

BOOKAHOLIC

For the Mystery Addict

February 2005

Vol. 3, No. 3

Several of you have asked that I publish a list of upcoming books so that you know when you can expect a book from your favorite authors. This request poses a number of problems, not the least of which is that I don't know who your favorite authors are (and please, don't tell me). But I understand your need to know. I carry around a spiral bound notebook in which are listed all the books, old and new, that I am looking for, and I have seen several similar notebooks emerge when I have talked to you in person.

So here's what I'll do. Since this 'zine is all about *moi* and what I like, I will list a very limited number of books that I am excited about in each issue and hope that these titles will excite you too.

As for finding a more comprehensive list of forthcoming titles, the internet (or internets as our President would have it) can be invaluable. Publishers have websites and so do many bookstores. Bookstores – not You Know Who, that Valdemort of bookstores, but truly wonderful, independent bookstores – also have staff members who know what's coming out and when.

Sally Owen

WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

NOCTURNES, John Connolly, Hodder & Stoughton

I was going to wait until the US edition was published before reading and reviewing this title, but I couldn't. The US edition, I understand, is going to be a paperback original and that's a shame because I'm sure Connolly fans want a hardcover edition and this collection of short stories is wonderful. They are not for the faint of heart since Connolly has drawn on fairy tale traditions and writes about subjects that speak to our deepest fears: the child abducted by the creature who cannot be kept out of the nursery; the village with a history of witchcraft; the author who will do anything to get over writer's block; clowns; and the pond with 'something' at the bottom. The first story in this collection is called *The Cancer Cowboy Rides* and it may stay with me forever. The last is a novella and it features Charlie Parker, Connolly's troubled detective, who will be appearing in a new novel in the Spring.

THE GEOGRAPHER'S LIBRARY, Jon Fasman, Penguin Press. \$24.95

Paul Tomm is a reporter for the *Lincoln Carrier*, a small Connecticut newspaper. When he is asked to cover the death of a local named Jaan Puhapaev, he recognizes the name as that of a professor from his alma mater's history department. And when he arrives at the professor's house he sees something that the police don't, a bookcase which looks curiously empty in a very crowded library. Thus begins Tomm's adventure that leads him to an international smuggling ring that may hold the secret to eternal life. This fascinating story also tells of a twelfth-century Sicilian cat burglar who steals a sack of artifacts from the king's geographer's library, the tools of transmutation, which are soon scattered all over the world. Tom's investigation and the story of the geographer's lost tools and how they are bought, stolen, and killed for, soon intersect. This an obvious must-read for anyone who enjoyed *The Rule of Four* and *The Shadow of the Wind*. Not a fast read, this is a story to be savored.

THE ROSARY GIRLS, Richard Montanari, Ballantine Books. \$23.95

In Philadelphia a young girl is found dead, a rosary in her hands which are bolted together in an attitude of prayer. It is Detective Jessica Balzano's first day in Homicide and she is teamed with veteran Kevin Byrne who has a troubled past with the department. There will, of course, be more murders, all young Catholic girls and all in different poses with their rosary. It is up to Balzano and Byrne to figure out what those poses mean and to stop one of the most sadistic killers in, dare I call it literature? Yes I dare, because this story is well told, goes from zero to sixty and doesn't slow down for a single plot twist. The loose ends are all very neatly tied up by the end of the book and that, for me, was the only disappointment. I'm hoping it doesn't mean we shall not be seeing Balzano and Byrne working together again. My kind of book.

THE DEVIL'S WIND, Richard Rayner, HarperCollins. \$24.95

This excellent story is set in Las Vegas during the 1950s when the city was growing and, once a month, the Atomic Energy Commission exploded an A-bomb less than sixty miles away to the delight of partygoers on The Strip. Maurice Valentine is a successful architect whose life begins to slide out of control when beautiful Mallory Walker seduces him. Is it love, or does Mallory want to get closer to a powerful Vegas mobster? Rayner captures the mood of Vegas in the 50s and has written here an elegant period piece as well as an absorbing mystery set in McCarthy's America.

ON MY READING LIST

THE FORGOTTEN MAN, Robert Crais, Doubleday. \$24.95

Here at last is the delayed new novel from Crais. Elvis Cole receives a call from the LAPD. Just before he died, an injured man told them he was Elvis's father. Together with his partner Joe Pike and LAPD detective Carol Starkey, Elvis searches for the dead man's identity.

***THE NARCISSIST'S DAUGHTER*, Craig Holden, Simon & Schuster. \$24.00**

Syd Redding is a working class young man who fantasizes about destroying the Kesslers, his boss's rich family. Syd has no plan in mind when he goes to the Kessler's mansion in the best part of town, but when he meets the boss's daughter, he is soon caught up in the sexual machinations of this magnetic family. Set in Ohio in the 1970s. Holden's books are must-reads for me.

***BLOOD MEMORY*, Greg Iles, Scribner. \$24.95**

Forensic expert Catherine "Cat" Ferry begins having panic attacks and blackouts at murder scenes. Suspended from the task force on a series of murders in New Orleans, she returns to her hometown of Natchez to recover. When some of Cat's forensic chemicals accidentally spill on the floor of her childhood bedroom, two bloody footprints are revealed. Cat's father was murdered when she was eight years old but she always thought he was killed in the garden. This evidence suggests otherwise, and Cat begins to reconstruct the crime.

***FLESH WOUNDS*, John Lawton, Atlantic Monthly Press. \$23.00**

Chief Inspector Frederick Troy is back! An old flame of his, Kitty Stilton, is now wife of a presidential hopeful and is back in London, being tailed by a private eye who has been hired to make sure that her affair with a certain rat-pack crooner does not harm her husband's political career. Troy becomes involved when the private eye is murdered in a particularly gruesome way. But this isn't an isolated murder (or is it?): bodies are turning up around London dismembered in the same bizarre and horrifying way. As always, Lawton's story is peopled with real, as well as fictional, characters: Macmillan is Prime Minister and Labor leader Hugh Gaitskell expects to succeed him; Eisenhower is the retiring president and is in London making a farewell visit. I almost missed this one. It is being published in England as *Blue Rondo*..

***SHADOW FAMILY*, Miyuki Miyabe, Kodansha. \$22.95**

Police investigating the double murder of a middle-aged salary man and his college-aged girlfriend discover email correspondence linking the victim with members of an online fantasy family. Meanwhile the man's real-life teenage daughter is given police protection after complaining of being stalked. Desk Sergeant Takegami is partnered with his old friend Detective Chikako Ishizu as they try to unravel the fine line between fantasy and the harsh reality of murder. This is only the second novel by Japan's best-selling Miyabe to be translated into English. The first, *All She Was Worth*, was an award winner in Japan and a hit with mystery fans here.

***ROSA*, Jonathan Rabb, Crown. \$24.95**

For Kripo Detective-Inspector Nikolai Hoffner and his assistant, Hans Fichte, the recent socialist revolution is an inconvenience. They are busy investigating a series of bizarre murders in the slums of Berlin. Four women with no apparent connection have been found dead. When Hoffner discovers the corpse of Rosa Luxemburg, one of the leaders of the revolution, with the killer's signature marks across her back, he begins to wonder what kind of case he is investigating. Set in post-World War I Berlin.

FLESHMARKET ALLEY, Ian Rankin, Little Brown. \$22.95

Inspector John Rebus descends into Edinburgh's red-light district, a place where men are ruthless, women sell their bodies to make a buck, and refugees seeking asylum in Scotland are always in danger. The murder victim here is in the last group and Rebus must sort through the depths of the crime world to find out who and why. The title here has been changed from its UK title of *Fleshmarket Close*

LIGHT BEFORE DAY, Christopher Rice, Miramax Books. \$23.95

Adam Murphy, a young journalist who is abruptly fired from his magazine job, meets mystery novelist James Wilton and joins his personal staff. Adam learns that his former lover has vanished without a trace and that his disappearance matches several other recent missing-persons cases. Adam and Wilton join forces to determine whether a serial killer is preying upon young gay men in West Hollywood. A novel of revenge and sexual obsession.

STRANGE AFFAIR, Peter Robinson, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95

Inspector Alan Banks receives a call from his estranged brother, Roy, and heads for London where he discovers revelations about the brother he never knew. Meanwhile, Detective Annie Cabbot is looking into the death of a young woman and there's a connection linking the murder to someone close to Annie. The investigations will collide with terrifying results for Banks and Cabbot.

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER, Gerald Seymour, Overlook Press. \$24.95

In the vastness of Saudi Arabia, a caravan of fugitives is moving towards its goal. One man in that group is going to rejoin his family – the leadership of Al Qaeda – to be briefed on his next target. Searching for him are American and British experts in counter-terrorism who must find him, for if they fail to kill him he will disappear and re-emerge in a teeming western city with a suitcase bomb. Seymour is one of the masters of espionage fiction from the UK who, until now, has rarely been published in this country. He has written seventeen novels, and I hope Overlook publishes them all.

PRINCE OF FIRE, Daniel Silva, Putnam. \$25.95

Gabriel Allon, art restorer and spy for the Mossad, is back in Venice when an explosion in Rome leads to a disturbing revelation: the existence of a dossier, now in the hands of terrorists, that reveals Allon's secrets. Allon must stalk an elusive terrorist and retrieve that information because he is not the only one who is threatened with destruction. We all wondered what espionage writers would write about after the Cold War ended. Unfortunately, we got our answer but what a rich library the age of terror is producing!

VODKA, Boris Starling, Dutton. \$25.95

It is December 1991, and the Soviet Union has collapsed. In the power vacuum a war between brutal mafia gangs for control of Moscow is taking place. Alice Liddell, an American banker, arrives in the city to oversee the privatization of Russia's most famous vodka distillery – the Red October. A series of bizarre child killings only adds

complications, and terror, to a dangerous and volatile time. Starling wrote *Messiah* and *Storm* two of my favorite terrifying books.

***THE BLACK DAHLIA FILES*, Donald H. Wolfe, Regan Books. \$25.95**

In 1947, the dismembered body of Elizabeth Short was discovered in a vacant lot in Los Angeles. In the Homicide Division of the LAPD, the Black Dahlia case files still bear the stamp: OPEN and UNSOLVED. Now the author reveals the true story of the murder, a story that has been buried for years in those very files. Wolfe identifies the killer, reveals the motive, and shows that the LAPD covered up a case that involved a corrupt police department, famous Hollywood figures, and crooked politicians.

FIRST MYSTERIES

***DIE A LITTLE*, Megan Abbott, Simon & Schuster. \$23.00**

In 1954 Los Angeles, Lora King, a schoolteacher and her brother Bill, an investigator with the DA's office, stop at the scene of an accident and help a woman named Alice Steele. Bill quickly falls in love with and marries Alice, a Hollywood wardrobe assistant. Lora is suspicious of Alice's account of her past and starts to dig, uncovering a world of drugs, prostitution, and murder.

***IMPROBABLE*, Adam Fawer, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95**

David Caine is compulsive gambler plagued by epileptic seizures. Able to calculate the odds of any poker hand, Caine always wins more than he loses until he makes a costly miscalculation and suffers an intense seizure. He agrees to test an experimental medicine to control his seizures and discovers that he is able to foresee the consequences of his actions and the probability of various outcomes. But he's not the only one who knows his secret – powerful forces want him for their own.

***YEAR OF THE HYENAS*, Brad Geagley, Simon & Schuster. \$23.00**

Set in ancient Egypt, this introduces Semerket the "Clerk of Investigations and Secrets" who is retained to investigate what is considered an insignificant murder of a Theban princess. As Semerket delves deeper, he uncovers a web of corruption so vast that it threatens the life of the last great Pharaoh, Ramses III.

***DRIVE LIKE HELL*, Dallas Hudgens, Scribner. \$23.00**

Luke Farmer can hardly wait to turn sixteen so that he can get behind a wheel, but when he does, the first thing he does is "borrow" his neighbors car. When Luke is pulled over and found in possession of an air pistol, a ski mask, a stolen TV, and a bag of pot, the local magistrate vows to lock him up if he ever stands before her again. Luke moves in with his brother, Nick, and during the muggy summer that follows, Luke contends with a kleptomaniac girlfriend, a duffel bag full of cocaine, the joys of driving without a license, and the realization that he must save his family from themselves.

SUSPECT, Michael Robotham, Doubleday. \$24.95

Psychologist Joe O'Loughlin has recently been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and is dreading the deterioration of his body and mind. When the police ask for his help in solving the brutal murder of a woman they assume is a prostitute, Joe is horrified to recognize the victim as a nurse he once worked with and with whom he has a past, and he begins to suspect that one of his patients may be responsible.

NON MYSTERIES OF NOTE**A THREAD OF GRACE, Mary Doria Russell, Random House. \$25.95**

This historical novel by the author of *The Sparrow* and *Children of God* is set in 1943. The Blum family is among the thousands of Jewish refugees fleeing over the Alps towards Italy where they hope to be safe now that Italy has broken with Germany and made peace with the Allies. But the Blums discover that Italy is anything but peaceful: It is a battleground pitting against one another the Nazis, the Allies, resistance fighters, Jews in hiding, and other Italians just trying to survive. Russell sets her fictional characters amongst the real network of Italian citizens who saved the lives of forty-three thousand Jews during the final twenty months of the war.

NEWS FROM THE UK**AN HONOURABLE MURDER, Philip Gooden, Constable**

In 1604, years after the ill-fated Armada, the Spanish are in London negotiating a peace treaty with the English and Nick Revill's acting company is given a ceremonial role in the proceedings. But not everybody welcomes peace. In the Tower of London sits Sir Walter Raleigh and he has friends on the outside who may try to sabotage the negotiations.

THE CIRCLE, Peter Lovesey, Little Brown

Widower Bob Naylor joins a writer's circle hoping to get help with his poetry. When the publisher who addressed their last meeting is murdered, all the members of the group come under suspicion. Bob, who is the only member never to have met the dead man, is persuaded by the rest of the group to do some investigating of his own.

LONG SPOON LANE, Anne Perry, Headline

Anarchists explode two bombs on an East London street and Thomas Pitt of the Special Branch investigates, uncovering something far more disturbing and sinister than the acts of a few misguided idealists.

THIS AND THAT

In 1930, Alfred A. Knopf published the third novel by a promising writer of hard-boiled fiction. Seventy-five years later a special Vintage Crime/Black Lizard Edition of *The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett is available.

Also available in newly repackaged editions are:
Red Harvest, The Dain Curse, The Glass Key, The Thin Man, The Continental Op, The Big Knockover, Woman in the Dark, and Nightmare Town.

COLLECTING

The new Harry Potter will be published in July.

Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince by J.K. Rowling will be available in three formats from England:

1. Hardcover in children's dustjacket. This is the most popular of the formats.
2. Hardcover in adult dustjacket. I love the adult djs since the art is quite disturbing.
3. A Deluxe Edition. I have no idea what this is (although I've ordered it for myself). I'm assuming that this is a limited edition, possibly in boards with no dustjacket. I'm hoping it will be signed, but I have no word on that.

This title will also be published here but collectors should have the UK Edition as well as the US. J.K. Rowling is a Brit and her language is sometimes changed in the US editions since she uses expressions unfamiliar to American children.

BOOK WITH A BUZZ

Several years ago I became a fan of Dan Brown and wondered why his books never landed on the bestseller lists. Then I started reading in the trade papers about his, then, new novel, *The DaVinci Code*. What I surmised from what I read was that his publisher was going to put considerable resources behind that title and propel it into a bestseller. Publishers are not always successful, but, yes, Virginia, bestsellers are often made, not born.

Anyway. I'm seeing the same push directed at the new Michael Gruber book, *Valley of the Bones*. Bestsellerdom couldn't happen to a better book and I am hopeful, but if that title does land on the bestseller lists there will be a demand for his first novel, *Tropic of Night*, which introduced the main character Jimmy Paz. Collectors and speculators take note.

FUTURE RELEASES.

I hope at least one of your favorite authors is on this list:

APRIL: *Power of the Dog* – Don Winslow

MAY: *The Right Madness* – James Crumley (a C.W. Sughrue mystery)

MAY: *Hitler's Peace* – Philip Kerr (Kerr returns to wartime Germany, but not with Bernard Gunther)

MAY: *The Hot Kid* – Elmore Leonard (set in Oklahoma during the 1930s)

MAY: *Legends: A Novel of Dissimulation* – Robert Littell (latest in this great series of espionage novels)

MAY: *Broken Prey* – John Sandford

More next month ...

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Atherton, Nancy, *Aunt Dimity and the Next of Kin*, Viking. \$22.95. Aunt Dimity and Lori Shepherd embark on their tenth adventure.

Beaton, M.C., *Death of a Bore*, Mysterious Press. \$23.95. Hamish Macbeth must solve the seemingly motiveless murder of the most boring man in town.

Donohue, John, *Deshi*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Martial artist Connor Burke is drawn into a murder investigation involving a mysterious martial arts master.

Dorsey, Tim, *Torpedo Juice*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. Lovable serial killer Serge Storms is looking for a bride. Nothing will come between him and his soul mate...when he finally hunts her down.

Eversz, Robert, *Digging James Dean*, Simon & Schuster. \$22.00. Who is digging up the bodies of dead celebrities? Nina Zero investigates.

Haig, Brian, *The President's Assassin*, Warner Books. \$25.95. Army lawyer Sean Drummond has three days to prevent the assassination of the President.

Harper, Karen, *The Fyre Mirror*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Seventh mystery featuring Queen Elizabeth I.

Lehane, Con, *What Goes Around Comes Around*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Bartender Brian McNulty is only one step ahead of a killer in this second mystery featuring the bars of New York.

Lordon, Randy, *Son of a Gun*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. NYC private investigator Sydney Sloane investigates the shooting of an old friend.

Mortman, Doris, *Shades of Red*, St. Martin's Press. \$24.95. Someone is sabotaging Vera Hart's company, killing women through the cosmetics that bear Vera's name.

Nadel, Barbara, *The Ottoman Cage*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. When a brutal murder is uncovered, Istanbul's Inspector Cetin Ikmen investigates.

Nelscott, Kris, *War At Home*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. P.I. Smokey Dalton and his son Jimmy look for a kid who never showed up for his spring semester at Yale. Set in 1969.

Parker, Barbara, *Suspicion of Rage*, Dutton. \$24.95. Miami lawyers Gail Connor and Anthony Quintana are involved in a murder when they visit Cuba.

Satterthwait, Walter, *Cavalcade*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. In 1923 Pinkerton detectives are sent to Munich to find the would-be assassin of a politician called Adolf Hitler.

Tishy, Cecilia, *Now You See Her*, Mysterious Press. \$23.95. A suddenly psychic divorcee uses her newly acquired ability in this new series.

Walsh, Marcie & Malone, Michael, *The Killing Club*, Hyperion. \$19.95. Marcie Walsh is played by Kathy Brier on *One Life to Live* and this story will be integrated into a full year of episodes beginning in March. This will probably only make sense to soap opera fans, but if you're one of them, you know this is a big deal!

Willig, Lauren, *The Secret History of the Pink Carnation*, Dutton. \$19.95. Eloise Kelly, researching her dissertation on the Scarlet Pimpernel and the Purple Gentian discovers there's a spy the historians seem to have missed.

Sally Owen is a book dealer and was the manager of The Mysterious Bookshop in New York City from 1996 to 2002. You can reach her via e-mail: sallyowen@verizon.net.

Or via mail:

Sally Owen

1825 Foster Avenue, Apt. 2J

Brooklyn, NY 11230

Phone: 718-434-1705

Visit www.owenbookseller.com