

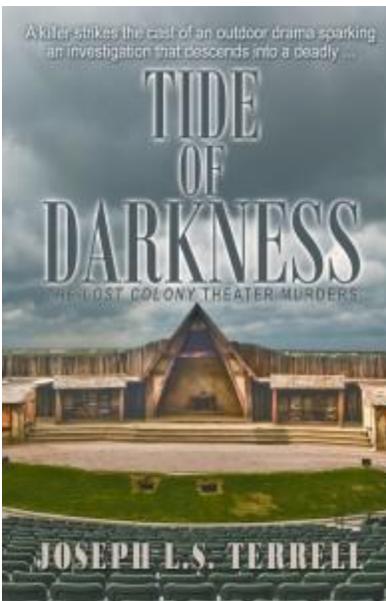
## Book Review: *The Tide of Darkness* by Joseph L.S. Terrell



### *Sun on My Face, Sand in My Shoes, Blood on My Hands*

On a particularly rainy weekend recently, I happily spent time at some friends' old family home 30 miles from the center of Nowhere, NC, near the coast. No cell service, no WiFi. Plenty of wine, good conversation, excellent friends, and the chance to read without interruption.

I was, however, tempted away from my bliss by a literary carrot: a trip to the independent bookstore, Downtown Books, in Manteo on Roanoke Island, just one bridge from the Outer Banks. There, on the shelf reserved for local authors, was exactly what I had been looking for.



Joseph L. S. Terrell's *Tide of Darkness – The Lost Colony Theater Murders*, was the perfect prelude to the beach season. I wasn't familiar with the author, but he was local, the book was set in Manteo and the Outer Banks, and it was a murder mystery with true crime overtones. I've long had seeing "The Lost Colony" on my to-do list, and as far as I was concerned, this book had everything I wanted.

My reward was a knock-down, small town, tightly constructed murder mystery complete with wind, sand, surf and a true sense of both suspense and place. The fact that the story is related to a still-unsolved murder that had happened July 1967 catapulted its standing on my Reading List Intrigue-O-Meter.

Harrison Weaver is tired. Tired of deadlines. Tired of writing about death. Tired of loss. A newspaperman-turned-true-crime-writer, "Weav" decides to relocate to the Outer Banks, where sun, surf and fishing guarantee the opportunity to de-stress, deal with the loss of his wife and move forward. The minute he checks into his hotel, though, he finds himself face-to-face with a murder case that is a gruesome déjà vu of the one he had covered there four years earlier: a female cast member of the well-known seasonal outdoor drama "The Lost Colony" has been found strangled and dumped in the water.

Drawn into the investigation by his friend, Thomas Ballsford "Balls" Twiddy, Weav struggles with his desire to see this case through and the need to settle into a quiet beach life with his bass fiddle and parakeet, Janey. Sooner than later, things turn ugly and someone in town wants to eliminate Weav.

Terrell, once a true crime writer himself, skillfully sets up a variety of reasonable suspects. The prosecuting attorney backhandedly accuses Weav of committing the murder to prop up his faltering writing career. A young deputy spreads a rumor that Weav knows more about the case than people think. A show-off father and son seem a little too interested in the investigation. The theater's maintenance man was friendly with both of the murdered girls. The play's fight

choreographer, who was last a part of the ensemble the year of the previous murder, is belligerent and uncooperative.

Harrowing experiences and the smallest clues building upon each other make this a well-crafted roller coaster ride. As a bonus, Terrell's love and respect for the Outer Banks is evident on every page, the rejuvenating soft breezes and surf sounds offering the chance to exhale between actions.

"I needed to breathe in the softness of the warm air that came off the water ... I had become so attuned once again to the ocean and it had become such a part of everything about life here, that I made listening for its sound part of my day. If I stopped and stood still, no matter where I was, it seemed to me that I could hear the waves breaking on the sand, the whisper and the surge, and sometimes the angry crash of the surf, churning white or muddy and green with sand and seaweed."

If you love our North Carolina beaches, you'll feel at home in this book. If you've not experienced even OBX, you'll want to go. You'll also want to see "The Lost Colony." Great for an "anytime" read and perfect as a beach read, *Tide of Darkness* is a true treasure. – *Jeanne E. Fredriksen*

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*Tide of Darkness – The Lost Colony Theater Murders* by Joseph L.S. Terrell. BellaRosa Books: Rock Hill, SC. 226 pages. 2010. This review appeared in *The Rolesville Buzz* newspaper.