



## Phillip Margolin

**Vanishing Acts**  
**ISBN13: 9780061885563**

Dear Reader,

When I was twelve years old, I decided that I wanted to be a criminal defense attorney when I grew up. One of the main reasons I chose this profession was my love for Erle Stanley Gardner's Perry Mason novels and the mystery novels written by Ellery Queen, Agatha Christie, and other popular writers. I started devouring these books in elementary school, and a career solving mysteries and defending people accused of crime sounded very exciting.

One career I never dreamed of was writing. I was in awe of the men and women who wrote the books I read, and it never dawned on me that I would ever have the talent to write like they did. I didn't start working on my first novel until I was in law school. But I didn't write the novel to get published. I wrote the book because I couldn't figure out how anyone could fill up four hundred pages with words that made sense. It just seemed too hard. The book I finished wasn't very good, but I loved working on it, so writing became a hobby. Through a lucky break I published my first novel in my mid-thirties,

and since then I've had fifteen bestselling thrillers for adults published.

When HarperCollins asked me if I wanted to write a middle-grade novel, I jumped at the chance to write a mystery aimed at kids who are the age I was when I first started reading mysteries. Ami Margolin Rome, my daughter, was writing a novel based on her experience in the Peace Corps. When I mentioned the project, she asked if we could write the book together. I thought that would be a great idea, and it was. I wanted Ami to learn the correct way to write, so Ami and I brainstormed the outline, then she wrote a draft of the outline and I edited it. Next, Ami wrote the first five chapters and I edited them. We continued our collaboration until the book was done. Working together was great because neither of us has a big ego. We recognized that our goal was to write a fast-moving mystery that would entertain our audience.

I loved reading mysteries when I was in elementary and middle school and I still love them. Hopefully, reading about Madison Kincaid's adventures will make our readers want to pick up the works of other mystery writers.

With best regards,

Phillip Margolin