

# BOOKAHOLIC

## For the Mystery Addict

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### *ANNIVERSARY EDITION*

*Bookaholic's* been around for a year now and I've had enormous amounts of fun writing it and hearing your comments. This will continue, but I'm making a change too.

When I started writing these reviews, they were for your reading pleasure only. I knew some of you were collectors, but *Bookaholic* was not going to address issues of "true first" or "first edition thus." However, I realize, after speaking with some of you, that I often have information which you may not have and which might be helpful if you collect or if you are thinking of collecting. I'm going to start sharing those nuggets, and I hope those of you who could care less don't get bored.

I've started by incorporating some of the information in the reviews, but I'm also going to add a "Collecting" feature. Sometimes, like this month, it will be just a few lines. In the future I'll give you some more in-depth articles.

I don't think you can be an avid reader of mysteries for long without wanting to collect the authors you love – it's a natural progression.

*Sally Owen*

### WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

**LONDON BOULEVARD, Ken Bruen, The Do Not Press, Paperback, \$ varies**  
Mitchell has just been released from prison after serving three years for a vicious attack which he doesn't remember. His mate, Billy Norton, is there to pick him up and take him to a flat he's rented. But Billy works for loan shark Tommy Logan and Mitchell doesn't want to get back in that life so he finds work for himself at the Holland Park mansion of a faded movie actress, Lillian Palmer, and her East European butler, Jordan. But it isn't long before Mitchell's violent past catches up with him. Another darker-than-dark tale from Bruen, whose characters read mysteries and quote their favorite authors. Is there any one of you who has not discovered this author? What are you waiting for?

**THE HAVANA ROOM, Colin Harrison, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, \$24.00**  
Bill Wyeth is a successful New York real estate attorney with all the trappings - a devoted wife, a son, an apartment in the best part of town – until that one night. Returning from a business trip, he arrives home late, makes a mistake and in one moment

loses it all. Wyeth starts to frequent a Manhattan steak house where he is fascinated by the manager, Allison Sparks, and by the restaurant's private bar, the Havana Room. Access to that room is by invitation only and what goes on there is secret. Wyeth agrees to help Allison's friend, Jay, with a last-minute real estate deal and realizes immediately that something is wrong. He becomes entangled in Jay's business affairs and is taken for an emotional ride that will not end until he discovers the secret of Jay's obsessions – and what goes on in the Havana Room. This thriller is gorgeously written, the story is enthralling and the ending unexpected. I've been eagerly anticipating a new book from Harrison since I read the last page of *Afterburn*. It was worth the wait.

***THE WATER CLOCK*, Jim Kelly, St. Martin's, \$24.95**

In the wintry Cambridgeshire Fens, a car is pulled from the frozen River Lark. Inside is a man's mutilated body trapped in a block of ice. Soon after, a second body is discovered high on Ely Cathedral. It has been there for thirty years. News reporter Philip Dryden knows he has a great story when forensic evidence links both victims to one terrifying event in 1966. But Dryden has a personal mystery to solve too. Two years ago, someone pulled him from his car as it sank into the river but left his wife to die. This story is atmospheric and complex. I loved it. This is Jim Kelly's first novel and was short-listed for the British Crime Writer's Association John Creasey Award for best first crime novel.

***RAPE: A LOVE STORY*, Joyce Carol Oates, Carroll & Graf (An Otto Penzler Book), \$16.00**

Uncomfortable with that title, I almost didn't read the latest from the prolific Oates, but this small book is not what it seems and it packs a terrific punch. Teena Maguire and her twelve-year-old daughter Bethie take a short cut after a Fourth of July party. She's gang raped and left for dead in the boat house, and Teena Maguire only regrets that she has survived. Bethie, who witnessed the outrage from her hiding place, lives in fear. The men she indentified are out on bail and they've got some hotshot lawyer who's getting the charges reduced to simple assault. But there's someone in that town who knows the meaning of justice. And love. Oates does something extraordinary here. She breaks your heart, and then mends it.

***WINTER'S END*, John Rickards, St. Martin's, \$23.95**

In the small town of Winter's End, Maine, a storm is raging as Sheriff Dale Townsend drives along a backroad and comes upon a frightening scene. A young man, naked from the waist up and with knives in both hands, is standing over the body of a woman. Despite this, there is no forensic evidence to connect the man to the crime. Townsend calls in his old friend, ex-FBI interrogator turned private eye Alex Rourke, to help him break the young man who is not giving out any information. But it seems as if the man has been waiting for Rourke. He knows too much about him and he's playing with Rourke, who realizes he might just be a part of the killer's game. A very satisfying read. Despite the setting of this story, the author lives in the UK where this first novel was first published.

***OUTSIDE THE WHITE LINES*, Chris Simms, Hutchinson, \$ varies**

This story, told from three points of view, will keep you up all night turning the pages. The killer appears to be an ordinary man with a family life. He never knows when he will kill, he only knows that some nights he must drive the motorways of Britain until he finds a breakdown victim waiting for help to arrive. Andy is a young policeman who loses the friendship of his more experienced partner and the support of his colleagues. The Searcher is an obsessive loner who haunts the motorways collecting odd souvenirs from the verges and the center median to put in his collection. These three characters are on a collision course and their story left me breathless. A first novel published in hardcover and paperback in England, but I have, so far, seen no plans for it to be published here.

**ON MY READING LIST*****ORACLE NIGHT*, Paul Auster, Henry Holt, \$23.00**

Novelist Sidney Orr is recovering from a near fatal-illness when he buys a notebook in a Brooklyn stationery store. For the next nine days, Orr will be haunted by that blank book, trapped inside a world of premonitions and puzzling events that threaten to destroy his marriage and undermine his faith in reality. This sounds like a ghost story but I understand it isn't. In any case, it is written by Auster and that will make me pick it up.

***FIREFLY*, P.T. Deutermann, St. Martin's, \$24.95**

In Washington, retired Secret Service agent Swamp Morgan is asked to investigate a "firefly" – a small but credible threat against the President. His first task is to review a slaughter that took place in a D.C. clinic where two dubious doctors and their team completed plastic surgery on a client who was altering his face before the clinic erupted in gunfire. As Swamp begins his routine check-and-dismiss, the missing client pursues his mission: to wipe out the outgoing and incoming governments at the upcoming inauguration. I know that Swamp will win the day, but Deutermann is a gripping writer and I will take the, no doubt, breathtaking ride to the finale.

***OBSESSED*, G.H. Ephron, St. Martin's, \$24.95**

Forensic neuropsychologist and expert defense witness Peter Zak faces another complicated case when a co-worker, Dr. Emily Ryan, is tormented by a stalker. She has no idea who it is, but his acts of violence have been escalating. There's no shortage of suspects, as the naïve Emily seems to attract admirers blindly. But when one of the suspects turns up dead, what started as a nuisance is suddenly much more complicated. This is the fourth in the Peter Zak series and I am still hooked.

***THE MURDER ROOM*, P.D. James, Knopf, \$25.95**

The Dupayne is a small private museum in London devoted to the inter-war years 1919-1939. It is in turmoil as the trustees argue over whether it should be closed. When one of those trustees is brutally murdered, Commander Adam Dalgliesh investigates, and there

is yet another murder. It appears that someone at the Dupayne is prepared to kill and kill again, and the murders appear to echo the notorious crimes of the past featured in one of the museum's galleries, the Murder Room. A must for devotees of the best in British mystery. First published in the UK earlier this year.

***THE CONSPIRACY CLUB*, Jonathan Kellerman, Ballantine, \$26.95**

Dr. Jeremy Carrier is a staff psychologist at City Central Hospital. His girlfriend, nurse Jocelyn Banks, is kidnapped and brutally murdered, leaving him devastated – and the prime suspect. When more women meet the same fate as Jocelyn, suspicion deepens, and when cryptic clues begin appearing in the mail, a harrowing game of cat and mouse is set in motion. I don't read Kellerman as much as I'd like, but this had the sound of body counting that put it firmly on my "must read" list.

***BELSHAZZAR'S DAUGHTER*, Barbara Nadel, St. Martin's, \$23.95**

When a brutal murder shocks Istanbul's rundown Jewish quarter, the Turkish police force unleashes their best weapon – the highly eccentric, chain-smoking, brandy-swilling Inspector Cetin Ikmen. This first book in a series that has been out for several years in England received rave reviews. It is about time we saw this series published here.

***POLITICAL SUICIDE*, Alan Russell, St. Martin's, \$24.95**

Will Travis, investigator, is sitting in a hotel bar when he sees a man slip something into a woman's drink. He comes to her rescue only to nearly get killed himself by a hitman. The woman, Claire Harrington, tells a strange story. She is in danger because she believes her father's death – ruled a suicide by the police – was actually murder. Her father was a congressman and Claire is convinced that one of the candidates in the upcoming presidential election was behind his murder. Russell writes well-written page turners and I wonder why he doesn't receive more attention.

***SOMETHING'S DOWN THERE*, Mickey Spillane, Simon & Schuster, \$24.00**

Mako Hooker looks like any other grizzled fishing-boat captain trawling the Bermuda Triangle. But he's a retired government operative taking a much-needed respite from his lethal and clandestine career back in the States. When fellow fishermen begin to be mauled by a mysterious sea entity the locals have dubbed "the eater" Hooker discovers that you can't retire from The Company until you're dead. Spillane's first book in many years and, as always, a Big Event.

## **FIRST MYSTERIES**

***GET OUT OR DIE*, Jane Finniss, Poisoned Pen Press, \$24.95**

This title begins a series set in Roman Britain in 91AD. The settlers, under the Roman rule of Domitian Caesar, have been entrenched for fifty years but there are many native tribes who still hate the conquerors and harass the Romans colonizing the new province. Tension is especially high in the North where Arelia Marcella, a young innkeeper from

Italy, runs the Oak Tree Mansio on the road to York. A string of savage murders disrupts her life and she and her Roman friends are under attack from a savage band intent on driving the invaders out.

***WINE OF VIOLENCE*, Priscilla Royal, Poisoned Pen Press, \$24.95**

In a small priory on the remote East Anglian coast, a young and inexperienced new prioress is appointed. It is 1270 and the nuns and monks in this unusual double house for the religious want to return to their tranquil routine after the Simon de Montfort rebellion. But it is not to be. A brutally murdered monk is found in the cloister gardens. Brother Thomas investigates.

***THE ORION PROTOCOL*, Gary Tigerman, Wm. Morrow, \$23.95**

Science journalist Angela Browning receives a mysterious computer disk containing photographic evidence of life on Mars. Angela turns to Jake Deaver for help. Deaver was commander of the last Apollo mission to the Moon. Together they face a powerful enemy – shrouded by the covert Orion Protocol – who will stop at nothing to keep their secrets safe.

## NON-MYSTERIES OF NOTE

***DOUBLE VISION*, Pat Barker, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$22.00**

In the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, two British journalists, a writer, Stephen Sharkey and a photographer, Ben Frobisher, part ways. Stephen returns to England where he discovers his wife is having an affair and Ben follows the war on terror to Afghanistan where he is killed. Stephen retreats to write a book about violence and what he sees as the reporting journalist's or photographer's complicity in it. Barker writes extraordinary books about violence, most notably the award-winning *Regeneration Trilogy*, and I look forward to reading her latest about the effects of violence on those who represent it. First published in the UK earlier this year.

***POMPEII*, Robert Harris, Random House, \$24.95**

All along the Bay of Naples, the Roman Empire's richest citizens are relaxing in their luxurious villas. Tourists are spending their money in the seaside resorts and all seems well. One man is worried. Marius Primus is in charge of the Aqua Augusta, the enormous aqueduct that brings fresh water to the nine towns along the bay. Springs are failing and there is a crisis on the main line somewhere to the north of Pompeii on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius. Marius sets out towards Vesuvius to repair the aqueduct but he is about to discover there are forces even the world's only superpower can't control. Harris has written some of my favorite books - *Fatherland*, *Enigma*, *Archangel* – and he has now moved further back into history to tell a story which, if filmed, would have once starred Charlton Heston and George Kennedy. First published in the UK earlier this year.

**THE THIRD CHILD, Marge Piercy, Wm. Morrow, \$24.95**

In the prominent political family of the Dickensons, ambition comes first, and Melissa, the third child, has always felt she came last. When she leaves for college it is a chance for a life free of her brilliant mother's constant scrutiny. Melissa meets Blake who is of mixed race and unknown parentage. He has been reared by lawyers whose defense of death row cases has brought them up against Melissa's father, the former governor of Pennsylvania who is now a senator. But Blake is also keeping a dangerous secret from Melissa, one that could destroy them – and their families. Piercy never writes anything less than first-class novels with a great deal to say about how we live now.

**NEWS FROM THE UK**

(I have no publishing information for some of these titles. Sorry)

**THE HOUSE OF SHADOWS, Paul Doherty, Headline**

If it's Monday, there must be a new Doherty! A series of brutal murders at a Southwark tavern interrupts Brother Athelstan's rehearsals for the annual Christmas mystery play.

**NEVER SURRENDER, Michael Dobbs**

This is a follow-up to the wonderful *Winston's War* of last year. It's on my list!

**MYSTERIOUS PLEASURES, Martin Edwards, Ed.**

This anthology celebrates the Crime Writer's Association's anniversary. Celebrants include Colin Dexter, Ian Rankin, Dick Francis, Peter Lovesey, Eric Ambler, Julian Symons, H.R.F. Keating, Ngaio Marsh, Ellis Peters, and Ruth Rendell.

**MAN IN THE BOTTLE, Bill Knox**

Thane and Moss investigate.

**ABSOLUTE FRIENDS, John Le Carre**

Yes, there is a new Le Carre. It still looks as if there will be more or less simultaneous UK and US editions, but if you're a collector you are going to want the UK.

**HOSTAGE TO MURDER, V.L. McDermid**

Val McDermid to you. This is a paperback original featuring Lindsey Gordon. The first new Lindsey Gordon for a long time. The paperback will be the true first edition and there will be signed copies floating about on both sides of the Pond.

**WATCHMAN, Ian Rankin**

This title has been out of print for a long time and those of you who have a true first edition are so lucky. Those of you who don't might want to have this reprint in your possession (there are bound to be signed copies) until you hit the lottery.

## THIS AND THAT

### Award Winners

**2003 Ellis Peters Historical Dagger**  
Andrew Taylor – *The American Boy*

**2003 Macavity Award**  
**Best Novel**  
S.J. Rozan – *Winter and Night*  
**Best First Novel**  
Julia Spencer-Fleming – *In the Bleak Midwinter*  
**Best Critical Work**  
Jim Huang, Ed. – *They Died in Vain*

**2003 Shamus Award**  
**Best PI Novel**  
James W. Hall – *Blackwater Sound*  
**Best First PI Novel**  
Eddie Muller – *The Distance*  
**Best PI PBO**  
D. Daniel Judson – *The Poisoned Rose*

**2003 CWA Gold Dagger for Fiction**  
Minette Walters – *Fox Evil*

## COLLECTING

I have been ranting on about Robert Littell books all year and have reviewed them as they were published by Overlook Press. These books are reprints. Here's the history. Last year Overlook published *The Company* by Robert Littell. This was a new book and was a first edition. Because of the success of that book Overlook began to publish Littell's back list and put handsome new uniform dustjackets on the books. To date Overlook has published *The Once and Future Spy*, *Sisters*, and *The Amateur* all with the distinctive "jigsaw piece" dustjacket design. There will be more in the future. If you are a completist and love Robert Littell you are probably collecting these new editions, but, as a collector you have, or want, the originals. And they are not easy to find these days.

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## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

### Fiction

**Ambler, Eric, *The Schirmer Inheritance***, Vintage, \$12.00. Reprinted

**Ambler, Eric, *State of Siege***, Vintage, \$12.00. Reprinted

**Anderson, James, *The Affair of the 39 Cufflinks***, Poisoned Pen Press, \$24.95. A zany 1930s country-house mystery. Follow up to *The Affair of the Bloodstained Egg Cosy*.

**Bannister, Jo, *Reflections***, St. Martin's, \$22.95. Brodie Farrell is asked by a friend in the police force to help find the long-lost aunt of two girls after their mother is murdered and their father disappears.

**Bland, Eleanor Taylor, *Fatal Remains***, St. Martin's, \$23.95. Marti MacAlister investigates centuries-old murders that surface during a contemporary land development deal.

**Bowen, Rhys, *For the Love of Mike***, St. Martin's, \$23.95. In her third outing, Molly Murphy goes undercover in the garment industry in 1901 New York City.

**Boyle, Gerry, *Pretty Dead***, Berkley, \$23.95. Reporter Jack McMorrow investigates the murder of a woman with ties to a very wealthy and prominent Boston family.

**Buckley, Fiona, *The Fugitive Queen***, Scribner, \$24.00. Murder and intrigue stalk the Yorkshire moors as two headstrong Queens battle to keep their crowns. Seventh in the Ursula Blanchard series.

**Duchin, Peter & Wilson, John Morgan, *Good Morning, Heartache***, Berkley, \$22.95. These two team up for the second mystery featuring Philip Damon, bandleader and sleuth.

**Edwards, Grace, *The Viaduct***, Doubleday, \$22.95. When Vietnam vet, Marin Taylor, is accosted on the Harlem viaduct, he throws one man to his death but has to deal with the other's vow of vengeance. Set in 1970s Harlem.

**Edwards, Martin, *All the Lonely People***, Five Star, \$25.95. Reprinted edition of the first book in the Harry Devlin series which was nominated for the John Creasey Memorial Dagger when it was first published in 1991.

**Grabien, Deborah, *The Weaver and The Factory Maid***, St. Martin's, \$22.95. Ringan Laine, British folk musician, and his longtime lover Penny are haunted by ghosts of characters memorialized in their songs.

**Hall, Parnell, *With This Puzzle, I Thee Kill***, Bantam, \$23.95. It looks like wedding bells agains for the much-married Cora Felton, known as the Puzzle Lady. But she'll have to solve some cryptograms and a riddle if she is going to live to make it to the altar.

**Hawke, Simon, *The Merchant of Vengeance***, Forge, \$23.95. Fourth mystery featuring Symington Smythe, ostler and would-be thespian and fledgling playwright Will Shakespeare.

**Henry, April, *Buried Diamonds***, St. Martin's, \$23.95. Claire Montrose discovers an engagement ring that has been missing for fifty years. Did the young woman who owned it really commit suicide?

**Holland, David, *The Devil's Acre***, St. Martin's, \$23.95. When a disfigured corpse is discovered in the mansion of a mysterious philanthropist, Reverend Tuckworth sets out on a dangerous path in pursuit of a ruthless killer. Second in this historical series.

**Keating, H.R.F.,** *A Detective Under Fire*, St. Martin's, \$23.95. D.S. Harriet Martens is chosen to head the investigation when a newspaper article hints at major scandal in the prestigious Maximum Crime Squad.

**Martini, Steve,** *Double Tap*, Putnam, \$25.95. Paul Madriani defends a soldier on trial for killing a beautiful businesswoman and guru of a high-tech software empire catering to the military.

**Mortimer, John,** *Rumpole and the Primrose Path*, Viking, \$24.95. Six new stories featuring the legendary barrister.

**Newman, Sharan,** *The Outcast Dove*, Forge, \$25.95. The latest installment in the series featuring Catherine Le Vendeur.

**Kaminsky, Stuart M.,** *Midnight Pass*, Forge, \$23.95. When Lew Fonseca's wife died, he moved to Sarasota, Florida, where he finds himself dealing with murder.

**Pearce, Michael,** *The Fig Tree Murder*, Poisoned Pen Press, \$24.95. The latest in the Mamur Zapt reprints set in Colonial Egypt.

### Non-Fiction

**Basbanes, Nicholas A.,** *A Splendor of Letters*, HarperCollins, \$29.95. Basbanes continues his exploration of book people, places, and culture with a volume on the pressing issues that surround the role of books in contemporary society. He also looks at the ephemeral nature of electronic data. This is the final book in Basbanes's trilogy which began with *A Gentle Madness* and *Patience and Fortitude*.

**Baxter, John,** *A Pound of Paper*, St. Martin's, \$24.95. John Baxter is a book collector and in this engaging memoir he gives us one brilliant and funny scene after another. Readers come in contact with literary greats like Graham Greene, Kingsley Amis, and Ray Bradbury. Baxter describes himself as a Book Addict. Just like us.

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