



The Coffee Trader

By David Liss

Miguel Lienzo is down on his luck in Amsterdam in 1659. Not only has he lost his fortune in the sugar market, but while attempting to recoup his losses by trading in brandy, he also lands himself so deeply in debt that he must relinquish his fine house in the affluent neighborhood on the Rozengracht canal to live in his brother's basement. When a pretty and enterprising widow offers him the chance to regain his fortune and his status by cornering the market in the new commodity of coffee, he jumps at the chance despite the laws forbidding Jews to act as agents for gentiles. This golden opportunity, however, plunges him into a shadowy world of plots and counterplots among traders on the Amsterdam Exchange and members of the rigidly claustrophobic Portuguese Jewish community.

Available at Wayne & Preakness in Fiction and on Audio-Cassette at Wayne

Through the Grinder

By Cleo Coyle

When several of her customers meet an untimely demise, Clare Cosi, owner of the Village Blend coffee shop, is confronted by a rich blend of murder and betrayal when her new boyfriend is named the prime suspect.

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House and Home

By Kathleen McCleary

Devastated by the loss of her beloved home in the wake of a painful divorce, coffee shop owner and mom Ellen Flanagan finds herself in an unexpected relationship with the husband of a shrewish woman who has bought the house.

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Grounds for Murder

By Sandra Balzo

Can too much caffeine lead to murder? Though she still has bitter thoughts about her dentist husband dumping her for his 20-something hygienist, attractive divorcee Maggy Thorsen has channeled her energies into making her coffeehouse a success after the untimely murder of her partner. Now she faces serious competition from Marvin LaRoche, owner of *HotWired*, a big chain of coffee shops, one of which has recently muscled into her territory. While Maggy's up to her eyeballs working on the creative contest she's running for baristas at *Java Ho*, Milwaukee's competitive coffee trade show, her partner Caron asks her to steal Amy, the talented barista who manages the shop run by Marvin's wife, Janalee. Despite her budding relationship with Sheriff Jake Pavlik, Maggy feels like a suspect after someone burns down Janalee's Place, and even more vulnerable when she discovers Marvin's body under a table at her mega-caffeinated contest, bashed to death with the first-prize trophy. Marvin's opening speech alienated a lot of people, and his tough business practices earned him plenty of enemies. It's up to Maggy and Jake to figure out who did the deed. Bright and breezy Maggy makes a charmingly down-to-earth sleuth.

Available at Wayne in Fiction



Perfect Blend

By Sue Margolis

Single-mom Amy works at her friend's coffee shop while trying to land her big story as a freelance writer. When a major coffee chain plans to move in down the street, she unexpectedly falls for the local architect working on the building even as she's investigating a secret that could take the chain down. Not only is Sam charming and handsome, he's also wonderful with Amy's son, Charlie. Their quickly developing relationship falters, though, when Sam admits he's not ready to be a father figure. When Amy tries to convince him otherwise, she only pushes him away.

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Queen of Dreams

By Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Rakhi, a California-born painter, knows nothing of her parents' Indian past. Living hand-to-mouth in Berkeley with her daughter, Jona, after a painful divorce, Rakhi and a friend run a homey little tea- and coffeehouse that comes under siege when a Starbucks-like franchise opens across the street. But more traumatic ordeals await, including the wrenching revelation of the truth about Rakhi's enigmatic mother: she was a dream teller, compelled to interpret other people's dreams whether they asked her to or not. As Divakaruni alternates between passages in Rakhi's mother's spellbinding "Dream Journals" and the story of Rakhi's high-wire life, long-hidden aspects of the temperaments and talents of Rakhi's father and ex-husband come to light, as does the fact that Jona may have inherited her grandmother's gift, and burden. But just as the tea shop finds new life as an informal community center, the horrors of 9/11 detonate, placing Rakhi and her circle, including a turbaned Sikh, in danger as anger, fear, and prejudice instigate violence. Writing, as always, with wit and lyricism, Divakaruni masterfully illuminates the tangible and the numinous, the abruptly changing present and the deep past in a page-turner lush with emotional, cultural, and spiritual insights.

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Bitter Grounds

By Sandra Benitez

In El Salvador, coffee provides the way of life. Savored by both plantation owners and poverty-stricken pickers, the brew is as much an elixir as it is a divider of the social classes. This addictive novel follows three generations of the Parietos clan and the family they work for, the Contreras, through the knotted complexities of Salvadoran power and politics from the 1930s to the '70s. Two women are the catalysts: Mercedes Prieto, a pacifist Pipil Indian and wife of a poor coffee picker, survives the destruction of her village and the kidnapping of her son by the National Guard; Elena de Contreras, matriarch of the coffee plantation, harbors a wounded and bitter heart. They, and the children they bear, are locked together by love and loyalty as well as torn apart by betrayals as they are involved in the country's struggles. For all its compassion and anger, Benitez's saga is surprisingly free of propaganda: both classes are capable of deceit and greed, fidelity and kindness. Her Spanish-sprinkled, elegant prose is mesmerizing in its simplicity and frankness.

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The Various Flavors of Coffee

By Anthony Capella

In 1893 London, Robert Wallis is an impoverished poet who takes occasional refuge from his debts at a coffeehouse. There, a coffee merchant who notices his extraordinary palate hires Robert to create a flavor index for coffee suppliers to gauge the world's coffee supply. His success shapes his life as an expert taster and a reckless, self-centered adventurer who stumbles into the darkest corners of the world. When he falls in love with Emily, the daughter of the coffee company's owner, he is shipped off to Africa to avoid scandal. There Robert learns how plantations are started and managed. He witnesses the indentured locals laboring as slaves on the plantations and the harsh conditions under which they work and live. Robert's experiences change his view of love, business, politics, and coffee.

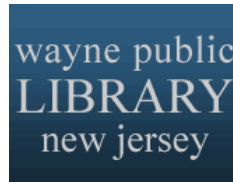
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Twenty Blue Devils

By Aaron J. Elkins

The Paradise Coffee Company, an up-market Seattle business, was doing quite well until the manager of the company's Tahiti plantation died by falling off a close--close on the heels of two other fatal accidents. The company's financial officer, Nelson Law, asks his brother, John, an FBI agent, to investigate. The first thing John does is exhume the body for a more thorough autopsy, done by his friend Gideon Oliver, one of the country's leading forensic anthropologists. Besides the victim's body, Gideon uncovers a web of family secrets that may give someone in the company a motive for murder. As always, the ninth Gideon Oliver mystery is a potpourri of clever plotting, grisly detail, witty dialogue, and belly laughs. Oliver is a genuinely likable protagonist whose quirkiness is balanced by his humanity.

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“Coffee: creative lighter fluid.”

~ Floyd Maxwell



It was a pleasant cafe, warm and clean and friendly, and I hung up my old water-proof on the coat rack to dry and put my worn and weathered felt hat on the rack above the bench and ordered a cafe au lait. The waiter brought it and I took out a notebook from the pocket of the coat and a pencil and started to write.

~ Ernest Hemingway