

Bestseller Mayor expertly juggles four plotlines, which may or may not be related, in his superb 32nd mystery featuring Vermont Bureau of Investigation agent Joe Gunther (after 2020's *The Orphan's Guilt*).

A year after the death of affluent food supplier Nathan Lyon from natural causes while under hospice care, a medical student dissecting his corpse determines that Lyon was strangled, prompting Gunther to launch a murder inquiry. The eccentric Lyon had most of his family, and thus most of those with an obvious motive to kill him, living together in a huge home that also housed several stores. As Gunther tries to find clues so long after the murder, a second member of the Lyon clan dies, this time from an apparently accidental fall. Meanwhile, PI Sally Kravitz is retained by the wife of one of Lyon's sons, who suspects an employee is stealing from her fancy food business. Finally, two Mafia hit men are trying to identify who ordered the killing that one of them admitted committing and did time for, but now claims not to have committed, in an attempt to find out who he took the fall for. Mayor matches vivid characters with clever plot twists. This is a perfect jumping-on point for newcomers. Agent: Molly Friedrich, Friedrich Agency. (Sept.)