



Crossed Hearts

Barbara Delinsky

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The first novel in beloved bestselling author Barbara Delinsky's Matchmaker trilogy about a woman who makes up crossword puzzles for a living—and a man who just might be the answer to L-O-V-E in her life...

Leah Gates always enjoys a good challenge—with words or otherwise. Still, she should have known better than to leave New York City for this. Knee-deep mud, lashing rain, a burned-down cabin...so much for the R&R that she hoped to find in rural New Hampshire. What had her friend Victoria Lesser been thinking?

Woodsman Garrick Rodenheiser was stunned and wary when Leah turned up shivering on his porch. A beautiful woman, miles from nowhere, spelled trouble for him. But he couldn't just slam the door in her face—or shut out the storm of passion that raged between them...

Originally published as Twelve Across.

Crossed Hearts Details

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From Reader Review Crossed Hearts for online ebook

Judy Churchill says

This is a delightful story. The name has been changed to **CROSSED HEARTS** while the story remains the same. It centers around changing the assumptions about yourself through experience. I enjoyed it.

Linda C says

Leah Gates, crossword puzzle creator, is being forced out of her apartment in NYC as it is being converted to an unaffordable condo. Her friend, Victoria, offers her use of her cabin in New Hampshire as an interim house while she decides whether to look for another apartment in the city or a house in the suburbs. Victoria gives her precise directions to the cabin and a letter of introduction to a friend who lives a short distance through the woods if she has problems (no phone service). What Victoria doesn't tell her is that the cabin burned down 3 months before and she is matchmaking her with her friend, Garrick. Spring rains bring mud and a treacherous trip, resulting in a mired car and an uninhabitable cabin. She shows up at the friend's cabin cold, wet and exhausted. He, of course, is suspicious. Both of these people have had difficult pasts which have kept them isolated and lonely. It is only as they spend time together waiting for the rain to subside that they realize that they are lonely. As they open up and eventually reveal their pasts they find a kindred soul in each other. More issues arise as well as the issues associated with stepping out of their insular lives. Very well done early work.

Laura says

I can hardly believe that the same woman who wrote *Coast Road* penned this shallow, melodramatic, bodice ripper. It started out so great, but was ultimately torture to finish. *Coast Road* is one of my favorite books. I've also deeply enjoyed *An Accidental Woman*, *Family Tree*, and *The Woman Next Door*, among others by Barbara Delinsky, so I'm puzzled by this one. It had a fantastic beginning, and a great plot, but it devolved quickly into little more than a detailed carnal romp, rife with agonizing dialogue and over-the-top emotion.

Faye says

Leah lived in NYC and designed crosswords. Her loft apartment was turning condo and she couldn't afford the price. Her friend Victoria sent her to her burned out cabin in New Hampshire. There she met Garrick. He whittled chess sets and trapped. He was hiding from his past. The two were rained and muddled in to staying in the cabin for several days. They fell in love. The development of that relationship and their overcoming problems of the past lives was intriguing. i liked this book a lot.

Louise Armstrong says

I liked the crossword element and I also liked the reason that kept the lovers apart near the end of the book - much better than a row or a misunderstanding.

Pat says

Nice story of redemption and healing.

Anne Harvey says

One of Barbara Delinsky's earlier novels, presumably republished for a 21st century reader. Despite it being a little dated, I found this a delightful story. Leah Gates has been given notice to quite her New York apartment and is at her wit's end until a friend offers her the loan of a cabin deep in the heart of New Hampshire. As Leah earns her living from inventing crosswords, she can work anywhere so accepts. What she hasn't bargained for is that the said cabin has been burned down. In desperation, Leah makes her way to the cabin of neighbour Garrick Rodenheiser, whom her friend had told her to turn to if she needed help. For Garrick, who for his own reasons, has shut himself off from the world, the last thing he needs is a very wet and bedraggled young woman turning up on his doorstep. Worse, in the middle of the rainy season, no-one is going anywhere. Somehow, until the weather clears, Garrick and Leah must muddle through together. This really is all of the story but the relationship between the two is explored in a tender and poignant way and is a good example to any budding writer. I loved it.

John Carter says

My wife picked this up for me at the local train station's "take one, leave one" bookshelf because I'm a crossword addict and the title and cover art promised puzzling goodness. I should have remembered not to judge a book by its cover.

On page nine we learn that the heroine constructs crosswords for a living. On page 67 that she does themed crosswords. With nothing more than that happening on the puzzling front by page 78 I started flipping through the rest of the book. Just about the only further reference I found didn't come until page 160 when Delinsky showed that she'd picked up one term of puzzle jargon but otherwise had no clue about the crossword business. (I can say this with authority since I have several friends who make their livings creating puzzles.)

In the meantime there was an abundance of smoldering looks and hormonal urges and "corduroys mold[ing] a lean pair of hips and long, powerful legs". And then I came to the title page—published by Harlequin Books. This is a bloody Harlequin romance!

That settled it: the thing was never going to improve. I did what is almost unheard of for me—I abandoned it. It'll be going back to the train station post-haste.

Lauralight says

I was surprised to research and find out this was a mid-career book for her and that she was in fact a female author at all. She really didn't use a realistic approach around love at all and made both characters almost pornographically mistake sex for love quickly in the story. And she wrote a sex scene unrealistically (women just don't apologize for having orgasms, men completely beg women to have them in bed), as if from the man's point of view. I started researching to find out if "Barbara Delinsky" was a pen name for a man and not even a female author. I'm not impressed by this first book by her that I've picked up. If I want sex scenes poorly written, I'll just pick up porn.

Gwen S. says

Arghhhh!! 1.5*****

I am trying to complete this Matchmaker Trilogy series by Ms. Delinski, and apart from losing several days of my valuable time, I am being introduced to the most uninteresting, unidimensional characters involved in the most inane plots. Victoria Lesser needs to stop playing matchmaker as she is deliberately endangering her "friends' lives"

Her targets this time around are Leah, an evicted cartoonist, and Garrick, a reclusive, washed-up, self-destructive actor/TV star, who meet in a torrential storm at his cabin. Why?? Victoria sent Leah on vacation to her burnt down cabin, who had to trudge through a forest without supplies in the cold, early Spring months. That's a friend for you! 1.5***** for the editorial process!

Marcia says

Actual Rating: ***1/2

Originally published in 1987, this "strangers stranded in a cabin" story was a very good reminder of how romance stories used to be.

The flames danced low and gently, and would have been soothing had she been capable of being soothed. But sitting before them, relatively warm and safe for the first time in hours, she saw all too clearly what she faced tonight. She was here for the night; she knew that much. The storm continued. Her car wouldn't move. She was going nowhere until morning. But what then?

Sharon says

This book was originally released as "Twelve Across" and was the first in the Victoria Lesser matchmaker series. It was not my favorite even though I tried to remember that it was written in the 80's and romance novels were very different back then.

Victoria lends her friend Leah her remote cabin in New Hampshire. When she gets there, the cabin has been

destroyed by fire and Leah is forced to seek help from another of Victoria's friends, the reclusive ex-movie star Garrick Rodebhiser. Forced to live under the same roof during "muddy season" the two find love.

It was a fast read. The storyline was interesting but I would have been furious with my friend had she sent me off to a remote cabin that did not exist. I like later Delinski much, much better.

Sharon Eikenberry-Deary says

We live our lives in puzzles each of us going either across or down. Sooner or later the across and downs will meet. What we do when they meet are the choices of the puzzler. We get stuck or work thru it. Victoria saw 2 people stuck; Garrick and Leah. She had to send in a life line for both. She had done it in a way which was wrong, but couldn't tell these two very different people what she was doing. She knew they would be apposed to what she was doing. They were very independent and strong people who wanted no interferences from the outside world only at their own will. They had so many barriers and walls Victoria had to do something for her friends. When they let down their walls they found true love and soul mates. They also found a word with 3 A's and the 4 letter word which was hidden within the puzzle. A word some will never find or for some a 2nd chance.

Louise says

Cute story!!

From back cover:

"Garrick Rodenheiser crashed, burned and found a second chance when he crawled away from the wreckage of his life four years ago. And while he hasn't exactly escaped his past, he's kept it far enough away. Until trouble in the form of a rain-soaked, bleeding woman comes banging on the door of his remote cabin. True, she doesn't look like a reporter. But the word trust simply isn't in Garrick's vocabulary anymore.

Crossword puzzle creator Leah Gates has a few words of her own for her reluctant savior: querulous, adamant, irresistible. She isn't sure if it's cabin fever, loneliness or just plain fate that drew them so magically together. But she does know that falling in love is the easy part. Trusting the future is a different challenge entirely."

Isabella Queirouz says

A nice second chance for Garrick and Leah. But reading the book made me feel a little stupid cause while I found it half exerted I couldn't stop feeling myself like I'm intruding in some private life that could be resumed in just two lines. I know it must be two characters resulting from the imagination of a romantic writer, but I'm sorry to say it didn't amaze me. I used to read this kind of book and be fond of them when I was a teenager...I guess things changed a little bit after all.

Anyway I didn't mention yet that's the first time I read Barbara Delinsky and probably it's not my general opinion about all her books. I recently entered the site of her and I was surprised to find a review of Times Union matching Barbara Delinsky to John Updike. And for the first time I picked up 2 books without knowing both these two authors and later found out a similarity between the two but of course as I'm reading now John Updike I can see that he got other style.
