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# Countdown City: The Last Policeman Book II (The Last Policeman Trilogy)



## Synopsis

"[The] weird, beautiful, unapologetically apocalyptic Last Policeman trilogy is one of my favorite mystery series." —John Green, author of *The Fault in Our Stars* and *Paper Towns* Winner of the 2014 Philip K. Dick Award *The Last Policeman* received the 2013 Edgar Award for Best Paperback Original—along with plenty of glowing reviews. Now Detective Hank Palace returns in *Countdown City*, the second volume of the *Last Policeman* trilogy. There are just 77 days before a deadly asteroid collides with Earth, and Detective Palace is out of a job. With the Concord police force operating under the auspices of the U.S. Justice Department, Hank's days of solving crimes are over...until a woman from his past begs for help finding her missing husband. Brett Cavatone disappeared without a trace—an easy feat in a world with no phones, no cars, and no way to tell whether someone's gone a bucket list or just gone. With society falling to shambles, Hank pieces together what few clues he can, on a search that leads him from a college-campus-turned-anarchist-encampment to a crumbling coastal landscape where anti-immigrant militia fend off impact zone refugees. *Countdown City* presents another fascinating mystery set on brink of an apocalypse—and once again, Hank Palace confronts questions way beyond "whodunit." What do we as human beings owe to one another? And what does it mean to be civilized when civilization is collapsing all around you?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

What does it say that my first act upon opening this book was to look for what month it is? How

close is the asteroid? Obviously, I've opted into Ben H. Winters' trilogy which began with *The Last Policeman*. Holy mackerel, what a fantastic second book! I don't usually get to say that so it is a particular pleasure to have loved this book so much. Ben Winters did a masterful job of making me intensely interested in the mystery when former police detective Hank Palace is asked by an old friend to find her missing husband. This is almost impossible in a world where going "Bucket List" is common and society is hanging on by a thread with no technological communications left. Of course, Hank can't turn down this personal plea. Hank's investigation gives Winters the perfect vehicle to simultaneously display some American society's odd mutations in response to the impending asteroid strike. His single-minded hero forges ahead despite all obstacles because that's the only way he knows to tackle his problems. This dual mystery-apocalyptic scene made a book I simply couldn't put down. I especially enjoyed the fact that the characters seem very real. I was intensely anxious, for example, about Hank's dog, Houdini, when he took him along to infiltrate a college campus that has become an anarchist encampment. Houdini does indeed become threatened which becomes an obsessive worry for Hank (and me). And the result? Completely unexpected by Hank (or me). But absolutely typical and perfect. It was at this point that I tipped my hat to Mr. Winters. This trilogy is shaping up to be a real classic for both the science fiction and mystery genres. I am looking forward with great anticipation to the end of the world, as seen by Detective Palace. *The Last Detective* and *Countdown City* are both going on my Best of 2013 list.

Imagine what "Walking Dead" would be like if Rick ignored the shambling hordes of zombies and instead he continued being a law enforcement officer, investigating suicides and searching for missing persons. That scenario is similar to *Countdown City*. Henry Palace has been cut from the diminishing police force in Concord, N.H. It is July. An asteroid will destroy Earth on Oct. 3. And yet, Henry gets up every day, dons a suit and tie, tucks his notebook in his pocket and rides off on his 10-speed bike, pulling a wagon with supplies and his little bichon frise, Houdini. Off he goes to solve crimes, ignoring the mayhem, avarice and crumbling society surrounding him. This is a hybrid sci-fi and detective story, with a heavy overlay of social commentary. Henry is naive, loyal and honorable in a world in which those qualities may be fatal. The premise of the novel is very interesting -- far more so than the case Henry attempts to solve -- and sometimes his tunnel vision becomes too much to bear. Decent, kindly Henry has time for one more adventure before the world ends, if the metaphorical zombies don't get him first.

Really liked the premise of "Last Policeman" and like the way it's continued here. Society's

continuing to collapse, and Henry Palace, though no longer a police officer, is continuing to play detective. Henry's basic goodness- his desire to try and take care of people- shines through this novel. Whether it's to help people in trouble, or parentless kids, or his own sister, his intentions are noble. And at least the novel ends with him in a (comparatively) safe place. I suppose there are a few logical issues- why were he and the other detectives retired while they continued to hire new uniformed officers? Wouldn't it have been better to have a few experienced people in uniform? Or did they just want newbies who'd brainlessly enforce what seemed close to martial law? Why WOULD the govt take the police off the street and have the citizens engage in what was pretty well open warfare against each other? And I wish he'd get the firearm stuff right- his Sig Sauer is a pistol, or a handgun, or a semi-automatic handgun- it sure isn't a revolver! But that's a minor detail... on the whole a good read, with a few implausible twists and turns.

This is the second book in the Last Policeman Trilogy, and it is equally as good, if not better, than the first. Things are continuing to deteriorate as D-day for the asteroid's impact approaches. The clock is ticking, and society as we know it is effectively shredding. Ben Winters must be well versed in psychology, sociology and just plain human nature. We have a mystery imbedded within the chaos of impending doomsday, a husband who has disappeared. Our protagonist is doggedly determined to solve it -- accompanied by his faithful little doggy (pun intended) companion, Houdini -- even though people are routinely disappearing right and left. The theme of this trilogy is surely one of the most innovative ever, and the effect on the reader is riveting. We are witnessing the breakdown of society and all the ways imaginable that people are handling it -- or not handling it! We are horrified, and we are afraid for the world in general and for the hero and the little dog in particular! Along the way, we are treated to several different possible solutions to the mystery before things finally come to light. The mystery is solved, but, of course, nothing else is. By the end of the book I was chewing my nails. Is there a solution to the asteroid's inevitable impact? Is there a conspiracy? Alas, we are left with no answers to those questions, and we must await the last and final book. But, of course, we knew that before we started reading. :)

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