



Mystery Scene Review (from Winter 2007)

Double Dead by Terry Hoover
Five Star, 2007

Terry Hoover is a newcomer to the mystery scene, but *Double Dead*, her first novel, does not read like the work of a novice. A finalist in the Malice Domestic/St. Martin's Press Contest for Best First Traditional Mystery, *Double Dead* is a standout by any standard, featuring intricate plotting, electrifying courtroom scenes and a genuinely likable protagonist.

Set in Charlotte, North Carolina during the early Sixties, this novel captures the flavor of the times, alluding to the Bay of Pigs Crisis and the ensuing rush to construct fallout shelters. Hoover gets it right, returning older readers to that dangerous, yet more innocent era, while immersing younger readers in a culture largely unfamiliar to them.

Hoover's detective is private investigator Steve Harlan, a dedicated family man and ex-newspaper reporter newly ousted by scandal from the profession he loves. Harlan gets his first major case when he is hired by a defense attorney to uncover evidence leading to the exoneration of John Lattimore, a prominent businessman who has been accused of murdering his longtime mistress. The case against Lattimore appears to be airtight, despite the fact that no one who knows the accused well believes that he committed the murder. It remains for Harlan to use his investigative skills well-honed from his days as a reporter to exculpate his unsavory client. That Harlan ultimately succeeds is no surprise, but the plot twists leading to the culmination are riveting. Count me in as a charter member of the Terry Hoover fan club!

- Lynne Maxwell