

Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments is a heartfelt chapter in which the author expresses profound gratitude for the numerous individuals and organizations who played an integral role in bringing their work to fruition. The journey to publication is rarely a solo endeavor, and the author begins by recognizing Grove Atlantic, the publisher, as an incredibly fortunate partnership. They note the great privilege of being able to work with such a supportive and dedicated publisher. Special thanks are given to Morgan Entrekin, who stood as a constant pillar of support throughout the entire process, always offering guidance and encouragement. Judy Hottensen, with her unique understanding of Midwestern English, is also singled out for her assistance, alongside Deb Seager, whose memory and helpfulness were invaluable during the writing journey. These individuals, along with others, provided the steady foundation on which the book was built, offering their expertise, knowledge, and unwavering belief in the author's vision.

The chapter continues with a tribute to Elisabeth Schmitz, the author's editor, who is praised for her sharp insight and remarkable ability to transform the manuscript into its final form. Schmitz's editorial contributions were essential in helping shape the narrative and bring clarity to the book's core ideas. The author acknowledges her exceptional talent for identifying the key themes and issues within the work, which played a vital role in crafting the final version. Additionally, Kelly Winton's artistic talent is acknowledged for the book cover, with the author describing it as magnificent. The cover, as a visual manifestation of the work, captured its essence, setting the tone for readers and reflecting Winton's artistic ability to visually express the story's themes. This collaboration between the author and those involved in the production and design of the book demonstrates the collective effort behind the scenes that contributed to the book's success.

Further acknowledgments are given to the Friedrich Agency, with particular thanks to Marin Takikawa and Lucy Carson for their professional approach and unwavering support. Molly Friedrich, the author's representative, is also thanked for her concise and witty approach to literary representation, as well as her ability to believe in the power of compelling storytelling. The author notes how valuable it is to have a literary advocate who understands not only the technical aspects of the industry but also the emotional and creative intricacies of a writer's work. This acknowledgment highlights the importance of collaboration between a writer and their agent, emphasizing the trust and mutual respect that forms the foundation of a productive and successful partnership. In addition to professional support, personal relationships also played a significant role in the author's journey, and these connections are celebrated with heartfelt thanks.

The chapter also reflects on the personal contributions of close friends and family who provided emotional support and practical help during the writing process. Liz is mentioned for her thoughtful gesture of providing Kellan's octopus, a symbol of inspiration, while Mike is thanked for introducing the author to the eternal law of electric bass, an important life lesson that resonated deeply. Lee's embodiment of Odysseus is also noted as a powerful reminder of the timeless qualities of adventure and endurance. Sol, too, is thanked for embodying the wisdom of Homer, symbolizing the strength and resilience needed to persevere through challenges. These personal acknowledgments emphasize the close-knit relationships that sustain a writer through both the highs and lows of their journey. The importance of these connections is highlighted as a source of strength and motivation throughout the creative process.

The author also reflects on the craftsmanship of John, who built their mahogany writing desk, a treasured object that became a symbol of the space in which the work was created. This desk, adorned with Reed's painting of the North Wind, was more than just a piece of furniture—it represented the environment in which ideas took shape and where the author could retreat to write in solitude. Robin is also mentioned for being a devoted reader, someone whose keen eye for detail ensured that the

characters remained true to their arcs and that no narrative thread strayed off course. Robin's ability to discern when something wasn't working in the narrative was a critical element in maintaining the book's integrity, and the author expresses deep appreciation for this invaluable contribution.

Ultimately, the acknowledgments chapter serves as a testament to the collective effort involved in bringing a book to life. It emphasizes the importance of both professional collaboration and personal support, recognizing the diverse individuals who contributed to the creation of the work. The author's gratitude is expressed not only toward those directly involved in the publishing process but also to those whose love, friendship, and inspiration helped shape the story. Through these acknowledgments, the author acknowledges that a book is not just the work of one individual, but the result of a community of people who believe in the vision and support the writer's journey. This chapter serves as a heartfelt tribute to the interconnectedness of human relationships, highlighting how the contributions of many can come together to create something lasting and meaningful.