



BOOKSELLERS

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Hours

Monday - Wednesday:
10:30 am - 5:30 pm
Thursday & Friday:
10:30 am - 8 pm
Saturday:
10:30 am - 6 pm
Sunday:
Noon - 4 pm



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Newsletter #4 • July 21, 2003

Despite a ferocious storm, we had a really pleasant evening with writers Libby Fischer Hellmann, William Kent Krueger and John Billheimer on July 8. The storm sirens went off and the power blinked out momentarily. But listening to these talented mystery writers talk about their work was far more compelling than the weather, and we're grateful that they made the trip here. We have signed copies of all of their



Libby Hellmann, William Kent Krueger & John Billheimer, 7/8

recent books available in the store.

We plan author events here at The Mystery Company to include time for our guests to introduce themselves and their work, for you to ask questions and, of course, for you to buy books and have them signed. Each time we do events, we hear from you (well, at least one of you) that you didn't know that the authors would be talking, and each time we hear how much you enjoyed the opportunity to hear them speak. While we may change format for some special events, please remember that all our events are intended to be more than just plain signings. We're getting started on scheduling for the fall, and look forward to seeing you at our events.

Discussion groups

We're launching our discussion group this week with a discussion of S.J. Rozan's *Concourse*. Meetings will continue on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:00; our August title is *Murder Must Advertise* by Dorothy Sayers.

Having settled on Wednesday evenings after a several-week process of consulting with you, we've since been asked over and over again for a daytime discussion group as well. If you're interested, please call or email and we'll keep you posted about our plans.

Calendar

Wednesday, July 23, 7 pm

First meeting for our mystery discussion group

We'll be talking about S.J. Rozan's *Concourse*.

Wednesday, August, 27, 7 pm

Mystery discussion group

Dorothy Sayers' *Murder Must Advertise*.

Thursday, September 4, 7 pm

Sharon Short visits to talk about her new series featuring stain removal expert Josie Toadfern. Details in our next newsletter.

Friends & Neighbors

Through our Friends & Neighbors program, we offer you a chance to read a new or forthcoming mystery without charge. All we ask is that you return the advance reading copy with your comments — a sentence, a paragraph, whatever you have to say (positive or negative) — and that you allow us to use your comments in the store, on our website and in this newsletter. Here's a new Friends & Neighbors review, one of many that we received recently. (Others will be posted in the store soon.)

Top O' the Mournin'

by Maddy Hunter
(Pocket Books, \$5.99)

WARNING: do not munch on Triscuts or anything covered in powdered sugar while reading this book! I nearly choked from laughing so hard while I was reading it. This is Maddy Hunter's second book; the first one is entitled, *Alpine for You*.

The heroine/sleuth of the story is Emily Andrews, a would-be-actress-turned-tele-marketer, who lands a job as an escort for a group of senior citizens who are touring Ireland. Half of the seniors are from Emily's native Iowa and the other half are from Brooklyn, New York – that in itself tells you that you are in for lots of laughs. One of the seniors is her wealthy grandmother.

The basic plot is straight from a Scooby Doo mystery with some extra added fun in the form of gender assignment issues, a little sex, a haunted castle, and a tour bus driver with BO who can neither drive nor navigate and who strongly dislikes Oliver Cromwell – what fun! There was belly laughter, or at least a chuckle, on each page.

This is the most fun read I've had in a while. Even though I got to read the book for free, I plan on purchasing a copy when it is published in August as well as looking up Hunter's first book.

Rebecca

This book is due in the store next week — reserve your copy now. Maddy Hunter's first Emily Anderson novel, Alpine for You (Pocket, \$5.99) is in stock now.

Meet our staff: Sherry Crane

Sherry Crane doesn't remember when she didn't want to know "whodunit?" She appreciates being led down the garden path, tripped up by a red herring, chased down a blind alley, and matching wits with any author from Dick Francis to the current crop of mystery authors. A cat on the cover, a quirky

female amateur sleuth, a "cozy" atmosphere, and as many dead bodies as needed to keep the pages turning is her recipe for the ideal mystery.

Sherry has lived in Carmel for six years, has learned to say "pop" instead of soda, but hasn't lost her Mississippi drawl. She's had two romance novels published by Kensington, and is working on a romance with a bit of mystery, and probably a cat. As she has several cats of her own, she gets plenty of encouragement to give the cat a bigger part in any book she writes. She is also doing freelance editing for an e-publisher.

She's always happy to talk mysteries or romantic suspense with customers. She can point you to the "cat cozies," and recommend her favorites.

What we're reading

Tiles and Tribulations by Tamar Myers

(Avon Books, \$6.99)

If you like your mystery series a little Southern, with a dash of comedy, and some truly different characters, you can't go wrong with Tamar Myers's Den of Antiquity mysteries. This latest installment finds Abigail Washburn attending a seance at the home of her friend, C. J., who wants to remove a ghost from her house. Unfortunately, Madame Woo-Woo, the medium, didn't foresee her own end. She collapses after the seance and dies. Being a nosy sort, Abby sets out to solve the murder, as well as the theft of some antique Portuguese tiles from C.J.'s house.

The usual cast of characters are in evidence, including Abby's crinoline and pearl wearing mother, the Rob-Bobs, Abby's new husband Greg, and Dimitri, the yellow cat. Abby has moved to Charleston, South Carolina, but the comic tone and the red herrings remain as strong as ever.

Myers has kept this series fresh by character growth, an occasional new character, and a change of scenery from Abby's Den of Antiquity antique shop to Charleston's historic district.

For readers who're looking for a little fun and a clean read, I recommend Tamar Myers. We have a full selection of back titles in the store too.

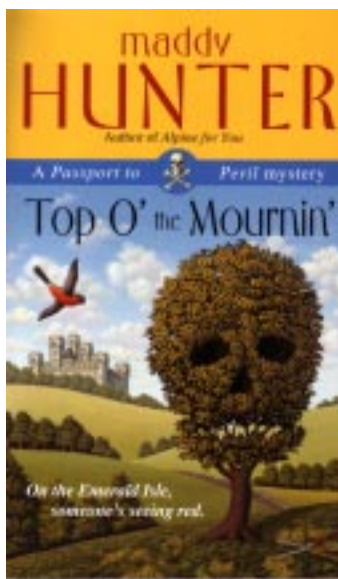
Sherry

Savannah Blues by Mary Kay Andrews

(Perennial, \$13.95)

Moving down the coast to Savannah, Georgia, I recommend another antique-laced mystery, another cast of slightly off-beat characters, another delightful book, an Edgar Award nominee for Best Novel of 2002 that's now available in paperback.

Eloise (Weezie) Foley is a picker – a buyer of antiques from yard and estate sales, and, occasionally, a dumpster diver. Arriving early for an estate sale and camping out on the grounds of a rundown plantation, Weezie finds herself in need of a bathroom in the middle of the night. She climbs a magnolia tree to an open window of the great house. While there, she can't resist grabbing a few treasures to claim when the sale opens. Looking for a hiding place, she opens a closet, and the body of her ex-husband's fiancée falls out. Since Weezie had been heard to say more than once that she could kill that



woman, she's a prime suspect.

In this book we have several subplots: saving a landmark plantation, an antiques reproduction scam, an closet alcoholic mother (Four Roses in an iced tea glass), a gay relative finally coming out, and a hint of new romance for Weezie. All are interwoven seamlessly in an entertaining page turner.

Mary Kay Andrews is known to mystery lovers as Kathy Hogan Trocheck, author of *To Live and Die in Dixie* and other mysteries featuring Callahan Garrity. Her fans will find this book as enjoyable and a bit more complex than her earlier mysteries. I recommend it as a great beach read, or for the patio with a large glass of sweet tea. Southern and tasty.

Sherry

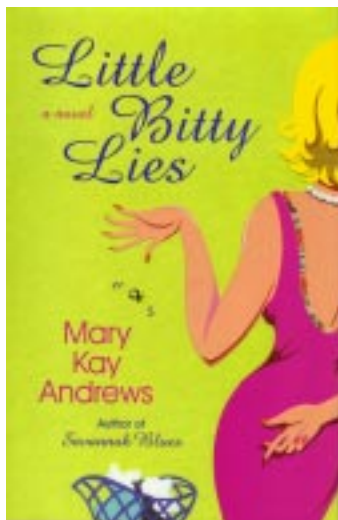
Little Bitty Lies

by Mary Kay Andrews
(HarperCollins, \$24.95)

Mary Bliss McGowan's husband, Parker, has left her, taking all their money, putting a second mortgage on the house, and cashing in his life insurance, except for one small policy. That policy and the title insurance on their house would enable Mary Bliss and her teenage daughter to stay on their feet. The only problem? Parker's not dead. Since Mary Bliss can't find him to kill him, she does the next best thing. She stages his death off the coast of Cozumel, Mexico, buying a bogus death certificate under the counter.

It might have worked, except the insurance company is reluctant to pay, and Matt Hyslip, a private investigator, is also looking for Parker over millions of dollars of business fraud.

With a coterie of traditional Southern characters — the demented mother-in-law, the madcap friend, the rebellious teenage daughter, the suburban culture — *Little Bitty Lies* lays



bare all the angst of a woman suddenly tossed out of her comfortable rut and forced to cope in an entirely new and disturbing reality.

Mary Kay Andrews mixes a little romance, a lot of laugh-out-loud episodes, and a heroine who, like all strong Southern ladies, lives to fight another day in this comic novel of revenge. (Is there a better combination?) Southern fiction doesn't get any better than this.

Did I mention there's also a marvelous chicken salad recipe at the end of the book?

Sherry

White Male Infant by Barbara D'Amato (Forge, \$6.99)

Here's a writer we've liked for a long time, creator of reporter Cat Marsala and of a series of police novels set in Chicago. This new novel, just out in paperback, is a standalone thriller, and what an unconventional, thoughtful and gripping thriller it is. Pathologist Dooley McSweeney and his wife get what should be great news: a bone marrow test proves negative. Their adopted son does not have leukemia. But McSweeney's trained eye notices something surprising about his son's bone marrow sample, something that suggests that little Teddy isn't really from Russia, despite the fact that McSweeney and his wife traveled to a Russian orphanage for the adoption. What follows is a gripping story, a novel that — despite a sensational subject and dramatic situations — gets its power from its characters and how they face their challenges. McSweeney's dilemma is aching, and you'll ask yourself over and over whether he's doing the right thing. D'Amato's writing is straightforward — cool and reportorial — as she lets the story speak for itself. There isn't a false note in the book.

Jim

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Our publishing program

In addition to offering you thousands of titles from publishers large and small, why are we also in the business of publishing mysteries? Because books we admire have fallen out of print, sometimes without having had a fair chance to find an audience in the first place. Because we know that you want to be able to read a series beginning with book one. And, most of all, because we want to be able to share these favorites with you. Just out is *Harball* by Barbara D'Amato, and more Mystery Company titles are on the way.



Harball by Barbara D'Amato

A bomb explodes, taking the life of Louise Sugarman and injuring reporter Cat Marsala. As a controversial advocate for the decriminalization of drugs and for treating addiction as a medical problem, Sugarman has many enemies. Outraged by the attack, Cat resolves to find the killer. The investigation forces Cat to confront the issues and the people on both sides of the debate.

This Mystery Company edition restores to print the 1990 novel that marked the debut of the Cat Marsala series.

ISBN: 1-932325-01-8 • 2003 • \$13.00

"Harball is fast and funny and Cat Marsala is a delight. The book reads like a tough screwball comedy with Carole Lombard as the star and Howard Hawks as the director. Cat is witty and determined and the cast of characters in her life is perfect."

Stuart M. Kaminsky

"The series about Chicago journalist Cat Marsala is one of the best going in at least two areas: pure fair-play puzzle-spinning, and a fresh and well-realized specialized background in each book."

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine



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