

## Short Takes – A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

### Review Short Takes

“Under the African sun, Michael Stanley’s Detective Kubu investigates crimes as dark as the darkest of Nordic Noir. Call it Sunshine Noir, if you will – a must read.”

Yrsa Sigurðardóttir

“Kubu returns with a vengeance – but what is prowling in the darkness of Botswana is more dangerous than the four-legged predators. Then there are the Chinese who just may be the most dangerous of all ... I love it!”

Charles Todd

“The lovable larger-than-life detective Kubu is back; frustrated this time because it is his father who has been murdered and he is banned from involvement in the investigation...Writers Michael Sears and Stanley Trollip deliver a great story set in Africa.”

Cape Times, August 9, 2015

“The fifth rip-roaring mystery in the Detective Kubu series. If you haven’t read the others, the lovable return characters, exceptional police procedural plot, and close-to-home Botswana setting will make you want to.”

Sunday Times, August 16, 2015

“Stanley and Kubu deserve much more critical and commercial attention than they have been receiving; hopefully this latest installment will rectify that shortcoming.”

Bookreporter, November 13, 2015

“This fifth mystery featuring Detective Kubu is another fast moving procedural notable for its warm characterizations and vivid sense of place.”

Booklist, September 15, 2015

“*A Death in the Family* is fast paced and gripping; Kubu’s frustration at his exclusion ups the tension, while his final lines offer a superb eulogy for Wilmon as a father and as a man.”

Lavender Magazine, October 1, 2015

“The Stanley novels deliver intricate plots and a cast of regulars well worth following.”

Kirkus Review

“...engrossing...As always Stanley brings to life a Botswana different from the one familiar to Alexander McCall Smith readers.”

Publishers weekly

“This is an involving and inventive series that introduces modern South Africa through the eyes of an endearing protagonist.”

St Paul Pioneer Press, October 23, 2015

“...a fantastically complex and artfully crafted plot that brings together political corruption, the incursion of foreign powers and companies in search of Botswana’s mineral wealth and the chilling, dangerous paths taken to satisfy greed.”

MumblingAbout, September 15, 2016

“I am loving this series!!!”

Bibliophile Book Club, September 1, 2016

“...the writing duo of Michael Stanley have already established a firm place on my 'must read' list.”

Rachel Hall Reviews, August 13, 2016

## Short Takes – DEADLY HARVEST

### Review Short Takes

"...a fascinating police procedural," and "(it) is the most complex book in this series. Besides being an intricate crime puzzle that Kubu and his team must untangle, it also looks at societal issues."

St Paul Pioneer Press, April 28, 2013

"*Deadly Harvest* is number four in this fascinating crime series. Detective David "Kubu" Bengu is a wonderful creation, complex and beguiling. The exotic smells and sounds of Botswana fill the pages as well as the changes and struggles of a country brimming with modern technology yet fiercely clinging to old traditions. Compelling and deceptively written, it's the perfect summer read."

New York Journal of Books, April 30, 2013

"Tight plotting is seasoned with African culture and the uglier presence of political corruption, AIDS, and black magic. Detective Kubu is joined by Detective Samantha Khama, who helps unravel a mystery involving a witch doctor who is believable and utterly menacing."

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, July 2013

"These darker, grittier entries featuring the portly and perceptive Detective Kubu blend intricate plotting and a compelling cast... Though the cat-and-mouse chase that ensues propels the novel ever forward, Stanley also peppers the tale with richly detailed descriptions of Botswana and the lively lives of its citizens."

Booklist May 1, 2013

"This book took me to a world I didn't want to leave. It kept me reading, it kept me guessing, and it kept me gasping at its many twists and surprises. Highly recommended."

R.L. Kline

"...richly atmospheric...gritty depiction of corruption and obsession"

Publishers Weekly Starred and boxed review, March 25, 2013

"...one of the finest crime thrillers of 2013..."

The Strand Mystery Magazine, Feb-May, 2013

"*Deadly Harvest* is a fantastic read, with a tense original story that draws you in and holds you enthralled from the first to the last page."

The Library Door, September 22, 2016

"...a brilliantly written police procedural with a cast of chilling characters who draw you in from page one until the very end."

Damp Pebbles, August 14, 2016

## Short Takes – DEATH OF THE MANTIS

Rated as Number 5 by The Strand Magazine in its selection of best 12 mysteries for 2011.

“...a must-read for anyone who enjoys clever plotting, terrific writing, and a fascinating glimpse of today’s Africa.”

Charles Todd, New York Times bestselling mystery author

“...the best book yet in one of the best series going... I loved this book.”

Timothy Hallinan author of *The Queen of Patpong* and *A Nail Through the Heart*

“...the best book I’ve read in a very long time... *Death of the Mantis* is a fantastic read. Brilliant!”

Louise Penny multiple award-winning author of the Inspector Gamache mysteries

“Impossible to put down, this immensely readable third entry from (Michael Stanley) delivers the goods. Kubu’s painstaking detecting skills make him a sort of Hercule Poirot of the desert.”

Library Journal starred review

“The information on the Bushmen ... is fascinating. Stanley does an exceedingly good job of presenting their plight and culture in an interesting and sympathetic manner. He also conveys the other characters, both black and white, in rich, multi-layered dimensions... a very readable novel that offers fascinating reflections on life in modern Botswana.”

The Canberra Times, November 5, 2011

“... *Death of the Mantis* is a wonderful piece of work, a novel that is quietly perfect in every way ...one of those rare books that transcends its rich genre. While there is a mystery at its core, it is also a study of the human condition, of the best and worst of people who do what they do for the best and worst of reasons. And Kubu is one of the best friends you will make between the pages of a book.”

Bookreporter October 27, 2011

“Most fascinating is that the story surrounds and reveals many of the ancient traditions and current ways of the Bushman in the red Kalahari ... you will want to keep reading about the desert and its prey to the very end.”

Cape Times June 3, 2011

“...the authors have created a solid plot and thrown in enough curved balls to keep you turning the pages. It is an absorbing read, made more enjoyable by a cast of characters you find yourself caring about from the beginning.”

Business Day June 21, 2011

“The authors have gone to great pains to achieve verisimilitude in this tale of misadventure in the Kalahari sands of Botswana ... Now with three Detective Kubu, a.k.a Rra David Bengu, crime-fiction thrillers out, a firm foundation has been set for many more.”

Mmegi Online June 10, 2011

“Kubu himself, intelligent, honourable, a fine detective, a loyal friend, and proud family man who delights in good food and drink, is always a pleasure. In him, Trollip and Sears have created a robust and believable series character... Full marks.”

The Witness July 20, 2011

“Alexander McCall Smith fans interested in a different take on modern-day Botswana will find it in the intriguing third mystery (from Michael Stanley)... The cultural conflict between the Bushmen and their fellow countrymen lends color.”

Publishers Weekly July 4, 2011

“As in the previous titles, Stanley creates a seamless and complex mystery, replete with the unique atmosphere of modern Botswana.”

Booklist August 1, 2011

## Short Takes – THE SECOND DEATH OF GOODLUCK TINUBU:

“...brilliant sequel to last year’s *A Carrion Death*... Stanley is not content with a single plot line, effectively juggling the murders with cross-border drug smuggling and the circumstances surrounding an upcoming African Union meeting. Kubu, a dedicated gourmand, is just one of many fully fleshed and charmingly realistic characters. ...each character is memorable and adds depth to this tense and involving police procedural.”

Booklist starred review May 1, 2009

“...a smart, satisfying, complex mystery.”

Entertainment Weekly - A rating – May 6, 2009

“Detective Kubu is a real discovery: he already feels like an enduring classic to add to the mystery canon.”

Killer Book Reviews Vol 6, 2009

“Following his spectacular debut, *A Carrion Death*, Stanley comes roaring back with an even better tale. Bringing a love of Africa similar to Alexander McCall Smith's popular "No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency" series, the author has created an excellent new venue for those who love to read about other cultures while enjoying a good mystery. Highly recommended.”

Library Journal Reviews April 1, 2009

“Kubu’s second case is as leisurely and well-appointed as the first... Stanley should satisfy all armchair travelers and most mystery fans.”

Kirkus Reviews, April 15, 2009

“It's the same country as Alexander McCall Smith's wildly popular No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series -- but hardly the same territory. Stanley offers a lot more action "out bush," while delivering a tale every bit as evocative in its sense of a place and the people who live there.”

The Times Picayune, June 8, 2009

“Detective Kubu is a gift to mystery readers – he’s an instant classic.”

Ann Arbor Chronicle, 13 June, 2009

“Kubu...is without doubt the most engaging literary detective in Africa.”

The Weekender, 19 September, 2009

“I was gripped and entranced from the first page. A wonderful, original voice – McCall Smith with a dark edge and even darker underbelly.”

Peter James, bestselling British crime writer.

## Short Takes – A CARRION DEATH:

"The gritty Botswana depicted in Michael Stanley's "*A Carrion Death*" (Harper) differs from Alexander McCall Smith's gentler vision, but the jovial, corpulent Det. Kubu is a winning creation."

Los Angeles Times - December 7, 2008. Favorite Crime Novels of 2008

"A first novel saturated with local color. . . . Happily, Kubu is also hugely appealing—big and solid and smart enough to grasp all angles of this mystery. Readers may be lured to Africa by the landscape, but it takes a great character like Kubu to win our loyalty."

New York Times Book Review, April 13, 2008

"This first novel, awash in local color, centers around shady business at a diamond mine and the land claims of the Kalahari Bushmen..."

New York Times Book Review – Paperback Row Review, April 26, 2009

"Delightful. . . . Plot twists are fair and well-paced, the Botswana setting has room to breathe and take shape as its own entity, and Stanley's writing style is equal parts sprightly and grave."

Los Angeles Times Book Review,

"Characters in this first outing are utterly believable, for good or ill. . . . Kubu himself is a marvellous creation, his distinctive characteristics. . . as well considered as the plot. ...This is a marvellous debut, and with any luck, Kubu's next outing will be as filling and tasty as one of the large man's dream meals."

Boston Globe April 14, 2008

"*A Carrion Death* by Michael Stanley (Headline), set in Botswana, is a brutal antidote to Alexander McCall Smith's cosy No.1 Ladies' detective Agency series. Detective Kubu investigates a brutal murder linked to vast sums of money involved in gem-trading, together with family upheavals and rivalries at which King Lear's nasty daughters would blanch. There are diabolically cunning tricks to deceive the cops (and family members), but Kubu is not to be fooled, in a plot climaxing in a series of whizzbang surprises.

"The intricate plotting, a grisly sense of realism and numerous topical motifs ...make this a compulsively readable novel."

Publishers Weekly (starred review), February 25, 2008

"[A] fast-moving story... Rich with the atmosphere of modern Botswana, and peopled with interesting and well-drawn characters, this is an exciting debut."

Booklist, February 1, 2008

"Kubu follows in the literary footsteps of ... brilliant male detective with a love of classical music, a palate for good food and fine wine, distant but compassionate, who solves crimes with reason and resolve. . . . This is a deliciously satisfying first mystery."

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, April 19, 2008

“This well-plotted debut introduces a new mystery series and will enthrall readers...”  
Library Journal, March 1, 2008

“...David "Kubu" Bengu of the Botswana C.I.D.—is more exotic still, and in ways that continue to surprise and delight from beginning to end ...”  
Ellenville Shawangunk Journal/Sullivan County Democrat (NY State), March 26, 2009

“There are diabolically cunning tricks to deceive the cops, but Kubu is not to be fooled, in a plot climaxing in a series of whizz-bang surprises.”  
The Scotsman, November 29, 2008

“*A Carrion Death* is that perfect combination of ‘I don’t want it to end’ and ‘I can’t put it down’. Great African crime fiction.”  
Deon Meyer, leading South African crime writer.

## Larger Extracts:

### A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

#### **Most complex novel in the series**

Bookreporter, November 13, 2015

*A Death in the Family*, the fifth and latest novel in the series, is by far the most complex, one in which tragedy hits very close to home as part of a plot with international overtones. The death in the family that is referenced in the title of this quietly compelling novel takes place very early on in the narrative.

Stanley and Kubu deserve much more critical and commercial attention than they have been receiving; hopefully this latest installment will rectify that shortcoming.

#### **Fast-paced and gripping**

Lavender Magazine, October 1, 2015

This fifth Detective Kubu novel will disturb readers who have formed close attachments to Kubu and his parents, Wilmon and Amantle. Wilmon's murder straight-off leaves a distraught, grieving Kubu pulled off the case by superior, Jacob Mabaku. The stock trope, detective-pulled-off-case-who-must-solve-it here acquires rare, devastating immediacy. Wilmon's murder and others are revealed to be intertwined with the Konshua mine, Shoshong tribal chief and his son, and Chinese mining interests in Botswana's rare earths. In the end, Stanley pulls off a trifecta; death in Kubu's family, in the Shoshong tribal structure, and his family of readers. *Death* is fast-paced and gripping; Kubu's frustration at his exclusion ups the tension, while his final lines offer a superb eulogy for Wilmon as a father and as a man.

### DEADLY HARVEST

#### **One of the finest crime thrillers of 2013**

The Strand Mystery Magazine, Feb-May, 2013

This fourth adventure of Detective Kubu is a vibrant mixture of themes that infuses the traditions of old Botswana against the shock of the new. However, the real appeal of the book is the easy-going voice that Michael Stanley deploys, leading the reader into the darkest of places with little warning. This makes *Deadly Harvest* into one of the finest crime thrillers of 2013...

#### **Compulsive Thriller**

Rachel Hall Reviews, July 25, 2016

*Deadly Harvest* was a truly compulsive thriller which has instead allowed me to discover a whole new culture and gives a very welcome voice to the residents of Botswana. Busting many of the myths which abound regarding traditional African

medicines and delivering an impartial look at the power of witch doctors and their place in the African culture, the authors have delivered a captivating and insightful novel.

## DEATH OF THE MANTIS

### **Page turner from start to finish**

Charles Todd, New York Times bestselling mystery author

Assistant Superintendent Kubu is back! In *Death of the Mantis*, a killer stalks the Kalahari Desert—and it's a page turner from start to finish. Michael Stanley's enthralling series with its very likable Botswana policeman is a must-read for anyone who enjoys clever plotting, terrific writing, and a fascinating glimpse of today's Africa. Kubu, *Death of the Mantis*, Michael Stanley: the perfect mystery trifecta for any crime fan."

### **I loved this book**

Timothy Hallinan author of *The Queen of Patpong* and *A Nail Through the Heart*

*Death of the Mantis* is the best book yet in one of the best series going: a serious novel with a mystery at its core that takes us places we've never been, thrills and informs us, and leaves us changed by the experience. I loved this book.

### **Brilliant!**

Louise Penny multiple award-winning author of the Inspector Gamache mysteries

*Death of the Mantis*, by Michael Stanley, is the best book I've read in a very long time. I'm fascinated by Africa and now I really want to visit Botswana. Through this book, I've come to love the people there, and fall totally for the main character – a policeman, nicknamed Kubu, the Setswana name for Hippo. He is gentle, wise and loyal to his family, his colleagues and his friends. He is altogether a lovely man. *Death of the Mantis* is a fantastic read. Brilliant!

### **Impossible to put down**

Library Journal starred review

As the secret lives of the victims are revealed, the variety of possible motives expands at a dizzying pace. Kubu is forced to re-evaluate the evidence and make hard choices. VERDICT Impossible to put down, this immensely readable third entry from (Michael Stanley) delivers the goods. Kubu's painstaking detecting skills make him a sort of Hercule Poirot of the desert. Grimmer than Alexander McCall Smith's Precious Ramotswe mysteries but not oppressively violent, this series can be recommended to a wide gamut of readers.

### **Seamless and complex mystery**

Booklist August 1, 2011

The third Detective Kubu mystery finds the genial Kubu having a hard time adjusting his lifestyle of fine wine and good food to accommodate the arrival of his long-awaited baby girl and the stress on both him and his wife of being new parents. When a murder in the Kalahari is blamed on the three Bushmen who found the body, Kubu is only too happy to take off for a few days to help out his old school friend, now an advocate for the Bushmen. As the investigation progresses, Kubu is drawn deeper into the hot, dangerous, and mysterious Kalahari, chasing a killer and the legendary source of the Namibian diamonds. As in the previous titles, Stanley creates a seamless and complex mystery, replete with the unique atmosphere of modern Botswana.

## THE SECOND DEATH OF GOODLUCK TINUBU

### Brilliant sequel

Booklist starred review May 1, 2009

...Kubu stars in a brilliant sequel to last year's *A Carrion Death*. ...Stanley is not content with a single plot line, effectively juggling the murders with cross-border drug smuggling and the circumstances surrounding an upcoming African Union meeting. Kubu, a dedicated gourmand, is just one of many fully fleshed and charmingly realistic characters. From slightly annoying sister-in-law Peasant to Kubu's intense and acerbic boss Mabuku to Scottish pathologist MacGregor, each character is memorable and adds depth to this tense and involving police procedural. Suggest to fans of The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series, who will appreciate Kubu's laid-back style and happy home life, and to Henning Mankell fans, who will respond to the complex plots and palpable sense of place.

### Detective Kubu has found his own pace!

Clea Simon March 4, 2009

If you liked *A Carrion Death*, you're in for a real treat with *The Second Death of Goodluck Tinubu*. I thoroughly enjoyed the first book, but in the second all the diverse elements -- the harder-edged crime (a multiple murder at a tourist camp) and the cozier parts of Detective Kubu's character (he's still enjoying his meals, only not quite as often, plus we hear more about his family and background) -- seem to come together better. I feel like the authors have found a better compromise and Detective Kubu has found his own pace!

### Rich novel

Ann Arbor Chronicle June 13, 2009

The settings in the book are so gorgeously rendered you can almost see and hear them, and obviously the writers have a deep love for their subject. ... This is a very rich novel – rich setting, rich characters, and many of them with a complicated story that is told in a kind of laid back way. The author has his own rhythm, but if you give

yourself time to adjust to it (as with a Tony Hillerman novel, for example) the pleasures are many.

Detective Kubu is a gift to mystery readers – he’s an instant classic. These books are a shade darker than McCall-Smith’s, including rape, drugs, and several brutal murders, but the surroundings are just as comfortable. Somehow, only two outings in, I feel certain that Kubu will get to the bottom of everything.

## Most engaging literary detective in Africa

The Weekender September 19, 2009

Move over Mma Ramotswe: there’s a new player in town, none other than Gaborone’s Assistant Supt David “Kubu” Bengu, of the Botswana Criminal Investigation department, and he is without doubt the most engaging literary detective in Africa. ... To make use of a horribly abused and overused cliché, the story is as fresh as tomorrow’s headlines and as refreshing as a cold beer, at sunset, in the hot African bush.

## A CARRION DEATH

### This is a marvellous debut...

Boston Globe April 14, 2008

... readers ... will be rewarded by a complicated police procedural that's more smart than bloody, particularly once Detective David Bengu, nicknamed "Kubu," is called in. So-called because his immense girth reminded an old school chum of a hippo, "kubu" in Setswana, this detective has both the seemingly slow and gentle manner and the underlying ferocity of his namesake. Like such great fictional detectives as Guido Brunetti (from Donna Leon's Venetian series), Kubu appreciates the finer things in life, including good food, music, and the love of his intelligent wife, Joy.

The story, with its interlocking strands, is complicated but well thought-out, with clues that will have readers flipping back chapters to check alibis and opportunities. ... most of the characters in this first outing are utterly believable, for good or ill. And many, including Kubu's new friend, Professor Bongani Sibisi, hold great promise as series regulars. Kubu himself is a marvelous creation, his distinctive characteristics - his weight, his taste in music - as well considered as the plot. And if his Botswana is more violent than McCall Smith's, it is depicted with its distinctive beauty intact as well. This is a marvelous debut, and with any luck, Kubu's next outing will be as filling and tasty as one of the large man's dream meals.

### The complete picture...

Sarah Weinman, Los Angeles Times, April 13, 2008

Assistant Superintendent David Bengu . . . shares a number of traits with McCall Smith's signature heroine. His nickname, "Kubu," is Setswanan for "hippopotamus," suggesting a traditional build confirmed by his penchant for wearing African shirts, size XXXL. His marriage to Joy is built upon the same practical foundations of love

that bind Precious Ramotswe to her garage-owning husband, J.L.B. Maketoni. And like Precious, Kubu takes a warm-hearted approach to life's incidentals -- especially if they happen to be accompanied by heaping plates of food.

But Stanley, the merged name of the South African writing team of Michael Sears and Stanley Trollip, makes clear early on that Kubu will travel down darker and more ghastly paths than Precious ever does. But then, murder investigation is Kubu's job, and the discovery of two bodies in the wild with almost all possible identification marks eliminated means that the job quickly involves sifting through a labyrinthine mosaic of diamond smuggling, family strife and generations of closely guarded secrets that the Kalahari Desert cannot contain anymore.

*A Carrion Death* gets much right: The plot twists are fair and well-placed, the Botswana setting has room to breathe and take shape as its own entity, and Stanley's writing style is equal parts sprightly and grave. Perhaps there needn't be so much concentration on Kubu's home life, but when he lets his jovial nature recede and talks instead of how murder "never works out quite the way you expect," it forces the reader to look alongside him for the complete picture -- one that should take shape over several series installments.

## Deliciously satisfying...

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, April 19, 2008

Set in Botswana, this debut novel introduces Detective David 'Kubu' Bengu of the Botswana Criminal Investigation Department. Kubu follows in the literary footsteps of Christie's Poirot and Conan Doyle's Holmes - brilliant male detective with a love of classical music, a palate for good food and fine wine, distant but compassionate, who solves crimes with reason and resolve.

...[Michael Stanley's] knowledge of Botswana, its history and its traditions, permeates every page.

...This is a deliciously satisfying first mystery. I want seconds.

## Well-plotted debut...

Library Journal, March 1, 2008

This well-plotted debut introduces a new mystery series and will enthrall readers, who should be aware that the author's detailing of the cultural and social background of the Botswana people shares equal footing with the solving of the murders. Stanley is the writing duo of South Africans Michael Sears and Stanley Trollip, who have shared adventures in the Kalahari. For readers who enjoy crime novels with African settings, such as those by Richard Kunzmann and Deon Meyer.

## A compulsively readable novel...

Publishers Weekly (starred review), February 25th, 2008

This impressive debut from Stanley, the South African writing team of Michael Sears and Stanley Trollip, introduces overweight assistant superintendent David Bengu of the Botswana Police Department, whose nickname is, fittingly, Kubu (Setswanan for hippopotamus). In investigating the case of a partially consumed human body found in a remote area of a game reserve, Kubu keeps running across tangential links to Botswana Cattle and Mining, the country's largest company. As more people connected to the case turn up dead, Kubu realizes that multiple murder may be just the byproduct of a much more heinous crime. The intricate plotting, a grisly sense of realism and numerous topical motifs (the plight of the Kalahari Bushmen, diamond smuggling, poaching, the homogenization of African culture, etc.) make this a compulsively readable novel. Despite a shared setting with Alexander McCall Smith's No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series, this fast-paced forensic thriller will resonate more with fans of Patricia Cornwell's Kay Scarpetta. (Apr.)

## Culture conscious mystery...

Madison County Herald, April 26, 2008

...Michael Stanley introduces the reader to detective Kubu, the nickname for Assistant Superintendent David Bengu of the Botswana Criminal Investigation Department. Kubu is Setswana for hippo; a playful appellation for his enormous girth and quick resourcefulness. Kubu loves his beautiful wife, fine food and wine, and classical music, which he sings aloud when travelling the bush to investigate crimes. The hyena-gnawed remains of a man are discovered near a water hole on the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana. Forensics indicate murder; the body was dumped for quick devouring. Now Kubu must question reluctant suspects, including the wealthy and devious family that runs one of Botswana's leading diamond mining companies. Poaching, political cover-ups, tribal rivalry and power-hungry scoundrels leave a blood soaked trail that even Kubu has difficulty trudging through.

*A Carrion Death* produces a fascinating protagonist and a culture-conscious mystery debut for Michael Stanley.

## Likable and durable character...

(South African) Sunday Times, June 8, 2008

Set in Botswana, the world's largest producer, by value, of gems, the most valuable assets by far are not the stones mined at the Maboane diamond mine — or even the Angolan blood diamonds that also feature — but that large Black Diamond, aka assistant inspector David Bengu of the Botswana CID. As is the case with tulips, black diamonds are the most valuable.

For Michael Stanley have introduced a likeable and durable character in the shape of an opera singing (to himself, in the car), gourmet guzzling, larger-than-life (his nickname Kubu means hippo in Setswana) original. *A Carrion Death* is surely the first instalment in a successful franchise.

All the boxes get ticked: exotic desert locations, bloodthirsty villains and beautiful girls, blackmail, more twists in the plot than a pretzel and, of course, murders most foul, galore.

In all, a remarkable debut and sure to be a successful one...

## Most readers happily turning the pages...

Canberra Times June 28, 2008

*A Carrion Death* is an impressive murder mystery with a great detective ... [whose] approach to crime-solving is delicate and cerebral. His investigation of the discovery of a half-eaten body in a waterhole near a local resort takes the reader on an entertaining journey through Botswana. The fluid writing and fascinating description of the Botswana countryside, and its people, will keep most readers happily turning the pages. Even the simplest interactions, such as Bengu's visit to his parents, are full of interest and totally engaging. The criminal elements are also well handled and the multiple viewpoints employed by Stanley add to the mounting suspense. In all a well-written and highly recommended debut mystery.

## The police procedural story line is superb...

Genre Go Round Reviews, February 9, 2008

Near a waterhole in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Botswana, game rangers Andries and Bongani find the partial human remains; as the best cleaners of a crime scene, hyenas were not quite finished devouring the corpse. The rangers collected enough evidence to make the case that a homicide not a tragic accident occurred. Botswana Criminal Investigation Department Assistant Superintendent David "Kubu" Bengu leads the investigation. As Kubu follows clues partially concealed by local superstition and more so by powerful killers with high level contacts intent on hiding the crime and much more, he mimics the "hippopotamus" that he is nicknamed for as he calmly but resolutely makes inquiries. With Mozart and other classical greats to entertain him as he drives the dusty roads, Kubu risks his life from those who will kill anyone including a persistent detective's loved ones to keep the truth from surfacing. The police procedural story line is superb with a strong obstinate hero; however the tale belongs to the insightful look at Botswana, a landlocked South African presidential representative democratic republic. The action-packed story line brings to life the people and cultures of a country struggling to avoid the problems besetting many of their neighbors to include tribal rivalries, government corruption, and avaricious poachers and smugglers ripping off the natural resources. The author team Michael Stanley provides the excellent debut of a police detective and readers will clamor for more investigations by this lover of the Magic Flute.

## The realistic characters could step off the pages and shake your hand...

ReaderToReader Reviews, June 22, 2008

...The mix of characters are those involved with the resort, owners of a diamond mine, and travelers as well as locals. They move in well described settings that bring life to the story. If you want to visit Africa, this book is an excellent way to get a feeling for this part of it. The realistic characters could step off the pages and shake your hand.

...The story contains several motives for wanting a person to disappear--blackmail, theft of diamonds, control of a company, love, and others. The victim or killer could be any one of the many characters of the story and they will have you and Kubu guessing.

Highly recommended. *A Carrion Death* is one of those books you may read again to pick up things missed on the first reading.

## [A] fast-moving story...

Booklist, February 1, 2008

Assistant Superintendent David Bengu earned his nickname, Kubu (hippopotamus), for his size, generally amiable nature, and occasional ferocity, all of which are evident in this lengthy but fast-moving story, the debut of writing team Michael Sears and Stanley Trollip. Kubu is called out to a remote tourist camp in Botswana when the manager finds a hyena chewing on human remains. What first seems to be a simple case of death by desert turns into something much more complex, as the Botswana Cattle and Mining Company turns up in every corner. Soon people start to go missing, beginning with a geologist whose specialty is diamonds. Rich with the atmosphere of modern Botswana, and peopled with interesting and well-drawn characters, this is an exciting debut, which will leave readers looking forward to reading the next investigation of Assistant Superintendent Kubu. Recommend to readers who like the Botswana setting of Alexander McCall Smith's stories and all readers who enjoy international police procedurals with a strong sense of place.