Novelist Lynne Golodner’s readers love the many ways she weaves faith and fiction

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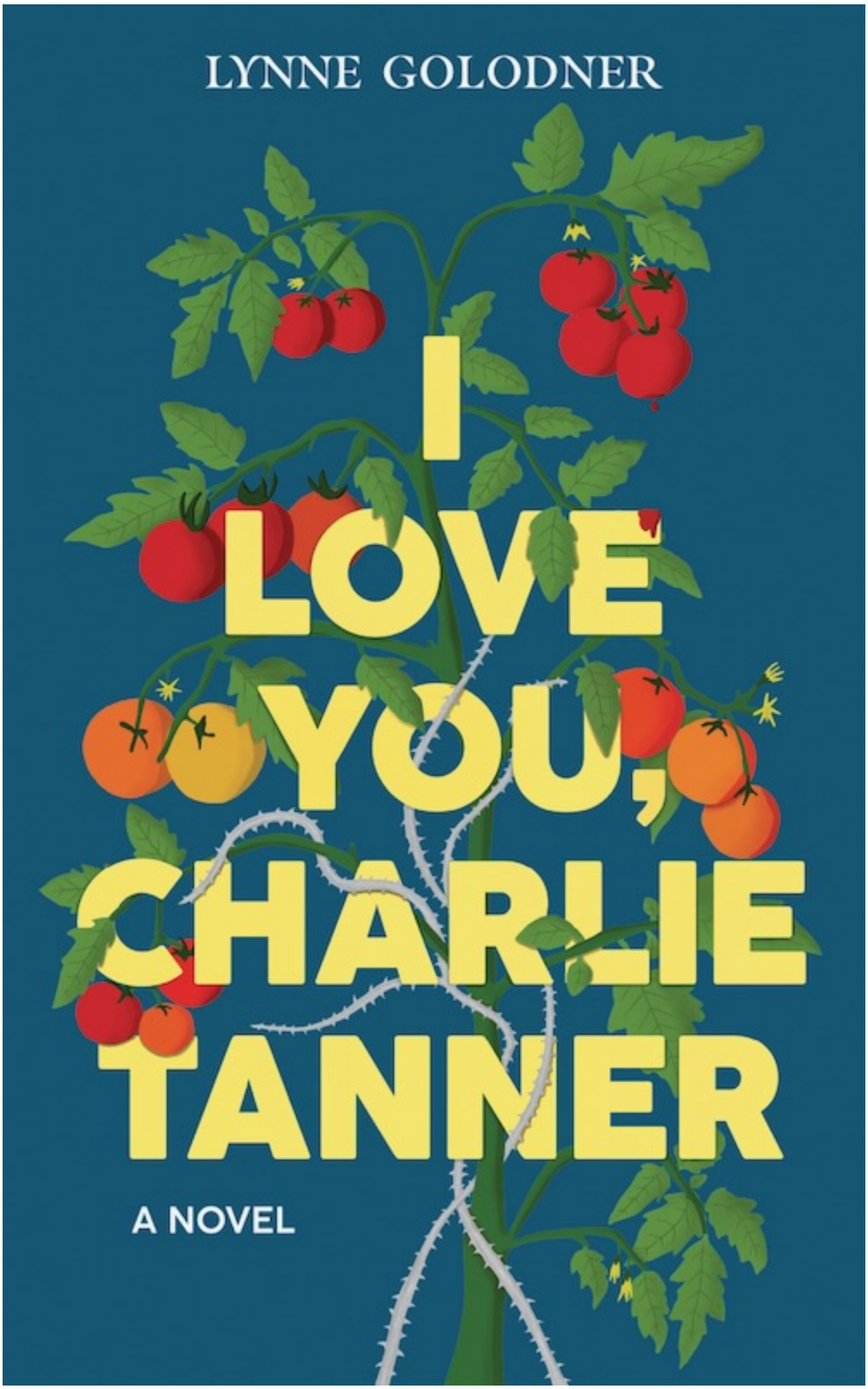
Lynne Meredith Golodner May 24, 2025



Click the cover to visit this new novel's Amazon page.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Author, marketing expert and journalist Lynne Golodner has been a part of our community of authors since our founding as a publishing house and, in 2013, we published one of her many books, *Flavors of Faith: Holy Breads*. In 2025, Lynne's national reputation has pivoted more and more toward her professional persona as a beloved

novelist. If you're organizing your own stack of "summer reading" right now, we also can recommend two of her earlier novels. In 2023, we published a *ReadTheSpirit* Cover Story recommending her novel, *Woman of Valor*. Last year, we had another Cover Story recommending her novel set in Scotland, *Cave of Secrets*. And if you're becoming a fan of Lynne's work, don't overlook her early-2025 collection of essays, *Forest Walk on a Friday*. Just as we have marked those previous book launches for our readers—we once asked Lynne to write a column for our readers, telling us more about her journey as a novelist. **Here is that column—**

By LYNNE GOLODNER
Founder of Scotia Road Books

When, about five years ago, I shrank my marketing business to focus on writing novels, I pledged to write a book a year for the rest of my life. With a third novel and my fourth book in two years due out June 12th, 2025, I had no idea how big that self-commitment would be!

I LOVE YOU, CHARLIE TANNER, my third novel and twelfth book, launches June 12, 2025, and I'm super excited for this gripping story to meet the world. It's got suspenseful romance with a hot rabbi, a cult-like commune and reclaimed Jewish identity, set in Cape Breton, Vermont and Traverse City, Michigan.

Not only was it easy to write—it poured out of me in six weeks, though it incubated in my head for a year and a half prior! It's a compelling, original, riveting story, if I don't say so myself. The generous authors who blurbed the book (among them, Jean Meltzer, the "Queen of Jewish Romance," Sarah Ansbacher, a lyrical novelist from Israel by way of England, and Christopher P. Locke, an essayist and poet from upstate New York) have likened it to Delia Owens' *Where the Crawdads Sing*, and that is high praise indeed!

Want to be part of the "Virtual Launch" of Lynne's new novel on June 12, 2025? Lynne shares this "sign up" link to join her and many other readers for that event.

How my love of writing first emerged

For me, this new book is part of my lifelong journey.

You see, I've been a writer all my life. My mother, who comes to most of my book events and to whom this novel is dedicated, says I started writing in earnest at age 6. When I look back, I see a Snoopy diary with a tiny gold key and big loopy handwriting and later, a corduroy-

covered journal with my earnest secrets and poems. Both sit behind my writing desk today, to remind me of who I've always been.

Because it took a long time for me to have the confidence to focus on writing books. I still do marketing work in the afternoons, but these days, my mornings are devoted to creative writing and it feels so good.

It's a privilege to be able to write creatively as a work priority. I realize that, and I am grateful. But I'm turning 54 just days after Charlie Tanner hits bookshelves, and I often wonder if I should have focused on writing books earlier in my life.

The honest answer is: NO.

You might wonder why, if this is a lifelong calling. I teach a lot of writing classes, which are mostly populated by midlife or older women who did other things for decades before listening to that urgent inner voice that told them to write. And what I am teaching, in addition to writing technique and craft and career-building, is confidence.

I was 37 before I truly believed in myself, and from what I'm seeing in writing communities and my classes these days, that's young to start building confidence. For me, it felt late, because I'd spent 15 years as a journalist and then, even though I was coming into myself, I still thrust most of my creative energy into creating and leading a marketing company.

Writing remained "on the side," "in the wings," something I did after my "real work" was done. With young children at the time, and as a single mother then, that didn't leave much time for my writing. Or myself.

Now, in my 50s, my children are grown and into lives of their own. Sure, when they come to town, I drop everything and focus on them and I wouldn't have it any other way. But most days, my time is my own and I've been in business long enough that I can relegate my "real work" to afternoon hours, and gift my creative morning energy to my writing.

To me.

How CHARLIE TANNER came to be

All I knew when I started planning out *I LOVE YOU, CHARLIE TANNER* was that I wanted a midlife woman as protagonist to have lost her life partner and process her grief in the garden, in a small town. As Jewish identity threads through all of my books, I wanted her to have a latent ancestral Jewish connection but not a brimming-over religious identity. And I wanted a hot rabbi to wander into her life somehow and capture her attention.

That was the premise. I did not plan to have a cult-like commune as her backstory or a controlling ex-partner who died suddenly. Like I said earlier, I noodled the concept for a long time and then, rather than plan out my typical many-pages “Beat Sheet,” I did an enhanced outline and started writing.

Last fall, I led a writers retreat in Humboldt County, California, where the tallest redwood trees stand sentry over a quiet coastline. It was breathtaking and peaceful and lovely, and I woke before the sun most days eager to write. I crept downstairs in the lodge where we stayed, where a fire was roaring in the fireplace and heavy wood chairs and tables were empty because it was 5 a.m. and the world was asleep. But not me. I huddled into my sweater and scarf and gloves and tapped away at my laptop because Charlie Tanner was begging me to write her story.

And then when I returned home, I blew off all my paying working for a full week because I couldn’t keep away from her. In no time, the story was done.

With my first two novels, the first drafts were messy, and I crossed off whole pages and moved around paragraphs and chapters and needed a lot of reworking.

Not *I LOVE YOU, CHARLIE TANNER*. This novel was in decent shape after the first draft, and I pulled it together quicker than I had ever before with earlier books.

I might just be getting the hang of this novel-writing thing.

I’m also getting the hang of promoting and marketing novels, having fun with it, getting curious about what works and what doesn’t. In April, I released audiobooks for my first books released since September 2023. While I hired a narrator for the first two novels, I narrated the audiobook for this new novel, and had such fun revisiting the story on a more intimate level. The audio version will launch with the paperback and e-book on June 12th.

It takes time to build a career as an author, I’m learning. Just the other day, a synagogue in Virginia contacted me to say their book club read *Woman of Valor*, loved it and had lots of questions, and could I please come speak to them on Zoom? We booked a date.

I realized that, in committing to writing a book a year for the rest of my life, I am always looking to the next book-writing project. But the books I’ve already produced are still finding their legs in the world of readers, and so I must straddle fences between each book and continue to build relationships between those earlier characters and my audience.

In truth, *Woman of Valor* hasn’t even been in the world for two years! She’s still a baby, and I need to give her as much attention as I am to Charlie.

Also recently, I spoke to a Hadassah book club about *Cave of Secrets*, which celebrates its first birthday in August. It hasn’t even learned to walk yet.

Both of those first novels are being considered for awards. *Woman of Valor* earned an honorable mention in the 2024 Eric Hoffer Award for Spiritual Fiction, and *Cave of Secrets* is a Finalist in Romance and LGBTQ+ fiction for the FOREWORD Indie Awards, and also a finalist in Romance for the Reader's Choice Awards. I'll hear about both in a few weeks.

Being an author with a commitment to keep writing means juggling a lot of balls all at once and never letting any of them drop.

Is it worth it? Unabashedly, YES!! I love this writing life, and the momentum I am building by committing to this pace.

Sometimes, I'll admit, it's exhausting. But since most authors never make a sustainable income from book sales until they have at least five in the world in one genre, I'll keep going to see what happens when more books meet the world.

Plus, I love the act of creation. Everything from coming up with the idea to planning it out to writing to revising, revising, revising, to working with my talented cover designers on the look of the book, to all the creativity that goes into imagining its debut into the world, I love all of that.

This is the life I've chosen, and I wouldn't have it any other way. As long as I get to write frequently and often, I'm good.