

BOOKAHOLIC

For the Mystery Addict

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I want to commiserate with you over the loss of James Crumley. He was one of our most important writers, and it has come as a bit of shock to realize that he was not well known outside the mystery world. A giant to us, but overlooked by the reading public in general. Isn't fame a strange thing?

If you're thinking, wait a minute, I have never read anything by James Crumley, honor him by picking up a copy of *The Last Good Kiss*. You'll find that it's his parting gift to you.

WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

TRIGGER CITY, Sean Chercover, Wm. Morrow. \$23.95

I missed Chercover's debut, *Big City, Bad Blood*, and I'm sorry I did because there are obviously some fine plot points that would have enhanced my reading experience. But no matter. This second novel to feature P.I. Ray Dudgeon more than holds its own. Retired Army Intelligence Colonel Isaac Richmond hires Dudgeon to look into the death of his daughter. To Dudgeon, it's a simple case. Joan Richmond was shot by a deranged co-worker who then committed suicide. But Colonel Richmond can't move on; he wants to know more about his daughter; wants Dudgeon to dig deeper. And what Dudgeon stumbles upon is extraordinary, and dangerous. This is tightly plotted, well written, and highly recommended to those of you with a taste for the best in hard-boiled detective fiction.

PIG ISLAND, Mo Hayder, Penguin Paperback. \$7.99

I've been trying to catch up on Hayder whose first novel, *Birdman*, turned me into a real fan. This stand-alone is not as shocking as her John Caffery series, nor is it quite up to the standard of *The Devil of Nanking*, her most successful book to date, also a stand-alone. But it is extraordinarily creepy. Journalist Joe Oakes makes his living exposing supernatural hoaxes, but when he is invited to stay with a religious group on Scotland's Pig Island, he may just have encountered the real thing. Creepier than creepy! And a shock ending.

THE BOOK OF MURDER, Guillermo Martinez, Viking. \$23.95

The premise here is terrific: a literary giant, Kloster, and an up-and-coming young writer have shared the services of a secretary in the past while the great one was on vacation. Luciana worked for the young writer, but has since returned to take up her duties with

Kloster. When she tells the young writer that she is going mad because she knows that Kloster is killing off her family and friends, he finds it hard to believe, but he's reluctant to deny her his help. This is a real page turner until the denouement. If you're like me and want an answer – well, is Kloster a murderer? – you are going to be disappointed. The answers belong in the realm of literary esoterica: do words kill? But read it anyway, figure out exactly what is going on, and then, please, let me know.

***THE TENDERNESS OF WOLVES*, Stef Penney, Simon & Schuster. \$15.00**

This award-winning first novel really got away from me, and I've just caught up with it in paperback. It is set in Dove River, a small settlement in the Northern Territory in 1867. Mrs. Ross, a local woman, stumbles upon a crime scene and sees tracks leading away from the murdered man's cabin toward the forest and the tundra beyond. Within hours, she makes another discovery: her seventeen-year-old son Francis has disappeared and is now considered a prime suspect. Searchers set out from the settlement to follow the tracks. There are those who are intent on capturing Francis; those, like Mrs. Ross, who want to find the real murderer; and those with other intentions entirely. This is a captivating story, elegantly told, and very hard to put down. It won the prestigious Costa Book of the Year Award. And no wonder.

ON MY RADAR

On My Radar is replacing On My Reading List because the phrase more accurately describes books to which we should all be paying attention – as readers and collectors.

***THE BLACK TOWER*, Louis Bayard, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95**

This features history's first great detective, Francois Vidocq, and is getting terrific reviews.

***THE BIG O*, Declan Burke, Harcourt. \$24.00**

Can receptionist-turned-armed-robber Karen, along with her criminal boyfriend, kidnap the wife of a disgraced plastic surgeon who also happens to be Karen's best friend? Burke is just one of the new Irish writers making a splash in this country.

***SILKS*, Dick Francis and Felix Francis, Putnam. \$25.95**

Let's admit it. After the death of his wife, we all thought Dick Francis was out for the count. No more books about his beloved horse racing. But, lo, son Felix has stepped in to help out and, guess what, he's doing a terrific job. Between them, Francis pere et fils have turned out two excellent additions to the series.

***COLD IN HAND*, John Harvey, Harcourt. \$26.00**

A Valentine's Day dispute between rival gangs leaves a teenage girl dead and Charlie Resnick, about to retire, is hauled back to the front lines. So lovely to have Charlie back with us again.

***NIGHT OF THUNDER*, Stephen Hunter, Simon & Schuster. \$26.00**

The latest Bob Lee Swagger thriller is set against the weeklong NASCAR event where Swagger will meet corrupt cops, meth lab crackers, deranged evangelicals, and the most diabolical villain he has ever faced.

***THE DRAINING LAKE*, Arnaldur Indridason, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95**

Erlendur Elinborg and Sigurdur Oli investigate when the water level of an Icelandic lake falls suddenly and reveals a skeleton weighted down by a heavy radio device bearing inscriptions in Russian. This series has begun to pull away from the pack of Scandinavian mysteries (all of them good).

***THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO*, Stieg Larsson, Knopf. \$24.95**

A sensation in Europe, this updated take on the "locked room" mystery is the first of three novels by the late Stieg Larsson. The title refers to one of the most interesting protagonists to come along in mystery fiction this year.

***BORDERLANDS*, Brian McGilloway, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95**

This is the first US publication of McGilloway's first novel, which I reviewed a few months ago when it was published in the UK. Please pay attention to this author. In England, he is being called the new Ian Rankin. And while I dislike those kinds of comparisons, this new series should be getting more ink from reviewers. Now that it's published here, maybe it will.

***THE PYRAMID*, Henning Mankell, New Press. \$26.95**

Five stories featuring Kurt Wallander. These tell of the detective's origins and what really happened to him in his early years. I had almost given up on more tales featuring Mankell's most popular creation.

FIRST MYSTERIES

***I AM NOT A COPI*, Richard Belzer, Simon & Schuster. \$24.00**

But he plays one on TV! Belzer bring his character Detective John Munch to life to solve the suspicious disappearance of a friend.

***TAKEOVER*, Lisa Black, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95**

Introduces Theresa Maclean, forensic scientist, whose fiancé is taken hostage at a Federal Reserve Bank along with other customers. When he is injured, Theresa offers to switch places with him figuring that once she's inside, she can use her experience and technical skills to take control of the situation.

***BRINGING BACK THE DEAD*, Joe Domenici, St. Martin's Press. \$24.95**

Honoring a friendship forged in Vietnam, two retired military men reunite to track down a former member of their squadron who has disappeared in the swamps of southern Florida.

TRAVEL WRITING, Peter Ferry, Harcourt. \$24.00

This tale of an English teacher who teams up with an occasional travel writer to investigate a traffic fatality is getting some remarkable early buzz.

MURDER ON THE EIFFEL TOWER, Claude Izner, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$23.95

Set in 19th century Paris when the Eiffel Tower is new and shiny, this mystery introduces young bookseller Victor Legris. Victor is on the viewing platform on the Tower when a woman collapses and dies. He is appalled by the media coverage of the death and is determined to discover what actually happened.

NON MYSTERIES OF NOTE**HOME, Marilynne Robinson, Farrar, Strauss & Giroux. \$25.00**

This could come under the mystery heading, I suppose, since it is about family secrets, love, and death, but Pulitzer Prize winner Robinson is, I'm sure, on a complex prickly path that will take us way beyond that simple description. Set in the same locale as *Gilead*.

NEWS FROM THE UK**SILKS, Dick Francis and Felix Francis, Penguin.**

Father and son set their latest in the world of horse-racing. Naturally! The U.S. edition precedes the U.K. by nine days.

FOUND WANTING, Robert Goddard, Bantam Press.

When a man agrees to do a favor for a dying friend, he finds himself racing for his life across Europe.

PRIVATE PATIENT, P.D. James, Faber & Faber.

Adam Dalgliesh and his team investigate a murder at a beautiful manor house in Dorset.

A MOST WANTED MAN, John Le Carre, Hodder & Stoughton.

A thriller set in Hamburg at the present time.

DARKER DOMAIN, Val McDermid, HarperCollins.

DI Karen Pirie investigates two cold cases, both from the same year – 1984, the year of the miner's strike.

BIRTHDAY PRESENT, Barbara Vine, Viking.

Vine's latest psychological thriller involves a member of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government and a stunning North London housewife stuck in a dull marriage.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Andrews, Lori, *Immunity*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. DEA agent Baxter is tailing a mobster when his partner convulses and dies. Geneticist Alexandra Blake conducts tests that show the death was far from accidental. Soon more people start dying, and Alex must track the epidemic to its source before it wipes out thousands.

Asensi, Matilde, *Everything Under the Sky*, HarperCollins. \$25.95. Mystery revolving around the hunt for the lost treasure of China's first Emperor.

Baatz, Simon, *For the Thrill of It*, HarperCollins. \$25.96. The real life case of Leopold and Loeb is examined in this nonfiction thriller.

Baker, Sam, *Deadly Beautiful*, Ballantine. \$23.95. Set in the fashion world and by the editor-in-chief of Cosmopolitan U.K.

Barclay, Linwood, *Too Close to Home*, Bantam. \$22.00. The murder of an entire suburban family spreads panic throughout a small community as neighbors wonder if they'll be the next to die.

Bell, Ted, *Tsar*, Atria Books. \$26.95. Alex Hawke returns in a tale of international suspense.

Blum, Howard, *American Lightning*, Crown. The 1911 bombing of the Los Angeles Times building reveals a deadly plot hatched by union radicals to force the country and capitalism itself to its knees. Nonfiction.

Carrington, Tori, *Working Stiff*, Forge. \$24.95. Sofie Metropolis is back in this hilarious series.

Cleeves, Ann, *White Nights*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. An exhibition at The Herring House art gallery is disturbed by a stranger who bursts into tears and claims not to remember who he is. The next day Inspector Perez finds the man murdered. Second in the Shetland Island Quartet.

Coel, Margaret, *Blood Memory*, Prime Crime. \$24.95. The more investigative reporter Catherine McLeod learns about a conspiracy involving her ex-husband's wealthy family, the more she learns about herself and the more desperate her would-be killer is to find her.

Cohen, Stuart Archer, *The Army of the Republic*, St. Martin's Press. \$24.95. This provocative political thriller comes with a marketing zinger: "Read it quick, while its still fiction." This story of the people against an alliance of big business and government *is* becoming less fictional by the minute.

Culhane, Patrick, *Red Sky in the Morning*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. A military murder mystery set during World War II from Culhane, who is Max Allan Collins.

Douglas, Carole Nelson, *Cat in a Sapphire Slipper*, Forge. \$24.95. PR honcho and feline super sleuth Midnight Louie returns.

Dunn, Carola, *Black Ship*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. A Daisy Dalrymple mystery.

Edgerton, Clyde, *The Bible Salesman*, Little Brown. \$23.99. A conman teams up with a naïve teenage bible salesman in this story that made David Sedaris howl with laughter.

Gaylin, Alison, *Heartless*, Obsidian. \$21.95. Magazine editor Zoe Greene was expecting a relaxing vacation when she joined her lover in Mexico, but that's not what she gets when tourists start dying.

Gerritsen, Tess, *The Keepsake*, Ballantine. \$26.00. A Boston medical examiner discovers that an ancient Egyptian mummy is actually a modern day murder victim.

Hallinan, Timothy, *The Fourth Watcher*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. A thriller set in Bangkok from this very talented writer.

Harrison, Cora, *A Secret and Unlawful Killing*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. The second in the series set in medieval Ireland featuring a female judge who is called upon to investigate a series of shocking murders at the Michaelmas Fair.

Hill, Susan, *The Man in The Picture*, Overlook Press. \$15.00. A ghost story just in time for Halloween! In the apartment of Oliver's professor at Cambridge is a painting. On this cold night, the professor reveals the painting's secret. To stare into it is to play dangerously with unseen demons.

Hill, Suzette A., *Bones in the Belfry*, Soho Press. \$24.95. The story of the village vicar who accidentally strangled a female parishioner is told by two local pets – the victim's cat Maurice and the neighbor's dog Bouncer.

Jardine, Quentin, *Aftershock*, Trafalgar Square. \$24.95. A dead woman seems to be a serial killer's latest victim, or was her murder politically motivated? Featuring Bob Skinner.

Jones, Merry, *The Borrowed and Blue Murders*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Fourth in the Zoe Hayes mystery series.

Kaplan, Janice, *A Job to Kill For*, Touchstone. \$24.00. Dizzy L.A. interior designer Lacy Fields returns for another fashionable murder mystery.

Krueger, William Kent, *Red Knife*, Atria Books. \$24.00. Corcoran (Cork) O'Connor finds himself caught in the middle of a racist gang war that's turning picturesque Tamarack County into a bloody battlefield.

McFadyen, Cody, *The Darker Side*, Bantam. \$24.00. A killer murders a woman on a crowded airliner at thirty thousand feet. Special Agent Smoky Barrett investigates.

McInerny, Ralph, *The Green Revolution*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. Just in time for the college football season, another mystery set at the University of Notre Dame.

Martin, Esteban & Carranza, Andreu, *The Gaudi Key*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. The great architect hides a sacred relic in his most precious work on behalf of an imperiled secret society.

Ocean, T. Lynn, *Southern Poison*, St. Martin's Minotaur. \$24.95. A Jersey Barnes mystery.

Patterson, James, *Against Medical Advice*, Little Brown. \$26.99. A young man faces a debilitating illness and a maddening medical establishment, in this real life story of struggle and triumph.

Saul, John, *Faces of Fear*, Ballantine. \$26.00. A Beverly Hills woman made perfect by her plastic surgeon husband takes her own life when she is scarred in a boating accident.

Underwood, Blair, *In the Night of the Heat*, Atria Books. \$25.00. Tennyson Hardwick, gorgeous Hollywood actor and former gigolo, is back to face new challenges.

Van Lustbader, Eric, *First Daughter*, Forge. \$25.95. Just a few weeks before Edward Carson is to be inaugurated as President of the United State, his daughter is kidnapped. ATF agent Jack McClure is called in.

Woods, Stuart, *Hot Mahogany*, Putnam. \$25.95. Stone Barrington is back in Manhattan and discovers his friend, who builds and restores antique furniture, is a spy who may be hiding a lot more than just a few forged antiques.

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