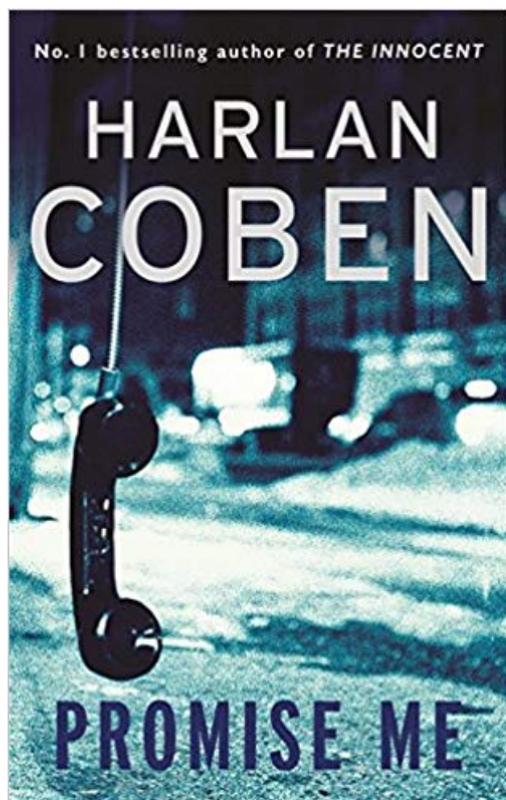


Promise Me *by* Harlan Coben



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Reviews of the *Promise Me* by Harlan Coben

- Olma

One advantage to becoming a fan of Harlan Coben in just the last few years is I didn't have to wait six long years in between Myron Bolitar novels. Of course that being said as of now (July 2014) it has over three since he has put one out... hmmm... of course we now have Mickey Bolitar novels. I must say this Bolitar story was among my favorites, it had all the familiar aspects you come to expect from a Bolitar novel and a Coben mystery for that matter. Suspense, pacing, great storytelling and humor makes this novel a can't miss.

Myron Bolitar has stopped being a hero... for six years he has lived his life and has saved no one but since he has stopped seeking trouble it has come to him. It started out innocently enough as he had two teenagers (one was the daughter of his current girlfriend and the other a daughter of a friend he went to high school with) make him a promise that they would never get into a car with anyone that

had been drinking. A few night later one of them calls and he takes her to a friends house and at that point she vanishes. Now not only is he determined to find out what happen, he is actually on law enforcements radar himself as the last known person to see the girl. For fans of the Coben's standalone novels one of the investigators will be familiar to you. Loren Muse is on the case. Myron Bolitar meets Loren Muse might be enough for a Coben fan to pick up this book. As the investigation untangles Coben has some twists and turns that you come to expect and will love.

Grade A+

- **Manemanu**

Harlan COBAN "rocks". What an astoundingly complex and utterly entertaining and satisfying AND plausible damned brilliant thriller. I am Keith Curran, a screenwriter, and I promise all of you fans of this incredible series (like Myron and his promises in this book), that Myron and Win, etc, WILL either be someday ASAP at a forty-plex near you, or, like "Wallander" and "The Killings" and "Vera" and "Luther" and "Bloodline" and "House Of Cards" and "The Walking Dead" and, shoot, I forget the name, "Fall"? (that brilliant BC miniseries with Gillian Anderson investigating a serial killer, played by Jamie Dornan), that "Malcolm Bolitar" will be, as soon as possible, for their lack of better word, "streaming". Regardless, DO read ALL of Mr. Coban's books. He never (well, astoundingly rarely), takes a false step. But he always takes your breath away. Starting thinking of who should play who, and comment if you like. But again, Harlan, bravo!

- **Mavivasa**

In his novel, "Promise Me" Harlan Coben continues a theme that was chillingly and powerfully embellished in the previous installment Darkest Fear (Myron Bolitar), which is the real and potential nightmares that can come with parenthood and childhood. In "Promise Me", the frightening consequences of child abuse, spousal abuse, peer pressure, societal pressures (getting your kid into the right college) and even jealousy of a neighbor's property, take on very real and palpable dimensions. These are not just stuffing and instant, paper-mache background, the kind you would find in your standard popular mystery. Each theme is painstakingly explored, and is, unfortunately, very real. This is the key to the book's credibility and to Coben's continued success.

A second theme of the book, related to the first, is spelled out in the title: the dangers behind a promise. There are promises all over the book. Someone finds a missing girl, but promises to keep her secret. Esperanza promises to "love, honor, cherish..." her husband. Myron's son promises to defend and fight for his country, each parent makes a promise (or tries to compensate for a broken one) to his/her child. And, of course, there's Myron's many promises to too many people which stretch him to the limit. These promises come back to bite Myron (literally).

In the end, the book succeeds for the same reason every book in the Myron Bolitar series succeeds: its the ensemble cast. While Myron is always the star of the show (the narrator is so close to him you would swear this was intended to be written in first-person narration), he allows his supporting "cast" to have the spotlight, too. Esperanza, El Al, Big Cyndi and, of course, Win are all given their moments. In this way, these books follow the formula of the old TV comedies that Myron and Win admire so much. The success of "The Mary Tyler Moore Show", "The Carol Burnett Show", "The Bob Newhart Show", etc., had to do with the fact that these established comedians allowed their talented supporting cast so much air time and chances to shine.

I seem to end each review of the books in Myron Bolitar series the same way: I look forward to the next installment.

- **Mr.mclav**

I found it interesting that Coben would change up his writing style for the 8th installment in the on-going Myron Bolitar series. This time we got to read the action from the point of view of more characters than Myron (the vast majority of the books are set with him the entire time) or Win (I remember one book having a bit that was more Win-centric). It was a change that I didn't mind, though I'm about as good with change as Myron.

The bit that didn't work for me in this book was the romance of the lead character with his current love interest, his past love and his "what if" with a character who died. Why Myron had to tell this current paramour he loved her when it seemed he really wasn't there yet was beyond me. Is this a character who is likely to jump in with both feet? Oh, yes, but the lady in question seems much more pragmatic. Would she buy Myron professing his love right around the time sex finally happens and when his gorgeous, successful, and talented ex just happens to announce her engagement in the New York Times? I don't buy that. I also don't really buy into the concept of Jessica begging Myron for one more night together. Myron hanging out at Brenda's grave after all the years that have passed is just weird.

One thing that bugged me to no end throughout this story: Why were characters referring to ATMs as ATM machines? Doesn't the "M" stand for machine, as in Automated Teller Machine?!?

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