



Award Winning Author Fighting Slavery With Debut Novel

100% Of Print Royalties Going to Courage Worldwide

For Immediate Release

Sacramento, CA – Stunned by the glaring statistics regarding modern day slavery, Jessica Kristie has joined the abolitionist fight. Her debut novel, *Barbed-Wire Butterflies*, follows the account of a young girl suddenly being forced into a US labor trade at thirteen. She is one of hundreds of other women inside the “The Hub” that is malnourished, mistreated, and without hope. The novel release is geared to bring awareness to the millions of slaves in the US and internationally. Ms. Kristie will use the opportunity to educate others while also donating 100% of her print proceeds, as well of a portion of electronic sales and merchandise to *Courage Worldwide*, an international non-profit organization that is building homes around the world for children rescued out of sex trafficking.

Elani Benjamin had never imagined the level of fear and uncertainty that was now a demoralizing part of her everyday life. With freedom ripped from her world, Elani must stand alongside the hundreds of other women forced into slave labor by the mysterious organization that runs The Hub. At only thirteen years of age, she must decide if she will give in to the daily atrocities surrounding her or keep fighting her courageous, emotional battle for freedom. Malnutrition, intimidation, and abuse force them all into an isolated depression that guarantees compliance. On the edge of surrender, Elani finds an ally in Eddie, a repentant long-term employee of The Hub who gives her the resolution to find a way out of her imprisonment and the hope of reclaiming her stolen freedom.

Barbed-Wire Butterflies, is a 208 page fiction novel. **Hardback ISBN:** 978-0-9881845-7-2 **Paperback ISBN:** 978-0-9881845-8-9 **Library of Congress Control Number:** 2012955022 Available in hardback, paperback, and eBook at all major retailers. For more information, to request a review copy or media kit, contact Winter Goose Publishing: info@wintergoosepublishing or Antonia Hall, Publicist: ahcassociates@gmail.com.

About Jessica Kristie:

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Jessica Kristie discovered her passion for writing as a child. Jessica Kristie is an award winning author, a writer, and a lover of poetry. She is an advocate for art, an activist against human trafficking, and a soulful contributor to the strengthening of our creative communities. Kristie will be donating 100% of her author print royalties to *Courage Worldwide*, an international, non-profit that builds homes around the world for children rescued from sex trafficking.

About Winter Goose Publishing:

Winter Goose Publishing is an independent publisher founded in 2011. We are a royalty-paying publisher dedicated to putting out the best literature in prose, poetry and art; covering a variety of genres. You can visit wintergoosepublishing.com for more information or email info@wintergoosepublishing.

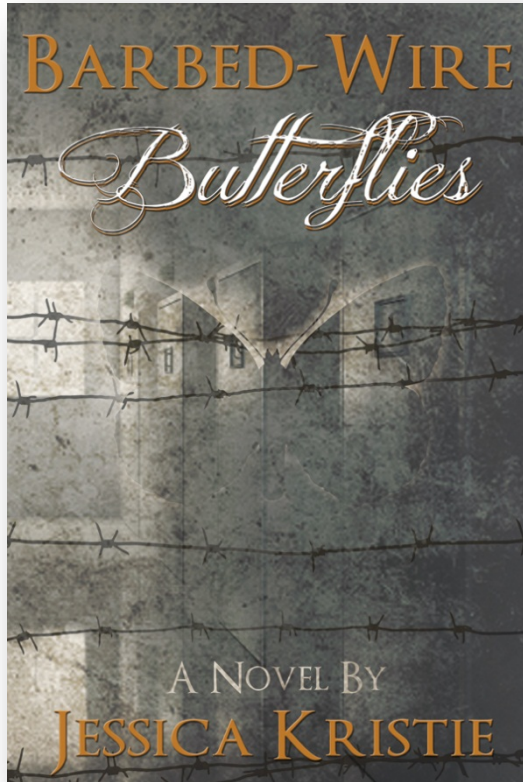
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Book Club Reading Guide

Barbed-Wire Butterflies

By Jessica Kristie



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100% of all print royalties and a percentage of digital copies go to Courage Worldwide, an international, non-profit organization that is building homes around the world for children rescued out of sex trafficking.

208 Pages

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About the Author



[Jessica Kristie](#) is an award winning author, a writer, and a lover of poetry. She is an advocate for art, an activist against human trafficking, and a soulful contributor to the strengthening of our creative communities.

Barbed-Wire Butterflies, her first novel, released January 2013, is a fiction account of a young girl faced with the atrocities of human trafficking and her struggle to find freedom.

[Dreaming in Darkness](#), Jessica's first volume of poetry, was the winner of the 2011 Sharp Writ Award and was nominated for a 2011 Pushcart Prize. Jessica's second collection, [Threads of Life](#), published through [Winter Goose Publishing](#), along with her eBook offering to writers, [Weekly Inspirations for Writers & Creators](#), are available through all major retailers. She is also the co-creator of the art and poetry collaboration [Inspiration Speaks Volume 1](#) and founder of the Woodland, CA, poetry series *Inspiring Words—Poetry in Woodland*.

You can find her fusion of poetry and music with the collaboration, *KRISTIE & CLOVERFIELD*, released through Ultrasonic Music Germany, and available everywhere.

Jessica has been published in several online and print magazines such as *Zouch*, *Muse*, and *The Huffington Post*. You can find all of Jessica's appearances under her *Press Page* at [JessicaKristie.com](#). Jessica has committed 100% of all print royalties and a percentage of digital copies and merchandise to [Courage Worldwide](#), an international non-profit organization that is building homes around the world for children rescued out of sex trafficking.

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Jessica Kristie discovered her passion for writing as a child. Along with her creative side, she works in the publishing industry, is an avid supporter of all creative souls, and hopes to draw readers into her world through shared emotion. She inspires to forgive, remember, and heal, while continuing to dedicate herself to the eradication of all forms of human trafficking.

Follow Jessica:

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Discussion Questions

1. Were your characters inspired by any real life persons?
2. What was the process like writing about such a difficult subject?
3. Where did the idea of a “Hub” come from?
4. Your main character Elani showed great strength in a tough situation, do you think that is a realistic attribute when faced with what seems like impossible situations?
5. Eddie was repentant for his involvement in “The Hub”. What was the importance of having a character with such a change of heart?
6. Did Elani inspire Eddie out of his loyalty to “The Hub”?
7. Would Elani still have survived without Eddie?
8. Why were Elani’s bunk-mates not more prominent in the story?
9. What does Captain Carson represent in the world of human trafficking?
10. What kind of an issue is human trafficking in the US?
11. Is it only considered human trafficking if it is on a large scale or organized?
12. What drew you to the issue of human trafficking and then compelled you to write a novel surrounding the subject?

Barbed-Wire Butterflies

By Jessica Kristie

Winter Goose
Publishing

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CHAPTER 1

A New Truth

Loud noises banging from the trunk didn't even make the two men flinch. It was an all too familiar sound. They traveled down a long dirt road toward what seemed, to the untrained eye, to be an abandoned warehouse. The town car didn't fit the road traveled, but it had been there many times before.

The thumping had finally subsided as they pulled near the desolate building. Quickly, they passed through the guarded entrance and could see another man waiting in his dark green clothing, waving them forward. The large wall receded up, opening into what looked to be an airport hangar. Several small planes, cars, and other equipment were parked inside. The two men got out of their vehicle and walked to the back of the car. The taller man turned to his partner and grinned while he unlocked the trunk.

Inside lay a thirteen-year-old girl, still passed out from the drugs she had been given steadily over the last few days. Her body was twisted from being knocked around during the three-hour trip from the hotel to the warehouse.

"Another one," the shorter man said with a half-hearted laugh.

"The second one this month; I wonder what's up," the shorter one responded.

"It ain't our business to ask. Let's just get her in here and get out. I want to get home before four a.m. this time."

"You take the feet and let's get a move on."

They each did their part and carried the young girl to the door where a gurney and two other men were waiting. They placed her on the rolling bed and headed back to their vehicle. It was as easy as that, and they were done. The town car drove off into the night, not to return until another package was to be delivered.

In her unknown destination and an hour after delivery, Elani Benjamin woke up. With confused, red-rimmed eyes and blurry vision, she could make out a tall woman hovering over her. The woman had long red hair and a much-too-wrinkled face to be in her forties. She was dabbing Elani's forehead with a cold, wet wash cloth knowing full well the young girl would protest soon.

"Where . . ." Elani tried to make sense of her words and surroundings, her head still foggy from the last few days. She darted up from the gurney and scanned the room for something, anything familiar. A nauseous feeling tugged at the lining of her stomach.

Everything was concrete, or white painted over concrete. The room smelled sterile but unclean at the same time. Confused about how she got there, she closed her eyes and tried to remember. The last thing that came to her was stopping at the Quik Stop for something before heading home.

"Elani, I am Jolene. I need you to keep calm while I explain where you are. Please try and control yourself so you don't upset the other girls when I put you in your new room." Jolene paused for a response. "Do you hear me, girl?"

"How do you know my name?" Elani pleaded to Jolene with surprise and a growing concern.

"We know everyone we bring here to The Hub. It is our job to know who we are dealing with."

"Where is my mom? Does my dad know I'm here?"

"Look, girl. I'm just going to tell you like it is. This is your new home. What you will have is a bed, food, and work. It's not much, but that's what it is. Now change into this so I can bring you to your new room." Jolene threw a blue sweat suit at Elani that was stenciled with an L, along with some old, worn sneakers, and then lifted her hands in a quick attempt to get her going. Elani slowly pulled the clothes toward her and reluctantly changed.

"Here, put your clothes in this. You won't be needing them anymore. We all just wear the same thing," Jolene said as she held a plastic bag in front of her.

“I want to go home,” Elani said, panic rising in her voice.

“That’s what you say now, but things will change,” Jolene quickly responded, in hopes to diffuse the pending breakdown. “You’re a big girl, you can do this.”

“I don’t want to do this. I don’t even know what *this* is,” Elani snapped with tears forming in her big blue eyes. She used her sleeve to rub the salty drops from her face and nervously pushed her dark hair behind her ear.

“Girl, we gotta get a move on. We don’t have time for this. The quicker you realize what is happening here, the easier it gets. I’ve been here for twenty-two years and I ain’t got no qualms about that.”

“What?” Elani was shaking. “I can’t go home, ever? What about my mom and my brother? My brother needs me. I need to get back home.”

“Your brother is fine. Your mom is fine. They will learn to get on without you. Now get dressed and let’s be going.” Jolene was losing her patience and it was obvious she had been through this routine too many times before.

Elani’s heart plummeted in her chest as the lack of control sunk in. She retreated to silence, feeling she might pass out from terror. She had no clue what these people wanted or what new future was being laid out without her permission. It all felt too unreal to comprehend.

She finished changing her clothes and surrendered her old life in a small plastic bag to Jolene. Jolene led her through several dimly-lit corridors with four doors on each side. Each hallway reminded Elani of pictures she had seen on television of the rooms for inmates of a mental-health facility. Small windows, about three inches wide, served as the room’s only peek outside of the personal cells. Elani’s mind was racing. Was this a prison? Had she done something to get put in juvenile hall? She knew of several kids in her neighborhood who had been to juvie, but from what she remembered, the kids went to court first.

Elani was always a fairly good kid. She had never done anything that deserved this kind of punishment. She tried not to shake, and watched Jolene as she stoically continued to lead her down dirty pathways with no hint of natural light to be found.

Finally, after several minutes of walking, they reached a long hallway that was just the same as all the others they had passed. The only difference was a large *L* stenciled at each entrance. “This is you, girl. *L17*.” Jolene reached into her pocket and pulled out the biggest ring of keys Elani had ever seen. “You are locked in at all times. We can’t have you girls trying to run about, now. Just keep your head straight and do what you’re told. You got that, girl?” Jolene asked as she unlocked the door and ushered Elani into her tiny room.

“Yes ma’am,” Elani said without thinking.

“Good girl, Elani. That will do. Now meet your bunkmates: Sophie, Jada, and Isabel. They are all nice girls who like being here. You get right, like them, and you will be fine.” Jolene turned to the girls in the room, “This is Elani. Tell her what she needs to know.” She then turned back to Elani to confirm she understood.

Elani nodded in a confused agreeance as she surveyed the room. There were two sets of metal bunk beds on each wall. The two-foot space between the beds held a single garbage can. To the right of the door was a frayed sheet thrown over a rusted metal frame, serving as a space divider. It seemed to be covering a small toilet and a sink. Elani cautiously moved further into the room and stood there in complete disarray. She was jolted to reality as she heard the heavy door close loudly behind her. Jolene was gone.

“You can have the bed over there,” said a small girl on the bottom bunk across from what was now to be her permanent bed. “I’m Sophie, I’ve been here a while. About six months, as far as I can tell. I’m trying to keep track but wonder what the point is sometimes.”

Sophie had green eyes and blonde hair. Her hands were tiny, and fit her small frame. She was far too young to be in a place

like this and Elani could tell it had aged her too quickly, just like the rest of the girls.

“Where is here?” she asked in a once-again growing panic.

“The Hub,” said the girl in the top bunk above Sophie. “I’m Jada. Been here a while now, too; it ain’t so bad. Better than what I had before, I guess.” Jada was obviously the oldest. The one who attempted to keep the peace. She had dark brown skin and jet-black hair with beautiful big brown eyes. Her hair, like all the girls, looked matted and dirty.

“Before?” Elani asked.

“Yeah, before they brought me here. I was pretty much livin’ on the streets or from foster home to foster home. Now, I get my own bed and at least one meal a day.” Jada attempted to be reassuring but her sullen gestures gave the truth away.

“Don’t you miss home, though? This isn’t right,” Elani protested. “We shouldn’t be here. I want to go home.”

Tears forced their way down her burning red cheeks and she collapsed on her bed holding her knotted stomach and aching muscles.

“Hey now, don’t upset the other girls. I know it is weird but you get used to it quick,” explained Jada. “It gets better, I promise. Hopefully the worst is over.”

“I don’t want it to get better. I just want to get back home. I don’t even know why I’m here.”

“You’re here to work,” chimed in a new voice she hadn’t yet heard. “I’m Isabel, and we are all here to work.” A thick Hispanic accent escaped her lips and she twisted her dark hair anxiously. Her brown eyes were bulging slightly from her head and she was far less confident than Jada when she spoke.

“To work? I’m only thirteen, why would I have to work?” Elani said through her blanket of tears.

“That is why we are brought here; to work,” Isabel said in a quiet and comforting voice.

Jada jumped in, “You are now a part of what you may have heard called a *sweat shop*. It is a place where people are forced to work. We make things like clothes, and put together phones and stuff like that, whatever they tell us to do. We always do what they tell us to do. It’s better that way.”

“So we are here just to work, nothing else? Why would anyone do that?”

“Because it’s cheap and people are greedy. I was fifteen when they took me, and I already knew what nasty things people did for money. Or to save money. I’ve been here a year or so and I don’t mind it. This place is different than most. From what I’ve heard, we get treated pretty damn good compared to other places like this.”

“Why? Why would they treat us good? They kidnapped us and threw us in a cement box to never see our families again. How is that good, anyway?” Elani said, her eyes welling with tears again.

Listening to them talk, she was slowly realizing these kids were brainwashed. Trained to say what The Hub needed them to say, and do what they were told to do. Fear was sharp and palpable from wall to wall.

“There is not a lot of conversation that goes on here. We all stay pretty quiet, but sometimes we hear the leaders or guards talking. From what I know, they pick people who need a place to stay and food to eat. They don’t really care if we are happy, but want us to be content enough to stay, or . . . I guess . . . not fight staying. I don’t know how many have tried to break out, but from what I’ve heard, no one has,” Jada explained.

“So this is my life, then?” Elani whimpered.

“This is your life,” Jada said with little comfort.

With that new and shocking information, Elani rolled over into her pillow and tried to hold herself to sleep. The other girls peered over at her from their beds.

Isabel looked down at Elani from the bed above to try and offer one last round of comfort. She pulled herself back up when it became clear there was nothing she could say. Isabel had been there

once, too, and the fear never really went away. The girls all lay back in their beds as the room went dark. It was *lights out* for the night.

Elani was frozen in the dark hoping this was some bizarre slip in reality that would be rectified come morning. Her emotional wounds dug deep under her skin making it difficult to breath. She thought that any moment she might lose consciousness, but almost welcomed it. She buried her face in the flat pillow that sat on her sagging mattress. Everything reeked of dirt, sweat, and fear. The salty tears that crawled inside her mouth served as some familiar comfort. The confusion was unbearable and shock took over. Elani fell into a sleep as her body shut down. She hoped that the morning would prove this was all but a bad dream, and nothing more.

Advanced Praise

"*Barbed-Wire Butterflies* is a gritty tale of a most unlikely heroine and her struggle against greed, corruption and indifference." - *John Malik, Huffington Post*

"Jessica Kristie has done an excellent job of balancing the horror of trafficking with the hope of survival and restoration."- *Genny Heikka, Author and Courage Worldwide Director of Communications*

"*Barbed-Wire Butterflies* is a powerful book about a sobering subject. Jessica Kristie helps you wrap your head around the horrors of human trafficking while drawing you into her characters and causing you to feel their pain, confusion and hopelessness. The humanity in all of us should be outraged by this subject. Just as Elani fights back and will not accept her fate within the confines of her barbed wire world, we should not give up on the war against trafficking. Each of us should feel personally responsible to help end this worldwide atrocity." - *Kathryn Mattingly, President of Editorial Management for The Possibility Place*

