



## False Pretenses

*Kathy Herman*

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Zoe Broussard loves the life she and her husband Pierce have built in her beloved Louisiana hometown -- especially their popular brasserie Zoe B's, to which folks drive all the way from Lafayette for lunch or dinner. It seems like heaven.

But it's about to become hell. A series of anonymous notes is making her life a misery --because Zoe has a secret so terrible it could leave the business in shambles and tear her marriage apart. Can she find the courage to face her past?

The first in a new series from Kathy Herman, *False Pretenses* is a gripping suspense novel that leaves a lasting impression about honesty and accountability.

## False Pretenses Details

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Author : Kathy Herman

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## From Reader Review False Pretenses for online ebook

### **Katie says**

More like 4 ½ stars. This is the first book I've read by Kathy Herman, but from what I read about her, I had a feeling I would like it. And I did! It had the suspenseful plot that slowly built throughout the book and also a really good twist of romantic tension between Zoe and her husband, Pierce. I kept hoping she'd tell him all her lies, and then I found myself hoping Pierce would forgive her. Really grew to like these characters—they just couldn't split up!

Zoe was a very layered character. Beginning the book, the reader knows she did something wrong, but not what. As the story progresses, her sin is revealed, but I kept discovering more and more layers of Zoe. She'd built such a wall of protection around her—with her false name and past—that she herself almost believed it. Definitely a three-dimensional(or more!) character! Pierce seemed a bit thin at the beginning of the book. It took me a while to like him, but by the time Zoe had to confess to him, he'd grown on me and I began to see a deeper side to him.

One of my favorite twists in False Pretenses (and there were many!) is when Zoe's life is now in danger because of the false identity she choice. Of all the identities she could've picked to start her new life, she landed the one with ties to the drug lords. Wow! What a blow that must've been for Zoe! Kathy's writing was strong and vivid, really putting the reader in Zoe's little town in Louisiana.

While it took a little to get into this plot, once the ball started rolling it never stopped. I found it easy to immerse myself into False Pretenses and get all caught up in Zoe's lies and deceits. What an awful way to live, with so much falsehood hanging over you all the time. There were a few parts or scenes that felt a bit awkward for the characters or didn't flow, but it wasn't that bad and I doesn't sway me from reading more of Kathy's books in the future! I recommend this for adults as well as teens. Nothing questionable that stood out to me, and False Pretenses holds many wonderful lessons on how lies can eat at your conscience and also on how your sins will always find you out.

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### **Kathy says**

#### **Excellent book!**

I really enjoyed reading False Pretense. The characters come to life in the story. They make mistakes, show sin, love, grace, and faith in God. One of the most interesting aspects of this book is the comparison of two couples. One couple has fully accepted Christ as savior and Lord. He lives in their hearts. The other couple has a head knowledge and worship God but there is no heart knowledge. During the telling of the story with good and bad things happening. the couples both lean on God to get through some very tough situations. I actually had to put the book down for a few hours because the situation was so intense. A loving relationship with Jesus is the final victor in this book. He is the center! I am looking forward to reading the next book.

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### **ML Couch says**

**Kathy Herman has quickly become one of my favorite authors**

Another good read! I only recently discovered this author and I'm certainly glad I did. When I started this book I wasn't sure I was going to like it as much as the other two of hers that I've read. It quickly gained momentum and drew me in however. Great story about forgiveness and grace. Looking forward to the next in the series.

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### **Beth - ;) says**

The story started out slowly at first but I did enjoy it once it picked up. I felt though as though I missed something at first; some of the characters seemed to have a backstory from a previous series (this is the first in a new series of books set in a different town than her previous books) and every now and then there were mentions of previous occurrences and I felt as though I should remember what had happened in the previous series. I am going to have to go back through my books read by this author.

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### **Kav says**

A multi-faceted story filled to brimming with grace. I love the way the author tells it from the point of views of two couples -- Zoe and Pierce and Vanessa and Ethan. She weaves their diverse stories into the increasingly sinister suspense thread and in the process, creates a riveting tale of compassion and love and ultimately the forgiveness that comes from the grace Jesus offers us. Hair-raising, breath-snatching, I came to a point where I couldn't put the book down and had to finish it in one chilling sweep. So many 'aha' moments by the time I reached the triumphant conclusion.

This is book 1 (2011) in the Secrets of Roux River Bayou and you can bet, I'll be hunting down books 2 and 3! And to Kathy Herman fans -- You'll recognize Vanessa and Ethan from the Sophie Trace Trilogy. I haven't read those books but there was enough background references that I felt compelled to check the author's website and sure enough I found Vanessa and Ethan's story in The Right Call, which I'll be reading soon as well.

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### **Jolie says**

I found this book rather sad and really felt bad for Zoe. Her husband, on the other hand, I wanted to smack upside the head and say "Stop being a dick. People make mistakes". The plot seemed a little far fetched and some parts of it really didn't make sense to me. But I liked the message (God will get you through anything) and though the book was great.

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### **Pat says**

Zoe Broussard loves the life she and her husband Pierce have built in her beloved Louisiana hometown—especially their popular brasserie Zoe B's, to which folks drive all the way from Lafayette for lunch or dinner. It seems like heaven. But it's about to become hell. A series of anonymous notes is making her life a misery—because Zoe has a secret so terrible it could leave the business in shambles and tear her marriage apart. Can she find the courage to face her past?

The first in a new series from Kathy Herman, *False Pretenses* is a gripping suspense novel that leaves a lasting impression about honesty and accountability.

Great story--couldn't put it down. Zoe has to deal with her lies & learn the meaning of grace from her new neighbors & friends who move in to renovate the Langley place (which they find also has a secret--who is the candy man and what is he doing there).

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### **Lizabeth Tucker says**

Shelby Sieger wants a life of her own, away from her father's abuse, from the preconceptions about who she really is, and from what she had done to finance that new start. After changing her name, she flees, leaving more lies behind her.

Ethan and Vanessa Langley moved to Louisiana to convert the family manor into a bed and breakfast. While the work is being done on the old plantation, they and their imaginative four-year-old son live in a place rented from Pierre and Zoe Broussard.

A lynching of a white man and a note that seems to imply a racial motivation has the town in an uproar. Could young Carter Langley's mysterious African-American Candy Man friend be behind the murder? In addition, Zoe is receiving notes that say "I know what you did", but how can she tell her beloved husband that she isn't Cajun, that her whole life is a lie?

This is a Christian mystery so religion is a big part of it, but Herman isn't preachy. As the story continues, there is more, especially when explaining how Grace must be given as well as received. The characters are real people, with both good and bad parts. Overall, a good read for anyone who isn't offended by religion woven through a story, but who don't want it jammed down their throats by holier-than-thou characters. 3.5 out 5.

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### **Mary says**

The characters were well written, felt like old friends and went thru the trials and problems as if I really knew them. Christian writer but she isn't preachy - would recommend all her books. Some of her comments in the book really hit you in the right place and it turns you back to your roots and upbringing.

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### **Bonnie says**

Kathy Herman is one of my favorite authors and this book is one of the reasons why! At the beginning of this book, Zoe was a girl who made a bad decision that she carried with her for years. And as with things we run from, we eventually have to face it again. Well, the time came for Zoe to face it. She made a decision to finally own her mistake, to make amends, and she was met with a very different outcome than the one she expected. In this story, Zoe discovers that God's grace is much bigger than our sin. The person she blossoms into through it all makes this book very enjoyable. An added treasure to this story, Adele is a godly and gracious woman who will be hard to forget. She goes on my list of book characters that really add to the

quality of a story. I say keep writing, Kathy Herman, because your books are worth reading!

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### **Cathy Daniel says**

Oh. My. Word. This book was so good!!! I loved the atmosphere and the characters. I loved how the suspense slowly built in a creepy way and all the threads came together and I loved the ending and the message of GRACE. I cried at the end. Happy tears. I can not wait to get my hands on the 2nd and 3rd books in this series!

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### **Donna Engler says**

#### **Absolutely loved it**

What an exciting story. Couldn't put it down. There is plenty of romance, mystery, great characters, murder and bad guys who could ruin everything. It's completely engrossing. Some serious mistakes from Zoe's past come close to spoiling everything she has going for her...her marriage her friendships, even her Cajun cafe. God steps in when all else looks hopeless. Enjoy!

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### **Mary says**

Ten years ago, Shelby Sieger changed her name and left her home, bound for Lafayette and a new life...She randomly picks a new name, Zoe from a newspaper article and moves to a small town outside of New Orleans and opens a restaurant. She married Pierre Broussard and they run a popular cafe.

Vanessa and Ethan Langley have just moved into Langley House, with the intention of turning it into a B&B. But Langley House has a six-generation history that includes its share of ghosts. Meanwhile, they are renting a apartment from Zoe and Pierce Broussard while Langley Manor is being renovated. Pierce and Zoe run a cafe together.

Herman, Kathy (2011-03-01). False Pretenses: A Novel (Secrets of Roux River Bayou) . David C Cook. Kindle Edition.

Trouble begins when a white man, the simple-minded Remy Jarvis, is lynched just 200 yards from Langley Manor. Meanwhile, Zoe starts getting anonymous notes, each the same five words cut from the newspaper: I know what you did. Her past is a secret from everyone, including her husband. Does someone know? If so, what do they know? And what will she do to prevent her secrets becoming known? The answers to these questions are slowly uncovered as the story progresses.

The story deals with the questions of why family of origin is so important to our self-image. What elements go into forming a healthy self-image? When those elements are missing in a child's life, who is responsible? When those elements are missing in an adult's life, who is responsible? Where do we find our true identity? At what point in time should an adult take responsibility for dealing with the wounds of his or her childhood? A statement from the book: "It's not your fault if you grew up dysfunctional, but it is your fault if you stay that way."

False Pretenses has a good Christian message, but not preachy and has an underlying theme of personal responsibility. It is also a story of the triumph of grace over adversity. A memorable quote from one of the characters:

“A day will come when someone you know is in desperate need of grace. Remember how this moment feels and pass it on. Healing comes as much in the giving as in the receiving.”

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## **Linda says**

Secrets have a way of coming out ...

### ***I KNOW WHAT YOU DID***

When the notes first start arriving, Zoe Broussard is terrified that someone has discovered the secret that she has been keeping for the last ten years and will ruin both her personal and professional life. Hoping that she can remove the potential blackmailer's leverage, Zoe takes steps to amend her long-ago transgression.

... Only to find that the situation is actually worse than she ever imagined, because the blackmailer thinks that she is someone else ...

Kathy Herman has instantly jumped onto my "favorite author" shelf. This blend of Christian suspense and romance is EXACTLY the kind of book I like to read. The rest of the Roux River Bayou series is going on my To-Read shelf TODAY, as well as her previous Sophie Trace trilogy, because I want to find out more of Ethan and Vanessa's backstory.

(Two tiny quibbles: 1. The bad guy's surname kept switching between Cowan and Cowen, and 2. Every time the drug heroin was mentioned, it was spelled "heroine" -- NOT the same thing at all!)

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## **Cindy says**

Zoe B's is a happening brasserie in Cajun country, in the town of Les Barbes. Zoe Broussard and her husband Pierce, have worked hard and have established a successful business, but Zoe realizes that her life is built upon deception, that will soon be revealed when she starts receiving notes that she knows will lead to blackmail. So forcing herself to face the horrible acts of her past, she knows that she has to face what she did and who she really is. She however is not sure her marriage can survive the revelation of the real Zoe. However when the notes lead to the actual act of blackmail, she realizes that she is in deep trouble and the truth has to come out in order to save her's and Pierce's lives. A crazed drug dealer thinks that Zoe is someone other than she really is and is convinced she has stolen a hundred thousand dollars and he wants it back, or someone will die.

An action packed story that I could not put down. I loved this book, it is the first book I remember ever reading from this author but I hope it is not the last one. LOVED the book!! 5 stars. 384 pages US \$14.99

This book was provided for review purposes only, no payment was received for this review.

