

# Polis Books



# Agora Books



## 2022 Catalog

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# A DIRE ISLE

RV Raman

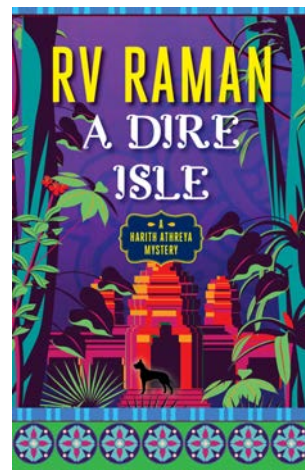
Fiction/Traditional Mystery

Publication Date: February 22, 2022

ISBN: 1-978-1951709-52-5

\$26.00 / \$33.99 CAN • Hardcover • 320 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

Rights: World, excl. UK



## PRAISE FOR A WILL TO KILL

**"A modern-day take on the classic locked-room murder mystery, transported to a remote mansion high in the hills of southern India."**

**—Sarah Lyall, *The New York Times Book Review***

**"Reminiscent of Agatha Christie mysteries, this first in the Harith Athreya series is a sure hit for readers who love a taste of foreign intrigue and a solid whodunit." —*Library Journal***

**"A deftly executed country house mystery... Raman weaves in a believable and well-thought-out plot that stays faithful to the mood of a country house murder. The ghost-ridden misty landscape of the Nilgiris is an ideal setting for a cozy winter afternoon read." —*Open, The Magazine***

An archaeological expedition is excavating in the heart of Bundelkhand, a place rich in history and legend. The location is on the banks of the Betwa River near Jhansi. The abrasive lady who runs the expedition (Mrs. Markaan) is disliked by every member of her team. When Mrs. Markaan defies the myth of Naaz Tapu, the fallout is swift and deadly. Investigating her disappearance, Harith Athreya, an investigator with a vivid imagination, finds her body on the island. Her skull has been crushed by a large mace-like weapon and her body bears deep fang and claw wounds, presumably inflicted by a huge dog. The doctor's opinion corroborates the initial impression. Athreya discovers that Mrs. Markaan had been secretly excavating at Naaz Tapu, and had taken away an old bracelet from the isle.

Before Mrs. Markaan's disappearance, Athreya had been hearing about a spate of thefts from museums and archaeological missions across the country. Precious antiques have been disappearing for over two years, and the thieves have been getting away every time. As Athreya begins investigating along with Inspector Bhupinder, he reaps a rich harvest of evidence and motives – anonymous letters that accuse Mrs. Markaan, financial misappropriation at the expedition, Mrs Markaan's habit of stealing her juniors' work and publishing it as her own, as well as suspicious activities by the people involved in the expedition.

As he begins to piece together the riddle, Athreya discovers that few of the archaeologists are what they seem to be. Athreya begins his dramatic dénouement by unmasking some of the archaeologists and bringing to light the multiple smaller crimes at play. And when he finally confronts the killer with the evidence gathered during the trap, he has to be fully prepared for a violent retaliation. Coming to his aid, very aptly, is a huge, ferocious Great Dane.

After a corporate career spanning three decades and four continents, RV Raman has moved away from full time roles to pursue his interest in teaching and writing. He now teaches business strategy at an IIM, mentor young entrepreneurs, advise select clients and write. In an earlier avatar, he led KPMG's Consulting Practice, and was a partner with A.T. Kearney and Arthur Andersen. He writes crime fiction set in India. The first four books are about white-collar crime and murder in corporate India. The fifth is a domestic whodunit. [www.rvrman.com](http://www.rvrman.com)

# THE RED CANOE

Wayne Johnson

Fiction/Indigenous

Publication Date: March 15, 2022

\$16.95 / \$22.99 CAN • Trade paperback • 352 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 978-1-951709-72-3

Rights: World



"A powerful story of brutal violence and righteous vengeance. Johnson has crafted this tale with both compassion and wisdom, and keeps the suspense building relentlessly toward the novel's bitter cold and enormously satisfying climax." —**William Kent Krueger, *New York Times* bestselling author of THIS TENDER LAND**

"Heart-warming and gut- wrenching. A nuanced, superbly written justice thriller laced with unflinching grit and social commentary." —**Booklist (Starred Review)**

"A powerful story of Indigenous people who are abused but also determined to battle brutality and corruption themselves when they can't rely on the authorities." —**Library Journal (Starred Review)**

"Simultaneously heartbreaking and heart-pounding."  
—**Tara Laskowski, award-winning author of THE MOTHER NEXT DOOR**

Buck, government name Michael Fineday, Ojibwe name Miskwa' doden (Red Deer) is on the brink of suicide. He has just been served divorce papers by his wife Naomi, who is fed up with his savior complex and the danger it often attracts to their door. Living on the border of Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community reservation, Buck makes a living as a boatbuilder and carpenter. He spends his days alone, trying to win the trust of a feral cat...until a semi-feral girl shows up, fascinated by the canoe Buck is building.

Lucy, Ojibwe name Gage' bineh, (Everlasting Bird), lives in a trailer alone with her father, a local policeman struggling with PTSD which is compounded by the loss of Lucy's mother. Just barely fifteen she has lived with a lifetime of abuse, while knowing that if she ever spoke out, her father would bear the consequences.

Buck senses Lucy is in trouble and doesn't hesitate to come to her defense. On the foundation of their shared Ojibwe heritage, they trace Lucy's abuse to a ring that extends farther than either of them ever imagined, while building a bond even sturdier than Buck's canoe.

Wayne Johnson is the multiple Pulitzer Prize-nominated author of the acclaimed Paul Two Persons Mysteries *DON'T THINK TWICE* and *SIX CROOKED HIGHWAYS*, a thriller, *THE DEVIL YOU KNOW*, and many other works of fiction and nonfiction. Of mixed Native and European descent, he grew up in southern Minneapolis, and in the north lakes region of Minnesota on the White Earth and Red Lake Reservations. He currently resides in Salt Lake City. Find him online at [waynejohnsonauthor.com](http://waynejohnsonauthor.com)

# THE HITMAN'S DAUGHTER

Carolyn Topdjian

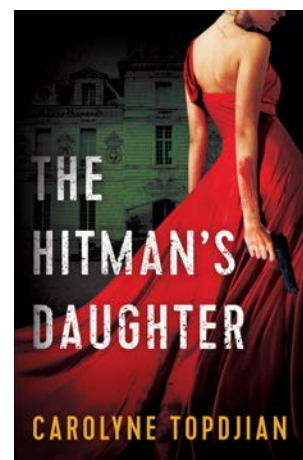
Fiction/Suspense/Gothic

Publication Date: March 22, 2022

ISBN: 1-978-1951709-58-7

\$26.00 / \$33.99 CAN • Hardcover • 320 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

Rights: World English, audio



"A fast-paced haunting novel of survival."—*Library Journal* (Starred Review)

"Topdjian's debut thriller is intense with foreboding and an eerie sense of place. The past and present perspectives captivate the reader and connect brilliantly to reveal a shocking conclusion. Fans of Jen Williams, Karin Slaughter, and Alex North will enjoy this one!" —*Booklist*

"Sumptuous, sinister, and seductive, I was both charmed and haunted."  
—Emily Carpenter, author of *Burying the Honeysuckle Girls* and *The Weight of Lies*

"A tense and atmospheric gothic mystery with lots of unexpected twists."  
—Allison Buccola, author of *Catch Her When She Falls*

A captivating debut that's part thriller, part domestic suspense, part gothic horror,  
all of which introduces a brilliant new voice in Carolyn Topdjian.

The Château was once the destination for the rich and famous to play, drink and ski—complete with a private railway to shuttle those desiring extra privacy—now, however, the guests are few and far between. The New Year's Eve party was supposed to hoist the rundown hotel back to its former status, until a massive blizzard hits, trapping the guests who've come to celebrate the grand hotel's last hurrah. The circumstances might even be romantic, if the hotel wasn't reputed to be haunted. When hotel employee Mave Michael finds the resident artist dead, and shortly thereafter hotel security finds Mave alone with the body, the reputation that Mave has fought long and hard to outrun comes back to haunt her.

You see, her father is a notorious hitman who has spent over the last decade in prison. She has changed her name and location dozens of times, but he somehow manages to track her down—sending her a postcard every year on her birthday—January 1st. She's the perfect choice to frame for murder, and now the number one suspect. Mave can no longer deny the lessons in survival her father taught her, or her strange ability to "find" lost objects. The more Mave learns about the history of the hotel and its strange inhabitants, the more she vows to stop running from her past, and the more the secrets of the hotel refuse to stay buried.

Carolyn Topdjian is a suspense writer with publications in PRISM International, Dreamers Magazine and Firewords Quarterly. She has an interdisciplinary PhD from York University and is a professor in the Faculty of Media and Creative Arts at Humber College in Toronto. She is a two-time Pitch Wars mentor and lives in a 112-year-old haunted house. This is her first novel. Find her online at: [carolyнетopdjian.com](http://carolyнетopdjian.com) and on Twitter at @TopdjianC

# THE 86<sup>th</sup> VILLAGE

Sena Desai Gopal

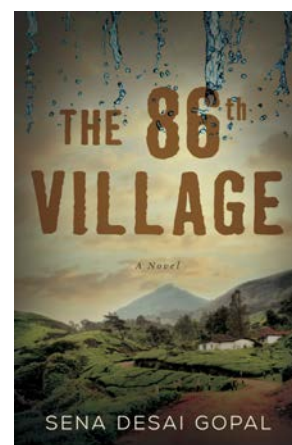
Fiction/Suspense

Publication Date: April 12, 2022

ISBN: 1-978-1951709-74-7

\$16.95 / \$22.99 CAN • Trade Paperback • 336 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

Rights: World, audio



Throughout Southern India, eighty-six villages are set to completely submerge due to a government-sanctioned dam across the Krishna river. Nilgi, one such village on the banks of the mighty River Krishna, has so far escaped unscathed from the illegal iron-ore mining and floods that have ravaged the rest of the district for decades. The village believes itself to be indestructible and incorruptible despite residents warn of impending doom. With whole mountains disappearing from the mining around Nilgi over time, the threat of a big flood submerging the entire village is imminent.

One night, Reshma, a young orphan girl appears in the village, alone and without any possessions. The villagers, not knowing what else to do, take her to Raj Nayak—the patriarch of the leading family in the village who has been organizing and leading anti-dam movements. For several years he’s been lobbying the corrupt government for fair compensation to be paid to the people who will lose their livelihoods and property to the mines and the flood. But Reshma’s presence, and the mystery of her origins, sets off a chain of events threatening the protests, the family, and Nilgi itself. Soon, secrets and corruption flood the village along with the waters.

In this poignant and beautiful debut, the reader discovers the damage—both to people and the environment—wrought by human hubris and greed, and asks whether it is ever too late to right a wrong?

Sena Desai Gopal is a journalist specializing in science and medicine, food, and travel. She was born and raised in India and now lives in Boston with her husband and two children. Her work has been published in The Boston Globe, The Atlantic, Modern Farmer, and The Times of India, among others. She holds master’s degrees in Environmental Science from India, Tropical Agricultural and Environmental Science from England, and Science and Medical Journalism from the United States. THE 86<sup>th</sup> VILLAGE is her debut novel. Find her online at [www.senadesaigopal.com](http://www.senadesaigopal.com) and on Twitter @senadesaigopal.



# FIND HIM

## HicFg i qm

Fiction/Mystery/Noir

Publication Date: April 26, 2022

\$26.99 / \$35.99 CAN • Hardcover • 320 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 1-978-951709-75-4

Rights Available: World



### Praise for the novels of Jake Hinkson

“Powered by raw emotional intensity and a disturbingly realistic portrayal of small-town America, this story is unforgettable.” —*Publishers Weekly* (starred review) on *DRY COUNTRY*

“Hinkson’s darkly satirical take on power and hypocrisy closes with a shocking but fitting twist.”  
—*I* on *DRY COUNTRY*

“As the principals take turns plotting their next moves, things predictably spiral out of control with all the horrifyingly matter-of-fact force of Scott Smith’s parable *A Simple Plan* as Hinkson leads his all-too-human hero step by step into a monstrous pool of corruption.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

**A stubborn teenager and her estranged uncle descend into the Arkansas underworld to track down her missing fiancé, in a riveting literary noir perfect for fans of Daniel Woodrell and "Mare of Easttown".**

Up until now, 18-year-old Lily Stevens has always been the perfect daughter of a Pentecostal preacher, but her insular Arkansas congregation is scandalized when Lily announces she’s pregnant with the baby of Peter Cutchin, a young man in the church. When Peter disappears before they can get married, Lily’s life is thrown into even greater turmoil. Everyone in their small town, including Peter’s furious mother, thinks the boy has simply run off and abandoned her, but Lily, furiously headstrong and determined to find the father of her child, refuses to believe it.

Help comes in the unlikely form of Allan Woodson, an uncle that her family will not acknowledge but a man who may know where to begin looking for Peter. Their search will lead them out of Lily’s safe world of the church and into the darkest corners of the criminal underworld on the Arkansas/Tennessee border, where neither Allan nor Lily can foresee the unsettling secrets they will uncover.

Jake Hinkson received an MFA in Creative Writing from UNC-Wilmington. His novel *Hell on Church Street* was awarded the French Prix Mystère de la Critique in 2016, and *No Tomorrow* was awarded the Grand Prix des Littératures Policières in 2018. He now lives in Chicago, where he teaches creative writing at the Chicago Academy for the Arts.

# THE INVISIBLE

## Michelle Dunne

Fiction/Suspense

Publication Date: May 3, 2022

\$16.95 / \$22.99 CAN • Trade Paperback • 320 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 1-978-951709-82-2

Rights Available: World (excl. UK)



**A migrant crisis. A corrupt harbor town.  
Who will stand for those who have become invisible to the rest of the world?**

People have become one of the world's most valuable commodities. Trafficked on the promise of a new life only to be hidden away as modern-day slaves. When Lena, a raped and badly beaten Syrian woman, literally falls into Lindsey Ryan's life, she's left with no choice but to find her part in this new war and play it as best she can.

But before she can work out a safe plan to get Lena away from her very own hell at the hands of Patrick Adebayo, Lindsey hears of an unconscious child being smuggled into Patrick's building just two doors up. Despite having Patrick's unwanted attention, she has to help the child and get Lena to safety regardless of the cost. In doing so, she finds herself face to face with the worst of humanity.

Added to her own private battle with PTSD, former soldier Lindsey Ryan is in a race against time and must once again fight for her life. But if she fails to protect those around her, what if anything, will that life be worth?

During her time in the army, Michelle went from recruit, to infantry soldier, to Peacekeeper with the UN, to instructor back home in Ireland. She now lives in the harbor town of Cobh with her husband and daughter and a large cast of characters waiting to make their way onto paper. She is the author of two Lindsey Ryan novels: *WHILE NOBODY IS WATCHING* and *THE INVISIBLE*. Visit her at [www.michelledunnebooks.com](http://www.michelledunnebooks.com) and follow her at @NotDunneYet.



# MURDER ON THE SPANISH SEAS

Wendy Church

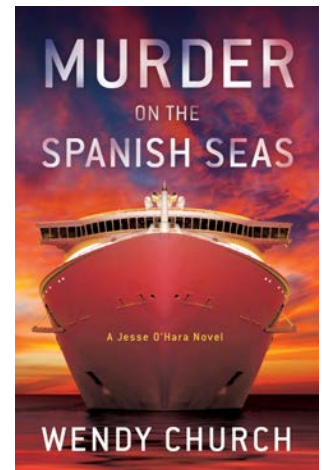
Fiction/Thriller

Publication Date: May 31, 2022

\$26.99 / \$35.99 CAN • Hardcover • 336 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 978-1-951709-85-3

Rights available: North America



“Clever, transportive, and laugh-out-loud funny, *MURDER ON THE SPANISH SEAS* is the perfect book to read poolside—just not on the deck of a luxury ocean liner.

I can't wait to read more from this wickedly entertaining new voice.”

—**Andrea Bartz, *New York Times* bestselling author of *WE WERE NEVER HERE***

“An action-packed debut that’s as funny as the heroine is unstoppable. I loved it!”

—**Nora McFarland, author of the *Lilly Hawkins Mysteries***

Jesse O'Hara is profane, introverted, and not frequently sober – and has just lost another job. “A million-dollar brain and a ten-cent personality,” her last employer said. With nothing better to do, Jesse reluctantly accepts the gift of a luxury cruise around the Iberian Peninsula. She’s not sure she can drink enough to keep her boredom at bay, but that’s the least of her problems. From the very first moment of the cruise, it’s clear to Jesse that something is very wrong.

Aided by her near-photographic memory, Jesse investigates a series of strange incidents on the ship and uncovers what looks like a terrorist plot in the works. But with each new layer uncovered, her perception shifts and broadens-- and someone doesn’t want her poking around. For Jesse, bruised and concussed is preferable to tan and relaxed, so she ignores the mounting danger even as she closes in on the villains, who have perfectly timed their grand finale...

*Murder on the Spanish Seas* is a riveting, whip-smart, and smart-aleck debut thriller that will keep you on your toes just as frequently as it keeps you in stitches. A perfect read for fans of Ruth Ware and Janet Evanovich.

Wendy Church has been a bartender, tennis instructor, semiconductor engineer, group facilitator, nonprofit CEO, teacher, PhD researcher, and dive bar cleaner. Her first suspense novel, *Murder on the Spanish Seas*, is set on a luxury cruise in the Iberian peninsula and introduces smart-mouthed amateur sleuth Jesse O’Hara, whose adventures are partly informed by Wendy’s expertise and international travels. Wendy now lives in Seattle with her partner.

# SEEING STRANGERS

Sebastian J. Plata

Fiction/Suspense

Publication Date: June 7, 2022

\$26.99/\$25.99 CAN • Hardcover • 320 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 978-951709-79-2

Rights Available: World English, Audio



**A stylish novel of obsession and social satire set in a world where sex is just a swipe away.**

Life is going well for Greg Kelly. He's married to the handsome and kind Cristian, a Spanish-born artist who is also a talented cook. Greg's work as a translator for an IT startup allows them to live comfortably in a stylish Bushwick two bedroom and enjoy just about all NYC has to offer—including sleeping with other men, since Greg and Cristian's marriage has been open for the past few years. This arrangement has been particularly appealing to Greg and his exceptional sexual appetite. Now approaching their mid-thirties, fatherhood calls and they enlist a friend to act as surrogate.

In order to focus on building a family, Greg and Cristian decide to close up the marriage when the baby arrives. Greg is going to miss his hookups, but at least he has the summer for one last hurrah. He methodically plans his hookups via Grindr and Tinder, carefully coordinates train routes for quick lunchtime hookups, and scouts potential candidates anywhere, anytime, like an old time Hollywood casting director.

As their baby's due date draws closer, anxiety sets in over Greg's impending parental responsibilities, the loss of his sexual freedom, and even his marriage to Cristian. But before he can sort out his feelings, a spurned hook-up reappears—Russell, an arrogant tv producer, who had wanted a relationship with Greg. And the problem is, Russell just won't go away, infiltrating himself into Greg's life in the worst ways possible, threatening his marriage and sanity. Greg is left asking, what does it mean to find happiness but still crave more?

Sebastian J. Plata was born in Poland, grew up in Chicago, and spent most of his twenties in Tokyo. He is currently based in Brooklyn, NY. In addition to writing, he also works as a Japanese/English translator. He is the author of the YA novel FREAK 'N' GORGEOUS. SEEING STRANGERS is his first thriller. Find him online @sebastianjplata.

# KILLING FIELD

## Meghan Holloway

Fiction/Suspense

Publication Date: June 28, 2022

\$16.95/\$22.99 CAN • Trade Paperback • 336 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 1-978-951709-86-0

Rights Available: World



### Praise for the novels of Meghan Holloway

"Tightly written and intense, *HIDING PLACE* is a thoroughly suspenseful mystery that you'll want to read in one sitting. Meghan Holloway is a writer to watch."

—Allison Brennan, *New York Times* bestselling author

"I love stories in which the principal characters have a boatload of baggage to overcome and Meghan Holloway's *HIDING PLACE* offers this in spades. Set in the wilds of Montana, this original and beautifully written story had me from the first page. Tense, gripping, and utterly engaging, I loved this book!"

—Karen Dionne, author of the international bestsellers *THE MARSH KING'S DAUGHTER*

"(A) gripping Tilt-A-Whirl thriller...This book is a perfect travel companion."

—Carole Barrowman, WTMJ Milwaukee on *HUNTING GROUND*

Annie Between Lodges knows who murdered her sister and why. She has proof. She also knows that if she comes forward with the evidence she has stolen, she will not survive long enough to tell the truth. She needs an ally, someone unflinching and unafraid, someone who knows how to make enemies and remain unscathed. But Hector Lewis is no hero, and one lie catapults her into deeper danger.

Hector has chased his missing wife's trail of secrets to the end. He has no answers, no job, and no patience for the girl who has been following him. Her claim to be his lost daughter sets the town ablaze and forges an unexpected alliance with his most bitter enemy, his wife's family. But the girl's secrets have placed a target on her back. When history repeats itself, Hector is left to grapple with a choice: Can he set aside revenge in order to save the girl whose lies have forced him to confront the past?

Wildfire season has engulfed Yellowstone in flames, and Raven's Gap is in the crosshairs. As the tension and heat escalate, the truth becomes clear—Betrayal lies far closer to home than Hector could have ever imagined.

Meghan Holloway is the author of two previous Hector Lewis novels: *HIDING PLACE* and *HUNTING GROUND*, as well as the acclaimed historical drama *UNCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH*. She now lives in the foothills of the Appalachians with her standard poodle and spends her days as a scientist with the requisite glasses but minus the lab coat. Follow her at @AMeghanHolloway.

# LUNATIC CARNIVAL

D.W. Buffa

Fiction/Thriller

Publication Date: August 16, 2022

\$28.99/\$26.99 CAN • Hardcover • 352 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 978-951709-83-9

Rights Available: World, audio



## Praise for the novels of D.W. Buffa

"Buffa's characters are compelling; the dialogue authentic and well crafted. Highly recommended for lovers of legal and political thrillers." —Library Journal (Starred Review)

"Expect NECESSITY to appear on numerous "Best of" lists, both because of and in spite of what it is. One cannot walk away from a Buffa novel without feeling educated to at least some extent and entertained to the fullest."  
—Bookreporter

"In the grand tradition of courtroom thrillers, there's a whopper of a reveal as the last witness is called. Fans of political thrillers and courtroom dramas, as well as those who can't get enough of the latest headlines, will race through this one." —Booklist

"An accomplished first novel... it ends with a couple of twists that are really shocking. And it leaves you wanting to go back to the beginning and read it again." —The New York Times on The Defense

"Buffa's spare observation, crackling dialogue, and shadowy circle of criminals, lawyers, and lovers keep you riveted." —Entertainment Weekly

"A Dan Brown read-alike tailor-made for an election year." —Booklist on Hillary

"The Who in the Whodunit rolls out tantalizingly....Bottom line: Add it to your docket."  
—People Magazine on The Legacy

"An excellent legal thriller with a well thought-out plot and believable characters. But it also scores as a novel of cold, calculating revenge perpetrated by an intelligence so formidable it goes unrecognized until too late."  
—USA Today

D.W. Buffa is the Edgar-nominated author of the Joseph Antonelli books. A former criminal-defense attorney, he uses his formal education in law and political science as well as his own work experience in the legal field to inform his writing. Born and raised in the Bay Area, he currently lives in northern California. For more information, visit [www.dwbuffa.net](http://www.dwbuffa.net).

# AMONG WOLVES

Erica Blaque

Fiction/Suspense

Publication Date: September 13, 2022

\$26.99/\$35.99 CAN • Hardcover • 368 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 978-951709-93-8

Rights Available: World English



*My husband is a self-important asshole but he isn't a murderer.*

At least that's what Sophia Claire believes when faced with a visit from detectives Adella Cruz and Trent Valletta. She has been enjoying what appears to be a storybook life with her fairytale husband, Robert Claire, in Deep River, Washington. Robert is the wealthy, intelligent and attractive CEO of massive pharmaceutical research company ANEXA. But the detectives tell her that they are investigating a string of murders of young women who all have at least one thing in common – they were all Rob's lovers.

Faced with these accusations Sophia is forced to question the realities of her marriage, and the nature of their love for each other. When does love die, exactly? She still believes Rob loves her; he loves her body, her grace, and her ability to fit the lifestyle of a prominent CEO. But she also knows he has cheated. With a marriage on the brink of collapse how does one find their partner again?

As the detectives track clues that could lead to an arrest, Sophia begins to question her own commitments, the motivations of those around her and her sanity. Reaching her breaking point, she hunts for answers about her husband's affairs and instead finds herself drawn to the sexual extremes of her husband's secret life, all while uncovering dark surprises of her own.

A twisty, sexy, and surprising debut perfect for fans of Megan Miranda, Tarryn Fisher, and Shari LaPena, AMONG WOLVES will have you riveted until the last page is turned.

Erica Blaque was born in Seattle, Washington where she spent her childhood taking dance and theater classes, swimming, or fearlessly forging new paths in the woods behind her parents' home. She holds a degree in business management and is constantly pursuing growth through education and trying new things, considering herself a forever student. Greatly influenced by high-profile true crime and dark romance, Erica's novelistic style features sharp and sinister themes. She finds inspiration in the clandestine and the fearlessly authentic, as well as the humor in life's strangeness. If she isn't writing or spending time with her favorite humans, you'll find her at home reading, meditating, or binge-watching her latest Netflix obsession.

# NO GODS FOR DROWNING

## Hailey Piper

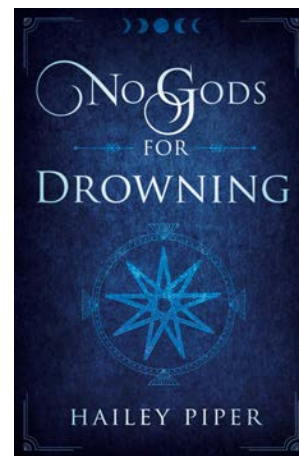
Fiction/Suspense

Publication Date: September 20, 2022

\$17.99/22.99 CAN • Trade Paperback • 368 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 978-951709-80-8

Rights Available: World



Q R F C @ C E L E \* K ? L U ? Q N P C W

U R F M S R R F C E M B Q R F C W J J @ C N P C W ? E ? Q ,

The old gods have fled, and the monsters they had kept at bay for centuries now threaten to drown the city of Valentine, hunting mankind as in ancient times. In the midst of the chaos, a serial killer has begun ritually sacrificing victims, their bodies strewn throughout the city.

Lilac Antonis wants to stop the impending destruction of her city by summoning her mother, a blood god—even if she has to slit a few throats to do it. But evading her lover Arcadia and her friends means sneaking, lying, and even spilling the blood of people she loves. Alex and Cecil of Ace Investigations have been tasked with hunting down the killer, but as they close in—not knowing they're hunting their close friend Lilac—the detectives realize the gods may not have left willingly.

As flooding drags this city of cars and neon screaming into the jaws of sea demons and Arcadia struggles to save the people as captain of the evacuation team, Lilac's ritual killings at last bear fruit, only to reveal her as a small piece in a larger plan. The gods' protection costs far more than anyone has ever known, and Alex and Cecil are running out of time to discover the true culprit behind the gods' disappearance before an ancient divine murder plot destroys them all.

Set in an alternate reality which updates mythology to near-modern day, NO GODS FOR DROWNING is part hunt for a serial killer, part noir detective story, and unlike anything you've ever read before.

Hailey Piper is the two time Bram Stoker Award-nominated author of *The Worm and His Kings*, *Queen of Teeth*, *Unfortunate Elements of My Anatomy*, *Benny Rose the Cannibal King*, and *The Possession of Natalie Glasgow*. She is an active member of the Horror Writers Association, with dozens of short stories appearing in *Pseudopod*, *Vastarien*, *Dark Matter Magazine*, *Daily Science Fiction*, and other publications. An avid reader and lifelong Godzilla fangirl, she nowadays lives with her wife in Maryland, where their paranormal research is classified. Find more about Hailey Piper's work at [www.haileypiper.com](http://www.haileypiper.com) or follow her on Twitter via @HaileyPiperSays.



# THE GIRL IN THE MIST

Vinaya Bhagat

Fiction/Suspense

Publication Date: October 4, 2022

\$16.95/\$22.99 CAN • Trade Paperback • 320 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 978-951709-90-7

Rights Available: World, audio



**It lurks in the shadows. It lives in your worst nightmares.  
It feeds on your deepest fears.  
And it's coming to get you.**

When she loses her parents in a car accident in Boston, Diya Mathur's world collapses around her. As far as she knows, she's a young woman alone in the world now, her parents having been her only living relatives. Until a mysterious letter arrives from India, claiming to be from her extended family that she'd never heard of. Suddenly, Diya has a chance at being part of a family again. She decides to take time out of school and go to India to meet her newfound family. But soon after Diya arrives there is a spate of what appear to be animal attacks around her and her family.

As bodies and tragedies pile up around her, Diya finds out more about the secrets her family is hiding, including the curse of the Chakwa—a shapeshifting trickster with the feet of a large beast—which legend has it, has been responsible for tragedies in her family for centuries. Diya's no longer sure that her parents' car crash was an accident. Will the monster that ruined her parents' life now destroy her happiness? Or will she manage to defeat it at its own game? With the help of her newly discovered friends and family, Diya must fight not just the monster from her nightmares, but also make sense of a fast-unravelling web of lies that makes up her life.

Vinaya Bhagat grew up with her face partly obscured by the books she was reading. She knew more about her favourite characters than her next-door neighbours. When not reading, she was writing and immersing herself in imaginary worlds. Writing took a backseat as she pursued a career in IT, until a fateful winter day in Dallas, Texas when she met with a near-fatal car crash. During her lengthy recovery, from wounds of body and mind, she once again found solace in writing and picked up the pen with renewed focus. Her short stories have been published in anthologies and have been short-listed in national and international writing competitions. She now lives in Bengaluru, India. Find her on Twitter @VinayaBhagat1.

# HEAD CLEANER

## David James Keaton

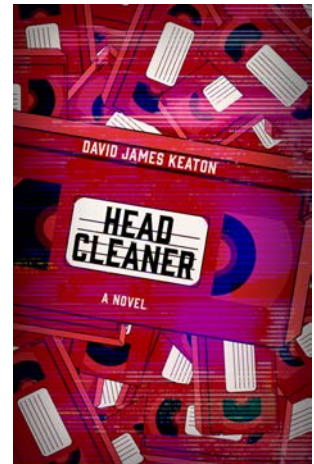
Fiction/Horror/Speculative

Publication Date: October 18, 2022

\$17.95 / \$23.99 CAN • Trade Paperback • 336 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 978-951709-94-5

Rights Available: World, audio



HEAD CLEANER is a hugely original blend of thriller, science fiction, and horror that takes our love of nostalgia to task for its morbid obsessions with dead media and dead-end jobs: *Clerks* meets *Black Mirror* (with a little *Groundhog Day* and *Russian Doll* thrown in for good measure):

The last Blockbuster video store in the United States is hanging on by a thread. And after a crazy night attempting to track down a lost VCR rental to collect the record-setting and internet-famous late fee, three employees, idealistic Eva, cinephile Jerry, and their tyrannical manager Randy, discover that this machine may actually have the power to change the endings of popular films, which, depending on the historical basis of the film, might also be changing the real world around them.

Or could this just be an elaborate, increasingly deadly prank?

When they begin receiving videotapes and voicemails seemingly depicting their deaths, Eva, Jerry, and Randy scramble to keep the VCR from falling into the wrong hands. And as one action-packed evening begins to seemingly repeat itself (or does it?), scores are settled and unwanted confessions begin to fly, until a Final Girl finally unravels a grand psychological experiment orchestrated at the highest levels of a crumbling social media empire.

David James Keaton is the author of three collections of short stories, including *FISH BITES COP! Stories to Bash Authorities*, which was named the 2013 Short Story Collection of the Year by *This Is Horror*, and *Stealing Propeller Hats from the Dead*, which received a Starred Review from *Publishers Weekly*. He is also the author of three novels, *The Last Projector*, *Pig Iron*, and *She Was Found in a Guitar Case*. He is the co-editor, along with Joe Clifford, of *Hard Sentences: Crime Fiction Inspired by Alcatraz*, and the editor of *Dirty Boulevard: Crime Fiction Inspired by the Songs of Lou Reed*. He teaches composition and creative writing at Santa Clara University in California and can be found on Twitter @spiderfrogged.

# TENKILL

## Shannon Kirk

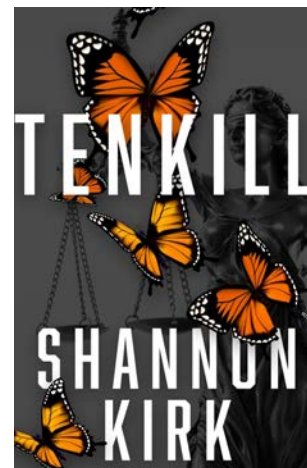
Fiction/Thriller

Publication Date: September 27, 2022

\$27.99/\$35.99 CAN • Hardcover • 352 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 1-978-951709-91-4

Rights Available: World, audio



A surrealist thriller which finds an e-discovery lawyer on the run from her own firm after uncovering proof of corruption that has shaped generations.

In *TENKILL*, Greta Vinet Seville, E-Discovery Counsel and Deputy General Counsel at the international law firm of Coarse & Cotton, finds herself on the run from her own firm. Using a thin argument that she is authorized to investigate suspected corruption and possible high crimes amongst the named partners, Greta absconds with firm data to conduct her investigation—holing up at a former client’s off-the grid farm to figure out her next move—that is until the firm tracks her down, claiming to have only her safety in mind, forcing her to flee again, this time enlisting a diverse cast of characters to help her comb through the mountains of data she’s taken from the firm.

This off-the-books, rag-tag legal team includes a genius litigation technology professional, a possibly psychopathic (but effective) summer associate, an AP investigative reporter, a classical painting art restorer, Greta’s philosophy professor brother, and Greta’s love interest, a compliance attorney at Tenkill. Romance, action, technology law, corruption are all explored, and married with Greta’s personal backstory about a renegade, vigilante aunt who’s been on the run for decades and fighting her own politically-charged battles.

They create a make-shift war room in a historic Salem, Massachusetts home, and their pursuit of more evidence leads them in action-packed chases around Boston...and a massive hospital—Tenkill—that is at the center of the corruption. But this investigation is like no other Greta has ever conducted, as people who have millions to lose and careers to ruin have and will kill to keep what she seeks to uncover secret. For fans of early John Grisham, but with an all-female-led cast, and stunning final twist that shakes political ideology.

]

Shannon Kirk is the multiple award-winning, international bestselling author of *METHOD 15/33*, which was optioned for film, sold in over 20 languages, and garnered critical acclaim, including three starred reviews and the coveted placement on School Library Journal’s 2017 “Best Adult Books for Teens,” as well as *VIEBURY GROVE*, *GRETCHEN*, *IN THE VINES*, and *THE EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY OF VIVIENNE MARSHALL*. Find her online at [shannonkirkbooks.com](http://shannonkirkbooks.com).

# THE HOUSEMATE

Sarah Bailey

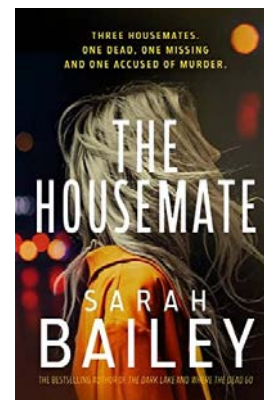
Fiction/Suspense

Publication Date: November 1, 2022

\$26.99/\$35.99 CAN • Hardcover • 336 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 1-978-951709-96-9

Rights Available: NA, audio



"Australian crime at its best." —**J.P. POMARE, author of *Call Me Evie***

"Each new twist in the story skillfully balances bombshell revelations and believability, in a crime that feels achingly familiar, yet shocking at the same time. Much like Oli, I couldn't stop until I knew the truth, too."

—**JACQUELINE BUBLITZ, author of *Before You Knew My Name***

The first standalone thriller from the award-winning writer of the bestselling Gemma Woodstock trilogy.

Three housemates. One dead, one missing and one accused of murder. Dubbed the Housemate Homicide, it's a mystery that has baffled Australians for almost a decade. Melbourne-based journalist Olive Groves worked on the story as a junior reporter and became obsessed by the case. Now, nine years later, the missing housemate turns up dead on a remote property. Olive is once again assigned to the story, this time reluctantly paired with precocious millennial podcaster Cooper Ng.

As Oli and Cooper unearth new facts about the three housemates, a dark web of secrets is uncovered. The revelations catapult Oli back to the death of the first housemate, forcing her to confront past traumas and insecurities that have risen to the surface again.

What really happened between the three housemates that night? Will Oli's relentless search for the murderer put her new family in danger? And could her suspicion that the truth lies closer to home threaten her happiness and even her sanity? A riveting, provocative thriller from the bestselling author of *The Dark Lake*, *Into the Night* and *Where the Dead Go*.

Sarah Bailey is a Melbourne-based writer with a background in advertising and communications. She has two young children and is currently the Managing Partner of advertising agency VMLY&R in Melbourne. Her internationally award-winning Gemma Woodstock trilogy includes *The Dark Lake*, winner of the Ned Kelly Award for Best First Fiction and the Davitt Award for Best Debut, followed by *Into the Night* and *Where the Dead Go*. Follow her at @SarahBailey1982.

# ARYA WINTERS AND THE DEADLY CUPCAKES

## AMITA MURRAY

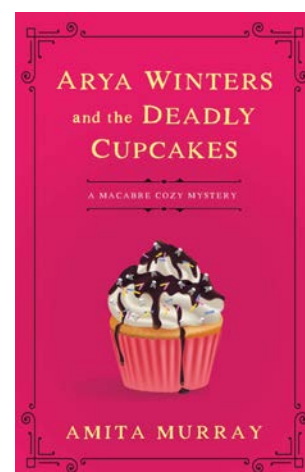
Fiction/Mystery

Publication Date: November 15, 2022

\$16.95 / \$22.99 CAN • Paperback • 336 pages • 5.5 x 8.5

ISBN: 978-1-957957-01-2

Rights Available: World, audio



### Praise for *Arya Winters and the Tiramisu of Death*

“This superior cozy from Murray turns the genre on its head in this wryly witty and at times poignant outing.”  
—*Publishers Weekly* (Starred Review)

“A captivating blend of mystery and romance that explores themes of diversity and social dysfunction with subtlety and empathy but also with wacky, sometimes ribald humor. Offbeat, irreverent, funny, and boasting a broad, multifaceted plot, this one will appeal to fans who enjoy quirky, genre-defying reads.” —*Booklist*

Arya Winters is your typical cozy heroine. She lives in a cottage in a small English village and bakes for a living—well, she specializes in macabre desserts. She has nosy neighbors, who she avoids ruthlessly due to her social anxiety. And she has a keen interest in all things sexy.

Arya isn't one to take on residential gigs, but when she's invited to bake her cakes for a two-week art retreat in the dead of winter on a large estate, she can hardly turn it down. It has the added advantage of helping her get away from her nosy neighbors. A posh estate, lots of baking, walks through the woods – what could go wrong?

Except Monk Hole is rife with secrets. Everywhere Arya turns, there are more people with problems, and they all want to talk to her. Could things get any worse? A corpse covered in her cupcakes might turn up perhaps. Or Branwell Beam, her ex, who seems to have a past she never knew about, might make an appearance – with a new girlfriend in tow. It's all Arya can do to hold things together. But can she sort it all out before she loses all she holds dear?

AMITA MURRAY is a writer based in London, by way of Delhi and California. Her first novel, *THE TROUBLE WITH ROSE* came out from Harper Collins in 2019, and her short fiction has won the SI Leeds Literary Prize, and has appeared in *Wasafiri*, *SAND Berlin*, the *Berkeley Fiction Review* and others. She's held writerly residencies with Leverhulme/University College London and Plymouth University/Literature Works, and has taught advanced fiction at the University of East Anglia and CityLit London. She was named runner-up for the 2022 CRIMEFEST scholarship for authors of color. Find her online @AmitaMurray and [www.amitamurray.com](http://www.amitamurray.com).

**CONTACT:**

**JASON PINTER, PUBLISHER  
JPINTER@POLISBOOKS.COM  
646-306-4865**

**CHANTELLE AIMÉE OSMAN, EDITOR, AGORA  
COSMAN@POLISBOOKS.COM**

**TWITTER.COM/@POLISBOOKS  
FACEBOOK.COM/POLISBOOKS**

**44 BROOKVIEW LANE  
ABERDEEN, NJ 07747**

**SUBRIGHTS**

**LINDA BIAGI, BIAGI RIGHTS MANAGEMENT  
LINDA@BIAGIRIGHTS.COM**

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