

MARY HIGGINS CLARK

HER HAUNTING
SUSPENSE
THRILLER



LET ME
CALL YOU
SWEETHEART

Mary Higgins Clark is the author of twenty-two international bestsellers. She lives in Saddle River, New Jersey.

MARY
HIGGINS
CLARK

Also by Mary Higgins Clark

Before I Say Goodbye
We'll Meet Again
All Through the Night
You Belong to Me
Pretend You Don't See Her
My Gal Sunday
Moonlight Becomes You
Silent Night
The Lottery Winner
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Weep No More, My Lady
Stillwatch
A Cry in the Night
The Cradle Will Fall
A Stranger Is Watching
Where Are the Children?

*Let Me
Call You
Sweetheart*

A NOVEL



LONDON · SYDNEY · NEW YORK · TOKYO · SINGAPORE · TORONTO

First published in Great Britain by Simon & Schuster, 1995
First published in paperback by Pocket Books, 1996
An imprint of Simon & Schuster Ltd
A Viacom Company

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Simon & Schuster UK Ltd
Africa House
64-78 Kingsway
London WC2B 6AH

Simon & Schuster of Australia Pty Ltd
Sydney

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 0-004-0285347-4

3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

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Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Omnia Books Limited, Glasgow

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No man is an island and no writer, at least not this one, writes alone. Special glowing thanks to my editors, Michael V. Korda and Chuck Adams, who are always the sine qua non of my books from conception to publication. Particularly and especially with this one and at this time, they've been wonderful.

A thousand thanks always to Eugene H. Winick, my literary agent, and Lisl Cade, my publicist. Their help is immeasurable.

A writer needs expert counsel. This book concerns plastic surgery. My thanks to Dr. Bennett C. Rothenberg of Saint Barnabas Hospital, Livingston, New Jersey, for his expert medical advice. Kudos to Kim White of the New Jersey Department of Corrections for her assistance. And once again, Ina Winick has vetted for me the psychological aspects of the story line. Thank you, Ina.

My offspring, all five of them, read the work in progress. From them I get much sound advice—legal: “Make sure you sequester the jury . . .”; or dialogue: “No one our age would say that. Put it this way . . .”—and always cheery encouragement. Thanks, kids.

Finally, my ten-year-old granddaughter, Liz, who in many ways was the role model for Robin. I would ask her, “Liz, what would you say if this were happening . . . ?” Her suggestions were “awesome.”

I love you, one and all.

*For my Villa Maria Academy classmates
in this special year,
with a particularly loving tip of the hat to
Joan LaMotte Nye
June Langren Crabtree
Marjorie Lashley Quinlan
Joan Molloy Hoffman
and in joyous memory of Dorothea Bible Davis*

*Heap not on this mound
Roses that she loved so well;
Why bewilder her with roses,
That she cannot see or smell?*

Edna St. Vincent Millay,
"Epitaph"

As often as humanly possible he tried to put Suzanne out of his mind. Sometimes he achieved peace for a few hours or even managed to sleep through the night. It was the only way he could function, go about the daily business of living.

Did he still love her or only hate her? He could never be sure. She had been so beautiful, with those luminous mocking eyes, that cloud of dark hair, those lips that could smile so invitingly or pout so easily, like a child being refused a sweet.

In his mind she was always there, as she had looked in that last moment of her life, taunting him then turning her back on him.

And now, nearly eleven years later, Kerry McGrath would not let Suzanne rest. Questions and more questions! It could not be tolerated. She had to be stopped.

Let the dead bury the dead. That's the old saying, he thought, and it's still true. She would be stopped, no matter what.

Wednesday, October 11th

1

Kerry smoothed down the skirt of her dark green suit, straightened the narrow gold chain on her neck and ran her fingers through her collar-length, dusky blond hair. Her entire afternoon had been a mad rush, leaving the courthouse at two-thirty, picking up Robin at school, driving from Hohokus through the heavy traffic of Routes 17 and 4, then over the George Washington Bridge to Manhattan, finally parking the car and arriving at the doctor's office just in time for Robin's four o'clock appointment.

Now, after all the rush, Kerry could only sit and wait to be summoned into the examining room, wishing that she'd been allowed to be with Robin while the stitches were removed. But the nurse had been adamant. "During a procedure, Dr. Smith will not permit anyone except the nurse in the room with a patient."

"But she's only ten!" Kerry had protested, then had closed her lips and reminded herself that she should be grateful that Dr. Smith was the one who had been called in after the accident. The

nurses at St. Luke's-Roosevelt had assured her that he was a wonderful plastic surgeon. The emergency room doctor had even called him a miracle worker.

Reflecting back on that day, a week ago, Kerry realized she still hadn't recovered from the shock of that phone call. She'd been working late in her office at the courthouse in Hackensack, preparing for the murder case she would be prosecuting, taking advantage of the fact that Robin's father, her ex-husband, Bob Kinellen, had unexpectedly invited Robin to see New York City's Big Apple Circus, followed by dinner.

At six-thirty her phone had rung. It was Bob. There had been an accident. A van had rammed into his Jaguar while he was pulling out of the parking garage. Robin's face had been cut by flying glass. She'd been rushed to St. Luke's-Roosevelt, and a plastic surgeon had been called. Otherwise she seemed fine, although she was being examined for internal injuries.

Remembering that terrible evening, Kerry shook her head. She tried to push out of her mind the agony of the hurried drive into New York, dry sobs shaking her body, her lips forming only one word, "please," her mind racing with the rest of the prayer, *Please God, don't let her die, she's all I have. Please, she's just a baby. Don't take her from me . . .*

Robin was already in surgery when Kerry had arrived at the hospital, so she had sat in the waiting room, Bob next to her—with him but not with him. He had a wife and two other children now. Kerry could still feel the overwhelming sensation of relief she had experienced when Dr. Smith had finally appeared, and in a formal and oddly condescending manner had said, "Fortunately the lacerations did not deeply penetrate the dermis. Robin will not be scarred. I want to see her in my office in one week."

The cuts proved to be her only injuries, and Robin had bounced back from the accident, missing only two days of school. She had seemed to be somewhat proud of her bandages. It was only today, on their way into New York for the appointment, that she'd sounded frightened when she asked, "I will