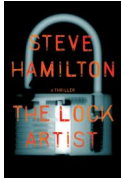


The lock artist

The Lock Artist by Steve Hamilton



Recently I decided to read a mystery that was either nominated for or won an Edgar Award. I chose The Lock Artist, 2010 Best Novel winner, because it sounded interesting. I was not disappointed. The story is narrated by Mike, a "boxman"- someone who can open any lock without a key whether it's on a safe, a door, a window or a padlock. We know this talent has landed him in prison at the age of 18 and that from there he writes his life story. We also know Mike is known as "Miracle Boy" because he survived a family tragedy that is hinted at throughout the book. This tragedy rendered him unable to speak, which brings an interesting facet to the tale. When he falls in love he is only able to communicate with the object of his desire through his other talent- drawing. *The Lock Artist* is not just one mystery, but many within the life of Mike- which job finally landed him in prison, what happened to the girl he loves, who is the dangerous and mysterious man who employs him, what happened to him as a child? Each chapter jumps to a different point in time in Mike's life with many ending as cliffhangers.

Mike is a likeable character. You can't help rooting for everything to turn out all right for him, even though you know he is in prison. The other characters in the book are interesting as well, whether they are the criminals he consorts with, the uncle who took him in or his girlfriend's unethical, troubled father. Along the way we also learn the trade secrets of lockpicking, fascinating enough to make you want to give it a try yourself. Hamilton has written other books, most notably the Alex McKnight series, about an ex-cop who becomes a reluctant private eye. I enjoyed *The Lock Artist* so much that I picked up A Cold Day in Paradise, the first book in that series.

Posted by Elizabeth G. on October 22, 2011

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