

May-June 2025

# *Affaire de Coeur*

Bringing You the Best and Most Honest Reviews

*Our flowers are lovely and talented*

*May's Calendar Star--*

*Roz Lee*

and

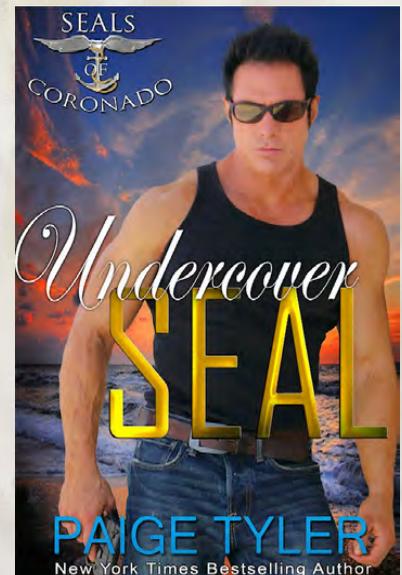


*June's Spotlight shines on*

*C.A. Czarek*



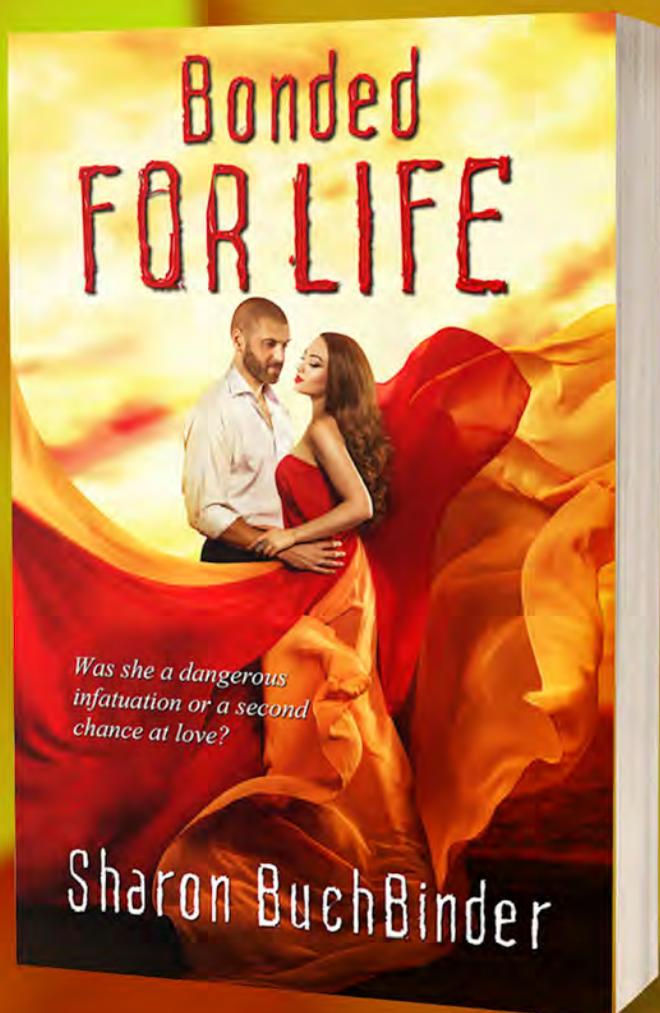
*Cover models like  
Julian Christian  
brighten our basket, too*



**Is she his long-lost love or a deadly temptation?**

**Lola Getz and Webster Bond felt an instant spark when they met as high school students in Victory Shores. But their budding romance was cut short when Lola's parents died in a plane crash and she had to return to Mexico.**

**The widow of a Mexican criminal, Lola's life is in danger when armed men break into her house. She flees to the only place she feels safe: her twenty-fifth high school reunion. Webster, a by-the-book cop, is surprised and thrilled to see her again—and vows to keep her safe.**



**Sharon Buchbinder is the author of the Hotel LaBelle Series, the Jinni Hunter Series, and the Obsession Series. When not attempting to make students and colleagues laugh or writing, she can be found walking her pugs, Agent Frank and Igor Valentino, waiting on her Maine Coon cat, Buster Brown, or breaking bread and laughing with family and friends.**



**SharonBuchbinder.com**

# May/June 2025

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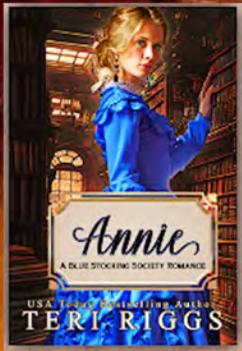
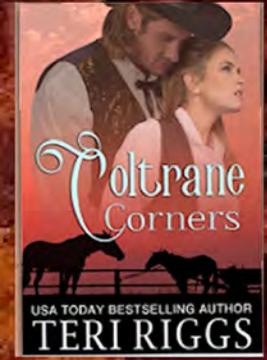
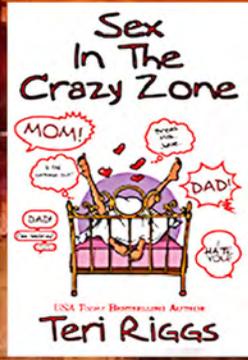
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# Dear QWERTY

by Pamela Ackerson

## Neuro Marketing

What is Neuro-marketing?



Neuro—the medical term means nerves or the nervous system.

Neurodiversity has to do with brain functions that affect mental function.

Neuroscience studies the brain.

Consumer neuroscience studies the brain on how to manipulate consumer behavior.

Marketers have coined the term neuro-marketing, which is the same as consumer neuroscience.

Easy right? So how do we, as authors, take those techniques and use them to our advantage? Brain triggers. Marketing tips using the old brain triggers can be challenging. Emotions, along with a little bit of logical reasoning prompts readers to buy. Targeting those emotions will trigger and encourage them to purchase the product.

In other words, use psychology and the emotions that go with it. For years, experts have taken the neurosciences to influence consumers and snag those subconscious and emotional thoughts. They've studied the behavior of consumers and learned what makes them tick.

The cute dog or cat, racing to the bowl of the

In the world of *The Dantes*, love isn't a choice—  
it's fate, decided by the emergence of a mysterious soul mate tattoo.

The *Dantes* are legends—ruthless, untouchable, and bound by destiny itself. When a soul mate tattoo appears on their palm without warning, it also manifests on the one person they are meant to claim. Meant to protect. Meant to love.



Fate's gift doesn't come without a price.

In their world, love is the greatest risk of all. Titus "The Dante" Dante built his empire on strategy, control, and absolute power—but Jazz Mirabella is the one risk he never saw coming. Titus isn't done.



He's been playing the long game—and when the final move is revealed, it will either destroy them, or prove that she was always his endgame.

[www.DayLeClaire.com](http://www.DayLeClaire.com) @DayLeClaire

most delicious food.

And my favorite, Haribo gummies, taking adults back to the time when they were kids and had fun with snacks. I don't think I've met anyone who didn't like those commercials.

The Busch Clydesdale commercials all incite that feel good smile and it makes the brain associate feeling good with the product.

How can you improve your marketing and advertising? Answer the following questions.

How do I reach readers? Name recognition.

Whom do I want to purchase my books? Determine your audience.

What do the readers want? Emotion. They want to feel, each one will want to feel different things for different reasons.

How can I be more effective in my marketing? Pay attention to what's going on.

Did you get clicks but no or low purchases? You were able to grasp their interest, but what happened?

Why didn't they click the purchase button? Did you continue to trigger their interest?

Did you reach the right audience? Targeting the proper consumer will avoid wasting time and money.

Craft the advertisement to evoke emotions. Once they hit the landing page to purchase, don't stop there.

You must give a compelling description that leaves them wanting more.

Using neuro-marketing will increase your advertising effectiveness. It's a given. Watch how the big guys do it. They like using numbers. It brings order to chaos. Odd numbers inspires thought and for some reason, the number three seems to be something our brains latch onto. Even numbers are more positive. (Pun intended.) They're friendlier, couples, even numbered friends all bring about happiness.

Amazon...the arrow looks like a smile. The largest consumer store in the US utilizes neuroscience when they advertise. You should, too.

Determine the emotions you want your reader to have and take advantage of that. And you can certainly use both even and odd numbers. Test it out; see which one works better for the goals you want to achieve.

Another suggestion, especially if it's a website ad, is to keep it short and sweet by inciting their curiosity. Some readers scan text quickly and certain keywords will grab their attention. If you have what they're looking for, they'll click.

Using powerful words to describe your story can create a positive emotional trigger for readers. Words

*Continued on page 27*

# The Spotlight is Shining on...

## Roz Lee

### AdC's

### Ms. May Calendar Girl



USA Today Best-Selling author Roz Lee is the author of over thirty romances. The first, *The Lust Boat*, was born of an idea acquired while on a Caribbean cruise with her family and soon blossomed into a five-book series originally published by Red Sage. Following her love of baseball, Roz turned her attention to sexy athletes in tight pants, writing the critically acclaimed “Mustangs Baseball” series.

Roz has been married to her best friend, and high school sweetheart, for over four decades. They have two daughters and are the proud grandparents of three adorable grandkids. Roz and her husband live in the wilds of New Jersey with their Labrador Retriever, Bud, which is code for Big Unruly Dog.

Even though Roz has lived on both coasts, her heart lies in between, in Texas. A Texan by birth, she can trace her family back to the Republic of Texas. With roots that deep, she says, “You can’t ever really leave.”

When Roz isn’t writing, she’s reading, or traipsing around the country on one adventure or another. No trip is too small, no tourist trap too cheesy, and no road unworthy of travel.

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

**R.L.:** Nope. I am working on what I hope will be the first book in a very long series. Stay tuned for more details.

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

**R.L.:** Ironically, the book I’m currently reading and the book

I’m currently working on both take place in Virginia. Pure coincidence that I’m moving to Virginia in a few weeks!

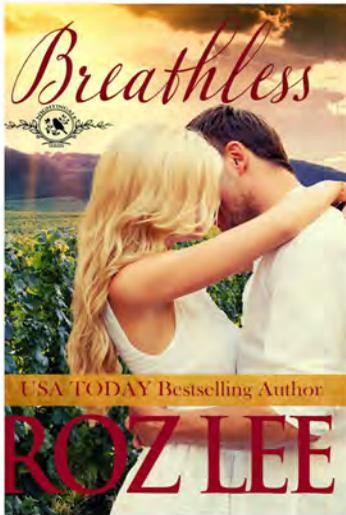
**AdC:** How do you name your characters?

**R.L.:** Naming characters is a tricky business. Names can convey a lot of information about the character, so it’s important to get them right. I’ve been known to look through phone books from areas where my

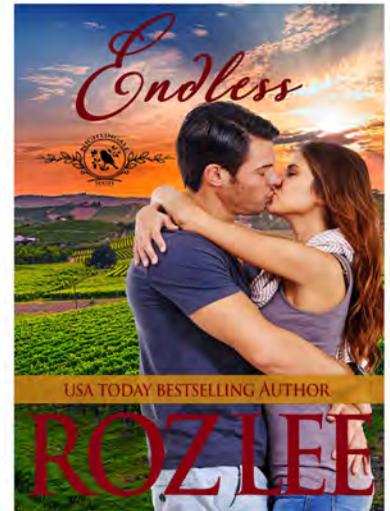
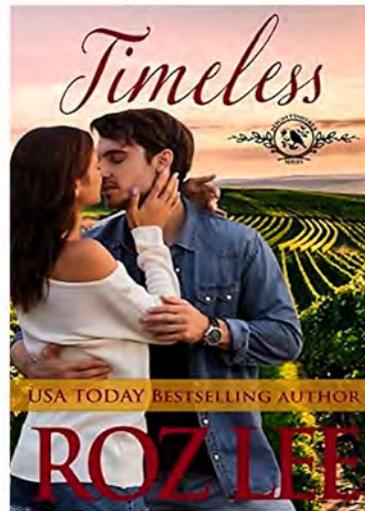
character might be from. Once I stole a name from a tombstone, and then there was Elgin Huddleston from *Still Taking Chances*. His name popped into my head while I was driving down the road. I had no idea where the name came from or who it belonged to. Months later, Elgin’s story popped into my head. He’s still one of my favorite characters.

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

Connect with Roz Lee



The Nightingale family has been in the winemaking business in New Jersey almost as long as the United States has been a country. Meet the up-and-coming generation, Wade, Sean, and Ian Nightingale as they struggle to keep the family business relevant in the 21st century and hopefully find love along the way.



machine?

**R.L.:** Nowhere. I'd be afraid I'd mess something up in the past, and then I wouldn't exist in the future I came from. In the future, I'd be afraid I'd find out I've already messed something up in the present day. Did anyone follow that crazy train of thought?

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

**R.L.:** When the words don't come, I craft. It's still a creative endeavor, but I use my hands instead of my brain.

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

**R.L.:** When it's time to kick back,

I read. Reading has always been my escape.

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

**R.L.:** I would love to learn to play an instrument, but alas, I have zero musical aptitude.

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

**R.L.:** I have several book signings scheduled for this year. You can find them all listed on my website. www.RozLee.net

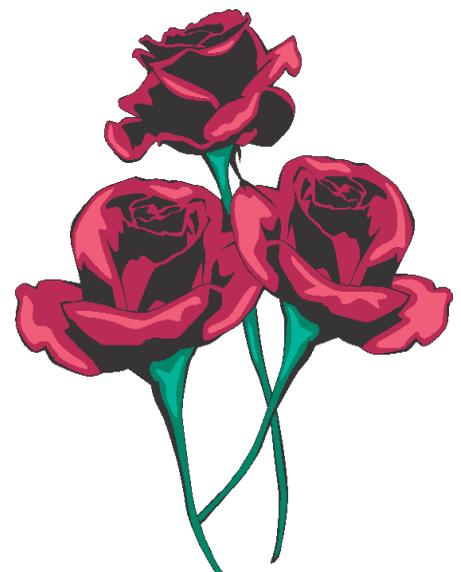
Please give us the following contact information:

Personal web page - www.RozLee.net

net

Twitter - [https://x.com/RozLee\\_Author](https://x.com/RozLee_Author)

Facebook- <http://www.facebook.com/authorrozlee>



## An Affaire de Coeur

### Sneak Peek



*Endless* (Nightingale Vineyard #3) by Roz Lee

#### Excerpt

“This is going to be a shit show.”

Ian adjusted the ridiculous pink necktie the wardrobe manager insisted would be perfect. He couldn't argue with Wade's assessment of the situation. “You don't have to sound so happy about it.”

His brother clapped him on the shoulder. “You will never—I mean, *never*—live this down. What the hell were you thinking, bro?”

“Let's just say I wasn't thinking with my big brain when I agreed to do the show.” He shrugged, trying in vain to get comfortable in the suit coat provided for him. Gray was not his color. He looked anemic, despite the stage makeup applied earlier.

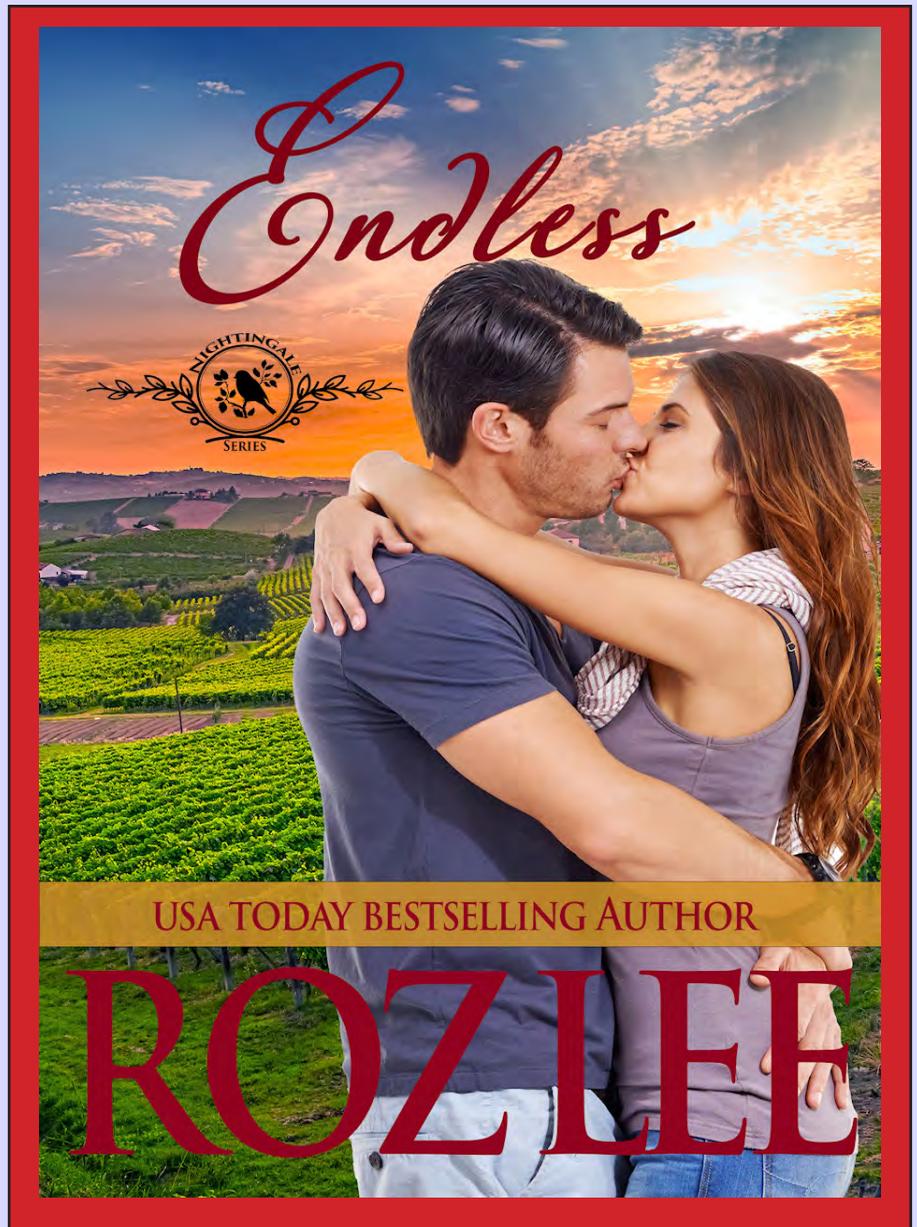
“Women can do that to you,” Wade agreed. He should know. Serenity had twisted him up in knots until he'd finally admitted he had feelings for her. He was engaged and happy as a pig in shit these days.

“Not women. Woman. Singular.” There was only one woman he was interested in. Lexie Hanson. AKA the production manager of this shit show. A reality match-making show, *Love at First Sight*, had topped the ratings at home and abroad for the last four seasons.

Maybe he was an idiot, but he'd endure a lifetime of teasing from his two older brothers if it meant spending the rest of his days with Lexie.

“I hope she's worth it, bro.”

“She is.” There was enough confidence behind his statement to



earn an Emmy for best actor in a lead role. Maybe he'd missed his calling.

“Lookin' good, Deputy!” The sound of Lexie's voice sent his libido into overdrive. Damn, the woman had him enthralled.



# AdC LOVES Conferences

## The Flagler County Book Fest

The Flagler County Library Book Fest, compliments of Friends of the Library and hostess Gemma Rose, was held April 5, 2025, in Palm Coast, Florida. Authors were able to connect with readers and network with other authors celebrating the love of books.



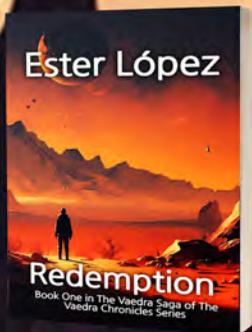
*Author Caesar Campana*



*Library Book Fest Hostess, Gemma Rose*



*Author Karen Flaherty*

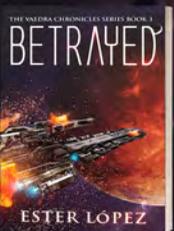
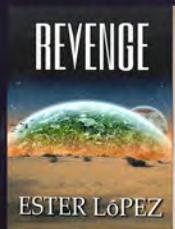
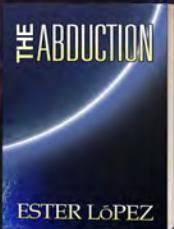


A powerful narrative about survival, redemption, and the strength of the human spirit.

**Dram:** A former slave trader  
**Tam:** A former sex slave

With a life sentence on Plumaris, Dram and Tam's alliance forms amidst the chaos of the quake, their harrowing hardships forge a bond stronger than the toughest tulin ore. With the opportunity to escape, they navigate the treacherous paths of freedom, their pasts haunt them, and redemption drives them towards a future neither dared to dream.

Together, they learn to work together, a testament to the power of unity in the face of danger and adversity.



## Writing on the Edge of Reality

The Vaedra Chronicles Series catapults readers into a galaxy brimming with human intrigue and interstellar alliances. An epic journey when Earthlings discover the Vaedra system and forge a pivotal alliance. The thrilling blend of adventure and the timeless question of what it means to travel the vast expanse of space across a cosmic universe.

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



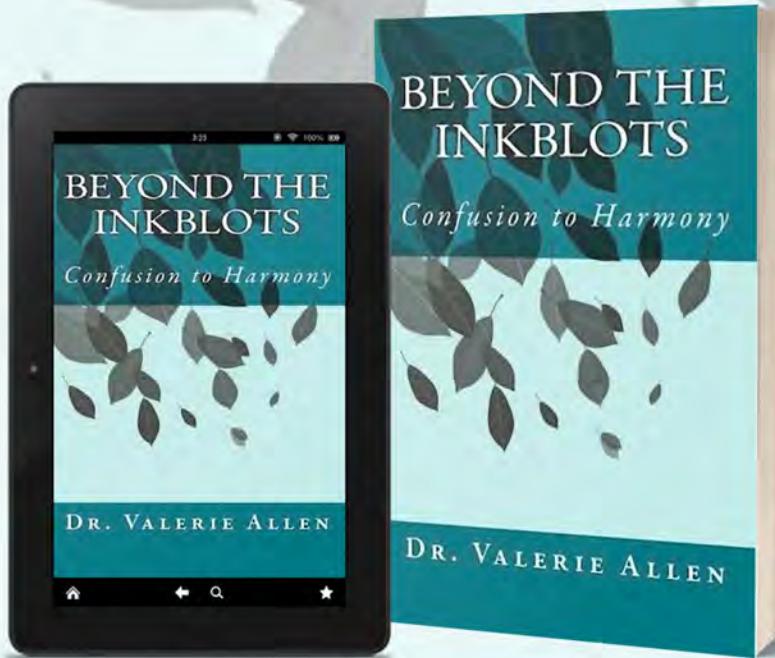
*Author Kate Moseman*



*Sabastian Sean Clitandre*

*Beyond the Inkblots* guides you on a path to calm anxiety, find inner peace, and leads the way for personal growth, understanding, and fulfillment. At some point, we come face to face with life's big questions dealing with who we are and what we have become.

### Simple Truths about Personal Responsibility



We wonder about those dreams we had and ask where are they now? This book offers insight into how we arrived at our place in life. It presents an opportunity to understand and assess the choices we made that brought us to this place.

Valerie Allen, psychologist, award-winning author, and speaker, writes fiction, non-fiction, short stories, and children's books. For many years she wrote a weekly new column, Family Matters. Her parenting articles, short stories, and anthologies have been widely published and enjoyed by many.

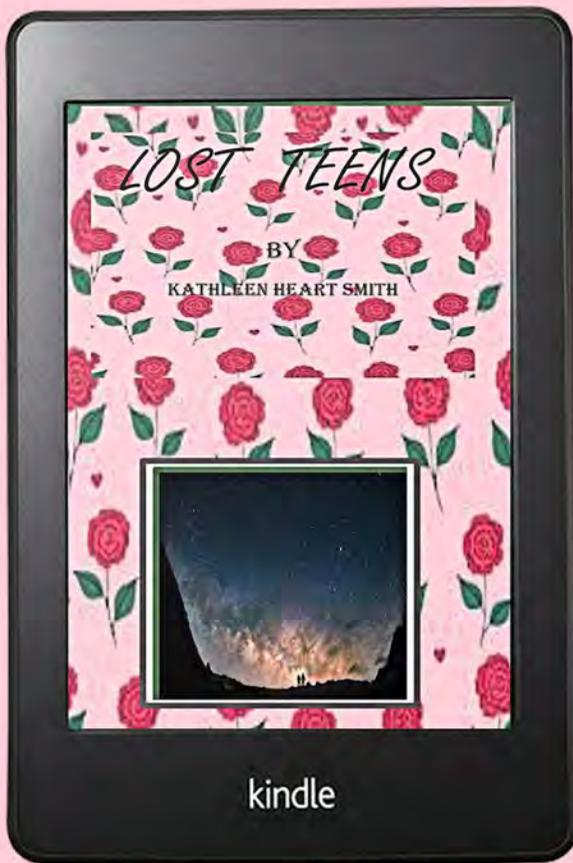
[ValerieAllenWriter.com](http://ValerieAllenWriter.com)



*Flagler County Library Book Fest*



*Author Cathy Cushing Caverly*



Bound by an unbreakable bond Joline Baker and Aiden Rodriguez set out on a life-changing journey to find the families they've never known.

Guided by elusive leads and newly found hope, the two uncover secrets, redefine their identities and learn that family is not just where you come from, but who you choose to be.

A coming-of-age tale of determination, love, discovery and a heartfelt story that captured the resilience and power of friendship.

Kathleen Heart Smith

Available on Amazon



**AND**

## **The Authors for Authors Conference**

The Authors for Authors seminar was hosted by author Dr. Valerie Allen. This year the seminar event was held in Melbourne, FL on April 6, 2025.

Several experienced authors gave panels on their expertise fields.

A few included:

Dr. Valerie Allen – Mega Marketing with Mini Money

Joanne Fisher – Why Join a Writer's Group?

Pam Ackerson – Be More Successful with Promotions and Advertising

Debra Easterling – Character Development



*Hostess, Dr. Valerie Allen*

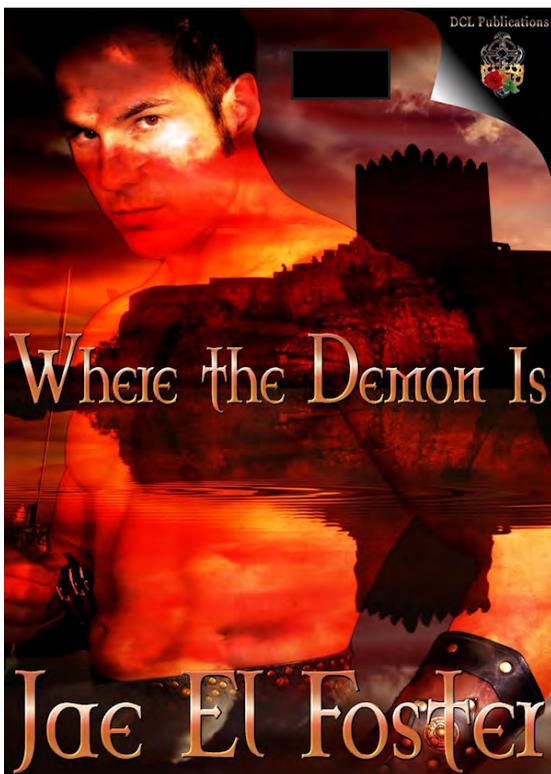
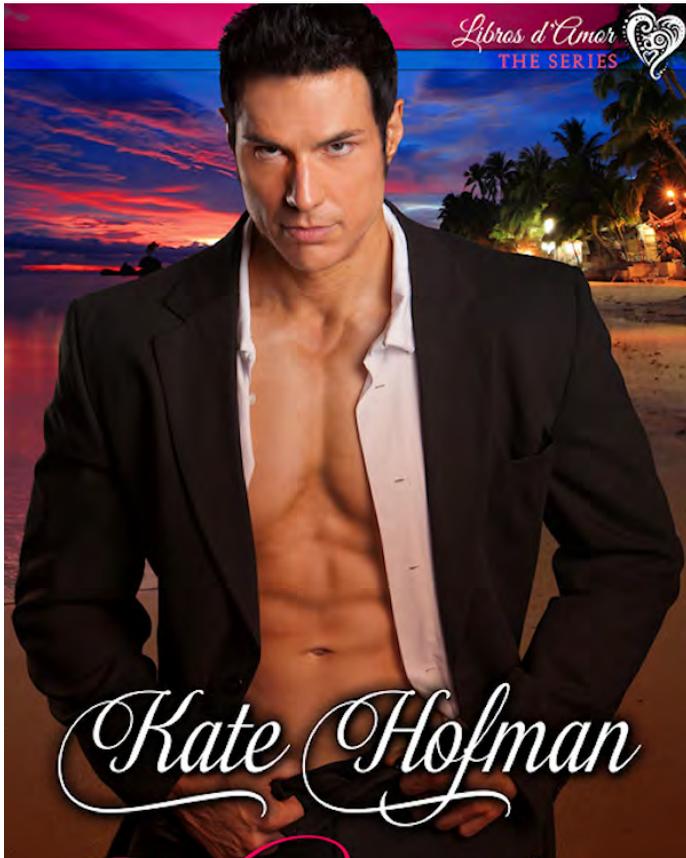


*Authors for Authors Panels attendees*



*Author and panelist  
Pamela Ackerson*

# Cover Model Corner with *Julian Christian by Debra Parmley*



**Debra:** Today I'm excited to interview cover model and author, Julian Christian. Welcome Julian! What was the first cover you appeared on and how did this come about?

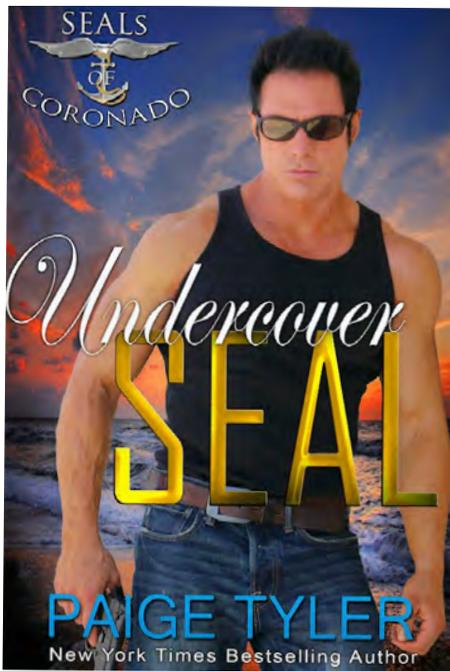
**Julian:** First off, thank you for having me. Let's see it was many moons ago, but I believe it was a fitness magazine called *Men's Exercise*. I think the first book cover called *Close Quarters* where I was a Marine.

**Debra:** You're welcome. Now 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?

**Julian:** So many places, how do I choose? It would definitely be some place historical like the Coliseum in Rome or the Acropolis in Athens.

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

**Julian:** I don't model anymore these days. I keep busy with my



career in pediatrics, my animals, and I started writing. Just published my first novel.

**Debra:** *You have accomplished a lot! I want to chat about your book in a minute. What's one question you wish an interviewer would ask you?*

**Julian:** Do I like tacos? The answer is YES! Kidding, of course. I would love to be asked about my spirituality. It's something I've been working on for a while.

**Debra:** *Now I'm hungry for tacos! Lol I always ask this question - If you wrote a book, what would it be about? Tell us about it.*

**Julian:** Well, I did write a book, it's a dystopian novel about AI controlling humanity. I think it's pretty good and I hope people will enjoy it.

**Debra:** *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?*

**Julian:** Mix of weight training and cardio, but the key is to be consistent. Make fitness apart of your life and it will take care of you. My diet is mostly plant based with some wild caught fish and organic eggs thrown in. I try to eat mostly organic. Lots of whole grains, vegetables, and fruit. I don't touch dairy or meat.

**Debra:** *If you could share three simple fitness tips the average romance reader*

*could do every day to stay healthy, what would they be?*

**Julian:** Walking for one. It's low impact and we are built to walk. Another would be stretching. It's important to maintain our flexibility as we get older. Third would be to do some lite weight training. It's important to maintain muscle mass as we get older.

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

**Julian:** Sushi from Nobu! And some vegan deserts. I don't drink alcohol so I would just go with a matcha latte.

**Debra:** *Describe the perfect romantic evening.*

**Julian:** The evening begins as the sun starts to set, painting the sky in warm hues of gold and pink. Soft music drifts through the air as candles flicker to life, creating an intimate atmosphere in a carefully prepared space. The scent of fresh flowers mingles with the aroma of a home-cooked meal simmering in the kitchen.

The table is set with elegant simplicity – fine China catching the candlelight, a bottle of wine breathing nearby, and a centerpiece of fresh seasonal blooms. The playlist transitions seamlessly between gentle jazz and romantic classics, providing a perfect backdrop without overwhelming conversation.

Dinner is served at a leisurely pace, allowing time for meaningful conversation and lingering glances. The menu is thoughtfully crafted – perhaps starting with a light appetizer of pan-seared scallops, followed by a main course that holds special meaning for the couple. The wine pairs perfectly with each course, its warmth adding to the evening's glow.

After dinner, the couple moves to a cozy seating area where comfortable cushions and soft throws invite them to relax. The city lights twinkle through the windows, creating their own constellation of stars. Time seems to slow as they share stories, dreams, and comfortable silences, their fingers intertwined.

The evening might include a slow dance in the living room, or a moonlit walk through a nearby garden, where the night air carries the sweet scent of blooming jasmine. Perhaps they end up on a balcony or rooftop terrace.

*Affaire de Coeur*

*Space Coast*  
Book Lovers

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

**The 9th Annual Space  
Coast Book Lovers Event  
Cape Canaveral, FL  
June 18th to 21st  
75+ Multi-Genre Authors**

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race, sharing a dessert of dark chocolate and fresh berries while watching the stars emerge above.

What makes the evening perfect isn't just the careful planning or elegant details – it's the genuine connection between two people, the shared glances and gentle touches, the inside jokes and meaningful conversations. It's an evening where phones are forgotten, where time loses meaning, and where the rest of the world fades away leaving only this moment, this connection, this perfect bubble of romantic bliss.

As the night draws to a close, neither wants it to end. The evening has been a reminder of why they fell in love, a chance to reconnect and create new memories, a perfect blend of thoughtful planning and natural chemistry that makes every moment feel both special and completely right.

**Debra:** *I believe you could also write a good romance. Please share one unusual fact about you or your life:*

**Julian:** Hmmm...not sure of any



**Culinary innovation from traditional to gourmet creations.**

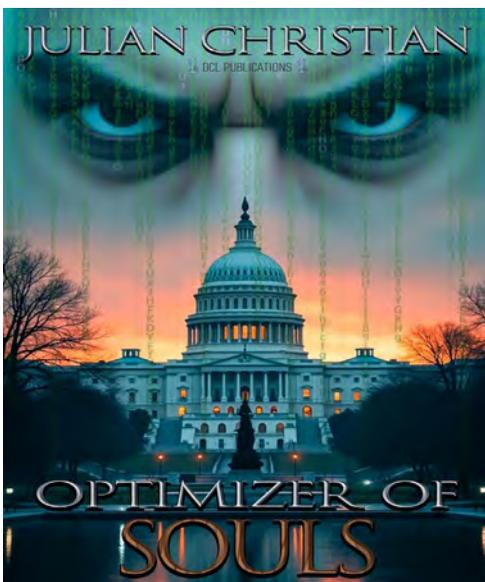
**214 pages of clear-cut, easy to follow recipes.**

**Whether you're looking for a hearty dinner to warm you up on a cold day or a special dish to serve at a gathering, the Comfort Food with a Flair Cookbook is a must have on your kitchen shelf.**

**Discover the joy of cooking Comfort Food With a Flair!**

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

[@YellowDogCafe01](https://www.instagram.com/YellowDogCafe01)



unusual facts about my life there are. Perhaps that I'm a big nerd.

**Debra: Now Eight Quickie questions:**

**Watching the sunrise or watching the sunset and the stars?**

**Julian:** Sunset and the Stars.

**Debra: The beach or the mountains?**

**Julian:** The beach. I live in San Diego.

**Debra: Primitive camping or luxury hotel?**

**Julian:** Luxury hotel.

**Debra: Snow skiing or water skiing?**

**Julian:** Snow skiing.

**Debra: Favorite movie?**

**Julian:** Cinema Paradiso

**Debra: Best book you ever read?**

**Julian:** Tough one. There are so many. Let's go with the *Count of Monte Cristo*.

**Debra: Favorite sport to play?**

**Julian:** Surfing

**Debra: Favorite sport to watch?**

**Julian:** Football

**Debra: Thank you for visiting with me today. It's been fun getting to know you.**

*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. Readers and Models contact [debra@debraparmley.com](mailto:debra@debraparmley.com). She loves to hear from you!*



*Our Other Spotlight is on...*  
**C.A. SZAREK**  
*AdC's May Calendar Girl*



*USA Today Bestselling, award winning author of romantic suspense and epic fantasy romance, C.A. loves to dabble in different genres. If it's a good story, she'll write it, no matter where it seems to fit! She's a hopeless romantic and always will be. Risking it all for Happily Ever After is what she lives by!*

*She's originally from Ohio but got to Texas as soon as she could. She's happily married and has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. She's always writing, and helps small business owners by writing their websites, and she loves it!"*

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

**C.S.:** I do have a fun project that I released in November of 2024 and what I did was go back to the first book of this series, *Sword's Call*. And I worked with an illustrator and an artist, and we put out a big book. It is 8 1/2 by 11 in hardcover, and we did 24 full-color illustrations plus the formatter did some really cool chapter openers. So it's the same story, but fully illustrated, including the naughty bits, which I always giggle at when I say it out loud. It turned out really beautiful and I love it. Eventually I will go back and do the others.

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

**C.S.:** Ohh, that would be completely fun! I am working in my fantasy world that I created so I would be there with my characters in my six provinces. With magic and wolves and dragons, etcetera!

**AdC:** *How do you name your characters?*

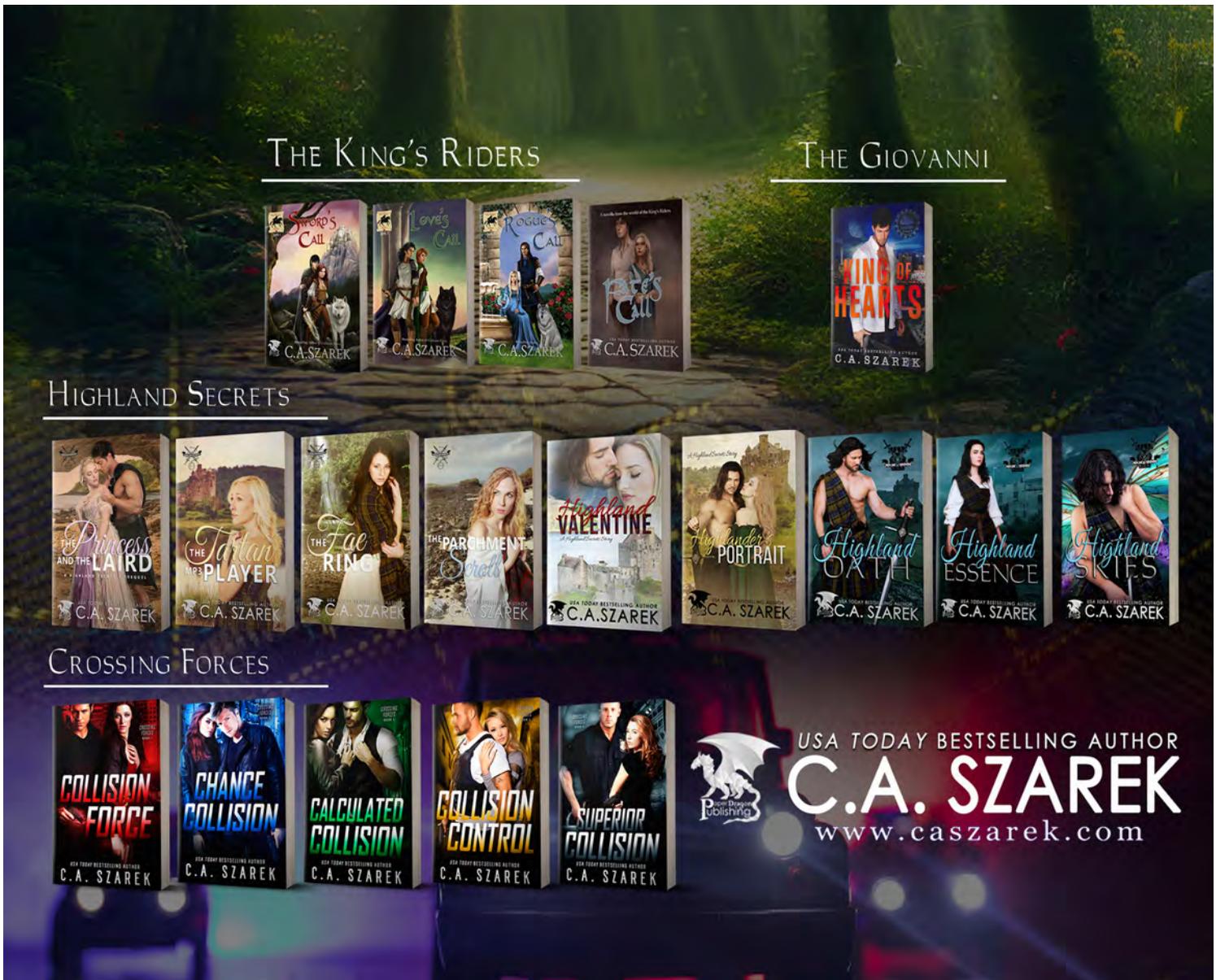
**C.S.** Strangely enough, my characters usually "introduce" themselves to me. So I don't really name them. I usually think of what I want to write about, or a character pops into my mind and tells me that they have a story. That's usually how it goes for me. Generally, when I know a character's name, that's what it is. Even if I don't like it.

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

**C.S.:** The intimacy scenes. Sometimes I even start with them, even if they're not at the beginning of the book. (Because normally they're not at the beginning of the book, of course!) But I love the chase part of the romance. I like to see them in bed together so I can see how they got there.

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

**C.S.:** Scotland, the Isle of Skye. In my second series that I have going, I'm writing about the 17th century and of course being a woman then, even a strong woman, wasn't really awesome, lol! But, I think I'd like to see it firsthand, period. Of course, I know it's smelly and there would be no antibiotics, but I would absolutely like to go see what *the when* I write about.



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

**C.S.:** I watch TV. I watch way too much TV, lol! And I follow many, many different shows. But it does help get the juices flowing. Sometimes I'll get an idea that I can apply to someplace I'm stuck in a book. My other method is I just think about it before I go to bed. Or obsess where I am stuck, how to find a solution. Then shockingly enough, a lot of times I dream up the solution. Which tells me that my subconscious had it and I just wasn't listening hard enough.

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

**C.S.:** I watch way too much TV. I really like TV. Probably an unhealthy amount, lol! I also like to play games on my iPad and just kind of veg out. I love my two dogs so I hang out with them too, or we go for walks or I take them to the park. I'm really a couch potato. Or a recliner potato because I sit in a recliner, lol!

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

**C.S.:** I actually have a few on the docket this year that are new to me. I have Kiss and Tell, which will be held in Grapevine, TX (Dallas area) on June 21st of 2025. Then I am venturing to a new Comic Con in Oklahoma in September. It will be

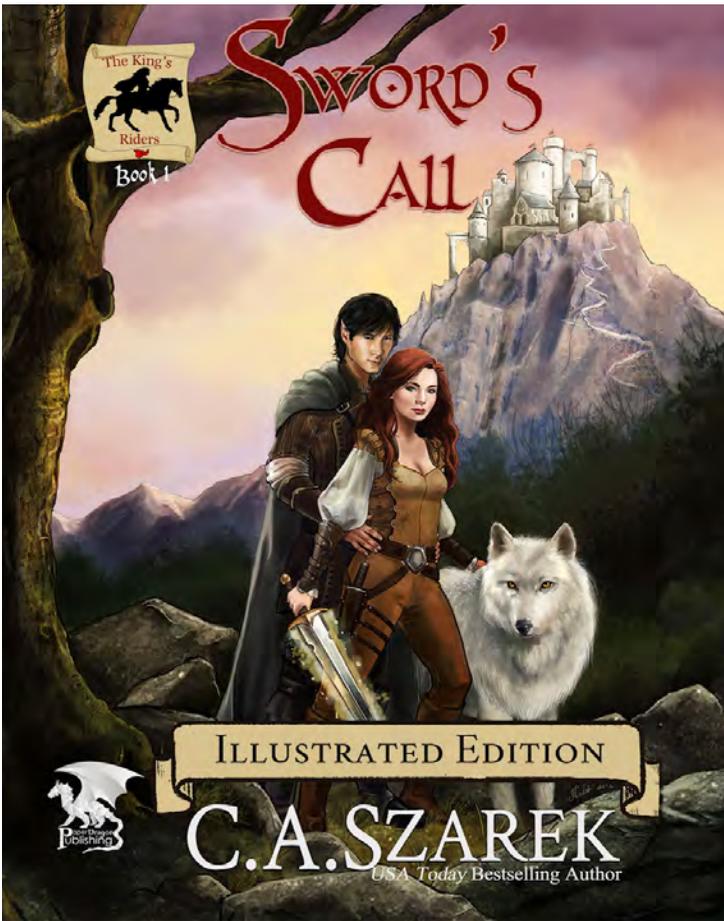
held in Ardmore, OK on the weekend of September 26th and 27th. Then I have The Traveling Bookshelf, which will be in Grand Prairie, TX on October 4th. I may have a few other ones that are in the DFW area, because that's where I live so people can keep up with my outings on my website!

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

Personal web page: <https://www.caszarek.com/>  
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/caszarek>  
 Instagram: [www.instagram.com/caszarek](http://www.instagram.com/caszarek)  
 Twitter: [www.twitter.com/caszarek](http://www.twitter.com/caszarek)

# *An Affaire de Coeur*

## Sneak Peek



## *SWORD'S CALL*

BY C.A. SZAREK

*AN EXCERPT*

**T**hey left the small village late, in the pouring rain. Cera covered her head with the hood of her cloak. Jorrin should have enough sense to do the same. She cursed as the rain pelted down on them.

*So much for a warm bed in a cozy inn.*

Would they get into a fight in every tavern they entered?

Jorrin had drawn his sword, prepared to fight, but she'd grabbed his hand and urged him to run, as they had from Marschke's tavern. Taking the time for a real fight wasn't worth the risk. Someone had seen her magic sword again. She could've hugged the half-elf for not asking questions.

Should she be concerned or relieved that he'd been a mercenary?

If he was skilled with his sword it could be handy, but she should've never let him accompany her. Hired swords usually weren't the most reputable of people, either.

She stared at him for a moment, dismissing any worries. Cera was in no danger from Jorrin. Not physically, anyway. Getting lost in his sapphire eyes was another matter entirely. Her heart missed a beat.

Why the *hell* had she told him where she was headed? For that matter, why had she told him her *real* last name on the road the day they'd met?

Thank the Blessed Spirit he'd not recognized it.

She cursed. It was too dangerous to involve anyone else, even a handsome stranger. If anything, this most recent bar scuffle proved that.

He'd tried to blend in; he'd pulled up the hood of his cape. Jorrin had been antagonized into action. The men who'd pushed them had to be Varthan's hired thugs. Maybe their descriptions were already out, and the thugs had been trying to confirm their identities.

If Cera kept drawing the sword, the bastard would have an easily laid trail to find them. No telling how far his eyes could see.

She glanced over her shoulder. No one was following them yet, but they hadn't much time. She looked for Trikser and slumped with relief when she spotted him. Matted wet fur could be dried, but her bondmate couldn't be replaced.

Nor would she survive if she lost him—literally. The magic that bonded them was permanent, and both their lives depended on each other. In turn, if she died, so would her wolf.

The village was the fourth they'd visited since Cera had saved Jorrin's hide in Lower Greenwald. They were in Berat now, but wouldn't be able to ride all night.

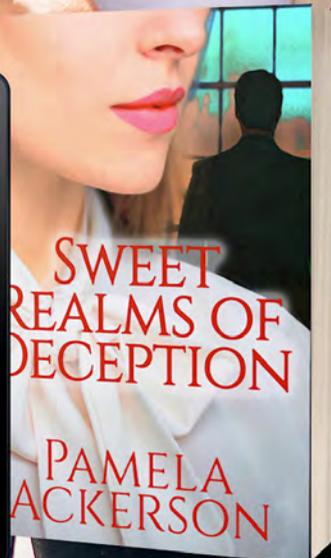
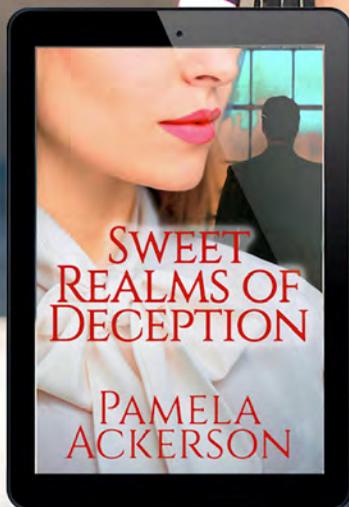
With the mounting rain, mud was everywhere, splattered a foot high on the stone buildings. Large puddles widened the unpaved road and made for an even rougher ride.

# C.A.

## Lizette Hill, pencil pusher and paralegal for the FBI

Assigned to a desk job for the last ten years, the FBI had a major shift due to upper echelon decisions. Lizette was assigned to her first undercover position in an office owned by a mafia family involved in the transport of drugs through their shipping yard on Lake Superior.

Keoni Nani is a talented carpenter, working his magic on museums and Victorian homes. When he met Lizette, he had no idea it would throw him into the world of mystery, murder, and romance with a twist . . .





**Vacations mean seeing famous landmarks. Name them!**

**Across**

- 2. Athena's home in Greece.
- 4. This big fella tells the time in London.
- 5. The highest mountain in Africa.
- 8. Sign on the hill in Los Angeles
- 11. Roman temple that was originally the home of the 12 Gods.
- 12. Palace in London.
- 13. Monument for our 16th President,
- 16. Bridge that connects San Francisco and Sausalito The \_\_\_\_\_ Gate.
- 18. Mount \_\_\_\_\_ is in Italy.
- 19. The Great \_\_\_\_\_ is in China.
- 21. This park spans Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho and has the Teutons.
- 23. This Australian reef is The Great.\_\_\_\_\_.
- 27. This mountain features the faces of four presidents.
- 29. Falls located in Zimbabwe.
- 32. Famous for its canal.
- 33. This one doesn't sew but it sticks up in the Seattle sky.
- 34. This rings out in Philadelphia. The Liberty \_\_\_\_\_.
- 35. The U.S. President lives in this color house.

**Down**

- 1. Russia's famous palace.
- 3. Falls in both Canada and Buffalo.
- 6. These Swiss mountains are famous for skiing.
- 7. These colorful petrified trees are found in the desert.
- 9. This mountain range is found in #21 across and is part of the Rockies.

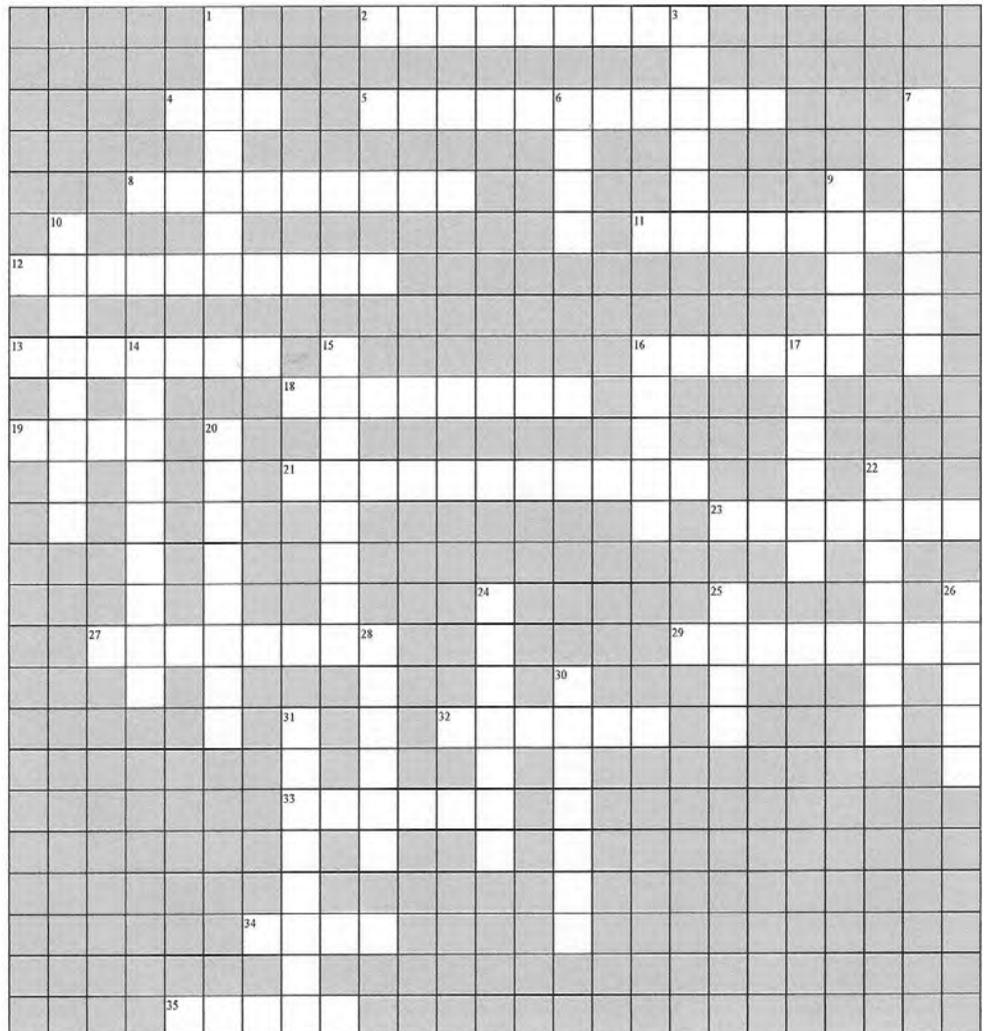
- 10. Tallest mountain in Japan.
- 14. Where the gladiators fought in Rome.
- 15. He's in Brazil at the top of a mountain.
- 16. This big canyon is in at least two states.
- 17. It's in New York, and it's tall.
- 20. India's famous mausoleum.
- 22. She lives on Ellis Island, and she's

- tall Statue of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 24. The active volcano in Hawaii.
- 25. It leans.
- 26. The famous naked man in Florence, Italy.
- 28. Les Tour is in Paris, and it's tall. \_\_\_\_\_
- 30. The Pope's home..
- 31. It's in Washington, and it's tall.

**Landmarks**

Louise B. Snead

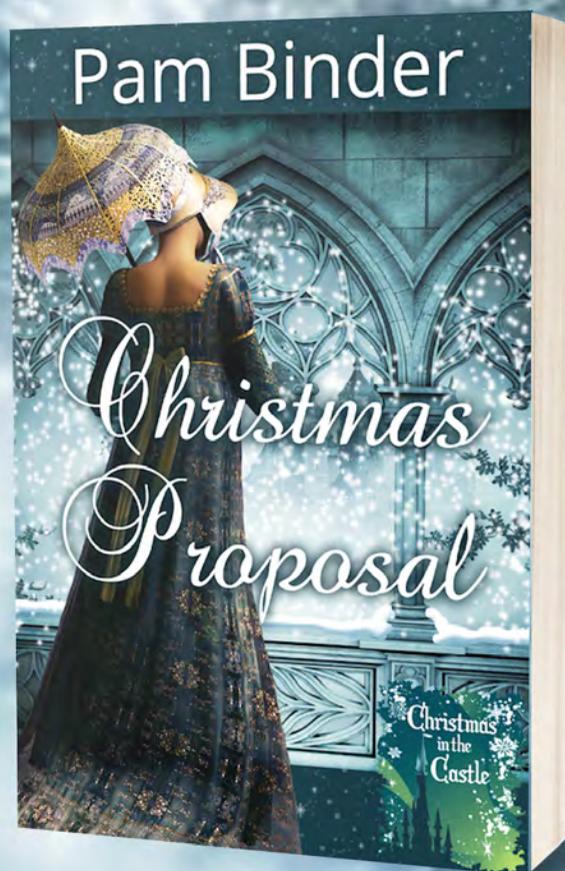
**Answers on page 34**





**Pam Binder**  
**New York Times**  
**USA Today**  
**Bestselling Author**

**Time is an Illusion,  
and Love...  
the Only Reality**



**PamBinder.com**  
**@PamBinder183**

# 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](http://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](mailto:adcreviews@att.net)

### Hidden Nature

Nora Roberts

St. Martin's Press

978-1250370853 Hardcover

B0DDJC6XS2 E-Book

★★★★

As a corporal in the Maryland Natural Resources police force, Sloan Cooper doesn't routinely have to handle complicated cases. But after a long day at work where she dealt with violent men, Sloan visits a convenience store where a robbery is in progress. She is shot, dies, and is revived. During her long convalescence, she returns to her hometown in Maryland where her family runs a resort in Heron's Rest.

Nash Littlefield is a former Wall Street worker who breaks away from family expectations and opens a contracting business along with his brother, Theo. He quickly finds plenty of work, including renovations at the Cooper family resort.

While recuperating, Sloan takes an interest in a missing person's case

and soon becomes embroiled in investigating what turns out to be a series of seemingly unrelated murders. As the attraction between Sloan and Nash evolves, they team up to work on the case. In the meantime, a romance develops between Theo and Sloan's sister, Drea.

What Sloan and Nash uncover is a couple who have a bizarre system of choosing their victims using their own twisted religious excuses for their crimes. Sloan herself could be in danger by meeting the couple's criteria for choosing their victims.

*Hidden Nature* is a mixture of romance and danger, peppered with Nora Roberts' attention to detail and a homey touch as she describes renovation projects. We're treated with not one, but two romances as both sets of siblings fall for one another.

The mystery is clever and original with a totally unexpected and evil set of "bad guys" and is certainly a satisfying read.

Hannah Rowan

*Affaire de Coeur*

# Contemporary Romance

## Hunted Through Italy

Delaney Diamond

### Harlequin - Romance

Mass Market

978-1335502841

★★★★★



Zaire's company sent her from the Atlanta office to establish a presence in their Italian office. An intelligent homebody who enjoys true crime and shares random facts, Zaire doesn't always use her filter. While on assignment in Rome, she overhears men planning an embassy bombing. She reports it to the American authorities in Rome and is then accused of murder and ends up on the run with CIA black ops agent Atticus "Buck" Swanson, her escort back to the United States.

Buck is a former Navy SEAL skilled with tactics, fighting, and weapons. He's deeply attracted to her at first sight. The last thing he wants is to be back in Rome, but he'll do what needs to be done to keep Zaire safe and bring her home to the U.S. safely.

Delaney's writing is down-to-earth, detailed, and vivid. She develops Zaire and Buck's intense attraction in a way that draws readers into each scene.. Her action-packed, tautly written and well-constructed fights, escape scenes, car chases, explosions, etc., are thrilling

Delaney gives the characters (and readers) a chance to get to know each other before they become intimate. Zaire and Buck are hiding and on the run. They get the chance to talk to each other about themselves, share their dreams, aspirations, and fears, and encourage each other.

*Hunted Through Italy* is a fast-paced, suspenseful, steamy, action-packed romantic read highly recommended for romantic suspense, action, thrillers, and light international espionage fans.

Lacy Hill

making furniture in her spare time, and fostering dogs while working a nine-to-five job she hates. Since being gently turned down after asking Elsie to their sophomore dance, she's longed for more. Her life revolves around Elsie. She's happy going along with whatever makes Elsie happy and doesn't know what her life is without Elsie.

Elsie and Ginny balance and help each other feel comfortable being themselves, at peace with themselves, and happy. For Ginny, it's easy to be with Elsie, and Ginny makes Elsie feel more self-assured because she's her safe space. Their closeness and ease with one another and how they support, defend, protect each other, illustrate their love and deep friendship.

Wilsner's active, vivid, and detailed, down-to-earth writing uses the characters' senses to develop and evolve their relationship and characters and highlight their intimacy. She develops Ginny and Elsie's relationship through alternating flashbacks from the past and present. Their relationship is filled with longing, nostalgia, steam, heat, humor, friendship, and love. Elsie and Ginny's love scenes are as emotional and intimate as they are intensely sexy and steamy.

While Wilsner forcefully brings the love, chemistry, steam, and sexual discovery, readers might have liked spending more time with Elsie and Ginny growing together as a romantic couple. *My Best Friend's Honeymoon* is a funny, introspective, sexy, and fast-paced about a woman and her non-binary BFF with a lot of heart.

Lacy Hill

## My Best Friend's Honeymoon

Meryl Wilsner

### St. Martin's Griffin

Trade Paperback

978-1250873320

★★★½

Childhood best friends Elsie Hoffman and Ginny Holtz go on Elsie's honeymoon together when Elsie breaks her engagement off. Elsie's fiancé planned their wedding and honeymoon without her input, and she finally admits that she doesn't want to marry him. When she breaks off their engagement,

he encourages her to go on the honeymoon. Ginny tells Elsie to think about what she really wants. She'll give Elsie anything she wants! It leads to them becoming intimate.

Elfie stands up for her everyone—anyone who needs help, but she never fights for herself. She isn't good with change and doesn't like surprises. Past traumatic experiences, have emotionally held Elise back from taking chances and being her authentic self. She defines herself by those around her.

Ginny is a plus-sized, non-binary lesbian who's been in love with her BFF Elsie since before she understood what love was. She loves woodworking,

# Paranormal Romance Reviews

Fantasy

Vampires

Shape Shifters

Time Travel

Werewolves...



## Be a Detective, They Said. It'll Be Fun, They Said (Accidental Detective Mystery #3)

Dakota Cassidy  
Self-Published

E-Book  
B0CYB3L72H

★★★★★



*“Wanda Jefferson, vampire/  
werewolf hybrid and (very) reluctant  
temporary PTA president, reporting for  
duty!”*

Don't be so shocked. I'd do anything for my two precious babies, Olivia and Sam, including whipping up batches of cupcakes late into the night for their annual bake sale at the Paranormal School for the Gifted. And, if I have to endure the most insufferable, controlling, bossy-pants PTA president in all of existence who goes by the name Neerie Lincoln-- so be it.

Except today, Neerie's a no-show, leaving me in charge of the event. The domineering little fae would never willingly miss the school's biggest fundraising event. Who else will properly ensure sweet and savory treats never grace the same table?

Just when you think they've seen it all, Wanda, Marty and Nina find some new and fantastical creatures that

blow even their minds. The accidental detectives third case is a missing persons case of the irritating, tyrannical and whacked out president of the PTA. She may be a pita, but her little girl is adorable and deserves her mommy no matter what. Through dogged determination and a whole lot of luck, these ladies manage to get the job done.

D. Antonio

## Deacon (Devils' Spawn Daddies Book 4)

Victoria  
Saccetti  
Essence  
Publishing

E-book  
B0DRKM848M

★★★★★



*She loved him for a night. Will he  
love her for all time?*

With the bloody war with the Steel Wolves finally over, Deacon dives right into the celebration—maybe a little too deep, hounded by past mistakes and lingering grief. He wakes up on the floor, naked, alone, and no memory. A woman's torn bra the only clue he must have had a good time.

Sydney knew Deacon was not himself that night, but she welcomed

his rough seduction, his hot skin under her cool hands, and she surrendered to the fierce rhythm of raw desire. Until his agonized whispers revealed he and Elaine—his late wife, her best friend—were Daddy/little.

Deacon grapples with his reaction to the Sentinels' Enforcer showing interest in Sydney. By the time he figures out she is the little he needs, Sydney's heart—and her safety—could be well beyond his reach.

*Deacon* is a fun romp. Deacon and Sydney are perfect for each other, but he has a lot of groveling to do to earn the love Sydney has harbored for him for far too long. I thoroughly enjoyed this installment.

Note: Contains a little male rivalry, a lot of groveling, and a little spanking.

D. Antonio

## Wooing the Witch Queen Stephanie Burgis

Tor  
E-Book  
978-1250408709  
★★★★★

In *Wooing the Witch Queen*, Queen Saskia is determined to protect her small country from the overreach of her evil uncle who inflicted untold

*Affaire de Coeur*

## Paranormal Romance

### Rescuing Her Bear

Cassidy K. O'Connor

Celtic Hearts Press

E-Book

B0F1ZY2JGR

★★★★★



*Are you a dummy when it comes to dating? Are you a loser at love? Come to Cypris Destiny Speed Dating to find the mate you should have already found.*

Avery Banks thought she was going speed dating, but she never expected to be whisked away by a tornado to a cabin in the middle of nowhere. When she discovers a bear near death, her instinct is to run, but fate—or perhaps a goddess named Persephone—has other plans for her.

Jordan Franklin finds himself in the wrong place at the wrong time when he overhears a plot to kill the pack alpha. After being beaten and left for dead, he crawls to a cabin for refuge. With Jordan's attackers on their trail, they must work together to reach his pack and warn the alpha.

*Rescuing Her Bear* is a delightful, fast-paced forced proximity, shifter/human romance that will make you laugh and sigh. A totally feel good read.

D. Antonio

trauma on her as a child, and the authoritarian archduke who wants to take over her territory. To protect her subjects, it takes time to study and perfect her spells. She has developed a reclusive personality that keeps getting challenged by the progression of dark wizards that come to her doorstep to curry favor. The newest is Fabian, who is nerdy and sweet, the right person to become her new librarian. Time spent together leads to a strong bond. Little does she know that he's actually the archduke who is in hiding. Will their love survive that reveal, and a confrontation with their enemies?

*Wooing the Witch Queen* is a feel good, humorous fantasy romance that flips the script. Saskia has "take charge" and "leave me alone" energy, and Fabian is gentle and kind, carrying physical and emotional baggage from his past, but so full of love and goodness. They feel so right together. Fantastic elements are vividly rendered and enjoyable, the storytelling immersing the reader into a world brimming over in magic. Saskia comes off as tough, but never feels truly evil. If that was the goal, perhaps

more development in her character was needed. Instead, she reads as "edgy," a person who has gone through dark experiences that have made her cynical, curmudgeonly and cynical. However, Fabian's steadfast devotion and care melts her heart of stone. Fabian is an absolute sweetheart. He's the kind of hero that every (slightly) wicked queen needs. Saskia's makeshift family includes servants who are considered monsters to the bigoted other nations around her, but show love and devotion, and two other wicked queens who have their own unique quirks. This romance is more on the sweet side with implied sensuality, but there's plenty there to feel the chemistry between Saskia and Fabian. *Wooing the Witch Queen* is a pleasant, fluffy concoction of fantasy and romance mixed together, for those who enjoy this combination, or newbies who want to dip their toes into the genre.

Danielle Hill



Saturday, June 28, 2025

VIP Entry 10:30-11:30 AM

General Admission Entry

12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

The party doesn't stop  
when the signing ends...

Readers, be sure to grab  
your tickets to the Police  
K-9 Evening for the K-9s  
from 6:00 - 11:00!

6-7 VIP Entry

7-11 General Admission

Columbus Georgia  
Convention & Trade  
Center

801 Front Avenue  
Columbus, GA 31901

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

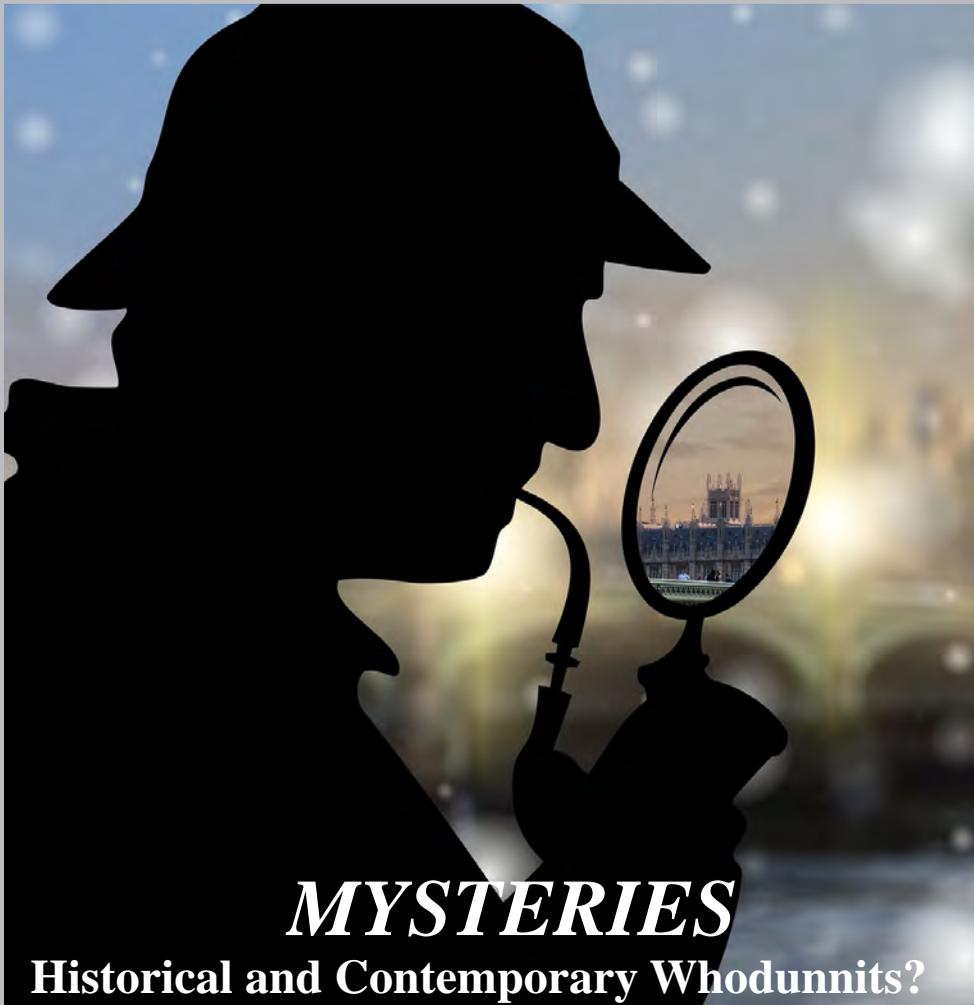
### NEURO MARKETING CONTINUED

are what we do, and we need to take advantage of those adjectives and adverbs. We don't want too many in the manuscript but you sure do want to use them in your advertising content.

Guide the reader to picture it in their heads. Use your senses and it encourages them to use theirs.

Don't over-exaggerate. If you do, you'll lose the trust of your reader.

Neuro-marketing is the frosting on all your marketing and advertising promotions. Keep the positive flow in mind and you'll start having successful promotional campaigns.



# MYSTERIES

## Historical and Contemporary Whodunnits?

### He's To Die For

Erin Dunn

Minotaur Books

978-1250360625 Trade

978-1250397355 Hardcover

B0DDJC9MSQ E-Book

☆☆☆☆

Rav Trivedi is an unlikely candidate for a New York City homicide detective. The son of a British noble and a former fashion model, He's known for his impeccable designer outfits and his refined tastes. As the youngest detective on the squad, he's already subjected to good-natured ribbing from his fellow officers, but his elitist tendencies add fuel to the fire.

Nevertheless, Rav has a solid history of solving cases; so he is assigned to take the lead on a case involving the murder of music executive Dick Vanderford. One of the primary suspects is Jack Vale, front man for the New Knickerbockers band. Rav's taste runs more to classical music, but

his partner clues him in to the cult-like following of the band. When Rav lays eyes on Jack, it's difficult to focus on the case. He is immediately attracted to the rock star's good looks as well as his surprisingly gentle demeanor. Juggling a totally inappropriate potential relationship while trying to remain impartial proves almost impossible, especially when *paparazzi* get wind of the connection.

Jack Vale's life is riddled with bodyguards, managers, groupies, stalkers, and the memory of his best friend and band mate's recent death. Rav is riddled with the reluctance of his superiors to allow him to follow leads he believes will exonerate Jack and help find the killer, not only of the executive but of a growing list of victims. But Rav can't be entirely sure whether his perception of the case is colored by his infatuation with Jack, especially when some facts come to light that seem to point in Jack's direction.

*He's to Die For* is a story that

gives some insight into the grittier side of the music business and the surprising difficulties a person faces when they become a super-star. Each character has an agenda and seemingly a motive that makes them a possible suspect in Vanderford's murder.

A stalking fan who seems intent on killing Jack doesn't make the case or the relationship any easier. Take a murder mystery with many suspects, many red herrings, and many surprises and add a blazing love affair between two unlikely heroes, the rock star and the detective, and you have a story that will keep you guessing and intrigued until the end.

Hannah Rowan

### Secrets, Lies and Fireflies

Angie Fox

Moose Island

Books

E-book

B0CX51B2MH

☆☆☆☆



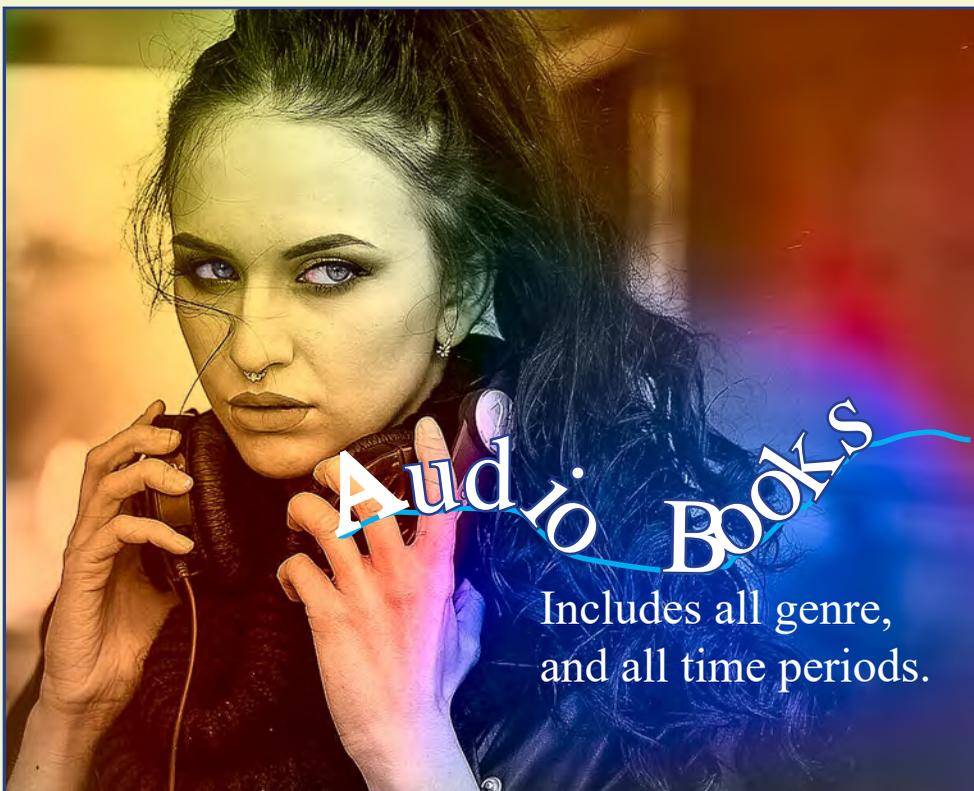
*Verity's family tree has deep roots...and deadly secrets.*

Some families pass down antiques or china. Verity's family can't seem to pass up a good mystery. When her dearly departed grandmother dropped by unexpectedly, Verity was overjoyed—until she learned Grandma Didi was back with a chilling request.

Every discovery pulled Verity deeper into danger, and some in Sugarland would stop at nothing to keep the past buried. If she wasn't careful, she could lose more than her family legacy—she could end up following her grandmother to the other side.

From skunk agility training to a burning building (or two) and a family secret this book had it all. Verity, with the help of her ghostly grandmother and her gangster ghost, Frankie, take on a mystery from several generations back with current consequences. *Secrets, Lies and Fireflies* had me laughing and shaking and downright enjoying.

D. Antonio



## Audre & Bash Are Just Friends

*Tia Williams*

*Narrated by Tia Williams, Jordan Cobb, and Torian Brackett*

**Hachette Audio**

Audiobook

978-1668649213

☆☆☆<sup>1/2</sup>

After Audre's dad cancels her annual summer visit, she's stuck sleeping on the couch in a claustrophobic apartment with her mom, stepdad, and one-year-old sister. Audre's life is a mess. She fears she'll never finish writing the self-help book that she hopes will get her admitted to Stanford. For writing inspiration, Audre will complete five wild dares. Audre asks Sebastian (Bash) Henry to be her fun consultant and help her. In the process, they grow closer, even though Bash isn't boyfriend material, and Audre doesn't want a boyfriend. Can they resist giving in to their shared connection and attraction that continues deepening?

Audre is uncomfortable in social situations, especially involving boys. She has panic attacks. She is the junior class president and an unlicensed therapist for friends and classmates.

With so much going on, having to take on babysitting her sister, she's overwhelmed. Once super close with her mom, she feels left out because they've grown apart.

A fine, tatted, Black, and chill surfer, Bash is a new senior at a rival prep school with a wild reputation because of scandalous rumors circulating about him. No one knows the real him, since Bash doesn't let anyone in to get to know him before Audre. Although he's a generational track star talent, Bash wants to be a tattoo artist. Raised by his father, Bash's drama-filled family life is complicated. Last year, a traumatic experience he doesn't talk about irrevocably changed his life. He moved to Brooklyn to escape.

Although it's more intense and emotional than expected, *Audre & Bash Are Just Friends* is sweet, captivating, and fun. Williams' vibrant narrative style, language use, detailed description, and world building highlight her beautiful way with words. Her characters, and storytelling, draw readers in, taking hold of their imaginations and hearts.

Readers start listening, and, before they know it, the novel's flown by. Colorful dialogue, highlighted by flirty banter flows naturally, adding to the richness of her characters' connections and de-

velopment while keeping readers smiling and laughing during most of their scenes, when you're not close to tears (crying) for the emotional ones.

Cobb and Brackett's animated narration complement Williams' writing style. Their voices perfectly fit Bash, Audre, and secondary characters as well, bringing them to life.

*Audre & Bash Are Just Friends* is a funny, sweet, sexy, poignant, fast-paced romance highly recommended for friends-to-lovers, Black love, dating lessons/coach, family-centered, family secrets, writer heroine, artist hero, heroes who fall fast/hard for the heroine, teen/ya romance.

*Lacy Hill*

## Plus Size Player (Curve #2)

*Danielle Allen*

*Narrated by Wesleigh Siobhan*

**Macmillan Audio**

Audiobook

978-1250395764

☆☆☆☆



Nina Ford still hasn't found one man with all the qualities to satisfy all of her needs. She's looking for excitement, confidence, humor, intelligence, ambition, passion, and romance. A plus-sized, Black woman, Nina is honest, open, and confident, but also private. She's an internet model and content creator, showcasing outfit combinations, setting trends, and re-creating outfits. Nina also works for an online clothing boutique storefront. Nina works multiple jobs, dates four men simultaneously, and enjoys many hobbies. She does what she wants, spends time with people she enjoys being around, and is intimate with men who satisfy her needs. Then she reaches a crossroads when a career opportunity interferes with her being the one man who's everything she's ever wanted in a partner.

Siobhan's vivacious narration breathes life into each character, drawing readers in straight away and before they know it, the audiobook has flown by. She excels at expressive narration for a diverse range of characters, re-

# Audiobooks

ardless of their age, gender, character type, or personality. Siobhan’s expressive narration uses dialects, pacing, pitch, inflection, and emotion to give them distinct voices. She captures the emotional highs and lows, the depth of Russ and Nina’s emotions and passion in their love scenes

While Nina believes in love, she feels it’s unrealistic to believe one man can fulfill all her needs. Russell Long travels for business frequently, but he and Nina get together whenever he’s in town. He’s honest, fearless, well-adjusted, creative, thoughtful, caring, and funny with a strong sense of self.

Allen makes Nina and Russ likable, relatable, and transition their relationship as they fall deeper for one another through funny, sweet, sexy, snarky, steamy, intimate, and emotional banter, conversations, and love scenes. Their chemistry and connection are intense, scorching hot, but there’s much more between them. Allen uses their senses to layer her vivid descriptions, world-building, and evolve their characters and story. They bring balance to one another’s lives. Nina finds the love and life partner who gives her everything she’s been longing for. She brings Russ peace—a place he can be himself. They share their dreams and talk about everything, even silly things, laugh, and have so much fun together. Russ is a hero you can’t help loving because he adores and loves Nina, and he expresses this through the way he respects and cares for her and puts her first. And Nina deserves no less.

*Plus Size Player* is fast-paced, and incredibly steamy and sexy, with a wonderful balance of humor, romance, and angst.

*Lacy Hill*

## **Unbound by Shadows (Book 1, Shadows of Aurelia)**

*Avalon Griffin*

*Narrated by Aileen Bishop*

**Wild Clover Ink**

Audiobook

B0F4L5ZGS7

☆☆☆½

Selene Riley falls through a portal into Aurelia’s matriarchal plan, unprepared for the life-changing adventure ahead. She forms a connection with the demon Samael who becomes her guardian for a treacherous quest for a stone that could return her home. But Sam wants to steal it for himself. Their unexpectedly deep connection and fiery attraction strengthen as they travel together. Will they surrender to it, or choose to escape Aurelia for home?

Selene learned from her chaotic upbringing not to make a fuss or cause trouble. She began caring for her younger siblings, becoming the family peacemaker. Selene puts others’ needs first without expecting anything in return. Unfortunately, Selene gets taken advantage of. All she wants is a calm, ordinary life. Libraries and reading became Selene and her siblings’ escape, but Selene has a weakness for bad boys—especially with horns.

Sam is driven by the need for vengeance. His moods are volatile and dangerous. Kidnapped from the underworld as a child and abandoned in Aurelia, he longs to return home. He’s intensely drawn to Selene, believing she may be his fated mate. The only demon in the kingdom, he is feared by all because of his scars. He feels like an outcast in Aurelia and is often lonely.

Aileen Bishop’s dynamic narration complements Griffin’s down-to-earth, fast-paced, descriptive writing and multi-layered, steamy urban mythology-like novel. Bishop’s flair for narrating a cast of humans, demons, vampires, fae, cryptids, and other immortal creatures of varied genders and ages immediately draws and awes

*Affaire de Coeur*

readers. Before they know it, the audiobook’s over. However, it’s a nice change of pace that Sam’s voice isn’t the typical gruff, aggressive one of most demonic heroes.

Griffin’s mythology is intriguing, and her characters are fascinating. She develops Selene and Sam’s characters, their relationship with each other, and their scenes with vivid and detailed descriptions. Selene and Sam’s love scenes are funny, steamy, and sweet while they contribute to the evolution of their connection, characters, and the story.

Suspenseful, funny, and steamy, *Unbound by Shadows* is a fast-paced start to Griffin’s fated-mates “Shadows of Aurelia” series.

*Lacy Hill*

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# Booty

## Reviews from other genre

### Comfort Food with a Flair

Stuart Borton

Yellow Dog Printing

Hardcover

978-0984291663

★★★★★

*Comfort Food with a Flair* came into my hands at the perfect time. It tweaks what a cook has been used to doing for years. It brings different ideas and combinations many wouldn't consider. The recipes are easy to follow and the ingredients are easily found. The chef has no hesitation sharing his unique gift, presenting you with the best meals he can offer.

This reviewer is looking forward to trying out all the different mouth-watering meals and desserts. Tired of same old, same old? This is a definite masterpiece for your kitchen and dining enjoyment.

Lauren Calder



### Modern Myths: And the Memes That Love Them

Anthony E. Meadors Ph.D.

Self-published

E-book

BODNYPBTC5

★★★★★

If you want to know all the ins and outs of the myths of our time and the nuances about them, then this is a book for you. The author's work is a treatise, examining all aspects of what creates and sustains myths and about the people that keep them alive.

*Modern Myths: And the Memes That Love Them* begins with the author's clarifications on his view of the subject. It moves on to cover the wide range of myths, giving many an anecdotal situation and quite a few quotes by others to bolster his views.

Delve into the past and present to help build an understanding of myths. With many anecdotes, it will be seen that there are many social complexities about the subject. There are quite a few modern myths presented as you turn the pages, though the focus is why they persist and why they begin at all.

There are many fascinating aspects and psychological perspectives to ponder. The author covers how memes contribute to the myths of today, to their creation and to their longevity.

Lauren Calder



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## **The Art of Overthinking**

*Ellen Zheng*

**Rowan Prose Publishing**

E-Book

B0DC72V1ZD

☆☆☆<sup>1/2</sup>

High school junior Isla Wu has zero self-confidence. This isn't surprising since her mother and other family members harp on her weight and call her ugly. She believes she's not smart, athletic, or talented, but tries her best to live up to the expectations of her Chinese family, who not only want her to lose weight but to get into an Ivy League college.

Isla's first day back to the prestigious Alistair Cabot school gets off to a rocky start when someone startles her on the New York subway platform and she spills her coffee all over his shoes. When she works up the nerve to look up, she encounters a "crazy cute" guy named Slater Wesbrook who only wanted to ask directions to Isla's school.

Her classmates are swooning over the hot new arrival who immediately joins the popular boys crowd. Isla's three besties are envious when Slater continues to talk to her, especially Elise, who makes a habit of dating

and then dumping boys.

Isla and Slater are paired for a semester-long art project that requires them to paint art that defines the true meaning of something. They settle on the true meaning of fear, which requires them to support each other in facing their fears. Along the way, Isla deals with betrayal, prejudice, family issues, and the certainty that she's not good enough. Perhaps looking at herself through Slater's eyes will ease some of that burden, though she must draw on her own inner strength to make it through the angst many high school students face as they grow into adults.

*Hannah Rowan*

## **Serenade of the Sasquatch**

*Rachael Lundin*

**Ann Wyld Books**

Trade Paperback

978-0931990106

☆☆☆<sup>1/2</sup>

Dakota and Sidney are two younger teenage best friends who enjoy spending time together and exploring the Washington state forests near their homes. Dakota wants to ask Sidney to be his girlfriend before he and his mom leave for a trip to the beach, but a series of events

complicates that plan, including an encounter with a real Bigfoot, a sasquatch named River on his own unique quest, family troubles for both friends, and discovering a decades' old mystery.

*Serenade of the Sasquatch* is a coming-of-age story that explores the difficult situations that young teens face on the cusp of growing up. The inclusion of Bigfoot's point of view is odd initially, but it is an intrinsic aspect of the story. Descriptive prose of the wilderness vividly sets the scene. The use of a journal from twenty years ago is a very good narrative device that ties the contemporary point of view to the past mystery. The mystery is set up very well, with a satisfying resolution. Notes of humor mix well with pathos from realistic family drama and issues, including missing loved ones, alcoholic parents, parental abuse, and a lack of understanding extended from overwhelmed parents to their children.

There is a subtle Christian element that feels natural to the plot, in which faith is something that guides characters and helps them through difficult times, and not a weapon used against others. This book isn't for everyone, but *Serenade of the Sasquatch* is a quirky, fun, but emotionally impactful young adult book with a unique storyline worth checking out.

*Danielle Hill*

# Late!

Didn't quite make in the last issue



Includes all genre and all time periods

## A Murderer Among Us

*Marilyn Levinson*

**Rowan Press**

979-822715320

Trade Paperback

☆☆☆<sup>1/2</sup>

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 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. Her neighbors don't believe Lydia when she exposes him in the middle of a bin-

go 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*

## A Wager at Midnight

*Vanessa Riley*

**Kensington Publishing**

E-Book

B0D9J2WWSG

☆☆☆☆

The second book in the "Betting Against the Duke" Regency series features the showdown between Scarlett Wilcox and Stephen Carew. Stephen has been the Wilcox family physician for ten years and has watched Scarlett grow from a young girl, to a beautiful, strong-minded and independent woman. Once friends, he is confused that she has grown apart from him, and horrified when he finds out she has been dressing as a man to pursue her medical studies in the echelons of London society closed to a woman.

The Duke of Torrance has tasked him with watching out for Scarlett, and she's leading him a merry chase, making it difficult to ignore the powerful feelings he has for her beyond friendship. Scarlett has felt unrequited love for Stephen for years, but she's now at the point where she's ready to move on and will allow the Duke of Torrance to choose a husband for her who will support her goals in becoming a doctor. Stephen won't leave her be, following her around and reminding her of feelings she would like to keep buried. She wants a man who will accept all of her, not put her in a box. Can Stephen prove that he's that man before he

# Late!

## PUZZLE ANSWERS

runs out of time?

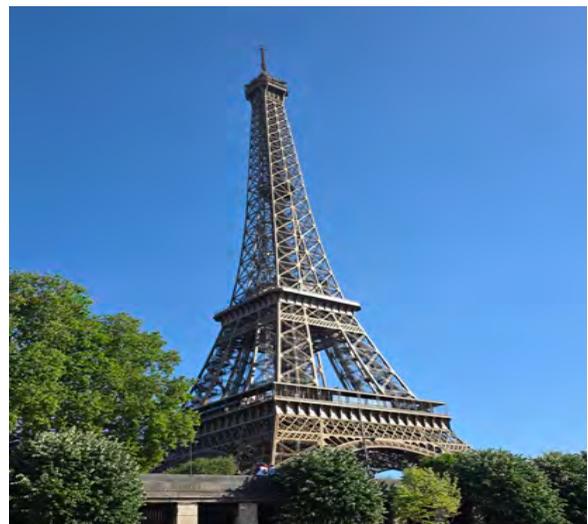
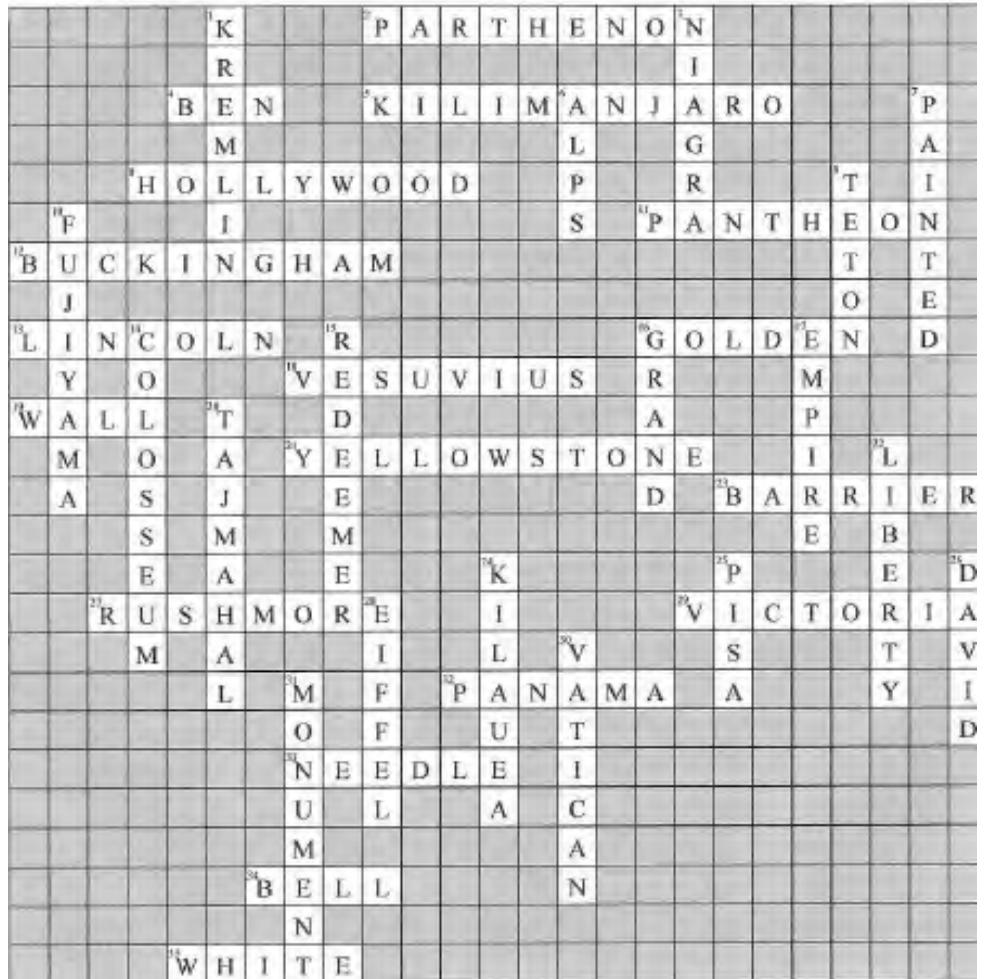
*A Wager at Midnight* is a Regency historical romance that will give die hard romantics all the feelings they crave. There is such scintillating chemistry between the leads as they clash with and crave each other. Scarlett and Stephen trade barbs as often as kisses. Stephen is very traditional in his beliefs, and it takes a while for him to realize that Scarlett knows what she wants, possessing all the potential to be an excellent doctor. She is very studious and determined to help others she cares for, just like he does. He believes that her actions are risking her reputation and initially doesn't believe a woman can be a doctor. He struggles with the demands of his profession trying to care for his community and provide medical services. His narrow-minded views initially will provide frustration for the reader, but he's the kind of man who loves wholeheartedly and cares deeply for others. While this is a sweet romance, the kissing scenes are nicely steamy, showing the powerful chemistry between Scarlett and Stephen. Their banter is fantastic and so engaging. Readers will root for them, especially when Stephen gets out of his own way.

This book shines a spotlight on the black gentry of London, particularly people of Caribbean and East Indies descent. The cultural aspects were fascinating, and the love they showed others in the community was heartwarming. The Duke of Torrance, a magnetic and somewhat tragic figure, practically steals the show, especially in his clashes with the oldest Wilcox daughter, Katherine, Lady Hampton. Their story will be the next book, promising to be a very compelling, explosive read. Vanessa Riley is an author with a distinctive voice who uses history to create stories with diverse and engaging characters. This series is a great way to jump into her books.

*Danielle Hill*

### Landmarks

Louise B. Sneed





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