



Erasing Memory

Scott Thornley

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A remarkable Canadian crime debut and the newest addition to our acclaimed World of Crime series.

MacNeice, a senior police detective in the southern Ontario industrial city of Dundurn, is returning from a pilgrimage to his wife's grave when he's called to a crime scene of singular and disturbing beauty. A young woman in evening dress lies gracefully posed on the floor of a pristine summer cottage so that the finger of one hand regularly interrupts the needle arm of a phonograph playing the Schubert Piano Trio. The only visible mark on her is the bruise under her chin, which MacNeice recognizes: it is the mark that distinguishes dedicated violinists, the same mark that once graced his wife. The murder is both ingenious and horrific, and soon entangles MacNeice and his team in Eastern Europe's ancient grievances, which reach out to breach all the walls that have been thrown up to keep the past at bay.

MacNeice must use his splendid but unorthodox powers of observation to stem the tide of events threatening to erase any trace of memory or history, leaving the target of the crime naked in the face of loss.

Erasing Memory Details

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Author : Scott Thornley

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From Reader Review Erasing Memory for online ebook

Heather says

This was a wonderful example of a "who done it" mystery. Although the minute the perpetrator was introduced I knew who it was. Don't worry, I do not read too many mysteries that I don't figure out who the perpetrator is before the author tells you. The complexities and descriptions that Scott Thornley provides proves to be a compelling & hard to put down book. This book kept me up well into the night reading and enjoying it.

If you like mysteries with a touch of side plots then I recommend this book highly.

Philip says

I read this book as part of my reading mystery novels by Canadian authors project and I was not too disappointed by it. The plot is a bit bizarre and it's kind of difficult to accept the apparent motive(s) but I found it very good reading. I was a bit disappointed about a couple of things, though. I really enjoy novels set in locations that I recognize such as Eric Wright's and Robert Rotenberg's Toronto, Claude Bouchard's Montreal or Howard Engel's St. Catherines (Grantham) where the location actually becomes part of the story but I think Erasing Memory could have been set in many other locations other than Dundurn(Hamilton) without affecting the story too much. And, as in many crime novels, one ending, while probably expected, is a bit unsatisfying as, again, no arrest and no perpetrator is brought to justice. Then comes a rather unbelievable epilogue with another unsatisfactory ending. Like how did we end up in California?? However I absolutely love McNiece and all his detectives. For once we have GOOD cops, in every sense of the word!

I would have rated this 5 stars except for those two minor disappointments. Looking forward to The Ambitious City!

Lis says

Well done-- first book in a series taking place in Hamilton, ON. Unusual murder method and a good cast of characters.

Alyson says

I guess I'll be reading more crime fiction! Not usually my thing, but I quite enjoyed this first in a series. In MacNeice Thornley has created a sexy detective with ultra keen powers of observation and diverse interests outside of his job. Was fun to read and place familiar settings and names and nicely surprising how far afield the the story reached. Great characters in the good guys and bad guys, the right amount of blood and guts, a satisfying plot and sensual detail throughout. But mostly I want to know more about that man, MacNeice. I think I have a crush! Looking forward to the next mystery!

Donna says

This was a murder mystery with a really different method of committing the crime.

There was a lot going on involving a local crime that ended up having European ties. The lead investigator, MacNiece, is an interesting character and I look forward to reading the other books in this series.

I found this book on the House of Anansi website.

Sunshyne says

Good book, great characters I enjoyed their quirks. A good police procedural book. There was nothing that stood out other than the characters from ant other who did it books, Who did it was no surprise.

Amanda says

Until this, I had never read a book for the reason I read this one. I picked up this book solely because of its location. It's set in a fictional town that's actually Hamilton, Ontario, and one of my husbands is from there and since a book is much cheaper than a plane ticket I decided to read this until I can visit his hometown.

For knowing only the location of this book before reading it, I was up for anything. It ended up being a pretty great mystery that had a really unique case at the center of it. The writing was good but not great. This was his first novel and for that it's pretty great but the editor in me saw some awkward sentences that could have been improved. That's pretty nit-picky though, isn't it?

The character development of MacNeice, the detective, was excellent. He has recently lost his wife to cancer and his inner dialogue of how he misses her was heartbreakingly beautiful. The small details of how they would drink espresso together, their vacation memories, her side of the bed, all of it was very well written and made even my cold heart warm up a little.

There's a sequel, THE AMBITIOUS CITY, that I also have a copy of and I will start that one soon. As far as I know, this is all he's written but if anyone else has any book suggestions that take place in Hamilton, Ontario, shoot them my way!

Monnie says

My honest thought as I finished this book? Thank goodness I got my hands on it before relations between the United States and Canada started to go you-know-where in a handbasket. That's because, I'm delighted to report, I've found a new series to love.

Well, sort of new; apparently, it was first published in 2011, so I'm not sure why it hasn't made it across the border till now. I am quite certain, though, that I want to read more about "Mac" MacNeice (oddly, I don't recall seeing a first name), a senior police detective in the fictitious Dundurn, Ontario. Apparently, there are three more books to be released between now and November, so there's plenty to look forward to.

I really love MacNeice, who is still grieving the loss of his beloved wife. Oh, there are hints of a possible personal connection with his co-worker Fiza Aziz - herself an interesting person in that she's a Muslim with a doctoral degree - but nothing serious developed by the end of this book. Is it a thriller? Not really; I'd characterize it as a basic police procedural (albeit with a unique method of murder), and for the record, that's my favorite kind of book.

As he returns from visiting his wife's grave, MacNeice gets a call to a murder that took place in a remote beach house. For more than one reason the woman can't be readily identified, but a bruise under her chin tells MacNeice that she was a violinist - as was his late wife. The rather horrific way she was killed doesn't help much in the clue department, so the motive remains a mystery as well.

But with input from the unusually perceptive MacNeice and investigative work by Fiza and other very capable (and likable) co-workers, the woman is finally identified; she'd recently graduated from a conservatory and apparently was headed toward a career as a professional musician. She had a wealthy businessman for a father, giving rise to the possibility that her murder may have been intended as some kind of message to him. But then, another body turns up - and connections between the two murders begin to take shape, as does the investigation itself. As much as anything, I enjoyed the character development and interactions; there are a few plot twists and life-threatening situations that keep the intrigue going, but at the same time I finished the book with a full set of intact fingernails.

In short, this was a joy to read (and thanks to the publisher, via NetGalley, for the opportunity to read and review an advance copy). Now if I could just get my hands on the next one, hint, hint...

Julie says

This was an enjoyable police procedural, Canadian-style. We meet Detective Superintendent MacNeice of the Dundurn (a thinly-disguised version of Hamilton, ON) police force, for the first time, along with his team of detectives. It's pleasant, for a change, to step away from the typically hard-boiled detective that usually appears in such novels. MacNeice is decent, a little bit flawed, and very likeable. (He's the kind of detective we'd like to meet if we ever needed one!)

I didn't find this to be especially mysterious, or thrilling -- as the jacket promises -- but that's not a huge condemnation, in this instance. Although the dialogue is sometimes awkward, even stilted, the narrative flows well and keeps you engaged. I look forward to meeting MacNeice again in future novels.

Lisa says

I got an ARC from NetGallery for this book, which is supposed to publish in June 2018, but I see various other sources that say it's already published internationally. It's a police procedural with likable, believable characters, including the protagonist, Detective Superintendent MacNeice. The plot involves the death of a young violinist in a most unusual way. For the most part, I enjoyed the book and its small twists and turns, but the last chapter left me very unsatisfied. No spoilers here, but the book got wrapped up in too neat a bow for my tastes, and I have to think I won't be the only reader to feel this way. Overall, I'd recommend *Erasing Memory* if you enjoy police crime stories. My ARC had the first chapter of the book to follow this one, "The Ambitious City," and I do think I'd like to read it based on this first MacNeice book.

Christine says

This book would be number two on my "2011 Favorites So Far" list.

"Mac" MacNeice is a homicide detective in Dundurn, Ontario (which bears a striking resemblance to Hamilton, Ontario where the author grew up). Driving home from visiting his wife's grave he picks up a police call about a girl murdered in a remote cottage on the lake. Mac's investigation leads us through an interesting suspect pool involving Eastern Europeans still reeling from the fall of Soviet Union.

The story in itself was very good, but I especially liked the characters that Mr. Thornley has given us. Mac is a complex man with interests so far removed from his job that he cannot help but be a little unique. I liked the Southern Ontario setting, as it was fun to try and guess the locations in the book, and that definitely added to my personal enjoyment. Although the plots are not similar I enjoyed this book for much the same reasons as I enjoyed *The Calling* by Inger Ash Wolfe. If you also enjoyed *The Calling* then this first time author is a must read.

Elaine says

Liked that it is set in Ontario. Interesting characters with backstories and quirks. Will look for more. More about the journey than the "whodunit". That was not a surprise.

Jennifer says

MacNeice is a senior police detective in the city of Dundurn, a fictional city in Southern Ontario. While returning one evening from visiting his wife's grave, he is called to a crime scene. A beautiful young woman who has just graduated from Conservatory, is found dead in a luxurious lake cottage. The crime scene is pristine and the girl has no identification with her. MacNeice and his team have their work cut out for them finding a suspect and a motive. When they find out the girl's father is a former Romanian microbiologist and investigation turns international and gets really messy.

This is a great beginning to a new series. MacNeice is a top-notch detective with a definite soft-spot. The

death of his wife has left him a bit of an emotional mess and I think the author did a really good job of portraying that aspect of him. He has a couple of great characters on his team, Aziz and Verestri, who all work together brilliantly and offset each other's strengths and weaknesses. I found the storyline fascinating. The manner of death in particular got my attention because of its uniqueness, and I just couldn't stop until I knew how this had come about and who was responsible. The international intrigue that is brought in through the Romanian connection really amped up the drama of the story. There are fistfights and gunfights and car chases for those who like thrills with their mysteries. I would definitely recommend this book for mystery and thrill lovers.

Richard says

Intense! I received this book free from the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for a fair and honest review. Written by Scott Thornley, and published by House of Anansi Press, Random House/Penguin Canada in 2018, the book was originally copyrighted by the author in 2011. The title seems appropriate to the story. Detective Superintendent MacNeice serves in the fictional Southern Ontario port city of *Dundurn*. Story-Dundurn is an industrial city located not too far from Toronto and Buffalo, and on one of the *Great Lakes*.. The *real* Dundurn, however, is a small village located in central Saskatchewan, and is far from being industrial, or a port city. The fictional city of Dundurn seems to be closely modeled after Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

We are never told MacNeice's first name, which I thought was a clever stratagem by the author. The story begins with the horrific murder of a beautiful and gifted young violinist who has just graduated from the *Conservatory of Music*. She has a rewarding future ahead of her, and no enemies in the world. Could her murder be a message to somebody else—another member of her family, perhaps? MacNeice and his team of dedicated detectives are relentless in their search to find out. Another murdered body is found, and it is determined that the two murders are related. Detective Inspectors Fiza Aziz, a Muslim and a female with a PhD, and Michael Vertesi, of Italian descent and proud of it, are joined later in the case by Detective Inspector Montile Williams, a black man, and Detective Swetsky, of Polish descent, but whose exact rank we are never told. These members of the team all hold MacNeice in high regard, and they all work well together as a tightly-knit group to solve the case.

Author Thornley develops the plot smoothly, and the action is relatively constant. Throughout the story, more and more of what probably happened is revealed to the reader in a skillful manner. I found almost all of the dialogue to be credible for Southern Ontario in the modern era. The author pays attention to character development, too. There is enough, but not too much, detail about the detectives and their lives and families to convince us that they are real people, and not just caricatures. There is sufficient detail to convince us that Dundurn might be a real place in Ontario, Canada, although the author might want to consider using a real city, such as Hamilton, instead of a make-believe city, for future novels. Other authors are able to use fictional characters in fictional stories set in real places quite successfully. Michael Connelly and John Sandford come to mind.

I did find a couple of inconsistencies. Perhaps they were because an author not from Canada was trying to write a police procedural set in Canada. Good editing and a bit of research could solve these kinds of problems, I believe. One thing that struck me as odd was the author's assertion that MacNeice often took off his shoes when sitting in his office cubicle on a raised floor under which ran "... power, Internet and phone cables ..." MacNeice could then "...feel it vibrating gently with the constant hum of words and images

being transmitted to and from the unit." Dramatic, but not realistic! Those are electrons flowing through those cables. They travel at the speed of light. They don't vibrate. And even if they did, no human could sense such high-frequency vibrations. I found this at Location #460 in the Kindle edition of the book.

At Location #841: "Bookner moved the throttle forward to glide into the area where he'd sighted the body . . ." and Vertesi hits his head on the edge of the wheelhouse roof because of the sudden deceleration. The problem with that is that the throttle on such a boat would be moved *backward*, and not forward, to slow the boat.

At Location #1919, Detective Superintendent MacNeice becomes Superintendent Detective MacNeice—his title is backwards. Good editing would have caught this error. At Location #2557, MacNeice says that "We've all got pagers . . ." They don't, but they all have cell phones. In a couple of places in the book, we are told that MacNeice carries a revolver in his police car glove compartment, and sometimes on his belt. Then, at Location #2952, we are told that one of the detectives has "a forty-four on my hip." Again, not likely. Almost all police departments in North America have switched from revolvers to semi-automatic pistols. Although the RCMP (Mounties) have standardized on the 9mm Glock or Sig Sauer semi-automatic pistol, there is no forced standardization for local and provincial police. Most of them, however, have adopted the 9mm or the .45ACP round as the one that is issued to officers. Dirty Harry movies notwithstanding, it is extremely unlikely that a police officer or detective anywhere in Canada would be allowed to carry a handgun as powerful as a "forty-four."

All in all, this is a good story, and it is well-written. I like this author, and I intend to read more of the MacNeice series of novels which, I believe, now numbers three. You will probably not get bored reading this story, and you might have difficulty putting it down. I know I did. If you like police procedurals, and if you don't mind the fact that this one is set in Canada, then I highly recommend this book. All five stars are awarded. I really enjoyed this one.

Scott Thornley says

Someone once told me, when I was a kid, 'don't underestimate your dreams'--of course at the time I had no idea what to do with the information--dreams came and went.

I've realized, after writing *Erasing Memory*, that listening to dreams and in my case writing them down, means a lot more than I ever thought possible.

Erasing Memory was inspired by 6 or 7 months of dreams. Those included in the first novel are as they occurred. I am now convinced that dreamstates are partners to waking creativestates. *Erasing Memory* is a triple entendre--and one helluva ride.
