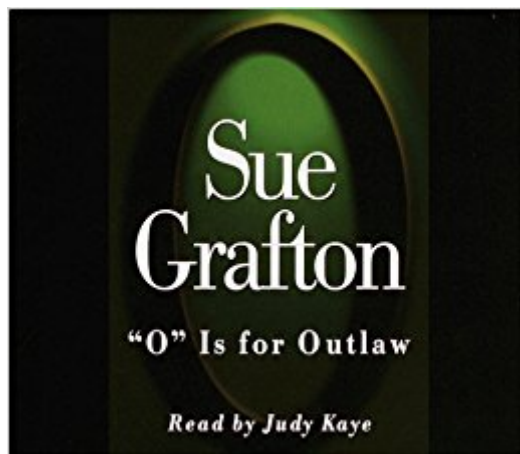


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# O Is For Outlaw (Sue Grafton)



## Synopsis

**O IS FOR OUTLAW** Read by Judy Kaye 5 CDs / 6 hours  
The call comes on a Monday morning from a guy who scavenges defaulted storage units at auction. The weekend before, he'd bought a stack of cardboard boxes. In one, there was a collection of childhood memorabilia with Kinsey's name all over it. Though she's never been one for personal possessions, curiosity is a power force. What she finds among the items is an old undelivered letter to her that will force her to reexamine her beliefs about the breakup of her first marriage...about the honor of her first husband...and about an unsolved murder. It will put her life in the gravest peril. Through fourteen books, listeners have been fed short rations when it comes to Kinsey Millhone's past: a morsel here, a dollop there. We know about the aunt who raised her, the second husband who left her, the long-lost family up the California coast. But husband number one has remained a blip on the screen. Until now. "O" Is for Outlaw: a revealing excursion into Kinsey's past.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Wise-cracking, staunchly independent, and chronically curious, Grafton's gritty gumshoe Kinsey Millhone is back. This time, the alphabet series star will take on the toughest case to date: her past. What begins as a random phone call from a "storage space scavenger" (someone who buys the contents of defaulted storage units) leads Kinsey to a box of old papers and personal effects that her ex-husband, Mickey Magruder, left behind. Inside, she finds a 15-year-old unsent letter from a

bartender that, among other things, reveals her former hubby was having an affair. The letter also contains details about the murder of a transient--a crime for which Mickey was blamed. Although never convicted, Mickey was ruined--losing his job, wife, and friends. But 15 years later, Kinsey realizes that foul play may have been involved in the murder, a deadly temptation for her. Die-hard fans will especially enjoy Kinsey's self-disclosure--something she's infamous for not doing--about her childhood, the fate of her parents, and the randy details of her first marriage. A very vulnerable and interesting side to Kinsey's character is also revealed when her obsessive-compulsive fact-finding bent is mixed up with matters of the heart. A fast, fun read, *O Is for Outlaw* is packed with Grafton's clear, colorful imagery and signature metaphors: "Our recollection of the past is not simply distorted by our faulty perception of events remembered, but skewed by those forgotten. The memory is like orbiting twin stars, one visible, one dark, the trajectory of what's evident forever affected by the gravity of what's concealed." --Rebekah Warren --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Grafton's fans will be thrilled with this knockout 15th Kinsey Millhone mystery, which deals with Kinsey's first marriage. In a complex story that zigzags between past and present, the California PI gets involved again with her first ex-husband, former cop Michael "Mickey" Magruder, who initially reappears in her life by chance when she comes across memorabilia he kept after their separation 14 years earlier. The mementos include an undelivered letter addressed to Kinsey, providing Mickey with an alibi for the beating death of Vietnam vet Benny Quintero, the unproven charge against Mickey that prompted Kinsey to leave him. Conscience-stricken, Kinsey looks up acquaintances from her early marriage, questioning her judgment and values at the time. Then two Los Angeles police detectives inform her that Mickey has been shot and is in a coma, and Kinsey decides to investigate. As usual in Grafton's novels, the PI encounters a string of offbeat characters who lead or mislead her in a gyre of confusion; here, many of them had motive and opportunity to shoot Mickey. In time, Kinsey stumbles on a clue that first bewilderingly leads back to the Vietnam War and, eventually, points the way to Benny's killer and Mickey's assailant. In addition to her distinctive humor, sharp sense of place and crisp dialogue defining character, Grafton adds depth to this outing through unexpected details of Kinsey's past. Meanwhile, Kinsey's examination of her youthful self-righteousness and naivete initiates a provocative contemplation of guilt, morals and loyalty that graces one of the very best entries in a long-lived and much-loved series. Agent, Molly Friedrich at Aaron Priest. \$500,000 ad/promo; Literary Guild and Doubleday Book Club main selection; author tour. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Paperback

edition.

What can you say about Sue Grafton other than she is a great mystery writer. Kinsey Milhone is an ex-cop and has her own detective agency and never much of a sex life if that what your looking for, go elsewhere. This is a traditional gumshoe story with action and danger for our heroine. After some spotty success writing books, Grafton changed to writing screenplays for TV and movies. With the success of her first Alphabet series book 'A is for Alibi' in 1982 it has continued to date. I first discovered her books when I came across 'G is for Gumshoe' (pub 1990) in a recycle center in 2000, I proceeded to local bookstores and to acquire all of this series up until the current at the time 'O is For Outlaw'. It's always great when you come across a great series in progress as it's a joy just reading book after book from a great writer. Much like 'binge watching TV series on Netflix nowadays. Only problem with an ongoing series is waiting for the next book. Grafton has done only a couple of yearly books and mostly every other year since 'P is for Peril' in 2001. It is now up to just plain 'X' in 2015 and will end with 'Z is for Zero'. I'm hoping she has Y & Z completed as she is 75 now and I'm 70 and don't want to miss the conclusion of this great series.

Another reader stated "O" should stand instead for Obligation. I agree with her. The novel is retro 80's, with it's roots in the early 70's. It involves Kinsey's first and very short marriage to Mickey Magruder, a cop. Mickey being badly hurt, Kinsey's on a bit of a guilt trip feeling she was unfair in letting go of the marriage as quickly as she had. She feels obligated to make things "Right" by finding Mickey's assailant. The story has an entire host of possible suspects. The settings go from seedy bars to mansions to the Vietnam War. The suspects go back a good 15 years. Grandsons are also suspect. The reader probably will not figure the guilty one until shortly before the end. Kinsey walks the fence as usual, staying inside the law; sometimes straying just outside. Ms. Grafton, throughout the series, has developed her character so very well. Nothing wrong with a health conscious PI with a penchant for McDonald's Quarter Pounders. She's real; she's human. She has her usual cast of regular characters surrounding her. The book has it's usual epilogue tying up loose ends. Ms. Grafton normally does well with these. This epilogue is particularly touching. It's a very good novel with some very good characters.

Another hit by Sue Grafton this one was very complex with back tracking to the 70s. In previous books you knew she was married twice but not much about her first husband in this book you are given a full account of how and why they got married and what lead to the break up. She believed

he was guilty of something he didn't do. However he guilty of adultery. She was a little upset that she was fooled but felt obliged to solve a mystery he started to solve. I enjoyed reading this book. I plan on reading all of the books in this series.

Much of the charm of many detective series relates to the refreshing references to times past. Walter Moseley's work is a good example. Dashiell Hammett is another example In these cases, the most successful books also teach you something about the people and the time that you did not know before. Sue Grafton has reached into this genre by letting Kinsey's time pass more slowly than our own. As a result, the patina of age is becoming more significant and charming . . . especially in this book. Perhaps the high point here is in expressing sexual and personal mores of earlier times, in ways that resonated for me. I also found that Sue Grafton has gotten better at adding sub-plots, many of which served as good red herrings for what was going on. My biggest disappointment was that it was very easy to figure out who the murderer was, because the plot design meant that few would have the motive and access to execute this exact murder. In fact, I think this book was the easiest one to figure out in the series. My suggestion is that she go back before the second printing and change the murder to make it much more cloudy who the murderer is. I, too, was charmed by some of the new characters and hope that she will write more about her best designed characters in the future whoever they turn out to be in each book. In P is for . . . , I hope she writes a book that will have a totally different plot structure. I think that will be fun for Sue Grafton and for us. If Sue Grafton was less talented, I would not bother to make these suggestions, but she is capable of lifting us to sublime new heights of ecstasy in future books. We should all encourage and applaud her when she moves in that direction. I also hope that the future books will continue to add that beautiful patina of the periods she illuminates.

I really liked this one! I have read all of the previous "alphabet" books with breaks in between to read other authors. It has been a couple of months since I read the last saga of Kinsey Millhone. This one was a real treat. Kinsey's detective skills were really sharp in this one. The story was very well presented and the ending was a good surprise. I also liked the fact that there wasn't as much physical violence directed towards our hero. I really enjoy the story better when she thinks her way out of a situation rather than has to beat her way out while fighting for her life. I won't wait as long to read the next letter in the alphabet!

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