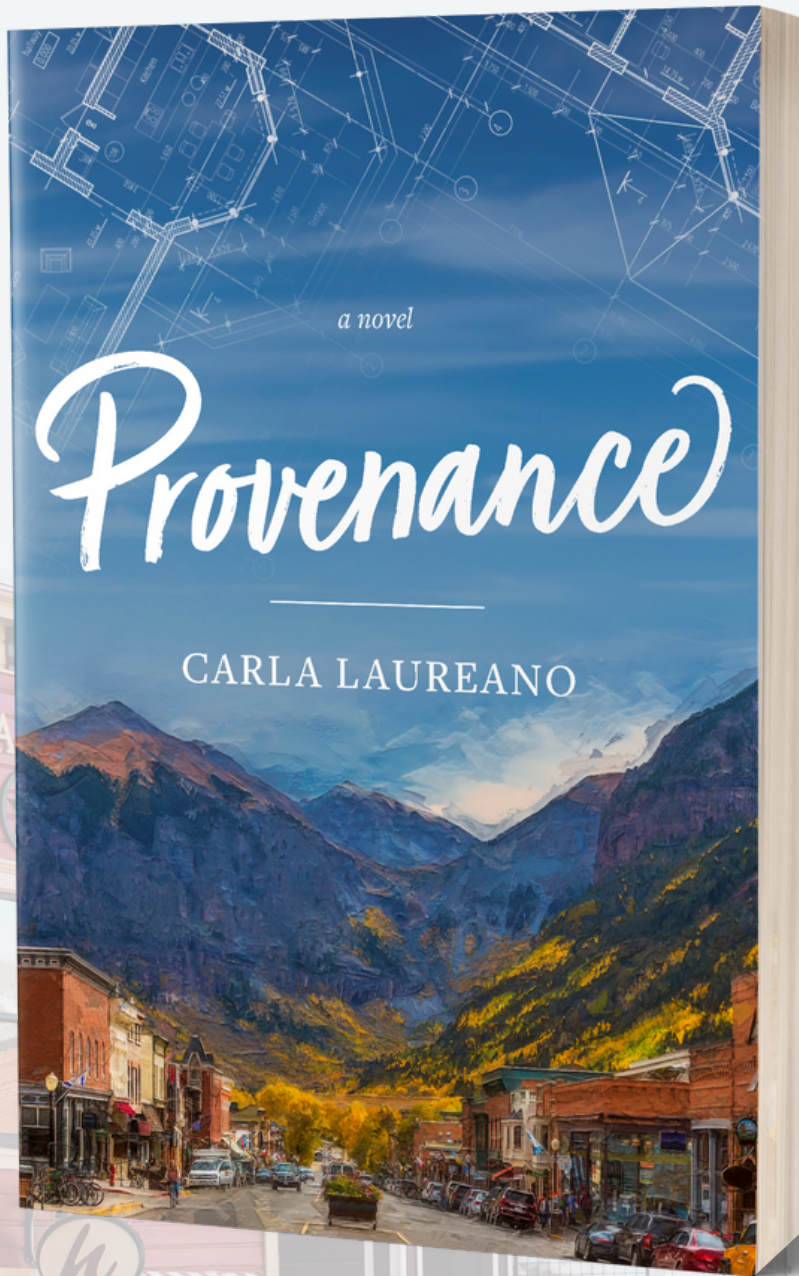


Book Club Kit



About Carla Laureano



Carla Laureano is the RITA Award-winning author of contemporary inspirational romance and Celtic fantasy. A graduate of Pepperdine University, she worked as a sales and marketing executive for nearly a decade before leaving corporate life behind to write fiction full-time. She currently lives in Denver with her husband and two sons, where she writes during the day and cooks things at night.

Visit Carla Laureano online at carlalaureano.com and follow her on social media.



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Recipes

What goes better with a great book discussion than some delicious, book-themed treats? Find three recipes here that tie to the novel. These may be the perfect snacks for your book club. Just remember to exercise caution as you make and enjoy them for the first time!



MAIN STREET

Latin Mocha

Delia's Latin mocha puts a spicy spin on the classic coffee-and-chocolate pairing! Feel free to adjust the sugar and spices to your particular taste and cool off the heat with a healthy dollop of whipped cream.

Ingredients:

- 2 shots of espresso or 4 ounces of very strong brewed coffee
- ½ cup steamed whole milk
- 1 tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
- ¼ tsp. cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp. cayenne or arbol chili powder
- Whipped cream, if desired

Brew your coffee according to your preferred recipe. Stir together sugar, cocoa, cinnamon, and pepper and stir into the hot coffee until completely dissolved. Slowly add steamed milk and stir lightly, then top with whipped cream and an additional sprinkle of cinnamon and cocoa powder.



Recipe courtesy of Carla Laureano



Opa's Simple Blueberry Muffins

The bakery-style muffin recipe that inspired Gabe's grandfather's blueberry muffins is undeniably delicious, but it's also incredibly fussy, requiring the butter and sugar to be creamed together and dry ingredients added alternately with the wet. This simplified version is much quicker but no less delicious, requiring only a single mixing bowl. Best of all, the whole process including baking only takes about 20 minutes—meaning you can have fresh-baked muffins any time you want them.

Ingredients:

- 2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. grated nutmeg
- 2/3 cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 ¼ cups buttermilk
- 1 ½ cups freeze-dried blueberries
- Turbinado sugar, for sprinkling

Makes 12-16 muffins

Continued on the next page →

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Fill a standard muffin tin with paper cups or grease with cooking spray. Whisk all dry ingredients (first six, including sugar) together in a large bowl. Add melted butter, eggs, vanilla, and buttermilk, and stir until just combined. Do not overmix—this will result in tough muffins! With a rubber spatula, gently fold in blueberries until they're evenly distributed. Using a spoon or spring-loaded scoop, divide the batter evenly among muffin cups, filling almost to the top. Sprinkle turbinado sugar evenly over the tops of batter. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until muffins are golden brown and tops spring back when lightly touched. Let cool in muffin tin for about five minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack until the paper can be peeled away from the muffin cleanly.

High Altitude (over 3,500 feet): Decrease baking powder to 1 ½ tsp. Bake for 15-17 minutes.

Notes and Substitutions:

Fresh or frozen blueberries may be more traditional, but they have the tendency to sink to the bottom of a moist batter and congregate at the bottom of the muffin, so I prefer freeze-dried instead. If you choose to use fresh or frozen, pat them dry with a paper towel and toss with ¼ cup all-purpose flour, shaking off extra, before adding to the batter.

You may also use buttermilk powder in place of fresh buttermilk. (I often do!) Add 5 tablespoons of buttermilk powder with the dry ingredients and 1 ¼ cup water with the wet.

Recipe courtesy of Carla Laureano



Chocolate-Chip Almond Scones

Ingredients:

- 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 3 cups all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. salt
- 5 tbsp. cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- 1 cup semisweet or bittersweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- Turbinado sugar, for sprinkling

Recipe courtesy
of Carla Laureano

Opa's original almond scone recipe doesn't include chocolate chips, but I have yet to find a baking recipe that can't be improved by adding chocolate. Because this recipe uses very little sugar, it benefits from the hit of sweetness that the chocolate chips add. If you choose to omit the chips, you may want to add another $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sugar . . . just be aware that the extra sugar may cause the scones to spread a bit more on the pan.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Whisk together 2 cups of flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Cut in butter with a pastry blender until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Stir in chocolate chips. Add half-and-half and almond extract; stir until mixture forms a soft dough. Add in remaining flour until mixture holds together and is sticky to the touch. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and bring together into an 8-inch disk, patting the top flat and even. Using a lightly oiled knife or bench scraper, cut disk into eight wedges. Arrange wedges on a parchment-covered baking sheet. Brush tops with more half-and-half and sprinkle with turbinado sugar. Bake until golden-brown and cooked through, 15-20 minutes. Let cool on the sheet for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire cooling rack.

High Altitude (over 3,500 feet): No adjustments.





with Carla Laureano

Q. What was your inspiration for *Provenance*? Why did you choose the circumstances and location that you did?

Usually an idea comes to me mostly formed; this was the first story I've written that had to be pieced together bit by bit. Years ago, I had the idea of writing a story about a dying town on the California coast and a young woman who inherited a historic home from a grandmother she never knew existed, but for some reason, the story never really came together. Then one day while my husband and I were driving along the southern edge of Denver, I started paying attention to all the new construction and renovation that was happening in this older part of the city and wondering how much of the historic character was being lost from these beautiful homes. That combined with the huge number of ghost towns in the various parts of the Colorado high country and the idea for *Provenance* was born!

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Q. As an author, what did you particularly enjoy about writing this story?

Up until now, my books set in Colorado have taken place in Denver and surrounding areas. This is my first book set in the high country, and I took special pleasure in modeling the town of Jasper Lake after my favorite getaway spot, Grand Lake. Of course, that required me to make several research trips (fortunately, it's just ninety minutes from my house) and take lots of inspiration pictures. It was fun to bring it alive in fiction.

Q. What surprises do your readers have in store with this story?

All my books exist in the same universe, so there are at least three fun references to my other books in *Provenance*, some of which are pretty obvious and one that is pretty obscure. I can't wait to hear how many readers pick out!

Q. What did you enjoy about developing Kendall's and Gabriel's characters? What challenged you in writing their romance?

Kendall and Gabe were both such fun characters to create! Kendall is fun, feisty, and intelligent; Gabe is a fun mix of serious and lighthearted. But Gabe has recently gotten out of a relationship with a woman who didn't share his beliefs and has vowed not to do it again. That made the developing romance between the two of them rather tricky! It also made for good conflict, especially when the heart and the head are saying two different things.

Continued on next page

Q. You say that this story explores how our relationships with authority figures, especially at a young age, affect our relationship with God. Can you explain that a bit more? How does that play out in Kendall's story?

I'm neither a theologian nor a psychologist, but one thing that I've come to realize about myself and my friends over the years is that our relationships with authority figures distinctly color our views on God and our relationship with Him. The less grace we've been shown, the more harshness we've experienced in those relationships, the harder it is to receive His love and acceptance. Because Kendall has painful experiences with abandonment, she sees all the hardship in her life as a sign that God has abandoned her as well.

Q. What do you want your readers to take away from reading *Provenance*? What about it will inspire or encourage their faith?

If I had to choose a guiding verse for this book, it would be Romans 8:28 (NLT): "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." So often the events of our life, especially the bad ones, seem random. It's only through time and distance that we can see how God brought us through those times, working things for our ultimate good. I hope that readers who are going through a difficult time can take heart in the knowledge that even the worst moments will be redeemed in the fullness of God's plan!

Discussion Questions

- 1.) Most of us have daydreamed about a surprise inheritance or windfall that changes everything. If the Jasper Lake houses came to you, what would you do with them?
- 2.) Kendall has a special knack for tracking down the provenance—the origin and history—of the pieces she uses to decorate her clients' homes. What do you think inspired that curiosity? How do those skills serve her in new ways when faced with her Jasper Lake inheritance?
- 3.) Gabe feels a deep connection to Jasper Lake—a place he credits with saving his life. How does that connection steer his decisions? Is there a place that holds similar roots for you?
- 4.) For much of Kendall's life, she's had a bad impression of Christianity, going back to her foster-home experience. How does that history initially color her impression of her grandmother Constance? Of Gabe? Gabe remembers his grandmother joking that "the only problem with Christianity was the Christians." Have you felt truth in that?



Discussion questions continued

5.) Gabe is accused of being “a fixer.” How does he play that role in Jasper Lake? In his relationship with Kendall? Do you relate to his impulse to jump in and fix things? Where does that serve him and others well? In what ways might it be harmful?

6.) Kendall realizes she has put labels on herself that aren't true, like *abandoned* and *unwanted*. It makes her wonder, “What other titles had she assumed that would turn out to be false?” If Kendall had always known the truth about her mother and grandmother, how do you imagine it would've changed her life? Have you found yourself carrying titles that aren't true? How have you worked to discard them?

7.) Kendall comes to see that her memories of her past are incomplete, with the bad crowding out much of the good. How does filling in the gaps change her perspective? Have you ever been forced to look at your past through a new lens? How did it change things for you?

8.) Gabe tells Kendall, “I don't believe in coincidence or chance. . . . I only believe in consequences of our actions and God's providence. And thank God that a lot of the time His providence overrides our stupid decisions.” Do you agree with his perspective? Can you think of a time in your own life when God's providence has softened the consequences of your actions or brought good out of a bad decision?



Discussion questions continued

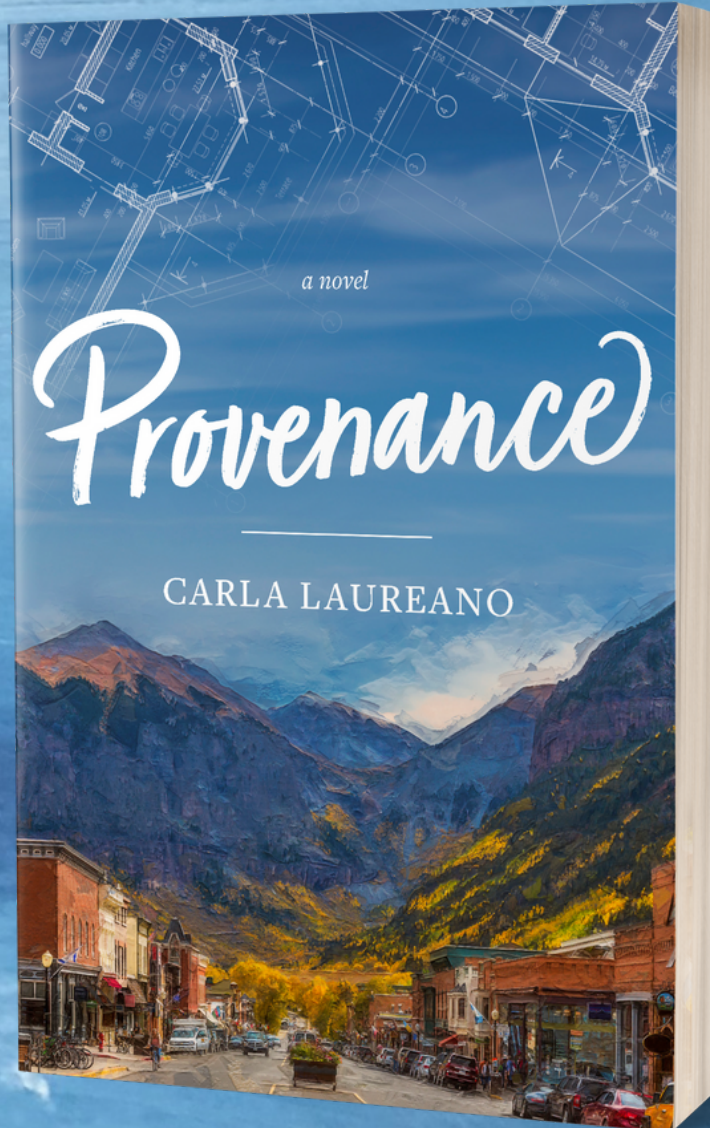
9.) Kendall initially believes she won't be able to move on without knowing the full truth about her family. But at the end of the story, many of her questions remain unanswered. How does she find peace with the things she might never know? How important is it to have the whole truth?

10.) Kendall has spent much of her life searching for a place to call home. What does *home* mean to you?

Your book group questions:

Jot down some questions you want to ask in your book club

Thanks for choosing



for your book club!

Be swept off your feet
in these contemporary
romances by Carla Laureano



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