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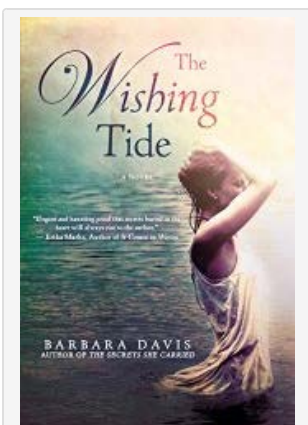
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## ALLEN MENDENHALL INTERVIEWS BARBARA DAVIS, AUTHOR OF "THE WISHING TIDE"

NOVEMBER 13, 2014 BY ALLEN MENDENHALL [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)



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APM: *Through my fault.*

*Through my fault.*

*Through my most grievous fault.*

So opens your novel *The Wishing Tide*. This refrain is repeated elsewhere in the novel in chapters attributed to the character Mary. It's a rhythmic reminder, I think, of the crashing and retreating tides of love and life. What about this opening scene frames the rest of the book?

BD: I love that you picked up on the rhythm of those opening lines, and how they mimic the sea. I really wanted to establish the sea as a presence in the book, and liked the idea of the sea as both

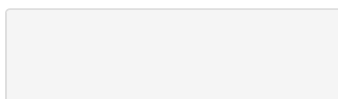
Mary's confessor, and the keeper of secrets. There's also the religious connotation of the lines from the old Catholic Confiteor, which, growing up with nuns, would have been drilled into Mary from an early age. One of the recurring themes in *The Wishing Tide*, for all the main characters, but especially for Mary, is the damage guilt can inflict, and the healing that only forgiveness can bring.

APM: You have a gift for prose and a talent for shaping characters. To a certain extent the former can't be learned or cultivated—some of it just comes naturally—but the latter, it seems to me, requires a lot of work. Would you mind explaining how you developed the three main characters in this book—Lane, Michael, and Mary? For instance, did you begin by outlining their traits, or did the characters just flow from mind to page and take shape as you worked?

BD: Mary came first, and was the product of a rather eccentric woman I met while walking along the cliff walk in Newport. She was at once forthcoming and evasive, telling me what she wanted me to know, but clearly withholding significant pieces of her life. Within an hour of that conversation's end I knew who Mary was, and what she'd been through. Lane and Michael both evolved more gradually, their traits and scars building as the story progressed and I got to know them and how they fit into Mary's story. I loved writing them all, but Mary was my linchpin.

APM: Tell us about your decision to alternate narrators from chapter to chapter.

BD: Each character in *Tide* is so unique, and, based on their life experiences, possess such different views of the world, that I felt the only way to truly convey them and their transformations was



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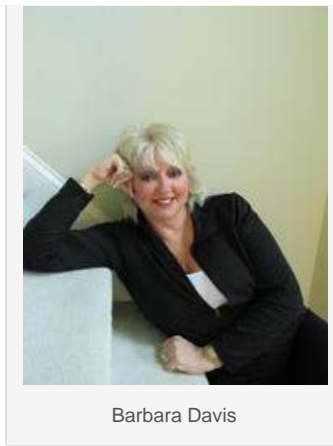
to let the reader see the world and events through their eyes. Also, there is knowledge each character has that none of the others possesses. Those bits of knowledge had to be carefully woven through the story in order for it to evolve naturally, and I hope, seamlessly. I especially wanted readers to be able to get inside Mary’s head, to get a sense of how wounded she is, and yet how wise she can be in moments of clarity.

**APM: Which narrator is your favorite? Whose perspective was the easiest to write from?**

BD: Hands down, Mary was my favorite narrator in *Tide*. I love creating a distinct voice for these types of characters, a pattern and cadence that is distinctly theirs. It can be challenging, and usually takes three or four passes to get the flavor just right, but when I finally find it, it’s so worth the work. The easiest narrator was definitely Lane. Parts of her character are a little autobiographical, so it felt easy to find her voice and share her take on the world.

**APM: The coast can be a wistful setting, and a pensive one. What draws you to it?**

BD: Personally, I’ve always been drawn to the sea, to its primal nature, its vastness and timelessness. And it’s so deliciously tactile, a feast for every one of the senses when you think about it. But mostly, it feels like the perfect metaphor for life—turning and returning, giving and taking. It’s a backdrop with a built-in pulse, which is pretty hard to beat.



Barbara Davis

**APM: You state in the Acknowledgements section of your book that the “writer’s journey is said to be a lonely one, but I never felt alone.” This seems like a statement of fact, but could it also be a form of advice?**

BD: I actually cried when I first wrote that line, because I don’t think I realized how true it was until the words came off my fingertips. I’ve been so blessed to have support from so many wonderful people, both inside and outside of the literary world, and it’s made all the difference in the world. And yes, there is some advice there, and it’s this: surround yourself with people who “get it,” who get what you do, and why you do it. These are the people who will keep you sane, who will push you, and cheer you, and keep you moving on your own journey.

**APM: Are you currently working on any projects that our readers will want to know about?**

BD: My current work in progress is set on Florida’s Gulf coast, on a pristine strip of beach called Hideaway Key. It’s the story of Lily St. Claire, a young woman who inherits a beach cottage from her father, that neither she nor her mother even knew he owned. When Lily heads south to investigate, she finds boxes and boxes of memorabilia, all of it belonging to Lily-Mae Boyle, the infamously beautiful aunt whose name has been forbidden for as long as she can remember. As Lily sifts through journals and old scrapbooks, a story of betrayal and sibling rivalry gradually comes to light, painting a very different picture of the infamous Lily-Mae Boyle than the one her mother has been painting for years.

**APM: Thank you so much for taking the time, Barbara. I’m wishing you much success with *The Wishing Tide*.**

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Allen Mendenhall is a writer, attorney, and educator. He he blogs at The Literary Lawyer. Visit his website at [AllenMendenhall.com](#).


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