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# Sticks & Stones: Rachael Flynn Mysteries, Book 2



## Synopsis

Critically acclaimed author Susan Meissner's Rachael Flynn mystery series started with the popular *Widows and Orphans*. In the second serving of intrigue, *Sticks and Stones*, lawyer Rachael Flynn receives an unsigned, heart-stopping letter: They're going to find a body at the Prairie Bluff construction site. He deserved what he got, but it wasn't supposed to happen. It was an accident. When the body is uncovered, Rachael and Detective Will Pendleton discover that the 15-year-old victim, Randall Buckett, had been buried 25 years before. Is the letter writer and the killer the same person? Why would someone speak up now? And why are they telling Rachael? Susan Meissner's ability to weave a fascinating tale will leave listeners wanting more.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours and 1 minute

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: christianaudio.com

Audible.com Release Date: August 31, 2016

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B01KGFXR76

Best Sellers Rank: #159 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > Legal Thrillers

#1413 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Legal #15196

in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > Women Sleuths

## Customer Reviews

Love this 3-book series. Good reading and complete with surprises.

I read the first book, *Widows and Orphans*, and loved it. I was very excited to see that she had written another book in the same genre. The book was very good, kept me interested and I would recommend it highly. I am very glad that I discovered Susan Meissner.

This book really needs to be edited. It's not 3 star worthy but, that's the closest I could get to being so so. When the dead boy was identified, it was Ronald Bucket, half way through the book he became Randall Bucket, toward the end he was back to being Ronald Bucket. So, what was his

name? There were a lot of other editing mistakes. It took a while for this book to pick up steam and then it did and then it slowed down again. The story just dragged on. I was glad when I got to the ending. I won't be reading anymore books from this author. This book just wasn't that good and could not hold my attention.

Reviewed by Patty English for Reader Views (3/07) There should be a law against abuse and bullying, but the next best thing is increased awareness, like that raised by public health programs and Susan Meissner's latest Rachael Flynn mystery, "Sticks and Stones." However, unlike the schoolyard refrain, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me," words can indeed injure a person and sometimes without remedy. This story offers some related insight regarding bullying and its dynamics and long-term results, as well as a gripping mystery. Meissner offers a captivating puzzle that includes the presence of Christian faith in the hero, Ramsey county attorney Flynn, and her husband Trace. It is not a preachy indictment of society by any means, but a believably vital part of the couple's life. This includes a gift Rachael received via the birth of daughter McKenna, manifesting as an uncanny discernment of events and information just beyond the senses of the average person. Rachel has become a profiler of sorts, but she does not see dead people and she does not "see" the whole picture. This gift is a combination of the words of wisdom and knowledge described as Gifts of the Spirit in First Corinthians 12:4, 7-11, and are tools to use in reasoning how to help the people involved. Believably, her Christian friends do not quite know how to handle her gifts and Trace feels left out of them. Unbelievably, baby McKenna never seems to cry. Rachael works unofficially on the case of a deceased Ronald "Bucky" Buckett after she receives a different kind of gift: three anonymous letters that predict a body to be found at a construction site, but not a victim of homicide. A 25-year-old skeleton is uncovered and the story of the dead bully and his young victims, now middle-aged, comes to light in some surprising ways. One of these involves Trace and his friends Fig, Sid, and Brick, members of a quartet of artists that sketch crime scenes for Rachael when they are not sculpting Joan of Ark and such. These sketches hold the key to the mystery in an old house and the nearby woods. Becoming almost obsessed with the case, Attorney Flynn stalls like a flooded carburetor when she tries to control her gifts too much, overreaching to grasp all the answers. Her younger brother Jason, doing a seven-year sentence for a crime he did not commit, is the one to counsel her that she should get out of God's way and let her gifts work in her instead of trying to work the gifts. Finally taking his advice, Rachael is then able to solve this case by reaching out to the abuse victims and the reluctant murderer. She knows through her gifts that she will not be harmed in doing, so although she does not routinely race into

dangerous situations in the story without thought and discussion. This novel is fun, fast moving, and free of harsh language. It is serious about preventing bullying and abuse and it shows people disagreeing in functional ways. Some of these lifelike characters discuss problems, compromise, and ask for help. Others show anger and sadness and put off dealing with their issues and conflicts through avoidance and lies for a season, but they confront their closet skeletons in due time. In another believable aspect of this novel, not everyone lives happily ever after and not everyone has faith, but there is always hope as long as a body is breathing. Teens through adults should like this novel "Sticks and Stones" for its excitement and commonsense approach to faith and choices as a part of daily living. It includes a list of anti-bully resources at the end, including the renowned Bully B'Ware program in Canada, that can be shared with friends and neighbors. Book received free of charge.

They're going to find a body at the Prairie Bluff construction site. He deserved what he got, but it wasn't supposed to happen. It was an accident. When the body is uncovered, Rachael and Detective Will Pendleton discover that the fifteen-year old victim, Randall Bucket, had been buried twenty-five years before. Is the letter writer and the killer the same person? Why would someone speak up now? And why are they telling Rachael? ~ back cover of Sticks and Stones Rachael has received a letter from someone who believes her compassionate enough not to judge what he/she is claiming to be an accidental death that has been hidden for twenty-five years. The truth is now coming out whether the letter writer likes it or not, and Rachel hopes to discover the truth before the police do. Somehow, in an eerie way, Rachel knows the person who is writing the letters is innocent. Now if she can only convince the cops... If you enjoy a book that's dedicated to exploring contemporary issues, this book might be the one for you. Sticks and Stones revolves around those ridiculed and bullied as children and the horrific results it has on them at the time, as well as later, as adults. There is one chapter in particular toward the beginning that describes children abusing other children and parents and schools failing them by not controlling them. It was quite eye opening. Being an escapist reader myself, I still found this book enjoyable for its suspense and a few quirky characters that were written particularly well. Rachel's artsy, eccentric husband, Trace, and his equally maverick buddies, Brick and Fig, were a blast to read. From spiky hair colored teal at the tips to yak and jicama for dinner, these guys kept me chuckling. Meissner does an excellent job of weaving backstory into the plot without overwhelming the reader. I didn't even realize I was reading book two in the Rachel Flynn Mysteries until well toward the end when I read the back cover. So who killed the neighborhood bully, fifteen-year-old Ronald "Bucky" Bucket? Which one of his five

child-victims would hate him enough to do it? Or did they work together...?Was it "murder and mayhem" or "desperation and utter misfortune" that took Bucky's life? Rachel's about to find out...

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