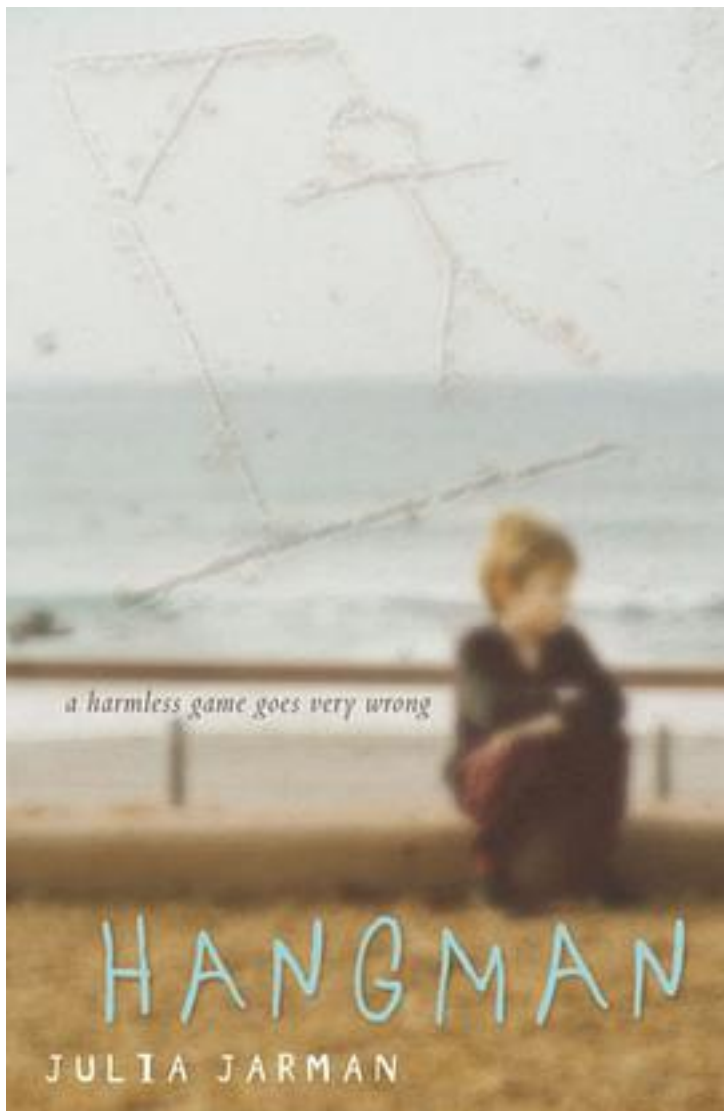


Hangman



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Murder, a missing woman, and a sociopath from the past sweep Peter Decker and Rina Lazarus into a labyrinth of mystery and danger in this electrifying new tale of suspense from New York Times bestselling author Faye Kellerman. . . . Fifteen years ago, high school senior Chris Whitman went to jail for murdering his girlfriend, Cheryl Diggs. Propelled by a misguided sense of chivalry, he confessed, determined to save another classmate, the beautiful and vulnerable Terry McLaughlin, from having to testify at his trial. When the truth came out, Chris was released from prison, married Terry—pregnant with his child—and changed his last name to Donatti. He also became a professional killer. Peter Decker was the detective on the case, and over the years, he and Terry kept in touch. Now his friend is in L.A. and asking for a favor. Though Decker knows full well that getting involved will bring Terry's sociopathic husband back into his life, the obsessive and duty-bound LAPD lieutenant reluctantly agrees. The favor soon becomes complicated when Terry goes missing and Donatti disappears, leaving their fourteen-year-old son, Gabe, with no one to turn to except Decker and his wife, Rina Lazarus. But Peter's search for Terry must share center stage with a gruesome murder. Adrianna Blanc, a neonatal nurse at St. Timothy's Hospital, had signed off her night shift at eight a.m. Six hours later, a foreman supervising the construction of a house in a nearby suburb discovered her body swinging from the rafters, a cable wire around her neck. Her car was found where she had parked it the night before, with no signs of foul play. A dedicated and conscientious professional, Adrianna had a circle of close friends. Yet as Decker and his able team soon learn, the young woman also had her share of detractors. A party-hearty girl, she enjoyed booze, kinky sex, and revenge-cheating on her boyfriend, Garth Hammerling, another nurse at St. Tim's. Suspicions heat up when Decker and his team find that one of Adrianna's last phone calls was a provocative and disturbing message to her vacationing boyfriend—who himself has vanished without a trace. Was Adrianna's death something personal because of her carefree lifestyle? Or was this unusually cruel and very dramatic murder the first signs of a serial killer? With lives hanging in the balance, Decker and his colleagues, Sergeant Marge Dunn and Detective Scott Oliver, need to find answers and fast. As if juggling two investigations weren't enough for the lieutenant (not to mention turning sixty!), things are becoming even more dangerous with his precarious home life. Ever the concerned parent, Decker wants to look after Terry's son, Gabe. Yet who will protect his own family? Because if there's one thing he knows for sure, with a sociopath like Donatti on the loose, no one is ever really safe.

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