



A Novel

friends for a season

BECAUSE WISDOM IS AGELESS

BRAD GRABER

THE AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF
The Intersect, After the Fall, and Boca by Moonlight



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FRIENDS FOR A SEASON

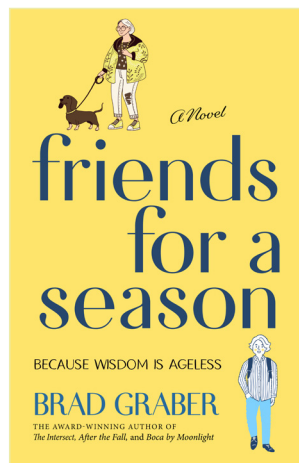
By Brad Graber

Brad Graber's new novel **FRIENDS FOR A SEASON** is the story of Helena, an octogenarian, who believes her life is over when she takes a tumble in her bathroom that requires hospitalization. In her youth, she'd been a mother, trail blazing author, famous speaker, and a women's rights activist, but now, she's scared and alone, hasn't written a word in years, abandoned by her sons, and certain the world has forgotten her. Forced to make a change in her living situation, Helena buys a condo in an experimental senior-living community, where she struggles to adjust her expectations, even as Julie, the activities director, wrangles her into volunteering as a patient advocate for Zak, a college freshman, also alone and struggling. What can two people of different generations learn from each other? How can they build a friendship that overcomes fear and anxiety in Graber's fourth novel, **FRIENDS FOR A SEASON** (April 2026, ISBN 9780997604283, Original Trade Paperback available on Amazon)?

From the multi-award-winning author of **THE INTERSECT**, **AFTER THE FALL**, **BOCA BY MOONLIGHT** and **WHAT'S THAT GROWING IN MY SOUR CREAM?** comes a novel that rips aside the façade of one woman's life, leaving readers to contemplate the value of friendship and family.

ABOUT BRAD GRABER:

Brad Graber writes novels because he grew up in a family where no one listened to him – so he made up stories about them. Graber writes a monthly blog: *There, I Said It!* He currently lives in Phoenix with his husband, Jeff. For more information, visit his website: www.bradgraber.com.



FRIENDS FOR A SEASON

By Brad Graber

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Who Is
BRAD GRABER?



Brad Graber writes novels because he grew up in a family where no one listened to him. So, he made up stories about them.

Brad's latest novel, *Friends for A Season*, is the story of Helena, an octogenarian, who thinks her life serves no purpose. In her youth, Helena had been a mother, author, gifted speaker, and a women's rights activist. But now she is alone, abandoned by her sons and certain that no one remembers her. When Helena takes a bad tumble, she fears her life is over, until she meets Zak, a college freshman, who is also struggling with his own life challenges. What can strangers of different generations learn from each other? Can they become friends?

From the award-winning author of *The Intersect*, *After the Fall*, *What's That Growing in My Sour Cream?* and *Boca by Moonlight*, comes an intergenerational tale of the friendship that blossoms between strangers. *Friends for A Season* is a lovely, heartwarming, upbeat novel, that reaffirms that the wisdom we share is truly ageless.

Born and raised in New York City, Brad earned a B.A. in Biology from the State University of New York at Buffalo and an M.H.A from Washington University in St. Louis. Brad has lived all over the country, from Chicago to Detroit to San Francisco. He currently resides in Phoenix with his husband, Jeff. Brad also writes a monthly humor blog: *There, I Said It!* and is an accomplished speaker who has participated in Arizona's Storyteller Project. He's an active volunteer for Duet, a Phoenix-based nonprofit, that offers compassionate services to aging adults.

A CONVERSATION WITH BRAD GRABER, AUTHOR OF *FRIENDS FOR A SEASON*

***Friends for A Season* is your fourth novel. What attracted you to writing an intergenerational story about a senior who relocates to independent living and a student at Arizona State University?**

For a decade, I've volunteered with Duet, a Phoenix-based nonprofit, that offers services to aging adults who are homebound, like grocery shopping and transportation. I've also in the past been involved with One-in-Ten, another Phoenix-based nonprofit, that works with disaffected gay youth. On top of that, I've become fascinated by senior housing and the many +55 developments (am I showing my age?) that offer educational and recreational opportunities. It occurred to me that there was a real intersection of fear/anxiety that is shared by seniors and students as they face these life changing events, each on the opposite end of life's continuum. That notion became the seed for *Friends for A Season*.

Your first novel *The Intersect* was a love story to the city of Phoenix. Your second novel *After the Fall* is about New York City. *Boca by Moonlight* is based solely in Boca Raton, Florida. And now this new story is based in Tempe, Arizona. Why the strong connection to place? And how does it help you develop character?

Since I live in Phoenix, I'm interested in stories about the southwest. But not the cowboy and Indian stories of old, but about life in a modern metropolis that reflects the character and the people who live there. Place helps ground a story and create character. Ventana, the name of the experimental senior housing complex in the novel, attracts a certain type of sophisticated retiree who wants to be connected to an educational environment and is willing to actively engage with mentoring students. I didn't want the story to be about seniors attending adult education, though there is certainly nothing wrong with that, but I wanted the story to be intergenerational, activity driven, revealing retirees as seasoned professionals with extensive life experience, and from that life experience, able to share important life lessons. I also wanted Zak, the university student, to share his experience in the world. Together, the two characters, Helena and Zak, tell you a lot about each other and offer a glimpse of the diversity of Phoenix.

Your book begins as Helena takes a tumble in the bathroom of her home. What inspired you to start the story there?

Seniors living alone face challenges of daily life as they age in place, including the serious risk of falling, which can be life limiting should you hit your head or break a bone. I wanted to open the story where our protagonist must come to terms with her own limitations and expectations of the future. What better way to start than to find her on the bathroom floor trying to figure out not only how to get up, but how to move forward in her life, while still living independently. In that way, the bathroom floor becomes a kind of time-out, a reckoning of sorts, for someone who is trying to ignore their changing life circumstances.

Helena's a feminist, author, speaker, and former civil rights activist, as well as a mother. As we get to know her, she struggles with coming to terms with her past and how that journey might have impacted her children. Why would that be an important issue to explore?

Helena is very much a product of the 1960s. As a widow raising sons, she struggled to come to terms with her cultural obligations versus the desire for self-actualization. She's clearly an intelligent, accomplished woman, who balanced career and family, and now, looking back on the relationship with her sons, she's uncertain she'd been very successful on the homefront. This seems to be a common theme among women: family vs. career. There's a natural tension as mother's struggle to balance one option versus another. Rarely do we see a father struggle with that issue. Too bad. We'd probably have better fathers if men did.

The novel follows Helena as she relocates to independent living. What made you want to explore that issue?

As Baby Boomers continue to age, long-term care will become increasingly important. When is the right time to move into independent living? Is it conceivable to give up everything you've worked for to live in a smaller space with access to care? And how do adults simply give up their independence freely? What circumstances drive that decision? I'm fascinated by how people make decisions regarding their future. I think it's an underexplored issue.

When Helena is recruited to be Zak's patient advocate, she's about as surprised as anyone can be.

Right. Because she selected a retirement experience that included interaction with university students. Helena's connection to Zak is commandeered by Julie, Ventana's activities director, and even though Helena's not a young woman, and she at first resists, retirement at Ventana is all about seniors mixing with young people. The really big surprise is that as the relationship between Helena and Zak develops, there's a sense the two have so much in common. And if you think back to the times of your life when you might have been uncertain, filled with anxiety, you'll agree that we don't always outgrow that fear. It can be as powerful when we're young as when we're old. Life is an unwritten script, no matter where you are on the journey. But especially at the beginning and the end.

Tell us about the inspiration for putting the two characters together.

I love the idea of different generations connecting. For me, as you age, distinctions fade. Especially when you hit retirement, and life starts all over again. It's possible, and very desirable, to have friendships with people from different generations. But I think for Zak, because he's young, it's a surprise, and something I hope he'll continue to do for the rest of his life. There are so many ways that older people come into your life. Mentors, coaches, teachers. How wonderful it is to learn and benefit from someone else's life experience. A true gift to those who are listening.

CHARACTERS OF *FRIENDS FOR A SEASON*

HELENA GREENBLATT

Helena is an octogenarian who lives alone and is suffering from dizzy spells. In her youth, Helena was a mother, well-known author, speaker, and women's rights activist. Abandoned by her sons, Helena believes the world has forgotten her.

ZAK ANDREWS

Zak is an eighteen-year-old college freshman who has recently come out to his family as gay. Deaf in his left ear, Zak works late hours at a noisy bar in Tempe to support himself. He's estranged from his family.

ALLISON

Allison is Zak's best friend from high school and the first person Zak came out to when he was fifteen. Allison has kept Zak's secret. She lives in New York City and is working toward a career in the theater.

MELINDA

Melinda manages the Windy Canyon Bar where Zak works.

MARSHALL

Marshall is Zak's first friend in college and the classmate that he has a crush on.

CHUCK

Chuck is Zak's roommate. He comes from the Bay Area and has a wrestling scholarship.

ALAN

Alan is the executive director of Ventana, the senior community located in Tempe, Arizona.

JULIE GOLD

Julie is the activity director at Ventana.

AGGIE

Aggie is a waitress at Ventana and Helena's first friend at the retirement community.

CYNTHIA, BABS, DONNA

Cynthia, Babs, and Donna, are Helena's dining room companions at Ventana.

GILBERT GOLDFARB

Gilbert is the Ventana Romeo who has his eye trained on Helena.

