

Praise for *Throw Mama from the Boat*

“Reece’s imagination knows no bounds. You’ll find yourself caught between a knowing smirk and an admiration for his writing style. This book is a great way to pass a long ferry wait. Enjoy.”

~ Cathie Roy, *Publisher*

“For those of us who depend on ferries ... the journey back and forth can be a time for contemplation or dreaming. Reece uses the trope of our familiar ferries to explore a world just beyond our usual daily lives. In this alternate cosmos ... creatures out of classical mythology and fairy tales are half-seen out of the corner of at least one eye, and people are more (and less) than what they seem. There’s whimsy in these pages and also a deeply serious understanding of humanity, its wishes, disappointments, and its possibilities.”

~ Theresa Kishkan, *author*

“‘Taking the ferry’, a west coast rite of passage, is an experience that can range from mundane to surreal. Steering a decidedly weirdward course, author PJ Reece has managed to stow a dozen adventures between the covers of *Throw Mama from the Boat and other Ferry Tales*.”

~ Arthur Black

“The iconic ferryboat of the Sunshine Coast dominates the narrative scenery. A few gems emerge from the collection—a little girl tells a story from her sickbed in the belly of the whale; while a cast of Coast characters enact a comical tragedy aboard a vessel struck by lightning. The stories teeter on the edge of reality, sometimes crashing down into the fantastic, sometimes making profound sense.”

~ Jan DeGrass

“I almost can’t find the words to adequately say how wonderful [these] stories are ... just the right mixture of angst and whimsy.”

~ John Friesen, *writer*

**THROW MAMA
FROM THE
BOAT**

AND OTHER FERRY TALES

Also by PJ Reece

FICTION

Smoke that Thunders

Roxy

NON FICTION

Flight of the Patriot
(ghostwriter)

Story Structure to Die For

Story Structure Expedition:
Journey to the Heart of a Story

**THROW MAMA
FROM THE BOAT
AND OTHER FERRY TALES**

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Throw Mama from the Boat and other Ferry Tales

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This book is a work of fiction. References to real people, events, establishments, organizations, or locales are intended only to provide a sense of authenticity, and are used to advance the fictional narrative. All other characters, and all incidents and dialogue, are drawn from the author's imagination and are not to be construed as real.

For Colin Yardley

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Queen of Whales	1
Gullible	15
Big Bad Wolf	27
House on Fire	41
The Boy Who Didn't Want to be a Human Anymore	55
Throw Mama from the Boat	67
Death of a Salesman	77
Gravity	91
Love Boat	103
Cold as Hell	117
Houston, We Have a Problem	129
The Curse	141
Love Yourself	161

QUEEN OF WHALES



CARMEN WAS ONE SICK KID. She was so sick that no one had the heart to tell her. The way the doctors looked at her, though, she knew. And she could tell by the sympathy in the eyes of the ambulance medics who came to escort her and her father across the Salish Sea and all the way to the children's hospital in the big rainy city. The world had been crying for a week, and according to the weather lady on television the sadness was forecast to get worse before it got better. But the operation was booked, the doctors were waiting, and now the decision had been made to risk the rough waters. Loading was delayed in hope the seas might settle, and finally the ambulance prepared to board through the ship's great gaping mouth.

"Entering the belly of the whale," the driver, Sharon, announced.

"I wish," Carmen said, but so hopelessly that she didn't even open her eyes.

Dad sat bolt upright as the loading ramp heaved and the ambulance came to an abrupt halt. "If the sea gets any rougher," he said, "you might get your wish."

"What, Daddy—we might sink?"

"Cross your fingers." Zack, the medic, gave her a gorgeous wink before jumping out to reconnoitre the situation, leaving Dad squeezing his daughter's hand.

"What's wrong, Daddy?"

"Nothing," he said, then joined the medic on the ramp. Carmen heard them speaking, heard Zack say something about whales.

Whales? She wanted to see. Zack said an entire pod of grey whales were “all rubbin’ against de ship.” He had such a pretty accent.

“I want to see,” she said.

“Sorry, darlin’. We boardin’ de ship now. All aboard!”

Once the ambulance was safely parked on the main car deck, Dad needed more air, but Carmen asked him to wait. She was listening. “Everyone please shush.” She could feel the vibrations, the scuffling against the hull. She could feel it in the poisoned marrow of her fragile bones.

“They must be shedding old skin,” Dad said.

The ship soon left the berth and headed into the restless sea. The ambulance creaked on its suspension, rolling one way and then the other with the increasing swell. Dad excused himself to “use the facilities” upstairs on the passenger deck. After he’d gone, Carmen asked Zack if they were going to be okay.

“You, young lady, are the most okayest person on this ship.” He opened a binder and reviewed her paperwork. “I shouldn’t be telling you this, you’re too young—how old are you, anyway?”

“I’m nine.”

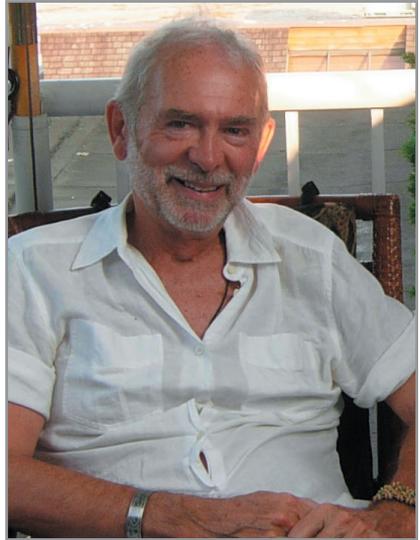
“Oh, man, you’re way too young.”

“To know what?”

He showed her a page of medical hieroglyphics, drugs she was on to survive the trip, but the sight of it only made her shut her eyes. “This ship could sink, darlin’—and you wouldn’t feel a thing.” He held her hand as he read deeper into her medical record, and he wondered if this emergency operation wasn’t just a lot of wishful thinking. He hated this part of his job, knowing his patient was never coming home. It might be more merciful if she *were* swallowed by a whale.

The pitching of the ship caused cars to skid and nudge each other, setting off their alarms. “Gosh, Zack—are we sinking?”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



PJ REECE has been a working writer for 25 years. He has scripted documentaries for most of the big networks, published two novels, ghosted a memoir of escape from Iran, and self-published two books on story structure. He lives with his wife in Gibsons, BC.

Reece's blog concerns "how fiction really works" and can be found at: pjreece.ca/catagory/blog.