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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

TJ Bennett

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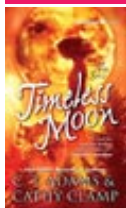
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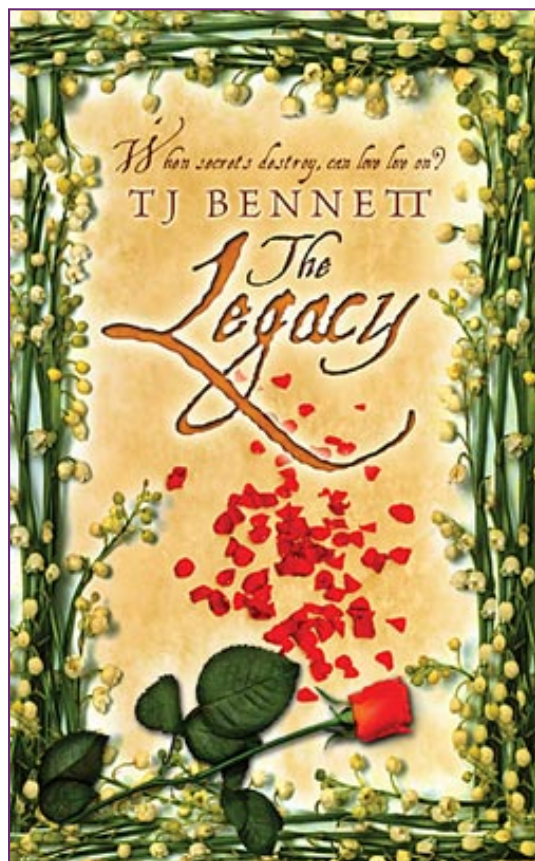


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AUTHORS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

TJ Bennett

Book Title: THE LEGACY



Category: Historical

Website: <http://www.tjbennett.com>

Description: In 1525, off the precipice of the Renaissance, history takes a fateful leap: peasants revolt against their masters, priests flee the pulpit, and a captive ex-nun becomes an unwilling bride . . .

Author Spotlight: TJ Bennett

My debut novel, THE LEGACY, is a historical romance about the destructive nature of secrets. Set in 1525 Wittenberg, Electoral Saxony, the novel weaves events occurring during the Early Reformation period into an intimate love story played out on the canvas of history.

People often ask what inspired me to write such an outside-the-

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box historical romance about a printer and the runaway nun he is blackmailed into marrying. The answer is simple: I wanted variety. I love historicals, and a few years ago, when I took a short break from my career to have a family, I found myself reading a lot of them. I mean a lot. I'm a fast reader, and in six months, I had read nearly two hundred romances, many of them historical. Perhaps it was just the over-consumption factor, but I started wishing for more unusual settings than the stories available on the market at the time. They were set in the British Isles or America almost without exception. While I enjoyed these stories, I wanted something different.

I stumbled across a book entitled *Martin Luther Had a Wife* in my husband's library (he happens to be a professor), and read how the protestant reformer Luther met his wife. She and eleven other nuns engineered a daring escape from a convent and fled to Luther's doorstep in Wittenberg, asking for help in starting a new life. They were the conscientious objectors of their day, but they had no one else to turn to because once they left the Church, their families abandoned them. Luther decided to help the women, finding most of them husbands in a round of hasty matchmaking. The twelfth nun, Katherine von Bora, decided she'd rather marry Luther than anyone else, and theirs became one of the great love matches of history.

It got me thinking: What must it have been like for the other eleven women? They went from nun to wife in such a short time, most of them marrying strangers. And what if one of those women hadn't wanted to marry the man chosen for her as a mate? The idea morphed into one of intrigue and suspense: What if an escaped nun was recaptured by her family and forced to marry a certain man for reasons she didn't understand? And what if his reasons for marrying her were just as mysterious? Thus, *THE LEGACY* was born.

The Early Reformation period makes for fascinating history. So much happened that set the stage for the modern era, including the rise of literacy, Protestantism, and egalitarianism. However, I never forgot while writing *THE LEGACY* that it is a romance, first and foremost. I made Wolf and Sabina's story as compelling, as passionate, and as deeply emotional as I could craft it. I hope this story will keep readers turning the pages all night, the way a great romance should.

Excerpt

Wolf scowled at Sabina. "Why did you come? What do you want?"

He looked almost feral. His eyes glittered dangerously, and he had raked his hands through his hair. His doublet was gone, and he'd untied the strings holding his cambric shirt together; as a consequence, it gaped open to the waist. Sabina gawked at the skin it revealed and warmth flooded her. She realized belatedly what she was doing and jerked her eyes up to meet his.

"Forgive me," she said. "I did not mean to disturb you. You looked unwell, and I just wanted to . . ." Her voice trailed off as his intent gaze traveled over her.

He appeared not to have heard a word she'd said. Nervous, she licked her suddenly dry lips, and his eyes flared with emerald fire.

"Sweet Jesu, what do you want from me?"

She heard the aching torment in his voice.

You.

For one horrified moment, she thought she had spoken aloud. She had not, but something must have shown in her expression



because the mood shifted instantly, tightening into an almost unbearable tension.

As though she were naked, she could feel the heat of his hand against the curve of her waist. Her breath caught in her throat at the wall of solid muscle against her breasts, and she became intensely aware he was aroused. The realization made her pulse beat in a staccato rhythm, from fear or desire she knew not which.

They stood pressed together it seemed forever, while he debated whether or not to kiss her. She could see the argument going on behind his eyes, could almost hear him lecturing himself about the reasons why he should not.

She rose up on her toes and touched her lips to his.

Wolf, startled at first, quickly recovered. He lunged for her, his arms going like steel bands around her waist, his mouth devouring hers. She staggered backward, and he pressed her up against the wall, its unyielding indifference counterpoint to his fevered response. A painting behind her crashed unheeded to the floor.

For a lightning moment, she felt trapped. That old familiar fear engulfed her, but her heart whispered this man would not hurt her. There was no anger in him, no domination. In fact, it was as if he had surrendered to a need greater than his own will, a need so palpable it crackled in the air around them. He kissed her throat, her eyes, her lips.

Tentatively, she kissed him back, touching her tongue to his. He groaned into her mouth.

"Oh, God, I'm on fire," he rasped. He tugged her hand up, placed it on the hot skin over his rapidly beating heart. "Can you feel it, Sabina? I burn for you . . ."

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