

# Identity Crises

by Alina Adams

It's a real mystery—or more of a riddle. 1) I am not me. 2) I am someone else. 3) But I have to subtly hide who that someone else is. 4) As well as who I am.

Let's backtrack a little. *As the World Turns*, America's iconic soap opera, celebrated 50 years of broadcasting on April 2, 2006. On April 4, Pocket Books published *Oakdale Confidential*, a romantic mystery novel featuring Katie Peretti (Terri Columbino), Carly Snyder (Maura West), and Maddie Coleman (Alexandra Chando), all characters on the show.

On April 10, as part of the day's regular episode on CBS, a splashy book party (with special guests author Jeffrey Deaver, *Publisher's Weekly's* Daisy Maryles, and other real-life press) was held. During this glamorous launch *soiree*, the good people of Oakdale were told that one of their very own citizens had written a scandalous *Peyton Place*-meets-Nora-Roberts-type novel but that the author wished to remain anonymous.

And so we have a classic soap-opera story: Who wrote this book? Why? How did they know so many juicy secrets about their fellow Oakdalians? And, more importantly, what will the public exposure of said juicy secrets do to Katie and Mike's and Carly and Jack's relationships?

Spoiler Alert: I know the answer to all these questions. I know them because I am the actual author of *Oakdale Confidential*.

But I am not the "real" author.

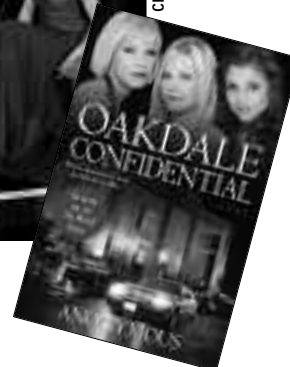
The "real" author is Katie Peretti, a perky blonde who runs a detective agency, hosts a television show featuring her aerobic Butt-Bustin' Workout, and who once crashed a small plane into a deserted island while searching for a missing diamond.

I am not blonde. I am rarely perky. My butt, alas, could use some bustin'. And as for



As the World Turns recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary. It debuted April 2, 1956, on CBS. This year the lively soap opera received 12 Daytime Emmy nominations.

CBS



the plane thing, nope, haven't done that, either.

I am not Katie, but I write like her for TV.

Which, may I say, wasn't particularly easy. With the book being by Anonymous, I had to write in Katie's voice without making it obvious that I was writing in Katie's voice—because that would kill the on-air mystery.

Obviously, all fiction authors channel another personality when writing. I do it for my own Figure Skating Mystery series but not all authors have to channel another personality while not making it obvious that they are channeling another personality. That took some finessing. The book needed to sound enough like Katie so that, when the truth was finally revealed on air, readers could go "Ah-ha!" but not so much like Katie that the "Ah-ha" was premature.

Plus, there was the challenge of writing about established characters who had a great deal of history prior to debuting between the pages of *Oakdale Confidential*—especially when their history affected the book's story—and striking that delicate balance between introducing Katie, Carly, Maddie and more to new readers without boring long-time viewers. How much do I include in the book? Do readers need to know that Katie and Carly's animosity stems from Carly's long-ago affair with Katie's current boyfriend? What about the fact that Katie married and broke Maddie's brother's heart?

And then there came the physical character descriptions. When you describe a typical heroine in a book, there is no one to take offense, but when you describe a heroine

**I am not Katie Peretti, the perky blonde detective on *As the World Turns*, but I write like her for TV.**

who also happens to be played by a flesh and blood actress, that's another quagmire all together. (Do you think one of *As the World Turns's* 60-plus stars will take offense to being described as looking like a wannabe teenager? Hey, I didn't say it! Katie did!)

Every author has an inner critic sitting on their shoulder as they type away but I also have inner actors, inner *As the World Turns* writers and producers, and inner *As the World Turns* fans. And those aren't imaginary! They exist! And they know where to find me.

Forget about the Who's the Author? tale playing out in Oakdale. Now that I've confessed the above, *Mystery Scene* readers will know the real reason why *Oakdale Confidential's* cover reads: The author wishes to remain Anonymous.

When she is not hiding her identity, Alina Adams writes *Figure Skating Mysteries* for *Berkley Prime Crime*, most recently *Axel of Evil*. *Oakdale Confidential* (Pocket, April 2006, \$19.95).