

BOOKISH MAGAZINE



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APRIL

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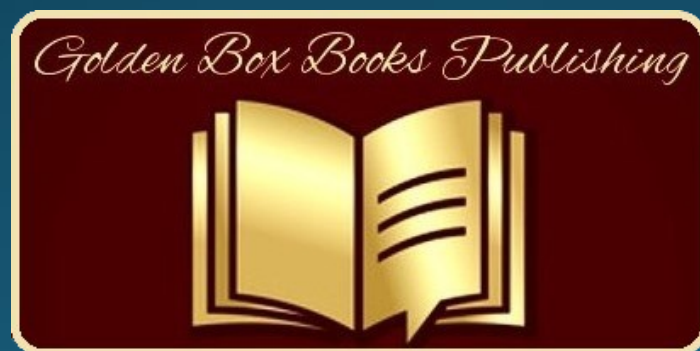
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A WhoDunIt mystery

by Alan Zacher
and Erika M Szabo



Can you guess who the killer is?

On a rainy Thursday morning, Mrs. O' Brian was found dead in her one-bedroom apartment in the inner-city of St. Louis by her caretaker and the apartment complex manager. According to their statements, Mrs. O'Brian didn't come to the door as usual when Flora, her caretaker knocked. Worried, she asked the manager to open the door, and they've found the old lady in the kitchen, dead, and the apartment ransacked.

Homicide Detective Chance was assigned to the case. According to the coroner's report, Mrs. O'Brian died sometime between eight and midnight the night before. The cause of death was asphyxiation as the result of someone holding a soft, thick material to her face until she stopped breathing. Although she had some bruising on her arms as if she tried to fight off the attacker, the coroner didn't find any evidence under her fingernails.

By Friday, Detective Chance found out that Mrs. O' Brian had lived there for many years, had a moderate income, and she was a lady of routine. She rose every morning at six AM. After bathing and dressing, she ate her breakfast of a bowl of cereal while she watched the morning local news on the small TV that sat on top of the kitchen table. On Mondays and Thursdays from eight AM until noon, Flora, her caregiver, came to help her with cleaning, laundry, and cooking.

On Tuesday mornings, Mrs. O'Brian ordered a taxi and went to buy groceries at a small family-owned store, the Kroger's, five blocks south of her apartment building.

Detective Chance visited the store and finding the owner asked if he knows Mr. O'Brian. "Of course, she's been shopping here every week for years. A loyal customer, she was just here Tuesday. I hope she knows that she had won the jackpot," the owner of the store told the detective, smiling. But his expression turned sad when the detective told him that she was murdered. "Oh, I'm so sorry!" he cried out. "She was such a sweet person."

"How did you know she won the lottery?" the detective inquired.

I know because every week she's been buying one ticket and always playing the same numbers, her birthday and of her late husband's birthday. She told me many times that if she would ever win the lottery, she would have an animal sanctuary built and gather all the old, unwanted animals. Life is so unfair!" he cried out. "Just when her dream comes true, she dies."

After gathering all the information, he could, the detective didn't have any proof, only suspicion. He asked the most likely suspects to gather in the modestly furnished living-room of Mrs. O'Brian's apartment, hoping he could flush out the murderer.

Two women arrived first. They sat on the floral-printed sofa, nervously glancing at the detective who stood by the window deep in thoughts, and the police officers standing by the door. Flora, a middle-aged, plump caregiver, Mrs. Banks, the manager of the apartment complex, a tall, bony woman with a pointy nose and dark hair combed into a tight bun.

Flora leaned closer to Mrs. Banks and whispered, "Oh, my! Who could be so cruel to smother a sweet old lady to death? I'm going to miss her." She sniffed and wiped her eyes with a tissue.

“Terrible!” Mrs. Banks nodded. “Just terrible. Who could have done it?”

“I never trusted this shifty-eyed janitor,” Flora whispered.

“I never had any problems with him, but you never know... We don’t really know people.”

As if talking about the devil, Gerard Ochs, the disheveled-looking janitor of the apartment complex in stained overall walked in and sat on the sofa close to Mrs. Banks. “There is a leak in apartment C,” he said to the manager. “I shut off the water; I’ll fix it later when we’re done here.”

Mrs. Banks nodded and looked up as Tricia O’ Brian, a twenty-three-year-old known drug addict niece of Mrs. O’ Brian walked in. She sat down and clasped her hands trying to hide the tremors of her fingers.

Scanning the nervously fidgeting bunch, Detective Chance began talking, “The coroner’s report of Mrs. O’ Brian states that she had been murdered. Everyone in this room had access to her apartment. According to her phone records, on late Wednesday night, she called every one of you, most likely to tell you that she won the lottery jackpot. Therefore, you all had a motive to kill her and steal the winning ticket!”

He towered over the niece, Tricia O’ Brian, “You are a drug addict, you have no job, and I suspect, you’re always in need of money.”

“But I... I didn’t get her message until...” she stuttered. “Until you told me this morning when you found me at my boyfriend’s apartment. You see, we had a party last night and... I didn’t hear the phone...”

The detective gave her a pitying look, turned, and stared at Mrs. Banks. “Your husband has gambling debts and the loan sharks are threatening him. You live in the complex and you have a key to this apartment.”

"It wasn't me!" Mrs. Bank shouted. "I drove to the casino shortly after eight, dragged my no-good husband out of there by the ear, and we had a huge fight in the parking lot. The police were called, and they took us to the police station. We didn't get home until four in the morning."

The detective took a step toward the caregiver. The middle-aged woman squirmed when the detective looked into her eyes. "Flora, let's talk about that morning when you and Mrs. Banks found Mrs. O'Brian slumped over at the kitchen table, dead."

"As I told you then," Flora said wringing her fingers on her lap. "I kept knocking and pushing the doorbell, but she didn't answer. I got worried, and I went to wake up Mrs. Banks to let me in with her master key."

The detective shook his head and leaned closer to Flora. "But that's not what happened. You have a key to the building and a key to your clients' apartment. I know; I checked with the two other residents here that you are taking care of. You let yourself in. What happened after that?"

Flora's eyes widened. "No! I never had a key to Mrs. O'Brian's apartment. She was paranoid about that, she never gave me a key. I swear!" Detective Chance gave her a sharp look, and then he turned to face the janitor.

The detective now faced Gerard Ochs, the janitor. "You have been stealing jewelry from these residents for years," he accused. "You've been careful, you take only one piece of jewelry at a time."

The janitor drew a sharp breath. "How do... how do you know?"

"Because you're stupid enough to use the pawnbroker only a block away from the apartment complex." The detective motioned to one of the uniformed officers standing by the door. "Arrest him and take him to the station."

Flora jumped up. "Murderer!" she shrieked.

"I didn't do it!" Gerard screamed as the officers handcuffed him. "I'm a thief but I'm no killer!"

"What happened to the lottery ticket, detective?" came Tricia's shaky voice. "I'm her only relative, and I could really use the money right now."

"Mrs. O'Brian gave the ticket to her lawyer and named him the executor of her new will to have the animal sanctuary built. She took care of everything the afternoon before she was murdered."

Detective Chance had all the information he needed to arrest the murderer.

Find out if your guess is correct... or not... Click [HERE](#)



Beware of the fluffy beast

By PJ Mann



In many private houses, it's common to find the warning about a ferocious dog ready to rip your limbs apart if you try to intrude uninvited. We all know about the cats' territoriality and their vicious habit of aiming straight at the opponents' eyes.

Yet, there's a big misconception about what apparently can look like the quintessential loveliness hidden within a cloud of fluffy fur.

I am talking about Bunnies.

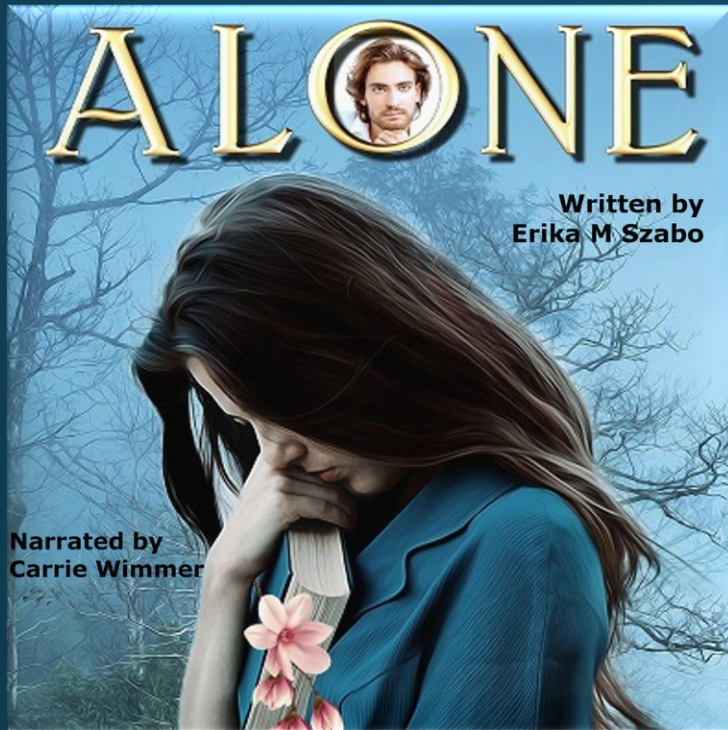
Even the nickname inspires nothing but tenderness, and when we saw pictures of those adorable little critters, the first thing that comes to our minds is just... AWWW!

Well, let me introduce you to the world of the most devious creature nature has ever created. Rabbits are natural prey, so you would expect them to run and hide when threatened. You would never expect them to punch, bite and run against whatever they might consider a threat. This, of course, regardless of whether the threat is real or is just in their imagination.

Yes, Rabbits are big drama queens and have a vivid imagination. I am wondering whether they are a sort of animal representation of Don Quixote.

Continue reading...

New Release audiobook



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A romantic dystopian novelette.

Caleb lost his soulmate, Valerie. Could it be possible to find her in a parallel universe? If his father succeeds to open the portal, will he find the same person in the alternate universe or a stranger? How far is he willing to go in finding the happiness he lost?

Will he find his soulmate, Valerie?

"I highly recommend this short story which opens the door to wonder and contemplation while reminding us to love well in this short life: Just when we have given up on life ever again fulfilling our hopes and dreams, surprises, if you like, small and unexpected opportunities can miraculously open up our reality. Holding onto that hope will ultimately lead us home." ~ Sandy C

"Fascinated by the subject of the afterlife, I gravitated toward the short story, 'Alone,' which delves into "parallel universes" (multiverses) - alternate realities. Categorized as Science Fiction Romance—the logic and plausibility forthcoming from a scientific breakthrough, paved the way for me to appreciate the romance aspect. For me, romance is the "heart of the matter". ~Eva Pasco

Narrated by
Carrie Wimmer

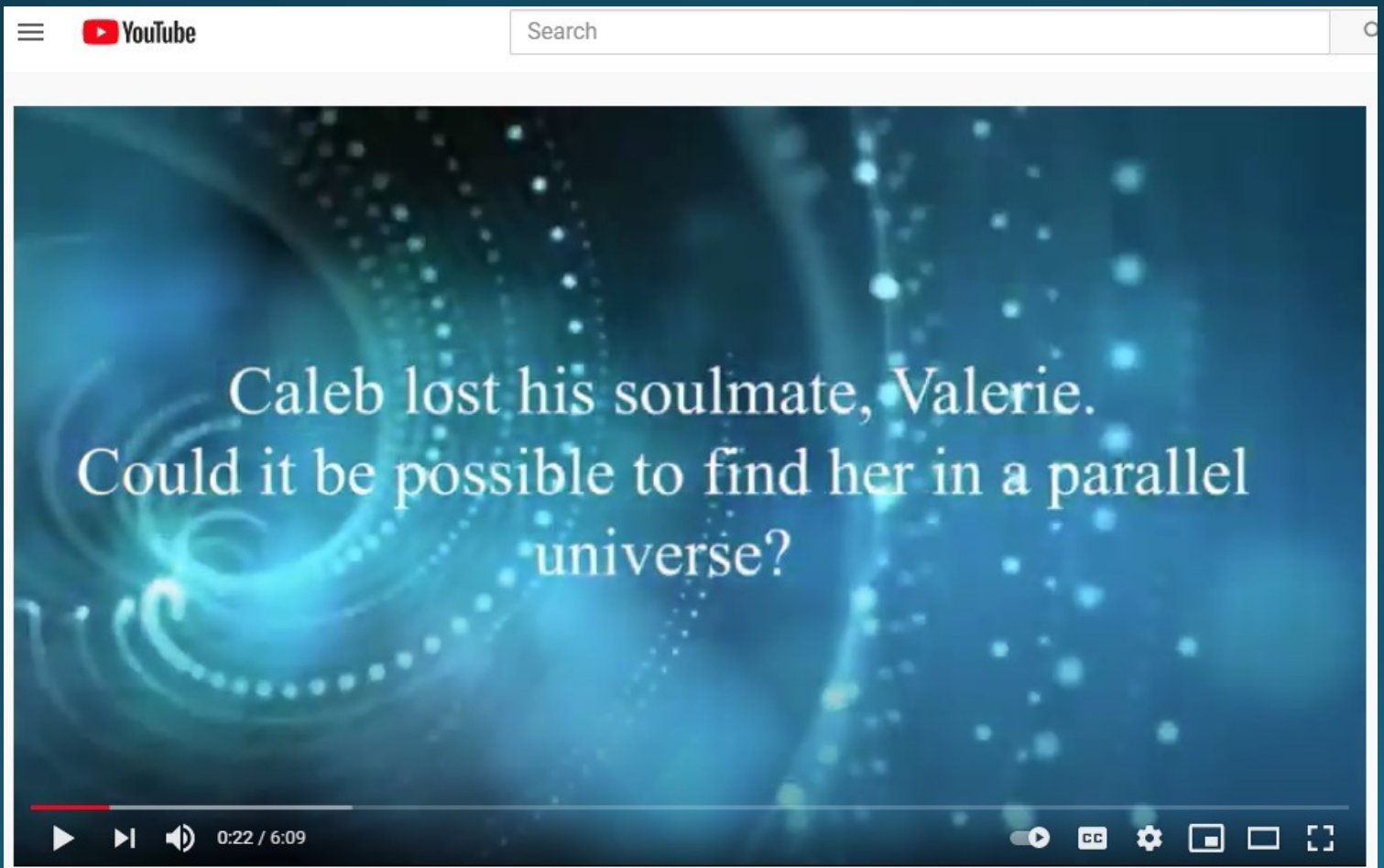
Narrating great books, writing my own stories, and helping others write theirs!



"This story was an interesting take on merging two parallel worlds. Where doing that to get to one love, others aren't meant to be." ~Elizabeth McDaniel

"This is a must read if you like to sink deep inside well written characters. Get enveloped inside rich background and storylines. Don't miss out on her other fabulous works!! Erika M. Szabo is a very talented author." ~Slate Raven

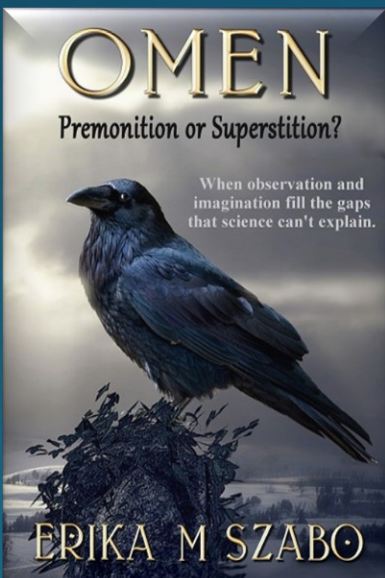
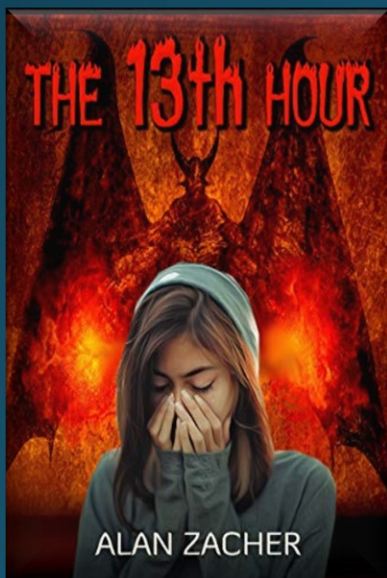
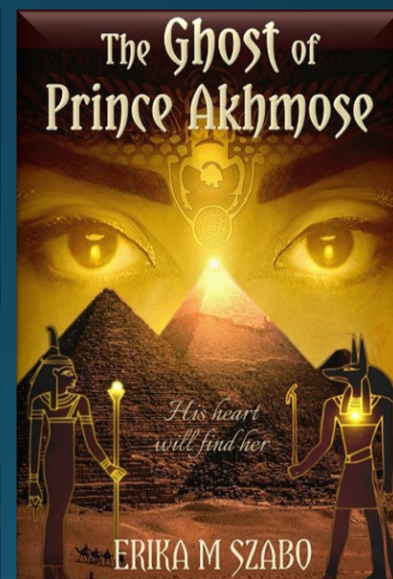
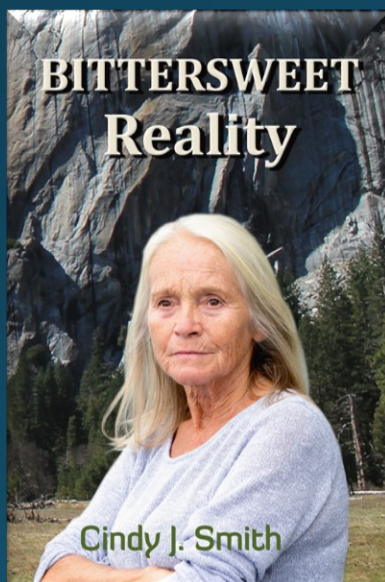
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Featured books



Is it safe to use herbal supplements?



The use of herbs for disease prevention and healing has a long history - dating back thousands of years and medicines extracted from botanicals include reserpine, morphine, penicillin, as well as anti-cancer drugs. Herbal supplements can be purchased over-the-counter (OTC) and may be labeled "all-natural" and are sold in many different forms - dried leaves for teas, powdered, as capsules or tablets, or in solution.

But does "all-natural" mean they are always safe?

Absolutely not! Although herbal supplements may be from plant or herb sources, the active ingredients are potent chemicals. Because of this, herbal supplements can have drug interactions, interactions with other herbs, or with food and alcohol.

Herbal interactions with prescription medications or other chemicals can:

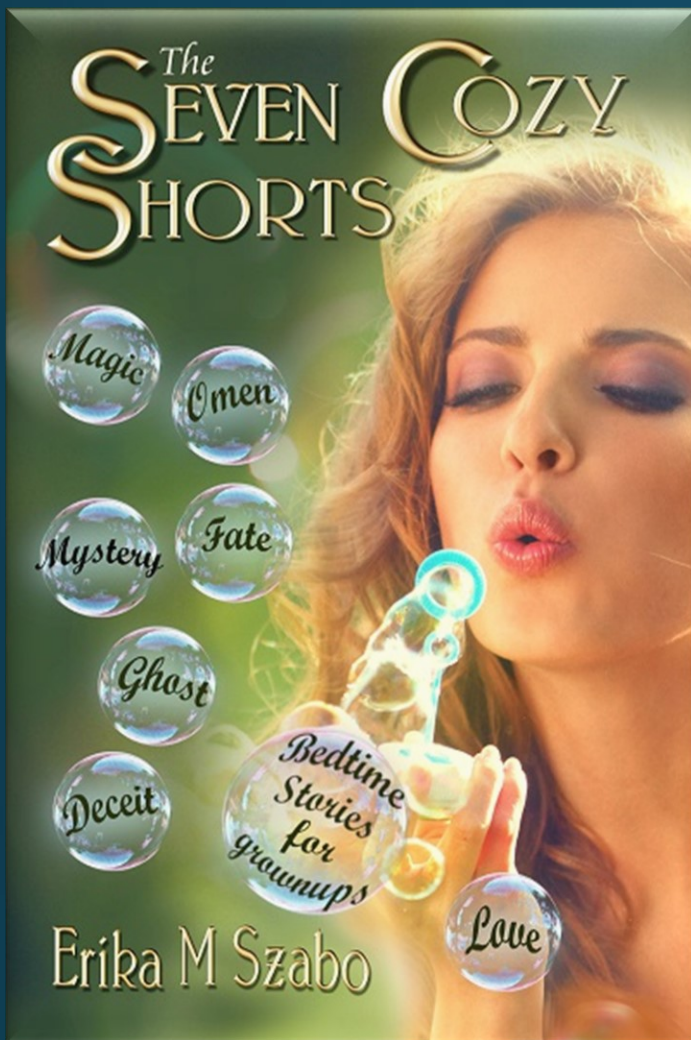
- interfere with how the drug may be broken down in the body
- enhance side effects of prescription medications
- block the intended therapeutic effect of a drug

BLACK COHOSH (*Actaea racemosa*, formerly *Cimicifuga racemosa*)

Black cohosh is often used for menopausal disorders ("hot flashes"), painful menstruation, uterine spasms, and vaginitis. There is concern that black cohosh might also be toxic to the liver and may enhance liver toxicity with certain medications, such as:

- Atorvastatin (Lipitor)
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- May reduce the effectiveness of:
- Amiodarone
- Fexofenadine (Allegra)
- Glyburide, and many statin medications

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Bedtime stories for grownups:

Magic

Mystery

Ancient Ghost

Fate

Soulmates: Love conquers

Deceit

Omen

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The audiobook is coming soon.

“We all remember cozying up in our warm comfortable beds and settling while a bedtime story was read to us. The fun of the stories centered on the variety - not even a single book was the same, but they all represented a vivid imagination and a memorable tale. Erika M Szabo refers to her imagination as her 'superpower' - I can't think of a better description of her creation of stories that span many different genres, yet they all have that touch of magic that resonates with us from those old-time fairy tales. These however are adult tales with adult themes such as rising to find your dreams following loss and suffering and rising up despite hardship and fear.” ~Sandy C



Longest and weirdest words

By A.L. Butcher



Next time you need a password no one else will check you could try one of these:

1) Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis

It's a 'contrived' word – for an unpleasant lung disease usually known as silicosis. (The Oxford Dictionaries define it as "an artificial long word said to mean a lung disease caused by inhaling very fine ash and sand dust")

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis>

2) Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia

The fear of long words.... Yes, really. (Also known as Sesquipedalophobia – which is hardly a short word.) Healthline

3) Pseudopseudohypoparathyroidism

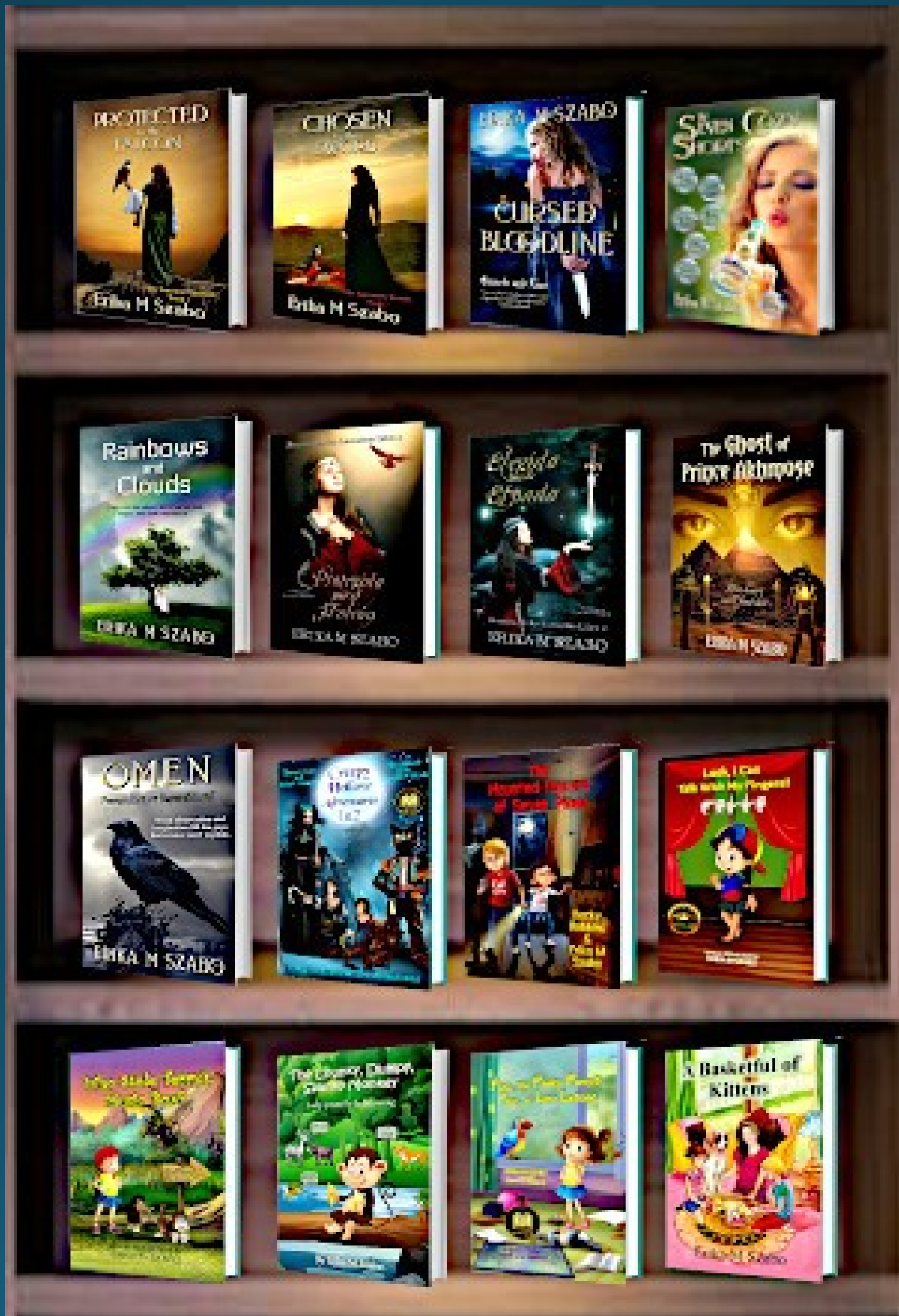
The longest uncontrived word (It's an inherited thyroid disorder.) Wikipedia
Science and medicine have more than their fair share of weighty words.

4) Floccinaucinihilipilification

The longest unchallenged nontechnical word that not all directories recognize, that including Merriam-Webster. According to alternative sources, floccinaucinihilipilification is the act or habit of describing or regarding something as unimportant, of having no value or being worthless. Oftentimes, it is used in a humorous way or on quiz shows.

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Can't sleep 6-8 hours straight without waking up?

If you're persistently waking up at night at the same time, it might be because your body and mind are trying to tell you something. Our bodies and minds work like an amazing computer system. The body is "resetting" the physical body, and the mind is organizing the previous day's events, thoughts, and feelings. We need a restful sleep to help our body, but sometimes our sleep is interrupted.

Waking up 10 Pm – midnight:

Waking up at this time of the night might be due to stress and anxious thoughts throughout the day that hasn't been resolved before going to sleep. You might be feeling pressured at your job, in your family life, or you have a lot on your "to-do" list and having a hard time keeping up.

Try:

Take a warm bath before bed, watch, or read a relaxing story, or listen to calming music. Think about the positive things you've accomplished. Next, put the unresolved issues and to-do list in your mind to a mental file "to be solved another day".

Waking up midnight – 1 Am:

This is when your mind is dealing with anger issues and the pent-up, unresolved anger tends to wake you up at this time of the night. Anger might manifest itself as a bad dream or nightmare.

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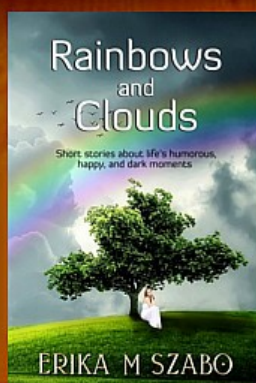
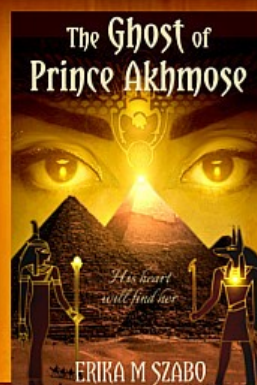
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I write speculative alternate history fiction, romantic urban fantasy, historical suspense, cozy mystery, supernatural, and sweet romance novels as well as fun, educational, and bilingual books for children ages 2-14 about acceptance, friendship, family, and moral values such as accepting people with disabilities, dealing with bullies, and not judging others before getting to know them. I also like to encourage children to use their imagination and daydream about fantasy worlds.

If you'd like to read about my books, visit my website and click on the book pages:

www.authorerikamszabo.com

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Children's books & audiobooks by Erika M Szabo

