

Happy HOLIDAYS



Get an
autograph

After a couple of very difficult years, what with the loss of my mother (and all that went with her decline before she passed), I have to say 2023 was a breath of fresh air—my rebound year, which turned into a celebration of the hard work I've put in over my career. The climax came when *THE SEASIDE LIBRARY* was released. I took the traveling bookstore we made from a vintage Airstream—Brenda Novak's Bookstream—on the road for two months. We drove almost 13,000 miles—that's equal to the distance of halfway around the world—along the entire perimeter of the United States, had thirty-three stops and met more than 2,000 readers! I think it was everything an author dreams about when she sets out to share her stories with the world, and I couldn't have made it happen without Ted's full support, and the support of my daughter Alexa, too. She joined us for fifty percent of the trip and, as always, was "the wizard behind the curtain."

I always get asked if I write from personal experience. That's usually not the case, but for my latest book, *THE TALK OF COYOTE CANYON*, I drew a lot of inspiration from what I went through trying to save the water rights on my mother's property in Moab, Utah. I had to have a well drilled in just a few weeks, but all the drillers were booked up for months. Fortunately, I found a kind man—Mike Zimmerman from Zimmerman Well Services—who jumped in right away to help, and what I learned from him, his brother and that process, helped me create a character like Ellen, who is a female driller. We don't have long to wait for the next in the trilogy! *THE MESSY LIFE OF JANE TANNER* releases on February 20th!

Another bright moment through this difficult time was getting to spend so much time in a place I absolutely love! Ted teases me that I always say I could live wherever we visit (I did this multiple times on the tour as we passed through so many fabulous states—maybe it's part of being a writer, imagining what living in different places would be like), but Moab, Utah tops the list because of its gorgeous views and small-town, artsy feel.

I'm hoping to go back on tour in early April when TOURIST SEASON is released, so look for details on that. This tour will be much shorter because we've been planning a wedding! Alexa and Vinny are getting married on the Amalfi Coast in Italy next May, and we are working hard to make sure the event is as special as they are. I'm going to try to bring you along as much as possible. Megan's children will be involved, of course. Ella will be the flower girl and Caden will be the ring bearer. Won't that be cute? We have a lot more planning to do, but all flights have been booked and we are so excited.



This holiday season, let's make it a point to cherish what's truly important in our lives: books. (And cookies.)

XOXO,

Arunde Monk

P.S. In case you missed it when I posted on Facebook, here's my favorite Christmastime drink—Vinny's Homemade Eggnog!

Ingredients: 6 Egg Yolks, 3/4 cup sugar, 1 cup heavy whipping cream, 2 cups whole milk (Vinny uses oat milk), 1 tsp nutmeg, 1/2 tsp vanilla extract, pinch of salt, 1/4 cup amaretto, 1/2 cup bourbon

Directions: Whisk together egg yolk and sugar. Over low heat mix together heavy whipping cream, whole milk, 1 tsp nutmeg, 1/2 tsp vanilla extract and a pinch of salt. Combine with egg yolk and sugar mixture. Add in Amaretto and Bourbon. Chill for a few hours.



As a gift from me to you this holiday season, I'd like to give you a FREE digital download of my cookbook, LOVE, THAT!, to thank you for your support of me and my work. It contains many of the recipes I've made for my family over the years. Simply email store@brendanovak.com to get your digital download!

I also have a special offer for those on my Christmas list—a darling wooden spoon to help with your holiday cooking that's completely FREE with any purchase of \$30 or more on my store: www.brendanovakstore.com

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