



Madam: A Novel of New Orleans

By Cari Lynn, Kellie Martin

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When vice had a legal home and jazz was being born—the captivating story of an infamous true-life madam

New Orleans, 1900. Mary Deubler makes a meager living as an “alley whore.” That all changes when bible-thumping Alderman Sidney Story forces the creation of a red-light district that’s mockingly dubbed “Storyville.” Mary believes there’s no place for a lowly girl like her in the high-class bordellos of Storyville’s Basin Street, where Champagne flows and beautiful girls turn tricks in luxurious bedrooms. But with gumption, twists of fate, even a touch of Voodoo, Mary rises above her hopeless lot to become the notorious Madame Josie Arlington.

Filled with fascinating historical details and cameos by Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, and E. J. Bellocq, *Madam* is a fantastic romp through The Big Easy and the irresistible story of a woman who rose to power long before the era of equal rights.

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Editorial Review

Review

“If you are enthralled with New Orleans and the history of its fabled red light district, this is the book for you. The evocative characters lovingly created by Cari Lynn and Kellie Martin made me wish Storyville was resurrected and rollicking with harlots and madams today.”

—Patti LuPone, actress, singer, author

“*Madam* is a fascinating recreation of New Orleans at the end of the 19th century, when the churchgoing politicians and power-brokers of sin created Storyville. An absorbing peek into the hidden history of the city and her most famous madam.”

—Lorraine Despres, bestselling author of *The Scandalous Summer of Sissy LeBlanc*

“Lynn and Martin tell the story of their protagonist’s rise to fame and fortune without piousness, sentimentality, or apology. Thorough research, convincing detail and true to life characters, makes this a spellbinder of a novel. The reader can almost smell the sweat of the johns and the fragrance of rose attar and shrimp gumbo. The characters’ words roll off their tongues like molasses in August.”

—Roberta Rich, author of *The Midwife of Venice* and *The Harem Midwife*

“Love the history they wouldn’t teach you in school? Then open up Cari Lynn and Kellie Martin’s *MADAM*. It’s a gritty, well-researched story of how Storyville, the largest legal red light district in the United States came into being.”

—Lois Battle, bestselling author of *Storyville* and *War Brides*

“I encourage you to accept this invitation to escape into the boudoirs and back alleys of 19th century New Orleans and leave behind our modern world for a spell. Kellie and Cari have vividly resurrected a world that most of us have never seen up close, and it’s quite a ride!”

—Danica McKellar, actress and *New York Times* bestselling author

“*Madam* delivers a world rich with details and visuals of a time and place long forgotten in our history. If you liked *Memoirs of a Geisha*, you will love following Mary on her harrowing journey to become an infamous Madam in New Orleans red-light district.”

—Melissa Joan Hart, actress and author of *Melissa Explains It All: Tales from My Abnormally Normal Life*

“With brilliant immediate language and fascinating detail, *Madam* jelly-rolls us through a gritty 1897 New Orleans underworld, and allows us to cheer as a sweet young prostitute fights all odds to become one of its great madams.”

—Jennie Fields, author of *The Age of Desire*

“*Madam* is an utterly enjoyable and fascinating read! It’s a story of a true underdog, Mary Deubler, who overcomes adversity while making history in New Orleans during the turn of the century. I found myself rooting for our protagonist from the very first page. Kudos to Mary and to Cari Lynn and Kellie Martin!”

—Ricki Lake, actress, host, producer

“An odyssey through the underworld and the spirit world of New Orleans, *Madam* is layered in rags and silks and voodoo visitations. This is a story of desperation turned inside out. Power holds court in back rooms and bedrooms but reaches its full potential in the heart and mind of a young prostitute whose prize possession is a pair of striped stockings she plucked from a rich woman’s trash. This book manages to wrap

transformation in sensuality and historical detail, and set the whole thing to the sound of ragtime. *Bien joué!*"
—Rita Leganski, author of *The Silence of Bonaventure Arrow*

"As rich and evocative as New Orleans jazz, Cari Lynn and Kellie Martin evoke a time and place with tantalizing detail, transporting the reader to a world hidden not only by the past, but by the very society that created it. *Madam* is a wonderful portrait of an indelible figure."
—DeLauné Michel, author of *The Safety of Secrets*

"Set in the vivid, visceral world of New Orleans in the late 1800's, *Madam* follows a young prostitute's desperate struggle to survive, thrive and ultimately achieve self-empowerment in the face of hugely challenging circumstance. With plenty of sex and liquor to go around, Kellie and Cari's debut novel does a stellar job of capturing the essence of what it really means to face our fears and overcome extreme adversity. Cheers to the first real madam!" - Hillary Fogelson, *LA Times* bestselling author of *Pale Girl Speaks: A Year Uncovered*

"It might be a 'lurid' subject matter, but *Madam* is captivating and Mary/Josie proves to be a plucky heroine. The atmosphere feels very New Orleans with a lot of jazz, including a few cameos by a young Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton." —Grafwv.com, the website for *Graffiti* magazine

"*Madam* has a sweeping, E.L. Doctorow-like scope, delivering a ribald chronicle of how an American red light district, Storyville, came into being. This richly researched novel is an entertaining, impressive feat of literary archaeology that conjures the sights and scents of the late-night sin that fueled one woman's financial independence." —*Johns Hopkins Magazine*

About the Author

Cari Lynn is a journalist and the author of four books of nonfiction, including *The Whistleblower: Sex Trafficking, Military Contractors, and One Woman's Fight for Justice* with Kathryn Bolkovac, and *Leg the Spread: A Woman's Adventures Inside the Trillion-Dollar Boy's Club of Commodities Trading*. Cari has written for numerous publications, including *O, The Oprah Magazine, Health, The Chicago Tribune, and Deadline Hollywood*. She has taught at Loyola University and received an M.A. in Writing from Johns Hopkins University. She lives in Los Angeles. This is her first novel.

Actress **Kellie Martin** is most fondly remembered as 'Becca Thatcher' on the ABC series *Life Goes On* for which she received an Emmy nomination for Best Supporting Actress. She has since appeared on *Christy, ER, Grey's Anatomy, Private Practice, Drop Dead Diva* and *Ghost Whisperer*, as well as numerous television movies and feature films. She was most recently seen as Captain Nicole Galassini on Lifetime's *Army Wives*. She is the national spokesperson for the American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association (AARDA). In 2001, *Reader's Digest* named Kellie a national "Health Hero" on its cover; and Lifetime Television profiled her in *Intimate Portrait*. She is the owner of the online children's boutique, ROMPstore.com and a graduate of Yale University. Talk show appearances in the last year include *Today, Access Hollywood Live, The Ricki Lake Show, Marie, and Home and Family*. Recent press coverage includes TimeMagazine.com, People.com, CelebrityBabyScoop.com, as well as a regular blog on Parenting.com. Martin lives in LA with her husband and daughter. This is her first novel.

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I come from a long line of whores.

In my nine decades on this earth I have never uttered these words, let alone seen them written, in my own hand, indelibly staring back at me. But now, as a summer storm rages strong enough to send the Pontchartrain right through my front door, I sit with a curious sense of peace and clarity. My past is more than just my own history. Although this story shames me in so many ways, it is the legacy I leave. I must embrace the very truth I spent my life denying.

I come from a long line of whores.

Call them prostitutes, call them women of ill repute, call them madams. It's of little consequence now to try to soften how they earned their way. But they did earn their way, and in a time when even women of means and good breeding held little hope of achieving anything professionally.

Oh Saint Teresa, what an ingrate I've been. Everything I have, everything I am, I owe to them—to her. She'd started life as a bastard girl, not a silver dime to her name. Her family tree was but a stump. And yet, the riches she bestowed upon me: my education, my inheritance . . . this fierce, old Victorian. How the walls moan in the grip of these winds! This house, in all its faded elegance, is all I have left. How I hated that it once lived as a bordello—hot jazz, Voodoo magic, and unspeakable sin oozing from every crevice.

My aunt built this house, but I saved this house. The ghosts would come to me at night, whispering that I couldn't let it go. While New Orleans raced to obliterate any evidence of the red-light district's existence, I guarded this door. Overnight, City Hall purged all records of the women who lived and worked here. Even the names of the streets were changed. It took the highest judge's signature to spare this house from the torch-wielding mob that pillaged and set aflame other bordellos. But how can I blame my beloved city? For I, too, wanted to erase this blight, this scourge on our history.

But it did exist. Storyville was real. And so were the madams. Larger than life, indeed, but flesh and blood through and through, with feelings and smarts even—they were more savvy in business than most businessmen in this town. And yet, they were still just women, devoid of equal rights and treated as vulnerable, useless creatures. These women may have laughed and drunk and frolicked more than most women, but they still ached and loved, cried and prayed, and in their darkest hours, repented.

Now, this house, my house, is all that remains as a testament to an era. If it is this storm that brings down my house, I will go with it. I only hope that this letter and these photographs will survive.

My dearest Aunt Josie, by the grace of God, please forgive me.

Anna Deubler Brady

225 Basin Street

New Orleans

August 14, 1997

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Elaine Moore:

Book is usually written, printed, or descriptive for everything. You can know everything you want by a publication. Book has a different type. As you may know that book is important matter to bring us around the world. Next to that you can your reading skill was fluently. A guide Madam: A Novel of New Orleans will make you to always be smarter. You can feel far more confidence if you can know about almost everything. But some of you think this open or reading any book make you bored. It is far from make you fun. Why they are often thought like that? Have you trying to find best book or suited book with you?

Lois Hernandez:

In this 21st centuries, people become competitive in every way. By being competitive now, people have do something to make these survives, being in the middle of the crowded place and notice simply by surrounding. One thing that at times many people have underestimated that for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a publication your ability to survive improve then having chance to stand than other is high. To suit your needs who want to start reading a book, we give you that Madam: A Novel of New Orleans book as nice and daily reading book. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

Arthur Freeman:

Often the book Madam: A Novel of New Orleans has a lot associated with on it. So when you make sure to read this book you can get a lot of profit. The book was written by the very famous author. This articles author makes some research prior to write this book. This book very easy to read you can obtain the point easily after scanning this book.

Mattie Peters:

This Madam: A Novel of New Orleans is great publication for you because the content which is full of information for you who have always deal with world and still have to make decision every minute. That book reveal it info accurately using great manage word or we can say no rambling sentences within it. So if you are read the idea hurriedly you can have whole information in it. Doesn't mean it only provides straight forward sentences but hard core information with lovely delivering sentences. Having Madam: A Novel of New Orleans in your hand like finding the world in your arm, info in it is not ridiculous one particular. We can say that no guide that offer you world with ten or fifteen small right but this publication already do that. So , it is good reading book. Hey there Mr. and Mrs. hectic do you still doubt in which?

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