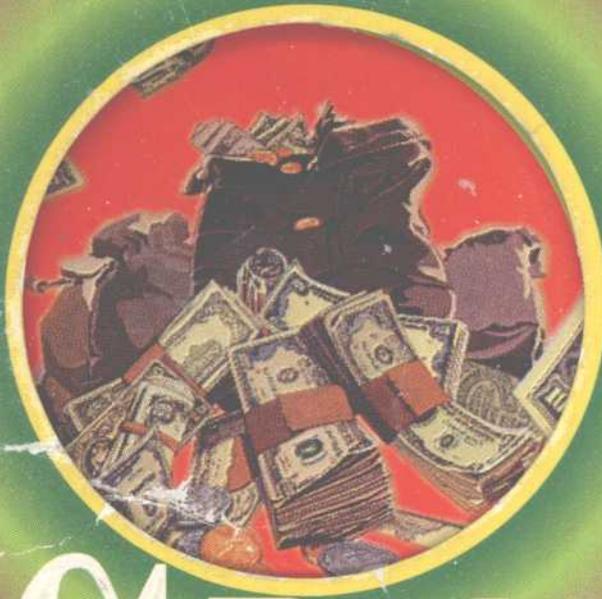


THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER



SUE GRAFTON

Author of
"K" IS FOR KILLER

"T" IS FOR LAWLESS

¥2000

CREST

**“L”
IS
FOR
LAWLESS**

Sue Grafton

FAWCETT CREST • NEW YORK

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“GRAFTON PROVES AGAIN THAT SHE HAS A REAL PRIZE IN MILLHONE: THE CHARACTER WHO GROWS FROM BOOK TO BOOK.”

—*Boston Herald*

When Kinsey Millhone agrees to do a favor for Henry Pitts, her lovable octogenarian landlord, she literally gets taken for the ride of her life. The family of a recently deceased WWII veteran wants her to find out why the military has no record of his service. All Kinsey has to do, she thinks, is cut through some government red tape. But when the dead man's house is ransacked and his old army buddy is beaten up, she quickly realizes he was not all he seemed. Before long Kinsey is trailing crooks halfway across the country, impersonating a hotel maid, tangling with a baseball-bat-wielding grandmother, and running from one very dangerous character. With her money almost gone and her nerves frayed, Kinsey's got to solve a decades-old crime and make it back home in time for Henry's wedding . . . if she can make it back at all. . . .

*Please turn the page
for more reviews. . .*

“FANS WILL BE JOYFUL.”
—*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

“Nearly halfway on her march through the alphabet, mystery writer Sue Grafton is letter-perfect.”

—*Atlantic Journal & Constitution*

“[Sue Grafton] has become almost like a sister to mystery readers. ‘L’ IS FOR LAWLESS has all the hallmarks of vintage Grafton.”

—*Denver Post*

“Grafton provides a richer sense of place than many writers in the genre. . . . Good fun.”

—*The Cleveland Plain Dealer*

**“THE WISE-CRACKING KINSEY
IS ALWAYS GOOD COMPANY.”**

—*Cincinnati Enquirer*

“‘L’ IS FOR LAWLESS” is Sue Grafton and Kinsey Millhone at their best; it’s a sure bestseller, an engrossing novel.”

—*San Antonio Express News*

“Kinsey is probably one of fiction’s best known and most likable private investigators.”

—*Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*

“A fast-paced caper . . . Readers can admire the gritty Millhone and relate to her endearing foibles at the same time.”

—*Newsday*

By Sue Grafton:

Kinsey Millhone mysteries

"A" IS FOR ALIBI

"B" IS FOR BURGLAR

"C" IS FOR CORPSE

"D" IS FOR DEADBEAT

"E" IS FOR EVIDENCE

"F" IS FOR FUGITIVE

"G" IS FOR GUMSHOE*

"H" IS FOR HOMICIDE*

"I" IS FOR INNOCENT*

"J" IS FOR JUDGMENT*

"K" IS FOR KILLER*

"L" IS FOR LAWLESS*

KEZIAH DANE

THE LOLLY MADONNA WAR

**Published by Fawcett Books*

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*For dear friends . . .
Sally and Gregory Giloth
and
Connie, Marshall, and Laura Swain
with love.*

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Kinsey Millhone,

P.I.

A, B, C...

and the rest of the alphabet, too.

"A" IS FOR ALIBI

"B" IS FOR BURGLAR

"C" IS FOR CORPSE

"D" IS FOR DEADBEAT

"E" IS FOR EVIDENCE

"F" IS FOR FUGITIVE

by

***New York Times* bestselling author**

SUE GRAFTON



"G" IS FOR GUMSHOE

Kinsey Millhone turns thirty-three and celebrates by moving back into her renovated apartment. Her birthday present is a new case: An old lady rumored to live in the Mojave Desert is missing. And as the surprise package, she seems to have made it onto triggerman Tyron Patty's hit list. When will the celebration end?

“J” IS FOR JUDGMENT

Wendell Jaffe had been dead for five years—until his former insurance agent spotted him in a dusty resort bar. Now California Fidelity Insurance wants Kinsey Millhone to track down the “dead man.” Just two months before, his widow collected on Jaffe’s \$500,000 life insurance policy. As Kinsey pushes deeper into the mystery surrounding Jaffe’s faked death, she explores her own past and realizes that in personal matters, sometimes it’s better to reserve judgment.

“K” IS FOR KILLER

Part-time clerk and full-time sex worker Lorna Kepler was found dead ten months ago. The police allowed that it was murder but could find neither a motive nor a suspect. To investigate, Kinsey immerses herself in Lorna’s seamy world, meeting porn movie actors, hustlers, and others on the fringe of the mainstream. But the question is, will Kinsey be able to pull herself out of that netherworld of the night?

"H" IS FOR HOMICIDE

Just because a drinking buddy is killed doesn't mean Kinsey has to get involved in the investigation. In fact, she doesn't even want to. After all, his case doesn't have anything to do with an insurance scam she's already investigating. Unless the two have more in common than anyone, including Kinsey, realizes.

"I" IS FOR INNOCENT

Fired by the insurance agency for which she had enthusiastically probed fraud cases, Kinsey is forced to take on a last-minute murder investigation. It seems that artist Isabelle Barney was murdered—her first husband is convinced she was killed by her second husband, already acquitted for the crime. But in Kinsey's search for the person responsible for the death, could she be courting her own?

COMING
IN OCTOBER

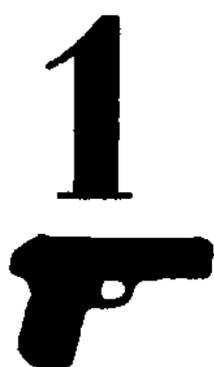
SUE
GRAFTON

MY
IS FOR MALICE



HENRY HOLT

4107



I DON'T MEAN to bitch, but in the future I intend to hesitate before I do a favor for the friend of a friend. Never have I taken on such a load of grief. At the outset, it all seemed so *innocent*. I swear there's no way I could have guessed what was coming down. I came *this* close to death and, perhaps worse (for my fellow dental phobics), within a hairbreadth of having my two front teeth knocked out. Currently I'm sporting a knot on my head that's the size of my fist. And all this for a job for which I didn't even get paid!

The matter came to my attention through my landlord, Henry Pitts, whom everybody knows I've been half in love with for years. The fact that he's eighty-five (a mere fifty years my senior) has never seemed to alter the basic impact of his appeal. He's a sweetheart and he seldom asks me for anything, so how could I refuse? Especially when his request seemed so harmless on the face of it, without the faintest suggestion of the troubles to come.

It was Thursday, November twenty-first, the week

before Thanksgiving, and wedding festivities were just getting under way. Henry's older brother William was to marry my friend Rosie, who runs the tacky little tavern in my neighborhood. Rosie's restaurant was traditionally closed on Thanksgiving Day, and she was feeling smug that she and William could get hitched without her losing any business. With the ceremony and reception being held at the restaurant, she'd managed to eliminate the necessity for a church. She'd lined up a judge to perform the nuptials, and she apparently considered that his services were free. Henry had encouraged her to offer the judge a modest honorarium, but she'd given him a blank look, pretending she didn't speak English that well. She's Hungarian by birth and has momentary lapses when it suits her purposes.

She and William had been engaged for the better part of a year, and it was time to get on with the big event. I've never been certain of Rosie's actual age, but she has to be close to seventy. With William pushing eighty-eight, the phrase "until death do us part" was statistically more significant for them than for most.

Before I delineate the nature of the business I took on, I suppose I should fill in a few quick personal facts. My name is Kinsey Millhone. I'm a licensed investigator, female, twice divorced, without children or any other pesky dependents. For six years I'd had an informal arrangement with California Fidelity Insurance, doing arson and wrongful death claims in exchange for office space. For almost a year now, since the termination of that agreement, I'd been leasing an office from Kingman and Ives, a firm of attorneys here in Santa Teresa. Because of the wedding I was taking a week off, looking forward to rest and recreation when I wasn't helping Henry with wedding preparations. Henry, long retired from his work as a commercial

baker, was making the wedding cake and would also be catering the reception.

There were eight of us in the wedding party. Rosie's sister, Klotilde, who was wheelchair bound, would be serving as the maid of honor. Henry was to be the best man, with his older brothers, Lewis and Charlie, serving as the ushers. The four of them—Henry, William, Lewis, and Charlie (also known collectively as "the boys" or "the kids")—ranged in age from Henry's eighty-five to Charlie's ninety-three. Their only sister, Nell, still vigorous at ninety-five, was one of two bridesmaids, the other being me. For the ceremony Rosie had elected to wear an off-white organza muumu with a crown of baby's breath encircling her strangely dyed red hair. She'd found a bolt of lavish floral polished cotton on sale . . . pink and mauve cabbage roses on a background of bright green. The fabric had been shipped off to Flint, Michigan, where Nell had "run up" matching muumuus for the three of us in attendance. I couldn't wait to try mine on. I was certain that, once assembled, the three of us would resemble nothing so much as a set of ambulatory bedroom drapes. At thirty-five, I'd actually hoped to serve as the oldest living flower girl on record, but Rosie had decided to dispense with the role. This was going to be the wedding of the decade, one I wouldn't miss for all the money in the world. Which brings us back to the "precipitating events," as we refer to them in the crime trade.

I ran into Henry at nine that Thursday morning as I was leaving my apartment. I live in a converted single-car garage that's attached to Henry's house by means of an enclosed breezeway. I was heading to the supermarket, where I intended to stock up on junk food for the days ahead. When I opened my door, Henry was

standing on my front step with a piece of scratch paper and a tape dispenser. Instead of his usual shorts, T-shirt, and flip-flops, he was wearing long pants and a blue dress shirt with the sleeves rolled up.

I said, "Well, don't you look terrific." His hair is stark white and he wears it brushed softly to one side. Today it was slicked down with water, and I could still smell the warm citrus of his aftershave. His blue eyes seem ablaze in his lean, tanned face. He's tall and slender, good-natured, smart, his manner a perfect blend of courtliness and nonchalance. If he wasn't old enough to be my granddaddy, I'd snap him up in a trice.

Henry smiled when he saw me. "There you are. Perfect. I was just leaving you a note. I didn't think you were home or I'd have knocked on the door instead. I'm on my way to the airport to pick up Nell and the boys, but I have a favor to ask. Do you have a minute?"

"Of course. I was on my way to the market, but that can wait," I said. "What's up?"

"Do you remember old Mr. Lee? They called him Johnny here in the neighborhood. He's the gentleman who used to live around the corner on Bay. Little white stucco house with the overgrown yard. To be accurate, Johnny lived in the garage apartment. His grandson, Bucky, and his wife have been living in the house."

The bungalow in question, which I passed in the course of my daily jog, was a run-down residence that looked as if it was buried in a field of wild grass. These were not classy folk, unless a car up on blocks is your notion of a yard ornament. Neighbors had complained for years, for all the good it did. "I know the house, but the name doesn't mean much."

"You've probably seen 'em up at Rosie's. Bucky seems to be a nice kid, though his wife is odd. Her name is Babe. She's short and plump, doesn't make a