



Yellowthread Street

William Marshall

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The first in Marshall's unforgettable, classic series of police procedurals – suspenseful and hilarious in equal measure.

Yellowthread Street is the sort of place that breeds more crime than any cops can handle.

Among the gangsters and the goldsmiths of Hong Bay, **Chief Inspector Feiffer** and his police department had their hands full . . . tourist troubles, a US sailor turned stick-up artist, and the jealous Chinese who solved his marital difficulties with an axe.

Then the Mongolian with a kukri brought an extra touch of terror to the district . . .

Yellowthread Street brings to vivid life a seamy world where people called Osaka Oniki the Disemboweller, Shotgun Sen and The Chopper feel at home, **a world of surreal possibility recorded with unique humour and a poignant sense of humanity.**

Praise for the Yellowthread Street series:

“Marshall has the **rare gift of juggling scary suspense and wild humor** and making them both work.”
Washington Post Book World

“Marshall’s style – blending the hilarious, the surreal, and the poignant – remains **inimitable and not easily resisted.**” *San Francisco Chronicle*

“**Marshall has few peers** as an author who melds the wildest comedy and tragedy in narratives of nonstop action.” *Publishers Weekly*

“Marshall is building a growing, iconoclastic body of work that mixes weird fantasy [and] wayward characterization . . . to produce a subtle, charged, atmospheric, lush fiction hybrid **sure to satisfy those with a taste for mysteries on the far edges.**” *Philadelphia Inquirer*

“Despite the wild humor, Marshall’s stories contain **excellent police procedure, real suspense, and fine irony . . . incessantly scary.**” *Chicago Tribune*

“**Among the best police procedural series** on the market.” *Detroit Free Press*

“As an **inspired poet of the bizarre**, [Marshall] orchestrates underlying insanity into an apocalyptic vision of the future.” *New York Times Book Review*

“Marshall’s novels feature seemingly supernatural events that turn out to have logical, if not precisely rational, origins. He has **savage fun with police procedure.**” *TIME*

“**Nobody rivals Marshall’s ability to expose** the links between comic hysteria and the most mundane human foibles, from greed to cowardice to simple funk.” *Kirkus Reviews*

“Moves at the speed of a bullet; **don’t read it aloud or you’ll run out of breath.**” *Chicago Sun-Times*

Yellowthread Street Details

Date : Published July 14th 2016 by Farrago (first published 1975)

ISBN :

Author : William Marshall

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Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime

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From Reader Review Yellowthread Street for online ebook

Sarah says

Set in Hong Kong when it was still part of the British Empire, we are introduced to Chief Inspector Feiffer and his rag tag team of a department as they try to solve crimes and arrest the perpetrators.

It's funny and gruesome and the names of some of the people are wonderful like The Disemboweller, Shotgun Shen and The Chopper to name but a few.

It's a fast and frenetic read, not much in the way of quiet time for this group and I want to see what other situations they get themselves into!!

I have The Hatchet Man and Gelignite ready to go in my kindle so as soon as I've finished the 3 I need to read for this week, I'll be on it!

Huge thanks to William Marshall, Farrago and NetGalley for this copy in exchange for an honest review

KayKay says

Oh my goodness, this is an extremely funny crime novel, short but packed with intense action.

Growing up in Hong Kong, and in fact I used to live around the area, this novel brings me the nostalgic sentiment to a place I love so much. Granted, by the time I was born, the precinct was not as dangerous anymore. In fact I lived in an upscale part of Wanchai growing up, but I doubt the crime level was THAT bad even before my time.

The novel consists of two parts, during the day and at night, with few unusual, humorous cases the officers encounter throughout that day. Few minor incidents with a major crime, the novel is excellently plotted with clever wittiness. The dialogues between the characters lightens a brutal crime which predominates the second half of the book.

Unlike other crime novels, "Yellowthread Street" is not about a single inspector/officer but with a few of them working in the same sub-branch of a district. Each officer has their own case(s) to follow and the novel "seems" fragmented from time to time. It's like watching a TV series with few cases that happen simultaneously; I had to adjust my expectation to synchronize with the pace and the writing style throughout at the beginning. But nothing is difficult, and in fact "Yellowthread Street" is a rare page turner that is highly entertaining.

I am so glad to have stumbled upon this rare vintage gem via Netgallery. Thank you Farrago for the opportunity for me to review the egallery. I will sure want to read more from such an interesting series.

Faith says

I read several of the books in this series years ago when they were already out of print and I had to buy them in a used bookstore. I'm glad to see that a publisher is re-issuing them now because I thought that the books were a unique combination of humor with a police procedural. I also liked the setting in the Yellowthread Street police station in a rough neighborhood of Hong Kong.

In this book, the first in the series, the large cast of English, American and Chinese police officers were simultaneously dealing with a water shutdown, a string of movie theater robberies, the murder of an adulterous couple, extortion and a missing husband. The action shifted rapidly from case to case. Although there was a lot of dry, almost surreal, humor there was also suspense. This book was an enjoyable, quick read and I'll probably read more of the books that I couldn't find when I first discovered the series.

I received a free copy of this book from the publisher.

Richard says

The first in a series of police procedurals; originally published in 1975 and set in a Hong Kong still under British rule.

It is striking to find a whole new series and an author previously unknown to you and a bonus to find on set in such an interesting location. The group of police officers are varied and it is a large team to get your head around in this opening novel.

It reminds me of the first time I read the 87th precinct novels in my teens as it takes policing into a new level. A male dominated department; with varying egos and a very present threat on the streets where tourists are advised never to set foot in and areas in the grip of gangs and related violence.

The story is set over one nightshift in the Yellowthread Street police station.

With clever dialogue and crisp interactions between the characters the story is full of dark humour and a degree of humanity often missed in contemporary thrillers. The author also writes in an engaging manner full of wit and observed humour almost enfolding the reader fully into the story.

From a few short passages, you start to care for these set of cops and identify with their thankless job.

Who would have thought so much could happen in one night? So many crimes solved in this crazy neighbourhood and a body count too many to count. Nothing is straightforward, no-one is too trigger happy, but the realities of their job does impact upon them and they carry a weapon with a sense of necessity not to blow people away. Others are not so slow to use violence and soon the streets are running with blood in cases of robbery, jealousy and revenge.

A short book but a wonderful vehicle into a series I now will look out for and read for fun. I cannot recommend this book highly enough and urge you to seek it out for yourself.

Kathryn McCary says

The first of William Marshall's tautly-written and hilarious stories featuring the staff of the Yellowthread Street police station in Hong Kong includes most of what came to be the trademarks of the series--multiple plots unwinding simultaneously, freeze-frame and looping in the middle of action sequences, existentialist self-examination by the various characters, and considerable sardonic observation of cross-cultural interactions. This book was a lot of fun--and the start of a long-running and engaging series.

melo says

una tranquilla notte di delirio nel distretto di Yellowthread Street a Hong Kong. centoventi pagine a ritmo serratissimo col volume a palla, che se fosse un film lo girerebbe Tarantino, ma i dialoghi di Marshall in realtà sono meglio, e comunque sarebbe impossibile da girare.
personaggi memorabili, situazioni ai limiti dell'assurdo, e la cosa bella è che ce ne sono altri, e costano meno una birretta in ebook, o in qualche edizione usata da qualche scaffale di biblioteca.
gran bel giro sulle montagne russe.

Doreen says

I picked up this book because it was billed as being hilarious and scary. I found it to be neither. To be fair it was entertaining and funny in a weird comedy-of-errors type of way. I can see how some people would love it; however, it just didn't live up to the billing, I felt.

There's an interesting writing style. Horrific things would be stated in a matter of fact manner. "Four streets away...a man named Chen went back to his room in Cuttlefish Lane near the fish markets with an axe and used it to halve his wife and quarter her boyfriend" (location 29).

In a descriptive section there's a note to the reader ("you are not expected to remember any of this").

I don't really know how to describe the odd humor other than to give a couple examples. "Auden lounged against the wall of the police station looking like a cop lounging against the wall of a police station pretending he was just lounging" (location 1276). Or when a bad guy says, "My goodness! It's an arsenal that man in the third black car that coincidentally looks like ours whom we do not know and have never seen before has" (location 1335).

There are a lot of characters in this relatively short book. However, it's pretty easy telling the cops from the gangsters because of their names: Crushed Toes, The Chopper Man, The Mongolian versus O'Yee, Auden, Feiffer, etc.

There's a lot of action but nothing goes very deep. There's some swearing which to me detracts rather than adds to the humor. Overall, it was an interesting, odd book. Will I read another one by this author? Probably not but who knows...

Thank you to Farrago and Netgalley for providing me with a free e-copy of this book. I was not required to leave a positive review. All opinions are my own.

Joe Noir says

Madcap action!

I found well-read copies of five of the books in this series at a library book sale. This novel is the first in the series of police procedurals. There are sixteen novels altogether.

Imagine the cops of the 87th precinct (or perhaps the cops of Barney Miller), in a Hong Kong action film, co-directed by Richard Lester, John Woo, and Sam Peckinpah. The cops are a multi-cultural mix: Asian, Asian-American, Eurasian, and British. The novel is set when Hong Kong was still under British rule, circa 1976.

The fictional Hong Bay section of Hong Kong is the sector of the city the travel pamphlets warn you to stay away from, especially at night. Yellowthread Street is where the police precinct office is located.

The communists in mainland China cut off the water supply to the city. The owner of a food stall has chopped up his wife and her boyfriend, the partner in the food stall, with an axe. A couple from New Jersey has become separated after their luggage was lost, and the wife wants to report the husband missing, however, no one realizes he has been arrested. An American naval destroyer has pulled into port, and the manager of the Peacock Cinema expects his box office to be robbed by an African-American sailor, because that's what happened the last time the ship was in port. So, an armed detective occupies the box office. A huge thug called the Mongolian is extorting money from shop keepers, chopping off fingers and ears to make his point. This angers the shop owners, a group of criminals who have enforcers with names like Crushed Toes, Shotgun Sen, and The Shot to the Back of the Head. They decide to kill the Mongolian. DCI Feiffer responds hilariously to telephone threats made against him.

This all culminates in an epic climactic shootout. The police vs the criminals vs The Mongolian.

Plenty of surprises, and a lot of fun! I will definitely be reading more in this series.

[Shai] The Bibliophage says

The truth is, I didn't expect that this novel is a page-turner and would make readers anticipate what will happen next. Gruesome and comedic at the same time, this novel is a must-read for fans of mystery, action and detective stories. While reading this, it reminds me of Jackie Chan's movies, in particular is the Rush Hour movie series.

C-shaw says

Not a satisfying read. The author seemed confused on whether he wanted to write a comedy/farce about the Hong Kong police department or a tale of gruesome murders. It consisted of very choppy sections, ranging the gamut of good cop/bad mobster/dumb cop/fellowship of thieves, etc. Too mixed up to be enjoyable.

Vanessa says

I don't know what this was but I didn't like it - stilted writing, characters that just roll around in unpleasantness but not in a way that the reader can enjoy, and an definite 70's funk that, to me, just stank up the place. I won't be revisiting but maybe a fan of Barney Miller would enjoy?

I received an ecopy from the publishers and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Kirsty 📚 📖 ❤️ says

This book is so fast paced (and fairly short) that I read it in half a day. It follows one night of the Yellowthread Street police department and all the goings on. Unlike your average crime thriller pretty much all the events are over in the same shift so there's no dragging out of the stories. It's got quite a crazy sense of humour running through it. I often had to bite my tongue so I wasn't sat giggling on the bus.

At first I found it hard to follow as there's so many things happening at once but actually this is how we are in real life, listening and conducting several conversations at once whilst trying to juggle your workload.

I really enjoyed this. Free arc from netgalley

Linda Strong says

Taking place in Hong Kong, this police procedural introduces the reader to Chief Inspector Feiffer and his police department. The book basically covers one night in the day of the officers. To be honest, one I got into it, one of my very first thoughts was that this resembled in some respects the old Keystone Kops. But then there were times of extreme brilliance in how the police handled crime in their city.

There are gangsters with really different names like The Disemboweller Shotgun Sen The Chopper. And then there's The Mongolian who likes to chop off fingers if the customer doesn't want to buy from him.

In some respects, it's dark and dreary, on the other hand, the humor runs rampant. I was looking for an interesting tale of crime in Hong Kong, but it actually reads as more a comedy. The cops have their hands full, but they seem to handle everything with a grain of salt .. and a smidgeon of humor.

Although it's really not what I expected, I did keep turning the pages. If you're looking for something different, I would recommend this one.

My thanks to the author / Farrago / NetGalley who provided a digital copy in exchange for an honest, unbiased review.

Bernadette says

4 Stars for This Police Procedural on Steroids

Recently I've found that NetGalley has been re-releasing some older mysteries in e-book format, introducing me to some new mystery series. Thanks to Farrago for the opportunity to read this 1980s mystery, **Yellowthread Street** by William Marshall. The book is a fast, funny police procedural. At only about 125 pages, Marshall packs a wallop with action, quirky characters and frenetic dialogue. The title refers to the street in fictional Hong Bay, China where the police station sits. DCI Henry Feiffer heads the busy night shift of Asian and British investigators when Britain still ruled.

While it's an overused term, I think this is a *unique* book. The work reminded me a bit of Carl Hiassen's

mysteries since Hiassen tends toward the outrageous. Some of Wallace's dialogue is reminiscent of Abbott and Costello's "Who's on First?" routine. **Yellowthread Street** is the first in a sixteen-book series by Wallace and was made into a British TV series in the 90s.

Bandit says

Found this on Netgalley, new edition (with great cover that isn't presently on GR) of an old book. Sounded like fun and fun it was. Set in Hong Kong, back when it was a British Colony, it features a cast of intrepid and otherwise cops protecting and serving and all that. So this is a funny police procedural if it had to be categorized by genre. It is indeed quite funny in a British humor sort of way, as a procedural it really didn't sing for me, possibly due to my indifference/dislike of gangster stories, possibly due to the fact that it was definitively more of a comedy. Either way it was entertaining enough and a very quick read, something like an hour and a half. Comes across as a cop comedy tv show, should have been one. Of course, it was serialized quite prolifically as such things tend to be. Thanks Netgalley.
