

COVER AUTHOR KAYLA PERRIN

Shades Of Reading: Please give the readers a brief bio on you the person and the writer.

Kayla Perrin: I have been writing since I could hold a pencil. Currently, I write romance, romantic suspense, and mainstream novels. I've also been trying my hand at funnier and more erotic stories. On a personal level, I'm a mom to a very active 13 month old who is keeping me extremely busy. I can't imagine my life without her, though. Chloe has added immense joy to my life.



SORMAG: Tell us about your current book?

PERRIN: *THE DELTA SISTERS* is a generational saga, set in New Orleans. It features mothers and daughters in the Grayson family. Sylvia Grayson, the matriarch of the family, is a pillar of the New Orleans black society. But she has deep secrets that she conceals beneath a veneer of propriety. She has a firm hold on her daughter, Olivia. When Olivia falls in love with a man her mother disapproves of, Sylvia finds a way to get him out of her life for good. This shatters the ties between mother and daughter. Fast forward twenty-seven years and Olivia is now a mother to a daughter in college. She has meddled in her Rachelle's life in ways Rachelle can't even imagine. And when that comes to light, a wedge is driven between Olivia and her daughter. All the while, a killer is watching from the shadows, determined to bring the secrets of the past to light.

SORMAG: What's your favorite scene from your book?

PERRIN: Hmm. I have to think! I guess I'd have to say my favorite scene is when Sylvia and

her houseman, Edward, go to see a voodoo priestess.

SORMAG: Which character in this book, did you have the most fun writing about?

PERRIN: I loved writing about Olivia, Sylvia's daughter. For one thing, I get to write about Olivia as she's a daughter trying to grow up under an overprotective mother. Then, I get to write about Olivia twenty-seven years later when she is a mother, dealing with her own issues trying to raise her daughter.

SORMAG: What would you like your readers to take away from your book?

PERRIN: I always want my readers to have a feeling of hope after reading my books. That love can conquer all, and that secrets just aren't worth keeping!

SORMAG: What's in the future for Kayla?

PERRIN: I've been working on some more erotic stories. I have a very hot novella coming out in an anthology in June called *PERFECT FOR THE BEACH*. I also have an interest in doing some funnier stories. I just completed revisions on a book called *THE BIG O*. It was supposed to come out this year, but now it's been pushed back to January 2005.

SORMAG: Any advice for writing mainstream novels?

PERRIN: When you're thinking of writing mainstream, the story simply has to be bigger. There's a romance in my story as well, but you need to have more plot, more characters. Stories within the story. I've got three women dealing with secrets and lies, plus an unsolved murder mystery and a

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killer who doesn't want it solved. You have to weave all the elements together, and that can be tricky.

SORMAG: If you have a family at home, how did you combine writing with your family commitments, and what kind of support did you have with family or friends?

PERRIN: I have to thank my own mother for her unending support. With a new baby, she was a great help to me when I needed to write. I've pretty much been home with Chloe; it was too soon to put her in daycare. But I definitely needed help so I could get work done. Writing around Chloe has been a huge challenge. Somehow, I've still been productive. (As I type, Chloe is on my lap.)

SORMAG: What satisfies you about writing?

PERRIN: I really love reaching the ending of a story. It's such a great feeling to know I've completed another tale. There was a time when I couldn't get to the end of a story because new ideas kept pestering me until I started writing them. So really, writing "The End" is a big accomplishment.

SORMAG: You are known for your romances, what do you like about writing romances vs mainstream?

PERRIN: I love the message of hope in romances. But in mainstream, you have much more free reign. You can do a lot more, the characters can be more flawed. I like that a lot. I still portray the same message, but with characters that appeal to a wider audience.

SORMAG: What advice would you give to someone whose book is about to be published?

PERRIN: I'd say try to connect with other writers as much as possible. There's a wealth of information to be had! Writing is a solitary profession, and it really helps to reach out to others.

SORMAG: What type of promotion did you do for this book?

PERRIN: I'm doing booksignings, a postcard mailing, sending bookmarks to bookstores. Right now, I'm trying to arrange signings at the LA Times Book Fair and at Book Expo. I also want to do a mailing to all the sorority chapters.

SORMAG: Any tips for a good booksigning?

PERRIN: Not really. Just smile and be friendly. Remember, you're selling yourself. As well, have information about you there—like bookmarks with your website listed and other titles you have published (if any).

SORMAG: Our theme for this issue is resources on the net. What resources on the net have been very helpful with your writing?

PERRIN: Oh, that's hard to say. Whenever I want to find something, I simply do a search on google and find a ton of information. A ton of information is available online. Also, I've found it extremely helpful to be a part of various writers' listservs. Ultimately, if you have a research question and post it online in one of these groups, someone will be able to help you.

SORMAG: What is something readers would be surprised you do?

PERRIN: That I spend all day in my pajamas if I don't have to leave the house! Even the FedEx guy is used to seeing me in my PJs!

SORMAG: What do you feel has been your greatest accomplishment as a writer and why?

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PERRIN: I'd have to say my greatest accomplishment has been landing on Romance Writers of America's Top Ten Favorite Books of the Year list. *SWEET HONESTY* was on the list in 2000.

SAY YOU NEED ME took the number 2 spot in 2003. I was the first AA author to make this list, so that's a great accomplishment.

SORMAG: What is the latest pager-turner you've read?

PERRIN: Oooh, I read *THE OTHER WOMAN* by Eric Jerome Dickey. Definitely a page turner.

SORMAG: Do you have any advice for those aspiring writers?

PERRIN: Write every day. Even if you only write one page a day, at the end of the year, you'll have 365 pages.

SORMAG: How can readers get in contact with you? (mail, email, website)

PERRIN: Readers can visit my website, www.kaylaperrin.com. Also, they can email me at kayla@kaylaperrin.com. If they want to send me snail mail, here's the address:

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SORMAG: Can you give us a sneak peek at your next book?

PERRIN: Do you mean a blurb? If so, here's one:

Helplessly she turned, wondering what direction she should head in, where she should go. The bayou glimmered before her. Beneath the moon's

rays, the water looked like liquid gold. It was a sight that had always given her comfort in the past, and it gave her a measure of comfort now.

She stepped forward and gripped the trunk of a Sycamore tree. As she paused to rest her body against it, a thought struck her.

And grew.

Could she do it? She stared out at the bayou's vastness, momentarily mesmerized by its tranquillity. And in that moment, she didn't think. She only acted on her pain and desperation, on the feeling of emptiness that filled her so completely.

Lifting her skirt, she charged full steam ahead, into the water.

Into a place that would offer peace and solace for what she had done.

THE DELTA SISTERS

From Essence bestselling author Kayla Perrin comes the compelling story of three generations of African-American women---of their deepest secrets and most cherished lies.

The Delta Sisters is a gripping, intimate portrait of what happens when these passionate women have to band together at last in the face of danger.

Internet Romance: Divine Intervention

by **Barbara J. Robinson**

Fate, destiny, the power of prayers? Lisa beamed a smile like a ray of sunshine at her older sister, "You never know what can happen with divine intervention, but I don't believe in luck. If it is going to work, it will take a higher power!"

"I have heard both good and bad about Internet romances, but there is just something about Bud that makes me think it is fate or destiny at work. I can feel it in my heart. It was just meant to be. How else can you explain our by-chance connection. If not for the Internet, a small-town Louisiana girl, who has never even been on vacation in Florida, would never have met someone like Bud. I believe it was simply meant to be."

"People meet all the time via the Internet these days. You have to calm down and play it safe. Be careful. Many of my girlfriends have not been so lucky with Internet connections."

"Bud tells me that he has heard about a lot of couples who have met over the Internet and ended up happily married," Spring told her sister.

Lisa sighed, "Remember, that's him telling you what he wants you to believe. Did you get his real name, or is Bud just his nick? Do you realize just how many Buds there are online?"

"Well, I just gave him my nick, so I thought fair was fair."

"Well, you'd better find out a lot more about your mysterious Internet love before you get in over your head."

"I plan to. He's phoning me for the first time Sunday evening."

Lisa opened the car door and jumped out. "Thanks for the ride to the grocery, sis. I hope he turns out to be a real prince and not a toad. I know the Internet is probably the only way you would ever meet anyone these days, since you don't get out enough, but I am leery of it, after some of the stories I've heard."

"I'll be careful, little sis. It is supposed to be the other way around. I'm supposed to be looking out for my little sis, but you are acting like an old mother hen over me."

"I want to meet your Internet love, if he ever decides to visit you in Louisiana."

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"You'll be the first to meet him; I promise." Spring waved bye to Lisa as she backed out of the driveway. She couldn't wait to get home and check her e-mail. They had met by chance over ICQ. One little yellow, beeping message was all it took and soon Spring's heart was doing little flip flops with every beep. She woke up to e-mail messages of, "Good morning, darling," to start her day and not a day went by without the two chatting via ICQ and sending e-mails and cards.

Sunday evening the phone rang, and she grabbed it on the first ring. When Spring heard Bud's voice for the first time, her pulse raced, and her heart skipped beats. She loved his voice the moment she heard it, and something told her, he was the one. He had a pleasant deep voice, and he said, "Can you believe how lucky we've been? Two lonely people meet via computer technology, and the world becomes a much less lonelier place for the two of them. Though worlds apart, each living in different states with over 700 miles between us, we connected over the computer via ICQ and became friends."

"Yes," Spring responded, "I'll never forget hearing Uh oh and seeing that little yellow message beeping in the ICQ window, and the name Bud appearing online. That is how it all started, with just one little, yellow message beeping uh oh. It's so hard to believe I finally found someone I actually enjoyed chatting with, after all the jerks."

"You know, I can't believe I'm chatting with you like I am. My little sister has warned me about Internet romances, and I have been hurt too many times to risk it again. Every time I give it all, my heart and soul, my very being, the man breaks my heart, and I don't want to go through that pain and heartache again. Yet, here I am, not being able to get enough of chatting with you."

"Men can be hurt too, you know. I have been hurt, and I have seen a marriage come to an end. I do not care to experience that pain and heartache again

either. We both have children by our previous marriages. We are both adults, and we both know what we want and what we are looking for in a partner this time. A partner is what I want, a partner for life, to share my life with."

Spring's children were all grown and gone, but Bud had a six-year old daughter. Did Spring dare to love again? Did Bud?

"I want a partner and helpmate in life too, someone I can depend on. My sister is worried that I will only get my heart broken again, and she said she wants to meet you if you ever decide to visit me in Louisiana. I guess she wants to check you out for herself. I promised that she'd be the first to meet you, if you ever make that ten-hour drive."

"Well, I can't wait to meet you, and I plan to see you next weekend, so make arrangements for your little sister to check me out."

Spring's heart stood still. It had only been two weeks since they met by chance over the Internet, and she was really nervous about meeting Bud in person. "I'll make the arrangements, and I can't wait to meet you either," she responded, with her heart in her throat.

The two talked almost all night long. Neither wanted to let the other go. By the end of the phone call, they felt as if they'd known each other for years. Spring warned him about his phone bill, "Your phone bill is going to be sky high. We have talked for hours."

"Don't worry about it. You're not paying it," so Spring kept talking and didn't worry. However, being states apart was not the only way that the two were worlds apart, so she worried about other things. Did Spring dare to give this romance a fair chance? She had a well-paying job, earned her own way, was her own woman, and was totally

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independent of any man at the time. Yet, could she dare to face the real worlds apart that stood in their way? These were all questions that ran through her mind constantly, and she seemed to have no answers. After all, her mirror never lied. Would it be possible to finally find and achieve love and happiness, for once in her life, or would it only lead to more pain and heartbreak? She was totally and completely in love, and she knew it with all of her heart, her soul, her very being. She could only hope and pray that she would not regret giving her heart away once again.

The day of their meeting finally arrived. He found her place by a map from the Internet and drove right to her front door, surprising her. No wonder her sister had warned her, she thought. She opened the door and there stood Bud with a dozen red roses and a grin ear-to-ear."

"How did you find this place? I thought I would have to meet you somewhere."

"Technology is amazing these days and so is the power of the Internet. I printed a map that took me from my door to yours," he laughed.

Brown eyes twinkled at the look of surprise and shock coming from Spring's green cat eyes. "Well, I guess I have to go let your little sister check me out. Are you ready?"

Spring had just received her first dozen red roses ever and was she ever ready! Bud put her right at ease and though he had provided her with his real name, address, home phone number, and cell phone number, she still called him Bud out of habit, and he still called her his Springsnow. "I'm from New York, and it was really nice to meet springsnow to thaw out my bones. I moved to Florida and work in a bakery, and I love Florida's mild winters. I hope you will visit me soon and see my home. I have three bedrooms, and you are welcome to that Florida vacation you've never had."

As brown sparkling eyes met green ones, love

lights and sparks told her that there was truly a higher power at work in the scheme of things and she knew it was divine intervention that out of all the people she could have stumbled across on the Internet, she and Bud had discovered one another. Perhaps, it was just meant to be. Spring decided she was a grown woman with a mind of her own, who could think for herself, and no matter what her little sister or anyone else thought of Bud, she intended to let this Internet romance have a fair chance. After all, what did she have to lose, only her heart, once again, but she wouldn't think that way. Instead, she would think positive and give Bud a fair chance. Something told her he was the one, and it was meant to be, call it fate, call it destiny, or divine intervention. Call it whatever, she called it love!

THE END

Barbara J. Robinson is the author of *Magnolia: A Wilting Flower* and *The Lord had Something Better in Mind*. Her testimonial appears in *Chicken Soup for the Teacher's Soul*. *Magnolia: A Wilting Flower* took home a trophy from the Florida Writers Association (FWA) Convention in October 2002, when the creative nonfiction Southern memoir won a Royal Palm Award. Her short story "The Lord had Something Better in Mind" took first place in Southeastern Louisiana University's fiction-writing competition, and Robinson developed her award-winning short story into a novel with the same title. "Internet Romance: Divine Intervention" will be part of a novel Robinson is presently working on titled *Called to Peace*. Visit her at <http://pages.prodigy.net/bud25> and http://pages.prodigy.net/bud25/_wsn/page6.html and search books, Barbara J. Robinson at your favorite online bookstores, such as www.amazon.com.