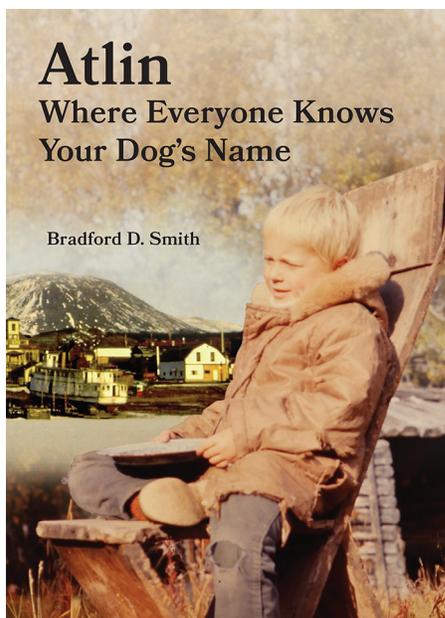


Atlin Where Everyone Knows Your Dog's Name

Bradford D. Smith

MEDIA KIT • 2021



“... brings alive the childhood experiences of a young boy growing up in a small, remote town in Northern British Columbia. Intertwined with his mother's writings, history, and humour, you will experience his life as his unique vivid descriptions capture you and carry you along on his journey, immersing you in adventures incomprehensible to most.

“You will feel the fear of a young boy creeping into his old house after dark with his imagination running wild, shiver in the frigid waters with Brad and his childhood buddies tempting fate to find the best swimming holes, clinging to handmade rafts, challenging each other to cross swift moving creeks, or testing thin ice. . . .

“It is an absolute must read!”

Terry Milos, author of *North of Familiar*

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Author: Bradford D. Smith

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Atlin Where Everyone Knows Your Dog's Name is the story of growing up in an isolated, northern gold rush town. It was an innocent time, when imagination was king, and the surrounding wilderness was a playground.

This story is as much about the town that molded and raised Brad Smith to be the person he is today as it is about his childhood. Atlin survived and thrived on inclusion, acceptance, and volunteerism. Civic duty was learned from childhood and performed with pride.

Atlin Where Everyone Knows Your Dog's Name tells of average life and average people who did extraordinary things that pushed their boundaries and took them out of their comfort zones. In doing so, it made them anything but average.

Atlin was a unique place and a unique time: trapping with his dad, grouse hunting with his mom, fishing and fort building with friends. Stories are told with self-deprecating humor like he's telling stories to an old friend. The reader is included in the dialog.

Brad combines his own memories with the tongue-in-cheek writings of his mother, who in the early seventies wrote humorous human-interest articles depicting northern living for the local newspaper.

Interview the author by phone or Zoom

Email brad@bradfordsmithauthor.com
for details and scheduling.

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In 1967, the Smith family moved from Juneau, Alaska, to the sleepy town of Atlin, British Columbia, Canada. It was the height of the back to nature movement and the escape from the Vietnam war. Atlin was scratching its way back from becoming a footnote in a history book, only recently escaping its ghost town status. Amid the influx of new families and money, it was experiencing a rebirth, a modern-day rush.

This story follows Brad through his early youth and his daily adventures surrounded by his family's many huskies and malamutes. With his buddies in tow, Brad enjoyed carefree days of swimming, fishing, hunting, and random adventures unknown to their city-dwelling counterparts of the time.

He was raised in a place without running water or sewer, without TV or radio. Where people burned wood for heat and ate moose meat and lake trout most meals. Water was delivered once a week and stored in the kitchen in a big barrel. Amenities weren't missed because he had no reference.

Atlin's recreation center showed an out-of-date movie every two weeks, which fueled the children's already fertile minds. They emulated the actors and became cowboys and Indians and pirates and Roman gladiators.



They acted out these roles as they ran through town, shooting each other with finger guns and throwing imaginary hand grenades after pulling the imaginary pins with their teeth.

A forest fire erupting close to town, the family truck dropping through the lake ice, a vicious dog team fight on the trap line, the beauty of the northern lights on a thirty-below night seen while skating on a local pond, an impromptu chopper ride to the top of a nearby mountain, and close calls with bears, are all average experiences of a not so average upbringing.

Dogs and their often-comedic antics are threaded throughout the story as they were throughout Brad's life, his family and the life of the community. It was a time not far removed from when dogs were central to the northern existence. Dogs were making a comeback, much like the community, after losing popularity to the gasoline engine only a short time before.

Newcomers were keen to experience the joys and freedoms of travel by dog team. Dog racing was exploding across the northland and Brad's family was in the middle of the sled dog world. They ran dogs on their trap line and they raised and sold beautiful malamutes. As a youngster, Brad thought himself one of the pack, rather than an only child.

The reader will enjoy this adventurous romp through a unique childhood in a place like no other, at a time when kids were allowed to be kids. They will experience nostalgic feelings, a yearning for adventure, and maybe even an urge to visit Atlin, British Columbia.



After the Kootenay burned, Atlin was left without a Café, so the author's parents rented the Moose Hall and reopened the Kootenay Café in that location.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



BRADFORD D. SMITH

Brad Smith splits his time between working in Arctic Alaska and his home in Northern British Columbia, Canada, where he lives with his wife and their dogs.

As well as two books, he has written and co-produced a short film that was accepted into the Anchorage International Film Festival, where it was warmly received in its category.

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Brad came to writing later in life, after concentrating on career and raising two sons. As more free time became available, he turned to writing in earnest, completing both books and a full-feature movie script that he hopes to complete with his film partner under the name of their company MerrySmith Film Works.

Brad was born in Juneau, Alaska, in 1965 and soon moved to Atlin, British Columbia, a historic gold mining town nestled deep in the wilderness. He was an only child amongst a household of huskies and malamutes, and at times he thought they were his siblings. He trapped by dog team with his dad, and hunted grouse and picked berries with his mom. He fished and snared rabbits and searched abandoned gold mines with his friends. Like many of his peers, he was sawing and splitting the winter's wood supply. He could run a small team of dogs at nine. He fought his first forest fire at sixteen.

He worked in construction in Tuktoyuktuk, NWT, Canada as a teenager. He long lined for halibut and cod in the Gulf of Alaska as a young man. He worked seismograph exploration at temperatures below minus sixty degrees on the Arctic Ocean in Alaska. Later, he helped build high-rise condos across Seattle's skyline and eventually returned to work in the north, particularly Alaska's North Coast.

From his mother, he got his appreciation for the arts; from his father, he learned the art of building. His mother was an avid historian, an award-winning writer, a painter, a sculptor and craftsman. His father, an artist in his own right, was a builder and general contractor who left his mark from Alaska to the Virgin Islands.

Brad approaches writing through the eye of a common man who has led an uncommon life. He yearns to tell stories and to entertain the reader. He knows what he enjoys in a story and strives to replicate it through his own voice. He feels that humans innately want to bring happiness and joy to others and there's no better way than story telling.

Atlin Where Everyone Knows Your Dog's Name

Bradford D. Smith

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BOOK EXCERPTS

Canoes and Canines

One day Randy Green, Lance Shaw and I “borrowed” a canoe from where we found it on the shore of the lake. Any adventure with Lance included his adolescent St. Bernard named Sam. So, the three of us and the hundred-pound shaggy beast all boarded our temporarily-acquired vessel.

At first everything went well. It was a beautiful calm day. We paddled along, contentedly enjoying our impromptu adventure. At some point, I felt we were drifting too far from shore for my comfort. I voiced my concerns, whining, crying and sniveling—considering we didn't have life vests and I couldn't swim, I felt it was a merited request. After a few minutes of boat rocking and torturing me with threats of heading for deeper water, they turned the canoe toward shore.

For some reason, this was a signal for Sam to jump out and start swimming. In the process of dragging his immenseness over the side of the boat, he managed to flip the whole kit and caboodle and send us all into the drink. My survival instinct immediately kicked in and I put my now much-improved dog paddling skills to work and frantically struck out for shore.

There I was in a race for my life, neck and neck with a St. Bernard named Sam. I did not see it as a competition and only wanted to reach shore alive. Sam, on the other hand, was of a competitive bent, so when I began to pull ahead, beating him at his own game, so to speak, he took exception and tried to slow me down by climbing on my back. I was in a struggle for my very existence with a hundred-pound drooling monster riding on my back. I made one last valiant lunge and thankfully I felt bottom. Slobbering and splashing, gasping and crying, I pulled myself

out of the water and flopped down on the rocks. Sam thought we were in the middle of some grand game and pounced on me, knocking the breath out of my lungs. As I lay on the rocks gagging, he licked me with his huge, slobbery tongue. I finally drew my first ragged breath just as Sam shook himself violently, spraying stinky, hair-laden dog water in my mouth.

After a brief period of self-pity and an adrenalin dump, I suddenly realized it wasn't all about me and Sam. Looking out at the water I saw Lance swimming after a wayward paddle, the other clutched in his hand. No sight of Randy anywhere—only the overturned canoe, Lance, and two paddles. I immediately started screaming at Lance to save Randy, not the stupid paddle.

Unbeknown to me, Randy was trying out a canoe-flipping survival technique he had recently read about in an out-of-print issue of *Nudist Canoeist* magazine. Long story, but remember I said we read anything we could get our hands on? The technique involves staying under the capsized canoe, hanging onto a thwart and enjoying the safety and protection of a giant air bubble. You can then assess the situation, check your direction and kick your way to shore, saving yourself and retaining your mode of transportation. Randy had already communicated this to Lance, so he was going after the paddles.

It was double heart attacks for me, an adventurous romp for Sam, a brisk swim for Lance and an opportunity to test some knowledge for Randy. Yes, we returned Bill Boyko's canoe—sshhhhh—nice and clean and no worse for wear. Our buddy Sam was nonplussed, to say the least, when I forcibly denied his boarding for the return trip. He ran back along the shore and, at first, he seemed to be casting me some scathing side eye, but he soon lost himself chasing seagulls and forgot all about me. I'm pretty sure he resented losing the hundred-foot (33m) dog paddle to a human. Come on, it's called the dog paddle after all. He should have been embarrassed, the cheater.

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BOOK EXCERPTS

Comic Caper

I remember getting word that Bob Fassel, a forty-something fellow, was interested in trading comic books. We were blown away and excited to know there was at least one adult out there that shared our love for comics. A few of us loaded up some of our Archie, Richie Rich, Casper the Friendly Ghost, Superman, Spiderman and Batman and headed over to see what Bob had. Although Bob had a daughter in school our age, we didn't know him well and definitely had never been in his house. Bob's place was another of Atlin's charming (meaning scary) old homes. My friends and I were at ease around most adults, but Bob hadn't been in town long and was somewhat of an enigma to us. He dressed like a biker, had a long black beard and a handlebar mustache and wore an earring in one ear. None of these things were completely unusual, but altogether it made him different than most of the men we knew. His demeanor was inhibiting to eight- and nine-year-olds as he mostly grunted his salutations and uttered one-word commands.

One of us built up the courage to knock on the door and it immediately flew open. Bob loomed large in the doorway. Without saying anything, he stared at us for what seemed an eternity. "W-w-we'r-re here to t-t-trade," I managed to stutter. Eventually he grunted and gestured with his head, turned and started up a nearby stairway. We all stumbled to follow as we passed the second floor and approached a lone doorway at the top of the second stairway.

Bob produced an old skeleton key from a large ball of keys that hung down beside his leg. I know what I was thinking, and the others later confirmed they were on the same page. First of all, who locks doors, especially

doors inside your house? Second, what is he hiding in there? And third, oh my God, we're all dead. Bob fiddled with the key and finally got the door open while we stood cloistered in a group waiting for someone to break from the herd and flee back down the stairs. Bob stood in the doorway, turned to look at us and once again just gestured "come on" with his head.

Possibly sensing our hesitation, he flipped on the light and gruffly said, "Come on, Chickens, I don't bite." That didn't help much, as we were already fearing cannibalism—what was up with the biting reference and what the heck did this have to do with chickens? Does he like to butcher chickens up here? Has he been practicing on chickens and now is finally going to try out the real thing?

Somehow, we all managed to shuffle into that small room under the eaves of another scary old Atlin house. Once in, our fears were somewhat alleviated as the room was completely empty except for one large wooden trunk sitting in the middle of the floor. Now, I for one was quite relieved to not find knives, meat hooks, rubber aprons or chicken bones, for that matter, but what was up with this guy and this trunk locked behind a door in the attic? I know he could have stuffed a couple of us in that thing, but assuredly not all. This left only the nightmares of what might be in it. I was pretty sure it was the last kid who had come to trade comics, or at the least, it was full of dead chickens.

We all cowered close to the door that had thankfully stayed open as Bob knelt down in front of the trunk and produced yet another key. He unlocked the lock and opened the lid. From where we were standing, we could not see any bodies, and no chicken feathers flew out, but none of us rushed to look. In his gravelly voice, Bob said, "Well, get over here, you chickens, you can't see nothing from there." I was in the back, so I pushed a couple guys forward until we could see that the trunk was full of beautifully preserved comics. Our guard completely dropped as we rushed forward to behold the wonderful bounty.

That trunk must have held a thousand comic books, but just as someone reached out to pick one up, Bob

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BOOK EXCERPTS

quickly closed the lid. We all quietly panicked a little, thinking, "Great, the comic books were a trap." But Bob sat back on his haunches and said, "Before you get to see what I have, let's check out what you chickens brought." What was up with the chicken references?

Okay, now he was talking our game. Most of us thought ourselves pretty adept at the old comic book-trading ritual. I was first to set my stack in front of Bob. Within seconds he had shuffled through, grunting with disdain at any of my Archie, Richie Rich and Casper the Friendly Ghost comics. Anytime he came across a book with a torn or missing cover, he glanced up at me with a mixed look of disappointment and sadness, and then cast aside the offensive rag as if it might burn his fingers.

In a matter of moments Bob had shuffled my stack into two piles: in one sat a Spiderman and a Sergeant Rock comic, in the other pile were the rest of my offerings. Bob looked at me and said, "I might be interested in these two," pointing to the small stack. Then, gesturing to the large pile he said, "I got no use for any of this crap." He'd just crushed me ... had he referred to some of my most prized comics as crap? Had he said crap? Who says crap to kids? I remember mumbling something unintelligible as I humbly picked up my crap and shuffled back.

Now the others were hesitant to approach, upon witnessing my embarrassment, but they eventually placed their stacks in front of Bob as if it was an offering to the God of Comics. Some did slightly better than I did, but none fared well. In the total of roughly 150 comics, Bob chose a dozen at most. Gruff and scary at first, Bob turned out to be a big kid at heart, although a very serious collector and comic aficionado. We did end up making a few insignificant trades and I suspect it was Bob's way of encouraging our enthusiasm for collecting comics.

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"Hooky Bobbing"

I know it has many names, but we called it hooky bobbing. This was the precarious pursuit of hanging onto the back of a car or truck, letting it pull you as you slid on your boots. Not an uncommon occurrence in town, and usually performed at night in the dark. We waited for an unsuspecting driver to start their vehicle before hunkering down out of sight and taking a firm grip on the bumper. Typically, this was a low-speed affair as Atlin had many stop signs and the maximum speed between them was minimal. The bigger risk was being discovered and receiving a smack on the side of the head, or much worse, a call to Mom. . . .

There was one time hooky bobbing took on a most urgent and dire turn. We were returning from a long day of tubing at Thrond Gulch. A bunch of us were huddled in the back of the last truck to leave. Of course, it was Randy Green that decided this was a great time to try some high-speed hooky bobbing, unbeknown to the driver, and if not outright encouraged by the rest of us, at least passively condoned. Alright, we outright encouraged him. Anyway, he hunkered down and took hold of the bumper. As we started out, everything went well; Randy had a huge smile on his face and seemed quite proud of his decision. By the time we reached third gear, the smile was gone, replaced by an expression of dogged determination. Upon achieving fourth gear, Randy's expression had turned to terror, his lips were stretched back in a rigor-mortis-like mask, his eyes bulged as he desperately clung to the truck.

After realizing it wasn't all that funny, everyone started yelling at him to climb aboard. The problem being that every time he tried to rise up to get a higher hold, his feet threatened to fly out from under him. A couple of the bigger guys got as far back as they could and leaned out. It was still up to Randy to make the final decision to take a literal leap of faith. Deciding his choices were few, he lunged out of his crouch and sure enough his feet sailed out behind, at the same time the guys grabbed both his arms and hauled him in. For a brief moment his body flapped in the wind like a broken umbrella in a hurricane.

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

When and why did you begin writing?

I've been fascinated with literature since I can remember. I've dabbled a little most of my adult life. Mostly bad poetry and a few short stories. But a friend was impressed with the memorial I wrote for my mom and encouraged me to continue to write. That was enough of a push for me to start taking it more seriously.

What was the first serious thing you wrote?

My first attempts were short film scripts. The same friend who encouraged me to keep writing was interested in making films and he needed a script. Ironically, the script he chose had no dialog, perfect for an insecure writer. We went on to make the film and it was accepted into the Anchorage International Film Festival where it was warmly received in its category.

Aside from *Atlin Where Everyone Knows Your Dog's Name* have you written anything else?

I have completed a novel, it's a mystery aimed at tweens and older. "Murphy and the Mystery of the Black Skull" is set in modern-day Douglas, Alaska. Murphy's a twelve-year-old boy, who with his dog Hogan embarks on a perilous quest to solve a mystery that involves pirates and hidden gold. I'm actively pursuing publishers at this time and see it as a possible series.

I'm continuously working on short stories that may turn into something larger or may eventually end up in a collection of some sort.

Your mother was a published author; did that influence you in any way?

Yes, in the sense that it is a personal achievement and that you're leaving something of yourself behind so that at the very least the ones closest to you will better understand you and remember you. My mom also impressed upon me the importance of documenting.

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What was it like growing up with so many dogs?

There were times, let's say up until I was five or six years old, I thought I was one of the pack. I played with all of them, every day. I had at least three or four with me at all times, no matter where I was going. I considered many of the dogs my best friends or on a certain level my siblings. We played together and got in trouble together. I was an only child after all and all my friends had siblings.

Was there a down side living with so many dogs?

I was a human pinball before I got big enough to fight back. I was constantly bounced about and knocked down in the melee of excited hounds. Getting out of our two-door car was always a dangerous event. The dogs were very excited to go anywhere and twice as excited to get out once we arrived. It was a chaotic balancing act to quickly exit before the hoard crushed me from behind. I think the hair bothered me the most, especially as I got older and it was important to look good for the girls. It was impossible to completely rid oneself of the hair.

Did you continue as your mother did to have dogs during your adult life?

When I moved from Atlin, the dogs stayed with my mom and that was a good thing. At that time, I could barely take care of myself. Shortly after I moved to Alaska, I got a husky mix from the pound. She was a great dog and was with me many years, but heartbreakingly she was run over in a freak accident. I was distraught and soon after we moved to an apartment, so we didn't get a dog again for many years. I currently live with a variety pack of mutts.

How were you directly influenced by the old timers as you call them?

Osmosis mostly. Observing them in public settings and seeing how they conducted themselves in the community. I was constantly in awe of their stories. If you were lucky enough to be there while they recounted a story, you were better for it and it was a story you never forgot. They set unassuming examples of how to conduct oneself in everyday life.

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What was the single greatest thing about growing up the way you did in Atlin?

I learned to be confident and self-assured from early childhood, and that has served me well. I learned to respect and revere my elders, but on the other hand I was encouraged to be a free thinker and to consider myself on equal footing with all of my fellow citizens.

You were surrounded by very capable women growing up. How that did influence your adult life?

Mostly raised by a single mother, an extremely capable single mother at that, influenced me in numerous ways, some tangible and some subconscious. First, I have to say I have never had the thought that any woman was not at least equal to a man in everything they do and many times are better. I never had an issue taking direction from a woman and have had a number of women bosses over the years. I basically have little male ego and I attribute that to being raised by unassuming but over-accomplishing woman.

I understand didn't earn your GED until your early forties. Where did you receive your education?

Reading. My mom read to me in the womb and continued to read to me throughout my childhood. Children's books were plentiful but quick reads. There wasn't much for tweens aside from *The Hardy Boys*, so she read to me what she was interested in. Without TV and radio and before video games, reading was our social media. We all shared our books. I have some large holes in my education that reading didn't fill but through the writing process I am continuing to learn.

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You didn't grow up with a lot of money, some would consider you poor. How did that effect your upbringing?

Short answer is, it didn't. Of course, there were detriments, but we were all in the same proverbial boat. We all had holes in our socks and our big toe stuck out. I didn't know I was technically poor. I had a carefree life as a youth as long as I pulled my own weight. I realized early on it wasn't the same for my mom. She tried hard to keep it from me, and she did her best to keep us afloat and she succeeded, although it was close at times. It was a struggle that took its toll physically and mentally. I had a real dread growing up that my actions could add to her burden. I worked hard at not causing problems.

What authors influenced you as a child?

Mark Twain definitely, I loved the adventure and the living off the land aspect, especially in Huck Finn. Understanding the deep sarcasm and social commentary didn't come until the second reading. James Fenimore Cooper, for sure. His depictions of early America and its brave people spoke to me. Robert Louis Stevenson, because who doesn't like pirates. Farley Mowat, I loved *Lost in the Barrens* and *Gray Seas Under*. At one point I had read all of Agatha Christie's mysteries and all of Zane Gray's westerns. I read everything I could get my hands on, but those authors were among my favorites.

Your book covers your early childhood. Why didn't you write about your teens or later?

I think the magic was the early years. Teen years are the same everywhere it seems. I did my share of cliché stupid teen stuff but it wasn't unique.

You don't currently live in Atlin, when was the last time you did?

I moved to Whitehorse to go to high school when I was sixteen in 1981. I came home on weekends when I could find a ride and sometimes hitch hiked when the weather was good. I only lived in Atlin fourteen years but it shaped me forever.

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TESTIMONIALS

A young boy growing up in northwest Canada in the 1960s and early 70s is magical. Think—Garrison Keillor, “Prairie Home Companion,” sharing heartwarming tales about Canada. Brad Smith paints a vivid picture of growing up in a breathtakingly beautiful, and somewhat isolated, area of British Columbia.

The book, written through the eyes of a young boy, was easy to read and felt very authentic. Having grown up on a homestead in Alaska, as a young girl, I relate to his experiences, adventures, and character descriptions. “Atlin” is an excellent book choice for young readers as well.

Brad’s colorful descriptions of growing up “off the grid” draw a sharp contrast to the modern conveniences we enjoy today.

Nancy V., NetGalley Reviewer

Atlin, Where Everybody Knows your Dog's Name is much more than just a story about a boy's life in the Canadian north, it is a glimpse into the life and history of a caring community who worked together to accomplish unimaginable feats.

It honours the hardworking, fun loving men and women of Atlin, B.C., especially the most amazing, independent, talented women, of whom his mother was the most accomplished of them all.

This book brings alive the childhood experiences of a young boy growing up in a small remote town in Northern BC. Intertwined with his mother's writings, history, and humour, you find yourself reliving this life with him as his unique vivid descriptions capture you and carry you along on his journey, immersing you in adventures incomprehensible to most.

You will feel the fear as a young boy creeps into his old house after dark with his imagination running wild, shivers in frigid waters as his childhood buddies tempt fate to find the best swimming holes, cling to handmade rafts, challenge each other to cross swift-moving creeks, and test thin ice.

You will learn about dog mushing, which included hanging on for dear life as well as being abandoned alone on the trail, “hooky bobbing,” and the trapping and hunting boys engaged in at a very young age as well as the many hilarious escapades that they did and didn't get away with. It is an absolute must read!

Terry Milos, author of *North of Familiar*



Atlin Where Everyone Knows Your Dog's Name

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