Book reviews

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FALSE IMPRESSIONS

S. Woods-Frankel
Zharmae Publishing
price £11.52; pp 285
ISBN 9781937365042

The first in a series featuring forensic odontologist Dr Steve Landau who uses the powers of dentistry to rid New York's streets of murderous foes, *False impressions* charts the pursuit of the 'dracula killer', a psychopath who gruesomely kills his victims by fatal bite wounds. If anyone is up to the task of tracking this sharp-toothed madman then surely it is the remarkable Steve Landau, who is not only a general dental practitioner, veterinary dentist at a local zoo and forensic odontologist, but lives on a sailboat, drives a Harley and manages to be a great single father to his teenage daughter following an acrimonious divorce. If Steve Landau has anything in common with the average dentist it is perhaps that despite some minor refinements, he still uses the techniques he learnt in dental school.

Forensic odontologist-cum-crime writer Stanley Woods-Frankel is clearly trying to dispel the stereotypical idea of dental professionals, though with James Patterson and Lee Child possibly serving as Woods-Frankel's literary role models, *False impressions* struggles to provide multi-dimensional, plausible and distinct characters or a plotline that proffers any unexpected conclusions. Landau, like most heroes, is not infallible, though his dental skills will be impressive to laymen and professionals alike; and with James Patterson at the top of Forbes' richest authors list 2012, this writing style undoubtedly holds a wide appeal.

Unfortunately, in this novel the protagonist's wise-cracking voice is shared by all of the characters and whilst Woods-Frankel may be hoping the chemistry between Landau and psychologist Nita Lazar will sustain another five books, this seems a little optimistic based on the evidence of this first lacklustre outing. We can only presume Landau's relationship with his ex-wife Carol Ann was somewhat steamier, as outlined in the text's best, unintended comic line; 'their affair began as a stock pot of simmering spices, which quickly boiled over into a torrid Cajun feast.'

Nevertheless, the book does offer great insight into the world of forensic dentistry, detailing victim identification, impression-taking, computer imaging and the legal process of court. There are even tips on emergency dentistry, dental treatment throughout pregnancy and reducing the gag reflex during prosthodontic applications. Anyone interested in the proper handling, examination and evaluation of dental evidence will surely find something to enjoy in this otherwise banal work of crime fiction as long as it is not taken too seriously.

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ORAL MEDICINE: A COLOUR HANDBOOK, 2ND ED

M. A. O. Lewis, R. C. K. Jordan
Manson Publishing
price £29.95; pp 224
ISBN 9781840761818

This title is intended for professionals and trainees in dentistry and medicine. This well illustrated book is perfect to keep in surgery for professionals and it

is an equally valuable educational book for the student.

This nine-chapter clinical handbook organises its chapters by the presenting symptom; ulceration, blisters, white patches, erythema, swelling, pigmentation, orofacial pain, dry mouth, excess salivation, halitosis and altered taste. After these nine chapters there are 20 clinical cases laid out so that the reader can test their knowledge.

There is an introductory chapter that covers the authors' approach in taking a history and conducting an examination. It also contains excellent pictures of normal structures found within the oral cavity and ample information on special investigations used in oral medicine.

Each chapter starts with a 'general approach' to the given symptom. Concise information with patterns of individual disease presentation is then given to help formulate a differential diagnosis. Following this the individual conditions are discussed under the topics of aetiology, pathogenesis, clinical features, diagnosis and management. This consistent format makes this book extremely user friendly.

Each chapter is extremely well written giving the reader an appropriate amount of relevant and interesting information. Complex clinical conditions are broken down and explained with fluency and intelligence. This book contains a remarkable 425 high quality colour photographs. These depict clinical conditions, histopathology slides and radiographic imaging. They are presented well within the text and are always relevant. The 20 clinical cases presented for the reader to test their knowledge will be of particular use to the dental student.