



L is for Lawless

Sue Grafton

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Read by Judy Kaye

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 a bad girl - quick-witted and quicksilver - poking her nose into everybody'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.

America's favorite borderline delinquent is back with her one-liners on tape and her energy level on high, romping through her fastest and funniest adventure in this, her twelfth foray into the alphabet of crime.

L is for Lawless Details

Date : Published (first published 1994)

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Author : Sue Grafton

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Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime



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From Reader Review **L is for Lawless** for online ebook

Quenya says

A better title for this book should be Kinsey and her misadventures with the Clampetts. Even though this book is one big Murphy's Law event for Kinsey, I still liked it. When main characters can't seem to catch a break in a book until the very end, I usually get very annoyed but not so with **L is for Lawless**. I give the credit to Sue Grafton for giving this book a more light-hearted feel to some of the other books and Grafton didn't allow Kinsey never to catch a break even in the end.

This book's story is a jigsaw puzzle which each piece slowly bringing the story full circle. It didn't feel like one of Kinsey's normal cases because she had no adversary to chase. The story is wrapped totally around Kinsey's sense of curiosity and desire to know the truth. The Rawsons are not the best supporting characters but Grafton made it all work and kept me engaged in the answers just as much as Kinsey.

If there was one thing I didn't like about the book it was the split personality Kinsey has to family dynamics. She seemed to enjoy being stuck with the Rawsons and observing their antics while totally being determined not to interact with her own family. Not sure why she was this way, but I just couldn't understand it

Mansuriah Hassan says

The author, Sue Grafton delivers another great astounding mystery in her alphabet series - **L is for Lawless**. In this book, the main character, Kinsey Millhone (a private investigator), is asked by her good friend/landlord, Henry, to help out a friend of his on a simple matter. She needs to show that Henry's friend served in the military during World War II so he can be buried as a veteran. It was such a simple request but the problem is that the military has no record of the man ever being in the army.

The family of the deceased is too busy fighting among themselves to be much help to Kinsey. Then an old friend of the deceased shows up and gets attacked at the dead guy's apartment. Once again we're on a race to see what's around the next corner for Kinsey and to find out why the government has no record of this veteran serving his country.

What should have been nothing more than a few hours of going through the man's papers soon turns into days with Kinsey taking a sudden flight to Texas, pretending to work in a hotel, running around in a cemetery, oh yeah, and being shot at. And this was a pro bono case! She wasn't even getting paid. Talk about dedication to one's work.

There's a little bit of mystery, but more suspense in this book filled with interesting characters. And more laughs than we've seen in the past with Grafton's other books. I'd recommend this easy read to anyone wanting a few hours of enjoyment as it's definitely one of Sue Grafton's better books in this series.

Kerry *Soulcaster* says

RIP Sue Grafton. I'm so sorry that you didn't get to "Z".

Kelly says

My enjoyment of this book was really diminished by the fact that Kinsey NEVER punched Laura in the face. She needed punching repeatedly. Also, we're on book 12; Kinsey should not be getting tricked quite as easily or as frequently.

But I want to hang out with the grandmother. She rocked.

Sarah says

Initially I found this book to be a tad better than its most recent predecessors, but then we got to Dallas and the stupidity hit. The longer our heroine hung out with this book's gaggle of ancillary characters, the more idiotic she herself became. By the end I was wishing Granny would take both her shotgun and her Louisville Slugger to the whole lot of 'em.

Em says

This was a highly unusual, very twisty and intense story. Kinsey's landlord, the dapper and handsome octogenarian Henry asks her to help out a neighbor who is trying to claim Veterans burial benefits for his grandfather who served in WWII and Kinsey thinks it's a piece of cake. Then an old friend of the dead man shows up and twice the decedent's home is burglarized. At that point Kinsey is hooked by her own curiosity, particularly when she catches sight of the potential burglar the second time. What follows is a cross-country car tour of the south, chasing down leads and trying to stay one step ahead of the bad guy. What made the book so good is Kinsey's brilliance in fitting together the pieces of the puzzle to solve the mystery. First figuring out the dead man had been in prison, not at war. And then taking all the clues the dead man left behind to track down the loot. But things don't end up as Kinsey had expected. Fantastic ride this is; through a mystery tour.

Susan says

Having finished my judging for Florida Scholastic Press Association, I dived right into "L," hoping Kinsey hadn't missed me for the few days I was away from her.

In this installment, set in November of 1985 even though it was published in 1995, Kinsey is 35, having had a birthday May 5. Her adored and adoring landlord, Henry, asks her to do him a favor. My guess is this experience pays her up for years to come.

Her adventures take her from her California hometown via air to Dallas and, eventually, to Louisville, Ky. Her phone airline negotiations are definitely "old school" compared to today's experiences. Entertaining, though, in light of the 21st century.

I can hardly wait until Kinsey gets a smart phone. It will make her job so much easier. If you go back and read the earlier alphabet mysteries, written in the 1990s but set in the 1980s, I'm sure you'll find yourself thinking my thoughts: "This will be so much easier in the future, Kinsey."

Meanwhile, Kinsey continues to captivate me and I still feel like I know her without actually meeting her. Wish I could...On to "M."

Tara says

My favorite in the series so far.

Bev Taylor says

kinsey millhone agrees to do a favour for a friend just prior to being a bridesmaid at one of henry's friends wedding

johnny lee has died and his family have decided that the authorities should pay for the funeral and burial. a wwII fighter pilot - but they have no record of him

then his apartment is ransacked and in the chaos a hidden safe is discovered with a key marked lawless

so starts her ride with 2 unlikely conspirators to try and get to the bottom of the mystery. it transpires that johnny was indeed lawless and they have a psychopath on their trail to ensure that he gets what he considers is rightfully his

loved the ma in this but to be honest i was not really drawn into this one as it almost seemed as though kinsey was a bit player

3.75 stars

bev

Sabrina says

Didn't like this book at all. I thought the last book K is for Killer was the worst but I take it back, this one is. Totally unbelievable story line with characters I hated and would love to see get what they got coming to them. Kinsey is a complete 180 from her usual self in all the other books and not in a good way. She went from smart, sassy and cautious to stupid, annoying/mean spirited and dangerously impulsive and a criminal herself to boot. I'm surprised she didn't die or get arrested with all the dumb choices she made in this book. She had numerous choices all through the book to leave this mess of a case behind but she never does and each time I wanted to jump into the book and beat some sense into her! By the time I got to the end I was half wishing she would get offed and this would be the end of it but since the alphabet goes on so does she. Also there were a shit ton of dog references in this book that made me wonder if the author got a new dog of

her own while writing this book.

In the beginning of the story Kinsey decides to do a favor for her landlord Henry right before the wedding of Henry's brother in which she will be a bridesmaid and after she turns down an invitation to Thanksgiving by her newly found relatives. (For reasons unknown she's been as nasty to these people as can be ever since she found out they existed even though they haven't done anything to her). She is supposed to help a neighbor who is trying to find some information on his veteran grandfather so that he can be buried with benefits. While going through the house for any papers that might help Ray, a friend of the dead man shows up. From there this story goes downhill. While looking around the house Ray tells her a tale about how he and the dead guy knew each other. After she and Ray leave the house it's broken into and she gets blamed. She clears her name but thinks Ray did it and is let in on what the dead man's son thinks is a conspiracy that his father (the dead guy) was a spy and now the government is looking for something he maybe had or stole. They do find a hidden safe in the closet but it's empty except for an old key which no one know what it belongs to. While driving by the house later Kinsey see's a man leave with a duffel bag it when no one is home and knows that this is the person who broke in before. She follows him and when he picks up a pregnant woman and heads for the airport she makes a rash decision to keep following. She calls the dead guys family to report what's going on from the airport as the couple prepare to leave.

She is hired to follow them and get back what they took and hoping they might figure out what the key is for, which Kinsey has. She maxes out her credit card to do so. The man doesn't get on the plane but the woman does and she has the duffel so Kinsey follows her. The woman gets off at a layover and checks into a hotel. Kinsey does too and while there finds out that Ray was found beaten at the house of the dead guy and that Henry's brother told him where she was. She steals a maids uniform to get to the duffel. Before she has it Ray shows up and tells her a different story about how he knew the dead guy and convinces Kinsey to team up with him to get the duffel which she now knows is full of cash. So she starts working for the bad guy and becomes a criminal. After she gets the duffel and doesn't find any money she figures out that the woman isn't pregnant but has the money in a fake belly. Also the money is old so something is off about the whole situation. Kinsey drags Ray up to confront the woman and finds out that she is Ray's daughter Laura (and dumber then a box of rocks, her IQ is so low I wonder how she functions) and the man whole broke into the dead guys house and beat Ray up is an old acquaintance Gilbert. Ray tells her another story now about how he and the dead guy met and that the money is stolen from a bank robbery! Laura is now dating Gilbert and that was how they knew to go after the money when Ray did. But she was going to double cross Gilbert who beats her and run off with the money and Gilbert's nephew. The key might unlock the rest of the money from the robbery that wasn't in the dead guy's house. Kinsey has finally decided she's had enough with Ray and Laura and has been fired so she wants to go home.

She gets to the airport only to find Gilbert getting off the plane she was going to fly out on. He assembles a gun (in front of everyone at the airport) and goes off to find a way to the hotel Ray and Laura are at without anyone stopping him. Kinsey tries to call and warn them but can't get through so has to go back and tell them of Gilbert in person calling the cops to meet her at the hotel. When she gets there the cops haven't come so she helps them get out of the hotel alone. But while doing so is chased by Gilbert who sets the hotel on fire. They all get away and drive to Ray's mom's house in Kentucky. She want's to get away and go home in Arkansas but Laura doesn't stop to let her out. Kinsey agrees to go the rest of the way with them as Ray promises he'll pay for her way home if she does. (Ray has been lying to everyone from the start and has lied to Kinsey with almost every breath so why she believe's him I have no idea and she should be locked up in the loony bin if she trusts any words coming out of his mouth.) They reach Ray's mom's and she is happy to see Ray and Laura. Ray has a letter waiting with another key in it. During dinner Ray, Kinsey and Laura discuss the keys and the money in front of Ray's mom like she has know everything all along which she hasn't. Laura then tells them that she called her mother to tell her where they were and Ray is mad because

Laura's mom will tell Gilbert. They get ready to leave but Gilbert shows up and stops them.

Gilbert has Laura tie up Ray and admits that he killed his nephew and plans to kill them. He is a psychopath and enjoys making others squirm. He takes the keys and the belly bag of money and demands the rest. Ray tells him that he doesn't know about it but that his mom has gotten money to be taken care of since the robbery. Gilbert is outraged that the money is gone and thinks it's all his. Before he can do anything else Ray's mom pulls a shotgun out from under the table and shoots Gilbert. He is hit in the neck and shoulder loses his gun and takes Laura hostage. Gilbert leaves with Laura, the keys and the money. Kinsey and Ray track down what the keys might belong to and a note the dead guy sent with the key. Ray tells Kinsey about the robbery and aftermath and also that he is actually not on parole but escaped custody so they can't call the cops. The next morning Gilbert shows up and demands his gun back which Ray gives him bullets in all! (What an idiot!) They all go to a cemetery they figured out from the note. They get to the cemetery and find the loot from the robbery and Gilbert tells them he called the cops on the original robbery and killed one of the guys on the crew as he prepares to shoot them. But Ray pulled the firing pin from the gun so it doesn't work. Ray pulls a gun and shoots Gilbert several times before Laura hits Kinsey in the head with a baseball bat (I again hope she's dead so this will end) but Kinsey wakes up in the hospital. Ray, Laura and his mom are gone with the loot and Kinsey lies through her teeth about her behavior so she won't go to jail (I hoped she would but alas no). She calls everyone she can so she can get money to fly home but no one answers so as a last resort she calls the cousins she hates and had rebuffed for cash. They give it to her....and she gets home in time for the wedding. Even though she was fired she doesn't tell the dead guys family about what happened and what they didn't get or what the dead guy did a long time ago.

The End. I wish I could have set this book on fire but I got it from the library so I was more than happy to return it as quickly as I was able.

David Highton says

I had not read a Kinsey Millhone book for a while, and enjoyed catching up with the character, although I did not find this the best of the stories so far - the accidental features of the plot and her inability to extricate herself from a gang of criminals lacked credibility.

Darinda says

Kinsey helps a neighbor discover why his grandfather has been denied veteran's benefits. It seems like an easily, but boring case. Things change quickly when break-ins start occurring, and Kinsey starts to wonder what the burglars could have been after.

The 12th Kinsey Millhone mystery in Grafton's alphabet series. Kinsey traveled away from Santa Teresa in this book, and I wasn't a big fan of the cross country chase. I wanted more of her crazy neighborhood stories, and less of the crazy characters involved in the case she was working. Kinsey acted a little impulsively in this one, and she continued to make poor decisions. I prefer a smarter Kinsey, though she stayed independent and sarcastic.

I listened to an audio version of this book.

Ouija says

This is probably my least favorite Kinsey Millhone book. I guess it was the author's attempt to get Kinsey out of her familiar setting. This is admirable, but not always successful. (Remember when Jessica Fletcher left Cabot Cove and moved to Manhattan? Blech.) I dearly missed Kinsey's familiar setting and familiar friends and after they left Dallas, found my interest flagging. There were some interesting characters and situations but other than Kinsey, no characters to root for or really care about. The plot was not exactly riveting and too complicated for the ultimate payoff. Oh wait...there was no payoff. Very abrupt and unsatisfying ending. Still Grafton on her worst day is still better than a lot of authors on their best.

James says

Book Review

4 out of 5 stars for L is for Lawless, the 12th book in the "Kinsey Millhone" cozy mystery series written by Sue Grafton in 1994. I thoroughly enjoyed this book, as it covered a lot with Henry, Kinsey's landlord and friend. He asks for her help to find the military records proving a good friend of his was in the service, in order to properly bury him. But this is where it takes a turn... Kinsey goes dark... well sort of... she's on a trip around the country to find the answers, stuck side by side with some ruthless characters whom she has to pretend to like. Less about murder more about mystery and past background checks, your mind works overtime to try to solve this one. It's complex but soft at the same time. Kinsey's personality makes these books.... you always root for her. In this one, she has to take more risks than usual, but it thankfully pays off. A must-read in this series, but there are a lot of those!

About Me

For those new to me or my reviews... here's the scoop: I read A LOT. I write A LOT. And now I blog A LOT. First the book review goes on Goodreads, and then I send it on over to my WordPress blog at <https://thisismytruthnow.com>, where you'll also find TV & Film reviews, the revealing and introspective 365 Daily Challenge and lots of blogging about places I've visited all over the world. And you can find all my social media profiles to get the details on the who/what/when/where and my pictures. Leave a comment and let me know what you think. Vote in the poll and ratings. Thanks for stopping by.

Jaret says

I really enjoyed the comic caper style of this episode in the Kinsey Millhone series. The beginning was a good build-up, but not near as much fun as the end. I could understand Kinsey's appeal to some of the characters. Her instant attraction (family-style) made the plotline even more humorous. I hated the character, Laura, but enjoyed Kinsey's sister-style bantering with her. The mystery was more of a treasure hunt, but the true treasure was the character Helen (aka Hell on Wheels). She reminds me a lot of my grandmother and I found myself laughing out loud at moments. This is definitely a character-driven story and I enjoyed the characters in the second-half of the story.
