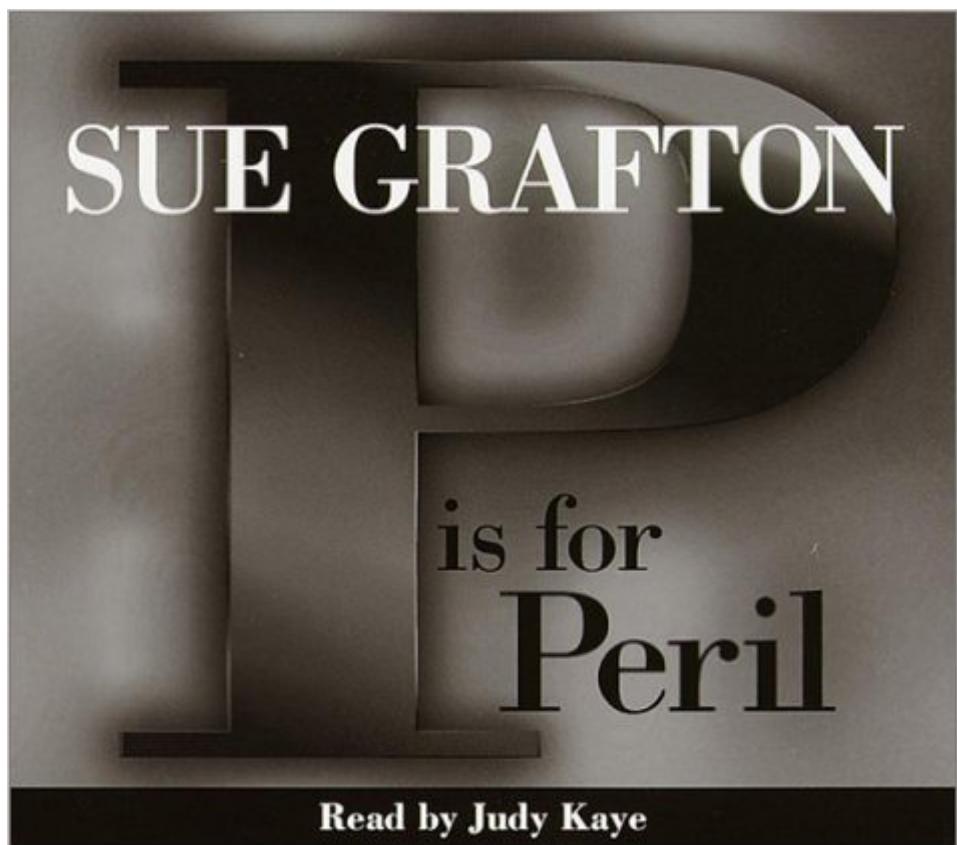


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P Is For Peril: A Kinsey Milhone Mystery (Sue Grafton)



Synopsis

Dr. Dowan Purcell had been missing for nine weeks when Kinsey got a call asking her to take on the case. A specialist in geriatric medicine, Purcell was a prominent member of the Santa Theresa medical community, and the police had done a thorough job. Purcell had no known enemies and seemed content with his life. At the time of his disappearance, he was running a nursing care facility where both the staff and the patients loved him. He adored his second wife, Crystal, and doted on their two-year-old son. It wasn't Crystal who called Kinsey. It was Purcell's ex-wife, Fiona. Everything about their meeting made Kinsey uneasy. Fiona's manner was high-handed and her expectations unrealistic. Kinsey's instincts told her to refuse the job, yet she ended up saying, "I'll do what I can, but I make no promises." It was a decision she'd live to regret. Pursuing the mysterious disappearance of Purcell, Kinsey crashes into a wall of speculation. It seems everyone has a theory. The cops think he went on a bender and is too ashamed to come home. Fiona is sure he ran off to get away from Crystal, and Crystal is just as sure he's dead. The staff at the nursing home is convinced he's been kidnapped, and one of his daughters, having consulted a psychic, is certain that he's trapped in a dark place, though she doesn't know where. Kinsey is awash in explanations and sorely lacking in facts. Then pure chance leads her in another direction, and she soon finds herself in a dangerous shadow land, where duplicity and double-dealing are the reality and, with the truth glinting elusively out of reach, she must stake her life on a thin thread of intuition. *P Is for Peril*: Kinsey Millhone's latest venture into the darker side of the human soul.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When Dowan Purcell, a respected physician who operates a nursing home, disappears, his ex-wife hires Santa Teresa PI Kinsey Millhone to look into it. Fiona Purcell is still seething over Dow's affair and subsequent marriage to Crystal, a former stripper, yet they're still friends, and she seems worried. But when his body is discovered, she's among the suspects. Both of Dow's wives, at least one of his business partners, and perhaps even Crystal's teenage daughter had motives to kill. While in her most recent adventures (*N Is for Noose, O Is for Outlaw*) Kinsey has acquired new digs, an extended family, and a few more gray hairs, in this one (which takes place some time in the mid-'80s), she's 36, still living in the remodeled garage that was blown up in an earlier novel. Easier than a facelift, and while Sue Grafton is a solid enough writer to pull it off, dedicated Kinsey fans will miss the more complex and multidimensional character who aged so ruefully and interestingly in the '90s. This isn't Grafton's strongest case; it's hard to care about any of Purcell's women or his associates. More exciting is the secondary plot, which involves a handsome landlord who offers Kinsey the new office space she's been seeking and turns out to be a lot more trouble than she bargained for. Despite its somewhat plodding pace and the echo of a more evolved heroine that rings through its pages, Grafton's many fans will probably shoot *P Is for Peril* right to the top of the bestseller list. --Jane Adams --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

PI Kinsey Millhone's trademark dry sense of humor is largely absent in the first half of the 15th book in this justifiably popular series, though it resurfaces as the suspense finally begins to build in the second half. In the bleak November of 1986, Kinsey looks into the disappearance of Dr. Dowan Purcell, who's been missing for nine weeks. Dr. Purcell is an elderly physician who runs a nursing home that's being investigated for Medicare fraud. His ex-wife, Fiona, hires Kinsey when it seems as though the police have given up on the search. Fiona thinks that he could be simply hiding out somewhere, especially since he's pulled a disappearance stunt twice before. However, Purcell's current wife, Crystal, believes that he may be dead. Kinsey is dubious about finding any new leads after so much time has elapsed. She's also worried about having to move out of the office space she now occupies in the suite owned by her lawyer, and between her interviews with suspects she tries to rent a new office from a pair of brothers whose mysterious background begins to make her suspicious. Grafton's Santa Teresa seems more like Ross Macdonald's town of the same name than ever before, with dysfunctional families everywhere jostling for the private eye's attention. The

novel has a hard-edged, wintry ambience, echoed in Fiona Purcell's obsession with angular art deco furniture and architecture. Unfortunately, Grafton's evocation of the noir crime novels and styles of the 1940s, although atmospheric, doesn't make up for a lack of suspense and lackluster characters. (June 4)Forecast: With a 600,000-copy first printing and a national author tour, this Literary Guild Main Selection is sure to shoot well up the bestseller lists. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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