

November/December 2018

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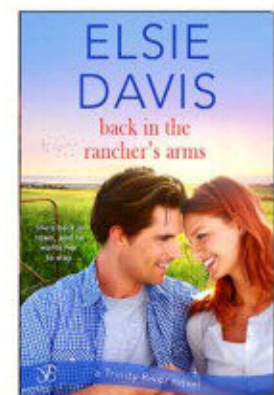
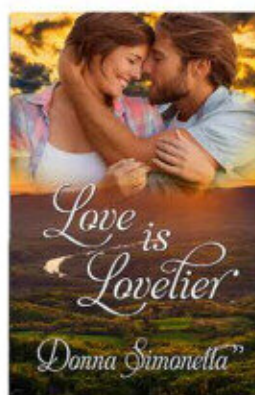
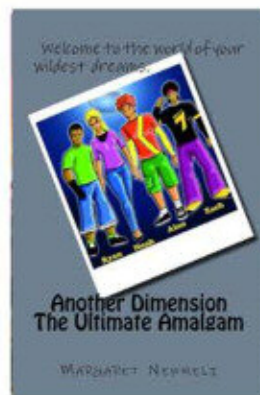
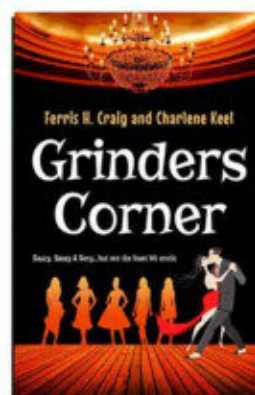
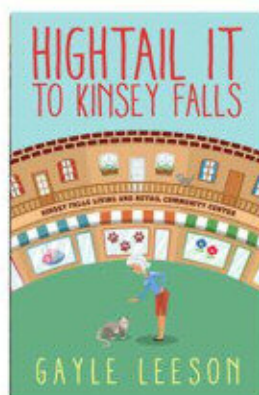
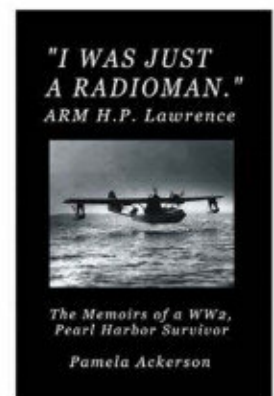
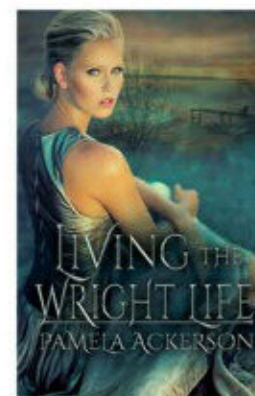
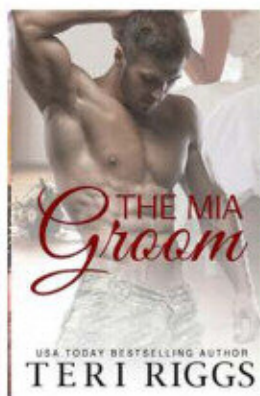
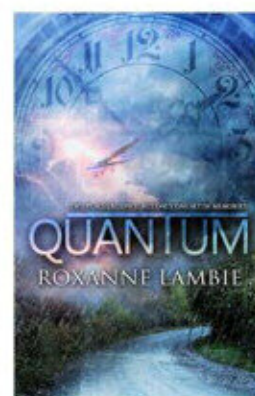
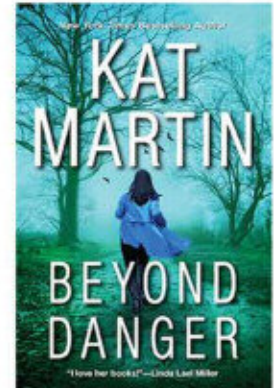
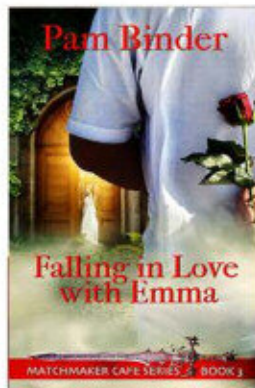
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Editorial

by Louise B. Snead

Last year, I made the claim that the holiday season was magical. I still believe that. Though this has been a disastrous year for many, I have personally witnessed so many people doing so many good things for people they don't know.

The fires that covered Butte county in Northern California and specifically Paradise, California, as well as some areas in the south have been the most devastating in our history. There are many theories, but it is evident by the numbers of people found in their cars that there the some of victims were caught unaware and evacuation plans fell apart. Unprecedented numbers--hovering around 89 with untold missing--lost their lives; families' homes burned to the ground. Students found themselves with no schools to attend.

The environment was in chaos. Even hundreds of miles away, here in the Bay Area, you breathed at your own risk, each inhalation carrying with it the probability of bring particles of contaminants into your lungs. The remedy, face masks, made us look like aliens from outer space. The skies of Oakland resembled the heavens in the aftermath of war. Every day for weeks on end was a "Spare the Air Day," a regulation enacted to minimize pollution in the Bay Area that requests that residents stay inside, minimizes driving, and makes it illegal to burn wood or anything else solid in a fireplace.

So many animals were stranded, lost or misplaced. Keep in mind much of the affected area is rural or woody. So we are talking about deer, coyotes, pigs, horses, goats, llamas, cows, rabbits as well as dogs and cats. Everyone prayed for rain in this drought

stricken area, but when it finally came, it was a mixed blessing. It did help quell the fires, but it also created mudslides.

I want you to call upon your imagination now.

Imagine you are one of the "fortunate" victims who left with your life. You had to leave so quickly that you have nothing--no food, no clothing, no personal memorabilia, no money. Where will you stay? How will you perform basics like bathing, brushing your teeth? Where will you get your next meal? And on a long-term level, how can my child graduate from high school when there is no high school?

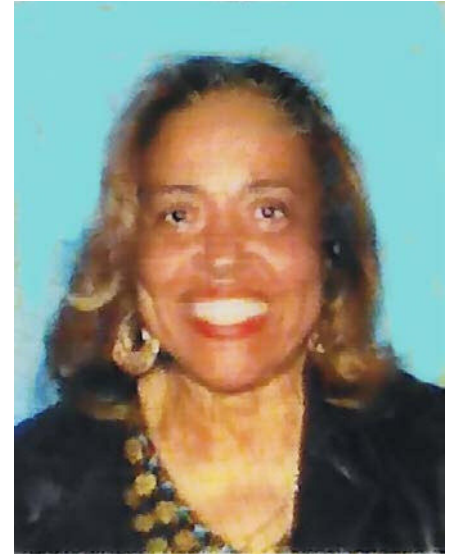
Imagine of the confusion, fear, and panic these animals felt.

Finally, imagine you find your property, though insured at the level recommended by the insurance company, turned out to be underinsured, and there is no way you can think of rebuilding unless you can get legal help.

This is why I maintain faith in man and womankind:

From the onset, I saw people step up for total strangers. A few miles away from the blazing fires and only hours after the word got out, there were groups of people assembling on the Wal-Mart parking lot bearing clothes, hygiene kits, food, diapers, blankets and other necessary items. Simultaneously, I saw the onset of collections of clothing and food here in the Bay Area to take to victims almost two hundred miles away.

Despite the possibility of exposure to roaring fires, deadly smoke, asbestos, firemen volunteered from across the country to aid in the fight against the fires, one of whom lost his life. I saw individual efforts, and groups--churches, non-profits organizations, school sororities and fraternities and so many others join the Salvation Army to help the victims of the fires with one thought in mind: WE ARE ALL IN THIS TO-



GETHER.

Restaurants donated their profits to the fire. Those closer to the fire donated food to the firemen. The beauty of this charity was that it was done without considerations of race, sexual orientation, ethnic group, political persuasion or any of the inane characteristics that keep us from being human beings at times.

I saw the Golden State Warriors not only donate thousands of dollars to the victims of the fire, but they also brought every high school from the affected area to a Golden State game and treated them like queens and kings.

I saw volunteers scouring the areas for animals as soon as the fires died down enough for them to do so. The Oroville Animal shelters opened the hearts and the doors to displaced pets and have reunited many while trying to find new homes for those victims who are unable to care for their pets in their present state.

I saw a millionaire give each displaced high school student in Paradise one-thousand dollars each. And even as late as this morning. I saw a man drive a nicely re-modeled bus designed to provide a place for some

continued on page 28

The Uniform of Success

by Pamela Ackerson

You are a professional. Even if you haven't sold one book yet, you're a professional and need to look and act like one. You're in the public eye, especially at any kind of author/reader event.

You're a celebrity in the book world. Yes, that's right. You're a star! Present yourself with every ounce of success in the way you walk, talk, dress, and act. Be gracious, humble, kind, and helpful.

Look good.

Just like the hottest celebrity from Hollywood, from the moment you arrive to the moment you leave, you are in the public eye. Sell yourself and you'll sell your books.

You don't have to dress in the hottest name brand clothing. You don't have to be couture. You don't have to be a fashionista. You just have to look it.

Lights, camera, action!

If you wear make-up, it's on and camera ready before you enter the hotel/event to check in, and stays the whole day and the whole time you are in public.

Camera ready? That's a term used for models and actors. Not too much, not too little, make it enough to know you're wearing make-up, and everyone will be happy. You don't go out and get professional pictures done without looking your best, right?

Well, that's what I mean. From the moment you arrive to the moment you leave, someone's going to be taking pictures. Make sure you're camera ready.

How many times have you or someone you know commented about how they looked in a picture? Practically every time. Don't be disappointed because you're not happy with a picture that's posted from the event. Be ready at all times to have your picture taken.

Many don't. I've seen authors arrive in stretched thread-bare yoga pants, no make-up, and hair that looked like they hadn't touched it for days, graying bra straps showing...

I've seen authors come to a meet and greet in dirty jeans and old t-shirts. They didn't look like that at the book signing. They were dressed nice, presentable,



and looking awesome.

What I'm suggesting is that you start the event looking awesome and end the event looking awesome. Your clothes are pressed and presentable. You're ready for the flash. Bring it on.

They can be clothes from Burdines, Walmart, or a second-hand clothing store. Who cares? As long as you look professional, it doesn't matter how much you've spent on the clothes.

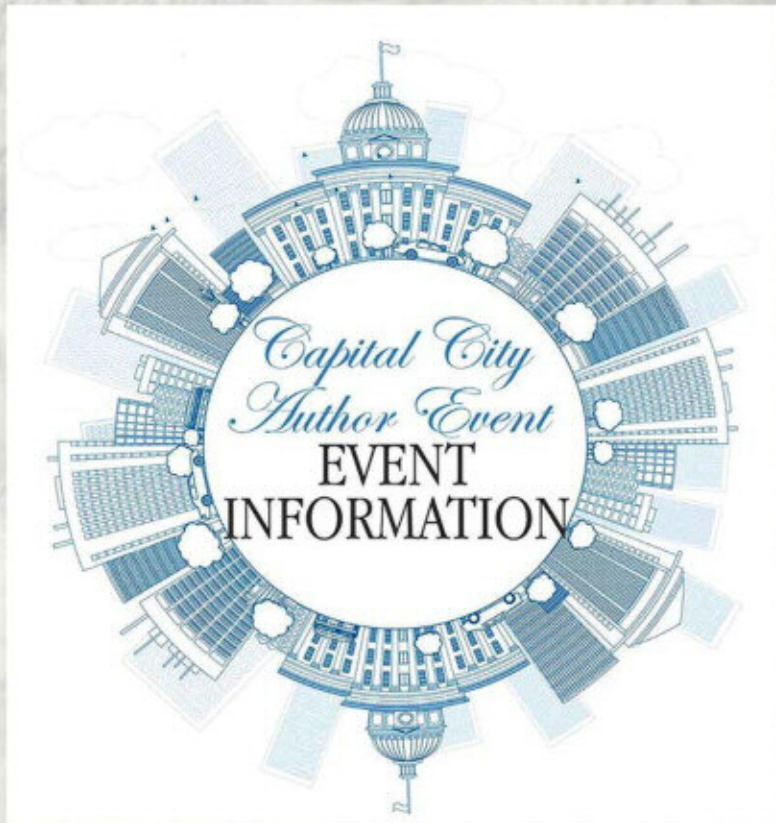
They don't have to be brand new. You don't have to be fresh from the salon. Just look your best.

You're a celebrity.

And you're the ZING in advertisZING!

Pamela Ackerson works for *Affaire de Coeur* in the marketing and advertising department. She is an internation-

Capital City Author Event



**May 18, 2019
Montgomery, AL**

**Hosted by
Tammie Smith,
Randy and
Michelle Sewell
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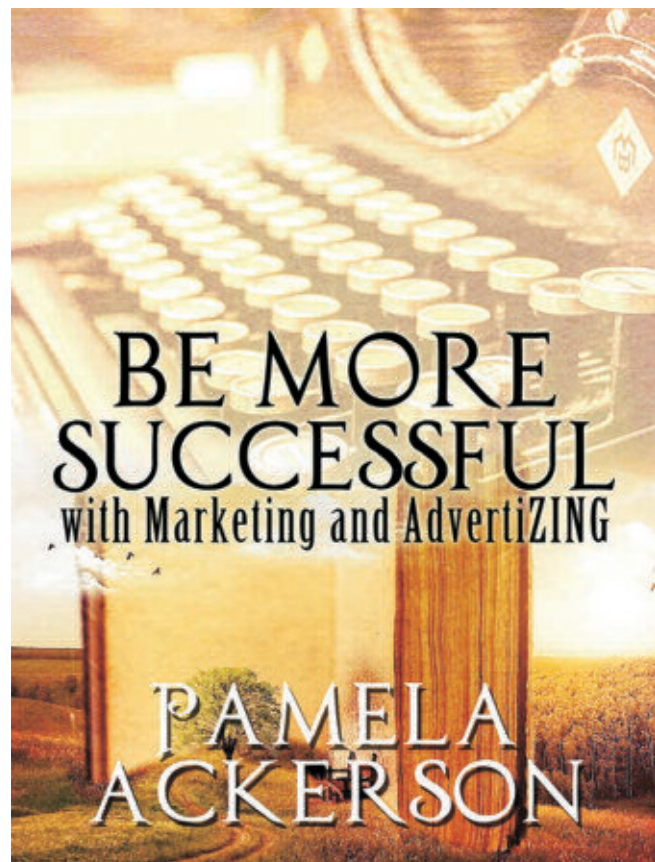
al best-selling author of historical fiction, non-fiction, and time-travel books. Look for her non-fiction release, *Be More Successful with Marketing and AdvertiZING*, available in print and e-book.

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Facebook: [facebook.com/pam.ackerson.7](https://www.facebook.com/pam.ackerson.7)

E-mail: Pam@PamelaAckerson.com



The Spotlight is on...

Gary Lemons

Gary Lemons received an Undergraduate degree in Poetry from the University of Iowa in 1973. He fished for many years in Bristol Bay (Bristol Bay & Other Poems—Red Hen Press) and worked as a tree planter re-foresting clear-cuts all over the Pacific Northwest. He has seven books of poetry in print with two more scheduled. He's a yogi, and currently teaches gentle yoga with his wife at their studio in Port Townsend, WA—Tenderpaws.

AdC: *When did you start writing?*

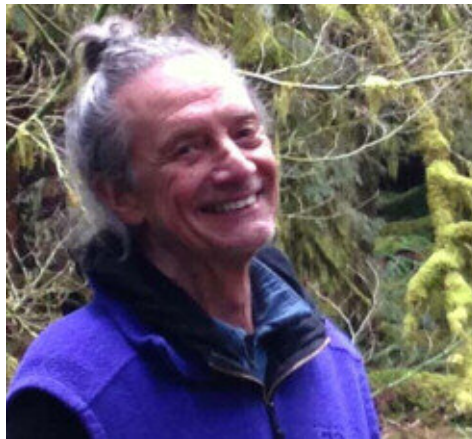
G.L.: Fifty years ago, when I heard “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” read out loud — “*I will show you fear/ In a handful of dust*” — as a teenager. I resonated with that—I wanted my feelings and fears about the world to be sent out into the unknown on the good ship of poetry.

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

G.L.: That there is nothing more worthy than searching for your true voice—the one that lets you know—beneath all the noise—what is right and what is wrong and which way to go. Poetry helps that voice become audible while simultaneously clarifying the path ahead.

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

G.L.: My new book is #3 in the “Snake Quartet” called the *Hunger Sutras*—it follows the collective voice of all life on planet Earth that has been rinsed, if you will, away by Earth’s need to cleanse itself to survive—it attributes an intelligence to the planet’s actions. Through the character of Snake, as he/she wanders the post- apocalyptic



landscape, we hear the poems/voices of everything that’s disappeared – Snake is the remnant throat for all that is gone.

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

G.L.: Everyday—really—what is better than coffee and an empty page?

AdC: *How/where do you get your plot ideas?*

G.L.: From dreams—from headlines—from meditation and yoga—from conversations with friends and strangers—from how all of that somehow merges into the imagery released when one listens inwardly.

AdC: *What is the most difficult thing about creating and developing characters?*

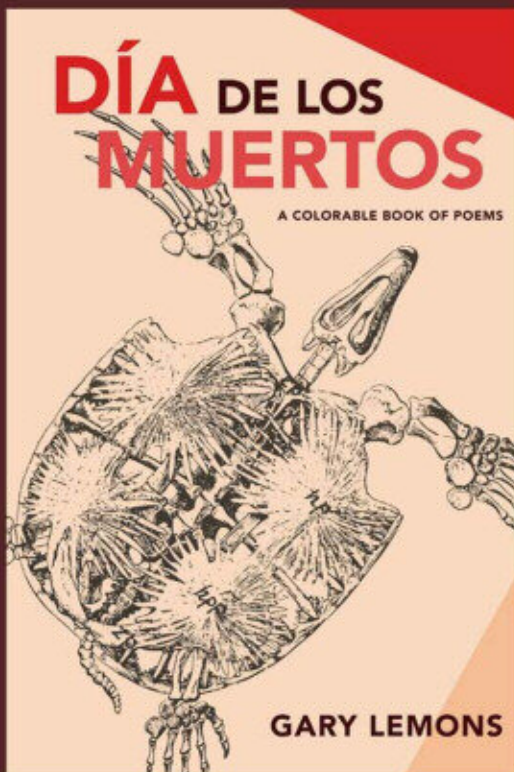
G.L.: Allowing them to speak without violating their right to an opinion different from my own.

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

G.L.: Living in the interior world of the spirit/body/heart connection as it manifests into language. Seeing things through those eyes instead of the eyes weary of what is currently visible; the sense of hope that comes from knowing we as human beings are at the very beginning of our evolution and not the end. And, of course, the friendship with others on this journey.

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

G.L.: Seven, currently, with two more scheduled for publication in the next three years. “The Quartet” is a post-apocalyptic look at how the end game came to be and how it played out and what remains after embodied presence is gone from the planet. And it presumes a time when new life begins again without the seeds of its own



"There is an odd equator of madness and song in this shadow decahedron where the fresh ideal of what constitutes solid form is taken up with mapping the other side of the river—here, by the way, the river is on fire and its song is one in which we become ecstatic and must drown. There is concealed in this work a flight from headlines and the sovereign silica. Such edgy and memorable new work by Gary Lemons."
-- Norman Dubie

GaryLemons.com

destruction built into the design. *Día de los Muertos* is a journalogue of my early days living and traveling in Mexico and especially time spent in and around Oaxaca during the Day of the Dead celebration. The other books are more personal narratives—all of my books I hope have at their heart an attention to the music of speech and reverence for dreams.

AdC: *Will you be attending any book signings or conventions?*

G.L.: Yes, I will be at AWP in Portland, Oregon, in March reading off-site and signing at the Red Hen booth. I will also be signing at the book launch for the *Hunger Sutras* on November 3rd at the Writers' Workshoppe in Port Townsend, WA.

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

G.L.: Write every day—even if you don't want to—sometimes the best work comes from resisting your own impulses.

Understand that editing is where the poem really hides. The first draft is just a rough-hewn shape—through editing the poem is revealed.

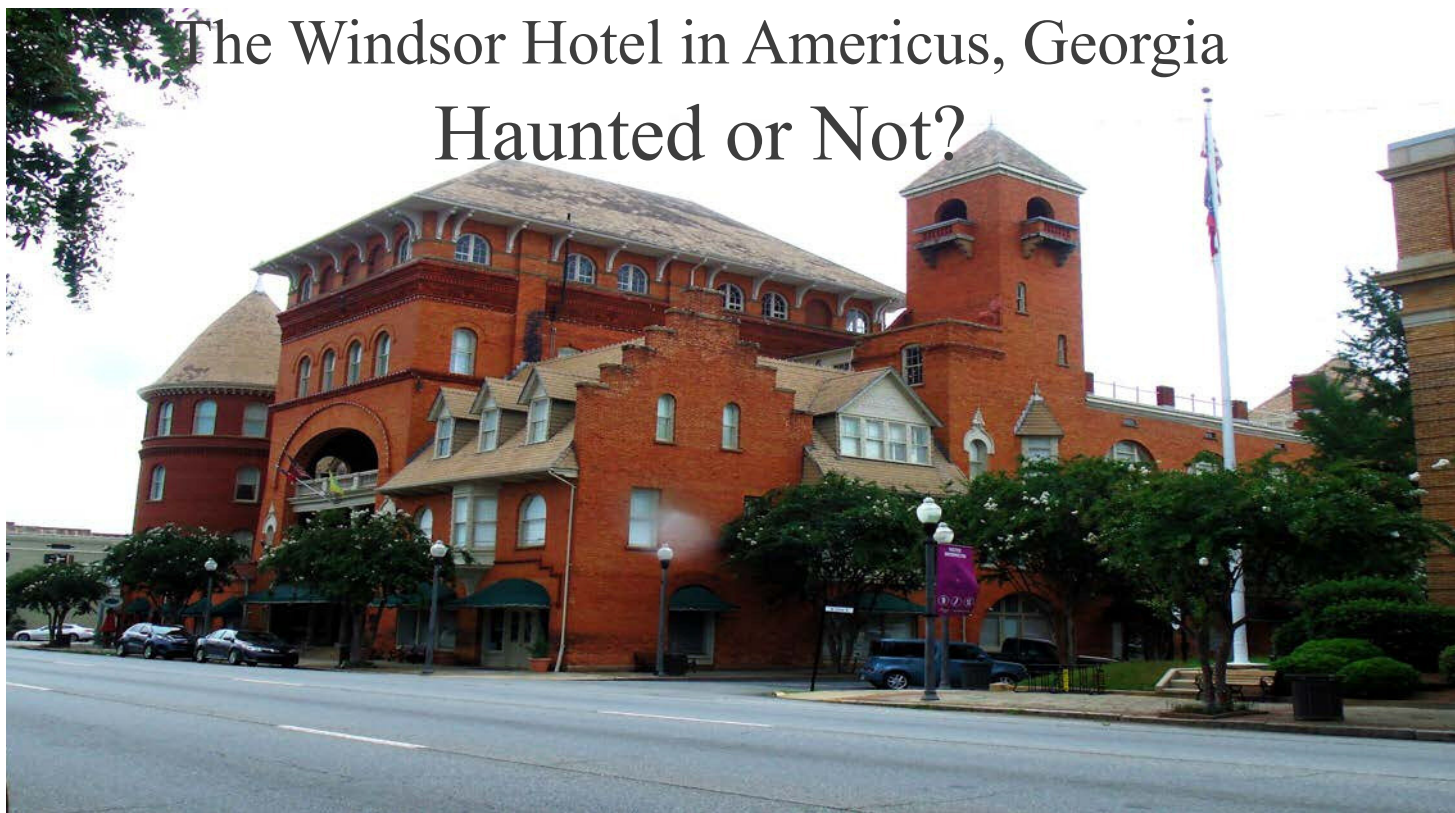
Please give us the following contact information:

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Tenderpawsyoga.com

Facebook: Gary Lemons--Poet



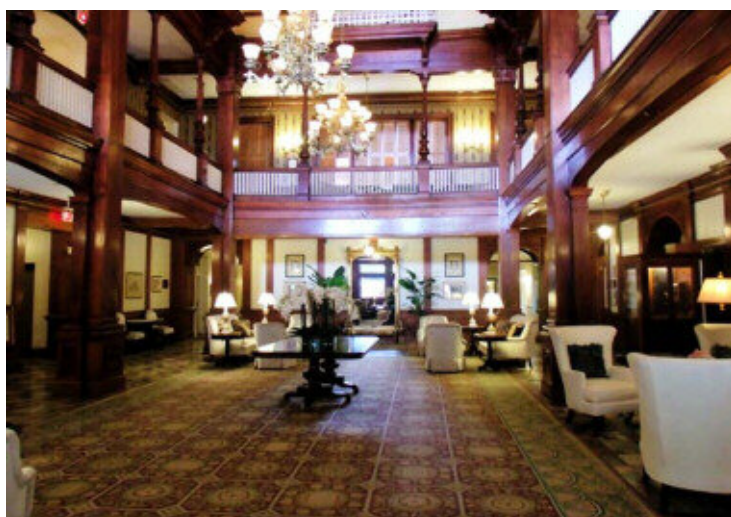
The Windsor Hotel in Americus, Georgia Haunted or Not?



The historic Windsor Hotel is as big as a city block. Built in classic, eclectic architectural style with high Victorian Gothic, Moorish, and Islamic influences, the combination is breathtaking. The four-storied turret and bell tower rises above the hotel as a beacon making the majestic structure a prominent feature in the center of town. The balconies had hanging plants, inviting the guest to enjoy the outside with an indulgence of relaxation.

Godfrey Norrman was a renowned Swedish born architect who was based out of Atlanta, Georgia. He designed the Windsor Hotel in 1890. The Windsor was named after John Windsor, a prominent businessman and philanthropist.

The interior of the building creates an ambiance of comfort and prestige. Enter into the past through elaborately carved French doors to a three-story open atrium.



Windsor Atrium

rated and arranged for guests to visit and chat with each other.

Straight ahead of the French doors where the original reservation



Stop a moment to admire the Italian marble floor.

On the right, a seating area is placed next to a gorgeous fireplace and to the left the guest check-in and reservation area. The sizable atrium has seating areas comfortably deco-

area was, are large blocks of manganese glass. The ceiling above was engineered and designed specifically to be used for allowing sunlight from the windows on the second floor. Upstairs, guests will see the dark glass on the floor which takes advantage of the sunlight. An innovative idea used



by many talented architects.

Fall in love with the wood herringbonedesign oak floors. You'll marvel over the hand-carved golden oak and mahogany woodwork with pillars accenting all corners of the room and throughout the hotel. Georgian heart pine, a good solid wood that'll last hundreds of

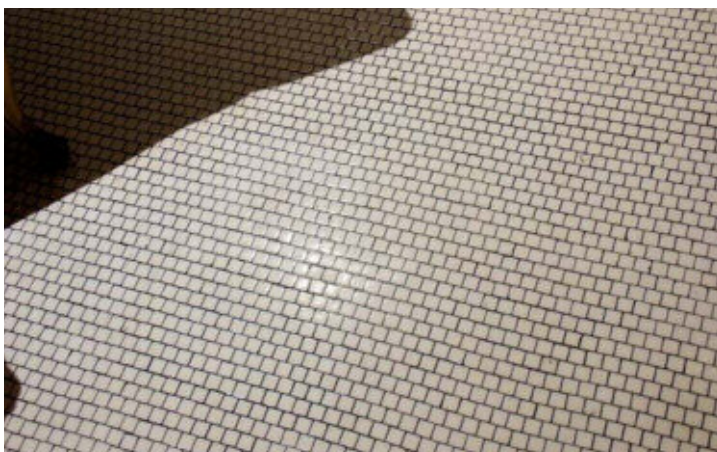
years, was used as an accent.

Make a point to stop in the elegant restaurant. Enjoy the ambiance surrounding you. Don't forget to admire the ivory tile floors! The restaurant serves breakfast and dinner at very reasonable prices. The food is absolutely delicious. It's well worth the stop, even if you're not staying at the hotel.

The hotel had its grand opening in June, 1892 with over one thousand attendees. The celebration was crowned by an elaborate ball held on the fifth floor. In 1910, the hotel was upgraded throughout the hotel with new electric lights, telephones, and elevators.

It's had its ups and downs, as any historical building. After being in business for almost eighty years, they'd closed their doors in 1972. Howard Dayton gifted the hotel to Americus. A decision had to be made. Tear it down? Or restore it?

It was restored and had reopened in the 1990s.



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Several years later, and multiple attempts to keep the hotel, the beautiful building fell short of profits, and the city had to put the historical building up for sale.

The current owners' visions came true. With their positive thinking, and well-planned ideas, the Patel family purchased the Windsor in 1998, and renovated the hotel to its magnificent condition. A few years later, they chose to become a Best Western Plus.

The Best Western hotel chain was the only one at the time who'd allow the owners to keep the sophisticated Victorian artistic designs throughout the hotel.

Former president Jimmy Carter attended the grand-reopening.

The Best Western Plus Windsor offers excellent accommodations, pleasant and friendly employees. Along with its full-service restaurant and lounge, it has a fitness center, business center, and a meeting space that can hold up to three hundred fifty people.

How about a bit of trivia?

The lounge has supported and cheered the local

baseball team since 1893!

There are three tunnels in the basement. Where do they lead? One theory is the old Confederate hospital across the street on Jackson.

President Jimmy Carter has stayed at the hotel. Franklin D. Roosevelt gave a speech from the balcony in 1928.



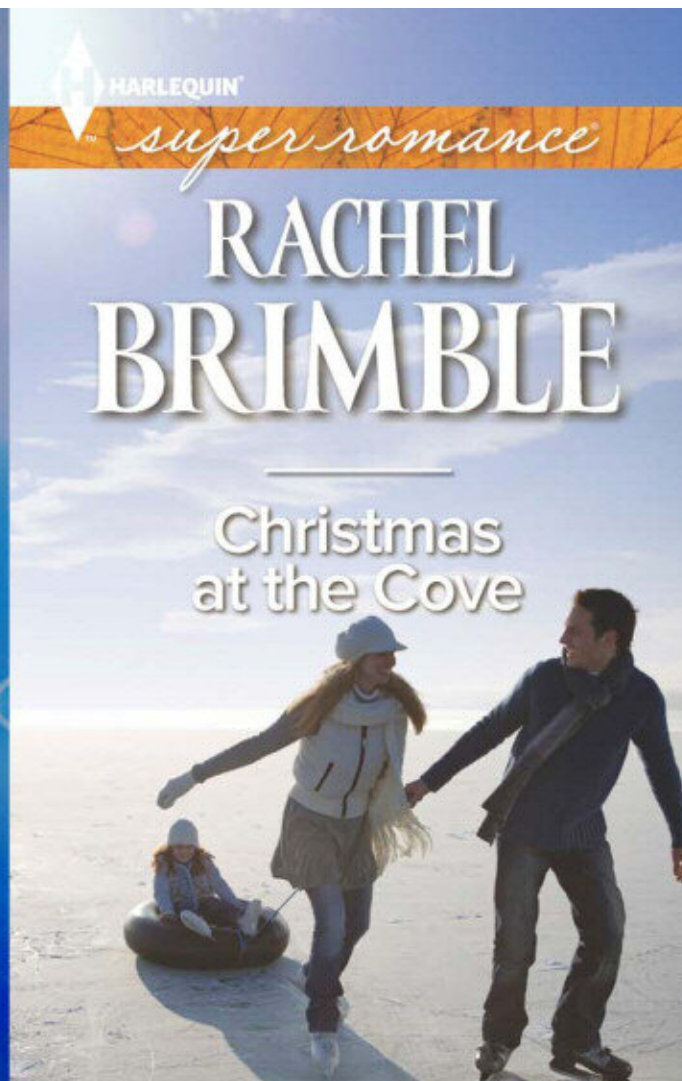
Windsor dining room

More family for Christmas?

Scott Walker doesn't have time for a relationship. The sexy mechanic has career ambitions, not to mention a mother and three sisters to take care of.

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

RachelBrimble.com
@RachelBrimble



The infamous Al Capone liked to stay in the top floor of the turret.

If you love history, it's a short trip to the Civil War Andersonville Prison Camp—definitely some hauntings there.

There are secrets at the Windsor. How about a secret staircase that leads to the fourth floor? And how did the fire start on the fourth floor?

And the ghosts. Yes, they've been authenticated as being haunted. Why is the hotel haunted?

What happened that night near the elevator? No one will ever know, and if they do, they're not talking. Here's the scoop or rumor. You decide.

One of the housekeepers had a well-known and prominent gentleman friend staying with her for the evening. Her daughter, who wasn't accustomed to her mother entertaining a man, came into the bedroom and tickled—what she thought was her mother's feet. It wasn't.

The gentleman was awakened, and was furious because the child tickled his feet. He started yelling at the child and abusing her.

The mother interceded and a ruckus ensued. Somehow, and for some very odd reason, both elevator doors were open. It was very unusual for something like that to happen. Even back then in the early 1900s, there were safety precautions taken with elevators.

The mother and daughter went down the shaft and were killed. The suspicious accident caused by the prominent citizen wasn't pursued by the authorities. Some newspaper accounts used different unknown names of the man who'd been involved.

The child and mother have been seen and felt since the incident.

All in all, the Best Western Windsor is a must stay hotel. Perhaps a nice writer's retreat or conference could be in order. They'll welcome you with open arms.
www.windsor-amicus.com

The Spotlight is On...

Deborah Camp



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 has been inducted into the Oklahoma Authors Hall of Fame, and she is a charter member of the Romance

Writers of America. She is also a member of the Author's Guild.

Ms. Camp is a lover of the West and the people who tried to tame it. She likes to write about strong, independent women and the men who are their equals. Having grown up on a diet of TV westerns has served her well. Since she appreciates men with devilish twinkles in their eyes, she likes to mix laughter in with the love

scenes in her books.

But, variety is her middle name. She is versatile enough to write in several genres. Her latest book, which is from her "Mind's Eye" series, is a romantic thriller. But she cut her teeth on historical romance, recently venturing into forbidden interracial love between a half breed and a white woman in *Lonestar's*

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In the land of Faerie only the bold will survive...

GRACE LOGAN AND THE GOBLIN BONES



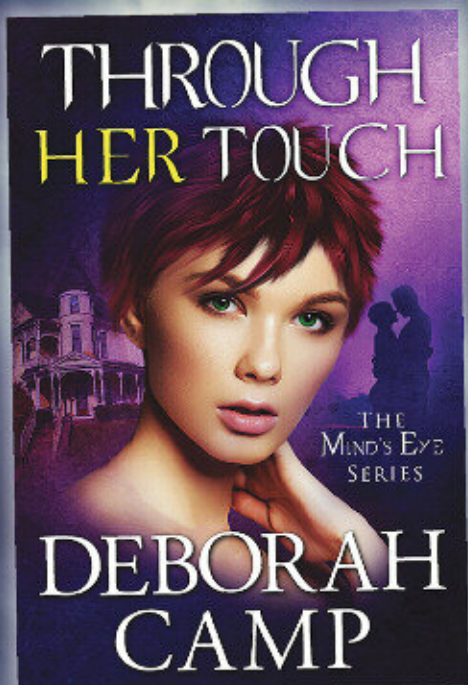
In the world of Faerie, only the bold will survive.

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Grace enters the underworld of the Goblins with outcasts: a changling abandoned by her Faerie mother at birth, and a mysterious young man who harbors a dark secret.

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*Sometimes
being psychic is
murder.*

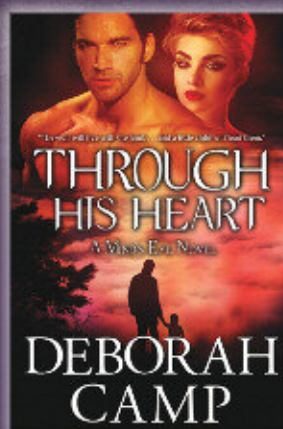
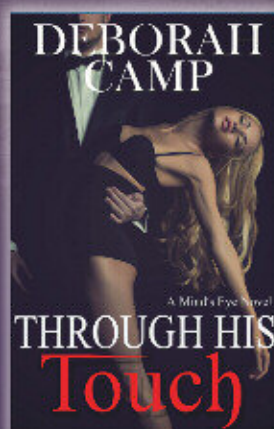
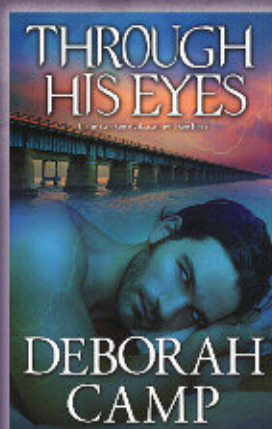
*Especially when you're
one of the psychics on the
killer's hit list.*

THROUGH HER TOUCH DEBORAH CAMP

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Look for the final book in the series -- *Through Her Heart* -- this fall!





Sneak Peek

Through Her Heart

(#6 The Mind's Eye series)

By Deborah Camp

The *beep, beep, beep* startled Levi Wolfe from his contemplation of the knife-pleats in his charcoal slacks. He pressed a button on the side of his watch and shut off the unnecessary notification. He was already at his five-thirty appointment. He glanced at the two other people in Dr. Althea McClain's waiting area. The young receptionist – what was her name? Betsy? Britney? – smiled at him through the pane of glass that separated her from the psychiatrist's patients. The other person, a dark-haired boy sitting near the window, stared up at a jet's white trail against the blue sky.

What's he doing here? Levi wondered for about the fifth time since he'd arrived at the office twenty minutes ago. The child glanced at him, then away. Probably came with whoever was in session with Althea. The doctor was usually prompt, so she should be wrapping it up and motioning for Levi to enter her inner sanctum. She'd called him that morning and changed his appointment time from noon to five-thirty because of a scheduling conflict.

He crossed his legs and drummed his fingers on the chair arms, then decided to text his wife. Sliding his phone from his inner jacket pocket, he smiled at Trudy's face staring at him from the screen. He'd taken the photo a couple of weeks ago at a charity event. She'd worn the diamond and emerald earrings he'd given her that evening and they'd flashed in the light from overhead chandeliers. Her dark red hair was swept across her forehead in spiky bangs, and her eyes – those bewitching green eyes – glinted with a potent mixture of love and lust. He typed out a quick message.

Waiting for the doc to see me. You home?

Her response came within a minute.

Just got home. Been at the police station most of the day. They tracked down the pervert. He's in custody.

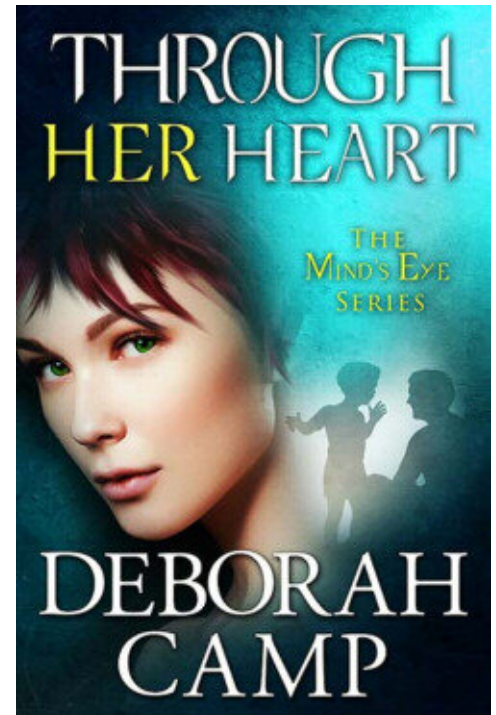
Yes! He smiled and pounded his knee with his fist in a moment of satisfaction. He spared a glance at the serious-faced boy, who looked quickly away.

Trudy had been working with the police for the past two weeks to track a man named Vic, who had molested at least four boys and murdered two others. She'd been connecting psychically with the monster, experiencing his stalking and pouncing on victims who had ranged from four to eight years old.

Great news, babe! How'd it go down? He looked up from the phone to find the boy staring at him with a furrowed brow. His phone vibrated and he read the next text from Trudy.

I'll fill you in over dinner. Short answer is I was "with him" at Chastain Playground. Officers caught him as he grabbed a six-year-old boy. Levi shut his eyes as the horror of what might have been cut through him. Jesus. There were so many predators out there. Made him wonder why Trudy was so determined for them to bring another innocent into the world. He shook off the desolate feelings and concentrated on answering her.

Don't hold dinner for me, if you're hungry. Dr. McClain seems to be running late.



From his peripheral vision, he noted that the boy was still staring at him. He was the age "Vic the pervert" had been targeting, Levi realized with an inner shudder. His black and gray tennis shoes swung back and forth, several inches from the carpet. He wore black cargo shorts and a red t-shirt with Wolverine on the front, teeth and steel claws bared.

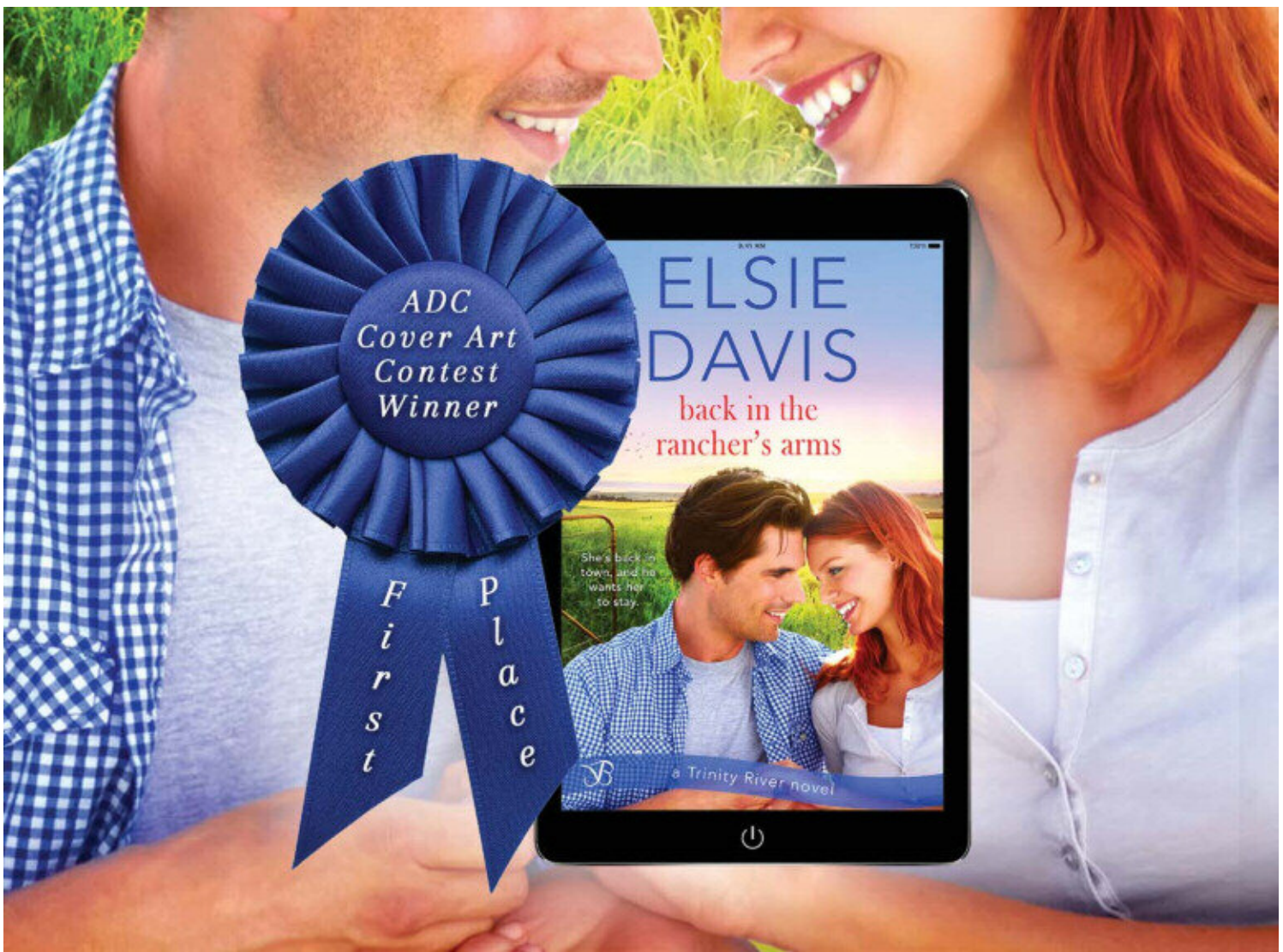
Levi's phone trembled in his palm again.

Wes has whipped up lasagna and Italian bread sticks. I'll wait for you, hot stuff.

Shaking his head, he pocketed the phone and met the child's steady gaze. He had eyes the color of the piece of sky Levi could see out the window. He didn't smile. Just stared, sometimes with his brows drawn together, or like now, with a question lurking in his expression.

The boy broke the staring standoff, looking toward the receptionist. Seconds ticked by before the phone buzzed. The receptionist answered it. The boy's brows lifted and, with a sigh, he returned to his view outside the window.

Levi's sixth sense quivered like a plucked string. That was interesting. Nah. He was probably reading more into it, he told himself. Still . . . the kid



did seem to be waiting for something to happen before the phone had rung. He fiddled with his mobile, calling up the weather, checking the time again, texting Darla, his assistant, to schedule a meeting with his VP of restoration architecture for tomorrow afternoon. Wolfe Enterprises, Inc. had nearly doubled in size during the past three years. A couple of years ago, he'd added the restoration of heritage buildings to his re-fab construction business and it had taken off like a California wildfire. His business had been centered in the Atlanta area the first few years, but the restoration arm had expanded their horizon to seven other states and a couple of Canadian provinces.

He noticed that the boy had shifted in his chair and was staring at the office door. Levi followed his gaze and waited with him. He'd counted to eleven when the office door opened and a postal express worker came in and

handed a package to the receptionist. The boy gave a little smile, heaved a sigh, and stared out the window again. *That kid is psychic!*

Levi straightened, his interest in the boy seizing him. Did he know that he had a special gift or did he think everyone could sense when the phone was going to ring or someone was walking up to the door? Could he receive thought transmissions, too? The questions crowded into his mind, demanding answers.

Closing his eyes, Levi concentrated. He wished he knew the boy's name because it would make this so much easier. Clearing his mind, he pictured a bow and arrow. Deliberately and slowly, he shot the arrow at the boy. When he opened his eyes, the kid was staring at him, his lips parted in shock and confusion. Levi had seen that look many times when he'd given people "brain pokes" as Trudy had dubbed

them. Levi winked at the child.

Did you feel that?

No thoughts came back at him, but he saw alarm and a sliver of fear zip through his big, blue eyes.

Levi smiled, wanting to put him at ease. "My name is Levi Wolfe. What's yours?"

The boy swallowed, glanced at the receptionist, and then answered, "Stuart. Atticus. McFarland."

The pauses between each name widened Levi's grin. "That's quite a handsome handle you have there, Stuart Atticus McFarland. What do your friends at school call you?"

He had to think about it a few seconds before he answered, "Stewie, mostly. Sometimes Stu. But Ms. Williams and Ms. Payne call me Stuart."

"I see. And are they your teachers?"

"Two of them."



"Where do you go to school?"

"Pace."

He wasn't surprised when the boy named one of the better private schools in the area. He was obviously bright, and his clothes, while casual, were expensive and looked brand new. Even his tennis shoes were Nike's that probably cost two or three hundred dollars. Stuart's gaze shifted to the door behind Levi and that expectant expression covered his face again.

Levi swiveled around in the chair when he heard the inner office door behind him open. A middle-aged woman stepped out, smiled at him, and then held her hand out to Dr. McClain. The kid's mother, Levi surmised.

"Thank you, doctor. I'll see you next week."

"Very good, Gayle. Let Britney make your appointment." Dr. McClain looked at Levi and then past him to the boy. "You hang tight for a bit longer, Stuart. Would you like a soft drink?"

Stuart shook his head and sat further back in the chair.

"Okay. Let Britney know if you want anything." She tipped her head toward the smiling receptionist. "Levi?"

Please, come in."

Looking from the woman making another appointment and back to the boy, Levi frowned as he stood, buttoned his suit jacket, and followed the psychiatrist into her comfortable office. He took his usual seat on the three-cushioned couch while Althea settled in a wing-backed chair across from him.

"The kid out there? Is he waiting for someone or is he a patient?"

"He's a new patient."

"Oh. He's young."

"Yes. He's seven."

"Stuart Atticus McFarland."

Althea looked a bit surprised. "You've been talking to him."

He unbuttoned his jacket to get more comfortable and rested his ankle on his opposite knee. "Did you know that he's psychic?"

Althea beamed and a little laugh puffed past her mauve-colored lips. "I suspected and was hoping you would confirm it." She set aside her sleek notepad and angled closer

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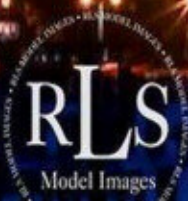
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Option to add on lunch with the authors for VIP only.

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Hosted By: Amanda Lanclos



to him. "I'm not supposed to put much stock in such things, as you know."

"I also know that you believe me to be psychic."

Her cinnamon-colored eyes warmed. "I do. Because I've had the opportunity to get to know you, I've had my mind opened about such things. To be honest, that's why I changed your appointment. I wanted you to observe Stuart to see if you detected that he could be clairvoyant."

"Hold on." He held up one hand, confused by her ploy. "Why didn't you just tell me that?"

"Because I didn't want to give you any preconceived ideas. Frankly, as a psychiatrist, I was also interested in seeing if you could identify your own kind."

He arched a derisive brow. "Did I pass the test, doc?"

Althea swept her hand in a graceful arc. "No test. Just an experiment." She laced her fingers over her knee and regarded him with interest. "Why do you think he's psychic?"

"He could tell the phone was going to ring before it did and he knew that someone was approaching the door." The boy's serious expression flashed in his mind again. "He's in therapy because of this?"

"No." Her professional demeanor returned, straightening her shoulders and spine. "I can tell you some about his situation because it's been widely publicized in the local media. He's here because he experienced a trauma. His parents were murdered nearly two months ago."

His breath hitched. "He witnessed it?"

"No, or that's the general consensus. He hid and says he didn't see anything. He might have heard things." She released a sigh of frustration. "The police psychiatrist transferred him to me because he feels that the child might know more than he's telling. Have you met Dr. Mabry?"

"Yes. I've run into him here and there." He'd spoken a few times with the balding, pudgy police psychiatrist. Always dressed in jeans and loose t-shirts, he exuded cheerfulness and kindness. "Does he think the boy has ESP?"

"Probably not." She shrugged. "But he does believe that Stuart might have glimpsed the assailant or assailants. I don't think the police are certain about how many broke into the house. I've only had two sessions with Stuart, but I also noticed that he would look toward the door and then I'd hear the phone buzz out there. Last week when we were

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in session, he interrupted me and said, ‘Ambulance.’ A few moments later, while I was asking him what he meant by that, an ambulance came screaming down the street.” She nodded to the slightly opened French doors that gave access to a small atrium and koi pond. “I thought maybe he had been hearing.” A look of concern covered her face for a few moments before she shook her head and focused on Levi again. “He’s very bright and *very* serious.”

“Serious because of what he’s been through, probably,” Levi noted.

“Sure, but I also think he’s been raised as a little adult. His father was fifty-eight when Stuart was born and his mother was forty-two. No brothers or sisters, full or half or step.”

“Is he living with relatives now?”

“No, he’s at the children’s shelter until a foster home can be located for him.”

“Really? His grandparents couldn’t—.”

“They’re dead, except for one grandmother, who is in her eighties and in no condition to raise a child.” Althea shrugged. “That’s what happens sometimes to children from late-in-life parents. His mother was an only child. She was adopted as a baby by a middle-aged couple. His father has an older brother, who is seventy-three and enjoys his grandchildren but doesn’t want another child to raise.”

“Poor kid.” Levi shrugged. “But he’s smart and cute. He’ll get adopted.”

“Hopefully, yes.” Althea settled back in the chair again and crossed her long, caramel-colored legs in that elegant way of hers. “Here’s my proposition, Levi. I think you should assist me with Stuart.”

He stared at her for a few moments, thinking she might be kidding around. “I don’t . . . I’m not equipped. You

know that. I only have a master’s degree in psychology.”

“I know, but you’re psychic and you have insight to this child that I can never have. Trudy could also be helpful. You could both talk to him about being psychic. What it means, how to cope with it, and how others might react to it.” Her gaze was steady and certain. “Wouldn’t it have been wonderful if someone like you or Trudy had entered your life when you were seven?”

He released a scornful chuckle. “Hell, if that had happened, I wouldn’t be sitting here.”

She chuckled with him. “Possibly not, but . . .”

He nodded. “Yeah, you’re right. I’d still be sitting here, but not quite as fucked up.”

Amusement bled from her expression and her psychiatrist face, watchful and wise, emerged. “Now, Levi, think of the progress we’ve made together. When will you stop degrading yourself? When?” She leaned forward a bit, latching onto his gaze more tightly. “Is self-loathing so ingrained in you that you actually enjoy it?”

“No.” He frowned, irritation bubbling in him.

“No,” he said, this time more forcibly.

“Then, for goodness sake, get over it.” Her tone was sharp, needling him. “It’s not a good look anymore, Levi. If it ever was. You’re confident in all things except for your own self-worth. Think of it this way, would a woman like Trudy Tucker have married a degenerate? Would she?”

He winced, his irritation subsiding. “No.”

“Okay.” She released a huffing breath. “Back to Stuart. Will you talk to Trudy about taking Stuart under your wings? It will ease his mind if he understands what’s going on inside it. He’s getting to the age of awareness.”

“Yes. Six or seven is when you usually look outside



"It's better than it was..."

but I still have flashbacks. Hannah and I are on a list with a therapeutic riding center that has other autistic and PTSD riders. Like us...."

Like Hannah. And Rachel. The daughter who shies from contact and the woman who survived three days of gang rapes and beatings.

The PTSD doesn't surprise me, but the autism throws me for a loop. I'm wondering what caused it. What can be done about it. How in the hell does she function? Being a single mom is tough enough. Struggling with her own issues while meeting Hannah's needs is a challenge of epic proportions.

Crap crap crap.

yourself and your little world. You start noticing the differences. He might have known for a year or more that something strange is going on inside of him."

"Yes, and from what you and Trudy have told me, it can be terrifying. He's already experienced terror. I would like to alleviate some of it for him. You and Trudy can help with that."

"There's more to this, though. Right?" He knew her, knew how she worked, and that she wanted something else.

"Well, yes." She settled back in the chair and reached for her notebook. The overhead lights picked out glistening curls in her Afro. "You might help open his mind more and he might be able to recall things about that night. I'm not going to divulge what we've talked about in my sessions with him." She flicked a glance at him.

"I wouldn't expect you to."

"However, I can tell you that very little progress has been made. Actually, he reminds me of you when we first met. He appears to be personable, well-spoken, and candid. But he's a closed book. He's all flashy leather binding, gold-leaf lettering, and intriguing title. But he won't let you inside to read his story."

A smirk edged up one corner of Levi's lips as the description rang true. "Ah, the bad, old days," he murmured.

Prior to Dr. McClain and Trudy, he'd believed that he could contain and control his roiling feelings of abandonment, anger, and vengeance, and that no one suspected how damaged and lonely he was inside.

"You'll talk to Trudy about my proposal?"

"Yes, but we're really busy right now, Althea."

"You always are." A little scowl marred her regal features. "If you don't want to help me with this, just say so."

He smiled at her. This woman who had seen all his ugliness, embraced it and him, and guided him to a better, safer place where he could confront his demons and slay them, one by one. Then he thought of the boy – alone, living with strangers now, and dealing with abilities that probably baffled and scared him. "Of course, I'll help, Dr. McClain. Let me talk to Trudy and I'll get back to you before the end of the week."

Althea's face brightened. "I knew I could count on you. You and Trudy." She switched on her notebook and the screen cast a silvery glow across her face. "Let's discuss you now. How have things been for you the past couple of weeks? You mentioned last time that you thought your father might have hired someone again to hack into your business and personal accounts. Anything else to report on that?"

He shifted gears in his mind. "I think it was Chason

Continued on page 32; Camp



December Things

By Louise Snead

Across

1. This dessert has dried cherries, nuts and other stuff.
3. This is the list you don't want to be on.
7. The beverage that's imbibed on December 31st.
8. A plant that demands a kiss between the couple standing beneath it.
11. December 7th marks the attack on this place.
13. Put these on your hands to keep warm.
16. The animals that pull the sleigh.
19. The pudding of song that is not really pudding.
21. The suite is musical.
22. This one is made out of white precipitation.
25. The big guy who delivers gifts.
31. A specialized type of sled.
32. The ugly ones are popular in December.
34. The natural light show that takes place in Alaska.
35. The time when the sun is at the closest distance from the equator.
36. Handel's masterpiece.
37. Children ride these in the snow.

Down

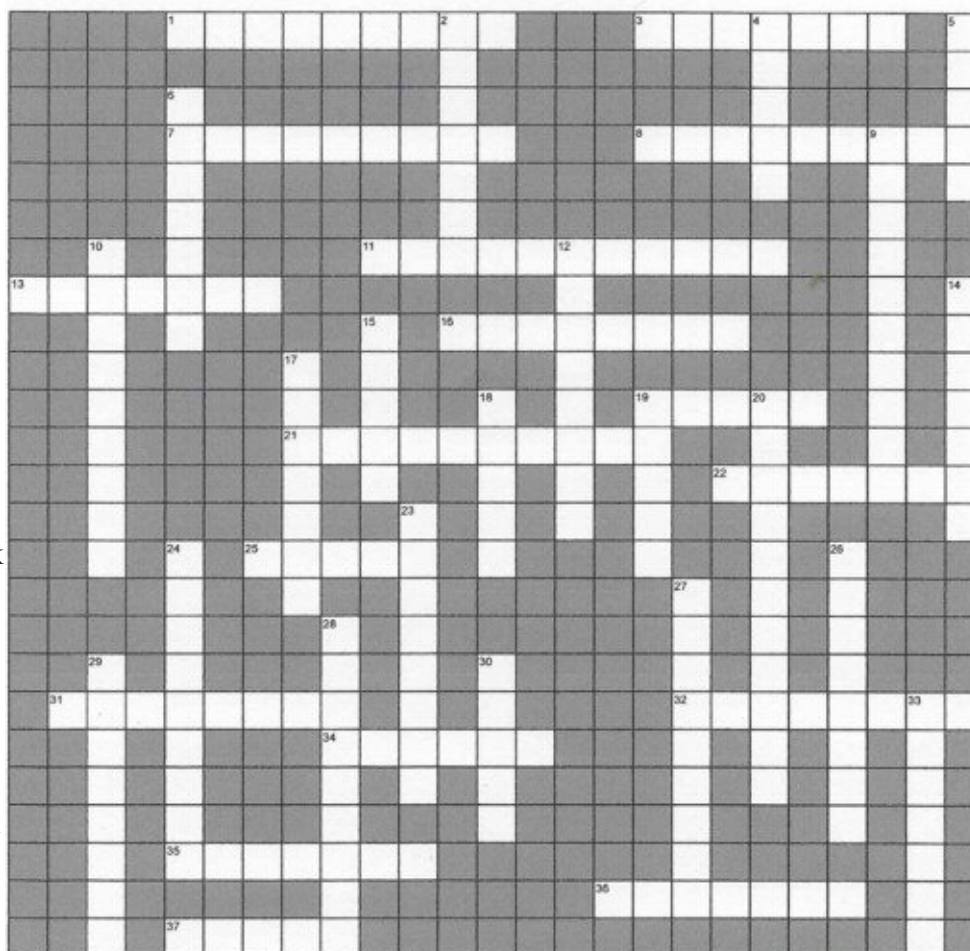
2. African-American holiday in December.
4. These are prettily wrapped and given to others.
5. The big guy's helpers.
6. An accessory worn around the neck to keep warm.
9. It's a German Christmas tree.
10. Worn on the feet and hung by the chimney.
12. A Jewish holiday celebrated in December.
14. His story is the most famous one in December.
15. Uggs
17. Used by both celebrators of #2

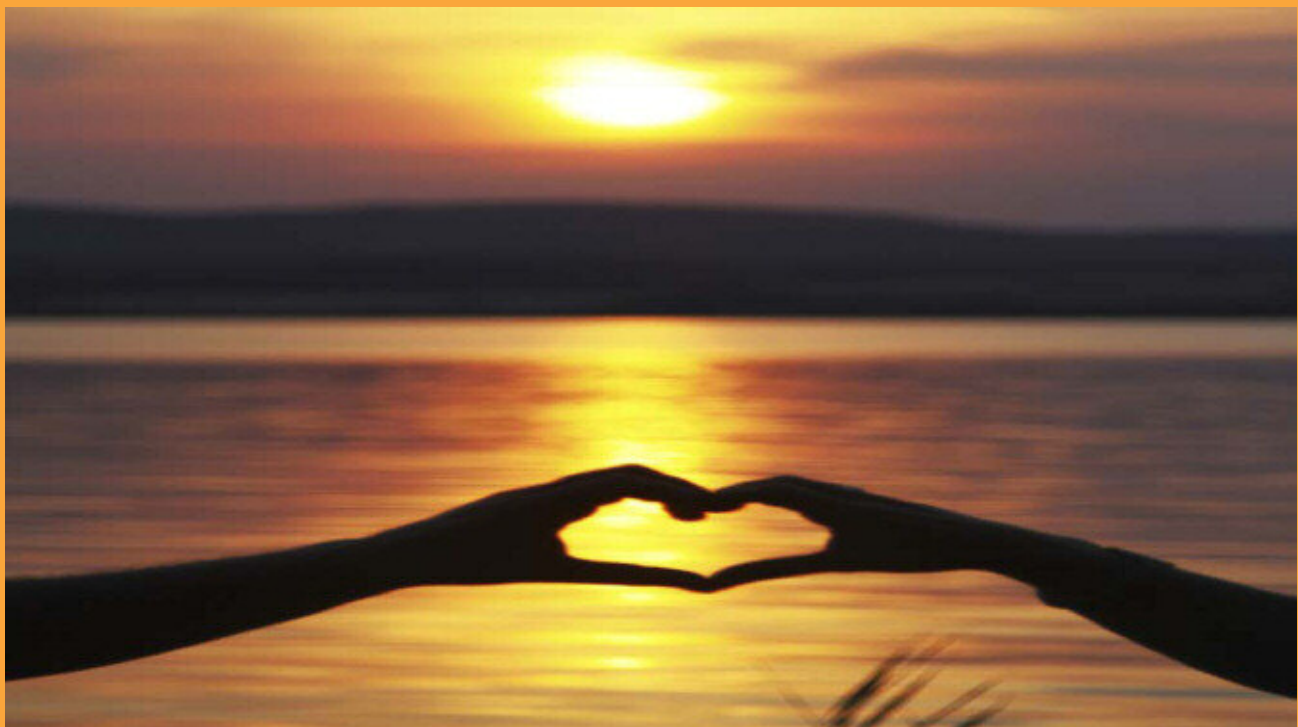
Down and #12 Down.

18. The reductions in price after December 25th.
19. Jack _____.
20. Edible men and houses are made of this.
23. They go around singing.
24. This hot drink comes from the cocoa plant.
26. Special logs that are burned in December.
27. These roast on an open fire.
28. Colored balls to hang on a tree.
29. The point during the Earth's orbit around the sun at which the sun is greatest distance from the equator.
30. These are mailed in December to friends and family.
33. He has a red nose and guides the rest.

Answers on page 30

December Things





Contemporary Romance Reviews

Dear Santa

Nancy Naigle

St. Martin's Griffin

Trade Paperback

978-1250185174

★★★★1/2

When Angela Carson inherited her grandmother's Christmas store called Heart of Christmas, she vowed to keep it exactly as her grandmother had kept it. The store was housed in the same lighthouse that her great-great-grandfather had worked until the day he died. When the town of Pleasant Sands, North Carolina, decommissioned the lighthouse, her family bought it and her grandmother turned it into a one-of-a-kind high-end Christmas store. Angela had loved helping her grandmother out as a child and now, as the owner, she was determined to keep her memories (and old-fashioned store) alive. Unfortunately, Pleasant Sands had recently become the latest location of the big box Christmas store called Christmas Galore and it was putting Angela out of business.

Geoff Paisley had spent his entire life helping his mother open up Christmas Galore stores all across

the country. He loved everything about the business--scouting for new properties with his mother, doing the research on the fiscal impact the store would have on the town they settle on, securing the financial backing on another property, and meeting the townspeople they will be hiring. He loved it all and firmly believed that there was enough business in the town to support two totally different Christmas stores. So why did he feel so guilty when he heard that Heart of Christmas was going out of business?

Dear Santa is a cleverly written romance about two people who love their businesses but are unable to see eye-to-eye about, well, anything. Only through "Dear Santa" letters are they able to let their feelings be known, but don't realize who they're talking to. The secondary storyline about Geoff's mother adds to the charm of this Christmas romance. Ms. Naigle has included a lot of history about Pleasant Sands while keeping the reader intrigued with the interactions between the two antagonists. A heartwarming Christmas romance.

Lani Roberts

Contemporaries

Finding Hope: A Colorado Veteran Christmas

Tiffani Lynn
Self-Publication

Kindle Edition

B076QB6M9

★★★★★



Cy McMullen is a hero returned home who, like so many, is suffering from a disease not easily explained nor cured. Unable to stay in a confined area, Cy prefers to sleep outside and becomes one of the many living on the streets. These homeless have become a target of cruelty and brutality, and Cy finds himself beaten and battered and in desperate need of medical care. But can he get past his fears to reach out for the help he needs?

Rosie Rossi is working through the demons of her past. While volunteering at a local homeless shelter, she is drawn to Cy. Seeing that he shares the same fears as she, Rosie takes him to the hospital and makes sure he feels safe enough to get the care he needs. Rosie sees beyond Cy's dirty clothes and ragged appearance and offers him a safe haven in her home to heal. But it's more than just Cy's injuries Rosie heals, it's also the piece of his soul he thought long lost.

Tiffani Lynn has written a Christmas miracle with Cy's and Rosie's romance.

Finding Hope is a love story of two broken people that find love in the most unlikely of places. I loved this story and highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

Learning To Love

Jennifer Wilck

The Wild Rose Press

Trade Paperback

978-1509223121

★★★★★



"She waited for him to explain further, but he remained silent, and she could almost see him erect his walls. Only this time, they weren't quite as high. She'd knocked a few bricks down, and she was determined to tackle the rest. If he'd let her."

Dina Jacobs, a woman who never fit in due to her high intelligence, is a single librarian who distanced

herself from her past. Surrounded by close friends and her love for books, Dina throws herself into her work as she remains committed to her Jewish faith. When she receives an invitation to attend her ten-year class reunion, Dina decides not to attend.

Adam Mandel is a corporate lawyer working at his father's law firm. Despite his wealth and status, Adam has a reputation of screwing up. After missing the third deadline, Adam finds himself in the hot seat with his father.

Dina's world turns upside down when she meets Adam on a cold winter evening. When they agree to be friends, a surge of stronger feelings surface. Dina can't believe Adam's boldness. Unannounced, he shows up at her job, her apartment and her temple. Though he isn't her type – too flashy, too rich – Dina tries to penetrate the walls he has built for himself. Unfortunately, Adam holds tight to his secrets.

This is my first time to read Jennifer Wilck. I was hooked from the first sentence and wasn't ready for the story to end. Her use of flowers and their specific meanings was of interest to me as well as her use of an intriguing plot underneath a steamy romance.

Sharing What I Love,
Veronica

Mistletoe Miracles

Jodi Thomas

Harlequin

Mass Market

978-1335005632

★★★★★



The Maverick Ranch was in deep financial trouble. The owners have done everything possible to save the ranch except marry for money. It was Griffin Holloway's only option. With the decision made, he marched his way to the Franklin sisters for help.

Jaxson O'Grady lived on a worthless piece of land next to the Holloway's. He stayed alone in his cabin, haunted by his memories. Taking care of an abused woman who had nowhere to recover hadn't been part of his plan to hide from the world.

Captain James Johnson just wanted some R&R. On the way to a hotel he wrecked his car. Exhausted, he walked toward the nearest town. The sheriff and deputy found him stranded. They misunderstood his mumblings and brought him to the new teacher's house.

Jodi Thomas never ceases to amaze and entertain her readers. One of the best holiday stories for all to enjoy. An impossible to put down must read!

Kitty Lane

Contemporaries

Wait Until Dark (Maximum Security 0.5)

Kat Martin

HQN Books

Kindle Edition

B07D7XR8P2

★★★★

“Tox screen. Drugs. Her pistol and a dead man.”

In Kat Martin’s novella, *Wait Until Dark*, the reader is dropped right in the middle of a crime scene. April Vale awakens naked and in bed next to a co-worker who has been shot with her gun. BAM! Got your attention? From there, the story unfolds with her hiring a verra hawt private investigator, Jonah Wolfe, with the Maximum Security firm, to help her uncover the truth behind who the murderer is... even it turns out to be her!

This reader looks forward to more stories from this author, and highly recommends this quick faced-paced romantic suspense!

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

Wedding at Poker Flat (Poker Flat Series Book 5)

Lexi Post

Self-Publication

Kindle Edition

B07H4ZY6J2

★★★★★



Welcome to Poker Flat...if you are new to our little resort, just an FYI, clothing is optional! In the 5th installment to Lexi Post’s “Poker Flat Series,” finally Wade Johnson and Kendra Lowe are going to tie the knot. What could possibly go wrong at a wedding? Their most joyous day? Everything, of course!

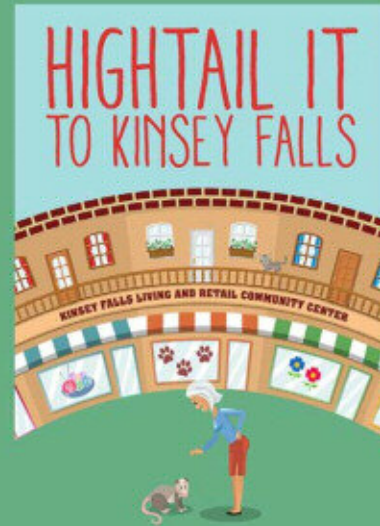
Oh, how I loved reading the antics and drama that comes when families collide! But wait! There’s more! Let’s toss in nude resort guests, a screaming cook, and a future mother-in-law with a non-filtered mouth! Kendra’s mother, Donna, absolutely stole the show in this quick and delightfully fun romantic read.

So, run, don’t walk, down the aisle to snag your copy of *Wedding at Poker Flat* by Lexi Post! I wish I could give more than 5 Stars! Highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

All work and no play
make Jade a dull girl.



GAYLE LEESON
GayleLeeson.com
@GayleTrent

Camp, contined

white woman in *Lonestar’s Lady*. (an *Affaire de Coeur* five star read.)

Also, widely published in non-fiction, she writes and edits for a magazine focused on small businesses. Deborah taught fiction writing for more than 10 years at a community college. She is currently working on her next historical romance set in the wild, wonderful West.

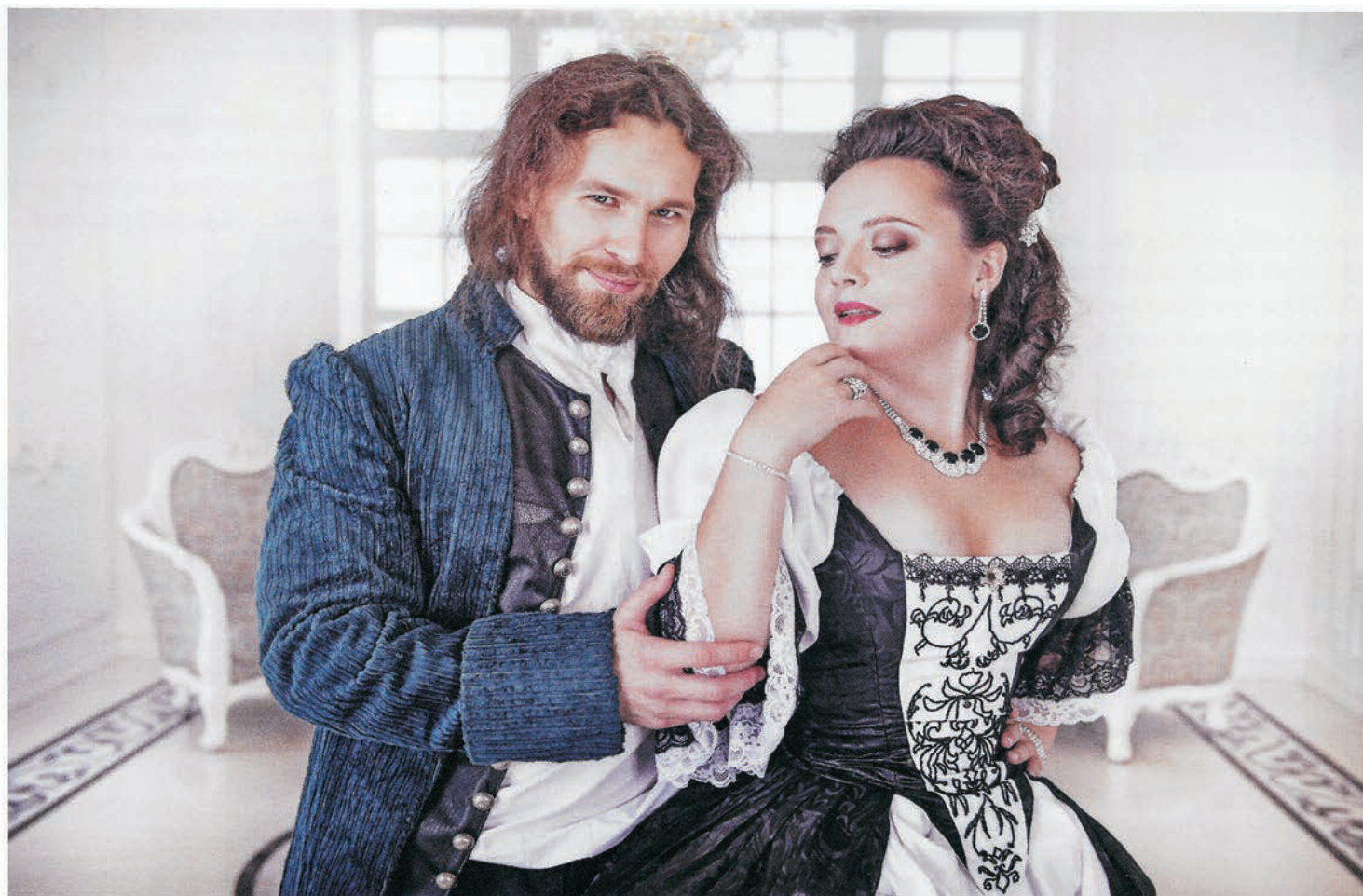
Ms. Camp was the recipient of the Janet Dailey Award (given to a romance novel that best addressed a social problem and was inducted into the Oklahoma Professional Writers Hall of Fame She also received the Nightwriter of the Year Award, Tepee Award from OWFI for published fiction, and the Golden Certificate from *Affaire de Coeur*.

Her books have been re-issued on Amazon for Kindle Direct and have attracted tens of thousands of new fans.

Website: Deborah-Camp.com

Twitter: @AuthorDebCamp

Facebook: OfficialDeborahCamp



Historical Romance Reviews

Barbarous (The Outcasts #2)

Minerva Spencer

Zebra

Kindle Edition

B079KSYTHF

★★★★

"Life is fleeting and precious...seize every opportunity to enjoy it. Never take even one day for granted."

Lady Daphne Davenport finds herself in quite a predicament. While picnicking with her twin 10-year old sons, she is once again attacked by Sir Malcolm Hastings. Daphne is determined to no longer cringe at the face of danger and takes matters into her own hands...literally, by bashing Sir Malcolm in the nose.

In rides our mysterious hero, Hugh Redvers, the long lost heir to the Davenport name. So many secrets and twists revolve around Daphne and Hugh, and with each passing day, they grow closer to discovering a truth about one another... and realizing that perhaps love can overcome their dark past and bring with it a brighter future.

Barbarous has everything a pirate loving romance reader enjoys—a lady in distress, a hero riding in to save the day, a devilish villain, and of course, a happily ever after. This is the first story I have read from Minerva Spencer, and I look forward to reading more. Highly recommend to fans of historical romance.

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

The Good, the Bad and the Duke (The Cavensham Heiresses #4)

Janna MacGregor

St. Martin's Press

Kindle Edition

B079DWSB8

★★★★☆



"Sometimes the heart does what it wants no matter what common sense says."

Since the tragic death of her sister, Lady Daphne

Hallworth has done her best not to be a burden to her family. Shrinking away and becoming a wallflower at various functions, Lady Daphne has perhaps done too good of a job hiding away, especially when her family packs up and leaves for the Christmas holiday without her. Left alone to her own devices, she's determined to embrace her spinsterhood and start working on obtaining her own townhouse and staff as well as finalizing her dreams of opening a home for unwed mothers. But when an act of kindness causes her most prized possession to be stolen, Daphne is put in the path of an unlikely hero coming to her rescue.

Paul Barstowe, Duke of Southart, has been known as a scoundrel throughout the *Ton*. But when his brother falls ill and passes, this rake of a Duke pledges to mend his ways in order to honor his brother's dying request. When he spies a beautiful lady at a most unscrupulous gambling establishment, not only is he shocked to discover it's a former childhood acquaintance, but also the sister of his former best friend. Seeing a way to both rescue the fair lady and perhaps get back in the family's good graces, Paul volunteers his services to assist Daphne in her quest to retrieve her journal.

As Daphne and Paul spend more and more time together, Daphne is finding it harder to hide the fact that she has been in love with him since she was a child. Paul is discovering that perhaps his heart is not as hard as stone after all...

When I first started reading *The Good, the Bad & the Duke*, I was thinking to myself this was yet another spinster heroine and rakish hero romance...been there, read that over and over. But as the pages turned, I discovered there's so much more to the romance between Daphne and Paul. These are two lonely people that so desperately want to love and be loved, but both put on a mask of indifference hiding this need from those around them. That is until they take a chance on each other...and then, dear reader, that is when the story ignites!

This is the first book I've read by Janna MacGregor, and I loved it so much, that I ran out and bought the first installment to this series! While this is the fourth book in the series, it can be read alone. Highly recommend and look forward to reading more!

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

Highlander Ever After (The MacGregors: Highland Heirs #8)

Paula Quinn

Forever

Kindle Edition

B07BVQWG8B

☆☆☆

Adam MacGregor, son to the chief's clan, finds himself at the altar with an unwilling bride. But in order to strengthen the MacGregor clan's alliance with the Crown, a

Historicals

royal bride he must have. Adam does everything in his power to help his new wife be welcomed into his home and family, but he soon finds out her heart belongs to another.

Sina de Arenberg can't believe her Queen would betray her in such a way. Already betrothed to her childhood friend William, she's whisked away to the highland wilds and made to wed a MacGregor. Knowing Adam has been forced into this marriage, just as she was, weakens her heart towards him but not her passion to return to her home and her beloved William.

Will these two strangers learn to leave the past behind and embrace the life they have been given, or will Sina's stubborn nature harden hers and Adam's heart with no promise of a happily ever after?

Paula Quinn's *Highlander Ever After* is an enjoyable enough historical romance. The pace of the story was a bit slow, and I found myself growing very frustrated with Sina. I came not to care very much for her character, as she was forever acting like a petulant child. There are two sides to every story, and I could see how Sina would be upset over the hand she was dealt. I just wish the author had not spent the bulk of the story dwelling on it. Adam was a kind and compassionate hero that deserved more. The ending was a bit rushed, but at least we got the long awaited HEA.

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

A Rose in the Highlands (Highland Roses School #1)

Heather McCollum

Entangled: Amara

Trade Paperback

978-1640636536

☆☆☆☆



"Their love wove tightly around them, healing old wounds and creating joy from their shattered beginnings."

Evelyn Worthington and her sister Scarlett are set with a task of making a school in the wilds of the highlands profitable, or find themselves shackled to a future not of their liking. In the dark of night in the midst of a storm, Evelyn finds herself face-to-face with Clan Chief Grey Campbell. Never one to back down, Evelyn sets up a truce between the Chief and some of the villagers to share Finlarig Castle and turn it into the Highland Roses School. As the days pass, Grey is drawn

towards Evelyn's strength and determination to educate the women and anyone else who wishes to attend the Highland Roses School.

Evelyn is falling in love with the fierce but caring and protective Grey. But when the future Evelyn and Scarlett are desperate to run from catches up with them, they find themselves in the middle of a treasonous plot and fighting an unsuspecting evil that could very well cost all of their lives.

A Rose in the Highlands is one of those stories that once started, you can't put down. Evelyn's and Grey's romance was smoldering hot, and I absolutely loved it! Highly recommend and can't wait for the next installment!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

Two Dukes are Better Than One

Lorna James

Riverdale Avenue Books

Trade Paperback

978-1626014121

☆☆☆☆

"I fear that I am wicked..."
"Darling, I'm counting on that..."

Lady Sophia Hodges knows she's not like the other ladies of the *Ton*. Having an appetite to try new and exciting adventures, Sophia discovers a book that is not to be judged by its cover. Rather than religious writings, Sophia is swept into an erotic fantasy that has her heart racing and her body begging for more.

Duke Cromwell Stone is a man known to take his pleasures and consequences be damned. But when he stumbles upon Lady Sophia and her naughty book, he is determined to introduce this young novice to his world of sensuality...a world that includes his best friend and known rival, Duke Huxley Brigmore. Together, Stone and Huxley awaken Sophia to the pleasures of the flesh and open their hearts to a love like no other.

This was my first read from author Lorna James, and I look forward to reading future releases. I'm in total agreement with her character Lady Sophia in this book, "Why didn't they throw library parties, where everyone wore comfortable clothes and read books?" Sounds like a dream come true to me! *Two Dukes are Better than One* is an entertaining M/F/M erotic read with a historical setting and a touch of a paranormal element. Enjoyed and would recommend.

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

Editorial continued:

to sleep while rebuilding their homes. Aaron Rogers, Chico native and quarterback of the Green Bay Packers donated one-million dollars.

Air BNB stepped up and provided free rentals to evacuees.

This has been a rough year for many; some of us have lost loved ones; some of us are struggling with health issues; some have experienced financial devastation. But what I have seen in the face of these challenges gives me and the world hope and belief in the goodness in mankind.

So, on that note, I am asking that you, if you can afford it, donate to the victims of the Paradise/Butte fire. A small donation goes a long way. You may not know them, but that doesn't matter. They are just people, like you and me except they have lost everything: except their determination and pride. The holidays are here. It's bad enough to be homeless, but children's hopes are high in this season. Let's show them how magical this season can be. Let's not let them down.

Donation sites are listed below:

The Red Cross: Call 1800 RED CROSS or text REDCROSS and enter 90999 to donate \$10.

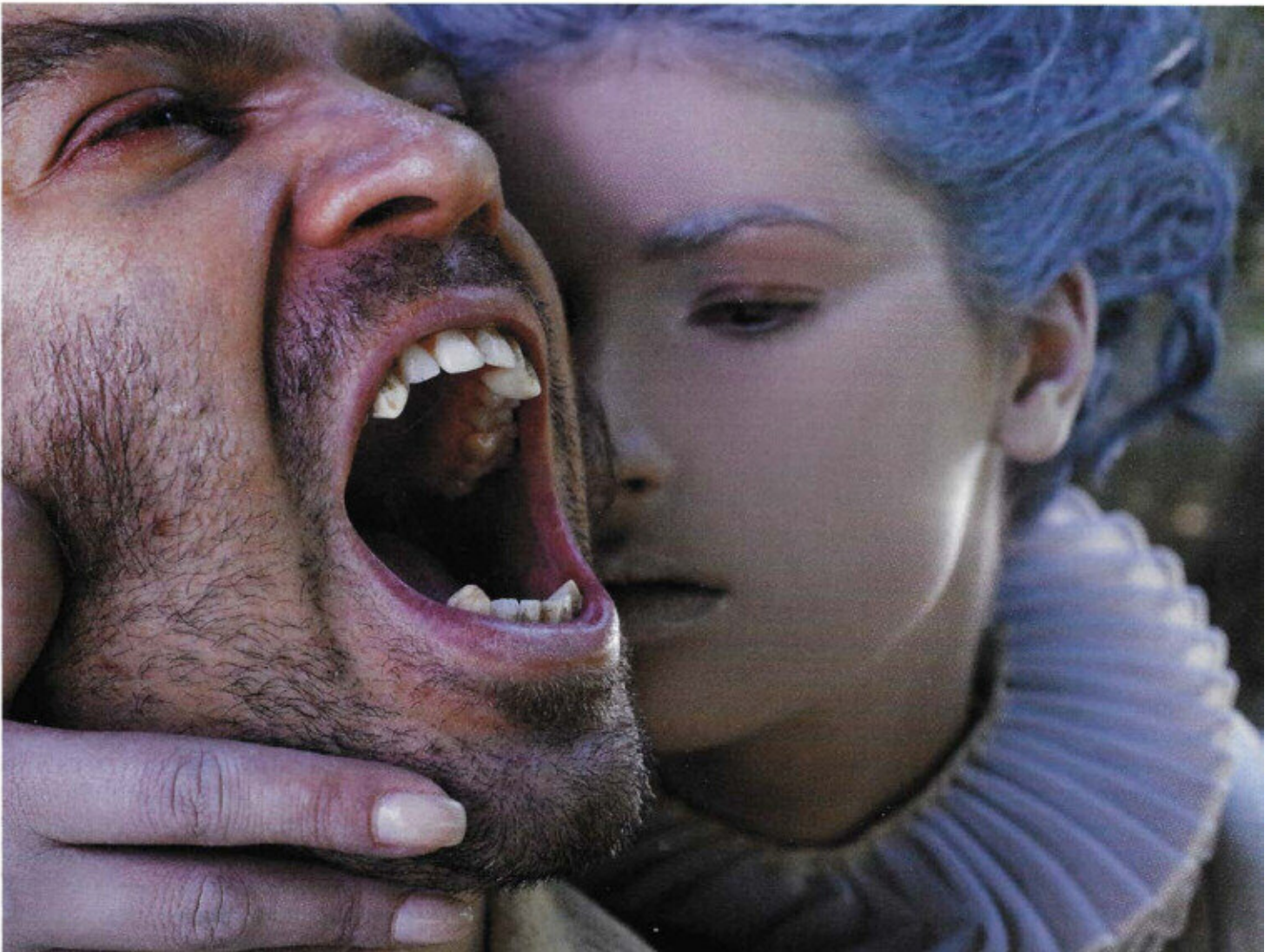
North Valley Animal Disaster Group: www.nvadg.org/donate.

United Way of Northern California: text BUTTEFIRE to 91999.

If these don't suit you, go online and google; donate to Butte fire victims.

Happy Holidays to all of you from the staff of *Affaire de Coeur*.

Paranormal Romance Reviews



Grace Logan and the Goblin Bones

Pam Binder

Wild Rose Press

E-book

B07J489ZZP

★★★★

Grace Logan, a ship captain's daughter, received a special ring. She finds that when worn, it reveals the once thought mythical creatures and other personalities are, in fact, real. Her father and his ship are missing. Upon learning he was captured, she is prompted to find and save him from the very things the ring proves to be a reality.

Grace begins the quest to rescue her father and takes on companions. The ring reveals their magical natures as they begin their travels, and immediately myths reveal themselves one after another. She learns to take them as a natural part

of life, and they continue to find the clues and obstructions along the way.

The second part of the quest entails finding a book called the *Book of Invasions*. A supposed close friend has taken the book and run away. The book has the answers to complete the quest, and it now seems imperative that it does not fall into the wrong hands because it is not just her father who is in peril but the whole world.

The companions meet and pass many magical personalities along the way--a dragon, some ghouls, a banshee, many more--all of whom shape this story into an adventure that holds the focus of the reader despite the continuous addition of characters that they pass along the way.

The companions acquire a small ship to get to the location of Grace's father. She always thought she would make a good pirate and does well to command her small ship. She is put to the test when she begins battle with the ship

Paranormals

made of the mythical goblin bones.

Pam Binder weaves a tale with Irish and Scottish myths that will please all her readers.

Lauren Calder

Camp continued:

Bolt poking around.”

“Oh, the ‘psychic to the stars.’ The one you feel is trying to one-up you all the time.”

“That’s him. There was a flurry of activity and then nothing.” He recalled his technical team’s reports. “All signs pointed to Bolt. He didn’t find anything, so he gave up. There’s nothing much to dig up about me. I’m an open book.” He grinned at her glare of chastisement. “Well, I am now.”

“Uh-huh. Show me a man or woman with no secrets and I’ll show you an android.”

He chuckled at her analogy. “Things have been rocking along pretty well. I did have a bad dream a couple of nights ago. Nothing major like the ones I’m used to. This one had to do with Trudy. In it, I arrived home from work and she was frantic. She said she had lost our baby and she’d torn up the place looking for it. I tried to calm her, telling her that we didn’t have a baby and that it was okay. She screamed at me and tried to hit me, slap me. I woke up then, my heart frozen in my chest.” He pressed his fist there, recalling the chilling feeling. “It was painful. She was so distraught. So hysterical.”

“How long has it been since she went off birth control?”

“Almost four months.”

“She’s concerned that she won’t get pregnant?”

He nodded. “No matter what I say, she worries that it won’t

happen for us. Then she talks about beginning adoption procedures. But I think that’s premature. Yesterday she said that we should both be tested to be sure we’re fertile.”

“I’d wait longer before taking that step, too. Four months isn’t all that long. Everyone is different. Some women get pregnant on their next cycle and some women’s bodies take a year or more before they conceive. There’s no set timetable. Does her anxiety make you anxious, too?”

“Sometimes.” He rolled his shoulders against the tightening of muscles there. “I’m not as enthusiastic about parenthood as she is. It’s a huge responsibility.” He tugged at the Windsor knot in his tie. “How can I know if I’m ready for it? I might be a complete failure at fathering.” He scowled at Althea’s gently chiding smile. “Well, it’s certainly possible! I have no good reference points when it comes to parenting.”

“Yes, you do. You haven’t lived in a cave, Levi. You’ve been exposed to people with children. You’ve seen them interact with their offspring. You’ve watched movies and television shows about families. You’ve read about good and bad parents. You know as much about it, if not more, than most childless people.”

“But I don’t know if I have what it takes. The patience, the depth of feeling.”

“No one knows for sure until they are in the situation. And those skills come with trial and error and over time. Every child is different, so there are no set rules or behavior patterns.” Her smile doubled. “We all have to wing it. Just jump from

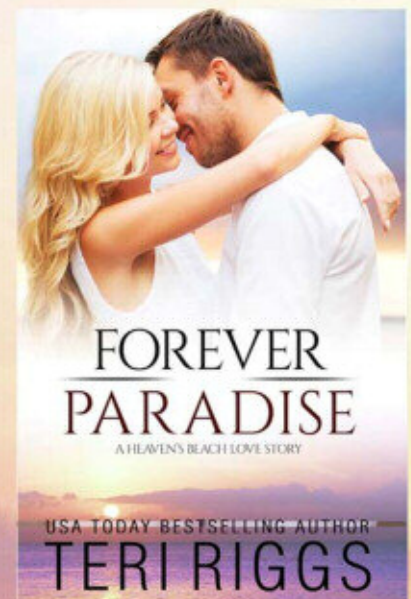
the nest and trust that we’ll figure out how to fly.”

He ran a hand down his face. “Hell. That makes me break out in a cold sweat. To think that I could screw up a life. That I could be the reason another person needs to seek out a psychiatrist.”

“Or that you could be the reason a person grows up to be happy and well-adjusted.” She arched a brow. “Mr. Sunshine.” He chuckled at her use of the facetious nickname he’d been given by a few people who worked for him. “Yeah, yeah. I get it.”

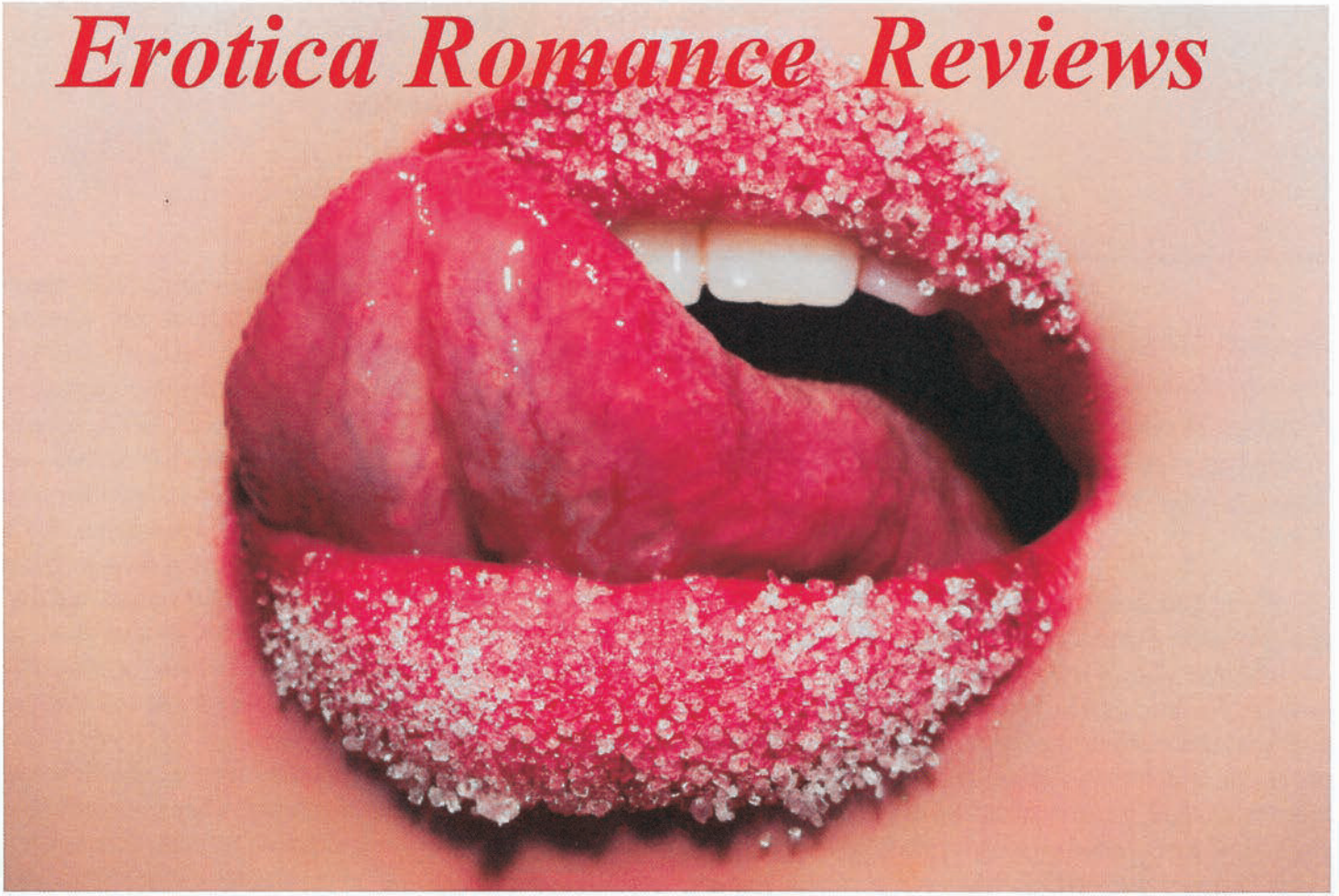
“Good.” She typed something in the notebook. “So, let’s talk about how you felt when you came back home at age seventeen. Your mother was dying from cancer. Was she bedridden by then? Tell me about seeing her again after all those years . . .”

**She came to Heaven’s Beach
looking for protection.
Instead she found a love
she couldn’t resist.**



**Teri-Riggs.com
twitter.com/TeriLRiggs**

Erotica Romance Reviews



Sugar Dom (Sugar Daddies #5)

Charity Parkerson

Punk & Sissy Publications

Kindle Edition

B07FC4N52V

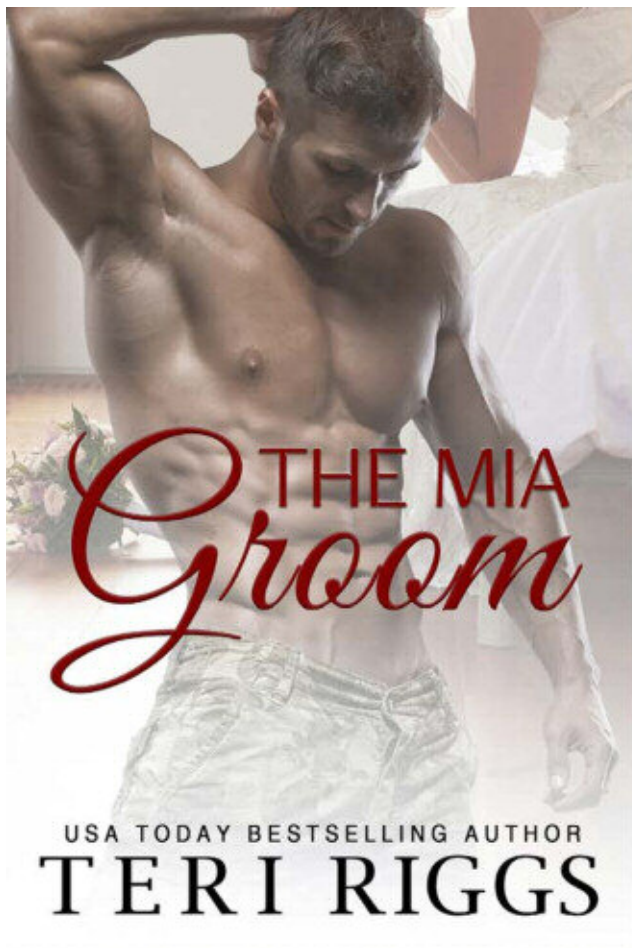
★★★★

“That’s who they were—two halves always seeking their stronger part.”

Payne knows he’s made a mistake. Loving his son’s best friend, Detroit, has cost him so much...his relationship with his son and by breaking off the relationship, possibly his soulmate. So much hurt and anger drives Detroit farther and farther away, and drives him to succumb to the darkness within calling his name...a darkness that whispers everything would be so much better if he closed his eyes forever. Will Payne step forward and claim Detroit as his, or will his declaration come too late?

Highly recommend this as well as the previous “Sugar Daddies” books! Can’t wait for the next installment!
Sharing what I love,
Veronica





The MIA Groom

After waiting nine months for the perfect chance to infiltrate the Russian Mafia's sex slave operation, former Navy SEAL, Tucker Abrams, gets his chance. There's one slight problem. At the same time he's going deep undercover, he's supposed to be at the church, marrying the love of his life.

Jillian Gilmore's wedding day has arrived. Unfortunately, her groom has not. After surviving three months of hurt and humiliation as a jilted bride, her missing in action groom returns, wanting to pick up where they left off.

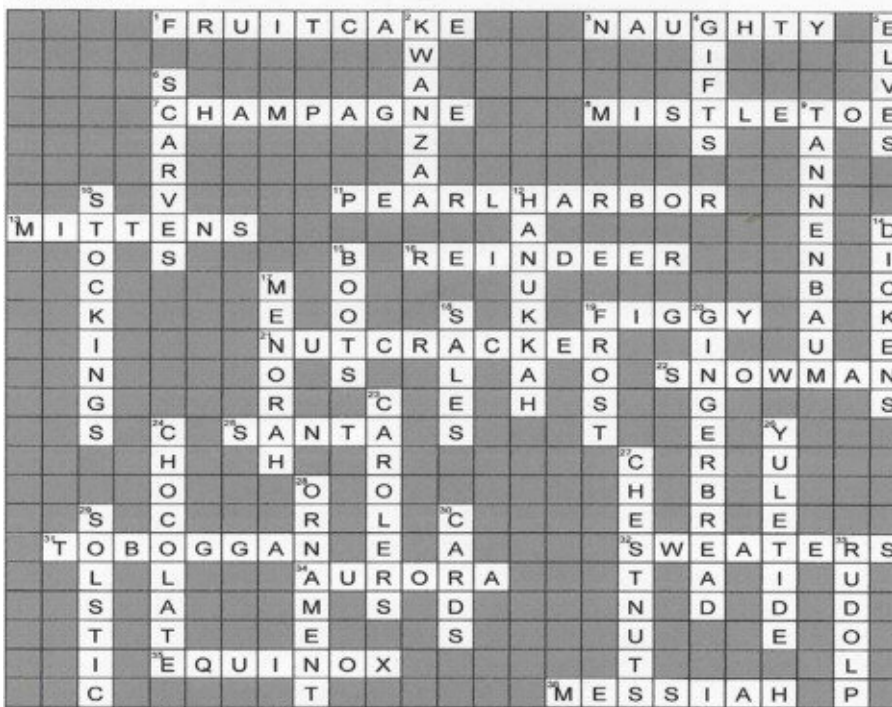
Can Jilly forgive Tuck and move on? Will she ever be able to trust him again?

Teri-Riggs.com

@TeriLRiggs

December Things

Louise B. Snead





K Street Killing (A Washington Whodunit)

Colleen J. Shogan

Camel Press

Trade Paperback

978-1603816137

★★★★

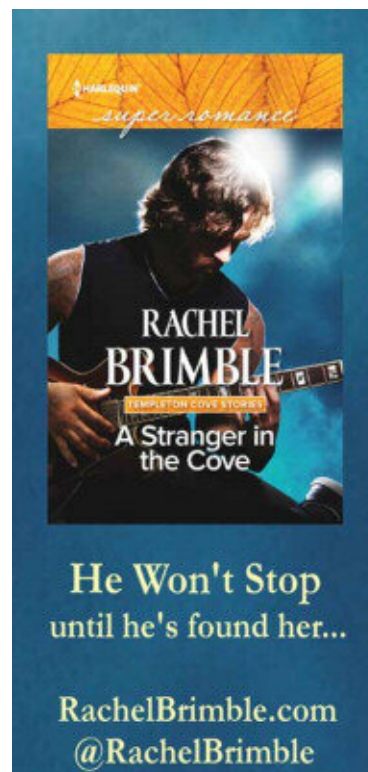
When senior Congressional staffer Kit Marshall signed on to become freshman Congresswoman Maeve Dixon's chief of staff, she had no idea that she would also be involved in another murder mystery. Kit and her best friend Meg Peters, the Congresswoman's legislative director, had just one more fundraiser to attend before leaving for North Carolina to help stump for the Congresswoman's re-election in November. Everything was going just fine when, just as Kit was leaving, she was horrified to see a body fall from the rooftop of the pricey hotel where the fundraiser was being held!

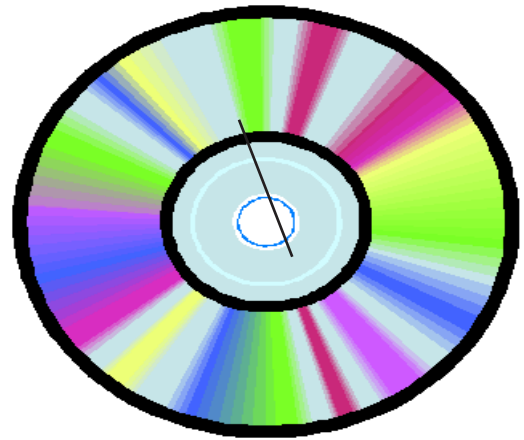
When the top lobbyist in D.C. mysteriously falls to his death at the end of the Congresswoman's fundraiser, everyone thought it was suicide. There was no evidence that it had been anything else, other than Kit seeing a 'mysterious' waiter that no one else saw. Will she be able to solve this mystery before it's too late to help her Congresswoman win in the mid-terms?

Ms. Shogan has done an outstanding job in combining political insider savvy with superb sleuthing skills

when she created Kit Marshall. This whodunit, the third in her series, is an excellent stand-alone but makes you want to read all the others in her series. Fast-paced and well-written, this is a mystery that you won't want to put down.

Lani Roberts





AUDIO BOOK REVIEW

Kept

Written by Maya Banks

Performed by Jeremy York

Brilliance Audio

Unabridged

CD's

☆☆☆

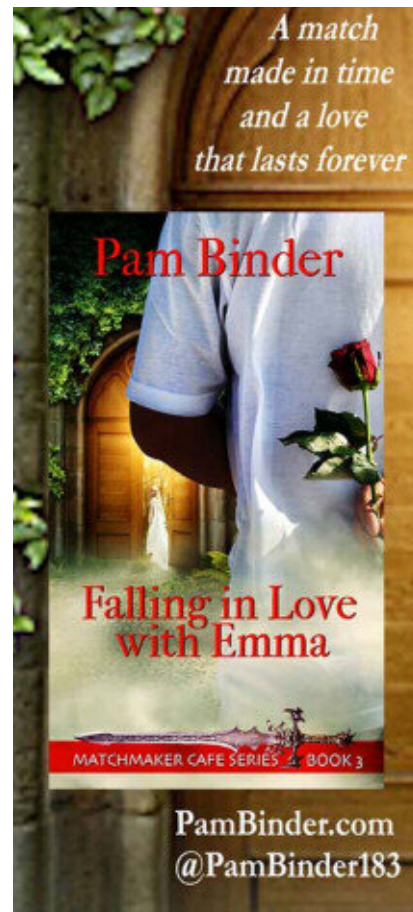
Haley's father was scammed by an insurance salesman. She thought she would be well taken care of when her father died and that she could continue to go to the school of music in New York where she studied the violin. When her father died, she learned she had been left nothing; so, she had to take on two jobs just to keep in school. In addition, she was losing her apartment, and even with two jobs, she couldn't afford a decent New York apartment. Unless a miracle happened, she would be out in the cold.

Silas is a man whose work is on the other side of the law. He has done things that send chills down the spine of the hardened of men. From his window, Silas saw the beautiful young woman as she entered his very expensive building in search of an apartment. Inexplicably, he was so taken by her that he quoted a ridiculously low price for the apartment and then renovated it to accommodate her needs. He could hear her practicing the violin, and it touched his soul and had him feeling and acting in ways he had never experienced.

Kept is an entertaining story of a genteel, innocent woman, the victim of scams, and a man whose line of work would scare most people. The premise of these two getting together, while believable, stretches credibility. The real problem with this audio is that the narrator, Jeremy York,

is all wrong for this audiobook. He is inconsistent and his renditions of women sound like a man trying to imitate a woman with a Southern accent. That said, *Kept* is a worthwhile read.

Mildred Burkett



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