# HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE

THERE'S MORE TO THE STORIES

THE 9TH WITNESS

THE WITNESS SERIES

3 million downloads

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BOOKS

FINN O'BRIEN CORI ANDERSON THRILLERS

EXPERT BEFORE WITNESS EYES

She runs;

A JOSIE BATES THRILLER
HOSTILE
WITNESS

PORGOTTEN
TORGOTTEN

**SECRETS** 

Surprising behind-the-scenes FIRE Adventures

REBECCA FORSTER

Best Selling Author

BECCA ORSTER DEAR FRIEND, BOOK LOVER, AND PARTNER IN CRIME

I AM SO HAPPY TO SHARE
THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE WITH YOU,
STARTING WITH THESE PICTURES
COMMEMORATING MY 40 YEARS OF
LIVING, BREATHING, AND WRITING BOOKS

I KNOW THAT WE SHARE A LOVE OF THE WRITTEN WORD, ADVENTURE, AND ABOVE ALL CURIOSITYABOUT HUMAN NATURE.

LIFE IS ALWAYS STRANGER THAN FICTION, BUT THROUGH FICTION I CAN SHARE MY TAKE ON THE WEIRD WORLD AROUND US.
THE BEST IS WHEN YOU WRITE TO ME AND SHARE YOURS.

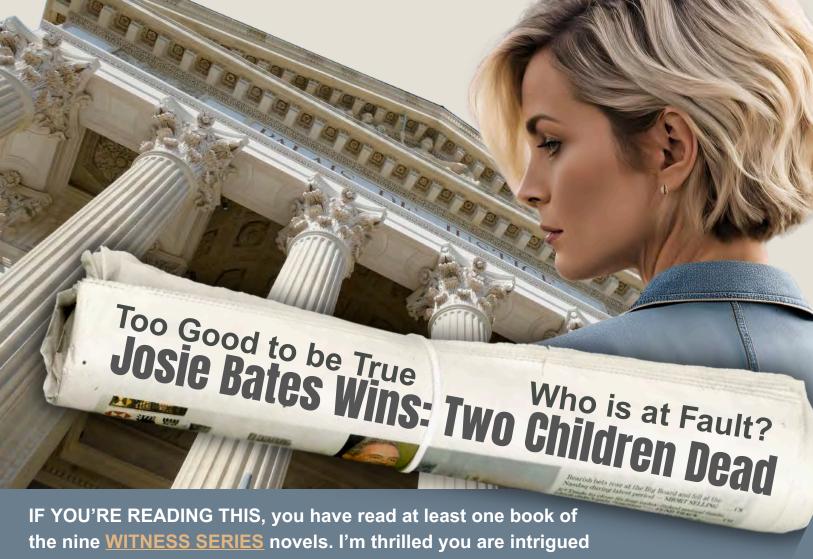
SO, LET'S GO DOWN THE WINDING ROAD
THAT INSPIRED THE WITNESS SERIES, FINN
O'BRIEN/CORI ANDERSON THRILLERS, MY
STAND ALONE THRILLERS, EARLY WORK
AND EVEN A ROM-COM TRILOGY. (CLICK
TO JUMP TO THE ONES YOU'RE MOST
CURIOUS ABOUT.)

THANKS FOR HITCHING A RIDE

Rebecca Forster







the nine WITNESS SERIES novels. I'm thrilled you are intrigued by this intricate saga of honor and justice, love and loyalty. But maybe you don't know how it began.

A top criminal defense attorney, Josie uses an archaic technicality to save her socialite client from a conviction for her husband's murder. When that same client murders her two children, and asks Josie to beat the system again, Josie's is devastated.

Shamed, overcome by guilt, she disappears from the spotlight to do penance. Josie Bates is done with the law....but the law isn't done with her.

The struggle to keep her moral compass steady has begun. In THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE, you'll find the true stories behind the fictional ones.

Thank you for taking the journey.

#### **JOSIE REGROUPS**

# THE WITNESS SERIES: EXILE

JOSIE RETREATS to a house in a small California town: Hermosa Beach.

She signs on with a neighborhood law firm, rediscovers her love of the beach, and begins to renovate her house.

Sadly, sun and sand aren't enough to banish the outside world. Still, fate is kind and four people will seek her out; people who will give her a reason to live and fight.

It took me a while to find the right place for Josie to regroup, but I think you'll agree Hermosa Beach is perfect.

Check out HERMOSA BEACH next OR click on a book title to go to its page.



**HOSTILE WITNESS** 

**SILENT WITNESS** 

**PRIVILEGED WITNESS** 

**EXPERT WITNESS** 

**EYEWITNESS** 

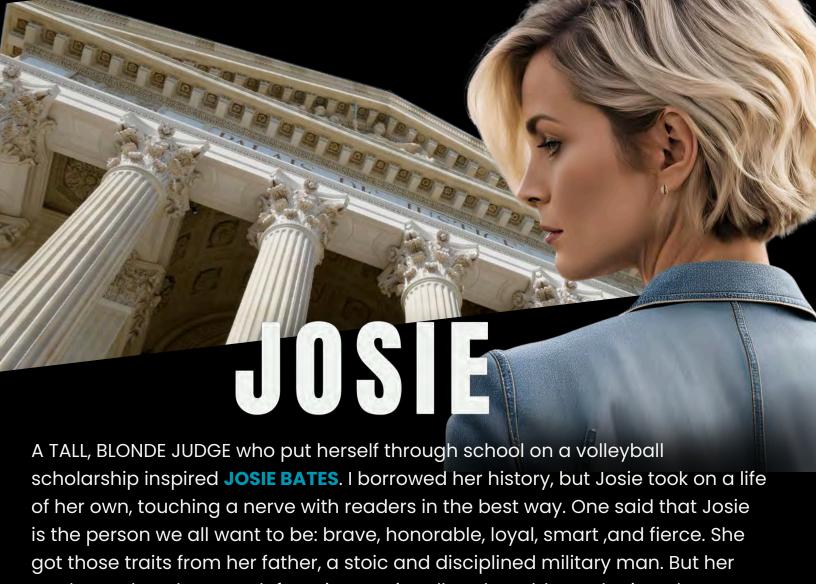
**DARK WITNESS** 

**FORGOTTEN WITNESS** 

**LOST WITNESS** 

THE 9th WITNESS





mother's abandonment left Josie emotionally vulnerable, and privately unsure of herself. That's why we relate to Josie: life isn't perfect, but we keep trying to make it so. I think readers also like Josie's taste in men.

JOSIE'S SIGNIFICANT OTHER, Archer, is a retired detective turned PI with a creative streak. Between watching Josie's back and his investigations, he hires out as a photographer. Based on the best traits of my husband and sons, Archer is cool, analytical, and the Greek chorus Josie needs when she rushes headlong into trouble. Still, fictional Archer isn't without his flaws. His emotions aren't worn on his sleeve, and that can leave him—and Josie—open to a world of hurts.

Ircher



MY SON'S HIGH SCHOOL classmate inspired both Hannah and Billy, two teenagers who grow up in Josie's care. I drove this boy home after tennis practice one day. He was handsome, privileged, and lonely. His successful parents believed he was old enough to take care of himself and were seldom home. Perhaps that was true, but his sadness at being left alone was so obvious that I knew I wanted to explore the consequences of this benign neglect.

Billy is a latchkey kid; Hannah is a bother to her ambitious mother. Yet Billy's spirit is bright and happy, while Hannah views the world with suspicion. They are two halves of a whole. The unfolding of their story was as raw to me as if I were watching my own children come to terms with their lives.

I often think of that boy and hope his story had a happy ending.





### JOSIE'S BEST FRIEND

JOSIE BATES'S COBBLED together family began with MAX, a dog she found abandoned on the beach. He seemed to be waiting for her. She soon realized that she had also been waiting for him.

My son's dog, Tucker—an abused, silent little mutt—was the inspiration for Max.

For over a year, my son cared for that dog with great love and affection. Eventually, Tucker felt safe and loved. In return, he protected my son, never letting him out of his sight.

What better inspiration for Max than this courageous little dog. In **THE WITNESS SERIES**, Max is called upon to protect Josie more than once. Sometimes he gets hurt, sometimes Josie does, but they always fight together.



### MAKING AMENDS WITH A VENGANCE



THE FIRST TEST OF JOSIE'S humanity and healing comes when Hannah, a troubled 16-year-old girl accused of murdering a judge begs for her help. Josie is stunned by the situation. Those who should love her, love themselves and their fortunes more. Josie can't turn her back.

HOSTILE WITNESS is a hard-won love story and the first of a nine-book saga. Josie and Archer, Hannah and Billy grow and backslide, their strengths are tested, and their vulnerabilities exposed. Together, these four people will face not only physical danger, but also emotional and spiritual challenges. It's just such a challenge that inspired this book.

# THE TRIALTHAT BROKE MY HEART AND LAUNCHED A SERIES

HOSTILE WITNESS WAS INSPIRED by two things. The first was a case my husband presided over, one of the first in the country where a juvenile was tried as an adult. The boy, 16 years-old, was found guilty of a triple murder and sentenced to life. My husband and I argued until the dinner went cold. What was right in this case? Justice for the victim's families or mercy for a child. It was a question even Solomon couldn't answer, and yet he had to adhere to the jury's wishes. He sentenced the boy to life in prison.

At the same time, I encountered a situation that lifted a veil of sorts. I believe in our justice system, but I saw firsthand that everyone who holds office, dons judicial robes, or carries a badge is not necessarily honorable.

I wish life-changing drama were limited to fiction, but sometimes it knocks on our door and we have to decide whether to answer. It takes courage and faith to believe in someone whom the rest of the world has written off.

I'm glad my husband was the judge in that case and not me. I'm glad I wasn't on the jury. I don't know how I would have cast my vote. Even after writing **HOSTILE WITNESS**, I still don't know what I would have done. Which side are you on? Is a child still a child even after committing a capital crime, or should they pay the price as an adult?



"Perfect. Impossible to put down."

—CBS Legal Correspondent



REBECCA FORSTER'S

#### SILENT WITNESS

### DEEP SECRETS; DEADLY TRUTHS



WHEN ARCHER IS ACCUSED of murdering a stepson Josie never knew he had, she isn't sure which is worse: the accusation or the personal blow that Archer has lied to her. Not only that, his brutal honesty about his relationship with the boy makes her question whether the man she loves is coldly cruel or insanely honest.

A year of divorces in my universe inspired **SILENT WITNESS.** In one the husband was vilified, and we all accepted that he was at fault for breaking up a family.

Years later, I found out that things were not as they seemed. I forgot that there are always two sides to a story.

The ending of <u>SILENT WITNESS</u> is both shocking and sadly all too real.

# FATHER'S RIGHTS

I'VE BEEN MARRIED FOR more than half my life, but divorce has touched people I love. Adult lives are turned upside down and children's lives are forever changed.

For fathers, that fracture can come with a devastating loss: not just of partnership, but of presence. Courts often favor maternal custody, leaving loving, capable fathers fighting just to remain visible in their children's lives.

When one of the partners remarries, the new spouse can find themselves in the middle of a battlefield not of their making. A stepparent can be seen as an intruder, resented by children, undermined by ex-spouses, and caught in the emotional crossfire of unfinished business.

SILENT WITNESS is a story of broken systems, bruised hearts, and deadly assumptions. The tragedy lies not only in what was lost, but in what is still worth fighting for: fairness, connection, and the chance to build a new family on the ruins of an old one.

Family court can be volatile and dangerous. The law can dissolve a union, but no one can control the emotional fallout.



"A grabber from page one. Excellent."



## JOSIE'S SEDUCTIVE PAST



JOSIE'S FIRST LOVER — a man who shared her ambition, the legal spotlight, power, and wealth— comes back into her life. His disturbed sister is accused of murdering his wife, but his senatorial campaign will be ill served by scandal. He needs Josie to make it go away; Josie needs to prove that he never should have let her go in the first place.

A real-life but brief encounter with a handsome, important man who left me with a feeling of dread inspired **PRIVILEGED WITNESS.** 

## POLITICS, PRIDE, POWER

I OFTEN FIND MYSELF in unusual situations, being invited to a private party to meet a presidential candidate was one of the oddest.

I wasn't wealthy like the other guests, yet there I was. And there he was: handsome, glib, young, charismatic. As he shook my hand, looking past me, aware I was no one of importance, I felt a chill.

I told my husband that the candidate was not a good man. He said I was being dramatic. Drama, after all, was my business. I didn't take kindly to that, but I let it ride.

Months later, the scandal broke. The candidate had a child by his mistress while his wife was dying of cancer. Damage control was impossible.

I never forgot that hand shake or the lessons I learned. Beauty is not a benchmark for virtue and always trust your gut.



"(Forster) not only matches the brilliance in the previous novel, but surpasses it."





REBECCA FORSTER'S

#### EXPERT WITNESS

### PAYMENT PAST DUF



IT IS ALWAYS DIFFICULT when someone moves in on your territory or you find yourself on unfamiliar terrain, unsure if you're welcome. That's the situation Hannah and Archer find themselves in. and it strains their fledgling relationship.

That changes when Josie goes missing, and they must band together out of necessity. Both love Josie enough to do anything to help her. Both, however, are devastated to find that she has a shameful history that doesn't fit the woman they know.

Worse, there are people who would be happy if Josie Bates was never found.

#### REPUTATION

I LOVE TO COURT WATCH, especially in my husband's courtroom. After years in criminal court, he now presides over intricate civil cases with millions of dollars at stake. The lawyers are like Titans at war. The best money can buy. Brilliant and ruthless. Like war, destruction of the enemy at all costs is the objective.

One day, an expert witness took the stand. Methodically and without mercy, the defense attorney destroyed that man's and the plaintiff's reputation. The lawyer smiled when he finished. I was appalled. I was also inspired.

EXPERT WITNESS looks at the one thing that most people spend a lifetime building and the consequences of its destruction.



"Edge of your seat thriller. Best yet."





#### **EYEWITNESS**

## SINS OF THE **FATHER**



setting, rescue helicopters crisscrossed the sky searching for someone who had been swept off the jetty and into the raging ocean. I wrote the opening scene of **EYEWITNESS** that night. The person drowning in my angry sea was Billy.

He had become an important character-close to Hannah as well as Josie—and it was time to know who he was and where he had come from. Even I didn't know how complicated his story was going to be until it started to unfold.

My immersion in, and fascination with, a foreign country is the foundation. Billy is the focus of my experience and obsession.

# 

TUCKED BETWEEN THE Adriatic and Ionian seas is Albania. Bordered by Greece, North Macedonia, Kosovo, and Montenegro, it is beautiful and mysterious. White stone villages spill down cliffs to turquoise coves, goats wander narrow roads, and sunsets set the sky ablaze over the Accursed Mountains.

My youngest son served in the Peace Corps, high in the mountains that were covered with castles and medieval villages. It is a country whose history is filled with romance, adventure, and tragedy. The people are kind, brave, and resilient after a brutal communist history. And then there is Albania's ancient code of justice: *The Kanun*.

Albanians believe in an honor code called *besa*, a promise of hospitality and protection for travelers. They also believe in blood feud. Kill my kin and I will kill yours. Today, 704 families are involved in active blood feuds, with 591 residing in-country and 113 escaping abroad. But leaving the country doesn't guarantee safety.

When you read **EYEWITNESS**, remember that somewhere in the world—somewhere in Albania—this story is not fiction.

\*\*\*\*

"Beautiful, horrible, edge-of-your-seat intense."





#### DARK WITNESS

## ATEST OF FAITH



RUNNING FROM A DANGEROUS situation in Hermosa Beach, Hannah and Billy travel to the dark heart of Alaska.

Their only thought is to stay safe and they welcome the assistance of a remote religious community, only to find that safety is open to interpretation and faith in a savior can be misplaced.

This is the perfect storm that flips
Hannah and Billy's relationship. The
story begins with Hannah in a position
of strength, until circumstances force
Billy to step up and be the man he is
meant to be.

**DARK WITNESS** is about courage and strength, but most of all it is about placing your faith in another human being without question.

### MY ALASKA

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA, WAS MY HOME when I was little. That's me by my father's knee. A draft notice forced him to sell his fledgling medical practice. My brother and I were toddlers, and Mom was pregnant when we drove from Missouri to Alaska before the Alcan Highway was even paved.

When she was old, Mom told me that the car broke down in the middle of nowhere on that drive. Surrounded by Alaskan wilderness dad left his pregnant wife and two toddlers as he went in search of help.

I was horrified. Wasn't she afraid? What if Dad never came back? What if...? My mom shrugged. What else were we going to do, she said. You have faith in one another, you have to do what is necessary to survive. My parents were like Hannah and Billy.

I took Mom back to Alaska before she passed. Once again, we had an unexpected mishap that took us off our course. We saw the flip side of the country: wild, independent, resourceful people living off the grid. It was fascinating. It's all in **DARK WITNESS.** 

"Bated, Chilled, Gasping Breath;
Remember to Breathe!"





#### FORGOTTEN WITNESS

# A PERSONAL CONSPIRACY



WHAT BEGAN AS A MINOR point of characterization took on a life of its own when I wrote that Josie's mother had abandoned her.

Josie saw her worth and her relationship with Hannah through the eyes of the motherless child.

I didn't want to address the question of what happened to Josie's mother, nor did I let myself think about her father's silence regarding the abandonment.

Oddly, I discovered a bit of history as I was contemplating **FORGOTTEN WITNESS**, and it provided the answers I needed. I was moved to tears by the outcome of this story.

# ALL THE PIECES

IT'S A HEADY FEELING when the pieces of a new book fall into place, but those pieces are never found purely in my imagination. In this case, it was an article in a history magazine, stumbling upon an abandoned government building in Hawaii, and meeting two Englishmen that ignited the story of **FORGOTTEN WITNESS.** 

The shameful history of the U.S.'s mind-control experiment, *M.K.Ultra,* gave me a plausible answer to Josie's mother's disappearance.

While in Hawaii, I stumbled upon an abandoned military building. Remote, surrounded by the beautiful jungle, the setting was perfect for this story.

A late-night email from a man in England who read my books while giving his sleepless baby a bottle was the trigger for the first of two critical characters. At the same time, I met another Englishman on a cruise. He was a bombastic man of great humor and surprising empathy. He was transformed into Josie's guide and protector.

Once Josie had her crew and her mission, the adventure could begin. **FORGOTTEN WITNESS** is a fantastic tale, grounded in an almost unbelievable truth—almost.



"One scary—and truly excellent—novel."



REBECCA FORSTER'S

#### LOST WITNESS

# THE PRODIGAL RETURNS



BILLY AND HANNAH'S COMPLICATED relationship ended in **DARK WITNESS**... or so it seemed.

Like all <u>WITNESS SERIES</u> characters, Billy came back to me on a cold, dreary day. In <u>LOST WITNESS</u>, Billy's return demands an emotional reckoning.

In the L.A. harbor is a cargo ship and on it a woman Billy is determined to save. He needs Josie's help, he wants Hannah's love, but he's ready to sacrifice both to do what's right.

Wisdom holds that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. In this case Josie and her family will be forged in steel if they survive.

## A SHIP OF FATE

ONE OF MY FAVORITE 'alone' places is the Port of Los Angeles.

Giant cranes and foreign ships are constantly moving. Security is high and out of sight. People sightings are rare.

I wonder what is in those containers that shouldn't be. I wonder who these men—and sometimes women—are who spend their lives crossing the oceans and slipping in and out of our country.

On the periphery of the port are businesses: boat maintenance, junk yards, 24-hour payday loans, strip clubs. It is a seedy, vibrant, dangerous area.

This is where Billy emerges, hardened to manhood by his work on an aging container ship, needing help from Josie, needing Hannah.

For me **LOST WITNESS** is an explosively physical and emotional book. The only place that would do the story justice is the port.



"Characters so real I feel I knew them."





REBECCA FORSTER'S

## THE 9<sup>TH</sup> WITNESS THE FINAL WORD



THE QUESTION OF HOW a person finds strength and purpose when they are alone has always been a theme of **THE WITNESS SERIES**. I write about it because I remember the days when I was not just lonely but truly on my own.

In **HOSTILE WITNESS**, Josie's beginning is one of self-imposed isolation. Through eight books, she builds a community, finds love, and purpose.

In **THE 9<sup>TH</sup> WITNESS**, Josie is alone again and again asked to be the champion of a woman she doesn't know. In the same way she stood up for Hannah, Josie accepts the challenge of Lilly Daye because it's the right thing to do.

I like full circles, and this is Josie's.

## LOST SOULS

ONE DAY I LEARNED that an elderly relative had been abandoned in a nursing home. The extended family rallied around, but her son held the power of attorney. He did not want her moved, even though many offered to take her in. The law tied our hands, and she passed away.

I have never felt such outrage and helplessness. No one deserves such a fate.

THE 9<sup>TH</sup> WITNESS is set in my own backyard, inspired by an isolated estate surrounded by high walls in a small city whose residents keep to themselves.

This book combines the emotions of a family drama, the sad reality that justice is truly blind, and a place of mystery.

In real life we could not be our relatives' champion, but in <u>THE 9<sup>th</sup> WITNESS</u> Josie shows how it's done.



"Heart as well as suspense. Forster does it again."



# THE WITNESS SERIES

I never realized how much of my life is in these books until I wrote **The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Witness Series.** 

From personal experiences to the hours spent simply observing people, places and things, every thought, adventure, and emotion became the foundation for a Josie Bates Thriller

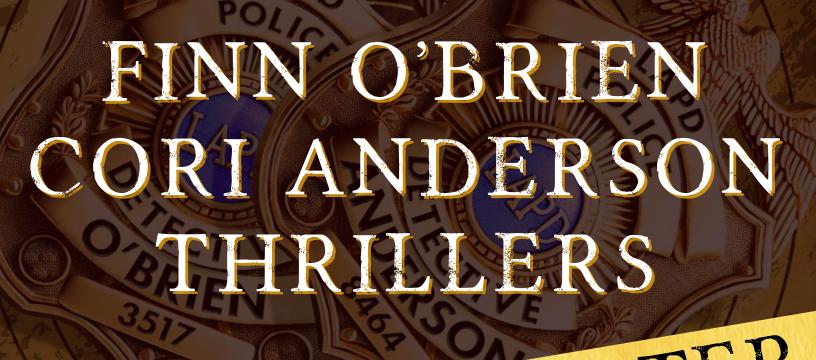
I couldn't have asked for better companions than Josie, Hannah, Archer, Billy and you, the reader.

Then again, Finn O'Brien & Cori Anderson are pretty cool too. They're up next.

Rebecca Forster

HOSTILE WITNESS





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REBECCA FORSTER USA TODAY BE SELLING AUTHOR



SEVIRED PELATIONS

O BRIEN/CORT ANDERSON THRILLER



# FINN O'BRIEN CORI ANDERSON CRIME THRILLERS

#### WHEN THE CITY OF ANGELS GETS HELLISH O'BRIEN AND ANDERSON GET TO WORK

WHILE THE WITNESS SERIES is a saga that stretches around the world, Detectives O'Brien and Anderson are laser focused on the microcommunities of Los Angeles. Places I have personally explored. Places I find mysterious. Places that have frightened me. Places Angelenos drive by, ignore, or run from. They are teeming with life. Finn and Cori know the people of these communities deserve justice at any cost.

From Hollywood to Little Ethiopia, Richland Farms to The Brewery, Finn and Cori will take you Into the most intriguing parts of L.A. to solve unspeakable crimes. Only a deep dive into a big city can deliver this kind of thrill.

Binge in order, or surprise yourself and mix it up.

SEVERED RELATIONS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
SECRET RELATIONS
INTIMATE RELATIONS
DISTANT RELATIONS



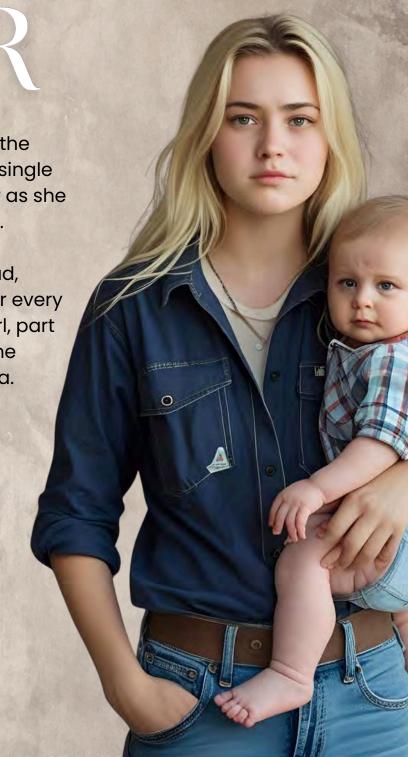


AMBER

Cori's unmarried daughter, Amber, is the mother to a baby son, Tucker. Cori, a single mother herself, accepts her daughter as she is and loves the baby unconditionally.

Amber is her mother's daughter: proud, strong, willing to take responsibility for every decision she makes. Part romantic girl, part responsible woman, Amber is often the Greek chorus to Finn and Cori's drama.

She comes into her own in **SECRET RELATIONS** and never looks back.





MURDER BEHIND THE GATES of Freemont Place was unusual; two children and their nanny killed in the home of a rich, young lawyer and his beautiful wife was unheard of. The tragedy blinds Finn to the odd behavior of the parents and Cori must fight to keep him on track.

Together, they connect the dots between the L.A. ladies-who-lunch, lawyers who skate on the edge of the law, pornographers, and Hollywood freaks as they uncover a horrific truth that will either bind them together or sever their relationship in the cruelest cut of all.





#### RICH MAN, SCARY MAN

LOS ANGELES IS A CITY of sharp contrasts. Hancock Park\* is old-money. Stately mansions line tree-shaded avenues, and the pedigree dates back to the 1920s. It's home to the rich and privileged. A few miles in one direction is downtown L.A. Fine dining, museums, theater.

Hollywood, a city that promises showbiz glitter but delivers gritty sleaze, is in the other direction. I've seen bewildered tourists stunned by the poverty and homelessness, stores that sell sex toys and cheap souvenirs. Here violent crime outruns L.A. by 200%. Hollywood is encroaching on Hancock Park. The enclave boasts L.A.'s highest burglary rate per capita.

SEVERED RELATIONS was inspired by this tug of war between the fat cats and the alley cats. I didn't want this to be a typical story about crime infiltrating a privileged neighborhood. I wanted the privileged to venture out into the grubby sewer of a city and vice-versa. I wanted to write a about a crime so horrific that both sides are repulsed—but not done in—by it.

Privileged or peasant, everyone shares the survival instinct and the desire to win. In the case of **SEVERED RELATIONS**, Finn and Cori find much more than a crime to solve, they find a personal reckoning that threatens to tear them apart.

\*Freemont Place in **SEVERED RELATIONS** 



TRAFFIC IN DOWNTOWN Los Angeles turns hellish when a woman hurtles from an overpass, crashing through the windshield of a car. When her autopsy reveals a gruesome secret, Finn and Cori are determined to prove her death was no accident

Together, they follow a twisted trail that leads into the veiled and exotic worlds of L.A.'s exiled African community, the luxurious enclaves of Hollywood, and finally to the doorstep of a third world despot whose cruelty knows no bounds and whose influence has a stranglehold on the City of Angels.





#### A CLASH OF CULTURES

I DROVE PAST Little Ethiopia on South Fairfax Avenue for years when I was a working woman. The neighborhood, a few blocks long, is home to Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees who fled war-torn Africa. I never forgot it. I needed to explore it to write **FOREIGN RELATIONS**.

I started my research with dinner. At the Mercado restaurant, I ate *injera* and spicy stew, scooping up the food with my fingers, sipping honey wine. The service was lazy and friendly, as if the day was too hot to move quickly. The owner smiled gently as he sat at the counter; the waitress was beautiful. A picture of the deposed Emperor Haile Selassi hung on the fabric-draped walls.

But it was after dinner, as I walked by an abandoned community center, that I was truly inspired. Taped to the dusty window was a note written on yellowing paper. Heartfelt, emotionally charged, the message begged for help for the homeland. It spurred me to research Ethiopia and Eritrea's history of brutal wars, political repression, and forced conscription. I brought all of that to Los Angeles in the story of **FOREIGN RELATIONS**.

Finn empathizes with the refugees experience; Cori the brutal history of the female victim. Little Ethiopia is a living archive of stories of survival, politics, and savagery. It hides in plain sight behind restaurant facades, shops, and the dusty window of a community building in the heart of L.A.



CORI'S DAUGHTER'S boyfriend, an undocumented immigrant, is missing. She begs Finn to help her find him. Uneasy about keeping a secret from his partner and hindered by the prejudice and politics of the LAPD, Finn is tempted to turn a deaf ear to the girl's plea - until the first body is found.

Together with a miffed Cori, Finn tracks a serial killer who preys on the most vulnerable, one with a gruesome secret that has been buried under decades of shame. To stop him, Finn must navigate a shadowy world where life is cheap - even his and Cori's.



"Grisly, courageous, enthralling, painful--and I couldn't stop reading."



#### **DESPERATE DEVOTION**

SECRET RELATIONS, MY HOMAGE to Romeo and Juliet, is about star crossed lovers, a horrendous crime, and a serial killer that preys upon communities the rest of the sprawling city doesn't want to acknowledge. I found the story in the pockets of L.A. where Hispanic/Latino culture thrives: Boyle Heights, East L.A. and Pico-Union are only a few of the places that Finn and Cori's investigation leads, but it is Richland Farms where they find the heart and soul of that community.

Richland Farms is a rural-zoned pocket in southern Los Angeles County. Originating in 1889 as a land grant from a minister to the city, the large land parcels are still zoned for agricultural use today. Originally, It was settled by the white community before turning to a black enclave in the 50's. The area is currently home to Hispanics and Latinos. There are no sidewalks or streetlights, residents ride horses, raise chickens and cows, and work the land.

The discovery of Richland Farms, was a perfect addition to my quest to write about the micro-communities of L.A. and the people who, more often than not, are voiceless. Finn and Cori change that in **SECRET RELATIONS**.



IT'S TWO IN THE MORNING when a domestic disturbance brings Finn and Cori to an artists' colony on the frayed edges of the City of Angels. Housed in an abandoned brewery, the concrete fortress looms like a dystopian portal to hell. Inside, the detectives find a bizarre gathering of Los Angeles elites, a man in a rage, and a young woman beaten to death, her face obliterated.

As Finn and Cori hunt for a killer, they find themselves in a surreal world where art and science create strange bedfellows, money and desire birth shameful descendants, and the deadliest relationships are the most intimate.





#### DESIRE IS AN ART, DEATH IS A CRAFT

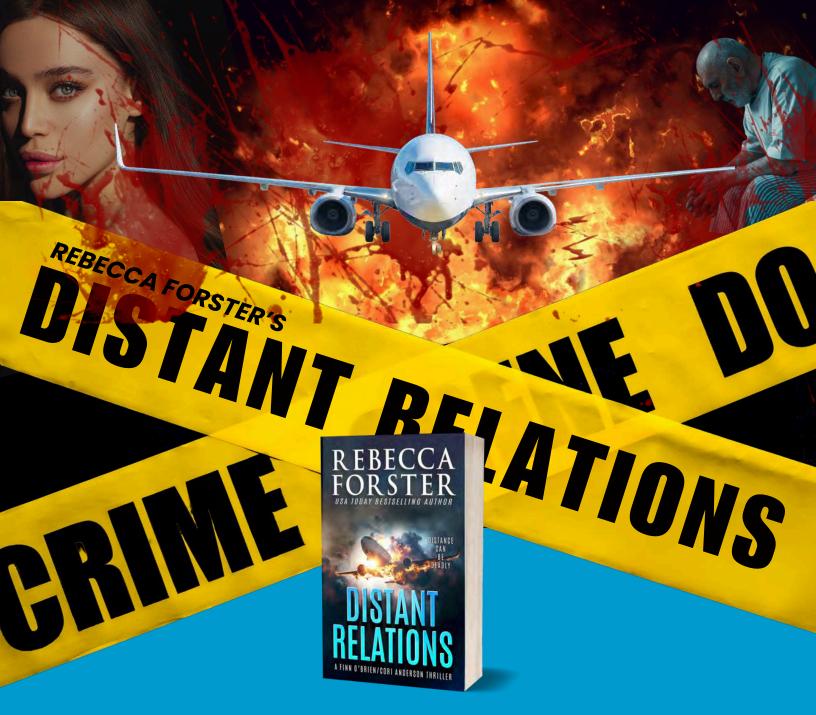
THE BREWERY HIT my radar when my youngest son, a writer, secured a loft there. Built between 1897–1903, the complex was a Pabst Blue Ribbon plant. It shut down in 1979. In 1982 it was transformed into live/work artist lofts under L.A.'s Artistin-Residence code.

The Brewery is on Main Street in Lincoln Heights just east of Chinatown. It covers 16-acres and boasts 21 historic buildings. Home to artists of all ilks, it has been described as "Burning Man with fewer drugs".

The lofts are boxy, concrete spaces that once were granaries, offices, or brewing rooms. The complex is surrounded by security fences that keep the residents safe from the meaner streets surrounding it. One artist noted that The Brewery is "an interesting combination of unforgiving urban industrial pragmatism and small-town naivety."

Twice a year the public pokes through the studios and submerges themselves in The Brewery culture. It was during one of these walks that I came upon one artists horrific vision, a vision that today is manifesting itself in every part of our lives.

In **INTIMATE RELATIONS**, Finn and Cori find out that art combined with science create the perfect storm for crime.



WHEN AN EXPLOSION kills Finn's estranged uncle and childhood love, a misdirected insurance settlement and an arrogant ATF agent make him believe this was no accident. Stonewalled in the investigation, Finn goes rogue, incurring the ire of everyone including Cori.

Led through a strange labyrinth created by big business and personal passions, Finn discovers that his life, and the lives of those he loves, are in the hands of a distant and deadly relation.





#### **BRUTAL HISTORY**

I AM FASCINATED by places no one else really looks at: the alley off the street that's just off the main highway, the restaurant so small it can barely be seen when you're standing right in front of it, whatever is behind the high wall. Finding drama in overlooked places, micro-communities, is what the O'Brien/Anderson Thrillers are all about—until **DISTANT RELATIONS**. With that story, I found myself inspired by a special group of off-the-grid people.

The rich and famous, the powerful and private are fascinating. They are as off-the-grid as a homesteader, but in a different way. Out of our sight, they sit behind tinted windows of expensive cars, have separate entrances to the theater, are whisked to tables reserved for them in fancy restaurants, and fly alone in private jets. It was seeing one of those jets up-close-and-personal\* that got me.

No fighting for leg room, no TSA or hassling with luggage. Instead, travel on a private jet and you have showers and spas, VIP car service, gourmet meals, and private customs and immigration clearance. That last bit was intriguing. If you have the money, you arrive and depart a city and no one is the wiser. Unless something happens and Finn and Cori are there to see it.

<sup>\*</sup>Sadly, up-close-and-personal only meant a peek at a plane, not a trip on it.

# FINN O'BRIEN CORI ANDERSON THRILLERS

Now you know how inspired I was by places in Los Angeles, what you don't know are the very real people who inspired Finn and Cori.

My Croatian brother-in-law came to this country when he was 17. My mother was a German immigrant in the '40s. Their shared experiences of having one foot in the 'old country' and one in the United States is what inspired Finn O'Brien's circumstances and character. I have never known two more resilient, courageous people, and I hope Finn Does them proud.

Cori Anderson is a compilation of the women in my Kansas/Missouri extended family. These women are practical, proactive, and women of faith. They also have great passion and are fiercely protective of the people they love. I hope their beauty and resourcefulness are captured in Cori.

There are still so many books to explore. You may be surprised by what comes next, but I also hope you'll be intrigued.

Rebecca



## THE SAME, BUT DIFFERENT

- STAND ALONE THRILLERS
- WOMEN'S FICTION
- ROM COM

I love it when a reader discovers my stand alone novels. These are books that were inspired by singular experiences in my life, or unique people who needed a book of their own. Each was written at different stages of my career and craft. All are dear to me.

I hope one or two will make it to your TBR pile.

Rebecca

A mountain grocer is executed, a beautiful woman is missing, and a small-town sheriff with second-sight is racing against time to find the woman before the killers do. What he finds instead is that his small town is not what it seems, and his heart is not as hardened as he thought.



#### DARK TIMES; HOPEFUL SPIRIT

MY HORRIBLE YEAR saw my father and father-inlaw at the end of their lives. Because I didn't work in an office like the rest of the family, I often sat with them and listened to the rush of air from oxygen tanks, their labored breathing, and something I found extraordinary. They had

moments of comfort as they spoke to people I couldn't see, times I knew nothing about. **BEFORE HER EYES** is a story about the struggle to live, the promises we make as we bargain for survival, the spirit that is strong even when the body has given up. I know the ending is shocking, I know I am asking you to suspend disbelief, but this story is my testament to the human spirit. Part fantasy, part reality, it's about unfairness and justice, triumph, and defeat. One thing I know, our life does pass before our eyes before we pass from this life, and hope does spring eternal.



When brilliant, sexy Nora Royce, an associate at L.A.'s premier law firm, is accused of brutally murdering a partner's wife, the legal community throws her to the wolves. Only her older sister, Amanda Cross, a third-rate attorney with no criminal experience, is willing to defend her. As this outgunned lawyer peels away the protective layers that cocoon the privileged few, she finds that Nora is more valuable to the firm dead than alive.



#### BLOOD IS THICKER

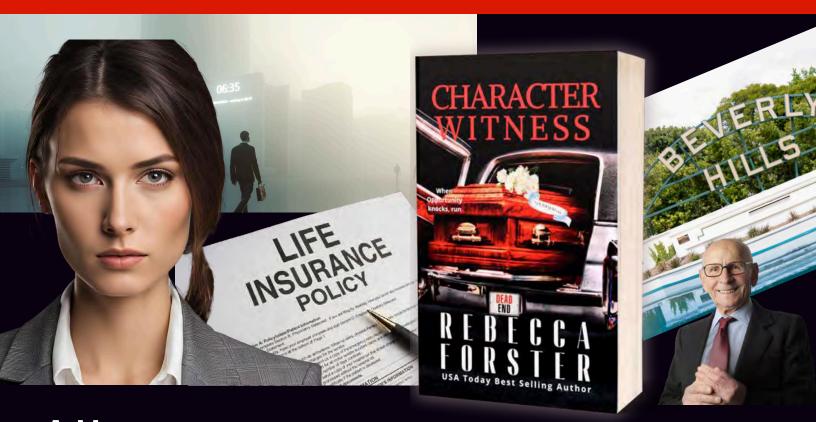
MY YOUNGEST SISTER was born on my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. I was in college before she was in kindergarten. When she was in high school and I was working, I realized how different her growing up was from mine. My parents were better off and she was shopping in department stores, on school trips in Europe, and dating at 16.I made my own clothes, worked, studied and went to chaperoned group events.

Two sisters separated by age and circumstance who find that they desperately need each other—and aren't sure they're happy about it—is the story of BEYOND MALICE. Don't worry, our age was only inspiration. My sister is nothing like Nora Royce, although I may be a bit like Amanda Cross.



"Can't wait to see it on the big screen. Dick Wolf read this book."

A shared cubicle in a strip mall law office wasn't the career Kathleen Cotter dreamed of, but all that changes when her uncle invites her to join his Beverly Hills firm. But the office is on the wrong end of 90210, and her uncle's glory days are over. Though it's a dead-end for Kathleen, she promises to see her one case through. Instead of an open and shut insurance claim, she is drawn into a web of lies, corruption, scandal, and murder. In Beverly Hills life is cheap and character is a four-letter word.



#### All That Glitters

I WAS A YOUNG BRIDE, impressed that my husband, a 'baby. lawyer,' and I had been invited to a party in Beverly Hills. Instead of glitz and glamour, high-powered attorneys and rich clients, I found a wizened has-been lawyer in a shabby office. The host was charming and unaware that the bologna hors d'oeuvres, cheap wine, and old

Christmas decorations were pitiful signs that his time had passed. For me, though, the inspiration for **CHARACTER WITNESS** was clear. Quirky, funny, frustrating and above all, a thriller, this is a story about justice, love, courage, a mighty weapon called experience.

"A riveting legal whodunit..."

– USA Today

When Attorney Tara Linley's best friend shows up with a bottle of champagne and a drop-dead gorgeous, much-younger lover to help celebrate Tara's birthday, she shows them to the guesthouse. But the new boyfriend wants more than hospitality—he needs a lawyer. Tara finds out too late that he is a madman. To protect her friend and save her own career, Tara plays a deadly game of cat and mouse only to find herself at the mercy of dangerously unstable client.

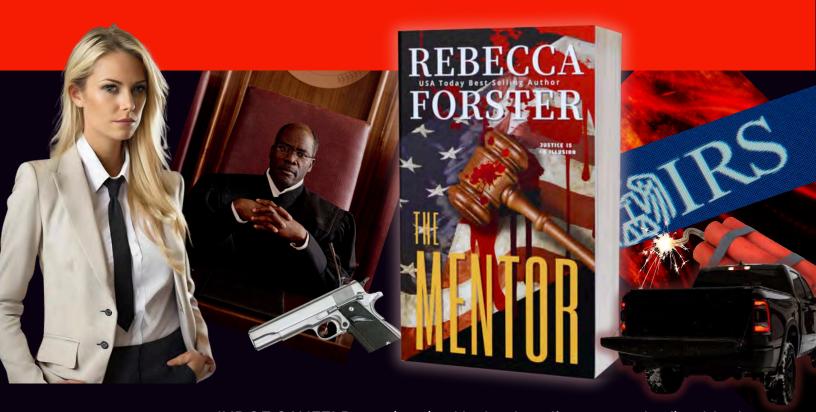


## UNHINGED DEVOTION

MY BEST FRIEND IS A WOMAN of unique character: a rough and tumble independent sort who makes her home in the New Mexico desert. We are as different as night and day, but there is nothing I wouldn't do for her. Our friendship and the remoteness of her small ranch were the inspiration for **KEEPING COUNSEL**.

Bill Hamilton, the handsome, psychotic drifter embodies my deepest fears. But it is the legal premise of attorney/client privilege that brought this story together. Breaching that privilege is only allowed if there is a provable danger to another human being. I felt every moment as Tara and her nemesis walked that fine line. This story still haunts me. The ending is shocking, but it is far too real. For some people, 'alone' is worse than death, and they will overlook horrors to avoid that fate.

Novice federal prosecutor, Lauren Kingsley, has been handed the opportunity of a lifetime - prosecuting a militia bombing. Determined to impress her mentor, Judge Caufeld, Lauren throws herself into the case. When Caufeld is murdered, Lauren finds herself adrift, in over her head, and trapped in a maze of conspiracy and corruption that leads to the U.S. Supreme Court. Lauren alone must decide who to trust before she becomes the next mark of a vicious killer.



#### PROOF OF WORTH

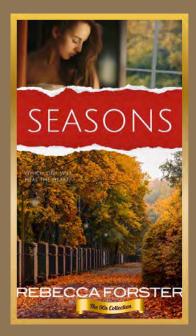
JUDGE CAUFELD was inspired by husband's mentor, the first black federal judge appointed west of the Mississippi. He was a giant in the legal community and an exceptional human being. When I told the judge that I had based a character on him, he was so pleased he kept copies of this book in chambers and signed them for visitors. THE MENTOR was, after all, 'his book'. My husband, a judge, is honored to have been assigned to his mentor's chambers.

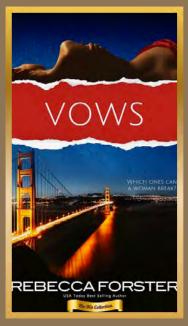
Lauren is based on a friend who joined the U.S. Attorneys office at the same time as my husband. So much responsibility is placed on the shoulders of these newly minted lawyers, how could they not be inspirational? They are smart, brave, and unafraid even though they always seem outgunned.

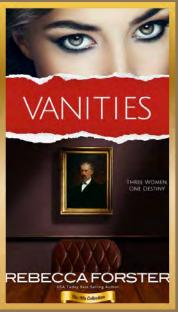


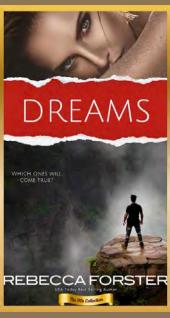


### LOVE, LOSS, LEGENDS









IN THE EARLY DAYS of my career, I was a working woman. I had earned my MBA and climbed the corporate ladder as an advertising executive. I flew around the country for 'high-powered' meetings. Sincere suits, stiletto heels, and an oxblood briefcase made up my uniform. I had also just begun to write.

Those were the days of Jackie Collins, Danielle Steel, and me! We wrote about women in a man's world. Strong women with high passion. The stories were as big as our shoulder pads: big drama, big love, big lives.

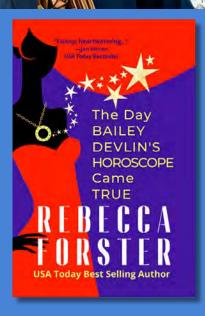
Everyone has a history and this is my literary one. Here's a look back to a time when women were hot in more ways than one. THE 90's COLLECTION. What a thrill.

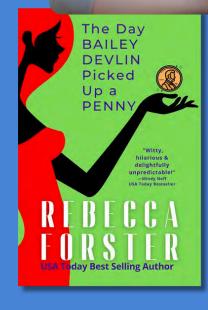


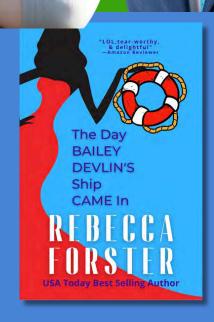
#### A FUNNY THING HAPPENED

One day, while my 80 something mother and I were having our favorite dinner of Margaritas and chicken wings, she said: "Can you write a book without bodies?"

Her wish was my command. For her 89<sup>th</sup> birthday I gave her THE BAILEY DEVLIN TRILOGY, three romcoms inspired by yours truly's inept romantic history, my ever-patient husband, my mom's father, and my firm belief that there is magic in the stars, that Fate has a plan for us, and that love comes in many forms.







## WHAT A RIDE

WE'VE REACHED THE END of the road. I know there were a few detours, an unscheduled stop or two as I reminisced, but I hope you enjoyed a look behind-the-scenes and a peek into my ever-spinning brain.

Forty years is a long time to be telling stories. Of course there will be more because life goes on, and there is inspiration around every corner.

