

Thanks for wanting to spend more time talking and thinking about the novel, *Comfort Zone*.

You might think, having read this book, that I'm something of a football savant. That my husband delights in having me share the sofa during football season, because I'm so smart about the game, right? WRONG. I'm the girl who still has to have rules explained. But, what I lack in strategy, I make up for in reading the personalities of those involved. Once again, my observer gene went into hyper drive. I'm a sucker for an Alpha Male who has lost his way and who hasn't fantasized about a good-looking quarterback in need of a brilliant woman? Confidentially, Jack Moses may be my all-time favorite male character. I'd want him to be my book boyfriend, if such a thing existed.

Anna Weber though, she came out of nowhere. I don't even know an art appraiser, much less, understand what it means to run from gun-toting, patent thieves. But I still think there is a ring of truth to this entire plot. Who doesn't understand high-school bullying? Being the misfit in a room of high-achievers? Being smarter than everyone else in the room and too shy to open your mouth? I packed a lot of heartache into this character and she took it all on the chin. Anna is who I would want to be my ride or die friend, hands down. Which is why she is perfect for the man who seems to have the world by the tail—or, at least did at one time. Haven't you ever wondered what happens to these larger-than-life athletes once the spotlight fades? My nod to the very real Earl Campbell was a mea culpa regarding all those who walked in fame and then lived the rest of their lives in the shadows.

Many have asked about the side story plot of the sheet music, the Rose Festival, and Black musicians in East Texas. There is a lot to unpack and one novel won't do all those categories justice. It's worth your time to delve into the archives of your preferred library and explore the real people at the center of these institutions. Though not being a musician, or Black, I did have to guess at some of the characterizations. In the few pages on which this secondary story rolled out, I hope it did everyone justice.

Anna had to deal with a high-school rape, an over-developed body, social tensions, absentee mother, and a brain that was too smart for its own good. She may have handled things different from you, in that situation, but how did you learn to recover from youthful traumas?

It was beginning to feel like Anna would never catch a break. A single mom on the run, hiding from her family, living hand-to-mouth, hiding her backstory from friends, dealing with strong-minded twin daughters; it was a lot to process. Then a dream job lands in her lap. What would be your dream job and how might it change your outlook on life?

There are a lot of women in Anna's life and she's kept them at arm's length, but the bonds of friendship seeped behind her armor. Have you had friends that wouldn't stop at the curb, but loved you enough to see behind the mask? How has that changed you for the better?

Jack Moses is a noble man. He and his best friend, Jo Jo Green, are the type of men we admire, but even with all that he has, Jack is lonely. Don't we assume that folks who appear to have it all going on are perfect? How can we be more perceptive of people we meet?

It's easy to think that a two-parent household is the single-woman's dream come true, but that is not always the case. How do women parent when there is not a reliable male figure in the family?

Do you have a skill set—like car repair—that your friends admire?

Organizing fundraisers is hard work and complicated. A million things can go wrong. Have you ever had to plan an unusual event for a cause and then—fingers crossed—that it would all turn out the way you'd hoped? Tell your friends, because they're bound to walk that path one day, also.

Education processes are in flux. The traditional model may not hold up well to a modern age. I so enjoyed learning more about charter schools, running a private school, and the ever-present need for more funding. Let's all keep an open mind toward the way children learn best and the systems for how education can best be delivered.

Thanks,
Kimberly

PS As something exclusive to subscribers to my newsletter at kimberlyfish.com, I sometimes create content as a holiday gift. The Green family may have to make a return appearance and surprise us all with the next adventure. Stay tuned!