

**From the Stacks**  
**By Julie Orf**  
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Crime, suspense, or mystery are all thrillers. Predictable thrillers are published; however, more recently, thriller authors write novels with tremendous shock value and sometimes with twists that are implausible. Authors frequently use dual timelines that contrast present-day consequences with the past events often a central crime or tragedy that set the story in motion. Incorporating digital correspondence like texts and emails not only advances the plot but also provides a window into a character's personality through their unique digital voice. Cliffhangers compel readers to dive straight into the next chapter, while a brisk, short-chapter structure creates a sense of rapid progress that makes 'just five more minutes' impossible to quit. Every suspenseful novel must contain a twist. And, a genuinely shocking turn of events that makes sense and still has the reader thinking days, weeks, or months later is the best kind!

J.A. Jance presents the 21<sup>st</sup> installment of the thrilling Brady novels, *The Girl from Devil's Lake*. Sheriff Joanna Brady's holiday plans and her daughter's police academy graduation are upended when a young boy's body is found beneath a flooded Arizona bridge. The grizzly crime scene suggests a seasoned serial killer who is just getting started. As Joanna investigates, she uncovers a vast web of cold cases and missing persons stretching from her small town of Bisbee to Devil's Lake, North Dakota. To stop the predator before he strikes again, Joanna must piece together a cross-country puzzle and pursue every high-stakes lead.

The final suspense novel from the legendary Nelson DeMille, coauthored with his son Alex DeMille, is entitled, *The Tin Man*. Army CID Special Agents Scott Brodie and Maggie Taylor are sent to the isolated Camp Hayden to investigate the murder of Major Roger Ames, the lead scientist for top-secret "lethal autonomous weapons" war games. At the frontier of next-gen warfare, the duo must navigate a lethal web of secret agendas and shifting alliances. Surrounded by the harsh desert, Brodie and Taylor face a facility full of suspects: a zealous commander, Rangers fueled by performance enhancing drugs and isolation, and secretive researchers. To find the killer, they must peel back layers of deception to reveal the terrifying truth behind the camp's arsenal and its true mission.

Ex-cop Max Summerlin and psychic Jonah Kendrick are an unconventional duo, but their combined instincts make Celina Investigations a force to be reckoned with. Their partnership is put to the ultimate test when a client arrives seeking a woman who possesses no name, no history, and no paper trail. The first red flag? He refuses to

involve the police. As Max and Jonah hunt for a ghost, a desperate woman races across the country, her life packed into a car as she flees her past that refuses to stay buried. In this high-stakes game of hide-and-seek, the investigators must discover if they are finding a missing person or leading a predator straight to his prey. Mindy Mejia's *The Whisper Place* pairs two unlikely investigators who specialize in finding people who do not want to be found.

M. C. Beaton's crafty Agatha Raisin is back in action authored by Beaton and R.W. Green in the latest novel, *Sugar and Spite*. When a string of deaths rattles the Cotswolds birdwatching community, Agatha Raisin suspects foul play. To stop the killer, her team must unearth decades of buried secrets and bitter rivalries among the village's local enthusiasts. Agatha is distracted: her relationship with John Glass is crumbling, and Sir Charles Fraith is eager to fill the void. Between juggling suitors and tracking a killer, Agatha must find the culprit before she becomes the next "sitting duck."