

BookLife Talks with Bob Burnett



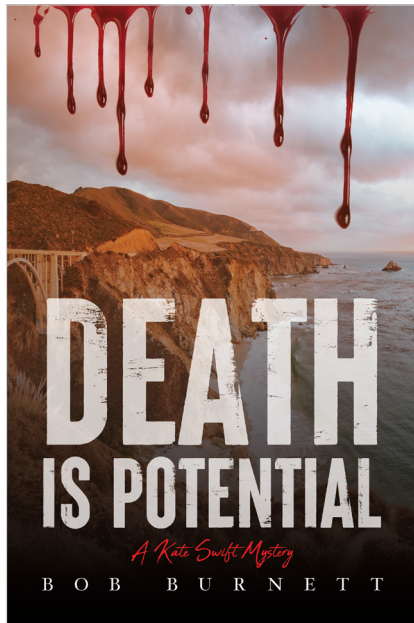
Debut fiction writer Burnett has taken the old adage “If you want something done right, do it yourself” to heart. After reading mysteries for years, the first book in his mystery series, *Death Is Potential*, is set to publish this month. It follows U.S. Marshall Kate Swift, who takes a trauma-recovery workshop only to have the attendees start dropping dead.

What led you to start writing this series?

I wrote a political column for 20 years and decided it was time to try something new, a mystery series. I have been a fan of mystery novels since I first encountered Sherlock Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet* many years ago. Recently, I’ve been disappointed in the quality of new releases and decided that instead of complaining about the formulaic nature of contemporary mysteries, I should create a series worthy of the genre.

The setting is a huge part of the series. Can you talk about your experiences in Northern California and how they relate to the books?

I set the Kate Swift mysteries in Northern California because that is where I have lived for 50 years. There have been mysteries set in San Francisco, but none that move around the other wonderful Northern California settings: my first mystery is set in Big Sur, the second in Monterrey, the third in Silicon Valley, the fourth in Sonoma County, and the fifth, I believe, in Sea Ranch.



What do you think makes Kate Swift stand out in the field of mystery-genre detectives?

Kate Swift stands out for four reasons. First, she’s a female protagonist portrayed by a male writer. Second, the series involves mystery and romance with a touch of racy humor. Third, the series is set in various interesting Northern California venues and, fourth, Kate is dangerous; she’s a whip-smart investigator with substantial tae kwon do chops.

Death Is Potential deals heavily with grief. Can you speak to the importance of it in the book?

Kate is grieving relationship failures. Tom Scott, her new beau, is grieving the death of his wife. Other workshop participants are dealing with various kinds of grief. That’s key because they all meet at a trauma-recovery workshop at Satori Institute in Big Sur.

Can readers expect more Kate Swift Mysteries soon?

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– Bob Burnett

Yes. With *Death Is Potential* publishing in August, the sequel, *Death Is Resistance*, is being edited and will be published in 2024. The third entry, *Death Is Technical*, is written, while the fourth book, *Death Is Political*, is in process.

For more, visit booklife.com/burnett