

# No One Writes Books about Locksmiths by Luanne Oleas

*Most of the time when you think about writing a book, they say you should write what you know. I knew locksmithing.*

SAN MATEO, CA, USA, March 6, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As a woman locksmith, I didn't go out on the two a.m. calls when patrons discovered their keys locked in their cars after the bar closed. But I did open cars for drunks in the daytime. One call required me to use a Slim Jim (a long, flat piece of spring steel) in my customer's car door while he wavered beside me, smelling of pizza and beer. Only after I unlocked the door did he mention he didn't have any money. I tossed the keys on the front seat, locked the car door, and slammed it shut. Suddenly, he remembered his checkbook in the glove box.

At the time, my husband was a cropduster, and I was looking to get out of locksmithing, because of incidents like the one just described. I thought I would rather be a writer. Anything had to be better than being a locksmith. Each day when my husband and I came home from work, we'd ask each other about how our days went. My stories included customers who didn't pay or a reoccurring tale about the local pimp. He would come in with his new girl to get a duplicate of the same key which hung from a suggestive key ring I hated touching.

After my work story ended, my husband would tell me his. It would sound something like this:

"Today, we finished work early, so we took the door off the airplane, filled some baggies with flour, and flew out over the Monterey Bay. When we spotted a whale, we would flour-bomb it."

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*Luanne Oleas*

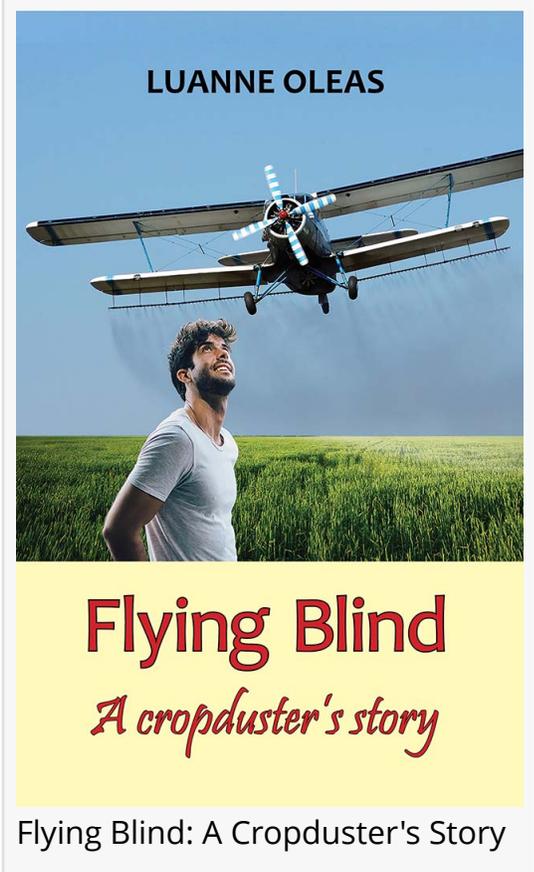
"That's nice, dear," I would reply, half-listening while contemplating how to be a writer.

I had taken some creative writing classes and attended a few seminars but kept my day job. The classes and seminars always stressed, "Write what you know."

What did I know? Locksmithing. That might make a nice scene or two, but I wanted to write a novel. The next day when I came home from work, my husband asked me how my day went.

"I had to go to Soledad Prison," I said. "One of the guards

locked his keys in his car. It was parked by the cyclone fence surrounding the prison activity yard. The whole time I was picking the lock, a bunch of guys hung on the fence and told me how much faster they could do it. I told them, 'That's why you're in there and I'm out here.' I really don't want



Flying Blind: A Cropduster's Story

to be a locksmith anymore. How was your day?"

"Today, the boss wanted me to help with some public relations work. He asked me to fly four parachutists over the local Broccoli Festival so they could do a demonstration jump. It's strange to go up with a plane full of people, especially jumpers, because they're talking loudly and on edge before a jump. When they finally leave the plane, all you hear is the wind coming through the open door. It went pretty well until a helicopter from another cropdusting outfit decided to do an impromptu fly-by. He didn't notice the jumpers descending on him. One jumper ended up in a tree and another in the river, just to avoid being sliced and diced by the main rotor blades."

"That's interesting," I said, leafing through another book on writing. Write what you know, it also advised. Well, I lived in a small town, so I knew about them. That mostly included drinking and going to church, or if you were really bored like I was, both. Also, there was small town politics, which usually included some NIMBY (not in my backyard) dispute.

I headed back to work the next day, and when I came home, my husband asked me how it went.

"I made another yucky key for Sweet Larry the Pimp. How was your day?"

"I was flying over a field by the freeway. I pulled up over some trees at the end of my spray run when a hawk flew out of the treetops. I had to veer away to avoid the bird. Suddenly, there was a wire right in front of me. I couldn't make it over. I couldn't make it under. I aimed the propeller right at it to cut it cleanly. I took out the power to the closest town."

"Oh, no," I said. "Did you land safely?"

"I did, but Bob didn't. He was flying a field halfway between where I was working and the airstrip. I was ferrying back to the strip, and my heart was still pounding from the hawk, when I saw Bob's plane in pieces on the ground. Bob was laying nearby, waving to me for help."

I still went to work the next day, but I knew then, I was never writing a book about locksmithing.

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Luanne Oleas' novel, FLYING BLIND, A Cropduster's Story, was published by Sand Hill Review Press LLC, and is available at bookstores and online. It's the story of a cropduster, a priest, small town politics, and learning the truth about commitment.

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