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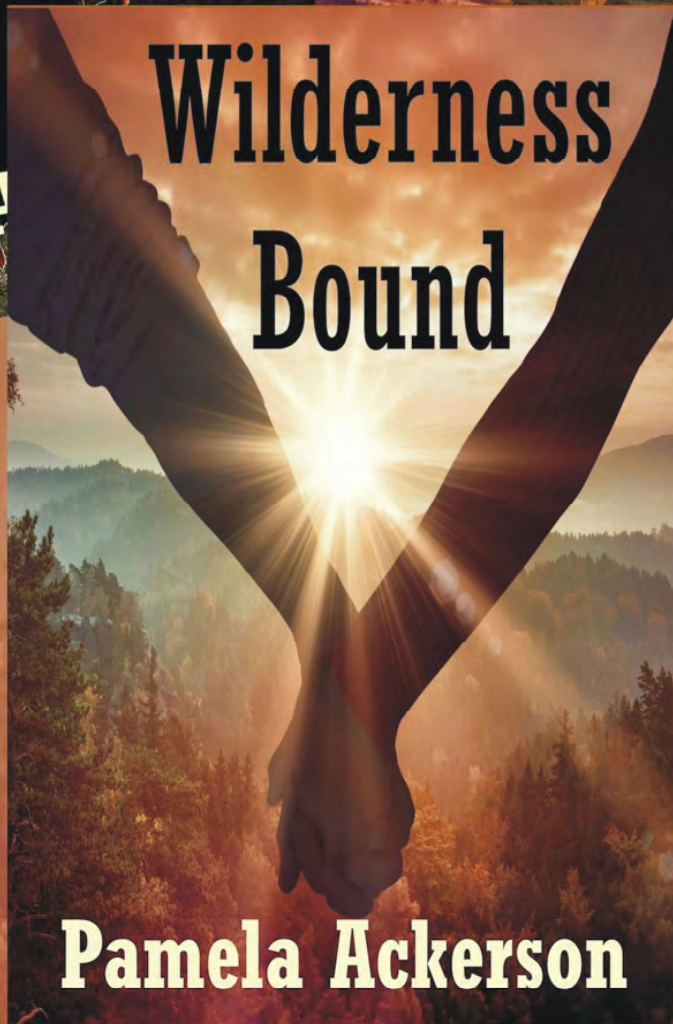
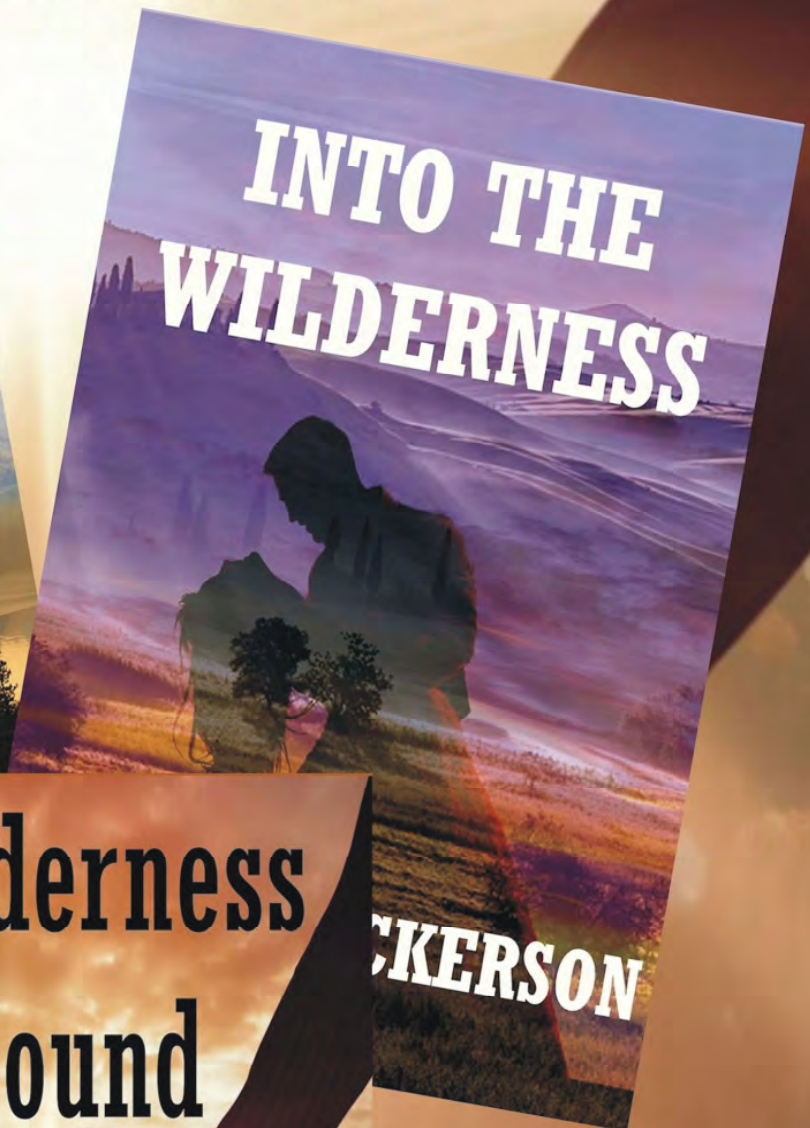
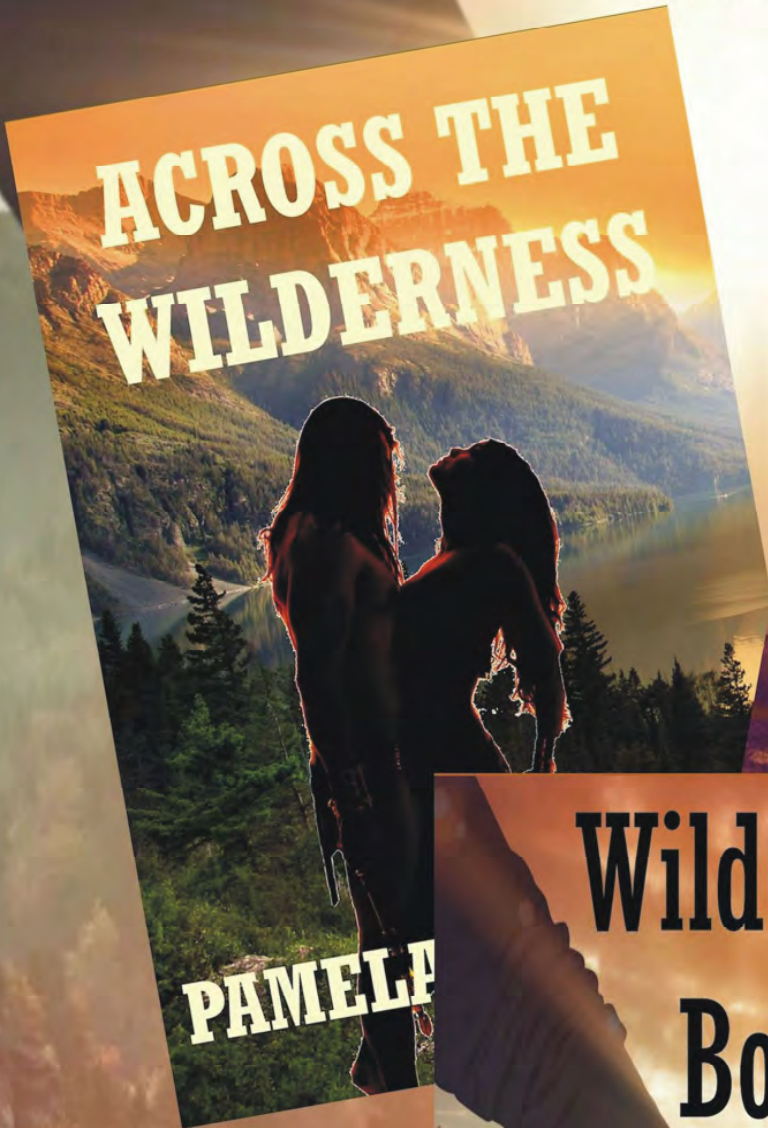
What's in a Name?
Kat Martin Knows!



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
in St. Augustine, Florida



Stories that stir within us the
unquenchable hope for a
better tomorrow.



Affaire de Coeur

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The Big Forty-Four

What do they have to do with Literature?



Presidents' Day is one of those rarely celebrated. As a nation, we're happy that it's a federal legal holiday and we get a day off, though by combining Lincoln's birthday and Washington's birthday years ago, we actually lost a day. Still, there are no parades or stump speeches to commemorate these two stalwart men who affected our country—just sales on everything from mattresses to cars. They would be appalled to see their contributions reduced to a thirty second commercial. So we at Affaire de Coeur took it upon ourselves to right a wrong in some small way. We wish to acknowledge how these presidents and others contributed to American literature through their acts and deeds, misdeeds, and even by their deaths.

They are a unique group, the forty-four Presidents of the United States. They are elite and varied; forty-three white men (or unacknowledged mixed heritage) and one African-American. They are from different states and different economic backgrounds. Many have been lawyers; some statesmen, plantation owners/farmers, and a few, like our first President, military men.

Because of their position as President of the United States, as well as their diversities, their very existence has become fodder for writers.

First and foremost are the biographies/autobiographies. Regardless of their tenure, their accomplishments while in office, or their roads to becoming President, every President has a biography. Biographies became tradition, much like the Presidential libraries of today, everybody gets one. Understandably, some Presidents' terms in office were more notable. If we were to poll the average Joe (or Jane) and ask them who they think are the most famous (or infamous) and why, we would certainly get some of the following:

George Washington - for defeating the British and becoming the first president;

Thomas Jefferson - for his diplomatic role and expanding the country. More recently, however, for being a slave owner and having so many children with his slave Sally Henning;

John Adams - founding father who was a brilliant lawyer and statesman; first to be part of the father/son presidency;

Andrew Jackson - gained fame as a general in the War of 1812, but was renown for his hatred of Indians, creating the infamous Trail of Tears which resulted in the deaths of thousands of Cherokee Indians;

James K. Polk - provoked battles with Mexico which resulted in the U.S. acquisitions of New Mexico, Northern and Southern California, Nevada,

and Arizona;

Abraham Lincoln - ended the Civil War and slavery – assassinated.

William McKinley - assassinated.

Andrew Johnson--succeeded Lincoln. First to be impeached;

Theodore Roosevelt - Rough Riders and naturalist. Cousin to FDR.

Herbert Hoover - the Depression;

Franklin Roosevelt - New Deal; Social Security; WWII; elected three times.;

Dwight Eisenhower - Army General; U.S. freeway system.

John Kennedy - first Catholic President; Cuban missile crisis; Camelot – assassinated;

Richard Nixon - Watergate break-in. Resigned;

Lyndon Johnson--Vietnam War, Passed the Civil Rights Act;

Barack Obama - First African-American president.

Despite the popularity or notoriety of each of our presidents, all have

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had at least one biography written about them. The American President series is responsible for many of them. Recently, the *Washington Post* conducted a poll of their readers to determine the best of the presidential biographies. Among them are *L.B.J.*, *The Passage of Power*, *John Adams* by David McCullough (which was made into an Emmy Award winning HBO series of the same name) and *Lincoln*, the movie, written by Doris Kerns Goodwin, who, herself, is famous for historical presidential offerings.

Those who touch the President, tangentially, have also become the subject of books. And some cabinet members, such as the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Homeland Security, are but a few who have had their own books. The *Riddle of Dr. Mudd* chronicles the life

of Samuel Mudd, a physician who set the leg of John Wilkes Booth, the man who assassinated Lincoln. Mudd was accused of being a Lincoln conspirator and was imprisoned until pardoned by Andrew Johnson. Others include books about Billy Carter, President Jimmy Carter's brother; President Nixon's partners in crime - Erlichman and Halderman; and presidential spouses, lovers and other significant people who are close to the President.

Then there are the fictitious offerings involving both real and fictitious presidents. My favorite three include *The American President*, written by Aaron Sorkin, which features a widower President with a teenage daughter who meets a new love. Dean Devlin and Roland Emmerich are writers of another favorite of mine, *Independence Day*, where that President is a bad-ass

fighter pilot and goes after the aliens after he's made a totally corny speech. *Olympus Has Fallen*, written by Creighton Rothenberger and Katrin Benedikt, is a thriller where the bad guys have managed to break into the White House. Hasn't that happened at least twice during the Obama Presidency? And who could forget the Presidential heroics exhibited in *Air Force One*?

There are many other thrillers, mysteries, and even a few romantic stories woven around a real or fictitious President. As long as there are no boundaries on imagination and innovation, who can predict where the stories will go? And, if the next president is a woman....Egads!

For Black History Month Pamela Ackerson Presents.... Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in St. Augustine, Florida



Visiting St. Augustine, Florida, the oldest city in what is now the United States, is a common event for my husband and myself. We enjoy the history that surrounds and envelopes the city -- how it came about, the different countries it was owned by, etc. However, this year we visited just a few days prior to Martin Luther King Day.

If you have been to St. Augustine and walked through the park, you would've seen the footprints and memorials. If you've walked down St. George Street, you've walked along the same path that Dr. King did; a

peaceful march encouraging equal rights for all. Too many people don't know that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited St. Augustine in 1964, during a time when our country was going through its own growing pains of acceptance. It was a tense, hot, and violent time in our history; passionate emotions flew between citizens of the U.S. who fought for equal and civil rights and those who were against segregation and equality.

If you take a tour, they'll tell you about the homes in the Lincolnville area that Dr. King stayed in, keeping it secret, hiding from the death threats, and about

the potential harm it may have caused those who were helping him and those he was helping in return.

He didn't receive a lot of encouragement from the local officials. In fact, they had prohibited him and anyone else from organizing marches and demonstrations. Even with a Federal Court order allowing demonstrations, the local officials, as well as the governor, refused to obey the court order. The KKK was strong in the South but there were enough out there to fight against them.

Dr. King was supported by local residents from all races; his efforts may not have happened as quickly as he would've liked, but he is remembered and honored among those intrepid fighters in the oldest city in the United States.

Things to see and do:

Take a tour, whether you use the Old Town Trolley, the Red Train Tour, or any tour, take one. You'll be amazed at the amount of history you come away with, and the fun you will have.



City Gates of St. Augustine



Shopping, shopping, and more shopping!

Countless museums, too many to name, I'm guessing we've been to all of them.

Food everywhere you go, our favorites:

The Mill Top (closing for renovations)

O.C. Whites

Harry's Seafood

Scarlett's

Café Del Hidalgo

White Lion

And to top your evening off with drinks and entertainment, we highly recommend:

Stogies Jazz Club on Charlotte St. (Say hello to Eric for us!)

Interested in more travel blogs from Pamela Ackerson?

Visit affairedecoeur.com for more adventures in travel through the United States and Canada.

Pamela Ackerson is an international bestselling author of Native American time travel, contemporary romance, and children's stories.

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Two Book
Three Book
Four

We love
books
and we've
got more!

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Journalist, Romance Writer, Oklahoma Authors' Hall of Fame Deborah Camp, a Literary Force



Author of more than 40 novels, Deborah Camp lives in Oklahoma. She has been a full-time writer since she graduated from the University of Tulsa. She worked for a few years as a reporter for newspapers before

becoming a freelance writer.

Deborah's first novel was published in the late 1970's, and her books have been published by Jove, New American Library, Harlequin, Silhouette, and Avon. She was inducted

into the Oklahoma Authors Hall of Fame, and she is a charter member of the Romance Writers of America. Widely published in non-fiction, she writes and edits for a magazine focused on small businesses. Ms. Camp taught fiction writing for more than 10 years at a community college.

Ms. Camp has favored AdC with an excerpt from her newest release, *Through the Heart*

A shudder raced through her and her stomach knotted. Nausea rose up to her throat as darkness descended in her mind. "I'm sending you an S.O.S. Sending you an S.O.S. An S.O.S. Can you find me? Can you hear me?"

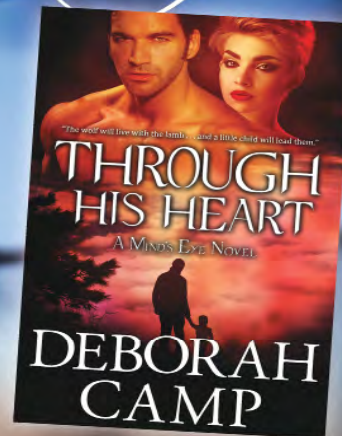
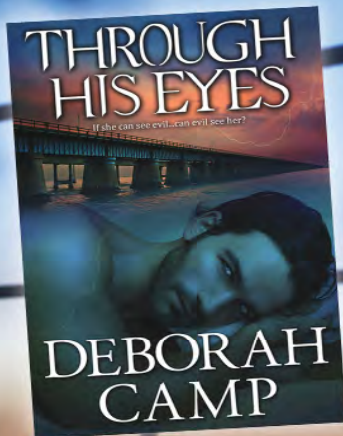
"I hear you," Trudy whispered, answering the small, trembling voice.

"Did you say something, Rachel? Are you singing something?" This was a different voice in her head. A deep bass, but gentle. Coaxing, cajoling, cunning.

The darkness parted like a curtain in Trudy's mind and Rachel came into view. She sat in a child's white rocking chair, her red tennis shoes dangling inches from the floor. A wedge of

Make 2016 Mind Blowing!

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All three novels in the Mind's Eye series by Deborah Camp are available on Amazon.

purple discolored her right cheek. Her lips twitched and her chin quivered.

“Be a good girl and do what you’re told and that won’t happen to you again. No one wants to hurt you. You gotta obey, though. Can’t say ‘no’ to your elders. Your mama should have taught you that.”

“It hurts.”

“Want me to kiss it and make it well?”

Rachel rounded her shoulders, making herself smaller. “Nuh-uh.”

“Okay then. I could make it stop hurting though . . . I’ll read you a Bible story. How about that? Remember what we talked about? God is way up here . . . then there’s his disciples right here . . . and then your elders . . . and you’re way down below that.”

Glimpses of hands . . . moving up and down, illustrating the levels. Dirty nails, dry skinned knuckles.

“Where’s Mommy?”

“Are you hearing me? This is important.”

“I want to talk to Mommy.”

“She doesn’t want to talk to you! God gave you to us. Your Mommy is busy serving the Lord and now you’re here serving us because it’s been ordained. Quit touching your face! That won’t help it heal. Come sit in my lap while I read. Did you hear me ask nice? You won’t like it if I have to ask twice. That’s my good girl. You act like this all the time and you won’t get any more boo-boos.”

Was he kissing her? Was he licking her?

New York Times best-selling author

Kat Martin

Grants *Affaire de Coeur* a mini interview and answers the age old question...

“What’s in a Name?”

New York Times bestselling author Kat Martin is a graduate of the University of California at Santa Barbara where she majored in Anthropology and also studied History. She is married to L.J. Martin, author of western, non-fiction, and suspense novels.

Kat has written more than sixty-five novels. Sixteen million copies of her books are in print and she has been published in twenty foreign countries, including Japan, France, Germany, Argentina, Greece, China, Russia, and Spain.

Born in Bakersfield, California, Kat currently resides in Missoula, Montana, on a small ranch in the beautiful Sapphire Mountains.

AdC: *What inspires you to write?*

I have no idea why I was chosen to be a writer. It never crossed my mind. Once I started I just could not stop. I felt I had found my calling. I’m inspired by the stories that come into my head. I’m inspired by the readers who enjoy my efforts so much. Makes all the hard work worthwhile.

AdC: *Tell us about your writing process.*

Being a workaholic, I write every day unless I’m traveling. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, I go into town to go to the gym. I’m back by noon, usually do some book promo, then write or go over what I wrote the day before. The other four days a week are full writing days, with a little promo before I settle down and

get to work.

AdC: *Do you listen to or talk to your characters?*

I don’t talk to them, but they seem to talk to me. I wrote something a couple of days ago (just starting a new book so not used to the characters yet). It felt completely off to me. I was freaking out. I got an idea what to do, went back and wrote a different opening and now things are falling into place.

AdC: *Have you been to Alaska?*

I’ve made two month-long trips to Alaska. Driving trips, each more than five thousand miles long, staying in the back of a tiny pickup camper, it’s not for the faint of heart. I would do it again in a heartbeat!

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

In the course of writing more than sixty books, I’ve learned that a character’s name is extremely important. I spend hours poring over lists of names: American, English, Italian, French, Japanese, Russian, Chinese, etc.

Months before I start a novel, I begin to work on choosing the right names for my hero and heroine, which is a way of getting to know them.

I like names that evoke an instant picture. I’ve been writing about the Brodies for the last five books, men with strong family bonds. Ty, Dylan, Nick, Rafe, and now Ethan are names I hope will make the reader think of guys with strength, courage, and principals--and of course tons of sex appeal.

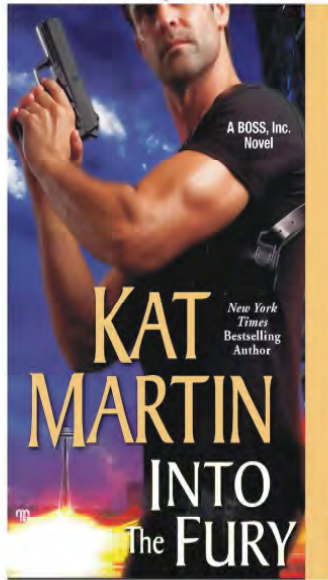
In *Into the Fury*, Ethan is a private investigator who works for his cousin, Ian, the owner of Brodie Operations Security Services, Inc. in Seattle. BOSS, Inc. they call it. Ethan’s a man used to taking charge, a hard man and capable, but he isn’t happy about his current assignment--babysitting a bunch of self-absorbed lingerie models on a cross-country fashion show tour.

Ethan is a man who has lost faith in the opposite sex--until he meets one of La Belle’s top ten models--Valentine Hart.

Val is another example of the importance of a name. Valentine Hart is actually her stage name and I think it does its job. Valerie Hartman is nothing at all like the image her stage name projects--though it takes Ethan a while to figure that out. And to learn there is a lot more to being a top model than just having a pretty face.

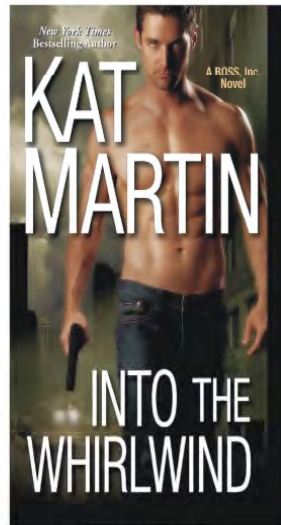
Ethan is 6’3 and built like a brick house. I can’t imagine a guy named

February 2016



KAT MARTIN

New York Times Bestselling Author



The Brodies of Alaska



THE AGAINST SERIES

June 2016

The Raines of Wind Canyon



Ethan Brodie being a wimp. Or a woman named Valentine Hart being anything but a sex pot.

Another member of the BOSS Inc. crew is Dirk Reynolds, another strong male name. Since Dirk was supposed to remain a secondary character, I gave him a bad-ass cropped horseshoe mustache and a cool dragon tattoo.

Then Dirk wound up being such a hunk I had to give him a book of his own! *Into the Whirlwind* will be out in June, one of my all-time favorites.

Into the Firestorm, the final book in the trilogy, another of my all-time favorites, is Luke Brodie's story--a bounty hunter extraordinaire. Luke was former special ops. He's infamous as a bail enforcement agent and unrepentant womanizer--until he meets his match with Emma

Sullivan.

Choosing Emma's name took me weeks and, truth be told, it still doesn't sit exactly right. Emma Brodie works better for me--fortunately, this is a romance so we are pretty sure she's going to end up with the right name eventually!

I hope you'll look for Ethan and Val in *Into the Fury*, out January 26th, and that you'll watch for the next two BOSS Inc. novels, *Into the Whirlwind* and *Into the Firestorm*.

How to find Kat: www.katmartin.com
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Remembering a Gentle Soul

by Lanelle Roberts



On December 29, 2015, the Snead family, the *AdC* family, and the world lost a gentle soul. Janine Snead, youngest daughter of *AdC*'s editor, Louise Snead, and *AdC*'s foreign correspondent, passed unexpectedly from this earth. She was just 37 years old.

Janine Deloris Snead was born and raised in Oakland. She was a happy and loving child, always with a smile on her face and a generous heart, especially when it came to animals, big or small. She began her animal rescuing career at the age of seven. By the time of her death, she had rescued more than 25 animals of many species, including: dogs, cats, birds, turtles, chickens, and a bearded dragon.

At the age of 9, Janine was diagnosed with

Juvenile Diabetes and was to suffer the ups and downs of that disease the rest of her life. But she refused to let it stop her.

After graduating from California State University Long Beach with degrees in French and Spanish, Janine took off to see the world, travelling alone. She visited Italy, Greece, Morocco, Costa Rica, Spain, Great Britain, Ireland, Scotland, Amsterdam and a number of countries in the Caribbean and became a Peace Corps volunteer in Jordan, then taught school in France for a few years. After returning to the United States, she decided to return to Cal State Long Beach to get her Master's degree in Italian. Janine loved words and writing, in any language. Puns were her favorite. With a natural ear for languages, she picked up vernacular and accents with ease and would definitely catch some of the natives of whatever country she visited when she swung into their dialect and used their curse words with ease.

Janine was a free spirit, with a strong will and determination to live each day to its fullest. She had a beautiful heart, quick wit, sense of humor and a smile that would light up a room. Everyone who met her loved her.

She left us much too soon and will be greatly missed. We, the family of *Affaire de Coeur*, extend our heartfelt condolences to the Snead family and especially to Louise.

Janine, now that you have your wings, you are free from pain and these earthly bonds to soar above the clouds and visit all the rest of the places you wanted to visit during your life. *Bon voyage, ma chere*. May you rest in peace.

THE INNOCENT AUCTION

Their love was a death sentence.

THE INNOCENT AUCTION

Their love was a death sentence.

THE INNOCENT AUCTION

It started with a plea for help and ended with forbidden love, the love between a Viscount and a stable-boy. An impossible love and a guarantee of the hangman's noose.

Will Deacon fight for Tom? Will he risk the death sentence and take that fight from the stately halls of his English mansion to the horrors of Newgate Prison and the slums of London?

Victoria Sue

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The Innocent Auction

Victoria Sue shares an excerpt from her book

London 1810.

Their love was a death sentence.

Deacon, Viscount Carlisle, was aware of the slums and gin-lanes of London; just as he was aware of the underground traffic that furnished the brothels and bath houses with human innocents. He was also aware that the so-called justice system would hang the accused without much of an attempt at a defense, unless the unfortunate had deep pockets to pay for it. He just hadn't expected to be directly involved in any of it.

It started with a plea for help and ended with forbidden love, the love between a Viscount and a stable-boy - an impossible love and a guarantee of the hangman's noose.

Will Deacon fight for Tom? Will he risk the death sentence and take that fight from the stately halls of his English mansion to the horrors of Newgate Prison and the slums of London? Or will he realize that if he doesn't, death will be a welcome end to the loneliness of the sentence he is already living?

London 1806

It wasn't beyond the realms of possibility that Deacon, Viscount Carlisle, would find himself swinging at Tyburn within hours. It was either that or follow in his late father's footsteps and drown his responsibilities, until an early death, in whatever brandy was most convenient.

Deacon sighed silently and eyed his younger cousin who was

fashionably dressed as ever, even if the white silk breeches were a little snug for Deacon's taste. The man was positively vibrating, and Deacon had an awful feeling it was due to fear and not excitement.

Deacon raised his eyes as his footman appeared. "Caldwell, bring the brandy and you may retire." Deacon ignored the murmured assent, and waited until the library door closed. "Now," he fixed what he hoped was a stern eye on Edward, his younger cousin of five, "start at the beginning."

Edward stood nervously, pulling weakly at his cravat as if it were too tight. "As I said, "it's Argyll." Deacon nodded somewhat fatalistically. Beau Grantham, Viscount Argyll, was the biggest scandal to hit the Grantham family in at least a century. If Deacon's jet black hair ever turned gray, every hair would have Beau's name on it. The man was completely unconcerned with reputation or social standing and drove his mother — Deacon's aunt — to have a fit of the vapors at every social occasion on the calendar. He also happened to be Deacon's childhood very best friend in the whole world. He could nearly hear Beau's declaration to that end as they had run amok in the paddocks at Sandgate Manor, where Deacon had spent all his happy memories as a child — every summer — before he was finally sent away to school.

"What's he done now?" Deacon said, deliberately infusing his words with boredom to hide the nagging feeling stalking his insides. The last time they had met and paid Beau's fines to push the scandal firmly under the Aubusson rug that decorated the drawing room floor,

Deacon had resolutely told Beau that he was done. The only thing he would pay, if there was one more scandal, would be Beau's passage to the Indies. It was only Deacon's money that had kept him from being pilloried. Beau's friends hadn't been so lucky, and one of them had been so pelted with stones, mud, and bricks on his ride to be shamed, he lay in a stupor at his parent's house still, two full months after the public humiliation in the Haymarket.

They were both silent while Caldwell reappeared with the decanter and glasses. Deacon thanked him and poured out two generous amounts. He had a feeling he was going to need it. Settling back down in his wing chair, he dismissed his footman for the night.

Edward jumped up and started pacing. "You have to help; I can't find him to offer any warning."

Deacon's eyebrows rose and he felt the first flutter of unease in the pit of his stomach. "What do you mean warn him?"

Edward's hands were twisting as he turned around. He whispered, "He's going to an Innocent Auction."

If Deacon hadn't been concentrating, he would have hardly heard the mumbled words. The flutter in his stomach turned to clay bricks that settled sickly. Dear God. What had Beau done this time? "Where?"

Edward swallowed. "The Tobacco Dock. One of the empty warehouses off Pennington Street."

Deacon shook his head, incredulously. Innocent Auctions? He didn't think they still existed. "I thought the Runners had put a stop to those years ago." There had

continued on page 29

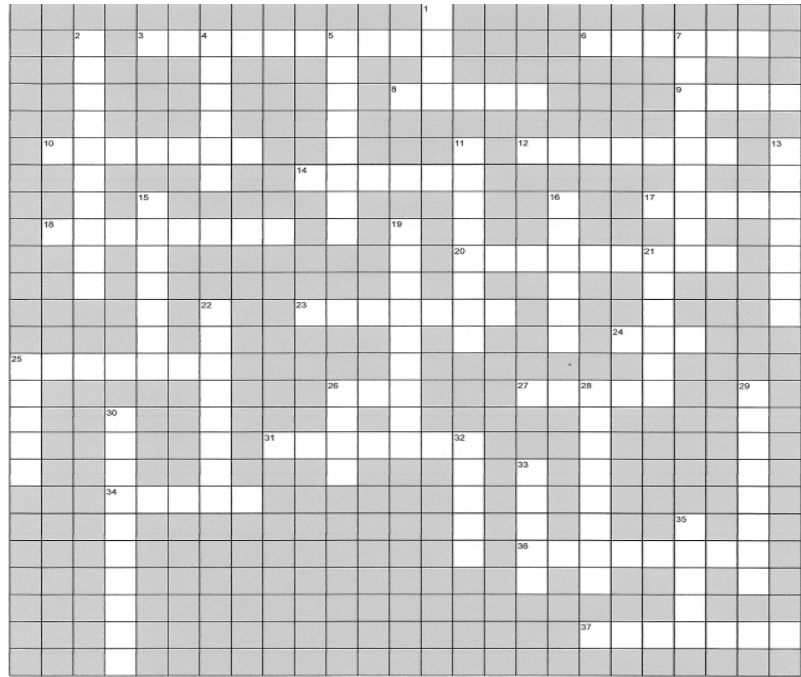
PUZZLER

Across

3. Host city of this year's Super Bowl.
6. AFC Champs playing this year.
8. Suffered a "wardrobe malfunction" during her performance.
9. The year February gets an extra day.
10. February's flowers.
12. AFC's quarterback.
14. Denver's mascot.
17. This is Superbowl # _
18. What team has won the most Super Bowls?
20. Their ads during the Super Bowl feature Clydesdale and always win an "aaahhhh."
23. One of the presidents whose birthday in this month.
24. The best part of the Superbowl, shown between plays.
25. *Gung Hay Fat Choy!* ____ New Year.
26. This bowl, featuring elected players, is held in Hawaii s week before the Super Bowl.
27. Simultaneous bowl featuring canines.
31. She is credited with singing the most moving rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner."
34. Simultaneous bowl featuring felines.
36. NFC champs playing this year.
37. My team, the OAKLAND _____ have played in 3 Super Bowls.

Down

1. This lady is singing the National Anthem at the 2016 Super Bowl.
2. This other president's birthday is in February.
4. Broadway Joe _____
5. The winners' trophy.
7. Lovers' holiday in February.
11. Sport played in the Super Bowl
13. Military planes do this before the game.
15. "_____ Wins championships!"
16. NFC's quarterback.
19. Method of scoring in the Super Bowl.
21. Movie that depicts a terrorist attack at the Super Bowl. *Black _____*.
22. February's gem stone.



25. Favored snack of the Super Bowl.
26. Name of this rodent who predicts the weather for the next six weeks.
27. Carolina's mascot.
28. Performing in the 2016 Super Bowl's half-time.
29. This sport has its all star game in February.
32. The length of a football field is 100 ____ .
33. February is _____ History Month
35. Method of scoring in the Super Bowl is by kicking a _____ goal.



Did You Know?

The puppies and kittens featured in the "bowl" games are from the shelters of the Host Cities and are up for adoption?

PREVIEWS OF UPCOMING BOOKS



MARCH REVIEWS

Carew, O. *My Best Friend's Stepfather*, St. Martin's
Cutler, M. *One Hot Summer*, St. Martin's
Femsle, T. *Let it Breathe* Montlake
Grey, A. *Wedding Night with the Earl*, St. Martin's
Ryder, D. *Dangerous to Know*, St. Martin's
Scott, J. S. *The Billionaire's Touch*, Montlake
Spinella, L. *Ghost Gifts*, Montlake
Warren, C. *Rocked by Love*, St. Martin's

Barreau, N. *Paris is Always a Good Idea*, St. Martin's
Shelton, P. *The Cracked Spine*, Minotaur
Wallace, A. *Skinny Dipping With Murder*, St. Martin's

APRIL REVIEWS

Burton, M. *The Shark*, Montlake
Bybee, C. *Doing It Over*, Montlake
Collins, M. *Good Dukes Wear Black*, St. Martin's
Grant, D. *Smoke and Fire* St. Martin's Press
Hawkins, A. *You Can't Always Get the Marquess You Want*, St. Martin's
Johansen, I., *Hide Away*, St. Martin's
London, J. *Suddenly In Love*, Montlake
March, E. *Reunion Pass*, St. Martin's
McGinnis, M. *Heart Like Mine*, St. Martin's
Raye, K. *Red Hot Texas Nights*, St. Martin's
Sandlin, S. *Wild Man's Curse*, Montlake
Scott, K. *Dirty*, Griffin

Scottoline, L. *Most Wanted*, St. Martin's



Contemporary Romance Reviews

Cowboy Take Me Away (A Texas Kings Novel - Book 2)

Soraya Lane

St. Martin's

Mass Market

978-1250060099

★★★1/2

Hope has a new job, one that requires that she and her son move to Texas. One of Hope's first assignments is to artificially inseminate some heifers. Turns out they're owned by her best friend from college.

Throughout college, Chase loved to chase the ladies. He was never serious about anyone until he slept with his best friend. When Chase woke the next morning, Hope was gone. Unbeknownst to her, Hope took with her more than memories. She was pregnant with Chase's son.

Hope knew that Chase didn't want to settle down. If she told him about the baby, Chase would insist that his son be raised on the family's Texas ranch. Besides, Hope was needed at her family's ranch in Canada. So, she didn't tell him.

Chase is still overwhelmingly attracted to Hope. But something's different. Not only does he want her in

his bed, Chase wants Hope in his life, permanently. But when he discovers that Harrison is his son, will Chase be able to forgive Hope?

This book's predominantly about the physical aspect of the couple's love. The amount of vulgar language that's used around a woman and her child is unrealistic. No true cowboy would talk that way in front of a lady or a child. The sex is insanely hot but otherwise this is a very typical "secret baby" book.

Sheila Griffin

A Daring Proposal

Sandra Kerns

Create Space Indie

E-Book

B00EXWTV4C

★★★★

Chaney McBride's sister and future brother-in-law didn't tell her who the best man was at their wedding. It wasn't until she was walking down the aisle that she learned it was Jed Sampson, the man who almost destroyed her heart. On a dare, Chaney kissed Jed, opening up a whole can of worms that should've stayed sealed.

Contemporary

Jed had some serious problems, and Chaney was his answer. Chaney needed help and she refused to allow Jed to be the one to do it. She would never allow herself to get involved with the man again.

This is a well-written tug-of-war story with great characters – a must read for all the romantics out there.
Kitty Lane

Headed for Trouble

Shiloh Walker

St. Martin's

Trade Paperback

978-1250067944

★★★★★



Neve McKay had left, actually fled, the small Southern town of McKay's Treasure nine years ago. Her Scottish riverboat captain's great-great-great-grandfather and the love of his life had founded the town and made their fortune off the flowing Mississippi. Her family had money and a normal home life until that fateful night of the car accident. Eight-year-old Neve was trapped in the back of the wrecked car with one dead parent and the other slowly bleeding to death and no one around to help her. After their deaths, her older siblings did the best they could, but she was pretty much left on her own. And she pushed every limit she could, earning her the nickname of "Trouble." So she left to make her mark on the world and now, nine years later, was back with her tail between her legs. She was in trouble, needed help, and figured home was the only place safe. Plus, she had discovered the tiny town had acquired some new and very interesting citizens!

Ian Campbell had left Scotland a few years ago and come to America to start over. He and Neve's older brother had met in England in school and become best friends. Now Ian ran the local tavern for Brandon and with his thick build, Scottish brogue, gorgeous eyes, and kilt wearing, he was a serious chick magnet. He would respond once in a while, but no one ever made that spark he was looking for until this beautiful, if slightly disheveled, redhead walked into the bar. Their chemistry was immediate and explosive and shortly became hot and heavy. Then Ian discovered that his hot sexy miss was the younger sister of his best friend and all bets (and hands) were off. Until he discovered her life was in danger and he vowed no one would ever hurt her!

Headed for Trouble is a truly swoon-worthy romance novel. The heroine is flawed and in distress, but very worth saving. Ms. Walker addresses the very real and serious issue of psychological abuse in a manner that many women can relate to...i.e., nobody believes them because, "He just seems so nice." But with her Scottish hunk to the rescue, Neve has never been safer. And the readers are in for a treat, not only with the sexy romance between Neve and Ian, but also the edge-of-your-seat stalking of her ex and its very satisfying conclusion. A true five-star romance.

Lani Roberts

Into the Fury

Kat Martin

Zebra

Mass Market

978-1420139006

★★★★★

Ethan Brodie works for a family business, Brodie Operations Security Services, or BOSS, Inc. He's not thrilled with his latest assignment. Ten of LaBelle Lingerie's top models have received threatening letters calling them "sinners, sluts, and whores." Ethan will have to protect them while LaBelle takes their show on tour, and he expects them to be spoiled and self-absorbed.

Val models as Valentine Hart, but she's really Valerie Hartman, veterinary student and ordinary girl with extraordinary looks. She became a model because she won a contest, needing money for school. She finds Ethan attractive from the moment she sees him, but he cannot get involved with his assignment. His ex has left him bitter about women as well, though he eventually realizes that Val is different.

Kat Martin launches her "BOSS, Inc." series with this title, which is connected to earlier series, but can stand alone. Ethan starts out as a clichéd woman-hater, but gains dimension as the tale progresses. The mystery subplot, which slowly ratchets up danger and tension, is a nicely paced puzzler.

Heather Nordahl Files

Love Struck (Book 2 Miss Match Series)

Laurelin McGee

St. Martin's

Mass Market

978-1250059192

★★★★★

Lacy joined an online songwriters' support group. It

didn't cure her writer's block, but Lacy, aka LoveCoda, did meet her soulmate, Folx. The group's rules prohibit members from revealing identifying information. The slightest slip and the moderators boot people out of the group. This website is the couple's only source of contact. They can't risk being kicked out.

Eli, aka Folx, has fallen in love with his online friend, LoveCoda. They make plans to meet on Christmas Eve. Meanwhile, Eli and his band have a tour to get ready for. At the last minute their opening act cancels. Lacy is contacted about touring with them. She's thrilled! It's a great opportunity and she loves their music.

The band's lead singer is the best-looking of the bunch, but the man Lacy finds herself in bed with is Eli. As the tour continues, Lacy realizes that she's falling for Eli. But how can that be when she loves Folx?

Eli's struggling with the same problem. He's in love with LoveCoda but he's falling for Lacy. How can Eli choose between a woman who is perfect for him, one he won't meet for several months, and the wonderful woman that's right in front of him?

This sequel can be read alone. Despite a stupid misunderstanding and vulgar language throughout, this is a good book.

Sheila Griffin

The Mistletoe Inn

Richard Paul Evans

Simon & Schuster

Hardcover

978-1501119798

☆☆☆1/2

The Mistletoe Inn is a novel to get a reader into the right mood for the Christmas season.

Kimberly Rossi is a woman who has been failed by love each time, but is determined to be a romance author. Her father pays for her to attend a conference at the Mistletoe Inn in Colorado at which her favorite author and the one who starts her writing is the keynote speaker. At the conference, Kimberly meets fellow author Zeke Faulkner and true love seems a real possibility, if she is willing to let go of past hurts and open her heart.

This is an eminently readable book. Evans taps into heartfelt emotions and conveys a sense of hope without turning a blind eye to the tragedy and the hardships that even the bright Christmas lights cannot erase. Kimberly is a young woman with a lot of heartache that the reader will feel keenly and hope that she is able to take a chance on love. Her close relationship with her father and their shared tragedy is poignant.

Contemporary

The insights and the view into the publishing world, particularly the romance novel industry, will appeal to devoted readers of the genre. *The Mistletoe Inn* is highly recommended.

Danielle Hill

Montana Hearts: Sweet Talkin' Cowboy

Darlene Panzera

Avon Impulse

E-book

978-0062394705

☆☆☆1/2

Sammy Jo Macpherson and Luke Collins have known each other for many years. Their families have been feuding for decades, but the younger generation of Collinses gets along just fine.

Luke served in the military, and the mental wounds that he bears are compounded by physical wounds sustained in a motorcycle accident. Surgery should correct his limp, but he is afraid of being put under. He has bigger things to worry about as well. Men in ski masks have been peering in windows and chasing away the paying guests at Collins Country Cabins. Any more mischief could seriously damage their business, which has already been rocked by embezzlement by people they thought they could trust. They also have a road block in Sammy Jo's father, who is in a position of authority and is not afraid to use any means at his disposal to thwart the Collins family in their building project.

Darlene Panzera's story is part of a series, but stands alone. Her hero is first reluctant to get involved with the heroine, then takes any opportunity to mistrust her, which can be frustrating. But the tale's likable heroine and suspenseful plot will satisfy readers.

Heather Nordahl Files

Contemporary

No Exit

Lena Diaz

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062349118

☆☆☆1/2

Jace Atwell has been watching Melissa Cardenas for a while. Now it's time to try to gain her trust in hopes of getting closer to her father Cyprian, who is most likely behind the deaths of innocent people. The plan is to rescue her from danger. Jace takes part in a setup with another member of his team, but it goes horribly awry when his partner starts shooting at Melissa—not part of the plan—and even worse when Cyprian shows up before he can gain her trust.

Melissa doesn't know this man, but she defends him from her father's men when they beat him. She decides to hire Jace as her bodyguard. She has been gathering information on her father and those who are connected to him, and is seeing ominous signs that he is involved in evil deeds. Trust will be hard to come by, as she and Jace don't know they're on the same side.

Lena Diaz's latest "Exit, Inc." thriller takes readers on a ride that starts on the first page and does not stop. While this is part of a series, this tale is easy to follow on its own. The journey is sometimes harrowing as loyalties are challenged.

Heather Nordahl Files

Playing Hard

Melanie Scott

St. Martin's

Mass Market

978-1025077202

☆☆☆☆

Amelia is a career-driven woman with no time for a fling, let alone a romance. She has her Wall Street job and a new assignment on the line; she needs to focus on her professional life. This all changes when she becomes attracted to Oliver Shields, a baseball star with a reputation as a womanizer. While they are attracted to each other, they both have serious careers to keep and advance in. Will they take a chance and let their romance take place?

This is a very good story and I do not want to take

away from the writing of it. The characters are very well written, and the plot is a good one as well. It was enjoyable to read the classic work or love conflict story line that I tend to enjoy. For me, the main drawback was the sports. As a female who does not like sports and doesn't know a baseball from a hockey puck, I did not get into that particular element.

Lenore Lovecraft

Redemption

Kate Douglas

St. Martin's

Mass Market

978-1250064776

☆☆☆1/2

Ben knew he had to go back and make things right. He had finally faced this fact after his last tour in Afghanistan where he almost didn't make it, and knew that he couldn't go out without making things right with his younger brother RJ. He hadn't been home or spoken to RJ in over 20 years, but the guilt was eating him alive, and the only way he could assuage that feeling was to go to him and beg for forgiveness. That's why he now found himself driving into his hometown looking for a place to stay. He couldn't and wouldn't stay at his parents' home. But when the beautiful young lady said she and her roommate had a spare room he could use, he couldn't begin to describe the feelings he was having. Things like that didn't happen to him; he wasn't worthy.

Lola and Mandy Monroe were discussing the horrible kidnapping of their friend and roommate Kaz and how she had been saved by her boyfriend Jake and lamenting the fact that there were very few decent men out there like Jake. They didn't know Jake, personally, but knew he was rich, drop dead gorgeous and loved Kaz. As they headed into the kitchen for dinner, Mandy flippantly said that they had to eat to keep up their strength in case some good-looking, smart, nice, single guy showed up at their door. To which Lola replied, "Well, if he does, as the older and wiser sister, I get first dibs!" A few hours later, Ben Lowell knocked on their front door, following a lead on how to find his brother, and Lola AND Ben fell in love.

As hard as it is to swallow the whole "love at first sight" in a romance novel, Ms. Douglas makes this totally work and plausible. Ben is a tortured hero, who has changed his life around and is looking for redemption for a wrong he perpetrated many years ago. Lola is a kind, loving, and forgiving person who helps Ben realize that he is worthy of forgiveness and is capable of being loved. The

Contemporary

two of them have chemistry from their first meeting, yet take time to develop an understanding of each other, while dealing with Ben's problems. *Redemption* is very aptly named, and the suspense subplot, secondary characters, and beautifully described background of San Francisco and Sonoma County make this a book you won't want to put down.

Lani Roberts

Red Hot Texas Nights

Kimberly Raye

St. Martin's

Mass Market

978-1205063960

☆☆☆

Brandy Tucker has made a new recipe for moonshine that rivals her family's old recipe from a century ago. Her family and the Sawyers have been moonshine rivals for decades. It seems that Tucker, who is of the Sawyer bloodline, has stolen her recipe from her. He is a bull rider who is getting ready for an important competition. The two of them have an undeniable attraction despite their family's history. Can the two take a chance and see where their lust takes them?

This reviewer was a fan of the very steamy scenes in this book and the pacing of the plot was spot on. The characters were very distinct and I liked the sassy Brandy attitude. Even the family history of the rivalry was a fun element that I enjoyed. For me, the only thing that took me out of it was the bull riding element as I have just never gotten into that sort of thing. Everything else about the story was great and the romance was well written.

Lenore Lovecraft

Rustler's Moon

Jodi Thomas

HQN

Mass Market

978-0373788620

☆☆☆1/2

Angela Harold's father has just died of a heart attack while being mugged. He left a warning behind for his daughter, telling her to disappear. So she packs up and moves to Crossroads, Texas, to take a job as curator at the Ransom Canyon museum without telling her remaining

family. Her fear of being followed leads her to accept the job under an assumed last name.

Angela's first meeting with Wilkes Wagner is strange, to say the least. In a case of mistaken identity, she involuntarily assaults him, and then he kisses her. He tells himself he doesn't like her and isn't attracted to her but struggles to believe this. But he's no candidate for a relationship, especially with someone who would expect forever.

Angela and Wilkes' story is woven with continuing stories of other characters in the "Ransom Canyon" series, but readers will have no difficulty getting up to speed. The small town charms of the setting blend with the building suspense to excellent effect. Every storyline is compelling, making for a page-turner you will not want to miss!

Heather Nordahl Files



Wizzy Wig

by **Tiffany Pitts**

**Has Toesy finally met
his match?**



Historical Romance Reviews

Dukes Prefer Blondes

Loretta Chase

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062100344

★★★★1/2

Lady Clara Fairfax has a high position in Society as the sister to the Earl of Longmore and possesses a legendary beauty. But she wants to be more than an ornament. The Milliners' Society for Indigent Females helps girls by teaching them a trade, and one of the girls has a brother who has gone missing. Clara takes it upon herself to find him before he is swallowed by the gangs of London. So she asks barrister Oliver "Raven" Radford for help.

Radford knows it is a mistake to help Clara in her

quest, but he commits one mistake after another with her. He is as attracted to her personality and wit as he is to her beauty, but he knows a pairing between a barrister and a lady is impossible. He expects he will never see her again after the dramatic events surrounding finding the boy. Unfortunately, the search has taken its toll on Clara, and she becomes seriously ill. Radford insists on being the one to nurse her to health.

Loretta Chase's latest is connected to prior titles, but stands alone. Her characters are compelling, and the wit and charm of her writing will keep readers riveted to the page. The plot's twists and turns are brilliantly done, as is her portrayal of the clear delineation between the classes.

Heather Nordahl Files

Affaire de Coeur

Historical

The Earl's Complete Surrender

Sophie Barnes

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062358899

☆☆☆1/2

James, Earl of Woodford, burns to avenge his parents' deaths. He has an opportunity to do just that when the King asks for his help to bring down a shadowy, powerful group called The Electors. The key is *The Political Journal*, written by the late Earl of Duncaster. James' job is to find it, and its most likely location is at Thorncliff Manor.

Chloe, Lady Newbury, is seeking the journal as well, hoping to find the identity of her grandfather's killer. The widowed Chloe is at Thorncliff Manor with her family. She is not looking for love, but she is fascinated by James, and he with her. While he has no intention of marrying while he is a spy, Chloe stirs both his passions and his affections. And, once they discover they are seeking the same thing, they agree to work together-- but things do not go smoothly.

Sophie Barnes' latest "Secrets at Thorncliff Manor" title is a strong entry in the series and stands alone. Once things get rolling, both in the romance and the action, readers won't be able to put the book down.

Heather Nordahl Files

Forbidden

Beverly Jenkins

Mass Market

Avon

978-0062389008

☆☆☆☆1/2

Rhine Fontaine may be the son of a slave and her master, but his ivory skin and the treatment he endured throughout his childhood cause him to make the decision to pass as white. Despite this, he does not turn his back on his race. His saloon in Virginia City, Nevada, is the only one to serve black customers, which means whites

tend to stay away.

Eddy Carmichael dreams of opening a restaurant in California, but her money is stolen before she can leave Denver. Her determination carries her to Nevada, but one wrong choice leaves her robbed again and stranded in the desert. Rhine finds her there and saves her from certain death. Even before she recovers, she feels a connection between them. But she must resist. There's no future between a white man and a black woman.

Beverly Jenkins always writes brilliant tales that entertain as they educate. Rhine appeared in an earlier work, but new readers won't miss a beat as they savor his story. His heroine is fantastic and resilient, and descriptions of her cooking will leave your mouth watering. Not to be missed!

Heather Nordahl Files

Isabella Bride of Ohio

Debra Parmley and Robert Arrow

Belo Dia Publishing

E-Book

B018YLLLTk

☆☆☆☆1/2

Isabella Britta Stolt is an immigrant from Sweden who has found herself without her parents and without a job. She and a group of friends make the decision to become mail-order brides. Trying her best to make a rational decision, she decides to try and take it slow, getting to know the man she picked as a potential husband. She is thrilled that they both seem to want the same things in life.

Donald Jenks is an accountant. Sending her money, he invites Isabella to visit him so they could get to know each other better and help decide if they would fit. On the way to Ohio, Isabella was robbed and almost abducted. Pinkerton man Tom Allenby has been assigned to the train to try and find the abductors. When he realizes Isabella may have been a target, he follows, rescuing her just in the nick of time.

When Tom travels to Ohio to return her stolen money, there is a clash between Donald and Tom. Tom feels there is something off about the man, and he is going to find out what it is.

It's been quite a while since this reviewer had to re-read a book because she was so involved with the story that she forgot to take notes! Isabella takes you on a wonderful, exciting ride full of intrigue, adventure, and ending with an HEA.

Kitty Lane

Historical

The Knave of Hearts

Elizabeth Boyle

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062283955

☆☆☆☆

Lavinia Tempest is a social disaster, especially when dancing is involved. When she makes her debut, it is imperative that she avoid dancing. Then Alaster “Tuck” Rowland brings her out onto the floor, and they dance beautifully... until he abandons her on the dance floor, leaving her to be socially ruined. Now she and her sister will not be received anywhere, and invitations are being rescinded. What are they to do?

Tuck certainly did not mean to damage Lavinia’s reputation, but he was drunk at the time. He has now made a wager with the evil Ilford that the Tempest sisters will be diamond of the first water, in high demand in society, within two weeks. At the time, he had no idea that their prospects were as damaged as they were. He’s desperate to redeem the Tempest sisters’ prospects, but he never expected to fall for Livy in the process.

Every Elizabeth Boyle title is a fun and joyful experience, and her latest is no different. This tale is closely entwined with her prior title, but this does not cause any confusion. This tale is a delight!

Heather Nordahl Files

Lady Bridget’s Diary

Maya Rodale

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062386731

☆☆☆☆1/2

Bridget Cavendish is an American, one of the sisters of the new Duke of Durham. The family’s relatively humble upbringing causes London Society to be inclined to judge everything about them, and none of the sisters fits the mold of a proper lady. Bridget is put on a reducing diet

and trained in the rules of Society. She desperately wants to fit in, but literally falls flat at her first ball.

Lord Darcy is exactly the sort of stuffy noble who dislikes this invasion of Americans on the scene. He views her with distaste, and watches unhappily as his brother Rupert becomes enchanted with her. As Bridget navigates Society’s tricky waters, she tries and fails to meet the standards set for her. She thinks she hates “Dreadful Darcy,” but doesn’t know why he stirs such inappropriate feelings.

Maya Rodale’s latest is a truly charming read with characters that captivate. Her heroine is immediately engaging, and her hero will intrigue readers. This delightful read is just the thing for anyone who appreciates a light, humorous historical romance.

Heather Nordahl Files

Lord Dashwood Missed Out

Tessa Dare

Avon Impulse

E-book

978-0062458285

☆☆☆☆

Elinora Browning loved Lord Dashwood, but he broke her heart. He treated her abominably and then went away. Her hurt turned to creativity, and she wrote a pamphlet that became wildly popular. Unfortunately, its popularity has affected Dash’s life and work, as a thinly veiled version of him takes an unflattering starring role in “Lord Ashwood Missed Out.”

Nora is traveling to Spindle Cove for a reading of her pamphlet at the local subscription library when a storm and carriage accident throws her together with Dash. She had hoped to avoid facing him, but instead they must seek shelter together, and Nora will be forced to express her feelings.

Tessa Dare’s latest alternates between Nora and Dash’s story and a visit with familiar Spindle Cove characters. As a result, this is not a standalone tale, but fans of the series will eagerly devour this novella.

Heather Nordahl Files

Historical

One-eyed Dukes are Wild

Megan Frampton

Avon

Mass Market

978-00624127682

☆☆☆☆

Margaret Sawford caused a scandal when she refused to marry her parents' choice of mate. She is hurt when her parents cut her off, but she has an income as a writer and the assistance of her sister and brother-in-law, who happens to be a duke. Now she is back in London to help get women out of abusive situations and makes up for any shortfall of funds with her skills in gambling. She does not really expect to find anyone to marry, least of all a duke. So, when the Duke of Lasham crosses her path, she finds him intriguing at first, but his stiff propriety dims his appeal.

Lasham was raised to be very aware of his position and responsibilities as duke and has never allowed himself the freedom to step out of line. Margaret leads him to want adventures outside of his usual life and eventually makes him want to keep having adventures with her.

Megan Frampton's latest is a winner! This book is part of a series but stands alone. Her characters are charming, and the plot well constructed. Margaret's writing is interspersed between chapters. Readers will enjoy this tale and be sorry to turn the final page.

Heather Nordahl Files

One Tempting Proposal

Christy Carlyle

Avon Impulse

E-book

978-0062428011

☆☆☆☆

It all starts out as a charade. Kitty Adderly's sister Hattie has found the man she wants to marry, but she cannot wed until Kitty does. So Kitty needs to find a false fiancé to convince her father that she is situated, and then maybe her sister will be free to follow her heart. The man Hattie loves has a prospective groom in mind:

Seb Fennick, the new Duke of Wexford. But their first encounter is problematic.

Seb's onetime fiancée was a Victorian mean girl, and he has no interest in being with another woman like her. When he witnesses Kitty shunning his sister at a ball, he immediately does not like her. Their first few meetings are prickly, as he does not want to help her, and he does not want to lie. But as he begins to see her softer side, he finds himself agreeing to the pretense. Then he begins to wonder if he could make it real.

Christy Carlyle's second "Accidental Heirs" novel does not fully utilize its late Victorian setting, but it does feature marvelously complex characters and a swiftly moving plot.

Heather Nordahl Files

Savage Nights

Mia Gabriel

St. Martin's

Trade Paperback

978-1205076816

☆☆☆☆1/2

The Earl of Savage is involved in an adult game that is being played among the wealthy people of London. During this game he meets Evelyn Hart whom he instantly feels something for. They have been playing the game for sure and have been enjoying it. This all changes when jealousy among the other players begins to develop. The Earl and Evelyn will have to be willing to fight to keep each other among the most influential families in London.

What can I say? I love this. The plot with all the aristocracy and their naughty little games was a wonderful idea to get the main characters together. It also added the necessary drama to keep the book both interesting and steamy all at the same time. There was a little issue for this reviewer with how intense and fast the pair bonded but, other than that, this one had me--hook, line, and sinker.

Lenore Lovecraft

Susana and the Scot

Sabrina York

St. Martin's

Mass Market

978-1250069702

☆☆☆☆

In the second book in the "Untamed Highlanders" series by Sabrina York, the middle sister of the Dounreay *Affaire de Coeur*

Historical

family meets her match in Andrew Lochlannoch, who happens to be her sister's brother-in-law and the man who broke her heart years ago.

Susana is fiery and independent, unwilling to be tied to any man. Andrew still mourns the young lady who stole his heart and has played fast and loose with women since then. When he meets Susana, he suddenly wants to be caught. Can they work together to keep Susana's beleaguered lands safe from enemies and keep their hearts safe at the same time?

Susana and the Scot successfully follows *Hannah and the Highlander*. Susana and Andrew have great chemistry together with love scenes that are melt the page. Their battle for who's in control is stimulating, showcasing their realized love. Andrew is sweetly and surprisingly vulnerable in ways that will appeal to readers, despite his lady-killer past. Susana's young daughter Isobel is a scene-stealer with her adventurous, inconveniently truthful, and precocious nature--adding lovely comic relief to this novel. One small shortcoming is the comparatively weak suspense plot, but otherwise *Susana and the Scot* is an enjoyable Scottish historical romance.

Danielle Hill



Paranormal Romance Reviews



Growl: Werewolf/Shifter Romance

Eve Langlais, Kate Douglas, A.C. Arthur

St. Martin's Griffin

Trade Paperback

978-1250078582

☆☆☆1/2

“The Legal Wolf's Mate”

Lycan lawyer Gavin is a lone wolf... until he meets his latest client. Megan is accused of murder. The minute Gavin meets her, he realizes that Megan is his mate. Gavin works to prove her innocence. Meanwhile, someone attempts to frame Megan for more murders.

“Feral Passions”

Cherry is vacationing in the middle of a wolf reserve. The luxury resort is staffed by the sexiest men she has ever seen, men with a secret. Cherry is soon convinced that she knows what it is. As crazy as it sounds, Cherry

believes that these men are werewolves. She's attracted to two of them, Brad and Cain. How can Cherry decide which one to take to her bed? Turns out she doesn't have to choose. The men are looking for a woman to complete their love triad.

“The Alpha's Woman”

Kira is an alpha female. When her mother's life ended, so did Kira's protection. Her father began encouraging one of his betas to forcibly claim Kira. It's time for her to leave. But Kira's father will never allow her to join a different pack, so she sneaks away. Unfortunately, a female werewolf traveling alone is a target for any randy male that comes across her path.

Blaez is the wolf who finds Kira. He takes her to his compound. Then, "for her own safety," Blaez refuses to let Kira leave. Although she doesn't agree with his definition of honor, Blaez is an honorable alpha. His good looks and sexual prowess are soon driving Kira wild. But

Paranormal

he's so fickle! One minute Blaez is ignoring Kira. The next he's making passionate love to her. Then, once he's gotten what he wants, Blaez goes back to ignoring Kira.

Time passes and Kira stops trying to escape. She starts falling in love. For the first time in a long time, Kira is happy. Then her pack arrives. They plan to force Kira to return with them. And they don't care who they have to kill along the way.

Each of these stories is filled with graphic sex and vulgar language. The second story is an odd addition to this anthology. It's not the typical werewolf-meets-girl story. For hot sex scenes, this is a great book. But readers that enjoy a book with a plot or are offended by ménage à trois should give this one a miss.

Sheila Griffin

Smoldering Hunger: A Dark Kings

Novel

Donna Grant

St. Martin's

Mass Market

978-1250071958

☆☆☆☆

Sophie is content with her life. She has a good friend and a satisfying career. Working as many shifts as the hospital will allow keeps Sophie too busy to date. That is fine by her. Men are untrustworthy. Sophie learned that lesson the hard way seven years ago. Knowing all of this, why can't Sophie stop thinking about the sexy stranger who she let shag her against the hospital wall?

Darius is one of the Dragon Kings. These immortal guardians easily shift from their dragon form to their human form. Sophie should be just another woman that he screwed, but Darius can't stop thinking about her. He knows that the best way to keep Sophie safe is to never see her again. But Darius can't stay away. His enemies cannot know how much Sophie means to him. Darius resolves to leave her alone, but it's too late. Sophie is on his enemy's radar.

Ulrik is a Dragon King whose power was stripped from him by his former brothers-in-arms. He won't rest until every last one of them is destroyed. While waiting for the right moment to strike, Ulrik will destroy everyone and everything the Dragon Kings love.

This continuation of a series can be read alone. Despite vulgar language sprinkled throughout, it's a

good book.

Sheila Griffin

Innocent, cont.

been a few famous raids by the Bow Street Runners on Molly Houses in the last ten years—the laws against sodomy were rigorous—that most of them had either shut down or gone underground. It simply wasn't worth the risk to one's position to be caught anymore.

Deacon picked up his glass and swirled the brown liquid. The Innocent Auctions was the name given to the almost slave trade that existed to furnish the Molly Houses with young boys. Innocents fetched higher prices as they were more sought after, and the first time they were bugged was often auctioned off to the highest bidder. Virginity could never be guaranteed of course, and much like the supposed fairer sex, there were plenty of liars, but the appearance of innocence seemed good enough for most. Deacon's lips twisted in anger. Whereas it was acceptable for a young buck to sew his wild oats in any house run by a female madam, the only possible recourse for Beau and any others like him was in visiting the Molly Houses, or bath houses as they were referred to, or hoping you could get some private arrangement—nearly impossible due to servants' gossip.

Not that it should concern him at all, he hastily assured himself, but the family's reputation was essential if he was to find a suitable match and produce the required heirs.

He owed a debt though. Beau had saved him all those years ago when his father's fist had sent him running repeatedly to Beau's. Beau's father, desperate to toughen his son up, encouraged his friendship with his cousin Deacon, even if their respective fathers remained indifferent to each other. Beau's father was Deacon's father's younger brother, and Deacon had survived his childhood thanks to his best friend. He could not survive Beau's adulthood.

Deacon suddenly processed the rest of Edward's words. "Warn him? Why do you have to warn him?"

"The Runners are mounting a raid. I've been to Whites and Almack's. I was so sure he'd be at one of his clubs." Edward came to a stop. His pale face turned to Deacon. "I don't know what to do." His voice rose in panic. "I haven't the resources to go."

Resources? Deacon surveyed the man disdainfully. What he actually meant was, if he got caught losing his allowance again, his elder brother had threatened to cut him off. Not that Edward be caught with anything

continued on page 33

Erotica Romance Reviews



My Best Friend's Stepfather

Opal Carew

St. Martin's Griffin

Trade Paperback

978-1250052865

☆☆1/2

Ash finally had her dream journalist assignment, if she could talk her best friend/schoolgirl crush and, now, boss into letting her do it. Adam made her heart pound whenever she was near him and he felt the same way about her. But since she was the little sister of his best friend and he was a few years older than her, he knew it meant hands off. Now she'd return from college looking for a job as a journalist, and since Adam owned a magazine, he hired her and they had become best friends. He still turned her on and she him, but both knew that acting on the mutual attraction was not a good idea since he was her boss. But now she wanted his permission to do an article about BDSM and was going to interview a real life Dom. That, in itself, was bad enough, but when Ashley wouldn't tell him who the Dom was, it made Adam truly nervous.

Darien Gallagher was rich, powerful, good-looking

and Ash's friend Helen's step-father. Ashley and all her girlfriends had had such a crush on Helen's step-father when they had been in high school that they practically swooned whenever he had to come to school for some reason. Helen was extremely popular with her friends; they all wanted to have sleepovers so they could sneak looks at Mr. Gallagher. As Ash approached the front door of his mansion, she couldn't believe that when she had inquired about how to find a real life Dom to interview, her friend Jessica told her that Darien, or Dare, was a Dom. And now she was going to interview him and, hopefully, fulfill her most private fantasy!

Just the title, *My Best Friend's Stepfather*, promised great erotica by Opal Carew, but, unfortunately, it didn't quite work out. The sex scenes are hot, very hot, but get repetitive as you get deeper into the story. Dare sounds like a great Dom, but almost immediately gets more romantic than domineering. Both males are drool-worthy, but Ashley's character comes across as rather shallow and her indecisiveness gets tiresome after a while. I really enjoy Ms. Carew's work, and she writes great erotica, however, the storyline for this particular novel petered out with a predictable ending.

Lani Roberts



A Deadly Tail

Dixie Lyle

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250078438

★★★1/2

Deidre “Foxtrot” Lancaster is an administrative assistant to an eccentric billionaire who solves crimes with her cat Tango and ghostly dog Whiskey. She’s back to solve a murder and attempted murder on the set of a zombie movie being filmed at her employer’s estate. Foxtrot has the gift of communicating with animals and is the guardian of the nearby pet cemetery full of portals that lead to the pet afterlife. Foxtrot, Whiskey and Tango work together to figure out who’s wreaking havoc on the set, and they interact with many different departed animals in the process in this cozy mystery.

A Deadly Tail is a fascinating idea that is for the most part well-executed. Initially, it was confusing to decipher the dialogue of the various animals, but eventually the book finds its rhythm. Animal lovers are sure to appreciate this exploration of the animal world with a special emphasis on the human animal bond. The author seems to have many insights into animals, as the animal

characters are often more well-developed than the human ones. While the mystery felt a bit anticlimactic in its resolution, *A Deadly Tail* excels with its animal-related content, and often zany humor. Cozy mystery fans will appreciate this novel.

Danielle Hill

Expect Deception

JoAnn Smith Ainsworth

She Writes Press

Trade Paperback

978-1631520600

★★★★1/2

Operation Delphi, the covert, gifted, and psychic occult team for the U.S., has been assigned to search for Nazi spies along the East Coast. Livvy, Lt. Olivia Delacourt, was at Hamilton House with the rest of the crew honing their skills. She and her team successfully planted a psychic command to Trey, Cdr. Barrington Drew.

Learning that they wouldn’t get credit for catching the spies from their first case, the group was slightly mollified when they were given tickets to the local USO magic show. Trey and Livvy sat next to each other, and both



recognized the wizard, Deryk Fergus, who had wanted to join their covert group but had been denied entry. Livvy realized the man was using psychic powers to hypnotize the group and audience. She may have protected her small group temporarily, but the wizard was determined. He was not giving up...

Ainsworth has penned a riveting story full of mysticism, intrigue, and nail-biting suspense. *Expect Deception* grabs the reader and doesn't let go until the very last page.
Lauren Calder

The Lavender Lane Lothario

David Handler

Minotaur Books

Hardcover

978-1250076113

★★★★★



State Trooper Desiree Mitry and Film Critic Mitch Berger return to solve another small town Connecticut murder with "The Lavender Lane Lothario." The Gants have held a grudge against Aurora Bing for many years, and that's just one of the reasons Building Inspector Hubie Swope, her only grandchild, and local business owner Shem Gant don't get along. When Hubie's body is found inside Shem's burnt down business, the finger seems to point right at Shem. Until it becomes clear that Hubie had quite a few women in his life, one of which might just have wanted him dead.

This is a fantastic book. The writing is effortless to read and the humor is excellent. The whodunit is so well-plotted, the reader won't find themselves easily guessing the culprit. Handler pokes fun at small town life in a way that is gentle but very insightful and funny. Des and Mitch have a lovely relationship that is the glue to this ongoing mystery series. Mitch's love of movies informs his perceptions as a sleuth and makes him a very good crime-solving partner to Des. None of the secondary characters are wasted or extraneous to the story.

Cozy and traditional mystery fans will thoroughly enjoy "The Lavender Lane Lothario."

Danielle Hill

Murder on a Summer's Day

Frances Brody

Minotaur Books

Hardcover

978-12500067401

★★★★

Frances Brody's female 1920's English private investigator Kate Shackleton, is back on a new case. She's investigating the suspicious death of a young Indian Maharajah at the Duke of Devonshire's Yorkshire estate. With Anglo-Indian relations a touchy subject since the Sepoy Rebellion, the Indian Office requires Kate's extreme discretion, including dealing with the Maharajah's young English mistress and a very valuable missing diamond. As Kate investigates the death, she uncovers dark secrets that powerful people want to keep hidden, including a possible assassin.

Murder on a Summer's Day is an immersive and involving traditional mystery. The reader will feel as though they have taken a trip back into time to 1920's England, gaining a bird's eye view at the complex interrelations of race, gender, societal stratification, class issues, and British Imperialism. The narrative is rich in history and well-researched. Kate is a capable, insightful and observant detective. Kate is a woman of independence and agency, navigating through the male-dominated society. She's unafraid to balk against the establishment when it's necessary. The deceased maharajah's mistress, Lydia, is a scene-stealer, but she's just one of several well-developed secondary characters that give this novel texture and complexity.

Recommended to historical mystery *aficionados*.

Danielle Hill

On Thin Icing

Ellie Alexander

St. Martin's

Mass Market

978-1250054248

★★★1/2

Bake shop owner/amateur detective Jules Capshaw has to solve another murder in *On Thin Icing*.

Torte is catering for a mountain lodge getaway for the local theater's advisory board. In the process of look-

ing for sausage, Jules find the body of the loutish bartender in the deep freezer. A severe winter storm leaves all the guests, employees, and Jules and her assistant Sterling stranded. To her surprise, her estranged husband, Carlos, shows up to mend their relationship. Can Jules keep her clients well fed, solve a murder, and juggle an estranged husband with her ex-boyfriend Thomas, the police detective called in for the crime?

On Thin Icing is an entertaining cozy mystery with plenty of delicious food to stimulate a foodie's taste buds. Jules is a likable protagonist with a head for a mystery. Her process of solving the murder, as she cooks her way through the weekend, keeps the reader's interest. This installment had some relationship angst that stole the spotlight from the mystery, but it was authentic to Jules' character development. The secondary characters were not as well developed, so solving the whodunit felt too straightforward. Overall, *On Thin Icing* is an enjoyable follow-up in the "A Bakeshop Mystery" series.

Danielle Hill

cont. from page 29

him off. Not that Edward would be caught with anything not wearing a dress, Deacon thought, eyeing the young man. His tailoring was spotless, as usual, his manners impeccable, and his behavior irreproachable. The only vice, if it was counted as such, was his affection for any game of cards and his inability to be successful at it. In the current climate though, losing at cards seemed a mere trifle.

Deacon strode over to the wall and pulled the bell. He didn't care if Caldwell had retired again; he would just have to get up. A fraught few seconds passed when neither of them said a word, then a knock on the door heralded his footman, still buttoning his jacket hurriedly.

"My apologies, your lordship," said the footman, flustered.

"I need the phaeton. Wake Joe, and tell him he'll need the racing team." The carriage and four had been lent out to take his aunt and her rather large birthday party to their festivities. His aunt didn't keep enough horses in London to be able to facilitate such, and it wasn't as if Deacon was likely to need them. Deacon turned to his cousin. "You need to go home, Edward. I will send word tomorrow."

Edward opened his mouth as if he were to say something, then closed it on a snap, and turned to follow the footman. At the last second he paused at the door.

"Beau told me. He said never to petition you again, but I didn't know what else to do."

Deacon nodded, unable to speak. Completely unable to give him the reassurances he was asking for. If Beau

was caught again, he wasn't sure even he had enough coin to appease the magistrate this time, and the papers had been full of young men lately swinging their heels under a rope. He swallowed the panic down. His footman appeared with Deacon's hat and gloves. Luckily, he hadn't changed out of his fawn breeches, and they were plain enough, and his overcoat of dark blue would be warm. His phaeton was fast but uncovered, and April this year had been decidedly chilly.

Within a half hour, Joe had appeared with his carriage and the two thoroughbreds that pulled it. He was lucky Joe had set on extra help only two days ago or he would never have gotten them ready so fast. He checked his pocket watch again, although he knew it was approaching half-past ten, and it would take at least an hour, maybe longer to get to the docks.

He eyed Joe as he gave the order. "Stay here, I will drive." He wasn't going to involve anyone else in this.

Joe doffed his cap respectfully. "Beggin' yer pardon, your lordship, but don't you need help with the horses?"

Deacon swore softly. Joe was right. There was no way he could trust that his horses or carriage would still be there when he came out of the warehouse. He eyed the older man who stood as patiently as ever. Joe had worked for the Granthams all his life, same as his father and probably his father's father. In fact, Deacon had offered to pension him and his wife off last year. Joe had been offended, and insisted there was no one else he had trained to to see to his lordship's thoroughbreds. Unfortunately, Joe had three daughters; their only boy child had been stillborn. He really was going to have to see about insisting Joe had help, an apprentice even. They had plenty of stable hands, but none that Joe trusted with the racing team unless he was there to supervise.

He didn't really want Joe involved in this, and was a little worried he hadn't thought this through properly, torn between needing to keep his presence secret and wanting extra help. He had no time to send a message to anyone, and he daren't trust the message for fear it may get delivered to the wrong person. "I have to go help Master Beau," Deacon said, knowing Joe would get an inkling of what was involved when he mentioned Beau's name. Joe had taught them both to ride, and Beau even then had been more concerned with how his rear looked on a horse than perfecting his seat.

"Very good, your lordship," Joe acknowledged quietly and moved to one side for Deacon to climb in. At the last minute, Deacon shook his head, too distracted to drive, and strode around to the other side of the phaeton.

Read the rest of this story in Victoria Sue's new release

Booty from the Other Genre



The Dirt on Ninth Grave (Charley Davidson Series)

Darynda Jones
 St. Martin's Press
 978-1250074492
 Mass Market
 ★★★★★

Jane Doe regained consciousness four weeks ago. Janey has no memory of who she is or how she wound up in an alley. Even worse, Jane doesn't remember what she is. You see Janey is really Charley Davidson aka The Grim Reaper.

Janey enjoys spending time with her new friends especially Reyes, the hot new fry cook! But she can tell that they're hiding something from her. Do they know

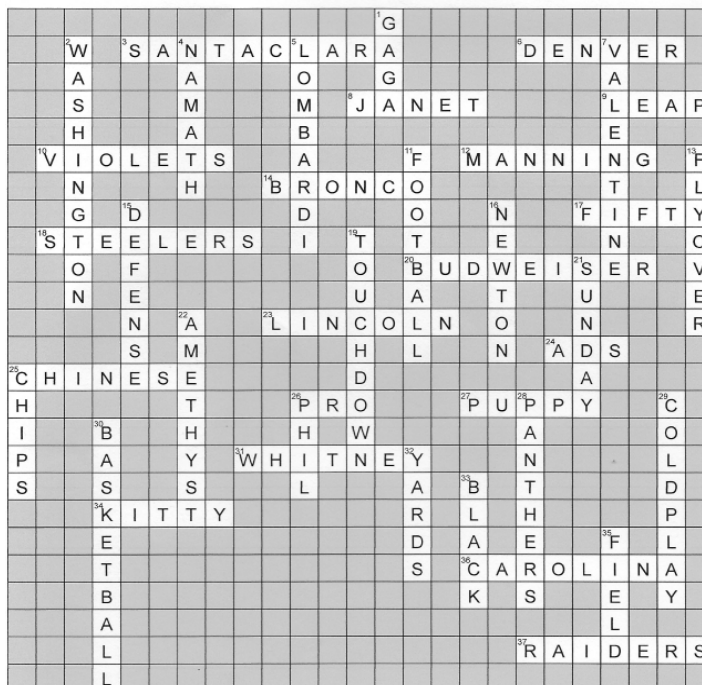
who Janey is? If they know, why won't they tell her? No, it must be something else. Is she repressing some horrible memory? What could be so bad that it caused Janey to forget her whole life? The one time someone comes close to filling in the blanks, a black fog envelopes the woman. When it clears, the lady has disappeared. Will Janey ever remember who she really is?

This is continuation of a romantic series. It can be read alone but is considerably more enjoyable if one has read the previous stories. This book has a good bit of humor in it. The only sour note is the heroine's unrealistically quick acceptance of her ability to interact with the dead. One nice change is that the heroine isn't referred to as the way to Heaven. Nor it divulged that the hero is Satan's son. Consequently this book is considerably better than its predecessors.

Sheila Griffin

"Super" February

Louise B. Snead





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