

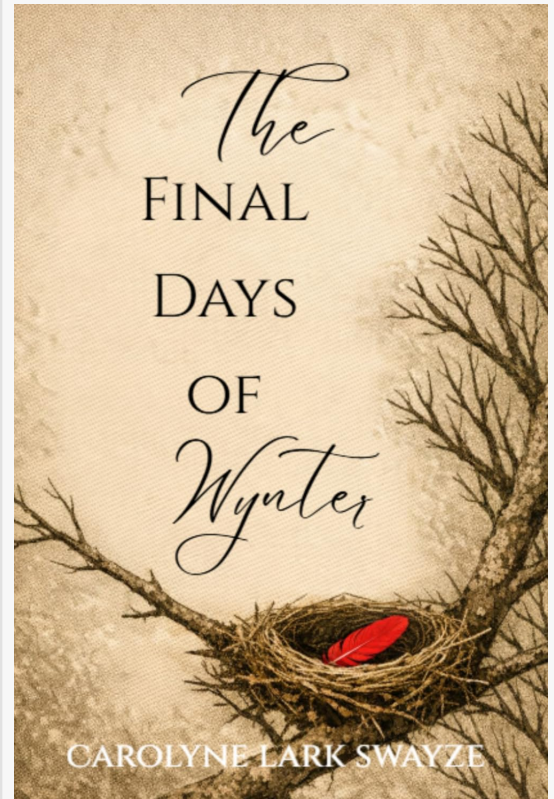
The Final Days of Wynter

A century-old former model returns from a near-death encounter with a divine command to stay silent, confronting grief and the grace waiting at life's edge.

NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES, July 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Final Days of Wynter follows Wynter Lang, a sharp, sometimes contentious, nearly one-hundred-year-old former fashion model living at Trinity Pines, an elegant assisted living facility north of Chicago. Brilliant, opinionated, and lonely, Wynter has outlived two husbands, two children, most of her friends, and the world she knew. Though financially secure, she has grown weary of living and begins staging small, reckless acts that might end her life without requiring her to commit suicide, which is not in line with her faith. After several alarming incidents, Trinity Pines administrator Dr. Elaine Perkins warns that Wynter's freedom may be restricted unless her behavior changes.

The next day, during a routine colonoscopy, Wynter flatlines. In a luminous near-death encounter, she believes she stands before God, who tells her that He did not call her and that her time has not yet come. God rebukes the "small bargains" she has tried to make with her life and sends her back with one instruction: be still, watch, and listen. When Wynter awakens after a three-day coma on Easter weekend, she refuses to speak. The silence is not physical incapacity but obedience, penance, and a test of faith. Hospital staff question her cognition, but Richard Brown, the warm, perceptive registered nurse assigned to her care, senses that Wynter is more capable than anyone realizes.

From her hospital window, Wynter becomes fixated on a pair of cardinals building a nest in the trees. When a storm dislodges the nest, she breaks through her passivity long enough to summon help. Richard retrieves the nest, returns the eggs to safety, and the birds resume their vigil. The incident marks the first shift in Wynter's spiritual and emotional journey: instead of engineering death, she acts to preserve life. Richard's tenderness and humor begin to reach her, and their bond deepens into a profound, mutual attachment. He sees beyond her age, wealth, and stubbornness to the grief beneath her silence.



The Final Days of Wynter by Carolyn Lark Swayze

Meanwhile, Malachi Glover, principal attorney at Lawrence, Chatham, and Glover and trustee of Wynter's trust, is drawn into her case after Trinity Pines demands either increased supervision or her removal. As Malachi reviews old files, he discovers Wynter's connection to Jonathan Lawrence, one of the firm's founders, and begins uncovering the hidden history of Wynter's lost daughter, Jessica Lawrence. Through flashbacks, the novel reveals Wynter's life: her Cincinnati childhood, an abusive first marriage, a successful modeling career that allowed her to navigate racial barriers, her marriage to George Temple, and the devastating Paris accident that killed George and their two children. Later, in Paris, she falls in love with Jonathan Lawrence, a civil rights attorney whose work always comes before domestic life. When Jonathan leaves, Wynter returns to America pregnant and gives birth to Jessica, raising her alone.

Wynter's relationship with Jessica is loving but fraught. As a teenager, Jessica rebels against her mother's refinement, authority, and expectations. After escalating trouble at school and with the law, Wynter sends her to Honore Girls' Christian Academy in Vermont. What Jessica initially experiences as exile eventually becomes discipline, education, and rescue. She excels, graduates early, attends college and law school, and becomes an attorney. Yet her unresolved wounds harden into estrangement. Years later, after a disastrous, abusive marriage, Jessica cuts Wynter out of her life when Wynter intervenes to protect her trust assets. Jessica attempts to rebuild herself, often using the assumed name Bernadette Chandler to honor a lost friend from Honore, and devotes her career to protecting vulnerable children and women.

When a local news segment celebrates Wynter's one-hundredth birthday, Jessica sees her mother alive and hospitalized. The sight forces her to confront decades of avoidance. She visits Wynter's room under Bernadette's name but flees before speaking. Wynter, though pretending to sleep, recognizes her daughter immediately and is devastated by her departure. The encounter fractures Wynter's fragile composure; she briefly breaks her vow of silence in an outburst over breakfast, revealing to Richard that she can speak but begging him not to expose her. Richard protects her secret while understanding that Jessica's return has become essential to Wynter's peace.

Malachi traces Jessica through old trust records, Honore, and the name Bernadette Chandler. At the same time, he negotiates with Trinity Pines so that Wynter may return home with Richard as her primary private caregiver, despite the facility's objections to a male nurse living in proximity to an elderly female resident. Richard agrees to take leave from Memorial Hospital, believing that caring for Wynter is the calling he has been preparing for all his life. Medical concerns arise when Dr. Thompson orders additional testing to evaluate possible Alzheimer's markers, complicating the question of whether Wynter's silence is spiritual discipline, depression, strategy, cognitive decline, or some combination of all four.

Jessica finally contacts Malachi, and, meeting him at his law office, the buried histories of Wynter, Jonathan, and Jessica converge. As the novel moves toward reconciliation, Wynter must decide what she needs to say before her final silence becomes permanent. Jessica must decide whether

she can forgive a mother whose protection often felt like control. Richard and Malachi become unlikely stewards of this late-life reckoning: one tending Wynter's body and spirit, the other untangling the legal and familial legacy that has kept mother and daughter apart.

At its core, *The Final Days of Wynter* is a literary, faith-inflected family drama about aging, regret, dignity, grief, race, motherhood, and the possibility of grace at the very end of life. Wynter's final days are not merely a countdown to death but an invitation to listen—to birds, to memory, to those who have loved imperfectly, and to the God she believes has not forgotten her. The story resolves in the hope that even after decades of silence, estrangement, and pain, reconciliation remains possible before the last call comes.

The Final Days of Wynter is the author's fifth book and was created, as the author quips, upon the refusal of several characters from her fourth novel, *The Contradictions of Martyrs*, to go away.

Carolyn Lark Swayze was born in Chicago and relocated to Northern California in early 1970. She built a career in local government and retired in 2007 after more than thirty years of public service. For a similar period, she worked as a pop/jazz singer, performing throughout the region. After discovering her family roots, she relocated to the southeastern part of the country in 2021 to conduct further research. She currently resides just outside Savannah, Georgia, where she enjoys life in what she calls her fourth quarter, with writing taking center stage among her hobbies and pastimes.

Other books by the author include *Of Noble Character*, *Lark's Flight – A Journey Home*, and *The Cognitive Doll*.

The book is available at:

<https://www.amazon.com/Final-Days-Wynter-Carolyn-Swayze/dp/B0H4S7Y969>

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