



Friday, September 12, 2008 - Page updated at 12:00 AM

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## Scene of the crime: What's new in crime fiction

New crime fiction for September includes a Portland writer's story of a deeply dysfunctional love affair; several new books by British authors, including the last (maybe) chapter in the career of Edinburgh detective John Rebus; and a mullifairth thriller by the author of "Wag the Dog."

By Adam Woog  
Special to *The Seattle Times*

This month's roundup features two Portland authors who have written thrillers about love gone seriously bad, and three British masters contribute sequels to previous work:

**"Sweetheart"** (*St Martin's Minotaur*, 328 pp., \$24.95), by Portland writer **Chelsea Cain**, is a sharp psychological inquiry into evil and obsession, as well as a deeply unhealthy love story, disguised as a frankly commercial page-turner.

It's a sequel to Cain's "Heartsick," which introduced Gretchen Lowell — brilliant, beautiful, charismatic and a connoisseur of torture and murder. She let one of her victims live — Portland police detective Archie Sheridan — because, she insisted, she loved him. Meanwhile, he fell hard for her despite the horrible agony she inflicted on him. (Go figure.)

Now Gretchen's in prison and Archie, vulnerable and addicted to pain pills, can't stop visiting, even though his obsession is wrecking his marriage and mental health. Then Gretchen escapes ...

**Also from the Portland area** comes the far tamer but very charming **"Night Kill"** (*Poisoned Pen*, 238 pp., \$24.95). A debut from former zookeeper **Ann Littlewood**, it convincingly and affectionately evokes its animal-friendly setting. Call it a zoo cozy.

At a zoo in Vancouver, Wash., big-cat specialist Iris Oakley's marriage to reptile guy Rick Douglas is in trouble. They separate until he can get his drinking under control. But then Rick's body is found in the lion's den, high in blood alcohol and torn apart by a big beast. The police call it an accident, but a near-disaster of her own (she's almost killed by a tiger) leaves Iris thinking that it's murder — and that someone's after her, too. *Ann Littlewood will sign "Night Kill" at noon Sept. 27 at Seattle Mystery Bookshop ([www.seattlemystery.com](http://www.seattlemystery.com)).*

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### Author appearance Larry Beinhart

The author will read from "Salvation Boulevard" at these locations:

- 6:30 p.m. Friday at Third Place Books in Lake Forest Park (206-366-3333; [www.thirdplacebooks.com](http://www.thirdplacebooks.com))
- Noon Saturday at Seattle Mystery Bookshop (206-587-5737; [www.seattlemystery.com](http://www.seattlemystery.com))
- 7:30 p.m. Saturday at Seattle's Elliott Bay Book Co. (206-624-6600; [www.elliottbaybook.com](http://www.elliottbaybook.com))

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