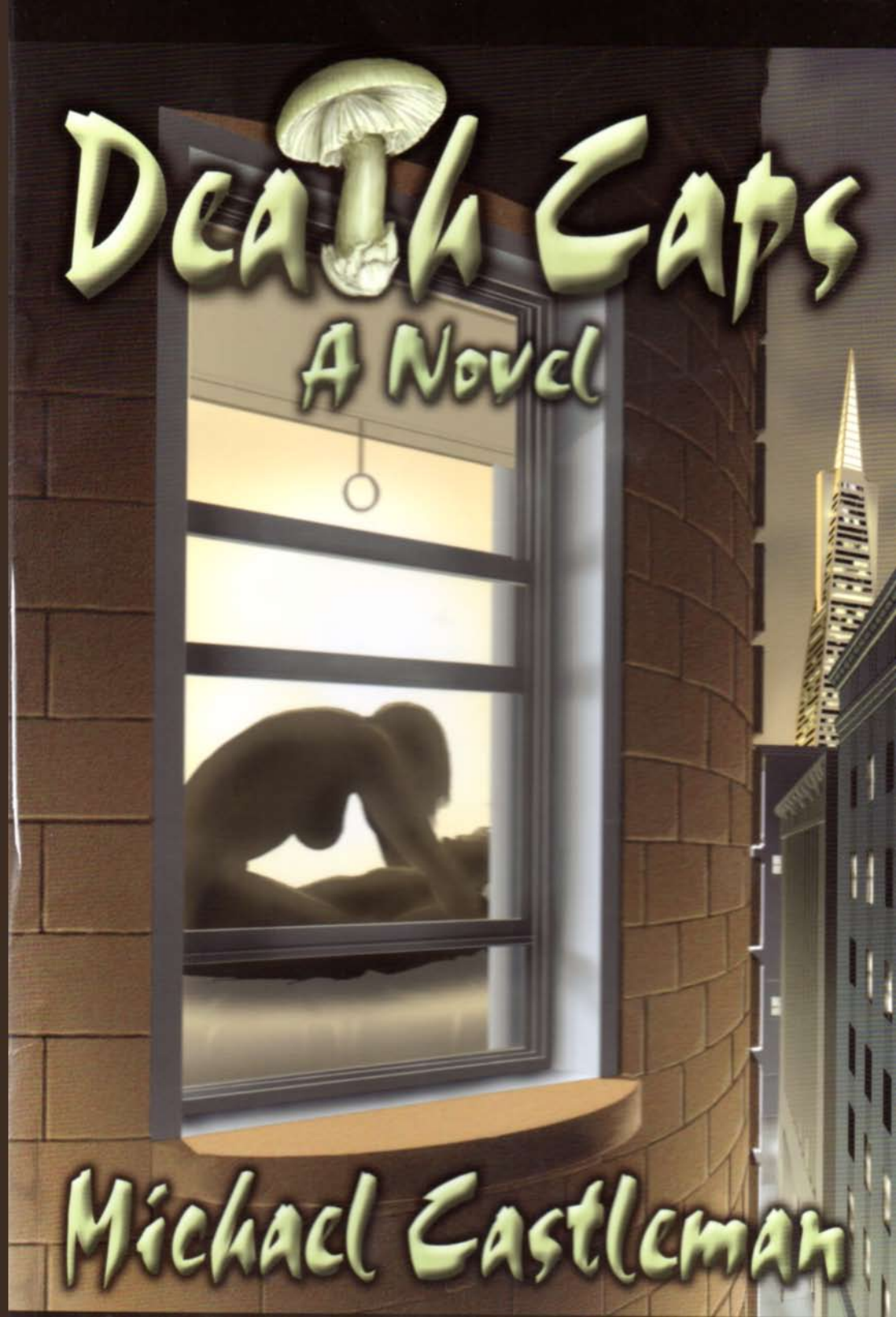




Death Caps

A Novel

Michael Castleman

A Sizzling Sexy Mystery With Fascinating San Francisco History

A hit-and-run driver in San Francisco kills a young model who posed nude for *Full Disclosure*, a raunchy men's magazine published in the City by the Bay. The magazine itself is almost as dead, a victim of Internet pornography, leaving its publisher, Ted Calderone, in deep trouble.

Calderone folds *Full Disclosure*, and launches *Loving Couple*, a new magazine that combines investigative reporting with relationship advice and erotic photography. At a party to celebrate the launch, sexy models serve appetizers from silver trays. But one item is not on the menu—poison mushrooms, death caps. The writer of the premiere issue's explosive investigative feature swallows the mushrooms and dies. The police call it murder.

Other guests narrowly escape being poisoned, including Ed Rosenberg, who writes the popular local history column for the San Francisco *Foghorn*. He gets sucked into the murder investigation.

Ed chases the story from the hairpin turns on Lombard Street to the dark basements of Chinatown, from four-star restaurants on the waterfront to X-rated movie sets in the San Fernando Valley. More bodies drop, and Ed begins to suspect that Ted Calderone might be the murderer—or the killer's ultimate target. Then Ed finds himself looking down the wrong end of a gun.

Death Caps is a sexy, compelling, intricately plotted mystery that makes San Francisco come alive. The writing is vivid, the action fast, the characters memorable, and the sex steamy. In fact, *Death Caps* just might be the most erotic mystery ever written. Visit deathcaps.com.

"Excellent. An intriguing plot with sure pacing." —*Publishers Weekly*

"Castleman captures San Francisco in all its glory." —*Library Journal*

"Fascinating San Francisco history. Castleman writes skillfully and with humor." —*Kirkus Discoveries*

"Fast-paced action, a luscious mystery, and exquisite snippets of San Francisco history." —San Francisco Museum and Historical Society

"*Death Caps* is a rich, compelling tale that combines a deft ear for dialogue, artfully drawn characters, San Francisco history—and hot sex. It's a carefully nuanced, finely drawn mystery that will keep you up late trying to guess the killer. Highly recommended." —Sheldon Siegel, *New York Times* best-selling author of *The Confession* and other Mike Daley mysteries

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Death Eats

A Novel

by Michael Castleman

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A dense San Francisco fog lay in wait for Jimmy Calderone and Alexandra Prescott as they crossed the lobby to the door of the exclusive Pacific Heights apartment tower. Jimmy kept a studio there to entertain women who were not his wife. He'd admired the statuesque blonde's spread in his brother's magazine. Alex had a beautiful face and a Barbie-doll figure. Over five pages, as she shed her clothes, she exuded youthful innocence. Jimmy liked that. As he'd done before, he arranged an introduction and turned on the charm. It didn't take many four-star lunches for Miss July to agree to join him for drinks in apartment 7-D.

The studio was small but it suited Jimmy's purposes. He appreciated Alex's playfulness. Some nude models became annoyingly modest in nonprofessional settings. But this girl, bless her heart, had no qualms about stepping onto the balcony topless. Jimmy also appreciated her patience in bed, which he needed more lately because of his illness. Damn doctors said he was stable. Then he took a turn for the worse. No one could explain why.

Alex was being patient now, holding the heavy door as Jimmy leaned on his cane and lumbered past her. She was a nice kid. Too bad he wasn't his old self. But this girl had a way of helping him forget his condition.

Jimmy turned his collar up against the raw dampness as Alex stepped to his side and wrapped an arm around his, a gesture that combined intimacy with physical support. Overhead a streetlight glowed, its gleam softened by the fog.

"Isn't the fog fantastic at night?" she cooed. "It makes everything so soft and ghostly."

On his own, Jimmy would never have noticed, but with this one, he did. "Yeah, babe, soft. Like you." He kissed her cheek. It was damp from the fog.

Alex smiled and helped Jimmy step off the curb.

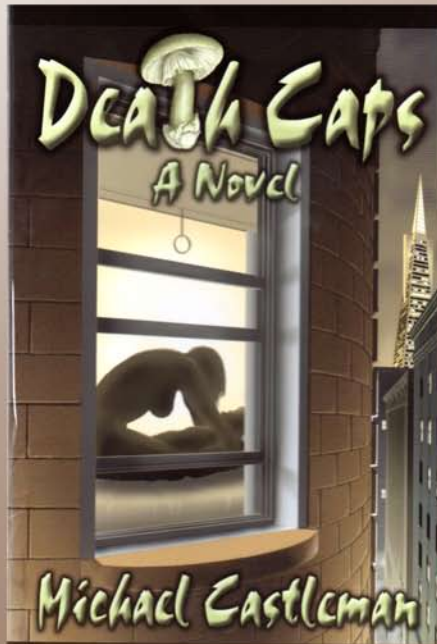
The car came out of nowhere. A black Mercedes. Before they could react, it was on top of them. Jimmy glanced up just in time to see the flash of horror on Alex's face as the sedan barreled into her, then roared off without stopping.

The impact threw Jimmy backward onto the hood of a Lexus. His cane wound up in the gutter. It took an effort to roll off the car, bend down, and retrieve it. *Christ*, that was close.

Jimmy felt dizzy. His hip and back ached. He struggled to steady himself and stepped to where the girl lay sprawled on the pavement, still as a statue. Mouth open, her tongue hung out, reminding him of a road-kill dog. Her jade eyes had become obsidian. Her head lay at an odd angle. Broken neck, Jimmy decided. He'd seen it in the navy. Poor kid.

Jimmy looked around but in the thick fog saw no one. If he called the police, they'd ask questions. His name would go into their report, and because of who he was, and who his brother was, it would wind up in the paper. There were several reasons to avoid that, among them, his wife and children. The girl was clearly beyond help. Someone would find her soon enough and call 911.

Jimmy stepped over her outstretched arm and hobbled toward his car. Reaching for his keys, he thought about the black Mercedes. He didn't recall seeing headlights. Odd, what with the fog. And the way it came at them, like it was lying in wait. Jimmy drew the only logical conclusion: This was no accident. Someone was trying to kill him. And he had a pretty good idea who.



Find out what happens next...

Death Caps



[Author's website](#)