Jasmaine Payne

AUTHOR, EDITOR, WRITING COACH

Media Kit

Jasmaine Payne

Guyanese Author of Psychological Thriller

LEECH

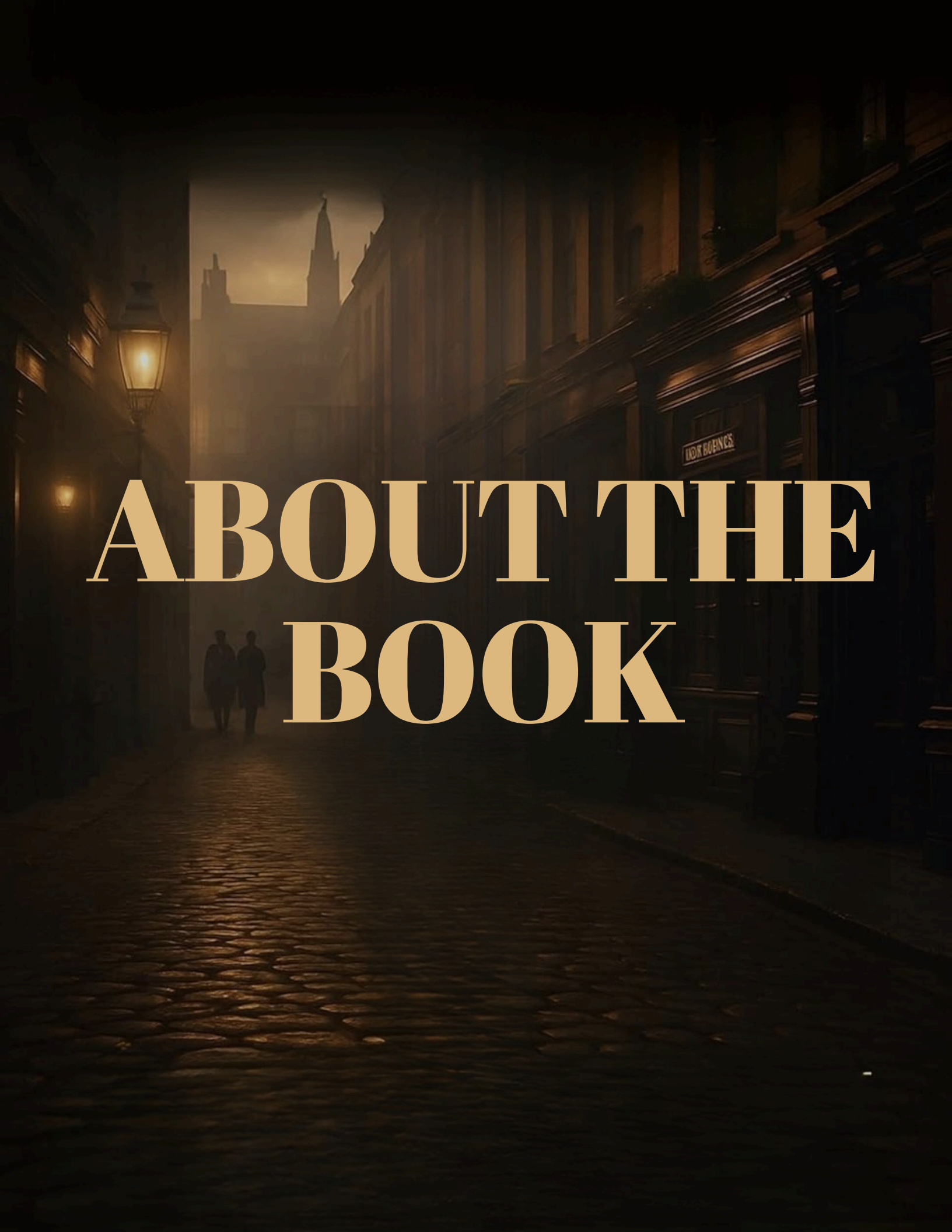
MEET THE AUTHOR

Jasmaine Payne

Jasmaine Payne is a Guyanese author, editor, and communications specialist whose debut psychological thriller Leech (2025) breaks new ground as the first of its kind written by a female author based in Guyana. Her writing journey began early, crafting novel-length stories on fanfiction boards and in well-worn notebooks passed among classmates in high school. She was first published at age 11, winning the UNICEF Environmental Awareness Poetry Competition in 1999. Jasmaine holds a BA in English from the University of London (Goldsmiths) and an MBA in Marketing from the University of Bedfordshire.

She brings 15 years of journalism experience and more than 8 years as a professional editor, working across journalism, business, and creative writing. Her work has been featured in respected anthologies and publications, including Guyana at 50, 50 Women 50 Years, GEM Magazine, and Lady Magazine. Her short story 'Another One for Mother Moon' was also shortlisted for the Guyana Annual Competition.

Named a 2025 Influential Women Leaders Award recipient, Jasmaine is also an experienced trainer who leads writing workshops for media professionals and aspiring creatives. Deeply passionate about storytelling in all forms, she continues to mentor young writers across the Caribbean. Her favourite author is Stephen King, and horror-thriller remains her genre of choice.



ABOUT THE BOOK

A borrowed voice. A broken mind. A story too haunting to bury.

Coming September 20, 2025

PAGE TURNER AWARDS
2025 Writing Award Finalist

John Thomas Reginald Leech always believed he was destined for greatness. But when his family stood in his way, he decided he would achieve it on his own terms. Then, when the world rejected him, he sought immortality in the only way he knew how.

More than 100 years later, Leech awakens in modern-day New York, more determined than ever to leave his mark. His target? Arianne Smith, a struggling writer desperate for recognition. Leech forces her to transcribe his story, believing that through her, his name will finally be remembered. But Arianne soon realises that telling his story comes at a cost.

As guilt consumes her, she seeks refuge in a psychiatric hospital and falls under the care of Dr. Oscar Pressum, a man with his own struggles and ambitions. As Arianne fights to break free, she faces a chilling reality: Leech isn't finished yet because he refuses to be forgotten.

5 Things to know about LEECH

1

LEECH Inspiration

John Leech's Character is a combination of many villains and anti-heroes. Inspiration was taken from characters like Jigsaw (Saw), John Doe (Se7en), Hannibal Lecter, Jack the Ripper, Oscar Wilde's Dorian Grey and Patrick Bateman (American Psycho)

2

Real-Life Influence

The character of Arianne is loosely based on the author and her real-life frustrations and disappointments as a writer. Arianne's parents, George and Nora are also immigrants from Guyana just as the author's parents as well.

3

Written in many places

Over its 11-year span, writing for LEECH took place in New York, Guyana and Paris, pulling influences from each location in various ways.

4

Historical Easter Egg

Over its 11-year span, writing for LEECH took place in New York, Guyana and Paris, pulling influences from each location in various ways.

5

Pay attention to the structure

The book takes the structure of a story within a story and spans three timelines where each character is retelling some version of events.

Short Excerpt

September 20, 1895 | London
John Leech

As I sat in my room on my final day, I remembered my childhood, all the things I longed for back then and the people I loved- of sorts. They were long gone by then, and I stood the blaring result of their own neglect.

With a pang of longing and lost love, I thought of my parents and found myself still wondering the reason they shut me off from themselves and the world. If it were for my own good, then it did no good.

My entire childhood, I watched people die. Consumption and cholera plagued my earliest memories. We lived away from the city, so my brother Edward and I only overheard the stories. My father transformed his practice as a doctor, moving from his London practice to a country doctor, to a surgeon operating strictly from home.

Our groceries would be delivered to us by one man, whom my father insisted on examining and sanitising upon every visit. Everyone who lived on our estate was subjected to weekly medical checks by my father to ensure that no disease had trickled into our haven. Edward and I were taught by a live-in governess. It was almost as if we lived on an island.

I suppose I can't blame him them for that. My father only wanted our family to live long lives—for as long as one could in a time like that. But even as a child, I knew that his fear would be his undoing. He had remarkable talent that could change the world. I saw him use it every day. He should have been a greater man than he was, but he shunned this talent and died because of that sin.

And despite his fear of disease, it wasn't disease that killed him. Both of my parents and Edward died in their sleep in a fire when I was 17 leaving me an orphan with the inheritance of a handsome fortune and the responsibility of legacy I once thought I could shape with honour.

But in my room on my very last evening of life as the walls closed in and the residue of recent acts still clung to my hands, I wondered then if that boy would recognise the man he became. Or if he would simply turn away.

TITLE

LEECH

AUTHOR'S NAME

Jasmaine Payne

PAGE COUNT

100

GENRE

Psychological Thriller

ORDER LINK

https://a.co/d/7iT5KVM

RELEASE DATE

September 20, 2025

MEDIA

Interview Questions

What inspired you to write LEECH?

I was inspired by the anti-hero and the thin line of morality one must often tread in the face of difficult decisions. I have a fascination with true crime, thrillers and horrors, I also sought to create a story that would take the main character down a dark road even as he tried to justify his actions. Coupled with our modern-day obsession with recognition and social media, I wanted to place this recognition in another era to see how it would turn out then juxtapose the two, to show that, perhaps, we cannot escape this human condition.

How do you develop your characters?

I placed high stakes at the centre of each character's journey then allowed the plot to lead them to react. Initially, I gave each main character detailed back stories down to their likes and dislikes and that also helped me to write in their voice: Arianne - sarcastic, Leech- charming and witty, Dr Pressum Logical and skeptical. As the stakes got higher and the plot thickened, these characters became multi-dimensional and relatable.

How much of the book is drawn from your own experiences?

I injected my own frustrations as a writer into Arianne and I also used her Caribbean background and her parents' immigrant experience to help connect the book to my Guyanese/Caribbean roots.

What was the most challenging part of writing LEECH?

The most challenging part was the second draft. Writing a novel for 11 years brings lots of inconsistencies. Moreover my beliefs, preferences, writing style and motivations changed over time. By the time the first draft was finished, there were many inconsistencies that needed to be cleaned up. It was a tedious undertaking but it helped me to appreciate the overall process and prepare me for structuring and planning my future books better!

What do you hope readers will take away from LEECH?

I would like fans of the genre to appreciate the narrative structure and storytelling style of the book. It is a slow burn. I want them to ask questions about what is real and isn't real in the world I created. I also want them to become curious about questions that I pose in the novel and hope that, someday, we can have good conversation about it all!

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Mentions

Page Turner Awards - August 2025

_Finalist for the 2025 Page Turner Awards (@pageturnerawards) in the Writing Award Category and the Pheonix Award Sub-Category

NCN Guyana - Interview - 11th July 2025

https://www.facebook.com/share/v/16tTw7nR8L/

Book Cover Reveal
The Guyana Prize Literary Festival
Castellani House

https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1AozYKDe9x/

Stabroek News - July 13, 2025

https://www.stabroeknews.com/2025/07/13/sunday/jasmaine-payne-authors-psychological-thriller/

Guyana Chronicle - July 13, 2025

https://guyanachronicle.com/2025/07/13/ink-and-identity/

Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry Guyana

WCCIG Member Spotlight: Jasmaine Payne

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Guyanese Author Jasmaine Payne Blazes New Trail with Debut Psychological Thriller, LEECH

GEORGETOWN, Guyana – July 14, 2025 – Jasmaine Payne, acclaimed Guyanese author, editor, and communications specialist, is set to make literary history with the release of her debut psychological thriller, LEECH, launching on September 20, 2025. This groundbreaking novel marks the first psychological thriller written by a female author based in Guyana.

LEECH promises a compelling narrative, exploring themes of obsession, recognition, and the dark corners of the human psyche. The story introduces John Thomas Reginald Leech, who, over 100 years after his death, awakens in modern-day New York to seek immortality through Arianne Smith, a struggling writer. As Arianne transcribes his haunting story, she discovers a chilling cost to telling his tale.

Payne's writing journey began at an early age, first published at 11 years old after winning the UNICEF Environmental Awareness Poetry Competition in 1999. With 15 years of journalism experience and over 8 years as a professional editor, her work has been featured in notable publications such as Guyana at 50, 50 Women 50 Years, GEM Magazine, and Lady Magazine. Her short story, 'Another One for Mother Moon,' was also shortlisted for the Guyana Annual Competition. In 2025, Jasmaine was recognized as an Influential Women Leaders Award recipient.

Deeply passionate about storytelling, Payne mentors young writers across the Caribbean and leads writing workshops for media professionals and aspiring creatives. A fan of Stephen King, horror-thriller remains her genre of choice.

LEECH is a "slow burn" that takes readers through a story-within-a-story structure, spanning three timelines where each character recounts their version of events. The character of Arianne is loosely based on Payne's own frustrations as a writer, incorporating her Caribbean background and her parents' immigrant experience to connect the book to her Guyanese roots. The novel was written over 11 years, with influences drawn from locations including New York, Guyana, and Paris.

"I was inspired by the anti-hero and the thin line of morality one must often tread in the face of difficult decisions," states Payne, discussing her inspiration for LEECH. She aims for readers to question what is real and unreal within the world she created and hopes to spark conversations around the themes posed in the novel.

About the Author: Jasmaine Payne is a Guyanese author, editor, and communications specialist. She holds a BA in English from the University of London (Goldsmiths) and an MBA in Marketing from the University of Bedfordshire. Her debut psychological thriller, LEECH, is set to be released on September 20, 2025.

Photos

JEFFERY DEAVER
MIRROR IMAGE
SERIAL KILLERS

JEFFERY DEAVER
THE VAMPIRE LESTAT
MIRROR IMAGE
MICHAEL SCOTT
SERIAL KILLERS

CONTACT

Jasmaine Payne

AUTHOR, EDITOR, WRITING COACH

+592-657-3698

jasmainepayne@gmail.com

Jasmaine Payne - Author

jasmainepayne_author

authorjasmainepayne