

Christine Noyes

AUTHOR

www.ChristineNoyesAuthor.com

BIO

You can't always plan where life will take you. That is certainly true for Christine Noyes. Growing up in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts as a tomboy, she spent her youth building forts, playing sports and enjoying the perceived innocence of the 1960's.

Not having a clear vision of what her life should be, she went where she was most comfortable, to the kitchen. Beginning her work life as a cook at her grandfather's restaurant at the age of eleven, she spent the next several decades re-inventing herself, becoming an accomplished chef, a sales representative, an entrepreneur, and now a writer and illustrator. She never chose her professions, they chose her.

She married her husband and soulmate, Al, in 1989. They moved to Orange, Massachusetts where, after Al's passing, Chris remains today with thirty years of wonderful memories to keep her company.

When not at her keyboard, she can be found in her kitchen: back to her roots and love of cooking.

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Haley's Publishing

978-24-9400

Q & A TIP SHEET

What do you hope people will come away with after reading *Close Enough to Perfect*?

What I've been hearing is that my story resonates with so many people. So, none of us are alone in our grief. And, even though grief can be debilitating at times, I hope to convey that true love is always worth whatever pain may ensue.

***Close Enough to Perfect* is about the death of your husband. How difficult was that to write?**

At times, very! But it was also therapeutic and it helped me to keep my husband close during those first years.

Do you consider yourself a poet?

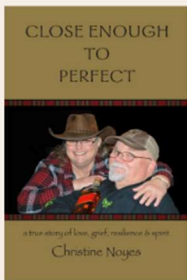
Although I have included some poems in my memoir, I don't really consider myself a poet. It took me a long time to think of myself as an author, so I think I'll stick with that.

You've written other books. What can you tell me about them?

*I've written four children's books, a series about a cuddly bear named Big Al. He's modeled after my late husband and possesses many of Al's traits. I also have the Bradley Whitman crime novel series. The third book, *Meet Your Maker*, is close to publication. And I just finished a romantic comedy that I'm very excited about. I like to try new things.*

What can your readers expect from you next?

I have several more books in the works, including more Bradley Whitman! If anyone is looking for me, I'll be at my keyboard!



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Publication:
Haley's Publishing, Athol, MA USA,
August 6, 2020

Close Enough to Perfect - a memoir

A true story of love, grief, resilience & spirit.

Told with deep emotion and a splash of bourbon.

excerpt:

I began to feel ethereal as if constructed of vapors, not of this world but watching as the world unfolded before my eyes. What seemed like minutes must have passed in seconds as time became obsolete. I watched as the woman performed CPR on my husband. The only words I remember her saying?

"I don't have a pulse" and "We have to get him out of here."

Close Enough to Perfect is the heartwarming and heartbreaking story of Chris and Al Noyes, married for twenty-eight years until tragedy hit on a commercial airline flight. The story speaks of soulmates, happy places, mental illness, adventure, and sorrow. A true story told with brutal honesty and emotion.

For more information visit
www.ChristineNoyesAuthor.com

CLOSE ENOUGH TO PERFECT



a true story of love, grief, resilience & spirit

Christine Noyes

"The story of a marriage, loss, and remembrance with tales of growing up in central Massachusetts in the 1970s and 1980s. Told with deep emotion and a splash of bourbon."

-Robin Shtulman

assistant director, Athol, Massachusetts, Public Library



Close Enough to Perfect

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Publication date 2021

Page count 202

ISBN 9781948380348 trade paperback \$19.95

ISBN 9781948380355 hardcover \$24.95

ISBN 9781948380669 audiobook \$14.95

LCCN 2020034392 print

LCCN 2020034393 ebook

CLOSE ENOUGH TO PERFECT

Christine Noyes

Published by Haley's



Retail: ChristineNoyesAuthor.com
& all major online booksellers

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TESTIMONIALS

Just finished your book! Awesome...just awesome! I loved the stories, the memories, and the poetry. You could really feel the warmth and fun of your marriage. M.L.

Chris, I received your book. I know you will understand this because you knew me as a Worthington Ave kid. I don't think I have read a book since I don't know when. I started reading your book and was completely enthralled. I literally could not put it down. The writing was very captivating as far as I am concerned. You had me laughing and crying at the same time. I wish you all the best. By the way, from what I read your life with Al was definitely near perfect. R.R.

Read slowly, digest the powerfully told story. So well written. M.M.

I ordered your book a while back and it couldn't come at a better time to read it. I tested positive with Covid and I'm doing good. I just want you to know that you did a wonderful job writing your book. I really enjoyed reading it. I think Al would be so proud of you! Thank you for sharing your story! D.T.

Already half-way through! So good! Read with tissues close by! Amazing! M.O.

Once I opened it, I couldn't put it down until I finished it! Christine Noyes I am so proud of you and love you so much. What a wonderful man Al was and how lucky we all were to have him- even if the time was cut short. We will always have St. Augustine.T.C.
I am not normally a reader but have been enjoying every page! N.D.

Finished reading it last night, was really good. I laughed and I cried. Boy did I cry, I had to put it down for a bit before I could continue. D.B.

Finished your book. Loved every minute of it although what you had to endure in that plane left me unable to breathe. You did a fantastic job and left me yearning for years gone past. I'm proud of you and you should be very proud of this accomplishment. Your mother was right. This book helped someone...me. Love you beyond what you can ever know. J.M.

TESTIMONIALS CONTINUED

I had to stop reading and let you know how your writing has captivated me, I am so moved by your story. We really never know what others are going through. I know I would never have the courage to put my life experiences in print – I admire you for your strength. Your Mom's message to you was accurate, this memoir is going to help people because it is helping me. K.W.

Just finished the book...amazing. The way you wrote it was genius, writing in present then past, then present again was an amazing way to tell your story. A.B.

I loved your book, couldn't put it down. The love, pain and vulnerability you write about had me in tears at times. I have received a Big Al hug and they were the best. His kindness and that smile and twinkle in his blue eyes all come through vividly. C.L.

I finished the book last night. I actually read quite a bit of it while I was on my deer stand. I don't even know where to begin to try to explain how I feel about this incredible writing. So I'm just gonna summarize it by saying your insight to your relationship with Al was incredible. The way you peeled back the layers of emotion getting down to the nitty-gritty, was amazing. I can honestly say I don't think I've ever enjoyed a book more. At many points I laughed, sometimes so loudly my wife asked what I was laughing at. And other times, the tears flowed freely. You've painted an incredible portrait of yourself, your relationship with Al, and Al himself. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be able to read this. My sister, who knew nothing of Al before I told her all of the stories after he passed, is anxious to read it. You wonder in a couple points in the book about whether it would help anyone. I can most assuredly tell you, it has and it will. Thank you SO much. R.H.

This book is an emotional roller coaster from start to finish with plenty of laughter woven between the love of finding that one person that makes your life meaningful. A complete Her Story, His Story, Their Story and back to Her Story that keeps you turning the pages. Christine also interjects her own poetry within the chapters that help to drive home the raw emotion that she faces every day.

J.Marble-Amazon review

Christine Noyes courageously opens a window into her world of love lost and hope regained through vulnerability and an openness to spirit. She creates (in her own words) 'a satisfying cocktail' that is relatable and entertaining. But don't sit down without a box of tissues; you'll need them for both the joy and the sorrow. Pour yourself a bourbon then pour yourself into this must-read memoir. It will surprise you. P.Francis – Amazon review





Reviewed By K.C. Finn for Readers' Favorite

FIVE STAR REVIEW

Close Enough to Perfect: A true story of love, grief, resilience, and spirit is a work of non-fiction in the memoir and autobiographical sub-genres of writing and was penned by author Christine Noyes. As the title suggests, this very emotive work explores the tumultuous life events of the author in the year 2018 when she was faced with the sudden death of her husband, Al. From here we scale back and explore the life that had led her to that moment, including powerful defining moments from her childhood, and a celebration of her life with Al in both their professional and home lives. What results is a sometimes bittersweet but always grateful recollection of working hard together to achieve happiness and success.

Author Christine Noyes has chosen to share a very personal and private journey with her audience, and this memoir does it in such a beautifully penned way that it feels like the reader is a party to the story from a very close friend indeed. The narrative structure switches well between past and present, delivering poignant moments from both times and tying them together with theme and emotion to give the whole work a solid, confident structure. The content itself is beautiful and heartfelt, allowing us into Christine's highs and lows so that we may discover and relate on our own level to each instance. Overall, this makes for a very successful memoir, and I'd certainly recommend Close Enough to Perfect to anyone who enjoys real-life stories written with both skill and compassion.

Reviewed By Mamta Madhavan for Readers' Favorite



FIVE STAR REVIEW

Close Enough To Perfect by Christine Noyes is a heartrending memoir where the author speaks about the death of her husband Al, their time together, and her life after his death, her Catholic upbringing, and her relationship with her family. The author also shares her early life in the memoir and her unawareness of her mother being unwell and diagnosed with manic depression, now known as bipolar disorder. The death of her husband Al shattered her and she speaks about how she learned to embrace her grief and celebrate it.

The memoir captures the grit and determination of the human spirit to survive and the author speaks about how her mother taught her to survive; not to dwell, not to envy, but to move ahead, and live life on her terms. She also speaks about the wonderful times she shared with her husband which included hunting, traveling, motorcycling, spending time with family and friends, and running a retail business. The author is honest and straightforward when it comes to sharing her life and the memoir not only captures the author's life before and after marriage but also gives good insights about the mental problems faced by her mother.

Close Enough To Perfect by Christine Noyes is a story of loss, pain, grief, redemption, and healing, how the human spirit is equipped to overcome any obstacles if given a chance. The memoir also speaks about why it is important to seed, water, nurture, and harvest the resilience that can be cultivated. The topic has been well handled and it is a good book to gift elders so that their attitude towards life always remains positive, happy, and optimistic.

Cooking up good stories and meals

Christine Noyes dishes out mystery series, romantic comedy and boeuf bourguignon.

By TINKY WEISBLAT
For the Recorder

Christine Noyes of Orange started working in restaurants when she was 11. She started writing professionally only four and a half years ago. Nevertheless, she sees similarities between the two endeavors.

"Really, if you think about it, they're almost identical," she told me in a recent interview.

"You're taking bits and pieces of a story and putting them all together the way you do with the food," Noyes said. "I'm always at my best cooking when I'm just emptying the refrigerator ... I think that kind of parallels with the way I write. It's taking an idea or taking the ingredients until everything meshes."

She started in food service at her grandfather's restaurant in Manchaug, a village in the town of Sutton. She described it as "basically a family restaurant." She added, "He had the best, absolutely the best fried chicken. My brother and I are the only ones that still have the recipe."

She began as a dishwasher and moved her way up through cleaning, clams and general food preparation to cooking. When I said that I had never cared for my job in college as a dishwasher, she disagreed with that opinion. She characterized dishwashing as a sort of Zen practice.

"In my later years, when I was working as a chef, sometimes when a dishwasher wouldn't show up, I would wash the dishes," she recalled. "Just to relax."

Although she adored her grandfather, calling him a "teddy bear," she noted that he was a taskmaster on the job. "He was very stern in teaching me about the restaurant business," she said. "I had to do things the right way, and it was great for me."

She moved on to other cooking positions before returning to her grandfather's restaurant, where she and her brother ran the business and learned every aspect of food service.

Training isn't everything, however, she observed. "There are some things that you can't learn. I think I had a natural flair for what foods went together well," she explained.

Her grandfather eventually sold the restaurant, and she ended up cooking at the Mountain Barn Restaurant in Princeton, where she worked for 15 years. While working there she met her late husband, Al.

She stayed in the restaurant business for several more years before she and her husband realized they had never had a day off at the same time in the entire course of their marriage. She moved on to food-related sales before the couple decided to open a sporting-goods store in Orange.

When Al Noyes died suddenly in January 2018, his wife started writing. "I honestly don't know how it happened," she remembered. "The whole time was so blurry."

She woke up one night with a poem in her head and jotted it down. The next morning, she decided that she liked both the poem and the writing experience. She began work on "Close Enough to Perfect," a memoir.

She also started writing and illustrating a series of children's books about a bear named Big Al, who bears a striking resemblance to her husband.

When Marcia Gagliardi of Haley's Publishing in Athol stopped by the sporting goods store one day, Noyes asked her advice about publishing her books. Gagliardi suggested that the author send her some material.

This began a partnership that led Haley's to publish the Big Al books ... and led Noyes to close the store so she could write full time.

Noyes and Gagliardi have also produced a mystery series featuring FBI analyst Bradley Whitman, a notable home cook himself.

"Bradley and I are a lot alike in the cooking department," she told me. "He also uses cooking to think. So do I."

In addition to all of these endeavors, Noyes is working on a romantic comedy. When she told me this, I marveled aloud at her productivity.

"I spend about 10 hours a day writing," she laughed. "If I'm not writing, I'm cooking." Like her hero, Bradley, Chris Noyes tends to prepare enough food to "feed hundreds of people." I have a feeling her relatives and neighbors don't mind having this prolific cook and writer in their midst.

When I asked her for a recipe, she opted to share her hearty boeuf bourguignon (beef burgundy). This rich beef stew takes hours to prep and cook but is definitely worth the effort.

Chris's Boeuf Bourguignon

Ingredients:
3/4 pound thick-cut bacon, cut in 1/2-inch pieces
2 pounds stew beef (1-to-2 inch cubes)

3/4 cup seasoned white flour (flour with salt, pepper, and granulated garlic to taste)

3 tablespoons olive oil (plus a little to coat the bottom of your Dutch oven)
4 garlic cloves, minced
2 shallots, chopped
6 to 7 large carrots, peeled and diced into 1/2-inch pieces

1 large sweet onion, diced into 1/2-inch pieces
1 cup merlot wine
3-1/2 tablespoons tomato paste

3-1/2 cups sautéed onion bouillon stock (This is a bouillon paste. Mix it with water according to the container directions. You may



Christine Noyes cuts vegetables in her Orange home kitchen.

STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

substitute au jus or beef stock.)

2 cups beef stock, plus more if needed
1 teaspoon dried thyme (or 2 teaspoons fresh)
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
2 bay leaves
10 ounces baby portabella mushrooms, cut into bite-size pieces
1/4 cup fresh curly parsley, chopped

Instructions:
Place your oven rack on the bottom third of the oven. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.

Pat the beef dry and toss it

with the seasoned flour. Set it aside. Coat the bottom of a Dutch oven with olive oil and place it over medium to medium-high heat. Add the bacon and cook until it is brown and crispy. Remove the bacon and set it aside.

Add the stew beef and brown it on all sides. Remove the beef and set it aside.

Add three tablespoons of olive oil to the pot. When the oil is hot add the minced garlic and shallots and cook for 1 minute. Stir in the diced carrots and the onion. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add the merlot. Stir the

vegetables with a heatproof spoon, scraping the bottom of the pot to release remnants. Allow the mixture to boil for several minutes. The sauce will reduce and thicken slightly.

Return the bacon and the beef to the pot. Stir.

Mix together the tomato paste, the sautéed onion stock, and the beef stock. Add them to the beef and the vegetables, making sure the solids are covered. (Add more beef stock if necessary to cover everything.)

Stir in the thyme, the salt, the pepper, and the bay leaves. Cover the Dutch oven

and place it in the preheated oven. Cook the stew for 2-1/2 hours.

Remove the stew from the oven. Add the mushrooms and the parsley. Return the stew to the oven, and cook for an additional half hour.

Remove the stew from the oven and allow it to sit for 15 to 20 minutes before serving. Serve over mashed potatoes. Serves 10 to 12.

Tinky Weisblat is an award-winning author and singer. Her next book will be "Pot Luck: Random Acts of Cooking." Visit her website, TinkyCooks.com.

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Christine Noyes' beef bourguignon.

STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

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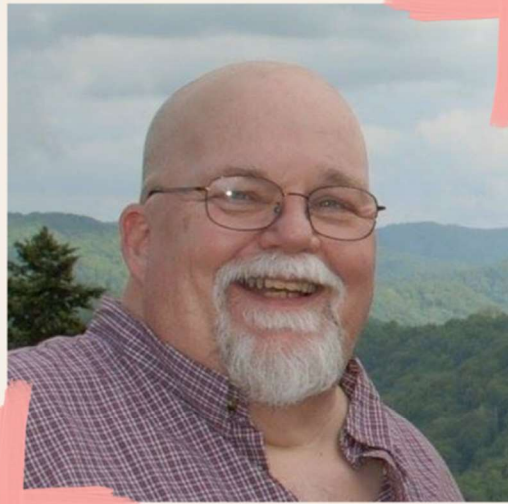
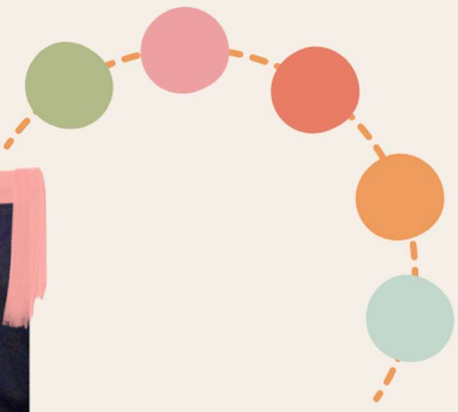
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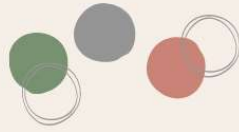
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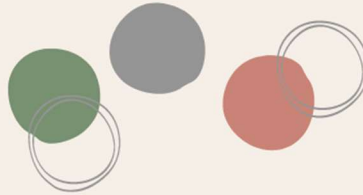
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romantic comedy



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