

# BOOKAHOLIC

## For the Mystery Addict

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### WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

***LOVE IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES*, Frank Devlin, Putnam. \$23.95**

Helen is a serial killer. She haunts bars preying on men on the make. She is trying to find the perfect man, but the men she finds always end up dead. Rose Burke is a homicide detective with the San Francisco Police Department. Her marriage is rocky and she misses her former partner, who killed himself. As the body count rises, Rose starts to see that the murders have a connection and she relentlessly pursues the killer.

This is the most extraordinary book I have read so far this year. I loved it. I loved it! Helen and Rose are remarkably realized by Devlin, whose real name is Tim Farrington (I don't know the name). This is one of those books I mourn when I have finished reading because I'm afraid I won't be able to find another as good. It also contains one of my favorite descriptions: Rose watching Helen... "She held herself like a dangerous person, a hot knife in a world of butter."

***PRINCE OF THIEVES*, Chuck Hogan, Scribner. \$25.00**

Charlestown, a neighborhood of Boston, is the bank-robbing capital of the United States and, as this book opens, a robbery is in progress. Doug MacRay is the brains behind this caper and his life is about to change. When Claire Keesey, the branch manager of the bank, arrives that morning, Doug and his crew are waiting. The robbery goes off with some minor hitches, but it is necessary to take Claire, blindfolded, with them to make their getaway. She is released, physically unharmed, but not before she has made a very deep impression on Doug. The book tells of Doug's obsession with Claire, his life as a bank robber, and his efforts to leave that life behind. At first I had trouble with Doug's obsession with Claire. First he traumatizes her and then he stalks her! But that said, I loved this book. The stalking aspect of the story quickly dissipates due to the extraordinary writing of Chuck Hogan (not to be confused with Chuck Logan) and I became caught up with Doug and his friends who are, more or less, men I might recognize, and with the FBI agent Adam Frawley who is also attracted to Claire and who is closing in on Doug and his friends. An unusually gripping story, well plotted, and well told. I was reminded of the writing of Dennis Lehane, and not just because of the Boston locale.

***THE CHINAMAN*, Stephen Leather, Coronet Books UK.**

Several of you have urged me to read Stephen Leather, insisting that, given my reading preferences, I would thoroughly enjoy him. Well, you were right. *The Chinaman* is set in

London in the early nineties. An IRA terrorist bomb explodes killing, among many others, the wife and daughter of the Chinaman. Actually he isn't Chinese although he has a Chinese take-out shop in London. He's Vietnamese, but the racism of the London police and the IRA does not allow them to look beyond the surface. And that will be their problem, because the Chinaman saw action during the Vietnam war and now he wants justice. He first approaches the police who cannot help him, so he resolves to approach the IRA and demands that they do something about the terrorists in their midst. Stephen Leather has been writing for years. His books do not seem to have been picked up here, and there may be a reason for that. Many of Leather's books concern the terrorist activities of the IRA in London, and Leather is very matter of fact about the connection between the money being funneled from this country to the IRA that, in turn, is often funneled to Qadafi's Libya for training and arms to be used against citizens of the UK. Sad, but true. References to that did bring me up short, but they in no way detracted from the thrilling read that this is. Leather's books are available in this country in UK editions and I urge espionage fans everywhere to hunt them down. Thank you for pointing me in his direction.

**DECEPTION, Denise Mina, Little Brown. \$23.95**

Susie Harriot was the court-appointed psychologist to the paroled serial killer Andrew Gow. When she is found, covered in blood, she is arrested and found guilty of the murders of Gow and his wife. Lachlan Harriot, Susie's husband, finds it impossible to believe that she is guilty of murder and starts to search Susie's home office convinced that he will be able to find proof of her innocence. What he finds there is more than shocking. It is totally unimaginable to Lachlan. Mina is one of the UK's new talented young writers and this story just kept pulling me in. This was published last year in England as *Sanctum*.

**TIJUANA STRAITS, Kem Nunn, Scribner. \$25.00**

I'll admit that I have never read Nunn before. That's because the surfing life has never held much interest for me and Nunn, a resident of Southern California, is really into it. Well, my mistake. This is the story of Fahey, once a surfer, now an ex-con who takes in law student and activist Magdalena who is fleeing across the border from Mexico. Magdalena has been fighting the maquiladoras, Mexico's foreign owned factories, and their exploitation of land and workers. Tracking Magdalena is a trio of killers led by Armando Santoya, a man created by the very conditions Magdalena fought against. This is an extraordinarily sad tale, beautifully told – and I learned something about surfing.

## ON MY READING LIST

**THE WATCHMEN, John Altman, Putnam. \$24.95**

An Al Qaeda prisoner is moved to a CIA safe house for observation and interrogation. His interrogator, Dr. Louis Finney, regrets his days spent working for the U.S. Government, and is consumed with guilt by some of the experiments performed by his

mentor. But the CIA is not the only group interested in the prisoner. An assassin schooled in ancient arts of meditation and murder is sent by Al Qaeda to eliminate the prisoner before he discloses their secrets.

**AT HELL'S GATE, Ethan Black, Simon and Schuster. \$24.00**

A body is pulled from the murky waters of Hell's Gate, a treacherous section of New York's East River. NYPD Detective Conrad Voort knows it wasn't a drowning and embarks on an investigation that has him pursuing rumors of sunken treasure before he realizes that what he is really looking for is a computer filled with very sensitive information. And he's not the only one looking. This is another of those series which improves with each entry.

**DARK VOYAGE, Alan Furst, Random House. \$24.95**

In April 1941, E.M. DeHaan, captain of a Dutch tramp freighter, is recruited by the Dutch Naval Intelligence Section in London for dangerous missions. Over time, the freighter becomes a haven for fugitives and stowaways as this decent captain becomes a fighting hero in an evil world. Anything by Alan Furst is a must for those of us obsessed with espionage and/or World War II.

**LUCIFER'S SHADOW, David Hewson, Delacorte Press. \$21.95**

Daniel Foster, a young Englishman cataloguing a library of dusty manuscripts in Venice, discovers a lost musical masterpiece. Slowly he is drawn into a treacherous game of deception spanning centuries, from the Venice of Vivaldi and Rousseau to the violence of the present day. The previous title by this author, *A Season for the Dead*, was set in Rome and I understand that series will continue. This, then, is either a stand alone or the beginning of another series. In any case, Hewson is a terrific writer of intrigue.

**HARK, Ed McBain, Simon and Schuster. \$25.00**

The Deaf Man has been a staple of McBain's 87<sup>th</sup> Precinct novels. He appeared in *The Heckler*, *Eight Black Horses*, and *Mischief* in which he was left for dead after being double crossed by his accomplice. Well, now he's back, and he's planning the perfect crime. He's also leaving clues for the detectives of the 87<sup>th</sup>: they are from the plays of William Shakespeare and they will have to be unraveled if he is to be stopped. And you know how up on their Shakespeare city cops usually are!

**SLOW KILL, Michael McGarrity, Dutton. \$23.95**

Santa Fe Police Chief Kevin Kerney travels to California to buy some prime quarter-horse breeding stock. When a guest at the ranch is found dead, Kerney finds himself a suspect so decides to do some investigating himself. He will have to find the answers to a thirty-year-old mystery in order to extricate himself from a situation that could ruin his career. This is the ninth entry in this solid series.

***BEST AMERICAN CRIME WRITING*, Otto Penzler & Thomas H. Cook, Eds., Pantheon. \$29.95 hardcover. \$15.00 Vintage paperback**

This is the third volume in the series of true crime reporting. Among the contributors are Jon Krakauer, James Ellroy, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., and Scott Turow. The sources include *The New Yorker*, *GQ*, and *Atlantic Monthly*. A must for lovers of true crime and the excellent reporting thereof.

***BRIMSTONE*, Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child, Warner Books. \$25.95**

Art critic Jeremy Grove is found dead in his room which is barricaded from the inside. His face is a mask of terror, his body temperature is high, there is an unmistakable imprint of a cloven hoof in the floor, and the smell of brimstone is everywhere. Thus begins the latest case for my favorite FBI agent, Alysious Pendergast. As more bodies pile up in the same manner, Pendergast and Police Officer Vincent D'Agosta find themselves moving from the luxury estates of Long Island to the crumbling castles of the Italian countryside.

***THE MASK OF RED DEATH*, Harold Schechter, Ballantine. \$24.95**

In the summer of 1845, Manhattan is in turmoil as a creature of inhuman depravity stalks the streets. One of the suspects is Chief Wolf Bear, an attraction at P.T. Barnum's American Museum, but writer Edgar Allan Poe thinks he's innocent: Poe believes the city conceals a monster, one with an ever-growing appetite for human prey. This is the third Edgar Allan Poe mystery by the author of *The Serial Killer Files*.

***INDELIBLE*, Karin Slaughter, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95**

An officer is shot point-blank in the Grant Country police station and sheriff Jeffrey Tolliver is wounded, setting off a hostage situation with medical examiner Sara Linton at the center. This series has added complications for the cast of characters. Sara Linton is the ex-wife of Jeffrey Tolliver, and Lena Adams, who has been reinstated on the police force in this outing, has had all sorts of problems in the past. It makes for gripping reading.

## FIRST MYSTERIES

***RIFT ZONE*, Raelynn Hillhouse, Forge. \$24.95.**

Faith Whitney has searched for her father all her life. He was a Communist Party hero who left her missionary mother a quarter century ago and now the Stasi – East Germany's secret police – make her an offer. If she will smuggle for them into Moscow, they will deliver her father, alive and well. And if she doesn't...

***THE LONGEST NIGHT*, Gregg Keizer, Putnam. \$25.95**

Set in World War II, the Resistance movement in Europe needs muscle and money to intercept a train carrying Dutch Jews to their death. Back in the States, Meyer Lansky is looking for an opportunity to get Leonard "Mouse" Weiss out of town fast after a botched

hit. What better way for Mouse to atone than to help the Resistance. He is packed off to Europe with simple instructions from Lansky: Do not screw this one up.

***FALLING OFF AIR*, Catherine Sampson, Mysterious Press. \$22.95.**

Robin Ballantyne, single mother, is putting her children to bed when she thinks she hears an argument outside. Suddenly a body falls past the window and Robin rushes outside to find her neighbor Paula Carmichael dead on the ground. Although they were not acquainted, the police find Robin's name mentioned frequently in the dead woman's diary. Robin discovers that her ex-boyfriend was making a documentary about activist Carmichael, but before she can ask him about it he's killed by a hit-and-run driver – who is driving Robin's car! Don't you love this?

***DIRTY SALLY*, Michael Simon, Viking. \$23.95**

Police detective Dan Reles is a member of Austin's homicide unit, the department's only Yankee and its only Jew. Still reeling from his partner's recent death, Reles is under scrutiny from internal affairs for his erratic behavior. When a prostitute is found brutally murdered and the bodies start piling up, Reles must track down the culprit, even though the trail appears to lead all the way up Austin's wealthy elite. Excellent dark debut.

## NON-MYSTERIES OF NOTE

***STRANGE BUT TRUE*, John Searles, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95**

After a fall from his New York City apartment, Philip Chase returns home to live with his mother who has never fully accepted the death of her younger son, Ronnie. Then Melissa Moody, Ronnie's former girlfriend, turns up with the news that she's pregnant. And the baby is Ronnie's. Could be a mystery I suppose, but the very talented Searle is more likely to be writing about family. His first book, *Boy Still Missing*, was just terrific and this is getting some very positive attention.

## NEWS FROM THE UK

***THE GOD OF CHAOS*, Tom Bradby, Bantam.**

Historical thriller set in Cairo in 1942, where a New York cop is investigating the murder of a senior British army officer.

***THE THIRD WOMAN*, Mark Burnell, HarperCollins.**

Have you been following the thrilling adventures of Stephanie Patrick, also known as Petra? If so, rejoice!

**THE PALACE TIGER, Barbara Cleverly, Constable.**

A new adventure for Scotland Yard detective, Joe Sandilands. India, 1922, and in the State of Raipur a man-eating tiger is terrorizing the northern villages. The Maharajah is also dying, and the succession seems unclear.

**ASSASSINS OF ISIS, Paul Doherty, Headline.**

Latest in the Egyptian series.

**TEARS OF THE DRAGON, Paula Gosling, Allison & Busby.**

In Prohibition Chicago, Elodie Brown becomes involved with the Chinese Mafia and missing jade.

**WEB OF DECEIT, Glen Meade, Hodder & Stoughton.**

New York attorney Jennifer March sets out for Europe when the body of her missing father is discovered frozen into a remote glacier in the Swiss Alps.

**MURDER IN TRIESTE, Michael Pearce, Constable.**

The first in a new series introducing Seymour of Special Branch, and set in the British Embassies and Consulates of Europe in the early 1900s.

**WIDOW'S PIQUE, Marilyn Todd, Severn House.**

The latest adventure of Claudia, Roman sleuth and glamorous heroine.

## THIS AND THAT

Starting in September, a new line of paperback crime novels will be available at your favorite bookstore. **Hard Case Crime** will be publishing Pulp classics, many of which have not been available for decades. Hardboiled crime fiction ranging from lost noir masterpieces to new novels by today's best-selling writers will be repackaged with stunning original cover art in the pulp style. The first six titles are:

*Grifter's Game* – Lawrence Block

*Fade to Blonde* – Max Phillips

*Top of the Heap* – Erle Stanley Gardner

*Little Girl Lost* – Richard Aleas

*Two for the Money* – Max Allan Collins

*The Confession* – Domenic Stansberry

Visit the website at [www.HardCaseCrime.com](http://www.HardCaseCrime.com)

## COLLECTING

It is always fun and worthwhile to collect UK first editions. Unlike their US counterparts, UK publishers tend to keep all their print runs rather small and manageable. A portion of that print run usually ends up in libraries, thus making the available copies almost instantly scarce.

Often, this doesn't matter, but in the case of **Jasper Fforde**, it most definitely does.

Fforde has written four books featuring his literary detective Thursday Next:

*The Eyre Affair*

*Lost in a Good Book*

*The Well of Lost Plots*

*Something Rotten*

In addition to those small print runs, Fforde himself has found a way to keep collector's collecting. Before each book is published, he produces a number of different postcards, each one depicting something relevant to that book. He carries these four-color postcards around with him to signings and pops them into every nth book, thus creating an instant demand for "the signed book with a postcard."

But he doesn't stop there. Among his postcards are a few, a very few, in black and white. These of course become even more collectible.

In addition, Fforde signs only his first name. In the majority of his books, he signs "Jasper" – upper and lower case. But every now and again he will sign only in caps. "JASPER"

What a showman!!!

In any case, if you collect the UK editions of Jasper Fforde's novels, they now break down as follows-most valuable first:

"JASPER" with a black and white postcard

"Jasper" with a black and white postcard

"JASPER" with a four-color postcard

"Jasper" with a four-color postcard

Black and white postcard with no signature (you can always catch him next time he tours)

Four color postcard with no signature (ditto)

"JASPER" with no postcard

"Jasper" with no postcard

Prices may or may not reflect these subtle differences, but fforewarned is fforearmed!

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

**Abramo, J.L., *Counting to Infinity***, St. Martin's Press. \$22.95. Jake Diamond's latest case begins when a shotgun-toting thug shows up at his office and threatens Jake's secretary.

**Andrews, Robert, *A Murder of Justice***, Putnam. \$24.95. When a vicious drug runner is gunned down in Washington D.C., few mourn. But it was a murder so cops Frank Kearney and Jose Phelps must investigate.

**Brown, Sandra, *Whitehot***, Simon and Schuster. \$25.95. The suicide of Sayre Lynch's brother compels her to return to Destiny, the one-industry Louisiana town that her father, Huff Hoyle, controls with an iron fist.

**Collins, Michael, *Lost Souls***, Viking. \$23.95. When a three-year-old is found dead, the victim of an apparent hit-and-run, a town finds itself torn between seeking justice and covering up for the suspect – a local high school football hero.

**Craft, Michael, *Bitch Slap***, St. Martin's Press. \$23.95. Journalist Mark Manning finds himself in the middle of a merger, between his newspaper and a paper company, which turns nasty when one of the parties slaps another.

**Curzon, Clare, *A Meeting of the Minds***, St. Martin's Press. \$22.95. Detective Superintendent Mike Yeadings investigates when the body of a woman is found in a parking lot in Henley-on-Thames.

**Daheim, Mary, *This Old Souse***, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Latest in the series of Bed-and-Breakfast mysteries.

**Douglas, Carole Nelson, *Cat in an Orange Twist***, Forge. \$24.95. Midnight Louie and Louise are on another case. I didn't know Louie had offspring! Where have I been?

**Dymmoch, Michal Allen, *The Fall***, St. Martin's Press. \$22.95. A professional photographer takes pictures of a car crash and finds herself embroiled in an investigation into a mob hit.

**Eggleton, Clive, *Assassination Day***, St. Martin's Press. \$24.95. A London literary agent is murdered before he can send out the novelized memoir of a former SIS agent.

**Emerson, Earl, *Pyro***, Ballantine. \$24.95. Seattle is in the grip of an arsonist and Lt. Paul Wollf of the Station Six's ladder truck sees a pattern: the fires are being set closer and closer to Station Six.

**Ferrigno, Robert, *The Wake-Up***, Pantheon. \$23.95. Frank Thorpe sees a young boy knocked out of the way by an arrogant businessman at LAX and decides to teach the guy a lesson.

**Gerritsen, Tess, *Body Double***, Ballantine. \$24.95. Boston medical examiner Maura Isles returns home to find a dead woman slumped in a car in her driveway. The murder victim is her mirror image!

**Graham, Caroline, *A Ghost in the Machine***, St. Martin's Press. \$25.95. A body is found near a gruesome medieval torture device, and someone in the tiny village of Forbes Abbot set the device in motion.

**Grippando, James, *Hear No Evil***, HarperCollins. \$23.95. Miami attorney Jack Swyteck is in the most explosive criminal trial of his career, a case that starts with murder on a military base and concludes with a shocking surprise.

**Hambly, Barbara, *Dead Water***, Bantam. \$25.00. Benjamin January sets out on a steamboat ride that becomes an inescapable passage to death and murder.

**Hooper, Kay, *Hunting Fear***, Bantam. \$25.00. The first in Hooper's latest trilogy (the "Fear" trilogy? The "Hunting" trilogy?) featuring FBI agent Noah Bishop and his elite Special Crimes Unit.

**Hurwitz, Gregg, *The Program***, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. Tim Rackley is assigned to retrieve Lelah Henning, the daughter of powerful Hollywood producer, who is in a mind-control cult. I haven't read this yet, but I read the first chapter and it is a jaw dropper!

**Jance, J.A., *Day of the Dead***, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Told that they are traveling to adoptive families in southern Arizona, young girls are being abducted from an orphanage in Mexico. But the fate that awaits them is truly terrifying.

**Jones, Solomon, *Ride or Die***, St. Martin's Press. \$19.95. Keisha is the young daughter of an activist pastor. Jamal is the neighborhood crack dealer. They are in love. (Romeo and Juliet? West Side Story?)

**Stephen King, *The Dark Tower VI: Song of Susannah***, Scribner. \$30.00. This is the penultimate book in the Dark Tower opus and it's already out there – in your bookstore and on the bestseller lists.

**Klein, Daniel, *Such Vicious Minds***, St. Martin's Press. \$22.95. Elvis Presley is once again in the building as he takes on his fourth case. Colonel Tom Parker has been arrested for murder.

**Markaris, Petros, *Deadline in Athens***, Atlantic Monthly. \$23.00. As TV journalist Janna is about to go on the air with some sensational news, she is killed. Inspector Haritos, junta-trained homicide squad chief, investigates.

**Maron, Margaret, *High Country Fall***, Mysterious Press. \$24.00. Judge Deborah Knott takes the bench in Cedar Gap for a week where the summer residents are packing up their homes to return to Florida. But one of them won't be going home. Nor will Deborah unless she can track down the killer.

**Marston, Edward, *The Counterfeit Crank***, St. Martin's Press. \$23.95. An Elizabethan Theater Mystery featuring Nicholas Bracewell.

**Massey, Sujata, *The Pearl Diver***, HarperCollins. \$23.95. Antiques dealer and sometime sleuth Rei Shimura moves to Washington, D.C. where she's soon involved in a search for two missing women.

**Miller, Linda Lael, *Never Look Back***, Atria Books. \$24.00. Clare Westbrook, attorney, is sassy and homicide detective Tony Sonterra is sexy. I guess this comes under the heading "romantic suspense."

**Moody, Skye Kathleen, *The Good Diamond***, St. Martin's Press. \$24.95. US Fish and Wildlife Agent Venus Diamond tracks a stolen gem across Canada and the US.

**Palmer, Michael, *The Society***, Bantam. \$25.00. A remorseless killer is waging a war of vengeance through the serial murders of managed-care executives. Rookie Detective Patty Moriarty thinks surgeon Will Grant is involved in the killings.

**Smolens, John, *Fire Point***, Shayne Areheart Books. \$22.00. Suspense tale set in rural Michigan by the author of *Cold*.

**Tanenbaum, Robert K., *Hoax***, Atria Books. \$25.95. New York District Attorney Butch Karp goes head-to-head with a crooked wannabe mayor, a rap star, and corrupt priests.

**Tope, Rebecca, *The Sting of Death***, St. Martin's Press. \$23.95. A series of mysterious killings in the quiet rural area of East Devon are investigated by Detective Sergeant Dan Cooper and undertaker/amateur Detective Drew Slocombe.

**Wait, Lea, *Shadows on the Ivy***, Scribner. \$24.00. Antique print dealer and professor Maggie Summer sets out to uncover the truth about two students, both single parents, found poisoned in their dormitory.

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