
TRUST MY LOVE

The Toussaints #1

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Introducing Iona Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 Findley's THE TOUSSAINTS, the first in a new contemporary romance series that blends heartwarming love with family fun, suspense, and a hint of paranormal to create a beautiful balance of heat, heartache, and happiness.

As the eldest son of New Orleans' most prominent family and one of NOPD's top Missing Persons detectives, Philippe Toussaint is no stranger to pressure. But when his Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 only niece is abducted, he'll do anything to secure her safe return. With few clues and Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 limited time, he seeks answers from every

resource, no matter how far-fetched. Even going so far as to question the enigmatic and beautiful so-called psychic who shows up out of nowhere, shaking up not only the case but his feelings, as well.

Artist Claire Davenport escaped to New Orleans to outrun the pain and humiliation of her childhood, keeping to herself and never letting anyone too close, but when a frightened teen girl shows up in her dreams and her Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 most recent paintings, she knows she can no longer hide. With her psychic ability now out in the open, Claire fears the ramifications. But it's not only her secret in jeopardy, the influential and gorgeous detective on the case stirs things within her she never thought to feel and endangers her tidy way of life.

Passions ignite between the two, but doubts on both sides threaten their relationship, and the case is only the beginning of their problems.

Can Philippe protect the woman he is falling for while convincing Claire that she can fit into his elite society life? Or will betrayal and fear destroy their dreams of love?

TO MY READERS

I'm so pleased to introduce you to the Toussaints. This big, boisterous, loving, chaotic family is a Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 joy to write about. I can't wait to share their stories with you over the coming months! When the characters began coming to life in my head, I immediately saw New Orleans – a vibrant, beautiful melting pot of culture, music and food. What better place for a Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 family of such strong personalities, warmth and fun?

I hope you will enjoy reading about these uplifting characters in this colorful setting as much as I enjoyed writing about them. For those of you familiar with my Hero's Heart Series, you'll recognize these heartwarming characters as one of my trademarks. For those reading one of my books for the first time, I hope these characters will touch and inspire you.

As an author I must apologize to any natives of New Orleans or those of you who, like me,

have enjoyed many fun vacation days there. Some of the local details and descriptions in this book could be experienced in the French Quarter Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 today. Others are purely creative license taken for this series of Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 romantic fiction. I hope you will just ride along with me creatively and laissez les bon temps roulez.

~Iona

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CHAPTER ONE

Psychics and detectives didn't mix. If anyone had told him he'd work a case with a psychic, Philippe would have handcuffed and jailed them for public intoxication. Only someone loopy on New Orleans Sazeracs and sing-alongs would claim something so absurd. The powerful cognac and absinthe drinks made visitors dream up all kinds of crazy – even psychic crazy.

Philippe had fortune telling nonsense on his mind as he reached up and swiped the beaded sweat from his brow. Had to be at least a hundred degrees, even under the galleys and balconies of the buildings, and the heavy, humid air wasn't the only thing steamed up. Geo, his partner and one of the finest Missing Persons detectives in New Orleans, was on a tear.

“So she tells this woman, ‘You will meet your future husband on a ship. He is dark and handsome and from a distant land.’ Unbelievable. The woman paid \$60 for that crap.”

Philippe listened to his partner's dramatic tirade. As they crossed Jackson Square, he gauged Geo's annoyance with the psychic – only a seven on a scale from one to ten. Not bad. A normal rant, nothing critical. After all, no self-respecting police detective believed in more than five senses.

“I wanted to arrest them both,” his partner said. “The priestess of woo-woo for bilking Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 a tourist, and the visitor for... I don't know... inappropriate use of travel funds or something.” Geo's hand gestures, wild and deranged, might have stood out in another city, but no Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 one in the French Quarter was likely to notice.

“Now you're just making shit up,” Philippe chided.

His buddy shrugged. “It may not be a real crime, but it seriously ought to be.”

Philippe acquiesced with one silent nod, indicating he agreed. Psychics oozed out of the alleyways and dark spaces in New Orleans and they were a damn nuisance. He hated the way they preyed on Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 the public. Some thought of fortune telling as harmless fun. Most of the tourists believed that. Not true. Those too hopeful, or too naïve, were fooled. Psychics hurt people. Sometimes even locals.

“I saw you staring them down from across the square. You’re just pissed because the tourist was so enthralled with her fortune, she didn’t notice you swaggering by.”

Geo slicked back his shaggy hair. “Well, yeah...”

Philippe laughed as he reached over and punched his partner in the shoulder. It was great Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 having a partner you could trust in a crunch and laugh with too. Plus, they always agreed on the important stuff. Stuff like Central Grocery, the only place to pick up delicious, super-sized sandwiches. The crowded deli counter tucked away down by the French market was Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 always worth the quick trek across The Quarter to snag lunch. His stomach growled and his mouth watered at the scents of fresh bread and Italian herbs wafting out of the bag he carried.

Ten inches of round, pungent goodness. Sheer perfection. The secret was the olive salad topping. That stuff blended perfectly with the Italian meats and cheeses. He widened his stride, speeding his pace. Time to get back into the frosty air conditioning at headquarters with his muffuletta and root beer. “Why were you checking out the redhead tourist anyway?” he called over his shoulder to Geo, who was just a half step behind. “What happened to Sheila?”

Geo’s unrepentant grin shot back at him. “Man’d have to be dead to miss a beauty like that one.”

Considering his partner’s player attitude and marveling at his endurance, Philippe felt a tug of regret. His own love life had screeched to a stop last month when he stopped humoring his parents and their social circle. Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 He wanted someone special, and she wasn’t going to be one of the “appropriate” ones unofficially selected by his parents’ social club. He’d find her another way.

He shot a glance at his womanizing partner. “Every night with Sheila’s not enough?” he asked. “You’ve shown up wrinkled and worn out every day this week. Thank God for the department’s on-site dry cleaning and the locker room shower,” he punched his verbal jab home perfectly. “Without those, you’d smell like a brothel.”

Geo grinned. “Hey, there’s more of me to go around. Besides, I haven’t seen you push women away when they become mesmerized by your looks, Levine.”

Shit. The stupid nickname. Philippe bit back a reply and shot a killing glare at his partner. Damn Geo. Years ago, a fellow detective in the Missing Persons Unit had begun calling him Levine because of his resemblance to the rock star. His dark hair, vivid blue eyes, Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 and upright stature were similar to

the singer, but damn. Razzing from Geo and the rest of his unit was all his looks ever earned him.

Hell, even civilian visitors to Missing Persons had commented on the likeness. No one with half a brain wanted to look like a popular celeb. A detective wanted attention for his casework and his results. Ball busting was part of the cop culture, but he wished they'd choose something else to harp on. Even his straight-laced, by-the-book personality was fair game. Just not that damn name. His skin crawled when people started in with the "does anyone ever say you look like..." mirror image crap. Jesus, who wanted Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 to be compared to some slick-looking, tattoo-coated pop star?

Experience told him ignoring Geo's swipe was the best course of action. So he clamped his jaw shut and thought of his lunch again, letting the irritation slip away.

A companionable silence fell over them as they strolled through the majestic iron Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 gates and up the steps of the sunny yellow Spanish Colonial building. Tucked inside of the ornate facade was the far less grand Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 New Orleans Police Department. He wanted to get inside, cool down, and dive in to his lunch. Geo probably wanted the same.

They pressed forward, breezing through the refined marble entryway and the twenty-two-foot cypress and glass doors. Elegance and formality nosedived when they crossed into the center hub of the NOPD Missing Persons Unit, also known by its rather inglorious nickname, "The Swamp."

"Did you hear Haydel cleared the Tibo case yesterday? Caught some positive attention for a change," said Geo, bumping a Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 chair out of his path as he made for his desk.

The room was empty, which wasn't a surprise. Lunch break was celebrated here with a zeal found only in New Orleans. Any excuse to cut loose was not to be squandered, and everyone cleared out when they had the chance.

Philippe followed in Geo's wake, opting for the quickest path. "Yeah, I heard. Good for him. He deserves the break."

"You helped him there."

"Nah, he pulled it in himself."

"With your contacts and your suggestions."

Philippe shrugged. "He's going to be a good detective. Just needs some confidence, and he'll build that with success."

"Needs a little less heat from the brass too."

“Yeah, well I think he’s worth the effort.” He smiled thinking about the young recruit.

“I think he owes you a beer, and I’ll take Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 one too.” Geo grinned and dropped his meal on his chair, the only clear surface in his workspace.

Rounding his desk, Philippe spread out his lunch, sat down, and was already diving in for the first mouthful as he watched Geo shove aside a notepad and several case folders to make room for his food. Geo would never learn. Clear thinking and logic came easier with a desktop free of debris.

The Swamp was chaotic enough without adding any additional layers of mess. Antique desks, too old to deserve such a name, each sported circa 2009 telephones, stacks of binders, and loose paperwork. A face-to-face configuration linked up each pair of desks, so detective partners could easily discuss their casework. It might be trite, but it worked. The salvaged wooden desks all suffered water damage from when Hurricane Katrina hit. None of the drawers opened afterwards, but they’d been cleaned up and repainted a gun-metal gray, and the desktops functioned Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 fine, according to Geo.

Philippe’s workspace standards were higher, but he’d learned to not voice those opinions. Instead, he brought in his own drawer and filing unit that rolled up under the desk on his side. It’d be nice to get rid of the faint smell of mildew and sweat that permeated The Swamp too, but that would be like pushing mud uphill – virtually impossible.

The two men savored Trust My Love: The Toussaints #1 their huge, gooey sandwiches in silence until Philippe’s cell rang. The funny picture of his brother and niece on the smartphone screen made him smile.

“Hey, Remy, where y’at?”

“Philippe,” Remy gasped, as if out of breath. “Thank God. You gotta help me.”

He stiffened and jerked upright as if he’d been tased. Something was wrong. Very wrong. Panic and stress raced through Remy’s voice.

Trust My Love The Toussaints 1

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