

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2023
ISSUE 7.0

LITERATE-LY MAGAZINE

FROM REVIEWS TO LITERARY NEWS
FROM HISTORY TO HER-STORY
BUILT TO EDUCATE AUTHORS

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT:

ELLIOTT D. LIGHT

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TRUE CRIME BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

FEATURED SHORT STORY

THE BACKYARD BY AMY SHANNON

PART 3

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About Essence Publishing:

Essence Publishing was created by Amy Shannon, and she is the sole proprietor of Essence Publishing and its parent company Essence Enterprises. Essence Publishing is the publishing company that self-publishes Amy Shannon's books.

The purpose of Essence Publishing is to educate, entertain and provide literary services.

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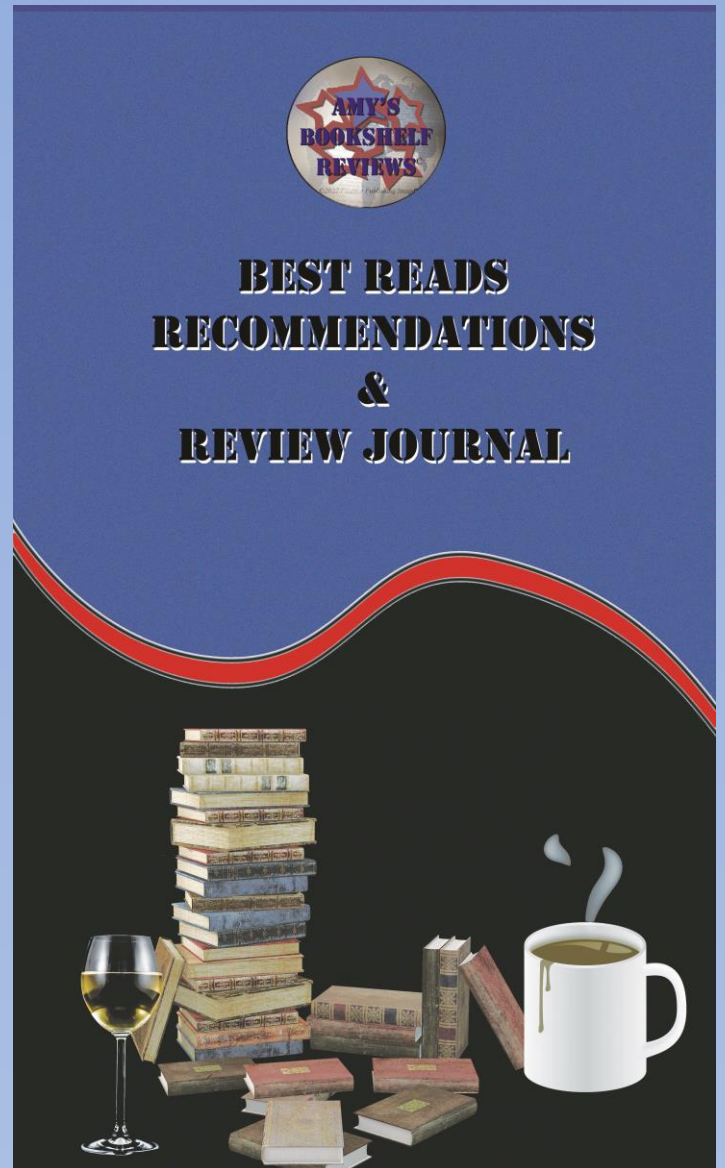
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Amy's Bookshelf Reviews "Best Reads" Book Project

A new book from Amy's Bookshelf Reviews called Amy's Bookshelf Reviews Best Reads Recommendations & Review Journal. For the first volume, I am selecting up to 50 book Titles. The book will be a free download on a few sites, and anyone who contributes to the book, is not only getting a promotion about your book title, but this book will also teach the reader on how to write a review. There will be a book description and a link to where the reader can buy the book. In addition to this information, there will be a template of questions for the reader, to show them how to write a proper review. The book also describes the importance of reviews.

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To utilize different tools to help authors at different levels, and with different parts of the literary publishing process.

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Fractured Tears: A Struggle for Justice Expanded Version

Anna Coleman gave her husband one more chance for them to work on fixing what was wrong with their marriage. Ted used that chance to try to kill her. Anna didn't give up or give in, she fought to survive, and she fought for justice, as it became a personal struggle. All she wanted was for the justice system to properly punish Ted for what he did to her, and it took a lot of strength, perseverance, and support.

Read how Anna struggles to fight for justice, and deal with her personal issues from having been betrayed and abused by her husband of 13 years.

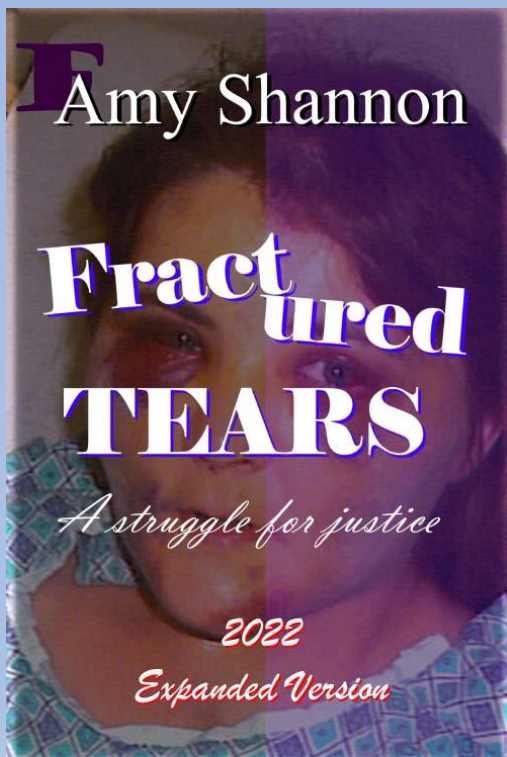
This is a fictionalized version of the real-life events of the Author.

Warning: This book contains scenes of domestic violence and may trigger PTSD or not be for some readers.

This is an expanded version and Fourth Edition.

Names have been deleted or changed for privacy reasons.

This is both a fiction book based on real-life events and a nonfiction book that tells my story.





Author Spotlight

Author Spotlight

Elliott D. Light

Elliott D. Light grew up in a tidy neighborhood outside of Washington, D.C. in McLean, Virginia before the beltway encircled the capital city, before farms were turned into housing developments, and before open fields became mega-malls. Light attended the University of Virginia, receiving degrees in Electrical Engineering and Law. He has several patents to his name. After stints as an environmental lawyer and a high-tech in-house counsel, he practiced patent law in a private law firm. Now retired, he resides in Naples, FL with his wife, Sonya.

Book Titles:

The Gene Police

Lonesome Song

Chain Thinking

Throwaways

The Jackson River Bridge (Release Date

8/22/2023)



Got a blog Tour?



The official Blog of Amy Shannon has moved, but it still participates in blog tours and author promotions.

<https://essenceenterpriseus.com/amy-shannons-blog>

This blog participates in blog tours by creating blog posts that gives information about the author and the book being promoted.

Some blog tours run simultaneously with Amy's Bookshelf Reviews when the review is posted on the blog tour date selected.

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews has a new website at <https://amysbookshelfreviews.com/>

And it also has new rules and requests information. The new request policies have changed, and the way an author makes a request has changed.

<https://amysbookshelfreviews.com/requests-and-rules>

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews is also to announce that it has become a book influencer and a professional review for authors, and directly for publishers.





Author Interviews

...pokręcił korbką.
...metalowe pręci-
...oczą melodyjkę.
...nagle tak, jakby
...sama melodia,

zegar...
- Tak, ale wygląda na to, że
- Jesteście pewni, że ten
czy czegoś w tym rodzaju? -
- Istotnie, mógłby używa
kojniejszym...

Christopher Bowron

Literate-Ly Magazine: In three words, describe yourself.

Christopher: Pretty darn chill

Literate-Ly Magazine: How many books have you written? How many of those are published?

Christopher: I have written 5 books. Three have been traditionally published, though I could have had my newest one published. I received two offers from publishers. I decided with the backing I have, that I would do better putting *Waiting for Morning Time* up through my own publishing company.

Literate-Ly Magazine: How much research did you do, and how long did it take before you even started writing?

Christopher: I was a History major in university with a minor in English. I've always dabbled in it. I ran an on-line game for 10 years... a role-playing game which required some fairly heavy writing. My game on the site was always the most popular.

I started writing seriously 10 years ago. I tore up a number of manuscripts before eventually writing: *Devil in the Grass*, which became a number one bestselling novel on Amazon.

Waiting for Morning Time took me 5 years to write for various reasons- research and interviews being the most onerous.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What is the title of your last published book? What's the title and when was it published?



Christopher: *The Society of Necessities*. It was published three years ago. It was a self-indulgent book closely following one of my on-line games. Some people have said it was my best to date, and I've had some who said they didn't like it. I suppose you can't please everyone and that's okay.

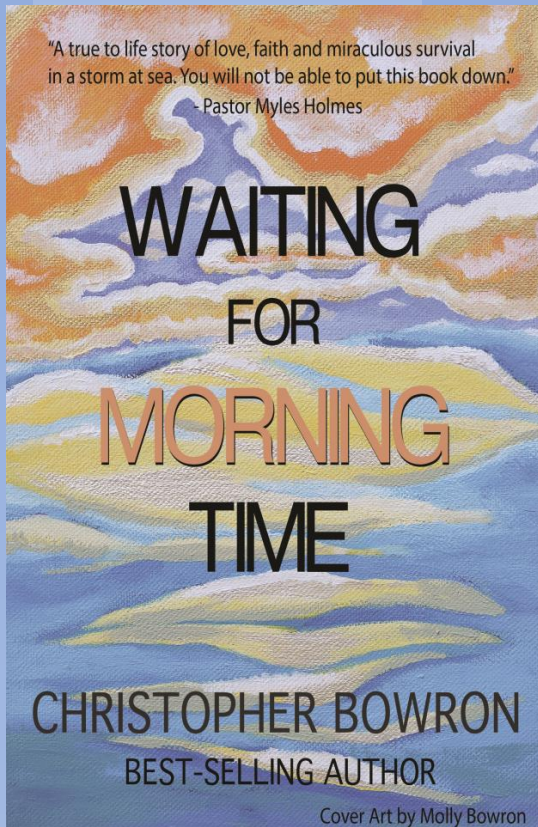
Literate-Ly Magazine: In regard to research, how did you do your research? Did you interview experts, online research, or in a library etc...?

Christopher: My newest book, coming out this month, *Waiting For Morning Time*, took a ton of research. I did probably 20 interviews, some in person, some over the phone. I researched all of the pertinent facts from past news articles in print as well as on the NET. I have never used a library.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What made you decide to write your past book, what inspired you?

Christopher: It was a story told to me by friends of the family- a true life rescue story. I was asked to write it. It was the toughest book I have written to date.

Christopher Bowron cont'd



Literate-Ly Magazine: Without quoting your back cover blurb, tell me about the last book you published.

Christopher: As stated above, *Waiting For Morning Time*, is a rescue story about three men who's boat sank 12 miles out in the Gulf of Mexico. They were the longest known survivors in open water. Most don't make it or are never found (Eaten by the local wildlife). It is a Faith based book – based upon a true MIRACLE. Their families on shore were equally as important to their survivals... and perhaps God if you are a believer.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Tell me something about yourself that is separate from writing.

Christopher: I love to fish and I'm pretty good at most sports, though as I'm getting

older... not as good. I like good food and wine and the company of my family and my wife Tara.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Who are your top THREE favorite authors?

Christopher: 1- J.R.R. Tolkien. I've read the LOTR at least 4 times. 2- Anne Rice. R.A. Salvatore- I am going to write a High Fantasy book one of these days.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What is the last book that you read? (Not counting anything you wrote)

Christopher: The Inner Game of Golf – Timothy Gallwey. Black Flags and Blue Waters – Eric J Dolin. I kind of read them at the same time. I'm also thinking of writing a Pirate book.

Literate-Ly Magazine: When writing, do you have a system or something you plan, or do you just write?

Christopher: I write out a plot and a possible ending. Sometimes I surprise myself with a new twist and run with it. This method sometimes changes the direction and ending of the book. So it's a mystery – even to me.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Why do you write?

Christopher: I like telling stories and I find it relaxing. It's the biggest buzz when someone tells you that they sincerely loved your book- better than the money you received for selling it.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Are you personally an expert on the subject of your recently published book?

Christopher: *Waiting For Morning Time*- I would not call myself an expert. If you read the book, you will pretty much know as much as I do on the subject.

Christopher Bowron cont'd

Literate-Ly Magazine: Do you read your own work a lot? If so, what does it do for you?

Christopher: I have read all of my books 10 times through editing- it does become tedious, none the less I do enjoy them. I did get a bit weepy and had a chill run up my spine when I read Morning Time. I had written it 3-4 years ago.

Literate-Ly Magazine: I play music when I write, and depending on the setting or mood of the story depends on what I listen to. Do you listen to music when you write? If so, what genre or artist/band do you listen to?

Christopher: Country music all the way, sometimes classical. I also like to smoke a little Sativa to open up my creativity. (BTW, it is legal in Canada)

Literate-Ly Magazine: As an author, I find that the hardest thing to write (for me) is the blurb that will be on the back cover or book's description. When you write, what is the hardest line to write, the first line, the last line or the synopsis for the book?

Christopher: All of the above. The Blurb sucks. The first line no matter how much you try always sounds contrived.

Literate-Ly Magazine: If you could sit down and have a coffee (or your favorite beverage) with anyone, living or dead, from any era, any time, who would it be and why?

Christopher: My Mother. I lost her when I was in my early thirties. I think that she would love the fact that I became a writer. Vodka on the rocks and a DuMourier light cigarette- just one. (I no longer smoke). That's what she liked. I'm not big on meeting famous people.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What does it mean to be a "successful" writer?

Christopher: Cliché I know. Having one person really like your book- sincerely. The money doesn't really mean anything. I have a really good job besides writing.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What do you want to accomplish, so when you look back at your life, you can say "I did that"?

Christopher: I want to be remembered as a good person- it's hard to do. Sometimes by trying to be super nice it can backfire on you. I would like to be recognized as being an entertaining writer. People had a good kick reading my books on the beach etc.

Literate-Ly Magazine: I am on a quest to read as many banned, burned or challenged books as possible? What is your feeling or opinion on banning books? It seems to be a new epidemic now.

Christopher: Do we not live in a free society? I think the U.S is sliding backwards in this regard- much like the reversal on abortion. Canada is not so bad. If you are writing a book on how to be a terrorist- okay ban that puppy. I feel that a lot of the people wanting to ban things claim to be moral or all knowing- most of them are whack jobs. Let people decide what they want to read or not read.

Christopher Bowron

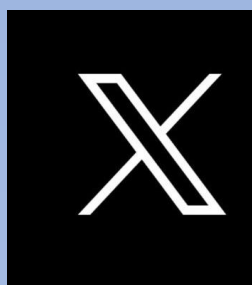
cont'd

Literate-Ly Magazine: What is the hardest part of the writing and publishing process?

Christopher: 1- Writing that first book. 2- Realizing that the business is insanely tough. 3- Getting and agent. 4- Getting your agent to get you a deal. All tough... filtering through all the people who are trying to sell you book promotional crap once you put your book up on Amazon.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Why do you write nonfiction books? What subgenres do you write in as well?

Christopher: I have only written one nonfiction book and it fell onto my lap. My favourite genre is thriller – dark ones. I may never write another nonfiction book again. I was put on to a guy who was supposedly JFK's personal chef. I wasted 4 trips to Florida before I found out he was a fake



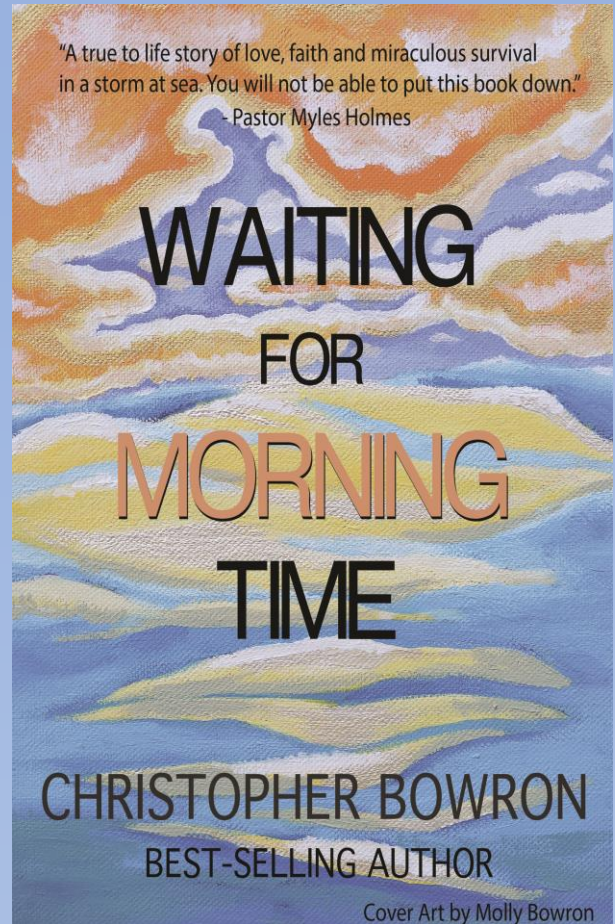
Waiting For Morning Time

By Christopher Bowron

Waiting For Morning Time, is a true life survival story.

The Coast Guard wants to call off the search as it will be over 45 hours since the men have been missing at sunup. It is longer than anticipated they could possibly survive in the 68 degree Gulf water. The families grow stronger and refuse to give up! A last ditch search is put together.

The tale portrays the trials of three men lost at sea and how they survive nature and combat their inner demons. It depicts how three families grew strong in their conviction the men were still alive through prayer and their religious faith in God. In the end, the Authorities and the Press called it a *Miracle*. Neal, Lew and Bill are the Longest Known Survivors in those temperatures. Most are never found dead or alive.



Elliott D. Light

Literate-Ly Magazine: In three words, describe yourself.

Elliott: Curious, analytical, and empathetic.

Literate-Ly Magazine: How many books have you written? How many of those are published?

Elliott: I have written five published books and a handful of books that either weren't finished or were best forgotten.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Tell me about how you come up with your titles for your stories. Do you create the title before or after you write the book, and does it ever change from the initial title?

Elliott: Imagining titles is a fun exercise that sharpens the ability to see a story in a few words. I usually start with a working title but the final title will emerge from the manuscript as the themes, characters, and settings come into focus.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What is the title of your last published book? What's the title and when **was** it published?

Elliott: My latest book is *The Jackson River Bridge* and is, or will be, published on August 22, 2023.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Out of all your characters in all of your books, who/what (sometimes a setting can also be an important "character") do you think is the most interesting and why?

Elliott: Noah Waters (*The Jackson River Bridge*) is a fascinating protagonist because he is evolving as his story is told. He is flawed, but relatable, a boy riddled with fear but courageous.



Literate-Ly Magazine: I know your story is fictional, but what inspired writing it?

Elliott: An old friend sent me video clips that included images of me at his fifth birthday party. He recalled that the old neighborhood was like the Garden of Eden, a place where the opportunities for kids to play and enjoy life were unlimited. I had a different perspective, and the "what-if" seed was planted.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What sub-genres do you currently write in?

Elliott: I write the story that comes to mind. Four of my books are mysteries. *The Jackson River Bridge* is a fictional memoir. I'm currently working on a story that is neither. I don't see myself writing science fiction or horror but I wouldn't rule it out either.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Without quoting your back cover blurb, tell me about the last book you published.

Elliott D. Light cont'd



Elliott: *The Jackson River Bridge* is a memoir of Noah Waters, a man who grew up on the spectrum. The story illustrates the destructive power of autism, not only affecting the person who is afflicted but those around him as well. But more importantly, Noah's story is a positive statement about the power of love, understanding, and kindness and a celebration of being different.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Quote your favorite line from one of your stories. Indicate the line, and then the book title.

Elliott: Finding a favorite line is a hard task because so much of a line depends on context. The sentence that I've selected is from *The Jackson River Bridge*. It is powerful and compact, almost self-contained, and a rare moment of introspection from one of the supporting characters.

The last thing I heard from Helen was a question that deserved an answer but would remain wanting: "What have we done to you?"

Literate-Ly Magazine: Tell me something about yourself that is separate from writing.

Elliott: I am fascinated by cats. Some people don't like them, but I do. I suppose it's because they are honest about what they want and who they want it from and hide the fact that they are loyal and social creatures.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Who are your top THREE favorite authors?

Elliott: I am not a reader of any particular author. I read some fiction but find books dealing with science and history more interesting.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What is the last book that you read? (Not counting anything you wrote)

Elliott: Madame Restell, by Jennifer Wright.

Literate-Ly Magazine: When writing, do you have a system or something you plan, or do you just write?

Elliott D. Light cont'd

Elliott: I have been a pantsner (someone who writes without an outline or even notes), a plotter (someone who produces detailed notes of the story before the writing even begins), and things in between. I have read books about novel structure, character arcs, and the “Snowflake Method.” (The term snowflake in this context is neither the white, cold kind nor the socially stunted human kind but rather a shorthand reference to a method that uses an iterative technique to produce it a detailed story summary.)

Teasing the story from a myriad of thoughts is hard work. What method I use depends on the story and the themes. Perhaps the most effective tool for me is to interview the important characters. The interview is truly a conversation and can go anywhere, but the goal, particularly with the protagonist, is to expose the character’s back story, fears, perceptions, and needs. The interview allows the story to be told from different perspectives. Often, a character’s voice will emerge—cadence, word choices, and other personality quirks—that make them unique and interesting. Once the characters have “told” me what they perceive the story to be, I begin to work out the structure of the book beginning with a good hook.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Why do you write?

Elliott: The simple answer is because I like to. With the cheeky response out of the way, there is something that drives me to put people in situations and see how they respond. By exploring these situations through the eyes of a character I can imagine a different me.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Do you read your own work a lot? If so, what does it do for you?

Elliott: I read what I’ve written only on rare occasions. I am sometimes surprised by the words on the paper, wondering where they came from. It’s not about being prideful but being in awe of the creative ability of the non-judgmental side of the human brain.

Literate-Ly Magazine: I play music when I write, and depending on the setting or mood of the story depends on what I listen to. Do you listen to music when you write? If so, what genre or artist/band do you listen to?

Elliott: I am my most creative when my wife plays the piano. Most of her pieces are classical but some are jazzy and more modern. I believe this stimulates my right brain, that the music instills a mood that gets wrapped in whatever words I’m choosing.

Literate-Ly Magazine: As an author, I find that the hardest thing to write (for me) is the blurb that will be on the back cover or book’s description. When you write, what is the hardest line to write, the first line, the last line or the synopsis for the book?

Elliott: I spend a great deal of time on the first line of the first chapter, the first paragraph, and the chapter itself. These ten pages sew the seeds for the plot, the theme, the wants and needs of the main characters, and the promises that the author

Elliott D. Light cont'd

makes to the reader. If this chapter is off by a little bit, the story will veer of course. And of course, if the reader isn't hooked, if the writing is too rushed or wordy, the next few hundred pages are wasted.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What does it mean to be a “successful” writer?

Elliott: Success isn't about book sales or royalties Okay. Perhaps that's an overstatement because it sounds good. But it isn't *only* about that. It's more about delivering on the inherent promise writers make to book buyers that if you pay your money for this book, you will feel that you received value in exchange. It's about creating believable characters that readers remember.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What do you want to accomplish, so when you look back at your life, you can say “I did that”?

Elliott: I'm not certain that it's possible to answer that question honestly. We all make mistakes and have cringe-worthy moments. I suppose the best answer is that on balance, I did more nice things than hurtful ones.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Any final thoughts that you want to give to your fans or even future authors?

Elliott: I would encourage everyone to write, tell stories, ask “what-ifs” and see what happens. Maybe nothing. Maybe no one will read it. But writing is both exhilarating and humbling. If you have the writing bug, listen to people around you—at the mall, the supermarket, church—and hear not just the words but the voice. Just don't get caught eavesdropping.



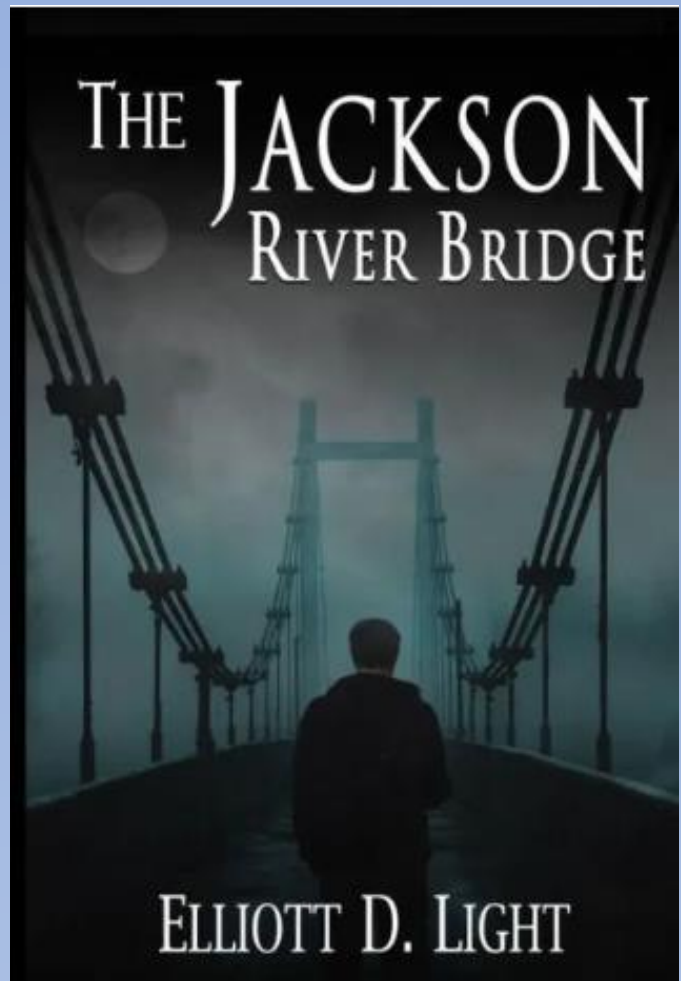
The Jackson River Bridge

By Elliott D. Light

Alone on a bridge staring into the dark water...

He was not born Noah Waters, but constant rejection often has a way of encouraging one to walk away from everything they have known while giving birth to the person they are meant to be. This is Noah's story...

I was a sixteen-year-old runaway when I worked my way to the edge of the Jackson River Bridge and peered at the moonlit water swirling below. To be fair, I wasn't an ordinary sixteen-year-old. I had an affliction akin to autism that left me with fragmented memories of my childhood, memories that inspired nightmares filled with demons that tormented me while I slept and awoke me screaming in the dark void of my room. Even I understood that I had few choices, and all were bad. There was nothing for me on the side of the river I had come from, and I had no reason to believe that the other side of the river offered anything better. Logically, jumping seemed a way to break the tie. The stalemate only broke when I heard a voice emanating from the darkness. The voice belonged to a man wearing a hooded garment that shadowed his face, a man who chose to live on the grounds of an old monastery with a dozen cats. The moment he stepped from the darkness my life began to pivot. I first learned to trust him, then love him. He put me on a path toward a future I never imagined possible that night as I stood on...The Jackson River Bridge.



L. Diane Wolfe

Literate-Ly Magazine: In three words, describe yourself.

L. Diane: Spunky, determined red-head!

Literate-Ly Magazine: How many books have you written? How many of those are published?

L. Diane: I've written eleven books. Nine are published and available now: In Darkness series The Vampire and The Shark; Overcoming Obstacles With Spunk; How to Publish and Promote Your Book Now; and the five book series The Circle of Friends. The next In Darkness books come out Sept. 5 (The Werewolf) and Feb. 6, 2024 (The Alien.)

Literate-Ly Magazine: Tell me about how you come up with your titles for your stories. Do you create the title before or after you write the book, and does it ever change from the initial title?

L. Diane: I usually go in with a title in mind. It might change a little though. The In Darkness series was originally Four In Darkness, but I shortened it. (In case I write more of them!)

Literate-Ly Magazine: What is the title of your last published book? What's the title and when was it published?

L. Diane: In Darkness: The Shark, a paranormal romance, came out on May 9 of this year.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Out of all your characters in all of your books, who/what (sometimes a setting can also be an important "character") do you think is the most interesting and why?

L. Diane: That would be a toss-up between Victor, the lead vampire in The Vampire, and



Krist, the lead alien in The Alien. Victor is a tough but fair leader with a troubled past, which is why he tries so hard to protect his people. Krist is a bit of a mystery as his race lacks emotions, but it leads to some really interesting and touching exchanges with the other lead, Liz.

Literate-Ly Magazine: I know your story is fictional, but what inspired writing it?

L. Diane: The Shark came from a bit of a dream (where most of my ideas come from) and a really old Saturday afternoon movie about a boy who befriends a shark. I morphed it all into a talking shark who befriends a young woman named Jewels.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What sub-genres do you currently write in?

L. Diane: Paranormal romance, non-fiction, and new adult.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Without quoting your back cover blurb, tell me about the last book you published.

L. Diane Wolfe cont'd

L. Diane: Set in the 1990's Australia, Jewels comes upon a talking great white shark. She doesn't trust him, but eventually he wins her over despite his man-eater status. However, there are more dangers than just sharks out there.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Quote your favorite line from one of your stories. Indicate the line, and then the book title.

L. Diane: Just one? This is from *The Shark*, when Jewels takes a tumble on the beach on the way to see her shark friend:

It's a good thing Clarence doesn't know what a klutz is.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Tell me something about yourself that is separate from writing.

L. Diane: I am a total vegan (no animal products), I love Minions and rollercoasters, and I don't eat chocolate.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Who are your top THREE favorite authors?

L. Diane: Richard Adams, Gary Chapman, and C.S. Lewis

Literate-Ly Magazine: What is the last book that you read? (Not counting anything you wrote)

L. Diane: Bubba and Squirt's *Shield of Athena*, which is an upcoming book in that series. (Perks of getting to read some stories early!)

Literate-Ly Magazine: I play music when I write, and depending on the setting or mood of the story depends on what I listen to. Do you listen to music when you write? If so, what genre or artist/band do you listen to?

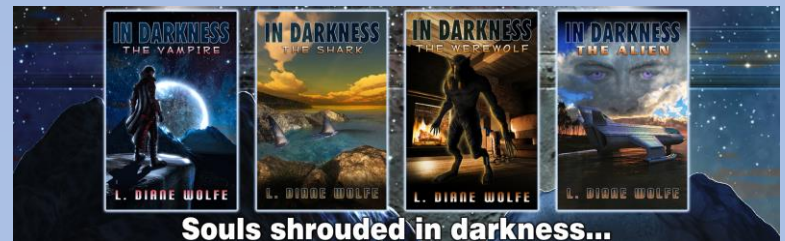
L. Diane: Yes, I do. Sometimes I make playlists, other times it's a single song. I listen to everything from older pop (70's-90's) to metal and progressive rock.

Literate-Ly Magazine: As an author, I find that the hardest thing to write (for me) is the blurb that will be on the back cover or book's description. When you write, what is the hardest line to write, the first line, the last line or the synopsis for the book?

L. Diane: The first line, as it has to grab. I can work my way through a blurb or synopsis, but that first line has so much pressure attached to it.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What does it mean to be a "successful" writer?

L. Diane: Success means different things to different people. Yes, an author who hits the best seller list is considered a success. Sales play a big part in measuring success. But what of the author who just wanted to see his book published? Once that happens, he has succeeded, and it matters a lot.



L. Diane Wolfe cont'd

Literate-Ly Magazine: What do you want to accomplish, so when you look back at your life, you can say “I did that”?

L. Diane: I have a lot of things, some spiritual, but as the senior editor at Dancing Lemur Press, I want to look back and know that I helped a lot of writers achieve their dream of being a published author.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Any final thoughts that you want to give to your fans or even future authors?

L. Diane: For writers (and for fans) understand it's a journey and first efforts aren't always the best. You will improve, as I have done, by writing more stories and more books. I am very proud of my In Darkness series and the chance to explore a more unusual aspect of paranormal romance. I hope everyone enjoys them!



Yurie Kiri

Literate-Ly Magazine: In three words, describe yourself.

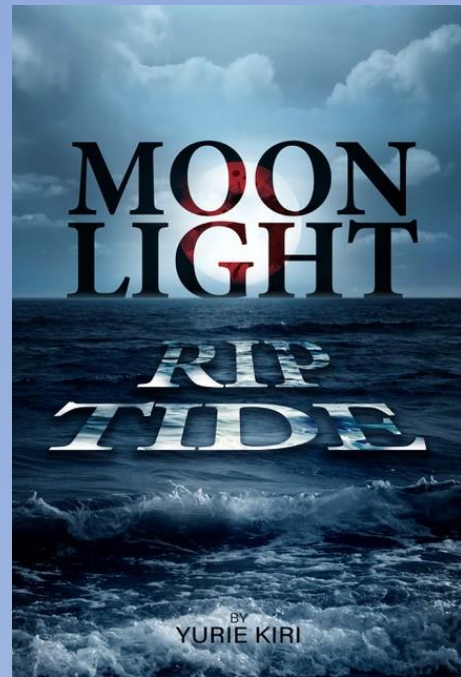
Yurie Kiri: Shy, quiet, private.

Literate-Ly Magazine: How many books have you written? How many of those are published?

Yurie Kiri: About 14 or 15 or so depending upon how they're edited. I have about 6 books in the "Moonlight" series with 3 published on Amazon (and 1 on Apple) the others in review. I'm working with some ARC readers for the next release - "Moonlight Rip Tide." I also have 7 books in the "Games" series with 2 published on Amazon (and 1 on Apple) the others in review. And then there's New York Stories also published on Amazon along with a couple of boxed sets in both Games and Moonlight so I have 9 titles on Amazon, 2 on Apple plus one on Audible.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Tell me about how you come up with your titles for your stories. Do you create the title before or after you write the book, and does it ever change from the initial title?

Yurie Kiri: The title is a big part of the creative process but it changes. When I first started the book I published as "Moonlight Beach" I called it something like "The Women of Rancho California" because of the main characters, four strong women. Then I thought that I needed something more "commercial" and came up with the Moonlight Series: Beach, Canyon, Rocks and



now "Moonlight Rip Tide" coming out soon. I actually had help picking "Moonlight Rip Tide" as a title since I went around and asked readers what they thought was best... you know, A or B or C... and we agreed on "Rip Tide."

Literate-Ly Magazine: What is the title of your last published book? What's the title and when was it published?

Yurie Kiri: In March of this year, I published a set of the two most popular books in the Moonlight series (Beach and Canyon) as the "Moonlight Duology" which I also entered in the 2023 Los Angeles Book Festival and subsequently won in the sequels' category. In February 2023 I published "New York Stories" after I won the "unpublished fiction" category in the New England book festival but it wasn't really announced until March 15th in a "New in Books" promo.

Yurie Kiri cont'd

Literate-Ly Magazine: Out of all your characters in all of your books, who/what (sometimes a setting can also be an important “character”) do you think is the most interesting and why?

Yurie Kiri: I love all of my good characters as well as enjoy seeing the bad guys go down. However, some stand out like Amy, the blind woman at the beginning of New York Stories who refuses to consider herself handicapped. Some readers were disappointed that Amy didn't have a bigger role but the story had moved on. Susan in the "Moonlight" series is one of my favorites because like Hanako in "Games" she is so strong.

Literate-Ly Magazine: I know your story is fictional, but what inspired writing it?

Yurie Kiri: Real people and real places have always been my inspiration. Most of my books have a "Note to readers" introduction where I explain how I got the story idea - sometimes from overheard conversations at bars and restaurants. Actually, I was once accosted by people in a bar who thought I was eavesdropping on them and taking notes, which I was... "Sorry, just work stuff," I said, waving my notes and smiling. Then they left me alone.. ha, ha. However, some of Moonlight Beach also came from interview meetings which I set up with some venture capital people under the guise of writing a non-fiction business book. I met those very interesting

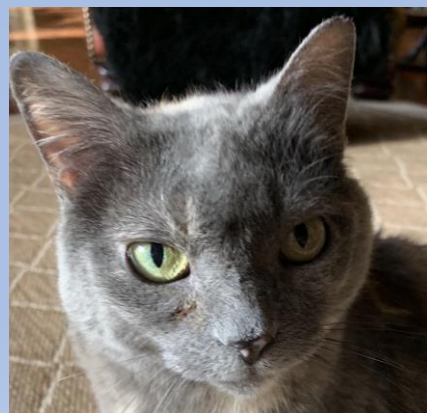
people who then formed some of the minor but important characters in "Beach" and "Rip Tide." I never finished the business book or a travel book (like Paul Theroux one of my favorite authors) I also started, finding fiction writing so much more enjoyable.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What sub-genres do you currently write in?

Yurie Kiri: "Moonlight" is in the thriller, fantasy, psychic, paranormal mystery, magic and murder genre with all kinds of weird ripples and twists. "Games" is more epic Asian science fiction built around video games, body swapping, ancient monsters and samurai ghosts. New York is future science fiction complete with evil AI and Martian colonies.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Without quoting your back cover blurb, tell me about the last book you published.

Yurie Kiri: "New York Stories" first takes place in the near future when the first rock samples from Mars are brought back to Earth and put on public display. During a wild robbery attempt,



Yurie Kiri cont'd

Amy and her companion animal, a genetically enhanced house cat called Zeke are exposed to the Martian rocks and to the invisible psychic virus-like Martian entities residing on the rocks. Fast forward towards the end of the century when people are living on Mars, going to and from a much different New York City slowly being destroyed by a warming climate, rising water, undemocratic government and destructive AI embedded into every aspect of people's lives such that banks can now kill people and collect on their life insurance when they don't pay their bills... The Martian entities are still around and they love cats like Zeke and Fred who have to take matters into their own little paws to help the people they love.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Quote your favorite line from one of your stories. Indicate the line, and then the book title.

Yurie Kiri: From the opening scene in "Moonlight Canyon" - Tito wants to take Jane's old kiva and he wants to kill her for it.

"Like I said, ceremonies," Tito said evasively. "I want to learn how to journey to the underworld and I want to do the snake dance. Your kiva, since it sits on top of the earth's navel will be a very special place for the snake dance and that will help me open the earth's navel."

"You're crazy," Jane said sadly. "You cannot open the door to the underworld with the snake dance. Besides you can do the snake dance anywhere you want, and the only thing you'll ever get is bitten! Of course, if you do get bitten often enough, maybe you'll actually find yourself in the underworld... the way you should be... dead and buried."

Literate-Ly Magazine: Tell me something about yourself that is separate from writing.

Yurie Kiri: The crush of people who want to be "friends" on Facebook is frightening especially when they try to call or text at anytime of day or night. I've had to delete the messaging app and cut off all announcements. I can't even imagine what it would be like to be a famous writer like Stephen King ... scary. Carlos Castaneda's Don Juan was right when he told people to stay quietly private.

Yurie Kiri cont'd

Literate-Ly Magazine: Who are your top THREE favorite authors?

Yurie Kiri: All the classic authors that I read in college including George Eliot and Jane Austen plus modern guys like Dan Silva for his spy novels, Mick Herron, Ian Fleming, Jack Kerouac, John le Carre, Carlos Castaneda... oops, that's way more than three and I have favorite non-fiction authors too.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What is the last book that you read? (Not counting anything you wrote)

Yurie Kiri: "Real Tigers" by Mick Herron, part of the Slough House series. Love the British dialogue but you need to have a good urban dictionary for the obscure British slang.

Literate-Ly Magazine: When writing, do you have a system or something you plan, or do you just write?

Yurie Kiri: I used to have a method... make an outline, sketch out chapters etc. then I discovered that once you got more into the story that more inspiration followed. Now I just let my imagination run wild then I edit out the crazy and keep the best bits but I'm still left with too much. Maybe I should go back to structure?

Literate-Ly Magazine: Why do you write?

Yurie Kiri: It's a compulsion... I've been doing it since I was a child.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Do you read your own work a lot? If so, what does it do for you?

Yurie Kiri: Yes, and I always find a few more typos regardless of how much editing has been done. I save those edits up and then occasionally re-issue the text on kdp so that new readers will be happy. However, please note that I find mistakes in every book I read, even those from famous authors and big publisher so maybe there is no such thing as a perfect book...

Literate-Ly Magazine: I play music when I write, and depending on the setting or mood of the story depends on what I listen to. Do you listen to music when you write? If so, what genre or artist/band do you listen to?

Yurie Kiri: No, sometimes I like background noise but the sound of rain, waves or wind is my favorite.

Literate-Ly Magazine: As an author, I find that the hardest thing to write (for me) is the blurb that will be on the back cover or book's description. When you write, what is the hardest line to write, the first line, the last line or the synopsis for the book?

Yurie Kiri cont'd

Yurie Kiri: The hardest thing for me to do is to cut out parts. I've been working on the third book in the "Games series" maybe called "Demon Games" for a while. When I was done it was close to a thousand pages... truly epic. So, I cut it into 2 books and thought about that for a while then I went back, made deeper cuts and put it back together. Now it's a bit over 600 pages, still longer than any other book. This has always been my problem, even with agents. When I got positive responses from agents they always said "too long, too long" with their ideal being maybe 250 pages... alas. Thank you KDP for allowing long books...

Literate-Ly Magazine: What does it mean to be a “successful” writer?

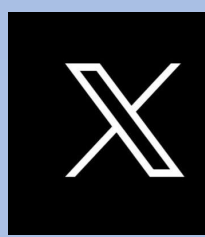
Yurie Kiri: To have satisfied readers, the more the better. I'm glad that people still read books, paperbacks and ebooks and not just watch videos. Maybe the thing that saves us is the ability to read ebooks on our phones - something I love since it's so convenient to always have my library in my pocket. Does that make me a bad person? Always connected to an iPhone instead of reading a traditional hardback book? I hope not and it's not true anyway because I have a huge hardback library... in storage... somewhere, honest. I was living on a boat with limited space, until it got squashed, what do you expect?

Literate-Ly Magazine: What do you want to accomplish, so when you look back at your life, you can say “I did that”?

Yurie Kiri: I don't want to leave any books behind. That would be a waste, especially the long ones...

Literate-Ly Magazine: Any final thoughts that you want to give to your fans or even future authors?

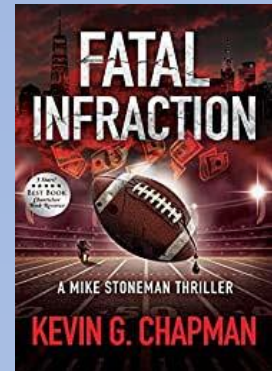
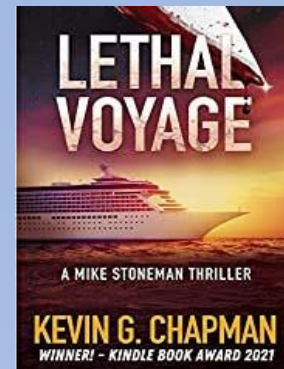
Yurie Kiri: Keep reading, please. It's better than TV and video games!



AUTHOR KEVIN G CHAPMAN

The Mike Stoneman Thriller Series

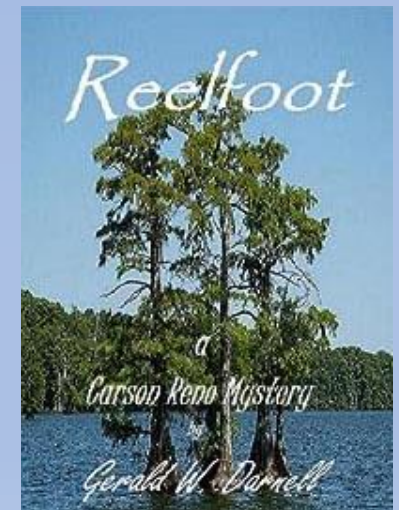
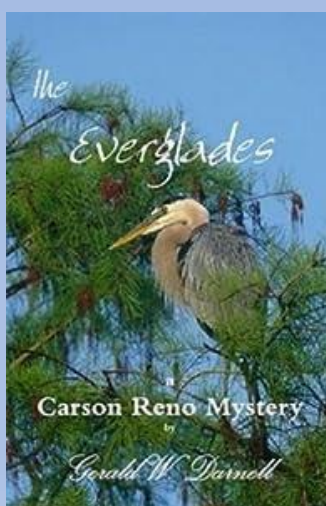
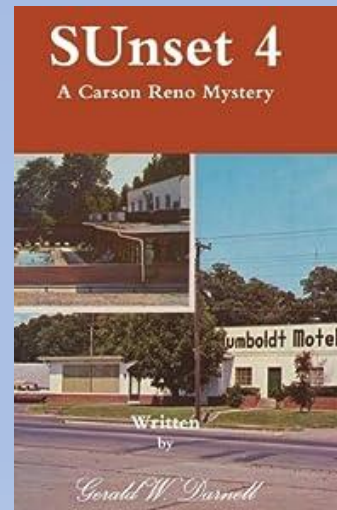
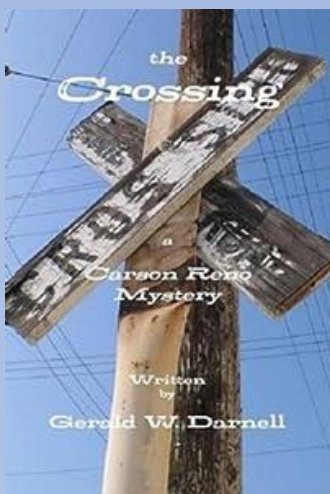
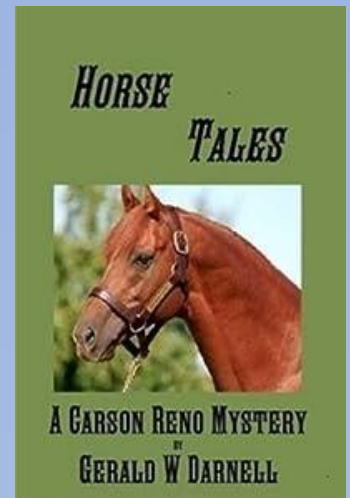
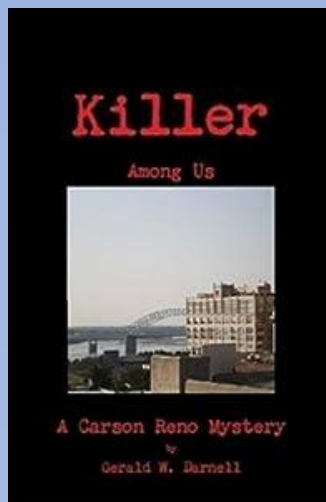
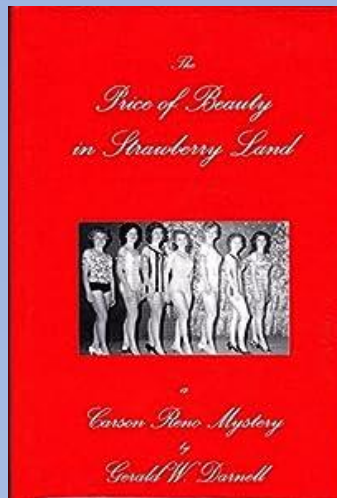
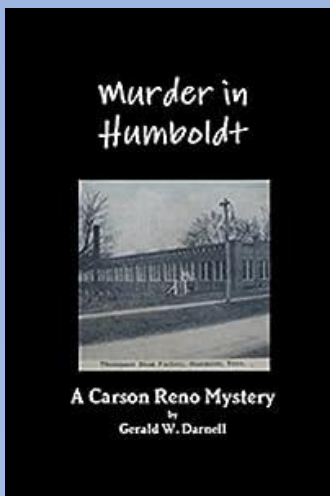
NYPD homicide detective Mike Stoneman and his partner Jason Dickson, are on a bumpy path as partners. They are thrust together to track a diabolical serial killer in Righteous Assassin. They doggedly insist on investigating the murder of a drug-addicted prostitute, over the objections of the top brass, in Deadly Enterprise. Then, after an embarrassing shootout in a Brooklyn hotel at the end of Deadly Enterprise, the Commissioner tells them to get out of town and away from the New York press, so they try to take a vacation. With Mike's love interest, Medical Examiner Michelle McNeill and Jason's recent girlfriend, Rachel Robinson, they board the Colossus of the Ocean for a relaxing cruise to Bermuda. Unfortunately, the cruise ends up being a Lethal Voyage. Back from their adventure at sea, Mike and Jason dive into the murder of controversial NFL Quarterback Jimmy Rydell in Fatal Infraction. Is Jimmy the victim of a racist attack? Was he collateral damage in a mob-run point shaving scheme? Or is there another answer? And why was his body dumped on the Central Park Carousel -- frozen? Mike and Jason need to solve the case before it tears the team, and the city, apart. Then, when they travel to Las Vegas for Jason and Rachel's wedding, Rachel's kid brother is accused of the murder of a fellow drag performer. Mike and Jason have to prove his innocence in order to save the wedding. Mike decides to take a big gamble. Their very lives depend on a Perilous Gambit!



AUTHOR GERALD DARNELL

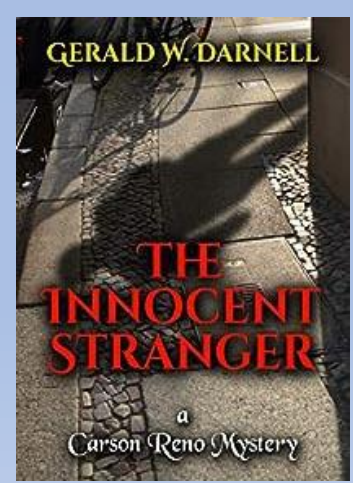
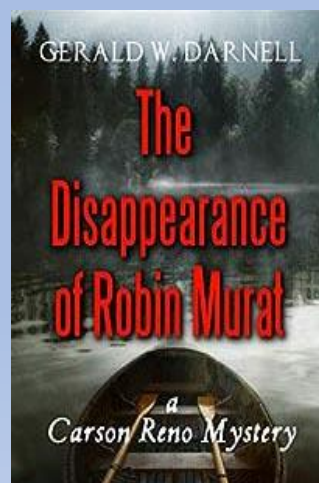
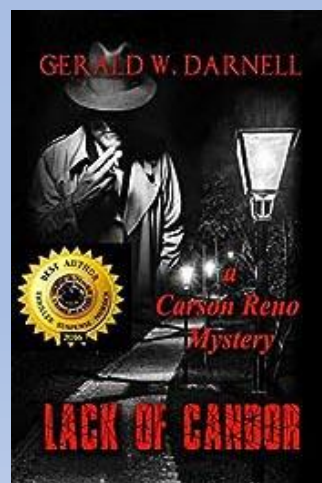
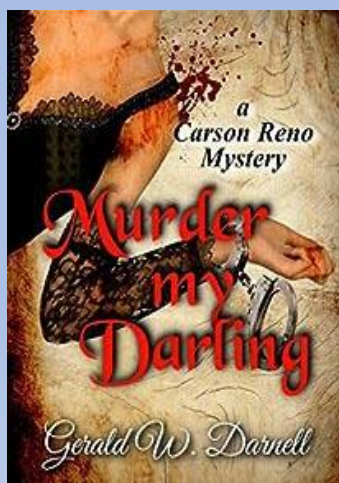
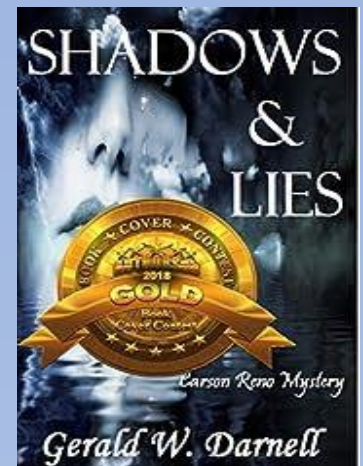
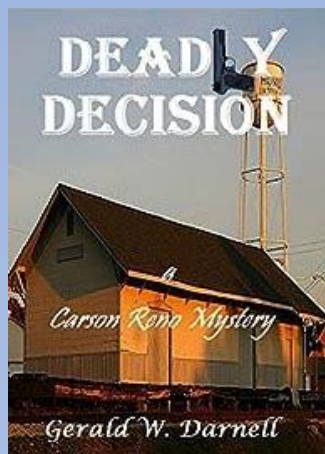
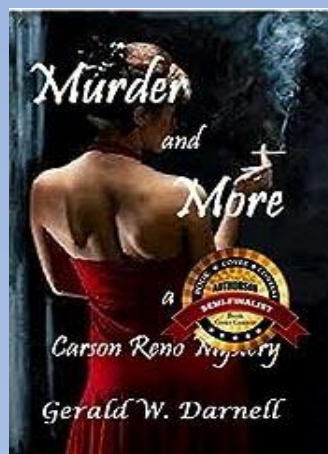
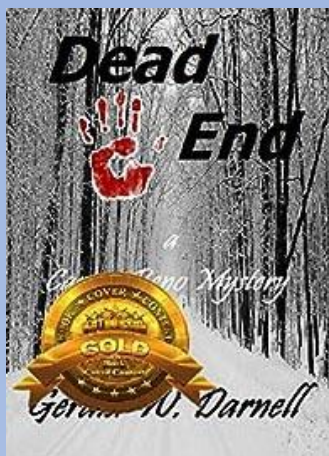
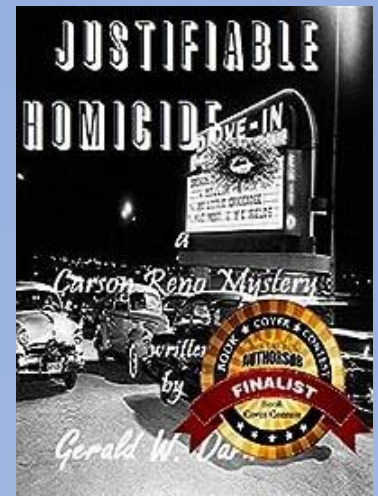
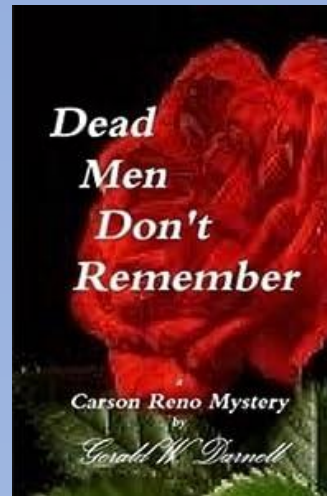
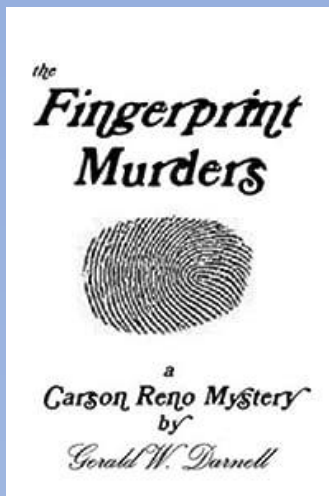
Carson Reno Mystery Series

In the 1960's from his Drake Detective Agency office in the Peabody Hotel, the Carson Reno Mystery Series takes its readers on adventures of Murder and Mystery across the Southeast and around the world. PG rated, Carson Reno books are suitable for all ages. Each book is a standalone novel and it is not necessary to read them in any order. (This series currently has 24 Volumes).



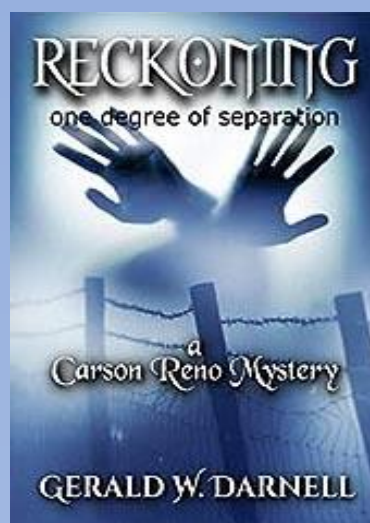
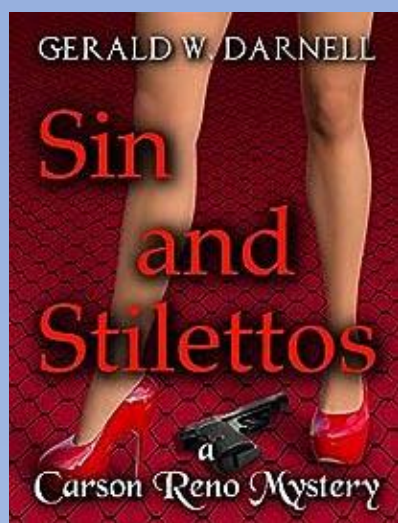
AUTHOR GERALD DARNELL

Carson Reno Mystery Series



AUTHOR GERALD DARNELL

Carson Reno Mystery Series





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Melina Druga- Sexual Awakening

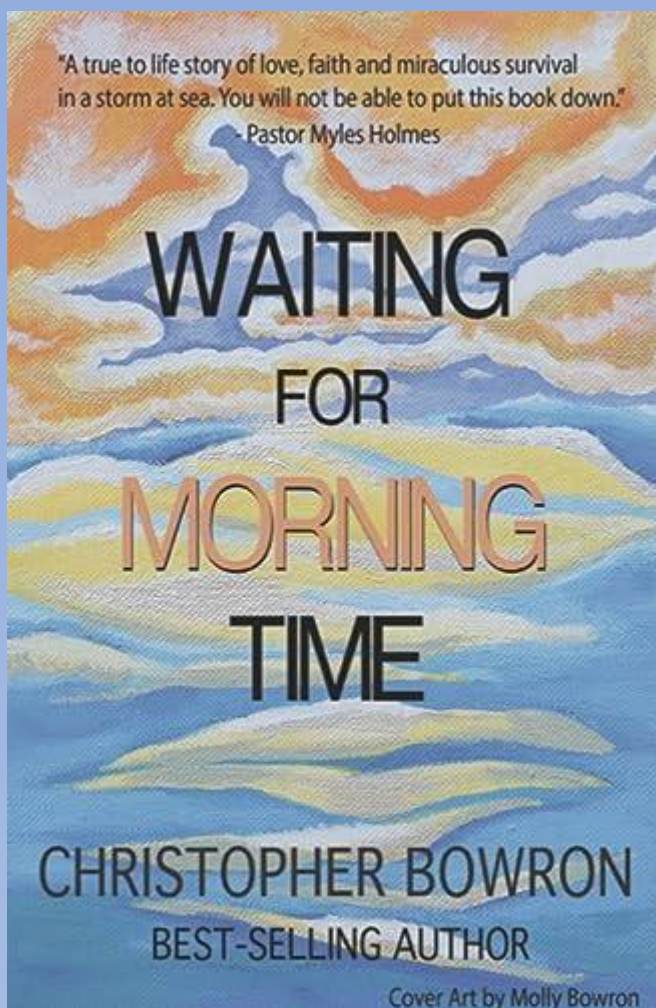
5 Stars

Provocative!

Melina Druga writes a woman's coming of age tale with *Sexual Awakening*. This book is part of the Rock Star's Wife series, and this is volume one. I am a big fan of Melina Druga and read whatever this author writes. This author has a grand imagination, and talent for showing the story. She is a remarkable writer, and writes a vast number of different genres, and she has a unique style based on the genre, which helps her show the story. The reader is introduced to Cassandra, a teenager who thinks she has it all, but she is also looking for something, her own intimate awakening. She comes from a strong, but dysfunctional Greek family, and they have a lot of rules. Cassandra feels stifled by her family, but she is very interested in searching for that boy. Cassandra is also the narrator, which gives the story an interesting perspective, and the reader gets to know what she is feeling, hiding from her family, and her intentions. Of course, she is a big fan of Kurt Cobain, the founder of the rock group, Nirvana. And his death affects her immensely and brings out emotions she never realized she could feel. She's growing up and trying to figure out what that means. A definite eye-opener. The story is endearing and heartbreaking.



*F/ Chick Lit/
Coming of Age/*



Christopher Bowron- Waiting for Morning Time

5 Stars

An unimaginable journey based on a true story!

What a magnificently told story in *Waiting for Morning Time* by Chris Bowron. This story is based on a true story and events that were told to the author, a friend of the family. This is a tantalizing story, and even if you are aware of the story of the harrowing events that occurred that stormy day, in Florida, in the Gulf of Mexico. The reader meets Lew, Bill and Neal, but not only the men in the story, but the families while they were trying to be strong. Three missing men, and not a lot of support because of the impending storm. It would be a storm for the family, bringing them closer, and showing strength and determination. Read it from the beginning all the way to the end, because you just want to know why and how what was going on. I am a definite fan of this author, and this is my favorite of the author's. This author is a great storyteller. A definite attention grabber, so much I couldn't put it down. Both thrilling and intriguing, all the way to the end. A wonderfully told story. Brilliant writing! What an amazing painting and perfect for the cover.

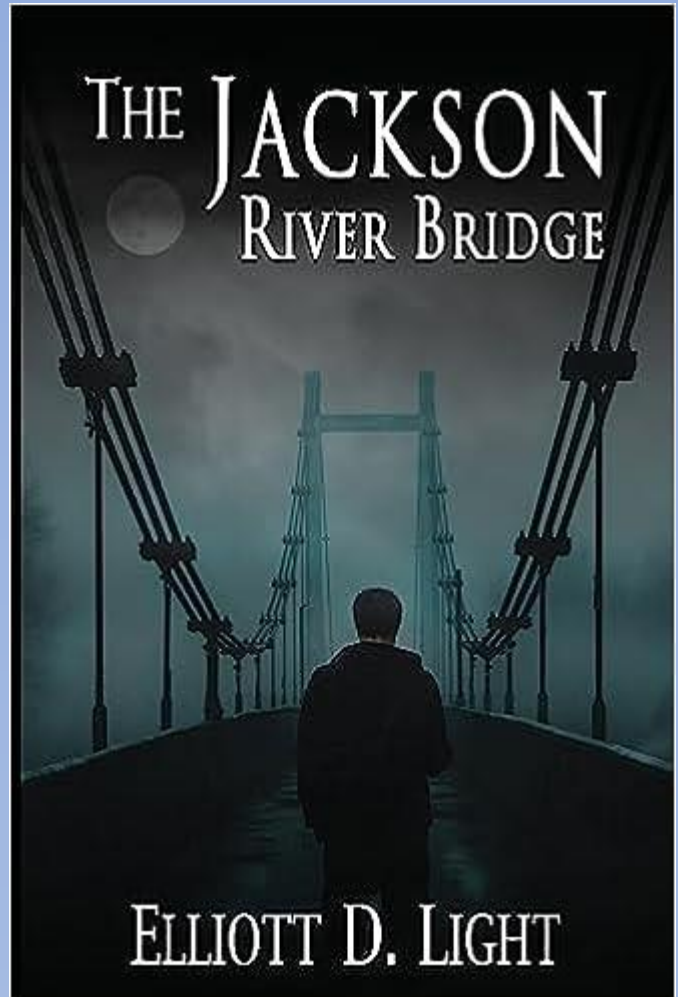
*Drama/
Based on true events/*

Elliott D. Light- The Jackson River Bridge

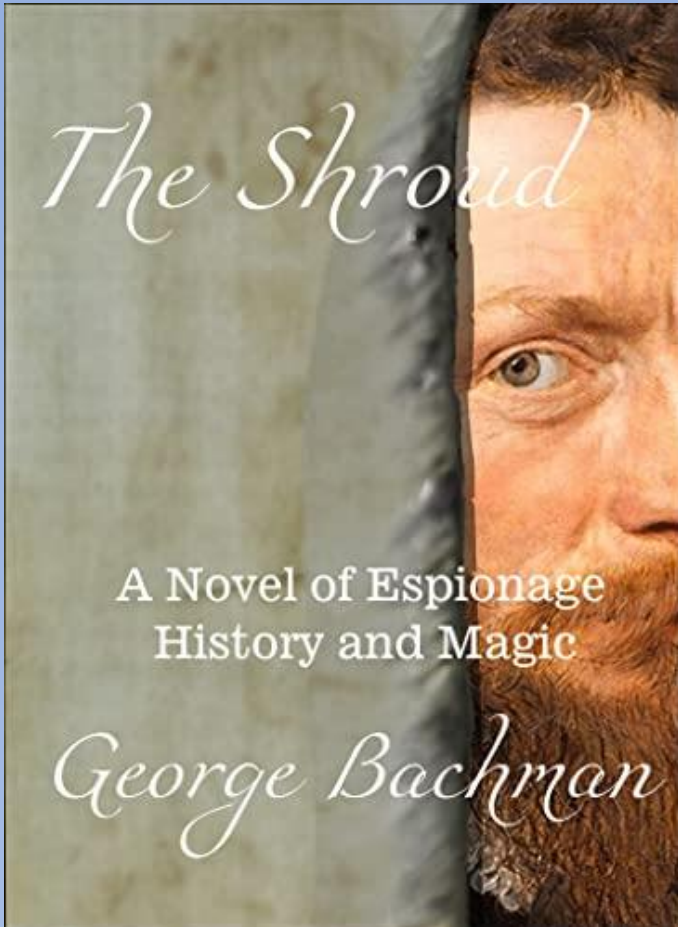
5 Stars

Amazingly thought provoking!

Elliott D. Light writes a dramatic tale with *The Jackson River Bridge*. I am a big fan of Elliott D. Light and read whatever this author writes. This author has a grand imagination, and talent for showing the story. This story was something I was so impressed with and unlike anything I have ever read before. Here is Noah's story. After harrowing upbringing, and constant rejection, a young man, reinvents himself as Noah Waters. He ran away at the age of 16, and found himself on the Jackson River Bridge. He is on the autism spectrum, and his memories are fragmented, but maybe that is how his mind works. That could be his normality. Everyone has their own. He's tormented by puzzle pieces in his head that he can't put together, but also nightmares that torture this young man. Noah seems like he is on the brink of jumping, but something calls to him, someone calls to him, and brings him on a journey of self discovery, self beliefs, and knowing he is something, someone special. His autism, his childhood doesn't have to define him. Impressive writing. The reader just embarks on a superb journey. What an inspirational title. The title drew me in, but the story made me stay. This book captures the reader's attention at chapter 1. A reader can get lost in the story. Simply masterful. Elliott D. Light not only tells the story but shows it with words as well.



*F/ Autobiography/
Journey/Drama*



F/ Fantasy

George Bachman- The Shroud

4 Stars

Grand Read!

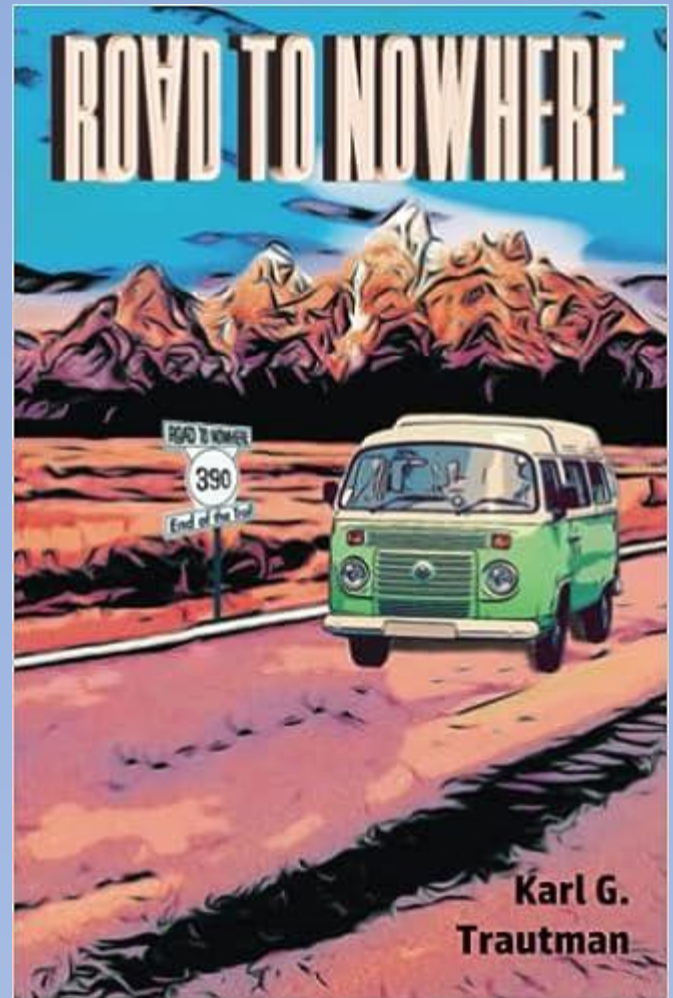
George Bachman writes a fantastical tale with *The Shroud*. I haven't read anything by this author before, and what a hidden gem. I enjoyed it so much, that I have now followed the author and look for more books to read. I enjoyed reading this story, as it had a mix of history, magic, and adventure, all the things that make up a great fantasy, while making the story feel so real. There are a bit of twists, along with betrayal, intrigue and the wonder of what is coming around the corner next. The reader is introduced to Hertford, a former spy who is recruited to find this supernatural shroud of Turin and use the powers, something that everyone wants for themselves. A simple assignment brings action, and enemies all vying for the same thing. Power. The author weaves a tangled web of story, and captures the reader. This author brings the story to life. The story brings in the believable, even if almost impossible. A very unpredictable story, my favorite kind!

Karl G. Trautman- Road To Nowhere

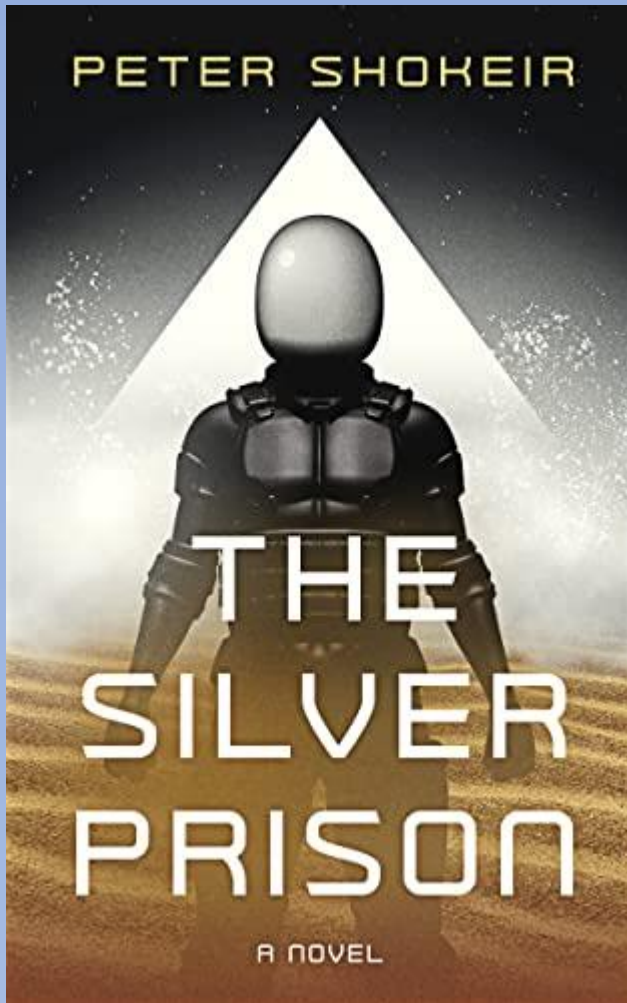
4 Stars

A Grand Read

Karl G. Trautman writes a coming of age tale with Road To Nowhere. I am a big fan of Karl G. Trautman and read whatever this author writes. This author has a grand imagination, and talent for showing the story. The reader is introduced to Manny, who believes he has something to prove, not just to others, but himself as well. Manny narrates his story, and shows us his interactions, actions, and thoughts about almost everything. He is a very interesting character, that seems to have his life planned out, but there is still something bothering him. The story starts with Manny becoming a TA for a very interesting professor, and life has other plans for Manny. The author weaves a tangled web of story, and captures the reader. This author brings the story to life. The characters are so real, it's like being with them within the story. It's a great story to follow and try to figure out what will happen next. As most coming of age stories are, this one also brings in the Manny's self-discovery, and also coming face to face with his life's journey. Manny makes the story his own. A genuine character driven story!



*literary fiction,
coming of age*



/YA/ Military/ Sci-Fi

Peter Shokeir- The Silver Prison

5 Stars

Intriguing!

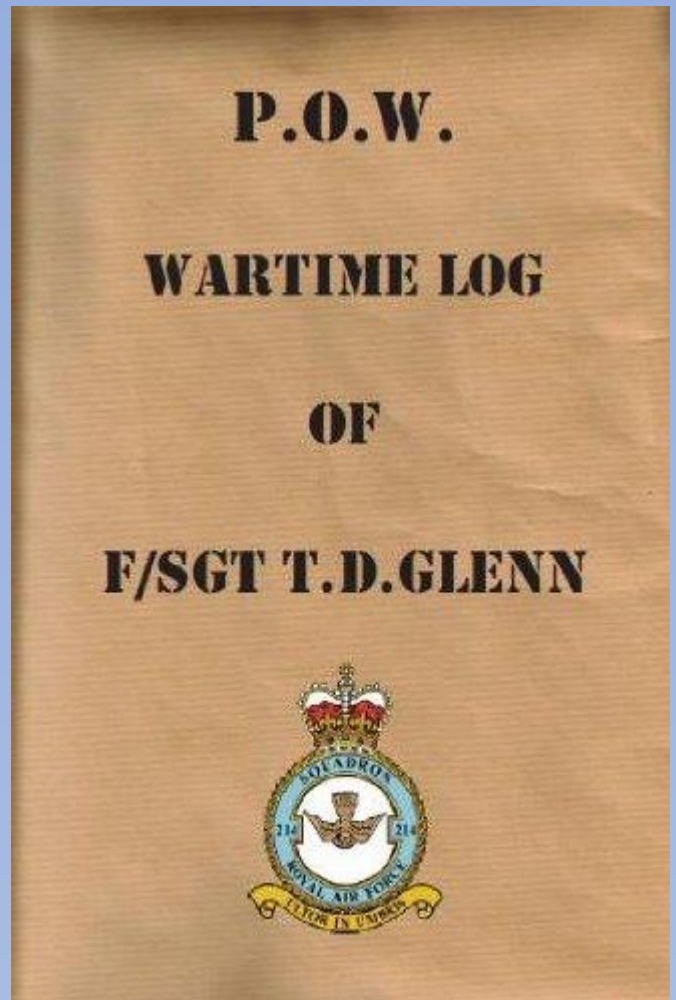
Peter Shokeir writes a sci-fi tale with *The Silver Prison*. I haven't read anything by this author before, and what a hidden gem. I enjoyed it so much, that I have now followed the author and look for more books to read. This author has a grand imagination, and talent for showing the story. The reader is introduced to a war borne world, and then, a mysterious man, they refer to as Helmet Man. Helmet man is very odd, but has great abilities and skills that not everyone can comprehend or explain, and then there is his personality, a bit rough and raw, intense, and a great character for the story. This author really brings the story together, with hints of suspense, and building a future world, that makes you wonder about your own future. This is one of those books that grabs you from the start and pulls you in. Impressive writing. I really loved the story, and its action, and levity when necessary. Peter Shokier can certainly write and share a story, and anyone who reads this would understand the honor of reading it. Un-put-downable! Shokier has just found another fan! Tantalizing and intriguing!

Rod Glenn - P.O.W. Wartime Log of F/Sgt. T.D. Glenn

5 Stars

A powerful and raw story of a POW

What a magnetic story in P.O.W. Wartime Log of F Sgt. T.D. Glenn by Rod Glenn. Rod Glenn shares his grandfather's Tom Glenn in a word for word, recreation of the POW's log. It's the true account of the British POW, and many of the details that Tom decided to write about were probably to help keep himself together, and alone with his own thoughts. I was very honored to read this book. He kept information about his crew, what his parcel contents were, and the reader can learn every little thing about his camp and what the conditions where. I am a definite fan of this author! I'm so glad to read this, this is such a legacy of a family legend, and I treasure this read, just as much as the Glenn family. An embraceable story. The reader just embarks on a superb journey. This is a magnificent plot that kept this reader turning the pages.



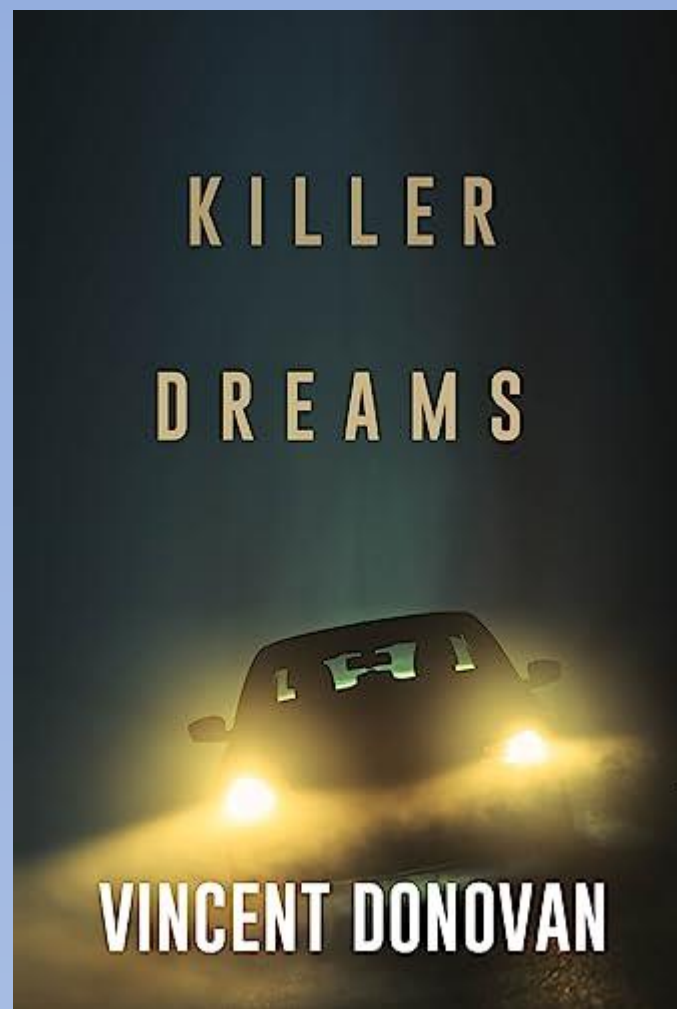
*Nonfiction/Memoir/B
iography*

Vincent Donovan- KILLER DREAMS

5 Stars

An exceptionally grand read!

Vincent Donovan writes a harrowing and thrilling tale with KILLER DREAMS. I haven't read anything by this author before, and what a hidden gem. I enjoyed it so much, that I have now followed the author and look for more books to read. This author has a grand imagination, and talent for showing the story. The reader is introduced to Cassie, who is basically being treated like the town's pariah. Her mother is in a coma from an accident she caused when she crashed into a group of people, killing and injuring them. The blame is now laid on Cassie's shoulders, even after slowly her mother begins to wake up. Rose has been in a coma for ten years, and things are definitely not the same as they were before the accident. Even Cassie's father is enjoying life, with a new woman. Cassie isn't sure that Rose coming back is a good thing or not, but then she focuses on the truth of what happened, and tries to prove what really happened that fateful day. This is one of those books that grabs you from the start and pulls you in. The story is endearing and heartbreaking. It's a real eye-opener. Whatever this author writes, I want to read. This is a magnificent plot that kept this reader turning the pages. This journey was very unpredictable.



Thriller

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews has been reading books (forever) and writing reviews for any author of most any genre since 2014, with no apparent end in sight.

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews also has a new website. amysbookshelfreviews.com

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews does have other features and options for authors. Amy's Bookshelf Reviews even does Video Reviews.

For "legacy authors" (repeat authors) who want a review, just send an email, and you'll get your title on the VIP Legacy Author shelf, unless you are in a hurry and want another shelf to be on. -

For "legacy friends" (repeat representatives), who want reviews for their clients also have options, and some are already designated as priority or preferred legacy friends.

So, check out Amy's Bookshelf Reviews, and if you need assistance, there are how-to videos on navigation and how to request a review if you're a new author to the site.

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews is a not-for-profit business and does not charge for reviews, but donations and gratuities are always welcome to keep the site up and running and to allow Amy's Bookshelf Reviews to purchase books to make the review a "verified purchase" on Amazon.com

Literary Professional Referrals



Essence Enterprises has rebooted the Literary Professional Services Bulletin Board. (If you were on the bulletin board on the old sites of The Official Blog of Amy Shannon, Amy's Bookshelf Reviews, and Genesis Book Promotions, your information has already been added to this new bulletin board).

Private Referral List (Free)

If you would like your services to be listed on my private referral list (which just means that it is NOT listed on the Bulletin board, but still in my list of services to be referred), still needs to be vetted, and the requirements to be on this list are the same for private and public referrals.

Bulletin Board (Public Referral list)
\$50.

If you would like your services to be listed on the (public referral) bulletin board, it must meet some requirements, and requires also a price of \$50 (US).

). This fee covers the bulletin board (you can have an image of your business card, or a list of your website, services, pricing link, etc... and a lifetime advertisement in Literate-Ly Magazine (for the life of the magazine).

Literary professionals include but are not limited to:

Publishers (any type)

Literary Agents

Literary Book Reviewers/Influencers

Literary Publicists

Literary Podcasts

Book Blog Companies

Cover Designers/Illustrators

Editors

Literary magazines

The image is a composite background. On the left, there is a lush green landscape with a large, full-canopied tree and a dirt path leading towards a wooden bench. The bench is positioned in front of a wall with a rough, textured appearance. On the right side of the image, a large, vertical wooden plank with a clear grain pattern runs from top to bottom. The overall color palette is warm, with golden and brown tones. The text 'Writing Tips' is centered in a bold, black, serif font.

Writing Tips

Authors, do you market your brand?

As authors, no matter the type of authors, traditional, Indie publishers, or Self-Publishers, need to promote their work, their titles, their writing. However, some authors do not think about promoting themselves, just the work.

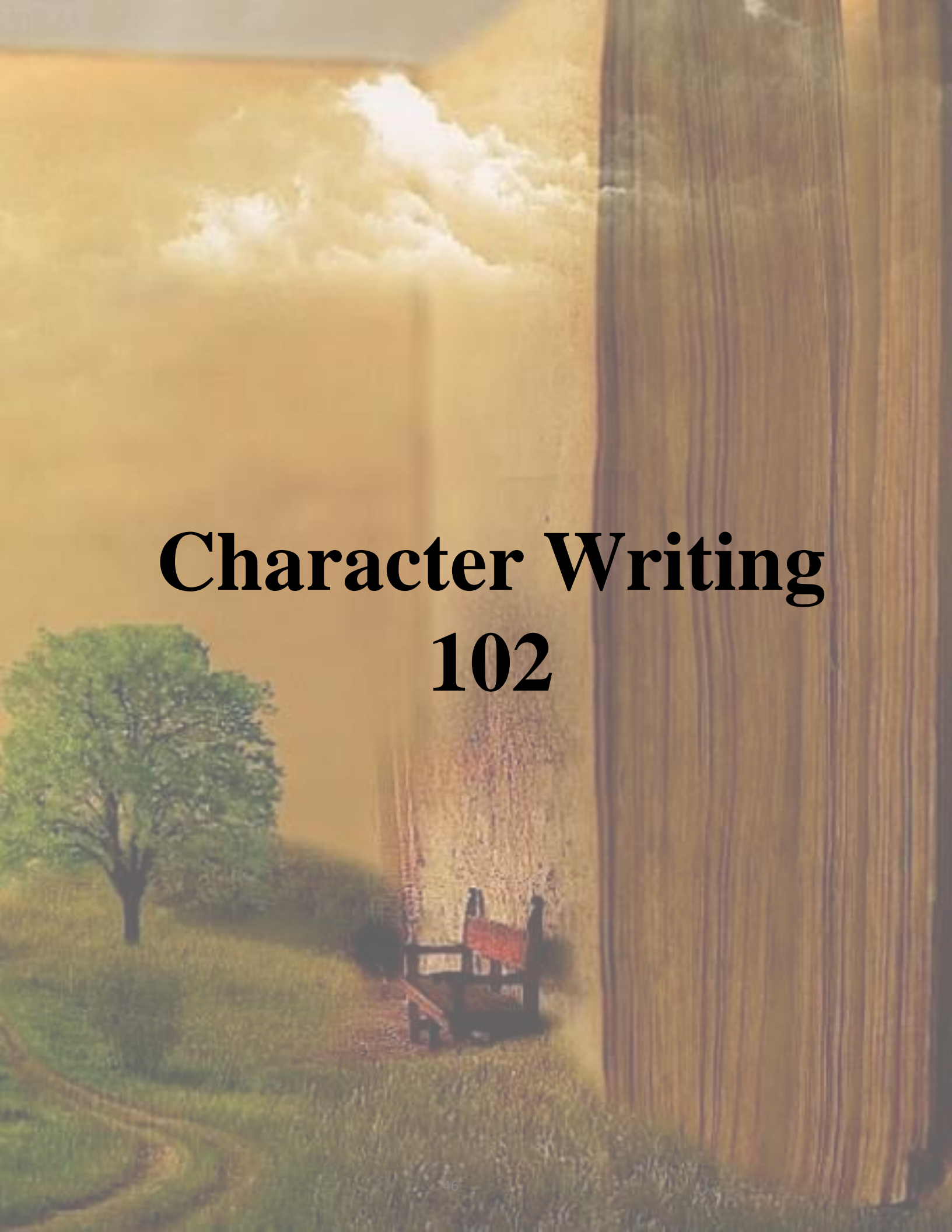
Book promotion and marketing is only part of what the author should do. The other part is to market themselves as writers/authors. If the author uses a penname, that penname is their brand. They should have at least some social media page, and maybe a website. The authors who use their own name on their book covers, also need to promote themselves, their brand. Authors do not need to release a real photograph of themselves, but something, some icon or image that shows the brand, and can be used on different social media platforms.

There are simple and (yes, free) ways to start to create the brand, but sometimes authors do not always know where their brand has strengths and where it has weaknesses. I offer services that not only help authors promote their work or themselves, but I also do a social media review. (See promotions pages for more details).



When an author publishes more than one book, the author will focus on promoting their upcoming release or the currently released book. But what happens to the books published in the past? Do they get less attention for promotion or maybe none? As the author gains readers, especially with their new or upcoming book, they should remind the readers that they also have other books out there. Especially if the books aren't part of a series.

Sometimes authors need to promote their brand, and when a reader sees that brand, they want to learn more about the author's current and past works, and maybe that reader will turn into a fan, and want to read whatever the author writes.

The background of the image is a painting of a rural landscape. On the left, a large, leafy green tree stands in a field. In the center, a small house with a thatched roof is visible, with a wooden fence in front of it. A dirt path winds through the field. The right side of the image is dominated by a vertical, textured brown strip that resembles the spine of a book. The overall color palette is warm and golden, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

Character Writing 102

Backstory

The backstory can refer to events that led up to what is currently happening in a story, what affects how the story will play out (the past), or the past of a character. In this instance of backstory, it's about the character's past, but also there may be a single event that changed the character and made the character who she or he is right now at the start of the story.

A character should not just "be" as they are right now, unless they were just born at the moment the story started. Characters have a past that may be good, bad, or in between.

Traumatic event: Any traumatic event can affect a person, and it also affects characters within a story. A traumatic event could affect any type of character, and it may explain why a character acts or reacts the way that they do or don't react or act as expected. A war veteran could suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), (others can also suffer from PTSD). A past event can make a character a serial killer or a law enforcement officer. There is a wide variety of character attributes that can relate to a past traumatic event. Another way to deal with the traumatic event is to pretend it didn't happen, deny or try to convince someone that everything is as it always was.

Loss of a loved one, parent, child, sibling, lover/partner/spouse, friend, or even work partner can shape a character and how they react or don't react. The change can precipitate a change in career, a dramatic change in personality, either for better or for worse. Character shaping does not have to be stereotypical; in fact, it is more fun to write for those who do not fit within a specific mold. Another way to do it, is to really make the character seem like it is a cookie-cutter stereotypical character, when in fact they are not, and thus explored as part of the story.

The backstory can be given as part of the story, as a prologue, or any way within the confines of the plot. However, the best way to share a backstory is to give it a little at a time. If a story is part of a series, and the backstory is part of the past book(s), it is also helpful to remind the readers of the backstory that helped shape the characters.

Let the past haunt the character, have constant reminders, attitude, or conflict with other characters. Maybe a character was a villain, but now has been redeemed, and there is that one character that doesn't believe in this person's redemption, and always reminds him/her of the past behaviors.

A painting of a rural landscape, viewed through a vertical wooden frame on the right side. The scene features a thatched-roof house with a red door, a large green tree, and a dirt path winding through a grassy field. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. The overall color palette is warm and golden, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

Short Story

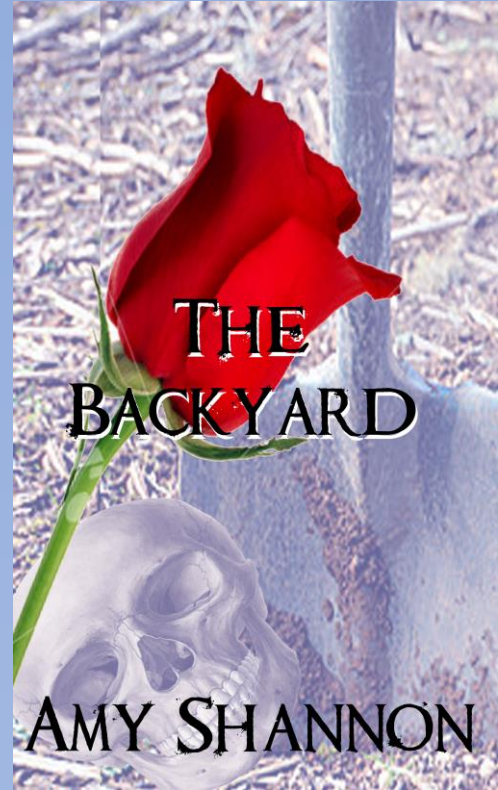
The Backyard by Amy Shannon (Part III)

Part Six

George

I don't know how long it had been, but I can't even open my eyes. The sounds of his dreadful whistling are drowning my ears, but I still can't open my eyes. The whistling sounds muffled as if my ears aren't even attached to my body. My body, I can't feel my body. I don't know why my thoughts are racing, wondering what is happening to me. I don't feel like myself. I have to calm myself. I can't see, I can't talk, I can't even feel, inside or out, but I can hear, and I can think. My mind is focused on the last chapter of my book, *Inside In*. I wanted to finish it, even if this is my final chapter, the book is still unwritten.

The smell. Yes, I can smell it. It's the nasty decomposition scent of his backyard. I can smell. Yes, finally another sense of mine is awakening. What is going on? I hear his whistling getting louder. The shovel. I hear it digging, digging. I have to focus. I have to see what is happening. What is happening to me? Yes, my eyes are open, but it's cloudy, as if something is covering them, like a mesh or burlap cloth. Now, I feel it. It's cold and dirty. I can feel its particles spread over my body. More particles, spreading, like dirt. Yes, that's what it feels like. It's dirt and I'm somewhere. But where?



“You wanted to see my garden,” Lyle’s voice penetrated the silent splashing of dirt on my body. “Now, you’re a part of it. Well, mostly.” The splashing of dirt continued on my body.

Mostly? I’m a part of his garden? What did he mean by that? My mind wandered to my own curiosity. The connections with the others. I wondered if they thought the same when I buried them. I buried them whole, but what was missing from me? I couldn’t move. I wasn’t alive, but I wasn’t dead. What did he take? I felt my conscious still alive, but that was it. He took me and left me, here to wonder for eternity. Then, it all went black. My eyes closed but my mind continued to wander

The Backyard by Amy Shannon (Part III)

... and then all I heard from my misguided ears was that oom-pa-pa of the polka music. My mind still wandered.

Part Seven

Lyle

Lyle placed the rose bush, slightly blooming with blue velvet roses in the hole, covering the burlap wrapped tightly over George's head. "Too bad, George, I was starting to like you," he snickered. He packed the dirt lightly over the roots of the rose bush and headed back to his house. He walked up the back porch and sat down on his chair, putting his feet up. He reached over to the turntable and set the needle on his father's favorite song *Polka Hits of the 50s* album. Such a treat, father, Lyle thought, eyeing the first rose bush he ever planted. His father buried underneath. It was the start of his beautiful garden, but this time, he needed a change. A new life. He leaned back in the chair and wondered what was next. George's rose was the last one in the row. He could start a new row, or a new life, be someone else, start over as someone else.

His eyes focused on George's house. He stood up and walked into his home, closing the door behind him. He walked down the long hall toward the basement door and headed down the stairs. He looked around the large room, it's table in the

center of the room, where he last had George. George never cried. He never screamed, but yet his eyes ran wildly as Lyle took him, took what he wanted from him. Most of George was now in the garden, under the beautiful blue rose bush, and it would bloom and sprout forever, as George's body would die but his conscious would be awake.

If you take his heart as he lay alive, if you savor his soul as he lingers, his mind will always be, Lyle remember his father telling him, and that's what he did to his father. Each soul was replaced with the one before it, Lyle trying to be someone new, each time, but it never worked. Today, it would.

Lyle loosened the top to the jar with George's heart and blood inside. He stared down at the silver tray, that had just a portion of George's brain sitting on it. His frontal lobe, where his creative mind would always exist. Lyle placed the portion of the brain inside the jar. He picked up an empty syringe and punctured the brain, as it absorbed the blood of George. He filled the syringe, and then closed the jar, sealing its top tightly. He wrapped a tourniquet around his arm, injecting pieces of George inside his right arm. He breathed heavily as he could feel George's soul enter him. He grunted lightly as it burned but then flowed gently through his veins. He took the jar and placed it in the refrigerator near the large freezer, that contained his other conquests. His eyes caught his reflection in the stainless steel as he closed the door.

The Backyard by Amy Shannon (Part III)

He hurried up the stairs and into the bathroom. He stared in the mirror. George? He whispered as his eyes became bluer, piercing almost. He grabbed his long hair, pulling it from its ponytail. The razor ran through his hair, dropping it into piles in the sink, as the sharp flat blade, grazed through each strand, until the last bit of hair was gone. He rinsed his head, staring back. “George,” he smiled.

Part Eight

Lyle

Lyle sat in George’s office. He rummaged through the desk drawers, finding the shoebox, filled with wallets, including his own. Lyle opened his own wallet, staring at his driver’s license. He tore it up, and replaced it with George’s ID. He put the wallet back in his pocket.

His eye caught the blank piece of paper in the typewriter. He turned the last page in the pile of papers over and read the last line that George had typed. *The music played louder and louder, drowning out the shovel digging, and screams of the spirit as it descended to hell.*

Lyle smiled, chuckling lightly to the blank page in the typewriter. He placed his hands on the keys and began to type. *The hunter became the hunted. Curiosity killed the cat, but his soul lingered on forever. And with that final dig, that final rose planted, Lyle was dead.*

The Backyard can also be read on Kindle Vella at <https://www.amazon.com/kindle-vella/story/B095Z72BGH>



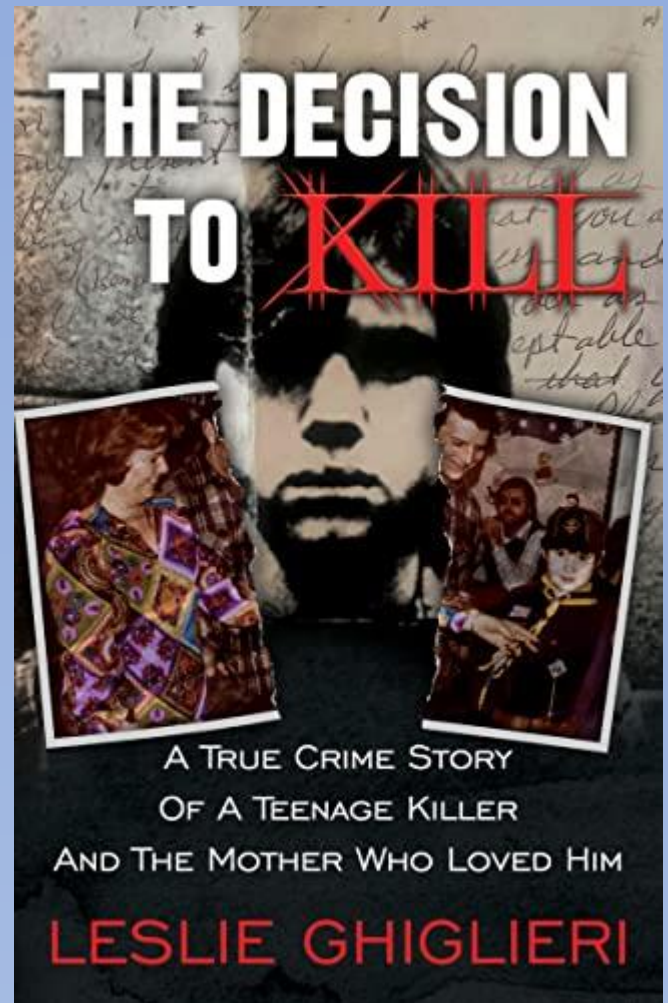
Leslie Ghiglieri- The Decision to Kill

A family tragedy propels this gripping true crime debut as a mother searches for answers in the shocking murder of her husband—and conviction of her son.

In the early morning of October 18, 1986, Cherie Wier's life collapses when her teenage son takes the life of her beloved husband. For years, Cherie grapples with events preceding and following the crime, struggling to overcome the consuming grief she suffers from her loss and the difficulty she faces as she attempts to forgive her son. The courtroom accounts of gruesome details and the shocking testimonies from experts, only add to Cherie's yearning to make sense of the crime. She is tormented, wanting to know how and WHY this tragedy happened and if there was anything she could have done to prevent it . . .

5 Stars

Powerful and dramatic read

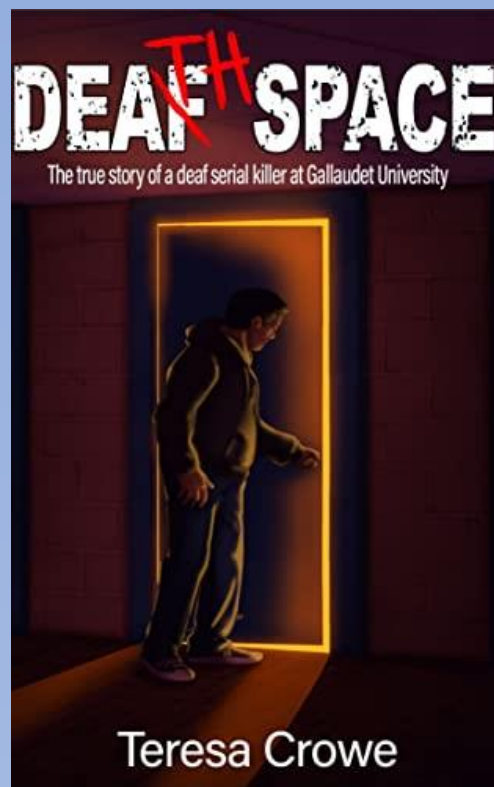


Leslie Ghiglieri writes about the 1986 murder of Don Weir by his adopted son, Dwayne in *The Decision to Kill*. I am a fan of true crime stories. This is the first book written by this author that I've read. The story of Cherie, Don and Dwayne Weir. On the morning of October 18, 1986, Don Weir had been found by his daughter, Donette, when she returned home from a sleep over. Her mother, Cherie, was out of town, and her adopted brother, Dwayne was missing. Dwayne was 16 years old at the time. In reading information about who Leslie wrote the story, I also learned of her background as a 911 dispatcher, and that she was a friend of Cherie. Cherie passed away in 2019 but spent her life not only dealing with what her son did to her husband, to their family, but trying to find a way to see if she could forgive a son, she still loved. It's a poignant story, and very dramatic, as well as heartbreaking. How can one deal with a family member, a child, killing a member of their own family? What makes a son want to kill his father?

Teresa Crowe- Death Space: The true story of a deaf serial killer at Gallaudet University

Four weeks into Gallaudet University's fall semester of 2000, a freshman smelled something funny coming from his friend Eric Plunkett's dorm room across the hall. Eric's bloodied, broken, and battered body lie in the middle of the floor. Fear seized the close-knit, insulated world of Gallaudet's deaf community, and the language barrier created chaos between police, media, and the Gallaudet community.

By the end of the semester, the investigation continued with no arrest. When students returned to campus in January 2001, they brought a premature sense of renewal and hope. One morning early in the semester, someone pulled a fire alarm in Cogswell Hall dormitory. The alarm strobed bright, powerful lights designed to wake the sleeping deaf students. A resident adviser found the mutilated body of freshman Ben Varner. The Washington, D.C. chief of police brought his top homicide investigators into the case, determined to stop the serial killer no matter what it took.



3 Stars

A Chronological set of events

Teresa Crowe writes about the serial killer at Gallaudet University in Death Space The true story of a deaf serial killer at Gallaudet University. I am a fan of true crime stories. This is the first book written by this author that I've read. The story of the killer, Joseph M. Mesa Jr. and his victims. The Gallaudet University is a college for deaf students. Mesa killed two 19-year-olds, Eric Plunkett and Benjamin Varner. The book was very informative, but it had a factual read to it, where it was words on a paper, and even though there were interviews, police involvement, and other interesting facts, it read just as that, a chronological order. When I read a true crime, I want to feel something about what is going on, and even if the writer is not directly involved, there should be parts of that writer in the book, telling the story. Just because it's a factual nonfiction true crime book, doesn't mean it shouldn't invoke emotions. It was a good factual story, and that's how it was presented to me. I will always read a good true crime story, because the intriguing human nature of how someone could just start killing others, has always had the debate of good versus evil, and if people can be truly monsters. Mesa tried to plead not guilty by reason of insanity, but the jury didn't buy it. The read was detailed and very thorough in telling the story.



Recommended Children's Books

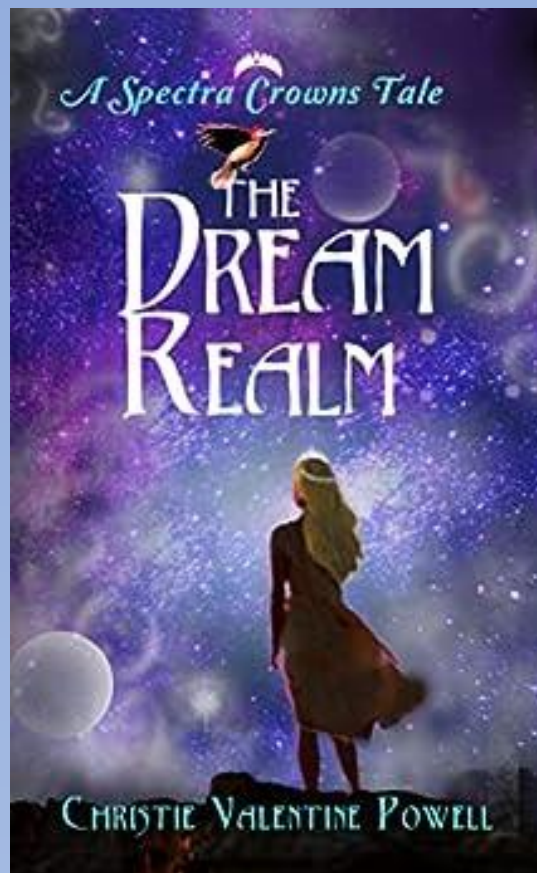
Christie Valentine Powell- The Dream Realm

Genre: YA Fantasy

A princess with a forbidden power.
A man asleep for a hundred years.

Princess Lilac can't let her family find out that she's a dreamrover. Her father and her kingdom forbid the ability, but it's the only way to meet Vireo, her best friend from the dreamscape. When northern cities are attacked, her father is certain that dreamrovers are behind it. Lilac must find the truth before her family discovers her secret. Vireo has answers, if she can find him in the waking world. If only she knew how long he's been asleep... or of the enemy determined to keep him there.

Find more about **Christie Valentine Powell** at www.thespectrabooks.com



Series: The Spectra Crown Tales Volume: 2

5 Stars

Enjoyed this story!

Christie Valentine Powell writes a fantastical young adult tale with *The Dream Realm*. If you haven't read anything from this author yet, you should. The Spectra books, and now, the Spectra Crown tales are wondrous stories with fascinating tales. Dream realms, dreamrovers, and dreamscapes, interesting places and beings, and they bring unique and exotic stories. The reader is introduced to Princess Lilac, a dreamrover who has to hide it from her family, especially her father. This is an ability that is forbidden, so how do you hide your abilities, when they are just part of you? Princess Lilac is tenacious and a very strong person, and then, she finds Vireo in her dreamscape. His status is that he is stuck there, while his body is still asleep. The author weaves a tangled web of story and captures the reader. I'm a big fan of this author! Whatever this author writes, I want to read. A definite attention grabber, so much I couldn't put it down. This read is more than just words on a page.

E.G. Moore- The Last Dragonfly

Genre: YA/Fantasy/Adventure

A magical dragonfly. A science-focused society. Only one can bring the land and her people from the brink of death.

Sixteen-year-old Governor's daughter Etoiny longs to throw off her upper-class responsibilities and become the first female scientist of Taachat. When she accidentally wounds a thought-extinct dragonfly, she must race to find a bygone cure in order to present it to the Science Society for admission.

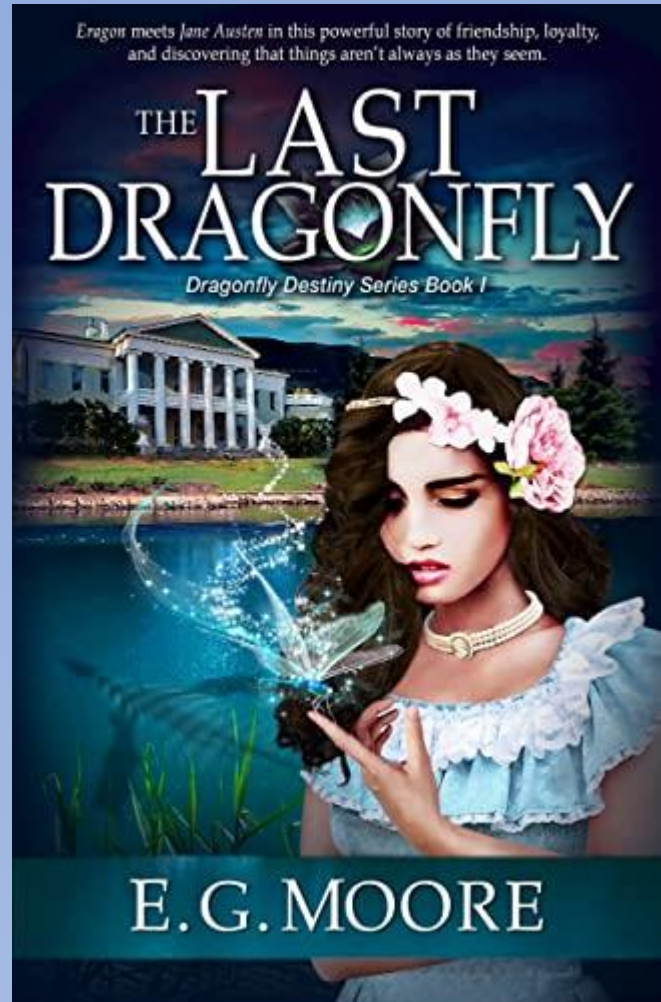
While she researches remedies for the dragonfly, she and the creature form a bond that can't be explained by science. The dragonfly also revives dying blooms all Taachat's citizens need to stay alive for the next three-year cycle. Her dead mother's missing journal could offer insight if only Etoiny could find it.

Find out more about E.G. Moore at www.egmoreauthor.com

4 Stars

Enjoyed this story!

E.G. Moore writes a fantastical YA tale with *The Last Dragonfly*. I haven't read anything by this author before, and what a hidden gem. I enjoyed it so much, that I have now followed the author and look for more books to read. One thing I enjoy when reading a fantasy book whether for adults or young adults, is how the authors come up with the interesting names of characters and places as they build a magical world. Etoiny is a young woman, just like her mother, who had a mind of her own. Even though her mother is long gone, she is always with her daughter. Etoiny is interested in science, and she holds on to her mother's memory with her diary and handkerchief. Her father is supportive, but he doesn't always understand his daughter or allow her to wear pants in public, and dress to hide a lot of her beautiful features. In the first chapter, we learn a lot about Etoiny, and her relationships, but also her interest in capturing a spider's web. Told in third person, it gives the reader a grand perspective of each person and being, and why the dragonfly is so important. The author weaves a tangled web of story, and captures the reader. A well-written plot. An embraceable story. Who could ask for more when it's filled with magical/fantastical creatures and other interesting beings? A genuine character driven story!



Evelyn Puerto- Flood of the Fire



5 Stars

Brilliant writing!

Evelyn Puerto writes a young adult fantastical tale with Flood of the Fire. I have read all the books in this series and liked each one. This one is a grand conclusion to this four volume fantasy series, The Outlawed Myth. Tereka is a very strong character, who believes that she wasn't even meant to be born. She knows what she' thinks she should know but doesn't. She doesn't realize how powerful she is, and I don't think she wants to believe it. She feels alone, even when she's not. She knows that people are against her, but she tries to hide it. "A stone struck her between the shoulder blades. She huffed and kept running ... Warmth flooded her face, a heat not solely driven by her exertion. How could the traders be so blind?" Everyone else seems to know their place, but Tereka is unsure. She isn't the Desired one. At least that what she believes, and why not, that's what everyone tells her. It's an intriguing read, that keeps the reader on the edge of their seat. I also recommend that anyone who wants to read this book, starts with the first one, and works their way through. They each get better and better, and the reader can understand the story about Tereka and Damira. This is one of those books that grabs you from the start and pulls you in.

Genre: /YA/Fantasy

An ancient prophecy, now an outlawed myth. A young girl who was never meant to be born. An empress determined to bring peace at any cost.

Tereka successfully led her friends to escape a prison camp, outwit pirates, and make a home as fugitives in the wilds. But the knowledge that someday her relentless foes will track them down drive her to make good on her promise to topple the rulers of her land—starting with her evil aunt Juquila.

Then an invading army conquers the southern part of Tlefas, and Tereka's hopes raise. Could the invader be the Desired One of prophecy? Or does he bring greater evil to the land? Now she is forced to determine her role in the turmoil that sweeps the country. The wrong choice could prove to be deadly for her---and the peoples of two warring nations.

Find out more about Evelyn Puerto at <https://www.evelynpuerto.com/>



AMY'S BOOKSHELF REVIEWS

**AMY'S
PICKS OF THE
MONTH**

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Andrew G. Berger- The Superflare

Genre: /post-apocalyptic/YA

About The Superflare

How far would you go to survive in a post-apocalyptic world?

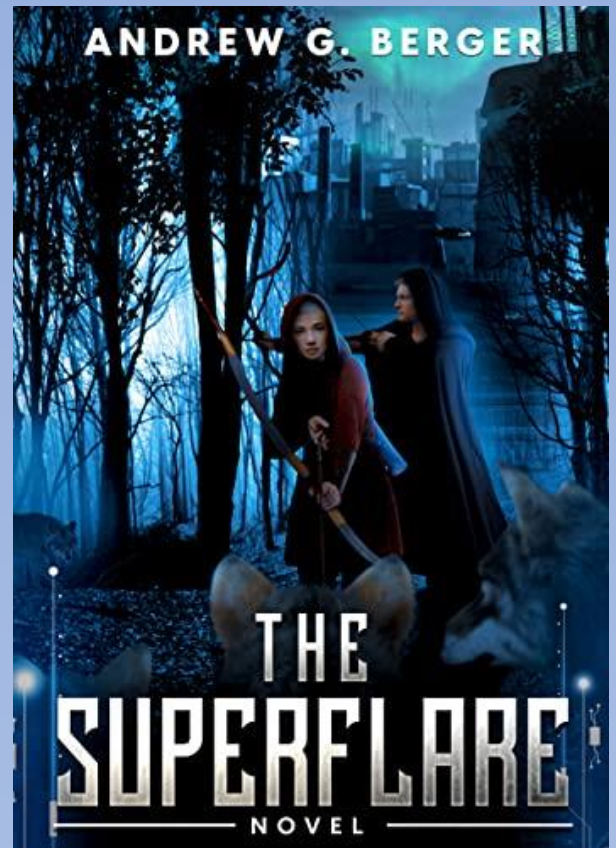
When a gigantic solar storm hits the earth in 2051, a worldwide EMP destroys almost all digital devices and power supplies. The artificial super-intelligence Tron disempowers the people. Life in the clean cities collapses. They sink into barbarism and chaos.

In the turmoil of this apocalypse, Julia (17), a girl from the clean city "CC 12" turned living hell, meets Winston, an 18-year-old settler, whose village lies in the wilderness and whose people strictly reject any use of digital technology. The catastrophe made the once separate worlds collide.

In the adventures and battles Julia and Winston endure together, they're forced to confront the principles of their worlds and to fight tooth and nails to stay alive. But Winston and Julia discover also their love for each other and their destiny in the fight of the free people against Tron and his machines.

For Julia possesses a special and powerful gift...

Find more about Andrew G. Berger at <https://eng.der-sonnensturm.de/>



Anthony Manna- Loukas and the Game of Chance

Illustrator: Donald Babisch

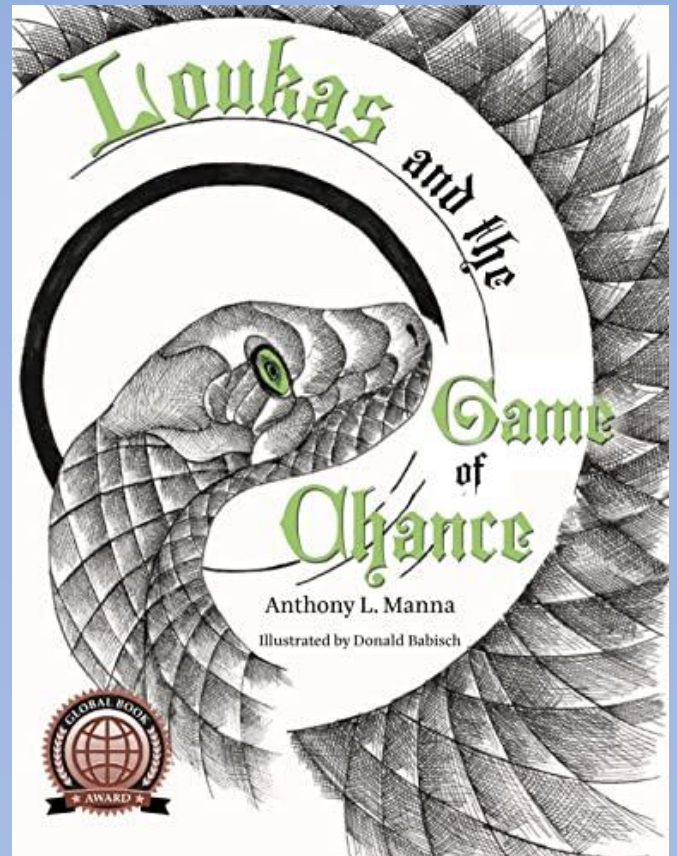
Genre: Middle Grade/Fantasy/FolkTale

About Loukas and the Game of Chance

While Loukas is playing his flute at the seawall one day, he befriends a mysterious talking, dancing snake that rewards him with fortune and favor. Some years later, tempted by greed and pride, Loukas loses all his riches and his family. He must now set off on a treacherous journey through a frightening forest filled with suspense and strange creatures to find Destiny, her son Ilion, the Sun, and her daughter Luna, the Moon. These celestial guardians will surely allow him to reverse his misfortune, restore his honor, and win back all that he loves and treasures, won't they?

A reimagined Greek folktale, Loukas and the Game of Chance is illuminated with dramatic and evocative pen and ink drawings that provide an ideal backdrop for the dark intrigue that fills this haunting story of human struggle, courage, and resilience.

Find out more about Anthony Manna at <https://anthonymannabooks.com>



John Heldt- Annie's Apple

Genre: Historical fiction, time travel, romance

Series: Second Chance

Volume 2

About Annie's Apple

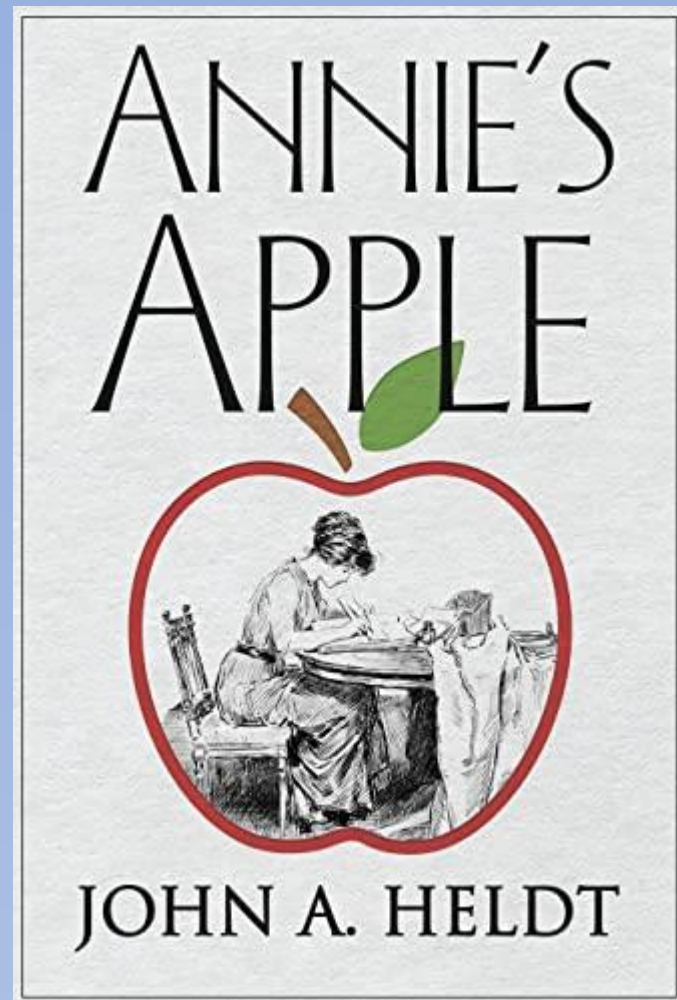
Six years after emerging from a fountain of youth, siblings Bill, Paul, and Annie Carpenter, time travelers from 2022, make their way in 1911.

In New York, Bill and wife Cassie finish a year as educators and struggle to start a family, while Annie tries her hand as a society reporter. In Arizona, Paul and Andy Lee, sergeants and brothers-in-law, attempt to keep the Mexican Revolution from spilling across the border.

For all, life marches on. Then the soldiers receive new orders, Paul and Annie meet alluring strangers, and the family's fortunes take dramatic turns.

In ANNIE'S APPLE, the sweeping sequel to THE FOUNTAIN, five young adults find love, danger, and adventure in the age of factory fires, high society, and the sinking of the Titanic.

Find out more about John Heldt at <http://johnheldt.blogspot.com>



Karl Beckstrand - Why Juan Can't Sleep- A Mystery?

Genre: YA/Mystery/Humor

Series: Mini-mysteries for Minors

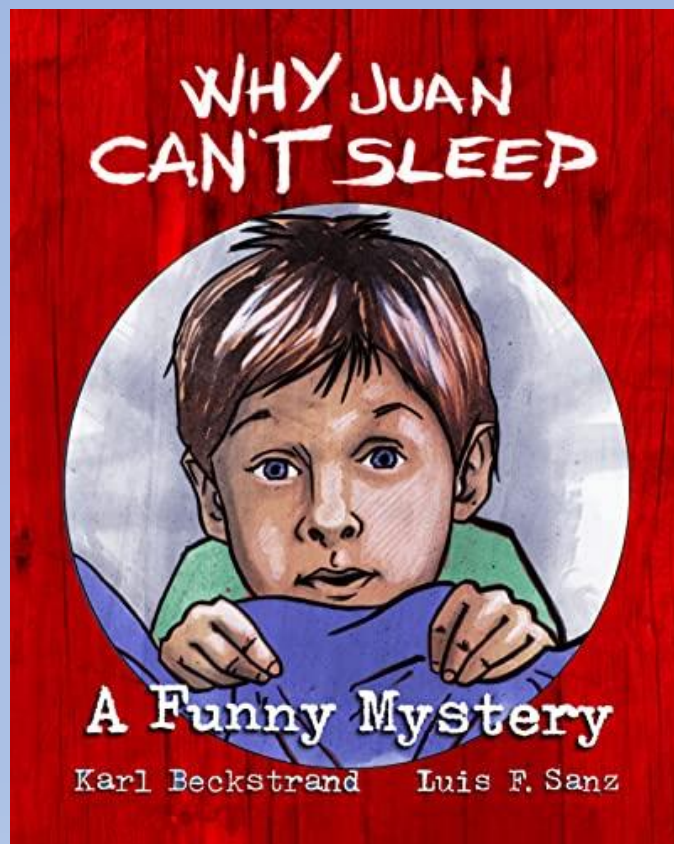
Volume: 4

Illustrator: Luis F. Sanz

About Why Juan Can't Sleep- A Mystery?

Tonight he'll dream of dragons ... or will he? ... Young and old will identify with this funny, spooky quest for rest!

Find out more about Karl Beckstrand at <http://KarlBeckstrand.com>



Peter Shokeir- The Silver Prison

Genre: /YA/Military/Sci-Fi

About The Silver Prison

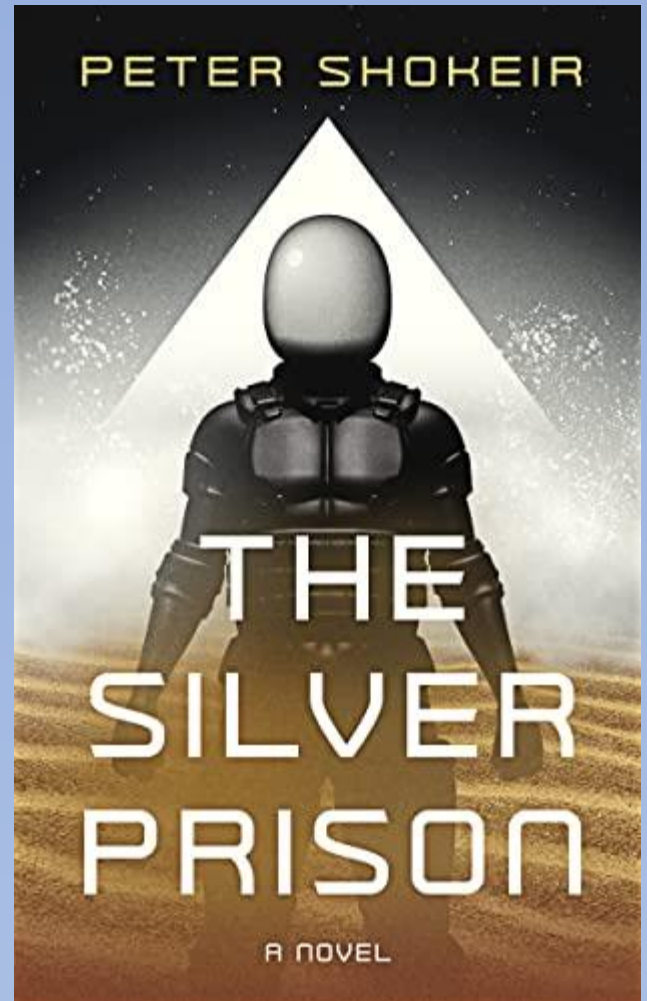
A hero unearthed...

In a war-torn future, a mysterious man has been dug up in the Sahara—somehow alive, buried for who knows how long, wearing an indestructible helmet that cannot be removed. He is a man with strange abilities and an even stranger personality.

He is captured and held prisoner at a remote facility where future soldiers are trained. Shortly after, the daughter of a dead corporate tycoon shows up and begins snooping around.

This attracts the attention of dangerous enemies, and those about to get caught in the crossfire will need the help of the Helmet Man if they are going to survive.

Find out more about Peter Shokeir at <https://petershokeir.com/>



Elliott D. Light- The Jackson River Bridge

Genre: F/Autobiography/Journey/Drama

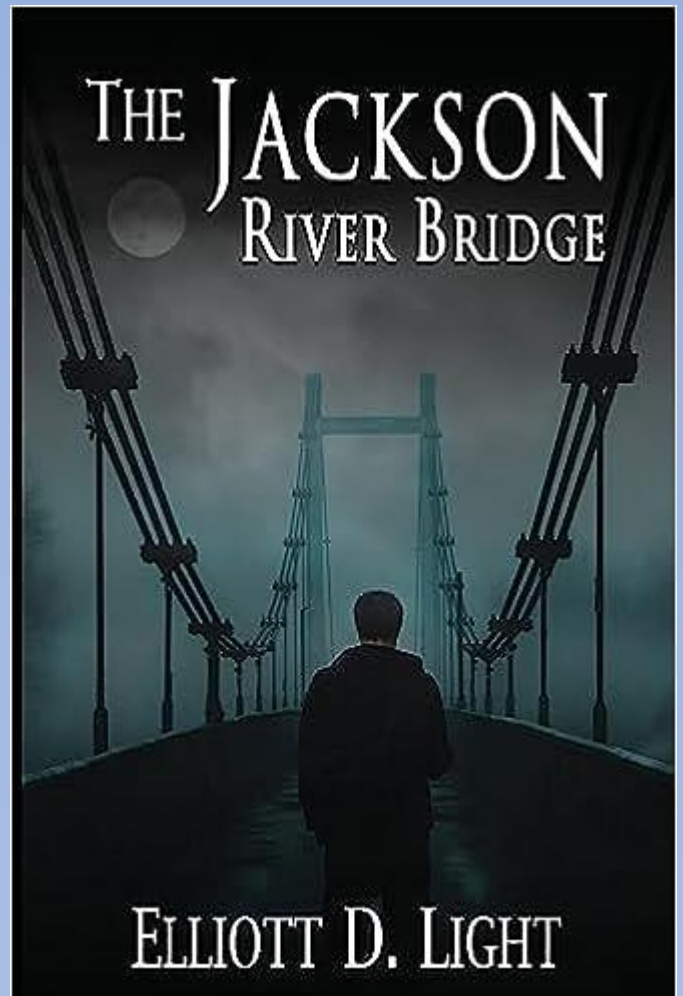
About The Jackson River Bridge

Alone on a bridge staring into the dark water...

He was not born Noah Waters, but constant rejection often has a way of encouraging one to walk away from everything they have known while giving birth to the person they are meant to be. This is Noah's story...

I was a sixteen-year-old runaway when I worked my way to the edge of the Jackson River Bridge and peered at the moonlit water swirling below. To be fair, I wasn't an ordinary sixteen-year-old. I had an affliction akin to autism that left me with fragmented memories of my childhood, memories that inspired nightmares filled with demons that tormented me while I slept and awoke me screaming in the dark void of my room. Even I understood that I had few choices, and all were bad. There was nothing for me on the side of the river I had come from, and I had no reason to believe that the other side of the river offered anything better. Logically, jumping seemed a way to break the tie. The stalemate only broke when I heard a voice emanating from the darkness. The voice belonged to a man wearing a hooded garment that shadowed his face, a man who chose to live on the grounds of an old monastery with a dozen cats. The moment he stepped from the darkness my life began to pivot. I first learned to trust him, then love him. He put me on a path toward a future I never imagined possible that night as I stood on...The Jackson River Bridge.

Find more about Elliott D. Light at <https://www.Elliottlight.com/>



Martin Bodek- Zaidy's War: Four Armies, Three Continents, Two Brothers. One Man's Impossible Story of Endurance

Genre: Memoir/Holocaust

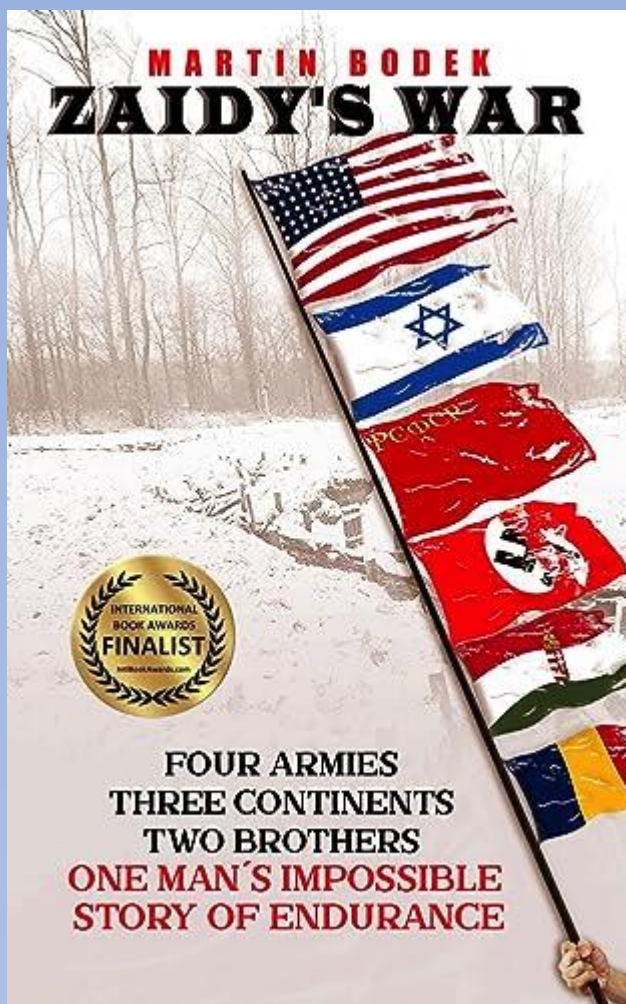
About Zaidy's War: Four Armies, Three Continents, Two Brothers. One Man's Impossible Story of Endurance

Benzion Malik was on a path of discovery. He was keen to learn about everything in life through the teachings of his faith and only something cataclysmic could throw him off this course. In 1939, the 21-year-old Benzion was called up to the Romanian Army. Little did he know that he would not be a free man until 1945.

During six long years, Benzion served in three further armies. He was forced into hard labor and was constantly abused because of his Jewishness by the Hungarian army. He was then made to serve the German army which simply needed disposable bodies to be targets for Soviet bullets. Finally, the Soviet army needed young men like Benzion to help with the effort to fight the Nazis.

Lovingly written by his grandson, this book provides an account of a man's resilience to not give up on the world after extreme destruction, but instead to help rebuild a community and practice Tikkun Olam - Repairing of the World - by believing in cosmic justice and leaving an imprint on his family, friends, and strangers for generations.

Find more about Martin Bodek at <https://www.martinbodek.com>



Melina Druga- Mr. Right is a Myth

Genre: F/Chick Lit/Coming of Age/

About Mr. Right is a Myth

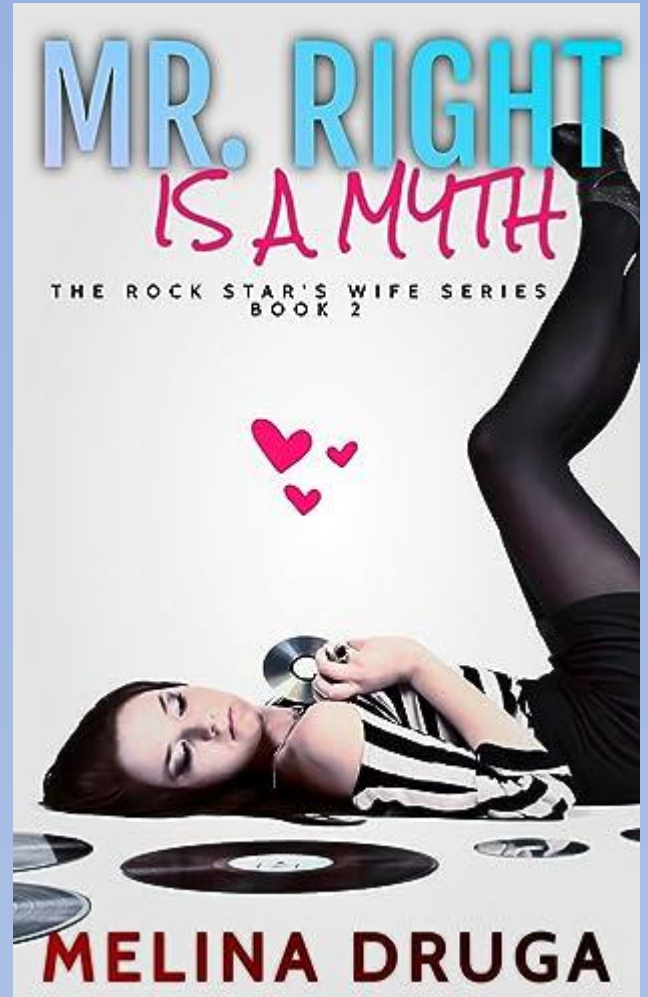
This heartfelt follow-up to *Sexual Awakening* follows its ambitious diarist to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where her hopes and dreams for the future are further tested by a string of social hiccups.

Cassie Economos has rules. If a new boyfriend can't wait two months to have sex with her, he's not the guy for her. If he refuses to wear a condom, he's not the guy for her. And if dating him would mean maintaining a long-distance relationship, he's... well, you get the picture.

She's got her life planned out, and she knows better than to try to make things work with someone who can't agree on the basics, like where to live and whether to have kids. But Cassie isn't perfect, and the more disappointing situationships she finds herself in, the more she wonders if there's even such a thing as a "Mr. Right."

But Cassie doesn't have time to worry too much about that. Her four years at U of I are passing quickly, which means it's time for her to chart her final course: toward Chicago, the city of her dreams.

Find more about Melina Druga at <http://www.melinadruga.com/>



Tracey Lange- The Connellys of County Down

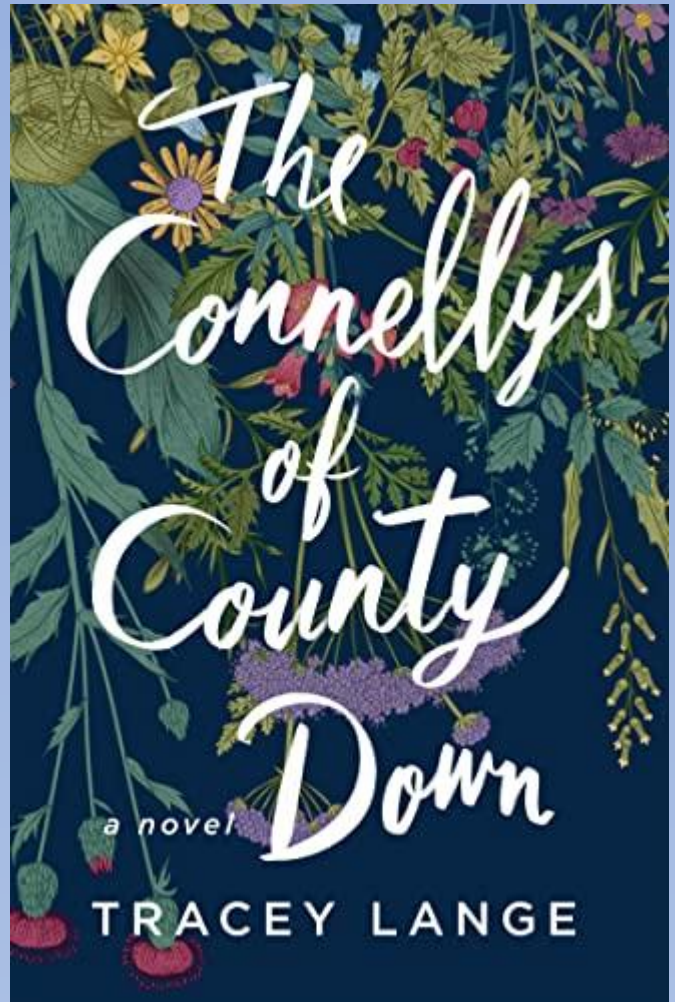
Genre: Women's Fiction

About The Connellys of County Down

When Tara Connelly is released from prison after serving eighteen months on a drug charge, she knows rebuilding her life at thirty years old won't be easy. With no money and no prospects, she returns home to live with her siblings, who are both busy with their own problems. Her brother, a single dad, struggles with the ongoing effects of a brain injury he sustained years ago, and her sister's fragile facade of calm and order is cracking under the burden of big secrets. Life becomes even more complicated when the cop who put her in prison keeps showing up unannounced, leaving Tara to wonder what he wants from her now.

While she works to build a new career and hold her family together, Tara finds a chance at love in a most unlikely place. But when the Connellys' secrets start to unravel and threaten her future, they all must face their worst fears and come clean, or risk losing each other forever.

Find more about Tracey Lange at <https://traceylange.com/>



Gareth Williams- Needing Napoleon

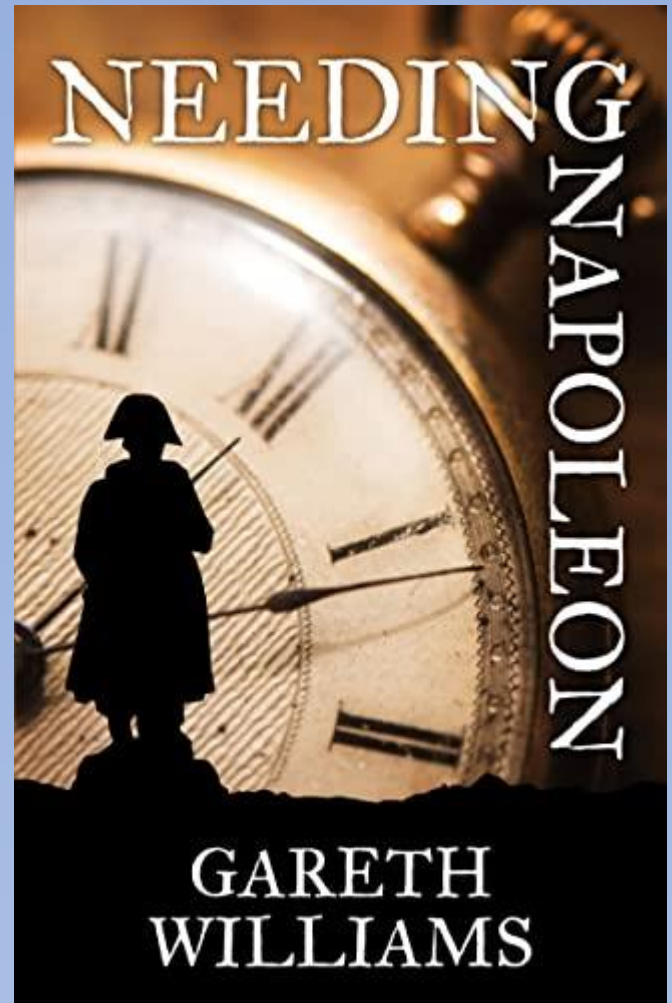
Genre: F/Historical/Time slip

About Needing Napoleon

‘Needing Napoleon’ is a remarkably original feat of imagination: an irresistible adventure that spirits the reader from present-day Paris to the battle of Waterloo and beyond.

Can you change what has already happened? As a history teacher, Richard Davey knows the answer. At least, he thinks he does. On holiday in Paris, he stumbles across a curious antiques shop. The eccentric owner reveals a secret Richard dares not believe. Richard’s conviction that Napoleon Bonaparte should have won the Battle of Waterloo could be put to the test. Accurate historical detail collides with the paradox of time travel as an ordinary twenty-first-century man is plunged into the death throes of the French empire.

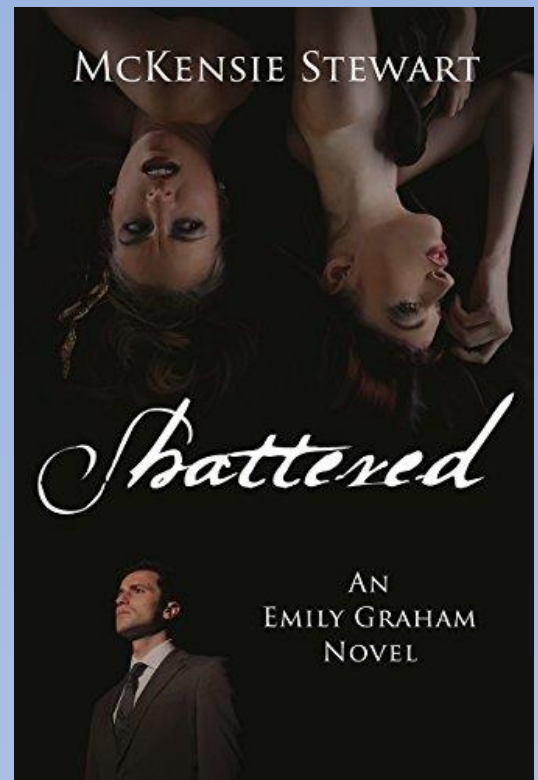
Find more about Gareth Williams at www.whatifaltnatehistory.com



Shattered: An Emily Graham Novel

By McKensie Stewart

Emily finds herself metaphorically waking up to face a life she no longer recognizes. She loves her husband Brendon Graham, the Senator for the State of Pennsylvania along with their twins Madison and Connor but that isn't enough any longer. The ripple effect of her college professor, Dave Banks, taking a piece of her innocence destroys her marriage every day. Even though Emily only shared part of the secret with Brendon; he is on a destructive spiral choosing escorts, booze and heroine to cope with the pain he feels from their loss. Kyndall, the matriarch of the family, and Emily's mother-in-law will do everything in her power to ensure that her dream of Brendon becoming the President of the United States will come to fruition no matter who she has to kill to make it happen. Emily's true love, Julia, her college roommate has a huge secret of her own that will shatter any reconciliation between the two of them.



amazon

Coming March 21 2024

Amy Shannon's Balls-Town

In celebration of the Village of Ballston Spa's anniversary of 217 years, Amy Shannon is releasing her first historical nonfiction book, *Balls-Town: A community of history, friends, neighbors, and lingering spirits*.

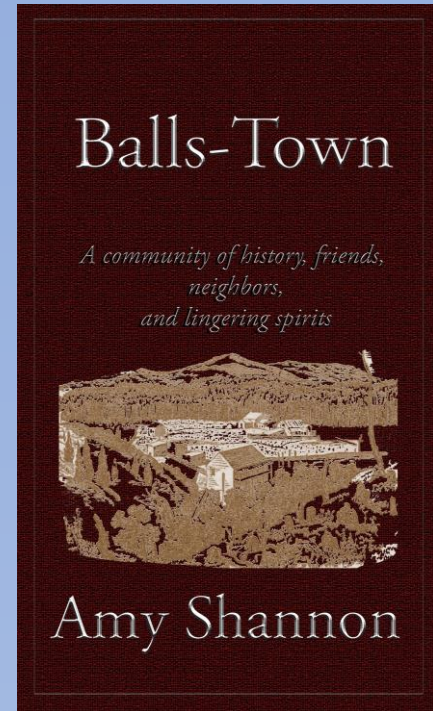
The book covers past and present, and also brings back to life those forgotten books by forgotten authors who dedicated their writing to Saratoga County, and its healing mineral springs. These springs bubbling up with their medicinal value, were the start of getting settlers to Ballston Spa, not just businesses like Taverns, Boarding houses, and hotels, but farmers and industrial business men as well.

A lot of reading and research went into writing this book.

Books as resources and those that have been found on digital copy, are available for viewing on the website at

<https://essencecenterpriseus.com/the-history-of-balls-town>

Some things that were not included in the book, but have been researched, will also be available for viewing. I offer some of the digital files for downloading, if you want a resource, but only those books that were available free for download.



Synopsis of Balls-Town

With such lush and savage history, the Towns of Milton and Ballston were one, Balls-Town. The settlers, pioneers may still be recognized for the start of the towns, but there is more to the story. People, not just prominent, and the writings of people, long past, where their work may be long forgotten. It is a shame that some are forgotten, so with this being a history of Balls-Town, the incorporation of the Village of Ballston Spa, it is also an homage to those who wrote about these precious lands of the towns. Some stories, poems, historical writings about these hometowns, may have been once lost, but in this book, some of them are being revived.

I'm Amy Shannon, and this is my hometown, and its community of history, lingering spirits, and neighbors