

Page Title: Mary Desch, Bio

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I've always loved learning, with the lure of curiosity. From discovering other worlds in library books, to new school subjects, I've welcomed challenge. 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 while living the limitations of Western medicine, I found myself graduating from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in my mid-twenties.

Through these tough training years in medicine, I participated in the joys of success, the sorrows of pain and loss, and met many interesting people. I found myself wondering just where I fit. And then I met Larry. While on a psychiatry rotation at the VA in Omaha, Larry's soul shone through his battered, schizophrenic exterior. I was hooked, and felt completely at home. An understanding of peoples' mental states, personalities, their motivations, conflicts, and behaviors drew me in. I moved north to the Twin Cities for psychiatric training at the University of Minnesota.

A mentor there, a psychiatrist and internist, showed me the fascinating area of mind-body interaction. I was captured 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.

I began journaling in my early thirties, a practice I've continued. After years of writing peoples' medical histories, I focused on more in-depth evaluations during our later time in Phoenix carrying out independent medical examinations. But 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, while never lost, resurged several years before I left medicine. After relocating, I worked in a corporate medical setting and an academic center, before retiring from psychiatric practice in 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 developmental editing, a critique group, beta readers, countless webinars, communities of experience and generosity in Sisters in Crime and the Willamette Writers. After writing courses, a Curtis Brown edit and pitch workshop, and with the thoughtful instruction from many sources, I'm now eager to pitch my debut novel, **TANGLED DARKNESS**.