

Love

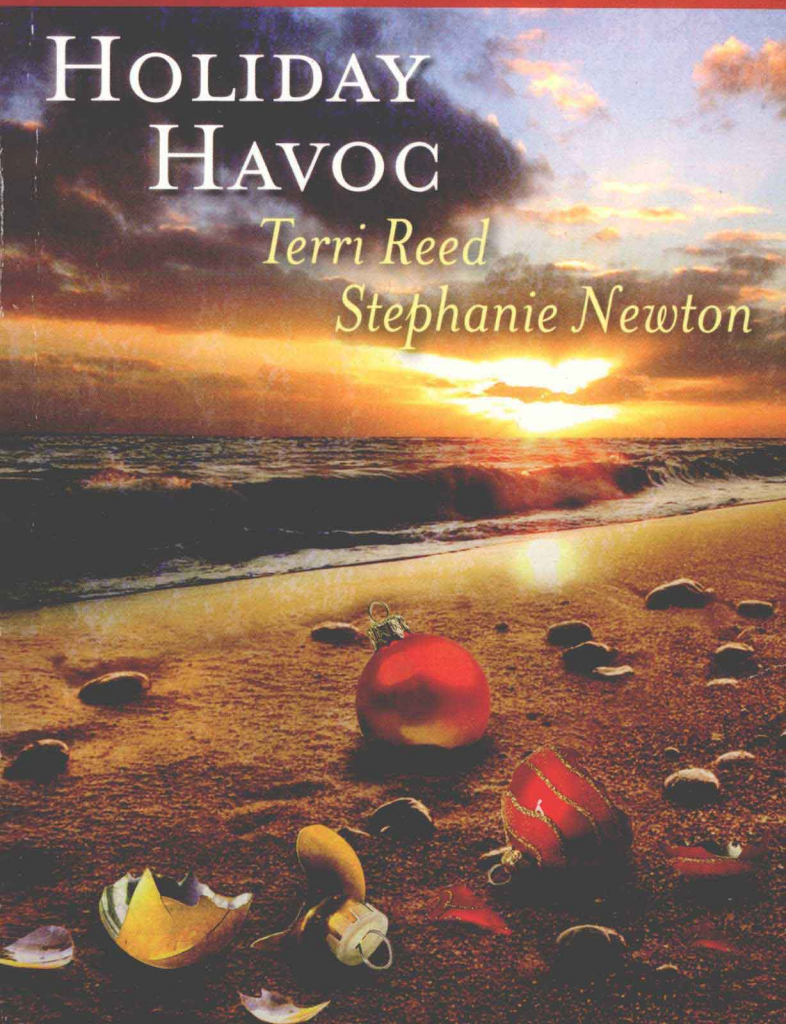
SUSPENSE

RIVETING INSPIRATIONAL ROMANCE

# HOLIDAY HAVOC

*Terri Reed*

*Stephanie Newton*



Dear Reader,

From the first day Maria walked onto a crime scene, I knew she was a character to be reckoned with. She would need a very special hero because Maria didn't really believe in love—at least not for her.

It took some meddlesome coworkers and the love of a very special child to bring Ben and Maria together under the Christmas tree.

I pray that your Christmas season is blessed with love and laughter. And that, like Maria, you have found that God's love isn't really scientific or rational, but that it's His gift to you, all the same.

Please visit my Web site at:  
[www.stephanienewtonbooks.com](http://www.stephanienewtonbooks.com)  
for more information, or e-mail me at  
[newtonwriter@gmail.com](mailto:newtonwriter@gmail.com).  
I love hearing from readers!

Merry Christmas,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Newton". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being capitalized and prominent.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Maria thinks she's got life figured out, but a surprise by her coworkers sends her reeling. Describe a time when you were surprised by life and had to scramble to figure out your next step.
2. How do you handle life's surprises—the good ones or bad ones?
3. Maria blamed Ben for her losing the scholarship that would've sent her to college. How does she later take responsibility?
4. Ben had to make a difficult choice, but chose to put his child in front of his career. How did his faith make it easier to make that choice?
5. Maria sees Ben's tattered Bible and thinks that he must be all right. What do you think? Is a man's dedication to studying the Bible an indicator of what kind of man he is?
6. Ben learns that he can open his heart to love. What does Maria learn at the end of the book that makes it possible for her to have a future with Ben?

# *Love Inspired®* **SUSPENSE**

## **TITLES AVAILABLE NEXT MONTH**

**Available December 7, 2010**

### **CHRISTMAS BODYGUARD**

*Guardians, Inc.*

**Margaret Daley**

### **THE SOLDIER'S MISSION**

**Lenora Worth**

### **NIGHT PREY**

**Sharon Dunn**

### **YULETIDE DEFENDER**

**Sandra Robbins**

# REQUEST YOUR FREE BOOKS!

**2 FREE RIVETING INSPIRATIONAL NOVELS  
PLUS 2 FREE MYSTERY GIFTS**

*Love Inspired.*  
**SUSPENSE**

**YES!** Please send me 2 FREE Love Inspired® Suspense novels and my 2 FREE mystery gifts (gifts are worth about \$10). After receiving them, if I don't wish to receive any more books, I can return the shipping statement marked "cancel". If I don't cancel, I will receive 4 brand-new novels every month and be billed just \$4.24 per book in the U.S. or \$4.74 per book in Canada. That's a saving of 20% off the cover price. It's quite a bargain! Shipping and handling is just 50¢ per book.\* I understand that accepting the 2 free books and gifts places me under no obligation to buy anything. I can always return a shipment and cancel at any time. Even if I never buy another book, the two free books and gifts are mine to keep forever.

123/323 IDN E7QZ

Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Address Apt. #

City State/Prov. Zip/Postal Code

Signature (if under 18, a parent or guardian must sign)

**Mail to Steeple Hill Reader Service:**

**IN U.S.A.:** P.O. Box 1867, Buffalo, NY 14240-1867

**IN CANADA:** P.O. Box 609, Fort Erie, Ontario L2A 5X3

Not valid for current subscribers to Love Inspired Suspense books.

**Want to try two free books from another series?**

**Call 1-800-873-8635 or visit [www.morefreebooks.com](http://www.morefreebooks.com).**

\* Terms and prices subject to change without notice. Prices do not include applicable taxes. Sales tax applicable in N.Y. Canadian residents will be charged applicable provincial taxes and GST. Offer not valid in Quebec. This offer is limited to one order per household. All orders subject to approval. Credit or debit balances in a customer's account(s) may be offset by any other outstanding balance owed by or to the customer. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery. Offer available while quantities last.

**Your Privacy:** Steeple Hill Books is committed to protecting your privacy. Our Privacy Policy is available online at [www.SteepleHill.com](http://www.SteepleHill.com) or upon request from the Reader Service. From time to time we make our lists of customers available to reputable third parties who may have a product or service of interest to you.

If you would prefer we not share your name and address, please check here. ☐

**Help us get it right**—We strive for accurate, respectful and relevant communications. To clarify or modify your communication preferences, visit us at [www.ReaderService.com/consumerschoice](http://www.ReaderService.com/consumerschoice).

LISUS10R



# SPECIAL EDITION

**USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR**

**MARIE FERRARELLA**

**BRINGS YOU ANOTHER  
HEARTWARMING STORY FROM**



When Lilli McCall disappeared on him after he proposed, Kullen Manetti swore never to fall in love again. Eight years later Lilli is back in his life, threatening to break down all the walls he's put up to safeguard his heart.

## UNWRAPPING THE PLAYBOY

*Available December  
wherever books are sold.*

**Visit Silhouette Books at [www.eHarlequin.com](http://www.eHarlequin.com)**

SSE65566R

## **Praise for Terri Reed**

"Kudos to Terri Reed for writing this entertaining and intriguing story."

-RT Book Reviews on *Her Christmas Protector*

"A first-rate mystery with a delightful heroine."

-RT Book Reviews on *Double Threat Christmas*

"In the exciting *Double Jeopardy*, Terri Reed does a terrific job of threading a ribbon of warmth throughout."

-RT Book Reviews

## **Praise for Stephanie Newton**

"Newton creates an intriguing mystery."

-RT Book Reviews on *Perfect Target*

"A nicely done romance...Newton's story is also a fascinating mystery."

-RT Book Reviews on *Moving Target*

"Plenty of action, an intriguing mystery and some familiar characters from previous stories."

-RT Book Reviews on *Smoke Screen*

## ***TERRI REED***

At an early age Terri Reed discovered the wonderful world of fiction and declared she would one day write a book. Now she is fulfilling that dream and enjoys writing for Steeple Hill Books. Her second book, *A Sheltering Love*, was a 2006 RITA® Award finalist and a 2005 National Readers' Choice Award finalist. Her book *Strictly Confidential*, book five of the Faith at the Crossroads continuity series, took third place in the 2007 American Christian Fiction Writers Book of the Year Award, and *Her Christmas Protector* took third place in 2008. She is an active member of both Romance Writers of America and American Christian Fiction Writers. She resides in the Pacific Northwest with her college-sweetheart husband, two wonderful children and an array of critters. When not writing, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends, gardening and playing with her dogs.

You can write to Terri at P.O. Box 19555 Portland, OR 97280. Visit her on the web at [www.loveinspiredauthors.com](http://www.loveinspiredauthors.com), leave comments on her blog at [www.ladiesofsuspense.blogspot.com](http://www.ladiesofsuspense.blogspot.com) or email her at [terrreed@sterling.net](mailto:terrreed@sterling.net).

## ***STEPHANIE NEWTON***

penned her first suspense story—complete with illustrations—at the age of twelve, but didn't write seriously until her youngest child was in first grade. She lives in northwest Florida, where she gains inspiration from the sugar-white sand, the blue-green water of the Gulf of Mexico and the many unusual and interesting things you see when you live on the beach. You can find her most often enjoying the water with her family, or at their church, where her husband is the pastor. Visit Stephanie at her website, [www.stephanienewton.net](http://www.stephanienewton.net), or send an email to [newtonwriter@gmail.com](mailto:newtonwriter@gmail.com).



# HOLIDAY HAVOC

*Terri Reed*  
*Stephanie Newton*



Steeple  
Hill●

Published by Steeple Hill Books™

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."



**Steeple  
Hill®**

**STEEPLE HILL BOOKS**

ISBN-13: 978-0-373-44417-5

**HOLIDAY HAVOC**

Copyright © 2010 by Harlequin Books S.A.

The publisher acknowledges the copyright holders of the individual works as follows:

**YULETIDE SANCTUARY**

Copyright © 2010 by Terri Reed

**CHRISTMAS TARGET**

Copyright © 2010 by Stephanie Newton

All rights reserved. Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the editorial office, Steeple Hill Books, 233 Broadway, New York, NY 10279 U.S.A.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

This edition published by arrangement with Steeple Hill Books.

® and TM are trademarks of Steeple Hill Books, used under license. Trademarks indicated with ® are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office, the Canadian Trade Marks Office and in other countries.

[www.SteepleHill.com](http://www.SteepleHill.com)

**Printed in U.S.A.**



Recycling programs  
for this product may  
not exist in your area.

## CONTENTS

YULETIDE SANCTUARY	7
Terri Reed	
CHRISTMAS TARGET	121
Stephanie Newton	



# **YULETIDE SANCTUARY**

**Terri Reed**



**To Teal and Kim, for being my sisters and loving  
my children so well.**

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit  
within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your  
flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

—*Ezekiel 36:26*





## ONE

From the top of a sandy berm skirting the beach, the man barely noticed the bitter cold or the churning surf of the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Oregon. His focus remained on his target.

A feral smile curved his scarred mouth. He couldn't have planned their reunion better. Seemed fate was on his side. Finally. His prey, who'd ruined his life, was alone and vulnerable. Just how he liked his women.

She was just up ahead, walking down the deserted beach with a sketch pad tucked under her arm. Her dark hair whipped about her head in the chilling December wind.

Time was of the essence. It would only be a matter of hours before his ruse was discovered.

His pulse sped up as he shuffled through the tall scrub grass, keeping his gaze fixed on her. On Lauren.

The burning need to avenge his pain seethed white-hot in his veins. *Patience*, he cautioned himself. He had to capture her quickly and carefully in case some nosy busybody looking out the window of their insulated, Christmas-festooned little home decided to interfere.

He stuck his hand inside the pocket of his long, black leather coat and fingered the syringe of ketamine he'd