

Nancy Flinchbaugh
1402 St. Paris Road
Springfield, OH 45504
Phone: 937-390-88332
Email: nancy.flinchbaugh@gmail.com
Website: spiritualeedlings.com

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REVELATION AT THE LABYRINTH

A Novel By

Nancy Flinchbaugh

The ancient pilgrim path of the labyrinth leads modern women into a journey of discovery and transformation as they encounter the turmoil of domestic violence, addiction, cancer, and climate change. This path leads the characters through personal healing and redemption, while finding hope for the planet.

The Magnificent and Marvelous Book Club (the MAMs), an eclectic group of 60-something women, face the challenge of climate change. MAM Molly Mabra, an African-American government worker, takes the lead in the story, developing a new project for the MAMs and then struggling with breast cancer, requiring surgery and chemotherapy.

Thomaseena White Cole, a forty-year old victim of domestic violence and a recovering alcoholic, leaves prison on parole after serving a sentence for killing her husband in self-defense. Cut off from her children and maligned by her husband's family, she seeks healing and learning to love and trust herself again, while receiving revelations from the earth.

Thomaseena's father-in-law, billionaire Noah Cole Sr., serves as CEO of Cole Oil, a very successful fossil fuel company. He continues to blame Thomaseena for his son's death. After suppressing evidence at Thomaseena's trial, he takes custody of her children, while controlling and abusing his own wife, Elizabeth, to keep her silent.

For Jose Martinez, a child of migrant workers who spent summers with Thomaseena on the farm of her grandmother, their childhood friendship leads to teenage love. But Thomaseena turns him away without telling him that she's pregnant with his child and marries Noah Cole Jr., heir to the fossil fuel fortune. Jose holds a flame for Thomaseena, while attending Stanford University and building a very successful solar power company, Sun Light, Inc.

Thomaseena's firstborn son, Joseph Noah Cole, aka Joey, completes his third year at Yale during the story, where he develops an idea in his Environmental Business class to help the family business thrive and address climate change. He writes a paper recommending that their fossil fuel company could stockpile fossil fuels, while diversifying into alternative energy.

The MAMs Book Club begin this journey when they finish a round of reading environmental books and grapple with what to do about the looming danger of climate change. They walk the Living Vine Labyrinth, a cloth labyrinth, made by MAM Jane in a spirituality class. The simple path spirals into the center, outlined with vining leaves and includes flowers at each turn, the colors of the rainbows and chakras. As they walk, they meditate and listen for answers to the environmental dilemma. After the walk, Molly finds inspiration and develops a

plan to start an organic, re-entry farm for women in recovery to help them heal, while caring for the earth. She engages the MAMs and her husband's family to help. Soon, they are converting the Mabra family farm into a halfway house called the FARM (Farming and Restoring with the MAMs). They form a nonprofit corporation and together staff a board which includes Molly's husband, Tom, and brothers George and Leo.

When Thomaseena, a mentoree of MAM Sallie Quisenberry, is released from prison, she moves into the newly renovated farm house and their project begins. The book follows Thomaseena as she adjusts to life out of prison, fighting old urges to drink and sadness from being cut off from her children. She also begins to awaken from within, connecting with the earth on the farm. Soon joining Thomaseena at FARM are Starletta, Maria, Xavia, Clementine and Lily, all with distinctive personalities and issues including drugs, prostitution and child trafficking.

Meanwhile, the new project faces setbacks. Shortly after the opening of the FARM, Molly learns she has breast cancer and is scheduled for surgery. Other challenges come when a drought threatens the crops, the neighbors try to shut down the group home on a zoning issue, the KKK pickets in the front yard and the state challenges the farm's organic status.

The MAMs and the FARM women return to the Living Vine Labyrinth on the floor of the barn at the farm again and again for inspiration. Thomaseena writes poems after each labyrinth walk, which speak to personal and planetary healing. The MAMs publish these poems into a book to sell to raise money for the farm.

When Thomaseena's former housekeeper and nanny, Mrs. Bird, carries letters from Thomaseena to her children, Noah Cole Sr. fires Mrs. Bird and tries to send Thomaseena back to prison for violating a children's services order. The parole officer refuses his request and Mrs.

Bird, now in retirement, approaches the court to offer evidence that Thomaseena killed her husband in self-defense, evidence not given at the original trial.

Jose Martinez hires a private investigator to find Thomaseena. When he learns Thomaseena is in a halfway house in Ohio and that he might have a son, he sets out to meet her again. However, Thomaseena's sobriety and then illness keep her from attending his first visits with the Board and the FARM women. Jose also seeks out Thomaseena's firstborn, Joey Cole, now a student at Yale, through an old friend and professor there.

When Noah Cole Sr. learns Joey's paper recommending diversification will be published in a Yale journal, he pays off Yale to dump the article and threatens to withdraw support from his grandson. Meanwhile, Jose Martinez offers Joey a summer internship with his Sun Power corporation in California. Joey accepts the internship, but begins to distrust Jose when Jose tells Joey he might be his father.

As the women struggle to heal, the MAMs walk alongside, helping them find their voices in a public speaking club, having fun in a Salon Night where they give each other massages, pedicures and manicures while dreaming about the future, and walking the labyrinth together. They all support Molly in her cancer journey as well.

The FARM board uses the drought as a way to reach out to neighbors, teaching them how to utilize solar panels to fuel irrigation. Working with the churches, they build support for the project at the zoning board and the police help squelch the KKK. But then a tornado touches down on the FARM, just as Jose Martinez comes to finally meet Thomaseena who is injured in the storm. Jose and Tom find her, unconscious in her bedroom, under a fallen window. They carry her to the storm cellar, but then the tornado destroys the FARM house. When the storm

subsides, they take Thomaseena to the hospital where doctors place her into a medically induced coma to let her body heal and summons the family.

Elizabeth, on vacation with Noah Sr. in Hawaii, becomes upset when he tells her not to worry about the tornado report. She decides to leave him, booking a flight back to River City, where she visits the court and enters her own testimony on Thomaseena's behalf, and arranges for Thomaseena's children and Mrs. Bird to come to fly from San Antonio to the hospital.

When Thomaseena wakes up, she finds her lost love, Jose, and her children by her side and soon also learns her case will be reopened with the new evidence. As she heals, she completes her year at the FARM. Jose Martinez stays close, helping equip River City houses with solar panels as the community rebuilds after the tornado. Eventually, he proposes to Thomaseena. She accepts, and then moves to her granny's farm for three months to prepare for her wedding to Jose Martinez.

Noah Cole Sr. fights his own demons and begins to stand up to the abuse he suffered as a child, apologizing to Thomaseena and his wife and offering a merger between Cole Oil and Sun Light Industries. This leads to the final scene, where all gather at the rainbow wedding of Thomaseena and Jose, with plans are underway to develop a healing salon at Granny's farm and also a new solar plant and organic farming project to put re-entry folks back to work, with Joey at the helm.

Revelation at the Labyrinth forges a spiritual path through the challenges of the 21st century, with a message of hope for people fighting cancer, addictions and climate change. This lively story of love and transformation will keep people reading and thinking about possible ways to creatively build a future together.