



# The Mystery Of A Hansom Cab: Text Classics

*Fergus Hume*

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# The Mystery Of A Hansom Cab: Text Classics

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Fergus Hume's sensational novel *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* is Australia's original blockbuster and international best-selling crime novel.

This edition for the first time reproduces the text of the original Melbourne edition printed by Kemp and Boyce in 1886. Other reprints have relied on later versions in which local details are omitted and language is bowdlerised. It includes an introduction by Simon Caterson.

First published in 1886, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* was an overnight sensation, selling hundreds of thousands of copies around the world and being translated into eleven languages. Over a century later, it has lost none of its page-turning power.

Set in the charming and deadly streets of Melbourne, this vivid and brilliantly plotted murder thriller tells the story of a crime committed by an unknown assassin. With its panoramic depiction of a bustling yet uneasy city, *Hansom Cab* has a central place in Australian literary history and, more importantly, it remains highly readable.

**Fergus Hume** was born in England in 1859. His family soon emigrated to New Zealand, where Hume qualified as a lawyer. He was admitted to the bar in 1885 and moved to Melbourne in the same year. Desperate to become a playwright but having no success, Hume decided to write a murder novel instead. When he couldn't find a publisher for *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* he published it himself. It was a sensation and soon sold over twenty thousand copies in Melbourne.

**Simon Caterson** is a Melbourne-based freelance writer and the author of *Hoax Nation: Australian Fakes and Frauds from Plato to Norma Khouri*.

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'One of the hundred best crime novels of all time.' *Sunday Telegraph*

'Fiendishly cunning.' Shane Maloney

'Australia's original blockbuster is back in print. Written more than 100 years ago, this murder mystery sold hundreds of thousands of copies around the world...It will give you a sense of Melbourne's history - you'll hear the hansoms rattling down Collins Street for weeks afterwards.' *Herald Sun*

'This novel was a phenomenal success when it was first published in Melbourne in 1886 and it became an international bestseller - It's easy to see why. The plot sweeps through unexpected twists and turns...and the suspense is maintained to the end. Most appealing...is the wonderful flavour of 1880s Melbourne, from the gaslit glamour of the Collins Street "block" to the hideous squalor of the slum alleys off Little Bourke Street...A splendidly romantic melodrama, full of period charm, and Victorian sentiment...*The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* is not only a classic but hugely enjoyable as well.' *West Australian*

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