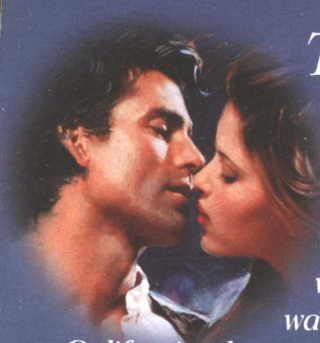


The book cover features a romantic scene of a man and a woman in 18th-century attire. The man, on the left, has dark hair and is wearing a white shirt with an open collar and a dark vest. The woman, on the right, has long brown hair with a purple flower and is wearing a pink dress. They are about to kiss. In the background, there are fireworks exploding in the night sky over a town. The title 'UNFORGETTABLE' is at the bottom in large, ornate, gold letters. Above it, the author's name 'MADIELINE BARKER' is at the top in similar gold letters. Between them is the text 'By the Bestselling Author of SPIRIT SONG'.

MADIELINE BARKER

*By the Bestselling Author of
SPIRIT SONG*

UNFORGETTABLE



The last thing Shaye Montgomery needed was another man in her life. Especially a gambler who had been hanged a hundred years before she was born. But Alejandro Valverde wouldn't leave her alone. As she walked the deserted streets of a

California ghost town, his image seemed to rise up out of the misty night. On the faded pages of a saloon girl's diary, his exploits came to life. And in her dreams, he was all too real—his hair long and black, his lips full and sensual, his dark, dark eyes filled with a predatory gleam.

Then, incredibly, she was drawn into his world, a world where badmen, showdowns and gambling halls had replaced the park rangers, T.V. shows and malls she knew. A world where Alejandro Valverde was soon to be wrongfully accused of murder. Now when she looked into his eyes, she saw a kindred soul, knew that what she needed most in the world was to share a love that was truly...

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UNFORGETTABLE



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UNFORGETTABLE

MADELINE BAKER

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If you purchased this book without a cover you should be aware that this book is stolen property. It was reported as "unsold and destroyed" to the publisher and neither the author nor the publisher has received any payment for this "stripped book."

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Printed in the United States of America.

This book is dedicated to:

All the ghosts in Bodie, real or imagined, and

*The Friends of Bodie
for their dedication in preserving the town
and to all the wonderful rangers
and park aides who so kindly and
patiently answered my numerous questions.*

And to:

*Carol Amato
who gave me the idea in the first place,*

*Flo Robinson
who helped me with the research
(even though the train didn't make it),*

*Mitch Dearmond
for his poem at the end of the book,*

*And to Mary
who has been my best friend
and fan for, lo, these many years.
It's a dirty job, but someone has to do it.*

Time Passages

I saw him in the distance
His image blurred by time and space
I heard his voice
so soft and low
I yearned to see his face

A lonely walk down a deserted street
And I saw him just beyond
I felt his spirit call to me
I reached
But he was gone

I crossed time's dusty threshold
And walking toward me he came
And I knew
Deep within my heart
I would never be the same

A dream, a wish, or was it fate
That scattered
The mists of time
That sent me back in history
To reside within his clime

How or why, it matters not
Together forever we'll be
Our hearts and souls
Now bound by love
For all eternity

—M. Baker

UNFORGETTABLE

**ROMANTIC TIMES PRAISES
MADELINE BAKER'S
PREVIOUS BESTSELLERS!**

SPIRIT'S SONG

"Madeline Baker consistently delivers winning, heart-wrenching, passionate romances and *Spirit's Song* is no exception."

UNDER A PRAIRIE MOON

"Madeline Baker writes of a ghost, a curse and a second chance with such power and passion readers cannot help but be mesmerized."

CHASE THE WIND

"This sequel to *Apache Runaway* is pure magic and packed with action, adventure, and passion. Madeline Baker fans, get ready to laugh and cry from the beginning to the surprising ending."

THE ANGEL & THE OUTLAW

"Readers will rave about Madeline Baker's extraordinary storytelling talents."

LAKOTA RENEGADE

"*Lakota Renegade* is as rich, passionate, and delicious as all of Madeline Baker's award-winning romances!"

APACHE RUNAWAY

"Madeline Baker has done it again! This romance is poignant, adventurous, and action-packed."

CHEYENNE SURRENDER

"This is a funny, witty, poignant, and delightful love story! Ms. Baker's fans will be more than satisfied!"

Prologue

She needed a vacation, and she meant to take one. Preferably, a long one. She was fed up with the rut she found herself in, with life, with deadlines, with men. Especially men! If she never saw another one until she was a hundred and three, it would still be too soon.

Leaning back in her desk chair, Shaye Montgomery closed her eyes and pictured the lake at Plumas Pines. The water in Lake Almanor was as deep and blue as a midsummer sky. Tall pine trees stretched upward, their emerald green branches ever reaching toward heaven. It had been years since she had been up there, but it was a place dear to her heart, and it was time to go back. Time to fish in Deer Creek, where the water was so clear you could stand on the bank and watch the trout take your bait. Power bait, she mused;

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that was what they liked. Time to take long walks in the twilight, time to feed the deer and the squirrels. Time to go into Chester and wander through the shops, indulge in some of the rich chocolate fudge at The Grey Squirrel, browse the antique stores, bask in the pleasure of devouring one of the huge pancakes at The Kopper Kettle.

She could stop off at Bodie State Historic Park on her way. She had always wanted to go there. The last time she had been this fed up with the demands of her job, she had thought she might give up reporting and try her hand at writing a novel set in the historic ghost town. She had long ago given up on the idea of writing a book, but she loved ghost towns, and Bodie was one that had always intrigued her.

Yes, she thought, a vacation up in Northern California was exactly what she needed. She smiled as she thought how pleased and surprised her mom and dad would be to see her. Her parents had always loved it up north and they had moved there a few months after her father retired from the Los Angeles Police Department. Three months later, they bought a cute little combination antique shop and cafe in Chester. Just thinking about some of her mom's homemade apple pie made her mouth water.

Reaching for the phone, she dialed her editor's number before she could change her mind.

Chapter One

Shaye grimaced as her Range Rover bounced over the rough road that led to Bodie. She had negotiated thirteen miles of crooked road after turning off Highway 395. It had been fairly smooth going until the last three miles or so, and then the paved road had run out.

"I guess this is so tourists will get the full flavor of 'roughing it,' " she muttered as she swerved to the left to avoid the worst of the ruts. "But I think a mile would have been more than enough."

At the entrance, she paid the two-dollar admission fee, noted in passing that it would have cost her an additional dollar if she'd had a dog. She gave the attendant a dollar for a guidebook to the park, wrote the three dollars down in the little notebook she carried to log her expenses.

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She parked her car in the lot, grabbed her backpack, which contained her wallet, camera, extra film, a couple bottles of Evian water, her cell phone, and some other odds and ends, and opened the door.

The weather was perfect, warm but not hot, with a mild breeze. She followed the other tourists toward the path that led to the town, glancing at the guidebook as she went. *Bodie State Historic Park*. There was a quote at the bottom of the booklet that read:

*And now my comrades are all gone;
Naught remains to toast.
They have left me here in my misery,
Like some poor wandering ghost.*

She stood at the top of the path for a moment, gazing down at what was left of the town. There were a number of buildings and houses still standing. According to the guidebook, only five percent of the buildings from the original town remained, "just as time, fire, and the elements have left it—a genuine California gold-mining ghost town."

Even though she didn't believe in ghosts, a shiver slid down her spine as she read the last two words.

Reading on, she learned that Bodie had been designated a state historic park in 1962.

She continued reading as she walked slowly down the hill. Bodie had been named after Waterman S. Body, also known as William S. Bodey, who had discovered gold there in 1859. Some thought the change in the spelling of the town's name was due to an