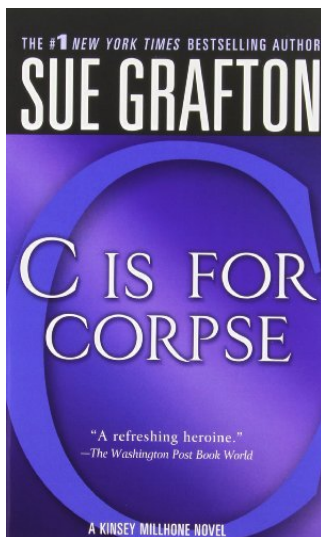
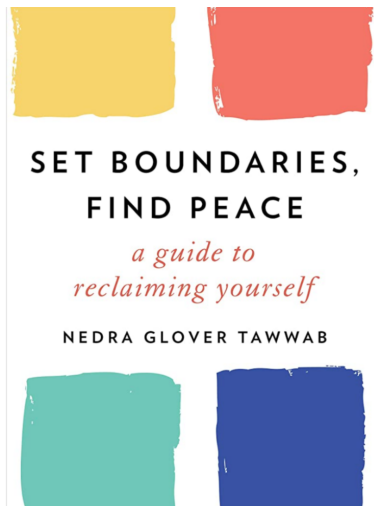


Despite all the writing last month, I still found time to read a few books. It kinda surprised me I read more in November than in [October](#). There's a direct correlation between how much I read and how much I write. Weird, but true, and somewhere out there you can find a few [articles](#) on the topic, too. Shall we dive into what I read in November?



C is for Corpse by Sue Grafton — This is the one I renewed twice in October, but never finished. I put the book on hold again and finished it in November. I had to backtrack a bit to recall important details. The nice thing about Libby is if you borrow an audio book and don't finish it before the due date, when you check the book out again, the app will pick up where you left off.

Kinsey takes on a client she's noticed at the gym while doing rehab exercises to recover from the injury she incurred in [B is for Burglary](#). The problem is, no one believes her client, Bobby, and no one cares about the investigation until Bobby ends up dead. Kinsey doesn't stop investigating, until she finds the information Bobby couldn't remember, and who killed him.



Set Boundaries Find Peace by Nedra Tawwab — I mentioned this book in [October](#), and was a chapter away from finishing, which I wrapped up in November. For the past five years, setting boundaries has been on my annual goal list. Yep, really. When you ask for a good book on the topic, most often people refer you to [Dr. Cloud's book](#). I've heard many amazing things about that specific book and have tried multiple times to delve into it without luck. I can't put my finger on why it doesn't sit well with me, but it became a real hangup for tackling this annual goal.

In October, I mentioned reading [Terkerust's book](#), which was a delight. I was also reading [Tawwab's book](#) on the same topic, but it took me a little longer to finish. I felt these books complimented each other, both touched on similar ideas of boundaries, but goingt into depth on different portions.

[Terkeurst's book](#) went deeper on an emotional level and spoke about the *million little funerals* one will have saying goodbye to relationships that are toxic or irreparable despite your best efforts. She also talked in depth about saying goodbye to relationships that only existed in your mind, referring to the idealistic way we hoped for any relationship to be. When a relationship doesn't follow the rules, or look the way we envisioned, we become hurt, and end up lashing out. I appreciated this viewpoint, and the gentle nature [Terkeurst](#) has in addressing such deep and difficult topics.

Tawwab takes a no nonsense style approach, perhaps because she's speaking from the viewpoint of a therapist who has many people enter her office with many of the same issues. The section of Tawwab's book that differed the most was the chapter about personal boundaries. The ones you hold yourself accountable to. I appreciated the insight and depth she went into on this topic, and the simple tips and scripts offered to help in overcoming the struggle. It gave me a deeper insight into why I stumble, and often fail, at certain goals.

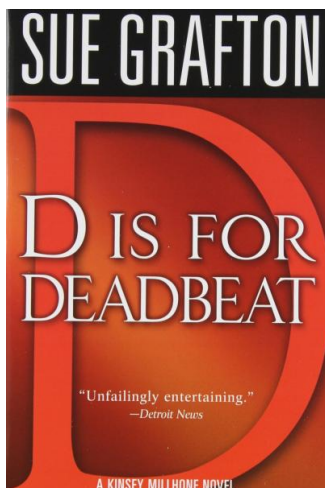


100 Days Of Sunlight by Abbie Emmons — During October, a member of our local writing group shared a video she'd watched on YouTube to help outline her project. I ended up watching the video one evening, and then got lost down the never ending rabbit hole of Abbie Emmons videos. They are all pretty short and to the point. After spending an evening reading about different aspects of writing, I decided to see if my local BAM had Abbie's book. They did not, but I could get it via Audible. I thought it was a fun way to help a fellow author along, especially one who's chosen the Indie route.

In 100 Days Of Sunlight, Tessa is dealing with temporary blindness because of a car accident. She's depressed and subdued spending most of the day in her bedroom. She lives with her grandparents who are worried about her. Blogging is Tessa's life, and without her vision, writing poetry is out for her. Grandpa decides he'll put an ad in the paper to find someone who can help. Except, it all goes wrong, and he opts to cancel the ad.

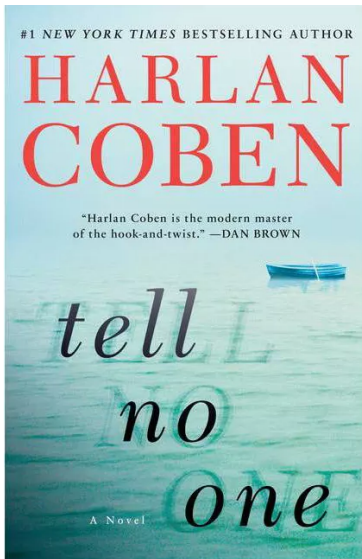
Weston hears about the situation and decides he's going to help anyway. After all, he knows a thing or two about having your life turned upside down. The problem is, Tessa is pretty sure she hates Weston and his perfect life and overly optimistic attitude. What would he know about having something as precious as his sight taken away from him?

I enjoyed this story (which is mentioned in a few of her videos) and put it on my Christmas List... as in the physical copy. (Yes, I have the audio copy, but I kinda like to own the audio, physical, and sometimes even the ebook version of certain titles. One copy is for the pure pleasure of listening to the story, while the other is used to study the craft.)



D is for Deadbeat by Sue Grafton — A guy who needs a \$25,000 delivered hires Kinsey. It should be a simple case, and since he's willing to pay her to do the job, she takes it. Except, nothing about the case ends up being easy. The guy who hired her wrote her a bad check, lied about his name, and by the time she hunts him down, he's dead. The kid the check is written out to isn't interested in the "blood money".

Daggett, the guy who wrote the check, has left a wake of destruction and hurt people everywhere he's gone, and the person who killed him isn't willing to go quietly into the night. In this story, the ending isn't neatly wrapped up with everything and everyone living happily ever after.



Tell No One by Harlan Coben — This is another book I chose based on having our writing compared to published authors. Coben's name came up in association with mine. I opted to scan what Libby had to offer and choose a book that didn't require a hold. Now, I'm going to confess something hilarious here.

While I thought I'd read the blurb about this book, I also picked it based on the audiobook cover. I thought the image was a lobster in a chef's apron and hat. Why? I don't know, nor do I know why on earth that image would interest me, and I'm guessing that I confused the blurb of this book with one of the many others I read. Because there is nothing about lobsters in this book, or backyard barbecues, or chefs.

I'll also confess I was more than halfway through with the book and was desperate to finish one more chapter before bed. Wanting to hold myself accountable for a *single* chapter, I was watching the little counter that ticks down the time in the Libby app. Fixated on the timer, I suddenly noticed the cover was not a lobster wearing an apron. It was a set of red lips with a colorless finger over them, the nail of which was painted a vivid, glittering red. This revelation was so profound to me, I almost jumped out of the chair as I held up my phone and shouted, "Hey guys, it turns out this isn't a lobster at all."

The "guys" were in the middle of some debate over whatever Mario game they were playing and gaped at me long enough to remind me just how crazy I am before returning to their

discussion.

As for the story, it opens with a couple heading out to the summer camp they frequented as children to mark their wedding anniversary. Things go terribly wrong, though. David hears his wife, Elizabeth, screaming, but before he can find her, he's knocked unconscious and dumped in a lake. He still has no recollection of how he got out of the lake, even years later. The only thing he knows for certain is that he still misses his wife.

Leading up to what should have been their anniversary, David gets a mysterious email. He opens it and follows the instructions at the appointed time, and sees something that turns his entire world upside down.

Two bodies are discovered near the camp where his wife died, prompting the sheriff to reopen the investigation with David as the prime suspect, leading him to investigate what happened all those years ago.

The first chapter sucks you in. The second chapter confused me, because I had to wrap myself around the time jump, but by the end of it I had strong suspicion of what was going on and had to keep reading to figure out if I was right. With its many twists and turns, this book required strong self-discipline to stop reading and go to bed at a reasonable hour.

The copy I listened to on Libby included an interview with the [author](#) at the end. I found it fascinating to learn about the book's conception and transformation into the story I read.

I'll also give a mini warning that there are a few graphic scenes in the book. It concerned me, because I don't do violence. My vivid imagination is hard to switch off when reading or watching things. However, I found that after the first two descriptive scenes, the author hinted about the rest more than he described them in vivid detail. So now the only question left is do I dare watch the movie adaption?



I'm now neck deep in Christmas reading. At the end of November, I scoured [Libby](#) and [Audible](#) for Christmas titles. I purchased several in the big Audible sale and put a few on hold with my local library. I cannot wait to sit down and [read the follow up to 100 Days of Sunlight](#), but I made myself agree not to start until December.

Thus, I started a [Macomber](#) book instead, which sparked an idea for a short story. We'll see if it comes to fruition, and if I can finish it in time to share this year with you. I promise I did not take her idea, but something she said in her note to the reader prior, mixed with an idea for a short story I had intended to write during November, got my imagination rolling.

In fact, I outlined the entire story on November 30th, while sitting in the aforementioned cafe of one of my local bookshops. Head down and fingers flying until I wrapped it up. My fellow writers were aware of the original story idea I had, but the few who remained late that night got to hear just how terrible my story might become. Based on the "Oh no!" and "Ew, gross!" comments, I think my idea will work. I know it's cruel to leave you hanging like that, so I'll give you the title: The Twelve Mishaps of Christmas. Which also means I ended up hitting my final writing goal I wasn't convinced I'd make in November!

If you have a favorite Christmas read, leave a comment and let me know what it is. I'm cramming as many Christmas related reads into December as I can this year. If you're looking for a few good recommendations, I'd suggest [The Christmas Pig](#) by JK Rowling. In audio fashion, the book is like a radio presentation. [A Christmas Carol](#), the performance by Tim Curry on Audible was a member gift one year. It's fantastically done. [The Christmas Wish Book](#) by Lynn Austin touches on helping two little boys with the gimmies learn to give back to their community and become just like the Wiseman from the Nativity story. Keep an eye out, it was available for \$1.99 on kindle recently. [The Christmas Spirit](#) by Macomber is quite a trip when a bar owner and a priest swap jobs two weeks before Christmas. [Dear Santa](#), also by Macomber, is pretty predictable, but a cute cozy Christmas read. A woman overcoming

heartbreak reads through letters she wrote to Santa as a child, and is encouraged by her mother to try writing to Santa despite being an adult.

The Christmas Bookshop takes a bit to get into, but it's not a bad read. Carmen is down on her luck after being laid off from her job, while her sister Sofia is living the high life in her perfect house with her perfect family. Carmen can't stand the idea of spending Christmas with her sister. Their mother, desperate to see her daughters getting along, puts her nose where it doesn't belong, and convinces Sofia to find a job for her sister. Carmen ends up taking the job because she's desperate for an income, and besides, working in a bookshop can't be that bad, can it?

The Reluctant Author.

