

Author enjoys release of 3rd novel in thriller series



Sharon Short
Literary Life

Author Meredith Doench is set for the publication of her third thriller, “Deadeye,” in her Luce Hansens thriller series, published by Bold Strokes books, on July 1. The Centerville resident has crafted a series detective who works at the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

In this outing, Special Agent Hansen’s Thanksgiving vacation with her partner is cut short when she’s tasked with capturing Deadeye, a vicious serial predator who has escaped custody.

The timing is challenging, as Hansen’s partner is already questioning whether she wants to build a life with a woman who puts her dangerous work first.

After graduating Centerville High School, Doench attended Ball State University for her undergraduate degree in Special Education.

Though she enjoyed working in this field, she felt she needed to pursue her creative writing.

She attended the University of Dayton, where she received her Master of Arts in English, and then Texas Tech University for her doctorate in English with an emphasis in creative writing.

She returned to UD as an adjunct instructor and is now a full-time lecturer in the English Department.

I recently caught up with Doench to ask her about her newest book.

“Deadeye” is the third in your series. What theme connects the novels, or has the theme for the series evolved over time? Doench: What most connects the three novels are the struggles Luce Hansen faces in her personal life.

She’s a complicated character, and because the novels are written in first person, Luce is front and center stage throughout them all. A major theme that presents itself is grief and the inability to let go of the past. Luce has lost many people that she has loved, and that fact is never far from her mind. Addiction is another recurring theme as well as trust issues. Each book also has a crime (or series of crimes) that links thematically. In “Deadeye,” that theme is safety and the question of how we keep ourselves and those we love safe in a world where we can become a victim of a random shooter at any time.

There are definitely pros and cons to writing a series. What do you like (and what do you find challenging) about writing a series? Doench: One of the things I love most about writing a series is the ease in which I can slip back into that world with each new novel.

The previous books have set the world of Luce Hansen for me.

While each book delves deeper into her character and those closest to her, I feel like I’m writing about a group of my oldest friends. I love that familiarity.

One aspect that has limited me with this series is Luce Hansen’s specialization as an agent who tracks serial killers.

Luce’s talent for finding these criminals is one of the things I love most about her, but it also limits me as a writer as to what kinds of cases she can become involved in.

Those limits have frustrated me numerous times.”

What’s next in your writing that you’d care to share with column readers? Another Luce novel, and/or creative nonfiction? Doench: My next novel,

“Whereabouts Unknown,” will release in early 2021. I love writing the Luce Hansen books, but ‘Whereabouts Unknown’ will be a departure from that series.

This novel centers around the Dayton Homicide Detective Theodora Madsen and her quest to find two children who went missing from Dayton three years before the novel opens.

I also write creative nonfiction, and I’ve been working on personal essays that feature the Ohio prison system, an Ohio inmate, and his crimes. This project is still very young, but I’m hopeful it might lead to a larger project in the future.

Learn more about Doench and her work at meredithdoench.com.

Upcoming Literary Events

■Monday, July 8, 1-3 p.m., Washington Centerville Library, Woodbourne Branch (6060 Far Hills Ave.) – The library’s “2nd Monday Authors” program welcomes Andrew Walsh, who will share his featured nonfiction book, “Lost Dayton, Ohio,” and Meredith Doench will share the newest book in her Luce Hansen thriller series, “Deadeye.”

■Tuesday, July 9, noon-2 p.m., Word’s Worth Writing Center (Oakwood Starbucks, 2424 Far Hills Ave.) – “Best Practices for Teens” will be led by published writer and instructor Christina Consolino. The class is open to writers ages 12-18.

The class is for all levels and will help teen writers establish a writing routine, The Wright Library Poets, a library-sponsored writing group, get motivated to write, and more. Visit www.wordsworthdayton.com for more information and to register.

■Wednesday, July 10; Monday, July 15; Wednesday, July 17; noon-2 p.m. each session (Oakwood Starbucks, 2424 Far Hills Ave.) – Christina Consolino will lead a teen writing class (open to writers ages 12-18), “Short Story Start to Finish,” in which students will create a short story from idea generation through creation. All participants will receive an anthology of the classes’ work. Visit www.wordsworthdayton.com for more information and to register.

■ Saturday, July 13, 11 a.m., Dayton Metro Library (Miamisburg Branch, 545 E. Linden Ave., Miamisburg) – Author Carol Cartaino will present fascinating facts and tales from her nonfiction book, “It Happened in Ohio,” in her program “Fascinating Facts About a State with an Extraordinary History.”

Sharon Short writes historical mysteries under the pen name Jess Montgomery (www.jessmontgomeryauthor.com). Send her column ideas, book club news, or literary events at sharonshort1983@gmail.com.