

# The Secrets of Harden Long

Peter A. Brandt

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Harden Long is your quintessential bachelor, a man's man who lives for beer, blondes, and the occasional ball game. Unbeknownst to his buddies he harbors a deep dark secret: Harden writes romance novels and one of them, *The Orphaned Prince* has just been published!

After Cooter sees the made-for-TV movie of Harden's best-seller, he becomes convinced that the book is about him. With Dixie Dawn in tow, the delusional Texan strikes out on a madcap mission to confront Harden and reclaim his birthright to the imaginary Canadian throne.

Although an unlikely pair, Harden and Dixie Dawn find themselves inexplicably drawn to one another. Could this be the happily-ever-after that they've been searching for? Maybe, if only they can figure out how to survive the lunacy that's suddenly surrounding them. Treat yourself to this hilarious break-out romantic comedy by Peter A. Brandt, and you'll find yourself believing that with love, anything is possible.

## The Secrets of Harden Long is now available at:

In store: Book City, 663 Yonge Street Toronto, Ontario

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## Book Excerpt

Dixie Dawn was in her element. Getting men's attention was something her mamma had taught her years ago when she was preparing for her courting days. From the look of her face, the clothes, the makeup and finally the strut, male eyeballs from all corners of the room were staring at her as she made her way up to the bar. Fingers were pointing and snickers heard but she pushed their negativity from her head. The ones that laughed were jealous; they knew they could never have her. Dixie Dawn sat down beside her intended target. Her heart was telling her to jump all over him, but she knew if she wasn't careful, she might scare him away. She knew it would have to be his idea. She had to be patient.

Harden didn't notice her at first. The Calgary Flames were playing the hated Edmonton Oilers on the large screen above the bar. His TV at home was much bigger, but watching it at home alone just didn't feel the same as it did watching it with others.

When the whistle blew in the game, Harden turned and noticed the movement to his right side. Harden stole a look and gave a little gasp. Sitting beside him was the woman of his dreams. The makeup, the hair, the smile—she was a true vision of loveliness.

Harden knew he had to play it cool. This was too good to be true and it was important he not scare her off. Slowly he turned his head, making sure he wasn't being too obvious, but Dixie Dawn was a master and noticed his movement out of the corner of her eye. When she was certain he was looking, she thrust her ample cleavage into his field of vision.

Dixie Dawn waited until she saw his eyes drop to her chest before she smiled at him with all the gusto of a shotgun blast. Harden almost fell off his chair. Harden's heart skipped a beat when he saw her and smiled back at her, lowering his eyes and mumbling something inaudible.

"Well, hi there yourself," she said, pretending she could understand his mumbblings. She reached out her hand, palm down.

Harden grabbed it quickly, bringing it up to his lowering head and kissed her hand.

Dixie Dawn squealed a little.

"My name is Dixie Dawn, and you are?" she asked.

"Oh, ah Harden. Harden Long."

"Well, I hope so," she said and continued to laugh and laugh at a joke Harden wasn't sure he understood.

## Questions and Answers

- Question?** Is it true you wrote this novel in only three days?  
**Answer** – Yes, I got an invitation to participate in the “Great Canadian Winter Novel Marathon” in Pickering Ontario. It was organized as a fundraiser for “Herizon House,” a home for battered women. A group of writers get sponsors to pay them for isolating themselves in the library for 3 days to write a full novel. We raised over \$5000 for the cause.
- Question?** How long have you been writing?  
**Answer** – I started out writing when I was just a kid, writing my first book at the age of 10. I stopped writing, concentrating on raising a family and my career in the Canadian Air Force. When I retired in 1996, I decided to change career paths and became a Technical Writer, which I still do today. I never started writing novels until 2003 after taking courses with Brian Henry in the Toronto area.
- Question?** What qualifies me to write romance?  
**Answer** – I’m a born romantic. I’ve lived through the pain of marrying to young and then getting divorced. I asked my new wife to marry me in the middle of the fourth inning at a Rochester Americans baseball game. She was asked a trivia question and the right answer won her a prize. I was inside the prize box and came out, got down on one knee and asked her to marry me in front of 10,500 people.
- Question?** You have an American coming to Canada in your story. Is there any connection in your own life?  
**Answer** – Yes, I lived and worked for two years in Rochester NY, fell in love with Carly and brought her back to Canada as my wife. She lived in Texas for a while and has family there, so it wasn’t a big stretch for me to write it in this setting.
- Question?** What’s your background? Who is Peter A. Brandt  
**Answer** – I’m a guy who has known since he was a little kid that he wanted to be a writer. My childhood wasn’t the greatest. My mother died when I was four and my father raised us alone. He ended up break his back, so my brother and I lived in foster homes for almost 2 years. Out of that pain, I learned to be funny. My whole life revolves around laughter. I have this knack for finding things in everyday life funny. I also like my

characters to live on the edge, to suffer the most horrendous things but make it in the end.

6. **Question?** So is comedy the only types of novels you write?

**Answer** – No, I love to write comedy but I am also very interested in writing thought provoking action thrillers. One I am writing now is about a 16 year old spoiled rich kid who skips school and mysteriously lands on a train. This train has four other people on board and no one knows where it's going. Sarah, the young girl, finally takes controls and the group set off to find out about the train and where it's going. The ending is very unique.

7. **Question?** Where did the name Harden Long come from?

**Answer** – Before I started writing the book I wanted to find a name that would bring a smile to the readers face as well as give my character a name which would surely cause him much distress growing up. I came across the name Harden Long and I knew immediately that this was the name for my character.

# Peter A. Brandt

## Bio

Peter wrote his first novel at the tender age of ten. Indicative of his love of mischief, it was a story about a chimpanzee that caused havoc in a young boy's life. As a young adult, he focused on important things, like raising a family, performing in a band and playing hockey.

Pete rediscovered his love for the written world in 1996 when he became a Technical Writer. Shortly thereafter he moved to Rochester, NY and met Lois Gresh, a published author who sparked his interest in trying his hand at writing novels. A few workshops later, Pete gathered up enough courage to participate in the annual Muskoka Novel Marathon for Literacy, a tradition he observes to this day.

Peter prefers to write fast-paced reads and his knack for finding humor in everyday life shines through the pages of his works. A romantic at heart, he credits his wife, Carly, for being his inspiration. Pete now lives in Toronto where he divides his time between his family of five children, his wife, his job as a technical writer, and his passion for creating fabulously fun works of fiction.

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# Peter A. Brandt

## Biography (Long)

Peter A. Brandt started his writing life early with his first book at the age of 10. Besides writing, Peter was the lead singer in a school band as well as a public speaker, winning numerous awards. Shortly after his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday he joined the army and was thrust into manhood to the extreme, living and working with ex-cons and men from all walks of life. It was through these initial years of upbringing by the Canadian Government that he found his flair for being funny.

“If I didn’t laugh I would have cried,” he admits. He spent his army life playing hockey, singing in bands and working as a soldier. In 1977 / 1978 he spent six months in Cyprus as part of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force. After returning he joined the battalion rifle team and was a member of the top rifle team in Canada in 1979. He left the Army shortly after and joined the Air Force as an engine technician, all the while playing hockey.

Peter was married for 23 years and had two boys. In 1996 he retired from the military and decided a complete change in career was necessary. Peter pursued his passion of writing and soon landed a job as a Technical Writer in a small community in the wilds of northern New Brunswick. It wasn’t long after his career change that he was divorced.

“Those early years were great for sharpened my writing skills,” and a few years later he was offered a writing position in Rochester NY, where he met and worked with Lois Gresh a published author.

“Getting to know her I realized what I was missing by not writing, so I set out to start writing again.”

It was while living in Rochester that he met the love of his life. Both Carly and Peter are sure divine intervention brought them together. A born romantic, Peter proposed to her in front of 10,500 people at a Rochester Red Wings ball game and married her in 2003 after moving to Toronto.

“From the moment I told her of my aspirations to be a writer she has pushed me to fulfill my dream.” His first book I wrote was a memoir describing the surreal antics of an immature boy raised by the army and a look at the countless crazy people he met in his early years in the army.

“I showed it to an agent and she was gracious enough to advise me although interesting and funny, it had not been written the proper way.” So, he went back to the drawing board.

Peter attended every writer's seminar that Brian Henry, a professor and editor, had to offer. Destiny offered itself to him when he got word of a "Writer's Marathon" to raise money for Literary in the Huntsville Ontario area. His first attempt at writing fiction landed him a 6<sup>th</sup> place finish that garnered a "worthy of review by a publisher," by the judges. What made this 6<sup>th</sup> place unique was there were 24 authors in attendance and several of them were already published.

"The Secrets of Harden Long," is a story born from a writer's marathon. Peter initially hesitated writing a comedy because he read it was one of the hardest to write.

"When Marty Avery, the brainchild of writers marathons asked me to attend the "Great Canadian Novel Writer's Marathon" to raise money for Herizon House, a battered woman's shelter, I decided I wanted to step out and write a comedy. At the same time, I wanted my lead female character to be strong against a weak bully, male character."

His first romantic comedy was written in three days and once rewritten and polished was sent to Linden Bay Romance and immediately chosen for publication.

Peter continues to write novels on weekends and evenings, as time permits from his job as a Senior Technical Writer downtown Toronto Canada.

"There are two sides to my writing," he offers. "There is the comedy side which is my first love because I have a real knack at seeing the funny side of life, but I also have a very bizarre mind and love to write action thrillers."

His latest project is a story of a young rich girl who skips school and has an encounter with a train. Suddenly she is thrust into a bizarre surreal life on board this fantasy train with four other passengers who seem not to care where the train is heading.

Peter's life revolves around his wife Carly and their five children, a blended family he loves dearly. Peter spends his time writing in his office with his dog Cricket, a Yorkshire terrier sleeping on a pillow by his desk.

"I love the rest of my family dearly, but Cricket is the only one allowed to keep me company while I write."

