



# LISA GARDNER

THE NEW YORK TIMES  
BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF  
*THE NEXT ACCIDENT*

*"RIVETING."* —*People*

# THE SURVIVORS CLUB

*"A HIGH-OCTANE,  
NERVE-JANGLING TALE  
OF SUSPENSE."*  
—Harlan Coben

LISA GARDNER

*The  
Survivors  
Club*

BANTAM BOOKS





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A Bantam Book

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## PRAISE FOR LISA GARDNER'S NOVELS

### *The Survivors Club*

"One cannot read this excellent new novel by bestselling author Gardner without wondering what actors might play these characters. . . . Rocks and rolls right up to a nail-biter ending."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"This should cement Lisa Gardner's place on the best-seller lists. *The Survivors Club* has it all—provocative plotting, an astute eye for detail, engaging characters, and a razor-sharp emotional edge."

—Stephen White, *New York Times* bestselling author

"Hot dang, a new Lisa Gardner book! I love her hot, fast thrill rides. I'm always first in line to grab my copy of her newest release the day it arrives in stores. For my money, when it comes to suspense, nobody does it better."

—Jayne Ann Krentz, *New York Times* bestselling author

### *The Next Accident*

"[An] accomplished psycho-killer tale."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Harrowing. A fiendishly well-choreographed dance of death."

—*Booklist*

**“A suspense-laden, twist-filled tale.”**

—*The Providence Journal-Bulletin*

**“Gardner has created psychological terror at its highest. . . . Definitely a must read.”**

—*The Snooper*

**“The suspense is constant. . . . A satisfying novel.”**

—*The Plain Dealer*

**“Lisa Gardner has shot to the top of the suspense field at an astonishing rate. A remarkable talent.”**

—*Romantic Times*

## ***The Third Victim***

**“Riveting, hold-your-breath suspense!”**

—Iris Johansen

**“Gardner deftly probes the psychology of school shootings while developing a cast of complex, compelling characters. . . . A suspenseful, curl-up winter read, this thriller teems with crisp, realistic dialogue and engaging characters.”**

—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

**“An extraordinary book . . . Deftly [Gardner] has crafted multi-dimensional characters. . . . Their emotions are well-expressed in crisp, pertinent dialogue and the tensions are sustained . . . with seemingly effortless ease. Scenes shift, the pace varies: all to perfection.”**

—*The Romance Reader*



## ***The Other Daughter***

**"Sheer terror . . . A great read."**

**—Iris Johansen**

**"Suspenseful, engrossing page-turner . . . one of those books that keep you up late, enslaved by the 'just one more chapter' syndrome."**

**—*Mystery News***

**"Once again, Gardner serves up suspense at a furious pace."**

**—*Publishers Weekly***

## ***The Perfect Husband***

**"A streamlined bang-up addition to the oeuvre of Tami Hoag, Karen Robards, Elizabeth Powell and, these days, even Nora Roberts."**

**—*Publishers Weekly***

**"Readers get loads of angst, great procedural stuff, some hair-raising action scenes, and a villain to keep you awake at night. What more can any thriller reader want?"**

**—*Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine***

**"Scary, gritty, terrifying. Lock the door, leave on a light." —*The Oakland Press***

**"A page-turner."**

**—Rocky Mountain News**

**"A chilling story of revenge and betrayal, with one of the creepiest villains I've ever read."**

**—Iris Johansen**

**"An unforgettably evil villain and a throat-gripping climax make *The Perfect Husband* a real page-turner!"**

**—Tess Gerritsen**

**"I loved this book! I was up till 2 A.M. finishing it!"**

**—Karen Robards**

**"Nail-biting suspense . . . a taut roller coaster of a story that kept me up very, very late."**

**—Kay Hooper**

BY LISA GARDNER

*The Perfect Husband*

*The Other Daughter*

*The Third Victim*

*The Next Accident*

*The Survivors Club*



## *Acknowledgments*

As a general rule, I enjoy researching all of my novels. Murder, mayhem, investigative procedures, it's all good stuff. This time around, however, I had a particularly wonderful experience, and for that I'm deeply indebted to the Rhode Island State Police. Not only are they one of the best law enforcement agencies in the country, but they are also helpful, generous and patient people. From explaining the proper protocol for rendering a salute to demonstrating the new AFIS technology, the officers went out of their way to answer my questions and impress upon me the pride they have in their organization. It worked. I'm very impressed by the RI State Police, and I have even started following the speed limit. Well, okay, so the latter half only lasted for a bit. I tried and that says something about their powers of persuasion right there.

Of course, as with all novels, I promptly warped most of the information they graciously provided. In this novel you'll find police procedure and forensics testing happening at approximately the speed of light. Also, my police detectives are perhaps a tad rougher around the edges and a bit more familiar with murder suspects than their real-life counterparts. Remember, the RI State Police detectives

have real jobs. I, on the other hand, am a fiction writer who makes things up.

I would like to thank the following members of the RI State Police for their assistance: former Superintendent Colonel Edmond S. Culhane, Jr. (ret.); Superintendent Colonel Steven M. Pare; Major Michael Quinn; Inspector John J. Leyden, Jr.; Lieutenant John Virgilio; Lieutenant Mark Bilodeau; Corporal Eric L. Croce; and Detective James Dougherty.

From the Providence Police Department I would like to thank Lieutenant Paul Kennedy and Sergeant Napoleon Brito. They also gave me the warmest reception, as well as a wonderful collection of gory anecdotes. Let's just say I never fully appreciated the history of dismemberment in the Ocean State before visiting the PPD.

Finally, I owe the following people my deepest gratitude for assisting me in the development of this novel:

Dr. Gregory K. Moffatt, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Atlanta Christian College, a wonderful friend and a very wise man.

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Kathy Hammond, phlebotomist, Rhode Island Blood Center, and my bloodsucker of choice.

Jim Martin, Public Information Officer, Department of the Attorney General, Rhode Island.

The Providence Preservation Society.

Kathleen Walsh, executive assistant and overall savior of my sanity.

And finally, my very tolerant husband, Anthony.

This time around, it was his Ghirardelli double-chocolate brownies that saved the day.

Once again, all mistakes in the novel are mine. Anything you think is particularly brilliant I'll take responsibility for as well.

Happy reading!

*Lisa Gardner*



## ***About the Author***

LISA GARDNER is the *New York Times* best-selling author of *The Perfect Husband*, *The Other Daughter*, *The Third Victim*, and *The Next Accident*. She lives in New England with her husband, Anthony, and two highly spoiled dogs and two incredibly pampered cats, where she is at work on her next novel, *The Killing Hour*.

Turn the page for an exciting  
early look at Lisa Gardner's latest  
thriller, **THE KILLING HOUR**,  
coming in hardcover from  
Bantam Books in July 2003.

# *The Killing Hour*

**LISA GARDNER**

## CHAPTER ONE

*Quantico, VA*

*3:01 p.m.*

*Temperature: 95 degrees*

“God, it’s hot. Cacti couldn’t take this kind of heat. Desert rock couldn’t take this kind of heat. I’m telling you, this is what happened right before dinosaurs disappeared from the earth.”

No response. Another awkward stretch of silence. “You really think orange is my color?” the driver tried again.

Finally a reply: “‘Really’ is a strong word.”

“Well, not everyone can make a statement in purple plaid.”

“True.”

“Man oh man, is this heat *killing* me!” The driver, new agent Alissa Sampson, had had enough. She tugged futilely on her shockingly orange, definitely vintage 1970s polyester suit, smacked the steering



wheel with the palm of her hand, then blew out an exasperated breath. It was ninety-five outside, probably one hundred and ten inside the Bucar. Not great weather for polyester suits. For that matter, it didn't work wonders for twenty-pound bulletproof vests. Alissa's suit bled bright orange stains under her arms. Kimberly's own mothball-scented pink-and-purple-plaid suit didn't look much better.

Alissa's fingers drummed along the steering wheel, her other hand leaving a damp palm print on the edge of her seat.

The street was quiet. Nothing happening at Billiards; nothing happening at City Pawn; nothing happening at the Pastime Bar-Deli. Minute ticked into minute. Seconds came and went as slowly as a bead of sweat trickling down Kimberly's sunken cheek, across her pale jawline, then over her already wet neck to join the sopping collar of her white silk shirt.

New agent Kimberly Quincy still didn't move. She kept her gaze out the window. Focus. Control. Patience. Above her head, fastened to the roof but ready to go at any minute, was her M-16 rifle.

"Here's something they never tell you about the disco age," Alissa muttered beside her. "Polyester doesn't breathe." She twisted abruptly in her seat. "God, is this thing going to happen or *what*?"

Alissa was nervous. A forensics accountant before joining the Bureau, she was highly valued for her deep-seated love of all things spreadsheet. This, however, wasn't a backroom gig. This was frontline duty.

In theory, at any time now, a black vehicle bearing a two-hundred-and-ten-pound highly armed suspected arms dealer was going to appear. He might or might not be alone in the car. Kimberly and Alissa, plus three other agents, had orders to halt the vehicle and arrest everyone in sight.

Phil Lehané, a former New York cop with the most street experience, was leading the operation. Tom Squire and Peter Vince were in the second backup vehicle. Alissa and Kimberly were in the third. Kimberly and Tom, being above-average marksmen, had cover duty with the rifles. Alissa and Peter were in charge of tactical driving, plus had handguns for cover.

In consummate FBI style, they not only planned and dressed for this arrest, but they had practiced it in advance. During the initial run-through, however, Alissa had tripped when getting out of the car and had landed on her face. Her upper lip was still swollen and there were flecks of blood on the right-hand corner of her mouth.

Her wounds were superficial. Her nervousness, however, now went bone-deep.

"This is taking too long," she muttered. "I thought he was supposed to appear at the bank at three. Now it's three-ten. I don't think he's coming."

"People run late."

"They do this just to mess with our minds. Aren't you boiling?"

Kimberly finally looked at her partner. When Alissa was nervous, she babbled. When Kimberly



was nervous, she grew clipped and curt. These days, she was clipped and curt most of the time. "The guy will show up when the guy shows up. Now, chill out!"

Alissa thinned her lips. For a second, something flared in her bright blue eyes. Anger. Hurt. Embarrassment. It was hard to be sure. Kimberly was another woman in the male-run world of the still very chauvinistic Bureau, so criticism coming from her was akin to blasphemy. They were supposed to stick together. Girl power, the Ya Ya Sisterhood and all that crap.

Kimberly went back to gazing at the street. Now she was angry, too, and the air in the car was strained. Damn. Double damn. Shit.

The radio on the dash suddenly crackled to life. Alissa swooped up the receiver without bothering to hide her relief.

Phil Lehane's voice was hushed but steady: "This is Vehicle A. Target now in sight, climbing into his vehicle. Ready, Vehicle B?"

"Ready."

"Ready, Vehicle C?"

Alissa clicked the receiver. "Ready, willing, and able."

"We go on three. One, two, *three*."

The first siren exploded across the hot, sweltering street, and even though Kimberly had been expecting the noise, she still flinched in her seat.

"Easy," Alissa said dryly, then fired the Bucar to life. A blast of hot air promptly burst from the vents