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Political Intrigue/Romance Mashup Hits the Shelves

New Romance Novel Set in Pittsburgh Mixes Italian Royalty and Contemporary America

FAYETTEVILLE, AR, August 11, 2015—Throughout history, regimes rose and fell through nefarious schemes as often as through bloody battles. What if an Italian royal family, whose bloodline is thought long-dead, has lived in secret through the centuries? And what if, when Italy's government starts to weaken, factions mobilize to move that old bloodline into power? Or to eradicate them before anyone learns about them?

Find out in *Bleeding Heart, Book One of the Medici Protectorate Series*, by Staci Troilo. (Lagan Press, 2015. Hardcover ISBN 978-1-63373-066-3 \$34.99. Softcover ISBN 978-1-63373-063-2 \$17.99. eBook ISBN 978-1-63373-064-9, \$2.99. Available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and iBooks.)

"I set out to write a book honoring my grandfather's heritage," said author Staci Troilo. "His father was the illegitimate son of the elite class in Italy. It made me wonder what would have happened if he had ever tried to get acknowledgement for who he was. The story then took off in a new and interesting direction, but it remains rooted in my ancestry."

And it did go in an interesting direction. What started as an exploration of heritage turned into a paranormal romantic suspense novel. Troilo imagined a mythology of alchemy and prophecy, of honored promises and secret organizations, to create the first in a series of novels following the descendants of the House of Medici and the warriors who protect them. The novel is set in Western Pennsylvania, where Troilo was born and raised, and combines her love of the area with her Italian-American roots.

Staci Troilo is the author of three novels and numerous short stories which have won regional awards. She is currently working on sequels to two of her series. More information about the author and her work can be found at http://stacitroilo.com.

Learn more about the novel, read a deleted scene, and request a copy of the prequel to the story by visiting http://stacitroilo.com/bleeding-heart/.

About the Author:



Staci Troilo grew up in Western Pennsylvania writing stories and poetry in her free time, so it was no surprise that she studied writing in college. After receiving creative and professional writing degrees from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, she went on to get her Master's Degree in Professional Writing, and she worked in corporate communications until she had her children. Now she is a freelance and editor writer living in Arkansas with her husband, son, daughter, and two dogs.

Her short stories have won numerous regional awards, and she's written three novels, two of which are the first of a series. More information can be found by visiting her website (http://stacitroilo.com), emailing her (staci@stacitroilo.com), or by calling her directly (724-567-8474).

About the Book:



In the heart of Pittsburgh awaits a secret nearly half a millennium in the making...

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Available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and iBooks.)

Review Copies and Media Interviews:

For a review copy of *Bleeding Heart* or an interview with Staci Troilo, please contact her directly at 724-567-8474 or at staci@stacitroilo.com. When requesting a review copy, please provide email address and format (.epub, .mobi, or .pdf) for eBooks or street address for a hard copy.

Bios for Staci Troilo

2-Line Bio

Author Staci Troilo writes multi-genre fiction focusing on flawed relationships. Find her at http://stacitroilo.com.

Short Bio

Author Staci Troilo writes multi-genre fiction focusing on flawed relationships. Her standalone titles and series span the mystery, contemporary, and romance genres and many of their sub-genres, including suspense, paranormal, and medical dramas. Her short fiction has won many regional awards. Find her at http://stacitroilo.com.

Medium Bio

Author Staci Troilo writes multi-genre fiction focusing on flawed relationships. Her standalone titles and series span the mystery, contemporary, and romance genres and many of their sub-genres, including suspense, paranormal, and medical dramas. Her short fiction has won many regional awards. Staci hails from Western Pennsylvania, and despite living in the south now, she holds her hometown dear to her heart, setting many of her stories in Pittsburgh and its surrounding areas. She loves the south because of its lack of snow-filled winters, and summers find her in the pool as often as at her computer. Find her at http://stacitroilo.com.

Long Bio

Author Staci Troilo writes multi-genre fiction focusing on flawed relationships. Her standalone titles and series span the mystery, contemporary, and romance genres and many of their sub-genres, including suspense, paranormal, and medical dramas. Her short fiction has won many regional awards.

Her family will tell you her love of words began as soon as she could speak. In other words, she talked. A lot. She told stories to whomever would listen, which pretty much amounted to her mother and her toys. She could spell 'Valentine' at the age of three, and when she could put pencil (or crayon or pen or marker) to the page, she began writing stories down. True, those first works aren't publishing-ready, but her mother saved a few of her early efforts, and occasionally she takes them out if she needs a laugh.

After breezing through her advanced English classes in high school, one of her teachers suggested she major in writing in college. But she didn't listen right away, believing others who told her she wouldn't be able to find a job with an English degree. Two majors later, she stopped listening to the naysayers and followed her heart. She graduated from Carnegie Mellon University with a double major in Professional Writing and Creative Writing. She turned down IBM's job offer to write software

documentation in favor of getting her master's degree, for which she was awarded a scholarship. She graduated in only one year, earning a Master of Arts in Professional Writing. From there, she went on to work in advertising, development, corporate communications, and technical writing. Clearly she found a lot of creative and fulfilling work with "just an English degree."

She left full-time employment to raise her children, but she continued working from home by accepting freelance writing and editing jobs. Her family moved around a lot, leaving her beloved hometown in Western Pennsylvania for Ohio, then Michigan, then Ohio again. The second time they lived in Ohio, Staci transitioned from only freelance work to a part-time teaching position at a local college.

When her family moved again, this time to Arkansas, Staci decided it was time to approach the next phase of her career. She redirected her freelancing efforts to editing fiction, and after a while, she wondered why she didn't just begin writing stories herself. After all, she'd been telling stories since she was young. She used to make up stories for her children as often as reading to them. And she had plenty of ideas for longer works. So she joined a local writing group and began to write. Her first novel was published just over a year later.

Staci added a new experience to her list when she started working for a local publishing company as an editor. She then took a job at a different publishing house where she spearheaded the marketing efforts of the company. After two years learning the publishing industry from the inside, she left her job to focus on writing fiction full time. She now spends her days working on her latest novel. Well, that's when she's not doing something for or with her husband, children, or dogs. Family always comes first for her.

Staci grew up knowing family is paramount. She spent time with extended family daily, not just on holidays or weekends. Because of those close knit familial bonds, every day was full of love and laughter, food and fun. Life has taken her one thousand miles away from that extended family, but those ties remain. And so do the traditions, which she now shares with her both her family and her readers. You can reach her at http://stacitroilo.com.

5 Fun Facts You Didn't Know About Me:

- 1. In addition to being an award-winning author, I'm an award-winning recipe developer. Ask me about my stuffed eggplant.
- 2. I've never had a cavity. Ever. Baby teeth or permanent teeth.
- 3. I can recite the entire opening to the *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* cartoon.
- 4. One of the first things my father-in-law ever saw me do (when I was first dating my husband) was a monkey impersonation, complete with hand motions and sound. I'm convinced that's when he knew I'd fit right in with the rest of the family, but we've never discussed it.
- 5. My guilty pleasure is watching the television show *Supernatural*. I've seen every episode (several times each).

Contact Information for Staci Troilo

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Twitter

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Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/authorstacitroilo

Pinterest

https://pinterest.com/stacitroilo

Synopsis for Bleeding Heart

Brief Summary:

Bleeding Heart—Warrior Gianni protects Franki, secret legacy of the Medici, from prophesied assassins.

Short Synopsis:

Bleeding Heart—Franki, secret legacy of the Medici, is prophesied to return Italy to its former glory. Targeted for assassination and ignorant of her enemy's identity, she is protected by Gianni, the warrior destined to defend her. He must conquer her fears and his demons to save them both.

Medium Synopsis:

Bleeding Heart—After her father's murder, Franki is targeted for assassination by an unknown enemy. She finds her safety depends on the Medici Protectorate, the warriors who guarded her bloodline and their secret for centuries.

Gianni, Franki's protector, struggles to garner her trust. As he assumes his new role, he also undergoes inexplicable, explosive changes... transformations he can't control.

Their worlds collide in passion and violence, and Franki struggles to trust Gianni. When her life is on the line, Gianni will have to conquer both her fears and his own personal demons to rescue her in time.

Long Synopsis:

Bleeding Heart is the story of a woman with three impossible choices—work with the enemy, die fighting them, or rely on a volatile warrior to save her.

After Franki's father is brutally murdered, she assumes control over the family building company. On the morning of her father's thirtieth day anniversary Mass, she is stuck at work taking a meeting with a mysterious foreign client. The meeting goes horribly, and she leaves, intending to rush to the church. But she discovers she's become a target for a nefarious faction—all four of her tires have been slashed.

Gianni, the client she wants to part ways with, comes to her rescue. He drives her to the Mass and he changes all her tires for her afterward. Because of his concern and his efforts—her attraction to him certainly had no bearing on her business decision—she agrees to start working with him. But she keeps their meetings secret from her sisters.

A desperate kiss ignites passions in her that Gianni refuses to continue acting upon—that is, until they can be alone together. Her desire for him grows, consuming all her thoughts, leaving her alone and vulnerable one afternoon. She is attacked in the woods behind her house and left for dead.

But there is more to Gianni than just his good looks and business acumen. He is actually a member of the Medici Protectorate, a clandestine organization that has watched over the House of Medici for centuries... even after the world believed the line to have ended.

A prophecy written by Michelangelo nearly half a millennium earlier indicated four daughters would be born into the line, and these four daughters would bring about the second rise of the House of Medici. The prophecy also stated that these girls would be in mortal danger.

Franki is the oldest of these sisters, and Gianni is the warrior destined to defend her.

The members of the Protectorate who guard the descendants each possess a marble dagger, sculpted by Michangelo and forged with magical properties in alchemical rituals. Gianni uses his dagger to heal Franki from her injuries and save her life.

But using the dagger's magic has unforeseen consequences. Gianni undergoes transformations—explosive, dangerous changes—over which he has no control. His body betraying him, his decision-making compromised, he makes mistake after mistake with Franki, costing him her trust.

The warriors and the sisters find themselves in an impossible situation—Franki is taken by the enemy, Gianni tries to rescue her without backup, and everyone is in danger. Can Gianni conquer Franki's fears and his demons in time to save them all?

5 Points of Interest about the Book's Content or Story:

- 1. The idea for this book takes root in my grandfather's heritage. He told us stories of his father being born the illegitimate son of royalty (a duke). That made me wonder what would happen if Italy's government collapsed and the descendents of a royal line were tasked with stepping into the role of leader. From there, the story morphed into what it is today.
- 2. The Italian-American heritage of the heroine is based upon the author's real life experiences. Foods mentioned, religious practices observed, and key Italian words and phrases all stem from recipes her family makes, her faith, and common Italian words she learned from family and friends (even the not-so-nice ones), respectively.
- 3. The Medici family (or the House of Medici) rose to power in 1434 in Florence, Italy. They were staunch supporters of the arts and humanities, which aided in Italy becoming the cradle of the Renaissance. In addition to three centuries of rulers (ranging from benevolent and profitable to cruel and selfish), the family produced four Popes and married into several other European

- royal families. The last Medici died in 1737 without a male heir, ending the dynasty. The illegitimate line in the story is entirely fictional.
- 4. Michelangelo was a famed painter, sculptor, and sonnet writer who lived in Florence, Italy during the Renaissance. But there is no evidence that he ever studied or experimented with alchemy. Alchemical properties do, however, play a huge role in the mythology of the novel, as does Michelangelo himself.
- 5. People who believe in the power of color and stones will be interested to know that red calcite—the material used to create Gianni's dagger—opens the base chakra, which stimulates energy and vitality. It enhances the physical experience. The color red is associated with both a subtle warmth and a fiery heat.

Book Details and Purchase Information

Book Title: Bleeding Heart; Book One of the Medici Protectorate Series

By: Staci Troilo

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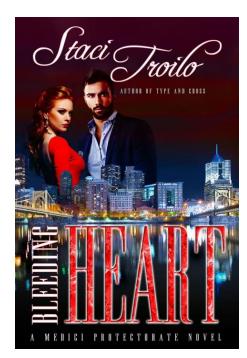
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Novel Excerpt

Bleeding Heart by Staci Troilo

Chapter 4, First Scene

Franki struggled to find the snooze button for the sixth time. She still hadn't opened her eyes.

"Hey, you riding with us today, or— are you sick?" Donni asked from the doorway.

Franki fought to lift her lids over burning eyeballs. It didn't work. "What time is it?"

"Quarter to."

"To what?"

"What's wrong?" Donni stepped into the room and put her hand on Franki's forehead.

Donni's fingers felt cool against her skin, but the mere weight of her hand felt like the Tower of Pisa rested on her brow. She batted at her sister's arm and said, "Go away."

Donni laughed. "How much wine did you have last night?"

Wine. What Italian couldn't drink wine? She struggled to sit up and pry her eyelids open. How did a sandstorm get in her bedroom, and why weren't Donni's eyes affected? Oh right. The wine. "I need a shower and I'll be fine."

"You need a bottle of aspirin and an ice pack. Do you want me to drive you to work? Jo's already gone. Toni needs to leave now, but I have time to spare."

"No." She rubbed her temples, which she swore pounded a staccato beat under her fingers. If her heart raced that fast, she might die before she left the bedroom. "I have a morning meeting off site, then I'll probably just come back here and work."

"What meeting?"

"Mr. Zanotti wants me to meet him at his daughter's home site."

"All right. Call if you need anything."

"Okay."

Donni left, yelling behind her, "And drink plenty of water."

Water sounded heavenly. Her mouth felt like a dryer sheet, sticky and dry and losing moisture by the minute. She'd never tasted a fabric softener sheet, but she didn't imagine they tasted good, nor did she think her mouth tasted any better at the moment. She'd get some water and a shower and she'd be good to go.

Two aspirins and three glasses of water later, Franki stood in the shower, resisting the urge to moan. Even the water spray hurt her head, but hurrying almost made her blackout, so she slowed down. As she rubbed her scalp with her favorite honey shampoo, her head throbbed under her fingers. She decided she could do without conditioner for one day and wondered what hairstyle would accommodate finger combing that didn't require a headband, ponytail holder, or clip.

She stepped out of the shower and froze. Knotted hair matted against her wet skin. Rivulets of water ran down her body to form puddles on the floor. Her hand covered her mouth and stayed there, quivering. "No," she whispered, then sunk to the floor, shaking her head. "No, no, no, no, Not today."

She pulled her hand from her mouth and reached up, touching the tangled mess of what was usually soft, silken tresses. She was supposed to meet Gianni DeSanto at the museum. Roughly fifteen minutes after she met Mr. Zanotti. It would take her longer than fifteen minutes to drive from the home site to the museum. As it was, she was probably going to be late for her meeting with Mr. Zanotti. And she never got Gianni's card, so she couldn't call him. She could call Sam for the number, but then her sisters would know, and she didn't want that.

She thought she had a headache when she woke up.

She squeezed the bridge of her nose and staggered to her feet. Time to get moving.

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Where to Buy:

Amazon: http://tinyurl.com/BHAmazon

Barnes and Noble: http://tinyurl.com/BHBarnes-Noble

iBooks: http://tinyurl.com/BHiBooks

Interview Questions for (author's name)

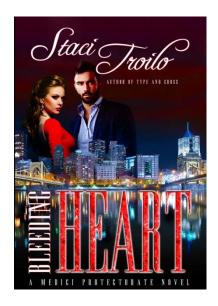
1. Why did you write Bleeding Heart? My grandfather's father was the illegitimate child of Italian nobility. It always made me wonder what life would have been like if he had been acknowledged by his father instead of unrecognized. That made me consider the ramifications of a long-lost descendant of a royal family appearing during a time of civil unrest. The story morphed from there into what it is

today, but the root of the idea began with my grandfather's heritage.

- 2. Was there any one person who was your inspiration for Franki, your main character?

 I can't say that any person inspired my main character. I can say that she has bits and pieces of me in her. I studied architecture in college before I became a writing major, so making Franki an architect stemmed from my interest in the field. She's Catholic. She's an Italian-American. Family is important to her. But is she me? No. Not even close.
- 3. You live in the south. Why did you choose to set your novel in Western Pennsylvania? I was born and raised in Western Pennsylvania. I lived in the same house in Vandergrift from the time my parents brought me home from the hospital until I got married, and then I just moved a block and a half down the street. I went to college in Pittsburgh. Western Pennsylvania is my home, even though I no longer live there. I thought it was time to write something paying homage to the place I love so much.
- 4. What themes does your novel tackle?
 Well, it's a romance, so it covers the "love conquers all" theme. And it's part suspense, so there's the "good versus evil" theme. But mostly, it's a story of family—what that means, what you'll do for them, what the cost of losing them is.
- 5. This is the first book of the series. Do you know what else will happen in the other books? Yes. I plot my novels out in advance of writing them. In the case of a series, I plot the whole saga out first. I would hate to be three novels into a four-novel set only to discover I'd backed myself into a corner or I didn't have a suitable ending. So I have outlines for the entire storyline already complete.
- 6. When do you write? Is it easier to write in the morning or at night?

 I get up early and write, because the house is quietest then. But I think my best ideas come to me at night. Ideally, I'd write at night and edit in the mornings, but with an active family in the house, I have to make my schedule work around their needs.
- 7. Where can we buy the book? It's available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and iBooks from Lagan Press.



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Book Website: http://stacitroilo.com/type-cross

Publisher Website: http://oghmacreative.com

Author Website: http://stacitroilo.com

Praise for Bleeding Heart

"Sexy and sophisticated. Staci Troilo's Bleeding Heart begins the Medici Protectorate series with an intriguing blend of contemporary romance complicated by ancient allegiances. An engrossing read."

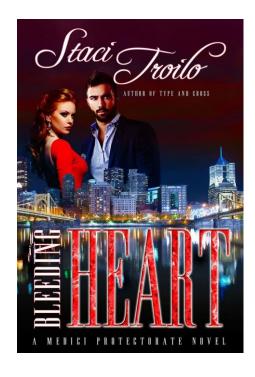
-Sorchia Dubois, author of Just Like Gravity

"A sophisticated thriller with secrets long kept, families guarded against unknown danger, and a cast of characters you'll never forget. Dan Brown move over. Staci Troilo is on her way. It's time for the women to play tough in this twisting tale of deceit and treachery."

-Velda Brotherton, author of *The Tell-Tale Stone*

Photos









Oghma Creative Media





Staci Troilo

Franki remained focused

and determined

through her **training**, and

only allowed a small **niggling** part of

her brain

to acknowledge he looked

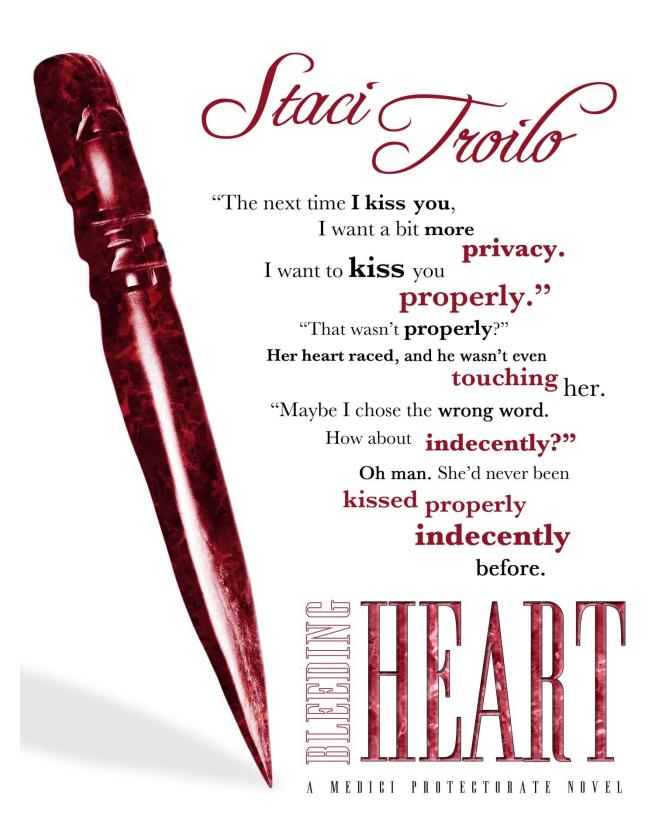
amazing

when he was sweaty.

Well, what was she **supposed** to do?

She wasn't blind.







... She felt **hopelessly**

unprepared

for what waited out there for them.

These men could kill

bare hands. with their

It stood to **reason**

their

opponents

were

equally

skilled.

And

she and

her sisters

were their

targets.



Staci Troilo



"I don't **care** if I **control** it

or if it just **is.**

The fact is, I'm your

beacon

in a storm

I pull you to me."

As if on command,

he drifted toward her.



When he **looked** at her, **his eyes** Were the **dark green**of **storm-tossed seas.**

He grabbed her hand and said,

"Where are you parked?"

"Off campus. Near the trestle."

"That's too far.

I'm in the garage."

Staci Troilo



A MEDICI PROTECTORATE NOVEL



Cheat Sheet—Things to Do in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

People often overlook Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania as a vacation destination, and that's truly a disservice to themselves and the city. Pittsburgh is no longer the sooty, environmentally-challenged city of the Industrial Revolution era. It's a clean, innovative city with many wonderful offerings. It's hard to narrow the list down, so here are just ten of the countless options:

- 1. Museums—4 Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh and the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh Art, history, science... even hands-on interactive displays for kids.
- 2. Amusement Parks—Kennywood and Idlewild Idlewild caters to kids—and the kid in all of us—while Kennywood offers rides for folks of every generation.
- 3. Animal Attractions—Pittsburgh Zoo/PPG Aquarium and National Aviary
 One of only six zoo/aquarium combinations in the country, boasting over 400 species of wildlife. The National Aviary is the largest aviary in the country, housing more than 500 birds of over 150 species.
- 4. Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens Indoor and outdoor gardens, green technologies, and beautiful art and architecture.

5. Historical Landmarks/Attractions

Explore the Nationality Rooms at the Cathedral of Learning, go to see Fort Duquesne and the Fort Pitt Blockhouse, visit the Frick Art and Historical Center, tour the USS Requin (a US Navy museum ship), or take a trip to the Heinz History Center, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution.

6. Water Attractions

In addition to the wet zones in the amusement parks, visit Sandcastle Waterpark for waves of fun, take a cruise on one of the Gateway Clippership Fleet's boats, or spend time enjoying the confluence of the three rivers at the fountain at Point State Park.

7. Sporting Events

Watch the Steelers play football at Heinz Field, take in a Pirates baseball game at PNC Park, or chill out at a Penguin's hockey game at Consol Energy Center.

8. Art Performances

Watch plays, operas, and ballets at Benedum Center or Bynham Theater. Listen to the symphony at Heinz Hall. Catch a live concert at one of the many concert venues.

9. Rivers Casino

Almost 3000 slot machines, over 100 table games, 30-table poker room, 5 restaurants, and live entertainment.

10. Food

Pittsburgh is an ethnic blend of people, and that fact is reflected in the food. Hundreds of dining choices, from famous sandwich shops to gourmet dining lauded by US Presidents.

"I miss Pittsburgh so much because you can see, do, eat, and tour something different every day and never grow bored. Indoors or outdoors. Educational or recreational. The city has something for everyone. I just hope my novel reflects even a fraction of the wonder that is Pittsburgh. Maybe it will inspire more people to visit the city I love." —Staci Troilo, author of *Bleeding Heart*

Bleeding Heart is available in hardcover, softcover, and eBook formats from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and iBooks.