

**In-Laws, Outlaws,
Friends, and Foes**

A Southern Collection

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A Southern Collection

By Pamela McConathy Kopfler



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dedicated to

my children

Adam and Caroline McConathy

my husband

Joe Kopfler

and

*all the in-laws, outlaws, friends, and foes
in the stories
on these pages*

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— Preface —

Every family has stories to tell. Ours is no exception. Sometimes I am reminded of a story from the past in most unusual ways. A certain smell, a look, a conversation, or maybe happening upon a note or picture can bring forth a flood of memories, tears to my eyes, and laughter to my soul.

My mother-in-law, Mary McConathy, is a delightful storyteller, as was her mother, Lula Lane. They could tell a story in such detail and animation you felt as though you were right there for the event. I love hearing stories and telling stories, but being a scribe at heart, I must write them down. It gives the story more security and somehow gives the characters and maybe the storyteller more permanence than their brief life on earth.

There is a flavor of the South that permeates its inhabitants. It's as though the hot, humid days steep southerners in a fine blend of tradition, humor, love, and humility. The stories I share with you about in-laws, outlaws, friends, and foes do not follow the order of time, but flow more like a conversation spanning over forty years of family tales, struggles, and triumphs, as they come to mind. Some of the stories are reminiscent, and others happened only recently.

The characters in the stories called in-laws include all those not directly related to me. Those considered outlaws are anyone, including a friend, family member, in-law, pet, or inanimate object, that is involved in a suspicious or less than virtuous activity, either real or imagined. An outlaw in one story may be a friend in the next. The friends in the stories include my children at all ages, all my other family members, and of course good friends. Foes are generally circumstances and not humans but foes all the same.

I thank my children, Adam and Caroline, for loving me anyway after I shared their childhood antics in my stories.

I thank my father, the late John Wallace, and my mother, Melva Mitchell, for believing I could do anything, and my sister, Sandy Planetta, and brother, Patrick Wallace, for the fun we had as kids that I enjoy telling about today.

I thank my ex-in-laws, the McConathy family, for loving me even after their son and I divorced and allowing me to share their funny family stories.

I thank my friends for enriching my life with their love, presence, and an abundance of writing material.

I also thank those who listened to my stories and helped me edit my jumbled stories into a form that could be submitted to my publisher, Pelican Publishing Company: Emily Rash, Doug Seegers, Beverly Halsell, Jerry Hermann, and my dear husband, Joe Kopfler.

Storytellers tell the story as they remember it, and can't be held accountable for factual details, only conveying the magic of the story. I hope you will laugh, cry, reflect, and enjoy these stories, understanding they are told only as I remember them.