

Autumn and New Beginnings

Autumn has always been my favorite season. When I was a kid I loved the possibility of a new school year, hoping each new grade would provide me with a blank slate. I would have new teachers who didn't already know me and my flaws. My clean, empty notebooks were just waiting to be filled with new information, and my new school clothes screamed 'new me,' no longer the 'old' me who had made so many mistakes the year before. Every year I had those hopes.

Look how hopeful I was at the beginning of 2nd grade.



Those hopes were always dashed within the first week of school because I was still the 'old' me, the *only* me, who made mistakes and had to live with them. I was socially awkward, insecure, and, in many ways, not a good friend. Each new school year held the promise of a new beginning, but while my teachers, notebooks, and clothes changed, my personality and my classmates did not.

That was a hard life lesson to learn.

I was a little more jaded by my senior year of high school, but by then I was looking forward to escaping the school district I'd attended since

kindergarten and start fresh at a college out of state where I knew no one, and no one knew me.



Going to college straight from high school didn't work out for me (socially or financially), and I dropped out after one year. After being in the working

world for a couple of years, I began attending night school. Fast forward nearly a decade, and a new school year found me taking on full-time graduate studies at seminary. It was another new start.

I'd have several more over the next few years, changing to a different seminary in another state, then eventually graduating and starting my first call in yet another state.

Each year, no matter if I was going through a major life change or not, I always felt like autumn was the time to shed my mistakes of the past twelve months and start fresh. I could die to my old self, and be reborn as my new.

(Okay, I may have left ministry, but the theology-speak still shows itself every now and then.)

I think it's the leaves. I love the way they change color and fall from the trees. In New Hampshire we're a little past peak foliage season, and this is my favorite time. Yes, of course I love the brilliant oranges, reds, and yellows mixed in with the evergreens just as much as everyone else who clogs the roads of my state this time of year (no bitterness, really). Just look at this picture I took on a bike ride a few weeks ago, during that peak season.



But what I really love is when the leaves are almost uniformly brown, and they're raining from the branches to cover the ground.



I know new leaves will bloom in the spring, which will spend a season shading the world under their green canopies, only to turn orange or red or yellow, then brown, and fall again. Different leaves, same tree.

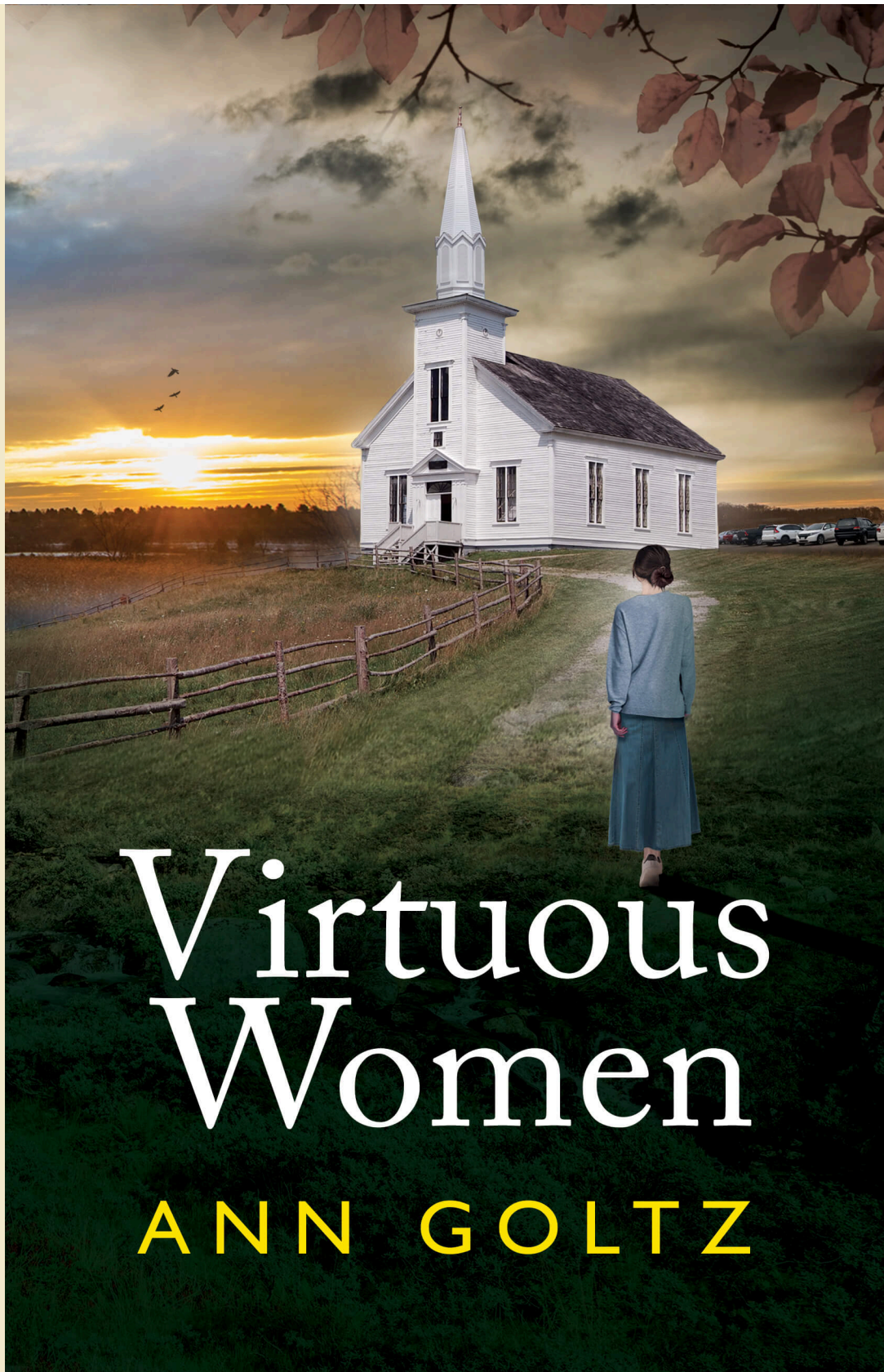
Just like me.

I can change notebooks, clothes, schools, even my name (I did that last fall-my 2nd grade picture will give you a clue why), but I'll always be the same

person. Each season will change me, my mistakes will change me, and I'll evolve into someone unrecognizable to my younger selves, but those younger selves will still be part of me, part of what makes me who I am.

So what is the wisdom in all this rambling? I guess I'm thinking about second chances and new beginnings. I'm thinking about how the choices we make can limit our future choices, and how much courage it takes to break free from the prisons we sometimes build for ourselves. Because those are choices we can make, too.

This all ties in with this month's Indie Author Spotlight, a new occasional feature I plan on including in this newsletter. Keep reading to find out more.



Virtuous Women

ANN GOLTZ

[Bookshop.org*](https://www.bookshop.org) (paperback)

[Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) (paperback/ebook)

Indie Spotlight: *The Trouble with Possibilities* by Nancie Abuhaidar

[Buy *The Trouble with Possibilities* at Amazon](#)

I met Nancie last year when we were both enrolled in Lainey Cameron's [12 Weeks to Book Launch Success program](#). (If you're an author planning to launch your book, I can't recommend this program enough!) Nancie launched her book last month.

The Trouble with Possibilities is all about second chances and new beginnings, two themes which, I'm sure you've noticed by now, are near and dear to my heart. The main character, Del, has taken the courageous step of starting over. Her unhappy marriage is over, her kids are grown, her career is in shambles, and it's time to follow her own dreams. She boards a plane to Tanzania to volunteer at an orphanage, ready to be a new Del.

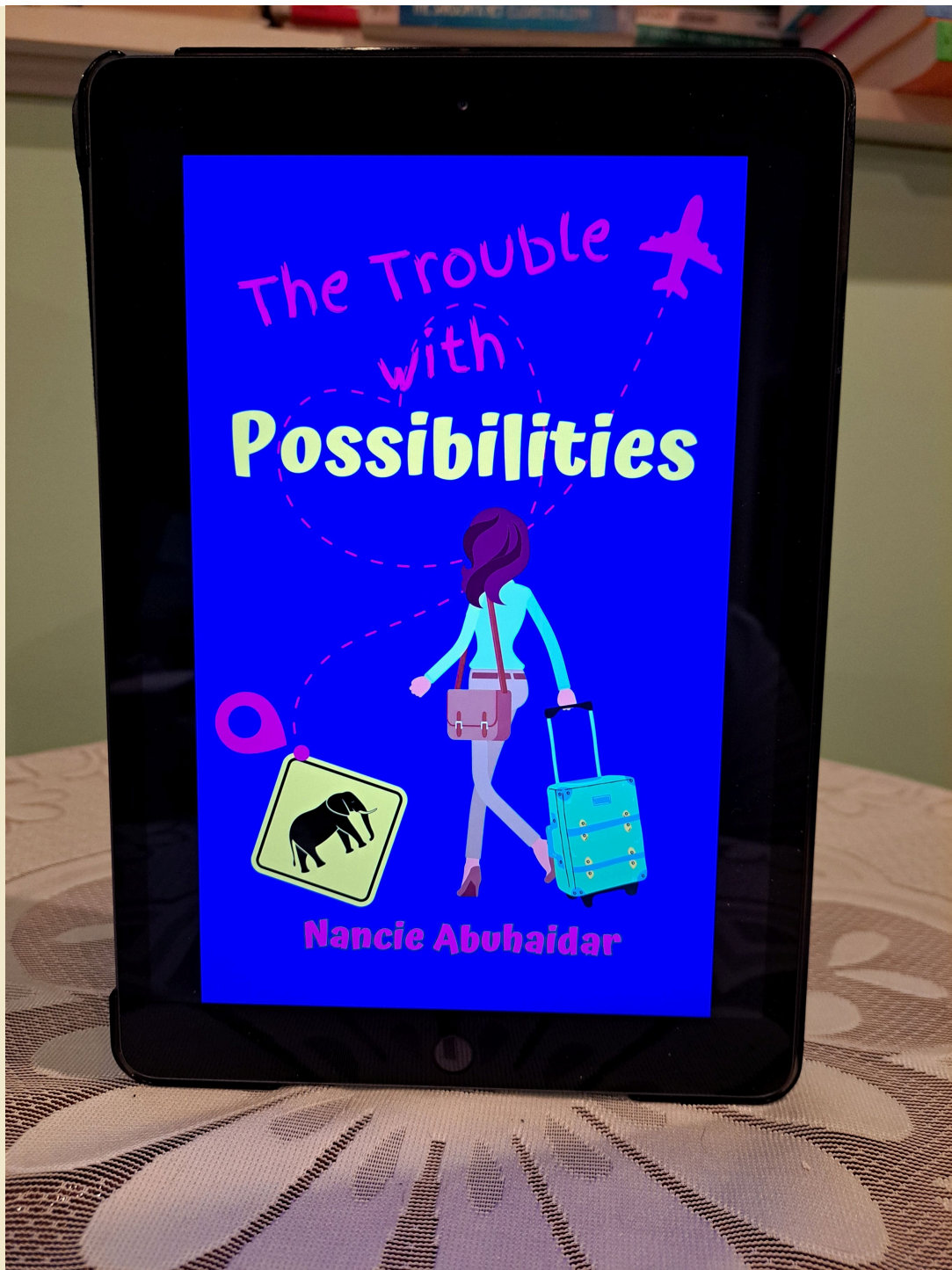
But, as is true for all of us, we can never fully shed who we once were, or the consequences of previous choices. Along with spreadsheets detailing her impeccable plan for her future, Del also brings to Africa guilt about how her marriage ended, concern over her damaged relationship with her adult son, and shame about how her career ended.

The book is engaging and immersive, transporting the reader to Tanzania and delving into Del's struggles to reconcile her past with this new future she's chosen for herself. All the characters in the book are complex, from Ben Mahoney, the famous Hollywood actor who founded the orphanage, to Del's quirky roommate Julia, to David the orphanage director with issues of his own, to everyone else who touches Del's life. There's a definite romantic element to the plot (there kind of has to be with a hot celebrity running the place where the newly-single woman goes hoping for a new start, doesn't there?) but to me, the romance was secondary to Del's personal journey.

In the review I left on Amazon and Goodreads (because reviews are extremely important to authors--hint hint!!!) I included the line: "If you enjoy stories that don't shy away from uncomfortable situations but also leave you with a sense of hope, then you definitely want to read *The Trouble with Possibilities*."

If you enjoyed my book *Virtuous Women*, then I think you'll also like *The Trouble with Possibilities*.

Subscribers of this newsletter will have a chance to win a signed paperback of Nancie's book. Keep reading for details!



Interested in learning more about Nancie? You can subscribe to her Substack [here](#) or visit her website [here](#).

Book Giveaway!



Congratulations
to
September's Giveaway
Winner

Linda from Georgia

*Tie Levings' A Well-Trained Wife: My
Escape from Christian Patriarchy*

As I mentioned above, this month I'm giving away a **signed** paperback copy of Nancie Abuhaidar's *The Trouble with Possibilities*. As always, all you need to do to enter is reply to this newsletter and tell me your name, where you live (I'll only publish your first name and state if you win), and that you'd like to enter the giveaway. And again, US mailing addresses only. Sorry!

I will randomly select one winner on Wednesday, November 13, so get your emails back to me before then. The winner will be informed immediately, and will also be announced in next month's edition for Ann's Tea Room.

Where Else Can You Find Me?

If you like getting newsletters from me, you can also subscribe to my **Substack**. I've recently changed my approach to it, and now my posts explore meaningful moments in my life (past and present) in story form. I'm spending a lot of time wrestling with the fact that I'm firmly on the other side of 50, and trying to figure out how to be the best version of myself I can be (if I manage to figure out who that is, anyway). I post 2-4 times each month, and I hope you'll follow me. Since I changed my approach to Substack, there's little risk you'll see the same content there as you do here. This newsletter is very focused on books (mine and others) and, sometimes, me as an author, while my Substack is focused on me as a person.

I always have my social links on the bottom of each newsletter, but I wanted to take a moment to tell you a little more about what I do on each of them.

Facebook: Occasional pictures, updates, book reviews, etc.

Instagram: Basically, the same stuff I put on Facebook, but always with a visual element.

Threads: Random comments, usually about things relating to my writing life, but sometimes just my observations as a human being. Honestly, I'm not on there much.

Twitter/X: It's dead, Jim. I finally got around to killing my account.

I also don't do much with my Goodreads or Amazon profiles, but if you're looking for an easy link to leave a book review (HINT HINT) you can do it by clicking on either of those icons below.

One Last Random Thing

Remember I said my favorite part of fall is when the leaves all turn brown and coat the ground? Well, I ended up redesigning the cover of my prequel novelette *Needing Hope* and using a picture of that carpet of leaves. None

of the content in the book is different, but if you'd like to download a copy with the new cover, just click [*here*](#). (And please, please, please leave a review on Amazon or Goodreads!)



The moving prequel to *Virtuous Women*

Needing Hope

A Novelette

by Ann Goltz

*Disclosure: I am an affiliate of Bookshop.org and I will earn a small commission if you click through and make a purchase.

Ann Goltz

131 Daniel Webster Hwy. #876,
Nashua, New Hampshire
United States of America



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