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Pearlhanger (Lovejoy Mystery)

Pearlhanger Details

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Author : Jonathan Gash

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Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime

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Susan says

I found this to be one of the better Lovejoy mysteries. And I got some inside information about antiques, forgeries and history.

This being said, the book followed the same formula in previous entries - Lovejoy is broke - once again - and takes on a shady job without knowing how to say 'no'. Once on it, he gets himself into trouble and takes it upon himself to set things right - his way. All along the way, nothing is his fault.

But still, I found it interesting, entertaining and will continue on.

patience says

Do you remember the Lovejoy tv series via A&E in the 90's? Loved it. The books are fun, too. Lots of details about antiques and the rogues who supposedly deal them.

Clever and literate, but quick and slight.

Peter says

This is a standard Lovejoy mystery. I started read all of these in order back in 1993 or so, during high school. I was hooked on the Ian McShane Lovejoy TV show, which led me to the books. A fun little mystery.

Susan says

I saw one of those pearl constructions he talks about in the Toledo Museum of Art. It was a Neptune, not a Siren but it was exquisite and it would be worth whatever it cost even if it was a fake. Meanwhile, it's Lovejoy so even when he wins he loses, but it's a great trip with the usual cast of thousands.

Skjam! says

Lovejoy is a "divvy" (presumably from "diviner"), a person who can just feel if an antique is genuine by standing near it. This is a great help in his career as an antiques dealer. But just because he's got a gift of his own doesn't mean he believes in anything else supernatural. So he's a bit put out when he's asked to attend a seance with Donna Vernon, who's looking for her lost husband. Missing person cases aren't normally in his bailiwick either.

However, this particular missing person is an antiques dealer himself, who vanished while on a cross-country

buying sweep. So Lovejoy finds that he's been roped into the hunt. Things quickly get suspicious, as Mr. Vernon doesn't seem to be very good at antique hunting, and the actual end of the voyage appears to be a fabulous pearl pendant known as "the Siren". And then the medium gets murdered after saying she has another message from beyond....

This is the ninth Lovejoy book; I have not read any of the earlier ones, nor have I seen the television adaptaiton. He's described in the back cover blurb as a "rake"; he's promiscuous, sexist, self-centered, loves pulling nasty tricks on people and is often in trouble with the law. On the other hand, he sometimes does quite nice things for people as long as it will also make him a profit of some sort. That, and the fact that his narration makes it clear he's easily led around by his appetites, makes him bearable.

A typical moment of his irritating side is when his apprentice Eric for once actually checks to see if an object is genuine, and refuses to buy it. Lovejoy berates him, because this particular fake was extremely valuable in itself, neglecting to consider he hadn't told the lad this important detail.

Most of the mystery part of the story is solved about halfway through when the murderer actually confesses to Lovejoy—but our protagonist has no proof, and must come up with a clever scheme involving antiques to see that some form of justice is served.

I am told that the television series smoothed out Lovejoy's sharper edges quite a bit (for example, giving him a steady love interest as opposed to chasing any likely tail in the neighborhood.) This is not a book for those who prefer the hero be more morally upright than not. The ending drives home his moral ambiguity.

But if you liked the TV show, or have a fondness for sleazy mystery protagonists, this is an amusing read.

Amicus (David Barnett) says

The ending seemed to lack coherence.

Robert Beveridge says

Jonathan Gash, *Pearlhanger* (Penguin, 1985)

Mysteries are like horse races. What pace you get depends more on the country of origin than the type of book. *Pearlhanger*, the ninth Lovejoy mystery, tries its best to be a hardboiled detective story in the Robert Parker vein (with Lovejoy an antiques dealer instead of a literate chef), but it's foiled by Gash's inveterate Englishness. English mysteries always start out leisurely and then pick up. Not the best way for a hardboiled detective story to start off.

Still, once you're past the slow bits, like most English mysteries, *Pearlhanger* gets good. The irascible, prejudiced, inveterately Lovejoy and his band of merry misfits are on the trail of a disappeared antiques dealer who doesn't seem to be doing much antique dealing. Once they reach the end of the trail, things pick up and plot twists abound. Unfortunately, reaching the trail takes half the book and a bunch of minor characters (all of whom, you hope, will pop up again later, but they never do except in conversation). The whole thing does come to a satisfactory conclusion, and with a bit faster pacing at first and a little more

completeness with minor characters, it would be excellent. As is stands, it's readable enough. ** 1/2

Lisa Kucharski says

Coming upon my first Lovejoy mystery. I knew about this series before reading it, so I knew a little about the character before I started. The rascal antique dealer was in full form. The mystery felt odd, almost like Lovejoy was barely awake throughout the first half of the book. In the second part he takes a more direct hand at trying to bring the bad guys to some kind of punishment.

I would say the book starts out more interesting than it ends. I enjoyed the writing though at times I just wanted to have an editor step in and take out some of the superfluous sentences.

The story is: Wife wants Lovejoy to help find her husband, who is an antique dealer. Why cause because a spirit at a seance told her. It's all pretty weird... but you go on the trip and have a good time with the discoveries that Lovejoy makes. Then the twists and turns of the "real" mystery come into play and the storyline tends to dissolve a bit.

Would I give another Lovejoy mystery a chance, sure but I'm not going to try and find one right away. I'll wait until I come upon it or try and find one that is considered the best.

I just happened to come upon this book in a sale.
