

My BOOK



The Gangster's Daughter

by M. Glenda Rosen (aka Marcia Rosen)

Our history and experiences can define us, inspire our actions, and as writers impact our words and stories. Mine most definitely has: my father was a small-time gangster. Really.

I grew up in an unusual, and sometimes outrageous, environment. It wouldn't take a genius, a psychiatrist, or a palm reader to

figure out the geneses of my fascination with crime and criminals. In my series *The Senior Sleuths*, Zero the Bookie is a version of my dad and several other characters are based on his associates.

I actually met Doc, The Gimp, Johnny the Jig, Fat Lawyer, and others in Buffalo, New York, where we lived. What a wealth

of material there was for me to claim! Believe me, I saw and heard a lot.

I visited my dad's gambling hall, where a card room was hidden behind closed doors. In our kitchen at home, I saw my dad count "the take" from football and baseball bets. He was a fancy dresser and some of my friends described him as a Damon Runyon character. I wrote a story about him and my mother, in which I called her his "gun moll."

There were advantages. If I was out on a dinner date and one of my dad's cronies was there, he picked up the bill. The waiter would tell us, "The man over there took care of it. Said you're Vic Barr's daughter!" I was equally safe from the pawing hands of any young man. All I had to do was ask, "Do you know who my father is?" All of them knew who my father was. My dad taught me incredible life lessons about generosity, trust, taking risks, and to never be a quitter.

I was always fascinated by how film noir characters acted and interacted. My all-time favorite is *The Thin Man*, where Nora Charles was certainly equal to Nick Charles, her charming husband. Nick adored her.

Now what woman doesn't want that?

In my series *The Senior Sleuths*, Dick and Dora Zimmerman, Zero and others take on similar roles. Still in their early sixties, they not only have the time, but the money, the smarts, and the chutzpah to get involved even when they are warned by police and criminals to stay away. It seems murders fall in their laps, sometimes on them. Even when facing danger in the course of solving a murder, they mix wit and humor and are accompanied by a colorful cast of cohorts. They strive for justice—not an easy thing to accomplish when the bad guys are determined to do evil.

None of us are innocent. We all keep secrets about who we are and things we know. In my case, I have been able to put these past family peccadilloes and experiences to use. No doubt, thanks to my father, writing mysteries is in my DNA! ✦

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