

March/April 2023

Affaire de Coeur

Bringing You Honest Reviews Since 1980

**Two dynamic Authors for Spring
or any time of the year**



**Ms. March
Candace Colt**



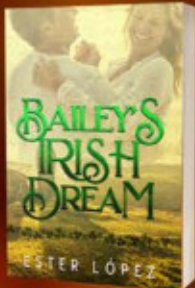
**Ms. April
Ester Lopez**



Inspirational stories of faith, hope, and divine intervention



Two detectives, investigating a rash of burglaries, are soon separated due to their recent marriage. Can their relationship survive the change? And will they be able to confront the Dark Demon alone, or seek the help of new allies?



Lost and Alone, A Second Chance for Love
Michael Shaunessy's best friend and angel, Kalen, finds a lonely soul in desperate need of angelic help.



A detective and her angel partner search for a killer. Can they find him before he kills again, or will they die trying?



A Guardian Angel and a nursing school dropout must learn who is behind the murders of two homeless men before she becomes victim number three.



Sara has been cursed and has lost several husbands in the past. Can Toby remember what Raphael told him and break the curse?

EsterLopez.com @EsterLopez1

March/April 2023

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Affaire de Coeur



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Dear QWERTY

By Pamela Ackerson

How to Handle a Bad Review



Dear Qwerty,

"I received a one-star review for my book. No comments, no written review. I feel as if I was attacked..."

How to Handle a Bad Review

The hardest part of rejection of this particular kind is to accept it and move forward. **If it doesn't help improve your skills of writing, then move on.**

♥ Don't let it bother you.

♥ Don't allow the shame and anger of rejection worm its way into your heart. Keep your happy, positive attitude intact.

Once you get over your butt-hurt reaction to a bad review, if you consider that it's given with construc-

tive criticism, it'll be taken as a learning experience. If it really sticks to you, take a break, walk away, let it sink in, and read the bad review again. Look for the positive in it. Turn the bad review around and make it so you can be a better author.

But, what about those times when the author doesn't know why? What if the reader doesn't explain why?

Unfortunately, you can't do anything about it. Whatever you do, don't engage with the reader and become combative.

Leave it alone.

Authors need thick skin, very thick skin.

Not everyone is going to like your book(s). Don't take it personally.

Rejection is painful for everyone. However, when it happens to someone who's put a lot of time and effort into a story, sometimes the bad review goes straight to the heart. It's okay when someone doesn't like your book.

Keep a positive attitude. Accept the opinion, use it as a moment of growth, take a positive approach, and learn from the experience. The room for improvement is always there even for the most seasoned authors.

If you let them, bad reviews can stick with you. It can last hours, days, weeks, or even months. Give yourself time to get over it. Sometimes you need to lick your wounds and sit back for a while.

I've had a not-so-good review from a reader commenting that my Native American series was offensive, and I should've had sensitivity readers. Err, my Lakota friends were beta readers. I know I did it right. I know they made sure nothing was offensive, and everything in the series was accurate and true. They didn't want anything sugar-coated and that's how I did it.

But that doesn't stop me from wanting to say something.

I didn't. I moved on. Well, sort of. We went out to dinner and went for a nice long walk along the river. It made me feel better. Then, I moved on.

Understand that you can't please everyone.

How do you get thick skin? You can't stop caring. Don't stop being sensitive. It'll hurt you and your stories. Good, skilled authors need that consideration and compassion. It comes out in their writing.

Thick skin comes from being self-confident. Don't listen to the mean whispers in your head telling you that you have imposter syndrome.

It's not easy to face rejection. Plain and simple, it hurts. Any kind of rejection hurts, whether it's from a person, from work, a reader, or a friend.

Vampire billionaire and casino owner, Quinn Ward, is on the run...

Home organizer and Gorgon, Meddy Stheno, is called in to help a recent arrival to Cat's Paw Cove. She meets a handsome and frustrated father of a precocious three-year old. Meddy is sworn to secrecy to protect this special child. The boy is unable to control his shapeshifting—but he can go out in the daylight.



Vampire billionaire and casino owner, Quinn Ward, is on the run from someone who wants to extract his dhampir son's abilities. To protect his child, he must rely on Meddy and the eccentric Supernaturals in Feline Fine Retirement Home.

With the fate of his son on the line, Quinn and Meddy must recruit and train a Magical team. Can Quinn overcome his past and let another woman into his life? Will this longshot give them the payout they both need? Or will Meddy and Quinn lose it all in this do or die gamble for love?

SharonBuchbinder.com

[@SBuchbinder](https://twitter.com/SBuchbinder)

Don't let it affect your well-being. A bad review isn't the end of your writing career. It will help you grow better and stronger.

Think about the things you have accomplished: the great friends you've got, the painting you just finished, or the garden that's thriving. Remind yourself that your other reviews are good, four- and five-star reviews. Re-read your positive reviews, whether it's a different book or the same book that received the bad review. Build yourself back up. Be positive!

Don't stop writing.

There's someone out there who needs your story, who needs your books!

Do you have a subject you'd like Dear Qwerty, to cover? Let us know, DearQwerty@adcmagazine.com

Dear Qwerty,

How do you know that you have found a reputable editor? How do you vet?

Each author has a particular

need from their editors. Some need to be fine-tuned and some need a thorough editing job.

Before you search for an editor, you need to know what you need from them and your budget. Editing can cost from \$100 for a short story and up.

Do you need more of a proof-reader?

Do you need copy or content editing?

Do you need creative editing? Grammatical editing?

Once you determine what you need, now you know what you need to discuss with a potential editor.

It is well worth the money to pay to get a polished story.

The best way to find a reputable editor is to look at time-proven websites where editors can post their options. Another way is to go to a writer's group and ask the authors who they prefer. Editors should always offer at least two pages of a free sample of their work.

Their rates should be front and center so there's no question to how much it's going to cost you. Some editors charge by page, some by word count.

A bad or disreputable editor will be dropped fast. The writing community has a big mouth. They're writers. They're going to give you their two-cents worth.

Listen to what experienced authors are telling you and ask for recommendations.

Good luck!



The Spotlight is Shining on Ms. March Candace Colt



AdC Magazine's Ms. March

Before becoming a full-time author, Candace had careers in health care, as a K-college educator, and as a library administrator. Along the way, she met wonderful people who inspired her stories by showing how everyday gestures make a world of difference in our lives and relationships. It's her goal to take those experiences, add a bit of magical realism, and turn them into uplifting stories that engage and entertain.

AdC: Tell us about the genre(s) you write. Why did you choose to go in that direction?

CC: My genre is a delicious blend of contemporary and paranormal romance with a touch of magical realism. All my stories are sweet romances. While I love reading all types of fiction, I've always been drawn to stories that took me out of the commonplace world. In the beginning, I tried writing traditional romance, but my characters had other ideas! The best thing I ever did as an author was to get out of my own way and let the characters tell their stories how they wanted them written.

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

CC: My characters are ordinary people in extraordinary worlds. They have charming and lovable sides but also flaws, issues, and backstories. And almost all of my characters have a special gift. It's quite a list: witches, wizards, time-travelers, ghosts, mediums, psychics, shifters, and fae. In almost every book, I have a snarky know-it-all cat who's a bit magical. Of course, regular characters appear, too. The story starts when non-magical and magical humans discover they've fallen in love.

AdC: Do you have a new book or series?

CC: I became an indie writer after several years of writing for small publishers. That decision was scary and

exhilarating at the same time. In 2022, I launched my first indie series: "Baga Shores Romance." The first two books in the series, *Bewitching Andie* and *Charming Sabrina* came out in 2022. My newest book, *Enchanting Robbi*, will be available this spring on Amazon.

AdC: Favorite quote:

CC: "First, find out what your hero/heroine wants, then just follow them!"
Ray Bradbury

AdC: If you were transported to the setting of the book you're currently reading or writing, where would you be?

CC: I'm already there! My "Baga Shores" series is set in a small coastal town on the west side of Tampa Bay, based on the small town where I live. The only difference is that Baga Shores is populated with magical people. Sadly, my town isn't—or is it?

AdC: Do you hide any "Easter eggs" secrets/truths in your books that only a few people will find?

CC: I hope that readers see beyond the fictional settings and tropes and discover the underlying truth that everyone is worthy of a "HEA" no matter who or what they are, where they come from, or how life's treated them.

AdC: If you saw a doorway/portal in the middle of the forest, would you enter it?

CC: Under certain conditions, absolutely yes! But I'd need reassurance that I could return if I chose to. Oh, and they'd have to serve coffee on the other side, too!

AdC: What scenes do you find hard to write and why?

CC: The ending! I know how I want the story to end and usually have that

Baga Shores Romance A Brand New Series!



available at
amazon



"A delightful, magical, romantic world."

~Amazon Reviewer~

CandaceColt.com



in mind throughout. The hard part is ensuring a satisfying emotional impact for the reader. I usually rewrite the ending three or four times to get it where it needs to be.

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

CC: In September, I'll be at the 2023 Books at the Beach Book Convention and Author Signing at the Sirata Hotel in St. Pete Beach. I'm also scheduled for local Florida library book signings throughout 2023, so check my website or follow me on Facebook for dates and locations.

AdC: *What's something about you-- personality traits, habits, background, etc., that has been useful in your writing?*

CC: I've always been a people watcher. Humans are so interesting, and it's

fun to make up stories about them. Let's pretend I see a woman sitting alone on a park bench in the middle of a busy farmer's market day. The next thing I know, I've made her into the heroine in my next book. Maybe she's just tired or waiting for someone. But in my story, she's just arrived from the seventeenth century and has no idea where she is or why she's there. The guy running the vegetable stand feels sorry for her and offers her a peach. Their gazes meet, and whammo! A story!

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

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FLIRTY IN TAMPA

Flirty in Tampa
June 3rd 2023

30+ Authors

Book Signing Event
12:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Hyatt House
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Sneak Peek



Bewitching Andie

Baga Shores Romance Book 1
Excerpt from Chapter One

Stop and go. Stop and go. Stop and *stop*.

Noon-hour traffic on the W. A. Goodfellow Causeway across Tampa Bay was horrifying. Something Andie McCraig had forgotten, and for two good reasons.

First, it was a pain to keep shifting gears in her MINI Cooper. Second, they'd come to a dead halt at the top of the bridge. Andie hated bridges, even relatively low ones like the Goodfellow.

She squeezed one hand around the gearshift handle and the other on the steering wheel as she waited for that blessed moment they'd start moving again. It didn't look promising from the obnoxious red stripe indicator on her car's navigation screen. And it didn't help her attitude that oncoming traffic sailed past.

Her seven-year-old son, Sam, had been patient for the six-hour drive from the Florida panhandle across I-10 and the crawl through bumper-to-bumper traffic on south I-75. But she could tell he was getting antsy. The



truth was, so was she. Relaxing was a top priority once they got to her grandmother's house.

"This will break up any minute." She hoped that was true for Sam's sake. It had been a long time since the last rest stop.

Andie craned her neck to see around the SUV, but nothing moved ahead. There must have been a wreck. She glanced in her rearview mirror to see how many were lined up behind. And to watch that guy still sitting on a motorcycle behind her. If he'd revved that engine once, he'd done it ten times. Did he think that would make this line move faster?

Her stomach rumbled again in a not-so-gentle reminder that she hadn't eaten anything since McDonald's three hours ago. Sam tapped her arm and held up an open bag of chocolate chip cookies.

That he could hear that muffled growl was another reminder of the child's gift of sharp senses.

"Thanks, honey." She popped one of the last broken pieces in her mouth.

By some miracle, cars in front of them began creeping forward. Andie put the Cooper in gear and edged along with them. Once they were back up to speed, and there was a space in the next lane, the motorcycle man gunned it and dashed around her. She watched him change lanes again before he disappeared ahead.

While parked on the bridge, catching glimpses of him in the mirror had been an enjoyable distraction. She had imagined him to be tattooed from toe to nose. He probably had a bevy of girlfriends, but she noticed the Harley didn't have a passenger seat when he passed her.

She had given entirely too much time to this daydream. It was time to refocus on Sam and how this meeting with his great-grandmother would go. It better go *well* since this was Andie's only hope for help.

Finally, the "Welcome to Baga

Shores" sign was in sight. The last four blocks were a breeze. The house was just up ahead and not a minute too soon.

Andie McCraig swerved into the driveway and slammed on the brakes.

Impossible. *That* Harley and *that* rider?

The man swung a long, muscular leg over the seat and dismounted. Standing with his back to her car, the man removed his helmet and scuffed his fingers through his brown hair.

The man turned, and his annoying scowl softened as he slipped off his sunglasses.

She got out of the car and leaned against the door as the man walked toward her. The corners of his eyelids crinkled as his face brightened into a smile.

"Hey, Andie," he said in a deep, heart-grabbing voice. "That was you in front of me?"

The neatly cropped beard and mustache caught her off guard. So did his body-hugging T-shirt, which outlined the impressive arms and broad chest she'd shamelessly ogled earlier in the rear-view mirror. She stared a few more moments.

"You don't recognize me, do you?" he asked.

Holy mother-of-pearl! Brett Austin? The skinny dweeb who'd hung around here with her brother, Jason? Of all places in the world, why had he parked a motorcycle in her grandmother's driveway?

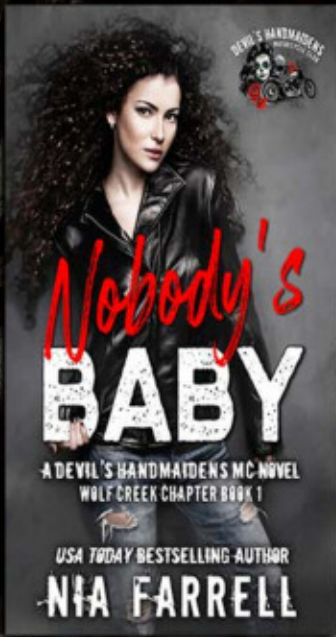
Sam had gotten out and stood in front of the four-car garage in a split second. Before she could gasp a breath or utter a polite greeting to Brett, Sam had raised a finger, and without touching anything, he opened one door halfway. Andie tipped her head to the heavens.

As if raising this boy by herself wasn't hard enough.

After an exhausting all-day drive, she didn't want to say anything to set him off. Besides, he'd been a little trooper. Before dawn, they'd left the only home he'd ever known. She doubted he understood they would never go back there, either.

What choice did she have? Her ex-husband's monthly support payments

Rumer seemed guarded. It must be uncomfortable sitting with a man she'd tricked and robbed.



NOBODY'S BABY
A DEVIL'S HANDMAIDENS MC NOVEL
WOLF CREEK CHAPTER BOOK 1
USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
NIA FARRELL

barely covered expenses. Every job lead dried up as soon as people associated her name with the powerful McCraig family.

Coupled with stories about Sam spun so out of control that it seemed they were about some other kid, it didn't help that he kept lifting things.

"Honey," she said in a measured tone. "Please put the door back down."

Sam paused, his finger frozen in the air, and flashed Andie a mischievous grin.

She knew that look too well. "Slowly, Sam. Do not slam—"

He dropped his hand to his side. The crash of heavy wood hitting concrete chopped her words at the knees. Andie's heart double-thumped.

So much for that.

"Very interesting," Brett said.

If anyone, Brett should know about *interesting*. He and half the people in Baga Shores had magical gifts. Sam's demonstration paled compared to

what Brett had done as a kid.

"That's my boy." Andie gathered her ankle-length denim skirt, bent to Sam's eye level, and geared up her stern mom voice.

"Honey, what did we talk about? You cannot move things with your fingers." Especially where every eye in town could be on them.

Sam's gaze met hers before it flicked away toward a gecko in the bushes.

She softened her voice. "Honey, I want you to meet Uncle Jason's friend Brett."

Brett squatted beside them and held his hand up for a high-five. Sam stared at the man's palm, three times larger than his. He gave Brett a quick hand slap and wiggled away, searching for the lizard.

Brett held Andie's elbow as they stood. "Long day?" he asked.

Longer than he could imagine.

"Yeah. But we made it."

"Can I help unload?" Brett

asked.

"Uh. No thanks." She turned away quickly to beckon her son to her side. Odd that Brett knew she'd driven a long way today. Who'd told him?

Once Sam was beside her, she offered him her pinky finger. "You know the drill." He hooked his finger into hers.

She caught Brett's confused frown from the corner of her eye, but she continued.

"With mine in yours and yours in mine, we seal a promise by fingers twined." Andie locked her gaze on Sam's. "Now, please don't lift things."

Since Sam's magic had emerged, they'd repeated this promise a hundred times when he opened doors. Or tossed trash bins. Or lifted the school principal's office chair with the principal still sitting in it.

Continued on page 17

What does a writer's conference and St. Pat's Day have in common?
If that conference is Book Obsessed Babes, the answer is
FUN!

Hosted by Taira Wilds from March 16th to the 19th, the Jacksonville book event was three days of fun. On Thursday, March 16th readers and author enjoyed a casual Meet & Greet at the hotel lobby bar.



Pam Ackerson with Event Hostess Taira Wilds

First thing Friday morning activities began and was open to all ticket holders. Book Cover Bingo, Pure Romance Party, Scavenger Hunt, Rock Painting, and so much more. Enjoy all the fun with Authors and fellow readers.



Book Cover Bingo

Saturday morning we enjoyed an author and reader breakfast. Raffle baskets, contests, and the book signing had everyone happy.



Breakfast with Readers

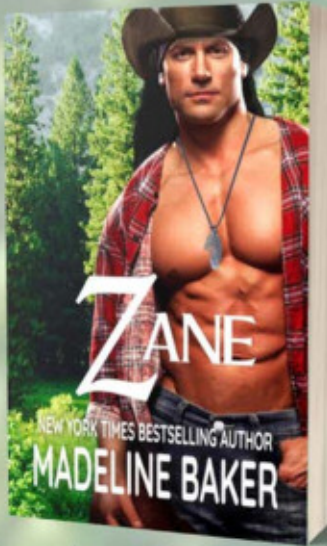
Zane Two Shadows

A drifter, a bounty hunter, and a half-breed wanted for murder.

Zane was definitely trouble. But not the kind her father warned her about.

There was something about the man that intrigued her, even as her father warned her to stay away from him. Circumstances and fate throw Kathleen and Zane together, proving that her father was right—

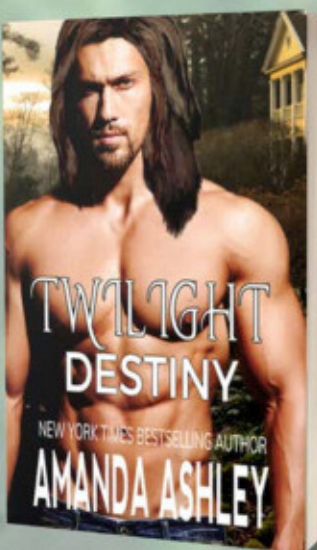
MadelineBaker.net



Rosa Ravenwood

Determined to find a vampire who will turn her, she goes to Morgan Creek.

Jason is a powerful vampire, but one who is seriously lacking in self-control.



The harder he falls for Rosa, the harder it is for him to resist the siren call of her blood. She is drawn deeper into a battle not only for her own life, but for that of the vampire she loves.

AmandaAshley.com

The Fangirl VIP/ALL Access luncheon was a blast, and the food was fantastic! Later that evening we had a Shake Your Shamrocks Welcome Reception with delicious food, a cash bar, a DJ and dancing. Everyone joined in the fun and dressed up in celebration of St. Patty's Day. Everyone had their green on.



Author Reading



The Shamrock Dance

Shamrock Dance

The weekend event ended with special reservations for readers and authors at
Hamburger Mary's Dinner & Drag Show

WW2, the occult battlefield is the most dangerous of all.



Expect Trouble

Will this trail of trouble land US Wave Libby Delacourt into the arms of the Grim Reaper?



Expect Deception

If Libby fails to ramp up her psychic powers, she may perish --and perhaps cause the US to lose the war with Germany.



Expect Betrayal

Protect the Philadelphia headquarters from Nazi occult attacks. The search for her family's grimoire, The Book of Cures.



Expect Obsession

The mission: Steal an ancient book of spells coveted by Hitler and avenge her spy lover's disappearance by consuming the U.S. facility in paranormally induced flames.

JoAnnSmithAinsworth.com

[@JoAnnAinsworth](https://www.instagram.com/JoAnnAinsworth)



A special shout-out and heartfelt thanks to Taira, Mr. T (Doug) and all the volunteers for making this a fantastic event.



Tamalyn E Scott



Pam Ackerson and Winnie Winkle



Michelle Sewell and Livell James

The House on Cedar Ridge

A mysterious ivory fan, a surprise marriage, and the suspicion a witch was among them... Secrets whispered along the corridors and hidden crevices.

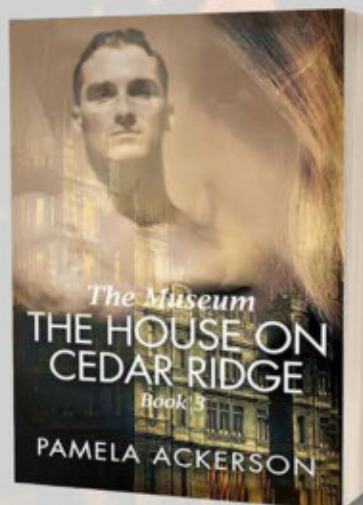
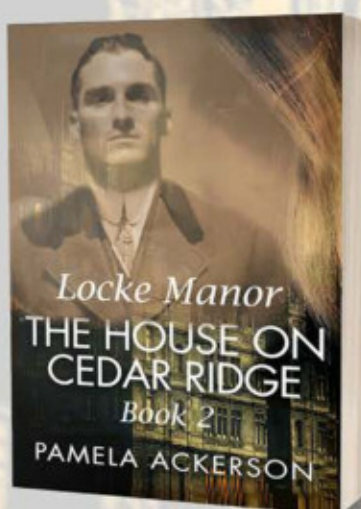
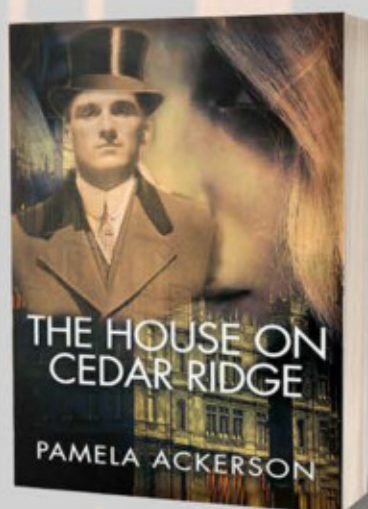
The House on Cedar Ridge: Locke Manor

No peace could be found; the walls within harbored dangerous and frightening secrets. The sunlight upon the walls of the museum cast a deceiving appearance of serenity...

The House on Cedar Ridge: The Museum

A jealous and angry witch was among them...The malevolent danger was as strong and relentless as the waves from Superior. The battle lines were drawn.

From award-winning, Wall Street Journal and international bestselling author Pamela Ackerson.



PamelaAckerson.net
@PamAckerson



The Spotlight is on. . .

Ester Lopez

The AdC Calendar Girl for April



Ester Lopez is a writer and publisher and lives in the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee, along with her husband, Jerry, and their two miniature horses. She's been writing sci-fi and paranormal/inspirational adventure romances for over 30 years, writing on the edge of reality. Her non-fiction children's books, The Adventures of Charlie and Ellie, Little Horses, and Across The Big Ocean, are told in a fictional way. When Ester isn't writing, she enjoys photography, sewing, crafts, making wine, canning vegetables and gardening.

AdC: Tell us about the genre(s) you write. Why did you choose to go in that direction?

EL: I like sci-fi, adventure and romance, so I mashed them together. I did the same for paranormal. I wanted something different than all the shape-shifters, vampires, and demon stories, so I chose angels, added some adventure and romance, but they ended up being inspirational as well.

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

EL: My characters come to me in different ways. I use the book, *Complete Writer's Guide to Heroes and Heroines: Sixteen Master Archetypes*, by Cowden, LaFever, and Viders. This book is a must have for writers. It lays out all the different qualities of these archetypes as well as their flaws. Sometimes I have one character's basic quality and then I thumb through the book until I find my

character. I don't have a certain type, but I've written about stubborn people a lot and make them learn to compromise.

AdC: Do you have a new book or series?

EL: I have two series: "The Vaedra Chronicles" and just finished the *Genesis Saga* in that series. The other one is "The Angle Chronicles", where I'm working on two books: *Dark Demon* and *Nephilim*.

AdC: Favorite quote:

EL: This is from *Betrayed*, book 3 in the *Genesis Saga*:

"You kiss like a human," she said.
"That's because I am human," he responded.

"Do you have other parts like a human?" She tugged at his clothes. It dawned on him what she was asking and dropped his unicrin on the floor.

Affaire de Coeur

Within minutes, he showed her just how human he was.

AdC: If you were transported to the setting of the book you're currently reading or writing, where would you be?

EL: My current book takes place in Miami, Florida, the place of my birth.

AdC: Do you hide any "Easter eggs" secrets/truths in your books that only a few people will find?

EL: I purposely put in what used to be conspiracy theories in my sci-fi stories, but some of them are proving true now.

AdC: If you saw a doorway/portal in the middle of the forest, would you enter it?

EL: Most likely, yes, if I was with someone.



AdC: *What scenes do you find hard to write and why?*

EL: Sex scenes because it makes me uncomfortable, knowing someone will read it.

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

EL: I attended so many last year that I hadn't planned anything definite for this year yet, but I am going to some Anime Conventions with my granddaughter just for fun.

AdC: *What's something about you -- personality traits, habits, background, etc., that has been useful in your writing?*

EL: I've had a lot of different jobs over the years: worked in retail, worked in the National Park Service in the law enforcement division as a dispatch-

er and 'fee collection officer,' taught school (I have a degree in Physical Education), I was a bartender for a short while, had a photography studio, worked as a front desk agent in hotels, and had a close encounter with a space ship when I was a Camp Fire Leader, and worked as a hostess in a restaurant/bar. I use those experiences as jobs for some of my characters.

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

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Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/EsterLopezAuthor>

Candace Colt's
Sneak Peek from *Bewitching Andie*

Pinky promises were two-way deals. Keeping her end of each bargain was easy. Since the divorce almost a year ago, her pitiful attempts to revive her gift had been laughable failures. Andie's grandmother, Miriam Pennywick Tanner, or Mimi, descended from a long line of witches. Fat chance she'd support any bargain not to use the craft.

To Andie, there were enough witches in the family to carry on the tradition and did they ever carry on.



Sneak Peek

Excerpt from *Dark Demon*

By Ester Lopez

Elena Romero Cummings, Miami-Dade Police Department Detective, glanced at her notes, then spoke to Keith from the tech team. “Got anything, Keith?”

She stood in the middle of a small repair shop in downtown Miami. The shop owner called when he came to open for business and discovered he had been robbed. Keith worked on the register, while Danny worked on the door facing, trying to get fingerprints. Amanda photographed footprints.

“I might have a print we can work with. Whoever did this was good,” Keith said.

There hadn’t been much damage except at the doorway. It appeared to be ripped open with a crowbar. And the register was not damaged. They either worked here or knew something about registers.

Pete Cummings, her husband and partner, walked up to her.

“They didn’t have an alarm system and only took money from the register,” he said.

“This one is a little tougher, Pete. Keith may have a print, but I’m not getting my hopes up.”

“There’s something else.” He leaned in and whispered.

She glanced up at his tall frame. Pete glanced around the small shop, a scowl on his face. “I smell a demon.”

“A demon? Like in Satan?”

“Yes. This may have been done by a human, but there was a demon in this store.”

“Well, that’s a first. I’ve never hunted a demon before.”

“I pray we never have to, Elena.”

She got the owner’s phone number and left him her card. She realized she would have to change the card and add her new married name. She smiled at the thought.

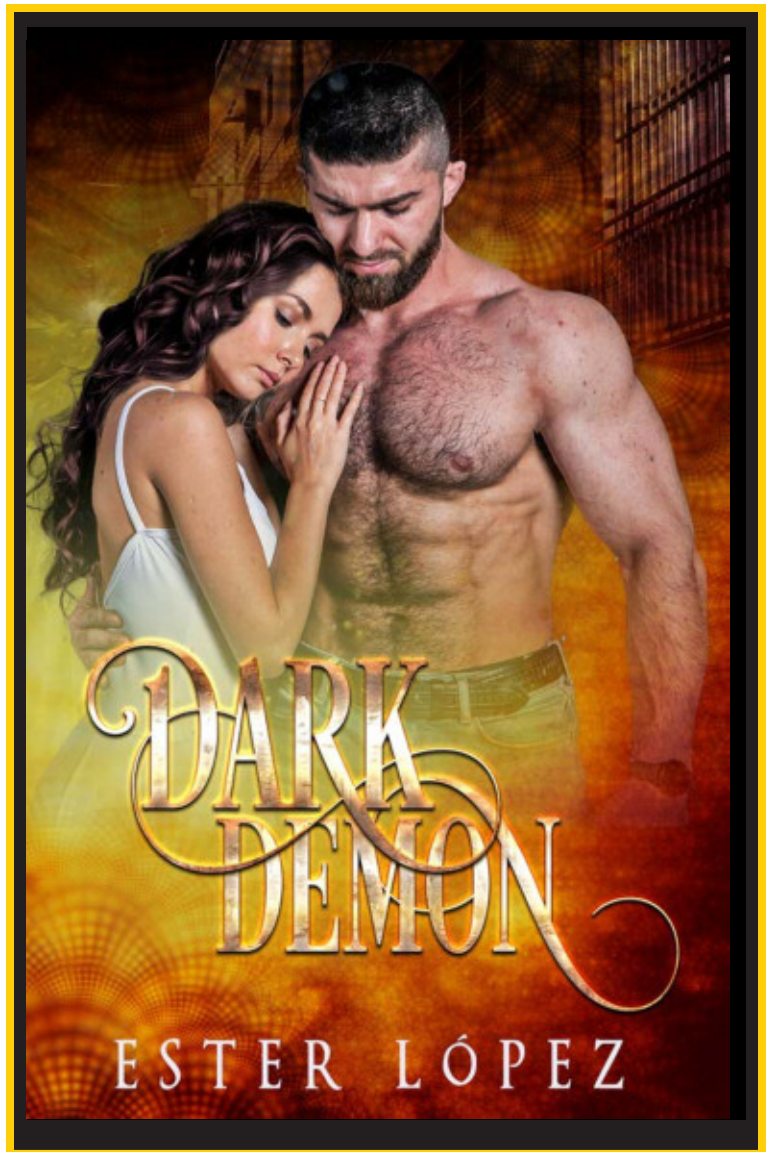
“Did you get a look outside, Pete?” she asked.

“Yes, but it looks like they left through the front door. I mentioned it to Keith. He said he’d check everything before he left.”

The two left the shop and headed for Pete’s truck. He opened the door for her, and she climbed up inside. He headed back to the station when they got another call on the radio.

“Unit 19, come in,” the dispatcher said.

She grabbed the radio and keyed the mike. “This is



Unit 19, go ahead,” she said.

“We’ve got another robbery near your location. Can you copy?”

She flipped open her notebook and grabbed a pen. “Go ahead.” The dispatcher gave her the address and she wrote it down.

“We’re enroute, Unit 19, out,” she said. Elena put the radio back in its holder and gave Pete the address.

He turned the truck around and then headed to the new address. “It’s only a block away from the first break-in.”

“Two break-ins on the same day,” she said.

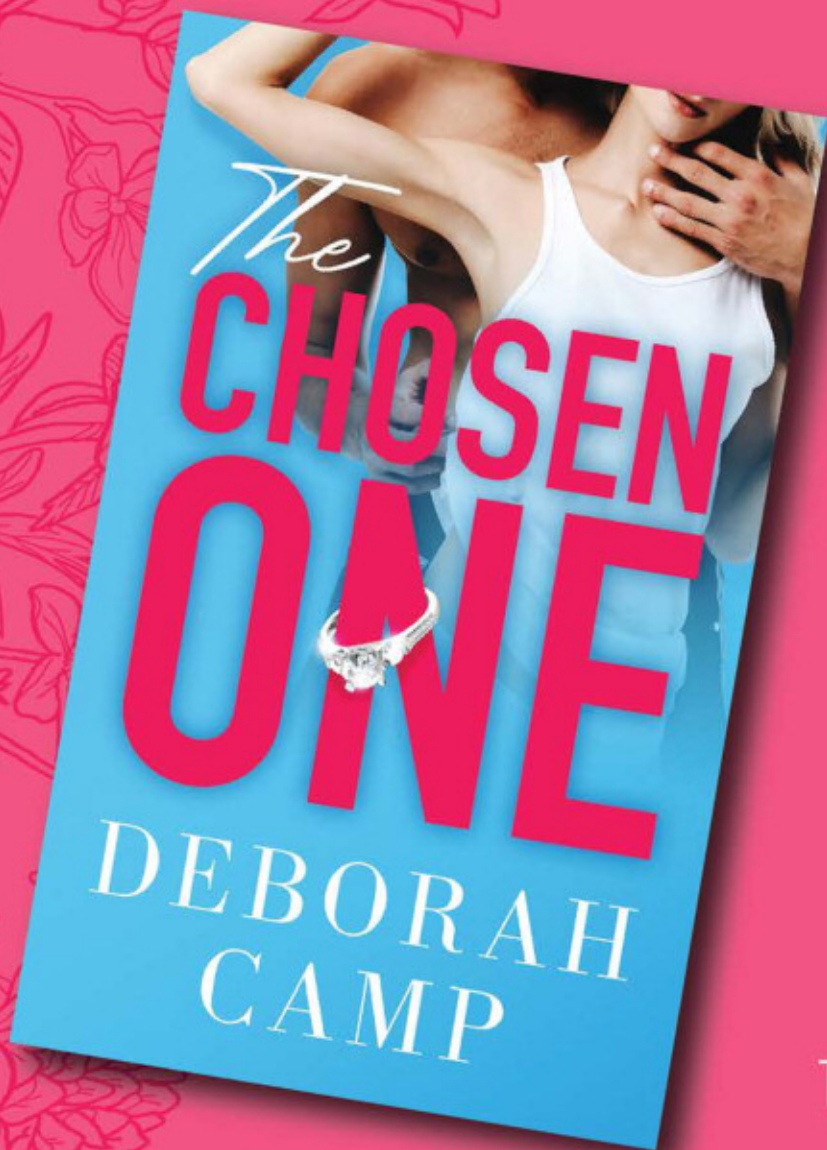
“I wonder if we’re dealing with the same people since it’s so close to the other one,” Pete said.

“That’s what I’m thinking, too, Pete.”

“That’s what I like about working with you, Elena. We think a lot alike.”

“I know. That’s why I’ve been putting off telling the captain we’re married.”

He glanced her way. “You’re thinking he’ll separate us, aren’t you?”



A FUN, SEXY
ROMANCE
ABOUT A GUY
WHO CAN'T COMMIT
AND A GIRL WHO
PROMISES HERSELF
SHE WON'T FALL
IN LOVE WITH HIM.
(SPOILER ALERT!
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★★★★★ Amazon Review

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An old family heirloom, a medallion of uncounted age, promptly absconded by a magpie. The magpie flies from the window leaving a single feather. Jeremy, not happy with the theft, promptly chases after the magpie. The feather transports him and the magpie to the 1600's, the days of King James and his pursuit of witches.

A thrilling adventure you will never forget...



ASIN: B08NW6BM6Z
ISBN-13: 978-1647501525





Women Who Tell Our Stories

Across

2. First woman in America to receive a medical degree.
3. This first lady took an active role in elevating women and African Americans.
4. Pioneer in journalism and television broadcasting.
5. First female double amputee from a war.
6. She knew why the caged bird sang.
8. First black female mathematician at NASA.
9. This Clinton was second woman to run for president of the U.S.
11. African -merican playwright and activist, she wrote *A Raisin in the Sun*.
14. Her work *Handmaid's Tale* is a futuristic look at the plight of poor or promiscuous women.
15. First African-American woman elected to Congress and first to run for president.
17. She introduced Chinese culture through her book *Joy Luck Club*.
18. Her book *Silent Spring* began concern about global warming.
22. Puerto Rican actress, dancer and singer known for *West Side Story*.
25. Young poet and activist who spoke at inauguration.
26. Blind advocate for disabilities.
27. Vice President of the U.S.
29. A.K.A. Moses, smuggled slaves to the north.
30. *Ain't I a Woman?*

Down

1. Foremost authority on chimpanzees and gorillas.
2. First female African-American supreme court judge.
4. First black female to receive the EGOTS.
7. Lawyer activist, she was the first woman to argue before the Supreme Court.
9. Stage and movie star, this black woman refused roles that would demean

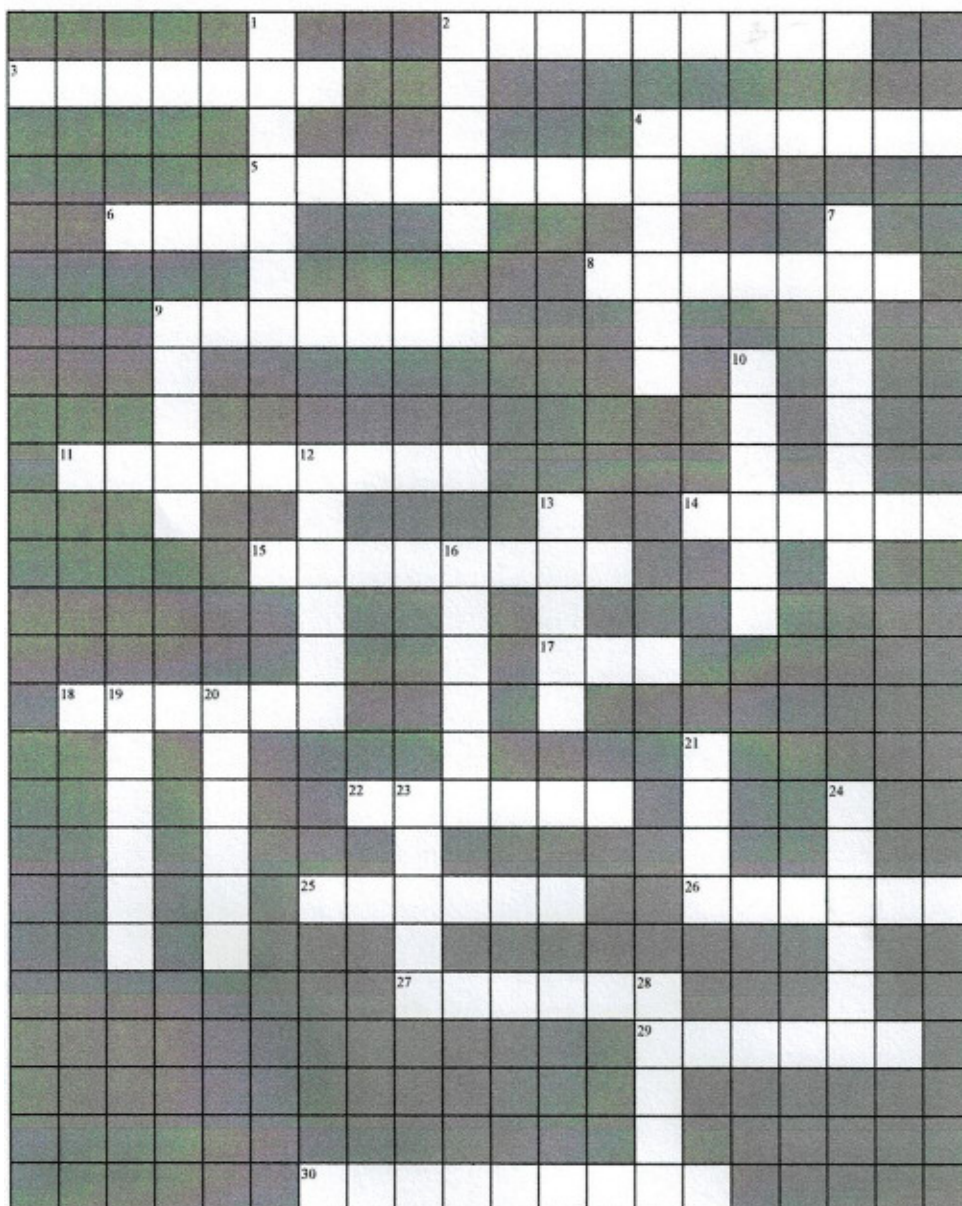
her race.

10. This British Dame wrote mysteries.
12. Journalist, filmmaker and author whose forte was comedy i.e., *When Harry Met Sally*.
13. She wrote *The Bell Jar*.
16. Her *To Kill A Mockingbird* exposed racism in the South.
19. Her book *Pride and Prejudice* revealed the plight of women in the

1900's.

20. Playwright who wrote *For Colored Girls....*
21. Fellow West Virginian, she wrote *The Good Earth*.
23. Talk show host who funds girls' school in Africa.
24. As a child, she fought for the rights for girls.
28. Wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Answers on page 27



Authors tend to sit for long periods of time. Working from home can put anyone into a routine that's not always the best.



Save Money on Your Healthy Lifestyle with these Simple Tricks

By Kim Thomas

When it comes to leading a healthy lifestyle, you may feel like it's an expensive and unachievable goal. Fortunately, there are ways to save money on your healthy lifestyle that won't break the bank. With a little bit of planning and some tricks that we have up our sleeves, anyone can achieve a healthier lifestyle while still staying on budget.

There are so many expenses that come with living in today's world. You could easily spend your entire paycheck on rent, utilities, groceries, and that doesn't even begin to cover all of your costs. There are also so many different factors in play when you're trying to stick to a budget—especially if you live in a city with high costs of living. But there are ways to save money on your healthy lifestyle without breaking the bank.

Plan Your Meals and Snacks in Advance

One way to save money on your healthy lifestyle is by planning all of your meals and snacks in advance. You'll need to do a little bit of shopping beforehand to make sure you have everything you need, but it will be worth it when you see how much money you've saved. Planning your meals ahead of time will eliminate the temptation to grab something quick and easy, which will save you money in the long run.

Ditch the Food-Processed Goods

One of the best ways to save money on your healthy lifestyle is by avoiding food-processed goods. Food-processed goods are items that have been made from ingredients that have already been processed, such as canned vegetables or frozen dinners. These foods can be convenient, but they're also pretty expensive and come with a [long list of side effects](#).

Use iPad Apps to Help Your Health Journey

An iPad or iPhone, especially when combined with an AppleWatch, can be a great tool for helping you live healthier. There are plenty of apps available, many for free, that can improve your quality of life. A calorie and diet tracker like MyFitnessPal is great for monitoring your eating habits. Apps like Insight Timer are a great way to get started on a meditation practice. And you can even use your AppleWatch to track your sleep.

Use Chemical-Free DIY Cleaners

One of the easiest ways to save money on your healthy lifestyle is to use

chemical-free DIY cleaners instead of store-bought products. There are so many different recipes available for homemade cleaning agents, and it's often much cheaper than buying commercial products from a supermarket. The DIY cleaners will be less harsh on your skin or lungs, which means that you won't have to worry about exposure to toxic chemicals.

Grow Your Own Produce

Did you know that you can grow your own produce? And it doesn't have to be expensive! If you have a green thumb and want to save money, this is the best option for you. You can grow produce like tomatoes, kale, bell peppers, and potatoes. All of these plants are easy and inexpensive to grow if they are planted in the right season.

Take Advantage of Free Activities

One way to save money on your healthy lifestyle is to take advantage of free activities and exercises. The internet offers a plethora of free workouts that are customizable and achievable for people of all fitness levels. Some websites offer videos where you can follow along with an instructor, while others offer exercise plans.

Of course, if you work out at home you're already saving money by nixing a drive to and from a facility, not to mention not having to pay gym membership fees. There are plenty of



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ways to exercise without equipment, such as bodyweight exercises and aerobics. Depending on your area's walk score – that is, how easy it is to walk to your destinations – you might also be able to get in your daily exercise just by running errands! But if you do want to enhance your fitness and are looking for affordable items like exercise bikes, go online to read up on unbiased home product reviews. With affordability in mind, be sure you consider an item's durability and the highest recommendations.

Start an Affiliate Marketing Blog

One of the best ways to save money while living a healthy lifestyle is by blogging. Blogging can be a great way to make money and share your knowledge. You don't need a blog to write about saving money – but it can be an excellent way to generate income with your passion for wellness. There are many affiliate marketing blogs out there that teach

people how to stay on budget and still live a healthy lifestyle.

You can even make a lucrative business out of it. There are additional steps involved in creating a thriving and growing business out of your wellness practices. You can start a new company with the help of a formation service to remove most of the guesswork, starting with reading this guide which covers all the steps to start a new business. It will walk you through all the major steps to forming a successful business. They can even help you file the necessary paperwork!

In summary, there are a number of ways to save money as you enhance your healthy lifestyle. From meal planning and avoiding processed foods to using organic cleaning products and growing your own veggies, you'll find it's more than possible to optimize your healthy living choices without going broke!



Kim Thomas enjoys writing about maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Her mission is aligned with that of US Health Corps, and that is to triumph over chronic disease.

ushealthcorps.org

REVIEWS

- ★★★★★ Amazing/Excellent
- ★★★★ Good
- ★★★ Average
- ★★ Something's missing
- ★ More than one element missing

Sometimes a book does not quite fit into the description above. That is when the reviewer will use 1/2 to indicate it is better than its description but not quite at the next level.

Books are evaluated on (1) Characterization (2) Plot (3) Pacing, (4) Writing and (5) Originality



Contemporary Romance



Do you think you can write a fair and honest review of a book you've recently read? Here's your chance. We accept guest reviews. If you would like to submit one, pick a book that has just come out, whether you liked it or disliked it, and write a review of it. It's not as easy as you think. Send it to our website at www.adcmagazine.com.

Authors,

We'd love to review your books! Are you brave enough for an honest review? If so, send it in at least three months before the pub date to adcreviews@att.net

A Guide to Being Just Friends

Sophie Sullivan
St. Martin's Griffin
Mass Market
978-1250624208
★★★★

In this contemporary romantic comedy, Hailey Sharp has escaped a toxic relationship to settle in the small town of San Verde, California, where she opens a salad shop called By the Cup.

Wesley Jansen has escaped the grip of his overbearing father to move to San Verde, where he and his two brothers own a tech consulting company called Squishy Cat. Wes is a perfectionist who comes from old money, while Hailey is, well, not quite perfect. For reasons he can't understand, Wes keeps finding ways to help Hailey, even though she wants to prove she can do things herself.

With a mix of false starts, encounters with old loves, and misunderstandings, Wes and Hailey navigate their way to a possible romance, whether they want to or not. They steadfastly

Affaire de Coeur

deny the sparks flying between them, not wanting to ruin their friendship with romantic entanglements in case things don't work out. Maybe they're both in for a surprise.

A delightful romp, *A Guide to Being Just Friends* makes for a fun read as we root for Wes and Hailey to realize at last what is right in front of them the entire time.

Hannah Rowan

Rosewater

Liv Little
Get Lifted Books

Hardcover
978-1638930228

★★★

Liv Little's debut *Rosewater* explores a young poetess' journey of self-discovery as she leaves her twenties behind while discovering how to make her passion for words a viable income source and make peace with her family and her childhood trauma/baggage.

Elsie is a fiercely independent, 28-year-old, sexy, gifted, and talented

Contemporary Romance

British Guyanese poetess who works long minimum wage hours at a South London neighborhood dive bar. Free to write poetry during the day, she expresses all that she finds hard to say. She represses her existential dread with a friends-with-benefits arrangement with her irresistible coworker, Bea, and drinking and getting high, but it doesn't keep it at bay. Elsie has determination and faith to believe things will change for the better. But sudden eviction from her social housing almost breaks her. With nowhere else to go and no one else to turn to, Elsie seeks her childhood friend Juliet's help.

Elsie renews her friendship with Juliet. And as they smoke and hang out together watching favorite tv shows, Elsie's deeply held feelings for Juliet slowly emerge. But will Elsie see that what she's been searching for has always been right there this whole time?

Unfortunately, despite vivid descriptions and a diverse cast of characters, including Black, queer, bisexual, and pansexual characters—particularly a queer Black British heroine—it's a difficult novel to get into. *Rosewater* drags with slow pacing and is frustrating at times because the heroine is a self-absorbed hot mess who doesn't spend much time thinking about anyone's feelings and needs but her own.

Kai-Isaiah Jamal's poetry contributes to Elsie's character development and growth. Jamal's poetry fits Elsie's character and the story in its content, style, and its stream of thought construction. *Rosewater* is a steamy, angsty, funny, dramatic fiction exploring a myriad of obstacles including homelessness, intergenerational love, queer identity, and gender and racial issues.

Lacy Hill

The Spite House

Johnny Compton

Tor Nightfire

E-book

978-1250841421

☆☆☆☆

Eric Ross and his two daughters are running from their past, drifting from town to town, making their way to his ancestral home in West Texas. He's had to live off the grid, taking questionable jobs to support his family. When he is offered the opportunity for a large payoff to stay in a haunted house and observe paranormal phenomena in a small town in Texas owned by a powerful scion, Eric cannot say no. For him, his past is a lot scarier than a haunted house, or so he thinks. The Spite House is hungry.

The Spite House is a contemporary novel with a Gothic feel. While it's a ghost story, Compton carefully keeps the focus on the characters and not so much the strange happenings in the eponymous house. This novel is as much an exploration of human nature and what drives its characters to make choices, both desperate and deliberate, and the harm that results. Stories about characters who are African American and their part in the American story are still underrepresented and are highly appreciated. Eric is a protagonist that readers will feel invested in, along with his daughters, Dess and Stacy.

While revelations abound and unfold as the novel progresses, there is still an element of mystery and unanswered questions that will leave the reader unsettled and wanting more. Johnny Compton writes with confidence, distinctively combining a beautiful eloquence with a down-to-earth narrative voice. Powerful imagery comes through in the writing, giving the novel a cinematic feel. Readers who want a straightforward ghost story won't find that here, but instead it's a character exploration built on the framework of a haunted house story. Tense, unsettling, disturbing, atmospheric, and at the same time oddly hopeful in its portrayal of human nature, *The Spite House* will linger in the reader's consciousness long

after they finish this short, but effective novel.

Danielle Hill

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Historical Romance

A Wicked Game (Ruthless Rivals #3)

Kate Bateman

St. Martin's Press

978-1250801586

★★★★^{1/2}

Kate Bateman explores the long-lasting rivalry between the Davies and Montgomery families in *A Wicked Game*, *Ruthless Rivals* #3.

Captain Morgan Davies returns to London to take revenge on the cartographer whose incorrect map led to him being shipwrecked, imprisoned, and tortured. Imprisonment gave him clarity about his feelings for his lifelong nemesis Harriet Montgomery, from whom he's also returned to claim three kisses—his prize from their latest bet. He's set on convincing Harriet he wants to spend forever with her despite a lifetime of bickering, rivalry, and one-upmanship—knowing it won't be easy. To his surprise, she's the mapmak-

er responsible for his captivity. Morgan uses it to his advantage to seek his sweet revenge and seduce Harriet into marriage.

Despite his taunts and challenges all these years, Harriet's always desired Morgan. Unfortunately, caring for her father with his failing eyesight and dealing with a competitor map-maker copying her work doesn't leave Harriet time for playing their exhilarating games. Morgan makes Harriet feel alive; so she fights the temptation and her attraction out of self-preservation, faking disapproval of him. A threat from Morgan's past puts Harriet and Morgan in danger and draws them closer together. That, plus the intimacies they share when Morgan claims his kisses, lead to Harriet's realization that the intense emotions tying them together aren't about them being enemies after all.

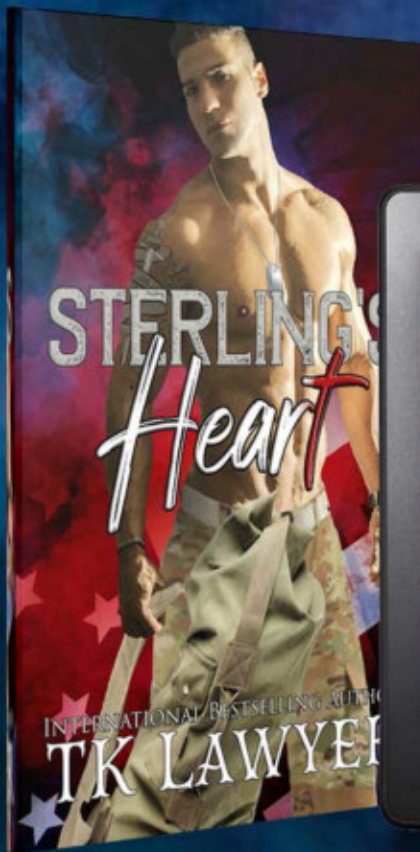
Morgan and Harriet are likable, complex, fallible, and wonderfully developed. Harriet is prickly, intelligent, studious, strong-willed, and smart-

mouthed. With a profoundly loyal heart, Morgan is a handsome, scoundrel. Despite always being at odds, both have a warped sense of humor, sharp wit, and a shared love for adventure and the absurd. Morgan's and Harriet's fiery, sweet, sexy, humorous, and steamy interactions and verbal sparring are so fun. They keep each other on their toes, challenging one another and giving encouragement and strength in times of need.

The pacing is perfect. Despite some moments of angst and suspense, the novel's tone is lighthearted. *A Wicked Game* is a captivating, funny, sexy, sweet, steamy, and romantic historical Regency read with a touch of suspense.

Lacy Hill

Duty, Friendship, or Love?



Sterling was honored to serve his country, but his contract is up, and he's ready to come home to her.

He is a damaged man. The scars of war will heal with Abby's help.

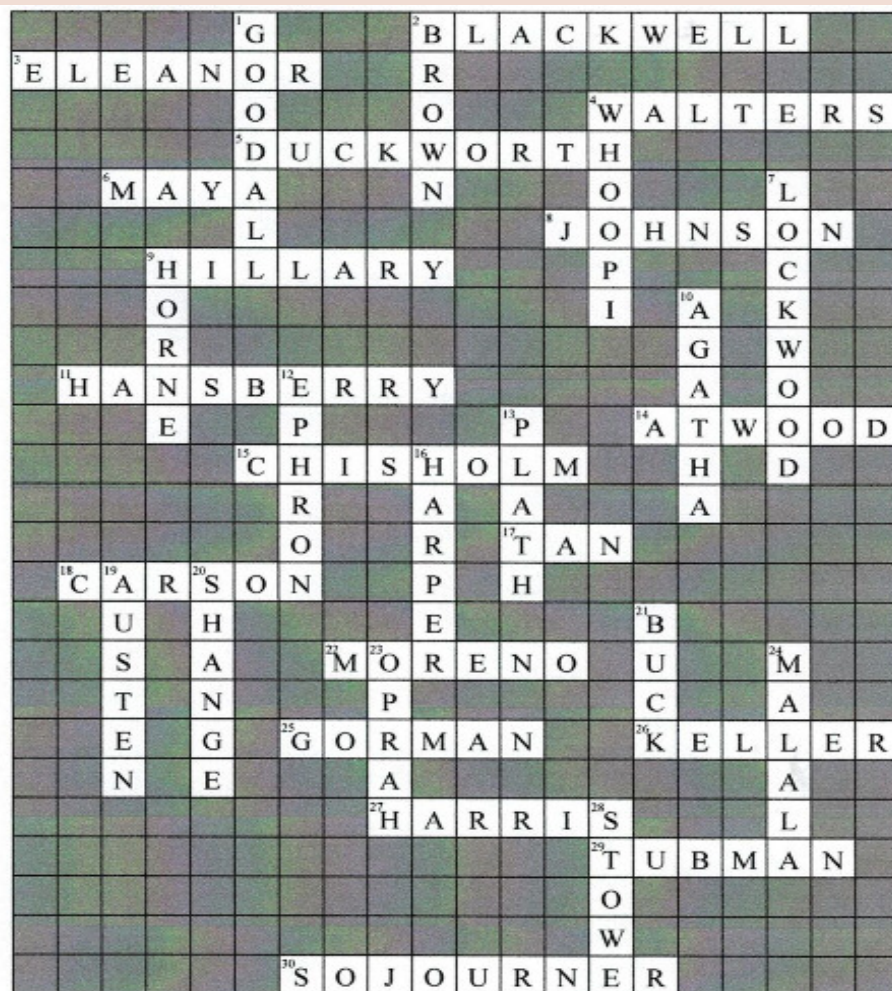
And then...there was Phil. The ex Abby can't, or won't let go. Things have changed.

Or have they?



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Paranormal Romance Reviews

Fantasy
Vampires
Shape Shifters
Time Travel
Werewolves...

Lone Women

Victor LaValle

One World

E-Book

978-0525512080

☆☆☆ 1/2

Adelaide Henry left the only home she had ever known, carrying a burden heavier than the trunk that accompanies her. She purchases a homesteader claim in remote Montana, hoping to find a safe place. But how can she ever be safe when her troubles have come along with her?

Lone Women is an imaginative novel not easily categorized as just mere historical fiction. LaValle's story feels mythical and dramatic, as much a tall tale as an entry in the American history textbook. On the surface, it's about an African-American woman who travels to the last frontier of America at the time of the First World War. People go West to reinvent themselves, and bring their emotional baggage, trauma and toxicity with them. In the case of Adelaide, LaValle uses metaphor in a poetic and powerful way. Themes of family legacy, loyalty, and the complicated relations between parent and child, along with the scars they leave on the psyche, resonate heavily in this short



novel. LaValle's writing is poetic and hypnotic, saying a lot with few words. He establishes his characters with spare but evocative language, allowing scenes to unfold in a way that forces readers to reevaluate their initial expectations of those characters. *Lone Women* transports readers into a place where the unbelievable is reality and one's perceptions will be challenged around every corner. *Lone Women* delivers powerful insights into the nature of humanity along with a fascinating story.

Danielle Hill

Twilight Destiny

Amanda Ashley

Ethan Ellenberg Literary Agency

E-book

B0BSDSNP5Z

☆☆☆ 1/2

Rosa Ravenwood traveled to Morgan Creek to visit with Rylan Saintcrow in hopes that he would introduce her to a vampire who would turn her if she decided that's what she wanted. She knew several, including family, who were vampires, and she wanted to be one as well.

Deciding it would be best and safer if he accompanied Rosa on her search, Rylan agreed to help her. While

waiting on Rylan, she spent the day exploring the town which had once been a haven for vampires. Later that evening, she and Rylan went searching for vampires who may be interested in turning her.

And she was introduced to Jake Kincaid and her life changed drastically...

Amanda Ashley has given us an engrossing story in *Twilight Destiny* that takes the reader on a fantastic journey. Highly recommend!

Elena B

The Vampire Billionaire's Secret Baby

Sharon Buchbinder

CPC Publishing

E-book

B0BQ2DPNLL

☆☆☆ 1/2

Meddy Stheno is a home organizer and has been hired by newcomer and admitted vampire, Quinn Ward. His son, Danny, is a dhampir, and wanted by some very dangerous people. Meddy has been sworn to secrecy.

Antoinette, Raven's sister, is determined to find the boy and use him for her nefarious, scientific experiments. In order to help Quinn protect his son, the residents of Cat's Paw Cove joined together for a good old-fashioned supernatural battle.



torture...*Broken Chains* is fantastic! A must read!

Kitty Lane

Paranormal

The Vampire Billionaire's Secret Baby (continued)

The Vampire Billionaire's Secret Baby is fantastic! This story had me in its pages from the very first paragraph. Grab a drink and snacks, because you will not want to be interrupted!

Lauren Calder

Erotica

Some Like It Hot!!!

Same Sex Couples

SM

Multi Couples

Alexander

Harlowe Savage

Self-Published

E-book

B0B97XX5Y6

☆☆☆

Alexander became Regent of Macedon when he was sixteen years old. His father summoned him to the front lines to join him in battle. He was accompanied by his best friend Hephaestion. It was there between battles they realized that there was more than just platonic friendship.

Being next in line to the throne, Alexander knew he had to take a wife and produce an heir. It didn't matter what his preferences were; he had a responsibility. When his father was assassinated, Alexander had no choice but to take his father's place.

Savage falters on historical accuracy but it's a good story nevertheless.

Kitty Lane

Broken Chains

Karina Kantas

Dirty Streets Press

E-book

978-19129965064.

☆☆☆☆☆



Elizabeth Finly was playing a dangerous game and knew she was in trouble. When MI5 brought her in for questioning, she was in deep.

A year later, Alex, one of the agents who'd questioned her, offered her a job at MI5. She accepted. She'd rather live the exciting life than to sit behind a keyboard and write about it. Danger from every angle was now a part of her everyday life.

During a case she was captured, questioned, and tortured. But MI5 had her back, and before it was too late, before they'd killed her, she'd been rescued. Things weren't over, not by a long shot. Three deadly unrelenting mafia bosses would stalk her, and she'd be passed around in a brutal mix of



Happy Easter
from
Affaire de Coeur



The Many Dates of Indigo

Amber D. Samuel

Narrated by Amber D. Samuel
and Reina Mystique

Dreamscape Media

Audiobook

978-1666630497

☆☆☆ 1/2

Reina Mystique narrates Amber D. Samuel's *The Many Dates of Indigo* about a successful Houston luxury shoe and accessory boutique owner who, on the verge of her 30th birthday, begins searching for love. At her sister's baby shower, Indigo wonders why she hasn't experienced a healthy, long-term relationship. She can't find a partner who fits her perfectly. Tired of her lackluster dating life and longing for someone to share her life with, she plans to date her way to her perfect man who must be good with her enormous and unruly family and hectic life and fit with her tight-knit friends, especially her ride-or-die childhood BFF, Nate, who's reliable, supportive, and long-suffering.

Meanwhile, Indigo struggles to juggle her work, family, friends, and dreams. And she's gotten so caught up in her search that she's losing sight of her life. Indigo's comfortable in her own skin, walking her own path. But she lets family pressure and expectations, what others think about her, and

fear incapacitate her. Can she let go of unrealistic expectations, face her fears, and learn to forgive, opening her heart and life to her perfect fit who's been by her side all this time?

Mystique's lively and expressive narration complements Samuels' funny and emotional narrative style, bringing the story and characters to life and drawing readers into Indigo's journey. Her voices for Indigo, Nate, and her family and friends fit the characters perfectly.

Samuel's lively dialogue, vivid descriptions, fascinating and flawed characters, and their interactions keep the story flowing with excellent pacing. She develops Indigo and Nate and their relationship through funny, sweet, surprising moments of heat and chemistry blended with suppressed emotions. Life-long childhood best friends Indigo and Nate's relationship deepened into love. However, an emotional college breakup almost ruined their friendship. Why they broke up is a devastating secret only they share and never mention to safeguard their friendship.

The Many Dates of Indigo is an entertaining, funny, sweet, sexy, angst exploration of friendship, first love, self-discovery, second chances, regret, making peace with the past, family, following your passion, searching for love, and forgiveness.

Lacy Hill

The Plus One (A Brush with Love #3)

Mazey Eddings

Narrated by Mazey Eddings, Imani Jade Powers, and Joe Arden

Macmillan Audio

Streaming audiobooks and cd's

978-1250881953

☆☆☆☆



Two childhood enemies—frenemies—unexpectedly fall in love while fake dating for her brother's/his BFF's wedding in Mazey Eddings' *The Plus One*. Imani Jade Powers and Joe Arden narrate.

Psychiatrist Indira's life appears perfect until she catches her boyfriend cheating. Jude, her lifelong enemy, is a doctor who's traveled the world treating emergencies and humanitarian crises. His state of mind and life are in turmoil. Elaborate wedding events are stressing Jude out, and Indira's forced to see her ex and his girlfriend more than is healthy. She and Jude become each other's fake wedding dates to ease the strain and offer buffers. But fake displays of affection and forced proximity draw them closer together, shifting their relationship.

Powers and Arden bring Eddings' beautifully written novel to life with expressive narration that perfectly fits and differentiates between the characters. They use pacing, intonation, and emotion to give the characters distinct voices—reveal their personalities, feelings, quirks, and state of mind.

Eddings' vivid description; natural-sounding and lively dialogue; complex, likable, fallible, and deftly developed and evolved characters; and use of language and active writing style make her novels irresistible and unput-downable. She draws you in from the opening scene and keeps you immersed. Eddings develops and evolves Indira and Jude from frenemies to lovers by weaving together moments from their past and present. Their love scenes are sweet, intimate, steamy, deeply emotional, and intensely sexy.

Eddings explores PTSD and

Audiobooks

recovering from parents' divorce with nuance and care. The Plus One is captivating, swoony, funny, steamy, sweet, sexy, poignant, and romantic.

Lacy Hill

Twice a Quinceañera

Yamile Saied Méndez

Narrated by Yamile Saied Mendez and

Marisol Ramirez

Recorded Books

Audiobooks

978-1705058251

★★★★★



Marisol Ramirez narrates Yamile Saied Méndez's *Twice a Quinceañera* about Nadia Palacio finally standing up to her cheating fiancé and canceling their wedding one month before her wedding day and 30th birthday. A successful attorney, Nadia's unsure how to break the news to her Argentinian family. Since all her family will be there and the wedding venue's already been paid for, she plans a quinceañera—sweet 15—for her birthday. Nadia can celebrate her treintañera—double quinces—while celebrating her accomplishments and herself as the first professional in her family. Unexpectedly, Marcos Hawkins—with whom she had a brief college fling that became profound and life-changing—runs the venue and is planning her double quinces. And he looks just as delicious as back then.

Ramirez's narration complements Méndez's beautiful novel about Nadia coming into her own, learning to celebrate herself, her successes, and getting a second chance with the man who consumed her young heart. Ramirez's expressive, vivacious narration vividly brings to life Méndez's original/creative story and characters. Her gorgeous voice and Spanish accent capture Mendez's emotional and dynamic writing style, giving the characters distinct voices using accents, dialects, pacing, intonation, and emotion. Ramirez perfectly fits Nadia, Marcos, and the supporting characters. Ramirez vividly expresses Nadia and Marcos' desire, passion, and love for one another while capturing emotions associated with their familial relationships and life issues.

Méndez's active writing style, colorful description, skillful world-building, and intriguing story draw readers in from the first scene. Her story features diverse characters she develops with lively and natural-sounding dialogue—Spanish and English—and animated and entertaining character interactions. Méndez wonderfully evolves her fascinating, relatable, fallible, and likable characters.

Twice a Quinceañera is a delightfully funny, sweet, sexy, steamy, and emotional romance about second chances, soulmates, making peace with who you are and where you are in your life, grief, loss, family, forgiveness, facing your fears, insecurity, self-acceptance, self-discovery, self-love, and self-esteem.

Lacy Hill



**Rockets Above Us
Beaches Beside Us
and a Book in our Hands**

**The 7th Annual Space
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Reviews from other genre

Ghostly Command

R.K. O'Brien
Self-published
E-book
B0B3YS1V65
☆☆☆

Joanna Davis is middle-aged, divorced, and an author. While she was trying to write, the banging and work sounds from the construction workers was distracting to her. She was having a typical day when her cat started acting oddly. Then she started hearing things go bump in the night.

A specter had appeared. It wasn't anything surprising. She'd seen ghosts and felt their presence many times. When the ghost appeared to her again, Joanna knew without a doubt the ghost had been murdered. Joanna was going to figure out who did it and what happened.

Ghostly Command is very slow with unnecessary fillers. It doesn't really get started until about forty pages in. Once the reader got past that point, the book took a turn for the better.
Lauren Calder

Kill Your Darlings

L.E. Harper
Shivnath Productions
E-book
978-1792366628
☆☆☆

Lucid dreaming is her escape. It was what she could control.

Kyla created a magical world where she could live a life with Valen. She was the Lightbringer, the heroine in her dreams. Her make-believe world is only interrupted by the abrupt reality of waking life.

Of course, in the story, one must have a dragon, a warrior and friend. This is a wow story. It's unique, inspiring and dark all at the same time. A must read!
Lauren Calder

Knockout Beauty and Other Afflictions

Marina Rubin
Crownsnest Books
E-book
978-0921332893
☆☆☆

Knockout Beauty and Other Afflictions is an anthology featuring a variety of stories.

"Jaula" Daisy had met the famous author and her idol. She had asked him a few questions while he signed her book. Everyone thought he was so impressed the author invited her to an invitation-only event. It had caused a stir, but it had also given her the push she needed to succeed.

"She Works Hard for the Money" A group of tourists in Bangkok arrived at a small theater to be entertained by a show. Entertainment included a trick with female parts to open a soda bottle, and ping pong balls, and other various things were being inserted. Oh, the irony of performers.

"The Sheep" Myrtle was visiting in New Zealand. Her coat was

Booty

sopping wet, but it wasn't going to deter her. She took advantage of what kept her warm the night before. Wrapping it about her, the comforter now became a warm covering for her expeditions in New Zealand. Near the end of the day, she volunteered to shear a sheep on stage.

Knockout Beauty and Other Afflictions is a collection of stories inciting different emotion with each one.
Elena B

Lifeline to a Soul Interior

John K McLaughlin

Lifeline Education Connection

E-book

979-898668911

★★★★

Getting a job teaching inmates at a low security prison wasn't exactly the author's first choice. It did become his best choice at the time. Teaching the inmates to become productive adults became a life-changer.

Once his tour was done, Mr. McLaughlin had a complete perspective. It wasn't going to be anything like he was expecting.

Woven into the book are bits of memories as a child and college student, all leading to where he landed—educating prison inmates. It gives an open perception for the reader to understand and relate to the author.

Time proved they all learned from each other.

Lifeline to a Soul Interior held this reviewer's interest. It's a good, solid story.

Elena B

Piñata

Leopoldo Gout

Tor Nightfire

Hardcover

978-1250781178

★★ 1/2

Carmen Sánchez is an American architect. She is in Mexico supervising the renovation of an abandoned abbey. It's summer so Carmen brings her girls. Eleven-year-old Luna is thrilled. Izel, Carmen's sixteen-year-

old, is not.

Luna and Izel are visiting the work site when a scaffold collapses. It breaks open a secret chamber. Inside are several ancient artifacts including a piñata, but not the kind that children break at parties. No, this is a tlalxoktli, a clay pot filled with flesh, entrails, cartilage organs and blood. These piñatas were smashed as offerings to the god, Huitzilopochtli. Unbeknownst to anyone, Luna sneaks the piñata out of the abbey.

Carmen's company is unhappy with the delay that the discovery causes. They recall her to the states. Once home, Luna hides the piñata in her room. Overnight she changes from a happy, outgoing child to an angry, secretive one.

Carmen can't help noticing how moody Luna has become. At first, she dismisses the behavior as preteen hormone changes. But it becomes apparent that it's something more serious. Carmen becomes convinced that something evil has followed them home. It's trying to possess Luna and seems to be succeeding.

Piñata is confusing. Day-to-day events are interspersed with paranormal occurrences. It is hard to tell what is real and what are visions.

Sheila Griffin

The Rebirth

V.P. Evans

Self-published

E-Book

B0BW78LV5

★★★★

Assassinations force Jason Roneros and his contemporary Mark into a desperate quest. A dangerous secret organization, the Imperatores has gone off its rails. Jason and Mark need to find a cache of information on a hard drive to stop those causing the chaos and murder.

The upper echelons of the organization are vying for power and are bent on keeping the secrets. When it's realized that Jason and Mark are now

on the hunt, the Imperatores draw on all their resources to stop them—they know way too much. Crooked law enforcement and a compromised FBI turn over many stones in the hunt.

When the two find the hard drive was destroyed, the quest changes to find the Tellus, the hidden guide to power and the Rebirth for the one who leads the Imperatores. The danger along the way and deaths of those they love only drives them that much harder to succeed.

The beginning sets the pace and tone for the story. Jason and Mark are older and not nearly as fit as they once were, making their running and hiding all the more difficult. Drawing on their past and quietly known associates along the way, they continue the chase almost throughout the entire story.

Evans does use a lot of historical references and implications that repeatedly seem to draw the reader away from the story, but it comes back into line. It's easy to read and will hold the reader's interest.

Lauren Calder

Rebirth of the Gangster Act 4: Inheritance

C.J. Standal

C.J. Standal Productions

Graphic Novel

97-98986905006

★★★★

Two families—the Thompson's and the Anderson's—have a criminal history together. After things don't go as planned, the sons, Marcus and Hunter, decide to take things into their own hands.

A robbery is planned, but each son has his own agenda, which he intends to carry out once the object of the robbery is obtained. But underlying both of their schemes is the same motivation: Revenge!

As the title indicates, this is the 4th installment of a graphic novel, so this reviewer came in at the end of the



saga. Never having read (or reviewed) a graphic novel before, I found it was a little hard to follow at first. But with the excellent illustrations and easy-to-follow storyline, this final installment of *Rebirth of the Gangster* neatly wraps up the saga of two families and their thirst for revenge without the advantage of reading the three prior installments.

Lani Roberts

Writing Professional Emails

Michelle Swann Ph.D.

Self-published

E-Book

B0BJVH52CP

★★★★ 1/2

People have underestimated the value of writing professional emails and being a professional in this internet world of business. It has become, and shouldn't be, a very casual way of communicating while dealing with business. It is a major part of business communication which can, if done wrong, hurt a business or career.

This guide helps to improve

writing skills and teaches the proper way to communicate from the opening salutation to the closing signature. It offers the reader a comprehensive and detailed guide to writing professional emails and letters. This is extremely

valuable to career-minded individuals.

Writing Professional Emails is one of the best self-guiding texts out there. Follow the guide and success will surely follow. This is a must have for any career-minded individual.

Lauren Calder

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