

November/December, 2016

Affaire de Coeur

Bringing You 35 Years of Honest Reviews

The spotlight is on husband and wife team writing mysteries as M.K. Scott



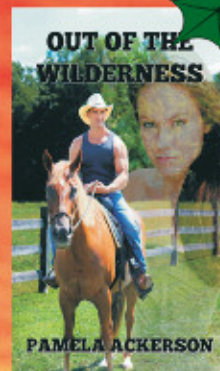
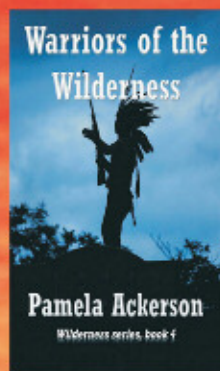
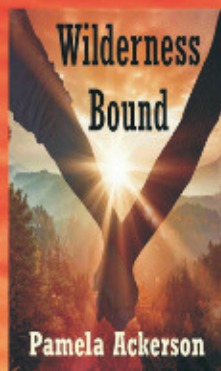
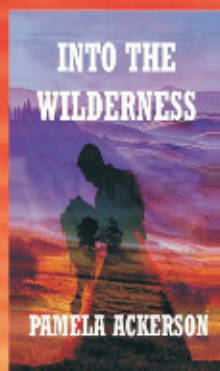
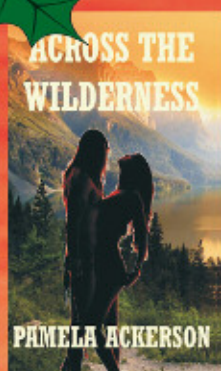
Reviews!

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**Food for Thought!
AdC invades the
kitchen for the dishes
we crave.**





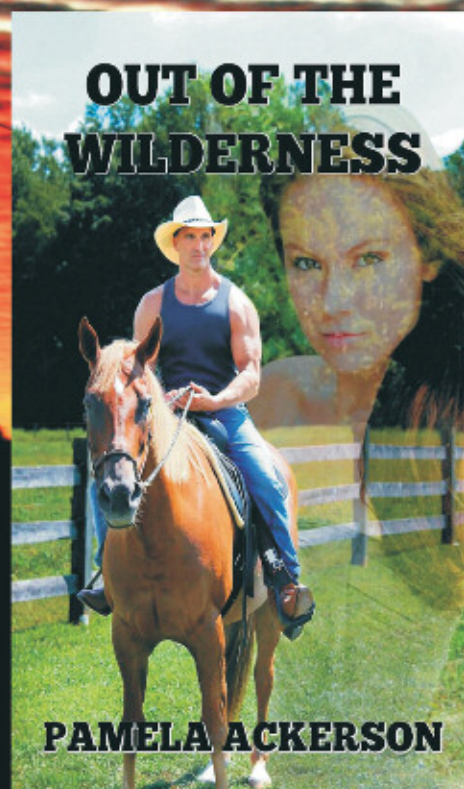
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Food for Thought

by Louise B. Snead

What is the most significant thing about the holiday season? Many will say it's the music, though, as the season wanes, some of those who so claim it will declare how tired they are of hearing the same old songs.

Could it be the decorations? I will admit I love to decorate for Christmas, but I love decorating for Halloween even more. The cackling witches, the rats, bats, and skeletons of butlers get me fired up. I haven't really analyzed it, but that may be because my birthday follows Halloween, and perhaps as a child I got all hyped up about Halloween because my (and Lani's) birthday soon followed. We've had so many birthdays since childhood that their forthcomingness should have ceased to be a factor decades ago. But the truth remains: nothing peeves me more (and I do meaning nothing) than to see Christmas decorations in the stores and for sale before Halloween.

Spiritual and religious people would claim the most important thing about the season is remembering the reason for it. I take no issue with that as long as we are tolerant of those religions and spiritualities that are different from our own. And that we do not restrict ourselves to the small span of time between November and January when it comes to celebrating our spiritualism, that we seek to do it all year around.

Is the most significant thing about the holiday season the fact that we become more altruistic and donate more? Not for me. I'm one of those people who always feels uncomfortable receiving gifts from others but who gets the greatest joy in the world from seeing someone's facial expression when I have directly or indirectly given them something they wanted. I'm that way throughout the year. I wish it were in my purview to make everyone happy all year round. I do what I can.

So, if it's not the music, the decorations, the giving and receiving of gifts, or the religiosity associated with it, what could possibly singularly represent the very best of the holiday season?

It's gotta be the food.

This guess is somewhat supported by several facts:

(1) The American eater will gain close to ten pounds in that small span of time between November 1st and January 3rd. There is no other single block of time that will yield the same results...unless it's pregnancy.

(2) Cooks come out of the woodwork to pass down (or keep going) familial recipes. Think about it. What dishes served on your Thanksgiving table go back more than a generation?

(3) The uniquely holiday foods. Or what dishes reappear that you haven't seen in eleven months that are not associated with a particular holiday? Examples of those would

include: cranberry sauce, egg nog, sweet potato pie, pumpkin pie, etc.

(4) The reappearance of diets, diet programs, exercising equipment and gym memberships. Those industries know we wolf it down during November and December, and they poise themselves to make money on the other sides of those months. Back in late September and early October, didn't you hear, "Shed those pounds in time for the holidays." Or now that the holidays are upon us, "Lose those extra, unwanted pounds by joining _____." Doing so goes hand in hand with our resolutions.

(5) Then there are the associations:

What do most people eat on Thanksgiving? Turkey.
What meat is a sure bet on most tables at Christmas?

Ham.

What good luck food do we eat on New Year's Day?
Black-eyed peas.

What drink do we traditionally pour on New Year's Eve? Champagne (or sparking cider, sparkling grape, or another sparkling combo.)

Thus, it would seem to me that food, by virtue of the fact that it has so many ways of proving it is overwhelmingly embedded in our culture, is the singular most significant representative of the season.

Having established that, we went back and asked some of our readers (1) how they cook something or (2) to pass on a family holiday recipe.

Now, let's talk turkeys:

(1) Do you brine your turkey before cooking it?

Read the label on the turkey before you make that decision. It is inadvisable to soak a frozen turkey because before many turkeys are frozen, they are injected with a saline (salty) solution. Brining a turkey like that would result in disaster. So



check the label to see whether it has been injected.

Seventy per cent who were asked do not brine their turkeys. Brining a turkey means soaking it in a salty solution (usually Kosher or sea salt and water) over a prolong period of time. There are lots of recipes for brining. The times for brining vary as do the spices that go into the brining solution. Pre-made brining solutions can be purchased at places like Sur la Table and William-Sonoma. Brining actually changes the molecular structure of the turkey, making it more tender. The thirty per cent who do soak, swear about it. Says Jake at Bank of the West, "Soaking a turkey in brine is done for 24 hours before it's cooked. Then the turkey is thoroughly rinsed so that it is not salty. It's the most tender, succulent and moist turkey you can do."

My turkeys are like that but my secret is aluminum foil. Betty cooks her turkey in a roaster, but she wraps it up in aluminum foil before she puts it in the roaster and covers it. When it's done, she browns it under a low (350) BROIL for about 15 minutes. She swears that the moisture stays inside.

This paragraph is out of place, but I just want everyone to know that unless you are buying a prepared ham (i.e. Honeybaked Ham or precooked from the grocery store)... An uncooked ham needs to soak in water to remove the excess salt from it.

(2) Is it stuffing or dressing AND do you put it inside the turkey or in a separate dish?

We found the name of stuffing or dressing depends on where you're from. Southerners and Midwesterners lean toward dressing. New Englanders and West coasters have stuffing. For the rest of the country, it's a toss-up.

Would you believe that the choice of whether it goes inside or outside the turkey is age related? Middle-aged to older women will stuff their turkeys. They have done so safely for years or under the supervision of an elder family cook and feel comfortable doing it today. On the other hand, younger women, many of whom do not take on the task of roasting a turkey, have been warned to the extent that they are cautious about the hazards of undercooking, the growth of salmonella and other bacteria, and will only cook their stuffing in a separate container.

(3) Gravy--with giblets or without?

Here's the other reason why it's very important to read the turkey label. It will be designated on the label whether or not the turkey contains giblets. What are giblets? They are the liver and gizzard that are usually found inside the turkey in a paper bag. The neck is usually in the cavity but is not wrapped or contained in a bag. Take it from me: there is nothing worse than assuming you have the giblets to make giblet gravy, only to find out that they were deliberately eliminated. Why does that happen? Some people do not want giblet gravy. The stores will take every opportunity presented to them to sell turkey parts separately. They make more money doing it that way.

Southerners as well as people who have gone to migration sites (where Southerners moved *en masse* for work

opportunities) like Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburg, and Cleveland want giblet gravy. It's a toss-up otherwise.

Now that we have given you what we hope are helpful hints, here are some heirloom recipes you may want to try, some of which go back to the old countries:

Let's start off with a holiday drink:

Homemade Brandy Egg-nog submitted by Victoria F. of New Jersey—serves about 10



Ingredients:

5 eggs, separated
1 quart of half and half
3 tablespoons of sugar
1 ounce of rum
1/2 fifth of brandy
Nutmeg

Beat egg whites until stiff. Set aside.
Mix egg yolks with sugar in a large mixing bowl
Add brandy and rum
Slowly add half and half,
Fold in egg whites
Chill
Sprinkle with nutmeg

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Spotlight Interview



M. K. Scott is the husband and wife writing team behind “The Painted Lady Inn Mysteries.” Morgan K. Wyatt, who recently retired from teaching special needs students to write full time, instead of in the wee hours of the night, is the general wordsmith, while her husband, Scott, is the grammar hammer and physics specialist. He uses his engineering skills to explain how fast a body falls when pushed over a cliff and other felonious activities. The couple’s dog, Chance, is the inspiration behind Jasper, Donna’s dog. Murder Mansion is the first book in “The Painted Lady Inn Mysteries.”

AdC: *When did you start writing and why?*

MKS: I started writing in first grade because the kid books were dull. I thought I could improve on the well-behaved children and their boring pets.

AdC: *What have you learned about writing since you started?*

MKS: You can always improve on a story. That’s why I go back and revise earlier tales.

AdC: *Tell us about your new book or series.*

MKS: My husband and I write culinary cozy mysteries with lots of crazy characters. The current series is “The Painted Lady Inn Mysteries” where an opinionated innkeeper solves murders with a veteran cop. There are some romantic elements involved, too.

AdC: *What is your idea of a perfect day?*

MKS: A perfect day is when I get everything done on my *to do* list and my husband offers to take me out to dinner at our favorite barbecue place.

AdC: *Do you have any hobbies?*

MKS: I’m an avid gardener. This year’s project was a bee and butterfly yard.

AdC: *What is the worst thing about being an author?*

MKS: It’s not a horrible thing, but people have no clue how much work



Morgan Wyatt and her husband Scott a.k.a. M.K. Scott

goes into a book.

AdC: *What is your favorite thing about being an author?*

MKS: There are so many great things about being an author. I do like the opportunity to meet so many great people. I enjoy working with my husband and then there’s cover art!

AdC: *How many books do you currently have out on the market and what genres do they fall into?*

MKS: This is definitely my question!
M K Scott (cozy mysteries)-Three out and another in the proofing stage;
Rayna Noire (magical realism)-Five;
Morgan K Wyatt (romance/romantic suspense)-Seven;



Sweet
and
Spicy
Romance

morgankwyatt.com

Morgan Kay (flirty contemporary romance)- Eight.

AdC: *What can we expect from you next?*

MKS: *Murder Mansion* audiobook will be out in November; *Christmas Calamity* by M K Scott (cozy mystery) will be out late November; and *Dangerous Regrets* by Morgan Kay (contemporary) will be out in January 2017.

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

MKS: Be original. It's so easy to want to base yourself on someone else. Don't.

You can find Morgan:

Personal web page – www.morgankwyatt.com

Twitter – www.twitter.com/morgankwyatt

Facebook – www.facebook.com/AuthorMorganKWyatt

[AuthorMorganKWyatt](http://www.facebook.com/AuthorMorganKWyatt)



Affaire de Coeur



Candied Yams Yours truly (and you can tell I don't measure)—
serves about six

Ingredients:

- 2-3 large sweet potatoes or yams (I mix them)
- 1 1/2 cups of water
- 3/4 cup of brown sugar
- Half stick of butter (I don't use margarine)
- Nutmeg (1 tsp)
- Cinnamon (1 tsp)
- Marshmallows (optional)

Peel yams and cut quarters or eighths.
Put them in a pan and cook until they are tender.
Add sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon.
Cook until most of the liquid is gone, stirring to prevent yams from sticking to the pot.
Adjust the ingredients to your taste--more sugar if you need it, more spice, more butter.
Add marshmallows on the top if you are so inclined, cooking



Candied yams with marshmallows on top until they melt and brown.

Brie En Croute

(There are many variants of this, *Epicurious*, for one, has several suggestions.)
I get a big glass pie pan and construct it in the middle leaving plenty of space on all sides for crackers.

Ingredients:

- 1 wedge of Brie. (4-6 oz)
- 1 box of puff pastry
- Craisins (unsweetened if handy)
- Marmalade
- Walnuts or almonds
- An egg
- Some crackers

Thaw at least one of the sheets.
Set the brie (I never rind it) in the middle.
Shloop some marmalade, craisins, and nuts down on top of the brie.
If I think I can close it all by folding the one sheet up and tying it with some butcher's string, I do. But this is goopy stuff, and if you think you need two sheets, drop the second one down on the top and kind of fold the edges like a wonton and hope for the best. (Stitching it with butcher's string does NOT work.)
Put a little egg/water eggwash on the top and bake it at 350 for 30 minutes or until golden and lovely.

Grandma Germaine's Jibberies

Romancing The Smokies 2017

March 17-18, 2017

A reader event
you will never want
to leave.

RomancingtheSmokies.com presented by Donna Wright

An event to remember! We'll be there!

Debby Guisti—Keynote Speaker

JK Ensley—Welcome Speaker

Mallory Kane—Event Emcee

Join 25 Authors for a Weekend of Fun

**Knoxville Airport Hilton
2001 Alcoa Highway
Alcoa, TN 37701-3163
865-970-4300**

Ingredients:

1 pound pork sausage
½ pound uncooked rice
1 whole cabbage
Salt and Pepper

Directions:

To soften cabbage, put in a large pan of hot boiling water. Let sit in water for ten minutes until leaves start to soften enough to peel away from the head.

Mix together sausage, rice, salt and pepper.

Take a leaf off of the cabbage head and lay down, place a tablespoon or more full of the mixture into the leaf. Starting at the bottom of the leaf, roll and fold in sides and then roll completely up.

Place all rolls in a dutch oven, fill with water and boil for 2-2 ½ hours.

I find that placing them in a covered casserole dish and baking at 350 degrees for 1 1/2 hours works just as well.

Makes 2 rolls per 4 servings

Aunt NiNi's Sweet Bacon Snacks

Ingredients:

Package of Club Crackers, separated by one rectangular cracker.
1 teaspoon full of brown sugar
1 Package of bacon thin slices.

Directions:

Take a cracker, put a teaspoonful of brown sugar on it, then wrap the cracker in bacon. Bake in oven at 350 degrees until bacon has browned or cooked to your liking.

Can also be done in a savory/spicy version using taco sauce mixed up and put on cracker or a small slice of jalapeno. Use your imagination.

Makes 2 dozen.

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Spotlight Interview



Author of more than 45 novels, Deborah Camp lives in Oklahoma. Her books have been published by Amazon, Jove, New American Library, Harlequin, Silhouette, and Avon. Lover of the West and the people who tried to tame it, Ms. Camp likes to write about strong, independent women and the men who are their equals. Her books have been re-issued on Amazon for Kindle Direct and have attracted tens of thousands of new fans.

AdC: *When did you start writing and why?*

DC: War is hell, right? We all know that, but nobody knows it better than the people who experience it first-hand. Back in the old days before psychiatrists and psychologists understood post-traumatic stress and how to deal with it, people were left to their own devices. Some ended their lives, others were placed in mental institutions, but most had to struggle through their symptoms alone and misunderstood. Even today the stigma of PTSD burdens many of its victims.

AdC: *Tell us about your new book or series.*

DC: In my novel, *Solitary Horseman*, I shine a light on a few of these earlier victims. Set in Texas a few years after the Civil War, the book features Callum Latimer, who is going through the motions of living without feeling any of its joy or satisfaction. His brothers were killed in the war and the heartbreak of that took his mother, as well. He returned home to ghosts of what he once held dear and a father who is barely able to get around, having suffered a riding accident. Into his world steps a courageous, kind, and lovely Banner Payne. He's known of her his whole life, but he doesn't know her. After they strike a deal that will help them keep their ranches

out of the hands of greedy bankers and carpetbaggers, Callum's eyes – and heart – are opened by the strong and lovely young woman.

Banner lives with Hollis, her only surviving brother. Hollis returned from the war a shadow of his former self. He's haunted by horrific memories of the war and can find little solace in the world around him.

Bookended by these two broken men, Banner clings to the belief that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. While she tries to keep her brother's flickering life flame alive, she ignites a passion in Callum that sweeps through her, as well. Set in the backdrop of a turbulent time in American history, *Solitary Horseman* is a testament to the courage of men and the resilience of women.



The Civil War is over...
But Inner Battles Continue.

He'd thought he'd lost most of what was worth living for until she came along and made him curse his solitary existence. Suddenly, all he wanted was her. All of her. And no one and nothing would stop him from having her.

SOLITARY HORSEMAN

BY DEBORAH CAMP
AMAZON 2016

Happy Trails to You in 2017!

AdC: *What is your favorite thing about being an author?*

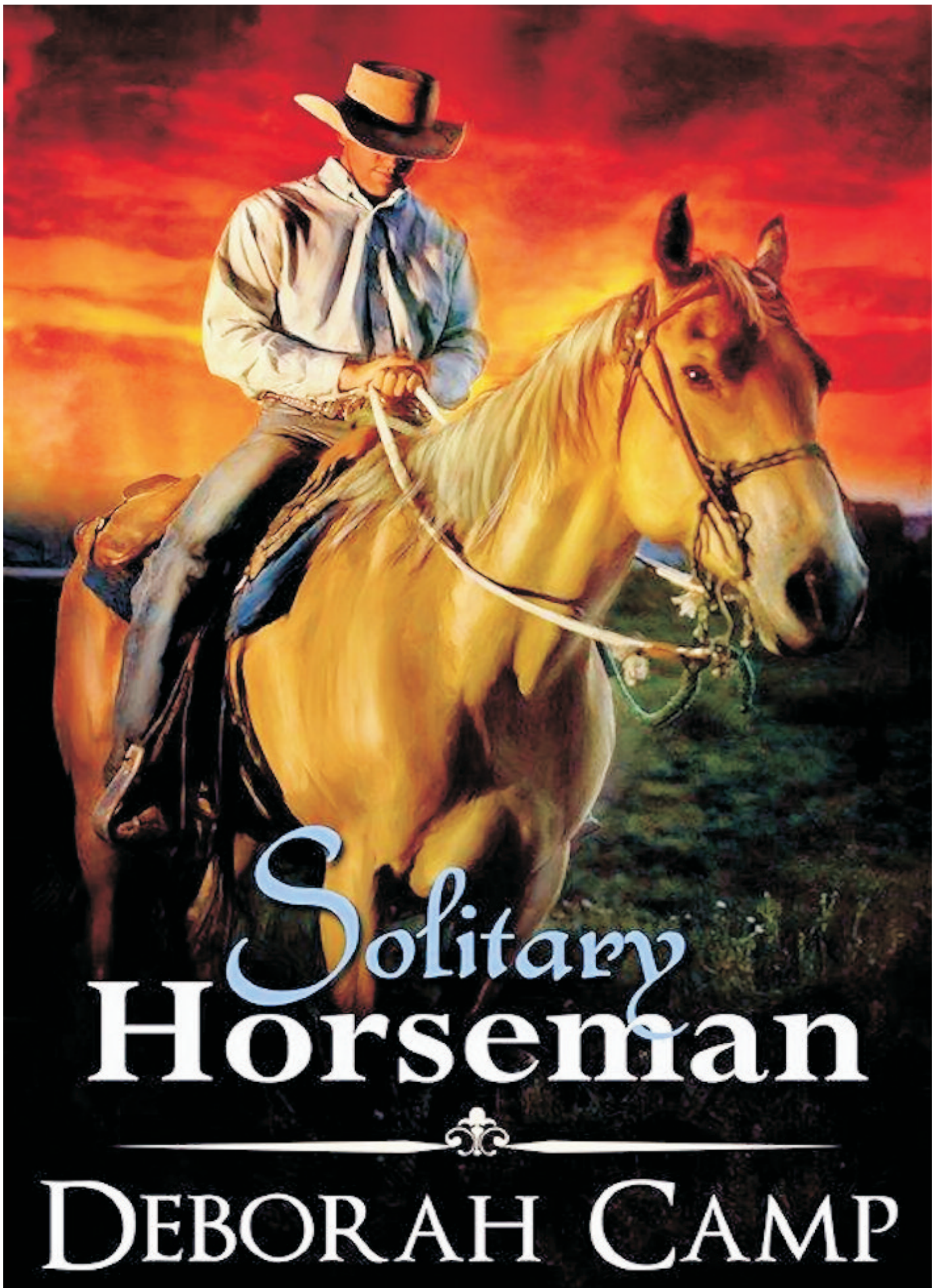
DC: One of my favorite things about writing is that I can take detours and explore facets of history and character studies. While the Civil War is highly dramatic and chock full of stories, the decade after it is also fascinating and frightening. The South didn't roll over and die. Southerners were incensed about losing the war and the multitude of changes that took place. The KKK sprang up along with other vigilante groups. Hatred mushroomed and law and order became hit and miss.

I think that most people resist change and that gets us into sticky situations. I know that I dread any kind of big upheaval. Little changes can be fun, but big ones are usually highly stressful! Like relocating or allowing a new person into your life. I like to have a plan and follow it. Of course, some of it goes awry because no one can control life.

I write the same way. I plan or outline a book and then follow that plan to completion. I guess it works because I've written more than 45 novels.

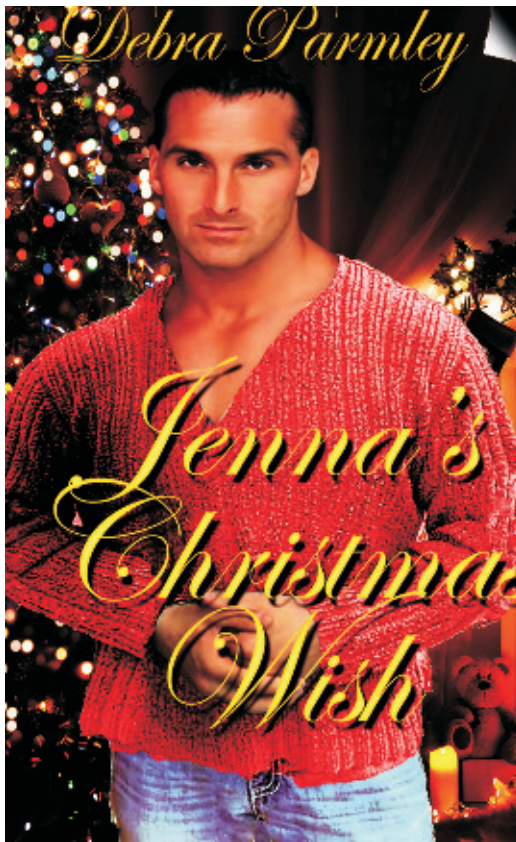
AdC: *What can we expect from you next?*

DC: I've already outlined my next historical romance, but right now I'm writing #4 in my "Mind's Eye" series. "Mind's Eye" features two psychics – Trudy Tucker and Levi Wolfe – who join forces to identify serial killers, murderers, and kidnapers. Trudy can get into the perpetrator's mind and see what he sees. Levi can commune with the deceased victims. Trudy and Levi have also become lovers and are engaged to be married now. While each case is solved in each book, the relationship between Trudy and Levi keeps evolving. In the one I'm writing now, which should be released on Amazon in the spring, Levi and Trudy are in New Orleans working on a serial killer case. I'm really having fun with it and scaring myself! These books are a real departure from my historical romances and not just because they're contemporary. The "Mind's Eye" series is gritty and sexy (bordering on erotic). My historical romances are sexy, but much more subdued. And while I have danger in my historical romances, I go way beyond that in the "Mind's Eye" series.





Sneak Peek



Excerpt from Debra Parmley's *Jenna's Christmas Wish*

Jenna hurried to get ready and then headed downstairs for the continental breakfast. The room was full of authors eating and chatting. After fixing a plate, she found an empty seat beside a man and a woman. "May I join you?"

"Of course," the woman smiled. "Please do. I'm Amy and this is my husband Brett."

"It's nice to meet you. I'm Jenna Heart."

"Nice to meet you, Jenna. This will get easier once we've all registered and have name tags."

"I'm glad. I don't know a soul here and I just got in from Memphis last night."

"Well, you do now," Amy said. "We drove up from Florida."

"Oh, that's a drive!"

"Yes. I'm with *Loving Hearts* magazine and we're one of the sponsors of this event. Did you hear that Nicolo Maldini and his mother are joining us for dinner tonight?"

"No, I didn't. How sweet of him to bring his mother."

"Yes, it is. She's a breast cancer survivor and they're very close."

"Oh, I didn't know that. It's scary when you think you might lose them." Jenna paused, remembering. "I think it's great he's bringing her. He sounds like a nice guy."

"He is. And so good looking. He's also single." Amy winked. "Have you been to his website and fan page?"

"No, I've only seen his picture on the promotional materials for this weekend."

I can't let on when I meet him that I haven't seen his pictures and don't know much about him. Cover models can be so focused on themselves and he might be insulted. I should've looked him up online. But I had to scramble to get copies of my books in and bookmarks. Things I would've had in stock if I hadn't taken so much time away.

"Most women would have been at least a little bit curious." Amy gave her a measuring look. "I think you might be the only woman here who hasn't been to his site at least once."

"Well, I..." Jenna took a deep breath and then exhaled. "I've been taking care of my mother who was very ill. I just haven't had time."

She hadn't planned to say anything. Had planned not to, in fact. She wanted the people she met this weekend to get to know her as Jenna Heart, the author, not Jenna, the caretaker. That role was done. She didn't want people feeling sorry for her.

"Well, then of course you haven't had time to play on the Internet." Amy's expression was understanding and kind. "How is your mother now?"

"She passed a few months ago after a lengthy illness."

Amy's hand closed over hers. "Oh, Jenna. I'm so sorry to hear that. You have my deepest sympathies."

"Thank you. I'm back to writing and able to attend author events again. I've been away too long. It's been a hurried scramble to get everything together in time."

Amy gave her hand a slight squeeze and then released it. "Well I'm glad you're back."

Jenna's Christmas Wish is available at your favorite bookstore in print or e-book.

Visit Debra Parmley's website: DebraParmley.com

Follow Debra on Twitter: [@DebraParmley](https://twitter.com/DebraParmley)

Facebook: facebook.com/debra.parmleyauthor

Meet the cover model John Antorino: facebook.com/johnantorinofanpage

Remembering Muhammad Ali

by Louise B. Snead



I am one of the many walking the face of the earth who can say, “I met Muhammad Ali.” Since I had moved to California, my brother and sister used to meet me in Las Vegas so we could bring in the New Year together. Unlike previous years, there was a host of stars, people we actually recognized from the entertainment world. The Temptations were enough for me, but we were unduly blessed with stars like Dinah Carroll (for whom mink coats were being thrown on the floor to catch her attention at Nieman Marcus), Telly Savalas with a sucker in his mouth, saying, “Who loves ya, baby?” (I know. I’m dating myself), and, in a small store in the mall, Muhammad Ali.

I was a fan of Muhammed Ali. Rather, I was back to being a fan. When Ali went from Clay to Ali, I was confused and actually bought into some of the negative hype about him. Why wasn’t he willing to fight for his country. Plenty of my classmates (a disproportionate number) had already done their tours of duty, and some

had come back in body bags. Why shouldn’t Clay at least show up? So when he declined, he fell into my disfavor.

I was young, influenced by almost anyone with a cogent argument. Then, I began to watch this man and came to realize what a tough choice he had made, what guts it took for him to take the stand he did whether I agreed with it or not, and what he had given up on behalf of his religion. As everyone knows, he was banned from boxing, and by the time he was allowed to box again, he was past his prime. Yet, he was a showman who could cover up his inadequacies with catch phrases like, “Float like a butterfly, stang like a bee.” And, “I’m pretty! Joe Frazier so ugly,” and tactics like the Rope-a-Dope.

I thrilled to the Thrilla in Manila and I loved everything about the fight in Zaire from James Brown and his entire entourage (including Maceo) to the Spinners. But Ali was my hero.

So, when I learned he was at a bookstore in the mall, I grabbed my daughter and raced downstairs so we could meet him.

HARLEQUIN

super romance



How can she forgive him for what he didn't do?

Photographer Izzy Cooper feels as frozen as her pictures. Trent Palmer might be the hottest firefighter in Templeton Cove, but she can never face him again. Not after he failed to save her brother. But when they're forced together by a calendar shoot, the sparks between them are undeniable.

Izzy knows it's not fair to blame Trent for the tragedy, but opening herself up to loss again isn't something she's prepared to do, no matter how determined Trent is to show her that pain is part of life and that love—their love—can make any suffering bearable.

RachelBrimble.com @RachelBrimble

I don't remember a thing about the bookstore. I don't think there was a line. It wouldn't have mattered; I would have waited all day if I had to. Then suddenly, there he was.

Even past his prime, he was a good-looking man. Heck! He was fine. He was significantly taller than I, and I am 5'8". I said, "Hi, Champ." He smiled (I melted), but he didn't say anything. I watched him take a seat, and when he was settled, he motioned for my three-year-old daughter Janine to come to him. With my encouragement, she went to him. He picked her up and sat her on his knee. I don't know what he said to her, but she was content (and who wouldn't be?) just sitting there while he bounced her on his knee. Later, when I shared this story with Harriet Klausner who was a reviewer for AdC, she responded, "I'm so damn jealous of your daughter."

We stayed a while, about half an hour. When we got ready to go, he gave me an autographed copy of a book about the Muslim religion. During the entire time we were there, I never heard him speak a word to anyone. We were walking toward the exit when I saw this lady in

the back of the store, crying her eyes out. I didn't know what had happened to her but I felt really sorry for her. Nosy as I can be and willing to help anyone, I hung back to see if I could be of help. The store was almost empty, and I saw Ali beckon to the lady.

She very hesitantly went up to him, wiping her eyes and snifing at the same time. When she reached his side, he said, "Are you crying for me?" It was the first time I heard his voice. It wasn't strong, more like a loud whisper. Raspy.

She nodded.

He grasped both of her hands in his. "You mustn't. I'm fine. I'm strong. I'm healthy, And I'm still pretty."

The lady and I smiled, and I felt tears well up inside of me. I knew what the woman had been thinking because I had been thinking the same thing--that boxing had not only cheated him, but it had reduced him to a man incapable of speech.

He could have let us go on thinking that, but chose to ease a woman in distress.



Bon Appetite

Across

1. This fowl is very oily.
5. A treat made of sugar, almond flour and sometimes chocolate.
6. Donald and his nephews are _____.
9. _____ peas. Fergie loves them.
10. This orange squash is made into pies and other goodies.
12. They're roasting on an open fire.
16. This dessert is full of processed cherries, raisins and nuts.
18. Italian sweet bread loaf.
20. Give us this kind of pudding.
22. Candied _____.
23. This cake has alcohol in it.
24. A German bread filled with fruit and topped with powdered sugar.
26. This green vegetable is often a fried delicacy in the South during the holidays.
31. Often served on a half shell.
33. A Louisiana classic--
34. Maker of some of the best chocolate candy.
35. Made from meat drippings to augment the stuffing and potatoes.
37. Toast with this on New Year's eve.
39. This treat is often made into houses or men and women (who run away).
40. Similar to pumpkin pie, but made out of a tuber.

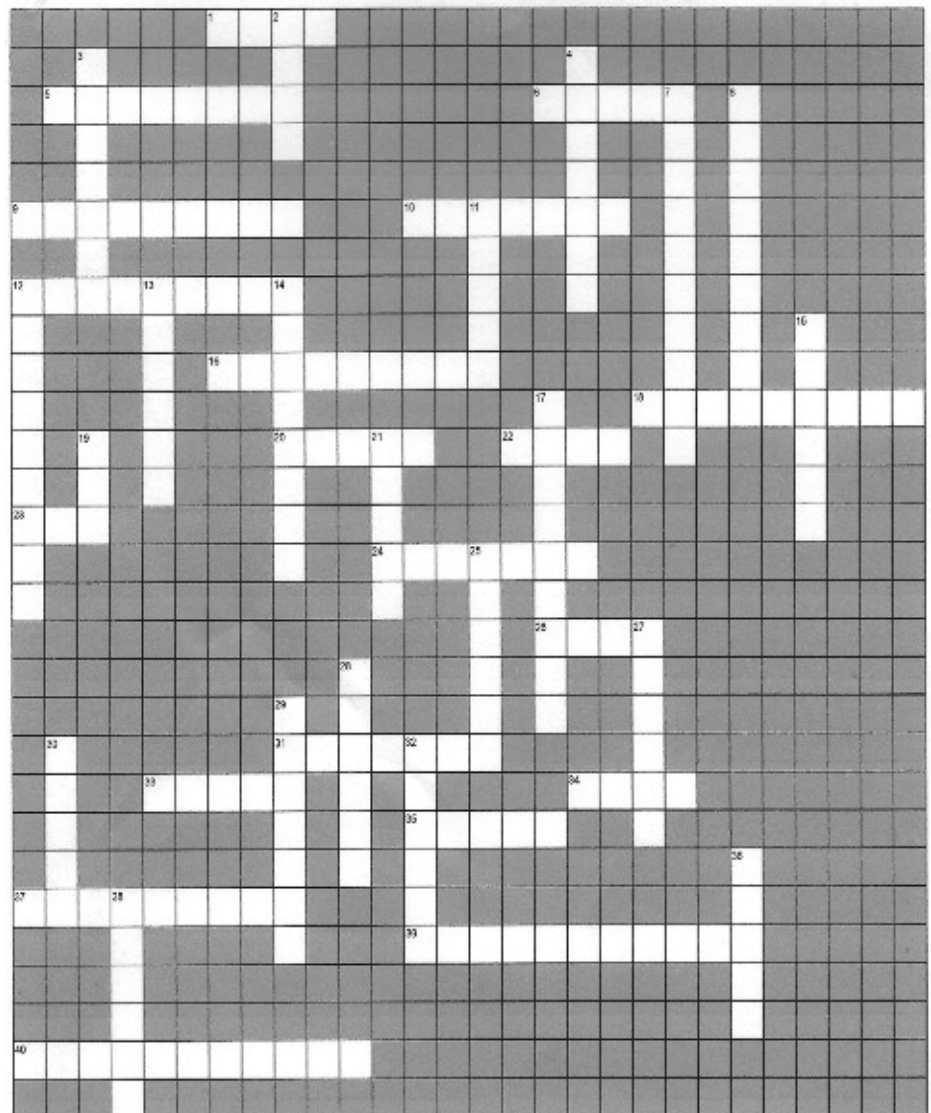
Down

2. Candy _____, red and white striped.
3. Eating this veggie ensures one will have money during the year.
4. This tea cake is popular.
7. A biscuit made with sugar, flour and butter.
8. Hot _____, a drink loved by most.
11. The English pie.
12. This is the sauce or jelly that is served with turkey.
13. The most popular fowl of the season.
14. The food inside the turkey.
15. These cookies are Danish and found in the blue tin cans during the holidays.
17. Green bean _____.

19. Honey baked ____.
21. This fowl is cooked.
25. Potato cakes popular for Hanukkah.
27. This fruit is candied for the holidays.
28. It's a dance, but it's also how the Idaho tuber is served
29. We leave this treat for Santa on Christmas Eve.
30. A fruit based drink, spiked with rum in the Caribbean.
32. This drink is made of cream and other spices and is often spiked.
36. This drink is made of apples.
38. Spiced wine.

Bon Appetite for the Holidays.

Louise B. Sneed



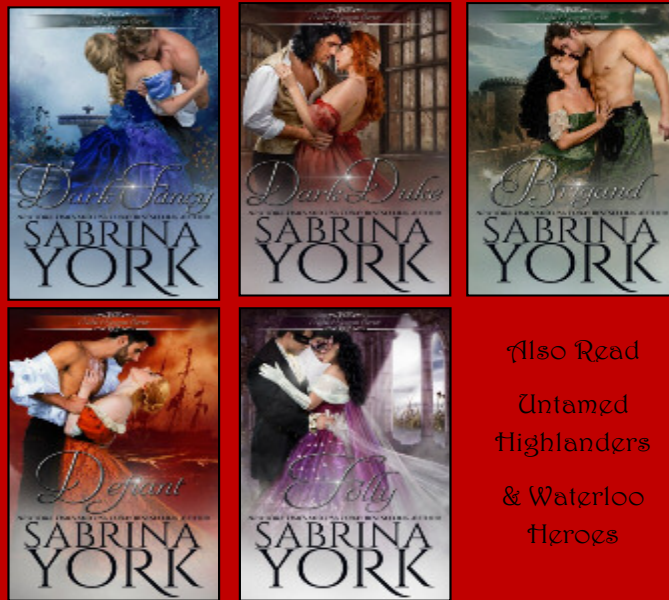
Affaire de Coeur

Hot Reads & Happy Holidays from Sabrina York

Scorching Stripped Down Cowboys



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Scorching Military Romance



Tryst Island Romantic Romps





Contemporary Romance Reviews

Between Hope and the Highway

Charissa Stastny

Ebook

ASIN: B01KIQ0AGY

☆☆☆

Liz Ruthersford needs to get away from her mother, who is pushing her to date again after the death of her fiancé. She accepts a job on a ranch in Montana to work with her beloved horses. She thrives with the Law family, including Bentley, who was injured in a years-ago accident and is still recovering. But she does not get along with Bentley's older brother, Rawson.

Rawson sees Liz as a con artist moving in on his family to take advantage of them. He does all he can to drive her away, including rude behavior and frightening antics. But Liz's pure heart and love for his family slowly begin to win him over. However, Liz is not so easily won. She requires a man of faith who is capable of a chaste relationship, and that's not Rawson-- or is it?

Fans of melodrama will be in heaven with Charissa Stastny's latest. Her characters are very young, and Rawson is sometimes dangerously immature. Liz, Rawson, and Bentley all offer their first-person points of view, and Bentley's is particularly well done. The villains are one-

dimensional, of the plot is full to bursting with situations for the lead characters to endure.

Heather Nordahl Files

Caught Up In You

Jules Bennett

Zebra

Mass Market

978-1420139105

☆☆☆☆

Cora Buchanan is a massage therapist who also happens to be blind. She has a seeing eye dog named Heidi. Braxton Monroe is a client of hers restoring his house to original Civil War condition. When he gets a massage from Cora, he finds that her hands not only heal his body but warm his heart. He hires her as his permanent masseuse, but their forbidden feelings may cause Cora to lower her walls and to make the ultimate choice.

This was a good entertaining light read. The plot was interesting with the blind person angle and the massage therapy job. It was also nice to see that she was a woman trying to reestablish independence again in her life. In general, this was a good read that kept me involved and also

Contemporaries

brought some new theme points. My only basic complaint was that my personal preferences are for more sex.

Lenore Lovecraft

Chase

Sidney Bristol

Zebra

Mass Market

978-1420139259

☆☆☆1/2

Gabriel Ortiz is a former FBI agent with a history. He has finally found a job in the FBI. He likes going undercover after drug dealers. His only problem is that he must work with his old partner Nikki Gage. They have a romantic past, as well as a professional one, that makes things very complicated for both. Can they solve the case and still have a relationship or will they have to choose?

In general, this was a good read with plenty of excitement. The undercover element of the plot was one of my favorite things. There was also a very good natural chemistry between the characters that kept me into this story. For me, the only real issue was that I felt it was a little too predictable in the hero FBI agent element.

Lenore Lovecraft

Christmas in Destiny

Toni Blake

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062392596

☆☆☆☆ 1/2

When Candice Sheridan gets the knock on her door at three in the morning, she is understandably wary of the man standing outside. The snow has caused Shane Dalton to get into an accident, and the weather prevents him from getting a tow for his truck. After he rescues her cat from the snow, she reluctantly allows him to spend the night.

Shane was on his way to Miami for a job opportunity, but his recently deceased father suggested he stop in Destiny, Ohio. Now his damaged truck forces him to stay in town while he waits for repairs and parts. He's not the friendly sort, but he makes friends in town without trying. And there's also Candice--"Candy Cane" to him--who intrigues him, even though she doesn't seem to like him.

Toni Blake's latest "Destiny" novel is a joy. While you

don't need to have read the whole series, those who have will get the most out of revisiting long-time friends in the town. The lead couple will keep reader attention as Candice lets her guard down with "bad boy" Shane.

Heather Nordahl Files

Explosive Forces (A K-9 Rescue Novel)

D.D. Ayres

St. Martin's Press

Trade Paperback

978-1250086976

☆☆☆1/2

Carly Harrington-Reese was just put the finishing touches on her new boutique, Flawless, when she heard a dog bark from the empty property next door. Instinct told her to just leave it, it was too late at night to be going about investigating, but when the dog barked again, she had to go see if he was all right. Going in to investigate, she found the dog chained to a post and an unconscious man lying on the floor. As she was untying the dog, fire suddenly erupted all around her and spread like wildfire!

The first thing Noah Glover realized when he opened his eyes was that he was in a hospital, had obviously been caught in a fire and his dog Harley was nowhere to be seen. As an arson investigator, he knew he had been caught in a fire but had no recollection of why he was there and how he had been saved. Then he remembered a beautiful woman who, with the help of Harley, had pulled him out of the fire. Who was she? Had she set the fire? And where was Harley?

Explosive Forces is explosive and hot from the very first page. Ex-supermodel Carly, grieving over the death of her photographer husband, ends up rescuing hunky arson investigator Noah Glover and his K-9 Harley from a fire set next door to her new boutique. Once she realizes that he wasn't trying to commit suicide and take his dog with him, she realizes that someone tried to kill Noah. Together they heat up the pages while trying to catch the serial arsonist who has been setting fires all over town. Both Carly and Noah are well-written, fully developed characters that the reader will instantly fall in love with and root for their happily ever after.

Lani Roberts

The Hero

Donna Grant

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250083395

★★★★1/2

Natalie Dixon is in a really bad situation. She has a bad marriage and is still in love with Owen Loughman. He has returned from 14 years' service as a Navy SEAL and wants only her. Owen will need more than his heart to help Natalie out of her predicament. Can love truly conquer all?

This is one book I generally liked. The characters had depth and made me want to connect to them. As for the drawbacks, I found the "soldier saves the day" thing a little old. Perhaps that's a taste thing that I prefer the more nontraditional female driven plots. Other than that, the story was well done and entertaining.

Lenore Lovecraft

In Bed With The Billionaire

Jackie Ashenden

St. Martin's Press

Trade Paperback

978-1250077868

★★★★★



Temple Cross is a hit woman on a mission. She wants to kill the man who destroyed her family. Jericho, aka billionaire Theo Fitzgerald, is the man she is after, but upon meeting him she has an attraction not to be denied. Theo wants to take down his family crime business and sees Temple as a means to that end. Can their connection be enough to take down crime and love all in one shot?

This was one happy reviewer on this book. The criminal underground element was just the excitement to keep the suspense rolling. It was also refreshing to see a female hit woman as a change from the male dominated romances. In general, this was a good steamy page turner I would recommend.

Lenore Lovecraft

Lost Melody

Dolores W Maroney

State of Mind Publishing

Trade Paperback

978-0988434431

★★★★1/2

Melody Ravenswood, the daughter of a famous rock star, led a secret life. Known as Mel Harper by the residents of the small town of Willowbrook, she was tired of living like a prisoner and moved to the small town to avoid the paparazzi. She just wanted a normal life, with real people. Finding a job as a journalist with the local newspaper, she was sent to Henry Travis' home to interview him about his donation to the high school. When she met Hank Travis Jr., the quiet life she had planned went straight out the door.

To Hank Travis, Mel Harper was a hot, sexy vision of desire until she told him she was a reporter. A cold bucket of ice would have been more pleasant. But, the more Hank thought about Mel, the more he wanted to convince her to give him a chance. Mel had absolutely no intention of getting involved with Hank Travis, especially since he was famous--exactly the last thing she could possibly want.

What a treasure! This is an excellent story written with charming, lovable characters. This is a love story that will make the reader smile and want more from this author.

Encore, Ms. Maroney, encore!!!

Kitty Lane

Nico

Sarah Castille

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250104038

★★★★1/2

Las Vegas is in the middle of a battle between two mafia families. Mia Cordano is a hacker and wants out of her family's mafia ties. Nico Toscani is a member of her rival's family and also a man who melts her heart and body. He will stop at nothing to get her, but with their brutal war going on, things get complicated. Can the pair have both their love and their family? Only Nico can decide by either betraying Mia and staying loyal to family or go with Mia all the way.

This was one I liked quite a bit. The general theme of the mafia mobster is inherently sexy and exciting as well.

Contemporaries

It was also fun to read all the complicated family ties with the mafia element of the plot. This was a good read; it only lacked for me in one element--the politics of the mob war did sometimes overshadow the sexy.

Lenore Lovecraft

The Reluctant Cowboy (Morgan Ranch)

Kate Pearce

Zebra

Mass Market

978-1420140002

☆☆☆☆

Chase loved growing up on his grandma's ranch. Then Chase's mother and sister disappeared. Shortly thereafter his father disappeared, too... into the bottom of a bottle. Chase hasn't been back in years. But when his grandmother sends a letter asking for help, Chase reluctantly returns. He's surprised to find a stranger living there.

January's writing her thesis on the historic ranch. She wants to preserve it and find ways to make it profitable again. Chase doesn't doubt that January wants to make it profitable all right, profitable for herself. He hires a private investigator to check her out.

Despite thinking that she's conning his grandmother, Chase finds himself wanting January in his bed. He proposes that they become friends with benefits. She readily agrees. January is eager to explore Chase's body.

Spending time with January, Chase's doubts begin to fade. He finds himself falling for her. Then the investigator arrives. It's January's mentally abusive ex-husband, and once again, his charming veneer pulls the wool over everyone's eyes. Can January convince Chase her heart's not only set on the best interest of the ranch but also full of love for him? Maybe she should quit trying. If Chase doesn't trust her, maybe he's not worthy of January's love.

This is the first installment of what promises to be an interesting series. It's a very good book.

Sheila Griffin

Snowbound at Christmas

Jennifer Ryan, Lia Riley, Maisey Yates

Avon Impulse

E-book

978-0062658784

☆☆☆☆

Three authors come together with stories of Christmas in the snow.

Ten years ago, Abigail Swain told the truth to keep Dex Manning out of prison, and as a result, her world was shattered. Now she's back in Montana, hoping to make amends for keeping their daughter away from him. Dex still loves her and finds a way to get over his anger. They are meant for each other, no matter what people in town may say or do. "Close to Perfect" (****) features a pair of lovers you'll root for.

Goldie Flint and Kit Kane use to be lovers, but then he took off for the Marines without a word. Now she holds a grudge that will never die. A huge storm descends, and she has to rely on him to rescue her. As they seek shelter with his family, they must put their conflict to rest. Lia Riley's "Hot Winter's Night" (**1/2) is a great, fiery read, but the cast of characters might be overwhelming to anyone who hasn't read the rest of the series.

Mia Landry has had a thing for Devlin Grayson for a long time. As far as she knows, he does not return her feelings, but then they are snowed in together. She comes up with the nerve to reveal her desires, and they share a sizzling night of passion. Can things continue with morning's light? "Snowed in at Copper Ridge Lodge" (****1/2) by Maisey Yates is a moving tale with an endearing couple and an intriguing cast of secondary characters.

Heather Nordahl Files

Taken

Cynthia Eden

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062437471

☆☆☆☆1/2

Bailey Jones was abducted by a serial killer, and she was the only one who survived... or so everyone believes. She knows there was another victim because Bailey fought to save her. The other woman got away without a backward glance, leaving Bailey to be thrown into an open grave. But she still feels the need to find her, so she brings her case to LOST, the Last Option Search Team.

Asher Young believes her, and is determined to help her in her quest. He is also drawn to her like no other woman, no matter that he knows that his feelings are unacceptable.

Contemporaries

But she feels the same, and these damaged people come together under hellish circumstances. It soon becomes very clear that someone is trying to resurrect the Death Angel, and Bailey is squarely in his sights.

Cynthia Eden's latest entry in her "Lost" series is a riveting, near perfect read. This thriller is loaded with twists and turns, and Bailey and Asher's chemistry is off the charts. Readers will stay up till the wee hours to finish this one in one sitting.

Heather Nordahl Files

Texas Tempting

Kimberly Raye

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250063977

★★★★1/2

The Tuckers and Sawyers have been feuding over moonshine for generations, and Jenna Tucker is tired of it. While restoring her family homestead to breed her horses, she discovers a secret in an old trunk. With the help of Elijah Sawyer, she will uncover the truth and love at the same time. Can the pair end the moonshine battle once and for all?

This was a good entertaining read. It had a good, not-too-heavy plot and well-rounded characters. *Texas Tempting* had a good balance of action and steam for me. My only drawback is the general southern cowboy Texas thing. For others, it is probably a draw to the book. Other than that, it had a charming story and was well written.

Lenore Lovecraft

A Wedding for Christmas

Lori Wilde

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062311450

★★★★ 1/2

Katie Cheek swapped lives with another woman, and she is in L.A. when she meets Ryder Southerland again. They grew up together, and she had a massive crush on him--so when they hook up for a passionate night together, it's all too good to be true. She flees in the early morning light, expecting to never see him again.

One year later, she's back in her hometown of Twilight, Texas, when Ryder comes back home. He is there to take care of his father after his stepmother dies. Things are worse than he expected and, to his surprise, it's Katie's job to help. With their glorious chemistry, one thing leads to another, and they are also thrown together due to Katie's

brother's wedding. Katie wants to keep their affair secret, but it's hard to hide the sparks that are flying.

Lori Wilde's latest "Twilight, Texas" standalone story features a pair of lovers that readers will adore, especially Ryder, who is wrestling with a painful past.

Heather Nordahl Files

Wild at Whiskey Creek

Julie Anne Long

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062397638

★★★★1/2

Like it or not, trouble finds Glory Greenleaf. She is working in the latest of ill-fitting jobs when she unintentionally becomes the prize for a group of shady characters. When one of them corners her, Eli Barlow comes to the rescue. The sheriff's deputy used to mean the world to Glory, but when he arrested her brother, he closed that door forever.

Eli knows Glory hates him now, but he'll never hate her. She starts a new job as a waitress, but all she wants to do is play her guitar and sing. She thinks she has a chance to be seen by more people than at the local open mic night, but her dreams are dashed by the Baby Owls' jerky manager. However, her dreams-- and Eli--aren't as impossible as they may seem.

Julie Anne Long's latest continues her "Hellcat Canyon" series, but you don't need to read the first book to completely enjoy this one. Glory is a fun and feisty heroine, and Eli will melt hearts. This tale is riveting from first page to last.

Heather Nordahl Files

Wrong for Me

Jackie Ashenden

Kensington Publishing Corp

Trade Paperback

978-1496703927

★★★★★

Rachel Hamilton is a tattoo artist in Detroit. Levi Rush is fresh out of prison after eight years and is out to get his girl. He buys the building that Rachel rents for her business. There is only one offer: her love and body, or she is out on the street. Will Rachel take Levi's offer or will she go

SUPERIOR COLLISION

Special Agent Taylor Carrigan takes 'control freak' to the extreme. Her need for structured rigidity rules her life—and her job at the FBI. She doesn't do emotion, so when her fiancé is murdered, she doesn't know how to deal with the internal fallout.

Antioch Police Sergeant Shannon Crowley has been intrigued with the uptight FBI agent for months. When he looks at Taylor, he sees more than the mask she hides behind.

She doesn't have time for the cop who won't quit chasing her—she's got chasing of her own to do. Taylor admits he calms her, but he's a distraction she can't afford. She's playing a dangerous game, riding the line between revenge and justice.

Keeping Shannon close could give Taylor the balance she desperately needs, but it would put something more than her case in jeopardy—her heart. With so much on the line, is she capable of handling it?

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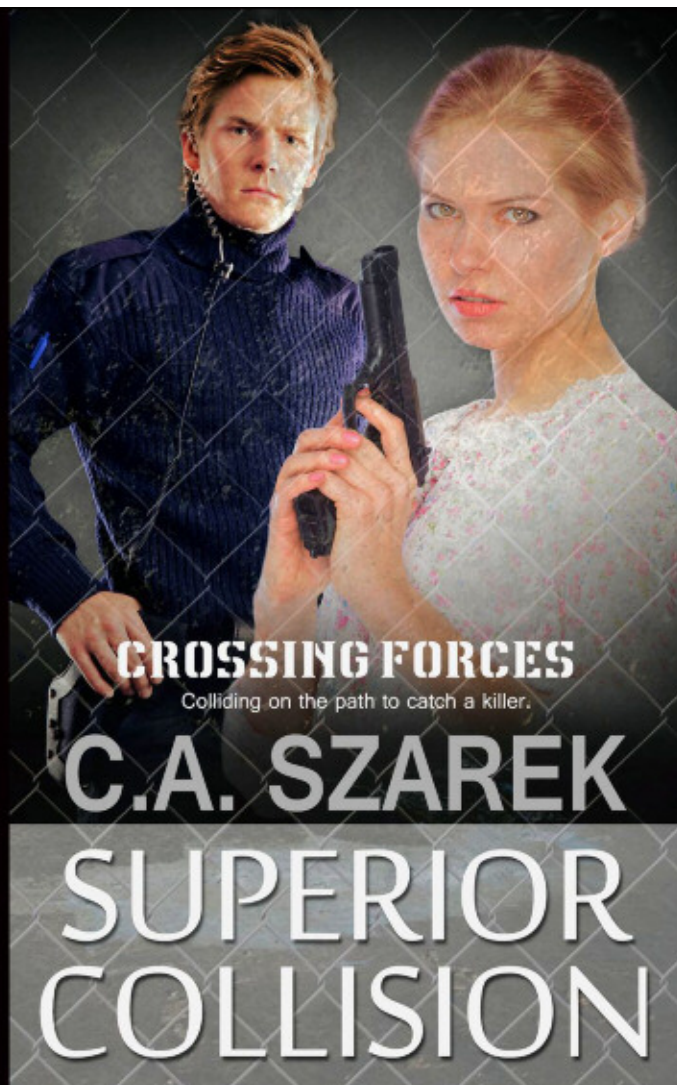
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Contemporaries

it on her own?

I was a happy reviewer when I got this one. What more could I ask for - tattoos, sex, and a strong man on a mission? The plot was a good old cat-and-mouse game that kept me in suspense and the tension palpable. More like this please.

Lenore Lovecraft

Food for Thought continued

Grammie Crystal's Famous Olive Cheese Ball

Ingredients:

- 1 set of plastic gloves
- 2 packages of softened cream cheese
- 1 small jar of chopped green olives
- ¼ cup of Nature's Seasoning or spices of your choice
- ¼ cup sour cream
- ½ cup of shredded cheddar cheese – reserve another ½ cup for rolling cheese ball in.
- ¼ cup of chopped onion.

Directions:

Put gloves on, mix all ingredients together into a ball. Roll in shredded cheese. Serve with Sociable crackers.

Great for the holidays!

Makes 8 servings.



Historical Romance Reviews

Baron

Joanna Shupe

Zebra

Mass Market

978-1420139860

☆☆☆☆

William Sloane has powerful family connections, but he's worked hard, sacrificed to keep their skeletons buried, and to succeed in proving his father wrong about him. His latest goal is running for political office, and a fake Spiritualist medium could destroy everything.

Ava Jones is Madame Zolikoff to make money to support her brothers and sister while saving for the dream of leaving the city for green pastures. When Will demands she cease doing readings for his running mate, she knows his type--a man who is used to getting whatever he wants and controlling others. He might not control her, but neither can she control the powerful attraction between them.

Baron is book three in "The Knickerbocker Club," a

Gilded Age historical romance series about industry giants and women they love. It is a passionate and engaging romance. Ava and Sloane are magnetic leads with volcanic chemistry culminating in steamy love scenes. Will is undeniably appealing, both to Ava and the reader. Ava's an intelligent, independent and passionate woman of principles, despite her spiritualist trade. Their forbidden love is the major conflict in this novel. Historical fans will enjoy this vivid and sizzling love story and eagerly look forward to the next in the series.

Danielle Hill

Christmas at Dove Creek

Scarlett Dunn

Zebra

Mass Market

978-1420142235

☆☆☆1/2

Thorpe learned the hard way that women can't be trusted. His fiancée ran away with another man. Thorpe sets

Historicals

A Date at the Altar

Cathy Maxwell

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062388650

★★★★ 1/2

Sarah Pettijohn is an actress and also a playwright desperate to see her plays performed. She makes a deal with a pair of theater owners: She will perform as the Siren one more time, and they will put on her play. She holds up her end of the bargain, and the Siren's performance is an absolute triumph---until a lord jumps up on stage and assaults her. She knees him, and the show turns into a riot. She runs, but Lord Rivington still gets to her...until she is rescued by a duke.

Gavin Whitridge, the Duke of Baynton, knows Sarah and knows Rivington as well. Rivington is deeply in debt and makes it worse by wagering that he can sleep with the Siren, putting Sarah in danger. This, plus her dire financial situation, leads her to the distasteful possible future of becoming Gavin's mistress.

Cathy Maxwell's latest is part of her "Marrying the Duke" series, but while fans of the series will get the most out of this book, new readers will not be lost. Sarah and Gavin are riveting characters, and their issues feel real and challenging. Not to be missed!

Heather Nordahl Files

The Earl

Katharine Ashe

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062412751

★★★★

Peregrine and Lady Justice have corresponded for some time. He works for the Crown. She writes passionate pamphlets centered around the need for reform. They do not know each others' real identities. Lady Justice is Emily Vale, a spinster who never intends to marry. She asks Peregrine for a desperately needed favor and meets him in disguise, only to discover to her shock that he is someone she knows very well: Colin Grey, Earl of Egremoor.

Emily is looking for her sister who disappeared in Scotland, and Emily was going to use Peregrine to get to her. But she can't conceal her identity that way so she cancels her request, intending to search on her own. Colin carries on with

out after her to make sure that she wasn't forced to leave. Along the way, he runs into a band of Indians who try to kill him. Luckily, a sharpshooter comes to Thorpe's rescue.

Lily shoots as well as any man and better than most. She was riding with a wagon train of so-called "good Christians." These people decided that some of the wagon train's members were too sinful to travel with them. Lily couldn't leave the women to find their way on their own, so Isabelle who's an unwed mother-to-be, a soiled dove named Dora, and Lily formed their own wagon train.

Lily can't help noticing how handsome Thorpe is, but she's not the only one who notices. When Lily sees Dora leaving Thorpe's wagon, she jumps to the wrong conclusion and begins avoiding him. They meet a handsome marshal who begins paying attention to Lily. Thorpe decides he doesn't care who Lily's friendly with. He's not looking for a wife anyway.

Many dangers can be found on the road to Wyoming, but so can love. Will Lily and Thorpe find the courage to reach for it? Set in 1868, this historical romance is a very good book.

Sheila Griffin

Dance to the Devil's Tune

Adrienne deWolfe

ePublishing Works!

E-Book

978-1614179924

★★★★ 1/2

Lady Pinkerton Sadie Michelson is in Denver on a case, in pursuit of murderous jewel thief Maestro, who is responsible for the death of a fellow agent. This is her job and she wants to prove herself as a capable agent, keeping her sometime lover and newly minted Texas Ranger William Cassidy from following her.

Cass comes to Denver anyway, determined to keep his woman safe...and to him that means solving the case for her and keeping her out of the field. His Judas kiss makes her feel hurt and betrayed, and she fights to keep up with all the players in the mystery. But Cass cooks up a scheme to trap Maestro by inserting himself in the case. Can Sadie get past Cass to solve the case before anyone else gets hurt?

Adrienne deWolfe continues her "Lady Law & the Gunslinger" series with this lively and entertaining tale. Her tempestuous lead couple has terrific chemistry, and their sparring and loving have equal intensity. Even after the culprit is revealed, the tension doesn't let up. There are loose ends left dangling at the finish, so the next book can't come soon enough!

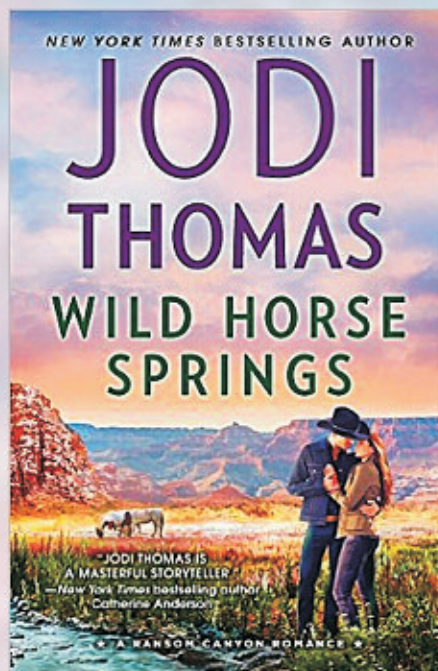
Heather Nordahl Files

Wild Horse Springs

Sometimes the right match for a lonely soul is the one you least expect.

When Sheriff Brigman finds a fancy blue woman's cowboy boot on the center strip of a back road, he tries to picture what the woman who wore it would be like. Finding her becomes his quest.

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the search. They meet in Scotland and soon find themselves on the run in a case of mistaken identity.

Fans of the “Falcon Club” series have been eagerly anticipating this tale, and Katharine Ashe provides an excellent read. The plot keeps moving, the characters have depth, and the story opens with a well-crafted prologue. Even those who have not read prior tales will enjoy this entry.

Heather Nordahl Files

Hearts Aflame

Jill Hughey, Anna Markland, Catherine Kean, Nancy Morse

Amazon Digital

E-Book

B01EG1U6PC

★★★★

“Rowan’s Legacy” by Jill Hughey

Fia held her father as he died while Paris was under attack from the Northmen. He bestowed a gift to her, an engraved stone with a riddle that seemed to have more than one meaning. Rowan and his father, David, had heard of the attack

and were worried about his friend Heric and his daughter Fia. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Rowan rode alone to Paris to find their friends. With a past history between Rowan and Fia, it would be a long trip returning her home.

“Passion’s Fire” by Anna Markland

Matthew de Rowenne was ordered by the king to return to Scotland. The second bombshell the king gave him was he was going to have a bride to encourage peace. Brigandine was living a lie. Everyone thought she was a lad, an apprentice to the armorer at her father’s smithy. When de Rowenne arrived at the smithy with his army, Brig knew she had to be careful with her secret. She was forced to travel with the army, and knew if she wasn’t careful, she’d be discovered.

“A Legendary Love” by Catherine Kean

Tavis de Rowenne had no desire to marry. However, his father had other plans and insisted he meet his future bride, Lady Helena Marlowe. When Tavis had endangered her life, Lady Helena’s father was not about to allow the marriage. But tragedy came years later, and Helena and Tavis were thrown back into each other’s world.

“Love Remember” by Nancy Morse

Jonathan Shane was surveying his land in East Africa, evaluating the damage caused by the drought. Seeing a vehi-

Historicals

The Scottish Duke

Karen Ranney

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062466877

☆☆☆☆

Lorna Gordon is a maid, but when she sneaks into a masquerade ball, she wears the costume of a lady. Her hope is to get closer to her employer, the Duke of Kinross. She gets closer than she ever expects, as his interest in her turns into a sizzling encounter. But it ends in an ugly way, and Lorna walks away.

Many months later, Lorna has left the Duke's employ to conceal her pregnancy. Her friend writes the Duke's mother to inform her of the baby, which brings the Duke to Lorna's doorstep. She sends him away, but his arrival leads to the local minister's discovery of the illegitimacy of the child. When he returns, he rescues her and takes her back to Blackhall Castle. But his heart is not open to love, and any relationship between a duke and a servant has many barriers.

Karen Ranney's latest has an intrepid, independent heroine that readers will root for. The duke's mother is an admirable character, and others, both likeable and not, are believable and make for absorbing reading.

Heather Nordahl Files

Solitary Horseman

Deborah Camp

Amazon Digital Publishing

E-book

B01HFCC2UQ

☆☆☆☆

Banner Payne and her family are considered to be trash in her small Texas town. She has her pride, and it hurts to have to go to her neighbor, Callum Latimer, for help. But she can no longer afford to run her ranch with few hands and disappearing cattle. She asks Callum if he would buy her spread, as she'd rather he buy it than the Yankee who's been offering to buy.

Callum can't afford to do as Banner asks, but he can make a deal: He'll help her with her cattle if she'll cook and care for his ailing father Seth. She takes the deal and things work well, even though Seth is cantankerous and sometimes hateful. But there are rumblings of discontent in town.

cle damaged and someone in trouble, he knew the person in the vehicle had short minutes from being attacked by lions. Little did he know that it was Julia Rowan—his ex who had disappeared a couple of years ago. But, Julia was acting very odd... Julia returned to East Africa in the hopes that it would nudge some long-lost memory. She needed help to her find out who she was, where she came from, and what had happened to her. A cherished jewel engraved in Latin has the connection of these stories along with the Rowan de Rowenne family. Is the jewel truly cursed, or does it lead to one's true love? Each author, expertly weaved the stories together, yet, was able to take their personal touch and create an individual story. A page turning anthology that will please all historical fiction readers.
Kitty Lane

The Legendary Lord

Valerie Bowman

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250072597

☆☆☆☆



Christian Forester, Viscount Berkeley, loved his hunting lodge in the Scottish Highlands. Even though he was an English Viscount and expected to marry and produce an heir, his trips to London during the Season had produced absolutely nothing in the way of romance or even prospects. He knew he needed help in the "genteel" department, but right now, he just wanted to spend the winter alone in his lodge. Except, when he arrived, tired, cold, grumpy and hungry, he realized that he wasn't alone. There was a woman in his bed!

Lady Sarah Highgate, the undisputed belle of the Season, woke up from her sound sleep staring at a large, very pissed off Scot who was angrily asking her why she was in his bed! Terrified, mainly because she knew she had no business breaking into the man's house and her chaperone was gone, the only thing she could think of was to grab the broadsword from over the fireplace to protect herself. It didn't matter that she could barely hold it up, her virtue was at stake!

The Legendary Lord is hilarious from start to finish. Not wanting to be married off to the person of her father's choice, Lady Highgate runs away with her chaperone to her father's hunting lodge in Scotland. Except due to the impending storm, they get lost and end up at the neighboring lodge belonging to Christian Forester. Once the misunderstandings are cleared up, the two make a pact. She will make him the most eligible bachelor of the Season so he can find a wife and he will make sure she gets back to London with her reputation untarnished. The journey and machinations that they both must go through to achieve these goals, only to discover they only want each other, is an absolute delight and well worth the read. Lady Sarah is definitely worthy and an equal to the dashing, if rough around the edges Scot, Christian. A keeper for your bookshelf!

Lani Roberts

Historicals

Yankees, freed slaves, and Indians are perceived as threats, and the locals want them gone...by any means necessary.

The origins of the Ku Klux Klan are explored in this tale. The subject matter can be uncomfortable, but the story comes alive in Deborah Camp's capable hands. Callum and Banner make for a compelling couple, and the secondary characters also shine.

Heather Nordahl Files

Tempting the Earl

Rachael Miles

Zebra

Mass Market

978-1420140903

★★★★

Olivia Walgrave is tired of being ignored by her husband and serves him with papers for a legal separation based on the fact that their marriage was invalid.

Harrison, Earl Levesford, deeply resents his father for forcing him into an unwanted marriage---even with a luscious wife like Olivia. He is content with leaving his wife in the country and pursuing his important secret work for the Crown. When his neglected wife threatens to leave him, Harrison realizes that he wants to fight to keep her.

This is a Regency romance that feels authentic, with interesting tidbits into life during this time period. Olivia and Harrison are both nuanced characters with emotional depth. The lack of descriptive love scenes may leave some readers disappointed, in light of the well-developed sexual tension between the romantic leads. The glimpses into Olivia's and Harrison's pasts are accomplished storytelling along with interesting secondary characters, such as the quirky scholars who reside at Harrison's father's estate. The ending is somewhat flat, but there is plenty of promise in Rachael Miles' writing to encourage historical romance fans to pursue

future books in "The Muses' Salon" series.

Danielle Hill

The Viscount and the Vixen

Lorraine Heath

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062391056

★★★★

his father is getting married, he's shocked. His father has mourned Locke's mother for his entire life, so this decision comes out of nowhere. When he meets Portia Gadstone, he's even more determined to prevent the marriage. So, he marries her himself.

His father's madness in the wake of his wife's death leaves Locke determined to never fall in love. He sees Portia as a mercenary sort out to marry a title, so he knows he'll never fall in love with her. Soon he discovers he's wrong, and feelings begin to creep in. But Portia has a secret, one that could destroy everything she has gained.

Lorraine Heath's latest is an intriguing, layered tale. Secrets are revealed slowly as Locke and Portia fall in love. The characters are well drawn, and the realities of the time are a solid part of the plot. While this is part of a series, it stands alone. Fans and new readers alike will find this book to be a pleasure to read.

Heather Nordahl Files

While the Duke Was Sleeping

Sophie Jordan

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062222541

★★★★

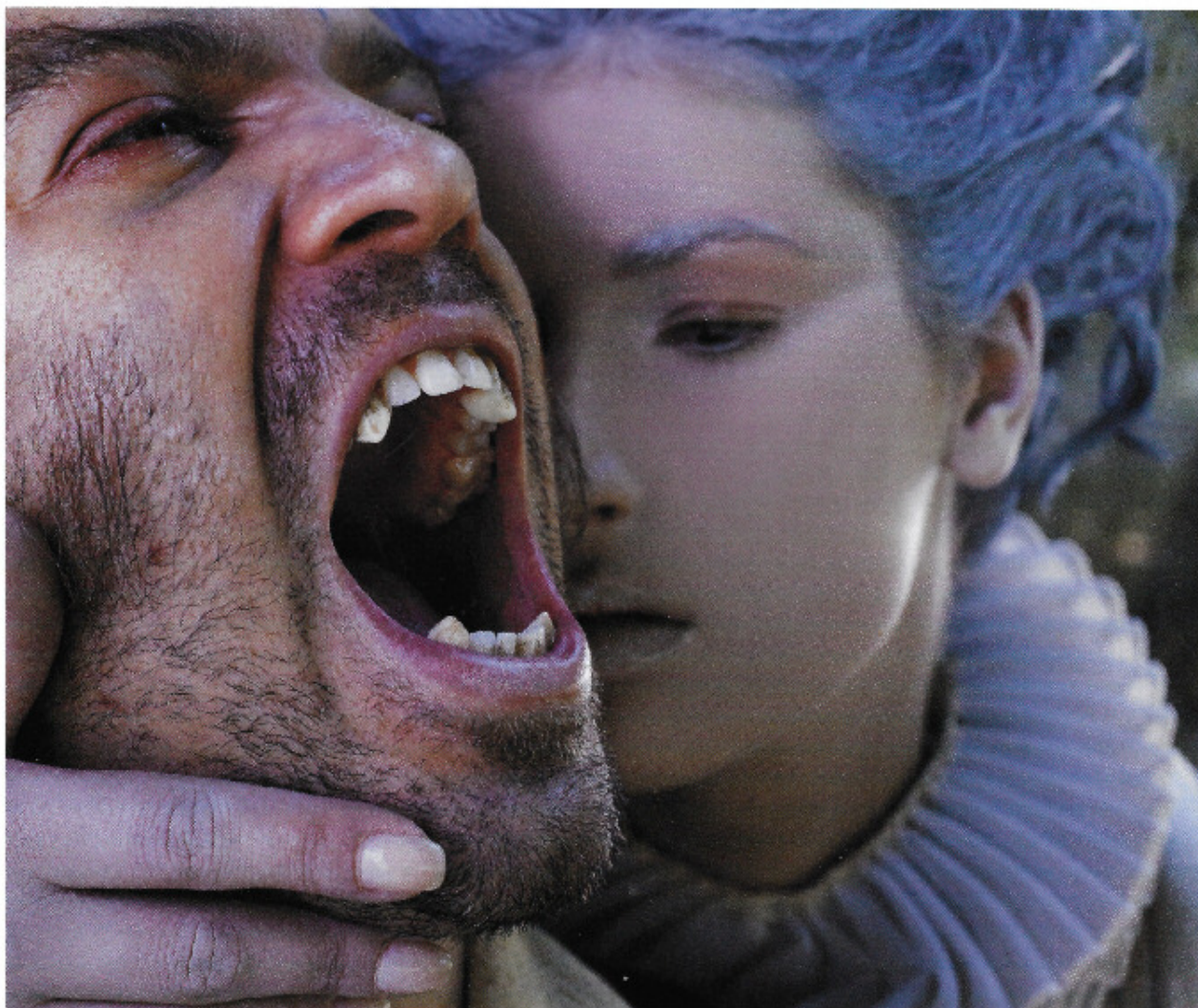
Poppy Fairchurch has a crush on the Duke of Autenberry. He frequently comes into the flower shop where she works, but he clearly does not share her feelings. When she sees him get into a fight in the street, her first instinct is to defend him, and she finds herself pushing him out of the way of a carriage to save his life. The fall puts him into a coma, and due to a chain of circumstances, she lies and says she is his fiancée.

Her lie brings her into the Duke's household, where she has to deal with Struan Mackenzie. He is the Duke's half-brother, and the man who fought with the Duke in the street. The Duke will not acknowledge Struan as his brother, but now he is in the duke's home as well as they wait for him to wake up. And while he is sleeping, a spark ignites between Struan and Poppy.

Sophie Jordan's latest pairs a romantic with a most appealing hero. Readers will enjoy the rich characterization and the swiftly moving plot.

Heather Nordahl Files

Paranormal Romance Reviews



Good Vampires Go to Heaven

Sandra Hill

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062356567

★★★★

Regina Dorasdottir is a witch who turns to black magic. The archangel Michael comes to her and gives her a chance to redeem herself. She will become a vangel, a Viking vampire angel. In modern-day America, she lives in Transylvania, Pennsylvania, with other vangel. She is determined to rescue Zebulan, a demon who has worked with the vangel to defeat Satan and his demons.

Zeb was caught and is being tortured by the demon Jasper. Regina succeeds in getting to Horror and rescuing him. When they finally arrive in Transylvania, they discover that they have triggered all-out mayhem by demons and Lucipires. An epic battle is coming.

Readers have looked forward to Zeb's tale for some time, and Sandra Hill pens a story worthy of this wonderful, complex hero. "Deadly Angels" series fans will get the most out of this, as events ratchet up to an epic finish in this story.
Heather Nordahl Files

Haunting Highland House

Kathryn Hills

The Wild Rose Press

E-book

978-1509210879

★★★★1/2

Sam Merrill needs to get away from her life, so she takes a job at Highland House, an historic home on Cape Cod. Once there, she discovers the house is haunted, as she has an encounter with the home's 19th-century owner, Robert Pennington. But he's not a ghost-- he's a flesh-and-blood

Paranormals

man. After he briefly enters the present, it's Sam who goes back to the 1880s for brief periods of time, which is bewildering and frightening except for Robert's presence.

Robert is stunned by the strange beauty who keeps appearing and disappearing on his property. Soon he hopes

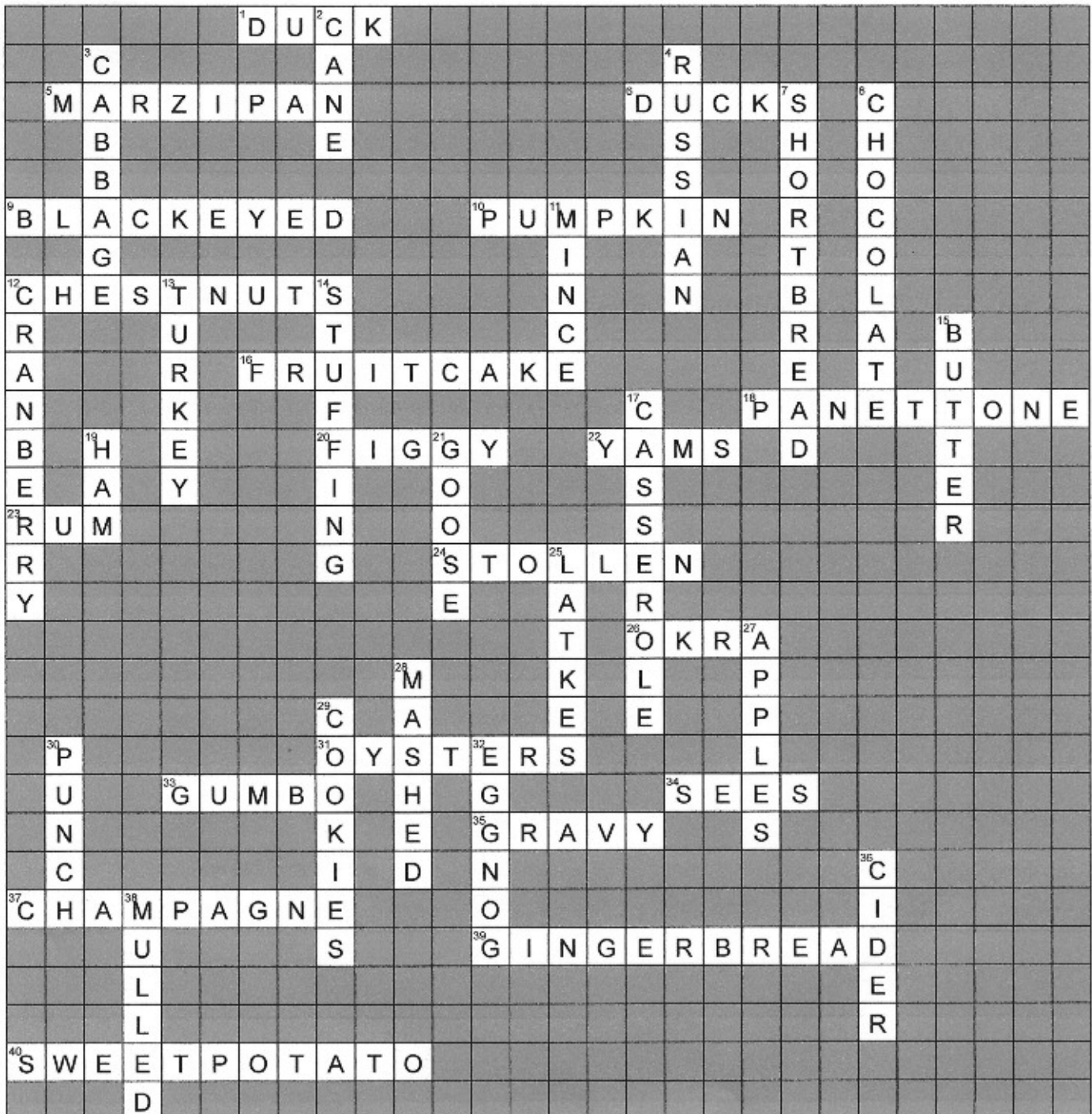
she will stay forever. Every time she returns, she yearns to go back. But she is unable to control her travel, no matter how much she wants to stay. The Penningtons are destined for disaster. She must find a way to save the lives of Robert and his family.

Kathryn Hills pens an absorbing tale with intriguing time travel patterns. Readers will be swept away along with Sam as she moves back and forth in time, and feel the urgency of her need to save Robert.

Heather Nordahl Files

Bon Appetite for the Holidays.

Louise B. Snead



EdisonCrossword.com



The CEO Came DOA

Heather Haven

The Wives of Bath Press

Trade Paperback

978-0989671262

★★★★★

Lee Alvarez, private investigator for the family business Discretionary Inquiries, was hired to find who was sabotaging the upstart Tech firm, Read-Out. When she found the body of co-founder D.H. Collier, things turned from bad to worse.

When having a meeting with Rameen Patel, the CFO of the firm, he told her that the new prototype they had been working on, chips and tester, were missing. He then hired her to find them.

Heather Haven's talented storytelling keeps the reader glued to the pages with every stroke of her pen. Definitely an author to keep on your favorite author list!

Lauren Calder



MYSTERIES

Killer Review

M.K. Scott

Sleeping Dragon Press

Trade Paperback

978-1944712839

★★★★ 1/2

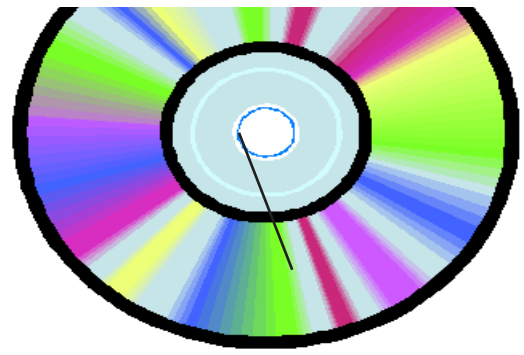
J.E. Muscovy was a food critic whose vicious remarks or pleasant ravings could make or break a restaurant. Donna Tollhouse owned the Painted Lady Inn, a B & B where the infamous critic had decided to stay. Her friend Janice's bistro may be the critic's next target, or possibly her own inn's restaurant.

Donna decided to follow J.E. when she left the inn but lost her when she was pulled over by the local detective and given a warning. When the woman was found dead, Donna started her amateur sleuthing to find the culprit.

Killer Review is a fun and spunky who-done-it, skillfully crafted to please all cozy mystery readers. The characters are solid, well developed, and all very identifiable. Ms. Scott has a winner on her hands!

Lauren Calder





AUDIO BOOK REVIEWS

Dirtiest Secrets

Written by J. Kenner

Narrated by Lucy Rivers

Brilliance Audio

7 Audio CDs

978-1511375115

☆☆

Dallas Sykes, a.k.a. The King of ****, is a man with unfillable sexual appetites. His conquests are many; his preferences are dark and dangerous. When he is once again united with Jane, the one person who knows of his trauma, their shared experiences are brought to the forefront.

Jane is basically a submissive woman who bears the same dark past as Dallas. She frustrated me to no end, as she allowed Dallas to do anything he wants, and says nothing. Nor does she leave.

I have read other books by Kenner and enjoyed them for the most part, but *Dirtiest Secrets* is beyond erotic to me, and into trashy novel territory. This was a story I just couldn't enjoy. The narration by Lucy Rivers, however, is well-voiced and descriptive. *Dirtiest Secrets* is definitely for mature audiences only, so if you want to be a fly on the wall and observe the story firsthand, then this is the story for you.

Letitia Elsasser

Do Not Disturb

Written by Tilly Bagshaw

Narrated by Kate Rudd

Brilliance Audio

15 Audio CDs

978-1469250199

☆☆1/2

Do Not Disturb is one of those books I wish I had heeded the title before beginning. Tilly Bagshaw's writing in this story is like reading a middle school creative writing essay. The characters were lifeless, but the storyline sounded interesting. Yet, I could not find myself getting interested as it evolved.

The positive of this audiobook was the narrative of Kate Rudd; her voice lends a full dimension to the story. Unfortunately, it could have been put to better use in a more interesting novel. I was sadly disappointed in *Do Not Disturb* and probably will not be reading any more of Bagshaw's novels.

Letitia Elsasser

Audio Book Reviews

Flawless

Written by Tilly Bagshaw

Narrated by Alison Larkin

Brilliance Audio

13 Audio CDs

978-1501279256

☆☆☆

Glamour, fun, diamonds, a diverse cast of dangerous and sexy characters, and intrigue are some of the things available in *Flawless*. A peek inside the diamond business with honest and dishonest characters alike, narrator Alison Larkin captures the language and tone of the diverse cast. Gorgeous twins, exotic cities, trashy sex scenes, and ruthless competitors are the essence of this book.

Flawless is a light and good read, but by no means as good as I had counted on by the synopsis. Having read a couple of her novels, I will wait to see what my peers think of her next offerings before I purchase future titles.

Lettetia Elsasser

The House of Hawthorne

Written by Erika Robuck

Narrated by Mary Robinette Kowal

Brilliance Audio

9 Audio CDs

978-1501234194

☆☆☆☆ 1/2

The House of Hawthorne is the love story of novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne and his wife Sophia Peabody. The little-known wife of the novelist is brought to life by the speaking voice of Mary Robinette Kowal and the writing of Erika Robuck.

Follow along as Sophia tells her story of life with her sister in Cuba, where they are hoping to find a cure for Sophia's migraine headaches. Suffering through debilitating headaches from an early age, she is staying, and while doing so, captures the *flora* and *fauna* of the area. She dreams of becoming a great artist, of a perfect marriage and of an end to her health issues. When she meets the novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne, she believes she has found her perfect match. Nathaniel appears to feel the same way and before too long, the pair marry and begin their life together.

A brilliant cast of characters with cameo appearances by Thoreau, Emerson, and Longfellow, along with others who are part of the story, make for an in-depth look into the life of this little-known wife and life of Hawthorne. Many ups and downs show that this couple, like so many others, were just like us. After reading this novel, I am looking forward to reading more from Robuck and Kowal.

Lettetia Elsasser

The Most to Lose

Laura Landon

Read by Sarah Coomes

Brilliance Audio

7 Audio CDs

978-1531882600

☆☆☆☆

Lady Cecilia has loved Jonah, Earl of Haywood, since she was a girl. When he and his best friend, Lady Cecilia's brother, Duke of Hadleigh, are estranged due to an unfortunate accident in the past, Jonah leaves England to fight in the wars. Upon his return, his estates are in shambles and he must marry an heiress to rebuild. Lo and behold, Lady Cecilia is there with arms wide open. Thus begins a story of passion, secrets, romance, misunderstandings, and friendship.

The Most to Lose is another historical romp that is sure to entertain readers from beginning to end. Read by Sarah Coomes, the action is clearly described throughout. Her voice lends itself to a smooth and comfortable story. There is plenty of action, passion, secrets and more. A well-written sense of time and place, as well as a brilliant cast of characters, make *The Most to Lose* a great recommendation for all historical romance lovers.

Lettetia Elsasser

Ransomed Jewels

Written by Laura Landon

Read by Rosalyn Landor

Brilliance Audio

8 Audio CDs

978-1522613329

☆☆☆☆

With her husband's dying statement that "His Marchioness has it," Claire, the Marchioness of Huntingdon, is doomed by all of those who would try to steal a valuable necklace. Even though kidnapers are holding her brother for ransom, Claire cannot give them what they want; she has no idea what they are talking about.

Enter our hero, Major Samuel Bennett, who believes Claire is a traitor in possession of said necklace. He intends to send her for prosecution and hanging; that is, until he



Audio Book Reviews

meets the lovely widow and rescues her time and again. So sets the stage for intrigue with plenty of twists and turns to keep you thoroughly interested.

Ransomed Jewels is right up there with some of my favorite books. The non-stop action from beginning to end kept me listening late into the night. Then I didn't want it to end. Read by Rosalyn Landor, *Ransomed Jewels* allows her to use her voice to give dimension to the characters and the novel. The cast of characters is varied and well written by Landon, with our hero and heroine being thoroughly likeable and realistic. The secondary cast ranges from thoroughly evil to completely likeable and lends a vital addition to the storyline. Laura Landon has a gift for keeping fans appreciating and looking forward to each of her novels.
Letitia Elsassier



Booty from the Other Genre



Love You Dead

Peter James

Macmillan

Hard Cover

978-1447255819

★★★★1/2



Jodie Bentley only wanted what everyone else wanted in life, a husband, children, and a mansion to show her parents that she was better than her dead sister. Determined to get these things, she chooses to marry an older extremely well-off suitor to find her fortune. Jodie, thwarted from her goal, had to try again, not knowing the man had had his own problems. She continues in true black widow style when another sure thing fails, inadvertently angering the Russian mafia. She walked away with cash, a USB stick, and a price on her head.

Eventually drawing the attention of Detective Superintendent Roy Grace, who juggles between two cases that haunt him, he was assigned a new case. He had little interest in a petty thief who had died of mysterious circumstances, until similarities from another case, raises its ugly head.

Peter James' novel, *Love You Dead*, can easily stand alone in this series. It keeps an even pace, and chapters that serve to give each character their place. It'll take the reader on the trail with the detective, giving a view into the minute by minute real world of international police business.

Lauren Calder

One Cowrie Shell

Reuben Sparks

iUniverse

978-1491780282

★★★★

Fifteen-year-old Jaiye belonged to the Yoruba tribe and had been promised to a Yoruba girl by the tribal elders, as was their custom. But Jaiye was infatuated with another Yoruba girl, who was promised to another. His tribe has been in constant war with their neighboring tribe, the Dahomey, for generations and nobody remembered why or even when it began. They only knew that they fought each other for slaves and more land to plant their yams. Whichever tribe caught members of the other tribe, they were sold to the foreign slave traders for cowrie shells, which was used as money, and metal tools for carving. This had been their tradition for generations and had become part of their culture. And it was every young man's dream to finally reach the age when he could stop tending the yams and participate in the raids on the Dahomey to prove his manhood. And Jaiye was no different.

When Jaiye discovered that his lady love was happy with whom she had been promised, he started plotting how to get rid of his rival. He decided to sneak up on him, capture him and sell him to the slavers for many cowrie shells. Then, when she saw how rich he was, she would be happy to be his number one wife! Only things did not go as planned and Jaiye's scheme ended with, not only his rival being sold into slavery, but also his lady love and his younger brother! So,

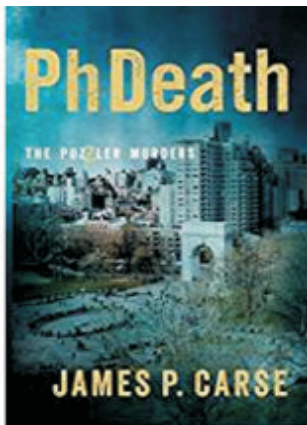
Booty

to correct his grievous mistake, Jaiye deliberately slips onto the slave ship to try and save his brother and friends, not realizing the horrors that lay ahead of him.

One Cowrie Shell is Mr. Speaks' first novel, and he does an outstanding job in helping the reader to understand the traditions and logic of Africans selling Africans into slavery. Never having anyone return from "across the great sea" as it was called, the tribes had no comprehension of the inhumanity and cruelty that was perpetrated upon those that were sold. The young hero not only makes the passage across the Atlantic secretly, but manages to stay free once he lands in America and travels from plantation to plantation to find his brother and love, witnessing the horrors and inhumanity of slavery in America. And he manages to return home to Africa!

This book is a marvelous tale of endurance and perseverance, told in a way that even a child can comprehend and, in this reviewer's opinion, has been way overdue!

Excellent job, Mr. Speaks, and I hope to see more from you.
Lani Roberts



PH Death

James P. Carse

Opus Paperback

E-book

978-1623160661

☆☆☆☆☆



Everyone thought it was suicide when Dean Oliver Ridley fell from a ten-story building on campus, but it did not fit his profile. He had just been given the job and seemed happy in his life. Then these strange messages began to show

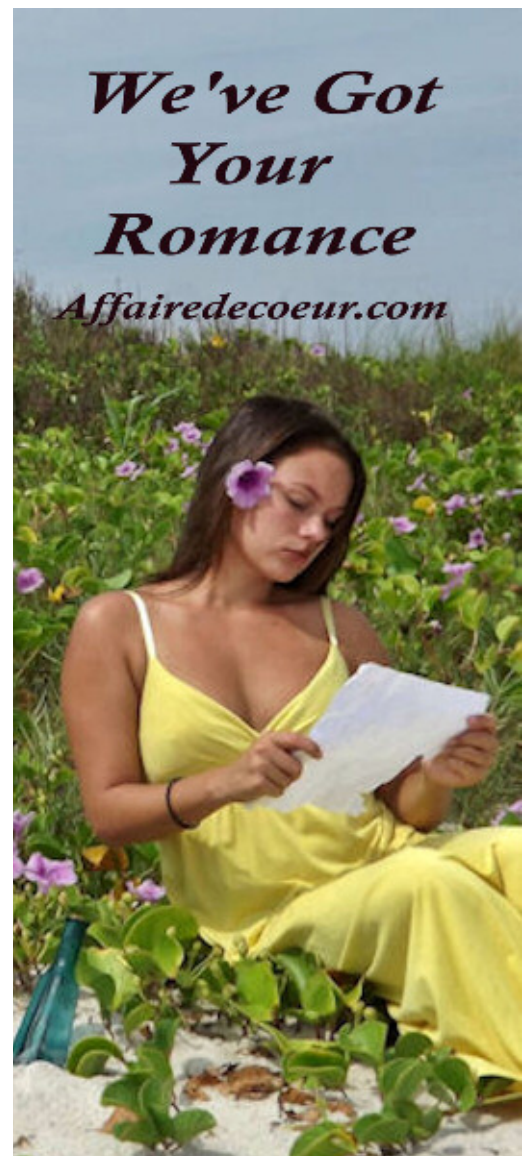
up that made Oliver's plunge to the ground look like murder. Not only that, but it began to look like a serial killer was on the loose. What would you make of a statement like this one: "The first to go is the most recent of ten."?

A few of the campus professors put their heads together to solve the puzzle. The person killed was a dean, and there were ten deans before him. If they were all still alive, then they are now all targets to be picked off one by one.

The killer will be creative, killing each of his victims in a different way. Lieutenant Tom Roche is the man to find the culprit. He is the city's best detective. However, if the killer is not an outsider but one of the faculty, then he will always be one step ahead of the investigation.

PH Death is told through the eyes of Professor Carmody, who has quite a sense of humor given the circumstances. Some of these teachers are so full of themselves that they try to impress each other with their intelligence when the focus should be on finding the killer who could be one of them! This story is witty and a real page turner.

Paul Zunino





Late Reviews

(Those that didn't make the last
issue.)

Because I'm Watching (The Virtue Falls Series- Book 3)

Christina Dodd
St. Martin's Press

Hardcover
978-1250028457

★★★★★



Maddie fights off a couple of invisible attackers and suddenly everyone in the new neighborhood is calling her "Mad Maddie." She's not crazy but if anyone has a reason to be insane, it's Maddie. Twice she's been the only survivor in brutal attacks against people that she loves.

Maddie is trying to move on with her life. The coping techniques she uses include sleeping as little as possible. Unfortunately, this takes its toll. Maddie falls asleep while driving and crashes into the living room of a neighbor's house.

Jacob is a veteran who has nightmares of his own. Several young recruits under Jacob's command were tortured and killed. He wants to commit suicide but can't bring himself to go through with it. Instead, Jacob is slowly starving himself. Then Maddie comes crashing into his life and changes everything.

The repair of Jacob's home forces him to interact with his neighbors, especially Maddie. As he gets to know her, Jacob finds that Maddie's just as broken as he is. Together they slowly begin to heal. But as the two start

falling in love, Jacob begins to suspect that someone is trying to drive Maddie insane.

This is a continuation of a series. While it can be read alone, it is advisable to read the previous stories first. This is a very good book.

Sheila Griffin

Making the Play

T.J. Kline

Avon Impulse

E-book
978-0062651808

★★★★★

Bethany Mills' sole focus is her six-year-old son James. She won't break his heart by bringing someone into their lives only to have it not work out. But football star Grant McQuaid is challenging that decision.

James is a huge Mustangs fan, and Grant is his favorite player. Having a chance to play catch with him is huge for this little boy who struggles to fit in. At first, Bethany thinks Grant is using James to get to her, but his affection for her son is real. Despite her resistance, they begin to bond. But he will be going back to his team soon, hoping to be fully healed from his injuries. There can be no future here.

T.J. Kline launches her "Hidden Falls" series with this sweet tale. Readers will learn about cochlear implants through adorable James, and while Bethany can be prone to

Late

snap judgments, she's a likeable heroine. Readers will enjoy this appealing small town tale.

Heather Nordahl Files

Mixing Temptation

Sarah Jane Stone

Avon Impulse

E-Book

★★★★

Caroline Andrews has spent a long time in hiding. Her CO raped her and lied about it, claiming it was consensual. Now she's AWOL and hiding from the military, surrounded by the few people she can trust with her secret.

One of these people is Josh Summers. Sexual tension has simmered between them for some time, but she's not ready to act on it. Instead, she shares the pies he bakes for her. Josh knows it's time to collect on the date she once promised him, but getting past her defenses is a challenge. Still, he's making slow inroads, even with the well-meaning overprotective behavior of her friends. Then she discovers someone else who needs help, and she must risk discovery while she seeks her own closure.

Sara Jane Stone crafts a brilliant tale in her latest "Second Shot" novel. Readers of the series will love the continuation of characters' stories, but new readers will also find much to enjoy. Josh is a fabulous hero who works hard to earn the trust and love of his heroine.

Heather Nordahl Files

The Soldier's Scoundrel

Cat Sebastian

Avon Impulse

E-book

978-0062642486

★★★★ 1/2

Jack Turner's job is to help ladies solve their problems, and he is willing to use questionable methods to get the job done. He's come up in the world since his childhood with shady parents, and now he runs his business in the same building as his sister's dress shop. Then Oliver Rivington walks through his door.

Oliver spent time fighting in the war and has an injured leg to show for it. The things he saw made him a true believer in respect for the law, and he finds Jack's actions in his work to be morally repugnant. His sister has hired Jack, so Oliver tries to get him off the case, but instead Oliver and Jack end up working together. But Jack knows about Oliver's

secret desires (a dangerous thing in this time), and he has them too.

Cat Sebastian pens an extraordinary tale in this romance between a gentleman and a scoundrel. Both heroes are fascinating and well-drawn, and the twin plot lines will keep readers' attention.

Heather Nordahl Files

When a Marquess Loves a Woman

Vivienne Lorret

Avon Impulse

E-book

978-0062446350

★★★★

Five years ago, Juliet Granworth broke Max Harwick's heart. Right after he kissed her for the first time, she ran away and married another man. Now she's a widow, and they are adversaries. They've placed a bet on the identity of this Season's Original. If she loses, Juliet will leave London and Max won't have to see the woman who hurt him any more.

When he kissed her, Max showed her what love could be. But she had to marry an immensely wealthy man to save her father from debtor's prison. Her husband treated her abominably, resulting in her never wanting to marry again. But suddenly, Juliet's and Max's passion bubbles over.

Vivienne Lorret's latest "Season's Original" tale is a joy from first page to last. The tale's twists and turns will keep readers enthralled. There are several characters from prior books, but new readers will not be lost. The chemistry between Juliet and Max is strong, making for a thrilling read.

Heather Nordahl Files



HAPPY
HOLIDAYS

FROM THE STAFF AT

AFFAIRE
DE
COEUR