

A Killer's Essence by Dave Zeltserman

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Dave Zeltserman is the Shamus award winning author of 'Julius Katz'. His 'man out of prison' crime noir series features the novels *Small Crimes*, *Pariah* and *Killer*, with *Small Crimes* being selected by NPR as one of the five best crime novels of 2008 and by the Washington Post as one of the best novels of 2008, and *Pariah* selected by the Washington Post as one of the best novels of 2009. His novel *The Caretaker of Lorne Field* is a finalist for a Black Quill Award for best dark genre novel of the year. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, Dave attended the University of Colorado in Boulder, and after graduating with a BS in Applied Math and Computer Science, returned back to the Boston area where he continues to reside with his wife, Judy. After spending 20 years developing network management software for several of the world's leading technology companies, he now splits his time between writing crime fiction and studying martial arts, where he holds a black belt in Kung Fu. His upcoming crime novels include *Outsourced* and *The Essence of Monsters*. *Outsourced* has already been called a 'small gem of crime fiction' by Booklist and has been optioned by Constantin Film and Impact Pictures.

October 2004. New York City. Could anything be more exciting than this time and this place as the electrifying playoff series between the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox erupts? NYPD detective Stan Green thinks not – that is, until he asks his eleven-year-old son who had defected to the Sox right after the divorce and leaving the city with his mom. At least the series would give them a little friendly competition – something to talk about – as Stan tries desperately to repair their broken relationship.

As usual, the job gets in his way. Wasn't that what got them into this mess – the job he couldn't leave but couldn't keep and stay married? One evil deranged man was all that was needed to cut into Detective Green's attempt to rebuild some semblance of family life. Others in the department busied themselves with extra projects popping up here and there and still focused on the baseball series – well maybe some things couldn't be helped like his partner getting his body raked over by a speeding car and ending up in the hospital. Naturally the department was already shorthanded and the higher-ups refused his request for help, instead telling him to suck it

up and handle the city's usual grisly murders and acts of evil. Routine stuff for New York streets, wasn't it?

No one but Stan would consider a possible relationship between the woman found shot in the face with her fingers severed near a Manhattan mystery book store – *why didn't the killer shoot the witness watching from a few feet away?* – and the influential businessman buried in a dumpster on the Upper West Side. Just routine! Now who the heck would be cruel enough to poison a pack of dogs then execute them and leave their bodies alongside the roadway 'neath the Brooklyn Queens Expressway – he oughta be shot. Poor dogs! No way that could be related to the other killings, though.

After more severed fingers and other grisly body parts continued to surface, Phillips gave in and ordered a task force together to put an end to the slaughter. Detective Green was clicking off the hundred seventy miles toward Rhode Island a little ahead of schedule to pick up his kids for dinner and an afternoon watching the fifth game in the series – *them Yankees are gonna win today. Then we'll see how smug the kid is.* He grinned as he fingered the \$3,000 tickets in his jacket pocket his friend had scalped for him, thinking maybe it would be worth the money after all. He was thirty miles past the halfway point when the call came.

No amount of argument could sway Phillips. “The new task force is meeting today. Too bad it's your day off. Be here before ten. We need your input.” Stan called his ex as he sped back to the city, assuring her he was only cancelling lunch, not the game. He would not disappoint his kids again – he couldn't. After listening to the expected tirade for thirty seconds or so, he swore, “I'll be there,” and flipped the lid down on the phone. The day fell apart in a hurry along with the case and within two weeks Stan was again the lone wolf piecing vague clues together until his path ran full-circle right back to the mystery book store in a bizarre twist of fate.

A KILLER'S ESSENCE appears slow-paced but packs in a powerful wallop as it vacillates between hard-boiled crime fighting, a love of baseball and a need to repair broken relationships. Detective Green is a believable character, down on his luck with little going for him but his job. Still he meanders through life, balancing all facets, and comes out on top in this chilling page-turner tuned to whet the appetite of the most avid crime lover. Well written and well paced.

Reviewer Lois Wilmoth-Bennett, PhD is a former psychologist turned editor and writer, author of *Beyond Forever: Experiences from Past Lives*, written under the pseudonym of Taylor Shaye, and *Deadly Visions* (Amazon Kindle). Her non-fiction book, *Essays On Living with Alzheimer's Disease: The First Twelve Months* was released in 2010. After a lengthy professional career in Ohio, she now lives in Central Florida near her two daughters. Her son, Gregory Wilmoth, still lives in Ohio.