

# Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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**★ Mr. Peanut.**

Ross, Adam (Author)

Jun 2010. 350 p. Knopf, hardcover, \$25.95. (9780307270702).

In this powerful first novel, which has garnered plenty of prepub buzz, Ross delivers one scorching scene after another showing the dark side of marriage. David and Alice Pepin have been married for 13 years, and despite the fact that David continually declares that he has been in love with Alice ever since he first spotted her in a film class on Alfred Hitchcock, he is continually imagining her death via airplane crashes, carjackings, burglaries gone bad, shark attacks, and “convenient acts of God.” After a particularly stressful period in their marriage, brought on by Alice’s multiple miscarriages, Alice is found dead at the kitchen table, and David is the prime suspect. Both Detective Sam Sheppard (based on the real-life doctor convicted of killing his wife in an infamous 1954 trial) and Detective Ward Hastroll, whose wife suffers from a debilitating depression, are convinced David murdered his wife. Ross is interested in all the soul-killing ways men and women try and fail to achieve intimacy, and, like Joshua Ferris in *The Unnamed* (2010), he wraps his age-old theme in a confounding yet mesmerizing format. With its noirish sensibility and eloquent prose, this dark novel depicts marriage as one “long double homicide.”

— *Joanne Wilkinson*