

HEADS YOU LOSE

By Lisa Lutz and David Hayward

“A complete delight! Sure, *Heads You Lose* is a snappy, stylish crime novel but it’s much more: a clever, often hilarious and insightful look at how these wonderful things we call books actually get created. It’s a toss-up (sorry, I couldn’t resist) to say which of the main characters are my favorites: fictional protagonists Lacey and Paul, or authors Lisa and David.”

—Jeffery Deaver, bestselling author of *The Bone Collector* and
The Burning Wire

From the *New York Times* bestselling author Lisa Lutz and co-author David Hayward comes **HEADS YOU LOSE (G. P. Putnam’s Sons; Publication Date: April 5, 2011; ISBN: 978-0-399-15740-0; Price: \$24.95)**, a completely original and hilarious new tag-team crime novel.

Paul and Lacey Hansen are just your average orphaned pot-growing siblings. When a headless body shows up on their land in sleepy Mercer, CA, they can’t exactly call the cops, so they move it off their property, hoping someone else will find it as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, the body reappears in their driveway a few days later—and riper. The message is received and the Hansen siblings realize they are in way over their heads. They soon discover some unsettling connections between their persistent visitor and their past.

And that’s just the fictional drama. As we discover from their notes to each other—which are included after each chapter—the tumultuous relationship between co-authors (and exes) **Lisa Lutz and David Hayward** is just as engrossing and entertaining as any story they could tell together.

How did the whole thing happen? Lutz, author of the bestselling Spellman comedic crime series, invited her ex-boyfriend, poet David Hayward, to collaborate with her on a new project. The ground rules were simple: Lutz and Hayward would take turns writing chapters, with each writer picking up where the other left off. The authors would not outline or discuss their ideas in advance, and neither was allowed to undo a plot development established by the other. They exchange brief emails as each chapter was completed, which are included as part of the text. Lutz and Hayward also couldn’t refrain from offering spontaneous comments as they read each other’s work, which they included as footnotes.

As with all seemingly simple plans, the project soon became much more complicated than anticipated. When Lutz and Hayward start to disagree about how the mystery should proceed, readers begin to wonder how the authors—let alone the characters—will make it out alive. Lutz, the seasoned crime writer, just wants to tell a good story, but Hayward, the learned poet, has loftier ambitions. Ostensibly to keep the story on track, Lutz kills off so many of Hayward’s characters so fast that he dubs her the “Pol Pot of mystery writing,” while she chides him for his use of obscure foreign phrases (“Latin? Are

you insane?”). Soon enough, details of their own doomed love affair begin to surface in chapter-ending e-mails and footnotes, and the past threatens to derail the whole project.

The authors' struggle extends to a growing list of suspects, including Paul's fiancée, Brandy Chester, an ex-stripper with a Mensa IQ; Sook Felton, a grandfatherly Korean War vet/geriatric pot-dealer; the grizzled local oracle and reality show wannabe Terry Jakes; and volatile community kingpins, brothers Big Marv and Jay Babalato, who desperately want to get their hands on the Hansens' land.

HEADS YOU LOSE will not only thrill Spellman lovers, but further broaden Lisa Lutz's rapidly expanding audience. The product of an unlikely literary duo whose rocky dating history and wildly different writing styles make for an unconventional and uproarious collaboration, it is a wholly original and outrageously funny new tag-team crime novel featuring an appealing pair of sibling sleuths, an ingenious and unpredictable plot, and an odd, eccentric cast of characters who will move and crack up readers in equal parts.

About the Authors:

Lisa Lutz is the author of the bestselling and award-nominated Spellman series of comedic crime novels. After graduating from high school in the Los Angeles area, Lisa studied at UC Santa Cruz, UC Irvine, University of Leeds in England and San Francisco State University—but never got her bachelor's degree. During college she sold a screenplay to Hollywood. Ten years and dozens of rewrites later, “Plan B” starring Diane Keaton and Paul Sorvino was released—and went straight to DVD. She vowed never to write another screenplay, and turned to novel-writing, utilizing one of her odd jobs (a stint at a family-run private investigative firm in San Francisco) as inspiration for her Spellman books. The Spellman series has been nominated for Edgar, Anthony and Macavity awards.

David Hayward runs a small writing and editing business in Healdsburg, California, where he does not grow pot. His poetry has won a Pushcart Prize and appeared in *Harper's*, *ZYZZYVA*, *The Threepenny Review*, and other magazines. He attended UC Berkeley and received an MFA in poetry from UC Irvine during the 20th century. *Heads You Lose* is David's first published fiction.

Many years ago, the co-authors dated, semi-disastrously. After breaking up, not speaking, and then making up, they became dear friends.

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