

★ Deadly Harvest: A Detective Kubu Mystery

Michael Stanley. Harper/Bourbon Street, \$14.99 trade paper (496p) ISBN 978-0-06-222152-0

The real-life phenomenon of African witch doctors committing murder to get ingredients for their spells drives the richly atmospheric fourth Detective Kubu mystery (after 2011's *Death of the Mantis*) from Edgar-finalist Stanley (the South African writing team of Stanley Trollip and Michael Sears). The Botswana Criminal Investigation Department assigns its first female detective, Samantha Khama, to a cold case—the four-month-old disappearance of a 10-year-old orphan, Lesego Betse. Samantha believes that the girl is the victim of a witch doctor who uses human remains to prepare the medicine known as *muti*. After another girl goes missing, Samantha gains the active assistance of David “Kubu” Bengu, the department’s assistant superintendent. Their investigation takes place during a time of political instability in the country when the prospect that an opposition party could finally be gaining traction spawns violence. The gritty depiction of corruption and obsession serves as a striking counterpoint to Alexander McCall Smith’s blood-free No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency series, also set in Botswana. *Agent: Marly Rusoff, Marly Rusoff Literary Agency. (May)*

