



Gypsy

J. Robert Janes

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It is 1943 and the international safe-cracker Gypsy is at work in Paris, millions of francs in diamonds destined for the Third Reich have been stolen. It is left to the unlikely team of Jean-Louis St-Cyr of the Surete and Hermann Kohler of the Gestapo to track him down. From the author of *Sandman*, *Stonekiller* and *Dollmaker*.

Gypsy Details

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Author : J. Robert Janes

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Cerisaye says

I enjoyed this book in the St-Cyr and Kohler series more than the last few I've read, mostly because the two detectives get to work together this time, and their relationship has always been one of the best aspects of these novels. The other is the brilliant way Janes has of putting you into Occupied France and the hearts & minds of his characters, though his writing technique can be confusing and disorienting until you adapt to its rhythms.

It goes without saying those of a sensitive nature should stay clear of these books. This one, for e.g. has a horrifically graphic account of a back street abortion. Female characters, as always, can be problematic, and relations between men and women very much reflect the attitudes and mores of the times, not ours. Some might feel uncomfortable, too, with the way this book talks about Gypsies.

As usual with Janes' books, the plot is complex and can be difficult to follow, with so many characters and complicated goings on between them. The way Janes brings out conflict between the different power groups of the Reich working in France, the Gestapo, SS and Wehrmacht, and their dealings with local police and the French Gestapo, is another highlight of St-Cyr & Kohler.

Our two detectives, Jean-Louis of the Sûreté and Hermann of the Gestapo, as ever find themselves assigned to investigate a case of common crime against a background of mass murder and war crime committed by the Occupiers in France, Germany and throughout Europe. Involvement of the women in their lives with forces of the Resistance, and the pair's shared anti-Nazi views, make their continued survival somewhat doubtful. How they work together to get to the bottom of the case and outwit their opponents is what makes these books so enjoyable, even if you don't always fully comprehend exactly what's going on! I love the way Hermann 'talks' to Jean-Louis even when he isn't there with him, how Jean-Louis 'talks' to murder victims as part of his crime solving process, and how they make such a marvelous team despite being on opposite sites, though Jean-Louis chides Hermann for his lack of knowledge of French literature.

It is now January 1943 (I think) and the tide of war has begun to turn against the Germans. The Resistance has become more bold, and Berlin interfering more in what goes on in France. An SS minder has been assigned to Kohler, to keep an eye on things, since the higher-ups question his loyalty. Advisably since all Kohler wants by now is to escape to Spain with his two women and become a simple farmer. Meanwhile, Jean-Louis has his own complicated romance with a chanteuse whose fame extends throughout the Axis- she reminds me a little of Wilie in Fassbinder's *Lili Marleen* (1981)- and the attentions of a woman they are investigating. Tobacco is in very short supply and Hermann pops Messersmitt Benzedrine to keep going. As usual, their next case is introduced right at the end of this one.

I have really warmed to this series as I have progressed through the books, in order. Janes is an acquired taste but his writing rewards patience and perseverance. Recommended for those whose interest lies more in human nature and period atmosphere than the details of crime. A television adaptation would be wonderful.
