

AUTHOR INTERVIEW LOIS CAHALL

Of love and loss, hope and

Author decides to embrace life, as mom would want.

By Jan Tuckwood
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Lois Cahall's last conversation with her mother was lively and quick — a burst of updates and jokes and teasing and a rushed goodbye: *Mom, I love you, I've got to run, I'm in New York, I'll call you at 5...*

A couple of hours later, when Lois called back, her stepfather answered.

Her mother, Marie, was gone. She had dropped dead from a sudden heart attack at 65.

Just like that. Bam. Just a short while after hanging up with Lois — her artistic, risk-taking only child, her dance partner for impromptu living-room boogies to Broadway show tunes and her truest partner in life.

It had always been those two against the world — in their case, the world of blue-collar Boston.

Marie admired her daughter's exuberance and pluck. She'd always tell Lois: "You're the lion, and I'm the lamb."

"We did everything together but die," says Lois, curled up in a chair in her sunny West Palm Beach apartment.

Just like that, Lois became a member "of the orphan's club" — untethered and unglued.

And unable to let her mother go.

As a writer, she had one way out of paralyzing grief: Spill it out. Type it out. Write a book for devastated people like herself, "a book for those left living — afraid to be on the other side, afraid to be left here alone on this side."

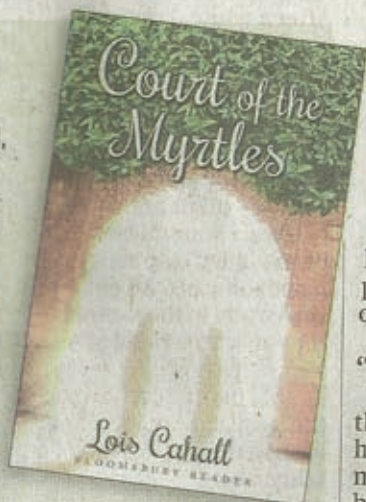
That book — "Court of the Myrtles," released



Lois Cahall has just released her latest book, "Court of the Myrtles," which Louise Sloan of Ladies Home Journal calls "'Tuesdays with Morrie' — on estrogen, with a touch of romance." TAYLOR JONES / THE PALM BEACH POST

'COURT OF THE MYRTLES'

Lois Cahall's new novel, released this week as an eBook, is about two women who meet every Friday morning in a cemetery. One is grieving over the tragic and early death of her mother. The other, mourning the loss of her daughter, shepherds the younger woman through the stages of grief — and the possibility of heaven. Published by Bloomsbury Press, it is available as an eBook at amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com (\$4.39 to \$8.99).



this week by Bloomsbury Press — is a novel about the relationship between two women who meet in a cemetery. One of them, Marla, lost her mother

tragically and suddenly. The other, Alice, lost her daughter after a lingering illness.

The message is hopeful — that we will see our

loved ones again — and universal: "This is a book for mothers, daughters, grandmothers, aunts and sisters," the author says. "This is a story about survival — for those who have loved and lost. So I suppose this is a book for all of us."

'Two kinds of death'

The idea for "Court of the Myrtles" came to Cahall after she buried her mother and weird things began to happen to her — "Touched by an Angel" kinds of weird things.

She would go to the cemetery and get "signs."

Once, after a teenage friend of her daughter had died in an accident, Cahall went with the child's mother to the cemetery and prayed. The child's mother wanted him buried near Cahall's mom — but where?

"My mother's bird