

BOOKAHOLIC

For the Mystery Addict

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WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

CANDY FROM STRANGERS, Mark Coggins, Bleak House. \$23.95

Several years ago I read the first August Riordan mystery, *The Immortal Game*. This was followed by *Vulture Capital*. I read that too. I was convinced that this series was going to be a hit. The writing zips along, is witty; the setting is San Francisco; and August Riordan plays a mean jazz bass. However, Coggins is one of those writers who, like so many others, seems to fall through the cracks of folks' reading lists. Coggins knows his roots and he knows his town, pays homage to both and, in so doing, creates a fine PI novel. For those of you looking for the writer you may have missed, here's a third chance to discover Coggins.

WILD FIRE, Nelson DeMille, Warner Books. \$26.99

DeMille brings back John Corey, who now works on the Federal Anti-Terrorist Task Force, and his wife, FBI agent Kate Mayfield. Here's the premise: the reason there has not been another major attack on the United States since 9/11 is because of Operation Wild Fire. If an attack takes place on American soil it will trigger a response, which no sitting president will have the power to stop, that will have catastrophic effects on every major capital in the Arab world. So it is in the interests of those governments to cooperate with the US and insure that an attack does not take place. But supposing there is a small group of highly placed individuals in the US who see the economic advantage of having that attack take place? DeMille, as usual, does a wonderful, un-put-downable job.

SILENCE OF THE GRAVE, Arnaldur Indridson, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$22.95

This thriller won the CWA Golden Dagger Award when it was published in the UK. It is the second of Indridason's books to be translated into English after *Jar City* and, together with that book, heralds the arrival of a talented writer who is going to be compared to Henning Mankell. The spare prose and the black and white landscape will bring Mankell to mind, but Indridason sets his mysteries in his native Iceland and this one opens with a chilling line: "He knew at once it was a human bone, when he took it from the baby who was sitting on the floor chewing it." That should draw you into this story! Inspector Erlandur investigates a horrifying crime in Reykjavik that goes back decades.

THORN, Vena Cork, Headline

I came late to this series (Cork has already written the third) but I'm delighted to have found it. Rosa Thorn has one of the most compelling voices in fiction and I was

mesmerized. At the beginning of the story, Rosa has just lost her husband in a traffic accident and she and her two children must start again. Rosa has a new job and her children have a new school but in the neighborhood where they live strange things begin to happen. At first Rosa hardly notices, but gradually her unease turns to fear for her safety and that of her children. It is fairly easy for the reader to figure out what is happening, but that didn't take away from the suspense of this novel. Nor did the fact that Cork takes a very complicated plot and drives it off a cliff. This sometimes happens with first-time authors. They simply put too much into the plot then cannot control it as they try to weave the threads together. But this series has so much promise I simply didn't care and cannot wait to read the next installment. Sorry to rave about a book that is going to be hard to find. I believe it is only published in the UK. In hardcover and in paperback.

ON MY READING LIST

***ECHO PARK*, Michael Connelly, Little Brown. \$26.99**

The US edition of the latest Harry Bosch is published this month. Just wanted to remind you in case it had slipped your mind. As if!

***BOOK OF THE DEAD*, Patricia Cornwell, Putnam. \$26.95**

I keep stubbornly putting Cornwell's novels featuring Dr. Kay Scarpetta on my "to read" list even though I have not read one in several years. I began to get bogged down in the plots, some of which carried over for several books. Here, Scarpetta moves to the city of Charleston in South Carolina and opens a private forensic pathology practice with her colleagues, who include Pete Marino and her niece, Lucy. Together, they offer expert crime-scene investigation and autopsies to communities that lack local access to competent death investigation and modern technology. I'm hopelessly behind, but I'm keeping Cornwell on my active list. She's too good not to come up with a real winner soon. Maybe this is it.

***COLLECTED STORIES*, Roald Dahl, Everyman's Library. \$30.00**

This is the only hardcover edition of Dahl's stories for adults. His stories are funny, grotesque, and just downright weird. His ability to remind us of what lurks just beneath the surface of the ordinary makes him a favorite of mine.

***WHAT CAME BEFORE HE SHOT HER*, Elizabeth George, HarperCollins. \$26.95**

This is a departure from the Thomas Lynley series, and it begins with three orphaned children, left at the home of their aunt who has very little time for them. The children must fend for themselves in a dangerous neighborhood. Then the wife of a prominent Scotland Yard detective is gunned down on her doorstep.

LISEY'S STORY, Stephen King, Scribner. \$28.00

Lisey Landon lost her husband two years ago after a twenty-five year marriage. Scott Landon was a best selling novelist (red flag here!) but he also had secrets. Lisey learned from him about books and why its sometimes better not to look into mirrors after sundown. Or to eat after midnight. Or to remember certain places. Now that Scott is dead, Lisey will have to remember some of the things she's suppressed. Every marriage has a light and dark side. Lisey must confront both.

HUNDRED-DOLLAR BABY, Robert P. Parker, Putnam. \$24.95

Once upon a time there was a girl named April Kyle, a beautiful girl who turned to prostitution to escape her family life. Longtime Spenser fans will remember her from 1982's *Ceremony* and *Taming a Sea-Horse* when she once again needed the Boston PI's help. Now she's resurfaced as a well-established madam with a very successful business. But somebody is trying to take it away from her and she needs Spenser.

FIRST MYSTERIES

A CORPSE IN THE KORYO, James Church, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95

This mystery, set in North Korea, introduces Inspector O, a state security officer. He finds himself investigating a case which at first seems simple enough, but soon has him way off his department's turf. This is an alien world where the rules are so enigmatic they will puzzle not only the reader but also Inspector O.

SHARP OBJECTS, Gillian Flynn, Shaye Areheart Books. \$24.00

After eight years, the murders of two preteen girls – a year apart – bring reporter Camille Preaker back to her hometown and her dysfunctional family. Installed in her family's Victorian mansion, Camille is haunted by the childhood tragedy she has spent her whole life trying to forget. As Camille works to uncover the truth about the murders, she keeps coming to dead ends and must unravel her own past and what happened to her years before.

MORNING SPY, EVENING SPY, Colin Mackinnon, St. Martin's Pres. \$23.95

An Afghan resistance fighter, once on the CIA payroll, Kareem is now working with al-Qaeda and the Taliban. CIA officer Paul Patterson sets out to track him down. Meanwhile, Muhammad Atta and other conspirators are preparing their attack on the World Trade Center. Patterson comes closer and closer to Atta. Inspired by *The 9/11 Report*, Mackinnon has created the world of the CIA and the terrorists and is being compared to John Le Carre.

NON MYSTERIES OF NOTE

***RESCUE MISSIONS*, Frederick Busch, W.W. Norton. \$24.95**

This is the final collection by the late author who received numerous awards for his short stories.

***THIRTEEN MOONS*, Charles Frazier, Random House. \$25.95**

This is Frazier's first book since he won the National Book Award for *Cold Mountain*. At the age of twelve, Will is given a horse, a key, and a map, and sent into the Indian Nation to run a trading post. Will's life is set against nineteenth century America and the Cherokee Indian nation and their vanishing way of life.

***THE SECRET LIFE OF HOUDINI*, William Kalush & Larry Sloman, Atria Books. \$27.95**

Alright, it is a mystery. But it is also a biography of Harry Houdini that brings to light little-known facts about his life. The United States and England recruited Houdini to be an active agent and in exchange for his cooperation, these governments facilitated his rise to the top of the world stage. After the war, Houdini took on his most dangerous mission when he became obsessed with exposing Spiritualist mediums as frauds. However, the Spiritualists were a powerful adversary; an organized network of fanatics, led by Arthur Conan Doyle, that worked to silence Houdini forever.

***THUNDERSTRUCK*, Erik Larson, Crown. \$25.95**

Edgar Award winner Larson tells the stories of two men: Hawley Crippen, a doctor and murderer, and Guglielmo Marconi, the genius who invented the wireless. Set in Edwardian London, Larson's story begins with Dr. Crippen's efforts to rid himself of his wife in order to enjoy life with his beautiful mistress. Meanwhile Marconi struggles to perfect wireless communication. Cut to the chase. After killing his wife, Crippen almost eluded capture by fleeing the country on an ocean liner. A Scotland Yard Inspector followed on a second liner and, through the magic of Marconi's new technology, was able to apprehend the pair.

***THE BEAUTIFUL CIGAR GIRL*, Daniel Stashower, Dutton. \$25.95**

Some excellent true crime titles are being published this month (see above). Here's another which tells of the murder of Mary Rogers in July of 1841. Rogers was a cigar salesgirl who had been missing for three days. When her body was found, it sent Manhattan into a frenzy, and in the months that followed, American journalism sank into lurid sensationalism. But the murder remained unsolved. A year later, a struggling writer named Edgar Allan Poe decided to take on the case and sent his famous detective, C. Auguste Dupin, to investigate.

NEWS FROM THE UK

FIRST LADY, Michael Dobbs, Headline

Virginia Edge is attractive, self-sufficient, and ambitious. Knowledge is power and she gets it from the Other Half Club, a group of Opposition Parliamentary wives and the gay network at Westminster. This is the story of Virginia's transformation from dutiful political wife to masterful manipulator.

DEVIL IN AMBER: A LUCIFER BOX NOVEL, Mark Gatiss, Simon & Schuster

Lucifer Box is embroiled in a plot that has him spying on fascist leader Olympus Mon, charged with murder, and escaping north to the convent of St. Bede where he meets a defrocked nun, Agnus Daye, from whom he learns some disturbing news.

DEPTHS, Henning Mankell, Harvill Press

Not a crime novel. Mankell delves deep into the male psyche here.

AT SOME DISPUTED BARRICADE, Anne Perry, Headline

It is 1917 and the trenches are deep with mud and rotting corpses. When an ignorant Major is murdered, his father, a General, demands that the killer be brought to justice. Fourth in the WWI series.

NAMING THE DEAD, Ian Rankin, Orion

It is July 2005 and the G8 leaders have gathered in Scotland. The police are busy with demonstrations but Detective Inspector Rebus has been sidelined, until the apparent suicide of an MP coincides with clues that a serial killer may be on the loose.

THE WATER'S LOVELY, Ruth Rendell, Hutchinson

Ismay lives in the house in Clapham where her stepfather drowned. Nobody talks about it now, but secrets hang in the air like dust. With painful inevitability the truth will emerge.

QUALITY OF MERCY, David Roberts, Constable

Featuring Lord Edward Corinth and Verity Browne.

NAKED TO THE HANGMAN, Andrew Taylor, Hodder & Stoughton

When a retired police officer is found dead in Lydmouth Castle, Detective Inspector Thornhill comes under suspicion. His wife Edith and former lover Jill Francis join forces in an uneasy alliance to help him.

The US Edition of One Good Turn, Kate Atkinson's second novel featuring Jackson Brodie, has just been published. Little Brown. \$24.99

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Baldacci, David, *The Collectors*, Warner Books. \$26.99. In Washington D.C. prominent people are dying. Meanwhile a gifted con woman assembles a team to pull off one of the most audacious scams ever, against one of the most dangerous men in the world.

Bartoy, Mitchell, *The Devil's Only Friend*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Pete Caudill gets involved in the corrupt wartime maneuverings of the powerful Detroit military industrial machine in 1944.

Becker, Lucille F., *George Simenon*, Allison & Busby. \$24.95. The life and complete works of the creator of Inspector Maigret are examined in this new biography filled with literary analyses. Nonfiction.

Benjamin, Carol Lea, *The Hard Way*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Private investigator Rachel Alexander and her pit bull Dashiell investigate the murder of a wealthy businessman – pushed to his death in the subway.

Brown, Rita Mae, *The Hounds and the Fury*, Ballantine. \$24.95. Book Five of Brown's Foxhunting series set in the Virginia countryside involves missing money and a missing body.

Burke, Jan, *Kidnapped*, Simon & Schuster. \$24.00. Irene Kelly and her husband Detective Frank Harriman are back in this forensic thriller.

Bush, Nancy, *Electric Blue*, Kensington. \$19.95. PI Jane Kelly is waist-deep in ugly secrets, a double murder and a wealthy and dysfunctional family.

Clarke, Susanna, *The Ladies of Grace Adieu and Other Stories*, Bloomsbury. \$23.95. A collection of eight fantastic stories all set in the same alternate England depicted in *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell*.

Conant, Susan, *Gaits of Heaven*, Berkley. \$22.95. Dog trainer Holly Winter is enlisted to train a new age couple's Aussie Huskapoo.

Doherty, P.C., *The Assassins of Isis*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Ambition, politics, and murder set in ancient Egypt.

Druett, Joan, *Run Afoul*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Wiki Coffin must clear his father's name of murder in this third seafaring mystery set aboard the U.S. Exploring Expedition.

DuBrul, Jack, *Havoc*, Dutton. \$24.95. This thriller moves from the German zeppelin Hindenburg in 1937 to the Central African Republic seven decades later and back again, as one man tries to find out the truth behind three thousand years of legend.

Evanovich, Janet, *Motor Mouth*, HarperCollins. \$26.96. Alexandra "Barney" Barnaby gets mixed up with a hot race car driver and battles a new set of bad guys in the second in this series.

Flynn, Vince, *Untitled*, Atria Books. \$25.95. Two weeks before the presidential election, Vice President Brian Baxter is trailing in the polls. After delivering a speech at Georgetown University, Baxter's motorcade is ambushed by a group of terrorists. Enter CIA operative Mitch Rapp.

Freeman, Brian, *Stripped*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Detective Jonathan Stride discovers there are only two ways to win in Las Vegas: you can hit the jackpot or you can get stripped. Follow-up to Edgar-nominated *Immoral*.

Gay, William, *Twilight*, MacAdam Cage. \$25.00. In this southern gothic thriller, two teens discover that not only was their late father not actually buried in the casket they bought, but the undertaker has also been grotesquely manipulating dead bodies.

Grabien, Deborah, *Cruel Sister*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Musician Ringan Laine agrees to act as adviser to Penny's brother and his wife as the couple builds a reproduction Elizabethan mansion. Ghostly visits and strange noises ensue.

Greenwood, Kerry, *Murder on the Ballarat Train*, Poisoned Pen. \$24.95. Amid rumors of white slavery and black magic, Miss Phryne Fisher searches for clues in the chloroform deaths on board a vacation train. Set in the 1920s.

Greer, Robert, *The Fourth Perspective*, PGW. \$24.95. Antique store owner C.J. Floyd will need all his bounty hunter skills when a book in his shop reveals a 19th Century photograph that people will kill for.

Herron, Mick, *Why We Die*, Carroll & Graf. \$25.95. Struggling London PI Zoe Boehm gladly helps a robbed jeweler for the reward. But there is a reason the man can't go to the police, and the reason is deadly.

Hewson, David, *The Lizard's Bite*, Delacorte. \$22.00. Nic Costa and his partner investigate the fire that claimed two lives at a Murano glass factory.

Hughes, Howard, *Crime Wave*, Palgrave Macmillan. \$22.95. A guide to the great crime movies, focusing on some of the very best including *The Maltese Falcon*, *Point Blank*, *The Godfather*, *Ocean's Eleven*, and more. Illustrated. Nonfiction.

Jones, Merry, *The River Killings*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. On vacation, Zoe Hayes takes a sculling class with her best friend. When the boat capsizes, they find themselves flailing about amongst floating corpses.

Kalla, Daniel, *Rage Therapy*, Forge. \$24.95. When a Seattle psychiatrist who specializes in anger management is found battered to death, fellow shrink and homicide profiler Dr. Joel Ashman finds himself the next target.

Ludlum, Robert, *The Bancroft Strategy*, St. Martin's Press. \$26.95. Two people face a shadowy organization working to twist global politics to their own unsavory ends.

Maitland, Barry, *No Trace*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Detective Chief Inspector David Brock and Detective Sergeant Kathy Kolla hunt down the kidnapper of a six-year-old girl.

Mayor, Archer, *The Second Mouse*, Mysterious Press. \$24.99. In the latest Joe Gunther, two separate stories collide: the investigation of an apparent suicide and the story of a dangerous threesome on a crime spree.

Miller, Lynn C., *Death of a Department Chair*, University of Wisconsin. \$24.95. In this satirical whodunit, Professor Miriam Held looks back on the previous year when she was suspected of killing a controversial female chair of her department, who was also her former lover.

Nelson, Mark and Bayliss, Sarah, *Exquisite Corpse*, Bullfinch Press. \$35.00. The latest book to take on the Black Dahlia murder presents a fascinating new take on the most notorious unsolved murder case of the 20th century. Nonfiction.

Oates, Joyce Carol, *Black Girl/White Girl*, Ecco Press. \$25.95. Fifteen years after the mysterious death of Minette Swift, a black girl enrolled as a scholarship student in an exclusive, mostly white liberal arts college, her former roommate begins an unofficial inquiry into her death.

O'Shaughnessy, Perri, *Keeper of the Keys*, Delacorte. \$25.00. When Leigh Jackson disappears, her husband seems clueless. Has she run away? Was she a crime victim? While he tries to discover what Leigh's disappearance might mean, her best friend begins to investigate him.

Randisi, Robert J., *Everybody Kills Somebody Sometime*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. When Dean Martin begins receiving threats in Las Vegas while filming Ocean's 11, Eddie G., pit boss at the Sands Casino, steps in to help. First in the "Rat Pack" mystery series.

Salter, Anna, *Truth Catcher*, Consortium. \$24.00. Forensic psychologist Breeze Copen has a gift – she not only hears the truth, she sees it. When she looks at born-again Daryl Collins, all she sees are lies.

Spencer-Fleming, Julia, *All Mortal Flesh*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$22.95. Police Chief Russ van Alstyne doesn't expect gossip in the town about his carefully contained feelings for the Reverend Clare Fergusson, and he certainly doesn't expect to be the prime suspect when his wife is found murdered in their home.

Torres, Steven, *Missing in Precinct Puerto Rico*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. What begins as a simple search for a lost child snowballs into a hair-raising struggle between small-town cops and international villains.

Truman, Margaret, *Murder at the Opera*, Ballantine. \$24.95. An attempt on the President's life on opening night at the Kennedy Center where it's hard to tell if the greatest actors are on stage or sitting in the best seats.

Ward, Robert, *Four Kinds of Rain*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$22.95. Psychiatrist Bob Wells tries to help his patient Emile Bardan, who is convinced that someone is trying to steal a legendary mask which Emile says is worth millions. Something inside Wells snaps. He decides to steal the mask himself.

Woods, Stuart, *Short Straw*, Putnam. \$25.95. Woods reintroduces Ed Eagle (from *Santa Fe Rules*) who fell in love and married Barbara Kennerly – against his better judgment. Turns out he was right. On the morning of his fortieth birthday, Ed awakes to find Barbara, and all his money, gone.

Xiaolong, Qiu, *A Case of Two Cities*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Inspector Chen Cao of the Shanghai Police Bureau is summoned by an official of the party to take the lead in a corruption investigation. The case will take Inspector Chen from Shanghai to the United States.

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