

## HOW TIMOTHY TURNED OUT TO BE LORENZA



### Bertha's World

Pierre's monthly newsletter for the quirky, the nutty and noir

#### August 2025 - Volume 1, Issue #02

In this issue: two new books by South African authors to tell you about as well as the publisher. And I share with you what is meant by 'finding your Timothy' and how my Timothy turned out to be Lorenza! It touches me each time I think about it.

#### The August Book Recommendation

I attended a joint book launch of two of South Africa's contemporary authors. Both authors are fairly well known through journalism, short stories, etc., but these are their debut novels. First up: *The Fourth Boy* by Andrew Robert Wilson. At its heart this is a mystery story, and a compelling one at that, and if mystery and intrigue is your kind of read you will love this. Set in the tumult of 80s South Africa, it tells the story of a journalist, Grant, who investigates the unexplained deaths of three men in the Karoo. Linked to this is his mother's dying disclosure that his father, who left when he was a toddler, was gay and Jewish. Then there is the history behind the three deaths: the men were part of a group of four boys shipped with hundreds of Jewish children from Europe during the 40s. This gives you some idea of what the mystery relates to, but it's much more than you expect and intrigue and surprise await you. How does his father connect to the narrative about displaced orphans? Who is the fourth boy? The story, both plot and characters, is very well crafted. [More about the book here.](#)

In *The Fourth Boy*, sexual orientation and Judaism provide context but in the second book: *Salt Water Pool Boy* by Peter-Adrian Altini they certainly take centre stage, especially sexual orientation. Altini chronicles Damon's life as he is forced to deal with the curveballs life throws at him: a dying mother, exploring and coming to terms with his sexuality and living up to his own promises. At the launch of *Salt Water Pool Boy*, Altini hinted that there are autobiographical

elements and the book certainly has that feel to it, especially when you realise that Damon moves from Cape Town, to Rome, then Paris, just as the author has. Like the first book, it is also very well crafted and for those interested in dense psychological journeys through heartbreak and letting go, sensuality and truth, then you will enjoy this. And if LGBT sensuality / erotica appeals to you, there's a healthy dose of that here. [More about the book here.](#)

## **The Independent Publisher Karavan Press**

Karavan Press founded by Karina M. Szczurek is the publisher of both books. I knew about Karavan Press, mostly from other authors and readers, but looking more closely at their mission, you can't help but be in awe of the dedication and passion for publishing high quality works. Books, Karina says, are like a caravan: they take you to new places. It's a fine metaphor and for readers familiar with my own preferences, you will know that this is something that resonates with me. [Karavan Press is open to any genres and any length books.](#)

## **Now About Timothy and Lorenza**

Publishers and authors, at least those trying to build a readership, always ask about target audiences. In the Novel Marketing podcast, Thomas Umstadt Jr. calls this "finding your Timothy". The analogy is the letter from St Paul to Timothy. St Paul addresses one person, but in reality he writes to a specific readership. Timothy is the bull's eye that represents that readership. And for authors your Timothy answers questions like: Who is your typical reader? Where do they hang out? And the more specific the answer, the more the publisher or indie author homes in on their market. The aim is to get the book in front of the specific people who want to read it.

If you came to my book launch in Johannesburg in June (and I must add that Margarita Nichas from St Benedict's College was a wonderfully thought-provoking discussant, thank you!), you learnt that my Timothy turned out to be a real person called Lorenza (and she gave me permission to recount this). When I thought about my Timothy for the book *Bertha's Law*, my mind drifted to a woman I spoke to on the phone in 2024. At the time I was looking for finance and insurance for a new car and didn't know her except for the brief telephone conversation. But there was something about the person called Lorenza that I spoke to that stayed with me. Perhaps it was the way she listened or the gentleness in her voice. I imagined that she may be a typical reader of *Bertha's Law*: perhaps a bit of a loner, someone who has animals for companionship. Maybe someone who has faced serious challenges, which is partly why they love getting lost in a story, within quirky characters they identify with.

I contacted Lorenza. She remembered me. I asked her if I could describe someone to her and hear whether she knows the person. Before getting halfway into the description of my Timothy she interrupted and said I was describing her. Her history was about a relationship breakdown, raising a son alone, a skydiving accident and later disastrous surgery. Wheelchair bound,

she found herself facing massive challenges and reading took her places as though she was traveling somewhere in Karina's metaphorical caravan. Her dogs were her confidantes. I am, of course, not doing her life justice in this brief account, but the upshot is that I had found my Timothy and he was a woman called Lorenza. I invited Lorenza to my launch at Exclusive Books, Mall of Africa and met her there for the first time. And oh my, what a privilege to make the connection.



Lorenza and I at Exclusive Books

## Coming In September

September's stories will be pretty creepy: *The Childish Thing* by John Metcalfe and *Seaton's Aunt* by Walter de la Mare. If you like atmospheric, macabre stories don't miss that. In bibliophile news I'll introduce you to *The Marginalian*, a truly remarkable collection of articles and stories, and in my news I'll tell you about the developments in Bertha's World.

Be free to be, Bertha and me.

**Pierre**



You received this email because you signed up on our website or made a purchase from us.

[Unsubscribe](#)

