



Summary

High-powered businesswoman Lana Rubicon has a lot to be proud of: her keen intelligence, impeccable taste, and the L.A. real estate empire she's built. But when she finds herself trapped 300 miles north of the city, convalescing in a sleepy coastal town with her adult daughter Beth and teenage granddaughter Jack, Lana is stuck counting otters instead of square footage—and hoping that boredom won't kill her before the cancer does.

Then Jack—tiny in stature but fiercely independent—happens upon a dead body while kayaking. She quickly becomes a suspect in the homicide investigation, and the Rubicon women are thrown into chaos. Beth thinks Lana should focus on recovery, but Lana has a better idea. She'll pull on her wig, find the true murderer, protect her family, and prove she still has power.

With Jack and Beth's help, Lana uncovers a web of lies, family vendettas, and land disputes lurking beneath the surface of a community populated by folksy conservationists and wealthy ranchers. But as their amateur snooping advances into ever-more dangerous territory, the headstrong Rubicon women must learn to do the one thing they've always resisted: depend on each other.



About the Author

Nina Simon writes crime fiction about strong women. She is the New York Times-bestselling author of *Mother-Daughter Murder Night*. This big-hearted whodunnit is a Reese's Book Club pick and a "best of 2023" selection for Amazon, Barnes & Noble, CrimeReads, and LibraryJournal.

Before turning to fiction, Nina wore many hats: NASA engineer, slam poet, game designer, museum director, and 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.

Mother-Daughter Murder Night is Nina's first novel. She wrote it as a love letter to her mother, as a way to entertain, comfort, and connect with her during a major health crisis. Born and raised in Los Angeles, Nina now lives off-the-grid in the Santa Cruz Mountains with her family. More information can be found on her website, ninaksimon.com.

Courtesy of authors website
<https://ninaksimon.com/#bio>



Discussion Questions

- Detectives Nicoletti and Ramirez interact with suspects in contrasting ways. Do you think Detective Ramirez would have approached Jack's interrogation differently if she were leading it? How does gender and racial identity play into their interactions with the public?
- 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?
- 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? Can a family bond truly heal after significant disagreements?
- How does the discovery of the body impact the Rubicon women's lives and their relationship with each other?
- What is the significance of the victim's identity and their connection to the town?
- How does the initial investigation unfold, and what challenges do the police face?
- Who are the main suspects in the case, and what evidence points to their involvement?
- How does the Rubicon women's investigation lead them to uncover hidden secrets and motives of the potential suspects?
- What role does the local community play in the investigation, and how do their suspicions and biases influence the case?
- What surprising revelations or twists change the course of the investigation?
- How does the author use red herrings and misdirection to keep the reader guessing?
- What is the ultimate solution to the mystery, and how does it tie together all the loose ends?
- How do the Rubicon women use their unique skills and perspectives to solve the mystery?
- What challenges do they face as amateur sleuths, and how do they overcome them?
- How does their investigation impact their relationship with the local authorities and the community?

Book reviews

One of the things Beth regrets most in life is that she doesn't have a closer relationship with her mother, Lana Rubicon. That all changes, however, when Lana is forced to take a hiatus from her high-powered Los Angeles real-estate career to deal with cancer and subsequently moves in with Beth and her granddaughter Jack. When Jack stumbles across a dead body while leading a kayaking tour of the nearby slough and becomes the local police's main suspect, Lana finds another way of engaging with her daughter and granddaughter by doing a bit of snooping. Can it really be true that the family that sleuths together, stays together? Simon's dazzling debut delivers everything a mystery fan could crave, including a realistically nuanced cast of characters, a vividly evoked coastal California setting, writing imbued with a deliciously desiccated sense of wit, and a perfectly plotted murder with enough red herrings deftly dropped in to confound the most experienced mystery reader.

VERDICT Insightful and frequently funny analysis of family dynamics wrapped up in a cleverly crafted cozy crime novel.