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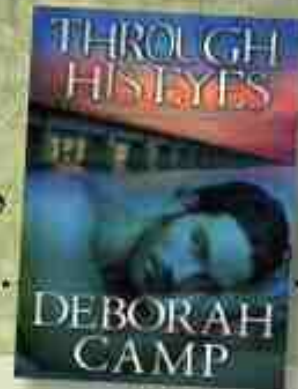
**Destiny Blaine's Writer's
Workshop and Reader
Rally | Debra Parmley's
Cover Model Corner |
Affaire de Coeur Interviews
Liz Lipperman**

***Affaire de Coeur*: Short
Story "Merry Christmas" |
Movies of the Mind | And
More!**

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Praise for "Through His Eyes"



Trudy and Levi, hot, mysterious Levi!!

Psychics of the first order and so in tune with each other and a depraved killer! This is a MUST READ! A real page turner! I can't wait to read the next in the series and see what

Ms. Camp has in store for us.

— Cheryle, My Secret Book Spot

Holy Freakin' Moly, Batman! I just finished *Through His Eyes* and I'm scrambling – scrambling! to get onto Amazon to buy the sequel. — Cary Frates

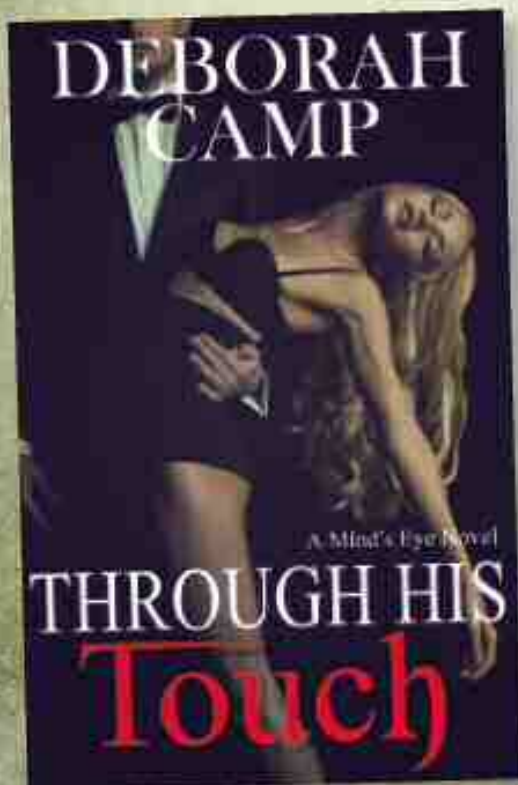
This is a fantastically written, absolutely nerve wracking, addictive, scream at the characters book.

I enjoyed every new gray hair I received from *Through His Eyes*. I must admit, I have never, ever read anything like it. I have already threatened to camp out on Deborah's front yard if she is the least bit slow about getting the second book out.

— Scbella Blue

I can't wait to read what is going to happen next! Thank you for sharing your book with us Deborah! I am a fan for life!

—Book Worms



THE WAIT IS

Over!

Will his touch claim her or kill her?

SEPTEMBER – AMAZON

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TABLE of CONTENTS

Destiny Blaine's Writer's Workshop
and Reader Rally 4
Debra Parmley's Cover Model Corner 7
Affaire de Coeur Interviews Liz Lipperman 10
Excerpt From *Chicken Caccia Killer* 14
Affaire de Coeur: Short Story
"Merry Christmas" 16
Movies of the Mind 20
Puzzler 22
AdC's Bookshelf 23
Coming Soon 24
Answer Key 39

Reviews

Contemporary 25

Historical 29

Paranormal 31

Mystery 32

Audio 33

Young Adult 35

Booty 36

Misc 37

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AFFAIRE DE COEUR

Margot Justes



Paranormal Romance Mystery Suspense

www.mjustes.com

Affaire de Coeur

Attends the

Destiny Blaine's Writer's Workshop and Reader Rally



Kingsport, Tennessee

Always fun, always enjoyable and always a pleasure to attend the Destiny Blaine workshops. Destiny Blaine's workshops make it worth the trip every time, authors who attend walk away with new knowledge and awesome, new friends!

Destiny Blaine's Workshop was held in October starting on Wednesday, October 8th with a Meet and Greet sponsored by Beachwalk Press. The pizza party was highlighted with a fun game; Whose Book is It Anyway, with hostesses Donna Wright from Hummingbird Place and author Kate McKeever.

Thursday the 9th brought the workshop attendees to the Reader Rally and book signing, held at the Kingsport Civic Center, sponsored by Dark Hollows Press and eXtasy Books. Authors from several genres, vendors, and contests were promoted creating a relaxed and fun day for all.

Later that evening, the authors went to the Country Club Bar and Grill in Bristol, enjoying a grand night listening and dancing to the music from country band, Gunslinger.

On to business on Friday the 10th, the authors started their day with a sponsored breakfast from Wildflower Books. Destiny Blaine welcomed the authors and handed the floor over to The Mistress of Ceremonies, Donna Wright.

The following morning, workshops were available for the authors to participate in for the day:

Leanne Tyler – The Craft of Being a Hooker

Juli Alexander and Leanne Tyler – Bad Boys: The Allure of Tattoos and Piercings

Vella Day – So You Think You Can Write.



Destiny Blaine welcomes authors and readers to the Destiny Blaine Writer's Workshop.



Host Destiny Blaine and Donna Wright, Mistress of Ceremonies, opens the workshop.

Break for lunch sponsored by author Shannon West. Shannon shared information with the group on how to have a successful Street Team and World Building for all fictional stories.

The afternoon workshops:

Larriane Wills – Brown-nose Your Editor with Great Formatting for Word

Kate McKeever – Hummingbird Place's Aunt Magnolia Talks Books

Morgan Wyatt – Self Pub True Confessions

Gregg Bridgeman, EIC of Olivia Kimbrell Press – Essential Free Tools for Indie Authors

Hallee Bridgeman – Writing Red-Hot, Squeaky Clean Sex

The workshop attendees ended the evening with an excellent dinner sponsored by eXtasy Books and Jay Austin.



Hallee Bridgeman speaks with the authors about The Value of Time.



Shannon West covers the subject of Street Team and World Building.

Saturday, October 11th was the second and last day of the workshop. Author Larianne Wills sponsored breakfast.

The workshop morning schedule:

Donna Wright, Vella Day, and Hallee Bridgeman – Inside the Author's Studio: Naughty and Nice with Hummingbird Place

Gayle Trent – Being a Hybrid Author

Gregg Bridgeman – Cover Design Principles

Lunch was sponsored by author Hallee Bridgeman who enlightened and entertained everyone with The Value of Time.

The afternoon workshop schedule:

Faith Bicknell Brown – Clean Your Clutter! Easy Ways to Tighten and Polish Your Prose

Gayle Trent and Shannon West – Writing a Manuscript in a Week or Less

Kate McKeever – Using All the Senses

Gregg Bridgeman – Advanced E-book Formatting and Optimization

Snacks, treats, fun, costumes, contests, and games were the highlight of the evening with the Monster Bash sponsored by Dark Hollows Press and Shannon West.

All the Monster Bash tables were decorated to the theme of the following sponsors:

Shannon West -- Fairytale Creatures and Characters

Selena Cooper -- Vampires and the Undead

Jacci DeVera -- Shifters

Susan E. Scott -- Witches and Wizards

L.L. Brooks -- Fairies

Michelle Williams, Dark Hollows Press -- Mad Scientists, B-Movie Characters/Monsters



Donna Wright, on the left, escorts Auntie Magnolia, right, into the room to discuss naughty and nice book reviews.



The Monster Bash, sponsored by Dark Hollows and Shannon West.



Everyone, including the most experienced authors, walked away from this workshop with new and useful knowledge in their hands. Tentative plans for the next workshop will be for the beginning of December 2015. For more information on next year's workshop, please go to destinyblaineworkshops.com or e-mail destinyblainewriterworkshops@gmail.com.

Affaire de Coeur would like to thank all the sponsors of the Destiny Blaine Writer's Workshop and Reader Rally. Contests, prizes, entertainment, and parties were sprinkled throughout the three days of the workshop and reader rally. Sponsors: Beachwalk Press, Wildchild Publishing, Hummingbird Place, Wildflower Books, eXtasy Books, Dark Hollows Press, Country Club Bar and Grill, Roz Lee, Shannon West, Larianne Wills, Hallee Bridgeman, Erin Flynn, and Destiny Blaine.

Debra Parmley's

Cover Model Corner



I was fortunate to bump into Jeremy Rivenburg at the Sweet Tea and Chocolate Cake Book Club Anniversary Luncheon in Augusta, GA, the first weekend in November and we sat and chatted for a bit about the upcoming holidays and his work as a cover model.

Debra - Jeremy, what was the first cover you appeared on and how did it come about?

Jeremy - The first cover I appeared on was *Wild Irish* by Jennifer St. Giles. The photographer that she had worked with in the past noticed me on a modeling network site and asked me if I would be interested in being on a romance cover.

Debra - I love the cover you did for *A Weldon Family Christmas* by Jennifer Saints. The holidays will soon be here. What is your favorite holiday memory?

Jeremy - When I was a kid, every year my family would go out to Disney and see all the lights and see all the decorations out there. That's something I really cherish, seeing the lights and the decorations as a family, just being together.

Debra - So that's a family tradition then. That's a great tradition. Is that what you'll be doing this year?

Jeremy - Probably at some point, as I get older it gets harder. My dad still works down there. My sister has five kids and my brother has two kids. It might not be right before Christmas, but some time in December or in January. They don't take the decorations down until after January first.

Debra - If you were doing something special with a girlfriend for the holidays what would you be doing?

Jeremy - I think around the holidays it's very cool sometimes to just drive around and look at the Christmas lights. The decorations give you the Christmas spirit. I'm normally in Florida where the weather is warm. But out at Disney they have where it snows in the streets.

Debra - If you could do a photo shoot anywhere in the world for a cover, where would you want to go and what kind of shoot would it be?

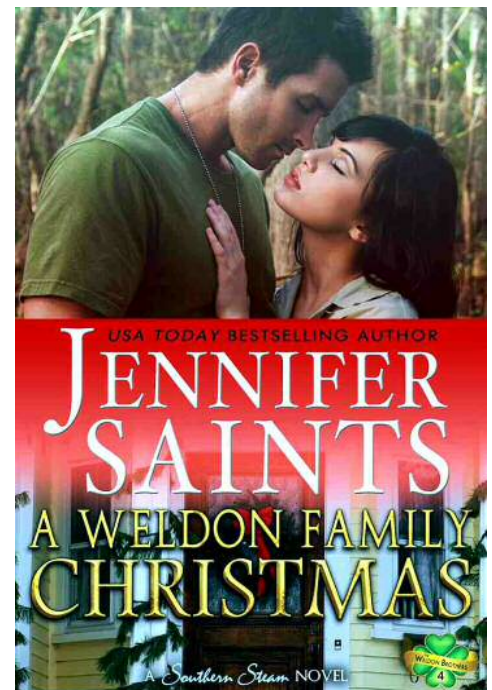
Jeremy - Oh, man. It would probably have to be somewhere like a tropical setting. I live in Florida so I've done shoots on the beach, so anywhere with a beach and ocean setting. Those are my favorite types of shoots.

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

Jeremy - I'm in nursing school fulltime and I also work fulltime for a property management company, so that takes up all my time.

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?

Jeremy - I just started working out again almost every day. I'm a natural athlete, but I'm also in the National Guard so being in the military I have to keep certain standards in my fitness. I like to work out, I like to run, it's just fitting it into my schedule. As far as nutrition goes, I really don't like junk food. Cutting out sugar is a huge thing. Like the cake we had today that was pretty much my cheat.



“Always get in at least 20 minutes a day of some sort of activity that gets your heart rate up, whether it's going for a jog or even if it was of a sexual nature, that would be okay.”



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

Jeremy - Never skip breakfast. Always get in at least 20 minutes a day of some sort of activity that gets your heart rate up, whether it's going for a jog or even if it was of a sexual nature, that would be okay. It's never too late to start no matter how old you are.

Debra - Okay Jeremy I have eight quickie questions for you.

1.) Watching the sunrise or watching the sunset and the stars?

Sunset because I'm normally sleeping when the sun's rising.

2.) The beach or the mountains?

Beach.

3.) Primitive camping or luxury hotel?

Primitive camping.

4.) Snow skiing or water-skiing?

Snow skiing.

5.) Favorite movie:

American Psycho

6.) Best book you ever read:

The Bible

7.) Favorite Sport to play:

Baseball

8.) Favorite Sport to watch:

Football

Debra - Jeremy before we end this interview, do you have a holiday wish for our readers?

-Continues on Page 15-



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"Spreading love one story at a time."

AFFAIRE DE COEUR INTERVIEWS

LIZ LIPPERMAN



Liz Lipperman is a best-selling, multi-published author of mainstream mystery/suspense, cozies, and romantic suspense novels, all naughty and nice. Starting off thinking she was a romance writer, she finally gave in to the evil villains that kept pushing their way into her stories.

Welcome, Liz Lipperman. Thank you for taking the time to chat with us.

Where are you from?

I grew up in a little town in Ohio called Bridgeport.

Tell us about your family.

I married my HS sweetheart 45 years ago. We have two kids, a wonderful daughter-in-law and son-in-law, and four adorable grandkids. Right now we have a two year old Malti-chon (Maltese and Bichon mix) named Lola who rules the house.

Do you have another job other than writing?

Not anymore. I am a retired nurse and write full time.

What is your favorite place to eat?

There is a small Italian restaurant called Salernos, I love-love their Chicken Cacciatore.

Favorite foods?

Anything Mexican and Italian!

If I came to your home and looked inside the refrigerator, what would I find?

Lots of pickles and lunch meat, I love bologna sandwiches.

Where do you like to go when you want to run away?

I have a wonderful deserted island, with the water splashing my legs. as I sit in the sand and write.

Attending any conventions/conferences this year?

I have been thinking about Malice Domestic again this year.

Do you have a critique partner?

I have a wonderful critique partner who writes very similar to me. Her name is Joni Sauer Folger and she writes both cozies and paranormal romances. Check her out.

Do you have a social/political cause you are passionate about?

I am a firm believer in St. Jude, patron saint of hopeless causes, and when I get what I ask for, I zip off a donation to St. Jude's Hospital. Somewhere up there, Danny Thomas is smiling at me.



“...WRITE AND PUBLISH THE WAY YOU WANT TO. AND NEVER QUIT WRITING, EVEN WHEN YOU THINK YOU ARE BLOCKED.”

What is the best advice anyone ever gave you?

I saw this on Facebook not too long ago and it has become my mantra. “Not my circus—not my monkeys.” I remind myself of this every time I want to get involved in someone else's drama.

Tell us your latest news? Current projects? We hear you have some great news to share.

Yes! I just sold mass market print rights for *CHICKEN CACCIA-KILLER* to HQN Worldwide Mysteries. I'm working on a novella from my “Clueless Cook” series titled *SMOTHERED, COVERED AND DEAD*, and the third book of my “A Dead Sister Talking” series, tentatively titled *MISSION TO KILL*. I am working on a deal for those last two books since all four books of the series were contracted by Audible.com. The first two, *HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE* and *JAILHOUSE GLOCK*, just came out this week on audio. Yay!

What is the easiest and hardest thing about writing?

I am the most undisciplined person I know, and I find my hardest task is making myself write. The easiest thing for me is plotting.

What inspired you to write your first book?

I thought I was a romance writer back then and wanted a story of a nurse in jeopardy—*SHATTERED* was born and still remains my favorite.

What ignites your creativity?

Anything that has to do with writing—conferences, talking with other authors or readers.

What challenges have you faced writing a love story or a specific scene?

I just could not write a sex scene for the first book. I tried everything, including candlelight dinners and sexy lingerie, but nothing worked. Finally, I wrote one sitting in the hot car one sweltering August day in Texas as I waited for my daughter to come out of the orthodontist's office. Go figure!

Is your writing area/office organized or strategically placed chaos?

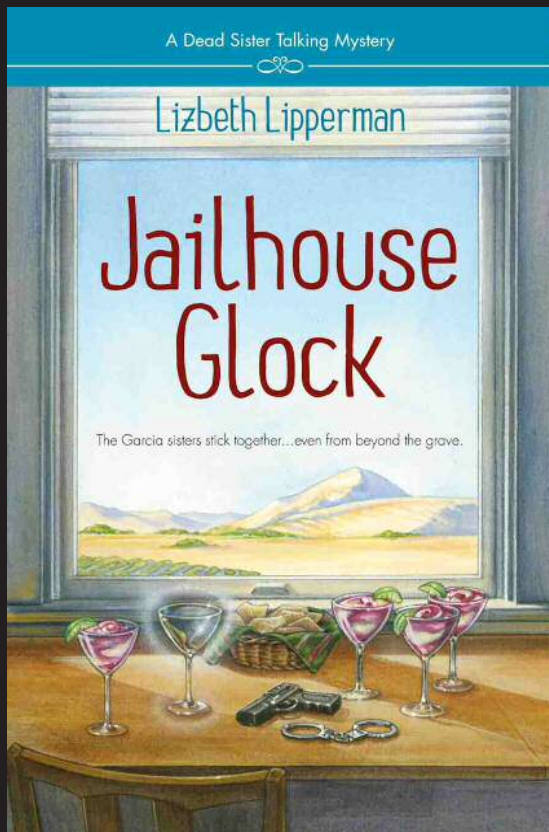
I'm a dinosaur and still write longhand, so I can be anywhere with a pad and pen. We've just recently downsized and moved to a gated active adult community and my new house has a wonderful sunroom that will be perfect for writing. That's if we ever get all the boxes unpacked!!

Interesting questions you have been asked by your fans ...

I am always asked if I am clueless in the kitchen like my heroine. The answer is no. I am one of nine children and grew up on casseroles and easy recipes, and most of the recipes in the backs of my books are my own personal ones. I do like bologna and fast food, though.

Do you listen to music while you write or do you need complete silence?

I will refer you back to the part where I said I was totally undisciplined. Any little thing distracts me, so I need complete silence when I write.



What author would you like to meet and have a cozy lunch with?

I have been fortunate to have been able to share a meal with a number of my favorite authors at conferences. However, I would love to sit down with James Lee Burke. I totally suck at descriptive writing, and that man is an expert at it. When he describes the dew on the leaves, not only can I see it, I can actually smell it.

Name one actor/actress you would love to get naughty with? (If you were free to do so.)

I love-love Robert Taylor who plays Sheriff Longmire in Longmire. He is so ruggedly handsome and down to earth and sexy—OMG!! Unfortunately, the series (used to be on A & E) was cancelled, despite the fact that it had a huge audience of older viewers. Seems advertisers are looking for the younger generation. (Who do they think has more money to spend???) I just read where they're looking for another channel to pick up the series, and it would make me really happy to see it back on the air.

Any life experiences tangled in the storylines?

Always. “A Dead Sister Talking” series is about 5 sisters, one of whom dies and comes back to help her sisters solve her own murder (in book 1) and then shows up when one of them is in trouble. I grew up with 5 sisters, one of whom died way too young, and although my sister was nothing like my potty-mouthed ghost Tessa, the relationship of the other 4 is spot on. My sisters all call them their books and my younger sister even fussed at me for making “her” too dull and boring. Her book is the one I’m working on right now, so I’m trying to spice her up a little so she’ll get off my back.

What books do you have on your favorites shelf?

I am a mystery/thriller reader and have James Lee Burke, Clive Cussler, Richard North Patterson, and way too many more to mention. The thing is that when I write, I can’t read. It goes back to that easily distracted thing with me. I get so caught up in someone else’s characters that I have a hard time getting back into mine. Consequently, my TBR pile is gigantic—but I will get to it.



Any new authors who have caught your interest?

There are too many to mention. My CP (critique partner) is an awesome writer.

If you could say one thing to the next generation of authors, what would it be?

Publishing is in the middle of a revolution with self-publishing at the forefront. Don’t settle for a crappy contract just because you think it’s prestigious. Write and publish the way you want to. And never quit writing, even when you think you are blocked. The wonderful Nora Roberts always says that unlike a blank page, even crap can be turned into something brilliant.

How do you come up with your titles?

Since I always have humor in my stories, I try to come up with titles that show that, “The only title that I didn’t come up with was my very first book, which I had titled *Ducks in a Row*. Fortunately, my editor at Berkley, who also has a great sense of humor, came up with *Liver Let Die*. That encouraged me to get creative with all my other titles in that series. To answer your question, I usually start with a great title and then plot the book around it.”

What would you like to say to your readers?

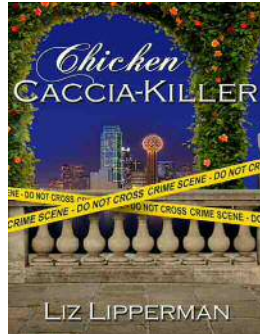
I love you!!!! And have a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Visit Liz’s website: www.lizlipperman.com

You’ll find easy links to her Facebook, Twitter, and blog.

Excerpt of

Liz Lipperman's *Chicken Caccia-Killer*



Covering sports events would have been the perfect job for Jordan McAllister, but here in Ranchero, Texas, the only gig available at the local newspaper was food editor. And although she doesn't know the difference between bruschetta and biscotti, she doesn't have a problem finding trouble wherever she goes.

Forced to fight to keep her job as the culinary reporter at the Ranchero Globe, Jordan must cover the International Italian Festival coming to town. But along with the festivities and great Italian food, she has to deal with meeting her boyfriend Alex's mother and sister for the first time.

When an arrogant Italian playboy falls to his death from a suite at a swanky hotel during a pre festivities party and Alex's sister Kate is charged with his murder, Jordan springs into action to find clues that could prove her innocence. But the real killer doesn't appreciate that she is getting too close. Can Jordan and her motley crew of friends stay one step ahead and catch a killer before she becomes the next victim?



Jordan swiveled around just as Kate Moreland approached, her cheeks flushed, her charcoal silk blouse slightly disheveled.

"Oh honey, how's your headache? I thought you were going to lie down for a while."

"I did, Mother, and I'm much better." She kissed Natalie then turned her attention to Emilio. "I need to talk to you later about the shipment from New Jersey. It still hasn't arrived, and I'm getting a little concerned."

"Don't you worry your pretty little head about it," Emilio said, patting her hand. "My guys are on top of the liquor situation. I guarantee it'll be here in plenty of time."

Apparently satisfied with the answer, Kate turned back to Jordan and motioned for the gang to come over. "These must be the friends I've heard so much about. I hope you all have a great time tonight and at the festi—" She stopped when an older gentleman tapped her shoulder, and after a brief exchange with the man, she excused herself and stepped away from the group with him.

“She’s not going to have much time to party tonight, I’m afraid,” Alex explained. “Everyone seems to need her for one thing or another. She’s—” He stopped when the sound of breaking glass was heard from inside.

“Looks like a lovers’ quarrel,” Emilio said, after glancing into the living room. “You know how passionate we Italians are about love and war.” Although his response was flippant, the serious look on his face was not.

Jordan followed his gaze and focused on one of the most gorgeous men she’d ever seen. Standing about six two and dressed in a black suit that had to be pure silk, the man was visibly upset. He was frantically trying to calm a woman who was screaming obscenities and waving her arms in the air with each new outburst.

She was about to say something to Alex when the good-looking man grabbed the woman’s arm and marched toward them, stopping directly in front of Emilio and Natalie.

“Maybe you can talk some sense into my fiancé,” he said, his voice dripping with anger. “She thinks I’m cheating on her.”

“Marco? What’s going on?” Kate asked, turning away from the man she’d been conversing with and stepping around her mother to face the new arrival.

“Kate! You said you weren’t staying for the party. I thought you’d left.”

“Is this the whore, Marco?” the short woman asked, tears now beginning to form in her eyes.

Kate’s face flamed, and before Alex could stop her, she lunged at Marco and gave his face a stinging slap, leaving a bright red imprint of her hand. Without another word, she turned on her heels and stomped out.

Without warning, Natalie Moreland reached out and slapped the other side of Marco’s face. “You’re a lying bastard.”

The silence following that statement was finally broken when a stunned Marco recovered enough to confront Natalie.

“And who are you?”

Her eyes flashed anger. “The whore’s mother.”

-Continuing From Page 9-

Jeremy - I'd like to wish everyone happy holidays and wish you spend it with your loved ones and celebrate the birth of Jesus, being with the ones that you hold most dear.

Connect with Jeremy on

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jeremy.rivenburg>

Wishing everyone a happy holiday from Debra Parmley at Cover Model Corner and *Affaire de Coeur* Magazine!

www.debraparmley.com

MERRY CHRISTMAS

by Kathy Hendrickson

Montana, 1868

Carrie put the finishing touches on the gingerbread cookies she was making for the church Christmas program. The blizzard continued to howl as she looked to the door for Hank's return. Her husband had bundled up to protect himself from the bitter Montana snow and cold. "I'll just check on Bossy to make sure she doesn't drop her calf tonight," he had said as he left the cabin with Biscuit, their dog. She held the door for them as they disappeared into the snowy darkness that led to the barn.

It was Christmas Eve. Carrie was excited because she had a special present for Hank this year. It had been a lean year with the drought and they were counting on the birth of a new calf to increase their herd. She knew Hank worried because she had given up so much to become his wife. Her wealthy father had all but disowned her when they got married, but Carrie would not trade away one minute of her new life here on their small ranch.

A spindly tree sat in the corner of the large room. She had decorated it with ribbons and popcorn. Hank had shyly offered the tree that he had found in the hills hoping to please her. "Carrie, I know you deserve so much more, than what I can give you." Carrie had knelt before him and held his callused hands in her own. She looked into his deep blue eyes. "Hank, this is what I want for us, this ranch and our life together. You make me happy and I love you."

Hank blushed and visibly swallowed. He held her tight and kissed her. "Carrie, I don't know what I would do without you."

"You'll never find out my darling. Now you and Biscuit go check on the animals while I finish supper."

That was several nights ago. She wanted to tell Hank her news then, but thought that Christmas Day would be the perfect time.

Hank held on to the rope as he trudged through the drifts to the barn. Biscuit had run off to chase after a rabbit. He opened the door and the smell of hay and animals greeted him. He fed and watered the horses. Hank went to Bossy's stall and saw that she had given birth to her calf in the freezing cold. It lay listless and did not move. He checked Bossy, then turned his attention to the calf. He rubbed the small animal and tried to coax it to life.

“Come on, girl, let’s get you up.” He continued his efforts to warm the animal and thought about how disappointed Carrie would be if the animal died. He decided that maybe the animal just needed some additional warmth. Hank picked up the calf and headed to the cabin. Biscuit greeted him when he left the barn and followed him to the house.

With his arms full, Hank was unable to open the door. Biscuit whined until Carrie unbolted it. When she saw the calf, she was taken aback. “What happened? How’s Bossy?”

Hank rushed to the fireplace and laid the calf on Biscuit’s blankets. He continued to rub the animal and covered it with an old horse blanket. Biscuit took a drink of water then lay down next to the calf to keep it warm. Hank and Carrie looked at the pair and then at one another, worry clearly visible on their faces.

“Here, let me help you with your coat,” Carrie said as she helped him shed his layers. “Bossy is doing fine. I worked in the barn on the calf, but I couldn’t get a response. She must be half frozen,” Hank said.

“The calf looks fine; maybe she just needs to warm up. I’ll get a rag with some warm milk and try and coax her to eat.”

Carrie warmed the milk and sat down next to the animal. She massaged the calf’s throat and muzzle as she dripped milk into its mouth. Several hours later, she was able to get it to eat a few drops.

Hank watched helplessly as Carrie worked on the calf. After a few hours, he knew Carrie must be exhausted, so he helped her up. “It’s in the Lord’s hands now.”

Carrie got ready for bed and put on her flannel nightgown. Hank joined her after he banked the fire and blew out the lantern. A soft glow lit the small cabin. She felt the bed dip and Hank pulled her to him. They held each other tight. She knew he was worried about their future and the ranch. “I love you, Hank. The Lord will find a way.”

Hank kissed her. “I hope you’re right about that, sweetheart.” In the warmth of the cocoon, Carrie ventured, “I have a special Christmas present for you, Hank.”

“Oh, honey, you know we don’t have much money for such tomfoolery.”

“Shh, Hank.” She placed her fingers on his lips, then took his hand and placed it on her stomach. “We’re having a baby, in the spring.” She felt the pressure of his hand as he touched her.

“Are you sure?” Hank asked.

“Doc Hamilton confirmed it last week when we went into town for supplies.”

“A baby!” Hank hugged her close and she squealed.

“Did I hurt you?” he said uncertainly.

“No, silly, you can hug me all you want.” They kissed each other with the promise of love and a new hope for their future.

The next morning when they awoke, the wind had stopped. They lay in each other's arms, snug and warm. "Merry Christmas, sweetheart," Hank said.

"Merry Christmas, Hank." They kissed and Biscuit started whining. "Hold on," Hank said, "I think Biscuit needs to go out."

Hank turned over and started to get up. "Well, would you look at that." The calf was awake and watching Biscuit. "Carrie! The calf, I think she's going to make it!" She scrambled to his side and watched as the calf tried to stand. Hank jumped up and helped the animal. "I better get some clothes on. I'm sure Bossy is missing her baby this morning."

"Oh, Hank," Carrie said with tears in her eyes. "Miracles do happen."

Hank pulled on his pants and shirt and sat on the bed to pull on his boots. Carrie hugged him and she whispered in his ear. "Let's name her Merry Christmas."

Hank turned to Carrie and touched her face. "I think that's a fine name. The Lord has truly blessed us."

Carrie smiled. "The Lord has given us each other, a child in the spring and a new-born calf. We are truly blessed."





HAPPY
HOLIDAYS

FROM THE STAFF AT

*AFFAIRE
DE
COEUR*

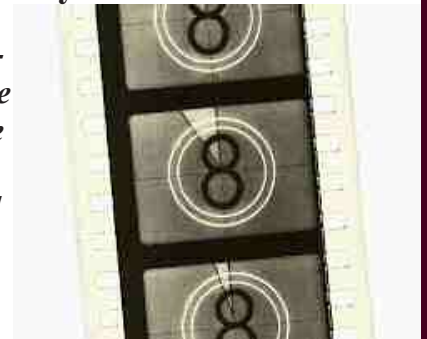
Movies of your Mind

THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

By Bennet Pomerantz

"A detective novel should contain no long descriptive passages, no literary dallying with side-issues, no subtly worked-out character analyses, no 'atmospheric' preoccupations. Such matters have no vital place in a record of crime and deduction. They hold up the action and introduce issues irrelevant to the main purpose, which is to state a problem, analyze it, and bring it to a successful conclusion. To be sure, there must be a sufficient descriptiveness and character delineation to give the novel verisimilitude."

– S.S. Van Dine



Maybe I am watching (or listening) to too many detective shows on old radio shows, TV, and DVD, because they seem to come through on my audio selections this month. Those detective folks of *CSI*, *NCIS*, *Law and Order*, *Spenser For Hire* (first season of the classic TV show is now available on DVD through Warner Archives), *Sherlock*, *Sam Spade*, *Phillip Marlowe*, *The Shadow*, *Batman* (the 1966 shows are now on DVD, also thru Warner video) and others have kept me company this past month or so.

The idea of the investigation is what mystery in any format is all about. It does not matter if you're reading, watching or listening, it is what drives us to enjoy the genre.

The men and women of law enforcement and private investigation are what intrigue the mind. It is that search for the truth and justice that draws us, as an audience, to mysteries.

A good mystery detective can be a single detective like Spenser, Ellery Queen or Jack Reacher...or the idea of a group of detectives like Doc Savage and his Fearless Five or Ed McBain's boys of the 87th Precinct. Either type of character we savor and enjoy the adventure of the mystery.

Kill Me If You Can

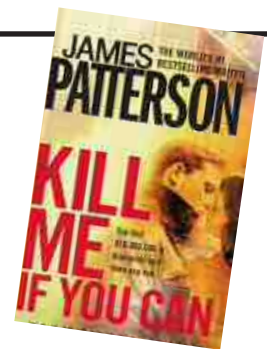
Written by James Patterson and Marshall Karp

Read by Jason Culp and Jeff Woodman

Hachette Audio

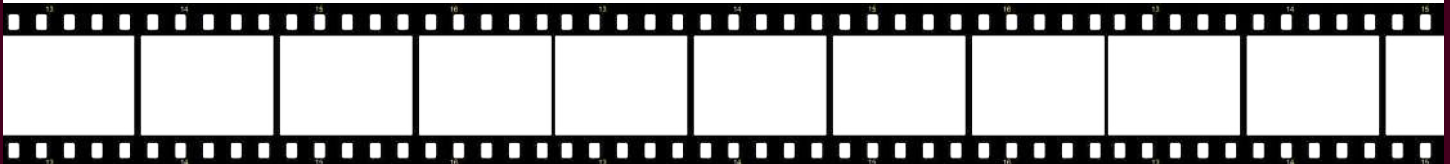
Unabridged; 8 CDs, 8.5 Hours

978-1611137484



Let me try this formula on for size with you...a male art student finds a bag of diamonds from a dead man in Grand Central Station in New York. He is dating his college art teacher. After he has the diamonds, he takes her on a whirlwind European vacation and reveals his big secret. Did I forget to tell you he is being followed by one, maybe two, hit people who work for the Russian mob? Is that enough bang for your buck? It is mine! I will say this – *Kill Me If You Can* had my interest and kept it!

Patterson and Karp craft a romantic mystery with a flair for the dramatic. Think of the films *Charade*, *To Catch a Thief* and *No Country for Old Men* combined together and you have the prototype for this book. I will say



this, there are a few twists in the tale you will never see coming... and one of the twists will set it up for any future books in the series, if they continue with these characters.

Jason Culp and Jeff Woodman, the two narrators of this book, sometime vocally over blend, which has a tendency to take away from the vocal shading and overall characters. However, it does not take away from your listening pleasure. I think this book could have been handled by one narrator. Both narrators are excellent on other audio productions, so don't ask me to choose which one.

This novel (and audio presentation) is lighter than Patterson's recent Alex Cross novel, *Cross My Heart* (also on Hachette Audio). It is also better crafted than many mysteries these days.

Robert B. Parker's Cheap Shot

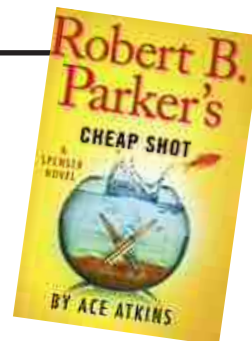
Written by Ace Atkins

Narrated by Joe Mantegna

Random House Audio

6 CDs, 7.5 Hours

978-0449807958



When a book series creator, in this case Spenser author Robert B. Parker, dies, you wonder if a series can survive and continue on. A number of times an author tries to inherit the mantle of a character series only to fail badly in his attempt to stroke lightning in a bottle. You can think of Jeffrey Deaver and his turn at writing James Bond. Sometime the new author cannot get the same vibe as the original author.

Ace Atkins has fully taken the literary pallium of the Spenser universe and has finally embraced it with this novel. His first two previous Spenser novels (*Wonderland* and *Lullaby*) were good, but not great. This new Spenser novel, *Cheap Shot*, seems a throwback to classic Spenser novels with a nod to the future. The white knight that Spenser is, complete with his code of honor and values that Parker established with such books as *Promised Land* and *The Godwulf Manuscript*, shows that Atkins has found his Spenser voice.

This novel transfers with ease to the spoken word. The one reason is Random House's use of the audio talents of actor Joe Mantegna. He is the voice of Spenser in more ways than one. Joe brings an intimate knowledge of the Spenser universe to the books because he has been narrating them for the last 15 years. A fellow reviewer noted to me that Mantegna, who had played Spenser in a few TV movies on the A&E Network, seems to have an inside track into each of the characters. I think she is right! He gives the listeners an edge by knowing and creating vocal patterns and doing it flawlessly.

In this book, Spenser is hired by a quarterback with an extreme temper problem. Suddenly the QB's son is kidnapped and Spenser enlists Hawk and Zee to help him find this child. Like Parker before, Atkins blends the city of Boston as a character within the subplots of the main story.

If you get a Spenser audio novel this year, make it this one.

-“So, until next time, I'll see you under the headsets!”-

PUZZLER

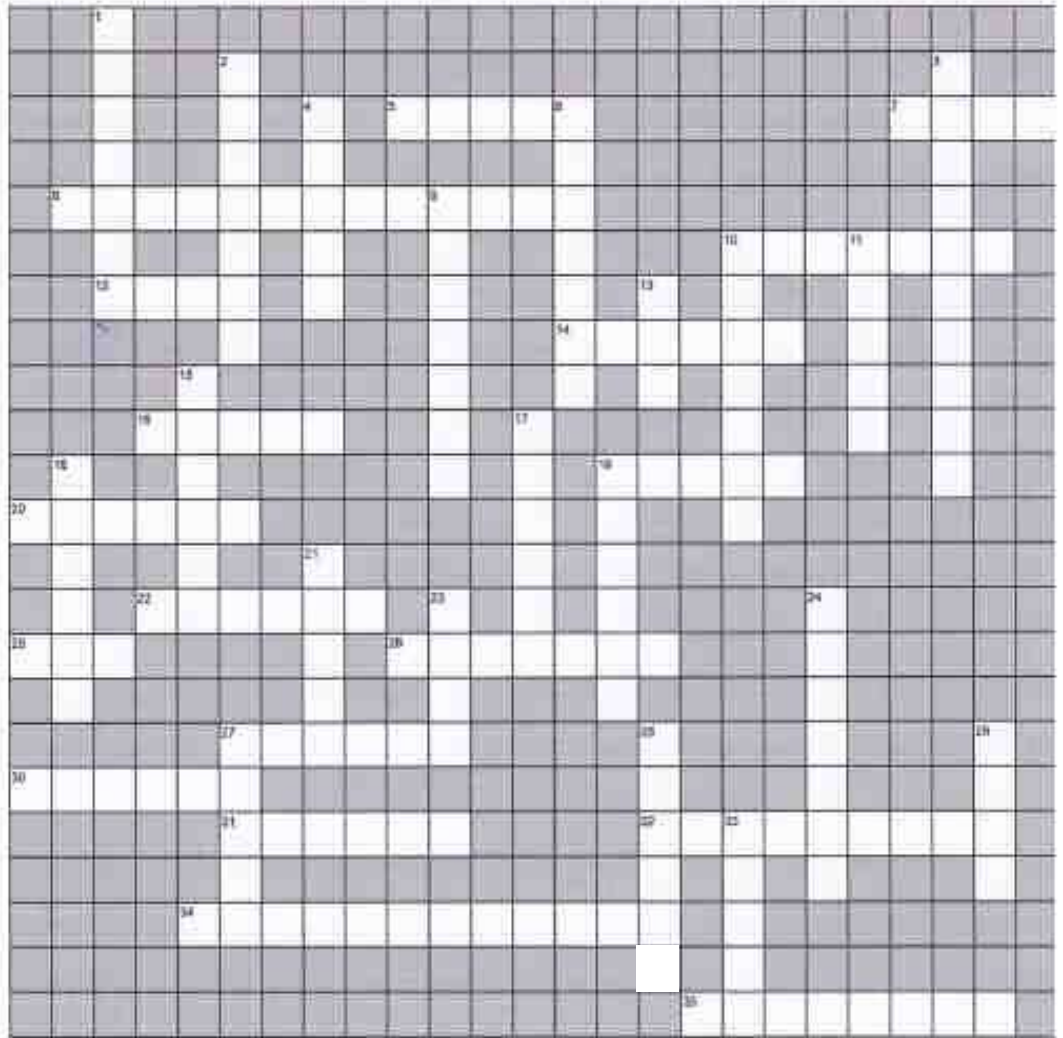
Louise B. Snead

Down

1. His Christmas includes Peanuts.
2. Small disabled lad who wants blessings for everyone.
3. The Mayor who fights Santa when he "Comes to Town."
4. Emmet _____'s Jugband Christmas.
5. Father _____.
6. Bad king.
7. The most famous elf ever.
11. Jesus' father.
12. Stingy workaholic.
14. The wise man who was a treasurer.
15. Balthazar, a wise man, offered this gift.
17. German Christmas tree.
19. She bakes the cookies for the fat man, Mrs. _____.
22. Wrote *A Christmas Carol*.
23. George _____. What if he'd never been born?
24. Buddy the Elf was played by this actor.
25. His nose is red.

Characters of December

Louise B. Snead

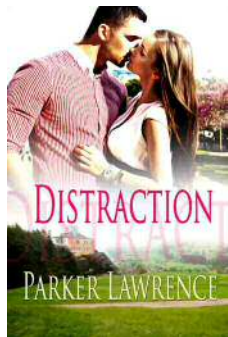


Across

3. Jim Backus is his voice in this Christmas Carol.
8. O'Henry's famous short story, "Gift of the ____."
9. Wise man who gave gold.
10. He disappears in the sun.
13. Little boy with an instrument.
15. Dead partner who appears in this Christmas tale.
16. Ole Man _____.
18. Kris _____.
20. Mother of Jesus.
21. Was told, "You'll shoot your eye out."
22. This reindeer's name means "thunder."
24. Sugar Plum _____.
28. _____ Drop Fairy.
29. _____ Meyer. "Is it all right if I ask Beth out?"
31. Translate this reindeer's name and you'll get "lightning."
32. Scrooge McDuck is in his *Christmas Carol*.
33. Annie, the bag lady who pretended to be royalty.
34. The mayor and his wife.



AdC's Bookshelf



Distraction

It's not always pretty when life is handed to you on a silver platter. Mac McAuliffe was Connie's biggest crush for more years than she would like to admit.

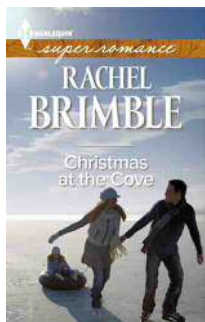
www.pamelaackerson.com



A Virgin For His Prize

San Francisco heiress Romi Grayson has only had a taste of Maxwell Black's addictive brand of seduction and knows she should stay away... especially having discovered just how determined he is to possess her!

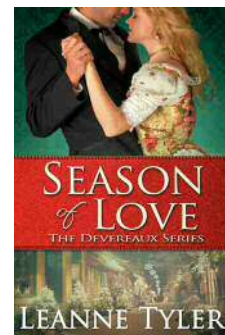
www.lucymonroe.com



Christmas at the Cove

The last thing Scott Walker needs is Carrie Jameson, the beauty he never forgot, arriving in Templeton Cove over the holidays with some unexpected news.

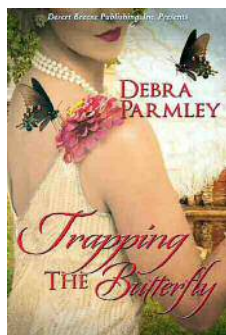
www.rachelbrimble.com



Season of Love

A nasty fall and an antebellum dress changes Holly Marcum's life forever. Once she is revived, nothing is familiar...

www.leannetyler.com



Trapping the Butterfly

Bethany is looking forward to celebrating her eighteenth birthday in Hot Springs. If Aunt Margaret and Uncle James have their way she will return from the trip engaged to Mr. Rivalde.

www.debraparmley.com



Beyond the Mist

Two sets of footprints are led by the ghost on a romantic journey, into a time of treachery and betrayal, to rescue one of the aristocracy from Madam Guillotine and to help another who is no longer alive.

www.joycecares.com

Coming in January 2015

Blake, T. *Love Me If You Dare*, Avon
Blevins, W. et al. *Moonlight Water*, Forge
Botouri, J. *The List*, Quercus
Brogan, T. *Love Me Sweet*, Montlake
Ellis, S. *The Best She Ever Had*, Dafina
Grant, D. *Hot Blooded*, St. Martin's
Grey, A. *The Duke in My Bed*, St. Martin's
Jance, J. *Cold Betrayal*, Simon and Schuster
Kramer, K. *You're so Fine*, St. Martin's
Krentz, J. *Trust No One*, GP Putnam
Neville, M. *The Duke of Dark Desires*, Avon
Sands, L. *The Loving Daylights*, Avon
Scott, M. *Angel in Armani*, St. Martin's
Sparks, K. *Crouching Tiger, Forbidden Vampire*, Avon

Alexander, E. *Meet Your Baker*, St. Martin's
Brown, C. *MacDeath*, Henery Press
Loweecey, A. *Nun Too Soon*, Henery Press
Mariaffi, E. *The Devil You Know*, Touchstone
Walker, L. *Devil in the Deadline*, Henery
Webb, H. *Rodin's Lover*, Plume

Coming in February 2015

Coming in February, 2015

Dimon, H. *Playing Dirty*, Avon
Hart, R. *Wishing Lake*, Zebra
London, J. *The Perfect Homecoming*, Montlake
Neggers, C. *Echo Lake*, Mira
Terry, C. *Sweet Surprise*, Avon
Unger, L. *Crazy Love You*, Simon and Schuster

Brody, F. *A Woman Unknown*, St. Martin's
Brooks, J. *Daughter of Gods and Shadows*, St. Martin's Griffin
Mulhern, J. *The Deep End*, Henery





CONTEMPORARY

Romance Reviews

Alanna

Kathleen Bittner Roth
Zebra

Mass Market
978-1420135305

Alanna Malone is engaged to a man she doesn't love. It's a predicament common amongst most women her age, but that's the only thing common about Alanna. She's intelligent, strong-willed, and used to doing things her way, much to her parents' dismay. They have their hands full making sure she does nothing to jeopardize this marriage, one that will guarantee their spot in the upper echelons of Bostonian society. When Alanna crosses paths with the handsome, mysterious man who gives her a glimpse of what she'll be missing if she settles for a husband of her parents choosing, the battle of wills between daughter and parents turns into a brutal, all out war.

Wolf was just a lad of six years when he witnessed his mother's murder, but now he's a man driven by the need to avenge her death. He'll travel to the ends of the earth if he has to, but no one will stand in his way, not the beautiful woman whose eyes he can't forget, or her father who has dark secrets he'll kill for, to keep them hidden.

From San Francisco to the treacherous waters of Cape Horn, from Boston to the Scottish Highlands, Alanna is an exciting, poignant, passionate story of murder, intrigue, and an all-consuming desire for revenge. It is, simply put, an adventure not to be missed!

Mallory Lane

Change of Heart

Jude Deveraux
Pocket

Mass Market
978-1476779720

****1/2

Miranda Stowe's ex husband is a lying weasel, but she gives him money anyway, leaving her and her son destitute. Eli is sick of watching his father take advantage of his mother, so the teenage genius knows he must do something. He and his best friend Chelsea have spent years breaking the law to help those who have been taken advantage of, so they use their skills to manufacture a nursing job for Miranda. They hope she will find a love connection with the man she will be nursing, Frank Taggart, who is a billionaire and father figure to Eli. Can their plotting succeed?

Twenty years later, Eli and Chelsea are all grown up, and they haven't seen each other for years. Chelsea became a model, and Eli has moved beyond his scrawny nerd appearance, though he still uses his extraordinary computer skills for the government. Chelsea is stunned by his transformation, but she has no intention of staying in Edilean, even for Eli.

Jude Deveraux has taken her 1994 novella of the same name, and has expanded it into this splendid novel. She has a gift for taking even mundane conversations and turning them into riveting, page turning reading. The plot in each half of the book is sound and the characters are well-crafted. Best of all, while this book is connected to two different series, no one will be lost.

Heather Nordahl Files

Christmas at the Cove

Rachel Brimble

Harlequin

Mass Market
978-037608812

****1/2

Carrie Jameson was a career woman who did not want to take the time for a relationship. Before she married Gerard on a holiday from work, she was drawn irresistibly to Scott Walker. She knew exactly what she wanted from him. Scott had no idea that he could be walking into a once-in-a-lifetime moment, but when he took Carrie's hand that night and walked out of the bar with her, he knew that it was going to be something special.

A little more than two years later, with a daughter that was Scott's, Carrie returned a widow, looking for Scott to tell him the truth. The pull the two of them had was compelling and hard to fight, but it just could not happen. Neither one of them believed they could do it again. There was too much involved and too many roadblocks.

Rachel Brimble's skilled pen has given her readers a fast paced, holiday romance with the perfect amount of push and pull in the love story that will keep the reader smiling until the very last page.

Lauren Calder

Christmas at Twilight

Lori Wilde

Avon

Mass Market
978-0062310248

****1/2

Meredith Sommers has been through a hell that grips her to this day. She married a monster and has been on the run from him for years, desperate to protect her son, Ben. She's found her latest temporary home in Twilight, Texas, renting a room from Ashley and her little girl, Kimmie. But Ashley is unstable, and she's taken off for Mexico with a man, leaving Meredith with Kimmie.

Captain Brian "Hutch" Hutchinson is Ashley's brother. He has just received an honorable discharge because of his wounds, both physical and psychological—he has lost his index finger. But the loss of his voice, however, does not seem to have a physical basis. He does not believe this and resents his discharge.

He arrives in *Twilight* to discover his sister has abandoned his niece. His first encounter with Meredith is anything but smooth—she pepper sprays him in the face. But as impossible as it seems, they just might be able to bring each other peace.

Lori Wilde's latest *Twilight*, Texas, tale is an emotionally wrenching journey into the hearts of two deeply wounded characters. Readers will be on the edge of their seats, rooting for their richly deserved happy ending.

Heather Nordahl Files

The Cowboy's Christmas Gift

Donna Alward

Harlequin American #1524

Mass Market

978-0373755455

Duke Duggan always felt like his grandfather was pushing him to be a rancher like him. Duke rebelled, instead following his father into the military. His father died in Iraq. Duke survived his own mission but is now deaf in one ear and can no longer serve. At loose ends with his life, he finds himself back at the Crooked Valley Ranch. His grandfather has died, and he and his siblings have inherited the ranch.

He went to school with Carrie Coulter when he was a kid. Now she's all grown up and working as the foreman on the ranch. She fears that he will sell the ranch and take away her livelihood, but an attraction is blossoming as well... an attraction that seems impossible because he may not stay.

Donna Alward launches her "Crooked Valley Ranch" series with a thoughtful tale that introduces an appealing case of characters with real and complex dilemmas. Readers will enjoy coming back to the ranch for future visits.

Heather Nordahl Files

A Fire Within

Margot Justes

Amazon Digital

E-book

B00IC4OYWO

Years ago, Rebecca Standish's gallery burned down. When she gets a call in the middle of the night, she fears that it's happened again. Instead, another disaster has befallen her gallery—a trash can with a burned body inside has been thrown through its window. This scary incident brings Kirk Adams back into her life.

Kirk and Rebecca used to be a couple, but he became frightened of his feelings for her and broke it off, lying and saying there was someone else. He has regretted that move ever since. Now that he tries to get her back, they seem to do nothing but fight. And as the danger to Rebecca increases, they may not get the chance to reconnect.

Margot Justes' romantic suspense features a solid mystery that could use more time at the forefront of the tale, and a more dramatic final reveal. The relationship between Kirk and Rebecca is hampered by his frustratingly hot and cold behavior, but the final chapters ratchet up the tension, bringing about a satisfying conclusion.

Heather Nordahl Files

For the Record

K.A. Linde

Montlake Romance

Mass Market

978-1477825907

Liz Dougherty and Brady Maxwell had been an item before. Then Liz had walked away because of Brady's circumstances. Now, Brady was about to make their relationship public and, since he was running for his second Congressional term, it was going to be big news. Liz was a college political reporter who had written negative comments about Congressman Maxwell when she had first met him. Then his charming personality and honesty had won her over and they had had an affair. When their affair had become public, Liz had left him at his primary victory to ensure that he won the election. She managed to stay away for a year, dating one of her co workers, but it had been hell because she never got over him, but still had to report on his campaign.

Brady Maxwell knew he loved Liz from almost the first moment he met her. He loved her feisty spirit, courage, political savvy and beauty. Once he managed to win her over to his side and knew he wanted to ask her out, he ended his relationship with his then current girlfriend. So, technically, there was no "affair," but that didn't stop the tabloids from having a field day with them both, which had prompted Liz to leave. Now that Brady had her back in his life, he was never letting her go, whether it hurt his political ambitions or not. Liz was his life and they would face the unfair repercussions together, openly.

For the Record is a very well written political insight to a politician's life and attempt at romance. Ms. Linde gives the reader the feel of what it's like to try and have a private life in a very public eye but does it with sexy aplomb and humor. Politics is a dirty business, and Brady and Liz are almost too good to be true, but they're very nice to read about.

Lani Roberts

Hard to Come By

Laura Kaye

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062267924

****1/2

Derek DiMarzio is on a mission to gain information about Manny Garza. One good way to gain intel is through Garza's sister Emilie. So DiMarzio follows her to a coffee shop near her work. He's attracted to her, and his instincts tell him she's not involved in her brother's evil schemes. He walks away, but as he connected with her, his friends and colleagues find guns and heroin in her basement. Now he needs to keep her out of the house.

Emilie is very interested in Derek but is recently divorced, and the end left her badly burned. She fears that any man interested in her will lie to her. And now is not a good time for a relationship. Her brother's behavior has been erratic ever since he came home from Afghanistan, and now he's getting violent. She doesn't want to turn her back on family, but she may not have a choice.

Laura Kaye's third full length in the "Hard Ink" series can stand alone, but is a much fuller experience if you've read them all. The love scenes sizzle and push the envelope into near erotic territory. And the tale's climax is a real game changer for future titles. Don't miss this!

Heather Nordahl Files

In His Shadow

Tiffany Snow
Montlake Romance
Trade Paperback
978-1477825860
****1/2

Ivy Mason likes her life just the way it is until Devon Clay invades her stress-free, peaceful existence. There's no denying the man is as dangerous as he is sexy, but there's something about him, something dark and compelling that she can't resist. But should she dare risk losing her heart to him, even as he draws her into a world that might well cost her her life?

Tiffany Snow has a loyal fan following, one that grows with each new book and stories like *In His Shadow* is why. This first installment to her new "Tangled Ivy" trilogy is exciting, intriguing, and suspenseful. The sexual chemistry between Devon and Ivy burns up the pages, making this not only a riveting read, but a passionate one.
Mallory Lane

In the Cards

Jamie Beck
Montlake Romance
Trade Paperback
978-1477825693

Lindsey was always a good girl. But the minute she saw the resort bartender, her good girl inclinations flew right out the window.

The last thing Levi needs is jailbait getting him fired. Even though he's mighty tempted, he resists. Lindsey continues flirting with Levi. Deciding to teach her a lesson, Levi leans in as if to kiss Lindsey. She closes her eyes, puckers up and he walks away.

Years later, Lindsey runs away from a cheating fiancé. She meets her new neighbor. It's Levi and he's just as standoffish as ever. Lindsey's here to decide what she's going to do about her engagement, not to fall for another guy. But that doesn't mean she can't be friends with a handsome guy. Does it?

Levi is severely injured in a motorcycle accident. But since he doesn't "do" relationships, not even friendship, Levi doesn't have anyone to take care of him. If Levi refuses Lindsey's offer of help, he'll have to go to a rehab center while he heals. As Lindsey looks after Levi, he finds himself experiencing unfamiliar, disquieting emotions. Could this be love?

Lindsey's known almost from the beginning that she loves Levi. But can her love overcome the pain of his past?

This story is told by both the hero and the heroine. Knowing both of their thoughts makes this an interesting book.
Sheila Griffin

In Too Close

Katherine Garbera
Harlequin Blaze #822
Mass Market
978-0373798261
***1/2

Elizabeth Anders and Bradley Hunt have been friends since college. They made a pact that if they were unattached on their thirtieth birthdays, they would become friends with benefits. Elizabeth's thirtieth is at hand. She wants Bradley

and always has but is apprehensive about taking their relationship to this level because when their sexual connection ends, so will their friendship.

Bradley has wanted Elizabeth forever and is pushing for greater intimacy, but it's tough to get her to open up until after midnight, and even this is limited. He tries to exploit this with phone sex and face time, but he still wants more. The problem is that Elizabeth is not the only one with commitment issues.

Katherine Garbera's latest is engaging and well written, with compelling characters. The reluctance of both protagonists to relax and commit can be exasperating. Elizabeth's fear of losing Bradley because the rules have changed makes sense, but the angst can be frustrating.
Heather Nordahl Files

Lead

Kylie Scott
St. Martin's Griffin
Trade Paperback
978-12500523284
****1/2

To some people, Lena Morrissey had the dream job. She was the personal assistant to the manager of the band, Stage Dive, and, as such, was part of the "in" crowd of the music business. The only problem was, she had been hired through a temp agency and had lost several jobs before this one due to her attitude and unruly mouth. And, as she listened to this ass hat give her grief about his damned *éclair* not being the right shape, she knew she was about to lose another one. She had had enough of men walking over her and using her and she was done. Even her sister was happily planning her upcoming wedding—to Lena's ex. Then, as she proceeded to inform her boss what she thought of him and his *éclair*, she realized that they were not alone.

Her firing was being witnessed by the entire Stage Dive band. As she was about to make her dramatic exit, the band's drummer Mal, said, "She's perfect!" And, just like that, Lena Morrissey became the sober companion and personal assistant to Jimmy Ferris, lead singer and all around bad boy of Stage Dive.

Jimmy Ferris, the gorgeous, always immaculately dressed lead singer of Stage Dive, was an alcoholic and reformed drug addict who had closed himself off from all human contact, emotion (except anger) and caring about other people. As hard as he tried, the rest of his band members, including his brother, refused to let him self destruct. He had already run off several previous sober companions who had refused to put up with his irascible temper tantrums, no matter how much they paid them. Then Lena stepped into the foray and her own stubbornness and equally bad temper turned out to be the perfect foil for Jimmy. Nothing he did could get rid of her and she wasn't the least bit afraid of him and his temper. The only problem was every time he just came into a room where she was, all her girly parts woke up and took notice big time! Now if she could just get Jimmy to open up, she might stand a chance.

This is the third book of Kylie Scott's "Stage Dive" series and it's both hard to read and hilarious at the same time. Jimmy is a very difficult hero to like, even knowing why he is the way he is, the reader still wants to slap some sense into him. On the other hand, Lena is extremely likeable and funny, who also wants to slap some sense into Jimmy. Throw in the rest of the band and their silly idiosyncrasies, and you have a love story filled with angst, complex relationships and true friendships that will make you cry. Lena is a force to be reckoned with and is absolutely perfect for the taciturn Jimmy. Ms. Scott has penned another winner!

Lani Roberts

Not Quite Forever

Catherine Bybee
Montlake Romance
Trade Paperback
978-1477825891
****1/2

Dakota Laurens is a bestselling author of erotic romance. She is attending a romance convention at a hotel which is also hosting a convention for medical professionals. She meets Dr. Walt Eddy when they discover that, due to a hotel mix up, they have been assigned the same room for their presentations. Walt is given a new room, but not before an attraction sparks.

They discover that they live not far from each other in Southern California, but their busy lives make it difficult to get a relationship off the ground. Even when things start to go well, a painful loss years before will rock his ability to connect with Dakota, as his fears of losing her push him to walk away.

Catherine Bybee's latest title is a blast for romance fans, with its peek at conventions and pieces of the writing life. It's part of a series but stands alone. Her combination of issues--dealing with death, difficult parents, juggling a love life with a demanding job and a marvelous sense of humor--make this tale a thorough pleasure.

Heather Nordahl Files

Resolutions

Teri Riggs
Decadent Publishing
E book
978-1613335871

IDEA agent Eve Taylor is finishing a mission to retrieve data crucial to sinking Mendoza's criminal empire when she is shot and a member of her team killed. She is imprisoned, tortured and beaten, and is near death when she's rescued by Dillon McKenna. She and Mac used to be an item, but broke up because he can't handle that she puts herself in harm's way in her work.

Hard feelings still vibrate between them, even as Eve battles through a vicious fever and serious injuries, including a gunshot wound and broken bones. Mac's mother died in a war zone, so he can't get past his need to protect Eve. He can't accept that she has the tools to protect herself, even as she demonstrates it again and again.

Teri Riggs takes readers on an exciting thrill ride packed with danger on every page. Readers who love old school couples whose tension is amplified by their bickering will love Eve and Mac, as their relationship is complicated by misunderstandings.

Heather Nordahl Files

Silent Night

C.J. Kyle
Avon
Mass Market
978-0062079671

When Miranda Harley comes to Christmas, Tennessee, she's on a mission to prove that priest Father Ambrose is a serial killer. No one believed her in Dayton, Ohio, so an innocent man sits in prison. She wants to keep more people from dying in staged, sacrament based executions, but she

can't trust law enforcement and has cameras she will use to watch the priest and hopefully catch him in his evil.

Unfortunately for Miranda, her new landlord, Tucker Ambrose, is the police chief in town. Despite her distrust, she is powerfully attracted to him. As the ritualistic murders begin again, she struggles to keep her secrets while sticking to her objective to take Father Ambrose down.

C.J. Kyle pens a taut thriller in this tale. Her protagonists stay true to their characters, and the mystery is baffling. Best of all is the killer ending in a book that will inspire readers to stay up into the wee hours.

Heather Nordahl Files

Sleigh Bells in Valentine Valley

Emma Cane
Avon
Mass Market
978-0062323408

Kate Fenelli is back in Valentine Valley after years of being a big city lawyer, but it's not by choice. A disagreement in her handling of a case leads to her being on sabbatical for two months. Slinking home feeling like a failure is a humbling experience, but at least now she can spend more time with her thirteen-year-old-son. But this also means she'll be spending more time with her ex husband, Tony DeLuca.

Tony and Kate divorced because their lives pulled them apart. He stayed in Valentine Valley and opened Tony's Tavern. She wanted a big city law career. They share custody of their son and have always been amicable post divorce, but while hurt has simmered beneath the surface, so has passion. It's only a matter of time before both bubble over again.

Emma Cane's latest "Valentine Valley" tale features a sympathetic couple who are wrestling with a love that never died. Add in the complications of family dynamics and a close knit community watching the slow rekindling of Tony and Kate's relationship, and readers are treated to a richly textured holiday tale.

Heather Nordahl Files

What A Woman Gets

Judi Fennell
Trade Paperback
Penguin
978-0425268315
****1/2

Liam Manley has to clean up after the spoiled rich Cassidy Davenport. She has no job and just spends money without regard for how it is earned. When her dad cuts her off, she takes a job as one of Liam's new maids. This was a change for her, for sure, but one that is positive rather than the hell that Liam thought it would be for her. Cassidy manages to live her own life, work, and even teach Liam a thing or two about love in the process.

This was an overall good book. The characters were very distinct and well written. The general plot was well-paced. However, things were a little short in romance. When the two characters fall in love, both being now poor, it seemed to me to be a little trite and predictable. Other than that, however, this book was good.

Lenore Lovecraft

HISTORICAL

Romance Reviews



The Accidental Countess

Valerie Bowman
St. Martin's Paperbacks
Mass Market
978-1250042088
****1/2

Lady Cassandra is joyous that her longtime unrequited only love, Captain Julian Swift, has returned safely from the Napoleonic Wars on the Continent, even if he's pledged to marry her cousin. When her cousin disappears with a made-up excuse to visit a fictitious friend at a country house party, Cassandra's scheming friend and recent duchess, Lucy, sees a chance for Cassandra to spend time with Julian, pretending to be Patience Bunbury, none other than her cousin's excuse for avoiding her intended. As they all congregate at the house party, Cassandra cherishes stolen moments with Julian. But she may lose him forever, the costly price for her pretense.

Valerie Bowman has written a highly enjoyable Regency romance with a special, standout charm. Cassandra is a very sweet woman whose love stands the test of time. Julian is hero-to-die-for caliber, kind and honorable, topped off by his outward masculine beauty. Along with Cassandra's three friends, Lucy, Jane, and Garrett, other well drawn secondary characters round out an already strong love story. With charming comedy-of-manners type humor that descends into moments of hilarious slapstick, and a true blue love between two wonderful people, this book has plenty of appeal for fans of historical romance.
Danielle Hill

The Duke's Guide to Correct Behavior

Megan Frampton
Avon
Mass Market
978-0062352200

Marcus, the Duke of Rutherford, was never expected to inherit. He does not have a good grasp on how a duke is to behave. Therefore, his household is not a good place to raise a child. However, this is exactly what he is called upon to do when four-year-old Rose appears on his doorstep. He knew about her and had paid her mother for her care, but now she's dead and Rose is his sole responsibility.

His first order of business is to find a governess, and Lily Russell comes to fill that position. She is gently bred, but misfortune forced her into socially unacceptable employment. She was able to leave that job and start an employment agency. This is her first position of this sort, and she needs to hide her lack of references and scandalous past. The last thing she needs is an impossible attraction to her employer, because nothing proper can come of it.

Megan Frampton launches her "Dukes Behaving Badly" series with this cute tale. If this story is any indication, the whole series should make for great entertainment. The characters are endearing, as is Lily's dedication to Rose, and the heroine's situation will keep readers absorbed.
Heather Nordahl Files

An Heiress for All Seasons

Sophie Jordan
Avon Impulse
E-book
978-0062363633

Violet Howard has no interest in marrying a man with a title, as the man she loves comes from more humble origins. But her parents deemed him unsuitable, so her mother dragged her from America to England, where Violet's dowry will be in demand. Will, the Earl of Merlton, is her mama's target. Violet is the first heiress put before Will that he truly desires, but he must somehow find a way past her reluctance.

Sophie Jordan's latest is a novella in her "Debutante Files" series, but readers need not follow the series to enjoy this short tale. The simple plotline works in this short format, and there are enough twists and turns to keep reader interest high.
Heather Nordahl Files

Destiny's Captive

Beverly Jenkins
Avon
Mass Market
978-0062231123

Noah Yates became a seafaring man in the wake of being shanghaied and enduring terrible treatment. Now he's the captain of his own ship. But when he goes to Cuba on business, his ship is stolen by a mysterious woman pirate and he is set adrift. He is furious that his ship and its contents have been taken away from him and will not rest until he punishes the pirate for her theft.

Pilar Banderas is working for rebels whose aim is Cuba's independence. She needs Noah's ship to transport guns for the rebels and make it to the gunrunners' rendezvous point on time. But Noah is looking for her, and when he finds her, the course of her future will change.

This is the final title in Beverly Jenkins' trilogy about the Yates brothers, and once again, readers will delight in education as well as entertainment. Learn about Cuba's fight for independence, and watch as feisty Pilar and tortured Noah find their way to love.

Heather Nordahl Files

Rogue Spy

Joanna Bourne
Berkley Sensation
Mass Market
978-0425260821
****1/2

Thomas Paxton, an assassin for the British Secret Service, becomes reunited with a young woman from his past, a fellow trainee at a school for sleeper spies in France. Living under the assumed name of Camille Leyland in England, she reveals herself to protect her family from a fanatical French Revolutionary. They never forgot each other; the bonds formed during their childhood turning into a passionate love that makes them more than willing to risk everything for each other.

Joanna Bourne's writing in this historical romance is crisp, elegant and beautifully descriptive. The espionage is well written, tautly suspenseful. Cami is an unusual young woman with phenomenal survival skills and a pragmatic approach to life. Pax is lethal and fierce, but has a gentle, sensitive soul that the reader will find appealing. Their relationship has a passionate chemistry that moves the story along effortlessly.

This novel has a distinctive feel, equally romance and espionage thriller, authentic in both ways. The reader will be kept on the edge until the very end as the dangerous spy game plays out, and they will wish for Cami and Pax to find the happy ending together they deserve, despite their lethal circumstances.
Danielle Hill

The Shocking Secret of a Guest at the Wedding

Victoria Alexander
Zebra
Mass Market
978-1420132267
***1/2

In this latest in a series of Victorian historical romances by Victoria Alexander, Jackson Channing realizes, at the age of thirty, that he is not just a mere banker, but the son of an heir to an earldom. He accompanies his newfound father, Colonel Basil Channing, back to England and gets his taste of English society. There he meets Lady Theodosia Winslow, an enchanting redhead who makes him want to pursue the biggest adventure of all, falling in love. However, her dreams are very different and may stand in the way of a future together.

Despite a slow start, the bright and humorous dialogue and the chemistry between Theodosia and Jackson make for a charming read. The narrative reads like a comedy of manners, something Oscar Wilde might have written in the turn of the century. Theodosia comes off as very stubborn in matters of love, and it makes her frustrating, but overall, this is a likable story with two leads who feel very right together. Readers who enjoy lighter, humorous historical romance will enjoy this banter filled novel.
Danielle Hill

The Viscount Who Lived Down the Lane

Elizabeth Boyle
Avon
Mass Market
978-0062283818
****1/2

Louisa Tempest and her twin sister are in London for their long delayed coming out. But when they arrive, they discover that their hostess, Lady Charleton, has passed away, and her husband is none too willing to have them in his home. The grieving widower is forced to adhere to his wife's promise, but he will not do it graciously.

The Tempest twins' arrival in London is not smooth. Louisa's cat Hannibal is a hellion who escapes into a neighbor's house, forcing her to chase him. Pierson Stratton is furious about the invasion of his home when he'd rather crawl into a bottle with his grief, but Miss Tempest and her cat just will not leave him alone. He won't admit it, but he wants her to keep invading his solitude.

Elizabeth Boyle has a marvelous knack for writing compulsively readable novels that are just blissful experiences. Even with the dark subjects tackled here, joy radiates from the pages. This is part of the "Rhymes with Love" series, but is a standalone tale.

Heather Nordahl Files

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PARANORMAL

Romance Reviews

Christmas in Transylvania

Sandra Hill
Avon Impulse
E-book
978-0062117557

As the VIK (Viking Vampire Angels) get ready for Christmas at the castle in Transylvania, Pennsylvania, Karl Mortensen has his own concern. Faith Larson, a waitress at the local diner, is thin and pale, the victim of an abusive relationship. When he discovers she didn't make it to work one day, he drives to her trailer to check on her. What he finds there makes it clear he must get her out of there immediately.

Faith has been abused by her boyfriend Leroy for some time, but she feels unable to escape. At first she's afraid to leave with Karl, but she's injured and depleted, so soon she's in the castle, sleeping and healing in an upstairs bedroom. She needs a doctor but does not want to do anything to allow Leroy to find her. Can she stay safe long enough for love to bloom?

Sandra Hill continues her "Deadly Angels" series with this appealing novella. The tale's hero has been an appealing secondary character throughout the series, and readers will appreciate the chance to see him take center stage.

Heather Nordahl Files

Light My Fire (Dragonkin)

G.A. Aiken
Zebra
Mass Market
978-1420131598



Elina has been sent on a suicide mission. She's to kill Rhiannon, the Dragon Queen. Elina's unsuccessful, mainly because she doesn't really want to kill the queen. Instead of executing Elina, Rhiannon assigns Celyn, one of her personal guards, to keep tabs on the girl. Celyn decides that the easiest way to keep track of Elina is to put her in jail.

A violent new religion has sprung up. Its main tenant is that all human/dragon half breeds are Abominations and must die. This includes Rhiannon's grandchildren. Stopping the spread of this vile religion requires allies. She decides to send Elina back to her tribe to arrange a meeting with their leader. Rhiannon sends Celyn to retrieve the would-be assassin. He is surprised to find that Elina's mad at him just because he forgot about her and left her in jail for nine months!

Celyn accompanies Elina on her journey. Despite their initial dislike of each other, the couple quickly falls into bed, then soon thereafter, into love. Of course, neither will admit it. Meanwhile, the royal Abominations are on the move. And they're not happy.

This is a continuation of a fun series. While it can be read alone, it's more enjoyable if the previous stories have been read. Despite having incredibly vulgar language and/or graphic sex in virtually every chapter, this is a great book.

Sheila Griffin

Son of No One

Sherrilyn Kenyon
St. Martin's Press
Hardcover
978-1250029911
****1/2

Jo Landry does not believe in the paranormal at all and is exasperated with her flaky family for their fervent beliefs. But she is desperate for a job, so she accepts a photography gig in a house that is thought to be haunted. She still thinks it's all hogwash until she falls into a mirror and lands in a strange gray world.

Cadegan Maboddimun finds her there. He has been consigned to this realm for a thousand years, and loneliness has been his constant companion. Jo is a glorious bright light suddenly dropped into his life, but he can't believe in her open trust in him; after all, he has been betrayed before, and women find him repellent. But he desperately wants to trust in this occasionally incomprehensible woman.

Sherrilyn Kenyon's latest in her long running "Dark Hunter" series is a surprisingly easy read for the uninitiated, but those readers will immediately hit the bookstores for the other titles. This tale's light, snarky tone contrasts with some of the dark, dramatic events contained within, making for a delicious page turner.

Heather Nordahl Files

Vampire in Paradise

Sandra Hill
Avon
Mass Market
978-0062210487
***1/2

Marisa Lopez's five-year-old daughter Izzie has a brain tumor that is slowly killing her. Her only option is a costly, experimental procedure that is not covered by insurance. She has nowhere near the money she needs, so she embarks upon a desperate plan: She will work as a waitress and massage therapist at a porn convention, hoping that generous tips will close the gap and prevent her from seeking a sugar daddy.

Sigurd Sigurdsson, Viking vampire angel, has a larger mission of stopping a powerful demon from infecting legions with evil. However, after meeting Marisa and smelling the sin taint upon her, he dedicates a lot of energy to saving her before her desperation drives her to sin and seals her fate.

Sandra Hill's light, funny books do not often bring tears, but little Izzie's dire diagnosis will certainly cause some readers to choke up. Marisa's relationship with her endearing daughter is more compelling than the developing attraction between her and Sigurd. But the ongoing battle between good and evil is tense and compelling, and the humor, as always, shines.

Heather Nordahl Files



MYSTERY

BOOK REVIEWS

Death in Blue Water

Kait Carson
Henery Press
Trade Paperback
978-1940976464

Hayden Kent wanted some much needed relaxation and went on a dive in the keys – alone. She wanted to lose herself in the exploration of the Humboldt shipwreck. Her peace in the water didn't last long. She found a dead body in the shipwreck.

The captain of the boat that took her to the dive spot called the Coast Guard but they didn't take her seriously, thinking she may have had a slight hallucination. Escorting the Coast Guard diver, Hayden showed him where the body was tangled in the line of an anchor in the wheelhouse.

Hayden and Grant, her boss at the law firm where she was a paralegal, were surprised when the police wanted to question her at the station. Grant accompanied her, as a friend and possibly her lawyer. As information came in to the police, the worse it looked for Hayden. Hayden's intense migraine had caused a loss of memory. She had no alibi, witnesses placed her with the victim, and the horrible fact was that the victim was her ex-boyfriend's brother.

Ms. Carson pens a web of intrigue, entangling the reader in a gripping chase to uncover the truth from the strategically placed clues in this page-turning mystery.

Lauren Calder

The Cinderella Murder

Mary Higgins Clark and Alafair Burke
Simon and Schuster
Hardcover
978-1476763125

Rosemary Dempsey always dreaded major plans, felt like something would always go wrong. It was a special party, her husband Jack's 60th.

Rosemary had mixed feelings when their daughter Susan called and said she couldn't make it because she had a movie audition. Susan promised to call the next morning but it wasn't her. It was the LAPD and they had to identify a young girl's body that was found in a park.

Laurie Moran had a news-based reality show called "Under Suspicion" and Rosemary agreed to allow the show to help uncover their daughter's 20-year-old cold case, the case dubbed the Cinderella Murder. Laurie was genuine about digging into the cold cases featured on her show. Fueled by her own haunted past, it was the driving force behind solving the mysteries and the show's success. She hoped to stir up some things in her search for the murderer...she succeeded.

This mystery will hit a nerve and stick with you. The authors hit emotions that we do not want to consider, the tragic

loss of a loved one. Readers will find themselves on an intense, emotionally bumpy ride.
Lauren Calder

Expect Trouble

JoAnn Smith Ainsworth
Oak Tree Press
Paperback
978-16100907422
****1/2

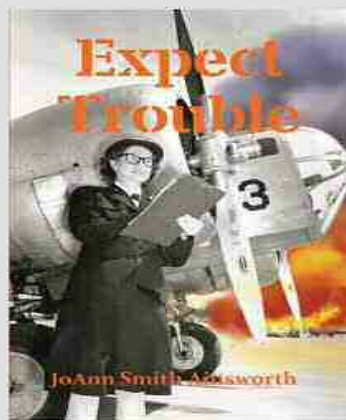
Lt. Livvy Delacourt had been assigned to a new position with the Joint U.S. and Allied Intelligence Project to track Nazi spies and their paranormal activities, under the command of Commander Barrington Drew, a man she knew from high school. She was disappointed when he had not recognized

her. She knew exactly who he was, the boy she had a crush on who had now become a very healthy, good-looking man.

While she was driving him to a meeting, she started to have a psychic vision and forced it back. At the warehouse, she started getting hit with another jolt of vision and was forced into coming up with an excuse to get them out of there. Luckily, they were far enough away from the bomb so that there were only minor injuries.

This talented author strategically and skillfully takes the reader on a trip that will stay with them for a very long time. What a treasure!

Lauren Calder

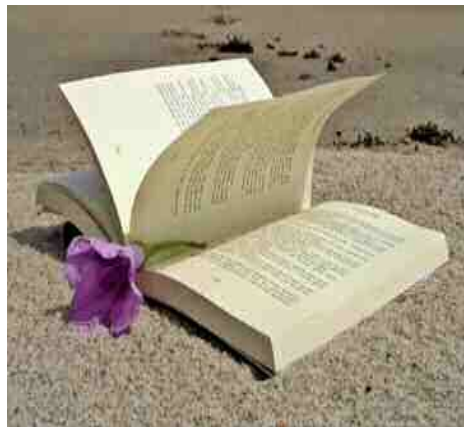


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"If you like the British series The Bletchley Circle, you will enjoy this book!"
Patricia Simpson, Author

Opening herself to ridicule by revealing she's clairvoyant is the last thing U.S. WAVE LIVVY DELACOURT wants, but when Uncle Sam (in the guise of a handsome naval commander) needs her skill to track Nazi spies, she jumps in with both feet.



AUDIO

BOOK REVIEWS

Don't Look Back

Author – Gregg Hurwitz

Brilliance Audio

Unabridged; 12 CDs

978-1455882441

Eve is a nurse married for ten years to Rick, a lawyer. They have a son Nicholas. She plans an exotic vacation in Mexico for her and Rick, only to have Rick reveal to her that he's fallen for a Dutch accountant who is ten years younger. Needless to say, Eve is devastated—she thought their marriage was fine. Now she's a single mom who has to relinquish her nursing job to provide for a management position that she really doesn't like. She's not giving up everything, though. She'll use that pre-paid vacation to get away from it all.

The vacation is near the jungles of Mexico in a resort where she meets the most eclectic group of people. From the time Eve sets foot in Mexico, she is embroiled in danger, intrigue and betrayal. She has stumbled upon evidence that indicates that a female news reporter, who had disappeared, has probably been murdered.

Hurwitz has written a brilliant story which he bogs down with superfluous details that make the listener yawn. He has done extraordinary research, not only about Mexico and the language, but weaponry, medical management in an emergency, and even the Holy War with Al Qaeda and the Taliban. But he forgot two rules of writing—show, don't tell, and you don't have to use all of your research. Two readers, Cassandra Campbell and Scott Brick, were very good with doing most of the reading. Cutting this book by about three compact disks would probably be perfect.

Mildred Burkett

Extreme Measures

Author – Elisabeth Naughton

Narrator – Hillary Huber

Brilliance Audio

Unabridged; 9 CDs; 10 hours, 56 minutes

978-01480599574

Zane used to be a CIA operative who met Eve Wolfe, another CIA operative, when they were in Beirut. They had become involved there but had gone their separate ways. Now Zane worked for an independent company, but someone betrayed their mission. The betrayal costs his company, both in lives and his own injury. He is convinced the person who betrayed them was Eve, as she called as soon as the mission was over and remarked that he was still alive. After that, his single focus was to get her and pay her back, and he quit his job to give him the time and space to do it.

When Eve was sent on her next mission to pay off a man in Seattle, things went awry. Not only did she not get the information she was supposed to procure, she learned her sister had been kidnapped, held by a group to insure Eve's cooperation.

Before she could make a move, an explosion blew up the place where she was sitting. The next thing she knew, she was bloodied and bound hand and feet, held by Zane Sawyer.

If you think this is a strong introduction—a perfect hook—wait until you get to the love scenes, which are hot, hot, hot! The action is constant in this fast-paced audiobook, and the bad guys are fairly well concealed. The tension is palpable. Narrator Hillary Huber has an unusual, sandy voice that is well suited to this audio and does an excellent job of going between all the characters.

Mildred Burkett

His Mistress by Christmas

Author – Victoria Alexander

Narrator – Susan Duerden

Brilliance Audio

Unabridged; 8 CDs; 9 hours, 35 minutes

978-1455800186

Lady Veronica Smithson is too fond of her independence to give it up to just any man, and most certainly not to Sir Sebastian. Despite her resolve to remain single, this merry widow can't fight her attraction to the blasted man. Thus, she makes him an offer she hopes he won't refuse.

Sir Sebastian Hadley Attwater, rogue and black sheep of his family, is weeks away from finding out if he'll receive his inheritance or not. In hopes of convincing his brothers that he's a responsible adult and surely entitled to the money, he decides to do the most respectable thing he can—take a wife. As luck would have it, he has just the woman in mind, the alluring Veronica Smithson. When she turns him down flat and offers to be his mistress instead, Sebastian comes up with a plan of his own—woo her, seduce her, and hope that spending the Christmas holidays together will convince her to give him her heart—because she has stolen his.

Romantic and witty with just the right amount of passion, *His Mistress by Christmas* will delight and captivate readers and listeners alike. This first book in the "Sinful Family Secrets" series is everything fans of Victoria Alexander have come to expect from this gifted author, and Susan Duerden's always applaud worthy performance is the big shiny ribbon on this holiday treat!

Mallory Lane

Impetuous Innocent

Author – Stephanie Laurens

Narrator – Polly Lee

Brilliance Audio

Unabridged; 8 CDs; 9 hours, 36 minutes

978-1441883902

After the death of her father, followed then by the death of her guardian uncle, Georgiana Hartley finds herself fighting

off the unwanted advances of her cousin Charles, a most vile man. Thinking to find refuge with Lady Alton at the neighboring estate, Candlewick Hall, Georgiana flees the place only to find herself in a different sort of danger, one of the heart that goes by the name of Dominic Ridgely, Viscount Alton of Candlewick.

Impetuous Innocent is the third in Stephanie Laurens' Regency series. It's a fun, romantic, passionate tale, written with that captivating, storytelling magic that Ms. Laurens' fans have come to expect. However, while the story itself is a delight, the narration is sorely lacking. Polly Lee has a beautiful voice, make no mistake, but her pacing is far too slow for this story, and there was simply too much "mouth noise" for this listener. Fans of Ms. Laurens' work should definitely pick this one up, but do themselves a favor and go the print or E-book route.

Mallory Lane

A Perfect Life

Author – Danielle Steele

Narrator – Edoardo Ballerini

Brilliance Audio

7 Cds; 8 hours

978-1455833269

1/2

Blaise McArthur has it all. At 47 years old, she is still a good looking woman and at the top of her field as an international news personality who lives in New York. Her private life is not ideal. She has a 19-year-old daughter who is blind as a result of juvenile diabetes. The girl's father is not interested in being in his children's lives. Because of Blaise's schedule, Salima, her daughter, is in a school for the blind in Massachusetts. When Salima's companion dies of meningitis, the school shuts down and Salima has to come home. The only teacher available is Simon, whom Blaise wants no part of. She wants a woman to be her companion, but none are available. Reluctantly, they take Simon into their home in New York. On top of that, changes at the news station put Blaise's job in jeopardy and her nerves on edge.

Simon is 15 years younger than Blaise. He is also one of the best when it comes to dealing with disabled people, especially blind ones. He knows Blaise and Salima don't want him, but he needs to get away since his affair with Megan, a married woman with three children, must end. Once they accept him, he sets goals for Salima, hoping to make her as independent as possible. He is attracted to Blaise and her to him, and soon that attraction cannot be denied.

Errors in research hurt this story, especially for those who are familiar with diabetes. Worse than that, though, independent, self-sustaining Blaise unbelievably undergoes a personality reversal and actually becomes pathetic as she waits to see if a man is interested in her. Performer Edoardo Ballerini lacks the range to perform multiple female voices convincingly.

Mildred Burkett

What Happens at Christmas

(Millworth Manor #1)

Author – Victoria Alexander

Narrator – Elizabeth Wiley

Brilliance Audio

10 CDs; 11 hours, 24 minutes

978-1455800247

***1/2

Knowing exactly what she wants for Christmas,

Camille, Lady Lydingham, devises a plan to ensure an engagement of marriage to a handsome prince. The only snag to her plan is that said prince wants to experience a perfect, story-book English Christmas, complete with proper friends and family. There's nothing perfect or proper about Camille's family. Undaunted, she hires a troupe of actors to play the parts of her beloved relatives in hopes the prince will be too enamored to discover the truth.

She's planned her charade down to the smallest of details so that nothing can go wrong. Everything's in place, the stage is set and the curtain is rising--and in walks Grayson Elliot, the man who loved her and lost her years-ago the man who isn't about to lose her again.

Victoria Alexander is a historical romance favorite, and with *What Happens at Christmas*, she's once again given readers a fun, romantic, passionate tale. Elizabeth Wiley narrates this story and does so with a lovely voice and lively performance. However, this listener had a great deal of trouble distinguishing between characters, even between the men and women. Overall, this is refreshingly unique and entertaining, to say the least, and sure to be a favorite amongst those who enjoy stories taking place during the joyous celebrations of Christmas!

Mallory Lane

The Witness

Author – Nora Roberts

Narrator – Julia Whalen

Brilliance Audio

Unabridged; 14 CDs

978-1455818150

***1/2

Elizabeth Fitch is the daughter of a beautiful woman who is the Chief of Surgery and who expects Elizabeth to follow in her footsteps. Unfortunately, though she is a genius with an eidetic memory, she did not turn out as beautiful as her mother expected. Consequently, her mother never bonded with her. Her mother plans every facet of Elizabeth's life; from her clothes to her food to the classes she wants her to take while she is at Harvard. Normally Elizabeth is not rebellious, but when her mother cancels the vacation she had promised to her, she decides to do what she wants. The 16-year-old's rebellion starts at the mall where she runs into Julie, a former classmate, who convinces her to go to a club. There, they meet men who are members of the Russian mafia, get drunk, and Elizabeth witnesses the murder of one of the men and Julie. Twelve years later she is in Arkansas and is known as Abigail Lowery.

Brooks Gleason is the new Chief of Police in the small town where Abigail lives. He is intrigued by skittish Abigail, and when he goes to her home and sees her state of the art security system, her killer dog Bert, and the Glock strapped around her waist, he becomes determined to learn her secrets.

Both Abigail and Brooks are winning characters. If you've ever seen *Rizzoli and Isles*, you've seen Elizabeth. She's Dr. Isles--smart, pretty, but a tad socially immature. Brooks is a dream--patient, understanding and smart. There is no real conflict between them, though, but a joint effort to protect her from the bad guys. Some of the additional storylines were disruptive to the main story and perhaps played out too long. Otherwise, the performance, done by Julia Whalen, was very good.

Mildred Burkett



YOUNG ADULT BOOK REVIEWS

Trial by Fire (The Worldwalker Trilogy)

Josephine Angelini
Feiwel & Friends
Hardcover
978-1250050885
****1/2

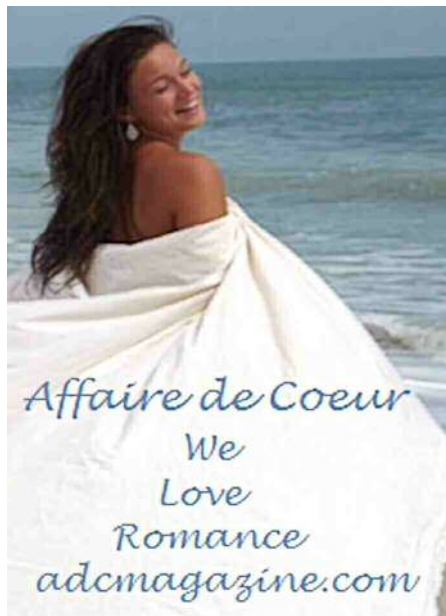
Lily is allergic to almost everything. A spiked drink leads to a deadly allergic reaction. Lily's hovering over her lifeless body, when a voice says that if Lily comes with "her," she'll no longer be sickly. Lily refuses and returns to her body. She recovers, physically anyway. But Lily's spirit doesn't heal from her best friend's betrayal. This time when the voice asks Lily if she's ready to go, she agrees.

Lily regains consciousness and quickly discovers that she's not in her Salem anymore. Her summoner, Lillian, is the most powerful woman in this world. She's also the cruelest and Lily looks exactly like her. Rather than help Lillian rule, Lily runs away.

Lily's quickly captured by a rebel. Rowan ridicules her story of multiple universes. Lily's inability to use magic finally convinces him that she's not Lillian. As she learns of Lillian's penchant for torture, Lily becomes convinced that Lillian must be overthrown. She, also, falls in love with Rowan.

For the insurrection to succeed, Lily must learn a lifetime's worth of magic in mere days. As Rowan teaches Lily, he finds himself falling for her. He even begins to trust her. But if Rowan's trust is misplaced, the last hope of freedom for his world will be snuffed out.

This is the beginning of an exciting series. It's a very good book.
Sheila Griffin



AFFAIRE DE COEUR



Black Phoenix Series Book 2

Available
December 2, 2014

www.SarahGrimm.com



Boaty

Betrayed

Lisa Scottoline
St. Martin's
Hardcover
978-1250027702

Judy Carrier, a lawyer with the firm Rosato and Dinunzio, was not happy when she was assigned the case for defending against asbestos damage cases. While at work, she received a call from her Aunt Barb. Her aunt had been dealing with breast cancer and had not told anyone, not even Judy's mother, Barb's sister.

While visiting her aunt, Judy finally met Barb's good friend and gardening buddy, Iris. Talking with Iris, she soon learned that Iris crossed into the U.S. illegally. When Iris left to go to work, her Aunt Barb filled her in on how they had become friends.

Later that evening, the police arrived at her aunt's house. Iris was found dead in her car. Something wasn't right, and Judy's aunt wanted to find out what happened. When they learned that Iris hadn't gone to work, Barb was convinced that Iris was murdered, and they were going to do some serious digging.

As expected, Ms. Scottoline delivers a gripping tale that proves over and over again that she deserves to be on top.
Lauren Calder

The Perfect Witness

Iris Johansen
St. Martin's Press
Hardcover
978-1250020055

Teresa Casali had a special gift, a gift her mob father took advantage of on a regular basis. After his death, her life was in danger, and she fled, chased by the new mob leader's goons.

Andre Mandak helped her escape from the men who were hunting her down. However, she didn't trust anyone and knew Mandak had an agenda.

Teresa's gift had never been stable or controlled. Mandak, a man she could not read, offered to teach her how to control her gift. He offered her protection, a new identity, a lifestyle where the mob would never find her. The decision was not a difficult one; Teresa was gone. She was now Allie Girard. However, she knew this would not be the end of Mandak. He would be around, involved in her life and he would use her, too.

Nail biting suspense from page one, in *The Perfect Witness*, Ms. Johansen expertly pens her suspense and mysteries with precision.
Lauren Calder

Sacrifice (Elemental)

Brigid Kemmerer
K Teen
Mass Market
978-0758294395

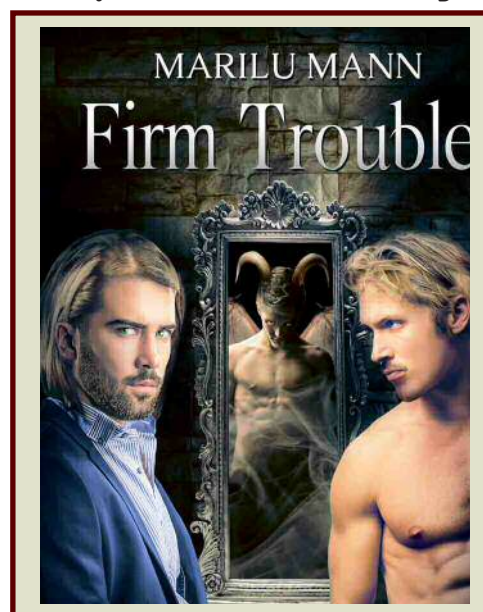
Michael was eighteen when his parents were killed five years ago. He's been responsible for his three younger brothers ever since. Michael is an Earth Elemental. He controls the ground, using it for protection and information gathering. Someone's been lurking in the woods near his house for the past week. But the earth isn't giving Michael any information about them. He goes to find out who it is and what they're up to. The sound of sirens draws him home. Michael's house, indeed his whole cul de sac, is on fire, and his brothers are home alone.

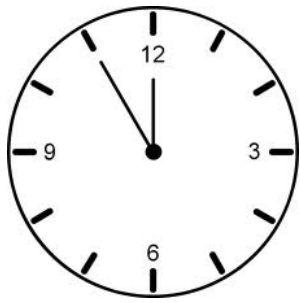
The boys survive, but they have no money and no place to go. A friend opens his home to them. While there, Michael gets a text instructing him to meet the sender to talk about the fire. Michael hesitates and receives more texts threatening him and his brothers if he doesn't comply. Michael reluctantly agrees to the meet. What harm could there be? He's an arson suspect. His family is homeless. The Department of Family Services is threatening to take his brothers away. How much worse can things get? Michael's about to find out.

This is a continuation of a series. While it can be read alone, it would be less confusing if the previous stories have been read. Despite typical teenage boy language throughout, it's a very good book.

Sheila Griffin

Escape into the Fantasy





MISC

ADDITIONAL REVIEWS

Beauty and the Brit

Lizbeth Selvig
Avon Impulse
E-book
978-0062370174
****1/2

Rio Montoya endures a bleak existence on the mean streets of Minneapolis, fighting to keep her sister Bonnie away from gangs and worse while fearing that her brother Paul is a lost cause. One night she pulls Bonnie out of a car where a pimp awaits. She takes her into Crossroads Youth and Community Center with her brother in hot pursuit. There, she finds a man with a duke's accent and a protector's instincts.

David Pitts Matherson is immediately taken with tough, street smart Rio. Soon, he is presented with an opportunity to get to know her better, albeit under difficult circumstances. Rio's home is burned to the ground, and a gangbanger's pursuit of her and Bonnie puts them in danger. He takes her to his home in Kennison Falls. Rio loves the stables but knows this is a temporary place for her to heal, not to fall in love.

Lizbeth Selvig presents her best book yet with this delightful tale. Her characters are flawed and don't always make the right decisions, making for a rich, believable tale. This book is part of a series, but stands alone.

Heather Nordahl Files

Caught in the Act

Sara Jane Stone
Avon Impulse
E-book
978-0062337597

Years ago, Katie Summers and Liam Trulane had sex, but he could not deal with her obvious feelings for him, and the fact that she had been a virgin. He walked away, leaving her bitter and her brothers furious.

One day when Katie has a flat tire, a flat spare, and a vehicle full of goats, Liam comes to her rescue, walking her and her goats home. Her feelings of both lust and resentment flare up. Liam's company wants to buy the Summers' family business. She hopes to get revenge for her long-ago heartbreak-she'll seduce him, then make sure the sale will not go through.

This is the second short novel in Sara Jane Stone's "Independence Falls" series. While this standalone tale is not as compelling as the first novel, readers will still be drawn to devour this in one gulp.

Heather Nordahl Files

Make It Right

Megan Erickson
Morrow Impulse
E-book
978-0062353498
****1/2

Max Payton has done some awful things in his life, but he doesn't know how to fix it. He hurt his ex girlfriend, who is now happy with his friend Alec. He has been trying to avoid connections with women, but Lea Travers is getting under his skin. However, every time he talks to her, he loses control of his tongue and says awful things.

Lea was in an accident as a child and has dealt with poor treatment because of the limp she sustained. As a result she can be bitter and struggles to trust. She knows Max can be a jerk, but she sees something underneath the attitude. Her instincts are confirmed when he helps her after her cousin is injured, and soon both of them are more involved than they ever imagined.

Megan Erickson has a gift for creating complicated characters with strong motivations for their sometimes unpleasant actions. Max is particularly complex, and even his worst actions make sense. This is the second book in a series, and while fans of the first book will get the most out of Max's redemption, new readers will relish this read as well.

Heather Nordahl Files

Sinful Rewards 3

Cynthia Sax
Avon Red Impulse
E-book
978-0062354150

Belinda "Bee" Carter goes to work expecting a promotion, having somehow missed all the signs that she is actually going to be fired, thanks to her conniving co-worker. She is torn between Nicholas Rainer, the billionaire who offers safety and security, and Hawke, the biker who sets her on fire with desire but could never be a forever man. She also has a secret admirer who challenges her with dares, then rewards her with fancy gifts.

Readers spend another twenty-four hours with Bee in this third "Billionaires and Bikers" novella. The story advances in this installment but is not complete by itself.

Heather Nordahl Files

Total Abandon

Alice Gaines
Avon Red Impulse
E-book
978-0062346568

Angela Carter is a brilliant scientist who views everything through the lens of logical experimentation. As a result, she has concluded that as she is approaching her sexual prime, she should be better at having orgasms. So she goes to Club Ecstasy to hire a man who can help her with this grand experiment. Brent Delaney is happy to help her, but he intends to do it in his own way, which means Angela has to let go of control.

Alice Gaines creates an intriguing heroine in Angela, and white hot Brent is the perfect man to teach her about sex. This is part of a series, but each novella stands alone.
Heather Nordahl Files

Total Immersion

Alice Gaines
Avon Red Impulse
E-book
978-0062346414
****1/2

Adam Fairchild used to take care of the female clients at Club Ecstasy, but he doesn't sleep with them anymore because he's moved up to management. Part of the reason for the move is his ex girlfriend Susan McGraw, who left him because of his work. Now she's shown up at the club. She is under the influence of a drug slipped to her at the club, so she's acting very unlike herself. Because she's making a scene, Adam's boss lets her get what she wants-- a threesome with Adam and another man.

Alice Gaines writes an unusual, erotic reunion romance with more depth than might be expected in a novella this short. Readers will enjoy this insightful, sizzling tale.
Heather Nordahl Files

Total Temptation

Alice Gaines
Avon Red Impulse
E-book
978-0062346391

Cassandra Willis lives a life without joy. Her much older husband recently died, and her stepsons (who are her age) are contesting the will. Furthermore, they are watching her like hawks, ready to jump on any misstep. Cassandra needs a release, so she takes a risk and visits Club Ecstasy, where she can find a lover who will take care of all her needs. Here she meets Bobby, who does all of this and more.

The short length of Alice Gaines' series starter makes this more of an extended vignette than a true story, but readers will enjoy the ride despite the somewhat unfinished ending.
Heather Nordahl Files

When the Rancher Came to Town

Emma Cane
Avon Impulse
E-book
978-0062369529

Mason Lopez is in Valentine Valley hoping to get his family ranch out of a financial bind. He comes to Connections B&B early to get prepared for an upcoming business meeting, and he's blindsided by a sudden, blistering attraction to Amanda Cramer, the B&B's owner.

Amanda left a demanding career for the peace of Valentine Valley and a trauma suffered on the job left her with deep psychological scars. She doesn't trust herself to start a new relationship when her issues could drag everything down.

Emma Cane pens a novella set in beloved Valentine Valley, where new readers won't be lost and seasoned readers will enjoy seeing familiar faces. The lovers share strong chemistry in this pleasant read.

Heather Nordahl Files

Intrusion

Charlotte Stein
Avon Red Impulse
E-book
978-0062365088
****1/2

Beth's neighbor is a recluse, rarely seen outside of his house. People in the neighborhood think he's odd at best and dangerous at worst. Beth finds him creepy, and when her dog turns up missing, she knocks on his door and accuses him of dog napping. She has no evidence and can see in his eyes that her accusation hurts him. She must make this right, so she goes back to his door offering a home baked pie.

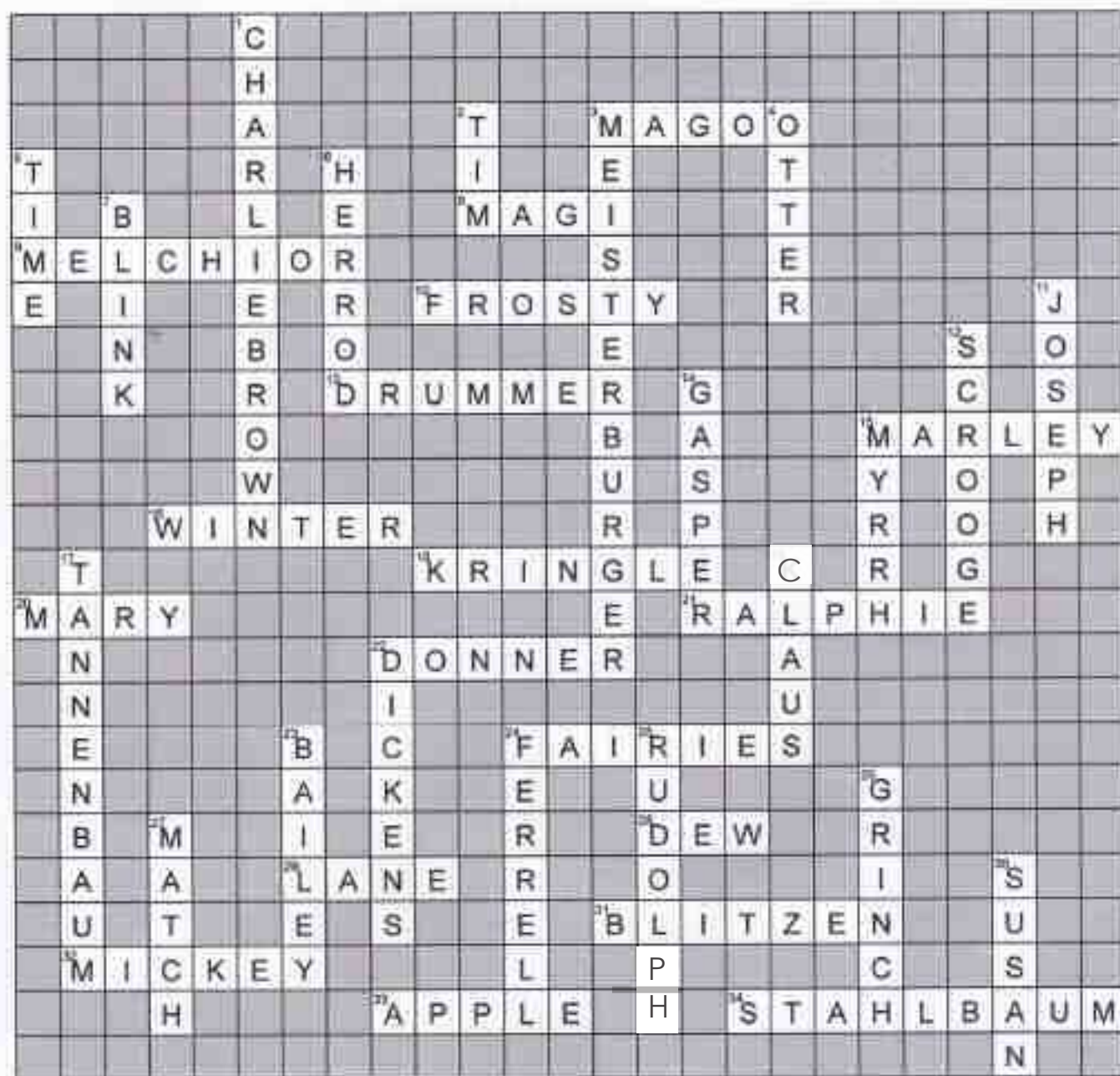
Noah Grant is a strange, beautiful man with the awesome, almost supernatural ability to read people and situations. His demons drive him even as he sleeps, leading to sleepwalking and finding himself in precarious situations when he wakes up. Beth's own demons cause deep distrust, but compassion for Noah's suffering wins out. And an unusual sexual connection dawns and deepens.

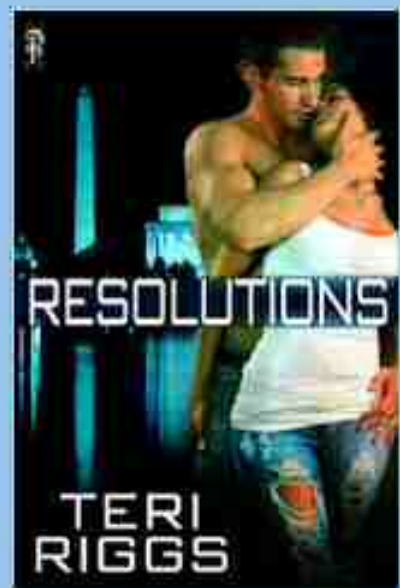
Charlotte Stein's novella, first in the "Under the Skin" series, has its creepy moments, but that's why it works. She is true to her characters, sometimes to an excruciating degree. The nontraditional sex scenes are amazingly erotic.
Heather Nordahl Files

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Characters of December

Louise B. Sneed





Teri Riggs

Author of The Kennedy O'Brien mystery series and
romantic suspense

What happens in Vegas...could be murder.

The Eyes Die Last

The killer is a man with a mission. He stalks the women before he kills them, leaving a "BEFORE" photo on their bodies, and sending an "AFTER" shot to the local news hound.

The Eyes of Vengeance

While chasing the killer, Kennedy must also try to control hotheaded Detective Hunt, who is hell-bent on finding out who killed the first victim—his best friend's father.

Romantic Suspense from the Honor Guard Series

Resolutions

On a mission to gather evidence against a Colombian drug-lord, Eve discovers the drug-lord is helping terrorists plan an attack on American soil.

Teri-riggs.com

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