



# Charming the Troublemaker

*Pepper D. Basham*

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## **Charming the Troublemaker** Pepper D. Basham

Rainey Mitchell is doing just fine. She has a great job helping children in need, her family is around her, she is mother to a fabulous little girl, and is getting over the betrayal of her ex-husband. Dr. Alex Murdock is not doing so well, as he is forced to work at a rural university, his life is full of secrets surrounding his family, and he has to start over in a new town. Luckily, Rainey, the daughter of his landlord, is there to get him settled. Rainey just wants to stay away from the new professor, who has the same charm as her ex.

Unfortunately, they seem to need each other. Rainey needs his grant-writing ability to save her program, and Alex is terrible at the lecturing at which Rainey excels. The two must work together to fulfill their goals, but will they be able to do it? Rainey's insecurities and Alex's obsession with protecting his family could be their undoing.

**Verdict Romance** readers will love Basham's (*A Twist of Faith*) well-written love story filled with suspense, mystery, and a loving family. Jessica M. Streffling, U.S. Court of Appeals, Federal Circuit, Washington, DC

**General Content (G) (I):** Contains little or no; sexual dialogue or situations, violence, or strong language. May also contain some content of an inspirational/religious nature.

## **Charming the Troublemaker Details**

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# From Reader Review Charming the Troublemaker for online ebook

## Savanna Kaiser says

Once again, Pepper Basham had me laughing and tearing up with another adorable story in the Mitchell's Crossroads series. I was delighted to be back in the Blue Ridge Mountains with the Mitchell family to watch Rainey's story unfold. Only, it's so much more than that. I fell in love with the whole cast of characters and wished for each of them a "Happily-Ever-After".

Rainey's a mom on a mission, ambitious and strong. The handsome, new doctor in town quickly flips her world upside down. Awww, Alex. ;) They're both searching for happiness, purpose, and healing. Rainey is struggling to forgive her ex and afraid to open her heart to someone new. Alex carries his own baggage from the past, including a tense relationship with his father and shame over previous mistakes. They both long for a new beginning and "Charming the Troublemaker" is all about second chances. What's not to love about that, right? :)

If you're new to this author's work, you'll undoubtedly be entertained by her witty dialogue, charming characters, and rich settings. There's always a beautiful Spiritual message woven delicately throughout. And the romance will leave you blushing! :) I can't wait to read her next book!

I received a free copy from the author. No review, positive or otherwise, was required—all opinions are my own.

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## Andrea says

I more than LOVE this book!!! Pepper Basham has become a "read whatever she writes" author for me. Really, she's that good! In this book you find two people with very guarded hearts, cautiously chipping away at each other's walls. Learning to trust and love again. I'll share a couple of highlights with you. Rainey, "Who was this guy? So arrogant and yet quick to beat up himself? Such a sweetheart to her little daughter? She was beginning to find this anomaly much too intriguing for her own good."

Alex, "She laughed. Loudly and freely. He'd only heard it once before but he wanted to hear the sound again and again. "

This book is full of family, love, romance, a surprising bit of suspense, and fun. I have laughed and cried with the people contained within these pages. I feel as if I know each person. I love Mama Mitchell and her ability to see what each person needs. I want to sit in her kitchen and talk with her.

This is the second book in the series, I think it could be read as a stand-alone, but why would anyone want to do that? You will want to read A Twist of Faith for a proper introduction to the Mitchell family.

I highly recommend this fun, loving, Faith-filled book.

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## Beth Erin says

Full review on Faithfully Bookish

Rainey Mitchell is heartsore and insecure over her ex-husband's betrayal yet determined to protect her daughter Sarah's heart... and hopefully her own heart as well! Alex Murdock is hiding yet he doesn't realize how lost he really is. Despite everything Alex has been through, he is willing to keep moving forward and seeking answers to the questions that ache inside.

Mrs. Mitchell seems to naturally gather folks up in a big hug, fill their bellies with delicious southern food, and make each person feel special, understood, and truly embraced. I can't say enough about this series. I highly recommend this book and eagerly anticipate future installments!

I borrowed this book through Kindle Unlimited.  
The opinions expressed are my own.

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### **Rebecca says**

"He had 'flirt' tattooed all over his high-watt grin."

Rainey Mitchell knows that Dr. Alex Murdock is trouble with a capital "T". His smooth, cocky, debonair presence has Rainey scrambling to locate her own personal space. After all, they are co-workers, and she has been recruited to ingratiate him into the Communication Disorders Department at Blue Ridge University, but there is only so much suave that her poor dismantled heart can survive.

Alex Murdock has met a lot of women in his day, but the lovely blond speech pathologist with the adorable little girl motivates Alex to become a better man. Besides, her crazy family makes him want to belong. As if sensing that Alex has her in his sights, Rainey doesn't make his perusal easy, but when her beloved clinic loses its funding and Rainey discovers what a successful grant writer that Alex has been, the prospect of coming to her aid gives Alex a much needed boost of optimism.

"Charming the Troublemaker" is filled to the brim with sweet, saucy Appalachian banter that will sneak into the crevices of your heart like a thick mountain fog. And who says that "kisses are overrated"?

I received a copy of this book from the author. The opinions stated above are entirely my own.

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### **Toni Shiloh says**

Alex Murdock is adorkably charming. Y'all, this book had me laughing and just heart melting over the surprisingly sweet comments Alex makes. He's the perfect hero. You know a complete mess, meets a girl worth knowing, gets that amazing grace from God, and turns into this adorkably charming hero.

If you don't know what I'm taking about then you need to pick up Charming the Troublemaker. It's stamped with Ms. Basham's signature Brittlachin humor and warmth of family and friends.

Not to mention a dash of suspense. This completely surprised me and hooked me in. I did not see some of those hits coming. All in all, another two thumbs up from this reader and continued fan for life.

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## Shona says

Adorkable Alex. Rainey and her sweet little girl, Sarah. Mix them up with a life in the mountains, challenging work at college and a side serving of mystery. All together you end up with a cracking story that moves along at a good pace, never leaving you much time to wonder about reading another chapter - of course you will!

This is a fantastic romance which is made all the more real by the relatable characters. Rainey's self esteem has taken loads of knocks from her ex husband and she doesn't trust easily. Alex is a confident handsome man who seems like he's too good to be true - so she doesn't trust him. I loved their story and Alex's interactions with Sarah were so sweet - a man who knows about 'my little pony'!

Another winning read from this author and I'm looking forward to the next Mitchell story with anticipation.

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## Chautona Havig says

Just What Makes Troublemakers So Crazy Charming, Anyway?

Maybe it was the fact that I just got back from this part of the country.

But I don't think so.

I think it's because somehow Pepper Basham manages to take all the things that make me cringe in books and not even care about them. You know, kisses, and tingles, and warm fuzzies, and those never-ending kisses. Did I mention the kisses? Seriously, Fred Savage didn't have to put up with anything in *The Princess Bride*.

No, I'm not exaggerating. Seriously, how many times did I have to swipe the screen to get past kisses that sizzled more than bacon in a cast-iron skillet? Oh, and let me tell you: Rainey can wield one with skills that would totally impress Rapunzel. Just sayin'!

But she did it. The ornery woman did it. I sat there riveted to a screen that only got quick swipes when the spit-swappin' got a little heavy for these innocent mother-of-nine's eyes.

She did it with things like characters who steal your heart.

Like little girls who are just too sweet for words—little girls who remind me of a combination of both of my granddaughters. Or how about heroes who are flawed but oh, so willing to brandish a sword anyway? Spunky girls who are just broken enough to make you want to give them every bit of drippy romance they probably need to get past their... well... pasts!

She did it with a supporting cast that makes you feel right at home. Seriously, I am convinced Mama Mitchell is behind the reason that my trek to Denny's at 2:30 a.m. in our cold wind (my version of the freezer, I assure you) failed. Bug night.

Can't have food for another hour, so here I sit back at the Lighthouse, writing this review to earn some food.

She wanted it done right. I'm sure of it. And she'll make sure the cook over there gets my BLT right. I'm sure of it.

And she did it with lines that made me snicker: Lucky for him she spoke fluent jerk.

Guffaw: She twirled her pen in her hand. "Coffee? Tea? A conscience?"

And even managed to throw in one of my favorite movie lines... a nice little ditty about fitting into pants... and my most hated movie ending line ever. Yeah. Rescues him right back. Seriously? She did that?

And dad burn it, but she made it work.

Jerk.

Okay, not really. But kind of. I'll admit it right here. I was so glad I bit the bullet and requested a review copy from CelebrateLit. She might regret it right about now, but hey. I call 'em like I see 'em.

And then she tied it all up in one lovely, perfect little one-liner bow: "I suddenly feel ready to fight a novel full of dragons."

Sigh.

Look, if you hate mush as much as I do, and you really hate skipping over kisses because you can't stand to read them, this isn't the book for you. It just isn't. Then again, I would have to tell you this book isn't for me. It's not.

But it so is. Only Pepper Basham can write almost 300 pages of utter mushy drivel and make me glad I read it.

In fact, only Pepper Basham can do that and make me eager to read her next one—mush and all.

But if, after reading this review, she gets the deluded idea that she'll convert me to utter romantic nonsense... well, she'll be one very disappointed lady.

However, thanks to great characters and witty dialogue, she's converted me to hers.

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## **Carole Jarvis says**

Reviewed at The Power of Words: <http://bit.ly/2zWYTLj>

Yes, it's entirely possible to fall in love with a fictional family, and that's how I feel about the Mitchells. I am so glad that *A Twist of Faith* now has a sequel because this family just begs for more stories and time spent together, especially with Mama Mitchell. Here's hoping for many more to come!

Pepper Basham is an excellent writer who knows how to spin an entertaining, moving story – and she has become one of my favorites. *Charming the Troublemaker* is filled with wit, charm, romantic chemistry, and even a little suspense – all beautifully wrapped up in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Appalachia.

Although I live in the Atlanta suburbs, my heritage is the mountains of North Georgia, so I found the Appalachian setting especially appealing. Mama Mitchell feels like someone I've known all my life, and I believe she might have a little of my grandmother in her. Rainey and the whole Mitchell clan are so very appealing and real.

The attraction between Rainey and Alex is easily felt, yet to categorize this as a simple romance doesn't come close to doing it justice. There's a lot of complexity in these characters beneath the surface – and their past creates some rocky moments in their relationship. Take Rainey's ex-husband, Gray, for instance ... "If Granny's saying about 'pretty is as pretty does' was true, Gray's insides resembled what the cows left behind." It's easy to understand how the ultimate betrayal colored future relationships for Rainey.

Alex goes on my favorite leading men list, and his relationship with Rainey's daughter, Sarah, is one of my favorite parts. Sarah simply steals the show – and this reader's heart as well. I loved how the author incorporated such a wide variety of scenes and emotions: unbelievably funny scenes (watch for Underoos and you'll know what I mean) ... tension-filled scenes ... and incredibly poignant scenes, like when Alex went to church and was challenged by a message about grace, as well as the Mitchell family singing.

There's no other way to say it ... I simply adored Rainey and Alex. Rainey with her determination to save the speech-language pathology center, and her reluctantly changing attitudes toward Alex. I loved the gradual peeling back of layers that exposed a good-hearted, caring and protective man of depth.

And then there's the spiritual element. I admire Pepper Basham for creating a story where people not only live out their faith daily, but they talk about it. Faith is essential to their very being. Alex questions his relationship with God – Why would he think God would listen to some superficial failure from a broken family and a damaged present? – and through Alex's struggles, we see the God who accepts us exactly as we are – sins, failings, shortcomings and all.

Highly recommended.

I was provided a copy of this book through Celebrate Lit. The opinions expressed in this review are entirely my own.

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## **Courtney Clark says**

I don't mean to be bossy, but ADD THIS TO YOUR TBR NOW!

Since the very first book of this series, *A Twist of Faith*, I have been interested in Rainey's story. Learning hers would be a "loose" retelling of *North and South* (Elizabeth Gaskell) AND that Rainey would be paired with Alex Murdock, an interesting if frustrating person in book 1, I was ecstatic!!! I mean, woohoo because I <3 the book & miniseries, and anything Pepper writes is a #mustread, magical romance.

While the humor is laugh-out-loud and the family drama endearing, a most intriguing new-to-Pepper's-books element is present in *Charming the Troublemaker*: SUSPENSE! A few surprises and moments of suspense add a good measure of intensity to this Appalachian rom-com full of love and heart.

The hero of this story has been dubbed #AdorkableAlex --- and for good reason! His hilarity and flirty manner guards a humble heart that needs a little nudging to find an inner hero, and the people of Ransom,

ESPECIALLY the Mitchells, are the ones to help him find that belonging. When he is determined to help or get involved in something, his whole heart jumps in, and it is just so endearing. And have I mentioned he likes Hallmark movies?! #swoon

Rainey Mitchell is the kind of friend you want to have... fiercely protective and discerning, yet adorably clueless about her own value. Her independence is a contrast with some of the baggage and insecurities she carries, and her journey toward a new confidence is wonderfully spurred on by her friendship with Alex. Her little girl, Sarah, is cute from start to finish! And when Sarah and Alex are together on the page, it's just precious.

The swoony romance is "I NEED A FREEZER" level on multiple occasions! (Pepper has mad kissing book skills). Even through that, however, Alex is EVER the gentleman. And Rainey has a few surprises up her sleeve with her sassiness! Let's just say it's fun to see Rainey catch Alex off guard.

More than the romance and the dynamic of these two lead characters, a strong theme of security, honesty, and life direction found ONLY IN JESUS centers this story as it winds its way toward a happy-ending. The emotional moments connected to this faith thread were the most joyous parts of the story. Mama Mitchell was often a tool of wisdom and grace for this purpose, and I just wanted to hug her. And eat her cookin'.

There are so many little things to love about Charming the Troublemaker. Like the walkie talkies. And the kisses. And names of a sleek sports car and practical truck! (Marilyn and Indiana, respectively) And all the little North and South parallels you "have to look hard" for that added to the story in just the right ways. And the Mitchell clan with all their hometown love. This is one family I will happily revisit in these pages and, hopefully, in stories to come for a long while.

Thank you to the author and publisher, Bling! Romance, for the complimentary review copy. This is my honest review.

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## **Rachel says**

Another winner by the talented Pepper Basham! And we're back with the wonderful Mitchell family! Loved it!

We learn a little about Rainey and Alex in the first book of the series, A Twist of Faith. This book finds their stories more fleshed out. Rainey is very wounded from her ex-husband's betrayal and Alex is trying to overcome his playboy past. As a dashing handsome and annoyingly flirtatious male, Alex doesn't stand a chance with Rainey at first. But Alex is drawn to Rainey from the beginning, so he does his best to win her over. It doesn't hurt his cause that he adores Rainey's daughter, Sarah, and Sarah adores him back. :) Will Alex break down her walls or will the secret he is protecting tear them apart forever?

I loved the always present humor and humorous situations (think underoos - so hysterical... LOL:D). I loved the Mitchell family support - Mama Mitchell is always there for her kids. I loved the swoon worthy, romantic sparkle and sizzle between Rainey and Alex as well as the tenderness Alex has for Sarah. And I liked that there was a light touch of mystery and suspense in the background to help balance out the story.

Don't miss out on this wonderful addition to Pepper's heartfelt, romantic, Blue Ridge Mountain stories!



\*Thanks to CelebrateLit for a complimentary copy of this book. I was not paid or required to write a positive review and all opinions stated are my own.\*

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### **Trisha Robertson (Joy of Reading) says**

Alex Murdock is such a charming, adorkable character. We first met him in *Twist of Faith* and I'm so glad that Pepper brought him back, so we could get to know him better! Under his facade of flirtatious quips, lies a wounded heart that is just crying out for someone to understand him. He has to first learn who he is in God, before he can really give his heart fully. Alex is quite the sweetheart, once you give him a chance and get to know him.

Rainey reminded me of a best-friend. She is fiercely loyal to her family and those she considers her friends. Her trust may be hard-won, but worth the effort. She has a huge heart for the community, especially the children in the community. She is willing to learn how to write grants and even step outside her comfort zone to earn the funds to see that the TLC center isn't closed.

A favorite character of mine in the Mitchell Crossroads series is Mama Mitchell. She is like the proverbial 'Secret Sauce'. Her strong faith, her wit and wisdom, and of course her amazing cooking. Mama Mitchell is a shining example of loving others right where they are, loving them to Jesus and back.

This wonderful book is chucked full of amazing quotes, surprising twists, amusing quips, and the love of God and Family.

If you haven't yet read one of Pepper Basham's books, you are missing out! Do yourself a favor and pick this book up. You will be glad you did! I give *Charming the Troublemaker* 5-stars and highly recommend this book to any and all who enjoy reading Christian Fiction.

(I receive complimentary books for review from publishers, publicists, and/or authors, including Netgalley. I am not required to write positive reviews. The opinions I have expressed are my own.)

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### **Carrie Schmidt (Reading is My SuperPower) says**

I have one word for you: Underoos.

Okay two more: #AdorkableAlex (does it count as one or two when it's a hashtag?)

And now I flail. Because no review in the world can do justice to how funny and sassy and SWOONY and sweet this story really is. It's just truly impossible for anyone to describe the hilarity, the heart, the KISSES that make *Charming the Troublemaker* so ... well...charming.

Rainey is the new-best-friend-you-wish-lived-next-door, her sass and strength and sweetness making her one of my fave Pepper Basham heroines (second only to Easley Barrett of 'I've squished a grandpa' fame). Her daughter Sarah is completely adorable in every way possible, and when Sarah and Alex share the page they steal the show – and your heart – without even trying. (oh be still my heart, the My Little Pony cutie mark scene) And then there's Rainey and Alex together... just go ahead and clear your calendar (and your freezer)

because you will be riveted to the page with their heart-melting chemistry and need-a-freezer-or-snowdrift-stat kisses! Whooooee! Pepper Basham's trademark 'closet kisses' do not disappoint in this book either!

And the HUMOR. Oh my stars, I still have not recovered from the previously mentioned underoos scene. Makes me laugh out loud just thinking about it. It's not just the laugh-out-loud moments though that make Pepper Basham's wit so enjoyable. It's the little comment tucked away in this sentence, or the subtle romcom movie reference in that one, or an unexpected turn of a phrase that has you still chuckling long after you've left that scene behind.

But there's also such a heartwarming tone to this novel. From Rainey's self-worth and trust issues to Alex's vulnerable side & his search for his inner hero to Sarah's adorable sweetness ... to Mama Mitchell's words of wisdom. It all bundles together in a warm hug that whispers, "You are loved by God."

Um...and hello Pepper Basham, suspense writer! She (and Rainey) can wield an iron skillet for more than just good ole' Appalachian cooking! Excellent action scenes that will have your heart in your throat and your breath on hold.

Bottom Line: Pepper Basham has mastered the combination of humor, heat, and heart. And Charming the Troublemaker is a perfect example! Sit down on the front porch and relax a spell. Have a piece of Mama Mitchell's lasagna, a mug of Daphne's hot chocolate (with whipped cream & chocolate syrup), and a spare glass of sweet tea just in case. Laugh with Rainey, battle inner dragons with Alex, and watch an episode of My Little Pony with Sarah. You may even get roped into lighting a fire with Reese or mending fences with Trigg or sledding down the hill with Emma. What you will do for sure is enjoy a delightful story that warms you from the inside out! Can a flirt transform into a hero? Oh yes... indeed.

(I voluntarily reviewed a complimentary copy of this book)

first seen at Reading Is My SuperPower

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## **Staci says**

Thoroughly enjoyed the second book in the Mitchell's Crossroads Series.

Alex was definitely not likable in book one. As with many of us, there is something beneath the outer surface. In addition to Alex and Rainey, it was good to have some scenes with the sarcastic Emma and Rainey's sweet daughter Sarah.

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## **Krista Phillips says**

What a delightful read! With a sprinkle of sweet, a dash of suspense, and a whole shaker-full of spice, Basham's Charming the Troublemaker is the perfect blend of everything that makes a romance spectacular! – Krista Phillips, Author of The Engagement Plot

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## **Susan Snodgrass says**

Speech pathologist Rainey Mitchell is getting over the betrayal of her ex husband and raising her small daughter. Teaching at risk students in a small Appalachian college is her heart. Dr. Alex Murdock has been sent to this small college, but wishes to be elsewhere. Dr. Murdock is also a man of secrets. He is also a charmer and a flirt. Rainey wants no part of him. But sometimes God has plans for our lives that bear no resemblance to what we want. Trusting Him to bring His will to fruition in our lives is sometimes very difficult, though.

Pepper Basham has written a solid second novel in her Mitchell's Crossroads series. Her characters seemingly leap off the pages from the start and dive down deep into the reader's heart. The witty banter between Rainey and Alex brought many a smile to my face during the reading. The entire Mitchell family, in fact, have gotten down deep in my heart and I certainly hope we hear from the remaining ones. And the swoon factor here is just gravy. Loved every minute!

\*I was given a preview copy of this book. My opinion is entirely my own.

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