

NOTE-REMEMBER YOU HAVE UNTIL FEBRUARY 15 TO ENTER AUTHOR GAYLE TRENT'S CONTEST-SEE JANUARY COLUMN

**HYGIENISTS IN PRINT=HEAVY DENTAL=FICTION & NON-FICTION- February 2012
[[AUTHORS'S ANSWERS]]**

NOTE: Check out Ann Littlewood's <http://zoomysteries.com> or <http://annlittlewood.blogspot.com> there might be something with my column in them.

NIGHT KILL –Ann Littlewood - This is the first in the small Finley Memorial Zoo Mystery series taking place in Vancouver, Washington. Protagonist Iris Oakley & her zookeeper husband of only a few months Rick have separated. Marriage ruined their relationship. They see each other at a party & decide to try again, but Peter doesn't go home with Iris. The next morning he's found in the lion area-dead. It looks like he went back, was totally drunk & was mauled by the lions after falling into their area. She's taken off her loved lion area & deposited with birds. It's believed some kids have been inlaying pranks at the zoo. Iris has to be careful because bad "accidents" happen to her. She & some co-workers, start to believe Rick didn't die the way it appears. The zoo also has to contend with some animal rights activist protesters outside. It also has an area that's to be part of an exhibit slowly being worked on. Rick has been into American Indian music & some other Indian things. When Iris goes through his locker & finds a jar with a tooth & other items in it, she begins to wonder if he found that at the zoo site, & is this sacred burial land.

DARK TIDBITS: 1. "Soon I'd get a good look at her teeth, after we worked more on 'open up.'" Author's comment: Iris is training a lion to open her mouth on command. 2. "...the old tiger far more agile than I would have thought, leaping up to slam me to the ground; teeth & claws sinking into my unprotected primate flesh..." 3. "My key turned in the lock, as familiar as brushing my teeth." 4. "The "rock" turned out to be a small, stained tooth." 5. "The tooth was probably unidentifiable & it wasn't even interesting. Maybe Rick had found it in the woods before the construction started." 6. "I got a deer jaw. I'll bring it in & we can compare the teeth", Calvin offered. "Just the lower jaw? Wouldn't we need the whole skull?" I asked. Calvin gave me a patient look. "Deer don't have any upper incisors. Just lower ones." (*Lois: Interesting--I had no idea about that!!*) Author's comment "I collect animal skulls since I find them beautiful, intricate, & fascinating examples of adaptation. (I find them in the woods--"no animals were killed to create this collection.") That is how I know that deer don't have lower incisors, just a tough pad to bite against." 7. "Range would never do such a thing [chew his leash], maybe because his retriever ancestors were bred for soft mouths." 8. "Commitment issues? You been reading magazine article at the **DDS'** office?" I sneered." Author's comment: Dental offices often have the best magazines. Long ago, I found my first copy of *Organic Farming and Gardening* in a dentist office in Carmel, California, and that tattered issue took me one more step toward environmentalism & sustainability. You never know. Anyway, Iris was annoyed at Denny and wanted a good dig at his expense. I pictured him searching for *Sports Illustrated* or *Time* and having to settle for *Redbook* or some such. 9. "The snake shed in the jar & the little tooth in the mud? I thought I was a deer incisor, but maybe not..." "We need to get that tooth to an anthropologist." [[Author's note: We have a lot of human tooth molds around the house, from my kids' orthodontia and my own night guard. So I had the opportunity to examine a lot of people-teeth, more than just shining a flashlight into my mouth!"]] 10. "Forget ever seeing that tooth again," Denny finally said. "We'll have to do without it." 11. "One small snake shed, 2 hatched-out turtle eggs, &- hard to spot-I small tooth." 12. "Now for the tooth." ... "Someone other than Wallace knew about the tooth & wanted it out of circulation." ... "I drove to Portland to catch my **DDS, Dr. Chen**. I made it to her office in southeast Portland, not far from my parents' house, by 11:45 AM. The **receptionist** was new, with spiky frosted hair & a blue tattoo around her wrist. I said I needed to talk to **Dr. Chen**. She said I needed to make an appointment. I said I needed to see the **DDS** immediately. We went on like that for a bit, but I was prepared to spend all the time it took, & she wanted to go to lunch. Finally she agreed to see whether **Dr. Chen** would talk to me... The concept of a talk with the **DDS** that didn't involve actual dentistry on my actual mouth was difficult." ... In spite of the new **receptionist, Dr. Chen** was possibly the world's most **perfect DDS**. She was calm & had a motherly air.... You knew she wouldn't ever hurt you unless she really, really had to for your own oral good. She also had little fingers, a positive attitude & a cool machine that showed live videos of your gums... I liked her enough to pay her bills instead of finding a **DDS** who would accept the zoo's dental insurance." ... (Iris shows her the mysterious tooth.) "I'll go with upper right incisor. Number 7". "Human?" ... "It looks like a human tooth." ... She walked to the sink & rinsed it & scrubbed it with her fingers and a little toothpaste. "It's got a filling. This pale spot. I suppose that makes it more likely to be human, although a zoo animal might need a filling." ... "Could the tooth be really old, like 100 years?" Maybe there were **DDSs** a 100 years ago... "It's a composite filling. I'd say the work was done no more than 25 or 30 years ago, probably much more recently." ... "The **receptionist** stopped me, checked on the fee with **Dr. Chen**, and grudgingly let me go for free."

[[Author's comment: My dentist is Dr. May M. Chang here in Portland, Oregon, a lovely woman we've gone to for years. I needed some conflict in the scene, so I went with a snippy receptionist. Forgive me! Dr. Chang's receptionist, Deborah, is a total sweetheart and in no way the model for the one in *Night Kill*. Fiction is dull if the hero doesn't face obstacles. On a visit to Dr. Chang, I pointed to my own incisor and asked what it was called in dentist-talk and she told me #7, and the equivalent on the other side, which I promptly forgot. She also told me about composite fillings."]] 13. "I would tell him about the tooth later, when I had time for an explosion of consternation and theories." 14. "Once I knew who, then I knew where the tooth came from & why Rick died." 15. "Three sets of golden eyes stared back, mouths a little open, outlined by black gums." 16. "I turned the tooth over to the police this evening." .. "With Rick cremated, that evidence is gone, & a tooth doesn't prove a thing." 17. "Even if the tapes weren't enough to convict the bastard, they would activate a serious search for the dental records." 18. "The tapes & the tooth are about it for evidence."

SPOILER FOR HOW ANN CAME UP WITH THE TOOTH IDEA: When I worked at the Oregon Zoo, a keeper really did find a human skull at a construction site. It was old and probably from a pioneer graveyard, not a victim of foul play. That

was the inspiration for *Night Kill*. The tooth in *Night Kill* has its roots, but that, plus watching the lions' behavior, clues Iris in to the murderer.

DID NOT SURVIVE= Ann Littlewood = the 2nd Finley Memorial Zoo series== Iris clocked in early because she was on a volunteer night shift & was the only 1 there. It's not her job, but Iris knows she should look in on the elephants who are acting up & sounding strange. There she finds her boss/foreman Kevin Wallace, being mauled by 1 of the 2 elephants in the exhibit. She sees him moving but has no idea of how to help him. She calls Sam Bates, the senior elephant keeper who walks her through the situation. Help materializes including personnel with guns, but she's able to prevent the elephant having to be shot. Then because of circumstance, it's unmasked the elephant wasn't trying to kill Wallace, but help him. A human tried to kill him. Strange things are happening including animals, dead & alive, disappearing.

LIVING TIDBITS: -1. "Clouded leopard boyfriends are prone to domestic violence, sometimes fatal, but Yuri had tolerated a stranger in his space, kept his focus on reproduction, & got the job done, albeit with teeth & claws & yowling,..." 2. I left Felines, & now Linda had them opening their mouths for dental inspections,..." **[Author comment** "Routine husbandry, looking for problems with the cats just as you do with people. "Husbandry training" is an important part of zoo keeping. Instead of sedating an animal, with all those risks plus a headache when they wake up (animals hate those darts), nowadays many animals are trained to allow examination of all parts of their body. It's all done with treats & very gradual steps, no force or punishment, which would only backfire. It's very common to train cats, sea lions, etc. to open their mouth & allow examination of the teeth (usually with bars protecting the human!). Probably you couldn't train an animal to tolerate drilling & filling, but I would not be amazed if someone told me it had been done. You would not believe what animals can be trained to willingly tolerate, in exchange for the right treat. Blood draws without any restraint are routine three days, for example." **]** 3. "The 3rd was from his **DDS** reminding him to come have his **teeth cleaned.**" **[Author comment** "This scene was a peek into the foreman's everyday life. He worked in a job with health benefits, so it seemed natural to have this.]] 4. "The super-long canines wrapped around a little cub." **[Author comment** "I've read that clouded leopards may be the closest living relatives to the extinct saber tooth cats. The long teeth may be an adaptation for catching birds, to go through lots of feathers into the body.]] 5. "My mother had set up a medical marathon & our tour began with the **DDS**. Pregnancy can be hard on the gums, & my mother wouldn't hear of me canceling. **Dr Chen** lectured me yet again on the supreme importance of flossing. Over lunch at my father's favorite taqueria, feeling a trifle bad about crudding up my immaculate teeth with a tamale, I told him I needed a replacement car pronto." **[Author comment** "I was told that pregnancy was hard on teeth, so that fit in with normal prenatal care. Iris would be conscientious and if she weren't, her mother would natter her into taking care of herself. You are making me think I'm obsessed with dentistry! Anyway, I needed a scene to show she wasn't in very good shape and didn't have a car. Having her dad drive her around to the dentist and doctor took care of that. Then he made it clear he wouldn't help her get replacement for the damaged car. This was a serious obstacle to her solving the mystery, but she wiggled around it.]]

NOTE from Ann: The third in the series is due out in July, *Threatened & Endangered*. Regretfully, no visits to the dentist, but a male mandrill monkey is featured. They are famous for their enormous canine teeth. Oh, and one of the new men in Iris' life has a chipped front tooth, which she finds endearing.

COOKIE DOUGH OR DIE. Virginia Lowell. Takes place near Baltimore Olivia Greyson owns The Gingerbread House with Maddie Briggs. The store has everything to do with cookies, including making them. Evidentially Olivia didn't realize has much of a friend wealthy business owner Clarisse Chamberlain was because she left Olivia \$150,000 & her antique cookie cutter collection. The police at first believe Clarisse committed suicide, but Olivia thinks it is murder because of the way she died. Maddie & Olivia are out to prove it especially because the postman almost died after eating cookies from their store, & it seemed like someone tried to kill Olivia.

YUMMY DENTAL: 1 "When 1 of the women knelt to pet him, he stretched his neck over her bent back, caught the string of her bikini top in his teeth' & pulled." 2 "She noticed his teeth were crooked, especially his 2 upper-front teeth, which virtually overlapped. Had he grown up too poor for braces?" **[**"The character with crooked teeth, Sam Parnell, can be irritating and gossipy. Olivia, my sleuth, isn't terribly fond of him, yet I wanted her to feel some compassion for him as a human being. She does this by wondering if he grew up too poor to afford adequate dental care. If Sam grew up in poverty, it might help explain why he could come across as resentful. The fact that Olivia wonders about his background adds depth to her character and, I hope, makes her more likable." **]** 3 "His smile broadened to reveal perfect teeth." 4 "When she smiled, Olivia noticed her incisors were pointy." 5. "How did you determine Jasmine was the real 1?" "Dental records. Roberta managed to track down Jasmine's childhood **DDS**. He faxed us her records, up to age 17. The match was convincing." **[**"When I included the dentist in the discussion of the victim's dental records, I actually had my own childhood dentist in mind. I grew up in a small town, as did the victim. My dentist was a beefy man with a gentle manner, who cared a great deal about his patients. I remember he was pleased for me when he realized my jaw was large enough to allow my adult teeth to come in without crowding, so I wouldn't need braces. I could envision him being willing to open his office on a Saturday evening to help the police identify a murdered woman who might have been a child patient of his. A less caring person might have waited until Monday." **]** 6. "Spunky dug his teeth into Edward's shirt sleeve & tugged, as if they were playing a game."

NOTE: **[**Lowell: "When I received your request from my publisher, I had to laugh—I had just returned from my six-month dental exam and cleaning. (No cavities. Yay!)" **]** **[**"Until I read your list of dental tidbits from **COOKIE DOUGH OR DIE**, I had no idea there was so much clenching and grinding of teeth in the book. Thinking about why that might be, I realized at once that clenching (and grinding) my teeth has been a major problem in my own life. I had developed TMJ and begun to grind down my poor teeth when my dentist urged me to be fitted for a mouth guard to wear at night. It has saved my teeth from being reduced to nubs and cured the TMJ. However, wearing the mouth guard has caused an interesting recurring dream. Over and over, I dream that my teeth are coated with some thick, gum-like substance, and I try, always unsuccessfully, to get rid of it. I'd have to say the dream is preferable to losing my teeth and enduring TMJ headaches! Hope this helps with your column and, again, thank you for contacting me." **]**

A COOKIE BEFORE DYING—Virginia Lowell Berkley ISBN 978 0 425 24501 9 PBO 295 pages This is the newest in the Olivia Greyson owner of The Gingerbread House, which specializes in all cookie things. First line: “Olivia Greyson licked a droplet of sweat off her forehead before it could dribble into her eyebrow.” Dogs included---Olivia’s lawn is spewed with balls of white paper stating SUGAR KILLS. She assumes her neighbor Charlene Critch who owns the Vegetable Plate. Then Olivia sees a man running from Charlene’s store. Because of her dog’s Spunky’s howling, Olivia goes outside & discovers a man’s body. He looks possibly like the man who she saw running from Charlene’s store. He was stabbed to death.

DOUGHY TIDBITS: 1. P. 7 “It’s 6:30 in the morning, Charlene’s probably up there sharpening her fans for a breakfast of raw rutabaga.” 2. p. 31 “Charlie smiled, revealing a mouthful of well-tended, perfectly straight teeth with a clump of orange icing stuck between the front incisors.” 3. p. 42 “She traced the outline of a faint, dark curve separated by a light patch. ‘Those could be teeth,’ Olivia said. 4. P. 43 “The hostess- a tall, elegant redhead with a brilliant smile-skimmed around closely packed tables as she guided Olivia to a table for 2 next to a window.” ...”The hostess flashed her snow-white incisors & disappeared.”

DENTAL: A COOKIE BEFORE DYING—Virginia Lowell =Olivia’s lawn is spewed with balls of white paper stating SUGAR KILLS. She assumes her neighbor Charlene Critch who owns the Vegetable Plate, had something to do with it. Then Olivia sees a man running from Charlene’s store. Because of her dog’s Spunky’s howling, Olivia goes outside & discovers a man’s body. He looks possibly like the man who she saw running from Charlene’s store. He was stabbed to death.

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THE WEED THAT STRINGS THE HANGMAN’S BAG- Alan Bradley In 1950 England, 11 year-old Flavia de Luce is determined to probe into who killed a well-known popular puppeteer & a young boy who supposedly hung himself. Her older sisters are still mentally torturing her.

FLOWERY TIDBITS: 1. “Today was the day I was supposed to have gone up to the City with Father to be fitted for braces.” 2. “You knew as well as I that we had an appointment for your teeth this afternoon.” “For my teeth! He made it sound as if the National Health were issuing me a full set of plaster dentures.” “But what he said was true enough; I had recently destroyed a perfectly good set of wire braces by straightening them to pick a lock. Father had grumbled, of course, but had made another appointment to have me netted & dragged back up to London, to that third-floor iron-monger’s shop in Harrington Street, where I would be strapped to a board like Boris Karloff as various bits of ironmongery were shoved into my mouth, screwed in, & bolted to my gums.” [[The idea of picking a lock with wire braces came from Flavia herself. Faced with escaping from a sticky situation using only what’s at hand seems natural to her. I’m afraid I can’t take any credit for it, since I never would have thought of it myself.]] 3. “Even if he wrote to the **DDS**, it would take time for the necessary back-&forth to be completed.” 4. “Satisfied with what she saw, she rewarded us with a broad grin that revealed the black gaps left by several missing teeth.” 5. “She still has all her own teeth,’ he used to tell us, “--& she knows how to use ‘em.” 6. “I had a good opportunity to examine her overbite, close-up & in profile. Even with her mouth shut, she showed a remarkable amount of tooth, & I found myself seriously rethinking my rebellion against braces.” 7. “...his lips pulled slightly back, his teeth showing obscenely.” 8. “I stepped off the path & into the grass, pretending to inspect the inscription on a weathered gravestone that jutted up like a yellowed tooth from a green gum.” 9. “I’d rather spend a morning in the **DDS**’ chair than listen to an hour of Mrs. Mullet’s rattling on.” 10. “...& I had been gobsmacked at the sight of 3 women in black dresses & black veils, chattering happily away at the door to the toilet like a congress of toothy crows, before resuming their grim demeanors & slipping back into Mr. Sowbell’s premises.”

[[I’m happy to see that at least 1 reader picked up on Flavia’s dental metaphors. I suppose that 1 of the minor reasons for their presence is that 1 of my sisters was a **dental assistant**, & her highly entertaining table-talk was a fact of family life. In later years, as a university television engineer charged with adapting high-tech camera & recording equipment to specialized medical uses - among other things - those images were reinforced in my mind. Since Flavia is only 11, her metaphors are limited to those things she has experienced first-hand, seen in the cinema, heard on the wireless, read, or been told by those around her. Her senses are keen, & she often reports on the taste, smell, feel & sound of things. Dental images have the advantage of being not only universal, but also particularly vivid, & quickly conveyed to most readers, who can identify at once with even the briefest of descriptions.]]

NOTE:Alan included this [[I’m sure you probably have in your library, as I do in mine, a copy of John Woodforde’s *The Strange Story of False Teeth*. I’ve always been fascinated, too, with the early transplant attempts by John Hunter in the 18th century!]]

--I AM HALF-SICK OF SHADOWS—Alan Bradley == Flavia de Luce’s family needs money, as usual. This time her father has decided to rent out their house to a film company right before Christmas. The vicar has gotten the leading lady Phyllis Wyvern & leading man to agree to do a Romeo & Juliet scene at the deLuce home. Due to a snowstorm the audience stuck in the house. Afterwards late at night, Flavia wakes up & hears a snapping noise that keeps going. She confirms its coming from Phyllis’ room where she finds her strangled with film. Will Flavia be able to follow through with her plans for Father Christmas?

HEALED TIDBITS: 1. “Look-you can still see’er teeth marks,” 2. “..& Flossie dished the dirt.” 3. “Our furnace has been baring its fangs.” 4. “I’d have blacked out 1 of my front teeth with pulverized carbon.” 5. “Dieter Schrantz tall, blond, & handsome, as they say on the wireless, stood on the doorstep, smiling at me with his perfect teeth.” 6. “Dear girl,’ she had said, ‘you are now 18. In a few years-4 or 5, if you’re lucky-your teeth shall begin to fall out & you shall find yourself eyeing the girdles at Harrods.” 7. “Since she had a slight overbite, she’d have licked it away in seconds if she’d been alive.” ... “Of course,

I was right. The endless hours I had spent being fitted & refitted with braces in **Dr. Reekie's** chamber of tortures in Farrington Street had made me a leading authority on jaw alignment. In fact, there had been times when I'd thought of myself as the Human Nutcracker. To me, Phyllis Wyven's mandibular displacement had been as easy to spot as a horse in a birdbath." 8. "He was using the pole to keep clear of my hands, my feet, & my teeth, dragging me along through the snow like a gaffed cod."

OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY = Justin Cartwright =The English Trevelyan-Tubal family have been bankers for centuries. Sir Harry Trevelyan-Tubal CEO always believed in investing bank funds conservatively. A stroke makes him unable to function. Some of son Julian's investments have almost tanked. He's borrowing somewhat illegally from different family trusts & puts the bank up for sale. When his step-mother Fleur divorced Artair MacCleod, he was told he'd get money monthly from a "charitable donation" He's desperate when the money stops. That's gets the ball rolling about the bank's situation. Due to money problems, reporter Melissa Tregarthen's paper will be keeping her on, but only as a piece writer, & she's to operate a blog on what she wants for the paper. It becomes very popular. Melissa investigates MacCleod's problem. The story roots into the family's lives.

Coinci-DENTAL TIDBITS: 1. "Julian wants to see Alice's milk teeth & her pursed, amused lips, which look as though they are lightly rouged at all times." 2. "Goodbye, dear Harry' she whispers, but not too near the agitated head; she fears it could snap at her with those regular & youthful teeth, the work of Harley Street's finest implantologist." 3. "And in those years she, too, has been drawn into a sort of privilege, with hairdressers, florists, drivers, pilots, doctors, **DDSs**, gardeners, tennis coaches & boatmen all eager to serve, all trembling with the desire to be touched by the holy mystery of great wealth." 4. "Close up, Kasimir's skin is pitted, with little black marks in the indentations, & his teeth, when revealed in courteous & dutiful smiles, are very large, almost intimidating, but perfect in shape & color. Julian remembers him with some prominent gold teeth, but these have all been converted to this dazzling array, like rows of stucco houses in Belgravia."

MASH (the book which the TV show came from) by Richard Hooker = This features the Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) during the Korean War. A whole chapter on Captain Walter Koskiusko Waldowski AKA Painless Pole the **DDS** is deposited.

THE CELLIST OF SARAJEVO =Steven Galloway—Sarajevo is war torn. Twenty-two people were killed standing in line waiting to buy bread. A cellist comes out every day to play for 22 days to remember them. You see what people in this type of situation go through.

PLAYING TIDBITS: "There's no glass left in the windows. Some of them are black-eyed, covered in plastic, while others are empty, gaps like absent teeth in an old man's mouth."

BONES OF CONTENSION –Jennifer Matthews =An American rich/dying father/uncle/ex-husband summons his family to Australia where he plans on having a doctor friend help him commit suicide. This is a very dysfunction family. The doctored is murdered. He is going to rewrite his will also.

DYING TIDBITS: 1. ""She grubbed through her purse. Wallet, passport, compact, lipstick, cigarettes. Boarding passes, overdue Visa bill, quart-sized plastic baggie with toothpaste & leaking blue mouthwash." 2. "She examined her teeth. She still had the full set, no thanks to her chauffeur." 3. "Whenever she went home to Georgia & had to socialize, she talked so sweet her teeth itched." 4. "Nothing incriminating inside-razor, shaving gel, toothbrush, toothpaste." 5. "What was it? Finding out there was no Santa Clause, no tooth fairy, no weapons of mass destruction?" 6. "He was tall for an Aborigine with inky black skin, a masonry of large, square teeth, & rows of raised, bead-like scars across his forehead."