

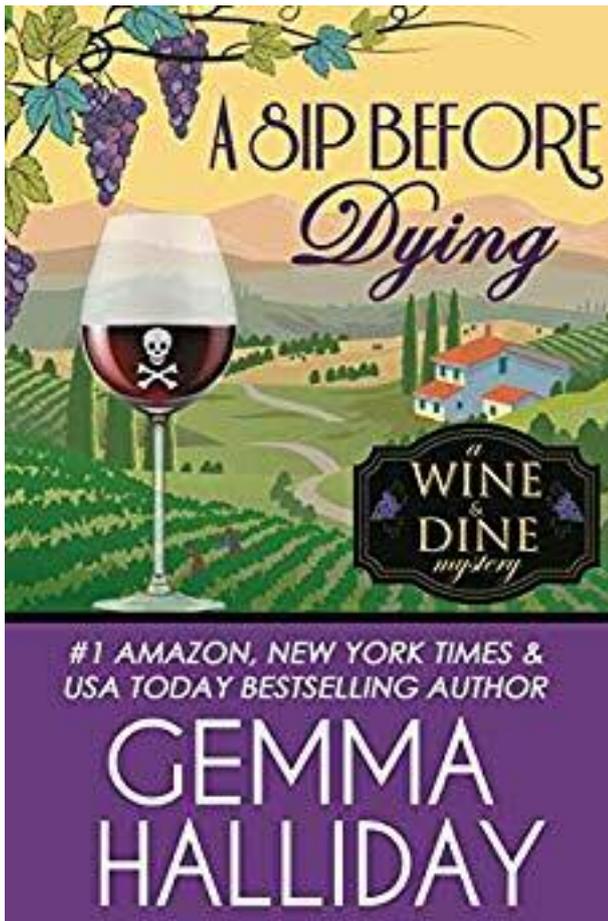
In celebration of storytelling

The Book Breeze

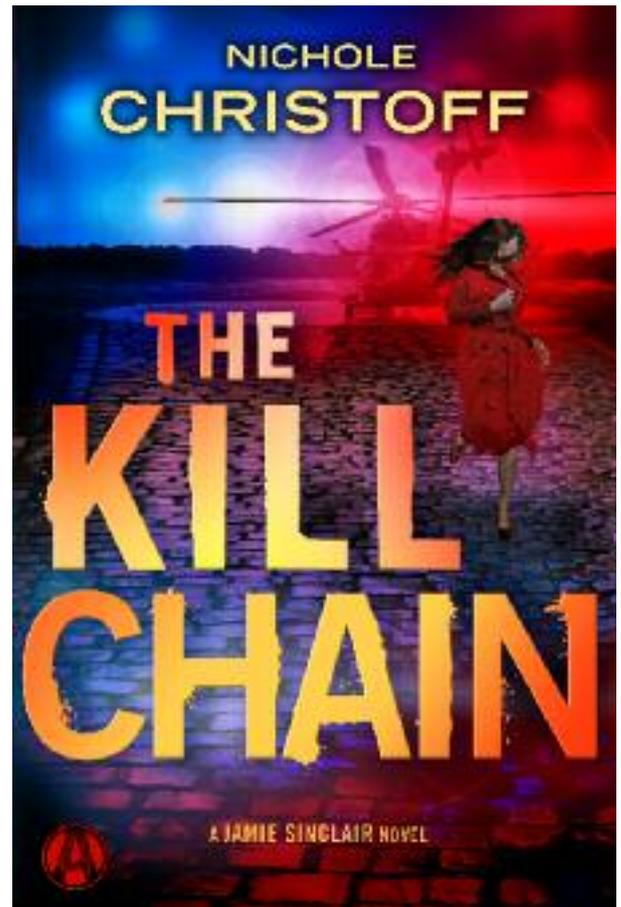
Vol 10 Issue 4

May 6, 2019

Women of Mystery



Gemma Halliday



Nichole Christoff

ALSO

Dane McCaslin • Stephen Moore
Juli D. Revezzo • Heather Haven • Linda Joyce
Dorothy St. James

in this issue

May 6,
2019

Nichole Christoff

Interview . . . Page 6

Book Excerpt from *The Kill Chain* . . . Page 7

Gemma Halliday

Book Excerpt from *A Sip Before Dying* . . . Page 4

Heather Haven

Book Excerpt from *Christmas Trifle* . . . Page 10

Linda Joyce . . . Page 13

Dane McCaslin & Kimberly Griggs

Interview . . . Page 14

Book Excerpt from *Photo Finished* . . . Page 16

Stephen Moore

Interview . . . Page 12

Juli D. Revezzo . . . Page 9

Dorothy St. James . . . Page 18

Reviews . . . Page 17

The World That We Knew by Alice Hoffman

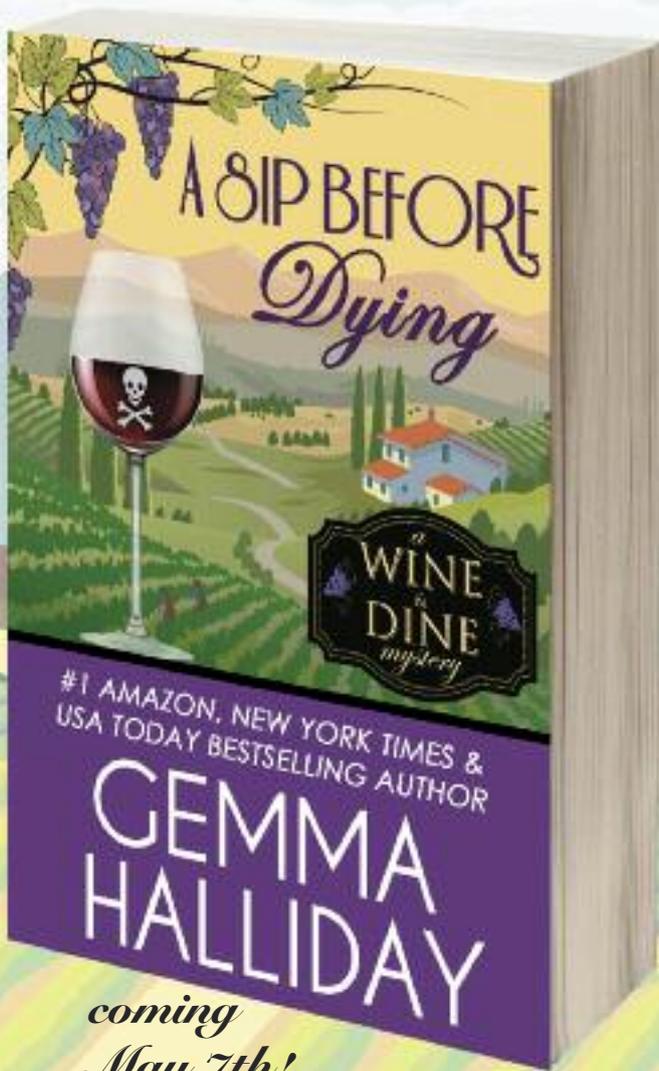
Alone in Berlin (movie)

The Life She Wants by Robyn Carr

Connections in Death by J.D. Robb



READ, PONDER,
REPEAT



*coming
May 7th!*



*"I enjoyed this delightfully engaging tale and I can't wait to spend more time with Emmy, Ava and their friends."
~ Dru's Book Musings*

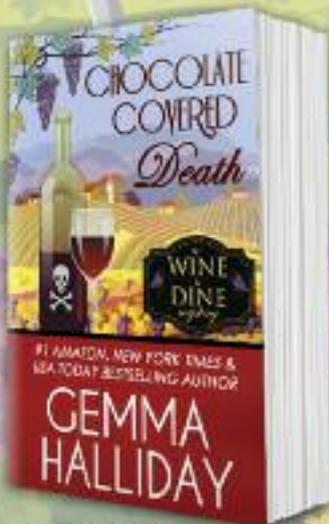
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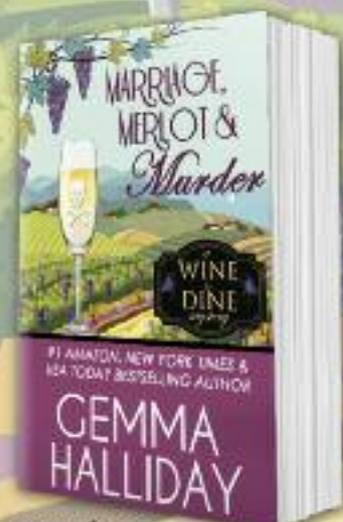
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www.GemmalHalliday.com

Gemma Halliday



is the #1 Amazon, New York Times, and USA Today bestselling author of several cozy mystery and suspense thriller novels. Gemma's books have received numerous awards, including a Golden Heart, two National Reader's Choice awards, a RONE award for best mystery, and three RITA nominations. She currently lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her boyfriend, Jackson Stein, who writes vampire thrillers, and their four children, who are adorably distracting on a daily basis.

On Sale Now

Book Blurb

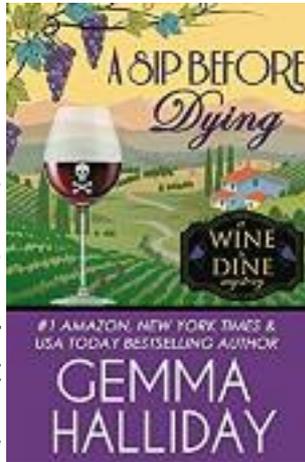
The Oak Valley Vineyard has been in Emmy Oak's family for generations. So when the small Sonoma winery is suddenly in financial trouble and in danger of being gobbled up by the corporate giants, Emmy moves home to try to save her legacy with her modern culinary know-how. First step—she throws a party showcasing her latest vintage and signature tasty treats to a group of wine country's most elite enthusiasts. Only when one of her VIP guests sips a glass of poisoned wine and dies in her cellar, Emmy's name is on everyone lips for all the wrong reasons.

The victim was the young, boy-toy husband of one of Silicon Valley's most successful female CEOs... and his playboy ways and suspicious spending habits have almost no one mourning his death. Enter Detective Christopher Grant, recent SFPD transplant, who is assigned to the case and immediately homes in on Oak Valley.

But Emmy is determined to clear her winery's name—even if Grant's dark eyes, sexy smile, and mysterious past threaten to distract her. After calling in the big guns to help her—a.k.a. her jewelry designer best friend and copious amounts of cookie dough ice cream—Emmy finds herself digging through a slew of suspects to uncover crimes, grudges, and secret affairs that could put a soap opera to shame.

Can Emmy find out just which of the upper crust poisoned the victim's vintage...or will Emmy's next sip be her last?

Simple and delicious recipes included.



Excerpt

I typed a name into the search engine: Christopher Grant. His official bio on the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office page came up first. Raised in the Bay Area, graduated from Berkeley, recently transferred from the San Francisco Police Department's homicide division. I wondered why. Seemed a step down to be going from homicide detective in the city to violent crime in the usually sleepy wine country. Was this a demotion?

Social media was scarce for the detective, though I did find a couple of articles in online news outlets briefly mentioning him. Always in glowing terms, talking about the criminals he'd taken off the street.

"Ms. Oak?"

I jumped about a mile at the deep male voice calling my name from the doorway. I looked up to find Grant's frame filling it, and I immediately shut my laptop as if I had been caught with my hand in the cookie jar. Or fingers tapping into his personal business.

"Yes?" I asked, hoping my voice didn't sound as guilty as I felt.

"We're wrapping up upstairs."

I nodded. "Good. Great." I paused. "Find anything?"

"I'm not at liberty to discuss that." The man had an excellent poker face.

"Jenny didn't do this," I told him.

He leaned against the doorframe in a deceptively

casual pose. "How well do you know her?"

"We went to high school together."

"That seems like a long time ago."

"Was that an insult?"

His poker face cracked, showing a hint of a smile.

"Not at all. I'm just saying people can change quite a bit in a...couple of years."

My turn to smile. The attempt to cover his inadvertent gaffe could have been kind of charming. You know, if he wasn't wearing a gun. "Jenny had no reason to want her brother dead," I reasoned.

"And you think someone else did?"

I nodded. "I do."

"Okay, who?"

I paused, not sure how much to share. "How about the victim's wife?"

Grant raised an eyebrow. "I thought she was a client of yours."

"She is. Or, I had hoped she would be." I noticed he hadn't answered my question.

"But you're throwing her to the wolves to protect someone you knew in high school?"

I crossed my arms over my chest. "I'm assuming the wolves," I said, giving him a pointed look, "will only attack if she's guilty."

"And if she's innocent, she'll come sip Merlot from you again?"

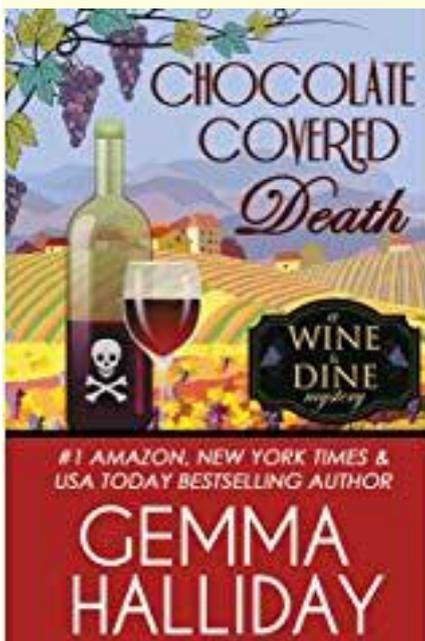
I scoffed. "We don't serve Merlot."

That smile hinted again. It was a good look on him. It softened the danger aspect just enough that something more human glinted underneath it.

Which, if I wasn't careful, could end up being just as dangerous.



Coming July 16th!



In order to boost her struggling family winery's reputation, Emmy Oak throws a Wine and Chocolate party for the Sonoma Valley elite—featuring her delicious drinks alongside her friend Leah's decadently chocolaty desserts. But when Leah's ex-husband's new trophy wife turns up dead after the party, the police paint Leah in the role of main suspect and the only thing anyone in town can talk about is the murder at the Chocolate Bar.

In order to save face and her friend, Emmy finds herself infiltrating high society and sorting among the catty and cantankerous for her killer. Did the victim's rare-wine brokering business have anything to do with it? Or was it the hot new golf pro at the club or the frenemy with a jealous streak? Or maybe her husband found a less messy way than divorce to end their short and unhappy marriage? Emmy isn't sure, but she knows

a mysterious man in a cowboy hat has something to do with it, and the deeper she digs, the more trouble seems to follow her. Between crashing the country club, dodging danger, and trying to stay one step ahead of the sexy Detective Christopher Grant, Emmy has her work cut out for her to catch a killer...before hers is the next death by chocolate!



Nichole Christoff

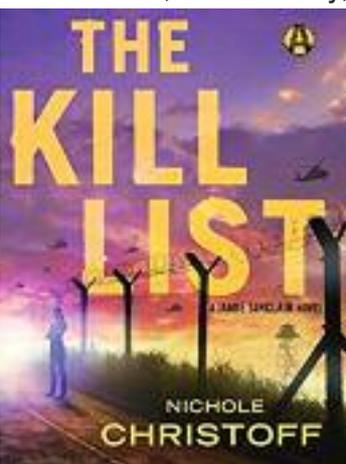
is a writer, broadcaster, and former military spouse who swears she owes Jane Austen, James Thurber, and Raymond Chandler for her taste in fiction. Nic is also the award-winning author of the Jamie Sinclair thriller series, including *The Kill Shot*, which was a Daphne du Maurier Award Finalist, and *The Kill Box*, a Library Journal "Best Books 2015" pick. When Nichole isn't at her desk working on her latest novel or teaching genre writing at a Midwestern university, she's out in the woods with her ornery English Pointer. Find Nichole online at her website, on Facebook, on Twitter,

and on Instagram, or drop her a note at nic@nicholechristoff.com.

Personal note: Nicole is one of my favorite authors. I received her first book for review from NetGalley and fell in love with Jamie. I have read and reviewed all six. It was such a pleasure to interview her.

I am a big fan of your Jamie Sinclair series. What inspired you to write it?

Thank you. I'm always thrilled to meet readers who love Jamie as much as I do. In many ways, the character of Jamie Sinclair has always been with me. As a kid, I gravitated toward stories with strong female protagonists in the lead, so that's the kind of character at the heart of my own work now that I'm all grown up. As for Jamie specifically, while I was a military spouse living outside the US, I often went to events at embassies and official residences. Among the members of the security teams, there would be plenty of highly-trained men—but there would be highly-trained women, too. These professionals' deep-seated desire to take on what, traditionally, hasn't always been considered a woman's cup of tea stayed with me. By the time I began work on the crime at the center of my first Jamie Sinclair novel, *The Kill List*, I knew my protagonist would need to embody the professional capabilities of those interesting women I'd met. I also knew she needed to have a vulnerability and even fallibility—not because Jamie is a woman, but because that's what it means to be human.



Do you have an interesting quirk about your personality that you'd like to share?

My dog's personality quirks are much more interesting than mine. I share my home with an English Pointer, and he's recently realized he can retrieve, too. The second I sit down at my desk, he begins to bring me things. He'll start with his favorite objects to carry: socks. He'll pluck them from the laundry basket or search for them under the bed. He'll then bring dish towels, junk mail, rain boots, the TV remote control, and one time, even a roll of toilet paper. He gets a treat if he brings me his own toys. I write like a maniac between offerings, but his arrival usually means I have to stop to accept what he's laid at my feet. As a result, I usually have a ring of abandoned objects circling my desk chair.

What advice would you share with a fledgling writer?

Read, read, read, and then write, write, write. Ask yourself what brings you to tears and what makes you cheer in the book you're reading. And then ask yourself how the writer managed to make you feel that way. You'll begin to notice some methods in the author's madness. A writer uses structure, characterization, conflict, and more to allow her story to unfold in a timely way—and to draw you in! Once you begin to see how those elements impact you as a reader, try sketching out a few scenes with characters you create. You'll be working your own magic as a writer. Most importantly, keep at it! Persistence is the way to get where you want to go.

What do you do when you are not writing?

We're into classic movies at my house, and weekends are reserved for cuddling up on the

couch to catch films like North by Northwest, The Adventures of Robin Hood, and The Big Sleep. But I confess, we like recent releases, too. Pitch Perfect is a favorite and so are Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them, Wonder Woman, and even that 1990s hit, The Mummy. Truth be told, I adore action-packed movies from a variety of decades, and when they have a strong woman in the lead and maybe even a bit of mystery in the mix, I can't resist. Funny enough, those elements tend show up in my books!

Which book impacted you as a teenager?

That's a great question! And my answer may seem like an odd one because I write Mysteries and Thrillers. In high school, I devoured all kinds of books, but I fell head-over-heels for both Sci Fi and Fantasy. I couldn't get enough of Frank Herbert's Dune series or Robert Jordan's The Wheel of Time saga. Those novels are just the whole package. The settings are mesmerizing and the characters are complex. As a teen, I'd get my homework done early so I could spend a lot of time reading, reading, reading.

What is #1 on your bucket list?

Now, that's a tough question. I've been blessed with a lot of opportunities. I've gone to the birthday party of a king, I've walked the Mars Yard where the engineers of NASA and JPL solve problems encountered by the Mars rovers, and I've learned how to make sushi from a chef in service to the Emperor of Japan. But I think what might top my Bucket List these days is settling down on a small farm. It may not sound as thrilling as the train trip I took across the country or the time I went deep-sea fishing in the Gulf of Mexico, but it still sounds like heaven to me!

What's next for you?

The sixth Jamie Sinclair novel, **The Kill Chain**, is now in readers' hands, so that means I'm neck-deep in a brand-new novel. This novel features a whole new cast of characters, and I can't wait to share it with you! For now, I can only say that I'm working hard on revisions, but the moment I can say more about the novel, my e-newsletter will be full of the latest details. You can sign-up for my free seasonal e-newsletter on my website or on

my Facebook page, and get the scoop as it happens—right in your inbox!

Website: www.nicholechristoff.com

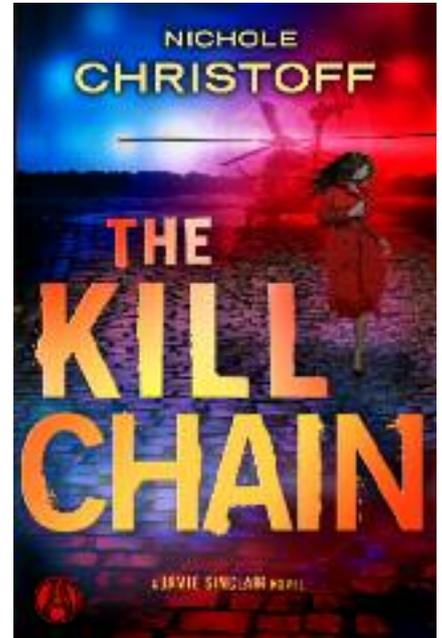
Facebook: www.facebook.com/NicholeChristoff

Twitter: www.twitter.com/NicChristoff

BOOK EXCERPT

Chapter 2

Nine o'clock caught me pressing the pedal of Madeline Donahue's rented Nissan Versa practically to the metal as I flew straight up New York Avenue Northeast. The broad thoroughfare cut like a blade through the heart of the District of



Columbia before angling toward Baltimore, Philadelphia, and the Big Apple itself. Skinny brick townhomes that once had housed the hardworking builders of the nearby US Capitol crowded close to one another and the sidewalks here. These structures, the corner liquor stores with their neon beer lights and the mom-and-pop shops selling bread and milk, weren't the kind of landmarks that attracted tourists, then or now. And maybe that's why the text message that had set Dr. Donahue's phone chiming had told us to come this way.

The avenue's asphalt angled at a definite incline as we left the Potomac valley behind. Low-slung industrial buildings, built of 1960s poured concrete, housed today's industrial designers and technology start-ups and took over where the improvements of the previous century stopped. Chain-link fencing, razor wire curling across the top, hemmed in the city school system's big yellow buses. We were at the edge of the District now—and at the start of something else.

More chain-link rose on my right-hand side. Old

BOOK EXCERPT FROM THE KILL CHAIN BY NICHOLE CHRISTOFF CONT
FROM PAGE 6

and corroded, its interlocking links were no longer bright. The wash from the avenue's streetlights couldn't reach beyond the lacy barrier, but the angular shapes of trees not yet in the full leaf of spring speared the horizon's inky sky.

Ahead, a gap in the fence appeared, wide enough to accommodate a steady stream of two-way traffic. But there was no such thing at this hour. A lonely driveway peeled away from the broad boulevard and led through the opening. I turned onto it because the message had told me to.

The driveway disappeared into the dark tangle of the trees. And if we weren't careful, I suspected we'd end up doing the same. Beside me, Dr. Donahue strained against her seatbelt as she leaned forward to peer through the windshield.

She shook her head.

"This can't be right."

Except it was. This was the entrance to the United States National Arboretum. Its gate, which should've been locked tight for the night, had stood open to admit us.

And just like that, I drove into the middle of nowhere right next to the city.

Darkness swallowed the car. I hit the high beams, was rewarded with nothing more than the sight

of mown lawn on either side of the ribbon of road, a glimpse of the squat Visitor Center, and the suggestion of trams parked under the cover of night. Dr. Donahue's phone jiggled in her lap.

"Turn right onto Hickey Lane. Proceed one half mile," she read from its sickly green screen. "Cross onto Eagle Nest Road. Continue for another half mile."

Making the first turn, I smelled a setup. Still, I didn't say so. The text message—and its timely arrival—meant someone had been on the lookout for us. Now, they certainly watched from some vantage point to be sure we followed their instructions to the letter.

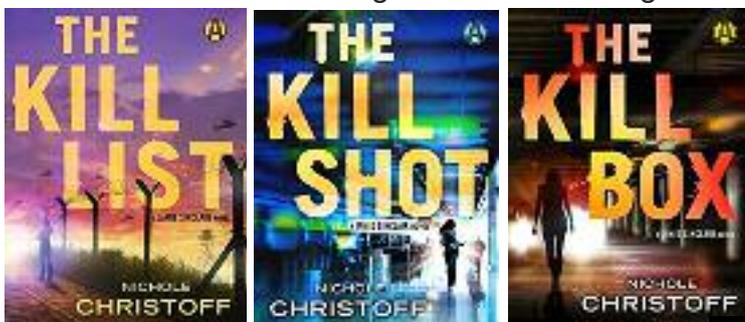
I wondered why.

In my humble opinion, a dead drop would've had this business over in a heartbeat. That's a spot where suckers—such as myself and Dr. Donahue—are directed to leave cash or other commodities without waiting around to meet the demand's maker. The dead drop was a preferred method of Cold War spies as well as today's industrial kind. And it was an extortionist's best bet for a clean getaway. Any other arrangement meant revealing yourself to witnesses.

Witnesses, however, could be eliminated.



Jamie Sinclair

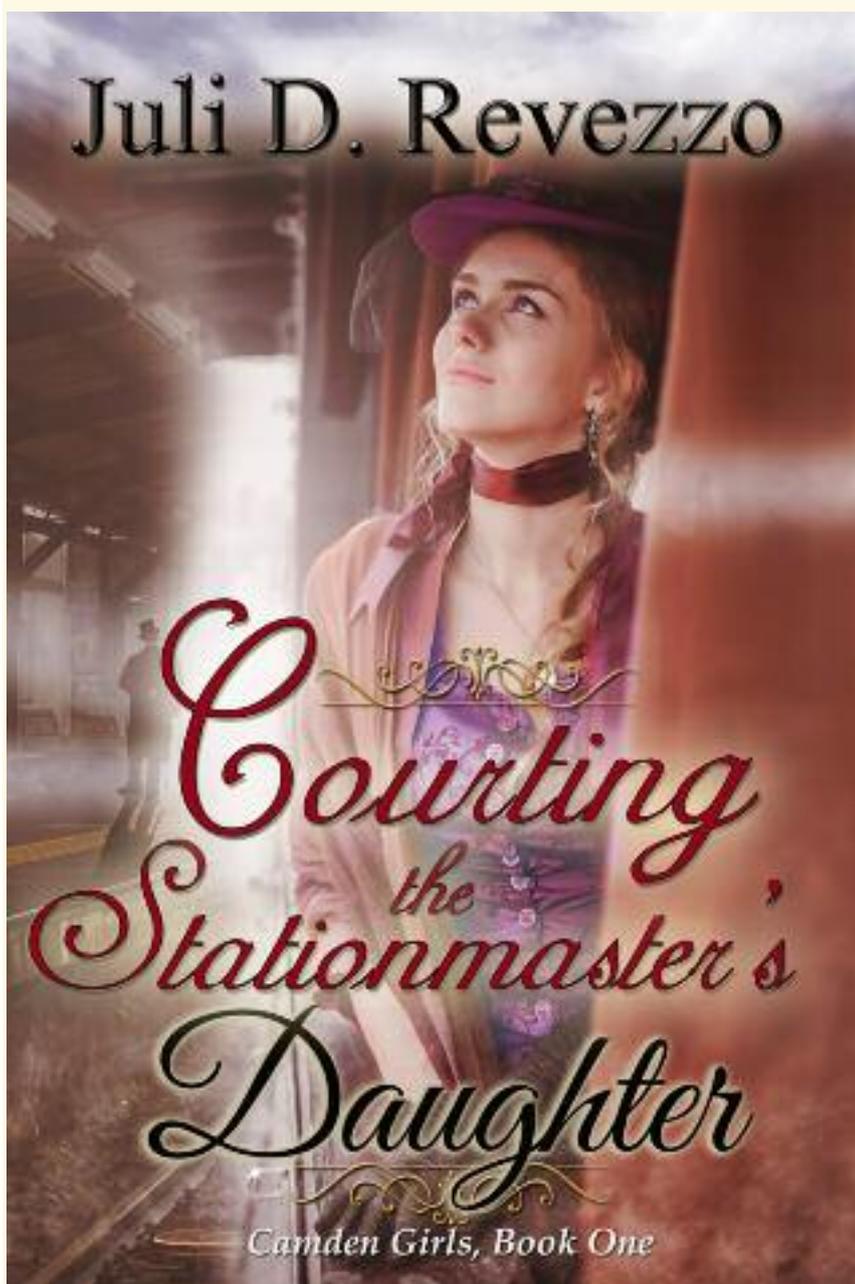


Mysteries



COURTING THE STATIONMASTER'S DAUGHTER
Camden Girls Book 1
BY JULI D. REVEZZO

After Honorine Camden is jilted, leaving her stunned and sparking a scandal in her tiny London borough of



Wallflower, she's devastated. But when she overhears her father, the stationmaster, talking about arranging a party for their newly-minted underground railway station, she volunteers to help.

Although she's intrigued with his handsome assistant stationmaster, Shane MacIntyre, she never expects to fall head-over-heels

in love with him.

Unfortunately, one tragic accident might derail everything.

HEATHER HAVEN



Heather, in the midst of writing her fourteenth novel, has also written short stories, comedy acts, television treatments, ad copy, commercials, and plays.

She has won numerous awards for her Silicon Valley-based Alvarez Family Murder Mysteries; Manhattan-based WWII Persephone Cole Vintage Mysteries; Ringling Brothers' Circus mystery noir, *Death of a Clown*; and *Corliss and Other Award-Winning Stories*. She has two romantic suspense series: *Love Can be Murder Mystery Novellas* with

Lee Alvarez and Gurn Hanson, the Nick and Nora Charles of Silicon Valley, and the *Snow Lake Romantic Suspense Novels*, of which *Christmas Trifle* is Book One.

She and her husband of thirty-seven years are allowed to live with their two cats, Ellie and Yulie, in the foothills of San Jose, California.

Christmas Trifle

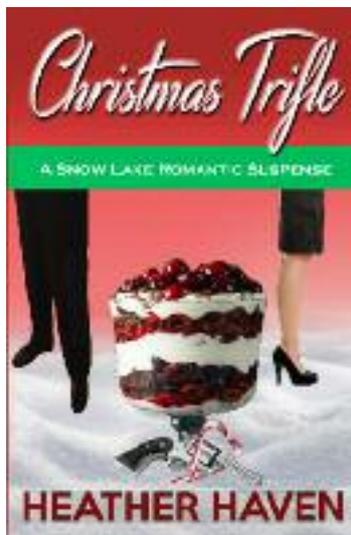
When chefs Charly and Cliff Harding divorce, she gets custody of their upscale restaurant and its namesake, Felix, the cat. He gets custody of their dog, Oscar. What they both still have custody of is each other's heart. But they seem to be the only two people in the small ski resort town of Snow Lake, Nevada, that don't know it.

When Cliff opens his own restaurant in direct competition with Charly, bad things start to happen. Death threats, accidents, and murder are now on the menu. Their 'if-you-can't-take-the-heat-then-get-out-of-the-kitchen' battles are backfiring.

Regret consumes the two of them. But can they find their way back to each other? Or is it too late? Because they just might spend the rest of their lives in prison unjustly accused of killing someone. Or can love triumph over even murder?

EXCERPT

Rain was coming down hard. Umbrella overhead, Charly walked up the front steps of Cliff's house



talking to herself, rehearsing the words she'd use once she saw him face to face.

"Just say, Cliff, I'm a different person now. I've changed in the year you were off being the Restaurant Guru and this year, too. But that doesn't mean I don't still love you. Don't you think we..." She interrupted herself with disgust. "Oh, brother. Saying it out loud, it all sounds so whiny." She

cleared her throat and tried again. "What I mean, Cliff, is...well...look, we've both changed, but maybe our feelings for one another haven't and..." She made a face. "Oh, God. That's worse."

Shaking droplets of water from her umbrella, Charly rang the doorbell. "Aunt Pearl, you'd better be right about this, now that I've finally gathered up the courage to talk to him," she muttered. "Not that my actions aren't my own responsibility.

My new mantra: my life, my responsibility."

Without looking, she dropped the umbrella into the stand just outside the door. It was a wood carving of wild geese about to take flight, one she'd bought years before. Cliff opened the door dressed in his robe, apparently fresh from the shower. Her courage ebbed. He gave Charly a surprised smile then fought it back.

CHRISTMAS TRIFLE

BOOK EXCERPT CONTINUED

“What are you doing here at the break of dawn and in these September squalls?”

“Oh, sorry. I just...” Courage lost, she hesitated. “I see you still have the umbrella stand I got at a yard sale.”

“Did you want it back?”

“No, no, certainly not. It was bought for this porch. Listen, I want to talk to you about...something...else.”

“Sure, sure. Come on in. I like that umbrella stand, by the way, in case I never mentioned it.” He stood back and let her enter. “What’s on your mind?”

“Ah...well...I wanted to say...that is...I wanted to ask...”

“Ask what?”

“Ah...well...maybe more to talk about...”

“Talk about what?”

“The murder,” she jumped in with. “We should do something.”

“About the murder? I’ll admit, something needs to be done about it. It’s been hanging over my head for weeks now.”

Relieved, she smiled for the first time since she came into the house. “Exactly. The police don’t seem to be any closer to who did it than when it happened. And because we found the body together, we look like we could have done it.” She stopped speaking and looked at him. “My business is suffering.”

“Mine is practically non-existent.”

“Truth time.” She took a deep breath and blurted out, “I’m selling my house in order to stay in

business. I’m meeting with the real estate agent to sign the papers in an hour.”

“They’re open on Labor Day?”

“For this they are. Besides, we’re going to be open today, aren’t we?”

“True enough. I’m sorry about your house, but what do you want from me, Charly?”

“I can’t stand idly by and watch Chez Felix go down the drain. I’m sure you feel the same way. Maybe you and I...maybe...we could look into who committed the crime ourselves. Help the police out.”

Cliff inhaled a deep breath, reluctant to say anything at first. Finally, he smiled. “Well, here’s a brave new world for you.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“I never figured you for a Nancy Drew type of gal.”

“Maybe you don’t know me so well anymore. I’ve changed. That’s really what I wanted to say. I’ve changed.” She took a deep breath about to launch into her speech but chickened out. Cliff watched her for a moment, obviously perplexed by her visit.

“I can see that. But maybe we should leave this to the police.”

“We did. They’re doing nothing. And what I’m thinking is, we’re on the inside.”

“Hmmm. What you’re saying is because we know a lot of the players, we might have better luck? That’s possible. It has to be someone we know. Now there’s a dismal thought,” he added.



Interview with artist and writer Steven Moore



Steven Moore has been telling stories with his art since he was a young child. As an adult he enjoys creating pictures with words.

Author Candace Sams wrote: “In Steven’s artwork, I see the whimsy, intensity and honor of each character he has imagined. Every pen stroke has been placed with not only an eye to detail, but to draw the onlooker into a place and time many of us wish existed.”

“It would be enough to say that Steven Moore is a master artist, skilled in mesmerizing others with his fantastical drawing. But add to that his ability to magnificently write stories to go with the characters he sketches and it’s easy to see some otherworldly force is acting through him. Truly... the gnomes, elves, dragons and knights are on Steven’s side. Through him, they become real to the rest of us. Through him, they speak to us all.”

Born in Frankfurt Germany on a U.S. Army base, Steven Moore has traveled to several countries and been to numerous states within the U.S., but has lived most of his life near the Gulf Coast of Alabama. He currently resides in Loxley, Alabama with his wife and daughter.

His Runes & Realms series is the first of the Downtime Reads™—books written for the entire family to enjoy during their downtimes and specifically written to motivate mid-grade readers and reluctant teen readers to read.

To encourage anyone who wishes to draw, but feels they can’t or don’t know where to start, he created the How-To Book for Artists Who Can’t Draw. A workbook for the true beginner.

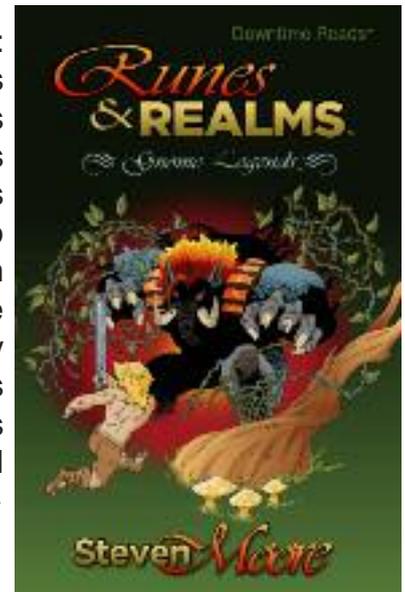
He is a proud member of The INSCRIBABLES: a group of successful writers and artists who

have teamed up to educate, inform and inspire the creative young.

Tell us about your new release.

The Runes & Realms series is the first of the Downtime Reads—books written for the entire family to enjoy during their downtimes and specifically written to motivate mid-grade readers and reluctant teen readers to read.

Runes & Realms: Gnome Legends is the first of the Runes & Realms series introducing readers to characters who exist in a world from long before recorded history where magic is everywhere and its energies affect all living creatures—animal and plant.



What led you to write this book?

For years I’ve created art. Most of it comic book, fantasy and science fiction. As I draw, stories form in my mind helping me bring the drawings to life. Often one piece of art’s story will blend with another’s. Over time a world formed in my imagination that I just had to write about.

My stories lend themselves to a younger audience. Since I enjoy the idea of inspiring young people to read, I decided to set my books up in a way that would entice mid-grade and reluctant teen readers to pick up the books and read them through.

What do you do when you are not writing?

I have a full time job that fortunately lets me be

Stephen Moore

Continued from previous page

creative doing things like computer graphics, web design and much more. But on my own time, I really enjoy sitting down and drawing. The biggest challenge is “just” drawing. As I draw I get ideas for a story and want to write it down. As I write I often picture the story in my mind and want to put the image to paper. I know it sounds chaotic, but I wouldn't change my little problem of wanting to write when I'm drawing and wanting to draw when I'm writing for anything.

Do you have a favorite writing place or writing rituals?

I need solitude when I write or draw. I admire the people who go to coffee shops to type out their stories, but the distractions are too much for me. Plus, I like to place art around myself when I'm writing or drawing. I'll often try to match my theme (space and tech things for science fiction or magical things for fantasy), but really any picture I like—in my view when I look up from my work—helps me get in the right frame of mind or keep the creativity going.

What's next for you?

Runes & Realms: The Timeless Crystal. I'm excited about this one. It includes a time traveler from the late 1800's who finds herself in the Gnome Legends world. I've finished about two-thirds of the story and so far I'm very pleased with where it's going. It has a very steampunk feel to it.

LINDA JOYCE

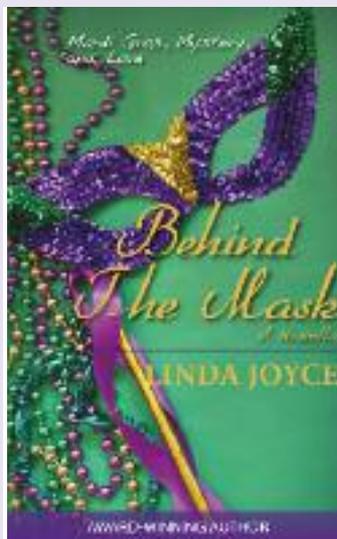
Amazon Best Selling author Linda Joyce writes contemporary small town romance—some clean, some a little spicy—along with women's fiction. She lives in a house in metro-Atlanta run by a canine named Oscar Maxence or “Maximum Max” along with her very patient husband. Linda's a closet artist who paints with a brush, but longs to use her fingers, and she's addicted to Cajun food and sushi. She will deny that she only leaves the house once a week in order to get criticism from two other authors.

Factoids:

Linda is a member of Atlanta Writers Club and Romance Writers of America.

Crossing the stage during the cap and gown ceremony, Linda received a B.S. in Business from the University of Florida, and she spent her corporate career working in insurance litigation. She graduated with honors from high school. Attended cosmetology school. Learned to fly a small plane. Now the most daring thing she does is zip line.

SALE \$1.99



Behind The Mask – 50 Amazon Reviews. 4.6 Stars

Face to face after ten years and still memories haunt Chalise Boudreau and Chaz Riboucheaux. She left Ascension broken hearted. He's compared every woman to her and found them all lacking.

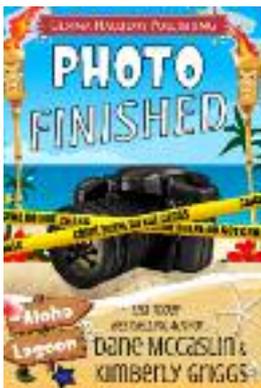
Now, a reversal of fortune, past pains, and a new mystery twist them together. But will love prevail?

Website Address [www:linda-joyce.com](http://www.linda-joyce.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LindaJoyceAuthor>

Twitter: @LJWriter <https://twitter.com/LJWriter>

Interview with Dane McCaslin



Tell us about your new release.

My newest book, “Photo Finished”, is the 14th installment in a multi-author series called “Aloha Lagoon Mysteries”. It’s set in the fictional town of Aloha Lagoon on the very real island of Kauai. The

characters are intertwined via the local resort and town, and you’ll often find them making cameos in the other books. Autumn Season, my main character, is the resort photographer and girlfriend of Jimmy Toki, the resort’s head of security. Between the two of them, there’s enough sparks to light the tiki torches at the latest luau. Unfortunately, Autumn may have caught a murder in progress through her camera’s lens, and now she’s the one in the spotlight!

Do you have a favorite fictional character by another author you’d like to meet?

I’d give my right hand to meet Hercule Poirot and Jane Marple! It was because of them that I became hooked on cozy mysteries.

Do you read the same genre you write?

Yes and no. I love all things mystery, although cozies will always be my favorite. I happen to enjoy Louise Penny’s series as well as anything written by Val McDermid and Ian Rankin. Dame Agatha Christie, though, will always be my go-to writer.

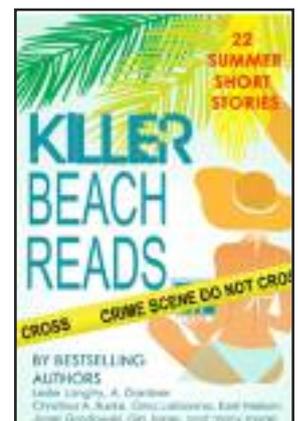
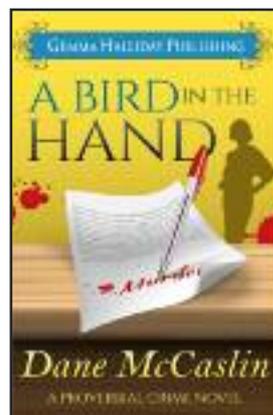
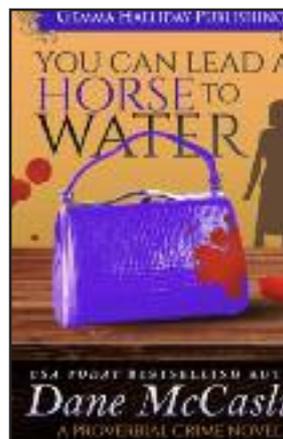
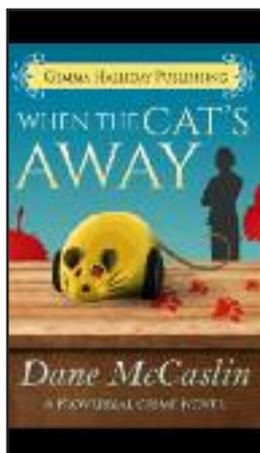
Do you have a favorite writing place or writing rituals?

Actually, I do. After all our children grew up and moved out, I “repurposed” one bedroom as my writing/reading room – sorry, kids! I’ve got a comfy recliner in there, as well as two walls of over-stuffed bookshelves and a convenient table to hold the endless cups of coffee I tend to drink when writing. Once I’ve got my coffee and laptop and I’m ready to write, I turn on some background noise – I tend to go for ocean sounds or wind chimes – and start pounding the keyboard.

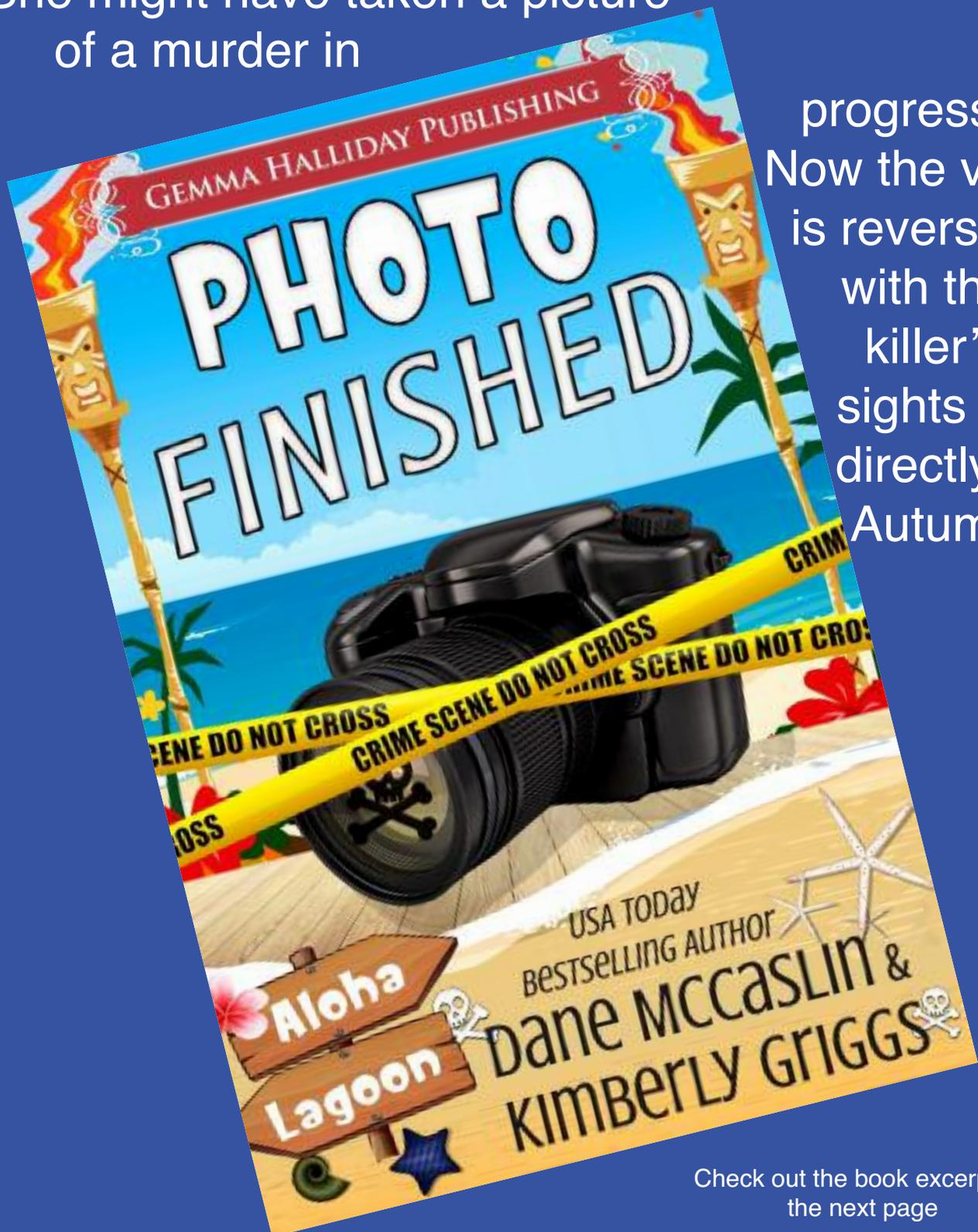
What’s next for you?

I’ve got a new series – “Cajun Cozy Crimes” - debuting within the next year with Camel Press as well as a new series – “Two Sisters Pet Valets” - for Kensington Lyrical in the works! Since both are currently three-book deals, you can bet I’ll be doing a lot of writing, revising, and editing for the next few years.

More mysteries from Dane McCaslin



Autumn Season is living her best life in Aloha Lagoon. She's got a hunky island boyfriend, her own ocean view, and a dream job as the resort photographer. She's also got a very big problem. She might have taken a picture of a murder in



progress. Now the view is reversed, with the killer's sights set directly on Autumn...

Check out the book excerpt on the next page

Book Excerpt from
PHOTO FINISHED
by Dane McCaslin & Kimberly Griggs

I'd longed to be a surfer growing up, but since the Midwest was hundreds of miles from the nearest ocean, it didn't offer up many opportunities to catch any good waves. I'd taken up photography as a teenager and soon found that I was quite good. With my meager savings in my pocket, I headed west three years ago and hadn't looked back. If I couldn't surf, I could do the next best thing—photograph those that do.

Watching Jimmy, as he plowed his way steadily through a heaping bowl of Spam fried rice, made me smile. He was the product of a Tongan father and a Hawaiian mother, and his rather intimidating physique hid a real teddy bear personality. If only he was into short, redheaded photographers. I sighed.

His muscles rippled in his arms as he brought his fork to his mouth. His eyes met mine, and he quirked a brow.

"What?" he asked around a mouthful of Spam.

"Nothing," I said hurriedly, embarrassed I'd been caught staring at his impressive biceps. "What time do I need to be there tonight?" Changing the subject was always a good distraction.

"Hang on a sec." He tapped out a text. "I'm thinking maybe half an hour or so before it starts, so you can get set up. Get your groove going."

I could feel my blood pressure rise a tad as I thought about snapping pictures of shallow women and the indifferent men they'd dragged along. Jimmy was right—this was definitely not

my cup of tea. I tended to see what I did as serious art, not just some means to a cheap souvenir.

Think of the exposure, Autumn.

"Yup, just as I thought." He checked the incoming text and read it aloud. "Have her meet me in the lobby at 6:30." He looked over at me, an impish grin on his face. "And wear your best muumuu, Red. It's a traditional luau in honor of the surfing champions from last year's competitions. In fact, my cousin is one of the honorees, so you can expect to see a bunch of my family."

I rolled my eyes. I loved Jimmy's mom and dad, but the thought of hanging out with them dressed like that made me cringe. Don't get me wrong. While muumuus were certainly comfy and could hide a multitude of issues, they usually made me look like a flowered tent with really short legs. As small as I was (I was five foot nothing when standing straight), I'd never been able to find one that fit me right.

"Fine, a muumuu it is. And what will you be wearing?" I eyed him suspiciously. In my experience, the island men dressed much more fashionably than the women did.

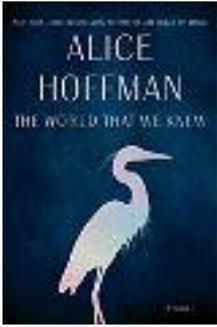
"Oh, you know," Jimmy said casually—a bit too casually for my liking. "Traditional stuff. My best board shorts and an aloha shirt. And flip flops."

He ducked down, laughing, as I threw a handful of ice at him.



“Be awesome! Be a book nut!”
— Dr. Seuss

Reviews



THE WORLD THAT WE KNEW
by Alice Hoffman / Women's
Fiction / Released Sept 24,
2019 by Simon & Schuster

In 1944 Berlin, at the time when the world changed, Hanni Kohn knows she must send her twelve-year-old daughter away to save her from the Nazi regime. She finds her way to a renowned rabbi, but it's his daughter, Ettie, who offers hope of salvation when she creates a mystical Jewish creature, a rare and unusual golem, who is sworn to protect Lea. Once Ava is brought to life, she and Lea and Ettie become eternally entwined, their paths fated to cross, their fortunes linked.

Lea and Ava travel from Paris, where Lea meets her soulmate, to a convent in western France known for its silver roses; from a school in a mountaintop village where three thousand Jews were saved. Meanwhile, Ettie is in hiding, waiting to become the fighter she's destined to be.

I have long been a fan of Ms. Hoffman so when an opportunity came up at NetGalley to review this book I jumped.

This book will stay with you long after you turn the last page. We've all heard about the 6 million lives slaughtered during WWII but Ms. Hoffman gives us insights into their hopes, dreams and courage in the midst of a reign of terror. Gripping, and deeply moving we experience the world slipping into madness.

This book should be a part of every history class.



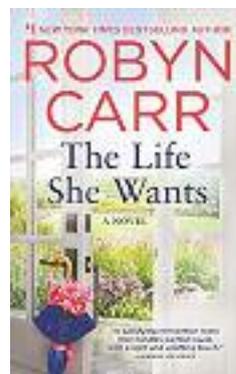
This brings me to an understated movie on Netflix called ALONE IN BERLIN. I watched it because I am a fan of both Emma Thompson and Daniel Bruhl.

The movie starts with a young soldier dying alone as the battle rages around his

last breath.

His parents, Emma Thompson and Brendon Gleeson, struggle with the grief but soon it grows to rage at what the Nazi party has done to their country so they begin a simple resistance.

Based on true events, it is a story of courage and the deep belief that every life, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, can make an impact.



THE LIFE SHE WANTS by
Robyn Carr, Mira Books,
September 2016, 4.5 Stars

Reviewed by Shannon
Kennedy

BLURB:

#1 New York Times bestselling author Robyn Carr brings together a poignant novel with a rich tapestry of characters. A moving story that will leave the reader laughing and crying, as two friends confront their pasts and move towards their futures.

In the aftermath of her financier husband's suicide, Emma Shay Compton's dream life is shattered. Richard Compton stole his clients' life savings to fund a lavish life in New York City and, although she was never involved in the business, Emma bears the burden of her husband's crimes. She is left with nothing.

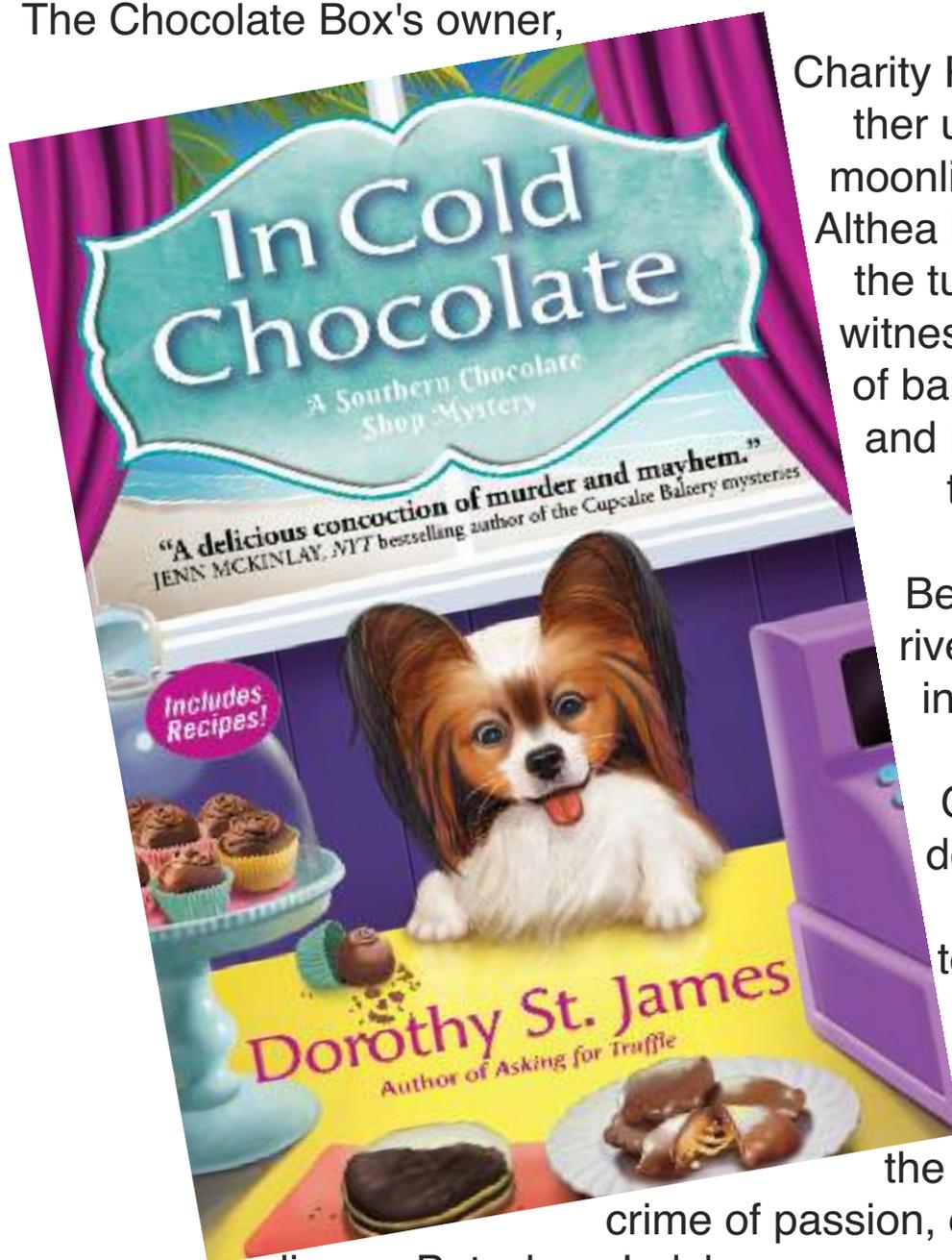
Only one friend stands by her, a friend she's known since high school, who encourages her to come home to Sonoma County. But starting over isn't easy, and Sonoma is full of unhappy memories, too. And people she'd rather not face, especially Riley Kerrigan.

Riley and Emma were like sisters—until Riley betrayed Emma, ending their friendship. Emma left town, planning to never look back. Now, trying

Continued on Page 19

A new batch of chocolate and troubles of the heart cause a string of disasters for the Chocolate Box's new owner, Charity Penn.

The vintage seaside town of Camellia Beach, South Carolina seems like the perfect place for romance with its quiet beach and its decadent chocolate shop that serves the world's richest dark chocolates. The Chocolate Box's owner,



Charity Penn, falls even further under the island's moonlit spell as she joins Althea Bays and the rest of the turtle watch team to witness a new generation of baby sea turtles hatch and make their way into the wide ocean.

Before the babies arrive, gunshots ring out in the night. Cassidy Jones, the local Casanova, is found dead in the sand with his lover Jody Dalton—the same woman who has vowed to destroy the Chocolate Box—holding the gun. It's an obvious

crime of passion, or so everyone believes. But when Jody's young son pleads with Penn to bring his mother back to him, she can't say no. She dives headfirst into a chocolate swirl of truth and lies, and must pick through an assortment of likely (and sometimes unsavory) suspects before it's too late for Penn and for those she loves in Dorothy St. James's third rich installment of the Southern Chocolate Shop mysteries, *In Cold Chocolate*.

to stand on her own two feet, Emma can't escape her husband's reputation and is forced to turn to the last person she thought she'd ever ask for help—her former best friend. It's an uneasy reunion as both women face the mistakes they've made over the years. Only if they find a way to forgive each other—and themselves—can each of them find the life she wants.

REVIEW:

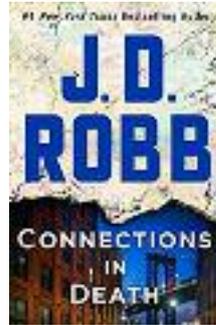
Since Robyn Carr is one of my favorite authors with her own place on my 'keeper' shelves, I can't believe I missed this book – and I don't know why my local Wal-Mart shelved it as a new release – it really doesn't matter. I have it now.

It stuns Emma Shay Compton when she discovers her husband is a criminal who has ripped off all sorts of people. Forced to face justice, he opts out and leaves her holding the bag. She leaves New York City to return home to California only to find that others blame her for what he did. Survival is tough when she can't find a job and when she does, she must be afraid someone will learn about her past and she'll lose the minimal financial security she's found.

A skillful writer, Carr carefully interweaves the past into the present and the reader learns why Emma fled her childhood home and previous life. Her best friend, Riley betrayed her, and Emma still hasn't come to terms with it, but when she loses one job after another, she has no choice except to turn to Riley for help.

Well-developed characters, descriptive writing, engaging romances and plenty of subplots are sure to entertain readers. However, there are occasional problems with the progression of the story which can be confusing.

Carr eventually sorts everything out, but a few more details at the beginning and middle would have smoothed those plot bumps and she wouldn't have so much work to do tying up the loose ends. In addition, when someone is described as having a temper and displays it throughout the story, then it seems very odd that the character doesn't speak up more when anger would be justified. Yet, this was a minor glitch and doesn't take away from the magic of the book.



CONNECTIONS IN DEATH by J.D. Robb, St. Martin's Press, February 2019, 4.5 Stars

Reviewed by Shannon Kennedy

BLURB:

Lieutenant Eve Dallas fights to save the innocent—and serve justice to the guilty—on the streets of New York in *Connections in Death*, the gritty and gripping new *In Death* novel from #1 New York Times bestselling author J.D. Robb. Homicide cop Eve Dallas and her billionaire husband, Roarke, are building a brand-new school and youth shelter. They know that the hard life can lead kids toward dangerous crossroads—and with this new project, they hope to nudge a few more of them onto the right path. For expert help, they hire child psychologist Dr. Rochelle Pickering—whose own brother pulled himself out of a spiral of addiction and crime with Rochelle's support.

Lyle is living with Rochelle while he gets his life together, and he's thrilled to hear about his sister's new job offer. But within hours, triumph is followed by tragedy. Returning from a celebratory dinner with her boyfriend, she finds Lyle dead with a syringe in his lap, and Eve's investigation confirms that this wasn't just another OD. After all his work to get clean, Lyle's been pumped full of poison—and a neighbor with a peephole reports seeing a scruffy, pink-haired girl fleeing the scene.

Now Eve and Roarke must venture into the gang territory where Lyle used to run, and the ugly underground world of tattoo parlors and strip joints where everyone has taken a wrong turn somewhere. They both believe in giving people a second chance. Maybe even a third or fourth. But as far as they're concerned, whoever gave the order on Lyle Pickering's murder has run out of chances...

REVIEW:

Continued on Page 20

Continued from page 19

In Book 48 of the “In Death” series, homicide lieutenant, Eve Dallas and her husband, Roarke return along with the ensemble cast of characters that readers have come to know, appreciate and love. This time, they are moving forward with the school and youth shelter showcased in a previous novel, Concealed in Death and Roarke hires a new psychologist. As the blurb explains, her brother, a recovering addict becomes the victim in Eve’s newest case. However, the situation becomes more complicated when she continues to investigate the murder with Roarke’s able assistance.

For those who have followed the series like I have since its inception with Naked In Death, it’s enjoyable to see what happens next in these peoples’ lives and it’s always fun to catch up with

old friends. However, for those who haven’t met Eve or her partner or their significant others or her friends and co-workers, it may be difficult at times to catch up with who is who. More details would help – yes, but so would a more complex mystery. It was obvious who’d committed the original crime and why. Of course, Eve caught on quickly as any good detective does, but in previous stories there were more red herrings to distract readers and her. This book could have used more of those.

Still, it’s always an adventure in futuristic New York of 2060, especially since J.D. Robb is so talented at world-building. Eve Dallas will be back with another murder to solve in September with Roarke providing his sexy, best advice and help as and when needed.



“If you only read the books that everyone else is reading, you can only think what everyone else is thinking.” -

*Haruki Murakami
in Norwegian Wood*