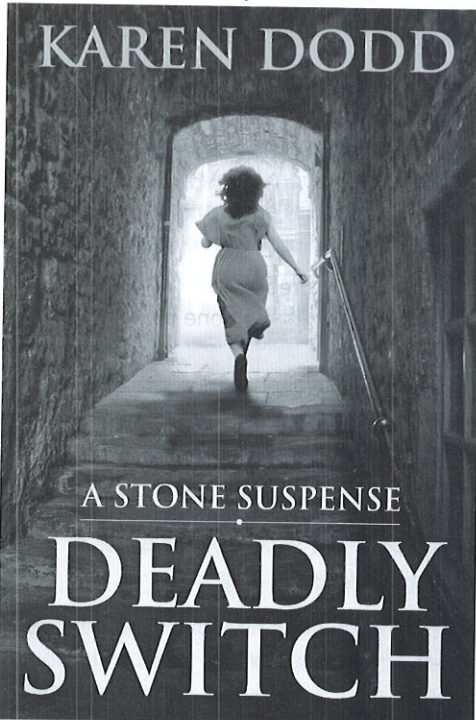


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Reading...Deadly Switch: A Stone Suspense

A novel by Karen Dodd

Book Review written by Rod Baker



We moved to Lions bay one year ago because we loved the view and heard it was a friendly community. We met Karen and Glen Dodd at the Periwinkle Place Canada Day party. As I chatted to Karen, I was excited to find out she was writing a book. I mentioned I was writing my memoirs. However, unlike myself and others who claim to write, Karen was actually about to publish her book. I write my memoirs when I can't sleep at night. Karen, who is currently working on the sequel, writes for six hours per day. As we chatted about writing, Karen suddenly popped the question.

"Would you help me out and be a beta reader for my new book?"

"Sure, be glad to help." Karen was obviously very professional and organized. I didn't even know what a beta reader was until I looked it up on Google. I found it was kind of

like proofreading, so I was ready to zip through her book and suggest changes. It was the first murder mystery I had ever read. I breezed along, almost speed reading, skipping through, clinically incising and excising, maybe a comma here, a different word there, perhaps adding a stronger adjective. But something was happening. I was slowing down. The story was seeping into me. It was starting to stick to my insides. The characters were becoming real.

I felt for the protagonist, Alexis—what a nightmare to find a dead body in your father's house. No wonder she was freaked. Why did Alexis' estranged father, Gavin call her to his house in West Vancouver; was he involved? I didn't think so. He seemed like a straight shooter just trying to survive a loveless marriage. And, it was all happening just down the road in West Van. No, wait. Alexis was being pulled to Italy in her relentless quest for answers. An unexpected Italian connection had emerged that she needed to follow up: a former business partner of the father's appeared to have been very shady. Alexis was resentful about her dad but didn't believe he was a criminal. That's good. Blood is still thicker than water. I have a daughter her age.

I once lived in Italy and Karen's description of Amalfi rang so true. I was whisked back there, circulating with her characters, Giancarlo and Angelina, through the boutique coffee shops, with their charming gigolos and stylish women. Hold on, it looked like there was a Mafia connection. I was becoming engrossed and forgetting to proof read. I was hooked as the plot skilfully dragged me helter skelter towards the thrilling conclusion; I would proof read later. I had to know what happened, what happened, what happened—and couldn't put the book down. Sometimes, even instant gratification is too slow! The characters hijacked me from Italy to Carmel, California, and finally back to Vancouver. And that self assured, stupid detective, I could have killed him. Where is the respect for people? Where?

So, I lost two days of my life being a beta reader. Funny, it didn't mention anything about losing time on Google but, it was a delightful distraction. If *you* want to be delightfully distracted for two days—or more, if you are less manic than I am—the book is

available on Amazon for only \$3.99
<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00HOHLHEE>

Print copies are available at Black Bond Books, Lynn Valley and Lansdown Centre in Richmond. Or, you can purchase directly from Karen. She lives here in Kelvin Grove and she would be happy to autograph it for you. Her website is: <http://www.karendodd.com> Happy Reading!

It's a Funny Old World

Written by Malcolm Bell

Lynx-eyed, wide-wake readers of the News would have spotted that in the Winter issue, my Funny Ol' World scribble had been run before in the Summer issue. Oops. It can be blamed on the vagaries of this IT world in which we live; which is also funny. My apologies.

I'm leafing my way through newspapers and magazines, concentrating mostly on movies and book reviews. In the space of minutes, I learn that a Cormac McCarthy-scripted movie, *'The Counselor,'* has a character muttering, "*They don't believe in coincidences. They've heard of them. They've just never seen one.*" And then, I stumble across a comment regarding Dickens' use of coincidence in Peter Ackroyd's *"Three Brothers": "coincidence is the condition of living in the city, is it not? Because everything is connected to everything else."*

Coincidences. Do they just happen and are merely just that: a 'coincidence', unworthy of further time-wasting contemplation? Perhaps. Unless you have a head for this kind of stuff. But I've just witnessed a coincidence, discussing coincidences, in less time that it took me to fine-tune the meaning of the word in the OED. Which was not overly helpful.

Which takes me back to September, 2012 in Rajasthan, India where you may recall in the summer issue of the *News*, I related the Tale of the Tip that Nobody Wanted. My mind is back there again, in the 300-year old Deogarh Mahal Hotel, I'm grazing bovine-like through breakfast curries, chapattis and other Indian culinary delights. I'm approached by a smiling lady who is wearing a *salawar* (loose trousers), *kameez* (tunic top) and *dupatta* (scarf). Her hair is jet black,