



## The Devil

*Ken Bruen*

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## **The Devil** Ken Bruen

America - the land of opportunity, a place where economic prosperity beckons: - but not for PI Jack Taylor, who's just been refused entry.

Disappointed and bitter, he thinks that an encounter with an over-friendly stranger in an airport bar is the least of his problems. Except that this stranger seems to know rather more than he should about Jack.

Jack thinks no more of their meeting and resumes his old life in Galway. But when he's called to investigate a student murder - connected to an elusive Mr K - he remembers the man from the airport.

Is the stranger really is who he says he is? With the help of the Jameson, Jack struggles to make sense of it all.

After several more murders and too many coincidental encounters, Jack believes he may have met his nemesis. But why has he been chosen? And could he really have taken on the devil himself?

## **The Devil Details**

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Author : Ken Bruen

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## From Reader Review The Devil for online ebook

### Josh says

'I look to you like a guy who does happy?' If a line could sum up Ken Bruen's masterful creation more accurately, I'd like to see it. Jack is back and not much has changed in his vice dependent life. Adding to his ever growing list of failures, rejections, beat downs and misrepresentations is a refused ticket to America. His fresh start thwart before it even begun. Naturally it's smooth sailing down hill with the breeze at his back straight to hell courtesy of the devil himself. While not necessarily investigating a crime this time round, Jack's latest does accumulate a high number of murders while providing further insight into Jack Taylor's inner circle of friends/enemies. For the first time, Bruen adds a hint of the supernatural to a Jack Taylor novel. The Devil is Jack Taylor doing as Jack Taylor does with something a little different - you'll either like it or lump it, I liked it, a lot. 4.5/5 stars.

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### Jmrathbone says

Jack Taylor meets the Devil. The Devil appears with long golden hair, or he is bald, and there are horrific murders with mutilation of the victims and also of dogs. Jack Taylor pursues the Devil and after each stop he makes in his investigation something very evil happens. Somehow this just doesn't work for me. The whole plot line seemed pointless. As another reviewer said "at least it is brief".

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### Ladiibbug says

#8 Jack Taylor series - Noir/PI

Jack Taylor, hard drinking & drugging PI, years ago kicked out of the Garda, is refused entry to America as he tries to leave Ireland. Taylor's hopes of a better life in the U.S. His violent past as a PI in Galway have caught up to him.

Jack meets a stranger in the airport bar, Mr. K, who seems to know a lot about him. Bruen steers his hardboiled PI into supernatural territory for the first time in book 8. Taylor has attracted the attention of Lucifer himself.

The life-and-death stakes here are breathtaking. Bruen is such a superb and talented author, Taylor such a perfect target for The Devil himself, that I bought this strange and sudden twist completely. Bravo, Mr. Bruen!

I was thrilled to discover my library finally has books 8-12 in this favorite series.

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### Karl says

I had not read any of the Jack Taylor series in four or five years, so, in an attempt to catch up, here I am. Jack Taylor is drinking again, hooked on xanax, and doing the rounds of the bars. I approve.

Mr. Bruen appears to have taken some kind of left turn with this addition to the series. We have here a romp into the supernatural that could have been called "Jack and the Devil". Yes the murders and violence in Galway (West Ireland) continue unabated and Jack is hired to resolve a number of them in his inimitable style. But the devil stuff just does not work for me.

The music references and mystery book references are appreciated. The machine gun language and short train of thought sentences are as crisp as ever. But ole man Beelzebub manipulating a defenseless Jack Taylor is just not believable. Perhaps John Connolly can pull this kind of thing off without issues.

If you have not read any of the Jack Taylor books , go do so, and start with book one, I believe it's called "The Guards" from 2004 for some good NOIR. There is just enough of the old stuff here to enjoy the book.

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### **Greg says**

1. I read a 140 pages of this book on my ride into work. It wasn't a ride that had any significant delays.
2. I still don't know how I feel about the actual Devil being a part of the book. I get how it pulls together some of the earlier novels, and now that I'm writing this I see how this book is working like the David Lynch moment Bruen has a character tell Taylor about during this book in regards to 'supernatural' fiction.

but

3. I'm not sure I approve of my hard-boiled depressing crime novels being mixed with the supernatural. But maybe I'm just being an asshole who is assuming the devil is all nonsense and maybe this book isn't quite possibly Bruen and Taylor jumping the shark.
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### **Andrea says**

I love everything by Ken Bruen. He strikes a deep chord with me, I love the style, the dark humour, the stubborn, Jameson-infused and literate characters, and I loved the entrance of the devil himself. So some of his books work better than others, but I love all of them, making me the worst possible commentator, I apologise for my own sappiness.

But one last thing...I also loved that list of writers he drops, I love writers that honour other writers, and I'm glad to see Gary Phillips make the list :)

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### **LJ says**

First Sentence: I should be in America.

Jack Taylor's second attempt to leave Ireland ends with Irish customs; his attempt at sobriety ends at the airport bar. The journey he does take is one of a mysterious stranger who seems to know a lot about him, and the death of those who come into Jack's life. Has the Devil come to Jack in this life rather than waiting for him in the next?

From the first page, and first chapter heading, I remember how much I love Bruen's voice. You hear and see Ireland in every word; and not just through the inclusion of the Gallic. There is a poetry to his writing and acknowledgement of one who has known the dark side of mankind.

The writing is impeccable and spare; not a superfluous word. The dialogue is spot on. The story is brutal and profane and not always pleasant to read. The brutality of the story is often offset by wry humor.

Jack isn't a character one is supposed to like. He is, however, one of the most compelling characters being written today. He is a dark angel; very dark, but you want him to survive and to succeed. With all the past books, I always felt the hope of possible redemption for Jack. In this book? Possibly not—but then again, possibly. For Jack, the reader cannot help but have hope.

This is the first time Bruen has introduced an aspect of the metaphysical, which I liked, and an ambiguous ending, for which I didn't care as much.

"The Devil" is a book of actual and metaphysical suspense. It is dark. It is sharp. It stays with you. This is a series which should be read in order. All I know is that I shall always read Bruen's next Jack Taylor book.

THE DEVIL (Noir/Metaphysical-Jack Taylor-Ireland-Contemporary) – VG+  
Bruen, Ken - 12th in series  
Minotaur Books, 2011

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## Mike Sumner says

*'Nightmares are the dress rehearsal for the dread awaiting'.*

Jack is having nightmares alright. He should have been in America but past misdemeanors have put paid to that. Stopped at the departure gate, prevented from boarding his flight. Jack does what Jack does. It's a large Jay and a pint of the black in the airport bar. A tall, slender man in a beautiful suit, long blonde hair, handsome, slides onto the stool next to him. "Sure is hell here today" - "Get you something, Jack?". Guy has a killer smile. Talks about evil: "*Evil hones in on those closest to redemption*". His name is Kurt 'with a K' and he is so going to fuck with you Jack.

Later, you take on a case to investigate the frenzied murder of a student, crucified upside down. And several murders follow and too many encounters with Mr. K. Has Jack met his nemesis? Is Jack dealing with the Devil himself?

Reading this there were times I thought I had strayed into the pages of a Dennis Wheatley occult novel. This is diabolical territory for Ken Bruen. It certainly is for Jack. *'The devil knows his own'* is that right Jack? How do you fight evil? Evil of the worst kind? Can Father Malachy help? I doubt that Jack. Get yourself a Sig Sauer and cap this monster....

But do be very, very careful Jack. I would like to see you again....

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## Anthony Vacca says

For all intents and purposes, this book probably should have sucked pretty hard. A fairly straight-faced PI series suddenly introduces 8 books-in a supernatural element? And by “supernatural element” I mean our barely-functioning PI Jack Taylor goes head-to-head in the streets of Galway with the Infernal One himself. No, the title is anything but metaphorical.

Actually, this book turned out to be a pleasant puff of fresh Gaelic air after the last three ho-hum entries in the never-ending struggle between Jack Taylor and his own damned nature. *The Devil* is a pretty concise and focused novel compared to the normal Bruen fair which tend to hinge on the barest semblances of plot and often re-write backstory to make way for any idea that pops into the author’s Irish brain, usually at the cost of any continuity or sense of character progression for the reader.

Taylor finds himself in some deep shit this time around when he happens to slouch his way into the Lord of Lies line of sight. The Prince of Darkness happens to be working on a pet project in Galway, killing off various innocents from various walks of life, all for the sake of that esteemed goal of making the world a bit more of a worse place to live.

My main gripe with this book, and with series as a whole, is that Bruen plays the “damned” card pretty heavily when it comes to the life and times of Jack Taylor. I can think of a few series where the leads are booze-slugging, drug-gobbling, self-loathing messes, but in those books the world does not conform to their particular character’s self-destructive tendencies. However, the Jack Taylor series revels in its hero’s inadequacies. It’s not so much that Jack Taylor’s actions make him the good man that he is supposed to be, it’s more that he is a good man because Bruen said so, and then we watch him do nothing to prove otherwise other than make half-hearted attempts at investigating mysteries, or occasionally beating up or shooting a bad guy.

There is a likeable quality about Jack—he does seem to have a heart beneath all his fucked-up exteriors, and that’s what has kept me reading.(That and the fact that each of these books can be read in under three hours.)

Is Bruen one of the best of our modern noirists? I don’t think so. But he still has a sense of style and a flair for the occasional grace of the throw-away poetic phrase. And with only two books left to go in the series, I’ll probably stick around to see what happens next.

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## Sam Sattler says

Ken Bruen is one of the true masters of noir. The man’s writing style, some kind of cross between outright poetry and weirdly formatted prose, is a nice visual representation of the genre – and private detective Jack Taylor is the perfect noir character. It just does not get any darker than Jack Taylor.

As this eighth novel of the series begins, Jack is disappointed (but not surprised) to learn that he has been denied passage to the States because of his past run-ins with the law. Always moody, the deeply introspective Taylor stops at the first airport bar he sees to load up on Jameson and Guinness before heading back to Galway. There he makes the casual acquaintance of another bar patron he will come to know as “Mr. K” – and will regret that encounter for the rest of his life.

Jack Taylor is a contradiction. On the one hand, he can be as physically vicious with Galway’s criminal element as is required for him protect the innocent from them – even if the thugs end up floating face first in

the river. On the other, he has a soft spot for children and their mothers, so when asked to find a missing university student by the boy's mother, Taylor feels compelled to take the case. But when the boy's mutilated body is discovered, and it appears that Mr. K might have something to do with the horrible death, all hell (literally) breaks lose.

When Jack Taylor begins to wonder if Mr. K might be the incarnation of Satan himself, *The Devil* veers wildly from the solid footing of the seven previous Jack Taylor novels. At this point, the novel becomes not so much a piece of detective fiction, as a beautifully written supernatural thriller. This development will probably disappoint some Ken Bruen fans at least a little, me included, but there is enough of Jack Taylor in *The Devil* that this is still a must read for regular readers of the series.

Jack Taylor aficionados will always welcome another chapter of the Irish detective's life story and "be-jaysus," we can't wait for the next one.

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### **Ian Mapp says**

I've missed Bruen... why have I waited so long for the next installment?

The books are easy reading and the story is secondary to the great lines that he writes and the references to literary and musicians that you should check out. I recommend keeping a pad next to you to take down the references... they are almost always worth checking out.

Noone writes about drinking like Bruen. After the first description of Jack Taylor hitting the bar for a pint of black and a double jay, it makes you want to go into your nearest boozier and repeat the experience.

The story is a load of old balony, as usual. But we dont read them for that. It would appear as though Jack Taylor has been taking far too many Xanax's and is hallucinating that the devil in the shape of a man called Kurt is stalking him. Everyone he speaks with winds up dead and his paranoia builds.

Short chapters, laugh out loud moments and the constant lament that fags are nearly 10 Euros a pack.

I won't leave it so long next time.

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### **Kathy Davie says**

#### **The Chronology of the Series**

Eighth in the Jack Taylor suspense-mystery series set in Galway, Ireland involving an ex-Garda turned private investigator.

#### **The Story**

The economy is so far down the tubes in Ireland with unemployment and anger over the non-nationals snagging all the aid and free medical for which the locals don't qualify skyrocketing and who should show up to ensure it all goes to the dogs...at least, those that manage to keep their heads. *The Devil*. Mr. K. Seems he's pissed off at Jack for spoiling so many of his little side entertainments: the swan killer, the nun, the gypsies, all of it. And he's taking out people for whom Jack cares. Heck, he's taking out people to whom Jack even speaks! Even as he stalks Jack, tempting him to leave, to drop off his soul, to take that final step.

Only Jack takes a step the Devil didn't expect whereas the Devil takes a step Jack had hoped against...when a single black candle burning on a special someone's bedside table is discovered.

### **The Characters**

Jack Taylor is an alcoholic and addicted to various forms of medication...besides the Jameson and Guinness. He believes in the power of the gun as well as the power of setting things right. You can't corrupt him...he's pretty much taken care of that himself. His life is full of regrets but not for doing what he believes is right. Kicked off the Garda, Jack has made a living as a PI, doing right for people who can't buck against the powers that be.

Ridge is a Garda with whom he's still a friend. She's suffered through a radical mastectomy and is working for a better chance at promotion and suppressing her gay side by marrying into what amounts to gentry in Galway.

Stewart is probably Jack's best friend. An ex-drug dealer whom Jack put in prison even though he'd supplied enough to Jack. He's out now and deep into Zen, doing research for Jack, and still wearing his thousands-of-pounds suits driving expensive cars.

### **My Take**

This was weird. So not like the usual Jack Taylor installment that Bruen normally writes. Jack is not the character I would ever have thought would be involved with the supernatural. And Bruen usually includes a lot more insight with the books Jack reads. In some ways, Bruen has mellowed Jack out...must be all that Xanax that Jack is popping, trying to stay off the drink and the cigs.

In some ways, Bruen's treatment of the Devil is scarier than the usual Lucifer-infused tales if only because the Devil is in everything that we tend to see as normal human behavior. He sees all and uses his abilities/power to so easily force people into doing what they would never consider. It makes me wonder just where God is. It's not like Mr. K is allowing most of the people he's hurting in Bruen's *Devil* a choice or to exercise their free will. He only chooses those who are talking to Jack, wishing him well, warning him, attempting to help, acting as a sounding board.

And, the odd thing is, the Devil's interference seems to be making Jack a better man...

### **The Cover**

Okay, the fanciful side of me sees this cover as a positive: Jack ascending a staircase with a gradient background of sunlit yellow rising through orange to blood-red to black. As though he's beginning to walk in the light although his head is not yet there. The title...ooh, yeah, the title, *The Devil* is simply accurate as Jack is up against the Devil himself.

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### **K.A. Laity says**

That's the thing with Bruen novels, you can't just read one. An unholy trinity I offer this week, ending with perhaps the oddest of the three. From the brutal realism yer man from Galway dips a toe into the dark swirling waters of magical brutal realism.

I really can't get enough of Jack Taylor; Bruen keeps chipping off bits of him — knocking his teeth out, breaking his bones with a hurley stick, and of course wasting his flesh with a variety of drugs, whiskey and the good old black gold, Guinness. Despite everyone's attempts to do so, it seems you just can't kill Taylor,

much as he tries to do it himself. Of course everyone around him seems to snuff it regularly, even more so in this novel. Even his usual nemesis, “the nicotine czar, his own self, Father Malachy” is looking pale. When these two have a drink together, you know all bets are off. Is it really the devil who’s taken a dislike to Jack’s meddling? And is he the one bad guy Jack can’t find a way to stop? I suspect when the devil wakes up from a nightmare, he’ll have Taylor’s name on his lips.

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### **Tony says**

Bruen, Ken. THE DEVIL. (2010). \*\*\*. Wait...There’s almost a novel here. Bruen is the current top-selling author of noir crime fiction from Ireland. He manages to get on the best-seller lists with each succeeding book. This one will probably make it, too, if only for the momentum of his work. His readers will buy it because they think they know what to expect. They will be wrong. This novel features Jack Taylor, an ex Garda, ex-alcoholic, ex-PI. It starts with him trying to board a flight to America. His boarding is denied because his past record comes up on the computer. As he sits in the airport bar nursing his Bushmills and Guinness, a stranger comes over and sits next to him. There’s something about this stranger that bothers Jack, but he can’t put his finger on it. The stranger seems to know a lot about Jack. This bothers Jack and he gets up and leaves. On his way out of the terminal, he is stopped by a young woman who works for Aer Lingus. She tells him that the man he was talking to at the bar seemed to be “stalking” him. He seemed “evil” to her and that Jack should watch out. After a series of flip remarks, Jack hops on the bus to town. He later learns that the young woman was killed in the parking lot by a hit-and-run driver. No sooner is he back on his turf than people come to him asking for a bit of help with this and that – he was a PI once. Every job he takes on ends up in a bloody ritual murder of either one of his contacts or of the person he was trying to help. It all seems to revolve around a Mr. K. Nobody seems to know much about Mr. K, but he is always at the center of things. When Jack finally gets to meet Mr. K, he discovers that he is indeed the Devil in human disguise. Through a tortuous trail of murders and confrontations, Jack realizes that the Devil is after him and that there is nothing he can do about it. There is no ending to this novel; it just stops at a convenient point. The least Mr. Bruen could have done would have been to call this “The Devil. Part I.”

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### **Jeff says**

Ken Bruen is an amazing writer. This one I don't know was going on. There is no mystery, really, which is fine. Then the Devil shows up and gets angry about a bunch of Jack Taylor's old cases. Then the devil starts killing anyone Jack talks to. Then Jack kills the devil. Then the devil shows up somewhere else quoting Rolling Stones lyrics. Add in some heavy drinking, Xanax, and a return to smoking, diatribes about non-nationals and repeat. I truly love Ken Bruen's writing, and will read anything he puts out. And being with Jack Taylor for a couple of days again was great. But I honestly have no idea what Bruen was trying to do here. Battle the greatest evil? Reference all his past books? If you've read the rest of the Taylor series, you'll need to read this one too. And then sit back and wait for the next installment and hope it's as good as Cross or Sanctuary.

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