

BOOKAHOLIC

For the Mystery Addict

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WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

***BLOOD TRAIL*, Gary J. Cook, Dennis McMillan. \$35.00**

Ben Tails lived in Montana before becoming a Marine in Vietnam where he was known as Mr. Slide, a sniper who worked alone in the jungle. After the war he stayed on in Indochina working for United States Intelligence. He then returned to Montana, became a deputy sheriff and fell in love. But when his soul mate dies unexpectedly he takes a job in Asia posing as a businessman on the payroll of a multinational organization secretly dedicated to fighting terrorism. All of the above you will learn as this extraordinarily well written book opens. That job in Asia and how Ben is once again forced to become Mr. Slide to save his own life is the story here. Cook is an author with a great deal to say about the world we live in. And he says it well. As always with Dennis McMillan publications, this book is not only well written, it is also beautifully produced.

***EYE OF VENGEANCE*, Jonathon King, Dutton. \$24.95**

King takes a break from his Max Freeman novels to give us this tense thriller. When a convicted murderer is gunned down in front of a corrections facility, reporter Nick Mullins is sent to cover the story. He discovers that the victim was the subject of one of his stories and when Nick starts researching further, he sees that several recent murders are connected to the stories he's written. We are soon introduced to the killer – this is no whodunit – but the tension builds as Nick gradually realizes that he may be able to figure out who the next victim will be. Nick Mullins is an interesting character who is struggling with the accident that took the life of his wife and one of his two daughters. King is a smart and talented writer and this is a hard novel to put down.

***SHADOW MAN*, Cody McFadyen, Bantam. \$24.00**

This first novel introduces Special Agent Smoky Barrett who, when we first meet her, is struggling with the death of her husband and daughter at the hands of a sadistic serial killer, a killer Smoky shot to death. Now she's confronted with another killer, one who calls himself Jack Jr and who claims to be directly descended from Jack the Ripper. This killer taunts Smoky and her FBI colleagues with threats and actions designed to both enrage them and scare them to death. This is an intelligent and horrific, beautifully written thriller. It's hard to recommend unconditionally since the deaths of Jack Jr's victims are almost too much to bear, but if you read the novels of Thomas Harris, and McFadyen's writing reminds me of Harris, then this is a must for you.

SUITE FRANCAISE, Irene Nemirovsky, Knopf. \$25.00

The most talked about book of the year was written during WW II by the author who lived in Paris before being sent to Auschwitz where she died. Nemirovsky had planned a five-novel cycle chronicling the defeat of France and the Nazi encroachment into that country. She only managed to finish two of those novels and it is our privilege to have access to them now, thanks to Nemirovsky's daughter. *Storm in June* follows a group of Parisians as they flee the advancing Germans, while *Dolce* is set in 1941 in an occupied farming village. This chronicle of daily life, written as the events unfolded, is an amazing and important historical document as well as a riveting novel.

ON MY READING LIST**THE HARD WAY, Lee Child, Delacorte. \$25.00**

Jack Reacher is in New York City to stop a ransom request gone wrong and to help a man who has a military past similar to his own. As always, Reacher will be doing things his way - the hard way. There is no doubt that this series gets better with each entry.

PROMISE ME, Harlan Coben, Dutton. \$26.95

This is Coben's first Myron Bolitar mystery in six years during which time none of the entertainment agent's clients have been murdered. Now the simple urge to protect two neighborhood high-school girls from getting in a car with a drunk driver puts Myron back in danger. One of those girls calls Myron at 2.00a.m. She's been drinking and she doesn't want to call her parents and, as promised, Myron drives into Manhattan, picks her up, then drives her to New Jersey where her friend lives. And that's the last anyone sees of her. Myron, the last person to see her, must once again play superhero to save a young girl's life. Welcome back Myron.

CRIME BEAT, Michael Connelly, Little Brown. \$25.95

Before he was a best-selling novelist, Connelly was a crime reporter. These articles written between 1984 and 1992 are a must for the Connelly fan. If you're a collector, the volume published last year by Steven C. Vascik Publications is the true first.

THE BOOKWOMAN'S LAST FLING, John Dunning, Scribner. \$25.00

Rare book dealer, and ex-homicide cop, Cliff Janeway accepts an invitation from a wealthy horse trainer to travel to Idaho and look at some rare first editions. The books turn out to be stunning, flawless children's classics, worth millions of dollars, but the owner is dead and Janeway is convinced that someone has been cherry-picking the book collection for personal profit. I know I didn't have to describe the plot. I had you at the title. A must for all of us.

KILLER INSTINCT, Joseph Finder, St. Martin's Press. \$24.95

Jason Steadman is a sales executive working for an electronics giant in Boston. He's good at his job but lacks that something that propels executives to the very top. When

Jason meets Kurt Semko and gets him a job in Corporate Security, good things begin to happen to Jason and bad things start to happen to Jason's rivals. His career suddenly takes off. Starting with *Paranoia* and continuing with *Company Man*, I have become a huge fan of Finder's thrillers set in the corporate world.

***THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT*, Alan Furst, Random House. \$24.95**

In Paris in 1939 a sensational story hits the tabloids: the murder/suicide of an Italian political émigré and the wife of a prominent French politician in a lovers' hotel. But this is not a lovers' tragedy, it is an assassination. It soon becomes clear that OVRA, Mussolini's secret police, is behind the murder and that the émigré was the editor of a clandestine newspaper that opposes fascism. Furst's latest is the story of the new editor, Carlo Weisz, and the Italian resistance. This will be on the reading lists of all of us who value great espionage fiction.

***THE ART OF DETECTION*, Laurie R. King, Bantam. \$24.00**

San Francisco detective Kate Martinelli returns in this intriguing mystery which finds Kate at a murder scene where she discovers that the dead man was more than a Sherlock Holmes aficionado; he may have been killed for the manuscript he recently acquired – a manuscript written by Holmes himself. Yes, folks, Holmes it says here. King combines her modern character with her Holmes series and the result should be more than interesting.

***THE VISITING PROFESSOR*, Robert Littell, Overlook Press. \$24.95**

Lemuel Falk, a Russian theoretical chaoticist, has been applying for permission to leave Russia every year for the past twenty-three years. Because he knows state secrets, he has been denied an exit visa. Now, suddenly, his request is approved. Falk accepts a chair as a visiting professor at the Institute for Advanced Interdisciplinary Chaos-Related Studies in upstate New York. No sooner does Falk arrive than he is plunged into a completely different kind of chaos. It's delightful to have this post-Cold War romp through contemporary America back in print.

***THE POE SHADOW*, Matthew Pearl, Random House. \$24.95**

Edgar Allan Poe is dead. It is 1849 and in Baltimore everybody seems to accept that Poe died a drunkard. Everyone except Quentin Clark who discovers that Poe's last days were riddled with unanswered questions. Clark sets out to find the one person who can resolve the mystery of Poe's death: the real life model for Poe's fictional detective C. Auguste Dupin. Poe is becoming the fictional character du jour, but this novel by the author of *The Dante Club* should be one of the best.

***DEAD WATCH*, John Sandford, Putnam. \$26.95**

In early morning Virginia, a woman is on the run. Her husband, a former U.S. Senator has been missing for days and she has no idea whether he has been kidnapped or murdered. But she does know who's involved and that she is next. Jacob Winter, chief investigator for the White House chief of staff is asked by his boss to get involved with these disappearances. This is a stand-alone thriller from the creator of Lucas Davenport.

***BAD TWIN*, Gary Troup, Hyperion. \$21.95**

Paul Artisan, a PI, picks up an intriguing case. One member of a pair of twins is missing. He is charismatic, irresponsible, punishing himself endlessly for his misdeeds. The other twin, Artisan's client, is dutiful and bewildered that his "other half" could have turned out so badly. He's also guilt-ridden for his inability to reform his twin. Artisan's search takes him across the globe as he finds that friends and enemies have a way of looking very much alike. What intrigues me about this book is not so much the story but the publisher's piece on the author: "Bad Twin was delivered to Hyperion just days before Troup boarded Oceanic Flight 815, which was lost in flight from Sydney, Australia to Los Angeles in September 2004. He remains missing and is presumed dead." This is the plane that crashed on the fictional series, *Lost*, the hit series on ABC. I cannot see the tie-in here but I assume there is one. I guess we shouldn't be looking for signed copies of this title anytime soon.

FIRST MYSTERIES***THE RABBIT FACTORY*, Marshall Karp, MacAdam/Cage. \$25.00**

High profile murders are taking place at a Disney-like theme park, threatening to destroy it. When Familyland's beloved cartoon character, Rambunctious Rabbit, is strangled followed by the death of other employees and visitors to the park, Detectives Mike Lomax and Terry Biggs from the LAPD are brought in.

***THE COTTAGERS*, Marshall N. Klimasewski, W.W. Norton. \$24.95**

Nineteen-year-old Cyrus Coddington lives year round at East Sooke on Vancouver Island and resents the summer influx of vacationers who descend each year. When two American couples arrive who are old friends with a complicated history, they become Cyrus's obsession. He spies on them through their windows and begins to insinuate himself into their lives. When one of them goes missing, no one looks at any of the others the same way again.

NON MYSTERIES OF NOTE***LUDMILA'S BROKEN ENGLISH*, DBC Pierre, W.W. Norton. \$24.95**

I'm not even going to try to describe the plot of this second novel by (Dirty But Clean) Pierre. If you read his first novel, *Vernon God Little*, which won the Man Booker Prize, you'll understand why. This writer is wild, audacious, and brilliant. It's very likely he'll be picking up more prizes with this. You either want to collect it or you don't. Not for everybody. The UK edition is the true first.

***A STUDENT OF LIVING THINGS*, Susan Richards Shreve, Viking. \$24.95**

Set in the near future, Washington D.C. is a city of floods and frequent terrorist bombings, and home to the Frayn family. The moment it takes Claire Frayn to dig into

her book bag for her umbrella, her brother Steven is shot down next to her on the library steps. His murder hits the family in different ways especially Claire who falls under the influence of Victor Duarte, a stranger who claims to know her brother's killer. Although the murder of Steven lies at the heart of this story, this is not really a mystery, more a meditation on love and fear, showing how a family grieves and the way public violence seeps into our lives.

NEWS FROM THE UK

***PELAGIA AND THE WHITE BULLDOG*, Boris Akunin, Weidenfeld & Nicolson**

This first novel in a new series introduces Sister Pelagia who knits, teaches gymnastics and literature and, in her spare time, solves crimes. She's described as a cross between Miss Marple and one of Charlie's Angels.

***BURIED*, Mark Billingham, Little Brown**

Luke Mullen, teenage son of a former high-ranking police officer, has disappeared. D.I. Tom Thorne is brought in to join the squad trying to find the missing boy. The boy's father has supplied a list of suspects, but Thorne notices that an obvious name is missing.

***TALE ETCHED IN BLOOD & HARD BLACK PENCIL*, Christopher Brookmyre, Little Brown**

A group of children first meet at primary school. Twenty years later one of them is dead. Does knowing someone since childhood enable one to know who is capable of killing in adulthood?

***NEFERTITI*, Nick Drake, Bantam Press**

"The Perfect One" rules equally with her husband, the Pharaoh Akhenaten, over the richest, most sophisticated and powerful society in the modern world. When Nefertiti vanishes, Rai Rahotep, the youngest chief detective in the Thebes division, is assigned to investigate.

***NEVER GO BACK*, Robert Goddard, Bantam Press**

Harry Barnett returns to England when his mother dies. While there, he attends a reunion organized to mark the 50th anniversary of his and his comrades' RAF days. The unexplained events of fifty years ago still haunt many of Harry's friends and, as he tries to solve the mystery of what happened then, Harry uncovers a secret that convinces him he will never leave England alive.

***DARKNESS AND LIGHT*, John Harvey, Heinemann**

Detective Inspector Frank Elder's first case was never solved. Now his estranged wife contacts him to ask for help in finding her friend's sister who has disappeared. When

Elder finds her she is dead, the obvious victim of that deranged killer he was never able to apprehend.

THE WAKING, T.M. Jenkins, Macmillan

Los Angeles 2006: Dr. Nate Sheehan is casually murdered in a parking lot. His wife, also a doctor, hopes to rescue at least a part of him for cryonic preservation and performs an unprecedented operation.

Gamma Gulch Penitentiary 2069: Duane Williams is about to be sent to the death chamber for the rape and murder of young women.

Icor Regrowth Program 2070: Dr. Nate Sheehan is resuscitated using the body of an anonymous donor.

DYING LIGHT, Stuart MacBride, HarperCollins

Summertime in Glasgow. The sun is shining, the sky is blue, and people are dying. D.S. Logan MacRae investigates the murders of prostitutes in this second novel by the author of *Cold Granite*.

VIENNA BLOOD, Frank Tallis, Century

In the grip of a Siberian winter in 1902, a serial killer in Vienna embarks upon a bizarre campaign of murder. Detective Inspector Oskar Rheinhardt summons his friend Dr. Max Liebermann, a disciple of Freud, to assist him.

COLLECTING

DIGITAL FORTRESS, Dan Brown, St. Martin's Press. \$19.95

When this title was first published, so few copies were printed that it became an almost impossible title to find or afford once Brown's subsequent novels started to hit the bestseller lists. If you collect Dan Brown, a First Edition Thus should be a consideration, especially at this price.

THIS AND THAT

The 60th Anniversary of the Edgar Allan Poe Awards (The Edgars): Boy, was I wrong in my predictions. It seemed from the very start when *Syriana* beat out *Crash* for **Best Motion Picture Screenplay** that we were in for a some dark horse wins.

Citizen Vince by Jess Walter won **Best Novel**

Officer Down by Theresa Schwegel won **Best First Novel By An American Author**

Girl in the Glass by Jeffrey Ford won **Best Paperback Original**

The complete list of winners can be found on the Mystery Writers of America's website:

www.mysterywriters.org

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

- Atkins, Ace, *White Shadow***, Putnam. \$24.95. The bludgeoning death of mob boss, Charlie Wall sends shock waves rippling through the 1955 city of Tampa, Florida.
- Barnard, Robert, *Dying Flames***, Scribner. \$24.00. Relationships gone awry, not to mention secrets, lies, and murder. From one of the masters.
- Barnes, Linda, *Heart of the World***, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. P.I. Carlotta Carlyle tracks her missing Little Sister (she was paired up with Paolina by a mentoring program) to Colombia. Did Paolina run away or was she kidnapped?
- Birmingham, Ruth, *Feet of Clay***, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Sunny Childs, lead detective at Atlanta's Peachtree Investigations, tries to get to the bottom of a year-old murder before the accused murderer's time runs out.
- Bonner, Hilary, *A Moment of Madness***, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. The gruesome murder of a music superstar, and the victim's widow, lead reporter John Kelly down a treacherous path.
- Box, C.J., *In Plain Sight***, Putnam. \$24.95. Wyoming game warden, Joe Pickett, finds himself in the middle of family trouble when local ranch owner and matriarch, Opal Scarlett, disappears. Joe is convinced that one of her sons has killed her.
- Brett, Simon, Ed., *The Detection Collection***, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Original stories by some of the best-known names in British crime writing including P.D. James, Colin Dexter, John Harvey and Lindsey Davis.
- Brewer, Steve, *Whip Saw***, Intrigue. \$24.95. When a major new computer game goes missing, retired secret agent Matt Donahue is asked to make the ransom drop.
- Corman, Avery, *The Boyfriend From Hell***, St. Martin's Press. \$23.95. Veronica McBride meets the man of her dreams. Or is he?
- Davidson, Diane Mott, *Dark Tort***, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. Featuring caterer Goldy Schulz. With recipes.
- Etchells, Olive, *Footprints of the Devil***, Carroll & Graf. \$25.00. A championship surfer returns to Cornwall to discover his brother's body has been found in a deserted tin mine.
- Goodwin, Jason, *The Janissary Tree***, Farrar, Straus & Giroux. \$25.00. A new mystery series set in the declining years of the Ottoman Empire.
- Housewright, David, *Pretty Girl Gone***, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Third in the Mac McKenzie series.
- Jackson, Lisa, *Shiver***, Kensington. \$19.95. A serial killer is turning the Big Easy into his personal playground.
- Jefferson, Roland S., *One Night Stand***, Atria Books. \$23.00. Myra Cross, a public defender who poses for Playboy spreads in her spare time, is asked by a gang punk to help him beat a murder rap.
- Johansen, Iris, *Killer Dreams***, Bantam. \$26.00. Sophie Dunston, a sleep therapist, is dealing with the night terrors of her ten-year-old son. But somebody has a nightmare planned for Sophie, one that won't end...ever.
- Kernick, Simon, *A Good Day to Die***, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Ex-cop Dennis Milne, living under an assumed identity in the Philippines, hears that an old friend and colleague has been gunned down in a restaurant. He returns to London to investigate.

Koontz, Dean, *The Husband*, Bantam. \$27.00. Landscaper Mitchell Rafferty receives a ransom note. Someone has his wife and wants two million in cash. There's no way Mitch can raise that kind of money, but the kidnapper is sure he'll find the money; if he loves his wife that is.

Leon, Donna, *Through a Glass Darkly*, Atlantic Monthly. \$23.00. A Commissario Guido Brunetti mystery.

Meyer, Deon, *Dead Before Dying*, Little Brown. \$24.95. Captain Mat Joubert tries to solve a terrifying series of murders in Cape Town.

Mitchard, Jacquelyn, *Cage of Stars*, Warner Books. \$24.95. Woman sets out to avenge the long-ago deaths of her sisters.

Patterson, James, *Beach Road*, Little Brown. \$27.95. Thriller set in the Hamptons.

Rosenfelt, David, *Dead Center*, Mysterious Press. \$24.95. Murder in an ultra-secretive religious community.

Riggs, Cynthia, *Indian Pipes*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$22.95. Victoria Trumbull, 92-year-old police deputy, investigates murder on Martha's Vineyard.

Roberts, John Maddox, *SPQR X: A Point In Law*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95.

Decius Caecilius Metullus is accused of corruption in Robert's latest Roman historical

Shepard, Karen, *Don't I Know You?*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Over the course of 12 years, the unsolved murder of a single mother has a devastating effect on three people, all of whom suspect that a loved one is the murderer.

Spiegelman, Ian, *Welcome to Yesterday*, Miramax Books. \$23.95. This noir thriller is set in the world of New York gossip and introduces Leon Koch, a young reporter, who works for the city's most powerful gossip column.

Stansberry, Domenic, *The Big Boom*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Dante Mancuso, ex-cop, is working for a private investigator on a missing persons case, which quickly becomes a case of homicide.

Stewart, Mariah, *Final Truth*, Ballantine. \$19.95. The conclusion of Stewart's Truth series.

Wall, Kathryn R., *Bishop's Reach*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Bay Tanner, her partner Erik Whiteside, and the Judge investigate when a local escort accuses one of her clients of raping her.

Zerries, A.J., *The Lost Van Gogh*, Forge. \$24.95. When a Van Gogh painting turns up at the Metropolitan Museum of Art like an ordinary package, NYPD Major Case Squad detective Clay Ryder gets the case.

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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