

BOOKAHOLIC

For the Mystery Addict

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WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

MIDAS, Russell Andrews, Mysterious Press. \$24.95

Long Island cop Justin Westwood returns in this thriller which begins with a suicide bomber blowing up a chic restaurant in East Hampton. Within hours, a small plane taking off from the Hamptons airport crashes. It is ruled an accident but Westwood discovers that the two incidents are related and that when he starts to talk about his suspicions, people start to die. This is a page-turner of the highest order. Don't expect to put this down until you've finished and, if you are – like me – a conspiracy buff, you'll be in seventh heaven.

THE MAGDALEN MARTYRS, Ken Bruen, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$22.95

Magdalen was the name given to young women in Ireland who, in the eyes of that strictly Catholic society, had sinned. They had been raped by their fathers, tempted their sister's fiancé, or had merely glanced at a boy. For these sins they were taken away from their families and put in homes under the cruel and watchful eyes of nuns. It is hard to believe that the last of these homes were not shut down until 1992, and it is against this background that Bruen sets his latest mystery. Jack Taylor owes Bill Cassell a big favor and Cassell wants him to track down a woman who helped his mother escape from the notorious Magdalen laundry many years ago. I have given you about as much information on the Magdalens as Bruen does and I was disappointed that he does not go more deeply into this part of Ireland's history. Instead we are treated to Taylor's constant fight with himself involving booze and drugs and by the end of this story I felt that Bruen has become much too indulgent with his main character. Bruen is a powerful and generous writer (his books are full of quotes and asides about his fellow writers) but I would have liked him to have paid more attention to the background of his story. For a better story about the Magdalens, do rent the chilling movie *The Magdalene Sisters* starring Geraldine McEwan. And for the best of Bruen, read *The Guards* or the superb *London Boulevard*.

SATURDAY, Ian McEwan, Doubleday. \$26.00

It is Saturday February 15, 2003. Henry Perowne, a successful neurosurgeon, wakes early, looks out of his bedroom window and sees something that makes him very uneasy. It is post 9/11, the war against Iraq is imminent, and there is an air of pessimism in London. Hundreds of thousands of protestors will be taking to the streets that day, but that will not stop Henry from his usual Saturday schedule – a game of squash with a colleague, a visit to his ailing mother, grocery shopping, and then dinner with the family.

But on the way to his squash game, an incident with another car adds to Perowne's feeling of unease and, by the time the family is gathered, his fears seem about to be realized. McEwan is an exquisite writer and I see prizes in the future for this stunning novel.

***SLEEPER*, Gene Riehl, St. Martin's Press. \$22.95**

In *Quantico Rules*, Riehl introduced FBI agent Puller Monk, a man with a habit of taking chances both at and away from the gaming tables. Now Monk has something else on his mind: his father passed away six months ago and left him with a predisposition for Alzheimer's. So when he is asked by the NSA to go undercover and find a sleeper spy, he has no problem accepting an assignment which he thinks may be his last. The spy is a young woman, American by birth, who was stolen as a baby and raised by the North Koreans and I found this part of the story particularly fascinating. Excellent second outing for Puller Monk.

***THE MYSTERIES*, Lisa Tuttle, Bantam. \$21.00**

And now for something completely different. This charming book tells the story of Ian Kennedy who is a private investigator with an impressive track record for finding missing persons. But he has his work cut out for him when Laura Lensky asks him to find her daughter, Peri, who has been missing for more than two years. It is not just the search for Peri that makes this story so fascinating, it is also the fact that the author takes time out to tell us true stories of strange disappearances. These enduring legends make this a work of fantasy as well as mystery and an imaginative look at the folklore surrounding people who vanish without a trace.

ON MY READING LIST

***ALL THE FLOWERS ARE DYING*, Lawrence Sanders, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95**

Matthew Scudder returns for the sixteenth time. A man in Virginia is executed for three murders which he swears, in the face of irrefutable evidence, he did not commit. A psychologist, who believes the man, watches him die and then returns to New York City. Meanwhile, Scudder agrees to investigate the suspicious online lover of an acquaintance. It is a simple enough case until people start dying and it becomes clear that a vicious killer is at work. I'm assuming these two plot lines are connected.

***SEASON OF THE SNAKE*, Claire Davis, St. Martin's Press. \$23.95**

After the death of her first husband, Nance Able remarries and begins a new life in the West with Ned, a seemingly quiet school principal. Seemingly, because her new husband's secret proclivities are emerging and when Nance's young sister, Meredith, moves to town, Ned can no longer suppress the terrifying mysteries of his past. *Winter Range*, Davis's first book, was an astounding and heartbreaking piece of writing, so this I will not miss.

***THE SIGN OF THE BOOK*, John Dunning, Scribner. \$25.00**

Bookman Cliff Janeway is asked by his new partner and friend to visit the town of Paradise where a former close friend is in jail, accused of killing her husband. Janeway is not sure he wants to get involved. Then he discovers the books! The victim has a fabulous collection. Could they be a motive for murder? This is, I'm sure, filled with fascinating booklore.

***THE TEARS OF AUTUMN*, Charles McCarry, Overlook Press. \$24.95**

Paul Christopher, secret agent, believes he knows who arranged the assassination of John F. Kennedy and when he is ordered to desist from investigating, he resigns from the Agency and embarks on a journey that takes him from Paris to Rome, Zurich, the Congo, and Saigon. This novel, first published in 1975, has been out of print for many years. It is *the* JFK assassination novel and, as such, I'm delighted to see it back in print.

***COLD SERVICE*, Robert B. Parker, Putnam. \$24.95**

When Spenser's closest ally, Hawk, is injured and left for dead while protecting bookie Luther Gillespie, Spenser must rehabilitate his friend in body and soul while tracking the Ukrainian mob responsible for the hit. Getting to this well-connected group will require Spenser to employ some questionable techniques and even more questionable hired guns.

***DRAMA CITY*, George Pelecanos, Little Brown. \$24.95**

After eight years in prison on drug charges, Lorenzo Brown is back in the Washington DC neighborhood where he grew up. He's a Humane Society officer, policing animal abusers and protecting the abused. Then a young killer, working for the local drug boss, changes everything with one violent act.

***DETOUR*, James Siegel, Warner Books. \$23.95**

Paul and Joanna decide to adopt a child and arrange a trip to Colombia to bring home a baby girl, Joelle. Upon their arrival they are taken prisoner and handed an ultimatum: Either Paul transports millions in cocaine to the US or his wife and daughter will be killed. The decision is obvious. The outcome is not since this is the man who wrote *Derailed*, the mind-bending plot twister of last year.

FIRST MYSTERIES

***AS SIMPLE AS SNOW*, Gregory Galloway, Putnam. \$23.95**

The narrator of this debut tells of Anastasia (Anna) Cayne, a high schooler fascinated with riddles and mind games. He is obsessed with her and when she disappears he begins to retrace their past five months together. Soon the fragments come together revealing surprises about friends, family, and especially about Anna Cayne.

CAST OF SHADOWS, Kevin Guilfoile, Knopf. \$24.95

Davis Moore is a fertility doctor in Chicago specializing in reproductive cloning. When his daughter is raped and murdered and Moore finds the killer's DNA, he decides to clone his daughter's killer. Justin Finn, at three, looks like any other child, but he will grow up to be a perfect gene replica of a brutal killer. Where does identity reside? Where does evil come from?

SPEAK SOFTLY SHE CAN HEAR YOU, Pam Lewis, Simon & Schuster. \$23.00

Carole, a shy student at an exclusive New York City prep school, is persuaded by the worldly Naomi to go to Vermont for the weekend with Eddie in order to lose their virginity before graduation. A stranger appears from the woods and before the night is over, a life is taken, a body is buried and a secret is sealed, setting in motion a series of events that will have far-reaching consequences.

MOST WANTED, Michele Martinez, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95

Melanie Vargas is a federal prosecutor with a rising career in the law and a chaotic personal life. When a wealthy former fellow prosecutor is murdered, Melanie knows that with her complicated home life, she should stay away from this high profile case, but it's a career maker and she signs on. Soon she is in a race for her life against a sadistic killer who always seems to be one step ahead of her.

NON MYSTERIES OF NOTE

SMALL CRIMES IN AN AGE OF ABUNDANCE, Matthew Kneale, Doubleday. \$22.00

Twelve stories that follow ordinary people as they travel in foreign lands. An English family leaves their tour group in China to travel alone; a respectable lawyer chances upon a stash of cocaine and realizes that it offers wealth and status; and a salesman in Africa is caught up in a riot that turns his life upside down. Kneale won the Whitbread Prize for his novel *English Passengers*.

NEWS FROM THE UK

GARDENS OF THE DEAD, William Brodrick, Little Brown

Ten years ago when Anselm announced to his colleagues that he was going to become a monk, Elizabeth Glendinning QC entrusted him with a key to a safe deposit box. Now, ten years later, she is dead, and Father Anselm opens the box and discovers some disturbing information. By the author of *The Sixth Lamentation*.

***THE FOOD DETECTIVE*, Judith Cutler, Allison & Busby**

Josie Welford moves to an idyllic West Country village and becomes the licensee of the local pub, but when she changed her local suppliers, odd things begin to happen.

***A CURSED INHERITANCE*, Kate Ellis, Piatkus**

Sixteenth Century Potwoolstan Hall, a New Age healing center, is reputed to be cursed, and it appears that inheritance of evil lives on.

***THREE MONKEYS*, Marianne MacDonald, Severn House**

Featuring Dido Hoare, antiquarian book seller.

***THE BURGUNDIAN'S TALE*, Kate Sedley, Severn House**

Roger the Chapman is summoned to London by Richard, Duke of Gloucester, brother of Edward IV. Richard wants his help with an investigation into the murder of the son of one the ladies-in-waiting to Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy.

***FOOD FOR THE FISHES*, David Wishart, Hodder & Stoughton**

Featuring sleuth Marcus Corvinus.

THIS AND THAT

The Edgar Nominations

I always hope that some of my favorite reads of the year will be recognized with an award, but, as usual, it is not to be. In fact I only read a couple of the nominees in the following three categories. But that won't stop me from casting my votes.

BEST NOVEL by an American Author

Evan's Gate – Rhys Bowen

By A Spider's Thread – Laura Lippman

Remembering Sarah – Chris Mooney

California Girl – T. Jefferson Parker

Out of the Deep I Cry – Julia Spencer-Fleming

Odds are that a female author will pick up the award. I think those odds lean towards Laura Lippman. Her work is consistently nominated and she has won several awards already – just not the Edgar.

FIRST MYSTERY

Little Girl Lost – Richard Aleas

Relative Danger – Charles Benoit

Cloud Atlas – Liam Callanan

Tonight I Said Goodbye – Michael Koryta

Country of Origin – Don Lee

Bahamarama – Bob Morris

Don Lee's book was the only book I read in this category so this becomes an automatic favorite for me. I have also heard excellent things about Liam Callanan's book.

If I had my druthers Kate Atkinson would also be nominated for Best Novel and Frank Devlin Don Lee on the First Mystery list.

PAPERBACK ORIGINAL***The Librarian – Larry Beinhart******Into the Web – Thomas H. Cook******Dead Men Up Never – Ron Faust******Twelve-Step Fandango – Chis Haslam******The Confession – Domenic Stansberry***

Again, I have only read one book on the list, but I don't expect *The Librarian* to win. I expect it to be between Thomas H. Cook and Domenic Stansberry. Isn't it time Stansberry received an Edgar?

Remember that I am invariably wrong.

The complete list of nominations can be found on the website of The Mystery Writers of America: www.mysterywriters.org/index.htm

News from Vintage Publishing:

Sideswipe by **Charles Willeford** is being reissued with an Introduction by Lawrence Block. \$12.00 trade paperback.

COLLECTING

I need some help solving this mystery:

ALL SHE WAS WORTH by **Miyuke Miyabe** was published in the US in 1997 by Kodansha. I have what I consider to be a first edition, but it has been pointed out to me that there is a number missing in the sequence on the copyright page. It looks like this:

96 97 98 99 1098765321

The number 4 is missing, but there is no space between numbers. I know Kodansha drops the numbers when reprinting, but this particular configuration doesn't seem to make sense.

A colleague who works in the production department of a publishing company thinks this is a production mistake: the numbers were not set properly and nobody caught it. I have also put this problem into the hands of Robin Smiley from *Firsts Magazine* who will look into it.

I'm wondering if any of you have a first edition of this title and can check your copy? Or if you have the solution to this very odd mystery?

Thanks.

FUTURE RELEASES

MAY: *Last Call for Blackford Oakes* – **William F. Buckley Jr.** (espionage)

MAY: *Bangkok Tattoo* – **John Burdett** (sequel to *Bangkok 8*)

MAY: *North* – **Frederick Busch**

MAY: *The Italian Secretary* – **Caleb Carr** (this one's Sherlockian)

MAY: *The Innocent* – **Harlan Coben**

MAY: *Alibi* – **Joseph Kanon** (revenge and murder set in Venice in 1946)

MAY: *Glad News of the Natural World* – **T.R. Pearson** (sequel to *A Short History of a Small Place*)

JUNE: *Appaloosa* - **Robert B. Parker** (a Western)

JUNE: *The Twelfth Card* - **Jeffery Deaver** (Lincoln Rhyme)

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Fiction

Akunin, Boris, *The Turkish Gambit*, Random House. \$22.95. Erast Fandorin returns in an adventure set in 1877 as war rages between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.

Andrews, Donna, *Owls Well that Ends Well*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$21.95. Meg and Michael hold a giant lawn sale when they buy a dilapidated mansion. A murdered body is found in the barn.

Ballard, Mignon F., *Too Late For Angels*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Augusta Goodnight, heavenly sleuth and guardian angel, investigates murder in a small town in South Carolina.

Barron, Stephanie, *Jane and His Lordship's Legacy*, Bantam. \$24.00. Featuring novelist and occasional sleuth Jane Austen.

Bell, Nancy, *Death Splits a Hair*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$22.95. The second Judge Jackson Crain mystery.

Bissell, Sallie, *Legacy of Masks*, Bantam. \$23.00. Ex-Atlanta DA Mary Crow returns to North Carolina to open her own practice where her first case is defending a Cherokee accused of killing the local prom queen.

- Bloom, Elizabeth, *See Isabelle Run***, Mysterious Press. \$22.95. Isabelle Leonard, recently jilted, joins the staff of a magazine run by lifestyle maven Becky Belden. But Isabelle discovers that nearly a dozen employees have met mysterious deaths.
- Bowen, Rhys, *In Like Flynn***, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Private Investigator Molly Murphy goes undercover inside the house of a senator whose wife has become the latest devotee of a pair of spiritualists who the police are sure are frauds. Set in 1902.
- Clark, Carol Higgins, *Burned***, Scribner. \$23.00. Regan Reilly arrives in Hawaii to be greeted with the news that the body of a young woman has been discovered floating in the waters off Waikiki.
- Compton, Jodi, *Sympathy Between Humans***, Delacorte. \$22.00. Follow up to *The 37th Hour* featuring Detective Sarah Pribek.
- Craig, Peter, *Blood Father***, Hyperion. \$21.95. Young woman on the run turns to her father who has a violent past of his own.
- Farmer, Jerrilyn, *The Flaming Luau of Death***, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Madeline Bean throws a bachelorette luau for her soon-to-be-wed assistant Holly. The moonlight! The Hula lessons! The grilled shrimp! The dead man floating in the surf!
- Frey, Stephen, *The Chairman***, Ballantine. \$21.95. A story of money and murder set in the perilous world of private equity, featuring Christian Gillette.
- Friedman, Kinky, *Ten Little New Yorkers***, Simon & Schuster. \$24.00. A murderer is killing off unsuspecting Manhattan men and the prime suspect is the Kinkster!
- Garwood, Julie, *Slow Burn***, Ballantine. \$25.95. A woman returns to her tiny hometown where she finds herself implicated in a decades-old murder.
- George, Elizabeth, *With No One as Witness***, HarperCollins. \$26.95. Acting Superintendent Thomas Lynley and his colleagues track a serial killer.
- Gischler, Victor, *Suicide Squeeze***, Delacorte. \$23.00. Repo man, Connor Samson, is pitted against a billionaire collector.
- Holmes, Rupert, *Swing***, Random House. \$24.95. An historical thriller with a twist – a musical murder mystery accompanied by a CD of original music within which crucial clues can be found.
- Jance, J.A., *Sentenced To Die***, Wm. Morrow. \$21.95. Available in hardcover for the first time, the first three books in the J.P. Beaumont series: *Until Proven Guilty*, *Injustice For All*, *Trial By Fury*.
- Johansen, Iris, *Countdown***, Bantam. \$25.00. Forensics thriller featuring Eve Duncan.
- Johnston, Dorothy, *The Trojan Dog***, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. When a powerful bureaucrat is accused of theft and computer fraud, Sandra Mahoney is convinced that the charge is false.
- Klavan, Laurence, *The Shooting Script***, Ballantine. \$23.95. Roy Milano, movie detective, once again stumbles into a murder case – this one centering on a copy of Jerry Lewis's uncompleted film *The Day the Clown Cried*, shot in Sweden in 1972. For the film buff.
- Macpherson, Rett, *Thicker Than Water***, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$22.95. A mysterious postcard from the late 1920s prompts Missouri genealogist Torie O'Shea to delve into a decades' old vendetta.
- Margolin, Phillip, *Lost Lake***, HarperCollins. \$25.95. A young tabloid reporter's "paranoid" theories just might be true.

Parry, Owen, *Rebels of Babylon*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. Civil War detective Abel Jones investigates murder and theft in New Orleans.

Perry, Anne, *Long Spoon Lane*, Ballantine. \$25.95. A Victorian mystery featuring Thomas Pitt.

Robb, J.D., *Immortal In Death*, Putnam. \$19.95. The third Eve Dallas novel, set in New York City in 2058, is now in a special hardcover edition.

Swain, James, *Mr. Lucky*, Ballantine. \$19.95. Loser Ricky Smith dives off his balcony during a fire in his Las Vegas hotel and survives. Suddenly a loser is miraculously transformed into a major-player winner!

Tremayne, Peter, *Badger's Moon*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. In 667 AD in the kingdom of Muman in the land of Ireland, a series of shocking murders terrorizes the villagers near the Abbey of Finbarr. Plus ca change....

Weber, Richard, *Miss Gazillions*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Celeste runs away from a traffic accident that kills her companions – the Secretary of the Treasury, a disgraced former U.S. Attorney General and a Colombian cocaine billionaire.

White, Randy Wayne, *Dead of Night*, Putnam. \$24.95. When Doc Ford checks up on the reclusive brother of an old friend, he comes upon one of the worst scenes he has ever encountered.

White, Stephen, *Missing Persons*, Dutton. \$25.95. Psychologist Alan Gregory investigates the death of a colleague.

Non Fiction

Chandler, Charlotte, *It's Only A Movie*, Simon & Schuster. \$26.00. The author spent many hours with Alfred Hitchcock discussing his career and introduces us to the real Hitchcock.

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