



Glenn Martin

Writer on ethics and leadership

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MEDIA RELEASE: Leading organisations in the midst of strife

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Writer Glenn Martin has released his second novel, a story that once again explores the difficulties that can face those who manage organisations. In Glenn's first novel, *The Ten Thousand Things*, we saw how a leader stepped up to handle a crisis in his first days on the job, and how he then learned what it takes to be a leader who is both effective and ethical.

In his new novel, *Sustenance*, Glenn takes us into the murky world of a community-based organisation where the inept and the self-serving on the management committee often hold sway. As Patrick, the lead character, comments after one episode, the job he had taken on as an opportunity to do something useful in the community was apparently a forum for unseemly people to play out their ugly hatreds and grudges.

Patrick struggles to figure out how to work productively with the unemployed youth who are the reason for the project, and who are variously disillusioned, angry or cowed. It is only when a death occurs that people open up and reveal what they value and what they have in common. But this only seems to intensify the problems with the committee, and these problems eventually reach crisis point.

This is a personal story, but it is also a business novel. It is a story about people and managers in organisations. Glenn maintains that becoming a good manager is a personal business: "It requires you to examine your values, and especially your ethical values. It is not simply a question of acquiring a set of skills in organising things and dealing with people. I think many managers still wish that being a manager is just about skills and power, but if you are to be a good manager you will invariably be called upon to be your best self."

Like Glenn's first novel, *Sustenance* was written within a short time frame. He was a participant in National Novel Writing Month (NanoWrimo), a global event in which over 160,000 people participate each year in November. He didn't quite finish the book in one month; it took him seven weeks. But Glenn was satisfied with the story. He says, "I read it, and I thought, 'That's it. The story is told'".

At the same time, Glenn doesn't recommend this approach. He says, "You have to be ready. Otherwise, as they say, 'Don't try this at home.'"

The story is based on real events in Glenn's life. He says he wrote it as a story rather than history because "it enabled me to avoid being pedantic about details that no longer matter, and to preserve the anonymity of people".

Glenn Martin is well-known in professional publications for his articles and commentary on human resources, employment law, training and development, and ethics.

Review copies available on request.

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