

# Horror and Mystery Books

What is horror to you? Is it a spine tingling novels that is impossible to lay down? Or maybe you're more of a mystery or thriller fan? Here you will find some of my favorite horror and mystery books and authors, as well as some thoughts on ones I didn't enjoy so much.

[Contact Me](#)

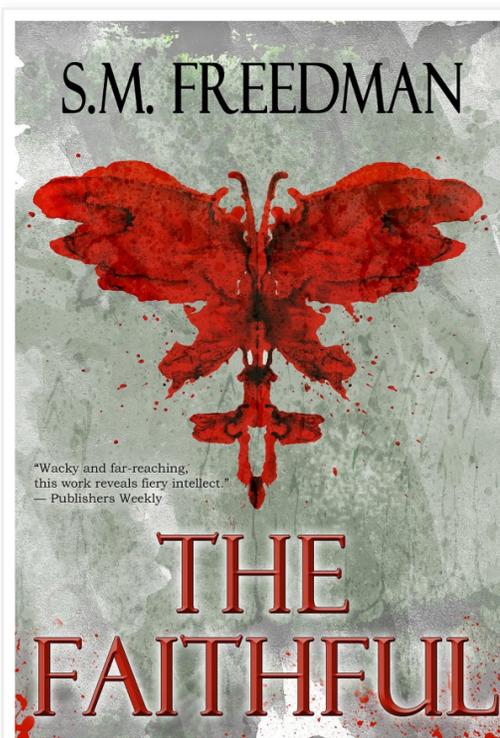
Saturday, December 13, 2014

## S.M. Freedman - The Faithful



*Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award Quarter-Finalist.*

### Synopsis



For Agent Josh Metcalf, memories are ghosts. They are blood-soaked backpacks and the smell of strawberry Chap Stick. Josh is haunted by a little girl who went missing his first summer on the force. Decades later his search has become an obsession, and he's pinned the photos of hundreds of missing children to his wall of tears. All the children had psychic abilities. All the cases went cold -- with no witnesses, no useful tips, and no children ever recovered. Until a woman gets injured trying to stop an abduction, and Josh comes face to face with his personal ghost.

For Rowan Wilson, a meteorite hunter for NASA's Spaceguard program, memories are lies. The childhood she thought she knew has been erased, leaving a black hole in its place. New recollections are flaring to life: men dressed like priests, a ranch in the mountains, mind control, and rape. Each new memory draws her closer to one of the other missing children, Sumner Macey; and to I Fidele, the underground organization for whom kidnapping is just the beginning.

For Sumner, memories have become weapons. He's sharpened each of his with surgical precision: the ranch, the doctrine, the mind-wash, and the murders. He's eager to slice at the black sludge pumping through I Fidele's heart, desperate to cripple those who stole his childhood.

To I Fidele, non-psychics are cockroaches in need of extermination, an inferior species destroying the earth. They're ready to enforce eugenics on a global scale. If they succeed, only those faithful to their

### About Me

My name is Steve, and I work in a casino. I'm a huge science fiction, paranormal, and horror reader, and I am also into science fiction conventions. I decided to start some blogs and post about things I enjoy and books that I read. Some of my likes are Star Wars, Star Trek, and the original Unsolved Mysteries. Some of my dislikes are social media, nothing but romance chick flicks and books, and bad drivers. Although you won't find me on social media, I recently joined Goodreads.

[Steve's bookshelf: read](#)



[The Ruins of Tropicalia](#)  
by Tyler Taylor

Steve's Review: This book is being offered for free on the author's website, and it's available in just about any format a reader could want. From reading the blurb and information, I have to confess that I have been very excited to ...



[A Stone for Benjamin](#)  
by Fiona Gold Kroll

~Amazing Book~ A Stone for Benjamin is an honest and frank look at the author's search for answers into her great-uncle's disappearance. Every page was well-written, made better by the fact that this is not a work of fiction, as so many...



[Hemlock Grove](#)  
by Brian McGreevy

The book was okay, I thought the Netflix show was great, though.

doctrine will survive. Crossing several genres, *The Faithful* will appeal to anyone who enjoys supernatural mysteries; high-tech, edge-of-your-seat suspense flavored with paranormal elements; thrillers involving psychics, occult and high stakes action/adventure; tied up with a depth and humor usually reserved for works of literary fiction.

## Where to Purchase *The Faithful*

[Amazon - Kindle](#)  
[Amazon - Paperback](#)  
[Barnes & Noble](#)



[Interview with the Vampire](#)  
by [Anne Rice](#)



[The Stand](#)  
by [Stephen King](#)



## The Author

S.M.'s [Website](#) / [Blog](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Goodreads](#) / [Facebook](#) / [Author Page](#) / [YouTube](#)

S.M. Freedman is a top-ranked Amazon author in the Mystery, Thriller and Suspense

categories, and a member of the WorldWideWriters group. She lives in Vancouver with her husband, two children and a giant orange cat.

She studied acting at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York, and spent years as a private investigator and business owner.

Inspired by authors of many different genres (favorites include Sue Grafton, Diana Gabaldon, Jodi Picoult, Stephen King, Justin Cronin, Suzanne Collins and Lawrence Hill, to name a few) she eventually turned back to her first love: writing.

*The Faithful*, a paperback and kindle Amazon Bestseller in both the US and the UK, and a Quarter Finalist in the 2014 Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award, is her debut novel. She's currently working on the sequel.



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Labels: S.M. Freedman, The Faithful

Thursday, December 11, 2014

## How the Water Falls by K.P. Kollenborn - Spotlight & Guest Post

### Guest Post -

#### K.P. Kollenborn

:

#### When Lying Can Be a Good Thing

An obvious cliché is defined by one of the most natural and primitive motives by human nature: lying. Why is it such a cliché? Well, I'm not going to blow smoke up your ass, or tell a cock 'n bull story, or pee on your leg and tell you it's raining, because, I'm quite sure you've heard it all before so I don't need to reinvent the wheel. The art of lying is much older than the oldest profession in the world, and yes, both are considered viral and can be harmful because, after all, who wants to get caught with their pants down in either situation?

Of course lying leads down the road of questioning morality. Large lies are destructive. Marriages and friendships fall apart. Wars rage on. Politicians stay in business. You know the deal. Small lies are forgivable. We don't want to hurt people's feelings with the small stuff. Or we just don't really feel like going to work or taking our kids to the park as a result of being tired and need a break. So the margin between how we justify telling lies can easily be deluded or misunderstood, thereby creating this moral conundrum.

I am one of the biggest liars I know. Every time I sit in front of a computer I tell lies consistently, obsessively. Why? Because I write fiction. The stories I tell are half true, half false. And the best part about it, you believe what I tell. When you begin to process that concept, it's really an incredible experience we both share, and it's as natural as breathing. Logically we should reject this acceptance. My father, the engineer, rejects it. He doesn't read fiction on the grounds that he would rather fill his mind with information that's legitimate and direct. But for the rest of us, we not only marvel in it, we dip our entire souls into it because it feels good. It releases a part of our imagination that we can't operate in the physical world.

So, yes, I write fiction. And I write fiction with a historical twist. Although I dig deeply into research, I chose to reproduce history in a fictitious form. It's like having immunity. I can break off story-lines from real events, and then turn around to commit forgery without blame. If you think about it, it

sounds bad; however there is a legitimate purpose. Fiction, like all other art, serves a higher calling. It allows an opportunity to blend real-life people into one character as a representative— a symbol of who that character represents— whether a crusader for equality or an irredeemable brute, to bring forth criticism and awareness. Fiction doesn't fall far from the truth. It has to come from somewhere authentic, otherwise readers will have no commonality to grasp upon.

I believe writing about history in a fictional context can be intellectually, spiritually, and humanely liberating. Fact or fiction, the art of lying unveils misconceptions about ourselves, our humanity, and our future. We lie, we reinforce. We gossip, we self-destruct. We seek, we fail. We grow, we die. But always we hope. To escape. To learn. To rediscover. To reinvent. It matters, all, it matters because we are here. I encourage this philosophy: Submitting to a moment in time allows us to remember, or to muse even, over our society's past. Although writing can educate as well as entertain, yet what makes art incredibly amazing, to that of paintings, photographs, and music, it transposes emotion into another form of humanity, and therefore, it is our humanity which keeps all of us striving for an improved future. So, if you think I'm trying to pull wool over your eyes, or even trying to pull your leg, then you're right. I am. That's my job. And I hope you ponder over what I tell you. Let us explore our vices outside of our everyday life. Let us think about how reading fiction, that, although is regarded as false and abstract, can reveal truths about ourselves. About our humanity. And allow a freedom to examine these controversies with creativity and heart. This type of lying can actually be a good thing.



**Virtual Book Tour Dates:** 12/1/14 – 12/15/14

**Genres:** Psychological Thriller



[How the Water Falls](#)

Goodreads rating: 4.64 (11 ratings)

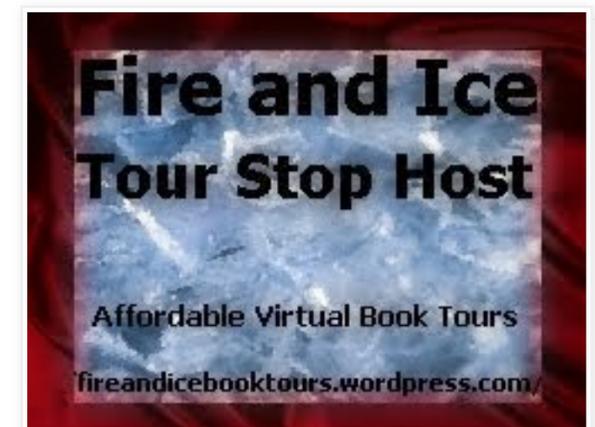
[How the Water Falls](#)

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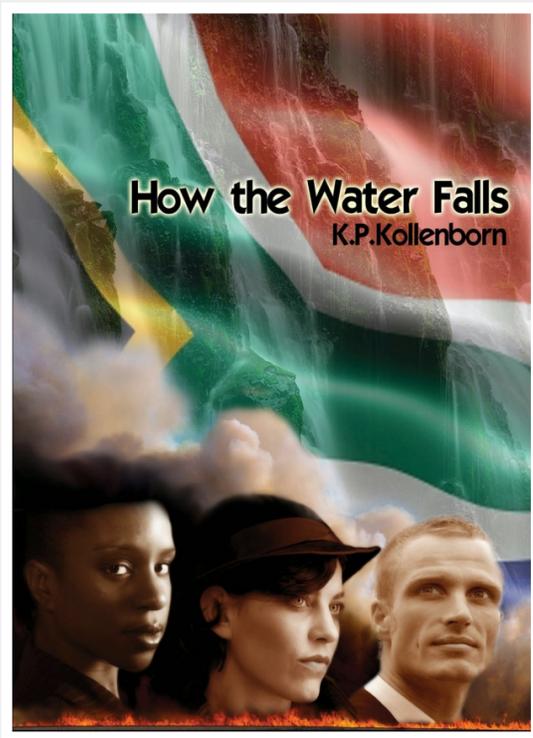
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#### This Book Tour Company Does Horror



#### Blog Nation Badge



**Blurb:**

On the fringes of a civil war arise a kaleidoscope of stories of abuse, power, betrayal, sex, love, and absolution, all united by the failings of a dying government. Set in the backdrop during the last years of South Africa's apartheid, *How the Water Falls* is a psychological thriller that unfolds the truth and deception of the system's victims, perpetrators, and unlikely heroes.

[See the book trailer on Youtube](#)

**Excerpt:**

LENA STOOD OUTSIDE of her workplace with a sign that read, "Work for First African Bank and Die of Starvation Wages." Down the block, at a shoe store, a light-skinned man in his mid-fifties stood in front of his workplace with another sign that read, "Work for Edworks and Die of Starvation Wages." Not far from him, a third accomplice—a young Zulu woman—stood in front of a clothing store holding a similar sign. All three lived in different townships, but Lena had managed to speak with them about staging this little protest during their lunch break. At first they were reluctant, fearing losing a job that had taken a long time to find. But none of them were paid the same wages as their white co-workers. Despite the fact that blacks were allowed to be employed in the downtown Johannesburg retail district, and had been for some years now, there were issues regarding pay and pay raises. They were earning nearly half of what their white counterparts were making, suggesting that they were worth half a human being. Lena had also contacted Robert Mlambisi from the paper to take photos. She understood it would not make the front page; nonetheless, to be mentioned at all in a newspaper would still achieve attention.

"How you been, sista?" Robert asked, giving her a hug while holding his camera with his other hand.

"Well, I am still 'ere," she smiled.

"That is much of a good thing as any!" he laughed. "It's good to see you rreturning to your old habits. Good indeed!"

"Thanks for coming, Rrobbie. Dis is much apprrreciated."

"For a worthy cause, anytime. Anytime! But I must confess, this will be my last assignment with *The Daily Harbour*," he said. "Starrting at the end of the month, I will be working for *The Sowetan*."

"Oh, I see," she nodded. "Why 'aven't you worrked with dem frrom de beginning?"

"To prrove a point I can work for a white newspaper strriactly on my own merrits. But as luck would have it, my editor 'as hired his quota of blacks this year, simply because they are black. Naturally that leaves me to ponder why he hirred me in the first place. So now, I'm moving on to where my talents arre acknowledged, I think."

Gently pressing his hand for support, she said, "Good luck, Rrobbie. I'm surre you will find fulfillment dere."

"So does my wife!" he laughed again. "She 'as thrreatened to find anotha 'usband if I don't stop complaining so much." Catching his breath, he announced, "So, Lena, shall we begin?"

He stepped back to the edge of the sidewalk and started to snap shots. Several people, who were white, walked by Lena and the other two protesters, and only glanced at the signs. Robbie took the photos of the passersby glancing at the signs. Although not stopping, they were at least noticing the existence of the signs. Robert eased his way around to photograph the two others who were dressed in their fine work attire appropriate for retail sales. Twenty minutes into the silent protest, the owner of the shoe store swung the entrance of the door open. In his early forties, wearing a suit and tie, he angrily pointed at his employee.

"What is the meaning of this, Dingane?" he demanded.

"Rread de sign, baas," he calmly replied, as if softly blowing a toy boat down the stream.

Glaring at Robert, he turned his pointing finger into his direction. "You there!" he cried. "Stop taking photos! You have no right to take photos in front of my place of business!"

Robert removed his press card from his jacket to show the store owner.

"This is public prroperty," Robert defended smoothly. "As a member of the prress, I 'ave the rright to be 'ere. You can call the police if you like, but I tell you, they cannot do anything to stop me."

The owner blinked as if he had been slapped in the face. Then turning to his employee, he ranted, "Dingane, get back inside before I fire you! You know very well I pay you the going rate for *kaffirs!*"

Dingane smeared a smile, exposing two missing teeth, one on the top, the other on the bottom. "Yes, baas," he replied evenly, sarcastically. "An' how fery kind of you. A man wit morals may pay more. But not you, baas. Tank you for being like any utta man on dis block so my childrren can starve."

Huffing, the owner crossed his arms. "Well, it's not my fault you people breed like rabbits! That's the real problem. You people don't stop having children you cahn't afford!"

Looking at Robert as if soliciting strength to not hit his employer, Dingane returned to stare at him. "Could you, honestly, feed a family wit 30 rrandas a mont? Afta taxes?"

"I write your paychecks. I know how much you make!"

"Den shall I make a sign for you, too, baas? Come join us?"

Straining his jaw, he cleared his throat. "Dingane, I'm warning you. If you do not come inside now, I suggest you don't come inside my store— ever again!"

He sighed and shrugged. "You hafe my addrress to mail my las' check, baas."

Exhaling, the store owner began pointing once more. "You need to leave these

premises for loitering, Dingane! I can call the police on this matter and they can arrest you, and your two girlfriends, for that!” Then pointing at Lena and the other young woman, he vented, “The same applies to you both! I’ll call your bosses as well if both of you don’t remove all this nonsense!”

The owner stomped inside his store, glaring out the window as he picked up his phone.

Dingane joked, “All dis calling will only wear out dat little pointy finger of ‘is!”

Lena and Robert laughed.

Robert promptly announced, “Well, Lena, it looks like I won the bet. It took *more* than ten minutes before one of them *brroke* down!”

### Buy Link:

[Amazon](#)



### About the Author:

I am fortunate to have been trained by one the top ten writing teachers in the US, the late Leonard Bishop, and author of *Dare to be a Great Writer*. I owe my love of writing to him. *How The Water Falls* is my second novel. Although I’ve been writing since my childhood, I have a BA in history. I love studying history as much as wanting to evoke stories. I like to believe that after decades worth of introspection we have learned more wisely than something that happened yesterday, because what happened yesterday affects how we live today. Although I’ve been writing since childhood, I have a BA in history. I love studying history as much as wanting to evoke stories. I like to believe that after decades worth of introspection we have learned more wisely than something that happened yesterday, because what happened yesterday affects how we live today. That’s why I love history: To learn. To question. To redeem our humanity. Submitting to a moment in time allows us to remember, or to muse even, over our society’s past. Although writing can educate as well as entertain, yet what makes art incredibly amazing, to that of paintings, photographs, and music, it transposes emotion into another form of humanity, and therefore, it is our humanity which keeps all of us striving for an improved future. In addition to writing, I draw, paint, create graphic design, and am an amateur photographer.

### Connect With The Author:

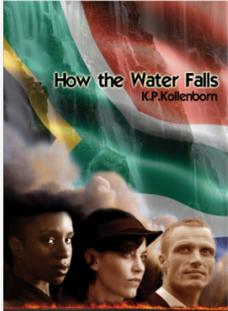
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### Giveaway:

Enter to win one of four print and autographed copies of this book! Open to residents located in the USA. This giveaway will run Nov. 15- Dec. 15, 2014. [Enter at Goodreads!](#)

*Goodreads Book Giveaway*



**How the Water Falls**  
by K.P. Kollenborn

Giveaway ends December 15, 2014.  
See the [giveaway details](#) at Goodreads.

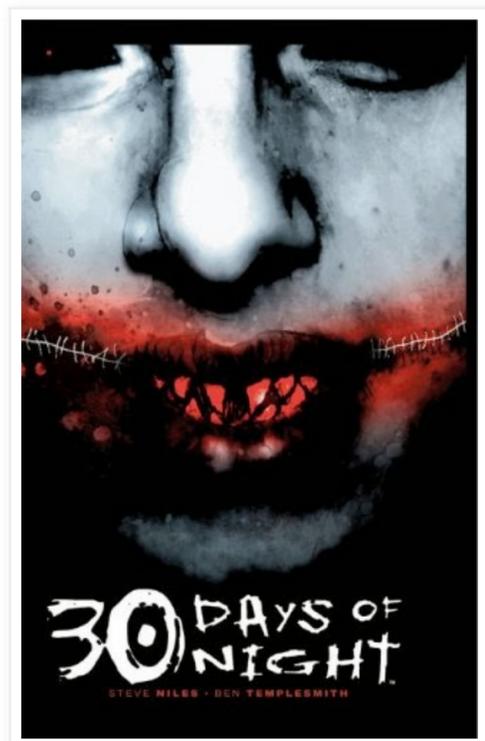
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Labels: [Guest Post](#), [How the Water Falls](#), [K.P. Kollenborn](#), [Psychological Thriller](#)

Tuesday, December 9, 2014

## 30 Days of Night - Book and Film



30 Days of Night by Steve Niles

[Amazon](#)

The Book:

I haven't read this book yet, but it was high up on my to-be-read list. As a huge fan of the film, I was very excited to see how the book plays out. But honestly that all changed when I looked at the Kindle

preview. The book appears to be in a comic book format, something that I'm really not a fan of.

#### Description:

The story of an isolated Alaskan town that is plunged into darkness for a month each year when the sun sinks below the horizon. As the last rays of light fade, the town is attacked by a bloodthirsty gang of vampires bent on an uninterrupted orgy of destruction. Only the small town's husband-and-wife Sheriff team stand between the survivors and certain destruction.

#### The Film:

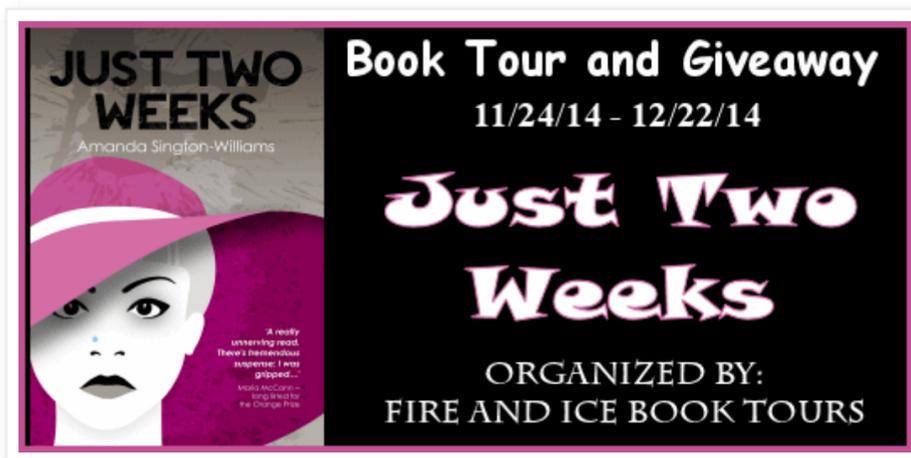
I've watched this movie several times, and I've always enjoyed it. I even watched a behind-the-scenes clip, from the scene where the vampires attack the SUV. Using the small "town" in Alaska was a brilliant move, especially considering that there really is 30 days of night. It was very easy to imagine something like this coming to pass. The town was little more than a village. As remote as it is, I fully believe that vampires would find it to be an excellent playground.

at 8:44 PM No comments:      Recommend this on Google

Labels: [30 Days of Night](#), [Vampires](#)

Friday, December 5, 2014

## Psychological Thriller - Just Two Weeks by Amanda Sington-Williams



**Virtual Book Tour Dates:** 11/24/14 – 12/22/14

**Genres:** Suspense, Psychological Thriller

**Tour Promo Price:** £7 to UK residents (paperback)

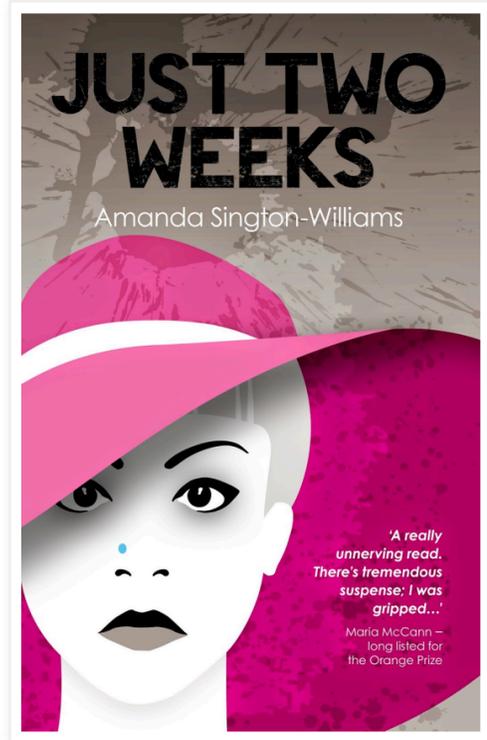


[Just Two Weeks](#)

Goodreads rating: 4.36 (11 ratings)

[Just Two Weeks](#)

Goodreads rating: 4.36 (11 ratings)



### **Blurb:**

Jolene's two week break in the sun turns into a nightmare when she meets Raquel, another holiday maker.

How could Jo have known this encounter would bring her past back to haunt her?

What does this woman want from her and is there really anyone she can trust?

After being made redundant from a seemingly secure job Jolene Carr takes a two week break in the sun. On the first day she meets Raquel, another hotel guest. Little does she realise how this apparently innocent acquaintance will lead to terrible and lasting consequences. After a frightening incident she hits a conspiracy of silence from the locals and over the rest of the holiday she feels herself slipping into a vortex of fear. Back home, the nightmare continues and she realises that Raquel is stalking her. Her hippie mother and her partner Mark tell her she is imagining it all. All certainties, even about relationships, become fluid and treacherous as her past begins to unravel. If it wasn't for Rob, her ex-lover who Jolene thinks has his own agenda, she would be left to cope on her own.

How much fear and betrayal can one person take?

### **Excerpt:**

It was so hot sitting in the glare of the sun. The combination of Campari and the journey yesterday were making her sleepy. She closed her eyes, drifted to the chatter of nearby Germans and faded into a reverie, back to another time when she was beach-combing. It was on a beach in Tangier and her mother had been lying a little way away with a muscular man wearing blue shorts. Her mother was topless, the local men stared without embarrassment. They hadn't been interested in Jo's collection of shells.

A shadow fell across the table and the blocking of sunlight woke her – she was back on this beach with the sound of speedboats roaring across the water. The waiter was collecting the empty glasses; he secured the bill under the ashtray. Jo smiled up at him then resumed looking out to sea. The speedboats were silent for

a minute, powered further up the coast. She could hear the distant roll of waves and closer, the surf hitting the sand; closer still, the sound of glasses being washed. She stretched. All she wanted was to go back to her room at the spa hotel. She stared into the middle distance, feeling sleepy again. It had been a long time, too long now since Zara had gone. She glanced along the beach. The waiter moved towards the table, clearly anxious that they should pay and move on.

‘I’m waiting for the woman who was there.’ She pointed to the empty chair opposite.

She removed her sandal and with the toe of her better leg, drew circles in the sand and thought about Mark, imagining him at work, checking patients, rushing round his ward. Was she too trusting? Some of the nurses *were* very attractive. She glanced at her watch. The waiter had returned.

‘She said she was going to the toilet, but it’s –’

‘You want toilet?’ He nodded to the back of the café, picked up the bill, handed it to her.

‘You’ve got one *here*? But I thought –’ She grabbed her bag and rushed to where he pointed. Her stomach was knotting and she felt sick. Outside the toilet there was a sink with a bent tap, a cracked mirror. She knocked on the door marked WC, went in.

‘*Christ!*’ she said while she stood in the concrete room with the cracked toilet bowl and the sound of jet skis buzzing through her brain. She reached into her bag and pulled out her towel. There was nothing else. No purse. No passport. Her book dropped to the floor: *A Memory of Loss* splayed in the dirt. She searched in her bag again, turning it inside out, shaking it violently. *Nothing*. Someone began banging on the door.

‘Hang on.’

Squatting on her heels, with her fingers she searched each corner of the dank sour smelling room. How could she have let this happen? Her fingers touched cardboard. She picked it up. A discarded menu. Other than sand and dirt there was nothing else on the floor. She picked up her book from the toilet roll where she’d balanced it, and stuffed it back into her bag, opened the door. Back outside she blinked in the sudden light and wove her way through the tables, aware of everyone following her movements with detached curiosity until she reached the table where she’d sat with Zara. Four pairs of seemingly foreign eyes turned to her expectantly.

‘Excuse me,’ she said. ‘Sorry to bother you, but was anything on the table – you know, when you sat down?’ She was feeling giddy and was finding it hard to catch her breath. ‘I mean, like a passport?’

One of them interpreted for the others and while Jo waited, her breathing laboured with anxiety, they all got up and moved their chairs back. Jo was down

on her hands and knees again searching in the sand, though she knew she was wasting her time.

‘*Did you find anything?*’ she said again.

‘There was nothing here when we came. The table was empty and wiped clean.’

‘Are you sure?’ Jo said, standing up. Her leg was throbbing.

Someone was tapping Jo insistently on the shoulder. ‘Your bill, ma’am.’ The waiter shoved a till print-out into her hand.

Sweat was soaking her T-shirt and suddenly she was incredibly thirsty.

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### **About the Author:**

Amanda’s second novel **Just Two Weeks** published by Golden Sand Books in 2014 won the IPR Agents Pick in 2013.

Her first novel, **The Eloquence of Desire** was published by Sparkling Books in 2010 and has been translated into Turkish. She won an award for this novel in

2007 from the Royal Literary Fund. Her

Since 2006 when she first started writing she has had many short stories published, including: Growing Pains by Bridgehouse Publishing, A Mother's Love by Indigo Mosaic, Two Orchids by Sentinel Literary Quarterly.

Unseasonable Weather by Dead Ink Press, The Woman at Number Six by Writing Raw, and many more.

Amanda has an **MA in Creative Writing and Authorship** from **Sussex University** and teaches Creative Writing in Brighton.

<http://www.amandasingtonwilliams.co.uk/>  
[amandasingtonwilliams.wordpress.com](http://amandasingtonwilliams.wordpress.com)

### **Author Biography:**

I got hooked on writing when I did a two year course on Creative Writing at Sussex University. I've had quite a number of short stories published and have an MA in Creative Writing and Authorship from Sussex University. The Eloquence of Desire was my first novel and was published in 2010. This was a romance and won an award from the Royal Literary Fund. It has been translated into Turkish. My latest novel Just Two Weeks is a psychological thriller set in Sri Lanka and The Lakes in northern UK. This won the IPR Agents Pick. I love cats and singing and am an Alto. I sing in Dawn Chorus in Brighton where I live with my husband. I mentor new novel writers.

### **Connect With The Author:**

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### **Giveaway:**

Enter to win one of seven fine art greetings cards by the accomplished artist David Williams <http://www.southdownsgallery.co.uk/>. This giveaway is open to residents of the UK only. The giveaway dates will run 11/24/14 – 12/22/14. [Enter through Rafflecopter.](#)

\*\*\*\* GIVEAWAY! \*\*\*\*

ENDS IN  
**09:07**  
days hours

**246**  
total entries

**0/28**  
entries earned

Enter to win one of seven fine art greetings cards by the accomplished artist David Williams  
<http://www.southdownsgallery.co.uk/>  
on the Just Two Weeks by Amanda Sington-Williams Book Tour & Giveaway!

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This giveaway is restricted to UK residents only!

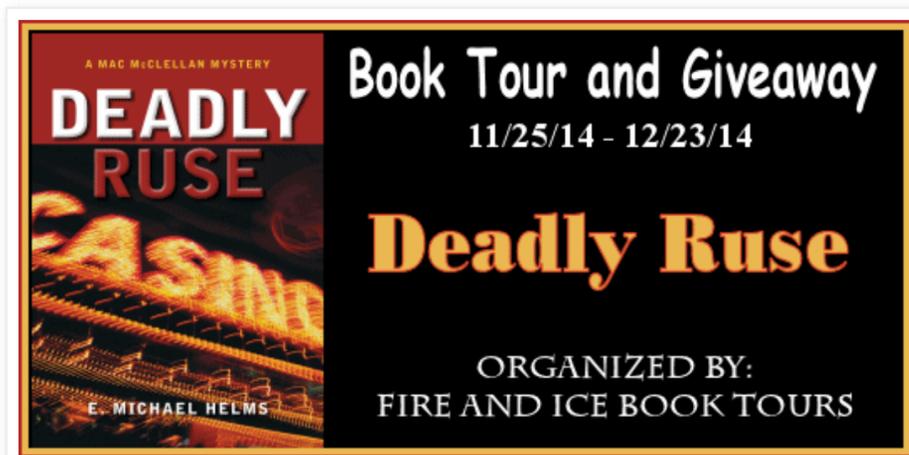
All prizes are provided by the author. Winner/winners

at 12:00 AM No comments: +1 Recommend this on Google

Labels: [Amanda Sington-Williams](#), [Just Two Weeks](#), [Psychological Thriller](#)

Thursday, December 4, 2014

## Feature & Giveaway: Deadly Ruse: A Mac McClellan Mystery by E. Michael Helms



**Virtual Book Tour Dates:** 11/25/14 – 12/23/14

**Genres:** Mystery, Fiction

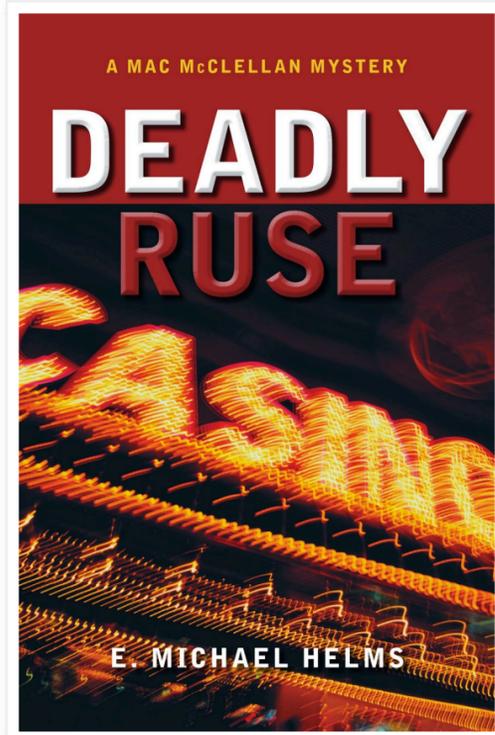


[Deadly Ruse: A Mac McClellan Mystery](#)

Goodreads rating: 4.56 (16 ratings)

[Deadly Ruse: A Mac McClellan Mystery](#)

Goodreads rating: 4.56 (16 ratings)



### **Blurb:**

Mac's girlfriend, Kate Bell, thinks she's seen a ghost. Wes Harrison, Kate's former boyfriend, supposedly perished twelve years ago in a boating accident. But now she swears a man she spotted in a crowded theater lobby is Wes. Mac has his doubts—it was only a fleeting glimpse. But to calm her shattered nerves, he starts making inquiries.

A clue leads him from his home in St. George, Florida, to a Texas orphanage. There he uncovers startling information that turns both his and Kate's world upside-down. Diamond smuggling, sex, deceit, and murder are just part of the twisted tale that emerges from Kate's earlier life. Using wit, grit, and the ingrained military training of a former Marine, Mac starts to fit the pieces of this scrambled puzzle together.

Further clues point to the Palmetto Royale Casino and Resort near St. George. He and Kate discover that the casino is a front for big drug deals. When they barely escape a murder attempt, Mac knows he's on the right track.

But he better play his cards right—because losing this high-stakes game could cost him his life.

### **Praise for Deadly Ruse:**

*E. Michael Helms wrote a wonderfully paced mystery that is filled with all the deceitful things a reader can find good when reading a book. This is a story that will keep your attention and hold you on the edge of your seat. —*

[Night Owl Reviews](#)

*Deadly Ruse is set in the Florida Panhandle and briefly in Texas and Atlanta, Georgia, and Helms has a fine knack for blending real locales into his fiction. —* [Si Dunn Books, Books, & More \(New\) Books](#)

### **Excerpt:**

From Chapter 1:

I'd never been a big believer in coincidence until the night Kate Bell and I strolled out of O'Malley's Theater after watching *Dead Man Walking*. O'Malley's shows classics and other oldies from yesteryear; and instead of row after row of conventional seating, tables and chairs occupy most of the auditorium where couples or small groups can enjoy dinner while

viewing the night's offering of cinematic magic.

Not that I considered 1995's *Dead Man Walking* a true oldie, but to the teens and twenty-something's in the audience I suppose the flick qualified. After all, I'd served with several old salt Vietnam vets during my career with the Marines, and to me the Vietnam War was ancient history, much like World War II and Korea had been to them. It's all relative.

I'm not much of a Sean Penn fan, although I think he's a fine actor. I guess it's his politics that rub me the wrong way. But Kate's a big fan, and any excuse to spend time with her is good enough for me. We enjoyed grilled grouper sandwiches with the trimmings and a pitcher of beer while I suffered through the movie.

When R. Lee Ermey, a career Marine himself who played the rape/murder victim's father, tossed do-gooder Sister Helen out of his house I almost cheered, while the scene brought Kate to tears. Ugh. And when they finally strapped Matthew Poncelet's no-good lying ass into Gruesome Gertie and fried the bastard, I did let slip a rather loud "Oorah!" From the look she gave me, I thought Kate was going to slap the taste out of my mouth.

"You just don't get it, Mac," she said, still dabbing at her eyes with a napkin as we left the theater and stepped into the cool, early spring night air.

"Sure I get it," I countered as we strolled down the sidewalk toward my Silverado. "He raped that girl and murdered her and her boyfriend. Then they fried his butt. What's not to get?"

Kate reached over and pinched my arm. "You're about as sentimental as Godzilla. I don't know why you even—"

"Dang," she said, interrupting herself, "I forgot my purse."

Kate turned and rushed back into O'Malley's, leaving me several steps behind. Just as I stepped under the marquee I sidestepped a tall, dark-haired man and bumped head-on into an attractive redhead clutching his arm. She was wearing a tight black pantsuit that did nothing to hide a knockout figure.

"Sorry," I muttered, standing aside as they hurried down the sidewalk. I forced my eyes back into their sockets and hurried through the door after Kate. She had stopped dead in her tracks between the concession stand and the doorway leading into the auditorium and was shaking like she'd been pole axed. I double-timed to her side, hoping she wasn't having a heretofore unmentioned epileptic fit or some similar medical malfunction.

"What's the matter?" I said, quickly wrapping an arm around Kate to steady her. She'd turned as pale as the mound of popcorn in the theater's popper.

"That man," she said, just as her legs buckled. I caught her with my other arm and pulled her close. She trembled against my chest, her ragged breath coming in rushes. "That was . . ." and just like that she fainted.

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### **About the Author:**

E. Michael Helms is a USMC combat veteran. His memoir of the Vietnam War, *The Proud Bastards*, has been called “As powerful and compelling a battlefield memoir as any ever written . . . a modern military classic,” and has been in print for over 20 years.

His work has also appeared in the books: *Semper Fi: Stories of U.S. Marines from Boot Camp to Battle* (Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2003); *Soldier’s Heart: Survivors’ Views of Combat Trauma* (The Sidran Press, 1995); and *Two Score and Ten: The Third Marine Division History* (Turner Publishing, 1992).

Book One of his two-part saga of the Civil War, *Of Blood and Brothers*, was released in September 2013, with Book Two following in March 2014. The first of his Mac McClellan Mysteries, *Deadly Catch*, was published in November 2013. *Deadly Ruse*, the second in the series, launched November 2014. *The Private War of Corporal Henson*, a semi-autobiographical fictional sequel to his memoir, *The Proud Bastards*, was published in August 2014.

Helms lives with his wife in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Upstate region of South Carolina, where they enjoy canoeing, hiking and bird watching.

See his interview feature in the November issue of “The Big Thrill,” the *International Thriller Writers e-magazine* [here](#).

### **Connect With The Author:**

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