

A CONVERSATION WITH DAVID HOUSEWRIGHT

What research did you undertake in writing your award-winning book?

I take the research required to write my novels very seriously. Some authors will tell you that “it’s only fiction.” They’re wrong. It’s a real story about real people in the throes of real emotions. It becomes fiction when you put something on paper that makes readers stop and say, “That’s not right.”

For *Curse of The Jade Lily*, I studied international art theft, the efforts of insurance companies to retrieve stolen art, museums and their security systems, the history of jade, and so on. I also study investigative techniques of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, but after 15 books I’m starting to catch on.

What do you hope readers take away from *Curse of the Jade Lily*?

There’s an old saying: “If you are from where they are from and you are taught what they are taught, you’ll believe what they believe.” I work very hard to give readers a true sense of Minnesota and the people who live here.

What do you like most about your award-winning book?

I like to think that I deal with the same themes and issues that you will find in so-called “literary fiction”—political corruption, chronic unemployment, the dying of the Great Plains, institutional prostitution, family dysfunction, and much more. But I also hope that I combine this with a compelling story.

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Has writing always been a part of your life?*

Pretty much. I actually wrote my first book when I was in the sixth grade. It was called *Swinging Danger*. It was eight pages long — four chapters — all about a kid who builds a rope swing despite his parents’

objections, falls off, and breaks his wrist. And yes, like most first novels, it was highly autobiographical. I’ve been a writer ever since, working on my high school and college newspapers, working for the sports department of the Minneapolis Tribune at age eighteen, writing for other newspapers, then advertising copy and so on and so on.

What are you currently writing and/or what’s an inspiration you have for a future book?

I am always working on something new—look for *The Devil May Care* around June of 2014. As for inspiration—if you need inspiration, you’re in the wrong business.

What is your biggest dream for your writing career?

This is the dream—to keep writing and make a living at it.

How do you most enjoy spending your time when you’re not writing?

Well, baseball doesn’t watch itself.

*Question and answer from a *Wild River* Review interview with David Housewright.

Minnesota Book Award Categories:

Children’s Literature

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Memoir & Creative Nonfiction

Minnesota

Novel & Short Story

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Genre Fiction Winner

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A McKenzie Novel

CURSE OF THE JADE LILY



DAVID HOUSEWRIGHT

EDGAR AWARD—WINNING AUTHOR OF *HIGHWAY 61*

Curse of the Jade Lily

by David Housewright

MINOTAUR BOOKS/ST. MARTIN'S PRESS

Curse of the Jade Lily

SUMMARY

In David Housewright's ninth novel in the award-winning P. I. Rushmore McKenzie crime series, thieves steal the 200-year-old Jade Lily from a Minneapolis art museum and then offer to sell it back for one third of its insured value — \$1.3 million. But there's a catch. They demand that unlicensed P. I. Rushmore McKenzie act as go-between.

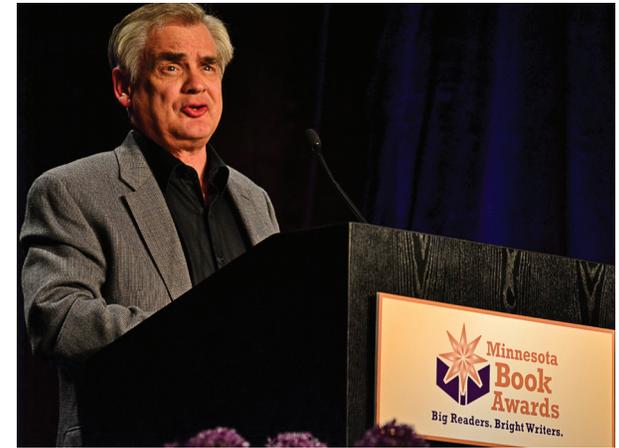


DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the nature of obsession? Why would so many different people chase after the Jade Lily, knowing that ownership comes at such a steep price?
2. What do you think about Heavenly Petryk? Is she really as amoral as she seems?
3. What is McKenzie's motivation – not specifically for retrieving the Jade Lily, but overall?
4. What is your interpretation of Herzong? Do you believe him to be 'good' or 'bad'?
5. What theories did you have regarding the mystery? Who did you think stole the Jade Lily, and why?
6. Does Rushmore believe himself to be a "doer of good deeds?" How much of his gruff manner is an act? How much is self-delusion?
7. Do the allusions to places and things in Minnesota add to or take away from the story?
8. How does family figure into Rushmore's character?
9. Have you read other books in the series? How does following one character have an impact on

your understanding of the books? If you haven't, do you now feel compelled to do so?

10. Is the ending an honest reflection of true life?



ABOUT DAVID HOUSEWRIGHT



David Housewright has worked as a journalist covering both crime and sports; an advertising copywriter and creative director; and a writing instructor. He is a three-time Minnesota Book Award winner and has received the Edgar Award for his crime fiction.

Learn more about the author at www.davidhousewright.com



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