

The Mysterious Messenger

Volume 4, April 2020

www.mysterylovers.com

Welcome to the fourth issue of the monthly Mysterious Messenger newsletter. Time is passing too quickly and not at all, all at the same time! It's almost the end of the month, how did that happen so quickly?

Looking back: this month in 1990, the year the store was founded, [The Bourne Ultimatum](#) by [Robert Ludlum](#) continued to reign number one on the New York Times Best Sellers list.

As many of you know, in response to the current COVID19 health crisis, we voluntarily closed our doors to our physical store in March. We are still up and running online and taking phone and email orders.

Please be patient with us as order fulfillment has slowed because all of our carriers and distribution centers are operating under very strict safety guidelines in order to keep us all healthy. We are so appreciative of their efforts to put all of our health and well being first.

We truly cannot express the gratitude and support we have received from everyone. We miss seeing and talking with everyone and look forward the days when the doors are open again. We are working through a plan for when it is safe to re-open, and we will share more as restrictions are lifted and we know we can safely operate with our doors open. Until then, we miss you and stay safe and healthy!

Mother's Day Is Sunday, May 10th!



Mother's Day is coming soon and books make great gifts! Our website has millions of books available to order in addition to the store inventory. You can find cookbooks, general interest and hobby books in addition to beautiful stationery and notecard sets.

[Shop our Mother's Day gift guide online!](#)

What's inside this issue?

We checked in with one of our good friends, Hank Phillippi Ryan, to see what she is reading during these times of social distancing. Wow, are we impressed with her reading accomplishment AND a new book coming in August!!

Author interviews, author interviews & more author interviews! Meet the 'Lady Sleuths'! We interviewed all of the authors participating in the May 2nd Lady Sleuth Book Party and we think you will be excited after you read what they have to say! Schedule and registration information are also in this issue.

Meet Sara Dahman, novelist, and the only female coppersmith building cookware in the USA. She will be joining Liz Milliron for an Instagram live event this week!

Keep reading to the end for a look ahead at books to look for in May!

Author's Corner



We miss everyone terribly and especially miss having author events at the the store.

We checked in with our good friend, [Hank Phillippi Ryan](#), to see what she is reading during these times of social isolation. I am sure you remember that Hank joined us in February as a panelist for our

Oakmont Carnegie Library fundraiser, 'The Perfect Crime' and has been a great friend of the store for many years!

We asked her what she is reading and, of course, what she is writing!

Hank: Reading is so different right now, is n't it? My brain bounces from book to book, and it's a little bit hard to pay attention. As a result of that, the quality of books becomes so clear--when a book is absolutely terrific, that's the only way my brain stays engaged.

I am so lucky to get to read advance copies of these terrific books that are coming out soon, and that is the joy of my life right now! I just finished the amazing [SISTER DEAR](#) by Hannah Mary McKinnon. It completely fooled me! And I adore when that happens. [HURRY HOME](#) by Roz Nay is sinister and chilling, and a real wow of a book. Samantha Downing's newest one, [HE STARTED IT](#), is riveting and wonderfully original--so many twists! And oh, Heather Gudenkauf's [THIS IS HOW I LIED](#). She is endlessly incredible--I am always so blown away by her talent. All of these books are coming soon, and I cannot wait for you to read them. Cara

Black's [Three Hours in Paris](#) next is on the pile — and I hear it's fantastic.

I'm also reading Herman Wouk's [Winds of War](#) again—sagas like that are so engrossing, and even inspirational. I also have a secret plan to re-read all of the Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers books. What do you think about that?

As for writing, I am, step-by-step, working on my book for 2021! Which is still untitled. But hurray, my brand new psychological thriller, [THE FIRST TO LIE](#), comes out August 4. And I am thrilled thrilled thrilled. I never know how a book will end when I begin to write it, and when I finally figured this one out, I gasped with surprise! I hope you will too. **(HOOOORAY!!! [The First To Lie](#) will be available for pre-order 90 days before the publishing date).**

'VIRTUAL' EVENTS UPDATE

We figured it out and have successfully hosted several events virtually. Hooray and thank you for everyone who has attended! We will continue to host events virtually for the near future and hope that you are able to attend a few!

History, Mystery & Food with Sara Dahmen & Liz Milliron

The poster is for an Instagram Live event. At the top, it says "Instagram Live" in a cursive font. Below that, "with Sara Dahmen" and "author of Copper, Iron, & Clay - A Smith's Journey". The date and time are "Friday, May 1, 2020 4pm Eastern/1pm Pacific". A text box says "Make sure to follow me on Instagram (@lizmilliron) and follow along as Sara and I talk about a tasty combination of history, mystery, and food!". On the left is a book cover for "The Enemy We Don't Know" by Liz Milliron. On the right is a book cover for "Copper, Iron, and Clay: A Smith's Journey" by Sara Dahmen.

Join Liz Milliron on Instagram Live as she speaks with guest Sara Dahmen about a some historical mystery, some historical cookware, and how they related. Follow [@lizmilliron](#) to view the Instagram Live discussion this Friday, May 1st at 4:00pm.

About Sara's book; [Copper, Iron & Clay: A Smith's Journey](#): A gorgeous, full-color illustrated love letter to our most revered cookware—copper pots, cast-iron skillets, and classic stoneware—and the artistry and workmanship behind them, written by an expert craftsperson, perhaps the only woman coppersmith in America.

Today, most people are concerned about eating seasonal, organic, and local food. But we don't think

about how the choices we make about our pots, pans, and bowls can also enhance our meals and our lives. Sara Dahmen believes understanding the origins of the cookware we use to make our food is just as essential. Copper, Iron, and Clay, is a beautiful photographic history of our cooking tools and their fundamental uses in the modern kitchen, accompanied by recipes that showcase the best features of various cooking materials.

Lady Sleuths Book Party Virtual Event! **May 2nd at 12pm**

The poster is yellow with a border of blue book icons and steam rising from them. In the center, it says "Lady Sleuths Book Party May 2, 2020 12 pm Eastern". Below that, "Join Us! www.crowdcast.io/e/lady-sleuths/register". A list of authors follows: "Ellen Byron/Maria DiRico, Annette Dashofy, Cynthia Kuhn, Keenan Powell, Lissa Marie Redmond, Mary Sutton/Liz Milliron, Elena Taylor & Kathy Valenti and Mystery Lovers Bookshop". At the bottom, it says "Laughter, fun, giveaways!".

Are you a fan of Lady Sleuths and Lady Sleuth authors? If so, you don't want to miss this exciting event on May 2nd!

We are excited to participate as official bookseller for this virtual event! Join 8 lady sleuth authors for one event on May 2nd at 12:00pm. You can view the event schedule, register, and purchase books online here:

Lady Sleuths Book Party Registration & Event Schedule

Meet The Authors!

Would you like to learn more about the Lady Sleuth authors participating in this event?

We asked them to answer a few questions so readers could get to know them a bit more before the event on Saturday.

Here is what they have to say...



USA Today bestselling author Ellen Byron is a television writer, playwright, and freelance journalist. Her TV credits include *Wings*, *Still Standing*, and *Just Shoot Me*, and her written work has appeared in *Glamour*, *Redbook*, and *Seventeen*, among others. She lives in the Los Angeles area with her husband,

their daughter, and the family's very spoiled rescue dog. A native New Yorker, Ellen still misses her hometown and still drives like a New York Cabbie. This is her fifth Cajun Country mystery.

Tell us a bit about your latest release, but don't give away any spoilers. My latest release is the first book in my new [Catering Hall Mystery](#) series, which I'm writing for Kensington under the pen name Maria DiRico – my late nonna's maiden name. In *HERE COMES THE BODY*, a humorous mystery, Mia Carina moves back home to Queens to help her father, a member of the Boldano crime family, run a banquet hall as a legitimate business. But much to Mia's surprise, it turns out working for a banquet hall can be as dangerous as working for the Mob.

What is the most exciting part of the book that readers will really enjoy/be most surprised shocked by? Without revealing too much, I'll say it's where the first body is discovered. I was pretty proud of myself when I came up with the idea. I was like, someone must have done this before - but as far as I know, no one has. (Although having said this, I'm sure someone will write in to say, "Actually..." And list an example from another book!)

Tell us about yourself as a writer, how did you find inspiration for your book/book series. Have you always been or aspired to be a writer, if not - what drove you to this? My dad was a writer and so are both my brothers, so it really feels like it's in our genes. But I set out to be an actress. I pursued that for about five or six years and during a period where I wasn't getting much work, I wrote a play. This launched me on a playwrighting career and then I transitioned to TV, writing for series like *WINGS*, *JUST SHOOT ME*, and *FAIRLY ODD PARENTS*. In terms of both my series – I also write the [Cajun Country Mysteries](#) as Ellen Byron – the Cajun Country series was inspired by the passion I developed for the region as a student at New Orleans' Tulane University. The *Catering Hall Mystery* series was inspired by my real life. My mother was born in Italy and growing up, Italian cousins ran a couple of catering halls in Queens. Mia, my protagonist, works in the place where my husband and I had our New York reception. She literally lives in my nonna's Astoria, Queens home. Both series are very personal to me.

Who has inspired you as a writer and how does it influence your work? [Agatha Christie](#), for one. Her plotting is impeccable. She also has more of a sense of humor than she gets credit for. She described a character as having eyes the color of "boiled gooseberries." I didn't even know what a gooseberry is – I had to look it up! – but that description told me so much in a small, acerbic way. I also love the Brontes and [Daphne Du Maurier](#). And I try to read as many books by friends as I can, which is daunting now that I know so many other mystery authors. But someone else who inspires me is my late father. He was the quintessential Mad Man, working as a creative director and occasional account executive in the NYC advertising industry. I joke that he was Don Draper if Don had been Jewish, monogamous, and a bit less handsome. But Dad lived to write. We authors have to do so much of our own promo these days, but I enjoy it because dad instilled a bit of the ad man in me. I just wish he was still around so we could brainstorm together. Many is the time I've asked myself, WWWDD? What Would Dad Do?

In these times of social isolation, how is this helping/hindering your work as a writer?

I blog with some fabulous authors at [chicksonthecase.com](#) and we've been having writing sprints. I'm pretty good about putting pedal to the metal writing-wise, but the sprints are really helping me get going, especially on those days when I'm dragging. What's also helping me is using writing as a way to distract myself if I feel like I'm getting sucked down into a vortex of fear, anger, and depression. It's funny – people procrastinate as a way to avoid writing. I often procrastinate BY writing to avoid other emotions or tasks.

What are working on now, writing or otherwise?

I just finished the draft for my 7th Cajun Country Mystery and will now launch into the draft for my third *Catering Hall* book.

What are you reading now? [MURDER IN DEEP REGRET](#), the most recent addition to [Anne Cleeland's Doyle](#) & Acton Murder series. I like to read outside my genre because it inspires me to add colors and layers to my own work.

Is there something exciting coming up that you want to share with your readers? A new contract, book options, a new pet (LOL)? *MURDER IN THE BAYOU BONEYARD* launches in September and I'm super excited because it's a Halloween-themed book that includes some Louisiana folklore. A Halloween mystery set in the state that proudly bills itself as the most haunted in the country feels like a perfect fit. And *LONG ISLAND ICED TINA*, my second *Catering Hall Mystery*, will launch in March 2021. I had so much fun writing both books!

Cynthia Kuhn



Cynthia Kuhn writes the Lila Maclean Academic Mystery series: *The Semester of Our Discontent*, *The Art of Vanishing*, *The Spirit in Question*, *The Subject of Malice*, and *The Study of Secrets*.

Her work has also appeared in *Mystery Most Edible*, *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern*, *Literary Mama*, *Copper Nickel*, *Prick of the Spindle*, *Mama PhD*, and other publications.

She is professor of English at Metropolitan State University of Denver, where she teaches literature, writing, and film. In addition, she blogs with *Chicks on the Case* and is a member of *Sisters in Crime*, *Mystery Writers of America*, *International Thriller Writers*, and the *Short Mystery Fiction Society*.

Tell us a bit about your latest release, but don't give away any spoilers. [The Study of Secrets](#) is the fifth book in the [Lila Maclean Academic Mystery](#) series. Here's an introduction: There could be nowhere more fitting for English professor Lila Maclean to spend her sabbatical than in a proper Victorian mansion. The whimsical Callahan House seems to have materialized from the pages of the mystery novels she is researching, with its enchanting towers, cozy nooks, and charming library. Unfortunately, it also features a body in the study.

Tell us about yourself as a writer, how did you find inspiration for your book/book series. Have you always been or aspired to be a writer, if not - what drove you to this? I have written fiction and poetry my whole life, but the dream was always to write novels. It took a long time to get to them!

Who has inspired you as a writer and how does it influence your work? [L.M. Montgomery](#) (both the Emily and Anne series) probably had the most influence. I re-read those books over and over again until the covers fell off. [The Princess Bride](#) was another favorite. Influential mysteries would go all the way back to the [Nancy Drew](#) and [Trixie Belden](#) books, then [Phyllis Whitney](#) and [Agatha Christie](#) and later, [Amanda Cross](#) and others. I can't say exactly how they've influenced my work, but they have inspired me.

In these times of social isolation, how is this helping/hindering your work as a writer?

The process is the same—open the document and start writing—but I'm finding it much harder than usual to concentrate.

What are working on now, writing or otherwise?

I've written a new book (hopefully for a new series) and am revising it now.

What are you reading now?

Currently, I'm trying to catch up on all the mysteries that I've already bought, especially those written by friends.

Is there something exciting coming up that you want to share with your readers? A new contract, book options, a new pet (LOL)? [The Study of Secrets](#) will be out May 26, and there's a launch party the next night on Facebook! You're all invited.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/211758516533192/>

Keenan Powell



I write murder mysteries because I love mystery best. Only in mystery do you have the puzzle, the game played between writer and reader. The writer plants clues and red herrings in what she hopes is an enjoyable story. The reader pits herself against the writer to figure out whodunit.

Growing up, I loved to draw. When I was seventeen years old, I showed some of my sketches to my brother-in-law who was creating a little role-playing game with his buddies and he asked me if I could draw dragons. Sure, I could! So, my first publication was Dungeons and Dragons, 1st Edition, (1974).

Tell us a bit about your latest release, but don't give away any spoilers. In [HELL AND HIGH WATER](#), Attorney Maeve Malloy is taking time off from the legal field, thinking about whether she really wants to be a lawyer after all. She just wants to be like everyone else so she takes a job as a kitchen helper at a guest lodge on Fox Island in Resurrection Bay near Seward, Alaska, hiding her law-related past. She meets a quirky set of characters: the hippy lodge owner and chef and her perpetually-high husband, an old biker chic manager, a couple of California tourists, two nuns, and a plant biologist. Just as the tail-end of a hurricane rolls in, a hungry bear begins prowling the lodge and a body turns up. The local police ask Maeve to investigate, blowing her cover, and suddenly her new friends aren't so friendly anymore.

What is the most exciting part of the book that readers will really enjoy/be most surprised shocked by? Life in remote Alaska is very different from the Lower 48. Or from Anchorage, for what it's worth. There's no running to the store when you run out of milk. When bears are around, you don't take out the garbage unless you're armed.

Tell us about yourself as a writer, how did you find inspiration for your book/book series. Have you

always been or aspired to be a writer, if not - what drove you to this? had toyed with the idea of writing in college but didn't have a story to tell, so I ended up going to law school and spending decades telling other people's stories. One day, I was sitting in a law seminar watching two old lawyer bicker when they started talking about a case they'd had years before. A man had died of a heart attack while working on an oil rig and they needed an autopsy to determine whether the heart attack was caused by something work-related or if he had longstanding heart disease. That's when they mentioned a little known law: the medical examiner has the authority to declare the cause of death without doing an autopsy and, further, has the authority to dispose (cremate) the remains if not claimed within 72 hours. How convenient for a serial killer! That was the inspiration of my first Maeve Malloy, DEADLY SOLUTION, which was nominated for an Agatha and a Lefty, and was short-listed for a Silver Falchion.

Who has inspired you as a writer and how does it influence your work? Some of the authors that have inspired me are [Charles Todd](#), [Tony Hillerman](#), [Louise Penny](#), and, of course, the great [Agatha Christie](#). From these writers, I've learned that you can write just about anything within the framework of crime fiction.

In these times of social isolation, how is this helping/hindering your work as a writer?

I'm feeling more hindered than helped as a writer. The constant rule changing makes it difficult to concentrate. And I still have a day job that pays the bills so that needs to be my first priority. Finally, my brand-new dishwasher died after this all started and I have a 15 year old boy to feed so I'm spending two hours a day in the kitchen, making food and washing dishes. Ironical since in my last Maeve Malloy, she took a job washing dishes, don't you think?

What are working on now, writing or otherwise?

I've written a new book (hopefully for a new series) and am revising it now.

What are you reading now? Currently, I'm trying to catch up on all the mysteries that I've already bought, especially those written by friends.

Is there something exciting coming up that you want to share with your readers? A new contract, book options, a new pet (LOL)?

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Liz Milliron



Liz Milliron *Liz Milliron has been making up stories, and creating her own endings for other people's stories, for as long as she can remember. She's worked for twenty years in the corporate world, but finds making things up is far more satisfying than writing software manuals. A lifelong mystery fan,*

she is the author of The Laurel Highlands Mysteries from Level Best Books. Her short fiction has appeared at Uppagus and Mysterical-e. and been in Lucky Charms: 12 Crime Tales, the Anthony award-winning Blood on the Bayou (the 2016 Bouchercon anthology), Fish Out of Water, Malice Domestic 12 – Mystery Most Historical and The Killer Wore Cranberry: A Fifth Course of Chaos.

Tell us a bit about your latest release, but don't give away any spoilers. [The Enemy We Don't Know](#) is "Rosie the Riveter meets Sam Spade." Betty Ahern is a young woman who works for Bell Airplane in 1942, but secretly wants to be a detective like her movie hero, Sam Spade. She gets her chance when a co-worker hires her to clear her name after being accused of sabotage.

What is the most exciting part of the book that readers will really enjoy/be most surprised shocked by? The book takes you through a lot of the ethnic neighborhoods in 1940s Buffalo and I hope readers will enjoy the look at what the city used to be like.

Tell us about yourself as a writer, how did you find inspiration for your book/book series. Have you always been or aspired to be a writer, if not - what drove you to this? The character of Betty Ahern was inspired by my grandmother, who did work for Bell during the war. I wrote this book at a time when I was looking to write something different and it seems to have worked out.

In these times of social isolation, how is this helping/hindering your work as a writer?

Because I can't watch the news without getting angry or hyperventilating, writing has been a welcome escape. It's nice to be able to fall into a world where bad things happen, but I can control the outcome and make it all right again.

What are working on now, writing or otherwise?

Right now, I'm drafting the second Home Front mystery, called The Stories We Tell. At the same time, I'm in the middle of pre-publication activities for the third in my [Laurel Highlands Mysteries](#) series, Broken Trust, which comes out this August.

What are you reading now? As I said, I can't read or watch the news, so I've got several things going. I'm reading [Hell and High Water](#), the third in Keenan Powell's excellent Maeve Malloy series. I have Harry [Potter & the Prisoner of Azkaban](#) for bedtime reading, and I'm picking at Terrible Swift Sword, the third in Bruce Catton's famous Civil War history trilogy.

Is there something exciting coming up that you want to share with your readers? A new contract, book options, a new pet (LOL)?

I'm starting a new Facebook Live series, Reading with Koda (that's my dog), where I read the first chapter of a book. I'm starting with books I've enjoyed, but I'm open to suggestions. Write to me on my Facebook page (www.facebook.com/LizMilliron)

[Lissa Marie Redmond](#)



Lissa Marie Redmond is a retired cold case homicide detective from Buffalo, NY. She handled a number of high-profile cases and appeared on numerous television shows including Dateline and Murder by Numbers. Her short fiction has appeared in *Buffalo Noir*, *Down & Out: The Magazine* and other

publications. Her Cold Case Investigation series was published by Midnight Ink Books.

Tell us a bit about your latest release, but don't give away any spoilers. In [The Secrets They Left Behind](#) a rookie cop has to go undercover at a rural community college to try to figure out the mystery behind the disappearance of three freshmen over winter break. Shea O'Connor is a twenty-three-year-old cop whose young appearance is a liability on the street but an advantage in undercover work. Equal parts mystery, danger and romance, this book is quite different than my [Cold Case Investigation](#) series.

What is the most exciting part of the book that readers will really enjoy/be most surprised shocked by? How emotionally involved Shea gets the longer she's undercover. Already emotionally damaged from the last case she worked on, she becomes attached to the missing girls' friends and family members, even though she knows how unhealthy that is.

Tell us about yourself as a writer, how did you find inspiration for your book/book series. Have you always been or aspired to be a writer, if not - what drove you to this? I've been a writer for as long as I can remember. I think working as a police officer for twenty-two years filled my head with ideas that are finally able to come out now that I'm retired. I'd hate to just let them keep rattling around in there!

Who has inspired you as a writer and how does it influence your work? I love [Agatha Christie](#), [Ed McBain](#), [Stephen King](#), and [Gillian Flynn](#). But I also read a lot of science fiction, fantasy and young adult. I think the more widely you read, the better your own writing becomes.

In these times of social isolation, how is this helping/hindering your work as a writer?

You would think I'd be writing fifty pages a day, but the opposite is true. I'm having a hard time concentrating on my writing. I think all the distractions around my house (laundry, dishes, dinner) have taken over my brain! Hopefully, I'll be able to get back on my regular writing schedule soon.

What are working on now, writing or otherwise?

I just finished a short story for an anthology and I've been playing around with a couple of stories to see if I can flesh any of them out into a full-length novel. I'm also outlining another book for my Cold Case Investigation series.

What are you reading now? I just finished [The Grace Year](#) by Kim Liggett. Having two teenage daughters means having loads of YA books in the house and I highly recommend this one if you liked [The Hunger Games](#) or [Divergent](#) series.

Is there something exciting coming up that you want to share with your readers? A new contract, book options, a new pet (LOL)? I'm super excited that [The Secrets They Left Behind](#) is now available on Audiobook, and the fourth book in my Cold Case series, [A Full Cold Moon](#), will be out in Audio format on May 5th! I wish I was getting another pet but I think my spoiled dog and pampered cat would kill me!

[Elena Taylor](#)



Elena Taylor worked in theater for twenty years before she turned her storytelling skills to fiction. Elena was a playwright, director, designer, technician, and educator. Elena taught a variety of theater classes at the college/university level, as well as Popular Fiction. She also teaches

workshops on writing and works one-on-one with writers as a developmental editor and writing coach. She is also the author of a private eye series, published under the name Elena Hartwell. When she's not writing, she can be found playing with her horses, dog, cats, and hanging out with her husband

at their home on the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River.

Tell us a bit about your latest release, but don't give away any spoilers. [All We Buried](#) is about a young woman name Elizabeth "Bet" Rivers, who returns to her tiny hometown to fill in as interim sheriff when her father falls ill. She anticipates he'll recover and she can return to the life she's building on her own. When he dies in an "accidental" fall, she finds herself faced with a dilemma, stay and fight to fill his seat in the next election or go back to Los Angeles and the career she envisioned. She feels intense loyalty to her father and her town but also desires the vision she has for her life, so she's torn. The novel opens a few months after her father's death. A visiting scientist discovers the body of a Jane Doe floating in the nearby lake. Now Bet faces her first homicide investigation knowing her future may rest on her ability to catch the killer.

What is the most engaging aspect of this story?

Besides the mystery itself, I think there are two aspects of [All We Buried](#) that will draw readers in. The first is the very human experience Bet has of trying to determine how she sees her life. What she wants from a career, a romantic partner, how she grieves for her father. The second is the description of her location. [All We Buried](#) is set high in the Cascade Mountain Range of Washington State. For those who have never traveled in my area, the novel has very accurate depictions of the dramatic landscape of our mountains. From the depths of a dark, dark lake, to the quaint "western" town of Collier, armchair travelers will see a part of the country they may not be familiar with. Those of us lucky enough to live here will see their geography act as a character alongside the rest of the crew in the novel.

Tell us about your writing journey:

I started out as a playwright. Wait, let me back up a few years. I started out as a storyteller. I have been writing stories for as long as I can remember. I wrote my first "book" when I was about seven. It was full of wizards and dragons, and had illustrations and cover art. I stitched it together along the binding with red embroidery thread. In college I got involved with theatre. I worked as a playwright, less because I was meant to be a playwright and more because I was a writer who worked in theater. I learned a lot during those twenty years. Working as a director, playwright, educator, and designer, I discovered a lot about story structure and dialogue and character development. But I always wanted to write a novel. So I did. Then I wrote another, and another. I finally landed a three book deal with my fourth novel, which launched my Private Eye series - the Eddie Shoes Mystery Series. I wrote those under the name Elena Hartwell. [All We Buried](#) is the first in what I hope becomes the Sheriff Bet Rivers Mystery Series. Because the Eddie Shoes books are very lighthearted and funny, we decided to launch the Sheriff Bet Rivers Mysteries under a pen name. Check in with me next year to find out about book two!

Who has inspired you as a writer and how does it influence your work? I'm most inspired by authors who never give up. Every time a writer has some modicum of success, there's always another benchmark. We finish a manuscript, we have to find an agent, we land an agent, we have to find a publisher, we find a publisher we have to have decent sales, we have decent sales, we have to write another book . . . Every one of those steps can falter for any given manuscript. I love my agent and I'm glad I have a home with Crooked Lane Books, but there's always more in front of me. I have to write the next book, I have to hope my editor wants it - or if not, that my agent can place another book with another publisher. Add in all the unknowns in the current situation and, well, you get the picture. So I am most inspired by the writer who never gives up. The author who achieves bestselling success twenty books in. The author who starts out with a bang, then the second book fails, but gets themselves back up, dusts off the keyboard, and finishes book three. I'm inspired by all the writers who sit down at their computer every single day not knowing if the book will be there, if the sales will be there, if anyone will want their work but writing anyway. It helps me get back at my computer no matter what.

In these times of social isolation, how is this helping/hindering your work as a writer?

I'm incredibly lucky right now, in that both my husband I usually do most of our work from home. I live in a beautiful place, where it's relatively easy to stay isolated and yet still get outside. What's difficult is the struggle to keep my concentration. I worry about the health and safety of friends and family. I feel empathy for those around the world losing income, loved ones, or even their own lives. As this tragedy unfolds, it's hard to stay focused on writing. But, having said that, it's still what I love to do. My days are both the same as before the pandemic and totally different, I work in the morning, I spend time with my horses in the afternoon, I work again when I get home. Then I binge watch TV too late into the night. It's also completely different as I haven't done anything else but those things for more than 40 days. I think the hardest part is not knowing when all this will "end" or what the world will look like when it does.

What are working on now, writing or otherwise?

I'm working on what I hope will be book two of the Sheriff Bet Rivers Mysteries. I'm also slowly making a teddy bear by hand for my beautiful grandbaby. She was born in February, so I got to visit her, my stepdaughter, and son-in-law before the quarantine, but now we can only visit over Zoom. I have a few other story ideas percolating that I'd like to get to as well, so I'm excited about what the future will bring.

What are you reading now? In addition to writing, I'm a developmental editor with [Allegory Editing](#) and a reviewer for the [New York Journal of Books](#). I'm currently reading a fantastic manuscript by an author I've worked with before. It's just terrific and I'm thrilled with how

strong this draft is. Then I'm reviewing [The Silence](#) by Susan Allott. I'm about halfway through reading it and I'm loving it! Such a beautifully written book and set in (primarily) Australia, with fascinating descriptions and background on a country I don't know a lot about. Lastly, I'm reading a textbook on police procedures in homicide investigations. I love research!

Is there something exciting coming up that you want to share with your readers? A new contract, book options, a new pet (LOL)? I'm thrilled that *All We Buried* just launched as an audio book! If anyone would like to keep updated on future events and exciting news (including pet pics!) they can sign up for my newsletter by visiting my website: <http://www.elenataylorauthor.com> and scrolling down to the sign up at the bottom of the page.

[Kathleen Valenti](#)



I've been writing for more than 20 years, first as a nationally award-winning copywriter and now as the author of the Maggie O'Malley Mystery Series. A firm believer that deadpan can be dead-on, I combine funny with frightening to craft page-turners of mystery and suspense.

In my debut novel, *Agatha and Lefty* Award-nominated *Protocol*, Maggie O'Malley examines the flaws of technology, the price of modern medicine, and the depths of greed to uncover what happens when the invisible among us disappear. In my second book, *39 Winks*, Maggie works to help her best friend's aunt, who discovered her husband's body during a sleepwalking episode.

Tell us a bit about your latest release, but don't give away any spoilers. My latest book is [As Directed](#). It's the third book in the [Maggie O'Malley series](#), and it follows Maggie as she makes the move from pharmaceutical researcher to pharmacy technician. Just as she begins to spread her wings at her new job, things begin to go terribly wrong. A customer falls ill in the drugstore. Followed by another. And then more. A suspicion of poisoning arises, conjuring old grudges, past sins, buried secrets, and new suspicions from which no one is immune. I know I'm not supposed to have favorites among the books that I write, but this one has a special place in my heart!

What is the most exciting part of the book that readers will really enjoy/be most surprised shocked by? This book has a LOT of twists and turns. I'm so pleased to hear from readers that they couldn't put it down! To me, it's the ultimate compliment.

Tell us about yourself as a writer, how did you find inspiration for your book/book series. Have you always been or aspired to be a writer, if not - what drove you to this? I've been an advertising copywriter for nearly 25 years. (Some may say that writing ads is akin to writing fiction!) As a lifelong reader and lover of mysteries, I decided to try my hand at novel-writing to see if I could write the kind of book I love to read. The fruit of that labor was [Protocol](#), the first book in the Maggie O'Malley series, which was nominated for both the Agatha and Lefty Award. The series has a medical angle. Medicine is something that touches so many of our loves, and the power to heal—or harm—provides fertile ground for ideas.

In these times of social isolation, how is this helping/hindering your work as a writer?

Oh boy, it's been a challenge. I have teenagers at home, and helping them stay on track with distance learning is a challenge, especially since it's been more than a few years since I've done algebra or studied alleles. (Hello, Google!) I also work remotely, so the combination makes me feel as if I'm being pulled in a zillion different directions. Thank goodness for coffee!

What are working on now, writing or otherwise?

I'm writing a new standalone book, which I'm really(really!) excited about.

What are you reading now?

I'm reading [Here Comes the Body](#), the first book in Catering Hall Mystery series by Maria Di Rico (aka Ellen Byron). It's absolutely fantastic—which is no surprise!!

[Annette Dashofy](#)



USA Today best-selling author Annette Dashofy has spent her entire life in rural Pennsylvania surrounded by cattle and horses. When she wasn't roaming the family's farm or playing in the barn, she could be found reading or writing. After high school, she spent five years as an EMT on the local ambulance service, dealing with everything from drunks passing out on the sidewalk to mangled bodies in car accidents.

Tell us a bit about your latest release, but don't give away any spoilers. [In Under the Radar](#), Paramedic and deputy coroner Zoe Chambers responds to a shooting and discovers her longtime friend, Horace Pavelka, has gunned down a man who'd bullied him mercilessly for decades. Ruled self-defense, no charges are filed. When another of his tormentors turns up dead in Horace's kitchen, Police Chief Pete Adams questions the man's innocence in both cases...especially after Horace and his girlfriend go into hiding.

While fighting to clear her friend, Zoe is handed the opportunity to finally learn what really happened to her long-lost sibling. What starts out as a quick road trip on a quest for answers leads her to an unfamiliar city in the middle of a November blizzard, where she finds way more trouble than she bargained for.

Pete's own search for his missing fiancée and a missing murderer ultimately traps him in a web of deception. Face-to-face with one of the most cunning and deadly killers of his law enforcement career, Pete realizes too late that this confrontation may well be his last.

What is the most exciting part of the book that readers will really enjoy/be most surprised shocked by? I think (hope) the reader will encounter quite a few startling revelations along the way. This one is jam-packed with them!

Tell us about yourself as a writer, how did you find inspiration for your book/book series. Have you always been or aspired to be a writer, if not - what drove you to this? I like to say my first writing implement was a crayon. I've been creating stories for as long as I can remember. I thought it was something everyone did. I wrote novel-length stories longhand, in pencil, in spiral-bound notebooks back in high school and passed them around in study hall where my "fans" would read the latest installment and return the notebook to me with orders to "write more!" It was a rush to hear back then and it still is!

Who has inspired you as a writer and how does it influence your work? So many wonderful authors have inspired me. [Mary Higgins Clark](#) is probably most responsible for my love of crime fiction. [Nancy Martin](#) has been my mentor for years and drives me to constantly improve my craft. [Julia Spencer-Fleming](#), [Hank Phillippi Ryan](#), and Lisa Scottoline have all influenced both my work and how I interact with my readers and aspiring writers.

In these times of social isolation, how is this helping/hindering your work as a writer?

Right now, it's hindering my research! I'm being forced to rely on Google Maps and other internet sources as I'm writing about a new setting. Hopefully, I'll be able to travel soon and get a firsthand look at the places I'm writing about. Plus the stress is limiting my mental and emotional bandwidth, so I don't feel as productive as usual. But I think I'm getting a handle on it.

What are working on now, writing or otherwise?

I'm gearing up for the release of my next Zoe Chambers Mystery ([Til Death](#)) in June. And I'm currently working on a first book in a new series, which I'm really excited about!

What are you reading now?

I just finished [Hid From Our Eyes](#), Julia Spencer-Fleming's latest (loved it!)

[Sara Dahmen \(Copper, Iron & Clay\)](#)



Sara Dahmen is the founder of House Copper & Cookware, a line of American-made cookware created with pure, natural materials and the help from local family-owned companies. Her cookware has been featured in national and international publications such as *Cooking*

Light, *Food and Wine*, *Veranda*, *Beekman 1802*, *Root+Bone*, *Midwest Living*, and many more.

One of the only female coppersmiths in America (if not the only), Sara has had a varied career, from her first job in marketing to building an award-winning wedding planning business to writing historical fiction. Her love of deep historical research led to her current work as a metalsmith of vintage and modern cookware.

Tell us a bit about your latest release.

[COPPER IRON AND CLAY](#) of course, out April 28th!! And while it's not the best time to release a book, we are all home, thinking about cooking - and what better time to learn about how your cookware works, where it comes from, and why you used it? Filled with history, science, use, and care of the three timeless, heirloom cookware materials, plus interviews from the major makers (Mauviel, Ruffoni, Lodge, etc) and recipes, too, this is meant to be the go-to for learning all about what you're cooking on, how it's healthy, and answering the WHY, too!

What is the most exciting part of the book that readers will really enjoy/be most surprised shocked by?

I really hope people love learning about where certain sayings come from - such as "ya know, they broke the mold with THAT one". :)

Tell us about yourself as a writer, how did you find inspiration for your book/book series. Have you always been or aspired to be a writer, if not - what drove you to this?

Becoming the only female coppersmith who builds copper cookware in America totally happened organically. And so, writing a non-fiction book about becoming a smith, and about the cookware that inspired me to *become* a coppersmith, felt like second nature. But...before this, I always wrote historical fiction. I guess having a desire to write all the time is the marking of a true writer. I mean, even in the copper shop, I have ideas pouring into my head! But I've yet to master writing and coppersmithing at the same time...

In these times of social isolation, how is this helping/hindering your work?

Isolation does two things for me, almost simultaneously, every day. First wavelength "LOOK AT ALL THIS TIME I HAVE I SHOULD TOTALLY TAKE ON A THOUSAND PROJECTS AND PROMOTE THIS BOOK AND WRITE ANOTHER NOVEL!!!" And the other...."....holy cats, the kids need to be homeschooled, I have zero time to do anything unless I say up til 3am every night, and I'm going to be behind forever, and...."

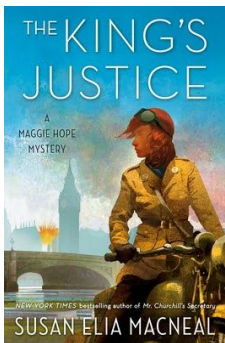
What are you reading now?

Usually I am reading multiple books at once. Our book club just tackled [The Ghosts of Eden Park](#) by Karen Abbott, now are reading [Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine](#), and on the side I'm trying to keep up with The Economist as well as bouncing in and out of a collection of Native American folk legends.

Is there something exciting coming up that you want to share with your readers? A new contract, book options, a new pet (LOL)? I just booked a manager!!!! Not an agent, but like an LA manager who will oversee all the media stuff floating around out there. Also there's always new pets around here. Rabbits are next now that the bees are in for the year! :) AND we are adding some silkies to our chicken flock! AND getting another gecko. I'm going to come out of this pandemic with about 12 extra pets. I have book club friends getting goats, or ducks, or more chickens. It's amazing.

Featured Book of the Month

The King's Justice



Did you miss the event with Susan Elia MacNeal yesterday? She joined us to discuss her recent installment in the Maggie Hope Mystery series, [The King's Justice](#).

If so, you can still read about her book here and pick up a copy of your own at our online store.

"A wartime mystery to sink your teeth into."—Kate Quinn, *New*

York Times* bestselling author of *The Huntress

Maggie Hope started out as Winston Churchill's secretary, but now she's a secret agent—and the only one who can figure out how the missing violin ties into a series of horrifying murders.

London, December 1943. As the Russian army repels German forces from Stalingrad, Maggie Hope takes a much-needed break from spying to defuse bombs in London. But Maggie herself is an explosion waiting to happen. Traumatized by her past, she finds herself living

dangerously—taking huge risks, smoking, drinking, and speeding through the city streets on a motorbike. The last thing she wants is to get entangled in another crime.

But when she's called upon to look into the theft of a Stradivarius, one of the finest violins ever made, Maggie can't resist. Meanwhile, there's a serial killer on the loose in London, targeting conscientious objectors. Little does Maggie know that investigating this dangerous predator will pit her against a new evil—and old enemies. Only Maggie can uncover the connection between the robbery, the murders, and a link to her own past.

Featured Children's Book



Ways to Make Sunshine by Renée Watson (Bloomsbury, \$16.99)

"A fresh beginning to a new chapter book series featuring a girl who can coax out sunshine from behind the darkest storm."
– **Shelf Awareness, starred review**

"This brave new world we're living in sure could use more stories about these bright and imaginative girls who specialize in 'making a way out of no way.'" – The New York Times Book Review

From Newbery Honor and Coretta Scott King Author Award winner Renée Watson comes the first book in a young middle grade series about Ryan Hart, a girl who is pure spirit, kindness, and sunshine.

Ryan Hart has a lot on her mind--school, self-image, and especially family. Her dad finally has a new job, but money is tight. That means some changes, like selling their second car and moving into a new (old) house. But Ryan is a girl who knows how to make sunshine out of setbacks. As her brother says when he raps about her, she's got the talent that matters most: it's a talent that can't be seen, she's nice, not mean!

Ryan is all about trying to see the best in people, to be a good daughter, a good sister, a good friend. But even if her life isn't everything she would wish for, when her big brother is infuriating, her parents don't quite understand, and the unexpected happens, she always finds a way forward, with grace and wit. And plenty of sunshine.

A Look Ahead – May Releases!

Getaway with one of these exciting new releases being published in May!

[The Lincoln Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill America's 16th President—and Why It Failed by Brad Meltzer and Josh Mensch \(Flatiron Books, \\$29.99\)](#)

[Someone Like You: A Novel \(Hardcover\) by Karen Kingsbury \(Atria Books, \\$26\)](#)

[The Book of Eels: Our Enduring Fascination with the Most Mysterious Creature in the Natural World \(Hardcover\) by Patrik Svensson \(Ecco, \\$28.99\)](#)

[All Adults Here: A Novel \(Hardcover\) by Emma Straub \(Riverhead Books, \\$27\)](#)

[Resistance by Tori Amos \(Atria Books, \\$26\)](#)

[A Good Marriage by Kimberly McCreight \(Harper, \\$27.99\)](#)

[The Imperfects: A Novel by Amy Meyerson \(Park Row Books, \\$27.99\)](#)

[Keep Moving by Maggie Smith \(Atria/One Signal Publishers, \\$24\)](#)

[The Paris Hours by Alex George \(Flatiron Books, \\$26.99\)](#)

[The Book of V. by Anna Solomon \(Henry Holt & Co., \\$27.99\)](#)

[The War Widow by Tara Moss \(Dutton, \\$26\)](#)

[Hard Cash Valley by Brian Panowich \(Minotaur Books, \\$26.99\)](#)

[Ghosts of Harvard by Francesca Serritella \(Random House, \\$27\)](#)

[Hello, Summer by Mary Kay Andrews \(St. Martin's Press, \\$28.99\)](#)

[Network Effect by Martha Wells \(Tor.com, \\$26.99\)](#)

[Killing Crazy Horse by Bill O'Reilly \(Henry Holt & Co., \\$30\)](#)

[The Last Trial by Scott Turow \(Grand Central Publishing, \\$29\)](#)

[The Boy Who Followed His Father into Auschwitz by Jeremy Dronfield \(Harper Paperback, \\$17.99\)](#)

[Sorry for Your Trouble by Richard Ford \(Ecco, \\$27.99\)](#)

[Shadow State by Luke Harding \(Harper, \\$28.99\)](#)

[Enemy of All Mankind by Steven Johnson \(Riverhead Books, \\$28\)](#)

[The Goodbye Man by Jeffrey Deaver \(G.P. Putnam's Sons, \\$28\)](#)

[Reaper: Drone Strike by Nicholas Irving with A. J. Tata \(St. Martin's Press, \\$27.99\)](#)

[Big Summer by Jennifer Weiner \(Atria Books, \\$28\)](#)

[The Lion's Den by Katherine St. John \(Grand Central Publishing, \\$28\)](#)

[These Women by Ivy Pochoda \(Ecco, \\$27.99\)](#)

[The Wife Stalker by Liv Constantine \(Harper, \\$27.99\)](#)

[Here We Are: My Friendship with Philip Roth by Benjamin Taylor \(Penguin Books, \\$26\)](#)

[To Wake the Giant by Jeff Shaara \(Ballantine Books, \\$29.99\)](#)

[Fair Warning by Michael Connelly \(Little, Brown, \\$29\)](#)

[The Friendship List: A Novel by Susan Mallery \(HQN, \\$26.99\)](#)

[East Coast Girls by Kerry Kletter \(MIRA Books, \\$16.99 paper\)](#)

[Girls of Summer by Nancy Thayer \(Ballantine Books, \\$27\)](#)

[The City of Tears by Kate Mosse \(Minotaur Books, \\$27.99\)](#)

[Wrath of Poseidon \(A Sam and Remi Fargo Adventure #12\) #12 by Clive Cussler \(G.P. Putnam's Sons, \\$29\)](#)

[Hideaway by Nora Roberts \(St. Martin's Press, \\$28.99\)](#)

[In the Lion's Den by Barbara Taylor Bradford \(St. Martin's Press, \\$28.99\)](#)

[The Jane Austen Society by Natalie Jenner \(St. Martin's Press, \\$26.99\)](#)

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