



Linda O. Johnston, celebrated author of over 60 novels, shares her journey and inspirations with Reader's House Magazine

Linda O. Johnston discusses her journey from law to full-time writing, her love for animals, and creating romantic suspense and mystery novels.

From Legal Briefs to Romantic Thrills

LINDA O. JOHNSTON

EXPLORING THE HEARTFELT NARRATIVES AND MYSTERIES

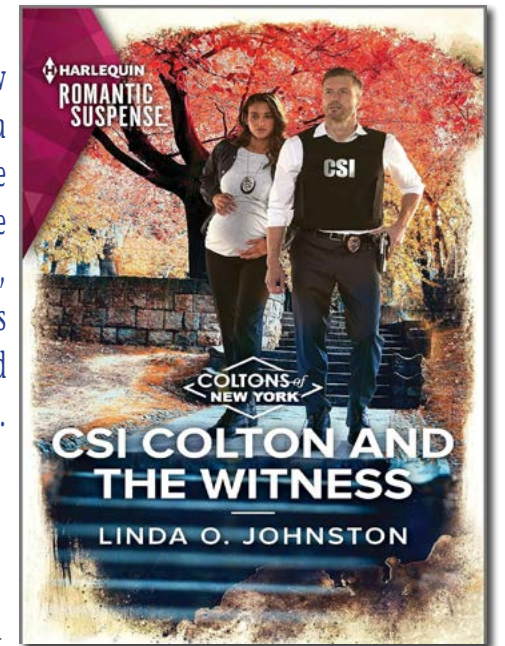
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Linda O. Johnston is a name synonymous with romance and mystery, her storytelling blending heartfelt relationships with gripping suspense. From her earliest days, Linda knew she was destined to write, weaving narratives even as a child that hinted at the prolific career to come. With an impressive portfolio of over 60 novels spanning various subgenres, she has captivated readers with tales of love, intrigue, and, notably, a deep affection for animals.

Linda's writing journey began early, with childhood stories that showcased her burgeoning talent and imagination. Despite a temporary hiatus during law school, her passion for storytelling soon resurfaced. Her legal background added a unique layer to her writing, enriching her narratives with authenticity and detail. She began with short stories, one of which won the Robert L. Fish Memorial Award, before transitioning to full-length novels. Her debut novel, the time-travel romance "A Glimpse of Forever," marked the beginning of a diverse and successful career.

A trained lawyer turned full-time author, Linda's journey is as dynamic as her plots. Her commitment to crafting intricate stories that often highlight the bond between humans and animals is evident in beloved series like the Pet Rescue Mysteries and Kendra Ballantyne, Pet-Sitter Mysteries. Her work reflects a genuine passion for animal rights, bringing a unique depth to her characters and settings.

"CSI Colton and the Witness" is an engaging addition to the Coltons of New York series. Linda O. Johnston masterfully blends romance and suspense, creating a thrilling narrative that keeps readers on the edge of their seats. The characters are well-developed, with CSI Colton standing out as a compelling protagonist whose dedication to justice is both admirable and relatable. The plot is intricately woven, with enough twists and turns to keep the reader guessing until the very end. Fans of romantic suspense will find this book hard to put down. Highly recommended for those who enjoy a good mix of mystery and romance.



In our interview, Linda delves into her inspiration for the Shelter of Secrets series, a fascinating blend of animal rescue and human drama, as well as her Alaska Untamed Mystery series, born from her own adventures in the Alaskan wilderness. She shares how her love for cruises and the natural world of Alaska sparked the creation of Stacie Calder, a naturalist and sleuth navigating the rugged beauty of the last frontier. Linda's attention to detail and commitment to authenticity

Linda O. Johnston masterfully blends romance, suspense, and animal advocacy, captivating readers with her heartfelt and thrilling storytelling.

shine through as she discusses her research methods and the joys of setting a series in such a unique location.

Linda also offers a glimpse into the challenges and rewards of contributing to long-running series like the Colton series, where multiple authors collaborate to expand a vast fictional family. Her ability to craft engaging, standalone stories within this framework speaks to her versatility and skill as a writer.

A dedicated member of several writers' organizations, including the Romance Writers of America and Sisters in Crime, Linda emphasizes the importance of community and continuous learning in a writer's journey. She offers valuable advice to aspiring writers on embracing their passions across multiple genres, encouraging them to find their voice and persist through the editing process.

Join us as Linda O. Johnston takes us behind the scenes of her creative process, her love for animals, and the heart-pounding excitement of romantic suspense. Her journey from writing short stories to becoming an award-winning author is as compelling as the stories she tells.

Your latest book, "Canine Protection," is the fourth in the Shelter of Secrets series. Can you tell us more about what inspired this series and its unique premise of a shelter that protects both animals and people?

I am an absolute dog lover and very much believe in caring for and adopting rescue animals—although I'm a bit of a hypocrite about it since my dogs for many

years have been Cavalier King Charles Spaniels and I have adopted them from reputable breeders because of the breed's health issues. But I love writing about shelters, and the idea of one that also took in people in trouble and created new identities for them really inspired me to start writing the Shelter of Secrets series for Harlequin Romantic Suspense. The series is winding down though, and there will only be one more after "Canine Protection," titled "Canine Refuge" next year, because with all that has occurred at and around the fictional shelter in the existing books the place might not be as much of a secret if it continued.

Your Alaska Untamed Mystery series introduces readers to Stacie Calder, a naturalist in Alaska. What inspired you to set this series in such a unique

location, and how do you conduct research for it?

I love to go on cruises with my husband, and our most recent cruise was to Alaska a few years ago—probably my fifth Alaskan cruise. When we spent time in Juneau there we had the opportunity to go on a river tour that was given by local naturalists who pointed out a lot of the wildlife in the area—and that inspired me to write about it. I even started asking questions and doing research on that tour boat. Stacie Calder was the result, an educated naturalist who also gives tours in Alaska—and solves crimes, sometimes after dead bodies are spotted in the water off the tour boats! And of course Stacie brings her own beloved husky Sasha with her each day.

What are some of the challenges you face when continuing long-running series like the Colton series?

The Colton series is definitely fun to write for! The books are actually works for hire by Harlequin Romantic Suspense because each year a new part of the vast fictional Colton family is featured, and the contents of the individual stories are determined by Harlequin but written by various authors in their lineup. My most significant challenge is to come up with an enjoyable rendering of the story that I'm designated to write.

Many of your books, including the Pet Rescue Mysteries and Kendra Ballantyne, Pet-Sitter Mysteries, feature strong animal themes. What draws you to write about animals and their relationships with humans?

As I mentioned, I'm a total dog nut, and I really enjoy writing about them. I'm also an advocate for animal rights in general and love reading and hearing about—and viewing—wildlife as well. Writing about animals makes me happy, and I hope it make my readers happy too.

What do you enjoy most about writing romantic suspense?

I enjoy coming up with characters who are attracted to one another but also get into some challenging situations where they have to sometimes save their own lives and each other's, while their attraction continues to build into something that will affect their entire lives.

What advice would you give to aspiring writers who are interested in writing across multiple genres and incorporating their personal passions, like animals, into their work?

Just do it! Determine what you want to write and figure out the best genre or genres for it. And then start writing, and continue till your stories are complete, then spend significant time editing them. It helps to join writers' organizations in your favourite genres and learn from the other members, as well as joining critique groups.