

*Our White Lady of the Gentle Sins*

Set in the early nineties, the story belongs to a young English teacher, Daria Kersey, who hopes to stand and deliver to the struggling and the privileged at a diverse Silicon Valley high school. Her mission is to save those lured by gangs, sex, and suicide, especially Selma, a gifted student with a talent for self-sabotage. When she defies Daria's best efforts, best friend and fellow teacher Shelley is there to console. So is Eric Kent, a colleague she believes to be her soul mate. But life defies Shel's advice and lesson plans when Selma sabotages her future and when Eric disappears at dawn, defying Daria's dreams of their future together. Neither do friendships play fair; a heartbreaking political betrayal awakens Daria to a deep inner emptiness and launches a rapid downward spiral. Yet grace finds her in uncanny places. It's in the wisdom of an ostracized colleague; it's in the blunders of her students who help one another; and it's in the wisdom of the students who give more to Daria than she can ever give them. Daria's journey strewn with multicultural misunderstanding, political intrigue, and reckless sex leads to the discovery that salvation doesn't lie in the rescue of others or in the rescue by true love. Rather, it lies in a Flannery O'Connor kind of wisdom: "God rescues us from ourselves if we want him to."