

MYSTERY NOVEL FEATURES BELOIT

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McBride

BELOIT - Beloit deserves its own murder mystery. That's why author Tom McBride said he wrote "Bent Dead Beloit: A Mystery."

Murder and betrayal unfolds in the river town, all to be solved by the gumshoes of the Beloit Police Department.

The book was released early this month. Reviewed as being well-paced, the book is available at Amazon.com. Readers can look forward to hearing about familiar places such as Hansons Bar & Grill, Shirland Avenue, Homecare Pharmacy, Oakwood Cemetery, Turtle Creek and more.

Beloit College Emeritus Professor of English Tom McBride is best known as co-author of the "The Mindset Lists of American History" and three novels a year post-retirement. He's a prolific writer with a fierce imagination veering toward the darker side in his latest book.

Although McBride seems like a pretty harmless fellow with a fondness for cats and Marie Callender's frozen meals, he admits an affinity for a good crime story. Enjoying the occasional dip in the Investigation Discovery (ID) channel, he decided to fill the pages of his latest novel with a corpse and accompanying treachery.

Perhaps the opposing forces within McBride helped create the tale of two contrasting characters and the terror which would befall them. The fictional account begins with a police call about a Peeping Tom near Turtle Creek, and results in the discovery of a dead body. As one plot thickens, a secondary plot emerges about rich kids running a meth house by Oakwood Cemetery.

Character one is cop Jeremy, a logical-yet-shy man. Like McBride, he's a fan of the Callender's meals and his loyal feline. Jeremy's alter ego is his orange tabby Dez who he imagines solves crimes. Jeremy is a slightly overweight bachelor who hasn't gotten much action with the ladies. Perhaps it's why he falls so hard for the wife of his cop partner Roger. The awkward Jeremy is so besotted, he gets jealous when he sees the woman squeezing a pack of paper towels at Homecare Pharmacy.

Roger's police partner and secret nemesis is the antithesis of Jeremy. He's passionate, ambitious and totally bored with the wife Jeremy is lusting after.

There's continual tension between the two partners, especially since Roger's good instincts helped save Jeremy's life on a police call. Despite the favor, Jeremy is resentful Roger made him look bad. As Roger and Jeremy duke it out, other relationships reach a boiling point. The woman who finds the dead body is estranged from her husband.

"There are all these people, in these terrible relationships," McBride said.

Although the novel is crime-laden, McBride said it portrays the fictional Beloit with a new twist. The upper crust of society is committing the real crime. When asked what inspired his tale of betrayal, McBride said retirement put betrayal on his mind.

"When you retire from a place, you sort of find out who your friends really are. You realize some of the friends you had were only your friends because you were working at the same place. When you retire, you learn the ones who really liked you," he said.

Although retired, McBride isn't putting the pen down any time soon. He is already planning to write a sequel, featuring a mutilated body found in front of the Angel Museum. It will be titled "Dearest Angel in Beloit."

McBride has authored three other mystery novels, "Godawful Dreams," "Rox & Darlene" and "The Homicide At Malahide." "Godawful Dreams" was featured on Wisconsin Public Radio's "Chapter A Day" last summer. He is also author of "The Great American Lay: An All Too Brief History of Sex" and "When You Could Only Dribble Once: 51 Famously Forgotten Game-Changers," which features, among others, Beloit College's great coach Bill Knapton.