

The Chase (Fox and O'Hare)

By Janet Evanovich, Lee Goldberg

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Janet Evanovich and Lee Goldberg, bestselling authors of *The Heist*, return in this action-packed, exciting adventure featuring master con artist Nicolas Fox and die-hard FBI agent Kate O'Hare. And this time around, things go from hot to nuclear when government secrets are on the line.

Internationally renowned thief and con artist Nicolas Fox is famous for running elaborate and daring scams. His greatest con of all: convincing the FBI to team him up with the only person who has ever caught him, and the only woman to ever capture his attention, Special Agent Kate O'Hare. Together they'll go undercover to swindle and catch the world's most wanted—and untouchable—criminals.

Their newest target is Carter Grove, a former White House chief of staff and the ruthless leader of a private security agency. Grove has stolen a rare Chinese artifact from the Smithsonian, a crime that will torpedo U.S. relations with China if it ever becomes public. Nick and Kate must work under the radar—and against the clock—to devise a plan to steal the piece back. Confronting Grove's elite assassins, Nick and Kate rely on the skills of their ragtag crew, including a flamboyant actor, a Geek Squad techie, and a band of AARP-card-carrying mercenaries led by none other than Kate's dad.


A daring heist and a deadly chase lead Nick and Kate from Washington, D.C., to Shanghai, from the highlands of Scotland to the underbelly of Montreal. But it'll take more than death threats, trained henchmen, sleepless nights, and the fate of a dynasty's priceless heirloom to outsmart Fox and O'Hare.

Praise for *The Chase*

"Fast and entertaining . . . new thrills and adventure on every page."—*Examiner.com*

"The action never stops . . . and a humorous tone keeps everything moving at a fun clip."—**Associated Press**

“Great fun, with plenty of twists.”—*The Sacramento Bee*

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Editorial Review

Review

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About the Author

Janet Evanovich is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of the Stephanie Plum series, the Lizzy and Diesel series, twelve romance novels, the Alexandra Barnaby novels and Trouble Maker graphic novel, and *How I Write: Secrets of a Bestselling Author*, as well as the Fox and O'Hare series with co-author Lee Goldberg.

Lee Goldberg is a screenwriter, TV producer, and the author of several books, including *King City*, *The Walk*, and the bestselling Monk series of mysteries. He has earned two Edgar Award nominations and was the 2012 recipient of the Poirot Award from Malice Domestic.

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It was 10 a.m. on a warm Sunday morning when the bomb exploded at the First Sunland Bank in downtown Los Angeles, setting off alarms in every parked car and building within a square mile.

The bank occupied the ground floor of an office tower on the north side of Wilshire Boulevard, midblock between Flower Street to the east and Figueroa to the west, in the heart of the financial district.

LAPD headquarters was just a few blocks away, so the dust, shards of glass, and chunks of mortar had barely settled on the ground when the bomb squad, a SWAT team, and scores of uniformed officers swarmed onto the scene.

FBI Special Agent Kate O'Hare got the call ten minutes later from agent Seth Ryerson. Kate was pulling away from the drive-through window of a McDonald's in West Los Angeles.

“A bomb just exploded at a bank downtown,” Ryerson said. “We're up at bat.”

“Was anyone hurt?” Kate asked, setting her Coke between her legs and the bag with her two hot Bacon, Egg & Cheese Biscuits on the seat beside her.

“Nope. The bank was closed, and the financial district is a ghost town on Sundays.”

“I'll meet you out front in two minutes.”

Kate sped east on Wilshire Boulevard. The Federal Building was in Westwood, only a few blocks away, just past the San Diego Freeway overpass.

Ryerson was waiting for her on the sidewalk when she got there. He wore a blue dress shirt and red-striped tie under a blue FBI windbreaker. He was in his early thirties, tall and pale with a rapidly receding hairline. She'd noticed that the faster he lost his hair, the more he lifted weights. Soon he'd be a bald man with grossly inflated biceps.

Kate was about the same age as Ryerson but a lot less concerned with her hair, partly because she had a lot of it, and partly because she could care less. At the moment, her shoulder-length chestnut brown hair was pulled into a ponytail, and her slim, athletic body was appropriately clothed in a dress-for-success dove gray pantsuit, the jacket left unbuttoned to allow her easy access to her Glock 9mm. Kate was ex-Special Forces, she believed in law and order, God, and her country, and she suspected that through no fault of her own she'd lost control of her career and her life.

Ryerson opened the passenger door, picked up the McDonald's bag, and wiped the seat to check for grease before he sat down.

Kate made an illegal U-turn across Wilshire Boulevard and minutes later made a sharp turn onto the southbound San Diego Freeway. She steered onto the transition to the eastbound Santa Monica Freeway and could see that traffic was backed up behind an overloaded, rusted-out truck that had spilled wooden crates across three lanes.

"There's no rush," Ryerson said, nervously tightening his shoulder harness, sensing that there was a maniac behind the wheel. "We're just along for the ride. The police will already have everything locked down."

"Blowing up a bank is a federal offense."

"True, but we're a formality. We're only answering this because we're on call this weekend. Someone else will pick this up tomorrow morning, and you'll be back chasing Nick Fox."

Kate mentally rolled her big blue eyes. If only Ryerson knew! She'd be chasing Nick a lot sooner than tomorrow morning. This whole bank event was a fake. A sham. A gigantic waste of taxpayer money, and God knows how many police officers' time. And she was involved! The very thought made her cringe. All her life she'd tried to do the right thing and uphold the law. And now it was a confusing mess. And it was all Nick Fox's fault.

"I hate him," Kate said.

"Who?"

"Nick Fox. I wish I'd never laid eyes on him. I wish I'd never heard of him."

Now it was Ryerson's chance to roll his eyes. "He's your obsession. You've chased him for five years. You even caught him once. You're practically married to him."

She veered onto the shoulder, speeding along the narrow strip between the concrete divider to her left and the stalled traffic on her right. A large wooden crate was on the shoulder directly in front of them. She tightened her grip on the wheel and sped up. Ryerson put one hand on the dash and turned his head away, as if that would make any difference if the windshield shattered.

Kate yanked the wheel just before impact, clipping the box and sending it skidding into the divider. She

cleared the pickup truck and the crates and swerved into the fast lane, cutting off a bus on Ryerson's side by mere inches. He let out an involuntary yelp of fear, which she found sort of satisfying.

Ordinarily, a trip from Westwood to downtown Los Angeles took an hour. But Kate drove with the pedal to the floor, weaving wildly through traffic. She got there in twenty minutes and even managed to eat one of her Bacon, Egg & Cheese Biscuits on the way.

The windows of the bank were blown out and there was rubble on the street. There wasn't any fire or smoke, only swirls of dust kicked up by the wind. SWAT officers were positioned around the building, waiting for something to happen.

Kate parked beside the cluster of police vehicles that formed the LAPD command center. She got out of her car and approached a barrel-chested, square-jawed officer who looked to be in his fifties. He was leaning over a map he'd spread out on the hood of the black-and-white. He wore a Kevlar vest over a starched white shirt and a red-white-and-blue-striped tie. The patch on his vest read: Captain Maibaum.

"I'm FBI Special Agent Kate O'Hare and this is Special Agent Seth Ryerson," Kate said to Maibaum. "What have we got here?"

"I don't know yet. The bomb squad sent a robot inside with a camera. There's debris everywhere, but the front counter is reasonably intact and the vault is secure. If it was money they were after, they screwed up."

"How smart could they be if they hit a bank that's three blocks from police headquarters?" Ryerson asked.

Maibaum shrugged. "Could be a disgruntled employee, or maybe a frustrated customer lobbed a grenade in there to make a statement. Maybe some sicko is waiting for me to send men into a booby-trapped building so he can blow them up."

Kate nodded. She knew it was none of the above, but she wasn't sharing that information just yet.

"I'm not letting anybody near the building until the bomb squad gives me the all-clear," Maibaum said.

"Okay, we'll get out of your way until then," Kate said, turning and walking into the middle of the street.

She looked to her left and then to her right. There were cop cars blocking both ends of the street. In between were several office buildings with banks, restaurants, and other storefront businesses, all closed for the day.

"Captain Maibaum," Kate called over her shoulder. "Did the blast set off alarms in any of the other buildings in the area?"

"Yeah," he yelled back. "There were alarms going off all up and down the street."

"Did anyone respond to those alarms?"

"I saw a couple private security guards checking things out, but we weren't asked for aid."

Kate turned back to Ryerson. "How many banks do you figure there are on this block and the next one over?"

Ryerson's eyes widened as the meaning of what she was saying dawned on him. "Too many."

There was a narrow alley in front of her that ran down to Seventh Street alongside a branch of Westgate Bank. There was a black-and-white parked in front of the bank. The black-and-white looked empty. A uniformed police officer ambled out of the bank carrying a bulging gym bag.

Kate started toward him. "Excuse me, Officer," Kate yelled, holding her badge up in front of her. "FBI. Could we have a word with you?"

The officer ignored her, opened the driver's side door of his black-and-white, and casually tossed his bag inside.

Kate drew her Glock. "Don't move!"

Ryerson grabbed her wrist and tipped his head up at the choppers in the sky. "Have you lost your mind? We're on live TV. You can't pull a gun on a cop."

The officer got into the car and, with one foot still on the street, looked back at Kate. He lowered his Ray-Bans and smiled at her like she was Little Red Riding Hood standing at the foot of her grandma's bed and he was the Big Bad Wolf.

Kate grimaced. "That's not a cop. That's Nick Fox."

Nick blew Kate a kiss and sped off in the black-and-white.

Good lord, Kate thought, he's such a grandstander .??. and a flirt. She was caught between wanting to wring his neck and wanting to nibble on it. She spun around and ran flat out for her car with Ryerson close on her heels. He was barely in his seat when she floored the gas pedal and took off, making a hard right turn into the alley. She cut the corner so close, she sheared off her passenger side mirror on the edge of a building.

"Are you sure it's him?" Ryerson asked as he buckled up.

"Yeah," she said. "I'm sure it's him."

Especially since she'd spoken to him two days ago when he'd come up with this scheme. And now she could add aiding and abetting a bank robber to her laundry list of hideous crimes! She'd go to church and ask God's forgiveness, but that ship had sailed long ago.

"You only caught a glimpse of him," Ryerson said.

"I'd recognize him in the dark, a mile away, underwater."

How could she not recognize him? Six feet tall with soft brown hair and a boyish grin that brought out the laugh lines around his eyes. He had the agile body of a tennis pro. Lean and firm. The kind of body she'd like to curl up next to if only he wasn't such a jerk. The man was a felon, for crying out loud. He was a con man. And he loved it!

Users Review

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