

BOOKAHOLIC

For the Mystery Addict

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WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

***THE OUTLANDER*, Gil Adamson, Ecco Press. \$25.95**

This first novel by Canadian Adamson languished on my “must read” list for far too long. It was published in 2008 and won the prestigious Hammett Prize before I got around to reading a paperback copy. A pleasure deferred. Set in 1903, Mary Boulton is nineteen and a widow. She is also her husband’s killer. She sets off alone across the West pursued by her brothers-in-law who are looking to avenge their brother’s death. I was reminded of Stef Penney’s novel, *The Tenderness of Wolves*, not only by the extraordinary prose but also by the landscape, here so hostile to women. Mary Boulton, like nearly all women of her time, is quite unable to fend for herself -- lacking any of the skills needed to survive the wilderness in which she finds herself. But survive she does, with some help from some men and by her own will to outrun certain death. Despite the stately pace of this novel, I found myself eagerly turning these pages.

***EVIL AT HEART*, Chelsea Cain, Minotaur Books. \$24.99**

Detective Archie Sheridan and serial killer Gretchen Lowell return in the third (and possibly the best to date) installment of this series. I had lost a lot of respect for Archie after his last outing when his actions and inaction seemed reprehensible. I know Gretchen has him under an extraordinary spell, but Archie seemed unable to put the safety of his family before the life of this sadistic, yet so attractive, killer. I’m happy to report that all seems to have righted itself now. What is becoming clearer is the battle of wits, the fight to the death, between Cain’s two protagonists. It is shown off to perfection here and the plot promises many sequels. If you’re new to this series, catch up.

***THE HIDDEN MAN*, David Ellis, Putnam. \$25.95**

Ellis introduces Jason Kolarich, a young maverick lawyer. Jason is approached by a Mr. Smith who tells him that he represents a third party who wants to get a man charged with murder off the hook. It seems that the accused is the elder brother of a little girl who was abducted from her home more than twenty years ago. And the man he is accused of murdering was a neighbor at the time, a neighbor with prior offenses against minors. This is great stuff. Ellis does not get the attention he deserves. His legal thrillers are way up there.

***BOTH WAYS IS THE ONLY WAY I WANT IT*, Maile Meloy, Riverhead. \$25.95**

Meloy has been a literary star in her own small way since her first collection, *Half In Love*, was published. This collection of stories is superb. “*Liliana*”, in which a self-involved grandmother returns from the dead, thus giving a disinherited young father hope

that, this time, things might be different, is my favorite. Meloy shows humor here as well as her ability to write some of the best prose on the planet. Even if you're not a fan of short stories, don't let this pass you by.

***THE AMATEURS*, Marcus Sakey, Dutton. \$25.95**

Four friends meet every Thursday at a bar in which one of them works. As they wile away their evenings, it becomes obvious that none of them have attained anything they wanted in their lives. So they hatch a plan, lubricated by alcohol, to pull off a robbery. Nobody will get hurt and each one of them has a use for the money the robbery will give them. But nothing goes right and people are killed. This is Sakey's territory. Take foolish, perhaps, young people, and produce a moral dilemma. How will each of them act, and how will those actions affect them and their relationship with others? Good stuff!

***THE SIEGE*, Stephen White, Dutton. \$25.95**

This is, hands down, the best thriller of the summer. White writes great stand-alones (he also has a series which I don't think is quite up to this standard), and he has a terrific talent for grabbing the reader by the throat and not letting go. It is a lovely weekend in New Haven, but some of Yale's students seem to have disappeared. The fact that some of them have influential parents – the sons of both the secretary of the army and the newest Supreme Court justice are missing – becomes a cause for concern to both the CIA and the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team. Turns out the missing students are in the Book & Snake Tomb. Is this something to do with the university's secret societies, or something else altogether? When a student emerges from the Tomb and informs the waiting crowd that he is going to die, and then does, it becomes obvious it is something else. Finding out what that something else is will keep you on tenterhooks.

GRAPHIC NOVELS

I have not been a fan of graphic novels, or comics as they were once called, since I devoured the Western Canon in Classic Comic form (oh, come on. You know you did it too). In fact, my mother was able to find the Bible – Old and New Testament – in comic form and that gave me a basic knowledge of those books without having to read the incredibly dreary text, such that I can pass for a halfway decent biblical scholar. But that's not my point.

Vertigo Crime and DC Comics are putting out a series of graphic novels, some of which are by writers not associated with that art form. ***DARK ENTRIES*** is written by **Ian Rankin** with artwork by **Werther Dell'Edera** and I had such great fun with this offbeat story that I have become a fan, not just of this series which I hope will grow and prosper, but also of graphic novels. Period.

With a little help from my friends, I have now read *FROM HELL* by **Alan Moore** and **Eddie Campbell** which is one great work of literature. Why would anyone else ever want to write a book about Jack the Ripper?

Anyway, thank you Vertigo Crime and DC Comics for expanding my horizons. I did mention some of the above on Twitter and, next thing, I was being followed by Spiderman. We live in interesting times.

ON MY RADAR

***THE LOST SYMBOL*, Dan Brown, Doubleday. \$29.95**

What can I say? Except this is not on my radar. It is on my “to read” pile.

***RICHARD STARK’S PARKER: THE HUNTER*, Darwyn Cooke, IDW. \$24.99**

The first novel in this classic series gets the graphic novel treatment. I’m hearing nothing but good things.

***HOMER & LANGLEY*, E.L. Doctorow, Random House. \$26.00**

The Collyer brothers, one blind and the other damaged by mustard gas in the Great War, live a reclusive life in their once grand Fifth Avenue mansion. But the epic events of the century have a way of playing out in their lives.

***BLOOD’S A ROVER*, James Ellroy, Knopf. \$28.95**

It is the summer of 1968. Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy are dead and three men are at the center of a political vortex: Dwight Holly, J. Edgar Hoover’s pet strong-arm goon; Wayne Tedrow, ex-cop and heroin runner; and Dan Crutchfield, a window-peeping private eye. As only Ellroy can do it.

***THE ARMS MAKER OF BERLIN*, Dan Fesperman, Knopf. \$25.95**

Stolen WWII documents on the White Rose student movement resurface and threaten to expose those in power.

***EVEN MONEY*, Dick Francis and Felix Francis, Putnam. \$25.95**

The third collaboration between Dick Francis and his son.

***THE WHITE QUEEN*, Philippa Gregory, Touchstone. \$26.99**

An historical by Gregory would not, as a rule, get my undivided attention. But the story at the heart of this tale is that of the missing princes in the Tower of London. I’m not sure how Gregory will approach this, but my take on this story is that if they were murdered, the name of the murderer is Tudor not Plantagenet. You knew I’d say that.

***PYX*, Bill James, Countryman. \$23.95.**

This is the latest (by which I mean, what, number twenty?) in the fabulous, underrated, and unappreciated Harpur and Iles series.

GALLOWS LANE, Brian McGilloway, Minotaur Books. \$23.99

The second book in the series featuring Garda Inspector Benedict Devlin as he investigates a series of murders in the Irish Borderlands. A great series.

HARDBALL, Sara Paretsky, Putnam. \$26.95

A new V.I. Warshawski novel . I'm hearing it's one of her best.

INHERENT VICE, Thomas Pynchon, The Penguin Press. \$27.95

A private eye novel set in L.A. By Pynchon? Absolutely!

THE HOLY BULLET, Luis Miguel Rocha, Putnam. \$25.95

This thriller has, at its heart, the conspiracy surrounding the 1981 attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II. My kind of book.

THE DARK CHRONICLES Case #1: sqweegel, Anthony E. Zuiker with Duane Swierczynski, Dutton. \$26.95

Oh, this looks interesting. The Dark Chronicles are crime thrillers centered on rogue serial killers. Steve Dark, who runs a secret black ops element within the U.S. government is charged with finding and bringing to justice the most brutal and horrific serial murderers in the world.

Readers will have access to digital content including twenty book-specific cyber-bridges which, when entered into the series' site, will unlock a video, audio, or interactive element that enhances the story.

Needless to say, this is a planned twenty book series, and needless to say I want to know if readers can enjoy this series without going to their computers! All will be revealed I'm sure.

FIRST MYSTERIES

CITY OF SILVER, Annamaria Alfieri, Minotaur Books. \$24.95

This historical is set in the Spanish-ruled city of Potosi, Peru, which faces upheaval when the King of Spain discovers that the coins the city has been circulating throughout the world are not pure silver. In addition, Mother Maria Santa Hilda is under pressure when the daughter of a wealthy man mysteriously dies in her care.

HEMINGWAY DEADLIGHTS, Michael Atkinson, Minotaur Books. \$24.95

It is 1956 and Ernest Hemingway is at his home in Key West. But when a friend is killed, Papa finds himself in the unlikely role of sleuth. First in a series.

DEVIL'S TRILL, Gerald Elias, Minotaur Books. \$25.99

Elias is an accomplished musician and is adjunct professor of music at the University of Utah, so his mystery set in the classical music world has heft. A priceless violin is stolen and then a murder is committed. Blind, reclusive, vulgar violinist Daniel Jacobus must prove his innocence.

***MURDER AT LONGBOURN*, Tracy Kiely, Minotaur Books. \$24.99**

Elizabeth Parker has dumped her two-timing boyfriend and accepted an invitation to join her Aunt Winnie for a “How to Host a Murder Party” on New Year’s Eve. Aunt W’s Cape Cod B&B becomes the center for Elizabeth’s investigations when a local wealthy miser ends up the unscripted victim.

***THE LAST EMBER*, Daniel Levin, Riverhead Books. \$25.95**

A literary thriller about the search for the legendary Tabernacle Menorah, stolen from the Second Temple in Jerusalem two thousand years ago and never recovered.

***A BAD DAY FOR SORRY*, Sophie Littlefield, Minotaur Books. \$24.95**

Stella Hardesty runs a sewing shop in rural Missouri. On the side, she helps battered women get rid of their abusive others. So when Chrissy Shaw asks Stella for help, it seems like a straightforward behavior correction, until Chrissy’s husband disappears with her two-year-old son.

***BLOODROOT*, Bill Loehfelm, Putnam. \$25.95.**

Kevin Curran has always hoped that his family would unite, but younger brother Danny seems lost to heroin addiction. When Danny shows up on Kevin’s Staten Island doorstep, Kevin is overjoyed. Danny looks clean, fit, and prosperous. But at what price? Not even Kevin’s worst nightmares could have prepared him for the horrors he’ll discover about his brother’s dark history.

***NEW WORLD MONKEYS*, Nancy Mauro, Shaye Areheart. \$23.00**

Duncan and Lily leave Manhattan for the tranquility of their inherited Victorian house. But that tranquility is immediately shattered when the town mascot, a wild boar, leaps in front of their car. Then there are the bones they dig up on their property. An eccentric and off-beat new voice.

***THE BIRTHING HOUSE*, Christopher Ransom, St. Martin’s Press. \$24.94**

A young couple attempt to save their marriage by starting anew in a rural turn-of-the-century house, once a birthing house. The former owner bequeaths a photo album that “belongs to the house.” Thumbing through these antique photos of women in their nineteenth-century dresses, the husband is chilled when he sees, staring back at him with a countenance of rage, his own wife.

***TOP PRODUCER*, Norb Vonnegut, Minotaur Books. \$24.99**

Vonnegut, a wealth advisor, has written a thriller about the behind-the-back dealings and scams of Wall Street’s elite, as only an insider can.

NON FICTION OF NOTE

***THE MAN WHO LOVED BOOKS TOO MUCH*, Allison Hoover Bartlett, Riverhead Books. \$24.95**

John Charles Gilkey has stolen hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of rare books from book fairs, stores, and libraries. Ken Sanders, book dealer, is driven to catch him. Journalist Bartlett befriended both men and the result is a must-read for bibliophiles and book collectors.

***FILM NOIR*, Alain Silver, Elizabeth Wars, James Ursini, & Robert Porfirio, Eds. Overlook Press. \$40.00**

This encyclopedia contains hundreds of film stills, photos, and text distilling everything about the genre into one volume -- from movies to stars to themes and motifs -- and brings the genre up to date with contemporary contributions.

NEWS FROM THE UK

***BLOOD LINE*, Mark Billingham, Little Brown.**

DI Tom Thorne investigates what looks to be a routine domestic murder – until a bloodstained sliver of an X-Ray is found clutched in the dead woman's fist.

***ORDINARY THUNDERSTORMS*, William Boyd, Bloomsbury.**

Adam Kindred, a climatologist, is in London for an interview. A chance encounter at a bistro leads to a series of accidents through which Adam will lose everything – home, family, friends, job, reputation, etc. There's a reward for his capture and a hired killer is stalking him. Boyd is the author of *Restless*, the Costa Novel of the Year.

***AGATHA CHRISTIE'S SECRET NOTEBOOKS*, John Curran, HarperCollins.**

An exploration of Agatha Christie's recently discovered notebooks. Also included are two new never-before-published Hercules Poirot short stories.

***REBELS AND TRAITORS*, Lindsey Davis, Century.**

Davis returns to her first love – the 17th century – and pens a novel set against the English Civil War and the dark plots of the Commonwealth.

***THE ANNIVERSARY MAN*, R.J. Ellory, Orion.**

Twenty years ago, John Costello survived an attack by the “Hammer of God,” a serial killer who targeted courting couples. His fiancée was not so lucky. Now John knows a lot about serial killers, and when a new spate of murders begin, he tries to look for the pattern behind the killings.

***A WEEK IN DECEMBER*, Sebastian Faulks, Hutchinson.**

Over seven days, and through the lives of seven characters, Faulks pieces together the complex patterns of modern urban life.

***SMALL WARS*, Sadie Jones, Chatto & Windus.**

Hal is a soldier with a brilliant career ahead of him and Clara is his soul mate. When Hal is posted to Cyprus in the middle of the Emergency – the British are defending the colony against Cypriots who want union with Greece – the atrocities of that “small war” begin to drive them apart.

***THE DEAD RISE NOT*, Philip Kerr, Quercus.**

Berlin 1934. The Nazis have been in power for just eighteen months, but already Germany is changing for the worst. As the city prepares to host the 1936 Olympics, Jews are being expelled from all German sporting events. Bernie Gunther (yes!) is a house detective at the Adlon Hotel where the discovery of two bodies involves Bernie in a vast labor and construction racket designed to take advantage of the huge sums the Nazis are prepared to spend to showcase the new Germany to the world.

***FEVER OF THE BONE*, Val McDermid. Little Brown.**

Tony Hill meets his most twisted adversary yet – a killer who targets youth and innocence.

***THE COMPLAINTS*, Ian Rankin, Orion.**

Malcolm Fox works for “The Complaints,” the cops who investigate other cops. Fox is asked to investigate Jamie Breck, who is dirty, but nobody can prove it. Fox discovers there’s more to Breck than anybody thinks.

***PRICE OF LOVE*, Peter Robinson, Hodder & Stoughton.**

A collection of short stories including a novella that fills in the gaps in the life of DCI Alan Banks before Yorkshire.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Abbott, Jeff, *Trust Me*, Dutton. \$25.95. What seems to be a disorganized group of malcontent losers is actually a dangerous terrorist organization.

Abel, Kenneth, *Down in the Flood*, Minotaur Books. \$24.95. New Orleans prosecutor Danny Chaisson is hired to solve a case of embezzlement as Hurricane Katrina bears down on the city.

Alexander, Tasha, *Tears of Pearl*, Minotaur Books. \$24.99. Set in the beauty and decadence of late 19th century Constantinople, this mystery featuring Lady Emily and Colin Hargreaves, diplomats of the British Empire, is full of intrigue, treachery, and romance. As you might expect from Alexander.

Andrews, Donna, *Swan for the Money*, Minotaur Books. \$24.95. Another goofy title in the Meg Langslow mystery series. The incredibly popular Meg Langslow mystery series.

- Balmaseda, Liz, *Sweet Mary***, Atria. \$24.95. One woman's hunger for justice becomes a journey into darkness.
- Benn, James R., *Evil for Evil***, Soho. \$25.00. Billy Boyle returns in Benn's latest World War II mystery.
- Cleeves, Ann, *Red Bones***, Minotaur Books. \$24.99. This is Cleeves' third thriller in the Shetland Island series. When a young archaeologist discovers a set of human remains, detective Jimmy Perez investigates.
- Cohen, Gabriel, *Neptune Avenue***, Minotaur Books. \$24.95. NYPD detective Jack Leightner is embroiled in a cat-and-mouse game set in the Russian émigré community of Brighton Beach.
- Cole, Martina, *Faces***, Grand Central. \$24.99. The tale of a young man with no place to turn but the world of gangsters.
- Cook, Robin, *Intervention***, Putnam. \$25.95. A medical thriller where DNA science, biotechnology, and religion collide.
- Crosby, Ellen, *The Riesling Retribution***, Scribner. \$25.00. The discovery of a human skull in Lucie Montgomery's vineyard points to family secrets going back to the Civil War.
- Douglas, Carole Nelson, *Cat in a Topaz Tango***, Forge. \$24.99. Death stalks a Las Vegas charity dance in the latest featuring Midnight Louie.
- Dunlap, Susan, *Civil Twilight***, Counterpoint. \$25.00. San Francisco stunt double Darcy Lott once again turns amateur sleuth.
- Dunn, Carola, *Sheer Folly***, Minotaur Books. \$24.99. A Daisy Dalrymple mystery set in the Roaring 20s.
- Ferrigno, Robert, *Heart of the Assassin***, Scribner. \$25.95. The post-apocalyptic Assassin trilogy comes to an explosive conclusion.
- Finder, Joseph, *Vanished***, St. Martin's Press. \$25.99. A new series from the best-selling author, introducing security investigator Nick Heller.
- Fossum, Karin, *The Water's Edge***, HMH. \$25.00. A Norwegian man's obsession with a child killing case threatens his marriage.
- Frey, Stephen, *Hell's Gate***, Atria. \$24.95. A disillusioned lawyer attempts to forge a new life in a small town. Those attempts are disrupted by true evil.
- Ghelfi, Brent, *The Venona Cable***, Holt. \$25.00. Russian agent Alexi Volkovoy visits the U.S. to uncover the top secret Soviet messages that implicated the Rosenbergs and Alger Hiss.
- Goodkind, Terry, *The Law of Nines***, Putnam. \$27.95. A thriller from fantasy writer Goodkind. Alexander Rahl is being pursued but he can't figure out by whom or why.
- Grabien, Deborah, *While My Guitar Gently Weeps***, Minotaur Books. \$24.99. J.P. Kinkaid investigates the death of a rock musician.
- Grace, Nancy, *The Eleventh Victim***, Hyperion. \$25.95. Reeling from her fiancé's murder, a young therapist learns that one of her patients has fallen victim to a serial killer.
- Graham, Mitchell, *Dead Docket***, Forge. \$24.95. A legal thriller featuring Katherine Adams and John Delaney.
- Haig, Brian, *The Hunted***, Grand Central. \$25.99. A Russian multimillionaire whose fortune was stolen by the KGB flees Russia with assassins on his trail.

- Hawks, John Twelve, *The Golden City***, Doubleday. \$26.95. The conclusion to the mystical Fourth Realm trilogy that began with *The Traveler*.
- Hitchcock, Jane Stanton, *Mortal Friends***, Harper. \$24.95. When the latest victim of the “Beltway Basher” is found in the bushes of Montrose Park in DC, Detective Gunner is convinced that the murderer is a society big shot hiding in plain sight.
- Huneven, Michelle, *Blame***, Farrar, Straus, Giroux. \$25.00. An auto accident transforms a wisecracking young intellectual into a shadow of her former self in this tale of retribution.
- Indridason, Arnaldur, *Arctic Chill***, Minotaur Books. \$24.99. Inspector Erlundur investigates when a body is found in a garden.
- Izener, Claude, *The Disappearance at Pere-Lachaise***, Minotaur Books. \$24.99. When Armand de Valois’s widow disappears into his tomb, her maid calls on Victor Legris, who thinks there must be a simple explanation. There isn’t.
- Jance, J.A., *Fire and Ice***, Wm. Morrow. \$25.95. J.P. Beaumont joins forces with Joanna Brady!
- Kadrey, Richard, *Sandman Slim***, Wm. Morrow. \$24.95. A paranormal noir about a demonic hit man from the netherworld, stranded in Los Angeles.
- Keating, H.R.F., *Inspector Ghote’s First Case***, Minotaur Books. \$24.95. Keating revives his beloved character in this prequel to his series.
- Konrath, J.A., *Cherry Bomb***, Hyperion. \$23.95. One of “Jack” Daniels’ loved ones is dead in the latest cocktail from Konrath.
- Koryta, Michael, *The Silent Hour***, Minotaur Books. \$24.95. Private investigator Lincoln Perry is asked to find a woman who disappeared twelve years ago.
- Kuzneski, Chris, *The Lost Throne***, Putnam. \$25.95. In 1890, a man collapses in Naples, Italy. He tries to communicate about a discovery of great importance. But nobody can understand him.
- Larsson, Stieg, *The Girl Who Played with Fire***, Knopf. \$25.95. The second in the late author’s trilogy.
- Lavalle, Victor, *Big Machine***, Spiegel & Grau. \$25.00. Ricky Rice is an unsuccessful hustler, recovering dope fiend and cult survivor living out his life in upstate New York. A mysterious message brings him to Vermont.
- Maron, Margaret, *Sand Sharks***, Grand Central. \$24.99. Deborah Knott’s colleagues are being murdered.
- Nugent, Andrew, *Soul Murder***, Minotaur Books. \$24.95. A house master is found brutally killed at a boy’s boarding school. Superintendent Denis Lennon and Sergeant Molly Power investigate.
- Patterson, James, *The Murder of King Tut***, Little Brown. \$26.99. A nonfiction thriller about the plot to murder Egypt’s boy king.
- Patterson, Richard North, *The Spire***, Holt. Patterson’s latest is part thriller, part love story.
- Perez-Reverte, Arturo, *The Cavalier in the Yellow Doublet***, Putnam. \$25.95. The fifth Captain Alatrieste adventure.
- Posadas, Carmen, *Child’s Play***, Harper. \$24.95. An exclusive private school is the setting for cruelty and murder in this psychological thriller.

Randisi, Robert J., *You're Nobody 'Til Somebody Kills You*, Minotaur Books. \$24.99. Once again the Rat Pack is featured.

Reich, Christopher, *Rules of Vengeance*, Doubleday. \$26.00. Featuring Doctors without Borders physician Jonathan Ransom in a new adventure.

Rosenfelt, David, *New Tricks*, Grand Central. \$24.99. Andy Carpenter learns that some people are willing to kill to get their hands on an adorable Bernese puppy.

Russell, Sheldon, *The Yard Dog*, Minotaur Books. \$24.99. In 1940s Oklahoma, railroad special agent Hook Runyon uncovers a Nazi plot to sell stolen “degenerate art” in America.

Schulman, Sarah, *The Mere Future*, Arsenal Pulp. \$22.95. In a frighteningly perfect, near- future New York, emotions are forbidden and a sensational murder trial will rock this paradise to its foundation.

Smith, Alexander McCall, *The Lost Art of Gratitude*, Pantheon. \$23.95. Scotland’s Isabel Dalhousie returns to philosophize, sleuth, and snoop.

Starr, Jason, *Panic Attack*, Minotaur Books. \$24.95. When Dr. Adam Bloom kills an intruder in his home, he is unprepared for the media attention – and the negative effect the incident has on his own family.

Swain, James, *The Night Monster*, Ballantine. \$25.00. Jack Carpenter discovers that South Florida towns can hold deadly secrets.

Todd, Charles, *A Duty to the Dead*, Wm. Morrow. \$24.99. Introduces Bess Crawford, a resourceful British army nurse who is injured when her ship is sunk in 1916.

Waddell, Dan, *Blood Atonement*, Minotaur Books. \$24.95. Nigel Barnes’s second case leads him into the dark heart of the Mormon church and a gruesome century-old secret.

Whyte, Jack, *Order in Chaos*, Putnam. \$26.95. Book three of the Templar Trilogy.

Woods, Stuart, *Hothouse Orchid*, Putnam. \$25.95. Featuring Special Agent Holly Barker.

Woods, Teri, *Alibi*, Grand Central. \$21.95. A low level thug gets in over his head with drug lords and finds himself in desperate need of an alibi.

Sally Owen is a book dealer and works at the Mysterious Bookshop in New York City.

You can reach her via e-mail: sallyowen@verizon.net

Or via mail:

Sally Owen

1825 Foster Avenue, Apt. 2J

Brooklyn, NY 11230

Phone: 718-434-1705

Visit www.owenbookseller.com and www.myspace.com/sallyowen