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Nameless had told Mitchell Krochek that he'd do whatever he could to find his missing wife, Janice. She'd run away before—propelled by a gambling fever that grew ever higher—and Mitch had always taken her back. This time, when Nameless, his partner Tamara, and the agency's chief operative Jake Runyon finally found her in a sleazy San Francisco hotel, she demanded a divorce.

A few days later, a beaten and bloody Janice stumbled into the agency begging to go home. No one is surprised when, soon after her homecoming, she disappears again.

But gambling addiction has a way of twisting things, and the blood on Mitchell and Janice Krochek's kitchen floor was a card off the bottom of the deck.

Janice is missing again, Mitchell is the prime suspect, and as Nameless searches for the truth behind her disappearance, he uncovers a vicious racket that preys on gambling fever victims...

Fever Details

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Author : Bill Pronzini

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From Reader Review Fever for online ebook

James Thane says

Pronzini's Nameless detective now has a name (Bill) as well as a young, black female partner, Tamara, and an associate, an ex-cop named Jake. Nameless narrates the bulk of the story and remains its moral center, but Tamara and Jake each have a significant part of the action told from their respective points of view.

The main story involves the disappearance of Janice Krochek, a housewife with a gambling addiction. Her husband, Mitchell, hires Nameless to find Janice and return her home. The first task proves no problem; the second proves impossible as Nameless refuses to force the woman to go home against her will. Ultimately, she does return home voluntarily, but only briefly before disappearing again under circumstances that suggest foul play.

Meanwhile, Jake is doing a pro bono case for a church-going mother who is concerned about her son who has begun behaving in very strange ways. At the same time, Jake, a widower, is dealing with emotional problems of his own while Tamara is active in both cases.

Pronzini artfully details the stories of these desperate characters and the fevers that envelop them and take control of their lives, while telling a very engaging story in the process. This is one of the longest-running series currently going, and thirty-some books into it, Pronzini still demonstrates a master's touch.

A says

I've never read any other books by Pronzini so this was my first in the "Nameless" series. I'm used to detectives that are a little more... "noire" - detectives that have a dark streak in their personality. Or at least some sort of idiosyncrasy. Nameless, who is now apparently called Bill, was kind of preachy. And boring. He had NO vices. And little personality. The mysteries themselves were interesting enough but I just could not like the main character so I will not be reading another.

Grey853 says

This wasn't the typical NAMELESS book. Normally Pronzini writes in first person point of view exclusively. In this one he's chosen to use that, but to also use third person for two other secondary characters. I could've skipped those chapters because they did nothing to add to the case. It took away from the novel.

Linda says

In enjoyed this Nameless detective book as much as I have his previous books. Always great story lines and his characters are also.

Rick Meyer says

excellent

charlie says

I have missed the Nameless series. This is like #16, and i have carefully read them in order. Of course, we now know his name. And he is a vastly changed man from back in the day, but Pronzini still creates with the same humanity and empathy that drove the series. Fun twists and great central characters. And SF is once again a great backdrop for crime. Read it less than 24 hours... a vacation bookie's dream.

carol. says

My mother recently retired, so I'm looking around for a new mystery series to entertain her. She rather enjoys series, so here's hoping the Nameless Detective works out--there are 38 other books. In one of those rare moments of gender reversal, I recognized Pronzini's name as the husband of Marsha Muller, a mystery writer I enjoyed reading for many years. Overall, I'd say it that while it is decently written, it feels very much of the old world order, full of assumptions

It begins with members of the detective agency looking for Janice Krochek, housewife of a wealthy engineer, who has gone missing. Although it isn't the first time, this time she's been gone for three weeks. They track her to a seedy hotel on the edge the Tenderloin, a district of San Francisco known for prostitution. She's enjoying her gambling binge, prostitution and all, and refuses to go home, leaving them in a bit of an ethical quandry. As they try to wrap that up, they begin a pro-bono case for a woman whose son has recently been assaulted and whose strange behavior has her worried.

"She was thirty-three, but in the dim light, and without makeup, she looked older; you could see the stress lines around her mouth and eyes. Addiction will do that to you, no matter what type of addiction it happens to be."

"Not that you could blame him, really, after all the financial losses he'd already suffered, but still it lowered him a notch or two in my estimation... Down another notch. Maybe you couldn't blame him for hiding assets, either, but it's illegal."

Narrative is shared between Bill, the now-named 'Nameless Detective,' Tamara, his agency partner, and Jake, an ex-cop and widower. Each one follows their own story; in Tamara's case, her story mostly figures on her personal life. Bill concentrates on looking for Janice and solving his team's issues, and Jake has a mix of both personal and professional issues to cover.

Though published in 2008, there is an overall tone of *datedness*. **"The agency seldom handled that kind [of case] unless the client was well-heeled, and then with reluctance, but recently they'd started taking on selected cases involving African-Americans, Latinos, and other minorities who needed investigative services but couldn't afford them."** Oh my. First, Pronzini mixes his categories by equating people of color

with economic disparity. Second, 'minority?' Really? You do know the 'minority' in California is slowly making its way toward straight white dude, right? Then there's the solution to this minor, low-budget mystery. Let's just say that Pronzini has yet to fully embrace the complexity of identity and conflates certain identity issues with mental health. I remain reasonably convinced that if you are going to try and write the 'other' when you are from the privileged demographic, you are beholden to write sensitively and with finesse. I mean, it is the most annoying kind of position where the author and characters are self-righteous about the situations they encounter.

Then there is the dinner out, where Bill's wife and Tamara engage in a lengthy conversation about cosmetic surgery, concluding with **"Tamara said dreamily, 'One thing I can see myself getting talked into, that's the hymen reattachment thing.'"** Wtf. I know it is a real procedure, but I just don't believe this conversation. Why would a 20 year old want that? Why would Tamara, who is partner in the agency? I'm not sure of the purpose of the conversation, except to shock Bill, cementing his old-fogeyness. And to shock me when the wife suggests it would be a 'present' to Bill to have her hymen reattached. Wtf(2). Clearly, Pronzini didn't do much research for this conversation. Any women out there want to go back and re-live their first intercourse? Yeah, thought not.

The solution to the first mystery was excellent, but the second mystery was a disappointment. And *seriously*, how good of detectives are they if they don't discover (view spoiler)

Meanwhile, Jake is stalking a half-disfigured, half-beautiful woman. I mean, not really stalking. Just driving around the neighborhood he last saw her. He's convinced they have a connection, so he keeps trying to 'run into' her. But don't worry; she's totally empowered and recognizes a kindred soul. Then there's the small old-fogey moment when Bill is all self-righteous about cell phones and driving, pulls over to the side of the road every time someone calls him. --dammit, lost my contact in the back of my eye again--

It wasn't horrible enough for me to do not finish, but it did just seem... dated, with characters that haven't been updated for decades, kind of like watching Andy Griffith. Bill's smart, everyone else needs fixing, and we can be generous to poor minorities once we're done helpin' the little lady. And stalking is okay if there's a real connection. I dunno, it could have been tolerable, even enjoyable, in the hands of a highly skilled writer. I think of early Scudder, set in the 1970s and with hookers with hearts of gold. Somehow time period dinosaurs are much more interesting than the ones I already know.

Maddy says

PROTAGONIST: Nameless Detective

SETTING: San Francisco area

SERIES: #36

RATING: 3.25

WHY: Nameless is hired by Mitchell Krochek to find his missing wife, Janice, who is a gambling addict. However, his motives may be less than pure. She is easily found but isn't interested in going back home again until she is badly beaten. At the same time, operative Jake Runyon is working all the time until he is distracted by a personal matter which looks to change his life. This book wasn't quite as engrossing for me as usual. I have begun to wonder about the second operative in the agency, Alex Chavez, who only had a page or two of exposure.

Mary Sue says

This is the first of the Nameless Detective novels I have read. Easy read. Detective agency has 3-4 partners. This novel they deal with two cases, a missing wife and an uncommunicative son. Both stories deal with the fever of addiction, one is gambling, the other may surprise you. Subplots about the detectives personal lives are interwoven. Enjoyable read and I will probably read more in the series.

Judy says

My advice to anyone writing a book is not to name it "FEVER" nor even put "FEVER" in the title. In searching for this book by Bill Prozini on Goodreads, I was faced with over 4600 titles. One-word titles are very popular. It is certainly easier to remember a one-word title; however this word is overused. But on to my review. This 33rd installment in the life of the nameless detective deals with the FEVER of a compulsive gambler. I love this series and hope I can ration myself and not read them faster than Pronzini can write them.

Elisabeth says

This feels very classic - no coziness, no abundant personal asides, just a man (two, actually) on a mission. This is the first Nameless novel I've read, but I will certainly be picking up more.

Karl says

Here is a list of all the books (in order) Happy Reading.

1971 The Snatch Random House
1973 The Vanished Random House
1973 Undercurrents Random House
1977 Blowback Ramdom House
1978 Twospot Putman
1980 Laybrinth St. Martin's Press
1980 A Killing In Xanadu Waves Press
1981 Hoodwinked St. Martin's Press
1982 Scattershot St. Martin's Press
1982 Dragonfire St. Martin's Press
1983 Bindlestiff St. Martin's Press
1983 Casefile St. Martin's Press
1984 Quicksilver St. Martin's Press
1984 Nightshades St. Martin's Press
1984 Double St. Martin's Press
1985 Bones St. Martin's Press

1985 Grave Yard Plots St. Martin's Press
1886 Dreadfall St. Martin's Press
1988 Shackles St. Martin's Press
1988 Small Felonies St. Martin's Press
1990 Jackpot Delacorte
1991 Breakdown Delacorte
1992 Quarry Delacorte
1992 Epitaphs Delacorte
1993 Demons Delacorte
1995 Hardcase Delacorte
1996 Spadework Crippen & Landru
1996 Sentinels Carroll & Graf
1997 Illusions Carroll & Graf
1998 Boobytrap Carroll & Graf
1999 Sluths Five Star
1999 Duo Five Star
2000 Crazybones Carroll & Graf
2002 Bleeders Carroll & Graf
2003 Spook Carroll & Graf
2003 Scenarios Five Star
2005 Nightcrawlers Forge
2006 Mourners Forge
2007 Savages Forge
2008 Feaver Forge
2009 Schemers Forge
2010 Betrayers Forge
2011 Camouflage Forge
2012 Hellbox Forge
2012 Kinsmen Cemetery Dance
2012 Femme Cemetery Dance
2013 Nemesis Forge

John Grazide says

When they're good they're good, and this was a good one. Not just the main story but the little nuanced parts. In the main one the agency was hired by a man looking for his wife, that ran away. Again. The wife is a compulsive gambler and is in serious trouble. But she is so far gone that she doesn't see it. And then she goes missing. With two neat little twists towards the end made it very enjoyable (anyone who says they figured is most likely not being honest (lying)). One of the side stories finds Jake doing some pro-bono work and along the way he stumbles across a woman that needs help. During one of his introspection's, he has a very touching realization about his wife. That alone was worth the price of admission. For me. A little closure on some of the other small pieces would have helped, but they didn't detract. A good one!

Ed says

This late entry in the Nameless Detective (actually, he's called "Bill", presumably after the author's name) series is a winner. I'll admit a fondness for the series going back to the first titles. If that's a biased view, so be it.

The "fever" is the online gambling addiction that compulsive types can't resist playing, much to the detriment and heartbreak of themselves and their loved ones.

Jake Runyon (a P.I. in Bill's detective agency) provides a subplot worthy of its own series.

I liked the moments of humor and the descriptive settings of San Francisco. The story really cooks when it focuses on the investigations. All in all, a solid detective narrative you can finish in a couple of sittings.

Lynn says

This series is a treat to read. This one developed a couple of lurid stories, but still it's really more about Nameless and his coworkers than the cases they're working.
