



## MINNESOTA PUBLISHER SCARLETTA PRESS: Moving Forward, Thinking Fast

by Linda White,  
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AUGUST 10, 2011—Spunky little Scarletta Press released the first title in its new children's line this week. The title, *Lost in Lexicon: An Adventure in Words and Numbers*, was originally self-published by author Pendred Noyce. Through a quirk of fate, Ian Graham Leask, Scarletta Press' Publisher, had her on his radio show, Write-On! Radio. One thing lead to another and Scarletta Press now has its first title in its new line, Books for Young Readers (though the imprint name will likely change).

*Lost in Lexicon* is the first in a four-part series, the Lexicon Adventures Series. It is a literary fantasy for ages 9 through 12. The second in the series, *The Ice Castle*, will be released next year. According to Scarletta Press Publicity Director Desiree Bussiere, the plan is to launch the line with *Lexicon*, publishing perhaps three more children's titles next fall, looking at other authors as well as the continuing series by Noyce.

*Lost in Lexicon* is not your average kind of story for kids. It combines explaining concepts and definitions with an engrossing storyline that kids and adults alike will find entertaining. With examples of iambic pentameter mixed in with lessons in map and graph reading, the 13-year-old hero and heroine travel through a fantasy land rich with discovery. Scarletta's goal is to publish more books for children that will intellectually stimulate them and create strong, thoughtful readers. President Nancy Tuminelly says simply, "We want good reading material for kids."

The children's line is just the latest addition to the other fiction categories that Scarletta Press has been doing well since it began in 2005. Previously, their catalog had been made up of women's literary fiction, creative nonfiction, and autobiographical fiction (metafiction). Recent titles include the Rat Pack-era novel *Hassie Calhoun* by Pamela Cory, the first in a projected trilogy; the humorous, futuristic novel *Our Jewish Robot Future* by Leonard Borman; and the recent re-release of two titles by Bill Watkins, *A Celtic Childhood* and *Scotland Is Not for the Squeamish*. Bussiere says they plan to publish an overall total of five titles per season, spring and fall, going forward.

It's clear from the recent forays of the press into self-published or out-of-print titles that they are open to working closely with authors of all experience levels. States Tuminelly, "We want the experience with the author to be a transparent relationship." Scarletta Press offers a large array of helps to its authors – from press kits and event coordination to websites and blog hosting. This is in addition to the general services of design, editing and distribution that it offers. The authors remain involved in the process throughout.

Though it radiates that sense of optimism and fresh outlook that only a relatively young company can, nothing about Scarletta Press is amateur. Perched in a sunny historic building on Hennepin Avenue in downtown Minneapolis, the office is a beehive of activity. Their output is sleek and their leadership is made up of industry veterans. As President, Nancy Tuminelly is the driving force. She is also the cofounder and Vice President of Mighty Media, which shares offices with Scarletta. With less of a stake but no less commitment, Publisher Ian Graham Leask has many years of experience in the publishing industry, is an author and hosts Write-On! Radio weekly on KFAI. He patrols trade shows and scouts for authors wherever he can.

While the publishing world may be changing, Scarletta Press looks poised to ride that change. Aligned with Mighty Media, they are looking at developing other methods of communicating about their books, such as apps (MM has an Apple apps developer license) and other interactive media. They are working with educational organizations to have their children's titles considered for inclusion in curricula; *Lost in Lexicon* has been lexile-level tested, and all future titles in the children's line will go through this process.

Some may think you'd have to be crazy to start a publishing company these days. But Scarletta Press is proving that if you take your lumps, do your homework, and know the playing field, there are still many opportunities out there. And they are doing a great job of looking ahead and moving into those new realms of possibility.