Mother-Daughter Murder Night: A Novel

Author: Nina Simon

Nina Simon writes crime fiction about strong women. She wrote for her mother, as a way to entertain, comfort and connect with her during a major health crisis. This debut novel was a Reese's Book Club pick, a Golden Poppy Award winner, and a "best of 2023" selection for Amazon, Barnes & Noble, CrimeReads and *Library Journal*. Before turning to fiction, Nina wore many hats: NASA engineer, slam poet, game designer, museum director and founder of a Of/By/For All nonprofit CEO. Her work on community participation in museums, libraries, parks, and theaters has been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, NPR and the TEDx stage. Born and raised in Los Angeles, Nina now lives off-the-grid in the Santa Cruz Mountains with her family.

Her 2 TEDx speeches:

youtube interview 1

youtube interview 2

Learn more about Of/By/For All:

Link to Of By For All , an organization about DEI at public spaces like Libraries and Museums. This organization folded in 2024.

Other books by Nina Simon:

This is her first novel.

The Art of Relevance and *The Participatory Museum* are her nonfiction works. Burbank Public Library doesn't own them at this time.

Learn more about California Wetlands:

The Beachcomber's Guide to Seashore Life of California by Duane J. Sept.

Between the Tides in California : *exploring beaches and tidepools* by Ryan P. Kelly.

Coastal Sage : Peter Douglas and the fight to save California's shore by Thomas J. Osborne

Visit the Slough? Link to their page: **elkhorn slough**

Fundraise/ pass the hat for funds for the Elkhorn Slough: Elkhorn Slough Foundation

Map of Elkhorn Slough:

Other books recommended by Burbank Public Library staff:

All of these books are more fun and funny rather than scary and have amateur(s) solving the crimes. And, best of all, if you like them, they all have sequels.

Vera Wong's Unsolicited Advice for Murderers by Jesse Sutanto. Vera wakes up one morning to find a dead man in the middle of her tea shop. Knowing she'll do a better job than the police possibly could – because nobody sniffs out a wrongdoing quite like a suspicious Chinese mother with time on her hands – Vera decides it's down to her to catch the killer.

Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman. In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet up once a week to investigate unsolved historic murders only to have the fun of solving a *real* murder mystery.

Everyone in my Family has Killed Someone by Benjamin Stevenson. Everyone at this family reunion has killed someone. Some, the high achievers, have killed more than once. All of the murders are revealed as the mystery who just killed someone at this reunion is investigated.

Discussion Questions for *Mother-Daughter Murder Night*:

1. The Rubicon women embody strength in different ways—Lana the warrior, Beth the caregiver, Jack the explorer. What traits do you associate with those of a "strong woman?" How do the women demonstrate those qualities differently, or similarly?

2. All the primary suspects --- and the murder victims --- have different visions for the future of the ranch. If you had the power to decide what should happen to the Rhoads ranch at the end of the story, what would you do, and why?

3. Lana and Beth disagree about why the sheriffs focus on Jack as a potential suspect. As Lana puts it on page 51, "Not everything is about racism or discrimination. This is just good old-fashioned incompetence." Do you agree with Lana? What role, if any, do you see discrimination playing in the investigation of Ricardo Cruz and Hal Rhoads' deaths?

4. Lana Rubicon and Hal Rhoads are both tough, exacting single parents. What differences do you see in their parenting styles, and how do you think those differences impact the relationships they've built with their adult children?

5. Self-love and family love are important themes throughout MOTHER-DAUGHTER MURDER NIGHT. On page 123, Lana tells Jack, "You have to love yourself most. No one else will do that for you." How do you feel about this advice and Jack's response to it? In what other moments of the book do these themes appear?

6. Lana Rubicon and Teresa Ramirez both use their appearance to command attention in a world that tries to render them invisible. How else do the women in the novel assert themselves? If you've had experiences of feeling invisible and wanting to assert yourself, how did you do it?

7. Detective Ramirez deals with sexism and racism while working under Detective Nicoletti, yet she finds ways to stand out. What are some creative strategies powerful women like Ramirez can use to defy expectations and succeed despite the odds?

8. Lana and Beth's relationship faces ups and downs throughout the story. Do you think their bond was ever broken, or were moments of tension essential for making it stronger?

9. The Rhoads family is full of secrets that lead to pain, emotional distance and murder. Do you think there are times when keeping secrets from family members can be good, even compassionate? Do you agree with the necessity in keeping any of the Rhoads' secrets?

10. Lana Rubicon and Gigi Montero both offer the young women in their lives unfiltered and unsolicited advice. Have you ever received an audacious piece of advice from an elder that has stuck with you (whether you agreed with it or not)?