



Aliens & Alibis Books

Cat Scratchings

March 2007

Hello!

Did you miss us?

It's taken us a while to get things organized after moving out of the space on Garners Ferry Road. We have some things in a storage space and some here at the house. Sometimes it becomes interesting to determine exactly where something is.

Please note the new phone number at the bottom of the newsletter. We had hoped to be able to move the original store number but that didn't happen. I think I am finished with gnashing my teeth over that frustrating process.

The goal for our newsletter is to give you information about new and forthcoming books and other mystery, fantasy and science fiction happenings. Some books will be from major publishers and others from the small publishers that we carried at the store. We hope that you look forward to reading our newsletters and will buy books through us. Remember that the postage is free in the Columbia metro area for the first three books. And you can buy books other than the genres we specialize in -- so, if you see a new nonfiction book you'd like, please consider us for your order.

A note on the store cats --- They seem to be adapting well to the periodically chaotic life with the house cats and dogs. We've had some interesting hissing sessions but no blood has been drawn. The biggest surprise has been Bertram. I think most of you know that Bertram has been a cat who liked to watch people but not be touched. For some reason that is changing. He actually asks for attention now. He still doesn't like to be picked up but we're waiting to see if that changes also. Serena is busy organizing the other cats to her specifications. Charlie, the Aussie Shepherd puppy is still trying to make friends with them and not making much progress.

We could use the assistance of you science fiction and fantasy readers-- and mystery readers too. Please let us know of any good books that you run across. You don't have to write anything fancy. We can edit what you send. We're not as much in the loop as we were when we had the actual storefront. This is your chance to tell us -- and the email list -- about the good book(s) you've been reading. They don't have to be new; we'll take suggestions for older books.

Deb and Gary

Forensics in 12th Century England

Mistress of the Art of Death

by Ariana Franklin

(Putnam, \$25.95)

Did you know that in 12th century Salerno, Italy women were respected as doctors but that was not the case in 12th century Britian? Did you know that in 12th century Salerno doctors who could 'speak for the dead' were asked to look at crime scenes as a way of determining how the person died and find clues as to who the killer was? I certainly didn't know either of these facts until I read **MISTRESS OF THE ART OF DEATH**. Ariana Franklin has put together a good mix of fact and fiction and come up with a book that I couldn't put down. If you like the books by Kathy Reichs or are drawn to books on forensics, read this book. The characters are well drawn and the story is compelling. And the learning is painless.

I do have to warn you that the crimes are not pleasant to read about since they are the murder of children. In fact the first chapter of the book has turned some readers off. I am not comfortable with books that cite crimes against children but in my opinion, Ariana has taken a very delicate approach to her story. There is no gratuitous violence in the book.

PI, Chicago Style

Big City, Bad Blood

by Sean Chercover

(Morrow, \$23.95)

Ray Dudgeon used to be a reporter but now he's a PI. He's finding that being a reporter was a lot safer. He's hired to provide protection for a locations manager for a Hollywood film that is shooting in Chicago -- and Ray quickly finds out that 'shooting' is not only the word for what a camera does but is also what a membe of organized crime wants to do to his client -- with a gun. The author has been a PI in Chicago for many years -- which shows in his writing.

It Runs in the Family

Heart-Shaped Bos

by Joe Hill (\$24.95)

HEART-SHAPED BOX has gotten rave reviews including a starred review from Publisher's Weekly which calls the book a truly remarkable debut. The story starts when middle-aged rock star Judas Coyne, who collects morbid curios for fun, doesn't think twice about buying a suit advertised at an online auction site as haunted by its dead owner's ghost. What he doesn't realize is that the suit belonged to Craddock McDermott, the stepfather of one of Coyne's discarded groupies, and that the old man's ghost is a malignant spirit determined to kill Judas in revenge for his stepdaughter's suicide. Be certain to read this one with the lights on.

Books Not to Be Read in Public

The Case of the Missing Books: A Mobile Library Mystery

by Ian Sansom

Harper, \$12.95

The Bass Wore Scales: A Liturgical Mystery

by Mark Schweizer

St. James Music Press, \$12.95

When I go out to run errands or to the doctor, I usually carry a book with me so I don't miss any reading time. But I've found out that there are some books that I am better off reading at home. The first to be a problem in public were the Terry Pratchett Discworld books. As I giggled, laughed, snorted, etc. through the humor in the books I got some very strange looks from people sitting or standing near me. The following two books definitely fit into that category.

THE CASE OF THE MISSING BOOKS begins when Israel Armstrong, a nervous, chubby, Jewish vegetarian, arrives in Tumdrum, Northern Ireland to become the town's librarian. He finds that loaning books to patrons will be difficult as all the library books, 15,000 of them, are missing. His task of finding the missing books is hampered by the citizens of Tumdrum who are quirky, to say the least. It's difficult to explain the humor -- it's a case of having to be there. A sequel to this book, MR. DIXON DISAPPEARS will be on the shelves in July.

THE BASS WORE SCALES is the fifth in the Liturgical Mystery series that begins with THE TENOR WORE TAP SHOES and is published by the Saint James Music Press -- honestly. Hayden Konig is terribly wealthy, the full-time Police Chief and the part-time organist and choir master of St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in St. Germaine, North Carolina. He also wants to be a hard-boiled mystery writer which is why he bought Raymond Chandler's typewriter. With it Hayden turns out such unforgettable lines as "It was a dark and stormy night -- a night just like any other night, except it was Tuesday, so it was really a night just like 1/7 of any other nights; a night when the air was just as hot, the streets just as mean and second chances just as likely as a beret-wearing donkey named Wotan tapping out the exact number of Rossini operas with his hoof and taking my last sawbuck".

Both books are highly recommended.

Satirizing Diplomacy

The Andoid's Dream

by John Scalzi (\$24.95)

John Scalzi is an up-and-coming new writer. OLD MAN'S WAR and GHOST BRIGADES, his first two Heinlein-esque SF books, were best sellers at the store -- and elsewhere. Now he turns to satire and does it equally well.

The Earth is faced with certain destruction after a diplomatic faux pas with the alien race, the Nidu. In order to save the world, Harry Creek must find and deliver the Android's Dream, an electric-blue breed of sheep, to the Nidu for their coronation ceremony. This will not be an easy task as disciples of the Church of the Evolved Lamb--founded by an early 21st-century SF writer of "modest talents" are also on the trail of the sheep. Publisher's Weekly calls it "an effervescent but intelligent romp."

Other SF/Fantasy forthcoming books

Kage Baker, Gods and Pawns (Tor Jan 2007)

Stephen Baxter, Emperor (Ace Jan 2007)

Gardner Dozois, ed., The Best of the Best, Volume 2: 20 Years of the Best Short

Science Fiction Novels (St. Martin's Griffin Feb 2007)

S. T. Joshi, Icons of Horror and the Supernatural, Volumes 1 and 2 (Greenwood Press Dec 2006)

Caitlín R. Kiernan, Daughter of Hounds (Roc Jan 2007)

China Miéville, Un Lun Dun (Ballantine Del Rey Mar 2007) -- has received rave reviews

Charles Stross, Missile Gap (Subterranean Press Dec 2006)

Howard Waldrop, Things Will Never Be the Same: Selected Short Fiction 1980-2005 (Old Earth Books Mar 2007)

Forthcoming Mysteries of Note

A few of the forthcoming mysteries -- all highly recommended:

Atherton, Nancy, Aunt Dimity Goes West \$22.95 Viking (Aunt Dimity)

Ault, Sandi, Wild Indigo \$23.95 Berkley (1st - Jamaica Wild)

Bass, Jefferson, Flesh and Bone \$24.95 Morrow (Body Farm)

Bernhardt, William, Capitol Threat \$25.95 Ballantine (Ben Kincaid)

Bowen, Rhys, In Dublin's Fair City \$23.95 Minotaur (Molly Murphy)

Bruen, Ken - Priest \$23.95 Minotaur (Jack Taylor)

Crombie, Deborah, Water Like a Stone \$23.95 Morrow (Kincaid/James)

Cooper, Susan Rogers, Vegas Nerve \$23.95 Minotaur (Milt Kovak)

DePoy, Phillip, A Minister's Ghost \$5.99 Worldwide (Fever Devilin)

Donnelly, Deborah, Bride and Doom \$6.99 Dell (Carnegie Kincaid)

Evans, Mary Anna, Effigies \$24.95 Poisoned Pen (Faye Longchamp)

Graves, Sarah, Trap Door \$22.00 Bantam (Jacobia Tiptree)

Hawke, Richard, Cold Day in Hell \$24.95 Random House (Fitz Malone)

Isleib, Roberta, Deadly Advice \$6.99 Prime Crime (1st - Dr. Rebecca Butterman)

O'Connell, Carol, Find Me \$24.95 Putnam (Kathleen Mallory)

Parshall, Sandra, Disturbing the Dead \$24.95 Poisoned Pen

Pickens, Cathy, Hog Wild \$23.95 Minotaur (Avery Andrews)

Tapplly, William G., Gray Ghost \$23.95 Minotaur (Stoney Calhoun)

More Books

We are adding to our used and collectible books that are listed on our web site. Be sure to check the lists periodically. We're also in the process of re-arranging things on the site so don't be surprised if you find a page or two under constuction.

Thanks.

Deb and Gary

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