



The Author Weekend

Laura Zigman

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In Laura Zigman's macabre novel *The Author Weekend*, an author with extreme insecurities faces a derailed promotional event and encounters the perils of fandom.

Faye is a prickly New Englander, just like the beloved sleuth in her famous suspense novels. She hosts a weekend retreat for her fans on Great Misery Island. The decision is based, in part, on her envy of Abby, a fashionable romantasy author whom she hopes to one-up. Meanwhile, Jade, an MFA graduate, thinks that working as Faye's assistant might inspire her own juicy novel. She is sometimes exasperated by Faye but also respects her. And beyond Faye's packed itinerary lies danger. People are murdered; still, Faye scrambles to keep the retreat going.

The cast's personal foibles are mined for humor. For example, Faye is an introvert, to the extent that no one on her team thinks that the author's weekend is a good idea. A pedantic superfan corrects people's grammar, and a publicist cares more about her cat's online popularity than she does about her work. Winking references flesh out the publishing industry, as do interludes focusing on Faye's agent and editor; gossipy group texts also have a situating effect. Practical discussions about writing as a craft fold into the story as well, resulting in perceptive metafiction.

Less a whodunit than a consideration of the dark psychological fissures that surface when people's loyalties are tested and their love is misdirected, the novel trades between the murder storyline and its lighthearted skewering of authors' dependency on their readers and readers' outsized expectations. The desperate measures that fragile Faye takes to cover up her lies make the story fascinating.

In the entertaining novel *The Author Weekend*, a bestselling novelist's fan retreat unravels because of unexpected crimes.

KAREN RIGBY (May / June 2026)

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