

1367

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Overview

"1367" by Chan Ho-Kei is a masterful crime novel that chronicles the extraordinary career of legendary Hong Kong detective Kwan Chun-dok, told in reverse chronological order from 2013 back to 1967. The narrative begins with an aging, wheelchair-bound Kwan, now a pariah within the police force, being called upon by his former protégé, Lau Kin-yee, to solve an impossible cold case. Each subsequent chapter delves into an earlier, pivotal case from Kwan's past, revealing his unconventional methods, unwavering moral compass, and the complex web of corruption and power dynamics within Hong Kong's society and police force.

The book is not merely a collection of detective stories; it is a profound exploration of justice, memory, and the socio-political transformation of Hong Kong over nearly five decades. As Kwan navigates increasingly challenging cases, often clashing with superiors and bending rules to achieve true justice, the reader witnesses the city's evolution from a British colony to a Special Administrative Region, grappling with its identity and future. The reverse chronology cleverly builds suspense and deepens the understanding of Kwan's character, showing how past events shaped his present, culminating in the foundational case that defined his commitment to justice.

Key Takeaways

- True justice often requires unconventional methods and a willingness to challenge authority.
- The passage of time can reveal hidden truths and reshape perceptions of past events.
- Hong Kong's socio-political landscape significantly influenced its criminal justice system.
- Moral integrity is a heavy burden, especially when confronting systemic corruption.
- A detective's legacy is built not just on solved cases, but on the principles upheld.
- Understanding the past is crucial for making sense of the present and future.

Chapter Summaries

2013: The Borrowed Time

An aging, disgraced Kwan Chun-dok, confined to a wheelchair, is secretly tasked by his protégé Lau Kin-yee to solve a seemingly impossible cold case involving a high-profile kidnapping. Kwan must use his sharp mind and Lau's legs to piece together clues from his past, demonstrating his enduring brilliance despite his physical limitations and the political machinations within the

force.

2003: The Longest Night

Kwan investigates a series of seemingly unrelated deaths during the SARS epidemic, uncovering a conspiracy that reaches into the highest echelons of power. This case highlights Kwan's dedication to uncovering truth even when facing immense public pressure and official obstruction, showcasing his ability to connect disparate events.

1997: The Handover

On the eve of Hong Kong's return to China, Kwan is embroiled in a complex murder investigation tied to triad societies and political maneuvering. The case reflects the anxieties and uncertainties surrounding the Handover, with Kwan struggling to maintain order and justice amidst a changing legal and social landscape.

1984: The Lost Son

Kwan tackles a case involving a missing child and a powerful, influential family. This chapter delves into the darker side of Hong Kong's elite, exposing how wealth and connections can manipulate the justice system, forcing Kwan to confront his own limitations and the pervasive nature of corruption.

1977: The Great Fire

During a devastating fire in a squatter settlement, Kwan uncovers a murder disguised as an accident. This case explores the harsh realities faced by the city's poor and marginalized, and Kwan's growing disillusionment with a system that often overlooks the vulnerable, pushing him towards more radical methods.

1967: The First Case

The origin story of Kwan Chun-dok, a young, idealistic police constable. He investigates a seemingly minor theft that quickly escalates into a complex conspiracy involving colonial authorities and deep-seated corruption, setting him on the path to becoming the legendary, morally uncompromising detective he is known to be.

Themes

- Justice and corruption
- Hong Kong's identity
- Moral ambiguity
- Time and memory
- Systemic decay

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 1367 about?

"1367" is a crime novel by Chan Ho-Kei, following legendary Hong Kong detective Kwan Chun-dok through six pivotal cases, presented in reverse chronological order from 2013 to 1967. It explores themes of justice, corruption, and the profound changes in Hong Kong society over five decades, revealing how past events shape the present.

Is 1367 worth reading?

Yes, "1367" is highly regarded for its intricate plotting, compelling characters, and unique reverse chronological structure. It offers a fascinating blend of detective fiction and social commentary, providing insight into Hong Kong's history and its justice system. Readers who enjoy complex mysteries with depth will find it very rewarding.

How does 1367 end?

Spoiler: The book ends with Kwan Chun-dok's very first case in 1967, where he, as a young constable, uncovers deep-seated corruption within the colonial police force. This foundational experience solidifies his unwavering commitment to justice, even if it means operating outside the rules, setting the stage for his entire legendary career.

Who should read 1367?

Readers who enjoy sophisticated crime fiction, especially those interested in international settings and socio-political themes. Fans of intricate mysteries, character-driven narratives, and stories that explore moral dilemmas will appreciate this book. It's also a great read for anyone curious about Hong Kong's modern history.

How long does it take to read 1367?

On average, it takes about 6 to 8 hours to read "1367". This estimate is based on an average reading speed of 250 words per minute and the book's typical length of around 350-400 pages.