

The Serpent Of Venice A Novel

“An emotional journey of love, loss, healing, and redemption. I rooted for every character.” —Lisa See, New York Times and USA Today bestselling author of *Snow Flower and The Secret Fan* “I Liked My Life is a treasure of a novel. Warm-hearted and clever, the story will keep you reading until the final delicious revelation.” —Diane Chamberlain, New York Times and USA Today bestselling author “Warm and hopeful, this marvelous debut stands next to novels from Catherine McKenzie and Carolyn Parkhurst.” —Booklist (starred) In the tradition of Jodi Picoult and *Where'd You Go, Bernadette?* comes a story from debut author Abby Fabiaschi that is “as absorbing as it is illuminating, and as witty as it is heartbreaking.” Maddy is a devoted stay-at-home wife and mother, host of excellent parties, giver of thoughtful gifts, and bestower of a searingly perceptive piece of advice or two. She is the cornerstone of her family, a true matriarch...until she commits suicide, leaving her husband Brady and teenage daughter Eve heartbroken and reeling, wondering what happened. How could the exuberant, exacting woman they loved disappear so abruptly, seemingly without reason, from their lives? How they can possibly continue without her? As they sift through details of her last days, trying to understand the woman they thought they knew, Brady and Eve are forced to come to terms with unsettling truths. Maddy, however, isn't ready to leave her family forever. Watching from beyond, she tries to find the perfect replacement for herself. Along comes Rory: pretty, caring, and spontaneous, with just the right bit of edge...but who also harbors a tragedy of her own. Will the mystery of Maddy ever come to rest? And can her family make peace with their history and begin to heal? The Merchant of Venice has been performed more often than

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any other comedy by Shakespeare. Molly Mahood pays special attention to the expectations of the play's first audience, and to our modern experience of seeing and hearing the play. In a substantial new addition to the Introduction, Charles Edelman focuses on the play's sexual politics and recent scholarship devoted to the position of Jews in Shakespeare's time. He surveys the international scope and diversity of theatrical interpretations of *The Merchant in the 1980s and 1990s* and their different ways of tackling the troubling figure of Shylock.

“Christopher Moore is a very sick man, in the very best sense of that word.” —Carl Hiassen “[Moore’s novels] deftly blend surreal, occult, and even science-fiction doings with laugh-out-loud satire of contemporary culture.” —Washington Post “If there’s a funnier writer out there, step forward.” —Playboy Absolutely nothing is sacred to Christopher Moore. The phenomenally popular, New York Times bestselling satirist whom the Atlanta Journal-Constitution calls, “Stephen King with a whoopee cushion and a double-espresso imagination” has already lampooned Shakespeare, San Francisco vampires, marine biologists, Death...even Jesus Christ and Santa Claus! Now, in his latest masterpiece, *Sacré Bleu*, the immortal Moore takes on the Great French Masters. A magnificent “Comedy d’Art” from the author of *Lamb*, *Fool*, and *Bite Me*, Moore’s *Sacré Bleu* is part mystery, part history (sort of), part love story, and wholly hilarious as it follows a young baker-painter as he joins the dapper Henri Toulouse-Lautrec on a quest to unravel the mystery behind the supposed “suicide” of Vincent van Gogh.

'Twas the night (okay, more like the week) before Christmas, and all through the tiny community of Pine Cove, California, people are busy buying, wrapping, packing, and generally getting into the holiday spirit. But not everybody is feeling the joy. Little Joshua Barker is in desperate need of a holiday

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miracle. No, he's not on his deathbed; no, his dog hasn't run away from home. But Josh is sure that he saw Santa take a shovel to the head, and now the seven-year-old has only one prayer: Please, Santa, come back from the dead. But hold on! There's an angel waiting in the wings. (Wings, get it?) It's none other than the Archangel Raziel come to Earth seeking a small child with a wish that needs granting. Unfortunately, our angel's not sporting the brightest halo in the bunch, and before you can say "Kris Kringle," he's botched his sacred mission and sent the residents of Pine Cove headlong into Christmas chaos, culminating in the most hilarious and horrifying holiday party the town has ever seen. Move over, Charles Dickens -- it's Christopher Moore time.

Jody never asked to become a vampire. But when she wakes up under an alley Dumpster with a badly burned arm, an aching back, superhuman strength, and a distinctly Nosferatuan thirst, she realizes the decision has been made for her. Making the transition from the nine-to-five grind to an eternity of nocturnal prowlings is going to take some doing, however, and that's where C. Thomas Flood fits in. A would-be Kerouac from Incontinnence, Indiana, Tommy (to his friends) is biding his time night-clerking and frozen-turkey bowling in a San Francisco Safeway. But all that changes when a beautiful undead redhead walks through the door...and proceeds to rock Tommy's life—and afterlife—in ways he never thought possible.

From master of subversive humor Christopher Moore comes a quirky, irreverent novel of love, myth, metaphysics, outlaw biking, angst, and outrageous redemption. As a boy, he was Samson Hunts Alone—until a deadly misunderstanding with the law forced him to flee the Crow reservation at age fifteen. Today he is Samuel Hunter, a successful Santa Barbara insurance salesman with a Mercedes, a condo, and a hollow, invented life. Then one day, destiny offers him the dangerous

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gift of love—in the exquisite form of Calliope Kincaid—and a curse in the unheralded appearance of an ancient god by the name of Coyote. Coyote, the trickster, has arrived to reawaken the mystical storyteller within Sam...and to seriously screw up his existence in the process.

This volume is a collection of papers that highlights some recurring themes that have surfaced in the generative tradition in linguistics over the past 40 years. The volume is more than a historical take on a theoretical tradition; rather, it is also a "compass" pointing to exciting new empirical directions inspired by generative theory. In fact, the papers show a progression from core theoretical concerns to data-driven experimental investigation and can be divided roughly into two categories: those that follow a syntactic and theoretical course, and those that follow an experimental or applied path. Many of the papers revisit long-standing or recurring themes in the generative tradition, some of which seek experimental validation or refutation. The merger of theoretical and experimental concerns makes this volume stand out, but it is also forward looking in that it addresses the recent concerns of the creation and consumption of data across the discipline.

Do you have a real relationship with God, or do you just have a religion? Do you know God, or do you just know about God? In *How Big Is Your God?* Paul Coutinho, SJ, challenges us to grow stronger and deeper in our faith and in our relationship with God—a God whose love knows no bounds. To help us on our way, Coutinho introduces us to people in various world religions—from Hindu friends to Buddhist teachers to St. Ignatius of Loyola—who have shaped his spiritual life and made possible his deep, personal relationship with God.

A Guggenheim Fellow and a paper engineer retell a

Persian myth in pop-up book form.

New York Times bestselling author Christopher Moore channels William Shakespeare and Edgar Allan Poe in this satiric Venetian gothic featuring the irresistibly mischievous Pocket of Dog Snogging, the eponymous hero of Fool Venice, a really long time ago. Three prominent Venetians await their most loathsome and foul dinner guest, the erstwhile envoy from Britain who also happens to be a favorite of the Doge: the rascal-Fool Pocket. This trio of cunning plotters—the merchant, Antonio; the senator, Montessor Brabantio; and the naval officer, Iago—have lured Pocket to a dark dungeon, promising a spirited evening with a rare Amontillado sherry and a fetching young noblewoman. Their invitation is, of course, bogus. The wine is drugged; the girl is nowhere in sight. These scoundrels have something far less amusing planned for the man who has consistently foiled their quest for power and wealth. But this Fool is no fool . . . and the story is only beginning. Once again, Christopher Moore delivers a rousing literary satire, a dramedy mash-up rich with delights, including (but not limited to): foul plots, counterplots, true love, jealousy, murder, betrayal, revenge, codpieces, three mysterious locked boxes, a boatload of gold, a pound of flesh, occasional debauchery, and water (lots of water). Not to mention a cast Shakespeare himself would be proud of: Shylock; Iago; Othello; a bunch of other

guys whose names end in "o"; a trio of comely wenches—Desdemona, Jessica, Portia; the brilliant Fool; his large sidekick, Drool; Jeff, the pet monkey; a lovesick sea serpent; and a ghost (yes, there's always a bloody ghost). Wickedly witty and outrageously inventive, *The Serpent of Venice* pays cheeky homage to the Bard and illuminates the absurdity of the human condition as only Christopher Moore can.

The Serpent of Venice A Novel William Morrow
A whale researcher's unusual observation of a humpback whale with "Bite Me" scrawled on its tail starts an adventure involving an age-old conspiracy, a megalomaniac undersea ruler, and a bizarre long-distance love affair.

In 17th Century Venice exists a mysterious establishment known only as the Gameshouse. There, fortunes are made and fortunes are broken over games of chess, backgammon and every other game under the sun. But those whom fortune favours may be invited to compete in the higher league . . . a league where the games played are of politics and empires, of economics and kings. It is a league where Capture the Castle involves real castles, where hide and seek takes place on a scale as big as the British Isles. Not everyone proves worthy of competing in the higher league. But one woman, who is about to play, may just exceed everyone's expectations. Though she must always

remember: the higher the stakes, the more deadly the rules . . .

A humorous, speculative novel fills in the lost years of Jesus' life, told from the perspective of Biff, his childhood best friend.

Madcap, zany noir set on the mean streets of post-World War II San Francisco. Sammy "Two Toes" Tiffin is the bartender in a scruffy gin joint, with street connections that make him the go-to guy for just about everything. When one of his schemes goes south and his lady vanishes, Sammy follows a tortuous trail from Chinatown to Telegraph Hill to a hidden forest enclave in a desperate search to find his girl. Meanwhile, a suspicious flying object has been spotted by the Pacific Coast near Mount Ranier, followed by a mysterious plane crash in Roswell, New Mexico ... but the real weirdness is happening in the City by the Bay.

A gripping novel about history's most infamous family—The Borgias—and an innocent girl pulled into their treacherous rise to power, from the USA Today bestselling author of *The Alice Network*. Rome, 1492. The Holy City is drenched with blood and teeming with secrets. A pope lies dying and the throne of God is left vacant, a prize awarded only to the most virtuous—or the most ruthless. The Borgia family begins its legendary rise, chronicled by an innocent girl who finds herself drawn into their dangerous web... Vivacious Giulia Farnese has floor-

length golden hair and the world at her feet: beauty, wealth, and a handsome young husband. But she is stunned to discover that her glittering marriage is a sham, and she is to be given as a concubine to the ruthless, charismatic Cardinal Borgia: Spaniard, sensualist, candidate for Pope—who is passionately in love with her. Two trusted companions will follow her into the Pope's shadowy harem: Leonello, a cynical bodyguard bent on bloody revenge against a mysterious killer, and Carmelina, a fiery cook with a past full of secrets. But as corruption thickens in the Vatican and the enemies begin to circle, Giulia and her friends will need all their wits to survive in the world of the Borgias.

The World Fantasy Award-winning author of *The First Fifteen Lives of Harry August* presents a mesmerizing tale of a gambling house whose deadly games of chance and skill control the fate of empires. Everyone has heard of the Gameshouse. But few know all its secrets. . . It is the place where fortunes can be made and lost through chess, backgammon -- every game under the sun. But those whom fortune favors may be invited to compete in the higher league. . . a league where the games played are of politics and empires, of economics and kings. It is a league where Capture the Castle involves real castles, where hide and seek takes place on the scale of a continent. Among those worthy of competing in the higher league, three unusually talented contestants play for the highest stakes of all. . .

The town psychiatrist has decided to switch everybody in Pine Cove, California, from their normal antidepressants to placebos, so naturally—well, to be accurate,

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artificially—business is booming at the local blues bar. Trouble is, those lonely slide-guitar notes have also attracted a colossal sea beast named Steve with, shall we say, a thing for explosive oil tanker trucks. Suddenly, morose Pine Cove turns libidinous and is hit by a mysterious crime wave, and a beleaguered constable has to fight off his own gonzo appetites to find out what's wrong and what, if anything, to do about it.

A smart and gripping tale of conspiracy, murder and espionage in Elizabethan London, ideal for fans of C. J. Sansom, Rory Clements and S. G. MacLean.

Charlie Asher is a pretty normal guy with a normal life, married to a bright and pretty woman who actually loves him for his normalcy. They're even about to have their first child. Yes, Charlie's doing okay—until people start dropping dead around him, and everywhere he goes a dark presence whispers to him from under the streets. Charlie Asher, it seems, has been recruited for a new position: as Death. It's a dirty job. But, hey! Somebody's gotta do it.

Built on an inverted forest, paved with a tortoiseshell of boulders, Venice is a maze of tiny alleys, bridges and squares. Tiziano Scarpa wanders through the city, recounting the customs and secrets that only Venetians know. With everything from practical advice for aspiring Venetian lovers to hints at where to find the best bacaro, Scarpa waves the tourist in the right direction and, without naming a single restaurant, hotel or bar, relates the secret language needed to experience the real Venice. So ignore the street signs - why fight the labyrinth? Venice, the fish, is ready to swallow you whole.

The birth of Jesus has been well chronicled, as have his glorious teachings, acts, and divine sacrifice after his thirtieth birthday. But no one knows about the early life of the Son of God, the missing years -- except Biff, the Messiah's best bud,

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who has been resurrected to tell the story in the divinely hilarious yet heartfelt work "reminiscent of Vonnegut and Douglas Adams" (Philadelphia Inquirer). Verily, the story Biff has to tell is a miraculous one, filled with remarkable journeys, magic, healings, kung fu, corpse reanimations, demons, and hot babes. Even the considerable wiles and devotion of the Savior's pal may not be enough to divert Joshua from his tragic destiny. But there's no one who loves Josh more -- except maybe "Maggie," Mary of Magdala -- and Biff isn't about to let his extraordinary pal suffer and ascend without a fight.

"Readers new to the work of Christopher Moore will want to know two things immediately. First: Where has this guy been hiding? (Answer: In plain sight, since he has a cult following.)...[H]e writes laid back fables straight out of Margaritaville, on the cusp of humor and science fiction."—Janet Maslin, New York Times

Whale researcher Nathan Quinn has a problem. It's not a new problem; in fact, it's been around for nearly 20 million years. And Nate's spent most of his adult life working to solve it. You see, although everybody (well, almost everybody) knows that humpback whales sing (outside of human composition, the most complex songs on the planet) no one knows why. Nate, a Ph.D. in behavior biology, intends to discover the answer to this burning question—and soon. Every winter he and Clay Demolocus, his partner in the Maui Whale Research Foundation, ply the warm waters between the islands of Maui and Lanai, recording the eerily beautiful songs of the humpbacks and returning to their lab for electronic analysis. The trouble is, Nate's beginning to wonder if he hasn't spent just a little too much time in the sun. Either that, or he's losing his mind. Because today, as he was shooting an I.D. photo of a humpback tail fluke, Nate could've sworn he saw the words "Bite Me" scrawled across the whale's tail. . .

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In the heart of Venice, a woman is sacrificed to a forgotten god, sparking a mystery lost for thousands of years. Dr. Penelope Bryne is ridiculed by the academic community for her quest to find the remnants of Atlantis, but when an ancient and mysterious script is found at a murder site, she flies to Venice determined to help the police before the killer strikes again. Penelope has spent her entire life trying to ignore the unexplainable and magical history of Atlantis, but when she meets the enigmatic Alexis Donato, everything she believes will be challenged. Little does she know, Alexis has spent the last three years doing his best to sabotage Penelope's career so doesn't learn the truth—Atlantis had seven magicians who survived, and who he has a duty to protect. As Alexis draws her into the darkly, seductive world of magic and history, Penelope will have to use her heart as well as her head if she is to find the answers she seeks. With the new MOSE system due to come online, and Carnevale exploding around them, Penelope and Alexis will have to work together to stop the killer and prevent dark magic from pulling Venice into the sea.

“Hilarious, always inventive, this is a book for all, especially uptight English teachers, bardolaters, and ministerial students.” —Dallas Morning News
Fool—the bawdy and outrageous New York Times bestseller from the unstoppable Christopher Moore—is a hilarious new take on William Shakespeare's King Lear...as seen through the eyes of the foolish liege's clownish jester, Pocket. A rousing tale of “gratuitous shagging, murder, spanking, maiming, treason, and heretofore unexplored heights of vulgarity and profanity,” Fool joins Moore's own Lamb, Fluke, The Stupidest

Angel, and You Suck! as modern masterworks of satiric wit and sublimely twisted genius, prompting Carl Hiassen to declare Christopher Moore “a very sick man, in the very best sense of the word.”

Venice, a long time ago. Three prominent Venetians await their most loathsome and foul dinner guest, the erstwhile envoy from the Queen of Britain: the rascal-Fool Pocket. This trio of cunning plotters—the merchant, Antonio; the senator, Montessor Brabantio; and the naval officer, Iago—have lured Pocket to a dark dungeon, promising an evening of sprits and debauchery with a rare Amontillado sherry and Brabantio's beautiful daughter, Portia. But their invitation is, of course, bogus. The wine is drugged. The girl isn't even in the city limits. Desperate to rid themselves once and for all of the man who has consistently foiled their grand quest for power and wealth, they have lured him to his death. (How can such a small man, be such a huge obstacle?). But this Fool is no fool . . . and he's got more than a few tricks (and hand gestures) up his sleeve. Greed, revenge, deception, lust, and a giant (but lovable) sea monster combine to create another hilarious and bawdy tale from modern comic genius, Christopher Moore.

Take a wonderfully crazed excursion into the demented heart of a tropical paradise—a world of cargo cults, cannibals, mad scientists, ninjas, and talking fruit bats. Our bumbling hero is Tucker Case,

a hopeless geek trapped in a cool guy's body, who makes a living as a pilot for the Mary Jean Cosmetics Corporation. But when he demolishes his boss's pink plane during a drunken airborne liaison, Tuck must run for his life from Mary Jean's goons. Now there's only one employment opportunity left for him: piloting shady secret missions for an unscrupulous medical missionary and a sexy blond high priestess on the remotest of Micronesian hells. Here is a brazen, ingenious, irreverent, and wickedly funny novel from a modern master of the outrageous.

Shakespeare meets Dashiell Hammett in this wildly entertaining murder mystery from New York Times bestselling author Christopher Moore—an uproarious, hardboiled take on the Bard's most performed play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, featuring Pocket, the hero of *Fool and The Serpent of Venice*, along with his sidekick, Drool, and pet monkey, Jeff. Set adrift by his pirate crew, Pocket of Dog Snogging—last seen in *The Serpent of Venice*—washes up on the sun-bleached shores of Greece, where he hopes to dazzle the Duke with his comedic brilliance and become his trusted fool. But the island is in turmoil. Egeus, the Duke's minister, is furious that his daughter Hermia is determined to marry Demetrius, instead of Lysander, the man he has chosen for her. The Duke decrees that if, by the time of the wedding, Hermia still refuses to marry Lysander, she shall be

executed . . . or consigned to a nunnery. Pocket, being Pocket, cannot help but point out that this decree is complete bollocks, and that the Duke is an egregious weasel for having even suggested it. Irritated by the fool's impudence, the Duke orders his death. With the Duke's guards in pursuit, Pocket makes a daring escape. He soon stumbles into the wooded realm of the fairy king Oberon, who, as luck would have it, IS short a fool. His jester Robin Goodfellow—the mischievous sprite better known as Puck—was found dead. Murdered. Oberon makes Pocket an offer he can't refuse: he will make Pocket his fool and have his death sentence lifted if Pocket finds out who killed Robin Goodfellow. But as anyone who is even vaguely aware of the Bard's most performed play ever will know, nearly every character has a motive for wanting the mischievous sprite dead. With too many suspects and too little time, Pocket must work his own kind of magic to find the truth, save his neck, and ensure that all ends well. A rollicking tale of love, magic, madness, and murder, Shakespeare for Squirrels is a Midsummer Night's noir—a wicked and brilliantly funny good time conjured by the singular imagination of Christopher Moore.

Matt is six years old when he discovers that he is different from other children and other people. To most, Matt isn't considered a boy at all, but a beast, dirty and disgusting. But to El Patron, lord of a

country called Opium, Matt is the guarantee of eternal life. El Patron loves Matt as he loves himself - for Matt is himself. They share the exact same DNA. As Matt struggles to understand his existence and what that existence truly means, he is threatened by a host of sinister and manipulating characters, from El Patron's power-hungry family to the brain-deadened eejits and mindless slaves that toil Opium's poppy fields. Surrounded by a dangerous army of bodyguards, escape is the only chance Matt has to survive. But even escape is no guarantee of freedom... because Matt is marked by his difference in ways that he doesn't even suspect. Being undead sucks. Literally. Just ask C. Thomas Flood. Waking up after a fantastic night unlike anything he's ever experienced, he discovers that his girlfriend, Jody, is a vampire. And surprise! Now he's one, too. For some couples, the whole biting-and-blood thing would have been a deal breaker. But Tommy and Jody are in love, and they vow to work through their issues. But word has it that the vampire who initially nibbled on Jody wasn't supposed to be recruiting. Even worse, Tommy's erstwhile turkey-bowling pals are out to get him, at the urging of a blue-dyed Las Vegas call girl named (duh) Blue. And that really sucks.

An inspector rages against the announcement that police HQ is to relocate – the way so many of the city's residents already have – to the mainland... An

aspiring author struggles with the inexorable creep of rentalisation that has forced him to share his apartment, and life, with ‘global pilgrims’... An ageing painter rails against the liberties taken by tourists, but finds his anger undermined by his own childhood memories of the place... The Venice presented in these stories is a far cry from the ‘impossibly beautiful’, frozen-in-time city so familiar to the thousands who flock there every year – a city about which, Henry James once wrote, ‘there is nothing new to be said.’ Instead, they represent the other Venice, the one tourists rarely see: the real, everyday city that Venetians have to live and work in. Rather than a city in stasis, we see it at a crossroads, fighting to regain its radical, working-class soul, regretting the policies that have seen it turn slowly into a theme park, and taking the pandemic as an opportunity to rethink what kind of city it wants to be.

“Christopher Moore is a very sick man, in the very best sense of the word.” —Carl Hiaasen The undead rise again in *Bite Me*, the third book in New York Times bestselling author Christopher Moore’s wonderfully twisted vampire saga. Joining his farcical gems *Bloodsucking Fiends* and *You Suck*, Moore’s latest in continuing story of young, urban, nosferatu style love, is no *Twilight*—but rather a tsunami of the irresistible outrageousness that has earned him the appellation, “Stephen King with a whoopee cushion

and a double-espresso imagination” from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and inspired Denver’s Rocky Mountain News to declare him, “the 21st century’s best satirist.”

In the wake of her father's death, Rose Newlin finds solace in her work as a book restorer. Then, one rainy Connecticut afternoon, a struggling painter appears at her door. William Lomazzo brings with him a sixteenth-century treatise on art, which Rose quickly identifies as a palimpsest: a document written over a hidden diary that had purposely been scraped away. Yet the restoration sparks an unforeseen challenge when William--a married man--and Rose experience an instant, unspoken attraction. Five centuries earlier, Renaissance-era Venetians find themselves at the mercy of an encroaching Ottoman fleet preparing for a bloody war. Giovanni Lomazzo, a portrait artist grappling with tragedy, discovers that his vision is fading with each passing day. Facing the possibility of a completely dark world, Gio begins to document his every encounter, including what may be his final artistic feat: a commission to paint the enchanting courtesan of one of Venice's most powerful military commanders. Soon, however, Gio finds himself enraptured by a magnificent forbidden love. Spellbound by Gio's revelations, Rose and William are soon forced to confront the reality of their own mystifying connection.

In San Francisco, the souls of the dead are mysteriously disappearing—and you know that can’t be good—in New York Times bestselling author Christopher Moore’s delightfully funny sequel to *A Dirty Job*. Something really strange is happening in the City by the Bay. People are dying, but their souls are not being collected. Someone—or something—is stealing them and no one knows where they are going, or why, but it has something to do with that big orange bridge.

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Death Merchant Charlie Asher is just as flummoxed as everyone else. He's trapped in the body of a fourteen-inch-tall "meat puppet" waiting for his Buddhist nun girlfriend, Audrey, to find him a suitable new body to play host. To get to the bottom of this abomination, a motley crew of heroes will band together: the seven-foot-tall death merchant Minty Fresh; retired policeman turned bookseller Alphonse Rivera; the Emperor of San Francisco and his dogs, Bummer and Lazarus; and Lily, the former Goth girl. Now if only they can get little Sophie to stop babbling about the coming battle for the very soul of humankind . . .

Alessandra Cecchi is not quite fifteen when her father, a prosperous cloth merchant, brings a young painter back from northern Europe to decorate the chapel walls in the family's Florentine palazzo. A child of the Renaissance, with a precocious mind and a talent for drawing, Alessandra is intoxicated by the painter's abilities. But their burgeoning relationship is interrupted when Alessandra's parents arrange her marriage to a wealthy, much older man.

Meanwhile, Florence is changing, increasingly subject to the growing suppression imposed by the fundamentalist monk Savonarola, who is seizing religious and political control. Alessandra and her native city are caught between the Medici state, with its love of luxury, learning, and dazzling art, and the hellfire preaching and increasing violence of Savonarola's reactionary followers. Played out against this turbulent backdrop, Alessandra's married life is a misery, except for the surprising freedom it allows her to pursue her powerful attraction to the young painter and his art. *The Birth of Venus* is a tour de force, the first historical novel from one of Britain's most innovative writers of literary suspense. It brings alive the history of Florence at its most dramatic period, telling a compulsively absorbing story of love, art, religion, and power through the passionate voice of

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Alessandra, a heroine with the same vibrancy of spirit as her beloved city.

Prosecutor Anna Curtis, assigned to bring a terrifying man known as Diablo, who led a vicious attack on a brothel, to justice, calls into question everything she believes about good and evil when her investigation leads her to one of America's most brutal street gangs and a devastating discovery.

Venice, a long time ago. Three prominent Venetians await their most loathsome and foul dinner guest, the erstwhile envoy from the Queen of Britain: the rascal-Fool Pocket. This trio of cunning plotters—the merchant, Antonio; the senator, Montessoro Brabantio; and the naval officer, Iago—have lured Pocket to a dark dungeon, promising an evening of sprits and debauchery with a rare Amontillado sherry and Brabantio's beautiful daughter, Portia. But their invitation is, of course, bogus. The wine is drugged. The girl isn't even in the city limits. Desperate to rid themselves once and for all of the man who has consistently foiled their grand quest for power and wealth, they have lured him to his death. (How can such a small man, be such a huge obstacle?). But this Fool is no fool . . . and he's got more than a few tricks (and hand gestures) up his sleeve. Greed, revenge, deception, lust, and a giant (but lovable) sea monster combine to create another hilarious and bawdy tale from modern comic genius, Christopher Moore. Note: The book, too, is a veritable work of art. Rich creamy stock is enhanced by two-color printing, featuring part/chapter titles, running heads, and folios printed in red ink. The text block has blue-stained edges. The book opens to reveal two-page spread endpapers decorated with a sepia-toned antique map of Venice; an antique map of Italy graces the book's front matter, printed in red. The jacket sports a matte finish with embossed author and title type; gold foil embellishes the title and illustration detail.

In Christopher Moore's ingenious debut novel, we meet one

