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In THE DRAGON KEEPER, a zookeeper fights to save the animal she loves, even as her own life crumbles around her...

"This is a thriller of the rarest form—one that touches both the mind and the heart."

—Mary Logue, author of the Claire Watkins mysteries

RELEASE: September 2012 PRICE: \$17.50 TRIM 5.25 x 8 x .6 PAGES: 272 ISBN: 978-1-61822-013-4

(Ashland, OR—June 4, 2012) — Ashland Creek Press is pleased to announce the September 2012 publication of THE DRAGON KEEPER, Mindy Mejia's gripping debut novel, which highlights the perils of captivity and the astonishing ways in which animals evolve.

Meg Yancy knows she may be overly attached to Jata, the Komodo dragon that has been in her care since it arrived at the zoo from Indonesia. Jata brings the exotic to Meg's Minnesotan life: an ancient, predatory history and stories of escaping to freedom—an independence Meg understands well. She's always been better able to relate to reptiles than to people, from her estranged father to her live-in boyfriend to the veterinarian who's more concerned with his career than with the animals' lives.

Then one day, Meg makes an amazing discovery: Jata has produced viable eggs—without ever having had a mate. Faced with this "virgin birth," Meg must now defend Jata's hatchlings from the scientific, religious, and media forces that converge on the zoo to claim the miracle as their own. As Meg fights to save the animal she loves from the consequences of its own miracle, she must learn to accept that in nature, as in life, not everything can be controlled.

"...impressive...ambitious...Mindy Mejia is a talent to watch."

—Sheila O'Connor, author of *Where No Gods Came* and *Sparrow Road*

"The Komodo dragon world that Mindy Mejia creates is an unforgettable world, and the feisty character of Meg Yancy, the dragon's keeper, is an unforgettable character. I came away from this book with a deepened respect for the welfare of endangered species and with an eagerness to see more writing from this dazzling young talent." —Jim Heynen

About the author: Mindy Mejia received her MFA from Hamline University, and her work has appeared in *rock, paper, scissors*; *Things Japanese: An Anthology of Short Stories*; and *THIS Literary Magazine*.

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