

Author offers free eBooks to GP book clubs

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Grosse Pointe Farms native Theresa Rizzo is offering digital copies of her book, "The Lives Between Us," to Grosse Pointe book clubs. Though she left Grosse Pointe several years ago, the community in which Theresa Rizzo grew up will always be close to her heart.

To date, Rizzo has based three of her four published books on her hometown.

"I really want to share Grosse Pointe with the world and through my novels I get that opportunity," she said. "For that reason, I included a 'Fact or Fiction' section in the back of each book to highlight Grosse Pointe and include personal anecdotes and links to websites."

Rizzo, who attended St. Paul School and then University Liggett School, still has family in the area. Her father, Dr. Paul Rizzo, lives in the Woods. Her mother, Marilyn Sutherland, lived in Grosse Pointe her entire life. Rizzo married her high school sweetheart, John Brooks, 32 years ago and currently they live in Boulder, Colo.

Though she's always enjoyed creative writing, Rizzo got her start after her children were born. She wrote about them in Christmas letters and discovered her family and friends got a charge out of her anecdotes. After her fourth child was born, she decided to write her first book.

"I started learning the craft and business of writing and it saved my sanity," she said. "Writing was a wonderful, creative and intelligent outlet. It fed my soul and made me a much happier person and a better mother and wife."

Rizzo finds her inspiration in newspapers and from news in general. Once a story grabs her attention, her imagination runs wild. One such story led to the creation of her latest novel.

"In the late '80s and early '90s, embryonic stem cells were creating quite a buzz," she said. "They were

hailed as potential miracle cures for all kinds of diseases and disabilities, yet pro-life supporters were outraged. The moral controversy intrigued me. I sympathized with scientists and pro-life people alike, yet thought they both simplified the issue. I think it's easy to take a moral stance when one's not directly affected, but what happens to your morals when it's your child or your spouse who stands to suffer or die? That idea intrigued me and I had to write about it; hence, 'The Lives Between Us' was born."

"The Lives Between Us" is the story of a non-committal reporter who forms a close bond with a relative who then becomes gravely ill. She becomes determined to find a cure, but their only hope lies in embryonic stem cell therapy. Romance and politics round out the story, which centers on family and love.

"It's about desperate people doing what they must to save the ones they love," Rizzo said. "'The Lives Between Us' poses a universal question: How far would you go to save the one you love? Fans of Jodi Picoult, Lisa Genova and Nicholas Sparks would enjoy this book."

Though the setting involves Grosse Pointe — a place with which she's quite familiar — Rizzo received help from her connections back home for the research part of the project.

"My books involve a lot of research and even though this is fiction, I want to be as accurate as possible."

For this book, Rizzo needed to research preemies, so her father contacted a friend who set her up with a tour of St. John's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and answered her questions. Also, her cousin, a Macomb County sheriff, was instrumental in helping verify several aspects of state law critical to the story.

"I love writing relationship books that tug at your heart," she said. "They explore controversial current issues. They educate without being preachy and make the reader question what he/she would do in a similar circumstance. The back of each book, with the exception of 'Just Beginning,' has discussion questions to facilitate dialogues."

"The Lives Between Us" will be released Wednesday, July 1, and Rizzo is giving away hundreds of digital copies for review on NetGalley, Goodreads, Librarything and elsewhere. She decided she'd like to add Grosse Pointe book clubs to her list of recipients.

"So I'm happy to offer a free eBook suitable for any eReader (nook, iPad, Kindle, Kindle Fire, smart phone, etc.) to any Grosse Pointer who is a member of a book club and contacts me by July 1," she said. "Please put FREE REVIEW COPY — GP News in the (email) subject line. It's my hope that they'd be willing to write a review and post it on the book's Amazon and/or Barnes & Noble page, but it's certainly not a condition of getting the free digital book. This is my chance to give a little something back to Grosse Pointe."

Rizzo was a finalist in the Rising Star category of BTSemag's Readers Choice Red Carpet Book Awards 2014. She is a member of the Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers, Colorado Romance Writers, Crested Butte Writers, Independent Book Publishers Association and Colorado Authors' League. She has received numerous accolades and awards for her work.

She can be reached at theresarizzo.com, on Facebook, Twitter, Amazon and Goodreads.