

Ann McCauley



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Ann McCauley



PRESS RELEASE

Ann McCauley Releases Second Novel

Runaway Grandma, the second novel by Ann McCauley, an emerging Women's Literature author from Northwestern Pennsylvania, is fresh off the press and is on shelves and online at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and www.annmccauley.com.

Runaway Grandma is the story of seventy-year-old Olivia Hampton, a widowed retired school teacher who meticulously plans a fake suicide. She believes her son is plotting to have her declared incompetent to gain control of her finances. She moves to a distant state with a new identity but life has a way of refusing to let her be.

The idea for the story came to McCauley several years ago during a Christmas visit with friends at a country log cabin. Though the characters are composites of people she has met over the years, and the story is fictional, in many ways it is true to life.

McCauley, who has worked as a psychiatric nurse and has a certificate in gerontology, believes that financial elder abuse is a definite problem in America today, citing an incident reported in a local newspaper that resulted in imprisonment for the accused. It is not uncommon for adult children to want their inheritances while they are still young enough to enjoy it, McCauley explained. However, it is far less common for parents to actually press charges against children who try to take control of their assets by fraudulent means. Even though they feel angry and trapped, the humiliation of acknowledging they've been betrayed by their own family usually deters legal involvement.

In the novel the protagonist's children are very self-centered and disconnected from their parents. When asked why she developed the characters that way, McCauley explained that she exaggerated their selfishness to enhance the story. "Just read your daily newspapers and be aware of the peculiar nonfiction stories that surface all too often," she said. "Truth can be stranger than fiction." Olivia, the heroine of her story, is very independent; perhaps modeled after McCauley's mother, who drove to Texas alone two years ago, at the age of 82.

McCauley knew from an early age that she would be a writer someday. "I can't remember a time in my life when I wasn't reading," she said. "Words and stories were the things I could always count on. All my life I've known I'd be a writer some day."

McCauley is the oldest of seven children. "Family was the tapestry of my childhood. There were always cousins, aunts, uncles, friends and grandparents coming and going. My parents still live on the farm I grew up on." Her first novel, *Mother Love*, was published in November 2004. "Since then I've had a crash course in the publishing world. It can be brutal but I'm learning the ropes," she said.

McCauley worked for many years as a nurse. She resides with her husband in Pennsylvania; they have five adult children and 10 grandchildren. A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh with degrees in nursing and psychology, she's done freelance writing for the local newspaper and nursing journals. McCauley is a member of Pennwriters, a networking association of writers and is currently working on her next novel.

Interested persons can learn more about McCauley at her new website, www.annmccauley.com. Her books can be purchased online or ordered through any book store. Autographed copies can also be ordered through her Web site.

Runaway Grandma is published by Madison Ave. Publishers.



Runaway Grandma Reviews

Ann McCauley's new novel *Runaway Grandma* will make you laugh and it will make you cry. One thing is certain - you will not be able to put it down. Widowed Olivia Hampton tries to escape from the demands of her scheming children and find some well-deserved freedom, but life has a funny way of refusing to let her be. If you've ever wanted to run away yourself, escape into the pages of *Runaway Grandma*. This novel's memorable characters, witty dialogue and unexpected plot twists will make you glad you did.

- Linda Underhill, author of *The Unequal Hours*

Fearful that her adult children intend to take control of her life and finances, Olivia Hampton takes drastic measures to insure that she is the one in charge of her own destiny. Ann McCauley's *Runaway Grandma* is the story of Olivia's journey with its highs and lows and how her decision impacts the lives of others, both the family and friends she left behind as well as her new friends. You can not help but be drawn into the story of this warm, brave woman who makes a brand new life for herself at the age of seventy.

- Karen J. Gause, Librarian

Olivia feels that her son will try to have her declared incompetent and take control of her assets, so she carefully devises a plan to disappear. She ends up living in a different part of the country where she meets an older gentleman and they become great friends. This book reveals an unusual solution to a family problem. I highly recommend *Runaway Grandma*. RATING: 4 Flames-**Rare Find**

- Wilma Frana, Reviewer for WordMuseum.com

Everyone comes to a place where the looming question of what to do next confronts us. Olivia Hampton, faced this dilemma when she believed her children were going to have her declared incompetent and she would lose her freedom. Instead of risking this possibility, she faked her own death, left everything behind and found a new life. The novel brings out some important truths the least not being that if life doesn't turn out the way we plan, plan something else.

- Patti Lawson, author of *The Dog Diet, A Memoir*

Disillusioned with her grown children, Olivia Hampton fakes her death, changes her name and sets out to start a new life—at age seventy! But has she made the right decision? *Runaway Grandma* is a tender tale about friendships, regrets—and ultimately, hope. Once again, Ann McCauley has penned an insightful, thought provoking glimpse into relationships.

- Lauren Nichols, author of seven romance novels

This is the story that anyone who ever thought about cutting and running would enjoy. Ms. McCauley has captured our dreams, our fears and our imaginations as her heroine Olivia steps out of all that is familiar and ventures into the unknown. Olivia proves it's never too late to begin again. I couldn't put this book down until I finished it.

- Ronald Schmidt, Book Reviewer, Scottsdale, AZ



Synopsis of Runaway Grandma (page 1 of 3)

Seventy-year-old Olivia Hampton fakes her suicide to avoid being declared incompetent by her businessman son, Alexander. She believes freedom with uncertainty is better than secure entrapment. She carefully plans a successful escape from her family with her best friend Luella's assistance. Before leaving Nebraska, Olivia transfers the deed of her home and the title of her car jointly to her two children, Andrea and Alexander. She forfeits all rights to Social Security and is determined to live what's left of her life as she pleases.

Despite Olivia's attempts to nurture relationships with her three grandchildren is all but nonexistent due to their self absorption and she's tired of the one sided relationships.

To prepare for her escape, Olivia withdraws her pension and investments as well as obtains two sets of false identities. She travels to New York City's diamond district, buys a small bag of diamonds and carefully sews them into the lining of her new leather purse. She keeps that purse with her at all times.

Olivia drives for weeks across Interstate 80, exploring many small towns along the way, before finding a new place to call home in Harmonyville, a small fictitious western Pennsylvania town. She changes her identity twice to avoid leaving a paper trail and finally settles down as Dorothy Myers. After spending a few weeks in a Bed and Breakfast, she rents a cozy apartment from Ray, an elderly man, who becomes her new best friend. And for the first time since her husband died twenty-eight years earlier, she has "someone." But not without baggage. Ray has a troubled, alcoholic son who's in and out of jail as well as his father's life.

There are a host of quirky local characters who add color and fun to the story.

Olivia, (a.k.a. Dorothy), enjoys her new life but finds herself craving information about her children; she visits the library frequently to check the hometown newspaper's website. When she travels out of town every few months she calls Luella for short catch-up chats.

Meanwhile her daughter, Andrea, suffers a bout of depression in the months following her mother's disappearance and her husband, Alexander and Luella rally around her. Their mother's 'passing' is a catalyst for Andrea and Alexander to mature and grow closer. Though Andrea never accepts her mother's passing, diligently hanging onto her belief that her mother is not really dead and when she makes eye contact with her during a getaway week end in NYC... she is even more angry and confused.

Alexander becomes actively involved with his niece and nephew to their benefit as well as his own. He eventually marries for the third time, to his secretary and has two children. His daughter in California graduates from college and his financial commitment to her and her mother finally ceases.



Synopsis of Runaway Grandma (page 2 of 3)

Alexander finally gave up on his mother though he had many unanswered questions about her suicide.

Olivia finds her life becoming more complicated, dealing with Ray's son, Billy, receiving ominous calls on her unlisted phone, (which she learns after several anxious months were made by a suspicious new female 'friend'), and her recurring homesickness. Several months later Harmonyville's water supply becomes contaminated, killing six and hospitalizing a dozen. Invasion of the FBI and the national media destroys life as she knew it.

Billy hears the news and returns to Harmonyville. His moodiness holds Ray in a state of limbo. One night Billy borrows his father's pickup; he 'hits and runs' a man who is walking his dog on a quiet street. The town is propelled into further shock when they learn the victim had been in the federal witness protection program. (He'd been spotted on CNN by the criminals he'd testified against and Billy had been sent to kill him to cover a gambling debt.)

Another team of FBI agents arrive to investigate the hit and run.

Meanwhile Olivia avoids going to town at all. The eyes of the nation seem to be focused on Harmonyville and if there was anything Olivia didn't want, it was life in a fish bowl. When the police and the FBI decide to concentrate their efforts on Ray's truck, Olivia leaves the hoopla for the anonymity of New York City. She decides to sell another diamond; escaping just before the media starts to congregate on their shared front yard.

She shudders when she hears CNN announce the FBI has determined e-coli caused the contamination of the water supply and the source was not an accident of nature, (eventually they learn it was intentionally poisoned by a deranged environmental zealot.)

While in NYC she almost bumps into her daughter, Andrea, on a subway...and pretends she doesn't know her... which brings much emotional turmoil to both mother and daughter.

Ten days later Olivia returns to Harmonyville, grateful for the media's short attention span and exodus. Ray is happy to have Olivia back but is unable to understand her recurring need to go to the city. The tension with Billy escalates.

Ray confesses to the hit and run to give his son a fresh start. Olivia finds this news shocking and devastating.

Not long after Ray's confession she returns to her apartment to find Billy in the process of rummaging through her belongings. She tries to talk to him but angry words and a scuffle leave Olivia unconscious on the floor. A short time later Ray walks in and for the first time sees a chilling ruthlessness in his son's callous eyes.



Synopsis of Runaway Grandma (page 3 of 3)

Ray confronts Billy; he mocks his father before using his gun to knock him unconscious too. Billy takes three thousand dollars from Olivia's wallet; he tosses her purse aside and is quickly on his way with cash in his pockets. He never looks back to check his father or Olivia's condition.

Olivia slowly regains consciousness and finds the sheriff and medic attending Ray and her. They both refuse hospitalization.

Billy is picked up by the State Police four days later in New Jersey and returned to Harmonyville.

Ray recants his previous guilty plea to the hit and run. The sheriff does not charge Ray for his false confession, since he's known him to be a decent and honest member of the community all his life. And Billy is finally behind bars again.

Olivia is relieved Ray will not be going to prison; she helps nurse his wounded body and spirit back to health. They enjoy eight more years of friendship and adventure before Olivia's health begins to decompensate.

Many years later, after a brow beating conversation with her old friend Luella, she gives her old friend her phone number and they resume weekly telephone visits. And Olivia finally decides to write letters to her children. Originally she'd planned to leave letters explaining why she'd left to be mailed after her death.

Alexander never responds but Andrea calls and they make arrangements to meet again. Before the planned reunion, Olivia dies quietly in her sleep... holding large photographs of her children.

It's a page turner that leaves readers searching their souls for their own attitudes and biases about the elderly... *Runaway Grandma* has many unexpected twists. As well as pondering life's heavy questions, for example, can people ever truly escape their past and start over? When does strong personal determination cross over the line into stubborn pride?

It's a serious story that deals with quality of life issues as well as the right to dignity and autonomy in our twilight years. *Runaway Grandma* will likely promote many hours of thought provoking reading group discussions.



Runaway Grandma Questions and Answers

Q: Where did you get the idea for this novel?

A: Several years ago during a Christmas visit with some friends at a cozy log cabin in a country area of McKean County...

Q: Are the characters in *Runaway Grandma* based on people you've known?

A: Not really, though perhaps a few composites of characters I've met through the years. It is obviously fiction but written in such a way as to make it seem true to life.

Q: Today in America, do you really believe financial elder abuse is a problem?

A: Yes, as was on the front page of a local paper on Oct. 5, 07... it is NOT uncommon for adult children to want their inheritances while they are still young enough to enjoy it. Whether need or greed is the motivator, it's wrong. What is NOT common are parents actually following through with pressing charges against their own children. What could be more humiliating than publicly acknowledging your own family has ripped you off? And talk about family rifts... they don't get much nastier than money wars. Somehow older people have become categorized by too many as a stagnated group waiting to 'check out', i.e. die. The boomer generation seniors will force us to change the way we view the elderly.

Fifty and sixty years ago, it was not uncommon for several generations to live in the same home; they often pulled their money to make ends meet. But then came upward mobility and families started to drift apart geographically, and in time emotionally, in search of better jobs, better lives, bigger cars, and bigger houses with fewer people living in them.

There are all kinds of families. Some must talk to each other three times a day, while others feel it's overkill to talk to their adult children more than once a month. Either situation can be symptoms of healthy or unhealthy family relationships. It all comes down to mutual respect between family members. (Respect is to hold each other in high regard.)

Q: In *Runaway Grandma*, most of the character's adult children seem to be extremely self-centered and emotionally disconnected from their parents, are these common generational problems?

A: It's typical for people in their 20s and 30s to be self absorbed as they try to find their way in life. The characters in *Runaway Grandma* are somewhat exaggerated to enhance the story. However there are cases where life is actually stranger than fiction! Just read your daily newspaper and be aware of the peculiar nonfiction stories that surface all too often.



Q: Olivia Hampton, the 70 year old protagonist of your novel just drives off with her false identification papers and even drives to NYC periodically. Isn't this a bit atypical?

A: Perhaps it is. But in my family, independent older women is the norm. I wanted to make Olivia 78 years old but my writing friends insisted she be no more than 70 to make *Runaway Grandma* believable! The last time my mom drove to Texas by herself was 2 years ago at the age of 82. My dad was leaving a few days before she was ready to go. She said, "At least when I'm the driver I can stop and go to the bathroom as often as I want!"

Q: Where is *Runaway Grandma* available?

A: *Runaway Grandma* is available online at www.barnesandnoble.com and www.amazon.com, as well as directly from www.annmccauley.com. It can also be ordered through any book store.

Q: Has the publishing world been easier to navigate since this is your second novel?

A: Yes and no. I still do not have an agent; I did hire a marketing firm, (Mellon & Co. of Ellicottville, NY) for *Runaway Grandma*. I met my publisher, Madison Ave. Publishers at a writing conference in Scottsdale, AZ two years ago. She liked my book and decided to publish it. It's a small independent publishing company with no marketing or distribution. At least I knew what I was getting into this time.

Q: Do you plan to write more books?

A: Yes, of course. I'm obsessed; it's like a virus I can't shake! I already have one completed and another half way there. I'm anxious to get back to work on the half finished one.

And of course, I still hope to someday find a good agent. In the meantime, I'll represent myself.

Ann McCauley



Ann McCauley's Biography

I grew up on a small farm in Pennsylvania, the oldest of seven children with lots of cousins, aunts, uncles and friends coming and going. I can't remember a time when I wasn't reading. Words and stories have been the one thing I could always count on. As a child I wrote dramatic stories and letters to and about my siblings, letters to the editor of the local newspaper and even letters to the state governor.

After reading one of my tales my father said, "I'll be damned if you're not a writer!" Young girls are very influenced by their fathers; I believed from that day forward, "I am a writer!"

However, there were many detours before I could focus on my true vocation. I married young, had three children and became a divorce statistic. I graduated from nursing school at the University of Pittsburgh with my associate's degree, which isn't easy to do as a working single mother. I also was the first nursing student to receive a certificate in gerontology. I continued on at the University of Pittsburgh and received my bachelor's degree in psychology.

I worked for twenty years as a nurse and married my husband in 1990. I have a profound understanding of the emotional complexities of life. I adore my three adult children, my two beautiful step daughters, their mates and our ten grandchildren.

I've always written short stories, essays and lots of letters to friends and family. I did freelance writing for local newspapers and nursing journals for ten years before I stopped working as a nurse in 2003. Since then I've been writing, marketing and learning the ropes of the publishing world.

Mother Love was published in Nov. 2004 and received the Reviewers Choice Award in 2005.

My second novel, *Runaway Grandma*, was released in November 2007 by a small press, Madison Ave. Publishers. Reviews have been very good.

Writing, as well as involvement with family and friends, gives me joy and life satisfaction.

My other passion, which I share with my husband, is travel. We've traveled in more than forty countries... perhaps our motto should be, "We want to cover the earth before the earth covers us!"