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From top: From April 28 to 30, Ryan will be the guest of honor at Maryland's annual Malice Domestic—a revered, international convention of mystery authors and readers; this month, see the author at South End's Piano Craft Gallery on the 12th and Millbury Women's Club Ladies Night Out on the 14th for book signings, Q&As and more.



MIND GAMES

When describing her newest thriller novel, *The House Guest* (Forge, us.macmillan.com), bestselling author Hank Phillippi Ryan (hankphillippery.com) chose her words carefully: greed, divorce, betrayal, female empowerment and revenge. Here, the Boston-based novelist shares a taste of what readers can expect from this recently released psychological thriller.

BY MADISON DUDDY

What was the inspiration for *The House Guest*? Years ago, an acquaintance of mine was happily married, and every morning she would go off to her high-powered job, waving goodbye to her husband, who was off to his equally high-powered job. And she was very happy... until the police arrived at the door. It turned out her husband had never gone to work. Every day he had been home doing nefarious illegal things on the computer, and my acquaintance had no idea. So I wondered how well do we really know the person whose pillow is next to ours?

What can readers expect from this book? *The House Guest* is the story of a happily married woman, Alyssa Macallen, whose affluent and influential (and manipulative?) husband Bill suddenly walks out on her. And when the FBI arrives at the door, Alyssa knows she really needs a friend. Putting it this way: In a shocking divorce, you can't always get what you want. But sometimes you get what you deserve. What can readers expect? *Gaslight* meets *Thelma & Louise* meets *Strangers on a Train*. But remember—the author may be gaslighting you too.

How does the book keep readers on the edge of their seats? This is two powerful women, facing off in a high-stakes, psychological cat-and-mouse game to prove their truth about a devastating financial betrayal. But which character is the cat? And which character is the mouse?

What do you love most about *The House Guest*? As with all my novels, the ending has to be gorgeously satisfying, with all the loose ends tied up... And sometimes, I worry that I have written a mystery that I cannot solve! When I figured out the end of *The House Guest*, I was by myself in my study. I was so thrilled with it that I stood up and applauded (and then I sat down, of course, very embarrassing).

What sets *The House Guest* apart from your other novels? *The House Guest*, unlike many of my novels, is one point of view in a linear timeline. No multiple timelines or multiple points of view. Just a fast, page-turning beginning, twisty propulsive middle and crackerjack of an ending, if I do say so myself.