

Author Spotlight: Character Interview by author David Burnett



Welcome to the World Literary Cafe Author Spotlight

Character Interview

Featuring: Allison Bannister

From: The Reunion

By Author: David Burnett

Interview by Stacy Eaton

Welcome to the WLC Author Spotlight Character Interview!! Another week and another great character interview. This week we have Allison Bannister with us. She is the star of The Reunion by David Burnett.

Welcome Allison! Make yourself comfortable and tell us about the story you star in!

I watched the waves roll onto the beach, recalling how our problems began. My husband received an invitation to his high school reunion.

Oh boy, I smell trouble already.

"Reunions are fun!" I told him "You see old friends, talk about old times..."

Sometimes we want to forget about those old times.

Michael wanted no part of it. "Talk to a bunch of fat, gray-haired people who I haven't seen in thirty years...A blast."

I'm kind of agreeing with him on this one, lol...

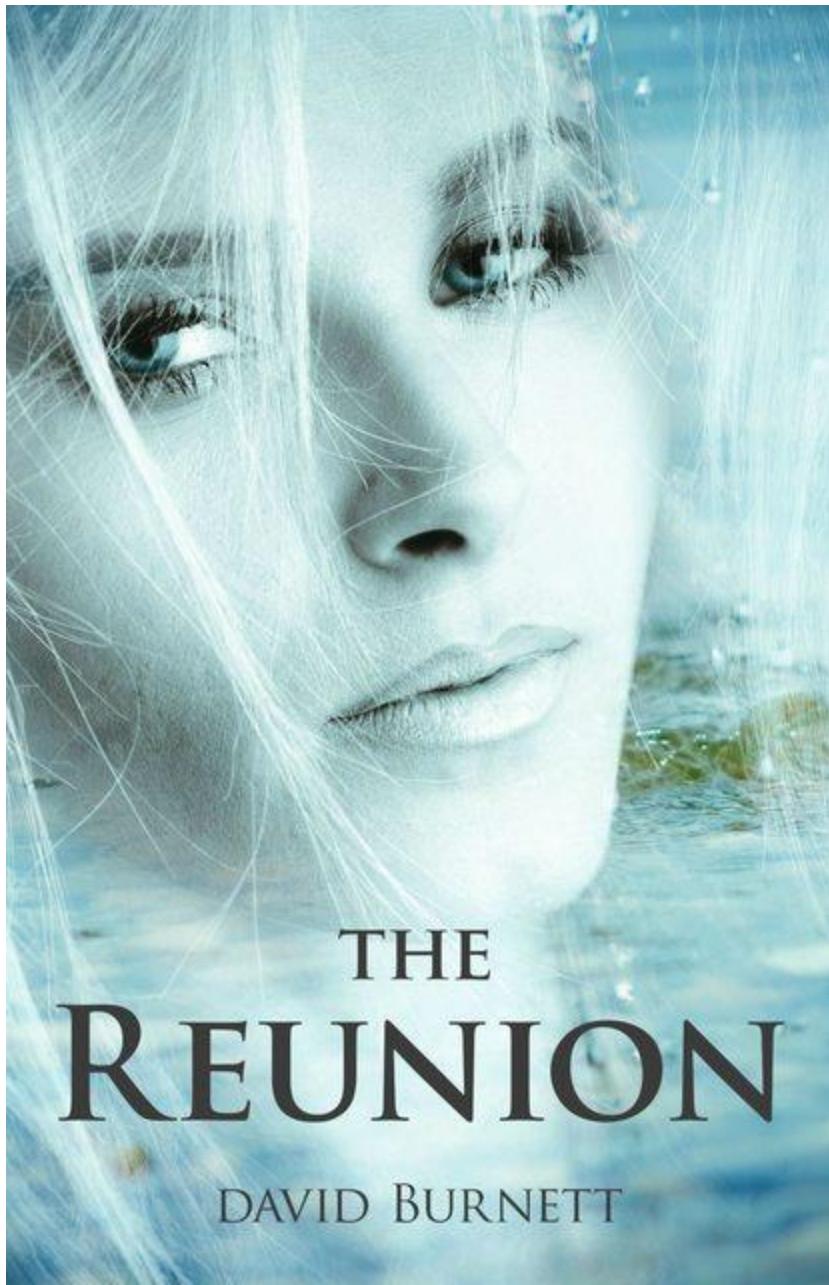
Even so, I surprised him with tickets.

Oh boy!

Had I only known!

See! I knew it smelled trouble!

Michael did see his old friends. They did talk about old times. As I met his friends and listened to their stories, I discovered a Michael I did not know, a boy who was so very different from the "staid, serious attorney" to whom I was married.



Something I'm sure you would have rather not known about, I'm sure.

Michael did have a blast. "Wouldn't it be wonderful," he asked, "if you could crawl through a worm hole and find yourself in high school, again?"

I'm cringing here... What's gonna happen?

Now, he couldn't really do it, of course. You won't find a worm hole — link between the past and the present — on Meeting Street in Charleston! Michael did, however, begin to *behave* as if he were in high school.

I'm groaning for you... really I am.

Childish pranks — he taught his secretary how to loop a rubber band around her finger and to shoot it across the room. He laughed when he heaved me into a cold, mountain lake. Alicia, our daughter, agreed it was funny, but, then, she *is* in high school!

lol... I guess you didn't find humor in that? Sorry for laughing.

He began to carry a sketch pad with him wherever he went. He trained to run a marathon. What had happened to my husband?

Sounds like a mid-life crisis. What else did he do?

Michael set up an art studio above our garage, where he turned his sketches into drawings. He disappeared each night after dinner, coming back to the house long after I was asleep. He worked all day Saturday, on Sunday afternoon, too.

He seemed to forget about me.

Ouch, I'm sorry about that.

Instead of sitting around the house alone, I did what any woman would do. I found things that I enjoyed: book club, yoga, ballet. Things I could do without Michael. With my schedule and his time in the studio, we once went an entire week without seeing each other.



I've been there done that, I bet most of us have.

I knew what was going to happen. Michael is an exceptional artist, and he was going to leave me to follow his Muse. I felt it. It's what my Dad did, after all. He walked out on his family to be a painter. It's what every artist does.

Oh, please tell me he doesn't!

In January, he took the entire month off to attend art school in New York. I was not at all sure that I would see Michael again after he boarded the plane, and I planned how I would support myself when he did not return.

Hard things to think about - did he come home?

Well, Michael did come home. The next night, I planned a romantic evening: a roaring fire, wine and dessert, climbing the stairs together to our bedroom.

Sounds nice!

Michael holed up in his studio, working on a drawing.

Well crap!

Nothing had changed. He was lost in his own little world. I was so hurt, so angry. I did what I suppose any woman might think of doing...

Oh man! That's a cliff hanger right there! Allison, let's get moving on a few questions that I have for you. We all want to be different, so what is the one thing you wish your creator had done differently with you?

I wish the author had made me a strong, confident, assertive woman, the kind of person I admire. He didn't. He made me a twit. You don't know what a twit is? Think "dumb blonde." It is a woman who is clueless, who does not think before she acts, does not think before she speaks, who allows her emotions to override her intellect. I despise women like that. I even say so in the story! I suppose that I don't like myself, then, do I? That's something to take to my next counseling session, for sure.

When it comes to love, woman are always ruled by their emotions. It does not make them a dumb blonde, but I totally understand what you are saying.



If you could have added something to the story, and your creator would have let you, what would that have been?

Our daughter, Alicia, and I had been in conflict since her first day in middle school. What mother and daughter don't have conflict? I believe, though, that our conflict was more intense than what most mothers and daughters experience. Although Michael denies it, I suspect Alicia decided to go away to boarding school to get away from me.

Our relationship reached its low point during The Reunion when she slaps me and calls me a tramp.

Ouch - on both accounts!

I wanted Alicia, to love me. I hope she does, but in the story, she seems, at best, to feel sorry for me, and to tolerate me. She tolerates me to please her father and her boyfriend, both of whom want us to get along. I wish there had been just one scene in which Alicia said that she loved me.

What do you love best about yourself? What do you like least?

What I like best: I am a good teacher. I want my students to learn, and I plan lessons that will capture their interest. I take them on field trips that make what they are studying come to life. My students like me. Other teachers respect me.

That's good!

What I like least: Aside from being a twit? It disturbs me that I ignored my husband. I know that I said he ignored me. He did. But I stopped paying attention to him, too. When I filled my schedule with yoga and ballet, I was filling my empty life, but I was also showing him what it was like to be alone.

I think a lot of us can relate to that.

The first time I attended a meeting of my book club, I forgot to tell him I was going. (Really, I did forget!) He came down early from his studio, and he could not find me. He searched the yard, called the neighbors. He was frantic when I finally reached home, was on the verge of calling the police. Served him right!

The shoe was on the other foot, huh?

Michael had been using his studio for months before I set foot inside. I refused to crawl up the stairs to lobby for his attention. In fact, when I finally looked in, I chose a time when he was not at home. Alicia went out to see him. She would take a book, curl up in a chair to read. I could have done that, too. I could have read, graded papers, done whatever I did sitting in the family room, alone.

I told you that Michael was an exceptional artist. He was, but I never told him that his work was good. He once donated a drawing to an auction sponsored by the private school where I taught. It was magnificent! A pen drawing on bright, white paper of a boat in the marsh near Charleston. It was purchased by a local bank. It received rave reviews—from everyone but me.

Sometimes we forget to tell the ones we love those things.

I should have been better than I was. I should have paid him attention even when I felt ignored. Perhaps things would have turned out differently.

Hindsight is 20-20...

What part of the book was the hardest for you and your creator to work through?

I told you about the romantic evening I planned when Michael returned from New York. We had talked into the night the evening before, made love, lay in bed on Saturday morning.

Things were going to be different, now. I knew it. We were starting over, we would be happy again, as we had been for over twenty years! I certainly wanted us to be happy.

Michael wanted to work on a drawing — for about an hour, he said.

I took a bath. Started the fire. Cut the cake. Poured the wine...And I waited. Hours later I went to bed. I lay there, awake, crying, waiting on Michael. I was asleep when he arrived. I still want to cry when I recall that night. My author almost cried as he wrote it.

Strong emotions, very strong. Is there a sequel for this book? If so, what do you want to accomplish in the next book. If not, do you wish you could continue your story?

I wanted a sequel in which I could redeem myself, show everyone that I am bright, assertive, confident — and good. Unfortunately, the sequel did not turn out that way! It's hard to believe, but I look as much like a twit in the sequel as I did in *The Reunion*. It was almost like someone hit a re-wind button!

I protested, vigorously, and the author finally agreed. Revisions are planned. Perhaps this time next year, *The Masked Ball* will have been published, and you can discover the “real” me.

I look forward to hearing about it! Is there anything else you would like to share with us before we go?

First, silence is not golden. If Michael and I had been willing to talk with each other, to share our feelings and our fears, our successes and our failures, if I had been willing to tell him how good his work was, then our lives would have turned out so differently.

Second, apparently trivial decisions can have major repercussions. Our problems developed slowly. One innocuous decision led to another. We went to his reunion. Who would have thought that Michael's personality would change so dramatically? When Michael began to draw, again, I did not want his work lying around the house, so he set up a studio. Who would have thought that I would seldom see him after that? A friend, another teacher, flirted with me, and I laughed about it. Who would have thought...

Oh boy! I have to tell you Allison, I'm really interested in finding out more about your story! I hope our readers are too! Thank you so much for coming to visit with us today here on the WLC!

To Purchase Book by David Burnett

Amazon



Barnes & Noble

For more Information on David Burnett:



Website: <http://the-reunion.yolasite.com>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/David-Burnett-Author/447290468681693?ref=hl>

Twitter: @DavdBurnett

Goodreads: http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/6579272.David_Burnett