



TRACKING MEDUSA

Gwen Finnegan Mystery

Devon Ellington

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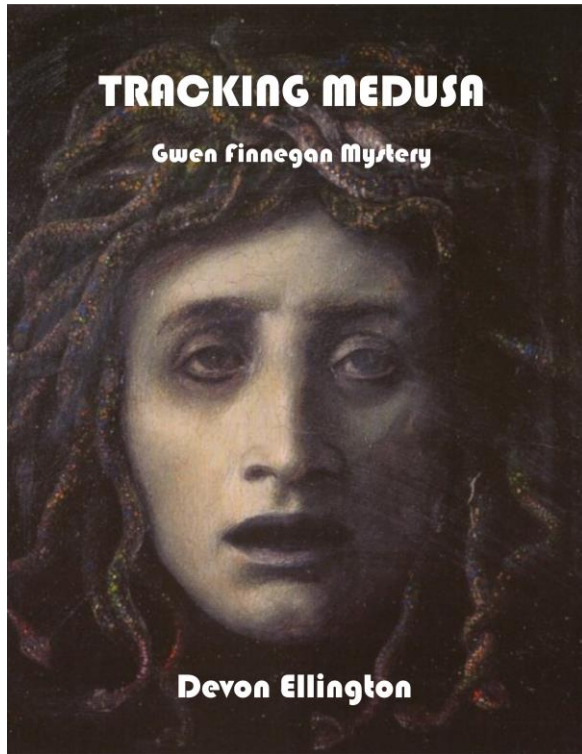
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About the Book & Buy Links



TRACKING MEDUSA A Gwen Finnegan Mystery

Archaeologist Dr. Gwen Finnegan is on the hunt for her lover's killer. Historical researcher Justin Yates bumps into her on the steps of the New York Public Library, and comes to her aid when she's attacked, sparking an attraction between them in spite of their age difference. The shy historian, frustrated with his failing relationship, jumps at the chance to join her on a real adventure through Europe, pursued by factions including Gwen's ex-lover and nemesis, Karl, as they try to unspool fact from fiction in a multi-generational obsession with a statue of the goddess Medusa.

Website for the Gwen Finnegan Mysteries:

<http://gwenfinneganmysteries.devonellingtonwork.com>

Available in multiple Digital Channels via Universal Buy Link:

<https://www.books2read.com/u/4Dok67>

Print release coming from Bluestockings and Gentlemen Press, date TBA.

Gwen Finnegan Mysteries on Facebook:

[https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gwen-Finnegan-Mysteries/
293635844132818](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gwen-Finnegan-Mysteries/293635844132818)

Ink in My Coffee, Devon Ellington's blog on the writing life:

<https://devonellington.wordpress.com>

About The Series

Dr. Gwen Finnegan is a noted archaeologist and anthropologist, who specializes in myth. She's also a practicing witch, who knows how myth and science intersect, and that a belief in science, evidence, and data doesn't negate the existence of the supernatural.

A modern woman with life and loves, she makes no apologies and gives no explanations for her choices. Her life is complicated by her past, especially ex-lover Karl Vanreth-DeGroot, sometimes an ally, sometimes a challenger.

Justin Yates is smart and shy, seemingly caught in a never-ending cycle of "always the assistant" in the library, always choosing the wrong woman.

When Gwen and Justin meet and go on the run to find the missing head of a Medusa statue, connected to the death of Gwen's lover, sparks fly on every level.

The series follows Gwen and Justin's evolving relationship across the globe, and how it challenges their growing careers. It also includes some of Gwen's adventures pre-Justin.

Exotic locations, adventure, romance, and the paranormal – the Gwen Finnegan Mysteries have them all.

Excerpt #1

“I really need Custis’s diary. But I can’t sit in the library and read it.” Gwen bit her lip.

“I need to get it out of the building.”

“No, you don’t. I have a photocopy in my bag.”

“You do?” She stared at him.

“I told the librarian I was working with you and I copied it while I waited for you.”

Gwen smiled. “You’re brilliant!”

Justin blushed. “Aren’t you glad I stopped for my bag?”

“Yes. You were right. I was wrong. And this is a time where I’m delighted to be wrong.” She thought for a minute again. “Do you have a passport?”

The question threw Justin. “Yes.”

“Handy?”

He clutched his knapsack closer to him. “In my bag.”

“I said it before and I’ll say it again: You’re brilliant.” She paused. “You’re in for a penny. Are you in for a pound?”

Justin took a deep breath. “I need more information than that.”

“This is your choice. Your crossroads. They’ve seen you now. Hell, Karl’s even talked to you. I think you’re safer with me. But there are no guarantees on this ride. I never thought they’d go after Harry. And he’s dead.”

“Dead.” Justin swallowed. “Who’s Harry?”

“Long story. But he was working on this with me. I should say I was working on it with him, he was the lead on it, but now it’s up to me. And he’s dead.”

“The funeral you went to yesterday?”

“Yes.” Now it was Gwen’s turn to take a deep breath. “If you don’t want to do this, continue on with me, I’ll drop you off wherever you say.”

“I’m in,” said Justin.

“There are no guarantees.”

“I’m in,” he repeated, in a stronger voice.

Gwen leaned forward. “JFK, please,” she said to the driver.

Excerpt #2

“I’m saying you need a better cover story, that’s all.” Shauna Simmons raised her breasts onto the padding in her bra and stared at herself in the mirror.

“I don’t need any cover story! I’m telling you the truth!” Justin Yates stared at her in frustration. He pushed back the lock of brown hair that kept falling into his face. Even first thing in the morning, she made him feel frumpy and small. It wasn’t her height—she was three inches shorter than his own five feet seven inches, at least before she put on her high heels. It wasn’t even that she was preparing to put on a white linen sheath dress and white stilettos to head off to work, while he was in his preferred work gear of chinos and a black short-sleeved T-shirt with a hooded sweat jacket over it. She made him feel like he didn’t matter.

She slid the dress over her head and turned her back to him, pulling her blonde curls out of the way. “Zip.”

Justin stepped forward and pulled up the zipper. He fumbled with it for a minute.

“Oh, please don’t tell me you broke it!”

“It’s stuck in the lining.”

“Be careful.”

“I am.” He gave it a tug and wrestled it up.

She didn’t thank him, just leaned forward to wet her lips and smile at him in the mirror. “When are you going to grow up, stop playing at history, and get a real job?”

“Shauna, I got paid two days ago. I made three months’ rent—your rent—and all of both our expenses—in a job that took me less than eight weeks.”

“So you say.”

“I was working for Dr. Vladimir Karos. You can look him up on the internet.”

“Don’t have time. Sorry.” She frowned at her reflection, then blended blended her already perfectly blended gold and taupe eyeshadows. “Look, I don’t know where you’re getting your money; I don’t really care, as long as you keep up. I’m just saying I don’t believe you can earn that kind of money in that kind of time poking around libraries.”

“He was on a deadline. He had a grant—”

“Whatever.” She shrugged. “I get it. You don’t want to tell me. No stress. It’s not like I tell you everything, either.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“That I don’t care how you earn your living, as long as you earn it. By the way, I won’t be home for dinner tonight.”

“Again?”

“You weren’t planning on cooking anything elaborate, were you?”

“Sarcasm is inappropriate at this early hour.” He sighed. “I was going to order in. But nice.”

“You don’t have the lock on sarcasm.”

“I’m not sarcastic. I’m ironic.”

“You’re boring me. It’s the Fliegler campaign. The client keeps wanting to change direction. Matt thinks maybe I can talk some sense into him at dinner.”

“Good luck.”

“Irony again?”

“No. I just hope you have a good day, that’s all.”

“What are your plans?”

“I’m going to the main branch of the library on 5th and 42nd to—

“I don’t want to know.” Shauna picked up her tiny little pocketbook and slid her keys into it.

Justin watched her cross the room. “Shauna?”

She paused in the doorway. “Yeah?”

“I don’t believe you have a meeting tonight.”

She smiled. “It’s from the same playbook as you earning money by looking things up in a library.” She walked out of the room, and he heard the front door shut.

Excerpt #3

A clap of thunder followed almost immediately by a flash of lightning startled them. The lightning snaked out of the sky and struck the rocky beach close enough to them the hairs on their arms tingled.

“Whoa!” Justin yelled.

“The kilns!” Gwen said. “It’s too far to make it back to town.”

They grabbed their belongings and ran into the nearest small, arched doorway cut in the rock as the rain poured down. Once inside, they stepped back. The kilns were empty stone spaces now, with two small arched openings out to the rocky ground, another larger one, and a fourth smaller one. They leaned against the side wall near the back to avoid the rain whipped in by the wind. Gwen tried to shove the wet hair out of her face.

“That came in fast,” said Justin. They watched the storm race across the rocks, lightning reaching out like electrical, skeletal fingers.

“Storms do here.” She shivered. “The storms usually leave almost as quickly as they come in. I should’ve paid attention. And I should have found us a secure indoor place to work, like the Crown and Anchor.”

“We’d have been noticed in a pub.”

“At least we wouldn’t be soaked to the skin. Sorry.”

“I’ll dry off,” said Justin. “I’m kind of glad to be in this big coat, even if it makes me look stupid.”

“You don’t look stupid. You—”

“Bloody hell! We’re not being paid enough for this bollocks!” A voice floated to them from right outside the kiln.

Gwen and Justin exchanged looks. Gwen pulled Justin farther back into the kilns. They were in the back most corner, hidden by shadows thrown from the other archways, but not much else.

Two men, bundled in heavy coats, ducked just inside the protected arch. They stared out at the driving rain. They were almost within arm’s reach of Gwen and Justin, who barely dared to breathe.

“Ye can’t blame ’im for the weather now,” said one of the men, slightly shorter than the other.

“I can blame him for bloody hell anything I want,” said the man who spoke first. “We don’t even know who they are. Just a man and a woman. She’s got red hair; he don’t.”

Gwen and Justin stared at each other. Justin pulled off his hat and handed it to Gwen. She yanked it down and tucked her red hair under it.

The shorter man chuckled. “He’s just a jealous bloke. Wants to know what the missus is doing when he’s not there.”

“I wouldn’t have agreed if I hadn’t had too many pints,” the man said. “I don’t like to put my fists to a man unless I have a personal argument with him. Besides, I hate this island. Haunted it is.”

“We just wait out the storm, then walk around a bit. There’s a pub or two. We can ask around. Someone will have seen ’em. Don’t get too many strangers ’round here. They’ll be remembered.”

Justin leaned close to Gwen’s ear. “Is there another way out?” She pointed deeper into the kilns. They’d have to cross behind the men, hoping they didn’t dislodge any stones.

“I’m not staying here. Bloody tide’ll come in and fill this place right up.” The taller man shifted in his coat.

“No, it won’t. These kilns have been there for o’er two hunnard year. They wouldn’t have built ’em if they couldn’t use ’em in bad weather. Seein’s as that’s all you get here.”

“Twill now. With all that global warming bollocks.”

“Ye’re not going all environmental on me, are ye? Next step, you’ll be vegetarian. That’ll ruin a good night out.”

“Nah. I still like me pint and me steak. But I’m regrettin’ agreein’ to this.”

“We took the man’s money. We’re not killin’ them or nothin’. Just givin’ them a what-for so they stop sneakin’ around together.”

Justin and Gwen looked at each other again.

Suddenly, a long, low howl filled the air. Justin and Gwen jumped because it sounded as though it was right beside them.

“What in the bloody hell?” the taller man asked.

The sound of footsteps padding toward them grew louder, along with a familiar sound of ragged breath. Another howl rent the air. A large dark head poked around the side of the archway. The two men screamed and nearly climbed over each other as they scrambled out and ran through the central arch into the storm. The large black dog turned to look at Gwen and Justin, then turned away and padded off.

“Am I completely hallucinating,” asked Justin, “or did that ghost dog from hell just *wink* at us?”

Reviews

[5.0 out of 5 stars](#)[TRACKING MEDUSA~](#)

By [Coffee Time Romance & More](#) on October 25, 2014

Format: Kindle Edition

What a wild ride! There was no shortage of action in this book. I enjoyed the growing relationship between Gwen and Justin. Not only was it passionate and entertaining, but the twist of the mature older woman and the insecure younger man was refreshing. The archaeological theme was fascinating, and the characters were well drawn and likeable. The one heads-up I would give readers is that the paranormal themes in this book seem to be written for an audience familiar with the genre. As one who has not read much paranormal fantasy, I felt a little out of the loop, and would have liked a bit more explanation at times. That aside, Tracking Medusa is a thrilling story, with a page-turning romance woven seamlessly into an intense, well-structured plot. Worthy of five cups.

Veronica

Reviewer for Coffee Time Romance and More

The Medusa Touch--

Tracking Medusa artfully combines tidbits from two wildly different disciplines (archaeology and paranormal studies), with an exciting tale of adventure and romance. I was hooked by the pace of the narrative as well as the deftly drawn character of the protagonist. Dr. Gwen Finnegan is that rarity in fiction, a slightly older woman who is both sensual and intellectual. When she entrances her younger colleague, we are neither surprised nor appalled. It makes sense!

Another virtue of this novel is scene setting. The author's vivid description of craggy coastlines, homey pubs and cozy inns makes the reader long to immediately book a trip to Britain. I can't wait to meet Gwen and Justin in their next adventure.

By [Arlene Kay](#) on September 13, 2014

Q & A With Devon Ellington

Question: How did you come up with TRACKING MEDUSA?

Devon Ellington: The Medusa myth always fascinated me. I got mad in CLASH OF THE TITANS when she was killed. I felt she was marginalized and destroyed because she was powerful. I've always loved archaeology -- when I was little, even though I always knew I'd be a writer, but before I made the commitment to theatre, I wanted to be an archaeologist. My life took a different path, but it always interested me. I also don't think science and spirituality need to negate each other. I wanted to work with a character who was smart and based a lot in science and evidence, but was a practicing witch and able to use all those facets towards her goals. The opening scene, in the club at Gramercy Park, came early on.

When I lived in New York, I spent a lot of time wandering around the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the New York Public Library. The Justin character evolved out of that, especially when a group of us who were affiliated with PEN got a behind-the-scenes tour at the Library.

Justin was inspired by the same real individual who inspired Billy Root in my urban fantasy series The Jain Lazarus Adventures, but the two characters evolved very differently, and have grown into very much their own men. Justin's journey through this series gets quite dark at times. Billy takes a very different route in finding his true purpose.

I also wanted to play with the age difference between Gwen and Justin. Gwen is a dozen years older than Justin -- how does that affect their relationship? Especially since Justin's emotional age is much younger than his chronological age.

It all started to come together one day when I was at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, wandering around the Greek and Roman galleries, which had just reopened, and the Egyptian gallery.

Q: Tell us about the background of the chase scene at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

DE: That was a lot of fun. I'd written my way a few chapters into the book, and I wanted to get it right. I took a day and went back to the Met, with my camera and my notebook, to choreograph the scenes. A couple of security guards asked me what I was doing, and I told them I was choreographing a chase scene through the Met for a book. They were enthusiastic, and offered ideas and feedback (while still keeping an eye on things-- no one neglected their jobs)! They asked not to be specifically named in the acknowledgements, in case Management was unhappy about it, but at this point, I'm sure most of them have moved on to other jobs.

Also, at that time, Hatshepsut had her own room. It's been dismantled now, much to my disgust, and the Hatshepsut sphinx was in the same room as the Temple of Dendur, last time I visited New York. She's not too happy about it.

I find it insulting that she no longer has her own room -- it was an important exhibit focused just on her and her achievements.

I'm putting photos from the Met and the Library and some of the places in Edinburgh and Ayrshire up on the website:

<http://gwenfinneganmysteries.devonellingtonwork.com>.

Q: Did you ever get to study archaeology?

DE: Not traditionally. In 2013, I was able to take, through Coursera, an online class with Sue Alcock of Brown University called "Archaeology's Dirty Little Secrets", about some of the basics. I loved it, and I was lucky enough to head from the Cape to Brown to meet her. In fact, she got me back in touch with one of my favorite playwrights from my early days in New York theatre, who was teaching at Brown. In the edits, I fixed a few glaring errors in the manuscript, but I still have made, shall we say, "adjustments" in proper process to serve the needs of the story. I hope Sue will forgive me -- and I plan to study more with her if the opportunity arises.

Q: The relationship seems more of a triangle than a couple, thanks to Karl. Can you talk about that a bit?

DE: Karl was originally going to be the primary antagonist -- former lover gone bad. However, Karl had other ideas. The relationship between Gwen and Karl has gone through various permutations for over twenty years. Their bond is so strong that even the genuine love between Gwen and Justin can't break it. Nor should it. This idea that fictional characters can only have a single relationship and everything else must come second is something I believe is harmful to teach readers to look for as human beings. We are capable of having more than one relationship without those relationships being a threat to each other, and I wanted to explore that.

Q: Then, of course, there's Edward.

DE: Yes, there is. Again, Edward was supposed to be a very small supporting character whose purpose was to provide information and the next lead for Gwen and Justin to follow. But Edward had other ideas. I believe in following my instincts when characters want to take a different direction than the original plan. It's the subconscious mind at work, which always knows more than the conscious mind. The subconscious embodies itself in the characters, so when you let that go, at least in early drafts, you can get to a better place than you would otherwise. When you write something that needs a structure, such as a mystery, then you take it and adjust the piece to the structure. Fortunately, the genre lines are blurring somewhat, and I take full advantage of that!

Q: Did you get any push-back because your vampire is named Edward?

DE: Because of *Twilight*? More power to Stephanie Meyer for creating a trilogy that connected to so many people. But I hadn't read her books when I wrote this, and the only thing Edward Ramsey has in common with the other Edward is the fact they're both vampires. One trusted reader who's a big *Twilight* fan suggested I change his name, but Edward's Edward, and there's more than one Edward on the planet. My editor and publisher had no problem with it. I also wanted the vampire aspect to be peripheral to this novel. It comes more to the center in the third book, especially where Justin is concerned.

Q: So where do your characters go from here?

DE: You'll have to read the books to find out! How's that for avoidance AND self-promotion! ;) Seriously, the second book, THE BALTHAZAAR TREASURE, is about salvaging a pirate ship, and there's a murder, AND Gwen and Justin face new obstacles in their relationship. There are definitely some surprises in that one, for readers who think they have a handle on Gwen and Justin! MYTH AND INTERPRETATION, a between-the-books novella deals with what Gwen and Justin deal with in New York, trying to build a stable, adult partnership and some of the obstacles they face in the life/work balance. It's vital information needed to go into what happens in BALTHAZAAR, but it ruined the pace and plot of BALTHAZAAR, so we yanked it out and developed it into its own novella. That comes out in July of 2018.

I have some interesting and possibly controversial twists and turns for their characters. But it keeps it fresh, for me and the readers. I hope people will continue the journey with these characters.

About the Author



Devon Ellington publishes under half a dozen names in fiction and non-fiction, and is an internationally-produced playwright, screenwriter, and radio writer.

She's written hundreds of articles, dozens of short stories, and her work is included in a variety of anthologies. Her short Delectable Digital Delights are listed here:

After decades of working backstage on Broadway and in film and television production, she writes full time, moving between fiction, scripts, and business writing.

She runs several blogs, the most well-known being Ink in My Coffee, about the ups and downs of the writing life:

<https://devonellington.wordpress.com>.

Her main website is Devon Ellington Work:

<http://www.devonellingtonwork.com/>

And the Gwen Finnegan Mysteries site is

<https://gwenfinneganmysteries.devonellingtonwork.com>

You can find Devon on both Facebook and Twitter.

