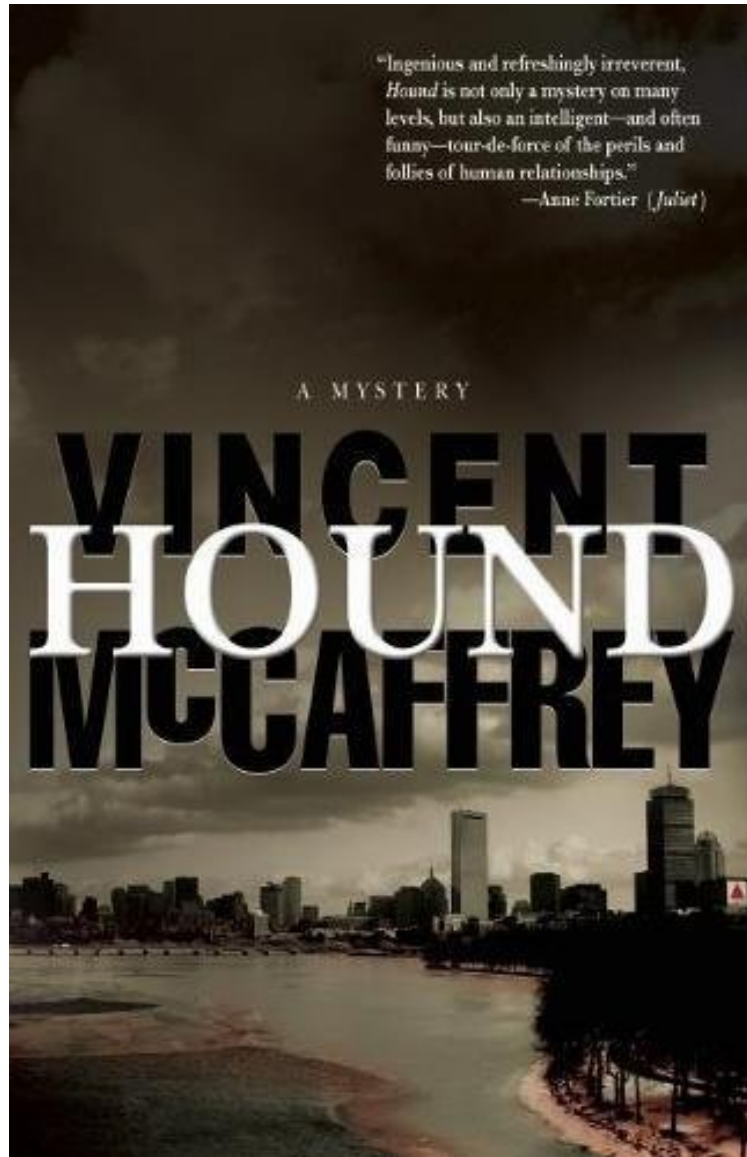


(Ebook pdf) Hound: a novel

## Hound: a novel

Vincent McCaffrey

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#3800827 in Books Small Beer Press 2011-06-07Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.40 x .70 x 5.501, .75  
#File Name: 1931520259280 pages | File size: 46.Mb

**Vincent McCaffrey : Hound: a novel** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hound: a novel:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. 4.5 Stars - A wonderful mystery for book loversBy L. J. RobertsFirst Sentence:Henry Sullivan is a book hound. He buys books at estate and library sales, most often selling them to other dealers and bookstore owners. Morgan Johnson, once his lover now recently widowed, ask Henry to appraise the library of her late husband with plans to donate the collection. When Morgan is found strangled, Henry becomes the

initial suspect. Although the police release him from that role, Henry does want to know who killed Morgan. This is a real book lover's book. McCaffrey, the author, is the owner of Avenue Victor Hugo Bookshop, located for 30 years on Newbury Street in Boston but now an online bookstore. The greatest pleasure, in reading this book, comes from his insights on book lovers--"...The ones who really loved the books liked to browse, dip into a page here and there, and feel the cloth and smell the paper."--readers, collectors, non-readers--"Maybe some rainy day, they'll read one of these books and it will change their lives or at least make them want to read another. It's possible."--Reader's Digest editions and a very frank look at the publishing industry. As a mystery, it's not particularly strong. The characters are not fully developed. I finished the book not really knowing who Henry is as a person, but identifying with him as a book lover. The other characters were interesting, but remained enigmatic. The sense of place is strong when the setting is a room containing books, but although the book is set in Boston--a city I lived in and love--there was no real sense of the city. The mystery is there and interesting but, as befitting the character, not very suspenseful. However, I did very much like the ending. This is one of those books I find hard to rate. As a mystery on its own, it was only good at best. As homage to those of us who love the written word and the vessels in which they are contained, it was excellent. For me, if McCaffrey writes a second mystery, I shall definitely read it.

**HOUND (Ama. Sleuth-Henry Sullivan-Boston-Cont) - VG**  
McCaffrey, Vincent - 1st mystery  
Small Beer Press, 2009, US Hardcover - ISBN: 97819315205911

of 1 people found the following review helpful. A delight for bibliophiles, but not a great mystery  
By Terry Weyna  
Any novel that features someone in the book business solving a mystery is likely to appeal to a biblioholic, and Hound is no exception. Vincent McCaffrey, the owner of Victor Hugo Books in Boston (formerly an excellent bricks-and-mortar bookshop that provided hours of browsing fun, now, alas, an internet-only business), uses his knowledge of the used book trade to great effect. Put this volume on the shelf alongside John Dunning's Cliff Janeway series and Carolyn G. Hart's Death on Demand books and create a biblio-heaven for the mystery buff. Henry sells used books on the internet, but only to other dealers so as to avoid tax problems. He doesn't make a lot of money, but he makes enough to be comfortable in his small apartment in one of Boston's classier neighborhoods, in a house built while John Quincy Adams was president. Henry is single, but a few years ago he had an affair with Morgan Johnson, a woman then married to a man a good many years her elder, and in poor health. Morgan ultimately found that her conscience would not allow her to sustain the affair. Henry was heartbroken; even though Morgan was a number of years his senior, he loved her. Heber Johnson, Morgan's husband, spent his career as a literary agent for some of the most prominent American authors of the twentieth century. When Hound opens, Heber has recently died. Morgan resurfaces from the past to ask Henry to value the most personal portion of Heber's library: those books that were inscribed to him by his clients. It's an amazing collection, as McCaffrey describes it. Anyone with his or her own collection of twentieth century first editions is likely to salivate at the description, despite McCaffrey's inclusion of a couple of fictional authors. The appointment for the appraisal of the books turns physical, as Morgan and Henry pay a brief, tender visit to their past together. That is why it is all the more gut-wrenching when the police show up at Henry's door the next day and drag him in for questioning regarding Morgan's murder. Henry is not content to leave finding the perpetrator to the police, and he follows the clues left in the Johnsons' library to attempt to discover the truth on his own. Even while he is working to solve this mystery, Henry is also preoccupied by a mystery from the past. His friend, Albert, runs a salvage operation often called into a home after the death of the owners to clear it out and prepare it for sale. One home yields a cache of bestsellers from the earliest years of the twentieth century, all in near mint condition. Along with the books is a pile of letters written by a young woman who, uncharacteristically for the time, explored Europe on her own while in her 20s. Henry tries to find out what happened to her, and how and why her library came to be walled up in an old house. Much of Hound turns on the hazard of the estate tax (otherwise known as the inheritance tax), which I found puzzling. In 2009, when this book was copyrighted, the first \$3.5 million of any estate was exempt from federal taxation, and the first \$1 million exempt from taxation by the State of Massachusetts. Although Heber's children are in somewhat desperate need of money, it seems unlikely that \$1 million wouldn't cover their problems. And the estate, though clearly sizable, doesn't seem likely to exceed \$3.5 million in value. But perhaps this is a problem only for bookworms who are also lawyers, and won't give pause to any other reader. The book lore contained in this novel is great fun. I happened to read it just a day or two before attending the Sacramento Book Fair, and was pleased to come across a number of first editions by Earl Stanley Gardner, just as described in Hound. I enjoyed the discussion of such things as the relative merits of authors like John Updike and Tom Wolfe and the diminishment of the once-proud literary establishment into a business so strongly tied to the profits made in the current quarter that good authors aren't given the time to build an audience. For me, this type of detail was the best reason to read the book; the mystery was nice, but secondary. This quiet book isn't for those who want a thrill on every page. Nor is it for the reader of classic mysteries who want a scrupulously fair mystery that allows him or her to solve the puzzle before the author reveals the identity of the culprit. But for those of us who love books about books, this is a vital addition to our personal libraries.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful book!  
By N. Gargano  
I just finished reading this book and I wanted to write the review right away, hoping someone else will see it and buy the book, I want to be the one to have suggested it. I loved this book, and wanted someone else to read it and enjoy it like I did. I bought it on Kindle, otherwise I would have just mailed my copy to someone for them to enjoy. No I take that back, I

wouldn't want to part with my copy after all! From the beginning of the book, I was so involved, I just wrapped myself with the characters and the stories that the characters were telling me. I can't quite explain why I loved it. It bills itself as a mystery, and although there were two mysteries in the book that needed solving, that is not what kept me reading. I guess it was the author's writing style, and I guess his characters. I was just sucked in and could not put it down. I was so glad it was a rainy day here today, so I had an excuse to stay curled up on the sofa until I had finished the book. I hope to see this character again, I was not ready to let him go, not just because of my love for books and he is a book dealer, but I just adore him, I am worried about what is going to happen to him next. Great story, great writing, just a great book.

Selected as a Must-Read by the Massachusetts Book Awards. "Ingenious and refreshingly irreverent, *Hound* is not only a mystery on many levels, but also an intelligent and often funny tour-de-force of the perils and follies of human relationships. McCaffrey has a gift for crafting quirky characters and original dialogue, and the path of our hero, Henry, is always wonderfully unpredictable. I came away from this 'book noir' with a sense of catharsis, but also with a sudden desire to reread and rethink all the great classics to which McCaffrey alludes in his terrific novel."—Anne Fortier, author of *Juliet* "As much about books—and love and knowledge and family—as about murder, *Hound* is the first in McCaffrey's projected trilogy, and book lovers will eagerly await Henry's next outing."—*Richmond Times-Dispatch* "McCaffrey, the owner of Boston's legendary Avenue Victor Hugo Bookshop, succeeds in conveying his love of books in his intriguing debut."—*Publishers Weekly* *Hound* is the first of three novels featuring bookhound Henry Sullivan. When an ex-lover is murdered, he mounts an unofficial investigation into her death that leads him through the murky depths of both Boston's literary world and his own past. Vincent McCaffrey has owned the Avenue Victor Hugo Bookshop for more than thirty years. He has been paid to do lawn work, shovel snow, paint houses, and to be an office-boy, warehouse grunt, dishwasher, waiter, and hotel night clerk. He has chosen at various times to be a writer, editor, publisher, and bookseller. *Hound* is his first novel.

From *Publishers Weekly* McCaffrey, the owner of Boston's legendary Avenue Victor Hugo Bookshop, succeeds in conveying his love of books in his intriguing debut. Boston bibliophile Henry Sullivan, who leads a lonely life in pursuit of rare books, attracts police attention after the strangulation murder of Morgan Johnson, the widow of a renowned literary agent—and Sullivan's former lover. Not long before, Morgan retained Sullivan to appraise her late husband's book collection that she was planning to donate to Boston University. Johnson's husband's relatives, each with a financial motive to have done her in, make up the small circle of logical suspects. Meanwhile, the reappearance of an old girlfriend forces Sullivan to consider another missed opportunity at happiness. Indeed, the crime-solving remains secondary to the author's sensitive portrayal of his middle-aged protagonist's search for meaning, suggesting this novel could've worked as well as straight fiction without the whodunit plot. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Vincent McCaffrey has owned and operated the Avenue Victor Hugo Bookshop for more than thirty years, first in Boston, and now online from Abingdon, MA. *Hound* is his first novel.