

BOOKAHOLIC

For the Mystery Addict

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WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

***ONE GOOD TURN*, Kate Atkinson, Little Brown. \$24.99**

Hallelujah! Atkinson has brought back Jackson Brodie, introduced in the extraordinarily good *Case Histories*. Jackson is in Edinburgh, where his girlfriend is taking part in that city's famous summer arts festival, when he witnesses road rage in action. A car bumps another, one driver is brutally attacked, and a chain of events is set off that will involve Brodie as well as a successful crime novelist, the wife of a real estate tycoon, and a female detective. I cannot, in all honesty, say that this is as good as *Case Histories*, but what could be? Instead, it is a continuation of what I hope will be a long series featuring the charming Brodie. If that should be the case, this will surely be one of the very best series coming out of the UK right now. The US edition will not be available until the end of September/beginning of October. The UK edition and true first edition is available this month.

***THE THIRTEENTH TALE*, Diane Setterfield, Atria Books. \$26.00**

Vida Winter is the best-selling author of a series of popular books and Margaret Lea is a young antiquarian bookseller who has also penned a minor biography. So when Winter asks Lea to write her biography, Lea is surprised and reluctant. But a letter to Lea from the reclusive writer convinces her to take on the task: Vida Winter has promised to tell Margaret Lea the truth about her extraordinary life and together they embark on a journey that will also shed a troubling light on Lea's own past. This haunting novel has been compared to *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Rebecca*; while it is reminiscent of those stories in its gothic structure, it's not quite up to a place alongside those classics. Nevertheless, a must read for the bibliophile and lovers of the darkly atmospheric.

***TRIPTYCH*, Karin Slaughter, Delacorte. \$25.00**

The aptly named Slaughter takes a break from her series to pen this stand alone which is breathtaking. The paths of three men cross after the sadistic murder of a woman in Atlanta: Michael Ormewood, the police detective on the case; Will Trent from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation; and John Shelley, an ex-con whose past is about to catch up with him. The book is divided into three sections, and after I read the first, my mouth dropped open. I had to go back to make sure I hadn't missed something. Then the twists keep coming. Towards the end of the book when all the twists are done, the story is unable to maintain the high standard set by those first few shocks and it becomes more routine, but, still, this ranks as one of the great summer reads of 2006.

THE RUINS, Scott Smith, Knopf, \$24.95

I thought I would like this book a whole lot better than I did. It has horror, it is accessible, and it comes with a rave from Stephen King. However, *caveat emptor*. A group of young men and women, vacationing in Mexico, decide to accompany a young man they have just met to try and find his brother, who has followed a woman to an archaeological dig. The driver who takes them to their starting off point warns them not to go, but of course, if they listened to him there'd be no book! The horrors that befall this group are indeed horrific and they are well described. However. In order to get to these horrors you, dear reader, must first put up with a group of young, heterosexual, generation x-ers, who drink, talk, have sex, and generally interact in ways that young people do. If your nightmare is to be stuck in an inaccessible place with a group of rampant yuppies – and mine obviously is – skip over these interactions and head straight for the creative ways they are killed off. Your relief will be palpable. This is the Big Summer Read, I hear.

ON MY READING LIST**CALIBRE, Ken Bruen, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$12.95**

In London, a parent gives a public tongue-lashing to a misbehaving child and a parking lot attendant is rude to a series of customers. The next thing either sees is the beginning of his own grisly end. The "Manners Killer," whose cause is the importance of manners, strikes again. But when he starts mailing letters to the Southeast London police squad wherein works Inspector Brant, he will soon find out just how bad manners can get! Brant might or might not agree with the killer's cause but if anybody is going to get away with murder on his patch it will be Brant himself, thank you very much. I'm sorry to see that this is being issued as a paperback original. In that format, it might be missed by some of Bruen's avid fans. Not by this one. And not by you I hope.

THE KEEP, Jennifer Egan, Knopf. \$24.00

Two cousins whose childhood prank changed both their lives, reunite twenty years later to renovate a medieval castle in Eastern Europe. The castle has a bloody history and the men find themselves reenacting the event of their youth with even more catastrophic results. As the horror unfolds, a prisoner in jail for an unnamed crime recounts a chilling story that brings together the crimes of their past and present. This tale of chilling suspense is getting lots of attention.

THE AFGHAN, Frederick Forsyth, Putnam. \$26.95

When British and American intelligence hear about a major Al Qaeda operation, they are instantly on alert, but do not know what to do. They know nothing. Not the what, where, when nor how. What they need is somebody on the inside. That person will be Izmat Khan, a prisoner of Guantanamo Bay and former senior commander of the Taliban. Colonel Mike Martin will try and stave off disaster by passing himself off as Khan – a westerner posing as an Arab among Arabs. It will require extraordinary luck because

nothing will truly be able to prepare Martin for the world he is about to enter. When it comes to espionage and international thrillers, nobody is better than Forsyth.

***COPPER RIVER*, William Kent Krueger, Atria Books. \$24.00**

Former Sheriff Cork O'Connor is back for his sixth outing and he's running for his life. Professional hit men have already shot him in the leg and, desperate, Cork hides out in an old resort owned by his cousin Jewell DuBois in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. When the body of a young girl is found along the banks of Copper River and another teenager vanishes, Cork must choose between helping to solve these mysteries or avoiding the hit men who are getting closer with each hour. This is another of those series that lurk just below the breakout line to bestsellerdom. If you haven't yet discovered it, you're in for a treat.

***THE ALIBI CLUB*, Francine Mathews, Bantam. \$24.00**

When four women, thrown together by chance, make an attempt to smuggle a brilliant scientist and his lethal secrets away from Nazi control, their courage will change the course of history. This story is based on a little-known episode of early World War II and is written by Mathews, who has not only worked as a foreign-policy analyst for the CIA but also writes under her pseudonym, Stephanie Barron, a charming series featuring Jane Austen.

***THE NIGHT GARDENER*, George Pelecanos, Little Brown. \$24.95**

This stand alone from Pelecanos tells the story of three cops and the murder that reunites them. Gus Ramone is a former Internal Affairs investigator now working homicide. His new case involves the death of a local teenager and brings up memories of a series of murders Ramone worked as a patrol cop twenty years earlier with his partner Dan "Doc" Holiday and a detective named T.C. Cook. The crimes, involving local teenage victims, were never solved. Now this new case will bring the three men together and they will try to lay to rest the ghosts that haunt them all. The publisher is touting this as Pelecanos' breakthrough novel. I certainly hope so. Those of us who have been devoted fans for years have always wondered why he doesn't sit on top of the bestseller lists.

***THE MESSENGER*, Daniel Silva, Putnam. \$25.95**

Gabriel Allon, art restorer and spy, is recovering from his showdown with a Palestinian master terrorist, when terrorism finds him once again. An Al Qaeda suspect is killed in London and photographs are found on his computer that lead Israeli intelligence to suspect that Al Qaeda is planning one of its most audacious attacks ever. This is the latest in Silva's series that is proving to be one of the best around.

***THE DEVIL'S FEATHER*, Minette Walters, Knopf. \$24.00**

When five women are brutally murdered in Sierra Leone, Connie Burns, who works for Reuters, suspects a British mercenary who appears to be using the chaos of war to act out his sadistic fantasies. Connie's suspicions fall on deaf ears, but she's determined to expose the man and his secret. The consequences are devastating. I'm hearing that Walters' latest is about as good as anything she has ever written.

FIRST MYSTERIES

***FROZEN*, Lindsay Jayne Ashford, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$22.95**

Profiler Megan Rhys has been asked to advise the police on the murders of two prostitutes. It would seem that the women were victims of two killers working together. But the information doesn't add up for Meg. First in the Megan Rhys series.

***THE GLASS BOOKS OF THE DREAM EATERS*, Gordon Dahlquist, Bantam. \$26.00**

This Victorian thriller opens with a simple note received by Celeste Temple from Roger Bascombe terminating their engagement. Miss Temple would like to know why she has been thrown over so cruelly, and she follows Roger to Harschmort Manor. There she discovers a world both seductive and shocking, and a terrifying conspiracy. This is no doubt going to be one of the most talked about books of the fall.

***LOST ANGEL*, Mike Doogan, Putnam. \$24.95**

Rejoice is a Christian commune set in the icy interior of Alaska. For twenty years this community has thrived, but when the granddaughter of the founder decides to be first the experience the outside world and disappears, the elders must look beyond their village for help. They turn to ex-cop Nik Kane, who has spent seven years in jail for a crime he didn't commit.

***SPECIAL TOPICS IN CALAMITY PHYSICS*, Marisha Pessl, Viking. \$25.95**

Blue van Meer is in her final year of high school at St. Gallway School in Stockton, North Carolina. She moves with a charismatic group of friends and their captivating teacher, Hannah Schneider. But when one of Hannah's friends drowns and then Hannah herself, shockingly, dies, Blue is left to make sense of it all with only her gimlet-eyed instincts and cultural references to guide – or misguide – her. This extraordinary-sounding literary mystery is structured around a syllabus for a Great Works of Literature class and contains ironic visual aids, drawn by the author. Sounds sublime.

NON MYSTERIES OF NOTE

***THE LAST TOWN ON EARTH*, Thomas Mullen, Random House. \$23.95**

Inspired by a little-known historical footnote, this novel is set against the backdrop of the 1918 flu epidemic and World War I. The town of Commonwealth in the Pacific Northwest has voted to quarantine itself against contagion. Guards are posted at the roads leading in and out of town, but when a cold, hungry, and apparently ill soldier presents himself begging for sanctuary, the encounter that ensues will reverberate throughout the town until every value is threatened. This is the author's first novel.

NEWS FROM THE UK

ONE GOOD TURN, Kate Atkinson, Doubleday.

See review, above (page 1).

GRAVE DOUBTS, Elizabeth Corley, Allison & Busby

Sergeant Louise Nightingale is asked to be bait in a sting designed to trap the prime suspect in a series of killings. But everything goes wrong and Nightingale finds herself in the nightmare from which she tried to protect others.

QUEEN OF THE NIGHT, Paul Doherty, Headline

In the summer of 314, Rome is shocked by a series of violent abductions. Young men and women are being held for ransom. Meanwhile, veteran soldiers who served along the Great Wall in northern Britain are being murdered. Claudia, “agente in rebus politicis” (or spy), is called in to investigate.

SECRET ASSET, Stella Rimington, Heinemann

MI5 Intelligence Officer Liz Carlyle is pulled out of the Counter Terrorist Committee to track a sleeper planted years ago by the IRA. Liz discovers that the sleeper no longer works for the IRA: he has now teamed up with the British-born Al Qaeda supporters and there’s a plot to destroy a major British establishment.

THE RELIGION, Tim Willocks, Jonathan Cape

This historical is set in 1565 when Islam is fighting its most implacable foe, the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. An epic tale of love and war, intrigue and obsession, politics and faith, and high adventure, by the author of *Green River Rising*.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Abbott, Jeff, *Fear*, Dutton. \$24.95. Miles Kendrick, federal witness, is suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorder. Dennis Groote is an ex-FBI agent turned hit man. Their paths cross when Miles stumbles upon a deadly conspiracy – and becomes Groote’s target.

Andrews, Donna, *No Nest for the Wicket*, St. Martin’s Minotaur. \$23.95. Whilst playing “extreme croquet” (don’t ask), Meg Langslow discovers the body of a woman at the bottom of a cliff, setting off another riotous tale of murder.

Bell, Ted, *Jackal*, Atria Books. \$25.95. Secret agent Alex Hawke is back in another white-knuckle thriller.

Bloom, Elizabeth, *The Mortician’s Daughter*, Mysterious Press. \$24.95. A suspended New York City policewoman returns home to investigate the murder of her best friend’s son.

Bowen, Rhys, *Evanly Bodies*, St. Martin’s Minotaur. \$23.95. Welsh constable Evans tries to persuade a Pakistani family not to enforce the custom of arranged marriage for

their daughter. In a seemingly unrelated event, a man is shot to death through the window of his home while eating breakfast.

Brown, Sandra, *Untitled*, Simon & Schuster. \$25.95. Brown's latest story of murder, romance, and betrayal in high society will have a title by the time its released. Unless *Untitled* is, in fact, the title!

Cannell, Stephen J., *White Sister*, St. Martin's Press. \$24.95. Detective Shane Scully takes on the beautiful blonde wife of a powerful hip-hop mogul who just may be at the center of a ruthless conspiracy.

Coben, Harlan, Ed., *Mystery Writers of America Presents Death Do Us Part*, Little Brown. \$25.95. Stories about love, lust and murder by Lee Child, Laura Lippman, Ridley Pearson, Charles Todd and fourteen more of our top mystery writers.

Cox, Elizabeth, *The Slow Moon*, Random House. \$23.95. When a high school sophomore is raped and shocked into amnesia, her boyfriend is tried for a crime he did not commit, and parents and teachers all over the town are suddenly taking a good, hard look at their kids.

Daheim, Mary, *Saks & Violins*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Music, murder and mayhem take center stage in this B&B series.

Gur, Batya, *Murder in Jerusalem*, HarperCollins. \$24.95. The sixth and final novel from the late Israeli crime novelist Gur. Chief Superintendent Michael Ohayon has spent his career surrounded by horrific crimes, but nothing has ever disturbed him more than the murder of Tirzah Rubin and what that murder reveals.

Jance, J.A., *Dead Wrong*, Wm. Morrow. \$25.95. Sheriff Joanna Brady, coping with the impending birth of her second child as well as a staff shortage, is confronted with two serious crimes. First the body of an unidentified man is found in the desert, then one of Joanna's officers is brutally attacked and left for dead.

Johnson, Dorothy, *The White Tower*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. A young man's addiction to a role-playing Internet game has led to his death. His suicide is a bizarre echo of his chilling execution in the game. But where do blame and responsibility lie?

Joss, Morag, *Puccini's Ghosts*, Delacorte Press. \$22.00. In the summer of 1960 fifteen-year-old Lila dreams of escape from her parents' home. When Uncle George, a music teacher from London, decides to stage an amateur production of Puccini's *Turandot*, she gets her chance. But for Lila, reality and fantasy fuse into a dangerous mixture.

Keating, H.R.F., *One Man and His Bomb*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Detective Superintendent Harriet Martens receive a phone call telling her that her twin sons have been the victims of a bombing. Despite this tragedy, Harriet is asked to stop a threat that could cause the deaths of millions.

Kellerman, Faye, *The Garden of Eden and Other Criminal Delights*, Warner Books. \$24.95. This volume contains Peter Decker and Rina Lazarus short stories, including three never-before-published short mysteries.

MacBride, Stuart, *Dying Light*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. In Aberdeen, Scotland, Detective Sergeant Logan MacRae has been relegated to the "Screw-up Squad" after a sting operation he was running left an officer dead. Determined to prove his worth, MacRae dedicates himself to two baffling cases.

McInerny, Ralph, *The Prudence of Flesh*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Gregory Barret, a classmate of Father Dowling, left the priesthood twenty-five years ago. Now, a

woman is bringing a multi-million dollar suit against him, alleging he sexually exploited her as a child.

Maron, Margaret, *Winter's Child*, Mysterious Press. \$24.95. In the twelfth installment of this series, Judge Deborah Knott's new marriage will be tested as she and her husband are drawn into a hunt for his missing ex-wife and son.

Marston, Edward, *The Princess of Denmark*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. In this Elizabethan Theater Mystery featuring Nicholas Bracewell, the troupe is embroiled in political intrigue and religious dissension.

Mills, Kyle, *The Second Horseman*, St. Martin's Press. \$24.95. Richard Scanlon, former FBI agent, enlists the help of a professional thief to steal \$250 million in order to bid on twelve nuclear warheads put on the market by a Ukrainian crime organization.

Minichino, Camille, *The Oxygen Murder*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. The eighth installment of the Periodic Table Mystery series.

Powers, Tim, *Three Days To Never*, Wm. Morrow. \$25.95. When Albert Einstein told Franklin Roosevelt in 1929 that the atomic bomb was possible, he did not tell him about a bigger, even more horrific discovery, which remained a secret...until now.

Ripley, W.L., *Pressing the Bet*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Ex-secret service agent Cole Springer has money and time on his hands. L.A. grifter "Spider" John Jupree has a plan to relieve Springer of that extra cash. But Springer isn't that easy a mark.

Siegel, James, *Deceit*, Warner Books. \$24.95. A disgraced journalist stumbles upon an unimaginable conspiracy – but will anyone believe him?

Steinhauer, Olen, *Liberation Movements*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. It is 1975 and one of the People's Militia homicide investigators is on a plane bound for Istanbul. The plane is hijacked, but before the terrorists' demands can be met, the plane explodes in midair. The latest in Steinhauer's political/historical novels.

Tracy, P.J., *Snow Blind*, Putnam. \$24.95. The Monkeewrench team and Detectives Magozzi and Rolseth of the Minneapolis Police Department investigate the deaths of local cops.

Vachss, Andrew, *Mask Market*, Pantheon. \$24.95. Burke stalks the dark alleys of his past in search of a vanished woman...and some truths about himself.

Whyte, Jack, *Knights of the Black and White*, Putnam. \$24.95. This is the first book in The Templar Trilogy which traces the rise and fall of the Knights Templar. For those of us who just cannot get enough.

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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