

## Caravaggio's Angel: A Reggie Lee Mystery

**Ruth Brandon**

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Dr. Reggie Lee of the famed National Gallery in London never dreamed that she would find herself physically threatened and others killed under suspicious circumstances due to her effort to put together an exhibition around three paintings by the great Renaissance painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. The three “Caravaggios” all depict the scene of “St. Cecilia and the Angel.” Because one of the paintings is owned by the elderly mother of the French presidential aspirant Jacques Rigaut, Reggie is unable to avoid crossing paths with the powerful man whose acrimony toward her appears boundless. When she uncovers the existence of a fourth Caravaggio, she knows one of the Angel paintings must be a fake, but discovering which one may wind up costing her more than just her exhibition....

Reggie's investigative trips from the gritty streets of London to the placid beauty of Paris and the bucolic southwest of France are described with the rich detail that only someone intimately familiar with those diverse parts of Europe could provide. Indeed, the author spends her time between both countries and is an accomplished writer who has written detective stories and other novels, including *Tickling the Dragon*, about the fatal attraction of science and the making of the atom bomb, and *The Uncertainty Principle*, about parallel worlds. She has also published *Surreal Lives: The Surrealists, 1917—1945*, a work of nonfiction. Her familiarity with the intricacies of the fine art world imbues this book with incredible verisimilitude. For example, one of her characters describes Caravaggio's clever use of optics to prove its authenticity.

Admirers of mysterious, exotic locales, or Renaissance masterpieces in today's modern art milieu will find much to enjoy in this multi-faceted book.

ALAN J. COUTURE (August 15, 2008)

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