

## December 2022

**Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and welcome to all of our new readers!**

We're one week away from Santa's visit, and for once I'm not running behind in my holiday preparations. There's a large undecorated tree in the living room, unaddressed Christmas cards on the dining room table, and Ellie's cookie jar is empty. Yep, I'm right on schedule this year! Somehow it will all get done (okay, maybe not the cards) and we'll have a ball with the grandchildren.

**So what have I been doing instead of decorating, shopping, and preparing for Santa's arrival?**

Last week, I took the train to Newark to see family and to meet my newest grandniece, an angel if there ever was one ♥.

Know what else was a lot of fun? Counting votes in the **First Annual Eastern Shore Mysteries Name a Character Contest!** I've had such a good time reading the entries and deciding which ones fit in the next Grace Reagan book. Almost as soon as I announced the contest to name two new characters, two more newbies popped up in the storyline. (Which was great because I had a four-way tie in the entries. 😊)

And the WINNERS are . . .

**Myrna B. for "Gordon"**

**Terry Sue G. for "Regina"**

**Lisa S. for "Bernadette" and for "Oscar"**

**Mary T. for "Stephanie"**

CONGRATULATIONS to all the winners!

Detective Sergeant Bernadette Xavier, Detective Sergeant Gordon Greenley, Attorney Oscar Breedlove, and Bar Owner Regina all thank you for your entries! "Stephanie's" role has to stay under wraps for now, but let's just say Grace will never forget her 😊.

Thanks to everyone who entered! You'll see your characters in print in your free Advanced Reading Copy of *In the Absence of Truth*, scheduled for May 2023.

### GOT BOOKS?

Don't forget to take some down time for yourself during the holidays. Reading is a great stress reliever when your schedule is overwhelming and your

characters will not cooperate with your plot and the dog has once again eaten something inedible.

Here are a couple of books that helped me stay sane over the last couple of weeks:

*The Lost Apothecary: A Novel*, by Sarah Penner. A historical mystery set in London.

*Deadly Wishes (Detective Zoe Finch, Book 1)* by Rachel McLean. I also read the first two books in her Dorset Crime series. Excellent police procedurals.

Let me know what you're reading. I'm always looking to add new books to the TBR pile!