

# TITLE

A Contemporary Novel {Fill in your genre}

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Your Name

PRESENTED BY

Agent information if applicable.  
If not represented yet, delete “Presented by”  
and include your contact info

{This is a sample proposal using the content from Johnnie Alexander’s proposal for

## CONCEPT

While she reclaims the old family homestead, God reclaims her heart.

## SALES HANDLE

If home is where the heart is, why is her heart still in pain?

## BACK COVER COPY

Recently widowed Shelby Kincaid longs to give her young daughters a happy childhood—just like the one Shelby had until tragedy struck shortly after her 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. Her beloved grandparents died unexpectedly, and a businessman with a decades-old grudge took possession of their ancestral home. The Ohio farm, known as Mystic Willow, is the only place Shelby ever belonged, and she’ll do whatever it takes to transform the neglected house into the home of her memories.

High school history teacher AJ Sullivan inherited Mystic Willow from his grandfather as a punishment for dropping out of law school. With no close family ties, AJ fears he can’t be the husband or father God wants him to be. He’s already failed once in the hero department. Big time. Besides, that legacy doesn’t run in his family.

After Shelby learns the tragic circumstances of her grandfather’s untimely death, will she be able to forgive AJ for the pain his family caused hers? Or will she realize that home isn’t about a place—it’s about people?

## MANUSCRIPT STATUS

The manuscript is complete with approximately 92,000 words

## PROTAGONIST'S QUEST AND STAKES

Shelby Kincaid believes she can renew her tattered relationship with God if she returns to where she knew Him best. A distant ancestor built the 150-year-old house where Shelby, as a child, spent golden summers and happy holidays with her beloved grandparents. She knew the house would be hers one day and, as she stretched out between the tall stalks of the sunflower house her grandfather grew especially for her, she often dreamed of a bright future with a loving husband and beautiful children.

But Shelby buried her dreams fourteen years ago when the house was lost to an unscrupulous businessman. Her grandparents died soon after, and Shelby's parents, wanting a fresh start, followed their own dreams of serving God in Mozambique. Shelby never fit in to the new and strange environment, and when she returned to the States for college, she didn't fit in with her classmates, either.

Now a widow with two young daughters, she revives her childhood dream once again. The farm's owner, high school history teacher AJ Sullivan, despises the house and would eagerly sell it. Unfortunately, it's tied up in a trust for four more years. At the urging of AJ's grandmother, he and Shelby enter into a lease-option contract that allows her to move into the house immediately.

Throughout the summer, Shelby works to turn the house into the place she remembered from her childhood. When AJ's cousins, who want to develop the land, threaten a lawsuit to break the contract, Shelby realizes she doesn't have the financial resources to beat them. As the weeks pass by and the work on the house becomes more of a burden than a joy, she realizes she has placed more importance on her family's material legacy than their spiritual one.

Shelby has to decide what gift to give her children: Should she hold onto the past, or should she step into the spacious place where AJ waits for her to be part of his family?

## AUDIENCE

Contemporary women who value the importance of heritage will identify with Shelby's desire to pass her love for her ancestral homestead to her children. Sometimes, though, we hold too tightly onto material possessions and may find ourselves sharing in Shelby's struggle to remember the higher value of a family's spiritual legacy.

More broadly, romance readers will fall in love with Shelby and AJ as the couple find themselves caught up in circumstances put in motion long before they were born. Their growing love for one another will eventually fulfill Shelby's need to belong and AJ's need to be a hero.

## TAKEAWAY VALUE

Childhood memories often tie us to a special place where it seemed like the sun was always

shining in a perfect world. Those ties may be so tight, those days so golden, that we long to escape back into their safety. But because God delights in us, He rescues us from deep waters and calls us into a spacious place (Psalm 18:16, 19).

## COMPARABLE TITLES

***That Certain Summer* by Irene Hannon**  
Revell, 2013

*That Certain Summer* is two love stories in one as sisters Karen and Val find romance with, respectively, a musician recovering from a tragic accident and a widowed physical therapist. Before the sisters can find happiness, however, they must come to terms with past heartaches. Karen struggles with issues from a failed marriage, and Valerie hides the painful secret that she had an abortion as a teenager.

Similarly, the protagonists in my novel have experienced past heartaches that negatively affect their spiritual journeys and hopes for true love. Though Shelby is widowed, her relationship with her husband was a difficult one. AJ wrongly believes his college girlfriend was forced to have an abortion by his grandfather. Both Shelby and AJ need to accept the truth of God's loving grace and forgiveness.

{2-3 comparable titles works well}

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

Under a different title, *Into a Spacious Place* received a Bronze Medalist award in the 2012 My Book Therapy Frasier Contest.

## POSSIBLE ENDORSERS

- [names]

## MARKETING HELPS

- Blog tour with influencers
- Book giveaways
- Social media involvement
- Paid advertising
- Author's newsletter
- Treasured Moments website promotion ([www.johnniedonley.com](http://www.johnniedonley.com))
- Book-signings and readings at bookstores, libraries, and interested groups or organizations
- Interviews with radio networks and other media outlets
- Attendance at appropriate conferences and events
- Additional marketing possibilities

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



**Johnnie Alexander Donley** is a published author, essayist and poet with a variety of writing and editing experiences. Her short story, “Beneath the Christmas Star,” will appear in the soon-to-be-released Guideposts anthology *A Cup of Christmas Cheer—Tales of Joy and Wonder for the Holidays*.

Her debut novel, *Where Treasure Hides*, won in the Historical Fiction category of the 2011 ACFW Genesis Contest. A contemporary story placed as a Bronze Medalist in the My Book Therapy Frasier Contest (2012). She won the Best Novel award at the 2010 Florida Christian Writers Conference and both the Best Novel and Writer of the Year awards at the 2009 FCWC.

Johnnie previously worked for two different Members of the Florida House of Representatives. She graduated from Rollins College (Orlando) with a Master of Liberal Studies degree.

In addition to her love of writing and reading, Johnnie enjoys family times (especially with her adorable grandchildren), and road trips. She lives in St. Cloud, Florida, where Johnnie leads a women’s Bible study and volunteers as a guardian ad litem for her county.

### Writing Awards

- Bronze Medalist for *Where the Whippoorwill Calls* (contemporary romance now tentatively titled *Into a Spacious Place*), My Book Therapy Frasier Contest (2012)
- Genesis Winner in Historical Fiction for *Where Treasure Hides*, American Christian Fiction Writers (2011)
- Best Novel for *When Sparrow Falls* [now tentatively titled *When Memory Whispers*], 2010 Florida Christian Writers Conference
- Writer of the Year and Best Novel for *Twirl* [now tentatively titled *When Memory Whispers*], 2009 Florida Christian Writers Conference
- Sigma Tau Delta Honors Conference, University of Central Florida: presented “e. e. cummings: A Celebration of Sponta(Typographical)neity”

### Professional Associations

- American Christian Fiction Writers
- ACFW Central Florida Chapter
- Imagine That! Writers (critique group)
- Kindred Heart Writers (critique group)
- My Book Therapy
- The Writers View

### Speaking Experience and Appearances

- Florida Heritage Book Festival, St. Augustine, Florida (September 2013)
- Friends of Osceola Library Authors Event (July 2013)
- Fresh Start Women’s Conference, New Beginnings Christian Church, Tampa, Florida (August 2011)
- 2011 Florida Christian Writers Conference After Hours: “Map the Journey: Explore Your Unique Writing Adventure”
- 2010 Florida Christian Writers Conference After Hours: “Novice Novelist Novel Notes”
- 2009 Florida Christian Writers Conference After Hours: “After the Conference – Now What?”
- 2009 Florida Christian Writers Conference After Hours: “Starting an Online Writing Group” (presented with other members of the Kindred Heart Writers)
- Christian women’s groups

### **Writing Experience**

- Author of “Beneath the Christmas Star,” to be published in *A Cup of Christmas Cheer—Tales of Joy and Wonder for the Holidays* (Guideposts, 2013);
- Author of *Where Treasure Hides*, published by Tyndale Digital First (January 2013);
- Owner of Treasured Moments website/blog at [www.johnniedonley.com](http://www.johnniedonley.com);
- Regular contributor to the Kindred Heart Writers blog ([www.kindredheartwriters.com](http://www.kindredheartwriters.com));
- Writer and editor for a variety of freelance fiction and nonfiction projects;
- Wrote hundreds of search engine optimization (SEO) articles for a client’s website;
- Wrote numerous speeches, press releases, correspondence, newsletters, abstracts, and informational booklets during employment with two Members of the Florida Legislature;
- Created and oversaw the publication of a newspaper for senior citizens as a campaign volunteer;
- Wrote, edited, proofed, and researched material for A Beka Books; and,
- Participated in NaNoWriMo, National Novel Writing Month, in 2003, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2012 (“winning” five times).

### **Education**

Master of Liberal Studies, Rollins College, Orlando, Florida (2003)  
 Thesis: *Exploring the Human-Canine Bond* (creative nonfiction)

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration; minor in Bible (1990)  
 Liberty University’s Lifelong Learning Program, Lynchburg, Virginia

## **STORY SYNOPSIS**

[Many authors find the synopsis](#)

**SERIES POTENTIAL**

***Book Two Working Title:***

*synopsis*

***Book Three Working Title:***

*synopsis*