



# The Lady of Bolton Hill

*Elizabeth Camden*

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## **The Lady of Bolton Hill** Elizabeth Camden

Female journalists are rare in 1879, but American-born Clara Endicott has finally made a name for herself with her provocative articles championing London's poor. When the backlash from her work forces a return home to Baltimore, Clara finds herself face-to-face with a childhood sweetheart who is no longer the impoverished factory worker she once knew. In her absence, Daniel Tremain has become a powerful industry giant and Clara finds him as enigmatic as ever. However, Daniel's success is fueled by resentment from past wounds and Clara's deeply-held beliefs about God's grace force Daniel to confront his own motives. When Clara's very life is endangered by one of Daniel's adversaries, they must face a reckoning neither of them ever could have foreseen.

## **The Lady of Bolton Hill Details**

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Author : Elizabeth Camden

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## From Reader Review The Lady of Bolton Hill for online ebook

### Erika B. (SOS BOOKS) says

This would be like a 2.5-3 star rating from me! Three for being somewhat entertaining. I really really wanted to like this book! I tried so dang hard but it was one of those books that just didn't stick with me. I would put it down for weeks at a time and then try again. I think it was because the main character Clara drove me nuts! Seriously she was so annoying! She was VERY preachy and very self-righteous. She is dealing with the villain at one point in the story and he's threatening to kill her and all she can talk about is being born again into Christianity. I just don't find this plausible. If a man was threatening to kill me and dosing me up with opium my first reaction to the situation be something like...AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!! HELP!!!!!! Then I'd use the S.I.N.G defense move on him! (Solarflex, Instep, Nose, Groin) and run away! I think talking about repentance would actually be one of the last things on my mind! But hey! That's just me! It certainly wasn't that way in this story! I haven't given up hope though! I still will attempt Camden's other books to see if they can redeem this one! :)

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### Rachel Brand says

I've read three of Elizabeth Camden's novels and, so far, I think this is probably my least favourite. Given that it's her debut novel, it makes sense that it isn't quite as strong or well-written as her later books. Her writing voice is quite different and more mature in her later novels.

I honestly think that the opening chapters of this book--involving Clara and Daniel as teenagers, and then Clara imprisoned in London--were the strongest in the whole story. They sucked me in and intrigued me immediately, but the ensuing conflicts weren't quite as intriguing as the opening ones. The suspense and mystery in this book definitely kept me turning the pages, and I won't deny that the story is compelling, but the opening chapters were definitely the strongest out of the entire book.

I definitely enjoyed the details about Clara's work as a journalist and the issues with the labour unions, which I haven't come across much before in other novels from this time period. Female journalists certainly weren't all that common at this time, especially ones who delved into gritty issues like the ones Clara wrote about. Labour unions and child labour might not be the most romantic historical details to discuss in a novel, but they were interesting to read about.

While the villain of the story is disconnected from the other characters for the majority of the plot (which is initially a little confusing), he becomes more prominent towards the end of the story. I actually read the sequel to this book, *Against the Tide*, first, and I remember wondering how much of Bane's backstory is dealt with in the first book, since I found the details in the sequel to be rather vague. They're still pretty vague here, to be honest, and I think I probably prefer *Against the Tide* to this book. The second book goes into a lot more details about the opium trade, which I found fascinating.

I think what didn't work for me was the spiritual side of the book. Clara just seemed too pushy towards Daniel (and eventually Bane) to become Christians. I totally understand her concerns about marrying someone who doesn't share your faith (my husband wasn't a Christian when we started dating) but she seemed to approach the issue from a very simplistic manner, almost as if Daniel just needed to be told about Jesus in order to change his mind. It seemed to me that it wasn't that Daniel didn't understand how salvation

worked--he just didn't think he needed anyone to save him because he thought he was in control of his life. I guess maybe it's just a personal thing, having been in a similar position to Clara--I would never have been as pushy as her, and probably would have tried to bring about more organic, realistic conversations about faith, rather than just constantly telling Daniel why he needed to become a Christian.

In spite of these complaints, Daniel's eventual conversion to Christianity felt a lot more realistic than Bane's change of heart. Daniel needed time to come to his own decisions about God and the role he would play in his life, and the gradual changes Daniel made over the course of the book felt believable considering his past attitudes. Bane, on the other hand, shows no signs of wanting to escape his criminal lifestyle until Clara challenges him, and his turnaround felt far too quick for me to believe it genuine. Perhaps if there had been some hints that he wanted to escape his life of crime but couldn't, I would have found this part of the story more realistic.

On another note, I would love to read a book about Clara's brother, Clyde, who works as a doctor for various Native American tribes in remote locations. His disconnect from his family's lavish lifestyle and society's treatment of him definitely intrigued me. I think he's more my kind of hero than either Daniel or Bane! I hope Elizabeth Camden decides to give Clyde his own story some day.

Overall, I have mixed feelings about this book and I think I'd give it 3.5\*. The storyline was certainly interesting and compelling, especially the suspenseful parts, but the spiritual side didn't feel very realistic and was more in-your-face than I usually like in my Christian Fiction. I'm not sure if I would have been so eager to read more of Elizabeth Camden's work if I'd started with this book. *Against the Tide* contains much stronger writing, and *The Rose of Winslow Street* is by far my favourite of her books so far.

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## **Lindsey (Books for Christian Girls) says**

About this book:

*"When Clara Endicott and Daniel Tremain's worlds collide after twelve years apart, the spark that was once between them immediately reignites into a romance neither of them thought possible.*

*But time has changed them both.*

*Daniel is an industrial titan with powerful enemies. Clara is an idealistic journalist determined to defend underprivileged workers.*

*Can they withstand the cost of their convictions while their hearts--and lives--hang in the balance?"*

Series: Connected to the author's other book, *"Against the Tide"*.

Spiritual Content- Scriptures and Biblical events are mentioned, quoted, remembered, & talked about; Prayers; Witnessing; Talks about God, Jesus, Heaven, forgiveness, faiths, salvation, & revenge; 'H's are capital when referring to God; Clara's father is an influential religious leader; Daniel does not consider himself a Christian \*Spoiler\* (view spoiler) \*End of Spoiler\*; Mentions of God; Mentions of prayers & praying; Mentions of churches, church going, services, sermons, ministers, & missionaries; Mentions of Heaven; Mentions of a Christian newspaper; Mentions of Christians, faiths, salvation, & believing; Mentions of a Christian committing suicide and theology beliefs; Mentions of blessings, being blessed, & blessed things; Mentions of sins & sinners; A few mentions of thanking God; A couple mentions of Bible reading; A

mention of someone being a gift from God; A mention of Easter;

\*Note: Mentions of believing there's a devil & doing evil; A few mentions of a woman looking like a Greek goddess; A mention of evil-minded intentions; A mention of ghosts in a building; A mention of an ungodly amount of something; A mention of a godforsaken place; A mention of something hurting like the devil; A mention of a person's demons; A mention of someone burning in hell.

Negative Content- Minor cussing including: a 'dumb', a 'shut up', two 'sissy's, five forms of 'stupid', and six 'idiot's; A mention of a curse (said by Daniel, not written); Some sass & eye rolling; Daniel wants major vengeance and is spiteful to a man because of the past; Being held hostage and at gunpoint & being threatened of being harmed or killed (up to semi-detailed); Fires & Explosions (up to semi-detailed); Pain, Gunfire, Seeing someone shot, Blood/Bleeding, & Injuries (up to semi-detailed); Being drugged & passing out (up to semi-detailed); Being in jail (barely-above-not-detailed); Many mentions of a death (murder, in a way), an explosion, accidents, burns and the smell of flesh, injuries, & wanting vengeance (up to semi-detailed); Many mentions of crimes, criminals, drugs, drug users, drug smugglers, & drug trades;

Mentions of Daniel's mother who committed suicide & finding her (barely-above-not-detailed); Mentions of young child working in unsafe conditions & paying the price with their health (barely-above-not-detailed); Mentions of explosions, gunfire, & wounds (barely-above-not-detailed); Mentions of riots, strikes, public disturbances, violence, vandalism, & fires (barely-above-not-detailed); Mentions of kidnappings & children and adults being drugged (opium); Mentions of blood & injuries; Mentions of jails/prisons, arrests, & cases; Mentions of threats & threats against families (barely-above-not-detailed); Mentions of hatred; Mentions of manipulation; Mentions of starvation; Mentions of alcohol, drinking, & a tavern; Mentions of gossip; A few mentions of another's suicide; A few mentions of the possibility of being killed/executed; A few mentions of dismembering someone/something (doesn't actually happen, used as a cover); A few mentions of wanting to remove someone's limbs; A few mentions of wars & deaths; A few mentions of stealing; A few mentions of blackmail & bribes; A few mentions of bets & betting; A few mentions of lies & lying; A few mentions of throwing up; A few mentions of gutting fishes; A couple mentions of thugs; A couple mentions of throwing someone overboard a ship; A couple mentions of poison; A couple mentions of jealousy; A couple mentions of tobacco; A couple mentions of nightmares;

\*Note: A few mentions of books & fictional characters.

Sexual Content- three (barely-above-not-detailed) hand/finger kisses, three (up to barely-above-not-detailed) cheek kisses, three forehead/head kisses, three barely-above-not-detailed kisses, two semi-detailed kisses (one of those including an ear being nipped), and a boarder-line semi-detailed // detailed kiss; Clara sits in Daniel's lap (not-detailed); Touches, Nearness, & Smelling (up to semi-detailed); Wanting to touch (barely-above-not-detailed); Blushes; Noticing (up to semi-detailed); Mentions of prostitutes & a mother selling her young daughter to a brothel; A few mentions of kisses & kissing; A few mentions of reputations & chaperones; A few mentions of blushes; A few mentions of crushes; A couple mentions of men being called delicious; A couple mentions of a boyfriend; A mention of a man having a mistress; A mention of a man having the worst of intentions with a girl; Love, falling in love, & the emotions;

\*Note: A mention of a woman dress (not) being ripped off; A mention of kissing up to someone.

-Clara Endicott, age 28

-Daniel Tremain, age 31

P.O.V. switches between them & Bane (5x)

Set in 1879 (Prologue in 1867, Epilogue eight+ years later)

334 pages

History, romance, surprise, heartache, a hero with a past, a heroine with a dream, a villain too smart for his own good, thwarted plans, rescue, repentance, misunderstandings, forgiveness, loyalty, fear, courage, ships,

abandoned buildings, happiness, London, music, insanity, family, coffee, (yes, coffee), something even blows up! and -to top it all off- an epilogue like no other! Seriously, you can just **hear** the end credit music crash to life in that tempo that yells "WAIT! There's more!!!"  
And there is! So, if you'll excuse me, "Against the Tide" is waiting.

\*This book does contain some more mature themes and I would not recommend to a younger audience.\*

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### **Lynne Stringer says**

I enjoyed *The Lady of Bolton Hill* very much. I felt it was a little slow to start, and it was certainly quite preachy, although I felt that fitted in with the story.

My biggest complaint was its presentation of the viewpoint that God will always keep you safe. While this may not have been directly what the author was trying to communicate, I think it could be implied by readers, and that is concerning, especially when you consider the many Christians who have died in the service of God over the years. Also, I felt Daniel's change of heart was too abrupt. I think it would have been better if signs of a gradual softening was evident earlier, rather than being led to believe that that much bitterness and ingrained behaviour could be swept away entirely in a week.

In spite of that, it was still a good read.

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### **Joy says**

Daniel and Clara are childhood friends torn apart before their sparks of romance could ignite. When they cross paths twelve years later the heat between them creates an inferno on the page. The romance in *The Lady of Bolton Hill* got so steamy- for a minute there, I thought it might be headed in a whole different direction. Rest assured, we don't cross out of Christian fiction territory, but if you are a fan of edgy inspirational you'll enjoy the romance in this one.

There was much for me to love in this book and I finished it in one sitting. The whole labor and union plot line reminded me a little bit of the series *North and South* and once that image popped into my head, I couldn't help but picture Richard Armitage as Daniel. If I had to cast someone to play the role, he'd soooo be my pick.

If I had one criticism of the novel, it would be that Clara seems to don a Super Christian costume to convert the lost. The reader doesn't actually see spandex, but Clara must have worn it underneath her dress because she wields an unbelievable power of persuasion over the unchurched.

But in my experience a good romance covers a multitude of sticky plot points (or in this case a single sticky plot point). And the romance in *The Lady of Bolton Hill* was very good. If you're anything like me, you'll still be thinking about the tingling in your tummy long after you put the book down.

Elizabeth Camden, welcome to my must read list.

(Thanks to CFBA and the publisher for my review copy)

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## Margaret Metz says

First I have to admit to cover love. I am so shallow that I wanted the book before I knew a thing about it other than it had a gorgeous cover. Thankfully the inside didn't let me down.

One of the wonderful things about historical fiction is all the "issues" they can talk and teach you about. This book had so many things going on that it felt like an action movie. What kept it grounded was the relationship between the characters and the characters themselves.

I may be shallow but Clara isn't. She isn't even a caricature of the woman ahead of her time or the strong willed independent type. She resists labeling because she may have some features that resemble those types but she's also terrified of horses and insecure a lot of the time. Daniel is the same way. He's brilliant, fiercely protective, determined, rebellious against society's rules, and so angry at the person who hurt his family that he's willing to hurt the financial security of his company. Yet on some level he's always felt unworthy to love Clara. The complexities in their personalities as well as those of Alex and Clara's father really impressed me.

I'm a romance girl and I thought the relationship was fabulous. It had enough sparks to feel realistic for the time period and I loved the tension between them. I believed in them and wanted it to work out. At the same time, I could almost believe that it wouldn't.

This is a well written, action-packed story with a great romance. I look forward to reading more by this author and I thank Bethany House for providing my copy though it did not influence my review.

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## Heather says

**THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS I HAVE READ IN A LONG TIME!!!** At first it seems it will be too predictable and that the main characters get along a little too well after their 12 year separation. I was looking forward to some tension and anger, especially on Daniel's part toward Clara. The tension and anger comes, but when you *least* expect it! And, that's where the **UNPREDICTABILITY** of this book comes in! Nothing ever happens the way you think it's going to! And so much more of the plot goes places you never expect when you first start reading. I chuckled at several parts as my heart constricted just loving the way things were said and how it was all going! Clara has a way of being so sweet and yet fierce and brave when it comes to sticking up for the down-trodden. Usually I can't stand "sweet" heroines. But I was never annoyed with Clara. I *really* liked her. She tried to help people turn their lives around and turn to God, in a non-annoying or preachy way. Any religious aspects were mellow and beautifully handled. I teared up a couple of times, and I RARELY cry when reading a book! This didn't even really come across as a Christian book, it just had a nice, feel-good message woven in to a wonderfully, perfect romance/mystery story. There is also a secondary character, Bane, who I cringed about at first and thought I wouldn't care if he did turn his life around, he'd still be a shady character, but I came to LOVE him, and I'd love to see a book written about him! **This was just so perfect from beginning to end!!** Elizabeth Camden is a new favorite author of mine...I love the way she tells a story! I'll buy anything she writes!

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## Ruth says

3.5 Stars. United by a passion for music, Clara Endicott and Daniel Tremain were the best of friends despite



their wildly disparate backgrounds. Clara, the daughter of an influential minister, is a glittering but refreshingly unpretentious child of Baltimore's elite, while Daniel is a native of the tenements, destined for a future in the steel mills but with a drive to escape his upbringing and prove worthy Clara's affection. After a tragic accident derails his youthful dreams, Clara is shipped to England with the hope of discovering her passion and purpose in life, leaving Daniel to transform his family's tragedy into a springboard for advancement, marrying his thirst for vengeance with the drive to exceed his antecedents and prove worthy Clara's world. While in England Clara discovers her passion -- illuminating the darkest struggles of the working classes with the power of her pen -- and when her expose sees her unceremoniously sent back to America, she and Daniel are reunited. After more than a decade apart, Daniel and Clara couldn't be more different -- but the connection and passion that simmered between them as teens remains unchanged, flaring to life once again after their first encounter. But as much as Clara would love to rekindle her relationship with her oldest friend, Daniel's stubborn, unrelenting obsession with revenge no matter the cost threatens to derail her most cherished hope. While Clara's passion for justice collides with Daniel's pride, an unseen enemy emerges, ready to strike. Can Daniel relinquish his hunger for revenge before he loses his truest friend, or will the hope of a future with Clara be ripped from his grasp forever?

Perhaps the best way to describe Camden's debut effort is intense. From the heady days of Clara and Daniel's early friendship to Clara's unceremonious deportation from England, Camden hits the ground running from the novel's opening pages. I loved the fact that Clara and Daniel's romance grew out of a childhood friendship. The intensity of their relationship, the way in which they "click" lends their budding romance an intensity and spark rarely seen in fiction of this ilk. Daniel is very much a hero cut from the same cloth as Darcy and Thornton of classic literature fame. Speaking of Thornton, this novel bears a striking resemblance in subject matter and romance to Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*. Much like the mill owner John Thornton, Daniel rises to society's highest levels with a hard-edged grace, consumed with validating his newly-acquired position. And like Thornton, Daniel meets his match in the form of a social-justice minded, independent and unconventional woman who refuses to surrender to a love built on a foundation of vengeance and anger.

Bolton Hill's greatest strength lies in its insistence on pushing the boundaries of historical romance -- this is a novel infused with heated romance, weighty social issues, and high adventure. And therein also lies the novel's biggest weakness. Clocking in at a relatively slim 320-odd pages, there's almost too much going on to do any of the multiple, and equally potentially strong, storylines the justice they deserve. Roughly half the novel focuses on everything from the challenges facing female journalists in the Gilded Age and workers' rights, labor riots, and industrial rivalry while the second half features an expansive opium smuggling operation headed by a sinister Professor Moriarty-type figure whose brilliant, teen-aged lieutenant (think a 19th-century James Bond type) has Daniel's downfall in his sights. Camden has a appealing voice and intelligent, articulate prose that kept me rapidly turning pages. And while I appreciate the novel's reach it simply isn't long enough to do full justice to its characters or the multiple storylines.

Don't let Bolton Hill's gorgeously-rendered cover fool you -- yes, there's a romance (and oh, some of the moments Daniel & Clara share!), but there's adventure, danger, and an organic spiritual thread wrapped up in the pages of Camden's debut. In particular I liked the character of Daniel -- his strength, intensity, loyalty to his family, and whole-hearted adoration of Clara, though his spiritual arc felt a bit truncated (again, due to length limitations). With the promise of a tighter storyline, Camden's crisp prose and fearlessly fast pace mark her as an author to watch. And that teen-aged, villainous protege I mentioned earlier? He makes a most welcome return later this year in Camden's third novel, *Against the Tide*.

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## **Janet Camilleri says**

I only got about halfway through this book, then decided I wasn't enjoying it enough to finish it. I just couldn't bring myself to care about the characters and what happened to them, and the "Christian" aspect just annoyed me. There has got to be more to Christian romances than just waiting for one of the starstruck couple to get saved!!!

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## **Jess says**

I have mixed feelings about this book after reading it. Overall I did enjoy the storyline, it was easy to read, had twists and drama in the right places, and had characters that were vivid, even if they were a little unrealistic at times.

There are two things that bring let this book down for me. The first is that it wasn't until halfway through that I realised it was a Christian book. Now to be fair it wasn't as 'preachy' as it could have potentially been, although there were times towards the end when the same bible quote was repeated over and over again, and that got a little repetitive.

But the main reason the book lost points from me is that the main antagonist in this book changed from being a hardened opium dealer criminal, to a born-again christian in a matter of days and after only a few short conversations with the main heroine he completely changed his life. I have not been in the situation where I have been convinced to change my opinion on religion, but I really doubt it would happen so quickly. To make this story more realistic I would have hinted at Bane's wishes to change his lifestyle rather than him saying how much he enjoyed it and wanted to climb up the criminal ladder.

Overall the story wasn't too bad, but not one I would rave about and highly recommend. There are far better writers out there that I would rather read more from.

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## **Beth says**

Lovely story and quite unexpected at times! Full review to come!

I admit, I judged this book by its cover- I'm guilty! Though the cover of the book is quite pretty, it led me to believe that this was going to be the typical inspirational, historical romance – all of the conflict would stem from a big misunderstanding, it would be resolved a few hundred pages later, and they live happily ever after. So you can imagine my pleasant surprise when the main character, Clara, is an investigative journalist, right around the time when there were female journalists, but not many. This particular journalist is intent on bringing the truth to light and using her words to do so. Early in the story, she is in jail, no less! The opening of the story had me hooked from the beginning.

The plot was in no way ho-hum, but rather kept along at a nice pace. It wasn't just the typical lady meets gentleman story – in fact, Daniel Tremain is not much of a gentleman at all, but rather a bit of a roguish character. Being a self-made man, he knows firsthand the hardships of the working poor. The struggles between Clara and Daniel were out in the open and all the more potent because of that. The relationship between them was endearing and rang true for me. I love how they had true, realistic internal conflict within

themselves and not just with each other and outside conflict. There were so many aspects to admire - Daniel's rocky path to forgiveness, Clara's steadfast loyalty and their conflict over her beliefs.

I also really enjoyed the relationship between Clara and her brother, Clyde – I think he deserves his own story and would love it if one was ever written about him. The other secondary characters, Daniel's sisters, Kate and Lorna, and especially Alexander Banebridge, were all fleshed out very well and added a lot of depth to the story.

What kept me from giving that fifth star was the fact that at times I didn't feel a very strong sense of place. I'm a reader who likes description of place and setting and at times, that just wasn't there for me. Some of the dialogue didn't seem like it was "back then," but rather would have suited a more contemporary story. I also felt that some of the decisions Clara made, while they propelled the plot, did not always come across as realistic. The second thing was the spiritual aspect of the story - one reviewer mentioned that Clara suddenly turned into "Super Christian," and I find that I have to agree. It became very in your face at times, versus the other times where it weaves in and out of the story more organically.

Overall, it was a very enjoyable story with a compelling plot, an endearing romance and stand-out characters. I'm really looking forward to reading the rest of Bane's story in *Against the Tide*!

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### **Margaret Chind says**

Now this is a book that I completely loved beginning to end. Page one had me captivated. I'm always nervous about new authors, but Elizabeth Camden with this one novel has made it to the favorite's keeper shelf and I will desperately await more stories to come! What is so extraordinary about this novel is that it was a perfect setting, but for once (something I do not often find with historicals) I could easily translate this and see it in my head as an everyday occurrence in the current time. It's a sad story, and a real story, but it's a beautiful story and so romantic and perfect. It's a romance of two humans and it's a romance of new beginnings with our Lord Christ. Elizabeth Camden has put so much into this book that it is just plain fabulous. I'm delighted to have read it and truly highly recommend it!

\*Thanks to Bethany House Publishers for providing a copy for review through the Christian Fiction Blog Alliance.\*

Originally posted: <http://creativemadnessmama.com/blog/2...>

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### **Jennifer says**

I appreciate what Ms. Camden was trying to do with this book. Honestly, I do. And the engaging storytelling, rich historical details, and compelling MCs made me want to like this book. But I couldn't. The h was way too preachy. What could have been a sweet and natural reunion between the MCs became strange and awkward with the h's insistence on the H becoming a Christian. Please don't mistake what I'm saying. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ is always a good thing. However, letting the way you live your life be your testimony is a much better way to share it. The problem with this story is that we don't see the h doing that. We just see her badgering him with the message of forgiveness and grace instead of being patient with him.

There were a few things that I liked about this book. The h wasn't a pushover or a doormat. She didn't compromise on her values or beliefs. She was also a hardworking professional who didn't rely on a man for happiness or for money. She also didn't turn into a puddle of hormonal goo whenever the H was around. All of those things were super refreshing. I also liked the H who didn't beat around the bush about his intentions toward the h. There wasn't any long drawn out angst in that regard. There was also not OP drama, which was quite nice as well.

All in all, I didn't hate this book, nor did I love it. The spiritual message was strong but maybe too much so for my liking. The historical aspect of this story was nice, but there was simply something missing in it for me.

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### **Cassie says**

This makes me want to reread Bane's story in *Against The Tide*.

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