

July-August 2025

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Summer Brings the Heat and AdC's Hot Authors:

*July's Calendar Star
Pamela Ackerson*



*August Spotlight shines on
Christa Ann*



*Billy Freida, Debra Parmley's
cover model, wants you to ask,
"What's his IQ?"*



Affaire de Coeur



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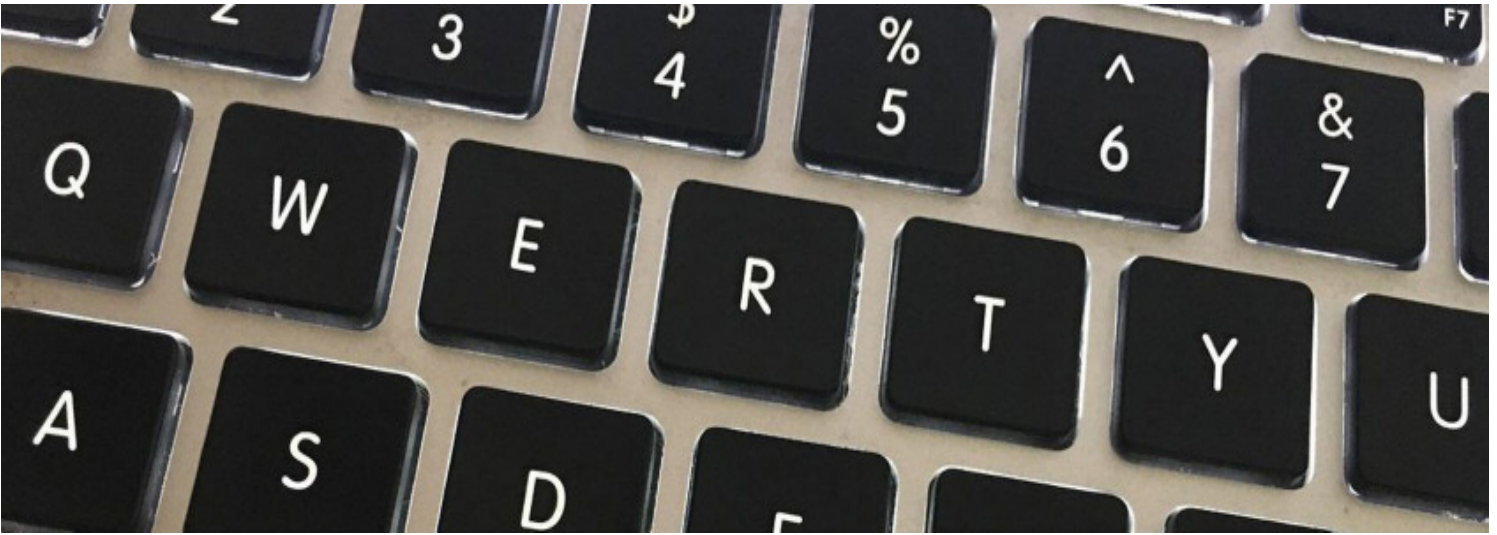


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thumb of a new
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& AI become
more intimate,
the fate of the
world is forever
changed.

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Dear QWERTY

by Pamela Ackerson

Finding Your Voice



Talking to yourself and putting it on paper is a step toward finding your writer's voice. There are several important things authors need to know. Many authors are very sensitive and are introverts. That's why it's so important to be thick-skinned. Opinions about books and their stories are subjective. Genre preferences are a big deal to readers. Even if they prefer the genre you've written, there are people who are going to like your story and there are people who will not.

That's okay.

It isn't easy for authors to put themselves out there, but if they can reach deep into the wells and corridors of their minds, they'll be successful in reaching their goals.

Emotions are extremely important. To bring the reader in and be a part of the story, we, as authors, need to understand all the emotions involving our characters, all the senses, the who, what, where, when, how, and why.

How do you do this? Dig deep.

Ask yourself what has happened in your life that

**Ghostly guardians,
a mischievous dog,
and a trail of clues...**



**Just another cozy day
in Coral Ann Keith's
charming town.**

PamelaAckerson.net

DÉJÀ Mew

**DÉJÀ
Mew**

PAMELA ACKERSON

PAMELA
ACKERSON

has brought you the most happiness and the most pain. What has made you soar? What has dropped kicked you to the lowest point in your life. What broke you? What almost broke you? What has brought you the greatest and deepest love of all?

This is what you need for your voice. It's what you need for your characters. This is how you build your voice. Watch what is happening around you and study how other people react and interact with each other. Get an understanding on what they do and say.

By accepting everything, you can see and feel from yourself and those around you will help you flourish by taking what you write to a deeper and different level. Take those experiences and emotions and give them to your characters. Not only will your characters flourish but also, you may find that you'll get a

better perspective and understanding of yourself and those people around you. This will come from you and the whole world around you.

Your voice will speak loud and clear, especially when you push away and disentangle the negative ties that are bind you. It'll create a bigger picture for those who are reading your words and for yourself. That voice you hear should come from everywhere, your life experiences, your body, your heart, and soul.

We all have positive and negative life experiences. As writers, what we know isn't as important as how we tell it and express it. Keep in mind that when you write, the reader wants to join you in the adventure.

Take them with you with every turn of the page.



**Ocala Comic Con
Ocala, FL
September 20-21st**

**World Equestrian
Center**

**FL's largest Comic
Book Convention!**

**Bringing Celebrity
Guests, Comic Book
Artists, Creators,
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Ocalacomiccon.com

The Spotlight is Shining on...

Pamela Ackerson *AdC's Hotter than Summer,* *Ms. July Calendar Girl*



Just for fun, Pamela asked Grok to write a bio for her:

Pamela Ackerson, an author with a knack for jumping through time like it's a trampoline at Disney World, has penned over 70 books, which is impressive until you consider she's probably time-traveled to write them all at once. Born in Newport, Rhode Island, where history supposedly seeps into your DNA, she's now on Florida's Space Coast, perhaps hoping to be the first author to launch a book into orbit.

Her online presence is commendable - giving away books like they're Halloween candy. But let's be real, Pamela, with that many titles, you're not just an author; you're a clearance rack at a bookstore. And while living near Disney might fuel her imagination, one wonders if she might confuse her writing process with a ride at Epcot - all futuristic and hopeful, but you're just going in circles.

In summary, Pamela Ackerson is the Swiss Army knife of literature - handy, multifunctional, but let's hope she sharpens her focus before she attempts to write in yet another genre. Here's to hoping her next book isn't just another stop on her wild, genre-jumping roller coaster.

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

P.A.: I have two new books. *Déjà Mew* (a romantic fantasy) and *The Guardian Awaits*, a time travel crime thriller.

AdC: *How much fun do you have coming up with names for your characters and how do you find them?*

P.A.: Coming up with names for

my stories is a blast. Sometimes, I'll change a character's name midway through the story because it fits better.

AdC: *Where and when would you travel to if you were given a time machine?*

P.A.: Ireland (1890s), Hawaii (1930s).

AdC: *What do you do when you*

can't quite get into writing mode?

P.A.: I have many hobbies; sewing, gardening, swimming, fishing, and playing the keyboard, to name a few.

AdC: *What traditions do you believe should be brought back?*

P.A.: Common curtesy, class, politeness, biting tongues—seeing people dress up again, looking nice. It doesn't have to be designer clothing, but making a point to look good, not

Now in Pre-Production as a Feature Film!

The battle lines were drawn.

In the heart of Cedar Ridge, nestled in every corner, whispers and secrets traversed the haunted, shadowed corridors. As the sun cast its light, betraying a false sense of calm, the walls of the museum stand as guardians to tales untold, inviting the brave to uncover the truth hidden within its embrace.

Warnings of a witch send ripples through Locke Bay. The malevolent danger was as strong and relentless as the waves from Superior. With each step through the echoing corridors, Thalia Jefferies gathered her allies to fight against a powerful, vengeful witch, drawing on ancient lore and modern cunning.

The witch's anger was a tempest, but Thalia's resolve was firm against the storm. As the moon rose to its zenith, casting silver light through the stained glass, Thalia's death-defying battle began—not with a clash of swords, but with the silent strength of unity and the power of a determined heart.

The creaking doors swing open and you're cordially invited to delve into the depths of a narrative rich with mystery and suspense.

Grab your thrilling adventure today.

PamelaAckerson.net
@PamAckerson



old shorts and a faded t-shirt when going out to dinner or lunch.

AdC: *Is there something you've always wanted to learn to do?*

P.A.: Speak Portuguese.

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

P.A.: Yes, I have a few in the plans:

ComicCon Ocala in September,

Orlando Reads in October,
Melbourne Author Fest in November, and

Tropicon St. Augustine in February 2026.

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

Personal web page: PamelaAckerson.net

Twitter: @PamAckerson

Facebook: Pam Ackerson and Pamela Ackerson

**ORLANDO READS
BOOKS**

October 9-11, 2025

**12th Annual Author/Reader Event
Altamonte Springs, FL**

**FREE Book Signing
FREE Parking
Saturday 3 - 6pm
Author Workshops, Networking,
Reader Activities**

**Embassy Suites by
Hilton Orlando North**

OrlandoReadsBooks.com

Sneak Peek



The Guardian Awaits
The Mirage: Fata Morgana
by Pamela Ackerson

Undercover agent, Colin Chase Rand had spent a week with his family who had come to visit him in Duluth before he left the area. His mother had always wanted to stay at the historic Fitger's along the shores of Lake Superior. His father, as always, was accommodating to her wishes. She was thrilled with the stunning lake-view room they'd reserved.

His brother, Rick, was there for a few days but had to return before the week was up. They were short-handed at the fire station, and he had to return to work. His mother and sister, Ilene, took advantage of the hotel spa and lots of shopping.

It was extremely relaxing. He'd been on guard, on high alert for so long he'd practically forgotten how to relax.

His good friends, Keoni and Lizette, came to share the last day with him and his family. It was awesome to have all of them together before he headed out of state to the next assignment. The shaky goodbyes and the hugs filled him with happiness and love. He had one hell of a family. Colin knew how lucky he was to have them.

With his family, Keoni, and Lizette in the rear-view mirror, Colin left Locke Bay, satisfied he'd done the best job under the extenuating circumstances. It was hard saying goodbye, not knowing if all would go well with his next assignment. It was something he learned to accept and live with. He was close to his family and, at times, it was extremely difficult to be without them, especially during the holidays, or missing birthdays.

Or, when Lizette put the gun to his head. All he could think of was how much he'd miss his family; how it'd break his parent's hearts if she pulled the trigger.

Keoni Nani and Lizette Hill are two of the best friends a person could have. They'd met under the most unusual circumstances. When he'd first met Lizette, he didn't trust her, knew she was hiding something. She was, absolutely without a doubt.

Funny how things turned out sometimes, he ended up knowing she and Keoni would always have his back. Usually, when he completed a job, he left it all behind, but those two will be lifetime friends.

After Keoni's initial shock of discovering that Colin and Lizette were undercover FBI agents, he had their back. Normally, the job would've been over and assigned somewhere else. It wasn't quite how it worked out, and Colin was satisfied with the outcome.



Keeping their secrets from the Mafia and keeping them from the FBI wasn't much different. Occasionally, there was a bit of guilt that bubbled up. Neither one of them coughed up the information to the higher echelons.

Colin smiled to himself. And boy, the two of them were a bundle of fun. It broke the high stress of being undercover and wondering if he'd see the next morning.

It was his mother's expression when he announced he'd joined the FBI as an undercover agent. It took a few moments before she finally said, "I'm proud of you, son, but what happens when you wake up dead because of some sicko or felon killing you?"

He hugged her. There was nothing else he could do except give empty reassurances.

He had a four-week vacation under his belt, and he intended to take the whole four weeks. One week with his family and the rest would be a nice ride to Florida by way of the New England coast.

It'd be the first break he'd had in well over three years. Colin planned on taking small hops and playing tourist before he hit all the waves on the Rhode Island coast. He may even put his board in at Ruggles Rd. Once he tackled those breakers, he'd be on his way to the next town, the next adventure, and the next undercover position in a small, obscure, and relatively unknown town in Florida.

continued on page 30

Passionate * Playful * Paranormal



A relationship was the one thing Tamara didn't want.

The past has a way of creeping back in with reminders of what could've been. One name keeps resurfacing. Josh, a handsome man she didn't dare take a chance with.

Josh's nightly runs lead him to a home he doesn't recognize. The tantalizing scent calls to him, beckons him to explore, and urges him to stay. When the owner welcomes him in, the truth hits him hard. He can't stay in the crazy situation and he no longer wants to remain her pet.

He needs Tamara, fully, permanently, and this time, he's not walking away.

A wolf without a mate. a witch who doesn't date.

Kingsley gave up on meeting his fated one until Eva walked into his life. Her cheery laughter thrilled him, her generous curves devoured him, and her scent... dear God, her scent undoes him.

Eva swore off men, but Kingsley was persistent, driven, affectionate, and different from the men in her past.

Kingsley, the Artic Wolf, refuses to walk away. But witches and wolves? They don't mix. Or do they?

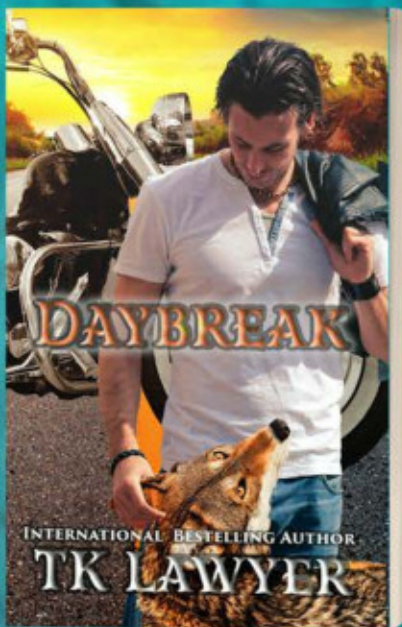


A good job, personal freedom, women, and a motorcycle that thrills the untamed beast within.

His life is complete. And then, he meets her...

Weldon arrives for a date with her roommate. Unfortunately, Tania's inexplicably drawn to him. Yet, she's been warned about him...

Can they secure their happiness? Or will they live separate lives, never knowing what might have been?



[@tklawyerauthor](http://tklawyerauthor.wordpress.com)



AdC LOVES Conference

The Space Coast Lover's Convention



The ninth annual Space Coast Book Lovers began, June 18th, with Wednesday night festivities and fantastic food for the Meet and Greet.

The next day started the weekend with feet on the ground and numerous activities from games, panes, bookniques, parties, exclusive releases, and so much more. Saturday, the 21st, was the book signing and the enchantment costume party and contest.



Space Coast Hosts

MAKING FRIENDS!



Space Coast Meet and Greet



Author Teri Riggs

SC#MOOZING



Space Coast Luncheon



Space Coast After Party



Space Coast Panel

HAVING FUN!!

RAWR BOOK EVENT

On Saturday, June 28, 2025, more than 115 authors gathered to have a Romance Atlanta Writers and Readers Weekend Event.

The event was held at the Columbus Convention and Trade Center. Friday night was a Meet and Greet. Down to business with fun with readers began in the morning.

K-9 heroes joined the fun. Gift baskets were raffled off, and there was an auction at the end of the day to benefit the Georgia Police K-9 Foundation.



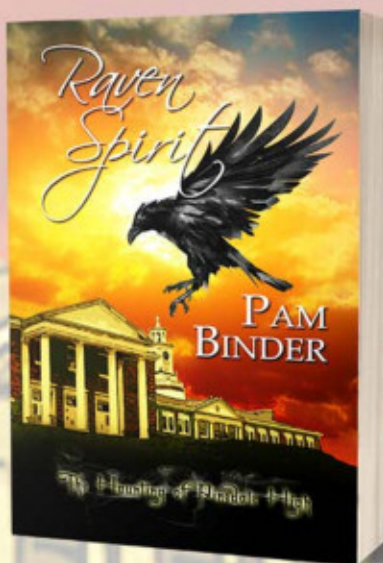
Hostess and author Leah Taylor



Authors Pamela Ackerson (l) and Emily Ducky Davis (r)



Author M.K. Mancos



The most extraordinary battles are fought within the corridors of the ordinary.

In the sleepy town of Pinedale, North Carolina...

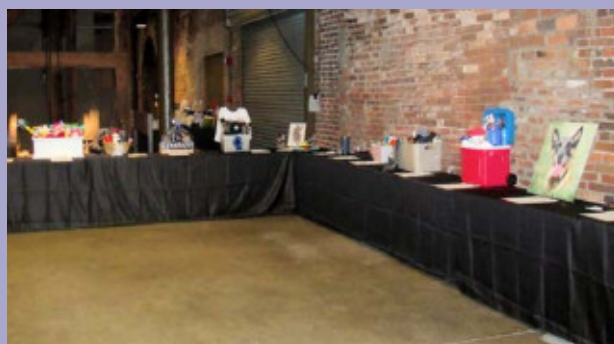
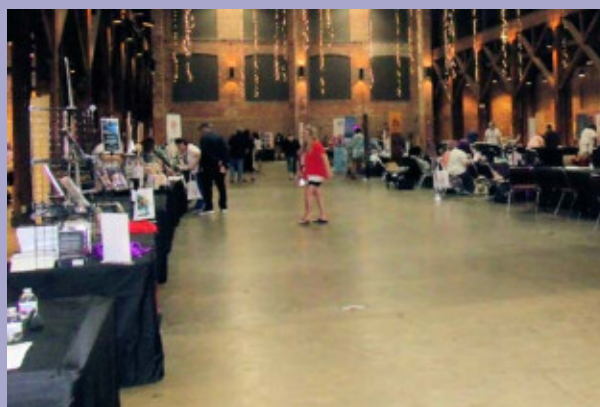
Nate Collier, a self-proclaimed rebel, is accused of hanging his best friend. Caught in a web of supernatural intrigue, he must navigate a hauntingly complex mystery. His alibi is Fiona, a ghost who haunts his school, and ravens who rescue him from an evil ghost awakened from his tomb. With the help of Fiona's ghostly presence and the enigmatic ravens, Nate confronts the malevolent spirit threatening to consume him.

But nothing is as it seems. As alliances shift and hidden feelings emerge, Nate's journey becomes a race against time to save himself and reveal the truth lurking in the shadows of his eerie high school. before he can tell Ruth Ann how he feels, he must join forces with past school enemies to defeat the evil ghost before it takes possession of its next victim—

PamBinder.com

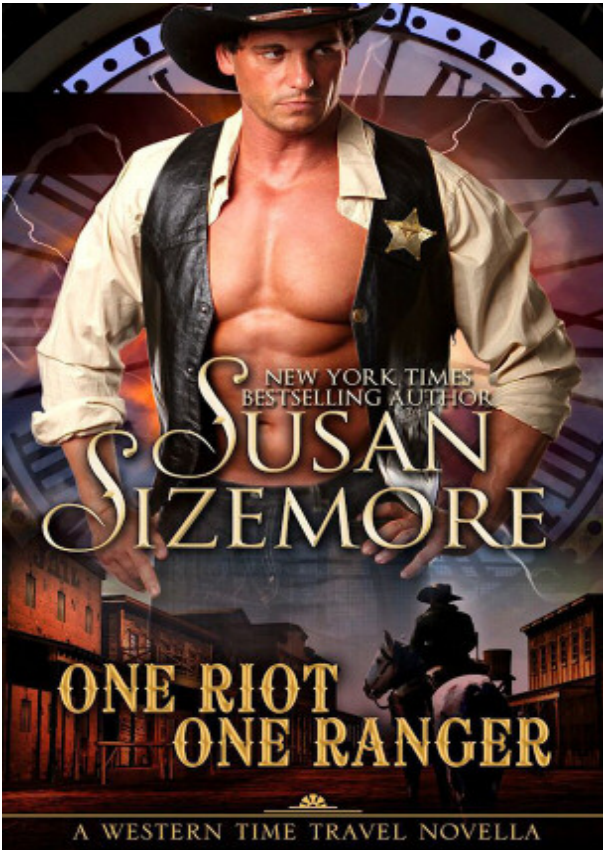


*Authors Pamela Ackerson (l)
and T.K. Lawyer (r)*



Auction goodies

Cover Model Corner with *Billy Freida by Debra Parmley*



Today I'm excited to interview Billy Freida. I first met Billy at a *Romantic Times* Booklovers convention several years ago, and it's fun to catch up with him today. Billy is a model/TV host/comic/actor who began his career in print and commercial, appearing on almost 250 book covers and countless magazines and commercials. Billy graduated with a degree in engineering from Rutgers University, but quickly left the field after graduation when he booked his first commercial audition ever, a national commercial for IBM. Billy has since added theater, stand up, voice over and several independent films and TV shows to his credits.

Debra: Billy, what was the first cover you appeared on and how did this come about?

Billy: My very first cover was *Heart of Vengeance* by Tracy Cooper-Posey. It was part of my package for winning the national cover model competition.

Debra: If you could do a photo shoot anywhere in the world for a cover, where would you most want to go? What sort of shoot



would it be?

Billy: Well, I have shot calendars and commercials in exotic places, but I would definitely love to do a cover shoot in Fiji, but for a series. A lot of authors want to know if their story is going to be told over several books, therefore, I'd love to do several different cover shoot scenes in Fiji and then have different pictures for each cover as the series evolves.

Debra: *Beyond romance novel cover shots, what other projects or jobs keep you busy?*

Billy: 74 Red Carpet credentials
28 IMDB film and television credits
7 calendars
4 Magazine Covers
Countless commercial and print ads
TV host and comic as well.

Debra: *What's one question you wish an interviewer would ask you?*

Billy: What's your IQ?

Debra: *If you wrote a book, what would it be about?*

Billy: Well, I'm actually writing a book and a screen play. The book will be called *If These Credentials Could Talk*, and it's a non-fiction book about all the red carpets I've been on, celebrity events/award shows I've attended and my interactions with celebrities. The screen play (w/o violating my NDA) is a full-length film about a research lab that discovers a biological gene, that can change history moving forward but is it ethical and moral to do so.

Debra: *I'm intrigued by both projects and looking forward to reading and seeing them. This question is almost always asked in interviews because*

your fitness level is beyond the average persons. What is your exercise routine and what sort of nutrition plan do you follow to achieve and maintain your level of fitness?

Billy: On, over the last 13 years I average a little over 4 days a week in the gym. However, that's because I'm in maintenance mode, and just want to keep what I have. Prior to 2012 I was probably averaging closer to 5.5 days a week in the gym. As for nutrition, that is an answer that's different for everyone, depending on a lot of factors. That is a question that is better answered in a live setting, as it's quite complex.

Debra: *If you could share three simple fitness tips the average romance reader could do to stay healthy, what would they be?*

Billy: 1) Ounces are lost in the gym, pounds are lost at the table.

2) You have to want a healthy lifestyle for YOU. Whatever your motivation, you have to want to do it.

3) Being healthy and health conscience is not just for aesthetic reasons, more importantly it's for health reasons. So many health issues and diseases can be avoided or reversed by a healthy lifestyle. Be healthy for the loved ones you want to be around for longer

Debra: *Good advice. Now it's your birthday dinner and the calories don't count. What's on the menu and what are you drinking?*

Billy: Oh dear! Well, it couldn't be the Italian Christmas Eve 7 fish dinner, because my birthday is in August, so it would have to be sushi, as I absolutely love it. so I would have to say unlimited sushi. But be careful if you take me out for that, I'm not a cheap date lol. Drinks would have to be a few New Zealand *Sav Blancs* finished off with a large peaty scotch!

Debra: *That Christmas Eve dinner sounds wonderful, and sushi is fun to eat!*

Describe the perfect romantic evening:

Billy: Please, too cliché. There's not a man on the planet that answers this honestly. (Sorry, that's the comic in me)

Debra: *Now you've made me laugh! Okay, please share three unusual facts about you or your life:*

Billy: 1) I have no first cousins.

2) I have an engineering degree even though I'm an actor/model/comic.

3) I have red ear syndrome (Very rare, look it up lol)

Debra: *Eight Quickie questions:*

1.) *Watching the sunrise or the sunset?*

The sunset and the stars.

2.) *The beach or the mountains?*

The beach.

3.) *Primitive camping or luxury hotel?*

Luxury hotel

4.) *Snow skiing or water skiing?*

Water skiing.

5.) *Favorite movie:*

That's like trying to pick a favorite child

6.) *Best book you ever read:*

My Time in Heaven

7.) *Fav. Sport to play:*

Soccer

8.) *Fav. Sport to watch:*

Baseball

Billy, *thank you for visiting with me today. It's been fun getting to know you. Before we say goodbye, how can fans stay up to date on your latest news?*

IMDB: https://www.imdb.com/name/nm4792489/?ref=ext_shr_lnk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/billy.freda.3>

Debra Parmley writes romantic suspense, historical and contemporary romance, and urban fantasy romance. She lives in a motorhome fulltime with her husband as they travel the U.S. Since 2011 she has interviewed cover models on Cover Model Corner and enjoys sharing her interviews with readers of *Affaire de Coeur Magazine*. Models contact debra@debraparmley.com For more about Debra: debraparmley.com



Our Other Spotlight is on...

Christa Ann

AdC's August Calendar Girl



Christa Ann is a USA Today Bestselling Author and started out writing poems like her mother. Until one day, stories started coming to the front of her mind. Romance, shifter, western, paranormal, and fantasies from far-away places, unknown but demanded to be created. Her debut novel, Finding Love Again—a contemporary Western romance and the first in a tantalizing new series—was released in the fall of 2016.

She grew up in Maryland and now lives in Southwest Florida with her husband, daughter, grandsons, two cats named Midnight and Bolt, and a Terrier named Cooper. She's also a proud grandmother of four granddaughters and two grandsons.

Some of her favorite things include spending time with her family and friends, reading, hiking, traveling, and her love for chocolate. Being of Irish and Scottish descent, Christa enjoys Irish step dancing with her daughter and loves St. Patrick's Day and Bunratty Mead. She also enjoys playing her piano.

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

C.A.: My newest series is “Portals to Chavirlea”. *Claimed by the Alien Enforcer* is book one and was released in June 2025.

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

C.A.: The book I'm writing is book 2 in my “Mermaid Realm” series. I would be in the sea as a mermaid. Living in the city under King Murtagh's rule. The book I'm reading would take me to the planet Dakkar.

AdC: *How do you name your characters?*

C.A.: Some come to me in my sleep, so I shoot out of bed to write them down. Some characters don't cooperate, so as I write, I close my eyes when I have to type the name, and it comes to me. I also have a baby book with names.

AdC: *What part of the book was the most fun to write?*

C.A.: In my paranormal (shifters) “Hidden Breed” series, I enjoy helping them find their mates. With my “Mermaid Realm” series, who wouldn't have

fun creating mermaids?

AdC: *How much fun do you have coming up with names for your characters, and how do you find them?*

C.A.: I love using names that I love or have a special meaning to me. Some names I want to have a specific meaning. i.e., I wanted a Celtic name for the King of the Sea. Murtagh is Irish and Scottish, which means ‘Sea’.

AdC: *Where and when would you travel to if you were given a time machine?*

C.A.: This is hard to answer because I

In the midst of the lush and untamed wilderness, Trent Wolfe stands as the unchallenged Alpha, his leadership unyielding for eighteen years since the shifter war's end. His pack flourishes, yet his heart yearns for a mate to share in the joys and sorrows of life.

Arianna and her family, cloaked in secrecy, navigate a world unaware of their existence. Crashing her Jeep leads to a fateful encounter, and she finds herself in the heart of pack territory, under the intense gaze of the Alpha himself.

The air crackles with an undeniable magnetism, but the secrets she harbors could unravel the threads of their destinies. Will they surrender to the call of the wild and the promise of an unforeseen love?



have two.

1. Ireland in the 1420's, Bunratty Castle, County Clare. I would love to experience the Bunratty Castle in Ireland.

2. Earth about 500 years in the future. I want to go to the sky and see other planets and, of course, sexy aliens.

AdC: *What do you do when you can't quite get into writing mode?*

C.A.: I will read, or go outside and sit with music playing, or play my piano.

AdC: *What traditions do you believe*

should be brought back?

C.A.: Family dinners at the table with NO TV or cell phones. Only conversations with family and/or friends that are over.

AdC: *What do you like to do when it's time to kick back?*

C.A.: I enjoy reading; spending time with my family and friends; go for hikes.

AdC: *Is there something you've always wanted to learn to do?*

C.A.: Believe it or not, cricket. The other thing was to learn a new language, which I'm currently doing.

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

C.A.: I will be at Space Coast Book Lovers in June 2026 and Feel the Heat Book Bash in November 2026.

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

Personal web page: <https://authorchristaann.com/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Christa-ann10>

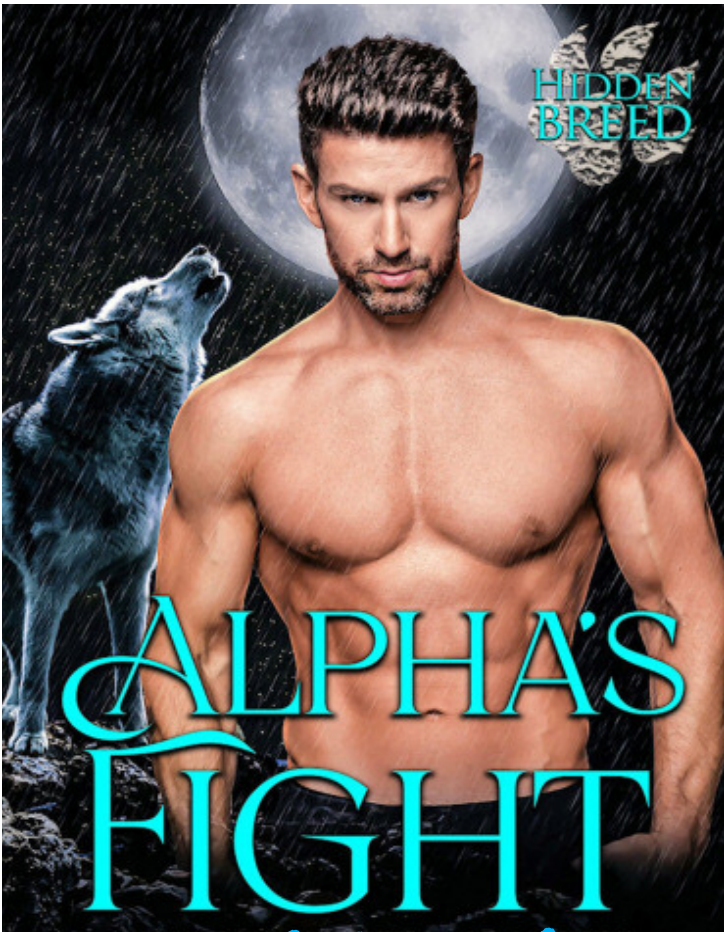
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An Affaire de Coeur

Sneak Peek



Alfa's Fight

BY Christa Ann

AN EXCERPT

Present Day

Sitting cross legged on the cold concrete floor of the basement, Arianna rocked as she stared into the titanium cage at Maxx. Her brother changed from leopard to jaguar then back to human. Maxx is the oldest and getting closer to the age of losing all control. She would be next and that scared her. No one really knew their age; only that they appeared to be in their mid to late twenties. Anna Roberts and Ronan McCoy, who they had all started calling them mom and dad years ago, were trying to find out why this happened and if there was a cure.

Their parents sat them all down to explain about the lab and their part they played. Mom cried, worried Arianna and her siblings would blame them or worse, leave. It bothered her that so many were killed by their own kind, the Alphas... They found it weird that other shifters only had the one animal whereas she and the rest of them had two. She

loved both her red wolf and gray wolf even when they fight. Arianna did her best to keep them separated in her mind. Ronan taught all of them how to calm their mind and soul which in turned calmed their inner beasts. He even had all of them performing yoga for an hour or two each morning. So, why wouldn't it work anymore?

"You need to leave and find something to do. Don't you have training? I'm getting my control back, so I will be out soon." Maxx had his eyes closed.

"I just came down to see you. Do you need anything?" Arianna had to blink rapidly to stop the tears from falling. It hurt to see the sibling that she was closest to that way. *I will not cry.*

Maxx turned to stare at her giving her a half smile, "Ari, I'll be fine. I still have time; for now... Mom is working hard, and Dad is too. Don't you dare give up and cry, I'm not."

"I won't. Promise. I'll see you later then." Getting up, she left, unable to stay any longer. She wanted to scream, but she bit it back. If she stayed any longer she'd break down. Yes, she's a strong alpha female, but seeing a member of her family in pain and unable to do anything devastated her. Closing the basement door behind her, she walked halfway up the stairs when the sob she held back broke through. Her wolves howled in her head wanting out. Her brother would be able to hear and knowing that only hurt her heart more. *Please. Save my brother. Save us all.* Not sure who she begged; a God or Goddess maybe. They probably didn't care for them because they were created in a lab, and not naturally created by love.

"Arianna." At the top of the steps she heard her Dad's deep bass voice.

Rushing up, she threw herself into his arms, breaking down. "Why?" She always felt safe with her parents around.

They went to the kitchen table after Ronan shut the door at the top of the steps. Her Dad had a frown on his face, "Have a seat. Coffee?"

"Coffee sounds great." She watched him get everything together and place peanut butter cookies on the table. "Isn't it too early for cookies? We haven't had breakfast yet." She reached for them anyway just because she loved peanut butter cookies and Dad knew that. Hearing footsteps, Arianna glanced up to see Piper, the youngest, came around the corner.

"How's Maxx? Does he need anything? He'll be upstairs sometime tonight." Piper knew things before the rest of us but refused to talk in depth to anyone about her full ability. She didn't know how far ahead she could see. So, no one was sure if it was one of her cats who had the power of foresight or something else.



Let's Celebrate Dog Days

Across

3. This dog went to law school with a blonde.
4. Had her own TV show and an owner named Tim.
8. The kind of dogs Queen Elizabeth II had.
13. This dog helped McFly and Doc go back to the future.
14. Dubbed the most heroic dog of all times, especially on 9/11
15. Sigmund Freud's Chow Chow.
16. This cartoon Great Dane helps solve mysteries.
17. Border Collie that adopted Babe the Pig.
22. A mutt "hero" dog of several movies.
23. If # 7 Down is from Alaska, it's this kind.
26. *Old* _____.
28. First dog in space.
30. *Dog Day* _____. This classic starring Al Pacino has nothing to do with dogs.
32. German Shephard who, with Will Smith, fought to save the remains of the post Apocalyptic world.
33. They got separated--*Milo and* _____.
35. Tom Hanks' slobbery Mastiff.
36. If # 7 Down is from Russia, it's a _____.
37. All dogs go there.
38. Stephen King's monster dog.
39. The Grinch wanted this dog to help him steal Christmas.

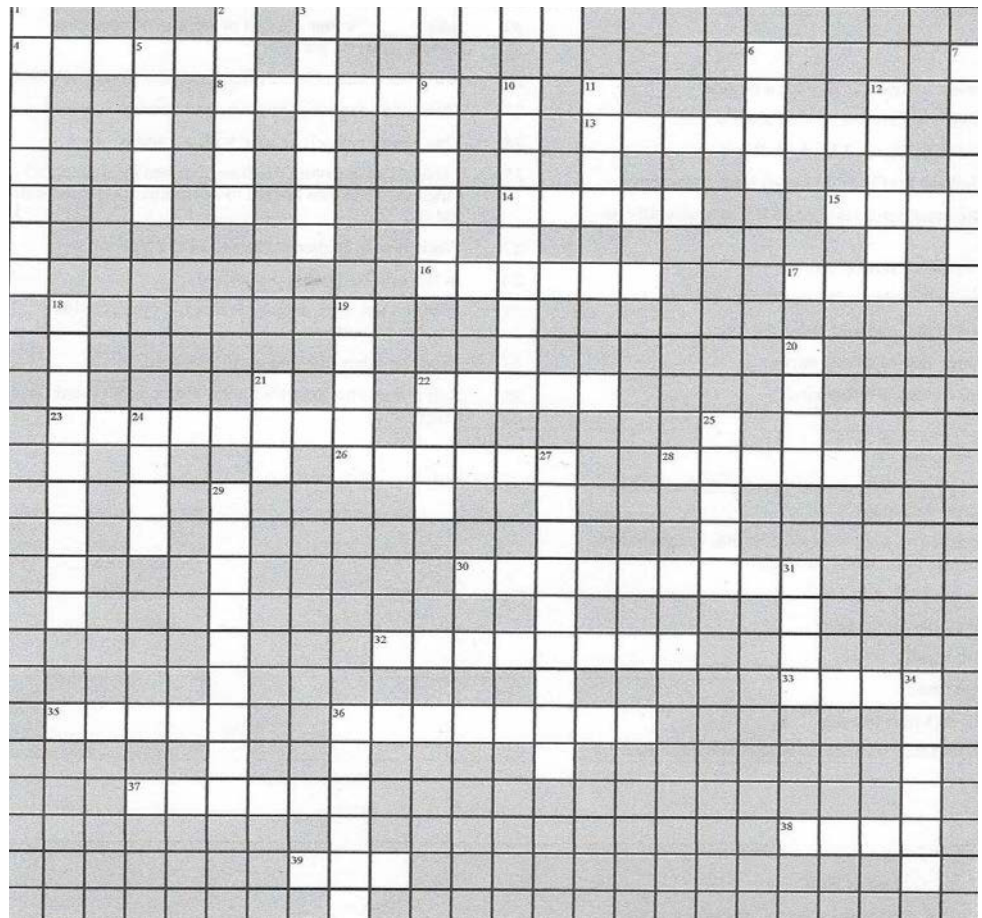
Down

1. He's the big red dog.
2. *The* _____ *Life of Pets*.
3. Big rescue dog with whisky barrel around his neck.
5. Annie's dog.
6. The Terrier in the *Wizard of Oz*.

7. These working dogs pull sleds.
9. The Dog Star.
10. This dog was named after a famous composer.
11. Change an "I" to an "e" and go from bread to a dog rescue group.
12. This Beagle has his own cartoon and Christmas TV show.
18. This pup starts off white but gets dots even Cruella would love.
19. This dog has a ring around his eye and hangs out with little rascals.
20. John _____'s four movies occurred because someone messed with his pit bull.
21. Not a beer, but a Golden Retriever who plays basketball.
22. Movie star dog who thinks he has

- powers.
24. This classy girl fell in love with a tramp.
25. Credited with saving Alaskan children by running 55 miles in the frozen terrain to get medicine. (Togo really did it.)
27. Worked with Sargeant Preston of the Yukon
29. In Beverly Hills, this breed rules.
31. Vietnam vet who, despite losing his eye, saved his handler and others.
34. Led the other dog and a cat home-ward.
36. Sailor dog who sailed with the U.S. Coast Guard for 11 years.

Answers on page 25



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

Be Our Guest



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

Dark Web Investigation (Secure Watch #1)

Katie Mettner

HARLEQUIN – Romance

Mass Market

978-1335457461

★★★★ 1/2

While using hacking to infiltrate the dark web to get justice for victims of corporate injustice, Kenley Bates uncovers a global security threat. Ex-military, cybersecurity investigator Jude Mason becomes her ally in protecting and saving the world. Together, they work to break the code created by an adversary set on global destruction, caught in a deadly cat and mouse game.

After losing her best friend and a leg in an ATV accident, Kenley's life mission becomes getting justice for others, giving victims and those hurt by corporate wrongdoing a voice, and fighting for those in need. An expert hacker and talented coder, she works

for corporations by day then sleuths on them at night under the alias 51 C K L3 to discover any wrongdoing or corporate negligence resulting in medical harm. Her primary focus is finding information to prove that the corporation, which manufactured the ATVs they were driving when her friend was killed and she lost her leg, is responsible for the accident. A petite, bi-racial Afro-Latina, Kenley lives a solitary life and doesn't date, fearing bringing someone into her life and the danger she gets herself into. Kind and fiercely independent, she doesn't need to be saved because of her determination, strength, fortitude and relying on herself for most of her life.

Jude is a digital personal investigator with Secure Watch's cyber division. He, too, leads a solitary life but yearns for touch. He's learned that caring for others makes one vulnerable. Burdened by trauma from years in the military, he's determined, skilled, intelligent, and protective. He's capable

Affaire de Coeur

Contemporary Romance

of defending, protecting, and fighting for their lives against a deadly adversary out to get Kenley and endanger the world. Insightful, kind, and gentle, he feels an instant attraction to Kenley when he first sees her and a moment of connection when their hands touch.

Mettner's writing flows from scene-to-scene, getting readers so caught up in her story, characters, and action they don't want to put the book down. Her vibrant writing is down-to-earth, descriptive and active, with colorful dialogue and effective world-building, drawing you in. She gets right into the action and doesn't waste words. Her action scenes are thrilling and well-constructed and along with her suspense keep readers on the edge of their seats. She develops her characters by having them talk with and learn things about one another and by having them interact in ways that fit with and evolve their characters. Jude and Kenley are deeply drawn to one another, and their snarky banter, connection, chemistry, and love scenes are sexy, sweet, electric, and deeply emotional at their core.

Dark Web Investigation is a captivating, suspenseful, action-packed, sexy, emotional, fast-paced, romantic read that's like watching the best criminal investigation, crime drama, mystery/thriller movie, or TV show.

Lacy Hill

Decoding the Heart *Stephanie R. Caffrey* Rowan Press Publishing

E-Book

978-8230643197

☆☆☆☆

The people in the small town of Cove Crest, Iowa aren't accustomed to serious crimes like murder, but when a serial killer targets three men in a matter of months, using the same method,

they become hosts to an FBI Behavior Analysis team.

Team leader Thomas Fleming is leading Matthew Grant, Logan Hayes, Trevor Ford, and Millie Driscoll, making their headquarters at the Noble Hill Hotel, a bed and breakfast where they can occupy the entire premises.

Widow Rebecca Clarke tends the inn nights in exchange for her parents, the owners, allowing her to live rent-free with her 8-year-old son Benji. During the week she is a fifth grade teacher. Not only does this give her peace of mind, but it pleases her parents to have her living so close.

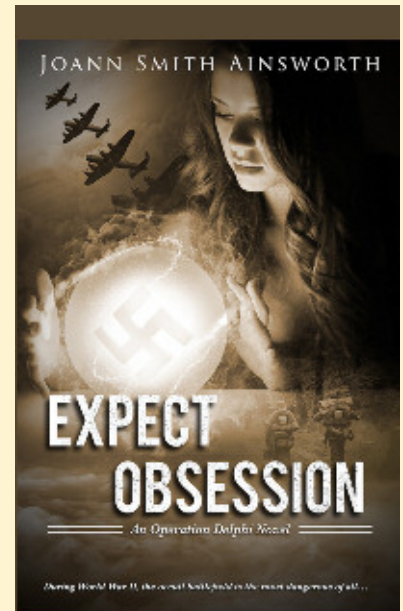
As soon as Matthew caught sight of Rebecca he was smitten, and she was surprised to find herself drawn to him as well. Matthew had always thought of himself as a loner, never wanting to get close to anyone after witnessing the death of his mother as a child. Rebecca wasn't sure she was ready for a relationship after losing her husband only a year before. In order to provide a decent life for Benji she had to endure abuse from her overbearing father.

The profilers can't find any similarities between the three murdered men except that they were all around the same age. Even while the agents are in town, the killer takes another victim, Rebecca's best friend Andy Mathis. The presence of the team in the inn gives Rebecca some sense of security, but everyone is frustrated at their inability to capture the killer before he strikes again.

The team researches and eliminates several possible suspects before it all comes together in a spectacularly shocking way. With the case wrapped up, Rebecca and Matthew face another challenge—whether their budding romance will survive the separation once the team leaves town. The suspense builds throughout the story, both in trying to find the killer

and in wondering if Rebecca and Matthew can face their demons strongly enough to let them find love. The ending is delightful with a twist it's difficult to anticipate.

Hannah Rowan



A Nazi spy murdered and assumed the identity of the temp secretary D.C. had assigned to fill the gap.

The spy's mission is to steal an ancient book of spells coveted by Hitler, named *The Book of Cures*, but her obsession is to avenge her spy lover's disappearance by consuming the U.S. facility and all who live in it in paranormally induced flames.

JoAnnSmithAinsworth.com



Fake as Puck (Denver Bashers Series, Book 1)

Sarah Smith

Narrated by: Tim Paige and Shiloh James

NYLA

Audiobook

B0DZJJM4F3

★★★★

Before meeting Bashers' team doctor Sophie Porter, only hockey and his off-ice antics mattered to N.H.L. star Xander Williams a.k.a. "the pantie dropper," Sophie proposes fake dating to help set boundaries with her over-protective dad, his head coach. Xander agrees to get a chance with Sophie. In opening up to her about his painful past, he falls for Sophie. Xander fears it's real for him but fake for Sophie?

Sheltered and overprotected, Sophie is a 24-year-old prodigy who attended medical school at 17. She's an awkward, nerdy, sweet, good girl who longs for independence. When she encounters her smug, selfish ex at a club, she asks Xander to pretend to be her boyfriend and continue fake dating to convince her father of her independence so, he can let go of his over-protectiveness.

An irresponsible, reckless, jokester, Xander has a playboy reputation. But after spending time with and getting to know Sophie, he tires of not being taken seriously—being seen as a joke, only good for sex. Despite his outward carefree playboy persona, he's burdened by a traumatic past. Sophie's presence helps to ease him.

James and Paige's vivacious narration complements Smith's multi-layered, engaging fake-dating, hockey romance. Their voices match Sophie and Xander and the secondary characters, giving them unique sounds with pacing, emotion, and inflection to reveal their personalities. During the novel's intimate scenes, they use their full vocal ranges and narration skills to express the characters' intimacy. Paige and James capture Smith's humor, passion, and depth of emotion with their expressive narration—especially during emotional and intimate scenes.

Smith's writing is down-to-earth, active, and vivid. Her characters are relatable, likable, complex, and imperfect. Smith makes it easy to care about and root for them to overcome their fears, take risks, and live happily ever after. From their first kiss to Xander and Sophie's first time together, their sweet intimate interactions are

captured James and Page and further develop the plot. Xander may be imperfect, but he's a sweet man who cares about people. Strong, funny, and courageous, behind-closed-doors, Sophie is a good girl with a naughty streak.

Fake as Puck is a fun listen.

Lacy Hill

When the Vibe Is Right

Sarah Dass

Narrated by Antonevia Ocho-Coultes

Harper Audio

Audiobook

978-0063229822

★★★★

Tess Crawford dreams of being a successful Trinidadian Carnival costume designer like her genius-renowned uncle, Russell Messina, and inheriting leadership of the family's masquerade band, Grandeur. Unfortunately, Grandeur's future faces ruin because of band rivalry. Fascinated with costumes for as long as she could remember, Tess loves the art form of creating costumes for Carnival. She's a talented seamstress and costume designer who focuses on the quality of the costumes she designs, believing what you choose to wear and project to the world for Carnival says more about who you are than the secrets hidden under makeup and costumes.

Desperate, Tess joins forces with the bane of her existence, classmate Brandon Richards to save the family business. Despite what Brandon does or says, Tess won't trust or give him a break. She always thinks the worst of him. Everything about him drives her crazy, especially how attractive she finds him when she wants to hate him. His connection to her horrible ex-boyfriend David, who shared personal details about her with her classmates, doesn't help.

Arrogant, confident, and honest, popular social media influencer Brandon works with Grandeur to improve their social media/marketing. There's more to him than what appears on the surface. Brandon knows Tess surpris-

Audiobooks

ingly well. He loves pushing her buttons. Tess and Brandon spend time together trying to save Grandeur. As Tess gets to know him better, she discovers that what she thought she knew about him may not be true at all.

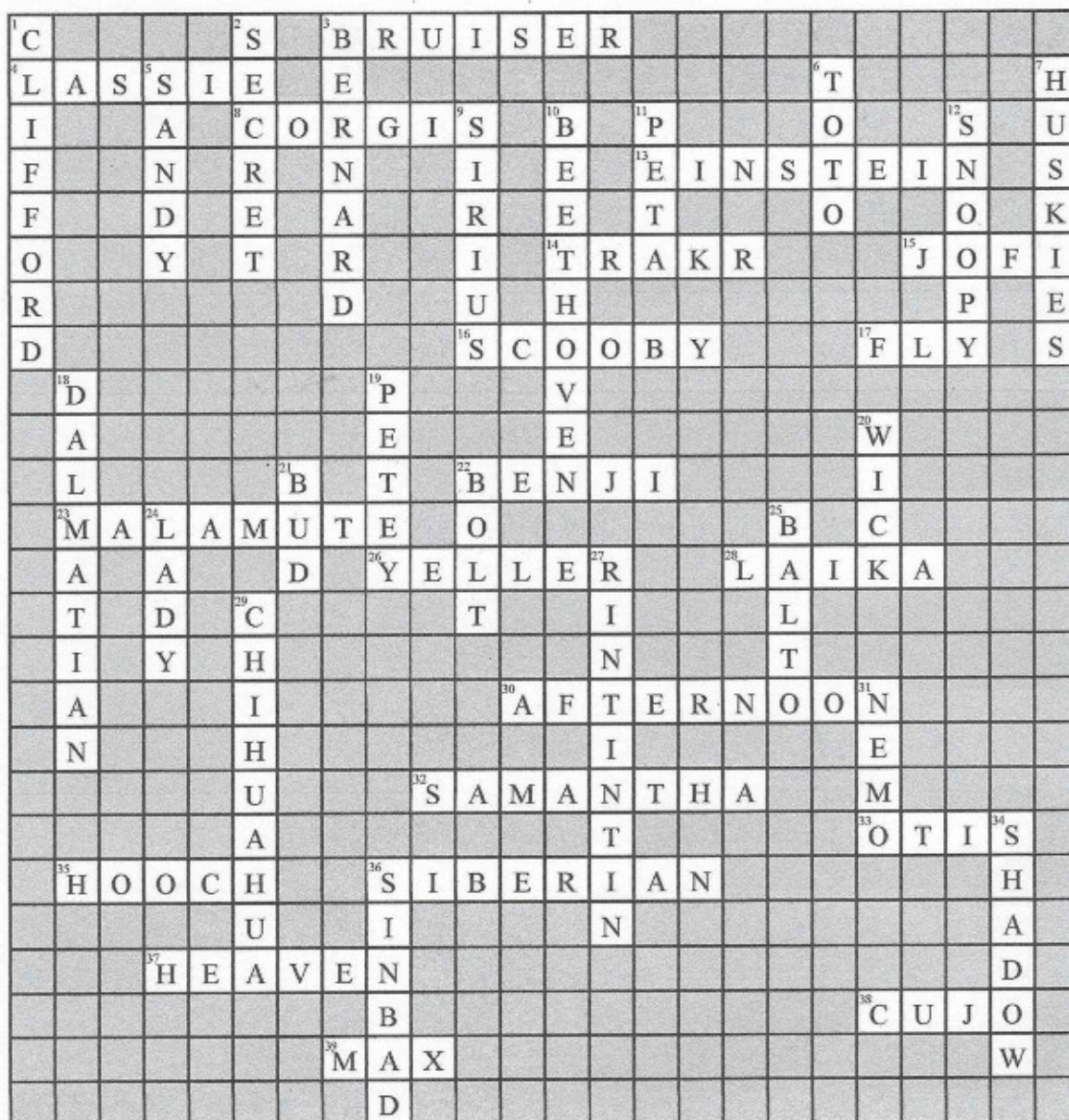
Ocho-Coultes narration complements Dass' descriptive writing and vibrant and detailed world-building. She's a terrific narrator, able to create different voices for a variety of characters. Her perfect accent draws readers the story immediately, and they can't stop listening. Ocho-Coultes' voices for Tess and Brandon match their characters. With accents, dialects, pacing, emotion, and inflection, she gives them distinct voices, revealing their personalities, feelings, quirks, and state of mind. Her skillful narration suggests that there could be multiple narrators.

Tess and Brandon's snarky banter, connection, vibe, and interaction are fiery, funny, and full of sparks. Dass skillfully transitions their relationship from hate-to-love/enemies-to-lovers using the character's senses to make each interaction richly detailed and emotion-filled. When the Vibe is Right is a highly recommended emotional, sweet, romantic, funny, and fast-paced listen.

Lacy Hill

Celebrate Dog Days

Louise B. Sneed





Diana Says Yes

Jen Besser and Shana Feste

Dial Press

978-0593447710 - E-Book

978-0593447703 – Trade Paperback

☆☆☆ ½

In this third and final installment of the “Dirty Diana” series, Diana Wood seeks to reconnect with her husband Oliver and repair the problems in their somewhat-rocky marriage. Though they attend counseling with some success, Diana is keeping a major secret from Oliver that she feels will derail their latest efforts.

Diana runs a website and podcast called “Dirty Diana,” showcasing women’s sexual fantasies. She accompanies the stories with paintings depicting the women. She has already published one book. Her site has become a surprising success after being noticed by celebrities, to the point where she will be featured in *Vogue* and is approached for a movie deal. Obviously she can’t hide this from Oliver anymore. Though she tries to keep her identity a secret from the likes of the

PTA moms, she is soon outed and potentially shunned.

Family drama abounds as Diana’s day job is working as a receptionist in Oliver’s father’s financial firm. Diana’s mother is a failed but still aspiring actress who has always put her career above her mothering. The appearance of an old flame of Diana’s makes her question her choices.

Diana Says Yes is a book that is quite steamy as it includes explicit transcripts of the women’s fantasies Diana discovers in her interviews. It is almost a “coming of age” story. Even though Diana is a grown woman she still struggles with her identity and what she wants.

Hannah Rowan

The Lost Bookshop

Avie Woods

One More Chapter

E-book

B0BMF2M8Z6

☆☆☆☆ 1/2

The Lost Bookshop is an unbelievable book with a plot that might not be believable about a bookstore, a

bookshop clerk, a rare book dealer, and university students.

It tells a story about unhappy circumstances in the early part of the 1900s, that happens to people who work in and around a Dublin bookstore.

Opaline, Martha, and Henry share a story that involves working and managing in and around a bookstore during this early part of the century.

This reviewer liked how the author explains the history as a backdrop with the history (World War I & II, and the Industrial Revolution), then while telling the story. While I didn’t like how it jumped from person to person. Through different eyes, they told the story through different points of view in each chapter. Each character tells a different POV of how they think and see each other react to each other, and how they interact with the other characters: Opaline, Henry, and Martha.

Another recommendation, it would be a good book for a book club that the group would all get together one night a week to read and enjoy in, maybe, a bookshop.

Kathy Smith



Archives of the Unexplained: Area 51

Steve Fox

First Second Books

E-Book

978-1250850270

☆☆☆

Archives of the Unexplained: Area 51 is a graphic novel about a young boy who finds documents in his deceased uncle's study detailing the secret of the US Government's study of alien encounters and activities.

This novel reads more like an entry in a reference book than an actual story. The frame story is very thin. Merely showing the boy reading the book, and a little bit of intrigue as some mysterious people show up to obtain the same information.

It was interesting, and certainly educational. But it just wasn't exactly a story and doesn't meet the standards for that expectation. It's not spooky, which kind of feels like a missed opportunity. That said, the illustrations were very good, and the layout does add to the feel

for the reader who is reviewing special, perhaps classified documents. Young readers who are interested in aliens and potential government cover-ups about aliens will appreciate this as long as they aren't expecting a well-developed narrative around the theme.

Danielle Hill

Archives of the Unexplained: Unwanted Guests

Steve Fox

First Second Books

E-book

978-1250850256

☆☆☆ 1/2

Minnie and Jackson and their family have moved into a house with that is giving creepy vibes. Dad assures them that everything is fine. They'll get used to the creepy house. They meet a boy at the park who tells them about two famous houses that were supposedly haunted: The Guyra House in Australia and The House of Blood in Atlanta, Georgia. Should this make the siblings

feel better about their own potentially haunted house?

These two stories were definitely spooky. The illustrations in the graphic novel were really good and added to the atmosphere. This frame story worked a little better than in *Area 51*, as it felt like an authentic story outside of just giving details about these famously "haunted houses." The diversity in the characters was great! Minnie and Jackson are black kids. As a young reader who was very interested in all things spooky and creepy, that means a lot to see characters from your own background. The writing preserves a sense of mystery and leaves the reader feeling like it is totally possible that the hauntings are real, and perhaps Minnie and Jackson's house does have its own resident otherworldly inhabitant. It's quite short, so on that level, the reader may feel like they want a little more from its rather open ending. But overall, this is a fun, ghostly story for readers who are intrigued by real and fictional hauntings.

Danielle Hill

Late!

Didn't quite make in the last issue



Includes all genre and all time periods

Behooved

M. Stevenson

Tor Publishing

E-Book

978-1250375094

☆☆☆ 1/2

Bianca is a highly-ranked Damarian noblewoman betrothed by her parents to Aric, the new king of rival nation Gildenheim for a strategic political marriage. Their meeting doesn't go well. Aric is cold and dismissive, giving Bianca doubts about his willingness to marry her, but they both follow through on the wedding. On their wedding night, a masked assassin attempts to kill Aric, and Bianca saves his life using a magic pendant her sister gives her, invoking a spell that turns him into a horse during the day and a man by night. They flee together for their lives, learning to depend on each other and developing feelings that go far beyond their original marriage of inconvenience.

Behooved is an enjoyable fantasy romance with a lead character who deals with a chronic ailment she has hidden because her parents have taught her to see it as her weakness. They taught her that no one would love her for herself. As Aric and her spend time together in hiding, she realizes that his cold demeanor hides a gentle, kind nature, offering her understanding and caring she has found nowhere else. Bianca is well-fleshed out and shows great character evolution over the novel, learning to trust herself and that she can allow herself to love Aric. Aric is delightfully bookish and analytical, but he is also very sweet in a way that Bianca has never experienced.

The romantic development is organic and very well done as Bianca and Aric grow to love and desire each other. The love scenes are sensual and further the story nicely. Magic is a prominent element of the story but it is not well-explained. More development of the magic system and fleshing out the world

building would have enhanced this book in the best way, as what is delivered is intriguing and makes the reader want more.

Behooved is a book for readers who enjoy a slow build to love between characters who are forced together due to their circumstances. This is a good book for readers who are looking to get into romantasy novels.

Danielle Hill

Forever Theirs (Anchor Bay #1)

Kennedy L. Mitchell

KLM Books

Kindle

B0DFJB19N

☆☆☆☆ 1/2

Adventure photographer Aspen travels to Anchor Bay, Alaska, seeking distance from her cheating ex and attracts the attention of two sexy local ex-Navy Seals, who share everything, including women. When a member of the poly community goes missing, disrupting the small town's poly community's peace, Aspen is drawn into danger. Meanwhile, Aspen photographs Anchor Bay, Miles and Aiden keep her safe, and they explore their attraction.

Suffering from confidence issues, Aspen needs a fresh start from her lonely, unhappy life. She hates her job, where she isn't doing what she loves. Stuck in a toxic relationship with a boyfriend who uses her talent, time, and energy to elevate his career but gives nothing back, Aspen quits her job and takes a trip for escape and self-discovery. A sweet, mischievous, talkative joker, Aiden is a protector and provider who is physically and emotionally scarred.

Brooding, overprotective, and tatted, Miles has PTSD and nightmares and doesn't let anyone in besides Aiden. Miles keeps his scars hidden. Aspen, Miles, and Aiden's connection is balanced and passionate. Aiden makes Aspen feel seen and loved. Miles helps Aspen feel protected and safe. Aspen perfectly matches and accepts them and doesn't view them as broken, making

Late!

it easier for them to communicate/connect.

Forever Theirs is recommended for readers into relationship-focused, steamy reads about throuple/poly relationships with some suspense. Writing in her protagonists' first-person POVs, Mitchell dives into Aspen, Aiden, and Miles' emotions to explore the instant attraction, development of the poly/throuple relationship, and evolution of their characters, which becomes a healing, emotional, and sexual journey. Their snarky banter and sexy, steamy interactions and love scenes reveal and evolve their characters, furthering the novel's plot. Mitchell's complex relationships, well-constructed action/fight scenes, and gripping suspense keep readers on the edge of their seats. Her straight-to-the-point narrative style, vibrant descriptive writing, and world-building make readers feel they're in each moment with the characters.

Mitchell focuses on developing their intimacy and connection. The pacing is moderate, with a greater focus on romance/sexual relationships than suspense. *Forever Theirs* begins with a dark, suspenseful opening, only then to be barely explored and mentioned off and on, with brief mentions of a missing friend, leaving readers wondering what's going on, and minimizing the sense of urgency. While the suspense and romance could be more balanced, *Forever Theirs* is a sweet, steamy, funny, sexy, and intriguing start to Mitchell's new romantic suspense series.
Lacy Hill

Immortal Sun *Rachel Van Dyken* **Publisher**

Kindle
978-1957700963
☆☆☆ 1/2

College student Cleo search-

es for her missing brother, and Cyrus (Osiris), must complete his human trial to find and sacrifice Chaos' last descendant. Cyrus longs for peace and returning home to Mt. Olympus. Cleo's twin brother went missing while working for Cyrus. She takes a job bar tending at Cyrus' bar, in exchange for a place to stay and his help.

Trusting and innocent, Cleo doesn't believe in magic and fate. She's stubborn and impudent—just what self-absorbed, superior, bossy gods need. She is also strong and fearlessness, and unwilling to give up, even when she has no way out of her circumstances, even up against gods.

Cyrus blows hot and cold with Cleo because he knows what his duty is, but he's deeply drawn to her and wants to keep Cleo with him. He feels guilty about what he must do. For the first time in so long, he's aroused—by a chaos descendant. Tortured, self-controlled, and lonely, he's never slept with a human before. All these years trapped on Earth, he's become cruel and torn between his duty and desire for her. The other 12 gods have failed. He cannot. Sent to Earth to keep the peace between immortals and humans, they began mating with them instead, deciding to stay on Earth.

Readers will love Cleo and how she doesn't always do what Cyrus wants and stands up to him and the other gods. Van Dyken sets Cleo and Cyrus up as two opposites who pair and balance each other well. Cleo is always cold, while Cyrus gives off heat. Cyrus is drawn to her while driven by duty while her life is all about sacrifice. Cleo and Cyrus' hilarious, snarky banter and sex intimate interactions and love scenes are well written, revealing and evolving their characters and furthering the novel's plot. Van Dyken's well-constructed action scenes and gripping suspense keep readers on the edge of their seat. More of these scenes would've been

better throughout the novel.

Immortal Sun's mellow pacing and unexpected mix of dark humor and suspense works for Van Dyken's story. Cleo and Cyrus' romance could've been developed more in depth earlier in the novel, as things get interesting, intense, and the attraction they share gets explored well into the novel. It may be more fantasy romance than romantasy as the fantasy elements are more developed than the romance. Van Dyken's active, straight-to-the-point writing/narrative style, language use, colorful dialogue, fascinating characters, intriguing mythology, and superb world-building draws readers in immediately, keeping your interest despite the pacing.

She crafts an absorbing paranormal/fantasy universe fusing Greek and Roman mythology inhabited by gods, fallen angels, demons, vampires, etc., living in the modern world with humans. Steamy, hilarious, and sexy, *Immortal Sun* is an intriguing, suspenseful, dark, angsty, fantasy romance.
Lacy Hill

A Murderer Among Us *Marilyn Levinson* **Rowan Press Publishing** Paperback

979-822715320
☆☆☆ 1/2

Lydia Kraus is a retired executive and a widow who recently moved into the swanky Twin Lakes Retirement Community on Long Island. As she begins to attend events to get the lay of the land, she is shocked to encounter a man calling himself Marshall Weill who is now serving as financial advisor to the homeowner's association and many residents.

Lydia knows him as Warren Mannes, a convicted embezzler whose financial shenanigans cost scores of victims, including her sister, financial ruin and ultimately led to her sister's suicide.

Late!

Lydia's neighbors don't believe her when she exposes him in the middle of a bingo game, and Lydia publicly clashes with his wife, Claire.

Unfortunately, after spending the night caring for a sick neighbor, Lydia returns home to find her car parked in the driveway with extensive damage to the front. When she calls 911, Lieutenant Detective Solomon Molina arrives at her house, but instead of taking the report of the stolen car, he focuses on the suspicion that it may have been involved in a hit and run that killed Claire, and Lydia is a suspect.

As shaken as she is by the accusation, Lydia can't help but notice how attractive the detective is. But does he truly believe she is capable of murder?

On a side note, Lydia's older daughter may be involved in an affair. And her younger daughter is planning to move across the Atlantic. Most of her neighbors shun her, blaming her for ruining the peace of their little enclave. Lydia feels like she's being attacked from all sides.

When another murder takes place, Lydia takes matters into her own hands, determined to find the truth and exonerate herself in the process. Doing so puts her in danger. Maybe if she can clear her name, she can explore her attraction to her hunky detective, who may or may not be flirting with her.

A Murderer Among Us is a cozy mystery that shows life and romance don't end when someone reaches retirement age. It sheds a little light on the culture of retirement communities, and even though it exposes some people with evil intentions, it does so with touches of humor.

Hannah Rowan

Pamela Ackerson's excerpt from *The Guardian Awaits*

continued from page10

He drove on the scenic roads and avoided the highways. He smiled as he enjoyed the drive looking at the open land, the cows, corn, soy, more corn, and oh, look! Cows.

A few hours later, it was time for him to charge the car, and take his first stop at Spring Green. He'd heard about the House on the Rock for years and never managed to get there to see it until now.

The hotel room was typical. Colin leaned his head back in the chair and looked out the window wondering what it would be like to live in Florida.

He sure wouldn't have to worry about driving and shoveling snow anymore. That will be nice.

He headed next door to the restaurant, grabbed a meal to go, and some Danish for his breakfast. The next morning, after he toured the House on the Rock, Colin headed southeast. Colin put it in auto-drive, looked at his itinerary, and played around on the radio. Preferring side roads instead of busy highways, he meandered through the countryside lost in his thoughts.

The long road had multiple mirages. The weather had been wacky lately, most likely causing all the mirages. He always thought they were like chasing a rainbow. No matter how close a person gets to it, it was always just beyond their reach. He recalled a long-ago memory with his mother.

She'd taken his hand. "Look. Colin. The end of the rainbow is right in our backyard. Watch what happens as we move closer."

He'll never forget that day. It withdrew from them as they moved toward it, but when they walked back to the house, they turned to look again. He expected it to be gone. Colin stood in awe. The rainbow glistened and beckoned to him.

Passing through Genoa City, a few miles from the Wisconsin and Illinois border, a stunning illusion of a mirage was on the road in front of him. The lights and colors were bending upward. The air was shimmering, similar to the northern lights. He stared, mesmerized by the sight.

The closer he got, the bigger it appeared. The road lifted upward, reaching skyward, creating an impression that the countryside was floating.

There were horses and people hovering in the air. He wanted to reach his hand out and pet the horses.

As he drove closer to the phenomenon, the more it wavered. Within seconds it morphed from within his reach to beyond the horizon and then back again. It was enchanting.

"Was it King Arthur's sister, Morgan? Is she the one that had magical powers and could pull castles into thin air?"

Siri answered him,
Morgan le Fay was King Arthur's sister who lured sailors to their deaths by summoning visions in the sky. She created large objects to flow upward confusing the sailors, prompting claims of sighting the Flying Dutchman. A tale among the sailors, the ghost ship was cursed to sail the seas for eternity.

Colin held the steering wheel, watching as he entered the mirage. "Fata Morgana."



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