

January-February, 2019

Affaire de Coeur

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Reviews!

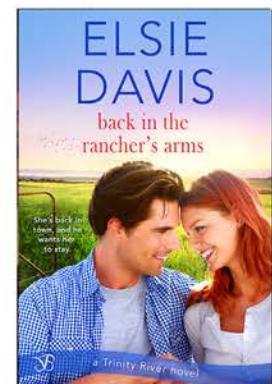
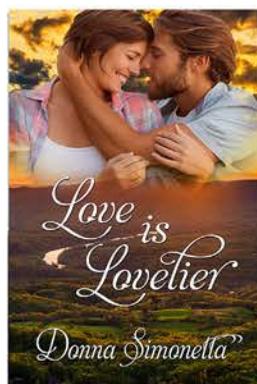
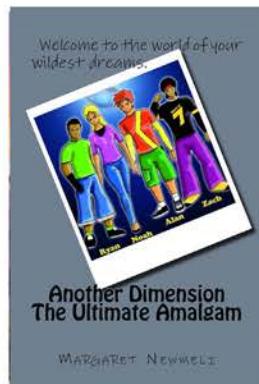
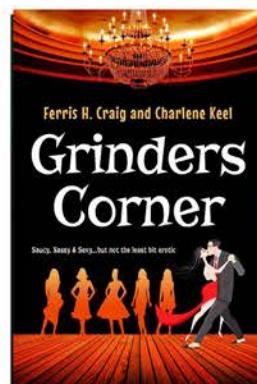
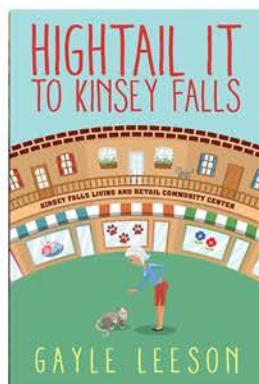
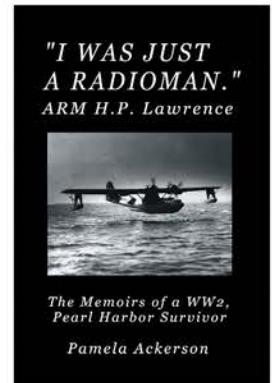
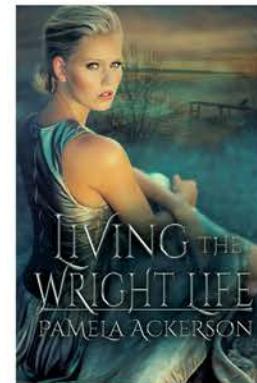
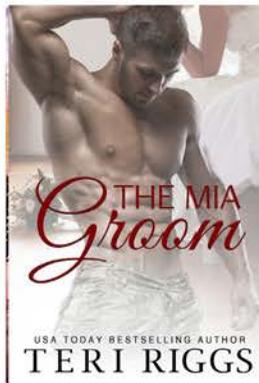
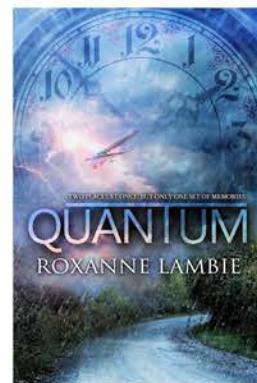
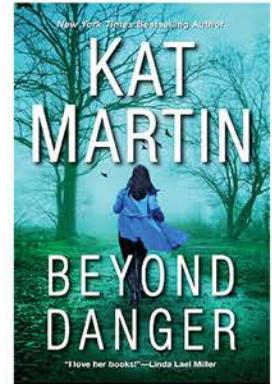
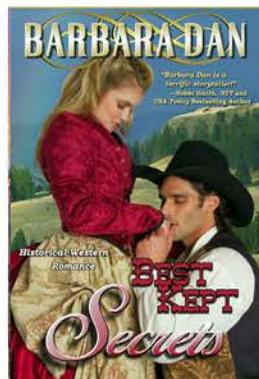
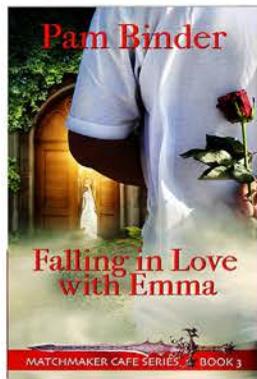
Reviews!

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*Join AdC in touring the
first Black settlement in
California--Allensworth*



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Affaire de Coeur

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Editorial

As years go, 2018 wasn't that bad, but it certainly wasn't great. On a scale, I would rate it as "sucked."

The exceptions to that include some highly touted books that made their debuts in 2018. I'm going to be honest. I have not read some of these books mainly because my reading time is scarce, and I have to be selective about what I read. And, let's face it: we read what we love or what we must. I confess I prefer fiction, but I received *Becoming Michelle Obama* for Christmas, and readers will surely get my honest review in the next issue. I've been impressed with the lengths of time of the books on the top ten lists. Some make many lists; others that we consider good, don't make any lists. Is there a bias against the romance and mystery genres? Of course there is. The *Washington Post* does have a list of the Best Five Romance Novels, but I sincerely question what they review.

I'm going to give you my recommendations, a composite list of five, (meaning they appeared on several different venues of the 2018 Top Ten), with a brief summary of the book. Why not make it a resolution to broaden your scope and read one of these? I will if you will.

There There by Tommy Orange. For me this is a must read based on myth, written by a man from Oakland, California, who tells the story through local Native Americans (some of whom I am certain I know) as they travel to Pow Wow.

Educated: A Memoir chronicles the birth and home-school education of a woman in a religious fundamental family in Idaho. Her coup de grace was getting her Ph.D. from Cambridge.

Asymmetry by Lisa Halliday, a two-part book, "Folly," the story of an affair between a young writer and an older one and "Madness," what happens when an Iraqi is detained at Heathrow.

Washington Black by Esi Edugyan. A slave escapes a Barbados sugar plantation via hot air balloon with the master's brother, who created said balloon.

The Great Believers by Rebecca Makkai. With the story of AIDS looming in the background in 80's Chicago, and spanning to 2015 in a terrorist-filled atmosphere, a mother tries to find her daughter.

Clearly, the winner for the best movie for 2018 was *Black Panther* written by Oakland, Californian, Ryan Coogler. The resurgence of black pride brought about by this movie was impressive. I'm still hearing, "Wakanda forever!" at unexpected times and places. And, the movie will be re-released from Feb. 1-7 with proceeds going to the United Negro College Fund!

In addition to *Panther*, there are two movies I would recommend from 2018. HUGE DISCLAIMERS: Both are set in the San Francisco Bay Area—*Incredibles 2* and *Blindspotting*, which features Lance Holloway, my son's best friend, in a comic relief role.

Blindspotting was written by childhood friends Daveed Diggs and Rafael Casal, one black and one white, who grew up in Oakland, California. Many acknowledge that blacks and whites are treated differently, but Diggs and Casal show us in a subtle, but striking, way just how different it can really be. It's taut, funny in spots, and a well-done effort by two newbies.

I'm going to sneak in a second movie *Green Book*. The story based on the life of genius musician Don Shirley is a portrayal of racism in the



1960's through a different eye. Viggo Mortensen plays a bouncer out of a job. In desperation he agrees to chauffeur an African-American man Mahershala Ali (from Oakland, California (through the segregated South on a tour.) The green book is an actual book that designates where it is safe for Blacks to stay. The wall that exists between them slowly disintegrates while they learn tolerance and caring for each other. Both men have been nominated for Oscars. A great film!

As with other year,s the losses we experienced in 2018 were great.

We lost legend and icon Aretha Franklin. As a latecomer to Detroit, I may have missed out on some of her very early music, i.e. church and gospel, but I was there just in time for "Respect." I saw her in concert more than once. She was a performer who left it all on the stage.

Stan Lee created most of the superheroes we love today. Not only that, until he died, he appeared in a cameo role in the Marvel movies, much like the late Alfred Hitchcock. I last saw him gambling in South Korea in *Black Panther*, a hero he created in 1965.

Nancy Wilson was one of my very favorite singers. She defined class with her beautiful, versatile voice.

Though many attempted to define her as a jazz vocalist, she was so much more than that. As a high school student, I saved my baby-sitting money and purchased her albums, *Broadway My Way* and *Hollywood My Way*, in which she crooned tunes from musicals and movies.

As producer and sometimes writer, Steven Bochco entertained us for three decades with mold-breaking shows beginning in the 80's and 90's. He gave us *Saint Elsewhere*, starring Denzel Washington, *Hill Street Blues*, *NYPD Blue*, *L.A. Law*, as well as *Doogie Howser, M.D.*

Penny Marshall set the standard as a pioneer for women in comedy as well as for roles for women behind the camera. I actually got a 'Poodle skirt' after seeing hers on *Laverne and Shirley*.

Naomi Parker. The name may not be familiar, but her image certainly is. She was the woman who posed as Rosie the Riveter, the symbol for women's foray into the "men's" work force during World War II.

I first saw Burt Reynolds on re-runs of *Gunsmoke*. He later went on to do *Boogey Nights*, *Smokey and the Bandit(s) I and II* and other films. His off-screen presence was just as entertaining as what we saw on screen where he made indiscreet look normal.

John Mahoney, *Frasier's* dad in *Frasier*, proved himself not to be anchored to a stereotypical role when he played

the Chicago District Attorney in the thriller movie *Primal Fear*.

I remember Sandra Locke more from her alleged treatment by Clint Eastwood than I do her movies. But she was hilarious in *Bronco Billy* as the spoiled little rich girl, every bit as capable as Scatman Crothers, Clint Eastwood and Geoffrey Lewis.

How can I be from West Virginia and not acknowledge country western (known as hillbilly when I was growing up) singer Roy Clark? He and his show *Hee Haw* are the reasons my children look at me as if I've lost my mind when I break out into a good old-fashioned hillbilly song.

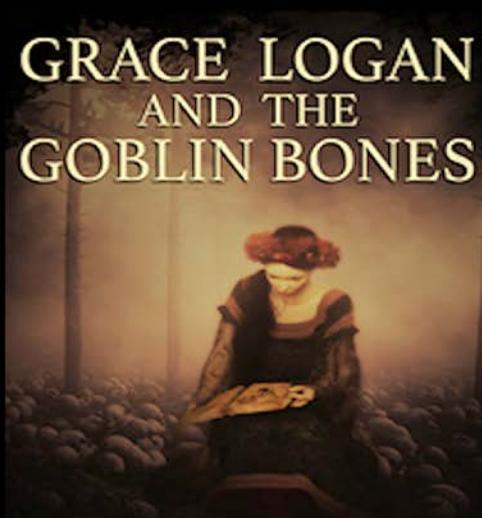
Whether you are a Democrat or Republican, you had to admire straight shooter, Senator John McCain. From his contribution as a pilot, which ultimately led to his being captured and held in a concentration camp for five years, to his service as the Senator from Arizona, he set an example for all of us.

There were so many more from all walks of life, and they will all be missed.

There are topics I try to avoid as a representative of *Affaire*—mainly politics and religion. After all, *Affaire* is a respite from the serious issues of today. However, it's difficult to ignore such topics when we're bombarded with them in the

Continued on page 20

In the land 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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I WANT TO WRITE

A BOOK

by
Pam Ackerson

Awesome.

Now sit down and write it. I've had many people tell me they want to write a book, but never follow through with that desire. They just don't seem to have the time. If you really want to write, have a story screaming to get out, you need to sit down and write the book. It's that simple. Just take a few minutes a day, or even an hour a day, and write.

Don't worry about mistakes, formatting, editing, spelling, or anything like that right now. Just write. Get the story down there. Some authors use an outline, plot description, or just write off the top of their heads without preparation. It's up to you on what's easiest for you. Start out by writing a bunch of short stories with the same characters or a group of articles focused on the same theme. Decide which genre and sub-genre you'd like to write about. Research what readers like, and find out what's best about that genre.

Read. That's right, read as many books as you can. Get the gist of what's wanted by the readers. Pick a few authors that you like and read their reviews. See what the reviewers liked and didn't like. Know what your readers want and like and you'll be ahead of the game.

You can write anything you want. It can be self-help, DIY, non-fiction, fiction, romance, whatever you desire. It doesn't matter what your genre is as long as you sit down and write it.

Telling me your terrific plot in one breath, (and I've heard some awesome plots), and then saying you can't type in the next breath tells me you've already defeated yourself.

You've already told yourself that you can't.

My response? Talk it in. Don't give yourself a negative attitude. Chances are that your computer already has one in it. It's not the best, nor is it the top of the line, but it'll do if you can't type.

Or just go the old fashioned route and write it on pen and paper.

Start with writing short stories, flash fiction, or articles.

Keep a positive attitude, convince yourself that you can do it. If you don't have the confidence and self-motivation, you're hurting yourself and your chances of succee-



ding.

If you've got that story burning in your head, sit down and write it. Who cares if you only write one page a day? At that pace, you'll write two small books a year or one with 365 pages. Perhaps you start with short stories. That'd be about four stories a year. Now you've gotten into writing on a regular basis.

You must be self-motivated and self-disciplined. Be determined to succeed, without that ingrained in your personality, you'll be struggling. Make yourself do it. You're your own boss and the boss has to keep their employees motivated. You've decided that you're going to write a book. You've gotten the plan and plot all set, time set aside, ideas, research (if needed), and the tools you need.

Tell, tell, and tell. Let me explain. Tell them what you want to do. Tell them while you're doing it. Tell them what you've done.

As you're writing the book, you need to put your name out there. If you're using a pen name, you need to get your pen name out there. By doing that, you'll know where you stand.

There's a slow process that needs to be cultivated in order for your name to become recognizable. It's important

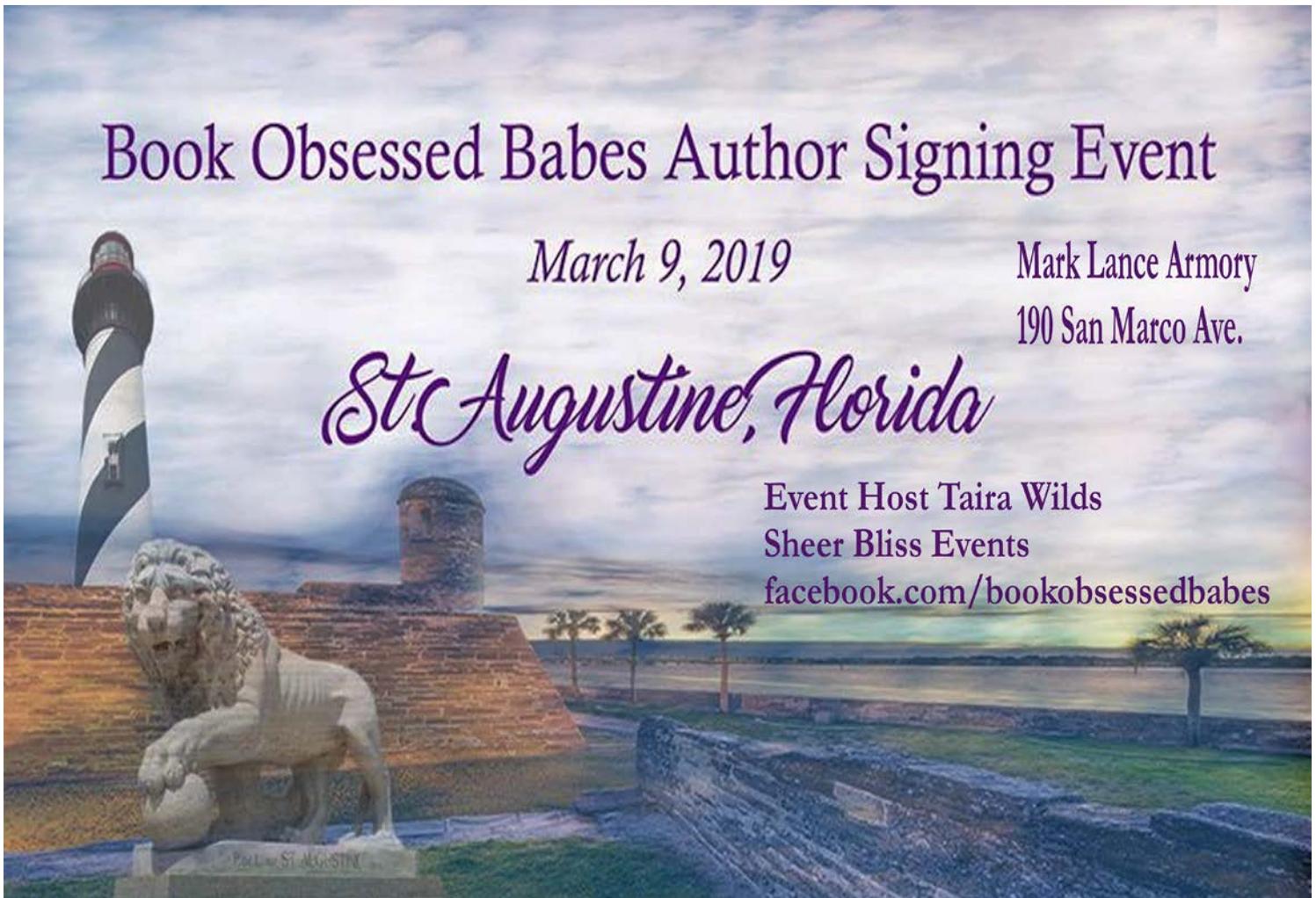
Book Obsessed Babes Author Signing Event

March 9, 2019

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Event Host Taira Wilds
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to know where you stand on what you should've done, what you should be doing right now, and what you should be planning to do.

Don't force the story. Let it grow with each page. Release the inner fantasy and put yourself in the story, even if you're a secondary character.

Avoid letting writer's block snag you. If you hit an impasse, start at the beginning of the chapter or at a section a few pages back. By the time you get to the blank page, you'll have written something. It doesn't matter if you reworded paragraphs or kicked in and extended the chapter. You wrote and that's what matters when it comes to the story, and the voices in your head that are screaming to get out.

Whispering...shhh, a secret. Let me tell you something I learned several years ago. Your computer should have a free voice program that'll read your story back to you. My computer calls it "narrator". Once your book's finished,

find that program, activate it, and listen to your story.

Stop and fix as you hear the mistakes. You'd be amazed at what you find while you're listening.

Have someone you trust read it before you send it to a professional editor.

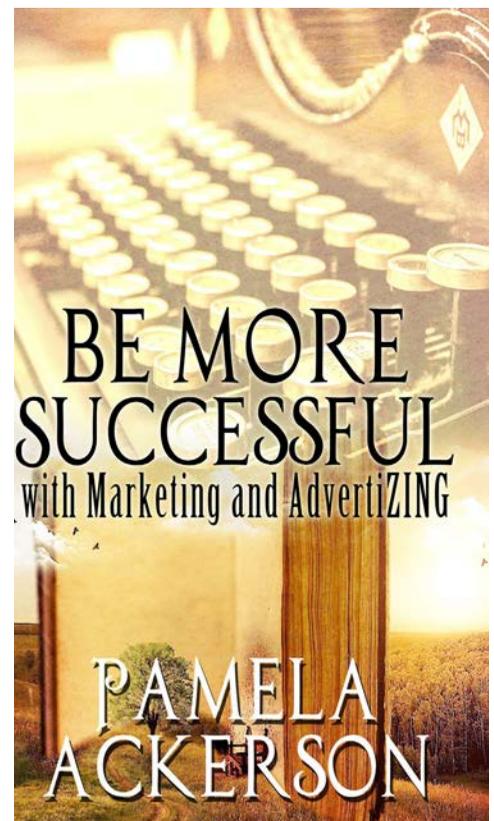
Make the necessary corrections, and put it aside for a couple of days.

Read it from the very first page to the last.

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Affaire de Coeur





When family ambition turns deadly,
Chase must keep Harper safe
and both of them alive.

New York Times bestselling author Kat Martin is a graduate of the University of California at Santa Barbara where she majored in Anthropology and also studied History. Currently residing in Missoula, Montana, with her Western-author husband, L. J. Martin, Kat has written sixty-five historical and contemporary romantic suspense novels. More than sixteen million copies of her books are in print and she has been published in twenty foreign countries. Kat is currently at work on her next romantic suspense



A Sneek Peek at Kat Martin's
THE CONSPIRACY

Dallas, Texas

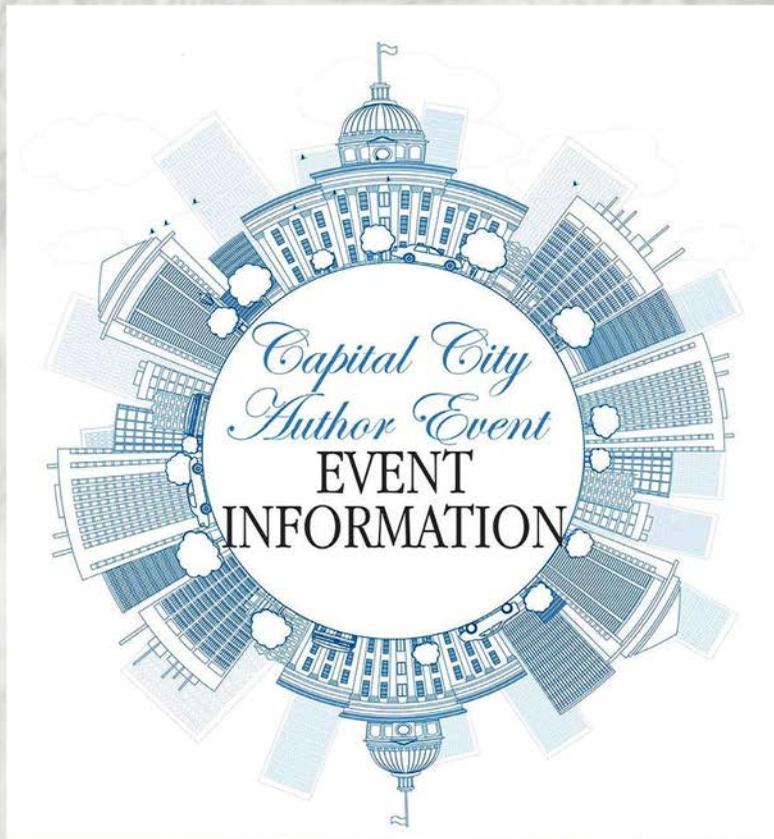
She knew who he was. The only man at the gala in a black tuxedo and shiny black alligator cowboy boots. Chase Garrett. The man she intended to hire to help her find her missing brother.

Harper Winston had known Chase since the day her father had thrown an obnoxiously extravagant party in honor of her sixteenth birthday.

Chase had attended with her older brother, Michael. She had spotted Chase in a swimsuit standing next to the pool, tall, with a lean, hard-muscled body, whiskey-brown eyes and thick, dark blond hair. In the sun it had gleamed like pirate's gold.

Aside from the close-trimmed beard along a jaw that had hardened with maturity, Chase hadn't changed. He still had the perfectly symmetrical features of

Capital City Author Event



May 18, 2019
Montgomery, AL

Hosted by
Tammie Smith,
Randy and
Michelle Sewell
RLS Model Images

[Facebook.com/Groups/CCAEReadersGroup](https://www.facebook.com/Groups/CCAEReadersGroup)

a movie star combined with a toughness that appealed to a legion of women.

Now that she was thirty, Chase thirty-five, Harper still found him ridiculously attractive, though he'd never given her more than a passing glance.

He didn't notice her tonight, though she wore an elegant strapless black gown that hugged her slender curves and set off the pale blond hair she wore long and slightly turned under. She glanced over to where he stood next to a stunning brunette, a successful lawyer in Dallas, the typical sort of woman Chase dated. Self-made career women, professors, bankers, stockbrokers. Not someone like her, the daughter of a wealthy Texas businessman, a woman who had attended Sarah Lawrence along with a bevy of other rich socialites from around the country.

It didn't matter that she was nothing like they were. That she hadn't the least interest in society. Her interests

lay in the business world, in Elemental Chic, the company she had started, a line of affordable, stylish and well-made casual clothing and accessories.

She wasn't cut out for teaching or social work, she had discovered during a year of volunteer work in South America, an adventure she had undertaken mostly because her father disapproved.

Harvard Business School was where she was meant to be, she had grudgingly conceded. As her father had insisted and was eager to pay for—business being one of the few interests she and Knox Winston, a self-made multimillionaire, had in common.

Unlike her father, Chase Garrett came from big money, which he disdained, though he and his two brothers had inherited a not-so-small fortune from Bass Garrett, Chase's dad.

Harper lifted a champagne flute off a passing waiter's tray and took a

sip. Chase might not notice her tonight, but he was the reason she was there. She hadn't seen him in years, but when she had read in the newspaper that he would be attending the gala, she'd seized the opportunity. She wanted to see the man he had become, the man she would be facing tomorrow morning.

It didn't matter what he thought of her as a woman. She needed his professional assistance. Her brother was in trouble. She knew it deep in her soul. Mikey had disappeared, and Chase was among the few people she trusted to help her find him.

Chase owned Maximum Security, a firm that specialized in private investigation, bail enforcement, personal protection, business and residential security. She had done her homework, knew he had offices in Phoenix and San Diego as well as here in Dallas. Chase was wildly successful, his reputation

continued on page 31

BLACK HISTORY

Affaire de Coeur salutes

Allensworth, the First Black Settlement in California



Welcome to Allensworth

I had never heard of it. I had never seen it on a map. Following my sons through high school and college football, I thought I had seen everything California had to offer—from the whopping feet of snow at Lake Tahoe to the hot and cold Mojave Desert to the rich, private beaches of Malibu. Allensworth? Why hadn't I come across it on one of my numerous trips up and down the state?

Okay, so what is the significance of Allensworth? It is the first

and only black settlement in California. As long as I have been in California, I never knew of its existence and had not ever been there. Shame on me! So, when I learned that my daughter-in-law's church was making a bus trip there, curiosity got the best of me, and my daughter and I signed up to make the 250 mile trek from Berkeley to Allensworth.

In 1908, the California Colony and Home Promoting Association, a group of four men, purchased 20 acres along the Sante Fe railroad,

and from those acres, Allensworth was carved out, becoming the first town to be founded, governed, and financed for Blacks. Interestingly enough, land was being given to whites, whether they were citizens of the U.S. or not, through grants and homesteading, while the country denied land to freed slaves.

The president of the Association was Allen Allensworth, and soon after the purchase the town's name was changed to name to



*A typical street sign--
Sojourna at Dunbar Road*



Allensworth. The men who joined him were former Buffalo soldiers: Harry Mitchell, a Los Angeles realtor who selected the acreage because of its rich soil and abounding water supply; Professor William Payne, a teacher from West Virginia (who had been deemed ineligible to teach in California because he had never taught in California); Dr. William Peck, an AME minister; and J.W. Palmer, a Nevada miner.

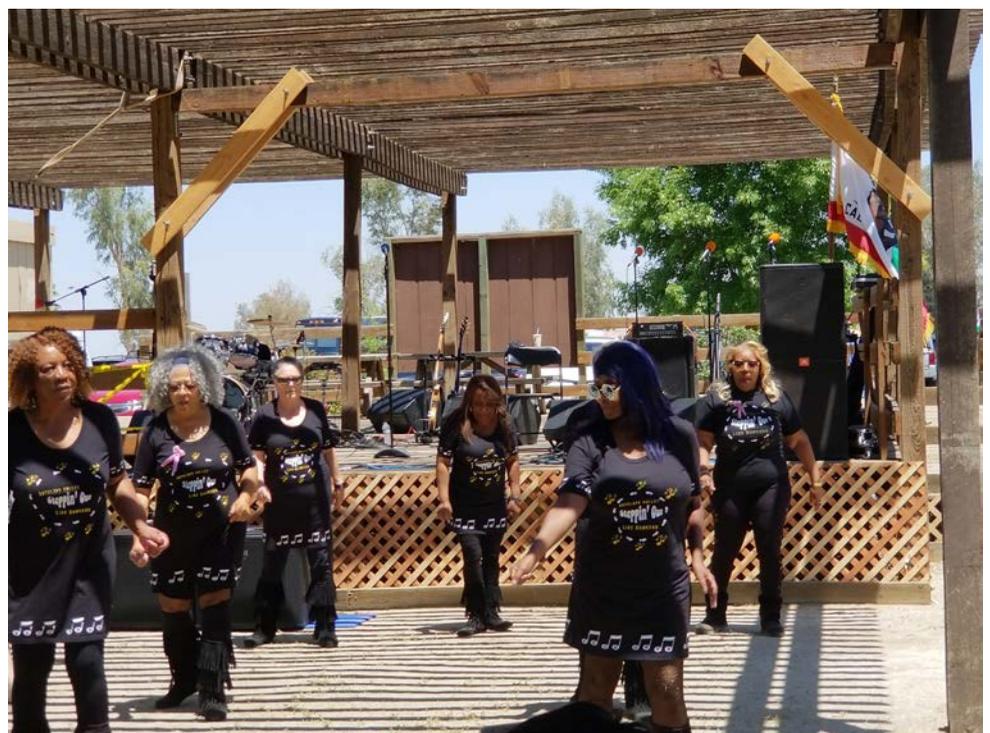
Once founded, it began to thrive because of its agricultural, business and tourists' contributions. By 1914, it would boast of a school district, a general store, a post office and, of course, a Baptist church. Later, it would have a library in conjunction with the Tulare Library system, and a judicial system. However, in 1914, the Santa Fe railroad moved its station from Allensworth to Alpaugh, resulting in a tremendous loss of financial support and the exodus of most of its residents. The next blow came in 1925, when the state of California refused to provide irrigation water to Allensworth, which crippled their agricultural prowess. The final blow

came in 1966, when Arsenic was found in the water, resulting in only 34 families remaining. Despite this, Allensworth lives on, largely thanks to an Original Tuskegee Airman and Sacramento City Councilmember, Herman "Ace" Lawson (a Fresno, California, native). He, with the help of the Allensworth citizens,

convinced the State of California to designate it Allensworth State Historic Park and with that designation, ordered the restoration of its original buildings.

The history of Colonel Allensworth is very interesting. Born a slave in Kentucky, he had been forbidden to learn how to read or write. During the Civil War, he escaped slavery and stayed behind Union lines where, in addition to becoming a Baptist minister, he served in two branches of the military--first in the Navy, then in the Army. When he retired, he was the highest-ranking Black officer in the Army. Post Army, he went across the country lecturing on the concept of self-help.

There is nothing like a good old-fashioned church bus trip, especially one that takes you back to your roots. No matter what denomination you are, whether you are a believer or not, or if you're young or pushing 90, you quickly learn that the people who put these trips toget-



Dancers provided free entertainment all day

I'm not Alexei.
You'll always have
a choice with me.
The question is,
do you trust me...?

SECRET SANTA
by **NIA FARRELL**



her know all about having a good time and delivering it to you. This trip was no exception.

From the time one steps on the bus, all the senses are treated. Once the boarding noise dies down and the 'business' is taken care of, the fun begins.... Trivia questions were first. The ground rules were simple: whoever got the correct answer first got the point for the question. The person with the most points won. The caveat was that the questions were modeled after the card game, "Black Card Revoked!" meaning the questions were about African-Americans and their impact in entertainment, invention, history, etc. With the card game, if you couldn't answer the question and you were African-American, your Black card was revoked. These activities make time fly. You're at the destination before you know it, and that is a feat. Allensworth is in Tulare County and 257 miles from Berkeley, California, the location of the church. It is a drive heading south and going through some of the hottest terrain California has to offer.

The bus drives close to Fresno. Then it continues further south, down Interstate 5 almost to



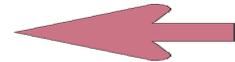
Authentic Pot Belly Stove



welcome. Debarking, we learned that they had gone all out, as they were celebrating their 42nd Old Time Jubilee. They provided food (at a small cost) and free entertainment all day, even in that scorching weather. There was even a fish fry with some of the most delicious fish I've had in a while. There the docent handed out brochures about Allensworth, making note of the soul food that's growing in their gardens—collard greens, sweet potatoes, okra and more. Another of their brochures itemized upcoming events they jointly put on with the State of California. A schedule of their events can be found on page 29.

If you have the opportunity to go, grab it with gusto. It's an entertaining but authentic history lesson, one that you should not miss. My cost was \$65.00 and worth every penny.

Beverly Jenkins, eat your heart out. A friend of Allensworth is dressed in a real Buffalo Soldier replica uniform of the 1860's and post Civil War.

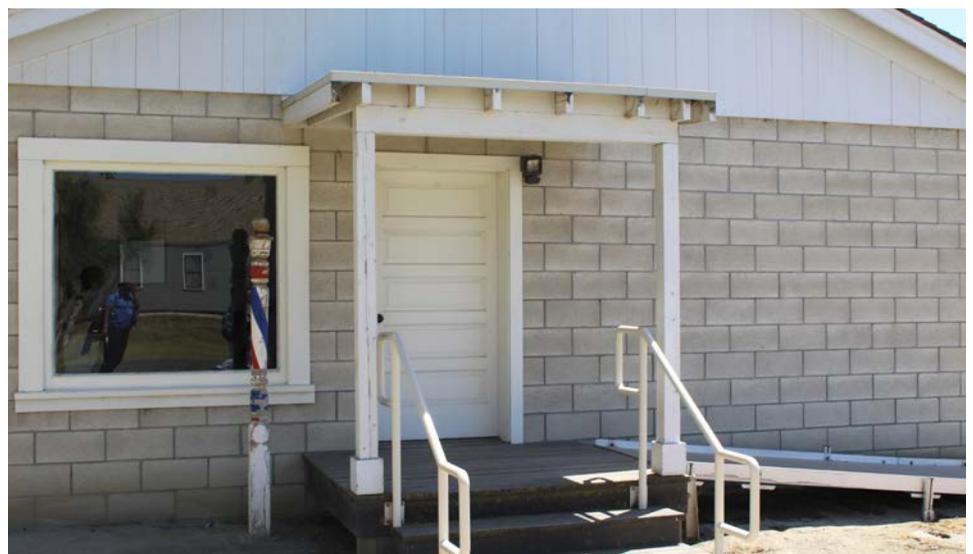


Allen Allensworth had been a Buffalo Soldier; he and three other Buffalo soldiers founded Allensworth.

Bakersfield. Veer right from there and go a few more minutes, and you're there.

At first glance, there is not a great deal to see in Allensworth, but it is so historically significant it's worth the drive, despite the fact that it is somewhat hidden away. From the time you step off the bus, you feel as if you have been thrown back to the early 20th century. Everyone is in costume—long dresses, men's pants with suspenders, and a Buffalo soldier who made my day.

The Friends of Allensworth do a great job in making visitors feel



Hair cut anyone? Here's the Allensworth barber shop



The Classroom for all



Let there be music, both by the piano below and phonograph



Affaire de Coeur

AdC Covers Conferences: The Central Florida Holiday Expo

Central Florida Holiday Expo book signing event was held at the Eisenhower Recreation Center in the Villages, Florida. The Center is also a military museum filled with artifacts, memorabilia, and historical items from all the military services.



Pamela Ackerson



Invite us to your conference. We may be able to come and give you free coverage!

Dynamic Debby Camp and her Happy Campers

Personal Motto: Don't wait for your ship to come in. Swim for it!

Author of more than 45 novels, Deborah lives in Oklahoma. She has been a full-time writer since she graduated from the University of Tulsa. She worked for a few years as a reporter for newspapers before becoming a freelance writer. Deborah's first novel was published in the late 1970's, and her books have been published by Jove, New American Library, Harlequin, Silhouette, and Avon. She 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.

Lover of the West and the people who tried to tame it, Deborah likes to write about strong, independent women and the men who are their equals. She grew up on a diet of TV westerns which have 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. 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.



AdC: *Tell us what motivated you to write the "Mind's Eye" series.*

D.C.: I've been interested in psychic detectives for quite a while and this idea was swimming in my head for about 10 years before I finally decided to write the book. The book. It started off as one book, but halfway through, I decided it could be two books. Then three books. Finally, it has bloomed into six complete novels of which I'm very proud! Writing the final one was bittersweet because I love my main characters and I'll miss them. Already do miss them!

AdC: *The main characters all have a main trait. Tell us about their abilities.*

D.C. Levi Wolfe can connect with the deceased. He chan-

nels murder victims and asks them to show him their final minutes in an effort to identify their murderers for the police and/or FBI. He has gained international fame for his abilities. He also possesses the ability to touch items and determine if anything tragic happened around them -- who wore them, who touched them last, what tragic scene occurred near them, etc. He's proven to be one of the most accurate psychics. He's also a showman and has gained fame by appearing on a variety of television and radio programs. Additionally, he's a bestselling author, having written books about his work on serial murder cases.

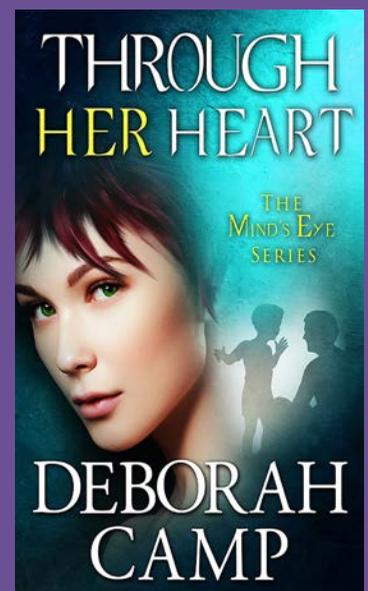
Trudy Tucker is unique in her ability to connect psychically with murderers, rapists, and child abductors. She can see, hear, and experience everything with them in real time when her mind connects with theirs. This usually happens when a perpetrator is casing his next victim or actually committing a crime. Her abilities are harrowing and she suffered through them most of her life. It's only been in the past couple of years that she's learned to cope with her psychic abilities and use them to

help apprehend the monsters among us.

Together, Levi and Trudy can approach murders from both the victim and perpetrator, gathering clues and information that hasn't been uncovered by investigators.

AdC: *What books are you working on now?*

D.C.: Next, I'm writing an historical western romance -- the other type of books I write. It's set in Kansas in 1870, and its main characters are a handsome, fast-draw sheriff who is known for taming wild towns and a



Start the year off with a series that will keep you

enthralled!

The Mind's Eye —

The complete series is available now on Amazon.

By **DEBORAH CAMP**

"Fifty Shades Meets Criminal Minds!"

"Great Romantic Suspense Series!"

"I love Trudy and Levi. Feel like I've known them my whole life!"

"Deborah Camp does a terrific job weaving a story full of suspense, mystery, and romance."



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<https://www.pinterest.com/debbycamp44/> • https://www.goodreads.com/author/list/198990.Deborah_Camp

Subscribe to Deborah's newsletter and receive the first book in the series FREE.
<http://www.deborah-camp.com>

young woman with a penchant for men who are deliciously dangerous and can't be completely tamed. I'm looking forward to introducing readers to Jackson Moon and Lacy Tyrell.

After I finish the historical romance, I plan to write a single title romantic suspense novel. I have some characters in mind that are currently in search of a plot.

AdC: *For any new fans out there, tell us about Debby Camp and her Happy Campers.*

D.C.: I like to interact with readers, so my faithful followers sign up to receive my newsletter (through my website) and I call them my Happy Campers. I don't bug them too much with email. I send a newsletter every month or so and they aren't only about my books and what I'm working on. I usually spotlight two or three books by other authors I've read recently and really enjoyed. I'm also an avid reader and love to support authors I admire. When you sign up for my newsletter, I send you one of my books free. Hopefully, you answer the questions to let me know if you like to read contemporary romances or historical romances. That way, I can send you the type you prefer to read. I also send birthday gifts to my Happy Campers and let them know when my books are being offered at special prices. I like to feature contests, too,

for readers to win books.

I'm on Facebook and Twitter, too. On Pinterest I have a section devoted to my books and photos of my "characters" plus places they visit, where they live, etc. It's fun and helps me keep my visuals straight as I write each book.

AdC: *What other genres do you write?*

D.C.: I write historical romances set in the American west. I've also written contemporary romances that range from "sweet" to "sexy." My "Mind's Eye" series is romantic suspense. All of my work is available on Amazon.

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@AuthorDebCamp

Facebook.com/OfficialDeborahCamp

PUZZLER

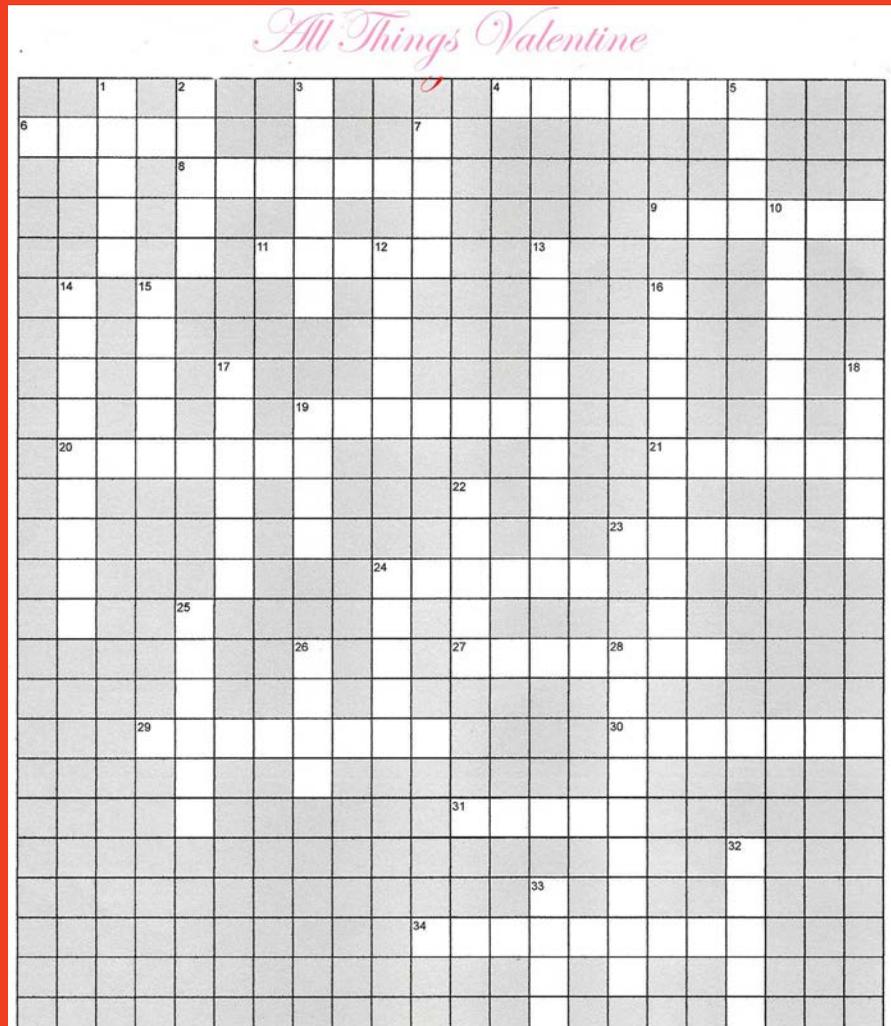
All Things Valentine

Across

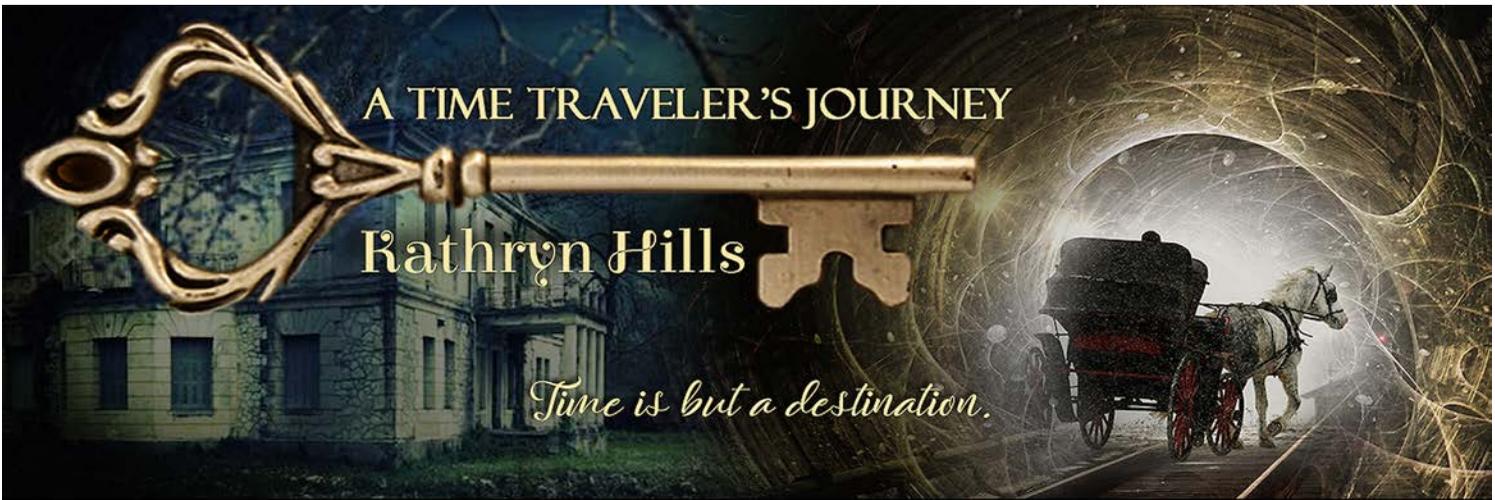
4. He painted "Cupid Complaining to Venus" in 1525.
6. This Sam wrote the mega hit song *Cupid (Draw Back Your Bow)*.
8. Favorite honeymoon spot in the olden days.
9. Cupid's wife.
11. Typical Valentine's Day gift.
19. She said, "Put a ring on it."
20. Dancing Couple: _____ and Rogers.
21. This artist painted "The Feast of Venus."
23. 150 million of these were sent last year.
24. An aromatic gift favorite, _____ #5.
27. The Cornish knight who fell in love with a betrothed Irish princess Isolde.
29. A girl's best friend.
30. He wrote the first Valentine's greeting card from prison, Duke of _____.
31. Favorite romantic French city.
34. Her man was Antony.

Down

1. Gershwin's couple: _____ and Bess
2. Cupid's mother.
3. Today's most famous couple: _____ and Prince Harry.
5. A favorite couple: _____ and Ricky.
7. Canine love heroine by Disney who loves a tramp.
10. Sculpted "Still Life With Plaster Cupid."
12. A bride's cache of money or property.
13. Arthur's woman.



14. _____ Taylor and Burton.
15. Symbol of Valentine's Day.
16. First celebration of Valentine was this fertility festival celebrated on the Ides of February.
17. He's Elizabeth II's man.
18. Most given flowers.
19. Old time name for a boyfriend.
22. *Beauty and the _____*.
24. The cherubic God of desire who shoots an arrow. (aka Eros)
25. This 13-year-old Capulet was in love with a Montague.
26. Mentally ill woman in love with Benny.
28. A bride's collection for marriage.
32. Ill-fated royal married to Charles.
33. This kind of chest is for an optimistic girl.



A TIME TRAVELER'S JOURNEY

Kathryn Hills

Time is but a destination.

Hellfire and Handbaskets

When the past comes searching for you,
there's no escape.

KathrynHills.com @AuthorKathrynH

African American Authors Can you find them?



Fire Next Time
James Baldwin



Once in a Lifetime
Gwynn Forster



The Color Purple
Alice Walker



Native Son
Richard Wright



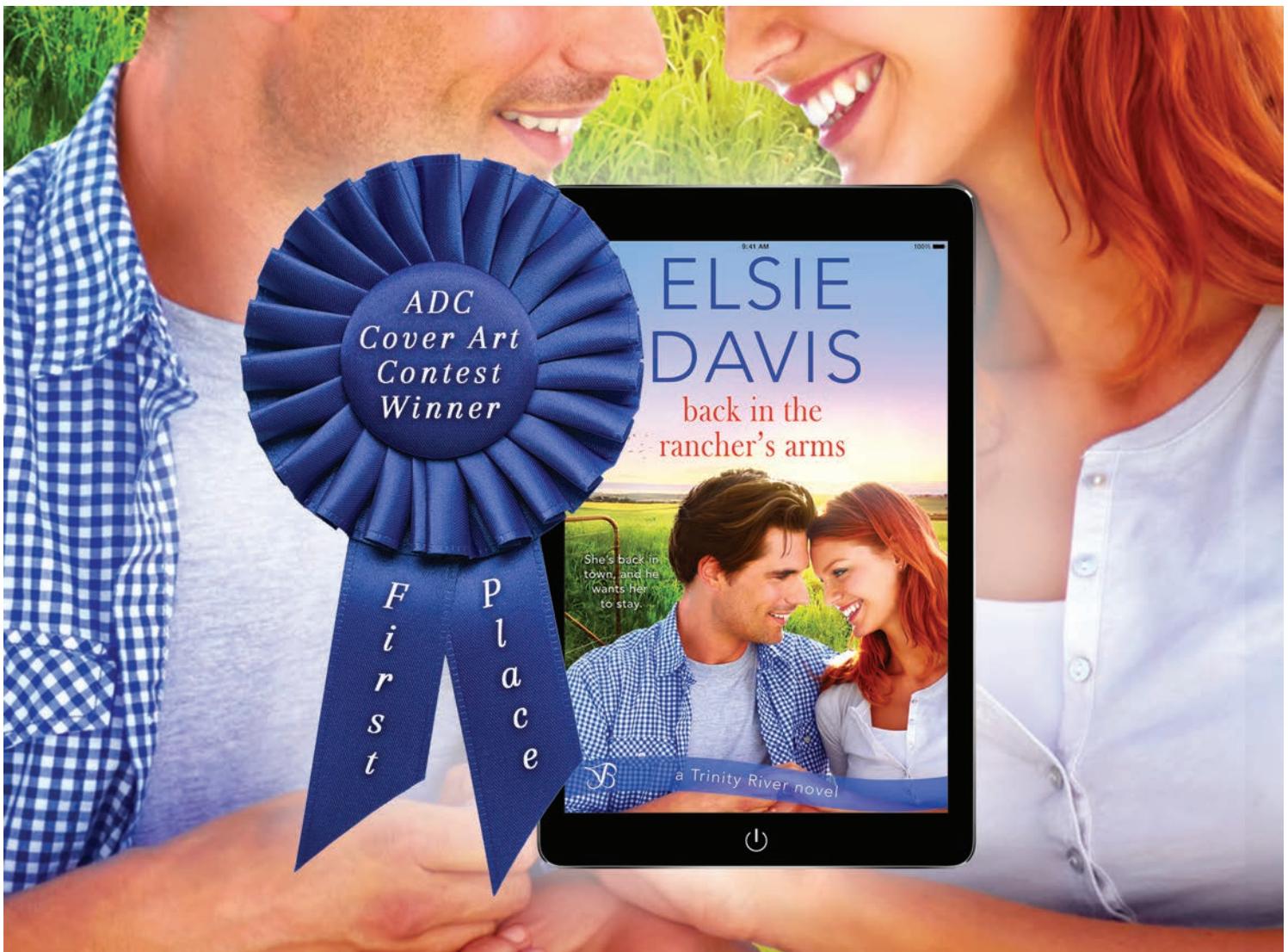
Beloved
Toni Morrison

M T R D U B O I S Z D R D
 V R E K L A I G V N J L R
 N O T G N I S G W J R M
 Z S K Y K X E N Z W U B
 Y T R O D B H W A N L H U A
 T T R F E N N Y W G G A B S
 T R N B V M Q X D P H S S
 R D B N N Y W G G A B S
 M V B Q T D P B E S
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Morrison
 Dubois
 Obama
 Angelou
 Wright
 Gwynne Forster
 Walker
 Baldwin

Douglass
 Washington
 Hughes
 Butler
 Haley
 Hansberry
 Due
 Mosley

Ans on page 34



Editorial continued.

news. One storyline continues to nag me. So, as a pediatric nurse, I will give this one opinion: what they are doing to those children at the U.S. borders is criminal.

Good riddance to “professional” football and especially the Oakland Raiders.

I have been a football fan since childhood. I loved it, and I am not one of those women who doesn’t understand the game. But politics infiltrated the NFL resulting in players being treated like mindless property who had no rights. I have heard the arguments, and if you are one of those who insists that because they are paid big salaries, they have no rights to self-expression, we just have to agree to disagree.

I have been a season ticket holder to the Raiders’ games since they came back after their first desertion over 20 years ago. Suffice it to say, the 20

Raiders have no loyalty to fans, who continued to give them sell-out games, even though they played worse than Pop Warner kids.

2018 showed us that some of the practices and tactics from Facebook are shady and irresponsible. It would seem their allegiance is to the dollar rather than the people who support them. So, I think I’m going to wean myself from it in 2019.

I don’t really do New Year’s resolutions, but I do have some things I am looking forward to in 2019. As you will see, some of these are passive activities.

1. Going to more writers’ conferences.
2. Seeing Serena win at least two more Slams.
3. Doing a 5K marathon with my daughter.
4. Playing cards on a regular

Affaire de Coeur

basis.

5. Seeing the U.S. Congress get out of its gridlock and approve some legislation that will actually help the people.

6. Seeing some good movies for a change.

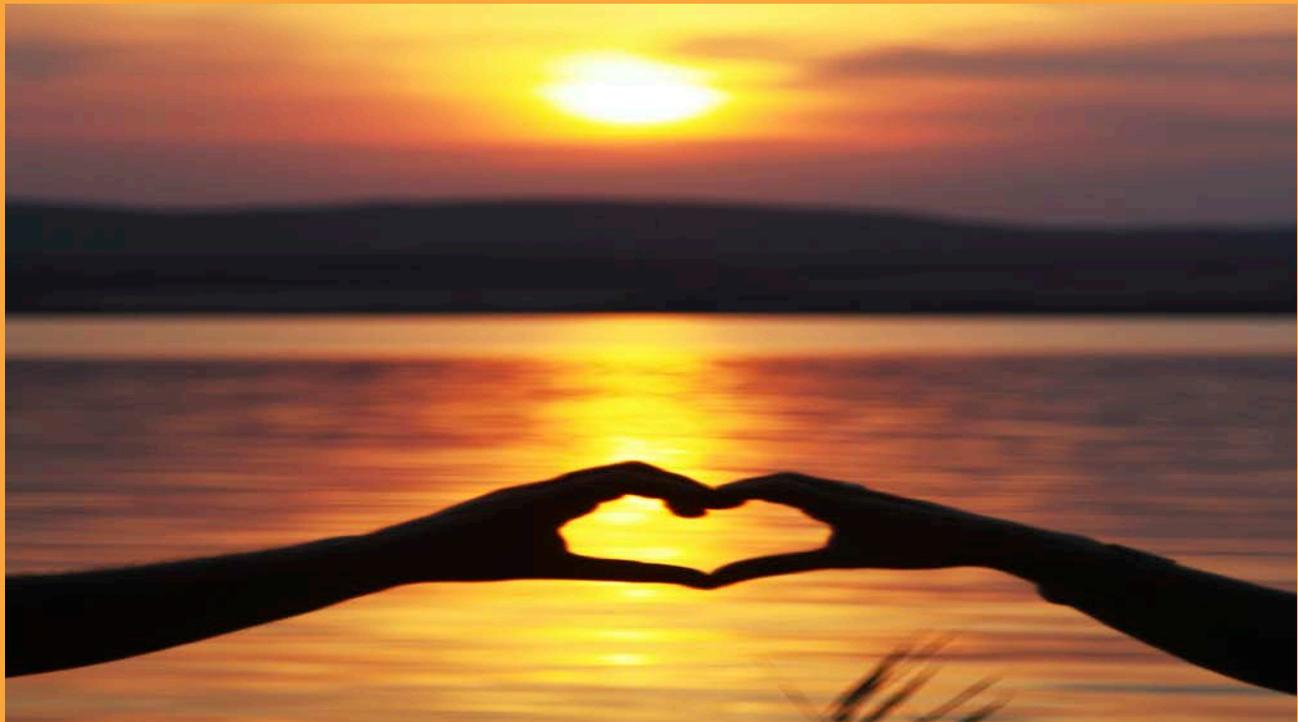
7. Rescuing at least one more dog and cat. (At the risk of being ostracized by my neighbors.)

8. Moving to a place that will accommodate #7.

9. Travelling to Fiji and Cuba. (I can dream, can’t I?)

10. Joining a protest. If we feel strongly enough about an issue, we should show it.

What are your resolutions/ things/goals you’re looking forward to? Let me know, and we’ll share them in the next issue. May 2019 give you its best and all of your wishes come true.



Contemporary Romance Reviews

The Conspiracy (Maximum Security #1)

Kat Martin

HQN Books

E-book

B07C14Q9M2

★★★★

Maximum Security, owned and operated by Chase Garrett, is a firm specializing in private investigation, bail enforcement, personal protection, business and residential security. Years ago, Chase had been best friends with Michael Winston, but after a confrontation with Michael's mafia-like father, they lost touch. With that being the case, Chase is beyond shocked to see Michael's sister walk through the doors of his office asking for help.

Harper Winston is frantic when her brother, Michael, goes missing. Pursuing his dream to sail his yacht in the Caribbean, Michael has not contacted her in a week, and she feels in her gut that something horrible has happened. Knowing that former family friend, Chase Garrett, is in the PI business, she enlists his services to track down Michael. Harper and Chase have a relationship built on past friendship that, as the search for her missing brother progresses, turns into something much more. As the truth behind what happened to Michael comes to light, Harper's life is now in jeopardy. Chase is tasked to keep her safe and eliminate the

threat, or their life together will end before it even has the chance to get started.

The Conspiracy is an enjoyable romantic suspense that keeps the pages turning. Would recommend to fans of this genre.

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

One Tough Cowboy

Lora Leigh and Veronica Chadwick

St. Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250309488

★★★★★

Sheriff Hunter Steele just didn't buy that the three recent deaths in his small town, one of them his own uncle, were the results of accidents and suicide. It just didn't make sense. He had been born and raised in his little town of Deerhaven, California, but, after returning from the Army, he had felt like an outsider. Now that he was Sheriff, the feeling hadn't really changed. But he was determined to investigate more into these three strange deaths, despite the usual distractions of the pushy mayor and his two insubordinate deputies. Then Samantha came back to town to bury her aunt, the last of the three, and Hunter's resolve to stay focused on



The Military Wife

Laura Trentham

St. Martin's Griffin

Trade Paperback

978-1250145536

★★★★★



Harper Lee Wilcox loved the wintry silence of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. It always seemed so peaceful to her after the hectic tourist season that the Outer Banks was known for. But, after five years of mourning Noah, her late Navy Seal husband, she desperately needed a change for her and their young son, Ben. But first, she needed to visit her friend Allison who had helped her when she had lost Noah. Now Allison needed her because her Seal husband, Noah's commanding officer, had returned from his deployment with an acute case of PTSD. She also needed to find Noah's best friend, Bennett Caldwell, or Grizzly, as his fellow SEALs had nicknamed him. Maybe Bennett could give her a little more information on how her husband had died. She needed to know!

Bennett had left the military after his last deployment and was now running a survival school. It suited him. He was a loner...always had been... and knew being alone was what he deserved. "Griz" was a giant of a man with steel up his back—the perfect SEAL. Nothing phased him; nothing could break him; and he was used to being alone and lonely. Then a small persistent woman mourning her husband and raising her five-year old as a single mother entered his life, and nothing would ever be the same.

The Military Wife is one of the best, most heartwarming stories I have ever read. If I could give it six stars, I would without hesitation. Ms. Trentham has captured the hardships, anxieties, frustrations and overwhelming tensions that a military spouse faces every day when their loved one is deployed. Being a military brat myself, this book actually gave me an insight into some of my mother's struggles after WWII and the ensuing 25 years as a military wife. Without being a military wife, herself, Ms. Trentham has done an outstanding job in relaying the everyday life of those "left behind." The romance is strong, without explicit sex scenes, and the second storyline of dealing with PTSD made it very difficult for this reviewer to read because of the tears flowing down my face. A truly exceptional must read!

Lani Roberts

his investigation took a backseat.

Samantha Jolene Ryder, or Sam as Hunter liked to call her, had been a wild child growing up in Deerhaven. She'd had a crush on Hunter ever since she was seven years old and he had come to her rescue when some bullies were trying to beat her up. After that, she had followed him around like a puppy, getting into any kind of mischief she could think up just so he could "rescue" her. She was so underfoot that Hunter started calling her "Pixie Pest" right up until her family left Deerhaven and moved to Detroit, Michigan. Now

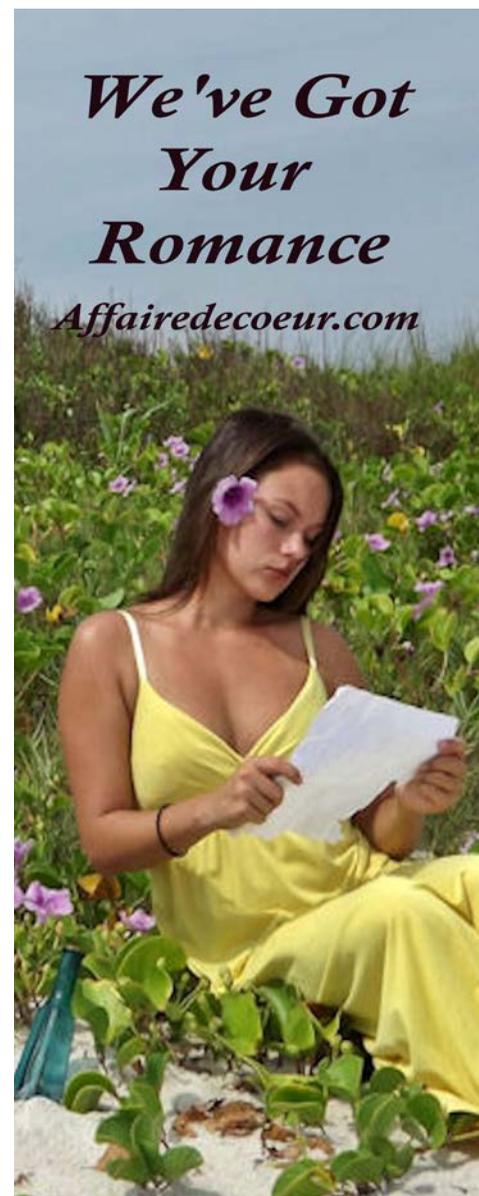
she was all grown up, a Deputy Sheriff with the Detroit Police Department and determined to find out what happened to her aunt, but her heart still belonged to Hunter. Would he even remember her? Would he let her investigate?

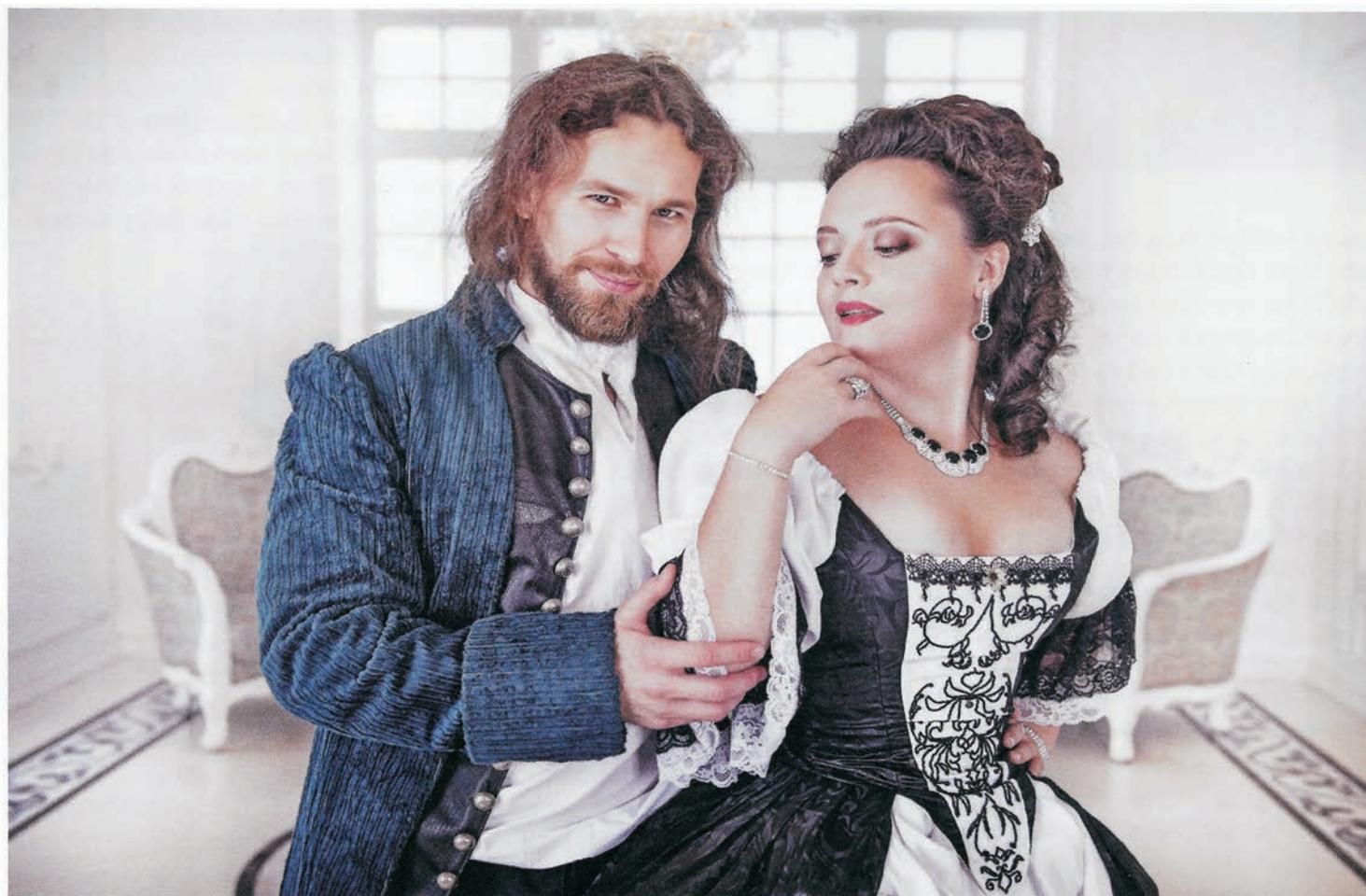
At first glance, I thought this was going to be just another boy-meets-girl-all-grown-up-and-falls-in-love kind of story. Been there, done that. But *One Tough Cowboy* proved to be much more than your run-of-the-mill romance. The hero is gorgeous, protective and every girl's dream in a cowboy. But his "antagonist" is a force to be reckoned with. Samantha gives as good as she

Contemporaries

gets. As a Detroit detective, Sam is Hunter's equal, in every aspect, as they work to uncover the mystery of the three sudden deaths in their community. An excellent, hot romance with a secondary storyline straight out of the headlines of today. A must read.

Lani Roberts





Historical Romance Reviews

The Duke I Once Knew

Olivia Drake

St Martin's Press

Mass Market

978-1250174376

☆☆☆☆

After caring for her elderly parents, siblings, nieces, and nephews from her teen years, Abigail Linton realizes that her life has passed her by, leaving her a spinster about to be shelved. Before she settles into the inevitable, she decides to experience life and, hopefully, some of what she has missed by becoming governess for the neighboring sister of the Duke of Rothwell, her first, and only, love Max. Max unexpectedly returns for a visit, with friends from his London life of excess in tow, after avoiding his home for years. Abigail and Max each believe the other stopped writing as they promised each other, leading to heartbreak and lingering animosity.

Abigail is selfless, gracious, loving, and longs for more than meeting her family's needs. Years of running from family secrets and the pain he associates with love has turned

Max into a cynical, embittered, unrepentant rake. Drake's description, characterization, and pacing are all top notch, drawing readers into the novel right from the start. Details of the fashions and societal mores of the novel's period add authenticity to the novel and further the development of the characters in this sweet, steamy, slightly angst, and thoroughly entertaining second chance romance.

Lacy Hill

A Fierce Wind

Regan Walker

Self-Published

Trade Paperback

978-0997656749

☆☆☆☆



Orphaned and raised by her uncle, Zoe Ariane Donet speaks her mind as she challenges gender roles of the 1700's. After the death of her first love at the hands of the revolutionary Paris government, Zoe decided to

stand at her uncle's side to bring emigres to freedom. Adorned in peasant attire, Zoe took to the villages, determined to rescue those destined for the guillotine.

Frederick West was fearless in battle and head over heels in love with his childhood friend Zoe. His attempt to save her from republican soldiers ended in near tragedy. With Zoe at his side during his recovery, Frederick's love for Zoe was fully realized. "*Your skin is as soft as a babe's,*" Freddie muttered in his fevered sleep. "*I want...I want to kiss you...everywhere.*"

My first time reading Regan Walker was a delight. The hot, steamy romance set amidst the French and English War proved to be the perfect setting for love, loss and honor. With skillful writing and unexpected plot twists. Walker keeps her readers on the edge of her seat.

Katrina Byrd

Highland Crown (Royal Highlander #1)

May McGoldrick

St. Martin's Press

E-book

B07DZY9NK2

☆☆☆☆

"They'd known each other for only a short time, but life was short with no guarantees of tomorrow."

Isabella Drummond is a trained physician in a man's world. Fighting hard to garner the respect so rightly deserved, she treats those who come to her in need of her care. But, unbeknownst to her, some of her patients are part of the Scottish rebellion, and her husband is one of them. After a skirmish between the British soldiers and the rebels, Isabella finds herself a widow on the run from both the British and Scots for information. Hidden away in a small village along the shore, she meets Cinaed MacKintosh, a wounded sea captain with secrets of his own. Together, Isabella and Cinaed fight for their lives while falling in love in the wilds of the Highlands.

While reading *Highland Crown*, I found the story more of a work of historical fiction than romance. The characters are well developed, as well as the conflict that surrounds them, but I found the romance a little lacking until I changed my reading point-of-view and thought of this not as my typical historical romance, but more of a telling of two characters fighting for what they believe in and finding solace in each other's company. *Highland Crown* is the first installment in May McGoldrick's "Royal Highlander" series. While there is an ending, there are questions still left

Historicals

unanswered. Overall, *Highland Crown* is an enjoyable well written historical that I would recommend.

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

Katie's Highlander (Highland Protector #3)

Maeve Greyson

Loveswept

Ebook

B07CR5Z599

☆☆☆☆



"Things pass through our lives—easy to gain, easy to lose. What matters in life is making memories with someone you love. Memories that no one, not time, the gods, angels, or demons, can ever take away."

The MacDara Clan has found favor with the ancient druid goddesses. Known throughout the Highlands of Scotland as the Protectors, the MacDaras travel back and forth in time, as the goddesses wish, to fulfill their sworn duties to protect the Heartstone, an ancient relic filled with energy that makes mortal life worth living. Ramsay MacDara has never been one to shirk his duty as a Protector, but living in modern day North Carolina is not his passion. He feels lost and alone in a world that doesn't understand him... that is until he stumbles upon a beautiful damsel in distress.

Katie Jenson has always put her job as a professor and archaeologist first. Resolving herself to a life of no romance, she can't believe she's being rescued by one verra hawt man in a kilt! Curiosity gets the better of Katie, and she finds herself swept up, in not only the arms of her highlander, but swept back in time as well.

As the days pass, Katie and Ramsay learn that fate has placed them in each other's path for a reason. Fear of the unknown becomes an obstacle neither can move and could cost them their happily ever after.

Katie's Highlander is the first book by Maeve Greyson that I have read, but it will not be the last! I found myself swept away within the first few pages, and did not want the story to end. Loved this impossible to put down historical romance and highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

A Protector in the Highlands (Highland Roses School #2)

Heather McCollum

Entangled Publishing, LLC (Amara)

E-book

978-1640637108

★★★★★



*“Forged from ashes
their binding love was the most
under heaven, made from the
pasts.”*

*of nightmares,
beautiful creation
shards of their*

Scarlet Worthington is determined never again to be a victim. Doing everything in her power to protect the other young ladies at the Highland Roses School, Scarlet asks Aiden Campbell, the clan chief’s brother, to train her and the other students in the art of being a warrior--to give these “Roses” the ability to use their “thorns.” As each day passes, Scarlet begins to see that Aiden may be fierce, but underneath that gruff exterior, lies a kindness like none she has ever witnessed, as well as a past that has hardened his heart to all things English.

While his brother Chief Grey Campbell is away, Aiden Campbell has been left with the task of securing Finlarig Castle and its inhabitants. Sticking with his grudge against the English, Aiden wants nothing to do with Scarlet, nor her students. But Aiden has met his match when it comes to Scarlet, and her fierce determination to be trained in the art of self-defense.

When Scarlet’s nightmare comes knocking on Finlarig’s doors, she tells herself that she is no longer going to run. Her fears will be buried in the past where they belong, and she will be stronger for having survived them... *“Even the most shattered mess can be made into something stronger and more beautiful if we pick up the pieces.”* Aiden and Scarlet find there isn’t anything they can’t conquer as long as they believe in each other.

This reader absolutely loved *A Protector in the Highlands*. Aiden and Scarlet’s story is full of intrigue, romance and kick ass heroines! Highly recommend and can’t wait for the next installment!

*Sharing what I love,
Veronica*

party. He will protect Derryth from the soldiers who want to rape her. In the week that follows, Derryth discovers that Cull is not only handsome, he’s kind. She learns that all Cull’s ever wanted is a home, a wife and a name to give to his children. During that same time, he discovers that Derryth is brave and loyal as well as beautiful. The two fall in love.

Derryth is horrified. How can she love a man who is planning on destroying her family? When Cull discovers that Derryth is the sister of the Lady Kincaid, he’s torn. Taking this castle is the first step in achieving his lifelong goals. But how can Cull destroy the family of the woman he loves?

This is a continuation of a series. It can be read alone. It’s a pretty good book.

Sheila Griffin

The Warrior of Clan Kincaid (Highland Warrior -Book 3)

Lily Blackwood

St. Martin’s Press

Mass Market

978-1250084842

★★★

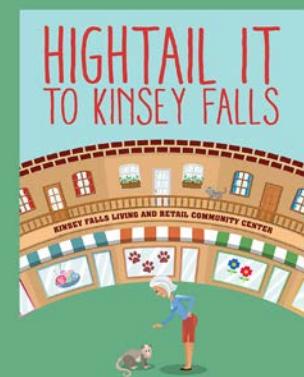
Derryth is informed she must leave her sister, the Lady Kincaid, immediately and return home. Derryth

is assured that nothing’s wrong. These assurances are lies.

The Wolf’s army, led by Cull, is nearing Castle Kincaid. The Wolf is Clan Kincaid’s worst enemy. He’s also Cull’s mentor. Derryth and her retinue are captured. Cull cannot risk the Kincaids learning that an attack is imminent. He promises to release the group unharmed after the battle.

Cull keeps Derryth in his tent, separate from the others in her

All work and no play
make Jade a dull girl.



GAYLE LEESON

GayleLeeson.com
@GayleTrent

Paranormal Romance Reviews



Day of the Dragon (Dragon Hunter #2)

Katie MacAlister

Forever

E-book

B07F7145FN

★★★★ 1/2

“I love you. I don’t know how it happened so fast, but you fill my heart, and I will love you from this moment until the time when I draw my last breath.”

Historical scholar Thaisa is out with friends enjoying a drink and girl talk when in walks Archer. Tall, dark, and oh-so over-the-top sexy, Thaisa knows she doesn’t stand a chance. But no one is more surprised than she is when she finds herself abducted by his twin brother Hunter and then rescued by the object of her lust. And if that wasn’t terrifying and exciting enough, they just happen to be dragons!

Toss in a mouthy sprite, demon summoning, a mystery to solve, and a lot of verra hawt dragon sex, you get a quirky fun read that is almost impossible to put down!

Highly recommend and look forward to more of this series!

*Sharing what I love,
Veronica*

Paranormals

work towards keeping Stuart safe while bringing the killer to justice.

Through Her Heart is the sixth and final installment of the “Mind’s Eye” series. Rightfully titled, this story is full of courage, love, acceptance and heart. Deborah Camp ended the series with a happily ever after readers will love. I thoroughly enjoyed it and would recommend to fans of paranormal romance.

*Sharing what I love,
Veronica*

Through Her Heart (Mind’s Eye #6)

Deborah Camp

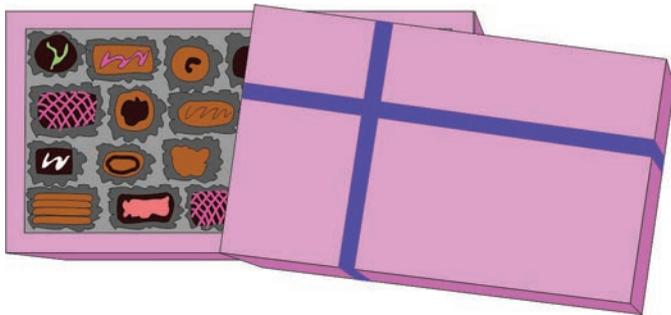
Self-Publication

Ebook

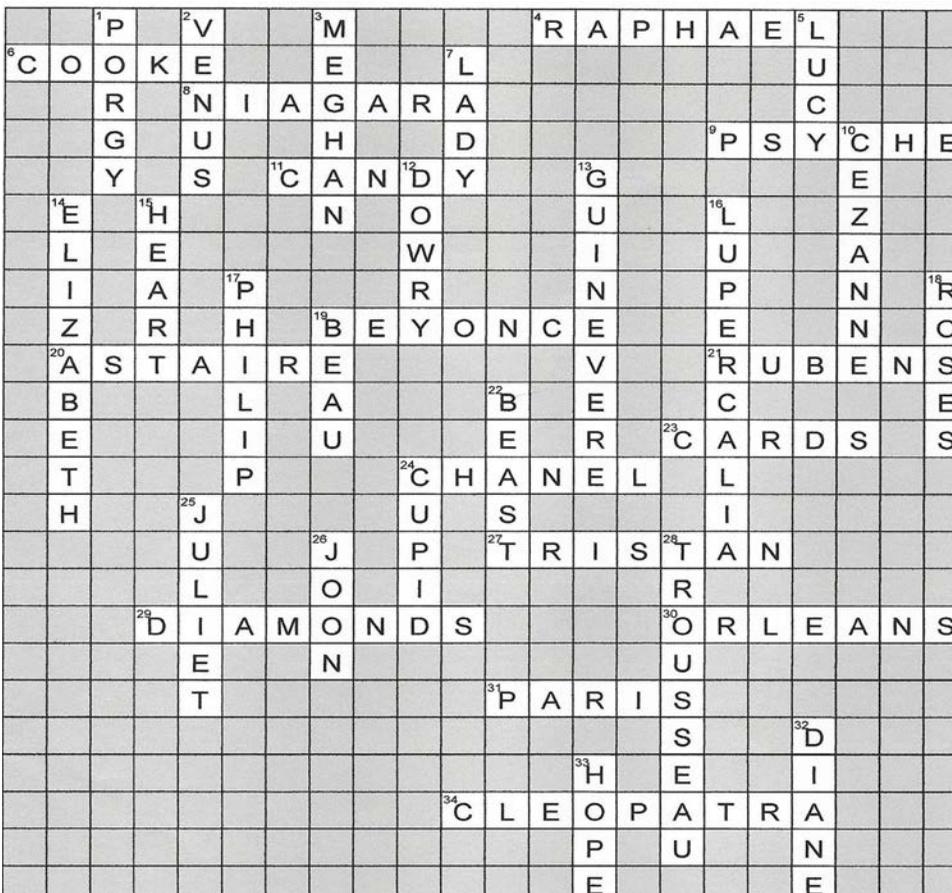
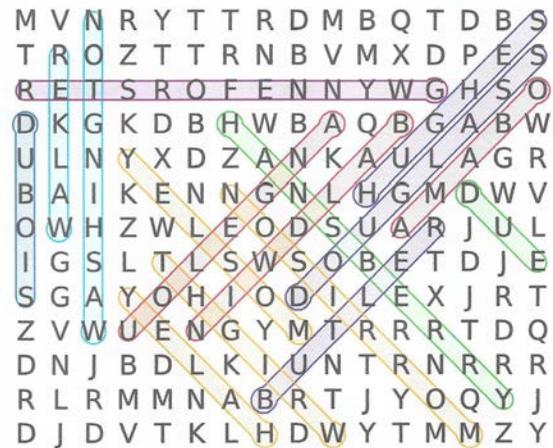
B07LGDZ4TR

★★★★

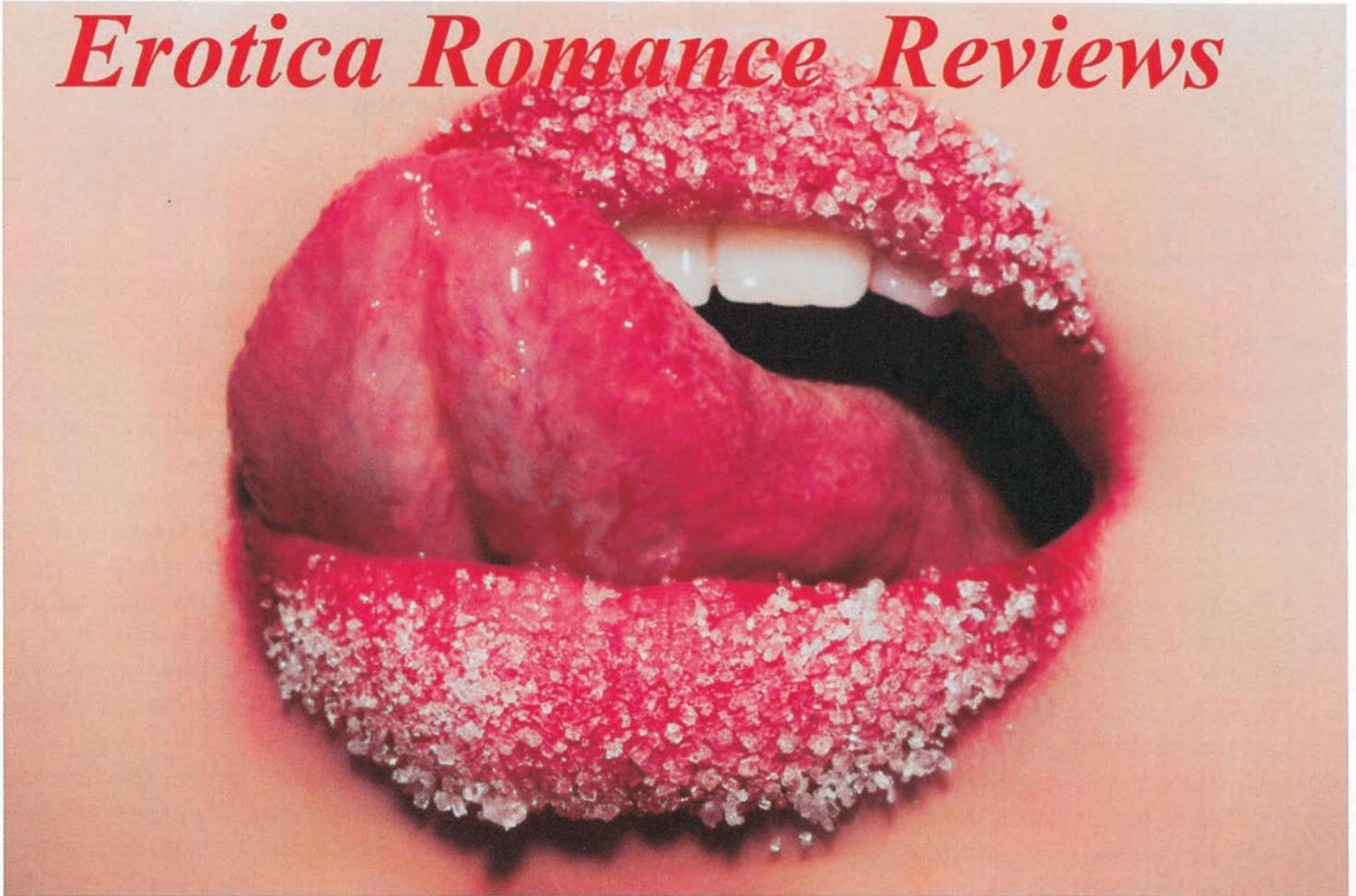
Psychics Levi Wolfe and Trudy Tucker have been given a task to help seven-year-old Stuart McFarland, whose parents were brutally murdered in their home. Stuart shares a similar psychic gift as Levi and Trudy, and together they



African-American Authors



Erotica Romance Reviews



Staged (Exodus End #3)

Olivia Cunning

Vulpine Press

E-book

B07JGR81P6

★★★★★

“Sex, Drugs and Rock & Roll...if any of those words are offensive to you, just stop reading now and move on...”

To Exodus End drummer Steve Aimes, the world is his stage. Hiding behind the persona of a typical sexed and drugged up rock star, he has a heart of a hopeless romantic... which comes out when the up-and-coming rock band Baroquen is introduced. Steve sets his eyes on keyboardist Roux Williams and is all in when it comes to winning over Roux’s attentions. Even when Roux shares her painful past, he loves her all the more.

Roux Williams is determined not to become another notch on Steve Aimes’ drumsticks. But when he lets his guard down to allow her to see past his legendary reputation, Roux takes a chance with her heart and allows herself to fall in love.

Roux and Steve are both characters hurt by their past but made all the stronger for having survived. “*She made him*

feel something he never thought he’d feel again. Hope. Hope that someone on this dark and twisted planet might be able to see him for who he truly was and love him because of it, not despite it.”

Even after a long hiatus between stories, Olivia Cunning has reminded this reader the joy of her sensuous writing style and the love for sexy hawt rock and rollers! Loved this latest installment of the “Exodus End” series and highly recommend!

*Sharing what I love,
Veronica*

Readers note: While this is book 3, it may be read as a stand-alone. Highly recommend the author’s “Sinners on Tour” series as well.

Trust Game

Kitty Thomas

Burlesque Press

E-book

B07KV2FGW2

★★★★★

“I could make you want anything. Play a trust game with me. You’ll see.”

Astrid has been locked in an abusive relationship with her murderous human trafficking husband. A delayed flight causes her untimely arrival at home, interrupting her husband's killer. Feeling elated that her husband is dead and can no longer harm her, she doesn't put up a fight when she's kidnapped. But as time ticks by, Astrid begins to wonder if she's traded one evil for another...

Angel has never once deviated from one of his contract kills. But when he sets eyes on Astrid, there is something about her that calls out to his dominative nature. Angel steals her away and offers her anything if she gives him everything...

In Kitty Thomas' novella, *Trust Game*, Astrid is asked to take a leap of faith with a killer. Within a few short pages, the author lets us peak into a world of "what if's" and "would I's". If you are new to darker romances, this is a great one to kick start your addiction.

Enjoyed and would recommend!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

Unleashed (Beloved of the Beast Book 1)

Abby Gordon

The Wild Rose Press, Inc.

E-book

B01H4JC7MS

☆☆☆☆ 1/2

Amanda Von Steinser has a gift of premonition. While traveling with her family, she gazes into a future that she knows will change all their lives forever. Taught from an early age to hide her gift, Amanda says nothing, but when they find themselves stranded in a blizzard and at the mercy of Baron Wulfgar, Amanda knows her life, as well as those around her, is about to change suddenly. Not all will be pleased with the outcome.

Baron Wulfgar has battled the curse that has plagued his family for years. When he meets Amanda, the beast he's been so desperately trying to hide awakens and recognizes what is his...and will claim at any cost.

This reader devours any and all stories that even hints at a *Beauty & the Beast* theme! Abby Gordon is new to me as an author. When I stumbled upon this story, I knew I had to read it! *Unleashed* did not disappoint! Within a few short pages, I was transported to the wilds of Wulfgar's estate and drawn into a magical romance. Highly recommend this erotic novella and look forward to reading more of this series!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

Blessed or cursed depending on one's perspective,

Special Celebrations at Allensworth

- **Black History Month** (February 9th from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.) This includes a celebration where visitors can interact with docents dressed in period attire. Story tellers bring history alive while entertainers provide song and dance. Guided tours of the park's historic villages are offered.
- **Old Time Jubilee** (May 18th from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.) This is a family day with entertainment in gospel, jazz and drama. Open air markets are there to sell local arts and crafts, all of it historic, some of it appropriately beautiful, and most inexpensive. (My time ran out, as our bus was leaving, but I managed to buy some jewelry.)
- **Juneteenth Celebration.** (June 9th from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.) If you don't know what day this represents, don't feel bad. On the east coast, we never heard of Juneteenth Day. It is the last day of slavery. Though the Emancipation Proclamation had been signed in February, 1863, Texas slave owners ignored it because they needed the free help. It was not until June 19th, 1865, slaves were appraised. Hence, the celebration. At Allensworth, this is another day of full celebration with entertainment, food, and free tours.
- **Annual Rededication** (October 12th from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.) This day is set aside to honor the contribution of slaves and former slaves to the successful development of California. As with other celebrations, they will provide square dancing, historic games with prizes, and arts and crafts. No guided tours on this day, but self-guided tours are allowed.

The buildings available for touring on our day included the church, the library, the general store, and Colonel Allensworth's private home, complete with piano. A bus will take you from one building to the next, but it's easily walkable between the buildings. However, if it's hot, you have to worry about both heat stroke and rattlesnakes.



The Escape Room

Megan Goldin

St. Martin's Press

E-book

978-1250219657

★★★★ 1/2

“Death, after all, was the ultimate equalizer.”

Sara Hall has everything she needs to get her foot in the door to be one of the highly paid financial advisors on Wall Street. Impeccable grades, references from an acclaimed professor, and enough determination to fulfill her dream. But money has a way of changing people, and perhaps there is a reason greed is one of the seven deadly sins. When four colleagues find themselves trapped inside an elevator in what they believe to be a team building exercise in the form of an escape room, the sins of their past link to the clues behind what really happened to Sara Hall.

The Escape Room is a thriller that will cause your heart to race and get the little gray cells working to decipher between the truth and the red herrings the author tosses out to keep the reader guessing as to who is behind this revenge driven game. Highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

Fatal Legislation: A Karina Cardinal Mystery

Ellen Butler

Power to the Pen

E-book

978-0998419350

★★★★★



Karina Cardinal, known to her friends as KC, is a lawyer turned lobbyist who has a way of stumbling into the uncanniest situations. In *Fatal Legislation*, KC goes from assisting a fallen colleague to becoming a person of interest in his death. With the help of her co-worker, Rodrigo, and her FBI agent boyfriend, Mike Finnegan, she's determined to put her amateur sleuthing skills to work and find answers. When other powerful political figures start to have fatal accidents, KC calls upon past alliances, and together they look for the key to unlocking what the deaths all have in common. As the clues come together, KC and Rodrigo find themselves being moved like pawns on a powerful political chess board, and the game they are playing is for the highest of stakes.

Ellen Butler has upped her game with the latest installment of the “Karina Cardinal” mysteries. *Fatal Legislation* speeds along at a pace sure to give the reader thrills, while offering some laugh-out-loud snark between the

MYSTERIES

characters, making this a perfect read for mystery fans. Highly recommend and anxiously await KC's next adventure!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

Murder at the Palace

Margaret Dumas

Henery Press

Trade Paperback

978-1635114638

★★★★ 1/2

Hollywood screenwriter Nora Paige takes over as manager at the Palace, her friend's classic movie theater in San Francisco, when its well-loved manager dies suddenly. This gig is supposed to be a refuge from the reality of her movie star husband's highly public affair with his sexy co-star. Finding a dead body in the ice machine and the ghost of an usherette from the 30's, along with some financial anomalies, present a challenge for this movie buff. Nora must use her classic movie know-how to solve the murders and discover why a killer is still stalking the Palace.

Murder at the Palace is a cozy mystery with an enjoyable emphasis on classic movie lore that will draw in movie buffs. Tidbits about classic movies mesh seamlessly with the ongoing narrative and provide excellent chapter transitions. Nora is clever and likable, her knowledge of movies impressive. Her encounters with the quirky group of employees at the Palace reveal much about herself, the story and the novel's supporting characters. The ghostly angle adds a distinctive supernatural

No Stone Unturned (A Lexi Carmichael Mystery #11)

Julie Moffett

Carina Press

E-book

B07GBB28LZ

★★★★

"We all have a past... The question is, are you going to remain a prisoner to yours?"

Self-proclaimed geek and expert hacker, Lexi Carmichael feels out of her element when it comes to "peopling." Never having been one to know what to say and do, she finds herself lost at her own engagement party. Slash, her fiancée and fellow hacker, is offering the back-up needed to fend off her anxiety. But when secrets from Slash's past start to threaten Lexi, Slash does the unthinkable by leaving her behind and heading to Rome to face the threat head on...and alone.

Lexi can't believe Slash still does not see them as a team. Not one to be left cooling her heels, Lexi instigates an investigation on her own, and what she uncovers has her hopping the first flight to Rome to track down Slash and offer assistance whether he wants it or not.

As the clues of Slash's birth and past secret agent activities start piecing together, Lexi and Slash find themselves in the crosshairs of a powerful enemy...one who is deeply connected within the Vatican and a past Slash can no longer hide.

No Stone Unturned is the 11th installment to the "Lexi Carmichael" mystery series, but the first read for me. Usually when picking up in the middle of a series, I've found myself so lost in all the characters and back story that it was hard to enjoy the current plot. Not the case here! Julie Moffett did an excellent job in the telling of Lexi and Slash's story without bogging down or confusing the mystery in this book. *No Stone Unturned* grabbed and kept my attention from beginning to end! Loved and highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,
Veronica

flavor.

A well-plotted mystery, appealing characters and great pacing make *Murder at the Palace* a very engaging read.

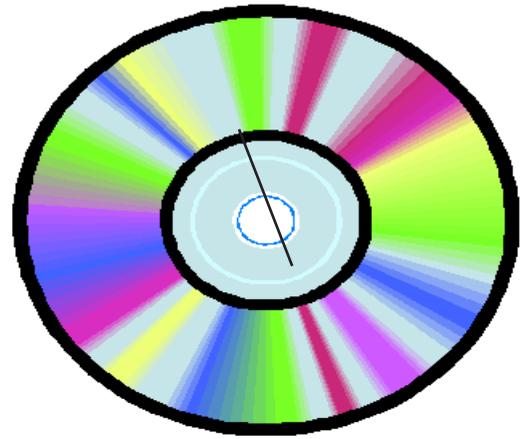
Danielle Hill

Kat Martin continued

impeccable.

No matter his opinion of her, he had once been a close friend of her brother's, a man Michael trusted completely. She needed Chase's help, and she was determined to convince him.

She wouldn't give up until she did.



AUDIO BOOK REVIEW

All the Little Lights

Written by Jamie McGuire

Narrated by Karissa Vacker & Darrell Dennis

Brilliance Audio

11 Audio CDs

978-1543690491

☆☆☆

This is a story of young love between two people who feel like outcasts. Yet, when they are together, the world seems brighter. Elliott Youngblood is a 10-year-old boy who spends the summers with his Aunt, as things at home aren't good. He sees young Catherine and begins to take photographs of her and also around the area. When he returns at 15, they finally talk and he spends many days in an easy friendship with young Catherine, whose home life is weird. As their friendship turns into young love, their bond seems unbreakable until Catherine needs him most, and Elliott is forced to return to his parent's home, leaving her vulnerable. When he returns two years later, he is the star quarterback of the local school and Catherine is angry that he abandoned her. How can he win back Catherine and what really happened two years ago?

This began as a young adult book with half the book focusing on the budding love of the main characters. Then developed into a dark and twisted story that I had trouble finishing. It is hard to describe why I had trouble without giving spoilers, so I will just say that it didn't work for me, but it may work for you.

Letitia

32

Bitter Season

Written by Tami Hoag

Narrated by David Colacci

Brilliance Audio

Unabridged

11 Audio CDs

978-1480598942

☆☆☆

Ted Duffy had been a seasoned, cynical cop who worked the Sex Crimes Unit in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Over the years he had become very good at his job; some actually praised him for his ability to solve crimes. Others, however, thought his constant contact with reprobates and soul-less people with whom he often entangled had, in turn, sullied him, turning him into a man who was lost. Someone even thought he was too tainted to live and put two bullets in him. Unfortunately, there were no forensics, no shell casing, no witnesses. So, the murder of Detective Duffy went unsolved.

Twenty-five years later, the Minneapolis Police Department was the benefactor of a grant, specifically dedicated to the establishment of a Cold Case Unit. Headed by Lieutenant Mascarino Nikki Liska, the Cold Case unit was small--staffed with Liska, who had transferred from the Homicide Unit, and Gene Grider, a retired cop who had been a friend of the deceased officer. He wanted Duffy's case to be their first, even though with the sparsity of forensics, it was unlikely to be solved.

Meanwhile, someone broke into the home of

Audio Book Reviews

Professor Lucien Chamberlain and killed him and his wife with a Samurai sword. The professor had been vying for a department head position at the university, and the list of possible murderers has its origin in the other candidates for the position and his daughter.

Finally, former foster child Evi Burke can't believe her good fortune. In spite of her turbulent childhood, she now has it all—the perfect husband, the perfect child, the perfect job. She keeps waiting for the other shoe to drop. And drop it does, while her husband is away and her job becomes a source of danger for her. Minneapolis P.D. has its hands full. How will it all end?

David Colacci did an acceptable job of narrating this audio book which this reviewer found bogged down by excessive, superfluous scenes that bore no significance. The constant introduction of characters led to confusion and sighs of impatience. This 11-cd audio could have easily been edited down to six or seven cd's without losing any storyline which would have ultimately helped the pacing.

Mildred Burkett

The Girl in the Moss

Written by Loreth Anne White

Narrated by Julie McKay

Brilliance Audio

10 Unabridged CD's

978-1543681178

☆☆☆☆ 1/2

I have not read a more intense thriller in quite a while. Loreth Anne White never fails to supply the reader with plenty of suspense to captivate until the very last pages.

Angie Pallorino is back, trying to move on with her life as a private investigator, after being disgraced, and dismissed, as a local cop. Her lover, newly promoted detective James Maddocks, has planned a much-needed getaway to the woods with Angie to rekindle their relationship. When a skeleton is discovered in the nearby woods, the peace is broken, and the place is soon crowded with cops. Who is this woman in the mossy grove, and how did she get there?

This is just the case that will by establish Angie as a brilliant P.I., and it will bring about parallels to a cold case from her early career. Could it also get her killed in the process?

I was intrigued from the opening scenes and was kept guessing until the dramatic end. Ms. White has a gift for developing fully dimensional characters and placing

them in difficult situations. While the story unfolded, the cast of characters played important parts in this thriller, and the narration by Julie McKay made the storyline flow.

Letitia

The Irresistible Miss Peppiwell (Scandalous House of Calydon #2)

Written by Stacy Reid

Narrated by Anna Parker-Naples

Brilliance Audio

8 CD's

978-1536696219

☆☆☆☆

Phillipa longs for independence and freedom from society's strict limitations and expectations for young women. Her heart is set on not marrying, but traveling and pursuing adventure instead.

Lord Anthony Thornton is a rake who is dealing with a family secret that could ruin him, his younger sister, and anyone associated with him. But he is unable to resist Phillipa who intrigues him.

Phillipa's and Anthony's interactions are emotionally and sexually charged and well developed, as well as their characters. However, surprisingly, some plot developments were needlessly overwrought and drawn out by an inexplicable lack of honesty between them. Further, too often Phillipa's choices and how she treated Anthony seemed inconsistent with the freespirited, independent woman who claimed not to care for or about London society's expectations.

Anna Parker-Naples' narration is engaging and makes listeners feel like they are in the midst of the lives of the characters. Initially, Parker-Naples' narration choice for Phillipa seemed a little strange and disconcerting, but as the story progresses, it turns out that it suits Phillipa's personality and feigned coldness and detachment from others. This historical is a quick, entertaining novel with deft description, pacing, character development, erotic romance, and a bit of nail-biting action.

Letitia

Audio Book Reviews

Maggie's Mistake

Written by Carolyn Brown

Narrated by Sarah Naughton

Brilliance Audio

5 CDs

978-1536628401

☆☆☆☆

Carolyn Brown has penned another compelling historical romance in *Maggie's Mistake*. I laughed and cried throughout listening to these CDs.

Maggie has vowed never to marry a man who cannot dance or laugh, but she gets caught in a compromising situation with the handsome town doctor named Everett Dulanis. Now, Maggie is poor, and everyone thinks she is dumb as a post, including the uppity doctor, Everett. See, Everett is engaged to an Atlanta socialite named Carolina Prescott. She is beautiful, cultured, spoiled, and only thinks of moving up in society. Everett thinks once the shotgun wedding is over, he will file for an annulment, and his future marriage to Carolina will go off as planned.

Things don't fall in with either Maggie's or Everett's plans though, and thus begins a lively story with relatable characters in unusual circumstances. This is a joyful read that I won't soon forget. It puts me in mind of some of my old favorites by Pamela Morsi.

Letitia

Once Haunted, Twice Shy

Written by H.P. Mallory

Narrated by Kate Rudd

Brilliance Audio

7 CD's

978-1491529102

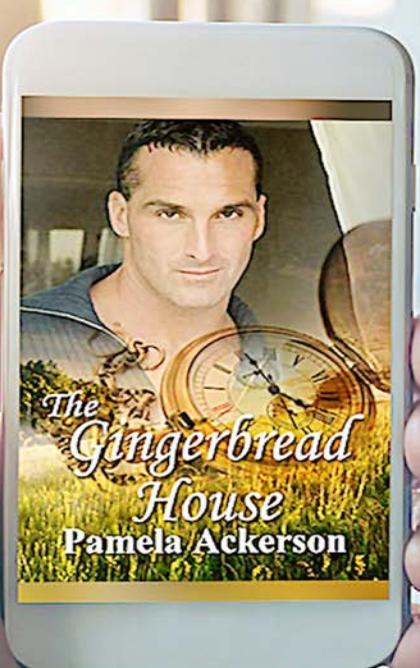
☆☆☆

As a Peyton Clark series, *Once Haunted, Twice Shy* has Peyton agreeing to let the spirit of the lothario, Drake Montague, inhabit her head. But she must find a way to explain to her boyfriend Ryan.

Supernatural forces are at play in New Orleans, and something wicked has come to town. It will take a little magic and some voodoo to uncover the fact that the spirit of the demon, Axeman, still dwells in her home. Peyton will have to travel back a century to keep history from repeating itself.

This was a cute and lighthearted paranormal of spirits and demons, ready to take readers on a journey where good battles evil and good wins the day. The characters were well developed and the sense of time and place was well represented. For fans of light paranormal romances, this is sure to please.

Letitia



**Meet Actor/Model
John Antorino**

**Book Obsessed Babes
Book Signing Event**

**Mark Lance Armory
190 San Marco Ave.
St. Augustine, Fl
March 9, 2019
12:00 to 4:30**

Facebook.com/BookObsessedBabes

Booty from the Other Genre



The Escape Room

Megan Goldin

St. Martin's Press

E-book

978-1250219657

★★★★1/2

"Death, after all, was the ultimate equalizer."

Sara Hall has everything she needs to get her foot in the door to be one of the high paid financial advisors on Wall Street. Impeccable grades, references from an acclaimed professor, and enough determination to fulfill her dream. But money has a way of changing people, and perhaps there is a reason greed is one of the Seven Deadly Sins. When four colleagues find themselves trapped inside an elevator, in what they believe to be a team building exercise in the form of an escape room, the sins of their past link to the clues behind what really happened to Sara Hall.

The Escape Room is a thriller that will cause your heart to race and get the little gray cells working to decipher between the truth and the red herrings the author tosses out to keep the reader guessing as to who is behind this revenge driven game.

Highly recommend!

Sharing what I love,

Veronica

Summoned to the Thirteenth Grave (Charley Davidson Series -Book 13)

Darynda Jones

St. Martin's Press

Hardcover

978-1250149411

★★★★

Grim Reaper Charley Davidson was banished from Earth for all eternity. But, inexplicably, she is released after one hundred years, or maybe it was only ten days. Who can say? Charley doesn't know how or why she was freed. She's just happy to be back in the arms of her husband, Reyes Farrow, son of Satan. Back home, Charley discovers that a hell dimension has opened up and is spreading. If it's not stopped, it will consume the entire world in a few days.

Luckily, while Charley was in the other dimension, she learned that to close a hell dimension she needs to find out what really happened to her mother. What's to know? Charley's mother died giving birth to her. Charley asks the only surviving witness, her Uncle Bob, for details and he lies. Why would Bob lie when his knowledge could save the world? And more importantly, can Charley persuade him to tell the truth before it's too late?

This is a disappointing conclusion to a very good series. Happily, it does leave open the possibility of a spinoff series starring the main characters' daughter. It is imperative that one read the previous books before starting this one. The sacrilege of the hero's family lineage will be off-putting to some readers.

Sheila Griffin

Happy Valentine's Day

