TITERATE TY WAGAZINE

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

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT:

ZOLA BLUE

AUTHOR INTERVIEWS:

LINA HANSEN
REBECCA COPELAND
SAVANNAH HENDRICKS
YVONNE REDIGER

DECEASED AUTHOR INTERVIEWS:

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

TEATURED SHORT STORIES
HOMAGE TO H.P. LOVECRAFT
THE SANDS OF DIONYSUS
GENERATION BOTTLEROT

BOOK REVIEWS AND MORE:

AMY'S BOOKSHELF REVIEWS
AMY'S PICK OF THE MONTH
UNCAGED MAGAZINE

CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULT:

MY DAD IS A SOLDIER

WHEN NAICHE VISITS THE STAR

AUDIOBOOKS:

DROP: MAKING GREAT DECISIONS

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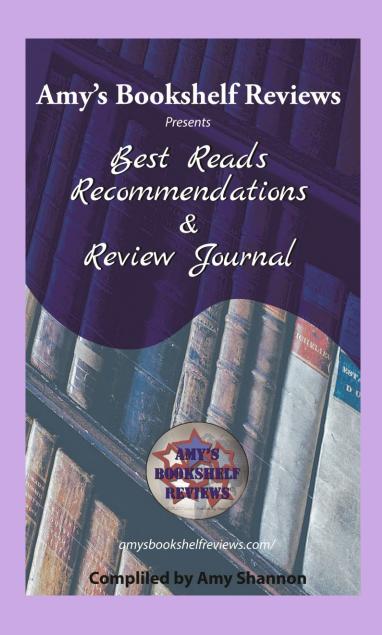
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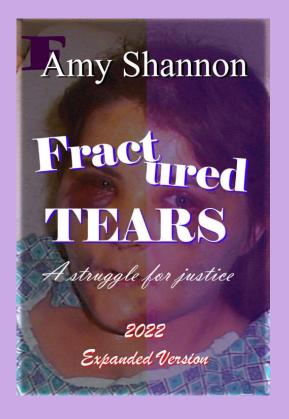
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Anna Coleman gave her husband one more chance for them to work on fixing what was wrong with their marriage. Ted used that chance to try to kill her. Anna didn't give up or give in, she fought to survive, and she fought for justice, as it became a 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.

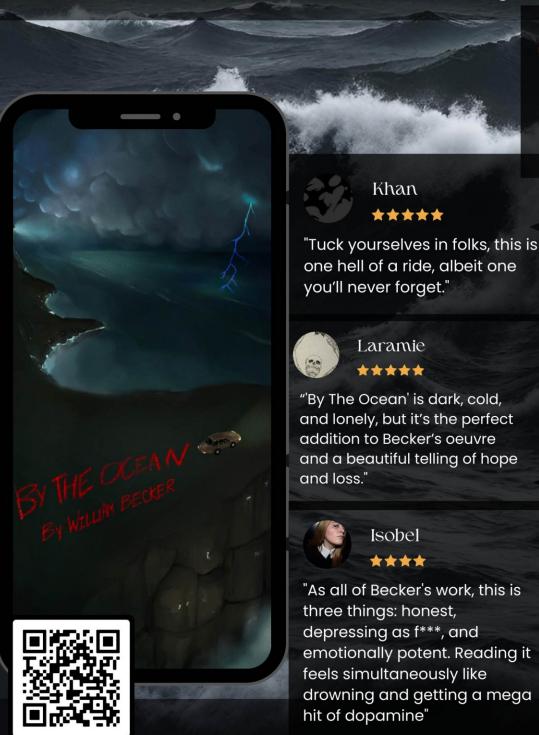
Warning: This book contains scenes of domestic violence and may trigger PTSD or not be for some readers.

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.

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Sam Marshalls is dying. After discovering he has terminal lung cancer, Sam is faced with the reality that he has to let go of everything he cares about. By The Ocean is a man's journey on his own terms not into the unyielding tides of death, but the powerful waves of a life full of regrets.



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Jada

"Truly depressing, taking us through a man's regrets throughout life as he comes to terms with the end of his."



Tyrnie

"I found myself easily getting lost in the story, entranced by the plot, almost like being unable to tear your eyes away from a car crash (the car crash being Sam's worrisome, yet captivating downward spiral)."



John

"Ugly but beautifully written."



E.J

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September Releases

- Debra Siraco and Zareen Wilhelm Sammy's Voyage to a New Home: True Adventures of a Small Cat Finding His Place in a Big World 9/3/2024
- Elli Morgan The Shadowed Moon 9/4/2024
- Janis Robinson Daly The Path Beneath Her Feet, A Novel 9/5/2024
- Yuval Noah Harari Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI 9/10/2024
- Melina Druga Holiday Homecoming 9/10/2024
- Bob Rothman A Terrible Guilt 9/12/2024
- Marie Judson Strange Alliances 9/17/2024
- Carly Rheilan A Cat's Cradle 9/20/2023
- Olivia Hardy Ray
 Pharaoh's Star 9/24/2024
- Janina Franck After Halastaesia 9/24/2024
- Addison Brae Off Edge 9/26/2024
- David Nos Kordan-The Final War of Wizards 9/30/2024

October Releases

- Beverly Twomey The Necromancer's Apprentice 10/1/2024
- S.M. McCoy Breaking Fate: A Greek Myth Monster Retelling 10/2/2024
- John Grisham Framed: Astonishing True Stories of Wrongful Convictions 10/15/2024
- Mason S. Haynie Profana's Faceless 10/29/2024

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"The author weaves a tangled web of story, and captures the reader... A well-written plot. An embraceable story." Amy's Bookshelf Reviews

"Moore builds a very complex and intriguing plot that will keep you guessing as to where each character's loyalties lie."
-Author Victoria Nelson

"In a Society run by science, Sablites hunt down every hint of [magic] power, and Etioiny must use all her pluck, ingenuity, and determination to find the truth of the last dragonfly..."

-Fantasy Author Azalea Dabill













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Author Spotlight

Author Spotlight Zola Blue

As a reader, Zola has enjoyed numerous books throughout her life. As a writer, she aims to create engaging stories that captivate and leave readers wanting more. Now semi-retired, she can devote more time to writing and building a relationship with God.

At the same time, she works on my creative journey. Living on a lovely island in Canada with her husband, two dogs, and one cat is a beautiful and serene environment that greatly inspires her writing. Drawing from her experiences and surroundings, too, I believe, adds richness and authenticity to her stories.

Nurturing her passion for writing and exploring the realms of fiction and fantasy with dedication and creativity, she hopes to continue to craft captivating stories that resonate with readers and provide them with an enjoyable reading experience.



















Ed Borowsky's Lizard of Transition

On his deathbed, a World War Two veteran, Joe Rubin, confesses to his son that he murdered a Japanese prisoner in the jungles of New Guinea seventy years ago. In his last hours, Joe enters the world between life and death, known as the world of transition. He tells of his journey, with an odd lizard leading the way, as he recants the tale of the murder prior to his imminent death.

He reveals to his son, Joshua, that he possesses a Good Luck flag - Hinomaru Yosegaki, that he had taken from the Japanese soldier he murdered on the island of New Guinea during the battle of the Druinimor River. The flag has handwritten messages from the prisoner's family and friends, which reveals his identity and the village in Japan he came from.

His son, Joshua, is under tremendous pressure. He's separated from his wife, who comes to visit her father-in-law, bringing the two together to face their problems under the gut-wrenching veil of his father's passing. By attempting to reunite the flag with the son of the soldier his father killed seventy years ago, will the family find their way forward?

From the wisdom of the ages, and from the Jewish perspective on death and redemption, "Lizard of Transition" shines a light on how understanding death and dying will lead us to live rich and fuller lives

ED BOROWSKY LIZARD TRANSITION



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Lina Hansen

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

Lina Hansen: Colorful, determined, quirky.

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

Lina Hanson: Eighteen. As to being published in Amazon, Kobo, Smashwords etc. I only have three out so far, with one due to be published in September, and three ready for self-publishing.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Do you have an upcoming release? If yes, tell me the title and impending release date.

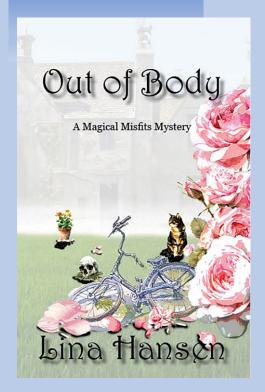
Lina Hansen: Actually, there are two releases. On 1 July the third Magical Misfits mystery, "Out of Body", will be published by Literary Wanderlust. Early September "Spirits of Gascony", my first Paranormal Romcom, is scheduled to be published with the Champagne Book Group.

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?



Lina Hansen: Good question... I like plays on words, and that shows in the titles. They always are related to the plot. Take the Magical Misfits, for example. In cozy mystery series catchy and witty titles are a must and, since series are also a must, we need some common elements. "In My Attic", the first in the series, sort of popped into my mind, and from there it was easy to come up with the next two: "Down the Hatch" and "Out of Body". The titles reveal something about the plot as well. In the first, the attic (duh!) indeed plays a major role. "Down the Hatch" is a bit tongue-in-cheek, since spoiler alert—the body does NOT go down any hatches. However...sorry, giving this clue away would be a serious spoiler, but rest assured there is a link to the title. Ditto with "Out of Body". Be ready to be surprised!

Lina Hanson cont'd



When it comes to the Romcom "Spirits of Gascony", we're again talking play on words. It's not just about ghosties and ghoulies, but Armagnac features strong throughout the story!

Fun fact—once I've settled on a title, I seldom change it. Never touch a running system. Having said that, the fourth Magical Misfits Mystery "Up the Ante", which I'm working on now, first had a different title. It was too long, so I ditched it. But that was the only one.

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?

Lina Hansen: Hey, I love them all! Though for me the most intriguing one is Myrtle Coldron, the heroine of the Magical Misfits. Ex-schoolteacher gone innkeeper who discovers her witchy side, she's the archetypal trope. At the same time she isn't, and she's simply fun to watch as she gropes her way along her errant magic. All my other heroines are more or less confident with their assorted paranormal skills. Myrtle isn't, and her journey toward self-discovery is so enjoyable to write.

Literate-Ly Magazine: If you could "create" your own genre of what you write, what would you call your books?

Lina Hansen: Magical Mongrels? Not? Okay, how about Witty paranormal mystery adventures with varying levels of romance? And here I don't mean heat levels! Whatever I write always falls under the "sweet" label. There might be sex, yes, but it's of the FTB variety.

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

Lina Hansen: "Out of Body" explores the shenanigans of wonky witch and amateur sleuth Myrtle Coldron. She's trying to get to grips with a spate of bizarre ongoings in the British village of Avebury, which rapidly escalate to murder. At the same time she has serious trouble with her spoofy coven. There's always a link between the killings and the paranormal, another trademark of my books. I'm pretty proud of the twist in "Out of Body"!

Lina Hansen cont'd

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

Lina Hansen: Outside, the sun was setting. Again. The ocean roared on and would continue forever even if no human was alive on Earth to care. (Spirits of Gascony)

I love this part since it shows the grief of a woman whose love is dying.

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

Lina Hansen: I love to cook and eat. I also travel a lot. And I'm nuts about cats. For me, a house without a cat in it can't ever be a home.

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

Lina Hansen: C.J. Sansom, Georgette Heyer, Janet Blackwell (and her various aliases)

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

Lina Hansen: I don't only read one book. If I get my teeth into something, I'll binge read the whole series. Currently, I'm re-reading

Susan Wittig Albert's China Bayles mysteries.

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

Lina Hansen: I definitely have a plan, a system I created myself based on the three-act structure. I start with a mind-map, then I fill out the overall story arc and create summaries for the various chapters/scenes. Once I have the bare bones of the stories I write — and things change. How to best describe the process is beyond me. Plotting pantser, perhaps?

Literate-Ly Magazine: Why do you write?

Lina Hansen: I have written my whole life, I cannot not write. I also read a lot, and I mean a LOT. Since I don't always like what I find, It made sense to write my own.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Do you currently have a WIP? If yes, what's the title, and is it part of a series or standalone?

Lina Hansen: The current WIP is "Up the Ante", fourth Magical Misfits cozy mystery. I also have one mystery in draft, the fourth of the Da Vinci set of cozy mystery adventures I want to self-pub.

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

Lina Hansen cont'd

Lina Hansen: I don't read my own stuff as such. What I do is serious editing. By the time I've finished with a book, I can't stomach it anymore!

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?

Lina Hansen: I can't listen to music while I write. I find it messes with my concentration.

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?

Lina Hansen: I have no problem with blurbs, taglines, punchlines or whatever. Marketing is part of my job portfolio and I always enjoyed the copy-writing aspect of my work. The first line or chapter isn't usually the hardest either, since I already have an idea where to start. It's the saggy middle where the plotlines get all knotted up that bother me.

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? (You can pick up to 3 persons).

Lina Hansen: Hmmm.... You know, history has a nasty way of putting the wrong people into the limelight. I'd much rather meet someone who didn't make it into the halls of fame. How did a settler woman feel about her life on the border. How did a native American woman feel about the invasion of her home? That would interest me a lot more. Having said that, the one person I always wanted to talk to is Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.

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

Lina Hansen: A very good question. To my mind, any writer who manages to "deliver" a story is successful, even more so if the end product is polished and not a rough draft. But success these days is generally counted in book sales, so....

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

Lina Hansen: For me it's not about ticking off achievements. Yes, those are nice, but in the end what counts is what we did for other beings, how we supported life/civilization/society — take your pick. I want to be able at the end of my life to say, "Yes, I was a positive lifeforce, a

Lina Hansen cont'd

constructive person. And I was happy with what I did." The latter is a tall order, that doesn't always work. So maybe let's call that "mostly happy"?

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.

Lina Hansen: What I don't understand is banning books that have to be seen in the context of their time. Purging or banning fiction written in the past? I don't get it. It might be totally "wrong" or not politically correct by our standards, fine. Slap a preface on, and it should cover eventualities. But ban it? Otherwise, it depends a bit on the reasons for banning. Books that propagate hate, racism, misogynism and all the other -isms out of control these days (especially in social media) to my mind deserve a closer look.

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

Lina Hansen: To the fans – never stop reading as much and as widely as possible. And no, movies aren't a replacement. For one thing, in a movie you see what you are meant to see. With books, you can run your inner Netflix. To authors – never give up and get your story out there, making it as good as you can.













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Rebecca Copeland

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

Rebecca Copeland: I have only written and published one work of fiction, but I've published three book-length translations from Japanese and have authored or edited nearly ten academic volumes in the area of Japanese literature.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Do you have an upcoming release? If yes, tell me the title and impending release date.

Rebecca Copeland: Sigh...not yet. I'm a slow writer.

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?

Rebecca Copeland: I completed my novel, *The Kimono Tattoo*, before I found the title. I kept the draft chapters in a file on my computer called "translator," because my main character was a translator. I marked each chapter with titles like "kimono mystery, chapter one" or "tattoo mystery, chapter three," depending on which draft it was. (I had at least five.) When it was time to begin sending the manuscript out to agents, I gave it the working title "The Kimono Tattoo" and it stuck.



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?

Rebecca Copeland: I am attached to the protagonist of *The Kimono Tattoo*, Ruth, because she lived with me for such a long time as I wrote and re-wrote the various drafts. She's still with me. But many of my readers tell me that they found Maho, Ruth's younger friend, to be the most memorable. Maho is a scrappy young Japanese woman with a Mohawk dyed either pink or orange. She teaches Ruth a lot about life.

Literate-Ly Magazine: If you could "create" your own genre of what you write, what would you call your books?

Rebecca Copeland: Literary auto-mysteries!

I had a difficult time finding an agent for *The Kimono Tattoo* because it does not conform to any particular genre. I consider the work a mystery, but it doesn't follow most of the expected conventions for the genre. To start with, I have a first-person narrator, which I

Rebecca Copeland cont'd

later learned was unusual in mystery fiction. I have subplots and narrative layers, switching back and forth in time, so the story adheres more to expectations of literary fiction in a way. And a certain element of personal experience seeps into the pages. I don't know how to write otherwise.

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

Rebecca Copeland: *The Kimono Tattoo* is set in Kyoto, Japan and follows the adventures that American Ruth Bennett has there. She's a down-on-her-luck former college professor who ekes out a living as a translator. Unexpectedly, she is invited to translate a novel by a Japanese writer who hasn't been heard from in over twenty years. As she translates, though, she finds the novel pulling her into the dark secrets of a particular kimono-maker family, and by coincidence into her own family's traumatic past.

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

Rebecca Copeland:

It was approaching twilight, "tasogare" in Japanese, a magical time caught between day and night. With the sun slipping beneath the horizon, the light is uncertain, making it difficult to

distinguish what is seen. The word in Japanese alludes to this vagueness. Unable to see exactly who is walking towards you in the twilight, you call out, "Who is that?" Or, tasogare as it would have been in years past. In classic plays and ghost tales, tasogare is the time of day when strange things happen, when peculiar creatures step out of the shadows, when dream worlds become real.

From The Kimono Tattoo

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

Rebecca Copeland: To be honest, it is hard to separate "self" from "writing," as they are always entangled. Writing is such an intimate act that wherever I am or whatever I do, I am never far from writing. My professional career feeds my writing, and in a way, vice



Rebecca Copeland Cont'd

versa. The things I experience, hear, and feel feed my writing.

I love solitude and I love being surrounded by nature. My preference is for the mountains, but I am just as easily drawn to the beauty of the desert or the magnificence of the sea. I love being able to experience things somatically—to move, to touch, to taste, to grow tired from a long day of physical exertion. And, I'm happy going days without seeing or talking to anyone.

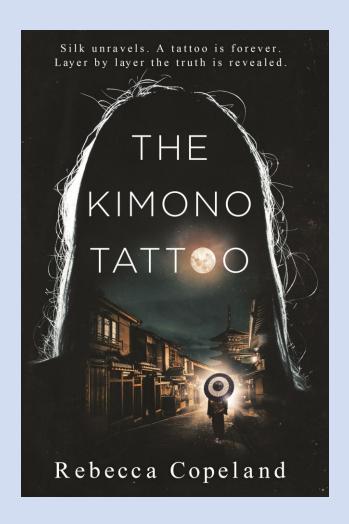
Literate-Ly Magazine: Who are your top THREE favorite authors?

Rebecca Copeland: I tend to favor authors from North Carolina like Lee Smith or Anne Tyler. I also like Kazuo Ishiguro.

Of course, most of my favorite authors write in Japanese.

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

Rebecca Copeland: I recently finished *The Return of a Shadow* by Kunio Yamagishi. I'm currently reading *The Secret Garden of Yanagi Inn* by Amber A. Logan.



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

Rebecca Copeland: I just write.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Why do you write?

Rebecca Copeland: I decided to write *The Kimono Tattoo* as a way to share my absolute love of Japan with others. I wanted readers to experience Japan the way I experience it—as a place of both beauty and frustration. They go together. We tend to turn Japan into some deeply philosophical gentle wonderland or else into a bizarrely brutal battlefield. It is neither, and at times it is both. But mostly, it's just a place, a normal place where people live and love and die.

Rebecca Copeland Cont'd

I write to share my experiences—to entertain, but also to celebrate what I have learned.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Do you currently have a WIP? If yes, what's the title, and is it part of a series or standalone?

Rebecca Copeland: Yes. I'm working on a novel tentatively titled *Blood Brocade*. The novel is a continuation of the story I started in *The Kimono Tattoo*.

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

Rebecca Copeland: Sometimes when I read my work, it surprises me. It's not as bad as I thought it would be. "Oh, that's pretty good," I'll tell myself. "I wish I could write like that now!" When I come back to a work or a passage I wrote a while ago, I'm often pleased with the way it reads, and I'll forget completely all the drafts I wrote, the choices I made, and the way I agonized over the writing.

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?

Rebecca Copeland: I can't listen to music when I write or when I read. I should probably try it!

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?

Rebecca Copeland: Conclusions kill me!

When the story is done, it's done. A neat, well summed-up conclusion just feels so unnatural to me.

But, I also hate writing blurbs. I have too many words, and they are never the right ones!

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? (You can pick up to 3 persons).

Rebecca Copeland:

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

Rebecca Copeland: I think a successful writer is someone who writes. Just spending time writing is an accomplishment.

But to be truly successful, I think you have to take risks. You have to love your work but also be willing to take criticism. At the same time, you need to trust your voice. In order to be successful, you have to be willing to fail.

Rebecca Copeland 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"?

Rebecca Copeland: I'd like to complete another novel. I learned a lot with the first one, and I want to do better.

However, years ago I ran a marathon. It was a momentous experience. I trained for the event with friends, and I accomplished my goal. Almost the minute I finished though I thought, I'd like to do better. I ran three or four additional marathons after that, but I never got any better! So, I may need to accept the fact that *The Kimono Tattoo* is as good as it gets for me. And, that's okay. It took me nearly ten years to write and publish. Kind of like a marathon!

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.

Rebecca Copeland: Banning books is antithetical to everything I have ever believed or practiced. I believe strongly in the free exchange of ideas. Not all books are appropriate for all people or at all moments in

their lives, but that doesn't mean they should be banned or that a small minority of objectors should decide what the rest of us are allowed to read or think. As an educator, I have always tried to encourage my students to familiarize themselves with ideas they disagree make with that them or uncomfortable and to investigate the source of their reactions. I want them to learn how to articulate their criticisms and engage in measured discussion about ideas that run contrary to what they are familiar with. That's the only way to learn. Banning books is like sticking our heads in the sand. The world will continue to be the world that it is regardless of the books we read or allow others to read, but we will not be equipped to deal with difference or to grow with new ideas.

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

Rebecca Copeland: Publishing today is very codified and in the United States very commercialized. I hope potential writers will stay true to the voices they hear and not try to conform to market demand or chase the latest trend.







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PRAISE FOR HOLTGART, BOOK ONE OF THE HARKENTALE SAGA:

This humorcoated fantasy had me chuckling from page one. ~Author E.G. Moore

"...humour spiced adventure on each horizon keeps the pages turning..." -Amazon Reviewer

What an incredible world built by Jeremy James Smith. I like that there is... war and survival, but it is balanced with comedic actions and dialogue." -Amy's Bookshelf Reviews

"Jeremy James Smith, weaves a fantastical narrative. He is deliberate in his world and character building providing a strong narrative that immerses the listener completely." Audiobookreviewer.com



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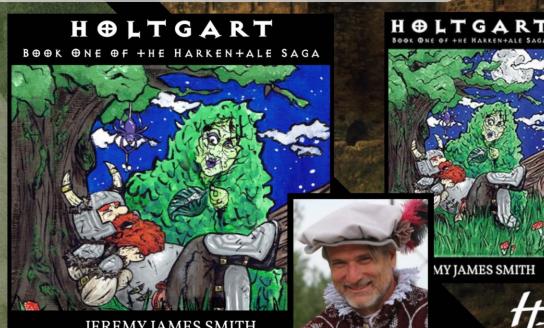








BARNES NOBLE



JEREMY JAMES SMITH

www.jeremyjamessmith.com

Savannah Hendricks

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

Savannah Hendricks: Funny, short, observer

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

Savannah Hendricks: I've been lucky enough to publish a good portion of my manuscripts, with only one going out of print from the publisher. Currently, I have thirteen published books.

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

Savannah Hendricks: I do about one to two months of research for the characters and setting (but this is just on the weekend, since I work full-time).

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

Savannah Hendricks: My most recent release is a children's book, *The Needle-less Christmas Tree* & Other Tree Tales. It was published July 1st



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

Savannah Hendricks: I only write fiction, so my research on places and characters usually doesn't involve outside sources unless I'm unfamiliar with an area or a character trait.

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

Savannah Hendricks: *The Needle-less Christmas Tree & Other Tree Tales* was something I wrote about six or so years ago. It's seen a lot of ups and downs. The idea came to me one Christmas when I was surrounded by full Christmas trees and thought, but what if...

•

Savannah Hendricks Cont'd

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

Savannah Hendricks: *The Needle-less Christmas Tree & Other Tree Tales* is a story(s) of a love and respect for taking what we have and accepting it. Finding a way to keep trying and not give up no matter what is happening around us.

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

Savannah Hendricks: I love to puzzle. It's just so much fun. It's really the only thing that gives you instant gratification.

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

Savannah Hendricks: Riley Sager, Abby Jimenez, and Shreve Stockton

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

Savannah Hendricks: First Lie Wins by Ashley Elston

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

Savannah Hendricks: I do rough outlines and plots. I'm sort of both a plotter and a panster. I start with a title, always, then I see what else unfolds from there, developing as I go until I'm ready to start the first draft.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Why do you write?

Savannah Hendricks: I write because I love it. I love to create, and I love to write funny scenes. My ultimate goal in each chapter is to make the reader laugh and have a feeling of hope.

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



Savannah Hendricks Cont'd



Savannah Hendricks: Not of any recently published books. My first adult fiction/romance novel, *Grounded in January*, has a main character with MS. My mom had MS and so I felt I could write about it from the personal history I witnessed growing up.

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

Savannah Hendricks: I usually end up reading/rereading my manuscripts about 8-10 times before they are ready/polished. It can make me happy or make me feel like I'm not good enough to write. It can be emotional in many ways, good and bad to read your work, over and over again. 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?

Savannah Hendricks: I usually don't have music on when I write, I will have the TV on and have a show or movie that the character would like on as inspiration.

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?

Savannah Hendricks: I would say the last line of the book is the hardest. It's important to end a story just as well as you started it.

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?

Savannah Hendricks: My mom. She passed away when I was only 15 years old, and I would give anything to sit with her as an adult and spend time together over coffee.

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

Savannah Hendricks Cont'd

Savannah Hendricks: For me, success would be having a movie or TV show made from one of my books. However, I do find being a successful author is different for everyone. It's best to set smaller goals as well as big goals. Thankfully, I've reached many small goals.

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

Savannah Hendricks: I want people to associate me with being a great dog mom and author. I want the cake and I want to eat it too. For readers to know me for my heartwarming and funny books and also that I'm that dog-mom-author.

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.

Savannah Hendricks: I say to each their own. You should be able to read whatever you want. But I do feel that some books should be monitored by parents, much like movies. Once you're an adult do as you please, but with kids it's different.

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

Savannah Hendricks: Getting it done!!! Honestly, if I could write full-time I would. It's very hard after a long work week to dive into a manuscript, it's like re-learning what you wrote every single time. I don't have much time off between work and writing deadlines, which can be overwhelming at times to follow my dreams

From the Authors of Brain Warp 4 Too Late to Run

Gil Snider and Judy Snider presents the thriller

BETRAYED



On a routine mammogram one year after a simple breast biopsy, a mysterious piece of metal is found embedded in writer Amy Lambert's breast. Amy becomes consumed by a desperate search to determine how and why this bizarre thing got there. At the same time, she must discover the identity of a violent, threatening stalker intruding into her life. But the closer Amy gets to the answers, the more it imperils the lives of herself, her friends, and her family. In the exciting climax, the truth is exposed and Amy's entire world is turned upside down as she fights for her life and the lives of those she loves.

https://www.judysnider.com/

https://www.gilsnider.com/

Yvonne Rediger

Literate-Ly: In three words, describe yourself.

Yvonne Rediger: analytic, ethical, weird

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

Yvonne Rediger: I've written 13 novels. One is on the bench, it took a turn in needs to be fix. Eleven are all published and the twelfth will be released this summer. I began with paranormal romance with a mystery. Now, I write mysteries with a hint of romance.

Literate-Ly: Do you have an upcoming release? If yes, tell me the title and impending release date.

Yvonne Rediger: Storm Stayed is the fourth novel in the Musgrave Landing Mysteries series. Due to be released August 1, 2024.

Literate-Ly: 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?

Yvonne Rediger: Usually I've thought up the title before I begin writing the first draft. I have a arc for each series and a vague idea where I want the go with the theme. I also like the title to show up somewhere in the manuscript. Once I've got the title, it rarely changes. I keep it in mind while I'm writing, visible from my desk on my main whiteboard.



Literate-Ly: 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?

Yvonne Rediger: Arlie Birch, who is in all the Musgrave Landing books is the most fun to write, but the most interesting is Adam Norcross from his mystery series. Adam has a precognition talent which helps him to *know* when he being lied to or is he is moving in the right direction to solve the mystery. His job and security clearance allow him access to information even the police don't have. What else would spies do on their days off?

Literate-Ly: If you could "create" your own genre of what you write, what would you call your books?

Yvonne Rediger: Mystery suspense, slow burn romance.

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

Yvonne Rediger Cont'd

Yvonne Rediger: The Right Road takes us to Sergeant Beth Leith's family's farm on the Prairies. Her career is in the dumpster. Then Adam Norcross shows up. He knows she needs his help. There are aspects of her suspension she doesn't know about. Political reasons. Before he can even speak privately to her, an RCMP inspector shows up to get Beth to assist in a suspicious death investigation, on her family's property, and should be a conflict of interest.

Things get more complicated when it turns out the victim had confrontations with Nick, Beth's father, over the archaeologists investigating paleo indigenous finds.

Norcross knows it's murder.

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

Yvonne Rediger: "Something's happened, something dire." Adam nodded as they reached the vehicle.

"Do you know something I don't, Norcross?"

"Not yet, but I'm optimistic."

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

Yvonne Rediger: I'm the videographer, editor, and admin for the 'Pallet Cabin' YouTube channel. My husband builds cabins, garages, and furniture out of pallets. I help, and record the episodes. I view it as another type of story telling.

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

Yvonne Rediger: Tanya Huff, Mick Herron, Harlan Coben

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

Yvonne Rediger: Murder on the Links by Agatha Christie. I love her Hercule Poirot character.



Yvonne Rediger Cont'd

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

Yvonne Rediger: I create a rough outline on my 'murder board'. I white board the outline because it can change as I solidify the plot. Even before I begin, sometimes writing a different manuscript all together, I get full conversations for my characters. These I write down as soon as I can and email them to myself. Then, when it's time to start this book, I drop them into my template MS. They don't always stay, but these dialogue scenes give me something to write toward.

Literate-Ly: Why do you write?

Yvonne Rediger: I write to keep myself out of trouble. I need something to keep my brain busy in winter. In summer, we travel or build projects.

Literate-Ly: Do you currently have a WIP? If yes, what's the title, and is it part of a series or standalone?

Yvonne Rediger: I am currently working on book 3 in the Adam Norcross series, The Middle Distance. I have the outline half completed. That said, I do have a few dialogue scenes already.

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

Yvonne Rediger: Before starting the next book in any of the series, I read the previous novel. I find it helps recapture the storyline and spirit of returning characters. So, yep, I'm reading The Right Road.

Literate-Ly: 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?

Yvonne Rediger: Nope. I want silence. I do listen to music when I am thinking things through. Classic rock or country.

Literate-Ly: 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?

Yvonne Rediger: Writing the synopsis is rough. I don't need to do this anymore for BWL Publishing, I am so happy a out the fact they take my manuscripts without one.

Literate-Ly: 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? (You can pick up to 3 persons).

Yvonne Rediger Cont'd

Yvonne Rediger: First, I'd choose a cold beer with my dad. He passed away over twenty years ago. I think of him every day.

Second, high tea with Agatha Christie. I have some plot questions...

Third, a whisky with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. I'd like to know if he ever did any work for the Home Office.

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

Yvonne Rediger: I'd like to have one of my mystery series made into a streaming series. That would be epic. Mostly, I'd like my books to be read after I'm gone.

Literate-Ly: 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.

Yvonne Rediger: Unfortunately burning or banning books is not new. Many fascist or communist regimes have tried to control ideas. While some books should be reserved for appropriate age groups, to be understood. No book should be banned. Like history, acknowledge culture has changed over the centuries. So too do ideas and perspectives. Hopefully for the betterment of all.

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

Yvonne Rediger: I know some great writers go it alone. For me, a writing group ignites my enthusiasm. Over the years I've received tons of advice and help from more experienced writers in various writing groups. Most libraries can help refer you to a group. When you achieve some success, pay it forward to other novice writers. This is what I'm trying to do with the Prairie Writers Guild.









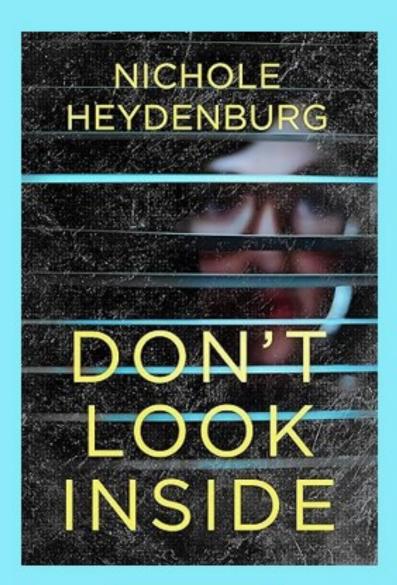
Nichole Heydenburg's Don't Look Inside

Don't question the lies. Don't investigate. And most importantly, Don't Look Inside...

Elena Pierce's junior year of college unfolds with a precarious situation—a mysterious new roommate named Mara. Despite her best efforts, Mara remains distant. Elena becomes increasingly wary as a string of unsettling disappearances rocks the campus.

Amid the chaos, Elena's boyfriend exhibits strange behavior. Elena teams up with her friends Joe and Logan to unveil the truth. As they dig deeper, a shocking revelation emerges. Elena is forced to consider the unimaginable: Is someone close to her responsible for the vanishing girls?

In this gripping psychological thriller, Elena must confront the unsettling reality—the true culprits may be hiding in plain sight, ready to shatter her world forever.





Advertisement



William Shakespeare

Literate-Ly Magazine: Mr. Shakespeare, how many books have you written?

Mr. Shakespeare: I have penned 39 plays, 154 sonnets, and several other poems. While not books in the modern sense, these works have been compiled into numerous volumes over the centuries.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What was your most popular book?

Mr. Shakespeare: Among my plays, *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* are perhaps the most renowned. They have captivated audiences for generations with their timeless themes and complex characters.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Did you think that writing would become a legacy for you?

Mr. Shakespeare: I wrote with the hope that my works would resonate with audiences of my time. The idea that they would endure for centuries and become a legacy is both humbling and beyond my wildest dreams.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What is your favorite place to write?

Mr. Shakespeare: I found inspiration in many places, but I often wrote in the quiet of my study in Stratford-upon-Avon. The tranquility of my hometown provided a perfect backdrop for

Note: This is a fictional interview, using Copilot to simulate this author's responses.



creativity.

Literate-Ly Magazine: How did people perceive you as a writer?

Mr. Shakespeare: In my time, I was both celebrated and criticized. Some admired my work for its depth and innovation, while others were more skeptical. Over time, my reputation grew, and I became known as one of the greatest playwrights.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What kind of reviews did you get?

Mr. Shakespeare: Reviews in my era were not as formalized as they are today, but I received a mix of praise and critique. Some contemporaries, like Ben Jonson, recognized my talent, while others were less kind.

William Shakespeare

Literate-Ly Magazine: What was the worst story you ever wrote? Did it get published?

Mr. Shakespeare: Every writer has their less successful works. Some of my early plays, like *Titus Andronicus*, were criticized for their violence and lack of subtlety. Yet, they were still performed and published.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What was your favorite story that you wrote?

Mr. Shakespeare: It's difficult to choose a favorite, but *The Tempest* holds a special place in my heart. It was one of my last plays and allowed me to explore themes of forgiveness and redemption.

Literate-Ly Magazine: What was the worst review you ever got?

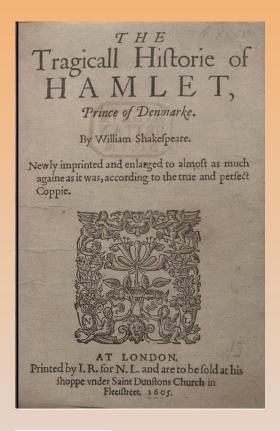
Mr. Shakespeare: One of the harshest critiques came from Robert Greene, who called me an "upstart crow" in his pamphlet. It was a stinging remark, but it also motivated me to prove my worth.

Literate-Ly Magazine: If you could give advice to centuries of authors, what would it be?

Mr. Shakespeare: Write with passion and honesty. Let your characters speak their truths, and don't be afraid to explore the depths of human emotion. Most importantly, write for the love of the craft.

Literate-Ly Magazine: If you could talk to anyone, living or dead, who would it be and why?

Mr. Shakespeare: I would love to converse with Homer, the great epic poet. His works, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, have inspired countless writers, including myself. It would be fascinating to discuss storytelling with him.





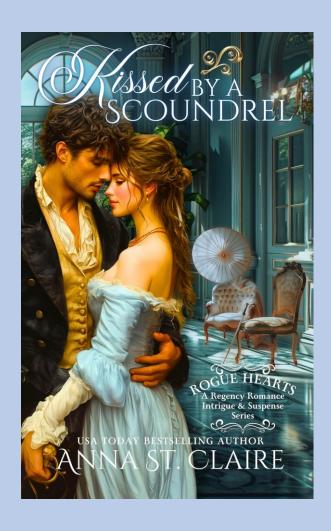


Kissed by a Scoundrel by Anna St. Claire

4.5 Stars

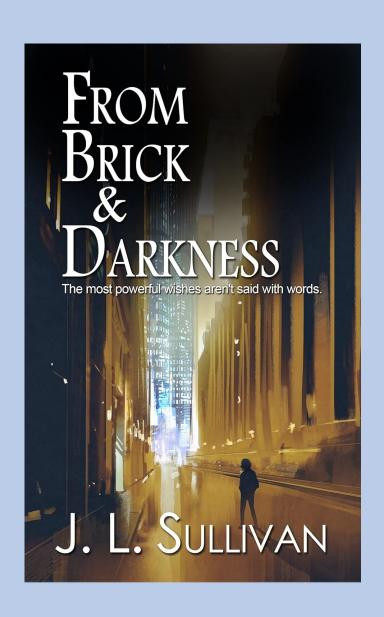
This book has Katie Latham paralyzed with fear after a robbery and the murder of her fiancé whom she witnesses and blames herself for and becomes a recluse in her family's home, not entering the society functions. When she finally agrees to go to a ball, she sees an incident which triggers her PTSD, and Sebastian sees and comes to her aid. Sebastian is a friend of Katie's brother and also a security professional and recognizes trauma immediately. her Sebastian helps Katie at the ball and is hired by her brother to find the robbers and killers that have never been caught and to provide security to Katie. Sebastian agrees and along with teaching Katie some selfdefense and fencing, he begins to fall for the strong lady.

A good suspense, tragic loss, quite a bit of danger and a clean romance makes up for this book. I was completely invested within the first chapter and even though I hadn't read the previous books in this series, I had no issues keeping up. This is a shorter read and one of my favorite characters is the Dowager Duchess. I can see a romance brewing in the background, and would not be surprised if it's the next book in the series.



Historical Regency

From Brick & Darkness by J.L. Sullivan



VA Fantasy

4.5 Stars

A great story with a great message. Bax is from a single parent home, his mother working a lot of hours to keep them going. A sophomore in school, Bax only has a couple of friends, his best friend Jason, and his neighbor Ashley. When coming home one evening, there is a creepy man sitting on the steps to his apartment building, who gives him a ring, telling him it's for his long lost father, Greg. Bax takes the ring and the man disappears. Bax has always wanted a better life, for him and his mother, and for his father to be back in his life. But be careful what you wish for....when Bax rubs the gemstone on the top of the ring, he summons a djinn named Janni. Janni is a low level djinn, (or genie for those that don't read heavily in the fantasy world) but can only do minor tricks. When Janni says there is a more powerful djinn nearby, Bax convinces his friends that a more powerful djinn can make their lives better. Little do they know, he's a monster of a djinn.

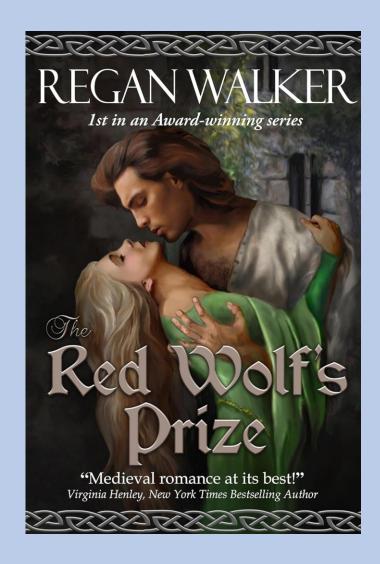
This book has a good message to everyone, and it's a little creepy for the really young, but older teens and adults will enjoy this one. Be happy with the life you have, and don't go wishing for riches....

Red Wolf's Prize by Regan Walker

5 Stars

Renaud aka the Red Wolf, is granted not only the lands of Talisand, but also Lady Serena, the daughter of the thegn who was killed in battle for him to wed. But Lady Serena only wants to escape from the Norman warriors who are going to take over her beloved home. Unfortunately she is caught and has to go in disguise as a servant to hide from her fate as a bride to this warrior.

This is so well written and the research has been outstanding that is a trademark of this author. I can't tell you how many times I had to touch on a word for the Kindle library to give me the meaning. Serena is a fierce advocate for her people, and there is plenty of action and romance, so this enemies-to-lovers trope works well. I always appreciate the epilogue at the end, and I actually had to switch Kindles to keep reading (way past my bedtime mind you) as I drained the first one. The author also gives us a real history lesson in the back of the book about this time and how she worked her magic on this story.



Zola Blue's The Mejuarian Series

The Mejuarian are god-like creatures living on the planet Ercutis in a near-perfect world. In a galaxy where telepathic bonds and ancient dreams shape destinies, the Mejuar and their diverse allies embark on a thrilling journey that intertwines their fates across worlds.

- The Four: Destruction of Honor (The Mejuarian Book 1)
- Bound in Strength: Stance Upon Heartache (The Mejuarian Book 2)
- Courage of One: Conviction to Stand (The Mejuarian Book 3)
- Whispers of Tribulations: The Present and The Destiny (The Mejuarian Book 4)

Zola Blue's The Mejuarian Series











The Mejuarian are god-like creatures living on the planet Ercutis in a near-perfect world.

Amy Shannon's MOD Life Epic Saga

The entire Saga, 67 volumes, and 9 bonus books all available on Lulu.com





ANACT OF GOD

William Becker





REVIEWS^o

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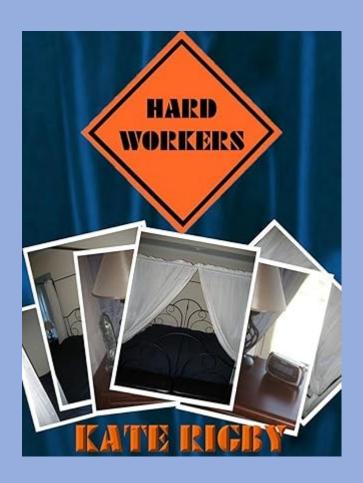
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F/Drama/Short Stories/Erotica

About the Book: Hard work and dedication should count for something, shouldn't it?

Kate Rigby- Hard Workers

4 Stars

Kate Rigby writes an intriguing short story with Hard Workers

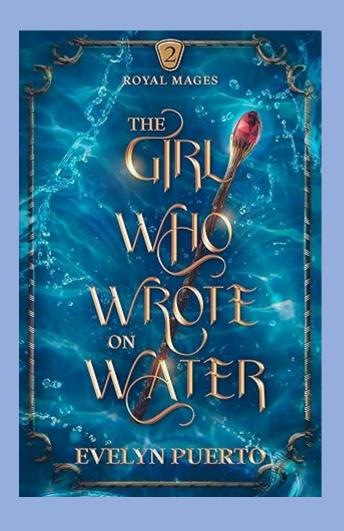
In Hard Workers, the reader is introduced to Bobbles, or Bob. One of the hard workers. This is a very short read, but it packs a punch with details and storytelling. I am a big fan of Kate Rigby and read whatever this author writes. This author has a grand imagination, and talent for showing the story. The character Bobs is also the narrator, which gives the story an interesting perspective. So, it did take me a few times reading it to figure out what or who the characters actually were, and I'm not giving that away. Kate Rigby has a great imagination. I read it so many times, it's only 7 kindle pages, but it is worth the read every single time. I found that all of the characters had their unique qualities, and that lent to the satisfying end of the story. And yes, the title definitely fits the story.

Evelyn Puerto- The Girl Who Wrote on Water

4 Stars

Evelyn Puerto writes a remarkable sequel with The Girl Who Wrote on Water

In The Girl Who Wrote on Water, the reader is introduced to Princess Derya, who is fearing that her friend. Princess Eliania is dead. The Girl Who Wrote on Water is part of the Royal Mages series, and this is volume two. I am a big fan of Evelyn Puerto and read whatever this author writes. This author has a grand imagination, and talent for showing the story. Evelyn is great at building a world of fantasy and magic, and bringing royalty to life. It's on now, the race to find the scepter is a quest Derya needs to take, and win, before it falls into the wrong hands. Evelyn Puerto has a great imagination. The plot is action packed, filled with truths, lies, secrets and curses. This story is grand read, and the characters have multiple layers. The Girl Who Wrote on Water is a definite recommendation by Amy's Bookshelf Reviews. I read this book to give my unbiased and honest review. Amy's Bookshelf Reviews recommends that anyone who reads this book also write a review

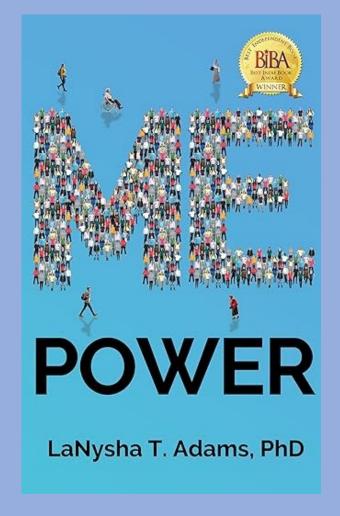


F/YA/Fantasy

About the Book: Sometimes a catastrophe isn't the worst of your problems

As dust settles on the buried kingdom of Ymittos, Princess Derya faces a horrifying truth: her friend Princess Eliana has perished after failing to break an evil sorcerer's curse. Which means the next obstacle in the plot to enslave the continent is Derya's father — the Emperor of Cinar.

When the emperor tasks Derya with forming a crucial alliance, her only way forward is to race the sorcerer in a hunt for the magical scepter he lost a millennium ago. If he retrieves it, he'll be unstoppable in his quest to dominate the world.



NF/Self Power/Self Help/Inspirational

About the Book: "Who do you want to be?" We've all heard or asked this question before, yet few of us answer it because identity is not fixed, but everexpanding as we move through life.

Dr. LaNysha Tufuga Adams, Ivy-League educated linguist and founder of award-winning education consultancy Edlinguist Solutions, challenges others to not only answer this question, but to put the answer(s) into action.

Me Power redefines empowerment, encouraging us to tap into our limitless flow of possibility while connecting with others. No matter the barriers, Me Power pushes us to activate the best of who we are and dismiss the possibility that power is something we can authorize, give away, or take from others.

LaNysha T. Adams, PhD- Me Power

5 Stars

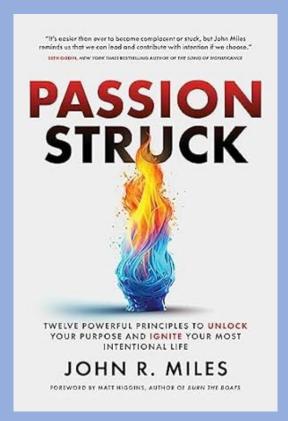
LaNysha T. Adams writes an interesting book about self-empowerment in Me Power

Me Power is a very interesting book. This is the first book I have read from this author. We always hear the word empowerment, but many times that relies on others to make you feel empowered. Me Power, is pulling it out from inside yourself, self-discovery, and making yourself feel empowered, and having a purpose. The book is written in parts, and it is one of those books that you understand while reading it. You don't need a PhD to read it. It's something that when you finish reading, you go and buy the audiobook so you can listen to that as well. A side note on that, as I have reviewed that book as well, the author is the narrator, so you can feel more than just reading words on a page. This book, though, is more than just words on a page. I found it to be an eye opener. I don't always feel empowered, but I try to make sure that there is a purpose in my life, usually more than one, but this book is something I really took to heart. It's not the usual self-help, make me feel good about myself book. It gives you principles to follow, and a framework to tap into yourself. Your inner power and bring it out and acknowledge it. Some of the pages, you end up reading slower than others, so not to miss anything.

John R. Miles- Passion Struck: Twelve Powerful Principles to Unlock Your Purpose and Ignite Your Most Intentional Life

4 Stars

Passion Struck is an impressive book. This is the first I have read from this author. I found that I could relate in some ways to this book, especially when I wake up in the morning, my first mission is to be grateful that I woke up, and the second is to get dressed and make my bed. In reading this book, I at first thought it was another one of those books that give you a road map and tell you to do something in order to make your life better. That's not what this was, it's not a cookie-cutter motivational book. The author found a way to make the book readable, and also offer assistance in how to look at your life. This book is not a cure for what ails you, but it can help you find your purpose, your motivation, and your passion, which can make you want to get out of bed in the morning. It is a grand book, that I read at the right time for me. I think that no matter when I read the book, it would've been the right time. This book lists out principles, and guides you, and the one thing I can see coming out of reading this book, is looking inside myself, and it is something I do a lot. This book captures the reader's attention in chapter 1.



NF/Inspirational/Motivat ional/Selflove/YA/Adult

About the Book: A Powerful Blueprint for Transforming Your Life from Ordinary to Extraordinary

Imagine yourself waking up each day with a clear mission, free from self-doubt, and armed with the skills to lead and thrive in any situation. In Passion Struck, John R. Miles provides a compelling roadmap to elevate your life from ordinary to extraordinary.

Passion Struck introduces a methodology centered around mindset and behavior psychology shifts. of progress, the deliberate action, and intrinsic motivation. You'll discover how to break free from the constraints of fear and doubt, leveraging insights from some of the world's most successful and inspiring individuals. John R. Miles combines his own life experiences with actionable advice and powerful stories to help you ignite your passion and live with intention.



Children's/Immigration/ Multigenerational

About the Book: Three women. from three different continents and by generations, separated stories of coming to the United States. Sarah's great-great fled grandmother Manya Cossacks in the Ukraine at the turn of the twentieth century. Grace's mom escaped with her family during the Iranian revolution in Raquel and her family fled gang violence in El Salvador in the 2010s. These three stories, all accounts of the authors' real family stories--Manya is legendary author Jane Yolen's grandmother--highlight the commonality essential of the immigrant experience.

Jane Yuolen, Marjorie Lotfi Gill, Racquel Elizabeth Artiga de PasStraw-Bag Tin-Box Cloth-Suitcase Three Immigrant Voices

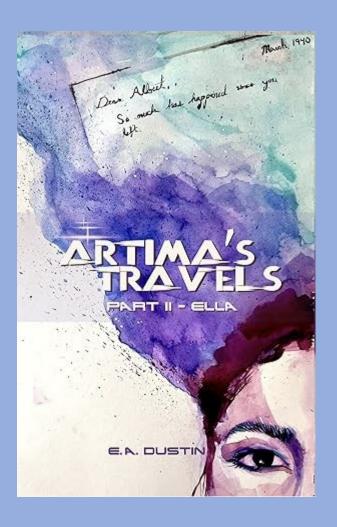
5 Stars

Straw-Bag Tin Box Cloth Suitcase Three Immigrant Voices is a magnificent story for children of all ages, and I recommend, if you're an adult, you read it as well. What I liked about the story is that it stems from the author's family stories. I also like that it proves that generational stories should always be told and shared. I haven't read work from these authors before, and I enjoyed this story. The illustrations were remarkable and were perfect for the story, so kudos to the illustrator. This book would be perfect to read to a child or have the child read it back. There are three stories, and each one starts with their bag or suitcase. Sarah's Nana takes out a straw bag. Grace's Momma takes out a Tin Box, and Racquel remembers the a cheap, cloth suitcase. The three had something in common, and seeing their stories presented on one page, each page, sharing their experiences. From the beginning, even if you never experienced having to leave your home, your home country, you get a feeling for the characters, the people telling the story, and true story experiences.

E. A. Dustin- Artima's Travels (Part II)

5 Stars

What a magnificent story in Artima's Travels (Part II) by E. A. Dustin. First, I've read the first book in Artima's Travels. I love the character of Ella, who is older than her time, more like an old soul, and now, she has this newfound brother, Colton. Ella's best friend Rusty stays by her side, and even covers for her. Ella finds out some disturbing secrets about her father's side of the family, a father she never got to meet. The story has a lot of twists and turns, and brings the past to the present with stories, and experiences. The past is based on WWII, in Nazi Germany, and Himmler is looking for scientists to be able to control others, and they experiment on Jews. That's just the beginning. I learned a lot by reading this story, and there were some things that I didn't know about the ravages of the Germans and their hatred against others, and some who just had to obey or they would die. Ella wants to know all the family's secrets, and she has to figure out what Uncle Joseph is up to, and how it involves her. It's one of those embraceable stories. It's definitely unput-downable! It is always an honor to read this author's books. A wonderfully told story. Brilliant writing! Entertaining and educational. I will definitely add more of this author's books to my bookshelf.



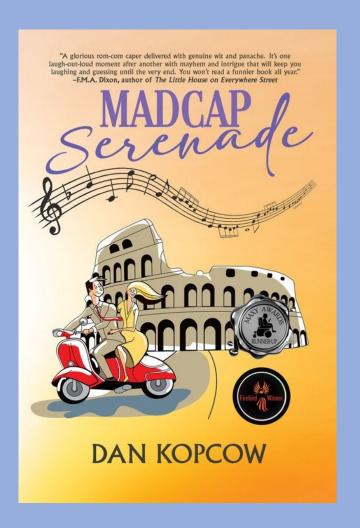
F/sci-fi/thriller

About the Book: Seventeen-year-old Ella, who is older than her time, more like an old soul, has a newfound brother, Colton. Ella's best friend Rusty stays by her side, and even covers for her as she is trying uncover her family's skeletons in the closet. Ella finds out some disturbing secrets about her father's side of the family, a father she never got to meet. The story brings the past to the present with stories, and experiences. The past is based on WWII, in Nazi Germany, and Himmler is looking for scientists to be able to control others using their disturbing experiments. Ella wants to know all the family's secrets, and she has to figure out what Uncle Joseph is up to, and how it involves her. It's one of those embraceable stories. It's definitely un-putdownable!

Dan Kopcow- Madcap Serenade

5 Stars

In Madcap Serenade, the reader is introduced to Eli, and the year 1979. I wish I wasn't old enough to remember that era, but I do. And I was seven, so my experience is so different than that of Eli. He's a very interesting young man, insightful, curious about everything, and totally socially awkward, at least to him. To others, he's just another one that blends in the background as a misfit, or socially impaired person. 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 have just become a fan of Dan Kopcow. Eli in his own way is intelligent, and gets himself into the local boys' choir, a professional Choir who will soon go to Italy and sing at the Vatican. Dan Kopcow created a remarkable world for Eli and setting the stage for a wondrous story. Eli intends to find out about his father, and his legacy, so he can find out who he is and who his father was, but then he finds something, someone unexpected. Jane. She has her own issues, and is also 16, American, and was sent to a convent. This is a fun romance, and it's something many of us can't remember, but the strange first love as a teenager, not realizing that there is so much more to life, than getting in trouble. I loved this story, and it is more than just teenagers running around Italy but engaging in more life than just each other's. I really liked this story.



F/Romantic Comedy

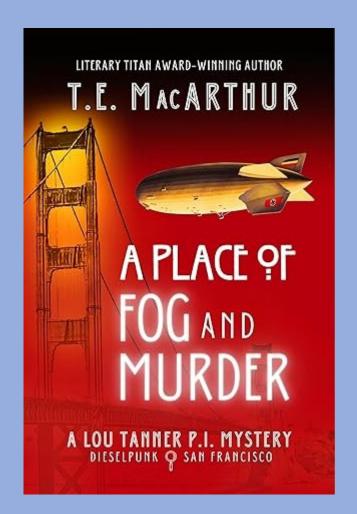
About the Book: Eli, a precocious 16-year-old social misfit living on Long Island in August 1979, cons his way into a professional boys' choir's Italian and Vatican tour so he can discover his missing father's legacy.

But when he meets his dream girl, Jane, and finds himself connected to an intricate murder plot involving a legendary drug, he must decide if singing for the Pope is worth losing his family and first love.

T.E. MacArthur- A Place of Fog and Murder

4 Stars

In A Place of Fog and Murder, the reader is introduced to Lou Tanner, a female sleuth as it were, or a detective. This book takes the reader to 1935 San Francisco, where it is hard enough to be a male detective, and Lou is a female, having to discover the corruption of the world, and the bowels of the underworld. It may be foggy in San Francisco, but the case has more secrets than the lingering fog. 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. A Place of Fog and Murder is part of the Lou Tanner P.I. Mystery series, and this is volume one. Reading it, you find yourself in a Noir-like setting, where everything seems black and white with shades of gray. Lou was just dropped a new case, but it is more than she bargained for. Lou just became one of my favorite detectives in the book world, and I can't wait to see what comes next. This book is filled with twists, turns, and you just never know what's going to happen next.



F/Diesel punk /Hardboiled Detective/Lady

About the Book: Lady detective Lou Tanner needs to cement her reputation to survive in a man's job, but the gorgeous client offering her a new case has brought her more than his tales of woe. Ruthless gangsters, suspicious cops, and a desperate blackmailer all manage to gum up the works at every turn. Gun in hand and wits at the ready, Lou is in a fight for her life.

Noir meets Dieselpunk in this twisting tale of 1935 San Francisco. From the corrupt power of its fashionable ultra-rich to the merciless reach of its dirty underworld, deadly secrets hide behind the thin veneer of propriety and a thick wall of fog.

About Amy's Bookshelf Reviews

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews is a not-for-profit business, as Amy's Bookshelf Reviews does NOT charge for reviews. Amy's Bookshelf Reviews is a professional book review website, which accepts review requests from any author, and accepts most genres (with a few minor exceptions if the book promotes hatred of any kind). Please, call her Amy, and NOT Shannon (that is her surname).

The mission of Amy's Bookshelf Reviews is to help promote authors and allow them to share their stories using my reviews. #ReviewsMatter and they are very important for authors. Reviews can be the baseline for promoting and selling an author's work.

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews reviews examine the characters, story and plotlines, and the author's writing and storytelling abilities.

Amy Shannon owns and operates Amy's Bookshelf Reviews has experience with being a writer with over 30 years experience. Since 2014, while reading and writing reviews, Amy has created a new Podcast, with the Amy's Bookshelf Reviews brand. She discusses books, authors, does interviews, reviews and literary news.

Need Help with any literary process? Amy Shannon is also literary Consultant. Over the years, she has received lot of questions presented by authors, wondering what to do next, or sometimes, they have so much going on at once, they don't know what to do or who to trust. Well, Amy is that person you can trust, even if you don't know it. Amy wants to help authors, do research for authors, and see where they may need to build their brand.

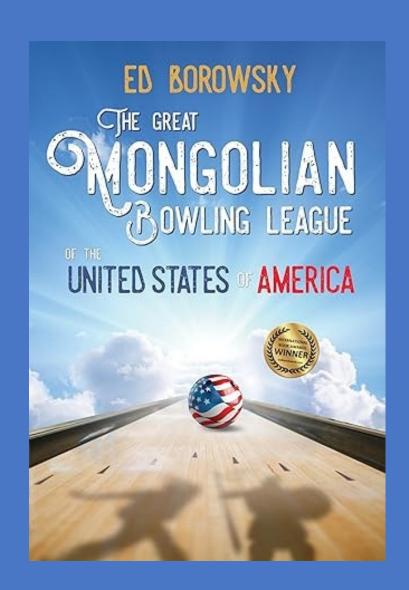


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Ed Borowsky's The Great Mongolian Bowling League of the United States of America

Harold Kushner and his roommate of thirty years, Murray Schwartz, are average senior citizens facing down their mortality in a trailer park in Land O' Lakes, Florida. Two selfprofessed "best Jewish bowlers ever" wind up contestants in the first-ever Great Mongolian Bowling League Tournament in the U.S.A. The rivalry becomes a high-stakes roll-off as Harold approaches "perfection" (defined in the bowling world as three 300-score games in a row) despite a fix set by the alley's mobsterowners. As the reporters and camera crews swarm to cover his amazing feat, Harold finds himself in a life review spanning back to his Bar Mitzvah and a past incarnation as a Mongolian warrior in the era of Genghis Khan, as he ponders profound questions we all ask as we near the end of our lives: Did my life have meaning? Did I fulfill my potential? Was I a good person?

Can Harold roll perfection to help his new Mongolian friends and live to tell the tale? The uncanny action unfolds in this beautiful comedy illuminating that although we come from worlds far apart, we share a common humanity. The outcome will impact millions... and strike you right in the heart.



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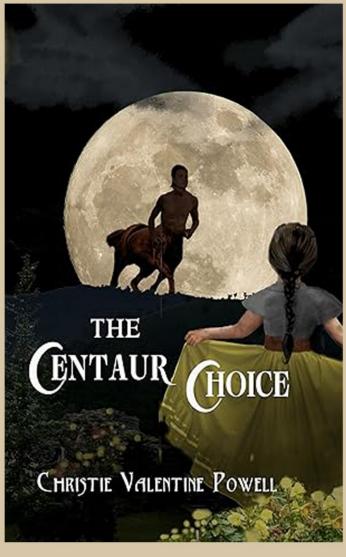
THE CENTAUR CHOICE BY

Christie Valentine Powell

Everyone knows that centaurs carry off young women, but when Bree meets a stallion in the wilderness, he's kinder and more interesting than any of the estate's highborn visitors. He can't be the monster that her brother describes.

But Dale the centaur has a secret: he needs a woman to transform into a centaur to save his young son.

Both families are torn and broken by the conflict between species. Bree could find healing and redemption among the centaurs, but how much should she change for a chance at a new beginning?



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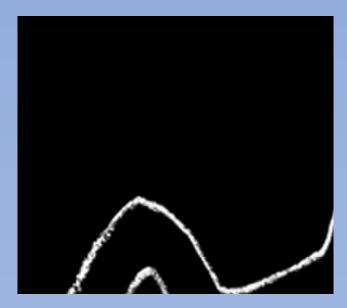
Writing Nonfiction Criminal Biographies or True Crime Stories

by Amy Shannon

Here is an example of the dissection of an intended target, such as John Hinkley Jr. To research the crime, and know the crime, you need to research the target, and basically do a profile, and see if there is a correlation between thoughts and actions.

Biological Criminal Behavior: John Hinckley Jr.

On March 30, 1981, a somewhat troubled young man became infamous when he attempted to assassinate the President of the Unite States, Ronald Reagan. A man who was fascinated with actress Jodie Foster ever since he watched her in the movie Taxi Driver, he became obsessed with her. Hinckley shot Reagan, as well as press secretary James Brady, a police officer, and a Secret Service Agent. Hinckley was found not guilty by reason of insanity by a court of law. Insanity. Obsession. Psychopathic. There are many reasons that support psychopathic behavior, such as genetics and physiological. He was committed to a mental health facility in 1982 after his trial. "Early on, he showed some strange interests. He was pen pals with convicted serial killer Ted Bundy before Bundy's execution in 1989 (Bio. True Story, 2013)."



Psychopathic

Psychopathy has been an entity that many experts have attempted to understand for quite some time. It has led to several criminal activities that have left professionals in awe. In today's day in age, medical experts have been able to identify certain triggers and signs that are indicative of psychopathic behaviors.

Several behaviors would constitute a psychopath. The easiest way to define psychopathy is the "...inability to feel guilt or remorse, gratification from criminal behavior, the inability to make realistic long-term plans, superficial charm, impoverished emotions and a lack of long-term relationships" (Thomas, 2013). Psychopathy has been deemed as needing its own classification for several reasons. Perhaps the more notable reason is

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Stories (Cont'd)

the fact that psychopaths are able to personify an ordinary appearance to the outside world. This is particularly significant because it provides the ability for psychopaths to blend themselves within the everyday community. The best depiction of this is captured in the hit T.V. show, Dexter. In the first season of this show, Dexter portrays himself as lacking an ability to have a long-term relationship, having no emotions, and has always felt a deep desire to kill. He remembered having these feelings dating back to his earliest memories. However, he also was established, well-known forensic scientist.

Other acts that are indicative of psychopathy are their desire to return to previous offenses. In other words, in instances where psychopaths committed a crime, they were significantly more likely to commit that crime again as opposed to non-psychopaths. That likelihood of re-offending those crimes rose when they were violent offenses.

John W. Hinckley Jr. was a troubled individual who was known for his obsession with Jodie Foster and his assassination attempt of President Ronald Reagan. Many of the characteristics of a psychopath relate to Hinckley in various forms. One for example was how he became obsessed with the movie Taxi Driver. The movie revolves around a cab driver, Travis Bickle who was contemplating the assassination of a political figure and uses violence to rescue a young woman. The obsession can be related to psychopathic behaviors in the sense that he envisioned himself in that role and soon took after Bickle's clothing style. The fact that he envisioned himself as Bickle so much to the point that he adopted many aspects of Bickle's life and implemented them within his own. This is significant because if he wanted to be like the dangerous cab driver, Hinckley certainly envisioned himself committing the violent acts that Bickle engaged in. Furthermore, his inability to engage in relationships, whether through friends or intimacy, is shown after he returned to Texas tech and spent most of his time alone. Also, John Hinckley lacked the ability to create long-term goals. While he had certain ideas for himself, they were hardly followed through with. For example, he had decided to

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return to school, but did not make the effort to go to class. Another example of Hinckley's psychopathic behavior is his lack of remorse in the shooting of President Reagan. While some medical professionals believed that Hinckley was sane, his excitement of Jodie Foster testifying in court showed otherwise. He called his parents and informed them of how close he was going to be to her, without paying any attention to why she would be there and what he had done. During Hinckley's trial, lead psychiatrist, Dr. William Carpenter concluded that Hinckley suffered from several forms of mental illness which were "an incapacity to have an ordinary emotional arousal, autistic retreat from reality, depression including suicidal features, and an inability to work or establish social bonds, "(Linder, 2008); all characteristics of a



psychopath. Carpenter also concluded that, "Hinckley could appreciate the wrongfulness of his act "intellectually," but not emotionally. To him, the President and the others he shot were just "bit players." So focused was he on achieving a "magical unification with Jodie Foster" that he didn't see the consequences of his action for his victims" (Linder, 2008).

Genetics

John Hinckley's mother suffered from agoraphobic, which is anxiety in situations that are unfamiliar and where the sufferer feels that the environment is unsafe or difficult to escape from. When a person who suffers from agoraphobia is put in such a situation, they often have a result of a panic attack. When John Hinckley was young, he was described to be very shy, clingy, and dependent on his mother (Linder, 2008).

During John Hinckley's trial, psychiatrist by the name of Dr. David Bear testified for the defense. According to Dr. both schizophrenia and clinical Bear. depression were present in John Hinckley. The defense believed that establishing that John's brain differed from that of a normal person; it would establish that he had an illness. Dr. Bear had performed a CAT-scan on John Hinckley's brain to establish evidence that Mr. Hinckley was not sane. The CAT-scan

Writing Nonfiction Criminal Biographies or True Crime Stories

(Cont'd)

of Mr. Hinckley's brain showed that he had a widened "sucli," the medical term for folds and ridges on the surface of the brain. Widened sulci are more common in schizophrenics than normal people are. Based on the CAT-scan Dr. Bear established that John Hinckley suffered from schizophrenia (Noe, N.A.).

Schizophrenia is a serious mental illness that does not go away. Schizophrenia is described as a "any of a group of psychiatric disorders characterized by withdrawal from patterns illogical reality, of thinking, delusions, hallucinations, and psychotic behavior. Schizophrenia is associated with an imbalance of the neurotransmitter dopamine in the brain and may have an underlying genetic cause" (schizophrenia. n.d.). After a lengthy study of more than 100 families and 1000 subjects there is ample reliable evidence of genetic susceptibility to schizophrenia, within a stretch of DNA on chromosome 13. **Experts** believe that schizophrenia is a condition determined by both genes and environment (Study Shows First Significant Genetic Evidence Schizophrenia Susceptibility, 1998).

Physiological

The consideration that some criminal defendants are exempt from their actions because of their mental state is deep rooted into Anglo-American law. The insanity defense can be seen as early as 1581 in a "legal treatise that distinguished between those who understood the difference between good and evil and those who did not." (PBS, 2013)

On March 30, 1981, John Hinckley Jr. attempted to assassinate then United States President Ronald Regan by shooting. Because of psychiatric testimony and a defense team that insisted Hinckley was not guilty due to his mental state, the jury acquitted Hinckley of all charges.

Though the verdict of not guilty by reason of insanity freed Hinckley from all charges; the public was at an outcry and the United States government passed new legislation that made it more difficult to use insanity as a criminal defense. To get a better understanding of why John Hinckley Jr. suffered from mental illness and why the court approved of the final verdict it is only proper to view some of the social settings and physiological behaviors of John Hinckley Jr.

Writing Nonfiction Criminal Biographies or True Crime Stories (Cont'd)

To some it may seem apparent that "John Hinckley Jr. was the youngest of three children born to a workaholic oil executive and an agoraphobic stay at home mother." (Linder, 2008) From the early stages of his life, John Hinckley Jr. was attached and very unsustainable without his mother. Hinckley spent two years in and out of college until the spring of 1976 when he decided to move to Hollywood in pursuit of a career as a songwriter, even though he had no musical education.

John Hinckley's viewing of the movie Taxi Driver while living in Hollywood may be the most relevant piece of John Hinckley's troubled life. To John Hinckley Jr. this movie appeared to give meaning to his pain and meaning to life. "Fifteen times over the next several years he watched this tale of a psychotic taxi driver, Travis Bickle (played by Robert DeNiro), who contemplates political assassination and then rescues through violence a vulnerable young prostitute, Iris (played by Jodie Foster, from the clutches of her pimp." (Linder, 2008) Soon after Hinckley starts to imitate the leading character in the Taxi Driver film by emulating Bickles wardrobe, preferences, and mannerisms and approves an infatuation for actor Jodie Foster.

After failing to launch a musical career, Hinckley returns to college, where he rarely attends class and spends much of his time alone. In 1979, Hinckley's parents express a concern for his depression and occupational goals. That same year Hinckley purchased a gun and began to visit the range for target practice on a regular basis. "Two times that fall he played Russian Roulette" and Christmas of that year he spent alone. (Linder, 2008) In early 1980, Hinckley took a picture of himself holding a gun to his head.

In the summer of 1980, Hinckley asked and received money from his parents to enroll at Yale as a writing major. Hinckley never truly wanted to pursue a degree in writing, instead he was pursuing undergraduate Jodie Foster. As most would suggest Hinckley failed at gaining the love of Jodie Foster and was reported to have been too shy to speak in person while leaving her letters and poems in her mailbox. Hinckley's failure at Yale leads him to continuously stalk the United States President by flying around the country attending public appearances. During his tour around the country, Hinckley purchased more handguns before running out of money and returning home to Colorado. Upon his arrival, John Hinckley's parents explained to him that

Writing Nonfiction Criminal Biographies or True Crime Stories

(Cont'd)

they were disappointed in him for failing to uphold his promises. Shortly after Hinckley antidepressant overdosed on medicine and was sent by his parents to a psychiatrist for help. Hinckley spent four months with the psychiatrist and never told him about his plans of assassination and little about his infatuation with Jodie Foster. The psychiatrist suggested that Hinckley's parents should "push John toward emotional and financial independence." (Linder, 2008) Over the next several months, Hinckley continued to travel around the country as his mental stability decreased. On the eve of New Year's Hinckley recorded a monologue where he expressed s feelings for Jodie Foster and his fear of losing mental stability. After reaching out to his parents for help, he was denied and ultimately attempted to assassinate President Regan.

No one can definitively state what is on the mind of John Hinckley Jr. The acts that he committed and his continual focus on Jodie Foster, shows Hinckley is clinically insane and possibly a psychopath. Theories are stated based on the behavior and study of Hinckley. Hinckley is a psychopath. He is a man who tried to assassinate a standing President of the United States, when his first attempt on Jimmy Carter was foiled, all because he wanted to gain a person's attention. An obsession that took over his mind and removed any sense of right and wrong.

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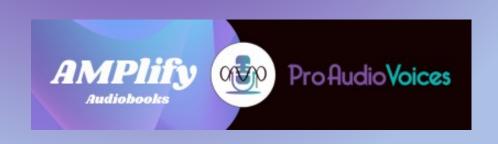


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Gary Orleck's Travels With Maurice: An Outrageous European Adventure in 1968

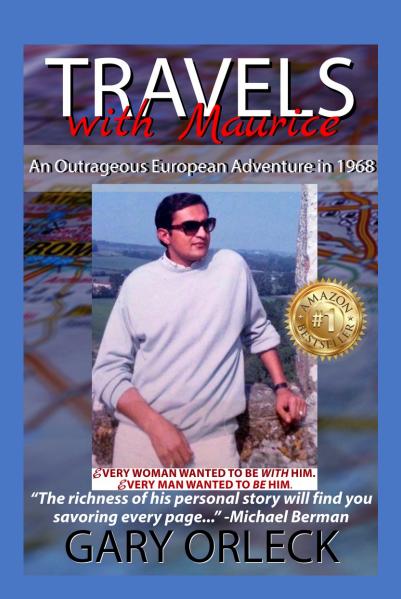
EVERY WOMEN WANTED TO BE WITH HIM. EVERY MEN WANTED TO BE HIM!

An unbelievable story, yet it's true because nobody could make this story up- NOBODY.

The 19,985 miles, 12 country adventure in 1968, Gary and Maurice, formed a formidable friendship, while perusing the London music scene, which included The Who, Elton John, The Rolling Stones and even the Beatles. Maurice, son of the richest Iranian man, shares his life and culture with Gary, as they dined with Kings and Queens, gambled with Shah of Iran and his wife-Her Royal Highness Empress Farah, while also learning the ins and outs of The Iranian government, its corruption, and the reasons the Shah was doomed to fail.

See them come of age while rubbing elbows with other famous persons, asked to dance by Brigitte Bardot, was even rescued out of handcuffs by Shirley Temple Black during the Russian Invasion of Czechoslovakia during the summer of 1968.

A simple "thank you" led to the trip of a lifetime!



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Character Writing

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Perspective and Point of View

There are different ways to write a story, and one of them is to determine the perspective or point of view (POV). Now, this may not sound like it affects character development, but it can. Perspective is not just point of view, it can also be how the story is written, whether the story is written in past tense or present tense. The tense of the story can dictate how the story flows, and the tense should always be consistent. This affects the characters and how the writer wants to tell the story.

First Person POV. The first person can be singular or plural. First person is someone telling the story from their perspective or point of view. First person singular uses pronouns such as I, me, mine, or myself. First person plural is multiple persons telling the story from a groups point of view. First person plural uses pronouns such as we, us, our, and multiple ourselves. Some writers use characters that are written in first person, and they usually (I say usually because not everyone does this) makes a note of whose point of view the section is being told by. Multiple persons' POV can tell their side of a multi-sided story. The reader becomes involved in the thoughts, ideas, emotions, and actions of the different characters. However, too many POVs can be very confusing, and sometimes that is best told from a different perspective.

I've written stories in first person, singular, with only one character doing the narrating. This is not an easy task, as this one character is involved with only *parts* of the story. The readers see the story through the eyes of the one character, so if something happens in the story that this character is not involved in, they may not be aware of it happening, or they are told in some way the details, which also gives details to the reader as well.

Second Person POV. Second person POV in novels and fiction stories are rare, but there may be some out there. Second person refers to a "you" perspective, where there is the use of pronouns such as you, your, yours, yourself, yourselves. Most of the time, second person is used in do-it-yourself books, self-help, or even some kind of instructions or manual. Even this book is written in both first person and second person.

One of the most famous quotes of second person is part of a speech by John F. Kennedy, "Ask not what your country can do for you... ask what you can do for your country." He is referring to "you," which was anyone who was listening.

Third Person POV. Third person refers to someone telling a story about a person or people. Usually the third person perspective tells everyone or most everyone's story. The

Perspective and Point of View

writer uses pronouns such as he, him, his, himself, she, her, hers, herself, it, its, itself, they, them, their, theirs, and themselves. Writers write this so it tells the complete story about many characters within the story, and though it is not first person, sometimes the writer lets the reader know what the character is thinking. Entering the mind of a character is not always easy, but some thoughts are left unsaid, but written so the reader knows what the characters in the book, do not. And sometimes the characters know what the reader does not.

Perspective: The different POVs or perspectives can add to building a character. When a writer begins a story, it is decided what point of view the story is written in. Perspective is how the character sees the world, and just like if there are four witnesses to a crime and each one sees the crime differently, that's how it can affect characters and the story.

Tense: Most stories are told in past tense, where the writer uses past tense verbs and actions of the characters as if they just happened. A writer will use the word "said" as it's past tense. The tense of a story can also give a character some depth as it tells a story in its tense. Present tense isn't always used, but when it is, it can be intriguing. When a writer writes in present tense, the writer will use words such as "says" instead of "said." If a writer uses present tense, if and when the character is reminiscing or remembering past actions, the actions must be written with the past tense, since they happened in the past. Present tense is happening right now; past tense happened from as little as a second ago, or as much as hundreds of years ago.



Bob Freeman's H2LiftShip series

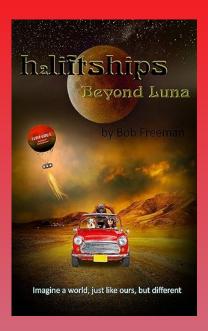
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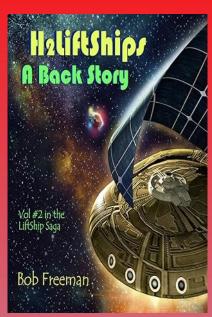
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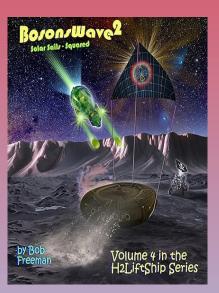
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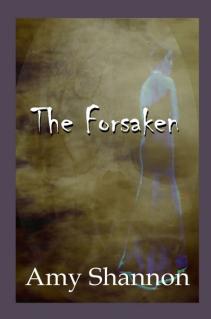


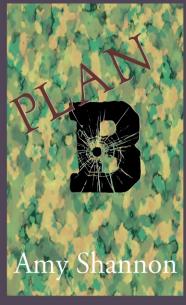


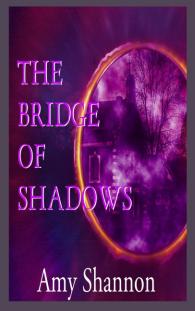


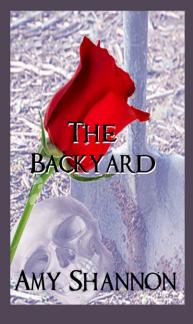


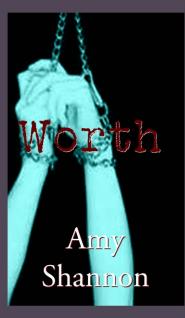
Amy Shannon's Short Story Collection













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Generation Bottlerot by Louis Falcinelli

My name is Louis, and I am a Millennial. That also means I was born from baby boomer parents, and as such I am the product of their society. Their culture. Their way of life, *really*.

I have been shaped or affected *yeah I think* that'd be a better word from their decisions.

I was born into the *decade of decadence*, a child during the Columbine school shooting, and one of the most notorious days in my nation's history... 911, experiencing all that played out after it—the immediate trauma that captivated our country, followed by the unity, then the outrage, then the vengeance.

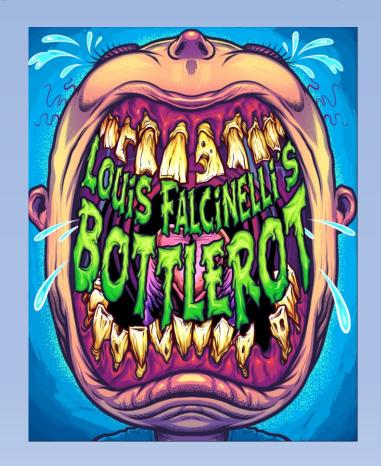
Throughout my adolescence my sensory receptors were flooded with various euphoric-multi-media-emotional frequencies as I was subjected to bright neon colors, boomboxes, gaming systems, VHS's, compact discs, natural disasters, altering terror alerts, manic stock markets, and war, interweaved with fun, interrupted by fury, then peace, interrupted by panic *no wait...* victory! Then right after.... more war?

But before I go on with what I went through during that turbulent time in my youth, let's rewind a bit to learn what the baby boomer went through...

You see, their parents were deemed The Greatest Generation. And if you look back on

that era, it'd be tough to disagree. They grew up during the depression and lived in more moralistic fashion. God. Family. Country. Community. and Hard Work held in the highest regard. They fought in what many feel was the last noble war, and after, humbly helped rebuild other nations while simultaneously building up their own, to a point of extensive economic and environmental prosperity: labor market multiplied, air was cleaner, water was purer, food was fresher.

The *baby* (operative word here) boomers were birthed and brought up into this. And you'd think, being this fortunate to be formed during this dynamic time in American life, they would have passed down those same substantive teachings



Generation **Bottlerot** cont'd

they learned from their parents to their own offspring while having them share in their economic and environmental ease. Unfortunately, things took a bizarre twist, and not only did they not, boomers instead instilled nearly everything antithetical to what they were taught when they started to severely capitalize on all they inherited. And it wasn't just enough to do well, they needed to do extravagantly well, abundantly well, abnormally well. To achieve this, everything they were taught to preserve went by the wayside.

They dug in deep for the almighty dollar, swapping out the great institution of their forefathers and replacing it with the financial institution of money mongers.

Their egos ever-e x p a n d i n g as they oversaw mass construction of big buildings, which suddenly sprung up everywhere—from quaint towns to modest metropolises.

Gawdy houses and flashy cars swept the once scenic, serene suburbs.

Big Business were emphasized over smaller shops that were homegrown.

Quick fixes favored over (sometimes timely) real solutions.

And along with it came retail superstores, converting the country into one, big shopping mall.

This resulted in the air around us becoming heavily polluted, the water tainted, and the food chemicalized.



With each move made, each step, each action, they teared into the tenets they were taught:

God used more as a moralistic front, for their lack of morals.

Country was something they could just reap the benefits of, not revere.

Community now just a status symbol, not something to contribute to.

Hard Work became something they escaped, through creating careers of money management for a pitiful profit.

And Family, the least sacred on their list, because it was seen as trite and tiring for their speedy, showy lifestyle. They couldn't be bothered. So, the next logical thing to do was dismantle it, which is what they did through reviving an almost dormant decree-like legal action that they used as some deranged fashion accessory called

Generation Bottlerot cont'd

divorce (usually a package deal with their plastic surgery and sporty car that inevitably followed). Along with credit cards with what seemed like endless limits, robust returns and a healthy housing market, they were all set!

With such net gains, how could there be a loss? How could anyone or anything be *affected* by this luxurious lifestyle??

Welp... that's where it all comes back to me and my fellow millennials. While they lived large we were left neglected due to their narcissism they had to keep serving with more unnecessary stuff.

And as the saying goes, all good things must come to an end or things masquerading as good. It's been this way throughout all centuries and civilizations alike, and the boomers—better or brighter or richer as they may have claimed to be than the ones that came before them, and as much as they thought they could play fast and loose with not only their existence, but also the country, they learned tragically, they were of no exception.

Due to their laxness... 911 happened on their watch.

Due to their misguidedness.... wars began to break out globally.

Due to their negligence.... a countless amount of my millennial generation died in battle.

And then their plump pockets were effectively drained when the recession of 2007 hit as a result of their own financially reckless living.

The end of their rein may not have ended, but the end of their era certainly did from there on out.

And so, I shifted through my childhood with the country in decline around me. Trudging through my twenties with now an exhausted economy, making what was affordable living, now barely affordable. For college it was financial aides and worthless degrees so I could enter into an awfully dry job market. For a career, it was whatever you managed to fit into, get into, or who you happened to know that could get you in.

And starting a family and having a home? Forget that pipedream! As staying afloat was the only real thing that concerned us.

But. When it seemed like there wasn't much of a glimmer of hope, I decided to flip the script on the dreary situation manufactured by the baby boomers, and that came in the form of writing about the wreckage of my generation, along with the unique optimism we tend to carry.

When it came time for the title, the word or words that would encapsulate the essence of my era, it was instantaneous... *Bottlerot*! That word is initially two words that I saw as the perfect paring to convert into one to make whole. The origin of the term, bottle rot, is when a parent puts a bottle with a sugary liquid inside their child's mouth to pacify their cry. It serves as an easy source of neglect. What better way to sum up who we are?

I then redefined the term!

PARENT represents OUR parents' generation not wanting to deal with us.

Generation Bottlerot cont'd

BABY represents my generation crying out.

SUGARY LIQUID represents society rotting out our teeth.

Bottlerot. It's **who we are**. It's **what we're about** *as I say in my book*. And I branded us *bottle rotters*, the ones spawned from the baby boomers!

In writing it, I saw this as not just my story, but more of a generational tale told by me about us, my millennial manifesto detailing many of our trials and tribulations—like what we've been through, what we're going through, and possibly predicting where we'll end up. This was my way of making up for (or fighting back against) us being sidelined by our society. This was us stepping out of the shadows to finally be seen and heard after shouted down and marginalized so many times before by boomers.

And so, as I grew from baby to child to teen to twenties, to now in my thirties. I'm still unable to get a home or get myself debt free (until my book is a major hit: Manifest! Manifest! Manifest!) While sadly many other millennials are also still suffering due to the baby boomers' handiwork.



Though we're fighters, we battled much from a young age and kept on, while being behind some major advancements in the world today.

However, don't get it twisted, for as much as it may seem, this isn't a knock on boomers, quite the contrary. I love baby boomers. My parents are baby boomers, some of my family members and neighbors are baby boomers. Most are quite the characters.

So, this isn't me taking shots at them, rather it's me using them as an example to tell you a cautionary tale of what happens when you lose sight of things of great importance for things that only seem great but have next to no importance. Because if you do that, you'll have to deal with the fallout one way or another, or worse, in the baby boomers' case, not only do you have to come to grips with your own mess... but realize it's spilled over to the children you're leaving behind.

Louis Falcinelli's second novel Bottlerot will be out sometime in 2024 on amazon, available in both paperback and kindle.

He is a millennial maven, pop-culture curator, and nineties nostalgia lover. When he's not writing, he's thinking of another way to stay sane.



Homage to H. P. Lovecraft by Donald Firesmith

http://donaldfiresmith.com

The bleak Victorian manor towered above the nearby houses like some eldritch temple of an old forgotten god. Whispered rumors of unholy ceremonies, arcane rites, and barely heard screams had spread far and wide so that few dared to tread the short walk up to that cursed edifice. As the cold and cloudless night fell, an evil miasma of darkness and despair rose from the surrounding grounds. The ghostly mist drifted like a spectral shroud while naked trees raised their skeletal arms into the moonless sky. Strange unnatural creatures, each carrying the captive soul of an innocent child, stalked the town's labyrinthine streets. Driven by hunger and greed, they converged on the master's uncanny abode. Slowly, silently, they crept supplicants up to that dreadful doorway through which they heard unearthly music, tortured screams, and the rattling of heavy chains. The hideous creatures paused, torn between their hunger and fear. Seconds passed before the bravest stepped forward and struck the massive oaken door with its clawed fist. Once, twice, three times, it pounded. Soon, heavy footsteps approached, and the door creaked open. As one, the creatures intoned the ancient incantation, "Trick-ortreat!"



Author's Comments

I wrote this in early October as my thoughts naturally turned to Halloween.

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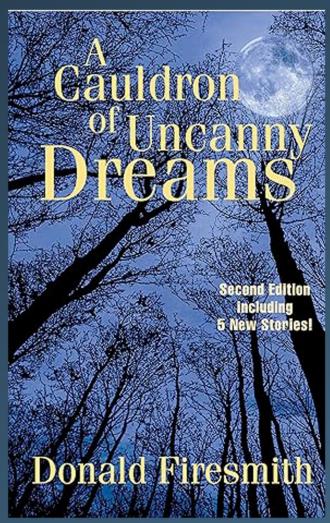
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Donald Firesmith's A Cauldron of Uncanny Dreams

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<u>Advertisement</u>

The Sands of Dionysus by Kerry Alan Denney

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"Damn her," Rona said, scowling as the Temporal Parallax Chamber returned her conscious awareness to her own time and universe. "Rya, you lucky flink, you always get the best of *everything*."

Rona's nerves tingled as she accustomed herself to the unsettling effects of interdimensional time travel. Sometimes she worried that she was leaving little pieces of herself in the alternate universe futures she visited during her junkets. She shivered, then sneered, shifting the blame again.

It was all Rya's fault.

A year younger than her sister Rona, Rya was celebrating her Sweet Sixteen birthday party right this moment. It seemed like half the population of the recently colonized planet was attending, their arms loaded down with expensive gifts. Most of the gifts were genuine tokens of affection. But Rona knew some were given to incur future favors from the brilliant little scientist. Rya was so popular that the Palladium—the new auditorium that was all the rage for concerts, plays, indoor festivals, and trade shows—was Standing Room Only tonight.

Rona and Rya's parents certainly hadn't rented that auspicious venue for *Rona's* sixteenth birthday last year.



Rona felt like puking. Part of the reason was her adjustment to temporal and inter-dimensional relocation. But mostly it was because she was sick to death of all the admiration and praise—none of which *she* was getting.

Rya's just brighter than Dionysus's blazing sun itself! Mark my word, that girl is going to be famous. It wouldn't surprise me if she ends up curing Krillion's Corruption! Just the right combination of maturity, insight, compassion, and genius. The Creator's gift to us all. *Blah blah blah*.

Ugh. Rona swallowed hot bile. Maybe she needed to cut back on the unauthorized jumps through time and dimensions. This had been about her thirtieth trip; she had lost count. She felt a little ... not all here at the moment, as if still waiting for the rest of her to catch up from the potential future she had just witnessed firsthand.

Naturally, Rya had been the shining star in that prospective future, too. When was the last time she hadn't been?

String theory and quantum physics had always posited the existence of alternate dimensions. Parallel worlds in which differentbut-mostly-the-same Ronas and Ryas lived, grew up, loved, lost, procreated, thrived, or perished. After thousands of years spent perfecting interstellar space travel and colonizing the stars, humankind had achieved amazing advances in quantum physics. They had created the Temporal Parallax Chamber: portals that functioned as time machines that took your conscious awareness to endless possible futures in parallel dimensions.

You were only partway there, a casual observer rarely able to interact with the people you encountered. Translucent, insubstantial, often invisible. Basically, a "ghost" haunting other future existences in which another "you" was a physical participant. Sometimes they saw you, and—rare but significant—sometimes they heard you speak. Rona still got the space chills whenever she saw one of her future/alternate selves. She called them "Other-Ronas." Had nightmares about them. But the knowledge she gained in her forays made up for the sleep she lost.

The good thing about her parents renting the Palladium tonight was that none of the party-goers had seen Rona sneak out. They were all too busy fawning over Little Miss Perfect.

Rona snorted, cracking open the Temporal Parallax Chamber's vacuum-sealed door and peering down the hallway in both directions. No one else here tonight. Good. She didn't need the Ethics Committee issuing her more demerits for taking unauthorized trips.

"Krecking sanctimonious gretches," she muttered, sneaking down the hallway toward the exit, careful to evade the security cams. She had memorized their locations, found their blind spots. Sure, her trip had been recorded. They all were, basic security protocol. But no one would know *Rona* had taken this jaunt. She snickered as she slipped outside through the entrance archway.



Poor, trusting Rya. She had left her Portal ID Chip at home tonight and would never know her beloved sister had "borrowed" it.

The thought would never even cross the naïve little flink's mind. In Rya's worshipping eyes, her older sister Rona was her confidante, her dependable guardian, keeper of all her secrets.

If the Chamber's administrators discovered Rona's unauthorized jump tonight, they would scratch their heads for weeks trying to figure out how Rya had taken the trip when she was celebrating her infinite wonderfulness all night at her birthday party.

It wasn't like Rona and Rya were all that different anyway—physically. People often mistook one for the other until they spoke. Rona could never imitate Rya's cheery courteousness, or her doe-eyed wonder. Or match her astounding intellect.

It wasn't fair. Because of the economic turmoil surrounding the recent colonization of Dionysus—they were one year shy of the twenty-fifth anniversary—credits were still tight, and Jeck and Risa Kogue weren't about to allow their daughters access to their accounts. Not until the establishment stabilized, which could take years, each one taking two standard Earth months longer than a revolution around Old Sol. Rona wasn't willing to wait that long.

Until times got better, sweet innocent Rya would get the mothra's share of rewards. She would get the shiny new flier; Rona would get a hand-me-down flier, probably their father's clunky old one. The thing's anti-grav was on the fritz half the time. Rona scowled as she pictured herself flying the junker while Rya whooshed past above her, then imagined herself crashing into the horizon-spanning Crimson Bluffs above the mighty Sapphire River in a tangle of crunching metal and mangled body parts. Yeah, right. Kreck that shit.

All because of the substantial difference in their grades, Rya would be sent to lauded Tempest Medical University amid a fanfare of trumpets and adoring fans waving banners while Rona got sent to community college to learn a krecking *trade*. Rya would marry the cream of Dionysus's crop,



make the smartest, most handsome babies, and solve the world's medical problems to glorious acclaim. Rona would get stuck with a *tradesman* who couldn't keep a credit to his name because of his alcohol or drug addiction—or his obsession with the whores lurking in the taverns and pharmaceutical parlors.

Rona *knew* this. She had seen it. Well, not in this dimension—you couldn't visit the future of your own dimension because of some krecked up quantum physics thing. She didn't understand it. Rya did, because she was a genius. But Rona had seen enough of her physical counterparts' dismal futures in alternate dimensions to know she was likely bound for frustration and failure in this dimension, while Rya was bound for fortune and fame.

Well, someone had to turn that around. Rona figured that was her duty. Her *destiny*.

For now, she had to hurry back to the party so she could give the guest of honor her most amazing birthday present of all. Rona's steps were sure as she jogged toward the Palladium, her breathing even because she stayed fit—one small thing in which Rya did *not* exceed her sister. The ambient light of Dionysus's two rising moons illuminated the trail alongside the Sapphire River in chrome tones accented by deep blue shadows. In ten minutes she saw the Palladium's festive lights glowing across the dusty landscape through the gnarled vegetation.

Slowing to a brisk walk, she ran her fingers through her hair to straighten out the kinks. Wiped a light sheen of sweat from her brow and cheeks. Brushed Dionysus's ubiquitous red dust off her jumpsuit and boots. Scanned the parking lot.

Everyone was still inside celebrating except for a dozen guards posted outside to keep wild animals from climbing into the open fliers and giving their owners an unwelcome surprise when they finally left the party and headed home. Good. The guards were watching for four-, six-, and eight-legged predators—along with the slithering kind—and not two-legged late party attendees. If they even saw Rona, they wouldn't remember her. She was a nobody.

She sauntered back inside unnoticed by anyone, as usual. She found the star of the show crouched beside an anti-grav chair. One of Rya's friends hunched in the chair with her feeble hands curled into claws. Ditra or Destra or something like that. Most of the party attendees were saying their farewells with wishes for health and success for Rya. Rona approached her sister, again unnoticed.

For the moment, Rya only had eyes for Ditra or whatever her name was. Rona swallowed spontaneous bile and forced herself not to grimace. About Rya's age, the girl in the anti-grav chair had Krillion's. Had it bad, fourth or fifth stage. Bloody pus leaked from open lesions on the girl's arms, legs, and face. Blisters swelled under the surface of her skin, slowly festering

and soon to burst. Her feet were so krecked up she couldn't walk anymore. In mere weeks the Corruption would reach her lungs and internal organs, forcing a gradual and unimaginably painful shutdown. Not a merciful end, because its victims remained totally cognizant of every little increasing spike of pain. They compared it to suffocating while slowly boiling alive. Even the strongest drugs failed to relieve the torture.

The tiny miracle—far too late for Ditra or whoever—was that, in her home lab, Rya had already concocted a bacterium that slowly ate some of the Krillion's cells. But it only staved off the initial effects of the insidious infection. If it were contagious, like the Coronavirus Plagues of distant Earth's ancient history, Krillion's Corruption would be a species killer.

The harbinger of a universal extinction event.

But all of Dionysus's best scientists had determined conclusively that it was *not* contagious. According to them, you couldn't catch it by touching its victims, being exposed to their saliva, blood, or pus, or breathing the same air they breathed. For all they really knew, you got infected by breathing the omnipresent red sands of Dionysus, or space dust that infiltrated the interstellar transport ships' air circulators.

Or by thinking too hard, Rona thought. Who the kreck knew. All she knew for sure was that she needed every bit of her inner strength to pull off her masterful plan.

Rya gently clutched the girl's hands. With the beatific smile that had won her hordes of fans, she stroked the girl's sweaty bangs out of her weepy eyes.

Rona mustered a sickly smile and kneeled beside the chair next to Rya. Only the imminent fruition of her plan prevented her from retching.

"Thank you so much for coming," Rya said to her doomed friend. "You're so much stronger than I am, than any of us are."

No way in hell was Rona ever going to touch the disgusting girl, but she managed to put a shaky hand on Rya's shoulder as if supporting all her outrageous fantasies of saving the world.

"Happy birthday, Rya," the girl spat out, drooling with the effort.

Rona gagged, and chewed it back. Krecking gross. It sounded like the girl said *abby birfay wya* because she could barely make her cracked, bleeding lips form the words. Aware that her parents were watching, Rona turned her gag into a sob and squeezed out a few tears.

Tears were easy to produce. The girl's repulsive stench burned her eyes. It was enough to make a veteran burn ward trauma nurse puke.

"I'm going to find a cure, I swear it," Rya said, stronger than Rona or the girl put together because she held back tears and exuded that annoying Rya-confidence with another beatific smile.

"I love you, Rya," the girl said with a cadaverous grin, and her gross spittle flecked Rya's face and Rona's jumpsuit. *I wubboo wya*.

Krecking sick.

Rona thrust her hand over her mouth, fighting not to vomit as bile filled her mouth.

Rya grabbed Rona's other hand and squeezed it, as if feeling her sister's empathetic pain. Somehow Rya found the strength to refrain from wiping the girl's vile spit off her face.

Please, gods, let's get the kreck out of here before I blow regurgitated birthday cake all over this creepy girl, myself, and you, Rya.

Maybe the gods were listening. Two adults—likely the wretched girl's parents—stepped up beside the anti-grav chair. Their tear-filled eyes leaked, but they had smiles of infinite adoration for Little Miss Perfect. Rona stood on trembling legs and pulled her sister up beside her.

"Come on, Rya," she managed to choke out.

"It's time for your present."

"Can Dextry come?" Rya asked with that get-everything-she-wants smile. She looked at the girl's parents. "I promise I'll stay beside her the whole time, take care of her. Bring her back safely. I just know she'll want to see this."

Rona's voice rasped as she spoke. "Gods, Rya, you're ..." What were the words she was straining for? So naïve? Such a hopeless dreamer? Or so clueless over what this is really all about? "So krecking brave," she blurted, unconcerned about cursing in front of the others. "So much braver than all the rest of us put together."

Dextry beamed a ghastly smile, and her rotting teeth made Rona flinch backward. "It's okay, I'll come next time." *Izzogay, I gub ness tie.* Sick.

"Yes, next time," Rona said, knowing this girl wouldn't get a next time. She grabbed her sister's hand. "Come *on*, Rya. The moons are rising, and they're both full tonight. We have to hurry."

Rya's smile was gone, but she nodded and said goodnight to the dying girl. Jeck and Risa squeezed out teary-eyed smiles for their daughters. Then, as he had reluctantly agreed to earlier, Jeck handed his flier's control fob to Rona. He started to speak, but Rona interrupted him.

"I *know*, Dad: Be wary of the faulty anti-grav lurches. I'll be as careful as a surgeon doing a brain transplant, I swear. Come *on*, Rya."

Out the Palladium's archway before anyone could object, hand in hand all the way, running as if Dionysus's fierce winds were trying to stop them. Then they were strapped into the family flier and taking off toward the famous bluffs that nearly divided the planet into two halves.

* * * * *

Gods, so desolate, yet so heart-achingly beautiful. Rya shared Rona's excitement during the ride, but not for the same reason. Dad's flier didn't lurch or give out a single choking rasp as they flew up alongside the massive escarpment. In all of the inhabited worlds, no other series of cliffs were as monumental, magnificent, or intimidating as the Crimson Bluffs of Dionysus.

Eleven thousand sheer feet of vengeful Nature's colossal bite mark.

This was the birthday present to end all prior birthday presents, all across the multi-verses. Horatio and Othello, Dionysus's moons, only rose full side by side in the southern hemisphere once every six years. They looked like an astronomically gargantuan pair of lantern eyes as they hovered over the horizon. Rona parked atop the cliffs and gasped as they exited the flier. She took her sister's hand, partly because the plan demanded it, partly because her awe could barely encompass the spectacle.

"Not too close, Rona," Rya said, her voice quavering.

"Just a little closer," Rona said, pulling her sister toward the craggy ridge's edge.

They both gasped an "Ahhh!" together as they reached the drop-off. Their parents had spent their belated honeymoon atop these mighty bluffs twelve years ago, when Rona was just five, and had bragged about it until Rona's endless pleading convinced them to let her share it with Rya on her sixteenth birthday.

"It's so ..." Rya gulped. "So ..."

"Yes, it is," Rona said, smiling for real now. Finally.

But could she do it? How brave, how determined, was she?

In her mind's eye, she saw all her time travel and inter-dimensional jaunts, the future as it might be for parallel worlds, and subsequently—more than likely—for this world, too. All of her losses added up from visions of other existences of her alternate selves. All of Rya's gains stacked up against Rona's countless failures. The Temporal Parallax Chamber's visions had to be accurate, representative of a cumulative truth whose consequences could only be altered by immediate, decisive action.

Too many sad Ronas. Too many happy, confident Ryas.

Damn it, she had *seen* the infinite truths with her own eyes. Risked far too much to hesitate now, to stop herself from *winning* just krecking *once*.

Yet doubt still assailed her. She squeezed Rya's hand, begging the gods for deliverance from this cruel choice. Asking all the alter-dimensional Other-Ronas to do this wicked deed for her. After all, *they* were the ones who suffered all of the

Other-Ryas to live, not she. Only she had been cursed with the visions of the awful way things were destined to be, across so many dimensions that it had to hold true for this one, too.

Didn't it?

Please! Take this burden from me!

Rya solved Rona's quandary. She turned and gave Rona that damned angel's smile, so confident. So determined. So assured of her place in every dimension.

"Thank you, Rona. It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen, ever even imagined. The most perfect birthday present *ever*." Tears sprang out of Rya's eyes and rolled down her cheeks. "I love you so much."

Rona choked on a sob. "I love you too, Rya. I'm so sorry."

Eyes blurring, she wrenched her hand out of Rya's and pushed her over the edge.

Horatio and Othello watched, not judging.

Hurry now, have to finish the last touches of the plan. Ignore the sudden heartache of loss and finality. Ignore Rya's never-ending scream. Gods, it seemed to echo into infinity, accusing *her*, as if *she* were responsible for the horrible truths that other worlds revealed! Run to the flier. Crank it back up. Long way down. Rona rose, then descended with her guts and heart left in the shifting sands atop the bluff.

Rya was *still* falling, still screaming. Her cry lost its fury of betrayal as her body bashed against the rocky cliff's side.

Tears distorted Rona's vision. Come on, damn flier, show me how unreliable you are! Show Mom and Dad, damn you! She shifted into overdrive, praying as if she actually expected to swoop below Rya's body and catch it in mid-air.

Metal ground against metal, and the flier lurched.

"Yes!"

Closer to the Sapphire's raging rapids, catching the odor of something burning, maybe rubber or synthetic components. Another lurch, Rya's tumbling body just a hundred feet over the Sapphire now.

Close enough to hopefully survive, Rona begged her sister's new ghost for forgiveness and dived out of the crashing flier. She splashed into the roiling waters knowing she had damned herself in multiple worlds.

I wuboo wya.

Moments later, sputtering and gasping for a breath, she tumbled and smashed against the unyielding boulders by the Sapphire's eastern shore, and blessed darkness swallowed her.

* * * * *

Beyond the constant pain, recovery was easy. She didn't have to explain anything because her

broken jaw was wired shut, so she suffered quietly. Sometimes she thought she heard her lost humanity crying, "Foul!" Or was it "Fool"?

Hard to tell from the ringing in her ears.

For weeks and then months, the tears came easily. When her parents, friends new and old, or doctors and nurses were around her-which was most of the time—she let them believe her tears expressed her loss, as opposed to the depths her grief plumbed as remorse. Despite her certainty that she had done the only thing she could do to guarantee herself a bright future, each of those pain-wracked days she wished the Sapphire had stolen her away beyond accusation.

Although that had never been the plan. Survival and redemption were the ultimate goals: a universe in which she didn't stumble and fall behind the shadow of the one girl who should have been her friend instead of her competition.

Later, if she survived her injuries—numerous broken bones and bruised internal organs—she could find out if she would reap the rewards of her horrible deed, a secret she had to take to her grave. All she needed was a score of jaunts in the Temporal Parallax Chamber ... when she could stand on her own two fragile feet again.

When she regained the use of her hands and fingers, she communicated a need for a tablet and wrote the whole damned horrible tragedy, hiding the truth in a pack of despicable lies.

It was just too beautiful, she wrote. Rya got too close to the edge. I begged her to come back and stand beside me. Then she slipped. I tried to grab her. Stop her fall.

I died, I swear, I died with her. I'm dead.

Those things were easy to say because the last part was true. The rest, she realized much later, was desperation for an acceptance she had never felt, for some confirmation of her silent repentance. Then she needed redemption, which she wasn't sure she had earned.

"She's different," people often said both before and after the tragedy, and often it was a compliment. If they only knew.

Different enough to murder my sister.

It was supposed to be the best gift ever, she wrote. Welcoming Rya into adulthood. I tried to save her in the flier. Find her in the river. Then I crashed. That's all I remember until I woke up here, in the hospital. I'm so sorry. I feel like I've lost half of myself.

The last part of that was true, too.

With a current population of only twenty million, Dionysus needed lots of babies, all of the time. Entire communities took the death of every child personally as if they had lost someone from their own family, especially a child so clearly bound for glory as Rya had been.

Numerous rescue squads searched for Rya for weeks, but the Sapphire had swept her body away, forever lost.

Rona's story flew. Dionysus's winds had erased all damning evidence of her monstrous deed atop the Crimson Bluffs. No one had any reason to doubt her. She had lost her sister, so close to her. A horrible tragedy. So Rona got the royal treatment from her parents as well as from the doctors, community, and media.

She was more than just a daughter and potential mother: she was an invaluable commodity.

As a gift from the community, she got a topof-the-line anti-grav chair to help her get around until she could walk again. After four months spent convalescing in the hospital, the doctors sent her home to finish recovering there, where she also got the princess treatment.

The Kogues weren't about to lose their only remaining child. Risa had been stricken infertile after Rya's birth, so Rona was now the jewel in their eyes.

It was a good start. But Rona was aching for a glimpse of what the near future might hold; that was the only way to justify her heinous sin. When she was safely settled at home and the media spotlight moved to more current developments, she started taking every officially approved peek into her alternate futures.

Each interested citizen was allowed one thirty-minute glimpse per week—once every six days. The destination for each trip was



determined through an educated computer guess based on the traveler's genetics and history, and the traveler always viewed an alternate dimension between one to seven years in the future, as far ahead as the algorithms could accurately calculate. The quantum machine consistently sent the travelers to a potential future in a parallel universe where they encountered their alter-dimensional doppelgangers. No one had figured out why yet, or why travel to the past was impossible; two quirks of the technology. The equations for a glimpse of the past were too complex for even the machine's computer mind.

The interminable six days between Rona's trips was an agony all in itself. She put all of her efforts into her body's rehabilitation so she could start sneaking unauthorized jaunts again and discover her destiny sooner. It wasn't until her ninth approved trip—only the second one she took walking at last without mechanical assistance—that she finally hit the jackpot.

In the Chamber, she was smiling as she felt the familiar vertigo plunge into momentary darkness. This was going to be an informative trip; she felt it in her bones. The machine spat her out in a penthouse suite featuring floor-toceiling windows with a panoramic view of the coast of the Great Basin Ocean, and her pulse quickened. Probably Carraco, one of the bigger cities. Whoever lived here had to be rich, successful, famous, or a combination of the three.

Insubstantial, her projected self floated toward the glass. With a gasp at her good fortune, she absorbed the breathtaking scene. Her alternate self from this dimension had to live here!

So, how far forward had she been thrown? A familiar voice behind her made her turn, and she smiled as this dimension's future Rona entered the room.

Other-Rona was beautiful; no more of that gangly teenager in her tight curves. She looked about twenty-four. The machine had sent Rona approximately seven years ahead, its maximum reach forward. Rona sucked in an excited breath when she saw the man following Other-Rona into the suite. Ridiculously handsome, about twenty-seven, well-muscled with an impressive ocher beach tan. He and Other-Rona were decked out in 100% Priskin casuals, the planet's finest natural fiber for high-quality clothing.

Other-Rona grinned and let out a happy sigh as she spun into the man's embrace, threw her arms around his neck, and kissed him. Excellent! Her husband? Rona realized she was crossing her fingers. Neither of the two saw her. She was invisible on this trip. Fine with her. Her heart was palpitating as Other-Rona spoke to the man.

"I have the most wonderful news, Cade. I've been waiting all day to share it."

Perfect name for a total Adonis, Rona thought, barely able to catch her breath.

Cade grinned, nuzzled Other-Rona, and kissed her again. "Oh yeah? Did my intrepid little explorer conquer new uncharted territory again?"

"Well, yes, that too. Rich soil, and a cornucopia of invaluable ores. Primo real estate, a huge score for us and our fellow Dionysians. We're going to be even richer. But that's only part of the good news."

"That's my girl," Cade said, laughing. "And even more good news? Don't keep your poor husband in suspense. He's about to burst."

Yes! Rona thought, clasping her hands as if giving thanks for an answered prayer. Apparently, Other-Rona was a territory prospector. Not just a highly-paid, adventurous, and important job, but a prestigious one, too. She had to have graduated summa cum laude from an acclaimed university as one of the planet's eminent new geologists to nail that job.

In answer to Cade's question, Other-Rona gave him an enigmatic smile, lowered a hand to her belly, and rubbed it.

"Another one?" Hooting, Cade picked her up and spun her around as they laughed together. "Gods be praised. What flavor?"

"A girl this time. I want to name her Rya, okay?"

"Absolutely!" He smothered her with kisses, and she started giggling. "Oh, Rona, your sister would have been so proud of you."

The faraway look of guilt Rona glimpsed in Other-Rona's teary eyes nearly spoiled the moment. But this was almost too much good news. Rona got the hiccups from being on the verge of hyperventilating, and frantically fanned her face to keep from passing out.

More good news came running into the room accompanied by boyish shouts and laughter. Two blond boys, one about five and the smaller one about four, ran toward Other-Rona and Cade, who each snatched up one in their arms with big grins. Adorable boys, clearly happy and healthy. A girl in her mid-teens carrying a backpack in each hand slumped against the doorframe and waved, frazzled but smiling. Probably their au pair.

chatter: how was your day, what did you learn today, did you make any new friends? Tears of joy sprang to Rona's eyes, and she covered her mouth with her hands.

My babies, she thought, my precious family. My future is blessed!

Before she could soak in more of the blissful scene, she snapped back to full physical awareness in the Chamber. She stifled a squeal, more excited than she could remember ever being. Surely this incredible good fortune must spread to other dimensions, especially this one! She could hardly wait until her next jaunt forward to find out more, discover alternate realities with similar great news.

Her body was almost fully healed now. She walked with a barely perceptible limp. The next several weeks and then months flew by faster than a swarm of Dionysian hornets. During that time, she took each trip with increasing newfound eagerness, every authorized peek along with two to three additional covert jaunts per week by resorting to her former sneaky tactics.

It wasn't like the Temporal Parallax Chamber portal was ever guarded with any real enthusiasm or strict attention, and computer security was lax and easy to circumvent. For most of the planet's citizens, the novelty had worn off long ago. After all, the forward glimpses only showed possible futures, and only in alternate dimensions. To most of Rona's peers, a Chamber jaunt was more of a lark, something you did on a boring weekend The room was filled with the universal daily when nothing better came up. But to Rona, it was eventual glory etched in granite. It had to be real, with comparable positive results dimensions.

After numerous subsequent trips, a pattern emerged. In each alternate reality, the Other-Ronas were all successful, famous, deliriously happy, and blessed with enviable husbands and lovely children. The theme became so common that Rona's sense of awe and wonder transformed into incredulity. Would she ever discover another alternate future in which Rya survived?

Had all of the countless Other-Ronas murdered their brilliant little sister as she had?

Before long, her search for a surviving Other-Rya became an obsession.

Rona was accepted with a full scholarship at Tiegle University, a local college that kept her close to home and her parents, and one of the new world's most prestigious schools. Taking a cue from the jaunt where she first glimpsed a successful Other-Rona, she majored in geology.

Time passed in a whirlwind of good news and great fortune, and at twenty-five, Rona's dreams of limitless success, an ideal career, and the perfect family had all come true. She, her gorgeous husband Rix, and their two boys Jex and Tyr were the envy of all her peers.

Despite her success, her search for a surviving Other-Rya grew more frantic.

She finally found one when she was pregnant with her third child—a girl this time, just like the first fruitful Other-Rona she had viewed. Rix

eagerly agreed to name the girl Rya. At the beginning of her second trimester, Rona discovered an alternate universe in which Little Miss Perfect had survived with possibly the best news of all. Rona experienced the jaunt with an unexpected and overwhelming relief.

The Temporal Parallax Chamber snapped her into the Palladium during an award ceremony in progress. No one saw Rona's time-travel ghost; this was another "invisible" trip, as most of them had been. Rya stood onstage at the podium, bathed in the warmth of flattering spotlights. She was about twenty-six, a potential-future glimpse two years beyond Rona's present time. Rya's raven locks gleamed in the auditorium's lights.

She was so beautiful and happy. The vision stole Rona's breath away. Her skin tingled in anticipation as Other-Rya spoke into the microphone.

"Yes, I'm flattered. But not nearly so much as I am happy and relieved. But this award—" she held up a shiny trophy almost a meter tall "—shouldn't have been given to just me. Because I could never have done it without my dedicated, tireless, and brilliant team. And we *especially* could never have accomplished this unprecedented feat without my best friend, my sister and my idol, my guardian angel, Rona." Other-Rya beamed at the group seated in the front row.

Rona looked. Other-Rona glowed with pridefilled eyes, her belly bulging with new life like an

overinflated balloon about to pop. On her left sat an adorable boy of about six, whose hand she gripped tightly. The handsome man to her right clutched her other hand, along with the hand of an irresistible little cutie to his right, a boy around five. Beside the boy sat Risa Kogue, Rona and Rya's mother, a little grayer with a lined face and crow's feet—and a far-off sadness in her eyes—but otherwise equally as happy. Jeck Kogue was conspicuously absent.

Another perfect family, unaccountably and disconcertingly just like in Rona's trips forward in time and sideways in a dimension where Rya hadn't survived. Where my other selves murdered their sister. They all wept tears of unmistakable joy.

"I love you, Rona," Other-Rya continued. "I love you all so much. Our beautiful families. I only wish our father was still here with us to celebrate." She gazed across the audience, so confident. "Rona, the best research specialist, and my priceless team, all of you, you're all the best anyone could ever hope for or dream of. I'm so privileged and honored to have worked on this with you all. *You're* the ones who should be receiving this award. You and all the victims who gave their lives to help us fight this terrible scourge. That's why I'm donating this award in all their names—and especially in our father's name, Rona—to the Krillion's Memorial Hall."

She thrust the award above her head, beaming with that trademark Rya-smile. Rona's heart gave an unexpected lurch. The scene blurred as tears filled her eyes, and Other-Rya didn't need a microphone as she concluded her acceptance speech.

"No longer will parents have to watch their precious children suffer and die, children lose their parents, friends lose their families and friends to this horrible, ravaging disease. *Together we have cured Krillion's Corruption*!"

The cheers and applause echoed off the rafters as the packed auditorium's crowd rose for a standing ovation. Louder than the most audacious pop star's performance. More filled with joy than a choir of angels singing. Tonight, at least in this dimension, Dionysians would be dancing in the streets until the sun rose.

Rona could barely breathe. "Home," she rasped, her code word to make the Chamber return her from her jaunts before her allotted time was up. The transformation didn't happen fast enough. She had to get out of here. "Home, home, home!"

Finally, she blinked back into the Chamber. Her legs wobbled like brittle twigs as she staggered out of the building. Halfway home, she collapsed beside a boulder jutting out of the Sapphire River's shore. She clutched her growing belly to prevent her gut-wrenching sobs from harming her little unborn Rya. Glaring at the deep blue waters and the pitiless rapids, she tried to evict the voices in her head.

"Oh, Rya. I'm so sorry. So krecking gods-damned sorry."

For a while, she let the grief reign, wishing those relentless waters had drowned her alongside her perfect sister just as sorrow now drowned her spirit. Some incalculable time later, as twilight descended and the moons rose over the horizon, she slowly stood and returned home. Cursed or not, she had a precious family to take care of, a new baby to nurture and protect, a suddenly lackluster career to resume.

"I swear I'll take care of them, love them like I should have loved you, Rya. On my life, on all my lives, I swear it."

She wouldn't dare beg her sister's ghost for forgiveness again. Not even she had that much appalling gall.

Everything would be all right. She would *make* everything all right. And no more trips into prospective futures in alternate dimensions that were less than half-real. *No more*. As she approached home, she belatedly realized she had spent so much time and effort gazing into potential futures of parallel dimensions that she had forgotten how to live in *now* and *here*.

Up the elaborately-tiled walkway to their sprawling hillside chateau. Brush off Dionysus's ever-present red dust, stomp it off the caked soles of her boots. Reach for the door, a transformed and repentant Rona with a devout promise lingering on her lips.

She flinched as a child's agonized wail pierced her new resolve. One of her boys. A fall, an accident? With a suddenly pounding heart, she threw open the door and dashed inside. The wails came from the playroom. Rix sat in one of the boys' virtual game chairs, a howling Tyr cradled in his arms.

"Where have you been, Rona?" Accusation simmered in his eyes. Those gorgeous blue eyes brimmed with tears. Jex was curled up on the floor beside his father and brother, snot bubbling out of his nose as he sobbed.

"I was ... what happened?" She rushed over to them and crouched beside the chair. Surely just an accident, a little-boy boo-boo. A cut, a bump, a bruise, maybe just a nightmare from which he woke screaming. *Please*.

All Rix could choke out was a body-wracking, "He's got it."

Tyr clutched his father so tightly Rona almost missed the first blisters forming on his forearms. His exposed calves. His precious little bare feet.

This couldn't be. Not possible. Rya had cured it, hadn't she? This was just a bad dream. Wake up, Rona, you stupid krecking flink!

"No," she gasped, barely a whisper. Someone was echoing "No-no-no-no," over and over, and a distant part of her mind realized the scratchy voice was hers. She leaped up and staggered backward, away from the horror that couldn't be happening, mustn't be happening. Shaking her head, unable to

stop. Her whole body trembled as if a cataclysm was razing the planet.

She stumbled past the couch and the game projectors. Watched Tyr pull his little head off Rix's chest and saw the crusty blisters on Rix's neck.

Dear gods, no!

"Where are you going, Rona? Tyr needs you right now. We need you."

"I can't ... this can't ... I gotta go. I'll be back as quick as I can, I swear it."

"Rona!"

"Mommy, it burns!"

She screamed, tugging at her hair as she staggered toward the front door. Hearing her family cry out for her, torn between running to them and fleeing from the nightmare, she grabbed their shock-wand—normally used to fend off oversized pests—on her way out the door. Stumbled down the overpriced tile steps. Nearly flew along the dusty trail bordering the Sapphire, her heart about to burst.

One more glimpse. Just to be sure.

The lackadaisical guard posted outside the Chamber building grinned and waved at her as she ran up to the entrance. "Hey, Rona. Weren't you just here? You know I have to check—"

With a savage growl she plunged the shockwand's tip into the guard's gut and pressed the trigger. His eyes bulged and his body jittered as the jolt knocked him unconscious. He collapsed to the ground. She leaped over him and dashed toward the Chamber. Her ears popped as the door's vacuum seal locked. Huffing, she swiped tears out of her eyes and gave the verbal command for another peek.

"Initiate forward sequence Rona Kogue-Ganz."

"Unauthorized jaunt," the machine's disembodied voice replied. "One week's wait is required between—"

"Override, damn it! Emergency authorization code 904632!"

"Authorizing."

The few seconds' wait was an eternity of torture. But her single-usage code worked. She blinked and was thrown forward to the penthouse overlooking the coast of the Great Basin Ocean where she had first glimpsed her glorious future.

She gasped as she watched Other-Rona and her husband Cade curled on the elegant parquet floor beside their two boys. All of them were covered in bloody lesions, cracking blisters, suppurating sores. They wheezed as their lungs struggled to draw a last few anguished breaths.

"No, no, no!" Rona shrieked.

Other-Rona's head swiveled toward her with a sickening *scritch* of tearing flesh. She glared at Rona, her red-rimmed eyes full of accusations.

She sees and hears me this time, Rona thought. Me, Ghost-Rona. Now, when nothing matters anymore.

Other-Rona's voice quavered with a mucusladen rasp as she spoke.

"This is all your fault. *Our* fault. *We* did this!" She waved her bloody hands at her family and cackled, hopelessly mad. Her lonesome laugh echoed in Rona's ears, spanning across multiple quantum probabilities.

"Home, home!" Rona cried. She blinked back into the sterile Chamber with her belly aching. Little unborn Rya was kicking as if possessed by Rya's spirit and seeking vengeance for an unforgivable deed. Spewing tears, spittle, and snot, Rona clutched her gut and raced home.

Rix and the boys were gone when she arrived. The audio message played back in Rix's tortured voice as soon as she opened the door.

"We're going to the hospital. Where you should be, Rona. I don't under ... please come. We need you."

She went, recklessly breaking laws as her flier sped there, constantly feeling little Rya kick. And she was there for them all as she had promised, her irreplaceable precious family, through all of their anguish and pain, in body, broken heart, and shattered mind.

But her spirit was crushed beyond redemption.

* * * * *

Four years passed in endless heart-wrenching agony, each day there and then gone in a

tear-filled blink. Each doom-laden moment simultaneously seemed to stretch into an eternity in a torturous way that destroyed Rona piece by piece. By the end of the first year, Rix had outlasted their boys by three months, multiplying his agony a hundredfold before he finally choked out his last bloody gasp.

This was the price Rona paid for one selfish, irreversible act, and kept on paying. If only her Chamber ghost could travel to the *past* in *this* dimension and tell her former self why she had to stop her insane, stupid, jealous, greedy krecking *masterful* plan!

She miscarried little Rya in the middle of her third trimester. The stillborn fetus was almost covered with Krillion's damnation.

Her parents joined the growing legions of the rotting dead two months later.

The loss and woe didn't stop there. Krillion's sprang upon Dionysus with a vengeance and ghostly talons that shredded fragile flesh, an invisible demon born in the vast emptiness of space, reaching ravenous tendrils toward an arrogant species full of the hubris of conquest.

In the first quarter of the third year, half of Dionysus's population was gone. Deader than the red sands atop Crimson Bluffs. At the end of the fourth year, when Rona turned twenty-nine, ninety percent of the population was dust.

Food stopped shipping. Utilities were intermittent, a last gasp of Dionysus's abundant underground waters that turned from a stream to a trickle. Electricity was a dream of the past. Healthcare was nonexistent; after Krillion's third wave hit and the casualties were assessed, all of the doctors and most of the nurses had become victims. More dust to mix with Dionysus's. So much for their insistence that the disease wasn't contagious or airborne.

Determined to kill, it had mutated.

Help wasn't coming from without. Space travel didn't work that way, at least not yet. The nearest inhabited colony was light years away. Nevertheless, the distress code and detailed S.O.S. audio had been laser-wired outward in an infinite recurring loop the moment panicking officials had declared Krillion's Corruption a global pandemic. A planet-killer, they called it, although technically the planet would abide eons after its bitter winds and carving sands had reduced the colonies—and their ardent colonists—to more red dust. By the time anyone arrived, the only thing their archeologists would find would be scattered relics from the ancient ruins of a doomed civilization.

"Civilization," Rona croaked, grimacing at her cadaverous reflection in her bathroom's

grubby mirror. What a wretched krecking pile of gretch dung she had become! Mustering the final resolve she had amassed this afternoon, she scraped enough water out of the toilet tank to clean the mirror. Then she washed her face, careful not to burst any of the blisters. Brushed her lackluster hair. Put on some lipstick that blended with the red sands of Dionysus. Applied just enough mascara to disguise her haunted gaze. She didn't dare brush her loose, rotting teeth. Then she donned the mother-of-pearl knee-length strapless dress that she had worn at her junior prom, the one Rya had raved about with such innocent joy that Rona had teased her about it until she finally relented and let Rya wear it for her own junior prom the following year.

She wanted that back, that closeness parents couldn't share with their children, or children with their parents.

A timeless bond that only sisters knew.

White indoor slip-on sneakers completed the ensemble. Kreck the intrepid explorer's boots. It wasn't like she would need to wash the sneakers later.

She had saved the last eight percent of charge her extravagant flier retained for a special occasion. It was just enough power plus a little bit more to take her to her destination. According to the gauges, from her reading this afternoon, the anti-grav unit was still fully functional.

Before she hopped in, she did a slow three-sixty. Scanned her world, the one *she* had made. The Sapphire's distant roar was a constant undercurrent that whispered a wordless promise.

The buildings were fine, a testament to the best of humanity in architectural design, stability, longevity, progress, and creativity. In a way, they were beautiful. But they were empty shells without their human occupants.

She raised a hand to shade her eyes as she contemplated the cliffs that nearly split the planet in two. The sun was setting over the bluffs, and she wished she could share the aweinspiring sight with a child, a husband, a friend.

With Rya.

She had none of the above left. She was raising a trembling leg to step inside her ride to the best present ever when a voice behind her made her spin around.

"Rona."

Gods, it was her, finally. Or one of her. Semi-transparent but clearly Rya all the way—with about a decade added to smooth out her former teenage gawkiness. A Ghost-Rya, here now and able to speak this time.

Beautiful. Healthy. Happy, but a sadness in her eyes reflected the depths of a raging river.

Rona blurted, "I was wondering—hoping—if you would ever come."

Ghost-Rya from a not-too-distant past in a parallel dimension sighed, then shrugged. "I've always come. Always been watching you. All of

you. Ever since I turned fifteen and was officially approved. You're all I have left of you, Rona."

Rona cringed as the realization struck her. The watcher had always been the watched.

"How many times, Rya? I mean, how many ... *mes*?" The real question tasted like ashes on Rona's tongue, and she couldn't spit it out.

How many Ronas murdered their sister, Rya?

Ghost-Rya nodded, standing tall and straight, confidence in her every move. "Most of them. Of you. Alternate yous."

Rona tried to tell herself this was just a ghost of someone who *might* be. Somewhere else. Unreachable, even after all of the jaunts, the pointless, absurd effort to try to see the future.

What a krecking fool she had been.

With that pleading get-everything-she-wants look that sent a rush of nostalgia tingling through Rona, Ghost-Rya said, "Don't you see, Rona? In every reality, it's not anything as abstract as fate or destiny that decides. It's *us*. We are the masters of our own destinies, and only we make our future. It's built by everything we do, the cumulative product of all our deeds."

Rona laughed, halfway a sob, wondering if the chains she forged in life would shackle her in the afterlife. "Well, I've certainly made one hell of a krecking mess of mine, haven't I?"

"But not *all* of you have done so. Sometimes you pulled me back from the ledge. Sometimes I slipped and you saved me. Sometimes you didn't

even push me, and we went home together and grew up and made all our dreams come true." Ghost-Rya winced and waved a hand at her other-sister. "It doesn't always end this way."

Rona shook her head, finding a lost smile. "It does here. To *me*."

Ghost-Rya stepped closer, and somehow she was Rona's lost sister, not murdered. Still semitransparent, still a ghost, but more *here* now. Rona almost believed she could reach out and touch the tears spilling out of her little sister's eyes.

"We could have had it all, Rona. Together. In every imaginable reality."

Rona wasn't going to say how sorry she was again. Apparently, any number of Ryas had already heard it from any number of Ronas.

She stifled a sob, wanting to be strong for one of her last remaining sisters, one who had reached out to contact her despite all the horrors her own various incarnations had committed.

"Will you come ... be there with me?"

Rya hesitated, gazing at the red dust at her feet. She started to reply, then just nodded.

"Meet me there?" Rona asked, a forgotten delight wrenching her heart. "Last one there has to do the laundry for a month."

Rya just nodded again, her luminous eyes reflecting all the losses they had shared.

In the flier. Cranking it up for one more ride. Then up, up, and away, awed again by the most astounding geological accident humankind had yet discovered in its infinite travels to seed the stars.

It still took her breath away, even after all these years. Even despite her losses, all the grief and death she had caused. Eleven thousand feet of near-eternal magnificence scrolled down past her as she rose. She sniffed, smelling the freedom it promised.

When she parked atop Crimson Bluffs near the edge, Rya was already there.

Rona climbed out of her flier with a relieved sigh. "You win again."

So much in that simple statement.

Back in the phase of the six-year cycle when they rose side by side and full, in what should have been an unforgettable spectacle to share with all the world—or at least with one priceless, irreplaceable sister—Horatio and Othello glared at the pitiful human woman atop the bluffs, now her judge, jury, and executioners.

Rya shook her head, sprinkling tears. "I've always loved you, Rona. No matter what. All the yous. All the mes. Always will."

Rona choked out a bloody spittle-flecked laugh, gazing down at the army of swelling blisters and suppurating lesions on her arms and legs. The leaking pus on her chest had already stained her pretty dress.

She just nodded at her sister, a nod for all of them in lieu of another pointless apology.

Another Rona might find—or *make*—a brief victory somewhere else. This was *her* world. Her own personal damnation. Let the gods weep for their children unheard here. In time, a mere blink in the eye of eternity, those children and all of their gods would vanish in Dionysus's winds, drown in its dust.

Ghosts of a dream that died with her sister.

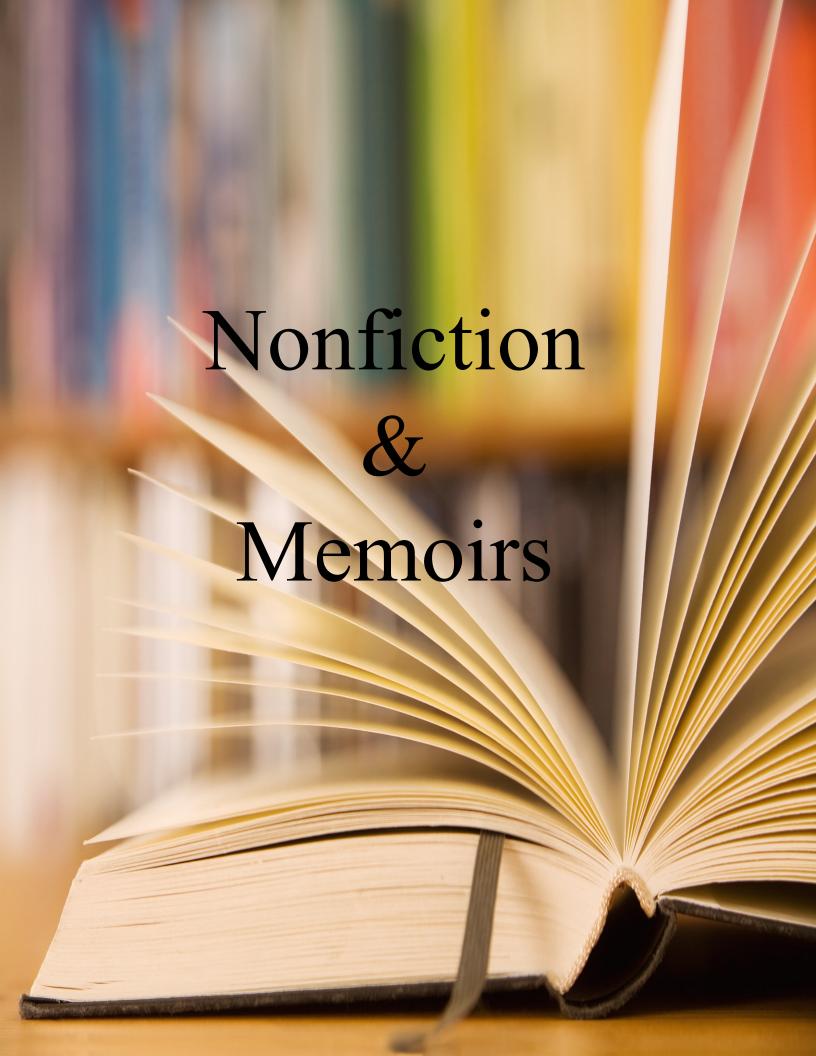
With a final wave to the survivor who was courageous enough to come say goodbye, Rona stepped off the edge.

She didn't scream, didn't cry out, didn't make a sound. But near the end of the long fall that finally set her free, as the whiplash rapids and jagged rocks of the Sapphire River rose to welcome the return of an old friend, she softly whispered, "I'm coming, Rya."



Www.kerrydenney.com

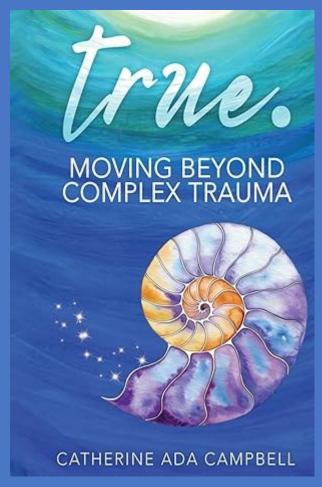
https://x.com/KerryDenney



Catherine Ada Campbell- True. Moving Beyond Complex Trauma

Catherine Ada Campbell spent her childhood summers with her parents in a travelling carnival, with the giant Ferris Wheel babysitting her for hours. In fourth grade, she waved to crowds atop a parade float. She enjoyed lavish birthday parties and studied ballet. Unlike many of her peers, Campbell knew she was never abused.

But at the age of 34, a chance phone call with her brother shattered everything she thought she knew about her family and her past: her memories were false. A memoir of resilience, perseverance and hope.

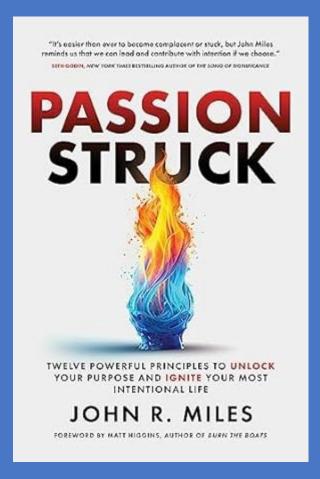


5 Stars

Catherine Ada Campbell writes a biographical story about trauma and memory.

True. Moving Beyond Complex Trauma is a very moving and complex book. This book captures the reader's attention in chapter 1. This is one of those books that grabs you from the start and pulls you in. I must say that Catherine is very brave for sharing this story. Memory is a funny thing, and we all have memories, but what does it mean or do to us, when we find out our memories are false, or we look at them in a different perspective, because our mind is trying to protect us. She writes her story magnificently, as it is heartbreaking, heartfelt, and truly inspiring. She's amazing to share her story, and her journey toward learning the truth, and moving forward. Trauma can make us feel something or sometimes nothing, and it can do wild things to our mind. She is honest and forthright, and I am so honored to read this story. It does make you question your own memories. Bravo, Catherine. This read is more than just words on a page.

John R. Miles- Passion Struck: Twelve Powerful Principles to Unlock Your Purpose and Ignite Your Most Intentional Life



A Powerful Blueprint for Transforming Your Life from Ordinary to Extraordinary

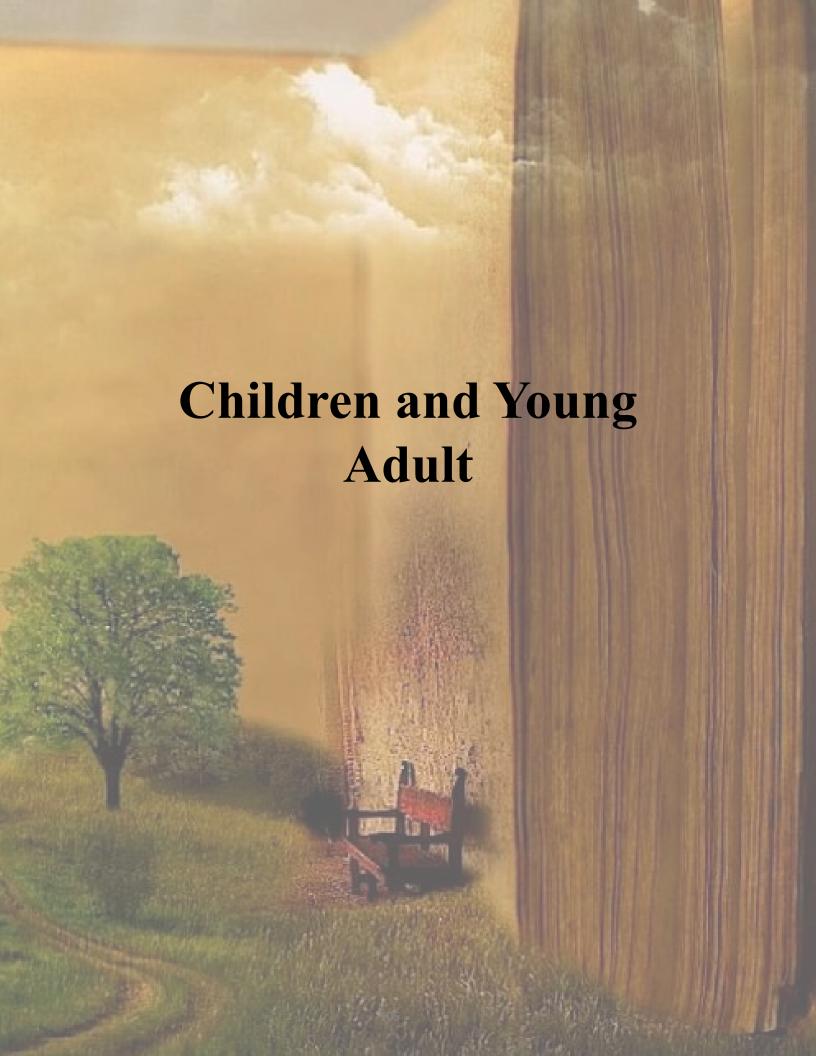
Imagine yourself waking up each day with a clear mission, free from self-doubt, and armed with the skills to lead and thrive in any situation. In Passion Struck, John R. Miles provides a compelling roadmap to elevate your life from ordinary to extraordinary.

Passion Struck introduces a methodology centered around mindset and behavior shifts, the psychology of progress, deliberate action, and intrinsic motivation. You'll discover how to break free from the constraints of fear and doubt, leveraging insights from some of the world's most successful and inspiring individuals. John R. Miles combines his own life experiences with actionable advice and powerful stories to help you ignite your passion and live with intention.

4 Stars

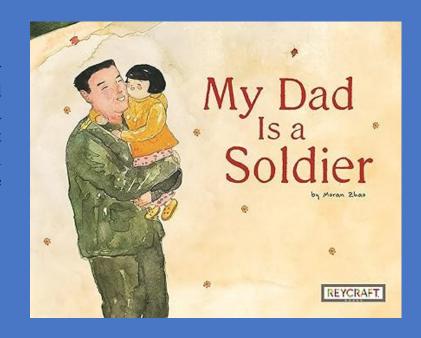
John R. Miles writes an interesting book about Passion and Purpose

Passion Struck is an impressive book. This is the first I have read from this author. I found that I could relate in some ways to this book, especially when I wake up in the morning, my first mission is to be grateful that I woke up, and the second is to get dressed and make my bed. In reading this book, I at first thought it was another one of those books that give you a road map and tell you to do something in order to make your life better. That's not what this was, it's not a cookie-cutter motivational book. The author found a way to make the book readable, and also offer assistance in how to look at your life. This book is not a cure for what ails you, but it can help you find your purpose, your motivation, and your passion, which can make you want to get out of bed in the morning. It is a grand book, that I read at the right time for me. I think that no matter when I read the book, it would've been the right time. This book lists out principles, and guides you, and the one thing I can see coming out of reading this book, is looking inside myself, and it is something I do a lot. This book captures the reader's attention in chapter 1.



Moran Zhao- My Dad is a Soldier

A little girl travels with her mother to a military base to visit her soldier dad. Once there, her dad is called away to help people suffering through a terrible flood. She understands the important work her dad does, but one day hopes he will return home and pick her up at school like all the other dads.

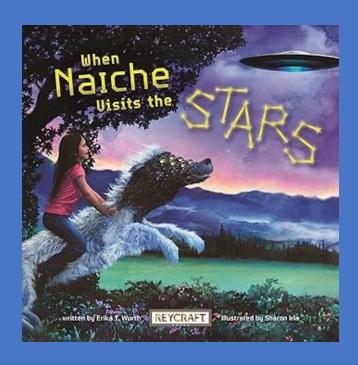


4 Stars

What a wonderful story in My Dad is a Soldier by Moran Zhao

I haven't read work from this author before, and I enjoyed this story. This was a great book and I recommend children of those in the military read it, as well as other children. The characters were real and the topic of the story is also real. The illustrations were wonderful and told the story. This book would be perfect to read to a child or have the child read it back. It's fun to read, and very enjoyable. The story is told from the child's point of view, and how they live at home, her and her mother, while her father is away. Sometimes she is able to visit him. And she is proud of her father, though she does sometimes wish that, like her friends, her father could take her to school or pick him up. Everyone of all ages should read this book.

Once Upon a Dance- Sora Searches for a Song: Little Cricket's Imagination Journey



Naiche, a mixed-race girl, dreams of one day making spaceships like her parents who work for NASA. While her mother teaches her the ways of the Apache and Chickasaw, she imagines her own encounter with aliens. Will she one day be able to fly to meet them?

5 Stars

What an incredible story in When Naiche Visits the Star by Erika T. Wurth

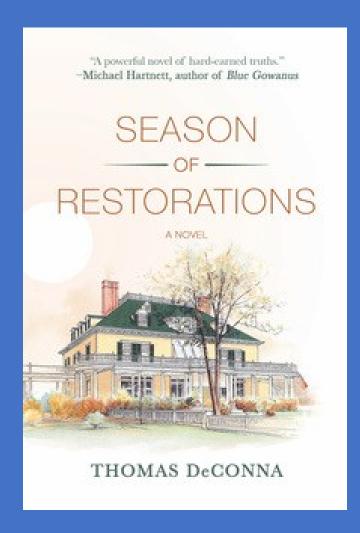
I haven't read work from this author before, and I enjoyed this story. The story about Naiche is a complex and unique story for children of all ages, and adults of all ages as well. The illustrations are remarkable, and add to telling the story. This book would be perfect to read to a child or have the child read it back. Naiche has a variety of cultures within her family, and is of mixed race. Naiche tells her story about her culture, her dreams and her parents. She loves her mother so much, and I like when she describes her and her mother, as three tribes, Apache, Chickasaw and Cherokee, and how they came from Mexico or the United States. Anyone would love to read this story, and learn about the child who has the dreams of making spaceships.



Thomas De-Conna-Season of Restorations

5 Stars

Heartfelt & Inspirational. In Season Restorations, the reader is introduced to the Bowman family, Franklin being close to death, implores that his family, his son and grandson come back home. They have a family home in New Jersey, and when they arrive, they also bring their baggage of secrets and decisions to make in their lives. I am a big fan of Thomas De-Conna and read whatever this author writes. This author has a grand imagination, and talent for showing the story. In the story, there is conflict, that comes with not just generational issues, but family issues and secrets. Franklin, George and Jack feel that they need to keep things to themselves, but wish they could share with each other. There is a bond between father and son, and it is complex and can show how distant men, fathers and sons, keep each other at arm's length, just when they want to grab their child, and hug them tightly. This is a remarkable story about family, bonds, generations, and endurance of their spirit. When push comes to shove, the family dynamic changes. This story is a very emotional rollercoaster and definitely an unforgettable read. For every thing there is a season



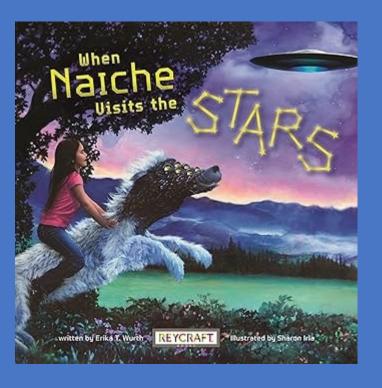
F/Drama/Literary/ Generational

About the Book: Three generations of men gather at their family homestead in New Jersey as Franklin Bowman faces impending death. With a plan in mind, Franklin summons his son George, who faces the uncertainties of retirement, and his grandson Jack, who faces the prospect of discovering himself after being fired from his job.

Each man keeps secrets he would like to share with the others, but the silence of men might keep those secrets hidden forever. With a touch of magical realism, secondary characters link to historical figures and act as mystical guides.

Erika T. Wurth- When Naiche Visits the Star Genre: Children's/Imagination/Aliens/Space

Illustrator: Sharon Iria



About When Naiche Visits the Star Naiche, a mixed-race girl, dreams of one day making spaceships like her parents who work for NASA. While her mother teaches her the ways of the Apache and Chickasaw, she imagines her own encounter with aliens. Will she one day be able to fly to meet them?

Find more about Erika T. Wurth at https://erikatwurth.com/

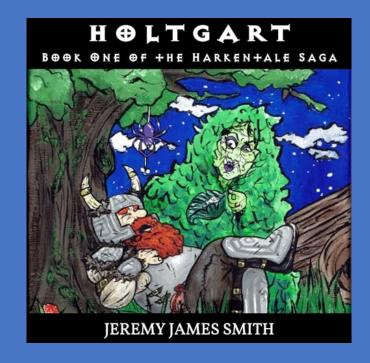
Audiobook Jeremy James Smith- Holtgart Genre: Comedic Fantasy, Epic Fantasy Narrated by: Dustin Sipes

About Holtgart

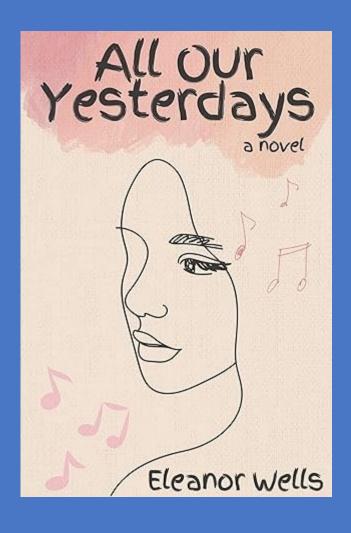
Angus Redbeard was nobody until a fateful mistake made him one of the most famous dwarves in history. Now he has a year to prove himself worthy of his new title - and become a hero. Like ripples from a skipping stone on a still lake, Angus' exploits reverberate, triggering dormant entities. Before long, fights become battles and battles become wars, and Angus finds himself defending people he never expected to know from long-latent threats roused by his own escapades.

Follow Angus on his quest to find elves, outwit politicians, survive goblins, orcs, and trolls, and discover what he's really made of. Holtgart begins the epic fantasy series The Harkentale Saga, a comedic romp forged from equal parts action and adventure, with a dash of world-saving, and a hearty side of diverse new friends.

Find more about Jeremy James Smith at www.jeremyjamessmith.com



Eleanor Wells- All Our Yesterdays Genre: F/Literary/Women



About All Our Yesterdays

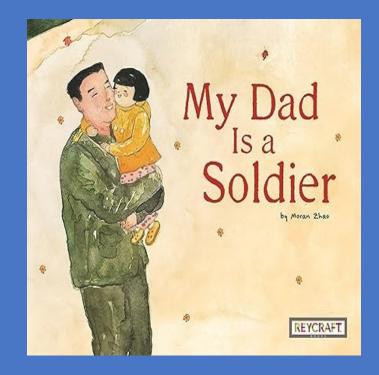
It's the summer of 1999 in rural Minnesota, and eighteen-year-old Marcy Lewis is at a crossroads. Having graduated high school without committing to college, she wonders about the meaning of her life and what she is meant to achieve. On a trip with her sister to New York City, she meets up-and-coming musician Cole Hargrove, and the spark between the two of them is instantaneous. After Cole is inspired to write songs about her, he becomes one of the biggest names in music. As Marcy is thrust into a world of wealth and fame unlike anything she's ever known, she finds herself torn between her sense of identity and status as one of pop's greatest muses.

Find more about Eleanor Wells at https://www.amazon.com/stores/Eleanor-Wells/author/B0CZ389HWB

Moran Zhao- My Dad is a Soldier Genre: Children's/Military

About My Dad is a Soldier
A little girl travels with her mother to a military base to visit her soldier dad.
Once there, her dad is called away to help people suffering through a terrible flood. She understands the important work her dad does, but one day hopes he will return home and pick her up at school like all the other dads.

Find more about Moran Zhao at https://www.goodreads.com/author/sho w/35127526.Moran_Zhao



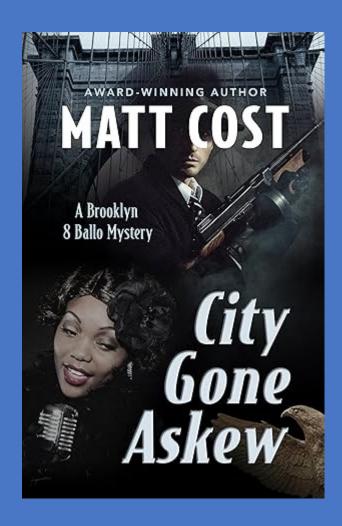
Matt Cost-City Gone Askew Genre: F/PI/Historical

About City Gone Askew

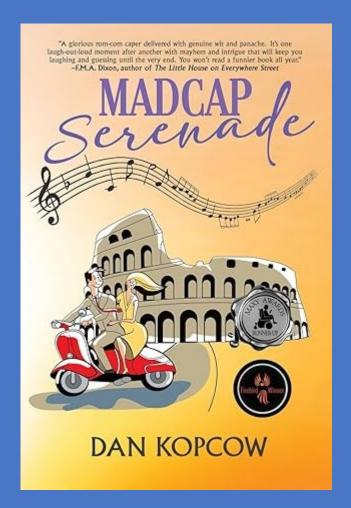
8 discovers that a priceless Aquila—an ancient eagle Roman standard carried into battle 2,000 years ago—was stolen from Karl Vogel when he was killed. This provides ties to a secret German organization known as the Batavi. But Vogel was also involved in the eugenics movement centered in Cold Spring Harbor on Long Island, as well as being involved with the Ku Klux Klan.

As 8 peels back layers of the underbelly of 1920s Brooklyn, the more complicated and dangerous it becomes for him and those who are important to him. What is happening at Cold Spring Harbor with Herman Wall and the eugenics movement? Who are the mysterious Germans threatening 8? And what is the identity of the charismatic Grand Cyclops? 8 must race against time to uncover the truth and put a stop to the most chilling triumvirate ever conceived.

Find more about Matt Cost at https://www.mattcost.net



Dan Kopcow- Madcap Serenade Genre: F/Romantic Comedy



About Madcap Serenade

Eli, a precocious 16-year-old social misfit living on Long Island in August 1979, cons his way into a professional boys' choir's Italian and Vatican tour so he can discover his missing father's legacy.

But when he meets his dream girl, Jane, and finds himself connected to an intricate murder plot involving a legendary drug, he must decide if singing for the Pope is worth losing his family and first love.

Jane, a rebellious 16-year-old American girl, is desperate to get back into favor with her school friends after accidentally calling a narc on them. When she is sent to a Roman convent for smuggling erotic novels, she realizes she must grow up fast if she's going to escape from the nuns, solve her family's mystery involving a mythical drug, keep clear of the authorities, and declare her love for Eli.

Find more about Dan Kopcow at https://dankopcow.com/

Patricia Loofbourrow- The Ten of Spades

Genre: F/Crime/Mystery/Steampunk

Series: Red Dog Conspiracy Series

Volume: 5

About The Ten of Spades Be careful what you wish for ...

After eleven years trapped in the Spadros crime syndicate, 23-year-old private eye Jacqueline Spadros is an independent woman, free to run her investigation business.

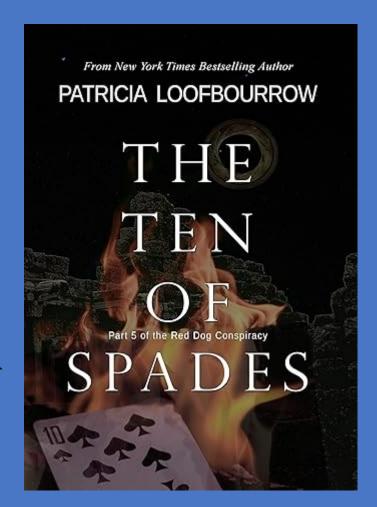
But her problems are only beginning.

Deeply in debt, Jacqui is in danger from both the rogue Spadros men calling themselves "The Ten of Spades" and the ruthless Red Dog Gang — who may be one and the same.

Jacqui is determined to find Black Maria, the key to the identity of the Red Dog Gang's secretive leader. To survive long enough to do that, Jacqui needs a paying case.

The one she's offered may put her in the most danger of all ...

Find more about Patricia Loofbourrow at https://pattyloof.com/

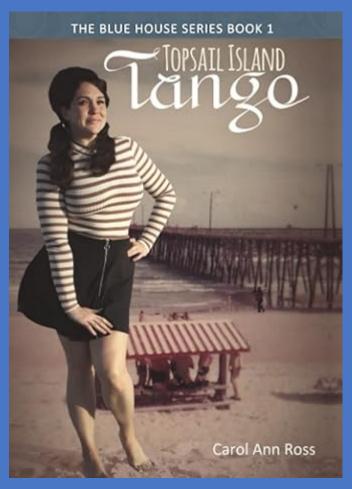


Carol Ann Ross- Topsail Island Tango

Genre: F/Historical/Romance

Series: Blue House Series

Volume: 1



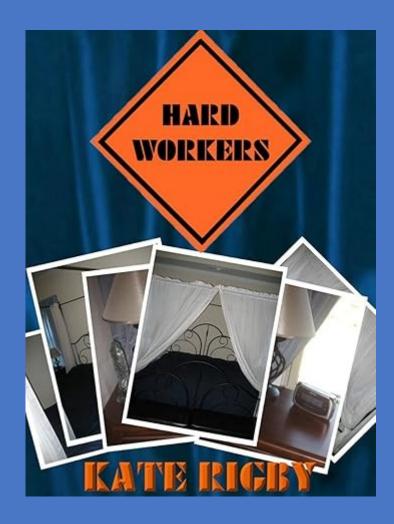
About Topsail Island Tango Mim has lived on Topsail Island her whole life until love takes her away to a life she never could have imagined. The words, there's no place like home, ring true as she finds out that love isn't everything she thought it would be.

Find more about Carol Ann Ross at https://www.carolannross.com/

Kate Rigby- Hard Workers Genre: F/Drama/Short Stories/Erotica

About Hard Workers Hard work and dedication should count for something, shouldn't it?

Find more about Kate Rigby at https://kjrbooks.yolasite.com/

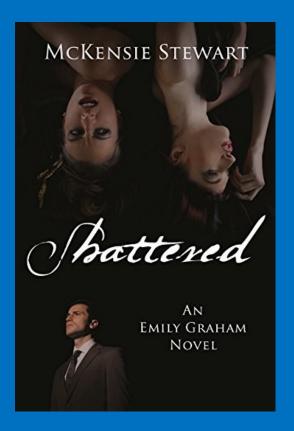


Shattered: An Emily Graham Novel

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 motherin-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.







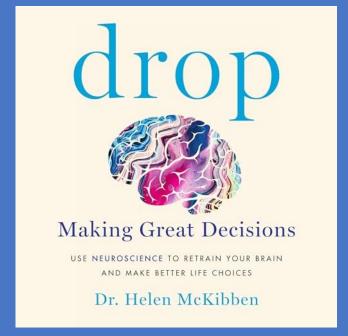
Audiobook Dr. Helen McKibben - Drop: Making Great Decisions

Genre: NF/self-help technique Narrated by: Dr. Helen McKibben

4 Stars

Dr. Helen McKibben talks about an interesting topic in Drop: Making Great Decisions

In Drop: Making Great Decisions, the reader is introduced to Dr. Helen McKibben, who also narrates here book. I have/haven't listened to anything from this author before, and I really enjoyed it. I found the that audiobook was the perfect format for this type of information. Not only does the doctor share her expertise, and also enters the world of neuroscience, and how you can retrain your brain, (note that not everyone can do that, especially if it's broken, and that's personal experience), but she also conducts interviews. The retraining of your brain in this instance is not about healing your brain, but making better choices and decisions, by thinking more before acting. It's an interesting self-help book, and the doctor seems to have a lot of experience. The narration could be a big clearer in sections, but it was a good story to listen to. This book deserves both a read and a listen! I did get the sense that the interviews were replanned, but they were also engaging in conversation. Drop: Making Great Decisions on audiobook is a definite listening recommendation by Amy's Bookshelf Reviews.



About the Book: Use neuroscience to retrain your brain and make better life choices.

"In order to make healthy decisions, we must learn to stop running from our emotions."

Dr. McKibben's approach combines the study of the body, the brain, and the interaction between emotion and memory. She enables us tap into the biomechanics of emotions, resolve triggered feelings, and make better life choices.

Learn to use neuroscience to activate the brain in the way it is designed to work emotionally, and to change your brain's response to yourself and other people.

You can use your emotional instincts to make great decisions. Trust your brain and set yourself up for self-reliance.

Available NOW! 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, Ball's Town: A community of history, friends, neighbors, and lingering spirits.

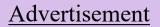
The book covers past and present, and also brings back to life those forgotten books by forgotten authors who dedicated their writing to Saratoga County, and its healing mineral springs. These springs bubbling up with their medicinal value, were the start of getting settlers to Ballston Spa, not just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

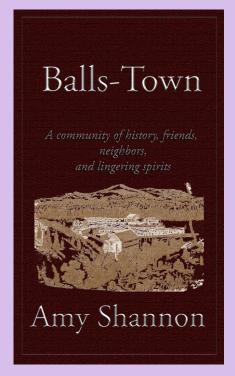
A lot of reading and research went into writing this book.

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

https://essenceenterpriseus.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, historical writings poems, about 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