



Murder in the Latin Quarter

Cara Black

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When a Haitian woman arrives at the Paris office of Leduc Detective and announces that she is P.I. Aimée Leduc's sister, Aimée must dig into her father's past to solve a murder

A virtual orphan since her mother's desertion and her father's death, Aimée has always wanted a sister. She is thrilled.

Her partner, René, however, is wary of this stranger. Under French law, even an illegitimate child would be entitled to a portion of her father's estate: the detective agency and apartment that Aimée has inherited. He suspects a scam. But Aimée embraces her newfound sibling and soon finds herself involved in murky Haitian politics and international financial scandals leading to murder in the Latin Quarter on the Left Bank of the Seine, the old university district of Paris.

Murder in the Latin Quarter Details

Date : Published March 1st 2009 by Soho Crime (first published January 1st 2009)

ISBN : 9781569475416

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Format : Hardcover 304 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Cultural, France, Crime



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From Reader Review Murder in the Latin Quarter for online ebook

Diane L says

Needs editing

Elizabeth Wood says

Fun to read if you want something that ranges over the length and breadth of the Latin quarter in Paris. A bit of a mashup as far as Haitian voodoo and rather strange introduction to Haitian grant politics. Also, very dark in places as they range through the sewers of Paris and Aimee LeDuc, the detective, keeps taking risks that seem rather implausible. But at the end one has to admire her guts and her author's ability to keep showing us different parts of Paris.

Terri Lynn says

Private detective Aimee Leduc has family issues. Her father, a flic (cop) turned private eye died in an explosion several years back but it is her mom she needs to obtain closure from. Her mother decided to leave an 8 year old Aimee and her dad in the 1970's to become a radical revolutionary and Aimee has suffered ever since not knowing what has become of her.

While working at her Paris office, Aimee is stunned when a mulatto from Haiti arrives claiming to be her half sister by her father. She has no real proof but Aimee longs so much for family, that she really wants for her to be her sister.

The woman- Mireille Leduc- disappears but leaves an address at a cafe. Against the advice of her business partner Rene, a dwarf who is in love with Aimee, Aimee goes to the address and comes close to being blamed for the dead man she finds there, a Haitian who died in a ritual attack.

This book is full of the familiar- her godfather Morbier, a flic, telling her to stop using her brain and get married and have babies, Rene frustrated by her lack of work towards building their company, Aimee using pretty much anyone she knows in any position to do so, looking for the missing Mireille, going underground into the old Roman baths, getting beaten up, shot, and drugged, and a cast of colorful characters involved in Haiti and its crooked government and poverty programs. Of course, Aimee sleeps with a guy she just met who she thinks might be a killer and rides another man in his own car until he tries to pick her pocket. Oh, and don't forget the nuns and the murdered scientist who is a pig scientist.

You really can't go wrong with this series! I am loving it. This is the 9th book in the series and the 9th I have read. On to number 10!

Liz says

Audiobook review with spoilers. I would sum this up as 'a hot mess'. This is the only book I have read from this series and it's the last. I have an extreme dislike of characters who are seemingly intelligent doing stupid things just to move the plot along. I would assume that a woman, Aimee Leduc, who owns her own investigative business must have some shred of intelligence. This character is criminally stupid. First off, a stranger walks into her business while she is having an important meeting and claims to be her sister who she has never heard of. So she decides to forget about the legitimate client and tear off all over Paris trying to find her missing 'possible sister' and rescue her because no one else is capable of finding her. Then she almost gets her partner killed while traipsing through catacombs. Does this slow her down? No. She decides to go traipsing through catacombs again this time without proper attire or equipment because she is the only one who can do it and it can't wait until she has help. So, she borrows some hospital scrubs (to put over her designer dress) and a helmet and a lantern and off she goes. At one point she puts out her lantern because the catacombs are policed. Apparently she can see in the dark because she is wandering about in the absolute dark and even eludes the police.

There are 3 murders that take place and only our intrepid Aimee can find the killer. She does this by going around and accusing everyone under the sun of the murders until the actual murderer tries to kill her. Did I mention that she is always getting beat up on.

There are more things to dislike. A friend tells Aimee that she should have a DNA test and not believe the first person who comes along claiming to be a relative. This would seem prudent as France has laws that all of the children have to split an inheritance and since Aimee's father has passed she inherited all his assets. This new sis would put that in jeopardy, big time, though it doesn't seem to faze Aimee. So, back to the DNA, Mireille (the unknown sis) just happened to leave her hairbrush at Aimee's house. How convenient, except that to get DNA the hair has to be pulled out by the root. Somehow the DNA is recovered. This is a small thing, but irritating.

The book is littered with French words that seem to be thrown in randomly maybe to remind us the story takes place in Paris. This seems to have thrown off the narrator who wavers in and out of a French accent all in the same sentence. All of the names and place names are pronounced with a French accent as are the random French words. This makes the narration incredibly distracting. Pick a voice and stick with it! The narrator even mispronounced brioche.

There are more irritating plot points but I'm tired of even thinking about this one.

Lorraine Shaw says

Not such a good book.

Lisa says

I really tried to like this book, but it was so poorly written I couldn't even read it all.

Sharon says

I have been working my way through the Aimee Leduc novels for a little more than a year (there are a lot of them). This one takes place in my favorite part of Paris, the Latin Quarter.

The tale begins when Mireille shows up at Aimee's door; she claims to be Aimee's half-sister, from Haiti.

Then, Mireille disappears, leaving Aimee with torn photos of her father and a lot of investigating to do. Pretty soon, Aimee is embroiled in the world of Haitian refugees and even black voodoo.

I remain surprised every single time the "whodunnit" is revealed in these books, which is unusual. I read a great many mysteries and police procedurals, so getting one past me is rare. Cara Black manages to do it every time!

I also love these books because I have walked the streets wherein the incidents occur. It makes it just a little bit more special for me to read them.

Kim says

Fun, especially since we just left Paris. The fashion references seem a bit out of the blue, but apparently is a thing for this author/character.

Sarah says

I have decided to rethink my rating system, having realized that 2 stars is totally underutilized. This book was okay and somewhat enjoyable. I would read another one (perhaps the next one, as this one ended in a cliffhanger). I liked the scene-setting, which is Paris pre-Euro and pre-macaron craze. Which is around the time I last went there, so at least things make sense. Aimee reminded me of a better-dressed, more sentimental Claire Dewitt, or at the very least they share a certain concussed, hungover hot-mess vibe. I did not understand the plot whatsoever, as there was so much going on (Haiti and the Duvaliers, swine, the World Bank, human trafficking, immigration, black magic, cybersecurity, fax machines) that it never came together. I didn't really like the French vocabulary interjected here and there ("non" is completely unnecessary; "flic" is fun if that's really how French people refer to the cops -- I kept wondering if it would be like a French language mystery set in the US in which the cops were constantly referred to as the fuzz). I also wished that Black could convey Aimee's stylishness without naming designers, which was tiresome even if the clothes were allegedly vintage. Overall the book gave off a nice hazy sepia tone, sort of a constant slanted light, that I enjoyed. Wholly unnecessary, offhanded comment about "most people" thinking all Asians look alike -- seriously, just don't.

Richard Brand says

This is a pretty typical Leduc mystery. Which I guess is a good thing if you like the series. It is a pretty formulaic mystery. Black seems to make it about international events, there are big international funding groups, big political movements, and lots of high up political operatives. This has a surprise of a possible sister for Leduc, and that dominates most of the story. The sister is from Haiti and world bank and Haiti politics and World bank are all involved. We have the typical sudden murder and as always Leduc does not stay around and explain what happens, she flees and jumps over fences and scrambles through bushes to avoid the police. This story continues the tradition of having about 15 or 20 people who are thrown in to complicate the story. It must be one of the cardinal rules of Author Black that Aimee has to have sexual intercourse at least one in every story. So she has her heroine stop in the middle of some part of her investigation and spend the night with somebody. It is not that I do not think sex ought to be left out, but it

would be a lot better if there were some context to the event. There is the required segment about her mother leaving. There is the required piece about her father's death and the accusations of corruption. And of course, Aimee's partner hides his love for her, and complains about her neglect of the software business she is suppose to be operating. These are enjoyable reading if you can follow the complicated international espionage involved in the stories as you will find the old familiar parts that fill out the story.

Ma'lis Wendt says

An Aimee Leduc mystery--the first one I've read. A quick read with a little too much fashion detail, but an interesting story.

Greta says

Aimee Leduc investigations and author, Cara Black, are new to me, but the setting of her story is familiar. The action takes place through out the Latin quarter in Paris "sister". Murder, international politics, Haiti, industry, research, monetary funds add up to revelations, near death experiences and more murder. Loved revisiting this part of Paris and enjoyed her brief history lessons.

Charles Matthews says

She dives through windows, ripping her pencil skirt and shredding her fishnet stockings; she prowls subterranean Paris in her beaded Schiaparelli jacket and hospital scrubs; she's knocked unconscious and has her Vuitton handbag stolen; she races down cobblestone streets in her Louboutins. Yes, Cara Black fans, Aimée Leduc is back.

This is the ninth of Black's novels about the chic, indomitable Parisian detective, and it has all the elements Black's readers have come to cherish: an engaging protagonist with a likable sidekick (her diminutive partner, René Friant), cops who hinder more than they help, villains with murky motives, grisly crimes, and above all, the unique Parisian atmosphere. This time, the air Aimée breathes is that of the Rive Gauche, the heart of intellectual Paris.

The action of the novel takes place in September 1997, just after the death of Princess Diana, an event with which the Paris constabulary is obsessed – fortunately for Aimée, who uses their distraction to her own advantage. The setup is this: a beautiful young Haitian woman named Mireille shows up, claiming to be the half-sister Aimée didn't know she had. And then she disappears. René is convinced that Mireille is a fraud, out to claim half of Aimée's inheritance, but of course Aimée has to go in pursuit. And inevitably, she winds up discovering a corpse – that of a professor of comparative anatomy who is a famed authority on pigs. Figuring out the connection between the murdered and mutilated swine scholar and the elusive, alleged half-sister will take Aimée the rest of the book.

Black gives substance to her detective stories, as implausible as they may be, by underlying them with real-world references. In this book, the plot centers on a project to supply water to the poorest parts of the horribly impoverished nation of Haiti, a project that involves the World Bank and millions of dollars. But where she's most skillful is at evoking the sights, sounds and scents of the Paris that Black, who lives in San

Francisco, clearly cherishes.

Black's dialogue is sometimes a little starchy, with needlessly interjected French words and phrases, oui and non and excusez-moi, as if to remind the reader what language the characters are speaking. And there are a few too many speeches that exist only to provide exposition, as when the murderer fills Aimée in on the back-story of the crime. But Black creates rich, plausible characters, giving them individuality and depth.

She is, for example, not afraid to halt the action so that Aimée can have a Proustian moment: "As she hurried in the dusk across rue Mouffetard, a familiar scent filled the air. Swollen, purple figs nestled in a bed of green leaves at the fruit stall. Fit to burst, like those in her grandmother's garden in the Auvergne. It took her back ... to the smell of her grandmother's tart aux figues, warm from the oven, her father's favorite, and how he always claimed the largest slice. The way his eyes crinkled in a grin." Touches like that, which betray an intimate understanding of where her characters come from, are what lift Black's fiction above the routine of the genre she practices so well.

Gasparde says

Chère Cara Black, si tu veux utiliser plein de phrases et noms français dans ton livre, fais-toi relire, pitié.

HBalikov says

I am going to give in to the temptation to note some comparisons between Evanovich's Stephanie Plum and Black's Aimée Leduc. Both are single women in a job that we still mostly associate with tough men. They both like their action and their "bad boys". Neither author lets the narrative slide very far into "harlequin" / bodice-ripping / graphic mode.

I found both entertaining but Aimée Leduc more enduring. Aimée, like another P.I., Warshawski, shares a history that includes a father on the police force, a mother who left our protagonist as a child, and an attitude that "one must do what one can for a client (paying or not) in need."

Even though Murder in the Latin Quarter is well into the series, it could serve as an intro to Aimée, her techno-investigator partner, Rene, and her family history with the Paris police (les flics). Black has a firm grasp on Paris, its sites, Paris couture, its history, its food, its culture, its geography, its characters and they all ring true.

A little about the plot: Several murders with a ritualistic aspect; a woman who claims to have been a victim of people trafficking; a previously unknown half-sister; the difficult relationship between France and its former colony, Haiti; the machinations of the World Bank and IMF; etc. Though it, at times, reads like The Perils of Aimée, Black makes it a satisfying experience.

