

BOOKAHOLIC

For the Mystery Addict

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WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

***VIRGIN LIES*, Roderick Anscombe, St. Martin's Press. \$24.95**

The author, a forensic psychiatrist, has created an interesting character in Dr. Paul Lucas who is an expert at interrogating violent criminals. When a nine-year-old girl disappears, he is called in because the only witness to her disappearance is a homeless schizophrenic woman with an unreliable memory. But she points him in the direction of two people who appear to have no connection to the victim: an elderly retiree and a troubled young man. This thriller examines the ethics and extremes of interrogation and Dr. Lucas must walk a thin line as he tries to solve the riddle of the young girl's disappearance. The result is fascinating. While reading this, I realized that I was missing information concerning Dr. Lucas and his wife. Although not knowing this background did not detract from the main story, I went back to the first book in this series, *The Interview Room*, to get filled in. A fine series.

***THE THIEF OF TIME*, John Boyne, St. Martin's Press. \$24.95**

Matthieu discovered that his body stopped ageing before the end of the eighteenth century. It is 1758 and he is fleeing Paris after witnessing the murder of his mother and his stepfather's execution, and we follow his adventures. Not chronologically I'm delighted to report. I don't know how far I would have gone with this book if Matthieu did not dart around the centuries. We meet him at the end of the twentieth century at the ripe old age of 256, we meet his wives, his nephews, Charlie Chaplin in 1920s, Hollywood, we visit the Great Exhibition of 1851, the French Revolution, the Wall Street Crash and witness other events through the eyes of this remarkable storyteller. The construction of the novel is ingenious. It is a historical tour made not just bearable but exciting and vibrant. This is Boyne's first novel although his subsequent ones, *Crippen* and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, have both been published here.

***THE SECRET OF LOST THINGS*, Sheridan Hay, Doubleday. \$23.95**

This first novel introduces us to Rosemary who, at eighteen, arrives in New York from Tasmania with nothing but her love of books. She takes a job at the Arcade bookstore where she meets the eccentric staff and the collectors who haunt the store. But when she reads a letter from someone seeking to "place" a lost manuscript by Herman Melville, the rivalries and ambitions at the bookstore threaten to get out of control. The mystery here is slim, but this book is so evocative of working in a bookstore that caters to bibliophiles and collectors that it becomes a must for all of us. Hay, who worked at The Strand Bookstore in New York which is the obvious model for the Arcade, manages to mirror all

our eccentricities and just plain weirdness as we search for and fight over those elusive first editions and rare reads that we must add to our collections.

***KINDNESS GOES UNPUNISHED*, Craig Johnson, Viking. \$23.95**

Here's a very pleasant surprise. After reading *The Cold Dish* a couple of years ago, I thought Johnson was one of the most promising writers to come along for some time. Then last year I thought he lost his way with his second Walt Longmire mystery, *Death Without Company*, which I found dense, overly complicated, and ultimately uninteresting. Now it would appear Johnson is back on track as Longmire leaves Wyoming with his friend Henry Standing Bear to visit Philadelphia and his daughter, who has become engaged. When his daughter is attacked and her fiancé denies anything more than a passing romance, now over, Longmire investigates. An excellent, excellent mystery.

***BLIND SPOT*, Terri Persons, Doubleday. \$23.95**

Agent Bernadette Saint Clare is a gifted but embarrassing member of the FBI. Her gift is her ability to use personal effects found at a crime scene to see through a killer's eyes. This second sight is useful but makes her bosses uncomfortable, so, as the story begins, she is assigned to a basement office in St. Paul. Her new boss is aware of Bernadette's gift, which can sometimes mislead, but he's willing to follow her instincts—up to a point. This is a terrific first novel, taut and well-written, but there is a plot twist towards the end that left me with my jaw hanging open. It adds nothing to the story, nor does it take away from the mystery, but I cannot think why it's there. If you figure it out, let me know.

ON MY READING LIST

***NERVE DAMAGE*, Peter Abrahams, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95**

Roy Valois is facing death from a rare respiratory disease. He's been told he has only four months to live and, curious to see how his obituary will read, he and a computer-savvy kid hack into the New York Times. What he discovers rocks his world. His wife, dead for fifteen years, was a brilliant economist who died in a helicopter crash, but according to the paper, Delia worked for the United Nations. Thinking there must be some mistake, Roy starts to investigate and suddenly friends are behaving like strangers and places where Delia worked seem to have gone without a trace.

***HADES*, Russell Andrews, Mysterious Press. \$24.99**

Andrews brings back East End Harbor's police chief, Justin Westwood, in a story that reveals more of Westwood's past than we've been privy to. When a Wall Street tycoon is found murdered on his Hampton estate, the prime suspect would seem to be his adulterous widow. Trouble is, Westwood is the man she's been seeing on the side. As his investigation takes him deep into corporate corruption, Westwood finds himself back in his hometown of Providence, Rhode Island.

CHRISTINE FALLS, Benjamin Black, Henry Holt. \$25.00

Pathologist Quirke discovers his brother-in-law, a doctor, at the morgue. It would seem that the doctor was tampering with a corpse and concealing the cause of death. The body belonged to a woman named Christine Falls and as Quirke tries to discover the facts behind her death, he comes up against the secrets of Dublin's high Catholic society, among them members of his own family. This lands on my list because Black is the pseudonym of the Man Booker Prize Winner John Banville.

PRIEST, Ken Bruen, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95

The decapitation of Father Joyce in a Galway confessional brings Jack Taylor to the scene. Taylor has recently suffered a loss, but this new job and an unexpected partnership make him hopeful. I believe I wrote about this book when it came out in the UK last year. But I cannot write often or highly enough about Bruen's work.

MAGIC CITY, James W. Hall, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95

A black-and-white photograph taken during the 1964 Clay-Liston fight in Miami Beach sets off a murder spree. When the last remaining copy falls into Thorn's hands, he and everyone he loves become the target of madmen and trained killers. Hall is my favorite "Florida" writer and this story is, apparently, based on real events and newly declassified documents.

DEATH COMES FOR THE FAT MAN, Reginald Hill, HarperCollins. \$24.95

Andy Dalziel is in a hospital bed on life support following an explosion while his colleague, Detective Chief Inspector Peter Pascoe, tries to bring those responsible to justice. It is no secret that the title of this novel in the UK is *The Death of Dalziel*. You don't have to be a genius to see where this is going, but we can hope. We can hope.

THE BLOOMSDAY DEAD, Adrian McKinty, Scribner. \$24.00

Michael Forsythe is running security for the Miraflores Hilton in Lima, Peru, when he receives a phone call from Bridget in Dublin, whose daughter has been kidnapped. If you don't know who Bridget is, you will want to read *Dead I Well May Be* and *The Dead Yard*, the first two books in this fine, dark trilogy.

THE GENTLE AXE, R.N. Morris, Penguin Press. \$24.95

It's Christmas in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1867 and investigator Porfiry Petrovich must try to unravel a bizarre murder: a man is hanging from a tree in Petvosky Park, a bloody axe tucked into his belt and, nearby, the body of a dwarf, his skull split in two, packed into a suitcase. This is Petrovich's first case since he worked on that involving the deranged student Raskolnikov, made famous by F. Dostoevsky in the novel, *Crime and Punishment*. Sounds fascinating to me.

STORM RUNNERS, T. Jefferson Parker, Wm. Morrow. \$25.95

Matt Stromsoe, a former cop whose wife and son were killed in an explosion meant for him, is getting his life back together again. He is hired by an old cop friend to work in his private security firm where Stromsoe's first case is to protect local television

personality, Frankie Hatfield, from a stalker. He discovers that it is Frankie's private pursuits and not her fame that have made her a target. Multiple Edgar Award winner Parker is bound to deliver another great suspenseful thriller here.

***THE BLACKEST BIRD*, Joel Rose, Norton. \$24.95**

The summer of 1841 is a particularly brutal one for High Constable Jacob Hays. Mary Rogers, a counter girl at a tobacco shop, is found brutally ravaged; John Colt, of the firearm family, beats his publisher to death with a hatchet; and young Irish gang leader Tommy Coleman is accused of killing his daughter, his wife, and his wife's former lover. Hays' investigation will span a decade, involving gang wars, grave robbers, and clues hidden in the poems of Edgar Allan Poe. Rose, whose knowledge of New York is prodigious, doesn't write often enough, but when he does, attention should be paid.

***DADDY'S GIRL*, Lisa Scottoline, HarperCollins. \$25.95**

Law professor Natalie Greco is visiting a prison with her colleague Angus when a riot explodes. Rushing to the aid of a fatally wounded prison guard, Nat is privy to his last words – words that, unknown to Nat, can unlock the key to a dangerous conspiracy. With her life on the line, her career in the balance, and her boyfriend on hold, Nat has to go into hiding in order to unlock the secrets behind the words.

***RAT RUN*, Gerald Seymour, Overlook Press. \$24.95.**

Malachy Kitchen, an Intelligence officer in Iraq, is accused of cowardice while on patrol with an infantry platoon ambushed by insurgents. Humiliated and kicked out of the army, Malachy becomes a recluse in a London estate. But when an elderly widow is mugged by local addicts, Malachy targets the network of narcotics traders. Seymour has not gotten the kudos thrown at some of his contemporaries, but he is a fine writer of thrillers.

***VISIBILITY*, Boris Starling, Dutton. \$25.95**

In 1953 London, as the Great Fog rolls in, a man meets his death in Hyde Park. Herbert Smith of Scotland Yard discovers that the young victim was a biochemist who, just hours before his death, claimed to be in possession of a secret that could change the world. The CIA, the KGB and even MI5 want the dead man's secret enough to kill for it and, as Smith inches near to the truth, the body count rises.

FIRST MYSTERIES

***VINNIE'S HEAD*, Marc Lecard, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95**

Small-time Long Island criminal Johnnie LoDuco gets involved in a credit card scam with his childhood buddy, Vinnie McCloskey-Schmidt, that will make them rich. The only problem is that while out fishing Johnnie reels in Vinnie's head on the end of his line. Now mafia types, bounty hunters, and Vinnie's girlfriend are after him and Johnnie

doesn't have a clue as to why. Lots of good buzz from Ken Bruen and Duane Swierczynski.

***THE SPELLMAN FILES*, Lisa Lutz, Simon & Schuster. \$25.00**

Introducing Izzy Spellman, a twenty-eight-year-old private eye working for her family's investigative business. Not a lot of information on this one but Izzy is being compared (by her publisher) to Bridget Jones, Stephanie Plum, Thursday Next, and Nancy Drew. This apparently hilarious debut is the first in a proposed series.

NON MYSTERIES OF NOTE

***THE COLOR OF A DOG RUNNING AWAY*, Richard Gwyn, Doubleday. \$21.95**

Lucas, a musician, lives in Barcelona's Gothic Quarter. Arriving home one day, he finds an invitation to a local art gallery slipped under his door and decides to go. He meets Nuria and they begin a love affair; he is approached by a band of Barcelona's mythic roof dwellers; and he has a run-in with a fire-eating prophet. But when he and Nuria are kidnapped by a religious cult with roots stretching back to the thirteenth century, Lucas realizes his life is spinning out of control.

***YOU DON'T LOVE ME YET*, Jonathan Lethem, Doubleday. \$24.95**

Lucinda works at The Complaint Line listening to anonymous callers and becomes captivated with a frequent caller who she calls The Complainer. Lucinda also plays with an alternative band and when Lucinda suggests some of The Complainer's musings to the lyricist, he transforms them into brilliant songs and the band gets its big break. Only trouble is, The Complainer insists on joining the band – with disastrous consequences.

NEWS FROM THE UK

***IN THE WOODS*, Tara French, Hodder & Stoughton**

When Adam Ryan was 12, he was playing in the woods with his two best friends. His friends disappeared, never to be found, and Adam was discovered with his shoes filled with blood and no memory of what happened. Twenty years later, Adam has changed his name and is a detective with the Dublin police force. Called out to the murder scene, Adam recognizes it as the exact site of his childhood trauma.

***ABDUCTION*, Mark Gimenez, Little Brown**

When her mother comes to collect ten-year-old Gracie Brice from soccer practice, she is told that Gracie has already left with her uncle. But Grace has no uncle. The nightmare begins for her parents.

DEATH OF DALZIEL, Reginald Hill, HarperCollins

The latest Dalziel and Pasco mystery.

KNOTS AND CROSSES, Ian Rankin, Orion

A new edition of Rankin's first John Rebus mystery. Contains never before seen material from the original manuscript.

GHOSTWALK, Rebecca Stott, Weidenfeld & Nicolson

Set in present day Cambridge, this story of ghosts and love also tells of a four-hundred-year-old murder mystery in which Isaac Newton is a suspect.

IN AT THE DEATH, David Wishart, Hodder & Stoughton

When a young man with everything to live for apparently commits suicide, his family asks Marcus Corvinus to investigate. Historical.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Archer, Jeffrey, *Cat O'Nine Tales*, St. Martin's Press. \$27.95. Twelve short stories from Archer, who tells us that the ideas for some of these stories came to him during the two years he spent in jail.

Azzopardi, Trezza, *Winterton Blue*, Grove Press. \$24.00. A man obsessed with finding his brother's killer meets a woman equally haunted by her mother in this romantic mystery.

Berlinski, Mischa, *Fieldwork*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux. \$24.00. When his girlfriend takes a job in northern Thailand, Berlinski goes along working for a local newspaper. He is given a tip for a story: an American anthropologist has been found dead – a suicide – in the Thai prison where she was serving a sentence for murder.

Bowen, Rhys, *In Dublin's Fair City*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. P.I. Molly Murphy sets sail for her native Ireland on a missing persons case.

Britton, Andrew, *The Assassin*, Kensington. \$24.00. Ryan Kealey hunts the halls of the CIA and confronts the people he trusts most in order to find a traitor and stop a terrorist plot.

Charles, Kate, *Secret Sins*, Poisoned Pen. \$24.95. Anglican cleric Callie Anson counsels a troubled new parishioner – a woman whose computer-obsessed granddaughter disappears.

Churchill, Jill, *The Accidental Florist*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Jane Jeffrey and Mel are finally going to tie the knot. But it won't be that easy. Murder will spoil the nuptials.

Clement, Blaize, *Duplicity Dogs the Dachshund*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. This is the second Dixie Hemingway mystery.

Conant, Susan, *Summer Down*, Berkley. \$22.95. A trendy club owner is bludgeoned to death at a fund raiser and Chloe Carter searches for the killer in this Gourmet Girl mystery.

Cooper, Susan Rogers, *Vegas Nerve*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Sheriff Milton Kovak and his wife Jean have chosen Las Vegas for a second honeymoon but murder interferes.

Daheim, Mary, *The Alpine Scandal*, Ballantine Books. \$23.95. An Emma Lord mystery.

DeVoe, Jr., Forrest, *Eye of the Archangel*, HarperCollins. \$24.95. When Arne Jespers begins shopping around a sophisticated satellite to various governments and private political groups, Jack Mallory and Laura Morse go undercover.

Downie, Ruth, *Medicus*, Bloomsbury. \$23.95. This murder mystery is set in Roman-occupied Britain and introduces Gaius Petrius Ruso who finds himself in the middle of an investigation into the deaths of prostitutes.

Fischer, Maribeth, *The Life You Longed For*, Touchstone. \$25.00. Grace, whose son Jack is fighting a mysterious and deadly disease, discovers that she's under investigation for Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy.

Gorman, Ed, *Fools Rush In*, Pegasus. \$24.00. While thousands gather for the March on Washington with civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Sam McCain seeks justice for a black student found dead in a car trunk.

Graham, Heather, *The Dead Room*, Mira. \$24.95. An explosion took the life of archaeologist Leslie MacIntyre's fiancé and left her with the ability to communicate with ghosts.

Graves, Ashna, *Death Pans Out*, Poisoned Pen. \$24.95. While recovering from a double mastectomy and the death of her mother, Neva Leopold retreats to her uncle's abandoned mining cabin and starts hunting for clues to his disappearance.

Hamilton, Lyn, *The Chinese Alchemist*, Berkley. \$23.95. An eighth-century Tang Dynasty silver box holds the key to the death of a museum curator.

Hawke, Richard, *Bleeding Hearts*, Random House. \$24.95. P.I. Fritz Malone returns in his second mystery as he investigates the deaths of several women, their hands held in place over their chests by a spike driven into their hearts.

Hayder, Mo, *Pig Island*, Atlantic Monthly. \$24.00. Journalist Joe Akes visits a reclusive Scottish cult.

Henry, Sue, *The Refuge*, NAL. \$23.95. Maxie McNabb flies from Alaska to Hawaii to help a friend disabled by an accident.

Hoag, Tami, *The Alibi Man*, Bantam. \$26.00. Elena Estes, former narcotics detective, discovers the body of a co-worker and her investigation takes her into the wealthy, elite, spoiled high society of Palm Beach.

Hughes, Declan, *The Color of Blood*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. PI Ed Loy searches for a killer among a well-known Irish medical family.

Hunt, James Patrick, *The Betrayers*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Two cops are machine-gunned down in St. Louis. Did they simply pull over the wrong reckless driver, or did someone target these two for more sinister reasons? Lieutenant George Hastings intends to answer those questions.

Jacobowski, Maxim, Ed., *The Best British Mysteries IV*, Allison & Busby. \$25.95. Collection of stories from Alexander McCall Smith, John Harvey, Lee Child, Robert Goddard, etc.

James, Peter, *Looking Good Dead*, Avalon. \$25.95. Tom Bryce finds a mysterious cd on a train seat and, immediately after, witnesses a murder. The threats to his family begin.

Kellogg, Marne Davis, *Friends in High Places*, St. Martin's Press. \$24.95. A Kick Keswick mystery.

Kirino, Natsuo, *Grotesque*, Knopf. \$24.95. The author of *Out* tells the story of Tokyo prostitutes Yuriko and Kazue who have been brutally murdered, leaving unanswered questions about who they really were and who their murderer is.

Kray, Roberta, *The Pact*, Avalon. \$24.95. To buy her brother protection in prison, a desperate woman makes a secret pact with a dangerous inmate.

McManus, Patrick F., *Avalanche*, Simon & Schuster. \$24.00. Sheriff Bo Tully is on his way to West Branch Lodge, a fancy resort, to investigate a missing persons case. When an avalanche traps him there, he discovers he's also investigating murder.

MacPherson, Rett, *Died in the Wool*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Resident genealogist, local historian, and busy mom Torie O'Shea investigates murder past and present.

Martinez, Michele, *Cover-Up*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Television reporter Suzanne Shepard was a ruthless celebrity scandal monger with a list of enemies. But which one left her mutilated, lifeless body in New York's Central Park? Federal prosecutor Melanie Vargas needs to find out.

Murphy, Shirley Rousseau, *Cat Pay the Devil*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. In this Joe Grey mystery, the talented tomcat and his feisty feline pals must keep a no-good ex-con in check.

Nesser, Hakan, *The Return*, Pantheon. \$22.95. Chief Inspector Van Veeteren investigates the discovery of a decomposing body, wrapped in a carpet. The body has no hands, feet, or head. A brutal killer is on the loose, but who is the victim?

Perry, Anne, *At Some Disputed Barricade*, Ballantine Books. \$21.95. The fourth installment of the World War I series featuring the Reavley family.

Pickens, Cathy, *Hog Wild*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Featuring Attorney Avery Andrews, who has returned to her small hometown of Dacus in South Carolina where the biggest news is a pig on the loose. Not for long.

Picoult, Jodi, *Nineteen Minutes*, Atria Books. \$26.00. Set in a small town in the wake of a horrific school shooting, Jordan McAfee finds himself representing a boy who desperately needs someone on his side.

Randisi, Robert J., Ed., *Hollywood and Crime*, Pegasus. \$24.00. New stories set in Hollywood from Michael Connelly, Max Allan Collins, etc.

Saylor, Steven, *Roma*, St. Martin's Press. \$25.95. Saylor moves away from his mystery series here and makes Rome itself the centerpiece of this novel.

Schiefelbein, Michael, *Body and Blood*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Two priests rekindle an affair and another dies, an apparent suicide,

Shaber, Sarah R., *Shell Game*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$22.95. Simon Shaw, forensic historian, encounters his oldest corpse yet – Uwharrie Man, who died fourteen thousand years ago. But there will be other, more recent, deaths.

Tapplly, William G., *Gray Ghost*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. This is the second Stoney Calhoun novel from Tapplly.

Walsh, Jill Paton, *The Bad Quarto*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Imogen Quy, college nurse at St. Agatha's College, Cambridge University, investigates when a research fellow plummets to his death from a beautiful old tower.

White, Randy Wayne, *Hunter's Moon*, Putnam. \$24.95. When Doc Ford saves a former president of the United States from an assassination, he has no idea what he's let himself in for.

White, Stephen, *Dry Ice*, Dutton. \$25.95. Michael McClelland, the brilliant killer introduced in White's first novel, has left the Colorado State Mental Hospital and is coming after psychologist Alan Gregory's family.

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