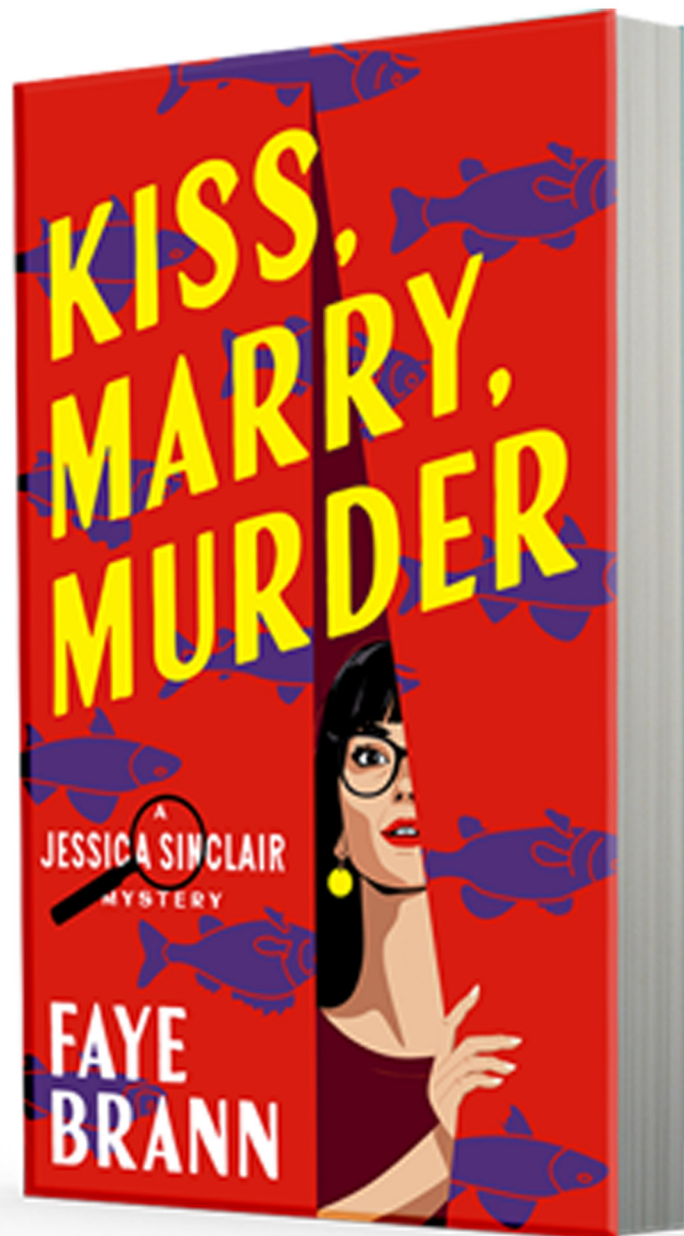


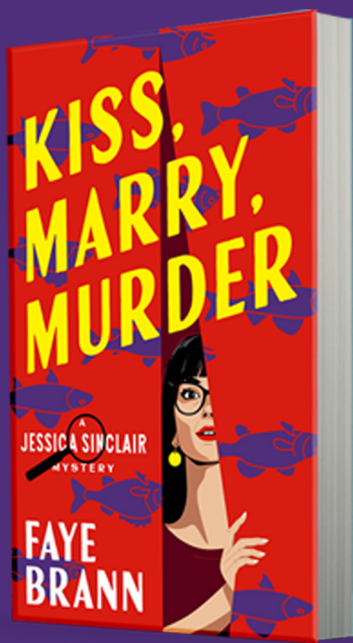
# BOOK CLUB KIT

Resources inside: questions for discussion  
- essay from the author - cocktail recipe



WOULD YOU LIKE TO HOST FAYE BRANN AT YOUR BOOK CLUB?

Faye is offering to virtually visit book groups of 6 or more and can join your group for up to thirty minutes. To arrange a session, please email [fayebrannwriter@gmail.com](mailto:fayebrannwriter@gmail.com)



## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. We first meet Jess when she is at rock bottom at the end of her television career. How does her character change and develop throughout the story?
2. Do you disagree with any of Jess's actions? What would you have done differently?
3. Each new character receives a three-word description, as seen through the eyes of Jess. Did this help you picture each character? Did this influence your perceptions of them as the story unfolded?
4. Jess and Ben's relationship is in a constant flux throughout the book. Discuss how you think they reached resolution. Did you think they made the right decision?
5. The theme of friendship is present throughout the book. How important are female friendships as we grow older, versus romantic ones?
6. The author describes her book as an 'urban cosy mystery.' What are some of the typical characteristics of cosy crime represented in the book, and how does the book move outside of the typical troupes of this genre?
7. Della and Darcy come from very different worlds. What is it about each of them you think makes the partnership work?
8. The journalists outside Jess's house cause her a great deal of stress. How would you cope in this situation and what would your reaction be?
9. Did you guess whodunnit? If so, when did you realise?
10. If this was a movie or TV series, who would play Jess? Rosie? Ben?



## ON WRITING KISS, MARRY, MURDER

Writing a second novel presented me with unanticipated challenges. In fact, this wasn't my second novel at all - that one is still tucked in a drawer, unfinished, from the heady days of the second lockdown when I failed to drum up the enthusiasm or imagination to finish the story. Instead, in 2023, I started again, having had the idea for a new series about a trio of ordinary women-turned-crime-fighting amateur sleuths.

In my first novel, *Tinker, Tailor, Schoolmum, Spy*, I very deliberately wrote characters that mirrored my own experiences of motherhood, mid-life and female friendship. When it came to writing *Kiss, Marry, Murder*, I couldn't help but draw again on this rich vein. Female protagonists of a certain age are still woefully under-represented in commercial fiction, despite so many readers being of a similar demographic. My books are my small contribution to making these 'invisible woman' slightly less so.

My characters were central to the creation of this book. It's fast, furious and occasionally chaotic, and isn't intended to be taken too seriously. But that doesn't mean there isn't substance behind the wisecracks and clowning. I think that for humour to resonate, it has to come from the tickly spot in your brain but also be planted in truth. This means writing characters who can deliver pathos as well as joy, with a journey that is balanced and realistic for my characters and my readers. I wanted women who were flawed and funny but who were also very serious about their endeavours, each with ambitions and strong motivations behind their desire to solve the crime.

The characters who surrounded them were just as important, and in particular I wanted to make sure that Ben and Marianne had journeys of their own that formed an intricate part of the story. Giving Jess a sense of history rounded her out as a person and gave her agency to resolve her story. And a bit of romance never goes amiss!



## ON WRITING KISS, MARRY, MURDER

Friendship - and love - was a huge theme in this book. The metamorphosis of the three women from strangers to allies had to feel organic and realistic; in turn, the end of friendship also needed to be given the respect it deserved. Whether it's actual death or the death of a relationship, I think mourning the finish of something is important and real. Hopefully I have done this justice.

When writing crime I always imagine that it's helpful to know 'whodunnit' but I like to experiment with my writing and so I never plot. It takes me far longer with lots of u-turns but I enjoy working it out and giving myself some surprises along the way! I think that's why I enjoy writing humour too, because it's so spontaneous. If you try to be funny, you'll fail every time. It's always gamble of course, because it is so subjective: one person's 'hilarious' will be another person's 'not funny at all'. It feels like a very brave or a very crazy thing to do – particularly when writing crime – but my roots are in acting and comedy improvisation, and I think that can't help but inform how I write.

I think the other reason I like to write humorous fiction is purely for my own sanity. Writing is such a lonely profession and it's difficult, sometimes, to stay motivated. I enjoy the process of conjuring up characters, scenarios and dialogue that make me smile when I picture them. It spurs me along and feeds my imagination, even if a lot of the slapstick action doesn't make it as far as the final cut.

Kiss, Marry, Murder has been a joy to write, and I'm looking forward to developing Jess, Della and Darcy in book 2 of the series.

# *Bookclub Cocktail Hour!*

## DELLA AND DARCY'S DANGEROUS DAIQUIRI

In its purest form, the Daiquiri is a delicatd balance of rum, lime juice and sugar. When made correctly, you've got a drink that is still dry, drinks smoothly, and doesn't allow any one of the three base elements to overpower the other. Much like Jess, Della and Darcy!

This Daiquiri recipe walks the knife edge with a mix of light rum and a darker demerara sugar syrup. The two accentuate the best qualities in each other, with demerara allowing the cocktail a bit of depth, while taking the bite off the rum and fresh lime juice.

### Ingredients

2 ounces light rum  
1 ounce lime juice, freshly squeezed  
3/4 ounce demerara sugar syrup  
Garnish: lime twist

### Steps

Add the rum, lime juice and demerara sugar syrup to a shaker with ice, and shake until well-chilled.

Double strain through fine mesh strainer into a chilled coupe.

Garnish with a lime twist.

