

# The Jekyl Island Club

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## Amazon.com Review

From its incorporation in 1886 to the early years of World War II, Georgia's Jekyl Island played host to the Jekyl Island Club, where members controlled an obscene portion of the world's wealth and the fortunes and fates of men and nations were routinely won and lost. Brent Monahan, who is more commonly associated with vampires (1993's *The Book of Common Dread* and 1995's *The Blood of the Covenant*) and spirits (1997's *The Bell Witch: An American Haunting*), uses it as the site of an 1899 crime. Monahan pits Sheriff John Le Brun against none other than J.P. Morgan, as the former attempts to solve the murder of a club member and the latter attempts to dismiss the crime, for personal reasons, as the work of a local poacher. That Morgan is a man of enormous influence is obvious. That Le Brun is a man with powers of his own is demonstrated when a chess match he's playing is interrupted by an errant bustle and a rematch is logically proposed.

"No need," Le Brun said, groaning softly as he bent low from his chair to retrieve fallen pieces. "It was pawn to king four, pawn to king four." He began placing the chessmen on the board. "Knight to king's bishop three, knight to queen's bishop three. Bishop to knight five, pawn to queen's rook three. Bishop to rook four, knight to bishop three. Knight to bishop three, pawn to queen three. Then pawn to queen four and pawn to queen's knight four. Your move."

As it becomes abundantly clear that Le Brun is as far from being a rube in sheriff's clothing as Jay Gould is from standing in a soup line, Morgan parries and Le Brun thrusts amidst a shifting stream of adversaries and allies. These include newspaper tycoon Joseph Pulitzer, Judge Iley Tidewell and his son, Le Brun's chief deputy Warfield Tidewell, assorted robber barons and titans of industry, and any number of duplicitous, nefarious, and dangerously armed factota. In the end, Monahan has crafted in *The Jekyl Island Club* a well-plotted and richly peopled period whodunit that rises, with an almost imperceptible pitch, to a place where lovers of mystery long to

travel but rarely seem to go. --Michael Hudson --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly

A swank Southern resort for the nation's elite at the turn of the last century forms the evocative backdrop for this first mystery by horror writer Monahan (*The Book of Common Dread*). Prominent names like Morgan, Vanderbilt, Gould and Pulitzer gather on Jekyll Island off the coast of Georgia to be pampered in opulent seclusion. When one of the club members, Erastus Springer, is shot dead in an apparent hunting accident, the powerful close ranks. The timing of this and a subsequent stabbing death is unfortunate, as President McKinley is due to visit the island to debate the country's plans to acquire colonies. The local cop with the hard job of solving the crimes and soothing the monster egos is Sheriff John Le Brun. Possessed of a sharp mind, Le Brun isn't the bumpkin the wealthy take him for. He never really attempts to smooth the moneyed feathers. In fact, he has his own personal (and financial) reasons for stirring things up. Monahan has a deft touch with the foibles of the period; he works hard at capturing the voices of the resort's black servants, and carefully details the mechanics of practicing medicine in 1899. Instead of providing a plethora of suspects, however, he chooses to develop the personalities of the real-life tycoons—which are interesting but not plot sustaining. The mixed result is a mystery rich in social history, but poor in narrative drive. (June)

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