



Cape Disappointment

Earl Emerson

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A man and a woman, their coastal getaway interrupted, say goodbye on an isolated landing strip in Washington State. She then calls from the air. And he watches from the base of a lighthouse as the plane, with eleven people on board, plummets into the steely gray sea. The man remembering this tragic event is in a hospital room, the victim of a bombing weeks after the crash. In this extraordinary thriller by award-winning author Earl Emerson, Seattle private eye Thomas Black returns after more than a decade—and he must put together the shattered fragments of his life. His life and his country depend on it.

CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT

The bomb that nearly killed Thomas Black went off in a school gymnasium after a Senate candidate had spoken. Amid the carnage, Black nearly bled to death. But he survives—and enters a tunnel of dreams and hallucinations, oblivion and unconnected memories. People come and go from his hospital room. A beautiful woman kisses him. A madman's rant echoes in his mind. Then, when Black—widower, hero, and private investigator—is released from the hospital, he faces the twin tragedies that have devastated his life, and the fact that his lovely wife Kathy is really gone for good.

Or is she? Thomas believes he sees Kathy—as a passenger in a passing truck. Her cell phone, which should be on the bottom of the sea, calls his in the middle of the night. And the explanations investigators give for the plane crash just don't make sense.

Now, step by step, Black is beginning to understand what a paranoid, alcoholic former CIA hit man has been trying to tell him about the plane crash, about the death of a reporter's husband, about suspicious things that nobody ever gets around to questioning. Suddenly, Black is on the run, chased by mysterious people, caught in a web of personal and political lies and something even worse: a plot that is killing everyone it touches.

Brilliantly told and emotionally galvanizing, *Cape Disappointment* is a political thriller and a gut-wrenching tale of conspiracies—the kind that are too crazy to believe and too deadly to ignore.

Cape Disappointment Details

Date : Published February 24th 2009 by Ballantine Books (first published 2009)

ISBN : 9780345493019

Author : Earl Emerson

Format : Hardcover 368 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Thriller

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From Reader Review Cape Disappointment for online ebook

Yvette says

A fabulous thriller by a writer no one ever heard of. This guy should be world famous, he's that good. Private eye Thomas Black is back after a very long hiatus - Hooray! Emerson is a Seattle firefighter and a helluva writer.

Julie says

I've read all of the books in Earl Emerson's Thomas Black series. I have to admit that it's been so long (Catfish Cafe in 1999), that I didn't remember much about the character when I started this book. But, I knew that I liked this author and that I would probably like this book. This was, however, a very different read from Earl. The flashbacks (and foreshadowing) kind of threw me at first. As I was saying, I was just trying to remember Thomas Black and the back and forth between past, present, and future was confusing. When I finished the book, I realized what Earl was trying to accomplish (finally), but I have to say that it wasn't my favorite format. That said, when I got to the "good stuff" at around page 239 I was so happy to finally be sucked into this story (as I had been in previous Earl Emerson books). He caught me off guard – maybe that was his intention? – and I jumped on the roller coaster story line that he had crafted. I'm still not sure this story needed so much of the conspiracy stuff, but I'll let that go (I don't want anyone to come after me). I have a place on the Long Beach peninsula, so I truly enjoyed the parts of the story that were set there. Interesting that he never mentioned the town of Long Beach, but he did speak of Ilwaco, Naselle, and Astoria, where I have spent a lot of time. I also loved that he integrated our Coast Guard buddies at Cape D – we have interacted with them on many occasions and those guys really are amazing. Glad to hear a shout out to the best Coasties on the west coast! Cape Disappointment can be a haunting place, stuck out there on the cliffs overlooking the mouth of the Columbia River and, along and its sister lighthouse (North Head), watching over the "graveyard of the Pacific." North Head lighthouse is supposedly the windiest place in the U.S., in case you care! Both are worth visiting and I'm glad that Earl chose this venue as a setting for his latest adventure. All in all, I would say that I liked this book. Not the best from Earl, in my opinion, but worth reading.

Stefan says

Cape Disappointment was a gripping thriller. The characters were interesting, the setting of the Pacific North-West was vividly described, the plot was intelligent, and the tension was constant. I enjoyed how Emerson wrote the novel using flashbacks and memories. The conspiracy theories were not used so outlandishly or implausibly that I became disinterested. In fact, the conspiracy theories added substance to the plot. I wish the conclusion had been a bit more satisfactory. I wanted to know the public reaction to Thomas and Ruth's article; also, I wish the author had been a little less vague saying who the bad guys actually were. The Thomas Black series is definitely worth reading more of.

John Stanley says

I went back and caught up on some Earl Emerson that I had missed. Once again I missed one, this one, and ended up reading the two that came after this first and, as a result, it took away one of the biggest unknowns of the book. Still, I thought it was a terrific book, a really good story. I thought it could have been a little meatier at the end but still it was still a very, very enjoyable read.

Kate says

Seems to me this book is not so much about conspiracy theories, as it is about the people who believe in conspiracy theories, how they got that way, and why they are convinced. Cases in point: the inimitable Slezak brothers, Bert and Snake, who range from alcoholic dementia to raving schizophrenia. Then Emerson takes the normally hard-headed and sensible Thomas Black, shakes him up like a cocktail, puts him through a blender, and then pours into him all the conspiracies on the Internet, with the assistance of the Slezaks. Black's reaction is what makes the book interesting.

I liked the way the book jumped around at first, because it was like the way Black was remembering things after the bomb blast that opens the novel -- a scene here, a scene there. We have to try to put the parts together the same way that Black is trying. Gradually a timeline emerges. As in any good mystery, by the end we know what happened in terms of who did what when. However, the question remains: Was there a government conspiracy? We know what Black believes, but enough is left ambiguous that we may disagree.

Eleanor says

I've waited for something like 10 years for a new Thomas Black novel from Earl Emerson, and was very happy when this one landed in the store.

Fans of multi-layered conspiracy theories will find this one an intriguing read, but I'm not a big fan of those so I can't rank it among my favorites.... but I also couldn't put it down, so there ya go.

Here's hoping Thomas Black is back for good.

Kelly says

This is the first Earl Emerson/Thomas Black I've read. Without giving away any spoilers, I was very touched by the despair of the main character. IMHO, it was extremely well written. I am anxious to go back to the beginning and read much more of this author.

Steve says

This is part of Emerson's Thomas Black series. Very complex story that takes a while for you to understand what is going on. Comes to a good resolution. Conspiracy, with murder and dirty politics are the order of the day. You are not quite sure which characters are on Black's side at different times in the book. Emerson's books have gotten more complex story lines over the years. I am ready for his next book.

Jody says

I liked this locally set conspiracy theory book. It's my first by this author and I'll look for others. Husband sees wife's small plane crash into the ocean, all on board died. Then her cell phone which should be at the bottom of the sea calls him. He has twin brothers helping him on his quest to get to the bottom of what happened and trying to keep him alive.

Jim Thomsen says

There comes a time in every series when the author loses interest and as a result, the stories lose their special crackle. Earl Emerson had a good run with Thomas Black, but probably carried it a book or two past his actual interest in Black, and I wouldn't have been upset if the wisecracking Seattle private eye had faded from the scene with 1999's "Catfish Cafe." Once Thomas and Kathy Birchfield, his longtime best friend turned lover, got serious and got domestic, the pilot light slowly faded out of this snarky mystery series.

But, 10 years later, Emerson and Black are back in "Cape Disappointment," and while it was nice to see old friends in action once more, this felt more like Black Emeritus than Classic Black. The book is darker than previous efforts in this series, with a stretch into geopolitical-thriller territory that doesn't rest easily on the shoulders of this traditional Seattle-centric formula-mystery series. The humor seems subdued, even perfunctory, and the laughs that should have come from the sleazebaggery of the Slezak brothers simply aren't there.

Frankly, everybody seems tired.

Nonetheless, the final act delivers some surprises (but not the ones you'd expect — come on, you didn't REALLY think Kathy had been killed in that plane explosion, did you?) — and the political machinations do give one at least a little pause.

That said, this was second-rate Emerson and second-rate Black, and it felt like one long somber, sluggish post-concert encore from both.

Jason Freeze says

Picked this book up on a lark at the gift shop of the Cape Disappointment lighthouse last summer. I didn't realize it was book 13 in a series, but whatever. It was a good read overall and rife with conspiracies and crooked politics. It also had a very human element that made it easy to feel for the characters. I look forward

to checking out the rest of the series when I have the opportunity.

Viccy says

Thomas Black is back and in great form. I love Thomas, more than Mac, who is a little too laconic for my taste. I prefer more action in my action hero. You will cry, you will laugh, vintage Earl Emerson!

Kallierose says

I think it would be almost to describe my feelings about this book without revealing spoilers, so needless to say I'm checking the "contains spoilers" ticky-box.

I did like this book, although it took me to some uncomfortable places. I'm not sure that the conspiracy-theory wielding brothers were the author's way of making his reader think more about the world around them, or whether he was just using it as a plot device. Either way, it did make a little uncomfortable about how rarely I look behind the headlines at what is really going on in the world. Sure, I read the news and do my best to understand it, but when you only have so many media outlets, and they're all saying pretty much the same thing, how do you know if you're getting the whole story? That's Thomas's dilemma, and mine as well. Who do you believe, and how much should you really trust them?

I did find the first part of the book a little disorienting, and in the beginning I didn't see why this was necessary. As we delved deeper into what happened to Kathy I began to understand the reasoning behind author's choice. Thomas's confusion and pain were so much more real and palpable this way.

I'd probably give this book 3.5 stars if that was an option. I liked it, but I didn't quite "really like it."

Ed says

A little disappointing. (har, har)

Emerson's stories and writing style are somewhat derivative of other top rated crime and suspense authors.

In this tale, Private Eye, Thomas Black, is nearly killed by a bomb that went off in a school gymnasium. After almost bleeding to death, he spends days in a near delerious, surrealistic state before being released to mourn his wife's death in a mysterious plane crash.

It is then he begins to experience wierd events relating to his wife and others as well as himself. He becomes

a target but manages to survive, solve the puzzle and experience a happy ending, a too neat and slightly unbelievable one.

As I implied above, after a while I thought, I may have already read this book or one very much like it. Still, I'm glad I did finish it.

Debra Walden Davis says

Emerson not only weaves a great story, but does his research. In Cape Disappointment, he brings into play the actual deaths of Missouri's Governor Mel Carnahan and Senator Paul Wellstone from Minnesota. Both men, like the politician in Cape Disappointment, died in plane crashes as they campaigned for office. As usual with Emerson, you will laugh and cry, but most of all you will identify with Black as he struggles to accept himself. For like all of us, he is flawed.
