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I Love You—Now Hush by Melinda Rainey Thompson & Morgan Murphy

Two of the South's funniest voices have come together to write a hilarious, heartfelt collection of essays about the nature of men and women.

She: Melinda Rainey Thompson is the author of the best-selling book *SWAG: Southern Women Aging Gracefully* (2006) and *The SWAG Life* (2007), both of which have delighted readers who adore Melinda's comic take on modern life.

He: Morgan Murphy spent fifteen years as a writer and editor at publications such as *Southern Living*, *Forbes*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Harper's Bazaar*, where he honed a sharp wit and love of the written word. He's a graduate of the University of Oxford and a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy and recently launched the world's first online social network of classic car enthusiasts, Motorpool.com.

The two have led wildly different lives. While Morgan was bellowing Gilbert and Sullivan Off Broadway, starting his magazine career on Madison Avenue, and hobnobbing with the future Mrs. M. in New York City, Melinda was writing and circulating *The SWAG Letter* from her dining-room table while raising three children and helping her husband, Judge Bill Thompson, on the campaign trail in Alabama. So how do these two seemingly different writers know each other?

From English 101 at Birmingham-Southern College, back in the days when Melinda was a teacher and Morgan a student. Sound juicy? Only if you have a passion for correcting misplaced modifiers. As Morgan says, Melinda "taught many rules, regulations, and notes on grammar in one handy, laminated 'cheat sheet.' She stood on a chair one day and made us all promise to take it with us everywhere, even to our *graves*. While I think I've broken most of the rules, I've always kept a copy of her editing remarks in my desk drawer . . . right next to the booze and tobacco."

I Love You—Now Hush is a pithy, humorous book along the lines of *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from*

Venus—but think *below* the Mason-Dixon line. And guess what? It turns out this former teacher and student work together beautifully, despite a few bumps along the way. Melinda absolutely refused to write an essay on cursing: "I told Morgan he would likely sprout wings and fly before I'd write this chapter. That's when an astonishing thing happened. In a velvety, deep-bass drawl that I adore, my friend looked across the desk at me and said, between his teeth, 'Yes. We. Are. Writing. This. Chapter.' I thought I was going to have to take to my bed. I really did." End result: a chapter titled, "What the #*\$&?" It's PG-rated, of course. As Morgan says, "I believe that if it is in the Bible, you can say it. Period. Fortunately for me, that opens up a whole range of blasphemy."

Melinda comments on their working relationship in the preface: "I've known Morgan for years. He was my all-time favorite student. . . . He writes beautifully. He should. I taught him. . . . He makes me laugh so hard I think I am going to throw up."

I Love You—Now Hush will be in bookstores everywhere in time for Valentine's Day 2010. Melinda and Morgan will be touring the Southeast in February, possibly in Morgan's 1959 Cadillac Eldorado, probably with the top *up*. Melinda can't show up for a book signing with wind-tossed hair, now, can she?



I Love You—Now Hush
\$16.95 trade paperback
5½ x 8½, 224 pages
February 2010
978-0-89587-378-1