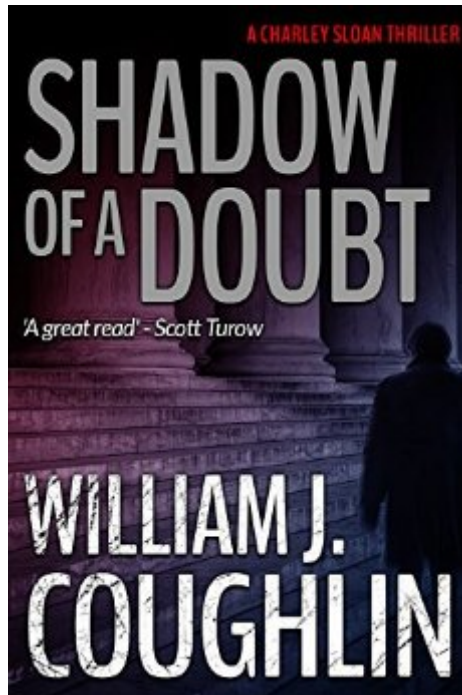


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Shadow Of A Doubt (The Charley Sloan Series Book 1)



Synopsis

Charley Sloan thought it was all behind him – his career, his wives, his drink problem. The colourful life he had once lived seemed a vague memory; he was now a regular at local AA meetings and was scraping by with work, using an office in a quiet and uneventful probate firm. There were no glamorous women, no exotic holidays and no flash cars. There was just Charley, sobriety, a rented studio and an old Ford Escort. Life was lonely without booze, but it was stable. That is, until the arrival of an expensive looking client in his shabby lawyer's office – Robin Harwell – a sweetheart from High School with a favour to ask, and \$20,000 to pay for it. Defend her step-daughter? No easy task when the charge is murder, the victim her husband and the defendant has already confessed – Angel – the rich little girl with celestial looks and a dead father's blood on her hands. Innocent child, cool headed killer or completely psychotic? She probably needs a magician more than a lawyer – Apart from the scandalous case they are facing, Robin and Angel seem to be coping remarkably well without Harrison Harwell. Their primary focus is on selling the shipping empire he left behind and making sure Angel doesn't wind up in jail. Why have they chosen Charley and what are they hiding? Family feuds, secret sexualities and missing records add to the pressure Charley is under – this is the one chance he has to restore his name but he knows he has to take a risk and fight dirty if he wants to win. With the publicity machine revving, the District Attorney prosecuting and the temptation to reach for the bottle growing, Charley must prove there's a Shadow of A Doubt or else he's sunk forever. William J. Coughlin has combined a career as a United States administrative judge in Detroit with that of a best-selling novelist. His four previous highly acclaimed and successful novels are The Twelve Apostles, His Father's Daughter, Her Honor and In the Presence of Enemies.

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Customer Reviews

William Coughlin's novel 'Shadow of a Doubt' is different from other books in this mystery genre. While many of these books stray to the action thriller hunt them down chases...this one looks at the mystery and slowly works its way through the plot with a great story and interesting characters. The story centers on a lawyer, Charley Sloan, that is riding the fine line between failure and barely making it. He is thrice divorced and a recovering alcoholic. He was once a big shot with big money, big clients and a big reputation...all of that has gone down the gutter and he is trying to just get by--that all changes when a former childhood lover visits him and asks him to defend his stepdaughter. I like the story because it deals with a guy that you see is struggling with his talents and his addiction to alcohol. You see the difficulty that he would have in trying to defend this high profile case. You get to know the women characters in this (Robin Harwell--former lover and wife of the dead man, and her stepdaughter Angel who is accused of murdering her dad) and become as frustrated as Sloan is when they give him little help in defending Angel. It is a good mystery with good characters and it is well written. There are some twists and there are some turns and there is some humor. Well done effort by Coughlin.

I picked this book up in the early 90's when it was first published. I thought it remarkable then and now, re-reading it, even more so. It is scary to try a case, especially when the cards are stacked against you. Charley Sloan beefed up his courage with alcohol, and the house of cards eventually came tumbling down. Now he has a chance for redemption and those that hate him a chance for retribution. This really captures the marriage of alcohol and litigation, regrettably often not that far apart. Coughlin has a strangle hold on the the self doubt of any lawyer who struts and frets his hour upon the stage and his descriptive powers of that fear are without parallel. Nice view of the dark humor of the meetings, too. 5 stars. Could be 8. Highly recommended. Larry Scantlebury

Charlie Sloan has been around the bend and is slowly coming back. He's made millions of dollars, wed three beautiful women, had a prosperous career, and lost them all to the bottle. When an old lover comes to him asking him to help with her step-daughter's defense in a case of murdering her father, Charlie sends her elsewhere, but she refuses to go. As he digs, he believes Angel hasn't committed the crime and is determined to get her off--because an NGRI plea isn't an option anymore and he's not willing to send a girl with a mental illness to prison. The novel's fast-paced and interesting. The end was surprising if you weren't paying real close attention. A good read by an author I want to hear more from!

Probably one of the best books I've read. Lost a lot of sleep turning pages. In a lot of books, the ending simply drops on you in a paragraph. Not so with this book. It is very well done, from beginning to end. If you enjoy legal thrillers, this ones for you. The characters are very human. They remind me of people I've met or know and the development of the way they interact with life is spot on. Highly recommend.

This a well-written, compelling legal thriller, about a Charley Sloan, a lawyer who once had the whole world in his hands and was an extremely successful litigator. Then, through his abuse of alcohol, he lost it all. Now, a recovered alcoholic, he is struggling to make a living. His future looks bleak, as his career is on the skids. Then, like a bolt out of the blue, an old flame asks him to defend her step-daughter, a young woman who is alleged to have killed her father. At first, he is hesitant to take the case, but both his former lover and her step-daughter are insistent. So, he succumbs and takes the case. After all, it is his chance to once again grab the brass ring and maybe find redemption along the way. He soon finds out, however, that things are not always what they seem. This is a fast-paced, well-plotted legal thriller that will keep the reader turning the pages. Fans of this genre will not be disappointed.

The writer very cleverly writes this story that leaves a surprising ending. It doesn't make the legal system look too swift but then who actually thinks we have a legal system. It is as corrupt as a member of congress. This is a great book that I thoroughly enjoyed reading and look forward to reading more of his books. Jim Morgan

I wanted to keep reading to see where it was headed. Although I felt I knew what the verdict would be, it did have a surprise twist...and several along the way. Liked the main character. Although I'm

female, this is probably more of a guy's book.

As a first time reader of Coughlin, I was hooked. He grabs the law and makes the practice of law real. His characters are well developed and complex. His lead character is a recovering alcoholic and his recitals will make any drinker take notice and he does this with humor and honesty. Not preachy. I can't wait to read another Coughlin book. I am thinking he was taken too soon. He has a lot to say.

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