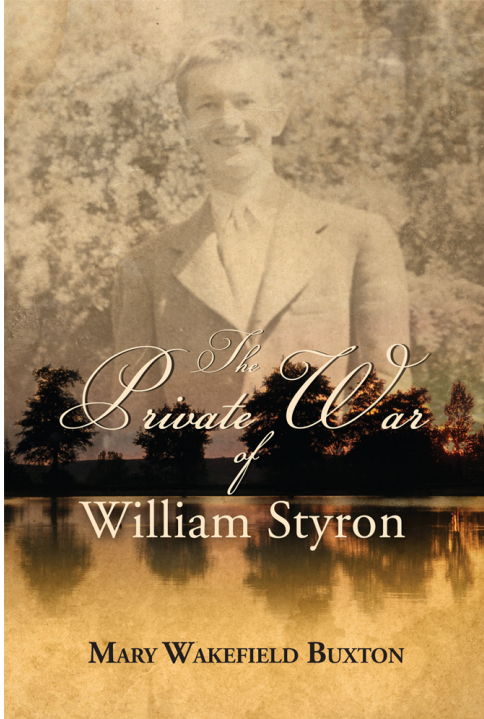


THE PRIVATE WAR OF  
WILLIAM STYRON  
*a novel*

BY MARY WAKEFIELD BUXTON



Returning to his childhood home in Virginia for the funeral of his stepmother, Elizabeth Buxton Styron, acclaimed writer William Styron finds himself plunged into boyhood reminiscence. He is “Billy” again, fourteen and heartbroken, with a mother recently passed from cancer and a grieving father who has fallen in love with the head nurse at the local hospital. The impending marriage terrifies Billy, who finds his new stepmother’s strict worldview stifling to his creativity, his joy, and his hopes for the future.

Driven by Elizabeth’s desire for him to become a doctor, Billy is sent to Christchurch boarding school, where he finds himself drawn more to writing than to sport, or anything else deemed appropriate for a man of good Southern breeding. Desperate to build a life on his own terms, the young Styron turns to fantasy and alcohol. He emerges a painfully burdened man, hounded by “the black dog” of depression from which he would never fully escape, and gifted with a foundation of moral sense that would inspire all of his later writing.

This is the story of the war Billy fought against the cruelty of circumstance, for the prize of his own soul and future—before he became Pulitzer Prize-winning author William Styron, gaining international recognition for his novel *Sophie’s Choice*.

HISTORICAL FICTION

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“Buxton uncovers truths we might otherwise never have known.”

Tom Hardin, editor, *Southside Sentinel*



**About the Author**

Mary Wakefield Buxton was born in Vermilion, Ohio, attended Randolph-Macon Woman’s College, graduated from the College of William and Mary, and earned a master’s degree from the George Washington University. She has written a column for the *Southside Sentinel* newspaper in Middlesex County since 1984 and is the author of eleven previous books about love and life in Virginia. This is her first novel. She is the mother of two adult children and lives in Urbanna, Virginia, with her husband, Chip, and her cocker spaniel, Dandy.

**About the Publisher**

BrandyLane Publishers, Inc., is a small independent press that has been publishing fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and children’s books since 1985. BrandyLane is located in the Monroe district of Richmond, Virginia.

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