

Busman's Holiday

Detective can't escape murder

Suspended Sentences

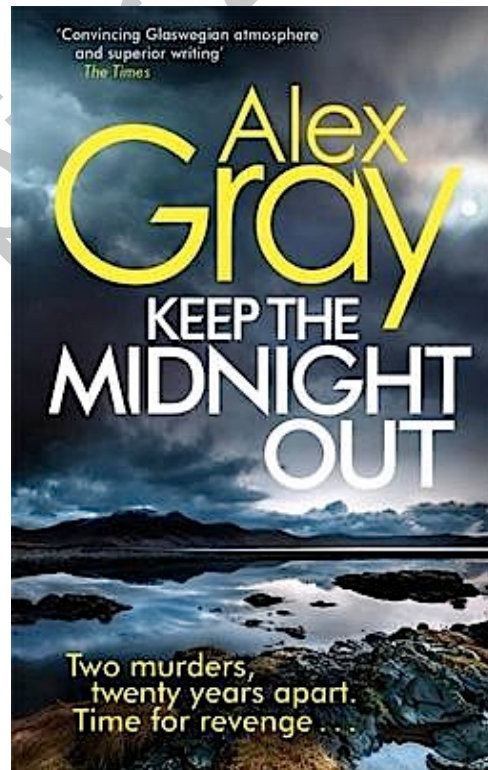
by Jim Napier

Since 2002 writer Alex Gray has been doing for Glasgow what Ian Rankin has so successfully done for Edinburgh. Recently she launched her twelfth tale in the Lorimer and Brightman series, and it's a corker. With a distinctive setting and a cast of memorable characters, this well-written novel will appeal to readers in search of a fresh take on Scottish crime fiction.

Detective Superintendent William Lorimer and his wife Maggie are vacationing on the Isle of Mull when he discovers a body on the beach near their rented cottage. The victim's wounds suggest he'd been tortured. Once it's reported a DI from Oban is put in charge of the case, and she's none too keen to have a senior officer from Glasgow on her turf. Lorimer is only too happy to bow out, but in the insular community of Tobermory he keeps running across information that inexorably draws him further and further into the investigation.

Lorimer soon realises that the recent death bears some disturbing

similarities to a case that, as a young DC, he'd investigated twenty years earlier in Glasgow. That death had gone unsolved, and he can't help wondering whether the two might be connected.'



Before long the beach victim is identified. He's a mainlander from Glasgow, working his summer off at a local tourist hotel while on a break from his university studies. New to the island, there seems no

reason why anyone there would mark him out for murder.

The well-paced narrative is layered by a poignant sub-plot: Lorimer and his wife are still grieving over their stillborn child. A death on their doorstep, especially one involving a young man, is not something either one of them want to face.

The story alternates between the contemporary case and the twenty-year-old Glasgow murder, deftly

drawing readers into both stories, and causing them to wonder until near the very end whether the two deaths are actually connected or whether the author is playing an especially adroit game of cat-and-mouse. A literate and atmospheric tale, *Keep the Midnight Out* will send readers back to Gray's earlier works in the series, and earn her many new fans. Highly recommended.

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Since 2005 Jim Napier's reviews and interviews have appeared in several Canadian newspapers and on such websites as *Spinetingler*, *The Rap Sheet*, *Shots Magazine*, *Crime Time*, *Reviewing The Evidence*, *January* magazine, the *Montreal Review of Books*, the *Ottawa Review of Books*, and *Amazon.com*, as well as on his own award-winning crime fiction site, *Deadly Diversions*. He can be reached at jnapier@deadlydiversions.com

