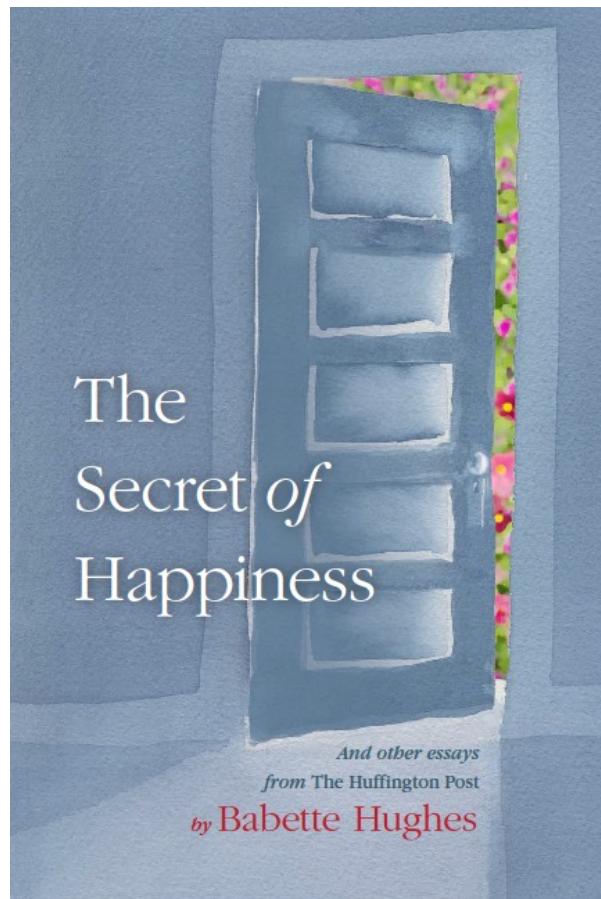


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Nonagenarian Novelist Discovers the Secret of Happiness



Ninety four year old novelist Babette Hughes has lived a full life, and she has paid close attention along the way. Her wisdom and wit have allowed her to not only survive into her nineties, but to thrive. She has penned and published a memoir and four novels and has become a regular contributor to the Huffington Post.

This collection of her best essays on life, love and loss is a treasure. It is entertaining and instructive, the perfect gift to give to friends and family who may be curious about how to live a creative and remarkable life, enjoy love, overcome adversity, and finish well.

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Author Babette Hughes

94, and still writing every day



In her first published work, a national article penned back in 1963 for The Saturday Review titled **Confessions of An Unpublished Writer** Babette Hughes wrote these words that turned out to be more than a little prophetic:

It (writing) is no easy calling, but its rewards go so far beyond the mundane that I expect to practice it for as many years as I have left on this earth.

Almost half a century later she is keeping her word. Her **Kate Brady** series, a gritty trilogy filled with guns and gangsters, retribution and atonement, was published by Post Hill Press in April-May-June of 2015. In February, 2016, she published what some have called her best work, **Searching for Vivian**.

Her latest book, **The Secret of Happiness**, is a collection of her favorite essays from her Huffington Post contributions,

Born in Cleveland Ohio, Babette grew up in the time of Prohibition and bootleggers. Her father was one of the first bootleggers in the country, and was murdered by the mafia in a turf war at the age of 29. Babette's mother, a tragic figure even before the death of her husband, sank into denial, telling Babette that her father had died of an incurable disease.

Writing has allowed her to draw from her unusual life experiences to create her characters and tell their stories (and sometimes cautionary tales) in vivid detail. Gangsters and guns, women and wine, sin and society all melded together in riveting detail for readers from all walks of life who somehow relate to the characters she creates. She explains that phenomenon by saying that "I find that the personal is universal. Though these stories are loosely based on real characters I have known and my own experiences, I find it gratifying, but not surprising, really, when readers tell me that they identify with them and their plight."

Now 94, she writes every day with ever increasing fluidity and grace. Why does she keep writing? "The truth is liberating, but sometimes elusive." She explains. "I'm always looking for it and how to best write about it, and I probably always will."

Babette lives in Austin, Texas.

To learn more about Babette Hughes, please go to: www.BabetteHughesbooks.com

An excerpt from The Secret of Happiness

TWO AMERICAS

I was fortunate to have a job at a canning factory that paid 25 cents an hour.

James E Faust
Former President of the Mormon Church

People born after The Great Depression have little idea what it was really like. The suicides. The joblessness. The locked banks against people trying to get their money out. The stock market that wiped out millions. The fear that hovered like a poisonous fog in the air and in our hearts.

My mother, a young widow, worked for the City of Cleveland in the Engineering Department. But the city was so broke it paid its employees with “script” which was about as useless in the world as Monopoly money. So every payday she put my nine-year-old self in the car and sent me into grocery store after grocery store to ask if they took script while she waited in the car at the curb. When I finally got a “Yes”, she would go in and buy the groceries.

Potatoes were a penny a pound. You could feed a family for a week on five dollars. Cars cost \$500 and had a terrific “rumble” seat that opened on the top of the car. Rent for a three-room apartment cost \$60 a month. Movies were a quarter; a dime for children.

Thousands of evicted and homeless families lived in the misery of tent camps called “Hoovervilles,” named after President Hoover, who, rightly or wrongly was blamed for the Depression. Hungry people waited in long lines for “Hoover Stew;” newspapers were “Hoover blankets;” broken down cars, “Hoover Wagons.” And as if even the heavens were affected, huge black clouds dumped layers of sand and dust over everything and everyone in Kansas and Oklahoma, killing cattle with famine and people with dust pneumonia. Moving East the storm dumped four million tons of prairie dirt on Chicago

Still, in many ways it was a better America. There wasn’t today’s underlying anger and bitter political conflict or the polarization in Washington, or the abyss between the rich and poor. Everyone was in the same boat united in mutual struggles and shared experiences. And in 1933 when Franklin Roosevelt defeated Herbert Hoover and became President the country trusted in his New Deal with confidence and optimism. With his inspired leadership we were like family looking out for each other as our friends and neighbors worried about us. Even Al Capone opened a soup kitchen.

The contrast between that time and the 2016 President campaign is graphic and disturbing.

The campaign’s display of meanness and vicious division border dangerously on destroying America’s values of civility and respect. The elegant experiment of democracy that is America’s unique story and the envy of the world was damaged by unprecedented suspicion and venomosity. America’s future must not be the loser. Surely we do not need the

Q & A with Author Babette Hughes

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

Q. You are 94 and still churning out a sizable body of work every single year. How do you do that?

A. Well, the truth is, I'm a writer and this is what writers do: they write. I still feel like I have something to say, and the best way for me to do that is with my books and essays. It's a privilege, really, to be doing what I am doing. I contribute regularly to The Huffington Post, and I am publishing a book a year on average. I already have an idea for my next novel and I'll begin work on that very soon. I can't wait!

Q. What do you hope to accomplish with your books?

A. My primary goal is to just do high quality work, first and foremost. I feel very lucky to be able to write every day, and contribute something to a bigger conversation. If you live 94 years, you should have some wisdom to dispense, right? But, I don't preach. I just write what I write and let people take away from it what they will. Hopefully it is making their life better in some way. That's a pretty good reason to get up every day and get back into my writing room.

Q. You're 93. Where would you like to be 10 years from now?

A. First of all I'd like to be alive, and on my 5th or 6th novel. A long time ago—way back in 1963—I wrote a piece that appeared in The Saturday Review, called “Confessions of An Unpublished Writer,” and in that article I declared that “*Writing is no easy calling but its rewards go so far beyond the mundane that I expect to practice it for as many years as I have left on this earth.*” I hope to keep that promise.

