

# Books Shelf

NOV/DEC/JAN  
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

"So Many Books. So Little Time!"

Reading is Healthy  
FIND OUT WHY

Engaging  
SHORT STORIES  
by our Authors

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS  
WITH BEST-SELLING AUTHORS

Find your  
NEXT READ  
for your 2022 Reading List

Writing 2022  
AWARDS  
MEET THE WINNERS

READERS'  
Quiz  
Check your knowledge



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# SYLVIA GREIF

SWISS WRITER AND ANIMAL ADVOCATE

"I am at my happiest in the great outdoors, playing sports. I walked part of the Way of Santiago in 2018 and I hope to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in the near future.

My passion for the environment and wildlife started when I was a child.

I grew up surrounded by pets and all kinds of animals and it always felt they were part of my family. I believe they have shaped me, and the compassion and respect towards them is without a doubt deeply instilled in me.

I work alongside non-profit organisations to protect animal rights, and fight animal cruelty. I have three dogs, BV, Shea and Lola.

In 2014 I released a children's book, Lester's Planet, that tells the story with a paw of imagination, of a little chihuahua with a bottomless



*What makes writing your passion?*

There is no nicer feeling than to put my thoughts into words. It's like drinking a nice cup of hot chocolate on a snowy day.

I self-doubt myself a lot, so writing taught me to deal with my fears (I have many), disregard failure, keep me committed but above all keep focused.

I suffer from dyslexia. Writing at first honestly felt like chaos.

I thought of giving up a thousand times. But living the stories at first in my head, gives me a real sense of peace. I really enjoy writing my ideas in my notebook then on my computer.

*What was the feeling when you published your first book?*

Fear! that there might still be some errors that I was unable to spot because my mind has its own way of thinking and sometimes just can't comprehend a mistake. Followed by a strong feeling of happiness and satisfaction.

*If you could go back in time and talk to your younger self, what would you say?*

PATIENCE Sylvia!

*Have you ever incorporated something that happened to you in real life into your novels?*

Yes, but I won't tell :)

*What do you think should be improved in the education of our children? What do we lack?*

Children are our future and the planet's. They are our greatest treasure.

We should teach them to take care of our planet and not do the same mistakes we did.

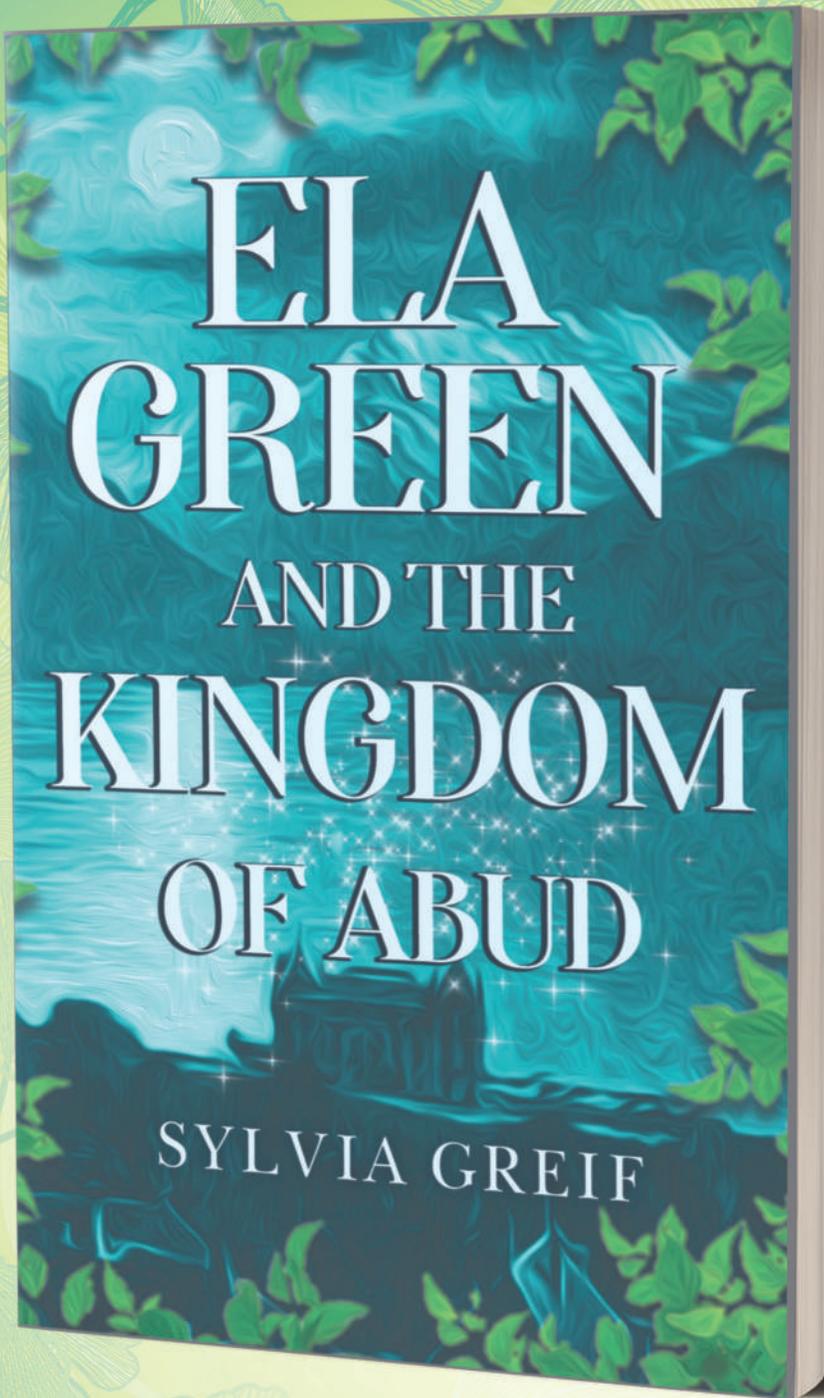
Adults are strong role models for children to understand the importance of the world around them. So Kindness, empathy, respect for all living creatures are to my eyes essential.

*If you were allowed 3 wishes – what would they be?*

To have been next to my dog when he died

To remove cruelty

Kindness and empathy in our world



# Ela Green and the KINGDOM of Abud

“Ela Green and the Kingdom of Abud is my first novel in a trilogy and introduces Ela Green, a fourteen-year-old girl. Her first adventure reveals the mysterious bond she shares with Mother Nature and her encounter with the wise-tree.

The adventure starts in the present day at Waldegg boarding school on the shores of lake Geneva in Switzerland. The formidable school is the connecting link in a story that will time-travel you through continents and centuries.”

*What would you say to your readers?*

I hope that Ela's first adventure will make you smile and bring a little magical impact into your lives. Thank you for any kind of feedback.

***Find Ela Green and the Kingdom  
of Abud on AMAZON***

## ***Readers shared...***

*“Ela Green and the Kingdom of Abud by Sylvia Greif is an adventure kind of a read! I loved the characters and all the incredible situations they got in. The story is well thought out and absolutely compelling! I recommend it and I'm rating it 5 stars for sure!”*

*“The first of three, this book is a beautiful adventure! I really enjoyed the fantastic characters and all the situations they have been through, because I felt like I was there with them. It was a great book to read!”*

*“Ela Green and the Kingdom of Abud by Sylvia Greif is a captivating adventure story. It has a great storyline, fascinating characters and it would keep you engaged till the end! Definitely looking forward to the next on in the trilogy!”*

*“An adventurous story that will keep you engaged! The author has an incredible writing style, and her imagination will take you on a trip around the world. I'm so excited about the other two books of the trilogy!”*

# QUEEN OF THE SEEP DITCH

*A Short Story By* **VALI BENSON**

Waking up at Granny's house, I hurry into the antiquated kitchen for a breakfast of thick-slab bacon and a Dr. Pepper. Our first job today is making noodles, squishing and blending the flour and egg yolks with gooey fingers, before rolling them out, paper-thin, to dry. Then, I watch as the freshly-butchered chicken, with its metallic scent of blood, is plucked and cleaned by those rough, loving hands, and set in the icebox until supper.

In the backyard, the sun, cradled in the blue-white sky, beats down on my fair skin like a flaming yellow drum. South-Eastern Colorado is not the Rockies. This is a dusty, clay-colored place, where the slightest breeze coats your teeth with a gritty film. The little storage shed off the porch is a cornucopia of yellowed photographs an outdated, misunderstood clothing. I rummage into what I can reach, but today everything seems determined to hold its secrets.

After lunch, my quest for adventure leads across the dirt road, avoiding the anthills of those ferocious red beasts whose bite leaves a painful stinging welt. The corn silo hugs the railroad tracks, and beckons me up its scorching twenty-foot ladder. I leap inside, sinking waist-high in the cool, shifting kernels, like treading in half-chilled Jell-O.

A short walk down the sun-baked train track is the Seep Ditch, a little creek running forty feet below the rails. I dance back and forth over the unguarded trestle, thrilling in the knowledge that a freight train could rumble down the tracks at any moment.



*Read More*  
*Short Stories by our Amazing Authors*

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*www.BooksShelf.com*

Negotiating the steep incline under the bridge, the crystal clear water seems at odds with the faint odor of sewage. I wade in, and let the slimy mud ooze between my toes.

Late afternoon, in the cool shade of the front porch, two fluffy, yellow kittens compete for the shoelaces of my well-worn sneakers. The cloying aroma of fresh-cut alfalfa from the feed mill wraps itself around the nearby houses like an over-protective parent.

Back in the kitchen, frying chicken splatters grease out of the heavy cast-iron skillet. If Heaven has a fragrance, this is surely it. My taste buds jump for joy when they encounter the fried chicken, and the doughy noodles cling pleasantly to the roof of my mouth.

After supper, we survey our kingdom from the back stoop. The incessant buzzing is the music of the cicadas, locust-like creatures who leave their crispy shells on the majestic maples, much like a snake sheds its skin. My dotting grandparents look on as I collect the tiny skeletons. By summer's end, I will have a shoe-box full, a gift for my squeamish sister.

The sunset is not a dramatic display of silvery-pink and burnished gold, but rather a pale cream-colored curtain that descends with lazy ease. Twilight carries the perfume of late-

blooming lilacs. The tawny kittens chase the lightning bugs that sparkle like a hundred Tinkerbells waving their magic wands.

Bedtime creeps in, soft as silk, and whispers the promise that tomorrow will be another perfect day.



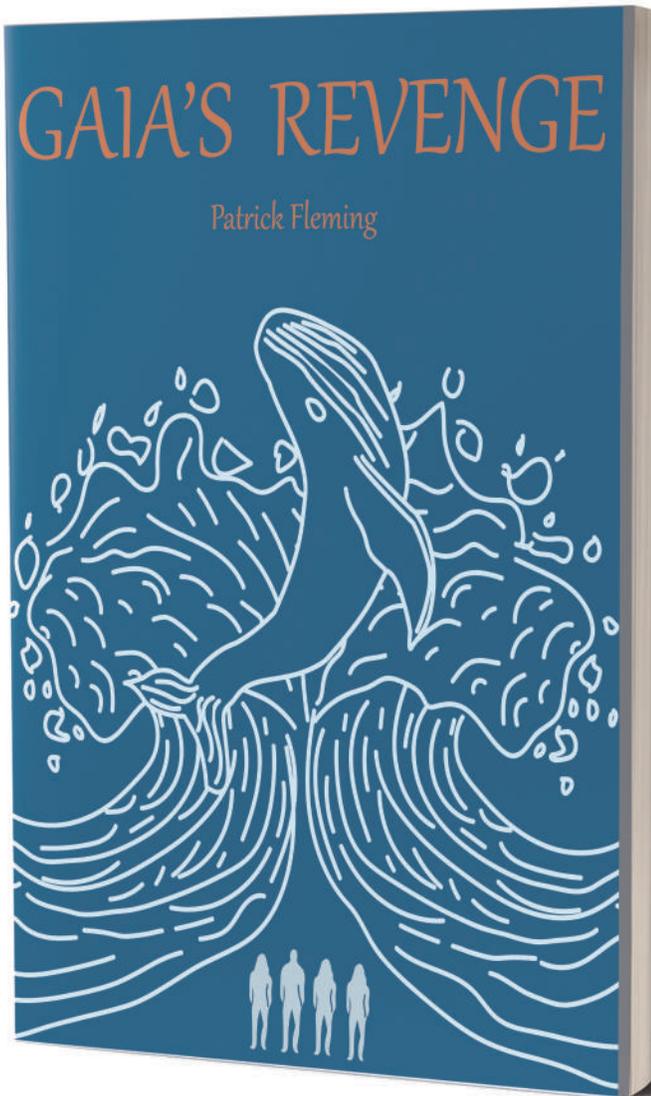
**Vali Benson**  
Author of  
*"Blood and Silver"*  
(2xWINNER - 2021 San  
Francisco Book Festival)



What is a twelve year old girl to do when she finds herself in the silver boom town of Tombstone, Arizona, in 1880, and her only home is a brothel and her only parent is a drug-addicted mother? If she is Carissa Beaumont, she outsmarts the evil madam and figures a way out.

*Find "Blood and Silver" on Amazon*





# GAIA'S REVENGE

A Cli-Fi, Sci-Fi thriller with a profound spiritual dimension, Gaia's Revenge is a Book of Revelation for the 21st Century, an apocalyptic fantasy based on the very real crisis of global warming and its threat to the future of humanity.

**Genre:**

**Fiction, Apocalyptic, Fantasy, Paranormal and Supernatural, Science Fiction, Thriller**

**Publish Date**

**September 22, 2021**

Gaia, Mother Nature herself, is secretly waging war on the human race. Her desire for revenge will not relent until we listen to her warnings. The world's press reports a series of mysterious, deadly disasters. Four unlikely heroes, a Catholic nun, a Hindu priestess, a gay Protestant minister, and a Tlingit Indian woman and marine biologist receive a shocking vision and message for humanity. The visionaries are instructed to deliver their dire warning to a young Irish woman, a leading climate activist. They sail to a remote island off the west coast of Ireland to find her. Russian mercenaries and a secret American oil militia are in pursuit to stop them. An unearthly, eerie battle erupts in a dark, pre-historic, stone fort. Gaia intervenes in the vicious siege whose outcome will determine the fate of the human race. A shocking twist leaves our destiny in the balance. Will Gaia's anger be assuaged? Will her revenge be averted?



*“This book reflects our time! This is a story that everyone should hear because it concerns our future. An engaging read, with characters that seem real, and some interesting plot twists, that would surprise you. Great book!”*

*“What will happen if we don't stop abusing our planet Earth if we continue living with our eyes closed about the harm we do to Mother Nature? Global warming and its threat to our planet and humanity. This book is all about stopping neglecting our responsibility to our planet.”*

**Find on [Amazon](#)**



# PATRICK FLEMING

Patrick Fleming, M.Div., L.C.S.W., C.S.A.T. is a psychotherapist and spiritual coach in a private practice in St. Louis, MO, Double Rainbow Counseling, Coaching, and Consulting, with his wife, Suzanne Lauber-Fleming. He is the principal co-author, with his wife and other colleagues, of a trilogy of books on psycho-spiritual trauma recovery. He has also authored a number of articles on psychological, spiritual, recovery, and social issues for a variety of national and international publications. As a psychotherapist, Patrick specializes in the treatment of abuse and trauma, sexual addiction and compulsivity, couple counseling, and the integration of spirituality and psychology. He has been a hospital chaplain, a hospice counselor and a psychotherapist for over thirty years.

In addition, Patrick, with his wife, Sue Lauber-Fleming, RN, MA, LCSW, has led numerous workshops and trainings nationally and internationally for survivors and the professionals that work with them, focusing on both the psychological and spiritual needs of those wounded by trauma and abuse. In addition to his healing work with survivors, Pat has worked for 18 years with Catholic priests and brothers, and other clergy who are perpetrators of clerical sexual abuse. He has also worked as a consultant to a variety of religious and mental health groups who work with survivors, addicts and perpetrators.

In addition, to the psychological training, education, and clinical experience Patrick also has extensive training, education, and pastoral experience in spirituality and the spiritual needs of those suffering emotionally and physically. His mission throughout his career has been to integrate the best of psychology with the depths of spirituality to facilitate greater healing and change.

Patrick has co-authored three books for survivors:

- *Soul Light for the Dark Night: Daily Meditations of Healing from Trauma and Abuse* (Gentle Path Press, 2019)
- *Shattered Soul? Five Pathways to Heal the Spirit after Abuse and Trauma* (WordStream Publishing, 2011),
- *Broken Trust: Stories of Pain, Hope, and Healing from Clerical Abuse Survivors and Abusers* (Crossroad Publishing, 2007), as well as several articles in national and international periodicals.

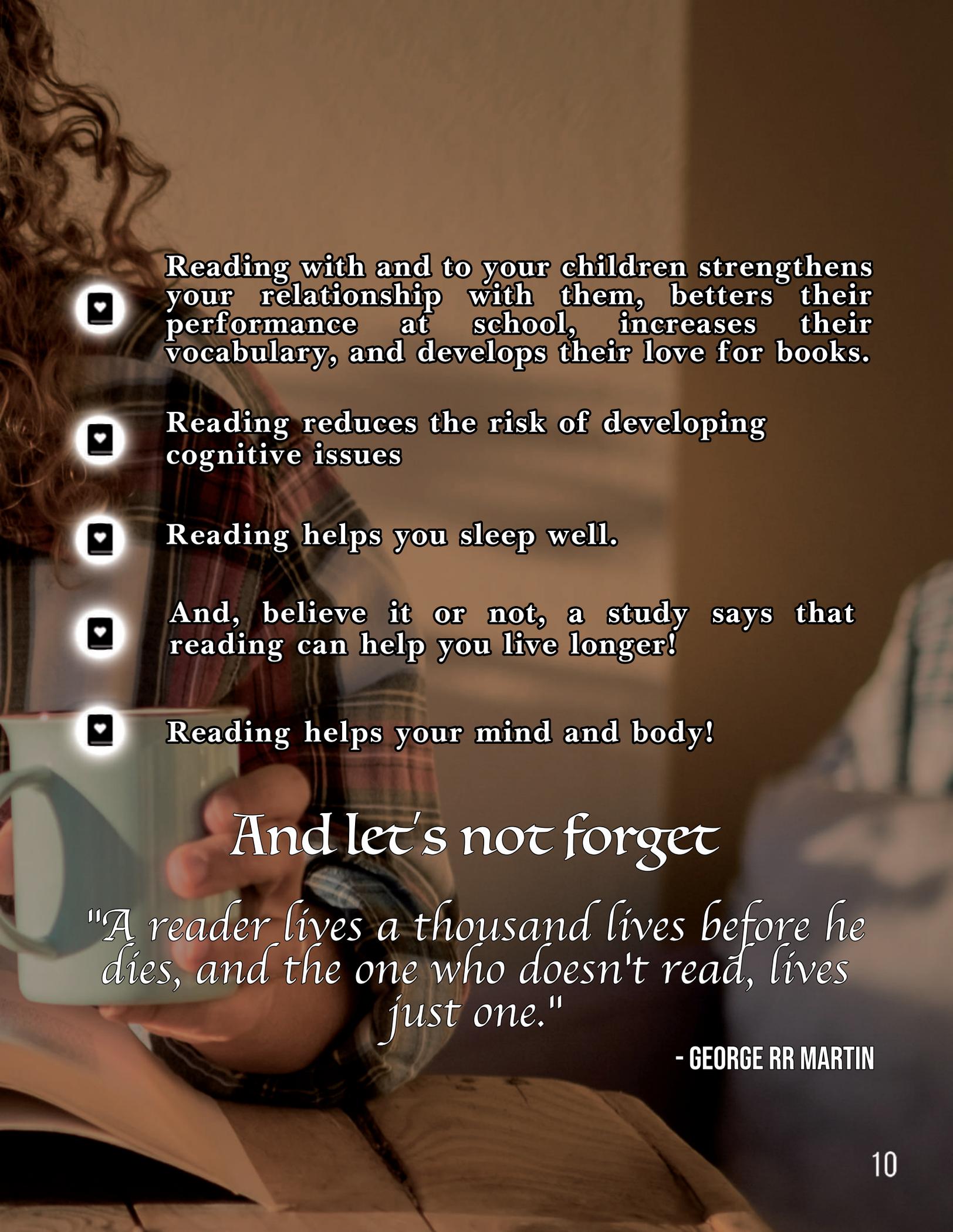
Patrick's newest book is *Gaia's Revenge*, a Cli-Fi, Sci-Fi Fantasy thriller about global warming and the future of our planet and humanity.

# Reading is Healthy

## FOR SO MANY REASONS

Every avid reader can tell you how amazing it is to dive into a story and lose yourself in the unknown world of fictional characters. The feeling you get from a good book can't be compared to anything else. Sometimes you may fall for a character, you may smile and laugh with them, you may cry and feel great compassion. All of this may seem so dreamy but the truth is that it is scientifically proven that reading is not only entertaining but also very good for your health.

- ♥ Reading fights with depression
- ♥ Reading reduces the risk of developing Alzheimer's later in life
- ♥ Reading helps your brain to stay active
- ♥ Reading helps you improve your imagination and creativity (especially kids)
- ♥ Reading increases vocabulary and builds good communication skills.

A person with long, curly brown hair is shown from the side, reading a book. They are wearing a plaid shirt and holding a light blue mug. The background is a warm, brownish-gold color.

Reading with and to your children strengthens your relationship with them, betters their performance at school, increases their vocabulary, and develops their love for books.

Reading reduces the risk of developing cognitive issues

Reading helps you sleep well.

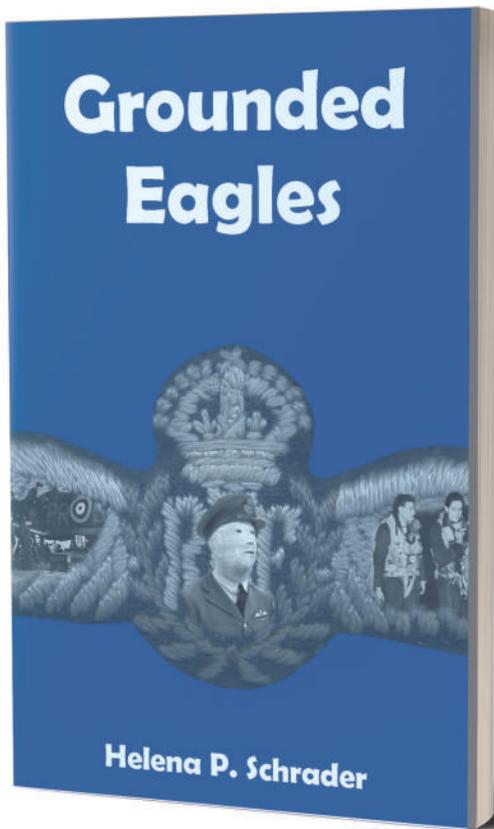
And, believe it or not, a study says that reading can help you live longer!

Reading helps your mind and body!

And let's not forget

*"A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies, and the one who doesn't read, lives just one."*

- GEORGE RR MARTIN



# GROUNDING EAGLES

In this collection of three unrelated tales, Schrader tells the story of a pilot who had been burned beyond recognition and struggling with his own identity, a widowed ground crew chief attracted by an upperclass woman, and a flight engineer who is posted off his squadron for "Lack of Moral Fibre" after refusing to fly his 37th operation.

**GENRE: FICTION, HISTORICAL, MILITARY / WAR**

**PUBLISH DATE: SEPTEMBER 23, 2021**

**FIND ON AMAZON**

Grounded Eagles: Three Tales of the RAF in WWII

A Stranger in the Mirror: The Story of one of McIndoe's Guinea Pigs

David Goldman, a German Jew with Canadian citizenship, is shot down in flames while flying for the RAF in September 1940. His face is burned beyond recognition, and he is told he will never fly again. While the legendary plastic surgeon Dr. McIndoe reconstructs a face and hands one painful operation at a time, the 22-year-old former fighter pilot must come to terms with the stranger in the mirror and decide who he really is.

A Rose in November: A WWII Love Story for the Not-so-Young

Not all lovers are young. Rhys Jenkins is "Chiefy" of a Spitfire squadron in late 1940, a full-time job in itself, but he is also a widower with two teenage children in need of his attention. Hattie FitzSimmons has devoted her life to the Salvation Army ever since WWI ended her hopes for a husband and family of her own. They are no longer young when they find each other, but they both feel things are 'right' – until Rhys discovers that Hattie has been hiding something from him.

Lack of Moral Fibre: A Story of Bomber Command

In late November 1943, Flight Engineer Christopher "Kit" Moran, DFM, refuses to fly to Berlin on what should have been the seventh "op" of his second tour of duty. His superiors post him for "lack in moral fibre" and finds himself in a mysterious DYDN center. Here, psychiatrist Wing Commander Dr. Grace must determine if he has had a mental breakdown requiring psychiatric treatment – or if he deserves humiliation and disciplinary action for cowardice. Grounded Eagles: Three Tales of the RAF in WWII

# HELENA P. SCHRADER

Helena P. Schrader is an established aviation author and expert on the Second World War. She earned a PhD in History (cum Laude) from the University of Hamburg with a ground-breaking dissertation on a leading member of the German Resistance to Hitler, which received widespread praise on publication in Germany. Her non-fiction publications include *Sisters in Arms: The Women who Flew in WWII*, *The Blockade Breakers: The Berlin Airlift*, and *Codename Valkyrie: General Friederich Olbricht and the Plot against Hitler*, an English-language adaptation of her dissertation. Helena has published twenty-one historical novels and won numerous literary awards, including “Best Biography 2017” from Book Excellence Awards and “Best Historical Fiction 2020” from Feathered Quill Book Awards. For more on her publications, works-in-progress, reviews and awards visit: <http://helenapschrader.com>

## *What do Readers Say...*



*“The book *Grounded Eagles* shares three stories, and the common between them is that they are all happening during the 1940s. However, each story is unique and pierce the reader's heart for different reasons. The stories are about the lives of three RAF pilots during World War II.*

*The book starts with the story of the 22-years old David Goldman, shot down and heavily wounded, left with his face destroyed and hands burned. He now will have to learn to cope with his new life differently. Then in *A Rose in November*, we meet Rhys Jenkins, a mechanic who is appointed as Ground Chief of a Spitfire Squadron and works for the leader that guided the young pilot Goldman. However, Jenkins has to deal with his teenage children and his family, the class differences with a woman he met, and his emotions as well. Finally, in the third story, *Lack of Moral Fibre*, we meet Kit Moran - who refuses to fly on his thirty-seventh mission without a medical reason not to. He is then sent to a center to determine if he is fit to fly or is just a coward.*

*Each story is impressive because the author provides detailed background for the characters and their situation. The book's complex plot is intriguing and absorbs the reader's imagination. Brilliant! A must-read, especially if you fall for historical novels!”*



# WE DID THIS ONCE BEFORE

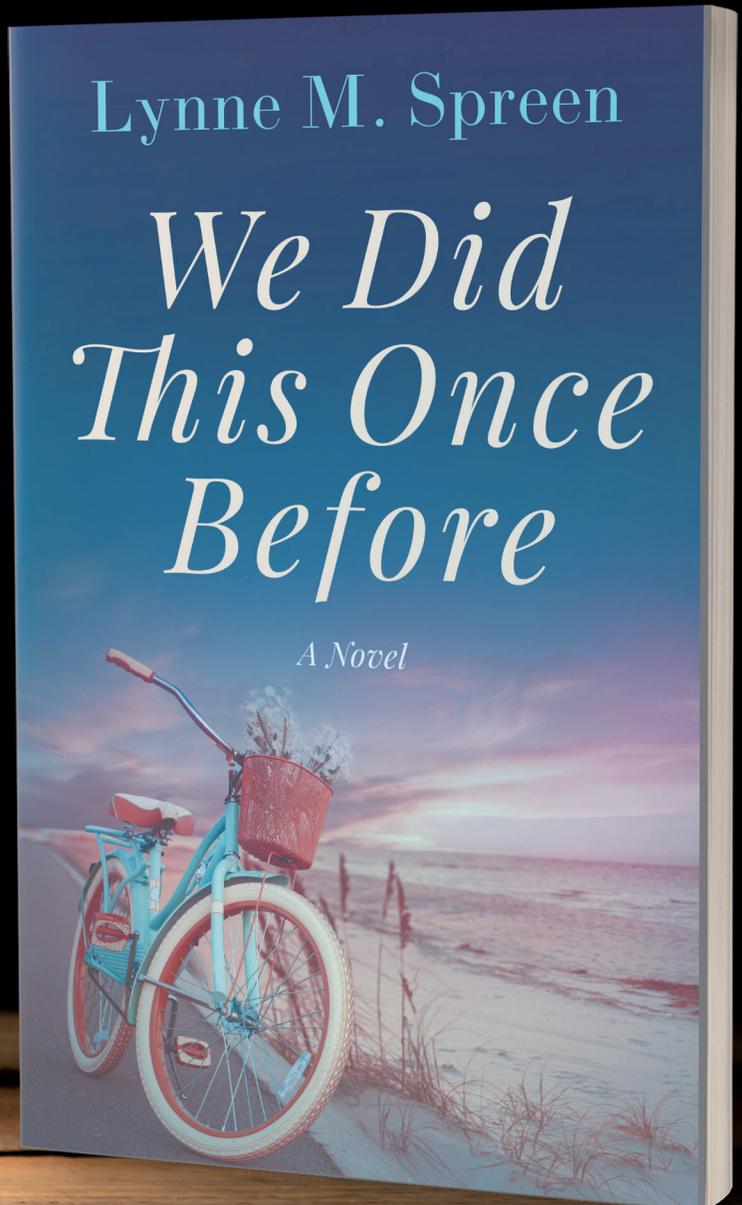
## WINNER - FIRST PLACE

Broke and lonely, Kim is about to make the worst decision ever.

Divorced and struggling, middle-aged Kim is hanging on by her fingernails. When her elderly mother invites her to move home to Florida, to the lush island of her childhood, Kim is tempted. She could spend time with Mom, start her dream business, and craft the perfect new life.

On the other hand, Mom has a Masters in manipulation, and there's a reason Kim fled to California in her youth. But she's too mature and experienced now to fall into the same family drama.

Telling herself it'll all work out, Kim loads a rental trailer with her last few belongings and heads for Estero Island, hoping she isn't making a huge mistake.



# Lynne M. Spreen

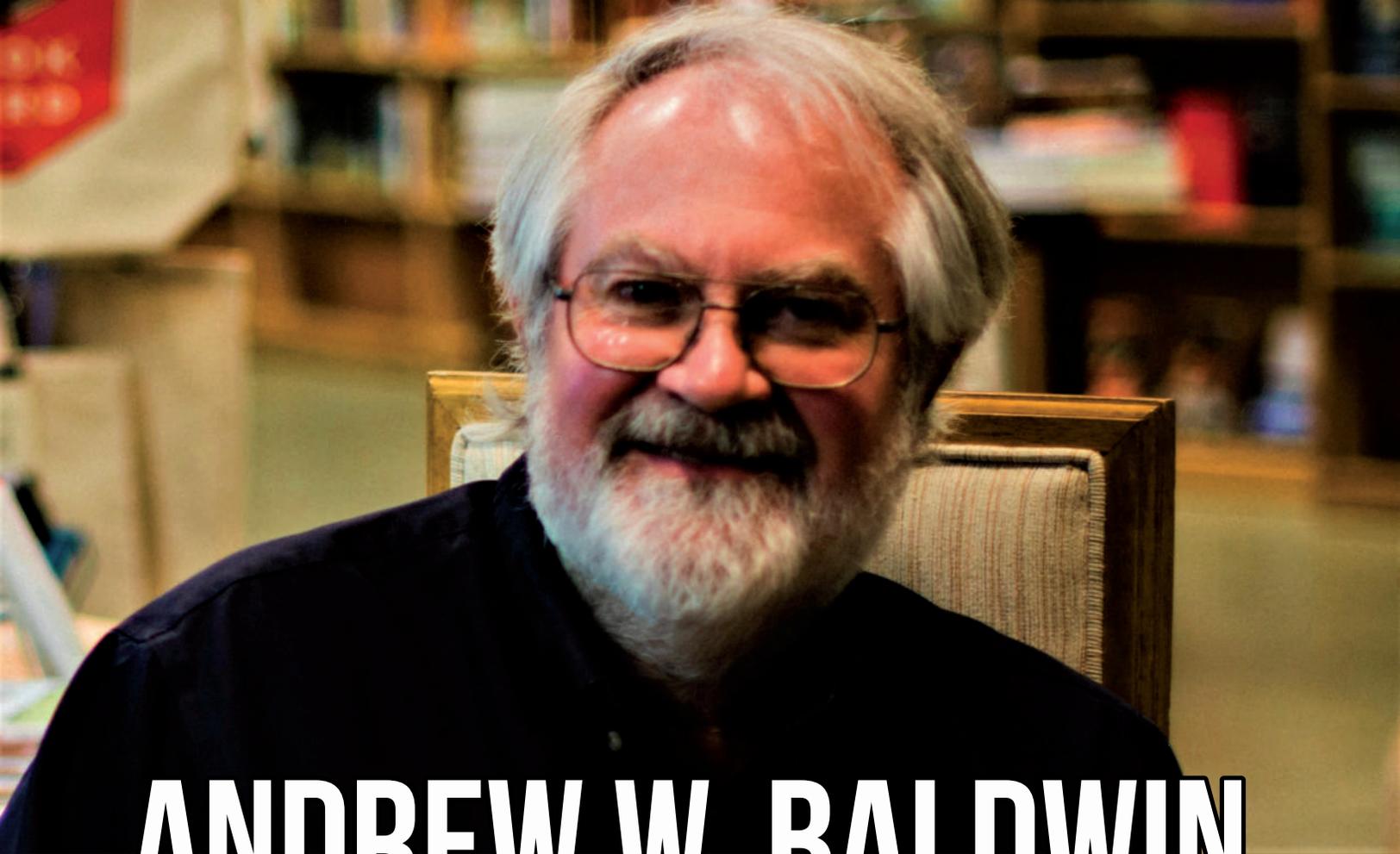


After a career in Human Resources, Lynne M. Spreen reinvented herself as an author, speaker, blogger, and teacher. She enjoys speaking about the positive side of aging, and writes uplifting novels and short stories featuring main characters in the second half of life. She refers to this as midlife fiction and crosses her fingers that it'll catch on.

Lynne's debut novel, *Dakota Blues*, told the story of two women who embark on a life-changing road trip. The novel won an award for excellence in women's fiction.

Lynne also wrote three more books in the series, including *Key Largo Blues*, *Goodbye to the Blues*, and *California Blues*. Her stand-alone short stories, *Middle-Aged Crazy: Short Stories of Midlife and Beyond*, was awarded five stars by the editors at Readers' Favorite.

Her website is [AnyShinyThing.com](http://AnyShinyThing.com), but you can find her in all the usual online places. Her books are available exclusively at Amazon.



# ANDREW W. BALDWIN

An avid backcountry hiker, canoer, and whitewater enthusiast, the author takes his readers on adventures in ancient lands that shape the motives and spirits of his characters.

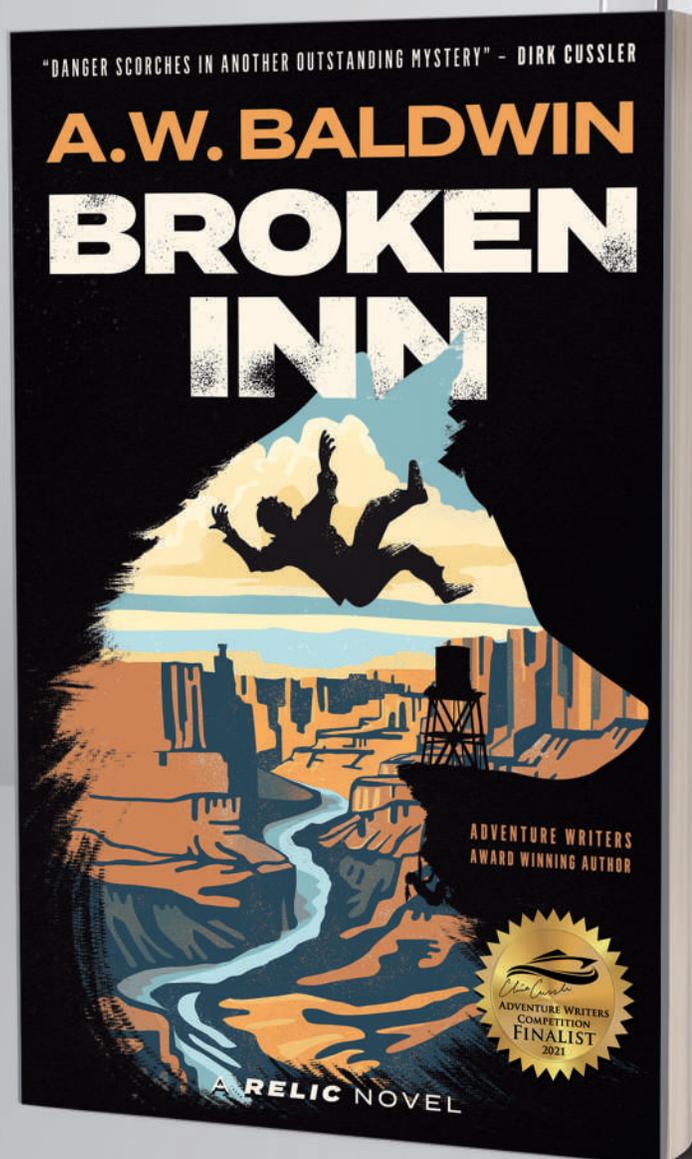
A graduate of Wright State University and the University of Idaho School of Law, Baldwin has practiced law for more than 35 years. He began his career with a poverty law fellowship award on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming, where he later became a staff attorney and then Executive Director of Wind River Legal Services, a legal aid program serving the Reservation and southeastern Wyoming. After successful civil rights and class action lawsuits, the Northern Arapaho Tribe hired him as in-house counsel from late 1988 to 1992, when he established a private firm that continued to represent the Tribe as well as individuals and other tribes in the Rocky Mountain West. He has appeared before the U.S. Supreme Court, Ninth and Tenth Circuit Courts of Appeal, and other Federal, Tribal, and State Courts. He won the right of the Northern Arapaho Tribe to operate (and self-regulate) the full gamut of casino-style gaming without state control. He has successfully litigated First Amendment religious liberties, voting rights, Tribal sovereignty, and for environmental justice. He earned his private pilot's license in 1997.

# BROKEN INN

WINNER - SECOND PLACE

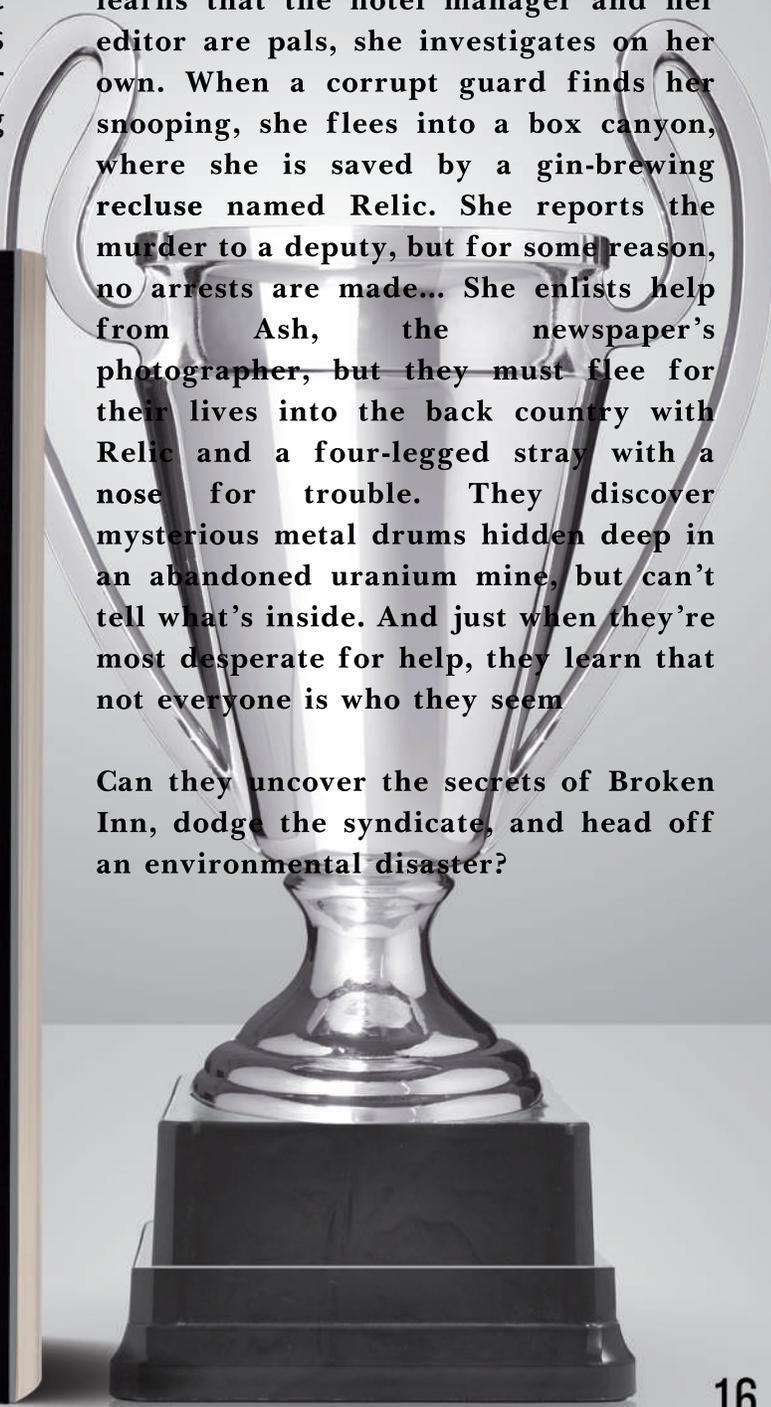
A moonshining hermit  
A budding reporter  
A \$25 million misdirection

The mob, undercover agents, and secret payloads make Broken Inn a dangerous place for a fresh reporter, a newspaper photographer, and a moonshining hermit.



Hailey witnesses a murder at the enigmatic Broken Inn, but when she learns that the hotel manager and her editor are pals, she investigates on her own. When a corrupt guard finds her snooping, she flees into a box canyon, where she is saved by a gin-brewing recluse named Relic. She reports the murder to a deputy, but for some reason, no arrests are made... She enlists help from Ash, the newspaper's photographer, but they must flee for their lives into the back country with Relic and a four-legged stray with a nose for trouble. They discover mysterious metal drums hidden deep in an abandoned uranium mine, but can't tell what's inside. And just when they're most desperate for help, they learn that not everyone is who they seem.

Can they uncover the secrets of Broken Inn, dodge the syndicate, and head off an environmental disaster?



02

THE LEGEND OF

# Koolura

WINNER - THIRD PLACE

The Legend of Koolura is an adventure that couples psychic super powers with the everyday life of a grade school student.

Like many preteens, Koolura has doubts about herself. She and her father have relocated so often that she has few community ties. Now, at her new school, she begins feeling "right at home" for the first time, ever. Soon she'll find out she has KOOL psychic powers. These allow her the ability to dematerialize at will and reappear wherever she chooses. She can move objects with her mind and even defy gravity. Will these powers be of any use in stopping Neb, a stalker, intent on her destruction? Neb wants the KOOL and he won't hesitate in hurting Koolura or her friends if they get

Koolura is packed full of life lessons that will enhance developing minds of young readers everywhere.



# MICHAEL L. THAL

Michael Thal is the author of six published novels—Goodbye Tchaikovsky, The Abduction of Joshua Bloom, The Lip Reader and The Koolura Series—The Legend of Koolura, Koolura and The Mystery at Camp Saddleback, and Koolura and the Mayans.

Moving from the frigid Northeast to comfy Southern California in 1973, Michael taught elementary and middle school for 28 years until a freak virus left him deafened at the age of 50. He reinvented himself as a writer composing over 80 published articles in print magazines as well as novels for middle grade and high school aged students.

You can learn more about Michael Thal on his website and blog at [www.michaelthal.com](http://www.michaelthal.com)



# My "Red Ryder" BB gun

In the spirit of the season, I thought I'd share a Christmas tale. What follows is a true story.

December 1992. There was no snow that year in East Tennessee, but it was still pretty cold by my then-teenage-Texan standards. You see my family had just moved to a small town called Athens ten months earlier and we were about to experience our first Tennessee Christmas. The weekend after Thanksgiving the entire family piled into Mom's gold Chevy Astro van and set off to get a real tree from a local tree farm. With smiles on our faces, my brother and sister and I found just the right tree. Dad agreed, and both he and the tree-farm owner strapped it to the hood of the van while we looked on with excitement. That joy turned to a sort of apprehension mixed with dread once we got it home, because we quickly realized the tree didn't fit in the living room even though it featured nine foot ceilings. Dad wove a tapestry of obscenities and then went full "Clark Griswold" by taking a chainsaw to the bottom of this very full Douglas fir. The previously eleven-foot tall tree was now only eight feet tall, which drove Dad to further psychosis. The old man couldn't even bring himself to hang the lights on the tree—which was always his duty at Christmastime—and he mostly avoided us for the rest of that weekend.

The days leading up to Christmas seemed to drag at a turtle's pace, a common problem for any kid. My brother and I passed the time by playing Super Nintendo, eating junk, torturing my sister, and having movie marathons. "A Christmas Story" seemed to always be playing on at least one television in the house. Randy, whining like a tick about to pop, was a favorite impersonation of ours... or watching Ralphie pout in his "pink nightmare" bunny suit often gave us a reason to be truly thankful. Meanwhile, Mom was busy checking and double checking what we wanted, prompting us to make lists that she could then pass on to Santa Claus. When she wasn't out shopping, she was hosting get-togethers with church-friends or decorating the house. For the most part I and my siblings were used to getting what we asked for year after year... as long as it was within reason. My folks weren't going to buy us the latest Air Jordans—only for us to grow out of them in a few months—but at Christmas they more often than not bent to the will of kid-fantasy. And any kid who read comic books that year knew that something big had been happening. For the first time ever a major character beloved the world over was getting the axe. Superman; the last son of Krypton... was dead.

For those of you that never read the story, a Kryptonian monster—which the people of Earth dubbed "Doomsday"—had broken free from a vault buried deep underground. After escaping his prison, the snarling beast clawed his way to the surface where he fought many other superheroes, and wrecked much of the United States in the process while on his way to the city of Metropolis. Doomsday was truly horrifying; all instinct, seemingly mindless, and born of rage and blood. Spoiler alert: Superman and Doomsday both "killed" one another after a long battle which ended with both of them delivering the final death-blow simultaneously. The death of Superman was commemorated by a special edition issue of "Superman" comics, issue number 75. The book featured the famous red S-shield logo dripping with blood, and came sealed in a totally opaque black bag priced at \$2.95. DC Comics had printed just enough of these things to make the mainstream media take notice, and while old fans came out of the woodwork, new fans were left empty-handed and salivating. I myself missed the issue the week it hit the stands—and although I made routine weekly trips to the comic book store—it was the one thing that year that I desired most, if only because it eluded me.

Cue Christmas Day. Every year Dad had a tradition on the morning which included—among other things—making him and Mom a pot of coffee, and then retiring upstairs for what he called a "shit, shower & shave" while us kids waited downstairs, staring at the gifts piled under the tree with baited breath. Finally, when he was ready, Dad would break out the camcorder and have all us kids announce what day it was, and what year it was before we were allowed to proceed with the present-opening bonanza. Presents were aplenty... socks and pajamas. Video game cartridges. Stockings stuffed full of candy and sweets of various shapes and sizes. I recall sitting on the floor by the tree with one present left to open, and it was most certainly not shaped like a comic book. I'm not even sure why I was disappointed because to my recollection I had never told Mom or Dad that I wanted the comic, or that I couldn't find it. And in those days it wasn't like you could just jump on eBay and grab a mint copy. After the gift-giving ended, Dad would usually videotape us kids once again, but this time recording a message to our extended family to thank them for what they'd sent us. I was handed a small key and asked by Dad to go and retrieve a blank video tape from the bottom drawer of the filing cabinet in his office. I did as he asked, but when I couldn't find the tape, he sternly suggested that I look again at the back of the cabinet. Upon a second look... I saw it. There it was. In a hanging file at the very back of the drawer... Superman #75! Still sealed! In the black bag!

Nearly ten years later I learned that my mother struggled that Christmas to find us all the things we wanted. She then enlisted Dad's help—which happened rarely, if ever—to find the Superman comic. As it turns out, Dad couldn't find it either, but he made a few calls, and went out mysteriously on his own a few days before the 25th. He'd gone to a flea market about twenty miles away and bought the shop owner's personal copy, which the man had kept to turn a profit, if he might. Dad spent around twenty dollars on it, which was astronomical at the time for a book that had been out for less than a month. But that was exactly who my Dad was; stubborn and hard on the outside, cold at times, but underneath he was this total softie who'd go to just about any length for any one of us kids, and even more so at Christmastime. As long as I live I don't think I'll ever forget that day. And while I, thankfully, never got to shoot my eye out with a Red Ryder, I did get the death of Superman in all its poly-bagged glory.

If you enjoyed this story, please raise your eggnog—or whatever is in your glass—and toast to my dearly departed parents, John and Natalie. They were the best people I've ever known, and they are sorely missed.

Happy Christmas to you all & God bless!



## BRANDON KEATON

Brandon loves movies, music, and animals, and has an undying affinity for gummy bears. He is a proud supporting member of the Science Fiction & Fantasy Association of New Zealand, and the Libertarian Futurist Society. Vain attempts to pen the sequel to TRANSFERENCE—his debut indie novel—are currently disrupting his sleep patterns.

*Find "TRANSFERENCE" on Amazon*



Read More Short Stories from our Amazon Authors  
or publish a Short Story of your own at [www.BooksShelf.com](http://www.BooksShelf.com)

# KATY SUDANO

Katy Sudano is the wife of Dr. Nick Sudano and the mother of five children. As Vice President of Total Health Solutions and BrainCore Neurofeedback of Milton, she helps people deal with anxiety, depression and PTSD. She also helps individuals find health and success as a certified Robbins-Madanes Coach under Tony Robbins. Katy has written her first book, *Truth Gives Strength to Wings*, her memoir about faith, love, and finding happiness through adversity, inspiring, motivating and helping people.



*“The first time I held the actual book in my hands. I was very excited.”*



An advocate for preventing child sexual abuse, Katy is a former board member, Spanish spokesperson and workshop facilitator for VOICE Today, a non-profit advocacy for survivors of sexual abuse. She was a model and actor for Real People Models and Talent. Katy is a former member of the Local Advisory Council (LSAC) for Fulton County Schools. She speaks 4 languages and is passionate about inspiring, motivating and helping people.

# Truth Gives Strength to Wings



## WINNER - FIRST PLACE

Against an international landscape of power, affluence, and fear *Truth Gives Strength to Wings*, the creative memoir by child sex abuse prevention advocate, Katy Sudano, breathes life into the tormented soul of a young woman who defied the odds and defined what it means to dig deep for strength, passion, and love of life. Katy's refusal to allow the abuse of her past to interfere with an insatiable desire to find happiness and break the vicious cycle of abandonment that nearly had destroyed her entire world, is a testament to her extraordinary determination. Enter Katy's world, as she unlocks her true colors--the pure essence of who she is--despite the terrifying examples forced upon her as a young girl. Broken and afraid, she discovers a strength she never knew existed, and built enough trust in herself to take those first tiny steps away from what she knew could not be. Those first few steps ultimately led to acts of inspirational boldness, and with the unexpected help of strangers and a little guidance from her alter-ego, she finds the strength to expand her broken wings, take off running, and soar.



# Elaine I. Makas

Elaine is excited to debut her first novel! Reading and writing have been her passion since she can remember. After finally retiring from the world of education she has devoted her time to tell the wonderful, important, and heartwarming story of her dad's battlefield journey during the Southern Invasion of Germany in 1944. Elaine has based her life values of those her dad taught her throughout all the wonderful years together. The two also shared a deep love and respect for history.



Elaine is a strong advocate for education. She spent over 40 years in the educational capacity of a professor of educational leadership at the University of Michigan, public school teacher, administrator, director of instructional services, and teacher professional development. Elaine was a private coach for failing schools in the areas of curriculum and accreditation through her company Curriculum Connections, LLC. Elaine completed her doctorate in Educational Leadership at Oakland University in 2010.

She has a Specialist degree from Saginaw Valley State University in educational leadership, a Master's from Central Michigan University in school guidance, and a Bachelor's from Western Michigan University in history.

Elaine authored two educational books: *From Mandate to Achievement* (Corwin, 2010) and *Career Pathways: Preparing Students for Life* co-authored with Pam Ill (Corwin, 2004).

Elaine is very proud of her four sons, Mark (Rochelle), Benjamin, Jacob, and Samuel, and her three grandchildren, Sarah, Ethan, and Joshua. She enjoys life with Fred and engaging in writing, oil painting, nature, horseback riding, and traveling.





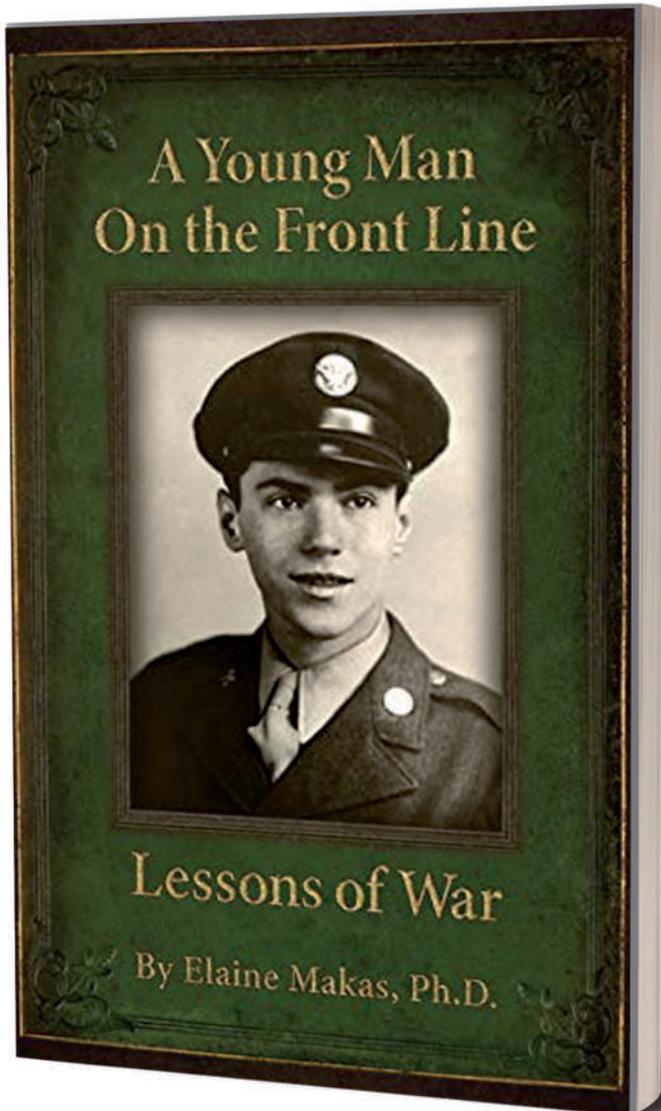
# A YOUNG MAN ON THE FRONT LINE

## Lessons of War

### WINNER - SECOND PLACE

A YOUNG MAN ON THE FRONT LINES: Lessons of War, is the true account of a young man amidst the brutality of the battlefield. The story chronicles his experience of becoming a soldier, enduring his soldiering days, and reconciling his life in the aftermath of his war experiences. As a reader, you become a fellow traveler with Sgt. Chris Makas on his journey of war, trauma , adaptation, and self-acceptance while contemplating 'lessons of war' – all within the historical realities of World War II.

**“This book is dedicated in loving memory of my  
father Chris Makas - My hero.  
And to the men of the 63rd Division.**



# BARKING AT THE MOON

## WINNER - THIRD PLACE



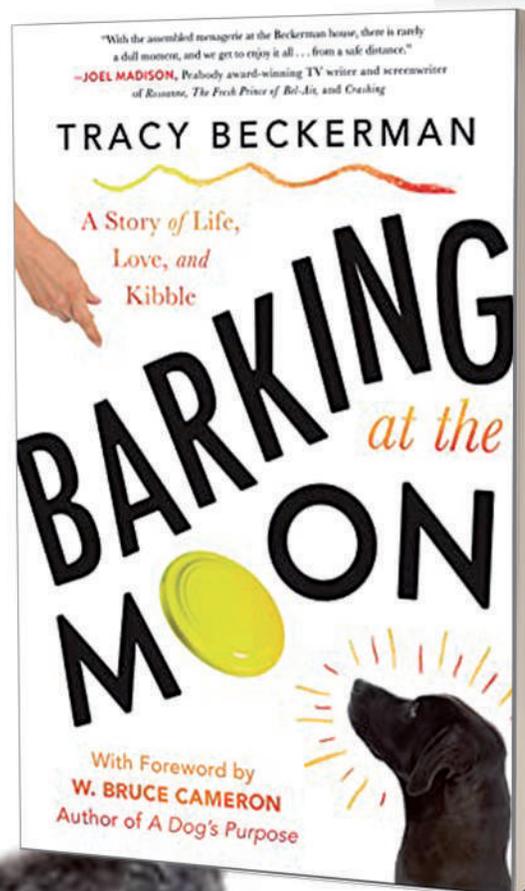
Amazon Bestseller in Dog Care & Health, Pet Loss Grief, and Family Health

"(Tracy) is a master storyteller, skillfully presenting dialogue filled with witty repartee. She captures the spark of comedy residing in the tribulations of daily life, and the abundant joy that outweighs the chaos of stolen socks, destroyed furniture, and a dog that eats toilet paper and rocks... This work is a funny, delightful, heartwarming read that will leave dog lovers smiling." -- Kirkus Reviews

How do you housebreak a dog in a hurricane?

When Riley comes into her family's life, award-winning humor columnist Tracy Beckerman realizes she got a lot more than she bargained for. From tracking wet cement through the house to shredding the family's underwear, Riley is a one-dog wrecking ball. Yet this lovable retriever also brings joy, laughter, and a renewed sense of wonder into the household.

At times hilarious and heartwarming, *Barking at the Moon* speaks to life's growing pains, and to mothering children both human and furry. With Beckerman's trademark wit and heart, she reminds us that no matter what stage of life we're in, we can learn a lot from the dogs who teach us how to stop and enjoy the ride.



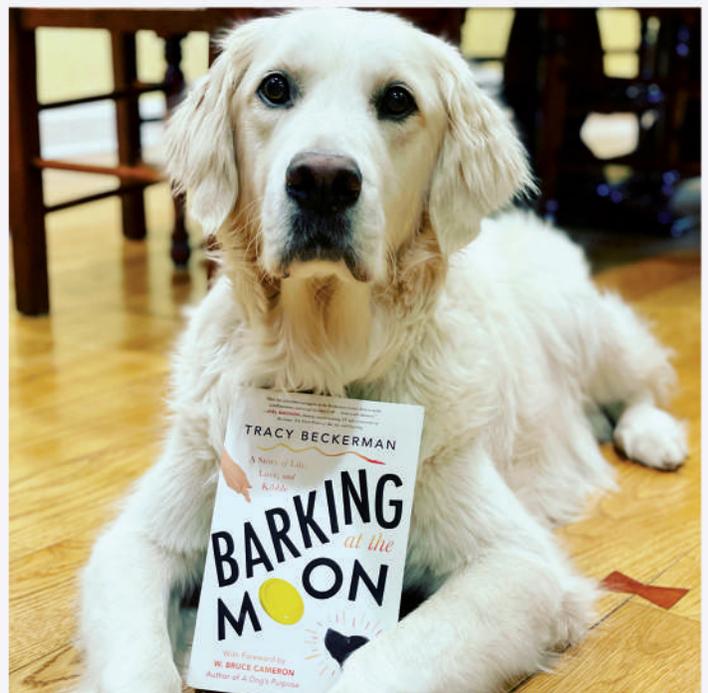
# TRACY BECKERMAN



TRACY BECKERMAN is an award-winning author, speaker, and syndicated humor columnist who has appeared on NBC's Today Show, CBS Sunday Morning, and Good Day New York. Her numerous honors for writing include the prestigious Writer's Guild of America award, an Erma Bombeck Writer's award, and a New York Emmy®.

Tracy's trademark heart and wit is put on display in her instant Amazon Bestseller, "Barking at the Moon." This must-read memoir reflects on the joys and pains of mothering a full house of humans and a wrecking-ball-of-a-dog, Riley. Tracy is also the author of the humor book, "Lost in Suburbia: A Momoir: How I Got Pregnant, Lost Myself, and Got My Cool Back in the New Jersey Suburbs" (Perigee Books, 2013).

Her first book, "Rebel without a Minivan: Observations on Life in the 'Burbs," was released in 2008. Tracy likes long walks in the park with her dog Monty, traveling with her husband, and telling her kids they don't call enough.

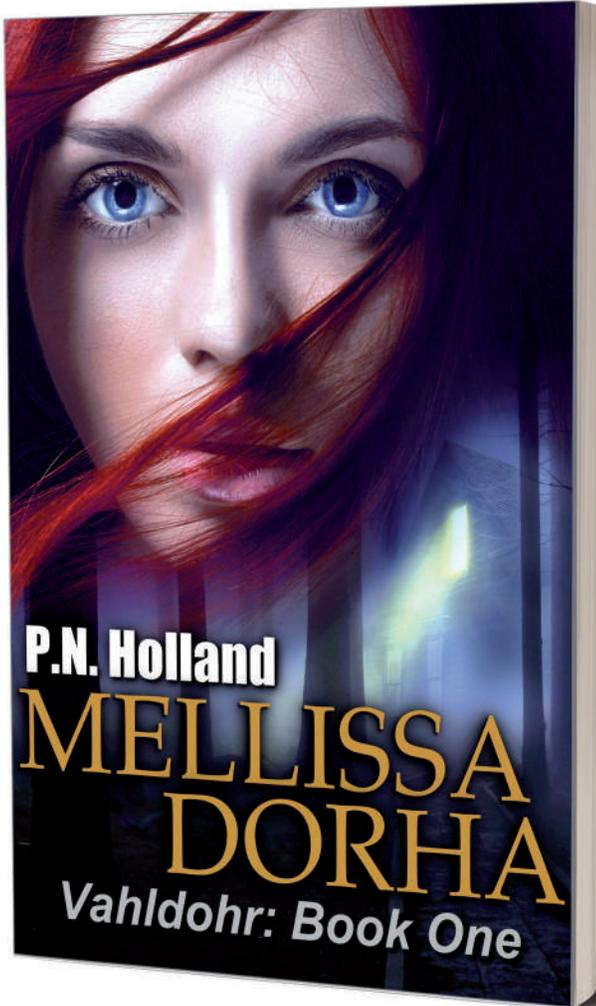


**03**

# START YOUR 2022 READING LIST

WITH THESE AMAZING NOVELS

## Mellissadorha BOOK ONE VAHLDOHR



As a teen, Mell does not get along well with her peers, parents or sibling. She knows she's different, but she can't understand why her father who is magical too, has left her alone to try and understand why. Where is he? It's not fair.

In search of her father and a better understanding of her roots, Mell takes her only friend, Val to a magical world where wizards and witches, both good and bad seek to control each other in an on-going struggle to be the kings and queens. She has to adapt to this strange land with it's weird creatures and demands of its heirarchy of royalty. Will she find her father? Will she and Val survive the war on this archaic world?

## Peter Neil Holland

"I am a retired teacher living in Victoria, BC, Canada. I love reading and writing Fantasy Novels: The Vancouver Island Mysteries; The Saxe Point Park Mystery, The Lost Boys of Lampson, The E&N Escape Mellissadorha, Book One, Vahldohr

I have a dog named Beau, cat named Lulu, 2 guinea pigs and 3 pet rats in our house with my son and his family. I have 5 wonderful grandchildren. I love talking to teens about their writing and reading and getting their ideas for new books I should write."



# THE SITE

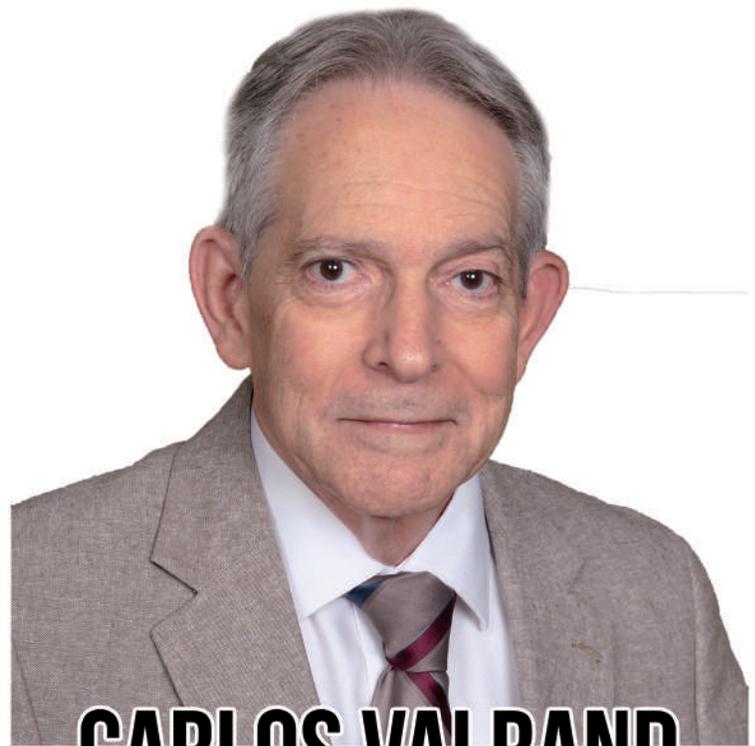
*A young London schoolteacher and an investigation by two Americans that she inexplicably follows in dreams reveal*

Cicely, a British school teacher, suddenly becomes afflicted with dreams of glimpses from the lives of two strangers who become entangled in a grand-scale government conspiracy. Charles and Vivian are involved in a dangerous investigation that involves locating an operative who absconded with a secret document containing priceless information.

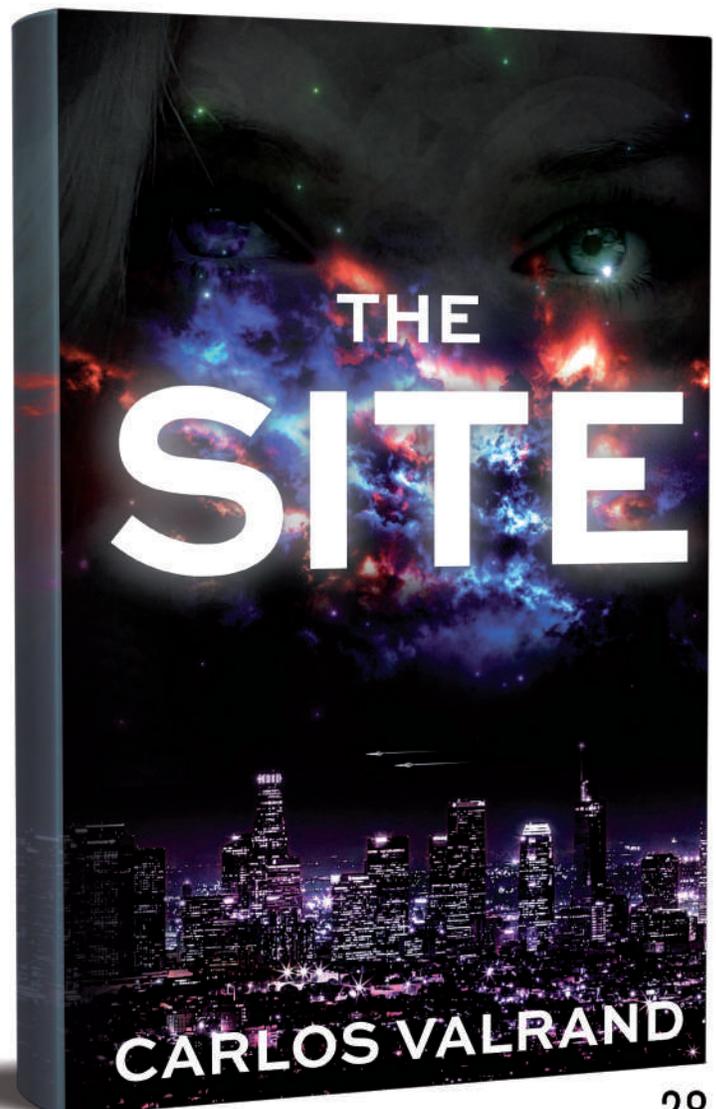
Cicely seeks psychiatric help for her unsettling visions, but the therapy does not stop the dreams from unfolding and escalating. Are the dreams wild figments of her imagination, or are Charles and Vivian real people? If the two are, in fact, real, then Cicely has more to worry about than just bizarre dreams.

As Cicely's dreams progress, she vicariously follows Charles and Vivian as they locate and enter a secret installation concealed in the high desert north of Los Angeles. The inhabitants of the sprawling compound are not from Earth, but that is just the beginning of a series of jaw-dropping revelations. The aliens have been secretly working with members of the government for decades, mining invaluable resources—but the real bombshell revelations deal with the mind-blowing backstory of an advanced space-faring civilization, and how their secrets, if revealed to the public, would change human civilization forever.

The Site is an impressively intricate and fast-paced science fiction thriller, with main characters facing moral issues, and whose daring search for truth and independence pits them against powerful forces and exceptional intelligences that work against their best plans.



**CARLOS VALRAND**



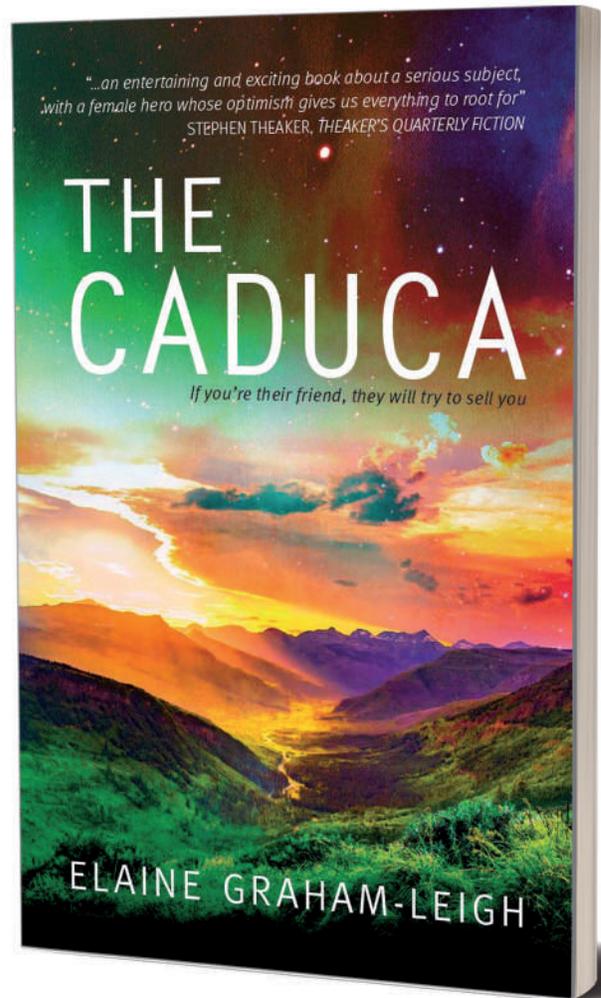
# THE CADUCA

When the major power in the galaxy invades a poor colony planet, two women – an alien diplomat and a human guerrilla fighter – confront how neither of their causes are what they seem.

The planet of Benan Ty is just another poor and violent ex-Terran colony. Now the Chi!me, the major power in the galaxy, are coming to broker a peace deal between guerrilla group ViaVera and the government.

For Quila, a rising figure in the Chi!me diplomatic service, the posting to Benan Ty could be the making of her career. Meanwhile Terise, one of ViaVera's inner circle, is just trying to get her lover out with his life. But in a conflict where no side's motivations are pure, they are both about to discover how much they have to lose.

Set in a future where humanity has gone to the stars, but taken exploitation and oppression with them, this is a story of imperialism, resistance, friendship and ultimately, liberation.



## Elaine Graham-Leigh

*"I am an activist, medieval historian and qualified accountant (because even radical movements need someone doing the books). I live in north London with my partner and a demanding elderly tabby. I've written on politics and medieval history, and science fiction short stories, but The Caduca is my first novel."*

A sci-fi/fantasy series starter filled with plenty of steam and satisfying twists! When mysterious strangers appear at her daughter's birthday party, Valerie uncovers the shocking truth about her life: She and six-year-old Charlotte aren't human at all...

# MAKE ME EXIST

Valerie's daughter Charlotte is celebrating her sixth birthday and she's loving it. Presents, games, and cake! For Valerie, it's not that simple. Being with her ex-husband and his new wife is always a strain, but not as hard as finding out that you're not who you think you are.

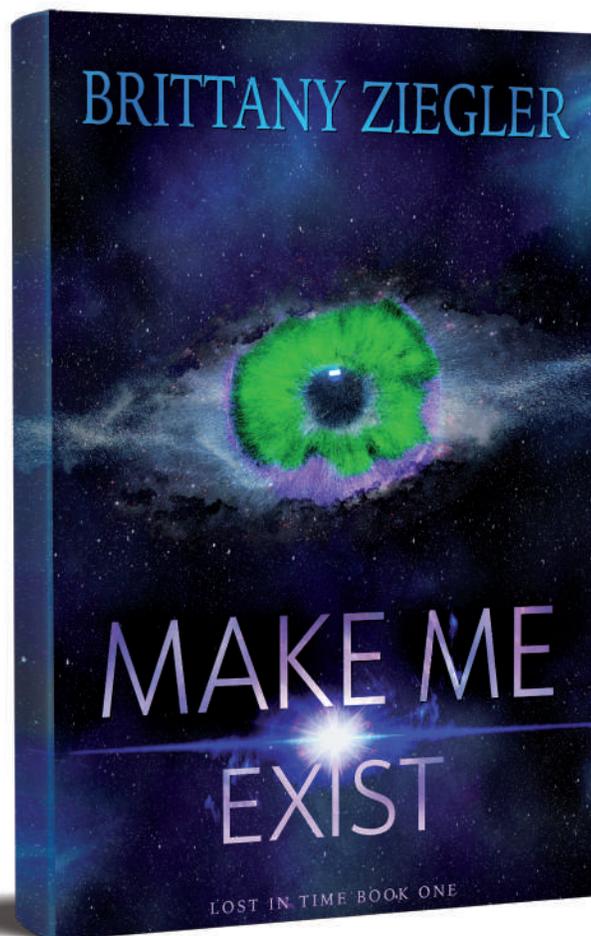
When a group of mysterious men unexpectedly show up at the party, suddenly Valerie's whole life feels like a lie. Why do they look so familiar? Why do they act like they know her? Stranger yet, why do they have the same startling green eyes as Charlotte?

Catapulted into a world she doesn't remember, Valerie needs to trust these strangers to help save her daughter and herself from a terrible fate. She and Charlotte are pure-bloods, the only chance for an alien race on the brink of extinction.

On the run and hunted, her enemies will not rest until they have them in their clutches. But as her memories return, can Valerie tap into the powers she didn't even know she possessed and save their lives?

Make Me Exist is the first book of a four part saga. A heart-pounding sci-fi adventure, with just the right amount of romance, that will keep you riveted to your seat in a journey of mind twisting awakenings.

Buy your copy now and join our heroine in her quest for freedom.



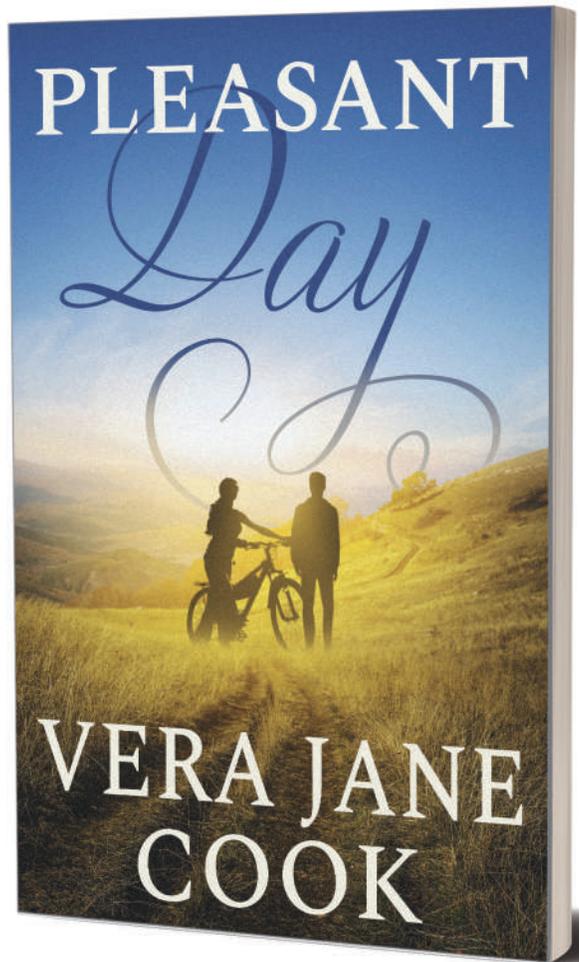
## Brittany Ziegler

*Brittany Ziegler was born in California and currently resides on the beautiful island of Maui in Hawaii. She studied marine sciences and biology at the University of Hawaii, as well as dabbled in creative writing and photography. She's married to the most patient man in the world and spends her days herding her two daughters on sunny beaches, kayaking with humpback whales, photographing sharks, and writing about impossible circumstances. Make Me Exist is her first fiction novel.*

# Pleasant Day

**With murder in common friendship is inevitable.**

*In the town of Hollow Creek, South Carolina two separate murders, fifteen years apart, unite fifteen-year-old Pleasant Day and sixty-year-old Clarissa Blackwell. As Pleasant Day struggles with her mother's distance, her father's infidelity and the death of her best friend, she draws closer to Clarissa, an older woman with the secrets to heal her. But Clarissa has struggles of her own as she faces betrayal and seeks to come to terms with old wounds. With her unpredictable psychic ability to 'read people' Clarissa uncovers the answers to a deadly crime and to Pleasant's true identity. In the end, both Pleasant and Clarissa's worlds are transformed by the truths they're forced to accept, and both find solace and strength in the histories that have shaped them.*



## VERA JANE COOK



"I am an award-winning hybrid author of southern and women's Fiction, including *Dancing Backward in Paradise*, *The Story of Sassy Sweetwater*, *Where the Wildflowers Grow*, *Pleasant Day*, *Marybeth*, *Hollister & Jane* and *Lies a River Deep*. My newest series is *The Fourniers*: Book One, *When Hannah Played Ragtime*, Book Two, *Glamor Girl*. The third book in the series, *The Memory of Music* is due out this spring. Under my pen name *Olivia Hardy Ray* I have written science fiction and fantasy. My newest novel in that genre is *Nobody's Road* and my past titles include *Annabel Horton*, *Lost Witch of Salem*, *Annabel Horton and the Black Witch of Pau*, and *Pharaoh's Star*.

The first novel I ever wrote, *Dancing Backward In Paradise*, won an Eric Hoffer Award for publishing excellence and an Indie Excellence Award for notable new fiction, 2007. *The Story of Sassy Sweetwater* and *Dancing Backward in Paradise* received 5 Star ForeWord Clarion Reviews and *The Story of Sassy Sweetwater* has been named a finalist for the ForeWord Book of the Year Awards. I have published in *ESL Magazine*, *Christopher Street Magazine* and I have also written early childhood curriculum for *Weekly Reader* and *McGraw Hill*."

# Jane Blake

## MYSTERY SERIES



KELLY SHADE



A girl abandoned as a newborn, adopted in a dysfunctional family grew up to be a beautiful con woman - Jane Blake. Deception and mind games was what she knew her whole life and yet she was desperately searching for the truth. Her truth. Who were the people who left her? Who was the man who tried to kidnap her as a child? Who is responsible for her to be so messed up?

Jane's abilities made her rich but they also helped many people find closure - she helped solve murders while building a reputation as one of the best in her field.

Luck or something else stopped her from continuing with the life of a criminal. Ryan Gray, a hacker and a part of an elite police team, caught her and blackmailed her into working in his unit. Jane, maybe intentionally, let him show her that she can trust again, she has people behind her back, and maybe, just maybe, she can love.

And thus it began - the dangerous endeavor of finding Jane's origins, breaking a ring of organized crime, and meeting her criminal, good for nothing but also smart and cunning biological family.

# CAN YOU

# GUESS

We have several quotes from popular books - Can you guess who said what?

# WHO SAID THIS?

## A QUIZ FOR BOOK LOVERS

*Let's get Started!*



1. "Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same."
2. "It matters not what someone is born, but what they grow to be."
3. "Not all those who wander are lost."
4. "One day I will find the right words, and they all will be simple."
5. "The author says one character's definition of a classic is any book he'd heard of before he was thirty."
6. "There are years that ask questions and years that answer."
7. "Real courage is when you know you're licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what."

Get your New Bookmark --->



8. "And, of course men know best about everything, except what women know better"

9. "What's the good of a home if you are never in it?"

10. "All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

11. "That is the one unforgivable sin in any society. Be different and be damned!"

12. "Every man desires to live long, but no man wishes to be old"

13. "It's no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then"

14. "If you tell the truth you do not need a good memory!"

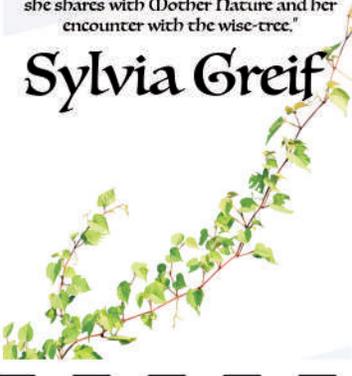
15. "Top 15 Things Money Can't Buy - Time. Happiness. Inner Peace. Integrity. Love. Character. Manners. Health. Respect. Morals. Trust. Patience. Class. Common sense. Dignity."





'Ela Green and the Kingdom of Abud is my first novel in a trilogy and introduces Ela Green, a fourteen-year-old girl. Her first adventure reveals the mysterious bond she shares with Mother Nature and her encounter with the wise-tree.'

**Sylvia Greif**



# RESULTS

*How many did you guess correctly?*



1. Emily Bronte, 'Wuthering Heights'
2. J.K. Rowling, 'Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire'
3. J R R Tolkein, 'The Lord of the Rings'
4. Jack Kerouac, 'The Dharma Bums'
5. Sinclair Lewis, 'It Can't Happen Here'
6. Zora Neale Hurston, 'Their Eyes Were Watching God'
7. Harper Lee,' To Kill a Mockingbird'
8. George Eliot, 'Middlemarch'
9. George & Weedon Grossmith, 'The Diary of a Nobody'
10. J.R.R. Tolkein, 'The Fellowship of the Ring'
11. Margaret Mitchell, 'Gone with the Wind'
12. Jonathan Swift, 'Gulliver's Travels'
13. Lewis Carroll, 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland'
14. Mark Twain, 'Adventures of Huckleberry Finn'
15. Roy T. Bennett, 'The Light in the Heart'

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**ARE YOU WORTHY TO PULL OUT THE QUILL?**

**EXCALIBURE**  
NEW WAY OF PUBLISHING





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2022