

Mary Desch, pen name — MM Desch, Long Biography

Member, Sisters in Crime

Member, Willamette Writers

I've always loved learning, driven by the lure of curiosity. From discovering other worlds in library books to exploring new school subjects, challenge is my friend. As a Nebraska Husker at age 12, I saw the potential portal to a larger world through pursuing medical school. Coming from a family that valued physicians' skills, I found myself graduating from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in my mid-twenties.

Along the way, I'd always saved enough change when candy shopping as a kid to pick up *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*. As I waded through an endless list of pre-med courses, the jewel I found turned out to be a Detective Fiction course.

While slogging through medical school, I wondered where I would fit in the vast machine of Western Medicine. Finally, on my psychiatry rotation at the VA in Omaha, I met Larry—a man whose soul shone through a battered schizophrenic exterior. I was hooked. Completely at home seeking an understanding of people's mental states, personalities, their motivations, conflicts, and behaviors, I settled in for the long ride.

A mentor during my psychiatric residency, a psychiatrist and internist, showed me the fascinating area of mind-body interaction. I was captivated and completed a fellowship in what is now called psychosomatic medicine. Soon in private practice, I grasped the addiction recovery world's tagline for Minnesota —'Land of 10,000 treatment centers' (and lakes, too 😊). I focused on gaining additional certification in addiction psychiatry.

Private practice allowed me an intimate view of the human experience through an abundance of stories. In the late 90s, I moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where I met my future wife through a hospital connection. My life became enriched beyond description; our adventures are ongoing. We've enjoyed several canine children, and yes—one feline family member, over the years.

A good friend of decades recently reminded me I had wanted to write a book in my thirties. But I was deep into years of writing people's medical histories, and later more in-depth evaluations with independent medical examinations. Let me tell you, writing medical reports proved to be little preparation for writing fiction.

Around the early 2010s, we planned our move from Phoenix to Portland, Oregon—home of Powell's Books and the wonderful Willamette writing community. Looking back, my love for reading crime fiction was never lost and swelled in the years before leaving medicine, December 2019. It's amazing how things line up for the next chapter.

During Spring 2020, curiosity struck again, this time for creative writing. Inspired to write a murder mystery, with the help of writing friends and my spouse, I launched into a first draft. Learning craft along the way, I've discovered beta readers, countless webinars, communities of experience and generosity in Sisters in Crime and the Willamette Writers, developmental editing, a critique group, and so much more. I'm excited to announce my debut novel, *TANGLED DARKNESS*, will be published soon. In the meantime, while working on Book #2, I've got a related short story and novella also ready for prime time. Happy reading, and I'll see you on social, or maybe in the stacks!