

RT BOOK REVIEWS

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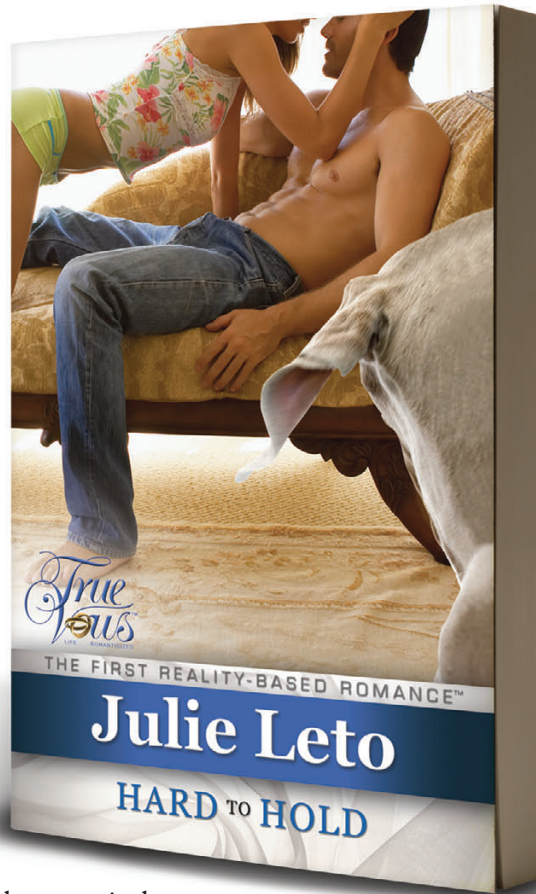
A Vow to Wow Romance Readers

ATENTION ROMANCE READERS True love does exist! And you can now find it between the pages of a new series written by established romance authors. Aptly named True Vows, HCI Books new reality based imprint is specifically dedicated to publishing books that feature real couples and the stories of their true-life romance in a novel format.

“Many novelists are inspired by stories they have heard, people they have met, etc., so this concept of reality-based romance lends itself naturally to the novelists writing process,” says HCI Editorial Director Michelle Matrisciani. Readers may know HCI, Health Communications, Inc., for their Chicken Soul) for the Soul titles, and they hope the True Vows line will also touch readers’ hearts.

The True Vows books are written by well-known romance authors who, collectively, have penned dozens of books and were excited by the challenge of turning a couple’s journey to love into a full-length romance novel.

Judith Arnold, who wrote *Meet Me in Manhattan*, one of the first of three True Vows books to be published, says that she started her adaptation process by reading a *New York Times* article from the “Vows” section about her couple, Ted and Erika Skala. The couple had dated as teens but were reunited 16 years later when both were living in New York City “We did a lot of e-mailing back and forth,” says Arnold of her couple, “And Erika sent me a beautiful, leatherbound scrapbook she’d made of all the e-mails they’d sent each other in the months before their wedding. By the time I finished writing the book I felt as if they were my close friends.”



While the authors are given creative license to help propel the narrative, the bones of the couple’s story are maintained, including actual names and significant events that played a major role in the relationship.

“Every word is mine,” says Julie Leto, author of *Hard to Hold*, which tells the love story of Anne and Mike Davoli, who dealt with the challenges of Tourette’s syndrome. However, Leto adds, some details were better left unaltered, such as “e-mails that my couple exchanged or when I actually transcribed their wedding vows, which were so lovely and romantic and heartfelt, they didn’t need me to make them better!”

Matrisciani believes True Vows is a natural extension of the romance genre. “If you love romance novels, you love romance, period. Who isn’t interested in asking about how someone has met their partner? How long they dated or what their wedding was like, etc.?”

Author Alison Kent, whose book, *Icing on the Cake*, is about a couple who met on an online dating site, felt a kinship with her couple. “Writing about Michelle Snow and Todd Bracken who met via **Match.com** brought back a lot of memories of the the “getting to know you” e-mails and chats she and her husband shared some 15 years ago when they first met.

The first three books in the line will be released Sep. 14 at bookstores nationwide and will retail for \$13.95. Readers are encouraged to share their own happily-ever-afters on the True Vows website, **TrueVowsBooks.com**. —SF