

JUDIE  
DEVIERAUX



REMEMBRANCE

# JUDE DEVERAUX

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# REMEMBRANCE



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# REMEMBRANCE

**Books by Jude Deveraux**

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*Velvet Song*  
*Velvet Angel*  
*Sweetbriar*  
*Counterfeit Lady*  
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*Wishes*  
*Mountain Laurel*  
*The Duchess*  
*Eternity*  
*Sweet Liar*  
*The Invitation*  
*Remembrance*

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# *Part One*





# 1

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## *New York City*

1994

*Y*ou can't be happy in this life because of what happened in your past lives.

What would you think if someone said that to you? You'd think, "It's hopeless, why bother trying." Right? Or would you think, "The woman telling me this is crazy and I'd better get me and all my worldly goods out of here?"

Or would you be like me and think, "A story! Everyone's into time travel now and nobody's doing past lives, so maybe I can ask a lot of questions and make a story from this lady's answers."

This last is what I thought when I first met Nora because I am a writer inside and out. There isn't one molecule of me that isn't geared toward, How can I use this in a story?

People are always asking me how I came to be a writer. I'd like to have an answer that would please them. I'd like to say that I was walking through a meadow full of tiny blue flowers when a beautiful woman in a silver dress appeared and bopped me on the head with her wand. She had a golden voice and said, "I am giving you the gift of writing. Go forth and write."



Sometimes I think that people want to hear that I was “chosen,” rather like a prophet. But you know, whenever you read about prophets, they *always* cry to God, “Oh Lord, why me?” Sometimes I think being “chosen” isn’t a gift, it’s a curse.

At any rate, I have just told you why I became a writer. I make up stories about everything. Absolutely everything on earth. I see something, hear something, read something, and my mind starts creating a story.

Storytelling is natural to me. When people ask me how I came to be a writer, what I want to ask in return is, What is in your head in place of stories? What do you *think* about while listening to a terminally boring speech? While driving a car? While putting the sixth load of wash in the machine? To me, this is the real mystery of life. I already know what’s inside my head, but what is inside other people’s heads if not stories?

Well, anyway, now that I am a full-fledged writer (that means I need no outside job to pay the bills) I find that we writers have a little club that we’re all supposed to be loyal to. The Hippocratic oath is nothing compared to this.

Since I don’t want to lose my writing membership, I’ll say what I’m supposed to. *It’s bloody hard work writing.* What is that thing someone said about opening a vein and spilling your blood onto the paper? Well, it’s true. Writing is really, really hard work. By golly, I bet I sit on my fanny six to ten hours a day. I pace the floor thinking about “what happens next.” I have a publishing house that sends me flowers and money every time I turn in a book.

Now, really, does it sound like a writer suffers more than, say, a secretary? She has to be awakened by an alarm clock (I wake when I want to), get the kids and hubby off, work for a boss who never praises her, then do another shift of work when she gets home. And no one ever says, “Wow, you’re a secretary. How did you get to be one?”

I guess we all do whatever we can. If you can drive a truck, you do that. If you can hassle people without conscience, you become a lawyer. If you have stories in your head you write them down. To me being a writer isn’t any different—and not nearly as important—as most other professions. But it seems that the world doesn’t agree

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with me. The world at large has decided that writers are smarter, more astute, more enlightened, more whatever than other people, so they treat them with awe and reverence.

My opinion is that we should have a National Profession Lottery and every year about ten professions would be drawn from a hat, and for that year all the praise would go to the people in those professions. They should have best-seller lists, receive fan letters, have autographing parties, and have something like a publishing house to praise them and give them gifts.

See? There I go again with a story. Give me a keyboard and I can't stop.

However, about these ten professions to be chosen, I want to make it clear that there is one "profession" that is too evil to be included in this lottery. Book reviewers. Specifically, romance book reviewers.

Maybe I should tell you right now so, if you are offended, you can stop reading this book. I write romances.

There, I've said it. It's out in the open.

For all the joy of my life, there is one aspect of it that is really and truly quite awful. Shockingly awful. And that is the way the world looks at romance novels, at romance readers, and, above all, at romance *writers!*

Isn't the world a weird place? I saw a man on *Oprah* who was admitting that he'd had sex with his daughter several times when she was a child. Nearly every actor/singer tells the world he/she has done every drug known and hurt or driven away most of the people in their lives.

And how are all these people greeted? With love, that's how. With love and understanding and sympathy.

But here I am and what do I do? I write funny little romantic stories about men and women who fall in love with each other. The wildest thing they do is make a baby or two. No drugs. No incest. No one boiling anyone and doing heaven only knows what else to them. I don't even have people plotting clever ways to kill someone. I just invent stories about what we all dream about: having someone to love who loves us in return.

You'd think that the very thought of a romance writer would

bring a smile to people's lips. Ah, how nice. Love. Making love. Laughter. Kissing.

But no, the world is upside down as far as I can see, and romances and their writers are ridiculed, hissed, and generally spat upon.

And for what reasons? One of my favorites is that women who read them might get mixed up about reality and imagine a man is going to rescue them from Life. According to this theory, women are so stupid that they can't tell a story from reality. Is anyone worried that the *men* who read spy thrillers are going to go after their neighbors with an automatic weapon? No, I don't remember anyone thinking that. Nor do I remember anyone worrying about murder mysteries or science fiction. It just seems to be dumb ol' women who might think some gorgeous, thoughtful, giving hunk is going to rescue them.

Honey, if any woman thought a gorgeous hunk was going to rescue her, romance novels wouldn't be forty percent of the publishing industry.

Anyway, back to the reviewers. These smart young people graduate from college with dreams of working on some magazine of intellectual merit, and what happens to them? Some old man who no longer has stars in his eyes decides to teach the young whippersnapper a lesson about life so he gives this child the lowest job in all the industry: *reviewing romance novels!*

Guess who bears the brunt of the newly graduated person's rage? Eighty grand spent on education and they are given a book to read that has a nursing mother cover (so called because of the size of the you-know-whats and the obviously about-to-be-lowered bodice [Quiz: do you think a man or a woman invented these covers?]).

Anyway, this person takes her/his rage out on me, the romance writer. The lowest creature on earth. A housewife with a bank account.

Rule number one for reviewing a romance novel: compare the book to the *best* book you've ever read. If it does not live up to Jane Austen, then use about sixty grand of your education to cut this writer down in the nastiest way possible. If, however, you should make the error of liking the book, write that "Readers of Hayden Lane should like this one." Whatever you do, don't stick your neck

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out and actually say *you* liked the book. If you allow anyone to think you like romances, you'll never get promoted to reviewing the "good" books.

So, anyway, what does all this have to do with the subject of past lives? It has everything to do with it because, you see, I'm thirty-nine years old; I'm about to hit the big four-oh, and I'm trying to figure out some things about my life. Sometimes I think I'm as curious as my readers as to how I became a writer. What *does* make us what we are today?

All in all, the most interesting thing to analyze is people. Why does the lady down the street dress with military precision? Why does someone have a fear of knives or fire or high places? What about those people who are too afraid to leave their houses?

There is, of course, the theory that every fear in your adult life was caused by something awful that happened in your childhood, preferably something you don't remember so that a therapist can see you hundreds of times and charge you thousands of dollars to help you remember this dreadful thing. So after therapy you're poorer and have some more rotten memories as well.

During a bad time in my life (what can cause a woman a "bad time" except a man?) I went to a therapist. She told me that I had stories going through my head because I wanted to go to bed with my father. When I recovered my power of speech, I said in great indignation, "I did *not* want to go to bed with my father!" "Oh," she said calmly, "then you suppressed it."

Seeing that I couldn't win—and winning has always been important to me—I didn't return after that visit.

But I have tried to figure out why I write and why I write what I do. You see, all writers want one thing. They want immortality. That's why we're so vain that we think someone else will want to read what we put down on paper. We writers hear of Mark Twain dying in poverty and feel no sympathy because ol' Mark attained the goal. He will live forever. Our families would no doubt choose for us to be writers who make lots of money, but we writers would take eternal recognition over wealth every time.

But that's the problem. No one comes to you, sitting on a pink cloud, a clipboard in hand, and says, "We're giving you the gift of

writing. Do you want the kind that everyone sneers at or the kind that people remember after you're dead?" Talent is not like a used car. You can't take it back if you don't like it. You can't say, "I'd like to trade in my talent for an Edith Wharton model."

My talent happens to be in writing romantic novels, and they get laughed at and ridiculed. In any movie, if the director wants to show that a female character is stupid, he puts a romance novel into her hands.

Early on, I decided that I was grateful for any talent at all. Those who can, do, and those who can't, review. As Anthony Trollope said, "Only a blockhead writes for anything except money." Or thereabouts. Anyway, it's true. You can't very well sit down at your computer and say, "I'm now going to write my way into history." It doesn't work that way. You don't decide what lives on after you, other people do.

So, anyway, I still wonder how I came to write romantic novels and I look back at my life to see if I can figure out what made me such a writer. In fact, I'd like to know what made me like I am in every aspect.

Until I was seven years old, I was the happiest child on the planet. My parents and sister and I lived next door to two houses filled with cousins and aunts and uncles and a couple of sets of grandparents. It was heaven. I was the ringleader of the bunch, ordering everyone about, telling them what to do and how to do it. My creativity was truly appreciated.

Well, maybe not appreciated by everyone. There was the time I saw my grandmother twist the head off a chicken, so I told my cousin we ought to help Nana and twist the heads off all the chickens. There we were, no more than five years old, chickens tucked between our scraped knees and twisting and twisting and twisting. My grandmother came out of the house with a load of wash and there were all her chickens, their heads cocked to one side, listing drunkenly about the yard. Looking back on it and thinking of the ferocious temper of my grandmother, I don't know how my cousin and I escaped alive.

But those wonderful years ended soon enough when my mother decided she'd had enough of her mother-in-law's renowned temper.

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My mother (who could defeat any temper with her rock-hard stubbornness) on one fateful day informed my father that she had bought a piece of land and he was going to build her a house on it. In my parents' household we all liked to pretend that my father was the one who made the rules. I think the rule he made was, Give Mama what she wants or she'll make life hell for all of us. Whatever his thoughts, he wasn't fool enough to say no to my mother when she had *that* look in her eye.

Whatever the philosophy behind it, the result was the same: We moved. In that one day I lost all those cousins and grandparents; I lost the chickens and the cows and the possum that lived in a barrel in the barn. I lost blackberry bushes that gave me chiggers and I lost apple trees to climb. In one day I went from being the champion of all, a person of prime importance, to being the child-who-must-be-kept-down.

In a matter of hours I went from having the most exciting life in the world to having a life of supreme dullness. My mother and sister were cut out of the same cloth. They were good. Good, good, good.

*What* is more boring than good? My mother was always saying, "Don't eat too much chocolate. It'll make you sick" or "I can't look at that right now. I have too much work to do" or "Hayden, you cannot read that book now. You haven't finished cleaning the bathroom." On and on she went. There was a right time and a wrong time for everything. But as far as I could tell the right time for exuberance never came.

Didn't people ever want to do something that wasn't on the schedule? Was I the only one in the world who actually wanted to eat as much chocolate as I could hold and damn the consequences?

Looking back, I think that some people are afraid to break out of the rules. Maybe they're afraid that if they break the rules, they'll lose all self-control and become something horrible—in my mother's case that would be a woman with a dirty bathroom floor.

Whatever was behind it all, again the result was the same: I was put in a bubble of isolation and left there alone. I had to try to remember to sit up straight, walk sedately, and never, never be rambunctious. I tried, but it's difficult to control yourself when you're a child. I guess an awful lot of me slipped out because I heard

the phrase “You know how you are” a few million times. Sometimes I got the feeling that my parents thought that if they didn’t keep me under rigid control every minute of every day that I’d lose it altogether. Maybe I’d start eating chocolate and laughing and just plain *never stop*. Maybe they feared not being able to reel me back in if they just let me go ahead and *be myself*.

Now that I’m an adult and know all about adult things (uh-huh, sure) I know that my parents were not creative and I was. If they bought something that needed assembly, they read the box and put it together in the way the manufacturer wanted them to. If I bought something, I felt that reading the instructions was cheating. And if I couldn’t put it together easily, it was quite ordinary for me to jump up and down on the box and say all the dirty words I knew—which, thankfully, weren’t many.

My punishment for box jumping or any infraction of the peace rules was to be talked to “for my own good.” Never in my life have I understood that phrase. When someone says this is “for your own good” it always, always, *always* means that someone is trying to make you openly acknowledge his or her superior power.

So, anyway, how did I survive these spirit killers? How did I survive being dragged to the preacher so he could talk to me because I was “different”? How did I survive hearing my mother ask my relatives if they had any idea what she could “do” with me?

I did the best I could by escaping into a land of stories.

I read incessantly. When my mother made me vacuum the bedroom I shared with my sister, she was more concerned with the length of time I spent vacuuming than with how clean the floor was after I was finished. All she ever checked was to see that the light bulbs were spotless, so I learned to clean the bulbs, then I’d get in the closet with a book, a flashlight, and the vacuum and sit down for a forty-five-minute read. Since my mother had the ears of a bat, I had to make sure the suction was going on and off, so I sat there putting various parts of my face to the hose, sucking and reading, sucking and reading. I did learn that one must make sure the hose end is clean or one’s face gets awfully dirty, then one’s mother makes one actually clean the room. Gag!

So, anyway, I learned to get round the work, work, work, clean,

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clean, clean ethic of my mother's house and make time for the books I loved so much. I read nonfiction even then. I read about heroes, about men and women who had done things and accomplished things in their lives.

There was Daniel Boone and Jackie Cochran and, oh sigh, Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton. There was the most magnificent queen who ever lived, Elizabeth I, and there were girls who dressed as boys and became spies. Oh, but the list was endless.

I didn't realize it then but what I was doing was researching. Yes, that's right, researching. Now I receive reader letters saying in awe, How do you ever do all the research necessary to write historical novels? Okay, let's have a reality check here. This woman has written me that she has a full-time job and three children under the age of five and she wants to know how *I* research a romantic novel. I want to ask *her* how she survives each day.

I guess I'm explaining so much about my life to make you, my readers, think I'm a normal, sane person because something happened to me that isn't normal and maybe not even sane.

You see, I fell in love with one of my fictional characters.

Up until I started writing a book titled *Forever*, I liked to think I was a perfectly well-adjusted person. Maybe I did have a lot of stories running through my head, but to me, the people who don't have these stories are missing something.

Anyway, I like to think I was happy and relatively well adjusted. I was thirty-seven years old, had a great career, had friends, and best of all, I had met a wonderful man named Steven.

Steve was a dream come true: smart, funny, talented, caring. If I'd made him up he couldn't have been better. And he adored me. He laughed at all my jokes, thought I was beautiful, smart. You name it, everything was perfect between us. There was no question that finally, at last, I wanted to get married. When he asked me to marry him, while riding in a hansom cab through Central Park, I threw my arms around his neck and said, "Yes, yes, yes!" with such enthusiasm that I embarrassed Steve.

But that night, actually, early Sunday morning, I awoke at 3 A.M. with an IDEA. That's unusual for me. When I first started to write I was plagued with Ideas, and I was so afraid that I'd forget them



when I awoke that I got out of bed and wrote all night. But after I'd written about ten books, I'd wake up with an Idea, then fall back asleep.

But that night of my marriage proposal, with my left hand weighted down by Steven's ring, I had an IDEA. It was so big that I couldn't relax against Steve's warm body and go back to sleep.

So, tiptoeing, I got out of bed and went to my computer to write down my thoughts. What I was really thinking about wasn't so much a story but a character. Well, okay, a man. A wonderful man, a man unlike any I'd ever written about before. A man who was more real to me than any other man I'd created.

In my books, I write about one family, the Tavistocks. When I first started writing, every time I finished a book I'd get depressed because I knew that I'd never again see the characters in my book. So one day I had the brilliant idea of writing four books about four brothers in one family. However, I had not taken into consideration that when I finished the series I would be quadruply depressed. When I reached this point, the only way I could figure how to recover was to write more books about the same family.

At the time I didn't realize what I was getting into. As the number of books about this family increased, the mail brought me thousands of requests for family trees. And people kept pointing out that I'd have a man and woman with a little boy in one book and in the next book their child would be a girl. I had to buy professional genealogy software to keep up with all of my people, since within a few years I had over four hundred characters, all related to one another.

Over the years I had come to love my Tavistocks and their cousins, and they had become very real to me. So on the night of my engagement it wasn't unusual for me to start writing about a man named Tavistock.

I named him James Tavistock, to be called Jamie, and he was a great big gorgeous sixteenth-century Scotsman running around in the Tavistock plaid, and the heroine was a modern woman of today who travels back in time to meet him.

When Steve awoke the next morning I was still at my computer, trying to get down dialogue and notes for the book. He'd never seen