

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

The Biddle name is synonymous with Philadelphia. Historians divide the family into two branches: “The Romantics” and “The Solids”. Cordelia Frances Biddle is from “The Romantic” line and is a direct descendent of Nicholas Biddle, president of the Second Bank of the United States. Nicholas also edited *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*. Biddles married into numerous prominent families over the centuries: the Drexels, the Lees of Virginia, and the duPonts to name a few. Anthony Drexel (the author’s great-great-grandfather) established Drexel University; his niece, Katharine Drexel, was made a saint in the Roman Catholic Church for her humanitarian efforts.

Before becoming a novelist, Cordelia was an actress in New York, having the great good fortune to work for award-winning director Jerry Zaks, and appear in a recurring role on the daytime drama *One Life to Live*. She has contributed to *Hemispheres*, *Town and Country* and *W*. Her website is www.CordeliaFrancesBiddle.com

Or, contact Jessica Rotondi at St. Martin’s/Minotaur for additional information

Jessica Rotondi

St. Martin's/Minotaur Publicity

Tel: 646-307-5564

Fax: 212-674-3387

Jessica.Rotondi@stmartins.com

THE MARTHA BEALE SERIES

SYNOPSIS OF *Deception’s Daughter*

When the daughter of one of Philadelphia's finest families disappears, Martha Beale—the fiercely independent society lady first introduced in *The Conjuror*—once more joins forces with her secret beau, Thomas Kelman, to track the heiress. Returning to the streets of 19th century Philadelphia, *Deception’s Daughter* brings the city to life with vibrant detail: from the outlying Blockley House for the homeless, with its thin walls and hungry inhabitants, to the odor-laden “bawdy house” of Madam Kat, to the elegantly furnished drawing rooms (and bedrooms) of the wealthy. It is into this multi-layered world that the players are thrust, where the economic crisis plaguing the nation forms the backdrop to personal dramas caused by a missing daughter, mismatched marriages and desires that transcend class.

Deception’s Daughter

A Thomas Dunne Book for St. Martin’s Minotaur

ISBN-13: 978-0-312-35247-9

ISBN-10: 0-312-35247-6

SYNOPSIS OF *The Conjuror*

Intrigue, passion and murder surround the suspicious disappearance of famed Philadelphia financier, Lemuel Beale, in the winter of 1842. Joining forces with Thomas Kelman, a man whose business is homicide investigation, Beale’s daughter, Martha, embarks upon a romantic attachment as the pair uncovers sinister connections between the city’s most affluent and its most destitute: an escaped inmate from the infamous Eastern State Penitentiary; the freed African-American prisoner, Ruth; the ritual slayings of young female prostitutes; and Eusapio Paladino, the renowned conjurer who claims to communicate with the dead.

The Conjuror

A Thomas Dunne Book for St. Martin's Minotaur

Hardbound

ISBN-13: 978-0-312-35246-2

ISBN-10: 0-312-35246-8

Trade Paperback

ISBN-13: 978-0-312-38338-1

ISBN-10: 0-312-38338-X

PRAISE FOR THE MARTHA BEALE SERIES

"...a feast for those fans who enjoy engaging characters and historical periods... will attract readers who loved Caleb Carr's attention to detail in *The Alienist* and Jacqueline Winspeare's appealing sleuth, Maisie Dobbs." **Library Journal**

"... Biddle, from one of Philadelphia's old Main Line families, knows her manners and her city, and shows both to great advantage... The reader, as in all good historical mysteries, learns as much about a time and place as about the crime, and Biddle's characters, from above and below stairs, are fresh and believable. I hope she continues the series." **Cleveland Plain Dealer**

"Leisurely pacing, numerous, well-integrated details of place and time, and appealing central characters make for a satisfying historical mystery." **Booklist**

"A first-rate mystery featuring rich period authenticity and beguiling characters, *The Conjuror* succeeds on all levels—as top-flight historical fiction, and as a classic whodunnit. Biddle's voice is uniquely suited to pre-Civil-War Philadelphia. This one goes on my keeper shelf!" **Julia Spencer-Fleming**, author of *All Mortal Flesh*

"... an intricately orchestrated narrative that implicates the Brahmin class and the corruption that comes with their absolute power. Biddle wonderfully evokes the color and culture of the time."
Publishers Weekly

"Masterful storytelling. Deception's Daughter transports readers to 1842—complete with sights, sounds and a narrative that rings true to period." **Rhys Bowen**, author of *In Dublin's Fair City*

"...appealing characters... a wealth of intriguing period detail" **Kirkus Reviews**

"Biddle successfully uses 19th-century Philadelphia, mining the landscape for the kinds of jewels that illuminate a good mystery, and shaping characters that ring true to the elements of their creation. *The Conjuror* is a worthy inclusion in the genre, and I hope there are many more Martha Beale mysteries to come." **The Philadelphia Inquirer**

"Biddle has done more than devise an engaging story populated by memorable characters. She has managed somehow to visit the past—and to restore to us an earlier Philadelphia, intact and alive." **Jon Clinch**, author of *Finn*

"Readers who value atmosphere and setting will find this book fascinating, and its picture of the status of women in all classes of society is enough to make a feminist of almost anybody. As social history, it's a great success." **Gumshoe Review**

The Conjuror was an IMBA Bestseller

Other Books by Cordelia Frances Biddle

Beneath the Wind, an historical novel exploring the dark secrets of the Gilded Age. (Simon Schuster 1993)

The Crossword Mystery Series, written with her husband, Steve Zettler, under the nom de plume, Nero Blanc. All published by Berkley Prime Crime, Penguin U.S.A.

The Crossword Murder

Two Down

The Crossword Connection

A Crossword to Die For

Corpus de Crossword

A Crossworder's Holiday

Anatomy of a Crossword

Wrapped up in Crosswords

Another Word for Murder

A Crossworder's Gift

Death on the Diagonal

A Crossworder's Delight

Caring For Your Cherished Possessions, a guide to antiques and their maintenance (written with Mary Kerney Levenstein, Crown Publishers, 1989)