

PRESS KIT

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BIO

Idelle Kursman was born and raised in Providence, Rhode Island. She earned her undergraduate degree from Boston College and her master's in reading education at William Paterson University. She has worked on her writing skills for over 20 years. A few years ago, she watched the movie *Taken* with Liam Neeson and was shocked to discover the existence of human trafficking rings. She has a loved one with autism, which forced her to put her career on hold. Concerned about these topics, Idelle began researching and writing her debut novel. In *True Mercy*, Idelle seeks to bring more awareness to the international human trafficking crisis as well as the plight of families with loved ones with autism. She does presentations to speak about these issues. Idelle currently lives with her family in New Jersey.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Title: *True Mercy*
Author: Idelle Kursman
Publication Date: December, 2016
Available at Amazon, IngramSpark and Smashwords
ISBN: Print—978-0996592208
Kindle—0996592202
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Retail Price: Print--\$15.99, E-book--\$2.99
Page Count: 342
Genre: Thriller & Suspense

PROMOTIONAL INFO

INTERVIEW RESOURCES

Q: WHAT IS YOUR BOOK ABOUT?

A: An 18-year-old young man with autism who just lost his mother finds a young woman passed out on his property. He helps her and quickly embraces her as a new maternal figure and friend. His widower father, who is already overwhelmed with caring for his son and holding down a demanding job, is at first outraged that his son has allowed a stranger into his home but soon is helping the woman flee her captors.

Q: WHAT'S YOUR WRITING BACKGROUND?

A: I always loved writing. My 10th grade teacher even encouraged me to go into it after graduation. College teachers commented that I wrote well. Unfortunately, I never thought seriously about pursuing it as a career until I was an adult.

Q: WHY SHOULD SOMEONE WANT TO READ YOUR BOOK?

A: Readers who are interested in autism, families coping with a loved one with autism, and those concerned about the human trafficking crisis would appreciate this book. Also, people who read thrillers may find it engaging. My goal was to make this story a page-turner that also touched upon social issues.

Q: WHAT WRITERS INFLUENCED YOU?

A: I loved Steig Larsson's *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo* series. They were not only page-turners, but I particularly admired Larsson's ability to weave an engaging story while at the same time drawing attention to social issues. I also find Camilla Lackberg mysteries very powerful because she writes about ordinary people in Sweden and makes their lives fascinating, making the reader feel empathy and caring about the characters. In *True Mercy*, I also wrote about ordinary people. I wanted readers to be touched by the widowed father dealing with his son with autism and to understand the tremendous challenges and stresses these families experience. I also wanted to put a face on the brutal world of human trafficking and show how these young women are kidnapped and forced to work as prostitutes to stay alive.

Q: WHERE CAN A PERSON FIND A COPY OF YOUR BOOK?

A: Amazon, IngramSpark and Smashwords.

Q: WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO SELF-PUBLISH?

A: I did not want to go through all the hurdles and wait months, even years, before a traditional publisher would take my book. It may never have happened since 97% of all submissions are rejected unless you have a famous name. I wanted creative control over my book. If a traditional publishing house would want to make the book violent and risqué, it would not coincide with my vision of the story and it would make me uncomfortable, detracting from the story's goals of raising awareness for

these two important issues. I am so glad we live at a time when writers can easily self-publish and control their own work.

Q: IN THE WAKE OF MEDIA-ATTENTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND ALL THESE SEXUAL HARASSMENT SCANDALS, HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE IDEA OF AN ESCAPEE OF A HUMAN TRAFFICKING RING?

A: About five years ago, I saw the movie *Taken*. It left me shocked and traumatized and I don't even have a daughter. The idea that young girls could be kidnapped and forced to endure the horrific sex trade left me reeling. I wondered how people could be so evil, but of course, humanity has a history of committing atrocities. I researched this topic and learned that it is happening all over the world, including in every state in this country. A couple was actually arrested for sex trafficking two teenaged girls in my town—how much closer to home can it get? The more I learned, the more I realized it could happen to anyone and unfortunately, it is happening all around us. More measures have to be taken to prevent it and apprehend the perpetrators. I strove to write an engaging novel as my contribution to help spread awareness.

As for the sexual harassment scandals occurring with prominent media figures and politicians, I realize women still have a long way to go for equal rights and equal respect. In many people's eyes, women are mere sexual figures and are not treated with the dignity that all human beings deserve. It only highlights the degradation women experience in human trafficking.

Q: HOW CAN ONE CAN GET INVOLVED IN PREVENTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

A: There are many avenues to get involved. Fortunately, many organizations have sprouted up to prevent human trafficking. In my state there is the NJ Coalition Against Human Trafficking, which I am a part of. There is also Polaris, Stop the Traffick, Hope for Justice, Zonta International and Durga Tree International, to name just a few.

If you suspect human trafficking is taking place, you can call the free hotline 888-3737-888 or text BE FREE (233733). Popular places for human trafficking to take place are in hotels, strip clubs and truck stops. It can also take place at major sporting events like the Super Bowl. Human trafficking rings have been caught in residential neighborhoods as well. Men have been known to try to recruit teenage girls where they hang out. It has even happened in the schools.

The websites for these organizations are listed below:

NJ Coalition Against Human Trafficking, <http://www.njhumantrafficking.org>

Polaris, <http://www.polarisproject.org>

Stop the Traffik, <http://www.stopthetraffik.org>

Hope for Justice, <http://www.hopeforjustice.org>

Durga Tree International, <http://www.durgatreeinternational.org>

Zonta International, <http://www.zontainternational.org>

Q: WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE ABOUT AUTISM?

A: I have a loved one with autism. I know how difficult and stressful it is for families to take care of these individuals. I wanted to give readers a peek inside living with someone with autism and have empathy because it changes the dynamics of everyone affected by it. Autism Bedfordshire, a charity organization that provides information, advice and support with people with autism and their families,

summed up the challenges perfectly in one of their articles: "Loneliness, lack of friends, few social activities and little support are among the most common problems that people with autism and their families face."

The following are just a few of the prominent autism organization websites:

Autism Bedfordshire <http://www.autismbedfordshire.net>

Autism Speaks <http://www.autismspeaks.org>

Autism Society <http://www.autism-society.org>

Autism Web <http://www.autismweb.com>

Autism Hwy <http://www.autismhwy.com>

Autism New Jersey <http://www.autismnj.org>

MEDIA REACTIONS

REVIEW FROM READER'S FAVORITE:

True Mercy by Idelle Kursman is a riveting and suspenseful thriller about a girl's attempted escape from modern slavery. It was early morning in Chisinau, Moldova and Marina was on her way to the station to catch a train. At the quiet and empty station, a stranger approaches Marina and forcibly shoves her into a waiting car. For the next six months, Marina is on a ship, chained up with several other women. They are brutally beaten, raped, and prostituted from port to port across Europe. Seizing an unprecedented and unexpected opportunity to escape, Marina is surprised to find herself in the United States. Starving, frightened and unable to trust anybody, Marina seeks refuge in a park-like area in a residential neighborhood. Unexpectedly, Marina receives assistance from an unusual source. A little leery, but grateful, she accepts the proffered help. But with dangerous men seeking vengeance and hot on her trail, has Marina endangered everyone's lives by receiving aid and shelter?

True Mercy by Idelle Kursman is a spellbinding novel that starts in Eastern Europe and makes its way across to America. Once you pick it up, you can't put it down. It is an amazing depiction portraying victims of sex trafficking. The main character's scramble to survive and be free again is heartrending. The author has done an excellent, but a disturbing job of capturing a very real nightmare that is operating across the world. Not only has the author featured human trafficking, but Autism also plays a major part in the storyline. It is a marvelous representation of the difficulties related to this spectrum disorder, rendering the characters lifelike and relatable. The unconventional conflicts gave the story a fascinating balance between good and evil. This remarkable and breathtaking novel keeps the reader in suspense to the final pages. It is a stunning novel and I am looking forward to reading more of Ms. Kursman's work.

FROM SELF-PUBLISHING REVIEW:

Combining a father's love for his Autistic son and the dangerous world of human trafficking, *True Mercy* by Idelle Kursman draws you in immediately, making it hard to stop reading.

An unassuming hero, Bruce Hitchens is thrust into the role of sole caregiver to his adult son, Adam, after his wife passes away. While still trying to get his footing in his new role, Marina, who has escaped from a human trafficking ring, shows up on his doorstep, scared and unsure of who to trust. The three of them

embark on a journey that is both heartwarming and full of intrigue, as Bruce and Adam unknowingly become part of the seedy underbelly of human trafficking while trying to help Marina.

The story alternates between character viewpoints throughout the novel, which is done very well. Chapter length allows for the reader to follow each micro story into the next while retaining their place in the overall storyline. The character backstories are artfully weaved throughout to not give the reader too much at one time, allowing readers to empathize with the characters without becoming too uncomfortable with the content.

Striking a delicate balance between love story and intrigue, suspense and heartbreak, readers will become deeply attached to the main characters as they root for them to defeat the nefarious group of human traffickers. *True Mercy* leaves readers a bit unsure about the relationship between Bruce and Marina and where it is headed, but the unexpected twists and turns in the novel will leave the reader wanting to see more from this author.

FROM CROSSROADS REVIEW:

This one was very good I couldn't put it down. It blended Autism and human trafficking together to create a wonderful story. I really enjoyed the characters and the pace of this story worked well. There were some great twists and turns and the story flowed. You could see how much the author wanted to bring this story to life and she did a wonderful job doing that. If you are looking for something different to read that will make you think and wonder check this one out.

SUSAN PANZICA OF THE JUSTICE NETWORK:

In *True Mercy*, Idelle Kursman gives us a riveting nailbiter about a very important issue for our times. She sheds light on the 2nd largest and fastest growing criminal enterprise through an action-packed novel that touches on true scenarios that sadly happen every day.

-Susan Panzica, *Justice Network*

PRESS RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Novel captures stress involved caring for special needs individuals while raising human trafficking awareness

Denville, NJ—Author Idelle Kursman will be presenting her debut novel *True Mercy* at The Oaks at Denville on Tuesday, October 10th, at 7PM. The themes for the presentation will highlight the challenges of caring for a special-needs loved one as well as educating the audience on the world-wide crime of human trafficking, two major issues in her novel.

True Mercy is about a recently widowed father who is solely responsible for his 18-year-old autistic son. The son Adam, yearning for a maternal figure, has befriended a young woman in terrible danger. Bruce the father becomes caught between helping her and protecting his son.

Kursman was a correspondent for *The Neighbor News* for four years and presently writes and edits articles for a company newsletter. She has also written articles for various publications. After seeing the movie *Taken* a few years ago, she decided to write about human trafficking. Kursman has a loved one with autism.

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Media kits, headshots, and other support are available upon request.