

The Gonif: An Amos Parisman Mystery

Andy Weinberger

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With noir pacing, a laid-back sensibility, and a touch of humor, the newest book in Andy Weinberger's Amos Parisman detective series, the cozy mystery novel *The Gonif* finds the elderly detective navigating a crime impacting the Jewish community of Los Angeles.

In this entry, a rich woman hires Amos after a thief breaks into a local synagogue, hoping to steal a Torah rescued from North Africa during the Holocaust. Amos sets out to discover who knows that the scroll is in Los Angeles and who has designs on it. Then, a security guard is killed during the second failed robbery attempt; later, the Torah is stolen from the rabbi by armed men. Amos now needs to figure out who's behind the crime and get the Torah back.

Working with a younger, bolder assistant investigator, Amos—a fan of the Los Angeles-based classic detective stories that his work mirrors—takes advantage of a wide network of connections as he tries to solve the case, connecting with local police and a suspect's possible love interest and receiving insider tips about a possible international crime syndicate's involvement. "You live here long enough," he says, "you get to know the neighborhood. That's just how it is. Nothing magical about it." Meanwhile, in his personal life, he juggles making sure his ailing wife, Loretta, receives the care she needs, trying to keep his aging body going, and making time for a good deli lunch when possible.

The Gonif is a breezy mystery novel in which a quirky older detective's hunches about people and their motivations, willingness to skirt the rules, and ability to get suspects talking all prove critical to solving a crime—and learning why the culprits took such great risks.

JEFF FLEISCHER (November / December 2024)

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