

Vernadine Merrick Bio: “And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Secret of Senator Jack”

Vernadine Merrick lives in Atlanta. She grew up in Cincinnati. Ms. Merrick is a writer and a marketing consultant. Writing has been her passion since college days, where she wrote a book of poetry while at Miami University (in Ohio) and Carnegie Mellon University. Ms. Merrick’s motto is “a story is only as gripping and rich as its characters.”

Meet the Author and Characters:

Introduce us to your book and the main characters.

“And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Secret Life of Senator Jack” is a political, suspense romantic thriller. The book is about twin boys’ climb out of poverty into power and the choices they make to get there. One turns to a life of crime. The other obtains an academic scholarship to a prestigious prep school and enters the mainstream. Their worlds suddenly and dramatically collide and change both of their paths forever.

It is a ‘Cain and Abel’ story of one man’s willingness to do just about anything to reach the most powerful office in the United States (the presidency) and the detective that’s equally determined to stop him. Love, the power of family and redemption are also strongly interwoven in the book. The novel has lots of twist and turns that will keep the reader spellbound! It is a definite page-turner.

There are seven major characters in the book. Each has his or her story to tell that when brought together, is a very powerful and robust tale.

Joe Baker is a tortured spirit, torn between truth and deception, self-awareness and self-deprivation...and many wrong choices. Joe's natural rebelliousness, charm and good looks successfully carry him from youthful mischief to adolescent street savvy to an adulthood filled with blind ambition, manipulation and dominance.

Jack Baker is the mirror image of Joe and can only be described as his brother’s *'better half.'* He is a person of deep conviction and lucid compassion. He is devoted to his father, fiercely protective of his brother and the voice of the unheard.

Suzanne Montgomery, glamorous, gorgeous and rich. Her larger-than-life, Hollywood looks, mask the vulnerable woman still desperate for love. She is the daughter of one of the most powerful attorneys in the United States. Living in the southern city of Atlanta, her father has deep political ties to Washington.

Nicola Patricks while enormously seductive, her intelligence, decency and achievements are her pride. She is now thrust into a web of lust, love and deceit. Caught in the fierce grip of the captivating Senator, Nicola asks herself, just how did I get here?

John Baker is the father of identical twin boys that he deeply loves, but begrudgingly admits to liking only one. Joe reminds him of the days of his youthful indiscretions, while Jack encapsulates the man he always wanted to be. John is a man of limited means, but is determined to carry out his deceased wife’s dream of giving his sons a better life.

Dirk Patterson is amongst the upper class African-American elite. Yet he is intricately connected to two brothers from the 'other side of the tracks.' They are each compassionate in their own right, brilliant, savvy, determined and, above all else, loyal to each other - no matter what.

Detective Ridder Jones smells blood and goes for the jugular. The case of the high-powered Senator is no exception. After years of accumulated resentment from a career gone awry, a failed marriage and only an adoring dog named Lily to keep him company, Ridder sees a final chance to recapture it all with one last professional conquest.

Who were your favorites? Are your characters from the portrayal of real people?

All of the characters are rich and multi-dimensional. I believe this is like many of us. We have both redeeming qualities and human frailty. My favorite characters in the book are Suzanne and Joe. I love Suzanne for her vulnerability and capacity to love and forgive. Suzanne is a victim of her own beauty and social status. People are unable to relate to her. Yet, like most of us, appearances are only half the story. She has experienced enormous tragedy and loneliness in her life that is the source of much of her compassion for others. Joe, on the other hand, is probably the character that grows the most in the story. He makes terrible choices in life. Yet he is able to come through them with strength and depth of character that is admirable to most. His character makes one acutely aware of the consequences of decisions. His struggle to conquer his inner 'demons' becomes your struggle.

The character of Joe was based on a person I knew from school many years ago. The other characters are from the mixing of persons that I know and the different sides of me. The direction of the novel stems from my love of politics, suspense and romance.

What makes you powerful as a person and a writer? Who are your mentors?

I believe what makes me powerful as a person and a writer is my ability to read human nature and to see all sides of just about anything. I am also compassionate, like Suzanne, it stems from many not-so-apparent life struggles. I get in the 'head' of my characters. You see their dilemma; you understand how they got there; you know them well enough that you sympathize and cheer for them in spite of their shortcomings.

My writing also has impact because it is visual. I love scenes and painting a vivid picture through an everyday analogy (i.e. "It was as hot as a Louisiana summer"). I make sure I meticulously depict the body language of the person to reflect what they are experiencing at the moment. The reader's mental and visual senses are working together to bring the character to life and make him or her memorable. Lastly, I like to keep things unpredictable. That is a lot of fun for me.

My writing mentors are the former Bebe Moore Campbell, Connie Briscoe, former Sidney Sheldon, John Grisham and Benilde Little (author of Good Hair). Each of these authors writes stories that are vivid, fast pace, unpredictable, and has substantive storylines with rich and complex characters. They leave you wanting more!

Who do you want to reach with your book and the message within?

I want to reach *everyone* with my book. The struggles and lessons drawn from my book are universal. The characters are African-American, which adds an extra perspective and dimension to them, but they are human most of all. That is why I believe I've had an African-American male

law professor, Caucasian sales and marketing person, a 70-year Southern, retired woman and my 18 year old nephew, all rave about the book! Again, the story is one of love, the consequences of choices, the power of family, standing strong through adversity, learning from one's mistakes, forgiveness and ultimately, redemption. It is about the human struggle and rewards of life.

What do you think makes your book different from others on the same subject?

Many books are about love (romance), or politics, identical twins, or involve crime and detective story lines. This book has equal doses of each! They are blended together to tell a very full and captivating story. The reader will remember the characters. The reader will increase his or her understanding of human nature. The reader will most likely be further empowered to meet his or her own life challenges.

How can our readers reach you online? Share with us your online contact info.

Readers can reach me online and learn more about "And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Secret Life of Senator Jack" by visiting my book's website at <http://vernadinemerrick.com>. On the site, there are book reviews and a way to enter book reviews, an audio intro of the Prologue, and the capability to order the novel. Readers can email me directly at vm@vernadinemerrick.com for additional questions or insights. I love to hear from readers! I'm also on Facebook.com. The novel can be ordered on Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com (ISBN: 978-1-60860-231-1).