

The footsteps were in the upstairs hallway now. They stopped outside the bedroom door. Oh God, he must've heard me come in here.

The knob rattled. Then there were a couple of loud thumps and the lock broke and the door burst open.

Oh no!

A match flared. A big man in a snow-covered coat and cap, somebody I'd never seen before, stepped through the doorway holding the match high. I knew he could see me by the bed.

No!

He kept coming.

Closer.

Closer . . . ●

**THE JURY BOX (Cont. from p. 42)** As Angela is recovering, the neurologist is murdered, and the clues point to the surgeon who saved her life. The story is powerfully emotional and intense, but retains Viets' signature wit.

\*\*\*\* Anne Perry, *Treachery at Lancaster Gate*, Ballantine, \$28.00. Thomas Pitt is called to investigate when a bomb goes off in a derelict building where the police had been called in to foil an opium sale. The five police caught in the blast are either killed or seriously injured. Was this a case of political anarchists or a targeted revenge killing for police corruption? When Pitt, heading the newly formed Special Branch, begins investigating, it places him in conflict with the regular police wanting to avoid charges of corruption, and politicians concerned for a Chinese trade deal. There's very little mystery, as we know fairly early who set off the bomb. But Perry's brilliant portrayal of Victorian England, and the depth with which she explores moral and political tensions, make this a highly engaging addition to her series.

\*\*\*\* Alice Arisugawa, *The Moai Island Puzzle*, Locked Room International, \$19.99. The author's dedication to becoming the literary successor to Ellery Queen helped make him a leader of the New Orthodox (*shin honkaku*) movement in Japanese detective fiction, and the first presi-

dent of the Honkaku Mystery Writers Club of Japan. *The Moai Island Puzzle*, originally published in Japanese in 1989, tells of three members of a university mystery club who spend a vacation on an island near Okinawa known for its Easter Island-styled statues. As the characters search for a hidden cache of diamonds, they encounter various puzzles (including a locked-room murder and a dying message). The dialogue is peppered with commentary on the nature and history of detective fiction and references to mystery writers of the past. The story is told in an energetic style, and the gradual denouement is brilliant.

\*\*\*\* Alan Bradley, *Thrice the Brinded Cat Hath Mew'd*, Delacorte Press, \$26.00. Twelve-year-old Flavia de Luce—with equal parts Pippi Longstocking and Bertie Wooster—is back in England after a one-novel exile in Canada (in last year's *As Chimney Sweepers Come to Dust*). The young detective is sent on an errand to the home of a woodcutter, only to find him dead, trussed upside down on his door. I found the plot, involving the legacy of an author of children's nonsense poetry, hard to follow for a good portion of the book, but the story is carried by Flavia's lonely but whimsically wise narrative until the pieces of the plot come together for a satisfying, albeit tragic, ending. (Cont. p. 170)

THE JURY BOX: Steve Steinbock