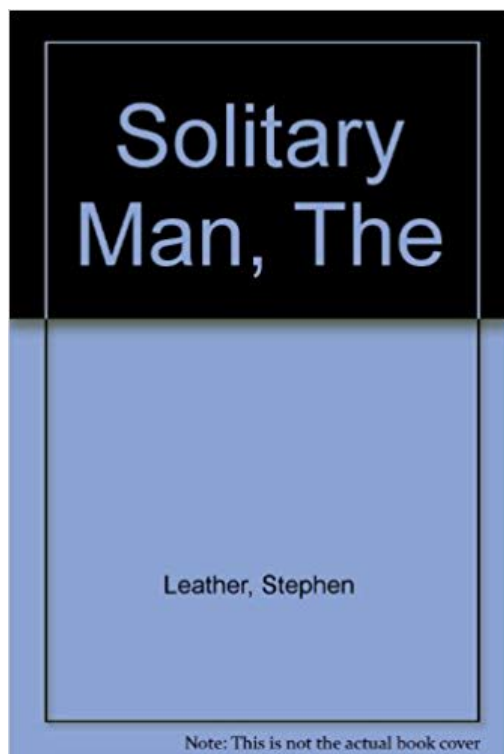
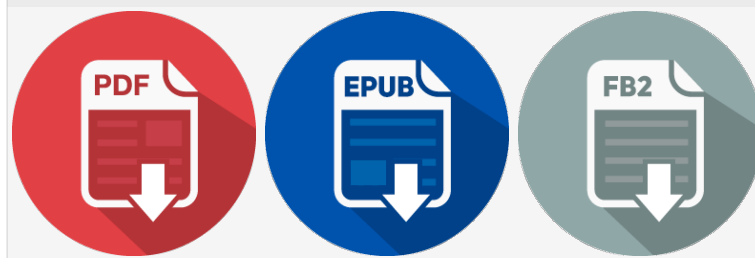


The Solitary Man *by* Stephen Leather



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Chris Hutchinson is a man on the run. Imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit, Hutch escapes from a British maximum security prison and starts a new life in Hong Kong. Then a ghost from his past catches up with him, forcing him to help a former terrorist break out of a Bangkok prison. Or face life behind bars once more. Meanwhile, the Drug Enforcement Administration wants to nail the vicious drug warlord responsible for flooding the States with cheap heroin. And decides to use Hutch as a pawn in a deadly game. Hutch's bid for freedom takes him into the lawless killing fields of the Golden Triangle, where the scene is set for one final act of betrayal...



Reviews of the *The Solitary Man* *by* Stephen Leather

Rrinel

THE SOLITARY MAN incorporates two parallel plots, either of which could stand on its own, but which combined yield a sum greater than the parts.

The IRA has branched out into drug smuggling - so long as the goods don't come home to Ireland. One of the lads, Ray Harrigan, is arrested in Thailand and thrown into prison to rot. The IRA wants its boyo freed and impresses that fact on Billy Winter, the organizer of the drug deal gone sour. If Billy wants to live, he's got to conjure Ray's escape.

Tim Carver is the DEA's local rep in Bangkok. His boss, the number two man in the agency, Jake Gregory, is under pressure from the U.S. Vice-President to bring down one of the most successful and ruthless drug lords in the Golden Triangle, Zhou Yuanyi. It was Zhou that sent to the States the heroin that killed the Veep's son. Now, Jake orders Tim to locate the elusive Zhou and his jungle headquarters preparatory to a reprisal strike.

The problems facing both Winter and Carver ultimately put Warren Hastings between two rocks and a hard place.

Seven years previous, Chris Hutchinson made a daring escape out of Her Majesty's maximum security prison at Parkhurst on the Isle of Wight, in the process of which it looked to the authorities as if Hutch had died. But Chris, with a new identity as Hastings, has built a new life and a successful dog training business in Hong Kong. One day, a fellow prisoner pal from Parkhurst, Winter, shows up seeking a favor; he wants escape artist Hutch to spring Harrigan from the Thai hell hole known as Klong Prem prison - a real place nicknamed the "Bangkok Hilton". (And Hutch, old mate, it's nothing personal, you understand, but, if you don't cooperate, your son back in the UK might come to some hurt.) Then, Carver shows up and offers Hutch a deal he dare not refuse. Some days, it just doesn't pay to get out of bed.

And then, just as his life couldn't get more complicated, Warren's head kennel maid in his doggie biz, Chau-ling, who secretly loves her boss and whose Dad is one of the richest and most powerful men in Hong Kong, decides to stick her nose in. Now make that Hastings between three rocks and a hard place.

THE SOLITARY MAN is one of Stephen Leather's best offerings because of his skillful intertwining of the various subplots. The author also provides one of the best descriptions of life inside a Thai prison that I've ever read. (Ok, ok, so it's the only one that I've ever come across, but it perhaps makes a Soviet-era Siberian gulag look like a holiday camp in comparison - at least the latter provided a lot of fresh air and outdoor exercise.) Via email, Leather told me that he based his description on the personal experience of an acquaintance.

The high caliber of Stephen's thrillers is largely due to the author's on site research. An old Southeast Asia hand, Leather is currently off to Cambodia. Whatever new novel results, I'm in.

Very Old Chap

I would have given this book a full five stars but, initially, there were so many different characters that I found it difficult to get into. I'm so pleased that I persevered because in true Stephen Leather style it turned into an exciting, well-written and well-researched book.

Mustard Forgotten

Very Good

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This is the Stephen Leather that i expect to raed unlike some of the silly Erotic stuff that he has churned out for the Asian market, it is a cracking read.

LoboThommy

well i love stephen leather anyhow, but this was an excellent ready, really looking forward to more of his books although at this stage have most read.

Wiliniett

Sad that Stephen Leather is not as well known in the US as in the UK and elsewhere, for he is a very talented author who draws upon his experience as a journalist and first hand knowledge of the settings of his books.

Here weaving favourite themes such as the IRA, drug-smuggling and South-East Asia he produces yet another compelling tale. The IRA having had a man arrested whilst drug-smuggling and imprisoned in the infamous "Bangkok Hilton" prison track down the hero Hutch, a man expert at breaking out of prison. They blackmail him into getting thrown into the prison to rescue their man by fixing it so that he faces a long sentence himself. His Chinese girlfriend Chau Ling, daughter of a wealthy Triad leader, attempts to get him out of prison herself taking advantage of the fact that in Thailand, money talks very loudly indeed.

A subplot involving a unsanctioned strike on a Thai drugs baron in retaliation for the death via heroin of a politician's son is deftly woven into the mix producing a three-way conflict amongst the dramatis personae. Nobody describes South-East Asia as vividly and real as Leather and few thriller writers are able to sustain his narrative tension. I highly recommend Leather to anyone with even a passing interest in the genre.....

Porgisk

Stephen Leather likes nothing better than slicing into the underbelly of society, in this case Thailand. I don't think the Thai tourist board would be too happy about his characterisation of their country, drug dealers, murders, horrid prisons, warlords, child selling, prostitution, there is nothing to like about the people as described here. However, without that it wouldn't be such a visceral read. It is a prison escape book which through a series of twists and turns heads into the golden triangle and an excellent climax worth of the detail in the book and the excellently crafted story.

Stephen Leather has a great new book called The Stretch ,what a shame you cannot buy it on Amazon.. But you can get it through the U.K. site.All Stephen Leather books are a good read.fast paced with good story lines,and always well researched.

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