

**INSPIRATIONAL THRILLER BESTSELLER**

**BRANDILYN COLLINS**

**Seatbelt Suspense™**

**Don't forget to *b r e a t h e ...* ®**

**GHOST SHADOWS**

**by Janet Chester Bly**

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October 14, 2007

Janet,

Alone in the dark I heard the sounds.

*Crunch ... hiss. Crunch ... hiss.*

Ahead of me, stretching over the entire street—an elongated shadow of a person. Grotesquely tall and skinny, a warped silhouette. Moving slow but steady, spindly arms stretching, pulling back, stretching, pulling back.

What *was* this?

It was nearing 5:00 a.m. as I jogged up the street. That day promised to be a busy one. I had to drive two hours each way to meet with a client about a marketing project. The only way to get a run in had been to leave my house at 4:30, long before dawn.

I was younger then.

The sounds intensified as I neared the shadow, the *pound, pound, breathe* of my own jogging rhythm fading in my ears.

*Crunch ... hiss. Crunch ... hiss.* In beat with the shadow's movement.

Spider-fingers skittered down the back of my neck.

My feet brought me close to the freakish apparition, soon to run over it. I turned my head to the right, searching the yard of an expensive stucco home for its origin.

A man. Digging.

Legs wide apart, shovel in his hands. Half-dimmed lantern on the ground behind him. He extended his arms—and his skinny silhouette did the same. The shovel connected with ground.

*Crunch.*

The man arced back and to the side—and his shadow arms mocked. Dirt and tiny rocks flowed off onto a growing pile.

*Hiss.*

I shuddered. Someone digging before daylight. Alone.

*Why?*

Heart pumping, I sprinted by. Leapt over the horrific shadow, as if touching it would taint me, fill my head with the surely aberrant thoughts of a man who chose to dig—to bury some secret, heinous thing—in the dark.

A body?

What if he saw me?

Fresh sweat popped down my arms. Sudden vulnerability nipped at my heels. What had I just witnessed? What havoc would such unwanted knowledge wreak with my life?

I cut my run short and veered for home.

The sight of that shadow, the sounds, the *why?* rattled all day in my head.

I was a nonfiction writer then, churning out brochures and annual reports and magazine articles for clients who hired me to make them look good. But in my mind, in my dreams, I was a novelist.

Years passed. At the birth of our second child, I took the leap to learn fiction, turning my back on my business, the steady income it produced. I wanted to grab readers' emotions, make them shiver and yearn and cry. I wanted to *create*.

Ten years I studied the craft. Read and read. Wrote and rewrote. Saw my work rejected. Quit—more than once. But always, like a sailor to Sirens' call, I dove back in, swam with all my might for the prize of becoming a published novelist.

I wrote a suspense, titled *Eyes of Elisha*. After a decade of pursuing my dream, I finally sold it. The publisher offered me a two-book contract. What should I write for the second story?

*Crunch ... hiss.*

That spine-wracking incident had never left me. Some day, I'd known all along, I would write about it.

What. *Was*. That man. Burying?

Thirteen years after that dry-throated jog, the scene became the prologue to my novel *Dread Champion*.

People ask me where I get ideas for my Seatbelt Suspense™. "Life," I tell them. "Life." Now with my mind constantly tuned to fiction, any off-hand remark, a moment's interaction on the street can turn the *What If?* gears in my mind. But never so stunningly, so grippingly, as that early morning jog in the dark.

To this day I can still hear the sound.

*Crunch ... hiss.*

~ BRANDILYN  
Redwood City, CA

**I wanted to grab readers' emotions,  
make them shiver and yearn and cry.**

**I wanted to *create*.**

**Brandilyn Collins**

## **MY STORY – A HALLWAY OF ERRORS**

I met Brandilyn a few years ago at a writer's conference in California. We chatted as we walked together after midnight, following a late night session. Exhausted, fighting yawns, we said our goodbyes. I headed two doors down, and reached in my purse for my key. No plastic and metal in the side pocket. Or scootched between wallet, Kleenex and assorted other sundries. After a frantic series of hand plunges, I dumped the contents on the floor. Then shook my thick syllabus of a binder. Nothing key-like tumbled out.

I recalled the events of that morning – scrambling back and forth, to and fro to get my class set up to teach, then tossing what could have been the key on the bed with a notebook as I yanked an additional handful of my own authored books for the conference bookstore. Laden down with my burden, I never gave a thought that the doors automatically locked. Now, it was too late to find someone to come to the rescue. Or so I thought.

*Push. Pull. Bump. Pull. Bump. Push.* I tried my best to tease the door, to pry the knob with erratic punches and yanks. But quietly, of course. Twist fast. Jerk. Slide slow. Squeeze. Maybe it was only mostly shut. Not completely latched. But I couldn't trick it ajar.

Flies buzzed and sneered, I'm sure, around dim ceiling lights. Conferees snored, snug in their beds. I tried not to think of my own cozy mattress and blankets just a few feet away. With great frustration, I scrunched down against the hallway wall. A slight chill stiffened my joints.  *Scoot. Twitch. Stretch. Scoot. Stretch. Twitch. Stretch.* I settled down for what might be long hours of waiting for an official somebody to appear. Not scary, no matter how many suspense writers lurked on the grounds. Just humbling. And irksome. I determined to make the most of this unwelcome turn of events, to not waste the experience. I prayed some. I recited the Bible verses I'd memorized.  *Fear not. All things work together. Jesus wept.* And like any writer would, I let my imagination roam.  *What if?* What if I hadn't been so careless? I could be snoozing in my expensive, paid-for room right now.

Several hours later, I remembered a lounge down the road and up a hill. Did they keep it open all night? I creaked to a standing position, slid out of the building and skittered around in the cold mountain shadows toward the haven of couches and drop-back chairs. Ah, sanctuary at last. Pillows of stuffed leather. A fireplace! A chance to ease my bones, sprawl, and shut my eyes.

About 5:00 a.m., a guy with a huge, jingling wad of keys found me. He opened my inner sanctum with a single quick *click*. I was saved. The coveted key shined brazen, but welcome, on the flowered bedspread. I passed out until the breakfast bell.

As the story of my stupidity made the rounds at the conference, Brandilyn admonished me, "I had no idea. Why didn't you come knock on my door? I had an extra daybed in my room. You could have stayed with me."

Such a sweet, gracious gal. Fun. Witty. Appears mostly normal. You'd never know that deep inside that pretty head resides a most suspicious, contorted, morbid mind—when she gets in front of a computer screen.

I thanked her and clung to my key the rest of the week.

**Such a sweet, gracious gal. Fun. Witty. Appears mostly normal.  
You'd never know that deep inside that pretty head resides  
a most suspicious, contorted, morbid mind—  
when she gets in front of a computer screen.**

### **WHY FANS LOVE BRANDILYN COLLINS**

Her books should come with warning signs: Chilling mysteries. Plenty of intrigue. Not to be read alone at night, especially on a dark and stormy night.

You may sense an eerie, evil presence.

So creepy, makes your skin crawl.

Your heart rate may climb.

You're plunged into gripping action from the first page.

Fans have lots to say about the edgy experience of reading her books: "Deliciously intense." "Terrifying situations." "She gives her characters horrible decisions to make."

Her main characters seem on a collision course with death. With tight timeframes That's part of why she's called 'the queen of seat-belt suspense.' There's plenty of fiction devices she uses to enhance her storytelling talents.

### **Suspense Builders**

In all my novels, I try to live up to my brand, 'Don't forget to  *b r e a t h e . . .* '

In my thrillers, I hope to snatch your breath away through peril and fear.

All good writers paint images for the reader, make you *see*. Good suspense writers like Brandilyn force you to *hear* things, too, that make goosebumps in the night.

Sounds of the dead knocking.

Grating rhythm of cicadas.

Whoosh of breath.

Hearts beating.

*Crunch. . .hiss. Crunch. . .hiss. Pound, pound, breathe.*

*Click. Crack! Thud! Bam. Bam, bam. Bam.*

*Poom, poom, puh-poom-poom, chaka-laka-laka.*

Brandilyn incorporated a subtle hiss into the villain Black Mambo's voice through using "s" words here and there. "Also used a lot of snake-y verbs," she admits.

*The noises, faint, fleeting, whispered into her consciousness like wraiths in the night. . .Erin listened. . .A drawer slid open. Contents rustled. . . Erin's heart staccatoed once more, then ground into a steady, hard beat. Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh echoed the blood in her head. . . Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh. She could hear nothing more.* From ***Brink of Death***

*Not a sound emanated from the study. Emily strained to listen. The silence snapped and clacked in her ears.*  
From ***Stain of Guilt***

"To read one of (Brandilyn's) works is like stepping into the front seat of a race car being controlled by an invisible driver," says K. Paris. "You'd better tighten that seatbelt and slip on the shoulder straps because Ms. Collins will take you for the ride of your life."

*The whole thing couldn't have taken more than sixty seconds. Bailey hung on to the counter, dazed. If she let go, she'd collapse—and the twitching fingers of the gunman would pull the trigger.* From ***Amber Morn***

"Lock your doors, pull your shades and read this book at noon—not in the dead of night" (Jill Elizabeth Nelson, Romantic Times review, ***Dead of Night***)

*Something sinuous brushed against Paige's knee. She jerked her leg away. What was that? She rose to a sitting position, groped around with her left hand. Fine wisps wound themselves around her fingers. Hair? She yanked backward, but the tendrils clung. Something solid bumped her wrist.* From ***Violet Dawn***

"Collins keeps the reader gasping and guessing as her artistic prose paints vivid pictures on their minds. High marks for original plotting and superb pacing" (Jill Elizabeth Nelson, ***Stain of Guilt***)

*The figure remained still as stone. Leslie couldn't even detect a breath. Spider-fingers teased the back of her neck.*  
From ***Coral Moon***

**"I was seriously creeped out," one fan says of reading a Brandilyn Collins book.  
 "Thankfully, I chose not to start reading the book the night I was home alone"--Candy Arrington  
 "The hot tub scene gave me goose bumps for a good while" reader, *Violet Dawn*  
 "A harrowing hostage drama." – Library Journal, for *Amber Morn***

## 1.) Plotting

It's filled with more turns than a winding mountain highway and just as dangerous. Will Ms. Collins become the Mary Higgins Clark of Christian fiction? No doubt about it.  
 -- Bev Huston, Romantic Times, review of *Eyes of Elisha*

It's like Brandilyn not only doesn't want her reader getting bored, a cardinal sin, she aims not to be bored herself. "One real strength is Collins's skill in handling multiple points of view and time shifts," Publishers Weekly says of *Violet Dawn*, "which flow easily together and advance the plot."

In *Web of Lies* two protagonists from two different series meet and solve a crime together. Forensic artist Annie Kingston witnesses a shooting at a convenience store. Several hours away, Chelsea Adams receives a chilling vision from God—a room full of spiders and two people trapped within by a sadistic madman.

She gives herself quite a workout in her second novel, *Dread Champion*. Over a dozen point-of-view characters. Yet, all the subplots coalesce at the end. A mind-bending who-done-it. She takes on even higher challenges in her later books, such as, juggling 1<sup>st</sup> person and 3<sup>rd</sup> person in *Web of Lies*.

*Violet Dawn* blends many difficult techniques and makes them look effortless . . . Collins is also excellent at weaving in scenes of backstory between current action . . . Her point of view shifts are deliberately placed to tighten the screws and the resolution highly satisfying. Jill Elizabeth Nelson

No humdrum plots here . . . She lays out "a confusing, twisting trail, sowing seeds of doubt. . .and teasing the reader just enough" (Publisher's Weekly).

Something sinister always appears. With plenty of false trails.

Mayhem erupts. Then she salts in some intrigue and deception. And peppers it with lust and greed and a dose of insanity. Then the questions begin. How will this turn out? Who is going to make it? What's the real story behind it all?

Brandilyn's high-octane stories leave the reader emotionally tangled and dangled.  
 Bring on the shivers.

## 2.) Pacing

*Amber Morn* is like a pyrotechnical engineer mixing the right amount of explosive chemicals to achieve a spectacular firework. . .(the) plot races by like the white dotted lines on a freeway. Darcie Gudger, TitleTrakk.com

Brandilyn cranks down a fixed timeline—the ticking clock. Then, she writes tight. Fast. Furious. She also steers a breakneck pace that jerks the reader. To. . .the. . .last. . .word. With intense twists. Taut turns. Escalating tension. And a format of short chapters. Brief sentences.

It's kind of like watching a season of '24' in one sitting (***Amber Morn***).  
Jennifer A1Lee

### 3.) Satisfying endings

Builds steam with every page, right up to the surprise ending.  
Tom Morrissey, author of *Deep Blue*, review of ***Dead of Night***

Brandilyn often stuns the reader with an explosive finale, a heart-pounding conclusion, yet satisfying, meaningful endings. She's got the knack of a twist on a twist that turns the story on its head. The identity of the villain is usually a surprise. She manages to tie together every last creepy loose end.

Common observations by fans:

"You don't quite get the whole picture until you scan the last word."

"You'll never guess the ending until you are there."

"***Violet Dawn*** is a roller coaster ride of worry, creepiness, surprise, and sweet vindication"  
(Mary E. DeMuth, author of *Wishing On Dandelions*)

Nearing the end I began to think there was no way this could  
turn out pretty or even be resolved. . .She pulled it off. . . .

Kelly Klepfer

### 4.) Caring what happens to characters

Filled with emotional turmoil, agony, and sorrow, Celia bleeds her heart out to the reader. We feel her pain, sympathize with her, and yearn for her to heal. Her suffering acts as a catharsis for our own yearning to be understood and loved unconditionally.

Terri, Christian Bookshelf, Faithwebbin.net, ***Color The Sidewalk For Me***

***Color The Sidewalk For Me*** . . . one of my favorite Brandilyn Collins titles. Here she explores broken hearts, betrayal, and bitterness through the emotional screen of hunger for parental love and affirmation. It's a tale of consuming grief that seems to have no remedy. Celia tests God's limits to repair gaping wounds down through generations of mothers/daughters and fathers/sons. In many ways, she seemed like me. A flooding of insight came to this reader when I realized why Estelle was so coldhearted at times and why Celia led such a lonely existence.

Brandilyn's fans stew about her characters, during the read and long after.

You know you've hit a great suspense novel when you find yourself talking to the characters, warning them as you read.

Tom Morrissey, author of *Deep Blue*, reviewing ***Dead of Night***

They're familiar enough to become like friends.

I wanted to hop on over to Java Joint, Kanner Lake's busy coffeeshop, to sit down and chat with the characters. I haven't had enough of them yet. . . . Becca, ***Coral Moon***

They get entangled in their lives. When they face evil it creates "a major emotional roller coaster ride" (Jake Chism, BookShelfReview.com)

What will happen to Bailey Truitt's

husband? Why is Wilbur so irascible? Will Frank West fall in love with the new girl in town? Is S-Man's manner for real or affected to hide something sinister?

K. Paris, *Violet Dawn*

Brandilyn reaches deep within a character's issues.

You, as someone who grew up in a nurturing home versus abused. How did you crawl inside my head? How do you write like that? Too bad these are just characters in your mind. I'd like to meet them.

(*Violet Dawn* reader quote on [www.brandilyncollins.com](http://www.brandilyncollins.com))

Sometimes the intensity becomes too much.

I couldn't set this book down for fear that something terrible might happen to the characters if I stopped reading. The characters seemed like real people with real struggles looking for real solutions.

Robert C. Peterson, review of *Dead of Night*

**Interestingly, I'm glad she has closed the Kanner Lake series. I care enough about the characters that I want Collins to leave them alone and let them get on with the activities of living, in all the meanings of the word.**  
**Kelly Klepfer, review of *Amber Morn***

Brandilyn taps into this reader empathy with her characters with creative interaction.

She developed a Scenes and Beans blog, [www.kannerlake.blogspot.com](http://www.kannerlake.blogspot.com) . . . written by characters in the Kanner Lake series. Scenes and Beans is 'sponsored' by Java Joint, the coffee shop in Kanner Lake, where everyone hangs out. Fifty advanced readers copies were sent out to auditioners, most of them aspiring novelists, for 10 characters for the blog.

"These folks read the story, then chose who they wanted to try out for," explains Brandilyn. Those picked committed to writing a character's posts for six months. After that, any reader could submit posts (subject to editing by Brandilyn).

"Bottom line, it's a way to involve readers in the books," says Brandilyn.

(taken from interview by C. J. Darlington, Titletrakk.com)

## 5.) Vile villains

Pull. Tug. Rip at the earring, and still it will not come.

It latches to your ear like a leech. You defy me, even in death, you shout to me in your silence that you will not be dejeweled, not be robbed of the sparkly outward display of your wretched and gaudy heart. . .I grip the handle, one finger testing the blade. . . .There. The earring is mine.

From *Dead of Night*

A serial killer slays with strychnine (*Dead of Night*)

A criminal calls himself Black Mamba, like the snake (*Violet Dawn*)

A psychopath sics creepy-crawlies as lethal weapons (*Web of Lies*)

They're warped. They're complicated. Descriptions of their inmost thoughts—chilling, revealing. Power and evil personified.

Reading the killer's monologues in between characters was like listening to nails on a chalkboard. You get so

uncomfortable and irritated and want to scream. The thinking is so twisted and evil that it's deliciously scary.  
Deborah, *Dead of Night*

And at least one of her characters, forensics artist Annie Kingston, must delve inside and outside these lost souls.

Annie must immerse herself in the man's twisted mind, as well as learn intimate details of his life. If she overlooks any habitual expression, her rendering of the way his face has aged could keep him from being apprehended. But she reluctantly agrees to the assignment out of sympathy for the victims' family members. –Jill Elizabeth Nelson, *Stain of Guilt*

## 6.) Crime tech detail

The nasal cavity at its broadest point determines a nose's width. From its bony contours, I sketched the general shape. For the soft tissue on top of bone, I consulted a formula. I drew, lifted the vellum sheets up to check the photographs, frowned at the skull, sketched some more. From *Web of Lies*

Brandilyn's first book was a true crime titled *A Question of Innocence*. "Q of A was about a nationally covered murder trial that was local to me," says Brandilyn. "I went as research for my first novel (eventually published as *Eyes of Elisha*), and ended up with the exclusive story of the defendant and her family. . . It was a very sad, but legally and psychologically speaking, fascinating case. A 14-year-old girl wrote in her diary that she killed her little sister (who'd died inexplicably in her sleep). The parents found the diary and turned it over to police." (from interview with Focus on Fiction, [www.focusonfiction.net](http://www.focusonfiction.net))

For the Hidden Faces series, to gain insight into the craft of a forensics artist, Brandilyn started on the internet, then purchased a textbook written by forensic artist, Karen Taylor. They exchanged some e-mails. Brandilyn comments: "In each of the four books, Annie has a different challenge, so I could focus on learning one aspect of the huge forensic art field at a time." (taken from interview with C. J. Darlington, Titletrakk.com)

He watched her body language, her eye movements, for any sign of deception. . . lying eyes tended to pull toward the dominant side. Francesca was clearly right-handed, but a number of times she glanced left when thinking.  
Murder victim's housekeeper questioned by Vince, *Violet Dawn*

Annie Kingston "takes us into the investigation realm and shows us how it's done" (T. Forkner, *Web of Lies*) Yet she also has compassion as she "truly wants to give the deceased a name and solve the mystery for victims' families."

## 7.) Big Honkin' Chickens Club (BHCC)

Authors have reader fan clubs who adore their books. Musicians have listener fan clubs who love their CDs. Me? I must be the only artist on the planet who has a club of people who intentionally DO NOT consume my product.

Brandilyn Collins

A special page on Brandilyn's website features her books for those too timid to read the thriller/suspense novels. The Big Honkin' Chickens Club also boasts products. Magnets. Keychains. Mousepads. Even T-shirts.

Too scaredy-cat to read her Seatbelt Suspense™? Brandilyn recommends her women's fiction books for their tastes, such as the Bradleyville Series:

***Cast a Road Before Me***—Jessie Callum clings to a steadfast dream for seven years of moving to the big city where she will make a career out of helping people.

***Color The Sidewalk For Me***—Cecelia Matthews, a successful advertising executive, returns to the painful memories of Bradleyville, after her father suffers a stroke, to face a tug-of-war for love and acceptance with her mother.

***Capture the Wind for Me*** – “captures the heart, soul and passion of a 16-year old girl's growing pains. . . Jackie Delham's story will bring back many teenage angst-ridden memories” (Bev Huston, Romantic Times)

But Brandilyn's quick to note that she no longer writes women's fiction. “I now kill people full time,” she wrote me.

Camy Tang points out that in the prologue to *Dead of Night*, the reader's given “a very good feel for the intensity level to expect. . . readers who might be frightened or disturbed by the violence of the crimes can gauge their comfort level after reading the first two pages.”

The cover looks rather spooky and while I love suspense and mystery, I don't do horror well. . . Then one day I got brave and read this book. . . I'm now hooked on this dear lady's writing.  
Sharon A. Lavy, review of ***Eyes of Elisha***

Brandilyn's got all her books marked by fright level with one to three chicken heads on her site. ***Violet Dawn*** and ***Crimson Eve*** rate only one chicken head—a good place for a brave BHCC member to start.

My daughter-in-law and granddaughter enjoyed Brandilyn's thrillers long before I even wanted to, dared to attempt one. After having been a lurkers member of the Big Honkin' Chickens Club as an admirer of The Bradleyville series, but taking the dive to read Brandilyn's more intense works recently--***Eyes of Elisha***, ***Web of Lies***, ***Dead of Night***--I've got an observation to make. I wonder if it's possible to face down our actual fears in the vicarious model of fiction. . . and overcome them, that is, practice courage in real time. For instance, through taking on the survival techniques of the protagonists. When you imagine things in the dark. When you can't sleep 'cause you're alone. When you feel vulnerable. Or when the unthinkable happens. . . to you or someone close. I've seen a bit of evidence of that in my life, after reading some Brandilyn thrillers. More determined not to freak out when my head's under the shower nozzle and I think I hear a noise. Weenie stuff like that. However, I haven't given it an acid test case yet. Nothing scientific, to be sure. But then there's the factor of adding a whole new raft of fears, the crafted image of never-thought-of-before possible evils, that imbeds in the psyche.

According to Brandilyn's blog, the novel she's working on now is about fear. Her protagonist, Kaycee Raye, writes a nationally syndicated column about her fears and how they affect her life. She manages to write with humor about things that truly plague her: “Kaycee fears include bees, heights, closed spaces, and the dentist's drill. Most of all Kaycee constantly fears that she's being watched.”

And what might qualify Brandilyn herself for membership in the BHCC?

Even though I'm known for my Seatbelt Suspense™, and even though the most common metaphor readers use to describe my novels is a roller coaster—I'm scared to death of the things. I wouldn't get on a real roller coaster for a billion dollars. But don't tell anybody.

An interview with C. J. Darlington, TitleTrakk.com

## **INSPIRATIONAL Thrillers**

**Collins forges ahead with other female authors  
(Kathy Mackel, Melanie Wells, Claudia Mair Burney. . .to name a few)  
who are mixing excellent mystery and suspense  
with splashes of grace and faith in the midst of turmoil.  
It's a bright day for Christian fiction.  
Eric Wilson, review of *Violet Dawn***

What's an inspirational thriller? It's a mystery novel with a spiritual thread. With a powerful message that might provide insight into the wickedness of the human heart. Or divine intervention. Or a glimpse into the invisible realm of demonic forces. It can also include far out visions that border on the paranormal.

But in Brandilyn's case, the 'thriller' part presents a refreshing change to traditional Christian fiction. Along with the supernatural might of prayer. A mix of crimes and Christianity. Inspiration and scary. Faith and terror and forensics. Nail-biting page-turners with threads of reliance on God. An inspirational thriller adds a dimension and subtracts some things: Suspense without gore. Good story without graphic detail.

Check out her Forensics and Faith blog—discussions on crafting fiction, the writing biz, and the Christian journey: [www.forensicsandfaith.blogspot.com](http://www.forensicsandfaith.blogspot.com)

How does Brandilyn infuse the Christian faith element in her stories?

I don't think about it initially. I just sit down to write a compelling and twist-driven suspense. My worldview eventually shows through, mostly in the spiritual arc of the protagonist. Because the characters drive the spiritual element, my novels vary as to amount of Christian content.

Interview by C. J. Darlington, Titletrakk.com

Readers with faith find themselves interacting in a spiritual sense.

The first two were good but this 3<sup>rd</sup> book (***Dead of Night***) absolutely touched my heart. I found myself praying as I read. . .I would actually stop reading and pray for my family, for their protection and for their salvation. . .this book has convicted me of my lack of a true prayer life.

(a reader comment on [www.brandilyncollins.com](http://www.brandilyncollins.com))

On her website [www.brandilyncollins.com](http://www.brandilyncollins.com), Collins explores why she chose to write Christian suspense: "Why not romance, or historicals, or contemporaries—something a little easier on the nerves? My mother wonders this too. She thinks I'm getting more warped by the minute. She's probably right. My stories do tend to be. . .intense. But the truth is, I have an amazing, fun

freedom in writing Christian suspense. I get to tell all sorts of scary stories—and inject the hope of God into them. That’s the best of both worlds, if you ask me. Truth is, we do live in an evil world. But the truth doesn’t end there, thanks be to God. The truth ends with the fact that God’s power can help us live, even be victorious, amid this evil. Not to say bad things don’t happen to good people. They do—in real life, and in my books. It is to say that followers of Christ have been given the awesome authority to go before His throne and ask for help in times of trouble—even big, bad trouble. Especially big, bad trouble.”

**“For the key to the whole story, make sure you read the verse at the beginning” (Mrs. Noah)  
 “Brandilyn’s talent for weaving threads of deep spiritual truth  
 into nail-biting stories shines. . . .” Lynetta  
 “I have always loved mysteries. But as a Christian, I was struggling with the who-dunnits out there  
 because they always seemed to come bundled with bad language, inappropriate bedroom scenes,  
 and all kinds of stuff I didn’t want to read.” (Trish Berg)**

Her character Chelsea Adams (*Eyes of Elisha*) is torn between what she knows and the burden of proof and must follow God’s leading and trust him for protection. Dreams and visions are seen as protection, as guidance, to effect God’s will, His power against evil. Publishers Weekly (*Dread Champion*) denoted Chelsea “as an example of how God uses ordinary people in extraordinary ways to accomplish his objectives.”

My stories, more and more so, are interwoven with the message of God’s power. Christians all too often walk in weakness. We don’t seem to understand the immense power available to us through prayer. Our God hung the moon. He can surely help us with our problems. And I think He protects us against evil way more times than we’ll ever know.

from interview with Focus on Fiction, [www.focusonfiction.net](http://www.focusonfiction.net)

Books like this do a form of spiritual surgery. For broken hearts. For crippled minds. In the midst of a reader’s own chaotic world. Note from a reader who was seriously abused as a child: “Brandilyn, God did so much work in me through your books, I thought I’d run out of Kleenex.”

**+++++++THE END+++++++**

**BRANDILYN COLLINS** is a best-selling novelist known for her trademark Seatbelt Suspense™. These harrowing crime thrillers have earned her the tagline “Don’t forget to *b r e a t h e . . .*” ® Brandilyn’s first book, *A Question of Innocence*, was a true crime published by Avon in 1995. Its promotion landed her on local and national TV and radio, including the *Phil Donahue* and *Leeza* talk shows. Brandilyn’s awards for her novels include the ACFW Book of the Year (three times), Inspirational Readers’ Choice, and Romantic Times Reviewers’ Choice.

Brandilyn is also known for her distinctive book on fiction-writing techniques, *Getting Into Character: Seven Secrets a Novelist Can Learn From Actors* (John Wiley & Sons). *The Writer* magazine named *Getting Into Character* one of the best books on writing published in 2002. When she’s not writing, Brandilyn can be found teaching the craft of fiction at writers’ conferences. She and her family divide their time between homes in California Bay Area and

northern Idaho. Her websites: [www.brandilyncollins.com](http://www.brandilyncollins.com), [www.forensicsandfaith.blogspot.com](http://www.forensicsandfaith.blogspot.com), [www.kannerlake.com](http://www.kannerlake.com), [www.kannerlake.blogspot.com](http://www.kannerlake.blogspot.com) (Scenes and Beans).

**Janet Chester Bly** has authored eleven books, such as *Awakening Your Sense of Wonder* and *Hope Lives Here*. In addition, she has co-authored eighteen books with her husband, award-winning western author, Stephen Bly, including *The Hidden West Series* and *The Carson City Chronicles*. Check her out at [www.BlyBooks.com](http://www.BlyBooks.com)