

WRITER BRENDA HAAS

AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR
FINDING SUTTON'S CHOICE (FICTION)

**FREELANCE WRITER/
CONTENT EDITOR**
PERSONAL ESSAYS, ARTICLES,
PUBLIC RELATIONS CONTENT

SPEAKER
AUTHOR PRESENTATIONS,
WRITING WORKSHOPS, BOOK
CLUB DISCUSSIONS

PHOTOGRAPHER
LAKE ERIE CONTENT, FESTIVAL VENDOR

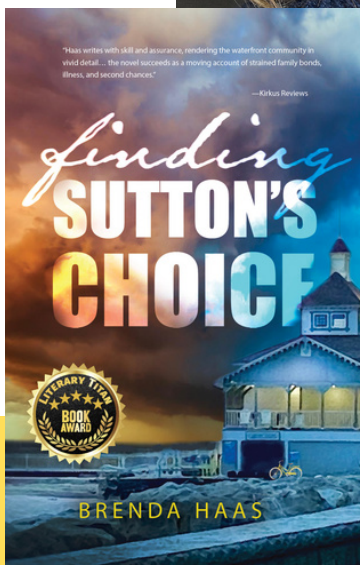


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Author, Writer/Editor, Speaker, Photographer

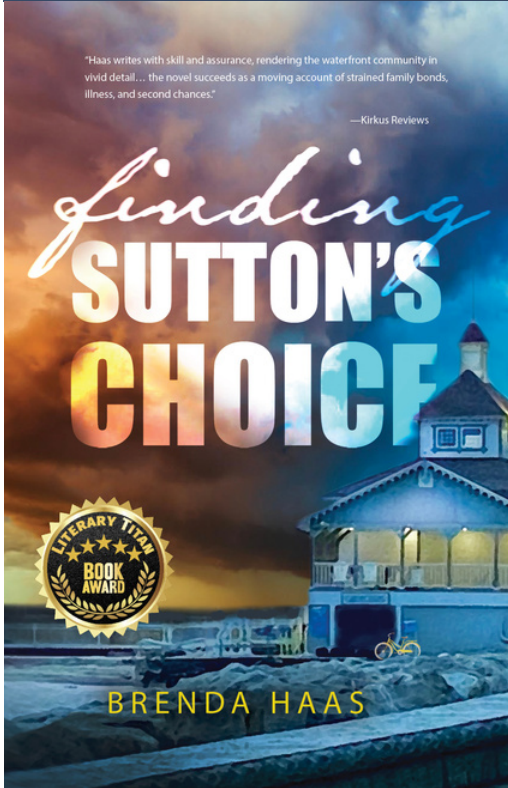
About
Brenda

Brenda Haas—award-winning author, freelance writer/editor, speaker, and Lake Erie photographer—was raised in Coshocton County, Ohio. A 1991 Otterbein University graduate, she spent many years as a reporter and columnist for Penn Franklin Publishing Company, a Pittsburgh press. Her writing has appeared in *Leisure Living Magazine*, *The Beacon*, *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and *My Outer Banks Home* magazine, among other publications.

Brenda lives in Lakeside, Ohio, the setting for her debut novel—*Finding Sutton's Choice*. A circa-1870s Chautauqua resort community, Lakeside attracts generations of annual vacationers, artists, and educators.

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DEBUT LAKE ERIE NOVEL



A cryptic voicemail message draws Charlotte back to the Lake Erie home she escaped.

It's been ten, long years since her abrupt departure, and, with a cryptic voicemail, 28-year-old Pittsburgh writer Charlotte Sutton finds herself back in her hometown of Lakeside, Ohio. Only this time, her estranged father doesn't recognize her, and a surprise half-sibling has taken her place.

Chuck Sutton—newspaper editor, retired baseball player, and the town's most beloved celebrity—is thought to have Alzheimer's disease. The community newspaper is also on the verge of closure, and a childhood friend holds a decade-long grudge. Despite all this, there is Lakeside. The quaint waterfront community, flush with ivy-covered cottages and vintage charm, hasn't changed even as everything else in Charlotte's life has shifted. She intends to stay only long enough to get her father's affairs in order.

But, to reconcile her past and unearth family secrets, Charlotte must reconnect with Chuck through his Alzheimer's diagnosis and reevaluate her own misconceptions about growing up in the small Ohio town that still holds her heart.

Finding Sutton's Choice explores complicated parent-child relationships, failing mental health, and the domino effect family choices have on who we become. It is set in Lakeside, Ohio, on Lake Erie.

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About the Book

WHAT READERS ARE SAYING

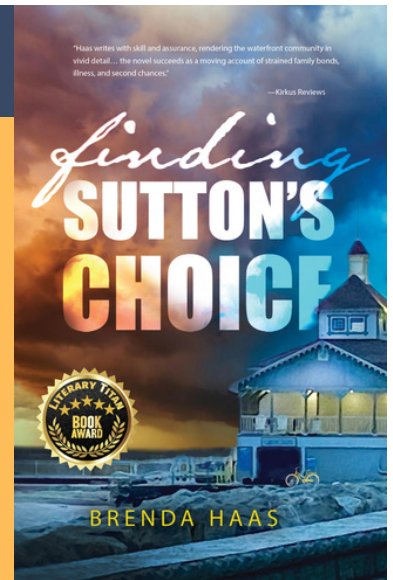
"Haas writes with skill and assurance, rendering the waterfront community in vivid detail and giving Charlotte's inner conflicts emotional depth... Her prose is grounded and filled with flashes of sardonic wit... The novel succeeds as a moving account of strained family bonds, illness, and second chances."

—KIRKUS Reviews,

"Get It!" Recommendation, 2025



**KIRKUS
Literary Fiction
FINALIST, 2026**



"Finding Sutton's Choice is a beautifully crafted story about love, loss, and family ties, set against the nostalgic backdrop of small-town America. Haas's storytelling is top-notch and skillfully relatable as she challenges readers to reflect on their relationships and the complexities that come with them. A must-read for anyone seeking a heartfelt narrative that will stay with them long after turning the last page."

—Susan Poole, author of Out of the Crash

*"Without becoming maudlin or reverting to the easy way around tough issues, this story hits home to most every family. That it tackles delicate subjects—coming of age at different times in our lives, becoming a parent to our parent, grappling with skeletons in the closet, betrayal, and ultimately resolution that is not tidy—is admirable and quite entertaining. I recommend *Finding Sutton's Choice*. Have tissues beside you."*

—Laurel Houck, author of Searching for Home

*"Finding Sutton's Choice is an intelligently written, engaging novel filled with unique, charming characters. It is fun, emotional, and unpredictable. Those who live in or visit the real-life community of Lakeside, Ohio, will find the connections poignantly entertaining. Those who haven't visited Lakeside will want to after reading *Finding Sutton's Choice*."*

—Sheri Trusty, Editor, The Beacon (Lake Erie media)

"I couldn't put it down! We all make choices every day, and those choices have consequences. Ms. Haas has created a world peopled by real, imperfect, likable characters dealing with life's little surprises. I laughed and I cried right along with them. Ms. Haas deserves to be read!"

—Susan J. Holloway, Amazon

Debut Reviews

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BOOK AWARDS and ACCOLADES

A Kirkus Indie Award FINALIST (Literary Fiction, 2026), *Finding Sutton's Choice* received the Literary Titan Gold Book Award (2025), "bestowed upon books that exemplify exceptional standards in the presentation of original content." The novel also won two International Impact Book Awards (Aging and Women's Fiction categories, 2025) and the PenCraft Seasonal Book Award for Fiction (Winter 2026).



Literary Titan REVIEW

In *Finding Sutton's Choice*, Brenda Haas delivers a heartfelt and layered story about Charlotte Sutton, a young writer who returns to her quaint hometown of Lakeside, Ohio, after ten years away. A mysterious voicemail and concerns about her estranged father's health, possibly Alzheimer's, bring her back to a place she swore she'd left behind. As Charlotte steps into the chaos of her father's declining memory, a struggling family newspaper, and a surprise half-sibling, she's forced to confront old wounds, unspoken truths, and what it really means to go home again.

This book hit me square in the chest. Haas writes with an intimacy that doesn't just paint a picture, it lets you walk the streets of Lakeside with Charlotte. Her prose is straightforward, not showy, but rich with emotion and charm. The dialogue felt natural and real, and the pacing kept me invested. I especially loved the way memory and identity were woven through the story without beating me over the head. And Charlotte, who is blunt, flawed, and sharp, was someone I could root for even when she was a mess... What really stuck with me was the raw honesty about family. The father-daughter dynamic wasn't whitewashed, and the complicated layers of resentment, love, and misunderstanding rang painfully true. Watching Charlotte navigate a relationship with a father who might not remember her, and then discovering a brother who took her place, was heartbreaking in the best way.

Finding Sutton's Choice is a beautiful story about forgiveness, second chances, and finding home in unexpected places. If you've ever wrestled with family messes or avoided going back to the town that raised you, you'll enjoy this one. I'd recommend it to readers who enjoy emotionally driven fiction with depth, especially fans of Ann Patchett or Elizabeth Berg.

— 5 Stars from *LITERARY TITAN*

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Award-Winning
Novel



Speakers Topics

WRITER
BRENDA HAAS

Brenda Haas presents at libraries, schools, social or service organizations, and other venues. She is available for online or in-person author/writer presentations, inspirational workshops, book club discussions, and book signings. Presentations may be customized to meet your needs.

Careful, or you'll end up in my novel

Every person, place, and experience we come in contact with leaves an impression. Brenda reflects on creatively documenting her past by putting memories on the page via writing nonfiction personal essays and incorporating aspects of real-life and its "characters" into fiction plots.

Getting published in today's market

Brenda discusses her winding path from journalist and public relations consultant to debut novelist (finally). Presentation touches on the basics of querying and the differences between traditional publishing, hybrid publishing, and self-publishing.

Memories on the page: writing a personal essay

Everyone has a story to tell. This interactive presentation explores writing slice-of-life moments in personal essay format. Discussion will cover essay structure, themes, and preparation for possible publication submission.

Novel writing challenge

Creatives take the challenge to write 50K words in one month. This presentation outlines how to prepare for writing a first draft OR for editing a drafted project. Customize for any time of the year and as a 1-day/3-day/week/month-long session.

Finding peace through journaling

Be present, each and every day, through the healing exercise of journaling. Allow anxiety, fear, or excitement to pour onto the page during this interactive presentation.

Spread the word: publicity bootcamp

Learn best practices for making a good public impression without spending a lot of \$\$\$\$. Presentation includes basics of publicity including writing effective press releases, social media posts, newsletters, etc. For nonprofits, small businesses, or indie authors.

Stages of editing a novel

Elevate a novel or other writing project. This session, for anyone with a work-in-progress or first draft, will dive deep into developmental editing, line editing, copy editing, and proofreading.

Agents, query letters, rejections... oh, my!

Presentation will include the nuts and bolts of submitting your work for publication, with a specific focus on literary agents and the querying process.

Writing the Lake Erie story

Lake Erie provides the setting for stories of community, adventure, family tradition, and even love. Writers will learn how to creatively document and structure lake stories for historical record or to pass on to the next generation.

Two writers. Two journeys. Two debut novels.

Co-presentation by *The Novel Ladies*—authors Brenda Haas and Susan Poole—who discuss how they met, their individual publishing experiences, and the importance of critique partners. What's better than a novel lady? Two, of course!

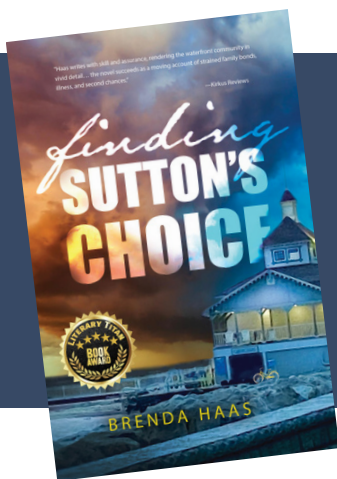
Contact Brenda about presenter/multi-presenter opportunities.

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Book Club Discussion

1. Charlotte left her small-town home right after graduation, with the intent of stepping out of her father's larger-than-life shadow. How did her independence help her grow? How did it not quite meet her social and/or career expectations?
2. Charlotte did not allow herself to get emotionally close to anyone after leaving Lakeside, including Elliot, her on-again, off-again boyfriend. Why do you think this is?
3. Charlotte said she returned to Lakeside simply to do her duty as Chuck's daughter. What do you think Charlotte *really* wanted to accomplish by returning? Discuss.
4. When Charlotte first came in contact with her half-brother, she was visibly upset. We saw little of Adam's reaction. What do you think he was feeling in that moment?
5. Why was "big city" Charlotte reluctant to see the good in "small town" Lakeside, Ohio? What are some misperceptions she had about her small-town upbringing?
6. Children do not come with directions. What are some different choices Chuck might/should have made while raising Charlotte? What are some unreasonable expectations or perceptions Charlotte had of her parents, either individually or as a married couple?
7. Alzheimer's disease greatly impacts patients and caregivers. Discuss. In *Finding Sutton's Choice*, how does the diagnosis change Charlotte's relationship with Chuck?
8. What are some aspects of the after-story that surprised you most?
9. What do you see in the unwritten future for Charlotte? For Adam? For other characters?
10. Discuss how the characters of Lakeside made you feel. Who were you rooting for? Who did you feel most connected to? Who did you recognize in yourself?

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