

The Alphabet Mysteries / Kinsey Millhone series

By Sue Grafton



A is for Alibi [1982]

A tough-talking former cop, private investigator Kinsey Millhone has set up a modest detective agency in a quiet corner of Santa Teresa, California. A twice-divorced loner with few personal possessions and fewer personal attachments, she's got a soft spot for underdogs and lost causes. Eight years ago, Nikki Fife was convicted of killing her philandering husband. Now she's out on parole and needs Kinsey's help to find the real killer. If there's one thing that makes Kinsey feel alive, it's playing on the edge. When her investigation turns up a second corpse, more suspects, and a new reason to kill, Kinsey discovers that the edge is closer--and sharper--than she imagined.



B is for Burglar [1985]

Finding wealthy Elaine Boldt seems like a quickie case to Kinsey Millhone. The flashy widow was last seen wearing a \$12,000 lynx coat, leaving her condo in Santa Teresa for her condo in Boca Raton. But somewhere in between, she vanished. Kinsey's case goes from puzzling to sinister when a house is torched, an apartment is burgled of worthless papers, the lynx coat comes back without Elaine, and her bridge partner is found dead. Soon Kinsey's clues begin to form a capital M--not for missing, but for murder: and plenty of it.



C is for Corpse [1986]

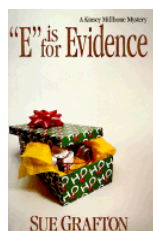
How do you go about solving an attempted murder when the victim has lost a good part of his memory? It's one of Kinsey's toughest cases yet, but she never backs down from a challenge. Twenty-three-year-old Bobby Callahan is lucky to be alive after a car forced his Porsche over a bridge and into a canyon. The crash left Bobby with a clouded memory. But he can't shake the feeling it was no random accident and that he's still in danger. The only clues Kinsey has to go on are a little red address book and the name "Blackman." Bobby can't remember who he gave the address book to for safekeeping. And any chances of Bobby regaining his memory are dashed when he's killed in another automobile accident just three days after he hires Kinsey. As Kinsey digs deeper into her investigation, she discovers

Bobby had a secret worth killing for— and unearthing that secret could send Kinsey to her own early death.



D is for Deadbeat [1987]

He called himself Alvin Limardo, and the job he had for Kinsey was cut-and-dried: locate a kid who'd done him a favor and pass on a check for \$25,000. It was only later, after he'd stiffed her for her retainer, that Kinsey found out his name was Daggett. John Daggett. Ex-con. Inveterate liar. Chronic drunk. And dead. The cops called it an accident — death by drowning. Kinsey wasn't so sure. Pulled into the detritus of a dead man's life, Kinsey soon realizes that Daggett had an awful lot of enemies. There's the daughter who grew up with a cheating drunk for a father, and the wife who's become a religious nut in response to an intolerable marriage. There's the lady who thought she was Mrs. Daggett -- and has the bruises to prove it -- only to discover the legal Mrs. D. And there are the drug dealers out \$25,000. But most of all, there are the families of the five people John Daggett killed, victims of his wild, drunken driving. The D.A. called it vehicular manslaughter and put him away for two years. The families called it murder and had very good reason to want John Daggett dead. Deft, cunning, and clever, this latest Millhone mystery also confronts some messy truths, for, as Kinsey herself says, "Some debts of the human soul are so enormous only life itself is sufficient forfeit", but as she'd be the first to admit, murder is not a socially acceptable solution.



E is for Evidence [1988]

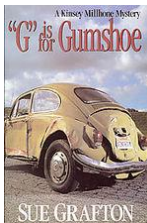
Being a twice-divorced, happily independent loner has worked like a charm for P.I. Kinsey Millhone— until holiday weekends like this one roll around. What she needs is a little diversion to ward off the blues. She gets her much-needed distraction with a case that places her career on the line. And if that isn't enough to keep her busy, her ex-husband, who walked out on her eight years ago, pops back on the radar... It all begins with a \$5,000 deposit made into Kinsey's bank account. Problem is she's not the one who deposited the money. But when she's accused of being on the take in an industrial arson case, Kinsey realizes someone is framing her. Now Kinsey's working for herself. But with new evidence— and corpses— surfacing

around her, she's going to have to act quickly to clear her name before she loses her career, her reputation— and quite possibly her life.



F is for Fugitive [1989]

When Kinsey Millhone first arrives in Floral Beach, California, it's hard for her to picture the idyllic coastal town as the setting of a brutal murder. Seventeen years ago, the body of Jean Timberlake—a troubled teen who had a reputation with the boys—was found on the beach. Her boyfriend Bailey Fowler was convicted of her murder and imprisoned, but he escaped. After all this time, Bailey's finally been captured. Believing in his son's innocence, Bailey's father wants Kinsey to find Jean's real killer. But most of the residents in this tight-knit community are convinced Bailey strangled Jean. So why are they so reluctant to answer Kinsey's questions? If there's one thing Kinsey's got plenty of it's persistence. And that's exactly what it's going to take to crack the lid on this case. As Kinsey gets closer to solving Jean's murder, the more dirty little secrets she uncovers in a town where everyone has something to hide—and a killer will kill again to keep the past buried...



G is for Gumshoe [1990]

Good and bad things seem to be coming in threes for Kinsey Millhone: on her thirty-third birthday she moves back into her renovated apartment, gets hired to find an elderly lady supposedly living in the Mojave Desert by herself, and makes the top of ex-con Tyrone Patty's hit list. It's the last that convinces Kinsey even she can't handle whoever's been hired to whack her, and she gets herself a bodyguard: Robert Dietz, a Porsche-driving P.I. who takes guarding Kinsey's body very seriously. With Dietz watching her for the merest sign of her usual recklessness, Kinsey plunges into her case. And before it's over, she'll unearth the gruesome truth about a long-buried betrayal and, in the process, come fact-to-face with her own mortality...



H is for Homicide [1991]

This volume finds Kinsey Millhone working on a case involving the death of a claims adjuster for a California insurance company. The story takes her into the Los Angeles barrio in pursuit of a violent criminal, into jails and hospitals, and into a grungy bar named the Meat Locker.



I is for Innocent [1992]

Fired by the insurance agency for whom she investigates, Kinsey is forced to take on a last-minute murder investigation in which the ex-husband of a murdered artist claims that David Barney, her current husband, is guilty as sin. Barney gets to Kinsey and insists he's innocent. But if he is, who's guilty? In trying to learn who's been getting away with murder, Kinsey may be courting her own...



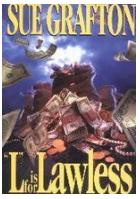
J is for Judgment [1993]

Wendell Jaffe has been dead for five years—until his former insurance agent spots him in a dusty resort bar. Now California Fidelity wants Kinsey Millhone to track down the dead man. Just two months before, his widow collected on Jaffe's \$500,000 life insurance policy—her only legacy since Jaffe went overboard, bankrupt and about to be indicted for his fraudulent real estate schemes. As Kinsey pushes deeper into the mystery surrounding Wendell Jaffe's suicide, she explores her own past, discovering that in family matters, as in crime, sometimes it's better to reserve judgment...



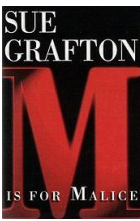
K is for Killer [1994]

Lorna Kepler was beautiful and willful, a loner who couldn't resist flirting with danger. Maybe that's what killed her. Her death had raised a host of tough questions. The cops suspected homicide, but they could find neither motive nor suspect. Even the means were mysterious: Lorna's body was so badly decomposed when it was discovered that they couldn't be certain she hadn't died of natural causes. In the way of overworked cops everywhere, the case was gradually shifted to the back burner and became another unsolved file. Only Lorna's mother kept it alive, consumed by the certainty that somebody out there had gotten away with murder. In the ten months since her daughter's death, Janice Kepler had joined a support group, trying to come to terms with her loss and her anger. It wasn't helping. And so, leaving a session one evening and noticing a light on in the offices of Millhone Investigations, she knocked on the door. In answering that knock, Kinsey Millhone is pulled into the netherworld of unavenged murder, where only a pact with the devil will satisfy the restless ghosts of the victims and give release to the living they have left behind.



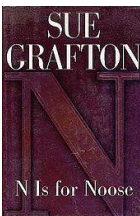
L is for Lawless [1995]

Kinsey's skills are about to be sorely tested. She is about to meet her duplicitous match in a couple of world-class prevaricators who quite literally take her for the ride of her life. "L" Is for Lawless : Call it Kinsey Millhone in bad company. Call it a mystery without a murder, a treasure hunt without a map, a quest novel with truly mixed-up motives. Call it the return of Kinsey as bad girl -- quick-witted and quicksilver, smart-mouthed and smart-alecky -- poking her nose into everyone's dirty laundry as she joins up with a modern-day Bonnie and Clyde in an Our Gang comedy that will take her halfway across the country and leave her with a major headache and an empty bank balance.



M is for Malice [1996]

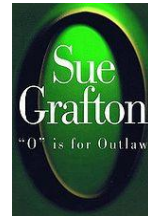
"M" is for money. Lots of it. "M" is for Malek Construction, the \$40 million company that grew out of modest soil to become one of the big three in California construction, one of the few still in family hands. "M" is for the Malek family: four sons now nearing middle age who stand to inherit a fortune -- four men with very different outlooks, temperaments, and needs, linked only by blood and money. Eighteen years ago, one of them -- angry, troubled, and in trouble -- went missing. "M" is for Millhone, hired to trace that missing black sheep brother. "M" is for memories, none of them happy. The bitter memories of an embattled family. This prodigal son will find no welcome at his family's table. "M" is for malice. And in brutal consequence, "M" is for murder, the all-too-common outcome of familial hatreds. "M" is for malice . . . and malice kills.



N is for Noose [1998]

Kinsey Millhone should have done something else -- she should have turned the car in the direction of home. Instead, she was about to put herself in the gravest jeopardy of her career. Tom Newquist had been a detective in the Nota Lake sheriff's office -- a tough, honest cop respected by everyone. When he died suddenly, the townsfolk were saddened but not surprised: Just shy of sixty-five, Newquist worked too hard, smoked too much, and exercised too little. That plus an appetite for junk food made him a poster boy for an American Heart Association campaign. Newquist's widow didn't doubt the coroner's report. But what Selma couldn't accept was not knowing what had so bothered Tom in the last six weeks of his life. What was it that had made him prowling restlessly at night, that had him brooding constantly? Selma Newquist wanted closure, and the only

way she'd get it was if she found out what it was that had so bedeviled her husband. Kinsey should have dumped the case. It was vague and hopeless, like looking for a needle in a haystack. Instead, she set up shop in Nota Lake, where she found that looking for a needle in a haystack can draw blood. Very likely, her own. "N" Is for Noose: a novel in which Kinsey Millhone becomes the target and an entire town seems in for the kill.



O is for Outlaw [1999]

Through fourteen books, fans have been fed short rations when it comes to Kinsey Millhone's past: a morsel here, a dollop there. We know of the aunt who raised her, the second husband who left her, the long-lost family up the California coast. But husband number one remained a blip on the screen until now. The call comes on a Monday morning from a guy who scavenges defaulted storage units at auction. Last week he bought a stack. They had stuff in them -- Kinsey stuff. For thirty bucks, he'll sell her the lot. Kinsey's never been one for personal possessions, but curiosity wins out and she hands over a twenty (she may be curious but she loves a bargain). What she finds amid childhood memorabilia is an old undelivered letter. It will force her to reexamine her beliefs about the breakup of that first marriage, about the honor of that first husband, about an old unsolved murder. It will put her life in the gravest peril.



P is for Peril [2001]

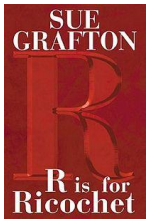
Kinsey Millhone is back, and she's broke, which is why she decides to take on a missing persons case involving a rich doctor who may have repeated history by running out on his wife and child. Things heat up when she learns that the good doctor is wanted by federal fraud busters on suspicion of Medicare fraud. Grafton delivers again in this, her sixteenth novel, which takes us into a world cast in shades of black amid shafts of steel and silver -- a shadowland in which the mysterious disappearance of the doctor leads Kinsey into a dangerous maze of duplicity as she taps into the intricacies of a cunning Medicare fraud.



Q is for Quarry [2002]

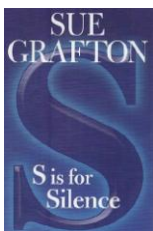
She was a "Jane Doe," an unidentified white female whose decomposed body was discovered near a quarry off California's Highway 1. The case fell to the Santa Teresa County Sheriff's Department, but the detectives had little to go on. The woman was young, her hands were bound with a length of wire, there were multiple stab wounds, and her throat had been slashed.

After months of investigation, the murder remained unsolved. That was eighteen years ago. Now the two men who found the body, both nearing the end of long careers in law enforcement, want one last shot at the case. Old and ill, they need someone to help with their legwork and they turn to Kinsey Millhone. They will, they tell her, find closure if they can just identify the victim. Kinsey is intrigued and agrees to the job. But revisiting the past can be a dangerous business, and what begins with the pursuit of Jane Doe's real identity ends in a high-risk hunt for her killer.



R is for Ricochet [2004]

Reba Lafferty was a daughter of privilege. Abandoned by her rebellious mother when she was an infant, she was the only child of a rich man already in his mid-fifties when she was born, and her adoring father thoroughly spoiled her. Now, at thirty-two, having had many scrapes with the law, she is about to be released on probation from the California Institution for Women, having served twenty-two months of a four-year sentence for embezzlement. Though Nord Lafferty could deny his daughter nothing, he wasn't there for her when she was brought up on this charge. Now he wants to be sure she stays straight, stays at home and away from the drugs, the booze, the gamblers. It seems a straightforward assignment for Kinsey: babysit Reba until she settles in, make sure she follows all the niceties of her parole. Maybe a week's work. Nothing untoward—the woman seems remorseful and friendly. And the money is good. But life is never that simple, and Reba is out of prison less than twenty-four hours when one of her old crowd comes circling round. R is for Ricochet. And R is for romance: love gone right, love gone wrong, and matters somewhere in between.



S is for Silence [2005]

Thirty-four years ago, Violet Sullivan put on her party finery and left for the annual Fourth of July fireworks display. She was never seen again. In the small California town of Serena Station, tongues wagged. Some said she'd run off with a lover. Some said she was murdered by her husband. But for the not-quite-seven-year-old daughter Daisy she left behind, Violet's absence has never been explained or forgotten. Now, thirty-four years later, she wants the solace of closure.



T is for Trespass [2007]

trespass \ˈtrespəs\ n: a transgression of law involving one's obligations to God or to one's neighbor; a violation of moral law; an offense; a sin -Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, Unabridged In what may be her most unsettling novel to date, Sue Grafton's T is for Trespass is also her most direct confrontation with the forces of evil. Beginning slowly with the day-to-day life of a private eye, Grafton suddenly shifts from the voice of Kinsey Millhone to that of Solana Rojas, introducing readers to a chilling sociopath. Rojas is not her birth name. It is an identity she cunningly stole, an identity that gives her access to private caregiving jobs. The true horror of the novel builds with excruciating tension as the reader foresees the awfulness that lies ahead. The suspense lies in whether Millhone will realize what is happening in time to intervene.



U is for Undertow [2009]

It's April, 1988, a month before Kinsey Millhone's thirty-eighth birthday, and she's alone in her office doing paperwork when a young man arrives unannounced. He has a preppy air about him and looks as if he'd be carded if he tried to buy booze, but Michael Sutton is twenty-seven, an unemployed college dropout. Twenty-one years earlier, a four-year-old girl disappeared. A recent reference to her kidnapping has triggered a flood of memories. Sutton now believes he stumbled on her lonely burial when he was six years old. He wants Kinsey's help in locating the child's remains and finding the men who killed her. It's a long shot but he's willing to pay cash up front, and Kinsey agrees to give him one day. As her investigation unfolds, she discovers Michael Sutton has an uneasy relationship with the truth. In essence, he's the boy who cried wolf. Is his current story true or simply one more in a long line of fabrications?

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