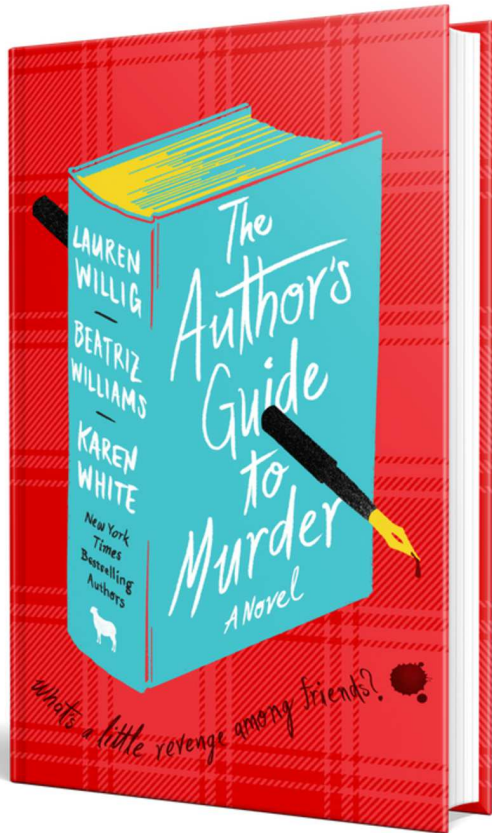


Agatha Christie meets *Murder, She Wrote*
in this witty locked room mystery
by *New York Times* bestselling team of novelists:
Beatriz Williams, Lauren Willig, and Karen White

Library Journal's Mystery & Suspense "Pick of the Month"



THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER

BY LAUREN WILLIG
BEATRIZ WILLIAMS
& KAREN WHITE

"A pure delight from start to finish! Williams, White and Willig are in top form in this clever, engrossing whodunnit with a heart."

— **Lisa Unger, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The New Couple in 5B***

"A fun send-up of the publishing industry in which mystery-writing, imbued with humor and mixed with tropes of the genre, is turned on its head...[a] dramatic mystery with an exotic setting and delightful characters. Readers who recognize and like satire will enjoy."

—**Library Journal, Starred Review
Mystery & Suspense "Pick of the Month"**

"Surprise romances and knowingly silly deus ex machinae [propel] the action. The characters are both sympathetic and hilarious...genre fans will eat it up. This is good fun." —**Publishers Weekly**

"...leaves clues that lead to an exciting conclusion involving a helicopter on a wind-swept cliff...drops lots of fun publishing Easter eggs in a bookish, charming mystery." —**Booklist**

ON SALE 11.5.24

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What's a little revenge among friends?

Bestselling fiction trio Beatriz Williams, Lauren Willig, and Karen White delighted readers in 2022 with their *New York Times* bestselling novel, *The Lost Summers of Newport*. We're thrilled to present their foray into the world of murder, intrigue, and mystery with **THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER** (11/5/2024; William Morrow), an expertly crafted blend of **Agatha Christie** and **Knives Out**.



Set against the backdrop of Castle Kinloch—a sweeping Gothic structure looming over a secluded island in the Scottish Highlands—**THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER** opens with the demise of literary superstar Brett Saffron Presley in a case that is as mysterious as it is shocking.

Years earlier, Presley had acquired the castle as a glamorous showpiece to attract paying guests with a penchant for writerly allure. Now, it seems the castle has done him in...or perhaps one of its guests has.

Enter **Detective Chief Inspector Euan Macintosh**, a local investigator faced with the daunting task of extracting statements from three American lady novelists who appear to be prime suspects: **Kat de Noir**, a sultry erotica writer with a flair for drama; **Cassie Pringle**, a busy Southern mom of six who juggles multiple cozy mystery series; and **Emma Endicott**, a New England blue blood and the author of critically acclaimed historical fiction. These women claim to be best friends writing a book together, but their stories don't quite add up. Macintosh's suspicion deepens as he uncovers a tangle of threads linking each woman to the victim.

Why did the authors really come to Castle Kinloch? And what really happened the night of the great Kinloch ceilidh, when Brett Saffron Presley skipped the folk dancing for a rendezvous with death?

Hunger for locked-room mysteries has surged with the success of franchises like *Only Murders in the Building* and the **Hercule Poirot** movies starring Kenneth Branagh.

With *THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER*, Team W—as they're known to their many dedicated readers—is set to join other massively popular thriller writers with a deliciously diabolical mystery set within the confines of four (castle) walls.

THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER combines sharp **satire of the literary world** with a **heartwarming story of unexpected friendship and romance**, all wrapped in a **delightful mix of plaid and sheep**. It's a perfect treat for **armchair travelers**, crafted by three bestselling authors who truly deliver it all!



ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Beatriz Williams is the bestselling author of over a dozen novels, including *Husbands and Lovers*, *The Summer Wives*, and *The Secret Life of Violet Grant*, as well as four other novels cowritten with Lauren Willig and Karen White. A native of Seattle, she graduated from Stanford University and earned an MBA in finance from Columbia University. She lives with her husband and four children near the Connecticut shore, where she divides her time between writing and laundry.

Lauren Willig is a *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of more than twenty-five novels, including *Band of Sisters* and the RITA Award winning *Pink Carnation* series. An alumna of Yale University, she has a graduate degree in history from Harvard and a J.D. from Harvard Law School. She lives in New York City with her husband, two young children, and vast quantities of coffee.

Karen White is a *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of thirty-four novels, including *The Last Night in London* and *The House on Prytania*, as well as the *Tradd Street* mystery series. She currently writes what she refers to as “grit lit”—Southern women’s fiction. She is a graduate of the American School in London and has a BS in management from Tulane University. When not writing, she spends her time reading, singing, and avoiding cooking. She has two grown children and currently lives near Atlanta, Georgia, with her husband and a spoiled Havanese dog.

SAMPLE AUTHOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Q: How did Team W come together, and what makes this most recent collaboration different from past books?

A: Three writers walk into a bar. That's really how it happened. We were all attending a writer's conference and—over an evening of wine and commiseration at the hotel bar—hatched a plan to write a book together so we could convince our publisher to underwrite a joint book tour. Voila, Team W was birthed! Five novels later, *THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER* is our first collaboration in which all three characters are in the same time period and interact with each other. Which meant we had to know the voices of the other two characters so we could make their dialogue authentic.

Q: Your previous novels together were all historical novels with multiple timelines—what inspired you to switch to a contemporary murder mystery?

A: Our inspirations for our books are as organic as the actual writing. We started with a story germ (three authors writing a book together with ulterior motives and a murder—or two!) and then went from there. Since we have three authors and their viewpoints, there wasn't another way to write their story without having them on the same page throughout. Of course, with a nod to our historical fiction background, we do have an important historic background to the current mystery as well as a cameo appearance by everyone's favorite supporting character, the unsinkable Prunella Schulyer—who's popped up in all our previous collaborations and plays a key part in the castle's lurid history.

Q: Where did the idea for *THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER* novel come from?

A: When we've toured for our previous collaborations, one of the questions we always get is, "Did your publisher put you together, like the Spice Girls?" Sometimes, after a few weeks on the road, we'll reply, "Of course—can't you tell we really can't stand each other?" (Truth: we weren't put together and we do adore each other.) But while we were on retreat in Newport, revising our fourth collaboration, *THE LOST SUMMERS OF NEWPORT*, we started playing the what if game. What if a group of authors had been put together like the Spice Girls— and were pretending to be besties but really couldn't stand each other? What if they were in Scotland, researching a book together? What if an absolutely crazy murder happened and they were all suspects and a hot British Detective Inspector needed to interrogate them...? One lunch break later, we had laughed ourselves silly and had the beginnings of the book that was going to become *THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER*.

Q: What experiences informed your writing of *THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER*—have you been to the Scottish Highlands?

A: We have all visited (and fallen in love with) the Scottish Highlands, although never at the same time. This is probably why, when we first came up with the idea of writing together, we planted our tongues in our cheeks and titled our first collaboration *FIFTY SHADES OF PLAID*—an epic anthology of plaid, sheep, and strapping Highlanders. Fortunately for our readers and editor, we dropped that plan, but the idea of setting one of our books in Scotland remained on our minds. All we needed was the right plot, the right Scotsman, and—of course—the copious addition of plaid and sheep, which can be found throughout *THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER*.

QUESTIONNAIRE (PAGE 2)

Q: What was the collaboration process like for THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER? Do you alternate chapters or "own" different characters, or do you write all aspects together?

A: As with our previous books, THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER is a true collaboration, from storyboard to final product. In the first step, we met at Karen's beach house to brainstorm and narrow down all the ideas we'd been tossing around in Newport, followed by a few days to hammer out the plot and write a chapter-by-chapter outline that fleshed out the story while leaving room for the details to develop organically in the writing process. Once we'd completed the outline, we each picked the character from whose point-of-view we'd be writing. (Note to readers: we devote a lot of attention to red herrings and deliberate obfuscations so that you won't know who wrote what!) After we were done with the outline, we all went our separate ways to begin writing the book, chapter by chapter, each one written from the point of view of Cassie, Emma, or Kat, in round-robin format. When the last chapter was drafted, we met in Arizona to make our final edits and email the finished manuscript to our agents and editor. This was followed by glasses of Prosecco—the signature Team W drink.

Q: Which character in the novel has the most "main character" energy, and why?

A: Emma and Kat would probably dispute that title between them, but the truth is that the book was plotted to give equal attention to each character's development—they all have distinct backgrounds, characteristics, and motivations, so that together, the three of them must learn how to vibe from each other's energy! At one point, a secondary character (epic romance novelist Karyn Black) tries very hard to take over, and you might say our three protagonists are inspired, but not cowed, by her efforts...

Q: Who is your favorite character and why?

- **KW:** Am I allowed to say Loren the sheepdog? She is a hero and saves the day at a pivotal point. Or is this an attempt to get us to confess which character we wrote? We never tell. Otherwise, it's Lady Ned. She is long dead by the time our story opens, but her strengths and sacrifices reverberate in the lives of the modern-day characters.
- **LW:** Aww, I'm so touched that you picked my canine alter ego! I'd have to go with Karyn Black, the larger than life, pantaboot wearing, deus ex machina 80s romance writer whose personality is as over-the-top as the epic novels she wrote. Although I do also need to give a shout out to Beatrice the sheep, who was on the case throughout, and solved the murder far before the Detective Inspector got there. Should we call her Miss Baaaa-rple? Or Woollock Holmes?
- **BW:** I confess to harboring soft spots for all three of our alter egos, but I have to say that Calum MacDougal, our dour Scottish ghillie, was the most fun to write. He pops up in just about every scene, equally capable of driving a Land Rover through a blizzard and wrapping our heroines in therapeutic spa treatments made of sheep's dung...until his ubiquity becomes more and more suspicious.

Q: Who are Cassie, Emma, and Kat inspired by in real life?

A: If we use real people as inspirations for our characters, they are heavily disguised so that only we know who they are. Consider it an inside joke. However, the name of the women's editor in the book, Rachelle, is borrowed from our own actual editor, Rachel Kahan. But that's where the inspiration ends! Or is it?

QUESTIONNAIRE (PAGE 3)

Q: AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER is releasing into the world following the wild success of KNIVES OUT and ONLY MURDERS IN THE BUILDING. Which aspect(s) of this ever-popular genre do you find most exciting to write?

A: One of the things that's so marvelous about the current strain of whodunnits is the perfect balance of suspense, humor, and heart. The stakes are real— but in Knives Out, Only Murders, and, now, our AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER, the tongues are also firmly in cheek.

Q: Satires on the literary world have taken the book world by storm - like Yellowface and American Fiction—any theories on what literary settings offer readers that other settings don't?

A: Everyone always wants to know what's going on behind the curtain! Books are something that are so present in most of our daily lives but the process behind them is pretty opaque to those not in the publishing world. Also, for those of us who love books, authors are our rock stars. So, for bibliophiles, books that beckon you through the door into the behind the scenes of the publishing world have the same fascination as a Hollywood tell-all or a rock and roll documentary.

Q: What unique challenges do you think women [and women writers] face, and how do you fight those together?

A: How much time do you have? There's the reception of the work itself: women's fiction isn't just fiction, it's women's fiction, implying it is somehow niche or less. A man's work is presumed to be universal in scope, a woman's... limited to women. Then there are the expectations layered on women authors, which mirror the cultural expectations placed on women in society generally. Male authors can refuse to blurb books; they can demand money for speaking; they can throw fits of temperament. Women authors are expected to say yes to everything and play nice or risk getting labeled "difficult." Difficult is a badge of honor for male writers (look at Hemingway!) and a death sentence for female authors (naming no names). Having a sisterhood makes all the difference in the world. Like the authors in the book, we may possibly have our own WTH (What the Heck) files of nasty emails—but we also have each other and our endless, epic text chain.

Q: How do you hope readers will feel after they finish the book? Do you think readers might be surprised by how this story ends?

A: Our hope is that readers will close the book with a satisfied sigh reminiscent of having finished a really good book—one that has touched on all the emotions. In addition to the mystery, murder and romance plots, this is a book about the female friendships we find along the way. We hope readers might be inspired to seek new friendships regardless of where they are in life. Life is much better with our friends beside us—that's a Team W motto! As for the ending: it's a bit twisty so we do expect the readers to be surprised.

Q: If given the chance to add an additional character or chapter to AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER, what would you include?

A: Forget an additional chapter: we were all set to write half a dozen sequels! We so fell in love with these women and their friendship that we immediately sat down and started plotting further adventures...

QUESTIONNAIRE (PAGE 4)

Q: What questions are you asked the most at book signings, by your fans? Do you get more feedback on the themes of friendship, romance, or something else?

A: Readers are often curious as to the “how” of writing together followed closely by the question of how we choose which character to write. But the question we get most is how we resolve conflict. This stumped us the first time we were asked, because, honestly, the biggest conflict we have is whether to order white wine or red! (Prosecco. The answer is always prosecco.)

Q: What drink pairs best with this book?

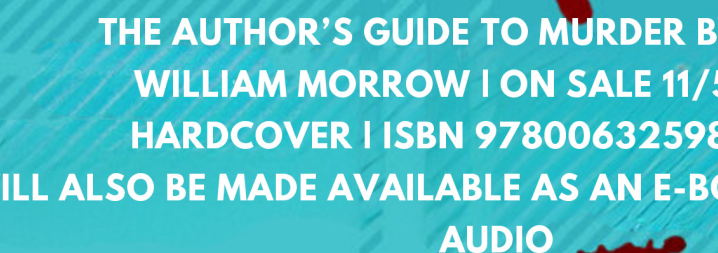
- **KW:** Whiskey (Because Scotland). And coffee since each character is on a quest for a decent cup throughout the book.
- **LW:** French 75! In honor of Emma, and because it’s a close cousin of Team W’s go to drink: Prosecco. Although I won’t say no to coffee....
- **BW:** As the Great Compromiser, might I propose a Scottish 75? With whiskey instead of gin? Or would that ruin two perfectly good drinks?

Q: What song/artist pairs best with this book?

- **KW:** WE ARE FAMILY by Sister Sledge—in honor of the sisterhood and friendship the women discover during the course of the book.
- **LW:** PUSH IT by Salt-N-Pepa—both because we tried to push the boundaries of our writing with this book and because you haven’t truly lived until you’ve seen Beatriz and Karen car-dancing to PUSH IT at three in the morning on the road somewhere between Atlanta and Pawleys Island on day eleven of book tour.
- **BW:** Dang it, Lauren—that was my pick! I guess I’ll have to go with ON THE ROAD AGAIN by Willie Nelson—it always reminds me of the three of us on book tour.

Q: What are you reading now? Any recommendations for the fall/winter—particularly those similar to THE AUTHOR’S GUIDE TO MURDER?

- **KW:** I’m currently reading YOU SHOULDN’T HAVE COME by Jeneva Rose because of what’s supposed to be a very twisty ending just like in THE AUTHOR’S GUIDE TO MURDER.
- **LW:** I’m currently re-reading Charlotte Vassell’s THE OTHER HALF in anticipation of her second book, THE IT CROWD. THE OTHER HALF was one of last summer’s stand out reads for me because it had the same combination of humor and mystery and wonderfully British sensibility that we tried to infuse into AUTHOR’S GUIDE TO MURDER.
- **BW:** I’m loving QUEENS OF CRIME by our darling and talented friend Marie Benedict. She’s taking her gift for gripping historical fiction to the world of 1930s detective fiction, with a trio of real-life female authors and a fabulously twisty murder mystery plot.



THE AUTHOR’S GUIDE TO MURDER BY TEAM W
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