



Gardner Gab

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"Finishing a book is like you took a child out to the back yard and shot it." Truman Capote

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Post-Deadline Life and Other Confessions of a Summer Slacker

Today is one of my favorite days to be a writer. My latest novel is done, my deadline met, and even the copy edits have boomeranged back to my esteemed publisher. Meaning my desk is clear, my calendar open. I am footloose and fancy free.

Every summer I complete a novel. This June, I wrapped up *Gone*, my sequel to 2003's *The Killing Hour*. Have to say, continuing Rainie and Quincy's story was an absolute blast. I just love Rainie. She's so edgy, tough and determined. *Gone* is probably the most visceral book I have written since *The Perfect Husband*. Every chapter delivers a punch to the gut.

I worried that writing a kidnapping book meant I was going soft—I'll be honest, I don't even kill anyone for the first 300 pages. But by the end of the book, I hope readers will agree that I more than made up for it. Rainie and Quincy never disappoint.

So editor is happy. I am happy. Which brings me to my yearly round of post-deadline writing resolutions:

"This summer, I will start my next novel immediately, instead of squandering eight weeks playing in the garden." Or, "This summer, I will work on one of my pet projects to keep my writing muscles sharp, rather than quit cold turkey." Or, "This summer I will be productive. I will write more. I will write better. I will write every single day!"

Boy, you should see how pretty my garden looks. And have I

mentioned yet how much fun I've had hiking?

I confess, I am a summer slacker. Nine months out of the year, I swear I'm fairly disciplined. I research my novels, I plot my novels, I sit up in my office, day after day, beating my head against the computer screen in order to complete my novel. Then the book is done. And the sun comes out, and, and...

I tell my husband it is too hot to work in a non-airconditioned office. I tell him it makes no sense to start work on Monday, when I'll have to take Tuesday off to see old friends.

My husband simply nods. At this stage of the game, he has heard it all.

In my own defense, we live in a climate that spends nearly four months below freezing. Of course I have to go out into the sun! It's my civic duty.

None of which explains the lack of newsletters. For anyone who has been paying attention, the very first *Gardner Gab* promised a new edition every three months. Therefore it should hardly be a surprise that it's taken me only two years to put out the third installment.

Fresh basil anyone? How about some lemon balm or mint? Really, this has been a stellar year for my garden.

So here I am, confessing my writerly weaknesses up front. I have friends who whip out two books a year. Others who think nothing of dashing off twenty pages without even stopping for

morning coffee. Obviously these people have never played free cell, and would be devastated to know what they are missing.

In the good news department, I already know what my next book will be. Come September, I'm going to start a sequel to *Alone*, featuring Bobby Dodge and D.D. Warren. They've been called to the scene of a mass grave. The remains appear to have been buried at least twenty-five years ago. But when their inquiries lead to new murders, it's clear that the danger is far from past. Then one of the identified "victims," turns up very much alive, and is the spitting image of Catherine Gagnon.

Naturally, I'll have to harm many people, so don't forget to sign up for the third annual "Kill a Friend, Maim a Buddy" Sweepstakes starting Sept. 05. It's the unique way of showing someone just how much you care.

To Blog or Not to Blog

Lately I've been getting some inquiries as to whether or not I'd consider starting a blog on my website. Honestly, it's taken me two years to write three newsletters. What in the world would I do with a blog?

Lisa Gardner Bookshelf

Alone, Dec. 31, 2005 paperback

Gone, Jan. 31, 2006 hardcover