

January, 2015

Prequel to TWISTED THREADS, the first in the Mainely Needlepoint series

“Angel, it’s time to come home. They’ve found your mama.”

Gram’s words on my phone kept repeating in my head.

I hadn’t even stopped to call her to ask, “Where?” “How?”

Her voice had told me what was most important. Mama was dead.

I’d thrown a few clothes in my duffle bag, adding my gun case. I didn’t want to leave a gun in an empty apartment. Then I’d headed for Phoenix’s Sky Harbor Airport, where I’d maxed out a credit card to pay for an airline seat. Three flights and ten long hours stretched between Arizona and Haven Harbor, Maine.

Sandwiched between a woman working on spreadsheets and a snoring man in a Sun Devils tee shirt, I watched each minutes click by on my phone.

Ten hours to remember everything I’d tried to forget.

Five dollars to the steward for a beer seemed cheap under the circumstance.

Gram had always called Mama a “free spirit.” But she’d been my mama, and she’d always kept her promises to me, if not to her boyfriends or bosses.

I’d been almost ten. Thrilled to be “flying up” from a Brownie to an Intermediate Girl Scout. She’d helped me memorize the Girl Scout promise and laws. She’d promised to bring cookies to the ceremony, like other mothers would.

But when my name was called to cross over the bridge, she was the only Girl Scout mother not there. Gram had smiled brightly from the back row, trying to keep me from being disappointed. But the chair I'd saved for Mama remained unclaimed.

I'd counted on Mama's being there. I'd counted on her sitting with the other mothers; on her hugging and congratulating me when the ceremony was over. I'd counted on, just once, feeling like I had a normal family. Not one where I had no father.

I don't remember the actual ceremony. Later Gram assured me I'd done everything right.

I held my tears until we were home.

That night I'd hated Mama. I pinned a note to her pillow telling her so. Then I cried myself to sleep.

I didn't know I'd never see her again.

That was eighteen years ago.

I asked the flight steward for a second beer.

When I'd left Maine ten years ago, I'd thought I'd also leave the memories.

But they'd stayed with me, no matter the drinks or the men or my work for a private investigator. I'd learned a lot in Arizona. Some of it was even useful.

But every time I saw signs for "Sky Harbor Airport" a part of me longed for the real harbor where I'd grown up. For a place where tides could be depended on, where sea breezes cooled afternoons, and where Gram still lived in the home that had been in our family since captains sailed from Haven Harbor to the Pacific Islands and Hong Kong.

Most of those men had come home.

Now it was my turn.

I finished my beer and closed my eyes.

Maybe I could sleep a little. And maybe, just maybe, the nightmares would wait until I was on land again.

Why hadn't Mama come home? Why had she left me?

I promised myself that now I'd finally find the answers I'd needed for so long. No matter what it took.

Author Biography:

Maine author Lea Wait is excited to introduce Angie Curtis, the protagonist of her new Mainely Needlepoint series, which debuts this month with *TWISTED THREADS*. The second in the series, *THREADS OF EVIDENCE*, will be published in September, 2015. Lea also writes the seven-book *Shadows Antique Print Mystery* series, the most recent of which is *SHADOWS ON A MAINE CHRISTMAS*, and historical novels for ages 8 and up, the most recent of which is *UNCERTAIN GLORY*, set in Maine during the first two weeks of the Civil War. Lea invites readers to friend her on Facebook or Goodreads, and to check her website, www.leawait.com, for more details about her life and her books.