



## Foursome

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John Cuddy's last case didn't put his life at risk, but it did leave him disconcerted and morally battered. Fortunately, Nancy Meagher, his friend and frequent lover, reveals that a classmate from law school needs the services of an experienced private investigator. She persuades Cuddy to abandon Boston for the bucolic pleasures of rural Maine and a high-profile murder case where the defense faces an unbelievably stacked deck.

The prosecution alleges that Steve Shea killed his wife, Sandy, his best friend, Hale Vandemeer, and Hale's wife, Vivian, for the oldest of motives. Hale and Sandy Shea were having an affair, and Vivian Vandemeer was an unfortunate witness to the act of vengeance. The evidence appears conclusive, but neither Cuddy nor Shea's lawyer is convinced of his guilt. In consequence, Cuddy must unearth sufficient grounds to convince a jury that someone else might have committed the crime.

Cuddy discovers several likely suspects, but although motives for murder may exist and are easily determined, that is not enough. Those who wish to kill must needs also have the opportunity to undertake the act, and that does not seem to exist in this case. Still, Cuddy continues the interviewing process and in the course of uncovering several rather nasty surprises identifies the murderer.

Jeremiah Healy's protagonist is a detective with none of the unorthodox physical or occupational quirks that traditionally define the species. Healy fudges a bit in his choice of villain, but the reader may forgive being left uninformed of an important clue. The repetitious citation of brand names and geographic locations in place of description is also annoying, but Healy's lapses in that regard are not extreme.

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