

Roost

by Ali Bryan



Conversation Starters

How does *Roost* differ from the kinds of narratives we expect to get from characters who are parents?

What scene in the book could you really relate to and what character did you end up identifying with in the scene?

Listen
*to an interview
with Ali Bryan*



“ I think that’s when being a parent is most difficult . . . when your child does something an asshole would and you actually think it. ”

-page 144

Were Claudia’s brother Dan, and her sister-in-law Allison-Jean really as obnoxious as she made them out to be?

Is Claudia a reliable or an unreliable narrator?

Roost tackles serious, dramatic content, and yet is also comedic at the same time. Author Rudy Wiebe has said that comedy in writing is a "method of elusion"; could Roost act as a counter-argument to his assertion and if so, how?

Many people say they read to escape, and yet Roost is about situations that many of us can relate to even if our life circumstances are different than Claudia's. If Roost isn't escapist then what makes it so engaging to read?

What to Serve

Scallop & Bacon Rolls

Ingredients:

- 1 package of scallops
- 1 package of bacon
- 1 can of water chestnuts

Instructions:

Place a scallop with a water chestnut making sure they match in size. Cut a strip of bacon in half and wrap it around the scallop and water chestnut. Secure with a toothpick. After all of the rolls have been assembled cook on a baking pan with the oven set to broil until bacon is crisp.

The Salty Dog

A cocktail to match Claudia's acerbic wit.

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. finely grated grapefruit zest
- 1 (2" wide) strip of grapefruit peel
- 2 oz. fresh white grapefruit juice
- 2 oz. gin or vodka

Instructions:

Combine salt and zest on a small plate. Rub grapefruit peel around rim of a glass; rim glass with salt. Combine grapefruit juice and gin or vodka in a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake and pour into rimmed glass; garnish with peel.

Recipe from saveur.com

Ali Bryan's Biography

Ali Bryan is a personal trainer, fitness instructor, and author of the popular blog *Hot Mess: Bananas in the dryer and other chaos*. She was a finalist in the 2010 CBC Canada Writes literary contest for her essay "Asshole Homemaker" and a bronze medalist in the CBC Canada Writes Literary Triathlon. She is a graduate of Saint Mary's University in Halifax, NS, and completed a graduate certificate in Creative Writing via the Humber School of Writers in Toronto under the tutelage of Paul Quarrington. In 2007, she was a semi-finalist in the Canadian reality series 3-Day Novel Contest. Unfortunately when asked on camera to describe herself she replied, *I'm a mom*, and after a long pause followed that with, *I'm a mother*.

She has over a hundred newspaper articles to her credit ranging in subject matter from the brake system of a Porsche 911 to backstage love at the world's largest annual indoor show. Her poem "First Touch of the Hip" was published in the St. Mary's University Literary Journal.

Ali grew up in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and spent her early years eating sand out of the sandbox and driving a plastic motorcycle. The youngest of three girls, she was forced to like the ugliest member of New Kids on the Block. She attended high school in Sackville, New Brunswick, after her parents pursued a lifelong dream and bought a historic inn in the small town. As a result, she took up smoking.

After university, Ali had a brief stint as a marketing intern in St. Vincent & the Grenadines. She returned from the Caribbean to Halifax and worked as an account executive in an advertising agency and later as a marketing communications professional. She also co-founded an acrobatic troupe and performed in a number of variety shows in Canada and beyond.

In 2006 she moved to Calgary with her husband Dave and established a career in fitness. She is an avid soccer player and fitness enthusiast. Having mastered a number of activities, including playing the glockenspiel cross-eyed and performing handstands on walkers, she wants to be an Olympic wrestler. But most days she'd settle for a clean kitchen.

Ali has three children, Pippa, Hugo and Odessa, and is known for her use of the word asshole. Her real name is Alexandra. Roost is her first novel.