

# Pattaya Mail

## Bookazine Book Review: *Minor Wife* by Lang Reid

This book is the latest from Christopher G. Moore and another in the Vincent Calvino Private Detective series written by this Bangkok based author. Published by Heaven Lake Press this year, we were included in the review copy list and I must thank Christopher Moore for his thoughtfulness.

Moore does not spend time setting the scene. By page 17 there is the body of 8K, a high class painter cum prostitute, whose throat has been cut from ear to ear. Not too many pages further on there are four suspects, all of whom are in love with the deceased, and all of whom may have a motive.

The thriller moves in those convoluted circles within which Thai life and society takes place. Moore's knowledge of these gives insights into many aspects of the cultural mores. Many of these are unknown to the ex-pat population, most of whom spend their time living in blissful ignorance of the Thai dark underbelly. The definition of the mia noi may come as a surprise for some, "The first thing about the mia noi (minor wife) of farang is she looks out for herself first. She is used to making deals with the devil. She will do whatever she needs to survive. And if you are in the way, what choice will she make?"

Money may apparently buy you happiness, but it will not buy you a 100% guarantee of trustworthiness. This Calvino knows, and in his search for the killer, discovers the truth behind the phrase, no matter which society, or level, is being looked at.

One of the reasons I enjoy Moore's work is his ability to take the everyday and dissect out each subtle (and sometimes none too subtle) nuance, showing an acuity verging on the extreme. Take the following example, which male readers will recognize instantly. "Calvino unzipped and an arc of early morning Mekhong made its exit onto a mountain of ice cubes, the kind that were hollowed out. Wedges of lime were buried like the bony tail of a fetal mammoth frozen in a glacier at the moment of birth." He continues, "Some of the ice was smooth, melted and fractured. That usually meant that someone at the bar had come back and was using one of the thinly cut wedges for target practice, raking the ice with hot yellow napalm. Take that you bastards. Die, die." We are guilty as charged!

Available from Bookazine with an RRP of 475 baht, this is another compulsive thriller from Christopher Moore. That TV rights have been purchased does not surprise me, because Vinee Calvino as portrayed by Moore, is a most believable character set against the unfathomable backdrop of Bangkok. Unfathomable to all who have not lived there, but totally believable for those of us who have. With real-time settings, such as the Landmark Hotel, for example, this would be a movie maker's dream assignment. I shall sit in front of the idiot box and wait. In the meantime, go and read this latest Calvino book. Great writing, great story and a great read. Get it, you will not be disappointed.

