

THE AUTHORS SHOW –

Author: Dana L. Brown

Me, Myself and Lottie

By Dana L. Brown

Charcoal pencil skirt, white Prada blouse, black Manolo heels----the outfit that always made her confidence as solid as her title. But today neither the designer clothes nor the name she read every morning on her office door was helping.

“I’m Charlotte Luce,” she reminded herself, “first female market president of Olde Florida Bank and the youngest in the bank’s one hundred years’ history, and I can do this.” Right, she thought with a sigh. I can tell the best man I’ve ever known, the closest thing to a father figure I had growing up, that the bank will be foreclosing on his property in ninety days if his payments aren’t brought up to date.

She plastered on her best smile and gave herself one last look in the mirror. Before stepping out the door, she fastened her silver locket around her neck and wished once more that she could talk with her gran. Gran had always known what to say, which is why she had given Charlotte the locket for her college graduation. The inscription, “Whither thou goest, I will go”, taken from the book of Ruth, was Gran’s way of telling Charlotte she would always be with her. Charlotte put the locket on the last thing every morning and always lifted up a prayer to the grandmother she had adored.

“Thank you for always believing in me, Gran,” she whispered, “and give me the strength I need to make it through this day.” With that she grabbed her suit jacket and headed out the door.

The above scene, the first part of Chapter One, from my debut novel, Lottie Loser, was written in my head as my husband and I rode our bicycles on weekend mornings. I had already decided that I wanted to write a book, but sharing that news with my husband, along with the

fact that I planned to retire early to devote myself to becoming a full-time writer, well, that took a little longer to divulge!

My name is Dana L. Brown, and on February 5, 2016, I retired from a thirty-two-year career in banking to begin what I like to call My Fairytale. I loved my job with First Merchants Bank, and I was good at it, but a burning desire to write a book made me realize it was now or never. I choose now.

The retirement party was over, my family had gone home and there I was, alone with a computer, and a head full of ideas. So, what did I do but sit-down and start typing, and before I knew it my keystrokes had brought the characters to life! And they didn't just come to life, but they took over, and about two thirds of the way through, I realized that the book I wanted to write, was going to take a sequel to complete.

Did I say sequel? Let's change that to series, because Lottie Loser turned into Call Me Charlotte, and Call Me Charlotte will be turning in to The Greysons. I used to go to bed at night with my characters talking to me and encouraging scenes; when that stopped happening, I knew that least for my protagonist, Charlotte Luce, the trilogy was coming to an end.

Writing this series, which I call the Anna Maria Island Series, or AMI Series because it takes place on Anna Maria Island Florida, has truly been my Fairytale come true. Soon after the release of my book I read an article about submitting books to the Florida Authors and Publishers for their annual Presidential Awards, so I thought, why not, and submitted Lottie Loser.

One of the biggest surprises and joys of my life was the July morning when I opened my email and read "Congratulations, you are a finalist in the Florida Authors and Publishers 2017 Presidential Awards". Of course, my husband and I knew we wanted to attend the conference and awards banquet, and I'm so glad that we did. Lottie Loser received the Silver Medal, a National Award for my debut novel, and things just kept getting better and better from there.

This summer Lottie was named a Semi-finalist in the Florida Writers Association Royal Palms Literary Awards contest, and Call Me Charlotte was the winner of the Gold Medal in the 2018 Florida Authors and Publishers Presidential Awards. Do you see my connection to Cinderella?

I will never get my size twelve foot into a glass slipper, and my carriage is a Toyota. Thankfully I already had my Prince Charming before I became an author, and he guides and encourages me with each new book. I'm currently working on a novel about a woman closer to my age, who in yearning for her lost youth and gets caught up in an online romance with a younger man.

I didn't decide to write a book because I wanted to be rich or famous, although I wouldn't turn either down. Writing for me was about proving I could do it and giving life to my characters. People often ask me if Lottie Loser is actually the story of me, but it isn't. I gave Charlotte some of my characteristics, like my height, and my weight issues. I made her a banker because that was a job I was familiar with, even gave her a wonderful grandmother like I had, but that's really where the similarities end. Was there a Nick in my life? Unfortunately, no, but my Prince Charming is special just the same.

My favorite scene in Lottie Loser is when Nick comes to her cottage on the beach to try to make her understand why as an FBI Agent, he hadn't been able to tell her he was investigating her bank, and her assistant in particular.

"I love you Charlotte. I've never stopped loving you, and if you will just let me explain from the beginning, I know that you'll understand."

You could have heard a pin drop the room was so quiet. How long had she wanted to hear him say that he loved her, but she couldn't believe him; she wouldn't.

"Don't run away from us again, Lottie", Nick pleaded.

Then Charlotte threw in the final blow. "There is no us Nick. I don't think there ever was. Just a girl looking for a fairytale and a guy looking to get in her pants."

Have belief in yourself and never give up on your Fairytale! Wishing you Happy Endings!