FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

**Bluebeard's Last Stand**
Alistair Boyle
Allen A. Knoll Publishers
Unknown $20.00 (167pp)
978-1-888310-45-0
(June 1998)

*Bluebeard's Last Stand*, an entertaining mystery novel, is the latest installment in the *Gil Yates Private Investigator* series by Los Angeles author Alistair Boyle. Gil Yates is an unlikely hero, a plant-collecting, 90's dad who happens to moonlight as a sort of Philip Marlowe. Gil is hired by a wealthy family who suspects that their beloved (and filthy rich) mother is about to fall victim to her modern-day Bluebeard boyfriend on an upcoming ocean cruise.

Gil's task is to observe the couple on their prenuptial cruise and ultimately prevent any harm from coming to the old millionairess, who, as it turns out, also has left a trail of dead spouses in her wake. In the tradition of the dimestore crime novel, Bluebeard is cut and dried suspense, but lacks much of the complexity of a great page-turner. There are no developed subplots and consequently not too many surprises. On the other hand, Boyle's off-the-wall humor and unadorned, relatively concise prose is refreshing.

Our hero admits early on in the book that he hates cliches and then proceeds to riddle the book with tongue-in-cheek spoofs on the rapid-fire, one-liner approach to narration that has made the "private dick" genre so endearing.

The book moves along swiftly as a good mystery should, and should satisfy most fictional crime fans, particularly those who enjoy (or at least remember) Alfred Hitchcock or Ellery Queen anthologies.