

# STEPHANIE ALEXANDER

RELEASES LATEST NOVEL, CHARLESTON GREEN



**How long have you lived on Daniel Island?** I first moved to Daniel Island in 2011, and then moved to Mount Pleasant in 2013, and back to Daniel Island in 2019.

**Where are you originally from?** I'm originally from the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. I came to Charleston in 1995 to attend C of C. I moved back to D.C. for approximately ten years, and then I was fortunate to be able to move back to Charleston!

**Tell us about your family:** My husband and I have a blended family of five teenagers. My three children Eliza (rising senior at Wando), Harper (rising sophomore at Porter Gaud), and Cyrus (rising 7th grader at Porter Gaud). My husband, Jeff Cluver, is a psychiatrist and heads up mental health for HCA at Trident/Summerville and Colleton Medical Centers. He has two sons, Nick (rising freshman at Lucy Beckham) and Alex (rising 7th grader at Laing Middle). So we have our hands full! We also have two miniature dachshunds, Trinket and Topsy.

**What is your professional/educational background?** I have a BA in Communications from the College of Charleston, and MA in Sociology with a focus in Social Policy from The American University in Washington, D.C., and a JD from the Charleston School of Law. Before children, I worked in the public policy arena for several women's health non-profits in Washington, D.C. I spent nine years as a stay-at-home mom and started writing during that time. When I went back to work, I taught sociology as an adjunct professor at C of C and also had my own editing and ghostwriting business. I returned to school in 2015 and graduated **cum laude** from the Charleston School of Law in two and half years, passed the bar exam, and started practicing family law. I'm currently practicing law and working on my personal fiction.

**Have you always had an interest in writing? What triggered that interest?** I didn't grow up wanting to be a writer, really, but I did read voraciously from a very young age. I started reading adult novels when I was about eight. I read *IT* by Stephen King when I was about 10. I've read thousands of novels in my life. At some point, I started to feel like I was rereading my favorite books and not finding much new that really resonated with me. I had the idea for my first novel, *The Cracked Slipper*, and after thinking about it for a few months and doing a lot of outlining, I started writing. I immediately knew that I had found my passion. I was thirty-two when

I started writing *The Cracked Slipper*. It was around the time my youngest child turned 2, and I was searching for something to call my own after six years of being wholly dedicated to raising my kids. At this point, I've been writing for eleven years.

**What novels have you published in the past?** I currently have four published novels. *The Cracked Slipper* series is a trilogy featuring three novels (*The Cracked Slipper*, *The Dragon Choker*, and *The Glass Rainbow*). It's a fairy tale retelling that tells the "true story" of Cinderella's happily-ever-after, which turns out to be pretty complicated, mostly because her marriage to Prince Charming turns out to be a disaster. It's set in a fantastical enchanted world that I think of as Austenesque, with unicorns, dragons, magic, talking animals, etc.

My fourth novel, *Charleston Green*, is a Southern women's fiction with a ghostly murder mystery woven throughout. It tells the story of Topsy Collins, a divorced mother of three who is also a clairvoyant, and how she rebuilds her life after a devastating divorce. She moves into a house in the Old Village of Mount Pleasant that's haunted by the ghosts of a married couple. Jane and Henry Mott have been haunting the house since the 1920s. They hate each other, because Jane thinks Henry killed her and killed himself, but neither can remember what really happened. Topsy must use her supernatural and investigative powers to solve the mystery of their deaths and bring peace to the house, all while dealing with her vindictive ex-husband, dating, parenting challenges, and the financial strain of trying to rebuild her career as a celebrated Lowcountry artist.

**What inspired you to write your most recent novel, *Charleston Green*?** *Charleston Green* was inspired by my personal experiences rebuilding after divorce, and also, as a family court attorney – I observe my clients going through the same challenges. I feel like there are universal emotions associated with divorce, even for those who have never experienced it, especially around our expectations of life, how they often fall short of reality, and how to come to peace with our past experiences and move forward.

**How would you describe your writing style?** All my books are meant for a book club audience, primarily adult women. They

include magical, paranormal, or other speculative elements, but the characters are meant to be relatable and encourage readers to think about the challenges and lessons of their own lives. I think my writing style is literary while still being accessible, and has a certain satirical humor to it. I also tend to change my voice depending on the book — for example, while there are similarities between the writing style in *The Cracked Slipper* series and *Charleston Green*, the former is a little more formal given the period setting, while the latter is a little more folksy given the Southern flavor.

**What authors do you admire?** My favorite book of all time is *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt, which is actually a memoir and not a novel, but I've never read a book with a stronger or more unique voice. Some of my favorite authors include Stephen King, Jane Austen, Margaret Atwood, Philip Pullman, Philippa Gregory, Pat Conroy, and Southern women's fiction authors like Mary Alice Monroe, Kristy Woodson Harney, and Dorthea Benton Frank.

**What was the most gratifying part about writing this book?** In many ways, the most gratifying part is seeing how people have

fallen in love with Topsy and her story. She's very near and dear to my heart. It's really exciting to have people ask for more books about her.

**What was the most challenging?** This book is very cross-genre, being Southern women's fiction with paranormal, historical, and mystery elements. It has been very difficult to categorize it, and most traditional publishers want to know "where it sits on the bookshelf," i.e., what genre it is. Personally, I prefer cross-genre books, and all my work is cross-genre, so I decided to write what inspires me.

**Where can we learn more/purchase the book?** All my work is available on all major book retailers, including Amazon, B&N, Apple Books, Google Play, and Kobo, as well as through independent booksellers. You can also learn more on my website, [www.stephaniealexanderbooks.com](http://www.stephaniealexanderbooks.com), or follow me on Instagram (@stephaniealexanderbooks) or Twitter (@crackedslipper). Also, The cover art for *Charleston Green* is by local artist Carolina Staley (@gallavantorart on Instagram) and the publisher is local publisher Bublish, Inc.



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Amanda Blundy  
Blundy Law Firm  
234 Seven Farms Drive  
Suite 111-A  
Daniel Island, SC  
[ablundy@blundylawfirm.com](mailto:ablundy@blundylawfirm.com)

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Dana Blalock, D.D.S.  
210 Seven Farms Drive, Ste. 103 | Daniel Island, SC 29492  
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