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BEST BOOKS

JANUARY

2024



[KATHLEEN
CURTIS WILSON]



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- *What do the words “writer’s block” mean to you?*

If I have writer’s block, I go for a walk or call a friend to take a break. Character development is ongoing, constantly changing from great euphoria to disappearing in the blink of an eye.

- *How do you develop your plot and characters?*

Finding time, devoid of outside responsibilities, is a constant struggle to my writing. The best time to plot and scheme is in the night and I keep pen and paper next to the bed. My books cover very diverse subjects that educate and entertain readers to little known facts in a wider world.

- *How many books have you written, and which is your favorite?*

I have been writing for 40 years. I’ve published 5 books, many journal articles, and presented academic papers in the USA and abroad. I recently finished my first novel.

- *How much research did you need to do for your book?*

I spent years in field research to write about Appalachian culture and historic textile traditions in the region.

- *What inspired the idea for your book?*

Adventurous Max Flax was great fun to create. He was an inspiration while I was living in Northern Ireland to write my most comprehensive and richly illustrated book, *Irish People, Irish Linen*. I love to garden and thought children should know more about how clothes are made. He would be a charming cartoon character.

- *If you’re planning a sequel, can you share a tiny bit about your plans for it?*

I have thought about sequel characters for Max, such as Sukiyaki Silk and Crabby Cotton.



Follow along with Max Flax as he is transformed from a plant growing in the Irish countryside to become a linen shirt worn by a coffee plantation owner in South America.

Linen has been used for thousands of years by everyone, rich and poor, old and young. Before manmade fabrics, all clothing was made of silk, cotton, wool, and flax. Join Max on his adventure from Ireland to South America.



Kathleen Curtis Wilson

Kathleen Curtis Wilson has been an honorary fellow at Virginia Humanities, Charlottesville, Virginia for thirty years. As a nationally known researcher, writer, editor, and speaker, her work has been recognized in the publication of countless articles in professional publications and four books, including *Uplifting the South—Mary Mildred Sullivan’s Legacy for Appalachia* and *Textile Art from Southern Appalachia: The Quiet Work of Women*. She guest curated a multi-venue international exhibition by the same name that completed a two-year tour at the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh. A renowned authority on Appalachian crafts, Wilson served as editor of the Craft Section of the award-winning *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*, (2006), and completed the history of *The Southern Industrial Educational Association, 1905-1926*, a digital resource at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Wilson’s third book, *Irish People, Irish Linen*, published by Ohio University Press in 2011, is a seminal study of the globalization of linen produced on the island of Ireland for over 400 years. During her five-year tenure as visiting scholar and honorary fellow at the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, Wilson interviewed linen makers and owners, uncovered the finest examples of linen in private and public textile collections, and consulted with the foremost textile authorities to write a book that is lavishly illustrated and engagingly written. Each chapter tells of art, social and economic history, design, fashion, architecture, technology, and cultural traditions that celebrate Ireland’s linen industry.

Wilson was born in Michigan where she studied weaving at the Cranbrook Schools. A lifelong lover of textiles, she lived in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee for many years. She and her husband live in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Why Do You Need A Website?

They say the world is now in our hands, and the information is at our fingertips. There are no second thoughts about that. The internet is fantastic and continues to transform the way we connect with people, share information, and live a quality life.

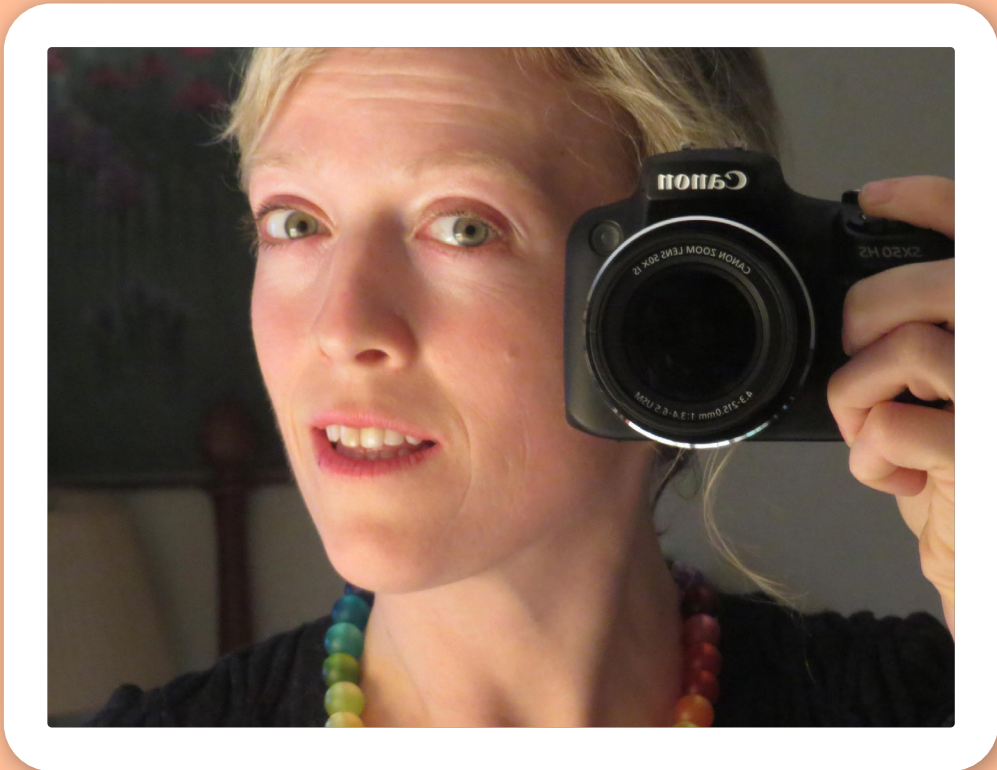
A lot of people spend most of their time on the internet. This could be for buying a product, using a service, reading a blog, entertaining themselves, or for various other reasons.

Considering the amount of time people spend on the internet, businesses too have moved online. Having a website

with a presence on social media has become the need of the hour. If you are an author and do not own a website, you might be losing a lot of potential book sales online. Therefore, knowing the importance of a website is key to growing your credibility exponentially.

Having a website makes it very easy for people to find you, read up about your book, discover what you do, and answer a bunch of questions they have on your title. By having a website people will be able to find your book when they search for the title on a search engine like Google, Yahoo or Bing.





Mary Brown

Mary Brown grew up in Port Townsend, Washington. She visited Seattle regularly throughout the 1980s and 1990s and graduated from the University of Washington, Seattle, in 2001. Her idea for *Seattle's Used Bookstores* came from a photography seminar she took as an undergraduate. She is a lifelong learner (Ph.D., Art History, CUNY Graduate Center), traveler (Europe, Latin America, and Asia), Peace Corps Volunteer (Thailand, 2002-2004), and lover of books and book places. She currently lives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, with her son, Xavier.

- *What do the words “writer’s block” mean to you?*

Writer’s block is when you circle your home hundreds of times throughout the day, doing everything except sitting down to write. The Block makes your laptop look like your enemy, a dark screen staring at you menacingly, knowing you are terrified of facing the blank page. It is a rock in your stomach that gets bigger and bigger until all you can do is remain motionless. When you try to stand and walk toward the work, it feels like wading through thigh-deep molasses, like a dream in which you are running from danger, but your legs cannot move. You feel ashamed of the inaction and hopeless that you will ever write again. Then, one day, you break through and can hardly contain the creative storm that has been brewing during the difficult time.

- *How long have you been writing, or when did you start?*

I remember being selected for our regional Young Writer’s Conference in Washington State as early as the fourth grade. At the time, I was aware it was an honor to be chosen, but I was happiest about being able to take a bus trip away from my small hometown to a nearby city with my best friend, Megan, who was also selected. We attended fiction and poetry workshops, and I enjoyed the colorful food treats and hot meals provided during the day. From these middle school days on, teachers praised my writing, and my essays were frequently selected as examples for other students to emulate. As I began traveling in my teenage years (this was the 1990s, before the digital age), I enjoyed composing letters to family and friends, which were also praised. My grandparents, especially, were delighted by my letters and frequently shared them with their friends to

demonstrate that letter-writing was not yet a lost art among the younger generation. At the turn of the 21st century, letters and postcards became emails, then texts, then social media posts, but I kept writing essays and research papers as a college and graduate student. I now enjoy writing art historical essays and works of reflective non-fiction based on my own observations and experiences.

- *What, to you, are the most important elements of good writing?*

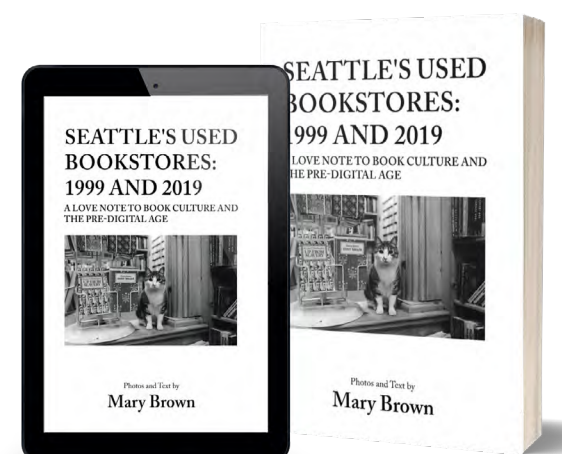
Vividness, clarity, and concision; however, any writing that makes a reader think and feel is good writing.

- *What’s your favorite and least favorite part of publishing?*

The process of turning an idea into a physical book is exhilarating. I also enjoy the revision and re-writing processes, developing ideas more deeply, and making new discoveries about a topic I am interested in. I am not too keen on the pressure to market a book, however, although I understand that publishing is a business and would not exist without sales and marketing.

- *What is the ultimate goal of the book?*

I would like to see my book made into a documentary film that honors the booksellers and their unique stores before they disappear. I hope my book encourages people to visit used and independent bookstores more frequently and reconsider their relationship with social media and digital devices.



Seattle's Used Bookstores: 1999 and 2019 is a collection of essays and photographs celebrating independent used bookstores in Seattle just before and twenty years after the city's tech boom. It is an homage to the culture of print and the world of used bookstores, reveling in their randomness, quantity of books, resident cats, patrons, and hard-working booksellers. Words and images convey the simple joy of reading, the magic of books, and the unique spaces created within bookstores.

Jo Ann Carty



I was born and raised in Harlem in New York City. My mother was from Crooked Island in the Bahamas and my father was from Tortola, British Virgin Islands. They met in New York City. I lived in the city projects in Harlem New York City until I graduated high school.

I attended elementary, junior high school, and high school in Harlem. My first year attending Julia Richmond High School, my music teacher thought I had a great voice and encouraged me to try out for the High School of Music and Art. She taught me an Italian song, “Caro Mio Ben,” which I sang to audition. I was able to spend my next three years attending the High School of Music and Art. There is where I met and became close friends for the first time with a Caucasian classmate.

I was raised in a church where almost everything was determined to be a sin. There were a lot of things I needed to learn, so even though I was married at age 18, I chose not to have children until I obtained my bachelor’s degree at age 27. I lived through a lot of turmoil, but God was with me. I have a relationship with Jesus Christ and know He is the reason I was able to survive.

- *How did you come up with the title for your book?*

While attending church services on a Sunday morning, my pastor mentioned during his message, “You ought to write a book, and call it “But God.” I am a literal person. When God speaks through a minister, I choose to listen.

- *What inspired the idea for your book?*

The idea for my book came from my then pastor, Rico Sharp. While preaching a message, he stated to us in the congregation, “you should write a book and call it, “But God.” I began writing the book. I then attended a conference where T.D. Jakes was a visiting minister. He pointed in my direction and stated, “Finish that book.” Of course, I did what God told me to do. It was God who gave me the inspiration to write my book.

- *What is the ultimate goal for the book?*

The ultimate goal for writing the book is to be obedient to God. I also wanted young women to read my book to see the mistakes I’ve made in my life and to help them to avoid making the same mistakes.

- *How much research did you need to do for your book?*

My book is the story of my life, so much research was not necessary. I simply told my experiences.

- *What part of the book did you have the hardest time writing?*

I did not find it difficult once I started writing my book. I simply told the story of my life.



It was always my desire to be in a marriage relationship with both parties loving and respecting one another. It was also important to me that both of us have a relationship with Christ Jesus. I thought I had that when I married a man of God who was a preacher, teacher, and deacon of a church. You would think I married the man of my dreams, but it was not so. I stayed in the relationship for a long time, twenty-eight years before realizing it would not get better. After leaving this marriage, I looked for love but only found deception. Now I have recommitted my life to Christ and am allowing him to bring to me Mr. Right instead of Mr. Right Now.

Press Release

Why Press Releases are more important than ever:

Social media has quickly become an indispensable tool for authors. While many have figured out what it takes to drive a successful branding platform and social media campaign, an important component are press releases.

Social media has changed how people communicate around the globe. It's led political revolutions and even created pop culture phenomena. As businesses scramble to figure out how to harness the power of social media to reach new audiences, a familiar marketing tool—the press release—has now gained fresh purpose. Press releases have become a vital tool and more important than ever in successfully promoting your book. Find out how you can leverage press releases and specific content to help traditional publishers, film companies & Literary Agents learn more about your book.

The New Face of Public Relations

For most authors, public relations and social media marketing provide a solid foundation and baseline for brand awareness and general marketing campaigns. Before the advent of social media, authors had to go through a long and arduous process of contacting journalists who acted as gatekeepers.



Social Media Marketing

This time is the perfect time to advertise and push your book even further. We make use of the fact that we are just launching the book. When most people are staying quiet because they have decided to just observe the market, it is the best time for us to make noise which will make us loud as ever especially that we have millions of book readers around the world sitting at home with a lot of time in their hands but with pretty much not a lot to do. Our challenge is to give them materials that are worth spending their time on. We would like to have your books as one of their top choices. We will use Facebook and Instagram, the largest Social Media platforms, to promote your books.

Social media marketing is a powerful way for aspiring authors to reach prospects and avid readers. People discover, learn about, follow, and shop from brands on social media, so if you're not on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, you're missing out! Great marketing on social media can bring remarkable success to your books, creating devoted book reader advocates and even driving leads and sales.

Why Facebook and Instagram?

Let's start with the facts. 80% of all Internet users use FACEBOOK. Even 65% of adults over the age of 65 use Facebook. It has over 1.85 billion users. Most users check their Facebook page multiple times per day. Regardless of who your customers are, they are using Facebook. And, they use it daily. Therefore, one of the most important benefits of Facebook advertising is that your customers use it daily.

With over 800 million monthly active users, over 220 million users are Americans.

INSTAGRAM has come a long way since it originated in 2010, and businesses are starting to take note. Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook, saw so much potential in

the platform and the benefits of Instagram that he bought it out just 18 months after it launched, for \$1 billion, and the platform has continued to grow ever since. Businesses have started to react more and more to this rapidly growing platform, and if you analyze the top 100 brands in the world, 90% of them have an Instagram account.

This will be a SPONSORED ad, and if you have been to Facebook lately, have watched a video or two, chances are, you may have seen some of these ads. We know how annoying and aggressive they can get and that's how we will be on your ad. Some users may be confused on why they are receiving these types of ads but Facebook has their details including their likes and wants during the creation of the profiles. Also, every time we use these platforms, our browsing behaviours including our searches, inquiries, commented items and posts, etc, gets retained(scary, i know but that's a fact) to be used for certain things such as marketing and advertising.

I am on Facebook. Why can't I just do the ad myself?

The majority of the people you're connected to on Facebook probably aren't your ideal reader. For example, let's say you're a sci-fi author. How many of your friends are into sci-fi? Probably not a huge percentage. However, by running a sponsored Facebook ad, you can get your book in front of a massive audience of hardcore sci-fi lovers. The simple truth is that Facebook ads allow you to reach an audience you couldn't reach otherwise. This audience is made up of the people most likely to buy your book.

We will customize your ad to fit the right people - from age, sex and even location - we can make it very targeted. Once they click the ad, we control where they will be taken to, it's customizable. We either take them to your Amazon profile or your website. Either way, they will also know more about your books and about you as an author.

In short, the ad is just the start, our landing page is the key. Wherever they may be taken, we will make it a point that they will have the ability to purchase your book, know more about you as an author, your other projects and passion. etc. We are like hitting multiple books or products with just one ad here.

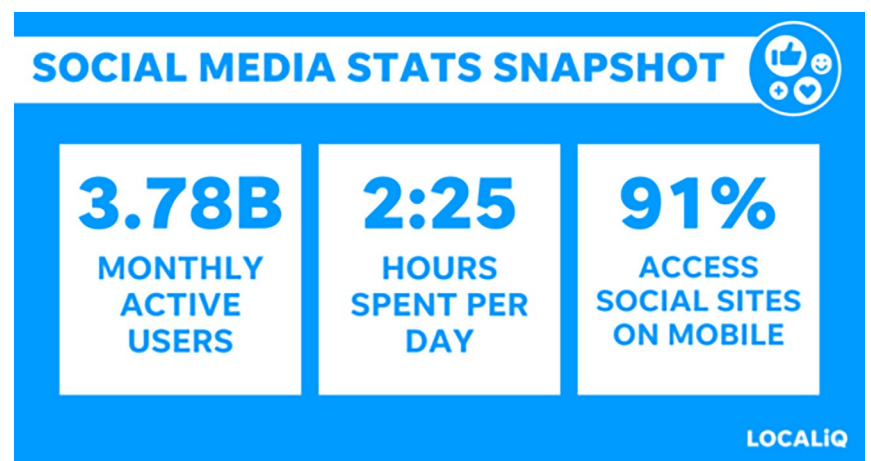
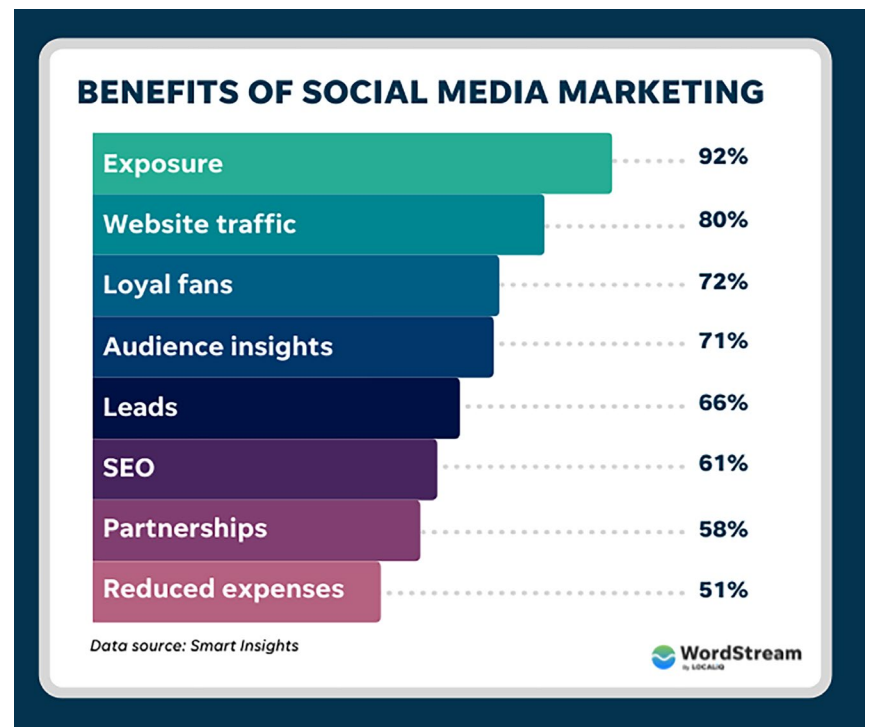
While the ad is running, we can send you a report on a weekly(or monthly) basis on how the ad is currently performing for us. After each month, we review the report and then decide if we need to add or change coverage such as location (state), age, etc. Once the ad has completed its full run, we will send a fulfillment report with complete details to give us an idea on what to do next in terms of promotion and marketing or where to take the book's general direction.

The ad will potentially reach approximately 4-5 million people each month and be clicked on average 5,000 times weekly. The most exciting thing about this is that we do not know who these people are, really. All we know is that their profiles fit the kind of book that we are advertising, we could be talking just the regular book readers, parents, teachers or major decision makers, producers, literary agents, etc. All we need is just a single solid break out of these kinds of contacts and the book, or your other books, your career, could potentially take off, instantaneously.

This particular advertising will peak at around 4-7 months after its run(depending on the length of time the ad was running) but residual effect will still be evident even 10-12 months after.

According to a recent research, Facebook and Instagram top the list for the social media outlets being visited by Americans these days, MULTIPLE times a day!

Another interesting fact is that most users who are the most active are the ones who belong to the middle to upper class of the society.



Carolyn Stovall

Twitter (X) Carolyn Stovall @carolynstoval19

Facebook @ Carolyn Stovall

Instagram @falcile7

<https://carolynastovall.com>



Born in the summer of 1960, raised by my grandparents on a farm in Dawson, Georgia until the age of five. Relocated to Florida with my mother. When I started school, I inherited a stuttering problem and was very shy. As my school aged years when on, I participate in activities such as dance and cheerleading which help me tremendously with my shyness and speech problem. Even though my grandparents lived next door to a church I don't remember being baptized until I became an adult. I've been blessed with two children and a wonderful grandson. I'm a professional medical coder by trade. Also, I have a gift for writing poetry which has been a passion that has come to fruition through prayer and with the love of God that keeps me going.

- *What inspired the idea for your book?*

It was a "God" ideal who inspired me to write "Forever Speaking" book. Writing down my poems was already a hobby and passion of mine. My book was already placed on the inside of me. Ready and waiting for a God given moment and time; because he is forever speaking.

- *How did you come up with the title of your book?*

As I would write down my poems/ thoughts on paper I realize that another person was speaking on the inside of me. That's how I felt in that moment of time. After each episode would occur, I would say "these words are not from me; it's from someone else." And that person is God. In the Bible "Exodus" it says God spoke to Moses and told him to write down the law of the Ten Commandments. God spoke through the prophet Moses and many other people in those biblical times and he still speaks to us today. So I decided the title of my book would be "Forever Speaking" because God is always speaking to us if we are listening.

- *What do you need in your writing space to help you stay focused?*

My writing space is very important to me, I need quietness, no distractions and well rested/relaxation. I need to hear my thoughts or what God is speaking to me

to write down. Each and every word has to flow clearly when trying get my audience attention. I believe words are very powerful, they can heal or hurt.

- *What is the ultimate goal for the book?*

The ultimate goal is to reach as many people worldwide as possible. To let them know that God's love for us is everlasting and that God speaks to us always. He speaks through his word (the bible), dreams, visions and a still small voice "1 Kings 19:12-13." We are his children and he want to commune with us daily. That's how he takes care of us by his healing power of words.

- *What advice would you give to a writer working on their first book?*

When working a first book; be true and genuine about what you are writing about. If you have a passion to be a writer being authentic should come naturally. A writer wants to share what's on their heart to encourage others through their words.

Listening to that still small voice. God is always here with us; trying to get our attention. Forever Speaking is a book consist of poems downloaded through dreams and visions sometimes in the most imitate times of prayer or the quiet moments. Written to share with others to help bring about healing to those who read. As children of god with an listening ear, the more we listen the more we hear the more we see clearer we're set free to live life to the fullness. →



Book Trailers

In case you're unfamiliar with the concept, a book trailer is a short promotional video for a book.

As the term suggests, it functions like a movie trailer, giving people an in-depth look at a newly released or soon-to-be-released title.

However, there are a few key ways in which book trailers differ from movie trailers.

For example...

- Book trailers tend to be much shorter than movie trailers, usually 30 to 90 seconds long.
- Trailers for books are focused on teasing the audience without giving away too much.
- Unlike movie trailers, which are displayed in previews, book trailers are meant to stand alone.

Ultimately, it's about engaging potential readers and getting them familiar with the narrative.

Book trailers combine audio and visual components to deliver a more well-rounded sensory experience than just text or graphics.

This means your video has the potential to leave a lasting impression on viewers. Plus, it can help your

book stand out from others that don't offer a synopsis in this medium.

As mentioned previously, many authors don't put the time and effort into creating book trailers, which means you can stand out from the crowd by producing one for your next title.

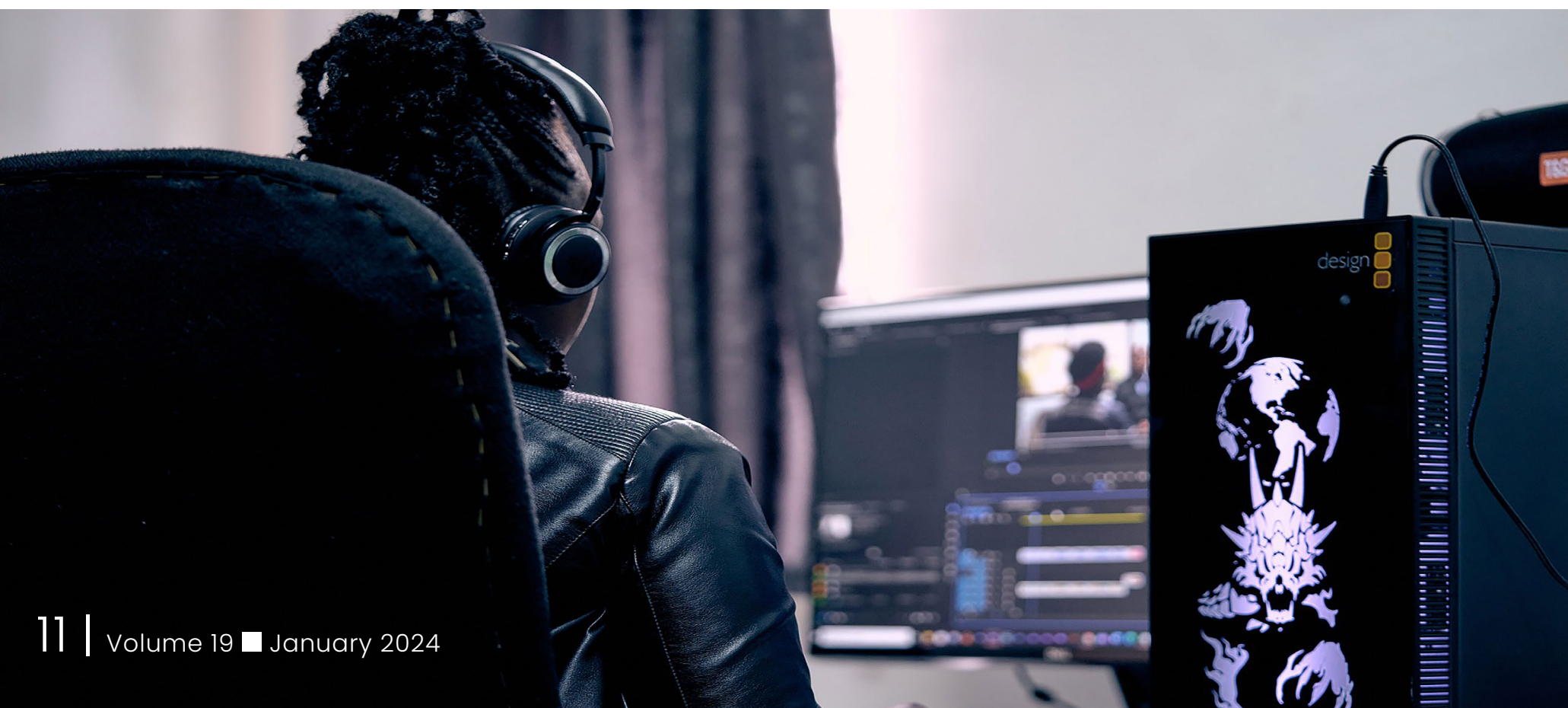
By nature, video is easy to consume and share. Therefore, when you create a book trailer, you give potential readers a fun and simple way to learn what your book is about.

Moreover, you increase your book's exposure by creating something people are more likely to share with others.

To get the most out of your book trailer, it's important to feature it in various places, including...

- On your website
- On your book's Amazon sales page
- On your social media pages
- On literary websites

In doing so, you can reach a broader audience and get in front of those who aren't familiar with your work already.



Snips from Publishers Weekly

January 22, 2024 issue

News

Big Five Dominate Bestsellers

In 2023, the major publishers maintained their grip on the bestseller lists, but indies scored some notable successes

The Big Five's grip on the hardcover bestseller lists continued in 2023, as 84.8% of the 2,080 positions on PW's weekly hardcover lists were occupied by titles published by major houses. But for the second year in a row, the Big Five's hold on the lists loosened a bit, dropping roughly three percentage points from 2022, on the heels of a similar three-percentage-point drop that year compared to 2021.

Penguin Random House's failed acquisition of Simon & Schuster in late 2022 didn't prevent the nation's largest trade publisher from increasing its hold on the hardcover bestseller lists last year, with its share of list positions rising to 36.7%, from 34.6% in 2022. Simon & Schuster (14.2% in 2023 vs. 14.3% in 2022) and Macmillan (7.7% in 2023 vs. 7.9% in 2022) had minimal declines, while HarperCollins (16% in 2023 vs. 17.5% in 2022) and Hachette Book Group (10.2% in 2023 vs. 13.7% in 2022) posted more significant drops.

The two independent publishers that did the most to chip

away at the Big Five's control of the hardcover lists were Entangled Publishing and Grove Atlantic. Entangled's original edition of *Fourth Wing* by Rebecca Yarros was on the hardcover list for 33 weeks, and a special edition of the novel was on the list for six weeks, as was Yarros's *Iron Flame*, which was published late in the year. Grove's *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese also stayed on the list for 33 weeks.

Given changing market realities, PW is breaking out trade paperback bestseller lists from mass market lists for the first time this year in its annual analysis of bestsellers by corporation. That breakdown shows that the Big Five's control over the trade paperback lists (61.6%) isn't as great as its control over the hardcover lists, but with an important caveat: "entrepreneurial" publisher Sourcebooks was the top publisher of trade paperback bestsellers last year.

In all, Sourcebooks led with 29 titles on the trade paperback list, occupying 213 positions of the 1,040 positions and accounting for 20.5% of all trade paperback bestseller slots. Since the beginning of 2023, PRH has owned a 53% stake in the Naperville, Ill.-based publisher, but Sourcebooks remains "structurally and operationally" separate from PRH, sources explained, and Circana BookScan (which powers PW's bestseller lists) continues to measure Sourcebooks' bestseller list share separately from that of PRH. Were they combined, PRH/Sourcebooks would have controlled 36.8% of all trade paperback bestseller slots last year—approximately the same as PRH's share of slots on the hardcover lists.

And in a further note on Sourcebooks' 2023 trade paperback performance, 23 of its bestsellers were published by its Bloom Books imprint, which accounted for 195 trade paperback slots. Ana Huang was Bloom's big star, placing seven titles on the PW trade paperback charts for a total of 123 weeks.

In 2023, HarperCollins and its Harlequin imprints had the largest share of mass market bestseller list positions. And while the Big Five had a hefty 83.6% share of mass market bestseller list positions, nearly all of the remaining positions on the PW mass market list were held by titles from Kensington, which racked up 40 mass market bestsellers occupying 160 positions. The indie publisher's 15.4% share of mass market list positions placed it third in mass market bestseller dominance, trailing only HarperCollins and PRH.

Of course, mass market sales have been on a steady decline in recent years. According to Circana BookScan, the format accounted for only 3.4% of unit sales in 2023. —Jim Milliot

2023 BESTSELLERS BY CORPORATION				
HARDCOVER				
	Books	Positions	2023 Share*	2022 Share*
PRH	192	767	36.7%	34.6%
HarperCollins	107	334	16.0%	17.5%
Simon & Schuster	92	296	14.2%	14.3%
Hachette	54	213	10.2%	13.7%
Macmillan	71	160	7.7%	7.9%
			84.8%	88.0%
TRADE PAPER				
	Books	Positions	2023 Share*	2022 Share*
Simon & Schuster	15	196	18.8%	-
PRH	41	170	16.3%	-
Hachette	30	152	14.6%	-
HarperCollins	18	87	8.4%	-
Macmillan	12	37	3.5%	-
			61.6%	-
MASS MARKET				
	Books	Positions	2023 Share*	2022 Share*
HarperCollins	212	390	37.5%	-
PRH	42	190	18.3%	-
Hachette	27	152	14.6%	-
Macmillan	17	71	6.8%	-
Simon & Schuster	16	67	6.4%	-
			83.6%	-

*These figures represent each publisher's share of the 2,080 hardcover, 1,040 trade paperback, and 1,040 mass market paperback bestseller list positions during 2023 and 2022. There are 20 positions on each of PW's four weekly adult bestseller lists: hardcover fiction, hardcover nonfiction, trade paperback, and mass market. Given changing market realities, PW is breaking out trade paperback bestseller lists from mass market lists for the first time this year in its annual analysis of bestsellers by corporation.

News

Cruising for New Readership

Why did Atria send a TikTok influencer to Antarctica?

Soon after Royal Caribbean's *Serenade of the Seas* set sail on December 10 for a nine-month "ultimate world cruise," TikTok users became obsessed with the voyage. One of those users was Marc Sebastian, a model and influencer with 1.6 million followers.

On December 20, Sebastian posted a video (which has since garnered more than 7.5 million views) about his desperation to secure passage on the *Serenade*. A week later, Sebastian got his wish, informing his followers that "a very unexpected and cool



brand" was springing for him to join an 18-night section of the cruise that included a visit to Antarctica. On January 5, from aboard the *Serenade*, Sebastian posted a video revealing his benefactor: Atria Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster.

"Do you like to read? I don't," Sebastian said in the video. "But maybe I could." A hashtag appeared overhead: #marcreadsabook. The video then cuts to Sebastian sitting next to a stack of eight books—among them, Fredrik Backman's *Anxious People*, Zakiya Dalila Harris's *The Other Black Girl*, and Lisa Jewell's *None of This Is True*. In the comments, followers could vote on which Sebastian would read as part of his "World Cruise Book Club." And on its own TikTok page, Atria also encouraged its 20,000-plus followers to vote.

The next day from his cabin, with an Atria "Hot People Read Books" knapsack visible behind him, Sebastian announced that Will Dean's 2020 thriller *The Last One* was the winner.

The sponsorship quickly became news in the book world, garnering some major media headlines and upsetting some users on BookTok, the app's bookish community. Why should Sebastian,

who by his own admission doesn't like to read, get to take a vacation on a publisher's dime? And why should Atria be courting his followers, many of whom are presumably not readers themselves, rather than book lovers who actually know what Atria is?

That's exactly the point, the publisher suggested in response. "We hope that seeing Marc, who is not normally a reader, pick up a book in real time will inspire others to start reading too," an Atria representative told *PW*.

Meanwhile, Sebastian responded to the criticism in a January 9 video. "Why should I have to stay in my own lane because I don't want to step on BookTok's toes?" he asked.

The comments poured in: "To be fair, I didn't know Atria Books existed before you"; "I literally looked into atria books because of you lol"; "I had also never heard of Atria Books before this and now I have and have respect for them so something must be working."

Whether or not TikTok users previously recognized the imprint's name, Atria has lately been a dominant presence on the bestseller lists thanks in large part to TikTok star Colleen Hoover, whose *It Ends with Us* and *It Starts with Us* were the top two books in the country last year, selling a combined 2.5 million print copies for Atria. But was springing for Sebastian's trip worth it?

It's too early to tell whether Atria's investment—reportedly around \$7,000—will pay off in terms of sales. So far, sales of the books featured on the cruise haven't shown much of a bump, at least not at the outlets that report to Circana BookScan. But the marketing campaign, and the press it generated, have brought the publisher significant—and quantifiable—visibility. According to data provided to *PW* by TikTok, the #atriabooks hashtag has received 98,000 global views since the cruise liner's departure and #thelastone has received 4.8 million views since the *Serenade* left port.

—Sophia Stewart

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Jerome Austin McNicholl



I began visual arts copying Norman Rockwell illustrations at age twelve. Writing took hold of me at age seventeen in between creative Dance and Piano became life long passions. Meeting Canadian poets Margret Avison and Leonard Cohen at age twenty-one helped confirm I had a budding poet within me.

As an artist I have worked in Stained glass, designing, painting and assembling various church windows and private commissions. In Theater – Stratford Ontario’s Shakespearean festival theater I painted sets and costumes. I have constructed and painted several large sculpture relief mural commissions.

I have had numerous exhibitions of my paintings, drawings and sculpture reliefs exhibiting mostly in Toronto, Canada and Paris France where I lived more than six years. Since 1975 the Alphabet work has been evolving as a ‘labor of love’.

- *What part of the book did you have the hardest time writing?*

The most difficult part of my writing and illustrating process is waiting for the ‘material’—the words and images to emerge. I am for the most part always ready to go—inspired, but the material, which I carry within me, is not always available.

- *Which of the characters do you relate to the most and why?*

I definitely relate to Argo the dust frog who eventually becomes the A creature but only by virtue of the glow in his shadow of which he had to struggle a long time to achieve. Like me Argo is a touch sensitive and often unsure but he is for the most part obedient to his ‘inner voice’ and at times can demonstrate ‘courage’.

- *If you’re planning a sequel, can you share a tiny bit about your plans for it?*

There are two more books already well underway. Book Two is entitled ‘A Book of small WORDS’—a Living Alphabet discovers words. In this book the animals exist within a visual environment that supports a Poem on a given word. I began writing these poems in Paris in 2002. I have words like Art, Best, and Care etc. twenty-six in all. In book three the Living Alphabet Creates Words. They

have all been given names and come together to express they’re attitudes and thoughts about being in a given word, words like ALIVE, COLOR, DIVINE, HOPE, twenty six in all...it’s like being inside a single word.

- *What characters in your book are most similar to you or to people you know?*

As I mentioned Argo is most similar to me as is the T animal. I live in Toronto an ethnically very diverse city, which I value and always wanted my alphabet in some ways to mirror that diversity.

- *How did you come up with the title for your book?*

The title came one day reading a book of poems by Dylan Thomas entitled ‘Quite Early One Morning’...the last word became ‘Planet’ and I had the title.

- *What is the ultimate goal for the book?*

The ultimate goal of the book is for other people as I have done to ‘fall in love with the alphabet characters with the hope that they create a more tactile less abstract relationship with letters and ultimately Words. When I was six my father would read the dictionary with me, occasionally he would point to a certain word and say ‘now that’s a beautiful word’...I feel the Living alphabet work was born in me in those moments.



Quite Early One Planet—The Arrival is a mythical tale about the origins of our Alphabet. It’s alphabet creatures with feathers, scales, and agile bodies. A living alphabet delivered to planet Earth ‘from all parts of the universe’ by a Great Weaver of Words.

It all begins with Argo a dust frog, who has sought refuge from all his fears on a desert oasis. One day at sundown, after years alone, Argo discovers a ‘glow’ in his shadow. Within the glow a voice whispers ‘Argo set out to find your B, C, and D, all of the others will follow, You will know them when you see them and they will know you’.

When all of the creatures find Argo and one another on planet Earth the Weavers’ plan is nearly complete. In a shower of inspiration they discover their letter sounds and they’re purpose is revealed “You will travel to the humans and make yourselves seen and heard so the humans are able to make Words...you my dear friends are an Alphabet, this you must never forget” whispers the Weaver to each one.



Query Letters 101

This proposal is a submission of a query letter to 500+ Literary Agents and 500+ Traditional Publishers

How long is a query letter?

It is about 300-500 words in which you briefly describe your book or script, highlight major plot points, provide a short bio about yourself, and indicate anything you have done or plan to do to get publicity or a large social media following.

What kind of stats do you have about the effectiveness of sending an email?

Commonly we have an 88-95% delivery rate, with about 88-90% for films, 94-96% for books. The open rate is about 75% for books; about 70% for scripts and films, which is affected by the appeal of your project. We currently have a 99% reputation rating with the main service we use for sending out queries, which is based on the percentage of deliveries and the very low number of unsubscribes, bounces, and spam reports, which is under 1% since we regularly update our databases through our own test mailings, about every 4 to 6 weeks.

How soon can I expect a response?

Generally, most contacts will respond within a day or two, some within a few hours if you send the query early in the day.

Why can't I send my own queries?

You can if you have the time it takes and knows who to contact and how. It could take you 20+ hours to put together your own database, and spend several more hours sending out the queries individually or spend about \$500 for the software to send out multiple queries, plus take the time to learn how to do this. Plus, it costs several thousands of dollars to buy the directories or subscribe to the industry services that provide this data.

But we've already gotten the contact and company information and used keywords to indicate their main areas of interest. We also spend several days each month updating the databases, based on the latest deals for publishers, agents, and producers, plus we buy the latest books and subscription services to keep the databases up to date. Additionally, we help you write an effective query letter, and even some

established writers need help with this. That's why we review all the letters before they go out and make suggestions or write letters for clients.

Here is the process:

- Step 1 Making of the Query Letter
- Step 2 Submission to 500+ Literary Agents and 500+ Traditional Publishers
- Step 3 Wait for responses.
- Step 4 Reply. Comply. Negotiate.

A synopsis of the book is needed for the query letter.

If the book is already published, the book title MUST be changed to something else since these literary agents and traditional publishers will be looking for that book online and see if it's selling or not.

An unpublished title will interest them to take a look at the query letter and manuscript. A published title with less or no sales online will most probably end up getting declined.

The main idea is to let these agents and publishers think that this is a new unpublished book so that they will be curious about it.

CHECKLIST

- ✓ A 1-2 page synopsis
- ✓ A couple of sample chapters (more may be required, depending on the agent or publishing company)
- ✓ Email address (an AOL or a YAHOO account will not be accepted since these providers will usually not allow senders that are not on the mailing list to go through)

Note:

Responses, whether negative or positive, will be sent directly to the authors' email.

Negotiations about contracts will be between the author and the contacting party; Brilliant Books Literary will not be involved.

Our role is just to initiate contact.

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Book Reviews

Title: Holy Spirit Mystifying Scriptures Volume 1
Author: C.J. Pitts
Publisher: Primix Publishing
ISBN: 9781955177702
Pages: 64
Genre: Religious, Christian, Non-Fiction, Art
Reviewed by: Leah Shepherd

Hollywood Book Reviews

In this compact and inspirational book, C.J. Pitts presents beautiful drawings, each one illuminating a specific Bible verse, along with the author's brief explanations about her art.

The drawings vary in style and technique, including pointillism and hidden face (a picture within a picture). Pitts highlights spiritual themes with bold colors, striking shapes and Christian symbols; such as a fish, which evokes the biblical command to be fishers of men.

One drawing shows a woman sleeping in bed with a peaceful expression. Her white hair is in the shape of a lamb. The calming shades of light blue and purple lend the scene a special tranquility, recalling God's peace in our hearts. Another colorful drawing shows a beautiful Queen Esther, covered with symbols like a flower, snail shells, and a red apple. There's also a poem about a caterpillar, symbolizing transformation and dying to sin in order to be reborn and soar with beauty. In another drawing, Adam and Eve are depicted in black as mirror images, facing each other. Later in the book, we see Adam and Eve in stark white after the fall, facing away from each other.

For anyone who is a visual learner, the art will make the biblical teachings even more meaningful and memorable. It's a unique and effective approach. The author's drawings and words can inspire us to pray and praise God in song and dance. Her book offers genuine hope and reassurance to Christian readers and spiritual seekers. However, it's not for readers who don't wish to hear proselytizing.

Pitts tells us that by accepting Jesus as a personal savior, we can be forgiven for all our sins and be born again, completely clean. This is the way to get to heaven after dying.



Title: Come Climb Toward God: Are You Hungry For God?
Author: Marianna W. Albritton
Publisher: Brilliant Books Literary
ISBN: 978-1641336963
Pages: 40
Genre: Christian
Reviewed by: Lily Amanda

Pacific Book Review

Come Climb Toward God: Are You Hungry For God? is a step-by-step accessible compendium that focuses on how one can begin a personal relationship with God and how to stay in communion with Him. The author compares believers to the scriptural branches of the vine which represent Christ. The caretaker of the vine is God. By Christians staying connected to Jesus, the True Vine, they will ultimately bear good fruit, and get to partake in life eternal.

Author Marianna W. Albritton assures readers that in Jesus, one finds calmness, the tranquility of spirit, and confidence in the promises and provision of God. Her meticulous approach digs into lessons on lordship, service, abiding by Christ, the topic of resurrection, a call to rest, and seeking Jesus even as she seeks to carefully break down the meaning of these terms in laymen's language. The book draws from Biblical figures such as Mark, John, and Paul as it emphasizes that each Christian had a unique walk with God.

Further, the text explains that the first step to spiritual maturity is seeking Jesus.

Consequently, the Holy Spirit draws one to Him. God has placed in each of us a gift to serve Him and by being in fellowship with Jesus, opportunities to serve will land in due time. The chapters further bring forth God's desire to satisfy believers' hunger with good things. Albritton hopes that by reading this book, readers will be able to discern God's call in their lives as He fills the empty areas in their lives.

The tapestry's breakdown blends personal experiences from the author's life with an astute analysis of the scriptures. The preface of this guide is bracingly enthusiastic that uses a surprisingly symbolic anecdote to describe the process of growing into a mature Christian. In design, the book makes use of bold fonts to highlight keywords along with scriptural references and a study guide. The result is a comprehensive inspiring read that will tug at the heartstrings of every reader.

Indeed, Come Climb Toward God: Are You Hungry For God? is an eloquent and inviting tome that edifies in a deeply satisfying way. Author Albritton's sage wisdom and lessons are of mammoth proportions and much needed in this contemporary world we are in.



Title: All's Forgotten Now
Author: Michael S. Ripley
Publisher: Brilliant Books Literary
ISBN: 978-1728328171
Pages: 166
Genre: Fiction /Thriller/Fantasy/Horror
Reviewed by: Jake Bishop



Hollywood Book Reviews

Initially, you think you're getting involved in a police procedural. There's a murder in a Silicon Valley city. Cops converge on the crime scene. The main investigator, ex-Los Angeles homicide detective Ramos, seems like the prototypical protagonist. He's got a marriage that's falling apart. A daughter growing up too fast. A co-worker he likes, Meyers a small, sassy female. A co-worker he doesn't like, Clement, a big, bigoted male. Plus a coroner who has basically seen it all. Typical, right? Wrong. As a reader, the first clue you get that this story is far from typical, is when the beautiful babe that's been killed and deposited in a dumpster, actually starts to come back to life.

Things definitely get stranger when the supposedly deceased woman gets taken to a hospital and finds a way to escape while a monster from hell and a vampire are wreaking havoc with the clinic's staff. Holy moly! The games afoot and readers are sucked into a bizarre combination of psychotic potboiler and phantasmagorical road trip.

The plot evolves into a search for a magical amulet that can help keep this thing we call earth, safe from ghosts, goblins, the mother of all evil, and a plunge into eternal darkness.

Along the way, an incredible cast of characters keeps the chapters flying by. There's Yuri, a six foot eight inch ex-Russian mobster who sometimes shapeshifts into a ten foot insatiable hairy Grendel that munches anything and everything in its path. There's Kessler, a long-haired albino- appearing blood sucker who moves faster than motion itself. There's Baba Yaga, a grandmotherly wild and wooly witch determined to ride herd over all. There's a trio of actual humans to reinforce Ramos and his daughter. But most of all, there's Rose, the seemingly indefatigable ex-corpse that just happens to be an ancient Archivist from a long line of individuals committed to preserving primordial knowledge and protecting The Twilight Veil, a mystical barrier that separates the world we all know from a "malevolent realm of formless spirits."

Author Ripley is a highly imaginative writer intent on injecting the fantasy world into the real world in an attempt to come up with something wholly original and entertaining. In addition to structuring his story with dream-jumping that whisks readers from one place and time to another, he also develops characters' backstories with enough information and emotion to make their behavior and reactions particularly plausible. While this is the author's debut novel, one gets the feeling it's not likely to be the last we hear from Ripley. Believe it or not.



At **LeapWrite Literary**,
we listen to your stories and we make it possible
the world knows about them too.

