



BOOK CLUB
RESOURCE GUIDE

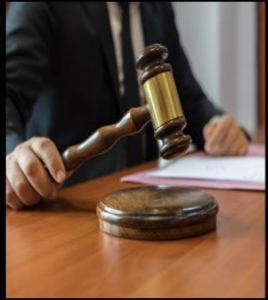
Crime Thriller



psychological thriller

Hot House

by Lisa Towles



Who killed Sophie Michaud?



Thank you for considering **Hot House** for your next Book Club read!

Synopsis

When a former CIA operative and private investigator Mari Ellwyn starts digging into the blackmail case of a federal appellate judge, she becomes targeted by a van following her, threatening notes in her mailbox, and a breach of her home. Teaming up with seasoned investigator and former detective, Derek Abernathy, the crime-savvy pair begin looking into the wrongful death of a mentally-ill college student, Sophie Michaud, as well as two journalists – one dead, one missing, who were writing a story on the dead college student with allegations of her connection to the federal judge. The two investigators must uncover the truth about Sophie Michaud before her killer makes them their next target. But more importantly, Mari needs to find her missing father and reconcile her broken past and family.

Editorial Reviews

"Memorable characters make for a winsome, absorbing detective tale." [Kirkus Reviews](#)

"The page-turning twists keep coming as do welcome doses of humor. Fans of bantering sleuth duos will be eager for the next book." [Publishers Weekly](#)

"Towles does a fantastic job of pacing the storyline so that the reader hangs on to every clue as it is discovered. Recommended for fans of crime fiction writers Baldacci, Slaughter, and Gardner." [San Francisco Book Review](#)

"Masterfully crafted with well-defined characters and an engaging plot. Towles is a gifted writer with a real talent for building suspense." [US Review of Books](#)

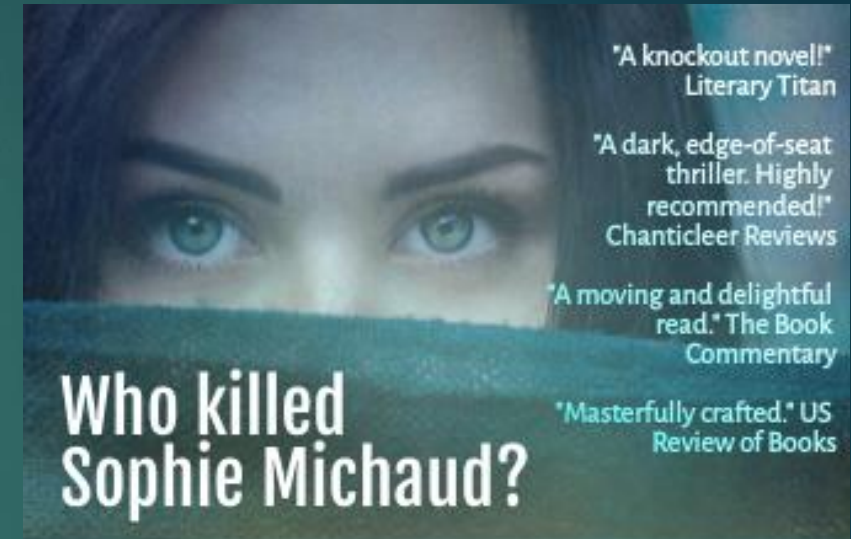
Discussion Questions

- How did the setting of the book contribute to the mystery? Did the setting seem well researched and have the level of detail you like? If not, would more or less detail have been better?
- What TV or movie character does the main character Mari remind you of? How about Derek?
- Which character would you want to see more of in Books 2 and 3 of this series?
- At what point did you guess the identity of Sophie Michaud's killer? Were you correct?
- What did you think of how the mystery was solved? Did it seem realistic? Would you have ended it differently?
- Do you prefer reading series novels or standalones? What did you think of how the ending of Hot House leaves an opening for Book 2?
- How would you describe the author's writing style? Did you enjoy it? How important is this to your overall experience of reading a story?
- Of the minor characters (other than Mari and Derek), who was your favorite and why were they memorable to you?



Book Trivia Questions

- What is Mari's art gallery called and where is it located? Where does Mari like to walk with Trevor in the mornings?
- What was Mari's former occupation?
- What game is Thomas "Reggie" Barnes an expert at, and where does he play?
- How is Sophie Michaud's closet related to why she died?
- Which SoCal coffee chain has Mari's favorite kind of coffee?
- Who is Mari's nemesis?
- What is the significance of the title?



A blackmailed federal judge. Two missing journalists. A dead foreign exchange student. How did Sophie's short, tragic life inspire these events? Enter her world...

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About the Author

Lisa Towles is an award-winning crime novelist, Board President of a Bay Area nonprofit, and a passionate speaker on the topics of fiction writing, creativity, self care. Lisa has nine crime novels in print with a new title, Salt Island, forthcoming in June of 2023. Her latest publication, The Ridders, won an American Fiction Award and her previous thriller, Hot House, was an Amazon Kindle #1 Bestseller.

Lisa has been serving bridgegood.org for over 10 years as a volunteer, board members, and now president. She is also a self care consultant and started a platform called [Strategic Self Care](#) for writers and entrepreneurs. She has an MBA in IT Management and works full-time in the tech industry in the San Francisco Bay Area.



Exclusive Behind-the-Scenes Details

Celebrity Tie-Ins for Hot House

When I'm developing a new story, I often map my main characters to celebrities I've seen on TV and in films. This helps me understand their personality nuances and write realistic dialogue when I know how they talk and behave. The following celebrities inspired the characters in this book.

Marissa Ellwyn
Main character



Julianne Moore

Derek Abernathy
Her partner



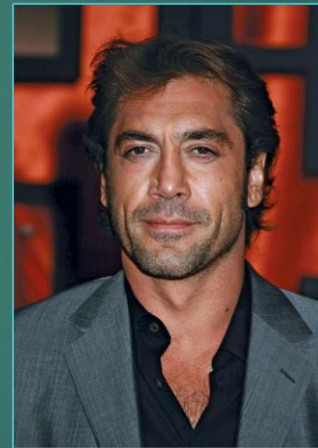
Michael Weatherly

Duga
Mari's Associate



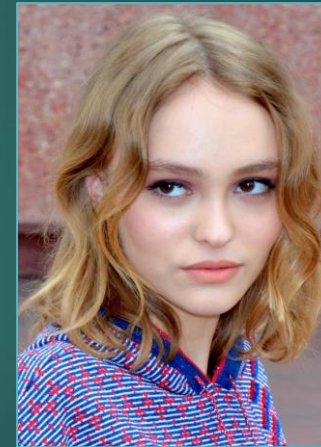
Colin Hanks

Ivan Dent
Police Detective



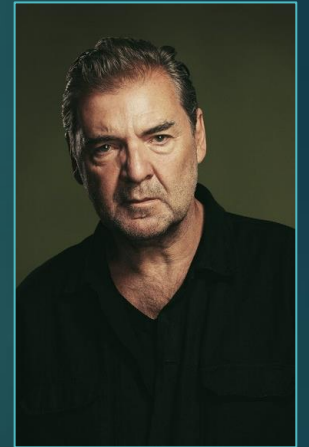
Javier Bardem

Sophie Michaud
Victim



Lily Rose Depp

Richard Ellwyn
Mari's Father

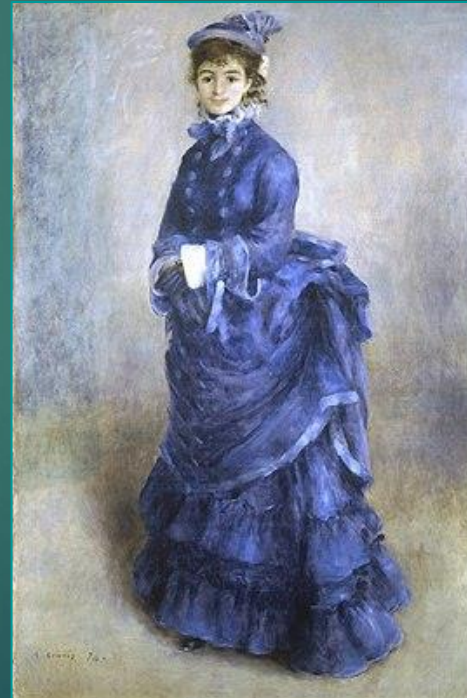


Brendan Coyle

Story Icons

- ▶ The Watch – Derek Abernathy's father's watch, which he gives to Mari
- ▶ Mari's Great Dane, Trevor
- ▶ Renoir's *La Parisienne* painting

Each of these items have special meaning to the story and series:



What One Reader Says:

Reader from Tennessee:



Great Read!

This is my first book by Lisa Towles and I am now a fan of her work! She blends suspense, humor, and relationships in a way that keeps you turning pages. There is a sense of being right next to the characters as the story is told. Excellent! I look forward to book 2 and 3 and will be checking out her other books, as well! Happy to add Lisa Towles to my bookshelf!

Book Club Details

- Bulk Discount of 30% off if purchased from the author, + free shipping or Bay Area delivery
- Free short story for all new email newsletter sign-ups: <https://tinyurl.com/378tj8rj>
- Author available via Zoom or in-person (Bay Area) to join book club meeting to answer questions, receive feedback, and swag giveaways

For follow-up questions, please contact Lisa Towles at lisamarietowles@gmail.com or (505) 263-9720.

Thank you for investing time in reading my books!

Best wishes,

Lisa Towles

Share

Now that you've read Hot House, would you consider taking a moment to leave a short review online to share your feedback with other readers?

Leave one on Amazon: <https://tinyurl.com/2f4h6zaf>

Goodreads: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8dtcbx>

Barnes & Noble: <https://tinyurl.com/2567utm9>

Thank you!

Connect

Stay in touch with Lisa Towles on social media:

- ▶ Newsletter: <https://tinyurl.com/378tj8rj>
- ▶ Facebook: @lisatowleswriter
- ▶ Twitter: @writertowles
- ▶ Instagram: @authorlisatowles
- ▶ Tiktok: @lisatowleswriter
- ▶ Amazon Author Page: [amazon.com/author/lisatowles](https://www.amazon.com/author/lisatowles)