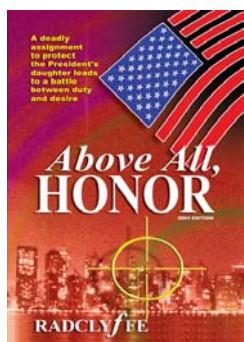


Book Review: November 2004

by Lori L. Lake (reviewer at [MBR](#))



Above All, Honor

Radclyffe

ISBN: 1-933110-04-X

Trade paper, 192 pp, \$14.95

January, 2003

Lesbian Romance/Adventure

Bold Strokes Books, Inc.

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Blair Powell is an artist living in New York City. She has spent years in the limelight, first as the only child of a governor, then after her father becomes president, as First Daughter to the widowed Powell. She's one of the most recognizable women in the world and must behave perfectly, assist her father, and periodically attend state dinners and international functions. Blair can hardly remember a time when she wasn't trailed by a contingent of Secret Service agents. But she has grown tired of this gig—especially because she has spent years hiding something very important. The daughter of the president of the United States is gay.

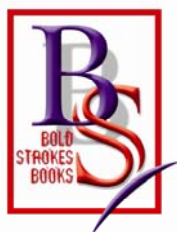
How can Blair have a life, a relationship, or any privacy at all with a protective detail shadowing her every move? She becomes adept at slipping away from her protectors, and this becomes a major problem. Every seedy bar she enters, every apartment she sneaks off to, every unscheduled visit to a store or gym could potentially spell disaster for her. But to have freedom is more important to Blair than her own safety.

And then the attractive, honorable, and imminently capable Agent Cameron Roberts is brought in to whip the team into shape and crack down on Blair's incorrigible actions. No longer can Blair be allowed to run free. This doesn't square with Blair's needs and desires. She believes that "the handsome agent saw her only as an assignment—an object to be moved, contained, and controlled on some giant chessboard. Blair might be the queen, but she had been stripped of her power. She was ruled by pawns, and she hated it. Especially when her keeper was a woman so attractive that she felt a twinge of desire every time she saw her" (p. 56).

Chess is a good analogy for the game of feints and dodges that goes on between the two women, one determined to keep Blair safe at any costs, the other determined to maintain her autonomy and freedom. Cameron is honorable and plays by the book. She will not surrender to her own emotions, even as she begins to feel more for Blair than she thinks she should. Neither woman fully realizes the danger that surrounds them, for there are forces at work behind the scenes that could bring death and disaster to Blair and anyone around her. Will Cameron be able to protect Blair? And can she protect her own heart from the growing affection she feels?

This is a classic romance with all the angst, all the action, and all the twists and turns that any reader could want. Not only did Radclyffe nail the Secret Service details and all the procedural issues facing a team responsible for such an important assignment, she is also right on with both of these engaging characters. Cameron and Blair are multifaceted, sexy, bull-headed, and downright fascinating. No wonder the author has been able to write a whole series. I look forward to reading the next book, *HONOR BOUND*. Highly recommended.

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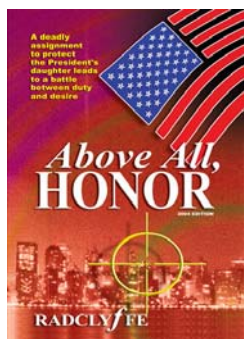
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Being given an assignment that United States Secret Service Agent Cameron Roberts felt was beneath her she retorts to her superior officer, "I'm an investigator, not a goddamned baby-sitter." She is after all, a senior agent with ten years of impeccable service and should have a say what her next job should be. Once the headstrong woman is resigned to the fact that she has no choice but to be the next Agent in Charge of protecting the safety of an equally strong-willed woman, who happens to be the daughter of the President of the United States, Commander Cameron Roberts is willing to put her life on the line for those in her care and lets nothing stand in her way in *Above All, Honor* by Radclyffe.

Cameron Roberts thinks she's getting an easy job until she meets the stunning, willful, elusive, caged bird, Blair Allison Powell. Cameron's predecessor tells her that, "She's an angry animal in a cage, and you're the new zookeeper." He also informs Cam that the "high-profile subject" has a "problematic lifestyle." Blair's mission is to elude those who are hired to protect her in order to maintain some sense of freedom. Cameron's mission is to protect her while maintaining her privacy - if possible.

The USSS Agent in charge before Cam steps in and gives the President's daughter an apropos code name: Egret. Blair barhops from one seedy place to another and most of the time she goes unnoticed. Who would expect the respectable first daughter to be frequenting bohemian gay bars? She rightfully yearns for a private life, which is virtually impossible, and until Cam Roberts comes along, nobody has any sympathy for her. She is not only trying to escape her life in a birdcage, but she has some painful memories of the past that have her haunted as well.

Cam demands respect from those under her command and she gets it. She's shrewd, smart, has integrity, and strong work ethics - all of which result in glowing performance records. She has sharp gut instincts, amazing self-control, and is an expert at undercover work. Cam does not tolerate homophobia on her team. More to her credit, she has no qualms accepting the resignation of any officer who has a problem with the fact that Blair is gay. Cameron Roberts is an admirable hero worth emulating.

Cam works hard to ignore Blair's advances. While Blair tries hard not to allow Cam to get under her skin. Is it possible for Cam and Blair to find love? According to Radclyffe, the essence of the entire Honor series is "the conflict between private and public lives, the balance between duty and love, and the incredible power of passion between strong-willed but sensitive people."

After reading *Above All, Honor*, the first in the series of Honor books, you will want to read the entire series, including but not limited to *Honor Bound*, *Love and Honor*, and *Honor Guards*. I found *Above All, Honor* to be extremely fast reading, exciting, titillating, and realistic - especially the technically correct medical scene that one would expect from a surgeon. She equally and adeptly captures the essence of the secret service/police drama in her finely researched work. Radclyffe is a very talented, prolific, award-winning author who creates a believable and interesting story that will make you happy to become a "part of the team."

One of the things I like best about Radclyffe's writing is that even though she creates sexual tension and longing between the two main characters, at least she gives us tidbits - juicy ones I might add - along the way to quench our desire. The build-up is beautifully done and quite delightfully explicit, as is the climatic ending. A truly satisfying experience for all.

Above All, Honor is a five plus star action/adventure/love story that will leave you breathless and hungry for more.

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