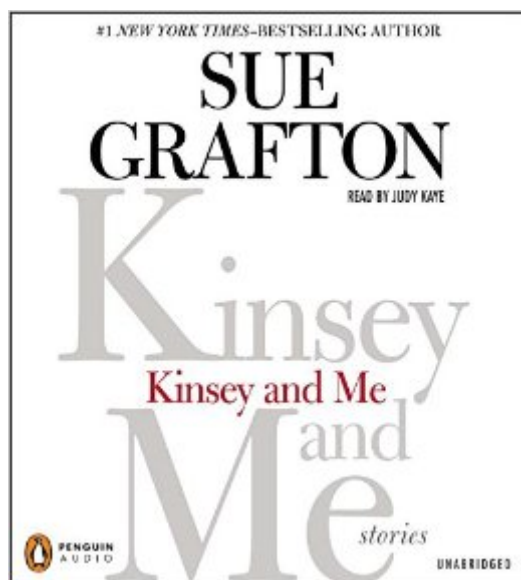


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# Kinsey And Me: Stories



## Synopsis

In 1982, Sue Grafton introduced us to Kinsey Millhone. Thirty years later, Kinsey is an established international icon and Sue, a number-one bestselling author. To mark this anniversary year, Sue has given us stories that reveal Kinsey's origins and Sue's past. I've come to believe that Grafton is not only the most talented woman writing crime fiction today but also that, regardless of gender, her Millhone books are among the five or six best series any American has ever written. "Patrick Anderson, The Washington Post Kinsey and Me has two parts: The nine Kinsey stories (1986-93), each a gem of detection; and the And Me stories, written in the decade after Grafton's mother died. Together, they show just how much of Kinsey is a distillation of her creator's past even as they reveal a child who, free of parental interventions, read everything and roamed everywhere. But the dark side of such freedom was that very parental distance. The same feisty voice and witty aperçus readers fell in love with in A Is for Alibi permeate the Kinsey stories. Those in the And Me section trace a remarkable voyage, from anger to understanding, from pain to forgiveness. They take us into a troubled family, dysfunctional as most families are, each in their own way, but Grafton's telling is sensitive, delicate, and ultimately, loving. Enriching the way we see Kinsey and know Sue, these stories are deeply affecting.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sue Grafton, author of those A to V Kinsey Millhone mysteries, is out with a new book. And it's sort of a hybrid, and like nothing I've ever read. "Kinsey and Me" is actually two books, with an entre'act in between. The first part are short stories about Kinsey that Grafton had dashed off in the 1980's

and a little later. If you are old enough to remember the Ellery Queen magazines of short mysteries, these stories are a lot like those. Not much substance - how much plot can you put into 15 pages? - but Grafton's characters with finely drawn personas are there. Grafton has a way with writing that gives even her stock characters nuanced portrayals. (One of the stories, the last one, was written to be published in a "Land's End" catalog - hey, I assume she was paid for it - and they got their money's worth from her product placement.) I'm not an enthusiastic short story reader - though I've been reading them more lately - and I don't think these stories are in any way comparable to Grafton's books. They're fun to read and you might learn a bit more about Kinsey Millhone and Santa Teresa and her milieu. It will certainly help ease the days til her next book, which is "W is for something or the other". However, any long-time reader of the Kinsey Millhone books has to be interested in Kinsey's back story. Reared by an aunt after the death of her parents in a car crash she survived, Kinsey didn't have much of a family life. She was given a little life-guidance by her aunt, but basically Kinsey raised herself, under her aunt's protection. In Grafton's book, she writes about her own family. She was the daughter of two alcoholics and her mother was a recluse who died of drink and smoking and esophageal cancer when Sue was about 20 and had already left home to an early marriage and baby.

For readers who have followed the Sue Grafton Alphabet Mystery series, Kinsey Millhone is a familiar character. Almost like someone from our own lives--albeit our lives in the eighties, the decade that has become the signature era for the character. A time before technology had advanced and when the Internet was still in the distant future. Kinsey's style was born from pages of gritty detectives searching for clues the old-fashioned way. Kinsey and Me: Stories is a closer look into the character and the author. In the first section, we enjoy several short stories featuring Kinsey with her trademark tough girl persona and her ability to "lie" and follow the clues with diligence. In the second half, Grafton takes us into her own life in the ten years following her mother's death. She writes: "At the remove of some fifty years, I still find myself reluctant to lift the veil on a period of my life that was chaotic and confused. Looking back, I can see that I was rudderless and floundering, that in attempting to save myself, I hurt others...." In the introduction to the final section, she says that "Kinsey Millhone is the person I might have been had I not married young and had children. She is more than that. She is a stripped-down version of my 'self'--my shadow, my projection--a celebration of my own freedom, independence, and courage." With Kinsey Millhone as her alter ego, Grafton describes Kit Blue, featured in the final stories, as a younger version of herself. In Kit Blue, we see the pain of the lost child whose parents dived into their bottles and abdicated their roles as

parents.

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