



# The Holland Suggestions

*John Dunning*

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# The Holland Suggestions

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## **The Holland Suggestions** John Dunning

Never before published in paperback and with an all-new Foreword from the author, this is award-winning author John Dunning's first mystery novel. A mysterious photograph unlocks a Pandora's Box of Jim Ryan's memories and lures him on a terrifying journey toward the shocking truth about the mother of his daughter, about himself, and about a past experiment in terror. As a legacy of betrayal and murder spirals out of control, Jim Ryan edges closer and closer to the hypnotic and destructive powers of "The Holland Suggestions".

## **The Holland Suggestions Details**

Date : Published December 1st 1997 by Pocket Books (first published January 1st 1975)

ISBN : 9780671003531

Author : John Dunning

Format : Paperback 232 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Thriller, Mystery Thriller

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## From Reader Review The Holland Suggestions for online ebook

### Ellen says

The Holland Suggestions by John Dunning.

The story is focused on a photograph of a cave. That cave is somewhere up in the Colorado Rockies. Jim Ryan believes it may hold answers to his own life as well as be a porthole to buried wealth.

I have read and totally enjoyed the Bookman series featuring THE bookman Cliff Janeway. This story, although suspenseful, made me feel as if I was on a merry go round from cave to home and back again.

With deep respect for this author and the Bookman series I give this story 3 stars.

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### Johnny says

There is a saying that whenever one is faced with a choice between conspiracy and incompetence, one should always choose the latter. But, what if the choice is between conspiracy and paranoia? For much of *The Holland Suggestions*, it seems like the character is driven by paranoia. Yet, all of the character's suspicions prove not to be ill-founded and even the final revelation proves to be something of an enigma. *The Holland Suggestions* is a thriller with, to borrow a lyric from a famous stage opening, "something for everyone..." but it isn't a comedy. Imagine the idea of hypnotic regression (*a la* Bridey Murphy) combined with Hitchcock-style pursuers and observers, Serling-esque travelers, and legends from ghost towns (one dealing with lost Spanish gold). That skims the surface of *The Holland Suggestions*.

There is madness, an obsession, and desperation in this story. An architect who is apparently well-grounded starts to disintegrate psychologically when his daughter, somewhat of a *doppelganger* for his ex-wife, begins to dress like her mother and even paints a "self-portrait" with her mother's distinguishing mole on her face. This, though she had never seen her mother or a picture of her mother! That would be unsettling enough, but he then receives an old dusty envelope with a modern cancellation along with its content, an old photograph that looks eerily familiar.

The protagonist begins to drink like a person trapped in one of those Hard Case Crime *noir* novels where the quicksand keeps seeping under her/his feet whenever he/she thinks safe, solid ground is under them. On one level, this feels different because the typical *noir* novel has its basis in some *hubris* that triggered the protagonist's problem (or, at least, was unwittingly instigated by the protagonist). In *The Holland Suggestions*, much of the circumstance is the result of external forces—many of which the protagonist is unaware.

At times, the reader senses that the protagonist is caught in an intricate web, but John Dunning masterfully deflects suspicion at times so that one is certain that the narrator of the story is merely delusional and self-destructive. At times, it seems like the key to the story is to be found in the regression analysis (possibly echoed in the title, *The Holland Suggestions*) and at other times, it seems like the key is in the narrator's failure to completely work through his abandonment (with infant daughter) by his ex-wife. At other times, there are obvious loose ends that the author doesn't deem necessary to knot together (I can't reveal them without providing a negative spoiler so suffice it to say that one of the loose ends is intentional and sets up a possible sequel of which I am unaware.).

For fans of Dunning, let me just say that I found this book to be more of a psychological thriller than the Bookman series or even, *Two o'Clock, Eastern Wartime*. Both the Bookman series and the book set in World War II are richly textured works which reflect Dunning's special interests (antique books and the history of radio). In fact, they pulled me in because of their subject matter where this one pulled me in because I saw Dunning's name. I don't think this novel is as powerful as the other two, but it is easy to see the power of Dunning's writing. It's just that this seemed too much like a *noir* film and not as much of a masterpiece as his other work. For example, there are hidden identities that are obvious from the moment they are introduced, but the protagonist doesn't "get it," even when the identity should have been obvious. Such careless touches make *The Holland Suggestions* move to the bottom of my Dunning list instead of to the top. One thing is certain, though, one cannot say that all of his novels are the same. They obviously each have their own unique quality to them. There is no obvious formula for the Dunning books I've read.

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### **Kimberly says**

Don't remember this story too well, but had these quotes:

"I believe that everyone has a talent that he does naturally better than other people in that same field who cultivated theirs. Trouble is, most of us waste our natural abilities, and they deteriorate to nothing."

"She was one of those people who for about 15 years, remain ageless, as unchanging as a painting. I thought she was beautiful."

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### **Sherri Couey says**

I enjoyed the book. I read some of the other reviews before listening to the book. I don't agree with the negative reviews. The road trip was a little boring but they can be that way. I could visualize the Colorado mountain town, the ghost town and the surrounding mountains. The fear of heights on trails, the terror of darkness in the cave was well written.

What I was looking for was an ending that finished the book. When they got in the mine was there still treasure? Guess I have some gold fever.

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### **Phyllis says**

I am a Dunning fan. The Jayneway series caught my attention in March and I have read all but two of Dunning's books--I have yet to find "Denver".

His books are generally fast-paced and exciting. I especially enjoyed learning more about the book-buying and -selling business--and the book that dealt with publishing as well. It's very disappointing to learn from another reader that he is not writing any more--great talent. I also enjoyed *Two O'Clock Eastern Time*--we have forgotten the impact that radio had on the lives of the era--and we have forgotten the talents of those actors/producers involved. Good reading.

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## **LJ says**

THE HOLLAND SUGGESTIONS - DNF

Dunning, John - Standalone

Product Description: A mysterious photograph unlocks a Pandora's Box of Jim Ryan's memories and lures him on a terrifying journey toward the shocking truth about the mother of his daughter, about himself, and about a past experiment in terror. As a legacy of betrayal and murder spirals out of control, Jim Ryan edges closer and closer to the hypnotic and destructive powers of "The Holland Suggestions".

Very boring - 90% narrative.

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## **Sherry says**

Although I loved Dunning's Bookman series, I didn't like this book at all. The main character was not credible, neither was the story. Told in the 1st person, there were lengthy descriptions of dangerous trails taken by the main character to find a centuries old hidden treasure cave. How the protagonist survived I don't know. I learned nothing from the story and, although my friend recommended it to me, I can't do the same.

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## **Allison says**

This is Dunning's first mystery novel and predates his Cliff Janeway series, which I really enjoyed. The Holland Suggestions revolves around a man names Jim Ryan, who is sent a series of unidentified photos showing what looks to be a cave somewhere in the mountains. Unable to focus on his work, he takes off on a cross-country quest to find the cave. The book includes intriguing elements of hypnosis, past life regression and legends of a treasure hidden somewhere in the Sangre de Cristo mountains of Colorado, along with the appearance of someone from his past. The story was interesting and I liked the author's description of the rugged Colorado mountains.

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## **Buff says**

Early Dunning. Very early.

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## **Roberta Marro says**

I listened to the sound recording. It's Dunning's earliest mystery story, and probably not as good as the Bookman series, but I like all his stuff. He's a local Colorado author and I heard him speak once. He's an interesting person. He and his wife operated antiquarian book stores, and he was a reporter for the local papers. He writes authentically. Unfortunately, there probably will not be any more books from him, as he suffered an illness that resulted in brain damage.

### **Jim Stennett says**

I think I listened to the disks about 9 or 10 years ago. Great start that drags in the middle picks up in last quarter and then really let's you down in last 10 pages. It's Amazing how much hiking, mountain climbing, fighting, running around through snow and freezing rain with little food and sleep one middle aged engineer can accomplish. Several plot holes.

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### **Jaci says**

Hard to get through all 7 disks. Tortured plot with tortured characters. Jim Ryan's daughter disappeared after being his focus for the first few chapters...doesn't make one confident in his parenting skills. I live in Colorado and his Colorado mine stuff isn't terribly convincing. What can I say. How he got to the conclusion, even with being put into a trance, is beyond me. Didn't help that disk 3 skipped. And I like his book dealer stuff. Hmmm.

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### **Jjudyfl says**

STAY OUT PLACES YOU WOULDN'T BE CAUGHT DEAD IN has long been apt advice. You would think that would apply to Colorado caves and abandoned mine shafts, but I found myself tightly tethered to the storyteller.

2 old manila envelopes, with photos and an ancient gold coin lead to an UNPLANNED yet PREDETERMINED cross- country trip.

I saw elements of Treasure Island and had a sense of the Unabomber - as-volunteer at Harvard experiments. Not a Dunning book-dealer novel...This 1975 paperback felt dated. but the FEAR was well paced.

(This book was accidentally removed and then re-added.)

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### **Rita says**

I've read other more recent books by John Dunning and he has definitely grown as a writer. This book was copyrighted in 1975 and this paperback version has a introduction he added in 1997. The intro itself was well worth the read as he discusses breaking into writing and what it takes. What it breaks down to is persistence.

The story of treasure, hypnotism and legends in southern Colorado was a good read and I can't wait to pass it on to my friends.

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### **Sara says**

Well, this was Dunning's first book. If you've read his Bookman series, you may be interested to read this, just out of curiosity...

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The plot is based on the idea of very deep hypnosis and actual reliving of events in one's past life, and goes on to deal with pursuit of Spanish gold caches in Colorado. But the way it plays out is way beyond improbable and I found the descriptions of supposedly hair-raising moments while exploring caves simply long and tedious and hard to visualize.  
He improved a lot in his other books!

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