

BOOKAHOLIC

For the Mystery Addict

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WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

***THE RIGHTEOUS MEN*, Sam Bourne, HarperCollins. \$24.95**

British journalist Jonathan Freedland has changed his name to pen this thriller about a series of seemingly unrelated deaths. Will Monroe, a journalist for The New York Times, starts to follow the story, but he's young and untested and it takes a while for him to realize what the connection is: the victims have all performed a single act of exceptional kindness. As Will investigates further, the stakes are upped when his wife is kidnapped and he finds himself in New York's ultra-orthodox Jewish community. This story took some interesting, and surprising, turns and my only criticism is that the story stayed too long with Will's investigation and not long enough with the lives and murders of the victims. But you know me well enough by now to understand that a high body count enhances my enjoyment.

KEN BRUEN

Had my own Ken Bruen Fest this past month:

***AMERICAN SKIN*, Ken Bruen, Justin Charles. \$24.95**

I think this book may still be floating under the radar. It certainly came as a surprise to me, but what a welcome one! This is Bruen's first story set in the United States as well as Ireland, and it is obviously the start of a series. Don't miss it.

***CALIBRE*, Ken Bruen, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$12.95**

This paperback original features Inspector Brant who is my favorite Bruen character. Brant is up against the "Manners Killer" who likes to make his point about good manners by killing those who don't have them.

***THE ABORTIONIST'S DAUGHTER*, Elizabeth Hyde, Knopf. \$23.95**

There are times when, having finished a book, I am hard put to describe what it is I loved about it. It's not that the writing is so lyrical or the story so well told or the subject matter so important. It is an intangible that combines those elements but in the end just simply adds up to "a great read." This is one of those books. The story is simple. Doctor Diana Duprey is the Director of the Center for Reproductive Choice in a small town in Colorado. She is found dead by her pool. Although the cause of death is a blow to the head, which could have been caused by a fall, the police suspect murder. The doctor's daughter, Megan, is called home from school, and she and her father deal with the death as the police sort through the suspects, a list that, given the doctor's views on abortion, is very long. Whodunit? The pages just keep turning.

ON MY READING LIST

***THE BOOK OF LOST THINGS*, John Connolly, Atria Books. \$20.00**

In his bedroom, twelve-year-old David is angry, confused, and alone. He has lost his mother and he prefers the company of his books. These are the myths and fairytales that his dead mother always loved, but soon David is propelled into an imaginary world that becomes frighteningly real. This is a must for Connolly fans I hear. Don't let the subject matter lull you into thinking he has written a book for young adults.

***MORE TWISTED*, Jeffrey Deaver, Simon & Schuster. \$24.95**

Deaver, who is an award-winning short story writer as well as an acclaimed novelist, gathers sixteen of his stories, including a new story featuring Lincoln Rhyme and Amelia Sachs.

***CRITIQUE OF CRIMINAL REASON*, Michael Gergorio, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95**

Detective Hanno Stiffeniis arrives in the city of Konigsberg to help find the culprit in a string of murders. Are the deaths part of a plot formed by Napoleon's spies to undermine the Prussian king, or the work of a solitary unknown killer? He will be helped by his mentor Immanuel Kant. It has been years since Kant published his *Critique of Pure Reason*, bringing him fame, but he must now apply his theories not to the average man but to a serial killer. Not the biggest fan of historical mysteries, I am intrigued by the use here of one of the great philosophers.

***NATURE GIRL*, Carl Hiaasen, Knopf. \$25.95**

The plot of this story as outlined in the publisher's catalog is guaranteed to cross your eyes. Let me just sum up: Honey Santana, Boyd Shreave, his mistress Eugenie, Piejack, Fry Sammy Tigertail, and a Florida State coed all end up on Dismal Key off the coast of Southeast Florida. If you are a Hiaasen fan that's all you need to know. If you're not, you might want to move on.

***THE SHAPE SHIFTER*, Tony Hillerman, HarperCollins. \$26.95**

Joe Leaphorn of the Navajo Tribal Police is now retired, but he can be lured back by his former colleagues to help with an occasional puzzling crime. But this time, the problem is with an old investigation of his involving the disappearance of a Navajo rug. Jim Chee and Bernie Manuelito are also featured in this sure-to-be classic which was announced for publication earlier in the year.

***THE SECRET LOVERS*, Charles McCarry, Overlook Press. \$24.95**

In West Berlin, a courier delivers the handwritten manuscript of a dissident Russian novel to Paul Christopher. Minutes later, the courier's spine is snapped when he's hit by a passing black sedan. In Rome, Christopher's wife, Cathy takes a famous film director as a lover. These two events set in motion a spiral of operational and personal intrigue that

leads Christopher from the cafes of old Europe to the front lines of the Cold War in the Congo. Long out of print, this novel will be welcomed by all espionage lovers.

ASK THE PARROT, Richard Stark, Mysterious Press. \$23.99

This picks up where *Nobody Runs Forever* left off. Master criminal Parker is still on the run from a heist gone terribly wrong when he meets a quiet but angry recluse who has only a silent parrot for company. Tom Lindahl saves Parker from the law while involving him in a dubious, dangerous, but potentially profitable scheme.

THE BLONDE, Duane Swierczynski, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95

Jack Eisley is sitting at an airport bar chatting to a pretty young blonde. It's just harmless flirting until the blonde leans forward and tells Jack she's poisoned his drink. She's running for her life, she tells him, and she must have someone with her at all times. That would be Jack, if he wants the antidote. Psycho! Thinks Jack, but as the violent night wears on, he begins to believe her. Swierczynski is the author of *The Wheelman*, another thrill-a-minute breath-taking original.

FIRST MYSTERIES

MURDER 101, Maggie Barbieri, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95

English professor Alison Bergeron discovers that her car has been stolen. When she finally arrives at St. Thomas, a college in the Bronx, she finds two homicide detectives waiting for her. The good news is that they found her car; the bad news is that in the trunk is the body of one of her students.

A SAFE PLACE FOR DYING, Jack Frederickson, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95

An extortion letter arrives at Crystal Waters, one of Chicago's wealthiest gated communities. Then a mansion blows up. The residents want answers fast before another zillion dollar residence is rubble. They hire former businessman Dek Elstrom, once a Crystal Waters resident himself, but now down on his luck.

BLIND SUBMISSION, Debra Ginsberg, Shaye Areheart. \$23.95

When Blue Moon Books in the Bay Area is forced out of business, Angel Robinson, the manager, counts herself lucky to land a job as the assistant to Lucy Fiamma, literary agent to the stars. Then she receives a chapter from a mysterious manuscript featuring a horrible boss and her long-suffering assistant. Lucy orders Angel to whip it into shape and soon the anonymous chapters, mailed in one at a time, take a disturbing turn as fiction and reality start to blur.

BLOODY HARVESTS, Richard Kunzmann, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95

Detective Harry Mason investigates what appears to be the work of a serial killer. Or it could be the work of a cult leader attempting to make "medicine" from children's body

parts. Harry sets out into the forests of South African myth and legends with his partner, Jacob Tshabalala, a cop and a tribesman. When a second murder occurs, the two of them are led even deeper into a chilling spiritual underworld in the slums of Johannesburg.

NEWS FROM THE UK

***SKIN AND BLISTER*, Victoria Blake, Orion**

When a student is found hanging in his rooms at St. Barnabas College, Oxford, it looks like suicide. A week later Sam Falconer's brother disappears, and Sam begins to see a disturbing connection between the two events.

***HEART OF ICE*, Alys Clare, Hodder & Stoughton**

In January 1194, a sick man is on his way to Hawkenlye Abbey hoping for a miracle cure. He sees a repeat of the miraculous sighting of the Virgin Mary that led to the founding of the Abbey. She approaches him. She is the last thing he will ever see.

***SWITCHBACK*, Matthew Klein, Orion**

Timothy Van Bender has it all. He's a Yale graduate, a successful hedge fund manager with a beautiful wife and a very flirtatious secretary. But on the morning Timothy wakes to discover that his hedge fund has lost \$24 million on a bad bet against the Japanese yen, his life changes. His wife commits suicide, and his secretary claims to the police that *she* is his wife. His life is obviously out of control.

***REBEL HEART*, Martin Stephens, Time Warner**

Elizabeth I is getting old. Who will claim the throne when she dies? Young Henry Gresham, gentleman spy, with his manservant and beautiful ward Jane, is commanded by Robert Cecil to deliver a mysterious letter. Henry is soon swept up in a battle for power.

COLLECTING

I recently received a couple of queries regarding authors using pseudonyms. The authors in question were Tim Cockey who wrote a book this year under the name Richard Hawke, and Lisa Miscione who started a new series as Lisa Unger.

The writers of these e-mails both felt that they had been duped into thinking that the new books by these authors were first novels, and they seemed to think that it was the publishers who were to blame for passing them off to collectors as such.

Whoa! While publishers can be quite creative about trying to stimulate sales (it is what they are supposed to do, after all), we collectors may think that we register on the radar more than we do. We are a relatively small group and probably appear as no more than a

blip on the horizon of publishing plans. It is quite normal for authors to use pseudonyms when writing in a different genre or trying to increase sales.

The question here should be: how do we know if an author has written a book under a different name? We don't. But reputable dealers and independent bookstores often do. They have relationships with the authors in question and they spend much of their time trying to discover first time authors for their customers as well as making sure they know what is and what is not a true first issue.

My self-serving point? Track down those dealers and bookstores and give them your undying loyalty.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Block, Brett Ellen, *The Lightning Rule*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. Corruption, racism, justice, and honor collide in this novel, set in Newark, New Jersey, in 1967.

Cash, Dixie, *I Gave You My Heart, but You Sold It Online*, Wm. Morrow. \$21.95. The Domestic Equalizers are back with another adventure from the land of tall tales and big hair (that would be Texas).

Chan, Cassandra, *Village Affairs*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Scotland Yard Detective Sergeant Jack Gibbons and his friend Phillip Bethancourt team up to solve the murder of a wealthy bachelor.

Maturro, Claire, *Bone Valley*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Sarasota Lawyer Lilly Cleary defends two guys accused of libeling oranges. Lilly's case goes from wacky to deadly when someone blows up one of her clients in front of her.

Page, Katherine Hall, *The Body in the Ivy*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Caterer and part-time sleuth Faith Fairchild is lured to a private island to help solve a very odd murder. A reimagining of the Agatha Christie classic *And Then There Were None*.

Patterson, James, *Cross*, Little Brown. \$27.99. An Alex Cross thriller in which he has the chance to capture at last the psychopath who murdered his wife Maria.

Perry, Anne, *A Christmas Secret*, Ballantine. \$16.95. Dominic and Clarice Corde, two minor characters from Brunswick Gardens, travel to a hamlet to replace the local vicar who is on holiday. But they discover the vicar murdered and stashed in the cellar.

Poyer, David, *The Threat*, St. Martin's Press. \$24.95. Navy commander Dan Lenson battles threats against the President and the nation.

Rankin, Ian, *Bleeding Hearts*, Little Brown. \$24.99. Michael Weston, gun for hire, is on the run after assassinating a TV reporter. Originally written under the pseudonym Jack Harvey, this is a reprint of one of Rankin's early works.

Robb, J.D., *Born in Death*, Putnam. \$24.95. Eve Dallas must solve the grisly murder of two young lovers, both employees of the same prestigious accounting firm and both brutally killed on the same night. Set in 2060 New York City.

Rowland, Laura Joh, *The Red Chrysanthemum*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Sano Ichiro, a samurai sleuth and the shogun's trusted advisor, becomes a target for treachery. Set in Japan in 1698.

Sington, Philip, *Zoia's Gold*, Scribner. \$26.00. When Madame Zoia, the painter, dies, Marcus Elliot, an art dealer down on his luck, is hired to write the catalog of her work. He begins to unearth secrets.

Thornton, Betsy, *A Whole New Life*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Jenny Williams of Cochise County, Arizona, dies in a car crash and traces of poison are found in her blood. Her husband, a professor is arrested for her murder.

Tremayne, Peter, *Master of Souls*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Sister Fidelma investigates the brutal murder of the Abbess of Faife and the mysterious disappearance of six young female religieuse accompanying her on a short pilgrimage.

Vincenzi, Penny, *Almost A Crime*, The Overlook Press. \$26.95. Tom and Octavia Fleming appear to have the perfect power marriage until an affair leaves their lives in danger. This is no ordinary affair. It will lead to life-threatening terror from which nothing and no-one in the Fleming's charmed circle can escape.

Waller, Robert James, *The Long Night of Winchell Dear*, Shaye Areheart. \$21.00. A classic tale of greed, corruption, and redemption in the American West.

Winegardner, Mark, *The Godfather's Revenge*, Putnam. \$25.95. The third and final installment in Mario Puzo's epic chronicle of the Corleone crime family.

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