

The Most Dangerous Thing

By Laura Lippman

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“One of the best novelists around, period.”

—*Washington Post*

“Lippman has enriched literature as a whole.

—*Chicago Sun-Times*

One of the most acclaimed novelists in America today, Laura Lippman has greatly expanded the boundaries of mystery fiction and psychological suspense with her Tess Monaghan p.i. series and her *New York Times* bestselling standalone novels (*What the Dead Know*, *Life Sentences*, *I'd Know You Anywhere*, etc.). With *The Most Dangerous Thing*, the multiple award winning author—recipient of the Anthony, Edgar®, Shamus, and Agatha Awards, to name but a few—once again demonstrates how storytelling is done to perfection. Set once again in the well-wrought environs of Lippman's beloved Baltimore, it is the shadowy tale of a group of onetime friends forced to confront a dark past they've each tried to bury following the death of one of their number. Rich in the compassion and insight into flawed human nature that has become a Lippman trademark while telling an absolutely gripping story, *The Most Dangerous Thing* will not be confined by genre restrictions, reaching out instead to captive a wide, diverse audience, from Harlan Coben and Kate Atkinson fans to readers of Jodi Picoult and Kathryn Stockett.

The Most Dangerous Thing By Laura Lippman Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #318141 in eBooks
- Published on: 2011-08-23
- Released on: 2011-08-23
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Product Description

Some secrets can't be kept...

Years ago, they were all the best of friends. But as time passed and circumstances changed, they grew apart, became adults with families of their own, and began to forget about the past—and the terrible lie they all shared. But now Gordon, the youngest and wildest of the five, has died and the others are thrown together for the first time in years.

And then the revelations start.

Could their long-ago lie be the reason for their troubles today? Is it more dangerous to admit to what they've done or is it the strain of keeping the secret that is beginning to wear on them and everyone close to them? Each one of these old friends has to wonder if their secret has been discovered—and if someone within the circle is out to destroy them.

Amazon Exclusive: Kate Atkinson Interviews Laura Lippman

Kate Atkinson's first novel, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, was named Whitbread Book of the Year in the U.K. in 1995, and was followed by *Human Croquet*, *Emotionally Weird*, *Not the End of the World*, *Case Histories* and *One Good Turn*.

Kate Atkinson: You employ the first person plural in parts of the new novel. It's quite a startling device (I loved it in Joshua Ferris's *Then We Came to the End*). Why did you use it in *The Most Dangerous Thing*?



Laura Lippman: The decision was intuitive at first—that is, I knew it was right, without knowing why it was right. When I finished the book, I realized that these passages are a consensual version of what happened in the past, that the survivors have agreed on what happened and that's why the story is, at turns, unflattering to each of them. They are working out their level of culpability in several tragedies and they just can't face this alone. And that voice allowed me to include a subtext of gloom and foreboding—the story is being told by people who know how badly it ends.

KA: Do you think you write better now than you did when you first began to write novels? (I only ask because I think I'm a much better writer than I used to be but no one else seems to have noticed.) Do you feel you can trust your "inner critic" or are you plagued by doubts the whole time you are writing?

LL: At the risk of sounding obsequious, I have to say that you set the bar awfully high for yourself with *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, but I've noticed how your work has changed, although I think the word that comes to mind isn't better, but bolder. You take such big risks and yet you manage them with aplomb. The frustration of being a fan of your work is that there's nothing quite like it. There are lots of wonderful

writers in crime and literary fiction, but there's only person who can write a Kate Atkinson novel.

I didn't start out on the same level. That's not poor-mouthing, as my Southern relatives would have it, but a fact on which everyone agrees. People tell me all the time—really, all the time—how far I've come since my first book. But, whether one writes a great first novel or simply a decent one, what are the choices? One can get better, worse, or stay the same. I shoot for better and I accept that there may be some dips, but they'll come from trying new things at least, not doing the same things over and over. I do trust my inner critic, but I'm happy to have a circle of external critics that I trust as well.



KA: You "honor" the dead in your novels rather than exploit them for sadistic effect. Do you think that's due to your background as a reporter butting up against real lives rather than fictional ones? Or because you're a woman? Or just a decent human being?

LL: All of the above? At least, I hope I'm a decent person. I do think crime writers need to take a moment for introspection about the stories we're telling and the bodies that are piling up around us. It's somber stuff. There should be an agenda beyond sensation.

KA: How many novels do you have on the back burner at any one time? Have you ever sat down to write and not had any idea what you were going to do?

LL: Once—just once—I managed to have two projects going on simultaneously, a novel and a novella. I do best with one thing in front of me. And, increasingly, I have no idea what I'm going to write next. But that's part of the job and, for me, part of the fun. I know a book is finished when I'm ready to sit down and ask myself, "What next, what interests me right now?" With *The Most Dangerous Thing*, I was interested in the way life becomes a kind of horror film at middle age. About two months after I started this book, my father-in-law died after a long decline. About the same time, one of my husband's oldest friends, dating back to his days on the college newspaper, had a stroke at the age of 48, and died within hours. Yesterday, I picked up *The New York Times* and happened on a first-person piece by a former colleague, who wrote about having ALS and his intention to commit suicide while he was still able-bodied. He's only 66.

But I also became a parent for the first time last year, which isn't one of the typical milestones of middle-age, yet there it was. And it had a huge impact on the book.

KA: Do you feel guilty when you're not writing, even when the other thing you're doing is totally fulfilling or completely altruistic or utterly well deserved?

LL: If I've been disciplined—gone to my desk every weekday morning, written at least 1,000 words—I seldom feel guilty. I feel much more guilt-ridden about not reading enough.

But I will steal a line from Anne Lamott, who once said if people knew how good she felt writing they would set her on fire. Just this morning I was working and it wasn't an on-fire moment, but it wasn't a bad day either. Just an average one, the kind of days one has in the dead middle of books. I took a sip of my latte, looked at the clock on my computer and thought: It is 10:10 a.m. and my job is to sit here and make things up. I am a very lucky person.

KA: "I've never wanted people to feel good at the end of my novels," you said in a *Publishers Weekly* interview. But do you feel good when you finish?

LL: I feel fabulous. It's the best day of the year. But even on a book-a-year schedule, that means I feel fabulous only one day a year. As someone who takes great pride in completing things, I've chosen an interesting little hell for myself.

Review

'The Innocents is compelling, suspenseful - everything a great thriller should be - but it is SO much more than that. That rarest of books - a nuanced and beautifully literate page-turner - this confirms what many of us have known for some time. Laura Lippman is not just the author of top-notch psychological thrillers, she is one of the finest writers in America. Simple as that.' Mark Billingham 'A story that ripples with menace, sorrow and the dark churn of adolescence-the prices families pay for secrets, the things we can't look at in ourselves.' Megan Abbott, bestselling author of *The End of Everything* 'Lippman delivers an emotionally complex drama that cements her reputation as one of the smartest crime writers around.' *People Magazine* Lippman has long excelled at believable psychological suspense.' *Guardian* 'Exquisite as fine jewellery.' Lee Child 'A corker... engrossing.' *Observer*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sarah Fernandez:

The book *The Most Dangerous Thing* make you feel enjoy for your spare time. You should use to make your capable more increase. Book can to get your best friend when you getting tension or having big problem together with your subject. If you can make studying a book *The Most Dangerous Thing* to be your habit, you can get considerably more advantages, like add your personal capable, increase your knowledge about many or all subjects. You may know everything if you like available and read a guide *The Most Dangerous Thing*. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science publication or encyclopedia or other folks. So , how do you think about this guide?

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