

recall past lives as a witch-finder in seventeenth century Spain and as a murderer of women in the East End of London in 1888.

The question at the heart of this novel is this: is Maybrick genuinely recalling a previous incarnation as Jack the Ripper, or is he faking it for purposes of his own? Or is the therapy itself inducing false memories and wishful thinking? As the story unfolds we see Drs Crane and Liebman, together with Missouri Detective Chris Stanford, struggling with these issues as they delve into Maybrick's background.

Authors of Jack the Ripper fiction are always looking for new ways to send their modern-day protagonists back to the late nineteenth century. Over the years we have marvelled at time machines, dream states, induced comas, astral travel, psychic transference, experimental drug trials, and so on. Now we have past life regression. You may recall this plot device being used previously by Anne Stuart in *Break the Night* (1993), Kit Crumb in *Time Ripper* (2015), and most recently by MW Taylor in *Killing Time* (2017) (see *Ripperologist* 155). In *Catch Me When You Can* the therapy is depicted as being rapid and reliable. At first Crane dismisses the practice as questionable, but gradually embraces the therapy as Maybrick recalls more and more verifiable details about his murderous activities in London. At the same time Crane turns into a sort of Ripperologist, digesting texts by Paul Begg and utilising Casebook resources to corroborate Maybrick's 'memories'. He even lauds Trevor Marriott's *21st Century Investigation* as a 'compelling study'.

Catch Me When You Can is the debut novel from J. Philip Davies, a retired educator living in Miami. It offers an original and intriguing slant on the Ripper murders, and is packed with interesting information about all sorts of subjects from optography and reincarnation to Shalimar perfume and bonsai trees. It begins as a police procedural before turning into a dark psychological thriller about Jack the Ripper's identity. Perhaps the plotting is a little thin in places, and the motivations of some of the characters didn't always convince me; I could have done without the uninteresting romance between the two mental health professionals brought together by the Maybrick case.

Catch Me When You Can

J. Philip Davies

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The New York City police are called out to a gruesome murder at an abandoned warehouse near the docks. Written on the wall in the victim's blood is the chilling taunt: *Catch Me When You Can*. Three weeks later, a second body, horribly mutilated in the manner of Mary Kelly, is discovered in Hightower, Missouri, with the phrase *From Hell* scrawled in blood at the scene.

The perpetrator is quickly apprehended. He is George Maybrick, a merchant seaman, who readily confesses to both murders as well as a string of other homicides in various ports around the world. He is a most peculiar individual, suffering from chronic nightmares and exhibiting a personality disorder unlike anything in the clinical literature. The police bring in forensic psychiatrist Dr Richard Crane, who in turn seeks the expertise of Dr Shoshana Liebman, a past life regression therapist. Maybrick proves to be a willing subject, and over the course of several hypnosis sessions he claims to

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Overall, though, I thought this was an enjoyable romp, briskly written in short snappy chapters. I found myself gripped by the drama of it and keen to keep reading. The author has researched his subject well and produced a clever murder mystery. A sequel appears to be in progress.