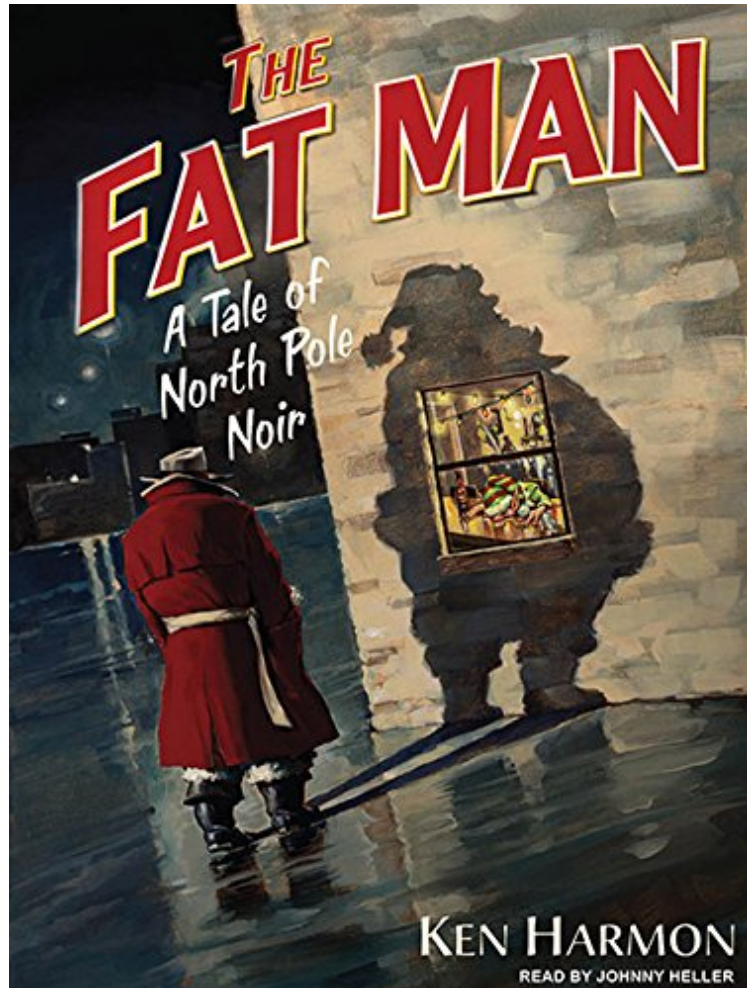


[Read and download] The Fat Man: A Tale of North Pole Noir

## The Fat Man: A Tale of North Pole Noir

*Ken Harmon*

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**Ken Harmon : The Fat Man: A Tale of North Pole Noir** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fat Man: A Tale of North Pole Noir:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A twisty, fun hard-boiled noir gingerbread house, slathered with Christmas fandom icing. A nice holiday read, if a bit long. By Wombat the Bookworm This month my Speculative Fiction book group (which reads about two or three fantasy books each year) selected Ken Harmon's hard-boiled detective novel, *The Fat Man*, a story about Gumdrop Coal -- the grumpy elf who founded the Coal brigade -- trying to stop an overthrow of the big man himself. A few thoughts:- Harmon imagines the North Pole as "Kringle Town," a fantastical place where all the figures from Christmas dwell, each with her or his own odd habits on display. This encyclopedic use of nearly every figure, from George Bailey to the Nutcracker to Ralphie, is the best part of the book.- Harmon also shows a thorough love of hard-boiled stories, filling his gritty, purple prose with similes and machine-gun patter dialogue. He works in titles of many Raymond Chandler novels, and builds a convincing hard-boiled story,

even in the silly context of the Christmas land he's built.- Mixed in throughout the story are Gumdrop's regular musings about the importance of Santa in the landscape of Christmas itself. He understands Santa to be a sort of gateway drug (my words) to Jesus, suggesting that the Santa gifts children receive early in their lives build in a joy of the season that helps them, as they get older, understand the Christian approach to the holiday. Gumdrop's own inner struggle with the idea of punishment for the naughty children also plays into the notion of the all-forgiving Jesus (though Hell is less clearly understood through the lens of the novel). I expect that Harmon did this proselytizing purposefully. He did it with a nuance that it doesn't disrupt the story much.- The mystery itself is pretty good, and functions like most hard-boiled detective stories do, with each clue revealing new parts of the plot that re-frame the crime. There's plenty of casual violence from both our hero and the people around him. And with his visit to Potterville, we get to see him interacting with the dregs of Kringle town.- The biggest negative to the book is its length -- the mystery and the premise really didn't support a novel quite as long as the one Harmon wrote. About 75 pages fewer would have brought the story into sharper focus.The Fat Man is an amusing, twisty hard-boiled gingerbread house, slathered with the icing of Christmas fandom. A nice holiday read, if a bit longer than it needs to be.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I love this bookBy EdithI love this book. It is written in an old style detective voice- really gritty but with character names like Dingleberry Fizz. The story is so smart and funny. I have this on Audible and I had to get the book to give to my sister. What a hoot!2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Delightful book!By Dianna L. GriswoldI found this to be a delightfully funny and refreshingly inspirational book. The memories of all those old Christmas movies, specials, and songs I grew up with were creatively woven throughout this hilarious mystery, and I totally enjoyed it, and have shared it with many of my friends. The humor was very entertaining and the religious references were well-placed and grounded to remind us what Christmas is really all about - the mixture was perfect! For those of you complaining about the religious references - HELLO???? It's a book about Christmas - CHRISTmas!!!!!!! - regardless of how commercialized it has become (sadly), or the origins of some of the traditions, or the timing of when we celebrate it, it is STILL a religious holiday for Christians, for God's sake! If the story were about Hanukkah, would you complain because there were Jewish references in it?? If it were about Ramadan, would you complain because there were Muslim references in it??? Come on, people - you have the right to choose what religion you want to believe in, or even none, if that is your choice, and as an American, I support that right. However, if you do not believe in Christmas, then don't celebrate it, but don't knock it for those of us who do! We don't knock your holy days and/or celebrations, after all!!

Fired from his longtime job as captain of the Coal Patrol, two-foot-three-inch 1,300-year-old elf Gumdrop Coal is angry. He's one of Santa's original elves, inspired by the fat man's vision to bring joy to children on that one special day each year. But somewhere along the way things went sour for Gumdrop. Maybe it was delivering one too many lumps of coal for the Naughty List. Maybe it's the conspiracy against Christmas that he's starting to sense down every chimney. Either way, North Pole disillusionment is nothing new: Some elves brood with a bottle of nog, trying to forget their own wish list. Some get better. Some get bitter. Gumdrop Coal wants revenge. Justice is the only thing he knows, and so he decides to give a serious wakeup call to parents who can't keep their vile offspring from landing on the Naughty List. But when one parent winds up dead, his eye shot out with a Red Ryder Carbine-Action Two-Hundred-Shot Range Model BB gun, Gumdrop Coal must learn who framed him and why. Along the way he'll escape the life-sucking plants of the Mistletoe Forest, battle the infamous Tannenbomb Giant, and survive a close encounter with twelve very angry drummers and their violent friends. The horrible truth lurking behind the gingerbread doors of Kringle Town could spell the end of Christmas-and of the fat man himself. Holly Jolly!

From BooklistHarmon's debut is a combination of heartwarming holiday story and tough guy noir, an interesting mix that creates an enjoyable story. For over 1300 years Gumdrop Coal has served as an elite and highly dedicated elf for The Fat Man (aka Santa Claus) and is the well known creator of the Naught List; the list of children who will be getting coal in their stockings. After Gumdrop loses his job in what he comes to realize is a frame-up he goes on a noir style revenge mission that encompasses all the neighborhoods of the North Pole, from the Misfits Island to the depths of dark Potterville. Littered with references to popular culture from both the noir and holiday traditions, with characters like Rosebud the journalist, Citizen Candy Cane and the not very bright misfit Sherlock Stetson. Harmon's novel is a clever tale, but the ending swings too far into heartwarming land, making it much more of a holiday than a noir story and limiting its appeal to a larger audience. --Jessica Moyer "I must have made the nice list this year, because Santa brought me Ken Harmon's The Fat Man. I double-dog dare you not to laugh." ---Steve Hockensmith, author of the Holmes on the Range seriesAbout the AuthorKen Harmon, an award-winning advertising copywriter with a lifelong affection for the noir novels of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, is the author of The Fat Man.Johnny Heller has earned multiple Earphones Awards from AudioFile magazine, including one for Closing Time by Joe Queenan, and has earned two Audie Awards and many more nominations. Named one of the Top Fifty Narrators of the Twentieth Century by AudioFile, he has recorded over five hundred titles.