

A missing teen and damn fine dogs

BOUND, by Antonya Nelson.
Bloomsbury, 231 pp., \$25.

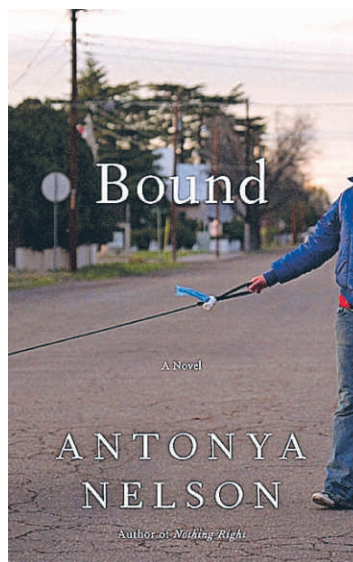
BY MARION WINIK
Special to Newsday

'Bound" has a riveting opening sequence: Misty Mueller accidentally drives off a cliff and breaks her neck. Her dog, only slightly wounded, finally gives up and leaves her bleeding mistress. The car sits there, its warning chime ping-pong away, the audio book of "Heart of Darkness" booming into the wilderness. Weeks go by before poachers find the car and Misty's 15-year-old daughter, Cattie, gets the news at boarding school. And because Cattie runs away, it will be a while before she learns that her mother left a will entrusting her care to an old high school friend. Cattie has never met the Catherine for whom she is named and to whom she's been bequeathed.

Her guardian-to-be, Catherine, is the childless third wife of a 69-year-old Wichita entrepreneur. She has no idea any of this has happened and



PHOTO BY MARION EITTLINGER



Antonya
Nelson,
author of
"Bound"

with dignity. Oliver, who ruminates on love as he cheats on Catherine with yet another younger woman, is surprisingly hard to hate. So are his crazy ex-wives, YaYa and Leslie, one a manic diva, the other an earnest spa director. And everyone in this book has a damn

almost doesn't find out, as the lawyer's letter is delivered to her mother's nursing home, where it molds for a while. Getting a brand-new teenage daughter was not on her agenda, nor that of her husband, Oliver. Well, since Cattie's disappeared, they can't get her very fast anyway, and the tension of the narrative slackens a bit, based on the expectations created by the

opening chapter.

Although this is Nelson's fourth novel, she is better known for her stories, which appear in *The New Yorker*, *Esquire* and annual award anthologies. As with the stories, the best thing about "Bound" is its characters. Catherine's mother, a dour professor who has been silenced by a stroke, bears the frustration of her situation

fine dog. But with the BTK serial killer lurking in the background — he was on the loose in Wichita during Nelson's childhood and resurfaced in 2004, when the novel takes place — you keep expecting more to happen than ever does. "Bound" starts out like it was written by Anita Shreve and ends up more like Lorrie Moore. Good ingredients, quirky recipe.

All eyes on Southampton

VOYEUR, by Daniel Judson.
Minotaur Books, 262 pp.,
\$24.99

BY ED SIEGEL
Special to Newsday

'Voyeur" has all the makings of a good cable movie: an intriguing idea, a strong plot, a sharp central character and a photogenic setting — the Hamptons. Southampton, in particular, is where our man Remer has been living after suffering a near-literal case of burnout as a private detective. While working a case, he was kidnapped and the word "voyeur" was seared into his chest.

That has to hurt. What hurts even more is that after opening a liquor store in Southampton, he falls in love with Mia, an employee who, during a tempestuous romance, steals 80 grand from him and heads for the hills. Fast-forward a few years and Mama of Mia comes knocking on his door asking him to find her. She'll

return the money her daughter stole if successful. Still carrying the flame, and egged on by a policewoman who also wants to find Mia, Remer goes for it. Adding to the intrigue: Mom says Mia is plotting to kill her.

Obsessive love, matricide, sex and violence in Southampton. We're there, particularly when it turns out that it's hard to tell who's scamming whom. Unfortunately, Judson can't keep it going. Halfway through, the plot stops building on itself when the convolutions get tiresome and hard to follow.

Worse, Judson's narrative reads more like a screenplay than a novel. As long as he sticks to basic prose, he's fine, but, whenever he reaches for something extra, you wish he hadn't: "Smith's grip is, of course, fast and firm. He has blue eyes that seek out Remer's with a directness bordering on assertion." Italicized comments about Remer's thought processes are equally clunky: "*Sorrow — real sorrow — is best kept hidden.*" Judson would have done

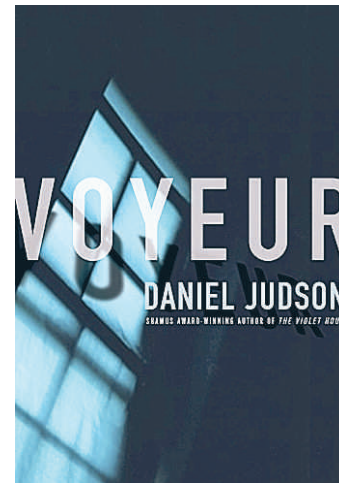


PHOTO BY TRACY DEER-MIREK

Daniel Judson

better directing his purple prose at trying to make the Hamptons come alive during the Christmas season in which it takes place. As it is, "Voyeur" could be set in Colorado or Oregon without too much trouble.

Still, Remer's an interesting character, even if Judson doesn't go deep into his psyche. He's a modern-day version of the sheriff who hangs up his guns before it's



too late, only to be lured back for another rush of adrenaline. Will he, or anyone connected to the case, get out alive?

It might have made a decent Long Island beach read next summer. But you're probably better off waiting for the USA or Lifetime movie, if one gets made. Judson won a Shamus award for a previous L.I. crime novel, "The Violet Hour," but there's little cause for celebration with "Voyeur."

this week

Readings & events on LI



"Paranormal" authors
Diane Hill, Joseph Flammer

Wednesday

"Paranormal Adventurers" **Joseph Flammer** and **Diane Hill**, authors of "Long Island's Most Haunted Cemeteries" (Schiffer Publishing), discuss pirates and shipwrecks of Long Island. Tickets \$18, reservations suggested. At 7 p.m., *Ward Melville Heritage Organization Educational and Cultural Center, Stony Brook Village Center, Main Street, Stony Brook; 631-689-5888, wmho.org*

Saturday

"Beverly Hills, 90210" and "Charmed" star **Shannen Doherty** signs copies of "Badass: A Hard-Earned Guide to Living Life with Style and (the Right) Attitude" (Clarkson Potter). At 2 p.m., *Borders, 1260 Old Country Rd., Westbury; 516-683-8700*



Newsday staffer **Jerry Zezima** reads from his self-published humor collection, "Leave It to Boomer: A Look at Life, Love and Parenthood by the Very Model of the Modern Middle-Age Man." At 3 p.m., *Borders, 2130 Nesconset Hwy., Stony Brook; 631-979-0500*

"Howard Stern Show" producer and *Uniondale native Gary Dell'Abate* signs copies of his memoir, "*They Call Me Baba Booye*" (Spiegel & Grau). At 7 p.m., *Book Revue, 313 New York Ave., Huntington; 631-271-1442, bookrevenue.com*



PHOTO BY DAVID S. RUBIN