

# Author Biography

## Jennifer Lynn Alvarez

### Official Bio

JENNIFER LYNN ALVAREZ is the author of RIDERS OF THE REALM and THE GUARDIAN HERD series, fantasy adventures starring winged horses published by HarperCollins Children's Books. THE PET WASHER is Jennifer's indie novel. She received a degree in English literature from UC Berkeley. She is an active horsewoman and a volunteer for U.S. Pony Club. Jennifer draws on her lifelong love of animals when writing her books and when she's not at her computer, Jennifer can be found riding her beloved mare Maddie. She lives on a small ranch in Northern California with her husband, children, and more than her fair share of pets. Follow Jennifer on Twitter @JenniferDiaries, Facebook and YouTube @ Jennifer Lynn Alvarez, or on Instagram @jennifer\_lynn\_alvarez. And to learn more about her winged universe of novels, please visit theguardianherd.com.

### Social Media

**Author website:** <http://www.jenniferlynnalvarez.com/>

**The Guardian Herd website:** <http://www.theguardianherd.com/>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/JenniferDiaries>

**Instagram:** [https://www.instagram.com/jennifer\\_lynn\\_alvarez/](https://www.instagram.com/jennifer_lynn_alvarez/)

**Fan Art Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/wingeduniversefanart/>

**Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/JenniferLynnAlvarez/?ref=hl>

**YouTube Channel:**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC50LaHt4Uj4Vhn2nRTWxgmg>

## **The Author's Backstory**

Hi, and thanks for reading! I'm an author and horse-lover, and I write mostly middle-grade fiction. I write two series starring winged horses: *The Guardian Herd* and *Riders of the Realm*. These universes are connected, but the series can also stand apart. I also wrote an indie book called *The Pet Washer* and I have many other projects underway. I like writing about animals and, occasionally, about humans. Here's the story of how I became a published!

I was born in Southern California, but I grew up all over the western U.S., attending new schools in new states about every two years. My family was not military, just nomadic. After each move, I found myself immersed in a new school culture--and so I learned fast to become an observer. I studied the kids in each town and attempted to adapt to their ways, their slang, and their clothing styles. I was the perpetual outsider.

I brought my pets, my diary, and my books with me everywhere I moved—three things I couldn't live without. I recorded my thoughts and feeling into my diaries, and I also wrote stories and poems. After school, I volunteered at local stables so I could ride horses for "free". I set a goal when I was very young to become a published author and to own a horse.

I wrote my first novel, *The Spotless Forest*, when I was nineteen. I submitted the full-length manuscript to publishers (back then I had to print the entire manuscript and mail it), only to have it rejected for being "too long for middle-grade readers" (this was pre-Harry Potter).

When I was about twenty-one, I transferred from a junior college to U.C. Berkeley where I received my degree in English literature. I went on to write a horrible and unpublished adult thriller. After that, I went back to writing what I love most, middle-grade fantasy. *Mouser and Merry* followed, a book about an oppressed princess who befriends an abused lion. I didn't finish this novel and it lives in my closet next to *The Spotless Forest*.

I graduated from UC Berkeley in 1993, obtained a job in finance of all things, and quickly bought my first horse for \$2300--a failed Thoroughbred racer named Splash. She reared every time I rode her, kicked me twice, and trampled me once. Needless to say, I loved her dearly.

Then unexpected events derailed my writing for fifteen years—I fell in love, got married, and had a baby! This wasn't part of my life plan, but it's turned out to be the best part. I had a second baby, and then adopted a third! My husband and I moved our beloved children, pets, and horses to a little ranch in Northern California where we still live today. When my youngest child entered kindergarten, my fingers itched to write again.

In 2011, I wrote and self-published my third novel, *The Pet Washer*. It's about a local girl who works at a pet salon and gets dragged into the royal life by a vacationing princess. I began speaking at schools and libraries and selling copies of *The Pet Washer* at local stores, out of my car, and on Amazon. I was the publisher, book designer, publicist, sales team, social media expert, editor, and web designer--and while it was a blast--I had little time left to be the author! I needed a team.

So I decided to break into traditional publishing with a young adult vampire book, get famous, and then make deals for the books I really wanted to write! 70,000 words later, I had *Dead Girls Don't Cry* and I queried it far and wide. It was soundly rejected. The vampire market was dead (or undead if you like). I was too late.

Down and out and decimated by the great American recession, I wrote in my "Jennifer (Recession) Diaries" blog that my time had come! Because finding a simple job had become as impossible as getting published, I decided I would get published. I threw away the twenty years of rejection slips I had taped to my wall and declared my intentions to the world, in ALL CAPS I might add, and perhaps in bold as well (which was bold considering I had no idea what I was going to publish).

Eight days later, I was driving home and I became engrossed in a wild daydream. I imagined a herd of flying horses migrating in the clouds above my car. One was pregnant—a white mare named Lightfeather. She was struggling to keep up as her herd pulled farther ahead. I knew the foal in her belly was special, but also a threat to the herd. By the time I got home, I had the plot to *Starfire*, which was to become book #1 in the Guardian Herd series.

I began the story the moment I arrived home and the book took over my life. I didn't write it, it wrote me. My daughter began to read *Starfire* and she became enthralled, asking for a new chapter each morning when she woke. I wrote like mad to accommodate her, and I did not come up for air until the first draft was finished. I'd always been warned not to write "talking animal" books—that publishers don't like them—but as I edited *Starfire*, I realized it was the book I'd always wanted to read as a kid. And so I decided to query it.

Since I'm not one to take rejection personally (see racehorse story above), I queried an agent who had previously passed on my work. The agent, Jacquelyn Flynn of Delbourgo Associates, loved *Starfire* and offered immediately to represent it. She sent the manuscript on submission to editors. HarperCollins Children's Books quickly acquired the novel in a four-book pre-emptive offer, which I was delighted to accept.

In hindsight, I'm grateful *Starfire* is the book that broke through because this book, my fifth, is the book I was born to write. It is the sum of my interests—flying horses and underdogs, heroes and bullies, and a special colt watching his herd, wishing he were not an outsider. It's the story for anyone who's ever felt left out, or different, or alone, but who believes in their heart they can belong and, perhaps, make a difference. It's my story, and now—thanks to my agent and HarperCollins Children's Books—it can be your story too.