

HEAVEN SENT

ALAN CARTER

ABOUT THE BOOK

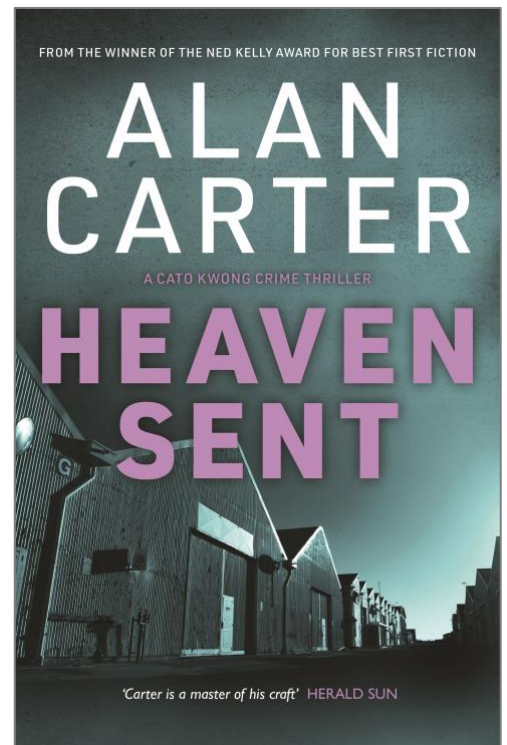
Detective Sergeant Philip 'Cato' Kwong is light on sleep but high on happiness with his new wife Sharon Wang and their baby girl. But contentment is not compatible with life in the Job, and soon a series of murders of Fremantle's homeless people gets in the way of Cato's newfound bliss. As New WAve journalist Norman Lip flirts online with the killer, it becomes apparent that these murders are personal — and every death is bringing the killer one step closer to Cato.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alan Carter was born in Sunderland, UK. He immigrated to Australia in 1991 and now lives in splendid semi-rural semi-isolation south of Hobart, Tasmania. He is the author of the award-winning Fremantle-set DS Cato Kwong series *Prime Cut*, *Getting Warmer*, *Bad Seed*, *Heaven Sent* and *Crocodile Tears*; and the New Zealand-set *Marlborough Man* and *Doom Creek*, featuring Sergeant Nick Chester. His latest book, *Prize Catch*, will be released in 2024.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who or what in the book is 'heaven sent'?
2. In what ways are the different attitudes towards homelessness represented in the book?
3. How do the lives of each of the victims represent 'homelessness' in *Heaven Sent*?
4. Out of the various charity organisations helping the homeless in the book, which is portrayed in the best light? What obstacles do these organisations face? What role does religion play in tending to the needy in society?
5. Do you think that homelessness is a problem that can be 'fixed'?
6. From the chapters written in the killer's voice, what do we learn about their past and their motivation?
7. Do you feel sympathetic towards Sharon? In what ways are her struggles typical of many modern parents?
8. What is the impact of the Job on Cato's primary relationships – with his new and former wives, and his teenage son and baby daughter?
9. Cato and Jake's relationship is strained at best. What is Carter trying to say about blended families?
10. Is it true, as Hutchens says at his farewell party, that 'The world needs more people like you, not less.' Is this a good reason to stay a police officer?
11. What kind of a man is Norman Lip?
12. Where do you think the moral line lies between the zealous pursuit of truth, and close engagement with a killer? Do you think Carter is making a point about ethics in journalism?
13. What is the difference between the poverty of homeless people in Fremantle and the struggles of a woman like Kerry Stevenson? Does one deserve sympathy more than the other?
14. DI Hutchens starts out as somewhat apathetic to social media but ends up finding a way to use it to his advantage, and Norman Lip uses it adeptly for his own purposes. Do you think social media has a role to play in police work?
15. What role does Naomi play in the plot? Why does the novel end where it does?



INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR

What made you choose homelessness as a subject for this most recent Cato Kwong novel?

Homelessness is a barometer for society and whether it's working or not. Australia remains one of the wealthiest nations on the planet, yet homelessness is rising and the gap between the richest and poorest is widening. This story is one way of holding a mirror up to all of that.

Homelessness can be a tricky issue to deal with from a political and social point of view. Did you try to be sensitive in your approach towards government and non-government organisations tackling the problem, or do you think they share in the blame?

I talked to both government and non-government agencies involved in tackling the issue and I did a fair amount of research around it. I don't think one can pin the blame for such a complex matter on any one group or system. But until there's a will to try and fix things nothing much will change.

Norman Lip is a complex character. Did you enjoy writing him, or was he just as annoying to you as he is to the other characters?

I enjoyed writing Norman Lip's character and I was keen to offset his more annoying traits by showing the bond with his sister who acts as his muse and good angel. But I suspect we all know a Norman out there and perhaps he is a part of all of us :)

Nick Chester from Marlborough Man makes a cameo in this book. Do you think that Cato and Nick would get along?

No, I think Nick would see Cato as a self-righteous, piano-playing, cryptic crossword-solving softie who needs to man up and drink a bit more. Cato would see Chester as a misunderstood soul who came from a tough background, has some good in him somewhere, and is probably cursed by that funny accent of his.

Will we see Cato Kwong again, or is he finally done with the Job?

That's the \$34.99 question isn't it? Certainly bringing him back to Hopetoun where it all began and reuniting him with some old characters can be seen as a full circle. But never say never, and sometimes full circles can spin on and on. And on.



@FremantlePress



Sign up for enews



fremantlepress.com.au