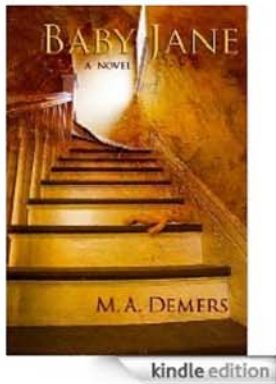


M. A. Demers shares her novel: Baby Jane

Posted on [August 17, 2011](#) by [David Cleinman](#)



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**From the tangled web of crime dramas
and the occult, M. A. Demers shares her
novel:
Baby Jane
A Native American mystery with a
paranormal twist**

Tell us what the book is about:

It's a murder mystery with a Native paranormal twist, set in Vancouver. It's about the relationship between this world and the spirit world, and about a half-Native detective who's trying to bridge his traditional Native culture with the larger culture, all the while trying to solve a murder. But it's his Native roots, and his Native grandmother, who turn out to be instrumental in solving the mystery.

And here's the dust jacket version:

There's more to good and evil than meets the eye...

When human remains are found in her pre-war fixer-upper in an east Vancouver neighbourhood, Claire Dawson's grand plans to fix the house — and her life — take a disturbing turn. Suspicious there might exist a relationship between the discovery and her own tragic past, Claire insinuates herself into the investigation, unknowingly placing herself in harm's way and Homicide's Detective Dylan Lewis in an impossible conflict of interest. And when Dylan's grandmother, a Coast Salish medicine woman, wades into the mystery, challenging the demon whose earthly form is behind the murder, the three find themselves embroiled in a high-stakes battle where lines are blurred and worlds collide — but souls are ultimately freed.

What is special about the main character?

I don't think my characters are "special" but rather ordinary people caught up in extraordinary circumstances. Your question speaks to a conversation a fellow writer and I were having about the difference

between literary fiction and genre fiction: the conclusion was that literary fiction is about ordinary circumstances written in extraordinary language; genre fiction is about extraordinary circumstances written in ordinary language.

What conflicts drive the story?

There are all kinds, on different levels. There's conflict within the characters' own selves: many of them are trying to reconcile past traumas with the need to grow and move on. There's the conflict between desire and duty, between sacrifice and selfishness. There's conflict between the murderer and those intent on bringing him to justice. And there's conflict between the forces of good and evil that exist not only in this world but in the parallel spirit world, of which we are interdependent.

What would you say the theme of the book is?

Again, it's multi-level, but if I had to pick one theme it is that combating evil isn't always about grand gestures and pyrotechnic showdowns; evil is combated on the micro-level as well, in small acts of kindness, in a positive attitude, in a generous heart.

Who would be most interested in this novel?

Anyone who loves a good mystery but is bored with the usual fare: the Native spiritual elements of *Baby Jane* provide a new twist on a traditional genre. My reviewers thus far have been unanimous that this is *Baby Jane's* strongest feature. That and the character development, which is more in-depth than is usually found in mysteries.

What prompted you to write the book?

I write for the film industry, and when the recession hit it hit us hard, so I had to rethink my career. I had some money in the bank so I decided to take a chance and do something I had always wanted to do: write a novel. As for the story itself, where does any story come from? It's a gift from the universe, tempered by one's own issues and interests.

When you write, how does it make you feel?

Exhilarated and exhausted. Writing is joyous, but I also feel every emotion my characters do, so each day is a rollercoaster session that leaves me drained.

What authors inspire you? Whose books can't you put down?

Without a doubt, Gabriel García Márquez.

Would you like to share any other stories or books that you have written?

I've written mostly screenplays and movie production notes; [Baby Jane](#) is my first novel. I have some earlier works of fiction, creative non-fiction, and articles that can be read on my website, <http://www.mademers.com>. My favorites are the postcard stories.

Please tell us about yourself and your family

I'm a professional writer and fine art photographer based near Vancouver, BC (my photographs are also on my website). I come from a large family, and early on I found peace and quiet in books. Probably accounts for a lot. I've done a fair amount of travelling, which has also greatly informed my world view. That, and an education in Women's Studies and Religious Studies. I'm particularly interested in Renaissance philosophy and magic, how the disciplines of science, religion and philosophy were all part of one system of thought, not divided as they are today. Renaissance beliefs formed so much of our current ideas of the spiritual and paranormal — like why vampires don't reflect in a mirror, for example — ideas whose origins have been mostly forgotten. So when you study these origins you get all these wonderful "Ah, so that's why we think..." moments. It's like a treasure hunt.

What projects do you have planned for the future?

I learned so much during the process of self-publishing [Baby Jane](#) that I've put together a lengthy manual, *The Global Indie Author: how to self-publish in the U.S. and around the world*, that's due out soon. After that it's on to my next novel, a paranormal psychological thriller that I describe as *Fatal Attraction* meets *The Book of Job*. And somewhere in between I have to produce some new fine art. Oh, and try to have a social life, which I delude myself into thinking is still possible.

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