



The
SEAMSTRESS
of Acadie

A Novel

Laura Trantz

Praise for *The Rose and the Thistle*

“A masterful achievement of historical complexity and scintillating romance sure to thrill readers with its saga of love under siege.”

Booklist starred review

“Frantz carefully unpacks a complicated period of religious persecution, lending this romance depth, fascinating moral stakes, and a palpable sense of suspense.”

Publishers Weekly

“It is impossible to go wrong with a Laura Frantz book. Once again, the author delivers a tale filled with history, romance, intrigue, and danger.”

Interviews & Reviews

Praise for *A Heart Adrift*

“Full of rich historical detail readers have come to expect from Frantz, this title is rooted in its time yet filled with issues that resonate today such as racial inequalities, economic injustice, and a pandemic.”

Library Journal starred review

“Author Laura Frantz is a master of the historical romance genre, and *A Heart Adrift* continues to showcase her originality and storytelling talents.”

Midwest Book Review

Praise for *Tidewater Bride*

“A powerful tale that brings history alive.”

Urban Book Reviews

“Frantz weaves suspense and romance beautifully in this enjoyable inspirational historical.”

Publishers Weekly

“The well-researched descriptions of the colonial era draw the reader in, and it is a treat to be introduced to such thoughtful, complex characters. This novel is a sure winner for any romance fan.”

Historical Novel Society

Books by Laura Frantz

The Frontiersman's Daughter

Courting Morrow Little

The Colonel's Lady

The Mistress of Tall Acre

A Moonbow Night

The Lacemaker

A Bound Heart

An Uncommon Woman

Tidewater Bride

A Heart Adrift

The Rose and the Thistle

The Seamstress of Acadie

THE BALLANTYNE LEGACY

Love's Reckoning

Love's Awakening

Love's Fortune

the

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Revell

a division of Baker Publishing Group
Grand Rapids, Michigan

© 2024 by Laura Frantz

Published by Revell
a division of Baker Publishing Group
Grand Rapids, Michigan
RevellBooks.com

Printed in the United States of America

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Frantz, Laura, author.

Title: The seamstress of Acadie : a novel / Laura Frantz.

Description: Grand Rapids, Michigan : Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2024.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023017867 | ISBN 9780800740689 (paperback) | ISBN 9780800745660 (casebound) | ISBN 9781493444793 (ebook)

Subjects: LCGFT: Christian fiction. | Romance fiction. | Historical fiction. | Novels.

Classification: LCC PS3606.R4226 S43 2024 | DDC 813/.6—dc23/eng/20230417

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2023017867>

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Published in association with Books & Such Literary Management, BooksAndSuch.com

Baker Publishing Group publications use paper produced from sustainable forestry practices and post-consumer waste whenever possible.

24 25 26 27 28 29 30 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

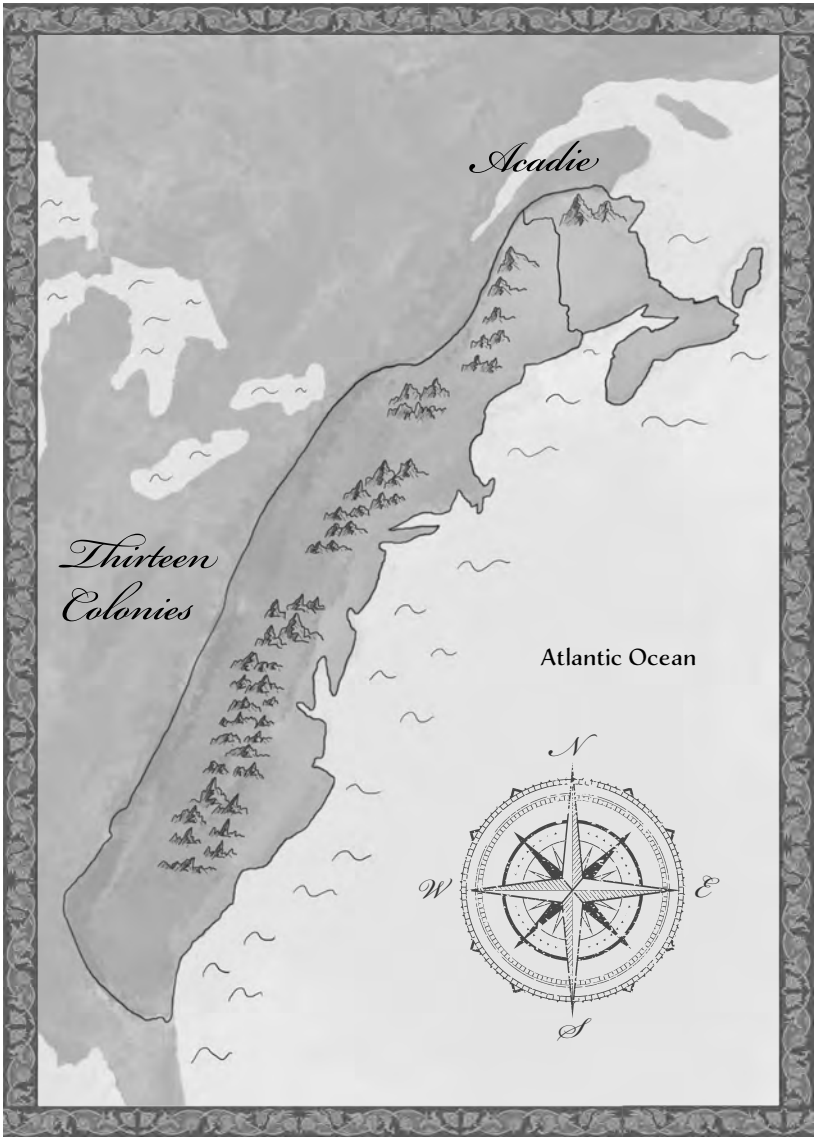
To readers everywhere who've embraced my novels.
Thank you for journeying to Acadie with me.
I hope we have many more historical adventures to come.

Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed,
judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Isaiah 1:17

Historical Note

The history of the Acadians began in 1604 when French settlers crossed the Atlantic to Acadie, now present-day Nova Scotia, Canada, where they became prosperous farmers and fishers. Though the bountiful land they lived on was contested by the French and the British, the Acadians declared themselves neutral. They spoke French but traded with the British and tried to maintain peaceful ties to both nations, including native tribes like the Mi'kmaq. However, Acadie passed back and forth between British and French control until 1755, the time of *Le Grand Dérangement*, or The Great Upheaval, when the British began to forcibly remove the Acadians from their homeland.



Glossary

- aboteaux**—a dike that keeps seawater out
- Acadie**—French name for Acadia, present-day Nova Scotia, Canada
- adieu**—farewell
- Anglais**—English
- au revoir**—goodbye
- Baie Française**—French Bay (renamed “Bay of Fundy” by the British)
- bel homme**—handsome
- bien-aimé**—beloved
- bien sûr**—of course
- bienvenue**—a welcome or kindly greeting
- bof**—okay
- bon**—good
- bon courage**—be brave
- bonjour**—hello
- bon sang**—for goodness’ sake!
- bonne santé**—good health
- chère**—dear
- défricheurs d’eau**—water clearers
- Dieu**—God
- eau**—water

fais de beaux rêves—sweet dreams
fête—party
française—French
frère—brother
gâteau—cake
grâce au bon Dieu—thanks to the good God
héritages—heirlooms
ici—here
jardin—garden
jolie—pretty
Le Diable Blanc—The White Devil
Le Loup—The Wolf
l'étoile—the star
médecin—doctor
merci—thank you
merci pour tout votre aide, pour toute votre bonté—thank
 you for all your help, for all your kindness
miam—yum
Mi'kmaq—Canadian Indian tribe
mon ami—my friend
mon cher—my dear
Noël—Christmas
objet d'art—piece of art
poutine râpée—potato dumpling with pork
quoi—what
ravissante—ravishing
rivière—river
sabot—wooden shoes
s'il vous plaît—please
sœur—sister
très belle—very beautiful
veillée—evening gathering

Prologue

Have your musket clean as a whistle, hatchet scoured,
sixty rounds powder and ball, and be ready to march at
a minute's warning.

Major Robert Rogers, founder of American Rangers

LAKE GEORGE, PROVINCE OF NEW YORK

WINTER 1753

He was numb, the wind-whipped snow driving icy shards into his exposed skin, the grip on his rifle weak. All the while a fire burned in his mind, driving him forward as he half clawed up the frozen mountain. He was no longer the commander of the Ranger Corps scattered in the valley below but a boy bent on saving his own life all over again.

Strange what came to a man when thirty-odd years flashed before his eyes. The thwack of Pa's axe. His little sister's gap-toothed smile. Chilled pewter mugs of cider atop a trestle table.

Winded, he pressed on amid snow blindness as other images assailed him like arrows. Mam's gathering basket that bore the scent of herbs, rosemary and rue foremost. Her candlelit profile as she read aloud to them at night, eyes closed in weariness between words strewn like bread crumbs in his consciousness.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you . . . peace . . . not evil . . . to give you an expected end.

And then calamity had struck on the heels of those words as if to refute them, consuming all that he knew in a few smoky, charred moments, leaving a black footprint on the frozen ground.

They'd said Indians weren't winter raiders. An outright lie.

Gripping a brittle mountain laurel, he pulled himself up with his free hand. He tightened his hold on his gun while battling his way forward even as his shoepacks slid beneath him. Each harried second brought the fear his chest might explode from the pressure of his climb. He was all that was left to carry on his family name. Blackburn. A fine Scots name that needn't die on this whitewashed mountain.

He wanted another, better kind of life. As he thought it, that stubborn childhood vision slammed into him like the knifelike wind, his breath powdering the air in front of him as snow thinned in a scraggly stand of pines. The mountain suddenly gave way to a wending river . . . a blooming orchard on one side of it . . . a handsome house up a greening hill. Clear as a painting on a parlor wall. He'd first encountered the vision soon after that fiery day he'd lost his childhood. A fancy? It revisited him only when he hovered between life and death. It returned now with all its color and clarity, something not even a blizzard could obliterate.

He looked back, his trained eye detecting a flash of motion just below. Abenaki? French militia were not far behind, yet the encroaching darkness was in his favor, silvering the snow and forming a hazy wall that pushed the enemy back.

He had in mind more than survival. If he got free of this present danger, he vowed to go in search of that other, peace-laden place.

Almighty God, help me.

 1

It was a Fine Country and Full of Inhabitants, a Butifull Church & abundance of ye Goods of the world. Provisions of all kinds in great Plenty.

Lt. Col. John Winslow

ACADIE

DECEMBER 1754

Sylvie Galant took a deep pine-scented breath. Atop the snowy bluff overlooking Baie Française, the sharp afternoon air cut into her lungs yet cleared her head after so much time indoors. Cold seeped through her shoepacks though her head and shoulders were warm, wrapped in a black wool scarf brightened by a red stripe, her mittened hands snug. She'd always found the snow enchanting. It lay like white silk shot through with silver thread and had the power to shut them in for days. Weeks.

Her delight dimmed as her gaze rose from the shimmering, silver-blue bay to a ridge crowned by the new, star-shaped Fort Lawrence, a blight upon the pristine landscape. Its British flag snapped about in the raw wind as if defiant, its parapets and ramparts blurred white by weather. Fort

Beauséjour, the French garrison she was in service to, stood just as stalwart, a mile of frozen marshland between them. Beyond its walls stood a church—some called it a cathedral—its unfinished, snow-topped spire giving an illusion of rustic grandeur. Its familiarity gave way to a niggling worry.

On the tip of this exposed bluff, was she watched by any at the English fort?

The climb to the top through thick forest left her heart beating hard beneath her loosely laced stays. This was her private place where few trespassed, her father's land. Taking her eyes off the two forts, she sought the seat that nature had made from an oak felled by a lightning strike when she was just a girl. Smoothed by time and weather, it made a comfortable rest. She brushed the snow off, her woolen petticoats an ample cushion. She craved quiet. Peace.

But oh, the churning in her heart.

Snowflakes swirled, adorning her garments like exquisite embroidery and turning the near woods into a glittering blur. Still, she spied him. Only a Mi'kmaq would be out in such weather. Her heart gave a leap, and she shot up from the stump in case he missed her and took the trail she'd come up through the Galant orchards.

"Bonjour, frère!" she called, her voice thin on the wintry air.

"Ma chère sœur!" he returned, quickening his step. He caught her up and swung her round in his hard, bearish embrace.

"Is it truly you, Bleu?" Laughing, Sylvie sank back into the deepening snow when he set her down, her wet skirt hem dragging. "I feared—"

"Never fear." His smile broadened, banishing her unease for a trice. "Hudson's Bay Company has kept me well occupied since autumn."

But not only Hudson's Bay? She studied him, her beloved

half brother, the cause of many a hope and prayer. His remarkable eyes—Acadie blue, Père called them—were the one feature they shared aside from their black hair. “I suspect it is not trading that keeps you but a sweetheart in the wilds.”

“A paramour?” Bleu’s deep laugh erupted, shutting down the notion. “I fear my many adventures snuff any courtship.”

“Would that you wed and stay closer to home.”

“Home? Where is my home?” He blinked, snowflakes rimming his long lashes. “Not only on the shores of Baie Française with our swelling clan. I am half my mother’s people, remember.”

None could forget it, looking at him. He was a striking mix of heritages, both Indian and French. Their father’s beloved Mi’kmaq wife lived on in Bleu. And he was continually on the move across the vast French frontier—wood ranger, trapper, trader, voyageur, mariner, marksman, interpreter, warrior. Some even whispered spy and a leader of the French Resistance.

Her hopes stood on tiptoe. “You are home for Noël.”

He nodded and glanced at the forts across the water, the lilt of his voice belying his dark look. “And what a celebration it shall be, eh? I have brought supplies that cannot be had with the British blockades. Cloth and spices and such.”

“Oh?” The haversack on his back looked hopelessly small.

“I’ve cached them for now,” he said, gesturing to the woods.

“Dare I ask if you remembered your sisters?”

“Did I?” He winked. “Only the finest for the mademoiselles Galant.”

“So it has been a lucrative trading season?”

“At York Factory especially.” His restless gaze returned to the landscape. “Why are you here alone?”

“I always come alone.”

“With all the unrest, it is unwise.” His eyes held a rare rebuke. “You never know when les Rosbifs are about.”

She almost smiled at the sobriquet. Did these arrogant English soldiers care to be called roast beefs? Better that than les grenouilles—frogs—which she’d heard flung at the French firsthand, and even at Acadians, her own neutral people.

“I want neither frogs nor beeves here.” Even imagining it seemed to sully so hallowed a place. “I like to think of the English coming no farther than the bridge at Pont-a-Buot.”

“Pont-a-Buot, oui. I hear English soldiers congregate with French soldiers at the tavern there.”

She nodded. “So Pascal says. He has dealings with the tavern keeper.” Her middle brother’s fascination with Fort Lawrence concerned her, though his business there was lucrative enough. “Selling spruce beer and cider from our orchards keeps him busy.”

“Your orchards, you mean. The finest cider apples to be had.”

“Merci.” Orchards were a woman’s domain in Acadie while the men minded the cattle and fields and tended the dikes. “I have saved you an entire barrel of L’Epice apples and another of Fameuse.”

“And I may have brought you some seed.” His smile reassured her of a promise kept. “The one variety you lack. Pomme Grise, no?”

“Oui.” Her brows arched in delight. “All your lengthy rambles are forgiven, if so. Marie-Madeleine and I have even cleared ground in preparation. Once the snow melts . . .”

His wry chuckle doused her excitement. “The Mi’kmaq predict a heavy season. Seldom are they wrong. The beaver and muskrat have built especially large houses and their fur is heavy.”

She shivered. “Remember the winter of ’45? So bitter our cider froze and Père had to chop it with an ax?”

“I’ve not forgotten it. It curtailed my rambles, as you call them.” He looked heavenward as snow swirled harder. “We might not see the ground till May.”

Five more months. The time stretched long, fraught with a thousand uncertainties. But suddenly all that mattered was that Bleu was here and Noël was before them, the most joyous celebration of the year.

Smiling so wide her frozen face hurt, she said, “Come, Mère has made a fine soupe de la Toussaint and Père has just finished cider-making, his best yet. It is not frozen, so you may drink to your heart’s content.”