

# Hard Times in Red Grape

## Secrets in Small Town California Are Hard to Keep

by Donna Barkley Fleming

### Book Description

*Hard Times in Red Grape* uncovers the truth and lies beneath the surface of the perfect small town just south of Napa, California. Surrounded by vineyards, Red Grape is the perfect get away. And, everyone seems to show up there including old boyfriends. The picture perfect town has its share of trouble with rising water rates, water rationing, overbuilding, a corrupt city council and too many developers. At the center of the novel are Brad and Helen Elsen who have been married for seven years, but have yet to have children. Brad is a successful CPA with a thriving business in Napa. His wife Helen is a nervous housewife trying to keep her readers interested in a colorful cooking blog. Her marriage to Brad is not perfect but there are secrets. Kate is the colorful local neighborhood gossip who secretly writes under a penname for the local paper, *The Grape Leaf*. And, a corrupt mayor, Beau Geysler is getting rich on contractor and developer contributions. Behind it all is the struggling state of California running out of water during a serious drought. Who has secrets in Red Grape? Everyone living in this perfect little suburban town. A page turning combination to enjoy with a glass of Napa Red Zinfandel.

### Praise received for *Hard Times in Red Grape*

“Fleming unfolds the story in a typical suburban town and her characters uncover layer after layer of corruption driven by the drought in California. *Hard Times in Red Grape* is a shocking debut novel.”

- Diane Stegman, author of *Grill! The Misadventures of an RV Park Fast-Fry Cook*

“The secrets of life in suburbia and the demands of marriage collide in this eye-opening story of corruption in a town that has everything, but water.”

- Michael Gonzalez, author of *Escape from Havana*

“Bravo! Donna Barkley Fleming manages to combine a really good story into a topical alarm about California’s water crisis!”

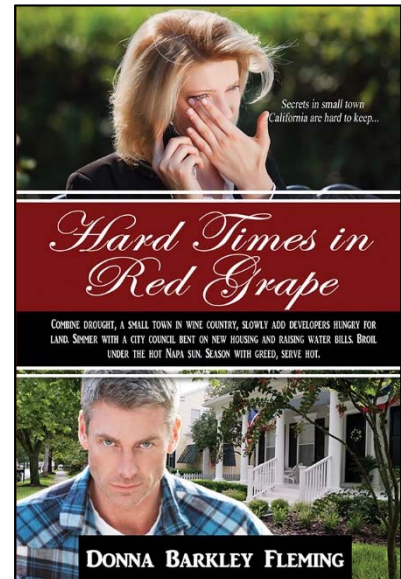
- Michael Smirnov, Environmental Compliance Consultant

### About the Author

Donna Barkley Fleming has been a reader her entire life. Her family moved many times during her childhood as her father’s career demanded it. Born in St. Louis, her family then moved to Kansas, Indiana, and finally to California. She started her first journal in Paris during the summer of 1974. She worked as a technical writer for industry for many years but she never gave up her passion for reading and writing. As she raised her three children, she wrote poetry, short stories and read thousands of books between baking muffins for junior lifeguards and shuttling kids to choir practice. Donna is the proud mother of a daughter and two sons, and is also a grandmother. She makes her home in San Juan Capistrano, California. *Hard Times in Red Grape* is her first published novel.

### *Hard Times in Red Grape*

is available from: Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble  
and many other fine retailers worldwide



**FICTION, NOVEL: MYSTERY,  
ROMANCE, SUSPENSE, THRILLER,  
POLITICAL**

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