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Author Bio

A.M. Ladd has been writing stories since she was five years old. As an only child with a vivid imagination, she would create enchanting worlds filled with wondrous creatures. As a mother, she would later enhance upon those stories and develop greater complexity sharing them with her sons at bedtime. They would call out random places and characters, and she would spin a unique adventure on the spot. No two tales were ever the same, as the ideas would twist into a chaotic story that would ultimately end in love and laughter.

Even though she has a degree in Psychology and Business, her career path veered to Technology early on and she never left. After decades working in the technology industry, she sees the path the world is taking. While all the technological advances are amazing, she feels many in this world are losing touch to their connection with nature. Balance is essential not only for the psyche, but for the soul.

Living in Arizona for over twenty years, she has explored many of the natural wonders the state holds, and wants to share those locations with her readers. She hopes her books will light a passion in others to go explore the world around them. Perhaps a communion of nature will allow more people to realize the beauty and be inspired to fight for the survival of so many sacred forests that greatly need our protection.

She has traveled around the world and the idea for her first novel fully formed after exploring a forest in Tasmania. Walking among the Giant Swamp Gum trees, she could see the beauty of the land and the mysterious qualities that compelled her to create a novel about a secret magical forest community that needed to protect their world from humans.



About the Book

She walked along the rocky path to a neighboring meadow. As Willow approached the giant Alligator Juniper at the center, the tree's limbs twisted to reshape the throne, adjusting to fit her body. Once the Guardian wreath was placed on her head, she comprehended the words of the ancients calling on her ties to the earth, linking her forever to the Coconino Forest. She felt the connection building until she could clearly see the edge of the forest for the first time. Willow vaguely heard the words expounded on the accomplishments of the Ashbrook Dryads and how their spirits would guide her to greatness.

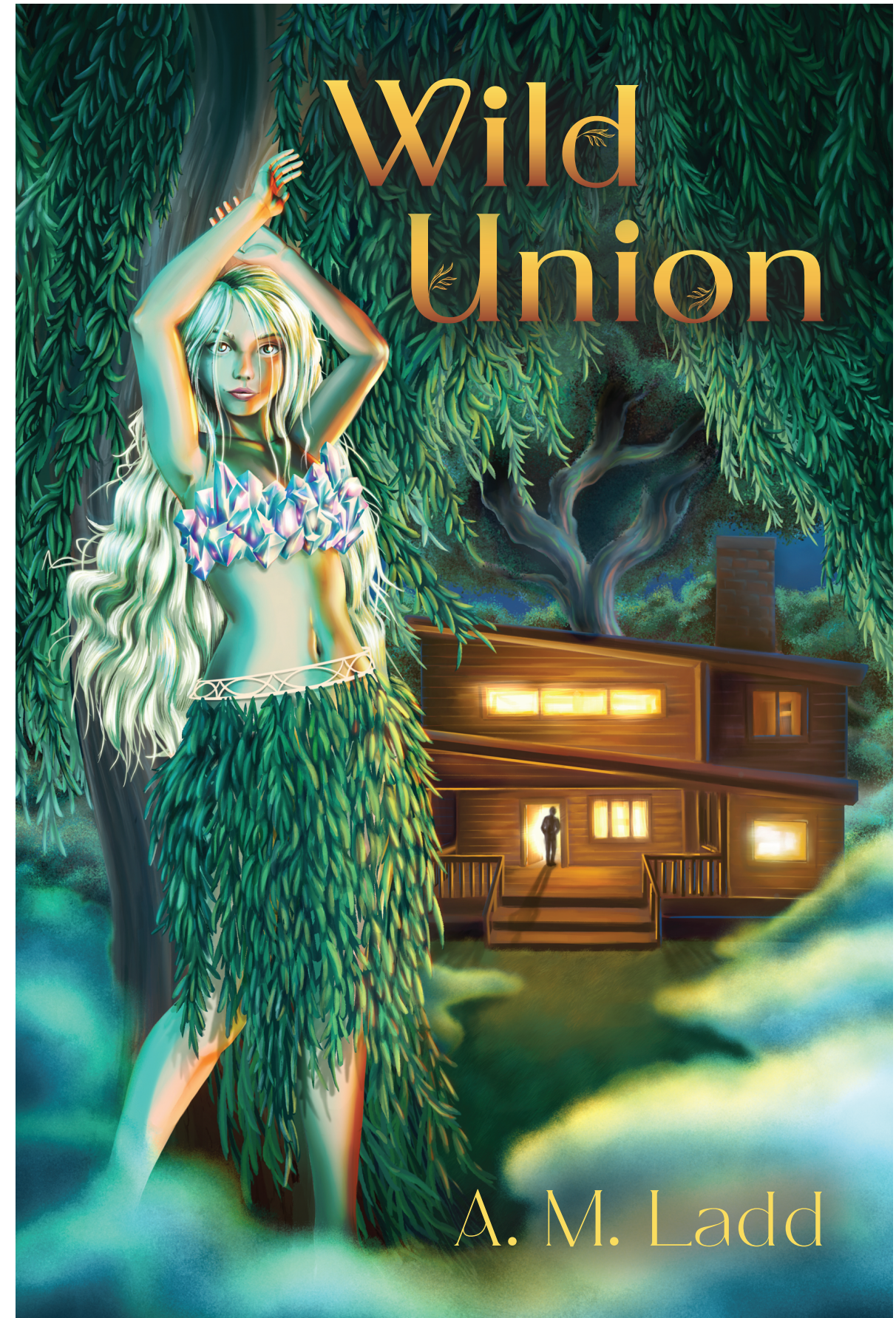


Mysterious Forest

In the small town of Bellemont, Arizona, most humans know to stay clear of the forest—especially at night. Strange, unexplainable things have been known to occur. Bray isn't interested in rumors, and he doesn't believe in myths. He's made a name for himself in IT and is all about logic. He's just purchased a beautiful cabin retreat in the woods. Despite numerous wilderness accidents, he refuses to leave. The connection he feels to this place is unlike anything he's ever experienced before.

Forbidden Union

Evicting the human should be simple, but Willow's Dryad powers aren't working. This human is enchanting her instead of the other way around. The more time she spends with Bray, the more she realizes he's not a threat, and she's starting to succumb to her feelings for him. But humans are forbidden from having anything to do with her world. Council will never allow such a union, even if it could be the key to everything.



Testimonials

A.M. Ladd is a Master Storyteller with her ability to capture your imagination with her amazing descriptions.

Linda M.

Her vivid characterizations write indelible images in your mind's eye. It makes you want to visit a forest, rest on a rock, and enjoy the smell of the surrounding pines.

Robert L.

Meticulous follow through. A true asset. Values customer relationships and does everything in her ability to make each interaction a positive experience.

Lalitha M.

Engaging read. I just love the humorous characters. Absolutely captivating storytelling.

Lisa E.

A.M. Ladd is a shining light in a very dark world. The creatures from her book have a whimsical feel, and they pull you into a fantastical world.

Gina L.

The hardest worker I've ever met. She is amazing and gives her all in anything she undertakes.

Tom H.

I feel drawn into each scene. The pages come alive. I can't wait to find out what will happen next.

Carol C.

A passionate nature lover, animal rescuer, beloved friend, and all around awesome person.

Tricia C.

A vivid and compelling urban fantasy. The writing is a descriptive blend of romance and humor. It felt like I was discovering a hidden world as I read.

Brandon G.

Wild Union is a captivating story, a non-stop read that pulls you into this wondrously detailed enchanted realm. A powerful female lead, a mystic eco-warrior type who's drawn into a scandalous love. And the vivid imagery hooks you from the beginning. Already waiting for the next book.

Tamara P.

Target Audience

Highschool and older

Anyone interested in fantasy, world building, and romance. This would also appeal to those who enjoy Dungeons and Dragons or other fantasy world gaming.

Animals lovers will be delighted by the quirky characters with humorous antics, trying to find their way. Those who are passionate about nature will enjoy meandering down the trail as the book takes them on a journey to a magical land connected to the human world.



Book Excerpt

From Chapter 28:

She seemed to grow more alert the farther into the forest they got. He slowed down when he saw smoke.

“My sisters.” She cried out.

Willow attacked the seatbelt trying to unbuckle herself. Bray slammed on the brakes and helped her unlatch it. She climbed out and screamed like a banshee speaking in a tongue he didn’t understand. Was she swearing in another language?

Bray had never seen her like this. She was always so easygoing, like nothing could phase her. He wanted to hold her, comfort her in some way. He desperately wanted to help. Together they could somehow find her sisters. He’d make sure of it.

“Willow, it’s ok. Calm down. I’ll help.” He walked toward her, and suddenly his feet were stuck. Vines snagged his shoes. He didn’t remember seeing them moments before, but then his whole focus had been on Willow. He yanked a foot free and took another step. Even more vines encased his foot. It took longer to pull free this time. By the third step, he realized the vines were growing faster than he could yank free. They were climbing up his ankles. He started to panic, struggling to get free. Every move made them grow faster. They reached his knees. It was almost as if the vines were sentient, like they didn’t want him to get to Willow. It was such a strange concept, he stopped struggling for a moment. The vines stopped their growth. Even the restriction on his legs loosened. What the fuck was happening? He stared at Willow’s back. She was slowly scanning the forest, then started to glow. Green? Willow chanted strange words over and over in a sing-song voice. All around them the trees started glowing that same eerie green. The trees looked like they were moving closer, but that couldn’t be possible. Bray had never been claustrophobic, but somehow the distance between the trees was growing smaller. He felt like

they were being surrounded. Tree branches brushed against him. They seemed to be experiencing something straight out of a horror movie. He couldn't move. He couldn't protect her. He was losing his mind.

"Willow, look out. The trees are alive."

She turned toward him, and he saw her once pale smooth skin had turned a crackled greyish-brown. Willow's long pale hair now had bunches of thin green leaves. They whipped around in the stifling wind. She had eyes like an unpainted marionette, no pupils. She stared past him with those unblinking wooden eyes. He couldn't help but shrink back on himself, although the vines prevented him from physically moving. A large tree came toward her and held out a branch. She reached out with her bark-covered arm and touched the tree. Blinding light lit up the forest and Bray shielded his eyes with an arm. He thought for sure the fire had reached them. The heat was so intense, the smoke so thick. He felt like he should be hacking and coughing but somehow, he was still able to breathe. The light faded enough where he could focus and he realized the light had not come from the fire, but from Willow. Her hair of willow branches moved with an invisible wind, whipping back and forth as trees sped through the forest toward them. It looked like the trees were going to crash into them, but they stopped just shy of some hidden barrier. The kaleidoscope of color was mesmerizing as the trees zoomed through the forest reaching out with a limb, a branch, anything for Willow to touch. She pulsed with a pale green light getting brighter and brighter. A blackened willow tree approached slower than the others and she melted into the surface. He could see her face form in the bark, and light filled every inch of the tree, from the base of the trunk to every leaf and branch. Minutes later, the tree's glow subsided. Bray could feel the pulse in his throat pounding. Willow emerged from the tree looking whole and healthy. Her clothes from the party were gone. The red blisters from her arms were healed. The gauze fell gracefully to the forest floor, the only evidence she had been to ER. Even the tree she had emerged from seemed healthy, no longer charred black from the fire. It disappeared, fading off in the distance. He looked around. All the trees were spaced apart again, back where they originally started. Other than the thick smoke, everything looked normal. He looked down at his legs. The vines had stopped

growing but still held him firmly in place. He waited several heartbeats. It was bizarre. Had they been standing still the whole time?

Willow stood in another clearing and knocked on an ancient pine. She called out her sister's names one by one. Her voice was eerie and sent shivers down his spine. Slowly her sisters appeared walking from the tree the same way Willow had. Bray knew he was hallucinating, or possibly dreaming. None of this could be real. He must have blacked out. Maybe it was a side effect from smoke inhalation. He watched as the sisters formed a circle and began to sing and dance. Bray didn't recognize the words, but he understood the basic meaning and felt himself swaying back and forth with the rhythm. His voice joined theirs. The sisters were calling for help from Gaia and her elemental creatures to bring the rain. They sang for a long time. Their voices grew hoarse. Even when the smoke got worse, they all continued to sing.

The wind stopped blowing and everything went utterly still as if time halted. The temperature dropped, and the rain began to fall. Light at first, and then a downpour. The sisters hugged and laughed, jumping up and down with excitement. No. Jumping wasn't the right word. Jumping would mean their feet left the ground. Their legs looked like tree limbs anchored in the earth, their feet like roots half in and out of the dirt. He stood frozen in shock watching the scene as if it were a movie. The vines that had held him bound, slid down his legs and flopped around his ankles. So many things didn't make sense. He spoke. No, not spoke. Sang in a language he didn't know. Had the sisters brought the rain? Had he in some way helped? What kind of creatures were they? They were definitely not human. Their skin was green, all different shades, just like their hair. He blinked. Not hair. On top of their heads were branches and leaves. Their faces looked chiseled. His logical mind rebelled against what he was seeing. He closed his eyes. Took a deep breath and opened them. No change. He had to get away. Time. Yes. That's what he needed. Time to process what just happened. Willow looked at him and grinned, but he had no smile for her. Another creature stood before him. Not the one he had fallen in love with. She was a stranger. Bray felt completely numb as he walked to his truck and climbed in. He turned the vehicle around, backing up slowly. He stopped and looked over his shoulder for one more

glimpse. He wanted to grab Willow, make her change back. Force her into the truck so they could get away from here as fast as they could. Get away. His mind screamed. She seemed to understand what he was asking with his eyes. She shook her head. Sluggishly he pulled back onto the path, directing it back to his cabin. He looked at his cell phone for guidance. His homing chip still worked. That single piece of technology was the only thing that made sense this whole damn day.



Sample Interview Questions

- Why did you want to become an author?
- What challenges did you face with writing your first book?
- Any recommendations to other inspiring authors?
- Where do you get your ideas?
- What is your writing process?
- Have you ever gotten writer's block?
- Why did you choose to work with Paperclip?
- What takeaway do you want your readers to have after reading *Wild Union*?

Story Ideas for Reporters

- How did you decide to use a Rainbow Eucalyptus in your book?
- What research was involved in the locations? Are they all real places in Arizona?
- What inspired you to write about a Dryad family?





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