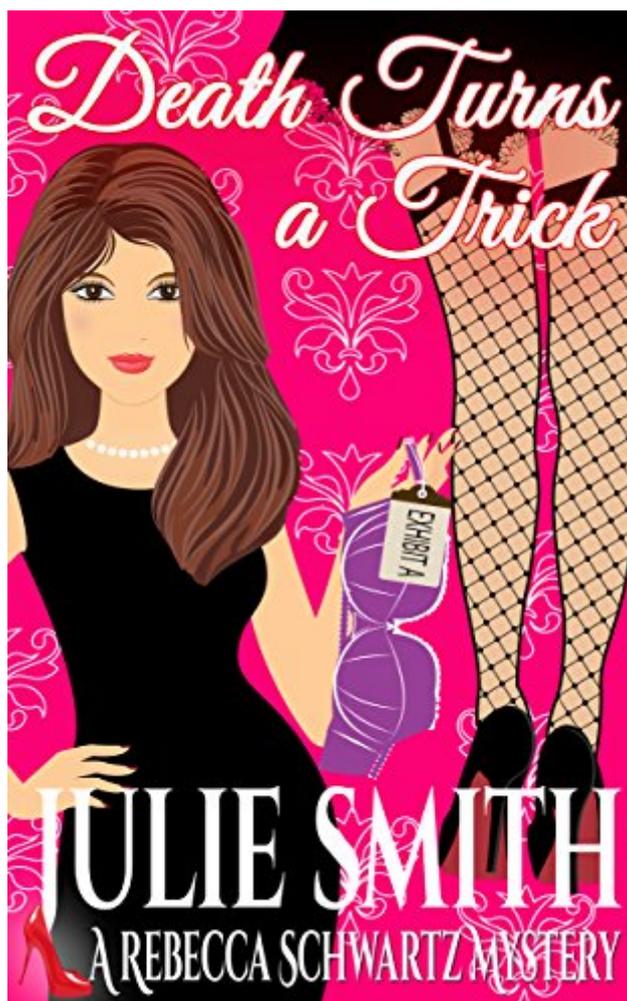


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# Death Turns A Trick (The Rebecca Schwartz Series, Book 1)



## Synopsis

The FIRST book in a cozy series by an Edgar Winner — Funny and witty, with a clever, outspoken heroine. — Library Journal

**A ROLLICKING TALE OF MURDER, ROMANCE, AND A BORDELLO** | Rebecca Schwartz, nice Jewish lawyer with a few too many fantasies, is happily playing the piano in a whorehouse when she suddenly finds herself assigned to make sure a near-naked state senator escapes a police raid. That dirty job done, a lovely evening turns even more delightful when she's picked up by the cops and spends the next two hours at the Hall of Justice. Could this day get any worse? Of course! Guess who arrives home to find a dead hooker on her living room floor? Handsome Parker Phillips, Rebecca's new beau and the most attractive man she's met in ages, is arrested for the murder. (Worse, she suspects he might actually have done it.) On the plus side, another very attractive man is following the case—reporter Rob Burns of the San Francisco Chronicle, a possible ally. And there are other possibilities. Fans of Janet Evanovich, Stephanie Bond, and Elizabeth Peters will get a kick out of this one.

Excerpt: Basically, I am the kind of girl that mothers wish their sons would marry. But nobody's son did, and anyway I couldn't be bothered. I was too busy living up to my father's ambition for me. Or what I imagined it to be. He always said, "Be a doctor, Rebecca. There's no money in law," but anybody could see he was joking. When I was a little girl, he used to take me to watch him in court, and when I was a teenager, he'd discuss his cases with me. What did I know from doctors? I had a lawyer for a role model. Now if you had led this kind of life and someone came along and said, "Listen, how would you like to play the piano in a whorehouse for just one night?" you'll be among friends; nothing can happen, wouldn't you do it? Especially if it were a feminist bordello? It wouldn't have to be a case of getting back at your mom. I should explain about Elena. She is a prostitute, and she's also very close to being a madam, only she isn't quite because this is a co-op bordello we're talking about. It's co-op because ostensibly everyone has an equal say in decision-making and the money is split among the members, but Elena is actually the brains and the driving force of the thing. She'd be a madam in the old-fashioned sense if she weren't political. I got to know her when she got busted and Jeannette von Phister asked me to take her case. Despite certain reservations I have about prostitution as a feminist issue (a "horizontal hostility," Jeannette calls it), I was already on the legal staff of HYENA, the "loose women's organization" Jeannette had founded. As you no doubt know, HYENA is an acronym for "Head Your Ethics toward a New Age," and its ultimate goal is to get prostitution legalized. Sitting over crab salad and white wine in my gray flannel blazer and Cacharel blouse, I felt pretty naive as Elena spun tales about a world of crystal chandeliers and high-heeled sandals. A world where indulgence

of personal vanity was not only not condemned but was actually applauded. I loved getting a peek at it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book jumps right into the action on page one. It then goes back and forth between the present and the past until the past catches up with the present. We learn a bit about Rebecca Schwartz in chapter two, but it is in chapter four that I really got to know and love her; she tells us about a shopping trip and takes us to her apartment. NOTE: Keep in mind this book was written in 1982 - thus the "current" fashions, nobody has a cell phone, you can't just Google something, and \$25,000 was a lot of cash. There are NO TYPOS in this book, it has good editing and grammar, grown-up language - I don't mean swearing, I mean very little swearing and no young-adult slang, there are even some "big" words that sent me to my dictionary. This is a fun read and I'm going right on to book #2 in the series. This IS a good stand alone book, you do not have to read #2 to get any answers or closure.

This review is for the Ballantine Books paperback edition published in April 1992, 177 pages. DEATH TURNS A TRICK, first published in 1982, was Julie Smith's debut novel, a mystery in the Rebecca Schwartz series. The author wrote four more novels in the Schwartz series, cumulating with OTHER PEOPLE'S SKELETONS in 1993, which was her first novel to make the USA Today bestseller list. Ms. Smith has written 19 mystery novels in four different series. To learn more, visit the author's website, [juliesmithauthor.com](http://juliesmithauthor.com). Rebecca Schwartz is a never married twenty-eight year old feminist, Jewish lawyer in San Francisco who enjoys playing the piano. The story begins, on that fateful night, when Rebecca is playing the piano at a bordello as a favor for Elena, Rebecca's client and one of four prostitutes who co-share the proceeds of the business. Around midnight, the cops raid the joint. Rebecca escapes through a secret passage in the bordello's basement dungeon, but she has to take along a naked senator who was tied to the bed there. Rebecca and the senator get in a minor traffic accident. The senator runs but the cops get Rebecca, who left her purse at the whorehouse and is driving Elena's car. By the time Rebecca gets back to her apartment that night, there's a corpse on her Flokati carpet. The writing is tight. Ms. Smith saves the sensory detail for the suspenseful moments when she wants to keep you teetering on the edge of your seat. The plot is free of hairpin twists and ridiculous feats, and the coincidences are lifelike. DEATH TURNS A TRICK is an unpretentious, fast-paced, fun read.

I'm not a huge Skip Langdon fan, but I love Rebecca Schwartz and her friends! Rebecca is a feisty, Jewish feminist lawyer who narrowly escapes trouble while playing piano in a bordello one night. Murder and mayhem follow, of course. What I really like about this book (and the other Rebecca Schwartz books) are the characters. Rebecca is so real -- she's proud of her strengths, and frustrated by her weaknesses. The book is written in first person, so you get to know her quite well. I like her law partner, her journalist boyfriend, her younger sister, and the sister's out-of-work-actor boyfriend, who is also Rebecca's receptionist. The story takes place in San Francisco, with lots of wonderful descriptions of San Francisco scenery, happenings, and food. The Sourdough Wars ties with Death Turns a Trick as my favorite Julie Smith mystery. Skip and New Orleans just don't do it for me, much as I've tried...I just wish that Julie Smith would write some more Rebecca Schwartz mysteries so I wouldn't have to keep re-reading the few I have!

This is a rather short novel (approx 177 pages) about Rebecca, a young Jewish lawyer, who happens to play the piano at a bordello and later that night finds one of the prostitutes murdered in her own apartment. How is that for a crazy plot? But it turns out to be an enjoyable and well written

story, it is written in first person and Rebecca is a likeable character with a nice sense of humour. It is not a novel that stays in your mind for a longer period of time, but it definitely makes for a couple of hours of nice entertainment, like a feel-good movie.

First off, I just have to say that the title of this book may say it's a humorous romantic cozy, but that is false. The only part that is accurate is that it was a cozy mystery. I didn't laugh at all, and found the main character stupid for a lawyer. I mean who takes legitimate evidence you just found from your lawyer and go to a party instead of giving it to the cops to get your client/ boyfriend out of jail? There also was no real romance. Halfway thru the book I kept waiting for some flirting or a reoccurrence of a possible romantic interest and it all fell flat, nothing. Even her relationship with the suspect is bland and of no interest. There is no conflict, no flirtation, no interest. There really wasn't any life to any of it. No depth, no hint at any real life experience poured into it. It was just someone telling a story with no emotion or feeling backing up the words. I hate to write a bad review, but readers deserve to know the truth. Not worth the free read even. I would not recommend this book or any others by this author. Dull, boring and no emotion

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