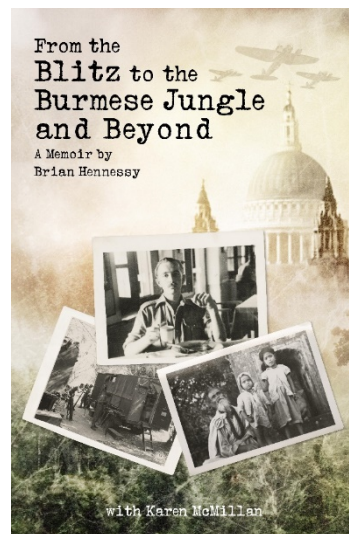
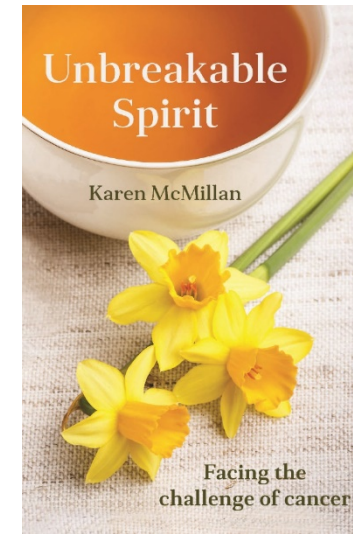
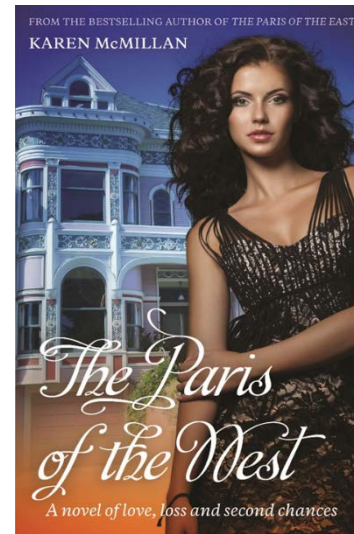
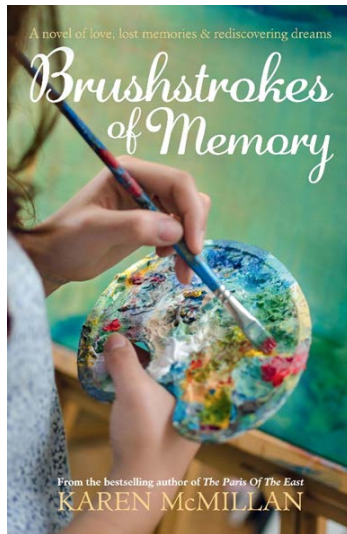


## Karen McMillan Catalogue 2016-2017



## About Karen McMillan

Karen McMillan is the author of fiction and non-fiction.

Fiction works include the novels *Brushstrokes of Memory*, *Watching Over Me*, *The Paris of the East*, *The Paris of the West*, and the delightful collection of short stories *Shaggy Dog and Fishy Cat Tales*.

Her non-fiction titles include *Unbreakable Spirit*, *Love Bytes*, *Unleash Your Inner Seductress*, and *From the Blitz to the Burmese Jungle and Beyond*.

Previously an award-winning fashion designer, Karen has worked full-time in publishing for the past sixteen years. She is a breast cancer survivor.

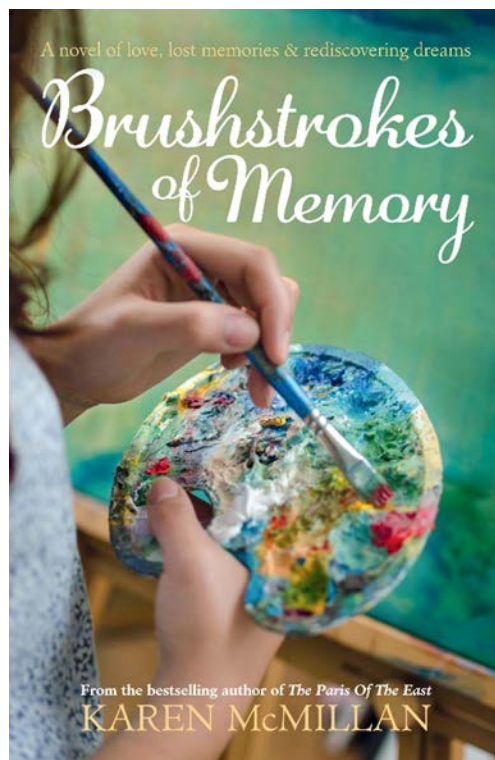
Karen lives in Auckland, New Zealand.

For more information about Karen and her writing visit [www.karenm.co.nz](http://www.karenm.co.nz).



# Brushstrokes of Memory

Brushstrokes of Memory is a compelling novel of love, lost memories  
and rediscovering dreams



On her 32nd birthday Rebecca is in high spirits. Life could not be better. She adores her husband of seven years, Daniel, a successful musician. She is carving out a reputation as a talented painter after several successful exhibitions. She expects to juggle travel, motherhood and a stellar career in the future.

But in 2013 she wakes in hospital after a head injury and finds out that nine years, nine months and nineteen days of her life are erased from her memory. Now nearly 42, she can't remember anything after her 32nd birthday – a decade fraught with changes she never would have anticipated – illness, infidelity and betrayal, death and separation – and the disintegration of many of her dreams.

Feeling like she is still 32, Rebecca has to grapple with suddenly being so much older and with a world that is a different and more complicated place than the one she remembers.

As she learns information about her life over the last decade from Daniel and her best friend, Julie, she comes to realise she has completely lost her way. But if she can't remember anything of nearly ten years, then could this be the chance for her to literally wipe the slate clean and start again?

Susanne Theune & Asociados

C/Pallars, 73 1º 1ª 08018 Barcelona | Telf: +34 629.388.043 | [info@stasociados.com](mailto:info@stasociados.com)

# The Paris of the East

The Paris of the East is a sweeping epic of love and war, courage and survival,  
sacrifice and loss



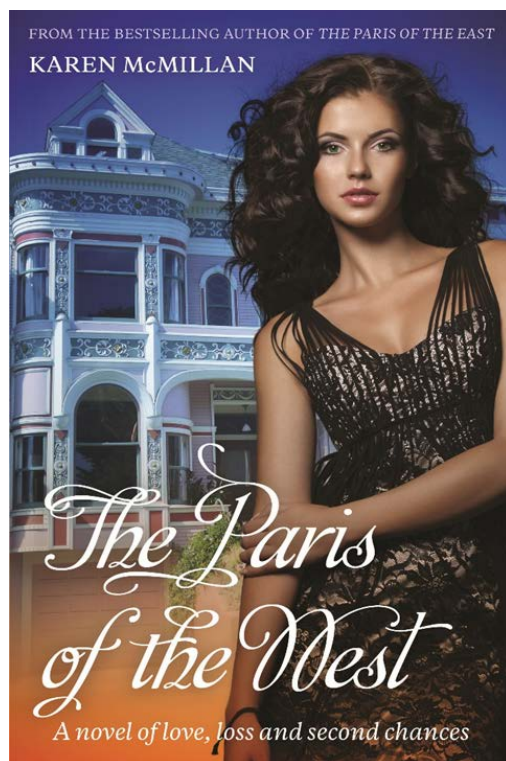
Warsaw, 1939. Four friends picnic on a brilliant summer's day and celebrate an engagement, aware of the rumbles of war, but hopeful that in any conflict Poland will have the upper hand. But only months later, Poland has surrendered and dare-devil pilot Rafael is ordered to flee the country, eventually flying for the RAF in Britain. The other three remain in Nazi-occupied Warsaw – Rafael's spirited wife, Celina; his shy and brooding brother Marek – who wishes he was the one Celina had married – and their plucky friend Anna. Danger lurks on every corner of occupied Warsaw, even more so when the three friends become active members in the Polish Resistance...

A page-turning story that spans the period of the Second World War, this is a dramatic historical adventure that goes from Warsaw to Lublin, from Bucharest to Paris, from London to the Concentration Camp at Ravensbruck – but always at the heart of this novel is the mesmerising city of Warsaw – 'The Paris of the East.'

This novel went straight into the Top Ten Fiction Bestseller List for 4 weeks in April 2014 in New Zealand

# The Paris of the West

The Paris of the West is a story of love and loss, betrayal and forgiveness, and having the courage to start over



San Francisco, 1948. Having survived the Second World War against all odds, Celina and her family arrive on a Liberty Ship into the Bay Area with high hopes for their new lives. But as new immigrants they face many hurdles, and they have to deal somehow with the trauma of war and the grief of losing loved ones. Betrayal and more heartbreak are just around the corner.

Why is it that now they are finally safe, Celina cannot sleep and is afraid of her dreams? And who is the mysterious jazz singer who will have such an impact on their family?

A page-turning, historical read set in the spectacular hilly city of San Francisco, 'The Paris of the West' goes from the jazz clubs in the Fillmore District to the sun-kissed vineyards of Sonoma.

This novel achieved the Top Ten Fiction Bestseller List April 2016 in New Zealand.

# Watching Over Me

A mesmerising novel of love and loss



What would you do if you lost everything you had ever loved? In this page turning novel of love and loss, set in the late 1990s, Sarah Martin's idyllic world is shattered when the death of her father sets into motion a series of terrible life-changing events. While fighting to save her father's bookstore from bankruptcy, Sarah discovers family secrets that tear her and her husband Michael's lives apart.

Meanwhile Gamaliel, Sarah's guardian angel, is fighting his own agonizing battles. A broken angel whose last mission to earth failed tragically, he somehow has to find the courage to set foot on earth again in a human body if he is to save Sarah. He has only twenty-four hours to complete his mission.

Sarah's life is on the line, but is Gamaliel up to the job? Thrilling and compelling, *Watching Over Me* is an inspirational read that reveals, ultimately, how the power of love can transform lives.

Karen McMillan Catalogue 2016-2017

# Shaggy Dog and Fishy Cat Tales

The cat with nine distinct personalities; the pooch who is an undercover agent;  
the cat who thinks he is a dog...



*Shaggy Dog and Fishy Cat Tales* is a delightful celebration of the unique feline and canine characters that share and enrich our lives.

Always amusing, at other times touching and sometimes downright hilarious, twenty cat and dog antics are told both from the owner's point of view and the very different viewpoint of the animal concerned.

Their stories will bring a smile to pet owners everywhere!

# Unbreakable Spirit

## Facing the challenge of cancer

An invaluable collection of real life stories of cancer, representing a wide range of circumstances that will provide comfort and help for families facing cancer



*Unbreakable Spirit* is a testimony to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of cancer. It tells the true stories of people who have survived cancer and of those who are terminally ill. It also shares the experiences of people who have had a loved one die from cancer and includes information from hospice workers, oncologists, GPs, a counsellor, surgeon and breast physician.

When Karen McMillan's parents, both of whom had lived with cancer, died in their prime, she started her own journey to find the answers to her questions from the stories of others. How do people cope with their own mortality? How frightening is the Big C? Are treatments improving? How does cancer impact on a family? What hope is there for the future?

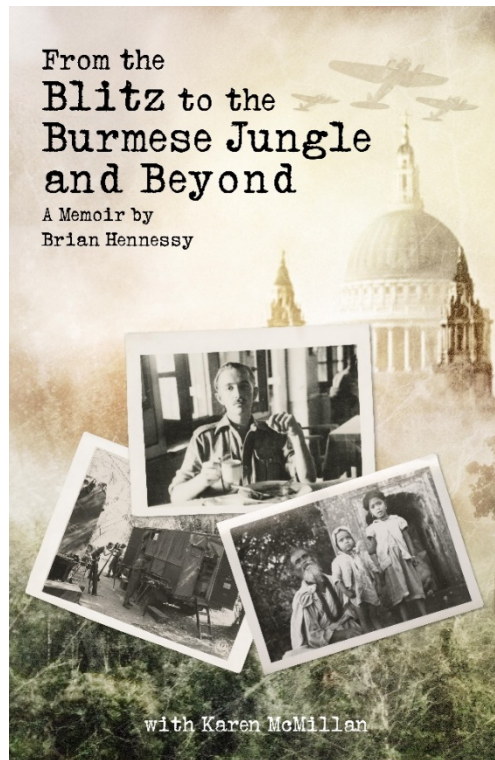
*Unbreakable Spirit* was first published in 2003, and it has helped numerous families facing cancer. In this revised edition, Karen finds out what has happened to many of the people featured in the book and updates their stories. She discusses the advances of medical science in the past decade and other changes. She also tells her own story of being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011 – a positive story of the importance of early detection through screening, and she includes insightful new chapters from her medical team.

Susanne Theune & Asociados

C/Pallars, 73 1º 1ª 08018 Barcelona | Telf: +34 629.388.043 | [info@stasociados.com](mailto:info@stasociados.com)

# From the Blitz to the Burmese Jungle and Beyond

One man's memoir of World War II that took him from the Blitz to the jungles of Burma,  
to the devastation of Hiroshima.



'I consider myself lucky to have survived the global carnage still myself – a reluctant soldier who had to go to war, who only ever wanted peace for everyone.' Brian Hennessy

Brian immigrated to New Zealand after the war and lived there until his death aged ninety-two, but he never forgot his extraordinary war adventures.

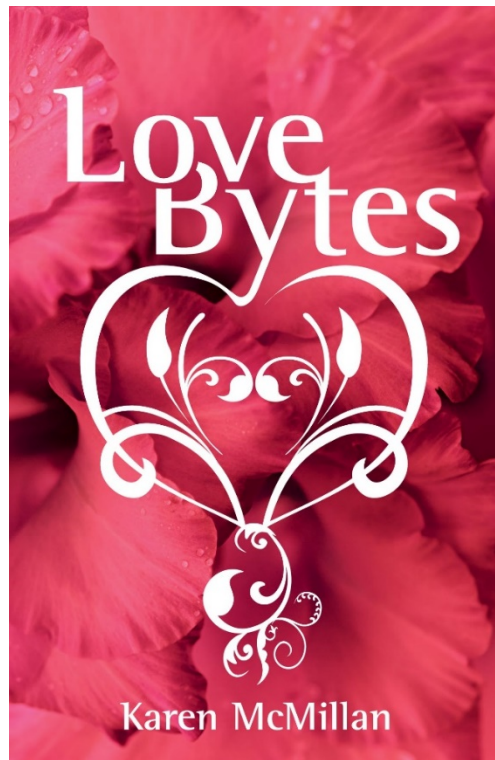
Born in Germany to English parents, he came from a family who served in the army. He was seventeen years old and living in London when war broke out, and he experienced the Blitz firsthand. Brian joined the British Army and became the youngest armament artificer. What follows was a true adventure story as Brian journeyed via South Africa to India and the remote jungles of Burma. Danger was always present, and his narrative is sometimes humorous, at other times poignant. At the end of the war, he went to Japan and saw first-hand the devastation at Hiroshima.

This is his story, a sweeping journey through the landscape of war and far more fascinating and exciting than any fiction.

# Love Bytes

Romance – Family – Friendship – Humanity

Real life stories of love, punctuated by famous quotations, *Love Bytes* is for everyone  
from teenagers to grandparents



Romance – family – friendship – humanity: love is the most important aspect of our lives. With love we become vibrant, passionate and caring people, living fully.

People of all ages and all walks of life share their special moments of love. Everyday, down-to-earth examples we can all relate to are mixed with stories of love that will challenge and inspire the way we think about love.

Karen uses the Greek words for the four different types of love: Eros (romance), Storge (family love), Philia (friendship) and Agape (love of humanity).

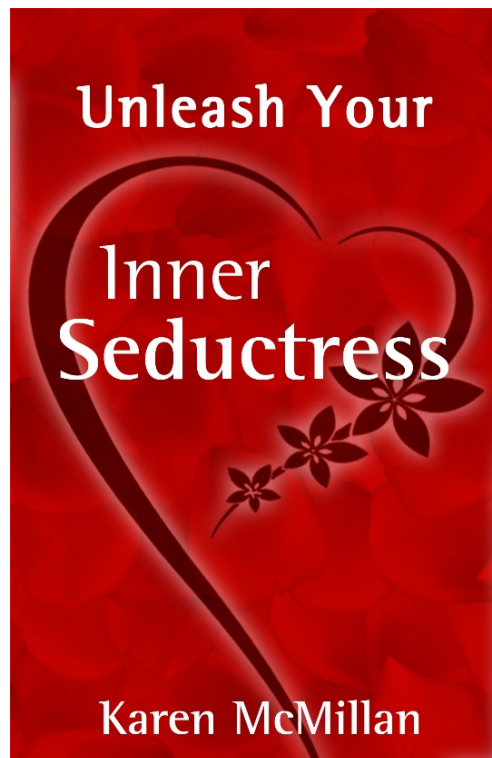
In Eros, people share their experiences from first impressions to being married for more than sixty years. In Storge, people of all ages talk about the love they have for their children, their parents, their siblings and their extended family. In Philia, friends talk about the simple fun of friendship; and in Agape unsung, modest people take centre stage for a moment to talk about the caring they do and what motivates them.

Love, the most power force in the world, bursts from every page of *Love Bytes*.

This unique book of love was shortlisted for the Ashton Wiley Award.

# Unleash Your Inner Seductress

The ultimate guide for women looking to increase their confidence, reclaim their femininity  
and enjoy life to the full!



Accessible for both single women and those in relationships, *Unleash Your Inner Seductress* explores themes of building confidence and tapping into a woman's natural femininity, tricks of making the most of your physical assets, and taking this information and putting it into action.

*Unleash Your Inner Seductress* will help women everywhere enjoy the benefits of their inner seductress. Here they learn how unleashing their own charm, beauty, sophistication and intelligence can enrich their entire lives, whether it be in the boardroom, bedroom or at a social gathering.

The book includes quotes from famous seductive women throughout history and hot tips on how best to allow your inner seductress to emerge true to your personality. Being in touch with their inner seductress in everyday life has never been more fun, or more deliciously glorious, as women discover their own unique X-factor with all the confidence and fun this brings to their life!

This is a book that focuses on the meaning of 'seduce' that means to 'win over and attract' rather than leading astray, and it will enrich women's lives whether they are asking the boss for a pay rise, meeting people for the first time at a party, or going out on a date with a lover.

# Praise for Karen McMillan's Books

## FICTION

'From the derring-do of Allied fighter pilots to the cunning of the Polish resistance and the everyday bravery of a professor and his daughter, there are heroes of all kinds in this sweeping tale of war-torn Warsaw. At its heart lies a tender love story which offers a glimpse of hope for a better future, and reminds us that humanity and kindness ultimately always prevail.' *NEXT Magazine*

'The weaving of truth and imagination blurs the lines of fiction into a compelling and enjoyable read.' *Australian Women's Weekly*

'admirable characters and well-researched writing.' *New Zealand Herald*

'*The Paris of the East* is a generous and energetic account of an historical period of terrible darkness, and one that revives what is often overlooked.' *Coast FM*

'I found this book very hard to put down. A tender love story, a story of courage and survival set in extraordinary times.' *Booksellers NZ Blog*

'this is a compelling tale of love, heroes and the utter determination and will to live against all odds.' *Hawkes Bay Today*

'*The Paris of the West* is a most readable symphony of history and romance that neatly concludes each character's arc and ushers them, lively and aglow, towards a promising future. McMillan is an empathetic observer of sorrow and rejuvenation.' *Coast FM*

'This well-researched novel paints a vibrant picture of post-war San Francisco, from the jazz clubs in the Fillmore District to the vineyards of Sonoma. An enjoyable historical read with a touch of romance.' *Sweet Living Magazine*

'a romantic page turner with many a heart wrenching and bittersweet moment but also a gradual healing. It is a well-researched read.' *Grownups.co.nz*

'The follow up novel to 'The Paris of the East', Karen McMillan delivers yet another fabulous romance novel that will satisfy all keen readers,' *The Rural*

# Praise for Karen McMillan's Books

## NON-FICTION

'Told with empathy, clarity and insight, *Unbreakable Spirit* will provide valuable support for individuals with cancer and the families and friends walking beside them.' *Australian Women's Weekly*

'Remarkable stories and an equally remarkable book.' *New Zealand Listener*

'*Unbreakable Spirit* is a book that I believe everyone should read as it is such an honest, well-rounded account of cancer that I can't think of another book that even comes close to it... This book is a very well written, insightful collection of personal experiences giving the reader a very wide ranging view of the experiences of cancer sufferers, as well as the teams behind them...A fantastic book, buy it and love it.' *The Library NZ Blogspot*

'This is not a cancer handbook. Rather it is a realistic, practical and remarkably upbeat book of more than 300 pages that could help to explain many aspects of a disease that is becoming much better understood these days. It will answer many questions, offer some hope, and most especially it should demystify cancer by bringing it out into the open and talked about, frankly and clearly.' *Flaxroots Productions - FlaxFlower*

'*Unbreakable Spirit* is a tremendous resource when you want to learn about what works well in helping a person maintain their spirit as it faces one of the greatest challenges life can offer.' *chelsey.co.nz*

'Under the four headings of friendship, family love, love of humanity and romance, the author has captured the essence of the many forms love takes. In this special little gift book, New Zealanders from all walks of life share their poignant stories, views and moments of love, and these are interspersed with various quotations. It certainly celebrates that love is all around us and all you need is...love, aroha, alofa.' *NEXT Magazine*

'*Unleash Your Inner Seductress* is both practical and imaginative, and leaves no stone unturned on the path to uncovering the world of seduction. It is the ideal accomplice to the task of unleashing your signature brand of charm, beauty and sophistication.' *chelsey.co.nz*

## Recent Publicity

**weeklyPEOPLE**  
THEY'RE YOUR STORIES

**How I live...**

**My novel approach to SURVIVING CANCER**

KAREN McMILLAN TURNED HER PAIN INTO PROSE TO HELP OTHERS

The former fashion designer turned to writing late in her career, and has since published a number of fiction and non-fiction books.

I'm a 44-year-old author who has been writing books for 14 years. I've always had a love of books.

When I was a child, I used to write stories and get them published in newspapers for pocket money. I felt terrible thinking that I would study to become a journalist, but ended up working in fashion.

At 30, I had an epiphany: writing is what I should do with my life. I then studied for an advanced diploma in professional writing and took a job at Hachette Publishing, which launched my career.

My first book, *Unbreakable Spirit* (2003), told personal stories of people who had cancer. I was inspired by my parents to write it, as they both died of cancer - my father only 21 when my dad died, and 29 when I lost my mum.

When my parents were sick, I was really annoyed that there were only either diet books (saying if you eat such and such, it will help cure cancer) or books about celebrity cancer battles.

**Quick fire:**  
The best piece of advice I ever received was...  
*follow your dreams, but don't take yourself too seriously.*

If I won Lotto, I would spend the money on...  
*paying off debt and helping others in need.*

If my friends described me in three words, they would be...  
*Lied, loyal and supportive.*

And here's my best ever household tip:  
*Marry a man who can cook, lucky me!*

I wanted to write a human story. Then, I was unexpectedly diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011. Since I was 15 years old, cancer had been a big part of my family. I'd been undergoing regular checks, so was shocked to find out I had an aggressive tumour. I had a mastectomy and a reconstruction, radiotherapy, chemotherapy and now I'm on hormone therapy.

By 2012, I'd finished my treatments, but they'd been gruelling, even though they had saved my life. It took me another year to recover after 11-sided mastectomies. That's when you feel emotionally vulnerable and fragile.

I didn't write for two years while in recovery. It was awful, no writing. I read 300 books during those 12 months.

Around the same time, I lost my job at Hachette. My husband, who I have been married to for nine years, was so supportive. Although we do not have children, I needed a salary.

Within 2 months, I had enough work to semi-retire from my public relations. It's nothing when I could, in my down time, I wrote my latest book, *The Years of the East*, before I was diagnosed with cancer. After surviving 120 days, I've got this book. I should get it out there.

I was inspired to write it after a trip to Poland during an author tour with my first book, as it was translated into Polish. I had an amazing experience and fell in love with the people and the history of the war from a Polish perspective.

I also met a woman named Wanda Potrowska, who was in her nineties. She had been a resistance fighter during the war and a prisoner of war in a concentration camp. I read her memoirs after meeting her and it made me think, "I have to write about this subject."

In my book, the character Callie is based on the real-life Wanda. Like my struggle with breast cancer, Wanda's story is an extreme example of fighting to overcome the difficult times in your life. I can't imagine what she went through.

All of us go through bad times, but we can get through them no matter how hard it is.

**As told to Linda Shackelford**

Karen wants you to help her with her next project. I am doing a revised edition of *Unbreakable Spirit*. If you were in the original book, please feel free to contact me via my website, [karen.co.nz](http://karen.co.nz), or I would love to update your story.

www.co.nz 31

# Karen McMillan Catalogue 2016-2017

## lpreviews

## + FOUR CORNERS



### HISTORICAL FICTION

#### THE PARIS OF THE WEST

By Karen McMillan, McKenzie Publishing.

A page-turning, historical read set in the hilly city of San Francisco in 1948, *The Paris of the West* moves from the jazz clubs in the Fillmore District to the sun-kissed vineyards of Sonoma. The story, a follow-up to the bestselling novel *Paris of the East*, centres on Celina and her family, who have arrived in San Francisco on a Liberty Ship, having survived the war against the odds. While they are ripe with hope for their new lives, the family must face the hurdles of being new immigrants and deal with the hangover of heartbreak caused by losing loved ones during the war.

### GIVEAWAY

WE HAVE 10 COPIES OF *THE PARIS OF THE WEST* TO GIVE AWAY TO READERS. To enter the draw to receive a copy, email [awweditor@bauermedia.co.nz](mailto:awweditor@bauermedia.co.nz) (subject: Paris) or send your details to *The Australian Women's Weekly*, Private Bag 92512, Wellesley Street, Auckland 1141, by May 18, 2016.



### MEET THE AUTHOR

After *The Paris of the East*, about a brave and resourceful Polish family in WWII, top-selling author Karen McMillan is back with a sequel, *The Paris of the West*, set in 1948 San Francisco (McKenzie Publishing, \$35).

**You weren't planning on writing a sequel to *The Paris of the East*. Did your fans demand it?**

Yes! I honestly thought I'd finished the story but people were saying they wanted to know what happened to the characters after the war. I couldn't leave them in communist Poland with no hope of a good life. I'd already decided they'd emigrate to San Francisco when my husband discovered San Francisco was called the Paris of the West back in the day.

**How did you become interested in the Polish experience of WWII?**

I was in Poland on an author tour for a non-fiction book I'd written. I met an amazing woman called Wanda. She and her friends were operated on by the Nazis, who conducted illegal experiments at Ravensbrück concentration camp. Her memoir was about this group of women banding together and finding light within the darkness. What I wrote was fictionalised of course, but with Wanda's blessing. When Celina [from *Paris of the East*] and her family arrive in San Francisco for this new chapter of their lives something unexpected happens. They're finally safe yet they fall apart emotionally. It was something many war survivors experienced. I've read so many accounts of people who were very brave to get through the war; it's afterwards they had to deal with the emotional impact of it all.

**As a breast cancer survivor, you've fought some major battles of your own. How has that experience changed your life?**

It's made me a little bit crazy – in a positive way! I'm very focused on my life now. I work in book publishing but before, I didn't make my own writing a priority. Now I know I have a voice and I'm passionate about it. I'm so much more determined. There's always a chance I could get secondary cancers and that things might not work out very well for me so I don't want to have any regrets.

**You spent time in San Francisco while you were writing *The Paris of the West*. Did you make any important discoveries?**

The most surprising thing for me was the Fillmore area. It's not remarkable today; it's just houses. But back in 1948 it was 20 city blocks full of pool halls and jazz clubs. All the jazz greats used to perform there. Discovering that was really exciting as it led to the formation of my new character, Serafina, who's a jazz singer.

**Are you hiding any secrets of your own?**

I can't cook, although that's no surprise to people who know me. I've had people ask, "Can I eat before I come to your place?" I once cooked a lasagne that was burnt on the outside and raw in the middle, and I set the kitchen alight at the same time.



### FIGHTING TALK

Karen McMillan lost both of her parents, in their prime, to cancer. It prompted her to volunteer for Auckland's North Shore Hospice, which sent her along to interview Mitch Albom when he came to New Zealand on an author tour. (*Tuesdays with Morrie*, Albom's account of his visits to a former university professor dying of cancer, became a bestseller in the 90s.)

When McMillan shared her own experiences with Albom, he declared: "Girl, you got a book there!" So, in 2003, she published *Unbreakable Spirit: Facing the Challenge of Cancer in New Zealand*, a collection of true stories of both people who have survived cancer and those who are terminally ill.

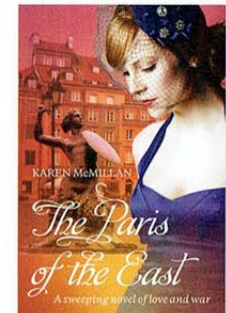
Less than a decade later, McMillan was herself diagnosed with the disease. Fortunately, she'd been having her breasts screened since she was 30 (her mother died of breast cancer) and she attributes early diagnosis – and the help of her medical team – to her recovery. Now she's republished *Unbreakable Spirit* (McKenzie Publishing, \$34.99) to include her own story, as well as discussing advances in cancer research with her medical team and updating patient stories.

One reader praises the book thus: "A unique and wonderful snapshot focusing on life with cancer, rather than death of cancer... I could now grasp this immensely traumatic event in our family as a part of the woven tapestry of our lives, rather than view it as a death sentence to be avoided."

STACEY ANYAN

24 | NORTH & SOUTH | MARCH 2016

## lpreviews



### BEDSIDE TABLE

**The Paris of the East, Karen McMillan**  
McKenzie Publishing, \$35

While touring Poland to promote a previous book, author Karen McMillan developed a passion for the region and its people. Seeing the devastating impact World War II had on Warsaw – once considered the Paris of the East – she felt compelled to write about it. From the derring-do of Allied fighter pilots to the cunning of the Polish resistance and the everyday bravery of a professor and his daughter, there are heroes aplenty in this sweeping historical novel. At its heart lies a tender love story which offers a glimpse of hope for a better future, and reminds us that humanity and kindness ultimately always prevail.

Susanne Theune & Asociados

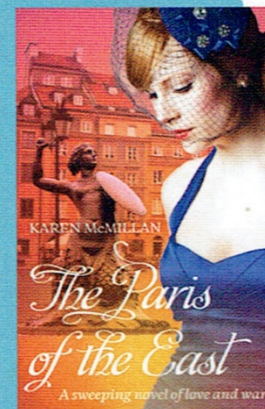
C/Pallars, 73 1º 1ª 08018 Barcelona | Telf: +34 629.388.043 | [info@stasociados.com](mailto:info@stasociados.com)

## Karen McMillan Catalogue 2016-2017

### HISTORICAL FICTION

**THE PARIS OF THE EAST**, By Karen McMillan, McKenzie Publishing, \$35.

So chic and elegant was Warsaw before the Second World War, it was known as the Paris of the East. Young lovers Rafael and Celina are celebrating their recent engagement, finding the nearby rumblings of war easy to disregard when enjoying warm weather, love and happiness. But it can't last. Eventually the war will find them and tear them apart. This is a fictionalised work, but much of the story is based on the accounts of a survivor who New Zealand author Karen McMillan met in Poland. The weaving of truth and imagination blurs the lines of fiction into a compelling and enjoyable read.



You'll find no victims in Karen McMillan's **UNBREAKABLE SPIRIT** (Mary Egan Publishing, \$35). You will discover stories of individuals who have confronted and survived cancer with fortitude, determination and humour. This reissue of a book first published in 2003, dispels cancer's dark reputation as a merchant of speedy suffering and death. Here are people of all ages and backgrounds who stare down the disease, defying the temptation to surrender, preferring instead to lead full and rich lives. The result is a genuinely inspirational testament to human strength and personal resolution. Remarkable stories and an equally remarkable book.

### The Paris of the West By Karen McMillan

If your mum loves to read, check out this new novel by Kiwi author Karen McMillan. Set in San Francisco in 1948, the tale begins with Polish migrant Celina and her family arriving on a Liberty Ship into the Bay Area. They had previously suffered appalling hardships in Warsaw under the Nazis, Celina as a member of the Polish Resistance and her husband, Rafael, a pilot with the RAF. They have high hopes for their new lives, but just around the corner is betrayal and heartbreak. The migrants struggle to establish a new life in America, with McMillan portraying the long-lasting effects of war, both physical and mental. This well-researched novel paints a vibrant picture of post-war San Francisco, from the jazz clubs in the Fillmore District to the vineyards of Sonoma. An enjoyable historical read with a touch of romance.



RRP \$34.99, McKenzie Publishing

Susanne Theune & Asociados

C/Pallars, 73 1º 1ª 08018 Barcelona | Telf: +34 629.388.043 | [info@stasociados.com](mailto:info@stasociados.com)

# Karen McMillan Catalogue 2016-2017

Life lessons



*Karen*

**Karen McMillan**  
*Diagnosed in 2011*

Karen, 47, is married and works in publishing. She has written a book on cancer called *Unbreakable Spirit*. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011.

**I DON'T NEED YOUR EXPERT OPINION**

People should keep their diet and medical tips completely to themselves. You know they're just trying to help, but we already have doctors. I remember when I'd just been diagnosed and someone very dear to me said, "You're going to have a double mastectomy, then you're going to have chemotherapy." I wasn't ready to hear that. I was really, really upset. Sometimes people have just seen a TV show or read an article about cancer and they tell you about this new 'breakthrough'. I'd think, 'Well my oncologist doesn't agree with that, so shut up!'

**CARDS ARE NOT CLICHÉ**

Before you go looking at what others can do for you, as the person with breast cancer you've got to allow people to help you. What people do is incredible. I had people drive me to my appointments, which was a godsend, and do my housework. You know how it is, there is nothing worse than a house that looks awful! But I also appreciated the little things like flowers and cards. They're not cliché at all; your spirits lift. Those random acts of kindness all help. »

**I'M STILL ME**

I felt fine during my radiotherapy treatment, but I found the chemo really hard. I got quite run down and quite sick. Some people are surprised when you say you're having a bad day. They're used to a brave cancer patient on TV, rather than a real cancer patient. Then there are the people who run for the hills. You meet them a few years later and they say, "Oh, I heard you had cancer." They couldn't cope with it. People need to remember you're not having a personality transplant. The difference is suddenly you've got a 'statistic' in life and you've never had that.

**COLDS ARE NOT WELCOME**

If people are a bit stuck, they can talk to the husband or partner to find out what's appropriate. But one thing people should know; if you're even slightly ill, don't go visiting someone having cancer treatment, whether it's a cold or any kind of illness. We're under quarantine!

*'People need to remember you're not having a personality transplant'*

*'I appreciated the little things like flowers and cards. They're not cliché at all; your spirits lift. Those random acts of kindness all help'*



## Mum's the... words

Forget those hackneyed Mother's Day gifts – or new-fangled gizmos for that matter – it's time to turn over a new leaf (or a few hundred) by choosing an old favourite gift for mum.

### THE PARIS OF THE WEST

The streets of San Francisco may be half a world away from war-ravaged Paris, however, the trauma of the Second World War is not so easy to escape, as Celina and her family discover in this tale of love and loss. From jazz clubs to sun-kissed vineyards, *The Paris of the West* offers high hopes to new immigrants but betrayal and fresh heartbreak could be just around the corner.

◆ Karen McMillan: *The Paris of the West* | RRP \$34.99 | McKenzie Publishing

### NEEDLE FELTING: FROM BASICS TO BEARS

Loaded with crafty ways to build skills, this book provides a comprehensive guide to making soft toys at home. Featuring step-by-step instructions and more than 400 photos, *Needle Felting: From Basics to Bears* is a useful resource even for those new to this craft.

◆ Liz Adams: *Needle Felting – From Basics to Bears* | RRP \$34.99 | Dave Bateman Ltd

### LOVE AS A STRANGER

Love can be beautiful but it can also prove an obsession. When Sarah takes a stroll through Symonds Street Cemetery, she begins a story which could lead to life and death decisions. In *Love as a Stranger*, Owen Marshall presents a world of affairs, passion and disquieting demands as an unexpected love develops.

◆ Owen Marshall: *Love as a Stranger* | RRP \$38.00 | Penguin Random House

### SUPERFOODS FOR KIDS

Since time immemorial, enticing children into eating their greens has been an uphill struggle for mums and dads. Fortunately, Rena Patten has developed a fresh, superfood strategy to ensure children eat fruits, vegetables and grains, and enjoy them too. Featuring recipes especially designed for children, *Superfoods for Kids* is intended to help busy parents establish healthy eating patterns in young ones from an early age.

◆ Rena Patten: *Superfoods for Kids* | RRP \$29.99 | New Holland

### MAD ABOUT BUTTONS

Sew what? Sew buttons, that's what! These days mending clothing may be somewhat 'old hat', but there are many other applications for all those buttons that somehow linger often long after the garment they once belonged to has gone. In *Mad about Buttons*, Alice Vinton demonstrates a wide range of ways to up-cycle buttons by creating keepsakes, artworks and jewellery.

◆ Alice Vinton: *Mad about Buttons* | RRP \$29.99 | New Holland

## WIN!

While these books make great gifts for Mother's Day, we're sharing the love with copies of each up for grabs. To be in to win any (or all) titles, complete the form at [www.rutaliving.co.nz](http://www.rutaliving.co.nz). One entry per person/email address, entries close May 31, 2016. Winners notified by phone or email.

## The Paris Of The East

by Karen McMillan (McMillan \$34.99)



Warsaw, Poland, is the backdrop for this historical romance by Kiwi author Karen McMillan, spanning the course of World War II. Celina and her pilot lover Rafael spend almost all of it trying to survive without each other, as their beloved Warsaw is taken over and bombed to pieces by the Germans. McMillan covers some very heavy ground here — including the "guinea pig" experiments at Ravensbruck, the Nazi concentration camp for women where the inmates were injected with bacteria — and she presents it in an interesting way, with admirable characters and well-researched writing.

Susanne Theune & Asociados

C/Pallars, 73 1º 1ª 08018 Barcelona | Telf: +34 629.388.043 | [info@stasociados.com](mailto:info@stasociados.com)

# the millwater interview

the millwater mag



Interviewing a successful professional author was a relaxed and very enjoyable experience, as Karen McMillan immediately put me at my ease. It was a joy to listen to her enthuse about her journey through life and I knew straight away that I was very much in the company of a natural story-teller: articulate, resourceful and entertaining.

"Ever since I was 8 years old I loved writing stories, many of which were published in a Sunday newspaper," said Karen. Born in Dannevirke and growing up in Wellington, Karen moved to Auckland in 2000, quickly obtaining a job in publishing. She and husband Iain McKenzie discovered Millwater when he came up to bike around the estuary and both love the community feel here.

Sensing an interesting, earlier background story, we chatted about the years before the move to Auckland. At the age of 17, Karen had wanted to become a journalist but needed to be 18 to start the course so she started work for a year in fashion design and loved it. Two years later, Karen had her own fashion

design business. Part of the less-well-known story is that Karen also sang professionally in a band and that the man who was to become her husband was a drummer in a different band. They literally bumped into each other in Auckland 23 years ago, she still in fashion design and he then in textiles. They subsequently enjoyed working together in a covers band for a time after Karen moved to Auckland.

"As a passionate reader and with a deep love of books, I re-evaluated my life and decided that I had reached a crossroads in my life, so I gave up the fashion world and devoted myself to a career in book publishing and writing," Karen enthused, "I started as one does in a lowly position, but within a year I had a really good position in sales and marketing with a major publisher."

Karen's first book was published in 2003, 'Unbreakable Spirit', which deals with the resilience of the human spirit in the face of cancer. Both Karen's parents died early of cancer and she herself is a cancer survivor. Meeting and talking with people who have made similar journeys has strengthened her focus on helping others and Karen works passionately in helping Hospice North Shore. Other non-fiction titles include 'Love Bytes', 'Feast or Famine', and 'Unleash Your Inner Seductress'.

Writing fiction also is another of Karen's strength and her first novel 'Watching Over Me' was published in the United States and is also available as an e-book. 'The Paris of the East' was a Top Ten bestseller when it publishing in 2014. 'The Paris of the West' has recently published. Far from being a self-taught writer, Karen has trodden the professional path well and has a Diploma in Professional Writing and an Advanced Diploma of Applied Arts (Writing). 'Love Bytes' was originally published as 'Love in Aotearoa' by Random House and the book was short-listed for the Ashton Wylie Book Award in 2005.

Ghost-writing is also one of Karen's many talents and 'From the Blitz to the Burmese Jungle and Beyond' – a memoir by Brian Hennessy – will be published in March, to be followed in April by her next novel 'Brushstrokes of Memory'.

It is simply impossible to convey the breadth and depth of Karen's talent in a single page in this magazine, so you will have to do as I have done and enjoy researching her fascinating and successful career – including her being a welcome book reviewer for Millwater readers.



NON-FICTION

## UNBREAKABLE SPIRIT

By Karen McMillan, McKenzie Publishing, \$35.

This collection of individual stories about New Zealanders living with cancer was first published in 2003 after author

Karen McMillan lost both her parents to the illness in their prime. She wrote it to find answers to her own questions: How do people cope with their own mortality? How does cancer impact families? How do people cope with the fear the big C brings? Since then Karen has faced and survived breast cancer herself. In this updated edition of her book she adds her own story and goes back to find out what happened to many of the people she interviewed for the first book. The result is a useful resource, which also includes information from hospice workers, a counsellor and medical specialists. Told with empathy, clarity and insight, *Unbreakable Spirit* will provide valuable support for individuals with cancer and the families and friends walking beside them.

Susanne Theune & Asociados

C/Pallars, 73 1º 1ª 08018 Barcelona | Telf: +34 629.388.043 | info@stasociados.com