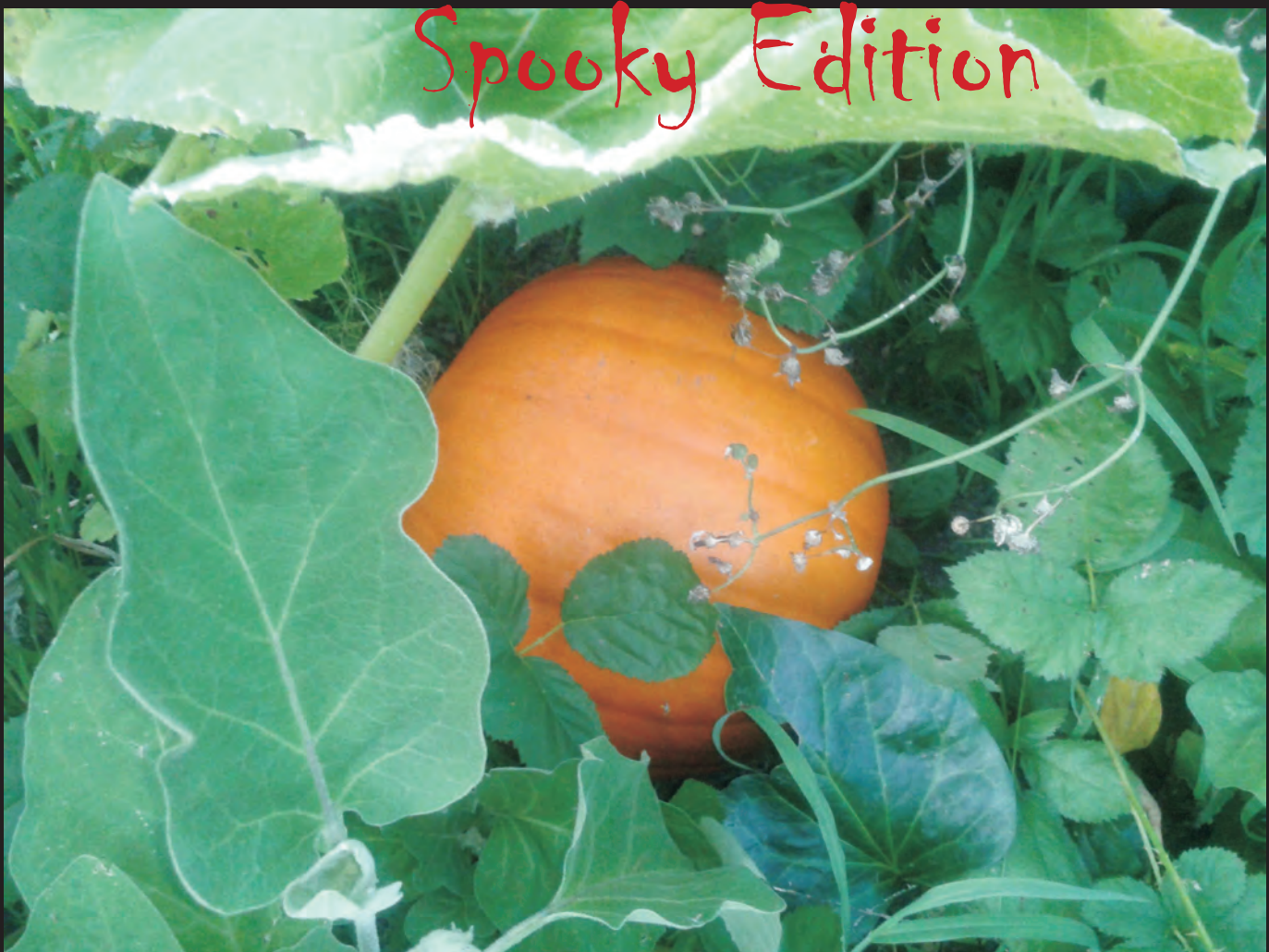


September/October 2016

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Reviews!

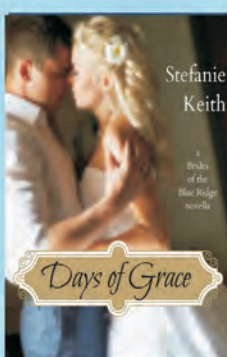
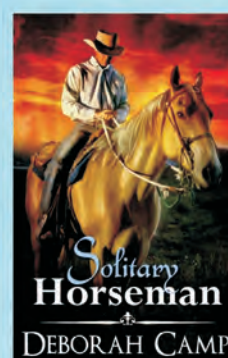
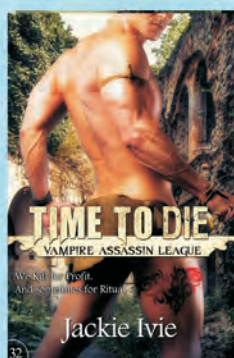
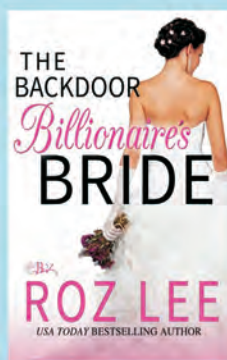
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Mystery Writers Can Teach Us a Few Things

by Louise B. Snead

Affaire de Coeur loves all genres. It is nothing unusual to see us hanging around conferences even if they're not "women's fiction." We've been to RainbowCon (See September, 2014, issue of *AdC*) and Comicon where my two sons played villains from one of the *Resident Evil* movies. Of course, we've been to RWA, both local and national conferences, and we've attended book fairs, both in Oakland and New York. Consequently, it was not unusual to find me at a presentation at the Dublin, California, Barnes and Noble store. The name of the workshop was "Writing the Mystery," and the presenters were three published mystery writer authors--Margaret Lucke, JoAnn Ainsworth, and Kate Jessica Raphael. In this small setting, all seats were taken. For a Sunday afternoon where the weather was beautiful and in an area where there is always something to do, it was quite a compliment to the authors that there were no vacant seats.

One might assume that each of these ladies followed



Margaret Lucke

a general format for writing their mysteries though they might vary, tweak, or have stylistic differences that individualize them. One may also think that given three accomplished mystery writers with more than six books among them, it would be easy to copy down their words of wisdom, follow the steps they suggest, and bang, bang, bang, we would have a book on those shelves in no time.



JoAnn Ainsworth

Their presentation is sharp. To help the audience out, they ask the questions of each other, things they know the attendees want to know but don't know how to ask. For example, many mystery readers already know what I just learned. There are many types of mysteries and/or subtle differences between them. Do you know of the existence of "Soft Thrillers" (which is what Joann specializes in), and "Cozy Mysteries?" Did you know that English mysteries are not as bloody or graphic as American mysteries?

Even if they wrote the same type of mystery, these three authors are about as different as three women can be. Their approaches to organizing the framework, to researching, or critiquing a rough draft are as different as day from night. How they go about it just speaks the old adage, "there's more than one way to skin a cat." Despite their differences, Ms. Lucke, Ms. Ainsworth and Miss Raphael got together and collaborated on a presentation relevant to those who have interests in mysteries--from writing to reading.

JoAnn's approach is analytical and methodical. She uses an Excel spreadsheet to lay out her novels. She takes on research with the same fierce vigor. Some might



What better way for Kate Jessica Raphael (r) to an afternoon than with fans?

think it extreme for an author to visit a psychic/spiritual person for the purpose of authentic research. JoAnn has seen and taken classes from such a lady in Berkeley for the purpose of making the scenes irrefutable.

On the other hand, Kate Jessica Raphael survived a harrowing experience in a foreign country that led her to put pen to paper. The result of that was *Murder Under the Bridge*, a Palestine mystery. Though all three

authors agree that “Everything can’t be found on Google,” Raphael doesn’t want to look much further than that. To say she dislikes researching is an understatement. She admits her book was “full of errors” when it came to guns because she approached her research lightly. Yet, her experience was real; her story is real, so if she uses a gun in her mystery that doesn’t perform the way the real one does, who cares?

Margaret Lucke has a variety of methods which includes “listening to characters who talk to her.” One could say that her supernatural characters in *House of Whispers* actually whispered to her. She is more like JoAnn when it comes to research. She believes in “submersion” and will be taking a class on guns this month.

When it comes to critiquing their work, they also differ (Of course, they do!). Ainsworth has had the same critique partners, two of them, whom she considered “brutal” when they first started to work with her years ago. Kate, who was on the run from Israel at the time, rejects the idea of critique partners. Margaret relies on people she trusts to critique her work.

One thing is also apparent, though. These ladies have realized the importance of marketing. To present a workshop is not costly nor particularly time consuming. Yet, the authors reap the rewards of their efforts almost immediately. Like some of the other attendees, I purchased their books. And, what better way to market oneself than to meet with fans, people who are familiar with your book, and someone from *Affaire de Coeur* to cover the whole thing and give you lots of free publicity.


Word to the wise: Invite us. You may be surprised.



The gallant young man who gave up his seat for moi!

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Spotlight Interview



This month the Spotlight Shines on... Jennifer Probst

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

J.P.: I've always wanted to write since I was young, and dreamed of being a romance writer. It's always been my True North so I consider myself very lucky to be living my dream! I think I was just born with a gift of writing, and after lots of hard work, I finally got there!

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

J.P.: It's always growing and changing and you need to show up and treat it like a job. Study your craft. Never take your expertise for granted because you are always learning new things.

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

J.P.: "The Billionaire Builders" series is an HGTV inspired sexy romantic series about three estranged brothers who need to come together to run the company after their father's death. Caleb is the builder, Tristan flips real estate and does interior design, and Dalton is the wood-worker. I'm so proud of this series inspired by The Property Brothers! Lots of family drama, angst, sex, tension, and witty banter I love to write!

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

J.P.: Going to the beach with my family and not worried about being on deadline. Hahah! It takes very little to make me happy.

AdC: *Do you have any hobbies?*

J.P.: I love reading, watching television, movies, and hanging out with family and friends. My fave things to do.

AdC: *What authors do you admire?*

J.P.: So many! Nora Roberts, Linda Howard, Susan Elizabeth Phillips, Jill Shalvis, Cherise Sinclair, Julie James, Catherine Bybee, Kristen Proby, Alice Clayton, Emma Chase, Christina Lauren, Kresley Cole, Stephen



King, Dean Koontz, shall I go on??

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

J.P.: The massive amount of time spent in solitude sitting. Not great for the body! It's a good thing I love being a hermit but sometimes it gets hard to go back out in the world and function properly!

AdC: *The best thing?*

J.P.: Everything else!



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Property Brothers a run for their money!

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

J.P.: This. Writing. Creating great books. Travelling to meet readers. Hanging with family and friends. I hope I will!

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

J.P.: *Any Time, Any Place* comes out in January, and *All or Nothing at All* comes out in June to finish up the series. Then my nonfiction book *Write Naked* will be out in March which I'm really excited about!

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

J.P.: Be kind. Work hard. Never give up. Believe in yourself. Follow your dreams.

Jennifer Probst is a New York Times, USA Today, and Wall Street Journal bestselling author of sexy and erotic contemporary romance. The Marriage Bargain, was ranked #6 on Amazon's Best Books for 2012, and spent 26 weeks on the New York Times Best Sellers List. She lives in upstate NY with her family and rescue dog.

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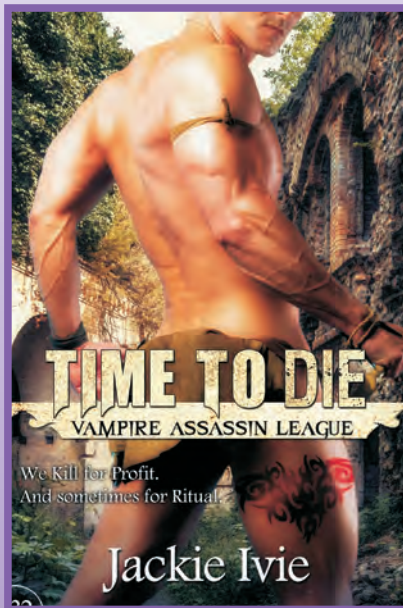
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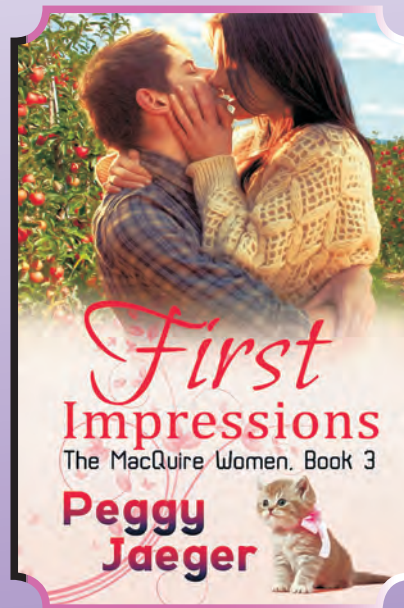
WINNERS

First Place

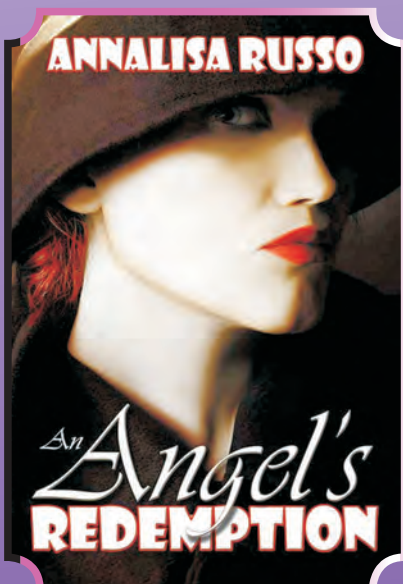
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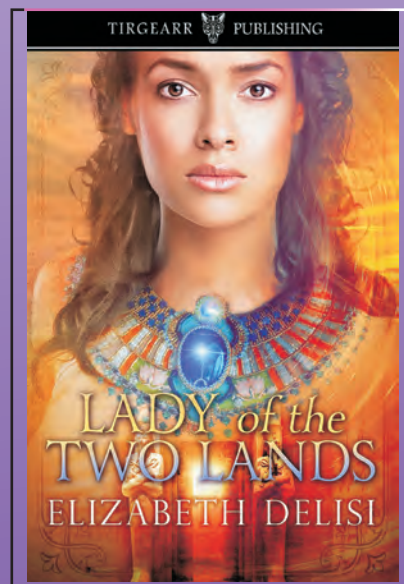
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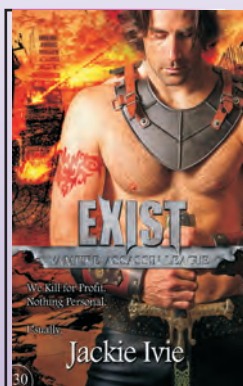


Category: Uniquely Yours



Second and Third Place Winners

Category: Hot Guyz Patrol



Category: Almost Kiss



Category: Gorgeous Girls



Category: Uniquely Yours





Spotlight Interview



Our Second Spotlight Is on Sean Michael

Best-selling author Sean Michael is a maple leaf-loving Canadian who spends hours hiding out in used book stores. Sean fantasizes about one day retiring on a secluded island populated entirely by horseshoe crabs after inventing a brain-to-computer dictation system. Until then, Sean will continue to write the old-fashioned way.

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

S.M.: I started telling stories before I could read—I would ‘read’ a story to my little sister. The first story I wrote down was in pencil on paper. I began writing professionally in 2003 and haven’t looked back since. Why do I write? Because I love it. Because there isn’t a better job in the world. Because the only way to quiet the voices in my head is to tell their stories.

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

S.M.: That I love actually writing the best, but that in order to do it, I have to do all the other stuff that goes with it. Like editing. ;)

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

S.M.: *Emergency Services* is the second book in the “Underground” series. This is a self-published series that follows members of this underground club. They’re not even really a club so much as a group of guys who know each other who get together in each other’s basements for safe, sane, and consensual BDSM.

Emergency Services tells the story of Blaze, a firefighter, and his lover and sub Jet, who is an undercover cop. In the opening scene Jet is badly hurt during a sting and the story follows his road to recovery.

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

S.M.: It’s somewhere around 15C, with a breeze so I can have my back door open and have fresh air blowing in. I’m in my writing chair, tapping away at the keyboard because the stories are flowing freely. And

there are lobster and scallops for supper that someone else has prepped and will serve to me along with a nice fresh salad with a white balsamic vinaigrette on it. There should be sticky toffee pudding for dessert.

AdC: *Do you have any hobbies?*

S.M.: I love watching anything sci-fi and/or fantasy, whether a TV show or movie. I also love reading, again sci-fi and fantasy are usually my go to.

AdC: *What authors do you admire?*

S.M.: Michael Ondaatje, Timothy Findlay, Stephen King, Anthony Burgess—I could go on and on, I love books and words and reading.

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

S.M.: Probably edits. I hate doing edits.

AdC: *The best thing?*

S.M.: My readers – they make my day on a daily basis. And the actual writing itself.

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

S.M.: I think I can say with confidence that I’ll be writing.

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

S.M.: Lots of the next book in a series—*The Biker’s Pup* follow-up, the next *Iron Eagle Gym* book, another “Shifter Rescue” story and just for a change of pace, a stand-alone novel about a firefighter and an EMS couple

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who unexpectedly find themselves with a six year old.

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

S.M.: Read, read, read and write, write, write. Seriously, read as much as you can get your hands on and write every single day, whether you feel like it or not.

Visit Sean on the web:

Blog: <https://seanmichaelwrites.blogspot.ca/>

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REGINA PUCKETT
AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR

Short Tales of Horror
PART II

Sheriff Wilson has no idea what really transpired the night twelve people were murdered in the old mental hospital during what was supposed to be a simple night of ghost hunting...

Short Tales of Horror Part II
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Spooks, Ghosts and Other Unworldly Beings

This time of year always ratchets up the stories about ghosts, haunted houses (or buildings), graveyards, and spells. So many of these tales dot our literature and our culture---*The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *Amityville Horror*, all of the “Freddies,” *Halloweens*, *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (and its numerous spin-offs), *Thirteen Ghosts*, and all the victims of axes, saws, poisons, and guns. Even the great Bard had ghosts and witches in his plays. I know you can finish the line, “Bubble, bubble, _____.”

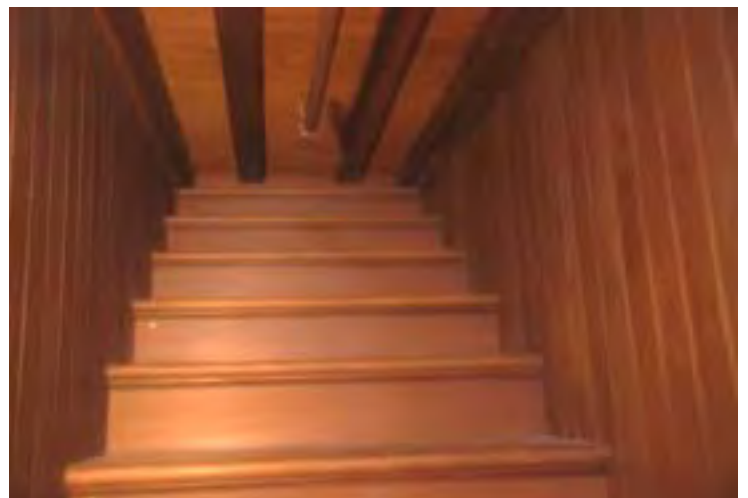
Sightings, haunted houses, ghosts, and other creatures of the occult are fun! They challenge our grasp of logic and send chills down our spines. . Purportedly, ghosts exist because they left some task undone and if you ever watched *The Ghost Whisperer*, you know they need help to get to the light. So, it is almost a given that a company like *Affaire de Coeur*, filled with curious people, would go in search of spooky places and the stories behind them. I challenged some of our reviewers and myself to procure pictures and, if possible, the histories of spooky places near them. Of course, yours truly took it to the extreme and went back east to find some of the oldest spooky places in the history of the U.S.

I started my search in Oakland, California. I didn’t have to search far. Less than seven miles from here is a former brothel called, imaginatively enough, The Bordello. This place has everything: the murder of a sailor who refuses to leave, chairs moving about by themselves, ghosts walking in front of the windows, and a room down in the basement that’s cold...

The Winchester Mystery House, located in San Jose, is one of the most famous haunts in the country. It is part of my tourist list when I have guests who are going to be here for a while. For those who don’t know its story, the Winchester house was the home of Sarah Winchester, heiress to her husband’s Winchester rifle fortune which, at that time in the early 1900’s, garnered \$1,000 per day. Sarah kept building onto the house, ending up with stairways that went to the ceiling and doors that opened to solid walls. I thought that was weird enough to stand as its *raison d’etre*, but in doing my research, I learned it’s haunted. Sarah’s former black-haired handy man is sometimes seen pushing a wheelbarrow or repairing the ballroom fireplace. A tour guide has heard the unsettling sigh of a tiny woman. Sarah?



A nighttime view of the Winchester Mystery House



The stairs that lead to nowhere in the Winchester House

And, there’s someone tapping people on their shoulders, but when said victim turns to see who did it, no one is there. On the many occasions I have been there, I have never encountered any of them. Perhaps I was just lucky....

The Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, California, is not only close, it’s one of my favorite digs. They have an awesome spa and a Sunday all-you-can-eat brunch to die for. (Did I really say that?) Visible from all the freeways in the East Bay, the Claremont is a majestic building that sits



The Claremont Hotel, beautiful but haunted

high on a hill. Though I have been there a number of times, it was not until preparing this piece that I learned it is haunted. You see, back in the early 1900's the Claremont caught on fire and burned down. A six-year-old girl may have been one of its victims. The origin of the fire was on the fourth floor, specifically Room 422. It was re-constructed almost immediately, but now the smell of smoke permeates Room 422 and other parts of the fourth floor... in a no smoking facility. And a playful ghost child may use your bathroom on the fourth floor.

My sister and I decided to do a road trip. I don't know about you, but as a young person, I did not have a

deep appreciation for history. I see this in my children. As I've gotten older, however, I've come to realize that I have a deeper appreciation for a site or area or even person if I know the history or the background. We began our journey in historic Boston. Both of us had been through Massachusetts but neither of us had stopped. This time we did it right. It's not hard to find historic landmarks in an old city like Boston. Sure enough, one of the first burial grounds was near the site of the Boston Massacre, a precipitant of the Revolutionary War. Samuel Adams was buried there, we were told. Across the street is a tavern where Samuel Adams beer is sold and, where, tour guides boast, "You can have a cold Sam Adams while looking at a cold Sam Adams." We were also informed that the original Mayflower Pilgrims had been dug up and re-located to a nearby cemetery. However, in Plymouth, Mass., we got a different story. There were allegedly some of the original Pilgrims on the hill opposite Plymouth Rock.

All right, I have to tell this one, though it is unrelated to ghosts and Halloween. On Beacon Hill, across from the African-American Trail (where the Robert Shaw mural featured in *Glory* is on display), is the statehouse. On the lawn of the statehouse is a statue of General Joseph Hooker, a Massachusetts general who fought at Gettysburg. (This is another story that was contradicted at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.) Hooker, for some reason not explained to us (but probably had something to do with his unexpected loss at Chancellorsville), left Gettysburg on the first day of fighting, leaving an inexperienced general in command, General Gordon Meade. Nonetheless, Hooker is lauded as an officer who took morale-boosting measures for his men. Toward that goal, he smuggled women into the special entrance downstairs. These women were known as Hooker's girls and later abbreviated to the term "Hookers." And that's your word derivation lesson for today. It is said that JFK used those same entrances.



Hooker's girls secret entrance to the statehouse

After picking up one of our editors, Judith Hill, we went on to Gettysburg. The place is rife with history and ghosts. In fact, there are several official walking ghost tours for those not faint of heart or legs. Those are fake, but I have been assured that the ghosts of a Texas soldier can be seen



Cemetery in Boston where the Mayflower pilgrims rest

seen on the battlefield at times. The Tilly Pierce House Inn, formerly known as the Reynolds Death House, is haunted by some children and a cat. Iverson's pit is the site of mass soldier graves and where many ghosts are currently seen. I personally took over 400 pictures there, and will share only a few of them with you. As far as I know, none of them has a ghost in it. A magnificent mural--42 feet x 335 feet is on display at Gettysburg depicting various facets of the battle.



The Battle of Gettysburg depicted on a mural.



The fields below Little Round Top in Gettysburg

Once you see that, it is not hard to imagine the ghosts who decided not to leave. Above is a picture from the top of Little Round Top, the most important high ground of the battle. Imagine the spirits below.

Ironically, without even knowing that the new African-American museum was opening on the weekend we were there, we ended up in Washington, D.C. The most famous ghost there, of course, is Abraham Lincoln, who purportedly resides in the White House. With all the messiness going on in this year's presidential campaign, it is of little wonder Mister Lincoln cannot rest.

Now, swing down with us to Florida, **before Hurricane Matthew**, where Pamela Ackerson, our Advertising Director, has, on a previous occasion, shown us

the oldest city in the country, which probably has the oldest ghosts. St. Augustine is known for being the oldest city in the United States. And being the nation's oldest city comes along with the time-honored historical legends and colorful stories that go along with it. One of them is ghost stories.

There are multiple ghost tours that you can take in Old St. Augustine where the guide will point out consistent, recurring sightings. It's a ghost hunter's paradise...several of the B&B's, St. George Street, the *Castillo de San Marcos* Fort, the old prison, Flagler's College, Stogies, the St.

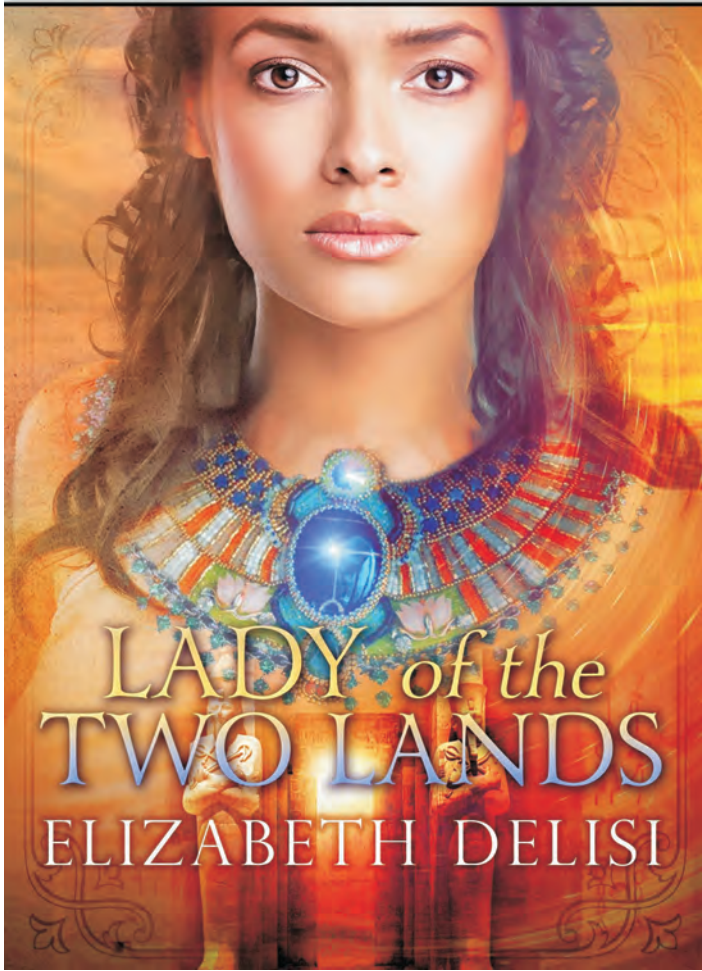


St. Augustine Cemetery

Augustine Lighthouse, and, of course, the old haunted graveyards. The Tolomato Cemetery, as pictured, is one of the graveyards in St. Augustine.

The point is that no matter where one travels, be it home or abroad, there are ghosts, witches, and all the other unworldly beings there. One need not look, they will find you. If you don't believe me, google your neighborhood. I will wager that within a ten mile radius there is a ghost and its story waiting to be discovered. Check it out and let me know what you find.

Perhaps, dear readers, you find the whole notion of ghosts, hauntings, vampires and the like totally silly. Indulge me. Don't be so cavalier. No one has been able to come back and tell us what it's like on the other side. Perhaps they are trying to tell us and we aren't listening. Perhaps there is a message for you....



Sneak Peek

Lady of the Two Lands

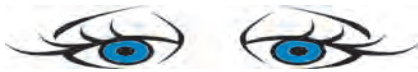
by Elizabeth Delisi

One minute, Hattie Williams is in a museum, sketching a gold necklace that belonged to Hatshepsut, first female Pharaoh of Egypt; and the next, she's lying in a room too archaic to be the museum, with a breathtakingly handsome, half-naked man named Senemut bending over her.

Hattie soon discovers she's been thrust into the body and life of Hatshepsut, with no way back to her own time. Tuthmosis, the heir to the throne, hates her; the High Priest of Amun and the commander of the army want to kill her and Tuthmosis; and the best bathroom facilities in the country are the equivalent of a cat-box.

To make matters more difficult, she's falling helplessly in love with Senemut, and soon, she's not sure she even wants to return home. To protect Tuthmosis from assassination, the lovers arrange to put Hattie on the throne. But, what should she do when she suddenly finds herself, an obscure artist from Chicago, crowned ruler of all Egypt?

Read the chapter preview of *Lady of the Two Lands* on AffairedeCoeur.com.



Sneak Peek

An Angel's Redemption

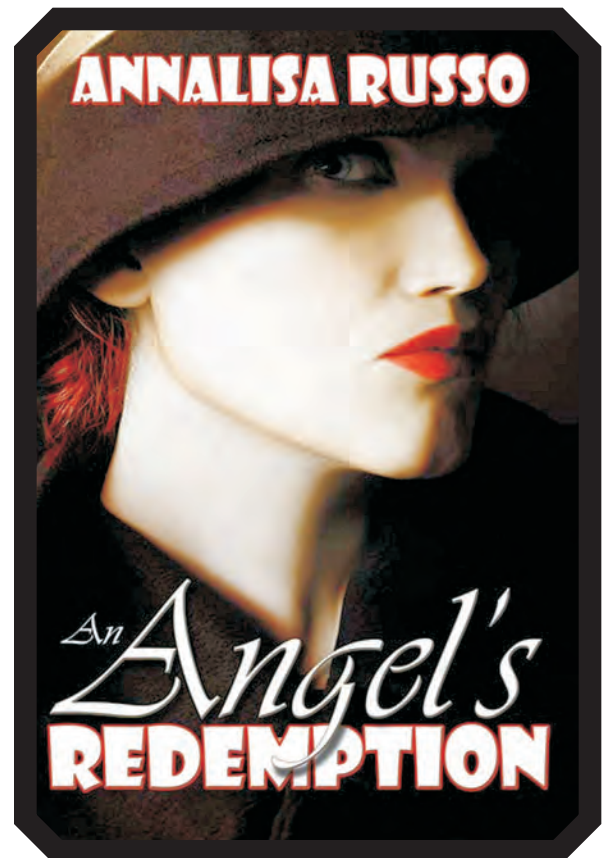
by Annalisa Russo

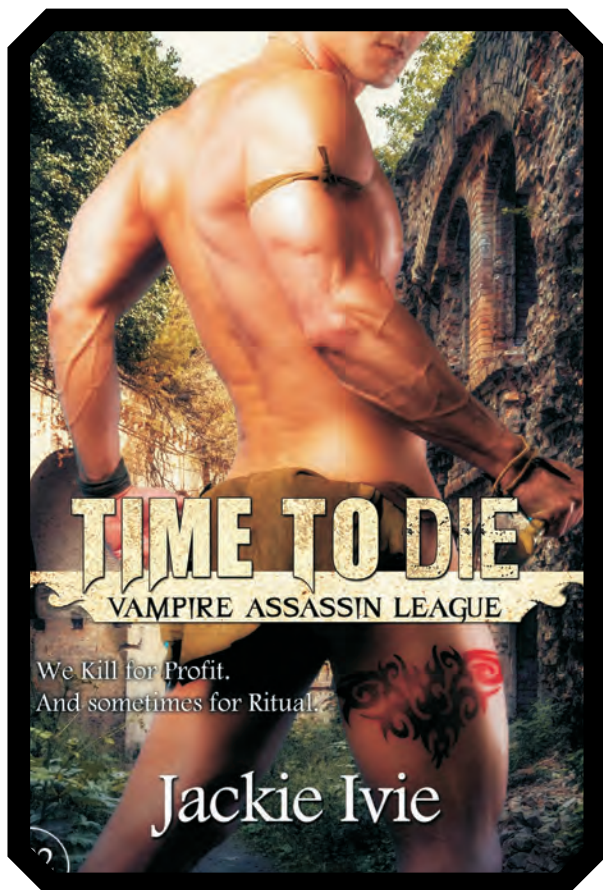
Faith Truitt lives in a world that allows females to attend medical school then denies them access to a hospital to complete their internship, so she knows that her position at Good Samaritan Hospital depends on the patronage of a family friend, Dr. Peterson. So when he asked for a favor after breaking his leg, she couldn't refuse—take his place treating a private patient in a wealthy immigrant family. If she keeps her nose clean until she completes her internship in July, and then passes her medical exam, she just might have a chance of securing a position and a future for herself and her younger brother. And everything was looking jake until Michael Vincente Cavelli opened his door that fateful morning and pulled her into the crosshairs.

Michael Cavelli would have been happy as a farmer; instead, he has a lot on his plate—being the only rational Cavelli male for starters, and then running the family's successful dairy business. Of course, the appearance of a long lost brother to add to his other four siblings, a twelve-year-old daughter who thinks he's a flat tire, a brother with malaria, a sister with potty mouth, two volatile uncles, and a ghostly ancestor who keeps popping up to give him advice doesn't help. And if that isn't enough, someone is out to cripple his business propelling him into lies and treachery weaving back a generation.

So when a fiery redheaded siren appears at his door in the middle of his sister's wedding, he wonders about the Deity's sense of humor. As a widower himself from a disastrous marriage, he thinks love is a fool's emotion and Faith Truitt isn't helping. It seems she has something to prove being one of the few female doctors in Chicago in 1925. She can't afford to make a mistake that would destroy her career—like getting married. Can't she see he can give her anything her heart desires—except-- maybe love?

Read the chapter preview of *An Angel's Redemption* on AffairedeCoeur.com.





An Affaire de Coeur



Sneak Peek

Time to Die

by Jackie Ivie

GOD OF THE FORESTS

Tane's name means god of the forests. It fits. Life on an uncharted island was wonderful. It's an even better afterlife. He gets centuries of time in a secluded paradise. Unmapped. Unexplored. Few know his volcanic island even exists. Fewer survive a surprise visit. But then - without warning - his mate appears....and everything changes.

A MODERN WOMAN

Kat Clark's life is a quest. Finding and photographing the world's most endangered creatures fulfills her. She's world-traveled. Used to staying in the most remote places. She doesn't need or want anyone. She's resourceful. Armed. Independent. And she'll fight to keep it that way.

JUNGLE LAW

Kat's got a week to find and film a mountain starling. On an island that's uninhabited and supposedly cursed. She's prepared for every contingency - even the law of the jungle. Despite finding ancient ruins. Savages intent on capturing her. And a primitive male in a loincloth. It's survival of the fittest out here.

...and it's not her time to die.

Read the chapter preview of *Time to Die* by Jackie Ivie on AffairedesCoeur.com

Knight Defenders

***It was all King-
freakin - Arthur's fault.***



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twitter @Vickysuewrites

P U Z Z L E R

SCARY THINGS!

Across

1. Arachnophobics are afraid of these.
2. Ghosts live within the walls of these houses.
6. Her screams warn of impending deaths.
7. Shelley's creation.
9. People in California are afraid of this because of the droughts.
12. Episodes of this series, _____ Zone.
13. This color cat.
14. She rides a broom and casts spells.
15. Uncontrolled cattle running about.
16. Bad guy in Star Wars movies.
20. People like Jesse James in the Wild West.
23. Peformed by people like Houdini, feared if it's Black _____.
24. American author who wrote scary stuff. "Nevermore."
27. These people come into the bank and steal the money.
29. Grave robber that eats the dead.
30. Dracula is one of them.
32. Scary _____. We go see them so we can be frightened.
33. Firearms
34. Sasquatch.

across.

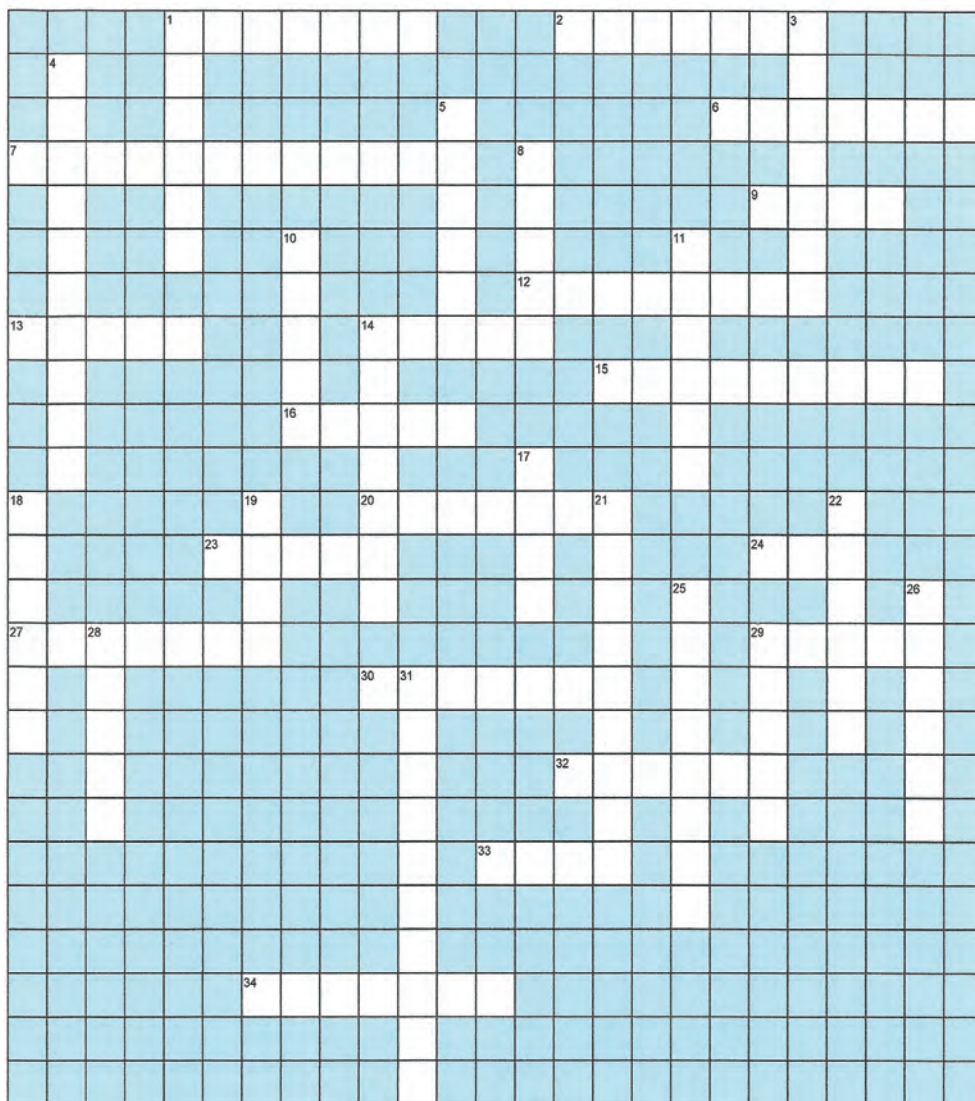
17. Most feared rodent.
18. Thanks to Jaws, people are scared of these animals.
19. These rat-looking animals hang upside down and some drink your blood.
21. The fleshless remains.
22. Devils.
25. South of the border outlaws.

26. Some say send them in, but coulrophobics fear them.
28. This man played in scary movies.
29. Casper is a friendly one.
31. These guys live in the swamps and scare everyone when they appear.

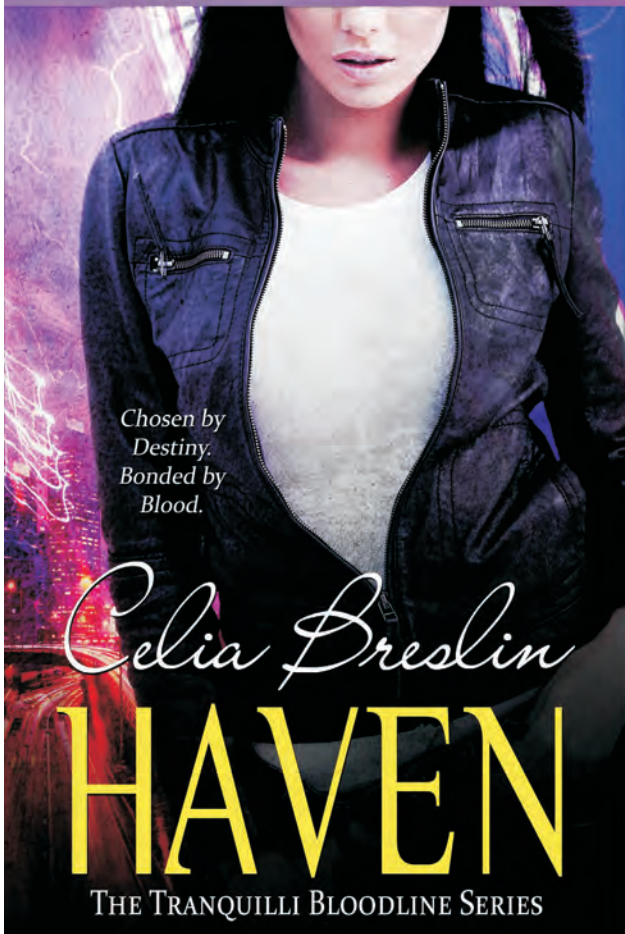
answers on page 32

Down

1. Copperheads, asps, etc.
3. He/she fixes one's teeth.
4. They change into these when the moon is full.
5. Mosquitoes, ants and roaches belong to this group.
8. End of life.
10. Animals that are sick and foam at the mouth.
11. Bluebeard was one.
14. He is the male counterpoint to #14



Vampires, love, mayhem...Join the club.



San Francisco nightclub owner Carina Tranquilli discovers latent powers and struggles to make peace with her vampire family, destiny, and soul mate, with Team Evil in hot pursuit.

www.CeliaBreslin.com

Coming in November

Ashenden, J. *In Bed With the Billionaire*, St. Martin's Press

Ayres, D. *Explosive Forces*, St. Martin's Press

Bowman, V. *The Legendary Lord*, St. Martin's Press

Grant, D. *The Hero*, St. Martins Press

Raye, K. *Tempting Texas*, St. Martin's Press

Wilde, L. *A Wedding for Christmas*, Avon

Carse, J. *PhDeath*, Opus



She's looking
to escape her
man troubles.

Instead, she
finds the man
of her dreams.

There's only
one problem –
he's dead.

KathrynHills.com

Coming in December

Ashenden, J *Wrong for Me*, Kensington
Bennet, J. *Caught Up in You*, Zebra
Bristol, S. *Hot Rod's Chase*, Zebra
Castille, S. *Nico*, St. Martin's Press,
Pearce, K. *The Reluctant Cowboy*, St. Martin's
Press



Contemporary Romance Reviews

At Fairfield Orchard

Emma Cane

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062411358

★★★★1/2

Amy Fairfield has come back home to the family orchard. Her parents have retired, leaving Amy and her siblings to run the orchard and hopefully make it thrive. Amy is re-learning on the job and is grateful for the support of her family until her sister leaves.

Professor Jonathan Gebhart is writing a book about Thomas Jefferson. He has a theory about him, and it involves Fairfield Orchard. But in order to investigate, he needs the Fairfield family's permission. Amy is reluctant at first. There is also the distraction of their inconvenient attraction. Amy recently got out of a bad relationship and isn't ready for a new one, no matter how hard it is to resist.

Emma Cane launches a new series with this excellent tale. The consequences of alcoholism on loved ones is threaded throughout, which packs a punch with the reader.

Jonathan and Amy are appealing lovers, and readers will look forward to more about the Fairfield family.

Heather Nordahl Files

Burned Hearts

Calista Fox

St. Martin's Griffin

Trade Paperback

978-1250072535

★★★★1/2

Dane and Ari have been through a lot. Dane's resort, 10,000 Lux, has made him a target of blackmail and revenge. The couple are rebuilding things, and with the recent revenge scheme in the works, Ari is a possible target as well. Can their love get them through yet another hurdle?

This is a series I love. The trilogy has had me since book one. Ari and Dane have a complicated and interesting relationship. When Dane's business gets in the mix, it's a guaranteed good read. My only issue is that the books have a similarity to the popular "Grey" books trilogy.

Lenore Lovecraft

Contemporaries

The Hating Game

Sally Thorne

William Morrow

Trade Paperback

978-0062439598

★★★★★



Lucy Hutton hates Joshua Templeman. They work together, and she has hated him from the first day their separate publishing companies merged. They engage in constant games of one-upmanship, and Joshua is generally in the lead, which frustrates Lucy no end. But suddenly things begin to shift.

One day, she wears a short black dress to taunt and distract him. By the end of the day, despite her upcoming date with another man, she is kissing Joshua in an elevator. Their relationship becomes ever more tangled until she has to wonder: Is it possible that she doesn't hate Joshua Templeman?

Sally Thorne's novel is an absolute triumph. Readers will be hard pressed to stop reading this tale full of humor, clever banter, and sexual tension. An inspired cast, from Lucy and Joshua to secondary characters, make this tale irresistible.

Heather Nordahl Files

Her Renegade Rancher

Jennifer Ryan

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062435354

★★★★★

Luna Hill was never more than friends with Wayne, but his family does not believe that. When he dies, she goes to the hospital to say goodbye, and his family meet her with hatred and vitriol. But things get far more difficult when it is revealed that she has inherited Wayne's ranch and is suddenly richer than her wildest imaginings.

Colt Kendrick has been dealing with guilt ever since he kissed Luna. At the time, he thought she was someone else's girlfriend. Now they've cleared up that misunderstanding, and he is doing his best to support and protect Luna as she deals with the escalating dirty tactics practiced by Wayne's greedy family.

Jennifer Ryan's latest "Montana Men" novel is her best yet. Her heroine is a lamb among wolves, but she holds her own with Colt's help. Readers will enjoy this well-written

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drama.

Heather Nordahl Files

Mixing Temptation

Sara Jane Stone

Avon Impulse

E-book

978-0062423887

★★★★★

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

Murder on the Mountain

Maddie James

Turquoise Morning

Trade Paperback

978-1622374069

★★★★1/2

Kate Carpenter is a teacher whose husband was killed in the line of duty. The problem arises when the ATF believe the man is still alive and Kate may know. Agent Michael Lehman was sent to go undercover as a D.A.R.E. officer, get into Kate's life, and find the truth. Was she a dealer, too? Did she know her husband was still alive?

Michael had no idea what he was getting into when he walked into Kate's class. Everything he expected to happen didn't. He knew she was innocent. Now, he had to find out what he was going to do with the woman and how he was going to protect her.

Maddie James continues to write her extraordinary stories with wonderful characters that the reader can love.

Affaire de Coeur

Murder on the Mountain is up there with the best!

Kitty Lane

Playing Fast (New York Saints - Book 5)

Melanie Scott

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250077219

★★★★

Baseball's bad boy, Finn Castro, has been demoted. The major league team he plays for sent him down to their Triple-A team to get himself under control. Between rehab and the demotion, Finn is ready to put his wild ways behind him. The first test of Finn's new resolve comes when he meets the team's sexy administrative manager.

Eva has had a crush on Finn for ages. It's not a big deal. Lots of women have celebrity crushes. But now he's here in the flesh...the hot, sexy flesh. To keep her infatuation hidden, Eva acts like she doesn't like Finn at all. Her ploy is successful... for a while. But slowly he works his way into Eva's good graces.

Eva still has concerns. Finn is six years younger than she, and he's headed back to the big league as soon as possible. But ultimately Eva can't resist Finn's charms. She agrees to go out with him but only until the end of the season. Finn has never had a problem moving on, so he agrees. But long before the season ends, Finn's feelings change. He doesn't want just one season with Eva. He wants a lifetime. Now all Finn has to do is convince Eva.

This continuation of a series can be read alone. It is filled with steamy sex. It's a good book.

Sheila Griffin

PoINCIANA Road

Margaret Way

Zebra

Mass Market

978-1420141702

★★1/2

Mallory left Australia six years ago when her fiancé, Jason, impregnated another woman. This is the first time Mallory's been home since. But her Uncle Robert has had

Contemporaries

a heart attack. He took care of Mallory when she was a little girl. Now it's Mallory's turn to take care of him. Oddly, the person she most dreads seeing isn't Jason. It's Blaine, the man her uncle considers the son he never had.

Blaine meets up with Mallory at the hospital and sparks begin to fly. But instead of the usual sparks of annoyance, these are sparks of attraction. Uncle Robert's too embarrassed to tell Mallory the bad news. So Blaine is forced to fill her in. Robert has hired Jason to run his fruit plantation. He lives on the property with his wife and daughter.

Mallory is furious at Robert's betrayal! How could he hire the man who broke her heart? But seeing Jason again, Mallory realizes that he didn't break her heart, only her pride.

As Mallory and Blaine get reacquainted, the couple begins to realize that they're in love. Meanwhile, evil stalks the grounds of Mallory's home. Will everyone survive?

This book has several subplots, but not much romance. The heroine has an interesting psychic ability but the author never uses it to further the story. It's a disappointing book.

Sheila Griffin

Stealing Taffy (Bigler, North Carolina Series - Book 3)

Susan Donovan

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250008053

★★★★1/2

Flying home, Taffy is seated next to the hottest guy on the planet. Despite the temptation, she resolves to keep her panties on. That resolve lasts all the way to the hotel room that Taffy and Dante wind up sharing.

Dante, an undercover DEA agent, flew home for a family visit. Flying back, he is seated next to the sexiest, dizziest woman he's ever met. When their plane is delayed, it seems like fate that they share a night that neither of them will ever forget. But a one-night stand is all it is. Dante doesn't have the time or the inclination to get involved with anyone.

Imagine Dante's surprise when it turns out that Taffy has ties to a lot of the players involved in his latest case. And she lives near the place where Dante's next big bust is going down. Imagine Taffy's surprise when the hottie from the hotel shows up in her hometown! Once she's reassured that Dante's not some sort of weird stalker, Taffy winds up

Contemporaries

right back where she promised herself that she'd never be... in some random guy's bed. Imagine Taffy and Dante's surprise when their "one-night stand" turns into something more.

This continuation of a series can be read alone. Hot sex prevails. It's a very enjoyable book.

Sheila Griffin

Sunrise Crossing

Jodi Thomas

HQN

Mass Market

978-0373789306

★★★★1/2

Tori Vilanie needed to disappear so she is hiding in a house in Crossroads, Texas, well away from her controlling family. She stays in hiding, but hides in a house under renovation one night, and this is how she meets Yancey Grey. He doesn't even know her name, but he is enchanted by his mysterious "Rabbit." Many people are seeking Tori, and one of them has found her. But he has also found something else that is even more important to him.

Parker Lacey helped Tori to disappear, but now she needs to get away. She joins Tori in Crossroads. There, she gets acquainted with prickly cowboy Clint Montgomery. Parker and Clint are about as different as two people can be, but that doesn't stop the flame that kindles between them.

Jodi Thomas' latest title is part of a series but stands alone. The separate threads of this tale weave together to form a beautiful tapestry with characters you'll root for. This story will keep your attention from first page to last.

Heather Nordahl Files

The Trouble With Mistletoe

Jill Shalvis

Avon

Mass Market

978-02448040

★★★★1/2

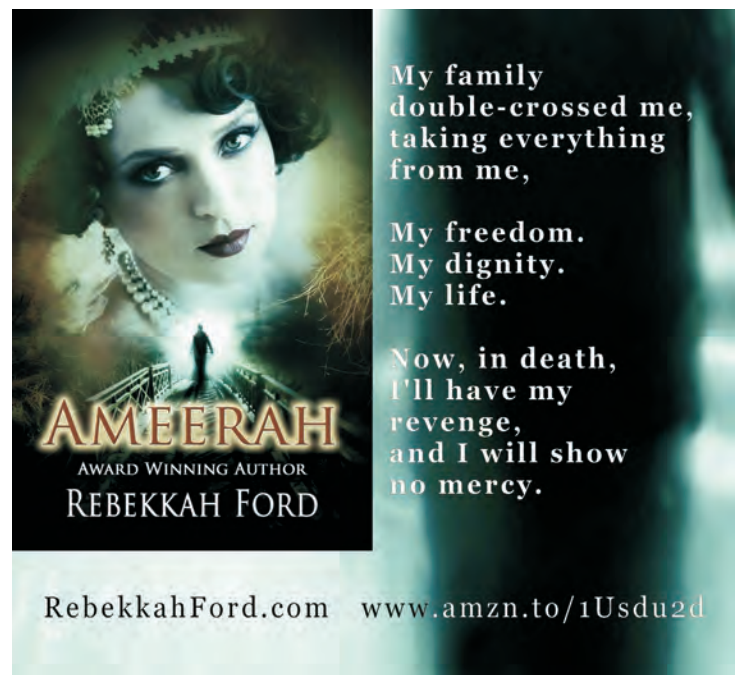
Keane Winters didn't even know he had an Aunt Sally when she turned up on his doorstep asking him to take care of her cat. He finds Petunia to be very difficult, renaming her Pita. He needs someone to watch her while he works and turns to Willa Davis. He doesn't know why she acts like she dislikes him, but he hopes to change her mind.

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Willa owns and operates South Bark, and she also has a tendency to care for strays-- but her strays are people, not pets. She grew up in the foster system and wants other foster kids to have help as they age out of the system. When Keane walks into her shop, even his pink cat carrier can't distract her from her memories. He stood her up once when she was a teenager, and worse, he doesn't even remember her!

The setting is as much a character as the people in this fun, yet emotional read. Readers will not be lost if this is their first "Heartbreaker Bay" book, but Willa's group of friends is so engaging that readers will want to read every title and wait impatiently for the next.

Heather Nordahl Files





Historical Romance Reviews

Do You Want to Start a Scandal

Tessa Dare

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062349040

★★★★1/2

Charlotte Highwood's mother uses some suspect methods to get her noticed by eligible men, and as a result she has become a joke in Society. She feels it's necessary to warn Piers Brandon about her mother's tactics in order to avoid being trapped in an unwanted marriage. Unfortunately, once her warning is issued, they are forced to hide together as a pair of lovers share a noisy tryst right in front of them. Once the lovers leave, Charlotte and Piers are discovered, and they are trapped in a betrothal.

Charlotte is determined to get out of this unwanted betrothal, so she decides to seek the identity of the mystery lovers. Unbeknownst to her, Piers is a spy, and he wants nothing more than to keep her safe. He interferes with her investigation and does all he can to make sure their wedding happens. But he will not love her.

This latest "Castles Ever After" tale is also connected to her earlier "Spindle Cove" series, but it easily stands alone. Readers will love Charlotte, and Piers is an appealing hero.

Regency lovers should put this title at the top of their list.

Heather Nordahl Files

If I Only Had a Duke

Lenora Bell

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062397744

★★★★1/2

Thea Beaumont is a failure in Society, and she likes it that way. She is free to spend quiet time with her beekeeping aunt in Ireland. She must give her mother one more Season first, however, and one arrogant duke ruins her plans. All she did was ask him if she could explore the paintings in his attic, and in return he dares to make her a success!

Dalton, Duke of Osborne, just wants Thea to leave him alone, but it never occurs to him that she wouldn't want attention and suitors. Now she's sending him the flowers from her suitors! She wants nothing more than to get away, and she needs Dalton's help to make it happen.

Lenora Bell's latest is the second book in her "Disgraceful Dukes" series, and it's just as delightful as the first. Tormented Dalton and lively Thea are an excellent match, and their attraction sizzles on the page. Don't miss this one!

Heather Nordahl Files

No Mistress of Mine

Laura Lee Guhrke

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062334671

★★★★1/2

Denys, Viscount Somerton, learns his partner in the Imperial has died. He expects that the theater's new partial owner would be Henry's widow, but he is stunned to discover that his new partner is Lola Valentine. She is his former lover, and after she left him for Henry, he never wanted to see her again, never mind work with her.

The truth about Lola is something Denys would never believe, and she accepts that. But she needs him to agree to work with her because she has plans to get into serious acting. She failed miserably last time, but she has trained diligently since then. Can she convince Denys to allow her to audition when he doesn't even want to be in the same room with her?

The sexual tension seethes between the hero and heroine in Laura Lee Guhrke's latest. It's part of the "An American Heiress in London" series, but new readers won't miss a beat. The characters are well crafted, and Lola's awareness of the difference in her and Denys' social positions

Historicals

is well done. Readers will devour this tale.

Heather Nordahl Files

The Perks of Loving a Scoundrel

Jennifer McQuiston

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062335142

★★★★1/2

Mary Channing is in London to care for her pregnant sister. She has no interest in social activities but agrees to go to an event where she can meet some of her favorite authors, even though she is nervous about attending. She has reason for dread-- the night leads to her ruin at the hands of a scoundrel she has already encountered.

Geoffrey "West" Westmore follows her to the library, believing she wants an assignation. By the time the doors are reopened, Mary's reputation is ruined... but that may not even be the worst part. They were not alone in the library. There, they overhear pieces of an assassination plot. Unfortunately, no one believes them when they share what they've heard. West has a reputation as a prankster, and Mary is a bookworm with a vivid imagination. They must work together to prevent tragedy.

Jennifer McQuiston's latest is a glorious adventure with well-crafted twists and turns. Readers will be swept away along with Mary and West as the story gains momentum.

Heather Nordahl Files

When a Marquis Chooses a Bride

Ella Quinn

Zebra

Mass Market

978-1420139570

★★★★

Ella Quinn's Regency historical romance series, "The Worthingtons," continues with the story of Dorothea Stern, the best friend of Charlotte, Lady Worthington's sister. She's come to town for her first Season but isn't in a hurry to find a husband. That is until she meets Dominic, Lord Merton, a Marquis known for his stuffy ways. Dominic finds that every rule he's had his whole life about propriety and duty

Historicals

falls to the wayside when he looks into Dorothea's eyes. He finds himself going along with her reformer tendencies while being unable to resist kissing her. When they are caught in a compromising position, it seems natural for him to offer for her. Can Dominic overcome years' worth of conditioning to grasp at a chance at true love with Thea?

Dominic will win over readers as his rigid ways peel away in layers to reveal his warm, passionate heart. Thea is lovable and strong enough to love a troubled man like Dominic, and the reader will root for them to find lasting true love together. The setting is authentic, and the rich cast of characters, including Thea's and Dom's friends and family, add to the enjoyment of this sweet and sensual romance.

Danielle Hill

When a Marquess Loves a Woman

Vivienne Lorret

Avon Impulse

E-book

978-0062446350

★★★★

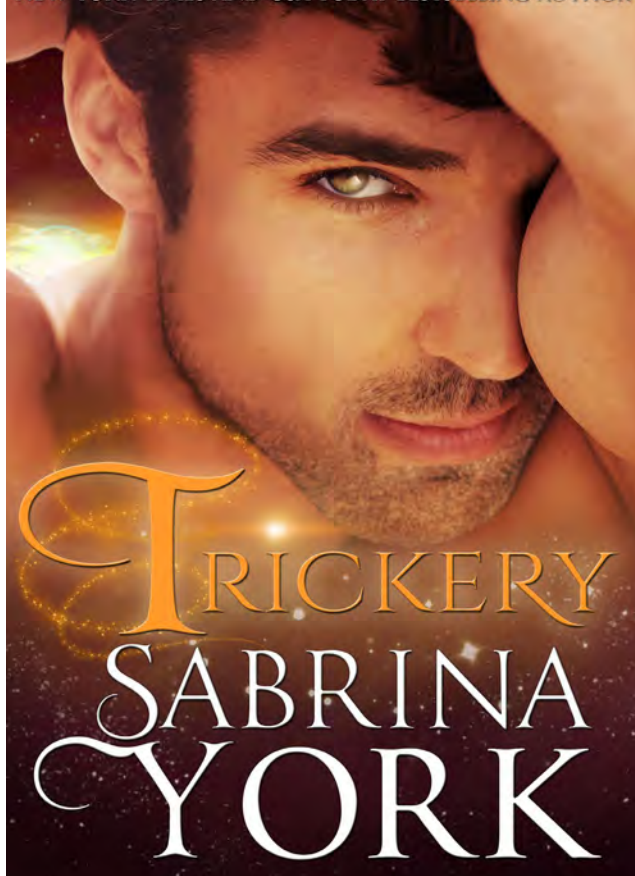
Five years ago, Juliet Granworth broke Max Harwick's heart. Right after he kissed her for the first time, she ran away and married another man. Now she's a widow, and they are adversaries. They've placed a bet on the identity of this Season's Original. If she loses, Juliet will leave London and Max won't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

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 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

NEW YORK TIMES AND USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR



Witches and warlocks
and totally
inappropriate passion.

A scary hot
Halloween read from
New York Times
and USA Today
bestselling author,
Sabrina York.

www.SabrinaYork.com

Paranormal Romance Reviews



Frost Line

Linda Howard and Linda Jones

Avon

Mass Market

978-0062421982

★★★★1/2

Elijah just watched his mother get murdered. Terrified that the killer will find him, he flees into the night. He ends up in his best friend's house, in his parents' closet. He wishes for someone to help him... and that's when magic happens.

The tarot deck in the closet is the Alexandria Deck, which has great power. One of the Major Arcana--Strength--is sent from her own world by the power of the deck.

Lenna Frost thought the Alexandria Deck had been destroyed long ago. Its existence means she can travel away from her world of Aeonian, but she can stay for only five days. She plans to use those days to help Elijah, but there's a

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barrier to her mission. A Hunter, Caine, has been sent to bring her home. She must work with him to achieve her mission and be protected from others sent to harm her.

Linda Howard and Linda Jones create an intriguing suspense-paranormal mashup in their latest, which creates a vivid world readers will find fascinating. Both hero and heroine are riveting characters, and the danger--both paranormal and mundane--will keep readers turning the pages.

Heather Nordahl Files

Affaire de Coeur

Paranormals

Immortal Nights

Lynsay Sands

Avon

Mass Market

978-02316066

★★★★1/2

Abigail Forsythe is on an impulsive flight to Venezuela when things go terribly wrong. She's in the cargo hold where her pilot friend has told her to hide, but the cargo turns out to be a naked man! How can she rescue this man but also keep her friend safe from the criminals on board? She frees the man, only to find herself making out with him. Such sexual pleasure is a shock, but so is her parachute ride out of the plane.

Tomasso Notte was kidnapped, and getting himself free is paramount because others need to be found and freed. Being stranded in the middle of nowhere while naked is bad enough, but Tomasso is an immortal and needs blood. As the days go by, he begins to suffer, and Abigail is a tempting source of blood. But she is his life mate, and he wants to keep her unaware of what he is until the time is right.

Lynsay Sands keeps her long-running "Argeneau" series fresh with her latest title. Her heroine is likeable, and an appealing sense of humor is threaded throughout. Readers will enjoy this adventure.

Heather Nordahl Files

Lingering Touch

Cassandra Chandler

Samhain Publishing, Inc.

Trade Paperback

978-1619236073

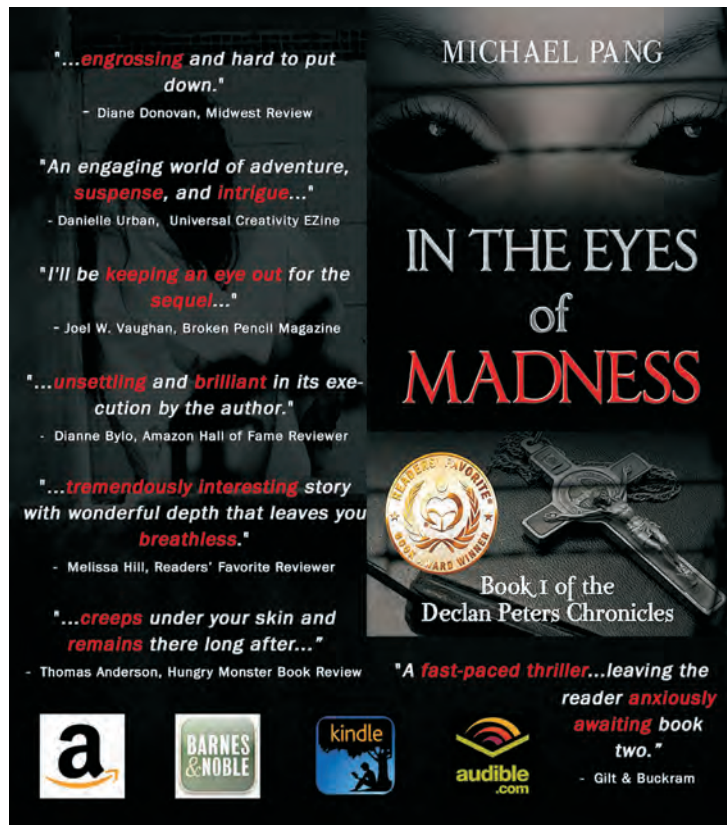
★★★★

Finn Connelly can see the past by touching objects and even read people's thoughts, and that allows him to be the best private investigator in Summer Park. Until his abilities spiral out of control, leaving his thoughts and emotions inextricably entangled with those of others.

Jazz Zhou, the only woman to ever break Finn's heart, is still reeling from nearly losing her closest friends to a serial killer—a man she brought into their lives. When she learns Finn is psychically bound to the ghost of one of the killer's victims, she grabs the chance to atone for past mistakes. As Jazz and Finn work together to find the killer, their relationship rekindles. But the more Finn uses his powers, the more he loses himself. And soon even Jazz's touch might not be enough to help him claw his way out of a murderer's memories.

Lingering Touch is the third book of Ms. Chandler's "The Summer Park Psychics" series and, I must say, as a paranormal romance novel, the book does catch the reader's eyes. The interaction between the characters is fascinating, and it does truly help the book develop the story. And despite the fact that the power Finn Conley has is not really creative, it is still intriguing; the power to view the past really pushes him to overcome the murder memory. I believe that it is a good book for people who love paranormal romance to read and recommend it.

Martin Chan





Death of an Avid Reader

Frances Brody

Minotaur

Hardcover

978-12500067395

★★★★

Genteel, widowed detective Mrs. Kate Shackleton is hired by Lady Coulton to find her illegitimate daughter. She also ends up investigating a ghost in the local library. The ghost hunt leads to finding the body of Dr. Potter, a beloved library patron. As Kate helps to protect a sick Italian immigrant from being wrongly accused of the murder, she stumbles on a decades' old connection that could lead to more murders if she doesn't find the killer soon.

While a slow starter, *Death of an Avid Reader* is an elegant and well-written historical mystery set in 1920's England. Initially, the connection between the two cases seems nebulous, but everything wraps up satisfactorily. Kate is a strong, intelligent and capable female detective who navigates a world of prejudice and class divisions. Her housekeeper Mrs. Sudgen and associate Mr. Sykes and the other secondary characters round out the story nicely. The reader is immersed in the time period and the culture of England, including the barriers that women, ethnic minorities, and the lower class face. The mystery is quite dark with a

very evil villain, leading to some thrilling moments for Kate. Fans of classic mystery novels will enjoy *Death of an Avid Reader*.

Danielle Hill

Pumpkin Picking With Murder

Auralee Wallace

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250077783

★★★1/2

Amateur sleuth Erica Bloom is back to solve another murder in the sleepy but quirky town of Otter Lake, New Hampshire, during its Fall Festival. Erica is visiting from Chicago when her best friend Freddie ropes her into helping with his new business, Otter Lake Security. This happens just in time because her close family friend Tweety is arrested for the murder of her old flame. Erica's budding relationship with her high school crush and current sheriff, Grady, is steadily being sabotaged by her sleuthing. However, she can't let Tweety go to jail for a murder she didn't commit.

This is a goofy treat that fans of humorous cozy mysteries will enjoy. While every opportunity is used to provide laughs, the mystery is at times chaotic and hard to

MYSTERIES

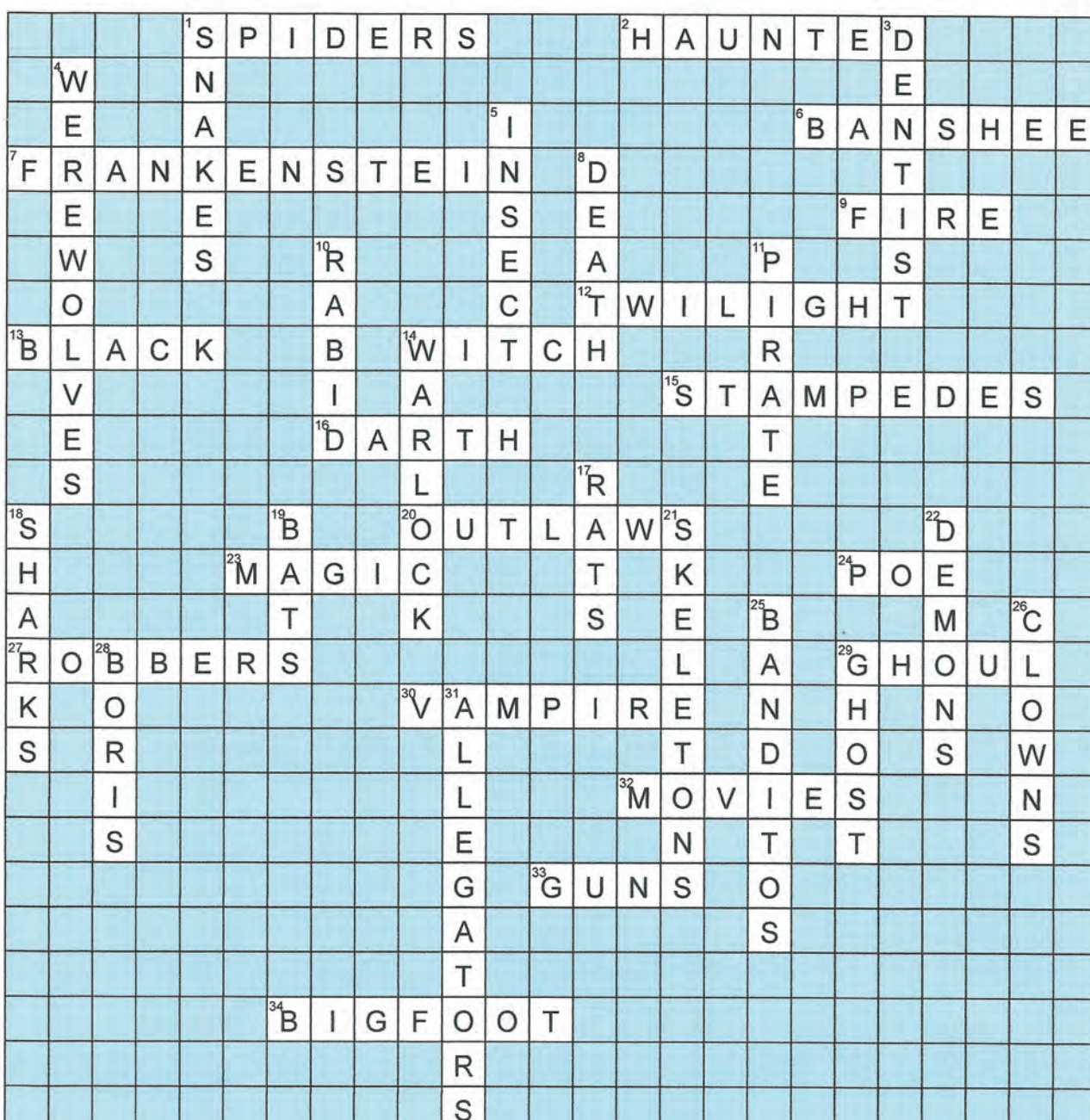
keep track of. Despite that, it is a worthwhile read because of the humor and the character interactions. Erica's friendship with Freddie, which leads to increasing levels of trouble for them, is the heart of the book, with a nice dash of romance with Grady and a cast of goofy characters who will keep

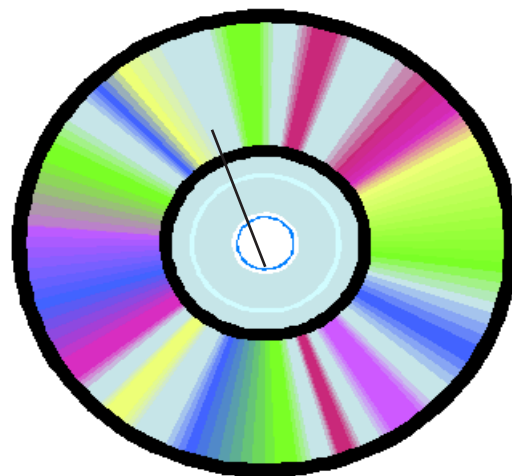
readers giggling.

Danielle Hill

Scary things.

Louise B. Snead





AUDIO BOOK REVIEWS

For the Love of Lilah

Nora Roberts

Brilliance Audio

CD

978-1501231520

☆☆☆1/2

Lilah is a self-confident young woman, a naturalist, and also fey. She believes in instinct and premonitions. She sometimes feels the presence of Great-Grandmother Bianca. Recently, she is getting the feeling that something bad is coming; she doesn't know where it is coming from, but she senses something is wrong. When she goes out to watch the storm and the thunderclouds overhead, she doesn't sense that she will soon save a life.

Max Quartermain is an American history professor who wants to write a novel. He was aboard Caufield's yacht in the middle of a storm and getting seasick. As he heads topside to get some air, he hears his friend Caufield and Captain Hawkins talking. He hears they are thieves and are using him to get information about some jewels which they want to steal. When Caufield realizes Max has heard everything, he tells Captain Hawkins to lock Max in his room. Max runs for topside. When he is finally cornered, he does what he knows he has to do but doesn't know if he will

survive; he jumps overboard! He senses rather than knows that someone is in the water to help him. They battle the waves and the sea until they reach shore. He looks at the face above him and sees its ethereal beauty and lots of red hair. He mumbles that she is real and that he doesn't believe in mermaids. Then he passes out. What will happen now? Will Caufield find the emeralds? Will Max be able to help himself and the girls?

With plenty of intrigue, *For the Love of Lilah* is a great book.

Lettetia Elsasser

Game of Fear

Robin Perini

Performed by Todd Haberkorn

Brilliance Audio

Compact Disk

978-1491535765

☆☆☆☆☆

Deb Lansing is a top-notch helicopter pilot with experience and baggage from her stint in the Army. Her motto is "leave no one behind," and she's a strong, fearless woman." She left the army after a betrayal and assumed



Audio Book Reviews

responsibility for her sister Ashley, as their mother had passed away. Ashley is a 16-year-old genius with an IQ of 170 who has been admitted to the Air Force Academy even though she and a friend have hacked into the government's computers. Now Ashley and her friends are walking the straight and narrow with their only deviation coming from playing a video game called Point of Entry. But now the game has gotten them into trouble. It seems many of the genius teens who have played this game have been kidnapped, including Ashley. Deb is wild with concern to save her sister, but she can't do it alone.

Gabe Montgomery is an undercover policeman whose assignment has been kept from everyone---family, friends, and other policemen because there are crooked police aplenty on that Denver, Colorado, force. He, too, has secrets, unrelated to his assignment, secrets that could tear his family apart. He has a thing for Deb Lansing, but he can't act on it because what he is doing is too dangerous. But Deb overhears Gabe talking to his snitch, and she knows. More than that she needs help desperately and somehow she trusts this man.

Wow! *Game of Fear* snatches the listener from the murder at the very beginning and refuses to let go until the very end. Haberkorn, the reader, gives an exceptional performance, mastering a wide range of male and female voices. If you like thrillers, this is a must.

Mildred Burkett

Just Kate

Linda Lael Miller

Brilliance Audio

CD

978-1501272363

☆☆☆

Just Kate is one of those timeless stories about love and belonging in the wake of tragedy.

Since her sister's death, Kate has tried to live up to her parents' expectations. Becoming engaged to a man her parents approve of is another way to be the responsible one. When she is betrayed by someone very close to her, Kate is fed up with living someone else's life, so she quits her job and sets out to forge a life of her own choosing, and maybe find love in the bargain.

Sean Harris, late husband of Kate's sister, is exactly the man she wants, since she has loved him forever. Travelling to Australia to see him, she soon finds that he

wants to move forward after his wife's death. If that life involves Kate, he has no qualms. Their lives are about to undergo changes, some that will need a strong sense of faith and love. Will they be able to be able to overcome the ghost of their pasts?

Letitia Elsasser

Midnight Betrayal

Melinda Leigh

Brilliance Audio

CD

978-1491529386

☆☆☆1/2

If you are looking for an intense romantic suspense story, *Midnight Betrayal* is just what you may be looking for.

Dr. Louisa Hancock, first introduced in the book *Midnight Sacrifice*, has a troubled past that has caused her to move from her previous post. Her life seems to be peaceful since she started working as a museum curator until the body of one of her staff is found dead. Has her dark past come back to haunt her? Has someone found something from her past?

Enter Conor Sullivan; the only man Louisa has ever cared for. When another of Louisa's staff goes missing, it seems to be connected to Conor. As the evidence against Conor mounts, both he and Louisa must try to find who is targeting Louisa and setting up Conor to take the fall. Time is against the pair as they race to find the psychotic killer before another girl goes missing.

With plenty of tension and intrigue, *Midnight Betrayal* is an audio that is hard to stop listening to. Read by Mikael Naramore, this is a non-stop story from beginning to end.

Letitia Elsasser

Playing with Fire

Tess Gerritsen

Performed by Julia Wheland and Will Damron

Brilliance Audio

978-1501248047

☆☆☆☆

On her last day in Venice, Italy, Julia Ansdell is looking for a gift for herself. A musician, she decides to treat herself to an old Gypsy book of music. She is thrilled to find that nestled inside, however, is another piece of hand-written music with erasures and corrections on front and back. The title of it is *Incendio*. She comes back home to Massachusetts and when she plays the piece, strange things start happening--inexplicable, deadly things. Now people are trying to kill her.

Audio Book Reviews

Or are they? Or is the music driving her crazy?

The music was written in 1944 by Lorenzo, a young Italian Jew, who had been taught to play the violin by his grandfather. He was extremely talented, capable of playing anything, but his exquisite performances came when he played for Lora. Lora was a cello player, and together they made lovely music, crushing all competition who dared to challenge them. They were falling in love, but he was Jewish, and she was Catholic, and a union between them was unacceptable.

This beautifully done offering by Tess Gerritsen is performed by two narrators: The female narrator, Julia Whelan, performs the present-day scenes. Will Damron performs the scenes that occurred between 1938 and 1944. The plot is tight, and the audience will root for Lorenzo and for Julia. This reviewer was surprised that Ms. Gerritsen took on this particular topic, but she handled it well. This is a good audio.

Mildred Burkett

The Ruthless Charmer (Rogues of Regent Street 2)

Julia London

Read by Anne Flosnik

Brilliance Audio

10 CDs

978-1491507315

★★★★

Julian Dane, rake of rakes, is the second rogue in the series to get his story. Still reeling from their friend Phillip's death, the rogues continue their rascally ways until love catches them by surprise. Julian's surprise is Claudia Whitney, a young lady who is more like a sister to him from an early age. When the pair are caught in a compromising position, they are forced to marry. Things seem to go along fine in their lives until such time that an incident has them at cross purposes.

Julia London never fails to impress with her fabulous cast of characters with flaws and foibles, just like the rest of us. Read by the late Anne Flosnik, this novel comes to life as the listener becomes a part of the story. There is plenty of passion, romance, intrigue and secrets to be had in *The Ruthless Charmer*. The secondary cast, with cameos of the other Rogues, as well as savory and unsavory persons

alike, are brilliantly depicted by the voice of Anne Flosnik. I had some difficulty with parts of the story, feeling the miscommunication and misunderstandings of our hero and heroine. I felt things could have been worked out much easier if they would just talk to each other.

Letitia Elsasser

The Scent of Your Breath

Melissa P.

Bolinda Audio

CD

978-1489085245

★★

The Scent of Her Breath is a fictionalized memoir by the author, which is her second book in her series of confessions.

While this is supposed to be like a letter written to her mother, even with an audio, the story did not flow smoothly and the plot was very confusing. Her sexual adventures with Thomas seemed to be self-absorbed, fantastical, and obsessive. Melissa and Thomas are not well-developed characters, and the storyline is boring at times.

If you are a fan of erotic novels, this may appeal. For me, I prefer more well-developed characters and storylines.

Letitia Elsasser

Booty from the Other Genre



Luxe 2: A LaLa Land Addiction

Ashley Antoinette

St. Martin's Griffin

Trade Paperback

978-1250066985

★★★★1/2

Bleu is torn between three loves. She loves drugs and her luxury lifestyle. Noah loves her and is her best friend. And finally Iman her kingpin lover. It comes time for her to choose between the lifestyle and love. And if that is not complicated enough, it is still a choice there. Which path will she choose?

This was interesting to me. I liked the lifestyle of luxury and excess portrayed, as well as the two very different loves she has to choose from. The complexity of the web these elements created made for a good book. My only issue was with the drug using parts which were uncomfortable to read.

Lenore Lovecraft

Strong Cold Dead

Jon Land

Tom Doherty Associates

Hardcover

978-0765335135

★★★★★



This is a fast moving story about a newly discovered

toxin that was found on an Indian reservation that has enormous potential for both good and evil. It all depends on who can get to it first.

The toxin can cure cancer better than anything now available. But chemotherapy drugs are all toxic. They are poisons that kill the cancer but also attack the patient to some degree. This toxin is no different. In order for it to do a better job, it has to be even more toxic. In fact, it is so toxic that it can also be used as a weapon of mass destruction. And the terror group "ISIS" knows about its existence.

Strong Cold Dead begins with strange happenings on an Indian reservation. Law enforcement agencies are at the reservation and trying to find out why everyone disappeared. Where did they go without taking anything with them? They even left food on the table.

Along comes Texas Ranger Caitlin Strong to find out what is going on. However, the local authorities tell her she is out of her jurisdiction and will not let her in on the details. This provokes an argument. It might have been better if she had walked away. Caitlin is in for quite a few surprises, and most of them are not good.

Paul Zunino



Late Reviews

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

Here and Now

Cheryl Etchison

Avon Impulse

e-book

978-0062471062

★★★★1/2

Rachel Dellinger's younger brother idolized Lucky James, who became a Ranger medic and fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. Ethan joined up as soon as he was old enough but died in battle. Rachel blames Lucky for his death and slaps him at the funeral.

Six years later, Lucky leaves the Army and goes back to school. He works as a tech at the local hospital in Durant, Oklahoma, but he is frustrated because he has to start over again. But meeting Rachel again is more satisfying. She's a nurse at the hospital, and her shame at how she treated him years ago leads her to try to avoid him. But Lucky and Rachel have a connection, and the more they see each other, the more she feels it.

Cheryl Etchison's latest "American Valor" novel has a lot going for it. Lucky and Rachel are both appealing characters, and Rachel's past and demons make her choices realistic. Readers will be right there with Lucky as he works through his dilemmas. Don't miss this one!

Heather Nordahl Files

Hero of Mine

Codi Gary

Avon Impulse

e-book

978-0062372284

★★★★1/2

Tyler Best lost his military dog in battle. Now he works with dogs and troubled teens. He is picking prospective new dogs for the program when he meets the prickly Dani Hill. They get off to an uneven start, but Dani has the real barrier to any possible relationship.

The most important person in Dani's life will always be her little boy, whose father took off when he learned she was pregnant. Tyler is unwilling to have a relationship with a single mom, but she gets under his skin. And when her ex suddenly starts showing up again, Tyler's protective instincts go on high alert.

Codi Gary's latest will appeal to those who love hot military men, dogs, cute little kids, and drama. Readers met Tyler in a prior title in the "Men in Uniform" series, but new readers will not be lost.

Heather Nordahl Files

Late Reviews

Torch

Karen Erickson

Avon Impulse

e-book

978-0062441225

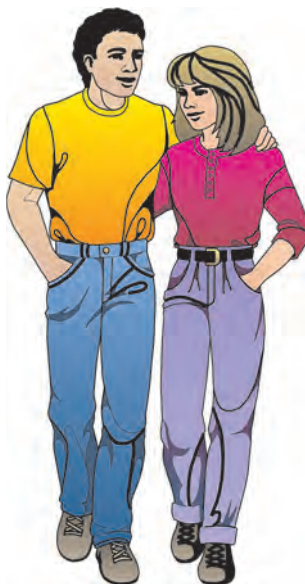
★★★★

Tate Warren drives Wren Gallagher crazy. He teases her mercilessly, calling her every bird name but her own. The last thing she wants is to get involved with him... but maybe she protests too much.

Tate wants Wren badly. But it's a bad idea. He works with her overprotective brothers, and they'd probably kill him. But he keeps crossing paths with her when she's drunk. They get ever closer to getting involved, but then her house burns to the ground. This is utterly devastating for Wren, but when he takes her in, close quarters makes it harder for them to resist each other.

Karen Erickson's latest is strongly connected for other stories in the "Wildwood" series and has a continuing mystery, but it still ably stands alone. Wren and Tate have solid chemistry, and other than a somewhat superfluous subplot, this tale is excellent.

Heather Nordahl Files



Bedmates

Nichole Chase

William Morrow

Trade paper

978-0062405197

★★★★1/2

Maddie McGuire just got arrested for trying to free dogs that would otherwise be euthanized. This is a big deal because she's the President's daughter. Her image needs a makeover, so she is involved in a new initiative to give housing to military vets. She's not happy with the assignment because she needs to work with Jake Simmon, the Vice President's son.

Jake isn't thrilled to be used by his mother, but he is happy to be working with Maddie. When did she get so hot? Working with her day in, day out kindles an unexpected attraction. But there are complications. Jake's controlling mother doesn't like Maddie, and Jake has unresolved issues with PTSD from his military service. It doesn't help that the first recipient of a home is in a wheelchair because of him.

Nichole Chase's latest launches her "American Royalty" series with this appealing tale. Readers of her other books will recognize a couple of characters, but no one will be lost. A refreshing aspect of this New Adult title is the maturity of the characters as they struggle with their dilemmas and difficulties.

Heather Nordahl Files

*Young
Adult
Reviews*

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