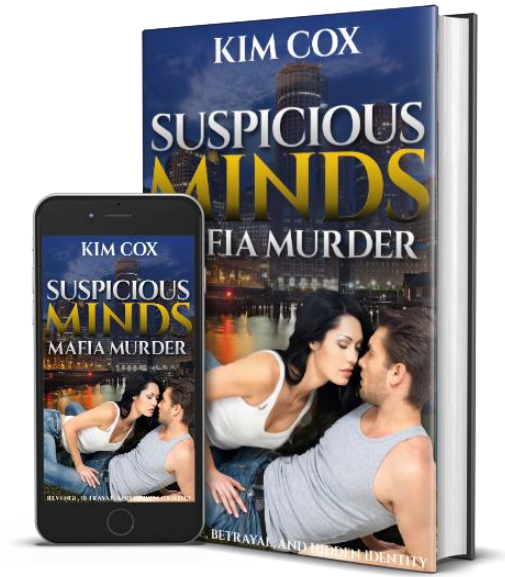


SUSPICIOUS MINDS

Betrayal, Revenge, and Hidden Identity



KIM COX

~ ~ ~

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DEDICATION

*To my critique partners
who have suffered through revision after revision:
Elaine H., Sher T., Liz D., Nancy L, and Sue P.*

*To my husband, Lee,
who never stopped believing in me.*

*And to my parents
from whom I get my stubbornness
and determination, and who will only
see this from heaven.*

*Last but not least,
to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ
for giving me the talent to
pull this off.*

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Prologue

"Is that her?" Detective Walsh asked, talking around the wad of gum in his mouth.

Ryan Donatelli tugged at the neck of his old football jersey while he looked everywhere but at the body on the steel examination table. The morgue walls were closing in on him. "I don't know." Even to him, his voice sounded tinny and far off. "Shelley's small, but this woman seems much smaller. It's hard to say." The obvious resemblance struck him, but he looked for any reason he could to deny it.

"Dehydration from the burns," the gray-haired coroner said. "It changes the facial appearance."

Ryan glanced up and noticed the older man's immense nose and his astonishing resemblance to the comedian and singer, Jimmy Durante.

The detective shrugged. "Well, if you can't be sure, I guess we'll just have to— Wait a minute! What about this?" Walsh removed a small envelope from his jacket pocket and extracted a plastic bag containing a necklace that had been tagged for evidence.

Ryan's stomach spasmed. Acid scorched his throat. Every conscious thought screamed denial, yet his trembling hand reached for the bag. Under the fluorescent lights, the ruby pendant glowed like a hot ember. He squeezed it in his palm, trying to feel its pulsing warmth—like the warmth of Shelley's smile.

Oh, God! It was as cold as the body on the table.

"You okay?" The detective's voice was muffled.

Ryan wanted to laugh at the stupidity of the question, but at this moment, mirth was a foreign emotion to him.

With his index finger, he traced the outline of the small stone before turning it over to read the inscription he knew he would find. Unshed tears blurred his vision, but there it was. *Happy B-day, Love, R.*

"It's Shelley," he said and turned away. He could no longer deny the evident truth, or hang onto the tiniest thread of hope that this was a terrible mistake.

Sweet, stubborn Shelley, his baby sister. She'd never argue politics, movies or anything mundane as the weather again. Shelley loved to challenge him. She'd made him think in new ways and consider new options. What would he do without her?

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Chapter 1

"Al, I need a favor." Natalie Southard bit her lower lip, uncertain if she was doing the right thing. Her crazy scheme could get them both fired.

"What? Working overtime on a Friday night isn't favor enough? By the way, this report isn't due for another week. You do realize we're the only ones still working, don't you?" Alyson McCormick sighed as she leaned back into the soft, tufted leather chair, her arms and legs stretched out in front of her.

"Working on this report was just an excuse to stay busy until everyone left. Now it's time for the real favor." Natalie flipped the off switch on her computer, smiled at Alyson and walked across the plush carpet to the office door. She poked her head into the hallway and scanned its length for signs of activity. No lights shone from the dozen other offices lining the wide corridor. The only audible sound was the soft hiss of the air-conditioning.

Convinced they were indeed alone, but still cautious, Natalie closed her office door before turning back to Alyson.

"Remember what I told you about DeMarco, that investor of my father's?"

"Yes. But I still don't understand why you're suspicious. Your father's too shrewd a businessman to get involved with a scam artist."

"Like I said before—gut instinct and the media. DeMarco's been on the news and in the papers. He's been arrested for everything from illegal gambling to murder. Mark my words. He has his own agenda. I'm sure of it. I just need proof."

"But he's never been convicted." Alyson squinted. Worry lines furrowed over her dark brows. "Oh, no! You've got that look in your eyes. The 'I'm Ethel and you're Lucy' look. What harebrained scheme are you planning now?"

Natalie smiled in spite of the serious situation. Alyson knew her so well. "I do have a plan, but there's nothing harebrained about it. You're right about my father being shrewd. He's never accepted anyone or

anything at face value. It's a safe bet he's done a background check on DeMarco, and stashed the information in a file. I'm going to find that file. Tonight."

Alyson's jaw dropped. "Are you crazy? Spying on your own father?"

She knew Alyson was on the verge of giving her a strong lecture on the subject of family trust and loyalty, so Natalie jumped in to stop her. "I'm not spying on my father. Just DeMarco. Are you with me on this or not?"

"But your father told you to back off. I know we used to sneak around and do things behind our parents' backs. We're grown now. Since loyalty is a big issue around here, shouldn't we abide by it?" Alyson smoothed the wrinkles from her too-short skirt, pushing it down her thighs as far as she could. Her slim figure and petite height forced her to buy her clothes from the young miss department.

Was Natalie being fair in asking for her friend's help? Over the years, the two of them had been involved in some wild antics and spontaneous adventures, but none of them had ever had more serious consequences than a slap on the wrist or a tongue-lashing from an irate parent.

At best, rifling her father's private files after she had been warned to back off could have her banished from the company. At worst, if her suspicions about DeMarco proved valid, she could end up chained to a rock at the bottom of the Charles River.

It wasn't too late to send Alyson home. "In or out?"

"Okay, okay. Where do I come in?" Alyson's voice sounded weary and resigned as she pushed blonde bangs away from her eyes.

"You don't have to do much. Really." Natalie's pulse raced with apprehension. She slid her fingers along her desk's smooth edge before meeting Alyson's gaze. With a tissue, she wiped imaginary dust from her fingertips, then cleared her throat.

"I want you to stay in my office, lights out and the door ajar just far enough to view the hallway. If you see anyone coming toward father's office, dial extension 121. Let it buzz once and hang up. *Comprenez?*"

"Hey, just like a real private eye or secret agent movie. Just call me *Le Femme Nikita* from now on."

"Then you'll do it?"

"Sure, but you owe me."

"What do you want?" God only knew what Alyson would demand. It could be anything from scuba diving to bungee-jumping.

"To be your maid-of-honor."

"That's jumping the gun just a bit, don't ya think?"

"Maybe, but that's what I want."

Natalie rolled her eyes. "All right."

She left Alyson at the door and continued on her mission. She wasn't sure why she was tiptoeing on the sky-blue carpet. Her father owned the building, and she should be walking down the corridor like the heiress apparent. But being sneaky made everything seem eerie. Spooky, even.

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Chapter 2

With every step, Natalie's heart pounded harder. She could almost hear each beat. Even the walls creaked, as if warning her to mind her own business.

Well, this was her business as well as her father's. The stock certificates bearing her name made it so. If it weren't for her father's overbearing ways and lack of trust in her, she wouldn't have to snoop. All her life, he had demanded to know her every move, who she went out with and what she did. How ironic that she was now the one asking those same questions of him.

At this point, she feared he was now running the business, her inheritance, into the ground. She couldn't tolerate him consorting with a mobster like DeMarco. She had to find out what their relationship amounted to—what part DeMarco played in the company. Of course, the all-powerful Sam Southard was as closed-mouthed as ever about his business dealings.

She turned her head toward every sound, shifting her eyes left, then right. She finally made it to the door without making a sound. A year took less time to pass than it took to venture to her father's office. The thrill was definitely gone, replaced by raw fear.

Reaching into her pocket, she pulled out Sam's spare set of keys—the ones she'd snatched a few days ago from a hook in the closet of his study.

Natalie's hands shook. She couldn't get the key into the hole. The keys jingled against the door. The sound surely echoed throughout the building. She steadied them with her free hand and unlocked the door. It squeaked as she pushed it—a high, unnerving sound. Had anyone been on the tenth floor, they'd have certainly heard the racket.

She shut the door lightly behind her and leaned against it. After a moment, her eyes adjusted to the moonlit room. Where should she search first?

The file cabinet on the right side of the wall looked like as good a place to start as any. She reached for the small flashlight in her pocket but decided the moon filtering through the window provided enough brightness for her to rifle through the contents. When she pulled the drawer open, it squealed as if in pain.

Is all this noise for real or is it in my mind?

Natalie checked each of the files, drawer by drawer, and found nothing relating to DeMarco. Her father's desk was orderly, not covered with loose papers like hers. *Mr. Neat Freak*. Natalie preferred an environment that showed she actually worked for a living, instead of ordering others around as her father did.

Natalie's thoughts wandered as she methodically searched Sam's files—a task requiring only half her brain. Worse, he never gave her mother a moment's rest. He made her wait on him and clean up after him as if she were his favorite slave. And the verbal abuse he showered on the woman belittled her in every way possible. She jerked the next drawer open with too much force and it banged against the cabinet interior in protest.

Why did she stay with him? For that matter, why did Natalie stick around? For her inheritance? No, not that alone, though it was part of it. She wanted to protect her mother from him as best she could. There was no telling what he'd say or do should Natalie leave for good.

If it weren't for the prospect of running Southard and Southard someday, she'd take her pretty little diploma in finance to another brokerage firm. And she'd get an apartment in New York City where the real action is if she knew her mother would be safe.

She even suspected Sam of physically abusing her mother, but she couldn't prove it and Elizabeth wouldn't admit that to anyone—especially her own daughter. An occasional bruise surfaced from time to time, either covered by a thick layer of makeup, or in a spot not easily seen with a casual glance.

Natalie cleared her head of all thoughts. This wasn't the time to contemplate her dysfunctional family's problems. However, it did relieve the slight guilt she felt over her actions. She concentrated on searching the desk.

All the drawers were unlocked but one. Looking through the center drawer, she found a letter opener. Careful not to scratch the polished wood, she tried to slip the lock. No luck.

Breaking and entering wasn't her forte.

Why couldn't she get it open? The movies made it seem so easy.

Her silk blouse stuck to her underarms. Darkness suddenly cloaked her like a blanket. She jumped. Then she glanced around and over her shoulder. The sky had turned dark. Rain clouds overshadowing the moon made it impossible to see.

Natalie was reluctant to use the flashlight if she could avoid it. She searched the desk top for something else—something she could use to pick the lock.

This idea had been nuts from the get-go. Why hadn't Alyson stopped her?

She spread her hands out along the cool desk, feeling for anything that would help. Finally, she encountered a paperclip. She unfolded it and straightened it to its full length. Just as she put it in the keyhole, the phone buzzed. Startled, Natalie's hand shook uncontrollably, the paperclip slipped from her fingers and fell to the floor.

Not now! She replaced the letter opener and left the paperclip where it lay. She'd retrieve it later. Heavy footsteps stopped outside the door. Someone jiggled the knob. Panicking, Natalie looked around the room for cover.

The washroom would hide her. *No, that wouldn't be a wise move.* She guessed the intruder was Albert Lawrence, her father's vice-president.

He always snooped around and listened to the conversations of the other employees. Then she would overhear him passing on the information to Sam. When her father left town, his right-hand man took the helm and took it seriously.

What if office-spy Albert needed to use the bathroom? Even if she found a place out of sight, she would still have a view of him. At the thought of his bare bottom, a chuckle erupted from her throat. *I'm doomed!*

Natalie slipped into the closet. She closed the door just as the outer office door creaked open. Sucking in a huge breath of air, she hadn't considered her claustrophobia. *Too late.* The darkness closed in on her. With the door shut and only a thread of light to guide her to the back of the closet, she tried to squelch her panic.

Perspiration beaded her forehead and upper lip. Since there was no way to avoid it, she gritted her teeth and ducked down behind her father's golf clubs, just in case nosy Albert decided to open the door.

Remembering the small flashlight, she retrieved it from a pocket and held her hands around it. She sighed in relief when the light splashed into the back of the closet. Thank God, it wasn't powerful enough to shine under the door. But she kept it raised high, behind her father's overcoat, just to be sure.

Her mind shifted to the contents of the small space to take her thoughts away from her enclosure. Extra shirts starched to a T and a couple of suits hung at the top of the closet. On the floor were Gucci loafers and golfing shoes. A golf bag sat on the floor in front of her. The closet smelled just like Sam's Aramis cologne.

She heard drawers open and shut. Someone else searched her father's office tonight. *Who could it be?* Not Albert—he was privy to all his boss's secrets. Besides, Albert would turn on a light. No—this was someone else, someone who didn't want his activities noticed.

She couldn't stand the suspense a moment longer. She had to see what was going on.

Natalie inched forward until her right eye lined up directly with the closet door's keyhole. At first, she only saw darkness. Shifting a little more to her left, she caught glimpses of light flashing around the room.

But it wasn't enough. She had to see more. She cracked the door just enough to see him better. The weather was on her side. Moonlight once again splashed over the desk and the back of the trespasser. His silhouette only confirmed he wasn't Albert. This man was younger, more muscular and much more graceful.

A burglar?

The intruder lay the flashlight atop the desk and rested it against the small crystal bowl that held assorted paperclips. Picking up the phone from its cradle, he positioned it in front of the light where he disassembled it, unscrewing the cover from the mouthpiece. Her heart pounded hard. Air caught in her lungs and a pain shot through her rib cage. Who was this intruder? Did she dare emerge from her hidey-hole to challenge him?

He reassembled the phone. Why in the world would he want to bug her father's phone? This was making less and less sense. Maybe it was one of DeMarco's men. Turning to face the closet, his light flashed into Natalie's eyes, blinding her momentarily. She dropped her keys. They hit the floor with a jingle.

He dropped his flashlight. *Oh, no!* He had to know she was there. Not moving, he appeared to listen carefully as he cocked his head to one side. She didn't dare move. She held her breath. The stranger squatted to pick up the flashlight.

Natalie gasped as he started toward the closet. When he flung open the door, the automatic bulb illuminated the small space. She jumped to her full height, coming face to face with her boyfriend's bearded face.

"Thomas!"

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Chapter 3

After the initial shock of finding Natalie hiding in the closet, he grabbed her by one arm and hauled her out.

"Thomas Randolph, let go of me right now!"

"Thought we agreed you'd call me Tom. What were you doing in there?" Keeping a hold on her, he slammed the door and pulled her toward the desk.

Natalie yanked free of his grip and tidied her blouse. "Me? This is my father's office. What are you doing here?" Her voice trembled as she walked behind the desk, distancing herself from him. With fists clenched by her sides, her mouth formed a grim line.

Ryan raked his hand through his hair and sighed inwardly. What could he say? The truth? Not now, she'd never understand. Boy, was she mad. Was that smoke coming from her nostrils?

"Well? I'm waiting for your explanation."

Imaginary fire shot from her green-eyed glare causing them to sparkle all the more. *What a tiger!* It had to be a sin to look that good under any circumstances. He'd better say something or any minute she might call the cops. The cops weren't his problem, though old man Southard would be if he learned Ryan had been snooping in his office. Or Tom, as they knew him.

She folded her arms. Her breasts jiggled from the abrupt movement. The rise and fall of her chest told him she was angry. But why would she be?

He tried to hold back, but his lips tightened in defiance. Angering her further could prove to be a bad move; especially if he wanted to convince her to help him.

Finally, he opened his mouth to speak. "I'm..." He rounded the desk, closing the space between them. Without the barrier of the desk, he felt more sure of himself, more charming.

Her throat moved as she swallowed and stepped back. Was he making her uneasy? He liked that. It meant they shared the same feelings. She got to him in ways he never imagined.

Then she looked up into his eyes.

It was time to act. "Me? Why were you hiding in the closet?" It was a cop-out, he knew.

She turned her back on him and walked to the window. "I'm asking the questions here."

Her reflection shone in the glass window overlooking the city. Long black hair, usually worn in a classy twist during work, now flowed around her shoulders like a silk cape. He wanted to slide his fingers through it, test its satiny softness, but he didn't dare. Not with Natalie so upset.

He followed her, looked where she looked and tried to figure out what interested her so much outside. The offices in all the neighboring buildings were dark, and the streets practically empty, indicating the lateness of the hour.

His laughter rang out into the quiet room.

She turned around as if ready to pounce. "What's so funny?"

"You. You act angry. But you're the one who hid in your father's closet. Then you demand to know my purpose for being here."

"I have my reasons. Besides, I'm Sam Southard's daughter. I have every right to be here. You don't."

His smile faded. He fingered his beard with speculation. "I'm suspicious of DeMarco." All sarcasm was now gone from his tone. Part of the truth came out at last. Lying wasn't his strong suit.

An odd, disturbed look clouded the depths of her eyes at the mention of the name. "Did you think he'd be hiding inside the phone you took apart and put back together?"

"I was checking for bugs." His body tensed. Had he answered too quickly?

"Why would DeMarco bug..." She furrowed her brows.

"Nat, I've done research. DeMarco's one bad dude. If he has any interest in Southard and Southard, you can bet he's got some way of knowing everything that's going on. Money is the most important thing to this man. He'll stop at nothing to get it, then control it."

"So? Was there?"

"Was there what?"

"Was there a bug?"

"Yes." He had to tell the truth. If he said no and she checked the phone after he left, she'd know he lied. And she would think he put the bug there. Which he did, but Nat didn't have to know that.

"Did you take it out?"

"No. If I do, he'll know someone's onto him. But there's another possibility, too."

"And that is?"

When he placed his hands on her upper arms, a heated blush crept across her cheeks. She tried to wiggle free. "Look at me," he said, lifting her chin with the tip of his finger. "He probably has an informant, a plant, working here."

He clenched his jaw at the apparent lack of concern on her face. When she turned away from him, his hand froze in mid-air, still warm from where he'd held her chin.

Natalie sauntered closer to the window and ran a finger along the cold edge of its frame.

A chill ran down his spine as a new fear coursed through his veins. Could she be in with her father and DeMarco? After all, this was a family business. Sam had probably taught his daughter ruthlessness from the cradle.

If that were true, the circumstances had just become much more dangerous. He would be alone in his pursuit. Though he'd started out using her for his own gain, had he been the one being used all along?

She faced him again. "I appreciate your help. But this is my problem, not yours. I don't need your help."

She came off as tough, but was she? Suddenly, he wanted to break down the barriers she was building. He wanted to possess her and prove she was on his side.

"Your problem is mine." His arms slipped around her slender waist and pulled her to him. His head slanted downward, his lips spreading. She inhaled a deep breath as her lips parted, inviting him to follow through.

"No!" Without warning, Natalie pushed against his chest with a force that made him take a step backward. Concern etched her eyes. "I can take care of myself. After all, I'm a Southard. My father has taught me well."

Wasn't that a clue? Although she pretended to be against DeMarco, it sounded more and more like she wanted all the power he could give her.

"I'm sure he has, honey. But this is a totally different ball game. You don't know what you're getting yourself into." *Or did she?*

She smiled. An eyebrow lifted. "I get it now. You think if you unearth the truth, show Sam just how DeMarco's taking advantage of him, you can take all the credit. And in my father's eyes, you'll be the company's savior, his golden boy."

"You've got it all wrong."

"Do I now?" She licked her lips and continued her attack. "I've seen how you cozy up to old Sam—at his beck and call. He rates you up there with the son he never had. The superhero of this company."

"You don't mean that."

"No? I've suspected you from that first day when you charmed yourself into a job here."

"Last night, when you told me how concerned you were... Well, I wanted to help out. Thought I'd come over here and try to find some information that would help you. At least now you know the phone is bugged."

"I'd eventually found that myself if you hadn't interrupted me. Look, Tom, you're a broker just like I am, not a cop. There's nothing more you can do that I can't."

"But I'm..." he began, then stopped. The truth would only put a bigger wedge between them. And he definitely didn't want that. Not yet. At least, not until he found out exactly whose side she was on.

Yes, he needed to stay close to her. Whether she was in it up to her slender, sexy neck or after DeMarco's hide didn't matter. Either side she chose could lead him to what he needed to know.

"What? I know you weren't going to say the difference is that you're a man." She laughed. "You really need to come up with a better reason than that."

"That's not what I was going to say." *If she only knew*. Soon, he would tell her—if she proved innocent. Maybe then she would understand. But not now.

"Really? Then what? What were you going to say?"

He knew his silence only confirmed what she was saying. He thought her nothing more than a weak, little thing who needed the protection of a big, strong man. Let her think whatever she wanted. Anything was better than the truth for now.

Her jealousy act was just that—an act to distance herself from him. He would let her have her way for now.

"What's wrong?" He had to change the direction of her anger. If that meant allowing her to think him a chauvinist, then so be it. "You and I both know you'd do better with a man along to help keep you safe."

"You arrogant..." Natalie marched to the door and opened it. "Just leave."

He pivoted to go, but turned again to face her. "I'll leave for now. Let me know when you're ready to listen to reason."

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LANA MALLOY PARANORMAL MYSTERY SERIES



This series is also considered a cozy mystery, romance, and humorous at times.

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Reader Review Quotes for Haunting Lana:

"This story was interesting to read as Lana's special gift becomes known and she tries to come to grips with it. The appearance of Lana's dead aunt increases the suspense and fun. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this short story and look forward to future books featuring Lana."

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In Book 1 - **HAUNTED HEARTS**, Lana sets out to solve her first case—the twenty-year-old cold-case and double murder of her great aunt and her great aunt's fiancé. If she succeeds, they'll spend eternity

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"If you're looking for a mystery filled with paranormal suspense, look no further than Kim Cox's Haunted Hearts. Lana Malloy can talk to ghosts. A bit reminiscent of "Ghost Whisperer", which is a show I LOVED, Haunted Hearts has characters that just jump off the page."

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"A spine-tingling psychological thriller with a twist showcases Kim Cox's talents as she introduces Lana Malloy with her Paranormal PI Business Malloy Investigations."

"This episode has Lana trying to exorcise a ghost who haunts the descendants of a partner who cheated him. Get Out or Die does not have the quirky characters I enjoyed in Cox's first book in the series, Haunted Hearts. Instead, Lana deals with the problems of a working woman struggling to have time for romance."

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"I love the Lana Malloy character as well as all the other characters, both living & dead. Besides Lana, my favorites are Tony & Aunt Lucy. It was a fascinating story showing how tragic events in a child's life can influence their adulthood. If you like Paranormal Romantic mysteries, I highly recommend this book."

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Reader Review Quotes for Christmas Cruise:

"A Ghostly and Murderous Cruise and a Delicious Who Dun It - A paranormal mysteries series! Good going. Lana Malloy is a psychic and sensitive mystery solver who tries to help all the ghosts she encounters, and there's plenty."

"A mixture of a love story and a ghost story. The author blended to two in such a way to hold the reader's attention. Easy read and well-developed story line."

"This is a lovey story full of mystery, suspense and romance. This would make a great holiday read, especially if it's near Christmas and you love seasonal books. The characters are well-written, and I really enjoyed the story. I have read other books by this author and would buy more in the future."

"I thoroughly enjoyed this story. There is enough description to really feel the tension and fear, but not so detailed as to turn one's stomach. I have already read the next book in the series, along with the previous ones, and I think this is the best of the five."

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In Book 5, **HAUNTED BY HER PAST**, a very pregnant Lana is put on bed rest by her doctor, but that doesn't stop the visions of those in trouble who need her. She has two visions of women in abusive relationships. What does it mean? From where and when will a spiritual connection come?

Lana's health and pregnancy are at stake if she doesn't stay in bed ... but she can't ignore her visions or someone in need.

Can she find a way to stay safe and help save a young woman's life?

Reader Review Quotes for Haunted by Her Past:

"Wow, author takes a very delicate issue and provides an awesome support circle for Jena. She was a nice surprise and I look forward to her addition to this series. Lucy is still on the job, lol. - I felt sorry for Jena and all she had to go through with Bryon but I was uplifted by all the happy, special, heartwarming moments intertwined throughout this tale. Another great addition to the series!!"

"What a powerful book, scenes so intense I felt I was there in the room with furniture flying but so poignant was the conversation between the mother and son spirits my heart was breaking a bit."

It's so easy to walk away and close our eyes to abuse but here is Lana stuck on bed rest seeing these visions of abuse and she just has to help. A quick call to her BFF gets the ball rolling."

"What a great story! Lana has to deal with a very aggressive and angry ghost while on bed rest! She's ready to have her baby anytime and she can't not do something to help! This book takes you through a maze of feelings and emotions!"

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Other ways to buy:

Box Sets and Combined Books:

Lana Malloy Paranormal Mystery I (includes Haunting Lana, Haunted Hearts, and Get Out or Die)

[EBOOK](#) [PAPERBACK](#) [HARDCOVER](#)

Lana Malloy Paranormal Mystery II (includes The Wedding Crasher and Christmas Cruise)

[EBOOK](#) [PAPERBACK](#) HARDCOVER: Coming soon!

NOVELETTE



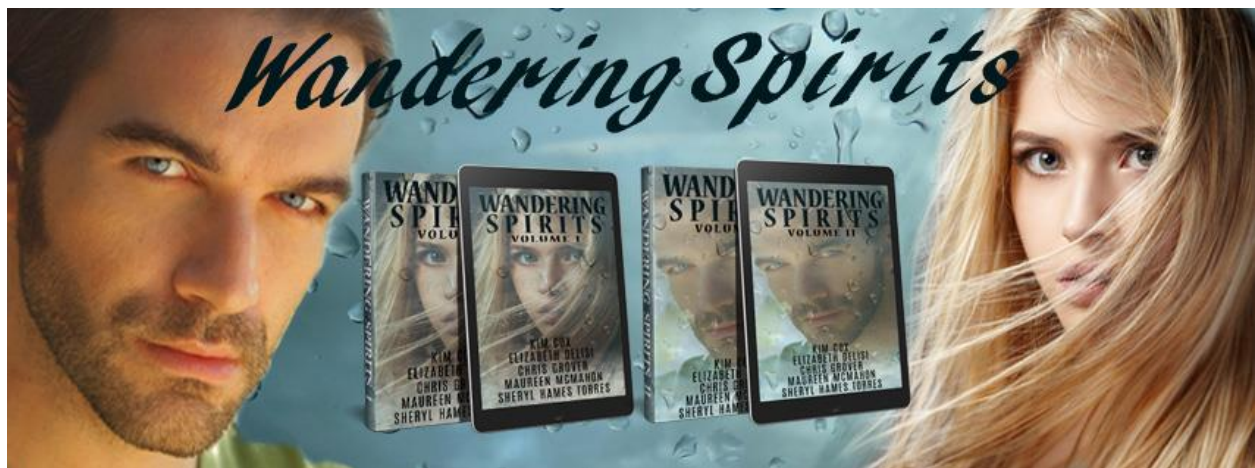
Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
1 Corinthians 13:7 (ESV)

Twenty-eight-year-old, Madison Barrett, and her husband, Eric, decide it's time to start a family? She's young. She's healthy—until she gets news no woman wants to hear . . .

Readers who enjoy women's fiction full of emotion will love Love's Endurance.

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ANTHOLOGIES



Wandering Spirits I – Blurb

Romance, mystery, danger and paranormal encounters...

The romances are gentle and subtle in the background, yet never taking a back seat to the plot.

HAUNTED HEARTS (condensed) by Kim Cox

Two ghosts, a hysterical neighbor and the handsome nephew of her aunt's fiancé and you get a mix bag of comical events. Lana Malloy embarks on a new career as a private investigator. She must solve the forty-year-old murder of her great aunt and her great aunt's fiancé or they will remain Haunted Hearts.

RESTLESS SPIRIT by Elizabeth Delisi

Desperate to talk to her young son, who died from a rare, incurable blood disease, Laura St. Clair uses a Ouija board to try to reach him. But when she makes contact with the spirit world and receives a message, whom has she reached? And what does the spirit want in return for helping her?

VALENTINE'S INN by Chris Grover

After being badly injured in an auto accident, which killed three of her friends, Rianna Gordon has given up on life. Then she meets Josh Byford, unaware that Josh is a ghost. Rianna is a lawyer not a hotelier, but rather than sell the country inn her family has owned for over a hundred years, Josh not only convinces her to reopen and run it, he finds her the perfect partner as well--the boy she fell in love with when she was nine years old and never quite forgot.

GHOSTS OF AULD LANG SYNE by Maureen McMahon (Stacey Christian & Peter Mansfield: Book 2)

The second book of the series after Return of the Gulls, Stacey Christian and Peter Mansfield reunite in Ghosts of Auld Lang Syne to celebrate New Year with friends at a remote New England homestead. Are the terrifying incidents that befall the guests really only accidents? And why does the spectre of a young woman walk the halls?

FATE'S LITTLE TRICK by Sheryl Hames Torres

Gemma McKenzie Fuller must put aside her fears and help someone from her past. Can a troubled child teach her that going back again could possibly be a Christmas miracle?

MEETING MR. WRIGHT by Chris Grover

Vicki figured the dream was simply a spin-off of her bedtime reading. She had no idea it was a prediction of things to come.

The five authors of the Wandering Spirits I Anthology have delivered a sure-fire winner for year-round reading enjoyment.

If you love stories with paranormal twists and sentimental romances, you'll enjoy curling up with Wandering Spirits I.

[BUY NOW!](#)

Wandering Spirits II – Blurb

GET OUT OR DIE by Kim Cox

When Lana Malloy helps a young widow communicate with her late husband, she learns of a frightening new ability — an ability that could give the spirit the upper hand. Knowing this next case will be more difficult than anything she's ever faced, Lana struggles for control when she encounters an angry ghost who doesn't want to leave and who doesn't want the occupants of the house to stay. Does she have other abilities she can rely on to save her?

LUCIFER'S LAST LAUGH by Elizabeth Delisi

When Kirk Marsden falls overboard from his yacht, he thinks he's dreaming when confronted by a scary-looking man in red, with a silver pitchfork stickpin. Lucifer offers Kirk a deal: he won't go to Hell if he can reveal his true inner self to one person who genuinely cares about him. But how can a rich man find someone who likes him for himself, not his money?

BELIEVING IN DREAMS by Chris Grover

Nicole James has always believed in dreams. So, after her mom dies and she dreams about a house she's seen in an old photo and an elderly woman who beckons to her and says "Nicole! Finally! I was so worried you wouldn't get here in

time," she has to check it out.

'NEATH HALLOWED HALLS AND IVIED WALLS by Maureen McMahon (Stacey Christian & Peter Mansfield: Book 3)

Stacey Christian and Peter Mansfield come together again to attend the funeral of their beloved Harvard history professor, Bertram Donelson. Stacey's emotional stint as a reporter in Afghanistan and Peter's exhausting high-profile business takeover make them even more vulnerable to the romantic chemistry that's always been between them.

Little do they know their old alma mater holds an evil and deadly secret that will propel them into a whirlwind of ghostly, shocking, and even deadly experiences. Will this adventure be enough to finally bring their love to fruition?

ENIGMA by Sheryl Hames Torres

Brace Adams struggles to solve the mystery of a blind woman who wakes up beside a brutally murdered man but has no memory of how she got there. Can he protect Riley from the forces surrounding her without losing his life?

Readers who enjoy a paranormal romance that is well-written, carefully plotted, and has well-developed characters, will love Wandering Spirits II.

SPECIAL: Recipes from Chris Grover

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DREAM, CONQUER, AND LOVE

Four sweet and clean contemporary romance short stories.

A DREAM COME TRUE (The first short story in the Second Chances series)

Miriam Alexander takes a vacation to Cancun and gets the surprise of her life. Her daughter, Kaitlin, has been playing matchmaker. Can she give her heart to Rhett Yancey again after he stomped on it the first time?

IN HIS ARMS (The second short story in the Second Chances series)

Julia and Edward (Ed) White have been estranged for a couple of years. Ed's lack of support he gave her as an author, calling her romances, "Not real writing" was the leading cause of their separation. Now Julia has a new editor who wants multiple changes on a book that's to be release in just a few months. On the plane to New

York City for a meeting with her editor, who does she run into, Ed of all people.

Ed realizes that he was jealous of his wife's success as a writer when he himself couldn't find a publisher for his non-fiction books. Now he has a regular job and wants his wife back.

Can husband and wife rekindle their love, put their differences aside and salvage a marriage that was doomed two years ago?

ALL FOR LOVE

Prequel to Love Conquers All:

Will Carina and Tyler find their way back to each other, or will she turn to an old lover?

Carina and Tyler Anderson are living their dream life. Carina Anderson thinks her life is about as perfect as it can get until Tyler begins acting strangely. When secrets are revealed, Carina's life is blown apart both mentally and physically.

LOVE CONQUERS ALL

Sequel to All For Love:

Carina and Tyler are finally back on track when Javier is up to his old tricks again. He threatens them by playing on their fears and using their own love to turn them against each other.

Readers who love their romance with rich and down-to-earth characters will love Dream, Conquer, and Love.

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