

Affaire de Coeur Sept./Oct., 2015

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Lisa Scottoline--

She loves writing, the law, and her animals!

Reviews!

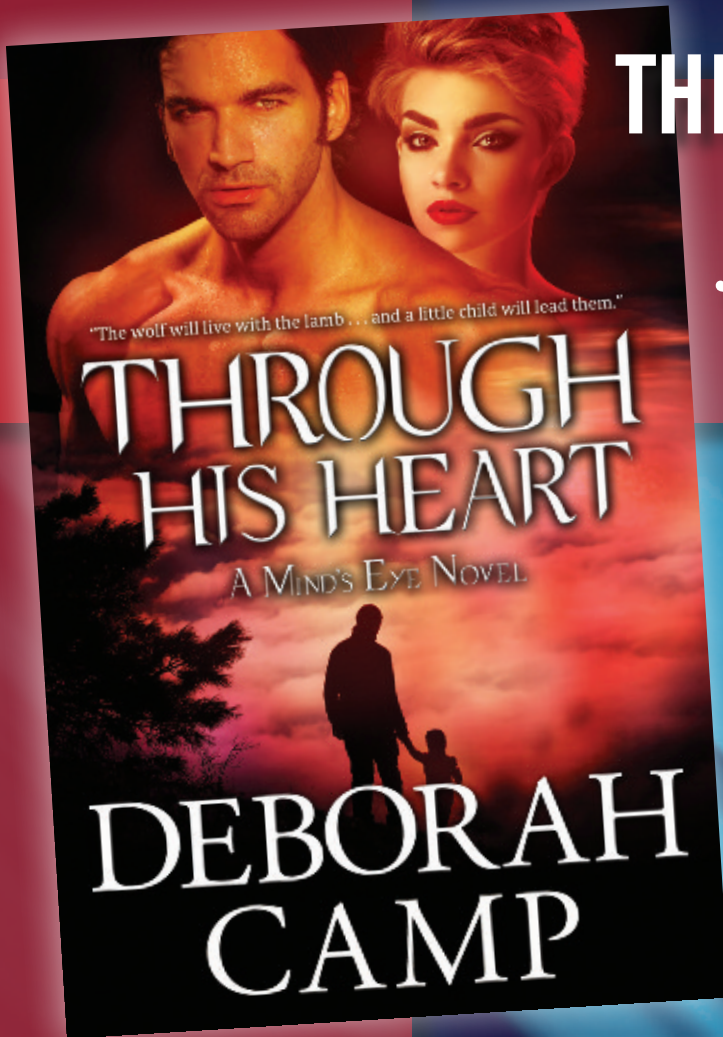
Reviews!

Reviews!



**An interview with
Cover Model J.D.
Hart**





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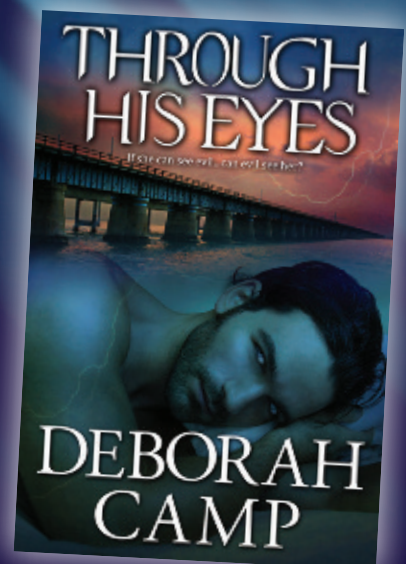
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Affaire de Coeur is published bimonthly at 3976 Oak Hill Road, Oakland, California 94605-4931
Telephone (510) 569-5675 Fax: (510) 632-8868 Email address affairedecoeur@adcmagazine.com
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Subscription rates for the U.S.A. are \$38 for 12 issues First Class. Third class subscriptions are \$30.00. Canadian subscriptions are \$65.00 for one year. Other foreign countries' rates are dependent upon the cost of mailing. Single copy price is \$5.95

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Lisa Scottoline

Thrills, Mystery, Intrigue and Romance--
She Writes Them All!

Lisa Scottoline--best selling author, single mom, attorney--she does it all. But how? It was my pleasure to try to find out from this smart, courageous, and since we share our love of animals, compassionate woman who also happens to be down to earth. Not only does she keep busy writing under her own name, but she has combined forces with her daughter to rock the book world.

AdC: *First and foremost, do you know magic? You haven't changed one iota since then. Does your writing keep you young?*

L.S.: Thank you so much, but the real truth is, as we all get older, we decide we're not old, right? I feel so lucky and blessed to be writing and to have a long career, and now I'm writing three books a year, so I'm really rocking and rolling. It's a cliché, but you really are as young as you feel!!

How great to speak with you again, and, as usual, your questions are thoughtful and fun to answer. I just finished my deadline, so I'll start spilling the beans, right now.

AdC: *How have things changed for you over the past six years? What projects have you successfully launched? What characters have you introduced?*

L.S.: Things have changed so much in a good way because I really feel as if I'm taking more control of my career and I'm actually loving it more than I used to. For example, as I said above, I'm doing three books a year and each one is very different. I re-launched my legal thriller series, now entitled Rosato & DiNunzio in *Corrupted*, since that four woman law firm has gotten older and wiser, and I love exploring the issues of justice in crime that are always in the



forefront of those books. *Corrupted* is a landmark in the series, in that the main character, Bennie, falls in love, so she meets the man of her dreams at the same time she handles the case of her life. Fun! That said, it's really fun to not always write in a series form, and not always lead with mystery, so I write standalones that come out every April, and the most recent one has to do with a woman who discovers that her sperm donor is a serial killer, titled *Most Wanted*.

Standalones give me a chance to explore the effects of a premise like that one on a really loving marriage and to see if they can survive a crisis of that magnitude.

So, you see, there's a very long answer to your very short question. But the bottom line is that I'm doing three different types of books, and I really love the ability to switch up the stories I tell and reach different types of audiences.

AdC: *How are your animals? (She thought I'd never ask.) Bring us up-to-date (with pictures, too.) of your current menagerie. Who's new in your group?*

L.S.: I like to talk and write about my animals because I think as a single woman and a single mother, it's really incumbent upon me to make the fun and love in my life come on my own. There's so many divorced people and



Mother and son agree--something tastes good!
 widows out there, and they need to know that they can have a full and happy life, even if they're on their own. That's where the dogs come in. I have two sitting on the couch with me right now, so I'm squeezed to the side. I think I'm up to five dogs, and one cat, 14 chickens, a couple of horses, and a pony.



Well, does it?

AdC: *Is your daughter still writing, or has she, like many young people, changed careers?*

L.S.: Yes, Finally, my beloved daughter Francesca Serritella has grown up and now is my co-author. We are writing together and are on our seventh humorous memoir about our real lives as a mother and a daughter, and the one coming out this June is entitled *I've Got Sand in All the Wrong Places*.

It's really fun to be co-authoring these memoirs with her because I think I speak to the middle-age types who want to hear about how my life relates to theirs, and she speaks to the twenty-something types, and we make a good Mutt and Jeff team. Even that reference is



Busted!

dated! But seriously, I do think that we are each other's best friends and there are precious few representations of mother-daughter relationships that are positive, and we wanted to speak to that in these humorous memoirs, which have been compared to Erma Bombeck and are really fun to read.

In addition to the memoirs, Francesca has
continued on the next page



There's safety in numbers, right?

been working away on her own first novel and has just completed it and gotten an agent, so fingers crossed that you'll get to see it in print, and I will, too! It's really wonderful, and I'm not biased. I just love great books, no matter where they come from!

AdC: *Think back on when you were between seven and nine years old. Did you want to be a writer then? A professional story teller?*

L.S.: I was such a little kid bookworm that I got lost in everything I read, mostly Nancy Drew. I had a girl crush on the girl detective, and I always thought that the best thing in the world would be to be able to write books. I can't even believe how lucky I am to be doing it, but it's really important to point out that there was a lot of struggle in the beginning.

It took me five years to get published, and I will never forget the rejection letter from an agent who said, "We don't have time to take any more clients, and if we did, we wouldn't take you." I just refused to give up until they published me, and for anybody reading this, I really want them to take heart and keep writing. There are so many more ways to get into print than there ever

were before, and everybody has at least one book in them!

AdC: *When you began to write, did you want to do legal/psychological thrillers?*

L.S.: I think if you're writing as frequently as I am, your writing begins to evolve and sometimes you can see the threads of interest in something in an early book that later blossoms into a full-fledged novel. I could bore you with an analysis of my own work, but if you ask me, I think my novels are trying to refine my thinking about the central questions of what is justice and what is love? And in the meantime, to tell a wonderful story that you can't stop reading. That's my goal. I'm always thinking of my reader and I always want to deliver for them, with each and every book.

AdC: *What authors have influenced you?*

L.S.: I read all the time and very widely, including nonfiction memoirs, and I think I am influenced by everything I read. But the interesting thing about that is that the more you read, the more you begin to refine your own authentic voice, which is exactly as it should be. I always advise people who are trying to write and get published to keep reading. I used to have a rule before I was published, in those five years of struggle, I said to myself that if I wasn't writing my own book, I had to be reading somebody else's. I still follow that rule pretty much!

AdC: *Do you find doing research difficult, or does your own legal experience and/or that of friends and family provide enough?*

L.S.: I do have a great legal background, but the truth is, I do tons of research. I love doing research because I love talking to people, and I love hearing them tell about themselves and what they do in their job and what they love about it because I will always tell you a little more information and help flesh out characters for fiction. And it seems like every time I write, I'm writing a book that's on the cutting edge of something that I can answer.

For example, *Corrupted* is about a corruption scandal in the juvenile justice system, and I had been a lawyer, but I never practiced juvenile law. I was fascinated to learn how different it would be, and to look at the effect on a family when juvenile justice goes awry. And as for *Most Wanted*, I didn't know anything about infertility practice and actually learned some fascinating

things about legal loopholes in that area that can really wreak havoc on a family, which is what the novel is about. So I love research, absolutely! And it's easier than writing!

AdC: *As you know, Stephen King, master of horrors, has been known to dabble in other genres. Some say Misery was a thinly veiled romance. Are you tempted to write other genre? Even if you're not tempted to try, what other genre do you think you would like to author?*

L.S.: I really think I'm moving more into romance and romantic suspense, especially with *Corrupted* and *Most Wanted*. I find that I'm just more interested in the way men and women relate to each other and how love can change, wane, or grow over time. The real challenge that I'm tackling, and I love doing it, is really writing a love story between two mature adults that is really exciting, but also realistic. Wish me luck!

AdC: *I do wish you luck, though I have a feeling you won't need it. Do you miss practicing law, or is there enough in your research and writing to satisfy your legal itch?*

L.S.: I do miss the back-and-forth of practicing law because I was a litigator, and there's a part of me that enjoys a good fight. That sounds sick, but it's true. That said, I love books more than anything, and I feel so joyful to be able to spend my life writing books. As I get older, I appreciate it more and more.

AdC: *From the perspective of an outsider like me, it seems that the justice system works for the men who are not of color and who have the financial means to fight. Would you agree or disagree with this concept? Why?*

L.S.: I spent a lifetime examining the question, not only as an author, but as a professor of law, and I think that the issue is much broader. I think that people experience the justice system differently depending, not only on their color, but on their gender, on their economic class, and even on where they live in the country. I wish it were not so, but it is because the central point, and it's one that I make in all of my books, is that the justice system is man-made, or woman-made, and, therefore, it is as fallible as human beings are.

AdC: *Is it safe to incorporate these so-called biases into a story line, or are publishers concerned that their readers will be offended?*

L.S.: I have no idea what other publishers think, but I am lucky enough to be with St. Martin's Press and Jennifer Enderlin is my editor, and I must tell you, I have complete freedom to explore whatever issues I want to, and to tell the best stories I can. I've never gotten a word of censorship or anything like that.

AdC: *I'm certain today's headlines often provide enough fodder for imaginative writers, but what keeps you fresh?*

L.S.: I never write anything from the headlines, to tell the truth. Those stories have already been told, and they don't really mean anything to me personally. All of my stories have to proceed organically from something within me, even if they touch of something realistic; the heart of the story comes from within, not from a newspaper.

AdC: *What do you love the most about your work?*

L.S.: Everything.



AdC: *I can't tell you how much I am honored by your taking time out of your busy schedule to do this interview. I'm sure I'm correct when I say our readers will appreciate it, too.*

Let's not wait six years before we hook up again.

Debra Parmley's Cover Model Corner

Interview with J.D.Hart

J.D. Hart took time out of his busy schedule to meet with Debra. Debra was fortunate to meet him at the A Day with the Authors event, hosted by Sandy Sullivan, Secret Cravings Publishing in Nashville last May. Many of you may know J.D. as the narrator of author Sharon Hamilton's books. He has the most amazing voice. So let's step away from covers for a change and take a look at the man behind the narration of some of the best romance stories available today. I'm excited about our peek behind the scenes, so let's get going.

Debra: J.D., how did you get into voice acting?

J.D.: I started in radio when I was 18 at WABZ in Albemarle, North Carolina. Later in life, Chevrolet's advertising agency hired me to be their TV spokesperson. That gave me the opportunity not only to be on-camera but voice-over many of the commercials that we shot.

Debra: Why are you referred to as the Pirate Narrator?

J.D.: Pirates have more fun! They live spontaneously and improvise a lot. Actually, someone once told me that I looked like Errol Flynn. I didn't know who he was because he passed away before I was born. When I looked him up and saw that he was a swashbuckler in films and lived an adventurous lifestyle, I liked him immediately. The nickname Pirate Narrator is actually a tribute to Errol, whom left this world much too soon.

Debra: Beyond producing and narrating audio books, what other projects keep you busy?

J.D.: I just finished shooting a TV pilot, *The Discarded*. I play a psychiatrist in a 1950's insane asylum. I continue to be the on-camera spokesperson for Dick Smith Automotive in S.C. My



Debra and J.D. (above)



J.D., the Pirate Narrator at work!



Is J.D. Hart an Errol Flynn look alike?

life is never boring, and I do wing it a lot. I wear a lot of different hats and that takes me to a lot of different places. Still dreaming of that home in Maui!

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

J.D.: What makes me happy.

Debra: So, J.D., what makes you happy?

J.D.: What makes me happy? Happiness is a little tricky. Sometimes we pretend we are happy when we're really not. Other times we may be having a happy moment but not realize it until months or even years later. Happiness comes from a place deep within. When I'm in unity consciousness and at peace with myself and others, I find that I am truly happy. I am completely happy when I am surrounded by other happy people who realize how fortunate we are to exist on this planet that provides our every need. Simple things like sunny days, bike rides, sitting around a bonfire, a walk on the beach or listening to great music always make me happy.

Debra: That's a beautiful answer, J.D., with so much truth in it. Happiness is a little tricky. Those moments are all the more soul fulfilling when we're aware. You've expressed this so well. I could see you writing a book. If you wrote a book what would it be about?

J.D.: It would be an autobiography. Mine is quite a story, believe it or not. It wouldn't be a look-at-me, I'm-so-great kind of book. It would be more about life's disappointments and struggles and how one hopeful romantic can survive in this world and find balance with life, love, and loss.

Debra: I would be in line to buy that book, for sure. I certainly enjoy listening to you narrate a book. Is there any special training for becoming a narrator?

J.D.: There are many classes you can take for voice acting. You need computer and audio software skills in order to do your own editing. For me, the best way is to just do it. If you're good, people will notice

and you'll stay busy. If not, you can move on and try something else. Years of acting in film, TV, and commercials has been the biggest asset for me.

Debra: Who is your favorite storyteller?

J.D.: Vincent Price had me at, "It's as much fun to scare as be scared."

Debra: Oh, I met him once! I was a preteen and very shy. He came to Springfield, Ohio, and it might have been a fundraiser, I'm not sure. My father had tickets for us to go hear him live, and his show wonderful. Afterwards, we got to meet him. I'll never forget it. My face was hot and red and I was all tongue-tied and hiding beneath my hair, as shy young girls do. He put his fingers beneath my chin and tipped it up, looking me in the eyes with a kind smile, and said, "You have lovely

Continued on page 20



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Spotlight Interview



This month the Spotlight Shines on... *Celia Breslin*

Celia lives in California with her family. She writes urban fantasy and paranormal romance and has a particular fondness for werewolves, vampires, and the Fae. When not writing, she can be found exercising, reading, hanging with her family, or indulging her addiction to Joss Whedon's TV shows and movies.

When did you start writing and why?

It started with my Irish grandmother and her stories of the Fae, including one tale of her personal encounter with a Banshee in her root cellar. Imagination fueled, I wrote a lot of fairytales as a kid. I've been writing ever since.

What have you learned about writing since you started?

I'm also an editor, but I need to turn off Editor Brain and let myself (aka Artist Brain) write messy, raw copy. And edit later!

Tell us about your new book or series.

I'm currently working on two series. In my urban fantasy vampire series, *The Tranquilli Bloodline* (Champagne Books), I'm working on book three, entitled *Origins*. The series features Carina Tranquilli, a San Francisco nightclub owner with a protective vampire family, a fated vampire mate, and a slew of pesky enemies. I also write for a multi-author, shared world series, *Black Hills Wolves* (paranormal romance, Decadent Publishing). My stories feature three Wolf shifter siblings, each one finding their mate. *Diamond Moon* released in March, 2015, and *Under a Mating Moon* releases soon. The third story is in progress.

What is your idea of a perfect day?

Time to write and hang with my family.

Do you have any hobbies?



Exercise! Yes, really. :-) I also play the piano.

What authors do you admire?

So many! In the romance genre: Laura Kaye, Kresley Cole, J. R. Ward, Larissa Ione, and more!

What is the worst thing about being an author?

I wish there were more hours in the day so I could write more.

What is the best thing about being an author?

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*The best thing?
Creating fun new worlds and populating them with
my characters.*

*What do you expect to be doing 10 years from
now?
Writing!*

*What can we expect from you next?
Origins, the third book in the "Tranquilli Blood-
line" Series, and Under A Mating Moon, my sec-
ond offering in the "Black Hills Wolves" series.*

*Pass on some words of wisdom, please, to aspiring
authors.*

Write, write, and write some more!

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Announcing the **Winners**

of the **Cover Art Contest** First Place:

Category: Hot Guyz Patrol--



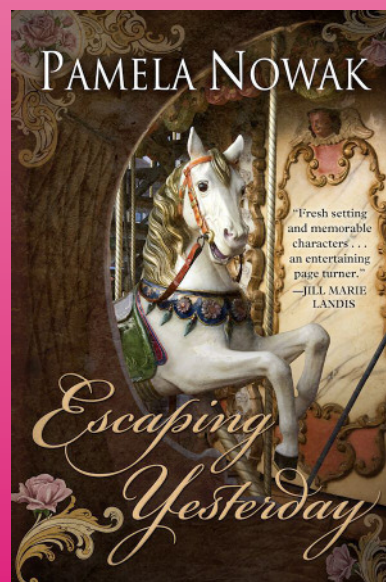
Category: Almost Kiss



Category: Gorgeous Gals

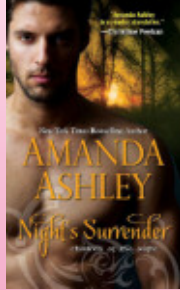


Category: Uniquely Yours

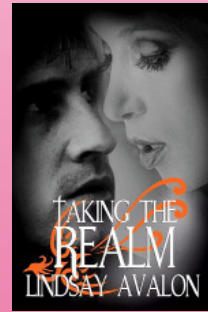
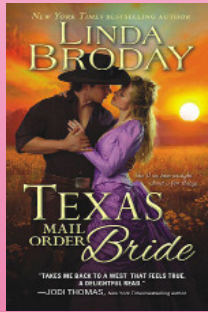


Second and Third Place Winners

Category: Hot Guyz Patron



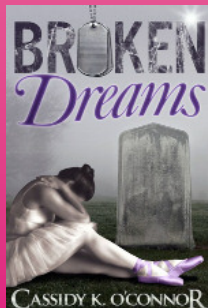
Category: Almost Kiss



Category: Gorgeous Gals



Category: Uniquely Yours





Spotlight Interview



Morgan K. Wyatt, Prolific, Bestselling Romance Author

Morgan K. Wyatt has penned twenty romance novels. Her articles and stories have appeared in several anthologies and magazines including *Guideposts*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Playgirl*, *Greensboro Magazine*, and *The Dollar Stretcher*. Her most recent publications include a sweet romance, *The Inheritance*, and an anthology, *Sunkissed: Summer Effusions*.

When did you start writing and why?

I started writing due to boredom in the classroom. My mother taught me to read and write before entering school. The first thing I did was read the entire first-grade reader and found it lacking. After telling my classmates about the sorry state of the reading book, I sat down and wrote alternate endings.

What have you learned about writing since you started?

- * Go with a genre you love & know.
- * Do not be your own editor.
- * Ask for help.
- * Don't disregard help when it is offered.
- * Edit, edit, and edit some more.
- * Beta readers can save you from very big mistakes.
- * Go with your gut.
- * Talk about your stories. This allows you to find plot holes.

Tell us about your new book or series.

My latest book is *The Inheritance*. This sweet romance features small town sensibilities, a cantankerous rescue hound, and a lake house both Melody and Levi inherit together. The problem is they can't stand one another.

What is your idea of a perfect day?

First, I'd be somewhere tropical on vacation with my husband. My morning would start with writing. During the day, we'd have a chance to walk the beach or float in the pool. After sunset, I'd tuck into an excellent book.

Do you have any hobbies?

Flower, vegetable and rose gardening, belly dancing, reading, and I recently started making jewelry.

What authors do you admire?

Cathy Maxwell, Jayne Ann Krentz, Betty Smith, Margaret Mitchell, Agatha Christie and Harper Lee.

What is the worst thing about being an author?

People assume writing isn't work. Relatives and friends call me at all times of day. Even drop by because I'm not "doing anything." I write for six hours straight, then do errands; later in the evening, I do social media and edit.

The best thing?

The creation process, along with meeting fantastic folks at conferences and book signings.

What do you expect to be doing 10 years from now?

The Soul Mate Search -- A fortuneteller's message sends Nina on a soul mate search for a man she's met before.

Love or Deception -- As she searches for her husband, Amy uncovers a secret that could be fatal.

www.morgankwyatt.com

I'll definitely be writing. The better question might be where I will be. I hope to be south of the snow belt.

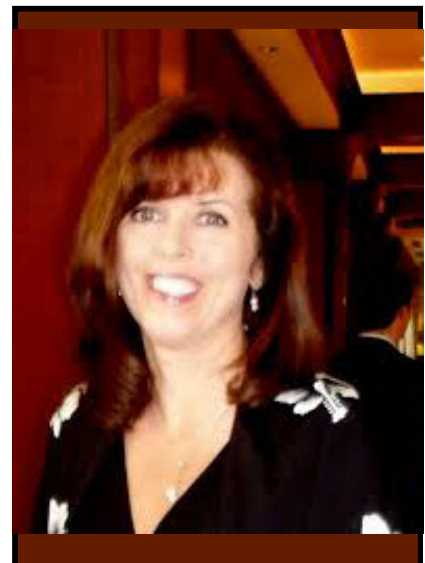
What can we expect from you next?

I have three series in the works. The first is the "Soul Mate series." The second is a romantic suspense series called *Suspicious Circumstances*. I'll be in Palm Springs in September at the Rone Awards for my first book in that series, *Love or Deception*. I have a brand new series based on the gentlemen in a male revue. It is called "The Men of Machismo." This series is a little more on the spicy side. The first book, *The Bad Decision Legacy*,

is in final edits.

Pass on some words of wisdom, please, to aspiring authors.

- * Write every day.
- * If you have an idea for a series, go with it. It's easier to sell a book or books you've already written than promising to pop out a series in six months.
- * Expect delays; nothing ever goes as fast as planned.
- * Be nice to everyone because it is the right thing to do. Many excellent writers helped me in several different ways.
- * Read the fine print. Always. Many writers have signed their rights away by not reading.



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unquenchable hope for a
better tomorrow.

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Affaire de Coeur visits RainbowCon in Tampa, Florida

We did a quick jaunt over to RainbowCon in mid-July to visit Shannon West, Susan Scott, and Shannon's new writing partner, Victoria Sue, who were all attending the conference. Shannon generously introduced us to K. Piet, who promptly invited us to join in on the festivities. Everyone there was having fun and enjoying their time at the conference.

The 2015 charity was for the Big Cat Rescue, a sanctuary in north Tampa dedicated to abused and abandoned big cats – lions, tigers, bobcats and ocelots, to name a few. For more information, you can go to their website: www.bigcatrescue.org

A few of the events: It's a Drag, Call of the Wild Masquerade, games, trivia, and prizes scheduled for the weekend were entertaining and fun for all.



L to r: Susan Scott, Victoria Sue, Morgan Marie Guthas, Denise Shirley Carter, Alexa Land, and Shannon West.



TJ Richards, Lisa Guertin, Viktor Alexander, Grace Duncan, and Wi Prater

An example of some of the workshops for authors: Just to name a few—How Much Sex is Too Much Sex, Collaborations in Writing, LGBTQ on Stage, The Importance of Cover Art, Fanfiction to Pro-fiction, The Squick Factor (making someone squirm and go “ick”), and a BDSM demonstration. We were invited to attend the BDSM demonstration. First, it was PG. No names will be revealed on who participated, nor pictures from the demonstration. Privacy of the participants was the utmost concern. The demonstration was with a Dom, his Sub, and a dungeon monitor.

Some of it I understood, but most, Google was my friend. The Q and A after the demonstration also helped considerably. It was

Continued on page 37

The Frugal Audio Critic

By Bennet Pomerantz



“A bargain ain’t a bargain unless it’s something you need.”
~Sidney Carroll, *A Big Hand for the Little Lady*

“Frugality may be termed the daughter of Prudence, the sister of Temperance, and the parent of Liberty.” ~Samuel Johnson

Sometimes, you get an email that makes you consider things and seek out resources. You will pardon me if I focus on being a resource rather than a critic in this column. Let me try to explain, I received an email from a fan of this magazine and supporter of this column.

Mr. Pomerantz, I have a situation and would like your help. I have enjoyed your column in *Affaire de Coeur* for years. You seem to have a pulse on what is good or bad in audiobooks. You also have opened my eyes to new books and audio projects I would not have tried if you did not suggest them in the pages of your columns.

Over the years, I would go to my book store (She mentioned a big name superstore). Over a year, I would buy six to eight new audiobooks. However, \$40 an audiobook is getting rather pricey for my budget. I still listen to these spoken word books when I cook for my family or walk in exercise.

Now my husband Frank has lost his job due to downsizing at the plant. Because of this, our family budget is getting a little tighter. Money is tighter, too. My question to you is: DO YOU HAVE IDEAS HOW I CAN STILL GET MY AUDIO FIX ON A BUDGET? Any ideas would help.

Thank you in advance and God Bless, Judy

After I received this email, I started to research this for ways that she can afford audio books. My first suggestion is a solution I have been mentioning for years...and usually the price tag is FREE. The public library in your area is a great resource. Many libraries have books, but also have DVDS and audiobooks on the shelves to check out.

Understand, many of these audiobooks may not be on the *New York Times*' best selling list when you get them. However, if they are new to you, they are still new to you. For example, James Patterson's *Hope To Die* (Hachette Audio) was available unabridged on CD when I took my last



trip to the library with a friend of mine. (And, YES, he did check this title out and told me he didn't care what my review was...he wanted to hear this!) You can usually check out audio projects for 14 to 21 days, depending on your library system.

If you have an iPod or an mp3 player, you can download the audio from the library web site from a service that the library uses called Overdrive. (That is in the state of Maryland, other states may call it other names. Check with your own public library.) It is like checking out a library book and just as painless.

If you have a computer and a library card, you can download the library audio from your own home computer for a one-time 14 to 21-day period to your device for FREE. You do not have to venture into the library building. It is the same audio book you would buy in the store or get from Audible. Most will limit you from three to six audios for that 21-day period...depending on your public library system. Check it out!

Some people want to own the audio book...and I understand that. You may want to consider buying a used audio from a consignment shop, a used book store, or a thrift store, Goodwill, Salvation Army or a "Friends of the Library" book store. You would be surprised at some of the selections available at these places.

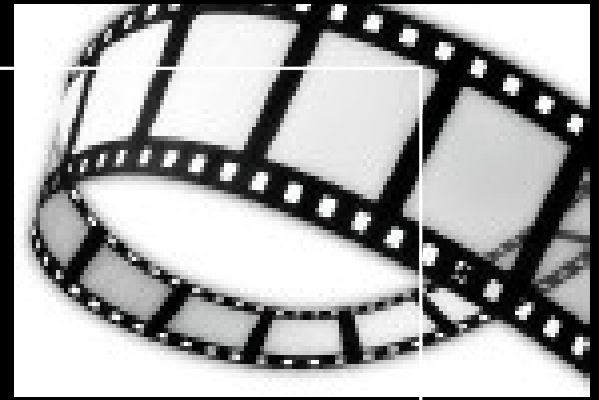
My friend Josh remarked, after he went to a "Friends of the Library" book shop, that he bought a recent *Star Wars* audiobook which he saw at a major book store for forty dollars. He told me boastfully, "I bought it for the price of SIX DOLLARS from the library!" and then he also told me, "Now I can listen to it anytime I want."

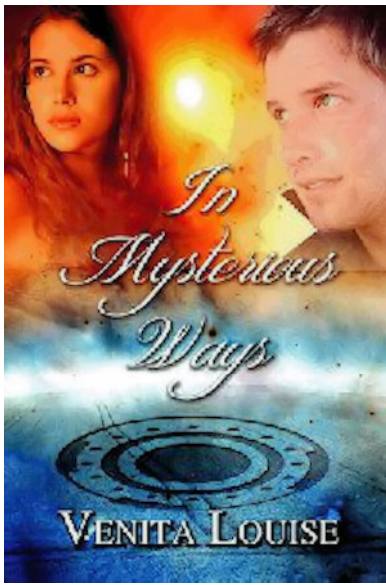
There are a few audiobook groups and audiobook clubs in computer web groups that exchange spoken word recordings and downloads with each other. I have never tried it myself; others I know have and rave about them. Some groups have fees, so check it before you download. If you are fan of old time radio, there are a few sites you can download older radio shows to a computer hard drive, flash drive, or other devices. Many times these sites are FREE.

Now remember, Amazon, Barnes & Nobles, E-bay, and other online retailers sell used audiobooks at cheap prices. Sometimes you are buying a great buy. Look and see what they have.

I do hope this helps, Judy. Thank you for your support of my column and this magazine. I hope you find some great audios to listen to.

Until next time, I'll be under the headsets!





A mysterious circle offers different repercussions for everyone who enters:

<http://venitahouse.net>

J.D. continued

cheekbones, my dear, and a sweet smile. You mustn't hide them. Your smile could light up the room." Well, I was floating at that point and have forgotten whatever else he said, but I have never forgotten those words. He was such a gentleman and that voice! Simply unforgettable.

It's clear that you enjoy narrating the books and must be loads of fun! Do you work closely with the author when you narrate their book?

J.D.: Yes, unless the author wants to remain out of it. I've recorded many audio books without ever communicating directly with the author. The best work comes from a close relationship with the author. The more honest you can be with each other, the better the final product. The same applies to directors and actors who choose to work together because they know their combined

efforts will create a better experience for their audience.

Debra: What is your favorite genre to narrate?

J.D.: It's narrated corporate, self-help, science fiction. I've even narrated anatomy, biology and military textbooks and manuals. After Sharon Hamilton and I discovered each other, I would have to say that romance is my favorite genre. It was love at first write! I'm a sucker for a great love story and the action and adventures of a great romance novel really give my acting chops a nice workout, plus I enjoy the ride.

Debra: Please describe the perfect romantic evening.

J.D.: Dressed to the nines, I walk into a crowded bar, scanning the room. I approach the bar where sits the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. She gives me that look that tells all the wannabes within her perimeter that they don't stand a chance. I offer to buy her a glass of wine, she accepts. We have light casual conversation while we study each other carefully. We finish the glass of wine and I ask her would she care to dance, although there is no dance floor and no music in the background. I escort her to my BMW convertible. With top down we sail off to a private lake where the moon is glistening on the water. I turn the stereo up with a special CD of love songs that I have created just for this night. We exit the car and move toward the lake of enchantment while holding hands and gazing into each other's eyes. Ah, the perfect song begins playing from my car stereo. The dance begins. As we hold each other, knowing that this is going to be a night we shall never forget for as long as we live, I slowly reach down and touch her wedding band. Then, I thank her for 21 of the best years of my life.

Affaire de Coeur

Debra: Now that is romance and a true love story. So beautiful. Thank you for sharing it with us.

Okay now, Eight Quickie questions:

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

Sunset and stars.

2.) The beach or the mountains?

The beach.

3.) Primitive camping or luxury hotel?

Primitive camping.

4.) Snow skiing or water skiing?

Water skiing.

5.) Favorite movie:

Body Heat

6.) Best book you ever read:

The Science of Mind (because it changed my life forever)

7.) Favorite singer

Neil Diamond

8.) Favorite actor

Gary Oldman

J.D.: Thank you for visiting with me today and sharing a behind-the-scenes look at your narration.

Readers, for more about J.D. and his acting and voice over work, you can find him at www.thebookvoice.net www.JDHart.net

I enjoy listening to his narration and I'll bet you will, too.

P u z z l e r

Oktoberfest and Other Things in Autumn

Louise B. Snead

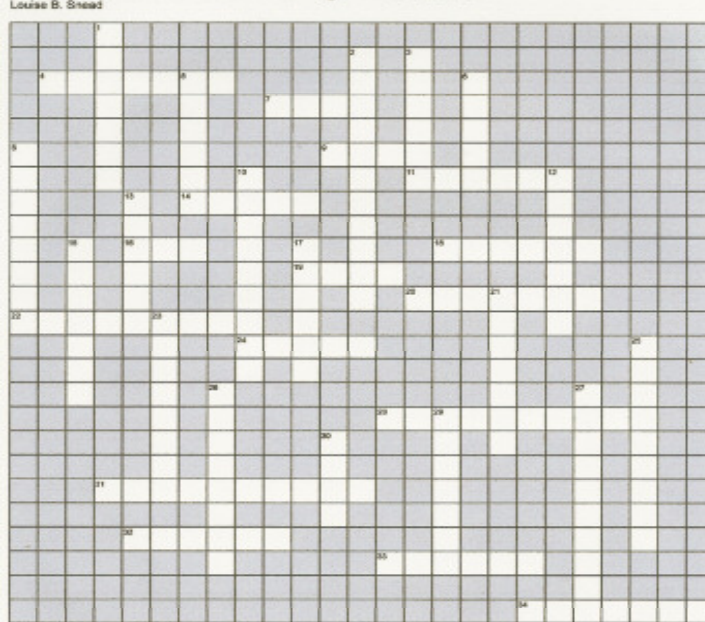
Across

4. Most popular dance of the festival.
7. This candy has its own day of celebration in October.
9. Day of the _____, celebrated in Mexico.
11. Oktoberfest began to celebrate the marriage of this Crown Prince.
14. They race in the main event in Oktoberfest.
16. Sean Connery was searching for this October.
18. Season October is in.
19. October's jewel
20. _____ the keg.
22. Month that Oktoberfest begins.
24. Vessel for the drinks.
28. This sport begins at the same time the one mentioned in clue # 17 down.
31. Leather breeches worn by men at the festival.
32. October is _____ Cancer Awareness Month.
33. Most popular city for Oktoberfest.
34. A day in October celebrating the formation of this international organization.



United _____.

Oktoberfest and other things in October.



Down

1. The day that recognizes the first European who touched American soil.
2. Edible necklaces are made of this.
3. The woman's attire at the festival.
5. October was originally the month of the year.
6. Baseball's grand finale Series.
8. He is credited with "discovering" America.
10. Weiner
12. Country where Oktoberfest originated.
13. The Costume and Riflemen's _____.
15. Weighing this greatest vegetable takes place in Half Moon Bay, Ca.
17. This sport begins in October.
21. Those soft, salty twisted treats of the festival.
23. October's flower.
25. Fun holiday on the 31st of October.
26. This statue of the person who watches over Oktoberfest.
27. German cabbage.
29. Number of days Oktoberfest lasts.

Answers on page 39



Contemporary Romance Reviews

A Cowboy's Christmas Reunion

Sasha Summers

Harlequin American #1566

Mass Market

978-0373755875

☆☆☆1/2

Josie Stephens didn't expect to be back in Stonewall Crossing, Texas, helping out at her father's bakery, but her father's health demanded it. Being back home means she must see Hunter Boone again. She's horrified that she's being thrown back into his arms when he's married with a child, but things are not as she thinks they are.

Hunter has been divorced for a long time. His son Eli hates Josie, as his mother has poisoned him against her his entire life. Hunter wants to be with Josie again, but his son's disdain is hard to miss—and hard to take. And Josie has no intention of staying in town any longer than she has to.

Sasha Summers makes her Harlequin American debut with this skillfully crafted tale. Her characters are vivid and memorable, and readers will look forward to secondary characters getting their own stories.

Heather Nordahl Files

Dirty Talk

Megan Erickson

Avon Impulse

E-book

978-0062407757

☆☆☆☆

Brent Payton is known as the easygoing Payton brother, the one who is not serious. His brother gave

him a dog with the embarrassing name of Honeybear, but that dog leads him to a friendship with his neighbor. And his job as a mechanic at the family shop leads him to Ivy Dawn.

Ivy's sister Alex works at the shop. Ivy visits the shop and is immediately attracted to Brent. But she can't get involved with him. Her priority is her daughter Violet, who is frightened of men because of Alex's abusive ex. They've made a "no men" pact... but then Brent rescues Violet from a bus crash. Ivy's gratitude knows no bounds, but all Brent asks for in return is a date. Then the powder keg of their passion explodes, even though she knows this should be the only date they ever have.

Megan Erickson is a spectacularly talented author whose work is truly addictive. This tale is part of a series, but even new readers will devour this book. The characters are endearing, especially Violet, and the plot is gripping. Don't miss this!

Heather Nordahl Files

Her Hometown Redemption

Rachel Brimble

Harlequin Superromance

E-book

978-03737609277

☆☆☆1/2

Tanya Todd had to come home to Templeton Cove. She made a mess of her former, high-powered life. Now she needs to find redemption—and a child molester. Her sister was molested when she was just twelve years old. That monster hurt Sasha at Funland, the local fairground, and Tanya wants to catch him there. Along the way, she plans to open a new business and mend her reputation with the locals.



Contemporary

Liam Browne is not happy to see Tanya again. She wreaked havoc on his life and then left. He's not about to let her back in to hurt him all over again. But she wants his help in her quest, and once he learns that it was Sasha who was hurt, he's in. But how can he keep Tanya from drawing him in again?

Rachel Brimble continues her series set in Templeton Cove with this marvelous, mature tale. Nuanced characters struggle with real dilemmas in these pages. New readers won't be lost, as the continuing characters are sprinkled in with a light hand. A read to savor.

Heather Nordahl Files

The Inheritance

Morgan K. Wyatt

Sweet Cravings Publishing

E-book

978-1631055959

☆☆☆☆

Melody Gibbons is a hospice nurse. When Roy McDaniels, one of her favorite patients, dies, she is surprised to discover that he has left her his home. But there's a catch. Roy's nephew Levi McDaniels is co-inheritor of the property, and they must live together for a year before either can sell his or her half.

Levi thinks Melody is a gold digger who conned his uncle. Melody thinks Levi neglected his uncle shamelessly before he died. They both discover their preconceptions are false. The wounded veteran and the mistreated foster child have a lot of scars to overcome, and they may be able to heal together.

Morgan K. Wyatt pens a lovely tale with this story of two people recovering from their wounds, finding solace together when they could not alone. She paints a sympathetic portrait of hospice nurses and the difficult work they do. Levi is an admirable hero, and readers will also enjoy Melody's old, cantankerous dog.

Heather Nordahl Files

Need You for Always (Heroes of St. Helena)

Marina Adair

Montlake Romance

Trade Paperback

978-1503948259

☆☆☆☆



Emi is a very responsible person. Since her mother died she has had to be. Emi's father can barely take care of himself, let alone her six-year-old sister. He's incapable of picking up Violet after school. So when the principal calls, Emi drops everything to go pick up her sister. Violet, wearing her wings and insisting that she's a fairy, has thrown glittery fairy dust...again. Emi doesn't have time for romance, let alone sex. Except for a one night stand in San Francisco.

Dax was that one night stand. Although he and Emi are from the same town, they didn't think that they would see each other very often. Dax is an Army Ranger. He is constantly being sent from one hot spot to another. They might see each other every few years when Dax visits his family. Then he's injured and moves home to recuperate.

Now Dax and Emi see each other every day, and he is loving it! She's enjoying it, too. but Emi doesn't have time for a relationship. Finally Emi decides that she will make time for a short-term, no strings attached affair. But the casual sex soon becomes something more. How will Emi survive when Dax deploys again?

This is the second in a series. It can be read alone. It's a very enjoyable book.

Sheila Griffin

One Breathless Night

Jo Leigh

Harlequin Blaze #860

Mass Market

978-0373798643

☆☆☆☆

Jenna Delaney has done this same James Bond New Years' Eve costume party with her fiancé for five years, and it's getting old. This year, her fiancé runs into an old friend, Faith, and now he's not acting like himself. As the clock strikes midnight, she watches him kiss Faith, and then she kisses Faith's boyfriend, Rick Sinclair.

Rick was planning to ask Faith to marry him. Now

that plan is obviously scuttled, but he's not exactly heartbroken. He feels more passion for Jenna than he ever did for Faith, but she has her own breakup to process. They leave the party together and stay in his friend's "smart apartment," where they enjoy the unusual amenities and explore their passion. But as they live so far apart, where can they go from here except a challenging long-distance relationship?

Jo Leigh launches a new trilogy, "Three Wicked Nights," with this well-crafted tale. Her hero and heroine are quite likeable, and the idea of a "smart apartment" will intrigue readers. The setting of Boston is fairly well utilized. Best of all, the characters' passion rings as true as their romantic conflict.

Heather Nordahl Files

Ransom Canyon

Jodi Thomas

HQN

Mass Market

978-0373788446

★★★★1/2

Staten Kirkland lost his wife to cancer, then lost his son to a devastating car accident two years later. Now, five years on, he never wants to open his heart again, but he does have a secret--for years he has slept with Quinn O'Grady, his wife's best friend. There are rules to their connection, but now they are beginning to break them, starting with Quinn's request for a good-bye kiss.

Lauren Brigman is just fifteen and dealing with her overprotective father, the sheriff. One foolish act causes her to be injured but also brings Lucas Reyes into her life. Yancey Grey is fresh out of prison and unsure if he's capable of living an honest, lawful life. But one lie brings him to the possibility of a new beginning.

Jodi Thomas' new series looks like an absolute winner if its launch title is any indication. *Ransom Canyon* features three story lines that slowly merge. The mysteries in Quinn's past are gradually revealed in perfect time, and all the stories are satisfying in their resolution.

Heather Nordahl Files

Contemporary

Rescued by the Ranger

Dixie Lee Brown

Avon Impulse

E-book

978-0062328403

★★★★

Garrett Harding's mother has been gone from his life ever since he was a child. Now he has discovered through a letter that his father hid from him that she recently died. He wants to know why his mother deserted him and his brother, so he drives to Idaho to get answers. There, he learns that he may be wrong about his mother, but before he meets his mother's sister, he has to rescue Rachel Maguire from some local lowlifes.

Rachel loved Garrett's mother, Amanda, and she has nothing but contempt for a man who would ignore years of her letters to him. She does not realize that he never received those letters.

This is not the only barrier to a relationship, however. Rachel has a stalker. She fled Texas to escape him, but he always finds her cell phone number, no matter how many times she gets a new one. He's a dangerous man, and she will run away before she puts another man at risk.

Dixie Lee Brown pens a thrilling romance with suspense and plot twists. Readers will love her hero, and will be on the edge of their seats by the final chapters.

Heather Nordahl Files

A SEAL's Temptation

Tawny Weber

Harlequin Blaze #859

Mass Market

978-0373798636

★★★★1/2

In the wake of her mother's death, Lark Sommers has found herself running her mother's coffee shop instead of making the pottery she loves. She's stuck in a rut and hasn't had a lover in a year and a half. But her friend Sara O'Brian has an idea of how to shake up Lark's life. Sara's birthday is coming up, and she's inviting her brother Shane up to visit in honor of the

Contemporary

occasion.

He's estranged from the family because of his career choice: He's a Navy SEAL. Maybe if he hooks up with Lark, he'll accede to the family's wishes and leave the Navy altogether.

Neither Lark nor Shane know of Sara's machinations, but they hit it off in spectacular fashion. They don't want anything more than a hookup, and Lark fears that her feelings are becoming too intense. Shane leaves for a mission and gets hurt; so she travels from Idaho to California to see him in the hospital. He wants to keep her there, but neither one of them is emotionally ready to truly take that step.

Tawny Weber pens a tale with uncommon depth. Her heroine has issues to process, and readers are right there as she does it. Shane is an excellent hero, and his flaws are right there along with his heroic qualities. This is part of a series, but it stands alone.

Heather Nordahl Files

Sinners Steel

Sarah Castille

St. Martin's

Trade Paperback

978-1250056627

★★★★★



Evie is a biker's dream and, in fact, two bikers happen to think so as well. Zane is connected to the Sinners Tribe and has been in love with her since they were children. She feels the same way but is dating his rival from the Black Jacks. At some point she has to choose between the man she has and the man she has always wanted. Will Zane be able to change her mind?

You had me at bikers with this one. Nothing makes this reviewer happier than motorcycles, leather, and, well, sex. This book has that and a bag of chips. As a book series, it has captured me as a big fan from the beginning. The plot was not too romantic and had the right amount of sex, love, and rough biker moments. In addition, the pacing was well done.

Lenore Lovecraft

Snowflake Bay

Donna Kauffman

Kensington

Trade Paperback

978-1420137477

★★★★

Fiona McCrae used to live in Blueberry Cove as a child. She was ignored by her crush Ben Campbell who preferred her sister Hannah. Now Fi is an interior designer and is moving back home. She has to plan her sister's Christmas wedding just when Ben comes back into town. Is it possible that he can see her now that they are adults? Could this be the best Christmas present ever?

Now I am going to warn you that, as a reviewer, I do not do the super lovey dovey stuff. So that did effect my rate. However, if you like that overly romantic and emotional story thing, then this is for sure your book. Other than that fact, I found that Kauffman did a very good job with pacing and were I the romantic type, this would be a 4 1/2 for me. I could not quite swallow the unrequited romance line.

Lenore Lovecraft

Texas Thunder

Kimberly Raye

St. Martin's Press

Trade Paperback

978-1250063953

★★★★1/2

Callie is of the Tucker clan and Brett is a Sawyer. The two families have been fighting for a century or more over moonshine bragging rights. Fast forward to today when Callie needs a secret recipe that only Brett may have. Despite the lack of trust, a deal is made that benefits both parties, saving Brett's ranch and Callie's reputation. During the process however, the two seem to develop a spark for each other that can end the feud for good.

This was an overall good book for me. This book had great characters, and the plot is an interesting one. To my surprise I found the moonshiner parts quite fun to read and thought they added authenticity to the story.

Lenore Lovecrafts

Win Me Over

Nicole Michaels

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250058164

☆☆☆1/2

Callie is the new coach for the high school's dance team. The principal talks her into entering a dance competition with the football coach as her partner. Callie assumes that he will be a grumpy old football player whose glory days are long behind him. Boy, is she wrong!

Bennett was an NFL player until a wreck destroyed his knees. Bennett has already told the principal that he won't dance. Bennett meets Callie and reconsiders. Then he learns that entering the competition could win him a lot of money, money that would go a long way towards helping his players pay for college. Bennett agrees to enter the competition.

Callie is stunned that such a graceful man is such a klutz on the dance floor. To make matters worse, she can't concentrate on anything when Bennett's around. Well, nothing other than how sexy he is! Bennett is in the same boat. Every time he sees Callie, all Bennett can think about is getting her naked.

As Callie slowly teaches Bennett to dance, the two fall in love. Then tragedy strikes and Bennett retreats into his shell. Can Callie get him to let her in or will she have to give up on what could be the love of a lifetime?

This is a continuation of a series. It can be read alone. It's a very good book.

Sheila Griffin

You Are Mine

Jackie Ashenden

St. Martin's Press

Trade Paperback

978-1250051783

☆☆☆☆

Seven years ago Zac Rutherford rescued Eva King. He is obsessed with having her, but she will not let any man touch her. Someone from Eva's dangerous past comes back into her life and it is time for Zac to help again. Perhaps this time she will surrender to him. She is the only one he wants, and he will stop at nothing to keep her safe as well as his in every way. It is only a matter of time for Eva to give in, or is it?

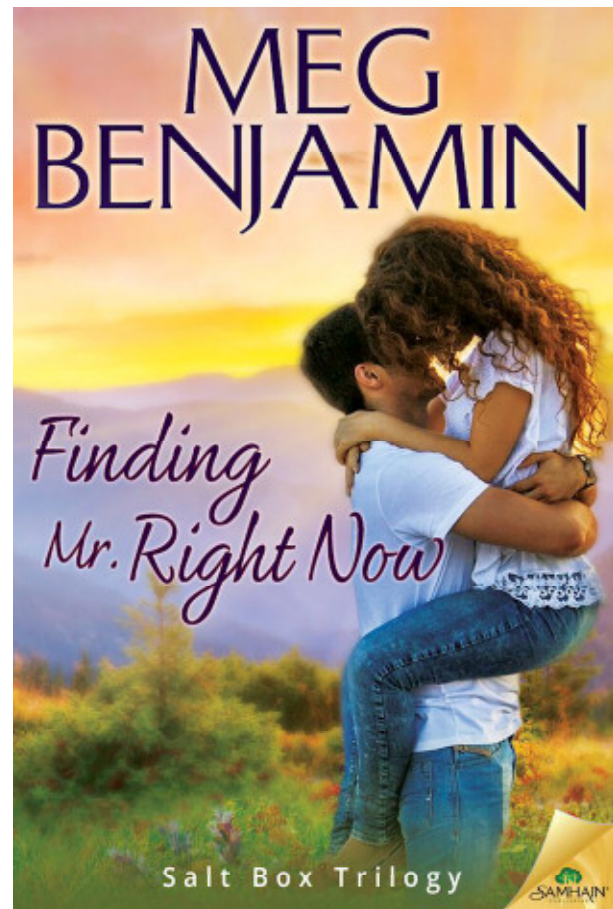
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Affaire de Coeur

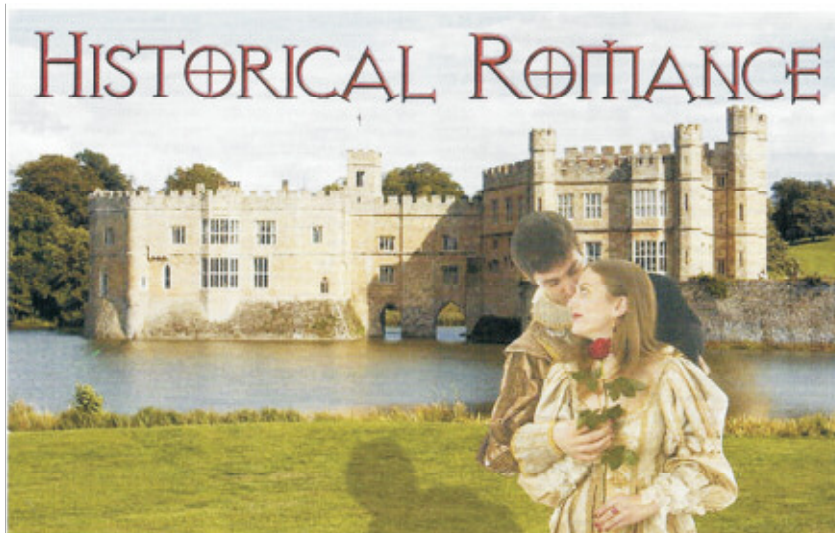
Contemporary

This made this reviewer a very happy girl for sure. *You Are Mine* has one of my favorite BDSM club owners and other strong women who do not want to be controlled. As far as the writing--it was well paced, and the lifestyle of the clubs and the participants was honestly portrayed. In addition, the Eva character was almost perfectly flawed in a way that I could both relate to and want to change all at once. That makes a great character as well as a good story.

Lenore Lovecraft



Romance can be hotter than
"reality"...www.megbenjamin.com



REVIEWS

Avelynn

Marissa Campbell

St. Martin's Griffin

Trade Paperback

978-1250084989

★★★★★



Avelynn, the beautiful daughter of Eadlorman of Somerset, definitely lived a rare and privileged life for an 18-year old girl of a wealthy Saxon in 869. Having lost her beloved mother to childbirth, Avelynn was raised by her father who raised her like a son. She could read and write in several languages, and her skill with a sword and knife were the equal of any man. Plus, her father had never pressured her into marriage. Unfortunately, as circumstances changed and war with the Vikings imminent, her father had to renege on his promise and gave her to Demas, who, unbeknownst to her father, was a greedy, cruel man who only wanted her for her lands and wealth. Devastated by her father's decree, Avelynn escapes to the coast to pray to the pagan gods and goddesses of her mother's religion. But in this devoutly Christian time in England, her prayers must be in secret or she risked being branded a witch.

Alrik the Blood-Axe came out of the forest and almost stumbled into the sacred circle of the praying young woman. He immediately knew she was a priestess and, as such, was not to be disturbed in her prayers. Alrik was a Viking and feared by many, but he was also a gentle, patient man when necessary. And he could tell that this beautiful priestess was an innocent, but an innocent that he meant to have. Would he be able to convince her that her fears of Vikings did not necessarily apply to ALL Vikings?

Avelynn is a love story of historical proportions.

Affaire de Coeur

The heroine is courageous and extremely headstrong, but these very attributes will keep the reader glued to the pages to see what she will do next. Alrik, her handsome Viking, is all warrior; a hero-worthy protagonist who awakens Avelynn to the beauty of true love. Ms. Campbell's rich, descriptive passages of the times, cultures and conflicts of the Dark Ages pull the reader into the story with such a compelling force that it is hard to put this book down. The ancient names are a little hard to process, but that just adds true authenticity to this outstanding historical. After living through the struggles and wars surrounding Avelynn and Alrik, this reviewer is sincerely hoping for a sequel to continue following the adventures of the Saxon and her Viking.

Lani Roberts

Hannah and the Highlander

Sabrina York

St. Martin's Paperbacks

Mass Market

978-1250069696

★★★★1/2

Sabrina York's "Untamed Highlanders" series begins with *Hannah and the Highlander*.

As the oldest daughter, Hannah Dounrey is the future heiress to substantial lands and fortune, which garners more suitors than a plump figure and looks that don't measure up to her two beautiful younger sisters. When she spies a gloriously masculine Highlander, she feels the desire to make him hers, and to be wanted by him for more than her fortune.

Alexander Lochlannach, Laird of Dunnet, is the very man Hannah felt drawn to. When he sees her, he

knows she's meant to be his bride. Hannah agrees to the marriage to protect her family from a predatory suitor who will stop at nothing to have a rich bride. But her taciturn husband seduces her in every way, claiming her heart, and delivering his own wary heart into her keeping.

York has written a Scottish historical romance that readers will no doubt enjoy. Hannah is spirited and strong-willed, and Alexander is strong and sexy with emotional scars that will wrap the reader around his finger. Their passionate love story, set during a low point in Scottish highland history, makes this an appealing and enjoyable read, and has the reader eager for the next book.

Danielle Hill

Highlander Undone

Connie Brockway

Montlake Romance

Trade Paperback

978-1503945487

☆☆☆1/2

Captain John Xavier Cameron of Her Majesty's Cormack Highlanders was a soldier, through and through. He had seen lots of men dying during his time in Africa fighting against slavery and hated the condescending ways his people treated the Natives who fought with them. As he held the dying Sikh's head in his lap, he was astonished to hear from him that one of his own men was actually profiting from the slave trade, while supposedly fighting against it. Jack promised the dying man he would find the traitor. Months later, Jack awoke from his morphine-induced coma, recovering from the almost fatal wound he had received in the Sudan, and found himself at his distant uncle's estate. As he lay in bed regaining his strength, he could hear conversations in the garden below him between two artists, Gerald Norton and Theodore Phyfe, and Phyfe's sister, Adelaide Hoodless, a recent widow of a Black Dragoon. As he heard them discuss Phyfe's commission to paint the Black Dragoons, Jack had the brilliant idea to pose as an artist of some type, so he could hang around the outskirts of Ted's studio and find out who was the traitor. The only problem was would he be able to pull it off around the lovely Adelaide?

Adelaide Hoodless was not the grieving widow that Society thought. Her husband had been a mean, sadistic man who delighted in inflicting pain, verbally and physically. Even his own parents had tried to warn her not to marry him, but she hadn't listened. Now she

Historical

was terrified of most men, especially soldiers, who she equated with liking to inflict violence. The only men she was comfortable with were her brother and his artist friends. When she met Jack, she immediately felt a spark that she hadn't felt in a long time, but figured it was nothing since the preening, fop he was pretending to be couldn't possibly be interested in her. He was just a witty, frail sculptor that had come from Scotland to be introduced to English Society by her brother so he could gain clients. She liked his wit and silliness and exact opposite to the crass boorish soldiers that she knew. But still, there was that spark.

Highlander Undone is a well written character study of two deeply injured people that need to learn to trust again. Jack is a true hero, recovering from serious wounds, and Addie, the battered woman, also recovering from serious psychological wounds. They're perfect for each other, but can Addie ever forgive Jack for his deception, no matter his honorable intentions? A marvelous romance with just enough whodunit thrown in to keep you turning the pages into the night.

Lani Roberts

A Knight's Seduction

Catherine Kean

Self published

Trade Paperback

978-1514600726

Claire Sevalliere intends to leave Wode, but the castle is attacked and conquered by Tye, illegitimate son of Geoffrey de Lanceau, the lord of Wode. Tye hates his father, who rejected him when Tye was a boy. His mission is to conquer his father's lands, piece by piece, and ultimately hand him utter defeat by taking his life. He had escaped his father's dungeon to begin his mission, and he will not stop until he achieves his goal.

Claire is afraid but defiant in the face of her conqueror, determined to protect Wode's people. But slowly she develops softer feelings for Tye and documents them in her journal. Even as his feelings also soften, she has to contend with Tye's vicious mother Veronique. She wants vengeance on de Lanceau at all costs and

Historical

has raised her son to be the instrument of her revenge.

Catherine Kean's latest is most satisfying for readers of other books in the series, as characters in earlier installments make an appearance. The main characters keep reader attention, and the plot moves at a good pace. In all, a pleasure to read.

Heather Nordahl Files

Scotsman of My Dreams

Karen Ranney

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062337504

★★★★1/2

Minerva Todd does not know where her younger brother Neville is, and she's sick with worry. She knows that when he disappeared, he was in the company of Dalton MacIain, the notorious Earl of Rathsmere. She decides that she will not leave him alone until he tells her where Neville is. So when his servant turns her away, she continues her efforts.

Dalton has a well-earned reputation, but going to fight in the American Civil War changed him. Now a bullet has blinded him, and he's beginning to lose himself in whiskey. At first Minerva and Dalton don't like each other at all, but that begins to change... even though Neville is the one who blinded him and Minerva refuses to believe that could be true.

Karen Ranney's latest features brilliant dialogue, complex characters, and a well-crafted plot. Readers will relish devouring this one.

Heather Nordahl Files

Some Like It Scot: The Scandalous Highlanders, Book 4

Suzanne Enoch

St. Martin's

Trade Paperback

978-1250041630

★★★★★

Catriona, or "Cat" MacColl had always dressed like a lad, ever since she could remember. Her father had

wanted a son and when he got a daughter instead, then lost his wife in a second childbirth, he decided to make small Catriona into the son he would never have. She rode, shot, hunted and traipsed through the Highlands better than most boys her age. She had never worn a dress and knew nothing of the "niceties" of being a lady. Consequently, as she grew older, she became the object of scorn of the males and females in her clan. Then two things happened that changed the course of her life: her father decided to give her in marriage to a rival clan leader...as an insult, and her gently raised half-sister Elizabeth contacted her from England about also being forced to marry someone she didn't want. So Cat packed up, stole her sister away and the two of them were presently hiding out in an abandoned, half-ruined abbey on MacLawry lands. The MacLawry's were a rival clan also, but had a reputation for being kind to travelers, but Cat wasn't taking any chances. She would hunt for the food they needed and keep her and her sister safe and warm through the harsh Scottish winter the best she could.

Lord Munro MacLawry, or Bear to his brothers and friends, was the only MacLawry sibling unwed. And he liked it that way. He was called Bear for a reason. There was nothing gentle-looking about him, he was huge, and had a habit of settling things with his fists. His brother, the Laird, and even his middle brother and sister had recently wed and had babies on their knees. They were so domesticated that Bear would escape into the woods and go hunting. When the buck that he had been tracking all morning was suddenly shot out from underneath him, he decided to find out who was hunting on MacLawry land...and who was such a good shot! When Bear reached the ruins of the abbey and saw the glorious redhead in men's trousers, he was immediately intrigued. Then he became doubly intrigued when he saw the golden-haired, silk clad, gentile young woman who looked so obviously out of place in the wilds of the Highlands. But the redhead, now that was another story altogether, and Bear was determined to find out what exactly that story was.

This is the fourth book in the "Scandalous Highlanders" series and, I think, it is the best. If you like big, burly, kilt-wearing Scots with hearts of gold, you will love this story. Cat has been dealt a raw deal in life and thinks she is unsuitable for any male...until she meets Bear. They are a perfect match and this is a perfect love story that will make you want to go to Scotland before you finish reading this one.

Lani Roberts





Untamed Highlands: Scorching new historical romance series from Sabrina York
www.sabrinayork.com

When a Scot Ties the Knot

Tessa Dare

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062349026

★★★★1/2

When Maddie Gracechurch was sixteen, her terror of social situations caused her to invent a suitor. She wrote letters to her imaginary love, Captain Logan MacKenzie, for many years, until she created for him a fictitious death. Now, nine years after her first letter, Logan turns up at Castle Lannair, very real and very much expecting her to marry him!

Logan has finally found the girl who sent him years of fanciful letters... and he intends to take advantage of her as much as he can. He wants her castle for his men who no longer have homes or families and need a place

Historical

to belong. If he can get that from a spoiled English girl, marriage will be worth it. But she doesn't match his expectations from the moment they meet.

Tessa Dare's latest "Castles Ever After" tale is pure enchantment from the first page. The characters charm and delight, including Logan's men and Maddie's aunt. Maddie is a complex and unusual heroine whose art—and the lobsters she's observing— help to make her a true nonpareil.

Heather Nordahl Files

What to Do With a Duke

Sally MacKenzie

Zebra

Mass Market

978-1420137125

★★★1/2

Marcus, the Duke of Hart, has lived under the shadow of a curse on his family. Every duke for two-hundred years has died before their heir was born, and he will be no different. He's avoided marriage like the plague, but he grows increasingly lonely. When he returns to Hart's Bridge after many years to appoint the new resident of Spinster House, he will have to face his destiny, for the one woman he can't resist steals his heart.

Miss Cat Hutting is convinced marriage is not for her—she chooses the peace and quiet of spinsterhood as the new resident of Spinster House. But the Duke is terribly appealing. Can they both ignore the desires of their hearts?

Sally Mackenzie has written a pleasing, humorous, sensual historical romance. Both Marcus and Cat are likable, although their persistence in ignoring their feelings for each other grew irritating. The various inhabitants of Hart's Bridge add to the sense of comedy, while diary excerpts written by the couple who started the curse create a serious undertone. The theme of pursuing true love when it comes, despite fears and doubts, is relevant. This book should appeal to readers of lighthearted Regency romance.

Danielle Hill



Paranormal Romance Reviews

About a Vampire

Lynsay Sands

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062316028

★★★★

Holly Bosley doesn't want to be on her way to the crematorium late one night, but she left her purse and blood testing equipment at work that day. When she arrives, she finds papers that must be delivered to the crematorium, so she goes there even though it's a dark, foggy night. Once there, she sees two strange men burning bodies, and she flees in her fright. But she's carrying scissors, and when she falls on them, she's mortally wounded.

Luckily for her, the two strange men are vampires. One of them, Justin Bricker, turns her into a vampire to save her life. Teaching her the reality of her new life means temporarily removing her from her home and job. Justin knows he's her life mate, but getting the girl is not as simple as he wants it to be, for Holly is married.

Lynsay Sands' latest Argeneau tale is very well written and does an excellent job of filling in some previously unknown details of immortal life. But many readers will have difficulty with the heroine being a married woman and Justin's efforts to make her his regardless of this fact.

Heather Nordahl Files

Black Dog Blues

Rhys Ford

DSP Publications

Trade Paperback

978-1632163530

★★★★

Raised by a human, Kai Gracen was an elfin Stalker hired to kill monsters. When he was given a job for Ryder, a sidhe lord, it was supposed to be a simple transport job. But doing what the lord wanted was not going to be as easy as everyone thinks it's supposed to be. The woman was 8 months pregnant, ready to pop, and traveling through dragon country during mating season. With every turn they made, danger followed.

This is a steady-paced intriguing fantasy adventure that will keep the reader turning the pages from the moment they open the book.

Kitty Lane

Even Vampires Get the Blues

Sandra Hill

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062356529

★★★★

Harek Sigurdsson is a vangel (Viking vampire angel) spending the centuries paying the price for the sin of greed, which led him to become a slave trader in the ninth century. Now he fights for the celestial good guys, saving sinners from becoming Lucipires and destroying those past the point of redemption.

Camille Dumaine is a WEALS, a fierce fighter proud to be on a mission combating Boko Haram. Harek is on the mission as well. At first, she does not know that he is anything other than human, just that she

smells chocolate whenever she's around him, and that he's a little strange. They are deeply attracted to each other. As they get ready for their mission, fighting it becomes impossible, even though having sex will get Harek in trouble.

Sandra Hill's latest in her "Deadly Angels" series mixes her usual humor with the dark threat of terrorism. Fans of the series will enjoy seeing Harek meet his match and will enjoy the inclusion of other continuing characters from various series.

Heather Nordahl Files

Night's Surrender

Amanda Ashley

Zebra

Mass Market

978-1420137354

☆☆☆

Abbey Cordova is an aspiring actress, but has just figured out that she does not have the drive to succeed in such a competitive field. She decides to come home, but before she leaves, she meets Nick Desanto. He's gorgeous and exciting, but when they go on a date, she is injured in a car accident. When she is hurt, he uses his powers to bring her to his apartment to recover. Nick is a vampire.

Abbey is human, but she grew up in a vampire family, so vampirism is not shocking to her. She falls for Nick right away, and the feeling is mutual. But her family has reservations about her getting together with such an ancient vampire, one whose sire is Mara, a very powerful and ancient vampire who is part of the family. But all Nick wants, besides Abbey, is to be cured of vampirism.

In Amanda Ashley's latest, the romance has a foregone conclusion, and Nick's occasional violations of Abbey's free will might disturb some readers. This tale can be a difficult read for those who have not read the rest of the series, but longtime readers will find a smooth and enjoyable read.

Heather Nordahl Files

Paranormals

On the Hunt

Alexandra Ivy, Rebecca Zanetti, Dianne Duval, Hannah Jayne

Zebra

Mass Market

978-1420125139

☆☆☆☆

"On the Hunt" Sentinel Mika Tanner is tracking a runaway. Jacob's trail leads to the woman Mika loved and lost. Bailey is a healer who ran away from the restrictions of the high-blood community, the same community that Mika was honor bound to stay and protect. Jacob is being forced to lead an evil man to Bailey. Mika must stop the man and convince the woman he still loves to come back and make a life with him.

"Scorpius Rising" A meteorite hit earth and released a deadly bacteria. The resulting disease is almost 100% fatal. The only hope of stopping a pandemic is microbiologist Nora and her ex-husband, Deacan, who thinks that their marriage shouldn't have ended. Spending time together has Nora thinking--he might be right.

"Phantom Embrace" Immortal Guardian Yuri Sokolov sees dead people. A sad ghost has captured his eye. Yuri asks the beautiful woman if he can do anything to ease her pain. Cat is stunned that Yuri's talking to her. After centuries of being alone, she finally has a friend! Inevitably, Cat falls in love with Yuri. To her amazement, he shares the feeling. Now if only they could find a way to consummate their love.

"Stake Out" Vampire Nina LaShay plans to take New York's Fashion week by storm. Then Wendi, one of her models, is killed. To make matters worse, she turns up undead. Nina has to put her fashion designs on hold while she and her boyfriend track down Wendi. So far their only clues are the dead bodies she's leaving in her wake.

Three of these stories are parts of series. All three can be read alone. The fourth story is the beginning of a new series. It's an odd addition to this anthology. It doesn't have any paranormal elements. Despite this one flaw, it's a really good story! This book will be enjoyed by fans both new and old.

Sheila Griffin

Paranormals

Shadows Strike (Immortal Guardians- Book 6)

Dianne Duvall

Zebra

Mass Market

978-1420129823

★★★★1/2

Heather has had a recurring dream for the past year. She's sitting in a clearing near her home when vampires swarm into the area. Following them is a mountain of a man. When she discovered the spot in real life, Heather knew she had to find out what the dreams meant. Every morning Heather waits in the clearing. It's been an utter waste of time... until today.

Ethan is an Immortal Guardian. He and his brethren protect humanity from violent vampires. Ethan is concerned about leaving Heather alone because other vampires may come looking for their slain comrades.

Ethan discovers that Heather is a gifted one, a human with special abilities. She is able to read minds. She learns of the danger that vampires present and is persuaded to use her gift in the fight against them.

Meanwhile, across the world, vampires are preparing to bring about Armageddon. Ethan and his brothers-in-arms must stop this army and destroy its puppet master. As he and Heather fight to protect humankind, they fall in love. Now if they can manage to prevent the world from ending, they will be able to spend eternity together.

This is a continuation of a series. It can be read alone, but the cast of characters is so large that it would be less confusing if one has read the previous stories. This is a really good book.

Sheila Griffin

Tall, Dark and Immortal (Entity Series)

Cat Devon

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250059154

★★★★

After Keira's grandfather dies, she finds his journal. In it he reveals many things. The two most shocking are that vampires are real and that he's the most famous vampire hunter of all time.

Grandfather also states that if Keira ever needs help she should contact Detective Alex Sanchez. Odd advice given that Alex is a vampire. Keira confronts Alex at the precinct. Anxious to get her away before she attracts attention, he agrees to answer Keira's questions at her apartment. They arrive to find two vampires attempting to break in. Alex grabs Keira and hustles her off to a secret vampire enclave.

Alex's sire told him that when he met his soulmate, Alex would recognize her. He fears that Keira is The One. She isn't aware of any destiny that ties her to Alex, but Keira is rapidly falling in love with him.

The vampires need the journal. They try to compel Keira to reveal its location. She resists. The vampires prepare to use other methods to "persuade" her. Alex will not allow the woman he loves to be tortured. He disappears with Keira. Now they're on the run from vampires, both good and evil. Can things possibly get worse? Of course, they can!

This is a continuation of a series. It can be read alone. Despite the abrupt ending, it's a good book.

Sheila Griffin



Erotica Reviews

Body Shots

Anne Rainey

Aphrodisia

Trade Paperback

978-1617733512

★★★

Crystal Shaw is finally free from her abusive husband, Richard. She moves in with a friend to heal her spirit. Over the next few months, she loses weight and gains confidence. Her friend brings her to a local bondage club, and there she meets the owners, Mac Anderson and Trent Dailey.

Mac and Trent are blown away by Crystal, and they make their move together. She is surprised to find pleasure when she sleeps with both men at the same time. She dates each of them separately, and she's happy, though she can't quite get past the unorthodox nature of being in a relationship with two men at once. And then there's the problem of Richard, who just won't go away.

Anne Rainey's latest can be a problematic read. The brutal opening, though helpful in understanding Crystal, gets in the way of reader enjoyment. Also, the characters lack somewhat in depth, making it hard to get to know them. But this is an enjoyable tale.

Heather Nordahl Files

Burned Deep

Calista Fox

St. Martin's Griffin

Trade Paperback

978-1250072511

★★★★★

Ari DeMille is the new event planner at a hotel opening at the New Year. She has a great job and salary. Her career is finally where she wants it to be, and her personal life is getting more interesting as well.

Dane Bax, her boss, having once made an offer for her professional services also made ones for her personal ones. The chemistry between them is undeniable and unavoidable. Could it be the "job" offer that she cannot refuse?

What can I say about this book? This reviewer seldom gives a full five stars, but this one deserves it. The pacing is perfect, the steamy parts are....well, steamy. As for the characters—they are not the perfect cookie cutter type who make some of the romance-books boring. It is also refreshing that the situation seemed realistic and natural between the Ari and Dane.

Lenore Lovecraft

Erotica

Hanging by the Moment

H.B. Pattsbyn

Dreamspinner Press MM

Trade Paperback

978-1627981279

★★★★1/2

Pasha Batalov has not come out of the closet. He works at his father's restaurant and lives by the rules expected from him. With the hours that he works, there is no time to find someone, so he just goes and grabs to whom he is attracted, not making any commitments. By chance he meets Daniel Englewood, an NA who is bi. Pasha finds himself immediately attracted to the young man.

Daniel finds himself attracted to Pasha and manages to get him to agree to meet. The two enjoy each other's company and want to pursue a relationship. Things get rough when an acquaintance is attacked and put in the hospital, Pasha's father finds out he is gay, and the restaurant is having money problems. Daniel is honest with Pasha and lets him know he is HIV positive. Pasha isn't sure if he can handle what lies ahead if he stays with Daniel.

This poignant heartfelt story takes the reader to the intricate emotions of gay, young love. An excellent story, highly recommended.

Kitty Lane

Wicked Lies

Lora Leigh

St. Martin's

Trade Paperback

978-0312389116

★★★★1/2

Annie Mayes is a woman with secrets. She is a school teacher from Tennessee who is hiding everything about herself, including her identity. If she tells the truth to her long time-time crush Jazz Lancing, their lives will be entangled in both danger and lust. As an ex-Navy SEAL, Jazz thinks he can handle anything,

but can "Annie's" secrets and their undeniable lust survive the journey?

This was a good story, and the more lusty scenes were not lacking, for sure. The plot was well paced, and the characters were very distinct, which this reviewer appreciated. They were not the cookie cutter type characters that sometimes grace the pages of books in the romance genre.

Lenore Lovecraft





The Miser's Dream

John Gaspard

Henry Press

Trade Paperback

978-1943390137

☆☆1/2

St. Paul, Minnesota-based Magician Eli Marks is back for book three, solving another set of murders using his magical training and observational skills. He sees the dead body of the projectionist from the nearby theater from his apartment window, in a locked projection booth. Eli sorts through the suspects, all bidders on a rumored lost movie print, realizing that the victim's semi-legal dealing in rare goods led to his murder. With a visiting master magician in town, Eli has to juggle his sense of insecurity about his own magical skills and his relationship with his girlfriend Megan, along with finding the murder suspect.

Eli's background in magic makes an intriguing foundation for this novel, along with film and popular culture. The mystery is well developed and plotted. It's fun to unwind all the clues to arrive at the whodunit. Eli's point of view is somewhat bland, but the unfolding mystery and the magical tidbits help to keep the reader's interest. A great asset to this novel is its quirky cast of characters, each having various levels of involvement in the present murder mystery.

The Miser's Dream is an enjoyable book for fans of modern mysteries with stage magic thrown in.
Danielle Hill

On the Road with Del and Louise

Art Taylor

Henry Press

Trade Paperback

978-1941962893

☆☆1/2

This is a novel made up of a group of short stories showing the life of a couple whose future began during a convenience store robbery. Louise tells the story of her and her partner in crime, Del, as they go from one caper to the next, aiming for a better future.

Del only robs those who can afford it in order to pay his way through college, hoping to leave the criminal life behind.

Having completed his college, Del works with Louise as a realtor for his sister, only to find the two are back into shady dealings that aren't of their making. They take the blame and some of the merchandise to cover expenses. They leave and design yet another scam, only to have it fall through when Louise finds she is pregnant.

They head to the Midwest with the aliases of Bonny and Clyde. The two decide to get married in a small Vegas chapel when someone decides to rob the place. The robber takes everybody as hostage. Louise takes the situation in hand and gets almost everybody out unhurt including the robber. They move on to North Dakota and make some honest money and find Del's sister has come clean and cleared their name.

The story moves but onto the same old thing, another day in the life, etc., with more escapades and ups and downs for the two. It seems to become too easy to justify the Robin Hood mentality when it's just all-for-one, but there is a little moral high ground dispersed

Mystery

through the book. It's easy to read after you find that you are in need of Louise most of the time.

Lauren Calder

Second to Nun

Alice Loweecey

Henry Press

Trade Paperback

978-1941962930

☆☆☆☆

Giulia Driscoll owns Driscoll Investigations. It began as a typical day when MacAllister Stone walked through the door asking for help for her unusual situation to evict a family ghost from her bed and breakfast. When Mac showed Giulia evidence of a possible haunting, Giulia agreed to take the job.

It was decided that Giulia and her husband Frank would stay at the B&B as guests, leaving Giulia open for complete access for her investigation. She arrived the night before her husband and immediately started searching for haunting equipment.

Strange things--a fire, a ghost-like crying woman, a brick barely missing Giulia--pushed Giulia into full investigation mode, and determination set in before someone could get seriously hurt.

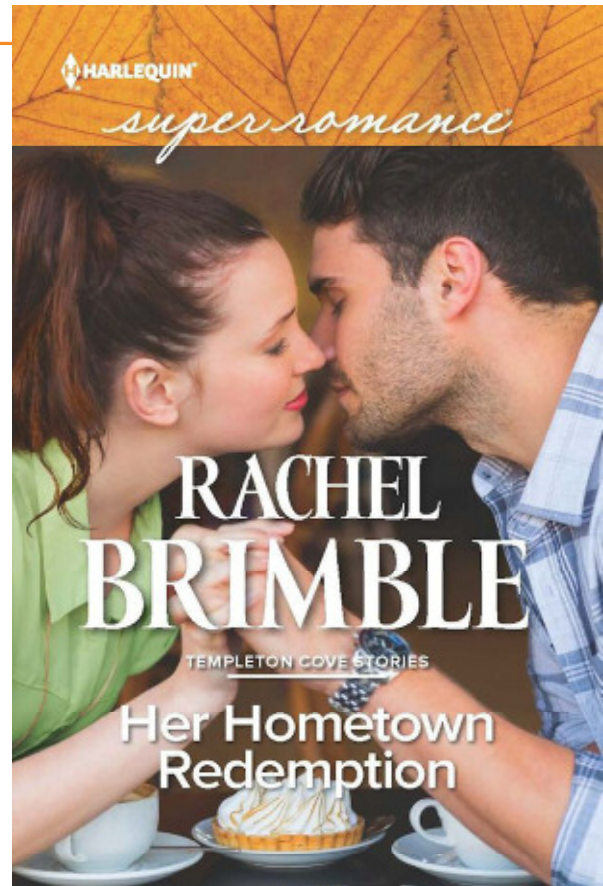
With a keen eye and a sharp wit, Alice Loweecey pens a page-turning, cozy mystery with a colorful, picturesque setting at an historical removated bed and breakfast.

Lauren Calder

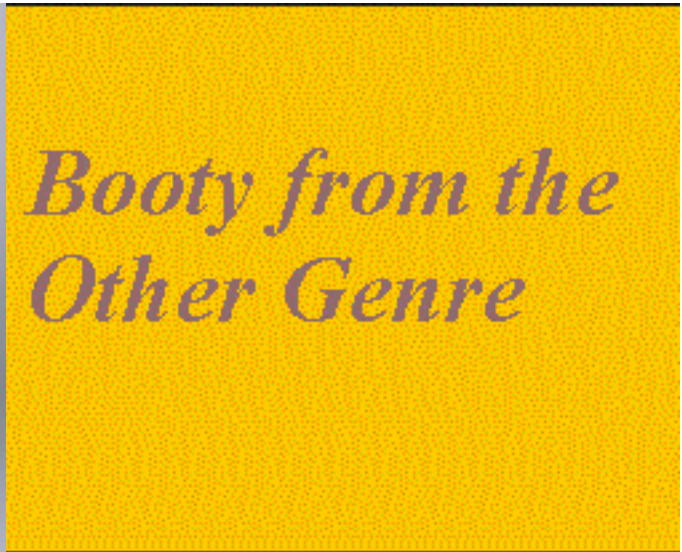
Rainbowcon continued from page 17

enlightening. We learned about boot-blackening, rope tying, wands, and flogging.

The third biennial RainbowCon is scheduled for July, 2017. For more information: www.rainbowconference.org Twitter: @RainbowCon_2017 Facebook: www.facebook.com/rain.con.3



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www.rachelbrimble.com



The Gift of a Charm

Melissa Hill

St. Martin's Griffin

Trade Paperback

978-1250077141

☆☆☆1/2

Holly O'Neill loves working in the vintage store, the Secret Closet. She imagines stories behind the beautiful, high-end outfits that she stocks and sells. One day, she finds a charm bracelet in the pocket of a jacket, and is immediately determined to get the bracelet back to its owner. There are few clues, but her own charm bracelet means so much to her, and this one may hold equal significance to its owner.

Greg Matthews loathes his job so much that one day, he quits. His passion is photography, and he's very good. But his girlfriend is less than enchanted with his change of employment, especially because he did not tell her of his decision beforehand. Having a boyfriend with less prestige attached to his job upsets her.

Melissa Hill's latest is a charming tale with beautifully intertwined stories, set in a lovingly described New York City. The characters are brilliantly drawn, and except for one plot twist too many towards the end of the book, the story is perfection.

Heather Nordahl Files

The Naked Eye

Iris Johansen and Roy Johansen

St. Martin's Press

Hardcover

978-1250020543

☆☆☆☆

The Naked Eye is book three about Kendra Michaels, a formerly blind music therapist with highly developed observational skills, who works with the police to solve crimes. She confronts a person from her nightmares and terrible memories, Eric Colby, the serial killer she helped catch, but who has managed to escape death twice. Colby is back to continue their game, and he's leaving bodies in his wake as personal messages to Kendra. Colby is obsessed with Kendra and will kill anyone and everyone he can use against Kendra to win their game. Can she stop him before it's too late?

This is a thrilling read that will keep the reader on the edge of their seats. The cat and mouse game between Kendra and Colby is nail-biting. Colby is a chilling and despicable villain whose fixation on Kendra will give the readers nightmares. With cameos from forensic sculptor Eve Duncan and her sister Beth, Kendra's hacker friend Sam, and Adrian Lynch, a shadowy operative and Kendra's would-be protector and lover; this is a fleshed-out but quick moving read that will have readers flipping through the pages. The suspense doesn't let up until the very end, and the reader won't take a breath until then.

Danielle Hill

Booty

Strong Light of Day

Jon Land

Tom Doherty Associates

Hardcover

978-0765335128

★★★★★



The story begins with some drug traffickers wanting to use the Russian mob to sell their drugs. The mob complied after their warehouses were raided and the drugs stolen. Why be the middleman when you can have it all?

Starting the book off with a Russian mob was a good way to begin because the mobs and cartels are in the news. On the very same day I got this book to review, Sinaloa cartel leader El Chapo (Joaquin Guzman) escaped from his Mexican prison. Ironically, if I wanted to check out a Russian mob movie, I could have

tuned in to *The Equalizer* starring Denzel Washington. It has been playing on Starz as an encore network for the past three months. It is still playing.

In this story, however, mob activity is only the tip of the iceberg. When thirty school children disappeared, Texas ranger Caitlin Strong is called in to help. As if this weren't enough, this crazed farmer complains that his cattle have been attacked. At first he is not taken seriously—his problem has to take a back seat to the missing children. When they finally get around to checking out his cattle, the seriousness of the situation becomes apparent. Sixty head of cattle were killed where they stood and picked clean to the bone. The cause is a mystery, as there are no footprints made by a predator. Nor did the animals make any attempts to escape. What can be more terrifying is... what is going to happen next?

Strong Light of Day is well done.

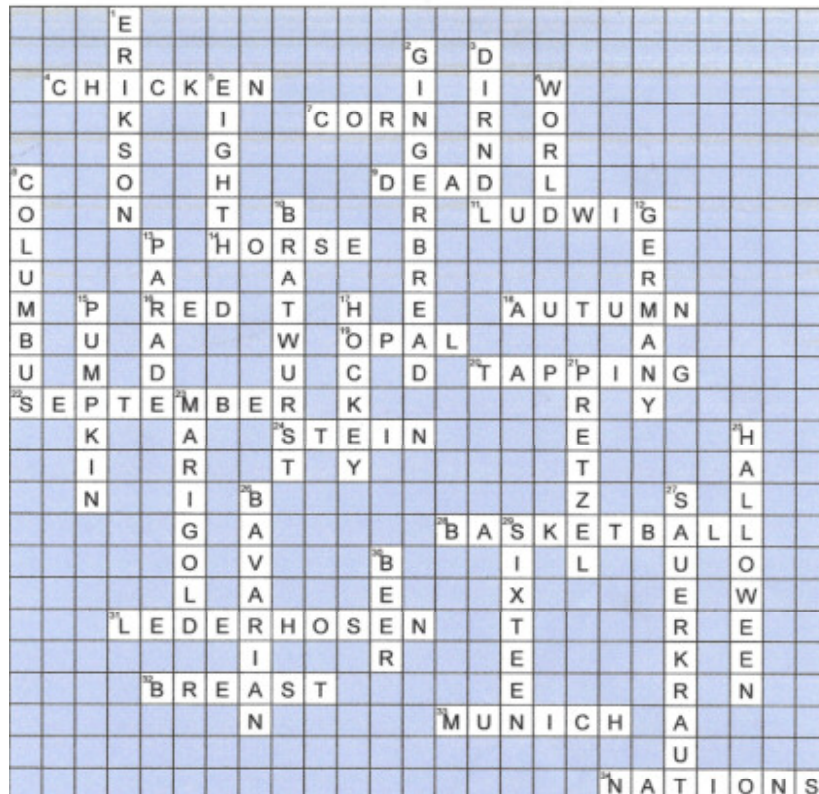
Paul Zunino

1

1

Oktoberfest and other things in October.

Louise B. Snead





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