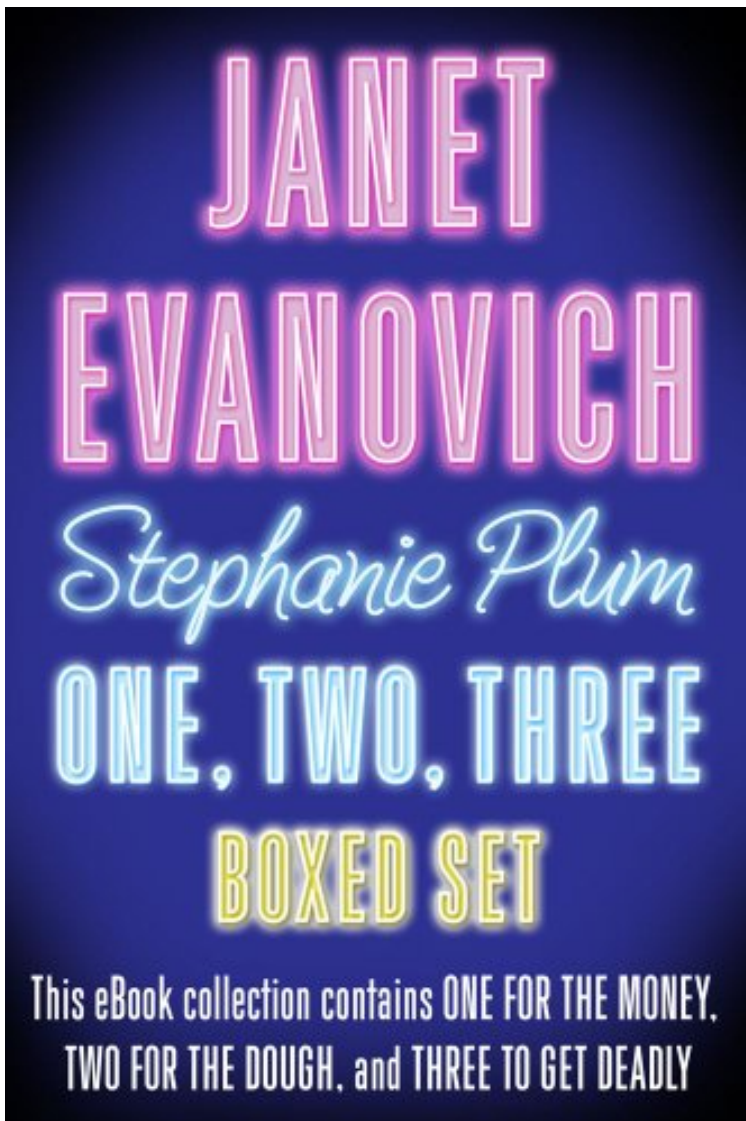


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# Stephanie Plum One, Two, Three: One for the Money, Two for the Dough, Three to Get Deadly



*Par Janet Evanovich*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThree complete novels: One for the Money, Two for the Dough, and Three to Get Deadly, from the New York Times #1 bestselling author, Janet Evanovich!Heres where it all began the three novels that first brought us Stephanie Plum, that bounty hunter with attitude who stepped out of Trentons blue-collar burg and into the heart of America. One for the Money: Stephanies all grown up and out on her own, living five miles from Mom and Dad and doing her best to sever the worlds longest umbilical cord. Her

mother is a meddler and her grandmother is a few cans short of a case. Out of work and out of money, Stephanie blackmails her bail-bondsman cousin Vinnie into giving her a try as an apprehension agent.

Stephanie knows zilch about the job requirements, but she figures her new pal, el-primo bounty hunter Ranger, can teach her what it takes to catch a crook. Her first assignment: nail Joe Morelli, a former vice cop on the run from a charge of murder one. Morelli is the inamorato who charmed Stephanie out of her virginity at age sixteen. There's still powerful chemistry between them, so the chase is interesting. Two for the Dough:

Stephanie takes to the mean streets of Trenton, armed with attitude (not to mention stun guns and defense sprays), to find Kenny Mancuso, who recently shot his best friend and is on the run. Aided by the enigmatic Ranger, who knows a thing or two about bounty hunting, and by her irrepressible Grandma Mazur,

Stephanie forms a shaky alliance with her favorite cop, Joe Morelli, for a tumultuous chase through back alleys and Grandma's favorite funeral parlors. Three to Get Deadly: Stephanie is having a bad hair day for the whole month of January. She's looking for Mo Bedemier, Trenton's most beloved citizen, who was charged with carrying concealed and skipped bail. To help her, she's got Lula, a former hooker turned file clerk. Big,

blonde, and black, Lula's itching to lock up a crook in the trunk of her car. And Morelli, the cop with the slow-burning smile, is acting polite even after Stephanie finds more bodies than the Trenton PD has seen in years. That's a bad sign for sure. Funny and fabulous, Janet Evanovich is at her sparkling best in these three novels that launched a bestselling phenomenon.

Chapter 1 There are some men who enter a woman's life and screw it up forever. Joseph Morelli did this to me -- not forever, but periodically. Morelli and I were both born and raised in a blue-collar chunk of Trenton called the burg. Houses were attached and narrow.

Yards were small. Cars were American. The people were mostly of Italian descent, with enough Hungarians and Germans thrown in to offset inbreeding. It was a good place to buy calzone or play the numbers. And, if you had to live in Trenton anyway, it was an okay place to raise a family. When I was a kid I didn't ordinarily play with Joseph Morelli. He lived two blocks over and was two years older. "Stay away from those Morelli

boys," my mother had warned me. "They're wild. I hear stories about the things they do to girls when they get them alone." "What kind of things?" I'd eagerly asked. "You don't want to know," my mother had

answered. "Terrible things. Things that aren't nice." From that moment on, I viewed Joseph Morelli with a combination of terror and prurient curiosity that bordered on awe. Two weeks later, at the age of six, with quaking knees and a squishy stomach, I followed Morelli into his father's garage on the promise of learning a new game. The Morelli garage hunkered detached and snubbed at the edge of their lot. It was a sorry affair,

lit by a single shaft of light filtering through a grime-coated window. Its air was stagnant, smelling of corner must, discarded tires, and jugs of used motor oil. Never destined to house the Morelli cars, the garage served other purposes. Old Man Morelli used the garage to take his belt to his sons, his sons used the garage to take their hands to themselves, and Joseph Morelli took me, Stephanie Plum, to the garage to play train. "What's

the name of this game?" I'd asked Joseph Morelli. "Choo-choo," he'd said, down on his hands and knees, crawling between my legs, his head trapped under my short pink skirt. "You're the tunnel, and I'm the

train." I suppose this tells something about my personality. That I'm not especially good at taking advice. Or that I was born with an overload of curiosity. Or maybe it's about rebellion or boredom or fate. At any rate, it was a one-shot deal and darn disappointing, since I'd only gotten to be the tunnel, and I'd really wanted to be the train. Ten years later, Joe Morelli was still living two blocks over. He'd grown up big and bad, with eyes

like black fire one minute and melt-in-your-mouth chocolate the next. He had an eagle tattooed on his chest, a tight-assed, narrow-hipped swagger, and a reputation for having fast hands and clever fingers. My best

friend, Mary Lou Molnar, said she heard Morelli had a tongue like a lizard. "Holy cow," I'd answered, "what's that supposed to mean?" "Just don't let him get you alone or you'll find out. Once he gets you

alone...that's it. You're done for." I hadn't seen much of Morelli since the train episode. I supposed he'd enlarged his repertoire of sexual exploitation. I opened my eyes wide and leaned closer to Mary Lou, hoping for the worst. "You aren't talking about rape, are you?" "I'm talking about lust! If he wants you, you're

doomed. The guy is irresistible." Aside from being fingered at the age of six by you-know-who, I was untouched. I was saving myself for marriage, or at least for college. "I'm a virgin," I said, as if this was news. "I'm sure he doesn't mess with virgins." "He specializes in virgins! The brush of his fingertips turns virgins

into slobbering mush." Two weeks later, Joe Morelli came into the bakery where I worked every day after school, Tasty Pastry, on Hamilton. He bought a chocolate-chip cannoli, told me he'd joined the navy, and charmed the pants off me four minutes after closing, on the floor of Tasty Pastry, behind the case filled with

chocolate clairs. The next time I saw him, I was three years older. I was on my way to the mall, driving my father's Buick when I spotted Morelli standing in front of Giovichinni's Meat Market. I gunned the big V-8

engine, jumped the curb, and clipped Morelli from behind, bouncing him off the front right fender. I stopped the car and got out to assess the damage. "Anything broken?" He was sprawled on the pavement, looking up my skirt. "My leg." "Good," I said. Then I turned on my heel, got into the Buick, and drove to the mall. I attribute the incident to temporary insanity, and in my own defense, I'd like to say I haven't run over anyone since. During winter months, wind ripped up Hamilton Avenue, whining past plate-glass windows, banking trash against curbs and storefronts. During summer months, the air sat still and gauzy, leaden with humidity, saturated with hydrocarbons. It shimmered over hot cement and melted road tar. Cicadas buzzed, Dumpsters reeked, and a dusty haze hung in perpetuity over softball fields statewide. I figured it was all part of the great adventure of living in New Jersey. This afternoon I'd decided to ignore the August buildup of ozone catching me in the back of my throat and go, convertible top down, in my Mazda Miata. The air conditioner was blasting flat out, I was singing along with Paul Simon, my shoulder-length brown hair was whipping around my face in a frenzy of frizz and snarls, my ever vigilant blue eyes were coolly hidden behind my Oakleys, and my foot rested heavy on the gas pedal. It was Sunday, and I had a date with a pot roast at my parents' house. I stopped for a light and checked my rearview mirror, swearing when I saw Lenny Gruber two car lengths back in a tan sedan. I thumped my forehead on the steering wheel. "Damn." I'd gone to high school with Gruber. He was a maggot then, and he was a maggot now. Unfortunately, he was a maggot with a just cause. I was behind on my Miata payments, and Gruber worked for the repo company. Six months ago, when I'd bought the car, I'd been looking good, with a nice apartment and season tickets to the Rangers. And then bam! I got laid off. No money. No more A-1 credit rating. I rechecked the mirror, set my teeth, and yanked up the emergency brake. Lenny was like smoke. When you tried to grab him, he evaporated, so I wasn't about to waste this one last opportunity to bargain. I hauled myself out of my car, apologized to the man caught between us, and stalked back to Gruber. "Stephanie Plum," Gruber said, full of joy and faux surprise. "What a treat." I leaned two hands on the roof and looked through the open window at him. "Lenny, I'm going to my parents' house for dinner. You wouldn't snatch my car while I was at my parents' house, would you? I mean, that would be really low, Lenny." "I'm a pretty low guy, Steph. That's why I've got this neat job. I'm capable of most anything." The light changed, and the driver behind Gruber leaned on his horn. "Maybe we can make a deal," I said to Gruber. "Does this deal involve you getting naked?" I had a vision of grabbing his nose and twisting it Three Stooges style until he squealed like a pig. Problem was, it'd involve touching him. Better to go with a more restrained approach. "Let me keep the car tonight, and I'll drive it to the lot first thing tomorrow morning." "No way," Gruber said. "You're damn sneaky. I've been chasing after this car for five days." "So, one more won't matter." "I'd expect you to be grateful, you know what I mean?" I almost gagged. "Forget it. Take the car. In fact, you could take it right now. I'll walk to my parents'." Gruber's eyes were locked halfway down my chest. I'm a 36B. Respectable but far from overwhelming on my 5' 7" frame. I was wearing black spandex shorts and an oversized hockey jersey. Not what you would call a seductive outfit, but Lenny was ogling anyway. His smile widened enough to show he was missing a molar. "I guess I could wait for tomorrow. After all, we did go to high school together." "Un huh." It was the best I could do. Five minutes later I turned off Hamilton onto Roosevelt. Two blocks to my parents' house, and I could feel familial obligation sucking at me, pulling me into the heart of the burg. This was a community of extended families. There was safety here, along with love, and stability, and the comfort of ritual. The clock on the dash told me I was seven minutes late, and the urge to scream told me I was home. I parked at the curb and looked at the narrow two-story duplex with its jalousied front porch and aluminum awnings. The Plum half was yellow, just as it had been for forty years, with a brown shingle roof. Snowball bushes flanked either side of the cement stoop, and red geraniums had been evenly spaced the length of the porch. It was basically a flat. Living room in front, dining room in the middle, kitchen at the rear. Three bedrooms and bath upstairs. It was a small, tidy house crammed with kitchen smells and too much furniture, comfortable with its lot in life. Next door, Mrs. Markowitz, who was living on social security and could only afford closeout paint colors, had painted her side lime green. My mother was at the open screen door. "Stephanie," she called. "What are you doing sitting out there in your car? You're late for dinner. You know how your father hates to eat late. The potatoes are getting cold. The pot roast will be dry." Food is important in the burg. The moon revolves around the earth, the earth revolves around the sun, and the burg revolves around pot roast. For as long as I can remember, my parents' lives have been controlled by five-pound pieces of rolled rump, done to perfection at six o'clock. Grandma Mazur stood two feet back from my mother. "I gotta get me a pair of those," she said, eyeballing my shorts. "I've still got pretty good legs, you know." She raised her skirt and looked down at her knees. "What do you think? You think I'd look good in them biker

things?"Grandma Mazur had knees like doorknobs. She'd been a beauty in her time, but the years had turned her slack-skinned and spindle-boned. Still, if she wanted to wear biker shorts, I thought she should go for it.

The way I saw it, that was one of the many advantages to living in New Jersey -- even old ladies were allowed to look outlandish. My father gave a grunt of disgust from the kitchen, where he was carving up the meat. "Biker's shorts," he muttered, slapping his palm against his forehead. "Unh!" Two years ago, when Grandpa Mazur's fat-clogged arteries sent him to the big pork roast in the sky, Grandma Mazur had moved in with my parents and had never moved out. My father accepted this with a combination of Old World stoicism and tactless mutterings. I remember him telling me about a dog he'd had as a kid. The story goes that this dog was the ugliest, oldest, most pea-brained dog ever. The dog was incontinent, dribbling urine wherever it went. Its teeth were rotted in its mouth, its hips were fused solid with arthritis, and huge fatty tumors lumped under its hide. One day my Grandpa Plum took the dog out behind the garage and shot it. I suspected there were times when my father fantasized a similar ending for my Grandma Mazur. "You should wear a dress," my mother said to me, bringing green beans and creamed pearl onions to the table. "Thirty years old and you're still dressing in those teeny-bopper outfits. How will you ever catch a nice man like that?" "I don't want a man. I had one, and I didn't like it." "That's because your husband was a horse's behind," Grandma Mazur said. I agreed. My ex-husband had been a horse's behind. Especially when I'd caught him flagrante delicto on the dining room table with Joyce Barnhardt. "I hear Loretta Buzick's boy is separated from his wife," my mother said. "You remember him? Ronald Buzick?" "I knew where she was heading, and I didn't want to go there. "I'm not going out with Ronald Buzick," I told her. "Don't even think about it." "So what's wrong with Ronald Buzick?" Ronald Buzick was a butcher. He was balding, and he was fat, and I suppose I was being a snob about the whole thing, but I found it hard to think in romantic terms about a man who spent his days stuffing giblets up chicken butts. My mother plunged on. "All right, then how about Bernie Kuntz? I saw Bernie Kuntz in the dry cleaner's, and he made a point about asking for you. I think he's interested. I could invite him over for coffee and cake." "With the way my luck was running, probably my mother had already invited Bernie, and at this very moment he was circling the block, popping Tic Tacs. "I don't want to talk about Bernie," I said. "There's something I need to tell you. I have some bad news...." "I'd been dreading this and had put it off for as long as possible. My mother clapped a hand to her mouth. "You found a lump in your breast!" "No one in our family had ever found a lump in their breast, but my mother was ever watchful. "My breast is fine. The problem is with my job." "What about your job?" "I don't have one. I got laid off." "Laid off!" she said on a sharp inhale. "How could that happen? It was such a good job. You loved that job." "I'd been a discount lingerie buyer for E.E. Martin, and I'd worked in Newark, which is not exactly the garden spot of the garden State. In truth, it had been my mother who had loved the job, imagining it to be glamorous when in reality I'd mostly haggled over the cost of full-fashion nylon underpants. E.E. Martin wasn't exactly Victoria's Secret. "I wouldn't worry," my mother said. "There's always work for lingerie buyers." "There's no work for lingerie buyers." Especially ones who worked for E.E. Martin. Having held a salaried position with E.E. Martin made me as appealing as a leper. E.E. Martin had skimped on the palm greasing this winter, and as a result its mob affiliations were made public. The C.E.O. was indicted for illegal business practices, E.E. Martin sold out to Baldicott, Inc., and, through no fault of my own, I was caught in the house-cleaning sweep. "I've been out of work for six months." "Six months! And I didn't know! Your own mother didn't know you were out on the streets?" "I'm not out on the streets. I've been doing temporary jobs. Filing and stuff." And steadily sliding downhill. I was registered with every search firm in the greater Trenton area, and I religiously read the want ads. I wasn't being all that choosy, drawing the line at telephone soliciting and kennel attendant, but my future didn't look great. I was overqualified for entry level, and I lacked experience in management. My father forked another slab of pot roast onto his plate. He'd worked for the post office for thirty years and had opted for early retirement. Now he drove a cab part-time. "I saw your cousin Vinnie yesterday," he said. "He's looking for someone to do filing. You should give him a call." Just the career move I'd been hoping for -- filing for Vinnie. Of all my relatives, Vinnie was my least favorite. Vinnie was a worm, a sexual lunatic, a dog turd. "What does he pay?" I asked. My father shrugged. "Gotta be minimum wage." "Wonderful. The perfect position for someone already in the depths of despair. Rotten boss, rotten job, rotten pay. The possibilities for feeling sorry for myself would be endless." "And the best part is that it's close," my mother said. "You can come home every day for lunch." I nodded numbly, thinking I'd sooner stick a needle in my eye. Sunlight slanted through the crack in my bedroom curtains, the air-conditioning unit in the living room window droned ominously, predicting another scorcher of a morning, and the digital display on my clock radio flashed electric blue

numbers, telling me it was nine o'clock. The day had started without me. I rolled out of bed on a sigh and shuffled into the bathroom. When I was done in the bathroom, I shuffled into the kitchen and stood in front of the refrigerator, hoping the refrigerator fairies had visited during the night. I opened the door and stared at the empty shelves, noting that food hadn't magically cloned itself from the smudges in the butter keeper and the shriveled flotsam at the bottom of the crisper. Half a jar of mayo, a bottle of beer, whole-wheat bread covered with blue mold, a head of iceberg lettuce, shrink-wrapped in brown slime and plastic, and a box of hamster nuggets stood between me and starvation. I wondered if nine in the morning was too early to drink beer. Of course in Moscow it would be four in the afternoon. Good enough. I drank half the beer and grimly approached the living room window. I pulled the curtains and stared down at the parking lot. My Miata was gone. Lenny had hit early. No surprise, but still, it lodged painfully in the middle of my throat. I was now an official deadbeat. And if that wasn't depressing enough, I'd weakened halfway through dessert and promised my mother I'd go see Vinnie. I dragged myself into the shower and stumbled out a half hour later after an exhausting crying jag. I stuffed myself into pantyhose and a suit and was ready to do my daughterly duty. My hamster, Rex, was still asleep in his soup can in his cage on the kitchen counter. I dropped a few hamster nuggets into his bowl and made some smoochy sounds. Rex opened his black eyes and blinked. He twitched his whiskers, gave a good sniff, and rejected the nuggets. I couldn't blame him. I'd tried them for breakfast yesterday and hadn't been impressed. I locked up the apartment and walked three blocks down St. James to Blue Ribbon Used Cars. At the front of the lot was a \$500 Nova begging to be bought. Total body rust and countless accidents had left the Nova barely recognizable as a car, much less a Chevy, but Blue Ribbon was willing to trade the beast for my TV and VCR. I threw in my food processor and microwave, and they paid my registration and taxes. I drove the Nova out of the lot and went straight to Vinnie. I pulled into a parking space at the corner of Hamilton and Olden, extracted the key from the ignition, and waited for the car to thrash itself off. I said a short prayer not to be spotted by anyone I knew, wrenched the door open, and scuttled the short distance to the storefront office. The blue and white sign over the door read "Vincent Plum Bail Bonding Company." In smaller letters it advertised twenty-four-hour nationwide service. Conveniently located between Tender Loving Care Dry Cleaners and Fiorello's Deli, Vincent Plum catered to the family trade -- domestic disturbances, disorderlies, auto theft, DWI, and shoplifting. The office was small and generic, consisting of two rooms with cheap walnut paneling on the walls and commercial grade rust-colored carpet on the floor. A Danish modern couch upholstered in brown Naugahyde pressed against one wall of the reception area, and a black and brown metal desk with a multiline phone and a computer terminal occupied a far corner. Vinnie's secretary sat behind the desk, her head bent in concentration, picking her way through a stack of files. "Yeah?" "I'm Stephanie Plum. I've come to see my cousin, Vinnie." "Stephanie Plum!" Her head came up. "I'm Connie Rosolli. You went to school with my little sister, Tina. Oh jeez, I hope you don't have to make bail." I recognized her now. She was an older version of Tina. Thicker in the waist, heavier in the face. She had lots of teased black hair, flawless olive skin, and a five-o'clock shadow on her upper lip. "The only thing I have to make is money," I said to Connie. "I hear Vinnie needs someone to do filing." "We just filled that job, and between you and me, you didn't miss anything. It was a crummy job. Paid minimum wage, and you had to spend all day on your knees singing the alphabet song. My feeling is, if you're going to spend that much time on your knees, you could find something that pays better. You know what I mean?" "Last time I was on my knees was two years ago. I was looking for a contact lens." "Listen, if you really need a job, why don't you get Vinnie to let you do skip tracing? There's good money in it." "How much money?" "Ten percent of the bond." Connie pulled a file from her top drawer. "We got this one in yesterday. Bail was set at \$100,000, and he didn't show up for a court appearance. If you could find him and bring him in, you'd get \$10,000." I put a hand to the desk to steady myself. "Ten thousand dollars for finding one guy? What's the catch?" "Sometimes they don't want to be found, and they shoot at you. But that hardly ever happens." Connie leafed through the file. "The guy who came in yesterday is local. Morty Beyers started tracking him down, so some of the prelim is already done. You've got pictures and everything." "What happened to Morty Beyers?" "Busted appendix. Happened at eleven-thirty last night. He's in St. Francis with a drain in his side and a tube up his nose." I didn't want to wish Morty Beyers any misfortune, but I was starting to get excited about the prospect of stepping into his shoes. The money was tempting, and the job title had a certain cachet. On the other hand, catching fugitives sounded scary, and I was a certifiable coward when it came to risking my body parts. "My guess is, it wouldn't be hard to find this guy," Connie said. "You could go talk to his mother. And if it gets hairy, you could back out. What have you got to lose?" "Only my life." "I don't know. I don't like the part about the shooting." "Probably, it's like driving the turnpike," Connie

said. "Probably, you get used to it. The way I see it, living in New Jersey is a challenge, what with the toxic waste and the eighteen-wheelers and the armed schizophrenics. I mean, what's one more lunatic shooting at you?" Pretty much my own philosophy. And the \$10,000 was damned appealing. I could pay off my creditors and straighten my life out. "Okay," I said. "I'll do it." "You have to talk to Vinnie first." Connie swiveled her chair toward Vinnie's office door. "Hey Vinnie!" she yelled. "You got business out here." Vinnie was forty-five, 5' 7" without his lifts, and had the slim, boneless body of a ferret. He wore pointy-toed shoes, liked pointy-breasted women and dark-skinned young men, and he drove a Cadillac Seville. "Steph here wants to do some skip tracing," Connie said to Vinnie. "No way. Too dangerous," Vinnie said. "Most of my agents used to be in security. And you have to know something about law enforcement." "I can learn about law enforcement," I told him. "Learn about it first. Then come back." "I need the job now." "Not my problem." I figured it was time to get tough. "I'll make it your problem, Vinnie. I'll have a long talk with Lucille." Lucille was Vinnie's wife and the only woman in the burg who didn't know about Vinnie's addiction to kinky sex.

Lucille had her eyes firmly closed, and it wasn't my place to pry them open. Of course, if she ever asked...that'd be a whole other ball game. "You'd blackmail me? Your own cousin?" "These are desperate times." He turned to Connie. "Give her a few civil cases. Stuff that involves telephone work." "I want this one," I said, pointing to the file on Connie's desk. "I want the \$10,000 one." "Forget it. It's a murder. I should never have posted bail, but he was from the burg, and I felt sorry for his mother. Trust me, you don't need this kind of trouble." "I need the money, Vinnie. Give me a chance at bringing him in." "When hell freezes over," Vinnie said. "I don't get this guy back, I'm in the hole for a hundred grand. I'm not sending an amateur after him." Connie rolled her eyes at me. "You'd think it was out of his pocket. He's owned by an insurance company. It's no big deal." "So give me a week, Vinnie," I said. "If I don't get him in a week, you can turn it over to someone else." "I wouldn't give you a half hour." I took a deep breath and leaned close to Vinnie, whispering in his ear. "I know about Madam Zaretski and her whips and chains. I know about the boys. And I know about the duck." He didn't say anything. He just pressed his lips together until they turned white, and I knew I had him. Lucille would throw up if she knew what he did to the duck. Then she'd tell her father, Harry the Hammer, and Harry would cut off Vinnie's dick. "Who am I looking for?" I asked Vinnie. Vinnie handed me the file. "Joseph Morelli." My heart flipped in my chest. I knew Morelli had been involved in a homicide. It had been big news in the burg, and details of the shooting had been splashed across the front page of the Trenton Times. VICE COP KILLS UNARMED MAN. That had been over a month ago, and other, more important issues (like the exact amount of the lottery) had replaced talk of Morelli. In the absence of more information, I'd assumed the shooting had been in the line of duty. I hadn't realized Morelli'd been charged with murder. The reaction wasn't lost to Vinnie. "From the look on your face, I'd say you know him." I nodded. "Sold him a cannoli when I was in high school." Connie grunted. "Honey, half of all the women in New Jersey have sold him their cannoli." One for the Money copyright 1994 by Evanovich, Inc. Two for the Dough copyright 1996 by Evanovich, Inc. Three to Get Deadly copyright 1997 by Evanovich, Inc. Revue de presse "Many writers create good characters, but to create hilariously funny ones virtually bristling with believable sexual electricity -- that's the achievement." --USA Today The New York Times Book Big hair, gold hoop earrings, Spandex bike shorts, and attitude out to here -- Stephanie kind of glows in the dark in Janet Evanovich's hip-swinging genre debut. Chutzpah and sheer comic inventiveness . . . The Evanovich/Plum books [are] good fun. Washington Post "Superb." --Detroit Free Press "Evanovich never met a felony she couldn't top with an unbeatable laugh." --Kirkus "A treasury of urban-style charms" --Publishers Weekly "Evanovich is the master" --San Francisco Examiner No less than her plotting, Evanovich's characterizations are models of screwball artistry. . . . The intricate plot machinery of her comic capers is fueled by inventive twists. The New York Times