

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I am grateful to my wife Karen, my best friend and life partner. For supporting this improbable project in every way and believing in Bethany's story despite my feeble initial efforts at creative writing, I thank you. I am blessed to have your love and encouragement, and for being "all my reasons".

Like Bethany, I have had numerous mentors over the years who inspired me with a love of learning and provided opportunities beyond my wildest dreams. I am deeply indebted to: Kayoko and Osami Hoshino, my parents; Jean Collins, my high school math teacher; Edward Barbeau, J.P. Grossman, Ravi Vakil, and all my former Math Olympiad coaches; Ian VanderBurgh and his remarkable team at the University of Waterloo's Centre for Education in Mathematics and Computing; Graham Wright from the Canadian Mathematical Society; Tom and Marlene Griffiths from the CMS National Math Camp; Jason Brown, Karl Dilcher, Jeannette Janssen, Richard Nowakowski, Dorette Pronk, and Keith Taylor from Dalhousie University; Cathy Beehan from Action Canada; Mark Winston from the Simon Fraser University Centre for Dialogue; Alain Jolicoeur and Diane Keller from the Canada Border Services Agency; Graham Flack and Adam Hendriks from the federal government's Recruitment of Policy Leaders Program; Mary Anne Moser and Jay Ingram from the Banff Science Communications Program; Ken-ichi Kawarbayashi from the National Institute of Informatics in Tokyo; and the entire community of Canadian mathematics educators, especially Peter Taylor from Queen's University and John McLoughlin from the University of New Brunswick.

I'm grateful for the numerous friends who read my original manuscript, whose frank advice and constructive feedback made the final novel so much more polished. In particular, I'd like to acknowledge the contributions of Sarah Aldous, Andrew Curran, Leonid Chindelevitch, Graham Duke, Matt Finlayson, Sharonna Greenberg, Chris Harder, Zdena Harder, Jack Koenka, Christopher Kowalchuk, Steve LaRocque, Derek Lemieux, Stephanie Mitchell, Anatole Papadopoulos, David Sandomierski, Naoki Sato, Adrian Tang, Ilya Volnyansky, and Wai Ling Yee.

After completing the first few chapters of this book, I posted what I had written to the Art of Problem Solving forum. I received valuable comments from members of the AoPS community, including high school students, undergraduate students, university professors, and the parent of a former Math Olympian. Thank you to Alex Chen, Jing Jing Li, Jonathan Love, Fedja Nazarov, Mary O'Keeffe, and Luyi Zhang.

Since February 2013, I have been a Mathematics Tutor at Quest University Canada in Squamish, British Columbia. I am grateful to my colleagues on the Quest faculty for deepening my love for teaching and reminding me of the privilege we have of serving the next generation. Thanks also to the students at Quest, including Rebecca Gross, Anna Harvey-Vieira, Anna Marie Obermeier, and Ariel van Brummelen, who read the manuscript and provided feedback on character voice and plot development. I am particularly grateful for the contributions of Sophia Matthew and Deanna Kronenberg, two remarkable students who worked with me every week for nine months, as they went through the text line by line, showing me how to make the story more compelling, and being the best editors any first-time writer could ask for.

Thank you to the entire team at FriesenPress, whose professionalism and talent taught me so much about the value of assisted self-publishing. I acknowledge the work of Dana Mills and her entire team for turning my manuscript into a finished novel.

Finally, I dedicate this book to all the Bethany MacDonalds out there, young students who are interested in mathematics but wonder if there is something more to the subject for them. I wrote this book with you in mind, to share the message that through relentless perseverance and hard work, anyone can succeed in mathematics and develop the confidence, creativity, and critical-thinking skills so essential in life. Like Bethany, I hope that studying mathematics will provide you with a deep clarity of purpose, and through this roller-coaster journey, you will discover how to serve society and live life to the full.