

BOOK CLUB  
RESOURCE GUIDE

ANTHOLOGY

A watercolor illustration of a cozy living room. In the center, there is a wooden chair with a curved back and a small wooden table. To the right, a light-colored armchair is visible. The room is filled with bookshelves on both sides, filled with books. The overall style is soft and artistic, with a warm, inviting atmosphere.

THANK YOU FOR  
CONSIDERING EXPOSED  
FOR YOUR NEXT BOOK  
CLUB READ

BOOK CLUB  
RESOURCE GUIDE

MULTI-AUTHOR  
ANTHOLOGY

Eight award-winning short works capture the instant when everything hidden steps into the light. A teacher stumbles onto a financial trail no one wants uncovered. A revelation after a lifetime of chasing the next big idea. A synthetic guardian questions whether mercy can exist after the end of the world. A lone traveler races through meteor storms toward a dying star, only to discover the real mission waiting in the dark. A forgotten pantry of home-canned pears and honey turns into a quiet haunting of a life left behind. These are stories you can read in a sitting—but think about for days. Perfect for book clubs, busy readers, and anyone who loves that sharp, breath-holding moment when truth finally arrives. Open the book. See what the light reveals.

WORD COUNT: 27,100

PAGE COUNT: 130

KEY WORDS: Speculative short stories | Revelation and Secrets | Themed Short Stories

DEMOGRAPHICS: Adult readers 30–65 | book club readers, lit-fic fans, and those who like cross-genre anthologies

COMP BOOKS: *Stories of Your Life and Others* by Ted Chiang | *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri | *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado

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## AESTHETIC & DECOR

### Lighting progression

- Start the evening with soft, low lighting: lamps, candles, fairy lights.
- As the discussion deepens, slowly brighten the room — not dramatically, just enough to symbolize revelation.
- If you want to be extra: use smart bulbs that shift from warm amber to soft white over the course of the night.

### Color palette

- Deep navy, charcoal, and plum (the “unknown”)
- Accents of gold, pearl, and soft white (the “revealed”)

## OPTIONAL COSTUME / DRESS THEME

### “Shadows & Highlights”

- Guests wear mostly dark clothing with one bright or metallic accent
- scarf, jewelry, shoes, pocket square, hair clip. It’s subtle, symbolic, and looks great in photos.

## MUSIC

- Use the Spotify music playlist provided later in the guide

## OPTIONAL PARTY FAVORS

- Mini jars of honey
- Bookmarks with quotes from the foreword
- Tea lights
- Pear-scented candles

# THEMED ACTIVITIES - What the Light Revealed

## Guess the Story

Prepare 8 cards, each with a single object or image representing a story:

- A ledger
- A meteor
- A jar of pears
- A camera
- A ridge silhouette
- A fire
- A star
- A key

Guests draw a card and describe the story without naming it, while others guess.

## What the Light Revealed to Me

Provide small blank cards to each guest.

Guests write:

- a quote
- a thought
- a feeling
- or a personal insight

Put all the cards in a bowl. Everyone draws one card, and after reading it out loud, everyone gets to guess who wrote each card and the story that inspired it.

# THEMED ACTIVITIES - What the Light Revealed

### **Exposed Open-Face Crostini**

- Toasted baguette slices with herbed goat cheese and roasted tomatoes—everything visible, nothing hidden.

### **Pears, Honey & Thyme Tart**

- Rustic tart with sliced pears, honey drizzle, and fresh thyme, nodding to the farmhouse pantry.

### **Meteor Shower Meatballs**

- Cocktail meatballs glazed with a spicy-sweet sauce, served with toothpicks in a star-shaped pattern for The Mission.

### **After the Fire Roasted Veg Platter**

- Charred vegetables with smoky aioli, echoing By the Light of the Fire.

### **Hidden Ledger Brownies**

- Fudge brownies with a surprise layer of salted caramel in the middle—plain on top, secrets inside.

### **Apocalypse Trail Mix Cups**

- Individual cups with nuts, dried fruit, dark chocolate, and pretzels—portable, post-apocalyptic snacking.

THEMED MENU – Small Bites, Big Taste



## A layered drink that changes as you stir it

### Ingredients

- 4 oz cloudy lemonade
- 1 oz pomegranate or blackberry syrup (this is your “hidden layer”)
- 2 oz prosecco or sparkling wine
- 1 oz vodka or gin (optional, but it balances beautifully)
- Pear slice + rosemary sprig for garnish

**Pour** 1 oz syrup into the bottom of a clear glass.

**Add** 4 oz lemonade gently so the layers stay separate.

**Add** 1 oz vodka or gin if using.

**Top slowly** with 2 oz prosecco to create the bright, fizzy “light” layer.

**Garnish** with a pear slice and rosemary.

# SIGNATURE DRINK-What The Light Revealed

Breathe Me by Sia  
Holocene by Bon Iver  
The Night We Met by Lord Huron  
Saturn by Sleeping at Last  
All We Ever Knew by The Head and the Heart  
Runaway by AURORA  
Way Down We Go by Kaleo  
Youth by Daughter  
The Scientist by Coldplay  
Radioactive (acoustic) by Imagine Dragons  
Cosmic Love by Florence + The Machine  
Demons by Imagine Dragons  
The Partisan by Leonard Cohen  
Slow Dancing in a Burning Room by John Mayer  
After the Storm by Mumford & Sons



# SPOTIFY MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

A watercolor illustration of a cozy living room. In the center, a wooden chair with a curved back sits on a light-colored rug. To the left and right are tall wooden bookshelves filled with books. A window with white curtains is in the background, letting in soft light. The overall style is soft and artistic.

THIS GUIDE CONTAINS POSSIBLE  
SPOILERS FOR THIS BOOK IN  
THE DISCUSSION SECTION.

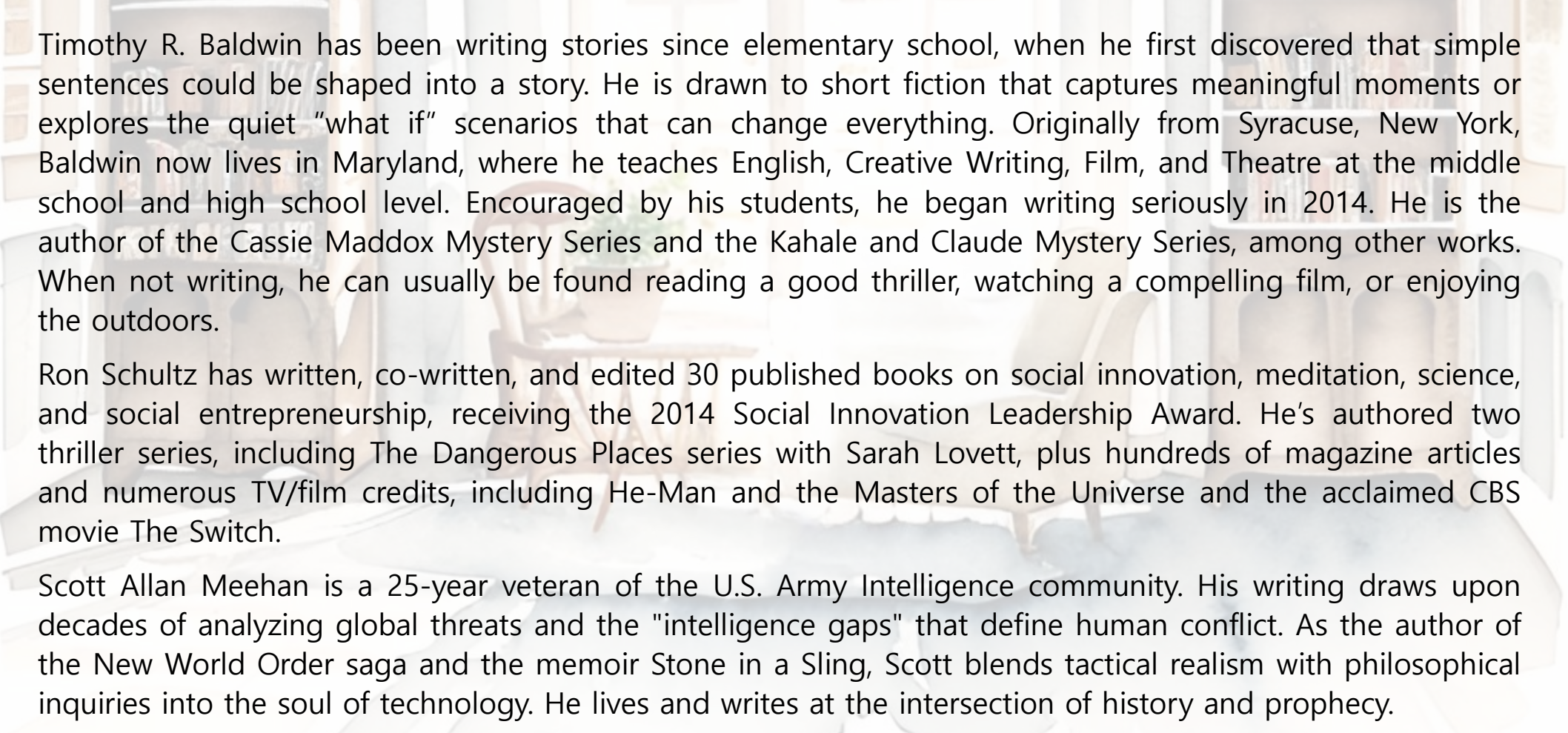
WARNING

- The anthology was built around the prompt “What the Light Revealed.” How does each story interpret “light”—literal, emotional, spiritual, or otherwise? Which interpretation resonated most with you, and why?
- In “Exposed,” a single late-night discovery in an office sets off a chain of consequences. Do you think the protagonist had a moral obligation to act on what he saw, or would you have walked away?
- “Salvage of a Soul” imagines a synthetic being grappling with mercy and meaning after the Rapture. What does the story suggest about what makes a soul—memory, choice, compassion, something else?
- “The Mission” blends allegory and fantasy as a traveler races to save a dying star. What do you think the star represents, and how did the ending reshape your understanding of the mission itself?
- Several pieces, including “The Break In” and “By the Light of the Fire,” deal with trauma and the way past events refuse to stay buried. How do these stories handle fear and memory differently, and what do they have in common?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In “Quannah Parker on the Distant Ridge,” the narrator finds echoes of his own life in historical last stands. How does the story use travel and landscape as a mirror for internal change?
- “Pears, Honey” turns a simple discovery in an abandoned farmhouse into a meditation on legacy. What do you think the jars represent, and how did the story make you think about what we leave behind?
- The foreword notes that these stories “go straight for the pulse” and that constraints sharpen the impact. Did the brevity of the pieces make the revelations feel more powerful, or did you wish any of them were longer?
- Across fiction and nonfiction, many characters confront a moment when they can’t go back to “not knowing.” Which character’s turning point felt most authentic or familiar to you, and why?
- If you were to write your own “Small Bite” for a future anthology with the same prompt, “What the Light Revealed,” what kind of moment would you choose—a personal memory, a speculative scenario, a historical scene? How would you want your reader to feel at the end?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Timothy R. Baldwin has been writing stories since elementary school, when he first discovered that simple sentences could be shaped into a story. He is drawn to short fiction that captures meaningful moments or explores the quiet “what if” scenarios that can change everything. Originally from Syracuse, New York, Baldwin now lives in Maryland, where he teaches English, Creative Writing, Film, and Theatre at the middle school and high school level. Encouraged by his students, he began writing seriously in 2014. He is the author of the Cassie Maddox Mystery Series and the Kahale and Claude Mystery Series, among other works. When not writing, he can usually be found reading a good thriller, watching a compelling film, or enjoying the outdoors.

Ron Schultz has written, co-written, and edited 30 published books on social innovation, meditation, science, and social entrepreneurship, receiving the 2014 Social Innovation Leadership Award. He’s authored two thriller series, including The Dangerous Places series with Sarah Lovett, plus hundreds of magazine articles and numerous TV/film credits, including He-Man and the Masters of the Universe and the acclaimed CBS movie The Switch.

Scott Allan Meehan is a 25-year veteran of the U.S. Army Intelligence community. His writing draws upon decades of analyzing global threats and the “intelligence gaps” that define human conflict. As the author of the New World Order saga and the memoir Stone in a Sling, Scott blends tactical realism with philosophical inquiries into the soul of technology. He lives and writes at the intersection of history and prophecy.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS - The Winning Trio

Donna L. Doty, Ph.D. is a Sociologist and some-time content creator for the media, film production and digital entertainment industries—She is inspired by the writers of 1920's Paris and enjoys writing in most genres and is equally passionate about fiction as nonfiction. Most recently, Donna wrote a short story called, *The Red Spot*, a murder mystery absent the murder, and is currently working on a psychological thriller.

J.W. Bell is a former Army Field Artillery Officer with expertise in long-range weapons, small arms, and explosives. He's worked as a roughneck, gymnastics coach, and teacher licensed in music and drama. A world traveler and composer of two symphonies, he now lives in Arkansas on a small acreage surrounded by pets, with his children and extended family nearby. His military thrillers draw on real terminology and experience.

D. Krauss resides in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia. He has been a cottonpicker, a sodbuster, a librarian, a surgical orderly, the guy who paints the little white line down the middle of the road, a weatherman, a door-kickin' shove-gun-in-face lawman, a hunter of terrorists, and a school bus driver. Currently, he's a layabout. He's been married over 50 years (yep, same woman), and has a wildman bass guitarist for a son.

Susan April writes reflective, place-driven short fiction and creative nonfiction. Her work often blends memory, environment, and personal history, echoing themes found in her published essays and literary pieces. She has contributed to several journals and brings a thoughtful, observant voice to her storytelling.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS - Honorees