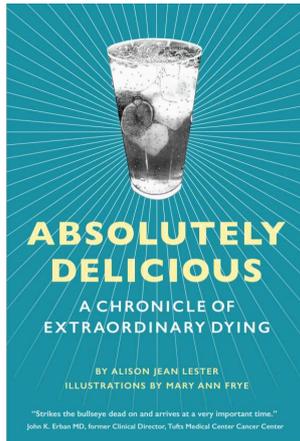


PRESS RELEASE



Absolutely Delicious

A Chronicle of Extraordinary Dying

Alison Jean Lester
Illustrations by Mary Ann Frye

Publishing 22nd October 2020
Paperback £9.99

“The book encapsulates, in the very best way, how we ultimately consist of our relationships and effects on other people, and how dying can be a very beautiful event.”

Kate Edgar, Executive Director, The Oliver Sacks Foundation

‘My mother, Valerie Lester, died on the morning of June 7, 2019, of metastatic melanoma. I’m driven to write about it because her death was, by all the standards I can imagine, a good one. Not only was the moment of her death good; the weeks of decline leading to her death were good. And not only that; the eighteen months between her first dire prognosis and her death were some of the happiest months of her life. Her final moment was, I suppose, ordinary – she drew a last breath, devoid of drama, when her body could no longer maintain itself. Her approach to dying, though? That was amazing.’

After a life marbled with exploration, academia, and domesticity, the writer Valerie Lester retired to a residential hospice and set about enjoying the final act of her life.

Yes. Enjoying. She knew just where she wanted to be, with whom, doing what, and she communicated this to her family and friends with clarity and consistency.

She died nine weeks later, having engaged in dying with equanimity, curiosity, and even amusement.

In ***Absolutely Delicious***, Valerie’s daughter, the writer **Alison Jean Lester**, describes the roads leading to her mother’s cooperation with her terminal disease and her decision to forego treatments that might have prolonged her life, but also might have ruined her death. It is a story that illuminates the benefits of acceptance and the many gifts offered by daring to own one’s end.

Absolutely Delicious forces us to ask some difficult questions - what makes a ‘good’ death? How can we best prepare for our own death, and those of our close family and friends? – inviting us to be more open about death and our own mortality. **Alison Jean Lester’s** moving tribute to her mother, which is interspersed with poetry and stunning illustrations, touchingly explores the importance of communication when faced with death, and offers us a window on how dying can be better approached if we are prepared to confront it honestly.

Alison Jean Lester is available for interview. For more information or to request a press copy please contact: Hannah Hargrave: 07855050137/

hehargrave@gmail.com

PRESS RELEASE

More advance praise for *Absolutely Delicious*

"If you fear death or are in denial of the inevitable, *Absolutely Delicious* is for you. It demonstrates with care and empathy the breadth of ways people can die on their own terms, and the impact that journey can have on loved ones."

Kim Callinan, President and CEO, Compassion & Choices

"As a palliative care physician I've read countless stories about dying patients but none as engaging and original as this, opening my eyes to what's possible for future patients and families I care for."

Jane Delima Thomas, MD, Palliative Care Physician, Harvard Medical School

"Compelling, moving, brave, and unflinching."

Neal Baer, MD, Producer and writer of ER, Law & Order Special Victims Unit and Designated Survivor

"This masterfully written and illustrated narrative arrives at a very important time, striking the bullseye dead on. It will resonate on many levels with readers, be they supporting someone dying, or dying themselves. A terrific read."

John K. Erban, MD, Professor of Medicine, Tufts University School of Medicine,



Alison Jean Lester was born in LA and grew up in St. Croix in the US Virgin Islands, London and Massachusetts before attending Indiana University, where she earned a B.A. in Mandarin and French. After an M.A. in Chinese Studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, she worked for the U.S. Commerce Department, before moving to Japan. She worked as an editor, journalist and voiceover artist before moving to Singapore, where she developed a successful coaching and training business and continued to write. She currently lives in Worcestershire, England. She is the author of novels *Yuki Means Happiness* and *Lillian on Life*, poetry, short stories, plays, and non-fiction books on communication.

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Mary Ann Frye has been a designer of exhibits for science and history museums, a faculty member at the Rhode Island School of Design and Head of the Graphic Design Concentration at Northeastern University and of the Printmaking/Graphic Design Program at the Massachusetts College of Art. One of her current projects is to paint a portrait daily, the total approaching 1500, "of people I admire or love."

Praise for *Yuki Means Happiness*

"It's funny, warm, scary — and thoroughly recommended."

Daily Mail

"An outstanding novel"

John Boyne, best-selling author of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*

Praise for *Lillian on Life*

"Dazzling . . . Spiked with unflinching observations, riotous riffs and poignant reflections."

The Washington Post

"I absolutely loved *Lillian on Life*. It was a delight. The style of it so fresh and clever and subversive and there's something very brave about it."

Kate Atkinson, best-selling author of *Life After Life*

Alison Jean Lester is available for interview. For more information or to request a press copy please contact: Hannah Hargrave: 07855050137/

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