

# Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

Issue: April 15, 2014

★ **Koko Takes a Holiday.**

Shea, Kieran (Author)

Jun 2014. 336 p. Titan, paperback, \$14.95. (9781781168608).

Set five centuries into the future, this debut novel begins in a resort complex called The Sixty Islands, where elite brothel owner Koko Martstellar narrowly escapes an assassination attempt. Fleeing to the orbital community known as the Second Free Zone, Koko is astonished to learn that her old friend, Portia Delacompte, is behind the assassination. And while Koko is trying to figure that out, Portia is trying to figure out something just as baffling: Why did she ordered the death of her friend (her memories concerning the hired hit seem to have vanished). This futuristic wild ride starts out quickly and doesn't really slow down until it's over. You would think such a breakneck pace wouldn't leave much time for character development, but you'd be wrong; Shea skillfully weaves characterization into dialogue and into the thoughts and actions of the people in the novel. The use of the present tense certainly helps make the story feel urgent and immediate, too: we get caught up in Koko's predicament and are carried along with her as she desperately tries to keep herself alive until she can track down her would-be assassin. Great fun and a fine introduction to an author with a distinctive. Expect more from Shea, perhaps in multiple genres.

— *David Pitt*