

July/August, 2021

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CONTENTS

July-August, 2021



Departments and Columns

Puzzler	21
Contemporary Romance Reviews	22
Historical Romance Reviews	24
Mystery Reviews	26
Booty From the Other Genre	30
Late	32
Children's Books	34
Young Adult Reads	35

Articles

The Secret to Writing a Great Synopsis by Pamela Ackerson	4
The Spotlight is on a Talented Trio--Kate Angell, Marina Adair, and Stacy Finz	6
AdC Loves Conferences! See why one of our favorites is the Space Coast Book Lovers' Conference	10
Pam Binder dazzles in our spotlight	12
Romantic Traveling--France	16

The Secret to Writing a Great Synopsis

by Pamela Ackerson



It really isn't a secret, but it sure does feel that way sometimes. Literary agents and publishers need synopses. It's how they know whether the book is what they're looking for or need. They want a good story from a good, unique storyteller.

- Authors pull their hair out trying to write them. How, pray-tell, can an author take a full manuscript they spent forever writing, and put it all into a nice cozy one-page synopsis? Okay, I exaggerated. Most agents, publishers want one to three pages. Some will take up to five. Many will put a word count on it.

Impossible? Wrong! It can be done.

Authors do it automatically without even realizing it when they talk about their storyline. They immediately go into a narrative about their book.

What? That's all it is? Yes, however, the submission requirements requested by the agent or publisher must be followed to the T. If you don't, it will go straight into the circular file.

Most agents and publishers want the synopses in third person, present tense. If they want it a different way, they will specify how they want to receive the synopses. Otherwise, third person, present tense.

Even if your book is first person-present tense, unless they specify differently, put it in third person, present tense.

So let's get to the nitty gritty.

Write a first draft and/or outline.

Know your market, and know your genre. Your market is always who, and your genre is what. So if you're not sure, ask yourself who will sell it, who will read it, and that's who will be interested in reading the book.

Number one rule. This is a pitch. You are now a salesperson, and are attempting to sell your book to them. You are selling yourself, and the story. Be colorful, dramatic, etc. If you're not passionate about the story, they will see it, right there in black and white.

- Keep it short and simple. If it isn't needed, don't put it in the synopsis.

- Start with a strong line, or blurb that will hook the reader introducing the story and first chapter. Think about how movie companies promote their movies. Pay attention to how they use particular words to grab your attention. Mimic but do not copy what they're doing. The point is to get them to keep reading.

- Use your talent to express the uniqueness of the story as the plot thickens and continues to the end.

- Identify your main characters.

- Follow the plot in its proper order by pulling major events from each chapter that draws the story onward. Start with how your story begins, conflicts, plot twists, and how the story moves forward. The action and character developments that lead to the story's climax, conflicts, etc.



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We'll be there! Stop by and visit us.
PamelaAckerson.com**

Don't forget to include the ever important climax. Include how you've tied in everything from the previous chapters, and how everything comes to a conclusion.

- Always include the story's ending. Did you see that? Always include the ending.

- Okay, now walk away for a few days. Return to the draft, reread, and do your re-writes. If you have a narrator program on your computer, listen to it. You'd be surprised how different it will sound when you're listening to it.

Edit!!!

Now edit again, and if you can't pay a professional editor get someone to see it with a different set of eyes.

This is the agent/publisher's first impression of your work. You must present your best! The competition is very high.

Take your time and do it right. Don't forget to follow the submission requirements exactly how they request it. Good luck!

You can find me:

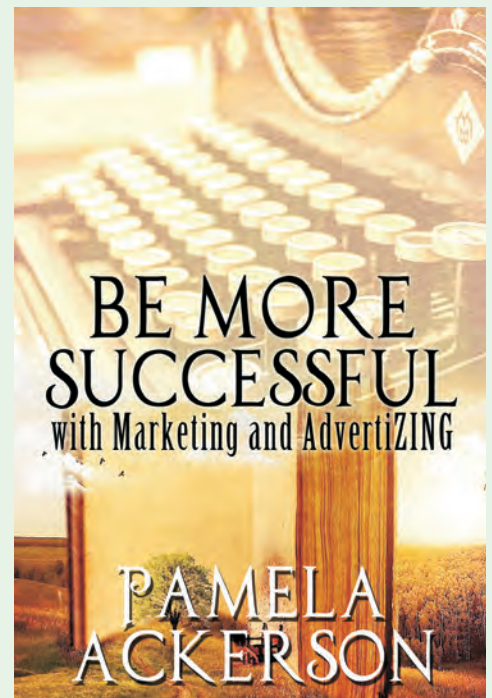
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Spotlight Interviews

This Time It's a Trio

Kate Angell, Marina Adair, and Stacy Finz

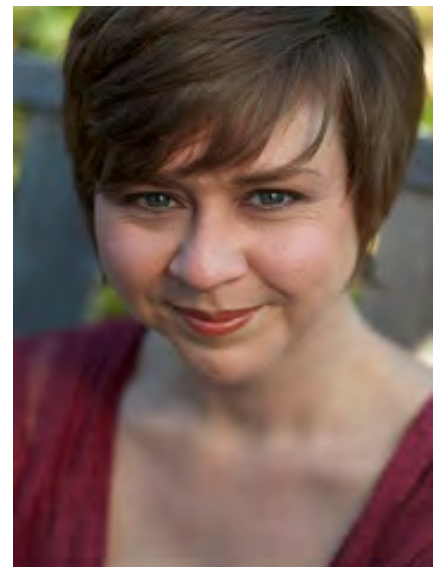
KATE



USA Today bestselling author Kate Angell writes contemporary romance. Appreciative of warmer weather, she lives in Beautiful Naples, Florida, on the Gulf of Mexico. She's an avid reader, animal lover (6 dogs and 4 cats), and sports fan. She enjoys lattes at Starbucks and browsing Barnes and Noble. She's best known for her "Richmond Rogues/Barefoot William" baseball, beach, and board-walk series.

MARINA

Marina Adair is a national bestselling author whose contemporary romances have sold over a million copies. In addition to the "When in Rome" series, she is also the author of the "Destiny Bay" series, the "Heroes of St. Helena" series, and the "St. Helena Vineyard" series which was the inspiration behind the original Hallmark Channel Vineyard movies. She currently lives with her husband, daughter, and two neurotic cats in Northern California.



STACY



Stacy Finz is a New York Times and USA Today bestselling author of contemporary romance. After more than twenty years covering notorious serial killers, naked-tractor-driving farmers, fanatical foodies, aging rock stars and weird Western towns as a newspaper reporter, she figured she finally had enough material to launch a career writing fiction. She is the author of the "Nugget Romance" series, the "Garner Brothers" series and the "Dry Creek Ranch" series and is currently working on a women's fiction novel. She lives in Northern California with her husband.

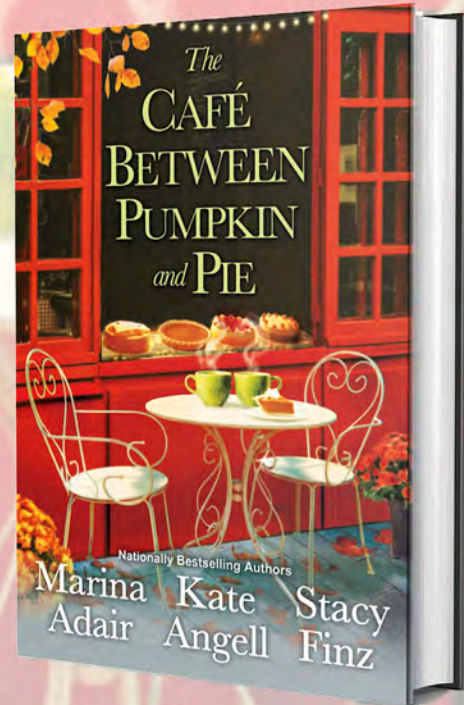
Moonbright, Maine

The sweetest kind
of enchantment

Heart-melting treats
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AdC: *How many different genres do you write?*

SF: I write contemporary romance, usually with a small-town and cowboy component and women's fiction.

AdC: *Tell us about the type of characters you love to write about.*

SF: I love writing flawed characters who are trying to find themselves either after they've hit rock bottom or have suffered a personal catastrophe. I guess you could call it a second-chance story. I also love to explore the idea of family, which in my books aren't always related by DNA.

AdC: *Do you have a new book or series?*

SF: *Holding On*, part of my "Nugget" series, was just released in May. It's about a woman who has lost her husband to divorce, her child in a bitter custody battle, and her beloved career.

But most of all, she's lost herself. Her journey to redemption takes many twists and turns and, in the end, she not only finds her best self, but love again.

AdC: *Favorite quote?*

KA: It's not about having time to do something, it's about making time to do it. (So if you want to be an author, schedule time to write.)

AdC: *What do you do when you just don't feel like writing?*

KA: I love to read many different genres. I seldom read romance novels, if I'm presently writing a romance. I enjoy mystery cozies, suspense, historical, and paranormal.

When I'm not writing, I often spend time outdoors - yard work, toes in the sand at the beach, walking my dogs, browsing Barnes and Noble - all activities clear my head. I've also been known to color. I have a large selection of crayons and coloring books. No

pressure, just fun. Large jigsaw puzzles keep me mentally active, too

AdC: *Many indie authors don't get their books edited by professionals. What advice would you give them?*

KA: All authors want to present the best book possible to their readers. In traditional publishing, authors have the advantage of an editor, copy editor, proofreaders to help minimize typos and errors. Although mistakes still can happen, despite everyone's best efforts. The eyes may see the mistake, but the brain reads it differently.

From an Indie perspective, I always suggest that those wishing to self-publish find a freelance professional to go over their story with a fine-tooth comb—if they can afford it. If such a cost is not in their budget, then they should attempt to locate someone good in grammar with the understanding of a

* continued on pg. 11



Sneak Peek

Moonbright Halloween Parade

by Kate Angell

“Bo Peep, you’re losing your sheep,” a man standing on the curb called to Hannah Allan. His voice was deep with a hint of humor.

Her sheep? Hannah heard him, but didn’t look his way. She stood in the middle of Pumpkin Lane, awaiting the start of the annual *Boo to You* parade. Fifteen minutes and counting. She was dressed as Little Bo Peep. She’d pinned her hair beneath a pink bonnet with white eyelet trim, then tied it under her chin. Her pink satin dress featured puffy sleeves, a faux lace-up bodice, and a polka dot trim. A stiff crinoline flared the skirt. Adult sheer-white thigh-high stockings decorated with flirty blue bows brought a sexiness to the childhood nursery rhyme. She’d debated the pink ruffled panties and decided to stick with the costume. No plain white cotton. Black patent leather Mary Jane shoes completed her outfit. She carried a bright blue plastic shepherd’s crook.

She grew weary. This was not her costume of choice. She wore it on her older sister’s behalf. She was doing Lauren a big favor. Her sister had come down with a cold and could not participate in the holiday festivities. Her husband was a police officer, on duty, and so, equally unable to carry out the family tradition. She’d begged Hannah to take her place. To take her four-year-old triplets to the parade, then trick-or-treating. Which was actually asking a lot. Hannah was single. She had no experience with children of her own.

Hal, Howie, and Harry were a handful. The identical boys were costumed as sheep. Their one-piece fluffy white Sherpa jumpsuits, hoods with ears, and shoe covers made it difficult to tell them apart. Tiny gold bells were sewed at the neck of each costume. Their heads bobbed, and there was a lot of jingling going on.

One such jingle had wandering feet. She turned to her young flock and discovered Howie’s focus was on the numerous live animals lining up behind them. He liked all things Disney, and wanted to pet the Saint Bernard wearing the Mickey Mouse ears headpiece. Hannah motioned to him. “Come back to me, Howie.”

He ignored her. “Right now,” she said firmly. “All small hands on the shepherd’s hook. We walk together, remember?”

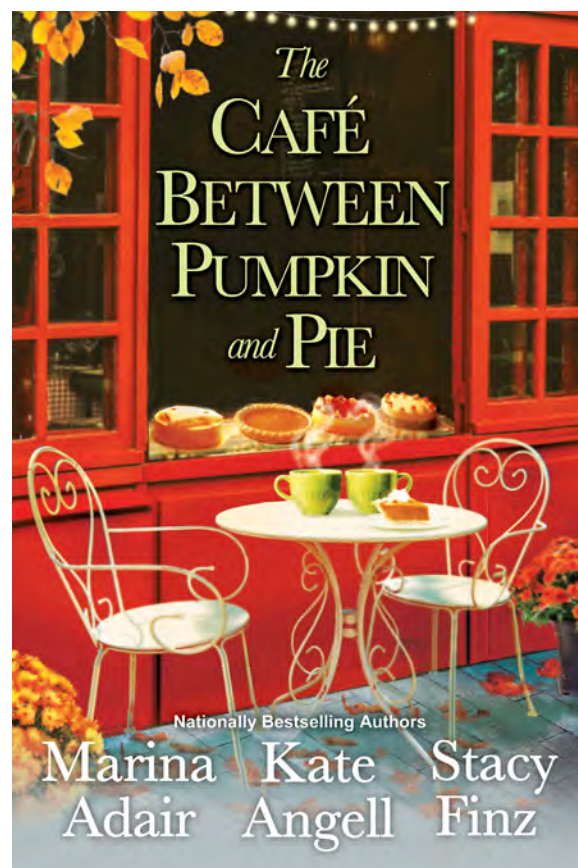
The guy at the curb chuckled. “Need help with your flock?” he asked.

The wide brim of her bonnet framed her face. She refused to look his way. “I’ve got things under control.” Or did she?

“You’ve lost a second sheep,” he pointed out.

So she had. Hal’s interest was centered on the Moonbright High School band. Costumed as skeletons, they tuned up their instruments in preparation of marching down the street. Hal had joined their drumline.

Worry took over. She was two sheep down, and the third, Harry, took interest in the man curbside. One quick look in his direction and



familiarity struck home. She shivered. Not from the cold, but in response to the man himself.

Jake Kaylor in the flesh. A Halloween shocker. He thumbed down his mirrored lens aviators and stared at her over the rim. His eyes were a green so deep they were almost black. No more than ten feet separated them. He defined edgy. All hard-faced, daring, and hazardous to her heart. He held her attention with a shadowed gaze and sexy cool smile. Then reset his shades.

Her knees nearly buckled. She’d had a crush on him for more years than she could count. Unrequited and from a distance. He was incredibly close to her now. Her heart raced.



Love Rising

by Stacy Finz

What . . . The . . . Hell?

The screeching noise was so incessant Sydney bolted straight up from her grandmother’s bed. At first, she thought it was a bad dream. A buzz saw running rampant through the little town of Moonbright, Maine. She didn’t need Freud to know that the buzz saw represented the current state of her life.

But now, wide awake, she realized the noise, which also included a pounding that reverberated through the walls, was no dream. Just your garden variety construction nightmare. It was happening all over San Francisco, where new buildings were going up faster than jetliners over the bay.

But in Moonbright?

She threw her covers off and padded to the window. There was a red pickup truck parked in the driveway, and the carriage house doors were flung wide open. Syd grabbed the first things her hands touched in her suitcase, dressed and flew downstairs, straight out the back door.

There was a man tearing out the walls of Gram's beloved crafts room.

"Excuse me," she shouted over the hammering and Mick Jagger wailing that he couldn't get any satisfaction.

"Excuse me!"

The man whirled around, took a longer than necessary look at her, and grinned.

"I guess you don't remember me."

She remembered him alright. Right up to the moment when . . . well, she'd gotten the thankless jerk through his junior year of algebra II. Except, Nick Rossi was no longer a high school student. The once rangy teenager had turned into a full-fledged man. There were now a few crow's feet dancing around those chocolaty brown eyes of his, and the broad shoulders she'd once ogled in math class had doubled in width.

Even in the brisk autumn air, he wore only a white, slightly damp T-shirt that clung to his chest like a second skin. He still had that thick head of wavy brown hair, though. Not like Gage, who by the time they'd broken up had started a regular regime of Rogaine.

"My dad retired," Nick said. "My brothers and I took over Rossi Construction about two years ago."

Okay. But that didn't explain why he was destroying the carriage house.

"What's going on here?" She pointed at the walls or, rather, lack of them.

The question seemed to surprise him, judging by the look on his face, which was a combination of mystification and *you're joshing me, right?* "I'm installing the kitchen Stella wanted." Kitchen? The Victorian already had a kitchen. And Stella . . . was dead.



* *Spotlight interviews cont.*

solid plot and believable characterization. Someone who will be honest in his/her evaluation.

Readers, paying for Indie books, deserve the cleanest pages possible. No hiccups when reading, should there be a significant typo or an odd change in tense. An author should read the novella or full-length story several times. Oftentimes aloud. It helps to spot errors. You can see if the words flow smoothly. And the characters appear sympathetic and believable.

AdC: *What do you do to go beyond your comfort zone when it comes to writing and life?*

MA: In my book, *Promise Me You*, I wanted to challenge myself with exploring other senses other than sight, so I decided to write a blind heroine. Part of my research was to put an eye mask over my eyes and spend an entire day without the ability to see. The experience not only helped me connect on a deeper level with my heroine, it also helped my craft in the books that followed.

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

MA: After a year housebound, I am excited to get back out there and connect with readers and other authors. I just signed up for the Barbara Vey Cruise in February of 2023. It's a 7-day cruise filled with hundreds of readers and some really amazing authors. Barbara Vey events are my favorite events to attend because of the intimate setting she creates between readers and authors.

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

MA: My mentor, Barnaby Dallas, told me the only difference between a writer and an author is that authors sit their butts in their chair every day and write. So my advice is to keep writing and eventually you will find your unique path to publication.

Kate Angel

Kateangell.com

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Stacy Finz

StacyFinz.com

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Marina Adair

MarinaAdair.com

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AdC Loves Conferences

Especially The Space Coast Book Lovers Conference

Space Coast Book Lovers Convention in Cape Canaveral, FL, was four days of pure fun!

From the Meet and Greet on Thursday, June 24th to the Buzz Sessions on Friday, the wonderful reader/author luncheon, parties, contests, games, prizes, raffles...and an incredible book signing event on Saturday, it was fantastic!



* *Tropes and Sips*



* *Cassidy K. O'Conner*

Hundreds of readers came to have fun with over 70 authors representing every genre.



* *Maggie Adams*



* *Teri Edney, Hostess*



* *Actor/Model John Antonio*

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- AND SO MUCH MORE!

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* L. Teri Riggs, R. Bev Kishpaugh



* AdC Contest winner
* Penny Prosze



* Author/Reader luncheon
* Teri Edney, Robbie Cox,
Darlene Cox, Sarah Mick

It was a pleasure seeing friends (it's been a long year...) and to meet new ones. Keep your eyes open, tickets will be available soon for next year! The event is scheduled for June 23 to June 26, 2022.
SpaceCoastBookLovers.com

The Spotlight is on Pam Binder

Pam Binder is an award-winning New York Times and USA Today bestselling author who loves Irish and Scottish myths and legends and traveling the world. So far, she has visited seventeen states and fourteen countries. Pam is a conference speaker and president of the Pacific Northwest Writers Association and writes historical, contemporary, Young Adult, time travel and fantasy fiction.



AdC: *How many different genres do you write?*

P.B.: Historical, Contemporary, Young Adult, Time Travel and Fantasy Fiction.

AdC: *Tell us about the type of characters you love to write about.*

P.B.: I love to write about characters who are closed off to the idea of love and feel that it has passed them by. Redemption and new beginnings

are also some of the themes in my books.

AdC: *Do you have a new book or series?*

P.B.: My newest book is the time travel romance, *Gingerbread Knight*, which is part of a new cookie book series by my publisher, The Wild Rose Press. The series will be launched in the Fall of 2021.

AdC: *Favorite quote?*

P.B.: “Fortune favors the bold.”

AdC: *What do you do when you just don't feel like writing?*

P.B.: If I don't feel like writing or reading, I'll work in my garden or walk in the woods near my house. Being outside invigorates me.

AdC: *There's a lot of controversy going around about how authors shouldn't write about things they've never experienced, i.e. if you're not trans, gay, an addict, etc., don't write a character like that...what's your take on that?*

P.B.: Before deciding to write a character or something you've never experienced, you must ask yourself why you need to write that character or experience. Are you doing it because you heard it was the next big trend or is it important to your story? If it is important to your story, then seek out resources and people who can help you create the authentic characters. Don't think you know characters because you've seen a movie or read a book or visited a site online. Times change. Search out people who can give you honest feedback. And don't just get opinions from people who share your point of view. If after you've done all of the above and you still feel uncomfortable, my advice is to not do it if you can't do it right.

AdC: *Many indie authors don't get their books edited by professionals. What advice would you give them?*

P.B.: My advice is to remind authors that their books will be available for a long time. Editing their manuscript by a professional should be the first cost they budget, followed by the cover. Don't rely on spell check or even online editing programs. Your book is important. Make it shine!

* Continued on page 14



Sneak Peek

Excerpt from
Christmas Knight
by Pam Binder

Colin Edward Penrose, a knight from fifteenth-century Glastonbury, England, must solve the riddle of his family's curse and marry a woman out of time—or lose his ancestral home. With a matchmaker's help, he meets a woman to whom he feels an instant attraction, but he knows the curse makes falling in love dangerous for her.

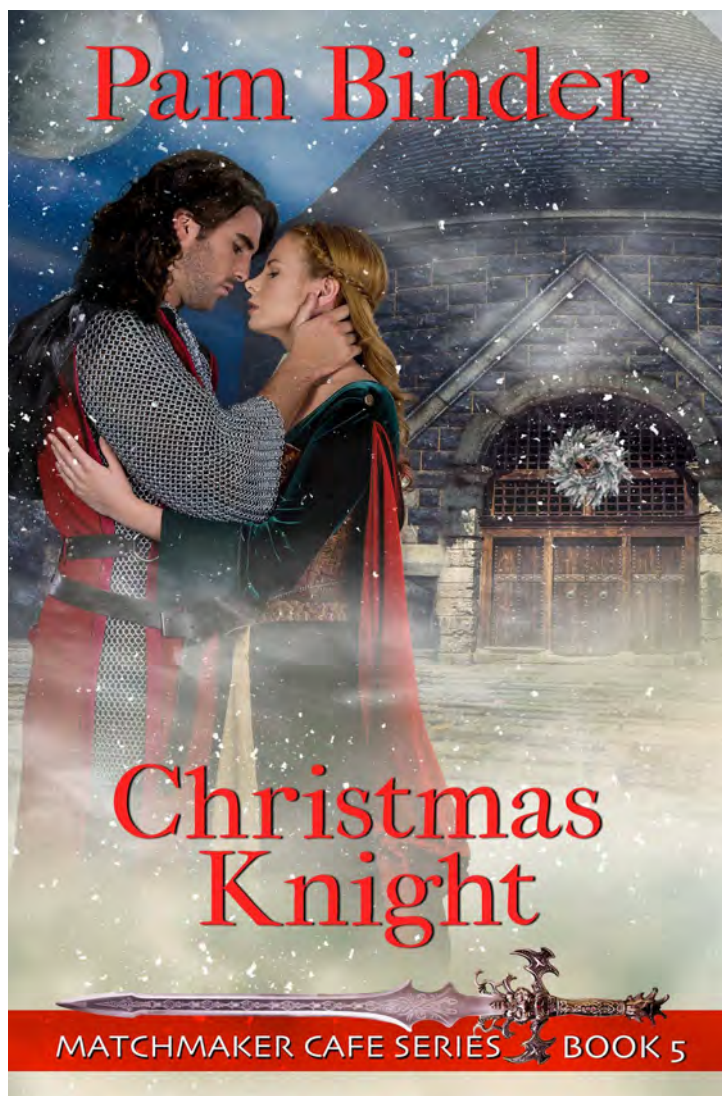
Madeline Murphy, defense attorney in a prestigious law firm, needs a date for her family's Christmas Eve party. In desperation, she turns to a matchmaker for her knight in shining armor. The man supplied exceeds her wildest fantasy but vanishes without a trace.

A year later, she needs a date for her mother's wedding, and she asks the same matchmaker. One problem: In order to find her mystery man, she must travel through time.

Modern day divorce lawyer Madeline Murphy has given up on romance. Needing a date to her mother's Christmas Eve wedding, she agrees to have one of the matchmakers from the Matchmaker Café set her up. Never did she dream that a simple wedding date would turn into an adventure of a lifetime...and a love affair that breaks all the rules...and maybe, just maybe, a powerful curse...

Fifteenth-century knight Sir Colin Edward Penrose is the last of the Penrose heirs. The family being cursed by the powerful wizard Merlin to have the wife of any Penrose die after giving birth, has Colin willing to give up his inheritance rather than pass the curse onto his bride. But, when he meets a matchmaker who says that she has found a way to break Merlin's Curse by finding Colin a bride out of time, Colin takes a leap of faith and prays this time, the matchmaker is correct.

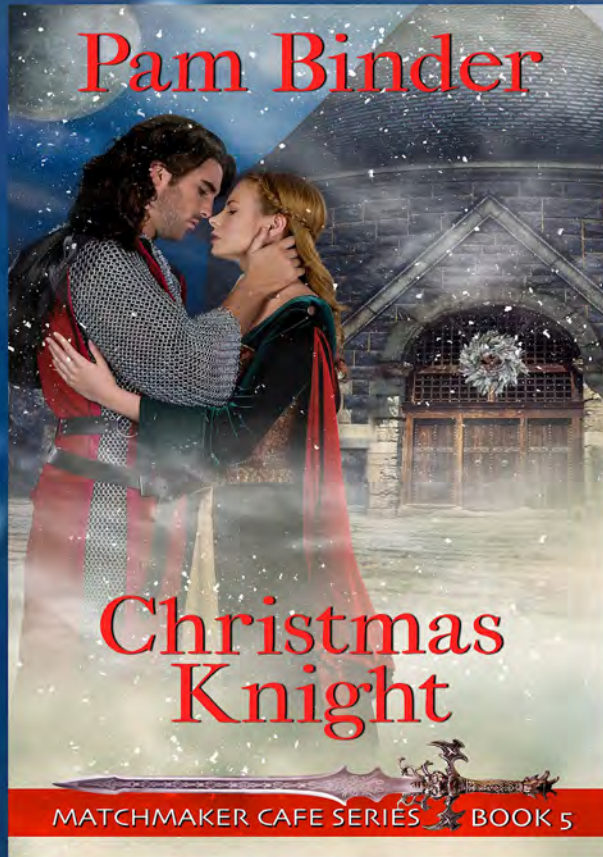
Colin and Madeline begin their once upon a time on a quest to find the fabled King Arthur sword, Excalibur, and prove once and for all that their love out of time will defeat Merlin's Curse, and allow for a Penrose heir and his love to live happily ever after...



- * **August is National Dog Month**
- * **Adopt a shelter dog!**



Time is an illusion and love, the only reality...



A curse
A matchmaker
and a knight
in shining armor!

PamBinder.com
@PamBinder183

* Binder interview continued

AdC: *What do you do to go beyond your comfort zone when it comes to writing and life?*

P.B.: In my writing life, I push beyond the things I know and try something new in each book. I'm always doing research and that research shapes my book and often takes the story in a new direction. In my life, I like to travel, but I'm not a fan of GPS. I feel it is a crutch. It is more fun for me to venture out in a city and see what I can see. I never get lost... or at least I always find my way back home.

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

P.B.: I will be attending the Pacific Northwest Writers Virtual Conference, September 15-19, 2021.

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

P.B.: The best words of advice I was given was the

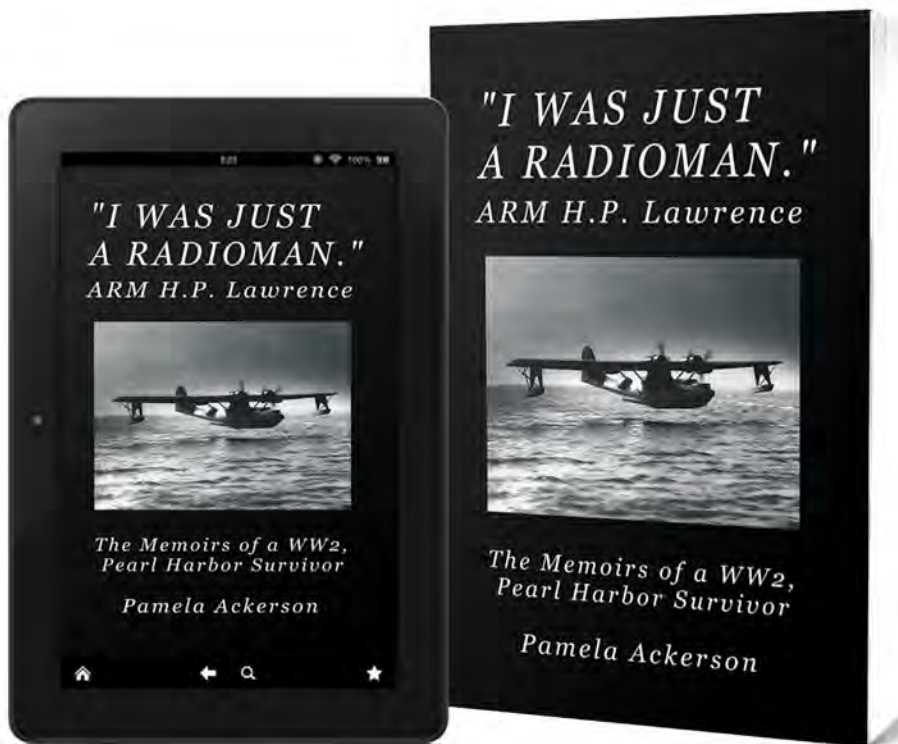
following: The difference between a published author and an unpublished author is that the unpublished author stopped writing. Keep writing.

Please give us the following contact information:

Personal web page: PamBinder.com

Twitter: @PBinder183

Facebook.com/Pam-Binder



December 7, 1941

The day which
will live in
infamy...
was just
the beginning.

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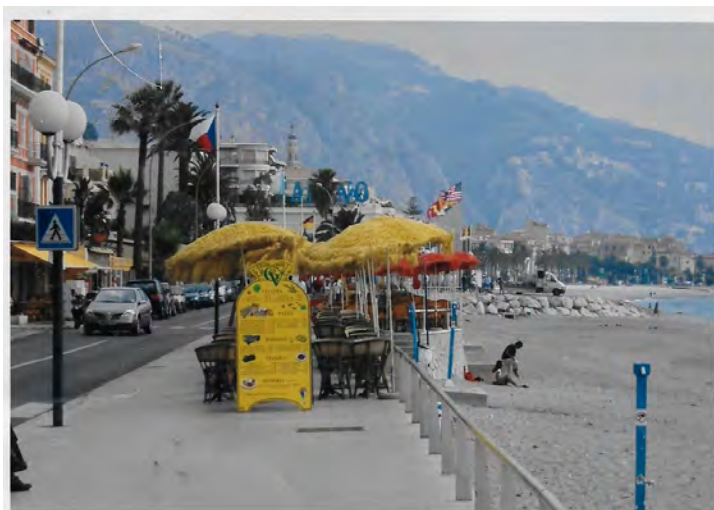
Though it seems unlikely that any tourist would not fill their touristy hearts' desire by visiting Paris, there are other great things to see in France.

The fun part, however, is getting from one spot to the next. The best mode of transportation through France is the train whether they are slow like the trains of yore or one of those T.G.V. (Train a Grande Vitesse), high-speed vehicles which are unbelievably faster than anything I have seen on

the ground. Before you leave the U.S, there are two things you need to consider about your train traveling. First, consider buying a Eurorail pass. These passes allow you to travel in several European countries in a specified length of time and at a relatively low cost. And these passes are cheaper in the U.S. If you wait until you get to Europe, you will pay significantly more for them. Except for the TGV, you travel at your leisure. Appointments must be made for the TGV, as it is both popular and fast. It is also more contemporary—USB plugs to charge your computers and phones, big, comfort-



- * One of Marseille's few attractions
- * Le Cathedrale Sainte. Marie-Majeure



- * Beach in Nice, France,--more rocks than sand.



Medieval England Time Travel Witch Hunts Magic Witchcraft and Adventure!

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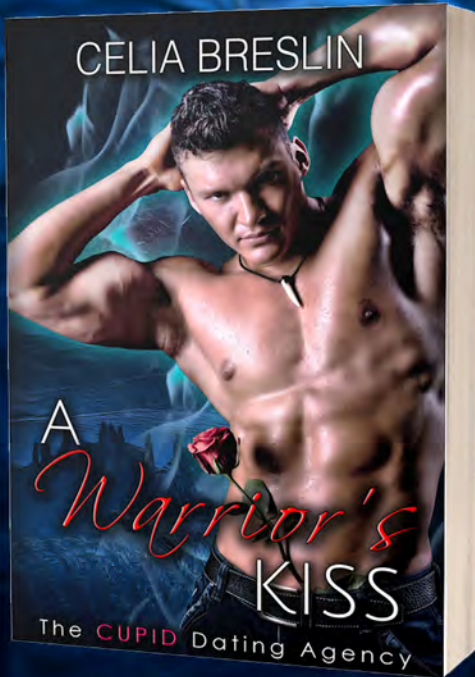
* Which way to go? Can't lose no matter which way you choose.

able seats, and, did I say they were fast?

There is nothing like seeing the countryside, noting the similarities and differences between our agrarian lands and theirs. One doesn't usually think of farming when thinking of France, but they do their fair share, and not all of it culminates in wine or cheese. (Would you believe they are the world's largest producer of sugar beets?) As far as the eye can see, you can see fields with a variety of products. My favorites were the sunflower fields. Speaking of grapes, almost every region of France has wine production, some areas more famous than others—Burgundy, Champagne, Alsace, Loire, etc. Speaking of cheese, I defy you to name cheeses you like and not name a French cheese—Brie, several different kinds of Bleu, Camembert, Babybel, Rochefort, Muenster—the best of which comes from the Aquitaine. (No wonder Eleanor had two kings fighting over her to get her land.) And so many more. Some of them are from cows; some from sheep. Other cheeses' flavor is enhanced by being in caves. Regardless, France has set the bar for both wine and cheese.

Marseille is the second largest city in France and

Pulse-Pounding Love on the Wild Side



She's chasing
her dream.

He's after her heart.

CeliaBreslin.com @CeliaBreslin

the city I liked the least. Perhaps my view is tainted by *French Connection* which portrayed Marseille as the origin of the drug problems in the U.S. It is the only place I have ever been that made it difficult to go into a bank. Plexiglass windows and doors, bars, and body scanners await one who wants to go inside. I must admit, it was a little scary.

Founded by the Greeks, short miles from Spain, right



* View of the Mediterranean from atop the hill in Monte Carlo

across the sea from the Northern part of Africa, and sitting on the Meditterrean, Marseille is as multicultural as it gets. If you want to see that in action, go to the *Vieux-Port* where booths are set up, selling everthing from jewelry to lamb meat in every form you can think of. One of its big attractions sitting very high on a hill is *Notre Dame de la Garde*.



A Frenchman and his dog on the beach in Menton

* (my favorite picture)

*When the quickening comes,
you can *defy* it, but you cannot deny it.*

IT IS THERE,

*as constant as the moon,
as mysterious as the stars.*

HELL'S FURY MC:
Rory

GUARDED HEARTS BOOK 8
CLAIRE MARTA  NIA FARRELL

Amazon <http://mybook.to/RoryGH8>
Release Date 1 May 2021



Contrary to belief, it does not resemble Notre Dame in Paris, but it has a reverence and notoriety of its own. Cathedrale de Sainte-Marie is much more impressive.

Leaving Marseille the train follows the Mediterrean, going through places like Cannes, Nice and Monte Carlo. My destination that day was Menton and my friends' apartment. Menton is only five minute's train ride from Monte Carlo and about ten minutes from Nice in one directions and about a 20 minute ride to Italy's border in the other direction.



* *Downtown Clermont-Ferrand*

What do you think of when you hear Monte Carlo? The car race? Gambling à la James Bond movies? Princess Grace? Or just super rich people? All of these were there, but since this article is about France, I will save the pictures and stories for some other time. I will also only mention that our final destination was Venice.

On the way back, we had a train change at Lyon, France, at about midnight. Unlike the U.S. where big depots never close, the Lyon train station closes until 4:00 A.M, meaning you can sleep anywhere but there. That was a challenge because it meant walking about or finding a hotel room, neither of which was desirable.

Once it opened, we said good-bye to the TGV and took the quaint train to Clairmont-Ferrand in the very center of France. Why there? That's where my daughter taught school for three years, and she was coming home. There is only one claim to fame for this beautiful, bucolic little town. It is the home of Michelin tires and that iconic tireman. Sight-seeing took the form of making contact of all the places she went and the people she knew. That kind of sight-seeing is invaluable.

Once we left Clermont-Ferrand, it was back to Paris and home. If you have a chance to see all or part of this country, you should grab it. It will be worth your while.



The Path to American Independence

Across

3. Number of original states.
5. No _____ without representation.
7. "We the People" is in the _____ of the Constitution.
10. Known as the Battle of #14 Across and _____.
11. Governor of Virginia—principle author of the Declaration.
14. The shot heard 'round the world came from here.
15. He and his crew crossed the Delaware
17. French nobleman who aided the colonies.
18. "Mad" Anthony _____.
22. Killed #20 Down in a duel.
23. She made a flag depicting the new country.
25. First man killed in the war.
26. Gives a parade on the 4th of July.
29. The fighting Quaker.
30. German troops who fought with the colonies.
31. The valley where many soldiers froze.
32. The first states were called _____.
33. Took the midnight ride to warn about the British.
34. Original location of the capitol.
36. First militia to serve for the colonies.
37. Wrote, "Listen my children and you shall hear..."

16. He regretted he had but one life to give for his country.
19. The party here included the destruction of a drink.
20. Founded the Treasury Department.
21. Co-writer of the "Federalist Papers," he became fourth President.
24. Biggest name on the freedom document.
27. Traitor.
28. This document begins with, "When in the course of human events..."
30. Statesman who said #35 Down.
35. "Give me liberty or give me _____."

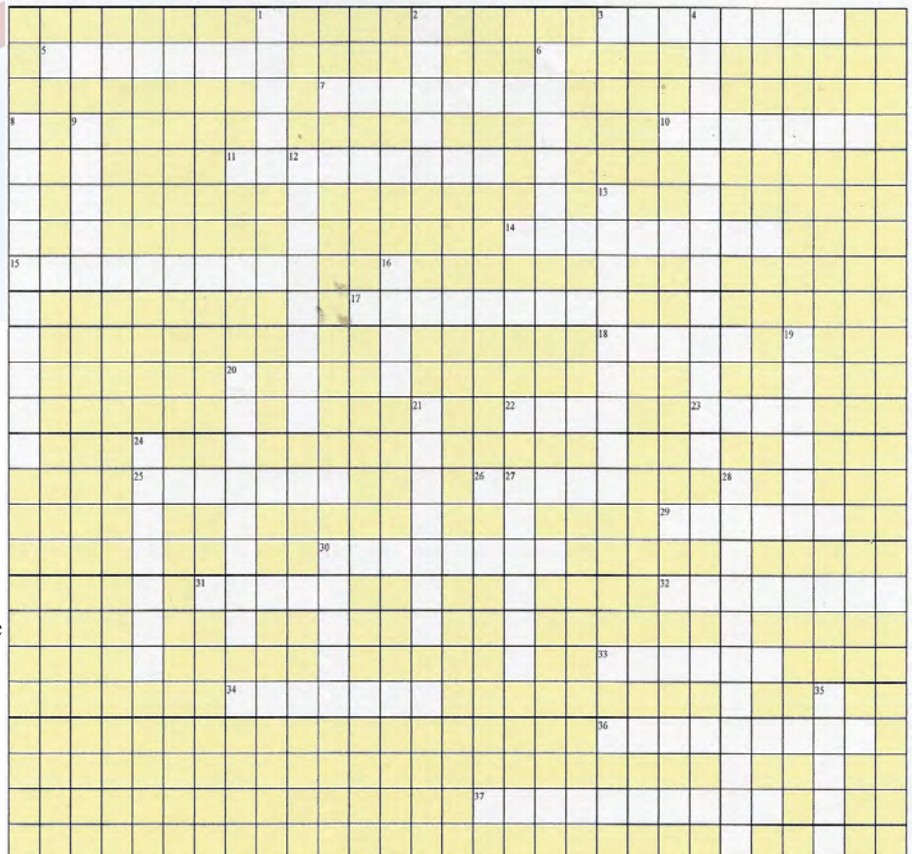
* Answers on page 25

Down

1. Benedict Arnold's British friend who was hung as a spy.
2. Established edict "Presumption of Innocence."
4. This war was the beginning of freedom from Great Britain.
6. King of England at the time of the War.
9. British general who was defeated in the Battle of Yorktown.
9. Naval guy who had just begun to fight.
12. Served on the Second Continental Congress—obtained help from France.
13. Fire crackers, sparklers, cherry bombs, etc.

Independence

Louise B. Snead



Affaire de Coeur

August is National Dog Month

Find the breeds and other things related to dogs!

C M B M R Y W K N Z S P Y X J Z T
O D P R P E J R B L G A Z B K R L
L N N D M Z G R O T T W E I L E R
L N V R D W N R M V N P M L Z L S
I M P M S T . B E R N A R D F P Y
E Z G G C Y M S D B Y D R J A M V
Y J N K K H U P T W N W M N L D R
Z G Y S V I I E X P T O I R A L Z
T M U N R D R H P L Y E E C W R L
E H Q I J R G O U X L T H L B K R
B S S M I G O L C A R S K R A B T
U H E E W D D A Z I H T I P G R T
L O R N L Y N G E U V U D Z U P M
L U D E R I W V N M B C A K P T R
D N V N N E E D Q Y Y T H R N J X
O D N E D R B B W L J T K O L X Q
G S Q M D N W W D L P D L R W X R

Bulldog
Canine
Bark
Hounds
Sirius
Leonberger
Pit
Spaniel
Terrier
Poodle

Chihuahua
Retriever
Husky
St.Bernard
Bernese
Fleas
Rottweiler
Pug
Dachshund
Chow

Answers on page 31



Contemporary Romance Reviews

All Night Long with a Cowboy (Kittredge Ranch #2)

Caitlin Crews

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250750006

★★★★

Jensen Kitteridge is notorious for playing fast and loose with the hearts of women vying for a spot in his bed. When he is confronted at the local seedy bar by the high school's prim and proper librarian expecting him to help her with a project for her students, he is surprised but uninterested. At least, not in the project. Surprisingly, he is instantly drawn to the librarian who is far from his usual type.

The last place Harriett Barnett wants to be is a trashy bar, but to help one of her students, she will make the sacrifice. Saving her student requires Cold River's infamous cowboys help, and she'll do what's necessary to get it.

Hiding his true self and feelings behind a façade of carefree joviality, Jensen plays into the town's preconceived notions and prejudices, living down to peoples expectations of him and ideas of who they think he is as a way to hide from the pain of the past. Harriet is logical, intelligent, and out of step with her peers when it comes to social mores, fashion, etc., and she's just fine with that. Harriet and Jensen are perfect for each other. He doesn't see her as odd but accepts her just as she is. He brings her out of her shell and opens her world to passion, love, and self discovery.

She throws him off his game, challenging him and breaking through the wall he's built between himself and the world. Harriet gives him a reason to deal with the past, put it behind him, and fully live again.

All Night Long With a Cowboy's narrative flow is different, perhaps affected by the characters quirky personalities. Crews deftly develops her characters and story with vibrant descriptions. Relationships and interactions between the characters are pivotal in their development, especially Harriet and Jensen, but also their relationships with secondary characters. *All Night Long with a Cowboy* is a sweet, emotional, and sexy romance about being comfortable in your skin and with who you are, how love changes how we see the world and ourselves, how the past can control and limit our future if we don't face it and make peace with it, forgiveness, and second chances.

Lacy Hill

Careless Love

Steve Zettler

Vine Leaves Press

Print Edition

978-1925965582

★★★★1/2

Careless Love is an intriguing in-depth look at a love story of two lost people who were searching for each other but didnt know it. Told in first person narrative, *Careless Love* relates the story of a dying mother who finally decides

Contemporaries

to tell her son the truth about his parentage. This revelation leads him to trace his mother's journey in Hawaii and to discover exactly who was this woman he called mother? And who was his biological father?

Married to an Academy Award winning Hollywood director, Grace found herself, once again, being told by her controlling husband, that he was divorcing her, and she had to leave. Only this time, her friend and neighbor, Sally Fulton, arranged for her to go, as her guest, to an exclusive private club on the island of Oahu for a week to get her head together. Nick had done this before, when he got caught in one of his many affairs, and after throwing her out, would come and beg/force her to return. Only this time, Grace did not want to return. She was tired of his games and the games of his circle of friends, and she wanted out. So she welcomed the quiet, exclusivity of The Pickering Club, complete with the elderly people who were its members. Except for the young man sitting by himself in the corner of the dining room, she had to be the loneliest guest at the club.

Lee Corbet always closed his award-winning New York restaurant during the month of August so he and his staff could have some down time. He usually spent his time off traveling and fighting off his Viet Nam-induced PTSD, but this summer his aunt had suggested he go to The Pickering Club as her guest for a week. He found the quietness of the exclusive club relaxing, if not almost boring, but it also left him too much time to dwell in his own mind. Then his eye was drawn to the only other young person in the club's dining room, and he felt an instant connection. As Grace and Lee got acquainted while hunting for "one last" cigarette for Grace, they discovered that they have more in common than they first thought.

Steve Zettler has penned a complex, character-driven tale of love, loss, and redemption. The characters are fully-fleshed out, including the secondary characters who are intrinsically essential to the plot and are a story within itself. The depth of Zettler's superb descriptive writing had this reviewer's emotions completely involved, especially while relating Lee Corbet's Viet Nam experiences. Readers will be kept on their toes keeping up with the twists and turns in this beautiful romance/non-romance love story.

Lani Roberts

The Dating Dare

Jayci Lee

St. Martin's Griffin

Trade Paperback

978-1250621139

★★★★★



The wedding was absolutely gorgeous. Everything had turned out perfectly for Landon and Aubrey, Tara Parks' best friend. She really was happy for them, but sad at the same time. Aubrey, her best bud and confidante, was leaving; leaving for her honeymoon, leaving to raise her family, leaving Tara behind...alone. Tara knew she was just feeling sorry for herself. She had a loving family, two overprotective brothers, and they owned their own brewery, where she created delicious, decadent microbrews and shared bartending duties. She loved her life; she really did, and her choice of not making a commitment and just having casual sexual relationships was perfect for her. Or so she thought until the gorgeous man with the playboy reputation kept staring at her throughout the wedding. He made all her parts stand up and take notice. But he was Aubrey's new brother-in-law, Seth, so was off limits as far as she was concerned. But, oh man!

Seth couldn't take his eyes off of Tara. He was a photographer and her natural beauty and effervescence had captivated his attention from the very beginning. But being Landon's younger brother and, supposedly, a known playboy, he knew Tara would have nothing to do with him. As the wedding progressed and drinks flowed, Seth and Tara started playing a game of "Truth and Dare" and ended up a dare of four "uncomplicated" dates with a vow not to fall for each other. With Seth leaving for Paris in a month to continue his dream of fashion photography, Tara figured, what's the harm? Only "uncomplicated" turned into complicated as feelings between them explode and they both discover that they don't want whatever they have to end with Seth's leaving.

The Dating Dare is a funny, well-written, character-driven romance that will leave the reader rooting for Tara and Seth's happily-ever-after. I have never read any other works by Jayci Lee but will definitely be looking for future novels from her. To me, the most fascinating aspect of this novel is that the characters are Korean. This is definitely not the focus of the book, by any means, and you learn of their ethnicity in subtle ways throughout, i.e., Tara's affectionate name for her brothers, mother, etc. It is very refreshing to have a romance where the characters are Asian for once, and in a not-specifically-Asian-only based story. I love it! Tara and Seth have such chemistry that it is hard to ignore, even though both of them have baggage from the past that they must overcome. Their journey to discovering that things really could work out between them is a journey you won't want to miss!

Lani Roberts



Historical Romance Reviews

A Duke Worth Fighting For (Isle of Synne #3)

Christina Britton

Forever

Kindle Edition

B08PV59SNP

★★★★ 1/2

“What else was she to him but the sun, lighting everything that had, up until then, been dreary and dark and hopeless”

Returning from war broken and disfigured from his wounds, Daniel Hayle’s trauma doesn’t end there. His older brother has tragically died in an accident, and now Daniel finds himself the new Duke of Carlisle. Wanting to help his mother find peace, he agrees to accompany her to visit her dear friend Lady Tesh on the Isle of Synne. Thinking the fresh sea air and the visit will help lighten her mood, he’s shocked to discover that Lady Tesh has volunteered her granddaughter to be his guide into polite society. One look into Mrs. Kitteridge’s eyes, and Daniel knows he’s lost or maybe he’s finally found someone who looks beyond his

battered body--someone who he can call his own--Margery Kitteridge lost her husband at the battle of Waterloo. Vowing never to love again, Margery has accepted her lot to be alone. After meeting the Duke of Carlisle, Margery begins having second thoughts. Perhaps there is room in her heart to love another.

Margery’s and Daniel’s second chance at love is a swoon-worthy romance I thoroughly enjoyed! I’m a sucker for any hint of a *Beauty and the Beast* theme, and Christina Britton did not disappoint in her third installment to the “Isle of Synne” series. Highly recommend to fans of this genre!

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

★★★★

Welcome to the Ludus Caledonia, an elite training compound where worthy men may sign on years of service to become highly trained warriors. Magnus Stewart has hidden the truth behind his royal bloodline and has fought his way to becoming the top gladiator known as “The Eagle.” Magnus is a proud man who struggles with opening up to his fellow fighters about his past, but when he’s in need of assistance to protect the woman he loves, Magnus discovers he’s not alone in this world--the Ludus Caledonia, a clan of powerful fighters who would lay their life down to defend one of their own, has become his family.

Is it possible for these two lost souls find a home with each other and in all places a fight club? Dear reader, I've so enjoyed Kathryn LeVeque's "Scots & Swords" series, and in her third installment, we have a sweet romance between Magnus and Diantha, where true love does indeed become legendary! *"I love ye. Ye have been mine since the beginning of time and ye'll be mine until the end of all things..."* If you are a fan of her medieval romances, be prepared for the same epic adventure and swoon worthy hero! Highly recommend! *Sharing what I love,*
Veronica

A 15x15 word search grid. The words are highlighted in various colors: blue, yellow, red, green, and purple. The words are:

- COLUMBIA (Blue, vertical, leftmost column)
- ODEON (Blue, vertical, second column)
- LINDA (Yellow, horizontal, third row)
- LINDA (Yellow, horizontal, fourth row)
- IMPERIAL (Yellow, horizontal, fifth row)
- EGYPT (Yellow, horizontal, sixth row)
- YOUNG (Red, diagonal, from top-left to bottom-right)
- ZIGZAG (Red, diagonal, from top-right to bottom-left)
- THERM (Red, diagonal, from top-left to bottom-right)
- MUM (Red, diagonal, from top-right to bottom-left)
- BERNARD (Yellow, horizontal, seventh row)
- CARP (Red, diagonal, from top-left to bottom-right)
- URBAN (Red, diagonal, from top-left to bottom-right)
- LUDER (Red, diagonal, from top-left to bottom-right)
- DODGE (Red, diagonal, from top-left to bottom-right)
- GOLF (Red, diagonal, from top-left to bottom-right)
- Others: C, M, B, M, R, Y, W, K, N, Z, S, P, Y, X, J, Z, T, O, D, P, R, P, E, J, R, B, L, G, A, Z, B, K, R, L, N, N, D, M, Z, G, R, O, T, T, W, E, I, L, E, R, L, N, V, R, D, W, N, R, M, V, N, P, M, L, Z, L, S, I, M, P, M, S, T, B, E, R, N, A, R, D, F, P, Y, E, Z, G, G, C, Y, M, S, D, B, Y, D, R, J, A, M, V, Y, J, N, K, K, H, U, P, T, W, N, W, M, N, L, D, R, Z, G, Y, S, V, I, E, X, P, T, O, I, R, A, L, Z, T, M, U, N, R, D, R, H, P, L, Y, E, E, C, W, R, L, E, H, Q, I, J, R, G, O, U, X, L, T, H, L, B, K, R, B, S, S, M, I, G, O, L, C, A, R, S, K, R, A, B, T, U, R, E, E, W, D, D, A, Z, I, H, T, I, P, G, R, T, L, O, R, N, L, Y, N, G, E, U, V, U, D, Z, U, P, M, L, U, D, E, R, I, W, V, N, M, B, C, A, K, P, T, R, D, N, V, N, N, E, E, D, Q, Y, Y, T, H, R, N, J, X, O, D, N, E, D, R, B, B, W, L, J, T, K, O, L, X, Q, G, S, Q, M, D, N, W, W, D, L, P, D, L, R, W, X, R



Danger at the Cove (The Island Sisters #2)

Hannah Dennison

Minotaur Books

Hardcover

978-1250194503

★★★★ 1/2

Evie Mead and her sister Margot Chandler have leased a defunct hotel on an island off the Cornwall coast. In exchange for a nominal rent, they pay for all repairs. Unfortunately, the repairs have been more numerous and costly than expected. The hotel's open house is quickly approaching. Things are not going well, and their money is almost gone.

Margot springs an unpleasant surprise on Evie. Margot's good friend Louise is arriving for a visit any time now. Evie says to let her know she can't stay. Margot says that Louise just lost her husband a few weeks ago. She needs someplace quiet to grieve. Evie, a recent widow herself, reluctantly agrees to the visit. When Louise arrives, she does not appear to be grieving. In fact, she has a new boyfriend, and he's coming to the island too! Evie is upset, but Louise is unable to reach Randy to tell him not to come. When he arrives, the sisters are pleasantly surprised. Randy is stunningly handsome and very friendly. He even agrees to pitch in and help them get ready for the open house.

After Randy arrives, a violent storm blows in. The

next morning the hotel handyman still hasn't returned from the mainland. He's not answering his phone, and no one has seen him since the previous day. Evie has a bad feeling that something is seriously wrong.

This cozy mystery is a continuation of a series that can be read alone. It's an enjoyable read.

Sheila Griffin

Happily Ever After

Alison James

Bookouture

E-book

978-1800194175

★★★★

"Welcome to Paradise--a resort as close to paradise as you're likely to find. Perfect for an intimate, romantic holiday. Perfect in every way--offering everything you could want--unless you wished your spouse was dead."

It's Pippa's wedding day, and she's developed a severe case of cold feet. Pippa goes to the church, not to marry, but to tell her fiancé she can't be with him any longer--it just didn't feel right. Now she's on a flight to a tropical resort for holiday that was supposed to be her honeymoon. Hoping the trip will allow her the time needed to sort out the mess her life has become, she never imagined it would actually put her smack dab in the middle of an

Affaire de Coeur

MYSTERIES

investigation into the death of one of the resort guests. Nor did she dream she'd be caught up in the dramatic and deadly turn of events that would soon follow.

What in the fractured fairy tales did I just read?! Alison James has certainly kept this reader's attention in her not so happily-ever-after tale of two honeymooning couples and their twisted and shocking entanglement! My lips are sealed for any further details; so you'll just have to snag your own copy! This is your must have pool/beach read this summer! Loved and highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

Her White Lie

Jackie Walsh

Hera Books

E-book

978-1912973644

★★★★ 1/2

"I know it could backfire on me. But to hell with it. I want my revenge--I'm fully aware of the trouble this will cause. It's a lie. I feel better already."

Tara and Faye have been the very best of friends. Growing up together, they were inseparable. Then something happened that fractured their friendship--something that one can't forget or forgive.

Three years pass, and Tara finds herself getting ready to marry the man of her dreams and move to Australia to live out their happily ever after. But the past comes knocking on Tara's door threatening to destroy all she holds dear, and the dark secret she believes destroyed her friendship with Faye is about to come to light, or is it?

Buckle up, Dear Reader, because the author hooks you within the first few pages and makes this book impossible to put down! With the story being told from both points of view between Tara and Faye, the tale unfolds as each character reveals her little white lies and how the truth never stays buried, no matter how much time passes.

"Time. Wouldn't it be great to have a button, to be able to pause, rewind, fast forward? Or a special box to put time away in and take it back out when I need it. But there is no button, no box. Time owns me."

Not everything is as it seems, and if you enjoy a good psychological thriller, then I highly recommend *Her White Lie*!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

The Last Time I Lied

Riley Sager

Dutton Books

Hardcover

978-1524743070

★★★★ 1/2

"Everything is a game whether you know it or not. Which means that sometimes a lie is more than just a lie. Sometimes it's the only way to win."

Emma has never fully recovered from the traumatic events from summer camp 15 years ago. Camp Nightingale was the scene of the bizarre disappearance of her cabin mates, Vivian, Natalie, and Alison. The camp closed after the three girls disappeared in the night without a trace. Emma has spent the subsequent years trying to move on from that night--the secrets she's kept--the lies she told.

Even after all this time, Emma is unable to let go of the past and uses her artwork as an outlet, painting the girls over and over in a series of portraits that hides them in the woods around Camp Nightingale. During one of her gallery showings, Emma is approached by the family that owned and operated Camp Nightingale and is asked to return as an art instructor. Emma is both shocked that the camp is reopening after the scandal of the girls' disappearance, as well as intrigued. Why is she, of all people, and with her history with the camp, being asked to return? Don't they realize "two truths and a lie isn't just a game--for most people, it's a lifestyle."

Camp Nightingale is no Camp Crystal Lake, but it will certainly give you chills! Every time I thought I had figured out what happened to Vivian, Natalie, and Alison, the author put another twist to the tale and proved I was totally off track! *The Last Time I Lied* is the perfect summer read guaranteed to keep you guessing till the very end! Loved and highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

Left for Dead (DI Amy Winter #3)

Caroline Mitchell

Thomas & Mercer

Kindle Edition

B082HT291W

★★★★ 1/2

"He was every woman's nightmare. He was the monster under the bed."

DI Amy Winter needs a break away from the nightmare her personal life has become. Her biological mother is a famed serial killer who is seeking an appeal of her conviction. Amy is still coming to terms with that information as well as coping with the loss of her adopted

father. Thinking a day of shopping with her sister is just what she needs, Amy stops to admire a display of a beautiful bride in the shop window. But upon closer inspection, the detective within notices the blueish tint to the nails as well as what appears to be blood dripping from the lips. This is no mannequin. This was a young woman placed on display and left to die.

Amy is now on the case to stop the monster hunting young women via an online dating site. When Amy offers herself up as bait, she begins to worry that perhaps her luck in catching serial killers is running out, and she may just end up being the next victim.

Left for Dead is the third installment to the “I Amy Winter” series but can easily be read stand alone. I’ve been devouring this thrilling series and highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

The Memory Bell

Kat Flannery

Black Rose Writing

Trade Paperback

978-1684337088

★★★★

Every Sunday Grace Penner was allowed to ring the Memory Bell. Like magic, her extended family would appear. When Grandfather dies, he leaves the bell to Grace. At the will reading, the family crowds around her, begging to hold the bell. Aunt Janice jostles Grace. The bell falls and shatters. Janice is furious. The bell should have gone to her daughter Ally, the prettiest, smartest granddaughter. Grace is heartbroken about the bell and stunned by her aunt’s anger.

Detective Bennett James has been helping out at the local sheriff’s department. A body has been found, and he has been called to the scene. The bones have been buried for at least twenty-five years. The sheriff says there haven’t been any missing persons, but Ben has a feeling the man’s lying.

Grace’s family is falling apart. Her favorite cousin is spending less and less time with her but is asking for more and more favors. The fights between Grace’s dad and brother Andy escalate. Then Andy disappears. Grace is sure that if she could just repair the bell it would fix everything, including her confused feelings for Ben.

Meanwhile Ben finds himself starting to fall for Grace, but after what his fiancé did, how can he trust another woman?

The only drawback in this story is the heroine. Her infantile belief that the bell is magical is ridiculous in a twenty-three-year-old. Despite this flaw, it’s an interesting book.

MYSTERIES

Sheila Griffin

The Purple Lily

LC Ahl and Cb Hartwell

Black Rose Writing

Trade Paperback

978-1684337286

★★★★ 1/2

A young couple disappeared into the forest. Daniella Keezar was the lead detective. A year later, she gets a phone call. Their bodies have been found. It was clearly a homicide, but so much time has passed that there isn’t much forensic evidence.

When Charlotte was in high school, she was stalked by Grant Dolan. Now she is an author, and she and her girlfriend, artist Tanya Wilson, move to the town where Daniella works. The local bookstore hosts a book signing. Grant is at her book signing, but several years ago he had plastic surgery and no one who knew him in high school would recognize him now. Charlotte autographs his book, and there’s not a glimmer of recognition.

Charlotte flies home for a funeral. That weird guy from her book signing is there. She finds out that he’s Grant Dolan. Grant asks Daniella out. A background check shows no problems. So she agrees. The two quickly become a couple.

Tanya’s art gallery desperately needs the business Grant is sending her way. She promises that she’ll never be alone with him. Charlotte’s still worried. Charlotte decides to give the evidence of Grant stalking her to the police. Daniella is stunned to find that her new boyfriend is a stalker. As she examines the evidence, Daniella begins to wonder if he might be something more dangerous than just a stalker.

Despite the choppy writing style, this is a very interesting book.

Sheila Griffin

Small Bones (Harvey & Birch #2)

Kerry Buchanan

Joffe Books

Kindle Edition

B095KTWGNN

★★★★

“There was a secret, one she’d kept inside her all these years, too afraid to look for answers.”

While doing a little yard work, Sue Hearn unearths a human skull. After her mom disappeared 30 years ago, Sue wonders could it be her mom’s bones and is her

MYSTERIES

father responsible for her death? But alas, Sue's father has dementia, and trying to get him to answer questions often times makes him agitated and his ramblings make no sense, especially when he starts telling tales of a policeman being behind her disappearance. Not sure who to believe or where to turn, Sue puts her trust in Detectives Asha Harvey and Aaron Birch. Together they unravel a conspiracy that has been long running and deadly.

Kerry Buchanan has written another suspense-filled crime thriller with an ending guaranteed to have the reader anxiously awaiting the next installment to this series! Highly recommend to fans of this genre!

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

The Stowaway

James S. Murray and Darren Wearmouth

St. Martin's Press

Kindle Edition

B08BYCZR2T

★★★★★

"It is better to risk saving a guilty person than to condemn an innocent one.—Voltaire

Or is it?

Reasonable doubt. After hearing endless testimony and seeing horrifying pictures of the victims of alleged serial killer Wyatt Butler, it came down to just enough reasonable doubt for one of the 12 jurors to vote "Not Guilty" and set him free.

Two years later, Maria Fontana just wants that part of her life to be over. Being endlessly hounded by the press, social media and the families of the victims, Maria is encouraged by her fiancé to take an extended vacation. Thinking a transatlantic cruise is just what the doctor ordered, Maria is ready to relax and enjoy time spent with family. But when a severed head is found in one of the cabins with a startling MO similar to that of the case against Wyatt Butler, Maria begins to fear that there could be a copycat on board, or perhaps Wyatt Butler wasn't an innocent man but in fact the killer.

Readers, I devoured this gruesome tale of being trapped on a boat in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean with a crazed killer on the loose! At first, I thought for sure I'd figured it all out. Then the author did a slight-of-hand with that ending!! Impossible to put down and guaranteed to give you chills! Loved and highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

Truth and Lies (DI Amy Winter #1)

Caroline Mitchell

Thomas & Mercer

Kindle Edition

B078W7X1KV

★★★★ 1/2

"You have to be your strongest when you're feeling your weakest."

DI Amy Winter has just lost her father. A well-respected police officer, he was much loved and admired by many. When Amy receives a letter from notorious serial killer Lillian Grimes, she figures it must be regarding something with a case her father worked. Why else would a convicted killer be sending her mail from prison?

The note is life altering in that Lillian Grimes is claiming to be her biological mother. After confronting the only mother she's known, Amy's perception of the truths she's been told begin to spiral out of control--has her entire life been built on a lie? Now Amy must work with Lillian to give the families of her victims closure and allow them to, at long last, lay their daughters to rest. But is Amy willing to pay the price Lillian is demanding for the information?

The author has certainly written a nail-biter with her introduction to the "DI Amy Winter" series! *Truth and Lies* is fast paced with plenty of twists and turns that will keep the reader guessing as to which are truths and which are lies. Loved and highly recommend! Already one-clicked the next in the series!

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

Booty from the Other Genre



1001 Energy Tips

“BTU” Bill Clark

Dorrance Publishing

E-book

978-1637647561

★★★★ 1/2

From simple energy tips to more complex, this book has it all. And all is explained in a way where the readers nod their heads and are willing to go for it from the kitchen to lifestyle changes, and ending with saving a bunch of money.

This book had a lot of suggestions this reader was already doing. Honestly, I still took away great suggestions to make life easier and better.

I highly recommend this as a household must have. It'd be a great housewarming gift!

Lauren Calder

Craven Manor

Darcy Coates

Black Owl Books

B0787KW4KY

★★ 1/2

“Things that die here have a tendency to linger”

Daniel Kane is a simple man who has fallen on hard times. Young and homeless, Daniel is taken in by his cousin, Kyle. But no matter how hard Daniel tries to better his lot in life, it's just never enough for Kyle. So, when a mysterious

note appears offering Daniel the groundskeeper position at Craven Manor, he readily agrees.

After receiving a set of rules about living at the estate, Daniel starts having second thoughts. (1) No strangers. (2) Do not enter the tower. (3) Remain in the groundskeeper cottage between midnight and dawn. (4) Keep doors locked and never answer the knocking in the night. Even with the odd rules and decaying condition of the estate, Daniel remains and begins the tiring but fulfilling job of cleaning the garden and surrounding area--until he unearths skeletal remains. That's just the beginning of Daniel's descent into the dark history of Craven Manor.

Dear Reader, I honestly struggled rating and reviewing this story. The cover was striking and snagged my attention when I was looking for a good ghostly haunted house tale. Perhaps I went in with too high of expectations. Would I classify this as horror? Not really. It has more of a cozy mystery feel. Not too terrifying, but just enough paranormal element and mystique to give it spooky vibe. An enjoyable enough read, but lacked the super scare I was hoping for. While not my favorites, I would still recommend for fans of ghostly haunts.

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

Booty

Although the final explanation is rather disappointing, this is a really interesting book.

Sheila Griffin

She Wouldn't Change a Thing

Sarah Adlakha

Forge Books

Hardcover

978-1250774552

★★★★ 1/2

Maria Forssmann is a psychiatrist. Her first patient, Sylvia Woolf, tells Maria that God has sent Sylvia back with a mission. Back from where? The future.

Sylvia says that when Maria's given the choice, she must do the right thing no matter the cost to her happiness. Sylvia says the first time they lived this life, Maria's secretary, Rachel, hurt Maria and her unborn baby. Sylvia warns her to stay away from Rachel. If Maria listens, her son will grow up a happy, healthy boy. If she doesn't, something bad will happen. Maria doesn't listen.

When Maria opens her eyes, she's in her childhood bedroom and is seventeen years old! Maria has all of the memories of life with her husband and children, but no one else does. Maria's parents think she is delusional. It breaks their hearts, but eventually, they have Maria committed.

Maria realizes that she was brought back to save the life of her husband, Will's, little sister, Beth. And she doesn't have long to do it. Maria's got to get out of the psych ward! If she saves Beth, Will won't go to the same college as Maria. They'll never meet. Her children will never be born. But how can Maria let an eight-year old be murdered?

The Sinful Lives of Trophy Wives

Kristen Miller

Ballantine Books

Trade Paperback

978-1524799526

E-Book 9781524799519T

★★★★ 1/2

This psychological thriller is an oddly lighthearted romp through an extremely upscale neighborhood in a suburb of modern day San Francisco, where life seems perfect from the outside. Three neighbors--trophy wives of multi-millionaires, focus on appearances, fashion, and alcohol-soaked luncheons. Formal galas and prenuptial agreements are a way of life.

But intrigue lies beneath the surface.

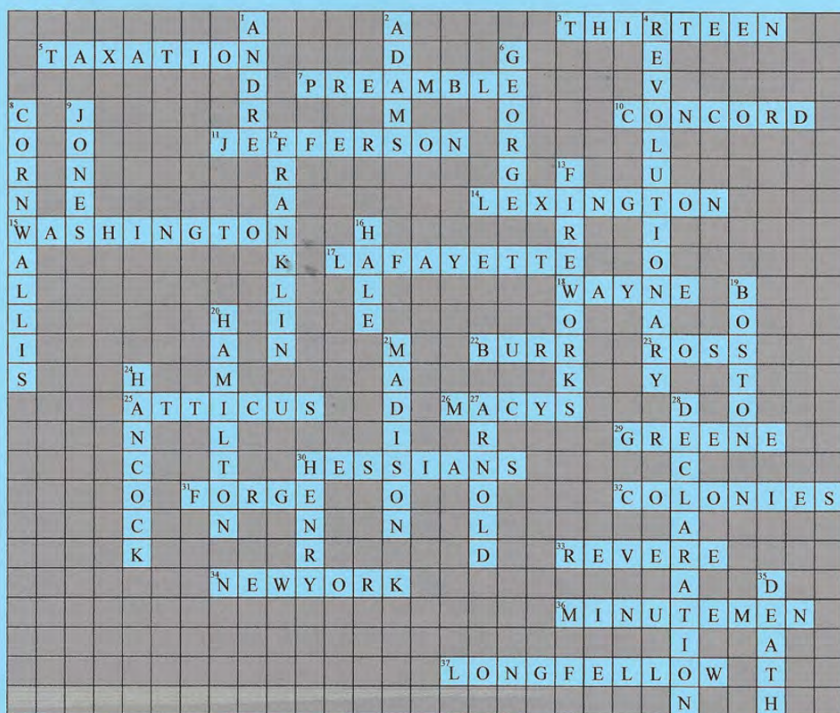
Georgia, fondly known as the Black Widow because of the suspicious deaths of her first two husbands, is set to try again when her fiancé goes missing. Her cohorts, author Brooke and reporter Erin, experience their own marital difficulties, but the three stick together in a strange combination of loyalty and envy as they wait to see if there really will be a wedding.

Danger builds on every page while the reader is left wondering who exactly is on whose side. This exciting story ends with a twist the most discerning reader won't see coming.

Hannah Rowan

Independence

Louise B. Sneed





Late Reviews

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

A Duke in Time (The Widow Rules #1)

Janna MacGregor

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250761590

★★★★

Upon Katherine Vareck's husband Meri's accidental death, she discovers he has married two other women. If his scandalous act gets out, it will ruin them all. Meri's older brother Christian, Duke of Ranford, spent his life cleaning up his brother's messes until he decided to avoid his family once he became an adult. But with his brother's selfish and thoughtless actions, Christian is drawn back into his family's drama and scandal that he spent so much of his life escaping.

Working together allows Katherine and Christian to spend time together as equals, and the initial sparks of enmity Katherine feels toward Christian and his misdirected frustration with his brother fade. His guilt for being drawn to his widow also fade, and the attraction between them bloom into passion. However, secrets from Katherine's past lurk to undermine her future with Christian and the success of her business—unless she can face and put them behind her.

Katherine focuses on making her textile business a success using the skills learned from her mother and her status as Meri's wife. She has a growing clientele and becoming the royal supplier will only contribute to her

business' reputation. An independent survivor used to making do, Katherine lets Meri's other wives stay with her and they become friends. She is used to keeping a low profile except for the social interactions required by her business, but now her home is full, and Christian is tempting her to open her life even more.

Although at first angry about being drawn into the situation with Meri's widows, Christian can't help but feel responsible for them, wanting to do what he can to help. A former soldier, he's honorable, though he comes off as cold to most. He plans to use his dukedom to help his fellow soldiers adapt to life outside the military, and the last thing he needs is to get involved with his half brother's misdeeds again. Additionally, Christian can't help but find himself irrevocably drawn to Katherine.

Initially, the pacing is a bit slow. However, MacGregor's description and character development are nicely done, helping to balance this out while drawing readers into the story. Christian and Katherine are relatable and sympathetic characters who are easy to root for. Their attraction is intense, and the development of their relationship is refreshingly straightforward, mature, and drama free. *A Duke in Time* is a Regency period read that is hard to put down. Historical romance readers who love stories of found families, true love, and second chances with independent heroines and heroes who deeply love the heroine should love this one.

Lacy Hill

The Promised Queen

Jeffe Kennedy

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250194350

★★★★★



The Promised Queen is the final book in “The Forgotten Empires” fantasy romance series.

Queen Euthalia of Calanthe was nearly killed by evil wizards working for her enemy as they attempted to steal away the source of her magical powers, the Abiding Ring. Her husband Conri, the rightful Crown Prince of Oriel, saved her, but she is physically and emotionally broken. Lia has an incredible legacy to fulfill and must find the strength to claim her legacy. And is there a possibility to make their marriage for dynastic purposes authentic if they can survive their mutual determination to end the reign of the evil Emperor Anure?

The Promised Queen delivers an engaging read. Integral to this novel is strong world-building and engaging fantasy elements paired with a believable and sigh-worthy romance. Lia’s coming into herself and realizing her potential leads to fantastic moments of empowerment and exciting action and magical moments. Conri and Lia are perfectly paired, their strengths and weaknesses complementing each other while their love and attraction for each other sizzle off the page. With memorable and impactful secondary characters who serve meaningful roles in the story and the fascinating connection between Lia and the living land that she rules and serves such a prominent part of the narrative, there is so much to love about this book.

Danielle Hill

Rebel’s Karma (Dark Protectors #13)

Rebecca Zanetti

Lyrical Press

E-book

978-1516110810

★★★★★

Rebecca Zanetti’s “Dark Protectors” paranormal romance series continues with *Rebel’s Karma*, Book 13.

Benjamin Reese, the craziest member of the Seven brotherhood, continues his search for the enhanced human Karma imprisoned by the Kurjans. A vampiredemon hybrid who lives on the edge, Benny is loyal, deadly, fiercely protective, and a wisecracking thrill seeker. His family consists of his brothers and their mates. He’s not interested in settling down, but Karma brought his primal instincts for

Late

a mate to the surface when touching her activated his mating mark, linking their lives and destinies.

Karma is intelligent, courageous, and caring. Mated to a Kurjan centuries ago--so long ago that she remembers nothing of her old life, only the life of a prisoner and Kurjan servant. Karma is unaware of her own power and strength. To protect innocents entrusted to her care, Karma must do whatever it takes, even if it requires sacrificing the inexplicable, confusing connection she feels to Benny and the belonging and safety she has discovered with him and the Seven. Benny and Karma fight to resist the sizzling attraction they share. However, the more time they spend together after Benny successfully rescues her, the harder it is to deny the passions that they stir in each other--feelings new to Karma--and the connection they share.

Zanetti’s exciting action sequences, vivid description, excellently developed characters’ steamy romance, and humor all come together for a thrilling read. Karma’s POV offers an insightful, fascinating insider’s perspective of life with the Kurjans compared to the Seven and the Realm. Although the novel features a lot of suspense and thrilling action scenes, it focuses more on developing and furthering the relationships between the characters, Benny and Karma, but also between Karma and the Seven, and among secondary characters, i.e., the younger generation of the Realm and the Kurjans. For much of the book, the pacing feels more laid back and less urgent. The interactions between Benny and Karma are intense, steamy, but also sweet. However, Karma’s secrets tied to her connection to innocents left behind when she was rescued that the Kurjans are using against her complicate their relationship. Fans of the “Dark Protectors” and readers looking for a paranormal romance with thrilling action, superb world building, and likable characters should love this entertaining read.

Lacy H





Children's Books

Journey to Cassiopeia

John K Addis

AE Press

Paperback

978-0998365619

★★★★

Cassie was named after a star. When her father comes home late from work, she was still awake waiting for him. They chat about the stars, and the universe, and traveling into space.

This story gave me chills. It's something that will stay with this reader for a very long time.

Lauren Calder

Seaside Countdown

Eoin Ryan

Self-published

Paperback

979-8725776294

★★★★ 1/2

Help Ann find all sorts of cool animals. Counting down for children with sea animals starting from ten. An interactive book for your child. Find the sea animal, and then learn about them.

Fantastic! What a great way to teach a child. The artwork is adorable.

Lauren Calder

Young Adult Reads



Jeremy and the Witches= Medallion

Randy Gauthier

Austin Macauley

Paperback

978-1647501525

★★★★

Jeremy receives an old family heirloom, a medallion of uncounted age that is promptly absconded away by a magpie. The magpie flies away from the window and leaves a single feather. Jeremy, not happy with the theft, promptly chases after the magpie, discovering in the meanwhile that the feather when it touches his skin transports him and the magpie back to the 1600's, the days of King James and his pursuit of witches.

A chase and the beginning of a trek follow. The magpie, burdened by the heavy medallion, must fly to a certain destination to use it. Jeremy is steps behind and loses her, only to find that he can rely on the feather to whisk him closer to the bird he has named Maggie. He also finds he can communicate with animals. Jeremy meets Dudley, a grand horse from the royal guard, and then a badger. Mrs. Fitzzy, with Dudley's help, travel in pursuit of the medallion and more animals join the trek. Maggie later finds the meddlesome boy is somehow blocking her transformation with use of the medallion because of his possession of her feather.

The story begins with a look back into the King James era and surrounding history with his persecution of

witches. The author relies on actual history in his world building. The reader will go through a few chapters of back-story before meeting Jeremy. There are some legal proceedings to get through that slow the story, but when the reader gets past this, the story takes off. It will be worth the wait.

Lauren Calder

