

FIRST CHAPTER PLUS

2021 What to Expect

2021 Reading Roadmap

*Doing Everything
Yourself*

*My Valentine's Day and
Instagram Ryan*

Barefoot Librarian Corner

What Is Going On In The US?

A bride and groom are shown in profile, facing each other and holding hands. The bride is on the left, wearing a white veil and a white face mask. The groom is on the right, wearing a black face mask. They are both looking at each other. The background is a solid yellow color.

Masks And Hearts

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S



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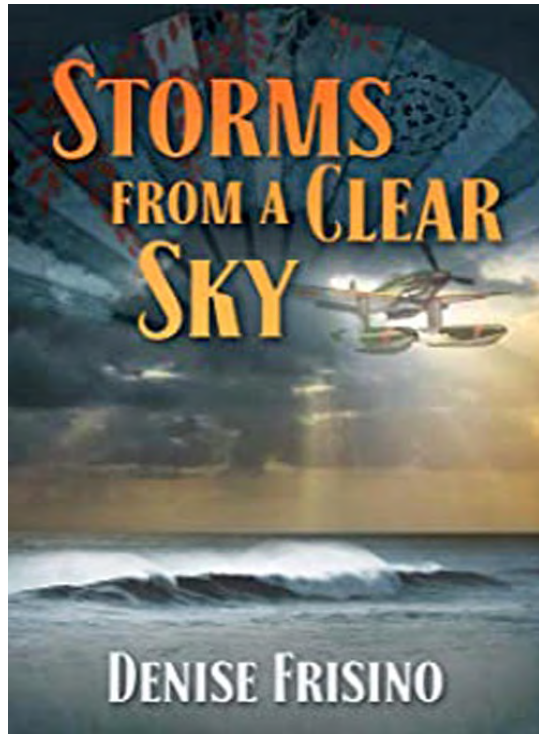
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G. R. Morris

Author of Tomorrow's End

Judy Prescott Marshall is a writer, interior designer, blogger, and lover of everything outdoors. She writes women's commercial fiction. She enjoys writing about women facing life's many challenges. She earned her certificate - Write Your First Novel - from Michigan State University. Judy is represented by Black Hawk Literary Agency...



Editor's Note

Born and raised in Venezuela of Italian immigrants, Susan completed a BA in Political Science and Business Administration before moving to the US . Although she built a career as a Business Analyst/Accountant, she also kept herself active as a freelance writer in the US; publishing articles, poetry, children's stories, and illustrations since 1996. She published her first book in 2009, and released her revised edition: *Innocent War: Behind An Immigrant's Past – Book 1* in 2011. Her picture book: *Tuma: The Tribe's Little Princess* was published in early 2013 under her own label.

Currently, Susan Violante is the Managing Editor/CEO/ Partner of I Have Something to Say Press and Book By Book Publicity, Author, Reviewer, Publicist and Publisher. She resides in Austin, TX with her husband Michel and her dogs, Canela, Karina, and Nutela. Susan is mother of two adult daughters, Arianna and Nicolette, and caregiver to her father. She enjoys cooking, reading, knitting, painting, writing, gardening, and any outdoor activity.



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2021 Are You Ready? Here We Come!

Yeah, I know...how can I sound so energetic and positive after 2020? Well, protein shakes and steroids! No seriously, what other option is there? We must pull ourselves up because no one else will do it for us; and if there is something worse than trying to keep yourself positive through 2020, is dragging this mood to 2021! We, as an earthling **MUST** get over this pandemic situation and make the most of it if we are going to survive it. Below are some tips on keeping yourself positive, hopeful and energetic.

* **Focus on the Finish Line** - The best way to keep you moving forward is keep your eye on the finish line. It's a given that sometimes challenges pop up, delaying our timeline to reaching our goals. Don't let these challenges win...keep going until you make it!

* **Be Creative and Safe** - Humans are not wired for isolation, but we must keep ourselves and families safe and the virus controlled. By being creative we can find a middle ground. For example, small groups social distanced hike, or back yard - social distanced barbeque, Reading at a park on a beautiful day, virtual cooking together hour...you get my point. *

If you lost your job - create work opportunities - I am one of the lucky ones, but know many that have been let go from their jobs. Don't despair! file unemployment and keep your job hunting on, but also reach to neighbors and friends and offer yourself to walk dogs, house sit, grocery shopping...etc. \$20 here and there can come a long way when you are out of work.

It has been a difficult year for all, but to make it better we need to stick together, be positive, and keep healthy! Let's go to 2021 with this in mind and create a better year!

Susan Violante
Editor





I remember feeling disappointed and insecure. I watched all my friends receive cards, chocolates, and flowers from their boyfriends. I bought a teddy bear and chocolates for Ryan, my boyfriend, and was shocked when he didn't have anything to give me in return. Fourteen-year-old me didn't wear disappointment well; it usually turned into raging, hormonal, teenage anger.

I did something most adults only see in movies, and most middle schoolers see every day: I broke up with my first boyfriend, on Valentine's Day, in front of all his friends, in a cafeteria full of our peers. I handed his teddy bear and chocolates to one of his friends and smugly walked off. It was all extremely dramatic.

My Valentine's Day and Instagram Ryan

by Nico Neak

This story became notorious in my family, partly because of what followed: I developed a crippling fear of never finding love again, and that I'd become a crazy cat lady who knits sweaters for her hairless cats. To no one's surprise (except mine), none of that came to pass. Presently, I sit in my comfortable home, married to a wonderful man who puts up with all my nonsense. Oh, and I have a dog. Also, I don't knit.

When Valentine's Day rolls around, my husband and I shrug it off and don't do anything. He'll run to the grocery store to buy me a plant I will then promptly kill with my overwatering. I'd say we're fairing pretty well.

But what about Ryan?! Did I destroy him? Did he ever find love again? I tried searching Instagram for him. I saw that he was a fishing enthusiast, grew a large red beard, and was cruel to mice, as evidenced by his graphic pictures of mouse traps. This is my fault. I did this I thought.

Then I realized I had the wrong person. Realizing that I wasn't going to find him so easily and not in the mood to see more disturbing Instagram feeds, I phoned my sister asking if she could try to find him on Facebook.

You see, I deleted my Facebook and don't quite care enough to go through the process of creating another account. Via my sister, I learned that Ryan is a fitness enthusiast and aspiring Ironman, enjoys cycling and swimming, has friends, is a swim coach, rocks a buzzcut and a soul patch/goatee thing, and most importantly, "has no relationship status to show." This Ryan seems like a more well-adjusted, but maybe lonely individual.

Looking back, it was obvious what was going on: this poor kid had no clue what to do. He was just thrilled that a real girl liked him. I'm not even sure he really liked me, and I'm not really sure I liked him either. The pressure that this holiday puts on both couples and single people is tough. So, if you're reading this and lonely or disappointed, allow yourself the comfort that at least you've fared better than poor Instagram Ryan.

Hang in there Instagram Ryan!



Featured Authors

G.R. Morris

Geoffrey Morris is a 10 time award-winning author. He has garnered much acclaim for his debut novel, *Tomorrow's End*. He not only won a prestigious Dragonfly book award, but a Feathered quill and received multiple 5 star reviews from many websites. He was a philosopher and a graduate from seminary studies before taking writing courses in college.



Do you have free will? He never asked to be a hero, but the universe didn't give him a choice. Kevin Knight never wanted to be the one to save the galaxy. But when tragedy upends his life and demonic forces steal his soul, the fate of time and space are sealed. Until a scaly, trench-coat-clad alien appears and gives him a glimpse into the true nature of all things.



Astounded, Kevin learns the world he knows is merely an illusion created by alien beings who control humanity's every move. With an invasion imminent, he must defeat the blackness and perfect his powers before the bloody battle begins. Which prophecy will Kevin fulfill... the one of darkness or the one of light?

Tomorrow's End

By G. R. Morris

Geoffrey R Morris (2021)

ISBN 9780615852379

Hard Cover - 436 pages - \$19.99

Fiction - Science Fiction

Tomorrow's End is a story that has to be read. It is nearly impossible to summarize without giving away huge plot twists. Kevin is thrown in a battle between good and evil that spans time and space. It is a story that grabs the attention from page one and never let's go. Kevin's adventures make for a thundering roller-coaster read rife with philosophy, religion, and morality... *Tomorrow's End will be a series that lingers in readers' hearts and transports you to a new world.*

— Heather Osbourne
Readers Favorite

Mr. Morris is a fascinating storyteller with a very vivid imagination. He weaves together religious mythology with a science fiction flair. I had a very easy time following the series of events and enjoyed the contrasting stories of Daren and Kevin. The battle between light and dark was compelling. I loved how, throughout the story, the contrasting forces were always at war, forming a prevalent theme throughout the novel. *Tomorrow's End was definitely a memorable read and I hope to have the opportunity to explore book two soon!*

— The Columbia Review



Read First
Chapter Here

[View on Amazon Here](#)

2021 READING ROADMAP



I have a huge collection of unread books. Like many readers, I accumulate them faster than I can read them. In my room, I have a system of shelves and cubicles to keep everything organized by genre. I've decided that my reading goal in 2021 will be to focus on one specific section of my shelves and thus, one specific genre. Now, I don't think I could handle reading only one genre for an entire year, so I reached a compromise with myself; I'll read one book from the chosen shelf or cubicle a month. Twelve books doesn't initially sound like a lot, but in terms of shelf and cubicle space, it translates to a vast visible improvement.

January: *In Order to Live: A North Korean Girl's Journey to Freedom* by Yeonmi Park

February: *Monster, She Wrote: The Women Who Pioneered Horror and Speculative Fiction* by Lisa Kroger and Melanie R. Anderson

March: *The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration Into the Wonder of Consciousness* by Sy Montgomery

April: *Built of Books: How Reading Defined the Life of Oscar Wilde* by Thomas Wright

May: *A Hobbit, a Wardrobe, and a Great War: How J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis Rediscovered Faith, Friendship, and Heroism in the Cataclysm of 1914-18* by Joseph Loconte

June: *Pirate Women: The Princesses, Prostitutes, and Privateers Who Ruled the Seven Seas* by Laura Sook Duncombe

July: *Perilous and Fair: Women in the Works and Life of J. R. R. Tolkien* by Leslie A. Donovan

August: *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* by Moises Kaufman

September: *Astrophysics for People in a Hurry* by Neil DeGrasse Tyson

October: *J. R. R. Tolkien: A Biography* by Humphrey Carpenter

November: *Other Minds: The Octopus, the Sea, and the Deep Origins of Consciousness* by Peter Godfrey-Smith

December: *Boiling Mad: Inside Tea Party America* by Kate Zernike

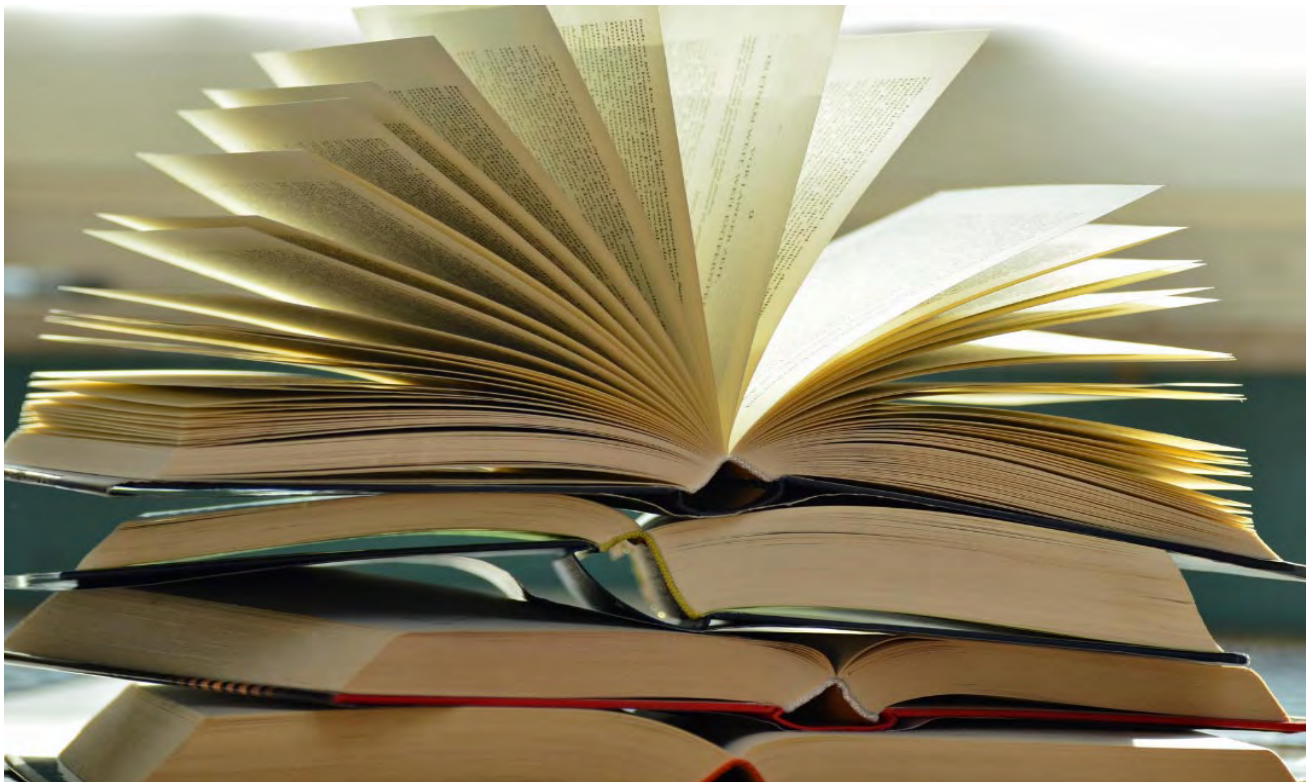
I'm leaving myself with the flexibility to rearrange the list as I need to. For example, if there's one book that I really want to read, but it's not scheduled to be read until later in the year, I can do some switching around.

My other goal with this reading roadmap is to keep myself motivated. If I feel like I'm falling into a reading slump with my regular reading, then I can just fall back on this list. I'm very competitive, especially with myself. I really enjoy a good challenge. Hopefully that will help keep me motivated.

I still plan on doing plenty of other reading, but I thought this might be an interesting way of approaching this year. If it goes well, I'll pick another shelf to work on next year.

What reading plans do you have for 2021?

By Skyler Boudreau



Featured Authors



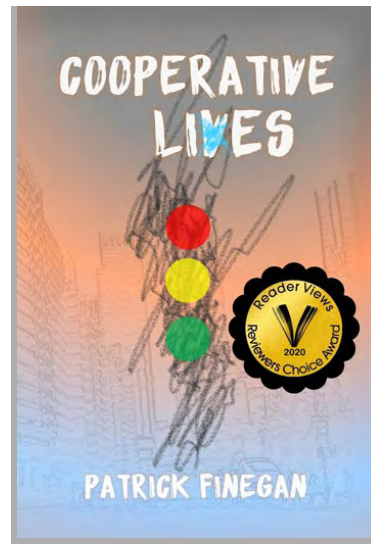
Patrick T. Finegan

Patrick Finegan was born during the latter half of the Eisenhower Administration and graduated during the Carter and Reagan Administrations from Northwestern University and the University of Chicago Law School and Graduate School of Business. He worked thirty-some years in law, finance, consulting and risk management. He has a wife and grown daughter and has lived in the New York metropolitan area his entire professional life – most of it in the same residential cooperative..

What lies beneath the façade of a storied Manhattan residential complex? The cream of New York’s elite lives in a co-op overlooking Central Park – quietly until a bus sideswipes a neighbor. This triggers a series of increasingly bizarre investigations that expose the inhabitants to unrelenting media scrutiny. Winner of nearly twenty respected book awards.

Cooperative Lives “is a fascinating slice-of-life that rings true even as it attempts the fantastic.”

– Michael Radon, US Review of Books.



Watch Book
Video Here

Cooperative Lives

By Patrick T. Finegan

Fiction - Literary Novel

Two Skates Publishing LLC (2019)

ISBN 9781733902526

Hard Cover - 474 pages - \$29.99

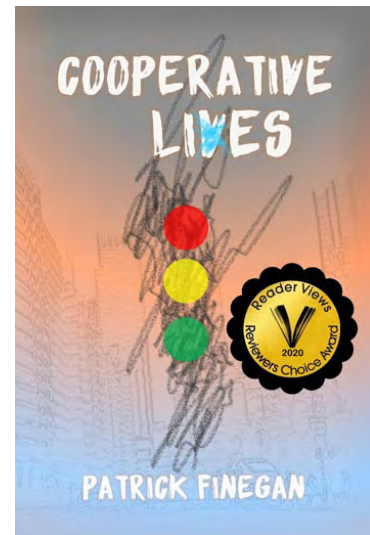
Patrick Finegan's luscious novel Cooperative Lives follows characters whose lives change when they are brought into close proximity with each other through a series of coincidences, accidents, and international espionage... Ambitious and sophisticated, Cooperative Lives is **a diverse and gorgeous tapestry of character studies and is a pure delight to read.**

— Wendy Hinman

Foreword Clarion Reviews

Happenstance, serendipity and luck dominate as the lives of characters crash against one another like pinballs in Patrick Finegan's Cooperative Lives. A novel that perfectly captures the unscripted events and coincidence of real life, where you can do your utmost best, and it's never quite good enough... **A powerful, chic and evocative read, Cooperative Lives proves a superb début for Finegan and a must-read for discerning readers of top-notch literary fiction.**

— BookViral Reviews

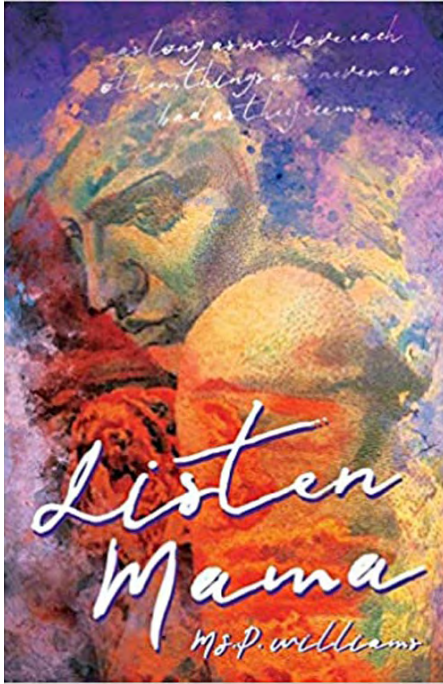


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[View on Amazon Here](#)

READER VIEWS

BOOK OF THE MONTH



Listen Mama

By M.S.P. Williams

Nonfiction - Memoir

Rowdy Parrot, Ltd. (2020)

ISBN 9780578730172

Reviewed by Tammy Ruggles for Reader Views (01/21)

L*isten Mama* by M.S.P. Williams, is a moving memoir about not giving up on love. Comprised of touching letters, this book chronicles the journey of a son's yearning for his mentally ill mother to love him, and encounters barriers that seem impenetrable. These personal letters offer slice-of-life, intimate insight into the lives of real people, and will leave you enlightened and inspired.

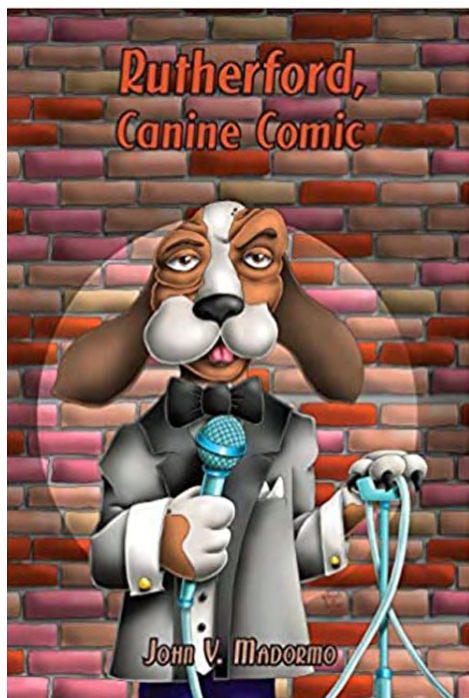
This often-heartbreaking memoir is emotional, honest, and all-too true for so many people searching for connection to a mother, father, family, or just belonging. The letters are poignant, and as you read, you will immediately be swept into the mindset of this man, and travel his journey with him, and, as him. The writing is touching and heartfelt, profound in its simplicity, and will connect with reading audiences everywhere. The themes of separation, poverty, loneliness, broken families, and a host of other life experiences, make this a timely and timeless story—and since the narrative is constructed of letters—makes them even more real to the reader.

Manny is a son trying to keep ties with his mother, who is in a psychiatric hospital. That would be a life hurdle in itself, but Manny has hope beyond hope, and shows how faith, willpower, and perseverance can lead to a fulfillment of wishes and dreams. He wishes the best for his mother, and longs for things to be the way they were before. He wants her to be happy and whole, but he's lost so much. Redemption seems impossible, but Manny, despite having a disfigurement and being born into disadvantages, has to grow up too soon. Seeking compassion and understanding, he had to deal with his mother's frightening behavior, brought on by her mental illness.

Eventually, he cares for her, and his four younger siblings—a challenging labor of love... The author shows a good balance of ups and downs over the twenty-years, and **“Listen Mama” is a gem of a book that will live in the heart and mind for years to come..**

To read the complete review visit www.readerviews.com.

READER VIEWS KIDS BOOK OF THE MONTH



Rutherford, Canine Comic

By John Madormo

Young Reader - Ages 8-15

Zumaya Thresholds (2020)

ISBN 9781612713533

Reviewed by Maddie (age 13) for Reader Views Kids (1/2021)

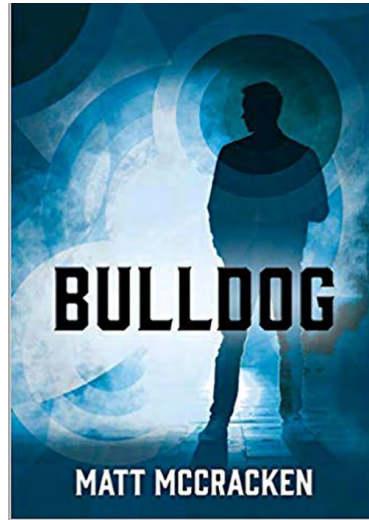
Rutherford, *Canine Comic* is a funny story about a dog who only dreams of being a watchdog for a loving family. The problem is that Rutherford is a Basset Hound and his short legs don't give him a very good chance of his wish coming true because he can't move as fast as a watchdog needs to protect his family. Rutherford's second choice is to be a stand-up

comedian and he is one funny dog and loves to make others laugh! When Rutherford is abandoned by the owner of the breeding farm he lives on, he lands in a shelter and is placed for adoption. Rutherford makes a few friends at the shelter and misses them very much when they get adopted but hopefully, Rutherford will be adopted also – read and find out!.

I loved this story because of the many different angles. It is full of action and adventure, along with comedy and trouble, and friendship. Rutherford is a great friend and a funny comedian. The jokes in the story made me laugh out loud and I admit I did stop reading many times to tell these jokes to my parents. But even though Rutherford is funny and jokes around all the time he goes through some hard times like being abandoned by his owner and chased by coyotes. He is also bullied by some of the other dogs at the shelter and gets mixed up with a couple of bad characters who just use him for his jokes. But he does make some really good friends and he learns who his real friends are when they come together to save Boomer...

...I was excited to learn that “Rutherford, Canine Comic” is the first book in a series – I can't wait to see what Rutherford and his friends get into next. **I recommend this book to kids aged 10 and up, because the humor and violence (dog fighting) might be too much for younger kids.** To read the complete review visit www.readerviewskids.com.

INTERVIEW WITH MATT MCCRACKEN AUTHOR OF “BULLDOG”



Matt McCracken was born in Columbia, South Carolina in 1960, but has lived most of his life in northern Virginia, primarily Arlington County. He attended Arlington’s public schools while growing up, and upon his graduation from high school attended Wake Forest University for a year, then transferred to the University of Virginia where he graduated with a B.A. in economics in 1982. After a brief stint in the Air Force he returned home to northern Virginia and worked as an accountant. In 1987 he attended the George Mason University School of Law and got married the following year. Upon graduation in 1990 and passing the bar that summer he took a position as an attorney at the U.S. Department of Labor where he has been to this day. Bulldog is his debut novel. **Hi**

Matt, thank you for joining us today at Reader Views Kids! To get started, please tell us about your debut YA novel, Bulldog. “Lily Fairchild” about? Bulldog is about a young man growing up in Baltimore in the late 1970s who falls in with the wrong crowd after his family falls apart. He lives with his father and belongs to a gang that sells drugs and alcohol to other teenagers and engages in petty theft. In an effort to expand their activities into stealing and selling bicycles the gang sends Bulldog, whose real name is Nate, into a hardware store to steal some bolt cutters to use in stealing bicycles. The store’s owner catches Bulldog in the process but allows him to work off the cost of the bolt cutters instead of calling the police. The book is about the relationship that develops between the store owner and Bulldog.



What was your inspiration behind the story? Many years ago, I watched an episode of the television series *The Wonder Years* in which the main character, played by Fred Savage, was employed in a hardware store for a crusty old man who worked him hard but also mentored him as well. Fred Savage eventually quit and went to work at the local mall so he could hang out with his friends, but I thought so much more could have been done with the story. I think young adults like a good story without a lot of plot twists or hidden meanings often found in adult literature, and the story I came up with was perfect for a younger audience. I also drew from my experience as a teenager in the late 1970s and thought it would appeal to younger readers.

How do you think writing for the YA crowd differs from writing for a more

mature audience? I think younger readers want a good story, but not necessarily a work of art. I also think younger readers want something they can relate to without being preached to, and I tried to do that in *Bulldog*. **What do you hope young readers take away from the story?** That the world can be a complicated place to navigate where good and evil are not always easily distinguishable. A person should do the best they can but need to be ready to change their actions and attitude when new information comes to the fore. **Do you have any advice for aspiring authors?** Write what you want to write, not what someone else thinks you should write.

Read the Full Interview with Matt McCracken Here.

By Sheri Hoyte



BOOK VIDEOS

The best way to check out a book!

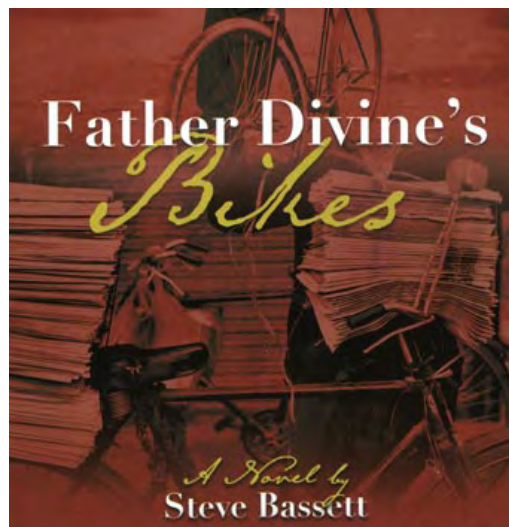
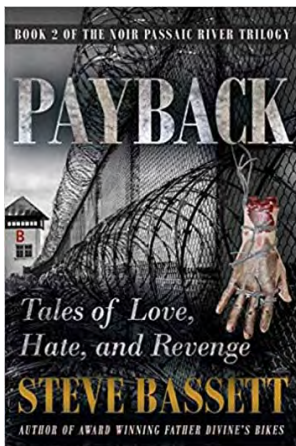
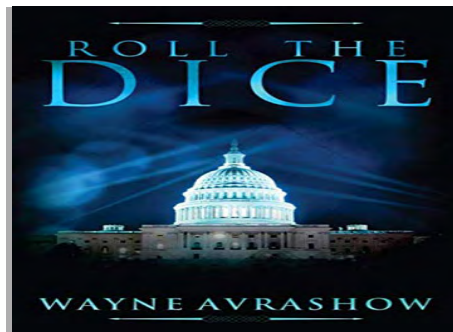
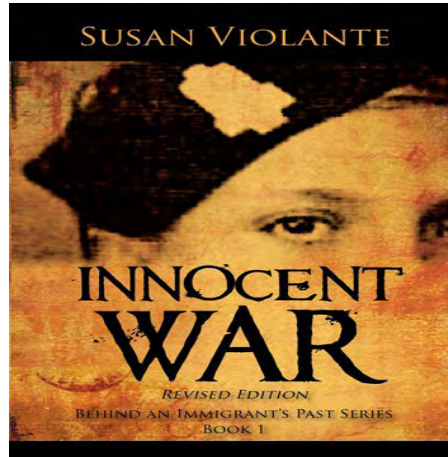
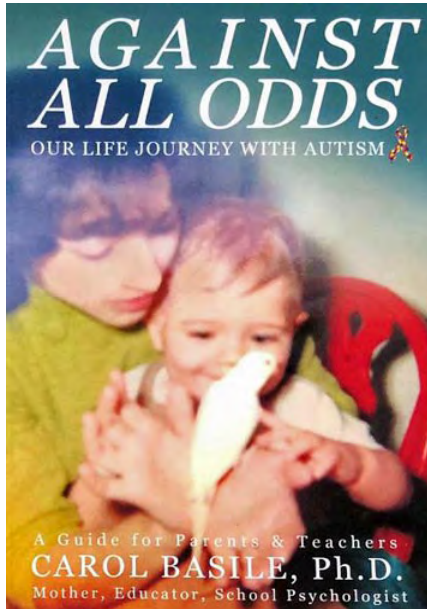
Sometimes we need a little bit more than an endorsement, book review or book cover to get a feeling for the story and decide on whether to purchase or not a title. For me, the little something is a book video. A book video not only brings to life the main story or topic for the reader, it can also portray a feeling on who the Author is and what message he or she wants to share. Below are some things I get from book videos that help make the decision to read the book but also gives me insight on its contents, improving in many cases, my reading experience.

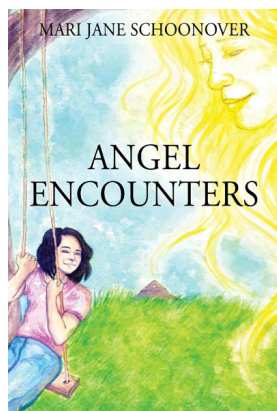
- The images – unlike movie trailers which use previews from the movie, the book video images could be off putting when reading the story, as the characters looks and settings will be a combined result of the descriptions, and the readers' imagination. But images that do not mess with such specifics and instead reflect the message, topic, or plot are perfect as a preview of a book, because it helps us to visualize in a short time the content of the book.
- Background music and narrator's voice – The sound allows the possible reader to feel the mood of the story. Is it thrilling? Mysterious? Romantic?
- Finally, but not least is the script of the slides or voice narration. Here is where we learn what the book is all about, and other information like endorsements, Author website, and where to get the book.

What is awesome about book videos is that we get all the above information in one minute or less! Check out some book videos we included here by clicking on the cover!



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Angel Encounters

By Mari Jane Schoonover

Outskirts Press (2018) - ISBN 9781478760306

Tradeback - 151 pages - \$19.95

Disappearing and reappearing tools; Windows found shut when they were left open; The rocking of an empty chair; Knowing everyone is safe; Arriving minutes after a double-murder; Escaping death sent for the wrong reason; Popping a tire on a blackened night; Helping a Mom keep her children; **The faith of a child, the courage given from prayer, and the feeling of chills will permeate each stop on this journey of a personal walk with God.**

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Flow

By Yaminah Futch

Outskirts Press (2020) - ISBN 9781977225320

Tradeback - 279 pages - \$21.95

You are here to experience yourself. Are you flowing with the universe to receive your desires? Are you enjoying this place we call home? It is here for you to enjoy. Do you know what you are made of? Are you aware of the ability to feel energy? **To get the most out of this experience you must value and respect how this universe operates.**

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The Shadow Angel: Genesis

By Robert Canter

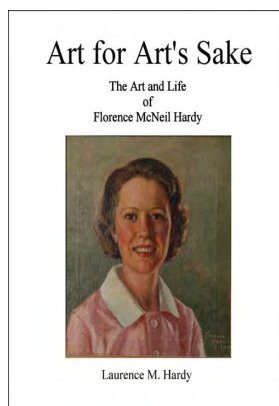
Outskirts Press (2020) - ISBN 9781977227980

Tradeback - 227 pages - \$18.95

Monsters are real. Though most of the world lives in a state of blissful ignorance, there are things that go bump in the night. **The only thing that stands between mankind and the monsters that plague the Earth is Daniel Adrian Angeleschu, The Shadow Angel.** His soul locked in perpetual servitude, Danny has served as the Vatican's greatest monster hunter for five hundred years. Now his mission brings him to South Bend, Indiana, prosperity of the 1920s.

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Art for Art's Sake. The Art and Life of Florence McNeil Hardy

By Laurence M. Hardy

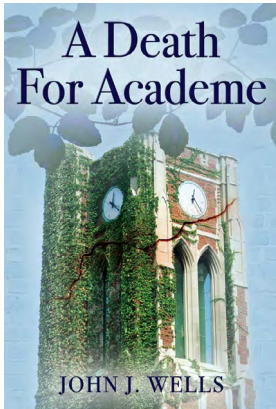
Outskirts Press (2020) - ISBN 9781977226884

Tradeback - 316 pages - \$32.95

A passion for life and learning exemplified the short career of one of the best American portrait artists of recent times. **This book follows the life and history of Florence McNeil Hardy.**

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A Death For Academe

By John J. Wells

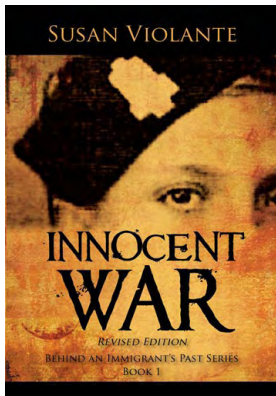
Outskirts Press (2020) - ISBN 9781977227843

Tradeback - 363 pages - \$20.95

Very often academic policy is determined less by lofty ideals than by pure politics, and the politics can be rough. So the faculty finds when, in 1994, Adrienne Plum is appointed the new academic dean with the specific charge to bring Marquette to the forefront of education in the twenty-first century. **It doesn't take long for the senior faculty to decide that the academic dean must go, at whatever cost.**

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Innocent War, Revised Edition

By Susan Violante

Outskirts Press (2011) - ISBN 9781432770471

Tradeback - 233 pages - \$19.95

Based on the taped memoirs Susan Violante received from her Italian Immigrant father, Nino; Innocent War's story (Hollywood Book Festival 2009 Honorable Mention) is a boy's adventure showing a child's point of view through the war's hardships, dangers, and tragedies of WWII, combined with his own humor, innocence, and awakening as he grows up. **WWII through and Italian 10 year old boy's eyes!**

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[View on Amazon](#)



Storms From A Clear Sky

By Denise Frisino

Fiction - Historical / Romance

Denise Frisino (2020)

ISBN 9781734928204

Tradeback - 406 pages - \$19.96

Fantastic. Boy did she do her research. The characters - well-drawn - in typical Frisino fashion and attention to intimate detail - are an instructive mixture of social interaction and rival ambitions. **I'm reading Storms From A Clear Sky a second time. I thoroughly enjoyed this book.**

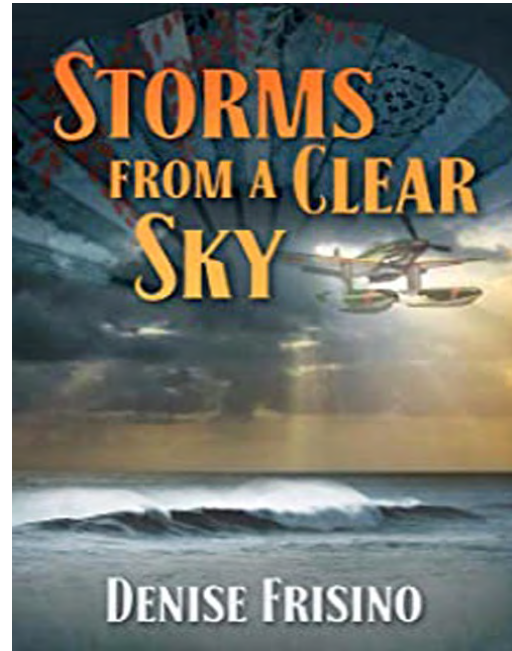
— Bob Harmon

Professor Emeritus of History Seattle University, who served in WWII at the Battle of the Bulge

Frisino's fictional story becomes more real thanks to her painstaking research. She introduces her second book with a "thank you" to the many men and women who shared their wartime experiences with her. Frisino has expertly woven many factual accounts into her tale, leading her characters on a journey into The War to End Wars. **"Storms" is an experience that easily captures readers' page-turning interest."**

— Jean Godden

Former member of the Seattle City Council Former journalist for Seattle Post-Intelligencer and Seattle Times



WII drastically changes the lives of FBI agent, Jack Huntington, and his new wife Billi. Her involvement with the Nakamura's threatens Jack's mission to unearth Japanese espionage. Torn between his duties to country and protecting Billi from the ruthless spy, Akio Sumiyoshi, Jack is forced to make a devastating decision impacting their personal relationship.

**Read First
Chapter Here**

**View on
Amazon Here**

INSIDE SCOOP LIVE PODCAST OF THE MONTH

Derryen Plante received her BS from St. Lawrence University in 2015 (mathematics-economics combined and psychology), her master's degree in criminal justice from Boston University in 2019, and is currently working on her doctorate degree in business administration from Northcentral University. She currently works as a Principal Revenue Agent for the State of Maine, where she resides with her two adorable cats, Kanga and Roo.

She wrote this book to create a connection with others suffering with an invisible injury and to offer them strength to build a new life post-injury. From the broken pieces, she was able to create something beautiful. She hopes she can inspire others to do the same.

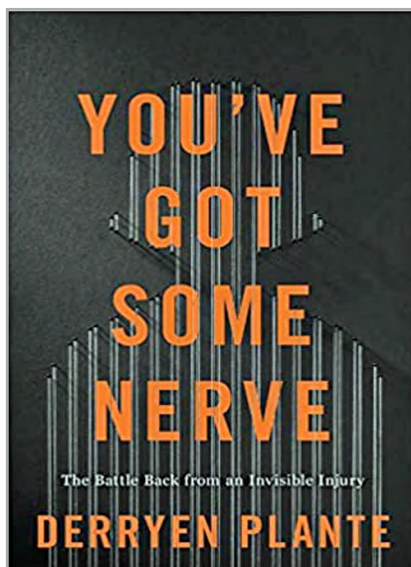
To learn more about Derryen and her work visit her website at DerryenPlante.com.



[Click Here To Listen to Podcast](#)

Topics of Conversation

- The 20-second attack that changed her life forever
- Writing about her experience as a way to help others
- How her experience changed her perception of depression, PTSD and other invisible illnesses
- Recovery - Expectations vs. Reality
- Centering your mysteries around a social justice issue



BAREFOOT LIBRARIAN CORNER



Eve Panzer

Eve Panzer reviews books for Reader Views Kids as well as her own business, Barefoot Librarian. Monthly she publishes the Barefoot Librarian Newsletter. She sells children's books published by Barefoot Books and Usborne Books & More at book fairs, educational conferences, community events, and online. She earned her Masters in Library and Information Science from the University of Texas in Austin and worked as a school librarian before retiring to start her own business. www.barefootlibrarian.com

Kindness is Never Out of Season

January 1 is universally accepted as the first day of the secular new year, even though other cultures and religions celebrate their new year at different times. Whether it is a religious or secular new year, humans often use the new year to reflect on our lives and improve ourselves. The year 2020 will long be remembered for many things. Unfortunately, many are not happy memories. However, throughout the tough challenges, there was a common thread – kindness.

I recently heard a story about an educator teaching comparative religion who found that religions shared this common goal of kindness. But how do we define kindness? Is it just being nice? The teacher gave an answer that resonated with me. Kindness requires action, while nice is just a feeling or attribute. This past year shows us we can and should always choose kindness, something we should all model for children. Picture books provide a useful springboard for sharing, discussing, and brainstorming acts of kindness.

One of my favorite picture books about kindness is **What Does it Mean to Be Kind by Rana DiOrio**, which I have reviewed below. I also recommend the following books modeling empathy, giving, as well as kindness:

Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts

Enemy Pie by Derek Munson

Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson

The Hundred Dresses by Eleanor Estes

During the holidays, acts of kindness are common. However, it is important to teach children that kindness is always in season. So always have a handful of picture books featuring kindness to share throughout the year and make kindness a habit.

Eve

Barefoot Librarian

THE BAREFOOT LIBRARIAN BOOKS OF THE MONTH



What Does It Mean To Be Kind?

By Rana DiOrio - Illustrated by Stéphane Jorisch

Published by Little Pickle Press (2015) - ISBN 9781939775092

Age 4 and up - Hardback - 64 pages - 17.95

“**What Does It Mean To Be Kind?**” starts with examples of different definitions for the word “kind.” “Kind” can mean category, “sort of” (as in “kind of”), etc. But this book makes clear that it is addressing acts of kindness and includes a myriad of examples. Some are everyday acts of kindness, such as holding a door open for others or picking up litter. Other examples are refreshingly unexpected such as “...seeing the best in people even when they are struggling to do their best” and “...allowing yourself to make and learn from your mistakes.”

The book concludes with the following “Being kind means having the courage to treat others the way you like to be treated. So show your friends what it means to be kind. And spread the word – if we can all be kind to each other and to ourselves, the world will be more loving, caring, and harmonious.”

The art is engaging, colorful, and whimsical. The characters depicted are diverse. And be sure to download the free discussion guide for Pre K – Third grade by going to What Does It Mean To Be Kind Discussion Guide. I highly recommend this book to everyone in the human race!

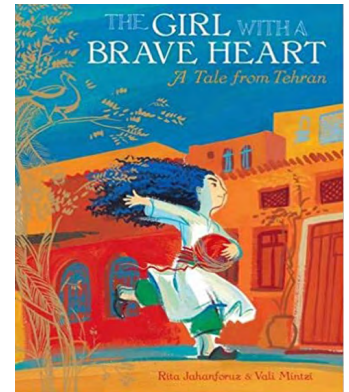
The Girl with the Brave Heart: A Tale from Tehran

By Rita Jahanforuz- Illustrated by Vali Mintzi

Published by Barefoot Books (2013) ISBN 9781846869310

Age 6 to 10 - Tradeback - 40 pages - \$8.99

The Girl with the Brave Heart: A Tale from Tehran is a lyrically written folktale that uses illustrations throughout to weave artfully in pieces of Iranian culture. It begins with a familiar fairy tale premise – an orphaned girl left only with her stepmother and stepsister and forced to do the housekeeping. However, this story delves deeper to reveal a young girl who sees the kindness in others and practices kindness herself.



Shiraz loses a ball of wool left to her by her birth mother and must retrieve it from the neighbor’s yard. The neighbor is an elderly woman whose house and person are unkempt. Her appearance evokes fear in Shiraz. However, Shiraz’s heart softens as she notes to herself, “This old lady has kind eyes.” She readily gives the old woman the benefit of the doubt, “She looks scary, but I expect she has just forgotten how to look after herself properly.” The woman agrees to return the wool to Shiraz if she completes some chores. Shiraz readily agrees and is rewarded. The jealous stepsister tries to earn the same reward but fails since she lacks the essential ingredient – kindness.

The text is complemented superbly with illustrations that use broad strokes and vivid colors. There is a childlike simplicity to the artwork, which makes it appealing and engaging. This story of kindness delivers a universal message while introducing the reader to the Iranian culture, a rare find in children’s literature.



DOING EVERYTHING YOURSELF

by Susan Violante

I have been known for wanting to have my hands in everything (especially when I was younger and an avid multitasker). Aging and experience has taught me though, that sometimes delegating is the best solution. However, delegating doesn't mean not being involved! We must learn how things are done to know that our delegates are doing things right. But learning is not done in one sitting. We must also update ourselves as technology updates every day! Therefore, the DIY trend sometimes can be daunting. Lucky for us many professionals in the Publishing and PR world are sharing key points about the business as content for their blogs, how to books, workshops and other platforms.

Granted, it is difficult if not impossible to keep up with an infinite number of websites, classes, books and guides. So, I decided to share how I do it.

- First, I determine which aspects of my business I must keep myself on top with. I decided that I needed to always be updated on Business strategies and tools, Marketing and PR strategies and tools, and Project management tools.
- Then, I looked for what was available locally, and found places like Score.org, Writers League of Texas, Author To influencer DIY Community, Writing Groups for all levels...etc. Some of these have fees, some them don't. The trick is to budget and spend in what offers the most and that you know you can commit to. It is in events that I attended and mentorships that I was lucky enough to find that I found the best tools to keep moving forward..
- To find what worked for me, I had to commit time to research. Google and I are besties. I not only use google for research, I also use the google tools as needed. It is through google that I found software to schedule social media posts, project management, marketing, and even writing to keep me organized.

A DIY does not imply isolating yourself as you try to keep up with all the different hats. It means building a support system so that you can manage your efforts along with the efforts of your delegates wisely and efficiently. In world PR By the Book's Accelerator, Score, and Google have been amazing as they informed me, inspire me, and guide me through the maze of a DIY and small business to help me grow. Only by exploring we find the best path to our goals. Fill that path with supportive allies!



WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE US?

by Susan Violante

My father (an Italian WWII survivor, and immigrant) always said: “When things go bad in the US, that means the rest of the world hit the fan...” We never thought much about these words until now. Seeing people storming into the USA Capitol was something I never thought it would happen in my lifetime, but somehow always new that this time was due to arrive at some point. Afterall, all great empires fall a fact that has been proven by history all over the world. I have seen this happen in Venezuela (country where I was born and raised), so I can't help comparing situations to find similarities that might help me understand what is going on in the US. .

- **Loss of moral values and ethics in high level leader groups**

This is true in all different aspects of the US structure: Political, Economic, Religious, Educational, Health...etc. When leaders act only to benefit themselves and their pockets all rules become breakable. I am speaking about Corporations, Doctors, Lawyers, Teachers. It is the Convenient job substituting any vocational reason to work..

- **People's Apathy**

It is ironic that so many lives were sacrificed so that people from all walks and backgrounds could have a voice in society, and now that we can speak out most of choose not to. We are all fat and happy dealing with our own lives without realizing that we are attached by each other's hip and by looking the other way we are hurting ourselves. Not speaking out on things that we see that are just wrong is giving your voice away along with your own rights.

- **Lack of real-life education at home and schools**

Morality is not Religion's exclusive topic. In fact, morality has nothing to do with religion and belief. Being kind, fair, ethical, mindful always came from home and school education. Somehow, we are no longer teaching it in schools as they focus only on the standardized test scores, nor at home of parents are too busy dealing with finances and work demands.

These points are common within all historical empires and great civilizations that have fallen. So, my question is why is all the above happening now and can we fix it? I think that in good times people become lazy and accustomed to their own reality, so they detached themselves from those who are not in their same circumstances. I believe that they are happening because regular people do not take the time to expand their knowledge farther than their own reality. This has made us live in bubbles vulnerable and blind to how fragile our bubble is. Reading diverse books, traveling outside our country, meeting, and getting to know people different from ourselves are ways to learn life lessons from others that we would never be able to learn in lifestyles.

It is by learning those lessons and transmitting them to our children through school or at home by sharing those stories we read or heard from different people; that we will be able to fix what is going on in the US and the world. I don't know this is just my two cents on this...**what do you think?**

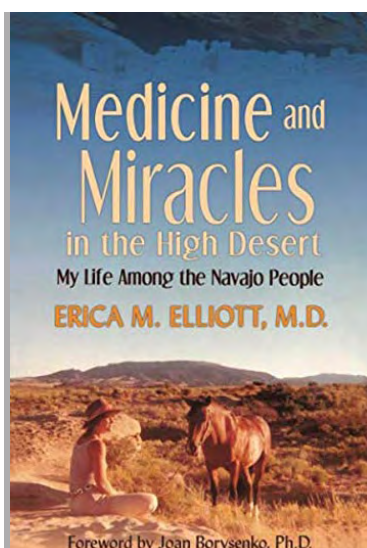
Featured Authors

Erica M. Elliott, M.D.

Erica Elliott, M.D., specializes in both family practice and environmental medicine, with a busy private practice in Santa Fe. Dr. Elliott is also an author and public speaker. She has given weeklong workshops at both Omega and Esalen Institutes and is co-author of the book, “Prescriptions for a Healthy House.” Dr. Elliott is often referred to as “The Medical Detective” since she attracts people from all parts of the country and even abroad who have mysterious and puzzling medical problems that have not responded to mainstream medical care. Dr. Elliott is often .



referred to as “The Medical Detective” since she attracts people from all parts of the country and even abroad who have mysterious and puzzling medical problems that have not responded to mainstream medical care.



This is the true story of a young Anglo woman, Erica Elliott, who comes to the Navajo Reservation in 1971 as a newly minted schoolteacher, knowing nothing about her students or their culture. After several blunders and misunderstandings, and beset by loneliness and despair, Erica makes a determined effort to overcome the barriers of language and culture. From the moment she begins learning the Navajo language, the people open their hearts and homes to her, inviting her into a mystical world that most people don't know exists, a world that profoundly impacts the rest of her life. Years later she returns as a medical doctor to serve the Navajo People. [This book is a page-turner that you won't be able to put down.](#)



Medicine and Miracles in the High Desert

By Erica M. Elliott, M.D.

NonFiction - Biography/Memoir

Balboa Press (2019)

ISBN 9781982220983

Tradeback - 202 pages - \$14.99

This book is sorely needed at this moment in America, when divisive voices incessantly warn us of the other, the foreigner, those who “are not like us... Mystery and Medicine in the High Desert: My Life Among the Navajo People reveals how diversity and inclusiveness can enrich our own society — [a lesson on which our future may depend.](#)

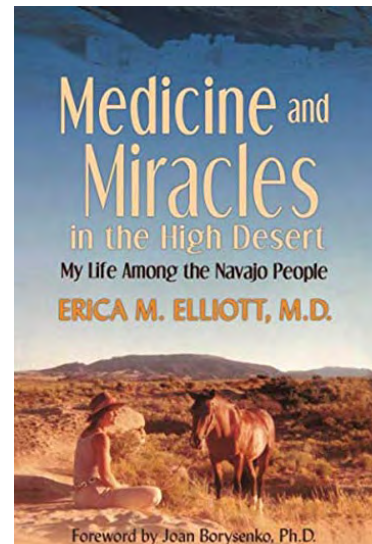
— Larry Dossey, MD

author of “One Mind: How Our Individual Mind Is Part of a Greater Consciousness and Why It Matters

Such an inspiring, life-affirming, yet tough tale, woven through with a strong drive to realize her life path. [Beautifully written. Elliott is an exciting new voice..](#)

— Natalie Goldberg

author of “Writing Down the Bones.



[Read First Chapter Here](#)

[View on Amazon Here](#)

A bride and groom are shown in profile, facing each other and holding hands. The bride is on the left, wearing a white veil and a white face mask. The groom is on the right, wearing a black face mask and a black suit jacket. They are both looking at each other. The background is a solid yellow color.

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