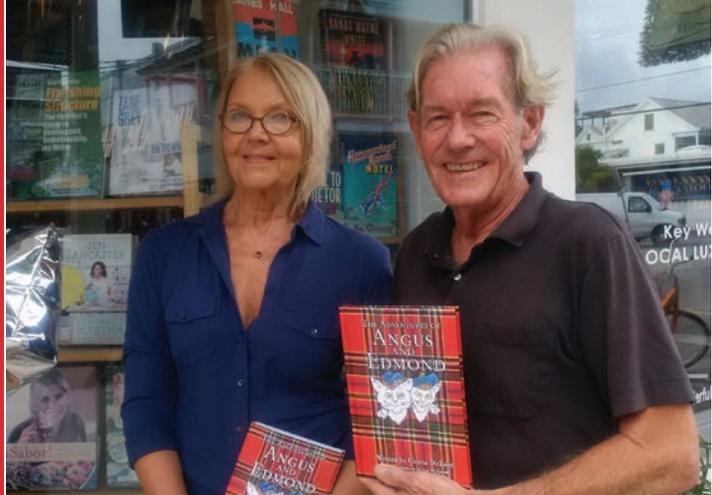
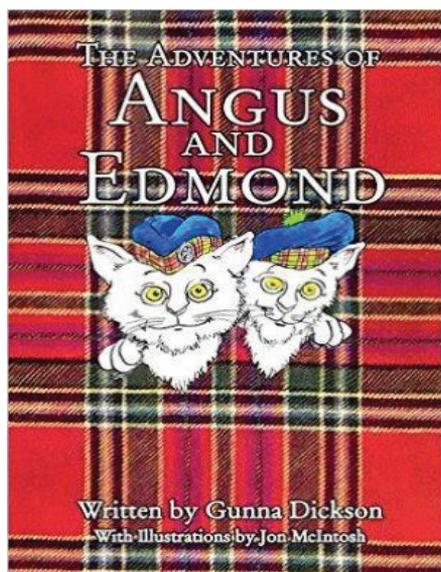


# Gunna Dickson

*New York-based writer Gunna Dickson draws inspiration from her late Scottish husband's heritage*



The idea for Gunna Dickson's new book, *The Adventures of Angus and Edmond*, came to her at a difficult time in her life. Her husband, author and journalist Stewart Dickson, had succumbed to cancer. Not long afterwards, the couple's two cats passed away within six months of one another.



"To contend against the unbearable stillness in our apartment, I found myself looking to adopt two more kitties," the writer recalls via email. "The Humane Society of New York happened to have a couple of inseparable litter mates with Scottish names – Angus and Edmond. It was a perfect match."

"The book is a tribute to my husband and his heritage," says Dickson, noting that Angus and Edmond's quest for their roots in the Highlands of Scotland leads them to Paris, London, Edinburgh and St Andrews.

"The story is very visual and I knew it had to be illustrated," she continues. "When a mutual friend introduced me to artist Jon McIntosh, everything fell into place. He was a godsend. The illustrations

by the magical Mr. McIntosh breathed life into my story."

An award-winning illustrator with Scottish roots, McIntosh currently lives and works in Key West, Florida. Given his passion for his ancestry, the collaboration simply made sense.

"My grandfather was brought to the U.S. by way of Nova Scotia in the 1800s when he was a very young child," he explains. "Our family was from the Moy area and from an early age my grandfather taught me about our clan and heritage. He even made it possible, when I visited with him in the summer, to learn the pipes. I have made many trips to Scotland to visit with the Mackintosh kin, and I was even married at a castle in Ayrshire!"

After graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design, McIntosh turned his attention to painting, commercial design and illustration.

He says everything about the story of Angus and Edmond lends itself to colourful imagery.

"Gunna's writing is very descriptive," he explains by email. "The only real challenge was for her and I to arrive at a style that was appealing for all ages; create her characters and their demeanor, and then apply them to scenes from the book."

Dickson says it was actually quite easy to write a story featuring cats as main characters.

"For years I was 'ghost-writing' silly verses from our cats to my husband for his birthday or Father's Day, and this is kind of an extension of that."

In fact, Dickson and McIntosh already have plans for a second book in the series. "Angus and Edmond are funny and sweet," she says. "And their antics inspire me."

In addition to being an author, Dickson is an avid reader. Many of her favourite books are mysteries – "from Sherlock Holmes to Mary Higgins Clark."

"That said, my eclectic reading list

leans mostly to non-fiction, as well as literary and political thrillers by authors such as Brad Thor, David Baldacci and Vince Flynn. I read every night before going to sleep."

The light nature of Dickson's new book is a contrast to her husband's novel, *VAIR*; a historical thriller in which a trail of brutal murders using 16th Century weapons follows the modern-day visit of a British Royal to the U.S.

*"Stewart applied his knowledge, intellectual curiosity, professional experience and imagination, together with a lot of research," she shares. "My book about Angus and Edmond is pure whimsy."*

That said, she certainly doesn't feel confined to a single style of writing.

"I am a serious-minded person who cares a lot about politics and global issues, and I have translated six books about totalitarian rule and the suffering it brings to those oppressed by it. I do have a softer side, however, and a pretty good sense of humor."

Dickson believes that Angus and Edmond's antics will appeal to a broad range of readers.

"Anyone who has ever loved a pet will like this story," she says. "The cats' adventures will also appeal to children, who tend to have a vivid imagination."

For those looking for a different sort of read, Dickson is working on *VAIR II: Ann's Story*. The book will be a sequel of sorts to Stewart's novel, written from the point of view of its main female character.

"I put it aside for *The Adventures of Angus and Edmond* but I am ready to resume work on it," she says. "It is a much more difficult book to write."

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