

Author Bio

SOCIAL MEDIA BIO

Susan Rounds is a former airline consultant with a passion for history and world travel. The Winds of Autumn is her historical romance debut novel.

SHORT BIO

Susan Rounds has always been fascinated with history and other cultures. She's lived in Europe, Alaska, and Hawaii, and loves to discover sweeping new landscapes to inspire her writing. The Winds of Autumn is Susan's historical romance debut novel.

MEDIUM BIO

Susan Rounds has always been fascinated with history and other cultures through her travels and living in Europe during her childhood. Exploring fairytale castles sparked her imagination. Her adventurous lifestyle led to a career in aviation, flying to Asia and Hawaii as a Flight Service Manager on the Boeing 747. A later venture into destination marketing gave her a creative platform to publish travel articles. Susan's historical romance novel, The Winds of Autumn, reflects her passion for storytelling with its rich narrative and sweeping landscapes that draw on many of her life experiences. She and her husband have two sons they're very proud of and call northern California home.

Author Photos



Cover Images



Book Description

A captivating love story transcending the American West, where secrets hide unknown consequences and true love fights for a second chance.

At the end of the War of the Rebellion, Mariah Renwick is still haunted by the memory of her late sister as she tries to piece together the remnants of an innocent time lost. All she wants is to bring happiness home again.

Then dashing Lieutenant Nathan Lawton rushes into her life and becomes her new husband. But Nathan's dark and tormented past hides revenge and betrayal as he stakes his claim to the Renwick fortune and his future out West.

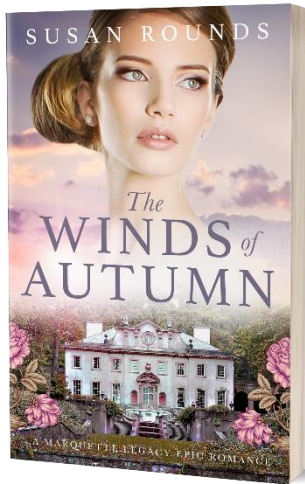
Railroad magnate, Julian Marquette, has just returned to St. Louis to secure another bank loan from Mariah's father. A brilliant mastermind, Julian orchestrates the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad, not for the sake of his own vanity but for the people of America. He's a man borne of conviction for what he believes in, a passionate man who's secretly been in love with Mariah since he first saw her two years ago. But now it's too late . . . until an intimate moment together takes them by storm.

"It was there again, in that infinitesimal space between them, the subtle tremor of attraction, at once forbidden but about to collide."

Torn between desire and duty, Mariah is caught in a crossfire as she faces unimaginable struggles on an epic westward journey that shows no mercy. Can Julian fight against impossible odds for the woman he loves, or is all hope lost?

Sweeping landscapes. Passionate characters. The consummate gentleman is back.

Book Excerpt



As they stepped out onto the terrace overlooking the garden, they gazed at the roses, aglow in the last rays of sun. Julian smiled and gestured with his arm. Mariah hesitated, then curled her hand in his embrace. How unprepared she was for the feeling. A skipped heartbeat made her unsteady. Holding on with two hands seemed the right thing to do.

They strolled along the garden path bordered with boxwoods and paused under the gazebo draped in wisteria vines. Evening's tide cast a soft light around them.

Julian braced his hands on the balustrade and peered into the distance. Mariah's gaze tiptoed toward him. The silhouette of his face stunned her. She took her chance and stared at him unhindered. Just as he turned his head, her attention shifted to the roses.

"I do have important business to discuss with your father. Traveling from Boston is too long a journey only to arrive and deal in pleasantries. I'm sure you can understand."

Reassuring Mariah that he was just here for business shattered to pieces when their gazes met. It was there again, in that infinitesimal space between them, the subtle tremor of attraction, at once forbidden but about to collide.

"Business aside, I'd be a fool not to admit I've enjoyed our short time together—immensely."

His smile was true. His words touched, enough for Mariah to let go, and let him in. *They* had become more personal.

"I've enjoyed our time together, too." Her smile faded. "Earlier today, at the train station, I didn't mean to be unkind to you. It's just that I—I haven't been myself lately."

She knew she was taking a risk she was unsure of, in front of a man she hardly knew, but she couldn't hide the hurt any longer. She had to trust someone. The feeling overwhelmed her.

She closed her eyes and fell lost in the darkness with no way out. Then a caress on her chin shone a light in her mind, as bright as the whitest snow covering a wintry Missouri landscape. She looked up. Julian's gaze was upon her, and the truth that dwelled in his honorable eyes.

"If I can ease your worries in any way, Mariah, I will."

She held tight to his every word, and she believed him. Her lips parted, and she said, "I know."

Press Release



An Epic Railroad. An Epic Romance. Dreams Do Come True

Author Susan Rounds knows what it's like to hold on to a dream. The publication of her debut novel is proof that not everything in life comes easy, especially a dream that took fourteen years to realize.

Susan's historical romance novel, ***The Winds of Autumn: A Marquette Legacy Epic Romance (Swancourt Press; December 20, 2022; Paperback; ISBN: 978-1-7343695-0-2; \$14.99)***, highlights the courage and determined spirit of those who worked tirelessly in hopes of realizing their dreams, whether pioneers or railroad builders.

A key storyline in her book focuses on the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad across America's frontier. That monumental project plays a pivotal role between the characters and their desires where passion and betrayal ignite in a crossfire set against the sweeping backdrop of the American West.

As Susan looks back on her accomplishments as an independent author and publisher, she sees many parallels in her novel, and in herself. "Writing my novel has been a labor of love. It's also been one of the most difficult things I've ever done in my life."

Obstacles and uncertainty confronted the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad. Achieving that dream didn't come easy. Writers confront that challenge too. For Susan, the chance to sign a book contract with a hybrid publisher turned her dream of finally getting published into reality. Unfortunately, that publisher ended up closing its doors for good.

So how did Susan overcome the many setbacks that indie authors can face? "I began to wonder, is my book ever going to get published? Surprisingly, what kept me going were the characters in my story. I couldn't let Mariah and Julian down. Their love for each other has to be shared so romance readers can be filled with the joy and hope of a happily ever after."

A dream come true.

About Susan Rounds: Susan Rounds is a former airline consultant and Flight Service Manager on the Boeing 747. She's marketed and promoted tourism and written travel articles for publication. Susan has lived in Europe, Alaska, and Hawaii, and loves to discover sweeping new landscapes to inspire her writing. ***The Winds of Autumn*** is her historical romance debut novel.

The Winds of Autumn: A Marquette Legacy Epic Romance will be available **December 20, 2022** at the following retailers – Kobo, Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, and Google Play Books. For more information or to schedule an interview, contact **Susan Rounds** at:

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Suggested Media Interview Questions

1. Tell us about your novel.
2. What made you decide to become a writer?
3. Why will readers want to read your novel?
4. What did you find inspiring about your writing journey?
5. Why did you choose St. Louis as the opening scene for *The Winds of Autumn*?
6. Were there any historical landmarks not obvious in your book that you used as inspiration for your writing?
7. What did you learn from writing your novel?
8. What advice would you give to aspiring writers who may want to start writing a novel?
9. What other advice would you give to a new writer?
10. What is your favorite motivational phrase?
11. What is your favorite romantic quote?
12. How can readers discover more about you and get in touch?

Speaking Engagement Topics

Find your passion | Nurture yourself against negativity | Take your writing profession seriously even if you haven't earned a dime | Believe in yourself | You got this!

Susan would love to meet with your book club! Reach out to her for a discussion about the inspiration behind her novel and the characters that bring the story to life.

Book Club Discussion Questions

1. One theme recurs in Chapter 1. What is this theme, and how is it revealed in Mariah's character?
2. What do Mother's Damask roses symbolize for Mariah?
3. What secret does Mariah want to keep safe? Why?
4. What does the storm symbolize in the closing scene of Chapter 1?
5. Mariah and her mother reacted differently to Fanny's death. How did each of them deal with the loss?

6. How did leaving St. Louis affect Mariah's feelings about her sister's death? What gift did she realize her sister had given her?
7. What inner conflict does Nathan struggle with the most that stems from his past? How does this conflict affect his relationship with Mariah?
8. When Nathan and Mariah's marriage is consummated, what does Mariah discover about her new husband? How does this discovery shed light on Nathan's character?
9. What are the driving forces behind Mariah's determination to keep her marriage intact?
10. What events in Mariah's life create fear? In what ways does this fear give insight into her character and ultimately define her as a woman?
11. Mariah reaches a dark moment when she discovers a truth about Nathan. How does this revelation fundamentally change her and everything she's believed in?
12. Describe the inner conflict that haunts Silas and how he changed as a result.
13. How are the struggles the emigrants faced similar to Julian and Mariah's?
14. Discuss aspects of the characters that resonate with you, and how you would deal with adversity.

Book Club Topics

Consider the following themes from *The Winds of Autumn: A Marquette Legacy Epic Romance* as ideas for further in-depth discussion:

Never give up on what you believe in | Don't let fear control your life | Let go of the past | Fight for what you want | Be the person you were meant to be | The power of hope | The meaning of home | Believe the impossible is possible | The power of love

Teaser Quotes

"Her face, for so long a distant memory, shined radiant before him again."

"But her alter ego had already moved in and slipped into her skin. Oh, how her purring made him crazy, real bad crazy."

"Hail poured down and hit the ground, crackling like lard sizzling on a hot griddle. Pellets of ice covered the land in white as if it had snowed all of a sudden."

"His face disappeared in her silky wonder, where he closed his eyes and inhaled its honeyed scent until his lungs burned."

"The cunning game was on again, cloaked in petal soft skin and laced with fine perfume."

"His passionate gaze had blazed so true. His love for her. The forbidden love they dared not speak of."

"He hated forever, for it meant a life without her, and a love worth nothing more than the dust on a cowpoke's boots."