



BOOKSELLERS

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Hours

Mondays through Fridays
10:30 am - 5:30 pm
Wednesday evenings to 8 pm
Saturday:
10:30 am - 6 pm



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for Independent Minds

Novelist Stephanie Kane presents a workshop on "The Structure of Suspense"

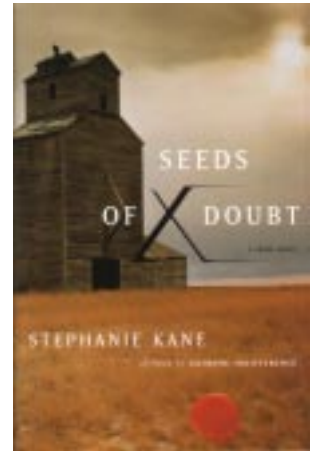
Stephanie Kane visits on Sunday, February 20, at 2 pm to present a workshop entitled "The Structure of Suspense." Kane is the author of four novels, three featuring dyslexic Colorado attorney Jackie Flowers, most recently *Seeds of Doubt* (Scribner, \$25.00).

Kane writes that the workshop "covers story elements, structural and stylistic techniques, the relationship between tension and suspense, and how suspense works hand in hand with other elements of dramatic story-telling at both the scene level and in the context of the larger plot. To illustrate, I deconstruct an old Twilight Zone episode."

Here's Jaci's review of *Seeds of Doubt*:

Is it 1973 or 2004? The similarities of the crimes make it almost impossible to tell. Rachel Boyd has served 30 years for the murder of Freddie Gant, a childhood tagalong. Has she, soon after her release from prison, committed another crime so similar that the jury will have no alternative but to find her guilty and return her to prison? Can her dyslexic defense attorney, Jackie Flowers prove that Rachel isn't the "bad seed" that the community is ready to label her once again? These are questions that Stephanie Kane tackles in *Seeds of Doubt*. This book is written in a way that blends the past and the present. It allows the reader to compare both crimes,

continued inside ➔



Calendar

Sunday, February 20, 2 pm

Stephanie Kane, author of four novels, three featuring dyslexic attorney Jackie Flowers including the just published *Seeds of Doubt*, presents a workshop on "The Structure of Suspense."

Wed., February 23, 7 pm. Discussion: *Death at La Fenice* by Donna Leon

Thursday, February 24, noon. Discussion: *Death at La Fenice* by Donna Leon

Saturday, March 5, 2 pm

Indiana writer **Tony Perona**, author of two novels featuring investigative reporter turned stay-at-home dad Nick Bertetto, visits to talk about and sign copies of his books.

Thursday, March 17, noon. Discussion: *The Man Who Liked Slow Tomatoes* by K.C. Constantine

Wednesday, March 23, 7 pm. Discussion: *The Man Who Liked Slow Tomatoes* by K.C. Constantine

Wednesday, March 30, 6:30 pm

Jeff Stone, first novelist and Carmel resident, visits to talk about and sign copies of *Tiger*, which launches his Five Ancestors series of historical adventure novels set in 17th century China. The book is aimed at boys 10 and up, but girls will find it of interest as well. Bring your kids; we'll have a pizza party with the author beginning at 6:30 pm. At 7:00 pm, he'll talk about and sign copies of his book.

Wednesday, April 6, 7 pm

"A Mystery Mt. Rushmore: Which Faces Belong?" Four mystery writers, **Luisia Buehler**, **Alex Matthews**, **S.D. Tooley** and **Mary Welk**, lead a discussion culminating in a vote.

Wednesday, April 20, 7 pm

Susan Wittig Albert visits to talk about and sign copies of her books, including her new China Bayles novel, *Dead Man's Bones*.

told through newspaper articles, police reports, suspect interviews and character development.

Stephanie Kane brings to her characters, particularly the women, an everyday type of reality. Jackie, constantly trying to overcome and hide the fact that she can't read like others, finds herself identifying with her client's problematic background. She hires an investigator whose husband died under questionable circumstances. Her lovable but precocious ten-year-old next-door neighbor has just been kicked out of boarding school. There are no superheroes, only people who have personal failings and their own demons to conquer.

Readers will think they have guessed the ending, but Kane adds enough twists to keep them turning pages ... right up to the end when Jackie is forced to confront her own terrors or allow another child to die.

Stephanie Kane was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She graduated from the University of Colorado with a degree in Italian language and literature. Between college and law school, she owned and operated a karate studio in Boulder. She published her first novel featuring Jackie Flowers, *Blind Spot*, in 2000. The series continued with *Extreme Indifference* in 2003 and *Seeds of Doubt* in 2004. She is also the author of *Quiet Time*, a suspense novel published in 2001. All four books are available now. Author's website: www.writerkane.com

Tony Perona visits Saturday, March 5

Indiana writer Tony Perona visits on Saturday, March 5 at 2 pm to talk about and sign copies of *Second Advent* (Five Star, \$24.95, Worldwide \$5.99) and *Angels Whisper* (Five Star, \$25.95), two novels featuring stay-at-home dad Nick Bertetto.

Here's Sherry's review of *Angels Whisper*:

Angels Whisper features Nick Bertetto, a former investigative reporter. Like an old war horse, Nick can still smell a good story, and he stumbles onto one when a leading state legislator disappears. Or rather a homeless man stumbles into Nick's path with a clue to the disappearance.

Angels Whisper moves at a good Hoosier pace. It's set in and around Indianapolis, and in and around the state legislature, with gambling, lobbying and murder crowding the stage.

Nick Bertetto is a complex character, struggling to keep his personal

life on track and his family safe while he investigates a disappearance which evolves into murder. Perona shows us the whole man, and we worry about Nick as he puts himself reluctantly but resolutely in harm's way to find his wife and solve the murder. But Nick has a guardian angel to guide him, and a homeless man who hears the angels whisper and conveys their messages to Nick.

Angels Whisper is a first-rate mystery, with strong Indiana roots and interesting insights into how the state legislature really works. Nick is the kind of man you'd like for your next door neighbor or to drive your child's car pool or to watch your back in a fight. He can

do both, and does them well.

Tony Perona worked for a division of General Motors for more than ten years, supplying market research data and analysis, managing an advertising budget of over \$1,000,000. He left the corporate world to be a

Can't make it in to the store? We offer free standard shipping on all orders delivered to US addresses. Call, email or visit our website to shop at home!

stay-at-home dad, which was still an unusual thing in 1991. He wrote about his experiences for The Indianapolis Star. He lives in Plainfield, where he does freelance marketing, advertising and public relations, in addition to writing novels. Author's website: www.tonyperona.com

Coming in April:

A Mystery Mt. Rushmore

On April 6, four writers — Luisia Buehler, Alex Matthews, S.D. Tooley and Mary Welk, who travel together as The Mystery Mavens — will lead a discussion on "A Mystery Mt. Rushmore: Which Faces Belong?"

"Carved into the rocky wall of Mt. Rushmore are the faces of four exalted American presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln. If there was a Mt. Rushmore featuring the faces of the greatest mystery writers past and present, which four authors would YOU nominate to appear there? Join the Mystery Mavens for an evening of lively discussion, then vote for the candidates who you believe belong on a Mystery Mt. Rushmore."

We have a poster up in the store now on which you can enter early nominations. More details about our four guests in our next newsletter.

New & noteworthy

Dark Fire by C.J. Sansom

Viking, \$24.95 — SIGNED COPIES AVAILABLE

In this the second book of the Matthew Shardlake series set in Tudor England (after *Dissolution*) Matthew takes on the case of a young woman accused of murdering her cousin. He only accepts what he perceives to be a hopeless case as a favor for a former client. After speaking with the accused murderess, he is fairly sure she has not committed the crime, but needs time to investigate. Since she has not pled guilty, she is due to face the press to force her confession. So it is urgent that Matthew do everything in his power to avoid that horrible torture. "Everything" in this case means doing a favor for his former mentor Lord Cromwell, Henry VIII's vicar general. Cromwell has heard of a secret weapon of mass destruction called "dark fire" that he feels will cement his ever-weakening position with Henry VIII. While leery of Cromwell's motives and ethics after his last experience with the powerful man, Matthew sees no other way to save the young woman. He accepts the job and buys himself and the young woman two weeks.

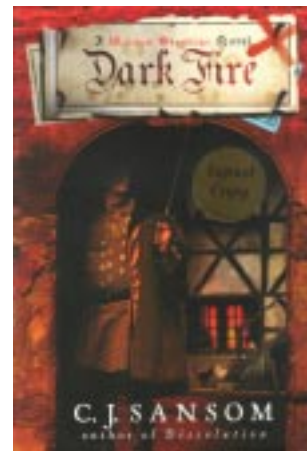
The novel moves at a rapid pace with Matthew working on both investigations simultaneously. Like many modern-day thrillers, he is racing a ticking clock. While Sansom's pacing is that of a contemporary thriller, he does not stint on the description and details of Tudor England. Matthew is an astute observer of this volatile era in English religion and politics, and a voice of reason in a time when choosing a side could mean the loss of your head.

— Moni

At Risk by Stella Rimington

Knopf, \$24.00 — SIGNED COPIES AVAILABLE

"Write what you know" is a cliché, but it's easy to see the validity. There's nothing like experience; some experience just can't be faked. Where we as readers run into problems is when an author's experience becomes a substitute for inspiration. Stella Rimington's *At Risk* is in many ways a fascinating book, and I've no hesitation in bringing it to your attention (if Random House's substantial marketing push hasn't already made you aware of it). The spy stuff in *At Risk* commands attention, though not always in the ways you'd expect. As a novel, however, it's less than an



Award nominees

It's awards season in the mystery genre. The Mystery Writers of America announced the nominees for its Edgar Awards. We list the three book-length fiction categories here. In addition, we would like to note that the MWA has nominated Terence Faherty for this short story "The Widow of Slane," an Owen Keane story published in Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine. Edgar winners will be announced on April 28 in New York. The Dilys Awards are selected by members of the Independent Mystery Booksellers Association, yours truly included. The winner will be announced during the Left Coast Crime conference in El Paso, Texas, February 24-27. We have most of these books in stock now; see our awards display in the front of the store. (Additional comments about this year's awards are on the back page of this newsletter.)

Edgar nominees

Best Novel Nominees

Evan's Gate by Rhys Bowen
By a Spider's Thread by Laura Lippman
Remembering Sarah by Chris Mooney
California Girl by T. Jefferson Parker
Out of the Deep I Cry by Julia Spencer-Fleming

Best First Novel By An American Author

Little Girl Lost by Richard Aleas
Relative Danger by Charles Benoit
Cloud Atlas by Liam Callanan
Tonight I Said Goodbye by Michael Koryta
Country of Origin by Don Lee
Bahamarama by Bob Morris

Best Paperback Original

The Librarian by Larry Beinhart
Into the Web by Thomas H. Cook
Dead Men Rise Up Never by Ron Faust
Twelve-Step Fandango by Chris Haslam
The Confession by Domenic Stansberry

Dilys Award nominees

The Enemy by Lee Child
Darkly Dreaming Dexter by Jeff Lindsay
Something Rotten by Jasper Fforde
The Intelligencer by Leslie Silbert
Birds of a Feather by Jacqueline Winspear
Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafon

ideal performance. Rimington is real-life former director of MI-5, Britain's counterpart to our CIA. An MI-5 agent was said to be the inspiration for James Bond's boss M. But the world of espionage that Rimington portrays is far from Fleming's romantic vision. What we learn from *At Risk* is that spying is a much more mundane exercise beset by the same bureaucratic infighting and failings of any large government organization. Rimington's protagonist is Liz Carlyle, a bright but inexperienced analyst who's set on the trail of "an invisible," a terrorist who is a native of the target country (and who therefore can cross its borders without problem). She's a likable and earnest protagonist, but Rimington doesn't have enough of a novelist's skill to really bring her to life (as John le Carre did with George Smiley). Still, it's fascinating to step through the investigation in Carlyle's shoes and to see terrorism in the way that Rimington sees it. Perhaps what's most startling about Rimington's presentation is how ordinary everything seems — from motives to methods to players, it's very much day to day stuff. This is where Rimington's experience might be most valuable, and her lack of a novelist's eye most significant. Because she is who she is, Rimington can tell this story without dressing it up with the false drama of fiction, and we're left with an unsettling message.

— Jim

All the Flowers Are Dying by Lawrence Block

Morrow, \$24.95 — SIGNED COPIES DUE THIS WEEK

Every moment in this novel, sixteenth in Block's landmark Matthew Scudder series, I felt manipulated. Still, it's an exciting ride. The story is split between Scudder's first-person narration and third-person chapters that follow a calculating, anonymous killer through the execution of a mark in Virginia then on to New York where he has unfinished business. (Block introduced split narration in the previous series entry, which I haven't read yet.) At first, the effect is disconcerting: I like Scudder and

didn't especially want to be pulled away. Then the case that Scudder is working on — a nicely-drawn story about a woman and her new boyfriend — pales next to the killer's more serious actions. More problematic is the way in which the juxtaposition puts us so far ahead of Scudder. We know what's going on in chapter 12 simply because of where it comes in the book, even though Block doesn't spell it out. Of course, Block's an exceptionally skilled craftsman; he knows that we know, and before long, we begin to have real fear about where we're going. Despite the five-word title — ever notice that the first 11 Scudders

have five-word titles? A customer pointed this out to me a few years ago — this isn't a return to form for Scudder, but a departure that has blockbuster written all over it. I have reservations — some significant — but there's no denying the effectiveness of a book I couldn't put down.

— Jim

Friends & Neighbors

Company Members can get an early look at forthcoming books through our Friends & Neighbors program. We offer a selection of advance reading copies of new mysteries. You may borrow one ARC at a time without charge. All we ask is that you return the ARC with your comments about the book and that you allow us to use your comments in the store, on the web and in our newsletter.

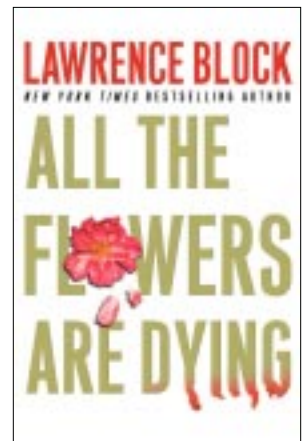
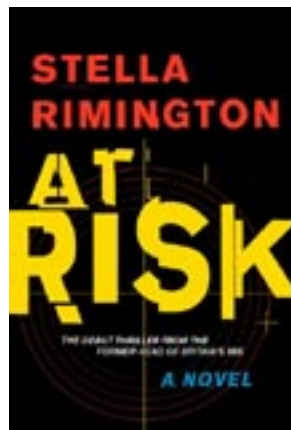
This review is by Howard Gray

A Cold Treachery by Charles Todd

Bantam, \$25.00

The time is 1919 in northern England at a farm on the outskirts of Urksdale, a small town. Five people are found shot, wiping out a family except for 10-year-old Josh Robinson, who is missing. Included in the

continued ➤



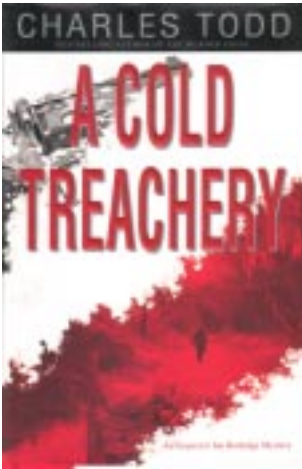


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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

**Stephanie Kane on
 “The Structure of
 Suspense” — this
 Sunday!**



dead are his mother, stepfather, sister, and his half-sibling twins. Inspector Ian Rutledge of Scotland Yard is dispatched to Urksdate to investigate. He arrives accompanied by his invisible late friend and fellow soldier, Hamish, who offers these thoughts and comments in Scottish dialect throughout the novel. Inspector Rutledge finds himself confronted by a cold barren mountainous countryside and multiple suspects. The characters are well-developed in a good story flow, as Rutledge sets about solving this multiple murder in true Sherlockian fashion. I enjoyed this mystery and would recommend it as a good English novel.

Notes & comments

I spend more time than I should complaining about things in this business; it’s a nice change to be able to recognize some positives.

First, a thank you. On January 15, we set aside a percentage of our sales to go toward tsunami relief. Not only did many of you turn out to buy books from us, but several of you also added additional contributions, plus the match that came from us (owners and staff). Altogether, we raised just over \$400, which we’ve sent to UNICEF.

Yesterday’s Indianapolis Star’s Sunday book page offered a review of and a feature about Michael Koryta and his first novel *Tonight I Said Goodbye*. (We covered this book on its publication in September.) Local coverage of books is rare in the Star; it’s worth noting and thanking them for supporting Indiana’s literary community. We hope to see more of this!

Speaking of the community, isn’t it terrific to see two Indiana writers among this year’s nominees for Edgar Awards? Koryta is nominated for best first novel, and Terence Faherty for best short story. This recognition is well-deserved; we hope to see them bring back the awards in April.

A year ago, I wrote of my disappointment with the 2004 Edgar nominees (in an essay that’s still up on the store website). My basic complaint wasn’t with the quality of the nominees — which for the most part are excellent — but with the fact that the nominees failed to represent the diversity of the genre. This year’s best novel nominees reflect a genre that you all will recognize — and recognize literally as three of the nominees visited The Mystery Company during 2004. It’s disappointing that the diversity does not extend to the other book-length fiction categories, but we are very pleased with the stride that the Edgars have made.

Earlier this month, I attended the Love Is Murder conference in Rosemont, Illinois. I had the opportunity to moderate a panel on what editors are looking for, and to participate in two other sessions, on small presses and on why mysteries are important. The latter session, which included Stephen Booth, Anne Perry and Barbara D’Amato, offered the reminder never to let others make you feel that genre fiction is inferior to literary fiction. During the conference, I picked up another award for my book *They Died in Vain: Overlooked, Underappreciated and Forgotten Mystery Novels* — very cool! I’ll bring this award in to the store and add

it to the shelf with the three others this book has won.

Thanks for your support!
 — Jim



With fellow Reader’s Choice Award winners Sandy Tooley (left) and J.A. Konrath (center) at Love Is Murder, earlier this month