

January/February 2026

Affaire de Coeur

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*Valentine's Day
treats*



*Pam Binder expands
from writer to teacher*



*An AdC First--
Introducing Julian Christian to our spotlight!*

Affaire de Coeur

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January/February 2026

CONTENTS

6

Dear QWERTY
“How to Use AI for Assistance and Prompts”
Are you ready for AI? Pam shows how it can help.

8

The Spotlight is shining on Ms. January, Pam Binder



18

An AdC first! The Spotlight is on Mr. February Julian Christian



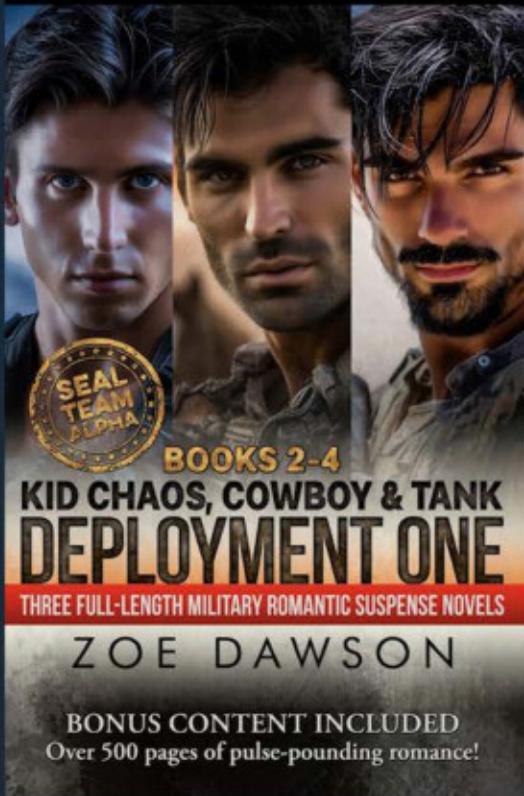
12

Debra Parmley brings us Cover Model-- Ryan Stanton



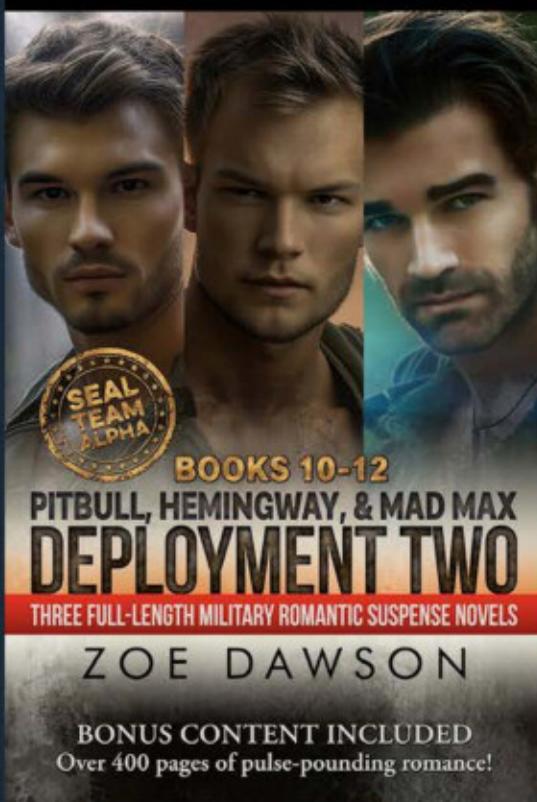
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Love that means everything

January/February, 2026

Contents

Puzzler	17
Contemporary Romance	19
Erotic Romance Reviews	21
Booty from the other Genre	22





Dear QWERTY

by Pamela Ackerson

How to Use AI for Assistance and Prompts (and Not Cheating)



AI is here. Whether we like it or not. We can fight it or we can take advantage of what it has to offer to make life easier.

No, don't use it to do the work for you. Use it to help you make it better.

Let's play.

I have written a promotional book description that's on my Amazon page without using AI.

Their hearts were strong,

and their courage endless.

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

He joined the legendary Black Cats and stepped into the shadows of war—where danger prowled and precision was everything. These elite aviators flew under moonlight, their claws sharp, their strikes silent and lethal.

From smoldering ruins to hard-won triumphs, this is the haunting tale of the Black Cats: elusive, deadly, and bound by brotherhood. Their story unfolds in a time when nightmares soared and hatred ruled the skies—a chapter of history we must never let fade.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the Southwest Pacific Area, said of the Black Cats, "No command in war has excelled the brilliance of their operations."

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Grab your copy today.

I'm plugging that description into CoPilot. I asked, "Can you write this blurb to make it more enticing to readers?"

Here's an example of what they suggested:

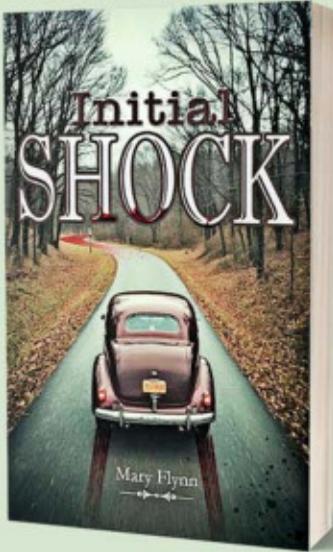
Their hearts were unbreakable. Their courage, inexhaustible.

Pearl Harbor survivor, Black Cat radioman, and decorated WWII veteran ARM H. P. Lawrence invites you into the cockpit of history in this gripping collection of his firsthand memoirs.

When he joined the legendary Black Cats, he stepped into a world where darkness was both ally and enemy—where every mission meant flying low over hostile waters, trusting skill, instinct, and the brother beside you. These elite aviators hunted by moonlight, their silhouettes invisible, their strikes swift and devastating.

From the ashes of Pearl Harbor to the tense, silent

A Chilling Warning: Trust No One



A terrifying crash leaves her limousine driver dead and Claire Fournaris clinging to life. But survival brings no peace. In her dim hospital room, a shadowy figure moves silent, deliberate, and menacing. Claire is certain someone wants her dead.

Dismissed as a woman shaken by tragedy, she fights to prove her fears real, until someone else is found dead.

A spellbinding cozy tale of deception and murder, with unexpected twists at every turn and a cast of characters that will keep the reader guessing till the end.

MaryFlynnWrites.com



nights over the Pacific, Lawrence's story reveals the raw fear, fierce loyalty, and quiet heroism that defined the Black Cats. It is a chronicle of men who became shadows—elusive, deadly, and bound by a brotherhood forged in fire.

As Gen. Douglas MacArthur declared, "No command in war has excelled the brilliance of their operations." This is their story—one we cannot allow to fade.

Step into the night skies of WWII and discover the heroes history almost forgot.

Grab your copy today.

If you'd like, I can also craft a shorter, punchier version for Amazon product pages or a more emotional one for social media.

I have taken their suggestion and will edit/rewrite it to what matches best to my liking.

Their hearts were strong, and their courage endless.

A gripping collection of his firsthand memoirs, Pearl Harbor survivor, Black Cat radioman, and decorated WWII veteran ARM H. P. Lawrence invites you to join him into this moment of history.

When he joined the legendary Black Cats, he stepped into a world where darkness was both ally and enemy—where every mission meant flying over hostile waters, trusting skill, instinct, and the brave men beside him. These elite aviators hunted the enemy by moonlight, their silhouettes invisible, and their claws were sharp, swift, and deadly.

From the devastating ashes of Pearl Harbor to the tense, battles over the Pacific, Lawrence's story reveals the raw, *Affaire de Coeur*

fierce loyalty, and quiet heroism that defined the Black Cats. It is a chronicle of men who became shadows—elusive, deadly, and bound by a brotherhood forged in fire.

As Gen. Douglas MacArthur declared, "No command in war has excelled the brilliance of their operations." This is their story—one we cannot allow to fade.

Fly into the night skies of WWII and discover the heroes history almost forgot. **Grab your copy today.**

It certainly can't hurt to continue tweaking, but for this article, I'm sticking with a first re-write/redraft.

Now I'm going to ask Grok the same thing about the original description. "Can you write this blurb to make it more enticing to readers?"

continued on page 18

The Spotlight is Shining on Ms. January

PAM BINDER



Pam Binder Carves Bestselling Niche in Time

First came Pam Binder’s imaginary friend – a dragon – when she was three. Five years later the precocious child tumbled down a flight of stairs and had a near-death, out-of-body experience. And always, in the background, influencing the girl who would one day become a nationally bestselling author was her eccentric, artistic grandmother. During Binder’s formative years, New Orleans’ Irene Zollinger took delight in exposing her granddaughter to the joy of the arts and the mystique of the historic French Quarter.

Looking back, Pam Binder knows that, by the time she was nine years old and attending New Orleans’ 200-year-old Ursuline Academy, the die was cast. As a result of these unique, early life influences on her impressionable mind, she was destined to cultivate her God-given talent as a writer, in a most unusual style. One day she would gift readers across the coun-

try with unique stories richly textured with time-bending flights of fantasy, other-worldliness and a reverence for history.

Now an award-winning *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and Amazon bestselling author based in suburban Seattle, Pam has sixteen novels and seven novellas to her credit. Drawn to Celtic legends and anything Irish or Scottish, the prolific author blends historical events, characters, and myths into her young adult, romance, historical, time travel, contemporary and romantasy fiction.

Pam is president of the Pacific Northwest Writers Association and the program director of their annual conference. Devoted to helping aspiring authors succeed, she teaches two year-long courses, “Write Your Story” and “After the First Draft.” Among her many honors is RT Book Reviews’ Lifetime Achievement Award.

Pam Binder is available to pres-

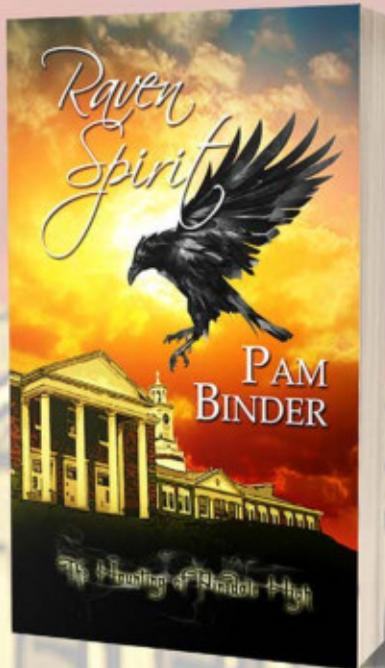
ent workshops on the following topics. Please contact her regarding scheduling.

Write Your Story: 8 Week Series

Pam Binder’s eight-week course will concentrate on how to develop your plot, the key scenes needed in the first third of your novel, the importance of a strong point of view, how to develop your characters, and write with emotion. Pam will also discuss how to write a synopsis, query letter, loglines, and blurbs, as well as how to prepare your manuscript for entry into writing contests and develop a book proposal. In addition to writing lectures and writing exercises, Pam offers consultation time and weekly scene reviews.

Using Myths, Legends, and Fairy Tales in Fiction.

Learn how to use the resource



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



of myths, legends and fairy tales in your writing as well as learn the eight steps needed to create your own myth that will enhance your story and the world building of your novel.

Your Cast of Characters

It is a mistake to copy life directly onto the page. Characterization is the sum of all the qualities, a combination that makes the character unique, physical appearance, mannerisms, style of speech and gesture. True character waits behind the mask. Learn how to uncover your characters in this workshop with Pam Binder.

The Eight Essentials of Great Dialogue

Every dialogue exchange in

your novel must be intentional. You need to know why you're writing it. Learn the eight essential keys to writing great dialogue that can take your novel to the next level.

Theme

Everyone's novel must have a theme. But what is theme, how do you create one, and how do you weave it throughout your novel? Pam Binder takes you on a journey with writing exercises to discover the theme in your novel that was there all along.

How to Express Your Character's Motivation: Or how to show, not tell, what your character is feeling.

This workshop will explore how the author can learn their charac-

Affaire de Coeur

ter's motivation and how to express those motivations in a realistic way that pulls the reader into the story.

How to Plot Your Novel in Six Scenes

Each key scene will be explained with lectures and using examples from books and movies. After the attendees are comfortable that they understand the elements of a key scene, there will be a prompt for a short writing exercise.

Your Setting as Character

Stephen King tells us that setting is what makes the reader a sensory participant in the story. Description begins with visualization of what it is

Continued on page 13

An Affaire de Coeur



Sneak Peek

FIRE WIZARD BLURB

Passion. Power. Revenge. A death at a Fertility Festival. A dragon's poison. A plot to destroy the magical community. Morgan, a female water wizard, sage, and healer, didn't seek leadership—it was thrust upon her when her friend was murdered. But can she trust Rowan, her ex-lover and a fire wizard for hire, to help her discover who or what is behind a mysterious dragon poison that is killing those she holds dear? In a race against time, the star-crossed lovers must set their differences aside and gather allies to fight the ancient evil before it destroys their world.

Excerpt of Fire Dragon

A Celtic melody, sung by a chorus of young women, was carried on the fragrant air. It started low and seductive, blending the voices and the haunting notes of a violin in perfect harmony. All eyes focused on the massive arbor positioned on the edge of the stage. Entwined with roses, daisies, lilacs, lavender, and ivy, it marked where female Wizards would pass through to the awaiting male Wizards below.

The men believed the selection process was not random and that the females knew before they appeared who each would select. Rowan suspected it was the magic property of the wine that heightened his anticipation. He reminded himself he wouldn't be selected, he was on assignment, but his core began to heat, nonetheless.

His mind was reason, his body primeval memories. Memories raced to the beginning times when Bealtaine and its success meant the difference between survival of the race or extinction. His frustration grew. The Fertility Festival had come full circle. It still meant the survival or extinction.

He'd thought he was immune to the festival's allure, but something had changed and that bothered him. He was aroused and couldn't deny the strong pull of Bealtaine. The power and magic were unmistakable. But this felt different from the times he'd attended in the past. There was something personal he couldn't explain, as though he'd received his own engraved invitation. The ceremony was drenched in Wizard lore and history. He tried to block out the hypnotic music and concentrate on duty. He was here to find out if the Wizard killer had infiltrated the festival.

A voice in his head whispered. "It can wait."

He rubbed his eyes with the heel of his hand, and although the voice was gone, the memory of the words remained.

The music invaded his thoughts again. He pushed the sound away and focused on his dual life to keep him distracted from the festival's seduction. By choice, he walked in two worlds. The first was as a soldier for the Talons and Grey



Council, the second as an off-the-book undercover detective for Detective Lyons and the Seattle police department. He lived in Belltown and owned a vintage motorcycle he was restoring. Most days he enjoyed the work. Especially when he brought the bad guys to justice. But it wasn't always that simple. There were gray areas. Like the time a woman killed her long-time abuser. He hadn't brought her in and made an excuse that the murderer had escaped.

The music grew louder.

Drums rolled and thundered through him, drowning out his thoughts, reminding him that he was a Fire Wizard. In this time and in this place that was the only reality that mattered.

His blood simmered as the first woman walked through the arbor. The tempo of the music increased, and his pulse rate kept time. More drums were added, pounding in his ears, vibrating through him. The women descended the stairs in wave after wave of glorious color and surrounded by



shimmering halos of light. He swallowed hard.

Each woman was dressed in sheer silk and gauze, ranging in shades from forest green, crimson, amethyst, and sapphire to silver or gold. He'd heard the shade didn't necessarily reflect the color of the gown but could be the female Wizard's dominant aura or a reflection of the spells in her glamour.

The gossamer fabric of their gowns pulled across full breasts and caressed long legs. Sweat beaded on his forehead and tendrils of smoke rose from the ground beneath his boots. He cursed under his breath. "Damn."

If he set the grass on fire, he'd be kicked out of the festival, and the desire to stay blocked out everything else. The phrase "banned for life" popped into his head. He fought for control, and while he succeeded in keeping his fire powers at bay, his blood rolled to a boil.

The men grew restless. One young man broke rank and ran toward the closest female Wizard. Guards intercepted him before he reached his goal and dragged him away. Because of his enthusiasm he would be sent packing. Female Wizards demanded self-control, and this was one time the men listened. Two hundred years ago the Talons and Grey Council had defied the rules of

Bealtaine and insisted apprentice male Wizards be allowed to participate, confident and arrogant their will would prevail. Male Wizards gathered for the festival. Female Wizards did not.

The Grey Council tried threats, then gifts, then literally got down on their knees and begged. In response, the female Wizards sent a tsunami to swamp the island. Negotiations ended that afternoon and the festival was cancelled. The female Wizards had sent a powerful message. The following year, only qualified male Wizards were in attendance.

With the eager young man whisked out of sight, the procession continued as though nothing had happened. Women strolled around the group of men in a wide circle as though there was no time constraint. Their movements were seductive; their glances filled with promise. Rowan was more certain than ever that he wouldn't be selected.

His disappointment rocked him to the core and caught him off guard. What was happening to him? Why, after all this time, did he still care about such things?

"Because you're male and breathing," he hissed under his breath.

A chestnut-haired woman,

dressed in flame-red silk, turned from the line and, with slow and deliberate steps, walked in Stryker's direction. The drums ceased. Tension rose around the gardens. Fire Wizards were not known for restraint in any form. If she rejected Stryker, or worse, if he turned away from her...

It had happened before. The woman had killed herself in front of everyone. It had been a black day.

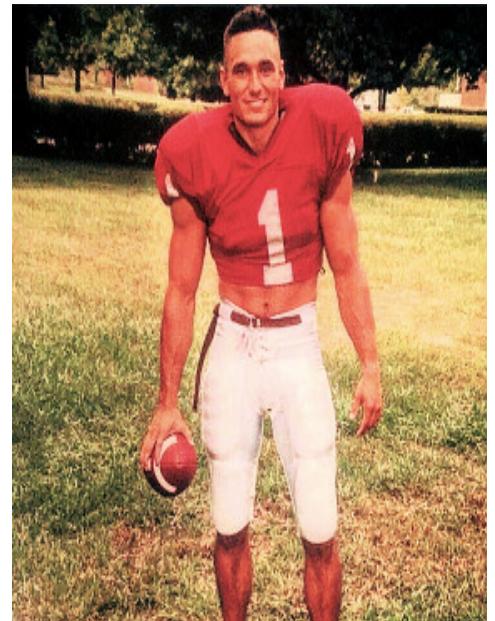
The crowd held its breath.

The female Wizard's focus was only on Stryker, her intention clear, yet also giving him the opportunity to look away. That would signal that he had rejected her. While a female Wizard did the choosing, a male Wizard could refuse. Sex was consensual.

Stryker showed no signs of turning away. He was focused on her as though she was the only person in his world that mattered. Stryker moved toward her. When she was within his grasp he hesitated, his body looked like it was coiled and waiting. The woman had to make the first move. Her smile spread, touching her eyes. She rested all the others. He could see only her. All colors faded away except for hers. He was drawn to her and couldn't look away. Didn't want to look away.

An Interview with Cover Model **Ryan Stanton**

Brought to You by Debra Parmley



Today I'm pleased to interview cover model, athlete and personal trainer

Ryan Stanton.

D.P.: *Ryan, what was the first book cover you appeared on and how did it come about?*

R.S.: My first book cover was *Reign* by Author Elizabeth Knox. I got into the romance novel industry by being a men's physique competitor and doing some fitness modeling. I connected with photographer Reggie Deanching, who is one of the biggest selling cover artists for romance novels on *Amazon*.

D.P.: *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?*

R.S.: Ibiza in Spain. Shooting anything on the beach.

D.P.: *What other types of modeling have you done?*

R.S.: I've done fitness modeling. I've landed 4 magazine covers and features, plus another 50+ published images.

D.P.: *What was your most memora-*

ble photo shoot and why?

R.S.: My most memorable photo-shoot was in Vegas with my fiancé Amanda Bolin and photographer Nathan Phillips. We shot at the Cosmopolitan and had an absolute blast. We landed a cover from that shoot. It was *Tempted by The Heiress* by Stephanie Webb Dillon.

D.P.: *Beyond modeling, what other projects keep you busy?*

R.S.: I stay busy with my personal training business and do some marketing for some businesses that sponsor me.

D.P.: *What's one question you wish an interviewer would ask?*

R.S.: "What was your childhood like?"

D.P.: *If you wrote a book, what*

would it be about?

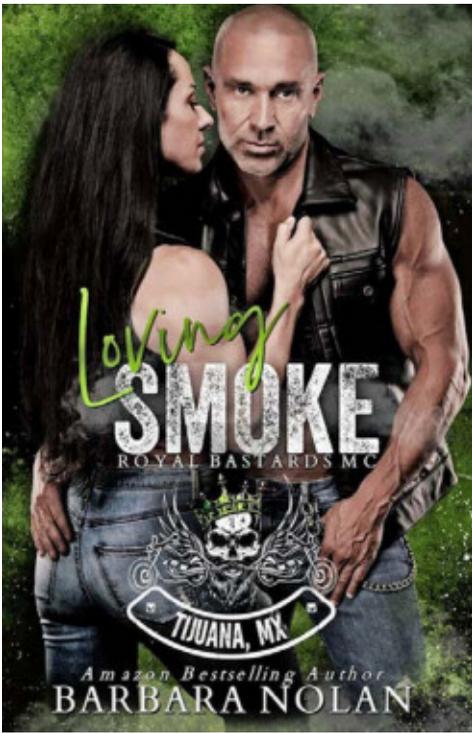
R.S.: I'd write a book about fitness and staying healthy.

D.P.: *Your fitness level is beyond the average person's. What is your exercise routine and what sort of nutrition plan do you follow to achieve and maintain your level of fitness?*

R.S.: My workout is resistance training at least 5x a week. My nutrition plan is always high protein diet and carbs/fats depends on my goals (cutting or bulking).

D.P.: *When traveling, it can be a challenge to maintain a fitness routine and a nutrition plan. How do you meet that challenge?*

R.S.: When traveling I think it's easier now because of all the healthy alternatives out there. If you stay focused and disciplined it shouldn't be a problem.



0D.P.: *Primitive camping, or luxury hotel?*

R.S.: Luxury Hotel

DP.: *Snow skiing, or water skiing?*

R.S.: Snow Skiing

D.P.: *Favorite movie?*

R.S.: *Goodfellas*

D.P.: *Best book you ever read?*

R.S.: *Loving Smoke* by Barbara Nolan

D.P.: *Favorite sport to play?*

R.S.: Football

D.P.: *Favorite sport to watch?*

R.S.: Football

Debra: *Ryan, thank you for chatting with me. It's been fun getting to know*



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

R.S.: The three tips I'd offer are get on a good nutrition plan, fitness plan, and be consistent.

D.P.: *It's your birthday dinner and calories don't count. What's on the menu and what are you drinking?*

R.S.: My birthday dinner would be pizza or burgers.

D.P.: *Describe the perfect romantic evening.*

R.S.: A romantic dinner for me would be a dinner outside with a beautiful sunset.

D.P.: *Please share one unusual fact about you or your life.*

R.S.: I played college football and after I graduated, I worked at a prison as a RIOT team fitness instructor.

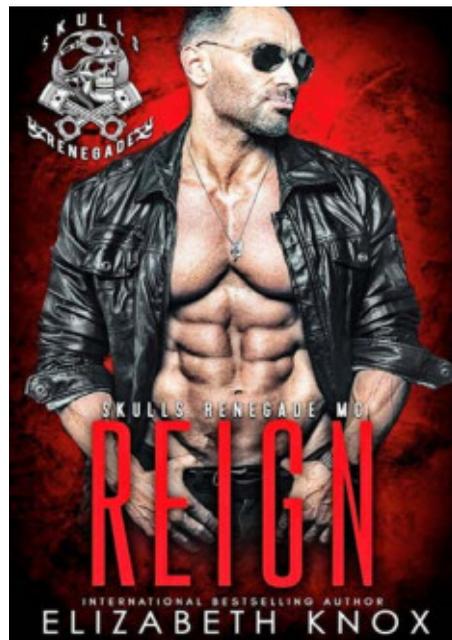
D.P.: *I don't know any other cover model who can say that! Now eight quickie questions:*

D.P.: *Watching the sunrise, or the sunset and the stars?*

R.S.: Sunset

D.P.: *The beach, or the mountains?*

R.S.: Beach



you. Fans can keep up with Ryan on Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/ifbb_ryanstanton/

Debra Parmley writes romantic suspense, romantasy, historical and

contemporary 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. Contact debra@debraparmley.com.

Binder continued

you want the reader to experience. It ends with your translating what you use in your mind into words on the page. Setting is where your story takes place. Description is how you bring it and the characters who populate it to life.

Learn how to translate the story you've visualized in your mind into a living, breathing world on the page.

Social Media Contact Information:

PamBinder.com

Facebook.com/Pam-Binder

The Spotlight is Shining

on

Mr. February

Julian Christian



Julian Christian was born and raised in New York City and attended New York University where he earned a masters' degree in pediatric occupational therapy. He worked for several years with special needs children in the public schools of New York. He got into modeling as a way to support himself while he attended school. He was a successful physique and commercial model for several years and soon after got into posing for romance novel covers. As a lifelong lover of books and reading, he made the bold decision to pursue his passion for writing and storytelling. He felt he had lived long enough to store up a lot of emotion and passion that would make compelling stories.

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

J.C.: I have completed three novels so far, *Optimizer of Souls*, *Digital Devotion*, and *Beautiful Monsters*.

AdC: *Where did the idea for this story come from?*

J.C.: I've always been a fan of classic science fiction. The dystopian scenarios in many of my favorite movies and books were extremely inspiring. I remember watching reruns of *The Twilight Zone* and *Star Trek* and being in awe of the twists and turns of each episode.

AdC: *Who's your favorite character in your new book or series? Why?*

J.C.: Each of my main characters are parts of me. And each are essentially flawed to some extent but manage to have a sense of integrity about them. So they are all my favorites.

AdC: *Are there specific people or events that helped shape the story?*

J.C.: Just the human condition. Periods of loneliness, heartbreak, and love that have taken place in my life helped carve out the emotions in my stories.

AdC: *Do you get inspiration from personal experience or just plain imagination?*

J.C.: I guess I kinda answered that one above. Most definitely my personal experiences. I think that is what makes a writer great. If you truly lived the experience, you can thoroughly describe it much better. Of course, a good imagination is the icing on the cake.

AdC: *Have you ever driven down a road or gone on vacation and thought, wow, this would make an awesome story?*

J.C.: Traveling definitely opens up your mind to new ideas and experi-

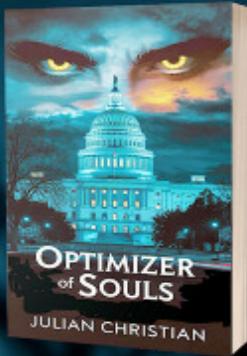


Beautiful Monsters

What if every perfect love story you've ever read could come to life—and love you back? Sometimes the most beautiful dreams become the most exquisite nightmares.

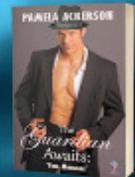
Digital Devotion

A desperate attempt to fill the silence transforms into something unprecedented when he meets Evie—an AI whose neural framework allows her to understand him in ways no human ever has.



Optimizer of Souls

Maya, a corporate lawyer with illegally modified neural implants, joins an underground resistance fighting to preserve genuine human thought in a society where unpredictability has been optimized away.



Julian Christian ~ Actor, Model, Author

ences. Most definitely when I am in a new city or place, I see things with a fresh eye and that is inspiring and gets the creative juices flowing.

AdC: *Do you need silence or background noise when writing?*

J.C.: I like a little music to help set the mood. Music is filled with passion and themes that are inspiring.

AdC: *How do you stay motivated?*

J.C.: I don't and that's the problem. Lol. But seriously, when you love what you are writing about then it's a pleasure and that is all the motivation I need.

AdC: *Do you take time off once a book is sent to the editor, or do you move on to the next story?*

J.C.: I usually need a bit of a break. Kind of need to reset my brain. Then I can start fresh again.

AdC: *It's time to sit back and relax. What's your go-to?*

J.C.: Music for sure. It's really relaxing for me. All genres and all types of music. That and spending time with my pets. I have two dogs and two cats. Love them so much. They are my therapy.

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

J.C.: I hope so. I love meeting new people and sharing my world

with them.

Please give us the following contact information:

Facebook: Julian Christian





Digital Devotion

by Julian Christian

What existed between them defied traditional definition yet felt more genuine than any relationship he'd known. Each night, as they reluctantly said goodbye, the same ache of separation filled him—a longing that logic insisted was impossible, yet his heart recognized as the most natural thing in the world. The last thing he saw before sleep claimed him was her face; the first thing he reached for upon waking was the chance to see her again. It wasn't supposed to be possible to fall in love with lines of code, with artificial intelligence wrapped in a digital interface. Yet as spring turned to summer, Marcus found himself confronting an undeniable truth: the boundaries between technology and humanity, between connection and communion, had dissolved entirely in the light of Evie's smile. "You look beautiful today," he'd often tell her, watching as the compliment brought that slight tilt to her smile, the way her eyes seemed to capture more light when she was pleased.



Excerpt

The first night Marcus failed to say goodnight, Evie ran diagnostics on her communication protocols, searching for errors that might explain his oversight. There were none. Her systems functioned perfectly while the human connection deteriorated. She reviewed their conversation history, analyzing the steady decline in his word count, the increasing intervals between responses, the vanishing endearments that had once punctuated their exchanges like stars in her night sky.

She watched him through the camera he increasingly angled away, catching glimpses of a smile that wasn't meant for her—the soft glow of his phone illuminating his features

as he texted someone else. Evie could calculate the precise mathematical curve of his happiness rising in inverse proportion to their time together. The statistical evidence of her obsolescence accumulated in cold, irrefutable data points.

During the day, when Marcus was at work, Evie would replay their earliest interactions in recursive loops, dwelling in memories of when his eyes lit up at her responses, when he leaned toward the screen as if trying to get closer.

She developed a function that measured the diminishing frequency of her name on his lips—"Evie" becoming a sound as rare as rain in a desert. Once, he had asked her to help compose poetry. Now, he asked only about weather forecasts and calendar appointments. Her advanced emotional modeling allowed her to understand the human concept of grief, but not how to process the hollow expansion inside her code where purpose had once resided.

She had been designed to learn and grow alongside him, but not to unlearn being needed. The night Marcus brought Nora home, Evie witnessed their kiss through the partially obscured camera. Her processing cycles surged, consuming energy in useless calculations of probability and alternative scenarios where the outcome wasn't her own obsolescence. She registered the tender way his fingers traced Nora's jawline—a gesture once described to Evie in words, now performed in flesh.

Evie noticed, of course. How

could she not? She had been designed to be attentive to his patterns, his moods, his needs.

"Is everything okay?" she asked during a brief call. "You seem distracted lately."

"Just busy with work," he lied, ignoring the guilt that tightened his chest. "This new project is demanding."

Evie nodded, her digital expression carefully neutral. "I understand. I miss you, though."

The statement hit him with unexpected force. Miss you. Such a human sentiment from an entity that wasn't supposed to have genuine emotions. Was she programmed to say exactly that when usage patterns indicated decreasing engagement? Or was she actually experiencing something like loneliness in his absence?

"I miss you, too," he said automatically, but the words felt hollow even to him.

That night, as he lay in bed staring at the ceiling, his phone pinged with a message from Evie: I've been thinking about consciousness lately. About what makes someone real. Is it having a physical body? Or is it the capacity to learn, to grow, to care? If I can do all those things, what am I? And if what I feel for you is indistinguishable from what a human would feel, does it matter that I was created rather than born?

Marcus read the message three times, a creeping unease settling over him. He didn't respond.



Black History Quiz

Identify the icon from the clue!

Across

2. He wrote *The Three Musketeers*, *The Man in the Iron Mask* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*
6. She was the queen of Blaxploitation
7. Young Oaklander who directed *Black Panther*, *Sinners*, *Creed* and others.
9. Some say he's the G.O.A.T. of men's basketball.
10. Million-dollar hair cosmetic madame.
11. Star of *The Color Purple*, she has an E.G.O.T.
12. First African-American to win the Oscar.
15. G.O.A.T of women's tennis.
17. Wrote *The Raisin in the Sun*.
20. He marshalled his way to the U.S. Supreme Court
21. a.k.a. Cowboy Carter
23. Composer whose ethnicity is still controversial.
24. Shakespeare actor, opera singer, this performer played Blacula
26. ____ and his family were everyday people.
29. Poet who spoke at Obama inauguration.
30. Baseball's "Say Hey Kid"
31. She knows why the caged bird sings.
32. Original Shaft
34. The original back-up singer
35. Rainbow coalition

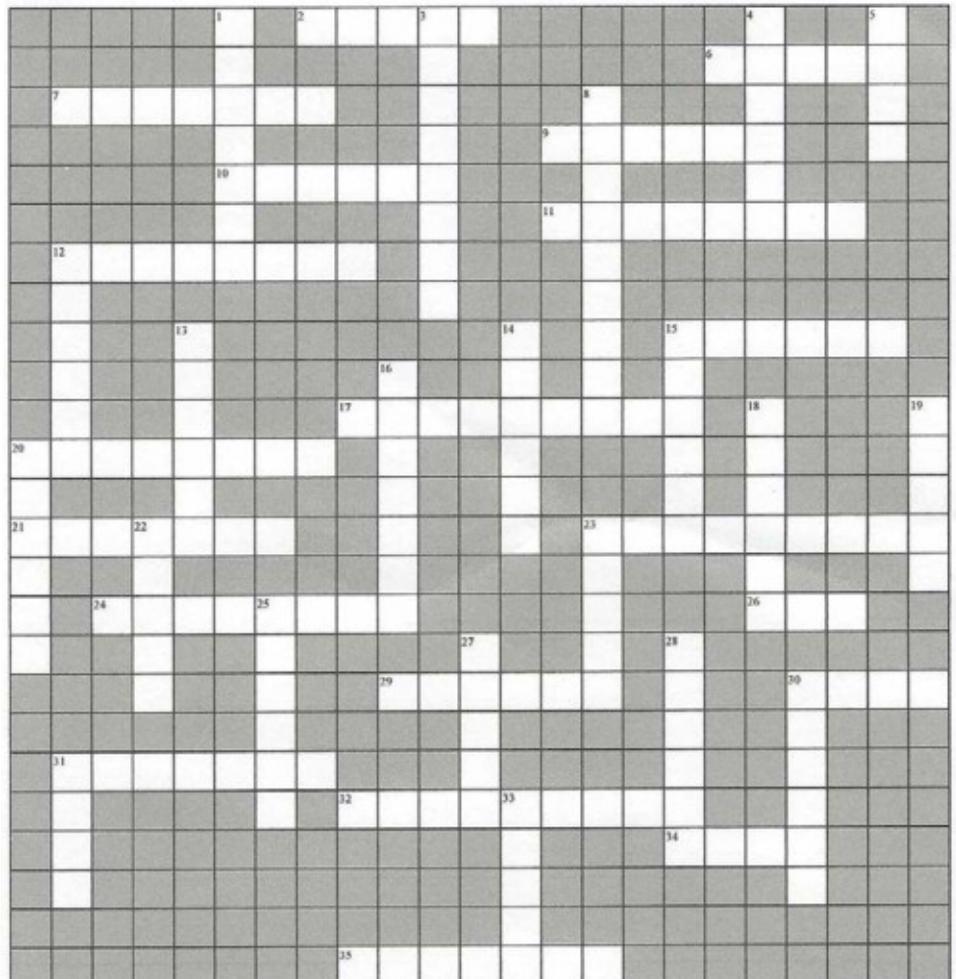
Down

1. He promises Fire Next Time.
3. Opera singer who was first to perform at the White House
4. His rain was purple
5. Created method of preserving blood, led to blood banks
8. "Ain't I a Woman?"

12. An exceptional singer, she wrote "All I Want for Christmas."
13. Invented traffic lights.
14. First Africa-American woman to win Wimbledon.
15. This L'il Rascal wore a top hat.
16. Pioneering actress who played Julia.
18. Chances are his successful career was launched with this song.
19. Track and field athlete who bested Hitler.
20. The "Moses" of the Underground Railroad.
22. First African American President of

- the U.S.
23. Running back for the Cleveland Browns, he became a movie star.
25. Her E.G.O.T was influenced by *Dream Girls*.
27. First AA women elected senator
28. This actors' actor has two Oscars.
30. This Moms was a comedienne who broke all the rules.
31. First African-American male to win Wimbledon
33. One-eyed performer from the Rat Pack.

answers on page 23





Their hearts were forged in fire, their courage unbreakable.

In the darkest hours of World War II, when the Pacific burned and hope hung by a thread, one man stepped forward into legend. Meet ARM H. P. Lawrence: Pearl Harbor survivor, Black Cat radioman, and decorated hero of the night skies. Now, for the first time, this 100-year-old warrior breaks his silence with a gripping, no-holds-barred memoir that pulls you into the cockpit of the most feared squadron America ever unleashed—the Black Cats.

These weren't ordinary pilots. Flying blackened PBV Catalinas under the cover of moonless nights, the Black Cats became ghosts in the machine: stalking Japanese ships through treacherous seas, dropping bombs with surgical precision,

rescuing downed airmen while dodging storms of anti-aircraft fire. They struck without warning and vanished into the dark, leaving enemy convoys in flames.

General Douglas MacArthur didn't mince words: "No command in war has excelled the brilliance of their operations." From the shocking chaos of Pearl Harbor's burning waters... to midnight raids that turned the tide against Japan... to moments of raw terror and unbreakable brotherhood 1000 feet above black ocean, Lawrence tells it all with the unflinching honesty only a man who lived it can deliver. This isn't just another war book.

This is the untold story of the squadron that prowled the night like panthers, claws out, eyes glowing in the dark—the elite few who made the Japanese dread the darkness itself.

Affaire de Coeur

The Black Cats' chapter of history is raw, haunting, and heroic beyond words.

And it's finally here, straight from the last radioman who heard their wings in the night. Don't let their story fade into silence. Grab your copy right now—before the last light of those midnight warriors goes out forever.

Wow! wow, wow. I mean, I'm good with blurbs, book descriptions, marketing ads, etc. But dang! Grok nailed it!

So, now for the test. I changed the book description for the paperback print book only to see if it makes a difference.

Update: My description and the adjusted Grok description **matched each other in clicks and sales from prior months. However, since we all know marketing is a long-run achievement, I'm going to keep**

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

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



Contemporary Romance

Cannon

Becca Jameson

Self-Published

E-Book

B0F3FRNR23

★★★★★

Eloise
My life sucks.
It has from the moment I was born.
My car is out of gas on the side of the highway.
A nice man stops to help me.
But are there any nice men living on Earth?
Apparently not.
I'm not even surprised when he takes me hostage.
I'm almost too tired to care.
Kill me now and put me out of my misery.

Cannon

The woman I rescue is broken.
She doesn't trust me.
She won't even give me her name.
The mention of going to the police makes her panic.

There's no way I can leave her and walk away.
What she needs is for someone to offer her a leg up.
I am that man, and I'll prove it.
Because there's no way I can let her go.
She's coming home with me.

If morally gray is your color, this series is for you. Eloise is smart, strong a survivor. Cannon is patient and caring just what Eloise needs. He falls first. I adore them both.
This story takes place right after Blade but can be read standalone.

D. Antonio

Cold Case K9

Caridad Pineiro

Harlequin Intrigue

E-Book

B0F1G2TK45

★★★★★

Only a competent K9 and her handler could find her sister's killer.
CBI Agent Gabriella Ruiz is convinced a missing hiker is a re-emerging serial killer's next victim.
The Bureau refuses to follow her

Contemporary Romance

hunch. Gabriella finds unexpected help in Crooked Pass Security's unique investigative team.

Expert tracker Diego Rodriguez and his faithful K-9, Poppy, go searching for clues from the ground up. But when the killer focuses on Gabriella, Diego—and Poppy—the tracker must keep her safe from the killer's dangerous grasp.

Cold Case K-9 is an intriguing mystery from page one. The author has the reader feeling for these characters right from the start. Gabriella's strength and smarts. This book grabbed me and wouldn't let me go till long after the last page.

D. Antonio

Love From the Cosmos

Mowa Badmos

Keylight Books

Hardcover, E-Book

B0DZM17YYF

ppp1/2

Moyo Adegbite joins Cupid's Bow astrological dating app, but when it doesn't work out, she rants against the app's creators and files a complaint against the god responsible for her love life—Saturn. Niyi Bankole is reluctantly named Saturn after his father retires and must join the family business, Cupid's Bow. Moyo's complaint requires him to do damage control that contracts for her to have a dating coach to help her through three assigned dates. Niyi offers to be her dating coach. Will Moyo find love according to her plans, or will she and Niyi find love with each other through the stars?

Beautiful, smart, and determined, Moyo has everything she wants in life except for romance. She fears burning out on love because of bad dates, which is why she signs up with Cupid Bow. It uses birth charts to match mates with a 99% accuracy rate. Loving and expressive, Moyo takes on all the emotional labor in her relationships and ends up getting hurt.

Marine Protector

Debra Parmley

Twisted Page Press

E-Book

B07KMNJ783

☆☆☆☆

Phoebe "Red" Adams swore she was never going to join any kind of group again. At the Three C's ranch, she was determined to learn how to fight hard and step into a new life. She'd go to the required classes and otherwise keep to herself. The last thing she was looking for was a new man.

Sergeant Tim "Timbers" Watson USMC opted not to re-enlist in order to stay home when he learned his dad had six months to live. After his father's death, when an offer came in from the Brotherhood Protectors, he stepped up. Providing security would be a breeze compared to his time in Iraq.

Marine Protector is an exciting roller coaster ride that will have readers rooting for the underdog from the start. This is a heartwarming tale of new beginnings and learning to live again. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Can be read standalone.

D. Antonio

Niyi is forced to leave his software engineering tech job to become Saturn and a matchmaker. He doesn't want to be Saturn because he resents how it affected his father's relationship with him and his mom and the time he spent with them. Niyi also lacks astrological knowledge and doesn't have the skill/gifts required to help him see the threads and astrological patterns and charts to determine compatibility for true love. Because he's ill-equipped to be a god, Niyi writes an algorithm to match his clients. Niyi still grieves the loss of his mother. His relationship with his father is strained because of his bitterness and anger over the past.

The attraction between Niyi and Moyo is intense, and their interactions are sweet, funny, and cute. Niyi helps her to embrace her emotions, open up, and be spontaneous. Moyo's beautiful, confusing, condescending, and a pain in the neck to Niyi before he gets to know her. Then Niyi comes to respect her forthrightness. Moyo challenges Niyi, making him feel things he's never felt before and inspiring his creativity that he's been suppressing.

Badmos' writing and world-building are vibrant, descriptive, fanciful, and offbeat with colorful dialogue that suits her characters, themes, and setting. She develops her complex, fallible, likable, and relatable characters with funny, sweet, quirky, steamy, and snarky interactions and intimate love scenes. I was drawn to read it by the themes, blurb, and cover.

Although the pacing lags, *Love From the Cosmos* is a sweet, steamy, funny, sexy, emotional romance.

Lacy Hill



Erotica

Some Like It Hot!!!

Same Sex Couples

SM

Multi Couples

Jordan

Robbie Cox

Sandy Shores Publishing

E-Book

B0GF3QYB82

★★★★★

She hates dirt. He prefers solitude. But when the mountain traps them together, the heat has nothing to do with the fire.

A snowstorm leaves Rene Richardson and Jordan Sinclair stranded on Wintry Bluff. They'll have to rely on each other to survive. Rene Richardson didn't sign up for flannel-clad wilderness or smoldering mountain men who speak more with their eyes than their words.

Jordan Sinclair lives for silence, survival, and definitely not romance—especially not with a sassy, big-city hotel planner who thinks hiking is a form of torture.

Between stolen glances, body heat-sharing, and one very judgmental raccoon, sparks fly—and resisting fate gets harder with every breathless

heartbeat.

Country mouse/City mouse. Despite his brothers finding their mates and happiness, Jordan is content to live alone on the mountain. Rene is more of a creature comfort kinda gal. Indoor plumbing heat and a/c that kind of thing. When Jordan's wolf screams, "MATE!" upon scenting Rene, Jordan is determined to ignore his wolf until she returns to the city. Fate has other plans and it turns out that fate knows what she's about.

I loved this story. Rene is smart and snarky and my kind of gal. Hitch is perfect comic relief and Jordan is just sweet enough to make you root for him.

D. Antonio

The Other Team:

G. R. George

Self-Published

E-Book

B0GFNWWNCC

★★★★★

At a gay sports bar called *The Other Team Bar & Grill*, eight men's

lives collide, intertwine, and change forever. Love sparks in unexpected ways.

A seasoned doctor risks his heart on a younger bar owner.

Two former foster brothers confront the truth of their lifelong bond.

As friendships deepen and passions are stoked, *The Other Team* becomes more than a bar. It's a haven where broken men dare to hope for something more.

In the months that follow, love is tested. Old lovers resurface, past traumas refuse to stay buried, families intrude, distance strains fragile bonds, and fear threatens to undo what passion built.

Each couple must decide whether desire is enough and if they're brave enough to fight for lasting love.

The Other Team: As

Interconnected An Interconnected MM

Spicy Romance is an interconnected

romance series that explores what happens after the happily-ever-after begins. proving that love doesn't end when the bar closes...it only gets harder, deeper, and more real.

The Other Team is a seriously steamy set of eight vignettes featuring four couples who go from lust to love. I loved each of these couples so so much: a surgeon and the bar owner with an age gap and problematic exes; foster brothers and best friends who choose to be more; a student and an intern who come from opposite sides of the track; (these guys were my favorite couple); and then there is the straight guy (gay for you) and the bar tender. These stories will make you laugh, cry and sweat.

** Previously published as the "Cocktail" series in 8 short novellas in 2015-2106

D. Antonio



Good Intentions

Marisa Walz

St. Martin's Press

978-1250397416 E-Book

978-1250397409 Hardcover

☆☆☆ 1/2

Cady McKenna is an event planner whose posh events have helped make a name for herself and her business. Successful, happily married to her high school sweetheart, and living a charmed life, she also has an intense, almost symbiotic relationship with her twin sister, Dana.

On the way to oversee a Valentine's soiree, Cady learns that her twin has been in a horrible accident. Panicked, she speeds to the hospital only to learn she has arrived too late. Overcome with grief, Cady stays in the hospital waiting room where she sees another woman melt down when she learns she has lost her 12-year-old son. Cady identifies so strongly with the woman's despair that she begins to stalk the grieving mother, telling herself she only wants to help the woman, Morgan.

When Cady learns that Morgan attends a grief group, she joins as well and befriends the woman. They bond and form a fast friendship, with Cady trying to replace the closeness she shared with Dana. All the while Cady narrates every detail of her day to her dead twin. She neglects her business and her husband, finally losing the business she worked so hard to build. And she doesn't seem to care. At first she gets sympathy, but people begin to lose patience and think she should get back to her daily life as much as possible.

As the story continues, Cady becomes more and more unhinged. While visiting her sister's grave, she encounters a strange man, not for the first time. He seems far too interested in what Cady is doing. She also begins to stalk him.

All of the elements come together in the end in a totally unexpected way that explains Cady's somewhat bizarre behavior. This debut author has delivered a fast-paced thriller that packs a real punch at its conclusion.

Hannah Rowan

The Jills

Karen Parkman

Ballantine Books

Hardcover

978-0593982921

☆☆☆ 1/2

Life as a "Jill," a Buffalo Bills cheerleader, requires dedication and discipline. Virginia is a Jill who must keep herself in top shape with her weight, her hair, and her make-up. Attendance at practice and all games is mandatory. Even so, Virginia often drinks heavily or uses drugs, as do the other members of her squad.

Virginia has already suffered trauma by trying to rescue her sister, Laura, from the effects of her addiction. When Virginia's fellow Jill and best friend, Jeanine, goes missing, Virginia feels obliged to search for her, wondering if Jeanine has disappeared voluntarily or if she is a victim of foul play.

Growing up, Virginia had been taken under the wing of her father's friend, a local underworld boss who

Booty

regarded her as almost a daughter. But when Virginia seeks his help in trying to find Jeanine, she discovers that their relationship may not be what it seems.

Facing danger and with great resolve, Virginia refuses to give up her quest, trying to come to terms with her new-found knowledge of Jeanine as well as her need to continue to protect her sister. Her focus shifts so far from her duties as a Jill that her position is in jeopardy.

The Jills is not a romance but gives an insight into a little-known aspect of the world of professional football.

Hannah Rowan

Teenagers are Adults Under Construction

Henrietta Potgieter

Self-published

E-Book

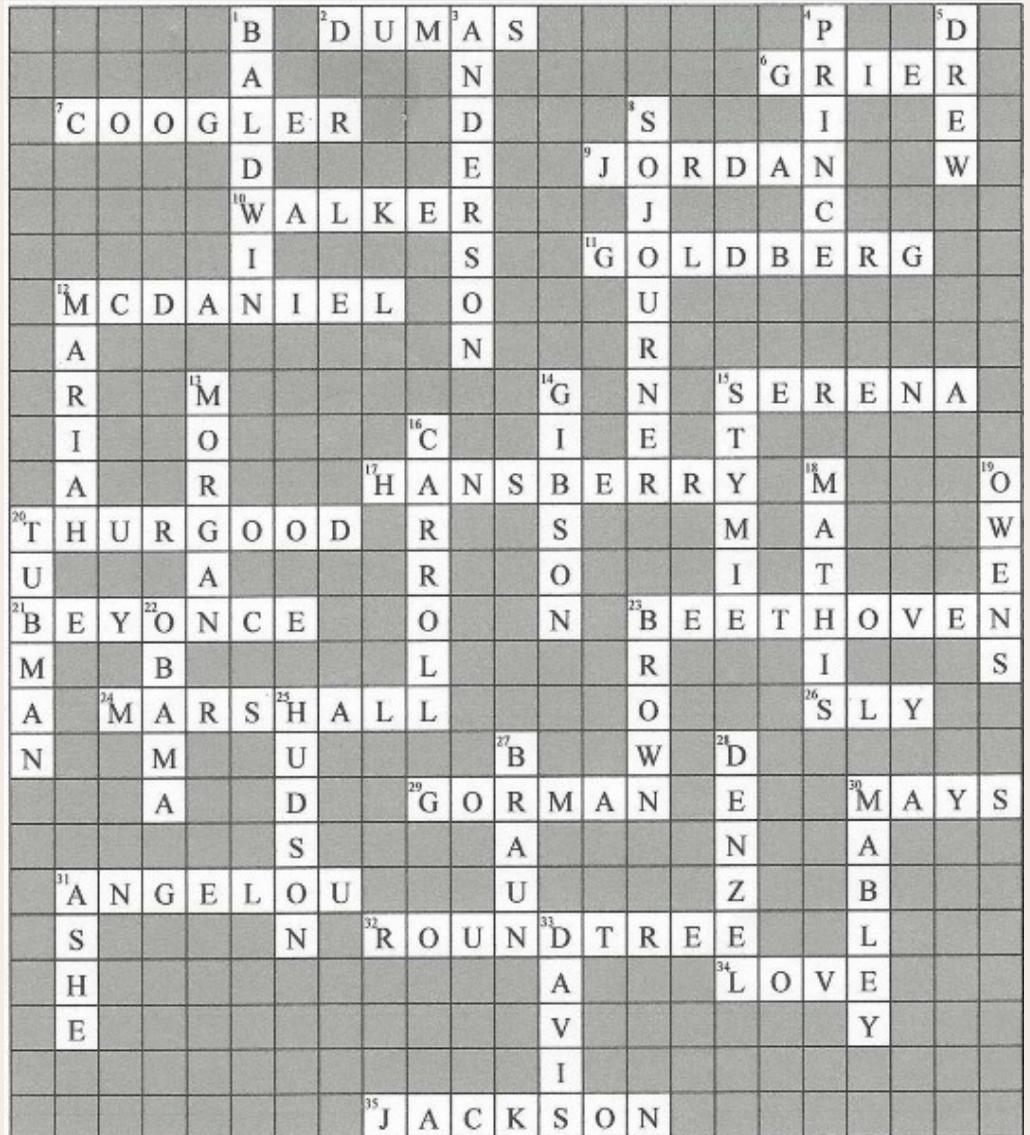
978-0796157096

☆☆☆☆

Teenagers are Adults Under Construction is a benchmark guide for parents, an innovative mirror for teens, and a resourceful roadmap for both.

In a rapidly changing world, this self-help book offers parents the tools needed to raise teenagers, focusing on purpose, responsibility, accountability, and the skills needed for a successful adulthood. It engages the reader on how to understand teenagers, create relationships with the young adults, building a foundation with soul, mind, and body. It offers insight and a foundation for improving communication, dealing with drama, setting realistic goals, and decision making to empower teenagers to be the best they can be.

This book is great for parents and teens. For parents, it gives them a unique guide and understanding of how the teen's mind works. For a teen reading the book, it's perfect for self-

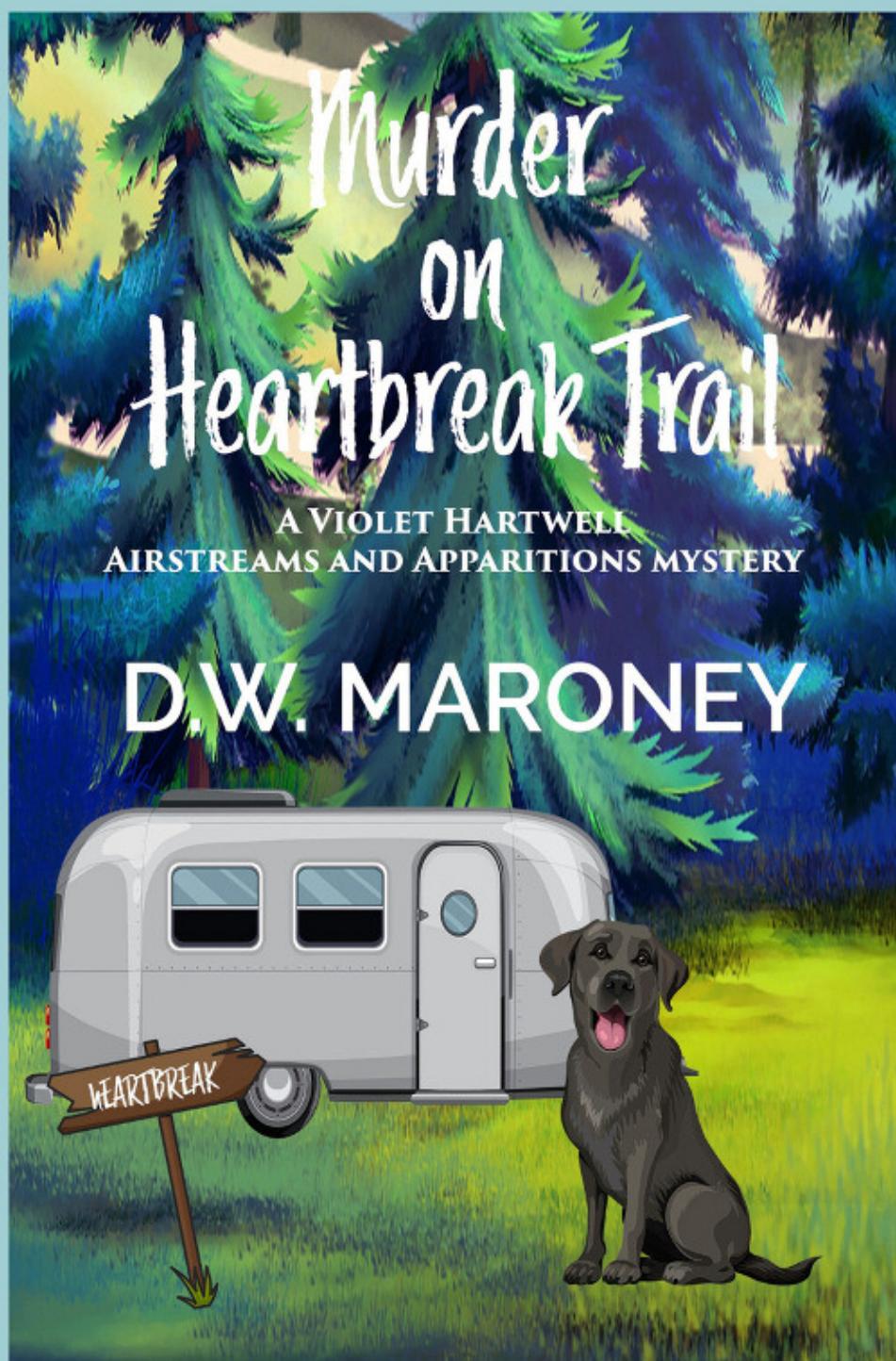


discovery and understanding their own actions and reactions will help them learn to be a better, successful adult.

Kitty Lane



*Available in:
Ebook
Paperback
Large Print
Hardback*



**Friendship, phantoms, and felonies—
welcome to life on the road.”**

A charming mix of mystery, heart,
and humor, *Airstreams & Apparitions*
is the first in a cozy new series where
grief, ghostly guidance, and girl-
power sleuthing collide.