

Rhonda McKnight



*Writing Books That Touch
The Heart Of Women,
One Story At A Time*

Press Kit

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E-NEWS RELEASE

Secrets and lies, can a marriage survive them? Do we own our past, our childhood issues, and our pain or are they marital property?

Author, Rhonda McKnight, asks these questions and more in her debut novel, *Secrets and Lies*.

It's hard enough to keep a secret without telling a lie, but when you're married it's almost impossible. In *Secrets and Lies*, the Morgan's marriage is collapsing under the weight of both. Against the backdrop of old memories, new enemies, and a plot for revenge this intense drama unfolds addressing several relationship issues; communication, honesty and trust among them.

The story takes readers into the complex mind of Dr. Jonah Morgan, a man who's dedicated his life to physically healing children, but he's emotionally and spiritually sick himself. And can his wife, Faith, keep the "faith" after Jonah's accused of the unthinkable? Or when a woman's fed up, is she truly fed up? Find out in *Secrets and Lies*, November 2009 from Kensington Publishers/Urban Christian Books.

Join **Rhonda McKnight** as she "...takes you on an emotional rollercoaster ride that holds you hostage until the end." — Essence Bestselling author Victoria Christopher Murray.

Marketing Campaign

- Atlanta/South Carolina Regional Author Appearances
- 5 City Tour (Atlanta, Charlotte, Baltimore/MD, Chicago and Dallas)
- Regional media, book events and postcard campaign
- Online Promotions, including blog tour(s), e-blast, social media sites, and cross promotion on Urban Books Website
- Marketing to Book Clubs and churches
- Library marketing, Including postcard and bookmark campaign

Rhonda is available for print, radio, television, and web interviews. To schedule an interview or to request a review copy, contact:

Issues of the Heart Ministries

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About the Book

Secrets and Lies

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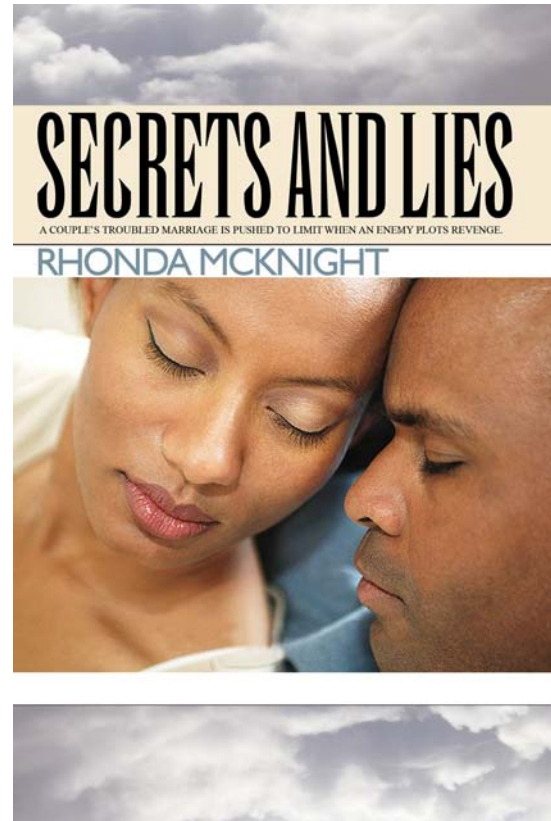
\$14.95 U.S./\$17.95 Canada

Faith Morgan is struggling with her faith. Years of neglect leave her doubting that God will ever fix her marriage. When a coworker accuses her husband, Jonah, of the unthinkable, Faith begins to wonder if she really knows him at all, and if it's truly in God's will for them to stay married.

Pediatric cardiologist Jonah Morgan is obsessed with one thing: his work. A childhood incident cemented his desire to heal children at any cost, even his family, but now he finds himself at a crossroads in his life. Will he continue to allow the past to haunt him, or find healing and peace in a God he shut out long ago?

[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD A HIGH-RES COVER](#)

Secrets and Lies is available wherever books are sold, including online at amazon.com, barnesandnobles.com and blackexpressions.com.



About the Author

Rhonda McKnight is the owner of *Legacy Editing*, a free-lance editing service for fiction writers and *Urban Christian Fiction Today* (www.urbanchristianfictiontoday.com), a popular Internet site that highlights African-American Christian fiction. She's the vice-president of *Faith Based Fiction Writers of Atlanta*. When she's not editing projects, teaching writing workshops or penning her next novel, she spends time with her family. Originally from a small, coastal town in New Jersey, she's called Atlanta, Georgia home for twelve years. More information about the author can be found at www.rhondamcknight.net



Short Bio for Writing Projects

Rhonda McKnight is the author of the novel, *Secrets and Lies* (Nov. 2009). She also owns *Legacy Editing*, a free-lance editing service for fiction writers and *Urban Christian Fiction Today* (www.urbanchristianfictiontoday.com), a popular Internet site that highlights African-American Christian fiction. More information about the author can be found at www.rhondamcknight.net

To book Rhonda for an engagement, books signing or guest appearance please send an email to publicity@rhondamcknight.net

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Rhonda is represented by:

Sha-Shana Crichton

Crichton & Associates Literary Agents

<http://www.crichton-associates.com/>

What People Are Saying About *Secrets and Lies*

“Rhonda McKnight has written an emotional but inspiring story of faith, trust and forgiveness as well as the importance of having God in our lives. *Secrets and Lies* also reminds us that just as a braid requires 3 strands--so does marriage: Husband, wife and God. I truly enjoyed this story and would recommend that not only married couples but anyone thinking of getting married read it.”

— **Jacquelin Thomas**, *Essence* Bestselling Author of *Jezebel* and *Redemption*

“Rhonda McKnight is a fresh new voice in Christian fiction who writes with the skill and grace of a seasoned pro. Her characters seem like friends and her prose flows effortlessly. Pick up *Secrets & Lies* and prepare for a long night – you won't want to put it down until you reach the satisfying end.”

— **Stacy Hawkins Adams**, National Bestselling Author of *The Someday List* and *Watercolored Pearls*

“Great debut! Rhonda McKnight is definitely an author to watch. *Secrets and Lies* was a thoroughly enjoyable read with well developed characters and lots of thought provoking lessons for all. ”

— **Sherri Lewis**, *Essence* Bestselling Author of *The List* and *My Soul Cries Out*

“Rhonda McKnight’s debut novel doesn’t disappoint. It mixes appealing and relatable characters with doses of drama and mischief that kept me hooked until the last page.”

—**Tia McCollors**, *Essence* Bestselling Author of *The Last Woman Standing* and *A Heart of Devotion*

Excerpt from Chapter 1

He's cheating. Faith Morgan pushed the end button on the phone. Three hang ups in two hours. She tried to shake off the sense of foreboding she felt every time it happened, but she couldn't. Her heart pounded as she walked back to the island, where she'd been chopping the ingredients for her husband's favorite meal. She looked at the piles of sausage and shrimp; the onions, and other vegetables that were next in line to be sliced and diced. She wanted to swipe everything into the trash can. Jonah didn't deserve this hard work. Not if some woman was calling their home.

Faith's shoulders dropped, she leaned her weight back against the counter and let her sneakered feet slide forward along the slick tile until they met the grout and stopped. She had ten years invested in this marriage. It had to last. She couldn't march down the aisle a third time. It was so Zsa Zsa Gabor-ish. And the truth was, she loved him. She loved the way he looked, she loved the way his scent filled her nostrils when he kissed her goodbye in the morning, she loved that husky quality his voice had just before he fell asleep at night, and she loved the way he touched her – when things were good between them.

A burst of giggles erupted from the family room and she looked up to see Elise, her four year old who remained positioned in front of the television. Elise adored her father. And at the age of ten, Eric, was approaching that time in his life when he'd need a man to help him sort through the man stuff. This wasn't just about her, and whether or not she loved Jonah. She was fighting for the children, too.

The ringing of the phone nearly sent her heart into spasms. *Not again*, she thought. Faith pushed herself off the counter and took the few steps necessary to reach the receiver. She looked at the Caller ID, let out the breath she'd been holding and picked up the phone.

"Hey, girl," she said.

"I have a taste for Ben and Jerry's Chunky Monkey. I've been craving it for three days."

Faith's mouth fell into an easy smile. "So, have it. Get some New York Chocolate Chunk for me."

"No, no, no," Yvette Taylor shrieked. "You're supposed to talk me out of it. Some friend you are. I need to lose five pounds to the dress for the women's banquet."

"What you need to do is buy a new dress and stop trying to fit into things you wore in college," Faith teased.

"Very funny, Miss Forever a Perfect Six. This *is* a new dress. It's just the same size as the dresses I wore in college." Yvette was barely able to keep the laughter out of voice. "You're not the only one who can maintain her girlish figure. A sistah can fight to keep the pounds down."

A small smile parted Faith's lips as she moved back to the island and began scooping the food she'd chopped into a large bowl. "You've dialed the wrong number if you're looking for someone to tell you to watch your calories. I'm making gumbo."

"Gumbo in May? You only start chopping and cutting up stuff when you're stressed. What's up?"

Faith emptied the bowl into a large pot of soup that was simmering on the stove. Then she looked to make sure Elise was still distracted by the television.

"More phone calls," she whispered.

Yvette was silent for a moment. "Are they still not saying anything?"

"Just silence and hang-ups."

"Did you call the phone company?"

"No." Faith bit her bottom lip.

"Why not?" Yvette asked. "You're torturing yourself."

Faith let her eyes fall on the four-carat diamond that weighed down her ring finger and

swallowed. "I don't know. I just..." She took a deep breath. "Losing, I think," she whispered. "Losing everything I have."

"Faith, you're trippin'. It's probably just kids or some telemarketing company. Women don't call wives anymore. Those heifers out there just wanna have fun, not wash some man's drawers. I'm telling you, it's not what you're thinking."

Faith wanted to believe that, but she had a bad feeling – a hair-rising-on-the-back-of-her neck kinda of feeling – that it was no prank or computer glitch in a telemarketer's system. Jonah worked late all the time, or so he said. He could easily have another woman, what with the hours he kept. A wave of nausea swept over her. Just the thought of her husband with another woman made her sick.

"Faith..." Yvette's voice broke through. "Don't sit around there acting like a victim. That's not even your style. Call the phone company and have them put a trace on the calls."

Yvette was right. "I'll call. I promise. First thing in the morning."

"You have the interview in the morning. Call now."

Faith's eyes rolled upward. She'd forgotten about that. "I should cancel."

Yvette didn't say anything.

"I haven't worked in five years. I'm just going to embarrass myself."

"Girl, please. You have the bomb resume. You shouldn't be afraid to step out with it."

But Faith was afraid. She was afraid of everything. Afraid to go on the interview, afraid of how her husband would react if she found a job, and afraid someone else was stealing her man. *Jesus*. She had to get it together.

"Look, I'm about to get on the interstate and I don't have my ear piece."

Faith nodded at the phone as if Yvette could see her. "Thanks for listening."

"What are friends for? You listen to me complain about my money problems."

"And food cravings," Faith added with a smile.

"That's right."

"Well, girlfriend, pass on the Chunky Monkey. Nothing tastes better than that dress will look on you."

"I know that's right." Yvette let out a cackle. "Later."

Faith put the phone on the counter, picked up a large spoon and stirred her masterpiece. That's what Jonah had called it the last time she prepared her mother's gumbo recipe. He loved her cooking. He loved her. At least she thought he did. But they had been fighting about everything lately – and now the phone calls. Faith felt tears welling. She clenched her teeth. Yvette was right. She had to be a woman about this. Let the phone company trace the calls. If he was cheating, she'd have to deal with it.

"Mommy, is the gumba soup almost done?" Elise had crept up and was now pulling the tail of her blouse.

Faith kept her back to her until she got her face together. Forcing a smile, she turned. Elise reminded Faith of sunshine standing there with her long auburn curls falling in ringlets around her small heart-shaped face.

"Mommy, why are you sad?"

Faith tried to mask her feelings by forcing another smile. She lowered her body so she was almost eye level to her daughter. "Mommy's not sad, honey."

"You are too. Your smile is not in your eyes," Elise said. "Are you mad at Daddy?"

Faith crossed her fingers behind her back. "No, baby. I'm not mad at Daddy."

"Good. Cause I don't like it when you and Daddy are mad."

Elise's words stung. So much for hiding their problems from the children. Obviously she hadn't done that as well as she thought. The child knew a phony smile when she saw one and there had been

plenty of those in the past few months.

“Why don't you let me finish cooking so we can eat and go to church.”

“But I wanna help you,” Elise whined.

Faith needed Elise out of the room. She felt guilty about it, but her emotions were too raw to deal with her children right now. Besides, it was still possible that she could call the phone company today, and she didn't want Elise to overhear.

“Why don't you go upstairs and find your smock? I bet they'll let you paint tonight.”

Elise was silent for a moment, obviously considering her mother's offer.

Faith leaned over and playfully swirled her index finger around in her daughter's bellybutton. Girlish giggles filled the kitchen as she scooped Elise up in one arm and continued to tickle her with her free hand.

"Okay, okay, Mommy." Elise was hysterical with laughter. "I'll go, I'll go..."

Once Elise's feet were planted on the floor. She scampered away, clearly satisfied to have gotten some of her mother's attention.

Faith watched her leave the kitchen. *My smile's not in my eyes.* Jonah's draining the life out of me. She clucked her teeth, let out a long breath and walked back to the sink. She began wiping counters when the shrill ring of the telephone froze her in her tracks.

The Caller ID read *unavailable*.

Faith pressed the talk button and brought it to her ear. “Hello.”

Silence.

“Why don't you say something?”

Silence, again.

“You don’t have anything better –,” Faith began, but the words “*You’re stupid,*” cut her off just before she heard the dull drone of the dial tone.

A stun gun wouldn’t have shocked her more. Her harasser had spoken, but they’d done it so quickly that she couldn’t tell if it was a man or a woman. But she did hear one thing – they’d called her stupid. That didn’t sound like a kid. That sounded like someone who thought she was being a fool.

Interview Questions

When did you know you wanted to become a writer and when did you actually begin to write?

I've been writing since I was a child and I started with books (LOL). I never wrote short stories or poetry. I always wanted to write a long story about a lot of different characters. I stopped writing in college and then began again in the mid nineties after I read *Waiting to Exhale* and thought, "I can do that." Boy did I learn *that* it wasn't so easy. I became serious about finishing a manuscript in early 2003. I joined a great critique group, attended some writers' conferences and read about 20 craft books.

How long did it take for you to complete your first novel?

It probably took me about 8 months of actual writing time, but that 8 months was spread over 4 years. I kept putting this particular story down and picking it back up again. Some of the elements were painful for me to write, so I played the procrastination game.

How do you balance your career, family, writing, and other obligations?

Ha! I don't know if you ever balance it all. I think you just fit stuff in. My career, writing and other commitments fall in around my kids. Sometimes I have to ask my teenager to help with his younger brother while I steal time to write or take time to get work done for my 9-5 which has become more like a 9-7 lately, but mostly I don't get much sleep. (LOL) I work when they're gone to bed or early before the baby wakes, and I rely heavily on my best friend to babysit her godson when I'm under deadline.

Do you belong to any writing groups or organizations?

I am the Vice President of Faith Based Fiction Writers of Atlanta. We are group of about 18 writers, published and unpublished, that meet monthly to learn about craft, talk about publishing, network , pray, etc. We also critique our work and that was critical in my development.

What genre do you write in?

I write women's fiction, but classify myself as a Christian Fiction author. I'm also an aspiring suspense writer.

Share with us a little about your new book; the name and when it is due out.

Ah, *Secrets and Lies*, my first born (book that is) is the story of Jonah and Faith Morgan, a couple who's troubled marriage is literally collapsing under the burden of...well, secrets and lies. And those lies aren't all coming from inside the marriage. Old memories and new enemies make for a very juicy plot where the characters are really challenged. The heat gets turned all the way up on this marriage.

Secrets and Lies will be released on Nov. 24, 2009.

What would you like readers to take away from a Rhonda McKnight story after they've read the last word of your debut and every other novel you'll pen?

I can't speak for my future novels. Secrets and Lies is a story about faith, forgiveness and reconciliation. The novel I'm currently writing has redemptive elements, so it's hard to know what the takeaway will be. However, I can say this, I pray for every reader to take away the message that God meant for them to find in the story. That may be different for different people. I'll let the Lord speak to each heart.

What tips can you share with me and others who are aspiring authors? Write, read, network and find a mentor. Then read some more and write. I also suggest developing a road map for your writing. Beginning, middle, end and what's happening to get there. There are lots of plotting systems out there, find one that works for you. Find a critique group or partner and never become over confident about your writing. There's always room for growth and improvement.

Who are some of your favorite authors to read?

Sherri Lewis, Tiffany Warren, Tia McCollors, Victoria Christopher Murray, Jacquelin Thomas, Stacy Hawkins Adams, ReShonda Tate Billingsley, Claudia Mair Burney, Marilyn Griffith, Dee Stewart (she's not published yet, but she can really spin a tale), the list goes on and on. Why did I try to answer? There are just too many. I also enjoy DeBerry & Grant, Walter Mosley, and James Patterson. The late BeBe Moore Campbell's work was my absolute favorite.

Where can readers find you on the Internet?

My website is www.rhondamcknight.net and I love social media. You're likely to find me being social several times a day at one or more of the following sites:

<http://www.facebook.com/rhondamcknight>

<http://www.twitter.com/rhondamcknight>

<http://www.myspace.com/rhondamcknight>

<http://sistahfaith.ning.com/profile/RhondaMcKnight>

Facebook is my favorite. I may also be reached by email at Rhonda@rhondamcknight.net