

BOOKAHOLIC

For the Mystery Addict

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WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

RESTLESS, William Boyd, Bloomsbury. \$14.95

This novel, which won this year's Costa Prize in the UK, is a superb story on several levels. Ruth Gilmartin, who has a young son and supports herself by teaching English as a second language, learns over the course of the summer of 1976 that her mother Sally was recruited to spy for England during World War II. Born Eva Delectorskaya, Sally worked in Paris and London with her enigmatic handler, Lucas Romer. Now, Sally is concerned for her life and needs the help of her daughter. Told from both Eva's and Ruth's points of view, this is a story of both espionage and of family. Do we really know those closest to us, especially when part of their lives was lived in wartime? Do not miss this!

HEARTSICK, Chelsea Cain, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95

Oh my, a major talent has announced herself here. I almost didn't pick this up because the only book Cain has previously written is a Nancy Drew parody, *Confessions of a Teen Sleuth*, but I did and then couldn't put it down. This is the first in a proposed trilogy featuring serial killer Gretchen Lowell and tortured cop Archie Sheridan. When the story opens, Archie is addicted to pills, estranged from his family, and obsessed with Gretchen, who is behind bars. We learn the story of Gretchen and Archie over the course of this novel in which Archie must solve a series of murders in the Portland area. Gretchen, in prison, will be compared to Hannibal Lecter. And she should be, with one difference: Gretchen is scarier. Can't wait for the next installment of this gruesome, well-written saga of murder and obsession.

DEXTER IN THE DARK, Jeff Lindsay, Doubleday. \$23.95

Everybody's favorite serial killer is back for the third time, having picked up new fans, I'm sure, from the very well done television mini-series. Dexter Morgan, blood spatter expert for the Miami Police Department (and he should know), is called out to a particularly disturbing crime scene at the university campus. Usually this would precipitate a smile of admiration from Dexter for a fellow killer, but Dex's Dark Passenger seems to sense something utterly chilling and goes into hiding. Dexter, mastermind of homicidal prowess, becomes unsure of himself. And that makes for difficult times for Dexter. It also makes for duller reading. Dexter is one of my favorite characters and diluting his powers of observation and ability to kill without conscience, reduces him to, well, ordinary. I have no doubt that the Dexter I love will be back, but this entry is, for me, a little dip in the series.

***THE FOLLOWER*, Jason Starr, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95**

Reading Starr's latest thriller made me want to take a shower. Set in Manhattan's singles scene, it captures the total horror of being young and looking for love. Katie Porter is one of those singles, and when she first meets Peter Wells, I was rooting for him, even though I knew he was a stalker. But next to the guy she was dating, he looked perfect. Just a little too perfect. Soon Katie finds herself the star of Peter's elaborate fantasy and when her creepy boyfriend is murdered (not that I wasn't delighted to see him go), Peter began to lose some of his charm even for this reader. As you can tell, I became totally involved here and was thankful throughout that I am no longer young. This is a very nasty book, in the nicest way. Starr captures young Manhattanites in all their complex vacuousness, and I highly recommend the read.

***DEATH OF A MURDERER*, Rupert Thomson, Knopf. \$23.00**

The murderer of the title has spent decades in prison for crimes that shocked England, but now she's finally died of natural causes and Billy Tyler, a career policeman, is assigned the job of guarding her body. His wife begs him not to do it, but Tyler spends that long night at the hospital morgue going over his life and thinking about violence – his own and society's. The dead child killer seems to speak to him directly, and she understands him. This is a fascinating and well-written meditation on crime, how we separate ourselves from those we call monsters, and what we hide from ourselves.

ON MY READING LIST

***THURSDAY NEXT*, Jasper Fforde, Viking. \$24.95**

As you can see from the title, Fforde has returned to the series featuring literary sleuth Next (hooray). And she has her work cut out for her. Sherlock Holmes has been killed at the Reichenbach Falls, and Miss Marple is killed in a car accident. And we know what that means! The end of the series. But not if Thursday can help it. If you haven't yet got involved in this gigglefest set in the world of literature, don't let the references stop you. You don't have to be an English major to enjoy the silliness of it all.

***THE SANCTUARY*, Raymond Khoury, Dutton. \$25.95**

This looks to be another edge-of-your-seat thriller from the author of *The Last Templar*. In Naples in 1750, a man posing as a marquis escapes after being confronted by the Prince of San Severo. In Baghdad 2003, an American army unit hunting down Saddam's inner circle makes a horrifying discovery. Are the two incidents connected? You bet.

***ACTS OF NATURE*, Jonathon King, Dutton. \$24.95**

King returns to his series featuring Max Freeman, who, with Detective Sherry Richards, returns to his shack deep in the Florida Everglades. It seems like the perfect getaway until a violent hurricane rips through South Florida. And that is just the beginning. Sherry is severely injured, and there's no way to call for help, so the couple begin a

treacherous trip back to civilization only to discover that the hurricane's devastation is the least of their worries.

***THE RED DAHLIA*, Lynda La Plante, Touchstone. \$14.00**

La Plante is the creator of the fabulous Jane Tennyson, of the Prime Suspect series. She is the mistress of creating marvelous but flawed female heroes, so this paperback original is high on my list. When the horribly mutilated body of a young woman is found dumped on the banks of the Thames, the murder is an obvious imitation of The Black Dahlia killing. Detective Inspector Anna Travis must race against time to catch the copycat, but there are no suspects and the media frenzy is spiraling out of control. Then a second dead girl is found.

***THE WHEEL OF DARKNESS*, Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child, Warner Books. \$25.99**

My favorite FBI special agent, Pendergast, is back. Pendergast has taken Constance (you need to read the previous books in this series to get the most out of this story) on a Grand Tour. They head to Tibet where Pendergast intensively trained in martial arts and spiritual studies. There they learn that a rare and dangerous artifact that the monks have been guarding for generations has been stolen. Pendergast agrees to join the search, and he and Constance find themselves on the maiden voyage of the *Queen Victoria*, the world's largest luxury liner, for a terrifying Atlantic crossing.

***BONES TO ASHES*, Kathy Reichs, Scribner. \$25.95**

There was a time when the titles of Reichs' Temperance Brennan books all contained a word in French (Brennan, like Reichs, divides her time between North Carolina and Montreal, Canada). Now, with a hit series on TV entitled *Bones*, the books contain the word Bones. Hmmm! But, this series, featuring forensic anthropologist Brennan, is consistently first class and is, hopefully, on everybody's reading list.

***PATRIOT ACTS*, Greg Rucka, Bantam. \$25.00**

It's been a long time coming, but Rucka has brought back bodyguard turned fugitive Atticus Kodiak, who goes undercover to protect the woman he loves and his country. This latest in one of my favorite series is getting great reviews.

***BEYOND REACH*, Karin Slaughter, Delacorte Press. \$25.00**

Slaughter returns to her series featuring Sara Linton and Jeffrey Tolliver. The charred remains of a woman have been found in Grant County, Georgia, and Detective Lena Adams is charged with homicide. This series has never captured me as Slaughter's stand-alone, *Triptych*, did. Still.

FIRST MYSTERIES

***THE HISTORY BOOK*, Humphrey Hawksley, Warner Books. \$24.99**

Catherine “Kat” Polinski - burglar, hacker, and undercover agent - learns that her sister has been murdered, shot outside of London. What was she doing there? Kat must use every weapon at her disposal, from martial arts to computer hacking, to bring her sister’s killer to justice. But in her search for answers, she discovers an increasingly plausible threat that could destroy the world as we know it.

NEWS FROM THE UK

***WRITTEN IN BONE*, Simon Beckett. Bantam Press**

Forensic anthropologist David Hunter is asked to examine a fire-death on the remote Hebridean island of Runa. It looks like spontaneous human combustion, but that cannot be. The island is cut off because of a storm, and the killing begins in earnest.

***DEATH MESSAGE*, Mark Billingham. Little Brown**

The latest Tom Thorne mystery.

***POISON MAIDEN*, Paul Doherty. Headline**

Second in the series set in medieval England during the reign of Edward II.

***BENEATH THE BLEEDING*, Val McDermid. HarperCollins**

Tony Hill, criminal profiler, and Carol Jordan try to make sense of the death of a football star followed shortly by an attack on the dead player’s home stadium.

***BURY HER DEEP*, Catriona McPherson. Hodder & Stoughton**

Third book in the CWA Dagger-nominated series set in Scotland shortly after the Great War and featuring Dandy Gilver, upper class amateur sleuth.

***THE LAST BREATH*, Denise Mina. Bantam Press**

Paddy Meehan is told that former boyfriend Terry Patterson, has been found dead in a ditch with all the hallmarks of an IRA assassination. Paddy has been named next of kin. Strange because they weren’t really that close. Set in Glasgow in 1990.

***NOT IN THE FLESH*, Ruth Rendell. Hutchinson**

A Chief Inspector Wexford mystery.

***FRIEND OF THE DEVIL*, Peter Robinson. Hodder & Stoughton**

When Karen Drew is found sitting in her wheelchair with her throat cut, DI Annie Cabbot takes the case. Meanwhile DCI Alan Banks is investigating the rape and murder of 19-year-old Hayley Daniels.

KING OF SWORDS, Nick Stone. Penguin

The second book in Stone's trilogy takes us back to Max Mingus's first terrifying encounter with his nemesis Solomon Boukman.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Anderson, Sheryl J., *Killer Riff*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Molly Forrester, advice columnist and sometime sleuth, is asked to write a profile of Russell Elliott, the legendary rock producer who recently died of an accidental overdose.

Andrews, Donna, *The Penguin Who Knew Too Much*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Meg Langslow gets involved in the hilarity when her father digs up a dead body while trying to build a pool for the penguins he found in his basement.

Andrews, Sarah, *In Cold Pursuit*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Andrews introduces Valena Walker, a student in geology headed to Antarctica to study glaciology. When she arrives she discovers that her tutor's been arrested for the murder of a reporter.

Brockmann, Suzanne, *Force of Nature*, Ballantine. \$21.95. When Ric Alvarado and Annie Dugan prevent a client from murdering the son of Florida crime lord Gordon Burns, they find themselves welcome in Burns' inner sanctum. But there's more to Burns than they originally thought.

Cook, Robin, *Critical*, Putnam. \$25.95. New York City medical examiners Laurie Montgomery and Jack Stapleton investigate a series of staph-related post-procedure deaths in New York City.

Cotterill, Colin, *Anarchy and Old Dogs*, Soho Press. \$23.00. The murder of a blind dentist suggests a plot to overthrow the government, or so coroner Dr. Siri Paiboum thinks. Set in 1970s communist Laos.

Crosby, Ellen, *The Chardonnay Charade*, Scribner. \$24.00. Fine wine and murder mix in Crosby's second mystery featuring vineyard owner, Lucy Montgomery.

Daheim, Mary, *Scots on the Rocks*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. Flynn and Jones investigate in another B & B mystery (that's bed and breakfast).

Doogan, Mike, *Capital Offense*, Putnam. \$25.95. Detective Nik Kane investigates a deadly mystery at Alaska's political heart.

Eccles, Marjorie, *Shadows & Lies*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. The discovery of a body on the grounds of an estate raises questions beyond those about the corpse. When a woman in London, suffering from amnesia, is found to have a connection to the events, the puzzle becomes even more tantalizing.

Finder, Joseph, *Power Play*, St. Martin's Press. \$24.95. Executives at the Hammond Aerospace Corporation are on a retreat. A band of hunters crash the opening-night festivities, and the executives of a billion-dollar company, cut off from the rest of the world, find themselves at the mercy of a group of men with guns.

Gayle, Stephanie, *My Summer of Southern Discomfort*, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. A humiliated but promising female lawyer leaves liberal New York and starts over in the conservative south.

Hunsicker, Harry, *Crosshairs*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Third in the series featuring Dallas detective Lee Henry Oswald.

Jance, J.A., *Justice Denied*, Wm. Morrow. \$25.95. Seattle investigator J.P. Beaumont works three cases at the same time.

Jones, Solomon, *Payback*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$19.95. Karima C.R.E.A.M. Thomas investigates her own mother's death.

Kaminsky, Stuart M., *The Dead Don't Lie*, Forge. \$23.95. The latest Abe Lieberman mystery from the former MWA Grand Master.

Kellerman, Faye, *The Burnt House*, Wm. Morrow. \$25.95. Peter Decker and Rina Lazarus investigate.

Kozak, Harley Jane, *Dead Ex*, Doubleday. \$21.95. Wollie Shelley returns in a murder mystery set in the eccentric world of television soaps.

Lyle, D.P., *Forensics and Fiction*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95. Ever wonder how writers know how long it takes blood to clot? Is it possible to fake being blind? They ask D.P. Lyle, M.D. And now he shares those answers with the rest of us.

Macbride, Stuart, *Bloodshot*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. D.S. Logan MacRae is assigned the dead-end case of a John Doe abandoned at a hospital ER. At the same time, he is looking for a hoodlum responsible for the death of an elderly man, and looking at a star soccer player who he believes is responsible for a series of rapes. This is the third in the series.

McInerney, Ralph, *The Widow's Mate*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Father Dowling investigates the death of the heir to a lucrative concrete business.

McNamer, Deirdre, *Red Rover*, Viking. \$24.95. A novel of love and friendship set in WWII.

Marshall, Michael, *The Intruders*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. The US edition of this extraordinary thriller is now available. Read it. Read it.

Riordan, Rick, *Rebel Island*, Bantam. \$25.00. Tres Navarre, Texas PI, faces a seemingly unstoppable killer.

Ruff, Matt, *Bad Monkeys*, HarperCollins. \$23.95. A futuristic dystopian thriller about a female killer whose admission that she belongs to a secret organization lands her in the psych wing where the real games begin.

Shuman, George D., *Last Breath*, Simon & Schuster. \$24.00. Blind psychic, Sherry Moore, is featured in the author's second novel. Her ability to witness the final moments of a murder victim's life is pushed to the limit when she observes a never-ending series of crimes at the hands of a ruthless serial killer.

Spanogle, Joshua, *Flawless*, Delacorte. \$23.00. The worlds of crime, science, and industry form a secret alliance and are hiding their victims at any price in this terrifying medical thriller.

Steinhauer, Olen, *Victory Square*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Emil Brod, now chief of the People's Militia, reopens the case that started his career in the 1940s. Great series set in an unnamed Eastern European country.

Tanenbaum, Robert K., *Malice*, Atria Books. \$26.95. This is the nineteenth book in the Butch Karp/Marlene Ciamp series.

Whyte, Jack, *Standard of Honor*, Putnam. \$25.95. The second novel in the historical trilogy about the rise and fall of the powerful Templars. The first, *Knights of the Black and White* is available in paperback.

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