

BOOKAHOLIC

For the Mystery Addict

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WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

***GOD'S SPY*, Juan Gomez-Jurado, Dutton. \$24.95**

It is April 2005 in Rome and Pope John Paul II has died. The cardinals are gathering from all over the world to elect the new Pope. Police inspector Paola Dicanti is called in when the Cardinals start to die – they are being tortured and it looks as though a serial killer is at work. If not a serial killer then someone who has a stake in who the next Pope will be. Inspector Dicanti is joined by Father Anthony Fowler, an American priest and former Army intelligence officer examining sexual abuse in the church. Together they begin to uncover a conspiracy that reaches into the heart of the Vatican. I love these tales of Vatican intrigue and the only thing that stops me recommending this one wholeheartedly is the translation, which I found a little stilted and which interfered with the flow of the story.

***BODY OF LIES*, David Ignatius, Norton. \$24.95.**

Listen up espionage lovers! There's a new star in your firmament and he's being compared to Graham Greene. A columnist for the Washington Post, Ignatius gives us here a post-9/11 thriller that does not let up until the last sentence. Roger Ferris is a CIA operative waging the war on terrorism. He has a shattered leg that he picked up in Iraq and now his mission is to penetrate the network of a master terrorist known as "Suleiman." Inspired by a ruse used by British intelligence during WWII, Ferris comes up with a plan to make it seem as if the CIA has accomplished the impossible – recruited an agent within the enemy's rank. When his plan begins to unravel, he must trust the head of Jordan's intelligence service, a wonderfully realized character, who is anything but trustworthy. Put Ignatius' name up there with Furst and Littell. Oh yes, and Greene and Le Carre.

***LONE CREEK*, Neil McMahon, HarperCollins. \$24.95**

This mystery, set in the wide open spaces of Montana, is a treat for all of us who love a good story, beautifully told. Hugh Davoren is a hand on the Pettyjohn Ranch, a place he has known since childhood and which holds some sad memories for him. When Hugh discovers two buried horses on the ranch, his life becomes more than difficult. Like all great stories, this is also about place, and McMahon brings the West alive as he intertwines an old mystery with the present. Where has McMahon been all my life? Apparently writing mysteries featuring Dr. Carroll Monks, an ER physician. I went back to those books and, while they hold out much promise, start here and catch this writer as he enters his prime.

ANATOMY OF FEAR, Jonathan Santlofer, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95

The fourth book by artist and author Santlofer introduces police sketch artist Nate Rodriguez. He has a talent for sketching the faces of killers based on the limited descriptions of witnesses. But he may have met his match when he runs across a killer who, like himself, sees and thinks in pictures. This killer is leaving drawings at the crime scenes depicting his murders and as Nate begins to close in on the madman, his colleagues in blue begin to turn against him. This tense thriller is a real page-turner made more provocative by the sketches, by Santlofer, that appear throughout. I look forward to more Nate Rodriguez in the future.

ON MY READING LIST**CHASERS, Lorenzo Carcaterra, Ballantine Books. \$25.95**

Three Apaches, first introduced in the author's 1997 novel of that name, reunite to continue their battle against crime. When innocent bystanders in a Manhattan restaurant are gunned down, the team investigates a Colombia drug cartel responsible for selling and distributing millions of kilos of cocaine. It's been a while since Carcaterra wrote, and his return is welcome.

ALWAYS, Nicola Griffith, Riverhead Books. \$26.95

Aud Torvingen, self-defense teacher, is shaken by the shocking consequences of the class she's been teaching, and her investigation of what seems to be a run-of-the-mill real-estate fraud is turning out to be more than she bargained for. I haven't read Griffith before but I'm reading reviews that say Aud Torvingen "...makes La Femme Nikita look a like a Powerpuff Girl." - *Details*. How can I resist?

THE BOOK OF AIR AND SHADOWS, Michael Gruber, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95

Gruber leaves his Jimmy Paz series to pen this biblio mystery. It begins with a fire in an antiquarian bookstore where, hidden in the binding of one of the charred volumes, is a cache of letters written by a 17th century British soldier and spy. The letters are encrypted and the key to unlocking the code has been lost for 400 years. If it is discovered and the letters are read, they will lead to one of the most valuable items in the world. I cannot wait to read this by one of my favorite authors.

THE VARIOUS HAUNTS OF MEN, Susan Hill, Overlook Press. \$24.95

When a woman vanishes in the fog, the police are not alarmed; people usually disappear for their own reasons. But when a young girl, an old man, and even a dog, disappear, no one can deny that something strange is happening in this quiet cathedral town. Police officer Freyer Graffham is assigned to the case with detective chief Inspector Simon Serrailer. This first novel from the UK is being hailed as the beginning of a terrific series.

SECOND SIGHT, Charles McCarry, Overlook Press. \$24.95

Overlook continues to put the Paul Christopher novels back into print. Christopher is now retired, married, and living in DC. But throughout the Arab world, US agents are being kidnapped and brain-drained by an enemy armed with a diabolical new drug. What begins for Christopher as a global manhunt turns into something far closer to home. McCarry writes some of the very best espionage.

THE NAMING OF THE DEAD, Ian Rankin, Little Brown. \$24.99

The latest John Rebus mystery takes place in Scotland, where world leaders are attending an international conference. During a preconference dinner at Edinburgh Castle, a delegate falls to his death. An accident or something more sinister? And what about that grisly find close by? Are the world's most powerful at risk from a killer? Rebus has seventy-two hours to find the answers.

SOVEREIGN, C.J. Sansom, Viking. \$25.95

In the Autumn of 1541, a plot against the throne has been uncovered and Henry VIII sets off on a spectacular progress from London to York with the cream of the nobility and his fifth wife, Catherine Howard, to quell his rebellious northern subjects. Awaiting him is Matthew Shardlake, who is holding a dangerous conspirator soon to be transported back to London. But when a local glazier is murdered, things get complicated. The murder seems to be not only connected to Shardlake's prisoner but also to the royal family itself. One of the most popular historical series after only two books.

WHAT'S SO FUNNY? Donald E. Westlake, Warner Books. \$24.99

John Dortmunder and his merry band of crooks try to find a highly valuable 700-pound chess set, a task that will take them back to the end of World War I when the gold-and-jewel studded set was sent as a gift to the last Russian Czar.

FIRST MYSTERIES

A STRANGER LIES THERE, Stephen Santogrossi, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95

Tim Ryder, having coffee on his front porch, sees the dead body of a young man laid out on his lawn. Although neither Tim nor his wife, Deirdre, knows the man, the death will take them back twenty years to when Tim testified against a man which resulted in a long prison sentence. The man has now been released and Tim is afraid he is bent on revenge.

NON MYSTERIES OF NOTE

THE SAVAGE DETECTIVES, Roberto Bolano, Farrar, Straus and Giroux. \$27.00

Born in Chile, Bolano was a much honored writer who lived in Spain until his death in 2003. He received Spain's highest literary award for this novel which tells the story of Arturo Belano and Ulises Lima who leave Mexico City in a borrowed white Impala. Their quest is to track down the vanished poet Cesarea Tinajero and this leads to a violent showdown. The story follows Belano and Lima through the eyes of the people whose paths they cross in Central America, Europe, Israel and West Africa. It's getting tremendous reviews.

AMERICAN YOUTH, Phil LaMarche, Random House. \$21.95

This first novel tells of a New England boy who is involved in a fatal shooting accident in his home. This tragedy further divides the town's already antagonistic older population from the newcomers who are gentrifying the area. A coming-of-age story that centers on a boy coping with his guilt and his impulse to flee.

THIS YEAR YOU WRITE YOUR NOVEL, Walter Mosley, Little Brown. \$19.99

Mosley offers tips, practical advice, and wisdom for the first-time author. And he gives you a time limit: one year.

ANGELICA, Arthur Phillips, Random House. \$24.95

When Constance married Joseph Barton, a biology researcher, she believed she had found the perfect mate. But after three miscarriages, and the troubled birth of their daughter, Angelica, Constance fears for her life in her own home. Things go from bad to worse, but is Constance right to fear for her life? This book is divided into four sections, each taking a different character's point of view, and nothing is quite as it seems.

NEWS FROM THE UK

CROSS, Ken Bruen, Bantam Press.

When an old friend from the Guards tells Jack Taylor that a boy has been crucified in Galway City, Jack agrees to help with the investigation.

POISONER OF PTAH, Paul Doherty, Headline.

Murder in the reign of Pharaoh Hatusu. Judge Amerotke investigates.

SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN, Donna Leon, Heinemann.

Commissario Brunetti is summoned to the hospital bedside of a pediatrician whose skull has been fractured. Brunetti uncovers a world where babies can be bought for cash.

BORDERLANDS, Brian McGilloway, Macmillan.

A very strong debut, introducing Garda Inspector Benedict Devlin whose patch in Ireland abuts the Northern border. McGilloway is being compared to Ian Rankin. This is a must for collectors.

INTRUDERS, Michael Marshall, HarperCollins.

An extraordinary thriller from the author of *The Straw Men* (I'll be reviewing this in the next issue of Bookaholic).

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Albert, Susan Wittig, *Spanish Dagger*, Berkley. \$23.95. Even as her attorney half-brother reopens a cold case, herb shop owner China Bayles finds a warm case in the form of a bloody body on the railroad tracks.

Alleyn, Susanne, *A Treasury of Regret*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Aristide Ravel, the freelance investigator for the police, comes to the aid of Jeannette Moineau in revolutionary Paris.

Butler, Gwendoline, *Dread Murder*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. When Major Mearns opens a large parcel delivered to him, he finds two human legs. Mearns, with the help of his friend, Sergeant Denny investigates.

Cannell, Dorothy, *Withering Heights*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$22.95. Ellis Haskell investigates some mysterious doings at a Gothic mansion on the Yorkshire moors.

Clark, Carol Higgins, *Laced*, Scribner. \$24.00. Newlyweds Regan and Jack Reilly find that their honeymoon on the Emerald Isle is anything but restful.

Clark, Mary Higgins, *I Heard That Song Before*, Simon & Schuster. \$25.00. The story of a young woman whose re-emerging memories threaten her marriage.

Cleland, Jane K., *Deadly Appraisal*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Antiques appraiser Josie Prescott gets mixed up in murder when a friend is poisoned at a gala benefit.

Coleman, Reed Farrell, *Soul Patch*, Bleak House. \$24.95. Ex-NYPD cop turned PI and entrepreneur Moe Prager must deal with the apparent suicide of his old friend and NYPD Chief of Detectives, Larry McDonald.

Cox, Simon, *The Dan Brown Companion*, Trafalgar Square. \$24.95. A colorful illustrated guide to the world of Dan Brown including maps, locations, and the art work described in his novels.

Davidson, Leif, *The Serbian Dame*, Arcadia. \$24.95. An internationally acclaimed writer with a fatwa issued on her head by Iranian mullahs, and the Danish government who may be making a deal with the devil.

Drake, Nick, *Nefertiti*, HarperCollins. \$24.95. Introducing Rai Rahotep, chief detective in Thebes, who is secretly assigned to unravel the mysterious disappearance of the world's most enigmatic queen.

Dallas, Sandra, *Tallgrass*, St. Martin's Press. \$23.95. During World War II the government opens a Japanese internment camp in a small Colorado town. When a young girl is murdered, all eyes turn to the newcomers.

Edwards, Ruth Dudley, *Murdering Americans*, Poisoned Pen. \$24.95. Conservative Baroness (Jack) Troutbeck journeys to the American Midwest as a visiting professor only to be confronted with knee-jerk political correctness and murder.

Eglin, Anthony, *The Amazon Lily*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Flowers and foul play in this English Garden mystery featuring Lawrence Kingston.

Emerson, Kathy Lynn, *No Mortal Reason*, Pemberly. \$17.95. A trip to upstate New York to visit some recently discovered relatives leads reporter Diana Spaulding and fiancé Ben to a mystery investigation in this 19th century historical.

Estleman, Loren D., *American Detective*, Forge. \$24.95. Amos Walker tries to get to the bottom of the murder of the daughter of a Detroit Tigers' pitcher and discovers illegal immigrant smuggling.

Evanovich, Janet, *More Plums in One*, St. Martin's Press. \$26.95. Contains three Plum novels: *Four To Score*; *High Five*; and *Hot Six*.

Fielding, Joy, *Heartstopper*, Atria Books. \$24.95. A killer is preying on teenage girls in a small Florida town.

Farris, John, *You Don't Scare Me*, Forge. \$24.95. Years ago Chase Emrick's stepfather committed suicide and tried to take Chase into the afterlife with him. Now he's back to finish the job.

Gabbay, Tom, *The Lisbon Crossing*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. Intrigue set in Lisbon and Paris during the early days of World War II.

Gowdy, Barbara, *Helpless*, Henry Holt. \$24.95. A middle aged repairman becomes convinced that a child model's overworked mother is neglecting her. He kidnaps the girl during a blackout and locks her into a custom-made dream room.

Green, Tim, *American Outrage*, Warner Books. \$24.99. Investigative journalist Jake Carlson uses all his skills to try and find the biological mother of his adopted son Sam.

Greenwood, Kerry, *The Green Mill Murder*, Poisoned Pen. \$24.95. Nothing can flap the unflappable Phryne Fisher – especially on the floor of the Green Mill, her favorite dance hall. Nothing but death, that is.

Haddam, Jane, *Glass Houses*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Philadelphia is in the grip of a serial killer. Gregor Demarkian investigates when a member of socially prominent family, who is now homeless, is arrested.

Hart, Carolyn, *Set Sail for Murder*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Henrietta O'Dwyer returns in this tale set aboard a murder-filled Baltic cruise.

HBO, *The Sopranos*, Time. \$19.95. To coincide with the show's finale, this official guide will be the first book to give the full story of the hit show, its creation and its storyline.

Hess, Joan, *Damsels in Distress*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Claire Malloy, local bookseller, is drawn into the strange inner workings of a group putting on a Renaissance Fair.

Houston, Victoria, *Dead Madonna*, Bleak House. \$24.95. When the body of a young woman is found floating on a lake in northern Wisconsin on the same morning that a prominent widow is found bludgeoned to death, Loon Lake police chief Lew Farris has his hands full.

Jelinek, Elfriede, *Greed*, Seven Stories Press. \$24.95. Kurt Janisch, a policeman in a small town in southern Austria, must solve the mystery of the body in the lake. Jelinek,

the 2004 Nobel Laureate, has created a mystery that is as much about relationships and aging as it is about whodunit.

Joensuu, Matti, *The Priest of Evil*, Arcadia. \$24.95. Det. Sgt. Timo Harjupaa of the Helsinki Violent Crimes Unit faces overwhelming evil in the form of a fanatical priest brainwashing teenagers into carrying bomb-filled backpacks.

Kane, Andrea, *Dark Room*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Seventeen years after she found the murdered bodies of her parents, Morgan Winter learns that the wrong man was convicted. The real killer is still at large – and has been the whole time.

Kellerman, Jonathan, *Obsession*, Ballantine Books. \$26.95. Psychologist Alex Delaware and LAPD Detective Milo Sturgis search for clues to a crime that may or may not be real.

Kennealy, Jerry, *Jigsaw*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. A killer calling himself Thanatos, the Greek god of death, has been sending e-mails to entertainment critic Carroll Quint with clues about his next target. The victims were all friends of Quint, and the police like him for the murders.

Liesche, Margit, *Lipstick and Lies*, Poisoned Pen. \$24.95. Female pilot Pucci Lewis helps the FBI infiltrate a German spy ring in WWII-era Detroit, but wonders if spying doesn't erode privacy rights.

Malloy, Brian, *Brendan Wolf*, St. Martin's Press. \$23.95. Wolf, a young gay man, finds himself pulled into a fool-proof robbery scheme by his brother and his brother's wife.

Mostert, Natasha, *Season of the Witch*, Dutton. \$24.95. Hired to find a London banker's missing son, psychic Gabriel Blackston learns that the young man was killed by one of two sisters – notorious occultists – in this gothic thriller.

Perry, Anne, *We Shall Not Sleep*, Ballantine. \$21.95. The fifth and final installment in Perry's World War I series featuring the Reavley family.

Pfarrer, Chuck, *Killing Che*, Random House. \$25.95. VIA officer Paul Hoyle is sent to Bolivia in 1967 to stamp out a communist insurgency, as well as one Ernesto Che Guevara.

Quick, Amanda, *The River Knows*, Putnam. \$24.95. Deception and dark secrets in the luxurious setting of late-Victorian London.

Rhoades, J.D., *Safe and Sound*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Bounty hunter Jack Keller heads into the Carolina woods on the trail of a kidnapped girl.

Robards, Karen, *Obsession*, Putnam. \$24.95. A woman survives an attempt on her life, only to feel like a stranger in her own home.

Rule, Ann, *Too Late to Say Goodbye*, Free Press. \$26.00. The true story of Dr. Bart Corbin, a successful dentist, who had a history of leaving women with bullets in their heads, apparent suicides.

Saums, Mary, *Thistle and Twigg*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. This new cozy series introduces Mrs. Thistle and Mrs. Twigg, two widows turned unlikely sleuths.

Seranella, Barbara, *Deadman's Switch*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. This was to be the first in a new series by the late Seranella. Charlotte Lyon investigates the derailment of a train that has killed both the engineer and a motion picture celebrity.

Smith, Alexander McCall, *The Good Husband of Zebra Drive*, Pantheon. \$24.95. The eighth installment in the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series.

Somoza, Jose Carlos, *Zig Zag*, Rayo. \$24.95. Elisa Robleda, a physics professor, tries to solve the deaths of a research team working on manipulating String Theory.

Thurlo, Aimee and David, *Turquoise Girl*, Forge. \$23.95 Navajo Police Special Investigator Ella Clah finds strange evidence while working on a serial killer case – evidence that leads her to believe that her father tried to stop this killer before his own murder years ago.

Tursten, Helen, *The Glass Devil*, Soho Press. \$24.00. Swedish Detective Inspector Irene Huss investigates the murder of a family whose computers have been professionally erased and left with bloody Satanic symbols on their monitors.

Wagstaff, Vanessa & Poole, Stephen, *Agatha Christie: A Reader's Companion*, Trafalgar Square. \$19.95. A beautifully illustrated guide to the Queen of Crime and her enduring creations.

Woods, Stuart, *Fresh Disasters*, Putnam. \$25.95. Stone Barrington takes on a job as a lawyer for a sleazy con man, and gets involved in the underworld of the New York mafia.

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