

SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER 2025

ISSUE 19.0

LITERATE LY

MAGAZINE

FROM REVIEWS TO LITERARY NEWS; FROM HISTORY TO HER-STORY

AUTHOR INTERVIEWS

FEATURED SHORT STORIES

ABSR SS CONTEST WINNER

MIRROR REALM BY AMY

TRUE CRIME

D.R. BARTLETTE

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NICHOLE HEYDENBURG B. WILLIAM HOOLIHAN



AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT
JAN NOTZON

AUDIOBOOKS:

JOHN HELDT

ROBERT CONLIN

NONFICTION:

Karen Olsen

REVIEWS & MORE

PICKS OF THE MONTH
ANTHOLOGIES
OUT OF THIS WORLD

OUT OF THIS WORLD HRILLERS & CHILLERS

HISTORICAL

ISSN: 3067-9907

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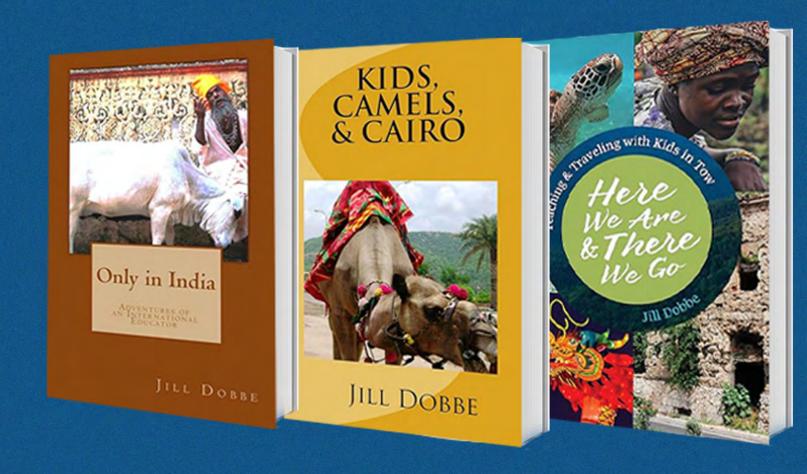


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International Educator & Travel Writer Jill Dobbe



Buy Jill's Books



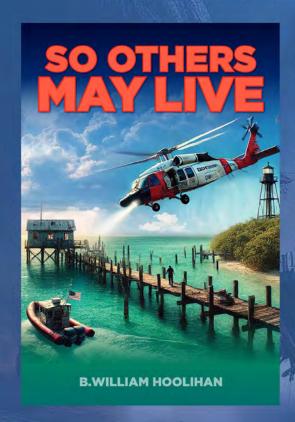
Jill lives in Honduras, writes about her global experiences in schools and countries, and continues to explore and document the beauty of Central America while learning Spanish.



B. William Hoolihan's

So Others May Live

Some missions never end. Some promises must be kept.



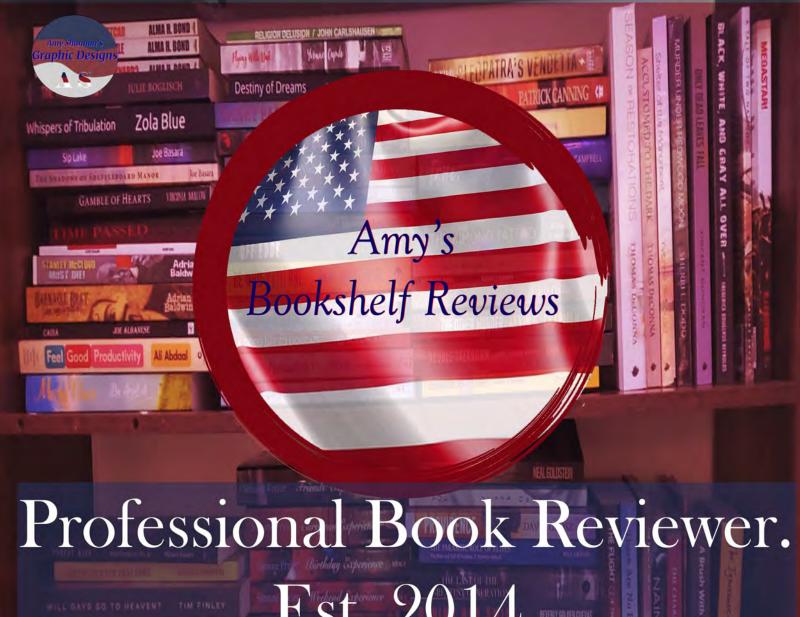
Retired Coast Guard Chief Rik
Duval thought he'd found peace
on the waters of the Florida Keys.
A quiet boat. A cold drink.
No more orders.
Then Billy Tiger crashed into his life changing its trajectory forever.

Loyalty beyond the bonds of brotherhood



Narcos. Treasure. Betrayal. And that's just the beginning





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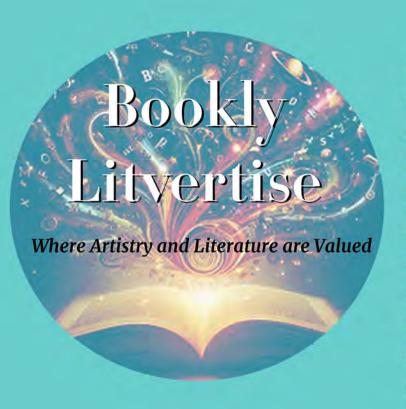
Every Author's story is celebrated and shared with unbiased, honest & ethical reviews. Read or Listen. Review. Repeat.



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CROWN PRINCE



This magazine is ALL full page 8x10 advertisements, and the ADs can range from authors selling their books, publishers promoting themselves, writing contests, artists selling their work, and basically anything artistic or literary. The caveat is that that with this magazine, in order to have an AD in it, there will be fees. The upside is that the business or person can create their own AD if they wish, or I can do it, and that would be free of charge. All Ads would have a QR Code so it can be scanned.

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If a person purchases an AD in Literate-Ly, they will get AD space for three consecutive months for free.

Think of this as a "Fivrr" version of a magazine. You can sell brand, your services, or advertise your work.

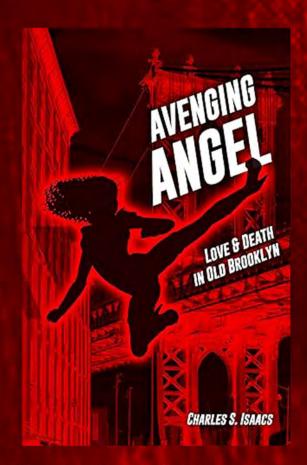


Charles S. Isaacs presents



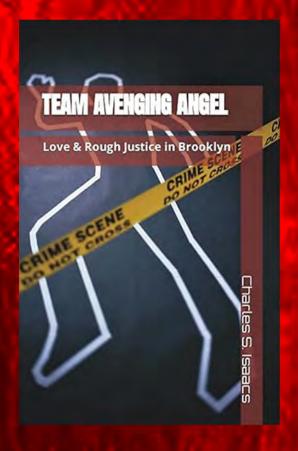
THE AVENGING ANGEL SERIES

Tales of vengeance, resilience, and redemption, intertwined with an unexpected love story, set against the gritty backdrop of an urban landscape marred by violence against women and the scourge of racism.



Charles Isaacs Website

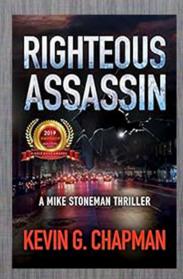


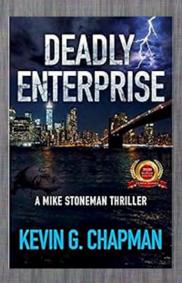


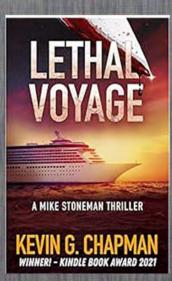
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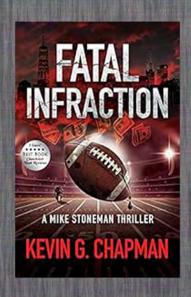
Kevin G. Chapman's Mike Stoneman Thrillers

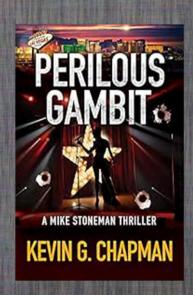






NYPD homicide detectives Mike Stoneman and Jason Dickson tackle the hard-hitting cases, while having ups and downs as partners, and while also trying to have a personal life.











https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B08BZMDSVT

Amy Shannon's

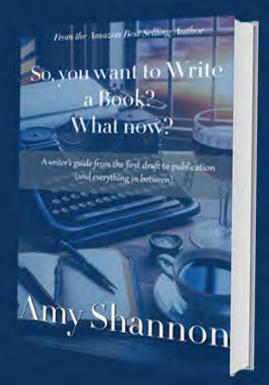
So, YOU want to Write a Book? What now?

A writer's guide from the first word to publication

This book is designed to support authors at every stage, from novices to experienced writers, as they navigate the publishing journey. It covers the entire process, from drafting to finalizing the manuscript. Learning from someone who has experienced this journey can offer invaluable insights, though it's important to remember that what works for one writer may not work for another.

Many people often say, "I should write a book." If you feel this way, then go ahead and write it. You won't know until you try. Some people discover their writing talent early in life, while others find it unexpectedly later on. So, if you have the urge to write, just do it.









CHRIS KARLSEN & JENNIFER CONNER

PRESENTS



BROKEN FACES

"In the aftermath of war, hope is sculpted from the scars, and love becomes the ultimate healer."

Amidst the devastation of WWI, Abigale Belorman and Colm Harp use their sculpting and metalsmithing skills to craft masks for injured soldiers, offering hope and normalcy. Their story showcases the resilience of the human spirit and the extraordinary lengths people go to make a difference in the world.

War changes all their lives, but if you can improve one person's life, is yours not for the better? What if you could help hundreds? What would you give up?







September Releases

Brett McKay
The Devil's Dance 9/8/2025
Kem Hinton
Nether Land 9/14/2025

October Releases

Sherri L. Dodd Hummingbird Moonrise 10/9/2025

Melina Druga Holiday Headaches 10/14/2025

Betsy Lynch Ground Effect after Spin Recovery 10/10/2025

Scott Eveloff MD Do Not Resuscitate 10/16/2025

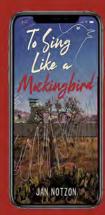
Jan Notzon's To Sing Like a Mockingbird

In a world where hope is a rare commodity, one teacher battles against the darkness to find light in the unlikeliest of places

Justin Kopechne's once idealistic view of the world shatters as he navigates a school filled with disillusioned students, a detached principal, and friends entangled in the drug trade. After the school's

closure due to a student's murder, he seeks refuge with his brother and sister-in-law, grappling with his

family's deep-seated dysfunction.







To Sing

JAN NOTZON

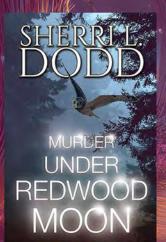


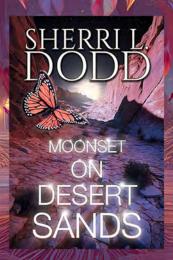


Sherri L. Bodd's

Murder, Tea & Crystals

The forest remembers what the living forget—and it's calling her back.









https://sherridodd.com/

Series on Amazon.





Author Spotlight Jan Notzon

Jan Notzon is a novelist and playwright who has made Charlotte, NC his home since 1994.

Jan's most recent work is entitled Only the Dead (Know the End of War), a story of three families, two Mexican and one Anglo as they experience the sanguinary establishments of the Mexican and Texas republics. His penultimate novel is Suffer Not the Mole People, chronicling the lives and immigration of a Polish family to Texas in the 19th century. He has also penned Song for the Forsaken, the story of a young mountain woman's fight to make sense of a life of constant deprivation and heartache and overcome the loss of faith that has estranged her from the little sister she raised from birth. His third novel is called The Id Paradox, which traces a young man's battle to rescue a bosom friend from the horrors of a Mexican prison, and then from the nightmare of spiritual annihilation. His second novel, And Ye Shall Be As Gods, recounts a brother's fight to rescue his beloved sister from the clutches of despair and his lost love from the prison of catatonia. His first work, The Dogs...Barking, is a coming-of-age story set in a sleepy backwater Texas border town in the 1950s, through the dislocation of university life in the '60s and on to the raw frenetic power of New York City as he learns to overcome the demons his upbringing has instilled in him.

He has also written seven full-length plays, a one-act, The Forsaken, which was produced in two different venues in New York City. His play The Cosmological



Constant was workshopped and presented as a staged reading at Actors' Theatre in Charlotte, NC by the Applebox Production Company. His play When Good Men Do Nothing was a finalist in the Dramarama Competition in San Francisco. He has also written one children's story, The Gift of Arbol Ceiba.

Jan has also worked as an actor, appearing on Matlock, The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles and, most recently, in Beverly Lewis' The Confession on The Hallmark Channel, a work directed by Michael Landon Jr., with Adrian Paul and Sherry Stringfield.

https://www.jannotzon.com/

Yurie Kiri's Moonlight and Murder

Step into the unknown with a stranger whose secrets may be more dangerous than his charm. Dare to ride?



Coming soon Moonlight Cruise





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Author Spotlight

Helen Keller

(1880-1968)

From a very young age, Helen was determined to go to college. In 1898, she entered the Cambridge School for Young Ladies to prepare for Radcliffe College. She entered Radcliffe in the fall of 1900 and received a Bachelor of Arts degree cum laude in 1904, the first deafblind person to do so.

Her life and relationship with teacher Anne Sullivan was depicted in the two movies, with the same name, just different actress, The Miracle Worker. Patty Duke played Helen in the first movie, and then, later in the second movie, she played Anne Sullivan.

The achievement was as much Anne's as it was Helen's. Anne's eyes suffered immensely from reading everything that she then signed into her pupil's hand. Anne continued to labor by her pupil's side until her death in 1936, at which time Polly Thomson took over the task. Polly had joined Helen and Anne in 1914 as a secretary.

While still a student at Radcliffe, Helen began a writing career that was to continue throughout her life. In 1903, her autobiography, The Story of My Life, was published. This had appeared in serial form the previous year in Ladies' Home Journal magazine.

https://www.afb.org/about-afb/history/helenkeller/biography-and-chronology



- "The Frost King" (1891)
- The Story of My Life (1903)
- Optimism: an essay (1903)
- My Key of Life: Optimism (1904),
- The World I Live In (1908)
- The miracle of life (1909)
- The song of the stone wall (1910)
- Out of the Dark, a series of essays on socialism (1913)
- Uncle Sam Is Calling
- My Religion (1927; also called Light in My Darkness)
- Midstream: my later life (1929)
- We bereaved.(1929)
- Peace at eventide (1932)
- Helen Keller in Scotland: a personal record written by herself (1933)
- Helen Keller's journal (1938)
- Let us have faith (1940), Doubleday, & Doran & co., inc.
- Teacher: Anne Sullivan Macy: a tribute by the foster-child of her mind. (1955),
- The open door (1957),
- The faith of Helen Keller (1967)
- Helen Keller: her socialist years, writings and speeches (1967)

Advertisement



"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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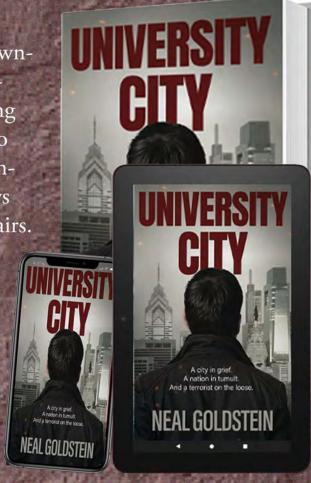
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In a fragmented America, dedicated public servants stand unwavering, ready to defend both their beloved city and the nation at any cost.

Detective Frank Benson and Sergeant Ophelia Brown-Thurman's investigation leads them into the underground snake pit of right-wing extremists still raging over the outcome of the 2020 election, and eager to lash out. As they race to determine a motive and unmask the culprit, another, deadlier conspiracy brews one that puts the new President-elect in the crosshairs.



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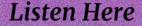




Amy's Bookshelf Reviews Podcast

Podcasts will drop every Sunday of the Month at 6:00 PM (EST/EDT).

- -Your Book can be on the show
- -Author Interviews
- -Literary Representative Interviews
- -and much more...
- Scan the QR Code Below for more details.







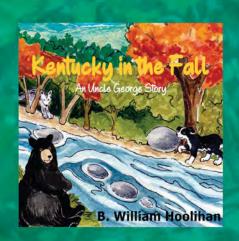
Starting October 2025, Every second Sunday of the month will have a new segment, Amy's Storytime for All ages

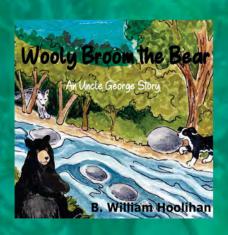
B. William Hoolihan's

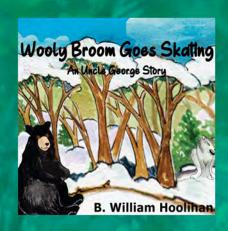
Uncle George Stories

Uncle George Stories embraces the simple joys and Family Adventures of Rural Kentucky

Uncle George Stories is a collection of nostalgic letters recounting the author's memories of his grandfather's boyhood adventures in Kentucky, highlighting family, nature, and simple joys.







So, "sit a 'spell" and enjoy Uncle George stories.
For the young and young at heart.







Talia Haven

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

Talia Haven: I have about 4 that I have abandoned for one reason or another. I never delete anything that I have started because it is amazing how many times, I have opened an old file and tell myself *I can work with this*. As for how many books, 15 so far. One novel, three shorter novellas, and the rest are short stories.

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

Talia Haven: Sled Runner is my most current release, available now. On Amazon both ebook and on audible.

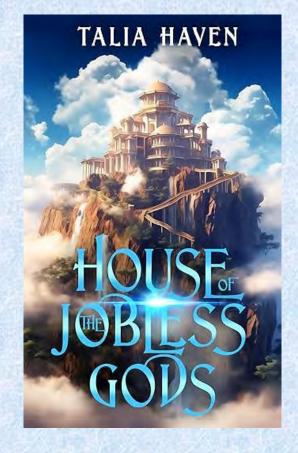
Literate-Ly Magazine: Tell me about how you come up with your titles for your stories. Do you create the title before or after you write the book, and does it ever change from the initial title?

Talia Haven: Usually the title comes first, those never seem to change. There was one time that I did have to do it. I wanted to use The Judas Child. When I searched for it, I found a book with that title, so I ended up using Judas's Daughter.

I then come up with a simple sentence to work off, or idea. Then the title ties into that original simple sentence or idea.

Once I have the title I begin on the story.

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?



Talia Haven: I love Ate from the short story I am Ate. I woke up one morning with this sentence in my head. My mother, bless her immortal soul has decided that I am to stand in front of Zeus and get my punishment. I just loved that sentence. After a little bit of poking around in the rather large group of Greek gods and titans I found her. Ate, the goddess of misbehavior, mistaken impressions, and wreaking havoc. I had a good goddess moment...who would not love to work this? I looked around and there was very little about her. And I like nothing better than a goddess that doesn't have a back story set in stone.

I am thinking for doing something with her...let's face it if she was real how much fun did, she have? And out of all the gods and goddess she had to have had a good time.

Haven cont'd



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

Talia Haven: I asked myself...how or who came up with the idea of dog sleds? A few Inuit gods later and I came up with Sled Runner.

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

Talia Haven: But Taranis, already seeing a stubborn look set itself on Clota's face, stepped in. "Hear them?" she asked. "We need your help. IF you don't, then you will never hear them again." Taranis watched disbelief rise in Clota's eyes. "Think I am bluffing?" she asked in a quiet voice. "I will curse them. Every place

you go, every river you visit, the frogs will die. How long do you think it will be before the frogs' songs go silent forever?" This is from The Good Mystic..

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

Talia Haven: I just look for things that strike my interest...Like in A Cautionary Tale I had read a news clip about uber driver that took payment for going and spying on someone at a different residence. I immediately thought to myself, that would be stupid what would happen if there was a crime going on. Would you be considered part of the crime?

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

Talia Haven: I do have a work in progress; it's intended to go to your short story contest. So, no title, sorry.

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?

Talia Haven: The first is never a problem, it is never what I started out with. But as far as putting it a paper, no issues with first lines.

Because I write mostly short stories, I have a problem with not being very wordy. With me its 5000 to 7000 words later and its done and I am ready to move on. The House of the Jobless Gods was a struggle.

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

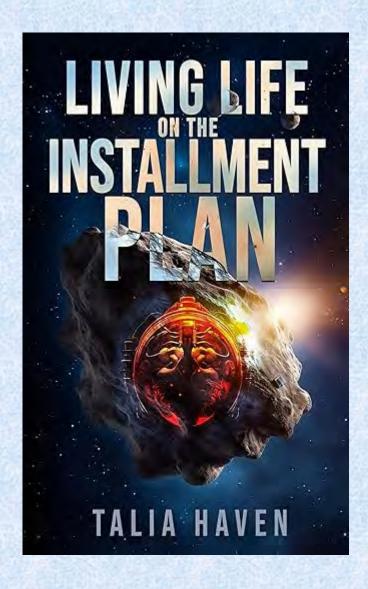
Haven cont'd

Talia Haven: Look at things and ask yourself how did it happen? Or listen to the news. Mama Cried is my first short story. The idea came from family always coming out and telling the press that the murder victim got justice.

In A'Dab's Gift, how did that genie get in that lamp in the first place? I could not find to many stories that told a tale on how it happened. They might be there, but I couldn't find them. In The House of the Jobless Gods, what happens when a new religion takes over? Can they survive without worship? May religions have gone to the wayside, if the gods were real, and many ancient societies believed they were. How did they deal with it?

In A Unicorns Virgin, why is it always the human that tracks them down? What happens if you should avoid them and they were the ones out hunting down virgins?

Amazon.com: Talia Haven: books, biography, latest update Talia Haven (Author of Mama Cried) | Goodreads Facebook Talia Haven



From the Authors of Brain Warp & 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/

Jill Dobbe

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

Jill Dobbe: Creative, kind, optimistic

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

Jill Dobbe: I have written four books, one of which was a rewrite of my first book, which I completed during the pandemic. I published my first book with a publishing company and self-published my second two books.

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

Jill Dobbe: I am in the process of writing another travel memoir. It is still a work in progress and will take some time to complete.

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

Jill Dobbe: I came up with my titles before my books were completed and stuck to them, too. I'm still deciding what to title my fourth book, but my husband came up with *No Hablo Español (I Don't Speak Spanish)*. The title is supposed to be a somewhat humorous take on our life in Honduras despite our knowing very little of the language. My book is also about living in one of the most dangerous countries in the world and how we survive day-to-day with our limited Spanish.



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?

Jill Dobbe: Since my books are all travel memoirs based on our work and travels in other countries, I guess those countries/locations are the essential characters. Also, my husband never shies away from a challenge and often runs into comical, dangerous, and unusual circumstances; he plays a significant role in my books.

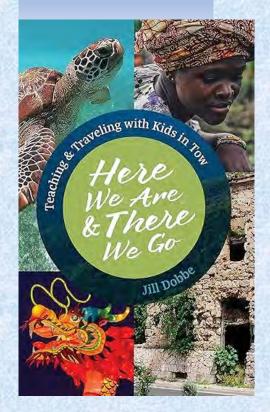
Literate-Ly Magazine: If you could "create" your own genre of what you write, what would you call your books?

Jill Dobbe: Off the Wall Adventures

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

Jill Dobbe: I am proud of my last published book, *Only in India*. Writing it was easy and a lot of fun for me. India is quirky, colorful, and

Dobbe Cont'd



fascinating. Our experiences there were often more humorous than anything else, so reliving them and writing them all down was an enjoyable experience.

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

Jill Dobbe: "The entire ordeal was like something we'd normally see on *World's Funniest Videos* or some other reality show in which two clueless foreigners misplace their car in a foreign country." A line from *Only in India*.

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

Jill Dobbe: I am a recently retired international elementary educator living in my seventh foreign country. I am the grandmother of three

granddaughters. In addition to traveling, reading, and writing, I am a tapestry weaver.

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

Jill Dobbe: Surprisingly, I don't have any favorite nonfiction authors since that's what I write and read. Even though I don't read much fiction, I love Marian Keyes and Sophie Kinsella. They are both my guilty pleasures after I've read a serious and heavy book.

I especially enjoy reading nonfiction books about courageous women who survive and overcome significant life obstacles, whether from war-torn countries or horrible circumstances. I also look for books about men and women who commit to helping others with human rights, medical volunteerism, poverty, etc.

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

Jill Dobbe: A Sliver of Light: Three Americans Imprisoned in Iran, written by Shane Bauer

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

Jill Dobbe: Before I started writing any of my books, I kept journals of our experiences. Throughout my writing, I'd refer to those journals or my memory.

When I write, I often come up with chapter titles first. I guess it's sort of an outline for me.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Why do you write?
Jill Dobbe: I like this question. It makes me wonder why I put so much energy and effort

Dobbe Cont'd

into writing. My husband doesn't get it and often tells me it sounds like too much work to him.

I write to entertain and, hopefully, educate others about different cultures, lifestyles, and life outside the U.S. My books are also pieces of me that I can leave behind for my children and grandchildren.

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

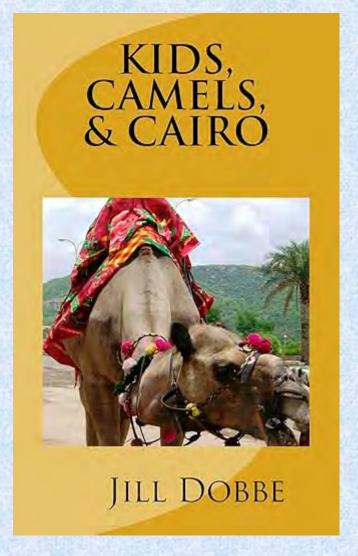
Jill Dobbe: I am writing a book about living in the capital of Honduras and working at an American school. Honduras is unknown, except for media reports about the gangs, corruption, and caravans. That stuff does exist, but another side keeps my family here, and I hope to make that come out in my book. I am not sure about the title yet, though.

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

Jill Dobbe: I read, reread, and rewrite as much as possible. I recently read on an author site that reading your work out loud is also extremely helpful.

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?

Jill Dobbe: No, I don't listen to music. I need quiet and time. I also prefer writing in the mornings.



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?

Jill Dobbe: I agree with you. I sometimes find writing the blurb and summarizing the entire book into a short paragraph frustrating. Finding the correct wording to make the book sound exciting and interesting takes time. I don't like reading lengthy blurbs myself, so I'm always conscientious of writing succinctly to get my theme across and entice readers to pick up my book.

Dobbe Cont'd

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). Jill Dobbe: My mother-in-law, Susan. She has since passed away but was an avid reader, owning one of the first used bookstores in our area. I wrote my books after she died, but I would love the opportunity to discuss them with her and the fact that I became an author.

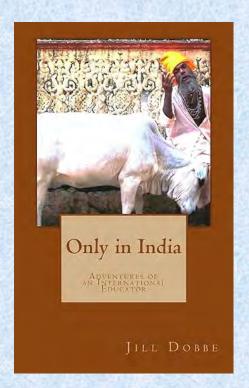
Literate-Ly Magazine: What does it mean to be a "successful" writer?

Jill Dobbe: I always felt that "successful" writers made lots of money on their books and were listed as a New York Times Best Seller. I am successful because I wrote and published three books and have had positive reviews from readers.

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

Jill Dobbe: I am 66 years old and honestly can say that my life has gone how I hoped. Traveling was always a goal of mine, and I married a man who also had the same goal. We had our children and then set off to see the world. My first book, *Here We Are & There We Go: Teaching and Traveling With Kids in Tow*, documented our first 10 years in four countries. My life now—grandchildren, retirement, traveling—feels like icing on the cake.

Besides publishing another book, I'd like to do more volunteering, especially here in Honduras and maybe even in other volunteer abroad programs.



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.

Jill Dobbe: I don't believe any books should be banned. People should be able to read the books they want to read. However, I do believe in age limits for some books.

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

Jill Dobbe: I'd like to thank the readers and reviewers of my books. It's always heartwarming to know that someone was interested enough to spend time and money reading what I wrote.

For future authors, write what you know. If you enjoy your story, others will, too.

www.facebook.com/jilldobbeauthor https://www.amazon.com/stores/Jill-Dobbe/author/B008RP9A92 https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/64

51013.Jill_Dobbe

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Campbell offers a powerful understanding of the impact of trauma and the journey of finding her own truth.

- Claudia Black, PhD. Author of

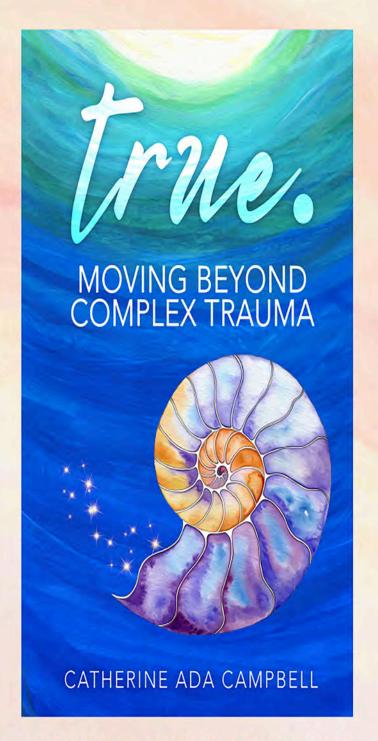
It Will Never Happen to Me, Unspoken Legacy, Deceived: Facing Sexual Betrayal, Lies, and Secrets

true. masterfully makes you question who you are and what you believe.

- Dr. R. Y. Langham, Author and Psychologist

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Toby LeBlanc

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

Toby LeBlanc: curious. optimistic. skeptical.

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

Toby LeBlanc: I've written five books, three of which are published. My first book I self-published and quickly decided I would prefer to try the traditional route in the future. However, the next two novels never got picked up. Looking back, I can totally see why. After that, a long writing slump found me until one fateful New Year's Eve I spoke into existence the desire to take my writing more seriously. Another seven years passed and *Dark Roux* was picked up by Unsolicited Press.

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

Toby LeBlanc: I'm happy to say that *Soaked* will debut from Cornerstone Press in just under two weeks (2/11/2025). I have another novel on submission and I'm hoping to hear back from a publisher this week. Stay tuned!

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?



Toby LeBlanc: For both *Dark Roux* and *Soaked* I found a title relatively quickly and then stuck with it. It was a matter of finding what I thought captured the spirit of the book and then drilling it down to a few words. In a way, they were both metaphors. Interestingly, though, in both cases the title created some of the plot and content. Once I really understood what my stories were about and what I was trying to say, I was able to build plots around the titles. That's probably backwards, but I liked it. In a novella I am working on now I am having a different experience. I've changed the title twice and am starting to consider a third change.

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?

Toby LeBlanc: Since place can be a character, I love the setting of Louisiana in my books and how all of my characters interact with it. This

LeBlanc cont'd

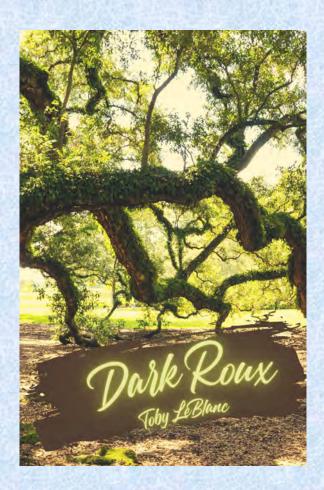
place where I grew up has a character and history all its own, but means something different to everyone. I love how it can be a place to love, to party with, to forget, to idealize, or even vilify. I try my best to show how this place can be all of these things at the same time.

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

Toby LeBlanc: I might have to call what I write "Lagniappe Literature." In Louisiana French, Lagniappe means "a little extra." Whether it be my characters, or my plots, or my dialogue, I try to push things and take it just past what you thought it would be. That said, I also try to do that with the meaning embedded in each story. My intent is that you walk away from each piece thinking and feeling a little extra.

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

Toby LeBlanc: *Soaked* is a short story collection set fifty years in the future in Louisiana after climate change has intensified. Each short story focuses on a different part of the culture: partying, faith, language, food, wildlife, weather, music, government, and industry. There are inauthentic accordion players, overzealous Wildlife and Fisheries agents, and politicians who respect their self-driving cars more than their constituents in the pages.



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

Toby LeBlanc: "If the end of the world moves not once, but twice, shouldn't it be twice the party?" *Soaked*. I loved this line because it embodied that true spirit of resistance and celebration in Louisiana. It holds that idea that even if the world it is ending, you just have more reason to seek joy.

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

Toby LeBlanc: In my day job I am a mental health therapist. I've been doing this work for twenty years.

LeBlanc cont'd

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

Toby LeBlanc: Tim Gautreaux, Toni Morrison, Ernest J. Gaines

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

Toby LeBlanc: I currently have an advance reader copy of *Behind the Water Line* by Kionna Walker LeMalle. I will be leaving a review for the book with the Southern Review of Books (something writerly I do for fun).

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

Toby LeBlanc: I am a "just write-er." Between a 40 hour job, parenting two children (including their accompanying extracurriculars and sports), my writing ends up being an act of theft. Whenever I can steal a moment here or there, I will try to churn out some thoughts and hopefully eventually turn it into something cohesive.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Why do you write?

Toby LeBlanc: I write to teach myself something. Every time I take on a writing project I want to explore a way of being or thinking or feeling. Writing feels like one of the greatest exercises in empathy. Every time I feel I've reached a stopping point for what I can understand, writing always shows me I have a ways to go.

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

Toby LeBlanc: I'm currently working on a novella called *Seeds* (at least for now). It also is set in the future post climate change. It has Mars and Antarctica colonization, grief, parenting woes, and found friends. It will be a standalone project.

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

Toby LeBlanc: I read my work while I am working on it and then I tend not set eyes on it again until after publication when I do a reading at a bookstore or event. Whenever that happens though, I tend to have two experiences. The first is surprise at what this earlier version of me thought and felt. It's a moment to check in and see if I still feel that or believe that. Or if I've projected something I don't believe or feel onto a character, do I still feel the same way about that character? I'll often have more compassion for them. Or maybe I'll realize how lost they are. The other reaction is appreciation. I won't lie and tell you I love every line I've ever written forever. But when I run across something I think I said well I get a warm feeling inside. In that moment, it makes me feel like an actual writer.

LeBlanc Cont'd

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?

Toby LeBlanc: I typically do not listen to music while I write. I have so much in my head the music tends to further jumble it. However, if I put on some music it will most likely be instrumental jazz. Anything before the 1980s and any artist will do.

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?

Toby LeBlanc: It is hardest to write a synopsis for me. I even recently took a class on it because I really felt lost. Something I was not prepared for as a writer is how many different writing skills a writer needs to have. Sure, long works incorporate many skills. But query writing is its own skill. Synopsis writing is a skill. Blurb writing is a skill. They all need a different framework and way of thinking about the writing.

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).

Toby LeBlanc: In Cajun history we have a "founding father" named Beausoleil Broussard. He supposedly fought the British guerilla style when they were deporting us from Nova Scotia and then was the driving force of resettling Cajuns in Louisiana. He seems like a force of nature. He also might be one of my ancestors. He sounds like he'd be fun to have a few coffees (or something stronger) with. I'd also love to sit down with an indigenous person in North America from before colonization. I'd love to hear their take on the world, nature, everything. Lastly, a coffee with Jane Goodall seems pretty cool. She understands humans from an animal perspective.

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

Toby LeBlanc: I've struggled with this question a lot over the years. But I think I've come down to this: successful writers leave the stories that mean the most to them. I used to think that being published made you successful. Or making lots of money. Or having tons of adoring fans. But really none of that matters if the story doesn't matter to the writer. Lots of money can't fill the empty hole that eventually makes. The most real and true story is what makes a writer successful.

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

LeBlanc Cont'd

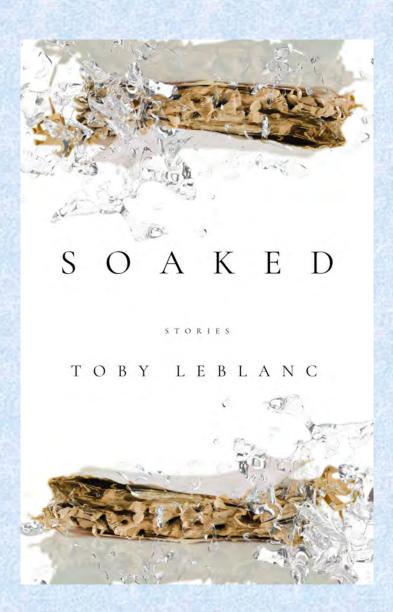
Toby LeBlanc: Having successful kids. I know how corny and cliche this might sound. But it's not as easy to be in the world as it once was. It's going to take more to be authentic and happy, while still staying fed with a roof over their head, than it ever has. I want to see them not just survive, but thrive. I want them to know themselves and their world. I don't want them to be afraid. If I can help this happen, I would consider any other "success" just...well...lagniappe.

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.

Toby LeBlanc: As a therapist whose job it is to understand where people are coming from, I do my best to comprehend the fear or anger someone might feel to want to ban a book. But the parent, author, and human in me is diametrically opposed. The world is full of stories. Many of those stories have been lost already. Sometimes they were lost to natural things like time, or uglier things like oppression. I believe book banning is form of oppression, saying that some stories should not be told. I think the world suffers when we do not leave room for all perspectives, all stories.

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

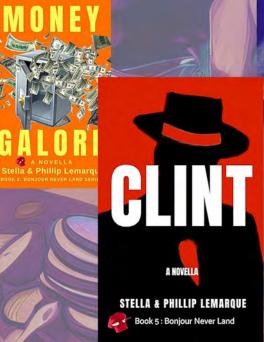
Toby LeBlanc: Whether a fan or an aspiring author, your story is worth telling. And who else can tell it the way it is supposed to be told, but you? https://www.html.com



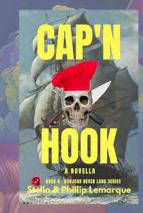
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Mary Shelley (1797-1851)

Literate-Ly Magazine: Good day, Ms. Shelley. It's an honor to have you with us. To start, how many books have you written?

Mary Shelley: Thank you for having me. I wrote seven novels, including "Frankenstein," "Valperga," "The Last Man," "Perkin Warbeck," "Lodore," "Falkner," and "Mathilda," which was published posthumously.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Which of your books is the most popular?

Mary Shelley: "Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus" is undoubtedly my most famous work. It has become a cornerstone of Gothic literature and is often considered one of the earliest examples of science fiction.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Did you ever think that writing would become such a significant part of your legacy?

Mary Shelley: I hoped that my writing would resonate with readers, but I never imagined it would have such a lasting impact. I wanted to explore profound themes and provoke thought, and it seems "Frankenstein" has done just that.

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

Mary Shelley: I loved writing beneath the trees of the grounds belonging to our house or on the bleak sides of the woodless mountains near our home. These places inspired the airy flights of my imagination.



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

Mary Shelley: People were often intrigued by my background and the themes I explored. Initially, I was known mainly for my efforts to publish my husband's works and for "Frankenstein." Over time, scholars have come to appreciate my broader literary contributions.

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

Mary Shelley: Most reviews were positive, praising the originality and depth of my storytelling. However, some critics were more focused on the sensational aspects of "Frankenstein" rather than its philosophical underpinnings.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Was there ever a story you wrote that you considered the worst? Did it get published?

Mary Shelley: There were certainly pieces I felt could have been better, but I believe every work has its value. "The Last Man" was not

Shelley cont'd

well-received in my time, but it has gained recognition in recent years.

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

Mary Shelley: "Frankenstein" holds a special place in my heart. It was my first major work and allowed me to explore themes of creation, responsibility, and the human condition.

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

Mary Shelley: The worst reviews were those that dismissed my work as mere sensationalism. It was disheartening, but I focused on the positive impact my writing had on many readers.

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

Mary Shelley: My advice would be to write with passion and authenticity. Embrace your unique voice and experiences, and don't be afraid to tackle difficult subjects. Your words have the power to inspire and create change.

Literate-Ly Magazine: Did you have any writer friends?

Mary Shelley: Yes, I was fortunate to have many friends in the literary world. Lord Byron and John Polidori were among my close acquaintances, and their company was both inspiring and challenging.

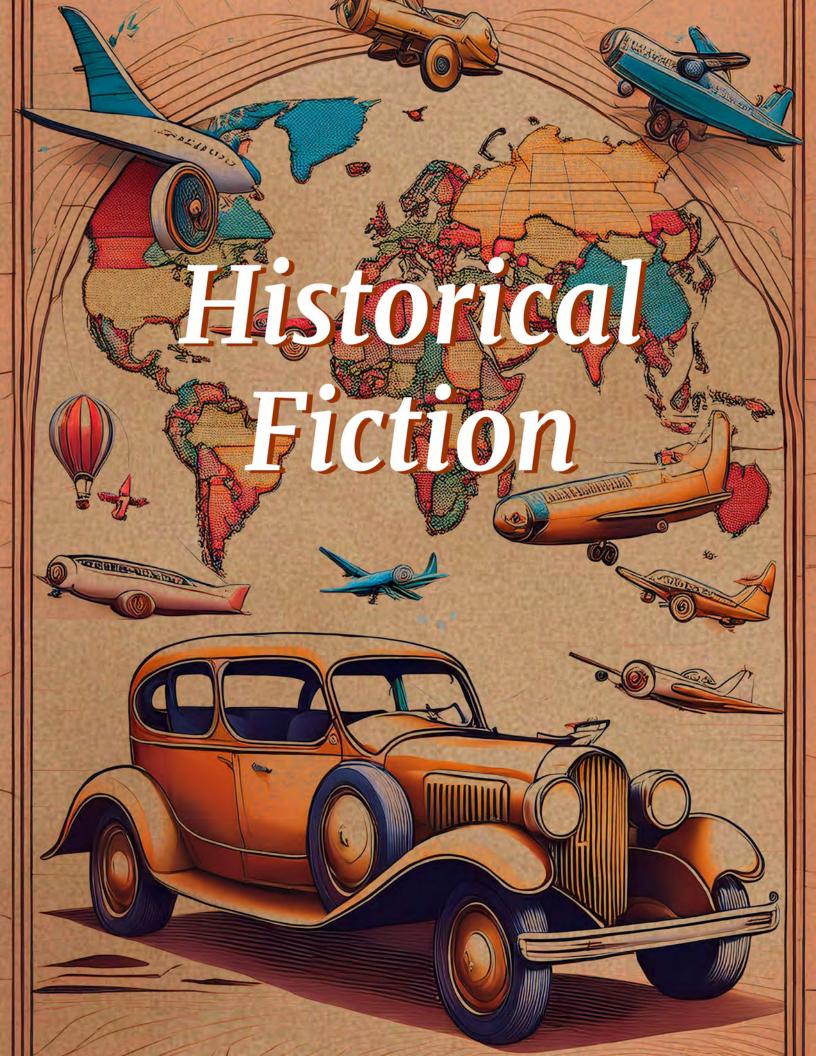
Literate-Ly Magazine: Did you share your work with anyone before it was published? Mary Shelley: Absolutely. My husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley, was my first reader and editor. His feedback and encouragement were invaluable in shaping my work.

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

Mary Shelley: I would love to speak with my mother, Mary Wollstonecraft. She was a pioneering feminist and intellectual, and I would cherish the opportunity to discuss our shared passions and learn from her wisdom.

Books Written by Mary Shelley

- Frankenstein; Or, The Modern Prometheus
- Valperga: Or, the Life and Adventures of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca
- The Last Man
- The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck, A Romance
- Lodore
- Falkner. A Novel
- Mathilda



Janis Robinson Daly-The Unlocked Path: A Novel

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews

Genre: F/Historical Fiction

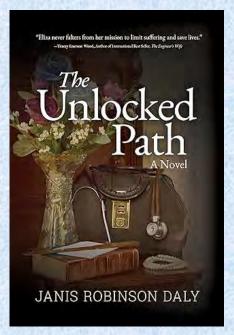
Series: The Path

Volume: 1

5 Stars

Janis Robinson Daly writes a grand historical fiction

The Unlocked Path is the first novel in The Path series. I actually read volume two first, and then discovered there was a volume one, so I knew I needed to read it. I do recommend reading books in a series in order, but for me, sometimes that is not always possible. I am impressed with this author's story telling ability, and historical accuracy. It is the era of the new woman, and in this book, the reader is introduced to Eliza Edwards. It's 1897 in Philadelphia. Eliza's mother wants her to be the woman that is expected of women of this era, while Eliza, is determined to enter medical college. In this era, women had to push beyond their boundaries, deal with inequality in education and society, and especially trying to be a woman medical doctor. Eliza's drive and ambition stems from a tragedy that she believes she could have prevented. Her aunt's self-harm. It's an amazing story that makes you aware of how it was in that era, how far women have come, and yet, there are still boundaries set. The author is a.



magnificent writer, and I am so glad I had the honor of reading this story. This story is a wondrous trail of words. The plot and subplots are endearing, heartbreaking, and enduring. It's a story I won't soon forget

About the book:

When Noah Maclean, 22, races home from Europe, he finds a dying grandfather, a hidden letter, and a family secret that dates to the 1740s. He learns he is the keeper of a stone shed that can send people through time.

Within weeks, Noah and his brother, Jake, 15, test their inheritance. They travel to 1776 to see Philadelphia in the age of Benjamin Franklin, the Declaration of Independence, and the American Revolution.

Buy on Amazon





Literacy by Amy Shannon

Literacy is the ability to read and understand what you read. There are thousands of people all over the world who do not know how to read, or who have a very basic level of reading, and understanding what is read.

Children who grow up in homes where their parents (or whoever is raising them), don't read and don't read to them. Children who love to read, grow up to be adults who read. Some of those readers become authors. I believe you can't be an author, if you don't also read. You also need to have your writing grow and develop.

I am a big advocate for everyone being able to read. I had a great-uncle who couldn't read. I learned that at age seven, and I couldn't understand why, because I was an excellent reader and a good speller. I also didn't know how he could drive without being able to read. As far as I know, he never learned. What a world he was missing out on.

As a reviewer, I read a lot of children's books and want to read more. I believe strongly that adults should also read children's books. I believe that reading is fundamental, and it's not just a slogan from the 1980's. Even if adults don't have children, there are so many books that would bring them back to their childhood. Children of all ages should read and be read to. When is the last time someone read to you?

I am a book advocate and believe books should be read. I challenge you to read at least one children's book a month and see what you think. As of late, I've been just writing short stories, since I can't do the full-length novels anymore, but after writing and publishing my first children's book, What am I? by Amy C. Shannon, it has driven me to write more children's stories, so keep your eye out.





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

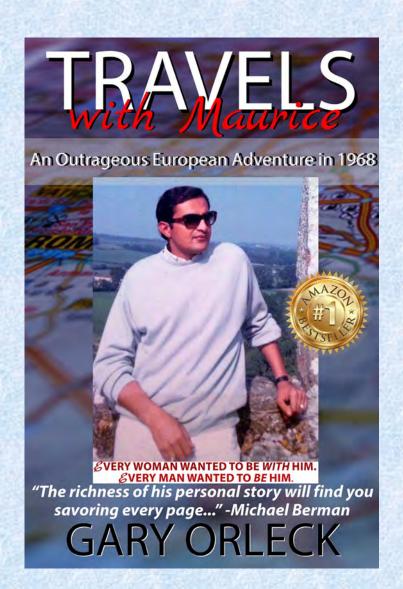
EVERY WOMEN WANTED TO BE WITH HIM. EVERY MEN WANTED TO BE HIM!

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!







To use AI or not to use AI? by Amy Shannon

Artificial intelligence (AI) is not a new concept, and in fact several decades ago, it was part of science fiction stories, movies and television shows, as if it already existed. A world of Androids, Cyber-Beings, and just plain AI, with talking computers, and those who become sentient.

I must say that I use a few AIs, but they don't do my work for me. I've used it with several AdobeTM programs. I enjoy using Microsoft's Co-PilotTM. And of course, I have Amazon's AI AlexaTM to do things for me, like play music, turn on my TV, and I often use the timer feature when I'm cooking.

Some of the AI graphics are tremendous when you put in the right word, but not all work out like you expect. If you're going to use an AI to generate graphics, in order to make it yours, you need to manipulate the graphics and do more than just changing colors. There are several things you can do to make it yours.

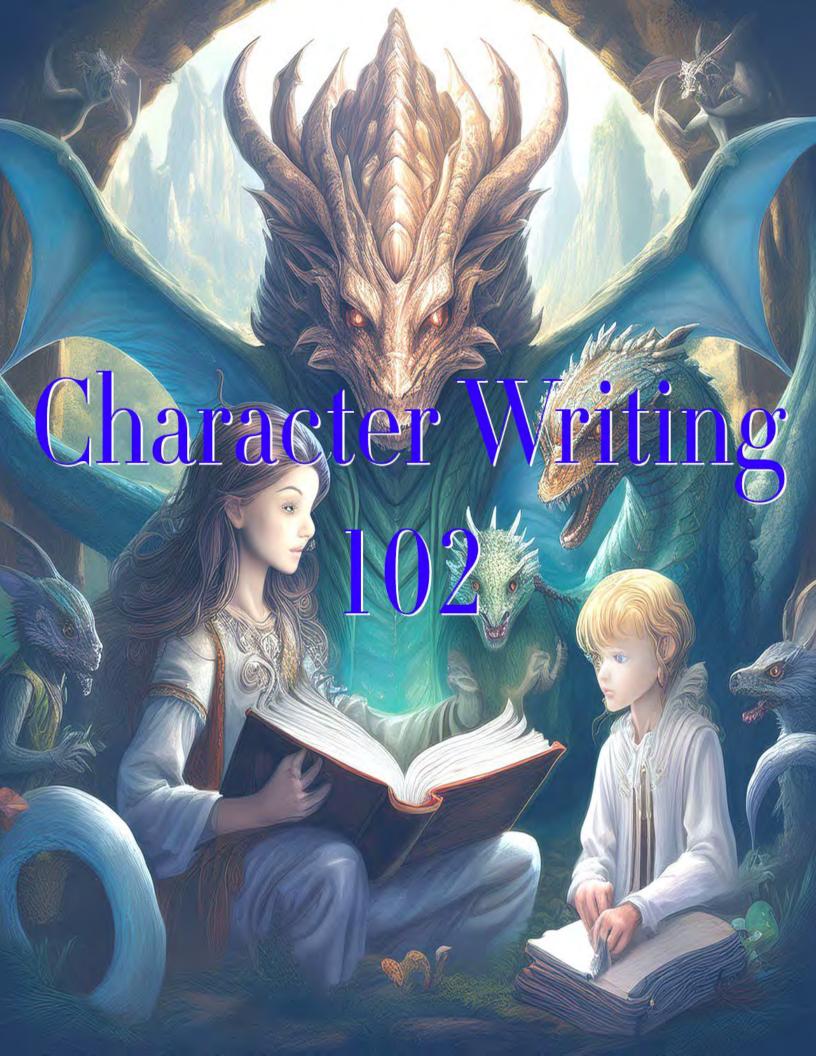
I have seen ads on my phone that state, "Write your book in an hour," and then you tell an AI what you want, and it writes a story. I don't have any idea if that works, because no matter how hard you try, emotions are human, and I believe if your AI wrote your story, you claimed it as yours, and had no input or your own words, it's not your book. It's not anyone's, and if you try to do it, it's very unethical. (More unethical than writing reviews of your own book).

I applaud the authors (and I know of one in particular) who wrote a children's book, using his own talent, and the help of an AI to see how it would work together, and he did credit himself and the AI (Good Job, Donald Firesmith).

Life is ever-changing, but don't let technology take over your own creativity. No matter your palette for your art, be it a canvas, or pen and paper, or your own hands, it should be all you. I must say it is fun to get help with writing a book description, tagline or elevator pitch, but even when I do that, I reword it so it's me, and not the AI. Sometimes it just sparks creativity. Whatever you do in the world, be yourself, and let your own imagination and creativity shine through — something technology can't ever do.







Stereotypes

A stereotype "is any commonly known public belief about a certain social group or a type of individual. Stereotypes are often confused with prejudice, because, like prejudices, a stereotype is based on a prior assumption. Stereotypes are often created about people of specific cultures or races," (Your Dictionary, n.d).

Characters shouldn't be cookie cutter characters, and they shouldn't be based on a stereotype. It's not wrong to implement some of a stereotype, as some people fit in, at least a small part of one. If the writer is creating a character, examine the stereotypes that may or could be assessed for the character, and take away pieces of that stereotype.

In my Passionate Retribution series, Derek is a gay man, who lives with his partner, Peter. Derek can be described as flamboyant, but he mainly gets excited quickly and speaks fast when he does. He discovers something about himself, his inner and outer strength. He even becomes a martial arts instructor at his friend's martial art studio. The character of Derek is inspired by an old friend of mine, but Derek is not based on that friend. He's one of my favorite characters, because he is multi-dimensional and loves being himself.

There are a lot of stereotypes in the world, and some are racial or gender profiling. Others are judged on their looks or outward appearance. Some think that a male is gay if he has a softer voice, or is flamboyant, and some look at tom boy females as being lesbians. Some stereotypes are aimed at an age group, or a group of individuals that have similar tastes. There are stereotypes of those who have tattoos (for the record, I have two) or someone who rides a motorcycle, or just a bicycle. These stereotypes should not overtake the character and can be used as a tool as to what to say or not say about a character.

One way to get rid of a stereotype without pointing it out would be to create a character as a stereotype or with those traits, and then make the point that this character is not what the stereotype thinks he/she is. For example, a male character that is a designer or hairstylist is a straight character, not gay. Or a female character that works in construction and wears flannel jackets is not a lesbian. When a writer writes about that, and creates the opposite of what is being judged, it can make people think, and see the world in a new way. After all, that's what storytelling is, sharing the world from a different or new perspective.







Mirror Realm By Amy Shann<u>on</u>

Matthew sat up quickly from a deep sleep. He took a deep breath as he wiped his sweaty forehead with the sleeve of his pajama top. He looked over at his sleeping husband, still asleep. "Phew," he whispered, careful not to wake Thomas. He got out of bed and headed directly into the relief modular bay. "Cold water, on." He commanded as the faucet flowed one of the things that made his ship remarkable, was the detoxification of the spring water on the ship. No matter how hot or how cold, bathing, sonic showering, drinking, cooking, sterilizations, the water was always impurity free. Something he knew he could rely on, without even giving it a second thought. He gently splashed cold water on his face. This isn't happening again. It can't happen again.

Matthew dried his face carefully with the towel and stared into the mirror. The reflection, as usual, wasn't his. It was his twin brother, Martin. He lost Martin twenty years ago. Lost is the most accurate word, since Martin disappeared when they were still living on Earth. The boys were seven.

It wasn't long after Martin's disappearance that his father got called in for duty. It was a new experimental ship launching into space, hoping it would go on beyond the Milky Way, and explore the newly discovered galaxy, Alpha-One. That is what Genesis DynamX called it. Yes, Genesis DynamX thought it was a new age for the future of space travel and beyond, space settlement. Their mission statement was even, 'Existing to propel Sapientity beyond boundaries—blending innovation, resilience, and discovery to create the



next frontier in space travel.' Their dreams ended at the end of Alpha-One. Then, somehow, somewhere, a charismatic genius of the highest IQ ever recorded of centuries of Earth's history, knew there was something beyond what Genesis DynamX could do, so he bought it, reengineered, reframed, and hired the best of the best who not just knew about space travel, but also knew the physics of it as well, and how to maneuver the physics of space to travel further, faster. NYX-Efforts was born, and the man who made it all happen was Mr. Andrew Trident. Matthew's Uncle, and his father's brother. His father, Frank, was the man behind the genius of his brother, as his IQ was higher, but never recorded to any Earth log. Frank loved being the scientist, the engineer,

and generating the best for the best as only space travelers deserved. His son, Matthew, being one of them.

"Captain," Matthew heard Thomas call. It never got old when Thomas called him that, however, he was still getting used to being the captain of the new spaceship, Oblivion's Echo, designed by his father.

"I'm in here," Matthew called back to Thomas. "I couldn't sleep." Matthew entered the bedroom and smiled at his husband. "I'm sorry if I woke you."

Thomas was sitting on the already made bed. "It's haunting you again, isn't it?"

"What? I'm fine. Father wanted me on this ship. He did everything except pack my bags, and now... and now..." Matthew swallowed the lump in his throat. "And now," before he could finish, he walked over to the replica console. "Cold Water, cold glass." He commanded, as a cold glass containing the magnificent water they were accustomed to, slowly appeared on the base of the console. Matthew grabbed the glass and gulped down the water. He set the glass back on the base of the replica console. "Refill. Cold water."

"I know. He's gone. I'm sorry, and you need to grieve, but you also have a ship of over 500 personnel, and their families on this ship to take care of."

"That's why I need you, *number one*," he laughed slightly.



"That is so *retro*," Thomas laughed, patting the bed beside him. "Besides, we're really in space, not on a stage set. Actually, now that I think of it, that is so ancient, old, *and* retro."

"I did like the captain's chair father designed. Just like Captain ..." he sat next to his husband on the bed, who happened to also be his first officer, Commander Thomas Trident. He remembered the discussion about Thomas taking his name when they were married, but Thomas reminded Matthew that he and Matthew's family were the only family he ever had. Ever known. Thomas was orphaned at the age of 3, and grew up in various group or fostering homes on Earth, and then, one day, at the Starlight Naval Academy, they literally bumped into each other in the dining hall, and the rest was history. Thomas knew Matthew was going to be Captain, and all he ever wanted to be was Matthew's number one.

"So, after your shift, mirror with your mother," Thomas smiled. "Oh, that didn't sound right."

"Yeah, just love how they refer to having a face-toface transmission with someone with a mirror call." He sighed. "It's not like we're reflections of ourselves, or each other."

"I didn't name it. If I am mistaken, your father did," he said. "Go, enjoy today's sonic shower. I'll be in there in a few minutes."

Matthew kissed Thomas's cheek and then headed into the relief modular bay. When Thomas heard the sonic shower turn on, he walked into the living quarters and sat down at his desk. His personal space comprised a replica console and connection to the main bridge, and his professional and personal tablet log system. He could use the Mirror-NYX system to connect with anyone in any galaxy, at least that's what Frank Trident told him.

After they boarded and travelled three light years, they received a mirror transmission from Joanna, Matthew's mother. He disappeared.

Frank was a highly regarded engineer and former captain in the Genesis DynamX program, and when his brother bought it and created NYX-Efforts, he still maintained his rank and was given a great deal of leeway to improve communications throughout the universe, and other universes. Frank was the one man in the universe that Andrew could trust. Andrew was a good face for the company, a talented man with the world's currency of the *Dolero*, but he never left the comfort of his Earth home, on a small mountain top in the Federation of States on the Atlantic Continent.

Frank was the founder of the entire department that created the Oblivion Echo's systems, and the ship itself. Frank made a discovery, something so secret that he didn't even log it. He told his wife he found something that would change their lives, but he never said what it was. Frank disappeared in almost an instant, just as Martin did, leaving no trace of life or death behind.

Matthew blamed himself for not taking his father's mirror transmission before they left the port from Revenant-5, one of the seven colonized planets in the Upsilon Galaxy. Before they even hit Flux Momentum, which is seventy-five times faster than its baseline speed of Phase Momentum. Phase Momentum is about fifty light years. The ship was the first of its kind but is also the Nexus of a fleet of ships, which are half the size of Oblivion's Echo, and carries only personnel, without their families, unless a family member is on active duty from NYX-Efforts.

The original NYX-Efforts had a monopoly on space travel, which started out as one base on Earth, and then they expanded to the end of the Milky Way. Eventually, they created bases on various planets for docking stations, recreation, ports, maintenance, and residential areas for anyone who wanted to go beyond Earth. With their travels through space, the various ships and personnel met new Sapients. Once upon a time on Earth, the Earthlings were referred to as humans, or human-beings, with various genders or non-genders.

The new Era of New Earth, after it's final war, the global war seven, and the loss of too many humans, animal-life, and the eco-systems to count, it was rebuilt. No one was a human. All and any who had intelligence, was self-aware, and/or part of a collective mind, no matter what their ancestors looked like, was now a Sapient. They identified with

their names, their naval rank, and their place in a new society. The previous centuries were wartorn, and eventually, after the final death was recorded and mourned, life had new meaning. Where there were centuries of various military and militia, one militia emerged as one, and it was dedicated to preservation and exploration, rather than kill thy neighbor. The World Naval force was created, with bases on various continents. Some continents used to be separate, but the Earth shifted, and moved as it did, and some continents merged with others, becoming one. The world, was now one nation, one *global* nation.

Not to say that everything could be fixed, or no one died or didn't disappear, because that still happened, and there were other universes, other realms that no one knew about unless, they faced them head on.

Now, the new Era of Earth having only fifty billion Sapients on Earth, and less than that on fifteen Abase planets all the way to the end of the Gamma Quadrant. The exploration was on!

Matthew's ship was supposed to travel beyond and see if there were more A-base planets, and if Sapients could travel beyond their last post. A-base planets were those planets that had oxygen and hydrogen in the air, so that Sapients that breathed oxygen could live without special equipment. Those planets had to also be sustainable in order to support the Sapients who lived on the planet.

Thomas pressed the button on his desk, and the platform moved and lifted the keypad and stylus for the system. He wrote on the tablet pad, using the stylus, and sent a letter to Joanna.

Matthew's still having nightmares. Are you sure Frank didn't leave any kind of message? He signed off and hoped for an answer by the end of his shift.

The ship's personnel comprised of the bridge crew, which included his first officer, Thomas, three Ensigns that were ship navigators, a security officer, and two lieutenants, who were engineers. Engineers, including the lead Engineer, a commander, and his team of four engineers, all Ensigns. There was a medical officer, Dr. Sorensen, and a backup hologram doctor for medical emergencies, as well as two nurses and an intern.

Oblivion's Echo had four decks. The main deck housed the bridge. The second deck housed the engine room, and its capacitor, which gained its power and energy from the hydrogen and ammonia that was pulled in from the atmosphere. Frank designed it so no matter where the ship was, they wouldn't have to worry about engine failure or explosions. Everything on the ship was recyclable, reusable, and sustainable. The third deck housed the living quarters for all the personnel, the medical and triage quarters, as well as the docking station, which connected when they entered port, and provided a catwalk between the ship and the port.



The top deck was where the sustainable garden, the tavern, the dining room and the chef's quarters and kitchen were. The chef has three sous chefs, and of course, a backup hologram for food emergencies. The chef used a cookstove and had recipes to make meals for every person on the ship. All living quarters on the ship had access to a computer, and a carbon cast, which allowed the person to request food in their quarters, and the computer would replicate it. It tasted almost like the real thing, but some things, no matter how ancient, were still best, fresh.

The ship was made with a special material that Frank and his team created. The shimmery outside of the ship allowed it to be more aerodynamic, especially when bending space and time to move faster, further, and most of all, and safer. The ship could move at Flux Momentum, leaving only behind its reflection in the space it once occupied.

Thomas and Matthew walked off the lift directly to the bridge. "Captain on the bridge," Thomas announced, as he took his seat to the right of the Captain's chair. He positioned his console in front of him.

Ensign Sutter stood up and walked over to Matthew, and saluted. "Sir, your java," he handed the mug of steaming hot coffee to Matthew.

"Thank you, Ensign," Matthew took the coffee. He put in a request to his mother to make sure that all her recipes for food and beverages were inputted into the ship's system, so he could still get a sumptuous meal from her. Matthew's coffee was

brewed with real coffee beans, and the perfect temperature of purified hot water. "Status," he turned around and looked up at the head of security, Lieutenant Stein, whose station was three steps above the main bridge.

"All decks secure. We're at full strength with the static field," he said, referring to the transparent force field that kept the ship and its residents safe, from enemies, the unknown, or debris fields in the unchartered space that surrounded their ship as they travelled.

"Very good," Matthew nodded, and then turned toward his immediate left, the engineer station. "Where is Lieutenant Lyons?" he grunted.

The lift door opened, and Lyons hurried in. "I apologize for my tardiness." he took a deep breath. "What kept you?" Matthew grunted, trying to be professional, even though he despised tardiness.

"I was just about to go on duty. I was leaving my quarters when the doors shut on me, and I almost got caught between them. I managed to leave my quarters, but the doors wouldn't open. I tried using the control panel to open it and then tried to do it manually. Nothing worked. Then, I saw something."

"You saw something?" Matthew cocked an eyebrow.

"A reflection in the panel. It wasn't my reflection. It was something I can't even explain. I didn't want to be late, so I ordered one of the Ensigns in engineering to investigate it. I tried to ring your comms, but they didn't work either."

Matthew immediately turned to Lieutenant Stein. "All systems good?"

I believe we should run a full diagnostic on all systems, starting with security." Lieutenant Stein said.

"Oh, definitely," Matthew said, as he sat down, staring at the *comm pip* imbedded in the cuff of his uniform's sleeve. All uniforms were made of a special material designed to be comfortable, cool or warm, depending on the climate. The Captain's uniform was black with red trim, and one piece, to avoid any mishaps with the uniform, or the person wearing it to adjust it's comfort in any way, especially since older uniforms that had a separate shirt would rise when a person stood up. Commander uniforms were red with black trim, and their commander medallions were adhered to the collar of their uniforms. The other uniforms were colored based on the department and rank of personnel. The medical staff wore dark blue with white trim, and their rank insignia adhered to the collar of their uniform. Engineering personnel wore a dark gray uniform with black trim.

The chef wore a white uniform with a black and white checkered trim around the cuffs of the sleeves and at the ankles, resonating from ancient chefs and cooks throughout Earth's history. The personnel that took care of the hydroponics, garden, and keeping the sustainability systems flowing properly, wore light green, with dark green trim. They also had a ranking system, even though they were scientists, and not necessarily Naval personnel. Some were and some weren't.

Though families were also on the ship, everyone had a job or a daily task to do, especially when it came to the care of the rest of the personnel on



the ship, teaching the younger Sapients, and caring for the infancy Sapients. The young Sapients attend school or Naval training. They also have duties where they assist adults in various tasks on the ship. Instantly, the ship stopped, so sudden that the impact forced the personnel and any untethered items to the ground.

Matthew grabbed his forehead, where he hit it on his chair, and it slowly bled down his arm from the gash. "Status, Commander?" He looked at Thomas, who was lying on the floor, unconscious. "Thomas, Thomas," he lightly shook his husband.

Thomas opened his eyes. "Matthew," he whispered. "Who is that behind you?"

Matthew was surprised, because according to regulations, unless they were alone together, and not in an official capacity, Thomas had to call him captain. "What?" Matthew looked around the bridge. All the bridge personnel were now floating in the air, unconscious. He tried to stand, but he felt so heavy, where everyone around him seemed light as a feather, floating. He looked back at Thomas, who was still on the ground, but unconscious again.

Matthew crept his hand toward his mouth to speak in the comm pip. "Captain Trident to the crew," he mumbled, but he heard nothing. Not even static or errors. We should be at code red, but nothing. What's going on? His thoughts were interrupted when the viewscreen, which was their eye to the universe in front of them, flickered, and then slowly scrolled as if it were an ancient television without an antenna.

Matthew rested his back against the front of his captain's chair and stared at the screen. Slowly, a green and blue image appeared, almost mirroring the bridge, but there was something in place of his floating crew. Each crew member, or what would be the crew member, resembled a butterfly's cocoon. Matthew rubbed his eyes again, and the screen fluttered. Static and noise filled the screen, wiping away the mirror image, and a figure, a shadow, came into a blurry focus. "Leave."

"I am Captain Matthew Trident of the Oblivion's Echo. Who are you?"

"Go back to where you came from. Return to Earth, where you belong." The computerized monotone voice spoke.

"I haven't been on Earth in years. My home is on Plutonium Six in the Gamma Quadrant."

"That's what he said," the voice continued, as the static noise increased.

"Who? Who is he?"

"Go home! Go back to Earth."

"I can't. Even if I wanted to," Matthew said. "The ship can't travel that far. I'll be dead long before we would reach Earth."

"If that's what you want," the voice mocked.

"It's not possible. Not even theoretically possible. Space can only bend so far," Matthew explained.

"As you wish," the voice and static faded.

Matthew closed and then opened his eyes. His body felt normal, and the crew members floated to the floor.

Ensign Sutter looked over at the captain. "Sir, are you alright?" and before Matthew could answer, the viewscreen showed the space in front of them, but then a blue fog surrounded the ship.

Matthew looked around at the crew, who were all disoriented, but waking up. "I don't know what is happening, so stay on your guard and go back to your stations. I want a status on everything. Every single operation in this ship, manual and automatic."

"Yes, sir," the crew said in unison.

"Uh," Thomas slowly sat up and crawled over to his husband. "this isn't over yet," he whispered harshly.

"Commander? Thomas?" Matthew stared into his husband's hollow-black eyes. "What?"

"Time to go, love," he smirked.

"He has a hold on you. Don't move, Please, Thomas."

"I'm the one with the hold on you," Thomas raised

his hands as he stood up, and thrust them down at his side. He turned to his natural state, a blue, transparent fog, and then the ship thrust forward.

"All stop," Matthew ordered, but no one was moving.

"Time to see the truth," Thomas said, as the ship spun out of control towards the darkness in the center of the blue fog.

A worm hole? Matthew thought.

"No, and yes, I can read your mind. Thought you knew that by now," Thomas said.

"Where is my Thomas?" Matthew yelled. "Where is he?"

"You should ask where you are," Thomas spewed, as the ship continued in a tailspin through the fog, as darkness covered the ship, but then, they stopped instantly.

"Mirror, Mirror, on the wall, where did your husband go? Where did your father go? And where did poor little Martin go?" The figure taunted.

"Who are you?"

"The Magic Man. Don't you remember? Shall we play a game?" The fog that was once Thomas disappeared. Matthew looked around the bridge. His crew seemed to be in a trance, and then he looked down at where Thomas had once laid.

"Thomas?" Matthew slowly sat in his captain's

chair and glared at the viewscreen. "Where are they?" He screamed. "What are you doing to my crew?"

The view screen waved like an ocean's water flow. Slowly, the mirror of the bridge reappeared, but Matthew wasn't in the reflection. The crew wasn't in the reflection. The wave opened a porthole in the center, and slowly sucked Oblivion's Echo into its world. It's realm.

Matthew tried to gain his bearings and looked around to see where he was, but everything was backwards. The computer screen texts were backwards. His crew's heads were facing the wrong direction, but they had no sense of knowing something was wrong.

Matthew gasped for air as it weighed down his lungs. He pleaded for Thomas, but Thomas was gone. Disappeared, just like Martin. Just like his father. Now, just like him. No, this can't happen. What is going on?

"It's OK," a young voice said. "It's just a game. He promised me it was a game."

Matthew looked toward the voice, coming face-toface with his twin brother. His seven-year-old brother.

"Who are you?" Martin asked.

"You're my brother. I'm Matthew."

"You're too old. Matthew and I were playing a game. The Magic Man wanted me to play with him. It's just a game," Martin said. "Even daddy is here."

"You brought father here? Where is he?"

"The Magic Man got mad at him. I don't know where he is. You're too old to be Matthew."

"No, I grew up," he gulped, his lungs felt like they were being filled with water. "I can't breathe too good."

"No, I want my brother. You're not him. The magic man said I could have him play with us."

Matthew tried to catch his breath, but he felt himself drowning. "I'm sorry, Marty." Matthew fell to the ground, thick and heavy air slowly exhaling from his body.

"Matty, come on," Martin called. "It's time to play. The magic man wants to play with us." Martin stood in front of the full-length mirror in the attic of their home.

"I'm busy. I have to do my multiplication tables, or I won't be able to go to space camp," seven-yearold Matthew called to his brother.

"Come on, just for a little while? I'll be your friend *forever*," Martin said, knowing that his brother always gave in.

"You're my brother *forever*. I'll be up in a few minutes."

Martin clapped. "Yay," he turned toward the mirror, and then it pulled him inside, into the mirror realm, and the last thing he heard was, shall we play a game?

Frank Trident sat behind his desk in his home office on Meridian 7, where his outpost was. He stared at the reflection in the console screen in front of him. "I know you're there. I saw you. Martin, is that you?" The screen fluttered and then flickered. Frank shook his head. "I must be seeing things." He pressed the button for the Mirror-NYX system. "Message directly to Captain Trident. It's important. Family. It's about your brother. End transmission." Frank looked at the screen again. The blue fog appeared again, and then the console sucked him into its mirror realm.

Matthew sat up quickly from a deep sleep. He took a deep breath as he wiped his sweaty forehead with the sleeve of his pajama top. He looked over at his sleeping husband, still asleep. "Phew," he whispered, careful not to wake Thomas.

Thomas opened his eyes and smiled at him. "You OK?"

"I'm not sure," Matthew said. "It's like Déjà vu, or something."

"Don't forget to mirror-call Martin after your shift," he smiled.

Thomas opened his eyes and smiled at Matthew, lying next to him. "You OK?" he asked as Matthew shot up quickly and then took a deep breath.

"I'm not sure," Matthew said. "It's like Déjà vu, or something."

"What do you mean?"



All hands! Abandon ship! Abandon ship!" The computerized voice thundered over the comm system of the Oblivion's Echo ship.

Matthew looked at Thomas. The two men held each other as the heat of the explosion pulled them into its blast range.

Martin opened one eye. "What?" He felt his brother staring at him.

"Nothing," Matthew was Martin's twin brother, and had been suffering from strange nightmares. He never talked about them, but Martin could feel Matthew's fear.

"It's something." Martin sat up. "I won't tell, I promise."

"I know. I keep dreaming about something creepy. It won't stop."

"I get it. Maybe the Magic Man will help us. We can play with him."

"No, I think we should play a different game," Matthew said.

"Like what?" Martin asked.

Matthew got out of bed and jumped on his brother. "Tag, you're it."

Martin and Matthew giggled loudly and started jumping on his bed.

"Boys, don't make me come up there," Frank called from downstairs.

Matthew woke up and looked over at his sleeping husband, still asleep. "Phew, gotta hit the shower before he gets up, or I'll never make it to the bridge on time," he whispered, careful not to wake Thomas. He got out of bed and headed directly into the relief modular bay off their bedroom. He commanded the sink to turn on the cold water.

Matthew dried his face carefully with the towel and stared into the mirror, and started to remove his pajama top, when, "Captain," Matthew heard Thomas call. He was still getting used to being the new captain of the spaceship, Oblivion's Echo, designed by his father after he retired from Genesis DynamX.

"I'm in here," Matthew called back to Thomas. Matthew entered the bedroom and smiled at his husband. "I'm sorry if I woke you. I was just about to take a sonic shower."

Thomas was sitting on the already made bed. "Such a handsome captain," he smiled. "How did you sleep?"

"Fine, I wanted to take a sonic shower before you convinced me to get back in bed. You know I hate tardiness.".

"Yes, of course, unless I make you tardy," Thomas flirted. "OK, so we'll sonic shower together and we'll both be on time and save the water."

"That's why we're, you and me, are totally sustainable," Matthew grinned.

"True, but so is every one else on this magnificent ship," Thomas smiled. "You still have 500 Sapients to get to now, young and old."

"That's why I need you, number one," he laughed slightly. "There's no way I can remember everyone one. I can't even remember last night."

"So, I'm forgettable?"

"Never, number one," Matthew smirked.

"That is so retro," Thomas laughed, patting the bed beside him. "Besides, we're really in space, not on a stage set."

"I did like the captain's chair father designed," he sat next to his husband. Thomas just loved being his first officer, and every time Matthew called him *Commander*, even in their private living quarters.

"So, after your shift, don't forget to return Martin's transmission. I'm sure he wants to brag about his promotion, and the son that he and Maggie have on the way." Thomas smiled.

"I know, I know. I can't wait to be Uncle Matthew."
"You mean Captain Uncle Matthew, husband of Thomas?" Thomas laughed.

Matthew kissed Thomas's cheek and then headed into the relief modular bay. When Thomas heard the sonic shower turn on, he walked into the main living quarters and sat down at his desk. His personal space comprised a replica and connection to the main bridge, and his console there, as well as his personal and professional log system. He could use the Phase-NYX system to connect with anyone in any galaxy.

Frank and Joanna were very excited about their

first grandchild who was on the way and was due any day now. Frank was still a big shot engineer at NYX, and even with that clout, Matthew got his Captain's bars on his own. Andrew Trident and his brother, co-owners of NYX new that Matthew would be Captain before they could even put in a personal request with the powers that be at the Naval Facility. Even though Frank was a partner, he was always an engineer and scientist at heart. That's what he loved to do, and he shared that love with his growing family.

Before the ship left the port from Revenant-5, one of the seven colonized planets in the Upsilon Galaxy, he connected with his brother, who was now stationed there, as a lieutenant, along with his wife, who was the chief surgeon on the medical base. They were expecting their first child.

Matthew's new job was to test the Nexus Ship, especially the Flux Momentum, which is seventy-five times faster than its baseline speed of Phase Momentum. Phase Momentum is about fifty light years. The Oblivion's Echo was the first of its kind.

Matthew's ship was supposed to travel beyond and see if there were more A-base planets, and if Sapients could travel beyond their last post. Matthew and his crew looked forward to exploring more A-based planets and galaxies.

Thomas pressed the button on his desk, and the platform moved backwards, and lifted the keypad and stylus for the system. He wrote on the tablet pad, using the stylus, and sent a letter to Martin. Transmission to Lieutenant Martin Trident. Congrats and Matthew will message you later. He is very proud of you, and we both miss you. End of Transmission.

Thomas and Matthew walked off the lift directly to the bridge. "Captain on the bridge," Thomas announced, as he took his seat next to the Captain's chair. He positioned his console in front of him.

Ensign Sutter stood up and walked over to Matthew, and saluted. "Sir, your java," he handed the mug of steaming hot coffee to Matthew.

"Thank you, Ensign," Matthew took the coffee. "Status." he turned around and looked up at the security officer, Lieutenant Stein.

"All decks secure, we're at full strength with the static field," he said, referring to the invisible force field that kept the ship and its residents safe from enemies or even debris fields in the unchartered space.

"Very good," Matthew nodded, and then turned to the engineer station. "Where is Lieutenant Lyons?" he grunted, annoyed at tardiness.

The lift door opened, and Lyons hurried in. "I apologize for my tardiness." he took a deep breath.

"What kept you?" Matthew grunted, trying to be professional, even though he despised tardiness.

"I was just about to go on duty. I was leaving my quarters when the doors shut on me, and I almost got caught between them. I managed to leave my quarters, but the doors wouldn't open. I tried using the control panel to open it and then tried to do it manually. Nothing worked. Then, I saw something."

"You saw something?" Matthew cocked an eyebrow.

"Just for a second, like a wave in the ocean. The console screen seemed to flutter and wave as if it were liquid, but then it stopped."

"Make sure all personal and ship-related systems are up and running. We don't want to enter Flux Momentum with any unknown ship system issues." Matthew sat down in his captain's chair and sipped his coffee slowly. "Ensign Ryan," Matthew looked at the back of the two men sitting at the helm's console. "Set a course for Alpha-Beta four, and let's see what she has to offer us." He cleared his throat, took another sip of coffee, and gave the command. "Embark."

"Yes, Captain," Ryan replied.

"Alpha-Beta Four?" Thomas asked, looking at his console of the star system.

"It's supposed to be better than Alpha-Beta Three," Matthew smirked.

Thomas nodded, "Yes, Captain. What do we expect to find there?"

"Clean air, enemies, new friends, old friends, not sure. That's why we're going there."

"You named it, didn't you?"

"Yes, and the coordinates are on your screen now, Commander." Matthew leaned back.

"Yes, Captain," Thomas answered.

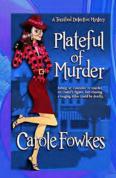
"A whole new world awaits us," Matthew said, looking down at his captain's console connected to the right arm of his captain's chair. His reflection skewed slightly and then fixed itself. He shuddered lightly, hoping no one else noticed.

No one did, except for the Magic Man, waiting for them to arrive.

Carole Fowker'

The

Terrified Detective



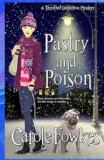














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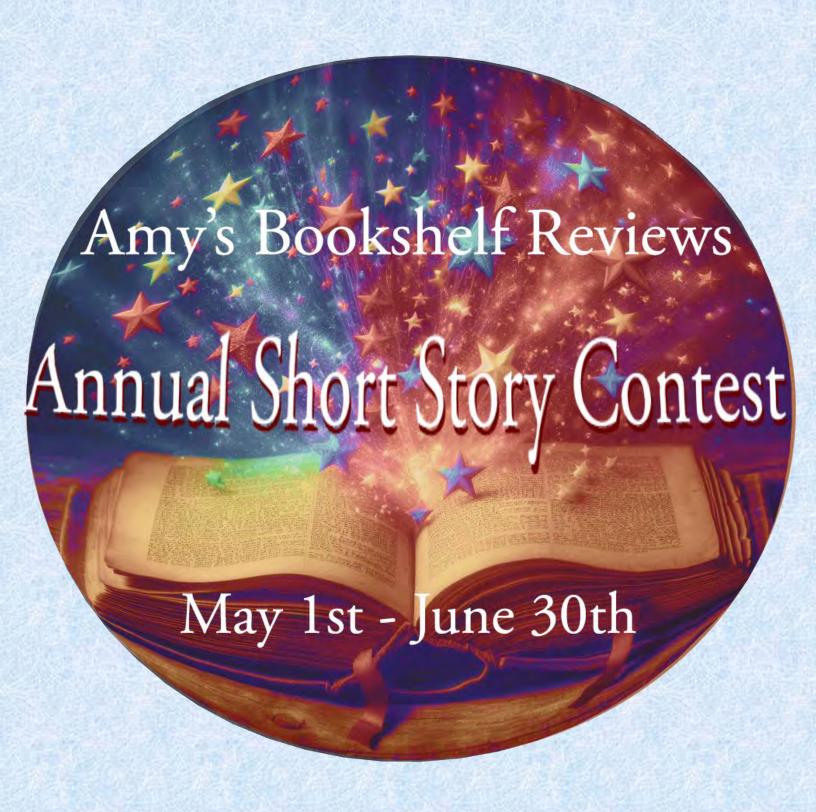
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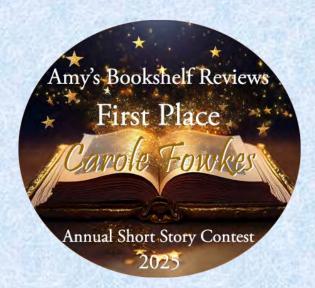
Elliott forgot about his miserable life when he was at a movie theatre. Before he'd sneak into the show, he'd shake down some timid bystander for money to buy an extra-large, extra butter sack of popcorn. And a large soda to wash it all down. The oily snack was Elliot's passion. He ranked movie theatres not by the comfort of the seats nor by the flicks they showed, but by the quality of the crunch. Hollywood Multiplex had the best.

One day while trying to ditch a persistent cop, Elliott noticed the back door to the Hollywood was ajar. He scanned the alley and seeing nobody, he slipped inside. Now feeling safe, he relaxed, and his belly growled reminding him he hadn't eaten anything since swiping an apple and a banana from a vendor's cart. Some warm movie-house popcorn would hit the spot.

Despite detecting no fresh-popped aroma Elliott placed his order at the counter anyway. "Extra large popcorn, extra butter." he demanded.

The teen behind the counter yawned. "Sorry, popper's motor burned up and we had to shut it down. So popcorn won't be ready for 40-45 minutes. Can I get you anything else?"

Elliot resisted the urge to grab the pimply-faced kid by his neck and pop *him*. But he didn't need more trouble, not today. Fists clenched, he stomped into Theatre Two.



Slumping in his seat, he smelled butter and heard the familiar rattling of popcorn in a bucket. He turned toward the enticing aroma. A man with black-rimmed glasses was holding an extra-large tub. Elliott, his mouth watering, whispered loudly, "Hey, I thought the popper was broken."

The owner of the popcorn bucket smiled. "I snuck this stuff in. But now I don't want it." He held out the tub to Elliott. "You can have the whole thing. I haven't eaten any of it yet." He shook the bucket and released the rich aroma wafted into Elliott's nostrils. He added, "Please, I insist."

The grease stains on the bucket from oozing butter sold Elliott. His empty stomach rumbled. He snatched the tub and soon began shoveling the salty treat into his mouth.

The stranger chuckled. "Good, huh?"

His mouth full, Elliott could only nod.

The movie ended, but to Elliott's amazement the tub remained a quarter full. Tossing it was out of the question. The stuff tasted better than any he'd ever had here at the theater. He hadn't needed to strong-arm anyone for it, either. That four-eyed sucker had just given it to him.

Elliott followed the crowd out, hugging the tub to his chest.

Though Elliott walked right past him, the guy who had given him the popcorn was texting and didn't notice Elliott. That is, until Elliott slapped him on the back. "Hey, thanks again."

The stranger's head jerked up and he stiffened. Sliding his phone back into his coat he answered. "Sure. Uh, how'd you like it? You didn't eat all of it."

Elliott swallowed his first response of telling the guy it wasn't any of his business. Instead, he forced himself to be civil. After all, the dork *did* give him the snack. "Popcorn's great but there's no way I could eat all of it."

The stranger relaxed and grinned. "Yes, there is." He lowered his voice. "If you haven't already, I urge you to try the unpopped kernels. They're crunchy but won't damage your teeth."



Again, Elliott had the urge to tell the stranger to butt out. He'd eat what he wanted of the stuff. Elliott didn't like to be pushed, but for now he'd play nice. "I'll be sure to give them a try."

The stranger's eyes darted around the lobby. "That's very good. Well, I best return home now." Elliott smirked. "Yeah, good idea."

Wanting to kill more time until he was sure the cop had given up for him, Elliott stayed. Besides, he had nowhere else to go. He'd missed the movie's beginning because that piece-of-shit popcorn maker didn't work. Despite its lame plot, Elliott decided to watch the flick from its start and returned to his seat in Theater Two.

On his second handful from that same popcorn tub, the lights went down. Fifteen minutes into the film Elliott got to the unpopped kernels. He carefully bit down on one. It yielded easily to pressure. The guy hadn't handed him a line. These babies tasted even better than the popped ones. He ate until at last, his oily fingers poked around

an empty tub. He discarded the container on the seat and left, taking care not to cross that cop's path again.

By the time he arrived home, Elliott felt queasy and worried the popcorn would make a second, less pleasant appearance. He chewed an antacid, burped, and fell into bed.

The next morning he stumbled into the bathroom and flicked on the light. As his eyes focused, Elliott gawked at the multiple red bumps on his face, four on his cheeks, two on his chin, and two on his forehead. They looked like ordinary pimples; the ones teenagers get. He shook his head. Twenty-eight years old and still getting zits. Probably too much popcorn grease last night. He shook his head and shrugged. That down-to-histoes thrill he'd gotten gobbling every last bit was worth it, especially those unpopped ones.

When he stripped to take a shower, he sucked in a breath. More red lumps on his arms, legs and torso. It better not be an allergy. Not to the one thing in his life that never disappointed him. He pounded his fist against the tile wall until his hand hurt and he was again calm.

His morning preparations completed, Elliott left home and headed to Westside Billiards, his usual hangout. He'd make an appearance there, maybe knock some heads together, then go get some medicine. In case he really was allergic.

On his way to the pharmacy, Elliott's legs began itching and burning. His chest, arms, and face soon joined in. As if a thousand ants were

crawling under his skin. He ducked into a diner, brushed past the guy seating people, and headed into the restroom. He doused himself with cold water, but it didn't help. Neither did looking in the mirror. One glance and he slid to the floor, crying out. The lumps had become more swollen, stretching his unaffected skin until it was taut and shiny. He couldn't even smile, not that he felt like it.

Bracing himself, he got up and made it to the nearest drug store. He snarled and cursed his way to the front of the line.

"Hey! What'dya got for this?" He pointed to his face. The pharmacist flinched but quickly recommended both pills and cream. Elliott grabbed both and got out of the store fast. He rubbed the cream on his face and swallowed two pills on the way back home.

He arrived home and locked the door of his apartment behind him. Elliott ripped off his clothes and dug his fingernails into his inflamed skin, scratching and sobbing. That stuff he paid money for hadn't worked. But he'd heard baking soda and water could stop an itch.

Scouring his cupboards, he shoved jars and cans out of the way until he spied an old box of the stuff. He tore it open and poured water straight into the cardboard container, making a soggy mess as he pasted himself with the mixture. By the time he finished he felt like the plaster of Paris globe he'd made in third grade. Legs spread apart, he took one Frankenstein-like step, then another until he reached the bedroom.

Exhausted, he fell into bed, the baking soda mix flaking off and creating a white dust that made him cough.

Day became night, but sleep didn't come. Elliott rose, moaning and cursing, as he rubbed ice over his arms and legs, hoping to numb them. Just before dawn he even made a promise to God that he'd visit his mother more often if only the itching would stop.

When morning came he called his doctor, but got a recording. His impulse was to throw the phone against the wall. Instead, he left a message, then dragged himself into the bathroom. He felt feverish and nauseated but needed to see how he looked.

One glance and his breath caught. He staggered backwards. The bumps were now so engorged the smooth parts of his face looked like valleys surrounded by hideous reddish-purple mountains. His hand shook as he pressed his thumb against one on his cheek. The hard nodule didn't budge.

His phone rang. The doctor would see him in an hour.

The room seemed to tilt, and Elliott stumbled to a chair. He recalled the stranger insisting he eat all the popcorn. Maybe that four-eyed creep put something in it. Elliot considered going to the cops. Tell them what? Some guy gave him popcorn? No, when he got past this horror, he'd

find the bastard himself and make him real sorry. Meanwhile, he had to make it to the doctor. He bit down hard on his lower lip as he struggled to put clothes on over the now painful lumps.

As soon as Elliott got outside, the lumps began to pulsate. He swallowed hard, fighting the panic engulfing him. He hailed a cab. The cabbie gawked at him, but Elliott was beyond caring. In a garbled voice, he gave the driver the clinic's address.

Three blocks from his destination, traffic came to a dead stop. Elliot screamed, "No! I've gotta get to the doctor."

At that second, the constant itching and throbbing halted. Elliott took a deep breath and started to tell the cabbie he'd walk the rest of the way. His words morphed into a low moan, then a tortured scream as lump after lump erupted, ripping Elliott's skin apart and spewing red mucous on the windows of the cab. The driver twisted his body to see, shrieked and scrambled from the cab, ignoring Elliott's cries for help.

The pain of a thousand knives coursed through Elliot as his torso stiffened and his face contorted. Barely conscious he heard high-pitched buzzing and struggled to open his eyes. Blue metallic-looking winged creatures, their fat bodies glistening with his blood, were hatching out of his eroded skin.

One dive bombed toward his face, flashing its tiny, pointed teeth. Elliott raised his arm to shield his

eyes, but more winged monsters rose from his destroyed flesh and attacked him, gnawing on what was left of his skin.

###

When the paramedics and police arrived at the scene, even the most hardened cop lost his breakfast. Blood and mucus were spattered on the cab's doors and windows. Bone chips and muscle fragments were imbedded in Elliott's ripped clothing. His face was shredded beyond recognition, and his mouth remained open as if death came mid-scream.

A man with black-rimmed glasses watched from a distance. Then he made a call. "This is Dr. Anderson. Put me through to Research and Development." He waited. "Our new formula for popcorn needs work. Seems it's still got some bugs in it."



AMPlify Audiobooks™



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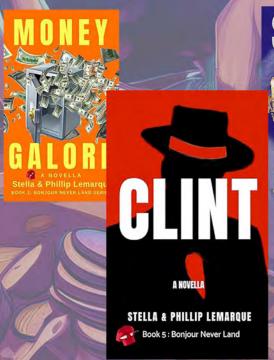




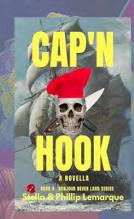
Phillip Lemarque & Stella Lemarque

Bonjour Never Land Series







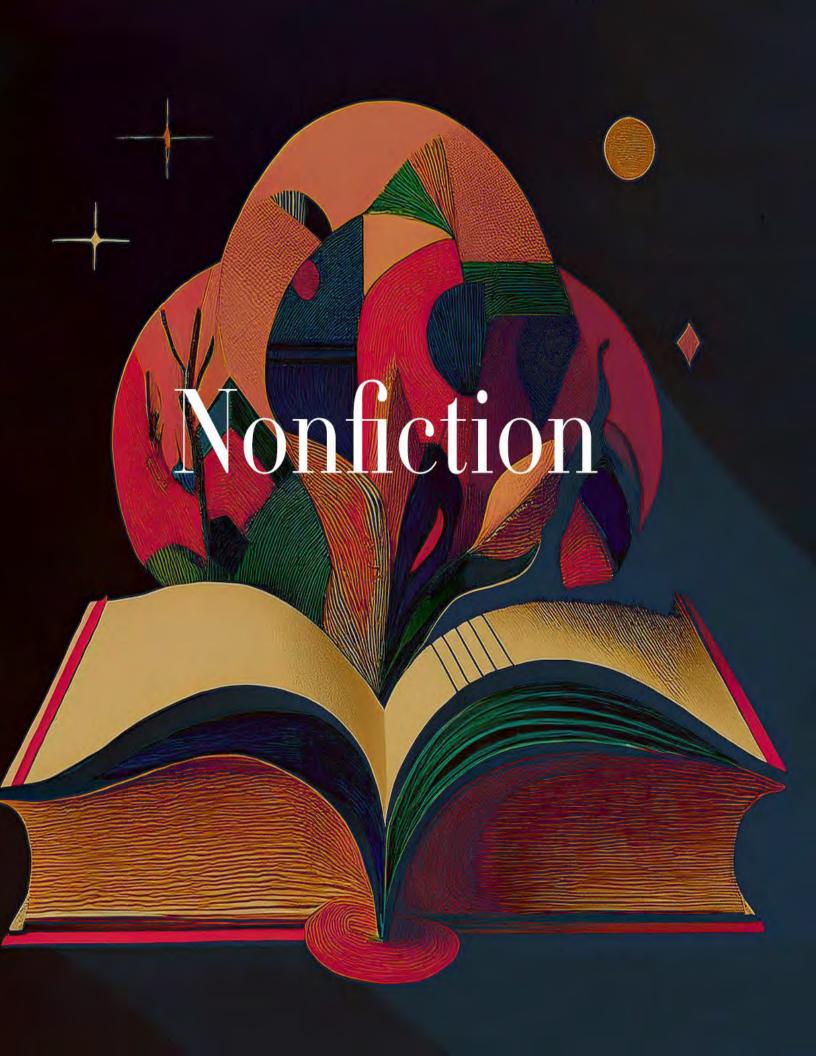


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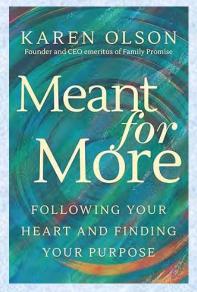
Karen Olsen - Meant for More

What happens when we act on our innate kindness?

It all started with a chance encounter outside of Grand Central Station in November 1981. Karen Olson, a successful marketing executive, was on her way to a business meeting when she saw an elderly homeless woman—her shoulders sagging, her eyes dull. Impulsively, Karen darted across the street and bought the woman a sandwich and an orange juice. She listened to the woman's story and learned her name: Millie.

This small act of kindness changed the trajectory of Karen's life. Karen dedicated her life to those in need and founded Family Promise, a national nonprofit organization that helps homeless and low-income families. In Meant for More, Karen tells her story, from tragedy in childhood to an adulthood full of compassion and service, which has made her stronger, healthier, and more fulfilled than ever before. Many people seek happiness through acquiring material goods or achieving status, only to find a lack of fulfillment. With firsthand testimonials from Karen and other volunteers, Meant for More is a call to action: when you reach out beyond yourself and seek to make a difference in the lives of others, happiness will catch up with you.





Amy's Bookshelf Reviews 5 Stars

Karen Olsen writes an incredible memoir.

Meant for More is a very interesting book. This is the first book I have read from this author. The author details her journey, her life's journey, and how she always knew she was there to give. Her family was pretty well off, and she writes about complex relationships with her father and her mother. After her mother passed, it devasted her. It also made such an impact on her life, after she went through grief, denial, and how she thought she should've seen her mother's illness for what it was, not what she thought it was. I applaud this author for sharing her story. She took a heartbreak, and made something of her life. She learned about her mother's mental illness, and her father's strive for perfection, and came to realize how to live her own life, in a way to help others, she always felt she was meant for more in her life. I am very impressed with her writing, and sharing her story, not everyone can put their life on paper, and have it written so well, and makes you see the person, on the inside. It may be easier to write things down than to say them out loud. This is one of those books that grabs you from the start and pulls you in.

WHEN LOVE GOES TOO FAR



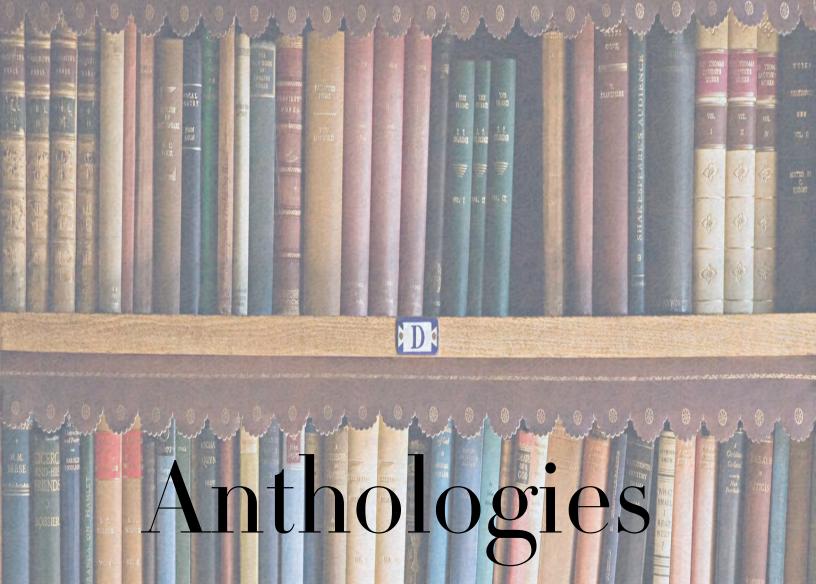
"YOU NEED TO DROP EVERYTHING AND READ THIS ONE ASAP" -PAIGE RAY, UNVEILING NIGHTMARES

"IF YOU WANT SOMETHING
THAT WILL MAKE YOU
QUESTION YOUR BELIEFS
WHILE ALSO HORRIFYING YOU
THIS IS THE ONE BOOK YOU
NEED." Z. MARTIN, AUTHOR OF
TALES FROM CHESTERFIELD

Meet Pete, a depressed misanthrope with a dry sense of humor and questionable morals. His life takes a chaotic turn when Kim, his semi-friend, semi crush introduces him to her new partner, Ben.

Together, they encourage Pete to cut loose and socialize. Little does Pete know that he's about to have the most wild night of his life by entering into a world of sex, drugs, violence, and debauchery.





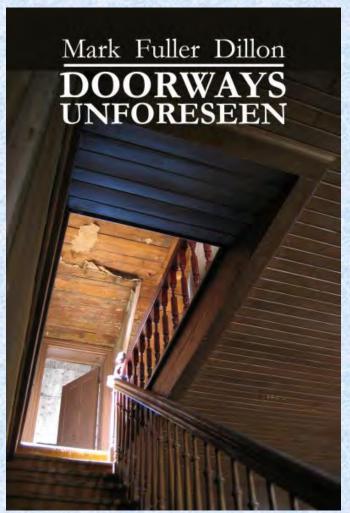
Mark Fuller Dillon- Doorways Unforeseen

Doorways lead to nightmares, from a bone-white church in a dead town of the captured and collected, to a barren farm where floating figures mob and kill, to a cedar forest where a creature from the sky reaches out to shatter souls. In prose and verse horror stories, nightmares wait beyond the mind's doorways unforeseen.

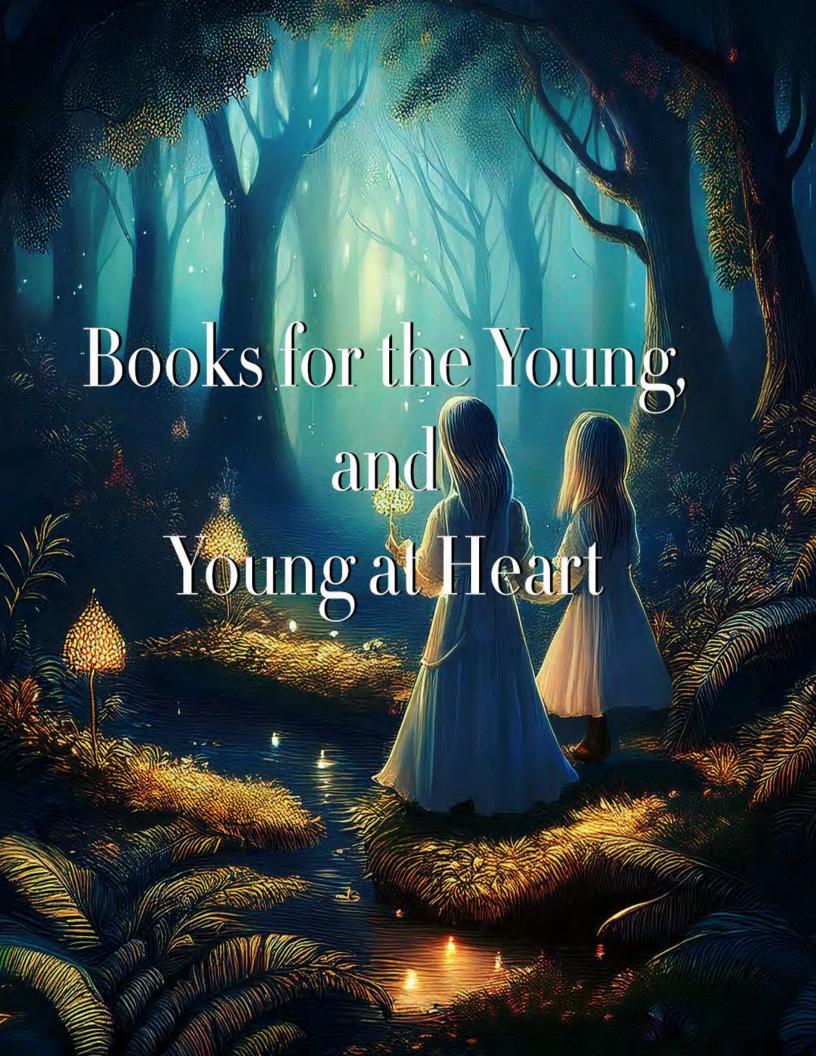


4 Stars
Mark Fuller Dillon writes a complex compilation of grand prose and stories

Mark Fuller Dillon
Doorways Unforeseen opens the door for the



reader, and entices the reader in, with the collection of horror and paranormal stories, along with prose. I am a big fan of Mark Fuller Dillon and read whatever this author writes. Each story or poem is unique, and paints a picture of a story, no matter the format. A picture is worth a thousand words, but each word is worth so much more. One of my favorites that I kept coming back to is A Flimsy Door. Something about it, just made me read it repeatedly. And when I finished the book, I went back to that one. I also found it interesting that he wrote down his dreams, and when he put them in the book, he added the date that he had the dream. Now, to me, that is impressive. Sounds like he keeps everything he writes, and I like that, because I do the same. Dream seven, a spy in the prison camp, was one of those dreams that can't be explained, of why it happened, just that it did. Many times in dreams our perception is skewed, and some thoughts merge into one that don't make any sense, except for in the dream. Beware of your dreams, they just might be trying to tell you something, or nothing at all.



Nichole Heydenburg - Deadly Vows

Enter the shadows. Unleash your power. Embrace your fate.

Taylor Windsor is only fifteen when her parents die in a tragic fire. During her grieving, she's sent to live with her Aunt Mel in the small town of Grimwood, North Carolina. Taylor struggles to adjust to her new reality, and strange occurrences unfold.

After being forbidden from entering a locked room, Taylor's curiosity leads her and her new friend Kylie to an ancient steamer trunk filled with dark secrets. She soon uncovers a shocking truth: Aunt Mel made a deadly pact with a demon. The demon has come to collect a soul, and Taylor is the only one who can stop him.

As Taylor pieces her family's past together, she realizes she can't escape her destiny. Determined to save Mel and confront the demon who tricked her aunt, Taylor steps into her parents' world, embracing the role they sought to deny her. With time running out, Taylor must master her newfound abilities and navigate a treacherous path to break the deadly vow.





4 Stars

Nichole Heydenburg writes a wonderful tale of secrets and shadows

In Deadly Vows, the reader is brought into the life of Taylor Windsor, who lost her parents when she was 15. Now, she has to live with her next of kin, her aunt Mel. Deadly Vows is part of the Shadow Bound Chronicles, and this the first volume, I am a big fan of Nichole Heydenburg. and pretty much read whatever this author writes. This author has a grand imagination, and talent for showing the story. Taylor has to grow up very fast, as death of parents can do that, and that can also change the part of innocence that is left when one hits their teens. I like the title, as when you first see the title, a reader's interpretation of what the word vows may refer to, and in this book, definitely not wedding vows. It's something more sinister. The story is written very well, and though it may be targeted for young adults, I am definitely not a young adult, and I enjoyed reading it. Taylor grows throughout the story, and becomes enchanted with her family's past, and her aunt's pact, a pact with a demon. There is more to Taylor than she even realizes, and she brings the reader with her on her journey. It's a captivating story, with a lot of layers, and depths of the various characters. The unpredictability of what would happen next kept this reader engaged. I look forward to the reading the next book in the series.

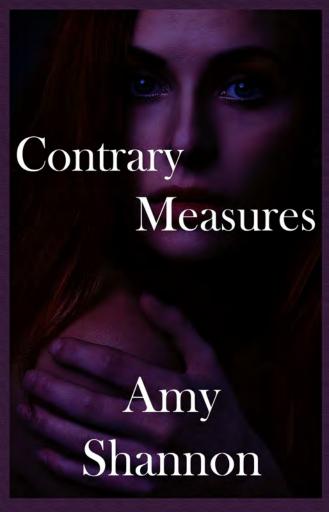


Amy Shannon's



Contrary Measures

Rayna's quest for truth and trust leads her through a maze of secrets that could either shatter or save her.



Rayna's world fell apart in a single, devastating moment, pushing her to the brink of loneliness. Determined to rebuild her life, she embarks on a journey to find something anything—that will bring meaning and improvement. Her emotions and memories clash and contradict, leaving her questioning the past and uncertain about the future.



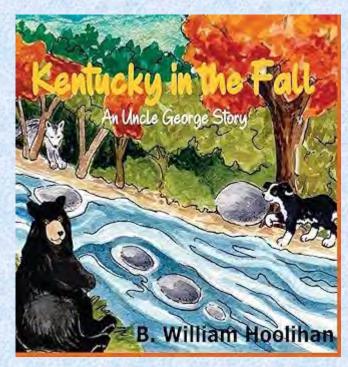
Kentucky in the Fall (Volume 1)

Welcome to Kentucky in the Fall and enjoy a funfilled day on Uncle George's farm. Uncle George Stories is a collection of nostalgic stories and letters written by the author's grandfather, Charles Rand, recounting his boyhood adventures in Vanceburg, Kentucky, around the early 20th century. The book is dedicated to the author's mother, Kathryn Rand Hoolihan, and her family. The stories are simple yet vivid, filled with charming tales of rural life, family, and the natural world, including memorable characters like Wooly Broom the bear, Uncle George, and Aunt Hett. The book captures the essence of a bygone era, offering readers a glimpse into a magical world of ice-skating bears, honey-loving dogs, and devious wolves, all set against the backdrop of the beautiful Kinniconick Creek. The glossary at the end provides context for terms and places mentioned stories, enhancing the reader's understanding of this historical and cultural setting

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews 5 Stars

B. William Hoolihan takes you back in time!

Uncle George Stories Book 1 is the debut children's book of B. William Hoolihan. The stories in each book, are wonderful stories that he shares, as his grandfather, Charlie, did with him. Charlie, when he was young, he had marvelous adventures at his Uncle George and Aunt Hett's farm in Kentucky. When Charlie grew up, he wrote letters to his daughter and her son. She read these wonderful stories to her son at bedtime, and now,



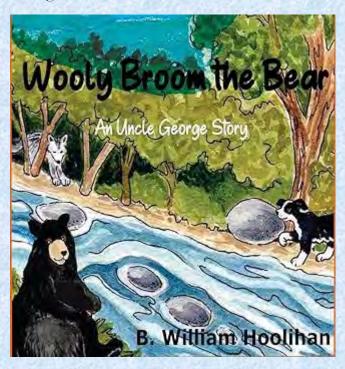
fifty years later, the author is sharing them with readers of all ages. The adventures at the farm take place near Kinniconick Creek and Beaver Pond, which is a pool in the middle of Kinniconick Creek, in the early 1900s. Don't forget to read the author's introduction. Each story is told in the letters as they were written, with the adventures of spending time at his aunt and Uncle's farm, told by Charlie. At the end of each book, there is a glossary of terms that might have gone out of style or are unknown to persons living outside of Kentucky, didn't live in the early 1900s. This is book 1 in the Uncle George Stories Series. It's Kentucky in the fall, and you can almost smell the fresh air, leaves falling to the



ground, and the groves of chestnuts, hickory nuts and walnuts, that were gathered for the upcoming winter. B. William Hoolihan shares grandfather's stories directly from the letters that were written to him and have always been part of cherished memories. In the story, along with the watercolor illustrations, the story of Charlie and how he helped out on the farm, came to life. The reader is introduced to Charlie, Uncle George, and Aunt Hett. Even to Bulger, the loveable and very intelligent dog. The locals call the Kinniconick Creek aka the Kinney. The reader learns about farm life, back then, and the animals, and their part in Charlie's stories make it more real, even with Charlie's vivid imagination. The reader also learns about the bear cub, Wooly Broom, and his new friends. I recommend that readers of all ages read this book. Sometimes adults should sit back and remember what it was like to be a kid, and whatever their child may be going through.

Wooly Broom the Bear: Uncle George Stories
Learn how Uncle George and Aunt Hett met
Wooly Broom. Uncle George Stories is a collection
of nostalgic stories and letters written by the
author's grandfather, Charles Rand, recounting his
boyhood adventures in Vanceburg, Kentucky,
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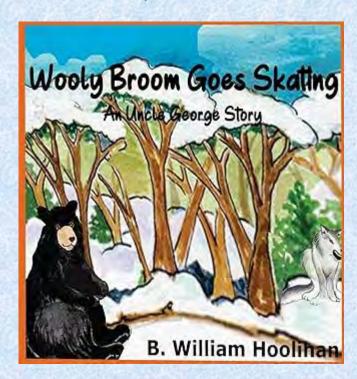


Amy's Bookshelf Reviews 5 Stars

Welcome to Uncle George Stories, as shared by the author, B. William Hoolihan. The stories in each book, are wonderful stories that he shares, as his grandfather, Charlie, did with him. Charlie, when he was young, he had marvelous adventures at his Uncle George and Aunt Hett's farm in Kentucky. When Charlie grew up, he wrote letters to his daughter and her son. She read these wonderful stories to her son at bedtime, and now, fifty years later, the author is

sharing them with readers of all ages. The adventures at the farm take place near Kinniconick Creek and Beaver Pond, which is a pool in the middle of Kinniconick Creek, in the early 1900s. Don't forget to read the author's introduction. Each story is told in the letters as they were written, with the adventures of spending time at his aunt and Uncle's farm, told by Charlie. At the end of each book, there is a glossary of terms that might have gone out of style or are unknown to persons living outside of Kentucky, didn't live in the early 1900s. This is book 2 in the Uncle George Stories Series. Wooly Broom the Bear's story shares with the reader Wooly Broom and his importance in Charlie's stories, and for the farm as well. Found as a small bear cub, Uncle George called him Wooly Broom, because of his thick wool-like fur, and his tail resembled a broom. The story shares how they embraced Wooly Broom and welcomed him to their farm. After he was grown, he was let out of the pen, and they expected him to be on his way. What an incredible imagination, and I can just imagine the feeling of being a young child, listening to mother read Charlie's letters. Anyone who reads this story, will see something and feel something that may be an

old feeling, and remembrances. We're never too old to listen to family stories, and even when they are someone else's, they bring a sense of familiarity. I loved reading all of the stories, and they reminded me of my own grandmother's stories about growing up on a farm. However, there wasn't a Wooly Broom.



Wooly Broom Goes Skating: Uncle George Stories

Learn how Uncle George taught Wooly Broom how to ice skate. But watch out for Nero the Wolf!. Uncle George Stories is a collection of nostalgic stories and letters written by the author's grandfather, Charles Rand, recounting his boyhood adventures in Vanceburg, Kentucky, around the early 20th century. The book is dedicated to the author's mother, Kathryn Rand

Hoolihan, and her family. The stories are simple yet vivid, filled with charming tales of rural life, family, and the natural world, including memorable characters like Wooly Broom the bear, Uncle George, and Aunt Hett. The book captures the essence of a bygone era, offering readers a glimpse into a magical world of ice-skating bears, honey-loving dogs, and devious wolves, all set against the backdrop of the beautiful Kinniconick Creek. The glossary at the end provides context for terms and places mentioned in the stories, enhancing the reader's understanding of this historical and cultural setting.



5 Stars

B. William Hoolihan takes you back in time!

Welcome to Uncle George Stories, as shared by the author, B. William Hoolihan. The stories in each book, are wonderful stories that he shares, as his grandfather, Charlie, did with him. Charlie,

when he was young, he had marvelous adventures at his Uncle George and Aunt Hett's farm in Kentucky. When Charlie grew up, he wrote letters to his daughter and her son. She read these wonderful stories to her son at bedtime, and now, fifty years later, the author is sharing them with readers of all ages. The adventures at the farm take place near Kinniconick Creek and Beaver Pond, which is a pool in the middle of Kinniconick Creek, in the early 1900s. Don't forget to read the author's introduction. Each story is told in the letters as they were written, with the adventures of spending time at his aunt and Uncle's farm, told by Charlie. At the end of each book, there is a glossary of terms that might have gone out of style or are unknown to persons living outside of Kentucky, didn't live in the early 1900s. This is book 3 in the Uncle George Stories Series. It's Kentucky in the winter, the pond is frozen over, the land is coated with crisp, white snow. Charlie is at Aunt Hett and Uncle George's farm, helping them out, as he would often do. In this story, Charlie shows how he taught Wooly Broom to skate. It's an incredible story, and can you imagine a bear wearing skates, and actually skating? As with great stories, and some stories never get old, there is a seminemesis, or a frenemy of Wooly Broom. Nero, a gray wolf. I like that Nero is somewhat of a troublemaker, never really dangerous, but always wants to see what Wooly Broom is up to. Another incredible story from Kinniconick Creek. This one was one of my favorite stories, and I have to admit, I enjoyed reading all of Uncle George stories, told by Charlie.



Coming June 1, 2024.

Amy Channon's

Those who dare trespass, beware the wrath of Red Ruby's Revenge

Travelers are souls existing in the dimension where time and space converge, experiencing rebirth through reincarnation over centuries until they choose to cease living another life. When the Waldens started their family, many of them were Travelers. However, this is only a small part of Harold/Jackson/ Rudy's lives. Ruby Walden, who died in 1929 at the age of six, became a egend akin to the infamous Bloody Mary







Zola Blue's The Mejuarian Series

The Mejuarian are god-like beings residing on the planet Ercutis, a near-perfect world. Their utopian existence enables them to attain extraordinary levels of spiritual consciousness. Enter the Dragonors, who follow a tradition of competing in rigorous games of cunning and skill to gain recognition and status within their village. In a galaxy where telepathic bonds and ancient dreams shape destinies, the Mejuar, beings created by the god Thire-Los, navigate a complex world of gods, creatures, and humans.

The Four: Destruction of Honor (Book 1)

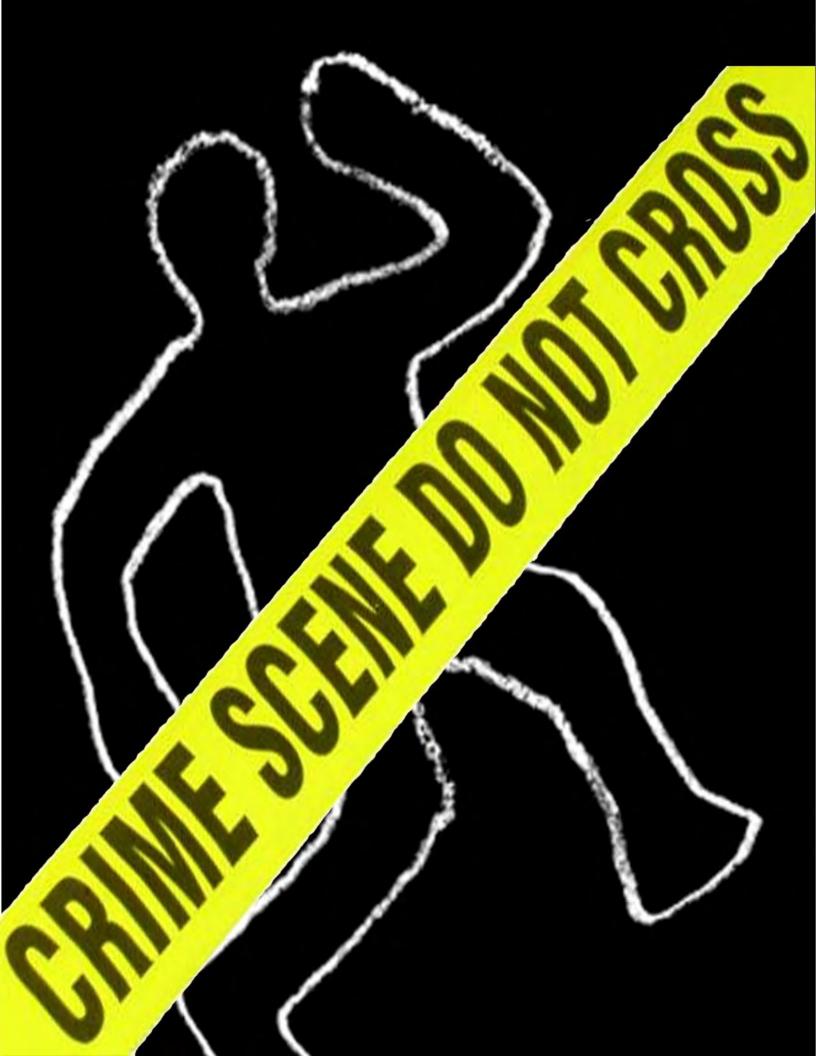
Bound in Strength: Stance Upon Heartache (Book 2)

Courage of One: Conviction to Stand (Book 3)

Whispers of Tribulations: The Present and The Destiny (Book 4)

Thire-Los: Demon or Angel (The Mejuarian Book 5)





D.R. Bartlette - The Dumond Affair – Lies, Politics & A Killer Freed – True Crime Exposé

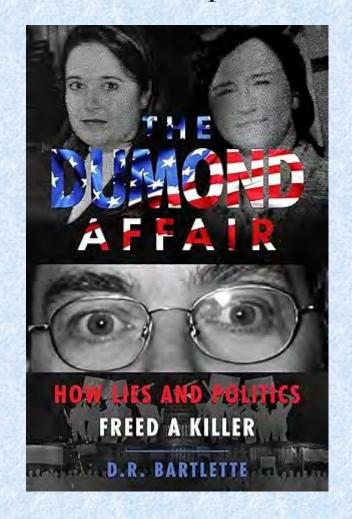
In THE DUMOND AFFAIR: How Lies And Politics Freed a Killer, first-time author D.R. Bartlette weaves a story of the political corruption and religious zealotry that gave birth to an anti-Bill Clinton conspiracy theory that led to the deaths of two women and, thirty-six years later, the birth of an insurrection.

The 1984 kidnapping and rape of a small-town cheerleader in southern Arkansas might seem like a tragic crime that was only notable because the local sheriff displayed her attacker's severed testicles on his desk for months afterward. But when Ashley Stevens came forward to accuse Wayne Dumond, a 35-year-old murderer and serial rapist, she could never have imagined how her case would be thrust into the media spotlight.

An innocent teen, Stevens was attacked first by Dumond, and then by anti-Bill Clinton conspiracy theorists who accused her of lying for political reasons, but themselves lied to push their nefarious cause. Then former conservative Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee used his influence to push for Dumond's release.

Once freed, Dumond went on to rape and murder two more women. But there's more to this story.

As Bartlette points out, the forces that came together to free Dumond eventually metastasized into the Qanon cult that the National Security Agency labeled one of the biggest national security threats since 9/11. A movement that was at least partly responsible for the insurrection on Jan. 6, 2020.



5 Stars

D.R. Bartlette writes about politics and crime in The Dumond Affair

In this book, The Dumond Affair – Lies, Politics & A Killer Freed – True Crime Exposé, the reader takes a deep dive along with the author to the explorations of politics, crimes, and how it affected prominent public figures. I am a fan of true crime stories. This is this author's debut book, and it is remarkably written. The story follows

The Dumond Affair – Lies, Politics & A Killer Freed – True Crime Exposé cont'd

Wayne Dumond, who was convicted of hurting a cheerleader on September 11, 1984, in Arkansas. But that's not the end of it. Dumond was sent to prison, received medical restraints, and then, got was released. This book was written very well. It seems some people in very high places were determined to secure Dumond's release. The local sheriff even displayed the results of Dumond's castration on her desk. Names like Bill Clinton and Mike Huckabee, yes, 44th governor of Arkansas, got themselves involved in what just seemed like a local, small town crime against a young girl, who deserved so much better. In the past or the present, things like this still happen, and some seem to forget about the original crime.





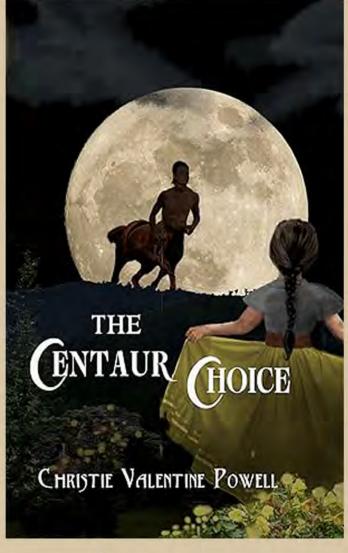
THE CENTAUR CHOICE BY

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?



Buy on Amazon



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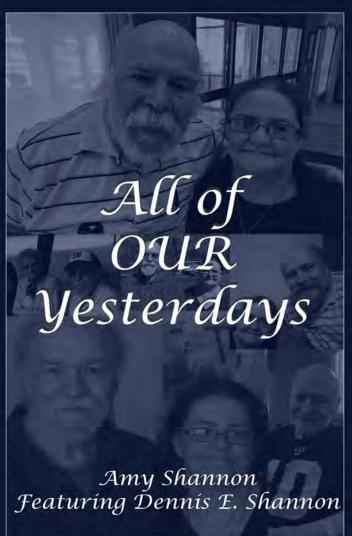


Advertisement

All of OUR Yesterdays

by Amy Shannon, Featuring Dennis E. Shannon

A Genius Mind, A Poet's Heart: My Father's Legacy Lives On



This book is a tribute to my father, showcasing his poetry and essays. Despite his struggle with dementia, his genius and poetic spirit continue to inspire.

Author's Note: 25% of the proceeds of this book will be donated to the Dementia Society of America. https://www.dementiasociety.org/

Buy on Amazon



Coming July 4, 2025

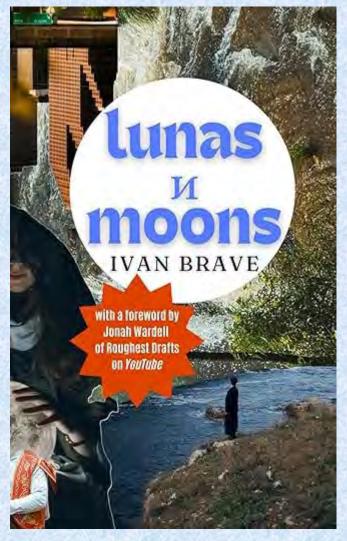


Iván Brave- Lunas и Moons

Embark on a celestial journey with Lunas M Moons, a captivating chapbook that defies conventional poetry and pushes the boundaries of linguistic exploration. As one reader notes, the five experimental pieces contained within achieve "a harmony that goes beyond languages by choosing each word not only for its semantic value but also for its sound, for its connotations, alluding to that collective unconscious that transcends cultures."

Immerse yourself in:

- "A Sylph Sketch'd" A mesmerizing prose-verse hybrid that chronicles a Turkish Knight's odyssey from battlefield to enlightenment.
- "The Devil's Throat" A mind-bending contrapuntal poem that mirrors the cascading waters of Iguazú, offering multiple reading paths and interpretations.
- An exclusive translation of Federico Manuel Peralta Ramos's work -- Experience the brilliance of Argentina's celebrated cult poet, bridging cultures and artistic movements.
- "The Most Famous Dead in Houston" Unearth the stories beneath Glenwood Cemetery in this innovative concrete short story, where text and subtext intertwine like roots and earth.
- "Lunas u Moons" The titular piece, a poignant exploration of love, ambition, and the unexpected, set against the backdrop of lunar colonization and mind-altering space dust.



Right from its title - pronounced "Lunas e Moons" - this chapbook challenges perceptions, blending Spanish, Russian, and English to create a truly unique reading experience. Each page turn promises a new adventure, inviting readers to return to the beginning and discover fresh nuances with every read.

Perfect for lovers of avant-garde literature, linguistic enthusiasts, and those who crave thought-provoking, boundary-pushing poetry.

Lunas и Moons cont'd

5 Stars

An exploration of mind and celestial journeys of thoughts

This collection of innovative prose by Iván Brave is a remarkable work of words. The words almost float and then bend, across the pages of Lunas и Moons. I enjoyed reading this collection, and entering the mind of this prolific poet. Such a wonderful read. I really enjoyed reading the entire collection, as they were full of descript words, and showed a world of exploration, and intuitive thought and energy. My favorite was the titular title, Lunas и Moons. These poems aren't just poems, but works of art that shows it is not just about the word, but the sound of the words, when speaking them, or thinking them, making you see something you might not realize. A powerful book that doesn't have boundaries, no cultural boundaries, no personal boundaries, but just enlightened words that fill your heart, and anyone who has a heart, can feel what the poet feels, and maybe beyond that. I look forward to reading more by this poet.







Bob Freeman's H2LiftShip series

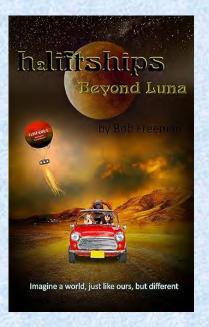
The H2LiftShip series is a unique and refreshing take on the space exploration genre, blending hard science, humor, and creativity.

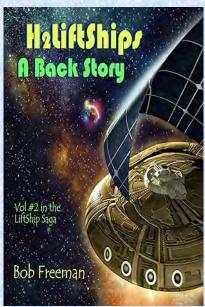
Beyond Luna is a world that's part Road-Trip, part solar sailing, always with food, gambling, jail, and pirates.

A Back Story where the LunaCola's crew sits down to play cards, celebrate a job well done, and recollect the past but there's still plenty that still has to come to light, as everyone has a back story.

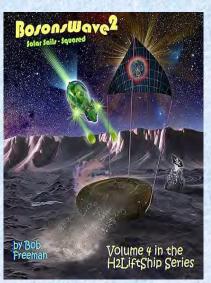
BosonsWave get's prepared for the ultimate showdown between H2LiftShip LunaCola and its enemies.

BosonWaves^2 pits the symbiotic combination of semisentient AI tablets and algal rocket ships against the Heliospheric Navy.

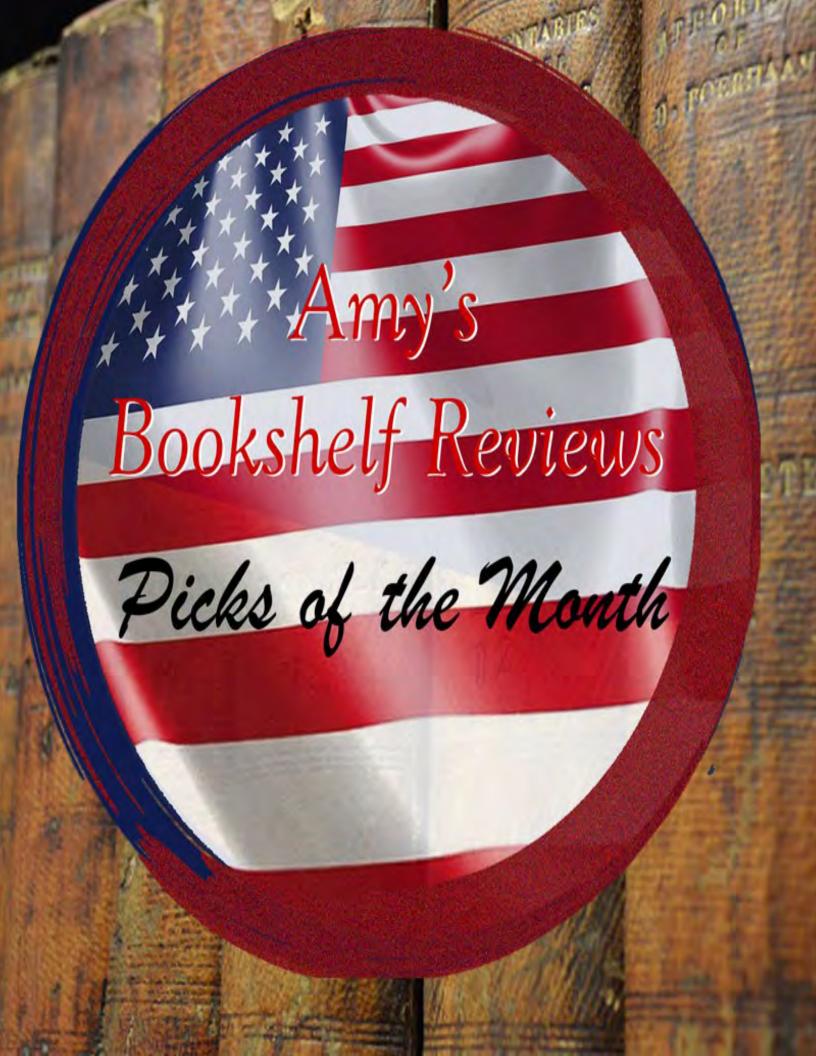












B. William Hoolihan-Pirate's Promise

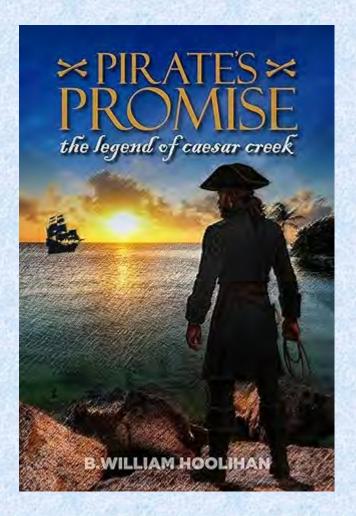
In the shadowy, hurricane-ravaged Florida Keys, the young blacksmith turned pirate, Smith, embarks on a treacherous journey to honor the legacy of his mentor, the legendary Caesar. Set against the tumultuous backdrop of historical piracy, the narrative sweeps through the 16th to 18th centuries, where ambitious Spanish explorers ruthlessly amassed treasures from Native American societies, shipping their ill-gotten gains back to a desperate Spain.

Among this swirling maelstrom of ambition and conquest, a real-life treasure emerges in Florida—who could have imagined? Centuries later, the truth behind this treasure and its piratical past beckons two very different generations. George, now the seasoned mentor, and Billy, his eager protégé and the story's narrator, embark on the adventure of a lifetime to unearth Caesar's legendary hoard.

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews 5+ Stars

What an incredible Pirate's tale, yes, Pirates! And so much more.

In Pirate's Promise, the reader is brought into the lives of Bill and his adopted son, Ryan. The backstory for Bill's life, is his unique mentorship when he was young. His young life revolved his mother, and a very adventurous and quirky to say



the least, George. I give this 5 plus stars, not just because I am a big fan of B. William Hoolihan and want to read whatever this author writes, but because the various generations and back story bring reminisces of life, and a path, that sometimes we don't choose, but it chooses us. This author has a grand imagination, and talent for showing the story. The narrator, Bill, tells the story of George and how he made an impact on his life, and sometimes, Bill was the one who knew when to say no. George was set in his life, smoking, drinking, and story telling.

Pirate's Promise cont'd

George and Bill embark on a quest to find Black Caesar, a legendary Pirate, and this sets the course for Bill's passion with pirates and treasure hunting. George and Bill didn't find the treasure, but always thought they were close, and then, life and death get in the way. B. William Hoolihan knows how to bring his own experience and knowledge into the stories that he writes, and this reader felt the passion behind the words, as if the author were taking us back in time in his own life. As with all of this author's work, there is depths to the story that make you want to reread the story, but also look for his other books to read, and when you read those, you anxiously await his next tale. Who could resist a treasure hunt, learning more about the legendary Pirate, his crew, and how does the past, a legendary and ancient past, come together in the present, with Bill and Ryan. Sometimes, as we get older, and live lives that we need to live, it isn't always about passion, but when you find something that gives you a spark, you must do something about it, embrace it and see where it takes you. This story is a definite attention grabber, so much I couldn't put it down. The characters are real, yes, real, and you can feel it with each word, with each adventure, and even solemn moments.









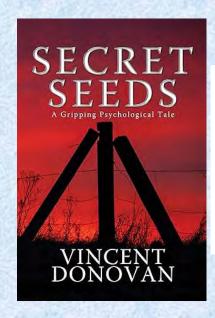
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Vincent Donovan-Secret Seeds





A gripping tale of resilience, sacrifice, and the search for belonging.

Gabrielle Ruiz, an undocumented migrant farm worker, follows the harvest until she and Luis leave the fields to give their unborn child a better life. But after tragedy strikes, Gabrielle finds herself alone and renounced by her father. Adrift, she meets Dale, a beacon of hope who offers her and her infant daughter, Olivia, a chance at a new beginning. After following him to Maine, they welcome a son. But over the years, Dale's abuse traps Gabrielle and Olivia. Salvation appears in the enigmatic Rezi, who proposes a daring escape — a plan shrouded in secrecy, promising sanctuary for Olivia within a hidden community. As Gabrielle places her trust in Rezi, she ignites a tempest with Dale and has Olivia questioning whether her protectors are from a twisted cult or messengers from another realm.

In a world where freedom is fragile, Gabrielle's tenacity and her children's coming-of-age journeys lead them to question what truly defines "home."

5 Stars

In Secret Seeds, the reader is introduced to Gabrielle, at first she seems like a timid and fragile pregnant woman, who works hard for her unborn child, yet, this is just the beginning of heart break and heartache. I am a big fan of Vincent Donovan and read whatever this author writes. This author has a grand imagination, and talent for showing the story. Vincent Donovan has a talent for creating great stories, and this one is no exception. Gabrielle is a character that grows with the story, and when she has the child, she demands to have a better life for herself. She suffers tragedy, and then is ousted by her family, her father, and relies on someone, who is not worthy of her to take care of her. It's a magnificent story not just about sacrifice, but also growth of a woman, who becomes strong no matter what, and she realizes her inner strength. It's an amazing story, about power from within and those who try to throw their power onto another person, with abusive and controlling tendencies. This story is a definite attention grabber, so much I couldn't put it down. Both thrilling and breath taking, all the way to the end. Some of the pages, you end up reading slower than others, so not to miss anything. The characters are so real, it's like being with them within the story.

Micah Dawanyi's When the Record Stops Spinning

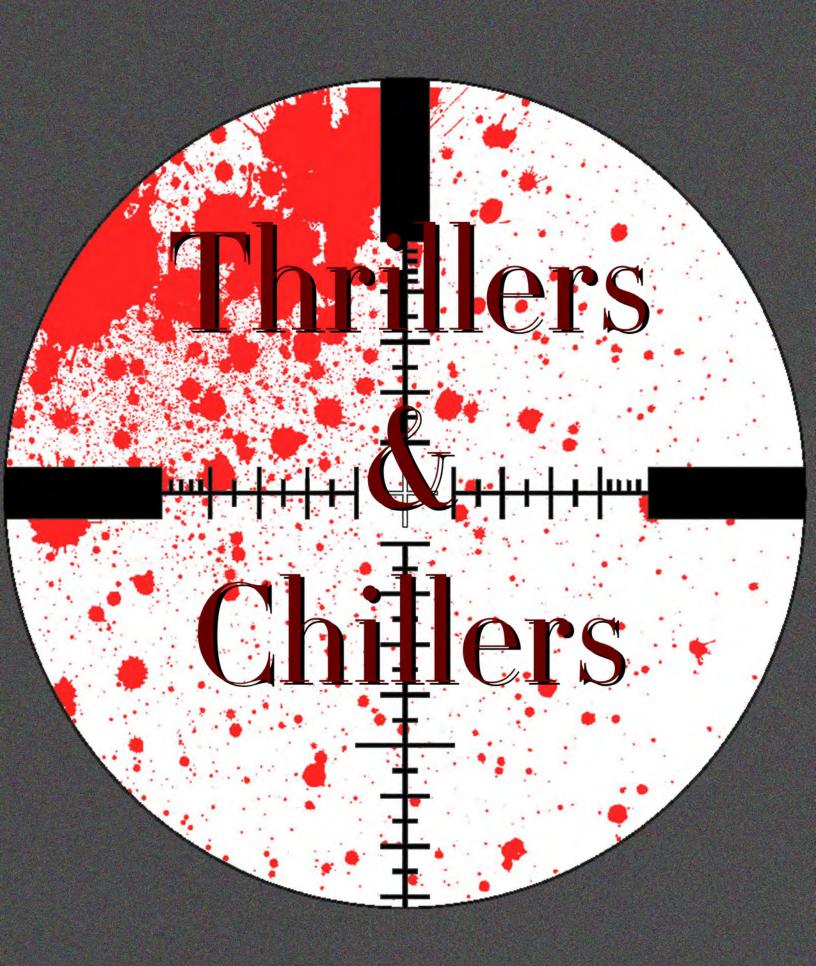
Even in darkness, a spark can ignite a revolution.

Once destined for stardom as an artist, college senior Kairo Young now finds himself dancing with despair and disaster- two of many symptoms from the world-ending tragedy that robbed him of his ability to create.

Still preparing for what now feels like a pointless graduation, he encounters Sahara Williams, a fellow senior and science prodigy at his university. Their introduction spotlights the stark differences between their worlds - but soon evolves into destiny when Sahara presents a groundbreaking opportunity: a chance to revisit the past through the creative power of music.







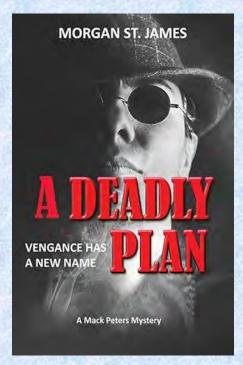
Morgan St. James - A Deadly Plan

Vengeance never forgets, and the Strangler's recent death may have triggered a deadly reckoning. Twelve years after the unsolved murder of his father, former LAPD detective Mack Peters is dragged back into the shadows. Someone is killing people tied to the Beverly Hills Strangler case—and Mack might be next. While chasing the truth, he's pulled into another mystery by his friend investigative reporter Greta Dietrich. As the two cases collide, Mack uncovers a chilling conspiracy that could cost him his life.

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews

4 Stars

In A Deadly Plan, the reader is brought into the life of Mack Peters. This is the second volume of the Mack Peters' series. I am a big fan of Morgan St. James and want to read whatever this author writes. This author has a grand imagination, and talent for showing the story. The author's stories are unpredictable, and just when you think you have it figured out, there is another twist behind the corner. It's a gripping mystery, and the author really knows how to weave a story, with suspense, action, and emotions. Mack Peters is a former LAPD officer, still reeling from the unsolved death of his father, who was also a police officer. This book has a grand cast of characters, from antagonists, to supporting characters. Each



character has its flaws, and also multiple layers, which make for a great story. Some readers may feel there are too many characters to keep up with, but the author knows how to write a great story with subplots that all lead somewhere. What a engaging story. This story is a grand suspenseful story.

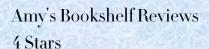




Vera Jane Cook- Faith Among Friends

What Your Friends Don't Know Won't Hurt You -But it Just Might Haunt You.

As five old friends reunite in a familiar old hangout forty years after they first met secrets are revealed, old wounds resurface and chilling lies reopen resentments that still leave a chill between them. The startling torments of youth haunt the present with a passionate reminder that old friendships can reopen the wounds of youth and heal them. When Vivian Forrester gets her old friends together to admit to a startling lie, a chilling omission, it will not be easy but neither will it be fruitless.



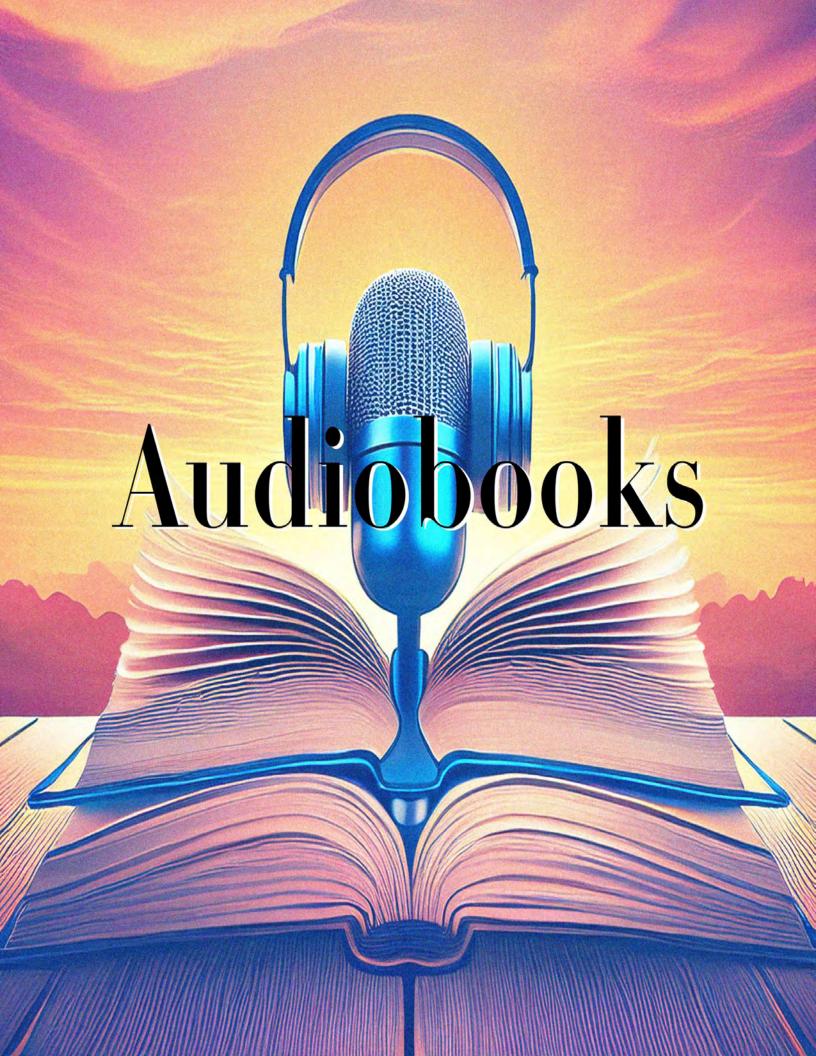
In Faith Among Friends, readers are brought into the lives of Vivian and her old friends. Vivian plans a reunion to share a revelation so significant that it changes their lives and her own. This is my first time reading anything by this author, and what a hidden gem! The author has a vivid imagination and a talent for storytelling. The third-person narrative offers multiple perspectives on each character's actions, thoughts, and realities. One person's reality isn't necessarily another's. The story has a rich backstory, and when Vivian reveals that her niece, presumed dead, is actually alive, the past collides with the present. Secrets are unveiled, and unexpected twists abound. Vera Jane Cook



masterfully weaves her characters and their relationships, making the story feel authentic. We all have demons to face, some more than others.







John Heldt-Sea Spray

Genre: /F/Time Travel/Historical Narrated by: Roberto Scarlato

Series: Time Box

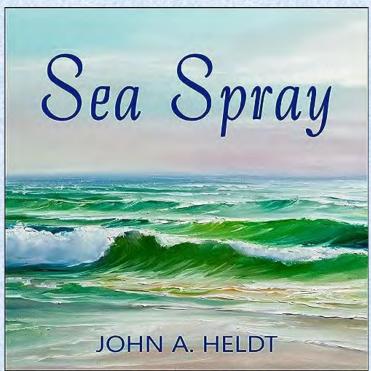
Volume: 2

Months after stealing two time machines from a madman who wants them back, the Lanes, a family of six, seek safety and contentment in 1893, the latest stop on a journey through time. While parents Mark and Mary find relief at Chicago's World's Columbian Exposition, an extravaganza of science and splendor, children Jeremy, Laura, and Ashley find romance, friendship, and thrills.

Older son Jordan, meanwhile, heads west in search of answers. Grieving the loss of a lover from 1865, he travels to Virginia City, Nevada, where he integrates himself into a storied mining community and the heart of a pretty library clerk.

Billionaire Robert Devereaux could not care less. Reeling from the theft of his million-dollar devices, he sends an assassin to the past to retrieve his property and rid the world of his former business partner and his troublesome clan.

Filled with humor, heartbreak, and suspense, The Fair follows a modern family on the adventure of a lifetime as they navigate their way through an unforgettable year in American history.



Amy's Bookshelf Reviews

5 Stars

Heldt tells a outstanding story in Sea Spray, the third book in the Time Box Series. I have read most of what Heldt has written. I like Heldt's writing style and his timeless time travel theme in whatever book he writes. He put the Time Box book series on audio, and that was a grand decision on his part. This author brings the stories and the different eras to life. I must say that time travel is just part of the story, and the family and family dynamic is the biggest part of it. His characters have depth, and minds of their own. Stolen time machines, life in a time long since passed, and even new relationships, but that is just the beginning. There's something to be said for living, literally, in the past. The Lanes are an incredible real family, with not just "time" issues, but family relationships and secrets. I loved this

John Heldt-Sea Spray Cont'd

book. The stories just keep getting better and better. Reading this, you can tell the time Heldt put into knowing the time eras where the Lanes land, and it pulls the listener in that time, right there with them. The story brings in the believable, even if almost impossible. This book deserves a second listen! (and maybe more). Heldt is one of my favorite authors that I review for, and his imagination is so full, I hope there will be more stories other than the Time Box series, that he puts on audiobooks. I did read the print version of the story, and enjoyed it, but I also really enjoyed this audiobook. This narration really brought this story to life.

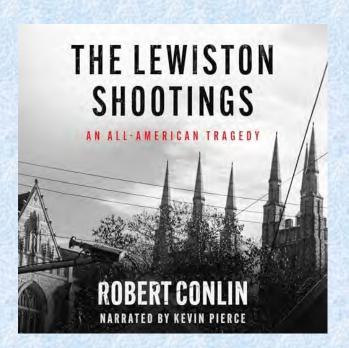






Robert Conlin - THE LEWISTON SHOOTINGS

Genre: True Crime/Murder Narrated by: Kevin Pierce



October 25, 2023 was just an ordinary night in Lewiston, a small, working class city of 37,000 in central Maine. Friends and families had gathered to do what they loved to do with the people they wanted to be with at a bowling alley called Just-in-Time Recreation Center and Schemengees, a popular sports bar and restaurant. They felt immune from the violent crime that seemed to wrack the rest of the country in a state that the FBI had just named the safest in America.

Then Robert Card II, a deeply paranoid Army Reserve soldier, walked into both places with a high-powered rifle and opened fire, killing 18 people and wounding 13 more. He then fled to a third location, where according to the evidence and the testimony of his best friend, he likely planned to lay in wait and kill his ex-co-workers when they came to work the next morning.

The tragedy is that the numerous red flags he had raised in the months before weren't enough to stop him before he carried out his terrible plan. A combination of watered-down gun control laws and law enforcement and military negligence made sure of that.

In THE LEWISTON SHOOTINGS—An All-American Tragedy, author and award-winning journalist Robert Conlin traces the shootings that deeply scarred a community that thought it was the last place on earth where a mass shooting would take place. Never again could anyone in Lewiston or the state of Maine say, "It will never happen here."

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews

4 Stars

It will never happen here! So, they used to say
This book, THE LEWISTON SHOOTINGS the
listener is introduced to the second largest town in
Maine, Lewiston Main, which was once deemed as
the safest place to live in Maine. I did read the print
version of the story, and enjoyed it, but I also really
enjoyed this audiobook. I am a fan of true crime
stories. This is the first book on audiobook by
Robert Conlin that I've listened to. In October of
2023. Robert Card went hunting, but it wasn't game
he was after, it was a shooting spree that killed 18
people, and injured 13. The town itself was injured,
and the events is something they wish to forget, but
also should not forget. It was detailed and terrifying,
especially because of items that not even the news

Robert Conlin - THE LEWISTON SHOOTINGS

showed. Robert Card walked into a bowling alley, and then to a local Bar and Grill. Later, Card was found dead from self-harm. There were a few unsung heroes who tried to stop him, but they were unable to do. Some persons died immediately, and three died later at the hospital. He discharged his weapon at least 54 times. This book was written with diplomacy and detailed the accounts of that October day, but never stopped acknowledging the victims and survivors.

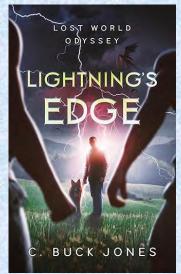






C. Buck Jones-Lightning's Edge: Lost World Odyssey

When a bolt of lightning propels Ryan and his loyal dog, Toby, into a perilous and primitive world, their survival skills are put to the ultimate test. From enduring ruthless slavers and battling fierce pirates to navigating the treetop villages of a mythical winged race, Ryan's odyssey is a heart-pounding adventure through a land filled with danger and mystery. As he seeks the secrets held by a tribal medicine man, Ryan is determined to return home, aided by his courage, the bond with his canine companion, and the help of his indigenous friends.





In "Lightning's Edge: Lost World Odyssey," embark on a journey where every step is a battle for survival, every encounter a test of trust, and every moment a fight against the odds. Will Ryan unlock the path back to his world, or will he remain forever lost in this strange and wondrous land?

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews 4 Stars

In Lightning's Edge, the reader is brought into the life of Ryan, who was transported to what he perceives as a primitive world. I haven't read anything by this author before, and what a hidden gem. I enjoyed it so much, that I have now followed the author and look for more books to read. This author has a grand imagination, and talent for showing the story. Ryan is determined to get back his world, and his wife, and she is like his guide

during this emotional and physical journey. I enjoyed the premise of this story, and Ryan, along with the reader, learns about life during a simpler time. Ryan connects with Zica, and Shera, and the world of Almirosia. The story is captivating, as the reader learns about Ryan's life, before and after his arrival. There is a great depth to the story and characters, and some may be predictable, but there are things in this story that unpredictable, and the reader wants to find out what happens next. The story is written in a way that it makes the readers not just care about Ryan and be curious about his journey, but also wonder what Emily is going through, without Ryan in her life. Ryan holds on to Emily, but is she holding on to him as well? Wellwritten and well told! This story is out of this world but almost mirrors a time when life on Earth was simpler, and people worked hard for living and survival, and treated each day as a gift.

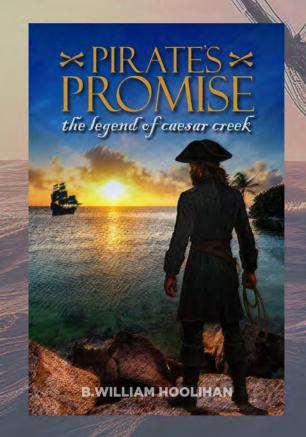
B. William Hoolihan's



Pirate's Promise:

The Legend of Caesar Creek

Two generations. One legendary treasure. Anepicadventure through the stormy seas of history.



In the hurricane-swept Florida Keys, young blacksmith Smith turns pirate to honor his mentor, Caesar, amidst the historical piracy of Spanish treasure hunters. Centuries later, George and his protégé Billy seek to uncover the legendary treasure, embarking on an adventure to unravel its storied past.





Arriving July 22 2025.



bwilliamhoolihan.com

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Amy Shannon





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