

The Human Cost of War: *Latest Murdoch unites father and son*

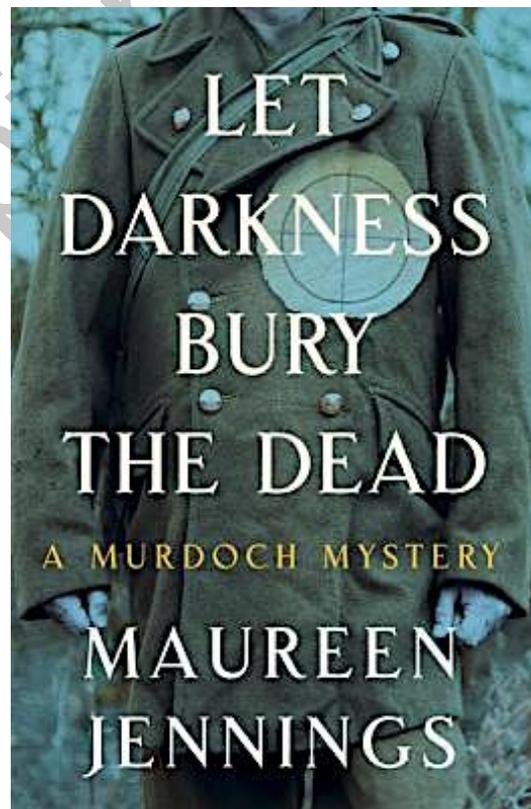
Suspended Sentences

by Jim Napier

The eighth and most recent entry in the hugely popular William Murdoch mystery series finds the iconic Toronto detective delighted to have his son Jack return alive from the Great War. Only a year earlier Murdoch's only child marched off to fight in Europe; but now he has returned home after being wounded and gassed, and like so many others, is suffering the psychological effects of that terrible conflict. He's accompanied by his close friend, another damaged ex-soldier, Percy McKinnon.

Jack moves back in with his father, but Percy finds lodging with a Chinaman named Ghong Lee, who gives him some opium to help him cope with recurring nightmares in which he is forced to relive the horrors of war. But within twenty-four hours of their return a young man is found beaten to death. Before long another young man commits suicide. Two more deaths follow. Although the men are killed in a variety of ways there are reasons to believe that their deaths might be related, and Murdoch's joy over Jack's homecoming soon turns to concern when the investigation throws suspicion on Jack and his fellow soldier Percy. It is

a father's worst nightmare, and Murdoch's efforts will lead him into the shadowy world of illicit alcohol, gaming houses, and much more, as the story comes to a violent conclusion.



Jennings' tale eloquently captures the atmosphere of wartime Canada, set against the backdrop of a Toronto altered by that conflict. But there is also an underlying social theme to her

story which reveals a divided Canada, encompassing not only those who went to war and the families who supported them, but also those who opposed conscription—not only conscientious objectors but also women who argued against their husbands, sons, and brothers being sent off never to come home again, or

at best, to return maimed and shattered by their experiences. *Let Darkness Bury the Dead* raises important moral issues that persist in international conflicts today, in such far-flung places as Afghanistan and Iraq.

Previously published on *Reviewing the Evidence*, March 2018.

Since 2005 Jim Napier's reviews and interviews have appeared in several Canadian newspapers and on various crime fiction and literary websites, including his own award-winning site, Deadly Diversions. His debut crime novel *Legacy* was published in the Spring of 2017, and the second in the series is scheduled for release in the Fall of 2018.

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