

BOOKAHOLIC

For the Mystery Addict

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SUMMER READING ISSUE

I'm back from Italy! Great history! Great food! Great wine!

Here's the bumper *Summer Reading Issue* – books published in May and June. There's something for everybody here!

WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

***THE THIRD SECRET*, Steve Berry, Ballantine. \$24.95**

This was the perfect book to take with me to Rome as the conclave to elect the new Pope began. In 1917 the Virgin Mary appeared to three children from Fatima, Portugal, and entrusted them with three secrets. The first two were known almost immediately, but it wasn't until 2000 that Pope John Paul II publicized the third secret. Berry sets this unput-downable novel against this factual background. Father Colin Michener is Secretary to Pope Clement XV, who night after night visits the Vatican's secret archive, consumed with the secrets of Fatima. Alberto Cardinal Valendrea, the Vatican's Secretary of State who wants to be the next Pontiff, is intrigued by this obsession. When a Romanian priest connected with the secrets is murdered, Valendrea sees an opportunity to take down Clement. This is a book to be read in a sitting. The secret, when it is revealed, stretched my ability to suspend belief, but I quibble. If you want to know more about how the Vatican and the Catholic Church work in the twentieth century, pick this up.

***BLACK FLY SEASON*, Giles Blunt, Putnam. \$25.95**

A woman stumbles into a tavern in Algonquin Bay covered in black fly bites. She seems drunk or high as she moves from table to table. When the local cops remove her from the bar they find that she is neither. She has a bullet in her brain and no memory of how it got there or who she is. Homicide detectives John Cardinal and Lisa Delorme are on the case. If someone tried to kill her once, they will probably try again, and not knowing her identity is going to make protecting her very difficult. This is one of the best entries in what is becoming one of my all-time favorite series. The writing is superb and Cardinal and Delorme are complex and very human characters. This follows *Forty Words for Sorrow* and *The Delicate Storm*.

BANGKOK TATTOO, John Burdett, Knopf. \$24.00

Police detective Sonchai Jitpleecheep of the Royal Thai Police became one of my favorite cops when I read *Bangkok 8* so I was delighted to receive the follow-up. The action begins at The Old Man's Club, which caters to a clientele who rely on the wonders of Viagra, jointly owned by Sonchai's mother and his boss, Police Colonel Vikorn. When a mutilated body is found and the murderer appears to be Chanya, one of the best working girls at The Club, it's bad. When it turns out the victim was CIA, it gets worse. To protect his club, Vikorn concocts a cover-up that involves Al Qaeda and Thailand's southern border where, since 9/11, the CIA has been an obvious covert presence. This series is smart, atmospheric and extraordinarily funny. I hope Burdett keeps supplying us with stories about Sonchai Jitpleecheep and a culture that to most Westerners is as alien as a Moonscape.

NORTH, Frederick Busch, W.W. Norton. \$24.95

This sequel to *Girls* brings back Jack who, in that novel, was a security guard in a college town in upstate New York. Since then, we learn, his wife has died and Jack is working on the Carolina coast, haunted by her death and that of his child. A New York lawyer hires him to find her missing nephew, who was last seen in the vicinity of Jack's hometown. Jack returns to that area and becomes involved with a troubled woman. Busch is one of our finer writers, and this is a meditation on memory and obsession as well as a superb mystery.

THE ITALIAN SECRETARY, Caleb Carr, Carroll & Graf. \$23.95

The author of *The Alienist* now turns his attention to Sherlock Holmes. Holmes and Watson are summoned to the aid of Queen Victoria at her home in Scotland by a telegram from Mycroft. Nearly killed themselves on the royal train, they arrive to learn of the brutal killings of two of the Queen's servants, an architect and his foreman, who were working on the renovation of the Royal Palace of Holyrood in Edinburgh. This story was commissioned by and written with the approval of the estate of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It is a well-written Sherlockian mystery and adventure. However, I find myself enjoying those stories which take the character of Sherlock Holmes and tweak it. Both *The Final Solution* by **Michael Chabon** and *A Slight Trick of the Mind* by **Mitch Cullin** do this in an extraordinary way, and I find those books far more satisfying. But I'm no Sherlockian!

RED LEAVES, Thomas H. Cook, Harcourt. \$23.00

Eric Moore has a happy stable life in a quiet town, or he did until the night his teenage son, Keith, babysat Amy Giordano, the eight-year-old daughter of a neighbor. The next morning Amy is missing and Keith is the chief suspect. Eric becomes one of those parents he's seen on television professing his child's innocence. But as he tries to protect Keith from the media and the town's suspicions, he begins to wonder if his son really is innocent. This is Cook at his darkest best and you know that means this book packs a wallop.

THE RIGHT MADNESS, James Crumley, Viking. \$24.95

What a pleasure to have Montana private eye C.W. Sughrue back with us. Sughrue is still fueled by alcohol and drugs and, despite his age, struggling with lurid sexual entanglements. But he's also still a great, and funny, PI. Will MacKinderick, psychiatrist, is Sughrue's close friend and when some of his confidential files are stolen, he asks the PI to help him track them down since he suspects that one of his patients is the thief. Sughrue is reluctant but the \$20,000 retainer helps. When the suspected patients start dying violent and unnatural deaths, Sughrue finds himself only just ahead of the madness unfolding around him. This is Crumley in top form.

DARK HARBOR, David Hosp, Warner Books. \$21.95

Scott Finn is a rising star in one of Boston's most elite law firms. But when the body of his colleague, and former lover, is found floating in Boston Harbor – her heart surgically removed from her chest – his world starts to fall apart. Natalie appears to be the seventh victim of "Little Jack," the Jack-the-Ripper like killer terrorizing Boston. Police Detective Linda Flaherty isn't so sure Jack's the killer, especially when Finn inherits Natalie's high-profile assignment involving a terrorist train bombing. This is a terrific first novel which moves along at a gallop. The story twists and turns until a highly satisfying denouement.

THE STOLEN HEART, Lauren Kelly, Ecco. \$23.95

Sixteen years ago, a fifth-grade classmate of Merilee Graf was abducted from a park and never found. Now Merilee is back in Mount Olive keeping vigil at the bedside of her dying father. Merilee is haunted by that abduction and when her father dies she becomes involved with two very different men, one of whom is the older brother of her missing classmate. Kelly – who is, as I'm sure you know, **Joyce Carol Oates** – has created here a woman I found quite difficult to like. Oates has a knack for doing that. Merilee's story did, however, keep me turning those pages. This second novel under the Kelly pseudonym is not as satisfying as the first, *Take Me, Take Me With You*, but both books explore the darker side of women's sexual nature and both left me feeling uncomfortable. That's a compliment.

THE HISTORIAN, Elizabeth Kostova, Little Brown. \$25.95

A young motherless girl lives with her father in Amsterdam. He is a lecturer and human rights advocate who sometimes takes his daughter with him on his work-related travels across Europe. During those travels, he begins a story about his time at Oxford University when his professor, Bartholomew Rossi, disappeared. Before he can finish the story, he leaves a message for her telling her that he must try to find her mother. He has also written down the rest of the story for her. She immediately sets out after him and these two stories, as well as that of the missing professor, unfold for the reader. And what is this epic journey about? None other than Vlad the Impaler, the historical Dracula. Could it be that Vlad or Dracula still lives in the modern world? Read this book! As well as incredible research on Vlad the Impaler, this book contains a fascinating history of the Byzantine world, the Ottoman Empire, Romania, Transylvania, Wallachia, during the 15th Century and under Communist rule. This is a massive read, in

all senses of that word. 672 pages of some of the best history and mystery I've read in a long time. It is surely going to be the one of the hot books of the year.

ON MY READING LIST

***LAST CALL FOR BLACKFORD OAKES*, William F. Buckley Jr., Harcourt. \$25.00**

Against the backdrop of the Cold War, Blackford Oakes crosses paths with Kim Philby, the highest-ranking of those who defected to the Soviet Union. Oakes, a complex CIA agent, has been around for thirty years but Buckley's series has never attained the same popularity or received the kudos given to **Graham Greene** and **John Le Carre**. He really should be counted in that company

***ONE SHOT*, Lee Child, Delacorte. \$25.00.**

Six shots are fired and five people are dead. The perpetrator is immediately caught but the man in custody says he didn't do it. His only request is that the police call Jack Reacher. Reacher's arrival changes everything in a case that isn't what it seems. This title was published in the UK last month.

***THE INNOCENT*, Harlan Coben, Dutton. \$25.95**

Matt Hunter has just been released from prison after serving nine years for manslaughter in an accidental death. Things are looking up for Matt and his wife Olivia, who is now pregnant. Then things begin to unravel. A mysterious man who's been tailing Matt turns up dead. A nun who is not what she appears to be is murdered. And local and federal authorities focus on one suspect ... Matt. But Matt is not willing to lose everything for a second time.

***THE CLOSERS*, Michael Connelly, Little Brown. \$26.95**

In 1988 a 16-year-old girl disappeared from her home and was later found dead. At first, the death appeared to be a suicide; although clues were found that pointed to murder, nobody was ever charged. Detective Harry Bosch, now working with the LAPD on cold cases, gets the report of a new DNA match which makes the case hot again.

***THE BLACK ANGEL*, John Connolly, Atria Books. \$25.00**

I'm sorry I did not get around to reading this for a review. The Detective Charlie Parker Series is consistently wonderful and I'm hearing that this is the best in the series.

***NO WAY BACK*, Michael Crow, HarperCollins. \$25.95**

In his third outing, Luther Ewing, a half-Vietnamese, half-black Baltimore county cop, has been suspended from duty for six months because of a case gone bad. Luther goes undercover as Terrance Prentice, working for the CIA – something he swore he'd never do again. His job: guarding a South Korean businessman with ties to the U.S. government. This series is dark and bleak and I love it.

THE TWELFTH CARD, Jeffery Deaver, Simon & Schuster. \$25.00

Thompson Boyd appears to be a nondescript, innocuous man, but he's anything but. He is a killing machine, unfeeling and cunning, and he's after Geneva Settle, a high school girl from Harlem. It has to do with Geneva's term paper about her ancestor, Charles Singleton, a former slave. It is up to Lincoln Rhyme and Amelia Sachs to discover what is in that paper that casts a shadow on the present day and to stop Thompson Boyd.

SUN AND SHADOW, Ake Edwardson, Viking. \$23.95

Erik Winter is the youngest chief inspector in Sweden. He dresses well, he cooks, he likes jazz, and he is about to become a father. He also has a gruesome double murder on his hands: A couple entertains a stranger in their apartment in Goteborg and it is the last thing they do. As Winter searches for the missing party guest, the clues lead into the cult world of the gothic; when the investigation leads to a possible link between the murders and the police force, even friendly faces are not to be trusted. Ake Edwardson is one of Scandinavia's most successful crime writers. This has been translated into English by Henning Mankell's translator, Laurie Thompson.

KILLING RAIN, Barry Eisler, Putnam. \$24.95

John Rain, Japanese-American assassin, is employed by Mossad which needs someone who can remove "problems" in Asia. With his new partner, Dox, the ex-Marine sniper, he botches an assignment and turns what should have been a surgical hit into a massacre. Rain finds himself running from the Mossad and from the CIA. This is the fourth in a series which is picking up new fans with every outing.

THE WATER ROOM, Christopher Fowler, Bantam. \$24.00

An elderly woman is found dead inside her home, her lungs full of river water. London's Peculiar Crimes Unit is called in to search for a logical solution, but the property's next tenant is also plagued by mysterious damp patches and the sound of rushing water. The death toll climbs and Arthur Bryant and John May must track down a murderer with an extraordinary motive. This is the second Bryant & May mystery. If you haven't tried this series yet, do. Start with *The Dark House*.

LAST WITNESS, Jilliane Hoffman, Putnam. \$24.95

In Miami cops are dying while on patrol. Dominick Falconetti suspects there is a drug connection. C.J. Townsend, the state prosecutor who put Florida's last serial killer behind bars, begins to think that she knows more than Dominick about why these cops are being murdered. Hoffman is the author of last year's *Retribution*.

HITLER'S PEACE, Philip Kerr, Putnam. \$26.95

It is 1943 and Hitler knows that Germany cannot win the war. The unconditional surrender that FDR has demanded will leave Germany in ruins so Hitler puts out peace feelers. FDR and Stalin are willing to negotiate, but Churchill refuses. Willard Mayer, an OSS operative, is chosen by FDR to serve as his envoy but the key players in this drama are FDR, Stalin, Churchill, and Hitler as well as Himmler, Bormann, Molotov, and Schellenberg. It's great to see Kerr back in World War II Berlin.

LOCKED ROOMS, Laurie R. King, Bantam. \$24.00

1924 San Francisco is a boomtown. The great fire and earthquake of 1906 have cleared the way for a modern city. But the closer she gets to her hometown, the more troubling Mary Russell's dreams become. As Sherlock Holmes, her husband, tries to settle their affairs, a mysterious stranger appears who may be the only one who holds the key to the locked rooms that are haunting Mary's dreams. This is a great series even though I was devastated when Sherlock Holmes married!

NOTHING LIKE THE NIGHT, David Lawrence, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95

Detective Stella Mooney investigates the death of Janis Parker and the disappearance of her roommate Stephanie James. When Mooney discovers that the two women shared a boyfriend as well as an apartment, she thinks she has a likely suspect. But then another body is discovered. Lawrence introduced Mooney in *The Dead Sit Round in a Ring*, one of my favorite mysteries from last year.

THE HOT KID, Elmore Leonard, Wm. Morrow. \$25.95

Carl Webster, aged 21, is becoming the most famous Deputy U.S. Marshal in America. He shot and killed bank robber Emmet Long and now he's tracking Jack Belmont, son of an oil millionaire. True Detective writer Tony Antonelli is following the story and this one is full of hot cars, gun molls, speakeasies, and murder. Set in Oklahoma during the 1930s, this looks to be Leonard as we like him. Great!

THE RIVER HOUSE, Margaret Leroy, Little Brown. \$23.95

Ginnie Holmes, married with children, is having an exhilarating affair with Will. They meet at an abandoned boathouse, confident that they will never be found. But the boathouse has caught somebody else's eye, and when Ginnie is convinced she has seen a murderer just outside the window she must decide whether to come forward revealing the affair and destroying her family. These lands on my list because I loved Leroy's last book, *Postcards From Berlin*.

THE TORMENT OF OTHERS, Val McDermid, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95

Detective Chief Inspector Carol Jordan has returned to Bradfield after being viciously assaulted (see *The Last Temptation*) and is surprised to discover that clinical psychologist Dr. Tony Hill has taken up a post in the city's high security mental hospital. When a prostitute is murdered and the killing resembles a series of murders that took place a couple of years before, Jordan turns to Hill for help. Derek Tyler was tried and convicted for those murders and nobody questioned his guilt – until now. Another prostitute is murdered and soon Jordan and Hill are up against one of the most perverted killers they have ever encountered.

DARK HOUSE, Theresa Monsour, Putnam. \$25.95

University professor Serene Ransom is a troubled woman who comes on to Catch Clancy, a bartender in a small rural hangout. When the bar is held up, Serene pushes Catch to kill the man, then takes Catch home to St. Paul where she has plans for him,

plans that will result in even more violence. Paris Murphy, the police detective featured in *Clean Cut* and *Cold Blood* tracks this couple, in a very different kind of murder case.

***FIRE SALE*, Sara Paretsky, Putnam. \$25.95**

V.I. Warshawski takes over coaching duties of the girls' basketball team at her former high school. This group of young women soon draw V.I. into their family woes. The mother of Josie Dorrado tells V.I. that she worries about sabotage in the little flag manufacturing plant where she works. When the plant explodes, V.I. is injured and the owner is killed. As she starts to investigate, V.I. finds herself up against By-Smart, the biggest employer on the South Side.

***APPALOOSA*, Robert B. Parker, Putnam. \$24.95**

Virgil Cole and Everett Hitch arrive in Appaloosa, a small dusty western town, to find that Randall Bragg, a man with little regard for the law, has taken supplies, horses, and women for his own and left the marshal and one of his deputies for dead. Cole and Hitch are used to cleaning up after thieves and murderers but Bragg is an unusual adversary – one who plays with emotions. This is Parker's second novel set in the Old West.

***GLAD NEWS OF THE NATURAL WORLD*, T.R. Pearson, Simon & Schuster. \$24.00**

Louis Benfield, the thirteen-year-old narrator of *A Short History of a Small Place*, returns. Now in his twenties, Louis is far from his native North Carolina in a one-bedroom New York City apartment with two roommates. Louis lands a job with a car service and wrestles with romance, the goings-on back home, and the strange characters who surround him. *A Short History etc.* is usually on the "best books of all time" lists of those who have read it.

***MURDER IS MY RACQUET*, Otto Penzler, Ed., Mysterious Press. \$24.95**

Court stories (tennis court that is) from **Lawrence Block, Kinky Friedman, John Harvey, Stephen Hunter, Peter Lovesey, Lisa Scottoline**, etc. The latest in Otto's sports anthologies.

***CAPTAIN ALATRISTE*, Arturo Perez-Reverte, Putnam. \$23.95**

Captain Alatrisme is a seventeenth-century Spanish soldier who, after being wounded in battle during the Thirty Years' War, is retired from the army. He now lives as a swordsman-for-hire in Madrid. He and another hired blade are asked by their two employers to ambush two travelers, stage a robbery, and give the men a fright. But there is to be no blood. Then a third man tells them they must murder the two travelers. With the attack imminent, it becomes clear to Alatrisme that these are not ordinary travelers, and what happens next is only the first in a series of twists and turns. This is the first in this historical series to be translated, so we can expect the further adventures of Captain Alatrisme.

CROSS BONES, Kathy Reichs, Scribner. \$25.00

A man is found shot to death in Montreal. As forensic anthropologist Tempe Brennan tries to make sense of the victim's wounds, a stranger slips her a photograph of a skeleton, telling her he holds the key to the victim's death. The murder victim, an orthodox Jew, was involved in the Israeli "import business" and Tempe, Detective Andrew Ryan, and biblical archaeologist Jake Drum follow clues to Israel and a tomb in the Kidron valley. Together they make a startling discovery that raises radical questions about the death of Christ.

DEVIL'S CORNER, Lisa Scottoline, HarperCollins. \$25.95

In this stand-alone thriller from Scottoline, Assistant U.S. Attorney Vicki Allegretti goes to meet a confidential informant and finds herself at the wrong end of a 9mm Glock semiautomatic. This was supposed to be an easy case for the neophyte lawyer but, before she has time to react, her partner is dead, shot in the chest. Allegretti risks her life to bring down those responsible.

BROKEN PREY, John Sandford, Putnam. \$26.95

The "Big Three" are a trio of inmates locked up in the Minnesota Security Hospital. Each is a vicious serial killer with his own distinct style, and everybody feels much safer now they are behind bars. But there's a new killer on the loose and his handiwork bears a remarkable resemblance to some of the finer points practiced by the Big Three, details that never made the papers. Enter Lucas Davenport.

36 YALTA BOULEVARD, Olen Stenbauer, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95

This superb series, set in a nameless Eastern European country during the 1950s and into the 1960s, has been nominated for the Edgar, the Anthony, the Macavity, and Historical Dagger awards. In this third installment, State Security Officer Brano Sev travels to the village of his birth to investigate a potential defector and discovers that loyalty to the cause might be the biggest crime of all.

FIRST MYSTERIES

FASHION VICTIM, Sam Baker, Ballantine. \$21.95

Investigative journalist Annie Anderson decides to take a job with a less serious magazine, *Handbag*, which covers the fashion world. When up-and-coming designer Mark Mailer is killed and the cause of death is listed as accidental, Annie knows there's more to the story. This is the first novel by the editor-in-chief of *Cosmopolitan UK* and she exposes the ready-to-wear fashion circuit. True first is the UK edition.

THE MOSAIC OF SHADOWS, Tom Harper, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95

Byzantium 1096. When an assassin looses his arrow at the emperor, he has more than the man in his sights. If the emperor falls, the mightiest power in Christendom will be torn

apart. Demetrios the Apokalyptor, unveiler of mysteries, is hired to catch the would-be killer. This is the first in a series set in medieval Byzantium. True first is the UK edition.

***STILL RIVER*, Harry Hunsicker, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95**

Introduces private investigator Lee Henry Oswald of Dallas, a PI who starts all his cases with an obvious burden. In this, Oswald's first case, a simple assignment turns deadly when he asks the right questions in the wrong places and is drawn into the shadowy world of smooth-talking drug lords and double-dealing real estate developers.

***THE INSIDE RING*, Michael Lawson, Doubleday. \$24.95**

General Andy Banks, Secretary of Homeland Security, passes on a note to the Secret Service Director. It reads "Eagle One is in danger. Cancel Chattooga River. The inside ring has been compromised. This is not a joke." The Director ignores the note and an assassin's bullet wings the president and takes the life of his best friend. Even after the supposed assassin is found dead, Banks decides to dig a little deeper.

***THE FOUR COURTS MURDER*, Andrew Nugent, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$22.95**

When Judge Sidney Piggott gets kicked to death in his chambers at the Four Courts in Dublin, nobody sheds a tear. Police detectives Jim Quilligan and Molly Powers are not satisfied that the murderer is a missing youth whom many suspect. Molly does some sleuthing in the arts library because of the judge's questionable dealing in paintings and there meets a charming young Dutchman who helps her with the search.

***THE ICON*, Neil Olson, HarperCollins. \$24.95**

In a remote Greek village, Captain Elias and his resistance fighters are engaged in a battle with the Nazis. A church is burned and several partisans die trying to protect a religious icon hidden there. Sixty years later, the icon surfaces on the New York art market, generating keen and possibly deadly interest from a variety of would-be buyers, each of whom wants the icon for a different reason.

***HOUR OF THE CAT*, Peter Quinn, The Overlook Press. \$25.95**

New York 1938: a nurse is killed in her apartment, a suspect is caught and convicted. Fintan Dunne, the P.I. lured into the case, unravels a complex setup that has put an innocent man on death row. He discovers that this murder has tentacles that stretch far beyond the crime scene – to Nazi Germany in fact. In Germany, Wilhelm Canaris, head of Military Intelligence, must make a choice: join the plotters in treason or betray them to the Gestapo. An atmospheric first novel set in pre-war New York and Berlin.

***THE TRAVELER*, John Twelve Hawks, Doubleday. \$24.95**

This first novel is not a mystery but is getting such positive word of mouth that I thought I would include it. It is set in a parallel world to our own and involves Gabriel and Michael Corrigan, brothers whose father was a Traveler, one of an elite group of prophets able to attain enlightenment. In London, Maya is attempting to lead a normal life. Maya comes from a long line of Harliquins, a band of warriors pledged to protect the travelers

at all costs. Searching for the brothers is Nathan Boone, a mercenary working for the Tabulas, men determined to inflict order on the world by controlling its population.

***FORCING AMARYLLIS*, Louise Ure, Mysterious press. \$23.95**

Calla Gentry is a trial consultant in Tucson, Arizona, devoting her time and energy to victims in civil cases rather than criminal trials. When Calla is assigned against her will to the trial of Raymond Cates, a wealthy landowner's son accused of rape and first degree murder, she cannot help but note the parallels between this crime and that against her sister. Calla begins to investigate.

NON MYSTERIES OF NOTE

***ZORRO*, Isabelle Allende, HarperCollins. \$24.95**

Allende imagines the life of Diego de la Vega, born in southern California in the 18th century. His father is an aristocratic Spanish military man and his mother is a Shoshone warrior. During his childhood, Diego witnesses the brutal injustices dealt Native Americans by European settlers and feels the conflict of his dual heritage. At the age of 16, Diego is sent to Barcelona for a European education. In a country under the stifling corruption of Napoleonic rule, Diego joins "La Justicia," an underground resistance movement devoted to helping the powerless and the poor. And you know the rest.

***THE MYSTERIOUS FLAME OF QUEEN LOANA*, Umberto Eco, Harcourt. \$28.00**

Yambo, a rare-book dealer from Milan, remembers the plot of every book he has ever read, but he no longer knows his own name, recognizes his family, or remembers his childhood. His loss of memory forces him to withdraw to his family home where, in the attic, he searches through boxes of old newspapers, comics, photo albums and diaries to try and find himself. In the process, his life becomes a graphic novel featuring Mussolini, Josephine Baker, Flash Gordon, and Fred Astaire. This novel from the extraordinary Eco contains over 200 illustrations.

***HAUNTED*, Chuck Palahniuk, Doubleday. \$24.95**

Twenty-three stories, all of them horrifying and stomach-churning. Each person who tells a story has answered an ad for artists seeking solitude in order to work on their various masterpieces. But this retreat turns out to be a hell where heat, power, and food are in increasingly short supply. Each artist telling his or her story also wants to be the hero of the inevitable play/movie/nonfiction blockbuster that will certainly be made from their plight.

***KING OF THE JEWS*, Nick Tosches, Ecco Press. \$25.95**

This is a biography of Arnold Rothstein, who was known in New York City as A.R., Mr. Big, The Fixer, and the Big Bankroll among other names. He was supposedly the inspiration for Meyer Wolfsheim in *The Great Gatsby* and Nathan Detroit in *Guys and*

Dolls. He was also rumored to be the mastermind of the “Black Sox” scandal, the fixing of the 1919 World Series. He sounds fascinating.

***THE 8.55 TO BAGHDAD*, Andrew Eames, Overlook Press. \$24.95**

In 1928 Agatha Christie, her marriage to Archie Christie over, took a vacation. She had originally decided to go to the Caribbean but after a conversation with a couple who had just returned from Iraq, she changed her mind. This is the story of that vacation. Part literary biography, part travel adventure, part ancient history, part contemporary world events, Eames tells an exotic chapter in the life of Agatha Christie.

NEWS FROM THE UK

***LIFELESS*, Mark Billingham, Little Brown.**

When it appears that someone is targeting London’s homeless, Tom Thorne goes undercover.

***A DEAD PLACE*, Stephen Booth, HarperCollins.**

An anonymous caller is taunting the Derbyshire Police with talk of killing. When a woman is snatched from a multi-story carpark, Detective Diane Fry begins to take him seriously.

***SEE DELPHI AND DIE*, Lindsey Davis, Century.**

When Marcus Didius Falco hears that two Roman visitors to Olympia in Greece have been murdered, he steps in.

***GOOD DAY TO DIE*, Simon Kernick, Bantam.**

Dennis Milne, living under an assumed identity in the Philippines, hears that an old friend and colleague has been gunned down in London. He returns to the city he once called home to find the murderer.

***FINAL ANALYSIS*, Keith McCarthy, Constable.**

An Eisenmerger/Flemming forensic mystery.

***BLOOD OF ANGELS*, Michael Marshall, HarperCollins.**

Ward Hopkins’ past comes back to haunt him when an ex-CIA colleague tracks him down.

***LAST RITES*, Barbara Nadel, Headline.**

A new series from Nadel set in World War II and featuring Francis H, an undertaker in the London borough of West Ham.

THIS AND THAT

Vintage Publishing is re-releasing *Blood on the Moon* by **James Ellroy** in trade paperback format. This introduced Detective Sergeant Lloyd Hopkins who can't stand music, or any loud sounds.

ANGELS & DEMONS, Dan Brown, Atria Books. \$35.00

The Special Illustrated Edition. A companion to *The Special Illustrated Edition of The Da Vinci Code*. Come on. You know you want it in your collection!

COLLECTING

I was asked recently if a tipped-in signature is as valuable as a signature on the half-title page of the book. A good question, to which I don't really know the answer.

Publishers are using this method more and more. Instead of, and as well as, touring the author to sign books, the publisher has the author sign blank pages and then tips these in during the binding process at the printer. The signature is authentic and the author signs every single one of those pieces of paper, but some collectors think that is not as valuable as having the author physically touch the book when signing.

James Ellroy signed tip-ins for the complete print run of his book *My Dark Places*. **Lawrence Block** tries to make sure that he personally signs all of his books and to that end tours extensively. One has to ask then, how valuable is the signature? Back in the day, it wasn't so easy to tour authors and it wasn't thought to be as necessary to sign books. A signature, therefore, became worth something. Sometimes the only signatures available were on "association copies" (copies given by the author to family members, friends, or colleagues).

If you are a personal friend of the author, it is worth something to have one of those "association copies." Those books will become a very valuable part of your collection and, for obvious reasons, they do not show up for sale very often.

Me? I want first editions. If I don't know the author, the signature is not that important, although I will always take the opportunity to have a book signed. Tip-ins do not add or subtract from the value of the book. As a reader, it is the content of the book; as a collector, it is the condition.

Hope that is helpful.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Anscombe, Roderick, *The Interview Room*, St. Martin's. \$24.95. A forensic psychiatrist in a maximum security prison is caught in a deadly game of cat and mouse with one of his patients.

Barclay, Linwood, *Bad Guys*, Bantam. \$22.00. Zack Walker, paranoid father, once again finds himself caught in the crosshairs of urban sprawl.

Barnard, Robert, *The Graveyard Position*, Scribner. \$24.00. The Cantelo family is dysfunctional, but did one of them kill clairvoyant and heiress Clarissa Cantelo?

Box, C.J., *Out of Range*, Putnam. \$24.95. Game warden Joe Pickett is temporarily running the Jackson, Wyoming, territory and soon finds himself in over his head.

Buchanan, Edna, *Shadows*, Simon & Schuster. \$24.00. Second book featuring the Miami Police Department's Cold Case Squad.

Cook, Robin, *Marker*, Putnam. \$25.95. A young man fractures his leg while in-line skating. Within hours of surgery he's dead. A medical thriller from the master.

Craig, Philip R., *Vineyard Prey*, Scribner. \$24.00. J.W. Jackson, retired cop, investigates murder and mystery on Cape Cod during the off season.

Daheim, Mary, *The Alpine Quilt*, Ballantine. \$22.95. Emma Lord, newspaper editor, returns in this latest crime novel set in Alpine, Washington.

Davis, J. Madison, *The Van Gogh Conspiracy*, Spotlight. \$22.95. The discovery of a "new" painting by Van Gogh hidden in a barn in France sets the art world spinning.

Emerson, Earl, *The Smoke Room*, Ballantine. \$24.95. When a rookie firefighter arrives late to a fire, his colleagues cover up for him. But there's going to be a price.

Evanovich, Janet, *Eleven on Top*, St. Martin's. \$26.95. Stephanie Plum decides to quit her job as a bounty hunter! But just when she thinks she's out, they pull her back in!

Friedman, Kinky, *Texas Hold 'Em*, St. Martin's. \$23.95. Essays from the next Governor of Texas.

Green, Tim, *Exact Revenge*, Warner Books. \$24.95. A political candidate is framed for murder and is determined to exact revenge on the conspirators who ruined his life.

Hamill, Denis, *Ten Spot*, Atria Books. \$24.00. A hip-hop empire, a mafia mistress, and an NYPD cop's ongoing struggle to clear his name.

Hamilton, Denise, *Savage Garden*, Scribner. \$22.00. Reporter Eve Diamond investigates the disappearance of a notoriously unstable leading actress.

Hillerman, Tony, *The Leaphorn and Chee Novels*, HarperCollins. \$19.95. Three novels in one volume: *Skinwalkers*, *A Thief of Time*, and *Coyote Waits*.

Housewright, David, *Tin City*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. The second Mac McKenzie mystery set in the Twin Cities.

Howard, Linda, *Killing Time*, Ballantine. \$25.95. Contributors to a time capsule are being murdered after the contents of the capsule are stolen.

Joe, Yolanda, *Video Cowboys*, Simon & Schuster. \$22.00. Straight-talking, crime-busting TV reporter Georgia Barnett faces a life-and-death hostage situation.

Johansen, Iris, *Countdown*, Bantam. \$25.00. Forensic thriller featuring Eve Duncan and her husband, Joe Quinn.

Jones, Merry Bloch, *The Nanny Murders*, St. Martin's. \$23.95. Zoe Hayes, an art therapist, finds a human finger and learns someone is dismembering Philadelphia's nannies.

Keating, H.R.F., *A Detective at Death's Door*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Harriet Marten investigates a poisoner who seems to be indiscriminately poisoning anybody who leaves a container open.

Kandel, Susan, *Not a Girl Detective*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Biographer and amateur sleuth Cece Caruso tumbles headlong into mystery and murder.

Kellerman, Jonathan, *Rage*, Ballantine. \$26.95. Psychological suspense featuring psychologist Alex Delaware.

Kernick, Simon, *The Crime Trade*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Operation Surgical Strike, a police sting designed to catch Colombian drug traffickers, goes horribly wrong.

Lange, Kelly, *Graveyard Shift*, Mysterious Press. \$24.95. News reporter Maxi Poole is working the graveyard shift, usually a signal that a pink slip is on the way. But why Maxi?

Lashner, William, *Falls the Shadow*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. Defense Attorney Victor Carl seeks the acquittal of a man convicted of killing his wife.

Lehrer, Jim, *The Franklin Affair*, Random House. \$23.95. A scandal that threatens to alter American history and a charge of plagiarism are at the heart of this latest mystery from Lehrer.

Lowell, Elizabeth, *Always Time to Die*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. Carolina May, a family historian, is hired by the eccentric aunt of New Mexico's multimillionaire governor. Things begin to go wrong immediately

Matturro, Claire, *Wildcat Wine*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Attorney in Sarasota, Florida, has her hands full when the obnoxious partner in her law firm is murdered.

Mills, Kyle, *Fade*, St. Martin's. \$24.95. Homeland Security calls on Salam Al Fayed, known as Fade, to help them. But the government abandoned him when he needed them, and they are not going to like his answer.

Minichino, Camille, *The Nitrogen Murder*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Gloria Lamerino investigates yet another periodic-table mystery.

Murphy, Margaret, *Weaving Shadows*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Lawyer Clara Pascal takes on a simple child custody case. Or so she thinks.

Nykanen, Mark, *Search Angel*, Hyperion. \$24.95. A serial killer is preying on birth mothers trying to reunite with their adopted children.

O'Shaughnessy, Perri, *Case of Lies*, Delacorte. \$25.00. Attorney Nina Reilly returns and takes on her biggest challenge yet: coming home.

Page, Katherine Hall, *The Body in the Snowdrift*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Fifteenth mystery featuring caterer Faith Fairchild.

Patterson, James and Paetro, Maxine, *4th of July*, Little Brown. \$27.95. Featuring the Women's Murder Club (a member of which Patterson killed off in his last book).

Poulson, Christine, *Stage Fright*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$22.95. The second in the series of academic mysteries set at Cambridge University featuring Professor Cassandra James.

Preston, Douglas and Child, Lincoln, *Dance of Death*, Warner Books. \$25.95. FBI Special Agent Pendergast is back. And this time he's up against a diabolical villain – his own brother Diogenes.

Quick, Amanda, *Lie By Moonlight*, Putnam. \$24.95. Historical romantic suspense set in late Victorian England.

Randisi, Robert J., and Matthews, Christine. *Same Time, Same Murder*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Featuring husband-and-wife sleuth team Gil and Claire Hunt.

Riggs, Cynthia, *The Paperwhite Narcissus*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$22.95. Riggs's third mystery incorporating the flora and fauna of Martha's Vineyard.

Riordan, Rick, *Mission Road*, Bantam. \$24.00. Tres Navarre steps in when his friend, reformed criminal Ralph Arguello, is accused of killing his wife.

Robinson, Patrick, *Hunter Killer*, HarperCollins. \$25.95. Robinson imagines an all-too-real scenario that pits the United States against France and Saudi Arabia.

Rollins, James, *Map of Bones*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. When a group of parishioners are burned to death in a German cathedral, the U.S. sends in the SIGMA force.

Rosenfelt, David, *Sudden Death*, Mysterious Press. \$23.95. Fourth mystery featuring Defense Attorney Andy Carpenter.

Saylor, Steven, *A Gladiator Dies Only Once*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. The further investigations of Gordianus the Finder.

Thomas, Will, *To Kingdom Come*, Touchstone. \$22.95. Barker and Llewelyn investigate when a bomb destroys the new formed Special Irish Branch of Scotland Yard.

Spencer-Fleming, Julia, *To Darkness and to Death*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Fourth in the Clare Fergusson/Russ Van Alstyne mystery series by Edgar-nominated Spencer-Fleming.

Spiegelman, Peter, *Death's Little Helpers*, Knopf. \$22.95. PI John March hunts a missing man and finds himself once again in the corrupt corridors of the financial world.

Tapply, William G., *Last Legs*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Featuring Boston lawyer Brady Coyne.

Vachss, Andrew, *Two Trains Running*, Pantheon. \$25.00. An epic story of postwar America set in the mill town of Altonville in 1959.

Wall, Kathryn R., *Resurrection Road*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Bay Tanner is accused by a young boy of killing his father.

Weisman, John, *Direct Action*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. Al Qaeda and Tehran join forces to deal a fatal blow to the West and the CIA must stop them.

Zubro, Mark Richard, *Nerds Who Kill*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Paul Turner investigates murder at a Sci-Fi convention.

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.

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