

THE AUTHORS SHOW – Authors of Fiction

Author: Vicki-Ann Bush

The Upside Down

As I sit here writing this reveal of my life's journey as an author, it occurred to me how quickly time has passed. It was in the blink of an eye that I've gone from a thirteen year old girl to a woman who has seen the changes of fifty plus years.

It was that thirteen year old however, who is responsible for the writer today. Living in New York where I was born, there was a city wide contest. We had to write a short book and construct it from cover to cover. My dad helped me with a few little drawings and behold ... my first masterpiece. I have told this story before, but it is the single most important component to my author life. It was my beginning.

As life went on as it always does, we moved out west to California and my writing took another turn. New to a style of life and a place very different from where I had come from, sadness took over and the darkness reflected in my poems and short stories. The words became a release for the things I was experiencing but kept bottled up inside. But above all—it got me through. It took me to places far away from the pain and loneliness.

The years passed and I was fortunate to meet the love of my life and have two beautiful children. All the while I kept writing. Very rarely did I ever share, tucking my thoughts into a box on the shelf. But what I never realized over all those years was that I was actually tucking myself into that box. Each poem or piece was a representation of my emotions. And I bottled them up once again.

Not until my children were grown did I pull them out and start wondering—what if?

Their words of encouragement were the push I needed and I started sending my work in to various publishers. My first published work was, Winslow Willow the Woodland Fairy with Salt of the Earth Press. Since then, I've gone from childrens books to young adult and my niche in my writing career. Freeing my thoughts and emotions has been a growing experience and

unlocked the me inside. I am myself once again. Through various characters I live and express myself, able to use the words to pull out those parts of me that I hide.

Room 629 is one of those stories that has me intertwined throughout the entire piece. Jesse Marshall is average, sarcastic, in love, in war, surrounded by friends and family. All the components that made up my life at the time I was writing the book. She uses her sarcasm as a witty cover up to hide the fear or pain inside. Although it's a science fiction, the elements of each character can be applied to every day situations in our lives. What they think, how they feel, their relationships are all sprinkled into a fantasy about the, what if? There's that question again.

The people around us influence in ways they could never imagine. I actually got the idea for Room 629 from a visit to Primm, Nevada. We had gone with some friends for a concert and it was after a night of too much wine that I found myself in the cafe the next morning; wishing for a big enough clunk on the head to put me out until the misery would pass. Observing our waitress and other servers, their seemingly slow movement and blank stares started the formulation of a story that would take me not only to another place but change the very world we live in. Now I'm certain most of my perception was muddled with the lasting effects of Merlot, but nonetheless, Room 629 was born.

I'd like to introduce you to Jesse so you may better understand who I am.

I'm Jessie Marshall: average height, average weight, and average student. I had gone to college intending to major in drama. I thought if I became an actress maybe I could transform this average person into something a little more interesting. But as it turns out, I didn't really like the whole process. Now don't get me wrong: I love being on stage. The lights, the sets, the audience—it makes you forget who you are and become anyone you want to be. But then there's the auditions, and the rejection, and the whole mess that comes before the actual performance. I didn't have the stomach for it. So midway through, I decided to change my major, and I'm proud to say I graduated with a degree in hotel.

Using the acting metaphor for writing, I was able to put down in words how I feel about the process. I love what I do and couldn't imagine anything else but like anything in life there are down sides.

Which brings me to the title of my essay, The Upside Down. It's taken from a Netflix Original series, Stranger Things. In the story there is a duplicate of this world but it's dark and gruesome. The two worlds are brought together through a portal. I thoroughly enjoyed the series and was able to share that joy with my children who followed it as well. In many ways I feel like there are two identical sides of me. The one side where everything goes right, my career is moving in a positive direction and my family and friends are all happy and healthy. And then on other days, I slip through the portal to the Upside Down and the darkness surrounds me, holding everything I love in it's depths of despair and slowly pressing the air out of my lungs. Those are the days I need my writing the most to carry me back through to the sunshine.

My career expectations are simple—never stop. The truth is I wouldn't know how to.

Life is a shared journey. It's nice to know that even on you're loneliest days, you're never really alone. Being an author reminds of that everyday. When I see a positive review of one of my books, a short note on social media or get a hug at a signing, I know this path is clear and I wouldn't have it any other way.