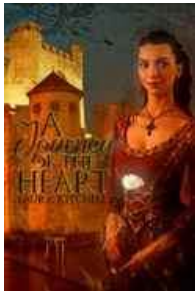


Writing Raw Author Profile: Laura Kitchell

Laura Kitchell holds a bachelor degree in business administration from Old Dominion University and works for Virginia's fifth largest law firm as a Senior Paralegal. Her passion, however, is writing romance. She has been a member of Romance Writers of America since 2004. Also in 2004, Laura joined a local chapter, Chesapeake Romance Writers, for which she now serves on the board as President and PRO Liaison. Her greatest dedication, besides to her family, is to her readers. She loves to hear from them, and encourages readers to contact her at laurakitchell@cox.net. You can also find her on MySpace at myspace.com/laurakitchell and at her website, laurakitchell.vpweb.com.



A Journey of the Heart

by Laura Kitchell

Lady Cytha is searching for her future when a black knight arrives to compete in her father's tournament. Sir Cimmerian knows he faces a challenge in earning the shy lady's trust, but he is determined to win her for his own. Despite every instinct telling her to avoid him, Cytha cannot fight his draw. Yet in her struggle to find inner strength and worth, she finds herself in a race for her life when a serial killer targets her. Sir Cimmerian must step from the tourney to become her knight in every way, but is it enough?

A Journey of the Heart is available in print at barnesandnoble.com and amazon.com and as an ebook at allromanceebooks.com. Look for her spy anthology, *Undercover Lover*, due for release in 2010.

Excerpt from: ***A Journey of the Heart***

Cytha sat and pivoted, finding him. "You are a quiet one." Her pulse raced. "You slipped right past without my knowing."

"You were deep in thought. It was easy."

His deep voice washed over her, exciting her nerves and making the hairs on her arms stand on end. She faced him. "I thought you would have gone on the hunt."

He shook his head.

"Do you dislike the sport?"

“On the contrary, I enjoy it immensely.”

She studied her fingers then cut a sideways glance at him. “I wanted to thank you for rescuing me last night.”

He bowed with grace.

“You did not come back.” She could not disguise regret in her voice and cringed inwardly. “How did you know I was in the stable?”

“I knew.”

“How could you?” Then she had a thought. “Or did you come to tend to your own horses and happen to see me there?”

He peered over the garden wall into the forest trees towering above the outer curtain wall. His lack of response irked her.

“Who are you? And why do you persist in making me the center of attention?”

“You will learn soon enough who I am. And I only insist you take your place, as your birth and position demand.”

“If I do not care, why should you?” Frustration made it much easier to question him than she anticipated. Of course, having his expression hidden helped. When he did not answer, she asked, “Why did you come here? Do you have something to say to me?”

Cimmerian faced her then squatted and rested his elbows on his knees. He said nothing. She yearned for the sound of his voice, which bothered her more than she cared to admit. Cytha let her anger show. “What do you want from me?”

He chuckled. “That. That is what I want from you.” His voice reverberated so low she had to strain to hear. “I knew there was fire in you.”

At a loss for words, she dropped her gaze. He had such a way about him, like a puzzle she could not figure out until she had all the pieces together.

“Do not become shy, Lady Cytha.”

“How is it you seem to know me?” Picking up her book, she studied the cover. She ran fingertips over embossed letters of the title.

“I do not. But I want to. And I cannot until you set aside your false notions about yourself.”

Anger flared anew as she searched the shadows of his hood. “False notions? You know nothing of me and my life.”

“I know enough.”



“And what happens if you succeed? What if I set aside my notions, as you put it? Will I become more marriageable?” She shook her head, her hand slicing through the air between them. “Would my age and reputation no longer matter? Will I suddenly be worthy?” She wanted to grab his tunic and shake him.

“You are.”

Those two simple words affected her like cold water in the face. Blinking, she fought tears. She wanted those words to be true. “When the tournament is over and you are gone, what then? Who will have me, sir? My reputation as an undesirable woman is already established.”

His hands at his sides, he stood and stared at her.

“Would you have me?” Her heart flip-flopped uncomfortably in her chest.

She averted her gaze, expecting rejection for her boldness. Waiting for it. But he did not move. He said nothing. Sending him a tentative glance, she let her vulnerability show. She took a great risk revealing it, but in that moment they shared complete honesty.

Cimmerian took two steps to stand at the edge of the wool tarp then squatted. She could glimpse a hint of features inside his hood, but could not discern his visage. She reached to push the covering, but he gently took her hand and pressed a kiss to her fingers. His firm lips caused her heart to skip a beat.

Whispering, she said, “Please tell me you are not a criminal, or something despicable that requires you to conceal your identity. Reassure me that all will turn out well.”

“I am worthy, milady. The grand marshal would not allow me to compete otherwise. As to what will happen, only God can know for certain.”

Releasing her hand and standing, he stared an instant longer then walked away without another word.