CRIMINAL LINES

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The latest news and updates from Marguerite Ashton

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Meet Ms. Ashton

When Marguerite Ashton was in her twenties, she took up acting but realized she preferred to work behind the camera, writing crime fiction. A few years later, she married an IT Geek and settled down with her role as wife, mom, and writer. Five kids later, she founded the Crime Writer's Panel and began working with former law enforcement investigators to create; Criminal Lines Blog, an online library for crime writers who need help with their book research.

She's a workaholic who hides in her writer's attic, plotting out her next book and stalking Pinterest for the next avocado recipe.

A member of Sisters in Crime, Marguerite grew up in Colorado, but is now happily living in Wisconsin and playing as much golf as possible.

Ms. Ashton introduces a new book series:

The Forgotten Daughters

In the first book in the series, BlindSided, we meet LEXI ARCHER.

Diagnosed with BPD & Depression, Lexi Archer prefers to continue outpatient treatment. But someone else has other plans.

Overview

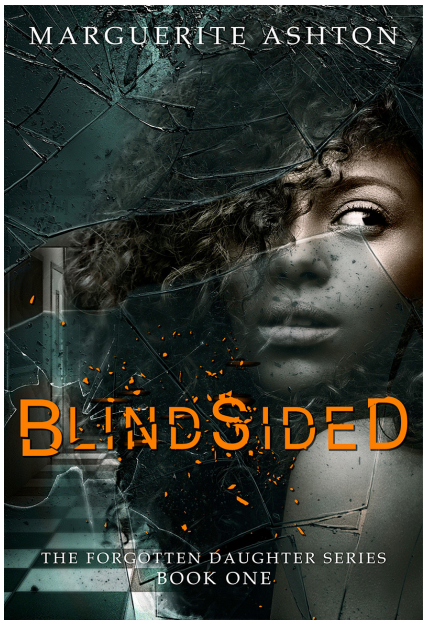
BlindSided tells the story of Lexi Archer, a twenty-year-old woman, who wakes up in a hospital bed, handcuffed to the rail and realizes that she doesn't remember what happened the night before.

After being released from the hospital, Lexi's transferred to the Milwaukee County Jail where she's informed about her pending charges for first-degree murder.

Intent on proving she's innocent, Lexi places a phone call to her step-sister asking for her help. As Lexi gets closer to the truth, she unravels ugly secrets about her dead mother that will change her life forever.

"We need to Break the Stigma surrounding mental health."

Marguerite Ashton



Dear Readers,

BlindSided is so precious to me. It deals with mental health issues. My character, Lexi Archer, is right in the middle of trying to make difficult decisions during a critical time in her life. The pivotal moment is when she realizes that she needs help, which she struggles to accept. While all of this happening, someone close to her wants to manipulate and control the situation, leaving Lexi to clean up the mess.

I'm hoping BlindSided, and the other books in The Forgotten Daughter series will help people of all ages, to realize that it's okay to seek help. If readers can relate to the characters in the book, then I've done my job.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Ashton

Project on Kickstarter.

All upcoming titles in The Forgotten Daughter Series will focus on mental health.

Burned Bridges: Prequel to the Oliana Mercer Series.

For a bridge once burnt severs ties forever...

Newly sober and dating the man of her dreams, Traci Collins is ready to enjoy the good life, until her new best friend, Olivia Durning, confides a dreadful secret far worse than Traci could imagine.

Sealed by a shared bond, and unaware there is more to the secret than what she was told, Collins feels honor-bound to protect her friend when a confrontation between Olivia and her childhood tormentor turns deadly.

A mysterious text forces Traci to question Olivia's actions and re-examine her loyalties. When the answers to Traci's questions endanger a life she treasures more than her own, she must decide if friendship has a limit. For a bridge once burnt severs ties forever...

Reviews:

"Ashton's promising debut novel concerns a group of friends who have bonded because they are all recovering alcoholics looking out for each other - and one of their members may be going over the edge. This is a great premise for drama and murder, with an enormously sympathetic heroine in Traci, who is not only struggling with recovery but who becomes pregnant by her untrustworthy and domineering live-in boyfriend. On top of that, she must answer the challenge of loyalty to her fragile friend Olivia, whose demons threaten to overwhelm her. One looks forward to the next of the series."

Sarah Kernochan, Writer of What Lies Beneath

"Burned Bridges was a compelling novel with a realistic portrayal of the legal world (Traci is a paralegal and her boyfriend, a lawyer). Those who find stories about addiction and childhood trauma will also find this an interesting read."

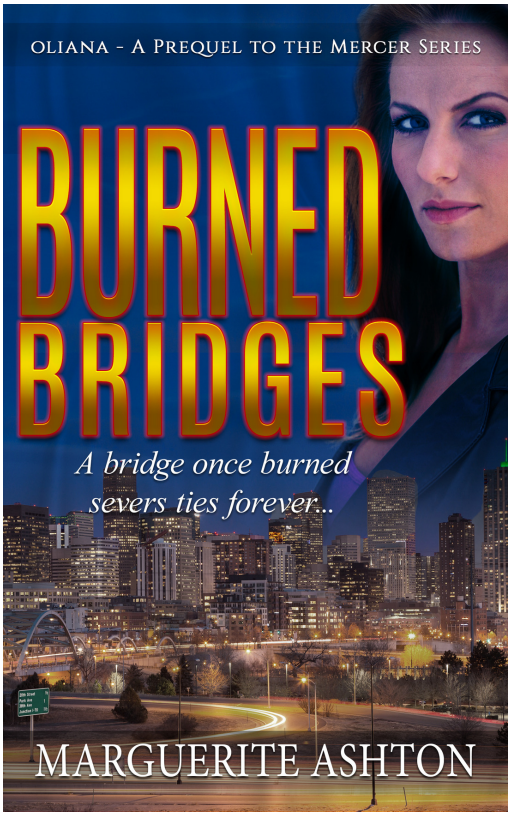
Larissa Reinhart, Mystery author of Portrait of a Dead Guy

"Ms. Ashton has done an excellent job of portraying new bonds developed through three people newly sober. She shows how stresses can cause setbacks, how new friendships can become too intense, particularly when one person doesn't divulge all the secrets that put her into the sobering path to start. This framework is a fine backdrop for the drama that Ms. Ashton portrays so well."

Dawn Edwards, The Kindle Book Review

Add it to your TBR list on Goodreads

"Darlin', everyone has scars." - As the central circle lean on each other for strength & encouragement in their mutual battle against alcoholism, the past creeps in an attempt to fray the ties that bind."



Her Final Watch - A Detective Blanchette Mystery Book 2

Speaking second-hand truths can be deadly ...

Detective Lily Blanchette will stop at nothing to solve a murder. Her current case involves the killing of an undercover cop working to bring down the mob for prostitution and drugs.

But Lily's usual laser-like focus on the case has been disrupted.

Two weeks earlier, she learned she was pregnant by her murderous husband whom she'd killed in self-defense. Unsure whether to keep her baby or place the child of this cruel man up for adoption, Lily keeps the pregnancy a secret from her colleagues.

Under mounting pressure to solve the case, Lily arranges a sit-down with a local mob boss only to find out her suspect is also wanted by them. But before Lily can warn her team, she and her new partner, Jeremiah, are shot at, and another body is found.

When she discovers Jeremiah has a connection with the underworld, she is pulled into a conflict that swirls around the boss's son who's hell-bent on revenge.

To add to the complexity of the situation, Lily learns that her victim might still be alive if it wasn't for opportunistic Assistant District Attorney, Ibee Walters, who has a twisted vision of justice.

As Lily gets closer to finding the killer, she unravels ugly secrets that point to Ibee and Jeremiah - placing Lily's life and her unborn child in danger.

"...a fantastic read for fans of mob families and police procedurals."

Reviews:

"...a fantastic read for fans of mob families and police procedurals." Blogger, Jenn at That's What She's Reading.
"...my first time reading this author and won't be my last. This story had intrigue, danger and chilling moments that just had your hair on end." Blogger at Books Are Love.
"Every page will keep you going to the next." Blogger, Peggy at Stormy Nights Reviewing and Bloggin'.
"This is the first time I have seen a mob plot line with a strong female for the main character. I have to say that I really enjoyed the combination of both put together." Blogger, Misty at Books for Books.

Add it to your TBR list on Goodreads

Promised Lies - A Detective Blanchette Mystery Book 1

Detective Lily Blanchette has a lot on her plate...

Her sister Celine has recently been murdered and her parents are on the brink of divorce. Now she's lead on a multiple murder investigation.

Six months after Lily's sister's death, the bodies of two young women are discovered. One look at the way the bodies have been posed and Lily knows her sister's killer is back.

And she's determined to get him.

But CtryGeek23 is very clever, and Lily has her work cut out for her. As she digs around, clues point her to a local brewery where she discovers the body of another young woman.

As the investigation comes to life, death hits closer to home, and Lily discovers she may not be who she thinks she is at all.

Filled with plot turns, suspense and mystery, Promised Lies will leave you wondering how well anybody knows anyone...

Reviews:

"I was quickly sucked into the story of the somewhat maverick female detective and her tangled personal life. Ashton has a conversational way of writing. This makes the story easy to read and it almost played like a film in my mind as I read." Blogger, Kelly K (Spring Time Book Club Tour)

"If you like action-packed crime thrillers then Promised Lies should definitely be on your TBR list!" Blogger, Sally Akins (Spring Time Book Club Tour)

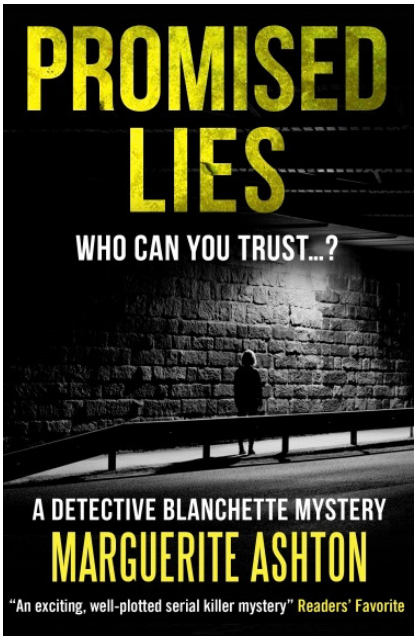
"Promised Lies was gripping & held my attention from the start!" Blogger, Emma Shearer (Spring Time Book Club Tour)

"This is a good old-fashioned cop/crime thriller." Blogger, Tippytupps (Spring Time Book Club Tour)

"...fast-paced and tightly scripted, and I enjoyed every minute I spent reading it. This is a police procedural that works brilliantly and is highly recommended. - Jack Magnus, Readers Favorite

Add it to your TBR list on Goodreads

"I was quickly sucked into the story of the somewhat maverick female detective and her tangled personal life."



Roll Call: Q & A with Marguerite Ashton

Where were you born?
Colorado - home of the Rocky Mountains. It's the one thing I miss. I lived there for twenty-nine years before moving to Wisconsin for a fresh start, meeting my husband, combining and starting our new family. I am a stay at home mom this time around with five kids.

What is something unique/quirky about you?
That I love rewrites!
Rewrites- My writing mentor taught me to take the good and improve it, polish and even surprise myself with potential alternative endings.

What are you passionate about these days?
The arts and working with foster parents in the community.

Describe yourself in 5 words or less!
Addicted to avocados.

Do you see writing as a career?
Yes, I do see writing as a career. It's very important to me and the challenges that come along with it.

When did you first consider yourself a writer?
For me, there was never that one moment. I had several. A lot of it had to do with my self-doubt as I tried to decide if I was making the right decision. My strong desire to write was something I felt from the inside. For me, I have to write every day. Even if it's just making notes on another book or working on my blog. If I miss more than a day, I start to get cranky.

The one thing that keeps me writing is David Baldacci. His story helped remind me that success can come with persistence and continual improvement.

How did you come up with the title of your first novel?
Coming up with a title for any of my books is a process. I've tried to make it easier, but I haven't had any luck. I write down the first words that come to my mind and start crossing out the ones that don't work for me. If I run out of suggestions, I go to my husband or mentor. It took me three days to come up with Her Final Watch. Promised Lies took a year.

Do you have any "side stories" about the characters?
Yes, I do! I'm looking forward to digging into their past and shaping them into what makes them the person they are today.

Tell us about a favorite character from a book.
One of my favorite characters is Detective Lily Blanchette in Promised Lies. She's got a lot going on. So, I'd like to think about what a day in Lily's life would be like if her life weren't in so much chaos.

My main character Lily is a workaholic like her dad, Collin. She works at a medium-sized police station in rural Wisconsin with her best friend and partner, Morgan. Between chasing leads- the coffee shop and McGinley's Irish Pub is the local hangout for law enforcement professionals when they need to relax and blow off steam. During her quiet time, Lily enjoys working on her latest remodeling project for her Victorian home. Also, spending time with her dad is a must. He's a cop too, which makes it hard when their schedules don't match up.

What is your writing process?
When writing my books, if an idea for another book hits me, I jot it down in one of my many notebooks. When it's time to go over the notes, I talk it out with my husband. For the law enforcement side, I contact my cop friends to see if I can get away with the story line.
Sometimes I'll be editing a manuscript or working on the latest promo and the idea hits, and I write the scene. But it helps me to let it flow, then organize it later.

What kind of research do you do before you begin writing a book?
Writing Her Final Watch was tricky. I had to find a way to work Lily's pregnancy in the story and allow her to work in the field. That's when I turned to my friends in law enforcement. They helped me understand what my heroine, could and couldn't do. After I did my research, I put myself in Lily's shoes and focused on what would be important to her. No matter how much she loved her job, her motherly instincts would kick in. And I think I've managed to find a balance between the two.

What are your top 10 favorite books/authors?
Absolute Power by David Baldacci
Under The Tuscan Sun by Frances Mayes
Phenomenal Woman by Maya Angelou
The Life of Elizabeth I by Alison Weir
The Amityville Horror by Jay Anson
Ruby by V.C. Andrews
Twilight by Stephenie Meyer
Salem's Lot by Stephen King
(I have two new favorite authors that I can't wait to read the complete series)
Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs
Catacomb by Madeleine Roux

What inspired you to write Her Final Watch?
I came up with the idea to write Her Final Watch as I finished the ending for Promised Lies. It went through several rewrites until I was happy that this book would again, force Lily out of her comfort zone.

Her Final Watch starts two weeks later. When we meet Lily, we see a strong woman and a cop who prides herself on balancing work and family. But underneath she's hiding a lot of emotional pain.

On top of everything else, Lily's learned that she's pregnant by her husband whom she'd killed in self-defense. So, what's supposed to be a joyous occasion has turned into a stressful situation. Now, Lily has a decision to make. Does she keep her baby or place the child up for adoption?

Then there's the case involving the murder of an undercover cop. That's when everything hits home for Lily. She's the lead investigator. Her victim is a colleague and a mother.
At this point, there's no turning back. Lily has to find her killer.

Who is your hero and why?
There are two women who've made an impact in my life. My grandmother and my mom. It was my grandmother who told me, "If you want to write books, then you go do it. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do something."
My mom has been there for me when I needed her the most. At times, she just listened. Other times, she offered advice. No matter what, she stepped in to help me with my little ones so I could write.

I'm grateful to have had several personal talks with my grandmother before she passed away. This year was rough as I dealt with almost losing my mom during her fight with cancer.
As we get ready to celebrate Thanksgiving, I'm thankful that Mom's here with the family.

What can we expect from you in the future?
More Lily Blanchette crime novels. At the moment, I'm working on the third book in the Det. Blanchette series. The Parolee will be released in 2021.

I'm also writing a young adult mystery series. Shadowed Seats, Staged and Cold Read have been published. The Director will be released in 2020. Also, I just finished my first draft that introduces a new female detective who works on cold cases.

Advice to new authors?
Being a writer isn't easy. Our job is to write every day and be prepared to repeat the process of creating a book over and over. My tip to writers is to give it your ALL.
A - Ask questions about yourself and your writing. Make sure that this is something you want to do.
L - Listen to the answers. Sometimes the reply is not what you'd expect or want to hear.
L- Learn from those answers. Then take the appropriate steps to master your art.

If you had to do it all over again, would you change anything in your latest book?
No, I wouldn't change anything. In fact, it kept me focused on what to write in my upcoming book, The Parolee.

If your book was made into a film, who would you like to play the lead?
Gabrielle Union as Detective Lily Blanchette.

Anything specific you want to tell your readers?
I want to thank you for giving Detective Lily Blanchette a chance to invade your personal reading space.

Info and Social Media Links:

Follow me on BookBub

Membership:

Sisters in Crime

The Crime Writers Association

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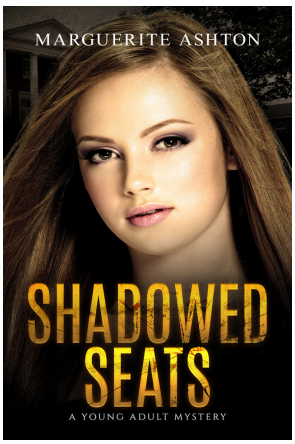
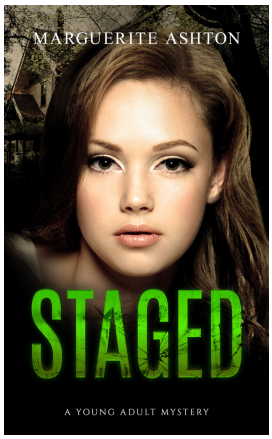
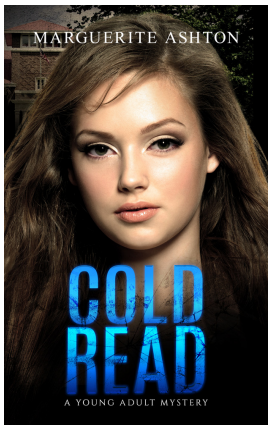
If you have any more questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Ashton. She's available for interviews via Skype.

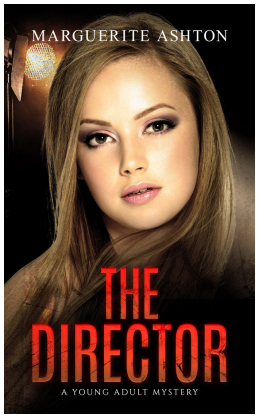
Other Books by Ms. Ashton

Oliana Mercer Series



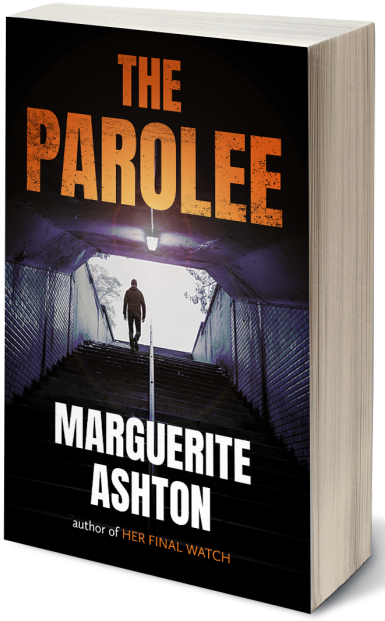






Upcoming Novels

2020



2021