



Catherine Finley leaves her dream job behind when she is called upon to help her ailing father, taking a different position as dean in a college. There, she falls prey to her boss's sexual advances and learns of his history of abuse...a history the college president is trying to cover up to protect the school's reputation.

As visits to her father and her increasing angst at her new job collide, Catherine uncovers a network of secrets and actions that not only threaten her personal well-being and her job, but her family relationships, as well.

The story opens with Catherine's reflection on how (and if) she should tell her tale. Should it be a fictionalized account, or a factual memoir? And if these stories are revealed, how will they affect the students and others who became embroiled in the controversy at the college in the previous year?

*"Why do some writers feel comfortable—or is it compelled—to tell their stories as memoirs, anxious to get them down on paper before forgetfulness obscures the details? Others need the veil of fiction, constructing their reality so readers can see the character as a whole, not as a fragmented life in progress."*

Catherine's choices in reflecting on her experiences, the nightmares she still struggles with in present-day 2005, and their lasting impact on all involved direct the course of her life as she reflects on the past and makes decisions about her future in *Grace*.

Flashbacks of memory permeate the story and create time shifts of information that provide background to Catherine's present-day world and dilemma. These are presented in italics and serve to embrace and round out the characters and their experiences, adding extra dimensions of inspection to create depth and background for the events that unfold.

Nancy Allen's ability to probe the foundations of relationships, secrets, past influences, and the legacy of abuse lends a realistic tone and perspective to a story that many women will readily relate to.

As scandal embraces her not once, but numerous times, Catherine wonders if she will ever have the courage to confront her darkest moments. Her choices affect not only her psyche and life, but the entire college.

Any woman who has faced family and career conundrums will find *Grace* a compelling saga. It winds through and forms connections between abuse, past and present circumstances, and a career woman who must confront close-held secrets on several levels.

This moving saga is powered both by a father's revelations and a daughter's determination to escape sexual harassment in the workplace and will be welcomed by women who may see in Catherine some of their own struggles and conflicts.