

*Suspense, Mystery, Horror and Thriller Fiction*

# SUSPENSE MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER/  
DECEMBER 2018

THE "BEST OF"  
**2018**

Close the Book on 2018 With

**BRIAN ANDREWS &**

**JEFFREY WILSON**

**MARC CAMERON**

**G.A. McKEVETT**

**JON LAND**

**KAY HOOPER**

*In Memoriam:*

**BILLIE SUE MOSIMAN**

*Everyday Hero*

**JOSEPH BADAL**

*Current Publishing Trends*

**ALAN JACOBSON &**

**PETER HILDICK-SMITH**

*Perfect Timing & How to Get it*

**DENNIS PALUMBO**



"Batista's characters jump off the page. They are as real as they are fascinating. A great read."

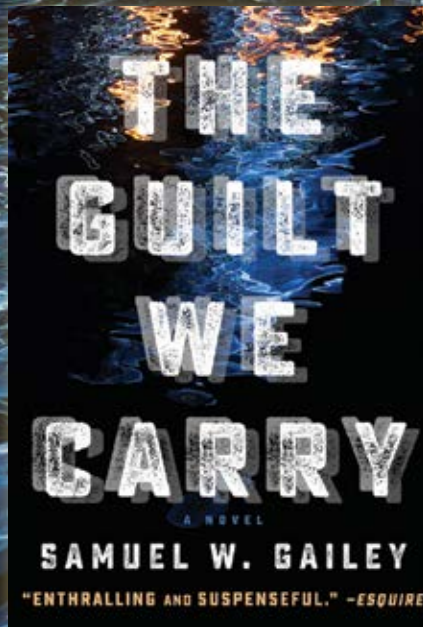
—ALAN DERSHOWITZ  
NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR



ON SALE DECEMBER 18

Legendary defense attorney Raquel Rematti represents a presidential candidate—and former First Lady of an ISIS-assassinated President—Senator Angelina Baldesteri in the most watched and explosive trial of the century.

"The *Breaking Bad* of the book world."  
—NEW YORK JOURNAL OF BOOKS

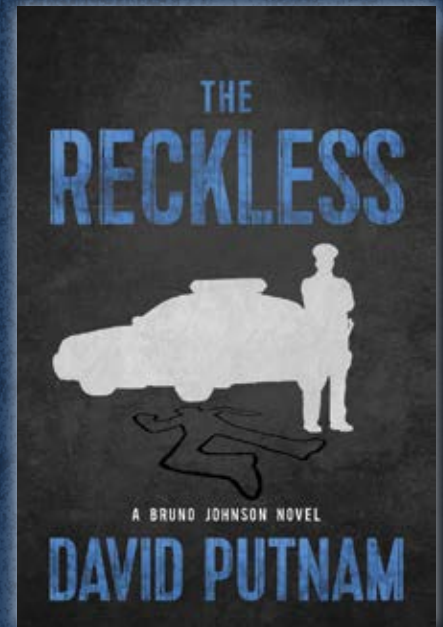


ON SALE JANUARY 8

A haunted young woman runs away from home. She lives on the streets, making one bad decision after another, and drowning her guilt in alcohol — until everything changes when she stumbles upon dead drug dealer and a duffel bag full of cash.

"Dazzles with authenticity, sharply-drawn characters, crackling dialogue, and insider details."

—LEE GOLDBERG  
NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR



ON SALE FEBRUARY 5

Bruno Johnson, a young and inexperienced LA County Deputy Sheriff, part of the Violent Crimes Unit, is put on loan to the FBI to help out with a "special problem" — a group of teenage criminals.

OCEANVIEW  PUBLISHING

WWW.OCEANVIEWPUB.COM



### CREDITS

John Raab  
President & Chairman

Shannon Raab  
Creative Director

Romaine Reeves  
CFO

Amy Lignor  
Editor

Jim Thomsen  
Copy Editor

### Contributors

Mark P. Sadler  
Susan Santangelo  
Kaye George  
Weldon Burge  
Ashley Wintters  
D.P. Lyle M.D.  
Andrew MacRae  
J.M. LeDuc  
Holly Price  
Kari Wainwright  
David Ingram  
Susan May  
Anthony J. Franze  
Barry Lancet  
Leslie Borghini  
Mary Lignor  
Julie Whiteley  
Sara Guisti  
Jeff Ayers  
Elise Cooper  
Joseph Badal  
D.P. Lyle  
Dennis Palumbo  
Lauren Brabrook  
Robert Allen Papinchak  
John Valeri

### Customer Service and Subscriptions:

For 24/7 service, please use our website,  
[www.suspensemagazine.com](http://www.suspensemagazine.com) or write to:  
SUSPENSE MAGAZINE at  
26500 Agoura Road, #102-474  
Calabasas, CA 91302

Suspense Magazine does not share our  
magazine subscriber list with third-party  
companies.

**Rates:** \$24.00 (Electronic Subscription)  
per year. All foreign subscrip-  
tions must be payable in U.S. funds.



Goodbye 2018, and *hello* 2019! What can I say? It's been quite a year here at *Suspense Magazine*, and we are excited to close it out with our annual "Best Of" issue—presenting you with our list of annual awards for the best books of 2018.

Every year it gets tougher to pick the winners, since the writing and the storytelling has gotten so much better over the years. The explosion of eBooks in the past few years has also given fans so many

more options to read, and provided us with so many more outstanding authors, that it's become a very exciting time to be a book lover.

Our list was compiled from our editors' choices, our review team, and fan votes. It's a very agonizing process, as we have a lot of fighting and compromises to handle. We would love to give everyone an award, but then it wouldn't be special for those authors who really took the time to write a memorable book.

The book that won this year's *Crimson Scribe Award*, the highest achievement our magazine gives out to only one book per year, is maybe one that you wouldn't expect. It's a very emotional, suspenseful book, taking the reader to the edge and back again. Many of us felt that this was the best book this author has ever written.

Now...I'm not going to give anything away here, so if you want to skip ahead and start getting into the magazine, I completely understand. Heck, if I didn't have to write this letter, I would already be reading and compiling my own personal list of the next books I want to buy. (If you decided to stay and keep reading, however, thanks so much.)

Looking ahead to 2019, we will be giving you five issues, one for each of the seasons and then ending with our traditional "Best Of" issue. We encourage all of you to keep sending in your short stories and article ideas. We love to hear from fans and are constantly excited to see what you come up with in the way of contributions to the magazine. So...keep them coming.

It's time for *Suspense Magazine* to 'close the book' on yet another great year. We want to thank all of you for the support you have given us over the years. Without the help of hundreds of people, *Suspense Magazine* would never have made it this long. Remember to subscribe to *Suspense Radio* through iTunes and catch all the action 'outside' of the pages.

Again, here's to a happy and safe 2019 for everyone. See you all very soon and keep reading!

John Raab  
CEO/Publisher  
*Suspense Magazine* ■



"Reviews within this magazine are the opinions of the individual reviewers and are provided solely for the purpose of assisting readers in determining another's thoughts on the book under discussion and shall not be interpreted as professional advice or the opinion of any other than the individual reviewer. The following contributors who may appear in this magazine are also individual clients of Suspense Publishing, an imprint of Suspense Magazine: J.M. LeDuc, Leslie Borghini, Susan Santangelo, Jeff Ayers, Joseph Badal, and Amy Lignor."



# CONTENT

## SUSPENSE MAGAZINE

*November / December 2018 / Vol. 084*

Crime & Science: D. P. Lyle, MD Discusses Famous Cases .....	3
Everyday Hero By Joseph Badal .....	6
Perfect Timing & How to Get it By Dennis Palumbo .....	7
Current Trends in Publishing By Alan Jacobson and Peter Hildick-Smith.....	9
Excerpt: "Violet Tendencies" By Kate Dyer-Seeley.....	12
<i>The Light Went Out</i> By Stephen Maitland-Lewis.....	16
<i>Pipe Tobacco</i> By Marlin Bressi .....	23
<i>Inside the Pages: Suspense Magazine Book Reviews</i> .....	25
Excerpt: "Storm Rising" By Sara Driscoll .....	32
<i>Featured Artist: Meet Leana Delport</i> .....	36
Excerpt: "The Hangman's Secret" By Laura Joh Rowland .....	44
<i>Suspense Magazine "Best of 2018"</i> .....	48
<i>Suspense Magazine's Crimson Scribe Winner</i> .....	77
<i>Andrews &amp; Wilson: Show They're "Tier One"</i> .....	78
<i>Unearth</i> By Jody Gerbig.....	97



# CRIME *and* SCIENCE RADIO

WITH AWARD WINNING AUTHORS

D.P. LYLE, M.D. & JAN BURKE

## D. P. LYLE, MD

DISCUSSES FAMOUS CASES:  
DRUGS, POISONS, TOXINS & DEATH



Interview by D.P. Lyle, MD  
Press Photo Credit: Provided by Author

**T**onight we're focusing on a subject that seems to be a favorite among writers; one subject that I get the most letters on in regards to how someone can be "done in" with drugs, poisons, etc. We are going to dive into the world of toxicology, and explore some famous cases that give a better understanding of how forensic toxicology works.

Let us begin with the famous case in San Diego that was given the name: "The American Beauty Murder." Kristin Rossum, a toxicologist by trade, was a beautiful blonde girl, very smart, very personable, came from a wealthy family, and grew up in Claremont, California. She was on a trajectory for a successful life, although she developed some drug problems along the way and got side-tracked for just a bit. She got back on course when she met and married Greg de Villers in 1995. She enrolled and graduated with honors from San Diego State, kicked her drug habit, and ended up taking a job as a toxicologist in the San Diego Medical Examiner's Office.

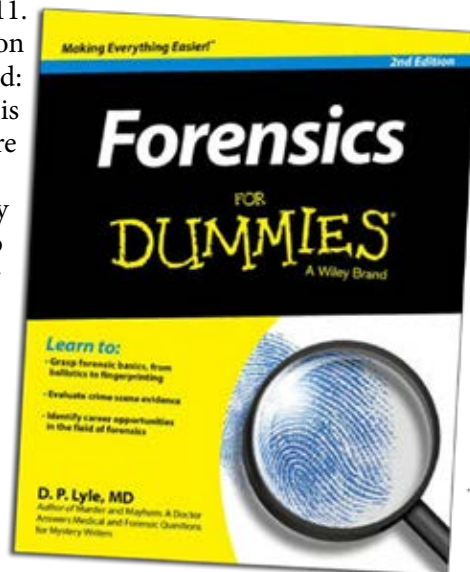
As life would have it, however, she ended up having an affair with a man by the name of Dr. Michael Robertson who was the chief toxicologist and her boss at the lab. Turns out she and her husband were not getting along so well. On November 6, 2000, at around 9:00 p.m., Rossum called 911.

The paramedics arrived and found Kristin on the phone and her husband, Greg, on the bed:

unresponsive. The oddity was that the bed was sprinkled with rose petals (i.e., this is where the "American Beauty" case title came into play because those rose petals were reminiscent of the movie with the same name).

Kristin told the police that she believed Greg had committed suicide. They accepted this explanation because, at the time, they didn't have anything else to believe. But Greg's family said that there was no way their son would do drugs or commit suicide. He had a new job that he was excited about, and basically, was happy with life. Paramedics, to their credit, continued their investigation and found out about Kristin's affair and that Greg had threatened to expose her relapse into crystal meth, which she actually stole from the lab. Both she and her lover, Dr. Robertson, were fired. Him for having the affair with an employee, and she for her drug issues.

At first she thought she'd get away with this crime, being that she was in the toxicology department and if the ME did the autopsy on Greg, well...they were



family in a way, so the ME should believe her story. The ME, in his wisdom, decided to outsource this case; he thought it was too incestuous and too “close to home,” so he outsourced it to the L.A. crime lab.

In L.A., during the autopsy, the ME discovered that Greg had seven times the lethal dose of fentanyl. (This is a synthetic opioid, like a narcotic, but extremely powerful; it is three hundred times stronger than morphine.) A small amount of fentanyl will take you down and cause you to die of asphyxiation. If you recall, some time ago, Chechen rebels took over a theater in Russia; they were strapped with bombs. The Russians surrounded it, pumped fentanyl into the building through the air conditioning system and took the terrorist's down before they could set off the bombs. Unfortunately, the fentanyl was highly lethal and over 100 innocent people died too.

This drug can be taken orally, by injection, or with patches, and is used to help people suffering terminal pain. As the investigation continued, Kristin's explanation of Greg committing suicide got more and more unbelievable. Especially when it was discovered that Kristin had called Greg's employer the day of the murder and said he wasn't coming in because he wasn't feeling well. They also discovered that Kristin had gone to a recent toxicology conference that had discussed fentanyl and how hard it was to detect.

Remember, this was fifteen years ago and tests were not sophisticated enough to find certain “untraceable” drugs, and fentanyl was one of them. Kristin knew this and had access to some in the toxicology lab.

During the autopsy, there were needle marks found on Greg, as well. Now some were explainable—where the paramedics, nurses, doctors, etc., had tried to help him. But there was one that could not be explained. The ME postulated that this was the injection site. Of course, this caused more problems for Kristin because, after all, if he had committed suicide and injected himself, then Greg would have gone out in two or three seconds. He would have no time to toss out a syringe or patches, and there were neither found at the crime scene. Most damning came when they investigated Kristin's finances and it came to light that she had a preferred customer card for a local grocery, and the day Greg died, she had purchased from there one red rose; hence, the rose petals on the bed.

Kristin was tried and convicted; given a sentence of ninety years. Her boyfriend, Dr. Robertson, split. He was from Australia and he disappeared and never returned. To this day, no one knows if he was a part of this crime.

The basic lesson in this crime, and all crimes, is that it doesn't matter how clever a killer is because they will be found out. In this case the L.A. crime lab did its due diligence, but if searched for hard enough, all toxins can be found.

**W**hen a toxicologist is brought in on any case, they must determine certain things: if drugs are present, the levels of the drug present, how they entered the body, and was the level of the drug enough to alter a person's

activity. An easy example of this is testing a person's blood alcohol level. Such as, if a person has an accident and crashes into a telephone pole and their blood alcohol level is far over the legal limit, it's fairly easy to make an assumption as to how they lost control of the vehicle and died. Whereas, if someone injured themselves on the job and they had drug or alcohol levels that were above the legal limit, this could be a liability issue where police would have to investigate where the company is liable because they had poor safety issues.

Now, it is important to note that anything and everything can be a poison; even water can kill you, and I don't mean just by drowning. If you drink enough water, you wash your electrolytes out of your system, and the sodium level in your blood drops dramatically. Your brain can swell, you can develop cardiac arrhythmia, and you can die. There is even a psychiatric disorder called “compulsive water drinking.” These people drink copious gallons of water a day and can (and will) die.

Oxygen can also kill you. If you breathe in 100% pure oxygen for an extended period of time, it wipes out the lungs: you change the elasticity of the lungs, they become stiff and finally scar, they quit exchanging gas, and you can die. We use pure oxygen in the hospital for patients with severe lung disease, but we try to use it for the briefest amount of time. So remember, anything can kill. There is an old adage in medicine that states: “What can cure, can kill.”

Like digitalis. A little dose helps strengthen the heart muscle, but a lot can and will produce arrhythmia and kill you. In fact, it is a deadly poison; we know that it comes from the foxglove plant.

**W**e all have levels of poisons in our systems right now; these include, lead, arsenic, cyanide, mercury, and others, because they're part of the environment and part of who we are. They are safe levels, homeopathic levels, and don't do anything. When those levels start rising, however, they become toxic and later can become lethal.

As it was in Greg's case, when the ME and toxicologist do their jobs, they use a two-tiered system. The first tier is a presumptive test, which is quick, cheap, and shows if a certain class of drug is present in the corpse. That's all the test will tell you. The second tier is confirmatory testing, which are tests that are highly expensive and time consuming, which means that these tests cannot be done on everybody because the ME budget won't allow it.

A typical/presumptive drug screen tests for things like, alcohol, ethanol, acetone, etc. There are also acid screens that look for acids and barbiturates, and others.

Using these various screens, the ME determines what “class” of drug is present. If one of these quick tests/screens shows something there, he/she has to go further into the confirmatory testing to see what, exactly, it is. Such as: If the presumptive test shows a certain type of drug, this could be Sudafed (legal) or crystal meth (illegal). The confirmatory testing (sometimes referred to as GC/MS or GC/IR) knows every chemical fingerprint of every known chemical. Using



gas chromatography, the fingerprint of the substance is found.

**T**he next famous case we'll be discussing is one that you most likely will remember because it rocked the nation.

On June 5, 1986, Stella Nickell was at home when her husband, Bruce, came home from work with a migraine and took two Extra-Strength Excedrin capsules; he collapsed and died just a few minutes later. The coroner determined it was a natural death. But then, a week later, 40-year-old Susan Snow took an Extra-Strength Excedrin and her husband Paul Webking took two of them from the same bottle. In only a few minutes, Susan King collapsed and died, but nothing happened to Webking.

At the autopsy, ME Janet Miller detected the distinctive odor of cyanide. You hear about this all the time; that corpses with cyanide in their system emit the odor of burnt/bitter almond that can be detected. Yes and no, actually. Some corpses do and others do not. But, more importantly, the ability to *detect* this odor is genetically determined. You can't learn to detect it; the ability is genetic. 50% of the population can smell it; the other 50% cannot, and no one knows why evolution is like that. Janet Miller could detect the odor and further testing showed that cyanide was the cause of Susan Snow's death.

She went on to test the bottle of Excedrin; three of the pills remaining in the bottle had cyanide, but the rest were clean. So, Webking, apparently, had just got lucky and taken two clean ones.

But then another bottle was found in a nearby grocery store, from the same lot found in Susan's home. Bristol-Myers was the manufacturer. This opened a variety of scary doors. Could this be a manufacturing issue? A saboteur in the company that was contaminating pills? A serial killer? They tested various lots and the company immediately pulled all the Excedrin off the market (they ended up changing them into caplets instead of the powder-filled capsules that could be tampered with).

Stella Nickell came forward and turned over two bottles she had as well. Testing was done and cyanide was found in both bottles...and in Bruce Nickell's remains. Now there was two dead and contaminated bottles from different lots, which made "accidental death" less likely. This raised the specter of product tampering, which brought in the FBI crime lab who started their own investigation and not only found cyanide in the bottles but also some odd, green flecks. When this was tested, it turned out to be an algae used in home aquariums which sold under the brand name of Algae Destroyer. So the FBI dug deeper.

They soon found out that Stella Nickell had taken out insurance policies on her husband, and had purchased the Destroyer product for their own home aquarium. They also found that Stella had visited a local library and checked out books regarding poisons. Her fingerprints were found all over the pages of "Algaecide." She was tried in 1988, convicted and sentenced. Apparently, Stella had taken the capsules apart and

mixed the algae with the Excedrin powder and put it back in the capsule. She knew if it was only her husband, though, who suffered death that the focus would have been turned on her as being the prime suspect. So she had purchased and tampered with other bottles so that other people would have this happen to them.

**T**he last famous case to discuss is the death of Kurt Cobain. Cobain was the lead singer for Nirvana which was one of the bands at the forefront of the "grunge movement" that came out of Seattle, Washington.

Kurt died at the age of 27, like Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix, which put him into the famous "27 Club." He had a long history of drug abuse and depression and on April 8, 1994, he was found dead in his Seattle home. He was discovered by an electrician named Gary Smith who called the police when he saw Cobain laying there, on his back, with a shotgun on his chest. He had died from a gunshot wound to the head.

A great deal of heroine was found in his system and there was a suicide note, of sorts, left behind. It was argued as to whether it was an actual suicide note or not. Question: Was this suicide or murder? The fact that heroine was in his system and he shot himself was not uncommon in a suicide. Many drug themselves first in order to get the courage to end their lives. The ME decided this was a suicide, even though conspiracy theorists have fought against that for some time.

The major evidence that was unusual was that the shotgun was laying on his chest inverted, and the ejected shell was lying to the side opposite the injection site 10-12 feet away. This case also became a battle of forensic toxicologists and ME's. One side said that with that much heroine in his system, he would not have been able to fire the gun. The other side stated that he was such an addict that three times the lethal limit of heroine, which would kill most people, would put a person like him into a "goofy" state but he would not be incapacitated.

Although this argument still rages today, the summary of these cases is what the toxicologist and ME have to do, the important principles they follow, and find evidence that will help the police solve the crime.

The job of an ME and a toxicologist are hard ones. Those who wish to get into this field should first get a degree in chemistry from college, then work in a lab and learn the principles of toxicology, and then move into the forensic field. This job is tedious, exciting, boring, and wonderful all at the same time. ■

*Originally aired on Crime & Science Radio; 2013.*

*D. P. Lyle is the Macavity and Benjamin Franklin Silver Award winning and Edgar, Agatha, Anthony, Scribe, and USA Best Book Award nominated author of many non-fiction books as well as numerous works of fiction, including the Samantha Cody thriller series, the Dub Walker thriller series, and the Royal Pains media tie-in novels. To learn more about D. P., check out his websites at [www.dplylemd.com](http://www.dplylemd.com) and <http://writersforensicsblog.wordpress.com>.*

# EVERYDAY HERO

*When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Get Going*

By Joseph Badal  
Press Photo Credit: Sallie Badal



I was feeling down yesterday. My favorite NFL team had just lost a game; I blew a tire; and, I added to my frustration when I made the mistake of tuning in to a news program on which two “political experts” were angrily going at each another with lies and half-truths. All in all, I thought I was having a pretty crappy day. Then I happened across a *USA Today* Internet news item about a man named Ronald Shurer II, who was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by President Trump on October 1<sup>st</sup>:

While a Special Forces combat medic a decade ago, Shurer braved gunfire in Afghanistan to save wounded comrades who were pinned down by Taliban fighters.

In April 2008, in Afghanistan’s Skok Valley, Shurer and his team of commandos were ambushed by an enemy force of more than 200 militants with snipers, machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

A senior medical sergeant, Shurer sprinted through enemy fire to treat one downed soldier, then dodged more bullets to catch up with members of his unit closest to the fighting. He fought for more than an hour to reach the group, killing several insurgents along the way, according to his commendation for the Silver Star.

Once there, he treated four more critically wounded soldiers and moved through gunfire to treat others. “Shurer managed to evacuate the wounded soldiers down a near-vertical 60-foot cliff under fire while shielding them from falling debris,” the commendation states.

“Shurer loaded the wounded soldiers onto a helicopter, took command of his squad and headed back to the fight.”

For more than six hours, Ron Shurer administered aid to his comrades while under withering enemy fire. “Not a single American died in that brutal battle, thanks in great measure to Ron’s heroic actions,” President Trump said, while presenting Shurer with the Medal of Honor.

Shurer was honorably discharged in 2009, but his service to his country didn’t end there. He joined the Secret Service’s Counter Assault Team and was assigned to its Special Operations Division in 2014.

So, after comparing my bad day with Ron Shurer’s bad day in April of 2008, I felt like a wimp. But, when I read the post script to the article, I felt downright ashamed. You see, Ron Shurer is now battling cancer.

I never cease to be amazed by the courage of some people. The old saying, “When the going gets tough, the tough get going,” was written for people like Ron Shurer. I hope you will keep Ron in your thoughts and prayers.

~Joseph Badal ■

*Joseph Badal is the author of 13 suspense novels, including “Obsessed,” which was released in June, 2018. His books have won numerous awards and have been #1 Amazon Best-Sellers. His next novel, “Natural Causes” (the 3rd in the Lassiter/Martinez Case Files series) will be released in April, 2019. To learn more, follow Joseph at: [www.josephbadalbooks.com](http://www.josephbadalbooks.com).*

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/10/01/medal-honor-recipient-inspiration-donald-trump-says/1488969002/>





# PERFECT TIMING & HOW TO GET IT



By Dennis Palumbo

Press Photo Credit: Provided by Author

Back in high school, during the late 1960's, I was part of a tragically un-hip rock band. Desperate to make it big (at least in Pittsburgh), and to ride the wave of the current fashion, we pooled all our available cash and purchased five extremely groovy Nehru jackets. I swear, *the very next day*, Nehru jackets were "out." No self-respecting rocker would be caught dead in one.

What this anecdote illustrates, among other things, is the peril of bad timing. I've certainly seen this in my work with the creative patients in my therapy practice. Over the years, this painful, maddening aspect of the artistic life has been a common complaint—especially among writers.

"The timing sucked," a disgruntled novelist will say, as another cherished project fails to take wing.

We all know what that's about. You labor for years on a genre-blending novel about a murder on a space station, for example, only to learn that a similar idea has just been bought by a Big Publishing House. Or you have a great idea for a historical thriller, but your agent convinces you it's not commercial. Then, the following year, two quite similar books are released to great critical and popular success.

Some time ago, I saw an author on PBS whose novel was then riding high on the bestseller lists. He revealed that he'd actually written it twenty-five years before, but its "government conspiracy" plot got it rejected by a dozen publishers.

"This was the post-Watergate era," he explained. "Political cover-ups weren't considered sexy anymore."

Only after the post-9/11 revelations of the NSA's dubious actions in the name of national security, and the success of TV series' like, *Homeland*, was the author emboldened to send his (updated) manuscript out again. This time it was accepted by the first publisher who read it.

Timing. Every writer has felt its favor *and* its sting. Certainly, publishing is famous for the wonderful manuscripts that made the rounds of all the Big (and Small) Houses, unable to find a buyer. Until somebody found it in the back of somebody else's file cabinet at a yard sale and declared it a masterpiece. Once published, everybody (including those who'd passed on it) agreed.

Conversely, numerous novels of all kinds—apparently written ahead of their time—unfortunately appeared before the reading public was ready for the material, thus failing to succeed.

This is quite common. Every day, a number of books (as well as films and TV series', of course) are routinely scuttled by the emotional intensity or political sensitivity of current events. (Just as an equal number of projects seek to capitalize on these same events.)

The point is, timing, like success, is essentially out of our control. However, also like success, there are certain things a writer can do to improve the odds.

For example, writers of all stripes need to be aware of the times in which they live—culturally, politically, and artistically.

As legendary golfer Ben Hogan remarked when praised for his good luck on the green: “Yes, I’m lucky. And the harder I work, the luckier I get.”

You might not be lucky enough to write something that hits just as the next wave of the *zeitgeist* is cresting, but you ought to at least be somewhere near the beach. Nothing is as dispiriting as reading a novel by a veteran writer who seems not to have looked out a window in the past twenty years.

In addition, the chances of being favored by good fortune (another definition of “great timing”) improve to the degree to which you apply effort. Pushing yourself to go deeper into character and narrative, to toil more consistently at your craft, to take creative risks. I’m speaking, regrettably, about hard work.

I know too many writers who steadfastly refuse to take a fresh pass at a novel or short story that isn’t working. In my view, they need to see their task not merely as the completion of this or that project, but as an ongoing, unfolding process of craft-building and discovery, whereby the rewards (if they are to come) arrive unannounced and unforeseen. In which case, success then no longer seems a product of good timing but of dutiful, consistent labor.

As legendary golfer Ben Hogan remarked when praised for his good luck on the green: “Yes, I’m lucky. And the harder I work, the luckier I get.”

Does hard work and artistic relevance guarantee that the gods of timing will smile on your efforts? Nope. But then, if you want guarantees, you’re in the wrong business.

However, there’s one thing I *can* guarantee will reduce even the possibility of good timing in one’s career: attempting to coerce or anticipate it. Like in my story about the Nehru jackets, all such attempts at success by pursuing the currently fashionable are by their nature doomed. Such as trying to write a thriller “just like” the ones topping the bestseller lists.

Sorry to say, in terms of mass appeal, that particular ship has sailed. In other words, what made that book so popular no longer pertains. That cultural moment has passed. And while such moments may be occasionally revisited, as with “retro” clothes and re-booted TV shows, the triumphs are brief; they’re little more than nostalgic back-steps on the continuing path toward an unknown future.

See, that’s the paradox of timing: the only possible preparation for showing up at the right time with the right product involves working authentically in the here-and-now, oblivious to what the outcome of your labors will be.

Which brings me back to my sorry little band. Rather than spending money on new jackets, we would have been better off spending more time rehearsing. Not that I’m convinced this would’ve propelled us to rock ‘n roll fame and fortune, but, hey...stranger things have happened. It’s all in the timing. ■

Formerly a Hollywood screenwriter (*My Favorite Year*; *Welcome Back, Kotter*, etc.), Dennis Palumbo is a licensed psychotherapist and author. His mystery fiction has appeared in *Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine*, *The Strand* and elsewhere, and is collected in “*From Crime to Crime*” (Tallfellow Press). His series of mystery thrillers (“*Mirror Image*,” “*Fever Dream*,” “*Night Terrors*,” “*Phantom Limb*,” and the latest, “*Head Wounds*,” all from *Poisoned Pen Press*), feature Daniel Rinaldi, a psychologist and trauma expert who consults with the Pittsburgh Police. Info at [www.dennispalumbo.com](http://www.dennispalumbo.com).

## EVEN NIGHTMARES CAN COME TRUE...

“*The Amazing Imagination Machine* is insanely creepy fun. Teens and adults will find this frightening, twisted and absolutely riveting. Highly recommended!”

—Jonathan Maberry, *NY Times*  
Bestselling Author of *Rot & Ruin* &  
Netflix’s *V-Wars*

Available at  
amazon



WWW.AUTHORBAILEYDAY.COM



# CURRENT TRENDS IN PUBLISHING:

## Where do Authors go From Here?

*If there's one article you read about publishing this year, this should be it.*



By Alan Jacobson and Peter Hildick-Smith  
Alan Jacobson Press Photo Credit: Corey Jacobson  
Peter Hildick-Smith Press Photo Credit: Provided by Author

*USA Today* bestselling author Alan Jacobson has been writing novels professionally for 25 years, and during that quarter century he's seen a tectonic shift—or rather, multiple shifts—in how books are read, printed, distributed, purchased...how and where authors get their compensation, and how publishers market and produce those books.

Rewind for a moment to 2005. Technology became part

of the publishing business when print on demand was introduced with great promise and fanfare. It was supposed to reduce the need for large up-front print runs, decreasing the number of unsold copies shred in ginormous recycling plants. But the reality did not meet the promise and a number of solid midlist authors (whose sales figures would be coveted these days) saw their careers unceremoniously terminated by that print on demand fiasco.

Technology's grip on publishing increased over the next few years. Combined with a devastating recession, an industry that moved too slowly, and unrelenting competition for people's spare time, the rise of video streaming, social media, smartphones, and an ever-expanding gaming world, reading became less central to the general public's lives.

Peter Hildick-Smith, president and founder of book audience research firm Codex-Group, has a vastly different publishing industry experience from Alan's. With a Wharton MBA in Marketing, his curriculum vitae includes non-publishing related positions in marketing and brand building at Quaker Oats, General Electric, and Johnson & Johnson. He was also a vice president of marketing and of merchandising at Bertelsmann's Bantam, Doubleday, Dell Publishing—so he knows the industry from both a Big Five publisher perspective as well as from a consumer brand management and quantitative book data view.

In this article, Alan and Peter will look at the most recent publishing trends drawing on not only their experience but on proprietary Codex-Group internal research data; data from the Association of American Publishers' (AAP) 2017 StatShot annual trend summary; and other publishing industry studies (as referenced below).

For the purpose of this article, they are going to look at today's book market in the context of key trends affecting author pay, sales, and retail channels. They will then evaluate what this data means for authors going forward.

The data examined suggested there are several developing trends in the US book market:

- A lot more people are writing books than ever, with the vast majority choosing to self-publish;
- This spike in the volume of self-published works—which often eschew traditional publishing industry overhead and practices (professional story editing, copyediting, proofreading)—has created a new tier of sub-\$5 books;
- A key effect of charging less is that authors have to work harder to sell more copies to try to maintain their incomes;
- The vast majority of these \$5-and-under “sub-prime” books is sold in the Kindle store, which added over 1,000,000 new titles—in 2017 alone;
- Although the number of sub-prime books has exploded, the number of readers has remained constant during the past six years, and the size of the overall book publishers’ revenue “pie” has remained largely unchanged;
- Adding hundreds of thousands of new authors to the market—with an unchanging reader base—has reduced the average author’s income;
- While millions more books are now available to US book buyers in more ways than ever before in history (print on demand, audiobooks, eBooks, digital book serials, subscription services), the National Endowment for the Arts Survey of Public Participation in the Arts shows that the number of US adults reading fiction has *declined* 7% since 2012, while the overall number of book readers has remained statistically unchanged;
- In line with those fiction reader trends, the Association of American Publishers (AAP) 2017 StatShot annual trend summary showed that their member trade fiction publishers’ revenue declined 16% from 2013 to 2017, with their eBook sales down even more, at 36%.

While the publishing industry relies on data from BookScan (a retail sales tracking service) and the AAP to measure and understand industry health and performance, they have a major blind spot: Amazon’s self-published and proprietary book sales are not included in the above figures because the company does not share this information. Thus, there may be a lot more going on than the industry is aware of.

Based on their ongoing quantitative retail market share tracking program, Codex-Group estimates that Kindle’s unit share of the eBook market, with a heavy skew to fiction, has now reached 77% in November 2018, up 40% during

that 2013 to 2017 time frame. This suggests that traditional publishers’ fiction and eBook sales have simply shifted to Amazon—indicating an overall growth market, not a declining one, at least on a unit basis.

Through its highly sophisticated, inter-locking platforms strategy—proprietary reading devices (Kindle), eBook subscriptions (Kindle Unlimited), customer loyalty (Prime Reading), discovery (Amazon First Reads, Amazon Charts, Goodreads), proprietary content (Kindle Direct Publishing, Amazon Publishing), and very low price points (sub-\$5 eBooks, sub-\$10 hardcovers), Amazon has secured book buyers’ ongoing allegiance with an unrivaled value recipe that locks in book buyer loyalty.

As a result, on a unit basis, Amazon now appears to own 49% of total adult book sales, 72% of online book sales and, as mentioned earlier, an estimated 77% of the eBook market.

A key to Amazon’s success, beyond effective execution, is their intense focus on the long-term. One of their most powerful strategies is their ongoing effort to reset book buyers’ accepted price for what a book should sell for—to much lower levels. This ultimately defines what a book is worth. The consumer-preferred, generally accepted price point for a book in any given format is known in pricing strategy as the “reference price.”

Traditional publishers and retailers work to keep books at retail price points that will sustain their business and adequately compensate their authors. They have fought to avoid the path magazines and newspapers took when they moved to a digital format and offered their content for free online. A price of “free” reset consumers’ reference price for what magazine and newspaper content is accepted to be worth to effectively \$0, with disastrous results for those publishing industries.

To avoid that path, book publishers seem to be suggesting that the business-viable value for what a book should be worth, for both eBooks and trade paperbacks, is roughly \$10 more than what Amazon is targeting.

In the face of those conflicting book valuation strategies, many book consumers—when offered sub-prime pricing, particularly in genre fiction categories like romance—have now reset their standard for what a book is worth to Amazon’s preferred levels. As a result, even for authors with once loyal readers, those readers now have a difficult time contemplating paying a publisher’s regular price. For many of those authors, book buyer loyalty has been replaced by “sub-prime” pricing loyalty.

This reference price shift in genre fiction categories has been a major contributor to Amazon’s accelerated eBook unit share growth. With that, the book market is increasingly divided into sub-prime vs. standard price segments and buyers. Self-published authors are delivering the book content and low pricing that fuel the sub-prime market, while traditionally published authors and their publishers



are attempting to sustain the standard market.

Making matters more challenging, Amazon's goal appears to be less about making a profit on books and more about using books as a vehicle to attract and retain the top 20% of American consumers who buy and read books. Why? In 2017, the US Census Bureau estimated that over half (51.5%) of all household income was concentrated in that top 20%. Based on this reported household income and this group's very high education levels, as reported in Codex-Group research, book buyers make up a significant part of the most valuable consumers in America.

So where does all this leave authors? Being a successful author in the digital age—which for the purposes of this article we'll define as “since 2008”—requires different priorities and skill sets than ever before. If an author's primary goal is ongoing sales growth, he/she now has not one but two priorities: 1) to create worlds, characters, and stories that consistently attract paying readers—and thus create loyal fans—and 2) to effectively communicate those worlds to current and prospective readers by investing significant time (at minimum a full working day per week) and effort in marketing, publicity, loyalty programs, and direct-to-reader communications to retain those book buyer fans.

Those who actively do both have fared significantly better than those who simply write and publish. This is the new reality for both self-published and traditionally published authors; there are no magic bullets.

In essence, the new era of publishing demands that the profession of “author” undergo a total redefinition to this dual discipline.

Note: the Authors Guild recently completed a groundbreaking, multi-year examination of author incomes, the most comprehensive evaluation of the topic ever conducted in the United States. The results are still being parsed and the Guild is preparing a white paper delineating their findings. We urge all of you to read it when it's released in the first quarter of 2019 at [www.authorsguild.org](http://www.authorsguild.org). ■

Alan Jacobson is the award-winning, USA Today bestselling author of a dozen thrillers in the FBI profiler Karen Vail series and the OPSIG Team Black covert ops series. Jacobson's books have been published internationally and several have been optioned by Hollywood. His latest, “Dark Side of the Moon,” was named one of the best novels of the year by The Strand Magazine. Connect with Jacobson at [AlanJacobson.com](http://AlanJacobson.com), on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



Peter Hildick-Smith is president and founder of book audience research firm Codex-Group, based in New York.

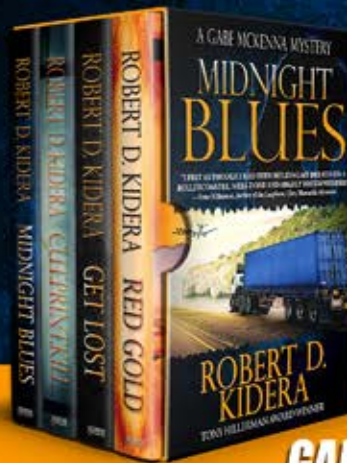
[SuspenseMagazine.com](http://SuspenseMagazine.com)

NEW FROM

# ROBERT D. KIDERA

“Takes readers on a remarkable journey filled with chilling evil, fiery valor, and heart-racing suspense.”

—Anne Hillerman, Author of the *Leaphorn, Chee, Manuelito Mysteries*



**NEW MEXICO/  
ARIZONA BOOK AWARD  
WINNER FOR BEST  
ACTION ADVENTURE  
2018, BEST WORK OF  
FICTION, BEST MYSTERY  
& BEST EBOOK 2015**

**AWARD-WINNING  
GABE MCKENNA RETURNS**

What kind of person would harm a child? Neophyte P.I. Gabe McKenna and his buddy ‘The Onion’ find out the hard way, when their plan to ransom a kidnapped boy goes terribly wrong. Finding themselves in a battle against international human traffickers, they rely on the help of unlikely friends in a race against time to rescue dozens of enslaved young victims. In a final, deadly showdown at a New Mexico ghost town, Gabe faces his ultimate challenge. How high a price is he willing to pay? Can he risk death and his own conscience to save the innocent without turning into his enemy?

[WWW.ROBERTKIDERABOOKS.COM](http://WWW.ROBERTKIDERABOOKS.COM)

**SUSPENSE  
PUBLISHING**



# VIOLET TENDENCIES

## *A Rose City Mystery*

By Kate Dyer-Seeley

Press Photo Credit: Provided by Publicist



More officers arrived on the scene. Strobes of police lights flashed off the warehouse and above my head. A truck marked ATF UNIT rumbled into the parking lot and officers wearing bomb detection gear unloaded a robot. Sirens stabbed the air. I sat in stunned silence, as a team of officers with bomb-sniffing dogs raced into the float barn. Some members of Dark Fusion began to disperse, but others started pounding on the police shields and tossing smoke bombs. Chaos erupted in every direction. I didn't know where to look. It was like a bad dream. I wanted to pinch myself.

My fingers were numb. I wasn't sure if it was from cold or fear. I tried to shake them to get blood flowing again, but it didn't work.

I shivered and moved closer to one of the portable heaters. A couple members of Dark Fusion hurled pinecones and rocks at the police. I ducked just in time as a three-inch rock landed next to my feet.

It was like a war zone. Everything seemed to be happening in slow motion through a hazy lens.

"This is nothing!" Zigs's familiar voice cut through the swirling violent activity around me. "Portland is ours! And we will fight!"

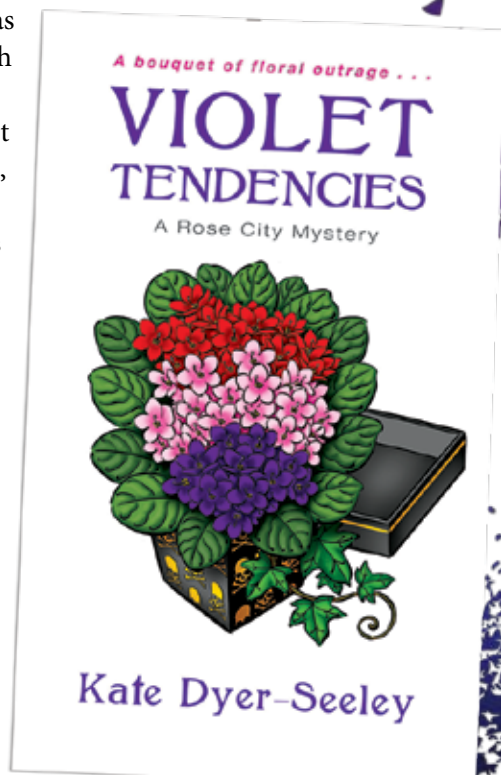
Sham's heavy frame appeared like a shadow behind Zigs. He extended a burly arm and pushed Zigs and a dozen other members away from the police.

"Prepare for change!" He raised a fist in the air.

What did that mean?

I had to get out of here.

I glanced behind me. My things were inside the float barn, but the bomb squad had the entire warehouse closed off. Was there a bomb in there? If Dark Fusion wanted to send a message, blowing up the float barn would certainly do





just that. There would be no way to recover if they destroyed every float tonight.

I rubbed my shoulders, imagining all our hard work and beautiful floats going up in flames.

"Britta, what are you doing?" Tomo's voice sounded behind me. "You have to get out of here!"

"Thank God." I threw my arms around him. "Tomo."

He hugged me back. "It's okay." Releasing me, he stepped back and studied my face. "Britta, maybe you should sit down. You look like you're going to pass out."

Words stuck in the back of my throat. I could feel every muscle in my body begin to twitch.

Tomo guided me to a nearby table and forced me to sit. "Breathe, Britta. It's okay. You're safe. There's no bomb."

My body trembled. I wrapped my arms around me and tried to rub my shoulders to stop the convulsions. What was wrong with me?

"That's it. Slow and steady. Keep taking nice deep breaths." Tomo's voice had an easy lull to it, but I could see the concern in his eyes.

"I can't get warm," I managed to mumble. "What's wrong with me?"

"You're experiencing a mild form of shock, but you're going to be fine." Tomo reached for his walkie-talkie. "Do you want me to call over the medic?"

"No." I squeezed my arms tighter. "No, I'm okay."

He kept his walkie-talkie in one hand and sat next to me. I caught a faint hint of garlic. He must have been helping at the ramen shop. Instead of his standard blue uniform he wore a pair of skinny black jeans, an untucked flannel shirt, and red Chuck Taylors. A black stud earring dotted his left ear.

"You're sure there's not a bomb?" My teeth chattered.

"They haven't given the official all-clear yet, but one of the guys told me the dogs didn't find anything."

I told him about dinner and how Gloria had mentioned a bomb and then paranoia had spread like wildfire.

"It's like a game of telephone," Tomo said with a half chuckle. "Do kids still play that anymore?"

"No idea." I breathed into my palms to try to warm them. "What's going to happen? Will you arrest everyone?"

Tomo shook his head. "No. I wish. DF's leaders are smart. They know the law and are tiptoeing right on the line. I think this is all part of their master plan. If you watch closely you can see that they're being very strategic tonight. None of their leaders have done anything other than shout a few threats. We can't arrest anyone for that. They've sacrificed a handful of guys—the ones throwing things and actually coming into contact with us—but if you pay close attention it's like a choreographed performance. They want us to think this is pure chaos, but, Britta, it's not."

His words sent a new round of chills through my body.

"I don't know what their end game is yet. I'm convinced that they want us to think that they're trying to cause as much disruption as they can. They want everyone to think that this is a battle with the badges."

He placed a hand over the silver badge pinned to his chest. "It's not. I'm telling you, something else is going down. I just wish I knew what, and how to prove it."

We both turned as one of Dark Fusion's members lit a T-shirt on fire and flung it toward the river.

"Like that." Tomo sighed.

Within seconds the police had the guy in handcuffs.

"And now he gets to spend a night in jail," Tomo said. "But look. See that guy with the mohawk and the other huge dude? They're not part of any of the action."

Tomo was right. Sham and Zigs were watching everything unfold from a safe distance.

"It's crazy," I agreed. "And so sad. Do you think the parade is going to even get to go on?"

Tomo shrugged. "It's too soon to know."

"Some of my favorite childhood memories are of watching the Grand Floral Parade with my aunt. I don't understand their motivation." My eyes drifted along the waterfront. At least ten men and women had been arrested and were lined up, awaiting transport to the police station. A few protesters were still hurling insults at the police, but otherwise it did appear that the situation was under control. I spotted Ted. He was standing next to one of the officers and pointing at Sham.

What if Dark Fusion's obsession with the parade wasn't about the parade, but was about the parade's most prominent member? What if it was personal?

I started to say as much to Tomo, but at that moment Pete appeared. He had ditched his suit jacket for a navy-blue windbreaker with the word *Police* on the back. He paused and stared at us for a second.

"I'm not interrupting something, am I?" His tone was cold.

"What?" Tomo scowled and looked at me. "No, why?"

Pete gave me a strange look and then turned to Tomo. He spoke as if I wasn't there. "I want Miss Johnston out of here, understood?"

I pointed behind us to the barn. "But my things are inside."

"Tomo, escort her inside to retrieve her things." Then he gave me a hard look. "After you get your things, go straight home. Understood?" There was no mistaking the commanding tone in his voice.

I nodded. Why the shift in attitude? Pete didn't crack a smile. Our flirty banter earlier had evaporated. Without another word he left us and went to confer with a team of officers.

Tomo stayed close to my side while I gathered my things. Police blocked each exit and were combing over every float. If they weren't worried about a bomb threat, their actions showed otherwise.

"Are you sure there's not a bomb?" I asked Tomo after I snagged my stuff.

He led me out the back entrance. "Yeah. If there was even a slight chance of an explosive they would have cleared a five-mile radius."

"That's a relief." I zipped up my jacket. My pulse had returned to normal.

"It doesn't mean you're out of danger, Britta." Tomo glanced around us. "I wouldn't put it past DF to vandalize the floats tonight. I'm sure we'll have a team here twenty-four-seven from now on, but be careful and stay vigilant, okay?"

"You don't have to ask me twice." I checked behind us and spotted Pete huddled with a group of his colleagues.

"What's the deal with Detective Fletcher?"

Tomo shrugged. "I think he's mad at me. He thinks I'm too connected because of what happened at the Happy Spoon. The man is a conundrum. Sometimes I think he thinks I'm rocking it, and other times I think he thinks I'm an idiot. But you know, he is from LA." The path was dimly lit by glowing yellow street lamps, but I didn't have to see Tomo's face to know that he was rolling his eyes. California transplants had been a bone of contention with Northwest natives for many years. Many Portlanders resented the fact that Californians had moved north, scooping up property, sending housing costs soaring, and contributing to overcrowded freeways and schools. Much like everything else in life, it was a complicated issue, and just one facet of Portland's current growing pains.

I didn't care where Pete was from, but I was bothered by his 180-degree shift in personality. Was he worried about Tomo's attachment to the investigation, or was he upset with me?

We arrived at the base of the Hawthorne Bridge.

"Where's your car?" Tomo asked.

"My aunt took the Jeep. I'm going to catch the streetcar." Since I'd returned to Portland I hadn't seen a need to invest in a car. Riverplace Village was walkable, and Elin's house was conveniently located just a couple blocks away from a streetcar stop. Portland's public transportation system was inexpensive and easy to navigate. Between the streetcar, Max trains, buses, and miles and miles of biking trails, a car wasn't necessary.

"Are you sure?" Even in the dim light I could see Tomo's eyes cloud. "I don't think Detective Fletcher will be cool with that. I can go grab the squad car and give you a ride."

"No, that's not necessary. I know you have your hands full tonight. I enjoy walking over the bridge." I pointed above us where a few cars and buses rolled overhead. "It's not that late."

Tomo hesitated. "I don't know, Britta. Are you sure? It's late and things are pretty tense down here."

"I'll be fine." I pointed to a group of twentysomethings who were dressed like they were ready for a night of bar-hopping. "I'll follow them."

"Okay, but promise me that if you see anyone who looks like they're associated with DF that you'll ignore them and keep walking."

"Will do." He didn't need to warn me. After what had just transpired, there was no chance I would initiate contact with any of the anarchists. I waved and followed after the partygoers before Tomo could change his mind.

"Be careful, Britta," Tomo cautioned.

The twentysomethings were completely oblivious that anything was amiss in our fair city. They linked arms and laughed.

I was struck by the contrast. Portland was alive with activity. Tourists in town for Rose Festival packed into pubs and queued up at dance clubs. There was a vibrant energy mixed into the crisp night air. This was how things were supposed to be. Dark Fusion might have been successful in their attempt to unsettle the volunteers and Rose Festival insiders, but no one



else in the city was any the wiser.

I took relief in the thought as I parted ways with the group of pub-hoppers and climbed aboard the streetcar. It rolled past the waterfront village, where kids with giant wands of cotton candy, up way past their bedtimes, raced through a maze of carnival games. A band played on the main stage, serenading hundreds of people dancing to its vibrant beat. Teenagers screamed from the top of roller coasters. How strange that two sides of the river could have such different vibes.

When the streetcar arrived at my stop, I prayed internally that Pete, Tomo, and the rest of the police force could contain Dark Fusion's negativity.

The house was dark and cold, fitting after what I had just experienced. Elin had texted that she and Eric were having a cocktail and not to wait up. I wasn't sure that I would be able to sleep, but I must have crashed the minute my head hit the pillow, because the next thing I knew my alarm was sounding. I fumbled in the dark bedroom to find the off switch.

What time was it? It felt like the middle of the night, but my alarm read seven a.m. I bolted upright. I really must have crashed, because I had slept in my clothes. I tossed off the covers and hurried to take a quick shower. The hot water revived my senses. Last night felt like a blur. I wondered what today would hold. We had so much to finish—or did we? Would the parade even go on?

I dressed in a rush, tossed a change of clothes into my bag, and headed downstairs. The house was quiet. Elin must have overslept too, I thought. I started a pot of coffee. Then I went to wake her. "Elin." I knocked on her bedroom door. "It's after seven. We need to go."

No answer.

I knocked again.

"Elin?"

On the third attempt, I opened the door a crack. Elin's bed was still made. The pillows and sheets hadn't been disturbed. She must have stayed at Eric's hotel.

I returned to the kitchen, guzzled a cup of coffee, and went to catch a train. Portland was in a sleepy, dusky haze. The train rumbled along the waterfront and came to a stop not far from the Hawthorne Bridge. Unlike last night when the streets had been packed with people, at this early morning hour it was like a ghost town.

A thin layer of fog hung above the river, giving it an eerie, otherworldly glow. I quickened my pace. Every few minutes a car or bus would pass through the middle of the bridge, but otherwise there weren't even any early morning joggers out yet. Twice I stopped and checked behind me because I could have sworn I heard footsteps.

*Stop, Britta, I chided myself.*

When I arrived at the float barn there was a single police car parked in front of the entrance to the parking lot. Otherwise the place was deserted. Tomo had said that the police were going to stay to protect the floats all night. I was surprised that they'd only left one squad car. I continued on to the front doors, which were unlocked.

"Hello! Am I the first one here?" I called. My voice echoed in the empty space.

*Nicki must be here. Otherwise how were the doors unlocked?*

An uneasy sensation swelled through my body as I walked with trepidation toward our float. Something about the huge, cavernous space felt foreboding.

"Hello!" I called again.

The only answer was the sound of my own voice bouncing off the walls.

Shouldn't the other decorators and volunteers be here by now? We were supposed to report by seven thirty for the morning meeting. Had I missed a message? Was the parade canceled?

I thought about turning around, but I willed myself forward.

Bad choice.

When I made it to our float I looked up in horror. Our float had been destroyed. The arbor and grapevines that we had meticulously secured had been torn apart and were scattered in broken pieces throughout the floor.

I stepped forward and let out a scream.

Sham's body was sprawled among the ruins. A noose of purple violets twisted around his lifeless neck. ■

*Kate Dyer-Seeley is the author "Scene of the Climb," "Slayed on the Slopes," and "Silenced in the Surf" in the Pacific Northwest Mystery series, as well as the memoir "Underneath the Ash." Her writing has appeared in Climbing Magazine, The Oregonian, The Columbian, Portland Family Magazine, and The Vancouver Voice. She is an active member of the Willamette Writers Association and the Pacific Northwest Writers Association. Visit her website at [katedyerseeley.com](http://katedyerseeley.com).*

# The Light Went Out

By Stephen Maitland-Lewis  
Press Photo Credit: Nathan Sternfeld



Mrs. Thelma Brewster was one of the stalwarts of the New York charity that'd been established years before by her late mother-in-law to raise funds for research into ailments connected with the one part of the anatomy for which no foundation had yet been

established. Since becoming a widow a few years earlier and chairman of the family's charitable trust, she had been able to dispense substantial funds at her sole discretion. There was hardly a charity on the eastern seaboard that did not court her. She was a soft touch for animals, symphony orchestras, and opera societies. Orphanages, veterans, and religious organizations had a much harder time reaching out to her. Police and fire departments stood no chance.

She would have preferred to stay home that evening to watch, yet again, Gloria Swanson in *Sunset Boulevard*, but her old friend Emily Peacock had cajoled her into attending that evening's annual gala. Emily always supported her pet projects, so she felt obliged to reciprocate by attending in full force, with her twin stepsons at her side.

The elderly black-tie attendees were gathered in small groups in the reception room adjacent to the ballroom where dinner was to be served, either sipping pre-dinner cocktails or browsing a vast array of assorted items displayed on tables filling the entire length of the three walls.

Two groups cleared the vestibule so Mrs. Brewster and her stepsons could make their entry. She received a smile or two as she passed onlookers, heading toward the silent auction offerings. Most turned away. She was happy they did. She had no time for meaningless chitchat with people she neither knew nor wished to.

Mrs. Brewster, not yet sixty, was a tall woman of muscular

build, an artifact of her years as a renowned tennis player and golfer and, previously, her college days of captaining Vassar's lacrosse team. Her late husband had enjoyed an easy popularity among their social circle; *her* booming voice, coupled with a dearth of grace, humor, and charm, generally led to her being avoided—except by those sycophants targeting her for charitable donations, always willing to sacrifice pride and succumb to third-degree interrogation and humiliation in the hope of catching her in a generous spirit.

She wore a long-sleeved, black dress and a vintage but simple Cartier diamond necklace and bracelet; barely any make-up or nail polish was added. Her gray hair was cut like a man's, short and straight, and her earrings were small diamond studs. She stopped to greet someone she knew while her stepsons hoped a waiter would soon pass by with a champagne tray.

Hugo and Cameron were identical twins. Thirty years old, unmarried, well educated, polite, and pleasant company—all traits inherited from their father. Overall, most eligible. And though they hadn't inherited her genes, they were, like their stepmother, tall, broad-shouldered, athletic, and expensively and conservatively dressed. Always immaculate: clean shaven and tan.

A serious skier, Hugo spent three months of every year at the family chalet in Klosters. Cameron had been captain of his college tennis team. The boys shared stewardship of an eighty-five-foot racing yacht they kept at Martha's Vineyard. Regular entrants of international races, they had, that August, sailed across the Atlantic to Cowes in the Isle of Wight, won two trophies, and then traveled south to spend three weeks on the Mediterranean before returning to Massachusetts via the Azores.

Cameron waved across the room to a friend and left his stepmother and brother. Mrs. Brewster and Hugo elbowed their way in to look at the display. The usual array: gift vouchers for restaurants and stores; costume jewelry; some



sculpture and ceramics; weekends in the Hamptons; a week's stay at a Corfu villa; a day at a spa. Hugo paused to look at a baseball bat, allegedly signed by Joe DiMaggio, and wrote down his bid of \$750. He didn't care whether he won it, but felt obliged to bid on something. Mrs. Brewster carefully appraised a computer guru's offer of a six-week course in learning basic computer skills. \$500. Well worth it. She hated to be dependent on others and was tired of asking her stepsons to repeat their explanations of fundamentals even a five-year-old could handle, eyes closed. After writing down her bid, she moved to the next table, Hugo still at her side.

A few watercolors, placed on table-top easels, were pleasing enough but not special. Two seascapes and a handsome Golden Retriever. And behind on a screen, three portraits. A woman with a King Charles Spaniel and another woman with a baby. When her eyes turned to the third painting, she froze.

"My God," she whispered. "Hugo, look at that painting."

She grabbed his hand and he felt her tremble. "Hugo, what do you think?"

"It's her. It's Arabella."

"I know. It has to be. Look at the eyes. Look at the hair. Her smile. And those pearls. That's the necklace I gave her on her twenty-first birthday." In her whispering voice, she addressed no one in particular. Her eyes watered. "Who's the artist?" she asked. "Go and see."

Finding a break in the row of tables, Hugo navigated around and back to the painting. His examination turned up only one identifying mark: "HC 2011."

Carefully he removed the painting from the wall to see if there was anything on the back of it that would identify the artist. Simply a small label suggesting that, at one time, the painting had been sold by Taylor & Comer, a Boston gallery. He replaced it and looked across at his stepmother, whose eyes had not diverted from the portrait.

"Are the other two paintings by the same artist?" she asked. "Find out."

The other two, he discovered, had been properly signed by a female artist. He walked back around the table to rejoin her.

"Go find Cameron. Say nothing to him. Let him see the painting and we'll watch to see how he reacts."

She glanced down at the sheet on the table. There had been no bids for the girl's portrait, but the reserve was \$500. She picked up the pencil next to the sheet and wrote \$5000. Her eyes returned to the painting.

The two boys soon joined her.

"You'll never guess who I've just been talking to," Cameron said. "Lucas Tindall. You remember him, don't you? We were at school with him. He got expelled for selling drugs."

"Cameron. Shut up. Just look at these paintings."

"Very well," he answered with little enthusiasm.

He picked up one of the seascapes and then the other. "Very nice. You see stuff like this at every gift shop on the

cape. What's the big deal?"

"Look on the wall."

His brother and stepmother waited in silence.

"Jesus Christ," he said softly. "That's Arabella."

Hugo and Mrs. Brewster nodded. "No doubt about it."

"Those are the pearls you and Dad gave her on her birthday, I think," Cameron said.

"People are moving in to take their tables in the ballroom," his stepmother replied. "Hugo, you stay here until they close the silent auction. If anyone places a bid over mine, go up, scare them off. Go up in increments of five thousand. Cameron, let's find our table."

Hugo nodded at her direction. He knew better than to argue.

"In fact, stay here for the rest of the evening. Just in case there are any shenanigans with people placing bids after they announce the auction is closed. It wouldn't be the first time. I'm not taking any chances. Cameron can swap places with you every half hour."

Mrs. Brewster did not enjoy the rest of the evening; she had nothing in common with the man sitting next to her, a professor of mathematics at Columbia University. Cameron was so overwhelmed by the painting that he was oblivious to the lukewarm tomato soup, tasteless chicken breast, and chocolate gateaux. The speeches and the live auction sucked the breath from the room. Mrs. Brewster sat motionless, her face drained of color. Her wine glass remained untouched as did the food on her plate.

Hugo came over to the table and whispered something in her ear, his eyes lingering longingly on her uneaten dinner. When she pushed him away, he slunk back to his post to see if anyone had topped her bid for the painting. No one had.

As soon as the silent auction ended, just before the entertainment began, Mrs. Brewster nudged Cameron—they rose without a smile or wave good-bye to the other eight people at the table. As they passed through the ballroom in order to rejoin Hugo, the loud screeching of a heavily tattooed and tanned singer, sporting a bright green wig and a strapless, revealing, white sequined dress, propelled them to walk even faster.

Ignoring the protestations of a volunteer, Cameron removed the painting from the wall as his stepmother favored the charity of the night with a \$5,000 check. With the painting tucked under Cameron's arm, they left the hotel to walk barely one block up Fifth Avenue to their co-op apartment.

Carefully Cameron positioned it on an armchair across from where his stepmother sat.

"Pour me a cognac," she snapped. "And bring me tonight's program. Let's see if we can determine who donated the painting."

Hugo did the honors.

"She would have been twenty-seven now"—Mrs. Brewster tugged a drink of brandy—"had that bastard not murdered her." She wiped away a tear. "I can't believe he got

away with it."

"It was tough on all of us," Hugo offered, referring to the loss of a father and then, not three months later, a kid sister.

"Don't I know it?" she answered.

"Looks as though the painting might have been donated by a gallery in Tribeca. McGrail and Foster," Cameron said, turning over the pages in the program.

"I'll call them in the morning. I'm going to bed. This has been an emotionally exhausting evening, to put it mildly."

"Why the hell don't art galleries open at an acceptable hour? Ten-thirty," she snarled as she looked at her watch. "That's not for another two hours, for God's sake." She put down the telephone after leaving a curt message demanding a call back.

Her stepsons, loitering at the breakfast table, knew better than to comment. After a lifetime of observing how her moods of mild irritation could quickly turn into temper tantrums, they had mastered the art of keeping their thoughts to themselves.

"I'll call Emily Peacock. Maybe she can throw some light on the painting's provenance," she mused. "Fancy Emily not being there last night after she badgered me for weeks about the damned event. But I'm glad I went. After all, Arabella's portrait . . ." She sipped her coffee. "And what are you two dilettantes doing today?"

Cameron stretched. "Meeting at the Yacht Club to discuss putting together a team for an upcoming race."

"It must be terrible to be so overwhelmed with work," she answered with undisguised sarcasm.

"Well, did you find out anything, Mama?" Hugo asked as he poured himself a pre-dinner cocktail. Neither Hugo nor Cameron liked calling this woman 'mother.' On top of which, they doubted she enjoyed hearing the maternal moniker any more than they liked saying it. But before his passing, their father had made it clear he expected them to act like a family—and that meant addressing his bride as though she'd given birth to them.

"Absolutely nothing. Emily has pneumonia, or so she says, and that's why she wasn't there last night. She hasn't the first clue about how Arabella's portrait ended up as an item in the silent auction. I took a cab to Tribeca to visit the art gallery. They were most unhelpful. They refused to give me any information whatsoever about the artist."

"How did they get hold of the painting? Did they at least tell you that?"

"No. All they said was that if I left my name and telephone number, they would let me know if another painting by the same artist came in."

"So, I suppose there's not much more we can do," Hugo said.

"Nonsense. After I left the gallery, I came straight back here and telephoned Bill Field, our attorney, who suggested I call David Hudson, who is supposed to be a tip-top private investigator. I met with Hudson at his office on Fifty-Seventh,

and I've retained him to find the artist. He charges a fortune, but I have every confidence he'll come up with something."

Cameron set down his own cocktail. "He say how long it might take him?"

"Not exactly. He told me to be patient and that it might be three months before we hear anything."

"I hope you're not paying him a daily rate for his services."

"Cameron, that's none of your business. I'll pay whatever it takes to find this man."

Hugo and Cameron found their stepmother seated at her desk in the book-lined library of her forty-room mansion in Newport staring out the window at the harbor. The brothers had been interviewing crew members for their upcoming voyage to New Zealand and were not pleased with her summons for this immediate conference.

"You took your time."

"We're sorry, but we were in the middle of something. What's so important that couldn't wait until dinner?" Hugo replied.

She paused to sip the first of the evening's gin and tonic and waited until John, her butler, had brought the boys their usual cocktails.

"It is three months to the day since I retained David Hudson to ascertain the identity of the artist who painted Arabella's portrait." She beckoned to the wall where the painting hung far from the window to avoid the fierce sun that during the summer months could be brutal.

"So what has he come up with? Anything?" Cameron asked.

"I'm not so sure that what he has come up with has been worth close to a thousand dollars a day, but it's a start."

Hugo set his drink aside. "You've invested ninety thousand dollars—already?"

"Don't worry. It's my money and not a dime has been paid from your trust."

"So tell us what he's found out."

"In a nutshell, Hudson believes that the painting is by a man called Edward Peterson."

"Well, that's bullshit before we go any further," Cameron insisted. "The initials on the canvas are HC."

"Cameron, be quiet."

"Okay, Mother, go on."

"Edward Peterson's seascapes sell quite well in Boston, Portland, and Connecticut. He has a representative who promotes his work with middle-range galleries on the coast between New York and Maine."

Since Cameron, having been shut down, now seemed content to affix his nonchalant eyes on the drink swirling in his hand, it was Hugo's turn to object. "So, here we have you in search of an artist who painted a portrait of Arabella who signs his works HC and you've spent ninety thousand dollars and have come up with an artist called Edward Peterson who paints seascapes. Not a good investment, if you don't mind me saying so."



The brothers sniggered.

"When you let me finish, you'll wipe that grin off your face."

"Okay, okay. Go on."

"HC stands for Hallowell City, a small town in Maine on the Kennebec River. That's where Peterson was born. And, it's barely five minutes from Augusta."

"So?"

"Have you forgotten that Arabella had a friend in Augusta she would visit often? A girl who was her roommate at college."

"That rings a bell," Hugo admitted.

"And what did the artist paint after the initials HC?"

"2011. The year Arabella was murdered."

The boys looked at each other, stunned.

Cameron risked speaking up again. "So where do we go from here?"

"We pay Mr. Peterson a visit."

"Did your Mr. Hudson come up with an address?"

"Sort of. As a child, Peterson spent many summers lobster fishing. He developed a love for the sea and he excelled at art in school, hence the seascapes. And then he joined the Navy."

"Is he still in the Navy? How old is he?"

"Hudson believes him to be in his early sixties. He retired early from the Navy and, like many ex-sailors, got a job as a lighthouse keeper."

This pulled Cameron's attention fully away from his drink. "That doesn't make sense. There are hardly any lighthouses anymore that are manned. They're all automated—they're equipped with machinery that can be controlled from land."

Not one to gracefully withstand correction in any matter, nautical or otherwise, Mrs. Brewster sniffed. "Anyway, he's a lighthouse keeper. That's what Hudson told me."

Hugo thought. "It's possible. There are still some lighthouses that are manned. What a lonely job. One would have to be extremely self-sufficient to take on something like that, after the camaraderie to which he would have been exposed during a long term career in the Navy."

"And remember, he liked to paint."

"But how would he have met Arabella, for God's sake?"

"That's something we're going to have to find out. Remember, Arabella mixed with a rough crowd—heavy drinkers—and the way that girl *dressed* sometimes— Well, your sister could look and act like a tramp at times, you know that. Maybe this Peterson was a dealer and she met him because they were both addicts. Who knows?"

Cameron, however, had another theory. "Do you think he killed her because he was after her money?"

"Unlikely. When we went through all of Arabella's papers and bank statements, there were no noticeable withdrawals. And, according to Hudson, Peterson sold about one painting every month for between three and five thousand—that, added to his salary and Navy pension. Not to mention, he lived a frugal life on a rock in the middle of the Atlantic with just one long weekend break every month."

"Arabella was killed on a Saturday night."

"That's right, Hugo. How could I ever forget that telephone call the next morning?"

"... But we're just assuming Peterson's the murderer."

"He *is* the murderer. Of that I have no doubt. And there's another clue."

"Go on." Even as Hugo compelled his stepmother's discoveries, he glanced toward Cameron, trying to gauge his brother's reaction. Was Hugo alone in his concern that Mrs. Brewster sounded overly conclusive about details that could be coincidence? Or his concern over what the old woman would *do* with her newfound information? But Cameron had returned to inspecting his drink.

"Hudson managed to find out—and don't ask me how, because he wouldn't tell me—that every month, he'd withdraw one thousand in cash. What did he do that for? Why did he need cash when he was the only person on a damn lighthouse?"

"You have a good point, Mother. I wouldn't know."

"That is because you are a halfwit. He was paying off someone to keep his mouth shut. He was being blackmailed."

"I suppose that's possible," allowed Hugo, always the quicker of the twins to recover from their stepmother's stings.

"This is what we're going to do. Next Tuesday, we'll meet in Montauk. We're going to pay the murderer Peterson a visit. You sail there and I'll meet you at the marina. After a quick lunch, we'll take a little trip to the lighthouse. I'm told it's about seven miles out to sea. Bring the small boat. No need to sail in that ostentatious thing you blow your trust income on."

"How are you going to get there?"

"Eric will drive me."

The brothers bristled at the name of their stepmother's chauffeur, her former gardener who, soon after he began sleeping with her, was promoted—first to chauffeur and then effectively to the major domo at her Rhode Island estate.

Hugo and Cameron set off the following Tuesday, seven o'clock, from Newport to pick up their stepmother in Montauk. "Think she'll actually get on the boat?" Hugo asked his brother as soon as they were underway. It wasn't an unreasonable question: she hated sailing, and she wasn't very fond of their company either. Her own preferred means of travel between Rhode Island and the Long Island peninsula was limousine, and now that Eric was on the scene, road trips were her only means of travel.

Cameron hoped the realization that she could not similarly take a chauffeured car to the lighthouse would encourage her to board the yacht without complaint. However, this was hope—not expectation.

The twins each privately anticipated their stepmother's slights and grievances as soon as she stepped aboard, no doubt to plant herself starboard bow, where she would complain about the ocean's spray as the sailing yacht skipped spritely along, urged by the day's 17-knot wind. She wouldn't

correct the problem by going aft or burrowing herself in one of the boat's two comfortable sleeping cabins. She wouldn't relax, trusting her stepsons' years of sailing expertise. If anything, she would grumble to them that this yacht, at an ample forty feet, was nothing compared to the eighty-two-foot, \$5 million-plus yacht with its twenty-foot beam and four sleeping cabins, which the boys used for transatlantic crossings. She was the sort to oscillate between finding *that* boat gaudy and superfluous, and thinking it was the only vessel good enough to transport her.

Within a couple hours, they had arrived at the marina in Montauk, and there she was waiting for them, her mouth a much grimmer line than the surface of the Atlantic.

After they had secured the boat for what they hoped would be its short berth at the marina, Hugo alighted the yacht and started, "Hello, Mother. We—"

"This is why I don't like boats," she greeted them. "It's too unpredictable trying to time your arrival. Do you know how long I've been standing here waiting for you two? Do you *care*?"

It was—as always—respect for the memory of their late father that helped Cameron stifle the response he was tempted to give, to say instead, "Sorry you had to wait. Is there a bag I can help you with, Mother?"

"Well, I can't lug the thing out of the trunk and onto your rocky boat by myself. And Eric has hurt his back."

"Very well. Where is he? Is he joining us for lunch?"

"No. He's gone inside to use the restroom. He knows you two dislike him, and he can't stand the sight of either of you. This mission is hard enough for me as it is without having to witness the hatred in everyone's eyes across the table." Then she added, with a rare chuckle, "It would spoil my lunch."

"Cameron"—she pointed toward the limo at the curb, its glittering onyx exterior in sharp contrast with most of the marina's earthy tones—"Eric will wait for me back here. I'm hungry and I won't be getting on that damn thing with an empty stomach. Your brother and me will go in and get a table."

"Your brother and *I*." Cameron corrected her grammar in the same way he expressed most of his sentiments about her: under his breath. He then struggled to unload the cumbersome kitbag from the trunk of her car. Was she carting hand weights out to the lighthouse? He finished quickly, joined Hugo and their stepmother for a tense meal of lump crab cake (which she found offensively spiced), bourbon-glazed salmon (which she found too smoky), grilled asparagus and pan-roasted mushrooms (which she didn't even touch).

After lunch, they boarded as quickly as possible. Mrs. Brewster checked twice to ensure her heavy kitbag had been loaded, and she revealed no humor when asked about its contents. "I'll be right here," she announced, planting herself starboard bow as predicted. "It's the only spot on this thing where I can stand and not get seasick."

The voyage lasted only seven nautical miles, though it

felt much longer to the twins.

Fortunately the sea was calm and the wind was light. A bevy of seagulls led the way to the lighthouse. As they approached, they saw a tall man, tanned, wearing a blue nautical pullover and dark gray trousers with a sailor's cap firmly placed on his head; he stood outside tinkering with an outboard motor on his small boat moored on a short jetty that stretched out from the rocks.

"Take a good look at that swine," she ordered the twins.

The man glanced up and waved. It was less a hospitable gesture than a perfunctory acknowledgment of their approach. Between prescribed hours, lighthouse keepers were obliged to extend a welcome to visitors. To many, such visits were delightful interruptions that broke up the monotony of the day. To others, they were intrusions. Seeing that these seafarers were intent on stopping for a visit, he put down the tool he had been using, stepped out of the boat, and walked to the end of the jetty, where he beckoned to them to approach.

"Welcome to my home," he said with a forced smile. "Throw me your rope and I'll tie you up."

Mrs. Brewster picked up her bag and stared at him.

"Cameron. Get off first. I don't want to touch this man's hand if he offers to help me get off this damned thing."

He obliged.

"I don't get many visitors, especially this time of the year," he announced. "So welcome. May I invite you in for a coffee or tea, perhaps?"

"That would be nice," Hugo volunteered, assuming this would fit into his stepmother's undisclosed plan.

"I'm Edward Peterson. And you?"

"I'm Emily Carlton," Mrs. Brewster rushed to reply. "These are my nephews, George and Terry English."

The boys looked askance at her deception.

They followed Peterson from the jetty, along a stone pathway and around to the other side of the lighthouse to a heavy door that opened up to a spiral staircase.

"There are three floors. Upstairs, on the first floor, I have my kitchen and living room, my bathroom and bedroom are on the floor above, and then there's the actual light and all the paraphernalia that goes with it."

Mrs. Brewster paused at a couple of points along the steep staircase before reaching the open kitchen.

Cameron—briefly wondering if he was supposed to be George or Terry—wanted to confirm a thought he'd previously expressed. "Most lighthouses are automatic these days, aren't they? Mr. Peterson?"

"Yes, there are just a few of us keepers still around. This one will be automated next year, and then I'll be pensioned off. Twenty-five years in the Navy and this is my nineteenth as a keeper, so I'll be ready to retire."

"How many times do you have to go up and down these stairs every day?" Hugo had determined his best role in this subterfuge was to keep things affable, asking the questions he figured a passerby named George or Terry would ask. "It's

quite a work out.”

“It is. Now, please step inside and I’ll put the kettle on. It’s tea or coffee. Only instant, I’m afraid.”

Mrs. Brewster paused to take in the almost round room, sparsely furnished with a basic kitchen, a square wooden table with four chairs, and a well-used brown leather sofa and armchair. To the right of the kitchen counter was an easel on which stood a canvas with an outline of a girl’s face etched in pencil.

“I can’t offer you anything other than some chocolate brownies. Picked them up when I went over to Montauk last week to get a few provisions. I try, weather permitting, to get over once every month. Mostly a day’s trip. Anything longer than that, I need to make sure I get a relief keeper, but that’s becoming harder by the year. More and more leaving the service.”

Mrs. Brewster was silent. Her eyes were fixed on the walls. Seven portraits. All in oil. Each painting the identical subject matter. The same colors. The same features. Portraits. Each one unquestionably Arabella. She cleared her throat to gain the attention of the twins and nodded in the direction of the walls. They turned to look.

“How do you like your coffee, Mrs. Carlton? I only have powdered milk, if that’s okay?”

He bent down to open a cabinet under the kitchen counter.

The zipper on Mrs. Brewster’s bag issued a menacing whine as she ripped it open. The lighthouse keeper—and artist, and murderer—turned his head toward the sound but neither turned around nor stood fully straight again. For someone who’d had to catch her breath on the stairs, she now demonstrated lightning reflexes. The speed of a skilled executioner. She retrieved her lady’s pistol, bought years earlier when she’d taken lessons at a Manhattan rifle school, and aimed.

Peterson arose with the container of powdered milk in hand. And the guest he knew as Emily shot him through the chest.

The twins’ eyes went from the man, blood oozing from his chest onto his navy pullover, his bewildered expression pleading for explanation, to their stepmother. Both boys feeling numb, leaden, they could only watch as she sauntered even closer to Peterson’s slumped body, which lay on the floor beneath the kitchen counter and the wall.

“Just to make sure,” she spat out viciously, as she fired one more shot directly at the dying man’s head.

“Jesus Christ, you’ve killed him!”

“How very observant of you, Cameron. Hugo, open that window. Do as I say. I have this all planned out.”

Hugo’s limbs seemed to move involuntarily: freighting him to the window, opening it as she had commanded.

“The two of you. I want you to throw the body out of the window. Okay. Then, go to the boat and bring out the kitbag and put it alongside the body. I have some work to do here. Now move.”

Cameron may not have moved at all were it not for the sight, amid this sudden gale of chaos, of his brother struggling with a chore. If the task itself was gruesome—trying to lug the deadweight of a murderous and murdered lighthouse keeper to the window—Cameron’s instinct to help his brother with whatever needed doing was familiar. Together they managed it. Then, together, they exited without further instruction.

Alone in the lighthouse kitchen, Mrs. Brewster mumbled, “Thank God I remembered to wear gloves,” as she retrieved a rag and began to mop up the few drops of blood on the floor and to put the unused coffee mugs back in the cabinet, the brownies back in the tin.

Standing at the window to wipe away any fingerprints, she peered out and saw Peterson’s body crumpled on the ground. And the twins, looking out to sea.

“Okay,” she said as she approached them. “Put the body into the kitbag. You see the blood on the path. Grab that watering can over there, fill it, and wash away the blood. When you’ve done that, stuff the can in the bag too.”

She watched them as they obeyed, less in the manner of children honoring a parent than robots responding to code. On top of which, they had the glassy eyes and stiff extremities of mechanical creatures.

Minutes later they were aboard and on their way back to Montauk. A couple of miles into the journey, she spoke again, “Toss the kitbag now into the water. The weights will ensure it doesn’t float and goes down to the seabed. Okay?”

Neither twin had yet broken free of his spell; in their shock, they had become like so many modern lighthouses—automated. They did as she said. They tossed the kitbag.

On the way back from the lighthouse to the marina, the seven miles felt longer still. Every choppy wave they cut across sent a jolt through Hugo’s spine. While he manned the helm, Cameron wandered—aimless, wide-eyed—into the sleeping cabins sequestered below deck. When he reached one of the beds with a thin but amenable mattress, his knees gave out, and down he went.

He knew his brother had seen what he had: their stepmother murdering the lighthouse keeper. And now she was on their boat. They were, in a sense, her getaway drivers, albeit in a sailing yacht rather than a fast car with its windows tinted dark enough to match lightless alleyways and the dead of night.

She was up there right now. With his brother. With Hugo.

The thought propelled Cameron from his seat up the stairs, toward the large wheel his twin brother clung to with white-knuckled fingers. After seven rugged, sick-making miles at sea, they dropped her off back at the Montauk marina.

Her composure after murdering a man—the way she stepped off the yacht and onto the dock with her accustomed air of disapproval for everything that surrounded her—made both boys wonder if, to her, this was nothing new. Just another day.

She waved to them, dismissively, without a glance



backward.

Cameron couldn't speak, but Hugo managed a few words. "Good-bye . . . Mother."

The twins' own journey back was gruesome. Sailing conditions had changed from good to severe within a few hours. It was as if the sea responded to their new status as accomplices to murder by visiting on them rough waters, heavy winds and pelting rain. Instead of sailing back to Rhode Island, they opted to hug the coastline and sail back to New York, where they had a mooring at the New York City Marina on West 79<sup>th</sup> Street. Nevertheless, it was after midnight before they were back at their apartment on Fifth Avenue. They had barely broken their silence since leaving the lighthouse several hours earlier.

A few days later, Cameron telephoned his brother from his gym.

"You'll never believe this," he whispered. "The Coast Guard reported Peterson missing, and they're conducting a search. It was Peterson's brother who was the murderer and he's on the lam. Evidently, Peterson has been paying off his brother's blackmailer all these years."

"My God. She killed an innocent man."

"Meet me near the entrance to the zoo in Central Park, half an hour."

Hugo sat stone-faced as Cameron approached. Since receiving his brother's phone call, he had purchased that morning's newspaper; waiting on the bench, he'd read and reread the three-paragraph story on page five describing the lighthouse keeper's mysterious disappearance.

"Have you spoken to that bitch of a stepmother?" Hugo asked.

"I called the house immediately after I called you from the gym."

"And?"

"Day after the murder, she flew to London with Eric. God knows where they are now."

"My God."

Cameron pulled his cell phone from his jacket pocket. "It's Janet," he said, "housekeeper at Rhode Island... Yes, Janet?" He listened attentively. "I'm with Hugo. We'll go right away to the marina. Thank you."

Hugo didn't have time to ask before Cameron explained: "We've got to get over to the marina immediately. Janet had a call from Rod at the marina, who's cleaning out the boat. Something's up."

Within ten minutes they approached the marina. Two police cars were already parked together with a truck that bore the markings of a bomb disposal squad. Someone had already alerted the media. Photographers and reporters wielding microphones swarmed the scene like locusts.

A detective approached Cameron and Hugo as they got out of the cab.

"Is this your yacht, gentlemen?"

Hugo found his voice first. "What's going on?"

"Your man, Rod, found a shoebox under one of the bunks. He heard ticking. He had the common sense to call 911 and our guys discovered a time bomb in the shoebox. Was set to go off several days ago, last Tuesday to be exact, at eight o'clock in the evening. Where were you that night?"

The twins looked at each other.

Cameron spoke not to the police officer but to his brother. "My God, we were on the boat, sailing from Montauk to Rhode Island but, because of the storm, we decided to hug the coast and sail down here."

"Who do you think put the bomb aboard? Any ideas?"

They shrugged.

"And I guess the bomb was to be activated by a remote and because of the storm there was no signal. That storm saved your lives." The police officer whistled. He had that demeanor unique to emergency responders: able to sound lighthearted in the face of bombs and sinister schemes and near deaths. "We need to discuss all this with you at length, gentlemen. Be at the precinct in an hour?"

"Of course."

They walked back onto 79th Street to hail a cab. "It must have been Eric who put the bomb aboard while we were having lunch," Hugo whispered. "So she wanted us dead, too."

"Jesus Christ." It was all his brother could say.

"We better call an attorney." ■

*Stephen Maitland-Lewis is an award-winning author, a British attorney, and a former international investment banker. He has held senior executive positions in London, Kuwait and on Wall Street prior to moving to California in 1991. He has owned a luxury hotel and a world-renowned restaurant and was also Director of Marketing of a Los Angeles daily newspaper. Maitland-Lewis is a jazz aficionado and a Board Trustee of the Louis Armstrong House Museum in New York. In 2014, he received the Museum's prestigious Louie Award. A member of PEN and the Author's Guild, Maitland-Lewis is also on the Executive Committee of the International Mystery Writers Festival. His novel "Hero on Three Continents" has received numerous accolades, and "Emeralds Never Fade" won the 2012 Benjamin Franklin Award for Historical Fiction and the 2011 Written Arts Award for Best Fiction. His novel "Ambition" was a 2013 USA Best Book Awards finalist and won first place for General Fiction in the 2013 Rebecca's Reads Choice Awards. Maitland-Lewis' most recent novel "Botticelli's Bastard" was a 2014 USA Best Book Awards finalist in three categories and won the Bronze Award in Best Regional Fiction (Europe) at the 2015 Independent Publisher Book Awards. In January of 2016, Maitland-Lewis was sworn in as a Freeman of the City of London and admitted as a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of City Solicitors. In April of 2016, he became a Fellow of The Royal Geographical Society (FRGS). Maitland-Lewis and his wife, Joni Berry, divide their time between their homes in Beverly Hills and New Orleans.*

# Pipe Tobacco

By Marlin Bressi

**ONE PACKAGE OF CAPTAIN BLACK, PLEASE.** Black cherry, if you've got it. Yes, that'll be everything. You know, the smell of Captain Black pipe tobacco really takes me back to when I was a kid. I suppose lots of fathers enjoyed smoking pipes back then. Buzz, my father, certainly did. All the fellows down at Pop's office called him Buzz and the nickname sort of stuck.

After all of these years I don't think any of us knew exactly what kind of work he performed at the office. Like other dads, he would exit the house each morning, briefcase in hand and fedora atop his head, leaving behind a trail of Old Spice aftershave which lingered in the air for a good five minutes after he left. At precisely ten after six each evening he would return home, kick off his shoes, and smoke his pipe. Over dinner, he would discuss things like the Peterson Account or the Wilmer Account or the Kinney Account. It was 1955, and I was six years old, so at the time I assumed my father must have been some sort of accountant.

Sadie, that was Mother's name, was a beautiful woman. Here, look at this picture. I've been carrying it around in my wallet since I was a teenager. It was taken right after the war, before Pops began working for Mr. Kelleher. A young couple in love, the entire world spread out before them like a banquet. I wasn't even a speck of light in Daddy's eye back then. No, I wouldn't come along for a few more years.

Fifty-five was a tough year for the Ward family. Some investments went south and the roof began to leak and Mother said that she wanted to join the workforce. Pops adamantly protested, of course, he being of a generation that believed a woman's place was in the home. Perhaps mother wouldn't have minded staying at home, if the roof didn't leak so much.

Mother promised that she would stay home, but sometime around February she began squirreling away money, stuffing it inside the tin of sugar in the kitchen cupboard. She did whatever she could to make life better for me and Sis. She gave piano lessons, voice lessons, you name it. Beautiful as well as talented, that was Sadie Ward. She was bound and determined to get a new roof by the end of the year. I suppose women aren't fond of being rained upon in their own homes.

Spring eventually came, slapping the bitter taste of winter from our mouths. Mr. Kelleher's firm was handed the Peterson Account, which must have been quite an important deal for my father. One day, Mr. Kelleher took Old Man Peterson and Pops out to lunch. Those were the days when business was conducted over ribeye steaks and a few stiff martinis.

"Let's go to the Purple Panda Club," suggested Mr. Kelleher. My father balked, of course, because he knew all about that place. Topless waitresses fluttering around like gauzy-eyed butterflies, cigarette trays strapped to their waists. Buzz Ward didn't frequent such establishments. His idea of indulgence consisted of a cigar, a snifter of peach brandy and perhaps a Dodgers game on the radio.

Buzz Ward, however, knew the Peterson Account was the kind of deal that could make or break Mr. Kelleher, so off to the Purple Panda they went. How red Pop's face must have been upon entering that place. I can only imagine his embarrassment. You know something? Mother was the only girl he ever kissed. No, in his whole life. I'm serious.

And how red Pop's face must have been when Old Man Peterson pointed his stubby finger at the stage; his turkey neck wattled as he said, "Sweet fancy Moses! Look at the cantaloupes on that dancer!"

"Why, that's Sadie," said Mr. Kelleher, as if Old Man Peterson ought to have known her name. "They say that for a ten-spot, she'll take you in the back and let you do anything you'd like to her."

Lord, look at the time. How about giving me another package of Captain Black before I go? I have to meet with Mr. Phillips from the parole board. Pops has been in prison for a long time, and I'm sure he misses his pipe tobacco.

■





## Twitter Advertising Network

How many readers do we reach?

**Enough readers to fill  
LA Memorial Coliseum 16 times.**



Think you'd sell some books?

**1,300,000**

Twitter Followers Worldwide

LOW-COST

HIGH-IMPACT

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES

# SUSPENSE MAGAZINE BOOK REVIEWS INSIDE THE PAGES

## THE PLAY OF LIGHT AND SHADOW

By Barry Ergang

This delightful locked room mystery novelette includes a bonus at the end.

The story begins with two old friends in a bar discussing a possible job: Darnell, a private detective who is an ex-cop and a lover of classic literature; and the narrator, a university professor who is bartending on his sabbatical. Both are interesting characters.

The bartending professor offers Darnell a job guarding a valuable piece of unusual art for a university colleague, Dr. Gaines, Chairman of the Art History Department. The piece of art was created by a painter named Charles Riveau, now deceased. While he was alive, he associated with a shadowy character named Paul Marchand, a man with a criminal past, and a passion for destroying the work of Riveau. Dr. Gaines is afraid Marchand will somehow succeed in getting to his artwork and marring it.

On the occasion of putting the newly acquired painting on display, Darnell agrees to take the job, making sure it stays safe while a cast of assorted characters filter through the gallery. The narrator/bartender/professor relates the goings on of the evening for us, bringing us into a locked door mystery, one of those impossible crimes. Impossible, of course, until it's explained and made clear.

The bonus at the end is on the order of "The Making of" this work, offering an intimate look into the mind of the creator of this twisted, entertaining tale.

I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. Maybe you can even solve it quicker than I.

Reviewed by Kaye George, Editor of "Day of the Dark: Eclipse Stories" ■

## THE DEAD RINGER

By M. C. Beaton

Fans of the prickly, likeable-for-being-unlikeable Agatha Raisin, have another mystery. She solves the crime, of course, but has to overcome a number of obstacles along the way. These stories are told in a style suitable for her—an abrupt and caustic, yet appealing woman.

The village of Thirk Magna, in the Cotswolds, is about to receive a visit from the new bishop, a handsome man named Peter Salver-Hinkley with a troubling past. Mavis and Millicent Dupin, identical twins who run the motley group of bell-ringers with savage authority, are thrilled about the visit. They want to go overboard with an extremely long and complicated, unpopular ringing pattern. When Millicent is found dead, there is no lack of suspects for the killing of the unpopular woman.

One of the bell-ringers asks Agatha to look into the death, so she starts investigating, even though she detests the boring backwater village and most of the inhabitants. One highly attractive man shows up, however; a reporter who seems to cause some strange happening inside Agatha's small heart. She falls in love with him. The real thing; the head-over-heels, heart-pumping real thing.

This turns out to be most unsuitable, though, and puts Agatha in a terrible position. She is determined to get to the bottom of the many mysteries that are popping up. Get your hands on a copy to find out exactly how she does it.

Reviewed by Kaye George, Editor of "Day of the Dark: Eclipse Stories" ■



## BLEAK HARBOR

By Bryan Gruley

Although the title brings to mind a grim port in a dismal town, it is actually a bright shoreline in a small town hosting its annual dragonfly festival.

Danny, a teenager diagnosed on the autism spectrum, lives there with his mother and stepfather. The Bleak's are related to the original town's founders. As the town prepares for a deluge of out-of-towners to descend on their shores for the festival, Danny disappears. While the frantic parents turn over every stone in an effort to find their missing son, a series of texts arrive on their phones. These messages share deep secrets; so deep that husband and wife have not even shared them with each other. Whoever has Danny is well-informed. In fact, they know more about the family's personal lives than could be anticipated.

As the police knock on every door and try to find who is making the threats, and ransoms are demanded, the couple try to keep the police out of their personal business, holding back information that may be important to the search and rescue efforts. When it is discovered that Danny's natural father was recently released from prison, the search becomes desperate.

This was a page-turning thriller that I read in one sitting. Not only was it impossible to put down, but Gruley has managed to perfect the one thing so difficult for most writers to attain: dialogue. Everything said is written in such a way that it is typical general conversation; nothing felt forced. In fact, it was so good he has joined the masters of dialogue, competing with the likes of John Sandford. Heck, I was expecting Virgil Flowers to lead the investigation.

An expertly written, easy to read thriller with the all-important twist at the end.

Reviewed by Mark P. Sadler, author of "Kettle of Vultures" ■



## SHELL GAME

By Sara Paretsky

You always know upon seeing the name: Detective V.I. Warshawski that the book is going to be oh-so-good.

In this newest offering from the fabulous Paretsky, the highly admired V.I. has not one but two confusing cases that she must tackle and solve at the same time. Worse yet, both of these puzzles involve people who are extremely close to her, which makes them beyond personal and causes V.I. to face some of the most pressing problems she's ever encountered.

Lotty Herschel is one of the people involved. A close friend and mentor to V.I., it is Lotty's nephew who has been placed in the eye of the police, becoming the prime suspect in a murder. But the evidence is not exactly overwhelming. You see, Felix Herschel wasn't exactly found holding a smoking gun; it was simply that his name and phone number were found on the victim's remains. This complete stranger of a victim turns out to be one obsessed with Middle Eastern archaeology, which leads to a stolen artifact and a network of criminals spread all over the world.

But that's not the only maze V.I. will have to traverse. In addition, her own niece (Reno) has disappeared. Not only did Reno have a hard past, but she's extremely beautiful and is holding on to a secret that may be the catalyst as to why she's missing.

This is the perfect title for this plot. From dealing with the Russian mob to ICE agents gone rogue to powerful people, stolen artifacts and so much more, V.I. must work double-time in order to win the shell game and bring justice to the people who deserve it.

Once again, Paretsky has done a brilliant job with plot and character. It is no surprise that V.I. is one who has lasted this long!

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of "The Double-Edged Sword" published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of Suspense Magazine ■



## THE 7 1/2 DEATHS OF EVELYN HARDCASTLE

By Stuart Turton

And now, for something completely different...

When I started reading, I wondered, is this a play? A play within a play? A dream? We begin "in" the person of Dr. Sebastian Bell, who cannot remember who he is, where he is, or why he's there.

Mystery after mystery unfolds; some solved, some not. The central event is that Evelyn Hardcastle will be murdered at 11 pm. The Hardcastle family holds a masquerade ball that night at the moldering old family place, Blackheath, giving us the theme: masks. The whole novel carries the air of a distorted version of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, weird and twisted, giving the characters multiple chances to get it right. The central character doesn't know who, if anyone, he can trust and who he can believe. He's groping in the dark for the answers.

Here's what's unique about this plot. The central figure is not actually Dr. Bell, he's someone named Adrian who is inhabiting Dr. Bell for the day. He is charged with finding out who will murder Ms. Hardcastle. Upon failing this job the first day, the next day he inhabits a different person, then another, then yet another, for eight days, gathering clues and frantically trying to not only solve the murder, but to prevent it. It's an attempt at crime prevention so complicated, with so many players, that it can't be accomplished in one iteration. If he solves the murder, he will be permitted to leave. He is warned not to prevent the murder, but he is desperate to do that, even if it means he might have to repeat the day forever.

A note which I hope will be helpful. There are a lot of characters whose names begin with the letter D. It will behoove the reader to keep them all straight. At the conclusion, I promise you will be rewarded with an astounding ending.

Reviewed by Kaye George, Editor of "Day of the Dark: Eclipse Stories" ■

## AN ANONYMOUS GIRL

By Greer Hendricks & Sarah Pekkanen

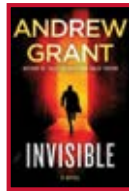
For readers who caught the title "The Wife Between Us," you're already aware that these two writers working together create extremely deep, complex, and heart-racing plots that delve into the psyche and change the way people look at "normal" situations.

In this new title, Jess Farris is a hardworking girl trying to make it on her own as a make-up artist and arrives at a new client's apartment in order to "spruce" them up. Jess struggles to make money; she's a loving daughter who wants to help her parents back home (especially her father who has just lost his job). She is also a good sibling, paying for her younger sister's medical care; a sister who had a horrible accident while in Jess's care a long time ago. When Jess is with her client, she finds out about a survey being done at the local college that pays \$500. Jess decides to fib just a little and go get the money. What she finds on this survey, however, is far different than what she expected.

The "doctor" behind this little project has a scheme of her own in the works, and instead of simply taking down Jess's answers, she manipulates Jess in order to get her to do what she wants. Everything from a twisted marriage, to encounters conveniently set up by the doctor, to a past girl who took her own life because of something that occurred... this book has it all. It's as if you're walking through a morality maze, trying to figure out what you would do if faced with a particular situation. These two authors once again create a story that gets under the skin and stays with you long after the tale has ended, and at the very core they teach one and all to "think twice."

As with their first collaboration, this is a book you don't want to miss.

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of "The Double-Edged Sword" published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■



## INVISIBLE

By Andrew Grant

Paul McGrath, as a young boy, became a rebel; his anti-war, pacifist father was a little much, to say the least. To go against the grain, Paul worked hard, joined the Army, and ended up becoming a true leader as a recruit, swiftly moving into the world of military intelligence.

Still working in the intelligence realm, Paul is now a veteran and sees his dad in a different way. He has regrets and feels guilty about how their relationship came to an end. This is the catalyst that brings Paul home. Unfortunately, what he finds there is not what he was expecting.

Paul's father has been murdered. When a key piece of evidence disappears, however, the case is ruled a mistrial. But Paul is not about to step away and leave it the way it is. Utilizing his wheelhouse of skills, he takes a job at the courthouse in order to infiltrate the place and find out just how much corruption it houses.

Meet... Paul McGrath, janitor. By being the lowly man on the totem pole, Paul is smart enough to realize that he will be granted total security clearance and access to the entire building; at the same time, everyone will most likely ignore or fail to realize that the "janitor" may be listening. Which is exactly the way it works. He seems to be invisible, yet, Paul takes note of everything from witnesses changing their stories mid-stream to jury members changing their votes to powerful lawyers cutting the small-time attorneys off at the knees. Nothing can bring back his father, but Paul is determined to help others and, hopefully, find redemption for himself.

This book is enticing, provocative, and truly shows how a "nobody" can pull the rug out from under the most powerful people's feet when they're not bothering to pay attention. This is definitely a "must-read."

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of "The Double-Edged Sword" published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■

## THE NIGHT AGENT

By Matthew Quirk

For fans of this writer, who has proven over the span of five books to be an absolute "must-read," you will be thrilled by this one. And for those who have not yet found author Matthew Quirk, this is definitely the book that will have you going back and reading everything he's created up until this point.

In this newest book, Peter Sutherland, an FBI Agent, is almost startled when he is told to work in the Situation Room at the White House. Although his work has always been perfectly handled, Peter does live under the shadow of his father; a man who worked as a section chief in the FBI for their counterintelligence unit way back when and was suspected of being an all-out spy, giving American secrets over to the Russians. Whether this was rumor or fact (you be the judge), this did lead to Peter's father being fired and eventually losing his life.

Now, Peter is sitting at the night action desk, monitoring an emergency line for a call that... may come in. He is one person who definitely knows that this job is to be taken more than seriously. When the phone finally does ring, a woman is on the other end. Her message introduces a killer and a statement that points out: "OSPREY was right...."

With these odd words, Peter is suddenly thrown into a long-running conspiracy where he will be forced to track down a Russian spy that is operating within the inner sanctum of the White House. He must find this traitor, go up against some of the most skilled killers in the business, and evade assassins in order to save himself and his country.

There is so much to say... but nothing can be told beforehand. Not even an inkling. Reason being: This is far too good to be missed.

Reviewed by Mary Lignor, Professional Librarian and Co-Owner of *The Write Companion* ■







## FOR THE SAKE OF THE GAME

Edited by Laurie R. King and Leslie S. Klinger

Some truly fantastic authors have come together to offer up stories inspired by the Sherlock Holmes canon. This latest volume in the award-winning series has everything to choose from. Whether you are a lover of fantasies, or mysteries set in the beloved Arthur Conan Doyle world of Sherlock and Dr. Watson, or even wish to read a graphic tale that focuses on “insectoid analysis,” you will find each and every one of them here.

This new anthology follows after “Echoes of Sherlock Holmes” and “In the Company of Sherlock Holmes,” and is absolutely sensational. With a treasure chest of award-winning authors that include the likes of Harley Jane Kozak, F. Paul Wilson, and so many others, this incredible tome is not just rooted in the past. Although stories of Holmes and Watson solving crimes do show themselves, imaginations go far and wide of Baker Street.

To take just a couple of examples from the slew of A+ stories, Peter S. Beagle offers up “Dr. Watson’s Song.” It is a song/poem that reaches into Watson’s mind and pulls out both his love and annoyance for his partner, and shows the reader his true understanding of Sherlock Holmes and the cost his friend has to pay in order to be the greatest crime solver of all time.

Another great author, D.P. Lyle, presents “Bottom Line.” In this present-day mystery, with southern accents abounding, readers follow Billy Whitehead as he tries to find out how Carl Draper landed in the Scoggins’ Funeral Home. Although everyone believes it was a suicide that took him down, Billy knows a murderer is afoot.

To speak about every one of the tales is impossible, but let us just say that this is a true celebration of Sherlock and would make Arthur Conan Doyle extremely proud.

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of “The Double-Edged Sword” published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■

## BLACK SWAN RISING

By Lisa Brackmann

Echoing recent headlines, Ms. Brackmann’s latest novel explores the modern world of politics, news and social media, and the rise of violent hate groups in a fast-moving adventure that keeps you guessing throughout.

Casey Cheng is an ambitious on-air reporter for a local station in San Diego. After she is shot, while covering Congressman Matt Cason’s campaign rally, she takes advantage of her hard-won fifteen minutes of fame. While still technically on limited duty, and still suffering from physical and psychological damage, she convinces her producer to let her pursue the story of the *Free Men*. It was a member of that shadowy group who shot Casey, and she wants to understand why their members express such hatred for women.

Sarah Price, twenty-something and secretive about her past, works on Cason’s congressional reelection campaign as a social media expert. Matt Cason is an attractive, charismatic politician. Is it any wonder that Sarah would be flattered by his attention? Lindsey Cason, the candidate’s wife and principal campaign strategist, is neither amused nor surprised.

There is an aspect common to Brackmann’s writing; she doesn’t sugarcoat the results of violence. Casey deals with sharp, lingering pain from damaged nerves, a desire to combat the pain with opiates and wine, and self-doubt about her motive in pursuing the story. The author has a deft touch in conveying Casey’s internal struggles.

This novel’s viewpoint puts us squarely in the action from the very beginning, and the novel continues at a quick pace. Brackmann’s descriptions of behind the scene activity at both the Cason campaign office and a local television news station rings with verisimilitude, which is not an easy task.

“Black Swan Rising” reflects the turbulent times of today and, in so doing, provides an entertaining and thought-provoking tale.

Reviewed by Andrew MacRae, Editor of “Shhhh... Murder!: Cozy Crimes for Libraries” ■

## SILENT SCREAM

By Karen Harper

Yet another incredible *South Shores* suspense, author Karen Harper brings fans on a frightening journey into a prehistoric burial site located in ‘The Black Bog’ of Florida.

Claire Britten is a renowned forensic psychologist married to criminal lawyer, Nick Markwood. She works hard and, basically, needs something to clear her mind of what seems like a life of opening graves and viewing a line of never-ending corpses. So when a friend of Claire’s from college calls her with a cool invitation to come on an archaeological dig at a peat bog in Florida, Claire gets excited. Even her husband wants her to get away and enjoy something new and different.

Of course, where Claire is present, oddities seem to appear out of nowhere, which is exactly what happens in *The Black Bog*. When she discovers that some of the perfectly preserved historical corpses they unearth actually show signs that they died at the hands of something truly grisly, Claire puts on her investigative hat and goes to work.

What she doesn’t know is that this so-called exploration into history, because of her curiosity, has now become a truly dangerous project. And... someone is watching every move she makes. Add in a murder case that Nick is investigating that may just be linked with these long-dead corpses, and you have yet another classic by Karen Harper that will keep you on the edge of your seat until the truth is revealed.

All die-hard readers and suspense lovers know that this series has been bone chilling, and getting your hands on this one will be the perfect way to usher in the New Year.

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of “The Double-Edged Sword” published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■



## DEATH AND DAISIES

By Amanda Flower

In this second *Magic Garden Mystery*, Fiona Knox is readying her shop for its grand opening. Two months ago she’d been living in Knoxville, TN, operating her own flower shop. Now, she’s living in Scotland, in a cottage that was bequeathed to her by her godfather.

She’s still getting used to the unique world and is working hard to make sure that her Climbing Rose Flower Shop succeeds. She’s also getting used to her new job as the Keeper of the Garden: a magical garden attached to the cottage. Her godfather was the eleventh person in line whose job it was to take care of the flowers that flourished all year long, and the ancient standing stone that bestows gifts on the Keeper.

Two weeks ago Fiona’s sister, Isla, showed up on her doorstep for a visit. And now, the day before the grand opening, a storm is coming in hard and fast and the ladies are doing their best to get home before it hits. As they’re leaving, Minister Quaid MacCullen, the unfriendly parish rector, appears and basically lays down a threat. He does not like the MacCallister family and wants Fiona to head straight back to America.

Both the storm and the opening are huge. Fiona is excited that the townspeople are flooding her shop and inundating her with orders. Even Chief Inspector Neil Craig (the man who makes Fiona’s heart flutter) shows up to wish her luck, and ends up reading a note left by the surly reverend in regards to Fiona’s ultimate destruction.

When the body of the reverend is found murdered, Fiona becomes a suspect immediately. With the help of her friend Presha; Hamish, her godfather’s friend; and, the garden’s magic, Fiona fights to find the killer, prove to the chief that she’s not his nemesis, and stop an ancient omen from coming true.

A great series, this author continues to write stories that should not be missed!

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of “The Double-Edged Sword” published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■

## FOREVER AND A DAY

By Anthony Horowitz

The minute you see that large '007' on the cover, you can almost hear the James Bond music begin...

Set before *Casino Royale*, author Anthony Horowitz takes us to a time when James Bond doesn't own the '007' mark quite yet. An agent lies face-down in the waters of the French Riviera, and it's M who decides that Commander Bond is due a promotion after his success at taking down a villain in Sweden. M puts Bond on the path to legendary status as being the "best of the best" of all spies by sending him to pick up where the now-dead agent left off.

Monte Carlo in the 1950's has everything from beautiful women to a memorable villain. This assignment has Bond walking into a casino, not too long after arrival, and meeting a femme fatale by the name of Sixtine. She's a woman with many voluptuous characteristics, including a very intelligent mind, and puts her order in with the bartender for a martini, shaken not stirred, before Bond can come up with it.

Not exactly knowing whose side this woman is on, Bond does his investigating and finds himself at the mercy of a Corsican drug dealer named Scipio. This man has control over the South of France, from the police to the port, and Bond will have to find a way to eliminate him before he joins the agent who was recently taken out of the game.

Explosions, car chases, a cat-and-mouse game that goes from land to boat and back again, Horowitz has done an excellent job keeping what all the world loves about Bond in place. With some original material from the Fleming estate, Horowitz adds his own extreme talent to the story and ends up making an "early" Bond that, yes, deserves a place on the screen. Although, I'm not sure if anyone will like it if Daniel Craig takes a bow.

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of "The Double-Edged Sword" published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■

## FIVE DAYS, FIVE DEAD

By Carol Wright Crigger

This newest tale in the *China Bohannon* series allows readers to catch up with China as she sits inside her Doyle & Howe Detective Agency with her little dog on a cold winter's day.

The peace is interrupted when a man opens the Agency's door and rushes in, looking for China's help. His fiancée's sister has been kidnapped and a ransom has been demanded before they will return her unharmed. Trouble is, the man looking for the detective's services has an inkling that this is all some sort of set-up.

The new client goes by the name of Sepp Amsel, who has made a ton of cash through his gambling hall/saloon. The big event coming up in his life will have Sepp standing at the altar and saying "I do" in one of the wildest weddings that has ever taken place in Washington state.

With her finances running low and the agency not bringing in much money as of late, China takes on the investigation and immediately turns to the soon-to-be-bride for more information. After all, it seems a little odd that a kidnapper would steal a sister instead of the woman scheduled to become *the* Mrs. Amsel. With the ransom due in two days, China must find the sister before it's too late. But kidnapping is soon usurped by murder, with one happening right behind another. A tailor, a bellhop... China starts to wonder if justice will be served and the bad guys will be found before the entire wedding party is taken out.

This author has produced many fun reads when it comes to China Bohannon, and with this she even dedicated her tale to the town of Spokane, Washington. Not only does she get the freezing temperatures and cold setting on paper perfectly, but she also loosely bases the book on one of Spokane's very own flamboyant characters.

Reviewed by Mary Lignor, Professional Librarian and Co-Owner of *The Write Companion* ■



## FRACTURED TRUTH

By Susan Furlong

In an unforgettable suspense titled, "Splintered Silence" readers were taken to the Appalachian Mountains of Tennessee and introduced to the Irish Travellers, and one former Marine MP named Brynn Callahan. Now, Brynn has just put on the uniform of the McCreary County Sheriff's Department in Bone Gap, Tennessee, and is facing her first "official" homicide.

In frigid February, a cross-country skier is out enjoying the winter weather until he happens upon the mutilated body of a young woman. When Brynn is sent to investigate this brutality, what she is most shocked by is the fact that she knows the deceased. Her name was Maura Keene and she was a fellow Traveller.

Maura was no "quiet" soul, however; she was accepted in both the community of the Travellers, as well as with the townspeople of Bone Gap who tended to stay away from the group. Could there be some hidden bigotry held against Maura that ended up being the catalyst to take her life? Brynn is unaware of any animosity towards Maura, but she also becomes worried seeing as that she, too, is a staple among both communities.

Wilco, her K-9, uncovers even more signs of death and anger when he digs up human bones while on the case, leading to the discovery of a scrap of paper filled with mysterious Latin phrases.

As more evidence comes to light, the case turns from professional to personal for Brynn, and she realizes that Maura was holding on to a secret that was more than dangerous. Brynn must bring this case to a conclusion while fighting her own past and her struggle with PTSD that has been a monkey on her back for some time.

Readers will be locked into these pages, gasping at the superstitions and prejudices that come to life in this more than frightening world. Author Susan Furlong deserves a standing ovation for bringing this ex-Marine back to the pages with an immensely entertaining and scary tale.

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of "The Double-Edged Sword" published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■

## FATAL FESTIVAL DAYS

By Jamie M. Blair

This is a brand new *Dog Days Mystery* and is so much fun! Author Jamie Blair once again shows her own fantastic wit when it comes to this cozy series, and allows readers to have a ball as they head to the winter festival being held in Metamora, Indiana.

For those who have not yet been introduced to this great town and its inhabitants, historic Metamora first appeared on the scene in "Deadly Dog Days," when a resident by the name of Cameron Cripps-Hayman set out to make friends with her neighbors. In that first mystery Cameron, and her estranged husband, the town's sheriff, were both named as suspects in a crime. This brought about Cameron and her co-workers forming the Metamora Action Agency where they worked together to solve the crime.

This time around, Cameron is working hard to get all the activities up and running for the winter festival. She has her hand in almost everything; from organizing the dog sled races to the big event of carving ice sculptures, as well as putting together the downhill skiing events for both participants and visitors. Although this is hard work, it makes it even worse for Cameron when a mascot goes missing and angry protestors arrive to try and ruin the whole festival.

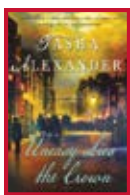
Soon, a dead body appears. A landowner whose heart is made of stone and whose mind only thinks about money and how to attain more of it is found dead as a doornail on top of one of the ski hills. But when another body is suddenly found, that of a former Olympian who once hosted the festival, then Cameron calls out to the Metamora Action Agency to regroup and help her catch this killer before everything comes crumbling down.

This is a great read, with great characters that have already created their very own fan base. It will be fun, as always, when we get to return to Metamora in the future.

Reviewed by Mary Lignor, Professional Librarian and Co-Owner of *The Write Companion* ■







## UNEASY LIES THE CROWN

By Tasha Alexander

This is the latest in the bestselling series, *The Lady Emily Mysteries*, and shows, yet again, how engaging the writing of Tasha Alexander is; not to mention, how exciting Lady Emily, her husband Colin, and her mysteries continue to be.

This time out, it is 1901 in Britain and a serial killer seems to have set their sights on the brand new king, Edward VII.

While on her deathbed, Queen Victoria requested a visit with Colin Hargreaves. She calls to this trusted agent of the Crown and offers him one last odd command as his Queen: "One and no more. Dare to know." The longest-reigning monarch then heads to the heavens and the entire British Empire feels the mournful sting of losing the one they most respected.

The mourning time is cut short for Lady Emily and Colin, however, when a body is found. This is a strange sight; the body is located in the Tower of London, and instead of being a corpse simply lying there, it has actually been posed to look like the murdered medieval king, Henry VI.

But that's not all. When a second body is suddenly found in London's exclusive Berkeley Square, the case grows in both horror and confusion when this man's remains are posed to look like the violent demise of Edward II. It is clear that a serial killer is afoot and shows no signs of stopping anytime soon.

The adventure is a cat-and-mouse, action-packed race that has your favorite characters rushing to the grisly underbelly of London. The evidence is not forthcoming and, what's worse, there is definitely a deadline to stop this killer considering the anonymous letters threatening the king now in power that Colin keeps receiving. The gauntlet that's thrown in this one is outstanding, and Lady Emily and Colin are pure enjoyment as readers go on this incredible ride they will never forget.

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of "The Double-Edged Sword" published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■

## STEAMED OPEN

By Barbara Ross

Long-time Busman's Harbor resident Heloise (Lou) Herrickson has died at the ripe old age of 101, and all the residents in this scenic Maine coastal town are mourning her passing, particularly her devoted housekeeper, Ida Fischer. Lou's heir, Bartholomew Frick, wastes no time in alienating most of Busman's Harbor citizens when he announces that the beach behind Herrickson House, which had always been open, will now be closed and has a fence installed around the property to keep the locals out.

The loss of access to the beach will have a devastating effect on the local economy, as so many businesses depend on a regular supply of local clams for their menu. Chief among these is the Snowden Family Clambake, which only operates during the warm weather months, ferrying visitors to Morrow Island for an authentic Maine clambake. Julia Snowden is worried that her business may not survive the summer season, and decides to approach Frick to reason with him. When she arrives at Herrickson House, many local clambers are protesting the restriction and tempers are running high. Unfortunately, the authorities determine that Frick has every right to put up the fence, and as the crowd disperses, it's clear that not everybody agrees.

Undaunted, Julia still is intent on talking to Frick, and discovers a way to approach the house. Before she can get close, she encounters Ida storming out, saying Frick is impossible and she has quit. Of course, when Julia finally talks to Frick, he refuses to change his mind.

It doesn't take long for someone to decide to eliminate Frick permanently in a violent way, and Julia is the last person to see him alive. Except for the murderer, of course. Suspicion immediately falls on Ida. Julia doesn't believe she's the guilty one, and sets out to prove it.

"Steamed Open" is the seventh in Barbara Ross's *Maine Clambake Mystery* series. Each one is even better than the previous. I loved it!

Reviewed by Susan Santangelo, author of "In-Laws Can Be Murder," published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■

## IN THE GALWAY SILENCE

By Ken Bruen

Jack Taylor is back and with him comes a brand new murder, a shadow from his past, and a look at Jack as he plays "dad" to his girlfriend's nine-year-old son.

Jack has been through many years experiencing tragedy and violence in both his personal and professional lives. He's finally at a point where peace is taking over. Of course, Jack still loves some of his vices, such as Jameson and a few harmless drugs once in a while, but he's content with his new lady and his brand new apartment.

What Jack is not expecting is having to dive into yet another dark place and come face-to-face with a horrific vigilante called "Silence." (Reason for that choice is the fact that he is the last thing any of his victim's ever hear.)

When a Frenchman walks into Jack's world and asks for his services, Jack should just walk away. The last thing he needs is more trouble. However, the man has a great amount of money to give and needs Jack to investigate the double-murder of his twin sons. This is a highly emotional case that hits Jack on many levels and he decides to do all he can to find the man some sort of justice. What he finds, unfortunately, is an evil plot that will have Jack racing to unmask a true killer who will not be stopped.

For those who have already been a part of Jack's world, you will love the fact that the Irish man with his dark sense of humor has returned in this unforgettable story. And for those who are looking for a sharp, fresh character and a cat-and-mouse game that's played perfectly, this is the book for you. Bruen continues to do a fantastic job when it comes to developing his character, and fans are thrilled to come along for the ride.

Reviewed by Mary Lignor, Professional Librarian and Co-Owner of *The Write Companion* ■

## 'TWAS THE KNIFE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

By Jacqueline Frost

This is only the second in the *Christmas Tree Farm Mystery* series, yet they are already a staple for cozy lovers who believe Christmas just ain't Christmas without being able to visit Mistletoe, Maine.

Holly White is sitting with Cookie and Caroline at their brand new shop in town: Caroline's Cupcakes. Although this is a new venture, the town is absolutely loving it and they're on track to becoming a huge success. Holly has just had a long day at her family's Christmas tree farm, Reindeer Games, and is enjoying her "vanilla cupcake therapy" while listening to Caroline talk about her date that became headline news. Caroline's father is the mayor and she's afraid she spoiled his bid for re-election. She'd gone out on a date with Derek, the son of a judge, and when he got a bit too feisty, Caroline shot him down...right in front of a reporter.

Heading into town for the annual tree lighting ceremony, a glass vat full of peppermints is unveiled to the crowd; a vat that contains both candy and the dead body of Derek. No longer feisty, a butcher knife (owned by Caroline) has done him in.

Evan, the officer who once saved Holly's life but who has been distant recently, sees Caroline as the primary suspect. So it's up to Holly to find out who really committed this horrible crime. Turns out Derek had a crazy ex-girlfriend who runs the local wine shop, there's a new "face" in town that could be Caroline's stalker, and so many more suspects to choose from that the story never slows down.

Frost has created a wonderful world that's fun and festive, while also producing memorable murder plots. Now, an Inn is soon to be built that Holly will run. I, for one, can't wait to see what the inside of that place looks like...but I hope it'll be one of the coolest crime scenes ever!

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of "The Double-Edged Sword" published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■





## EGGS ON ICE

By Laura Childs

There are a list of things that make Christmas the best time of the year, and the release of this new *Cackleberry Club Mystery* is the icing on that holiday cake.

Suzanne Dietz (newly engaged to the town doctor, Sam Hazelet), along with one of her partners at the Cackleberry Club Café, Toni, have skipped their normal business duties in order to help with costumes, stage lighting and more for the Kindred Players who will be putting on everyone's favorite play, *A Christmas Carol*.

While attempting to figure out what curtain goes up and down, and exactly how much fog should be shot from the fog machine, they watch from backstage as an infamous ghost embraces Scrooge for just a moment before veering away. Suzanne is the only one who seems to find the fact that Scrooge hasn't moved from his position yet, a little odd. When she closes in on him, she sees that he has been murdered and she chases after a ghost who basically turns on her, threatens her without saying a word, and races out the back door.

Scrooge was being played by one of the most hated men in town. Allan Sharp is described as the town's curmudgeon, so becoming Scrooge wasn't all that tough for him. But when the person who was cast to play the ghost stands beside Suzanne as the murder is taking place (because he was late getting to dress rehearsal), the suspects as to who could have taken Sharp down becomes a list longer than Santa's own 'naughty and nice' list.

Childs once again provides an excellent story with a twist of a killer that you will not see coming. It is so much fun to be back at the Cackleberry Club with all our friends, and her words make Christmas even jollier than it already is. Not to mention, the recipes in the back are so scrumptious, they should be on every holiday table!

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of "The Double-Edged Sword" published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■

## MURDER ON CAPE COD

By Maddie Day

"Murder on Cape Cod" is the first of what I hope will be a long-running series featuring Mackenzie "Mac" Almeida, who operates a bicycle shop in Westham, Massachusetts. As summer approaches, and visitors swarm Cape Cod from all over the world, Mac's prepared to handle all the rentals, repairs, and other bike-related requests the tourists will demand.

What Mac is not prepared for is discovering the murdered body of Jake Lacey, a local down-on-his-luck handyman. Unfortunately for Mac, she was seen arguing with Lacey a few hours before his death, so the police zero in on her as Suspect Number One. Mac doesn't last long on the suspect list, however. She's replaced quickly by her half-brother, Derrick, a single father and recovering alcoholic whose custom-made fishing knife was the murder weapon.

Mac knows Derrick is innocent. But there's a problem: he doesn't show up for his usual shift at the bike shop and doesn't respond to her calls and texts. And before he disappeared, Derrick dropped off his daughter at their parents' house, asking them to care for her until he came back.

Mac and Derrick have interesting parents, which adds to the enjoyment of this mystery. Mom is a psychic who's changed her name to fit with her new profession, and Dad is a respected minister. Men of the cloth are known for keeping confidences, and as Mac questions him about Derrick's whereabouts, she begins to suspect that her father knows a lot more about her brother than he's prepared to share with her.

Mac's only "experience" with murder investigations is through her involvement with the Cozy Capers, her local book club. And she quickly discovers that dealing with a real murder is a lot more complicated than one on the printed page, where a satisfying ending is pretty much guaranteed.

"Murder on Cape Cod" is an excellent start to this new series. Check it out for yourself. You'll be glad you did.

Reviewed by Susan Santangelo, author of "In-Laws Can Be Murder," published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■



## LET THE DEAD KEEP THEIR SECRETS

By Rosemary Simpson

One of the most entertaining settings in literature, I have to say, is New York City during the Gilded Age. The sounds, the characters, the speech, the locations... everything seems to jump off the page, especially when Rosemary Simpson is the one penning the scene.

Her thrilling *Gilded Age Mystery* series continues to take readers on unforgettable adventures, and this newest addition is no exception.

This time out, we are strolling the world of NYC in 1889, being thrilled by the architecturally beautiful homes, the lush period clothing, and the electricity in the air that seems to foresee this city's expansion into becoming the ultimate metropolis.

Prudence MacKenzie is a socialite who learned law from her late father who was a judge. She is now a P.I. and her partner's name is Geoffrey Hunter. Born and bred in the South, he is a gentleman as well as an ex-Pinkerton detective. Their wealth of knowledge and skill help in this brand new case dropped at their door; a case that involves the sudden death of a mother and her newborn. The identical twin of the deceased woman hires Prudence and Geoffrey to find out if her own feelings are true; she believes that her sister was murdered by the horrible husband she married. What's worse is this man remarried almost immediately and this second wife is now pregnant and could possibly be his next victim.

Post-mortem photography is the popular historical forensics method that this book focuses upon in order to solve the crime. When Prudence and Geoffrey are led to the photographer, they uncover the fact that the photo was retouched, which means someone is hiding something. They need a negative, and fast!

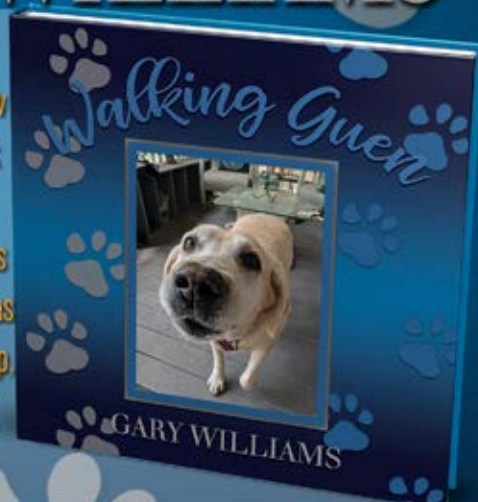
Although this can be read as a standalone novel, reading all of these mysteries is a sheer journey of enjoyment and fun. All are page-turners, and bringing this particular killer to justice before other women are mysteriously killed is truly riveting.

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of "The Double-Edged Sword" published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■

In a time of social and political unrest, you might as well take a break and traverse the oldest city in the United States with a man and his dog.

## GARY WILLIAMS

Follow along as author Gary Williams and his female yellow Labrador retriever, Guen, walk the historic streets of St. Augustine, Florida, and discuss such soft-hitting social topics as The Village People, bubble wrap, ice cream, rain, skinny jeans, barbeque and tennis shoes.



On Sale Now

@WILLIAMSKNERLY



## A SCANDAL IN SCARLET

By Vicki Delany

Gemma Doyle, owner of the Sherlock Holmes Bookstore and Emporium (home to the cat, Moriarty, who loves and hates equally) has had a long day. It is the height of tourist season in Cape Cod, and both she and her friend and partner in Mrs. Hudson's Tearoom (Jayne) are working a lot of hours. One night after work, Gemma is basically crawling home, but she still has one more thing to do: walk Violet, her Great Uncle's pup.

Heading through the quaint streets, Violet begins to bark and Gemma smells a bit of smoke in the air. Looking through the windows of the Scarlet Museum, the oldest surviving house in West London, Gemma sees the flicker of fire and immediately calls 911. Not only does the man she has a romantic past with arrive (lead detective, Ryan Ashburton), but also his partner who doesn't like Gemma's behavior of getting involved in criminal cases.

Gemma swears off attempting to find the arsonist, but when she and Jayne put on an auction to raise money to fix the Scarlet House, and the head of the committee turns up dead in the tearoom, things change. Another local shopkeeper, Maureen, is the main suspect because she had a fight with the dead woman not long before the body was found. She asks for Gemma's help, and even though Gemma doesn't want to, she believes that Maureen—although a real pain—is definitely not a murderer. As Gemma and Jayne begin to ask questions, past stories, past resentments, and even a bit of old-fashioned, small-town jealousy crop up and the list of suspects grows long.

These books are so much fun and so well-done, it is clear that Delany is in love with her characters as much as her die-hard fans are. Which means...a great next step would be to build the Emporium as a real tourist attraction on Cape Cod very soon. People would never stop coming to visit!

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of "The Double-Edged Sword" published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■

## THE PUZZLE OF THE HAPPY HOOLIGAN

By Stuart Palmer

What do Lizzie Borden, Hildegard Withers, and Saul Stafford have in common? They all get the Hollywood axe in Stuart Palmer's comedy confection, "The Puzzle of the Happy Hooligan" (1941). Throw in a white apple core, a lateral loop fingerprint, a curious folding bed, and Palmer has all the makings of a solid satire on the persnickety movie-making scene.

Palmer's screenwriting pedigree comes with a successful run of over thirty seven feature films. One, the adaptation of *The Penguin Pool Murders* (1931) introduces his unmarried, thirty-nine-year-old NYC schoolteacher/amateur detective Withers.

Here, Withers is hired as a technical advisor on another version of the notorious Fall River case of parricide. In L.A., on a sabbatical, dining at the famous Brown Derby, an ambulance chasing agent, Harry Wagman, discovers Withers and signs her as the consultant on a "big picture" for producer Thorwald L. Nincom at Mammoth Studios.

She is only one of more than ten orbiting minions in Nincom's writing room, which also includes the prankster duo, Saul Stafford and Virgil Dobie. (Their hi-jinks include setting a fellow writer aflame in a lounge chair.) Withers becomes entrenched in her L.A. mystery after she's given an office next to Stafford's. Before she has a chance to set fingers to typewriter, however, she discovers her colleague "sprawled akimbo" on a carpet; his neck broken.

Despite her homicide "hobby," Withers is stymied by the method of murder. She calls in her stalwart companion in crime, NYPD Inspector Oscar Piper. As a supporting character in the Withers's canon, their relationship is close enough that when it seems she's a victim in an accident, he flies to California to find her. Before Withers and Piper sort out the wicked from the dead... many heads will roll.

Palmer emits the regional flavor of historic Hollywood by name-dropping celebrities of the era (Loy, Garson, Cooper) spotted at local hot spots on the Sunset Strip in this audacious, rollicking entry in Otto Penzler's *American Mystery Classics* series, which is reissuing the best of the crime novels from the Golden Age of detection.

Reviewed by Robert Allen Papinchak ■



## UNTOUCHABLE

By Jayne Ann Krentz



Jack Lancaster, a consultant to the FBI, seems to have an affinity to the cold; cold cases, that is. A fire is lit within him when it comes to solving cases that law enforcement has put away, thinking that they are completely unsolvable and not worth their time. Jack wants to uncover missteps in the justice system. He wants to make sure those accidents and suicides are not actually murder.

His deep dedication to this quest comes from the fact that Jack is a survivor. Almost losing his life in a fire, arson cases have always been something that he leans toward solving. He has not only helped family members of victims, but he has brought himself to the forefront of many conversations because of his uncanny ability to get into the mind of a killer and solve the crime. This passion has not only taken over his life, but it's messed up his personal life as well. The only one he can talk to or go to for help is a meditation therapist by the name of Winter Meadows.

This time out, Jack must deal with one, Quinton Zane, a villain who is still very much alive. Quinton has his own agenda. He has worked hard to take control over Jack's biological family's hedge fund and now the man in power is working to eliminate all of the foster sons who could gain money from the fund... starting with Jack.

This is one of those cat-and-mouse thrill rides that do not end, and readers will love to delve into yet another brilliant work by Krentz. This woman continues to create some of the most suspenseful plots ever written.

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of "The Double-Edged Sword" published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■

## IN PEPPERMINT PERIL

By Joy Avon

Callie Aspen left the small town of Heart's Harbor, Maine, after college to become a tour guide for a company specializing in trips to historic venues. With Christmas just one week away, she has taken a break from world traveling to work in her Great Aunt Iphy's vintage tearoom.

Haywood Hall is the location for their next event, and Callie is traversing the fields of snow, taking the incredible cake and other items to the Hall in order to set up. Seems that the grand owner, Dorothea Finster, has invited all of the social elite to hear an announcement. The one person Callie hopes not to see is a man who, long ago, was the subject of her admiration: Stephen Du Bouvrais. Stephen is there but, fortunately, Callie feels no attraction for the man who is the future heir of Dorothea's fortune.

When Callie opens the boxes to start setting up the cake, she finds a hole cut out in the middle of the top tier. It is her old friend, Sheila (who actually married Stephen) that lets Callie know an engagement ring will be placed inside the cake so that her future son-in-law (a boy *she* handpicked for her daughter) will get down on one knee and propose. Dorothea joins this little party and announces she has made changes to her will. From the town council members who want Dorothea's funds for their own agenda; to Sheila, who only seems to have married into the Finster family to gain a lot of money when Dorothea finally kicked, are now in jeopardy.

The engagement ring comes up missing, and the eccentric gardener of Haywood turns up dead as a doornail in the conservatory. The suspects are numerous, and Callie finds herself working with the handsome Deputy Falk to unravel the mystery, bringing her face-to-face with the killer.

This is a great debut! It will be exciting to see who dies next in Heart's Harbor, Maine.

Reviewed by Amy Lignor, author of "The Double-Edged Sword" published by Suspense Publishing, an imprint of *Suspense Magazine* ■



# STORM RISING

*An FBI K-9 Mystery*

By Sara Driscoll

Jen Danna Press Photo Credit: Jess Danna Photography  
Ann Vanderlaan Press Photo Credit: Provided by Publicist



## **LANDFALL: COMING ASHORE AFTER A TRIP OVER WATER.**

*Friday, July 21, 10:04 PM  
Jennings residence  
Arlington, Virginia*

“Meg, come look at this.”

Meg Jennings looked up from packing at the sound of her sister’s voice. She tucked several folded athletic shirts into her duffel bag, then jogged out of her bedroom and down the hall.

She found her sister Cara perched on the edge of the sofa, her attention focused on the flat-screen TV at the far end of the living room. Cara’s brindle greyhound, Blink, gave a low whine from where he sat on the floor beside her and pushed his nose against her knee. Cara reached out blindly to stroke his head, crooning to him softly, her eyes never leaving the screen.

Meg took in the breathtaking scene splashed across fifty-two inches. The stark white lettering on the brilliant red news ticker labeled the area as Nags Head, North Carolina. Nags Head was unmistakably under attack. The fact that Mother Nature was the marauding force would make no difference to the outcome. Huge waves crashed ashore, trees bent nearly sideways in the roaring wind, and lethal pieces of debris were whipped into the air by the gale.

“It’s making landfall now?”

“Yes. And Clay is out there somewhere in the middle of it.”

Meg took in Cara’s motionless stance and stiff shoulders. Her sister was silent, but her body language shouted her concern. Meg came close enough to rub a hand down her sister’s back. “Hey.” She waited until Cara tore her eyes from the TV and looked up at her. “He’ll be okay. It’ll take more than Hurricane Cole to take him down. He survived Iraq and other war zones; he’ll survive this. Besides, he’s not a storm chaser for The Weather Channel, he’s writing a story for





the *Washington Post*. TV reporters will be out in the gale. McCord will be undercover, finding the personal interest pieces.”

Hearing his owner’s name, Cody went from lying prone to standing on his back feet with his front paws pressed to Cara’s thighs in a single motion. He jammed his wet nose into the hollow of her throat and Cara pressed both hands to his shoulders in response. “Down, Cody. You know better.” The twelve-month-old golden retriever dropped obediently to the ground and grinned up at her, his entire back end undulating with his enthusiastic tail wags. “Did you hear Daddy’s name?” Cara ruffled the puppy’s ears and sighed. “Cody misses him.”

“He’s doing fine and you know it.” Meg dropped onto the couch beside her sister. They were so similar, almost carbon copies of each other—tall and athletic, gifted with the ice-blue eyes and the long, glossy black hair of their Black Irish paternal grandmother. “Cody loves you and he loves the pack.” Meg’s gaze drifted over the two dogs sleeping in a pile on the oversized dog bed against the far wall—her own black Lab, Hawk, and Cara’s mini blue pit bull, Saki. “He loves to spend time here. The only thing that would make it better is McCord being here too.” Meg relaxed back against the couch cushions and cocked an eyebrow at her sister. “Like he did night before last.”

Cara flushed up to her hairline. “You . . . knew he was here?”

“Of course I knew he was here. You’re an adult. You don’t need to justify your relationships to me. I’m not Mom. Not that you’d need to justify them to her either.”

“I didn’t know if you’d find it awkward. We share this house, so maybe I should have cleared it with you first.”

“It’s not like you brought home a stranger. It’s McCord. And I saw this happening two months ago.” Meg regarded Cara, as much best friend as younger sister, and wagged her fingers in a give-it-to-me gesture. “Now stop being stingy with the details. Just because I knew him first doesn’t mean I don’t want all the sisterly dirt.” She leaned in close so she could drop her voice to a conspiratorial whisper.

“How was he?”

At that, Cara laughed and flopped back onto the couch beside Meg, turning her head toward her sister. The glint in her eye answered Meg’s question before she spoke. “Absolutely fantastic.”

Meg grinned at her slyly and sat back. “I would expect nothing less.”

Cara turned sideways on the sofa, snuggling into the soft cushions, some of the tenseness relaxing from her frame. “While we’re on the subject of sisterly dirt, what about you and Todd?”

An image of the firefighter/paramedic in question sprang into Meg’s mind: tall and dark, with the muscular build of a man used to sprinting up stairs wearing sixty pounds of gear with one hundred pounds of fire hose tossed over his shoulder. They’d met last May when a vengeful man had acted on his personal grudge by blowing up government buildings with C-4—loaded drones, uncaring of the innocent bystanders inside who ended up as collateral damage. DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services had been called in along with any available teams from the FBI’s Human Scent Evidence Team—Meg and Hawk among them—to rescue the live victims and recover the dead. Together, Meg and Lieutenant Todd Webb had saved the life of a young girl and a bond had been forged.

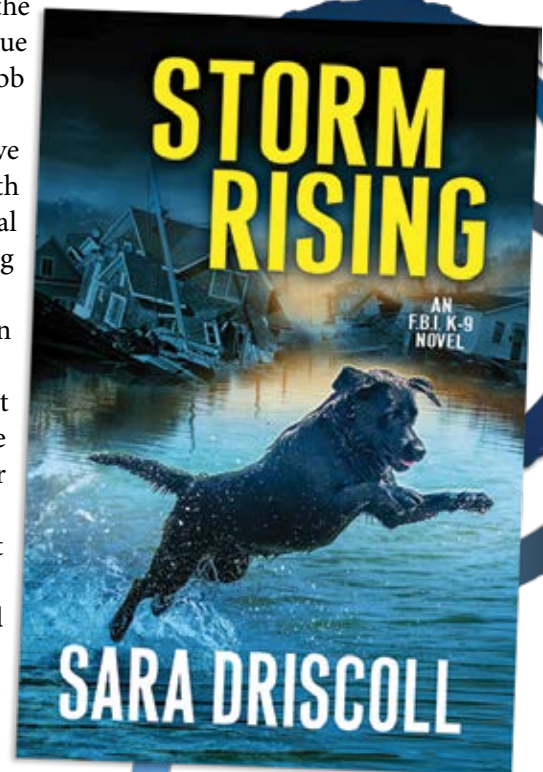
“Getting close, but we’re not quite there yet.” Meg’s tone was easy. “I’ve been away so much in the last few months—out in California helping with the mudslides and then in Colorado after that avalanche, not to mention local deployments. Add into that his schedule at the firehouse and things are moving slowly. Which is fine for both of us. We’re not in a rush.”

“Sometimes that’s the best way. Does he know you’re headed out of town again?”

“He knew it was likely, but I haven’t talked to him since Craig made it official.” Craig Beaumont, Supervisory Special Agent for the Forensic Canine Unit’s Human Scent Evidence Team, had only called an hour ago with their orders.

“I wanted to pack first,” Meg continued, “then I’ll give him a call and let him know we’re headed to Virginia Beach.”

Cara shifted to look back at the TV. The scene had changed from the sand dunes of Nags Head to the charming pastel three-story houses of Hatteras. The whitecap-topped, churning sea roared up to smash in front doors while the wind screamed and torrents of rain fell at a steep angle. “This is going to be bad.”



"It is." Meg's attention was drawn across the room where Hawk stood up and stretched after his nap, and then wandered over to her. "Hi, buddy. How's my boy?" She stroked a hand down his glossy black fur and he sighed in pleasure. "They're saying this one could be up there with Sandy. The only good thing is this time they had a better handle on the track of the storm from the beginning and got the appropriate warnings out earlier. But you know we're going to lose people despite all the warnings and evac orders."

East Coast weather forecasters had been talking about Hurricane Cole for almost a week, their concerns becoming more strident as the storm approached. It was early in the season for a storm of this ferocity, but the talking heads were already discussing the impact of climate change on extreme weather events. A particularly warm Caribbean Sea and its evaporating water helped produce the dense cloud system that spun into a tropical storm before forming a hurricane. At first, they were hoping the storm would do what nineteen out of twenty Atlantic hurricanes do—curve east and burn out over the Atlantic. However, the usual high-pressure system over Bermuda that blocks and turns those storms hadn't materialized, and the hurricane had hugged the U.S. coast, running parallel up the Eastern Seaboard following the warm Gulf Stream. Then a blocking high over Greenland paired with an undulating jet stream over the continental United States and Canada drove the storm westward, where it rolled over the barrier islands of North Carolina and onto land.

The governors of North and South Carolina and Virginia had given evacuation orders for communities on the coast, but, as always, some inhabitants refused to leave their homes, preferring to take their chances with Mother Nature rather than risk all their worldly possessions to looters taking advantage of a natural disaster. Those who'd opted to stay had been warned that, after a certain point, they were on their own. Emergency services couldn't risk the lives of first responders coming to rescue them if they got into trouble because of their decision to stay.

And yet, they remained.

Those were the people Meg and her teammates would be sent in to locate and rescue once the storm passed. Or, more likely, recover, because by that time, for many, it would be too late. Meg studied Hawk, who looked up at her with bright eyes full of love and loyalty. "I think the body count is going to be pretty high, and you know how hard that kind of search is on the dogs. I have a bad feeling about this whole deployment."

"They think Virginia Beach will be hit that hard?"

"As long as I lived and served in Richmond, I've only been to Virginia Beach that one time with you and Mom and Dad when we were teenagers, so I don't know that much about it and my visual memory is filtered through the eyes of a teenager. I can tell you what the beaches and the snack shacks looked like; I couldn't tell you about population density, elevation, and emergency services strength or normal response times. But Craig says it's been considered a hurricane risk for a long time. All that low-lying beachfront with no protective barrier islands and nearly forty thousand people living in a floodplain at sea level, within a quarter mile of the water's edge. Hurricane landfall is not their problem. It's being on the side of the counterclockwise rotation of the storm. Landfall gets the eye, but that side of the storm, north and east of the eye, gets gale force winds forcing a wall of water up onto land as the ocean floor slants upward and it has nowhere else to go. They think the storm surge is going to be comparable to Hurricane Sandy."

"From what they were just saying on TV, it's the worst of all possible scenarios, high tide during a new moon, which makes it higher, massive waves and then the storm surge on top of that—that's called the storm tide—all piling onto land with sustained winds near one hundred miles per hour. It's downgraded from a Category Three storm, but even making landfall at Category Two, the storm tide could be thirty or forty feet high."

Meg's hand stilled on Hawk's back. "A three-story wall of water. I can't imagine the terror of that coming right for you."

"It wouldn't be if they left." Cara's voice had an unforgiving edge. "Okay, maybe if you're an adult you can make that choice for yourself and if you



choose wrong, you'll pay the price. So be it. But people keep their kids and pets with them. Protecting your stuff is a stupid reason to die. They're things; they can be replaced. The life of a child, or pet, can't."

"I agree one hundred percent. It'll probably be at about one hundred and fifty percent by tomorrow when I'm in the middle of the recovery. But—" She cut off when her cell phone rang. "Hold on. I have to get this. It could be Craig with updated instructions." She picked up her phone and scanned the name on the display. "Not Craig. It's Todd." She accepted the call. "Hey."

"Hey. Have you gotten your orders yet?"

"Yes. We're bugging out early tomorrow for Virginia Beach. They want us there for first light, but not before. We need to let the storm pass, and we're going to need light for searching because I'm sure the power will be out by then. Probably is now, in fact. Cara and I are just watching landfall on TV."

"I'm hearing that power is already out. So . . . can I hitch a ride with you?"

"To Virginia Beach? It's not a great time for a vacation, not there anyway."

Webb laughed. "Not for a vacation, for work. I've been deployed out to the Virginia Beach and Norfolk area for mutual aid."

"Mutual aid?"

"It's the agreement DCFEMS has with Virginia and Maryland. When we need help, they come to us. When they need help, we go to them. No questions asked. Right now, that whole area is short on EMS personnel due to budget cuts."

"And since you're dual-trained as a firefighter and a paramedic, you're the perfect person to go."

"Exactly. They've got equipment, but they're lacking in trained personnel. They're sending a bunch of us, but if I can hitch a ride with you, it'll keep my truck off roads that will already be flooded and clogged with debris and rescue vehicles. You need your vehicle because it's got Hawk's special traveling compartment, but have you got room for another passenger and the gear I need to take with me?"

"Sure. And I'd love the company on the way in. I need to start early though. Probably about three thirty?"

"Works for me. Time for us both to get a few hours of shut-eye. See you about three fifteen."

Meg said good night and hung up.

"Todd's going too?" Cara asked.

"Yes. It sounds like DCFEMS is sending a group of them in, but we're going to carpool to the coast."

"Makes sense." Cara laid a hand on her sister's arm. "You be careful. You and Hawk. I know you're a pro at this, but some of these searches can be pretty treacherous. Structures will be unstable, and flooding will be a constant problem."

"Of course I will." Meg gave her a pointed look. "And I don't want you sitting at home here, you and the dogs, fretting about the lot of us. We'll all stay safe."

Cara reached over, picked up the remote and turned off the TV. "I know. It's probably just listening to these news reports about the storm. It's making me twitchy."

"I promise to stay in touch as much as I can. Both power and communication could be iffy, so don't panic if it's radio silence for a while." Meg stood and gave Hawk the hand signal to come. "Now I have to finish packing, then grab a few hours of sleep."

"Get me up before you go. I want to see you off."

"You sure? It's going to be way early."

"I can go back to bed after you're gone. Get me up."

"You got it."

Meg cast one last look at the dark TV screen, but the images were imprinted on her brain. Hundreds of people had died during Hurricane Sandy, and almost two thousand from Katrina. Time would reveal what the impact of Hurricane Cole would be.

*Bring home the ones you can.*

Craig's words to her just before she stepped through the doors following the bombing at the James L. Whitten Building on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., echoed in her brain. They had a job to do: Whether living or dead, they would bring the victims home. ■

*Sara Driscoll is the pen name of Jen J. Danna and Ann Vanderlaan, authors of the Abbott and Lowell Forensic Mysteries. Jen is an infectious disease researcher at a cutting edge Canadian university near Toronto, but loves to spend her free time writing the thrilling and mysterious. Ann lives in central Texas with five rescued pit bulls, including Kane, now a certified therapy dog. She also trains with Kane for competitive nose work. You can follow the latest news on the FBI K-9 Mysteries at [www.saradriscollauthor.com](http://www.saradriscollauthor.com).*



# Featured Artist

Interview by Amy Lignor for *Suspense Magazine*



# LEANA DELPORT

*Looking into the Core  
of the Ultimate Artist*

GUARDIAN OF THE WINTER'S GATE





When it comes to the “Best of” issue for *Suspense Magazine*, our focus is to congratulate those writers who have penned a book in 2018 that truly hit the readers out there with force. Hence, that is exactly what we wish to do when it comes to singling out an artist whose works have evoked emotions in viewers because of their own rich, creative imaginations.

Leana Delpert is one of those fantastic artists that resonate with readers and artisans alike. Her images are stunning; the emotions leap off the page, and she is a name that should be internationally known because of the brilliance she exudes. So sit back, lose yourself in some of these elite images, and learn more about this extraordinary lady who wishes to begin her interview with her very own “shout out” to readers, friends, and family...

Leana Delpert (L.D.): *I just would like to say: Thank you very much to Suspense Magazine for choosing me to be their featured artist, and not for just any edition, but the “Best Of” edition. It has been a dream of mine for over a decade to be interviewed, and I did hope to have an article written about me in a magazine, but just “any” interview (even for a blogsite) was all I dreamed of.*

*And here it is...I can't believe it. For everyone reading this, please know that I am just a human who happens to find it easy to increase her brain capacity, so I am just naturally good at a lot of different things. That doesn't mean I'm successful when it comes to finances, however, as I have made a lot of questionable choices along the way. No matter what, though, I stand by my choices, and if it wasn't for my mother, Annelize Bekker, and my husband, Dominic Delpert, I probably wouldn't be standing at all; nevermind standing by my choices. People like those two, and my brother, Japie de Klerk, and a myriad of amazing people I have had the pleasure of knowing in my life, add to who and what I am, and what I am is someone who just keeps on growing and growing... One day I will be immortal, not in human form, but my consciousness.*

*Suspense Magazine (S. MAG.): I want to begin with the backstory of the ‘incredible creator.’ Were you born and raised in South Africa? And...when did you know that being an artist was definitely your future career?*

L.D.: *Yes, I'm born and bred South African. I'm what they call a ‘Dutchman’, which is a term for Afrikaans middle-class, and usually farmer type people. Something very few people can believe when they look at how I look now and the art I make, is that I actually grew up in the countryside on farms for most of my childhood. Though I never seemed to fit in with those people—I was too weird for them. I was the typical outsider and bullied-weirdo-kid in school, but to all of their defense, I really am and have always been a special kind of weird. My mother always says she can't even dress me appropriately; nevermind even consider taking me anywhere. And also to further elaborate on your question, I actually haven't ever been outside of South Africa. But I really believe that one day I will be able to travel.*

*I wanted to do art professionally, on and off, throughout my school career. I'm academically very inclined also, and had a lot of pressure put on me to achieve good marks from my dad. He refused to allow me to make art my career; he believed there was no money in art. I, however, always told him that I didn't care for being rich, I cared for being happy, and art is probably the core of what makes me happy. I love my husband dearly, and he makes me happy, but even he can't cheer me up when I go through a blocked phase.*

*My dad passed away when I was 19, and obviously when he passed away I was then free to do as*



**ACHERON PARTHENOPAEUS**





## BOUND BY LOVE



## BREATH OF ETERNITY

*I pleased. But at that stage I believed it was too late to be able to go study art. So I started teaching myself, which was hard as I didn't have permanent or stable internet, so I had to figure shit out by trial and error: there were no YouTube videos to help. I only watched my first tutorial on photomanipulation after about 2 or 3 years of doing photomanipulation. So I would say that tutorials took me from beginner to intermediate level at least.*

*To be honest, I have never known if I want to do art as a full-time career; even now. I have too many other interests also, like learning Sanskrit, researching quantum physics, playing guitar and composing music, or just singing on Smule, and most of all, GAMING. Yeah, I'm a huge gamer, and would love to be able to go pro with Dota 2 one day.*


**S. MAG.:** *It was a pleasure looking at your creations on deviantArt (dA). I have to say that your range is remarkable; yet with each image—whether it be concentrated on beauty or mystery or even the darker subjects—there is one thing they have in common (to a viewer like me) and that is the intensity. The emotions truly come through. Can you give our readers information on, perhaps, what electrifies you when it comes to creating? Does your locale/scenery have anything to do with it?*

**L.D.:** *First of all, thank you very much for all the beautifully descriptive compliments about my work. I never have really gotten much pleasure out of somebody who simply says something like: 'Wow, Amazing!' Because I want to know: Why is it amazing? So thank you for seeing my truth. That is essentially what all of my art is: little bits and parts of me. There is ALWAYS a deeper meaning to my work, though, even if it looks shallow in concept.*

*That being said, I'm a very emotional person. My emotions are what drive me, and yes, sometimes that's not a very good thing, but all of my best works were created during a time when my emotions were in turmoil, even if nobody—not even my close friends and family—notice something is 'off' with me. I have been doing art for as long as I can remember. My first memory is of a dream; my second is of drawing while watching cartoons. I even refused to go to kindergarten, as watching cartoons and drawing was much more fun. And I'm still doing exactly that; I'm still just as much of a hermit as I was when I was 4. And throughout my crazy-train childhood, I learned to use my art to escape. That being said, I guess the answer to your question should be that what gives my art that electrifying intensity, is that you look into my soul with each work, and (without any vanity meant), my soul or rather consciousness is not one that you can miss somehow... It tends to reach out to other people, even across countries.*

**S. MAG.:** *Before you begin a work, do you have something in mind already, a topic or theme, or do you sit down and "let it just come" together? Are you surprised at the end result?*





“Whether it  
be digital or  
traditional, art is  
the only thing that  
has ever been able  
to mend me.”

ELANA

L.D.: There's actually a bunch of different reasons and processes; it really depends on what form of art I'm doing (digital, photomanip, pencil sketching, or painting traditionally), and whether it is a paid or personal artwork I am making. But I'm assuming you are referring to my personal artworks, the ones that were created from my own, personal ideas.

Most of the time I will just feel the need to create something, not really knowing what yet. I will either then start doodling, if I'm doing traditional, and for photomanipulations I will start looking at stock. With photomanipulations most often, I am actually inspired by a stock photo. With some stock photos I can immediately see the entire "finished" artwork in front of me when I look at it for the first time. Alternatively, I would create a photomanipulation to express a concept I feel the need to get out to the world, or to express an emotion I am experiencing. But conceptual work isn't as popular, so I can't do too many of them, though doing those are my favourite. Thing is, my work always has a ton of symbolism and hidden meaning and messages in it, and I LOVE when somebody comes to me and starts picking at those, not just look at it and go, "Oh yeah, it's pretty." I know I should appreciate all compliments, but I really don't care for compliments unless the person specifies exactly what it is they like. And if you want to make me squeal, you'll go into detail about it.

Traditional work is what I do when I see a picture in my head, or have a very prominent dream, because it's easier for me to draw realistically accurate than to find the proper stock sometimes. Lately, like for the past year or so, I have been obsessed with sacred geometry, so I've been drawing a lot of things similar to Escher's work, and a lot of flowers of life with hexagonal additions. I also often get paid to draw tattoo designs for people; my traditional style of drawing is very in-line with tattooing.

S. MAG.: I know it's quite impossible for most to pick a favorite, but are there a couple you can cite that you still remember after all this time? Or, perhaps, creations that you feel literally changed your life?

L.D.: It's only impossible because as I evolve in skill, my taste in art also evolves. But change is inevitable, so I embrace the fact that I never can decide on just one of anything. If I do have to choose only one of the works I have created so far, it would be "Perpetuem Mobile." It's something I did while competing in deviantArt's photomanipulation tournament. The challenge my opponent gave me was just 'perpetuem mobile'. Needless to say, I had to first google to find out what that even meant. I love how it came out, because it explains some things in regards to my understanding of life in relevance to the cosmos. But I really love "Human Form" also.

"Human Form" started out as a tribute to the show "Hannibal." That was one of those series that just worked with my mind too much at a certain point. It made me go into that world of thought where I can so easily disappear. Fortunately,

whenever I disappear to there, you can know that a very good artwork is close, because eventually I need to also empty out my "dump files" a bit, reboot and stuff, and I do that by making the creation. Whether it be digital or traditional, art is the only thing that has ever been able to mend me. So what started out as a tribute artwork, ended up explaining much more about my psyche than the actual TV show.

Lastly, I can never leave out "Winter's Soul." I am incredibly proud of the flowers around the horns, as this image started out with a lady with bare horns on her head, and then evolved.

S. MAG.: Can you share information on your working background? Are you a freelance artist; do you do book covers, etc.?

L.D.: Firstly, I have to state how super hard it was for me to get enough gigs to be able to "only" do art for a living. I was only able to quit my day job after 2 years of paid work, and even then I had to get a job a few times along the way. That being said, my work with the literary community started with a novelist from the USA who loved my work. She did a lot of poetry, published on deviantArt (dA), and she had me do specific works to post with her poetry. She bought me my very first Wacom also, and sent it FedEx. (I thought it was a hoax, but was over the moon when it actually did arrive.) Having a Wacom definitely helped me progress much quicker. You can have a look on my deviantArt (dA) profile and see a folder titled "Mandy," which is all the work I did for her. That gave me a good reference for getting more clients.

At that point I was still very active on dA. I was admin in a few groups, even had my own group, and I was the first (and I think the last) person to attempt an online video show for photomanipulation. I would discuss artworks I'd found, interview artists, give critiques, and sometimes even do a quick tutorial. It was called "The Voice of Manipulation." (The last episode can be seen here: <https://www.deviantart.com/triziana/art/TVOm-Ep4-459669447>.) I was asked to do an interview with Dean Samed on dA. He and I became friends and he gave me a lot of very good advice on how to get my book cover career off the ground.

I then discovered oDesk (now called UpWork), and that's where I got most of my work from. It took me about three months to complete the first cover, as I had a lot of learning to do. The covers have to be designed very specifically because of the margins, bleeds and text. After I completed it, I knew I wanted to do much more. So I googled publishers/publishing houses, and emailed a cover letter and my portfolio to them all; from the large Penguin to really small/independent publishing houses. I became a contracted designer for mid-sized Titan Publishing House in Wales. I started doing a great deal of work for them, and had my own independent clients, as well.

Currently, people contact me, preferably through my Facebook page, but email works also. I decided to focus more on my own personal work, however, instead of doing a great



deal of commissions. BUT I love to still do commissions for people who come seeking my own personal weird style of art, if you want something done by mippieArt, I'm always keen.

S. MAG.: It's fantastic to note that you learned everything you know by teaching yourself. Is the dedication always there to learn more and, perhaps, move into other genres where your images are concerned?

L.D.: Oh yes, definitely! When it comes to art, I have always been like a water-seeking sponge, in that I have always made sure to open myself and try to bring on to my life path people who can teach me more and new forms of art.

When I was about 19, the sketch, painting and art theory lecturer for first and second years at one of the universities in the city we lived in, was the older brother of my best friend at that time. He is truly a magnificent and masterful artist himself. PW Burger is his name and I love his tarot card series of oil paintings. He needed some nude models, as most girls are too shy for that, but as I said, I'm a special kind of weird and have never been phased by nudity. (Not that I'm super-hot or anything; I'm quite ob-shaped and chubby, but I just can't care about what people think. I am who I am.)

So I started sitting for him. I loved to "walk" through the work-in-progress artworks. It is really something you have to experience yourself to understand—when you see yourself through 30 other people's eyes and each one sees you dramatically differently. At this point, my traditional art was already in the "skilled" category, and the lecturer friend made sure the students knew it. He was probably just proud, as he gave me a lot of guidance with my art during that time. The ones I thought really had potential, I would go chat with, just get to know them and try to make friends, as I'm not super good at that. And one day a girl I went to talk to—a fellow weird one—suggested I try joining deviantArt and posting my art there. Internet access at that point in our country was still a major issue, so it took me about a month to organize a cheap plan and modem.

The very first artwork I saw when I went onto dA was called "Swan Queen" and done by J.U.D.A.S. That was it. I fell in love with whatever that was, even though I had no idea what I was looking at. I was very unaware of digital art genres at that point. And the rest, as they say, is history. I started learning a new genre because I was at an art place working for the guy I had learned the craft from; so, you see, learning about art has always been something I constantly do. I feel stagnated if I can't see myself increase my skill in at least one of the genres I enjoy doing.

At the moment I am not posting as much art as I have in the past because I am trying to learn to draw hentai and anime. So far, I haven't done anything I'm willing to show to the world, but... stay tuned. I am also working on my singing and guitar playing, and I write my own music.

S. MAG.: Social media is quite a big marketing tool for artists, writers, and many others. How does deviantArt, Facebook, etc.,





help you in your work and extending that exposure to others out there on the Internet?

L.D.: Ugh...social media. That should explain to you my current feelings on the subject. I am the first person to admit that managing your social media in a disciplined fashion and posting great content, often, will bring you all the success in the world. It really is the key to being a successful freelancer...but I am so over it. I think I just over-did it between 2010 and 2015; I now even go onto Facebook only if I get a very important notification from it on my phone. I prefer hiding in the Dota 2 social shadows if I have to talk to people online, or Smule. The thing is, I live in a really awesome, small mountain town where people are very interactive and in touch with one another, so if you wish to reach me, e-mail is the best way.

S. MAG.: Does the art world have that close collaboration where ideas are shared and support is given a great deal?

L.D.: I have been part of many art realms, and it really depends on the generation and the genre, I feel. Also, how popular they are. For instance, when I was a beginner on deviantArt, there were amazing people like Kuschelirmel and Aermid who were always very happy to assist me when I had questions about learning new techniques. DeviantArt regularly runs awesome mentorship programs, which I joined as a mentor when I felt I was good enough to be able to teach others. But there are the few odd artists who prefer to keep their secrets to themselves. Such as, when I was trying to figure out how to paint blood realistically, all I could find tutorials on were the blood drops, but I wanted to know how a particular artist managed to achieve the dried blood texture to go with the running blood. The person flat out refused to share, but after I pleaded with him/her for even just a small hint to send me in the right direction, they finally sent me an image of concrete. HA!! That was all my brain needed to make the necessary leap. I realized that making a brush out of concrete, in a certain way, would create the exact effect I was looking for. And now I teach others out of the love in my heart how to do the same. I personally love collaborating and sharing. I believe that is the only way we as a species will be able to ascend and evolve.

In other realms, like the traditional art world, I have found that artists are very willing to help you. Overall, deviantArt is the clear winner of being open, helpful and collaborative.

S. MAG.: I have to ask about the names that grace various sites for you: Mippie and TriZiana. Can you tell our readers how those names came about? In addition, for fun, you wrote that your friends refer to you as the "Flamboyant Cuttlefish." What are the commonalities between you and that creature? (LOL)

L.D.: Ha, not surprised. I can't imagine somebody not asking, as it must bug people in the back of their heads trying to figure

it out.

Mippie is the first nickname given to me that I actually liked and that wasn't a mocking nickname from school. A very dear friend of mine, Anton 'Verkrag' van Niekerk, gave it to me over a decade ago, as I was the weird one in a group of death and black metalheads, and even goths. What it stands for is a combination between metal and hippie, cuz I refused to label myself as only a "metalhead." I already loved things like, Damien Rice and Jack Johnson back then, so they started calling me the metal-hippie, or the Mippie for short. I searched very long to find another mippie, and finally found it when I met my husband.

TriZiana is a name that came to me in a deep spiritual trance. I can't explain it in a way that would seem believable to most people, but as I said before, I'm deeply spiritual.

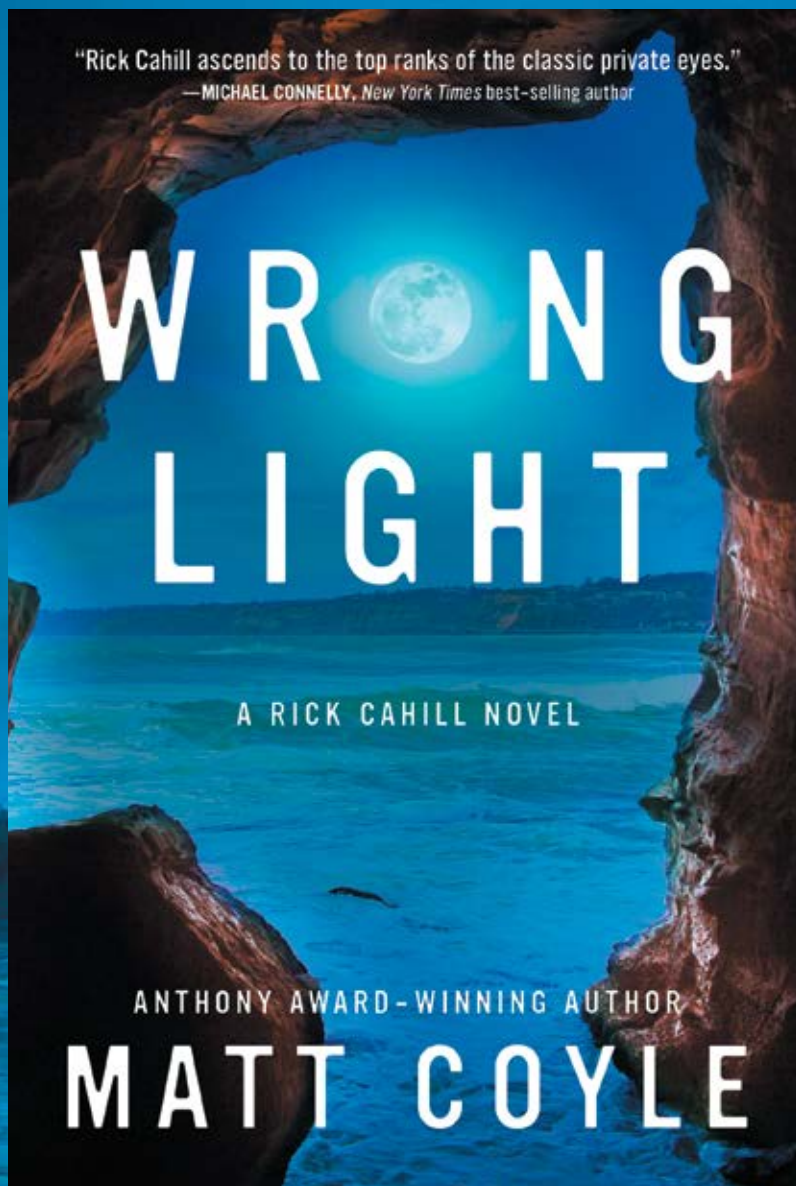
And the "Flamboyant Cuttlefish" (hahaha) came from my super cute and awesome friend, Laney, who started calling me that after I showed her the 'True Facts of the Cuttlefish' on YouTube. If you search 'True Facts' you will find a whole web series; I love the marsupials the most. In a certain part of the cuttlefish episode they introduce the Flamboyant Cuttlefish, who is super colorful and very unlike the rest of his species. The narrator then says something along the lines of, "Unlike his normal cuttlefish friends, the flamboyant cuttlefish does not prefer to blend in with others. He asks, why don't they blend in with me?" When Laney saw this she immediately exclaimed "That's you! That's exactly how you are!" So, yeah, the newest of the nicknames, but I really like it.

S. MAG.: Last, but not least, what comes next for you? Are there any current projects you're working on at the moment?

L.D.: That's a fucking good question. To be honest with you, I have no idea. I have a few things I'm working on, but I have been working on them for a while now, so we will see what happens next. I prefer to live in the NOW, because there's nothing I can do about the future, and the past is the past, so best to just live in the moment. That being said, every day is a surprise to me. I have, in the past year, experienced such unbelievably random days where blessings and opportunities just fall from the sky, and those moments and days have changed the projected course of my life a few times already, so who's to say what's next? Hopefully what's next happens in a different dimension all together.

I, for one, will be watching to see exactly what does come next. Interviews, a great deal of the time, are "standard" questions that receive those "textbook" answers. The experience of really getting to know this artist was as intense and unforgettable as her stunning works.

For more information on Leana, you can head to [www.facebook.com/MippieArt/](http://www.facebook.com/MippieArt/); [www.deviantart.com/triziana](http://www.deviantart.com/triziana); or email Leana Delpot at [mippieart@gmail.com](mailto:mippieart@gmail.com). ■



ON SALE DECEMBER 4, 2018

"The best in the series so far and not to be missed."

—*NEW YORK JOURNAL OF BOOKS*

"Distinctive characters and a powerful narrative."

—*PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*

"Coyle knows the secret, digging into a crime means digging into the past."

—**MICHAEL CONNELLY**

*New York Times* best-selling author

"A fascinating, fast-paced, spidery-webbed novel."

—**REED FARREL COLEMAN**

*New York Times* best-selling author

"For the Jim Thompson crowd, who want their noir straight, no chaser."

—*BOOKLIST*

OCEANVIEW  PUBLISHING

WWW.OCEANVIEWPUB.COM



## SPECIAL PREVIEW FROM LAURA JOH ROWLAND

# THE HANGMAN'S SECRET

By Laura Joh Rowland  
Press Photo Credit: Marty Rowland



LONDON, JANUARY 1890

Carriages and wagons are already rolling down Whitechapel High Street. Snowflakes dance in the yellow haloes around the gas lamps. Coal smoke rising from chimneys mixes with the fog, the chemical fumes from the factories, and the stench from nearby slaughterhouses. People emerge like gray ghosts from the murky atmosphere that obscures my view of the street beyond twenty feet in either direction. As I lock the door, machinery clangs. A train rumbles into Aldgate East Station down the block; even in early morning, the East End of London is never silent. Although we're in a hurry, I pause to admire the studio.

It's in a row of the oldest buildings on the street, which date from the past century. Their three-story whitewashed stucco fronts and attics set in gables rise above the ground floors. Ours, located between a watchmaker and a jeweler, has "S. Bain Photographer & Co." painted in gold letters over

the door and display window. This part of Whitechapel is the sprucest, most prosperous and respectable. To look at it, one would never know that it's surrounded by some of London's worst slums. I still can't believe my good fortune. I only wish I had time to use the studio and build up a clientele. The kind of work I'm doing today keeps me too busy.

"Come on, Sarah!" Mick calls.

Laden with my equipment, we hurry up the street, then down Brick Lane, entering the neighborhood of Spitalfields. The brick tenements look dispirited in the snow, smoky fog, and gas light. A layer of cold grime coats my face; I can feel my tongue turning black.

"At least this one's close," Hugh says.

They're always close. Whitechapel has an overabundance of violent deaths. Our house is conveniently situated. Trudging between Hugh and Mick, I can hardly believe I didn't know them until about two years ago, and now they're my dearest friends with whom I live and work. I glance at Hugh. Despite his looks and the fact that we're both single, our relationship is happily platonic. He's not interested in women, and my affections are engaged elsewhere.

Four blocks later, we turn left on Fashion Street, whose narrow, cobblestoned length divides terraces of three-story brick buildings. A small crowd is gathered outside the second from the corner. The people appear to be local tradesmen and housewives; dressed in dark winter garb, they resemble vultures huddled around carrion. The building is a public house, tall and narrow, with a door on the left, a large, mullioned window on the right, and a pair of smaller windows on each upper floor. The woodwork is painted dark red. Gold letters mounted



across the front read, "The Ropemaker's Daughter." From a pole at the roofline hangs a flag illustrated with a picture of a red-haired girl in a white dress, holding a coiled rope. A young police constable with rosy cheeks is stationed outside the pub. Snow frosts his tall helmet and blue uniform. He rubs his gloved hands and stomps his booted feet to keep warm.

I swallow my fear of the law, which I've had since childhood and still plagues me even though my job puts me in daily contact with the police.

"We're not too late," Mick says happily. "There oughta be somethin' worth seein'."

Dread grips my stomach. Hugh says, "God, I hope it isn't too awful."

The constable sees us approaching the door. "Hey! What do you think you're doing?"

"Good morning, Constable," Hugh says with his most charming smile. "We're from the *Daily World* newspaper. We're here to take photographs."

The constable plants his feet wide and his hands on his hips. "This here's a crime scene. You can't go in."

"Then we'll just take photographs outside," Hugh says. "Would you like to be in one?"

"Well, all right." The constable seems pleased, flattered.

"What's your name?" Hugh asks.

"Mitchell, sir."

"If you'll just stand over there, Mr. Mitchell?" Hugh gestures away from the door.

Hugh's aristocratic bearing and accent command respect. The constable moves. "The wife would be tickled to see me in the papers." Then he sees Mick sneaking into the pub. "Hey! Stop!"

The crowd cheers. Hugh and I grab my equipment and scramble after Mick, but Constable Mitchell blocks our way. From within the pub, Mick exclaims, "Gorblimey!"

Another constable steps out of the pub. He has unruly dark hair, a slender but strong build, and an irate expression. Mitchell says, "Sorry, Barrett. They tricked me."

"It's all right," Barrett says. "Let them in."

Even though we're courting, when I see Barrett in uniform, I see the uniform first, and my fear of the law resurges. Then my heart flip-flops like it does every time we meet, despite the fact that we've been lovers for almost a year. I'm so smitten with him that I smile even though he doesn't.

"Fancy meeting you here." His carefully proper speech disguises his humble East End origins. Wry tenderness underlies the disapproval in his crystal-clear gray eyes.

This is the first time he's been at a death scene when Hugh, Mick, and I showed up. It's his duty to keep the public away from the scenes and protect evidence, but he's accommodating my friends and me because he loves me. I smile apologetically, knowing he doesn't like my job. He thinks it's unsuitable for a woman and only tolerates it

because it's my livelihood. It's one reason our relationship is rocky.

"How did you hear about this so fast?" Barrett adds, "I only just got here myself."

"The *Daily World* has informants all over town." At every hour of the day, they hang around police stations and taverns in every neighborhood, ready to gather and pass on information about crimes and other newsworthy events. They include the man who woke me up this morning. They alert the photographers and reporters who cover the stories for the paper.

"It's good to have friends in the right places." Hugh claps Barrett on the back and starts to enter the pub.

"Don't come in, Hugh," Mick calls. "You don't wanna see this."

"I'll take your word for it." Hugh retreats.

He has a weak stomach. I'm afraid mine will fail me; that's why I didn't eat breakfast. I've endured viewing many terrible crime scenes, both before and after I began photographing them last October, but someday there will be one I can't take. This could be it.

"It's bad, Sarah. Maybe you'd better skip it too," Barrett says, trying to discourage me.

"I'll be all right." I avoid Barrett's gaze as he helps me carry my equipment through the door. I don't want to see his ambivalence; nor do I want him to see me struggle to muster my nerve.

When I step into the dim passage, the smell of blood and ordure hits me like the foul wind from a slaughterhouse. A wave of nausea churns sour bile up from my stomach. I drop my camera case at the threshold and clap my hand over my nose and mouth—too late to keep out the taste of iron and salt, meat and feces. The dark wooden wainscoting and white walls swim dizzily around me. At the end of the passage, beside a steep staircase, blood is spattered like a thick red sunburst across the black-and-white tile floor. In the middle lies the large, crumpled, bloodstained body of a man dressed in a white shirt, black trousers, and black shoes. Instead of a head, he has only a ragged, gory stump.

I've seen the corpses of four of Jack the Ripper's victims, who were brutally stabbed and mutilated. This is just as terrible. I'm glad it's so cold in here; otherwise, the smell would be even worse.

Mick, standing near me, says, "The bloke was hanged!" His voice is shrill with horror and excitement.

I look up and see the thick rope that dangles from the railing on the second-story landing. Caught inside the loop at its end is the dead man's head, suspended about ten feet from the floor.

"His head came off!" Mick says.

The man's eyes are bulging, his mouth slack, and his cheeks bloated and purple. His short, smooth gray hair and beard look incongruously neat. Torn flesh under his chin



oozes stringy red clots. I gag. It takes all my willpower not to vomit.

"I didn't know that could happen." Mick sounds awed.

Neither did I. Criminals are routinely hanged for offenses that include but aren't limited to murder. Stories about executions feature regularly in the newspapers, but I've never heard of anyone's head coming off.

Barrett peers up at the railing. He looks a little green. He's been on the police force for eleven years, patrolling beats in London's roughest neighborhoods, but the terrible things he's seen haven't prepared him for this. "He dropped at least ten feet before the rope pulled tight. The force on his neck must have been so great that it decapitated him."

I want to run away and forget I ever saw this—but I'll never forget, and I've a job to do. My hands shake as I set up my tripod and camera as close to the body as I can while avoiding the blood spatters. Working always calms me. My stomach settles enough for me to speak.

"Who is he?" I say.

"His name is Harry Warbrick," Barrett says.

"What happened?" Hugh calls from outside.

Mick runs to the door and tells him, sparing no details. I hear exclamations from the crowd as I load a negative plate into my camera and fill the flash lamp with powder.

"I've not had time to investigate yet, but this was probably a suicide," Barrett says. "So there's no need for you to take pictures."

I know from experience that things are sometimes far from what they seem on the surface. "Why do you think so?"

Barrett frowns; he doesn't like me challenging his professional judgment—or the sense of competition between us. Nor does he like the fact that Hugh and Mick and I, untrained amateurs who started a private inquiry service last year, have already solved two major cases. One was Jack the Ripper. Barrett is among a very few people in the world who know that we succeeded while the police failed, and he can't help taking the failure personally.

"It would have been difficult to hang a man as big as Mr. Warbrick," Barrett says.

"That's a good point." And it's hard for me to believe anyone would inflict such a violent death on himself. But he probably didn't know he would be decapitated. "Who found him?"

"The charwoman, when she came to clean this morning," Barrett explains. "The front door was locked. She has a key. There was no sign of forced entry."

"What about the back door?" I see it at the end of the passage, beyond Warbrick's body.

Barrett compresses his lips; his patience is wearing thin. "I was on my way to check when I was rudely interrupted."

I don't want to argue with him, but my experience with crimes has sharpened my instincts, and I sense something in the atmosphere—a lingering trace of malevolence? If I'm

right, and this death proves to be murder, I'll live to regret leaving the scene empty-handed. I put my head under the black drape that covers the back of my camera, aim the lens, and focus. Holding up the flash lamp, I snap the shutter. Flash powder explodes, lighting up Mr. Warbrick's corpse. Sulfurous smoke overlays the reek of blood and death.

"It's not right for Sir Gerald to make you do this," Barrett says.

My friends and I work for Sir Gerald Mariner. One of the richest men in England, Sir Gerald made his first fortune in shipping, his second in banking, and ventured into the newspaper business when he bought the *Daily World*. I bristle at Barrett's insinuation that Sir Gerald has bought me.

"I chose to accept the job." But it's true that I'm at Sir Gerald's beck and call twenty-four hours of the day. That's the reason my studio sits unused while I photograph crime scenes.

"Working for him is dangerous."

I wince at the reminder as I emerge from the black drape, take the exposed negative plate out of my camera, and insert a fresh one. Last April, Sir Gerald hired Hugh, Mick, and me to find his kidnapped baby son. The investigation almost cost us our lives, although it earned us Sir Gerald's respect and further employment. "I just take photographs. Hugh or Mick or both of them are always with me. What could happen?"

"All sorts of bad things have happened to you three." Barrett's expression darkens; I know he's remembering the night in a slaughterhouse in 1888. "I'm only trying to protect you. And Sir Gerald is a monster."

I can't disagree; the kidnapping investigation had shown me the worst about my employer. I also know Barrett is protective of me because he loves me. "Sir Gerald pays well."

Barrett lowers his voice. "You wouldn't need his money if we got married."

Resistance flares in me even though I love him and want to be with him forever. I busy myself with adjusting the settings on my camera and taking more photographs. I can't explain to him why I'm reluctant to marry him. My reasons are so personal, so complicated.

"We're supposed to have dinner with my parents on Thursday," Barrett says. A crime scene isn't the best place for personal conversation, but we may not have another chance to talk later. "Do you think you can make it this time?"

I've canceled twice, on short notice, because of my work. I know Barrett is hurt, and it's another reason he dislikes Sir Gerald—my job has kept us apart, our future in limbo. But I was actually glad for an excuse to avoid the dinner. I'm shy, and I'm afraid his parents won't like me. I'm plain, thirty-three years old—two years his senior; he could get a younger, prettier, more charming woman. And meeting them is a step closer to marriage. "Yes. I promise."

Barrett smiles, but there's doubt in his eyes.

"I say, Barrett," Hugh calls from outside the pub, "do you

know who Harry Warbrick was?"

"The pub's owner," Barrett says.

"He was also a hangman. That's what these good folks out here tell me." Hugh has a talent for striking up conversations and making friends wherever he goes. "Mr. Warbrick has hanged hundreds of criminals all over England. He's reputedly the best in the business."

"Well," Barrett says, disconcerted because Hugh has learned something that he himself hasn't had time to find out.

I'm interested to hear that a hangman has met the same end that he inflicted on others. It's as if his past has caught up with him, and fate has exacted justice.

"That's why his pub is called The Ropemaker's Daughter," Hugh says. "It's a polite name for the gallows."

It's said that when a man is hanged, he marries the ropemaker's daughter. I imagine hands that have tied nooses pouring me a drink, and I shiver. "Why was Mr. Warbrick running a pub?" I call.

"Hangings pay ten pounds apiece," says a woman outside. "Not enough to live on."

"So the poor fellow's head came off because he fell such a long distance," Hugh marvels. "After hanging so many people, wouldn't he have known to use a shorter rope?"

"I should think so." I focus my camera on Warbrick's suspended head.

"If he was in a disturbed state of mind, he might not have cared," Barrett says.

"He'd have cared," says a man in the crowd. "He always bragged that he'd never botched a hanging. He liked to tell the story of a hangman, named James Berry, who decapitated a bloke in 1885. Called Berry a disgrace to the profession. He wouldn't have botched his own hanging. It was a matter of honor."

I'd never thought of honor in connection with hangmen, but I suppose that every profession has its standards. I'm carefully composing these photographs, even though they may be too gruesome to publish in the newspaper.

"If Mr. Warbrick didn't hang himself, then this was murder." Hugh sounds excited.

"We better look for clues." Mick hurries toward the stairs.

Barrett blocks his path. "Oh no, you don't." He says to me, "This is why I don't want you and your friends here."

When we're confronted with a mystery, we feel compelled to solve it, even if it's none of our business. If we run roughshod over the crime scene, Barrett could get in serious trouble for letting us obstruct the police's efforts to catch the murderer.

Nimble avoiding the blood on the floor, Mick runs through the doorway at the right of the passage, into the taproom. "Don't worry—I won't tinker with evidence."

Barrett stalks after him. I follow, eager to get away from the corpse and propelled by my curiosity. The taproom has

a wood floor and wainscoting and contains a dozen wooden tables with benches. Framed pictures cover the whitewashed walls. At the back is the bar, with its row of taps; the bottles and glasses on shelves behind it; and the fireplace. A gaslight fixture dangles from the pressed tin ceiling.

"Look!" Mick says.

"Found something?" Hugh calls.

Mick points to the floor. "Bloody footprints."

I see smeared red marks on the floor. Barrett says, "Don't step on them."

"Somebody was here after Warbrick's head came off," Mick says. "They walked in his blood."

Something crunches under my foot. "Here's broken glass." I see more fragments under the tables and smell spilled liquor. "These may be signs of a struggle. Warbrick may have fought with his killer before he died."

"Maybe," Barrett says. "But fights and broken glass in pubs aren't unusual."

I point out damp, bloody streaks amid the glass. "I think that whoever tracked blood in here was trying to clean up. Why would he, unless he killed Warbrick and didn't want anyone to know the hanging wasn't suicide?"

"You're right." Barrett sounds grudgingly impressed by my deductions.

Mick is in the passage, tiptoeing between blood spatters and around the headless corpse. Barrett gingerly follows him to the back door. Mick opens it. "It weren't locked."

"Don't keep me in suspense," Hugh calls.

"Someone went out the back door after Warbrick died." I look outside.

Across the alley, trees with bare branches loom inside the brick wall that encloses the yard of Christ Church. Red footprints show on the thin snow on the cobblestones, getting fainter until they vanish amid other footprints. I hear the sound of hoofbeats and wheels rattling in the street.

Someone calls, "The police surgeon's here with the meat wagon."

"Time for you to go." Barrett points Mick and me toward the front door. "Out!" ■

*Laura Joh Rowland is a bestselling author of historical mystery novels. Her newest series stars Miss Sarah Bain, a photographer in Victorian London. The latest book is "The Hangman's Secret." Laura's previous series, which is set in medieval Japan and features samurai detective Sano Ichiro, has been published in 21 countries, been nominated for the Anthony Award and the Hammett Prize, won RT Magazine's Reader's Choice Award, and been included in The Wall Street Journal's list of the five best historical mystery novels. Laura has also written a historical suspense series about Charlotte Bronte, the famous Victorian author.*

*Laura holds a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Michigan. She is a former aerospace scientist, a painter, and a cartoonist. She lives in New York City with her husband Marty.*



# COZY BEST OF 2018

**“HOLLYWOOD ENDING”** by Kellye Garrett (Llewellyn Worldwide, LTD.; August 8, 2018): *And the award goes to . . .*

. . . Dayna Anderson, the semi-famous actress turned PI who steps up her sleuthing swagger in this follow-up to the breakout hit “Hollywood Homicide,” winner of the Lefty Award and the Agatha Award for Best First Novel!

Tinseltown’s award season is in full swing, and everyone is obsessed with dressing up, scoring free swag, and getting invited to the biggest awards’ shows of the year. But when celebrity publicist Lyla Davis is killed, the festive mood comes to an abrupt halt.

Apprentice PI Dayna Anderson thinks she’s uncovered the killer. Unfortunately, what starts as an open-and-shut case turns out to be anything but. Diving deeper into the investigation, Dayna gets a backstage look at gossip blogging, Hollywood royalty, and one of entertainment’s most respected awards’ shows—all while trying to avoid her own Hollywood ending.



Press Photo Credit: Kathryn Hollinrake

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

Kellye Garrett (K.G.): *#BlackGirlMagic meets Janet Evanovich’s bestselling Stephanie Plum series.*

S. MAG.: If you could write a message to future aspiring authors and place it in a time capsule to read years later, what would you write?

K.G.: *“Just do it! Publishing is a very interesting business. For every high like this one, there are probably a kajillion lows. As writers, we can’t control when we get an agent, when we will get a book deal, if our book will get good reviews, if people will actually buy our books, etc.*

*The only thing we can control is sitting down in front of a computer (if they still have those when you’re reading this) and putting words on a page. Focus on that.”*

S. MAG.: If you could be a superhero, which one would you be? And what is that one special gift of his/hers you want to have, and why?

K.G.: *No question, I would be a Dora Milaje warrior from Black Panther. I could kick butt, hang out with a crew of equally fabulous women, and get to look at Chadwick Boseman all day, every day. Sign me up please. ■*

**“MURDER IN THE LOCKED LIBRARY”** by Ellery Adams (Kensington; April 24, 2018): Welcome to Storyton Hall, Virginia, where book lovers travel from near and far to enjoy the singular comforts of the Agatha Christie Tea Room, where they can discuss the merits of their favorite authors, no matter how deadly the topic . . .

With her twins, Fitzgerald and Hemingway, back in school, Jane Steward can finally focus on her work again—managing Storyton Hall and breaking ground on the resort's latest attraction: a luxurious, relaxing spa named in honor of Walt Whitman. But when the earth is dug up to start laying the spa's foundation, something else comes to the surface—a collection of unusual bones and the ragged remnants of a very old book. The attendees of the Rare Book Conference are eager to assist Jane with this unexpected historical mystery—until a visitor meets an untimely end in the Henry James Library. As the questions—and suspects—start stacking up, Jane will have to uncover a killer before more unhappy endings ensue . . .

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): What is the best book you read in 2018?

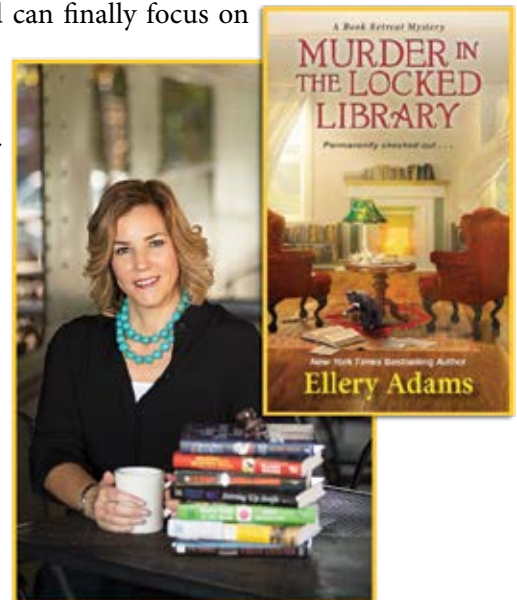
Ellery Adams (E.A.): *Sorry, but I have a dead tie between two very different books: Stephen King's "The Outsider" and "Children of Blood and Bone" by Tomi Adeyemi.*

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

E.A.: *Readers can expect two releases in 2019: "Murder in the Reading Room" (Book 5 in the Book Retreat Mysteries) and "The Book of Candlelight" (Book 3 in the Secret, Book, and Scone Society).*

S. MAG.: Finish this sentence: If I wasn't an author, I would be \_\_\_\_\_.

E.A.: *If I wasn't an author, I'd be a chocolate wrapper in a factory with Lucy and Ethel.* ■



Press Photo Credit: Amy Stern



Press Photo Credit: Provided by Author

**"TO CATCH A WITCH"** by Heather Blake (Crooked Lane Books; August 7, 2018): Wishcrafter Darcy Merriweather might be a witch with the ability to grant wishes for others, but wishing isn't going to help her catch a killer . . .

When Darcy's personal concierge company is hired by elite runner Abby Stillwell to organize the Wicked Mad Dash, a competition that takes place in the Enchanted Village, Darcy is more than willing to help her friend. As blizzard conditions rage on the morning of the race, Darcy's main concern is the terrible weather—until Abby goes missing . . . and is later found dead, buried in the snow.

As Darcy investigates her friend's untimely death, she learns that she didn't really know Abby all that well. And those closest to the woman—

her secret fiancé, her roommate, her ex-boyfriend, and her co-workers at Balefire Sports—seem to have plenty to hide, too. As Darcy digs deeper, she uncovers complicated relationships, a possible embezzlement scheme, and allegations of cheating against a top athlete.

Just when Darcy is convinced she's hit a dead end in the case, a startling burglary and the hunt for Abby's elusive ex send Darcy down a dark, dangerous trail. It will take the help from friends, family, and a little bit of magic for Darcy to stop a stone-cold killer from striking again.

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): What is the best book you read in 2018?

Heather Blake (H.B.): *I recently finished an advanced copy of "The Widows," a historical mystery by Jess Montgomery. The novel*



is beautifully written, with a compelling plot and richly drawn characters. It'll debut in January, and I absolutely loved every page of it.

S. MAG.: Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

H.B.: *Lovable witches solve crimes in an enchanted village.*

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

H.B.: *In 2019, the trade paperback edition of "To Catch a Witch" will be available in March; "A Witch to Remember," the ninth book in the Wishcraft series, will be out in April; and in July, "Midnight at the Blackbird Café," a women's fiction/magical realism novel, makes its debut. That one is written under Heather Webber—my other name. It should be an exciting year. ■*

**"THE GHOST AND THE BOGUS BESTSELLER"** by Cleo Coyle (Penguin Publishing Group; September 24, 2018): A big bestseller leads to small town trouble.

Bookshop owner Penelope Thornton-McClure didn't believe in ghosts, until she was haunted by the hard-boiled spirit of 1940s private investigator, Jack Shepard. Now Jack is back on the job, and Pen is eternally grateful . . .

After an elegant new customer has a breakdown in her shop, Penelope suspects there is something bogus behind the biggest bestseller of the year. This popular potboiler is so hot that folks in her tiny Rhode Island town are dying to read it—literally. First, one customer turns up dead, followed by another mysterious fatality connected to the book, which Pen discovers is more than just fiction. Now, with the help of her gumshoe ghost, Pen must solve the real-life cold case behind the bogus bestseller before the killer closes the book on her.

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): What does having your book chosen as a "Best of" by *Suspense Magazine* mean to you?

Cleo Coyle (C.C.): *A great deal—and not just to us. For nearly a decade, the long-suffering readers of our Haunted Bookshop Mysteries waited for us to resume writing the series. After such a long hiatus, we were (understandably) nervous about the reception a new entry would receive. This honor from Suspense Magazine and its fans is a miraculous confirmation that we did something right. We can't thank you enough for this beautiful vote of confidence.*

S. MAG.: If you could write a message to future aspiring authors and place it in a time capsule to read years later, what would you write?

C.C.: *With few exceptions, the writer's life has more in common with a roller coaster than a carousel (which explains why you sometimes see authors throwing up hands and screaming). Our philosophy: never lose your love of storytelling; make friends with risk (there are virtues in it); try not to take yourself too seriously; and always be game for a wild ride. As for the art and craft of writing: the best genre writing does not rely on strict formula. Never be afraid to color outside the lines. Surprise and amuse; thrill and unnerve; inspire and inform yourself, and you're more likely to provide a satisfying story for your reader. Satisfy readers on a consistent basis, and you'll build a career. If there's any formula worth following, it's that one.*

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

C.C.: *"Brewed Awakening," the 18<sup>th</sup> entry in our Coffeehouse Mysteries series, is scheduled for hardcover release next December, and we're happy to confirm that we've agreed to write more Haunted Bookshop Mysteries for our longtime publisher. "The Ghost and the Bogus Bestseller" was the 6<sup>th</sup> entry in the series, and we'll be completing the 7<sup>th</sup> title in 2019 for publication by Penguin Random House's Berkley imprint in 2020. ■*



Press Photo Credit: Provided by Author

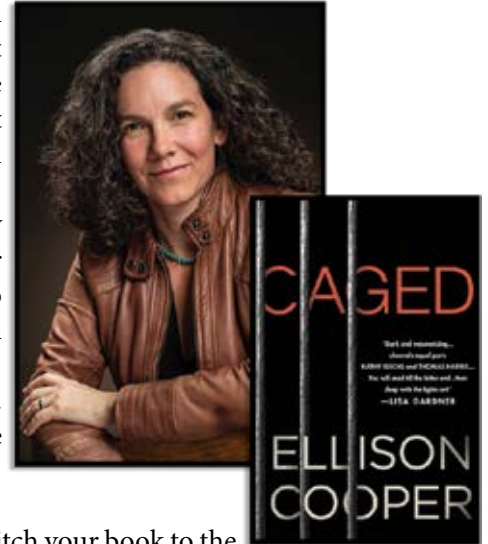
# DEBUT

## BEST OF 2018

**“CAGED”** by Ellison Cooper (Minotaur Books; July 10, 2018): In a residential Washington, D.C. neighborhood, a young woman’s body is found in the basement of an abandoned house—starved to death in a cage, along with the video footage of a dark and deadly ritual. The victim is identified as the daughter of a prominent D.C. politician, and it falls to the FBI to track down the unconscionable psychopath who murdered her.

FBI special agent Sayer Altair would rather conduct research on criminality than catch actual criminals. But when she’s offered a promotion hinging on her next assignment, she reluctantly accepts the “Cage Killer” case. Taunted by a photo of another victim at the mercy of this vicious killer, Sayer and her team are driven to put an end to these grisly homicides.

During the investigation, clues emerge connecting the murders to Sayer’s past. Now, the stakes are personal, and the deeper Sayer is drawn into the deadly web, the more she believes she is the only one who can uncover the killer’s identity.



Press Photo Credit:  
Provided by Author

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

Ellison Cooper (E.C.): *A fierce FBI neuroscientist, cutting edge science, and ancient death rituals (plus a rescued dog).*

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

E.C.: *“Buried,” the next book in the Sayer Altair series, is out in July of 2019. Sayer is called down to the mountains of Virginia’s Shenandoah National Park when an off-duty FBI agent and his cadaver dog fall into a sinkhole filled with human bones.*

S. MAG.: If you could write a message to future aspiring authors and place it in a time capsule to read years later, what would you write?

E.C.: *I wrote “Caged” while sitting in doctor’s office waiting rooms, horribly worried about my son’s health. As he slowly got better, I channeled all that fear and hope into my writing and I ended up writing a book about fierce people who fight to survive horrific experiences (whether that is being captured by a serial killer or simply losing someone you love). By focusing on survivor stories, I think my genuine emotion came through in “Caged.” So my advice would be to always write from the heart, even if it’s hard, and to trust your own unique voice. I believe that we all have something important to say! ■*

**“ALL THESE BEAUTIFUL STRANGERS”** by Elizabeth Klehfoth (William Morrow; July 10, 2018): One summer day, Grace Fairchild, the beautiful young wife of real estate mogul Alistair Calloway, vanished from the family’s lake house without a trace, leaving behind her seven-year-old daughter Charlie, and a slew of unanswered questions.

A decade later, Charlie still struggles with the dark legacy of her family name and the mystery surrounding her mother. Determined to finally let go of the past, she throws herself into life at Knollwood, the prestigious New England school she attends. Charlie quickly becomes friends with Knollwood’s “it” crowd.





Press Photo Credit: Provided by Publicist



Charlie has also been tapped by the A's—the school's elite secret society well known for terrorizing the faculty, administration, and their enemies. To become a member of the A's, Charlie must play 'The Game,' a semester-long, diabolical, high-stakes scavenger hunt that will jeopardize her friendships, her reputation, even her place at Knollwood.

As the dark events of past and present converge, Charlie begins to fear that she may not survive the terrible truth about her family, her school, and her own life.

*Suspense Magazine (S. MAG):* Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

Elizabeth Klehfoth (E.K.): *At boarding school, Charlie tries to solve her mother's disappearance.*

S. MAG.: What does having your book chosen as a "Best of" by *Suspense Magazine* mean to you?

E.K.: *It's a tremendous honor, and I couldn't be more thrilled to be included. Writing can be such a solitary process, so it's very rewarding to see readers are connecting with the book and responding so positively to it.*

S. MAG.: Is there a book, written by another, that you wish you'd written?

E.K.: *I really love Shirley Jackson's "We Have Always Lived in the Castle." I read the whole thing in one breathless sitting, and it had me on the edge of my seat the whole time as to what was going to happen. I loved the gothic atmosphere, the relationship between the two sisters, and, of course, the suspense and slow reveals. Such a fantastic book. ■*

**"THE 7½ DEATHS OF EVELYN HARDCASTLE"** by Stuart Turton (Sourcebooks Landmark; September 18, 2018): The Rules of Blackheath: Evelyn Hardcastle will be murdered at 11:00 p.m. There are eight days, and eight witnesses for you to inhabit. We will only let you escape once you tell us the name of the killer. Understood? Then let's begin . . .

Evelyn Hardcastle will die. Every day until Aiden Bishop can identify her killer and break the cycle. But every time the day begins again, Aiden wakes up in the body of a different guest. And some of his hosts are more helpful than others.

*Suspense Magazine (S. MAG.):* Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

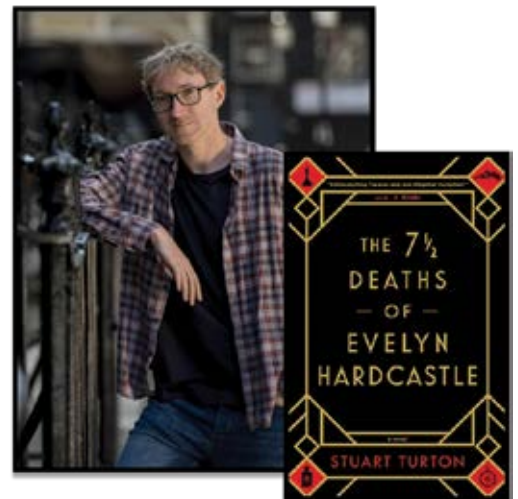
Stuart Turton (S.T.): *This book is un-filmable. Please stop trying! You'll go mad.*

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

S.T.: *I'll be having a nice lie down. 2018 was HUGE. Normal service will resume in 2020.*

S. MAG.: Is there a book, written by another, that you wish you'd written?

S.T.: *"The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy is as close to perfect as a novel can be. Intricate, beautiful, ingeniously constructed, and built on an extraordinary love of words; how they sound and the ways they can be played with. I wish I'd written it, but that would leech the joy out of it for me. So, actually, not that. Something I'd never want to read again . . . the instruction manual for my car, maybe? ■*



Press Photo Credit: Charlotte Graham

# Romantic SUSPENSE

## BEST of 2018



**“THE WINTERS”** by Lisa Gabriele (Viking; October 16, 2018): After a whirlwind romance, a young woman returns to the opulent, secluded Long Island mansion of her new fiancé Max Winter—a wealthy politician and recent widower—and a life of luxury she’s never known. But all is not as it appears at the Asherley estate. The house is steeped

in the memory of Max’s beautiful first wife Rebekah, who haunts the young woman’s imagination and feeds her uncertainties, while his very much alive teenage daughter Dani makes her life a living hell. She soon realizes there is no clear place for her in this twisted little family. Max and Dani circle each other like cats, a dynamic that both repels and fascinates her, and he harbors political ambitions which he will allow no woman—alive or dead—to interfere with.

As the soon-to-be second Mrs. Winter grows more in love with Max, and more afraid of Dani, she is drawn deeper into the family’s dark secrets—the kind of secrets that could kill her, too.

Press Photo Credit: Vanessa Heins

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): What is the best book you read in 2018?

Lisa Gabriele (L.G.): *I loved Tana French’s “The Witch Elm.” It has everything I love in a suspense novel: breathtaking writing, a questionable narrator (in this case the feckless, privileged Toby), a rambling old house, and a creepy skull found in the hollow of an old tree. Besides being insanely tense, “The Witch Elm” is an excellent case study of a man for whom life has always been easy, and what it reveals about his character when things take a dark turn.*

S. MAG.: Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch “The Winters” to the movies in ten words or less?

L.G.: *It’s Rebecca via Mean Girls with a surprisingly twisty ending.*

S. MAG.: What does having your book chosen as a “Best of” by *Suspense Magazine* mean to you?

L.G.: *Seeing “The Winters” on a “best of” list in this magazine is deeply gratifying. It means my book—my first stab at this genre—really resonated with people who know a thing or two about suspense novels. It also means I might have to take another stab at this genre with my next book.*

S. MAG.: Is there a book, written by another, that you wish you’d written?

L.G.: *There’s a book coming out in a few months, by Taylor Jenkins Reid, called “Daisy Jones and The Six.” It’s written in several voices, in the manner of an “as told to” exposé you might find in Rolling Stone magazine. Each band mate is interviewed about the sudden and mysterious dissolution of the insanely popular band they belonged to back in the ‘70s. It’s also a love story, but not between the obvious people. It’s so clever, tense and moving. I couldn’t have written it, but I wish I could steal that format. ■*





Press Photo Credit:  
Provided by Author



**“A DANGEROUS GAME”** by Heather Graham (MIRA; March 13, 2018): Trouble always finds her . . .

Wrapping up a normal day at the office, criminal psychologist Kieran Finnegan is accosted by a desperate woman who shoves an infant into her arms and then flees, only to be murdered minutes later on a busy Manhattan street.

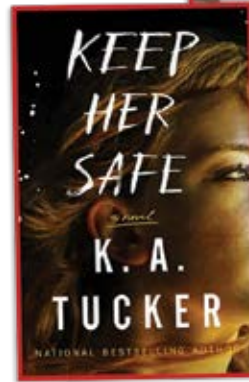
Who was the woman? Where did the baby come from? Kieran can't stop thinking about the child and the victim, so her boyfriend, Craig Frasier, does what any good special agent boyfriend would do—he gets the FBI involved. And asks Kieran to keep out of it.

But the Finnegans have a knack for getting into trouble, and Kieran won't sit idle when a lead surfaces through her family's pub. Investigating on her own, she uncovers a dangerous group that plays fast and loose with human lives and will stop at nothing to keep their secrets—and they plan to silence Kieran before she can expose their deadly enterprise. ■

**“KEEP HER SAFE”** by K.A. Tucker (Atria Books; January 23, 2018): Noah Marshall has known a privileged and comfortable life thanks to his mother, the highly decorated Chief of the Austin Police Department. But all that changes the night she reveals a skeleton that's been rattling in her closet for years, and succumbs to the guilt of destroying an innocent family's life. Reeling with grief, Noah is forced to carry the burden of this shocking secret.

Gracie Richards wasn't born in a trailer park, but after fourteen years of learning how to survive in *The Hollow*, it's all she knows anymore. At least here people don't care that her dad was a corrupt Austin cop, murdered in a drug deal gone wrong. Here, she and her mother are just another family struggling to survive . . . until a man who clearly doesn't belong shows up on her doorstep.

Despite their differences, Noah and Gracie are searching for answers to the same questions, and together, they set out to uncover the truth about the Austin Police Department's dark and messy past. But the scandal that emerges is bigger than they bargained for, and goes far higher up than they ever imagined.



Press Photo Credit: Provided  
by Publicist

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

K.A. Tucker (K.A.T.): *I write in multiple genres and right now I am finishing up a contemporary romance/women's fiction blend called “Say You Still Love Me,” out in June. But, I've been sitting on a psychological suspense idea that I hope to have time to begin plotting next year.*

S. MAG.: What does having your book chosen as a “Best of” by *Suspense Magazine* mean to you?

K.A.T.: *I cannot begin to express the honor I feel for having my book selected by Suspense Magazine. I am proud of all my books, but “Keep Her Safe” challenged me as a writer in a way that no other book has, to date. It feels validating to have the end result of that hard work recognized, and by people so in tune with this genre.*

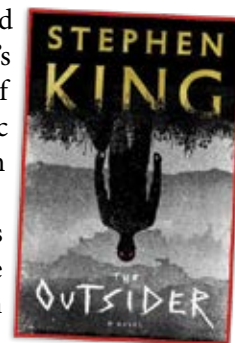
S. MAG.: If you could write a message to future aspiring authors and place it in a time capsule to read years later, what would you write?

K.A.T.: *My philosophy for strengthening my writing craft has always been and will always be this—read broadly, research curiously, and write voraciously. Do these three things and your writing can't help but improve. There is always room for improvement, no matter the writer.* ■

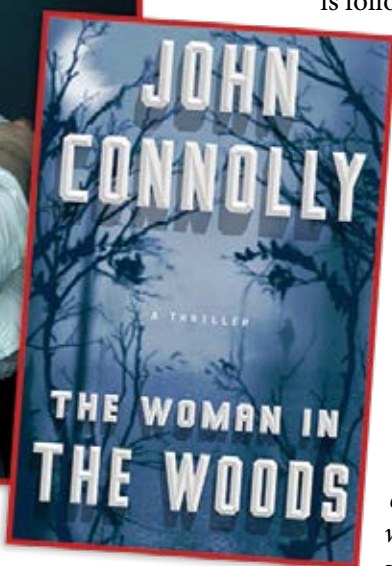
# BEST OF HORROR

**“THE OUTSIDER”** by Stephen King (Scribner; May 2, 2018): An eleven-year-old boy’s violated corpse is found in a town park. Eyewitnesses and fingerprints point unmistakably to one of Flint City’s most popular citizens. He is Terry Maitland, Little League coach, English teacher, husband, and father of two girls. Detective Ralph Anderson, whose son Maitland once coached, orders a quick and very public arrest. Maitland has an alibi, but Anderson and the district attorney soon add DNA evidence to go with the fingerprints and witnesses. Their case seems ironclad.

As the investigation expands and horrifying answers begin to emerge, King’s propulsive story kicks into high gear, generating strong tension and almost unbearable suspense. Terry Maitland seems like a nice guy, but is he wearing another face? When the answer comes, it will shock you as only Stephen King can. ■



Press Photo Credit:  
Provided by Publicist



**“THE WOMAN IN THE WOODS”** by John Connolly (Atria/Emily Bestler Books; June 12, 2018): In the beautiful Maine woods, a partly preserved body is discovered. Investigators realize that the dead young woman gave birth shortly before her death. But there is no sign of a baby.

Private detective Charlie Parker is hired by a lawyer to shadow the police investigation and find the infant, but Parker is not the only searcher. Someone else is following the trail left by the woman; someone with an interest in much more than a missing child . . . someone prepared to leave bodies in his wake.

And in a house by the woods, a toy telephone begins to ring: a young boy is about to receive a call from a dead woman.

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): What is the best book you read in 2018?

John Connolly (J.C.): *The book that gave me the most unexpected pleasure was Ryan O’Neill’s “Their Brilliant Careers: The Fantastic Lives of Sixteen Extraordinary Australian Writers.” The twist is that none of the writers in question—including an excessively prolific mystery novelist—will be familiar, even to the most learned of readers, because all are fictitious, although they contain echoes of actual people and literary movements. I loved it.*

S. MAG.: Do you have a memorable fan experience you can share?



J.C.: *At my first Bouchercon in Denver, a woman spent a considerable amount of time telling me how much my books meant to her and how talented I was, before handing me a copy of Ian Rankin's "Black & Blue" and asking me to sign it.*

S. MAG.: Who's your favorite fictional villain?

J.C.: *I have a fondness for Roderick Spode, leader of a fictitious group of fascists called the Black Shorts in the Jeeves & Wooster stories of P.G. Wodehouse. Fascists hate being laughed at. It's worth remembering, in the current political climate.* ■

**"THE HUNGER"** by Alma Katsu (G.P. Putnam's Sons; March 6, 2018): Evil is invisible, and it is everywhere.

That is the only way to explain the series of misfortunes that have plagued the wagon train known as the Donner Party. Depleted rations, bitter quarrels, and the mysterious death of a little boy have driven the isolated travelers to the brink of madness. Though they dream of what awaits them in the West, long-buried secrets begin to emerge, and dissent among them escalates to the point of murder and chaos. They cannot seem to escape tragedy . . . or the feelings that someone—or something—is stalking them. Whether it's a curse from the beautiful Tamsen Donner (who some think might be a witch), their ill-advised choice of route through uncharted terrain, or just plain bad luck, the ninety men, women, and children of the Donner Party are heading into one of the deadliest and most disastrous Western adventures in American history.

As members of the group begin to disappear, the survivors start to wonder if there really is something disturbing, and hungry, waiting for them in the mountains . . . and whether the evil that has unfolded around them may have, in fact, been growing within them all along?



Press Photo Credit: Suzette Niess

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

Alma Katsu (A.K.): *The original pitch for "The Hunger" is perfect and still my favorite, I think: The Donner Party meets "The Walking Dead."*

S. MAG.: Do you have a memorable fan experience you can share?

A.K.: *Since authors are hardly household names—unless your name happens to be Stephen King or Tom Clancy—I'm always amazed that anyone would know who I am. My two worlds collided a few years back when I was in a class for work. My (former) day job is about as far as you can possibly go from writing horror novels: I used to be an intelligence analyst for one of those three-letter agencies. The instructor had us go around the room and make brief introductions, and after I'd said my name, one guy in the class jumped up and said: "I know who you are—you're my wife's favorite author!" Which was so unexpected, I thought for a minute that I'd hallucinated it.*

S. MAG.: Is there a book, written by another, that you wish you'd written?

A.K.: *So many that it's hard to narrow down to just one. Today, I'd say "Interview with the Vampire" by Anne Rice. I just think the novel revolutionized what a horror story could be. Not many books can have (or have had) as broad an impact on popular culture.* ■

# DARKURBAN Fantasy BEST of 2018



**“WRECKED”** by Joe Ide (Mulholland Books; October 9, 2018): Isaiah Quintabe—IQ for short—has never been more successful, or felt more alone. A series of high-profile wins in his hometown of East Long Beach have made him so notorious that he can hardly go to the corner store without being recognized. Dodson, once his sidekick, is now his full-fledged partner, hell-bent on giving IQ’s PI business some real legitimacy: a Facebook page, and IQ’s promise to stop accepting Christmas sweaters and carpet cleanings in exchange for PI services.

So when a young painter approaches IQ for help tracking down her missing mother, it’s not just the case Isaiah’s looking for, but the human connection. And when his new confidant turns out to be connected to a dangerous paramilitary operation, IQ falls victim to a threat even a genius can’t see coming.

Waiting for Isaiah around every corner is Seb, the Oxford-educated African gangster who was responsible for the death of his brother, Marcus. Only this time, Isaiah’s not alone. Joined by a new love interest and his familiar band of accomplices, IQ is back—and the adventures are better than ever.

Press Photo Credit: Craig Takahashi

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

Joe Ide (J.I.): *IQ is Sherlock in the hood.*

S. MAG.: Is there a book, written by another, that you wish you’d written?

J.I.: Many. This year: “Child 44” by Tom Rob Smith, “My Absolute Darling” by Gabriel Tallent, “Less” by Andrew Sean Greer, “Wonder Valley” by Ivy Pochoda, “Liars Club” by Mary Karr, “Rules by Civility” by Amor Towles, “Desperation Road” by Michael Farris Smith, “The Feral Detective” by Jonathan Lethem.

S. MAG.: If you could write a message to future aspiring authors and place it in a time capsule to read years later, what would you write?

J.I.: *Have a backup plan.*

S. MAG.: Finish this sentence: If I wasn’t an author, I would be \_\_\_\_\_.

J.I.: *Some variety of bum. I’d be living in a motel with a woman who drinks wine out of a box and maybe has a couple of teeth missing, and since writing is my only marketable skill, I’d be working at 7-11 stocking shelves with pumpkin seeds and tampons because the register was too complicated; or feeding mice to the boa constrictors at Petco; or smearing icing on the Cinnabons for the same reason. I’d spend my nights at the library reading books I wished I’d written, or watching Jeopardy! and getting all the answers wrong, or sleeping on the couch with my three cats, Napoleon, Jared Kushner and Susan B. Anthony. I have to go now. If I don’t meet my deadline I’ll be living in a motel with a woman who drinks wine out of a box, etc. etc. ■*





Press Photo Credit: Ma Petite Enterprises

**“SERPENTINE”** by Laurell K. Hamilton (Berkley; August 7, 2018): Vampire hunter Anita Blake has always managed to overcome everything she faces. But this time there’s a monster that even she doesn’t know how to fight . . .

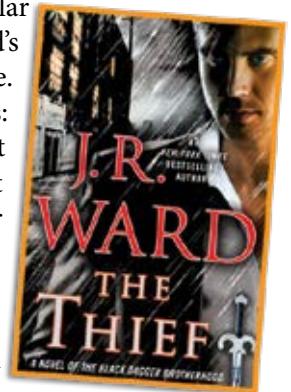
A remote Florida island is the perfect wedding destination for the upcoming nuptials of Anita’s fellow U.S. Marshal and best friend, Edward. For Anita, the vacation is a welcome break, as it’s the first trip she gets to take with just wereleopards Micah and Nathaniel. But it’s not all fun and games and bachelor parties . . .

In this tropical paradise, Micah discovers a horrific new form of lycanthropy, one that has afflicted a single family for generations. Believed to be the result of an ancient Greek curse, it turns human bodies into a mass of snakes.

When long-simmering resentment leads to a big blow up

within the wedding party, the last thing Anita needs is more drama. But it finds her anyway when women start disappearing from the hotel, and worse, her own friends and lovers are considered the prime suspects. There’s a strange power afoot that Anita has never confronted before, a force that’s rendering those around her helpless. Unable to face it on her own, Anita is willing to accept help from even the deadliest places. Help that she will most certainly regret—if she survives at all . . . ■

**“THE THIEF”** by J.R. Ward (Ballantine Books; April 10, 2018): Sola Morte, former cat burglar and safecracker, has given up her old life on the wrong side of the law. On the run from a drug lord’s family, she is lying low far from Caldwell, keeping her nose clean and her beloved grandmother safe. Her heart, though, is back up north, with the only man who has ever gotten through her defenses: Assail, son of Assail, who never meant to fall in love—and certainly not with a human woman. But they have no future, and not just because she doesn’t know he is a vampire, but because he is not about to stop dealing arms to the Black Dagger Brotherhood. Fate, however, has other plans for them. When Assail falls into a coma and lingers on the verge of death, his cousins seek out Sola and beg her to give him a reason to live. The last thing she wants is a return to her past, but how can she leave him to die?



As a lethal new enemy of the vampires shows its face, and the Brotherhood needs Assail back on his feet, Sola finds herself not only a target, but a mission-critical force in a war she doesn’t understand. And when Assail’s truth comes out, will she run from the horror . . . or follow her heart into the arms of the male who loves her more than life itself? ■



**“HIGH VOLTAGE”** by Karen Marie Moning (Delacorte Press; March 6, 2018): *There is no action without consequence.*

Dani O’Malley was nine years old when the delusional, sadistic Rowena transformed her into a ruthless killer. Years later, Dani is tough and hardened, yet achingly vulnerable and fiercely compassionate, living alone by her own exacting code. Despite the scars on her body, and driven by deeper ones carved into her soul, no one is more committed to protecting Dublin. By day she ensures the safety of those she rescues, by night she hunts evil, dispensing justice swiftly and without mercy, determined to give to those she cares for the peace she has never known.

*There is no power without price.*

When the Faerie Queen used the dangerously powerful Song of Making to heal the world from the damage done by the Hoar Frost King, catastrophic magic seeped deep into the earth, giving rise to horrifying, unforeseen consequences. Now deadly enemies plot in the darkness, preparing to

enslave the human race and unleash an ancient reign of Hell on Earth.

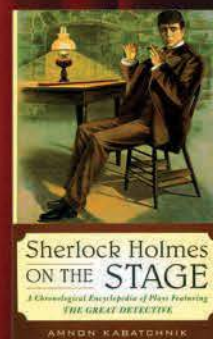
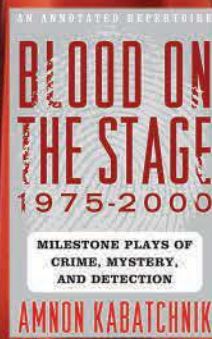
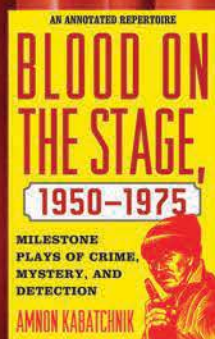
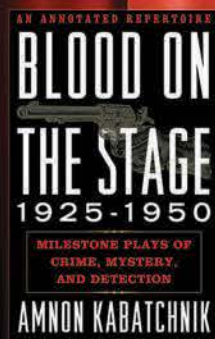
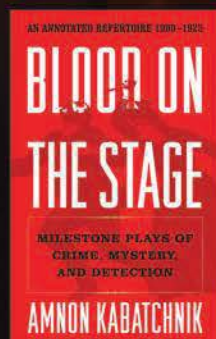
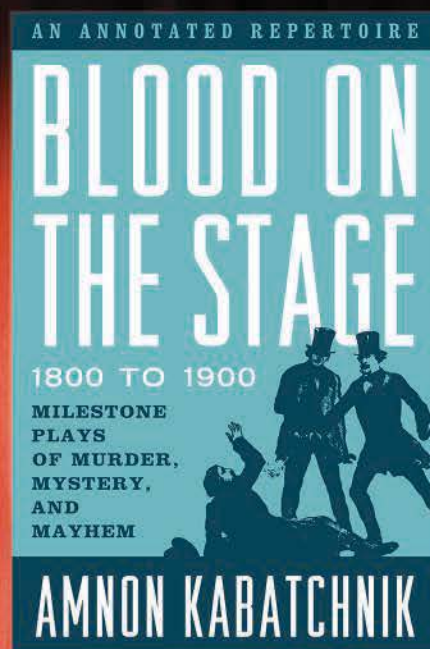
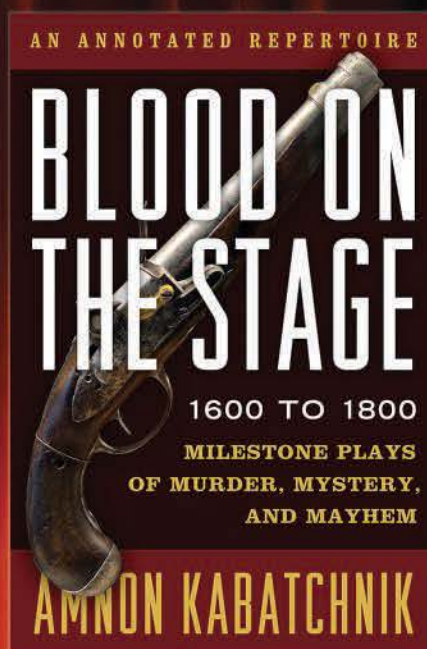
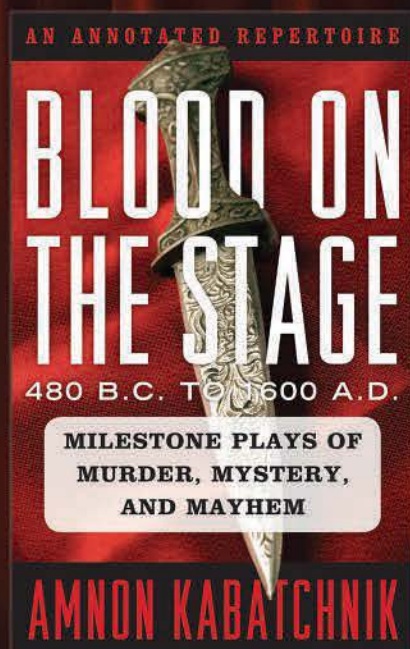
*There is no future without sacrifice.*

With the lethal, immortal Ryodan at her side, armed with the epic Sword of Light, Dani once again battles to save the world, but her past comes back to haunt her with a vengeance, demanding an unspeakable price for the power she needs to save the human race. And no one—not even Ryodan who would move the very stars for her—can save her this time. ■



# SUSPENSE THEATRE COMES ALIVE!

In Eight Unique Resources  
by **Amnon Kabatchnik**



"Kabatchnik provides a wealth of material for lovers  
of theatre" -- *Los Angeles Times*

**Gold Medal**

Benjamin Franklin Awards  
Independent Publishers Book Awards

"An extraordinary contribution to mystery  
scholarship" -- *Mystery Scene*

"It's a HIT!" -- *Deadly Pleasures*

Hundreds of productions cited, all works of enduring importance, pioneering contribution, or singular innovation.  
Each entry includes a plot synopsis, production data, and the opinions of well-known critics and scholars.

**ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD** [WWW.ROWMAN.COM](http://WWW.ROWMAN.COM) 800-462-6420

Also available through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and wherever fine books are sold



# HISTORICAL BEST of 2018

**“THE TATTOOIST OF AUSCHWITZ”** by Heather Morris (Harper Paperbacks; September 4, 2018): In April 1942, Lale Sokolov, a Slovakian Jew, is forcibly transported to the concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau. When his captors discover that he speaks several languages, he is put to work as a Tätowierer (the German word for tattooist), tasked with permanently marking his fellow prisoners.

Imprisoned for over two and a half years, Lale witnesses horrific atrocities and barbarism—but also incredible acts of bravery and compassion. Risking his own life, he uses his privileged position to exchange jewels and money from murdered Jews for food to keep his fellow prisoners alive.

One day in July 1942, Lale, prisoner 32407, comforts a trembling young woman waiting in line to have the number 34902 tattooed on her arm. Her name is Gita, and in that first encounter, Lale vows to somehow survive the camp and marry her. ■



as the shadowy figure of Anubis, himself, stalks the streets of London.

But the perils of an ancient curse are not the only challenges Veronica must face, as sordid details and malevolent enemies emerge from Stoker's past. Caught in a tangle of conspiracies and threats—and thrust into the public eye by an enterprising new foe—Veronica must separate facts from fantasy to unravel a web of duplicity that threatens to cost Stoker everything.

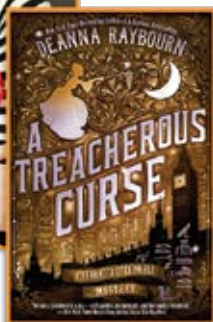
*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): What is the best book you read in 2018?

Deanna Raybourn (D.R.): *Usually this is a question I struggle with because books are like puppies, and I just want to show all of them the love, but hands-down—“CIRCE” by Madeline Miller. I was lucky enough to read it on vacation in Greece, and it was the most unimaginably perfect reading experience, never to be duplicated, I fear.*

**“A TREACHEROUS CURSE”** by Deanna Raybourn (Berkley; January 16, 2018): London, 1888. As colorful and unfettered as the butterflies she collects, Victorian adventuress Veronica Speedwell can't resist the allure of an exotic mystery—particularly one involving her enigmatic colleague, Stoker. His former expedition partner has vanished from an archaeological dig with a priceless diadem unearthed from the newly



Press Photo Credit:  
Provided by Author



discovered tomb of an Egyptian princess. This disappearance is just the latest in a string of unfortunate events that have plagued the controversial expedition, and rumors abound that the curse of the vengeful princess has been unleashed

S. MAG.: Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

D.R.: *Downton Abbey meets The Mummy on a very special episode of Sherlock.*

S. MAG.: What does having your book chosen as a “Best of” by *Suspense Magazine* mean to you?

D.R.: *It means that the genre I love so much loves me back. And to the eight-year-old girl reading Agatha Christie, that is everything.*

S. MAG.: If you could be a superhero, which one would you be? And what is that one special gift of his/hers you want to have, and why?

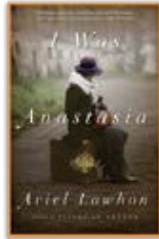
D.R.: *No question—Wonder Woman. My Twitter bio even ends with: “I still believe if I spin fast enough I’ll turn into Wonder Woman.” I was a child of the ‘70s, so every week I watched Lynda Carter show the world how to be a brilliant, beautiful*

*badass who always saves the day. She's strong and powerful, but we also get to see her kindness. And I will never get over wanting Themyscira to be real.*

S. MAG.: Finish this sentence: If I wasn't an author, I would be \_\_\_\_\_.

D.R.: A 19<sup>th</sup>-century courtesan dying genteelly of consumption.

**"I WAS ANASTASIA"** by Ariel Lawhon (Doubleday; March 27, 2018): Russia, July 17, 1918: Under direct orders from Vladimir Lenin, Bolshevik secret police force Anastasia Romanov, along with the entire Imperial family, into a damp basement in Siberia where they face a merciless firing squad. None survive. At least that is what the executioners have always claimed.

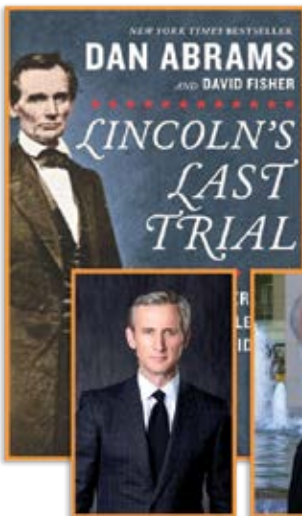


Germany, February 17, 1920: A young woman bearing an uncanny resemblance to Anastasia Romanov is pulled shivering and senseless from a canal in Berlin. Refusing to explain her presence in the freezing water, she is taken to the hospital where an examination reveals that her body is riddled with countless, horrific scars. When she finally does speak, this frightened, mysterious woman claims to be the Russian Grand Duchess Anastasia.

Her detractors, convinced that the young woman is only after the immense Romanov fortune, insist on calling her by a different name: Anna Anderson.

As rumors begin to circulate through European society that the youngest Romanov daughter has survived the massacre, old enemies and new threats are awakened. ■

## **"LINCOLN'S LAST TRIAL: THE MURDER CASE THAT PROPELLED HIM TO THE PRESIDENCY"**



by Dan Abrams & David Fisher (Hanover Square Press; 6/5/2018): At the end of the summer of 1859, twenty-two-year-old Peachy Quinn Harrison went on trial for murder in Springfield, Illinois. Abraham Lincoln, who had been involved in more than three thousand cases—including more than twenty-

five murder trials—during his two-decade-long career, was hired to defend him. This was to be his last great case as a lawyer.

What normally would have been a local case, took on momentous meaning. Lincoln's debates with Senator Stephen Douglas the previous fall had gained him a national following, transforming the little-known, self-taught lawyer into a respected politician. He was being urged to make a dark-horse run for the presidency in 1860. Taking this case involved great risk. His reputation was untarnished, but should he lose this trial, should Harrison be convicted of murder, the spotlight that now focused so brightly on him might be dimmed. He had won his most recent murder trial with a daring and dramatic maneuver that had become a local legend, but another had ended with his client dangling from the end of a rope.

The case posed painful personal challenges for Lincoln. The murder victim had trained for the law in his office, and Lincoln had been his friend and his mentor. His accused killer, the young man Lincoln would defend, was the son of a close friend and loyal supporter. And to win this trial he would have to form an unholy allegiance with a longtime enemy, a revivalist preacher he had twice run against for political office—and who had bitterly slandered Lincoln as an "infidel...too lacking in faith" to be elected.

"Lincoln's Last Trial" captures the presidential hopeful's dramatic courtroom confrontations in vivid detail as he fights for his client—but also for his own blossoming political future. It is a moment in history that shines a light on our legal system, as in this case Lincoln fought a legal battle that remains incredibly relevant today.

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?:

Dan Abrams & David Fisher (D.A. & D.F.): *Lincoln the lawyer, in his own words, defending a killer.*

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?:

D.A. & D.F.: *America's history is replete with extraordinary trials that have shaped our laws and our culture. In 1915, former President Theodore Roosevelt was sued for libel for calling a politician corrupt. In his long-overlooked testimony, Roosevelt provides an insight into political reality that is just as applicable today as it was more than a century ago.*

S. MAG.: If you could write a message to future aspiring authors and place it in a time capsule to read years later, what would you write?:

D.A. & D.F.: *Follow your curiosity and it will lead you to a fulfilling career.* ■

Dan Abrams Press Photo Credit: ABC Photography Dept.  
David Fisher Press Photo Credit: Randall Arthur



# Young BEST OF 2018 ADULT



**“SAWKILL GIRLS”** by Claire Legrand (Katherine Tegen Books; October 2, 2018): Who are the Sawkill Girls?

Marion: The newbie. Awkward and plain, steady and dependable. Weighed down by tragedy, and hungry for love she’s sure she’ll never find.

Zoey: The pariah. Luckless and lonely, hurting but hiding it. Aching with grief and dreaming of vanished girls. Maybe she’s broken—or maybe everyone else is.

Val: The queen bee. Gorgeous and privileged, ruthless and regal. Words like silk and eyes like knives; a heart made of secrets and a mouth full of lies.

Their stories come together on the island of Sawkill Rock, where gleaming horses graze in rolling pastures and cold waves crash against black cliffs. Where kids whisper the legend of an insidious monster at parties and around campfires. Where girls have been disappearing for decades, stolen away by a ravenous evil no one has dared to fight...until now.



Press Photo Credit: Ellen B. Wright

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): What is the best book you read in 2018?

Claire Legrand (C.L.): *“Damsel”* by Elana K. Arnold—a feminist fairytale about trauma, assault, and gaslighting, told with impeccably crafted prose and capped by a gloriously surprising and satisfying ending.

S. MAG.: Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

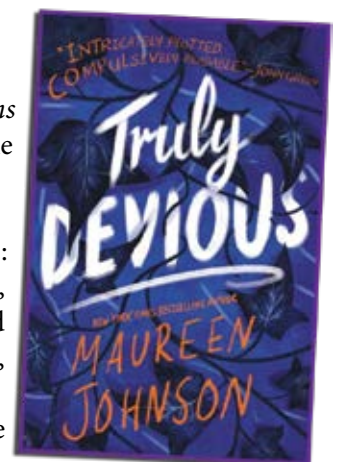
C.L.: *Stranger Things meets Buffy. Girls hunt down interdimensional femicidal monster.*

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

C.L.: *The second book in the Empirium Trilogy, “Kingsbane,” releases May 21, 2019. Fans of “Furyborn” should brace themselves and keep in mind that my favorite Star Wars movie is The Empire Strikes Back.* ■

**“TRULY DEVIOUS”** by Maureen Johnson (Katherine Tegen Books; January 16, 2018): Ellingham Academy is a famous private school in Vermont for the brightest thinkers, inventors, and artists. It was founded by Albert Ellingham, an early twentieth century tycoon, who wanted to make a wonderful place full of riddles, twisting pathways, and gardens. “A place,” he said, “where learning is a game.”

Shortly after the school opened, his wife and daughter were kidnapped. The only real clue



was a mocking riddle listing methods of murder, signed with the frightening pseudonym, “Truly, Devious.” It became one of the great unsolved crimes of American history.

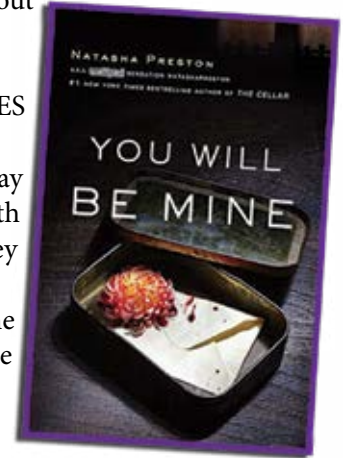
True-crime aficionado Stevie Bell is set to begin her first year at Ellingham Academy, and she has an ambitious plan: She will solve this cold case. That is, she will solve the case when she gets a grip on her demanding new school life and her housemates: the inventor, the novelist, the actor, the artist, and the jokester. But something strange is happening. Truly Devious makes a surprise return, and death revisits Ellingham Academy. The past has crawled out of its grave. Someone has gotten away with murder. ■

**“YOU WILL BE MINE”** by Natasha Preston (Sourcebooks Fire; February 28, 2018): ROSES ARE RED, VIOLETS ARE BLUE, WATCH YOUR BACK, I’M COMING FOR YOU.

Lylah and her friends can’t wait to spend a night out together. Partying is the perfect way to let loose from the stress of life and school, and Lylah hopes that hitting the dance floor with Chace, her best friend, will bring them closer together. She’s been crushing on him since they met. If only he thought of her the same way . . .

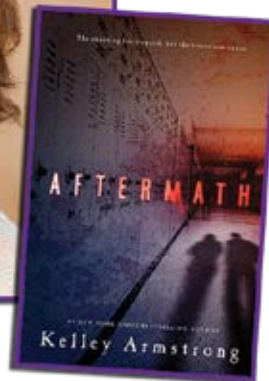
The girls are touching up their makeup and the guys are sliding on their coats when the doorbell rings. No one is there. An envelope sits on the doormat. It’s an anonymous note addressed to their friend Sonny. A secret admirer? Maybe. They all laugh it off.

Except Sonny never comes home. And a new note arrives: YOUR TURN. ■



Press Photo Credit: Kathryn Hollinrake

**“AFTERMATH”** by Kelley Armstrong (Crown Books for Young Readers; 5/22/2018): Three years after losing her brother Luka in a school shooting, Skye Gilchrist is moving home. But there’s no sympathy for Skye and her family because Luka wasn’t a victim; he was a shooter.



Jesse Mandal knows all too well that the scars of the past don’t heal easily. The shooting cost Jesse his brother and his best friend—Skye.

When Jesse and Skye reunite, they can’t resist reopening the mysteries of the past. But can wounds that deep ever truly heal? Skye can’t outrun her brother’s shame.

But when Skye uncovers evidence that could clear Luka’s name, it becomes obvious that someone wants the truth to stay buried. What happened that fateful day? Skye and Jesse are *dying* to know. And they just might pay that price.

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): What is the best book you read in 2018?

Kelley Armstrong (K.A.): *I’ve read several great suspense books, but I’ll give my shout-out to Sherry Thomas’s, “A Study in Scarlet Women.” I love fresh takes on the Sherlock Holmes story, but because I love them, I’ve read a lot and I’m very picky. It’s been many years since I finished one that I started. I truly loved Thomas’s take, though, and I have book 2 in the series on my to-be-read shelf.*

S. MAG.: Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

K.A.: *Her brother was a high-school shooter; his was a victim.*

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

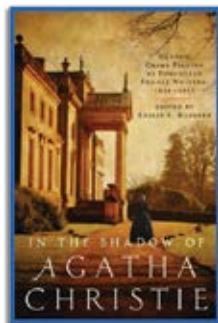
K.A.: *Book 4 in my Yukon set Rockton mystery series, “Watcher in the Woods,” comes out in February. In April, I have a thriller standalone, “Wherever She Goes,” and in August, the first in a new middle-grade fantasy series, “A Royal Guide to Monster Slaying.” ■*



# BEST OF 2018 ANTHOLOGY

## **“IN THE SHADOW OF AGATHA CHRISTIE: CLASSIC CRIME FICTION BY FORGOTTEN FEMALE WRITERS: 1850-1917”**

edited by Leslie S. Klinger (Pegasus Books; January 2, 2018): Agatha Christie is undoubtedly the world’s best-selling mystery author, hailed as the “Queen of Crime,” with worldwide sales in the billions. Christie burst onto the literary scene in 1920, with “The Mysterious Affair at Styles.” Her last novel was published in 1976, marking a career longer than even Conan Doyle’s forty-year span.



The truth is that it was due to the success of writers, like Anna Katherine Green in America; L.T. Meade, C. L. Pirakis, the Baroness Orczy, and Elizabeth Corbett in England; and Mary Fortune in Australia that the doors were finally opened for women crime-writers. Authors who followed them, such as Patricia Wentworth, Dorothy Sayers, and, of course, Agatha Christie would not have thrived without the bold, fearless work of their predecessors—and the genre would be much poorer for their absence. So while Agatha Christie may still reign supreme, it is important to remember that she did not ascend to that throne except on the shoulders of the women who came before her—and inspired her—and who are now removed from her shadow once and for all by this superb new anthology by Leslie S. Klinger. Featuring: Mary Fortune, Harriet Prescott Spofford, Ellen Wood, Elizabeth Corbett, C.L. Pirakis, Geraldine Bonner, Ellen Glasgow, L.T. Meade, Baroness Orczy, Augusta Groß, M.E. Graddon, Anna Katherine Green, Carolyn Wells, Susan Glashell. ■



## **“FOR THE SAKE OF THE GAME: STORIES INSPIRED BY THE SHERLOCK HOLMES CANON”**

edited by Laurie R. King and Leslie S. Klinger (Pegasus Books; December 4, 2018): In a sensational follow-up to “Echoes of Sherlock Holmes” and “In the



Company of Sherlock Holmes,” a brand new anthology of stories inspired by the Arthur Conan Doyle canon. “For the Sake of the Game” is the latest volume in the award-winning series from *New York Times* bestselling editors Laurie R. King and Leslie S. Klinger, with stories of Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson, and friends in a variety of eras and forms. King and Klinger have a simple formula: ask some of the world’s greatest writers—regardless of genre—to be inspired by the stories of Arthur Conan Doyle. The results are surprising and joyous. Some tales are pastiches, featuring the recognizable figures of Holmes and Watson;

Laurie R. King Press Photo Credit: Josh Edelson  
Leslie S. Klinger Press Photo Credit: Provided by Publicist

others step away in time or place to describe characters and stories influenced by the Holmes world. Some of the authors spin whimsical tales of fancy; others tell hard-core thrillers or puzzling mysteries. One beloved author writes a song; two others craft a melancholy graphic tale of insectoid analysis. This is not a volume for readers who crave a steady diet of stories about Holmes and Watson on Baker Street. Rather, it is for the generations of readers who were themselves inspired by the classic tales, and who are prepared to let their imaginations roam freely. Featuring Stories by: Peter S. Beagle, Rhys Bowen,

Reed Farrel Coleman, Jamie Freveletti, Alan Gordon, Gregg Hurwitz, Toni L.P. Kelner, William Kotzwinkle and Joe Servello, Harley Jane Kozak, D.P. Lyle, Weston Ochse, Zoe Sharp, Duane Swierczynski, and F. Paul Wilson.

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

Leslie S. Klinger (L.S.K.): *Great writers tell stories inspired by the original tales of Arthur Conan Doyle and his immortal characters. (15 words)*

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

L.S.K.: *"Annotated American Gods" with Neil Gaiman, and "New Annotated H.P. Lovecraft: Beyond Arkham" (a collection of those stories omitted from my "New Annotated H.P. Lovecraft"), and an anthology of classic ghost stories co-edited with Lisa Morton.*

S. MAG.: If you could write a message to future aspiring authors and place it in a time capsule to read years later, what would you write?

L.S.K.: *Find something that you're passionate about and dive in. The work is its own reward; as Sherlock Holmes said, "I play the game for the game's own sake."*

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

Laurie R. King (L.R.K.): *A Kate Martinelli story! Every single author event I've done for the past ten years has included a question about what's happening with Kate, and at last, I can let people know. Yay for that! It'll be out towards the middle of the year, more news to come . . .*

S. MAG.: Finish this sentence: If I wasn't an author, I would be \_\_\_\_\_.

L.R.K.: *If I weren't an author—that is, a writer who collects actual money for their storytelling habits—I'd probably be a teacher—that is, an otherwise even-tempered individual who torments students into knowing the difference between an adverb and an adjective, cajoles them into using the serial comma, and berates them for daring to use impact as a verb, or modifying unique in any fashion whatsoever.*

S. MAG.: Is there a book, written by another, that you wish you'd written?

L.R.K.: *So many books, so many envious thoughts. Terry Pratchett for his clever puns, Dorothy L. Sayers for her show-off learning, the voice of Connie Willis, the world-building of Charlaine Harris . . . ■*



### "YULE LOG MURDER"

by Leslie Meier, Lee Hollis and Barbara Ross (Kensington; October 30, 2018): *Fresh-baked cookies, pies, and cakes can warm*

*even the frostiest Christmases in coastal Maine. But there's little room for holiday cheer when murder is the new seasonal tradition . . .*



*Yule Log Murder* by Leslie Meier: Lucy Stone is thrilled to be

Leslie Meier Press Photo Credit: Stephanie Foster  
Lee Hollis Press Photo Credit: Provided by Publicist  
Barbara Ross Press Photo Credit: Provided by Publicist



cast as an extra in a festive period film—until the set becomes a murder scene decorated in blood and buttercream icing. Returning to her role as sleuth, Lucy dashes to restore peace to Tinker's Cove, unwrap a cold-hearted criminal's MO, and reveal how one ornate Yule log cake could possibly cause so much drama.

*Death by Yule Log* by Lee Hollis: Hayley Powell's holidays aren't off to a very merry start. Not only has her daughter brought Conner—an infuriatingly perfect new beau—home to Bar Harbor, but a local troublemaker has been found dead with traces of her signature Yule log cake on his body. As Conner becomes the prime murder suspect, Hayley must put aside her mixed feelings to identify the real killjoy.

*Logged On* by Barbara Ross: Realizing she can't make a decent Bûche de Noël to save her life, Julia Snowden enlists the help of her eccentric neighbor, Mrs. St. Onge, in hopes of mastering the dessert for Christmas. With everyone in the old woman's circle missing or deceased, however, it's up to Julia to stop the deadly tidings before she's the next Busman's Harbor resident to meet a not-so-jolly fate.

*Kick back with something sweet and indulge in three bite-sized Yuletide tales too good to resist!*

Suspense Magazine (S. MAG.): What is the best book you read in 2018?

Leslie Meier (L.M.): *Actually, I first learned about Kate Atkinson when "Transcription" was so widely reviewed, and I read "Life After Life" and "A God in Ruins." I was absolutely knocked out of my socks by both of them, and quite envious of Atkinson's talent. While these are mainstream novels, she also has a series of mysteries that are killer, too.*

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

L.M.: *I'm very excited about "Invitation Only Murder" which will come out in 2019. I've always wanted to write an island mystery and this was so much fun to write, especially after I visited Minister's Island in New Brunswick and discovered the perfect setting. I hasten to add that I renamed the island, to protect the innocent, and moved it 10 miles out to sea, and I'm sorry about all the nastiness that took place.*

S. MAG.: What does having your book chosen as a "Best of" by Suspense Magazine mean to you?

L.M.: *It was a wonderful, delightful surprise to learn that "Yule Log Murder" was chosen as a 'Best of 2018' by Suspense Magazine, and I'm especially thrilled because it was a group effort, including novellas by Lee Hollis and Barbara Ross. The book was the brainchild of John Scognamiglio, our editor at Kensington, and he deserves a big slice of Yule cake for coming up with this sweet Christmas treat!*

Suspense Magazine (S. MAG.): What is the best book you read in 2018?

Lee Hollis (L.H.): *The best book I read this year was "The Couple Next Door" by Shari Lepena. I love reading, but I need to find more time because I have a stack of books I'm behind on!*

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

L.H.: *Our 11<sup>th</sup> book in the Hayley Powell Food & Cocktail Mystery series, "Death of a Wedding Cake Baker," will be released April 30, 2019. We have another anthology coming out in 2019, this time Halloween-themed, with Leslie Meier and Barbara Ross that we are very excited about.*

S. MAG.: What does having your book chosen as a "Best of" by Suspense Magazine mean to you?

L.H.: *It absolutely means the world to us. Finding out we were chosen "Best of" is so exciting, and it's great to know that people are reading our books and enjoying our characters and stories. We love hearing from the readers who write us and tell us how much they enjoy our books, recipes and cocktails.*

Suspense Magazine (S. MAG.): What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

Barbara Ross (B.R.): *2019 is going to be a busy year for me. There will be a new Maine Clambake Mystery, of course, "Sealed*

Off,” number eight in the series; a new novella collection, again with Leslie Meier and Lee Hollis, “Haunted House Murder”; and a debut book in a new series “Jane Darrowfield, Professional Busybody.” Can’t wait!

S. MAG.: Finish this sentence: If I wasn’t an author, I would be \_\_\_\_\_.

B.R.: A cranky old lady. Some would say I haven’t escaped it!

S. MAG.: Is there a book, written by another, that you wish you’d written?

B.R.: Anything by P.D. James, Ruth Rendell, Kate Atkinson, Louise Penny, or Alice Munro. Literally anything. ■

**“BRIEF CASES”** by Jim Butcher (Ace; June 5, 2018): The world of Harry Dresden, Chicago’s only professional wizard, is rife with intrigue—and creatures of all supernatural stripes. And you’ll make their intimate acquaintance as Harry delves into the dark side of truth, justice, and the American way in this must-have short story collection.

From the Wild West to the bleachers at Wrigley Field, humans, zombies, incubi, and even fey royalty appear, ready to blur the line between friend and foe. In the never-before-published “Zoo Day,” Harry treads new ground as a dad, while fan-favorite characters, Molly Carpenter, his onetime apprentice, White Council Warden Anastasia Luccio, and even Bigfoot stalk through the pages of more classic tales.

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

Jim Butcher (J.B.): *Dirty Harry Potter*.

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

J.B.: *Peace Talks* :)

S. MAG.: If you could be a superhero, which one would you be? And what is that one special gift of his/hers you want to have, and why?

J.B.: *All the godly superpowers would, if you had to tote them around in your real life, ruin things for you tout suite. They all come with either serious drawbacks or massive responsibility to humanity, and given the lack of supervillains to face in the real world, I’m not sure any of the big dramatic powers would be worth having given the complications that would be presented by government and society alike.*

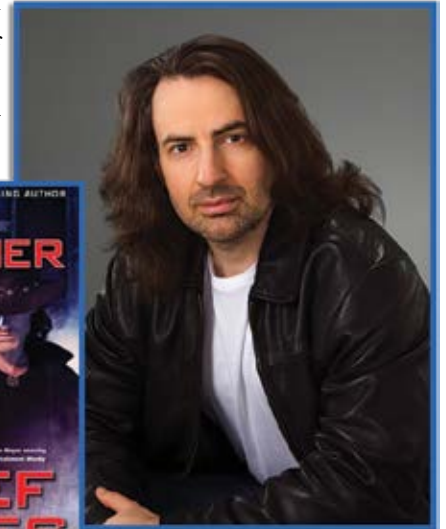
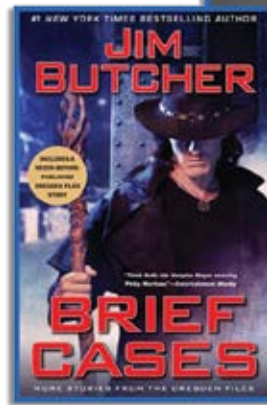
*My advice would be to go for the ultimate quality of life superpower: Multiple Man. Multiple Man can split into lots and lots of copies of himself, which can then go off independently and do things, then re-integrate those experiences and memories into his central form to keep a continuous whole.*

*IMAGINE what you could do with that. A couple of you could be out working and bringing home the bacon. A couple of you are badass martial artists and gunmen. A couple are hitting the gym on an intensive basis. Maybe a dozen more are sitting in on classes and obtaining the knowledge of dozens of degrees. One is learning to be an excellent dancer, another learns to kill it in conversation, and a few more learn how to build or repair everything in your house so you never have to call a contractor or plumber again. A couple are running errands and cleaning house, a couple are carefully watching your investments (your business master’s equivalence taught you about investing), a couple are always engaged in art and creation, and the rest of you can play video games, go fishing, whatever you want to do.*

*Oh, and your spouse is VERY happy in the bedroom, and they always have help when they need it.*

*AND you could spend as much time as you wanted with your kids while they were growing up. No outside obligation could stand in your way.*

*Now THAT is a superpower. ■*



Press Photo Credit: Portrait Gallery  
Photography by Karen Hacker



# TRUE CRIME BEST OF 2018

## **"THE FEATHER THIEF: BEAUTY, OBSESSION, AND THE NATURAL HISTORY HEIST OF THE CENTURY"**

by Kirk W. Johnson (Penguin Publishing Group; April 24, 2018): On a cool June evening in 2009, after performing a concert at London's Royal Academy of Music, twenty-year-old American flautist Edwin Rist boarded a train for a suburban outpost of the British Museum of Natural History. Home to one of the largest ornithological collections in the world, the Tring Museum was full of rare bird specimens whose gorgeous feathers were worth staggering amounts of money to the men who shared Edwin's obsession: the Victorian art of salmon fly-tying. Once inside the museum, the champion fly-tier grabbed hundreds of bird skins—some collected 150 years earlier by a contemporary of Darwin's, Alfred Russel Wallace, who'd risked everything to gather them—and escaped into the darkness.

Two years later, Kirk Wallace Johnson was waist high in a river in northern New Mexico when his fly-fishing guide told him about the heist. He was soon consumed by the strange case of the feather thief. What would possess a person to steal dead birds? Had Edwin paid the price for his crime? What became of the missing skins? In his search for answers, Johnson was catapulted into a years-long, worldwide investigation. The gripping story of a bizarre and shocking crime, and one man's relentless pursuit of justice, "The Feather Thief" is also a fascinating exploration of obsession, and Man's destructive instinct to harvest the beauty of nature. ■



Press Photo Credit:  
Marie-Josée Cantin Johnson

Three decades later, Michelle McNamara, a true crime journalist who created the popular website TrueCrimeDiary.com, was determined to find the violent psychopath she called "The Golden State Killer." Michelle pored over police reports, interviewed victims, and embedded herself in the online communities that were as obsessed with the case as she was.

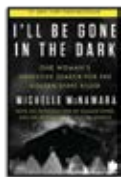
"I'll Be Gone in the Dark"—the masterpiece McNamara was writing at the time of her sudden death—offers an atmospheric snapshot of a moment in American history, and a chilling account of a criminal mastermind and the wreckage he left behind. It is also a portrait of a woman's obsession and her unflinching pursuit of the truth. Utterly original and compelling, it has been hailed as a modern true crime classic—one which fulfilled Michelle's dream: helping unmask "The Golden State Killer." ■



**"HUNTING EL CHAPO: THE INSIDE STORY OF THE AMERICAN LAWMAN WHO CAPTURED THE WORLD'S MOST WANTED DRUG LORD"** by Andrew Hogan (HarperCollins; April 3, 2018): Every generation has a larger-than-life criminal: Jesse James, Billy the Kid, John Dillinger, Al Capone, John Gotti, Pablo Escobar. But each of these notorious lawbreakers had a "white hat" in pursuit: Wyatt Earp, Pat Garrett, Eliot Ness, Steve Murphy. For notorious drug lord Joaquín Archivaldo Guzmán-Loera—El Chapo—that lawman is former Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent Andrew Hogan.

In 2006, fresh out of the D.E.A. Academy, Hogan heads west to Arizona where he immediately plunges into a series of gripping undercover adventures, all unknowingly placing him on the trail of Guzmán, the leader of the Sinaloa Cartel, a Forbes billionaire, and Public Enemy No. 1 in the United States. Six years later, as head of the D.E.A.'s Sinaloa Cartel desk in Mexico City, Hogan finds his life and Chapo's are ironically on parallel paths: they're both obsessed with the details.

In a recasting of the classic American Western on the global stage, "Hunting El Chapo" takes us on Hogan's quest to achieve the seemingly impossible, from infiltrating El Chapo's inner circle to leading a white-knuckle manhunt with an elite brigade of trusted Mexican Marines—racing door-to-door through the cartel's stronghold and ultimately bringing the elusive and murderous king-pin to justice. ■



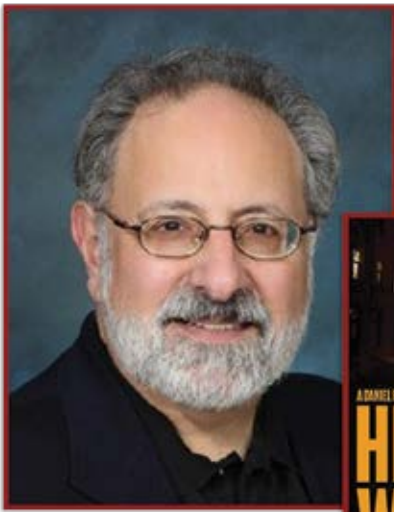
## **"I'LL BE GONE IN THE DARK: ONE WOMAN'S OBSESSIVE SEARCH FOR THE GOLDEN STATE KILLER"**

by Michelle McNamara, Gillian Flynn (Introduction), Patton Oswalt (Afterword) (HarperCollins Publishers; February 27, 2018):

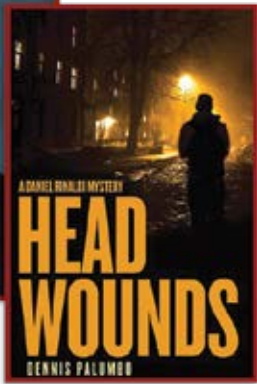
For more than ten years, a mysterious and violent predator committed fifty sexual assaults in Northern California before moving south, where he perpetrated ten sadistic murders. Then he disappeared, eluding capture by multiple police forces and some of the best detectives in the area.

# SUSPENSE THRILLER

BEST of 2018



Press Photo Credit: Provided  
by Author



**“HEAD WOUNDS”** by Dennis Palumbo (Poisoned Pen Press; February 6, 2018): Psychologist Dr. Daniel Rinaldi consults with the Pittsburgh Police. His specialty is treating victims of violent crime—those who’ve survived an armed robbery, kidnapping, or sexual assault, but whose traumatic experience still haunts them. “Head Wounds” picks up where Rinaldi’s investigation in “Phantom Limb” left off, turning the tables on him as he, himself, becomes the target of a vicious killer.

“Miles Davis saved my life.” With these words Rinaldi becomes a participant in a domestic drama that blows up right outside his front door, saved from a bullet to the brain by pure chance. In the chaos that follows, Rinaldi learns his bad-girl, wealthy neighbor has told her hair-triggered boyfriend Rinaldi is her lover. As things heat up, Rinaldi becomes a murder suspect.

But this is just the first act in this chilling, edge-of-your-seat thriller. As one savagery follows another, Rinaldi is forced to relive a terrible night that haunts him still. And to realize that now he—and those he loves—are being victimized by a brilliant killer still in the grip of delusion. Determined to destroy Rinaldi by systematically targeting those close to him—his patients, colleagues, and friends—computer

genius Sebastian Maddox strives to cause as much psychological pain as possible, before finally orchestrating a bold, macabre death for his quarry.

How ironic. As Pittsburgh morphs from a blue-collar town to a tech giant, a psychopath deploys technology in a murderous way.

Enter two other figures from Rinaldi’s past: retired FBI profiler Lyle Barnes, once a patient who Rinaldi treated for night terrors; and Special Agent Gloria Reese, with whom he falls into a surprising, erotically charged affair. Warned by Maddox not to engage the authorities or else random innocents throughout the city will die, Rinaldi and these two unlikely allies engage in a terrifying cat-and-mouse game with an elusive killer who’ll stop at nothing in pursuit of what he imagines is revenge.

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

Dennis Palumbo (D.P.): *Psychologist battles brilliant psychopath who killed hero’s wife years before. (Boy, that wasn’t easy. Even elevator pitches are longer than ten words!)*

S. MAG.: Do you have a memorable fan experience you can share?

D.P.: *A reader who is a city planner in Pittsburgh said she loved my books, but that the route I used to describe my hero’s commute*



to and from his office was inefficient, especially at rush hour. So she sent me a better route, and, starting with the fourth book in the series, “Phantom Limb,” it’s now the way that Daniel Rinaldi commutes to work! I even gave her an acknowledgement at the front of the book.

S. MAG.: Is there a book, written by another, that you wish you’d written?

D.P. Yes. “The Poet” by Michael Connelly. Still his masterpiece, in my view, and one of the best mystery thrillers ever written. ■

**“EVERY WICKED MAN”** by Steven James (Penguin Publishing Group; September 4, 2018): A criminal mastermind’s chilling terrorist plot forces FBI Special Agent Patrick Bowers to the brink in the latest thriller from bestselling novelist Steven James.

When a senator’s son takes his own life and posts the video live online, Agent Bowers is drawn into a complex web of lies that begins to threaten the people he loves the most. As he races to unravel the mystery behind the suicide and a centuries-old code that might help shed light on the case, he finds a dark pathway laced with twists and deadly secrets that touch a little too close to home.

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

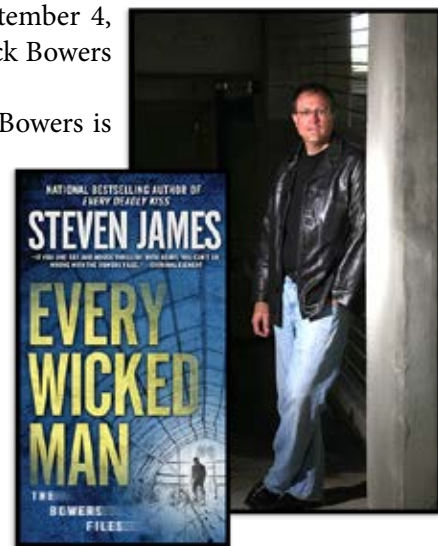
Steven James (S.J.): *FBI agents attempt to stop a string of live-streamed suicides.*

S. MAG.: Do you have a memorable fan experience you can share?

S.J.: *At a recent conference a guy said to me, “I don’t really read anything you write because I don’t read in your gender.” Huh. I didn’t know I wrote in any particular gender.*

S. MAG.: If you could write a message to future aspiring authors and place it in a time capsule to read years later, what would you write?

S.J.: *Burn your outlines and trust the story. Don’t ask, “What should this character do?” but “What would this character do if I got out of the way?” And then do it. Cut their leashes and set them free to roam on the page.* ■



Press Photo Credit:  
Eric McCarty, Photographer



Press Photo Credit: Provided  
by Publicist

**“JAR OF HEARTS”** by Jennifer Hillier (St. Martin’s Press; June 12, 2018): When she was sixteen years old, Angela Wong—one of the most popular girls in school—disappeared without a trace. Nobody ever suspected that her best friend, Georgina Shaw, now an executive and rising star at her Seattle pharmaceutical company, was involved in any way. Certainly not Kaiser Brody, who was close with both girls back in high school.

But fourteen years later, Angela Wong’s remains are discovered in the woods near Geo’s childhood home. And Kaiser—now a detective with the Seattle PD—finally learns the truth: Angela was a victim of Calvin James. The same Calvin James who murdered at least three other women.

To the authorities, Calvin is a serial killer. But to Geo, he’s something else entirely. Back in high school, Calvin was Geo’s first love. Turbulent and often volatile, their relationship bordered on obsession from the moment they met right up until the night Angela was killed.

For fourteen years, Geo knew what happened to Angela and told no one. For fourteen years, she carried the secret of Angela’s death until Geo was arrested and sent to prison.

While everyone thinks they finally know the truth, there are dark secrets buried deep. And what happened that fateful night is more complex and more chilling than anyone really knows. Now the obsessive past catches up with the deadly present when new bodies begin to turn up, killed in the exact same manner as Angela Wong.

How far will someone go to bury her secrets and hide her grief? How long can you get away with a lie? How long can you live with it?

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

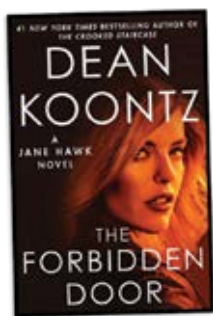
Jennifer Hillier (J.H.): Orange is the New Black *meets* Sharp Objects.

S. MAG.: Finish this sentence: If I wasn't an author, I would be \_\_\_\_\_.

J.H.: *Working at Sephora. They take all my money, anyway—I could use the discount.*

S. MAG.: Is there a book, written by another, that you wish you'd written?

J.H.: *"You" by Caroline Kepnes is as perfect a psychological thriller as I've ever read. It's Caroline's debut novel, but it still manages to be a master class in voice, suspense, and character.* ■



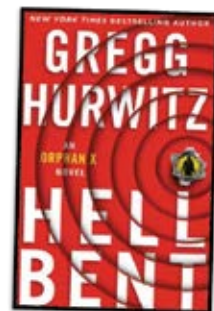
**"THE FORBIDDEN DOOR"** by Dean Koontz (Random House Publishing Group; September 11, 2018): "We're rewriting the play, and the play is this country, the world, the future. We break Jane's heart, we'll also break her will."

She was one of the FBI's top agents until she became the nation's most-wanted fugitive; a happily married woman before becoming a devastated widow. Now Jane Hawk may be all that stands between a free nation and its enslavement by a powerful secret society's terrifying mind-control technology. She couldn't save her husband, or the others whose lives have been destroyed, but equipped with superior tactical and survival skills—and the fury born of a broken heart and a hunger for justice—Jane has struck major blows against the insidious cabal.

But Jane's enemies are about to hit back hard. If their best operatives can't outrun her, they mean to bring her to them, using her five-year-old son as bait. Jane knows there's no underestimating their capabilities, but she must battle her way back across the country to the remote shelter where her boy is safely hidden . . . for now. As she moves resolutely forward, new threats begin to emerge: a growing number of brain-altered victims driven hopelessly, violently insane. With the madness spreading like a virus, the war between Jane and her enemies will become a fight for all their lives—against the lethal terror unleashed from behind the forbidden door. ■

**"HELLBENT"** by Gregg Hurwitz (St. Martin's Press; January 30, 2018): *When there's nowhere else to turn . . .*

His name is Evan Smoak. Taken from a group home at age twelve, he was raised and trained as an off-the-books government assassin: Orphan X. After breaking with the Orphan Program, Evan disappeared and reinvented himself as the Nowhere Man, a man spoken about only in whispers and dedicated to helping the truly desperate. Now, the person in need of help is Jack Johns, the man who raised and trained him, and the only father Evan has ever known. Secret government forces are busy trying to scrub the remaining assets and traces of the Orphan Program and they have finally tracked down Jack. With little time remaining, and an elusive new enemy on his trail, Jack gives Evan his last assignment: to find and protect his last protégé and recruit for the program—or die trying . . . ■



**"THEN SHE WAS GONE"** by Lisa Jewell (Atria Books; April 17, 2018): Ellie Mack was the perfect daughter. She was fifteen, the youngest of three. She was beloved by her parents, friends, and teachers. She and her boyfriend made a teenaged golden couple. She was days away from an idyllic post-exams summer vacation, with her whole life ahead of her.

And then she was gone.

Now, her mother Laurel Mack is trying to put her life back together. It's been ten years since her daughter disappeared, seven years since her marriage ended, and only months since the last clue in Ellie's case was unearthed. So when she meets an unexpectedly charming man in a café, no one is more surprised than Laurel at how quickly their flirtation develops into something deeper. Before she knows it, she's meeting Floyd's daughters—and his youngest, Poppy, takes Laurel's breath away.

Looking at Poppy is like looking at Ellie. And now, the unanswered questions she's tried so hard to put to rest begin to



haunt Laurel anew. Where did Ellie go? Did she really run away from home, as the police have long suspected; or, was there a more sinister reason for her disappearance? Who is Floyd, really? And why does his daughter remind Laurel so viscerally of her own missing girl?

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): What is the best book you read in 2018?

Lisa Jewell (L.J.): *The best book I have read this year, so far (there's still a few days left!) was probably "Snap" by Belinda Bauer. It's a thriller/drama about a young boy whose mother disappears, leaving him and his two young siblings in a car on the side of the motorway. Years later, as a troubled teenager, he finds an object in a house he's just broken into that sends him on a frantic mission to uncover the truth. It's delicately told but utterly gripping.*

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

L.J.: *I am halfway through my seventeenth novel. It's about a family in London in the 1980's whose lives are taken over by a sociopath who moves into their house. Years later, adoptee Libby Jones inherits said house from her birth parents, both of whom, she learns, died in the house in a suicide pact with another couple. But what happened to their children? Libby's brother and sister? They vanished without a trace. I'm set to deliver it in the new year.*

S. MAG.: Finish this sentence: If I wasn't an author, I would be \_\_\_\_\_.

L.J.: *A midwife. Babies being born is about the most consistently remarkable thing going on in the world. I would love to be involved in that all day long. Alternatively, I would also love to be an editor. ■*

**"THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW"** by A.J. Finn (William Morrow; January 2, 2018): *It isn't paranoia if it's really happening . . .*

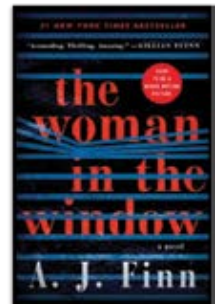
Anna Fox lives alone—a recluse in her New York City home, unable to venture outside. She spends her day drinking wine (maybe too much), watching old movies, recalling happier times . . . and spying on her neighbors.

Then the Russells move into the house across the way: a father, a mother, their teenage son. The perfect family. But when Anna, gazing out her window one night, sees something she shouldn't, her world begins to crumble—and its' shocking secrets are laid bare.

What is real? What is imagined? Who is in danger? Who is in control? In this diabolically gripping thriller, no one—and nothing—is what it seems.



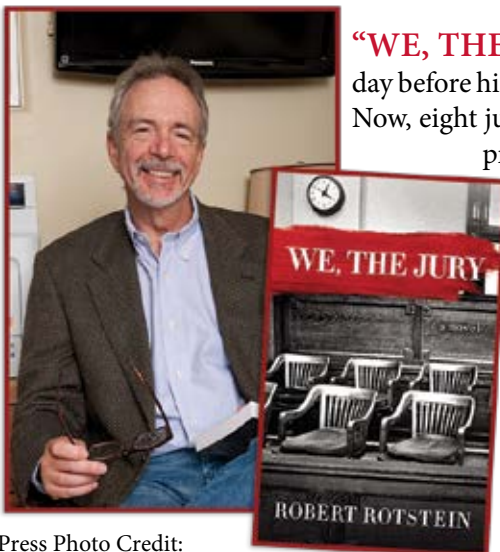
Press Photo Credit:  
Andrew Whittons



**"WE, THE JURY"** by Robert Rotstein (Blackstone Publishing; October 23, 2018): On the day before his twenty-first wedding anniversary, David Sullinger buried an ax in his wife's skull. Now, eight jurors must retire to the deliberation room and decide whether David committed premeditated murder, or whether he was a battered spouse who killed his wife in self-defense.

Told from the perspective of over a dozen participants in a murder trial, "We, the Jury" examines how public perception can mask the ghastliest nightmares. As the jurors stagger toward a verdict, they must sift through contradictory testimony from the Sullingers' children, who disagree on which parent was Satan; sort out conflicting allegations of severe physical abuse, adultery, and incest; and overcome personal animosities and biases that threaten a fair and just verdict. Ultimately, the central figures in "We, the Jury" must navigate the blurred boundaries between bias and objectivity, fiction and truth.

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?



Press Photo Credit:  
Provided by Author

Robert Rotstein (R.R.): *Twelve Angry Men meets Faulkner's "As I Lay Dying" updated.*

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

R.R.: *I'm writing a novel about two lawyers, a husband and wife, who travel the country taking on clients in need, usually in controversial, high-profile cases. In this story, their client is a pregnant woman who's made a seemingly inexplicable medical decision that threatens the life of her unborn twins. The State's attempt to intervene raises important civil-liberties issues and also forces the main characters to confront their own dark and painful secrets.*

S. MAG.: If you could be a superhero, which one would you be? And what is that one special gift of his/hers you want to have, and why?

R.R.: *I love this question, because it strikes a personal note. My wife, author Daco Auffenorde—who also designed the cover for "We, the Jury"—wrote "Electromancer," a campy, thrilling novel about a kickass, electric (literally) superhero. The novel's co-star is superhero Blue Arrow, who, among other things, can throw a protective cloud around those oppressed by the forces of evil. I'd definitely choose Blue Arrow and his power to protect. ■*



Press Photo Credit:  
Niko Giovanni Coniglio

**"THE CUTTING EDGE"** by Jeffery Deaver (Grand Central Publishing; April 10, 2018): In the early hours of a quiet, weekend morning in Manhattan's Diamond District, a brutal triple murder shocks the city. Lincoln Rhyme and Amelia Sachs quickly take the case. Curiously, the killer has left behind a half-million dollars' worth of gems at the murder scene—a jewelry store on 47th Street. As more crimes follow, it becomes clear that the killer's target is not gems, but engaged couples themselves.

The Promisor vows to take the lives of men and women during their most precious moments—midway through the purchase of an engagement ring, after a meeting with a wedding planner, trying on the perfect gown for a day that will never come. The Promisor arrives silently, armed with knife or gun, and a time of bliss is transformed, in an instant, to one of horror.

Soon, The Promiser makes a dangerous mistake: leaving behind an innocent witness, Vimal Lahori, a talented young diamond cutter who can help Rhyme and Sachs blow the lid off the case. They must track down Vimal before the killer can correct his fatal error. Then disaster strikes, threatening to tear apart the very fabric of the city—and providing the perfect cover for the killer to slip through the cracks.

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

Jeffery Deaver (J.D.): *Please produce my book or I will be very sad.*

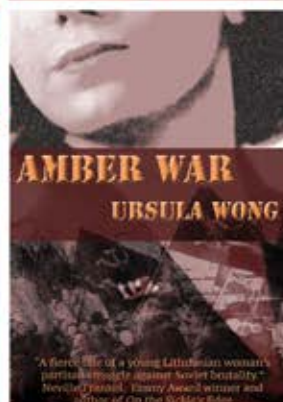
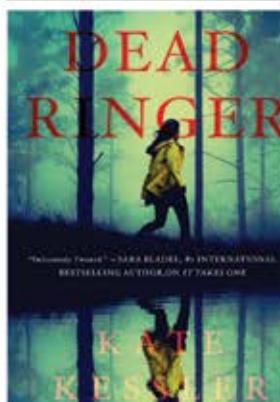
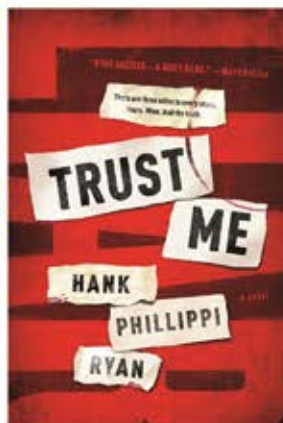
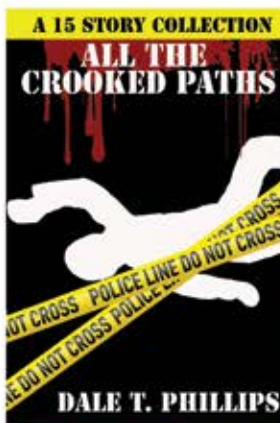
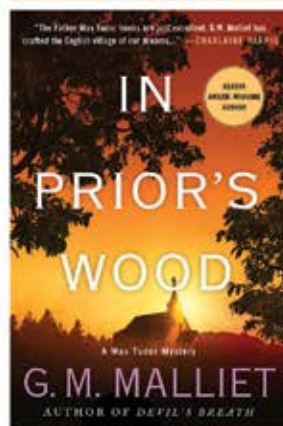
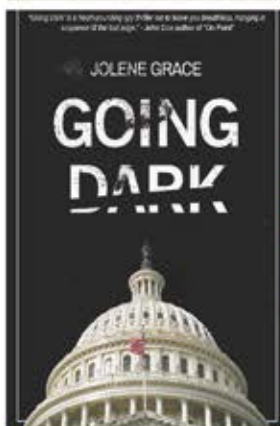
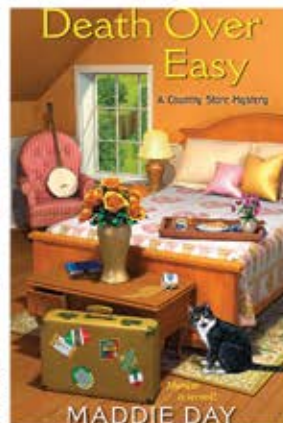
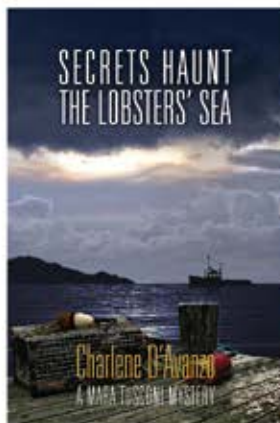
S. MAG.: Do you have a memorable fan experience you can share?

J.D.: *A teenager came up to be at a signing and asked if I'd sign his books. I said, "Of course." He handed me a Grisham, a Stephen King, and a Dean Koontz. There was a humorous beat, and then he and his parents explained that he'd never read a book of fiction outside of school until his dad gave him "The Bone Collector." It turned him on to reading and the three other authors he brought were the first books he read after "The Bone Collector." I was very moved.*

S. MAG.: What does having your book chosen as a "Best of" by *Suspense Magazine* mean to you?

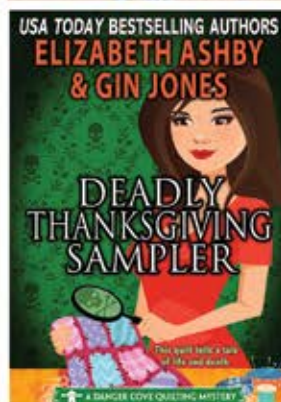
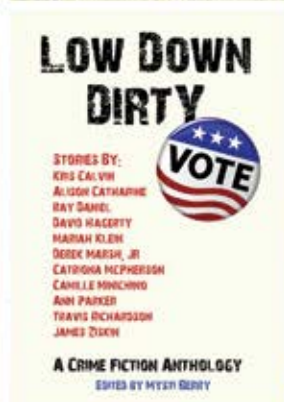
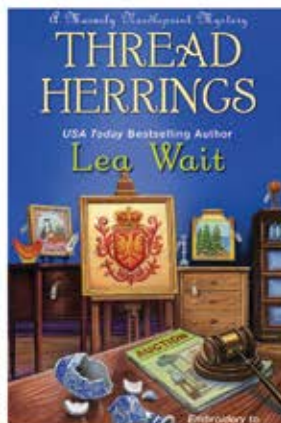
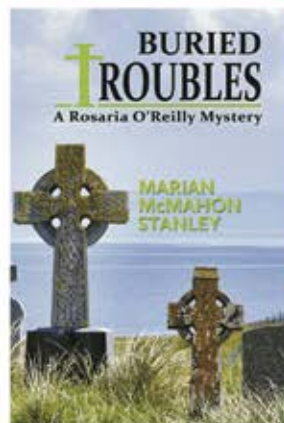
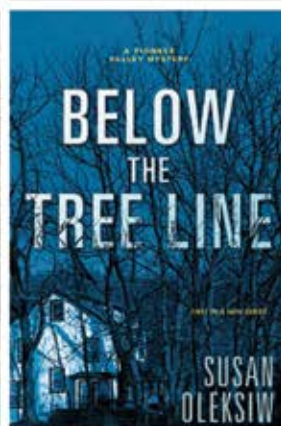
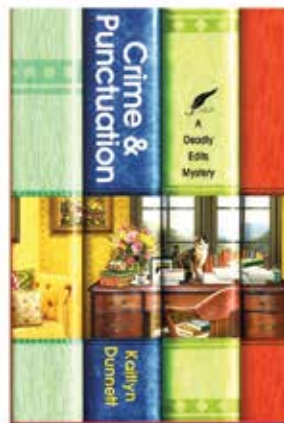
J.D.: *It means the world to me! The reputation of Suspense Magazine is known throughout the world; it's a vibrant gathering place for authors, editors, publishers and, of course, readers. To be so recognized by such a community is beyond thrilling! ■*





# 2018 Books by Sisters in Crime

New England

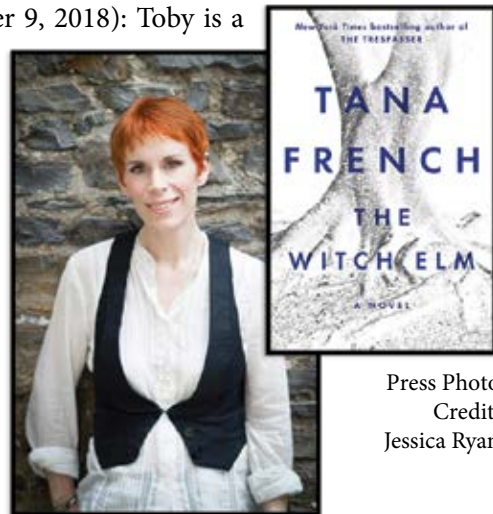




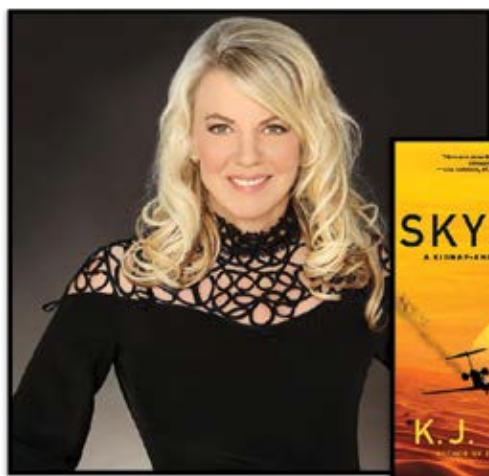
# HONORABLE MENTION

**“THE WITCH ELM”** by Tana French (Penguin Publishing Group; October 9, 2018): Toby is a happy-go-lucky charmer who’s dodged a scrape at work and is celebrating with friends when the night takes a turn that will change his life—he surprises two burglars who beat him and leave him for dead. Struggling to recover from his injuries, beginning to understand that he might never be the same man again, he takes refuge at his family’s ancestral home to care for his dying uncle, Hugo. Then a skull is found in the trunk of an elm tree in the garden—and as detectives close in, Toby is forced to face the possibility that his past may not be what he has always believed.

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?



Press Photo  
Credit:  
Jessica Ryan



Tana French (T.F.): *Lucky guy loses his luck and finds a skeleton.*

**“SKYJACK”** by K.J. Howe (Quercus; April 10, 2018): International kidnap expert Thea Paris is escorting two former child soldiers on a plane from an orphanage in Kanzi, Africa, to adoptive parents in London, when the Boeing Business Jet is hijacked and forced to make an emergency landing in the remote Libyan Desert.

When the dust settles on a tense negotiation, Thea finds herself at the beck and call of a ruthless criminal who will stop at nothing to crush his rivals, even if it means forcing her to break international law.

Revealing a deadly conspiracy that connects the dark postwar legacy of World War II to the present, this case will bring all parties to an explosive conclusion that will decide the fate of millions across Europe and the Middle East.

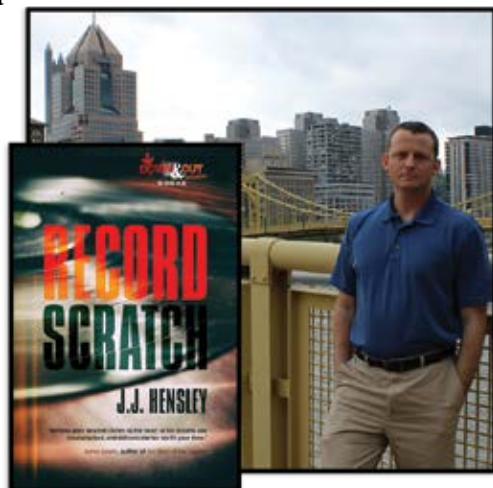
Press Photo Credit: Provided by Publicist

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

K.J. Howe (K.J.H.): Air Force One *meets* Blood Diamond—*shaken, not stirred.* ■

**“RECORD SCRATCH”** by J.J. Hensley (Down & Out Books, October 22, 2018): “There are two types of men you must fear in this world: Men who have everything to lose, and men like me.”

It’s a case Trevor Galloway doesn’t want. It’s certainly a case he doesn’t need. The client, the sister of a murdered musician, seems a bit off. She expects Galloway to not only solve her brother’s homicide, but recover a vinyl record she believes could ruin his reputation. Galloway knows he should walk away. He should simply reach over the desk, give back the envelope of cash that he admittedly needs, and walk away. However, when the client closes the meeting by putting a gun under her chin and pulling the trigger, his sense of obligation



Press Photo Credit: Provided by Author



drags him down a path he may not be ready to travel.

As Galloway pieces together the final days of rock-and-roll legend Jimmy Spartan, he struggles to sort through his own issues, to include having the occasional hallucination. He's not certain how bad his condition has deteriorated, but when Galloway is attacked in broad daylight by men he assumed were figments of his imagination, he realizes the threat is real and his condition is putting him and anyone nearby at risk. The stoic demeanor that earned Galloway the nickname "The Tin Man" is tested as he reunites with an old flame, becomes entangled in a Secret Service investigation, and does battle with old enemies.

A story divided into twelve songs from Jimmy Spartan's final album.

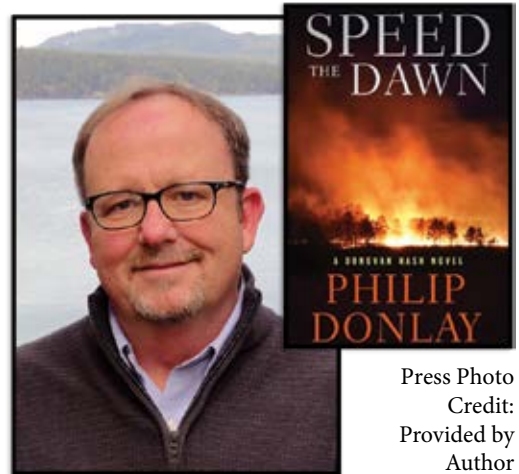
*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

J.J. Hensley (J.J.H.): *Find the record. Find the killer. Stay alive.* ■

**"SPEED THE DAWN"** by Philip Donlay (Oceanview Publishing; March 6, 2018): Hundreds of white-hot meteor fragments plunge toward Earth near Monterey Bay, California. Huge fires ignite the tinder-dry landscape and, as the sun sets, the power grid collapses and the fires grow, illuminating a nightmare created in hell, itself. Donovan Nash realizes he is trapped.

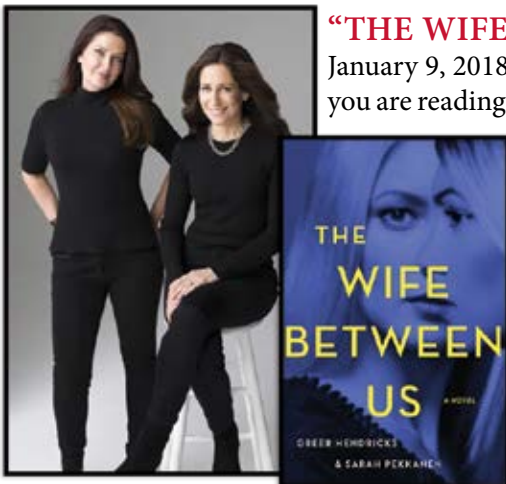
Injured and growing desperate, his options dwindling, Donovan fights to keep himself and a small band of survivors alive until dawn, when they can make one last attempt to escape the inferno.

Meanwhile, Donovan's wife, Dr. Lauren McKenna, working with the Pentagon as well as the Forest Service, envisions a bold approach to stop the fire from spreading all the way to the Bay Area and the seven million residents living there. She's terrified that, if not executed perfectly, her plan could cause the death of thousands of people—including Donovan.



*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

Philip Donlay (P.D.): *Imagine the movie Twister . . . except the tornadoes are burning. Run.* ■



**"THE WIFE BETWEEN US"** by Greer Hendricks & Sarah Pekkanen (St. Martin's Press; January 9, 2018): When you read this book, you will make many assumptions. You will assume you are reading about a jealous ex-wife. You will assume she is obsessed with her replacement—a beautiful, younger woman who is about to marry the man they both love. You will assume you know the anatomy of this tangled love triangle. Assume nothing.

Twisted and deliciously chilling, Greer Hendricks and Sarah Pekkanen's "The Wife Between Us" exposes the secret complexities of an enviable marriage—and the dangerous truths we ignore in the name of love.

*Read between the lies.*

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

Greer Hendricks & Sarah Pekkanen (G.H. & S.P.): *"An Anonymous Girl"—our new psychological thriller about a young woman who sneaks into a study on ethics and morality conducted by the mysterious Dr. Shields—will be published on January 8, 2019.*

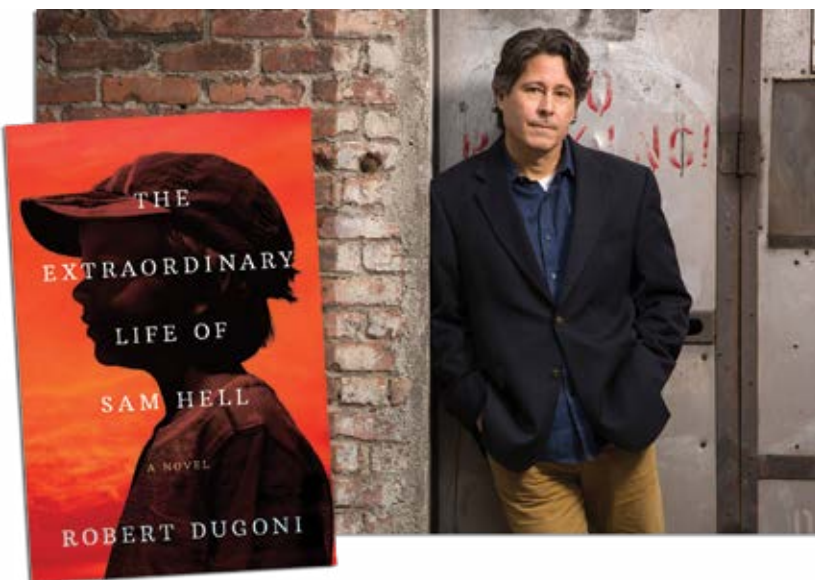
*It is already in development for a television series by eOne, the company that put together Sharp Objects, and has won starred reviews from Publishers Weekly, Booklist, and Library Journal. We'll be heading out on tour—17 events and counting!—come January to promote it. You can learn more about "An Anonymous Girl" here: [www.anonymousgirl.com](http://www.anonymousgirl.com).* ■

# And the Winner is...

**“THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF SAM HELL”** by Robert Dugoni (Lake Union Publishing; April 24, 2018): Sam Hill always saw the world through different eyes. Born with red pupils, he was called “Devil Boy” or Sam “Hell” by his classmates; “God’s will” is what his mother called his ocular albinism. Her words were of little comfort, but Sam persevered, buoyed by his mother’s devout faith, his father’s practical wisdom, and his two other misfit friends.

Sam believed it was God who sent Ernie Cantwell, the only African American kid in his class, to be the friend he so desperately needed. And that it was God’s idea for Mickie Kennedy to storm into Our Lady of Mercy like a tornado, uprooting every rule Sam had been taught about boys and girls.

Forty years later, Sam, a small-town eye doctor, is no longer certain anything was by design—especially not the tragedy that caused him to turn his back on his friends, his hometown, and the life he’d always known. Running from the pain, eyes closed, served little purpose. Now, as he looks back on his life, Sam embarks on a journey that will take him halfway around the world. This time, his eyes are wide open—bringing into clear view what changed him, defined him, and made him so afraid, until he can finally see what truly matters.



Press Photo Credit: Provided by Publicist

R.D.: Favorite hero is Paul Edgecomb, “The Green Mile.” Favorite villain is any book featuring Nazi Germany as the villains.

S. MAG.: What does having your book chosen as a “Best of” by *Suspense Magazine* mean to you?

R.D.: It’s a tremendous honor. It is a validation that all the hard work translated into a book that meant something to so many.

S. MAG.: If you could write a message to future aspiring authors and place it in a time capsule to read years later, what would you write?

R.D.: Learn the craft.

S. MAG.: If you could be a superhero, which one would you be? And what is that one special gift of his/hers you want to have, and why?

R.D.: Superman. Always wanted to fly.

S. MAG.: Finish this sentence: If I wasn’t an author, I would be \_\_\_\_\_.

R.D.: Miserable.

S. MAG.: Is there a book, written by another, that you wish you’d written?

R.D.: “The Nightingale” by Kristin Hannah. ■

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): What is the best book you read in 2018?

Robert Dugoni (R.D.): Andrew Gross’s “Button Men.”

S. MAG.: Hollywood pitches are very brief. How would you pitch your book to the movies in ten words or less?

R.D.: “A Prayer for Owen Meany” meets “Benjamin Button.”

S. MAG.: What can fans expect to see from you in 2019?

R.D.: An espionage novel based on true events is coming April 2019, “The Eighth Sister,” followed by another Tracy Crosswhite novel, “A Cold Lead.”

S. MAG.: Do you have a memorable fan experience you can share?

R.D.: I still love the woman who was perplexed to discover I was a male. She thought I used a nom de plume.

S. MAG.: Who’s your favorite fictional villain? Favorite hero/heroine?





# ANDREWS & WILSON

## Show They're "Tier One" Quality

Interview by Jeff Ayers for *Suspense Magazine*  
Press Photo Credit: Provided by Author



Brian Andrews and Jeffrey Wilson have found success writing together. Not only do they write the #1 bestselling series *Tier One*, they have also written standalone novels featuring ex-Navy SEAL Nick Foley, under the pseudonym of Alex Ryan. They took time out from their busy writing schedule to answer five questions for *Suspense Magazine*:

Jeff Ayers (J.A.): How do you edit your work when it's a collaborative process?

Jeffrey Wilson (J.W.): *One thing that's different for us—at least from me and my solo projects—is there is so much more editing that goes in during the rough draft phase. Our process involves writing concurrently, brainstorming constantly, and splitting up chapters, usually by POV. About every three or four chapters we trade work, edit and re-write the other guy's chapter, and blend them together into a master file. As a result,*

*when we finish the rough draft, we have functionally been through one complete edit. After the rough, we start the developmental editing (DE) phase and bring our amazing developmental editor into the loop. She reads the entire manuscript, prepares detailed notes, and we conference all together. With the manuscript back in our court, we begin the process all over again but now as a DE pass—with me and Brian splitting the work, and swapping the master file back and forth. It sounds cumbersome, but it's actually insanely efficient and is the reason we can produce a book so quickly.*

Brian Andrews (B.A.): *And when Jeff is finally done with all the heavy lifting, I write "The End" and attach the file to a snarky, self-indulgent email to our publisher, and send our latest masterpiece off for publication. But seriously, all kidding aside, one of the more important elements of our process is the mechanics of managing the prose so the novel reads with a singular voice. One of the great compliments for us as a writing duo, is when a fan or reviewer comments about the consistent voice and the absence of stark or contrasting style from chapter to chapter. That is intentional, and the cornerstone of the Andrews & Wilson process. A*

very wise author once said, “All writing is rewriting” and we embrace this adage to the core. Our editing phase is the heavy lifting of the project, during which all sentences are fair game for deletion, relocation, or rephrasing. As you heard Jeff explain, by the time we’re done with DE the book has been collaboratively rewritten two times, which is why a unified voice emerges by the end. This process requires that you trust your co-author and lock your ego away in a drawer. Even if we wanted to, it’s impossible to “take credit” for specific ideas or sections of prose—every novel is an Andrews & Wilson collaboration and is virtually impossible to deconstruct.

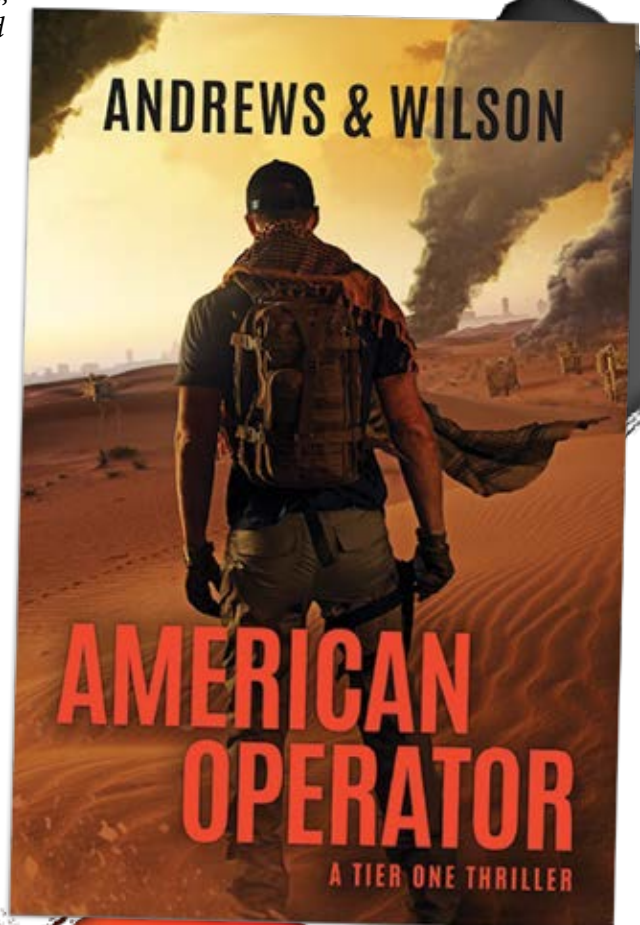
J.A.: Why do you think your *Tier One* novels have been so popular?

B.A.: When a reader picks up a *Tier One* novel, our goal is that he or she is fully immersed in the story before finishing the first chapter. We try to accomplish this by using three levers: premise, plot, and protagonist. Every *Tier One* book is based on a “ripped from the headlines” premise. Given the long production cycle for books like these, this requires a good measure of crystal ball gazing and a little bit of luck so that we get it right. For example, the impetus for “*American Operator*” (the latest book in the series) was born from us observing a systematic, multi-pronged Russian influence campaign to destabilize American relationships and operations in Turkey, Iraq, and Syria. The premise of the book is a “what if” scenario in which Russia orchestrates a false flag operation in Turkey that fractures the US-Turkish alliance, thereby knocking the United States out of the driver’s seat in the region and shifting the balance of power and influence to Russia.

The second lever is plot, and every *Tier One* novel opens with an inciting event that draws the reader into the mind and motivational machinations of the villain. For example, in the opening chapter of “*American Operator*,” the US Ambassador to Turkey is murdered and his Chief of Staff, Amanda Allen, is kidnapped. We pose the question immediately to the reader: Why was Amanda Allen taken instead of murdered? And if she’s not recovered, what will the consequences be?

J.W.: I think readers are drawn to the realism in our premises, and the intrigue in our plots, but most importantly the realism of the characters. All the series characters are real and relatable; our protagonist, John Dempsey, most of all. That’s highly intentional—writing characters with strengths and weaknesses, faults and frailties, instead of just superheroes—because those are the type of men and women we know and have served with. In *Special Warfare*, you have ordinary people who do amazing things because of their drive and sense of service, but then pick up milk on their way home, go to their kids’ ball game, and take the garbage to the curb. We try hard to imbue humanity into all the characters, because it brings them to life and makes you care what happens to them. Dempsey is just a man, but he is a man of the highest possible caliber. He is a former *Tier One* Navy SEAL—an operator, a patriot, and a member of an elite brotherhood. In his world, heroism is expected. In his world, country is put ahead of self. And in his world, tragedy is unavoidable. To do his job requires a level of self-sacrifice—as well as mental and spiritual toughness that few people will ever know. To understand him, you have to walk in his

**“When a reader picks up a *Tier One* novel, our goal is that he or she is fully immersed in the story before finishing the first chapter.”**





shoes, which is why we write his character using an intimate, and intimidatingly close, third person POV. After reading any of the Tier One books, you will feel like you've been through "the suck" with Dempsey, and that's the level of realism we strive for.

J.A.: How do you find your distinctive voice, both with your individual works and those done together?

J.W.: Well, I think understanding our process that we described earlier answers that a little bit, but I also think that Brian and I have a very similar outlook on writing. We think alike now to the point where we joke that we have one brain that we share when it comes to the craft of writing. Others might say that if you sum us up, you almost have one good writer.

B.A.: In our co-authored works (the Tier One and Alex Ryan series), the mission is to eschew two distinctive voices in exchange for a unified voice. There's no soloist in this performance, only the choir. That's the beautiful irony of your question—when you read our collaborative work, what should resonate is that the Andrews & Wilson voice should feel different and distinct from our solo stuff. We want it that way, because each co-authored novel is truly a 50/50 collaboration.

J.A.: What is the Andrews & Wilson brand?

B.A.: When we started this journey we decided that we wanted to write books about Military Characters, Covert Operations, and Science & Technology. Those are the three pillars of our brand and will always be a common theme in all our co-authored works. From book to book and series to series, the emphasis might shift more heavily from one pillar to the other, but all three elements will always be present.

J.W.: Thematically, that's correct. From a storytelling perspective, I would say the hallmarks of our brand are hard-hitting, realistic action that ebbs and flows through a nail-biting, and sometimes gut-wrenching plotline. As far as the writing itself, well, when it comes to a two-name brand everyone brings their own personal strengths. I'm the talent and the good looks and the brains, and Brian...wait, what did you say you do again?

J.A.: Have you thought about writing either solo or together in other genres?



J.W.: Well, Brian and I have both written outside the military and covert ops thriller genre. I've written a few supernatural thrillers—one being more classic horror than anything. Brian recently released a speculative technology thriller called "Reset" that's an incredible near future techno-thriller that ties climate change, artificial intelligence, and government conspiracy into a 'what the heck just happened' plot. If I had to describe it in a single sentence, it would be: "The Terminator meets War Games with a dash of The X-files thrown in." As far as co-authored off-genre work, we do have an exciting new Andrews & Wilson novel in the pipeline. The book features a former Army CID investigator turned homicide detective, Valerie Marks, as she tackles her first domestic case in which the murderer is unlike any serial killer the world has faced before. We don't have a pub date yet, and can't release the title, but in this new book we explore some cutting-edge science and mix in some true crime elements for the first time.

B.A.: And Jeff just released his first faith-based title, "War Torn," a couple of weeks ago, and it's been incredibly well-received. Something that folks probably don't know, is that Jeff leads a men's military ministry in Tampa focused on helping war fighters deal with crisis of faith dilemmas that can accompany war time service—both for the service members and their families. "War Torn" was born out of things Jeff has seen and been part of in the horrors of war, and it is a beautifully written, emotional novel that I encourage our readership (even those who don't typically read faith-based fiction) to explore.

To stay up to date on their work and sign up for their newsletter, check out these links; Brian's Amazon Author Page: <https://amzn.to/2OZEkXd>, Jeff's Amazon Author Page: <https://amzn.to/2DcHQqW>, and Andrews & Wilson Newsletter: [www.andrews-wilson.com](http://www.andrews-wilson.com). ■

# SUSPENSE/HORROR WRITER BILLIE SUE MOSIMAN TALKS ABOUT THE CRAFT OF FICTION

Interview by Weldon Burge for *Suspense Magazine*  
Press Photo Credit: Provided by Author



We're all greatly saddened to hear that Billie Sue Mosiman has passed. She was always supportive of so many of us in the writing community, and her work was enjoyed by readers around the world. Billie was an incredible woman, a wonderful friend, a powerful creative force, and a champion for female horror writers everywhere. Our thoughts and prayers go to her family and many friends. She will be sorely missed. RIP, Billie.

~Weldon Burge

Billie Sue Mosiman's "Night Cruise" was nominated for the Edgar Award; her novel entitled "Widow" was nominated for the Bram Stoker Award for Superior Novel. She's a prolific writer—a suspense/thriller novelist who often writes horror short stories. Billie has also been a columnist, reviewer, writing instructor, and dwells in Texas...where the sun is too hot for humankind. *Suspense Magazine* is grateful that she took some time from

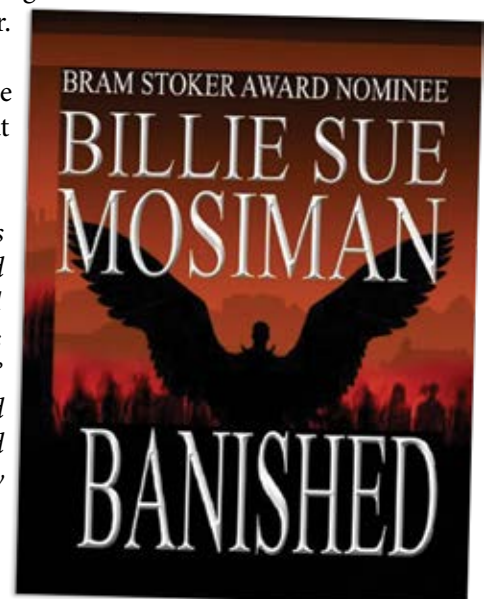
her busy schedule to answer a few questions for us in regards to her amazing career.

Weldon Burge (W.B.): You've been writing professionally since the early '80s—more than 60 books and probably more short stories than I can personally count. What persuaded you to write in the first place?

Billie Sue Mosiman (B.S.M.): *I was always a reader and went through a lot of books as a youngster. One day, a man in a suit came to my grandmother's house. He looked so grand that I sat around listening in the living room while they spoke. I discovered he was a Dean of a University, and I knew you had to be educated to do that. I was smitten by an intellectual. I thought, "Yes. That is what I want to be. Just like this man."*

*My family had never gone to college but, at thirteen, I knew I would. And it would be grand. Of course, I wanted to go in order to learn how to be a better writer. I had faith and determination. I went to my little blue diary and wrote in it: "When I grow up, I want to be a writer."*

W.B.: What authors inspired or influenced your style along the way?





B.S.M.: *I loved Steinbeck, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jim Thompson, Bradbury, and a raft of others. It was a few years of reading before I came upon genre books and fell in love with them as well, reading each author's entire works.*

W.B.: Your work often bridges the gap between suspense and horror. A prime example, I think, is your novel, "Night Cruising," an Edgar Award Nominee. How much of this wedding of horror and suspense is intentional, and how much is simply, "I write what I enjoy reading?"

B.S.M.: *The books are organic in the way they turn out. My work was always graphic and I didn't think I owed anyone anything. I was free to write the novels as they came to me. So sometimes they were classified as horror, but were unlike straight horror.*

W.B.: Your novel "Widow" was also nominated for a Bram Stoker Award. The story involves a female serial killer and a male copycat murderer, and apparently you did a lot of research for the book. You even interviewed exotic dancers. Likewise, your novel "Wireman," was based on true crimes in the Houston area that occurred back in the late '70s. How much research is required for your fiction? How do you go about it?

B.S.M.: *Sometimes it takes a lot of research. If I don't know something, I won't write about it. I didn't know how detectives worked so I asked questions of another writer's chief of detectives' husband to build my own in "Wireman." Some books are purely imaginary, set in places I've lived in or traveled to. But if I don't know something, I make sure to research it.*

W.B.: You've also been an editor, most notably of the anthology "Frightmare—Women Write Horror," which also garnered a nomination for a Bram Stoker Award. You've always been a champion for female writers, especially those in the horror and suspense genres. What led you to start this particular project?

B.S.M.: *I saw so many anthologies on the market in the horror realm and they always appeared to have a predominance of male writers. I have nothing against them, as some are the best in the world. But where were the female writers? I knew for certain there were great women writers being ignored. I decided I'd do something for them. I'd pull together an anthology that gave them a voice. I think I was angry. I never backed down from a fight and I thought it was past time for a fight in this realm. The women came through, and I was so proud. I did not add my own work. It was for them.*

W.B.: As an editor, what do you look for in a story? What gets you to "yes"?

B.S.M.: *If it excites me and if it catches me in the first three paragraphs. I don't like info dumps or overly wrought work or stories with no point. I'm kind of exacting about those things.*

W.B.: Your novel "Moon Lake" involves a lake monster, but the focus is on the teenage lead characters. Is this the closest

**"I DOUBT I WOULD'VE DONE ANYTHING DIFFERENTLY, EXCEPT MAYBE SLOWED DOWN PUBLISHERS WHO PUSHED ME FOR THE NEXT BOOK. MY ADVICE TO YOUNG WRITERS IS TO BE TRUE TO YOURSELF."**



you've come to a YA novel? If so, was this meant to attract a younger audience?

B.S.M.: *It was meant as an adult read, but I see how it would appeal to a teen. I'm part kid myself, so I'm not surprised I end up with novels meant for a younger reader.*

W.B.: You've also written a memoir of sorts with "Alabama Girl: Memoir of a Writer—Part 1." What motivated you to write your own story? Is there, or will there be a 'Part 2' in the future?

B.S.M.: *My mother was such a towering personality in my upbringing and a disruption to the family. I had her and my dad living in my large home when they aged, but each day was like I was twelve again and my mother was the queen in my life. I don't know if I have the heart to write the second part of that book. My son, our only child at the time, died in a house fire. Other terrible things all living creatures confront happened, and I just didn't think I could face writing about it. So it may never happen.*

W.B.: Do you think about marketing at all when you're in the "creative" mode?

B.S.M.: *Nope. I never had to do that and I can't start now. I just write stories.*

W.B.: From your perspective, how has publishing changed over the years? Where do you think it's headed?

B.S.M.: *Publishing has lost its way. The Amazon digital phenomenon started it. Anyone who wanted to write a book did. Those who hadn't read enough. Those who hungered for fame before they knew the rules of grammar. And so forth. We all know what happened; people got used to free digital copies. Why should they pay? Publishers, in some instances, did a rights' grab from authors and then overpriced the market. The film and TV scripts have overtaken the reading of books. I weep for the whole scene and hope one day things return to normal. 'Normal' being: more than three major publishers, higher advances, more promotion, sharing digital rights with authors, and so forth.*

*We are not tradesmen. We don't make art except with words. From our minds to yours, we share those worlds. It's an honorary endeavor and as serious as can be. That's what I learned from the great authors who came before me. The world needs stories and novels. People need them. They may not know it, but I do. Since the caveman wrote on cave walls, we should have known then how important a life of letters can be.*

W.B.: Looking back, what would you have done differently? In short, what advice would you offer a young writer following in your footsteps?

B.S.M.: *I doubt I would've done anything differently, except maybe slowed down publishers who pushed me for the next book. My advice to young writers is to be true to yourself. If you like mystery writing and someone pushes horror on you, balk, backpedal, and do anything you can to stick with what you love. Read tons of books, of all kinds. Write like a mad person. Trust your gut. And never, never give away your Life of Copyright. If someone wants to give you a million bucks for it to one of your books, trust you can get \$1.2 million from some other publisher who won't steal your copyright. Besides being productive, you must be smart.*

W.B.: And, last question, what do you enjoy most about writing?

B.S.M.: *Being lost in the story, where nothing else exists. Thinking how others feel when they read my words.*

W.B.: Thank you for your time, Billie! It's always a pleasure to talk with you.

For more on Billie Sue Mosiman and the many books she's written, visit her bio page at, [www.amazon.com/Billie-Sue-Mosiman/e/B000AQ0Z5E/](http://www.amazon.com/Billie-Sue-Mosiman/e/B000AQ0Z5E/). ■





# MARC CAMERON

## Talks About His Work & the Next Tom Clancy/Jack Ryan Release

Interview by *Suspense Magazine*  
Press Photo Credit: Victoria Otte



It was in late 2016 that Marc Cameron, author of the *New York Times* bestselling *Jericho Quinn Thriller* series, was chosen to continue Tom Clancy's beloved *Jack Ryan* series. As a long-time fan of Clancy and his work, Marc was thrilled to take over the reins from established author, Mark Greaney, and continue to bring to life characters that've been known across the globe for some time.

Being a retired Chief Deputy U.S. Marshal, Marc Cameron has spent nearly three decades in law enforcement. That wealth of experience—combined with a second-degree black belt in Jujitsu, certification as a scuba diver and man-tracking instructor, being an avid sailor and adventure motorcyclist—certainly makes this author the perfect candidate to pen high-octane suspense thrillers.

Living in Alaska, Marc enjoys hearing from readers and was kind enough to take time away from his list of upcoming books in order to sit with *Suspense Magazine* and talk about his background, his reaction to being the next author in the "Clancy" line, and give our readers an inside look at the newest *Jack Ryan* book: "Oath of Office."

*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): "Oath of Office" is the latest book; give us the inside scoop.

Marc Cameron (M.C.): Where "Power and Empire" hearkened back to "Without Remorse," "Oath of Office" has shades of "The Cardinal of the Kremlin." There is some interesting tech, and the sophisticated weaponry that Tom Clancy readers have come to expect, but like "Cardinal," "Oath of Office" is a book about spies and the intelligence officers who run them.

President Jack Ryan has his hands full with an influenza epidemic, flooding in the southern states, a congresswoman who wants to see him fail, and a so-called Persian Spring which Ryan believes is not what it seems. Ding Chavez, John Clark, and the other Campus operatives bounce around Portugal, Spain, Afghanistan, and Iran, hot on the tail of a Portuguese arms dealer and his girlfriend who is also a talented assassin—who both appear to be in bed with Russian intelligence.

Early in the book, President Ryan asks his newly confirmed Secretary of Homeland Security what scares him. The secretary answers: "Three things, Mr. President."

"Which three?" Ryan asks.

"Any three," the secretary says, "If they happen at the same time."

Let us just say that in "Oath of Office," Jack Ryan gets hit with three things...and then some.

S. MAG.: When you were asked to write Tom Clancy, what was your first reaction?

M.C.: My wife and I were on a beach in Florida working on "Open Carry," the first book in my new Arliss Cutter series, when I got the call from my agent, Robin Rue. She let me know that Mark Greaney had recommended me for the gig. I've been a

Tom Clancy fan since I was a rookie policeman and read “The Hunt for Red October,” so it was more than a little surreal. My wife saw me talking on the phone and thought someone had died. For some reason, she took a photo.

*She took another only a few minutes later...after I'd collapsed in the sand.*

S. MAG.: What was/is the most difficult part in writing a series when the original author has passed away?

M.C.: Mark Greaney is a talented writer, so I was concerned about trying to fill his shoes, let alone Tom Clancy's. Mark has been a big help as we continue to make the transition, filling in the blanks with character traits and other details from the Jack Ryan Universe.

I knew going in that there would be people who were upset that Mark was no longer writing the books, or that anyone other than Clancy was continuing his characters. I also knew that there was no way I could get away with trying to imitate Clancy. So the editor, Tom Colgan, and I, decided from the start that I would write a Marc Cameron book in the ‘spirit’ of Tom Clancy. I want to keep the characters true to what Tom Clancy envisioned and strive to tell an authentic story that readers who want more of Jack Ryan, Mary Pat Foley, John Clark, Ding Chavez and the rest, will enjoy.

S. MAG.: In “Oath of Office,” the story drives at 90 mph. Is it hard to pump the brakes sometimes?

M.C.: I like the speed analogy. I try not to pump the brakes much. To carry the image a little further, I'd rather “drift” the rear tires around the corners at speed, retaining just enough control to stay on the track. That said, there has to be some exposition, a time for readers to catch their breath. I once had a reader tell me she read my Jericho Quinn books from between splayed fingers. That's the effect I'm trying for with every book.

S. MAG.: When writing a military/thriller, why do the details matter so much?

M.C.: I think it's possible to push the envelope and make some things up—but we can't get things wrong. I transposed some numbers in the half-life of a plutonium isotope once and immediately heard about it from a nuclear physicist. I was happy a physicist was reading a Jericho Quinn adventure, but embarrassed that I'd made a mistake on something so simple to check. Describing the sound of a Glock's safety “snicking” off, or calling a pistol magazine a “clip” lets those versed in small arms know that the writer doesn't have a clue about weapons. Some readers might read an unrealistic fight scene and think it's cinematic; others, who are martial artists, might say, “That could never happen!” if some obvious mistake is made.

I personally think that a lot when I read about some guy getting clunked in the head with a beer bottle or brick and not coming away with possible brain damage. Blood is slippery... A high-speed rifle round can do a heck of a lot of damage to meat and bone... You rarely know you've been cut until after the fight is over...

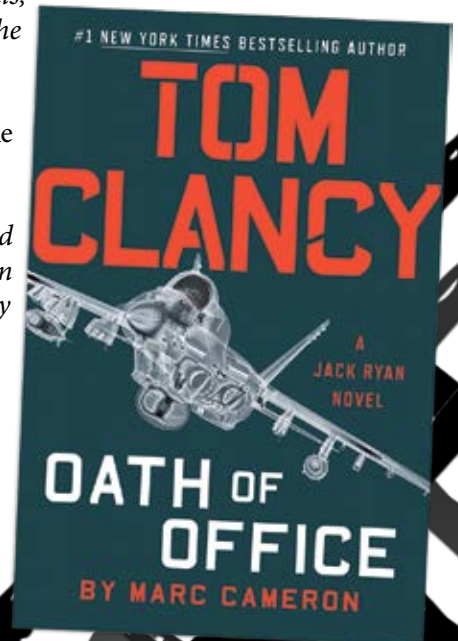
My own son asked me when he was new on patrol, “Dad, how come you never told me that intestines look like bubble gum?”

I'm pretty sure his mom wouldn't have let me bring that up around the dinner table, but that tiny fact in a book lends a certain verisimilitude to those who've been there. If a writer points out little details like this, then the people who didn't realize it learn something new. Those that were already in the know are likely to buy into the rest of the story if the little things are correct.

S. MAG.: In thinking about the villain, what personality traits did you want to make sure came through on the page?

M.C.: I'm often asked about all the “evil people” I've investigated, hunted, and arrested during my time as a police officer and Deputy U.S. Marshal. I've met hundreds of men and women who have done evil things, but only a few whom I would consider truly

**“I HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN DRAGGED BY A CAR, CUT, AND BEEN NOSE-TO-NOSE WITH PEOPLE WHO WERE TRYING VERY HARD TO KILL ME. NONE OF THAT IS ESSENTIAL TO WRITING A THRILLER, BUT IT DOESN'T HURT EITHER.”**





evil—lacking any good at all. I spent a couple of weeks in jail in Mississippi guarding three witnesses we'd flown in to testify in a federal trial against the "Dixie Mafia." Two of us were on the inside, associating with all the inmates daily: doing pushups, eating meals, playing cards. Two of our witnesses had been on death row but had their sentences commuted to life without parole. I learned a lot from these men, listening to their stories, how they viewed themselves. Everyone is the good guy in our own story.

There are several villains in "Oath of Office" and I worked hard to make even the worst of them believe in what they were doing.

S. MAG.: How did your original work prepare you to take on the Clancy series?

M.C.: I knew I wanted to write long before I got into law enforcement. But I was fully aware that once I pinned on the badge, I was in a position to experience things that not everyone gets to (or wants to) experience. Cops are, for the most part, great tellers of war stories, especially when we're around other cops. At Thrillerfest and Bouchercon I often find myself drawn into conversations with Simon Gervais, Sean Lynch, Rip Rawlings, and others who were either in law enforcement and/or the military. These folks know what they're talking about and it's fun to listen to them.

As writers, it's certainly possible to imagine things we've not experienced. I've never been shot, for instance, so I've had to make up the details when it happens to one of my characters. I have, however, been dragged by a car, cut, and been nose-to-nose with people who were trying very hard to kill me. None of that is essential to writing a thriller, but it doesn't hurt either.

Perhaps even more important, law enforcement types have to be keen observers of the world and people around us—a skill also suited to being a novelist.

S. MAG.: Is there a point when you are writing that you think, "I've gone too far," and have to pull it back?

M.C.: When I set out to write a novel, I imagine two scales. The first, with "plausible" at one end and "implausible" at the other; the second with "probable" and "improbable" at either end. The Clancy novels and my new Arliss Cutter books tend to tick further toward the probable and plausible end of both scales. While the Jericho Quinn plots are always plausible, parts of them lean a little more toward the improbable—but only a little.

Clancy had a way of teaching new things when he wrote, like a beloved professor. I can't imitate him, but I can strive for that same sort of decorum.

S. MAG.: Do you read your reviews? If so, do you let it affect your writing at all?

M.C.: I don't. I used to, but nothing good can come from it. I could get twenty five-star reviews in a row and feel uncomfortable with the praise. A single one-star would gut me if I was having a crummy writing day.

I've spent most of my life dealing with bullies face-to-face and I find so many reviews bullying. By the time reviews come out, the book is written and I can do nothing more with it. Some people live to pick at others. I don't feel like giving them a voice in my head. There are enough of my own in there already.

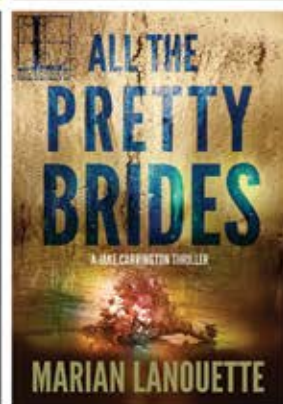
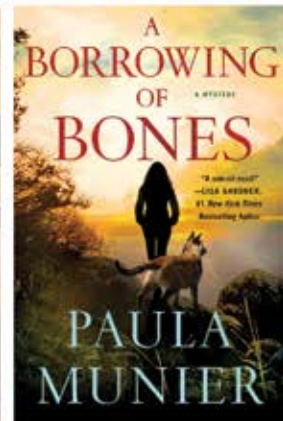
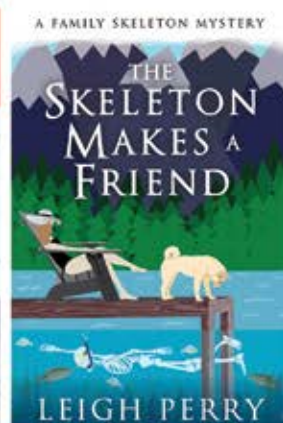
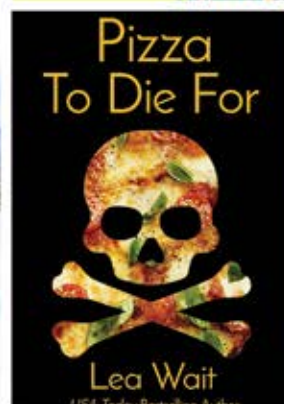
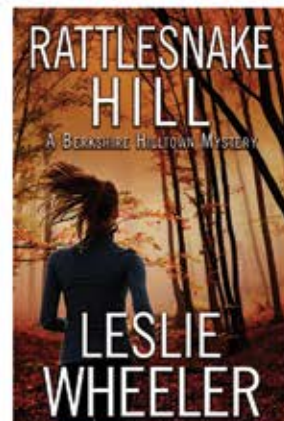
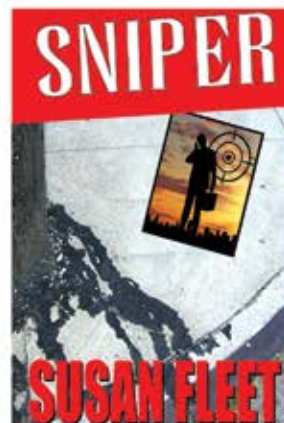
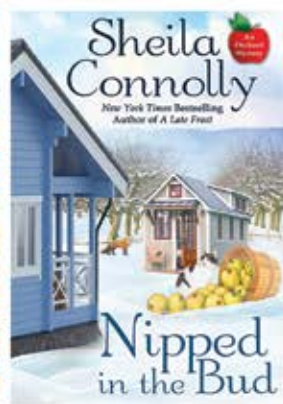
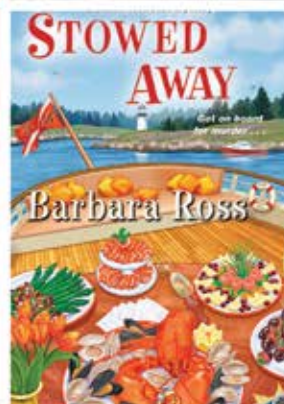
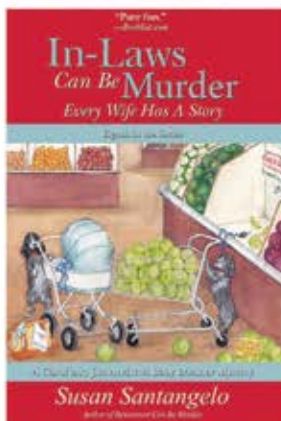
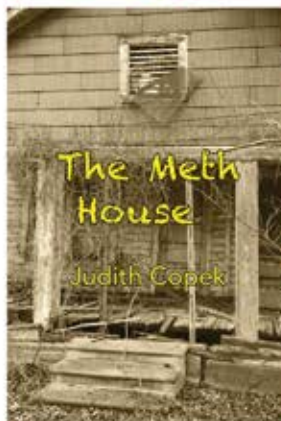
The same goes for people who have meltdowns when someone uses the wrong too/to/two or there/their/they're. If I see one of my friends has accidentally misused a word on Facebook, it does them no good for me to point it out. The kind of people I hang with already know that a possessive "its" has no apostrophe. They don't need me to rub their nose in it if they put one in. It proves I'm snooty, not that they're ignorant to the finer points of English. My own grandkids I'll teach. Other than that...Nope. (I die a little inside when I see that I've made any of those mistakes myself, though.)

As far as giving reviews, if I like a book, I'll give it five-stars. If I don't, I keep it to myself. Writers have it tough enough without being torn down by other writers. I do, however, read and answer my emails.

S. MAG.: What is next for you, either your own work or the next Clancy book?

M.C.: I have an Arliss Cutter novel called "Open Carry" coming out the end of February from Kensington. It's a mystery about a contemporary Deputy U.S. Marshal based in Alaska, so it's near and dear to me. I'm working on the second in that series at the moment. I'll start my third Tom Clancy in January. More details on that will be coming soon. And, of course, there are more Jericho Quinn novels in the works—one that will be out later next summer.

In other words, the five-star "hits" of Marc Cameron will keep on coming. To follow his upcoming works, news and events, check out <https://marccameronbooks.com>. ■



# 2018 Books by Sisters in Crime New England





*Christmas Cozy Caper:*

# G.A. McKEVETT

*on "Murder in Her Stocking"*

Interview by John B. Valeri *Suspense Magazine*  
Press Photo Credit: Provided by Author



G.A. McKevevett—real name Sonja Massie—is offering readers of her highly acclaimed *Savannah Reid Mysteries* a gift this holiday season: the opportunity to meet beloved character “Granny Reid” as a crime-stopping, caretaking, fifty-something-year-old widow in “Murder in Her Stocking.” The book serves as a launching point for the author’s second cozy series for Kensington, while also revisiting familiar faces from her twenty-three book (and growing) *Savannah Reid* saga—but this time, the setting is 1980s Georgia rather than contemporary California.

In addition to whodunits, McKevevett—who has more than sixty books to her credit—has written historical romances, thrillers, movie tie-ins (including the bestselling “Far and Away” based on Ron Howard’s film) and non-fiction titles on the history of Ireland; she previously worked as a prolific ghostwriter and manuscript doctor for major publishers, and has taught numerous courses on writing at university and adult continuing education facilities. The author currently makes her home in New York but has lived in Los Angeles, Toronto, and County Kerry, Ireland.

McKevevett is known for her laugh-out-loud humor, intricate plotting, eccentric characterizations, and astute scrutiny of human nature—all of which are hallmarks of the Reid family stories, regardless of whether Stella or granddaughter Savannah serve as leading lady. “Murder in Her Stocking” has already struck a chord with fans since the book’s publication in October, and *Publishers Weekly* called it a “tender spinoff,” noting the multiple storylines “pack an emotional punch and add a poignant layer to this enjoyable cozy. Readers will look forward to Stella’s further adventures.”

Now, G.A. McKevevett reveals the magic and mystery of uncovering Granny Reid’s origin story...

John B. Valeri (J.B.V.): “Murder in Her Stocking” serves as a prequel of sorts to the *Savannah Reid Mysteries*. What inspired you to go back in time, and how might this book serve as the perfect primer for those who are new to the family?

G.A. McKevevett (G.A.M.): *From the beginning of the Savannah Reid series, Savannah’s octogenarian, Georgian grandmother, Stella Reid, has always been a fan favorite. I received gleeful letters when I had her visit Savannah in Southern California and considerably less-gleeful ones when I left her sitting at home in Georgia. Later, readers were pleased when Granny decided to*

fulfill her lifelong dream, follow her granddaughter's lead, and move to Southern California. Now she graces the pages of every Savannah book. When my editor suggested I write a second series, I explained to him how the story of Savannah's childhood, being raised by her grandmother, along with her eight siblings, had grown in my heart over the years. I convinced him Granny would be just as loved by fans when she was in her fifties, a young widow, and trying to care for her seven grandangels. He agreed, and "Murder in Her Stocking" is the first book of that new series.

J.B.V.: Here, you get to revisit Stella ("Granny") Reid as a middle-aged protagonist, and Savannah (and her siblings) as a young-yet-intrepid child. In what ways did this allow you to explore your beloved characters in a new context; and how does their shared history add to our understanding of their current life circumstances?

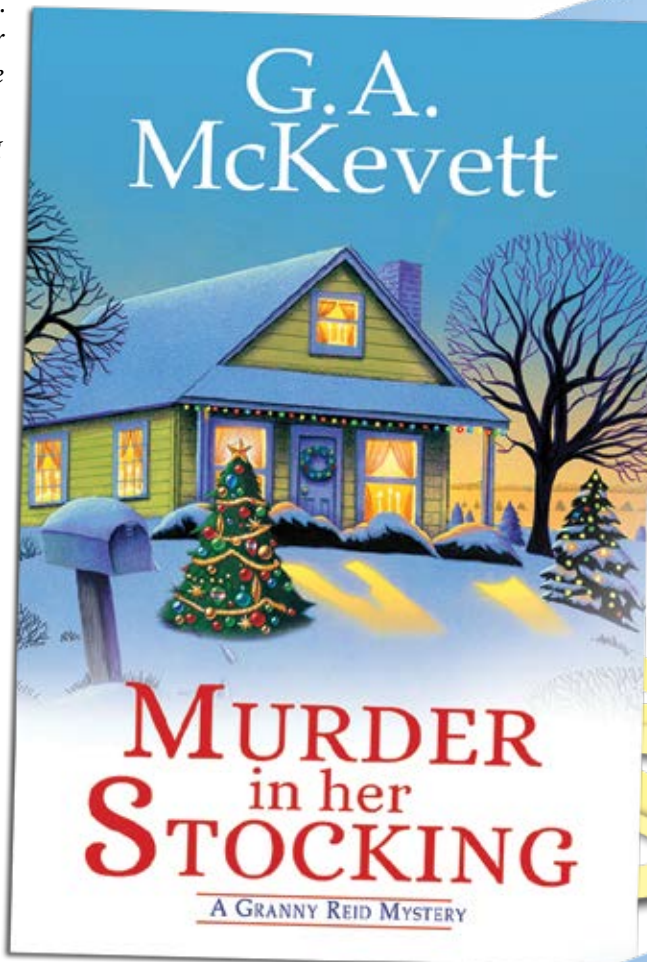
G.A.M.: *One of the things I've enjoyed about the Savannah Reid Mysteries, and hopefully, my readers have, too, is the relationship between Savannah and her grandmother. So much love, respect, loyalty, and history bind these two women. Savannah will be forever grateful that Granny took the nine grandchildren out of a miserable and dangerous situation and into her safe, peaceful, healthy home. Being the oldest, and by far the most mature, Savannah always appreciated the personal price her grandmother paid for this gift of love and devotion to their family. On the other hand, Stella loves all of her grandchildren, but Savannah has always had a special place in her heart—the young girl who had to become a woman far too early. The grown Savannah has a bossy streak, an overly protective, exaggerated maternal instinct, not just for her now-adult siblings, but for the innocents of the world at large. It made her a good cop and now a highly effective private detective, as she seeks to provide protection for individuals in danger and justice for those who have already been harmed.*

J.B.V.: The book is largely set in the 1980s. How did you go about recapturing the essence of that time period? Also, in what ways does (or can) nostalgia work as a narrative device to enhance readers' engagement?

G.A.M.: *I truly believe in the power of a "period piece." Personally, I find the escape we all seek in reading even more complete when the time and place are far removed from our own daily reality. Certainly, it's more of a challenge for an author. Often, you can't even have your characters sit down for a meal without doing research. But if you've lived in the era you're writing about, you can access your own memories. Also, my Facebook friends/fans and I had a good time recalling what perfumes, toys, games, fashions, music, television shows, movies, books, and even furniture were popular at the time. Walking down the 80s Memory Lane was a fun, enriching exercise.*

J.B.V.: This story plays out against the backdrop of the holidays. In what ways does the season lend itself to the themes you wanted to explore; and how were you also able to use it in establishing atmospheric flourishes?

*"A lot of writing is instinctive, inexplicable, as natural as one kindergartner who twirls gracefully across the classroom floor, while another (like me) tries and falls flat on her face."*





G.A.M.: *Certain events, seasons, holidays, experiences have universal commonalities, and an author draws on those when creating atmospheres that strike a chord with their readers. Including those who may not celebrate Christmas, we all know the fragrance of the evergreens, the sparkle of the lights, the music and scents of the foods that evoke the spirit of that special holiday. I didn't have to work hard at all to portray the magic of the season. Christmas does that all by itself.*

J.B.V.: This, and the *Savannah Reid Mysteries*, are considered cozies. How do you find the conventions of this genre to compare to the others that you write in; and in what ways are you able to stretch boundaries to achieve a realistic portrayal of crime and its aftermath?

G.A.M.: *As far as other genres, I wrote a few romances in my early days, and the conventions of romantic fiction are, obviously, far different from those of murder mysteries. But I've been able to apply some of what I learned when writing those books to Savannah's and Dirk's relationship and now to Stella's and Sheriff Gilford's. A little spark of romance can be nice, even in the midst of murder.*

J.B.V.: You are well known for the good humor that punctuates your books. What role does levity serve in your work, and how do you endeavor to balance this sense of fun so that it doesn't become farcical?

G.A.M.: *Ah, thank you. I love the thought that my books make people laugh. Heaven knows, we can use all the giggles we can get in this sad old world of ours. I think it's extremely important to balance humor with the tragedy that is inherent in a murder mystery. Otherwise, the book is too dark, and the reader finishes it with a heavy heart. My intention is to leave them better than I found them, not vice versa.*

*As far as avoiding the farcical, I wouldn't claim that I always succeed—or even worry about it all that much. A bit of nonsense now and then never hurts anyone. In fact, some of my more outrageous scenes have garnered the most enthusiastic responses from my readers. (Like when the entire Moonlight Magnolia team was unable to subdue a monster of a mobster named Vito, until Granny felled him with a taser.)*

J.B.V.: You are also an educator. In your opinion, what of writing can be taught versus what's intrinsic talent; and how can discipline/tenacity factor into the equation?

G.A.M.: *To be a true storyteller, I believe one must possess both natural talent and a working knowledge of their craft. The same could probably be said of any of the arts. I've taught writing, and I find some people can hear the music of language, while others—like wanna-be singers who are tone deaf—simply can't. A lot of writing is instinctive, inexplicable, as natural as one kindergartner who twirls gracefully across the classroom floor, while another (like me) tries and falls flat on her face. But no matter how talented a writer might be, they still have a lot to learn about story structure, character development, dialogue, action, and writing setting description that's vivid but doesn't overwhelm the story. You have to learn the rules, then skillfully break them, creating your own style.*

J.B.V.: Leave us with a teaser: What comes next?

G.A.M.: *At the moment, I'm writing the second book of the Granny Reid Mysteries. It's a Halloween story...another holiday that spins its own web to ensnare readers quite effortlessly for the author. As the tiny, rural town of McGill, Georgia celebrates, its revelers, finding their way through a corn maze on Judge Patterson's antebellum plantation, stumble over the body of a woman. When she is identified, Stella is shocked to find it was someone she loved, murdered in the same way as several other local women—including Stella's own mother. The citizens of McGill, where everyone knows everything about everybody, are horrified to realize that, for decades, someone they've been passing every day on Main Street and saying, "How do?" to...is a coldblooded serial killer.*

We'd like to thank G.A. for sitting down with us and sharing her wit, stories, and time. ■

# The Edge of Cozy:

## JON LAND

on “Murder, She Wrote: Manuscript for Murder”

Interview by John B. Valeri *Suspense Magazine*  
Press Photo Credit: Provided by Author



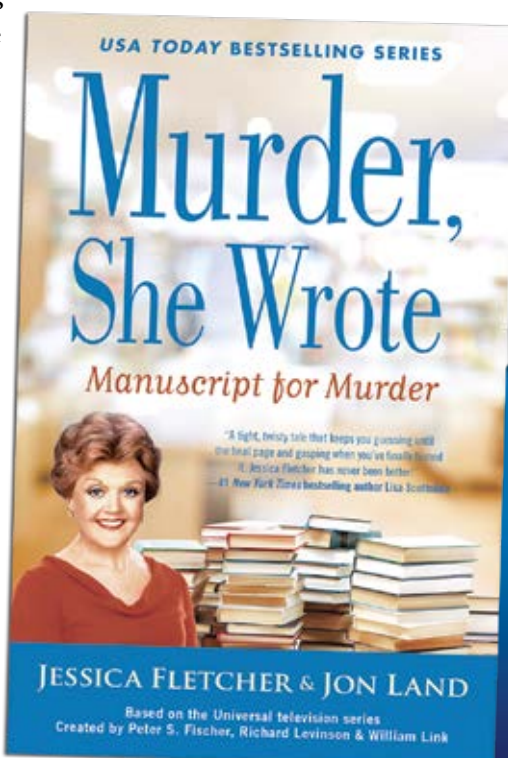
Jon Land has been thrilling readers for decades with his high octane novels, which now total more than forty titles. He's hit the *USA Today* bestseller list, won national and international awards, collaborated with a string of impressive names, and introduced two popular protagonists in Blaine McCracken and Texas Ranger Caitlin Strong (her 10<sup>th</sup> adventure, *Strong as Steel*, is due out in April). Still, assuming authorship of the venerable *Murder, She Wrote* series (based on the beloved television show starring Angela Lansbury as mystery writer/amateur sleuth Jessica Fletcher) was not without challenge.

The initial forty-six MSW books were written by legendary scribe Donald Bain, and his wife/frequent collaborator, Renee Paley Bain; sadly, both authors passed away in recent years. Land—who shared an agent with Bain—was brought on to complete the series' forty-seventh entry, “A Date with Murder.” The book was published last May, marking Land's first foray into Cabot Cove (the charming coastal Maine town with a disproportionate body count), as well as his inaugural venture into the world of cozy mysteries. Not altogether surprisingly, the narrative boasted a newfound edginess and energy—a tone that's further amplified in the newest installment.

“Manuscript for Murder” (November) is Land's own story, in both concept and execution. In it, Jessica finds herself in possession of a top-secret, anonymously written text that, at the very least, correlates with a string of unsolved deaths, taking her from Cabot Cove to New York City to Washington, DC in search of answers—and leaving her vulnerable to somebody who will gladly kill again to keep their secret. #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Lisa Scottoline praised the book as: “A tight, twisty tale that keeps you guessing until the final page and gasping when you've finally turned it. Jessica Fletcher has never been better!”

Now, Jon Land talks candidly about this transition, and his melding of cozy and thriller components—and offers a provocative glimpse at what comes next for Jessica Fletcher...

John B. Valeri (J.B.V.): “Manuscript for Murder” is your second effort in the *Murder, She Wrote* series (following “A Date with Murder”). How did you find





the creative process this time in comparison to the last—and what was the biggest lesson learned from that book to this one?

Jon Land (J.L.): *Great question to start with! I kind of inherited the concept of “A Date with Murder,” since it had already been approved and Don Bain had already written over fifty pages. Contrary to that, with “Manuscript for Murder” I was able to develop the concept from scratch, on my own—take more ownership, in other words.*

*As far as the biggest lesson I learned going from my first effort to my second, well...I'd say that taking over a series as iconic as Murder, She Wrote comes with a much higher bar than developing my own. That's because the fan base has a certain set of expectations you're obligated to meet. You can't just 'wing it' since there's an established cast of characters and formula to the writing. So, with “Manuscript for Murder” I tried as much as possible to stick to what readers were expecting while, at the same time, putting my own stamp on the series.*

J.B.V.: What are the greatest challenges of taking over such a beloved, long-running series from Donald Bain and Renee Paley Bain?

J.L.: *Perfect follow-up! The greatest challenge in taking over Murder, She Wrote was maintaining as much of the established mythology as possible, while making the series my own. I hadn't read a single book in the series before I took it over, so I naturally gravitated toward the feeling and flavor of the television show instead. NYPD Lieutenant Artie Gelber, for example, never appeared in the books but was featured in around a dozen TV episodes (played beautifully by Herb Edelman), and he plays a key role in “Manuscript.” Still, I made a lot of small deviations, like the fact that Cabot Cove Sheriff Mort Metzger always calls Jessica “Mrs. Fletcher.” That didn't feel natural to me, and more than anything else what I'm doing, with this book and beyond, is writing Murder, She Wrote the way it would be written if the television series went on the air today. So, to that point, I'm writing the same Jessica Fletcher everyone loves so much, but updated with a more contemporary approach.*

J.B.V.: This new book finds Jessica in pursuit of her publisher's killer(s). In what ways does this particular storyline allow you to explore the inner workings of the publishing industry—and what might readers be most surprised to know?

J.L.: *I think what readers will be most surprised to learn is that on Amazon's Kindle Unlimited plan, authors are paid by how many pages of their books are actually read—that's the source of the potential malfeasance another author accuses Jessica's publisher of being guilty of. As for the inner workings of the publishing industry, I had fun with the whole notion of Jessica's publisher discovering what he believes is the next “Da Vinci Code.” Only trouble is, everyone who reads the manuscript he's kept secret from the rest of the world dies...and now, Jessica has also read the manuscript. That highlights arguably the biggest enhancement I've made to the series, in that Jessica's life is actually being threatened. She's at risk of becoming a victim herself, instead of being just an amateur sleuth. That changes the whole notion of what drives the suspense and pacing of “Manuscript for Murder,” hopefully for the better.*

J.B.V.: Tell us about how once-quaint Cabot Cove is evolving. Also, how do Jessica's travels beyond Maine invigorate the series and inspire your own storytelling sensibilities?

J.L.: *I think what makes these books ‘cozies’ is the reader's comfort with recurring characters they've come to know and love, along with Cabot Cove itself. The TV series dropped plenty of hints and focused any number of episodes on shady real estate developers who wanted to exploit Cabot Cove's seaside setting. I've taken that to the next level by portraying the once bucolic village as a kind of mini-Hamptons of the North during the summer months. This has happened with any number of formerly quaint New England villages, and that's what I meant before about making the series feel the way it would if it had been conceived now. Remember, I'm a thriller writer, so my instinct is to have things always in motion—evolving, in other words. To be frank, I don't expect all MSW fans to embrace the fact that these books are no longer frozen in time. But I think the majority will enjoy my approach and new readers will be drawn to the series thanks to this fresh approach. At least, that's my hope.*

J.B.V.: You are perhaps best known for your thrillers, and thereby bring a new edginess to the MSW books. How did you familiarize yourself with the conventions of the cozy—and how do you endeavor to balance those with thriller elements?

J.L.: *Another perfect follow-up! As I alluded to above, writing and/or storytelling has to be organic. It has to come from the inside out, rather than the outside in. So I think what I created was something we can call the “cozy thriller” in that I'm striving to preserve what readers love most about Murder, She Wrote, while adding the kind of pacing, suspense and plotting they may*

have seen before. That transition wasn't entirely seamless but, again, a writer first and foremost has to be true to themselves. In a perfect world, every established fan of MSW will love my approach even as legions of new readers discover or rediscover the series. But this isn't a perfect world and I know diverting from some of the established templates of the cozy culture is going to upset some readers. At that same time, I believe far more are going to feel that I've kept just enough of the cozy structure intact while adding elements that keep the series fresh.

J.B.V.: Jessica Fletcher is an iconic character. What are the blessings and burdens of assuming her identity—and how, despite your differences, do you relate to her?

J.L.: First off, when I started the series, I'd never written a mystery, a cozy, or from the first-person viewpoint. Talk about a sea change, right? What made it all work was finding Jessica's voice very early in the process. I've developed a GREAT relationship with her as the book's narrative voice—that's the blessing. The burden is, she's speaking to me and not Don Bain anymore, which means the books, and Jessica herself, are going to be different than what some readers are accustomed to or prefer. But I could never take over this or any other series without putting my own stamp on it and making it my own. Beyond that, and I've never put it this way before, I'd like more readers—new readers—to discover "Murder, She Wrote." Fans of the television series, for example, and fans of mysteries in general.

J.B.V.: Leave us with a teaser: What comes next, both for you and for Jessica Fletcher?

J.L.: I'll keep my answer to "Murder, She Wrote" because there's plenty to say on that count! First off, I've completed my third effort, "Murder in Red," which will coming out in May and is already available for pre-sale. But here's the teaser: August will see the publication of the 50<sup>th</sup> book in the MSW series, "A Time for Murder." And to commemorate that, for the first time ever, in books or TV, the audience is going to meet Jessica as a younger woman still married to her husband, Frank, and serving as a substitute English teacher before her writing career begins. A murder back then will be directly connected to a murder in the present and Jessica will narrate both plot strands in, generally, alternating chapters. That's what I mean about best serving Jessica and expanding the audience for "Murder, She Wrote," in this case by doing something entirely new and different.

We'd like to thank Jon for sitting down with us. To learn more about this incredibly talented author, follow him at [www.jonlandbooks.com](http://www.jonlandbooks.com). ■

SuspenseMagazine.com

**"In-Laws Can Be Murder is another zany Baby Boomer romp, one not to be missed!"**

—Allison Brook, Author of the *Haunted Library* Mystery series

## *Every Wife Has A Story*

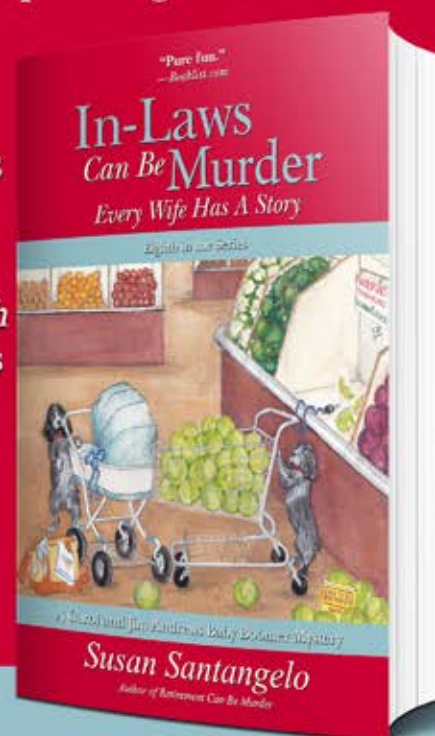
A Carol and Jim Andrews Baby Boomer Mystery

Carol Andrews doesn't share well. Especially when it comes to her precious, long-awaited first grandchild, CJ. So when her son-in-law's pushy mother, Margo, arrives in town and horns in on Carol's happiness, it's hate at first sight. But when Margo thinks she's committed a murder and reaches out to Carol for help, then vanishes without a trace, it's up to Carol to put aside her petty jealousy and crack the case before the police get involved.

**"As hilarious as all the rest!"**

—Carol J. Perry,  
Author of the *Witch City* Mystery series

**ON SALE  
NOW**



Eighth in the Series  
**[babyboommysteries.com](http://babyboommysteries.com)**



# KAY HOOPER

## *'Closes the Book' on The Bishop Files with "Final Shadows"*

Interview by *Suspense Magazine*  
Press Photo Credit: Claudio Marinesco



KAYHOOPERHASBROUGHTTOHERFANS everything from heart-pounding action to scenes that made the eyes grow wide with fear every time we took flight with one of her unforgettable tales.

As the highly-acclaimed and highly-successful *Bishop Files Trilogy* comes to an end with "Final Shadows," *Suspense Magazine* sat down with Kay to learn about the new trilogy that's already in the works. So sit back and learn all about this author who has certainly been one of the country's most beloved writers for years. See "inside" a Kay Hooper Writing Day; meet the bevy of cats and dogs that are with her as she takes on a new plot filled with outstanding characters; and hear about her most memorable moment and the advice she has to give to help bring new "voices" into the publishing world.

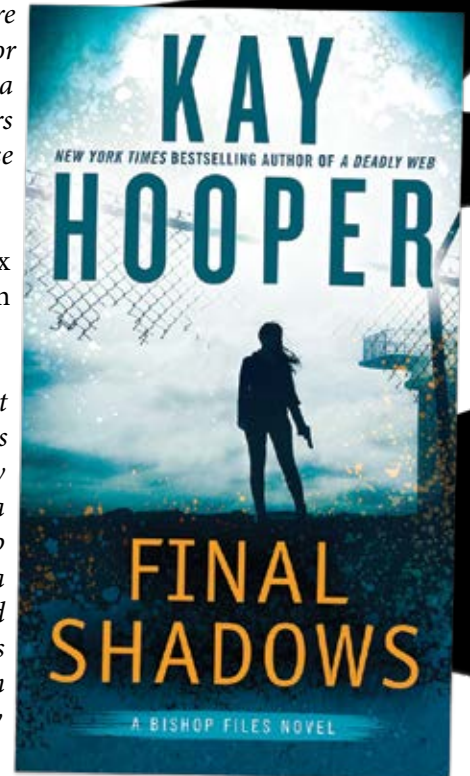
*Suspense Magazine* (S. MAG.): How would you describe a *Bishop Files* novel? What can readers expect of each book?

Kay Hooper (K.H.): "*The Bishop Files*" trilogy was created in large part because I had a conspiracy-based idea involving psychics that didn't fit within my long-running Bishop/SCU series about an FBI unit made up of psychics. Nevertheless, Bishop as a character seemed to me an ideal bridge between the trilogy and the series, because psychics were at the heart of the conspiracy. Someone, a mysterious and dangerous group of people, is hunting people with psychic abilities. Psychics are

being killed, being abducted, simply vanishing. And no one knows why. But there are other people, some psychic and some not, who have made it their mission to fight for those being targeted. Psychics, some only children, must be protected and saved. It is a desperate battle going on in the shadows; an underground war known only to the soldiers fighting it. They are fighting a faceless enemy, sometimes to the death—an enemy whose motivations they must understand in order to find a way to defeat them.

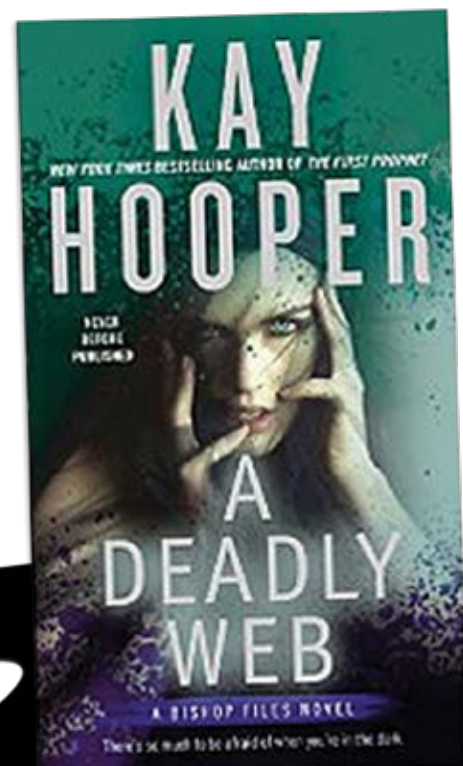
S. MAG.: Let's talk about Noah and Miranda Bishop. They're both very complex characters. What challenges did you have when you first introduced them in the *Shadows* trilogy? How have they evolved?

K.H.: 'Challenges' would probably be the wrong word, at least as it pertains to my part of the storytelling. I write organically, which means I tend to learn about my characters just as the readers do, as those characters face and fight the obstacles in their paths; they both reveal themselves and evolve in that process. Bishop and Miranda already had a history with each other when they met again in "Out of the Shadows," a relationship that had ended tragically because of mistakes made—and the violent actions of a deadly serial killer. That beginning had placed both Bishop and Miranda on their fated paths, and for some years each walked those paths without the other. Until the events of "Out of the Shadows," and another vicious killer, brought them back together. Each had evolved as people, and together that evolution continued—and continues. They still surprise me sometimes. Which is one of the joys of writing.



S. MAG.: You have a gift for telling stories-within-stories. Is there a certain way you go about doing this? Do you create an outline before sitting down to begin?

K.H.: No, when I said I wrote organically, I meant just that. I sit down with the seed of an idea, the seeds of characters who have little more than names until they become caught up in the idea that becomes a story. Other characters appear along the way, some with their own stories that demand to be told immediately, while others offer me only a hint or two, and the promise to return. Honestly? Sometimes I think it's magic. The rest of the time, I know it's hard work. It's always an adventure.



S. MAG.: Are you interested in future collaborations with other authors? Is there a specific genre that you have never delved into before that you would like to?

K.H.: I have collaborated in the past in a couple of different ways, and enjoyed it. But the experiences also taught me that I'm best suited to be a solitary storyteller, I believe. As for other genres, I believe I've managed to weave elements of most genres into my work at one point or another. Probably the only one I've missed has been Sci-Fi, and though I enjoy the genre very much as a reader and viewer, so far my ideas haven't led me in that direction.

S. MAG.: Is there a specific book of yours that you would say is your personal

**“I would warn them not to take anything for granted, not their ability, and certainly not the market”**



favorite, and why?

K.H.: *"The Wizard of Seattle." Not only are wizards and time-travel a lot of fun, but I was able to explore quite a few themes that interest me along the way. Also, it was a book that began with a very simple question: "Why are there no female wizards?" The answer I found for myself was fascinating, and the book was a joy to write, start to finish.*

S. MAG.: I'm sure you have many, but if you could pick one of the "best things" to have happened over the span of your writing career, one that is incredibly memorable, what would that be, and why?

K.H.: *I'm going to tease you a bit here. VERY early in my career, I attended a writer's conference, and at the hotel I discovered that a mix-up at the desk had put a total stranger in my room ahead of me, something neither of us knew until my key opened her door. As I recall, she was barefoot and on the phone. We were both startled and confused, but it was a memorable meeting. That lady turned out to be Carolyn Nichols, who shortly became my editor and remained so for quite a few years. She believed in me. She let me experiment in my work. She believed I was a natural storyteller long before I did. Definitely one of the best things to happen in my career was meeting Carolyn.*

S. MAG.: Is there a specific author who you just cannot wait until their next title hits the market?

K.H.: *Yes. But there are two things I never do: name a favorite living writer (because how could I choose among some who are my friends?); or publicly criticize another living writer (because I know how hard the job is, and anyone who does it has my respect).*

S. MAG.: Can you tell us what a Kay Hooper writing day looks like?

K.H.: *I would say that a Kay Hooper writing day probably looks like chaos. With cats on the desk (usually asleep on whatever paperwork I desperately need), sticky notes hanging off the computer monitor and other notes written on odd sheets of paper. Either the TV is on low or I have my iTunes playlist going because I hate silence. One of the dogs is bound to be shoving a toy at me so I'll stop and play with her, and I have about six different pencil cups and mugs holding an insane variety of pencils and pens. There used to be reference books piled high before Google, but still one or two highly useful old favorites are close at hand. And me, in uber-casual clothing, either pounding the keyboard with the heavy touch of someone who learned on a manual or else rocking absently in my chair staring into space. (Yes, I took the question literally.) ☺*

S. MAG.: Everyone always gives up-and-coming writers advice on how and what to do to help their careers. But, if you could offer advice on something *not* to do that would help them as they move forward, what would that be?

K.H.: *I would warn them not to take anything for granted, not their ability, and certainly not the market. Because if they're lucky enough to be around as long as I have been, they'll see their whole world change—many times. And I would warn them not to go chasing after every publishing fad-of-the-moment, but to follow their nose and allow their writing to grow organically.*

S. MAG.: With "Final Shadows" closing out the *Bishop Files* series, we'd love to know what's next.

K.H.: *Sure. The next trilogy in the Bishop/SCU series is underway. The title keyword for the trilogy is SALEM. Working title for the first in the trilogy is "Finding Salem." And in this trilogy, all three books take place in the same small, decidedly strange town. I believe readers will enjoy the adventure. I know I am.*

And as all Kay Hooper fans will surely agree, we're already salivating over what this fantastic author has in store for us when it comes to such a familiar name. *Hmm...* could there be witches in our future? We shall have to wait and see. To keep current with Kay's work, events, and so much more, head to [www.kayhooper.com](http://www.kayhooper.com). ■





# unearth

By Jody Gerbig

THE GUY RUNNING THE “REAL ARCHEOLOGICAL dig” has me take the Number Nine bus to a non-stop alongside the freeway. He instructs me to tell the driver to pull over at mile-marker six. I wear khaki hiking pants, rolled and buttoned mid-calf, hiking boots, and a black t-shirt. The summer air has an unexpected chill to it, and I wish I’d worn a jacket, or something with pockets for my hands.

“Here we are,” the bus driver says, pulling onto the berm. I emerge from the bus alone, on the berm, with only my cell phone, some cash, and a photo I.D. I wonder when the others will arrive and notice it’s already 5:35 p.m. I didn’t think to bring a taser or pepper spray, but I wish I had.

A gray Jeep slows on the asphalt and pulls over, its front dipping into the ditch marking the beginning of the field, its sides somewhat obscured from the road by tall grasses. A man steps out, all six-feet-some-inches of him. He wears faded jeans slung low on his lean hips, a hunter-green long-sleeved T, a plain baseball cap that covers peppered brown hair, and hiking shoes. I judge him to be somewhere between thirty-five and forty.

“Howdy!” he says, shifting a bag of rattling tools and a large spade to his left hand. “Miriam?”

“Ted? I wasn’t sure I had the right place,” I say. He extends his free hand for me to shake. It is warm and soft. I notice a pair of leather gloves hanging from his back pocket.

“Wow, you’re much prettier than I expected.”

My neck tenses. I have been called ‘pretty’ only a handful of times and never by a stranger. I feel my armpit drip with sweat. Ted is handsome. Not like Harrison Ford handsome. He’s clean shaven and smells like baby laundry detergent. I stare at his perfect row of white teeth as he smiles.

“And the others?” I say, fingering my cell in my back

pocket, considering an Uber ride home.

“Others?”

“There are other people on this dig, right?”

“Oh, yeah.” Ted searches the horizon, as though remembering these nameless ‘others’ who had once filled the class. “They had, uh, another engagement.” He turns and smiles, his eyes inviting, like those of a guy passing me on a Sunday hike, out with his black lab, enjoying the stillness of the woods. “Just us.” He winks. “Sorry, not sorry.”

“Oh.” I shrug, letting my hand fall from my phone. “No worries,” I say, like someone else. Like a festival-going hipster.

When I filled out the form linked in the Facebook ad, Ted emailed me within the hour. I considered for a moment that “Ted” is an infamous serial-killer name. He wrote emphatically, *Hello, Miriam! I have one spot open for an evening group dig this Thursday at 5:30 p.m. Reserve about three hours and wear comfortable outdoor clothing. Please respond if you are interested in signing up and pay via PayPal on the link below!*

I had so many questions: Where do I meet Ted? Do I bring my own shovel and brushes? Where do I buy a shovel and brushes? How many people are in the class? Are we digging on private property? His own, maybe?

My co-worker Jen, standing over my shoulder when I got the email, said, “You’re not thinking of doing this, are you?”

“It sounds fun,” I said.

“It sounds stabby. Or rapey,” she said.

“So, I shouldn’t go.”

“I dunno. He might be cute.”

I paid without asking the questions, and Ted sent me instructions with too many exclamation points in them.

But Ted doesn’t seem like an exclamation-point kind of



guy in person. Not out here. Even with the teeth. He does seem like a quarter-life-crisis kind of guy, though. I make assumptions: he went to Harvard business school and then dropped off Wall Street two years in to be a rafting guide in Colorado—that is until he realized he kind of sucked at rafting, that he was way better at digging dirt and brushing dust off old poop pots.

Ted turns and walks toward the worn path, whistling a light tune anyone would follow. I know I should call the Uber. I feel like my next step could take me somewhere.

“Coming?” he says, turning only his cheek toward me, a half smile. He waves his hand over his shoulder—he will not wait for me. I take a full breath, clench my fists, step onto the grass path, and walk into the horizon.

Ted’s whistling is beguiling. I don’t even notice we’ve walked about a half-mile on a narrow dirt path, past some full-grown oak trees, until the low sun pierces my eyes.

“What do you expect to find today?” I ask.

“Oh, you know.” He pulls the gloves from his back pocket and slips them on his hands. The shovels and brushes rattle on his back as he strides, clinking together like a hobo’s pan and tin cup. “Sometimes we find native clay pots. An arrow head or two. Maybe something like that.” He turns his head slightly. I see a glint in his eye—the sun’s reflection. “What do you expect to find today?”

It is one of life’s questions. I don’t answer.

“How many times have you done this?” I say instead. I want to ask all the other questions, like whether he’s married, if he has any children, whether he’s close with anyone, but I don’t. I ask interview questions, as though I haven’t already bought the ticket and tromped that first piece of grass off the freeway.

“A few.”

The air is still and thither, save birds fluttering hither and thither. I’ve always wanted to use that phrase, *hither and thither*. In accounting we use acronyms, like ETA, ULD, AR, LLC. We wear layers of polyester clothing, the office a deathly temperature fit for a sub-species of men. Our throats scratch when we talk, and we don’t talk much. Thus, the acronyms.

“So, what is Miriam like when she’s not following strange men through unmarked fields?” Ted says, glancing back.

“Sitting next to stranger men in cubicles,” I say. He laughs. I can’t help it—I fall for his self-deprecation. He has a nice laugh.

We walk twenty or so more yards, past a sign that reads *Private Property, No Trespassing*. Ted holds open a loose spot in a barbed-wire fence for me to climb through awkwardly and slowly. I count nine years since my last tetanus inoculation. We enter a clearing, speckled with limestone boulders, hedges, and dirt mounds. About two-hundred yards in the distance, a line of deciduous trees. I can’t make

out any buildings.

“Here we are,” he says. I stop and stretch, making mental notes about the direction we’ve gone (south), how far on foot (approximately a mile), the terrain (mostly flat and open, a dirt trail through tall grasses), should I ever need to remember. The ground on the site has been dug before, in neat four-by-six-foot sections with a flat-edged shovel—I can make out a clean edge—like rows upon rows of fresh graves.

“You sure we’re allowed to be here?” I ask.

“Oh, yeah. No worries.”

“It’s private property.”

“I worked out a deal.” He pulls off his tools and unbinds them. “A couple weeks ago I found some artifacts around here. I was with a few young ladies from the university. They loved it,” he says, like a man who holds forest-bed orgies under super moonlight. He looks up just long enough to wink and smile.

I picture girls in high pony tails, low scoop-neck t-shirts, and Daisy Dukes out here pecking at the dirt with the point of their spades. I shudder, feeling both revolted and jealous. Maybe even a little afraid. I remember some discussion in the spring about a new self-defense startup for such girls, and I wish now that I had taken one of the classes. But I am not a co-ed. I’m a middle-aged woman wearing a loose chignon with frayed grays around her temples.

“What kind of things do you do for fun?” he says, and I bristle, thinking again of the orgies under moonlight. “Dig in the dirt much?”

My mother rented a plot in a community garden once, outside our rented town house. She grew tomatoes and cucumbers and lettuce, and I remember her outlining rectangles like these, each to keep track of what she’d planted where. Later I realized the cucumbers take over all of it. “No, not like this.”

Ted shovels an outline of a new work area, the same rectangle as the surrounding ones, and as he works a bead of sweat forms on his brow. I find myself taking deep breaths, watching his arms flex under his shirt, noticing his back muscles grip cotton with each move.

“Here, sift through this dirt pile I’m making. Make sure nothing interesting is in it,” he says, pointing to the growing pile behind him. I squat down, my eyes level with his backside, and grab a handful of dry dirt. It slides out the bottom of my fist, now like an hourglass. “You just might be a natural,” Ted says, and I blush.

Ted and I talk to pass the time—about high school and first dates, about junker cars and strange pets we’ve owned. He gabs more than I would’ve imagined, growing quiet only when describing a brown-eyed girl who lived next door. I think I should respond, to fill the void.

“You liked her?”

Ted seems not to hear. He bends over and digs a dozen or so strokes. In the middle of a shovel-full he remembers something that sparks the conversation again, a summer spent camping in Wyoming with his uncle. He talks feverishly about butchering his own deer. He is so youthful and excited about it all that I almost forget that he has killed and slaughtered a deer.

“—its entrails fell out like—” I hear before the horizon captures me, its large, jagged rocks and bushes like a rural skyline. A fantasy emerges: A storm has rolled in, and we are trapped in the woods. We need to make shelter. And huddle. We must huddle for warmth. Ted’s scruff has grown. I feel it on my chin as I shiver. He rubs my arms, and—

“I’ve never told anyone that,” Ted says.

“Hmm?” I’ve missed something.

“I mean, no one knows.”

“Oh, wow. Okay,” I say, now trying to remember the last thing he said, wondering if it was something clandestine, illegal even. I nod, but he doesn’t look at me. He digs instead, his sleeves now rolled up his forearms, his pace quickening. He glances at the sky, at the horizon where the sun begins to dip, where I had been staring when he confessed.

He wipes his forehead and meets my gaze. “You want to trade?” He lifts the spade toward me.

I pause, staring at the tip of the blade, maybe studying it for marks or something. I stand, take it from him and hold it like a shot gun, feeling its weight in my hands. I nod, lean over, and dig. It’s more difficult than I imagined, the dirt hard and dry and unforgiving. I feel sweat beading in my cleavage and worry I smell. I wonder if this is Ted’s workout.

“Does it ever get easier?” I say, leaning in, pushing the spade into the hard, dry soil with my boot heel.

“Easier?” He laughs. “This is fun for me.” He fiddles with his brushes. I am so focused on creating the hole I don’t notice if he’s made any progress.

“I didn’t think it would be so violent,” I say, my arms aching. I have dug a sizeable hole. We haven’t found one artifact.

“Most things are, aren’t they?” He laughs. I don’t understand the joke. I am breathing heavily now; I feel dizzy. Do I imagine a buzzing sound? Birds, maybe? Hawks overhead? I squint into the sky, getting only an eyeful of sun.

“Hey, why don’t we take a little break?” he says, leaning over and reaching into his left sock. From it he pulls out a flask. He shakes and uncaps it. I smell whiskey. He takes a long swig and holds it out for me. I could take it—I am only an arm’s-length away—but what then? Would we sit on a boulder and watch the sun set?

Was it too much of an impulse, coming here? I wonder. It was damned ad on Facebook. An ad! I’d been riding the Number Six bus to work last week, like I had every day for

fifteen years, scrolling through my Facebook feed, when a man, holding a morning paper under his arm, climbed aboard. I’d noticed him before, this gray-haired man still riding the bus to work, still reading a physical paper. He passed me and chose a back seat. I made some assumptions about him: he still sits in a cubicle; he often works late; on Tuesdays he eats lunch at Applebee’s; he has a secret life—some hobby or activity he does—that maybe his wife doesn’t even know about. In the moment I grew jealous.

That’s when I noticed the ad. *You, too, can find hidden treasures!* I clicked on it. The man with the paper coughed behind me. The bus jerked to the left, and I was forced right. I reached for the seat in front of me. The driver yelled, “Shit, man!” slamming his foot on the brake, leaning back so that his bald spot reveals itself to the dozen passengers behind him. The tires squealed. A woman screamed. In the street, a dog barked and then yelped. Perhaps, I thought, it is dead. I didn’t want to know. I gripped my seat. I took in a quick breath and held. *This is it, I think. I will die today, in this rolling coffin of a life.*

What did I know, then? Nothing. It was another life. She, a different Miriam.

“Aren’t we running out of time?” I ask.

Ted caps the flask and returns it to his sock, shaking his head. He is disappointed.

“I’m not.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Nothing. Nothing.” He pulls the flask back. I stand, my arm resting on the planted shovel, my head cocked to one side. I’m tired, but I don’t drop the shovel. In the quiet, I study Ted: the sharp edge of his jaw casting an odd shadow, his pristine hiking boots, the brushes sticking awkwardly from the tool bag that, admittedly, might not be brushes at all. I feel tired. Very tired. I do want to take a break.

“Look,” he says, using his hands to talk, “I just meant that I’ll be back. You aren’t planning on coming back, are you?”

It is one of life’s questions. I don’t answer.

I think about the man with the paper, on the bus. About his secret life. Gambling? Jumping from planes? A girlfriend? A boyfriend? It would’ve been nice to have known him, I think—to have talked to someone through all those red lights between my apartment and the cubicle.

“Give me a swig,” I say, reaching for the flask Ted digs from his sock. I down a large gulp, the alcohol burning my throat, the low sun piercing my lashes—closed now like a Venus Fly Trap. The tonic tastes like death. Like all the countless things that have perished here, some deep and sand-like, some fresh and foul. I wonder which I will be. One of life’s questions.

I don’t answer. ■



# Subscribe Today!

## BENEFITS TO SUBSCRIBING

- Reviews and ratings of new releases
  - Discover new authors
    - Short stories
  - Author interviews including many of your favorites
  - Much, Much More!
- Available at:

**AMAZON**

**BARNES & NOBLE**

or Subscribe to the

**ELECTRONIC VERSION AT**

**[www.SuspenseMagazine.com](http://www.SuspenseMagazine.com)**

RATES (Electronic): 1 Year: \$24.00/ 2 Years: \$48.00

*"Suspense Magazine nicely fills a long-vacant niche for readers of this popular genre. If you like a good old-fashioned whodunit, grab a copy and get the latest scoop on all your favorite authors, current books, and upcoming projects."*

~Wendy Corsi Staub, *New York Times* Bestselling Author

*"Suspense Magazine is chock full of stunning artwork, intriguing fiction, and interviews. It's a winner!"*

~Tess Gerritsen, International Bestselling Author



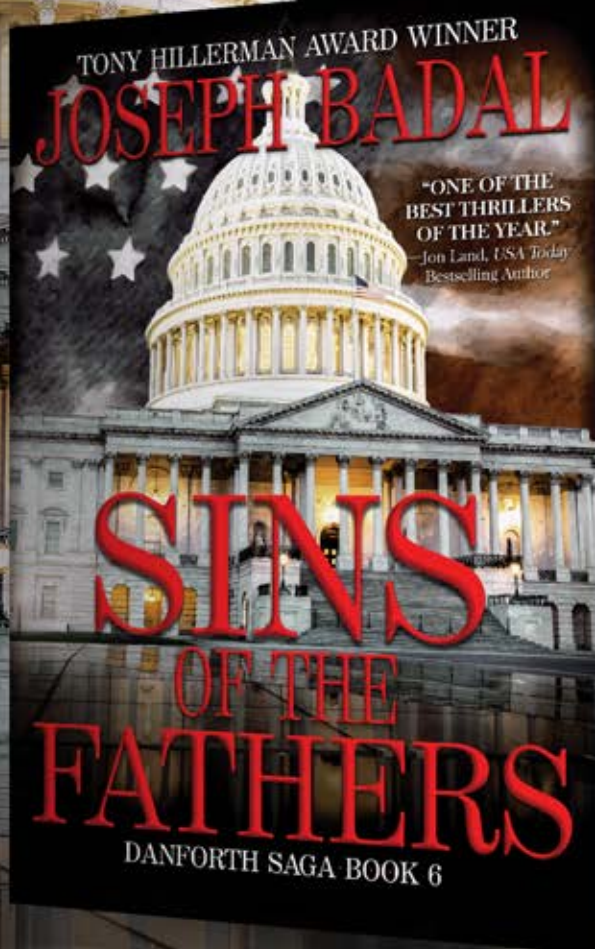


NEW FROM TONY HILLERMAN AWARD WINNER

# JOSEPH BADAL

**"OUTSTANDING!  
WELL-WRITTEN, INTENSE, TIMELY AND, AT  
TIMES, TERRIFYING."**

—Sheldon Siegel, *New York Times* Bestselling Author of the  
*Mike Daley/Rosie Fernandez* Novels



"Sins of the Fathers" takes the reader on a tension-filled journey from a kidnapping of Michael and Robbie Danforth in Colorado, to America's worst terrorist-sponsored attacks, to Special Ops operations in Mexico, Greece, Turkey, and Syria. This epic tale includes political intrigue, CIA and military operations, terrorist sleeper cells, drug cartels, and action scenes that will keep you pinned to the edge of your seat.

Joseph Badal's twelfth novel is complex, stimulating, and un-put-down-able. You will love his heroes and hate his villains, and you will root for the triumph of good over evil.

**THIS IS ACTION AS  
CLOSE TO REALITY AS  
YOU WILL EVER FIND.**

THE DANFORTH FAMILY RETURNS IN THIS SIXTH  
EDITION OF THE DANFORTH SAGA

**SUSPENSE**  
PUBLISHING

[WWW.JOSEPHBADALBOOKS.COM](http://WWW.JOSEPHBADALBOOKS.COM)



*Suspense, Mystery, Horror and Thriller Fiction*

# SUSPENSE MAGAZINE



"Concise. Informative. Topical. If you want to know the latest from the world of suspense, then read *Suspense Magazine*."

—Steve Berry, *New York Times* bestselling author of "The Paris Vendetta"

# [www.SuspenseMagazine.com](http://www.SuspenseMagazine.com)

Named one of the  
**100 BEST BOOK & MAGAZINE MARKETS FOR WRITERS**  
by *Writer's Digest*