

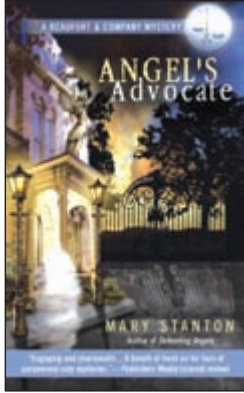
BEACH READING

‘Angel’s Advocate’

By Mary Stanton (Berkeley-Prime Crime imprint, \$7.99)

REVIEWED BY PRUDY TAYLOR BOARD
Special to Florida Weekly

West Palm Beach author Mary Stanton has done it again. “Angel’s Advocate,” her second in the Beaufort & Company series, is as charming and intriguing as the first, “Defending Angel,” released last year. Brianna “Bree” Winston-Beaufort, an up-and-coming young lawyer and recent grad from Duke University, is the protagonist.



“Angel’s Advocate” is also a paranormal cozy (no sex, no gore) and features the same quirky characters, including Lavinia, her charmingly southern landlady who talks of her “Littlies” upstairs, and Bree’s wealthy but eccentric family, especially her sister Antonia, who works in the Savannah Repertory Theater.

The premise of the book is that a gorgeous young woman lawyer is recruited to serve as defender not of mortals, but immortals. In other words, if you’re a ghost or a phantom who was murdered or unjustly accused of a crime before you died, Bree will take your case. In this book, she represents the recently deceased drug-store magnate Probert Chandler. Probert reportedly died in an automobile accident, but as he indignantly informs Bree, “I didn’t die in the car.” She is charged

not only with representing him before the court of the Celestial Court, but also with identifying and bringing to justice his killer.

Bree may, from time to time, represent the living because, as her secretary Ron Parchese explains, “... the living are the pre-dead, so to speak.” To which her Russian paralegal, Petru Lucheta, quotes Sir Thomas Moore, who describes the dead as “shadows of the living.” Then Petru adds, “Although, of course, Sir Thomas was not thinking of the need to pay the electric bill.”

Her second client is sure to be familiar to South Floridians. Remember the juvenile from Boca who robbed a Girl Scout of her cookie money? In “Angel’s Advocate,” Bree is hired to represent the young juvenile who is a Georgia peach of a villain. Bree does this at the insistence of her socially well-connected Aunt Cissy, who’s a good friend of the juvenile’s mother (they play bridge together).

Savannah, with its traditions and engraved-in-steel social structure, provides a relevant backdrop to the story as does the location of Bree’s office. A charming 19th century house located on the back streets of Savannah’s historic landmark district, her office is also next to an old and neglected all-murderers’ cemetery.

Ms. Stanton’s latest is a delightful book, enjoyable from page one. ■

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