

# The Irresistible Blueberry Bakeshop & Café

## Author's Note

The idea for *The Irresistible Blueberry Bakeshop & Café* came from something I heard on the radio one morning. A woman was talking about her grandmother, who had recently died. She said her grandmother's last words were, Erase my hard drive. As soon as I heard that, I began to wonder what was on the grandmother's computer that she so badly wanted to keep secret. Was she a spy? A member of organized crime? Did she have a child no one knew about?

All of this led me to think about some broader questions, such as what a woman in her later years might want to change about the life she'd lived and what regrets she might have about certain decisions she'd made. I imagined that woman, looking back on her life and deciding that she needed to set some things right before she died. Rather than use a computer as the springboard for the story, however, as it seemed too impersonal, I employed a more old-fashioned device – a letter.

Once I had the basic idea, the characters came along quickly. I decided to make Ellen an attorney with a passion for photography, two characteristics she shares with me. I always find it interesting when people who excel at something highly technical also have an equally strong creative side. Which path do they take and why?

Ellen's grandmother, Ruth, is the grandmother I wish I'd had, as all of my grandparents, except my maternal grandfather, died before I was born or when I was very young. After Ruth and Ellen, the rest of the cast followed.

When I considered where to set the story, I immediately thought of Maine. I wanted to send Ellen, a fast-paced New Yorker, as far north of Manhattan as I could, while still keeping her in the continental United States. I'd been to a number of places in Maine over the years and was familiar with its picturesque towns and natural beauty. I knew I would love writing about it.

I decided to create my own small town, Beacon, so I would have the freedom to make it look and feel as I pleased, while keeping the essence of a small Maine town. When Ellen arrives there, she is truly a fish out of water.