

Media Kit for the California Romance Series by Casey Dawes

There are four books in this series:

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###

Title: California Sunset

Author: Casey Dawes

Publisher: Crimson Romance

Release Date: 8/6/2012

Genre: Contemporary Romance



Book Blurb

Divorced mother Annie Gerhard spotted rugged new bookstore owner John Johnson at the worst possible time in her life. Her high tech company is threatening to lay her off if she doesn't move from California to New Jersey and her 15-year-old son David is causing trouble. The recession has hit Silicon Valley hard and there are no jobs for a middle manager, no matter how good she is at her job, even if she hates it. This is no time for romance, no matter how good the man looks in his jeans.

John has escaped Montana memories of a deceased wife and betraying girlfriend by buying an independent bookstore in California. He's got bigger problems than falling for a spunky woman with control issues. Keeping a bookstore afloat in a recession and finding a home where he can stable his horse are all he can handle right now.

Unless...

If Annie's willing to take a risk and stay in California, John would be tempted to put the past behind him. But Annie always plays it safe – a legacy from a nightmarish childhood and alcoholic marriage. Ever since her divorce providing for her son has been her top priority. She'll have time for love after her son graduates from college, won't she?

But doing what she's always done isn't working for her anymore. David's facing jail and her prospective manager in New Jersey has roving hands. John's old flame shows up in California.

Is it time for Annie to deal with the truth about childhood and get the life and love she wants and deserves?

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Excerpt

"Annie!" Randy's sharp voice echoed in the tiny office. "What do you think?"

"About being laid-off? It stinks! I'm the best project manager you have." *And I'm the only support my son has.*

"You're a great project manager, but the project's been terminated."

"There's got to be another project somewhere."

"It's not only you, Annie. Ten thousand people are being laid off from JCN today. The company needs to cut costs."

The final bit of air left her lungs.

Randy pawed through the papers on his desk. "But there *is* another project. You'd be great for the one in New Jersey and they could use your skills. It's complex and government-mandated—one of those impossible situations you're good at handling."

"I can't move to New Jersey." She'd been to New Jersey once—boardwalks, billboards and Bruce Springsteen. Not a place she could ever imagine living. And she couldn't drag her son away from his friends. He was only 15.

"C'mon, Annie. Give it a chance. I'd hate for the company to lose you."

She shook her head. *New Jersey may have been fine for Frank Sinatra, but it wasn't fine for her. It had taken so long after her divorce to feel secure again. She had her friends, her home, her cats...and no job.*

"There's nothing in the company in this area for someone with your skills. I looked. If you aren't willing to transfer, then I have no choice. I have to lay you off."

An ache began in the back of her neck. She needed this job. No one else was going to support David or provide medical benefits. She was going to have to do something to keep a salary coming in. And with the economy the way it was, chances of finding a new job soon would be slim. Unemployment wouldn't cover her mortgage, much less her other expenses.

Maybe she could learn to like New Jersey. After all, she liked Bruce Springsteen. Boardwalks and billboards might grow on her. There *was* an ocean, even if it wasn't the Pacific.

But what about David? Would her ex fight her for custody if she tried to move him out of state? Her stomach roiled and she forced back the tears welling in her eyes. *Never cry in the office. Never.*

“You have six weeks before the layoff is final.”

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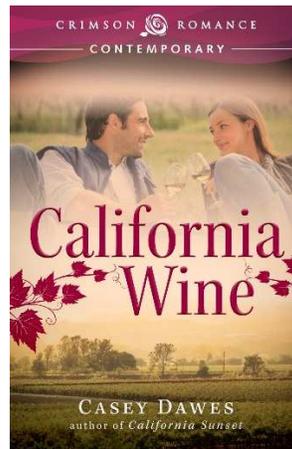
Title: California Wine

Author: Casey Dawes

Publisher: Crimson Romance

Release Date: 12/31/2012

Genre: Contemporary Romance



Book Blurb

Single mother Elizabeth Ladina decides to take her life into her own hands after her mother passes away, her college-age daughter begins her own life, and she ends her five-year relationship because she doesn't want to get married again. She's done with men. From her father on down, all they want to do is control her life.

A visit to an upscale skin care boutique in Italy inspires her to dream big. She could create an upscale lotion line that is splashed across the pages of the best glossy fashion magazines. She's eager to get home and make her dream a reality.

So why does she invite a sexy Italian stranger to visit her in California?

Italian Marcos Gamari has one goal in life — to create the world's finest wine from the best vineyards in the world. His vineyards in Italy and France are producing prime wines that are already garnering awards and he has no time or desire for romance in his life. Emotional entanglements only lead to pain.

His ex-wife had proved that.

Still, when he sees the pretty American eating alone in a hotel dining room in Liguria, he's compelled to strike up a conversation, which leads to dinner and Elizabeth's invitation to see the vineyards of the Santa Cruz Mountains. She claims they are equal, and cheaper, than anything he'll find in Napa, his original destination.

Sparks fly when they meet again, but Elizabeth and Marcos are determined to maintain their single-track focus on their businesses and keep romance out of their lives.

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Excerpt

Oh, my.

Elizabeth's eyes locked with a pair of the most intense blue eyes she'd ever seen. They belonged to a man with thick black hair to his shoulders, a strong aquiline nose, and high cheekbones. His smile was warm; his straight white teeth a sharp contrast to his light olive skin.

Why did Italy produce such heart-breakingly handsome men?

She looked down at the restaurant table and then looked up again. He was still staring, the smile even broader.

Maybe her daughter Sarah was right. Elizabeth should dine out more often, especially if the scenery was going to be like this.

The waitress brought her a salad and Elizabeth looked at it morosely. Was it possible to eat salad and not get some stuck in her teeth when a gorgeous man was staring at her? Or worse, drop a huge leaf of oily lettuce on her blouse, calling his attention to her less than abundant breasts?

But the salad looked so good...tiny red cherry tomatoes interspersed with baby carrots and radishes on a bed of mixed greens. She sighed and stabbed the nearest tomato with her fork.

The red orb escaped her plate and went bouncing off the table to land on the floor, rolled to the center of an open space, and sat there for only a minute before being squished by a waitress' black shoe.

"Such a tragic end for a little tomato." A rich masculine voice spoke near her ear.

She looked up into the blue eyes of the man standing next to her.

"Perhaps if you had not stabbed at it so viciously, it might have survived," he continued.

She had to grin at his mock seriousness.

"May I join you?" he asked his hand on the chair.

She considered him. She'd intended to eat her supper alone, go upstairs to her room, run a hot bath, and relax with a good book.

He waited for her answer.

Suddenly, her plan seemed a lonely way to spend one of her last days in Italy. "Sure."

He sat down next to her and a frisson of heat zapped her body. For the first time since her mother had died, life stirred in her heart. She put down her fork.

“My name is Marcos,” he said, holding out his hand.

“Elizabeth.” She shook. His palm was smooth and cool, and the long fingers fit the rest of his lean body. His touch electrified her skin.

“American? Yes?”

She nodded.

He grinned, looking as if he’d guessed a game-show answer correctly. “Are you here on business? Pleasure? Traveling all by yourself or is your husband with you?”

She took a sip of wine. Her best friend Annie had told her not to reveal too much personal information about herself when she was traveling. What could she safely tell her new acquaintance, a man she knew nothing about, other than he exuded masculinity?

He must have seen the suspicion in her eyes because he waved his hand and gestured. The proprietress of the hotel came over to their table.

“Is there something wrong?” she asked, a frown creasing her forehead. “Marcos, are you being a bother?”

“Nothing like that. I was only trying to assist the lady with her vegetables. They seem to be escaping.” Marcos pointed to the stain on the floor.

The woman snapped her fingers at the nearest waitress and pointed. Then she turned back to Elizabeth. “I am so sorry. Would you like me to bring you another tomato?”

“Another tomato? No, no, I’m fine.” Elizabeth stifled a laugh. “It’s nothing, really.”

She glanced at Marcos, who was holding his hand over his mouth. His eyes were sparkling with laughter.

“And him,” the woman poked a long fingernail into Marcos’ shoulder. “Is my cousin annoying you?”

“Uh...” Now was Elizabeth’s chance to get rid of him if she wanted.

Marcos’ eyes pleaded for a reprieve.

An impish spark rose in her soul. Why not have an adventure in the safe confines of the hotel dining room? Her trip was almost over anyway. Surely no harm could come from a little fun. Could it?

“No. He’s fine,” Elizabeth said.

“Bueno.” The hotel owner turned on her heel and left, muttering under her breath.

“Cousin?” Elizabeth asked. “She doesn’t seem at all like you. She’s very...”

“Serious?” He shrugged. “The women in my family tend to be fire-breathing dragons.”

A waitress walking past the table glanced in his direction and blushed. He fired off rapid Italian to her with a smile that would make any woman’s heart melt.

The waitress’ blush deepened. She nodded and hurried off to the coffee bar.

My, he was a flirt. She’d better tread carefully.

###

Title: California Homecoming

Author: Casey Dawes

Publisher: Crimson Romance

Release Date: 6/24/2013

Genre: Contemporary Romance



Book Blurb

Pregnant and alone, Sarah Ladina wants to regain her independence and do what's best for her soon-to-be-born baby, but buying a run-down Victorian for an inn wasn't her brightest idea. An inability to cook or fix a leaky faucet will make the job even harder. When a friendly golden retriever, disabled vet, and potential cook show up on the first day, she knows her life is going to get a lot more complicated.

After returning from duty in the Middle East wounded in both body and spirit, Hunter Evans is in search of employment and a home. Finding a job has been tough and housing doesn't come cheap in Costanoa, the town that he loves most on the California Coast. His prosthetic leg allows him to run, but keeps him from his childhood passion, surfing.

Ghosts from their pasts haunt them. Sarah's Victorian is Hunter's childhood home. A dusty box of letters hidden in a closet hint of a long-ago affair. When her ex tries to get back into her life and her doctor orders modified bed rest, Sarah wonders if she'll ever be able to stand on her own. With a low-level job and a transient motel for a home, Hunter isn't sure life is worth living.

Spring is coming in Costanoa and love is in the air. With the help of good friends, Sarah and Hunter may be able to get beyond the painful past and complicated present to find the love and respect they want and deserve.

Buy Links

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Excerpt

Sarah Ladina turned the key and pushed open the oak door, her pulse quickening in anticipation. Stale smells of forgotten perfumes and long ago dinners wafted from the entrance hall. She crossed the threshold, shut the door behind her, and leaned against it.

Mine. This soon-to-be-inn is all mine.

She rubbed her hand on her stomach. *Ours.*

Cobwebs huddled in the high corners of the paneled entry and a screw sticking from the staircase newel told of a missing cap. Layers of dust added texture to the floor.

The work was also going to be all hers.

Her shoulders sank. What had she been thinking?

“If you want a job done right, do it yourself.” Other people aren’t dependable.

A bark from outside made her drop her bag of cleaning supplies, snacks, and tools on the floor. Cautiously, she opened the door.

A golden retriever sat on the porch, staring up at her, dark eyes pleading entry. The dog barked again, stood, nosed the door open, and walked in. He...or she...made a beeline for the front sitting room, circled, and laid down.

Great. A dog who thinks it owns the place.

Keeping a wide berth, she walked toward the dog. “Shoo,” she said. “Go home.”

The dog looked up at her, rolled over, and beat its tail against the floor.

Definitely a girl dog.

“Go! Get out of here!” Sarah raised her voice. She did not need anything else to take care of.

The dog whined and thumped her tail harder.

Tires crunched the driveway gravel.

Sarah groaned, stomped to the door, and opened it wide.

The dog got off the floor, followed her, and sat down crowded close to her leg.

The heat of the retriever’s strong body against Sarah’s leg gave her courage, ready to face whoever was coming to call. Maybe I do need a dog. A single woman—correction: a single pregnant woman—might be at risk living alone.

She glared at the newcomer’s car, a black Jeep polished to a gleaming shine.

A tall man with broad shoulders emerged from the Jeep. His dark hair was clipped short and he stood with the rigid carriage of a soldier, an odd contrast to the banana slug T-shirt and shorts he wore. His right leg ended in a prosthetic below the knee.

How sad.

“Hello,” he said, his deep voice easily carrying across the distance between them. “Nice dog,” he added and walked toward her.

A rumble from the dog’s throat made her put her hand on its head. The soldier wasn’t a threat.

Yet.

The man reached out his hand. Automatically, she took it. "I'm Hunter Evans."

Her cold hand was engulfed by his strong warmth.

"I'm Sarah." She withdrew her hand. "What can I do for you?"

"I understand you just bought this place."

She nodded. "Today."

"Will you sell it to me?"

She almost laughed out loud. Is he serious? "No." She stepped back to close the door. The dog stood.

Hunter didn't move. "I'd really like to buy it."

"It's not for sale any more. I bought it."

His green eyes glittered with determination. "I know, but you haven't had time to get attached to it yet. I'll give you ten percent more than you paid."

Now she was getting irritated. Why couldn't he accept "no" to mean "no" and move on?

Typical male. "Why do you want it so badly?"

His lips went to a thin line. "My family used to own this house. I spent some of my best years here. After spending some time in the war..." He gestured to his leg. "I was hoping to return to happier times."

Her irritation fled. "I'm sorry, I really am, but no." She wouldn't give up her baby's future for anyone, even a vet. "I wish you well, but this house is not for sale. I'm going to make it into an inn."

"Interesting." He took a piece of paper from his pocket and scribbled on it. "In case you change your mind." He handed her the paper.

He gave her a mock salute, climbed into the Jeep, and drove off.

Sarah patted the dog, anticipation and regret tingling her nerves. Even with a bum leg, Hunter Evans exuded testosterone. He was the kind of man who could take the place of Rhett Butler, swooping up a reluctant Scarlett, and ascending the stairs to bed.

###

Title: California Thyme

Author: Casey Dawes

Publisher: Crimson Romance

Release Date: 4/7/2014

Genre: Contemporary Romance



Book Blurb

Caterer, waitress, and inn cook, Mandy Parker doesn't want to turn out like her mother, an aging bipolar actress desperate for the love. In her heart Mandy has always known her mother's version of the truth is limited, but it wasn't worth the effort to invite chaos into the house by questioning her mother's words. Growing up with Lola had been crazy enough as it was.

Instead, she moved a continent away from Lola as soon as she could. Her ideal man has a nine-to-five job and coaches Little League—someone true to her and to their family, unlike her philandering Hollywood producer father. Concern for her own mental health keeps her from taking risks to develop her catering business or find the love she wants. But when waitress shifts at Costanoa Grill are cut, she's forced to look for additional work.

Since the woman he'd loved had married his best friend, movie set location manager James Lubbock has put women far behind advancing in his career. Hiring Mandy, a waitress he met in a small coastal town as a temporary assistant caterer shouldn't cause a ripple in his plan, but her optimism and joy make him realize what his life is missing. Still, he needs to focus on figuring out who's sabotaging his set. If he can't determine the culprit, he'll lose everything he's worked for over the last five years.

Sparks fly between Mandy and James, but can they overcome their painful pasts to risk a chance on love?

Buy Links: Coming Soon

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Excerpt

Mandy dumped her discontent and walked into the Costanoa Grill for her evening shift. Waitressing in an upscale restaurant in a beach town in the summer was a decent job. One she was lucky to have in this economy.

As she entered the staff room, a fellow waitress tapped her on the shoulder. “Good looker just sat down at Table Nine. He was here last week, too. No wedding band. Jill says he’s a good tipper. Lucky you.”

Mandy smiled. Big tips meant more money in her savings account. Her car was still running, but the high mileage made her nervous. “The tips will be great, but I’m not interested in anything else.”

“You should be. You’re not getting any younger.” The woman tossed her coffee cup in the overflowing trash and went back to work.

Twenty-five isn’t old.

Mandy glanced at the man seated at Table Nine. His lean profile and square jaw were classically handsome.

If I was in the market for a man, this one would do just fine.

Plucking a sweating water pitcher from the tray, she made her way through the scattered tables to a two-seater by the window. As she picked up his glass to fill it, she smiled at him and said, “Hi, I’m Mandy, and I’ll be your server this evening. Would you like anything to drink besides water?”

His lips curled into a grin, revealing the straight white teeth of a Hollywood smile, a smile that went all the way to his sea-green eyes. The wrap-around sunglasses perched on his sun-blond hair gave him a casual elegance belied by the Rolex on his tan wrist.

Her heart beat a little faster.

Good thing I’m a professional.

She put the water glass down without spilling a drop. “We have an excellent wine list if you’d like to see it.”

“How do you know I’m a wine connoisseur and not a Bud man,” he challenged.

She gestured to his pressed short-sleeve shirt. “A Bud man wouldn’t be caught dead in that.”

He laughed. “You’re right about that!”

Heat rose in her cheeks. “I’ll get you that list.” She brought the water pitcher back to its tray, hoping her face cooled on the way.

Moments later she was back with the thick, imitation-leather-bound book. “I don’t know if you realize this, but you’re at the edge of one of the oldest wine regions in California. We have a nice selection of local beverages on our menu. The Santa Cruz Mountains appellation is particularly known for Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs, although there are a few outstanding Cabernet vineyards, too.”

She snapped her mouth shut, wishing she could cut down on her ability to over-share.

“Glad to see your enthusiasm for your job.” He gestured to the purple streak in her hair. “Neat color.”

“Thank you. I’ll return in a few minutes.”

She checked in with her other diners, all the while trying to squash her awareness of the masculine vibe emanating from Table Nine.

He was exactly the type of man she wanted to avoid—too handsome, self-important, and probably involved in a career that would expose him to women who had no care for the feelings of wives. The same type of man her father had been.

Not the kind she wanted at all. Her ideal was a man with a nine-to-five job, who coached Little League in the summers—a man who’d be true to her and to their family.

The memory of her mother’s tears describing her father’s final infidelity pained Mandy. How could men be so unfeeling? This Table Nine guy was probably the same as every other man with money and power. Thought he could do anything he wanted.

By the time she got back to Table Nine, she’d worked herself into a solid anger. How dare some Southern California snob come into *her* restaurant and sit at *her* table?

“What can I get you?”

Her indignation must have seeped into her voice, because he frowned before answering.

There goes my tip.

“I’ll have the Ridge Cabernet,” he said.

Might as well get dinner started, so he’d finish and leave, and she could begin again.

“Are you ready to order or do you need a few more minutes to decide?”

“Have I done something to offend you?” he asked.

“No. The specials are—” She rattled them off, then waited a few seconds, tapping her pen against the bill folder. “Well?”

She internally winced at the snippy tone in her voice. He didn’t deserve this—seemed like a nice-enough guy. She was letting her anger over her past control her present.

As always.

He put his menu down and held out his hand. "We seem to have gotten off on the wrong foot here, although for the life of me, I don't understand why. I'm James Lubbock."

Automatically, she shook his hand, and electricity raced up and down her spine. He had the strong grip of a man in charge. For a moment she wasn't sure she'd be able to breathe again.

This was so not good.

She jerked her hand back. "What can I get you, James?"

"Was it the hair?"

"What?"

"Was it the remark I made about your hair that got you so mad?"

"No. No. It has nothing to do with you." Her behavior shamed her. "What brings you to Costanoa?" She made an effort to add warmth to her voice.

He grinned at her. His damn teeth sparkled so much she expected a flash, like she'd seen in commercials for whitening strips.

"I'm an assistant locations manager. I'm working for a company filming a movie up toward Davenport," he said.

Yep. She'd been right. He was a Hollywood guy. Just like dear old dad. "Oh." She warred with her returning displeasure.

He leaned forward. "Do you think I could get my wine, now?"

"Sure." She fled the table and made a beeline for the polished redwood bar.



Author Bio

Casey Dawes has lived a varied life--some by choice, some by circumstance. Her master's degree in theater didn't prepare her for anything practical, so she's been a teacher, stage hand, secretary, database guru, manager in Corporate America, business coach, and writer.

With a few marriages, two sons, and three step-children, her personal life was a challenge when she met and married her current husband who has proved to be the love of her life. They reside in Montana where she quilts, writes, and coaches on the banks of the Clark Fork River. The couple has been adopted by two gently used cats.

Links

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