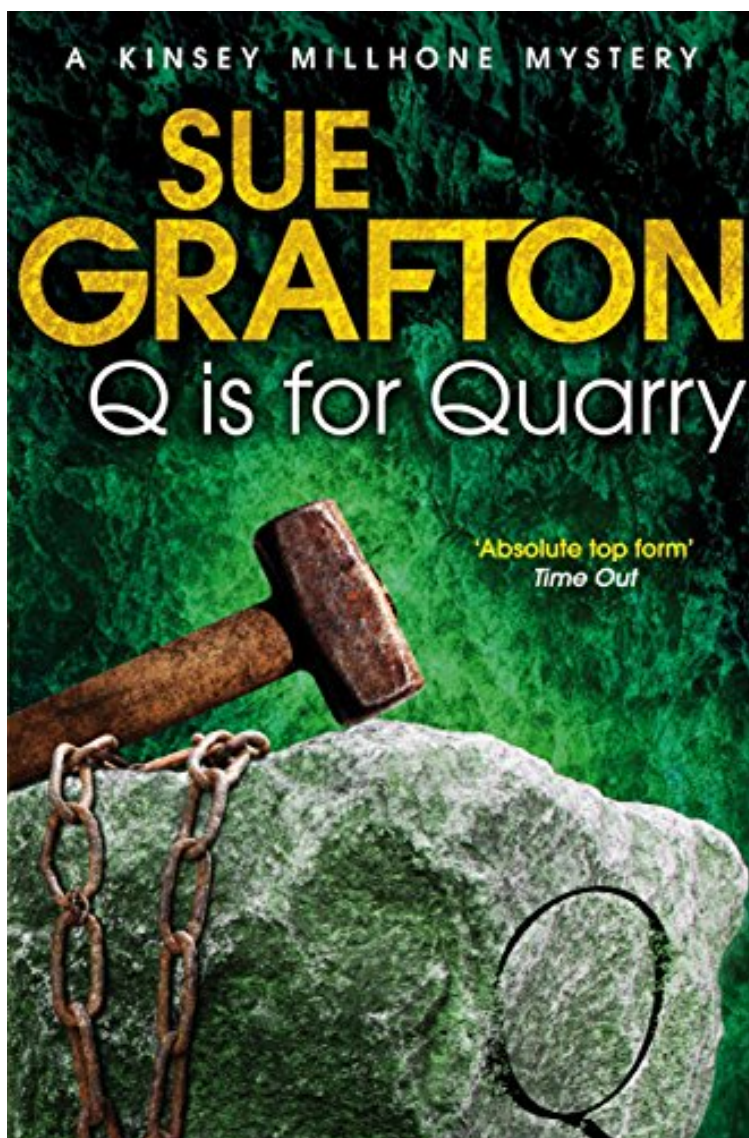


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## Q is for Quarry



*Par Sue Grafton*  
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### Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurQ is for Quarry is the seventeenth in the Kinsey Millhone mystery series by Sue Grafton and is based on a true crime.She was a 'Jane Doe', an unidentified white female whose decomposed body was discovered near a quarry off California's Highway 1. The case fell to the Santa Teresa County Sheriff's Department, but the detectives had little to go on, and after months of investigation, the murder remained unsolved. That was eighteen years ago. Now the two men who found the body, both nearing the end of long careers in law enforcement, want one last shot at the case . . . and they turn to Kinsey Millhone to help them find closure. But revisiting the past can be a dangerous business, and what begins with the pursuit of Jane Doe's real identity ends in a high-risk hunt for her killer. Based on an unsolved homicide that occurred in 1969, Q is for Quarry and Grafton's interest in the case have renewed police efforts. The body

has been exhumed, and a facial reconstruction made that appears in the last pages of the novel. It is hoped that the photograph will trigger memories that may lead to a positive identification..comPrivate investigator

Kinsey Millhone has served Sue Grafton well through 16 letters of the alphabet in a perennially popular series that occasionally breaks new ground but more often traverses familiar territory, as is the case here. Two old, ailing cops--one retired, the other disabled--try to breathe some life into an 18-year-old mystery that haunts them both for different reasons. They enlist Kinsey's help in identifying the victim, a young woman who was murdered and left for dead in the old quarry of the title. Neither they nor Kinsey expect that reopening an old case will incite the killer to strike again--not once, but twice. And while the real case of the still-unidentified victim that inspired this fictionalized scenario continues to languish in the cold case file in the Santa Barbara sheriff's office, Grafton's solution is as plausible as any. While the unlikely trio of

Millhone and her cranky geezer sidekicks offers a few chuckles, the inner reaches of Kinsey's soul remain largely inaccessible to her as well as to the reader, which will probably not bother most of Kinsey's or Grafton's many admirers. --Jane AdamsExtrait1. It was Wednesday, the second week in April, and Santa Teresa was making a wanton display of herself. The lush green of winter, with its surfeit of magenta and salmon bougainvillea, had erupted anew in a splashy show of crocuses, hyacinths, and flowering plum trees. The skies were a mild blue, the air balmy and fragrant. Violets dotted the grass. I was tired of spending my days closeted in the hall of records, searching out grant deeds and tax liens for clients who were, doubtless, happily pursuing tennis, golf, and other idle amusements. I suppose I was suffering from a mutant, possibly incurable form of spring fever, which consisted of feeling bored, restless, and disconnected from humanity at large. My name is Kinsey Millhone. I'm a private detective in Santa Teresa, California, ninety-five miles north of Los Angeles. I'd be turning thirty-seven on May 5, which was coming up in four weeks, an event that was probably contributing to my general malaise. I lead a stripped-down existence untroubled by bairn, pets, or living household plants. On February 15, two months before, I'd moved into new offices, having

separated myself from my association with the law firm of Kingman and Ives. Lonnie Kingman had purchased a building on lower State Street, and though he'd offered to take me with him, I felt it was time to be out on my own. That was my first mistake. My second was an unfortunate encounter with two landlords in a deal that went sour and left me out in the cold. My third office-related error was the one I now faced. In desperation, I'd rented space in a nondescript cottage on Caballeria Lane, where a row of identical stucco bungalows were lined up at the curb like the Three Little Pigs. The block-short, narrow, and lined with cars--ran between Santa Teresa Street and Arbor, a block north of Via Madrina, in the heart of downtown. While the price was right and the location was excellent--in easy walking distance of the courthouse, the police station, and the public library--the office itself fell woefully short of ideal. The interior consisted of two rooms. The larger I designated as my office proper; the smaller I was using as a combination library-and-reception area. In addition, there was a galley-style kitchen, where I kept a small refrigerator, my coffee pot, and my Sparkletts water dispenser. There was also a small fusty half-bath with a sorrowful-looking toilet and sink. The whole of it smelled like mildew, and I suspected at night wee creatures scuttled around the baseboards after all the lights were turned off. By way of compensation, the building's owner had offered unlimited cans of an off-brand paint, and I'd spent the better part of a week rolling coats of white latex over the former pulsating pink, a shade reminiscent of internal organs at work. He'd also agreed to have the rugs cleaned, not that anyone could tell. The beige high-low, wall-to-wall nylon carpeting was matted from long wear and seemed to be infused with despair. I'd arranged and rearranged my desk, my swivel chair, my file cabinets, sofa, and assorted artificial plants. Nothing dispelled the general air of weariness that infected the place. I had plenty of money in savings (twenty-five thousand bucks if it's anybody's business) so, in theory,

I could have held out for much classier digs. On the other hand, at three fifty a month, the space was affordable and satisfied one of my basic principles in life, which is: Never, never, never, to live beyond my means. I don't want to be compelled to take on work to meet my overhead. The office is meant to serve me, not the other way around. Since the bungalows on either side of mine were vacant, I was feeling isolated, which may account for a newfound ambivalence about my single status in a world of married folk. Except for two brief failed marriages, I'd been unattached for most of my natural life. This had never bothered me.

More often than not, I rejoiced in my freedom, my mobility, and my solitude. Lately, circumstances had conspired to unsettle my habitual content. Earlier that week, I'd encountered my friend Vera with her husband, (Dr.) Neil Hess. I was sneaking in a late-afternoon jog on the bike path at the beach when I'd spotted them sauntering along ahead of me. Vera was a former employee of California Fidelity Insurance, for which I'd also worked. She'd met Neil, decided he was too short for her, and tried passing him off on me.

I knew at a glance they were smitten with each other, and despite protests to the contrary, I'd persuaded her that he was her perfect match, which had turned out to be true. The two of them were accompanied that afternoon by their eighteen-month-old son in his stroller and a grinning golden retriever pup, frolicking and prancing, tugging at his leash. Vera-massive, lumbering, milky, and serene-was clearly expecting again, apparently in mere days, judging by her swollen state. We paused to chat and I realized that in the three and a half years since I'd last seen her, my life hadn't changed a whit. Same apartment, same car, same work, same boyfriend in absentia in a relationship that was going no place. The revelation generated a prolonged pang of regret. Meanwhile, Henry, my beloved landlord, was off cruising the Caribbean in the company of his siblings and his sister-in-law, Rosie, who owns the tavern half a block from my apartment. I'd been bringing in his mail, watering his houseplants once a week and his yard every couple of days. Rosie's restaurant would be closed for another five days, so until the three of them returned home, I couldn't even have supper in familiar surroundings. I know all of this sounds ever so faintly like whining, but I feel morally obliged to tell the truth. That Wednesday morning, I'd decided my attitude would greatly improve if I quit feeling sorry for myself and got my office squared away. To that end, I'd gone to a thrift store and purchased two additional (used) file cabinets, an upright wooden cupboard with assorted pigeon holes, and a funky painted armoire to house my accumulation of office supplies. I was perched on a low stool surrounded by cartons I hadn't unpacked since I'd moved into Lonnie's office three and a half years before. This felt a little bit like Christmas in that I was discovering items I'd long forgotten I had. I'd just reached the bottom of box number three (of a total of eight) when I heard a knock at the door. I yelled "I'm here!" When I turned, Lieutenant Dolan was standing on the threshold, his hands sunk in the pockets of his tan raincoat. "Hey, what are you doing here? It's been months." I got up and dusted my hand on the seat of my jeans before extending it to him. His grip was strong and warm, his smile almost sheepish, as pleased to see me as I was to see him. "I ran into Lonnie at the courthouse. He said you'd rented this place so I thought I'd pop in." "That's great. I appreciate the visit." "I see you're getting settled." "About time. I moved in February fifteenth and haven't done a thing." "I hear business is slow." "It is-at least the kind of jobs I like." I watched while Con Dolan made a circuit of the room. He seemed ill at ease and covered his discomfort by wading through a steady stream of small talk. He chatted idly about Lonnie, the weather, and miscellaneous matters while I made what I hoped were the appropriate responses. I couldn't imagine what he wanted, but I assumed he'd get down to his purpose in due course. He'd never been the type to drop in unannounced. I'd known him for ten years, the greater portion of which he'd headed up the homicide unit of the Santa Teresa Police Department. He was currently out on a medical disability, sidelined by a series of heart attacks. I'd heard he was eager to return to work full-time. According to the scuttlebutt, his chances ran somewhere between slim and none. He paused to check out the inner office, glanced into the half-bath, and then circled back in my direction. "Lonnie said you weren't crazy about the place and I can see your point. It's grim." "Isn't it? I can't figure it out. I know it needs something, but I can't think what." "You need art." "You think so?" I let my gaze trace the bare white walls. "Sure. Get yourself some big travel posters and some double-sided tape. It'd perk the place right up. Failing that, you might at least wipe the dust off the artificial plants." He was in his early sixties and his cardiac problems had left his complexion looking sour. The usual bags under his eyes had turned a dark smokey shade, making his whole face seem sunken in circulatory gloom. He was apparently marking the time away from the department by shaving every other day, and this wasn't the one. His face had tended to be pouchy in the best of times, but now his mouth was pulled down in a permanent expression of malcontent. Just my kind of guy. I could tell he was still smoking because his raincoat, when he moved, smelled of nicotine. The last time I remembered seeing him he was in a hospital bed. The visit had been awkward. Up to that point, I'd always been intimidated by the man, but then I'd never seen him in a cotton hospital nightie with his puckered butt on display through a slit down the back. I'd felt friendlier toward him since. I knew he liked me despite the fact his manner in the past had alternated between surly and abrupt. I said, "So what's up? I can't believe you walked all the way over here to give me decorating tips." "Actually, I'm on my way to lunch and thought you might join me-if you're free, that is." I glanced at my watch. It was only 10:25. "Sure, I could do that. Let me get my bag and my jacket and I'll meet you out in front." We took off on foot, walking to the corner, where we turned right and headed north on Santa Teresa Street. I thought we'd be going to the Del Mar or the Arcade, two restaurants where guys from the PD gravitated for lunch. Instead, we soldiered on for another three blocks and finally turned into a hole-in-the-wall known as "Sneaky Pete's," though the name on the entrance sign said something else. The place was largely empty: one couple at a table and a smattering of day drinkers sitting at the far end of the bar. Dolan

took a seat at the near end and I settled myself on the stool to his left. The bartender laid her cigarette in an ashtray, reached for a bottle of Old Forrester, and poured him a drink before he opened his mouth. He paused to light a cigarette and then he caught my look. "What?" "Well, gee, Lieutenant Dolan, I was just wondering if this was part of your cardiac rehabilitation." He turned to the bartender. "She thinks I don't take very good care of myself." She placed the glass in front of him. "Wonder where she got that?" I pegged her in her forties. She had dark hair that she wore pulled away from her face and secured by tortoiseshell combs.

I could see a few strands of gray. Not a lot of makeup, but she looked like someone you could trust in a bartenderly sort of way. "What can I do for you?" "I'll have a Coke." Dolan cocked his thumb at me. "Kinsey Millhone. She's a PI in town. We're having lunch." "Tannie Ottweiler," she said, introducing herself. "Nice to meet you." We shook hands and then she reached down and came up with two sets of cutlery, encased in paper napkins, that she placed in front of us. "You sitting here?" Dolan tilted his head. "We'll take that table by the window." "I'll be there momentarily." Dolan tucked his cigarette in his mouth, the smoke causing his right eye to squint as he picked up his whiskey and moved away from the bar. I followed, noting that he'd chosen a spot as far from the other drinkers as he could get. We sat down and I set my handbag on a nearby chair. "Is there a menu?" He shed his raincoat and took a sip of whiskey. "The only thing worth ordering is the spicy salami on a kaiser roll with melted pepper jack. Damn thing'll knock your socks off. Tannie puts a fried egg on top." "Sounds great." Tannie appeared with my Coke. There was a brief time-out while Dolan ordered our sandwiches. As we waited for lunch, I said, "So what's going on?" He shifted in his seat, making

a careful survey of the premises before his gaze returned to mine. "You remember Stacey Oliphant? He retired from the Sheriff's Department maybe eight years back. You must have met him." "Don't think so. I know who he is-everybody talks about Stacey-but he'd left the department by the time I connected up with Shine and Byrd." Morley Shine had been a private investigator in partnership with another private eye named Benjamin Byrd. Both had been tight with the sheriff's office. They'd hired me in 1974 and trained me in the business while I acquired the hours I needed to apply for my license. "He must be in his eighties." Dolan shook his head. "He's actually seventy-three. As it turns out, being idle drove him out of his mind. He

couldn't handle the stress so he went back to the SO part-time, working cold cases for the criminal investigations division." "Nice." "That part, yes. What's not nice is he's been diagnosed with cancer-non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. This is the second time around for him. He was in remission for years, but the symptoms showed up again about seven months ago. By the time he found out, it'd progressed to stage four-five being death, just so you get the drift. His long-term prognosis stinks; twenty percent survival rate if the treatment works, which it might not. He did six rounds of chemo and a passel of experimental drugs. Guy's

been sick as a dog." "It sounds awful." "It is. He was pulling out of it some and then recently he started feeling punk. They put him back in the hospital a couple of days ago. Blood tests showed severe anemia so they decided to transfuse him. Then they decided while he was in, they might as well run more tests so they can see where he stands. He's a pessimist, of course, but to my way of thinking, there's always hope." "I'm sorry." "Not as sorry as I am. I've known him close to forty years, longer than I knew my wife." Dolan took a drag of his cigarette, reaching for a tin ashtray on the table next to us. He tapped off a fraction of an inch of ash. "How'd the two of you hook up? I thought he worked north county. You were PD down here." "He was

already with the SO when our paths first crossed. This was 1948. I was from a blue-collar background, nothing educated or intellectual. I'd come out of the army with an attitude. Cocky and brash. Two years I knocked around, not doing anything much. I finally got a job as a pump jockey at a gas station in Lompop.

Talk about a dead end. "One night a guy came in and pulled a gun on the night manager. I was in the backroom cleaning up at the end of my shift when I figured out what was going on. I grabbed a wrench, ducked out the side door, and came around the front. Guy was so busy watching to make sure my boss didn't call the cops, he never saw me coming. I popped him a good one and knocked him on his ass. Stacey was the deputy who arrested him. "He's only ten years older than me, but he's the closest thing to a mentor I ever had. He's the one talked me into law enforcement. I went to college on the G.I. Bill and then hired on with the PD as soon as a job opened up. He even introduced me to Grace, and I married her six months later."

"Sounds like he changed the course of your life." "In more ways than one." "Does he have family in the area?" "No close relatives. The guy never married. A while back, he was dating someone-if that's what you want to call it at our advanced age. Nice gal, but somehow it didn't work out. Since Grace died, the two of us have spent a fair amount of time together. We go hunting and fishing any chance we get. Now that I'm out on medical, we've done a lot of that of late." "How's he dealing with all of this?" "Up and down. Too much time on his hands and not a lot to do except brood. I can't tell you how many times I heard that one: guy

retires after thirty years and the next thing you know he gets sick and dies. Stacey doesn't say much about it, but I know how his mind works. He's depressed as hell." "Is he religious?" "Not him. He claims he's an atheist, but we'll see about that. Me, I always went to church, at least while Gracie was alive. I don't see how you face death without believing in something. Otherwise, it makes no sense." Dolan glanced up just as Tannie appeared with two large plates loaded with freshly made sandwiches and fries, plus two orders for the other table. Dolan interrupted his story to have a chat with her. I occupied myself with banging on the ketchup bottle until a thick drool of red covered the southeast corner of my fries. I knew he was leading up to something, but he was taking his sweet time. I lifted the top of the kaiser roll and salted everything in sight. Biting in, I could feel the egg yolk oozing into the bun. The combination of spicy salami and snappy pepper-hot jack cheese turned out to be the food equivalent of someone hollering Hot Damn! on the surface of my tongue. I made one of my food moans. Embarrassed, I looked up at them, but neither seemed to notice. When Tannie finally left, Dolan stubbed out his cigarette and paused for an extended bout of coughing so fierce it made his whole body shake. I pictured his lungs like a set of black cartoon bellows, wheezing away. He shook his head. "Sorry about that. I had a bad cold a month ago and it's been hard to shake." He took a swallow of whiskey to soothe his irritated throat. He picked up his sandwich and continued his story between bites, taking up exactly where he'd left off. "While Stacey's been laid up, I've been doing what I can to get his apartment cleaned. Place is a mess. He should be out of the hospital tomorrow and I didn't want him coming home to the sight of all that crap." He set his sandwich down to light another cigarette, rolling it over to the corner of his mouth while he pulled out a cylinder of papers he'd tucked into his breast coat pocket. "Yesterday, I went through a pile of papers on his kitchen table. I was hoping to come across the name of a friend I could contact-somebody to cheer him up. Stace could use a little something to look forward to. Anyway, there was nothing of that nature, but I did find this." He placed the curling sheaf on the table in front of me. I finished my sandwich in one last bite and wiped my hands on a napkin before I reached for the papers. I knew at a glance it was a copy of a Sheriff's Department file. The cover page was marked 187 PC, indicating it was a homicide, with a case number following. The pages were held together with fasteners, sixty-five or seventy sheets in all, with a set of handwritten notes inserted at the back. I returned to the cover page. Victim: Jane Doe Found: Sunday, August 3, 1969 Location: Grayson Quarry, Highway 1, Lompoc Under "Investigating Officers," there were four names listed, one of them Stacey Oliphant's. Dolan leaned forward. "You can see he was one of the original investigating officers. Stace and me were the ones who found the body. We'd taken a Jeep up there and parked off the side of the road to go deer hunting that day. I guess there's a gate across the road now, but the property was open back then. The minute we got out, we picked up the smell. We both knew what it was-something dead for days. Didn't take us long to find out exactly what it was. She'd been flung down a short embankment like a sack of trash. This is the case he was working when he got sick. It's always bugged him they never figured out who she was, let alone who killed her." I felt a dim stirring of memory. "I remember this. Wasn't she stabbed and then dumped?" "Right." "Seems odd they never managed to identify her." "He thought so, too. It's one of those cases really stuck in his craw. He kept thinking there was something he'd overlooked. He'd go back to it when he could, but he never made much progress." "And you're thinking what, to have another go at it?" "If I can talk him into it. I think it'd make a world of difference in his attitude." I leafed through the photocopies, watching the progression of dates and events. "Looks like just about everything." "Including black-and-white prints of the crime scene photographs. He had another couple of files but this is the one caught my eye." He paused to wipe his mouth and then pushed his plate aside. "It'd give him a lift to get back into this and see about developing some information. He can act as lead detective while we do the legwork." I found myself staring. "You and me." "Sure, why not? We can pay for your time. For now, all I'm suggesting is the three of us sit down and talk. If he likes the idea, we'll go ahead. If not, I guess I'll come up with something else." I tapped the file. "Not to state the obvious, but this is eighteen years old." "I know, but aside from Stacey's interest, there hasn't been a push on this since 1970 or so. What if we could crack it? Think what that'd do for him. It could make all the difference." It was the first time I'd seen any animation in his face. I pretended to ponder but there wasn't much debate. I was sick of doing paperwork. Enough already with the file searches and the background checks. "Stacey still has access to the department?" "Sure. A lot of folks out there think the world of him. We can probably get anything we need-within reason, of course." "Let me take this home and read it." Dolan sat back, trying not to look too pleased. "I'll be over at CC's from six until midnight. Show up by eight and we can swing over to St. Terry's and bring Stacey up to speed." I found myself smiling in response. --from Q is for Quarry by Sue Grafton, Copyright October 2002, G. P.

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