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# Stacy Robinson

A WIFE, A DAUGHTER,  
A MOTHER AND  
STEPMOTHER,  
A FIXTURE ON THE  
DENVER SOCIAL SCENE,  
AND NOW AN AUTHOR

Stacy Robinson's first book—an upmarket contemporary novel titled *Surface*—came out in February. “It’s a margarita beach read without the hangover,” Robinson says of her novel peopled with art collectors, philanthropists and country club regulars and peppered with swank such as Harry Winston watches and Herman Miller chairs, Moët and Mercedes Benz, steam rooms in Paris and glitzy charity galas. • On March 4, Robinson will read from and sign copies of *Surface* at The Tattered Cover Bookstore on East Colfax. She’s also on the authors docket at The Book Bar in Highlands on March 21, and The Bookworm in Edwards on March 26. Her appearance at Tattered Cover represents a full circle because Robinson wrote about half of her novel at the bookstore. “It’s is a cautionary tale,” Robinson says of her debut. “It examines betrayal, not only in terms of an [extramarital] affair, but betrayal of one’s self and values. The overarching theme is about women experiencing unexpected left turns in their lives, how they stand up to setbacks and traumas and reinvent themselves.”

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*By Colleen Smith*

*Photography by  
Marea Evans*





Robinson cites F. Scott Fitzgerald as one of her all-time favorite authors. “F. Scott Fitzgerald said there are no second acts in America. I disagree.” Robinson is a case in point. A native of Los Angeles, she grew up in North Hollywood. Her mother was a Hollywood dancer, actress and model. At an early age, her parents exposed her to theater and music.

“My first concert was Ethel Merman at the Greek Theatre when I was 10,” Robinson says with a demure smile. “I don’t think too many people can say that.” Perhaps what makes Robinson even more singular is that fact that she was diagnosed with Type I diabetes at age 25 and has lived with the disease for half her life. But Robinson is no victim. Rather, she’s the heroine of her own life story.

After graduating Stanford with a degree in international relations, Robinson worked in Japan for three years. With her sights set on the diplomatic corps, she got a job with a Japanese consulting company and taught English as a second language. “I intended to go on to Hong Kong,” she says, “but I got ill, and I got out.” Robinson’s diabetes diagnosis came as a shock,

yet she shifted gears and committed herself to a rigorous ongoing treatment regimen. “The day to day management has become an ingrained routine. This is not to say that it’s easy. I test my blood sugar a minimum of five times per day and take anywhere from three to five injections daily. I exercise at least five days a week,” she says. “I’ve been lucky that my discipline has worked. Others do everything right and still wind up with devastating complications.”

Robinson praises the Barbara Davis Center: “We are extremely fortunate to have one of the preeminent diabetes clinical care and research facilities in the world right here in Denver, where about 6,000 of us receive the best preventative and medical care, can be involved in studies, and have access to the docs and researchers who are working to find the cure,” she says. Robinson serves on the executive board of the Children’s Diabetes Foundation. “Our mission is to raise funds to support clinical care and research at the Barbara Davis Center.”

Despite juggling community service, familial duties and social obligations, Robinson reserves time for reading. Robinson’s creative process typically includes reading for inspiration before she writes. She lists favorite authors: Jodi Picoult, Joyce Carol Oates, Dorothy Parker, Oscar Wilde, P.G. Woodhouse, Jasper Fforde and Nick Hornby. Her favorite books include *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak, *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver and *Crazy in Alabama* by Mark Childress. *Vanity Fair* is her magazine of choice.

In *Surface*, set primarily in Denver, she includes factual places including The Palm, Andrisen Morton, Pasta Pasta Pasta, The Four Seasons, Craig Hospital and East High School. “It wasn’t a book to start,” Robinson explains. “It started as an exercise in the Lighthouse Writers Workshop where I took a class really only as an intellectual tickle. It brought back all the fun I had in high school writing.”

For her writing assignment, Robinson developed a scene inspired in a consignment clothing store. “Some women were dropping off couture and other women were shopping for second-hand Chanel,” Robinson says. Robinson’s scene grew

into a short story. She continued taking writing classes, and instructors encouraged her to expand her storyline.

"I knew my beginning and ending, but didn't know how to get from here to there. I'm definitely a seat-of-the-pants writer. I never had an outline," she says. "I sit down in the morning with no idea of what's coming. It's a very organic, fun process."

To create her main character's backstory, Robinson worked with the concept of ripple effects: "You make a choice and it has consequences," Robinson says. "I gave my character an affair, an impetuous decision that turns her life and the lives of her son and husband upside down." *Surface* includes some bodice-ripper scenes, though in the dedication of the book to her mother and father, Robinson urges her parents to skip the sex scenes. "It's not my story," Robinson emphasizes, a disclaimer alluding to her main character's infidelity and the near-death of her protagonist's son. "I'm very happily married with healthy children."

Robinson's husband Jeff Robinson is a real estate developer whose family owns Argonaut Liquors. His wife credits him profusely in her acknowledgements. Though Robinson's domes-

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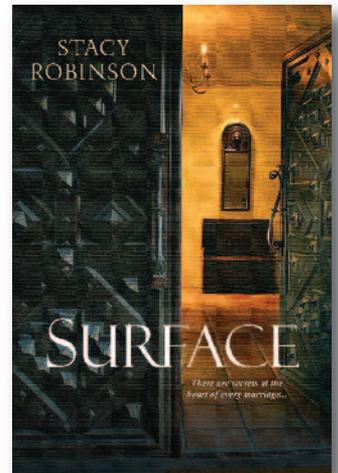
tic situation differs from that of her protagonist, one scene in the novel parallels Robinson's real life: enlightenment via a labyrinth. Robinson first encountered a labyrinth at the Golden Door Spa in Southern California. "I was there with a girlfriend about 12 years ago, two exhausted moms in need of some R&R. The place is beautiful and inspiring. The only aspect I couldn't adjust to was the guided meditation classes," she says. "Half-way into the week we were introduced to the spa's labyrinth, a replica of the labyrinth at Chartres in France. We were given the general background that it was a sacred space, a place of potential spiritual transformation. The skeptic in me was on high alert. "But out of respect to this lovely place, I began the walk to the center. And something magical happened. I was

the last one to complete the path, probably 45 minutes later. Long story short, I had the epiphany that I was too invested in doing things perfectly. I had lost the wilder spontaneous side of my personality that made college and my Asia years such a great adventure."

For Robinson, the moving meditation worked wonders. "By the time I made it to the center, I felt both lighter and hyperaware of changes I knew I needed to make in my life. And if you read the labyrinth scene in the book, you will see that I modeled Claire's experience much after my own." Like the circuitous labyrinth, writing a novel off and on over 12 years helped Robinson find her way to her own center, now complete with a fresh measure of contentment accompanying her literary accomplishment. She connected with her literary agent at Aspen Summer Words and later signed a two-book deal with Kensington Publishing.

"I've always loved to write. I'm an only child and spent a lot of solitary time dreaming up plays and stories," she says. "My parents saved every little thing I wrote from age three, including my stapled-together books with stick figures." Robinson recently joined the Colorado Authors' League (CAL) and is at work on the second novel. Her manuscript is due to her editor in July. "I'm a little behind," she admits, but she was packing her bags for a writing stint in Mexico, where her work-in-progress is set. "It's the story of another woman whose marriage and life implodes, and much of the book is informed by music," she says.

"I love words," Robinson says. "I've learned that I'm more persistent than I ever imagined myself to be; and you have to be to get a book published in this day and age. I don't know that I've reinvented myself, but I definitely feel I've found my calling in middle age in terms of authentically pursuing my writing passion and becoming an author." **CE**



*Colleen Smith is the author of Glass Halo and Laid-Back Skier, as well as a regular contributor to Colorado Expression, The Denver Post and other publications. She wrote and directed the documentary film "Angels Alleluia," now streaming on Rocky Mountain PBS.*