



Kirsten Pursell's storytelling is profoundly moving, capturing the essence of human experience with authenticity and emotional depth.

*Kirsten Pursell, an award-winning American author, released her fourth book, "Long Enough to Love You," in 2023. Her previous works include a memoir and two novels, with over 15,000 downloads since 2021. Her books have topped Amazon charts and won multiple awards. She lives in Ocean Beach, California.*

## Crafting Stories of Resilience and Renewal

### KIRSTEN PURSELL

#### BALANCING LIFE AS A COMPETITIVE SWIMMER AND ACCLAIMED AUTHOR

as told to Anna Harlowe

**K**irsten Pursell is a literary force whose works have captivated readers with their raw emotion and relatable themes. An award-winning American author, Kirsten's latest novel, *Long Enough to Love You*, released on January 1, 2023, delves into the complexities of middle-age challenges and new beginnings. This book has already garnered significant acclaim, including the Firebird Book Awards First Place in Fiction, Divorce Fiction, and Romance categories, and a Literary Titan Gold Book Award. Kirsten's previous works, including her memoir *On Becoming Me: Memoir of an 80's Teenager* and novels *Harvard* and *Company Clown*, have also achieved remarkable success, with her memoir reaching #1 on Amazon's women's biographies and memoirs and *Company Clown* topping the Satire Fiction category.

Kirsten's journey as an author is deeply intertwined with her personal experiences. Her memoir offers an unfiltered glimpse into her teenage years, resonating with readers through its authenticity and the unique format of diary entries, journals, and letters. Her novels, each inspired by different facets of her life, showcase her versatility and ability to craft compelling narratives across various genres. From the academic and athletic blend in *Harvard* to the satirical exploration of corporate culture in *Company Clown*, Kirsten's storytelling is both diverse and engaging.

Beyond her literary achievements, Kirsten is a dedicated mother of three and a competitive Master's swimmer, competing at national and international levels. Her

Harvard by Kirsten Pursell is a beautifully written, emotionally resonant novel with compelling characters and a richly detailed setting. Highly recommended!



mantra, "Do things you're scared to do; take your life and make it the best story in the world," reflects her approach to both life and writing. Living in Ocean Beach, California, Kirsten draws inspiration from her vibrant surroundings, infusing her work with the rich atmosphere of her coastal home.

In this interview, Kirsten Pursell opens up about the inspirations behind her books, the intersection

beginnings in life and love.

**Your memoir, *On Becoming Me: Memoir of an 80's Teenager*, offers a deeply personal narrative. How did you decide to share such intimate moments from your life, and what impact do you hope it has on readers?**

I had been contemplating sharing the story for a long time. People do not look at me today

and think I was ever anything but happy and enthusiastic, but I struggled on so many levels in those years, which is why it resonates. The memoir is unique in that it's not reflective, but my actual diary entries, journals, letters, and poetry from those exact

of her passions for swimming and writing, and the impact of her success on her storytelling. Her insights offer a deeper understanding of the woman behind the words and the stories that continue to inspire and resonate with readers around the world.

**What inspired you to write *Long Enough to Love You* and explore themes of middle-age challenges and new beginnings?**

A story with this much raw emotion can only come from personal experiences and feelings. I had given so much to raising my family, but as the nest started to empty, I reflected on my own life. I questioned my marriage and what I wanted the rest of my life to look like. During this process, I was comforted by the reality that so many of us go through this. I wanted to tell a story that mirrors what women experience emotionally as we figure out our place as we age. Starting over in middle age is scary but can also be incredibly liberating and exhilarating. Society says we're too old to start new. It says to be good with what you have. Starting over in our fifties is a brutal thought for most of us. Sometimes, we need reminding that we're never too old for new

moments in time. Writing the book was cathartic. More than anything, it's the evolution of a young girl into a woman. In today's day and age, the memoir is a refreshing, reflective account of growing up that resonates with readers. Also, the eighties were just an epic era of pop culture, and I referenced many of those in the book.

***Harvard* seems to blend elements of academia, athletics, and romance. What sparked the idea for this novel, and how did you develop the characters of Helena and Thor?**

*Harvard* was the first novel I wrote. The idea came to me while driving down a mountain after a family weekend. As someone who loves to run, I had a vision of two people literally crashing into each other on a mountain trail while running from their respective demons. The characters have background stories that draw them together. Like most characters I write about, I have a general idea of who they are but let much of their story happen organically. (On a fun note, I wrote this book when my daughter, Quinne, was 12. She went on to graduate from Harvard nearly ten years later!)

**Your book *Company Clown* delves into the world of advertising and corporate culture. What inspired you to explore this industry, and how did you approach crafting the character of Jack Carp?**

Before being a stay-at-home mom and now author, I worked in the corporate world. Specifically, I worked for a major fast-food chain in product marketing. I was intimately involved in advertising campaigns and met many fascinating characters. I initially intended for "Company Clown" to be a screenplay, but once I started to write, I had too much fun presenting an exaggerated account of the rise of a corporate icon. Jack Carp was inspired by a hand model I met at a commercial shoot. I loved taking someone whose "only" beauty was his hands and giving him center stage.

**As a competitive swimmer and a writer, how do these two passions intersect in your life? Do you find any parallels between the discipline required for swimming and the discipline required for writing?**

They are such a part of who I am that it's hard to imagine life without them. The parallels, while subtle, are similar. Loving the process is a must for both. As I have gotten older, though, I am kinder to myself regarding expectations. Swimming can be very mundane, but I love pushing my body. Writing is exciting, and transforming ideas into words is intoxicating, even if staring at a blank screen can be daunting. Swimming has taught me discipline; writing has given me an outlet for expression. I need both!

Your books have achieved significant success, with "On Becoming Me" reaching #1 in women's biographies and memoirs. How has this success impac-

ted your approach to writing and storytelling?

I am so grateful that readers are interested in my books! It encourages me to continue writing. While different genres and stories resonate with various people, I tell the kinds of stories I want to read. Since "Long Enough to Love You," the feedback to continue writing and developing underrepresented "middle-aged" women protagonists has been overwhelming. It's motivating and encouraging to have readers become fans. I never thought I would be in that position.

**Living in Ocean Beach, California, must offer a rich backdrop for creativity. How does your environment influence your writing, particularly in terms of setting and atmosphere?**

I have a beautiful ocean view, and I sometimes find it more distracting than conducive to creativity! I appreciate that I live where I can write indoors or outdoors all year. The ocean is mesmerizing, and Ocean Beach is full of quirky characters. I get new ideas constantly.

With your diverse literary portfolio, from memoirs to poetry collections to novels, what drives you to explore such varied genres and themes in your work?

I write what inspires me. If I have a story I'm excited about, I will write that. I have so many ideas all the time. To limit myself to just women's fiction or romance means I can't explore other genres that excite me.