

January/February, 2020

Affaire de Coeur

Bringing You 38 Years of Honest Reviews



Eve is in the Spotlight

Reviews!

Reviews!

Reviews!



The Publishing World Loses Two Legends!

Johanna Lindsey and Mary Higgins Clark



Five Degrees of heartwarming to melting stories

Five stand-alone swoon-worthy heroes

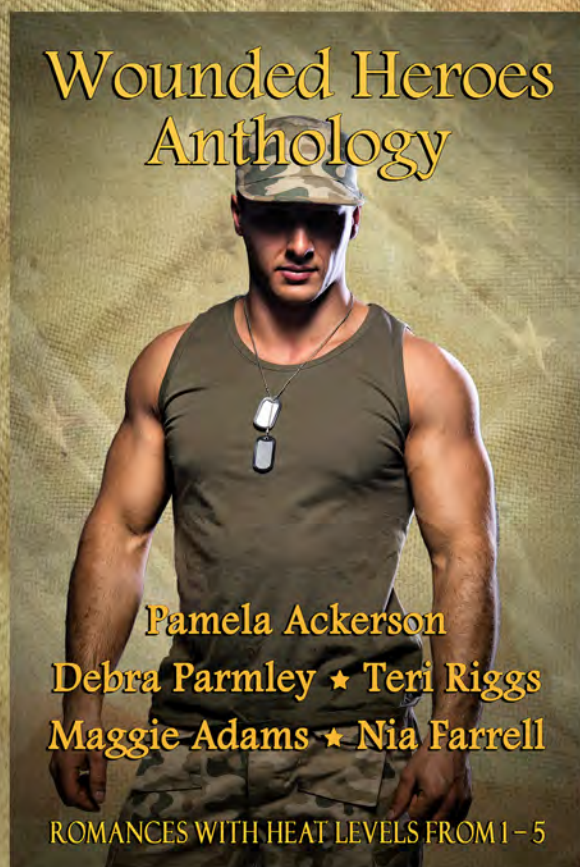
* A Rosa for Russell ~ Who in their right mind falls in love with the enemy?

** Two Step, New Steps ~ The air force veteran can't help falling for perky Leanne Bobbin who brings out his protective instincts and makes him laugh.

*** Bringing Her Home ~ Can Thomas Raintree bring home the woman he loves, but had to leave behind?

**** As Time Goes By ~ Blake's determined to find out who killed his best friend, and his widow holds the key ...not only to the murder, but also to Blake's heart.

***** Fallen ~ An Army chaplain priest's faith is tested when he falls for his PTSD therapist.



Wounded Heroes Anthology

Pamela Ackerson

Debra Parmley ★ Teri Riggs

Maggie Adams ★ Nia Farrell

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C O N T E N T S

I'm In! Now What? by Pamela Ackerson 4

The First Spotlight is on Eva Langlais 6

Romantic Traveling--The Grand Canyon 9

Two Authors Remembered— Johanna Lindsey and Mary Higgins Clark 12

Deborah Camp expounds on the Per-fect Hero, the Perfect Heroine, and Perfect Timing 14

Departments and Columns

Puzzler 19

Contemporary Romance 20

Historical Romance 23

Erotica Romance 28

Mystery Reviews 29

Audio Reviews 30

Booty from the Other Genre 34

Late Reviews 35

I'm in! Now What?

Congratulations! You're now officially a business owner or if you prefer, an entrepreneur.

Regardless of whether you're self-publishing or with a publisher, there are several things you must do. Open the phone book (if you have one) or do a web search for local libraries and small bookstores within fifty miles of your home.

I read a statistic somewhere that 60% of households have a library card and 70% use the card on a regular basis. How awesome is that???

Approximately four months before the release date, send out snail mail letters and/or email letters letting them know you'll have a book out soon, the title, the genre, the publisher, and the date when it'll be out. When you receive the ISBN and ASIN, send out another round of letters reminding them about the book and include the ISBN and ASIN.

If you can, order some books and donate them to the libraries.

Continue, and increase activity on your social media sites. Start following authors who write the same genre you do and interact with them. Get to know them, ask questions, promote their books, share, etc. It isn't going to hurt you to help other authors.

Offer to be a beta reader if they're looking for someone. Offer to write a review. If you offer to write a review, make sure you sit down and write it. Authors send a bunch of books out for reviews and unfortunately, they don't get the promised reviews.

Keep in mind with each review, with every word you write, how you'd react if it was about your book. You can be honest and diplomatic. You're an author, a wordsmith. I'm sure you can come up with an honest review.

Have a little class, a pinch of genuineness, and kindness and you'll be helping your fellow authors.

Send out queries to bloggers and reviewers who read the genre you've written, asking if they're available to review your book or help you promote it. You can send them a pdf copy of your book before it comes out. Just make sure they're a legitimate blogger or reviewer.

If someone doesn't like your book, accept it. It's okay. You haven't liked every book you've read. It's their opinion. If they give a reason why, listen to what they're saying, it might



just improve your writing skills.

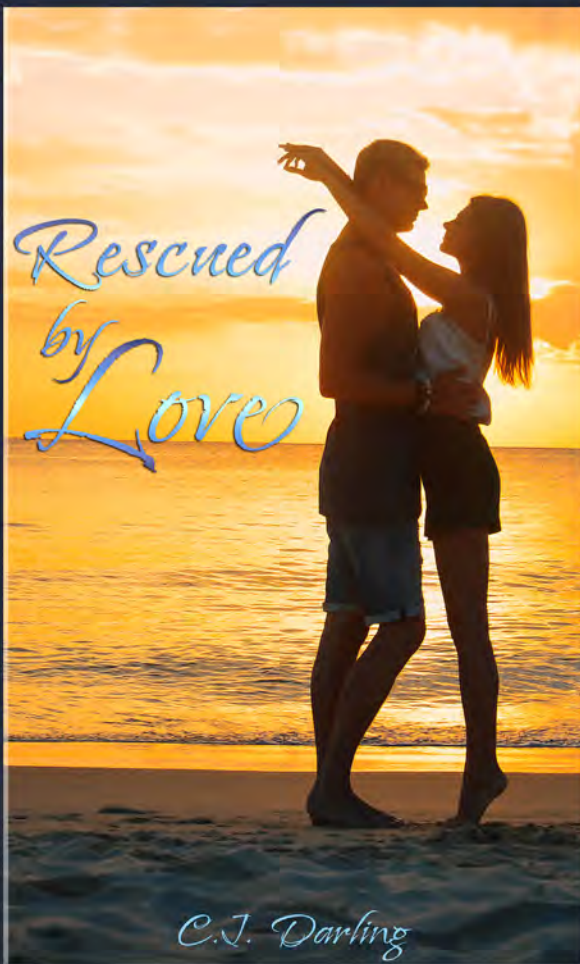
Whatever you do, don't start arguing with them. It's their opinion. Everyone has one. Leave it alone. You're going to get good and bad reviews. You might even get snarky reviews. It happens. Shrug it off and don't let it discourage you.

Now just a couple of things before I pitch *Be More Successful with Marketing and AdvertiZING*.

If you haven't already, find local author workshops, conferences, conventions, book signing events, etc. It may be too late for you to register as a participating author, but that doesn't mean you can't attend as a reader.

Pick their brains for information. Most authors are happy to help other authors. Introduce yourself and rub elbows with awesome authors, bloggers, event coordinators, and the readers. Then, try to get on the sign up list to attend as an author for the next available event.

This book's for you. My whole point of writing it is to help all authors. I've had many established authors, aspiring authors, WIP authors ask me a multitude of questions and I was more than happy to help. (WIP-work in progress) I



Sparks fly when
Devon Gallagher
opens a new pet
store too close to
Lucas O'Shaunnessey's
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or are they just
crazy in love?

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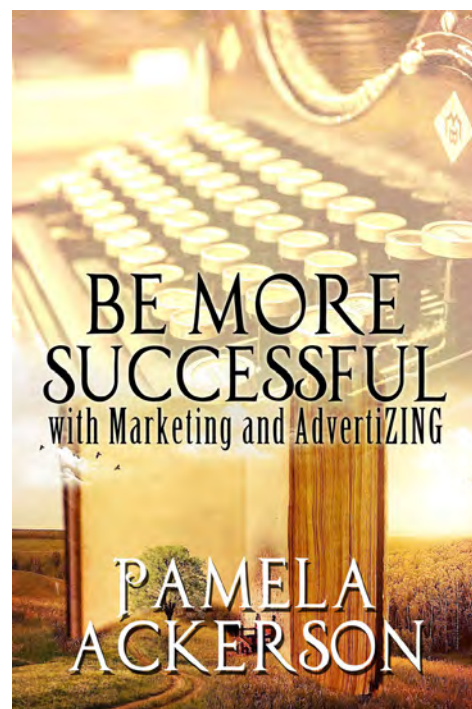
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The Spotlight is on...

Eve Langlais

New York Times and USA Today Bestseller Eve Langlais is a Canadian author who loves to write hot romance. She likes to blame her twisted imagination on her sarcastic sense of humor which tends to heavily influence her stories.

AdC: When you write, do you outline first, or are you a pantsier?

EV: *Pants! When I write, I only have a vague idea that snowballs as I go. I like to let the characters drive the story and love it when they surprise me.*

AdC: What type of characters do you like to create?

EV: *At over 100 published titles, I can probably say all kinds, lol. From kick ass, to uncertain, all kinds of body shapes and attitudes, each new character tends to form their own personality.*

AdC: Tell us about your new book or series.

EV: *I am most excited in 2020 for my new "Deviant Future" series. Set after the apocalypse, it is a dystopian, action-packed romance meant for adults. No teenagers saving the world here. Each of the 6 books will follow a different couple and adventure that will slowly unfold a complex new world with hints of today, warped by tomorrow.*

AdC: What is your favorite passage/scene in your current release or WIP?

EV: *I don't want to give anything*



away, but what's fascinating is how the heroine discovers her tiny world view that is contained to a life in a dome is false. There is so much more to discover and experience outside her protected ecosphere.

AdC: What motivates you for a perfect writing day?

EV: *Quiet! Nothing I like better than when hubby leaves for work and the kids are off to school. Then it's just me, a coffee, the pets and my laptop.*

AdC: How/where do you get your plot ideas?

EV: *They hit me at random. Some-*
Affaire de Coeur

times inspired by a song, or current events. I never know what will inspire me.

AdC: Did you need to do research for the story? And what kind of research did you need to do?

EV: *I didn't do a ton of research because I wanted to create an original future. One that held elements of the psionic as humanity evolved and nature mutated.*

AdC: What is your favorite thing about being an author?

EV: *I get to live inside new worlds every day.*

AdC: Is there a genre that you have been wanting to try writing?

EV: *High fantasy! I am dying to write some epic story.*

AdC: How many books do you currently have out on the market and what genres do they fall into?

EV: *Lots and lots of books. Because my interests are varied so are the topics. So, we have Dystopian Romance, Paranormal, Science Fiction, Romantic Suspense and Urban Fantasy.*



AdC: Will you be attending any book signings or conventions?

EV: *Currently, I am attending Coastal Magic in Daytona, February of 2020. But other than that, it will be a quiet year for conferences.*

AdC: Pass on some words of wisdom, please, to aspiring authors.

EV: *Sit down and finish it. Procrastination is your enemy.*

AdC: Please give us the following

contact information: Author web-

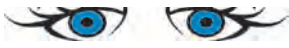
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Sneak Peek

Toxic Dust by Eve Langlais

In a Deviant Future, the world has been reshaped. Humanity has been changed. Yet despite it all, one thing does survive--love. An exciting new dystopian romance FOR ADULTS from *New York Times* bestseller, Eve Langlais.

The world outside the domes is a scary place, but nothing compared to the marauder who captures Laura.

With one dark look, Axel prom-

ises violence, yet his touch is gentle. He shows her a different way of living. A new set of truths. How the ancients used to do things.

Makes her want a forbidden thing called love. But can she leave her past and beliefs behind?

The woman is trouble with a capital T. Yet the moment Axel sees her, rational thought disappears, and when she ends up in grave danger, he can't stop himself from going to her rescue.

Will he be in time to save her?



Michael's new job has one catch:



He has to share his wife with the boss!

Michael convinces Karina to join the hotwife lifestyle.

It doesn't quite go the way he planned.

ThomasRobertsAuthor.com

Romantic Traveling

The Grand Canyon—The North Rim

Louise B. Snead



The Grand Canyon is the most spectacular natural resource the United States has to offer. Primarily (but not exclusively) located in the state of Arizona, it was carved out by the Colorado River. The Grand Canyon is 277 miles long, 18 miles wide and is slightly deeper than over a mile (6,093 ft.). There are several entrances to the park—Grand Canyon National Park, the North Rim and the South Rim. Within the canyon are several Native American reservations, descendants of the Pueblo--the Navaho Reservations, the Hualapai Reservation and the Havasupai Reservation. and it lies within the Kaibab National Forest.



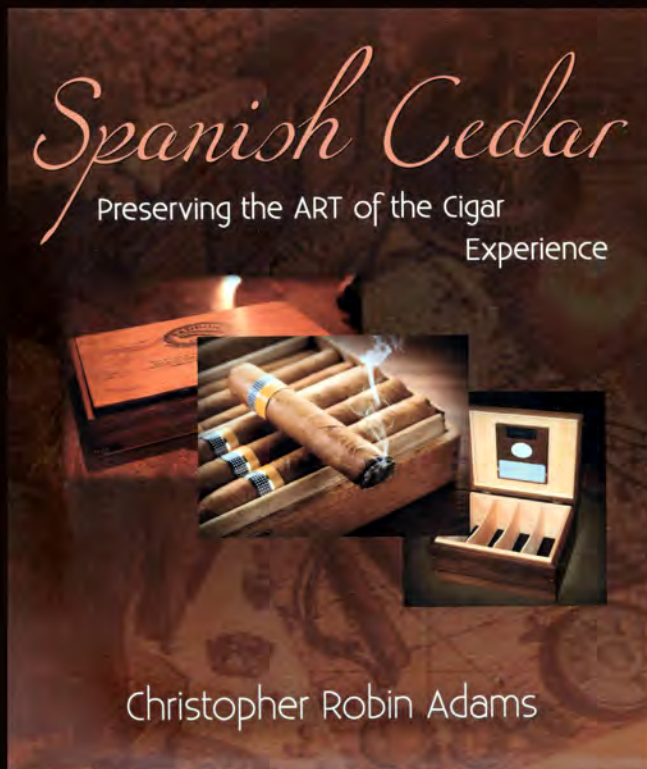
Years ago, when my kids and I visited author Judith Hill and her family in Chandler, Arizona, we rented a car and drove past beautiful Sedona to the South entrance of the Grand Canyon, the biggest entrance. From that view the sights are breathtakingly beautiful. From this rim we sat on the ground and watched the sunset. Nothing could be more lovely.

We thought we had seen all the sights to behold and there wasn't any reason to go back; so for years I didn't. It was not even on my radar to go back until my husband and I went to Monument Valley in Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado. (See Nov/Dec, 2019 issue) I noticed that there was a sign on the road in Tuba City that indicated the entrance to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon was about 60 miles away. It occurred to me that my husband had not been with us when we had gone



Would you stop for this sign? Or speed up

A Collection of Poetry



Poems about
specific cigars,
about the cigar
world, or written
while enjoying
a cigar.

SpanishCedarBook.com
@crwtp

to the South Rim and had not seen the Grand Canyon and I hadn't seen it from the North Rim. So, why not go so he



The Watch Tower

could? It turns out that only 10% of the visitors who go to the Grand Canyon go through the North Rim. Perhaps the percentage is so low because it snows there, and some roads cannot be traversed. In fact, it's closed between October 15th and May 15th because of bad weather, attributed to the higher elevation of over 8000 feet. Since this rim is smaller, there is only one hotel for lodging, The Grand Canyon Lodge, and one campground. So, if you plan to stay there, you need to make your reservation early.

The road, route 67 from Tuba City to the Grand Canyon, was a scenic ride climbing upward. The rock formations so prevalent near Monument Valley gave way to pine trees and other conifers and road signs, the likes of which I'd never seen. (The sign featured here does not represent a domestic cat.) When we finally reached the entrance, I was delighted our hefty entrance fee

was waived because of a National Park Membership I purchased when I went to Yellowstone Park over five years



Drawings by Native Americans inside the Watch Tower

The beautiful view depends on where you are standing at a particular time of day



ago.

Two things are noticeable as soon as we went inside the park: a castle-like structure with a tower with throngs of people going throughout on all levels and the various views of the canyon.

The tower is the Desert View Watchtower, designed by Mary Colter. It is open and can be entered on the ground level. From there people are free to roam through it at their leisure. The ground floor walls have pictures representing the original art of the first settlers of the canyon, the Native Americans. For those who can climb stairs, two additional floors give a panoramic view of the canyon.

There are so many places from which the canyon can be viewed, and the views vary according to the site. For example, from the Grand Canyon Lodge, one can see the

famous Painted Desert. From other sites, less than a mile away, the basin, the different rock striations, and the plateaus can be viewed. For those seeking adventure, there are plenty of things to do: numerous hiking trails, horseback riding, helicopter tours and walking tours with rangers. Sunrise and sunset tours are also available, but you can do either on your own.

The one thing I did learn from this unplanned trip was that you really need more than one day to see the Grand Canyon. There is a lot to see and do, and even if you've been before, you haven't seen it all.

The World of Books and Entertainment Lost Two Greats:

New York Times Best Sellers,

Johanna Lindsey and Mary Higgins Clark



Johanna Lindsey

She was not one of the original “Avon ladies,” the women who started the romance genre as we came to know it, but she wasn’t far behind. Johanna Lindsey was a woman who had a story to tell. When the romance genre began, she had a format in which to tell it. Tell it, she did, for over forty years to the tune of over 60 million copies of her books, most of which were spent with Avon. She ultimately went to Simon and Schuster.

Her education path did not lead to writing. In fact Lindsey worked with data processing programs until she married. “I can write those,” she said of romance, and that she did. She specialized in historical romance. Neither sub-genres nor different time periods seemed to daunt her. She wrote of pirates, Native

Continued on next page



Mary Higgins Clark

She was known as the “Queen of Suspense” with a reputation for giving the reader what they wanted—a tense, (often female) character-driven story that couldn’t be put down. Winner of numerous awards including the Grand Master of the Edgar Allen award and the French *Grand Prix de Litterature Policiere*, she sold over 100 million books with some making it to the big screen.

Mary Higgins Clark was born Mary Theresa Eleanor Higgins, daughter of Nora and Luke Clark Higgins in the Bronx in 1927. A variety of jobs—telephone operator, typist, secretary and flight attendant for Pan American Airlines, began at the age of 15 when her father died. She always wanted to be a writer, and told stories early in her life. After a decade of married life, she began to take classes in writing to hone her skills. But in her late 30’s, after

continued on page 18



Heaven's Beach Love Stories

Teri-Riggs.com

@TeriLRiggs

Johanna Lindsey, cont.

Americans, the English ton, though not standard Regencies, Vikings in the ninth century, and the Wild West. Her first book, *Captive Bride*, was about a desert sheik who kidnaps a new bride, featuring a hero and heroine of different cultures, and dare I say, different ethnic pools--different and bold moves, even for the 1970's. When that became not so challenging, she wrote sci-fi fantasy romance. Her covers originally displayed the old 'bodice rippers' on the cover, but as she sold more, she negotiated the covers and the bodice rippers disappeared.

I met Johanna Lindsey through Barbara Keenan, a good friend of hers and founder of *Affaire de Coeur*. At that time, she traveled with her mother and her publisher. Her mother, Wanda, gave commentary while Johanna signed the books. On this occasion, she did a book-signing at a drug store near Barbara's store. She was tiny with long hair and a piquant, pretty face, and Barbara teased her about being the perfect author to represent the romance genre. She was cordial and had a soft southern accent. Anyone who's been a celebrity knows that, as such, you're subject to running into all kinds of people.

At the signing, a 'fan' asked Johanna to autograph her book. She looked at the book and saw it was not hers. In truth the fan had no idea who she was. Not wanting the fan to be disappointed, Johanna glanced at the cover, saw the name of the author and signed the name of the author with her 'best wishes.' We laughed then; we still chuckle about it now. Barbara and I later took them to dinner and spent an evening to remember.

Johanna's mom spoke of her dad, an Army sergeant, who had been stationed in Frankfurt, Germany, where she was born in 1952. They later settled in Hawaii. She passed away in October 27, 2019, in Nashua, New Hampshire, of complications of lung cancer, but her son Alfred indicated they were too devastated to release the information until December.

Upon hearing of her death, I pulled all of my Lindsey books off the shelf in my office with the intention of making a pyramid and taking a picture of them. Alas, there were far too many, over 20, and a few of them had yellowed with age. Johanna Lindsey was 67 years old. She is survived by three sons--Garret, Joseph, and Alfred--and four grandchildren and thousands of fans the world over.



Deborah Camp has been spinning love stories since she was a kid and was first published in 1979. Her romances, both contemporary and historical, feature strong men and stronger women. She lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she enjoys reading, volunteering with a dog/cat rescue group, and trying to stay out of trouble. She has taught romance writing and several of her former students are published romance authors.

The Perfect Hero

I spend a lot of time creating characters. I love reading about all kinds of romantic heroes, but my personal favorite is the “misunderstood hero.” If you fell in love with Mr. Darcy, Rhett Butler, Christian Grey, or the Beast then I’m right there with you! There is something infinitely touching about a man who is gruff, stoic, or even brusque on the outside but has a soft heart and a good reason for his behavior.

When I wrote my romantic suspense/paranormal *The Mind’s Eye* series, I gave myself the opportunity to create a multi-layered, misunderstood male protagonist. I put everything I love about a hero into Levi Wolfe. Brooding, brusque, arrogant, gorgeous, intelligent, ambitious, brave, broken, lonely, and misunderstood. I loved writing about him and removing a layer at a time until readers finally discovered his big, gooey heart. Some reviews of the first book noted that readers didn’t care for Levi all that much, but that he grew on them by the end of the book. That’s okay. That was the first impression people usually had of Levi.

It’s not a good thing for a single title hero to be disliked in the first chapter. You want the reader to be attracted to the hero quickly in those because you only have three hundred or so pages to work with. But in a series, you can take your time. And I did. Each book revealed more about Levi, his inner workings, the reasons for him keeping himself apart from most people, and why and how the heroine (Trudy Tucker) managed to storm his defenses.

For a single title hero, as I’ve stated, it’s imperative that the hero make a grand entrance and that the reader be intrigued, attracted, or both. For my current historical



romance, *Ropin’ the Moon*, I opened the book with the arrival of the hero and how he is seen through the heroine’s eyes.

She noticed him right off.

He was hard to miss, astride a high-stepping buckskin gelding with black socks and flowing mane. The stranger’s black and silver gun belt with a silver-handled six-shooter glinted in the sunlight. Horseshoes and clover leaves

“Ropin’ the Moon”

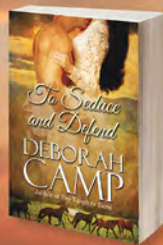
By DEBORAH CAMP

Sometimes falling in love is as likely
as ropin’ the moon. And sometimes
that old moon lassos your heart
when you least expect it!

He had tumbleweed in his blood, moving from one town to the next. Traveling to where there was trouble, he was hired to tame wild places with a fast draw and an iron will. Lacy knew that Dalton wouldn’t be around long and she shouldn’t be tempted by him. But like the moon, his pull on her was a natural, powerful force that she was helpless to resist.

More stories of heart and hope set in the American west!

“The author does a beautiful job of capturing the readers’ interest, building full characters, while telling an intriguing story.” – *Romance Authors That Rock*



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adorned his heavily tooled saddle where a rifle hung from a sling in easy reach.

With a spine as straight as a ruler and shoulders squared with confidence, he cut a dashing figure as he made his way down the main street of Far Creek. The slack way he held the reins and the liquid movement of his body in rhythm with the big gelding’s gait lent him a masculine grace. Curling, raven black hair grew over his shirt collar and a day or two’s growth of whiskers darkened the lower half of his face. Dressed in dark trousers, pale gray shirt, and a black leather vest, he looked fresh as a daisy, but his mount was lathered, giving evidence that he’d been riding for a spell.

As he rode past the hotel, he swung his half-lidded gaze toward her and it stayed there for several seconds that seemed like minutes. Normally, Lacy Tyrell would have looked away from a stranger’s brazen attention, but she didn’t this time. Couldn’t. She stared right back at him until the corners of his wide mouth tipped up in a droll smile. He lifted one black-gloved hand and touched his fingers to the brim of his hat in a flirty salute before he rode on past the hotel.

Lacy released her breath in a whoosh, only then realizing that it had been trapped in her burning lungs. *Who in blazes was that?*

So, we’re introduced to Dalton Moon, the new town

marshal. Lacy fashions her own first opinion of him, but is forced to change it as she comes to know him – right along with the readers. Like most people, he is complex and a result of his upbringing and personal experiences. He was raised on the east coast and fought for the Union in the Civil War. He’s arrogant and polite, intelligent and stubborn, hard and soft. And, yes, he’s misunderstood. He’s known for his lightning fast quick draw. However, he takes no joy in shooting anyone and tries to avoid it. While most people assume that he’s tough and can be ruthless, Lacy (and the readers) discover that he’s brave and kind.

The Perfect Heroine

I love a gal with sass. That gets me in trouble when I’m creating heroines because I have a tendency to go too far. Too much sass and my editor (and early readers) mention that she’s a smart aleck and they don’t care for her. That’s not what you aim for when creating a heroine.

The heroine is the character that readers identify with the most. She and the reader become one. So, if she’s too acerbic, readers won’t want to be her. Therefore, it’s walking a fine line.

I don’t think I could like a meek heroine or a goody-two-shoes gal. If she won’t stand up for herself and give as

good as she gets, then I don't have much interest in her. I don't want to be like her. However, if she's as prickly as a cactus, why would the hero want to be around her? Creating a feisty heroine requires finding that perfect blend of opinionated independence and wise compassion.

In *Ropin' the Moon* Dalton gets an early taste of Lacy's spirit:

"Were you injured in the war? Is that where you got that scar?"

He touched the place on his face that had drawn her attention. Sickle-shaped, the thin scar ran from the corner of his left brow to just below his eyelashes. "Yes. A chunk of shrapnel struck me there. It was nothing much. But it did land me in a Rebel prison."

"Oh?" Her blue eyes widened with alarm. "How horrible for you."

"I was fortunate that it was at the very end of the war. I was there for less than a month before they had to turn us all loose."

She shook her head in a gentle rebuke. "One doesn't often hear a man speak about getting wounded and imprisoned as fortunate occurrences."

"That is the craziness of war, ma'am."

For a few moments, their gazes held and time slowed. A beam of sunlight found her face, making her eyes sparkle like jewels. She moistened her lips with the tip of her tongue and Dalton thought his heart might burst from his chest.

"I suppose you may call me Lacy," she said, in a near whisper as her lashes swept down to hide her eyes from him.

"I suppose you may call me Marshal or Sir."

Her sable lashes lifted and her eyes sparked with blue fire that made him laugh.

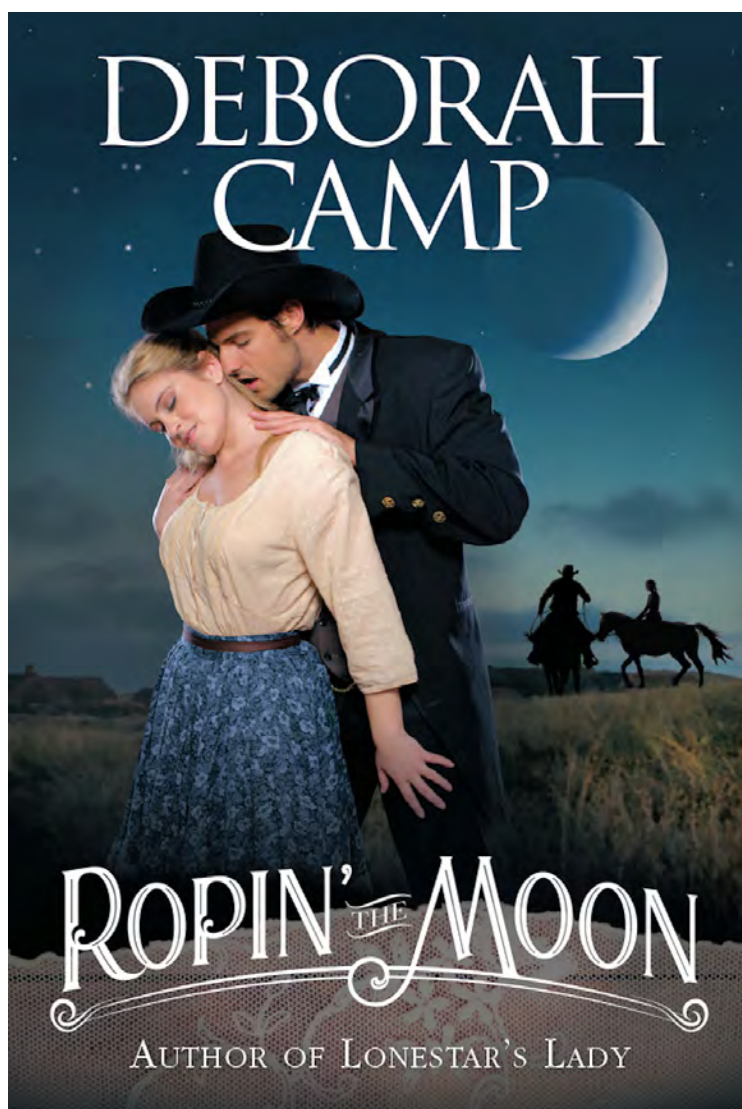
"I'm joshing with you. Call me Dalton."

She banked the fire in her eyes. "Very well, *Marshal* Dalton." Her sly grin made his blood heat.

They've squared off in this scene and decided they have found worthy adversaries. From here, there is the push-pull of getting to know each other and test the boundaries. Although they both are cautious about forming a tight bond because Dalton will be leaving town as soon as he has set things to right, they are hopelessly drawn to each other.

The Perfect Temperature

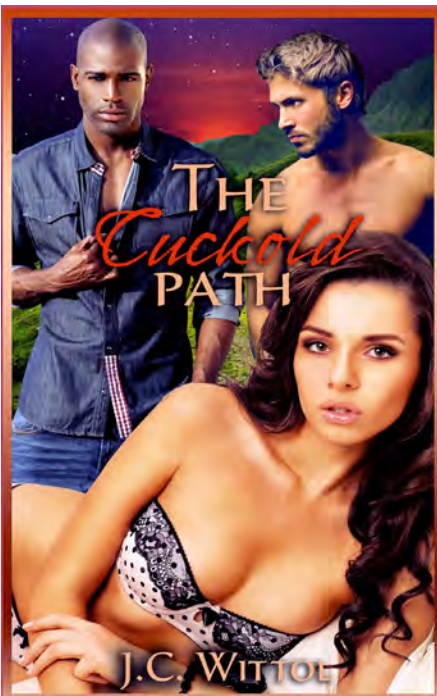
Romances come in all shapes, sizes, and passion potent. I've written sweet romances and erotic romances. My contemporary romances these days are hot. My historical romances sizzle when the characters aren't married and are brought to a boil when they are married (usually mail-order brides and the like). While there is a healthy market for sweet western romances, I'm just not interested in writing them. I try to remain true to the morals of the



period. My westerns take place in the mid to late 1800s. Therefore, my heroines don't sleep around. They are virgins unless they are widows or something bad happened to them. However, that doesn't mean they aren't sorely tempted to let the hero have his way with them. I feel that folks back then weren't that different from folks today. When you're turned on, you're turned on!

From Ropin' the Moon:

"Lacy, Lacy," he whispered in her ear, and she loved the way he made her name a tortured moan. His lips trailed from there along the side of her neck and then to the hollow of her throat. "God help me, I want you." He kissed her chin, gave it a little bite, and then settled his mouth on hers again. His tongue teased the sensitive corners of her mouth before delving inside to stoke her inner fire. His arm came around her waist and she rested her hands on his wide chest and felt the incessant beating of his heart. Kiss after kiss, he drugged her until her head swam and her body ached with surging desire. She slipped her arms around him. He was



Nick has it all:
A beautiful wife
A great job...
Clear skies, calm waters,
and smooth sailing.
Just over the horizon,
a wave is building
that threatens to change his entire life.

JCWittol.com

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solid and muscled. She felt safe enough to be reckless in his embrace.

When his mouth freed hers and she was able to gather a decent breath, she opened her eyes to witness the stark passion in his, leaping like flames, eager to consume her. He was breathing hard and so was she. His gaze moved hungrily over her face, her hair, and then back to her throbbing lips.

“What am I going to do about this?” he asked in a hoarse whisper.

“About what?” she asked, her mind still in a soup of yearning.

“About wanting to make love to you. Here. Now. On this bed of leaves under a canopy of blue?”

Ah, the sweet dilemma, right? That’s what makes romances sing – the heat and fire, the doubts and concerns, and the ultimate decision to let go and let your heart take the lead. It’s what makes every romance writer eager to create the next hero and heroine and place them dead center in a plot that will test them. And it’s why we love to read romances!

I plan to write two more westerns with misunderstood fast-draw heroes. Right now, I’m finishing up a contemporary romance and then I’ll concentrate

on my next historical romance hero. I know his name and a little about his background already. I also know the heroine’s name and her current situation. Their story simmers in my brain and I’m ready to flesh them out. It’s what keeps me going. Getting to know another misunderstood hero and a feisty heroine is like making two new friends. Sometimes I will read one of my early books and I get to know those characters all over again! However, I’m more interested in making new friends and charting a course to true love for them. It’s a journey that never gets old for me.



Time is an illusion and love the only reality.



The immortal warrior
Lachlan MacAlpin
rescues a mysterious
woman from Loch Ness,
believing she is the one
who haunts his dreams,
the one foretold to release
him from the bloodlust that
threatens to consume him.

@PamBinder183

PamBinder.com

Mary Higgins Clark, continued

the death of her husband, and with five children to support, she reorganized her life and started writing short stories.

People often refer to her as an overnight sensation, but that is not quite the truth. Though she always wanted to write novels, she began a professional writing career by penning radio scripts. Her short stories did not land her in the place where she wanted to be, and her first novel *Aspire to the Heavens*, a fictionalized story about George and Martha Washington, flopped, forcing her to look for inspiration elsewhere...namely her own collection of books. She said, "I realized I love suspense more than any other subject," she related to CNBC. "I had always been reading thrillers and know why the good authors work and their stories work and why others don't work."

At the age of 48, *Where Are the Children*, her first endeavour in suspense, brought the attention of readers worldwide. In it she told the story of a woman with her two children who were in danger. It was in paperback and became a best seller. With this success under her belt, she wrote her second novel, *A Stranger is Watching*, became a millionaire and never looked back. She does acknowledge a slight pattern in her work. "In my case, it's always a woman, a young woman. She's smart, intelligent, and something

happens. She's not on the wrong side of town at 4 in the morning. She's living her life and something crosses it. And by her own intelligence, she works her way out of it." Critics call it formulaic, but it's what fans wanted and she delivered. It's what kept her a best-selling author after 50 books.

Early in her career, she graced Rom-Con, *Affaire de Coeur's* annual reader/writer conference where she taught a workshop on, of course, writing mysteries.

Clark wrote into her 90's with *All By Myself*, her last release coming out in 2019. She passed away in Naples, Florida, of natural causes at the age of 92.

Accolades have flowed in from all over the world. Her legacy includes an award for the best suspense novel of the year given by the Mystery Writers of America and is named after her.

She and her daring, smart heroines will be missed.

Black History Month PUZZLER

Black History Sites

Across

2. State that Jesse Owens was born in.
6. Representing New York, she was the first black congressperson.
- 10 The location of the Negro League Baseball Museum.
13. First free black settlement in the U.S. also its oldest city, St. _____.
18. Place of Louis Armstrong and other jazz greats.
19. Place where African-American pilots were trained in World War II.
20. The Pettus bridge, site of an historical march, is in _____.
22. The first professional football team to have a black player was the Los Angeles _____.
25. Formerly the location of a Woolworth Department store where the first sit-ins took place.
26. Oldest African-American church is located in this city.
28. Home of the first African-American president.
29. This park holds the first monument of a black woman.
32. City where Malcolm X was born.
34. Site of Motown.
35. The capitol of this state's Central High School needed soldiers to enforce integration.

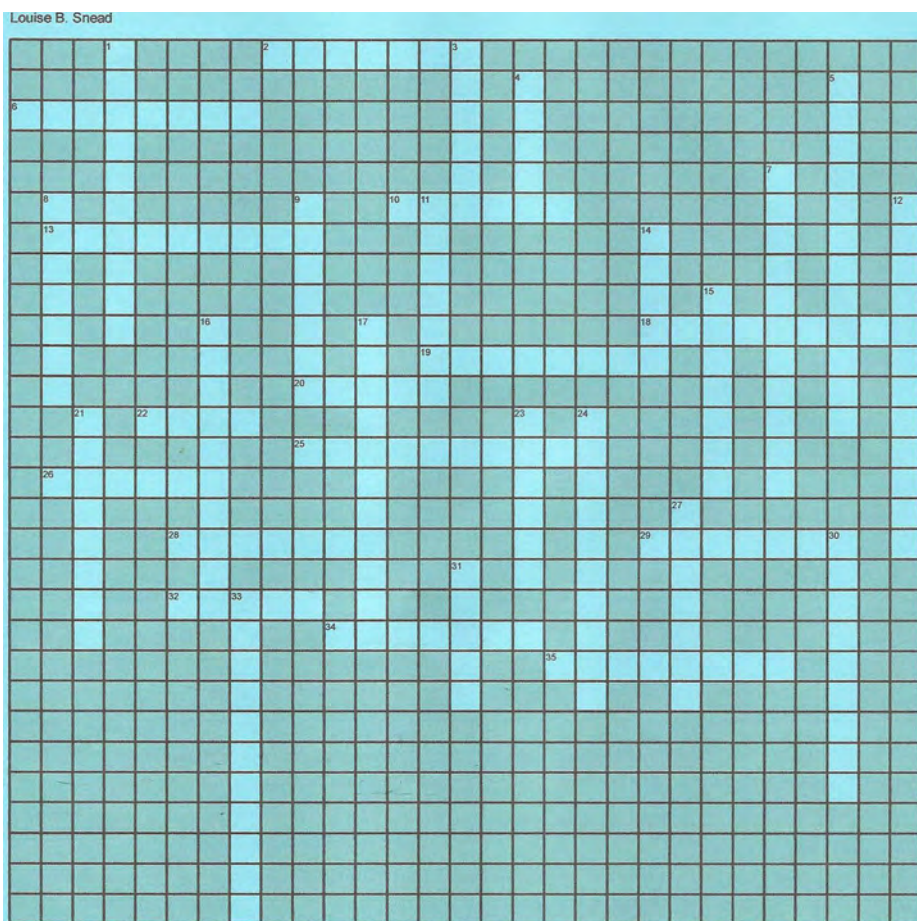
Down

1. Location of the newest African-American museum, run by the Smithsonian.
3. Harriet Tubman's New York State residence is in this city.
4. The Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers museum is in this small Ohio city.
5. The oldest HBCU, Cheyney University, is in this state.
7. The first Black congressman represented this state.
8. The Black Panthers originated here.
9. The Lorraine Hotel was turned into a museum in this city.
11. Location of the M.L.K. museum.
12. Location of the museum of John Coltrane (jazz saxophonist).
14. This street is known as "the place that gave birth to the blues."
15. His museum is dedicated to Blacks and

labor.

16. Site of the 16th Street Baptist Church.
17. The National Underground Railroad Museum is located in this Ohio city.
21. First major league baseball team to have an African-American player.
23. This Washington D.C. University is among the oldest.
24. Place where bus boycotts were started.
27. This Missouri city was the birthplace of George Washington Carver.
30. Named after a slave who purchased his freedom, this city is the town where a predominant black community was established after Reconstruction.
31. Vanessa Williams, the first black Miss America, is from this borough.
33. An *AdC* favorite, the first black settlement in California.

Answers on page 32





Contemporary Romance Reviews

An Everyday Hero (Heart of a Hero - Book 2)

Laura Trentham

St. Martin's Griffin

Trade Paperback

978-1250145550

★★★★ 1/2

Greer Hadley gave up her dream of being a country music star and moved back home. She thought that was rock bottom. She was wrong. When Greer's boyfriend cheated on her, she got drunk and trashed a jukebox. Now Greer's been sentenced to community service. The judge decided not to have her pick up trash along the highway. Instead, Greer's musical talent will be utilized at an organization that uses music to help veterans and their families deal with the trauma they've experienced. Greer has sworn she won't pick up a guitar again. But it's that or thirty days in jail. So off to music therapy she goes.

One of Greer's clients is Emmett Lawson, the town's golden boy and her high school crush. Emmett and the sergeant he commanded were ambushed. The attack cost Emmett his leg and the sergeant his life. If he had reacted faster maybe Emmett could have saved the man. He's bitter and consumed with guilt. He just wants to be left alone to drink. Greer's no-nonsense approach is just what Emmett needs. Soon her tough love turns to real love. But can Greer convince Emmett that the best way to honor the sergeant is

by living a full and happy life?

This is a continuation of a series. It can be read alone and is a very good book.

Sheila Griffin

Jingle Belle's Rock

Brynn Paulin

Supernova Indie

Publishing Services, Inc.

Ebook, Kindle Edition

B07Z6QH6XM

★★★★★



Belle just can't believe her mom is going to try to set her up on a blind date for the holidays. While she loves her big crazy family, her heart has already been lost to the one man she can't have, her best friend who just happens to be her boss.

Decker has been patiently waiting for the right time to tell Belle how he feels; so when she tells him about her mom's husband hunting plan, Decker comes up with an idea of his own to save his Belle and make her his forever.

Dear Reader, I'm a sucker for holiday romances. This time of year is hard for so many for different reasons, and sometimes it's nice to just enjoy the moment. Brynn Paulin's *Jingle Belle's Rock* does just that. It's a quick holiday romance that warms the heart, and I loved every

minute. Highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

The Last Real Cowboy (Cold River Ranch-Book 3)

Caitlin Crews

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250295279

★★★★

Amanda Kittredge is tired of being treated like a child. It's time for everyone to realize she's twenty-two, not twelve. She will take some measures to prove she is an adult: Step one: move off of the family ranch. Step two: get a job bartending at the seediest dive in town. Step three: lose her virginity. And Amanda knows just the man for the job, her older brother's bad-boy best friend, Brady Everett.

Brady has always thought of Amanda as a pesky little sister. But when he sees her working at the bar, Brady realizes that little sis is all grown up.

Amanda's older brother asks Brady to keep an eye on her. Keeping his eyes on Amanda isn't the problem. It's keeping his hand off! Brady feels like a dirty old man for lusting after his friend's baby sister. If Amanda's brothers find out what he's thinking, Brady is a dead man.

Amanda's brothers have scared away every boy she's ever liked. But what they don't know about, they can't interfere with, and she has no intention of telling them about Brady. But her well-laid plans soon go awry as lust begins to turn to love. But can she convince Brady that their love is worth risking her brothers' wrath?

The Last Real Cowboy is a continuation of a series. It can be read alone. It's a typical boy meets girl story and is a good book.

Sheila Griffin

Rescued by Love

C J Darling

Boruma Publishing

E Book

B07XXBTS7Y

★★★ 1/2

Devon Gallagher had attained her dream, to become the proud owner of an exotic pet store.

Lucas O'Shaunnessay owned one of the largest pet chain stores in the US. He was not happy when he found out Devon's store was put in the same flea market as the original store. Prepared for a fight, he was completely surprised and when he entered her store. It was pleasant with a relaxing

atmosphere. And she was gorgeous.

Lucas was pushy, and she wasn't happy about it. Despite their issues, they managed to find a common ground and goal. Both characters seem to have judgmental, bigoted attitudes toward affluent people-describing them as shallow, snobby, and self-centered.

Unfortunately, their bigotry was a turn-off. The book is categorized by Amazon as erotic/erotica genre. It is not erotic romance, nor is it erotica, disappointing this reader. A cute, steady-paced contemporary romance.

Kitty Lane

Sleighing Mr. Right

Hope Ford

Self-Pub

Ebook Kindle Edition

B081SC6SBR

★★★★★

This man is dangerous. He can make me feel things I've never felt before.

Candy thinks she has this finding Mr. Right perfected by compiling an A list of what she desires in her perfect man. But when she finds herself stranded in the middle of a tree farm, dumped by her "Mr. Right," she discovers she may need to bend her rules a bit in order to live and love happily ever after.

From the moment his eyes see her, Cane's heart knows she's the one, the one he's waited to make his life complete. He comes to her rescue when he sees the man she's with is not being a gentleman. Cane convinces Candy to give him a chance. If only he can get her to ditch that damn list.

Sleighing Mr. Right is a first read for me by the author, Hope Ford, and will not be the last. I don't always give five stars to novellas, but when I do, it's well deserved! Absolutely LOVED this verra smexxy insta-love holiday romance and highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

A Triple C Ranch Christmas Wedding: A Brotherhood Protectors World Novel

Debra Parmley

Twisted Page Press

EBook

B08287N992

★★★ 1/2

Lucy Barr is a jewelry designer who becomes engaged to Jack "Gunny" Barr, a former Marine who is now a security expert from the Brotherhood Protectors Agency. They met when he was a bodyguard for Lucy's friend in Hollywood but are now temporarily living in

Bozeman, Montana. They plan a Christmas wedding at the Triple C Ranch, a facility that helps women who have graduated from a shelter learn how to build a new life.

Jack's job concerns Lucy because she is afraid for his safety. She is sure something is going to go wrong to interfere with their Christmas wedding. She has also heard rumors about the wildness of Marine bachelor parties, which she doesn't approve of.

Jack hopes to allay Lucy's fears and give her the wedding of her dreams. Yet during the time they are preparing the ranch for the ceremony, a horse thief steals ten horses from the ranch, and Jack is the best person to give chase, validating Lucy's concerns.

While Jack and Lucy face these challenges on their way to the altar, more emphasis on the Agency and the works of the ranch would have enriched the story.

Hannah Rowan

You, Me & Twenty-seven

Beth Loure

Soft Belly Press

EBook

B07ZY91ZHJ

★ ★ 1/2

Twenty-seven is the magical number in this novel

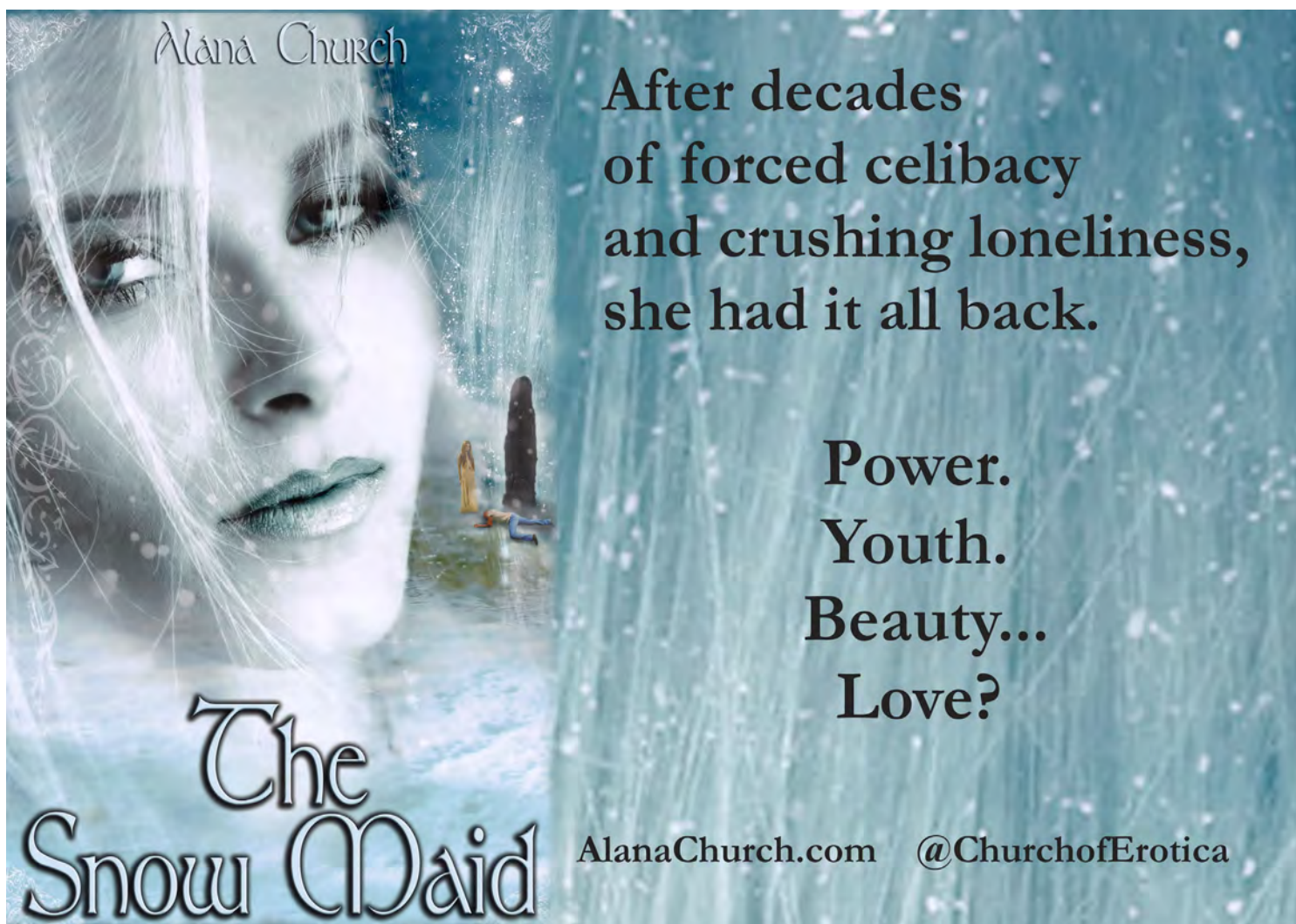
featuring two parallel story lines. The action takes place mostly in Detroit, with some side trips to other cities.

Empty nesters Tom and Emily have been married for 27 years but are not reacting well to their new stage of life. Tom is heavily involved in financial trades on his phone, and Emily feels so neglected she turns to the woman who was her lover before she met Tom. Many of their issues could be resolved if they weren't both too stubborn to say how they feel.

Seven is a young woman who recently lost her mother and who is basically adrift. She believes in omens and considers the number 27 a significant sign. She has difficulty relating to people. A mysterious sex therapist gets involved with all three, not hesitating to give unsolicited advice that could change all their lives.

This unique story is confusing at times, especially trying to understand why the people behave in seemingly irrational ways. It begins to make a strange sort of sense as it goes on.

Hannah Rowan





Historical Romance Reviews

The Beast of Beswick

Amalie Howard

Entangled: Amara

Ebook, Kindle Edition

B07N62XFG2

★★★★★



Lord Nathaniel “Thane” Harte returned from the war horribly scarred and nearly dead. Being the second son of the Duke of Beswick, he never fathomed he would inherit the title. But with the passing of both his father and brother, he finds himself with the very responsibility he loathed. Years have passed, and the now better-known Beastly Duke of Beswick broods over his domain daring anyone to enter his lair. So, when a beautifully feisty and outspoken woman barges into his private chambers, no one is more surprised than The Beast to find himself contemplating her proposal of marriage.

Lady Astrid Everleigh was once a young naive girl thought to be in love. When she finds the object of her desire not all he seems to be, she becomes the object of scorn and is cast out of polite society. Having accepted her lot as a spinster, Lady Astrid is determined the same fate will not

happen to her younger sister. But when Astrid’s past returns to take vengeance on her beloved sister, she is forced to seek sanctuary in the arms of a powerful ally in The Beast. “*Because sometimes a girl doesn’t need a hero to save her. Sometimes she needs the opposite.*”

Thane and Astrid are both broken with scars both seen and unseen. They must learn to trust each other and learn that “*Love is one-part courage, one-part choice, and one-part luck. And like anything worth fighting for, it’s worth it in the end.*” If you are a follower of my reviews, you know that my all-time favorite romance is *Beauty and the Beast*. I will read and devour all stories that even have a hint of this “tale as old as time.” Amalie Howard did not fail to deliver in her retelling of a classic. Loved and highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

Historicals

Devil's Dominion (Battle Lords of de Velt #2)

Kathryn Le Veque
Dragonblade Publishing
 Ebook, Kindle Edition
 B00NPE4TEQ
 ★★★★★



"I love you...you are my heart, my soul—I have never loved anyone as I love you—you are the first in many ways--you are with me forever."

The Devil's Dominion is a tale of heartache and vengeance and a chance at a HEA.

Bretton de Llion suffered greatly at the hands of The Dark Lord Jax de Velt and has spent his life seeking vengeance for the deaths of his family. With his army of mercenaries, de Llion does the unspeakable to obtain the eldest daughter of The Dark Lord, Lady Allaston de Velt. But Lady Allaston is not what Bretton expected, and over time, she becomes his guiding light out of the darkness surrounding his heart.

"He was such a lost soul and she wanted to help him find his way."

I don't think I will ever get enough of Kathryn Le Veque's stories. Put this author on auto buy! Highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,
 Veronica

Oh, I'm so in love with Erica Ridley's *12 Dukes of Christmas* series! These holiday romances are just the right mixture of sweet and heat! Highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,
 Veronica

Forever My Duke (Unlikely Duchesses #2)

Olivia Drake

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250174390

★★★★1/2

A survivor of a brutal British attack, free-spirited American Natalie Fanshawe is determined to fulfill her dying best friend's last request to take her son Leo to the safety of her estranged father's care in England.

In pursuit of a bride, Hadrian Ames, the Duke of Clayton, is traveling to his cousin's Lord Godwin's to satisfy a family arranged marriage to his daughter. Natalie's and Hadrian's lives intersect at an inn. Hadrian offers to help Natalie find Leo after the child runs away. They miss their transport to Leo's grandfather who happens to be Hadrian's cousin. Hadrian invites them to join him on his journey.

Natalie loves Leo like her own son and longs to keep him and take him back to America with her and fulfill her dream of opening a school. Arriving at his grandfather's home, she observes the coldness and cruelty of his family. She must rethink this whole situation.

Hadrian's desire for Natalie conflicts with his plans for the perfect bride suitable for a duke. The more time he spends with her, the less he cares. He finds himself falling for her and decides to woo her. Can he convince her that there is more to him than his title and wealth? Most important, that he wants to share his life with her.

Drake's description is rich, and her characters are well-developed, brimming with life that draw readers into the story immediately and effortlessly. Unfortunately, there are some pacing and tonal issues in the second half that affect the story's flow. Nevertheless, readers should enjoy *Forever My Duke*.

The Duke's Desire (12 Dukes of Christmas #8)

Erica Ridley

WebMotion

Ebook, Kindle Edition

B07M65JMX1

★★★★

Meg Church has embraced her spinster lifestyle. She's opted to enjoy the freedom of not having a husband dictating what she can or can't do, and extremely happy being outrageous and bold with what she wants. She has set her eyes on taking Lucien le Duc as a lover. If only in her fantasies....

Lucien le Duc is determined to leave England and return to his native France. This has been a dream since he had to flee with his family during the revolutionary war. Lucien will let nothing change his mind—well almost nothing. There just happens to be a beautiful, outspoken woman who may just make him think twice on his feelings of all things English.

Historicals

Lacy Hill

In Bed with the Earl (Lost Lords of London #1)

Christi Caldwell

Montlake Romance

Kindle Edition

B07SYJ5DVP

☆☆

Reporter Verity Lovelace has been tasked with tracking down and writing a story on the lost heir, the Earl of Maxwell. If she fails, she will be left without a job and destitute. Having her younger sister to care for, Verity will stop at nothing to fulfill the assignment...even if it means climbing down into the depths of the London sewers to find a man wishing to be left alone.

Malcom North has put his brutal past behind him. Memories of being kidnapped and beaten are well buried, and he's well established himself as a King within the London underground. But when his past comes looking for him, Malcom is forced to accept his new place in society and his life being headline news...

Malcom's and Verity's road to HEA is not an easy path, but together, they forge ahead to find love and acceptance.

This story is very difficult for me to review. While I'm sure several readers will enjoy this book, I had a very difficult time connecting with the characters. In fact, I started and stopped several times, just trying to get into the story. But I wouldn't let my lack of interest deter you from reading what could be your next favorite story. If you are a fan of this genre, I'd recommend giving it a try.

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

My Darling Duke

Stacy Reid

Entangled: Amara

Ebook, Kindle Edition

B07Y73D87G

☆☆☆☆☆

"You are the only person I've ever wanted to share my silence."

Miss Katherine "Kitty" Danvers is going to be bold, daring, and a wee bit wicked to save her sisters from spinsterhood. Claiming to be the betrothed to the recluse Duke of Thornton, Kitty knows her family will begin to receive

Scot Under the Covers

Suzanne Enoch

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250296405

☆☆☆☆☆



Aden MacTaggart was the second of the three Highlander MacTaggart brothers whose English mother had forced them to London to find English brides. Unless they complied, she would no longer fund their Highland estate where their father, her husband, resided. The only problem was that they all had to be married before their baby sister could marry the young man in her life.

Aden considered himself the charmer of the three... and the most devious. He loved gaming halls and women, not necessarily in that order. He loved the women of London but had not yet found anyone to his liking. Then the older sister of his sister's intended came to him out of desperation for help with her plight. It involved gambling, which she hated, and anyone associated with it, but she figured Aden would be her best bet because he was a gambler. She didn't like him, even though he was devilishly handsome and a charmer, she just needed his help to escape a fate worse than death. What was he to do? A man had to help out family!

Miranda had just had the shock of her life. Her brother Matthew had lost an extraordinary amount of money at the gaming tables to an odious man named Captain Vale and, to settle his debt, he had promised him her hand in marriage! What could she do? He owed Captain Vale a whopping fifty thousand pounds which her family did not have. Trying to raise that amount would not only bankrupt them, it would totally ruin them and Matthew's upcoming marriage to Sophie MacTaggart. She couldn't do that to her family so thought she had no choice. Who could she trust to help her out of this unbelievable situation except another gambler?

Scot Under the Covers is the second installment in the "Wild Wicked Highlanders" series but it stands alone well. Aden is indeed a gambler and a charmer. Ms. Enoch proves her writing skills extraordinaire once again in this well-written Highlander/English adventure. I can't wait to get the last MacTaggart married!

Lani Roberts

invitations to balls, dinners, and all the top social functions of the *ton*. Being a "duchess" will make her sisters stand out amidst the crowd and will give them the opportunity to find husbands to care and protect them. But when the Duke of Thornton suddenly comes out of hiding to meet his soon to be duchess, Kitty is not at all prepared for the "Beast" she encounters, nor the way her heart beats faster, but not out of fear.

Historicals

Alexander Master, the Duke of Thornton, starts hearing rumors of his upcoming marriage to a Miss Katherine Danvers. Wondering who would dare claim to want to be engaged to a beast of a man, Alex begins to study and gather as much information about this bold woman. With his curiosity spiked, Alex does the one thing he vowed not to do--enter back into society if for no other reason than to lay his eyes on Miss Danvers. When she does not shy away from his appearance. and, in fact, looks upon him with something akin to desire, Alex knows he must possess her—at least until she no longer interests him. To convince her darling duke he is worthy of love and a happily ever after, Kitty must use the same wicked boldness that started their affair--and hope she doesn't

lose her heart in the process.

Stacy Reid is a new to me author, and I am ever so thankful to have discovered! *My Darling Duke* reads like *Phantom of the Opera* meets *Beauty and the Beast* (two of my fav kinds of romance). While heartbreaking at times, I devoured every page. Loved and highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica



Wild, Wild Rake

Janna MacGregor

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250255211

★★★★★



Avalon Warwyck, the Marchioness of Warwyck, was determined that the future Marquess of Warwyck would absolutely lack for nothing once he was born. Her husband, the Marquess of Warwyck, didn't love her and made no bones about it. He was verbally and psychologically abusive towards her, even going so far as banishing her from the ancestral home in London so his pregnant mistress could reside there. Her parents had forced her to marry the Marquess, instead of William, the man she loved, because the Marquess was "a better catch." She was 18 and a virgin married to a man she didn't love or want. After his one time bedding her, he told her she was cold and laying with her was like laying next "to a block of ice." He even went so far as to bring his friends over to his London residence to "party" with his mistress' friends while the Marchioness was there. So, Avalon decided that he would pay handsomely for his betrayal and his future child's welfare.

Mr. Devan Farris, the youngest of four sons of the Earl Larkton, had been one of the "friends" that had been at the home of Warwyck on the fateful day. He had a reputation of being a rake and a charming ladies' man looking to marry an heiress. He had started calling her Lady Warlock ever since she had jilted his friend William Cavensham, but, after witnessing her humiliation at the hands of her husband and how she had handled it with dignity and pride, his opinion of her changed drastically. Denied a commission in the army by his oldest brother after their father's passing, Devan joined the priesthood and became a vicar. His brother, the Earl of Larkton, had been named guardian and conservator of the young marquess by his father before his passing. So, in the interest of keeping check on the finances of the estate and the young marquess' upbringing, the Earl had Devan made the parish priest of the community where Avalon lived and had established a refuge for young ladies who were in need of help. Could the vicar and Lady Warlock come to some understanding for the sake of the young marquess?

Wild, Wild Rake is an historical romance with a definite twist. Ms. MacGregor has penned a wonderful tale of love and redemption, although through rather unconventional means. The vicar and Lady Warwyck are thrown together, without consent, to resolve an issue regarding her son... an issue his mother isn't even aware of. The chemistry between them is immediate and explosive but held in check due to her wariness and his position. This character driven story has depth and empathy to the plight of women in that era and handled beautifully. A wonderful read!

Lani Roberts

Paranormal Romance Reviews



Stormsong (The Kingston Cycle Book 2)

C. L. Polk

Tor

Trade Paperback

978-0765398994

★★★★

Powerful mages have been using souls to fuel the aether network that supplies all of the power in Aleland. When Grace Hensley discovered this horrible secret, she immediately helped stop the atrocity. But without power there's no heat, and winter has just begun. People have already frozen to death, and it's only going to get worse.

Grace is the strongest mage of her generation. But she's not strong enough to disperse the upcoming blizzards. Despite Grace's best effort, the recent storm dumped three feet of snow in one day. And the storms she

senses on the horizon are even stronger.

Meanwhile, people are protesting daily. And they don't even know about the soul engine. When everyone finds out what the dead have been subjected to, there will be a revolution. And the people most likely to be able to stop the snowstorms will be killed. Then the blizzards will kill everyone else.

Grace is trying to keep things under wraps long enough to enact a plan that just might save everyone. Her efforts are hindered by journalist, Avia Jessup, the woman she's falling in love with. Sadly, Avia will not allow the feelings she has for Grace to affect her journalistic integrity.

This is a continuation of a series. While reading the previous novel is not required, it is strongly recommended. This is a really good book.

Sheila Griffin

Erotica Romance Reviews



Before Him (Cubs for Rent #4)

Charity Parkerson

Punk & Sissy Publications

Kindle Edition

B07XC3QGLW

★★★★★



accepting and loving each other just as they are. I'm so in love with this story! Highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

"If someone has to change you before they can love you, then it's not you they want."

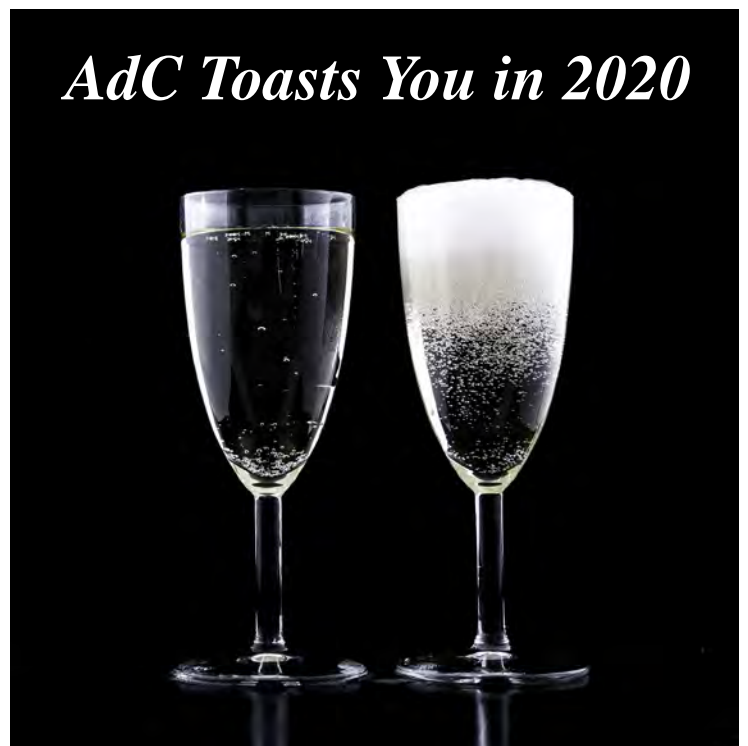
"You don't have to change for me."

Kevin has been broken perhaps beyond repair by a man he thought loved him. Opting to purchase time spent rather than risk his heart again, Kevin is reluctant to move forward in any type of relationship – that is, until Jericho.

Jericho has built his life around being a single father and workaholic fire fighter. But now that his son is grown and found love and a life of his own, Jericho starts wanting something more. When he sees Kevin, it's like a switch is flipped and his heart recognizes Kevin is the one.

Kevin's and Jericho's love affair is all about

AdC Toasts You in 2020





The Business of Blood (In the Business of Blood #1)

Kerrigan Byrne

SelfPub

E book, Kindle Edition

978-1700310286

★★★★★



historical romances with the smexxy bad boy hero. Nope. In *The Business of Blood*, the author takes her writing skills and weaves a thrilling who-dun-it with a well-known iconic killer. This reader couldn't get enough and is already desperate for the next installment! Wish I could give more than five stars!

Highly recommend!

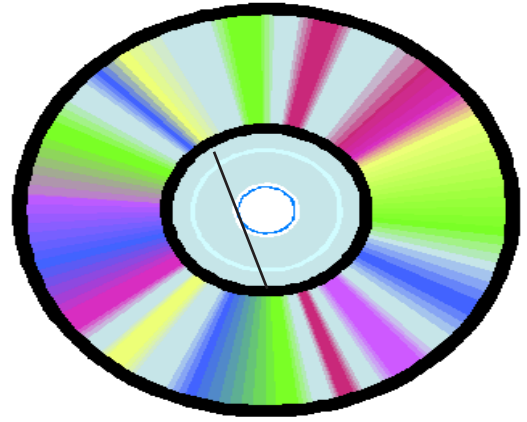
Sharing what I love,
Veronica

"Sometimes, what we want and what we fear are one and the same."

Fiona Mahoney is no stranger to darkness. Making her living via the dead, Fiona has become quite the expert in forensic clean up and disposal – perhaps too good, for she has caught the eye of one of the deadliest villains in London, Jack the Ripper. Following the gruesome murder of her dearest friend, Fiona vows to seek vengeance and uses all her wits and connections, lawful and unlawful, to determine if the killer that has once again spilt blood on the cobbled streets is her old nemesis or an obsessive copycat. One thing is for certain, *"to beat the Devil, you have to play his game."*

Kerrigan Byrne's *The Business of Blood* is a dark and sinister mystery I did not want to end! If you are a fan of all things The Ripper, this is a must read! It should be noted this novel is NOT a romance. Don't be picking this up thinking you are going to be reading one of Kerrigan's

Affaire de Coeur



AUDIO BOOK REVIEWS

Barbecue and Bad News

Written by Nancy Naigle

Narrated by Shannon McManus

Brilliance Audio

Audiobook, Unabridged, 8 cd's

978-1501220784

☆☆☆

Savannah Dey is a journalist with an undercover job of writing a popular, but snarky, column under the name of Van. She was on her way from Washington, D.C. to the small hometown where she was born—and left in conditions that almost reached the level of scandalous. She was going to her ex-husband's wedding, who was marrying her cousin. She didn't want to go; she hadn't been back home since her parents died, but her Aunt was begging her to come. So, she hopped in her little Cooper and reluctantly headed home. Preoccupied, she didn't see the policeman until he was on her tail. She had been speeding, a whole seven miles over the speed limit, and he was going to ticket her. She tried to dissuade the handsome sheriff with charm and smiles, but he was immune—until she blurted out that she was having the worst day of her life. She was out of gas, having to go home to see her ex-husband remarried and now she was getting a ticket. He let her slide. Car troubles and a parade made her miss the wedding altogether, and she decided to work in the little town of Adams Grove where she was.

Sheriff Scott Calvin thinks she's cute—no, pretty—but he can't be bothered with a city girl like her. Experience has taught him that he and city girls just don't match. He would like to send her on her way, but she has agreed to help the

elderly newspaper publisher and later on other people from Adams Grove, including his mother. She has insinuated herself in many areas—yoga, tea party with an older woman, and the honoring of the Sheriff for doin' his job. And, she had to consult with the sheriff to understand the police blotter.

The small town begins to change Savannah, forcing her to examine who she really is. What is changing her even more is the Sheriff, but she's done something to hurt him and when he finds out about it....

Barbecue and Bad News—ok, the subtlety of the title eludes me—is a contemporary romance that examines the pros and cons of love in the small town where everyone knows everyone else's business. The story can be told in fewer cd's; there is a lot superfluous information that neither move the story along nor embellish the entertainment. A mystery is thrown in the storyline but not well developed. Shannon McManus' performance of Savannah is vanilla, sometimes irritating. If you like sweet, Southern romance, this may fit your bill.

Mildred Burkett

Consumed by Fire

Anne Stuart

Performed by Jill Redfill

Brilliance Audio

Unabridged Audiobook--9 CD's

978-50124897-9

☆☆☆☆

Evangeline Morrissey is a grad student conducting research in Italy when she meets handsome, sexy James Bishop. His sexual prowess sweeps her off her feet, and,

Affaire de Coeur

Audio Book Reviews

after knowing each other for only a few days, they get married. She awakens in the luxury hotel in Venice where they were honeymooning and finds him and her heirloom diamond earrings gone without a trace.

Fast forward five years and a husband later. Evangeline's life is dour. Her current husband is a cheat and has stolen her research work and published it under his own name. She ditches him. She just wants to conduct her research in remote areas where she and her dog Merlin can be away from the civilized world. Just when she thinks she's accomplished that, she is appalled to learn she has picked up a stowaway at the Canadian crossing into Montana—her husband James Bishop. He wants her to take him to New Orleans.

James Bishop is not what he seems. Though he has kept his distance from Evangeline, he has tracked her every move over the past five years. He's had to stay away from her. He's an assassin for the Committee, and his nemeses believe he killed their accountant. They put out a hit on for Bishop, and the easiest way to get to him is through Evangeline. He needs to get her to a safe place so he can leave her again, but she wants no part of it...or him, she tries to convince herself.

Consumed by Fire is a top-notch romantic suspense audiobook. From the time they meet the game is on. Thrust in a situation where their top priority is survival, they war with each other while having some of hottest sex imaginable. The hero is a too flippant for this reviewer, while the heroine often comes across as a victim. It takes a big leap to believe they are in love. The antagonist is no surprise which made for an anticlimactic climax. Ms. Redfill does an adequate job of performing all of the characters. Still, their story is a good, solid one with twists and turns that keep the reader involved.

Mildred Burkett

Fear the Dark

Kay Hooper

Narrated by Joyce Bean

Brilliance Audio

Audiobook, Unabridged, 6 cd's

978-1511305334

★★★★½

Simon Church and Amy Grimes are two teens running away. After filling Simon's Jeep to the hilt, they took off from Serenity, Tennessee, on their way to wherever they landed. Except, they didn't land anywhere. Simon's car was found on the side of the road on the edge of town with both doors open, all the contents untouched, and two sets of footprints that led downhill and then disappeared. The teens were nowhere to be found. Oh, and the policemen's watches

and cell phones were acting funky.

Chief Jonah Riggs is the sheriff of Serenity. He and his assistant Sarah couldn't make sense out of the scene. Then it happened again, this time with the Judge who had gone on his nighttime fishing trip. Riggs seeks help from the FBI's Special Crimes Unit, a group who has extraordinary, some would call paranormal, special skills and talents. Before Agents Samantha Jordan, a clairvoyant, and her husband Lucas, who is also her partner in the SCU, could intervene, a young mother disappears while walking across her complex to borrow baby food. A movie goer disappears when he leaves his seat to get snacks, and a little girl who got up in the middle of the night to get water is nowhere to be found. This requires two additional special agents—Dante Swann, a medium and Robbie Hodge, a telepath. Even with these special people on the case, no one has a clue who the perpetrator of these crimes is or if any of those who disappears is still alive. Then a policewoman gets her throat slit on the street.

If the reader accepts the concept that these types of people exist, *Fear the Dark* will be a real treat. It's still spooky, even if the listener is not a believer. The tension is constant, the delivery by Joyce Bean is excellent, and the plot is fast moving and will keep the listener frowning, trying to make sense of it all. For fans of *X-Files* and *X-Men*, *Fear the Dark* is a must.

Mildred Burkett

Field of Graves

Written by J.T. Ellison

Narrated by Joyce Bean

Brilliance Audio

Unabridged, Audiobook 8 cd's

978-1531887551

★★★½

Lt. Taylor Jackson is a homicide detective chief with baggage. As with many women in higher positions than men, she is supported by few, hated by some. She catches a case, a young female Vanderbilt student who has been murdered and left naked in the Parthenon in Nashville, Tennessee. Scarcely before she can ascertain the name of the woman, another woman is found in a different place who is also a Vanderbilt student. She's under a lot of pressure to solve these cases before someone else is found.

Dr. John Baldwin (MD., Ph.D., J.D, etc.) is/was a profiler with the FBI. When all of his colleagues get killed on an investigation, he is so wracked with guilt, he gives up on life and quits everything except a game of Russian roulette every night. His former boss calls him and convinces him to act as a consultant to the Nashville Police Department who spurn him. Back to Russian roulette it is. The night the gun actually goes off is the night Lt. Taylor knocks on his door causing him to miss his mark.

Audio Book Reviews

With certain genre there are expectations. *Field of Graves* does not meet the standard of being a romance, a mystery or thriller, though there are elements of all three. The relationship between Taylor and John is too underdeveloped to be called a romance. The killer comes out of nowhere, so it feels as if the reader was never given a true opportunity to follow the clues and identify the character. Though there is certainly a hook at the beginng that makes the listener want to know the story, the thrills seem artificial and don't last long. The reader, Joyce Bean, though challenged with the myriad of voices, comes through. Still, *Field of Graves* is entertaining.

Mildred Burkett

Gone

Elisabeth Naughton

Performed by Amy Landon

Brilliance Audio

Unabridged Audiobook, 8 Cd's
978-1536609349

☆☆☆☆

Deveraux is a journalist. They fell in love, true love, and had a daughter Emma. Everything between them was great until Alec took Emma to the park one day, and she disappeared. Alec blamed himself and became an alcoholic, a suicidal alcoholic. As a final act of severing himself from life, he divorced Raegan and tried to stay away from her.

Four years later a little girl fitting Emma's description has been found, but it's not Emma. They both relive the trauma of that day, and Raegan is devastated by the fact the child is not her daughter. She refuses to give up hope that Emma's alive, but Alec thinks it's best if they accept what is probably the truth. He thinks his father, who is in prison, is the man responsible. Then Raegan, in her professional arena, begins to examine other kidnappings, and she sees a pattern and asks for Alec's help. He's reluctant to do it, but he has never stopped loving her and agrees. Their lives become endangered, as the perpetrators will do what they must to prevent discovery.

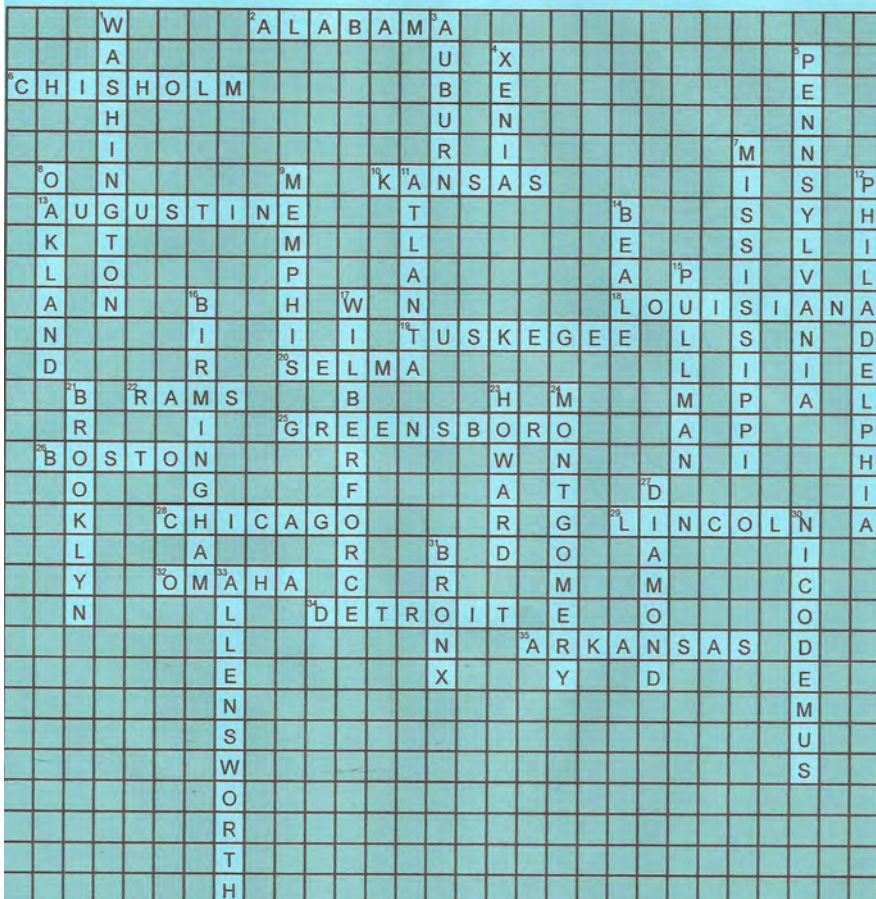
Gone is an exciting tale of child kidnapping and how it affects the people involved. Readers will be surprised at who the kidnapper is as it is not revealed until very late in the story. True to Naughton's style, the couple is hot! The attraction is undeniable and the flame between them rocks. Amy Landon, the reader, does a good job of performing all the voices. Enjoyable.

Mildred Burkett

Alec McClane is a photojournalist and Raegan

Black History Sites

Louise B. Sneed



Booty from the Other Genre



Been There Married That

Gigi Levangie

St. Martin's Press

Hardcover

978-1250166814

★★★★

Agnes Nash is a published author. But more importantly (at least according to her “friends”), she’s a Hollywood Wife. For more than a decade everything has seemed fine. Then, with no warning, her movie producer husband, Trevor, asks Agnes for a divorce. Well, he doesn’t actually come out and ask for a divorce. Instead, Trevor says he “wants to go in another direction.” Trevor “doesn’t want to do marriage anymore.” He isn’t happy, and Trevor “really, really wants to be happy.” He has discussed it with his “people.” They’ve decided he “needs someone who knows how to market Trevor Nash, handle his social schedule and is interested in everything he does.” It appears that Agnes is getting divorced by committee.

Agnes is naive when it comes to divorce. She doesn’t bother to call a lawyer right away. It’s going to be a civil divorce, so what’s the rush? When Agnes does start calling, she discovers that Trevor has beat her to it. He’s had a ten-minute meeting with every big-name lawyer in the area. This creates a conflict of interest and none of them are able to represent her. And so, Agnes finds herself and her no-name attorney facing off against the biggest, baddest law firm in town.

Been There Married That is filled with witty words, clever comments and quick quips. It’s a surprisingly fun read.
Sheila Griffin

Book of Scandal: The Tesano Elders

Al Tonya Washington

Al Tonya Washington

E-book

BO7Y6QBL5X

★★★★ ½

Liam Paolo Tesano didn’t start out to be a financial giant. In fact, being in the middle of five boys of Luca and Constanza Tesano, he was the one who decided to stay at home when his brothers took after their parents and traveled the world. Then his parents were brutally murdered in their own home, and his four brothers went on a vengeful rampage. Seventeen-year-old Liam refused to join them and stayed home tending the fields and flocks. When his brothers failed to return home, Liam thought hard about his future. Then fate dealt a hand and he “met” his future wife, Athena Cavalese. Together, they started a fabric delivery business with Carlo DiCenzo, with a truck given his friend, Frederico Nandi. Liam was a shrewd businessman and very good at what he did. When the business grew and they started thinking about overseas shipping, DiCenzo made them an offer too good to pass up.

When the Tesanos and friends landed on Ellis Island to set up their fabric delivery service, Liam went all out. Together, they forged a business that ended up being a global conglomerate worth millions. This is the story of their family dynamic.

Book of Scandal: The Tesano Elders is an involved, chronological story of a complicated family through the years. Its short chapters help keep the pace from bogging

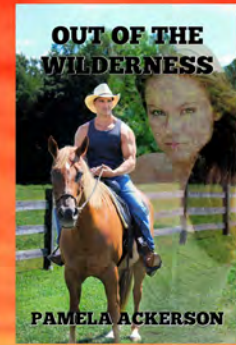
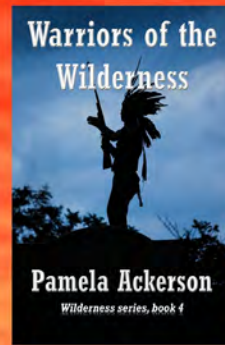
BOOTY

down, but, unless you've been following the Tesano family chronicles through the years, there's an awful lot of names and relationships to try and keep track. It's an enthralling story that will keep you riveted to the pages as Ms. Washington takes you through the early years of the Tesanos' and their families and how it all came to be. A fascinating in-depth look at a complex family dynasty in the making.

Lani Roberts



*Stories that stir within us
the unquenchable hope for
a better tomorrow.*



*Romance Betrayal Desire War
The Wilderness Series has it all!*

*PamelaAckerson.com
@PamAckerson*



Late Reviews

(Those that didn't make the last
issue.)

Christmas in Venice

Joanne Fisher

Joanne's Books

E-Book

978-0692764008

☆☆☆

Tiffany Washington inherits a glass studio in Venice, Italy, from an elderly glass artist who admired her outstanding artistic glass-blowing skills. She moves to Italy from the U.S. and fortunately is able to speak Italian, but it will take more than familiarity with the language to earn her acceptance in the tight-knit, traditional community.

Massimo Busetto owns the coffee shop next to her gallery. The café has been in his family for generations. His mother pushes him to marry someone she feels is suitable for his aristocratic Venetian heritage, and very clearly disapproves of Tiffany.

Though Tiffany slowly gains acceptance by the locals, when she witnesses a crime her report isn't taken seriously. When Massimo questions her truthfulness, their relationship is in jeopardy. With the adjustment to a new culture, and the locals and family wary of her, Tiffany and Massimo have a lot to overcome to build a future together.

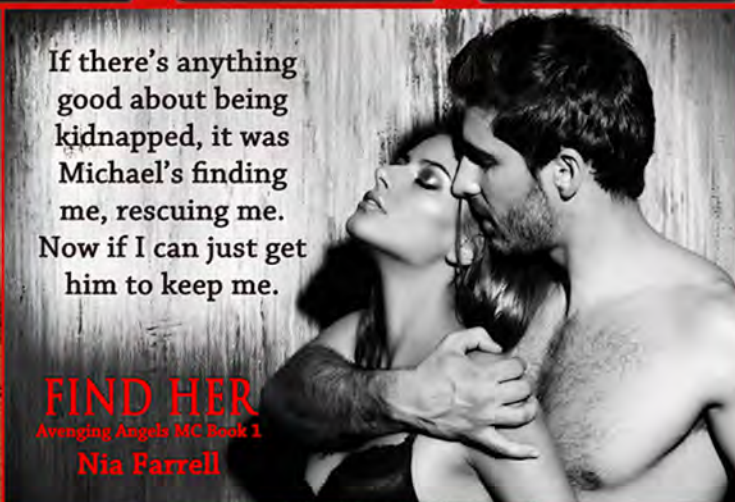
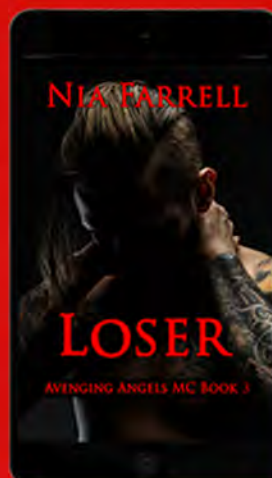
Christmas in Venice is intriguing, at times it reads more like a travelogue than a novel. The book would have benefited from a bit more editing. There is a bonus collection

of links to recipes for the meals the couple enjoyed during their courtship.

Hannah Rowan

AVENGING ANGELS MC SERIES

by NIA FARRELL



niafarrell.wordpress.com