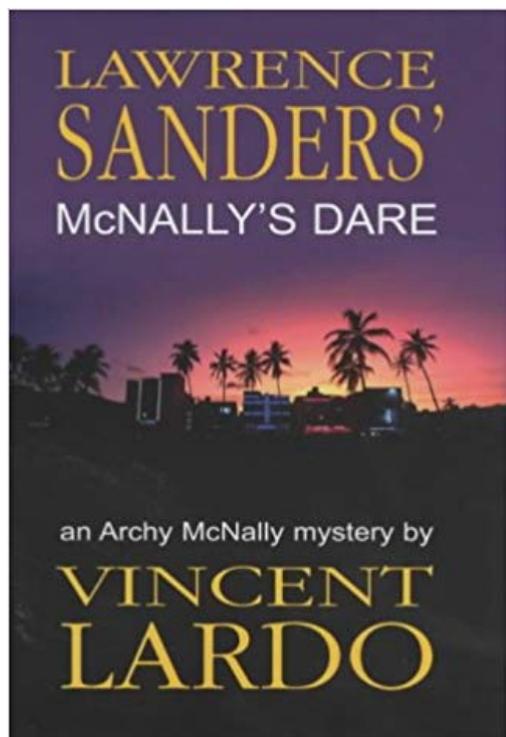


## Lawrence Sanders' McNally's Dare (Archy McNally S.) by Vincent Lardo



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**Author:** Vincent Lardo

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## Reviews of the Lawrence Sanders' McNally's Dare (Archy McNally S.) by Vincent Lardo

Agantrius

The dowager duchess of Palm Beach dies, leaving behind a fabulous fortune and a handsome young heir-though Archy McNally has his doubts about the boy's bona fides. — When a young waiter working Malcolm "Nifty" MacNiff's annual Tennis Everyone! benefit is found dead in Nifty's otherwise pristine swimming pool, it's Archy McNally, South Florida's most famous Discreet Inquirer, who rushes in to salvage the town's reputation and solve the un-fortunate crime. Palm Beach is already in a tizzy over the arrival of its newest millionaire, Lance Talbot, just in from Switzerland to claim his inheritance after the demise of his grandmother. There are those who

believe Lance an imposter, and who he is-and was-becomes more of an enigma as Archy traces Lance's progress from the snowy Alps to the sands of Palm Beach. If he isn't the true heir, who is he? And who is the alluring Baroness Holga von Brecht, who is old enough to be his mother but claims to be his lover? When an old school chum of Holga's is made redundant, Archy must make some daring choices to snare a double murderer. "A madman thinks he has the perfect crime. He has done it before and no one has stopped him. He can do it again, or can he? Very good book. A real page turner". Worth the time.

Netlandinhabitant

I have read all the Archy books and as I have mentioned in another Sanders review, really enjoy this authors use of English. His character building and tight style makes his books a joy to read. I am now getting through the Commandment series, Also well worth a read but it is of concern that at the rate that I am consuming these books - there will one day be a void; that will be a sad day.

Darkshaper

This was the best one yet in the Archy McNally series. I had been concerned when the original author died and his estate agreed that Vincent Lardo would continue the series, but this IS the BEST! The plot is well woven and I couldn't guess the end (man, I hate when that happens!); the characters continue to be well developed, and unlike in many series, they are not stagnant, but evolve and relationships change. Can't say enough good things about this enjoyable read!

GAZANIK

Lawrence Sanders was the king for sure, in writing these novels. However, Vincent Lardo has done an admirable job keeping the series alive. A different writing style, for sure, but still great reads.

IGOT

Typical Archie book but an easy fun read.

Vozilkree

Few writers are as insightful about how an inquisitive mind works while managing to entertain and amuse you. Too bad he's gone.

Ytli

Vincent Lardo was definitely gilding his wings in DARE (# 12 in the series), and they glided mighty fine, glowing in heady sunlight. He appeared to be attempting what I was saying (in my previous review of McNally's ALIBI, # 11) I wanted to avoid; yet he held my interest and maintained entertainment satisfaction. By first honoring (through at least 3 Archy novels, DILLEMA, FOLLY, and CHANCE) and honestly imitating the spirit and style which Sanders had begun, Lardo had (to me) more than earned the right to veer off Sander's patterns and ploys with this series. I had been concerned that I wouldn't be able to stay with Lardo if he did that too soon or too dramatically. He clearly dared to veer, here, and I was impressed.

At first, the TENNIS EVERYONE! gala in the opening chapter felt like GATSBY redone in an Archy slant, exposing the ennui and utter superficiality of the repetitively empty, "grand" doings of the very wealthy, accompanied by the utter terror of not being invited, by those aspiring to remain in good standing in the social strata of Palm Beach.

Do I have a natural interest in social class issues? The truth? Not really. People are what they are. I am what I am. I've proudly earned everything I have, and have no desire to cling to anyone's skirts, especially not if they're of designer quality, with the resultant price tag. Wouldn't want to seem (seam?) unseemly. I'm okay (for now) with the comfy "rags" I wear and wear, until the holes become too obvious or too breezy.

Yet, Lardo made this social climber scene interesting to me. As a coup of a bonus to that, he designed the situation into a light literary artistry, without the drama descending into depressing drudgery.

I was surprised to realize I had immediately become curious about who Jeff Rodgers and Lance Talbot were and how they were connected. Ironically, considering the outcome (in a complexly satisfying ending), I wanted to know who the real Lance Talbot was, and what his story was, as contrasted the real Jeff Rodgers. I realized that Lardo might be making a statement of disdain of class pretension's chilling abuse to the "less fortunate" young people serving the Palm Beach "snobs," but whatever.

The more I read in this novel, the more it felt very different from any of the previous 11 novels in the series (see my Listmania and reviews). It almost felt to me as if it had been written in a geographic location very potent to the author, though not in Palm Beach. Its atmosphere felt like the Hamptons, as that area has been described by those who live there (thank you again, "HeyJudy," Top 1000 Amazon Reviewer, for insights on your home grounds) or have visited, and especially as described in Cleo Coyle's latest coffeehouse mystery, MURDER MOST FROTHY (See my Listmania and review). In that novel this special area was vividly described, not merely as a cultural phenomenon but as having an unusually ethereal feel in the sunlight and climate. The way Coyle described it made me think of a sort of heaven on earth. Strange.

Yet, the exclusivity of the tremendous heights of wealth of both old and new money in the Hamptons, as described by many authors who have used that area as a location for a novel, seems to have somehow diminished the prime or pristine physical atmosphere. On the other hand, in the cold light of reality, might the exclusivity have also preserved something of value in that ethereal glow? I truly don't know. Cocoons are necessary for caterpillars to metamorphose into butterflies.

I may never have the opportunity to actually step foot into any of The Hamptons, but I feel as though I have, through reading McNally's DARE (with the preparation of MURDER MOST FROTHY). Yet, (I kept reminding myself) the novel's plot took place in Palm Beach. Did Vincent Lardo somehow transfer the atmosphere of his Hamptons home to his plot in DARE? Did he write the plot while living so solidly and joyfully in the Hamptons that he unintentionally transposed one geography onto the other?

Whatever happened, I enjoyed the privilege of Lardo's Transportation Device.

Final last words are that I'm still trying to understand, more precisely, how/why DARE felt so different in so many ways from the previous 11 novels. It's like a third Archy rose out of the ashes of the first and second versions (Sanders' then Lardo's). Archy has 2 new cozy cohorts, Georgy and Denny, and his relationships with his regulars have changed (especially with his father); he received (it seemed to me) more teasing and more flack, and he etched out more underlying respect. To me, it felt like a 37-year-old man was just stepping into an early, youthful manhood. It felt like he was stepping into the Palm Beach social arena, for the first time seeing it, feeling the potency of the open doors of high echelon money, fame, and status, which had always been open to him, but, he hadn't understood the import of the position to which his father and grandfather had contributed their strongest talent and clearest blood.

Of course I felt the parallel to the situations of the two authors of this series as well.

Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis?

As it appears,

Linda Shelnett

Good book. Good story. Good writing. What more is needed?

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