

HEARTWAR

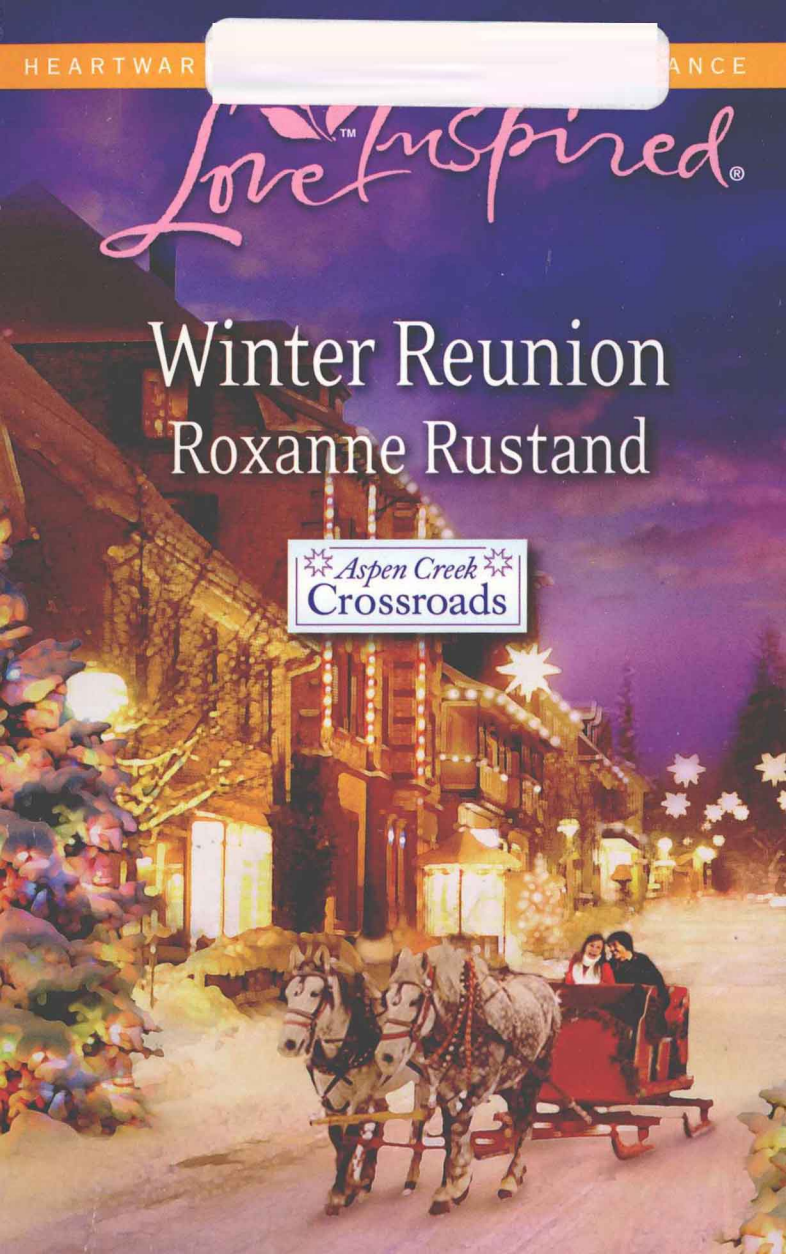
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Love Inspired™

Winter Reunion

Roxanne Rustand

★ *Aspen Creek* ★
Crossroads



Dear Reader,

I hope you've enjoyed your visit to Aspen Creek! This is the first book in the ASPEN CREEK CROSSROADS series, involving the members of a book club in a scenic little Wisconsin town. Though my next book, *Murder at Granite Falls* (April 2011) will be a Love Inspired Suspense title, I can't wait to come back to Aspen Creek after that, for Sophie's story!

Writing for Steeple Hill Books has been a dream come true. I love writing about people like Devlin and Beth, who have encountered challenging times in their lives and find it difficult to let go of the past. Finding a way to forgive, heal and move on can free all of us to enjoy a happy and abundant life...but sometimes it's just so hard to take that step. I have always found such comfort and encouragement in the following Bible verses, and if you are hurting inside, perhaps it will touch your heart, too.

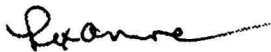
"Don't worry about anything. Instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Jesus Christ."

—Philippians 4:6, 7

I love to hear from readers. If you are online, you can reach me at www.roxannerustand.com or through my "All Creatures Great and Small Blog," where authors and readers can exchange stories about their favorite

friends with feathers, fin or fur...and horses, too! The blog is at roxannerustand.blogspot.com. You can also e-mail me at www.roxannerustand.yahoo.com. My snail mail address is P.O. Box 2250, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403-2550.

Wishing you many blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Roxanne", followed by a long, thin horizontal flourish.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Beth treasures her friendships with the book club members who meet at her store, and considers these women her extended family. Are you geographically close to your family? Far away? What people are you closest to emotionally, and why?
2. Beth worries when she realizes that her ex-husband and her mother are going to be back in town at the same time. Do you have to deal with awkward relationships when certain friends or members of your family are together? How do you think Beth should have handled this situation?
3. What were Devlin's reasons for wanting a divorce? Were they valid? Is divorce ever an appropriate option? Why or why not? Do you think his emotional issues, from what he experienced in the war in the Middle East, played a part in his reactions and decisions when back in the States?
4. Devlin struggles with feeling at ease when back in his hometown. Do you think this is a common reaction for those coming home from the military? Is there a way you could ease the adjustment for someone in your own community?
5. Devlin believes that God has ignored his prayers for years—even his heartfelt prayers during

battle. How does God answer prayers? How has He answered yours? Were you ever surprised by a perfect answer to your prayers—an answer or solution that you hadn't even thought to ask for?

6. Maura has urged Beth to reveal her biggest, most painful secret to Dev. Should Maura just go ahead and tell him? Is it better to keep secrets that may cause someone pain? Does Devlin have a right to know this one?
7. Frank longs to be an active, contributing member of society again, and though he has been a bachelor all of his life, he has strong feelings for Reva. Do you know of older couples who have finally found the love they've always longed for?
8. Elana is frightened and wary, after her past experiences. Does your community have services for abused women like her? How might you help someone who is, or was, in Elana's situation?
9. Several characters in this book are hoping for a fresh start in life, after troubling circumstances waylaid their plans. Are there community colleges or social services in your area that are designed to reeducate and then help people reenter the work force?
10. Vivian was not a loving, attentive mother, but she seems to have become a different person as she

grew older—more giving of her time and more involved in her church. What might have spurred her to change? Can a person ever undo all of their past wrongs? Is there anything that cannot be forgiven? Vivian and Devlin were still estranged at the time of her death. How might she have handled her relationship with Devlin better in the last few years of her life?

11. Book club member Sophie has been widowed for ten months, and is still mourning the loss of her late husband. She notes that some people think she's had plenty of time to move on emotionally. Do you agree? How long does it take to feel "normal" again after the loss of a loved one? What can friends and family do to help? Do you think it's better to bring the subject up, so the person can have a chance to talk about her feelings, or does it just make them feel worse?
12. Devlin returns to town, wanting a second chance at a relationship with Beth, and hoping to readjust to civilian life. What challenges do you think he will face in trying to do so? Since he walked away from Beth once before, do you think she can trust him to stay?



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to enjoy a sneak peek from
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Introducing DADDY BY CHRISTMAS by Patricia Thayer.

MIA caught sight of Jarrett when he walked into the open lobby. It was hard not to notice the man. In a charcoal business suit with a crisp white shirt and striped tie covered by a dark trench coat, he looked more Wall Street than small-town Colorado.

Mia couldn't blame him for keeping his distance. He was probably tired of taking care of her.

Besides, why would a man like Jarrett McKane be interested in her? Why would he want to take on a woman expecting a baby? Yet he'd done so many things for her. He'd been there when she'd needed him most. How could she not care about a man like that?

Heart pounding in her ears, she walked up behind him. Jarrett turned to face her. "Did you get enough sleep last night?"

"Yes, thanks to you," she said, wondering if he'd thought about their kiss. Her gaze went to his mouth, then she quickly glanced away. "And thank you for not bringing up my meltdown."

Jarrett couldn't stop looking at Mia. Blue was definitely her color, bringing out the richness of her eyes.

"What meltdown?" he said, trying hard to focus on what she was saying. "You were just exhausted from lack of sleep and worried about your baby."

He couldn't help remembering how, during the night, he'd kept going in to watch her sleep. How strange was that? "I hope you got enough rest."

She nodded. "Plenty. And you're a good neighbor for

coming to my rescue.”

He tensed. Neighbor? *What neighbor kisses you like I did?* “That’s me, just the full-service landlord,” he said, trying to keep the sarcasm out of his voice. He started to leave, but she put her hand on his arm.

“Jarrett, what I meant was you went beyond helping me.” Her eyes searched his face. “I’ve asked far too much of you.”

“Did you hear me complain?”

She shook her head. “You should. I feel like I’ve taken advantage.”

“Like I said, I haven’t minded.”

“And I’m grateful for everything...”

Grasping her hand on his arm, Jarrett leaned forward. The memory of last night’s kiss had him aching for another. “I didn’t do it for your gratitude, Mia.”

Gorgeous tycoon Jarrett McKane has never believed in Christmas—but he can’t help being drawn to soon-to-be-mom Mia Saunders! Christmases past were spent alone...and now Jarrett may just have a fairy-tale ending for all his Christmases future!

*Available December 2010,
only from Harlequin® Romance®.*

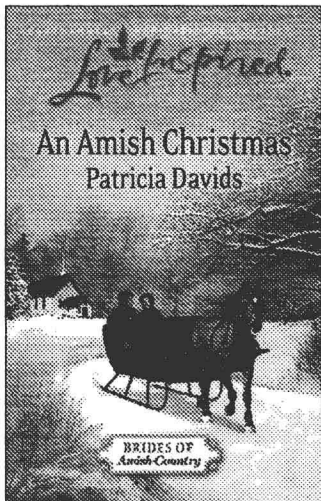
Love InspiredTM

When Karen Imhoff finds a beaten man lying unconscious in her Amish community, she doesn't hesitate to help. "John Doe" needs a place to stay while he regains his memory, and he quickly proves invaluable around the farm. But the handsome Englisher wreaks havoc with her emotions....

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"So how come you didn't remarry?" Dev asked.

"I just like my life as it is. I'm content, aren't you? We both ended up with what we wanted, or we'd be leading totally different lives right now." Beth was embarrassed and babbling, and couldn't seem to stop.

At his continued silence, she ventured a quick glance at him. At least he wasn't laughing.

Dev stared down at her, his eyes intent and searching her own. "I really enjoyed walking with you. Maybe another time?"

"I'd like that."

He strolled away and Beth continued on to her store, reining in the urge to look back.

Just a walk. A casual conversation. Nothing more. Yet she could still feel the tingle in the hand he'd held, still felt that little sense of loss when he'd released it.

There was no use denying it. Their old chemistry was still there, and it intensified every time she ran into him....

Books by Roxanne Rustand

Love Inspired

**Winter Reunion*

**Aspen Creek Crossroads*

Love Inspired Suspense

***Hard Evidence*

†Final Exposure

***Vendetta*

†Fatal Burn

***Wildfire*

†End Game

Deadly Competition

***Snow Canyon Ranch*

†Big Sky Secrets

ROXANNE RUSTAND

Roxanne Rustand lives in the country with her husband and a menagerie of pets, many of whom find their way into her books. She works part-time as a registered dietitian at a psychiatric facility, but otherwise you'll find her writing at home in her jammies, surrounded by three dogs begging for treats, or out in the barn with the horses. Her favorite time of all is when her kids are home—though all three are now busy with college and jobs.

This is her twenty-fourth novel, and the first in her Aspen Creek Crossroads series for Love Inspired. Her next book will be *Murder at Granite Falls* for Love Inspired Suspense, April 2011. *RT Book Reviews* nominated her for a Career Achievement Award in 2005, and she won the magazine's award for Best Superromance of 2006.

She loves to hear from readers! Her snail-mail address is P.O. Box 2550, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406-2550. You can also contact her at www.roxannerustand.com, at www.shoutlife.com/roxannerustand, or through her blog, where readers and writers talk about their pets, at roxannerustand.blogspot.com.

Winter Reunion

Roxanne Rustand



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**This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads
and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the
good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest
for your soul.”**

—*Jeremiah 6:16*

