

Catch Up With Author Leann Sweeney

Learn more about the inspiration behind her book "The Cat, the Quilt and the Corpse."

By Stacy N. Hackett

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Mystery writer Leann Sweeney and her Himalayan cat, Indigo. 1. What was your inspiration behind the book?
My first inspiration was my lifelong love of all animals but especially the wonderful cats who have owned me. Secondly, I always have believed, "What's a good mystery without a cat lurking around?" And thirdly, I wondered, "What if the cats were always the center of the mystery?" I knew I'd love to read a series like that, so I wrote the book.

2. What was the most difficult part of writing the book?

Because I wrote a series before beginning the "Cats in Trouble Mystery Series," the most difficult part was creating brand new characters with completely different personalities.

3. What was the most rewarding part of writing the book?

The most rewarding part was giving life to three wonderful fictional cats: Chablis, Merlot and Syrah. Making them unique, and yet cats most people could relate to, was wonderful fun.

4. What type of feedback have you received so far?

The feedback has been amazing. I have heard from cat lovers all over the country who enjoy the kind of mystery "The Cat, the Quilt and the Corpse" is — totally cat-centered. And the book was the No. 1 best-selling softcover on the Independent Mystery Booksellers Association list for May 2009.

5. What is your writing process?

I first start with a "what if?" question. The "what if" question for "The Cat, the Quilt and the Corpse" was: "What if cats were allergic to people, rather than vice versa?" An entire book came from that simple question. Of course, then comes an outline and a plot and lots of hours thinking through the puzzle any good mystery must have at its center.

6. Do you have any other books?

I write another series called "The Yellow Rose Mystery Series" set in Texas, which consists of five books. The heroine/detective also has a cat whose name is Diva. Diva has an important role in solving the crime in the first book in the series ("Pick Your Poison").

7. Do you own a cat or other pets?

I have three cats: Indigo (Himalayan), Archie Goodwin (tuxedo) and Agatha Christie (tortie Exotic). I also have a mini Labradoodle named Rosie who most days believes she is a cat.

8. Do your pets influence your writing?

Absolutely. They are my best friends and are by my side as I write. Their wonderful antics give me plenty of ideas for cat behavior in the mysteries. They also have inspired me to do plenty of cat research, and much of that shows up on the finished page. If you like cat trivia, "The Cat, the Quilt and the Corpse" has plenty!

Stacy N. Hackett shares her Southern California home with two Cornish Rex cats, Carson and Evita, and Jackson, an orange tabby.