

November/December 2021

# *Affaire de Coeur*

*Bringing You Honest Reviews Since 1980*



**Kat Martin**

**From Newbie to Best Selling Author**

**Pamela Ackerson Commemorates  
Her Father, a Pearl Harbor survivor**

**Reviews!  
Reviews!  
Reviews!**





# *Affaire de Coeur*

*Wishes You*

Sheila Griffin

Barbara Keenan

Patricia Calders

Kathye Quick

Mildred Burkett

LACY HILL

DANIELLE HILL

Pamela Ackerson

Louise Snead

Veronica Giles Westfall

Hannah Nolan

Tina Connolly

Lani Roberts

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*November-December, 2021*



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# *The Spotlight is on . . .*

## **Teri Riggs**

*Teri Riggs is a retired mom and former nurse who loves to write. She reads at least one book a day. Her all time high was four books in one day. Being an insomniac gives her extra time to read. She live in Georgia with her husband and two spoiled puppies. She has three beautiful daughters and six grandblessings that she loves to spend time with. She's a USA Today Bestselling Author and her second book, Resolutions, was a Daphne Du Maurier finalist.*



**Teri Riggs**  
**Wife, Mother, Nurse**

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

**T.R.** I write romantic suspense, historical western and contemporary romantic comedy. My venture into paranormal is coming soon.

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

**T.R.** I love to write about Alpha heroes and strong heroines.

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

**T.R.** I am currently working on two. One is paranormal and the other one is historical western suspense.

**AdC:** *What is your favorite quote?*

**T.R.** "F\*\*k 'em if they can't take a joke."

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

**T.R.** I've been experiencing this since Covid started. Even when I get out my laptop, I sit and stare at it.

**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?*



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**T.R.** I think you can write about anything that interests you as long as you do the research.

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

**T.R.** Get them edited by professionals.

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

**T.R.:** I go to conferences.

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

**T.R.** Right now, I'm only signed up for Space Coast Book Lovers and Penned Con in 2022 and for three others in 2023.

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

**T.R.** Never give up on your dream of writing.

#### Contact Information

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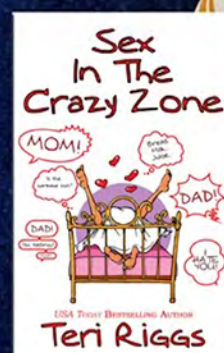


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*An Affaire de Coeur*



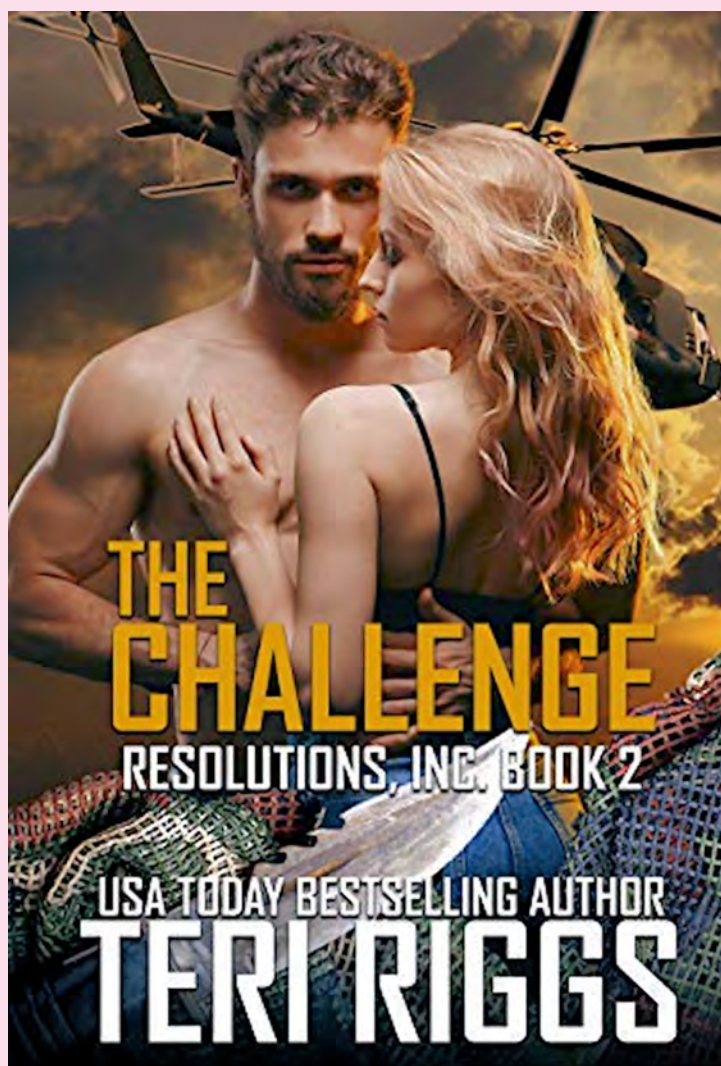
# Sneak Peek

Excerpt of *The Challenge*

The Challenge between Ellie Ryan and Vince Corelli had been tough. It was both mentally and physically exhausting, not to mention overloaded with sexual tension. In the end, Ellie exited victorious as the test pilot of the brand new XH8 helicopter, Vince was offered a high paying private sector job, and they finally allow themselves one night of passion before going their separate ways.

Months later, Ellie's crew has been murdered and the prototype helicopter she was piloting hijacked. All evidence leads to her involvement in a deadly terrorist game. Her only hope of survival is to open herself up and accept help, if it arrives in time.

Vince, a Resolutions operative, is sent to retrieve the XH8 from Colombia and deal with the woman the U.S. military believes to be behind the plot to kill hundreds of thousands of Americans, but will he be able to overcome his trust issues in time to prove Ellie's innocence?



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# Pam Binder

New York Times  
USA Today  
Bestselling Author



## Gingerbread Knight

Together they devise  
a dangerous plan,  
knowing failure  
means they will never  
see each other again.

[PamBinder.com](http://PamBinder.com)



## Christmas Knight

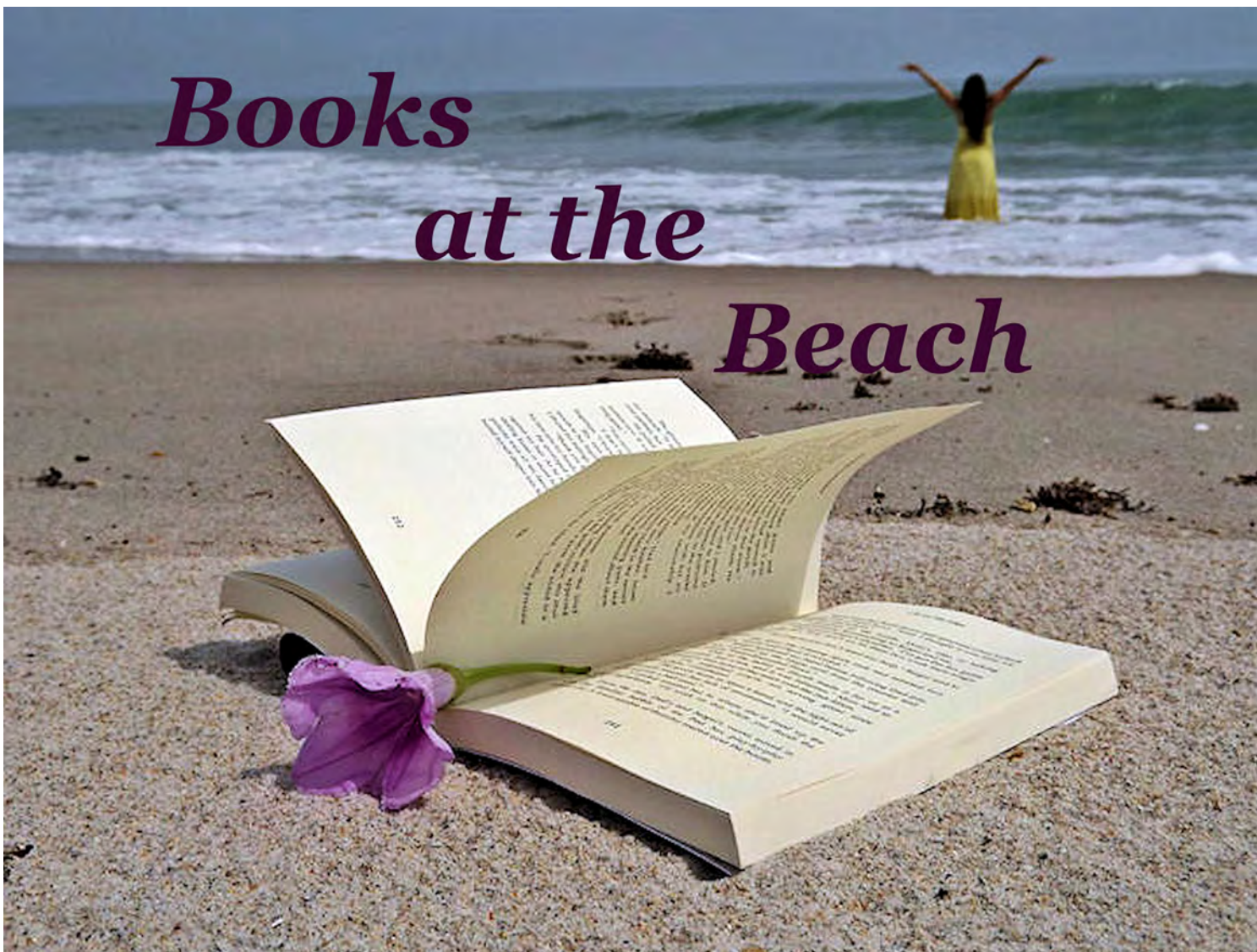
To find her mystery man,  
she must travel through time.

## Christmas Deadline

Will Holly and Noel manage to  
write a happily-ever-after for their  
fictional couple—and themselves  
by their Christmas deadline?





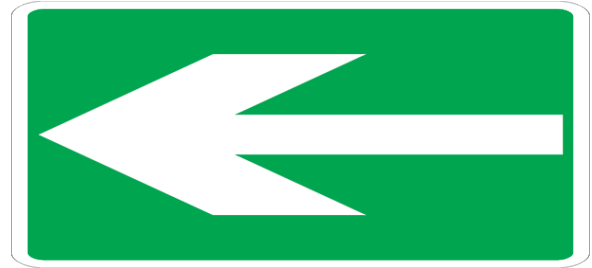


October 21-24, 2021, in Clearwater Beach, Florida, was chock full of busy book lover fun. Hosted by Jennifer Wedmore, Sheri Lyn, and Cassidy O'Connor, the Books at the Beach Convention and Book Signing was attended by over seventy authors who joined a fabulous group of readers.

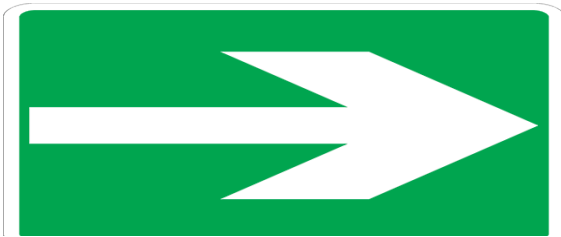


*Hostess, Jennifer Wedmore*





*Hostess, Sheri-Lyn*



*Hostess, Cassidy O'Conner*



Author panels, an ice cream social, delicious meals, and parties marked the beginning of this great conference

Thursday began with Industry Panels for authors.

The rest of the weekend was for authors and readers. Several panels kept everyone excited and ready for the book signing on Saturday. Friday evening kept with the Halloween theme and a Creepy Carnival.

Everyone enjoyed their meals beach side watching the sunset on the beautiful blue Gulf of Mexico.

There was an abundance of raffle baskets sure to please everyone. Proceeds from the baskets went to Suncoast Animal League and #TeamPink4Teri.

Next year's event will be held in September in St. Petersburg, Florida.

[BooksattheBeach.com](http://BooksattheBeach.com)



*Attendee, Linda Bleser*





## Romance and Mystery in one Thrilling Story!

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Someone  
knows  
something.  
Someone  
is lying.



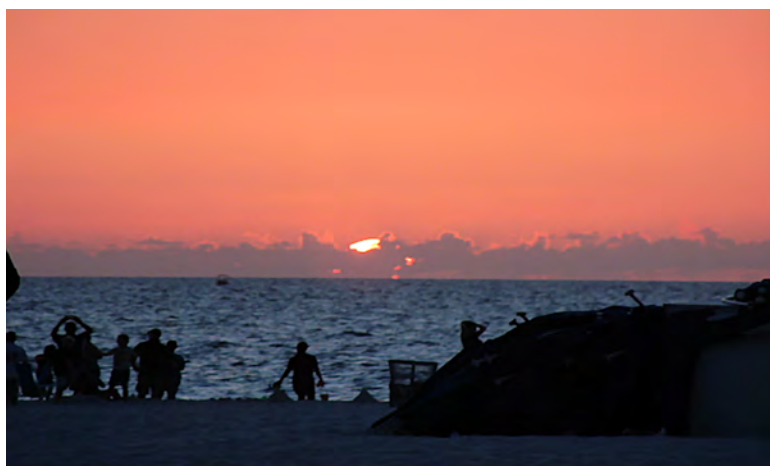
Who killed Sir Benedict Stanbury?

John and Lydia Savidge have another mystery on their hands, and only three days to discover the incredible truth and save an innocent man from the gallows.

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Pam Ackerson and Actor/model, John Antorino





# The heart knows it's never too late to fall in love again.

All proceeds donated to:  
**#TeamPink4Teri**



ASIN B09BW6KCFJ



# The Spotlight is On...

## *Pamela Ackerson*



*With over 70 books published, time traveling adventurer Pamela Ackerson is an award-winning multi-genre author. She was born and raised in Newport, RI, where history is a way of life. She lives on the Space Coast of Florida where everyone is encouraged to reach for the stars! When it's time to run away, she's a hop, skip, and jump to Disney World and fun-filled imagination and fantasy. She writes time travel, westerns, Native American, historical fiction, non-fiction, WW2, inspirational, self-help marketing and advertising, personal and travel journals, and children's preschool/first reader books.*

**AdC: Why have you written so many different genres?**

**P.A.:** I've been published since I was sixteen years old. My first story was science fiction. From there, I wanted to explore different genres and stories.

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

**P.A.:** I like taking real people, real experiences and

twisting them around so readers can relate to the story, even if it is a 'far-fetched' as time travel.

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

**P.A.:** I'm excited about *Skies of Blue*. It started as a back-story of a character I have in a series I am currently writing. It is part of the *Late to Love Anthology Box Set* with twenty-nine other authors. All proceeds go to #TeamPink4Teri.

**AdC: Favorite quote?**

**P.A.:** To multiply your happiness, divide it with others.

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

**P.A.:** I enjoy playing the keyboard, easy-listening type music. When it's not too hot outside, I work in the garden. As a lifetime herbalist, I have many herbs, veggies, and fruits in the gardens.

**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.A.:** My usual response: Well, I've written about serial killers and I'm not one...or am I?

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

**P.A.:** I've been asked this question many times. Inexperienced authors need to understand they are selling a product, and are in business to sell their product. If a book isn't edited properly, it's not a quality product.

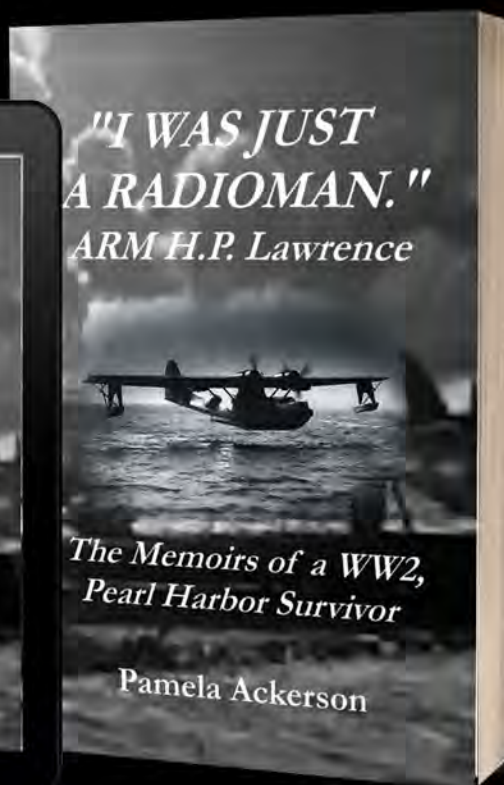
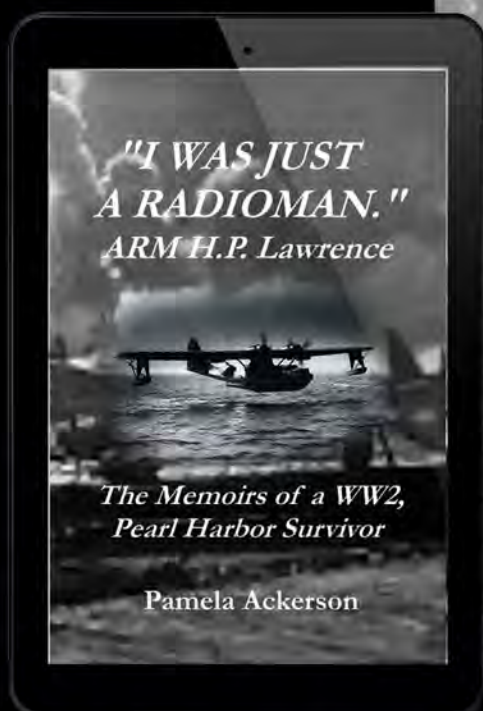
**AdC: Will you be attending any book signings or conventions?**

**P.A.:** I have several events I'll be attending in 2022. I had to bow out of Book Obsessed Babes in April, a worthy event for readers and authors.

In May, I'll be attending Weekend with the Authors in Nashville, TN, and the Capital City Book

*Cont on page 27*





December 7, 1941

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

Their hearts were strong, and their courage endless.

Pearl Harbor survivor, Black Cat radioman, and decorated WW 2 veteran. ARM H. P. Lawrence, tells the true story of the fight against the Japanese in this compilation of his memoirs.

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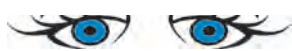
Ebook: B01MRL3T88

Audio: B06ZZDZ6TR

[PamelaAckerson.com](http://PamelaAckerson.com)







# Sneak Peek

“I Was Just a Radioman”

An excerpt by Pamela Ackerson

**December 7<sup>th</sup>** started like any other Sunday in the service for me. Since it was my day off, I slept in, which means I didn't have breakfast. I was planning on going to a later mass at the Chapel and just wanted to enjoy a lazy day, eat a quick lunch afterwards, and shoot the bull with the guys.

I remember being slightly aggravated because there was so much noise, and I was being rudely awakened from a wonderfully sound sleep. Everything seemed muffled at first and then the next thing that I heard was a loud noise. I practically fell out of bed and jumped up to see what was going on. As I ran toward the window, someone said that we were being attacked by the Japs.

You have to understand, all of this took seconds, split seconds that seemed to be in slow motion—watching a train wreck that couldn't be stopped. Every second was engraved in my eyes and brain as each movement was pulling me forward.

I ran to the balcony in my shorts where I had an excellent view of the harbor. The unmistakable sound of multiple airplane bombers coming at us thundered in my ears. Looking up, I could see large formations of aircraft going to other targets. As I turned my head to look over the harbor, the Jap torpedo planes and dive bombers had a nice clean run at the battleships.

With each drop of their torpedoes and bombs, I could feel the percussion of the explosions as they annihilated everything on Battleship row.

Some of the men on the ships were firing back, but it was a losing battle. Without any opposition, the Japs had everything going their way.

It was damned sad.

The clear air over the harbor was encompassed with smoke, and the clean water was turning black with oil. Those of us in the barracks knew we had to get down to the squadron and report in. I don't remember when I grabbed my clothes, or how I managed to dress while I was watching the destruction unfold before my eyes. As I slipped in my shoes, a bright flash blinded me. Looking over toward Battleship Row, flames were licking the oil in the harbor.

Just about that time there was another large explosion and I could see the Arizona was on fire. The black smoke from her went straight up into the sky. The battleships tied up at Ford Island were starting to settle to the bottom.

Our squadron was about a half mile from the barracks. On our way down the road leading to our squadron, we'd ducked for cover a few times. After the Japs dropped their bombs, they started strafing.

Someone would yell and we'd hit the dirt. You could see them coming with their guns firing, but we all reported in without anyone getting hit.

The dry docks across the harbor from our barracks were in flames. I hadn't known it then, but the USS Downes was one of the ships that was hit. (The Downes was in dry dock at the time Pearl was bombed.) Our squadron and all the planes that we had parked two days ago were destroyed. The hangar we shared with VP21 had a couple of large gaping holes. Since we were still under attack, the strafing aircraft kept us moving as quickly as possible. We had to get the burning planes away from the ones that weren't on fire.

All of a sudden it was dead silent. There was an eerie stillness, a numbness after hearing all the explosions. All I could see around the harbor were burning ships. There were a lot of small whale boats and fishing boats picking up men from the oil-blackened water. The smell was something I don't think I'll ever forget—the stench of burning oil and destruction...

Someone from our squadron suggested for me to set up a fifty caliber machine gun in one of the PBY's. He asked if I'd ever shot one and I said no.

I learned real quick how to shoot one.

We moved the PBY over to the opening of the hangar, positioning it so we

could shoot and protect the airplane as much as possible.

We ended up relieving each other, taking turns being on look-out, etc. I was on the ground after we loaded the machine gun.

Just about then the Japs returned. This time they were doing a lot more strafing. When the Jap planes started coming in our direction, we started firing the fifty that we'd just loaded.

How a handful of seconds could feel like eternity, I don't know. But it sure felt like an eternity to me. All I could do was stand near the opening of the hangar, watch, and point to any aircraft coming our way. I'll tell you right now, when they came back the second time around, anyone that had a gun was firing it.

During all this mess, the USS Nevada, which had gotten up steam, was coming up the channel and ran itself into a sandbar in the middle of the harbor on purpose. I think they did it so the ship wouldn't sink in the harbor and foul up the channel.

When the strafing ended, they mentioned the men from the ships would be needing clothing. I left the squadron area and went up to the barracks to open my locker.

For some reason or other, I went through the mess hall. That was a huge mistake. I just couldn't seem to get this out of my head. Every table in the mess hall had a body on it. They were all covered with oil and blood. The medics were working as fast as they could to help and relieve their pain. Seeing this, watching the medics, kicked in the reality of what was happening around me. I swear I started sweating it out right there.

I ran to my locker and brought down everything I could spare. Handing them to the guy who was collecting the items for the sailors, I turned to the squadron leader for more direction. He had everyone moving planes around and cleaning up the hangar. We broke out the thirty and fifty caliber ammo and started linking them in belts so we'd be ready for when they came back. Most of us couldn't believe how old the ammo was (WW1), and we all hoped they'd work.

Our ships were gone.

All the ships that'd been tied up at Ford Island were on the bottom of the harbor or close to it. Men were putting out the fires, and starting the pumps to get the water out.

*Cont. on page 29*



# Magnificent Kat Martin

from Wide-Eyed Newbie to *New York Times* Bestseller

She shares her journey with *Affaire de Coeur*

**K**at Martin is a name well-known to those who read women's fiction. A pioneer in the romance genre, she knows how to diversify, writing between contemporary romance and historical and spreading to romantic suspense and mystery. Husband Larry is also a writer who specializes in Westerns. Not only do they support each other's efforts, but they even collaborated on a book together. Kat lives in Montana with her husband. She graciously took out time from her very busy schedule to give *Affaire de Coeur's* Louise Snead, to an interview.



**Louise:** Hi, Kat,

It is so special to have an interview with you, so much so I wanted to do it myself. We've known each other forever, it seems. You've always been a supporter of *Affaire de Coeur*, and we thank you for that. I've made it a point to follow your career. I'm going to start with a little nostalgia. Before I do, Barbara Keenan sends her love to you and Larry.

How did it start for you? Until

you were published, what career did you have?

**Kat:** I was in Real Estate before I started writing. I really enjoyed it, but it was never a calling. Once I stated writing, I knew it was what I wanted to do as a career. I've never regretted my decision.

**Louise:** How did you prepare yourself

to write? Did you take courses, classes or join writers' groups?

**Kat:** Larry and I both took writing classes once a week from a published author. After six months, we wanted to learn something new' so we switched to a well-known author, Joyce Brandon, in Fresno. I think you knew her.

**Louise:** I do remember her quite well.

**Louise:** Who (what authors) inspired you to write? Or, did you have a story inside that you had to tell? Or both?

**Kat:** Larry had written a novel--he had always wanted to write. I was helping him with the grammar and spelling (no spell-check back then) and I got hooked! Our first two novels were published within six weeks of each other. So we traveled and promoted together for years.

**Louise:** I believe that's where Barb and I met you and Larry--at a conference promoting your books.

**Louise:** How did you make a breakthrough? Did you have an agent, or did you do it on your own? What was it like? How did you celebrate (knowing you and Larry, you did) What was the book? Who was the publisher?

**Kat:** Sherry Robb was my first agent.

**Louise:** Wow! Definitely a name from the past.

**Kat:** She represented us both. I was at lunch with friends when I got





in NYC, but it is very expensive. I still think if you can find a good conference it's great for your career.

**Louise:** You started off as a romance author though, not surprisingly (because you're so talented), you have expanded to other genre. Was/Is the romance formulaic? In what sub-genre are you best?

**Kat:** I write Romantic Thrillers full-time now. They are extremely difficult because of the plotting and the necessary research. I think the complex plots makes each book completely different, though I always have a happy ending!

**Louise:** Your ability to flesh out a character is uncanny. Do you have a set of criteria (i.e. psychological profile) to which you subject your main characters so that you know who they are and what they will/will not do before you even start telling their story?

**Kat:** I use a character sheet that I got from Fern Michaels many many years ago. It helps me get to know the characters but it's still takes me at least a hundred pages to feel as if I connect.

**Louise:** When did you decide, "Hey, I can make a living at this *sic* writing?" Was it a particular sell? Book?

**Kat:** I just fell in love with writing and I had always had a lot of stories in my head. At some point, I decided that I

the call that my first book, *Magnificent Passage*, would be published by Pageant. (after a jillion turn-downs); so it was a tremendous moment. I cried. We were pretty broke by then-switching careers isn't cheap. A few cocktails at lunch was our celebration.

**Louise:** How has getting published changed for aspiring authors like you were then? Many don't see an advantage in going with a publishing house and end up self-publishing. Many writers don't feel like they're 'legitimate' unless their book is published by a house. What are your thoughts?

**Kat:** I think it's easier to get published because of self-publishing. I think it's harder to make a lot of money. For that you pretty much need a traditional publisher. Although I have seen some great marketing done and perhaps those writers were able to make six figure incomes. Personally, I would rather write than spend most of my time marketing. But it's as hard now as it was then to get a traditional publisher.

**Louise:** As I said earlier, I met you and your husband Larry at a conference. In your opinion, has the role/importance of the conference changed?

**Kat:** RWA has lost a lot of its power. It was a terrific group of women and a wonderful way to promote your career.

Probably the self-publishing aspect changed the dynamics in some way. I still attend the Thrillerwriters Conference



*Kat and Larry Martin*



could make a better than average living. It took years and a lot of books before it actually happened. But it was my goal from the start.

**Louise:** Once upon a time, you and Larry wrote a book together. I believe the head-over-heels in-love Larry just wanted to spend more time with you. You, on the other hand, seemed to be more focused on the task at hand. Would you collaborate with him again? Whether the answer is yes or no, it was fun watch.

**Kat:** It was his idea, but then he was sorry he did it! He said he would rather be married than write together and get divorced so that was our only joint effort. It was fun for me. Not so much for him. We both have had fun with the book



Kat's own Montana bear

over the years.

**Louise:** I remember when you moved to Montana to a home you and Larry had built. On one hand I was so happy for you, but I was also afraid we would lose contact. And, though I have not yet visited, I promise I will. In the interim, tell us about your home. What do you love about it? (Please

send me as many pictures as you can.)

**Kat:** It's a true Montana house. A wood house with huge windows that look out into the mountains across the valley. I have a great office that also has a great view. We get lots of wildlife in the yard, mostly wild turkeys and deer. We have bear skin rugs and elk horns on the walls, lots of Western antiques. We are 25 miles from town, which is the bad news. I have to cook every night. Larry cooks a couple of times a week, but there is still clean up. Beautiful in the summer. In winter we go to Prescott, AZ.

**Louise:** . You've drifted away from standard romance though you typically weave an element of romance throughout your storyline. Was that a conscious decision, or did it just happen? Did you not want to be identified as a romance author? How would you classify your preferred style of books?

**Kat:** I still think of myself as a romance writer. I guess I'm not Nora Roberts in that. I would never write a novel that leaves out the romance which, along with the plot, I feel plays an equally important role.

**Louise:** If you had it to do all over again, and the power to alter outcomes, what, if anything, would you change?

**Kat:** Not a darn thing. I've had a blessed life and I am so grateful!







**Louise:** What has been the most exciting aspect of career? What part could you be ecstatic never to encounter again?

**Kat:** Traveling and meeting interesting people has definitely been the best part.

I enjoy the challenge of putting a book together, seeing the way it turns out. The emotional ups and downs were brutal. I think just about every writer goes through very trying times. So stick it out. Some of my great author friends quit. I hung in there and am still writing after all these years. Worst thing? Bad reviews break your heart. Fortunately, I just got a starred review from *Publishers' Weekly* on *The Last Goodnight!!*

**Louise** (whispering): Wait 'til you see the review AdC gave you.

**Louise:** I believe we are never too old to learn, especially from those, like you, who have been down the road many aspire to travel. What words of wisdom/inspiration do you wish someone had given to you that you can now pass onto aspiring authors?

**Kat:** There are a couple of things...write what you love. You have to look at the market, but don't be swayed by what people tell you will sell. Do your own thing. And NEVER give up. If writing is what you want to do, write and just

keep at it until you achieve your goal.

**Louise:** Kat, I really appreciate the opportunity to interview you. I could have asked a dozen more questions. Maybe next time. If you would like, you may list social media ways to contact you as well as apprise us and the dates of locations of your upcoming book-signings/conferences.

I'd like to mention my new book, *THE LAST GOODNIGHT*, which is a cold case murder mystery set on a Colorado Ranch. It's the first book in my new "Blood Ties" series. The Logan brothers are the first three novels. I hope readers will watch for them.

Hugs to Barbara. Great talking to you, Louise. Come and see us in Montana! Love ya, Kat





## Santa Baby,

*If Eartha were here, she would want these*

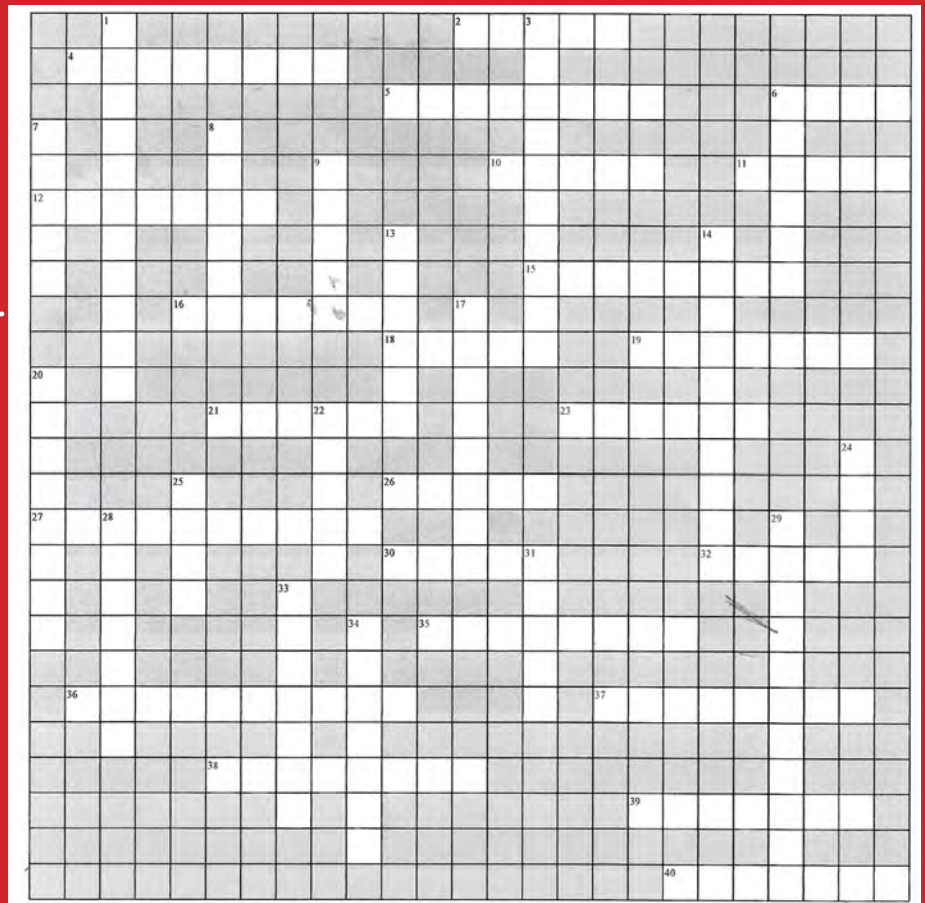
### Across

2. Rich man's boat.
4. Apple or P.C.
5. These are a girl's best friend.
6. Use these cards to purchase gifts.
10. Pea, rain, flight, parka are types of \_\_\_\_\_.
11. The O'Jays' big hit was about this.
12. Chanel, Estee Lauder, Eternity.
15. Decorations must be purchased from \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Seiko, Citizen, Timex, and others.
18. Louboutin, Manolo Blahnik, Air Jordans.
19. It juices up electronics.
21. Birkin, Chanel "Diamond Forever", Mouawad 1001 Nights Diamond.
23. Baby cat.
26. These tickets are for \_\_\_\_\_ i.e. *My Fair Lady, Hamilton, Lion King, and Ain't Too Proud to Beg*.
27. These tickets will let you in to see this venue featuring the Lakers, Warriors, or Brooklyn.
30. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Zinfandel.
32. Travel to Paris, New York, San Francisco.
35. It dangles from the Christmas tree.
36. Device to watch programs and movies on.
37. These tickets let you see the artist live!
38. Metal above gold on the "ring" table.
39. The three little kittens lost theirs.
40. Scented burners i.e. Yankee.

### Down

1. Drop top.
3. See's, Ghirardelli, Lindt, Godiva.
6. They warm the hands.

7. Baby dog.
8. Minolta, Nikon, Canon.
9. "All I want for Christmas is my two front \_\_\_\_\_."
13. Busses.
14. Type of ring that comes with a promise.
17. Montblanc, Goulet, and Cross make these pens.
20. These tickets enable you to see the 49'ers, Saints, Rams or Seahawks.
22. Eartha names this fur, but we want faux fur.
24. Fedora, beret, top, bowler.
25. \_\_\_\_\_ phones: Apple or Android.
28. Ugly garment of the holiday.
29. These houses are edible.
31. Worn around the neck
33. Waterford and Swarovski.
34. Chocolate chip, macaroons, Oreos.







## Contemporary Romance Reviews

### **Courting Mr. Cutthroat**

*Deborah Camp*

**Self-published**

E-book

B09GGXR1T2

★★★★★



Cutter Forsyth came from a small town, from a wealthy family, a family infamous for its baggage. Within memory of the past generation, many weren't ready to forgive transgressions.

While the Forsyth business was no longer the bully, there hasn't been enough time to heal all the angst. Cutter Forsyth, overly rambunctious in high school, got into fights and acted out, and was detained by the police who found a little knife on him. The police nicknamed him Cutthroat Cutter as a joke, but the name stuck, growing his bad boy reputation.

In high school Gemma Summerhill, a Cherokee princess, had a crush on Cutter. When his ADHD had been diagnosed, meds took the edge off his troubles. Years later, Cutter returned to town as a successful artist and commission to do a large Native American sculpture. Angst from the past stops the placing of the sculpture on an ideal property. The owner refused to sell only because Cutter was involved.

Much of the undeserved angst subsided, but the few holdouts made for an uncomfortable situation as Gemma and Cutter became familiar with each other again. The two wrestled against their own families misconceptions as the heat of

passion grew between them.

*Courting Mr. Cutthroat* takes time to build, but it carries well and there never seemed to be a dull moment. It certainly does get quite hot as they learn about each other and search for the acceptance they deserved.

*Lauren Calder*

### **Dinner on Primrose Hill**

*Jodi Thomas*

**Zebra Books**

E-book

978-1420151367

★★★★★



Jodi Thomas returns with book three in the "Honey Creek" series with six characters whose lives interconnect starting on a seemingly uneventful Spring Break.

College chemistry professor Benjamin Monroe has settled into his 40's, content with his predictable life when his colleague Virginia Clark enlists him in her "Chemistry of Mating" research, seriously tempting him to shake up his routine.

Former Army Ranger Ketch Kincaid is a month from graduating college and ready to settle down, only to be dumped by his fiancée. After getting drunk, he's saved by shy Tuesday Raine, whose TLC soothes his broken heart while his friendship changes her insular life.

Librarian Amelia Remington is a lonely woman fixat-



## Contemporaries

ed on her daily routine when she is literally run over by town bad boy Hank Norton. Nursing her back to health leads to this wanderer growing roots, from his heart to hers. Love is blooming in this small town Texas.

*Dinner on Primrose Hill* is a cozy, thoroughly enjoyable novel with characters that become family and friends. Jodi Thomas' prose is highly engaging, leaving no reader's emotions untouched. The themes of family, friendship, love and loss resonate off the page, translated from words into feelings. Each couple spotlights a unique and distinct love story. Thomas demonstrates her knack for writing affective love stories with plenty of romantic tension and chemistry, that are also wholesome. When this book is over, readers will feel like they just visited Honey Creek, Texas.

*Danielle Hill*

### How to Marry Keanu Reeves in 90 Days

*K.M. Jackson*

**Forever**

Trade Paperback  
9781538703502

★★★★

Two best friends take a road trip to find Lu's soul-mate, actor Keanu Reeves, and keep him from getting married in *How to Marry Keanu Reeves in 90 Days*. The book, written in first person from Bethany's and True's perspectives, focuses on the longterm crush and friends-to-lovers scenario playing out between Bethany and her best friend True. The question is whether they ever will get out of their own way and escape the friend's zone to become so much more. Some crazy and cool happenstances occur on their road trip, and they experience unexpected encounters. Could destiny be trying to give them a push in the right direction to open their eyes to all they're missing out on in each other?

Artist Bethany Lu Carlisle is a total Keanu fangirl. Artistic, quirky, privileged, competitive, and lovable, she's a bit of a hot mess, but she's authentic and owns her messiness... or at least tries. Truman Erickson, AKA True, is an economics professor and mathematics genius. Handsome, intelligent, loyal, thoughtful, with the patience of a saint, he will do anything for Lu... even sacrifice his own happiness/future for her. He always puts her first.

Jackson's character development, vivid description, and narrative style bring her charming novel to life, drawing readers into the book straight away, keeping them invested. I love the relationships between Lu, True, and Dawn, Bethany's 30 year fangirling partner-in-crime and manager, who rounds out this trio. Their interactions, teasing, and conversations feel so natural and comfortable. They sound like ones I've had with my friends about fannish things. Like their sexy and humorous teasing and banter, the chemistry between True and Bethany sizzles.

*How to Marry Keanu Reeves in 90 Days* is a sweet,

### The Last Goodnight

*Kat Martin*

**Kensington Publishing**

Trade Paperback

978-1496736796

★★★★



Kade Logan watched the sheriff and crew recover his dead wife's car from the river. She'd been dead for eight years and, at the beginning, Kade, along with everybody else in the small ranching community of Coffee Springs, Colorado, had figured she'd run off with one of her many men friends. Heather had been beautiful and a flirt, but Kade had looked past her faults, until he caught her cheating—for the second time—and decided to file for divorce. But, as he watched her pack her bags and drive off in her Subaru, Kade had no idea he would never see her again. Two years later, her body was found in a shallow grave, beaten, and strangled, but her car was never found, until now, and her killer was still at large. Filled with guilt for thinking she had started a new life with one of her rich boyfriends from Vail, Kade vowed to find her killer. But he had a large ranch to run, so decided the best way to find her killer was to hire a private investigator. His friend, Connor Delaney, owned Nighthawk Security in Denver, and Kade trusted him to provide him with a competent PI that would help him discover his wife's killer. That's all he wanted...he thought.

Eleanor Bowman was one of four private investigators who worked for Nighthawk and one of the two women, the other being Connor's sister. Eleanor's specialty was undercover work, but when the big, beautiful cowboy walked into the office, he thought she was the secretary. After Ellie was introduced to him as his new PI, Kade wasn't sure if he wanted a woman investigator. He didn't trust beautiful women and wasn't sure if she could handle the job. Ellie was hired and brought to the Diamond Bar ranch under the guise of the substitute cook while his regular cook was on vacation. But having Kade around was going to make concentrating on her job a little harder.

*The Last Goodnight* is an edge-of-your seat romantic thriller that pairs two unlikely people together to try and solve a cold case murder mystery and end up discovering they are meant for each other. Ellie uncovers clues that had been overlooked eight years ago when Heather first went missing and follows the trail to a surprising end with Kade's help. Ms. Martin has done an excellent job with her colorful characterizations, descriptive background, and storyline, making Kade and Ellie easy to root for and the clever unraveling of the mystery easy to follow. Throw the unlikely second romance into the mix and you have a story that this reviewer couldn't put down!

An excellent beginning to Ms. Martin's new series!

*Lani Roberts*



## Contemporaries

hilarious, sexy, and entertaining romcom that takes readers on a wild and emotional ride. This unique and imaginative novel explores themes of friendship, love, loss, fear, healing, finding inspiration, and how the connections between friends shape who we are, making us stronger.

*Lacy Hill*

### The Love Con

*Seressia Glass*

**Jove Books**

E-book

978-0593199053

★★★★ 1/2

Best friends Kenya Davenport and Cameron Lassiter have cheered each other through life and supported each other through challenges. Now Kenya is a contestant in a life-changing reality television show cosplay competition. When she becomes a finalist, Kenya finds out she has to compete with her significant other, and the problem is she doesn't have one. But she has a Cam and claims him as her partner-in-love. Cam is thrilled, because he's wanted to make their relationship real for a long time. Can their friendship weather the competition and make the transition to love, and is Kenya willing to take the risk?

*The Love Con* is a refreshing romance that will appeal to fans of friends to lovers romance. References to geeky fandom are really fun, giving so much popular cultural relevance. Fast-paced, humorous dialogue, dramatic tension, and well-written description draws the reader into the story, along with standout leads. Kenya and Cam are beautifully developed and thoroughly likeable. Kenya's personality as a black cosplayer is a wonderful example of representation in fiction, shouting out to geeky readers of color. Their racial differences are handled organically, as well as Kenya being plus sized. It's no doubt that Cam loves all of her very much. Kenya's struggles with gaining her straight-laced parents acceptance of her dreams strikes a poignant note. Kenya and Cam's relationship is so effortless and authentic, their true feelings for really obvious, although it takes Kenya a long time to acknowledge them because of inner fears and inadequacies. Kenya and Cam have excellent tension, although the love scenes lacked that desirable steam. Readers will root for Kenya and Cam's happy ever after in love and career aspirations. *The Love Con* is strongly recommended.

*Danielle Hill*

### Silent Protector (Verona Bay #3)

*Katie Reus*

**KR Press, LLC**

B097KFCL39

★★★★

*Silent Protector* by Katie Reus explores the chemistry simmering between MacCollins and Adeline Rodriguez.

Adeline made a fresh start, a new life Verona Bay. A co-owner of a pet grooming business, she's not the woman who fled her life, burying secrets of her violent past. While she's made close friends, Adeline's secrets and past, which she shares with no one, still keep her from having a relationship.

After Adeline's response to him when he asked her out indicated she was avoiding him, Mac reconciled himself to not having a chance with her. Then, they were stuck alone together in a remote cabin during a storm.

Just when Adeline decides to take a chance and go out with Mac, who's wanted her since their first meeting, he ghosts her. When she finally confronts him, she catches the attention of a dangerous, vengeful killer from his past. Mac knows what he wants, and he's made no secret of his desire for Adeline. But the last thing Mac wants is for her to be hurt because of him. He wants her but needs her safe even more. Adeline wants him just as much, even still burdened by her past, fearful of being hurt, things not working out, or losing Mac. After spending time alone with him at the cabin, however, she knows he's worth the risk.

The moments focusing on Adeline and Mac spending time together and growing closer at the cabin are emotional, sweet, sexy, and filled with sparks. Unfortunately, the development of their romantic relationship is a little disappointing because there isn't enough time spent on it. More scenes with them getting to know each other better and transitioning from friends to lovers would have improved the novel's romance. *Silent Protector* would be a more effective and entertaining romantic suspense novel with less time focused on the villain's POV, mental state, and sex life, especially-- a huge mood killer.

*Lacy Hill*





## Historical Romance Reviews

### Girls Before Earls

Anna Bennett

St. Martin's Paperbacks

E-book

978-1250793911

★★★★★



Hazel Lively has overcome her orphaned childhood, establishing Bellehaven Academy for Young Girls. When Gabriel Beckett, Earl of Bladenton, arrives at her school with his recalcitrant niece Kitty in tow, he's obviously trouble and so is his niece. While she has forsaken emotions for intellect, Hazel has a soft heart for young girls in need of a home. Despite that, she's not about to let the Earl abandon his niece so he can go about his rakish business. Blade makes a deal with the intriguing, yet buttoned up Miss Lively that he'll support the school if she takes Kitty on as a pupil. Hazel agrees, as long as he comes to see his niece fortnightly. While forging a relationship between estranged uncle and niece, can the schoolmistress and the Earl teach each other lessons in love?

*Girls Before Earls* is an enchanting Regency historical romance. Hazel and Blade have fantastic chemistry. Along with their simmering attraction, there's

genuine emotional connection between the pair. Each has loss in their pasts and a wariness to open their hearts, and as the book progresses, they grow to respect, like, and fall for each other, realizing they can risk trusting their hearts to each other. Hazel is intelligent, hardworking, and refreshingly passionate beneath her intellectual, controlled mien. Blade is sexy, charming, funny, and genuinely kind. While his painful past has made him guarded, he has a very generous heart. They are clearly made to be together. The young girls' antics are a wonderful addition to the central love story. *Girls Before Earls* is a thoroughly enjoyable read.

Danielle Hill

### Not Just Any Earl

Anne Bradley

Oliver-Heber Books

E-book

978-1648391453

★★★★ 1/2

Emmaline Templeton's family of five sisters was devastated by scandal when their mother ran off with her lover. A wager with a family friend provides a last bid to save their family from ruin, leading to a trip to London. At her friend's

# Historicals

houseparty, Emmaline shares a passionate kiss with the most eligible bachelor of the season, Johnathan Parrish, the Earl of Marlow in the library. Johnathan knows the only woman for him is the mystery lady from the library, yet he's equally drawn to Emmaline, the shy botanist with a passion for roses and their scents. Emmaline's feelings for the Earl of Marlow don't correlate with her scientific, logical principles. Will they recognize how special the love blooming between them is?

It's always a pleasure when a romance book is truly romantic. Anna Bradley has written a book that packs a lot

of joy and sigh-worthy moments in a compact package. The bond between Emmaline and Johnathan feels really special from the moment they meet. Emmaline is caring and sweet, determined to look out for her family, and endearingly bookish. Her tendency to compare human relations to cultivating roses is amusing. Johnathan is refreshingly not a rake. His ability to see Emmaline's natural beauty and how he really cares for her and what interests her makes him a wonderful hero. The blossoming secondary romance between Emmaline's sister and Johnathan's grumpy friend is wonderful bonus to the satisfying love story between this endearing pair.

*Danielle Hill*

## Quintet: Five Regency Short Stories

*Beth Andrews*

**Belgrave House**

E-book

B09HP6M37P

★★★★★



### Scoundrel of Her Own (Sinful Wallflowers #3)

*Stacy Reid*

**Entangled Publishing LLC**

E-book

978-16406376

★★★★★



*"I felt I have been waiting all my life for this moment to love you."*

For 15 years, Devlin Byrne has worked his way up from nothing to be worthy of the girl who stole his heart so many years ago when he was just a boy of 12. Now a powerfully wealthy man, Devlin has garnered a reputation of being both faithful to those he cares for as well as ruthless to those who would cause them harm. Regardless of his wealth and power, he is still not considered worthy of being part of the *ton*. Devlin has fought too hard to achieve his heart's desire, and he will continue to plot and wait for as long as it takes to claim his beloved Fifi.

Lady Ophelia Durby is the only child of a powerful marquess. Her doting parents have always allowed her to choose her own path in life and encouraged her to only marry for love. So long as she brings no scandal to the family name. But Ophelia's heart was stolen long ago by a boy with a heart of gold who saved her from certain death who made her feel cherished, protected and loved just as she was. A boy who begged his Fifi to wait for him.

Stacy Reid has once again hit it out of the park in her third installment to her *Sinful Wallflowers* series! This story is full of all the heartwarming, sinfully romantic feelings I've grown to expect and enjoy from her romances! To the moon and back I loved Devlin and Fifi's story and highly recommend! Wish I could give more than five stars!

*Sharing what I love,*

*Veronica*

The first story is of a bachelor in His Majesty's Navy who is offered an assignment to find an informant at an estate that is holding holiday festivities. He must discover the informant's identity while keeping his cover. Knowing the activities of Napoleon are essential, Mark has no idea it will lead to happiness.

The second story: A young man traveling home after dark in his carriage from an errand perceives a commotion at an abandoned estate. Stopping to investigate, he discovers an heiress locked in a secret room. Intrigue and love make unexpected turns in this tale of betrayal.

Three more stories follow. Intrigue and sleuthing are regular themes with a touch of romance. The situations are new and different for all the stories and the outcomes not so predictable.

Short stories are an art unto themselves, as the author must build a world and characters within a limited frame. The author is quite adept at these qualities. With a flair of the era, along with intriguing characters, the reader is pulled into the stories. A pure delight for readers who love Regency romances.

*Lauren Calders*



# Paranormal Romance Reviews



## **Bound by Eden (Eden Series–Tolba Book #2)**

*Lexi Post*

**Self Pub**

E-book

978-1949007206

★★★★

Welcome to Eden!

Rowena wakes up with the monster of all hangovers. She barely remembers what happened last night beyond hooking up with a couple of hot Edenists and sharing a bottle of tequila. What was she thinking?! She had come to this planet in hopes of becoming a beloved, and with her sabbatical coming to an end, her time is running out. But what if she accidentally bonded with these strangers? What will this mean for her future? Especially if she can't even remember their names.

Takoda's heart is still broken from the loss of the one loved. How she could have bonded with someone else, he cannot understand...and is unwilling to let go. A night with a

beautiful woman and her powerful drink seemed like a good idea at the time, but now he's awakened with a fear that he has bonded with this exquisite stranger, and he must do everything he can to prove their bond was never formed. But there is a danger surrounding his potential mate, and Takoda must make a choice to let go of the past in order to save his future.

Awan is beyond excited that he and Takoda will be able to move on from their heartbreak now that they have found Rowena. However, his excitement over the possible bonding isn't contagious in that Rowena and Takoda are "gun shy" in committing to the idea. It will take all of Awan's faith to prove to his lovers they are simply meant to be.

If you are new to this series, here is a quick re-cap. Eden is a planet of very hawt, very naked men in search of their beloved...the one who will make them whole. With women being outnumbered greatly on this planet, the men have begun searching Earth for their soul mate. So, if reading more the merrier romances is your thing, then you will fall in love with this series!

*Affaire de Coeur*

# Paranormals

Lexi Post has written a dream world for those of us who enjoy ménage stories. After each installment, I am left eagerly awaiting my return to Eden. Highly recommend!

*Sharing what I love,  
Veronica*

## **Knight Time**

*Brynn Paulin*

**Supernova Indie Publishing  
Services LLC**

E-Book

978-1-62344-342-9

★★★★★



*"I love you. You are my very heart"*

For years Emma has dreamed of her knight, but each dream ends the same—after a kiss, she is swept away from his embrace only to wake alone in her bed. Out of habit, Emma twists her grandmother's ring on her finger. Running her fingers against it, she remembers that her grandmother once told her the ring would bring her what she needed the most. What she desired in the deepest part of her heart. What Emma is wanting the most is to love and be loved, to no longer be alone, to have a family. While thinking of her knight, Emma slips her grandmother's ring on her finger and suddenly finds herself dropped in a strange location with people screaming "witch" at her. But like in her dream, the knight who always held and made her feel safe and loved is there and prepared to defend her. Emma is both thrilled and terrified at finding herself back in time with her beloved knight, but how will she survive the loss, if it all disappears with a kiss?

Oh, how I luvs time travel romances, and Brynn Paulin did not disappoint this reader with her smexxy romantic tale of a knight and his lady sharing a dream and falling in love. Did not want this story to end! Loved and highly recommend!

*Sharing what I love,  
Veronica*

## **Loving Her Highland Thief (Time to Love a Highlander #1)**

*Maeve Greyson*

**Dragonblade Publishing**

Kindle Edition

B09CZYCCTG

★★★★

*"I will love ye till time is no more."*

Sheep farmer Kenzie has had it with her rebellious little ram. Chasing him through a cave is not how she envisioned spending her day. But as Kenzie passes through the opening, she starts to feel a little woozy. Thinking there must be a natural gas leak or something, Kenzie works her way out of the cave, and with the help of her faithful dog, Brodie, gets her ram outside.

What greets Kenzie is not the familiar field of her farm, but rather what appears to be a re-enactment of a Medieval battle, and one very determined to keep her safe highlander. Kenzie quickly finds herself being kidnapped by what she assumes are actors, but as the days pass in their company, she starts believing the unbelievable—she has somehow been transported back in time and is falling in love with her highland thief.

Time travel romances are some of my favs, and Maeve Greyson has woven a fun sweet romance full of snarky banter between Kenzie and her highlander, Mathias. Looking forward to future installments to the series!

*Sharing what I love,  
Veronica*

## **Multiple Blessings**

*Candace Colt*

**CPC Publishing**

Trade Paperback

979-8524121127

★★★★ 1/2

Cassie Blessing is planning on boosting her career by entering a photojournalist competition. Returning home from college, she decided to take advantage of the uniqueness of Cat's Paw Cove. When she meets Thomas Hudson, she wasn't sure what to think. Was he real? Was he a ghost from the Winter Solstice legend near the crash site of a WW2 fighter jet?

The two go on a journey of discovery to find answers they believed had been lost forever.

Book three of the "Magic Potter" series is a pleasure to read. Buy two! You'll want to keep an original for yourself. It will leave you smiling, from beginning to end.

*Lauren Calder*





## The Chalet

Catherine Cooper

**Harper Collins**

E-Book

978-0008477943

☆☆☆ 1/2

*"Vengeance is a monster of appetite, forever bloodthirsty and never filled."*—Richelle E. Goodrich

In the winter of 1998, two brothers take a ski holiday in the French Alps. But during that trip, only one returns.

Fast forward to another winter, this one 20 years later at the same ski resort. This time the group on holiday will be judged by their past, and one will be found guilty.

*The Chalet* is an enjoyable locked room mystery full of a cast of characters so unlikeable readers will be cheering for the villain of this tale to take their revenge! Told from dual story lines and multiple points of view, *The Chalet* falls victim to the author's twists and turns so many times the reader will be dizzy trying to keep up. If you are a lover of these types of mysteries, you will most likely guess the killer before the end.

Overall, a quick entertaining read I'd recommend to fans of this genre.

*Sharing what I love,*  
Veronica

## Hide

Nell Pattison

**Avon Books**

E-Book

978-0084680335

☆☆☆☆

*"Do we ever really know other people? Sometimes the people we think are completely harmless are the ones who end up ruining lives."*

Seven nature enthusiasts enter a nature preserve on Boxing Day. After one of their group is found murdered in one of the hides, they quickly start turning on one another. Who could have killed Alec...and why? As their secrets become uncovered, the mystery unfolds. One of the group is thirsty for vengeance, and there is nowhere to hide.

Wow! Personally, I found this story a wee bit frightening in that one of the characters is deaf and finds herself running for her life—in the dark—in the forest—alone. Can you even imagine how absolutely terrifying it would be with no sense of where you are and not being able to hear anything around you? Is the person chasing you friend or foe? \*Shiver\* Highly recommend this page-turner of a thriller!

*Sharing what I love,*  
Veronica

# Mysteries

## The Mother Next Door

Tara Laskowski

Harlequin

E-Book

978-1525804700

★★★★

*“By the time our Halloween block party is over tonight, one of us will be dead”*

Theresa's mother raised her to fight for what she deserved in life, and she deserves it all. So when she sees an opportunity to move into the coveted Ivy Woods Drive cul-de-sac, Theresa calls in a favor to obtain the perfect job for her husband and buy the perfect house. Theresa is offered to become a part of the clique of moms known as “The Ivy Five,” and she knows she'd be a fool to turn it down, especially when she's included in their famous Halloween block party. Finally, she will have the perfect life of which she's always dreamed. But this isn't a Norman Rockwell painting there is someone watching the Ivies...someone who has kept a secret ready to release at the most opportune time. Someone will make them pay for the sins of their past.

Ever wonder what happened to the Mean Girls when they grew up and became moms? Look no further, and

snatch up a copy of *The Mother Next Door*! What a fun read with a *Pretty Little Liars* all grown up feel! Can you keep a secret? Enjoyed and would recommend!

*Sharing what I love,*

Veronica

## The Weekend Escape

Rakie Bennett

Harper Collins UK, One More Chapter

E-book

978-0008486952

★★★★

*“It is easier to forgive an enemy than to forgive a friend”*—William Blake

It's been 10 years since that fateful day on the beach when seven friends became six...when one of their own died. Time passed and friendships waned until the self-proclaimed leader of the group reaches out and rallies them to spend a weekend together on a remote island where they can reconnect and once again have an adventurous retreat. They say confession is good for the soul, but what these six friends discover is that it can also prove to be deadly.

Full of drama and twists, *The Weekend Escape* is a wickedly entertaining mystery! Would recommend and look forward to reading more from this author!

*Sharing what I love,*

Veronica

## Just a Radioman cont.

After taking inventory of what happened on Ford Island, it told us the Japs had knocked out all our battleships, and two of them went belly up.

Over in the dry dock area, billowing smoke was visible from the ships that were hit. The USS Arizona was still smoking, its forward mast was starting to bend because of the intense heat.

It was a complete loss.

The fishing and whale boats from the island residents were still cruising the harbor, trying to save whoever was left, picking up bodies, and taking pictures.

All three PBY squadrons—VP22, 23, and 24—lost most of their planes. My squadron, the VP22, didn't have any planes that were able to fly. All three squadrons were crippled. The Japs had hit outside of the hanger we shared with VP 21, and also disabled all of our planes on the ramp.

We had nothing left and would have to wait for replacements from the States, for planes and ships to be built before we could defend ourselves. Time was a factor we couldn't control.

The day went by pretty fast. They kept us busy doing a little of this and that. When evening rolled around, we ate some dry sandwiches. So much had happened that it wasn't until then I realized I hadn't eaten all day. Dry as they were, those sandwiches tasted good.

They mentioned there was a water truck on the strip; so Red (Bob Hagensen) and I went looking. As we were out on the strip with a blink of an eye, the sky lit up with gunfire. There was a spattering of gunfire everywhere, all

day, and I think I was finally scared. I don't think I had time to be scared earlier that morning. There was no time to think, just time to do.

Red and I couldn't find the water tank. We had to beat it back to the squadron area once the gunfire had started again.

We found out later a few of our own planes were trying to land at Ford.

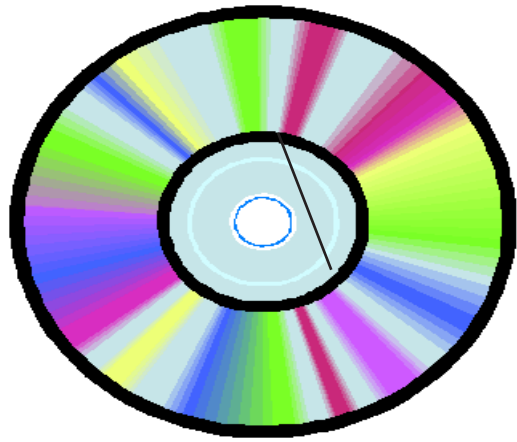
It was pretty late by this time and the word came down that we might as well turn in for the night.

One of approximately thirty non-Native American code talkers, *I Was Just a Radioman* is about the true life WW2 experiences, memoirs, of Chief ARM Henry P. Lawrence—a Pearl Harbor survivor, Black Cat, and decorated war veteran.

Chief ARM Henry P. Lawrence was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, three Air Medals, the Navy Unit Citation, the Philippine Liberation Medal, and Air Crew wings with three stars. He was authorized a total of seven stars on his Asian Pacific Ribbon. He returned home in 1945 as Chief ARM. He was also recommended for the Silver Star, but that was not awarded.

After the war, Henry P. Lawrence spent another eighteen years in the Navy Reserves, leaving the service as a Master Chief Petty Officer.





# AUDIO BOOK REVIEWS

## **A Good Day for Chardonnay**

*Darynda Jones*

*Narrated by Lorelei King*

**Macmillan Audio**

Audiobook

978-1250788153978

★★★★★

*A Good Day for Chardonnay*, wonderfully narrated by Lorelei King, is book 2 in Darynda Jones' hilarious and suspenseful "Sunshine Vicram" series.

Being sheriff of a small town in New Mexico is anything but as carefree as Sunshine Vicram would like. Still settling in as sheriff, she must deal with matchmaking parents, her teenage daughter's search for a serial killer, and investigating a bar fight involving her childhood crush. All of that is on top of solving the mystery behind her abduction as a teen. Although things might suggest local distiller and bad boy Levi Ravinder is responsible for her abduction, Sunshine doesn't believe he's behind it. She is, however, starting to suspect he might hold the key to solving the mystery.

Haunted by the mystery of an abduction she's driven to solve even though she cannot remember it, Sunshine is snarky, but also fairly low key, considering. She's surrounded by a delightful and memorable cast of characters who keep her on her toes, some of whom cannot stay out of trouble. Sunshine's daughter and her childhood crush Levi.

The strong, silent, mysterious, and dangerous type with killer abs, Levi is always there whenever Sunshine, or her daughter needs him. He's also the man Sunshine has crushed on forever, and her feelings just keep growing stron-

ger.

Driven by a captivating narrative, the novel features an engaging combination of small town charm and intriguing mysteries. Jones' descriptions, plotting, and development of the characters and their interactions are fantastic. *A Good Day for Chardonnay's* characters are diverse, complex, engaging, and developed with easy nuance by Jones as they evolve throughout the story. Narrator King's husky narration perfectly captures the humor, snark, and charm of Jones' storytelling. Each character's voice is distinct, as King uses her diverse vocal range to effortlessly shift between characters, i.e., from Levi's deep, sexy voice to Sunshine's daughter's youthful, sweet tone and change cadence and pitch to reflect each character's emotion, mood, accent, etc., from scene to scene. Her superb narration makes the novel a must listen.

With an entertaining blend of surprises, humor, quirky characters, suspense, and the passion of first love of the teen and adult variety. *A Good Day for Chardonnay* is a thrilling and romantic mystery/suspense listen that will leave readers excited for more from Jones.

*Lacy Hill*

# Audio Book Reviews

## **The Introvert's Guide to Online Dating (The Introvert's Guide #1)**

Chicklit

*Emma Hart*

*Performed by Savannah Peachwood and Tim Paige*

**Dreamscape Media, LLC**

B08WR72J9Y

☆☆☆

Savannah Peachwood and Tim Paige narrate *The Introvert's Guide to Online Dating*, Emma Hart's "The Introvert's Guide Series Book #1." The performance is in first person, with a dual POV, an enemies-to-lovers romcom.

Because all of Tori Sussex's friends' circle are off the market, it's time for her to get serious about finding a husband. Tori's plans to try Internet dating, but it's complicated by the no-strings hookups she's been secretly engaging in with Colton Lane, her best friend's brother, for the last six months after a drunken one-night stand. Tori is afraid of getting caught by their friends and knows she can't move forward with her life until after ending things with Colton, but it's easier said than done because Tori's unexpectedly come to love being with him. She's addicted to their booty calls and might also have fallen for him.

Among her many negative traits, Tori is sarcastic, moody, and often cruel to Colton. The more insecure she felt, the more mean-spirited and hurtful she became. This behavior makes it hard sometimes to sympathize with or like her or imagine possibilities for a romance between her and Colton.

While written primarily in Tori's POV, Colton's POV offers balance, softening the harsh effect of Tori's because the reader can see he doesn't take her abrasiveness and mean-spirited behavior to heart. Colton lets it roll off him, snarking back at her but in a lighter, more conspiratorial manner. While his POV offers hope for a potential relationship between them, Colton is not blameless. He's oblivious, and by allowing Tori to set the terms and waiting for her to take all the risks, he makes it seem like she has all the power. But he decided the rules about their "thing". Hart deftly captures the closeness and deep friendship among their friend's circle. She develops them naturally within the story's progression, making them relatable, flawed characters readers ultimately root for without always agreeing with their choices or liking their personalities. Hart develops the hero and heroine to evolve so that as their relationship changes and they mature, their personality traits and core of who they are don't change—i.e., they still bicker and pick at each other, however, it's sweeter and less hurtful.

Peachwood's and Paige's splendid narration resonates with emotion, enthusiasm, and humor, drawing the listener

into the lives, world, and stories of Hart's characters instantly. They nicely capture each character, according to their personality quirks, speech patterns that distinguish them. In the book's second half, the narrators truly shine, capturing the emotional connection between the couple and the intensity of emotions that come with transitioning from enemies to lovers.

*The Introvert's Guide to Online Dating* is a flirty, humorous, and slightly angsty dual POV, enemies-to-lovers romcom, which shines when focusing on the relationships between this circle of friends.

*Lacy Hill*

## **The Introvert's Guide to Speed Dating**

*Emma Hart*

*Narrated by Avery Reid and Will Watt*

**Dreamscape Media**

Audiobook

B097F6S7MK

☆☆☆☆

I loved every second of *The Introvert's Guide to Speed Dating*, book two in Emma Hart's "The Introvert's Guide" series. This audiobook is narrated in first-person by Avery Reid and Will Watt. It's an adorably sweet, humorous, and sexy slowburn friends-to-lovers romance that also explores the difficulty of being a modern, single, working mom.

Deciding it's time for London to get back out there and start dating again, London Stuarts' cousins and best friends take matters into their own hands by signing her up for speed dating. Lucky for her, one of her dates is her son's British soccer coach Oliver Hayes, on whom she may have a bit of a crush. Told primarily from London's POV, each chapter begins with an "Introverts Rule."

A journalist, London has a lot going on. She works full-time and raises her young son on her own. She always has a smile for everyone. Sexy Brit Oliver is funny, handsome, but genuinely loves kids, particularly London's, making him irresistible to her. Her feelings for him only grow stronger as they spend more time together when Oliver offers to help her son Leo improve his game. Still, she's not ready to accept he's as good as he appears because of emotional scars from her relationship with Leo's father. Furthermore, Oliver may only be in the country for a brief time before returning to Britain, so dating or getting involved with him is not a good idea for her son or her heart.

Hart's development of the characters and their relationships, both primary and secondary, is fantastic. The repartee between Oliver and Leo is so adorable they will make readers smile. London and Oliver's romance develops slowly from friendship to romance in a sexy and sweet slow burn that is romantic and fun to experience. Hart deftly shows the evolution of the characters through her development of London's and Oliver's friendship and romance.

Narrators Reid and Watt excellently voice the charac-



## The Rules of Arrangement

Anisha Bhatia

Narrated by Shazia Nicholls

Dreamscape Media, LLC

Audiobook

B091V9PTYX

★★★★★



*The Rules of Arrangement*, written by Anisha Bhatia and narrated by Shazia Nicholls, focuses on Zoya Sahni. Zoya is a woman who loves her job, has an excellent education, and a loving, if crazy, family. She struggles with being the perfect Indian girl, and her family's expectations. Unmarried at 26, she is overweight, dark-skinned, knows her own mind, and doesn't hesitate to say what she thinks—the complete opposite of the fair-skinned, and slim prized Indian woman. To her horror, her matchmaking aunties decide it's past time they arranged her marriage. Their timing couldn't possibly be worse because she earns a promotion and the chance to relocate to New York City for her dream job. Does an Indian woman living in Mumbai have the courage to reach for her dream, even if it means flaunting her family and societal expectations she's struggled with her whole life?

Zoya describes the interactions between her family and community members, centering around women and their value, which primarily depends upon their marital prospects/status and devotion to home and family. Bhatia's deftly developed characters are complex, relatable, and for the most part, likable. Her detailed and vivid descriptions offer readers a firsthand view of Punjabi life, traditions, and culture in Mumbai. This draws readers into each scene, investing them in Zoya's journey with ease.

Nicholls' narration for *The Rules of Arrangement* is wonderful. She brilliantly brings the book from the written page to life. By adapting her voice to suit each character with subtle nuances for mood, personality, and personality quirks, Nicholls perfectly captures each scene. Our heroine's voice flawlessly rings with snark, cynicism, frustration, anger, love, humor, and joy—the full spectrum of emotion—from one moment to the next. Zoya's reminisces of her childhood and spending time with her matchmaker aunt Sheila Bua, a pivotal person in Zoya's life, are filled with nostalgia, awe, love, and touches of sadness. As she learns more about her boss Arnav the Dragon Bajaj, his gruff, stiff tones shift, softening, and his voice changes to suit the Arnav that Zoya discovers behind his façade.

A beautifully written and emotional exploration of the tension between family love, expectations, and selfhood, *The Rules of Arrangement* is an introspective, hilarious, and thoroughly entertaining and relatable novel made for audio. Nicholls is the perfect narrator for this story.

Lacy Hill

## Audio Book Reviews

ters for this novel, using pitch, accents, dialect, and nuances to capture the characters' personalities. Being able to hear the emotion and feelings in every scene draws readers right into the story, helps bring the characters and the story to life, and makes readers care about them and their journey. I loved Avery's voices for Oliver and her son especially. They were perfect. Will's British accent was terrific as well, and I thought he wonderfully differentiated Oliver's and Dylan's British accents from Sebastian's American. *The Introvert's Guide to Speed Dating* is highly recommended for readers looking for a sweet, sexy, humorous slow burn romance with sides of friends-to-lovers, single parent, and meddling friends and family.

Lacy Hill

## When Sparks Fly

Helena Hunting

Narrated by Stella Bloom and Jason Clarke

Macmillan Audio

Audiobook

B08TZ3Z2CJ

★★★★★

Stella Bloom and Jason Clarke narrate Helena Hunting's *When Sparks Fly* in first person, dual POV. Together, they take readers on an emotional journey with two friends who must learn to navigate a vastly different and far riskier relationship after years of being best friends.

Running her family's event hotel is Avery Spark's dream. After a car accident leaves Avery severely injured, immobile, and needing extra care and help while healing, Declan cares for her himself. Despite being best friends and roommates since college, Avery's reliance on Declan to care for her daily needs pushes their relationship to a more intimate level that becomes overwhelming and confusing for them both. As a result of being thrust into closer quarters, intimate situations, and Declan lending Avery a "helping hand," feelings they have denied, repressed, or even been unaware of coming rushing to the surface. They have friendship down flawlessly, but moving into a sexual/romantic relationship is a leap for which they're woefully unprepared.

Avery loves her friends, working with her sisters, and living with Declan in their jointly owned condo. She hasn't taken a chance on love since a devastating college breakup. Declan is avoiding commitment like the plague. Cynical and emotionally challenged about romantic relationships because of childhood/parental baggage, Declan's a manwhore with no

# Audio Book Reviews

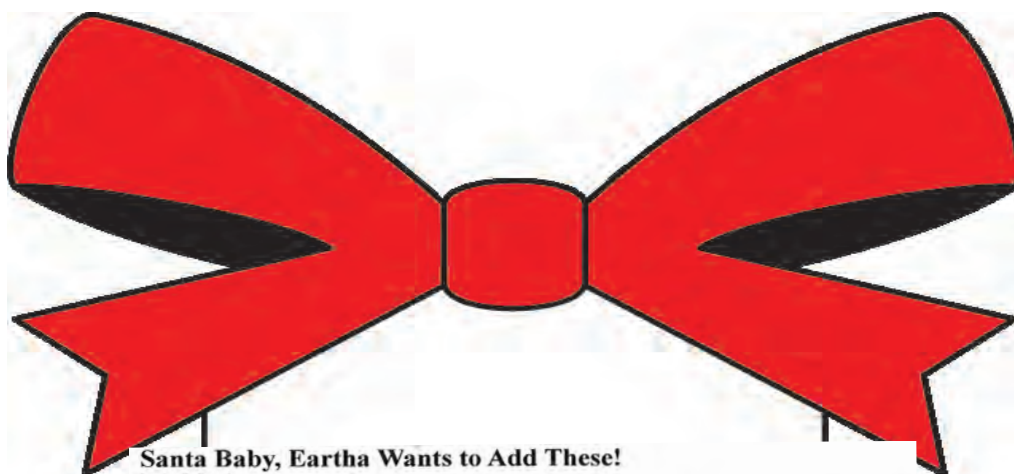
interest in love. Hunting's characterization and evolution of Declan, Avery, and their relationship are the novel's best aspects, along with their interactions. Her description is vibrant, giving life to these characters, their emotions, and the story, drawing readers into the story with ease. I loved Avery's and Declan's friendship. Hunting vividly reveals the strength and depth of their relationship within the story and has the characters confront their emotional/mental and relationship issues in a nuanced and thoughtful way.

Bloom's and Clarke's narration elevates this contemporary romance, beautifully portraying the essence of Avery's and Declan's characters, their close friendship, and the emotional intensity of their relationship, as well as the intense emotions they experience because of Avery's accident and the unexpected transformation of their relationship. Their narration brings the characters to life, giving each a unique voice

for that character using pitch, cadence, accents, dialects, etc., for primary and secondary characters. Listening to the audiobook added a deeper dimension to the novel because the narrators nailed the emotional undercurrents running through the book. They made Declan more sympathetic despite some of his terrible choices.

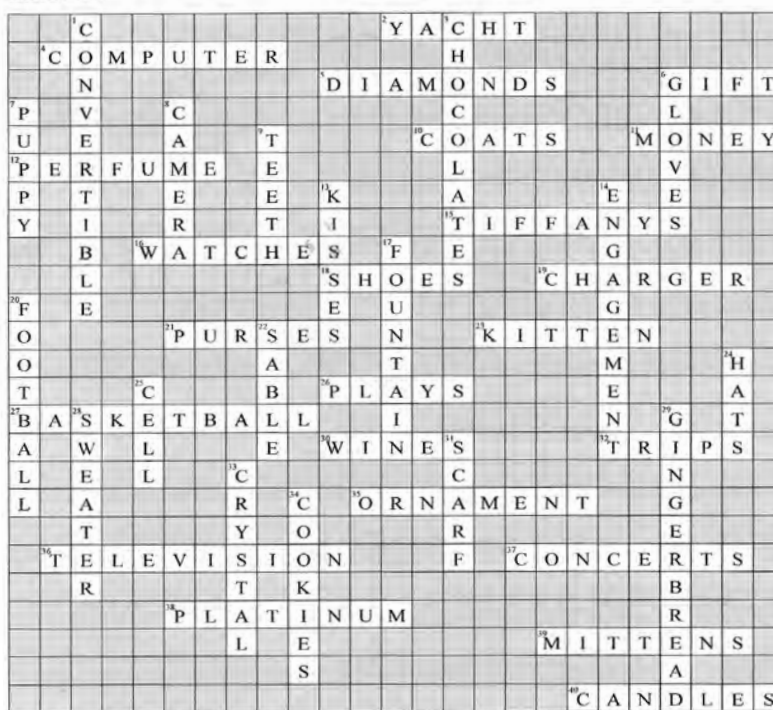
*When Sparks Fly* explores the challenging journey from friends to lovers when two people are so deeply in denial that their behavior affects their friendship and the development of a romantic relationship. It's a thoughtful, intensely emotional exploration of friendship, love, accountability, and how our pasts and parental baggage influence how we relate to people, view, and form emotional/sexual bonds and relationships with people. Huntington takes a rare perspective on friends-to-lovers romance and the tricky transition from friends to lovers by focusing on the emotional/psychological connections and bonds between two people and the importance of balancing those connections/bonds and sex. At its core, the emotional connection between Avery and Declan truly is the most fundamental theme.

Lacy Hill



**Santa Baby, Eartha Wants to Add These!**

Louise B. Snead





# Booty from the Other Genre



## She Never Left

C.M. Harris

Harper Collins UK/One More Chapter

Trade Paperback

978-00084728322.

☆☆ 1/2

*"Sometimes the light's all shinin' on me  
Other times, I can barely see  
Lately, it occurs to me  
What a long, strange trip it's been"*-Grateful Dead

Cousins, as well as writing partners, TJ and Jane decide to attend their 20th high school reunion in hopes of gathering some material to get them over the hurdle of writer's block. But when they show up in their hometown, they discover Jane's long-time stalker is creepier than ever, the town folk are still whispering about TJ's family tragedy, and then there are the memories of time spent within "the thicket", and the loss of their friend Evie. But what if she never left?

So, it has taken this reviewer a wee bit to prepare thoughts on a review as there is a lot going on in this story—perhaps too much. What do you get when you mix together a high school reunion, a stalker and a mysterious "thicket"? Mass confusion for this reader! Reading this book has most certainly been "a long, strange trip", which, for some, may be exactly what they were looking for, but for others, such as myself, totally lost. The cover and blurb completely drew me in, but as the pages turned, I kept getting confused with the POV and time changes. This is most likely just reader preferences, so don't let my low rating dissuade you from giving this story a chance. While not my fav, it could be yours!

*Sharing what I love,  
Veronica*

## The Shivering Ground & Other Stories

Sara Barkat

TS Poetry Press

E-book

978-1943120550

☆☆☆ 1/2

*The Shivering Ground & Other Stories* is a collection of speculative fiction stories that span diverse dimensions of subject matter and genre, from futuristic dystopian to contemporary, to historical, even off-planet or time travel elements. While the framing device plums the imagination, the heart of the stories are about the human experience, and the complicated ways in which people's lives intertwine.

The eleven stories fit well in the category of literary fiction as the focus is on the characters and the choices they make as they navigate through circumstances far from the mundane, every day. Emotion and feeling is the focus, instead of linear storytelling, which may be problematic for readers looking for more straightforward genre short stories. Lyrical describes the manner in which the author employs words and unfolds events in the stories. Despite that fact, the reader will take away clear themes as the characters navigate through difficult choices, the challenges of love and loss, and the fear of an uncertain present and future. Memory is an important theme in more than one tale. While none of the stories are explicitly horror, some definitely take a turn towards dark subject matter such as environmental destruction, racial hatred (in this case told with different sentient humanoid species pitted against each other), and humane treatment of prisoners. *The Shivering Ground & Other Stories* is recommended to speculative fiction short story readers who enjoy a literary bent with their narrative.

*Danielle Hill*

## The Stalker

Sarah Alderson

Harper 360 Avon

E-Book

978-0008400040

★★★★★



*"I'd take my time with them, let the rage simmer before I brought it to a boil."*

Newlyweds, Liam and Laura, opt to take their honeymoon on a remote island off the coast of Scotland. But what starts out as a romantic getaway begins to turn into something sinister—the feeling of being watched—bloody messages left on doors—tapping at the window. With each day comes a new terrifying threat from the mysterious stalker on the island, and the newlyweds begin to fear this island could very well become their tomb.

If the movies *The Strangers* and *Sleeping with the Enemy* had a baby, it would be *The Stalker*! WOWZA! The author had my heart racing from day one and just kept ramping up the pace of this psychological thriller! Loved this twisty page-turner and highly recommend!

*Sharing what I love,  
Veronica*

## Yalgaar: The 1659 Event That Changed Hindustan's Destiny

Arnold Boleman

Notion Press

E-book

B09GH4LQGV

★★★★★

*Yalgaar* is a powerfully moving work of historical fiction. The setting is 1659 India, then called Hindustan, in the Maaval province. The people were strong and determined in the face of adversity, and this is the true story of what happened that year. This location sets the stage for the young protagonist, Hiroji, to be tried and tested to the limits of endurance after the rape of women in his family. He wants nothing but revenge and is plunged into the brutal world of plunder and slavery, but how can he change the centuries-old patterns? The answer might lie in the leader of an uprising, who seeks to fight the Islamic forces that caused all this.

"Yalgaar" is the Farsi word that means attack, but Hiroji knows that in order to defeat the enemy, he has to learn to think like them. His rage flares up, and he launches into an attack with his friend Ramaji. From there, the narrative unfolds in visceral, emotional scenes, and tension builds when they have to work with those they don't always respect or agree with in order to achieve goals. The realism Boleman conveys is so mind-boggling that you feel as if you are in the scenes with the characters, whether it be a conversation with a Khan or how Shivaji organizes hill farmers.

Boleman has crafted a richly detailed and deeply immersive novel based on a historical event and doesn't pull any punches when it comes to describing the violence

## Booty

and brutality that happened that year. From the first page, the reader is drawn into the situations and motives of the characters, beginning in the village of Pali. The author masterfully gives a clear picture of who young Hiroji is, what his character is about, and his backstory. Readers are placed directly into his world of working the plow and the rape of his young wife, Savitri.

If you like stories steeped in historical details, culture, customs, and battles of life, death, and honor - both personal and spiritual - you will enjoy the powerful and entertaining *Yalgaar* by Arnold Boleman.

*Tammy Ruggles, Guest Reviewer*

### Pam Ackerson cont.

Event in Montgomery, AL.

In June, Space Coast Book Lovers in Cape Canaveral, FL

In the Fall, there's a tentative scheduled event, East Texas Book Bash

In October, you'll find me in Clearwater Beach, FL, at Books at the Beach

In November I will be Meet the Authors in Melbourne, FL

### AdC: Please give us the following contact information:

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Facebook: PamelaAckersonAuthor





*He was the  
town's hell-raiser  
and she was his  
salvation. Now  
that he's back,  
will he claim her  
heart or break  
it again?*



*Available on Amazon*  
[www.deborah-camp.com](http://www.deborah-camp.com)