

'Go As a River' author to speak in Naples Oct. 26

BY VICKY BOWLES
Special to Florida Weekly

First-time novelist Shelley Read is coming to Naples on Oct. 26 to talk about her runaway hit "Go As a River," a heartbreaking — and heartwarming — tale of a lonely young woman living on a western Colorado peach farm, spanning from the 1940s to 1971.



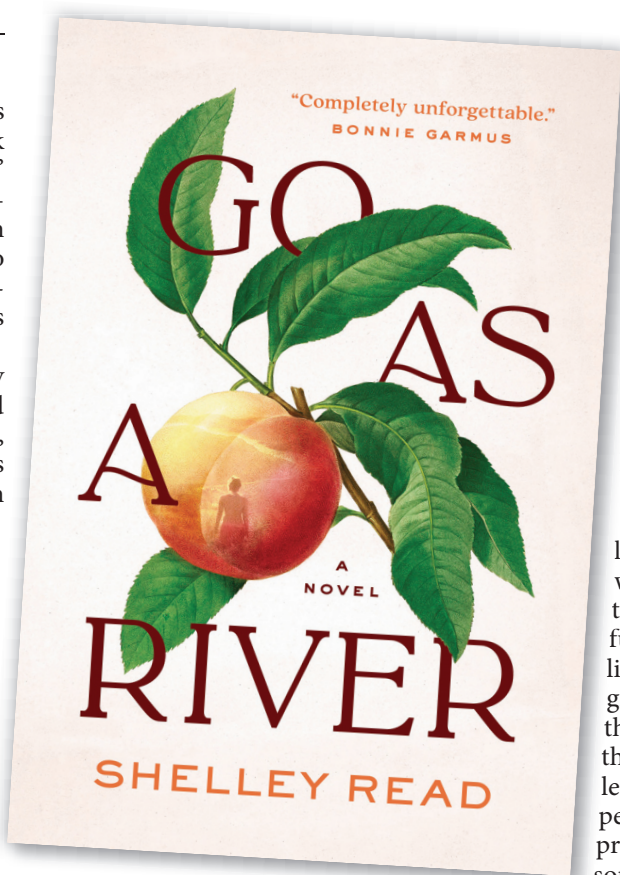
The book already has been translated into 30 languages, won multiple awards and had its film rights sold to a major production company.

Read opens this year's Author Spotlight series, sponsored by the Friends of the Library of Collier County, on Thursday, Oct. 26. The second Author Spotlight talk will feature Shana Abé, author of "An America Beauty," on Thursday, April 4.

The lectures are part of a busy schedule of events by the nonprofit Friends of the Library, which raises hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund programs and resources for the 10 Collier County Public Library branches.

This year the Author Spotlight Events move to The Norris Center, south of Cambier Park near downtown Naples. Seating will be general admission. Each talk will be followed by a book signing. (See info box for details on dates, times and cost.)

Read is a fifth-generation Colorado-



an who lives with her family at 9,000 feet elevation in the Elk Mountains of the Western Slope. She describes herself as a mom, mountaineer, world traveler, and friend to small creatures and old dogs.

"Go as a River" was inspired by the flooding of the small town of Iola when the Gunnison River was dammed in the 1960s to create the Blue Mesa Reservoir. Read personifies that disruption of

place and identity through a teenager, Victoria Nash, whose life is marked by loss — the accidental deaths of her mother and aunt, the girl's lover murdered by her racist brother, and then the government's flooding of the family property.

Although "River" is her first novel, Read is a published writer who was an award-winning senior lecturer at Western Colorado University for nearly three decades, teaching writing, literature and environmental studies.

"I can definitely say that I learned how to write a novel by writing one," Read said in an interview. "Certainly (and gratefully), my decades of studying literature and writing helped a great deal, but it was primarily through trial, error and patience that 'Go as a River' was born. I learned a lot along the way, especially to believe in the writing process (no matter how wacky it sometimes seems!) and in my own creative instincts."

The book's title derives from one of Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh's calligraphy paintings, Read said.

"I love the simple wisdom of the words 'go as a river.' Observing wild rivers really inspires me," she said. "Rivers nearly always find a way forward — over, under, around obstacle, even carving new banks when necessary. Rivers also gather and nurture along the way, carrying the past,

In the KNOW

Friends of the Library Author Spotlight Events

- **What:** Author lectures fundraiser, Friends of the Library of Collier County
- **Where:** The Norris Center, 755 Eighth Ave. S., Naples
- **When:** Shelley Read, Thursday, Oct. 26, at 2 p.m., followed by a book signing
- **When:** Shana Abe, Thursday, April 4, at 2 p.m., followed by a book signing
- **Cost:** \$48 each lecture for current Friends of the Library of Collier County members; \$58 for nonmembers. Seating is general admission, "saving" seats is not permitted. Friends memberships begin at \$40/year and provide access and discounts to many other programs.
- **Purchase tickets and become a member:** Go to collier-friends.org. Questions? Email Marlene Haywood, the Friends' Program Director, at mhaywood@collier-friends.org or call 239-262-8135.

present and future in their waters."

Read describes herself as "over the moon" that "Go As a River" has been optioned for film.

"I've been told that the novel's imagery feels very cinematic and will translate to a beautiful film. I know the project is in very good hands, and I'm super excited to see it all evolve," she said.

Sponsors of the Author Spotlight Events are Kelly E. Capolino, of Downling-Frye Realty, and Signet Financial Management. ■

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