

## **CRIME BOOKS**

### MARGARET CANNON

**The Hamlet Murders, by David Rotenberg, McArthur & Company, 215 pages, \$24.95**

This is the fourth in the excellent series featuring Shanghai Detective Zhong Fong, and it's every bit as good as the previous three. Rotenberg has a real talent for characterization and place, taking readers right into the urban heart of Shanghai, with its 18 million people and conflicts between tradition and modernization.

Zhong is called to investigate the death of a man at the Shanghai Theatre Academy. The corpse turns out to be the director of the theatre, Geoffrey Hyland, who is also Zhong's late wife's lover. The cause of death appears to be suicide, but is it?

There is a subplot in which Zhong's cheap communist rental apartment becomes a very expensive condo. Can he find a way to buy and move into the capitalist paradise?

Rotenberg is an acting teacher; he knows a lot of the backstage lore of theatre, and brings it to bear fruitfully on the plot.