



## Morning Glory: A Novel

By Sarah Jio

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**From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Always* and *Blackberry Winter***, Sarah Jio imagines life on Boat Street, a floating community on Seattle's Lake Union, home to people of artistic spirit who for decades protect the dark secret of one startling night in 1959.

Fleeing an East Coast life marred by tragedy, Ada Santorini takes up residence on houseboat number seven on Boat Street. She discovers a trunk left behind by Penny Wentworth, a young newlywed who lived on the boat half a century earlier. Ada longs to know her predecessor's fate, but little suspects that Penny's mysterious past and her own clouded future are destined to converge.

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## Morning Glory: A Novel By Sarah Jio Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #192558 in Books
- Published on: 2013-11-26
- Released on: 2013-11-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .60" w x 5.31" l, .50 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 304 pages

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Jio's fifth novel, following *The Last Camellia*, explores the degree to which time and distance give comfort to those who have experienced loss. In 2008, Ada Santorini's life in New York as deputy editor of *Sunrise* magazine is shaken by personal tragedy. She leaves her job and rents a houseboat on Seattle's Lake Union, hoping a change of location will provide the healing she needs. Yet her new home has its own tragedy—the disappearance in 1959 of a local woman, Penny Wentworth, which no one in the small, tight-knit community will discuss. When Ada finds a trunk in her houseboat and realizes it belonged to the missing woman, she and her new friend Alex, a neighboring houseboat renter, decide to uncover the truth. The growth of Ada and Alex's relationship as they work together is satisfying, but the beautifully rendered setting emerges as an equally important character. However, the flashbacks to 1959 are so strong that readers may lose patience with the present-day narrative, while the town's secret is too easy to figure out. Fans of Jio's previous works should find that the depth of feeling in her writing overcomes the drawbacks. Agent: Elisabeth Weed, Weed Literary. (Dec.)

Review

“Jio has become one of the most-read women in America.”—*Woman's World*

Praise for Sarah Jio and her novels:

“Delightful and uplifting.”—*Historical Novel Society* (on *Goodnight June*)

“Linger[s] long after the last page.”—*Romantic Times* (on *The Last Camellia*)

“Eminently readable . . . a tribute to family and forgiveness.”—*Booklist* (on *Goodnight June*)

“Terrific . . . compelling . . . an intoxicating blend of mystery, history and romance.”—*Real Simple* (on *Blackberry Winter*)

From the Author

As I type this, I'm sitting in my houseboat, looking out the window to a gray day on Lake Union in Seattle. The rain is falling in great sheets. It pounds on the roof, and the wind splatters it against the windows. These are my favorite days on the lake. I can see ducks swim and boats motor by, as well as the occasional kayaker braving the rain. It's cozy, and I'm content.

When I set out to write this novel, I began with a setting, and nothing else: a houseboat on the banks of Lake Union. As a lifelong Seattle-area resident, I've always been fascinated by floating homes (and of course, a little movie called *Sleepless in Seattle* only furthered that fascination). Years ago, as a young journalist, I wrote an article about the houseboat lifestyle, and I'll never forget being invited to tour a floating home for the first time. The woman who graciously welcomed me into her home (through a door with an opening in the bottom for ducks) told me about life on the lake--the way a houseboat sways gently in the wind, how the lake can rock you to sleep, and perhaps most memorable, for me, the way the houseboat community is like a family, helping neighbors in need, keeping secrets like only trusted friends do.

I suppose the very beginning of this novel started that day, when I stepped inside that little floating home. And as time went on, I longed to live in a houseboat of my own. But as our family grew, my husband and I

decided that raising three little boys on a tiny floating home may not be the best choice (imagine playing catch on a small dock). So we set that dream aside, at least until September 2012.

My husband knew I'd begun plotting out an idea for a novel set on a houseboat, and while I'd hoped to find one to rent for a weekend for research purposes, he surprised me with a generous idea. Why not, he suggested, rent a houseboat for an extended period of time? I could use it as my office, and really get the feel for life on the lake.

My first instinct was to say no. At first blush, it seemed frivolous, an unnecessary splurge. But then I began to think: How else would I really get to know the houseboat lifestyle, the history of the community, the local personalities and their secrets?

So we went to tour a houseboat for rent, and in the space of 3.5 seconds, I fell head over heels. With a loft bedroom (complete with a working porthole), a rooftop deck with a view of the Space Needle, and a quaint and fully stocked kitchen, this was the houseboat of my dreams. My husband and I quickly signed a lease to rent it for four months.

I could not have written this book without the time I've had on Lake Union. While it's true this is a work of fiction, the months I've spent in the houseboat community have enriched and inspired my writing--from the pair of mallards nesting outside my back deck to the kindness of the neighbors all around me.

We have a few more weeks on our little floating home before our lease runs out. I really hate to go. I've laughed here. I've cried here. I've made new friends and bonded with old ones under this roof. I've felt a great sense of peace here. And mostly, I have fallen in love with the houseboat community.

But it's almost time to say good-bye. For when I turn in the final draft of this novel in the days ahead, I will also be turning in my key and saying good-bye to my beloved Boat Street, as I've affectionately called it in real life and in the novel. Even so, the dock, and the story I created here, will forever remain in my heart. Houseboat No. 7. Henrietta and Haines. Little Jimmy. Penny and Collin. Alex and Ada. I feel as if they're all waving good-bye as I make my way up the dock. Years will pass, but I'll always know where to find them.

SJ

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