

# Crime thriller deals in fear, human failings

**The Trophy Exchange**  
By Diane Fanning  
Severn House, \$27.95

BY BETTY TAYLOR  
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Learn more about Diane

Fanning

side her mother's body, her mom's face crushed beneath a concrete block. Gruesome, yes. But just as she does in her true-crime books, Fanning goes beyond the inexplicable whys of a killer's mind to show how the human spirit will and must survive the horrible monsters that live among us.

Readers discover why Pierce went into homicide. When Charley tells Pierce that she wants to be a police lady, Pierce reflects on her own troubled past and thinks, "Finding your mother's dead body does that to a kid." And as colleagues and strangers repeatedly question Pierce's eye patch, readers also quickly learn how she lost an eye. "Shotgun blast. Domestic violence call," she responds.

The novel came from two different ideas that coalesced into the seed of a book, Fanning says.

"A lot of serial killers take a trophy," she says. "And I thought, 'What if the serial killer took the item and exchanged it?' I also thought, 'What if the lead character was a woman? And what drove her here?'"

The book is rich in characters, including Pierce's partner Ted, a past love who is dealing with a troubled marriage.

"I really respect Lucinda," Fanning says. "I'm not sure she would like me."

"But the one who is most real to me is Charley," Fanning adds. "She's bright, affectionate and determined. She knows fear but doesn't let it get the best of her."

Strong emotions run the course of the book, including raw accounts of domestic violence. These are studies on human frailties and weaknesses. Readers should brush up on their investigative skills and pay close attention as this clever whodunit unravels.

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*Betty Taylor is a San Antonio writer.*



"Are you ever afraid?" Those who deal in the business of catching bad guys don't have time for that question. Certainly not Lt. Lucinda Pierce. The main character in New Braunfels writer Diane Fanning's mystery crime thriller knows that the only

thing worse than being afraid of the bad guy is not being able to catch him.

In "The Trophy Exchange," the first in Fanning's new series, Pierce makes a promise to 8-year-old Charley to find the murderer of the little girl's mother. Charley comes home to the smell of fresh-baked cookies only to discover her little sister Ruby sitting be-