



A Deadly Shade of Gold

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When Travis McGee discovers a face from his past lying in a pool of blood on a cheap motel room floor, he wants answers. But so far, all he has are questions--plus the dubious inheritance of his friend's vengeance-driven girlfriend, and a valuable ancient Aztec golden idol. Part rebel, part philosopher, and every inch his own man, Travis McGee plunges into a wild and perilous trek for a killer that takes him from the Lauderdale beaches to the seething corruption of American expatriates in a distant Mexican town, to the lush high life of the California jet set.

A Deadly Shade of Gold Details

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From Reader Review A Deadly Shade of Gold for online ebook

Kid says

I'm kinda reviewing the whole series here. . .

So what's the deal with Travis McGee? I don't even know how to begin without sounding like an asshole or revealing some serious masculinity issues. . .

But shall we? Shall I dare say that Travis McGee is a kind of "man's man"? The best of these were written in the early to late 60s when the literal and popular landscape of this country was going through some radical changes (as if that isn't always happening but whatevs). How does a dude on the fringes of a culture ruled by cynicism, cheap sex and self-destruction manage to survive? Why by living on a BOAT in the Florida Keys OF COURSE. As a bachelor. With a compromised yet enlightened view about ecology, sex, work and righteousness and a penchant for getting into some crazy ass scrapes with some really bad dudes (and babes). He is NOT a detective. Can we get that STRAIGHT? Brother is a SALVAGE CONSULTANT. He will get your shit for you that you lost by being a total asshole for half the value of whatever it is. Maybe you socked away like 50K by being a prostitute and now your pimp wants you dead? Trav will probably hook you up. But in the meantime he's gotta rant articulately about the state of corporate America or the real estate nightmare that is southern Florida. Brother also has this genius friend named Meyer who also lives on a boat and is an accountant. He knows a ton about numbers. He keeps his emo's in check. He's the yin to Trav's yang. It's all good with the dudes. They play chess and just hang the f' out drinking GIN.

One thing that's tough for Trav but maybe convenient in the grand landscape of this series? All the ladies he falls in love with end up dead. So then he needs to get some revenge and he also is unattached so the series continued until John D. MacDonald croaked.

Yes - this may seem like some clubhouse, "No Gurlz Alloud" style nonsense but I have a number of woman pals who also swear by Trav and read all of these things and get bummed when they run out. There's only about 20 of them so pace yourself. Life is too short though. . .this one is my favorite. It's a tour de force in the Travis McGee mode.

Cathy DuPont says

In this, my third read of ~~~Cathy's swooning over~~~Travis McGee~~~Cathy's sighing over Travis McGee~~~ok, I admit it, there is no other like Travis McGee in my little black book.

I'm reading much more carefully than ever before in part because of the ongoing discussion of Travis on D. R. Martin's blog, Travis McGee & Me when specific questions and discussion come about.

Travis McGee, Salvage Consultant

In my opinion, Travis though JDM, of course, is more philosophical in this book than any other book thus far on my third reading. I happen to enjoy, relish probably more accurate, Travis' musings on life.

There were a number of thoughtful observations that Travis made in Gold but this one was, I think, my favorite which I could have shortened but wanted the reader to get the entire reasoning behind Travis' remarks:

She took me into a study which was also a trophy room. African game. Some very good heads. Leopard, lion, buffalo. There was a case of fine weapons behind glass. There were framed photographs of her, younger, slimmer, just as vital, standing by the dead elephant, rhino, great ape. "My guns," she said. "My dear dead animals. I took my sainted husband on safari five years running, thinking it would turn him into enough man for me. He killed like an accountant signing a ledger. He bent over a bush to pick a flower for me and a snake struck him in the throat. He was dead before he could fall to the ground. If it was permitted, I would have his head in here, mounted like the others. " Then later, "You might be enough man for me."

Travis speaking in the first person, "I do not like the killers, and the killing bravely and well crap. I do not like the bully boys, the Teddy Roosevelts, the Hemingways, the Ruarks. They are merely slightly more sophisticated version of the New Jersey file clerks who swarm into the Adirondacks in the fall, in red cap, beard stubble and taut hero's grin, talking out of the side of their mouths, exuding fumes of bourbon, come to slay the ferocious white tail deer. It is the search for balls. A man should have his shot at something, a shining running something, and see it come a-tumbled down, all mucus and steaming blood stench and gouted excrement, the eyes going dull the final muscle spasms. And if he is, in all parts and purposes, a man, he will file that away as a part of his process of growth and life and eventual death. And if he is perpetually, hopelessly a boy, he will just to go do it again, with a bigger beast."

And later "There is one thing which strikes me as passing strange. Never have I met a man who had the infantry memories, who had knocked down human meat and seen it fall, who ever had any stomach for shooting living things." Then later...speaking of another character in the book..."He would need no romantic fantasies about himself. His manhood would need no artificial reinforcing."

If a reader does not like JDM's writing, doesn't like Travis McGee, that's fine with me. However, the following authors have made many extraordinary comments about John D. MacDonald's writing and looking over the list, I would be hard pressed to say they don't know what they're talking about or they have terrible taste in the written word:

Ian Fleming
Mary Higgins Clark
Sue Grafton
Pete Hamill
Carl Hiaasen
Stephen King
Dean Koontz
Rex Stout
Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
Joseph Wambaugh.

Greg says

The stars, McGee, look down on a world where thousands of 4-H kids are raising prize cattle and sheep. The

Green Bay Packers, of their own volition, join in the Lord's Prayer before a game. Many good and gentle people have fallen in love this night. At this moment, thousands of women are in labor with the fruit of good marriage. Thousands of kids sleep the deep sleep that comes from the long practice hours of competitive swimming and tennis. Good men have died today, leaving hearts sick with loss. In quiet rooms young girls are writing poems. People are laughing together, in safe places.

You have been on the underside of the world, McGee, but there is a top side too, where there is wonder, innocence, trust, love and gentleness. You made the decision, boy. You live down here, where the animals are, so stay with it.

My least favorite so far in the series. Probably the most amount of rantings against 20th Century Consumerist Culture so far though.

1. This spoiler is about any of the previous novels in the series (view spoiler)
2. Possibly the most condensed ending of any of the books in the series so far. Which is kind of weird since it's about twice as long.
3. Confused about why this book was almost twice as long. I'm not sure if MacDonald just really liked the Nora character, or couldn't get himself to pull the trigger and start getting down to the meat of the story.
4. Still quite good. The lower rating is just to put this in perspective for me in the future so I know which ones I liked better than others. Because I forget things. A lot.

I motioned him back and had him get himself a shot glass. I filled it from my bottle. I held my glass up and said, "Drink to me, my friend. Drink to this poisonous bag of meat named McGee. And drink to little broken blondes, and a dead black dog, and a knife in the back of a woman, and a knife in the throat of a friend. Drink to a burned foot, and death at sea, and stinking prisons and obscene gold idols. Drink to loveless love, stolen money and a power of attorney, mi amigo. Drink to lust and crime and terror, the three unholy ultimates, and drink to all the problems which have no solution in this world, and at best a dubious one in the next."

He beamed without comprehension, and said, "Salud!". We drank and bowed and I filled the glasses again.

Tony says

A DEADLY SHADE OF GOLD. (1965). John D. MacDonald. ***.

Most of the Travis McGee novels by MacDonald that I have read incorporate relatively straight-forward plots along with philosophical asides by Travis. In this novel, however, you need graph paper along side your reading chair to keep track of where the plot is going. It's as if in Genesis, the first chapter in the Bible, the narrator who was writing all the 'begats,' stopped after each issue and started to tell of the life of the subject begotten. Once having figured out where the plot line really goes, the story becomes more typical of a Travis McGee dilemma. A friend of Travis's gives him a call one evening. His friend, Sam Taggart, hasn't been around for about three years – ever since he had broken up with his girlfriend. Taggart tells Travis on the phone that he needs help, but also discusses the possibility that he might be able to see his old girlfriend

(Nora Gardino) to see if things could be patched up. They agree to meet the next day, Travis agreeing to bring his es along. When they got there, they found Taggart dead; someone had murdered him rather messily using a knife. McGee learns that his old pal had gotten mixed up with a group of men who had stolen a batch of pre-Columbian art from a wealthy collector. He, in turn, had stolen them from the original thieves, and they wanted their loot back. The only clue McGee had was the only piece of sculpture that his friend had with him that he had shown to McGee before he was killed. Supposedly, there were twenty-eight of these various pieces, all covered with gold plating. Now we set McGee off on a search for the missing pieces and the crew who now had them. His search leads him to a variety of information sources who help him pinpoint potential next steps. The search leads him to Mexico, where he ferrets out the original collector, who is surrounded by a batch of guards and other men who have infiltrated his organization. They are no match for McGee, however, and the bodies begin to fall. This is a reasonably good thriller, but is diluted with too many side plots and diversions. It is not typical of the fine-tuning MacDonald usually gave to his plots.

Carla Remy says

Far better than The Quick Red Fox. The mystery worked. Still I got a bit bored. I've read a bit much of Travis McGee in too short a time. I don't, for the record, think he's sexist. Yes, it's a male fantasy of having women willingly want you. But this book is from 1965, and it is what it is and doesn't bother me. That said, I'm bored of him sleeping with different women in every book. I just need a little space.

Charles Adkinson says

I almost wanted to give this five stars. I would have to say it's my favorite McGee so far. It begins with a murder and has the customary fantastic escalating climax followed by the slow denouement that ends up plopping McGee right back where he began on the Busted Flush, but in between there was a fair amount of intrigue, suspense, emotional devastation, romance, and one scene in particular that had me racing through it just to see how it turned out. I had to keep reminding myself he wasn't going to die because of course there are still sixteen more sequels, but the situations he finds himself in are still wrought with tension. I just love the way McGee goes about his hard-boiled detective-ness. He sure knows how to bust out the phonies.

Bobby Underwood says

"I hoped she was taken dead so quickly she was given no micro-second of the terrible reality of knowing she was ended."

If ever there existed a book within a series which makes you realize as a reader that the series is something really special, this is it. You realize as you read A Deadly Shade of Gold that the Travis McGee series is more than the sum of its parts, and better than almost any other series in the genre ever written. This is the entry where you can visibly see on paper, and almost tangibly feel in your bones the series transforming from something very good, into something for the ages, worthy of being placed in a time capsule for generations hundreds of years from now to discover.

“She loved her tropic sea and it had killed her dead, in the hot blazing days of August.”

All John D. MacDonald had promised in the very good Deep Blue Good-bye was delivered on in this fifth book in the famous Travis McGee series. The lengthiest entry of the entire series is involving, insightful, violent, and yet resonating. It preceded Bright Orange For the Shroud and Darker Than Amber, making it the finest three-book stretch of the series until decades later, when we got Free Fall in Crimson, Cinnamon Skin, and the final Travis McGee, The Lonely Silver Rain.

I’m going to use a lot of quotes this time around, but I’m not really spoiling anything for anyone, because frankly, you can pretty much find something quote-worthy every two or three pages. And the story is so complex, so full of characters and motivations, there really isn’t a spoiler attached. As I mentioned, this is MacDonald taking the series to new heights, and it’s a stunningly good read. The body count is incredibly high here, yet the narrative is so rich and resonating, so filled with insight, it masks just how much life is lost in this one. McGee does actually take a body count as he lays wounded near the end of the book, and reaches ten. But the dying isn’t over yet.

A Deadly Shade of Gold is one of the Mexico stories, which seemed an extension of Florida, and McGee. Nothing was lost by taking McGee out of his Ft. Lauderdale environment in the Mexico entries. He’s in New York for a spell, and Los Angeles, but you can feel rural Mexico in this one:

“At sea level the heat was moist, full of a smell of garbage and flowers, and a faint salty flavor of the sea.”

“Unpaved streets of mud and dust, some clumsy churches, a public square with a small sagging bandstand, naked children, somnolent dogs, snatches of loud music from small cantinas, scores of small weathered stalls, squatting street vendors, ancient rickety trucks, a massive, pervasive almost overpowering stench composed of a rare mixture of mud flats, dead fish, greasy cooking and outdoor plumbing.”

Author Carl Hiaasen, in praising the series — as do a slew of writers which, were I to list them all, male and female, would read like a who’s who of great writers — talks about MacDonald’s ability to capture Florida perfectly, in all it’s racy sense of promise, breath-grabbing beauty, and languid sleaze. MacDonald does the same with Mexico. That may in fact be why the books where part of the narrative is set in Mexico, seem so natural. Mexico seems in fact, in this series, to be an extension of Florida, with much of the same atmosphere, including MacDonald’s disdain for its spoilage by greed and corruption.

There is also a lot about Cuba in this book, which like Mexico, has a strong connection with McGee’s Florida. McGee’s friend Raoul tries to explain just how it was in Cuba under Batista, and how it didn’t get better with Castro:

“You are not such a great fool as to try to fight such power, neither do you get too close to a power which has a silent and secret side, sudden disappearances, quiet confiscations. What you do, you give him and the ones close to him no opening. How do businessmen survive under Salazar, Franco, any of them? I am not being an apologist for my class. Perhaps we should have done something sooner, before the communistas came in with their perversions of freedom.”

Later, when Raoul puts McGee into contact with Dominguez, McGee inquires whether Dominguez knows some of the wealthy Cubans who made it out, and gets this response:

“I used to know them well. Just as Raoul used to know them well. Upper class Havana was a small community, McGee. But now there is...a considerable financial difference between us. Raoul and I came out

later. It is the Castro equation, my friend. The later you left, the cleaner you were plucked. So we no longer travel in the same circles."

To know Florida, as MacDonald did, was to know both Mexico and Cuba, and there is a deep, rich resonance to all that happens in this narrative centered on those two countries. Mexico and Cuba loom large over McGee's quest for justice for his friend Sam Taggart's murder. McGee is doing it mostly for Nora, but also for some gold artifacts which led to Sam's ugly death in a lonely hotel room:

"When a man with a hundred dollar car gets killed in a four dollar cabin, the pros are not going to get particularly agitated."

But love dies hard, and the chance of reconciliation between Sam and Nora has McGee heading to New York, with Nora in tow, because this isn't just his quest to unravel what happened, but hers as well:

"I cannot describe the look on her face then, a hunting look, a merciless look, a look of dreadful anticipation. It reminded me that the worst thing the Indians could do to their enemy prisoners was turn them over to the women."

But there is danger, and deception, which bothers Nora. And there is a very dangerous man from the old Cuban regime living high on the hog in Mexico. McGee and Nora get close, and in a marvelously tense and exciting portion of the narrative, McGee sneaks into the compound at night, is attacked by a dog, and moves stealthily in the darkness to discover what's been happening. There he meets the beautiful little Almah, with whom Sam was in love. McGee's plan is to fool her into spilling the beans, and toward that end, he needs to frighten her:

"I wanted her to feel death so close she could smell the shroud and the dank earth."

But even when he's accomplished what he needed to, there is a sickening feeling that the cost was too great:

"Her glance moved swiftly away again, reminding me of the way a spiritless dog cringes when inviting a caress."

"As I started up I told myself that something would have broken her sooner or later. She would have come up against something that couldn't be cajoled or seduced. The ones with no give, the ones with the clear little porcelain hearts shatter. And in shattering, some splinters are lost, so that when, with great care, they are mended, the little fracture lines show. But when you break a pretty thing, even if it is a cheap pretty thing, something does go out of the world. Something died in that clearing. And she would never fit together as well again."

All the while McGee moves closer to discovering what happened, he moves closer to Nora as well. He soon realizes that through actions aboard a boat, goaded into killing under false pretenses, Sam, at least the Sam both he and Nora knew, died long before he returned to Florida with the stolen artifact. And then, something terrible, beyond McGee's control, and beyond the acceptable risk they were taking occurs, changing everything for McGee. As good as the story has been up to that point — and it's stellar — it then gets better. Yes, it appears to meander a bit as McGee tries to drown his sorrows, but once Raoul puts McGee in touch with Dominguez, the story gets grittier, weirder, and more violent, with McGee desperately attempting to keep at bay his depression at all that's happened, and all that's been lost:

"There can be a sort of emotional exhaustion compounding of finding no good answers to anything. Too

much had faded away, and the only target left was a grotesque pornographer with a voice like a trapped bee, and he seemed peripheral to the whole thing.”

But he may not be as peripheral as McGee first thought, and there is some unexpected violence to this one, which echoes all the way back to Cuba. The ending is not violent at all, but kind and resonating, as McGee plays guardian angel so at least one good thing can come out of Sam Taggart’s death.

Rich, colorful, incredibly involving and satisfying, *A Deadly Shade of Gold* is the kind of read that is marvelous on its own, and foreshadows the even deeper and more mature resonance of the last few books in the series. Meyer is only at the beginning of the narrative in this one, but will soon become an integral part of the series, taking on a larger role as McGee’s confidant, and sometimes conscience. At over 400 pages, there is a lot here for a McGee novel, but the ride, and the ending, make it all worth the reader’s time. A marvelous achievement within the series, and a book which set the bar higher for not only this series, but this genre. Highly recommended.

“For Superman it’s easy. For Mike Hammer it’s easy. But real people wander around in the foggy foggy dew, and never get to understand anything completely, themselves included.”

Maggie K says

ok, I really did find this book sexist... I give it a bit of a break because it was written in the '60s, but every single woman was either manipulative and petty, or headed for McGee's bed. He 'slept' with so many women in this book, it was like a James Bond novel.

I would have loved this book otherwise. McGee is a little off kilter due to his personal stake in this mystery, and the fact that it shows adds to the emotional punch of the piece. It is almost depressing in its stark portrayal of human greed and cruelty, which makes the nice moments shine so much better.

Lyn says

Batman and Robin sit in the Bat Cave and discuss John D. MacDonald’s 1965 Travis McGee novel *A Deadly Shade of Gold*.

POW!

Robin: Holy Aztec gold, Batman! This book was the bees knees.

Batman: That’s right Boy Wonder, Mac has a way – of putting words – together. And the 60s is such a great – time – to tell such a tale.

Robin: He gets a call from an old friend and then WHAM! They find him in a seedy Fort Lauderdale motel room – DEAD!

Batman: We've come a long way from the Prime Minister's exploding cake. Or have we?

Robin: Um, not sure what that has to do with the book, you did read it right Batman? We're talking about where Travis goes to Mexico to solve the mystery of who killed his friend and to find ancient gold.

Batman: Of course, but there's also a lot of drinking, where McGee feels remorse for his shooting and violence. But you wouldn't know about that. Not you, Robin. They have strict licensing laws in this country. A boy of your age is not allowed in a drinking tavern.

Robin: Right ... But the book also features lots of great quotes from MacDonald, though this was an action series BAM! POW! He interjected some astute observations about western civilization. McGee was a very worldly guy. An especially good protagonist for the 60s.

Batman: The true crimefighter always carries everything he needs in his utility belt, Robin.

Robin: OK, Adam, CUT!, I think we need to start over, you seem to be lost in a loop of some of your most campy quotes and we're supposed to be talking about a Travis McGee book!

Batman: That's one trouble with dual identities, Robin. Dual responsibilities.

Kemper says

Read again on 7/8/09. I've started going back through the Travis McGee books off and on in-order since last winter. I still enjoyed the first few, and was amazed at how McGee's cynical '60s worldview was still applicable to 2009. Since it's been so long, I've forgotten a lot of the plots and supporting characters so the books are new to me again in some ways, but it's weird how some lines or scenes were still very clear to me. A Deadly Shade of Gold has actually been the one that impressed me the most so far with its plot of McGee running a scam to avenge a friend, but of course, ending up with a lot of physical injuries and emotional regrets.

MacDonald's portrayals of women seem very dated and even hysterical at times. Kind of like Mad Men without the irony. And McGee takes himself far too seriously. But these are still first rate crime stories, and MacDonald was way ahead of his time in some ways. McGee brooded about things like consumerism, privacy concerns (in an era where computer databases were just starting), and the ecological damage being done to Florida in the name of 'progress'. I think a lot of crime fans may not realize how influential MacDonald and McGee were on the modern mystery novel, and it's been interesting reading them from the perspective of 40 years after they were written.

Gary says

At a point in this text, I happened to wonder if I knew what would happen, and I got it right. Still, just as in genres said to be more literary, the pleasures to be found were in characterization and thought, rather than in plot. The pleasures and the psychological perceptions were not mine, but they were great.

Gracie says

I am a huge fan of the Travis McGee series, and this is one of my favorites. Trav is everything a detective hero should be: cunning, rakish, good with his hands, prone to deep thought and susceptible to love with the wrong kind of ladies. These books were mostly written in the 1960s so some of the plot lines are pretty retro, but the plots and action stand up today!

Jeff Yoak says

This novel has two relatively self-contained stories in it -- one in Mexico and one in Los Angeles. I liked the first a lot more than the second. The second is a little too... real. McGee runs around doing dangerous things. I find I want him to get away with it unscathed, and it catches up with him a bit here.

A shining moment is that Meyer appears for the first time in this novel. He is first mentioned in the last one, and makes a relatively trivial appearance in this one. I remember from my previous readings that he will eventually be one of my favorite characters.

Greg says

"Reasonable conservatism is a healthy thing...but poisonous divisionist hatemongering is the heart of contemporary propaganda, amigo, to strengthen ignorant terrible men who believe themselves to be perfect patriots...any way that they can make Americans hate Americans helps..." writes MacDonald. In 1965, no less!

What's great?

At 400+ pages, this is epic MacDonald/McGee with epic stage sets on which epic, stupendous action sequences occur. I'm reading this McGee series in order, and as far as plot, thrills, and sex go, this one is the best of the five. Four stars for this very good thriller, with a number of plot twists I didn't see coming at all. What's not so great?

I believe I have already answered this question. I don't read this author, or this series, for politics. True, the above quote is fitting within the context in which it occurs, but still, I think it's out of place within this novel. Why, if I want good, solid, reliable, balanced news reporting, I'll watch Fox News of course! So, one star for an out-of-place soapbox political speech (which, though I must add, is oddly relevant today anyway, so let's make it two stars for relevancy.)

In summary, four stars for an epic McGee thriller, two stars for needless (but oddly relevant politics 50+ years after the fact) for a 3-star average rating. McGee has gotta be one of the best characters in all of American fiction with which one would want to have a beer, and a guy no doubt you would want on your side should you find yourself embroiled in that ever-popular 1960s debate; Stones vs Beatles, who was the best. (But it's like comparing rocks and apples, really.) On to more McGee for me! A new favorite comfort read, along with Dame Agatha and M.C. Beaton, who has a new, third series! (But don't worry, Hamish, there is only one place in my heart for a small-town Scottish detective....but I digress, as usual.)

Christopher Troy says

A masterpiece of American crime fiction and a remarkable piece of mid-Twentieth Century literature.

Kurt says

This is one of the best paced and plotted crime novels I've ever read. I found it even more satisfying than the first in the series. Many fans have expressed disappointment at the length -- almost double that of its predecessors -- but I enjoyed the further development of McGee's background and his lengthier-than-usual observations of society. It's amazing how relevant most of this is today, although it was penned 45 years ago.

Dave says

"A Deadly Shade of Gold" is the fifth installment of this amazing series and it is a terrific thriller of a novel from cover to cover. At over four hundred pages, it is one of the longer McGee novels, but well worth the time it takes to read. It is filled with adventure, intrigue, romance, social commentary, and some of the best and most in-depth characterizations you will read anywhere. One of the things that really stands out about Macdonald's McGee series is that somehow he captures the substance of people and is able to convey it in his lengthy detailed descriptions. This novel takes McGee on some journeys, mainly away from his beloved sea. He starts in Florida, heads to deep Mexico, and ends up in Tinsel Town. There is almost never any let up in the tension though.

Here, McGee is after revenge and after some treasure that has been misappropriated and he goes through an entire range of emotions from shock and anger and so on and actually does things that are quite shocking and cruel in his quest to get the bottom of the mystery. This is not merely a novel about McGee working on commission to get someone's money back from bad folks, but McGee trying to avenge a friend -Sam Taggart- and he is emotionally attached to this quest and to Sam's long-lost love Nora, who tags along with McGee to adventures and dangers she could barely have imagined when she set out on this quest. One of the more striking things about the McGee novels is that it is about a man who muses about society and his place in it. He lives on a houseboat, doesn't exactly work a regular job, and is quite cynical about the institutions and people he encounters and about what their motives are. The social commentary he engages in does not feel dated or past its time even now.

Lee says

Another great addition in the McGee series. When someone that's need his help, with the understanding of a 50-50 split, if it goes as planned, to the suspense and intrigue that follow. I have to say in his 5th adventure, there was a higher body count then in the past stories, and they were all hard on our hero. I always enjoy McGee's philosophy on how/why the outcome will turnout for the characters involved...including himself. With the wonderful atmosphere of being sent back to the mid '60's, this series has aged gracefully.

Debbie Zapata says

Number five in the Travis McGee series but only the second one I have read. This is a darker, more violent book than The Deep Blue Good-by, with plenty of explosions and surprises for everyone from the Cuban bad guys to the Cuban good guys.

An old friend shows up needing help, but gets killed before he can really explain to Travis what has gone wrong. In his quest to get answers, McGee travels to Mexico and California, meeting beautiful women and ugly men along the way.

I checked this out at the library while I was in Arizona, and there was only one title more available (review coming right up!) so I guess I am done with Travis McGee for awhile unless I treat myself to an online shopping spree one of these days or see him in the used book sale shelves the next time I go to Arizona.

Darwin8u says

The only thing in the world worth a damn is the strange, touching, pathetic, awesome nobility of the individual human spirit.

- John D. MacDonald, A Deadly Shade of Gold

John D MacDonald presents a combination of James Dickey's prose with Ian Fleming's narrative flourish. With John D. MacDonald, however, you are also likely to find weird paragraphs sprinkled into the novel that deal with economics, politics, love, lust, the John Birch Society, and the ethics of hunting.

Reading MacDonald is like having a surprisingly lucid conversation with a drunk economics professor who you recently discovered just killed a man with his golf club. You can't pull away from the conversation and aren't quite sure if the story is going to continue, or if he is going to explore a tangent more appropriate for an economics class or his therapist. His brain is amazing and his stories definitely titillate on several levels at once.
