ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

MYSTERY

Silent Partner: Buck Jaspers Mysteries, Book 9
Jerry C. Blanton
CreateSpace
978-1-4499-8434-2
Four Stars (out of Five)

Good mysteries make the average person who lives a calm, mundane existence think about the unthinkable. These stories keep readers intrigued until the very end, when the horrific events that have occurred are explained by a truth that no one could have contemplated. Exceptional novelists like Jerry C. Blanton have the ability to create fascination and wonder along with genuine sympathy for their protagonists. The characters in *Silent Partner* do not progress down a stereotypical passage to discovery.

Silent Partner is the story of Isidra Bloemfield, a former celebrity and socialite who hires an investigator to prove that her executive assistant's disappearance eighteen years ago was actually murder. Even more dreadful is Isidra's suspicion that her own ex-husband, wealthy and elusive, committed the crime. She employs Buck Jaspers to dig up the past, retrieve the victim's body, and prove her theory. What she believes will be a simple, cut-and-dry explanation turns into more than she expected.

Buck knows what he's doing, and at the onset he suspects this troubling situation won't be what Isidra anticipated. As he uncovers buried secrets and untangles complicated lies in this cold case, he examines every party involved with skepticism. Like all trained investigators, his experience has taught him to look down every path for an answer and not remain fixated on where he's told to focus. The result will surprise even the most jaded mystery connoisseur.

This well-written novel will not disappoint genre fiction fans looking for quick, page-turning entertainment. Its only flaw is the unfortunate layout, which contains formatting problems such as ragged margins, unusual font changes, and awkward insertions in the text to illustrate letters, text messages, and recorded conversations. The insertions are distracting and do not abide by customary publishing industry standards for fiction. Consequently, what could have been an exceptional novel has fallen short of the mark.

Silent Partner is the ninth volume in Jerry C. Blanton's series of mysteries featuring Buck Jaspers, a straightforward, contemporary character in the Sherlock Holmes tradition. This

talented novelist gives a unique twist to his work that will delight avid readers seeking a change. Fast-paced and tightly edited, Blanton's style does not overwhelm the text with unnecessary words that detract from the story. Every scene is executed with precision.

Julia Ann Charpentier