

### **Interview with Donna Kendall, author of *Sailing on an Ocean of Tears***

Reader Views is happy to welcome Donna Kendall, author of the women's fiction novel, "Sailing on an Ocean of Tears." Donna is being interviewed by Juanita Watson, Assistant Editor of Reader Views.

**Juanita:** Thanks for talking with us today Donna. Would you please tell us the storyline of your new book "Sailing on an Ocean of Tears"?

**Donna:** "Sailing on an Ocean of Tears" takes the reader on a journey from New York City, to the mountains of Appalachia, to a coastal hamlet in Ireland, and a warm southern Italian village. Along the way we explore the hearts of women across two continents. We encounter Isabella in New York City where, on a torrentially rainy evening, she stumbles upon an elderly homeless woman named Ruth seeking shelter from the storm. Isabella invites Ruth into her home and into her life. The two women become friends, sharing stories of the paths they have taken to arrive at their present conditions. In the course of their rapport they discover a kinship to each other and to another woman named Bridget. An intimate glimpse into the tightly knit texture of female bonds and friendship reveals the intangible forces at work in our lives guiding us towards the true meaning of love and happiness. Each woman ultimately discovers truths within themselves that lead them to the joys of realizing their life long dreams.

**Juanita:** What was your inspiration for this particular story?

**Donna:** This book was born during a time in my life when I was trying to cope with unfortunate events that disabled my sense of purpose and ability to move forward. I seized the opportunity to reconnect with my family and take a step back from my problems. I was inspired to write a novel about searching for the fragment of hope that sustains us during such times.

**Juanita:** Would you give us more insight into the three female lead characters "Sailing on an Ocean of Tears"?

**Donna:** Isabella is a character who embodies the spirit of compassion and strength. She learns from her early experiences in life that the strong family bonds of love can empower us to endure the unendurable. Through her own losses she finds the strength to embrace others as if a complete stranger is just a long lost relative. Ruth struggles to overcome a dysfunctional childhood. The

driving force in her life is the conviction that she can rise above her own mother's mistakes by making better choices, but quickly learns that despite our best intentions we can often make decisions that can alter our path permanently. Bridget's character is impelled by the force of will to transform her life by taking opportunities when they present themselves – even if it means that love has to take a back seat. Bridget's course must come full circle to redefine her goals and purpose in life.

**Juanita:** How did you create these characters?

**Donna:** I believe each of the characters is a composite of strengths and weaknesses I've observed in myself and others. Having always worked in a field dominated by women I've come to cherish the unique elements that define us as women and empower us towards self-fulfillment.

**Juanita:** What is the significance of the three women coming from diverse backgrounds and cultures?

**Donna:** I always saw myself as being different because my own parents were immigrants so I naturally gravitated towards people like myself from culturally diverse backgrounds. I believe it is significant because it supports the old adage that "suffering is universal." Despite our cultural or socio-economic backgrounds, we struggle through life's problems the best way we can.

**Juanita:** What is the common thread of Ruth, Isabella and Bridget's stories?

**Donna:** Ruth, Isabella and Bridget share a number of mutual experiences including loss, inner conflicts and misfortunes. A common thread weaves its way into their lives by enlightening them to the vital cord that connects us as human beings – sometimes it is a subtle message, at other times it is blatantly obvious. But as Isabella once says, "If we are open to messages, our hearts may hear what our ears fail to listen to."

**Juanita:** How did the chance meeting of these three women alter the direction of their lives?

**Donna:** Funny that you should use the words "chance meeting." I could be wrong and maybe everything happens by chance or coincidence but I've always believed the opposite to be true - that everything happens for a reason. We can follow a course set by our parents or we boldly take our own path but all those choices or circumstances that come our way have a connecting thread to something greater than ourselves. I think the main characters discover this as a result of their encounters.

**Juanita:** What does "Sailing on an Ocean of Tears" say in regards to the choices we make in life?

**Donna:** I hope that the book speaks to the power of faith. We make many choices each day, some seemingly insignificant, while others are more important – but we make these choices without any guarantees of the outcome and that's where faith steps in, I believe. The characters in the book make the choices any of us would easily make under the same circumstances but believing that something intrinsically good is at the end of our journey is a powerful force to believe in.

**Juanita:** What are the themes you address in "Sailing on an Ocean of Tears"?

**Donna:** The human spirit has the power to transform our lives through bonds of kinship so that we have the strength to not only endure but to overcome the pitfalls we may face each day. Faith and hope are fundamental rhythms that ebb and flow in the course of our lives, but it is love that ultimately saves us and by recognizing the many forms it takes, we never have to live without it.

**Juanita:** I read a book description that stated, “In this powerful novel the lives of three unforgettable women take an integral series of paths arriving at a critical intersection where love, fate, and friendship help them to realize their greatest moment of truth.” Can you explain this statement to our readers?

**Donna:** Each of the characters carries within their hearts a deep longing for a particular blessing upon the residual effects of past choices. At a crucial meeting point in their lives Isabella, Ruth and Bridget come to understand what their own hearts have long desired and in one final step they take together they find the common ground that leads them towards their destiny.

**Juanita:** Who would enjoy reading your book?

**Donna:** Anyone who enjoys immersing themselves into the lives of other characters and exploring the depths of the human spirit might enjoy reading this book. Although it would primarily appeal to women, the men that have read it have acknowledged it as an illuminating blueprint of the female heart.

**Juanita:** Donna, what did you ultimately want readers to understand by reading “Sailing on an Ocean of Tears”?

**Donna:** I want readers to embrace the idea that we’re all in this together. Whether a crisis is small or large it is our bond as a human family and the potential for loving each other despite our differences that will lead us all to the inherent good at the end of our journey.

**Juanita:** How can readers find out more about you and your endeavors?

**Donna:** Readers are welcome to visit my website at: <http://www.geocities.com/dmgallo11059/WorksOfTheHeart.html> or by visiting Crystal Dreams Publishing website at <http://www.crystaldreamspublishing.com>

**Juanita:** Donna, thank you for taking the time to talk to us today. You have written a very honest and inspiring novel. Do you have any last thoughts for your readers?

**Donna:** After spending twenty years as a teacher I find that I continue to be the student. I certainly welcome readers to share their thoughts about “Sailing on an Ocean of Tears,” and future books that are currently in the works.

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