



You might want to grab a cuppa. This is a long one!

G'day, !

I hope this month's newsletter finds you well and in good spirits. Continued Covid lockdowns tend to play havoc with our mental health, so be sure to take care of yourself.

I've been on two weeks school holidays and it's been raining so much here. I can't remember the last time we've had such a wet winter holiday. I'm not complaining because we certainly need the rain in my part of the world.

I've been thinking about kisses (I know, weird for a romance author to be thinking about kisses, right? lol). We all know romance books **must** have kissing. It's usually a significant moment between the hero and heroine. So I've been asking people on Facebook an important question.

favourite kiss



<https://linktr.ee/debrastjames>

Debra
St James

Which kiss pictured above is your favourite?

You can only choose one!

A

B

C

D

E

F



I REALLY HOPE YOU'RE FOLLOWING ME ON INSTAGRAM!

I've got something HUGE coming your way!

I'm collaborating with 24 amazing Aussie authors to bring you something to set your Kindle on fire.

Mark **July 25** on your calendar and make sure you're following me on Insta. You won't want to miss this.

[@debrastjames_books](https://www.instagram.com/debrastjames_books)



*Margie's
Corner*

Hi,

I just wanted to drop by and give you an update on my new living arrangements.

Imagine my surprise when Kate and Oliver told me they were moving and wanted to take me with them. My heart was bursting with happiness for them—that they'd found each other and were moving forward with their lives. The fact they wanted me to be part of that was overwhelming and incredibly sweet. Kate's always been a sweet girl; looking after an old duck like me. But their offer to give me a new home was something else.

My husband, Thomas, would be thrilled to know that I'm being looked after so well. He would have loved living here. He used to love fishing on the river of an evening in the summer time.

Oh, I took some photos of the view. Isn't it wonderful?



I often sit on the deck, watching sun come up over the city skyline. It's such a pleasant way to begin my day.

Anyway, I'm off to visit Pete and Joe. Kate's taking me to spend the afternoon with them. It feels like it's been a long time since I've seen them. I miss those old fellas and their antics.

Take care,

Love Margie X

Current Projects

Who wants a snippet of *Stolen Kisses*?

You do of course!

I actually shared this in my Facebook reader's group, **Deb's Bibliomaniacs**. You can join by clicking on the image! That way you won't miss out on any snippets.



Stolen Kisses is Emma's story. I introduced Emma in my previous newsletter.

You first met her in **Loving Summer**, she's Kate's friend.

Will she get her HEA?

This excerpt is from Theo's (Emma's new neighbor) point of view. He's recently taken guardianship of Charli, his four-year-old niece.

This excerpt is raw, unedited, and subject to change! ENJOY!



"Hi, Son. How are things going with you and Charli?"

"Hey, Dad. Good. We're getting into a routine and getting used to each other."

"That's great to hear. I was hoping to pop around this morning. I, uh, have something that Anna left for Charli that I want to give to you." I swallow down the lump that immediately forms in my throat at the mention of my sister's name. "I would prefer to give it to you while Charli's at school."

I wonder what it is? "Sure, Dad. I'm out at the moment. I should be home ..." I check my watch. "by ten."

"Okay. See you soon."

I make it home with minutes to spare. I wanted to get a new section of gutter to fix the gutter Austin pulled down when he fell, plus I had to match the paint. I'll probably end up painting all of the gutters, because the new paint will look slightly different to the rest and that'll annoy the shit outta me every time I look across to her house. As I'm climbing out of my truck, Dad pulls in behind me.

"That was good timing. Wanna come in for a coffee or are you in a rush to get to the restaurant?"

"I've got some time." He grabs a box from the passenger seat and follows me inside. It's the first time he's been here, so I give him the tour. I catch his smile as he looks into Charli's bedroom. We make our way into my kitchen, the dishes from this morning still in the sink.

I add two heaped teaspoons of finely ground coffee and two teaspoons of sugar to the briki, stir, then add the right amount of cold filtered water. As I put the briki onto medium heat, I ask Dad, "So what did you bring over for Charli?" I stir the coffee until all the coffee is dissolved, then stop.

"I'll show you once you sit down."

The foam's beginning to form and the beautiful aroma of coffee fills my kitchen. I don't generally go to the trouble of making our traditional coffee, but I thought I'd show Dad that I'm not completely useless in the kitchen. As the foam reaches the top of the pot, I turn off the heat and share the foam between the two cups, then make sure to share the coffee grains evenly without disturbing the foam.

Placing the cups on the table, one in front of my father, I realize my shoulders are stiff as I hold my breath, awaiting his approval. He studies the cup in front of him, takes a sip, then smiles at me. "A good brew, Son." He nods in approval, releasing the tension I was holding, then pushes the box he brought with him toward me. "Open it."

With trepidation, I drag the box forward. It's only the size of a shoebox, but whatever's inside is going to be important to Charli. I take a sip of my coffee for

fortitude and then with shaking hands, I open the lid. The box is filled with dozens of letters. As I look through the first few envelopes, my breath seizes in my lungs at the sight of my sister's neat cursive script. Each letter lovingly labeled with Charli's birthdays. I look up to my father.

"How many did she write?"

"One for every birthday until she's twenty-one, graduations from school and university, first boyfriend, first heartbreak, first job, marriage, first baby."

I flick through the sheets of paper which undoubtedly hold words of wisdom only a mother can share with her daughter. My throat grows tight and I have to blink several times to hold back the stinging in my eyes. How fucking difficult would this have been for my sister to do. To know you won't be around for your baby for these milestone events? I always knew Anna had a quiet strength about her, but this ... this is unbelievable, even for her.

"She wanted Charli to have something for every major event. Right at the bottom are some small gifts for graduation and her wedding day." *Fuck!*

Dad's bottom lip trembles as a tear escapes, tracking down his weathered cheek. The guilt I feel at not returning home to support him and my sister through her final months is overwhelming, suffocating me, drowning me.

"I'm so sorry, Dad. Sorry for my selfishness! For leaving you to deal with everything. For not coming home when I should have. I ... I just ... couldn't go through it again! It was too much. But now I see how unfair, how cruel I was to you, to Anna, to Charli. I'm so fucking sorry, Dad." My own tears fall as if to punctuate my words, to highlight my pain.

My father, always stoic, stands and wraps me in his embrace. "It's okay, Son. We understood your reasons. You took your mother's death incredibly hard. I understood."

"It's not fucking okay. It'll never be fucking okay that we lost the most important women in our lives to that fucking disease!" I pull out of his embrace so I can stand and pace. I've got so much anger and hate bubbling up inside of me, I don't know what to do with myself. "It's not fucking fair. They were good people, kind people. They didn't deserve to die so young. We didn't deserve to lose them! My sister shouldn't have had to write all of those letters to her daughter for events she'll never be able to attend. Charli doesn't deserve to be motherless! I don't deserve to be motherless! You didn't deserve to lose your wife!" I stand in silence, looking across my backyard to my workshop. Lost in thought, for I don't know how long, I jump when my father's hand makes contact with my shoulder.

"You're right, Theo. It isn't fair, but we can't change what's happened. We need to make sure that Anna remains a solid part of Charli's life." He points at the opened box on the table. "Those letters and gifts will help do that. Us sharing stories about her mother will help do that. I'm so grateful that we have Charli; she's part of Anna—her legacy. Just as you and Anna were your mother's legacy. I saw your mother in you and your sister every day. I see Anna in Charli every time I look at her. Her quiet strength. Her kindness. Her friendliness. No matter where we went, Anna always came away making a new friend. Charli is very much the same."

My shoulders slump forward and I tuck my hands in my pockets, contemplating his words. I'm having a tough time reconciling that two good women were

stolen from us too soon and as a result, two children grew up motherless. That history is repeating itself and another child is going to grow up motherless. "I am beyond grateful that we have Charli, don't get me wrong. But I want Mom and Anna, too." I shrug my shoulders. "Call me selfish, but I want all of them. Here. With us. Where they belong." I point at the floor between us as if that will magically provide a space for their return.

"I know, Son. I wish for that too. But we can't spend our lives wishing for the impossible. We have to live for who we have left. She needs us. Now more than ever."

I nod, begrudgingly accepting his words as the truth they are. He pats me on the back. "I'll leave you to your day. There's a letter at the back of the pile for you. Read it when you're ready."

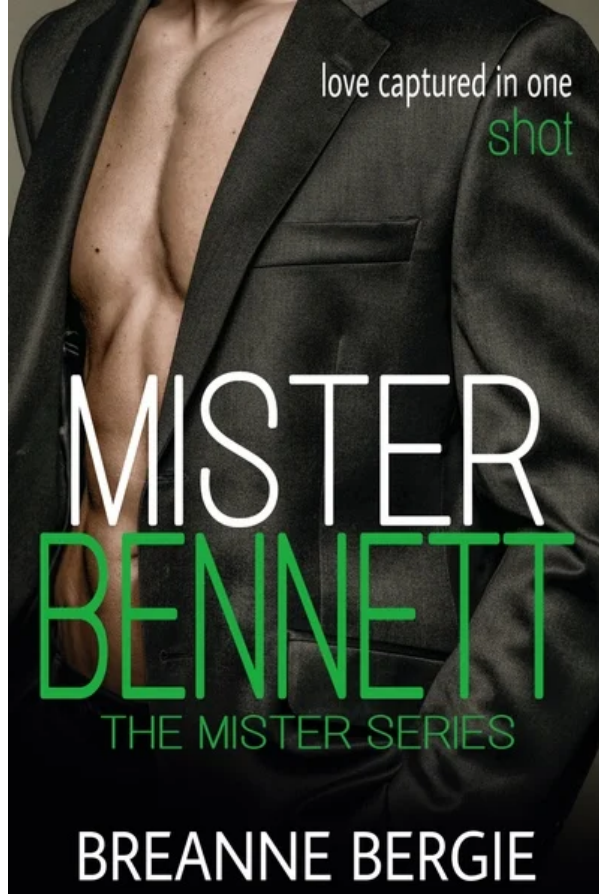
I don't respond. I can't. I can't imagine what she wrote in those letters. Each and every one different for special times in her daughter's life. The daughter she'll never see grow up. I don't know if I'll ever be ready to read her letter to me. Will it be full of anger and hatred that I didn't come home in her final months, weeks, days?

The front door bangs behind my father and I'm alone with my thoughts. A fucking dangerous place to be. I head out myself, needing to keep busy. I've got the perfect task!

*~excerpt from **Stolen Kisses** by Debra St James*

***I'd love to know what you think of this piece.
Feel free to respond to this email!***





Mister Bennett

A secret baby billionaire romance (Mister series book 1)

The occupation she's waited for. An undeniable attraction. One risk they shouldn't take.

Levelheaded photographer Becca knows what she wants. Her dream country home away from it all. But she lands the career of her dreams, capturing her boss behind the camera lens and falls hard for him.

Famous model Grant Bennett's a billionaire. He's confident, toned, and gorgeous. And completely off-limits. But it's his green piercing eyes that captivate her and she can't resist. Putting her goals in jeopardy when he's fallen for her, too.

Becca never expected to be attracted to Mr. Bennett. She needs to withstand the hold he has over her. Their careers depend on it. But one night alone with him could change it all. Can she capture Mr. Grant Bennett's heart?

Mister Bennett can be read as a standalone and contains a HEA.

Discover the steamy billionaire Mister Series:

Book 1: Mister Bennett

Book 2: Mister Lawson

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Much Love and Happy Reading ...

Debra xo



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