

OCTOBER MUSINGS

SHARON VIRT

## Holding Tight to the Stories

### Loss and Moving Forward



In early August, I lost my mother. Even when we know loss is inevitable, the reality of it always arrives with a force that unsettles everything. One moment you are going about daily life, and the next you're stopped in your tracks by a memory, a voice, or a story that feels too important to let slip away.

In the days since her passing, I've found myself drawn back to the stories of my family and community — the ones my mother told and the ones I've learned since her death. Some of these discoveries have brought me great joy. Others have opened old wounds that, even after decades, I fear may never fully heal.

My relationship with my mother was never simple. There were stretches of closeness and seasons of silence — months, sometimes years, when our words to each other were few. The last eight months before her death were one of those quiet stretches. I haven't cried since she passed, and for a while I wondered what that meant — whether it said something about me, or about us. But as I've gone through her things and uncovered stories she never told and truths she buried, I've begun to understand that grief doesn't always look like we expect it to. Sometimes

it's not the tears but the questions that linger — questions about who she was, and who I am because of her.

In these weeks, reading old letters and spending time with my father recounting times both good and hard, I've been reminded why I write. Capturing stories that matter has carried me not only through my personal journals but also through the novels I've written. Each book has been a way of honoring the past and looking more deeply at the people who shaped our history and our lives — flawed, beautiful, and complicated as they are.

My family has called Loudoun County home for generations. Its rolling hills, its communities, and its histories are part of who I am. Every time I travel these old dirt roads that wind through the foothills where I grew up, I am reminded that our lives are merely chapters in a much longer book.

And maybe that's where I find my mother now — not only in the memories that ache, but in the stories that keep unfolding. Her life, like all of ours, was a mix of love and silence, truth and secrets. Writing helps me hold those contradictions, to see her not just as the woman who raised me but as someone still teaching me — about grace, about imperfection, about the unfinished stories we leave behind.



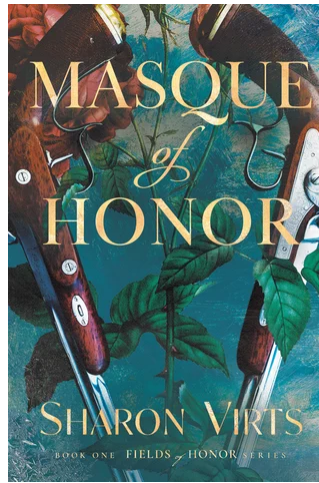
## Make *The Grays of Truth* Your Book Club's Spooky Fall Read!

**Here's how it works & the benefits ...**

- The Book club organizer places the order for 10+ books and gets **25% OFF!**
- Book club organizer gets this cute tote bag as a gift.
- Each book club member gets a signed book plate.
- Each book club member gets a set of *Grays of Truth* spooky stickers.
- Each book club member gets a *Grays of Truth* bookmark.
- **Sharon will join your book club** via Zoom (or in person if you're local!)

**Interested? Use the button below to let us know!**

**Tell me more about this great book club deal!**



Pre-Order Masque

## ***Masque of Honor* Returns—With a Fresh Look and More Story to Tell!**

I'm thrilled to share that ***Masque of Honor***, the first book in my **Fields of Honor Series**, is being re-released in MARCH 2026 with a stunning new cover and even more for you to enjoy.

This edition includes additional chapters that expand the story, along with a brand-new epilogue that sets the stage for the entire five-book series.

The epilogue is something truly unique; it will weave across all the books, connecting the threads of history, family, and honor in ways that deepen the journey.

Whether this is your first read or a return visit, I can't wait for you to experience ***Masque of Honor*** in its bold new form. [Preorders just opened!](#)



*Writer's Life.*





## We had a ball ...

Scott and I had such a wonderful time at the **Patriots and Petticoats Ball!** Dressed in our finest period attire, we joined friends in celebrating Loudoun's rich history with an evening full of laughter, dancing, and camaraderie.

Slipping into the spirit of 250 years ago reminded me how deeply connected we are to the stories of those who came before us. It was a night of friendship, heritage, and so much joy.





I gave the keynote address at the event, you can listen to it here.

**Hear Sharon's Keynote Here.**



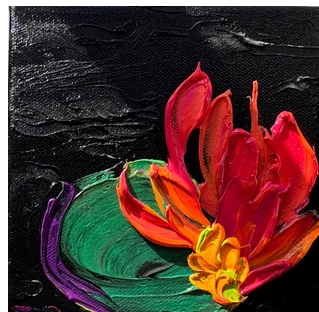
**Listen to the Interview**

I joined the Alimond Show podcast to talk about my journey from corporate leader to historical fiction author, and how storytelling, entrepreneurship, and community are all connected.

We covered everything from the “business” of being an author, to building authentic connections with readers, to the importance of giving back through the [Virts Miller Foundation](#).

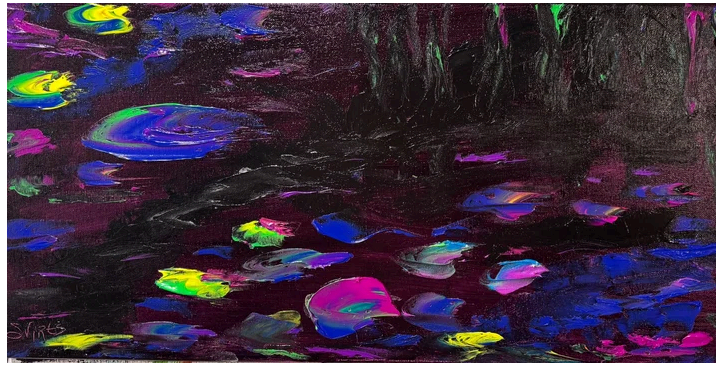
If you'd like to hear how passion and perseverance can shape not only a career, but also a community, you can hear the interview via this link.

## **I've been busy painting and planning a new art event**



On Friday, October 24 from 5:30 – 7:30 PM at **The Ordinary Art Gallery** in Leesburg, Virginia, I will be unveiling my newest exhibit:

### **Dimension in the Darkness**



This mesmerizing new collection of paintings transform under black light.

This is a free event, if you are in the area please join me and watch the art come alive in glowing layers!

## **Afternoon Tea with Miss Virginia**

I recently had the joy of speaking to an inspiring women's group over afternoon tea, with the lovely Katie Rose, Miss Virginia 2023 in attendance.

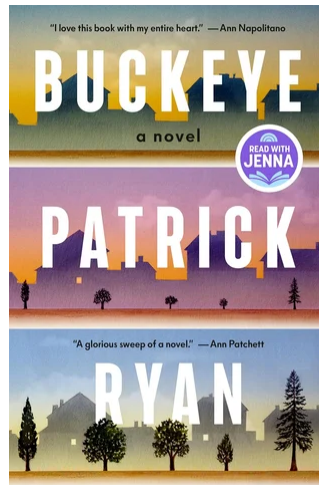
I shared a message close to my heart, one of faith, strength, and empowerment on how as women, we can do it all: build a career, raise a family, start a business, and live lives of purpose and meaning.



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## **Autumn Book Picks**

As the days grow cooler and the light softens into autumn gold, it's the perfect season to curl up with a story that stirs both heart and mind.

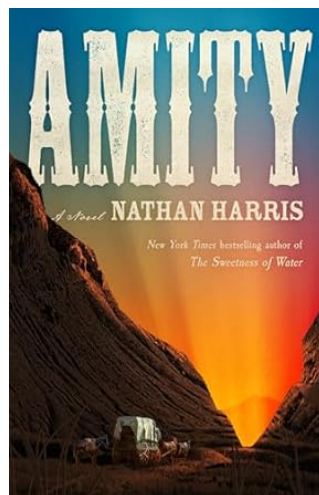


4.44★ on Goodreads

## ***Buckeye***

by Patrick Ryan

A fleeting VE-Day encounter entwines two families: Cal Jenkins, wounded by the war he couldn't fight; Margaret Salt, hiding her past; Becky, a seer who speaks with the dead; and Felix, a sailor whose fate pivots on a telegram. As postwar America booms, their secret refuses to stay buried, echoing through the next generation. Sweeping yet intimate, this novel explores identity, loyalty, and the enduring human pull toward love and goodness.



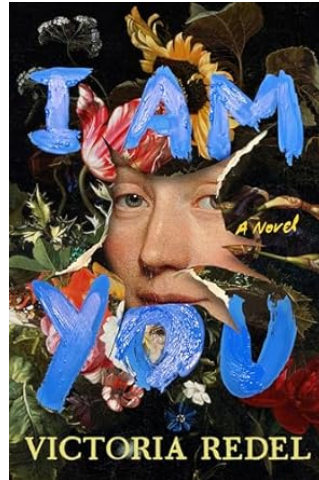
4.23★ on Goodreads

## ***Amity***

by Nathan Harris

New Orleans, 1866: the war is over, but freedom isn't. Siblings Coleman and June were split when their former master, Mr. Harper, dragged June to Mexico. A letter summons Coleman south, but disaster sends him fleeing with Harper's daughter, Florence, across a brutal desert while hunters close in. Told in taut, parallel

journeys, Amity (from the author of *The Sweetness of Water*) explores how freedom isn't granted—it's seized.



4.38★ on Goodreads

## ***I Am You***

by Victoria Redel

Amsterdam, 1600s: seven-year-old Gerta, shorn and renamed “Pieter,” works in the Oosterwijck home. The family's teenage daughter, Maria, sketches her, then brings her to Utrecht to train in a master's studio, where Maria's talent soars even as the guild bars women. As maid and mistress cross lines of art, class, and desire, Gerta's gifts surface and a love takes shape. Inspired by Maria van Oosterwijck, *I Am You* explores gender, ambition, and creation in the Golden Age.



4.24★ on Goodreads

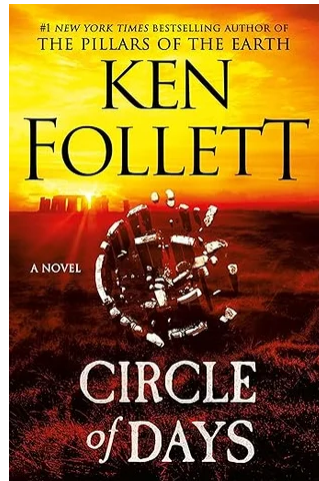
## ***The Lost Story of Eva Fuentes***

by Chanel Cleeton

A single rare book links three women across time and continents. In London (2024), book scout Margo Reynolds is pulled into a dangerous chase—and back to a lost



love. In Havana (1966), librarian Pilar risks everything under Castro to protect it. In Boston (1900), Cuban teacher Eva pens the pages that will define her legacy. Chanel Cleeton weaves suspense, romance, and resistance into a riveting, time-spanning tale.

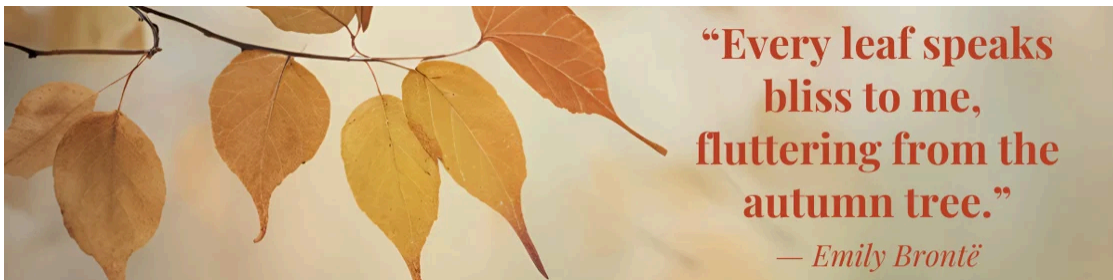


4.05★ on Goodreads

## ***Circle of Days***

by Ken Follett

With the human drama he's known for, Ken Follett reimagines the birth of Stonehenge as a story of love, leadership, and the price of creation. A gifted flint miner, Seft, and a visionary priestess, Joia, forge an audacious dream: a stone circle so vast it will outlast them all. As drought deepens and rival tribes turn from suspicion to war, their shared vision demands courage, sacrifice, and unlikely alliances—a sweeping, deeply human epic about building something that defines a civilization.



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**October Journaling: Embracing Change & New Beginnings**



As the golden days of summer give way to crisp autumn mornings, we're reminded of the beauty of transition. The turning of the leaves, the return to routines, and the subtle shift in the air all signal change... and with change comes possibility.

This month, let's explore the theme of transitions and new beginnings. Whether it's a fresh project, a shift in perspective, or the start of a new season in your life, take time to reflect on what you are leaving behind and what you are stepping into.

Here are a few prompts to get you started:

- 🍂 What change (big or small) are you embracing this fall?
- 🍂 What lessons from summer do you want to carry into this new season?
- 🍂 How do you prepare yourself, emotionally, mentally, spiritually for a fresh start?

**Autumn is the perfect time to let go, lean in, and begin again. 🍁**

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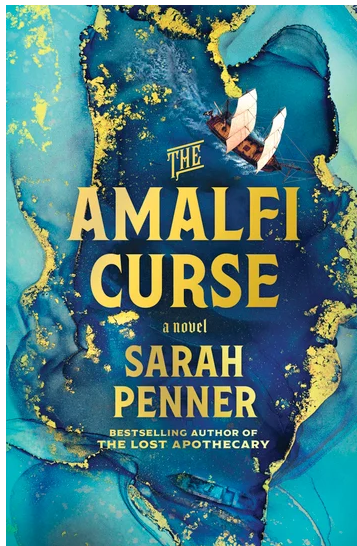


## **#ReadWithSharon Book Club**

Get ready for an incredible lineup in my [#ReadWithSharon](#) book club. On Thursday, October 23, at 7:00 p.m. Eastern, we'll dive in with a sea-soaked mystery set on the Amalfi Coast with author Sarah Penner.

***The Amalfi Curse*** follows Haven Ambrose, a nautical archaeologist hunting shipwrecks, and her late father's rumored cache of gemstones, while strange storms and a legend of stregheria (sea magic) roil Positano.

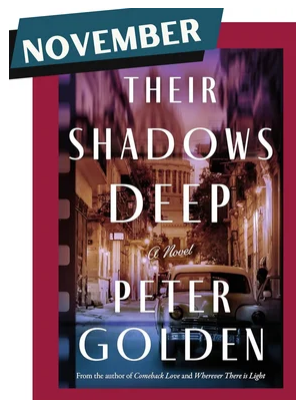
Old curse, powerful witchcraft and perilous love on the high seas--a perfect read for witch season!

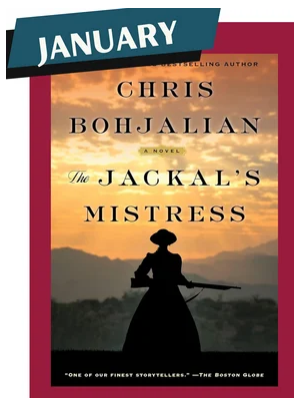


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The #ReadWithSharon book club only reads current releases (within the last year) of historical fiction, and I do my best to pre-read every selection before making the pick. Most months, the author joins us via Zoom, and you can ask questions during the discussion. Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Eastern and last no longer than an hour. For meetings you miss, you can access our Zoom discussions with the authors on my [YouTube Channel](#).

If you love stories from the past, this club is for you. You can sign up for free [HERE](#).





Enjoy the crisp air and beautiful colors of fall!

*Sharon*



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