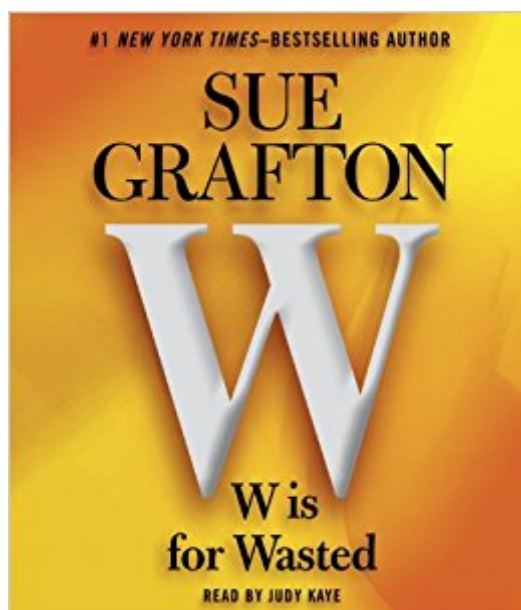


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W Is For Wasted: Kinsey Millhone Mystery



Synopsis

Of the #1 New York Times bestselling Kinsey Millhone series, NPR said, "Makes me wish there were more than 26 letters." Two dead bodies changed the course of my life that fall. One of them I knew and the other I hadn't even laid eyes on until I saw him in the morgue. The first was a local PI of suspect reputation. He hadn't been gunned down near the beach at Santa Teresa. It looked like a robbery gone bad. The other was on the beach six weeks later. He hadn't been sleeping rough. Probably homeless. No identification. A slip of paper with Millhone's name and number was in his pants pocket. The coroner asked her to come to the morgue to see if she could ID him. Two seemingly unrelated deaths, one a murder, the other apparently of natural causes. But as Kinsey digs deeper into the mystery of the John Doe, some very strange linkages begin to emerge. And before long at least one aspect is solved as Kinsey literally finds the key to his identity. "And just like that," she says, "the lid to Pandora's box flew open. It would take me another day before I understood how many imps had been freed, but for the moment, I was inordinately pleased with myself." In this multilayered tale, the surfaces seem clear, but the underpinnings are full of betrayals, misunderstandings, and outright murderous fraud. And Kinsey, through no fault of her own, is thoroughly compromised. W is for . . . wanderer . . . worthless . . . wronged . . . W is for wasted.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Wasted lives, wasted time, and wasted opportunities are at the heart of this twenty-third entry in the long-running Kinsey Millhone series, which reveals how the deaths of two very different men impact

Kinsey's life. The first man, Pete Wolinsky, found murdered in a local park, is a shady PI for whom Kinsey has little respect; the second, R. T. Dace, is an alcoholic vagrant who not only turns out to be Kinsey's relative but also leaves her a half-million bucks. Armed with news of R. T.'s death, Kinsey sets out to learn more about him and why he disinherited his immediate family. The clever twists of *V Is for Vengeance* are mostly absent here, and readers will need to wade through a lot of story before Wolinsky's connection to Dace comes clear. But Grafton hasn't lost her touch for characterization. Nobody in the cast is a stereotype, and it's the clash of personalities and interpersonal dynamics that provide the appeal here. Nearing the conclusion of this celebrated series, Grafton continues to shape Millhone's character, toughened by circumstance but still both understanding and forgiving. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** As the end of the alphabet draws closer, expect a revival of interest in a series that has helped define the role of the female sleuth in mystery fiction. --Stephanie Zvirin --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

"A realistic female detective, a woman of her times, independent and self-reliant and smart..."W is for Wasted "finds Kinsey in perfect form."--"The Star-Ledger "(Newark, NJ) "The story is new, but the familiar Kinsey Millhone is in charge, not afraid to ask questions, take thrilling small risks or challenge the secretary guarding the office tower. She's funny and quick-thinking, street-smart and kind to stray kittens...a fast-moving, readable novel that bears the mark of a master storyteller."--"Deseret Morning News " (Salt Lake City, UT) "Perhaps America's premier writer of crime fiction...Grafton, as always, combines a gripping story line with further development of one of the most intriguing protagonists in the genre [in] prose that often startles with grace and rich detail."--"Richmond Times-Dispatch" --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

I have enjoyed all of Sue Grafton's previous books and this was not an exception, however I felt this one was a bit slow and rambling. It did come together eventually, but it seemed there was a lot of filler. I enjoyed catching up with the other characters that have been regulars in the books. I had somehow skipped this book (possibly because of the ratings) and have already X. I will probably read Y which is out soon and who knows how long it will be before a Z book may come out. In my opinion it is probably time to retire Kinsey and bring things up to date in terms of technology and subject matter.

W is pure Sue Grafton/Kinsey Milhone drama mixed in with detail and description. All of the

characters are back and for those of us who have read from A to W, there was no disappointment. Is it great literature? Probably not, although Grafton's writing skills are amazing and you can't beat anyone for a good story with plenty of clues, personal insight, and twists - as are needed in this genre. I appreciated the "out take" chapters that allowed Grafton to explore a side of the story not entirely wrapped up in Kinsey - they added to the story and were probably the only way to move the story along. The thing that I have had to get used to is the fact that Kinsey's world exists in a time before cell phones and computers on every desk. I am always taken by surprise when Kinsey has to find a pay phone or go to the library to look up city tracts - it is a reminder of a more difficult time for the average PI. The best thing about W for me was the focus on homeless characters - a reminder that no group is uniform or heterogeneous. These characters are treated with the same detail and and composition as the other characters as well as Grafton's clear understanding that no one is purely one thing or another. There are pieces of good and bad in all of us - even those who are ignored by society and cast off to make their own way with little support.

I am a big Sue Grafton fan and have read every one of her alphabet books so far. Her writing is still wonderful and a joy to read; however, I found the plot here to be both convoluted and ridiculous in the extreme. Everything but the kitchen sink is thrown in here with an attempt to wrap it all together at the end. Very little of the plot made sense to me. I understand that this is fiction, but the prior books have always had a nice sense of realism to them - this one just seems unrealistic and implausible. Also, I found the political correctness annoying. Kinsey is the valiant protector of a bunch of despicably behaving bums, but yet she apparently thinks nothing of breaking up a marriage of two decent, hardworking people for no good reason. I don't know - maybe I needed to take notes while I was reading this.

I've read all of the Kinsey Millhone Mysteries and I like them all. I love Sue Grafton's writing style and how she describes her characters so that you can really imagine how they look and sound. The stories take place in the 1980's so I like how she describes using a typewriter, using phone books and year books to track down people and other details that really bring to life the world of a PI in that time period. I also really like the setting because I love Southern California and can imagine the interesting characters she has created actually living there. The last thing I like in each book is the climax where she finds out who the guilty party is who is now after her. I try to figure out who it is before they reveal it and then you wait to see when they will come after her. If you haven't read a Kinsey Millhone Mystery yet, I would encourage you to do so. Start with this one or start at the

beginning with the A book. It's a very good "light-weight" mystery series.

I have read many but not all of this alphabet series. Most I borrowed from the library. It is not necessary to read them all to enjoy one. With the theme of homelessness some readers may not enjoy the book, but the author majors on the mysteries without being preachy about the homeless. Kinsey is quirky without being annoying. The characters are well drawn, the settings well described, and the storyline believable. In short a well written book worth reading.

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