
ROUND ROBIN MYSTERY



NEVER EVER

By Helen Currie Foster, Wendy Gee, K. P. Gresham, and M. K. Waller

How long had it been since she picked up a hitchhiker? Bonnie sat at the last highway traffic light on U.S. 290 going out of Austin, looking at the girl across the intersection, thumb out. No suitcase, just a backpack. No sunglasses, maybe trying to inspire trust? Jeans rolled up. A Band-Aid on one shin. Old pink Converse sneakers. Early morning sun on a young face, tired.

When the light changed, with no understanding how exactly this happened, Bonnie slowed her car and pulled off onto the shoulder past the girl and waited. She locked the doors but rolled down the passenger side window.

The face appeared. "Oh, thank you!"

Bonnie interrupted. "Where are you going?"

"Big Spring."

"I can get you as far as the turnoff on Highway 87."

"That'd be great."

Thunk. Bonnie unlocked the car. The girl put her backpack in the back seat and climbed in front, glancing at Bonnie. Bonnie smiled, saying nothing. Big Spring. Of course. *Midnight Cowboy*. That's all she knew about Big Spring, except zipping past it as fast as she could on the bypass. San Angelo, okay. She had a cousin there. But Big Spring...if she'd ever been there, she couldn't remember. The name just aroused worry. Jon Voight...

And really, why had she done this? Stopped to pick up a hitchhiker? She was heading for Colorado, cool clean air, if she could just get out of Texas, get across Oklahoma, she'd be... Why had she encumbered herself?

Well. "What's your name?" she asked the girl.

"Dusty," she said, reaching into her backpack. "Mind if I smoke?" She presented a tattered Zip-loc containing three joints.

"Uh, nothing illegal. Just had the upholstery cleaned." Bonnie licked her lips in anticipation of a mellow high. These days she had a fondness for prescription drugs anyway. Yup. And now that she'd come into money—big money, she'd up the quality of her recreational activities. "Check the glove compartment. Might be an old pack of Newports."

Dusty popped the latch and her eyes widened. "Lady, you have a gun."

Bonnie flicked her gaze and spotted the matte black pistol. She swerved to the side of the road and skidded to a stop, kicking up gravel and grass. She reached across the console for the gun before Dusty had time to react.

Dusty raised her hands. "I only want a ride. No trouble. Okay?"

"Oh, for heaven's sake." Bonnie tucked the Smith and Wesson into her purse and dumped it at her feet. "What'd you expect? This is Texas."

She checked the rearview mirror before heading back onto the road. Her brown eyes stared back at her, a little bloodshot from her "activities" the night before. In her hurry to get out of Austin, she'd swept her brown

hair back into a ponytail, which made the wrinkles on her face more pronounced. Not for long, she smiled to herself. She maneuvered the car back onto the road and wondered which one of the three men she was running from had planted the gun—her husband, her boss, or the guy she’d picked up in the Four Seasons lounge last night.

“See what you can find on the radio,” Bonnie said, and began ruminating on her problem. She eliminated the wannabe cowboy she’d left sprawled in a tangle of sheets at the hotel. He’d never been out of her sight.

“We interrupt this broadcast...”

Oops. Too much information. Bonnie switched off the radio. “Those are always bad news. Dusty, tell me something good.”

“Gotta think.” Dusty leaned back and closed her eyes.

“How about Big Spring? What’s there?”

So still, so peaceful, the girl might have fallen asleep.

Bonnie sized her up. Brown hair, sun-streaked, skin pale under a light burn. Fragile. Where had she been yesterday? How long had she stood in the heat, waiting? How many drivers had picked her up, then put her back out on the road to wait again?

Dusty opened her eyes, caught Bonnie looking.

“Boyfriend. Maybe. With him, it’s hard to tell.”

“One of those, huh?”

“Rodeo next weekend. He’s a bull rider.” A smile. “Said he wants me there watching.”

Must be nice, Bonnie thought, running to something instead of running away. “I hope it works out for you.”

“Me, too. Where’re you headed?”

Sweet kid. No need to involve her in my stuff. “Family. Little town nobody ever heard of.”

“Why’re you carrying a gun?”

WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS WITH BONNIE AND DUSTY?

[Read the rest of *Never Ever!*](#)

 <u>Helen Currie Foster</u>	Wendy Gee	 <u>K. P. Gresham</u>	 <u>M. K. Waller</u>
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SO MUCH TO SHARE!!!

Once again, we have so much to share! We have videos of monthly meetings in case you couldn't attend, interesting panels from chapter authors, and invites to events from other Texas chapters of Sisters in Crime. Hope you enjoy this issue's shares!

MYSTERY WRITER PANELS. A BIG THANK YOU TO MEG MILLER AT THE PFLUGERVILLE LIBRARY for organizing and moderating three panels discussing various aspects of mystery writing.

Authors of Mystery Talk Setting: The Lone Star State –Laura Oles, K. M. Hodge, and Helen Currie Foster talk about how they chose the settings in their books and the role they play. Premiered on September 14, 2020.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gccai44Goy8

Authors of Mystery Talk Characters: How we create them –N. M. Ceden, M. K. Waller, and Dave Ciambrone discuss their characters and how they develop them. Premiered on October 12, 2020.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntGOJ86C5YM

Authors of Mystery Talk - Writing Humor in a Mystery –K. P. Gresham, Kelly Cochran, and Nancy G West discuss how they approach humor in their writing. Previously recorded, the panel will premiere on November 6, 2020 at 6 pm with the moderator and authors available to take questions! www.facebook.com/pflugervillelibrary/

SAVE THE DATE! FREE WORKSHOP - A WRITER'S GUIDE TO CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS BY BERNARD SCHAFFER – THANK YOU TO THE HOUSTON SINC CHAPTER for inviting us to attend their workshop!

WHEN: November 14, 2020, from 9am to 2pm CST

WHERE: ZOOM!

WHAT: Hands-on workshop - From Patrol Officer to Detective - What it takes to get a gold shield. Crime Scene and Forensic Methods. Interview and Interrogation. UC's and CI's - Undercover Officers and Confidential Informants.

WHO: Bernard Schaffer, author of the acclaimed Santero and Rein Thriller series, featuring detective Carrie Santero and her mentor, the troubled Jacob Rein and many other fiction and non-fiction books. Bernard Schaffer is a 22-year veteran police officer. He has been a detective for approximately fifteen years. He is a court-recognized narcotics expert, a child forensic interviewing specialist, and has participated in over 2000 hours of police training. www.bernardschaffer.com

TEX THOMPSON'S JUICE BOX HERO – SQUEEZING PLOT FROM CHARACTER. YEEE-HAAW! We've got good news for you – you can now watch Tex Thompson share her ten top tips to juice up a story. Whether you are still outlining or already deep in revision, her tips are packed full of ways to help your writing.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyroapyA1NQ&feature=youtu.be

BILL WOODBURN – BEYOND BAD AND GOOD GUYS. EXCELLENT DISCUSSION ON MOTIVATION. Bill Woodburn, Med, LPC-S, LMFT-S on what motivates people and how to apply it to your character's thoughts and actions. Create believable characters. www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJ5TAcmbz&feature=youtu.be

CAN'T GET ENOUGH? [CHECK OUT MORE VIDEOS FROM OUR PREVIOUS MEETINGS!](#)

NANOWRIMO! - #SINC50K

**Join Sisters in Crime to “sink 50K” with a #SinC50K
National Novel Writing Month Challenge!**

TELL YOUR FRIENDS - YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE A MEMBER OF SISTERS IN CRIME TO JOIN!!!!



Every November since 2000, thousands have participated in NaNoWriMo in hopes of writing a 50,000 word draft from November 1 to November 31st. This year, Sisters in Crime is a major sponsor for NaNoWriMo to help get the word out about Sisters in Crime to new writers and new members of SinC.

This year Sisters in Crime is a major sponsor of NaNoWriMo (as it is known) to help get the word out about SinC to new writers (and new members for your chapter!) and to help our current members participate in a fun community challenge to meet their writing goals.

TO SinC50K – You Must do the following!

- **SIGN UP FOR NANOWRIMO AT** www.nanowrimo.org
- **SIGN UP FOR SIBLINGS DO NANOWRIMO** www.sistersincrime.org/event/SinC50K20
- Optional - [SIGN UP TO JOIN THE SINC NATIONAL SINC50K NANOWRIMO FACEBOOK GROUP](#)

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## **SISTERS IN CRIME NATIONAL – NANOWRIMO LAUNCH PARTY!**

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2020, 12 NOON EASTERN**

Join SinC National for the Virtual Launch Party on Sunday, November 1, 2020, 12 noon Eastern. (This is Eastern STANDARD time, as the clocks fall back the night before!) You can sign up for the Crowdcast event now: <https://www.crowdcast.io/e/h071n6da>

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NANOWRIMO WRITE-INS

THANK YOU to The Houston Chapter of Sisters in Crime who will be hosting weekly virtual write-ins for Sisters in Crime members on all five Sundays in November! There is no pressure to hit a certain word count or revise a certain number of pages. These write-ins are merely to help keep us accountable to our projects. If you make your favorite beverage, it will be just like we’re sitting across from each other at a café! 😊 **SinC members only, sorry no guests.** On Zoom from 4-6pm. Heart of Texas Sisters in Crime Members should have received an email with the information needed to join the first virtual write-in. If you did not receive this email, please contact Fran Paino - franpaino@gmail.com to request a copy of the email. #SinC50K

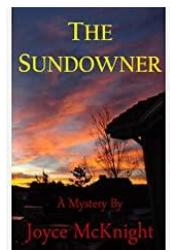
Remembering Joyce Arquette



As we near the end of 2020, we pay tribute to our member Joyce Arquette who we lost on January 16, 2020 at the age of 82. Joyce was born August 29, 1937 in Kerrville, TX.

Joyce first joined our chapter in 2002. During her years as a Heart of Texas, Sisters in Crime member, she became known as a dedicated, active member, and a friend to all who met her. She was a member who was quick to volunteer when something needed to be done. In 2002 she manned the Sisters-in-Crime hospitality suite at Bouchercon, in Austin, Texas. In 2003 and 2004 Joyce was a Texas Book Festival Sisters-in-Crime booth volunteer and a planner for the 2003 through 2006 festival booth projects. Also, in 2003, she became the publicity and newsletter chair and held the position through 2014. Joyce served on the Barbara Burnett Smith Aspiring Writer and Texas Book Month events committees in charge of publicity from 2006 through 2009. In 2006 she was an aspiring writer participant.

In 2013, Joyce, under her maiden name Joyce McKnight, published a mystery novel. Sundowner set in her hometown of Kerrville, TX in the 1960's tells the story of Alma, a senior citizen, who figures out who killed a young woman found at the bottom of a lake. But Alma suffers from Sundowner Syndrome, so no one believes her, except the killer.



Joyce was more than a published mystery author. She held a Bachelor of Arts from Trinity University and spent her early years as an English teacher, later working in the family business as a florist, and then as a case worker supervisor for the State of Texas Adult Protective Services. First and foremost, she was a dedicated mother and treasured her children and grandchildren and cherished every moment with them.



SPECIAL EVENT – ONE PERFORMANCE ONLY!

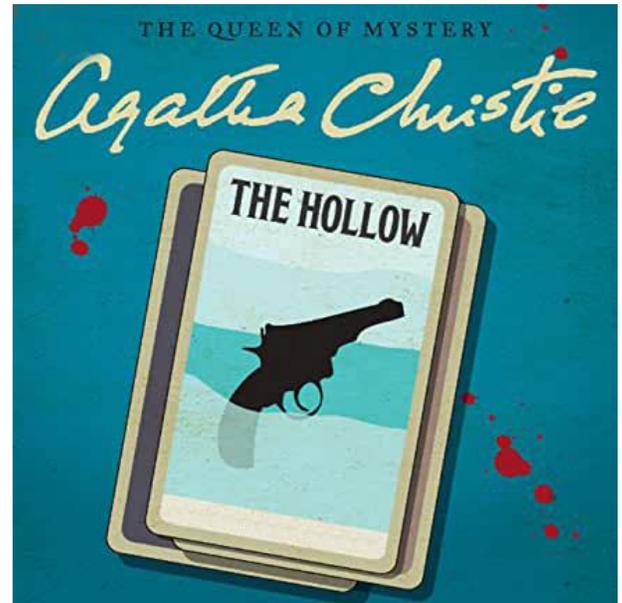
Agatha Christie's THE HOLLOW

December 6, 2020, at 5 p.m. - Presented on ZOOM!

In partnership with BookPeople and Heart of Texas Sisters in Crime, Austin Shakespeare presents a theatrical staged reading of an Agatha Christie play based on her novel, *The Hollow*. It's a psychological murder mystery set in a classic English country house, with all the suspects present and with Agatha Christie at her cleverest.

You'll meet Lucy Angkatell, Christie's comic grande dame; Dr. Cristow, the charismatic romantic focus of the trouble; his devoted wife, Gerda; his mistress, the sculptor Henrietta; and his former lover and glamorous Hollywood actress, Veronica. Each one has a motive for murder—but only one of them did it.

The original novel featured Hercule Poirot. For the play, Christie created a new detective—the charming Inspector Colquhoun--AND a new murderer. Christie, the best-selling novelist of all time, was also a record-breaking playwright.



One Performance only—on ZOOM
Sunday, December 6, 2020 at 5 pm

TICKETS: donation of \$10

www.austinshakespeare.org/the-hollow-2020

You'll receive the ZOOM link.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Upcoming meetings, contests, conferences, book signings, etc.

Upcoming Meetings (details at www.sinc-heartoftexas.com)

Due to Covid-19 all meetings for the remainder of the year will be held **virtually via Zoom**. Please view our website for details and up-to-date information about our meetings, and for links to join these meetings. www.sinc-heartoftexas.com/meetings-events/3105-2/

- **November 15, 2020** – She Spies Private Eye, Inc – Anji Maddox
- **December 13, 2020** – Holiday Zoom Party!
- **January 10, 2020** – What Authors Need to Know about Business Entities and Taxes – Mike Kowis, Esq., Tax Attorney, Adjunct Faculty Member at Houston Community College and Author of “14 Steps to Self-Publishing a Book” and “Smart Marketing for Indie Authors.”

Call for Submissions (deadline dates)

- **November 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020**– **Groovy Gumshoes Anthology** Short Story (approx. 5000 words). **Payment Pro-rata share of royalties** if selected for publication. For the details visit – www.crimefictionwriter.com/submissions.html
- **January 1, 2021 to February 28, 2021** – **Mickie Finn Vol. 3 Anthology** – Short Story (approx. 5000 words) **Payment Pro-rata share of royalties** if selected for publication. For the details visit – www.crimefictionwriter.com/submissions.html
- **Ongoing** – **Mystery Weekly Magazine** – Short Stories 2500-7500 words. A penny per word. Response time is now 3 to 6 weeks. For details - www.mysteryweekly.com/submit.asp

Contests (deadline dates)

- **December 12, 2020** – **Daisy Pettles Writing Residency for Women 40+** - Grand Prize is a Month of free rent and utilities at the Daisy Pettles Writing House and \$1000.00 grant, First Runner Up is \$200 cash and offer of residency if Grand Prize winner can't accept prize, Second Runner Up is \$75 cash. www.daisypettleswritingcontest.com/

Other Business

At our November meeting we will elect our officers – The proposed board slate for 2021 is:
President - KP Gresham; Vice President – Kelly Manfredini; Treasurer – Dave Ciambrone; Secretary – Fran Paino;
Past President – Noreen Cedeno; Newsletter Chair - Kelly Cochran; Member at Large & Chapter Historian –
Kathy Waller; Member at Large – Helen Currie Foster