



Magnolia Publishing
"Books for those Southern or Southern at Heart"

“DRINK ONE TO ME, CHRISTIAN BENNETT”

Born youngest of four children into a large family of old money, American photographer Abigail Christensen entered a world already expecting great things of her, and spent her entire life trying to conform, striving to please a family she knew she never could.

Finally breaking free of stifling conventionality, she travels with her brother to Mexico, drifting from province to province as she captures photographs for an upcoming exhibit, wishing she had settled for the monotony of her previous lifestyle when she attracts the attention of legendary drug lord, Esai Molinero.

Excerpted from Chapter 1

Esai Molinero was a powerful man. Plucked as a child from the streets of Mexico City by legendary drug lord Alejandro Diaz-Garcia, he had been raised in a restored seventeenth-century mansion in the countryside of Veracruz province, and educated and groomed for the family business alongside Alejandro's three sons. Upon Alejandro's death, Esai dismissed ceremony and took control, assassinating each legitimate heir one by one, and establishing himself as sole head of the cartel before his twenty-fifth birthday.

Esai was hard to predict, as each facet of his personality seemed contradictory. One side presented a striking, generous, compassionate man with an uncharacteristic soft spot for noble causes — one who funded orphanages, supported the homeless, tithed heavily to the church, and often served as principal financial patron for worthy charities.

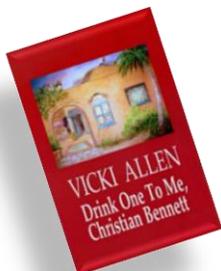
The other revealed a vicious, murderous, ruthless monster notoriously given to executing or maiming for the simplest indiscretions as the mood struck.

Overall, he was hard to resist: charming, handsome, free with money, showering those closest to him with the fruits of his extravagance, ranging from cars to homes to the finest of jewels. He never lacked female companionship, given freely or not, although most were more than willing.

Esai Molinero got what he wanted when he wanted it, with no exception.

Excerpted from Chapter 2

For Abigail Christensen, the trip to Mexico had been a godsend. The youngest of four children born into a large family of old money, she entered a world already expecting great things of her and had spent her entire life trying to conform, striving to please a family she knew she never could.



“Drink One To Me, Christian Bennett,” the fourth novel from author Vicki Allen is now available from Magnolia Publishing.

The trip to Mexico was her latest act of rebellion, her breaking free of all expectations, and the start of living life the way she wanted. Three weeks of total abandon spent in places she wanted to see, traveling from region to region on her time frame, lingering a few hours in one town and a few days in another.

Despite her symbolic emancipation, her father had insisted that she bring Jonathan along since, “he’s not doing anything anyway,” and Jonathan had been more than happy to oblige.

They spent the first week as tourists in the Yucatan, sightseeing in Merida, languishing on the beach in Cozumel, and drinking tequila as they watched the sunset in Cancun. The second week, however, was different.

“If I only wanted pictures of tourist spots, I’d buy postcards,” she said, ignoring Jonathan’s grumbling as she insisted they leave Cancun for Mexico City. “I want to photograph real Mexico: real people, real cities, real landscapes.”

“Which sounds real boring,” Jonathan sighed as he loaded their bags into the rented Jeep. “Could we at least go to Acapulco first? We could fly over for a couple days and then do the real Mexico.”

Abby’s condescending look answered before she did. “No.”

“Fine. Will there be real bars in these real places?”

“Real cantinas.”

“Whatever. All I’m asking, Abby, is will I be able to get a real drink? That’s all I want to know.”

“I imagine that’s a real possibility.”

After leaving Mexico City, they traveled Highway 150 toward Veracruz, taking small detours for Abby’s real people/places/landscapes along the way, ending up in a small municipality near the coast by midweek.

“Aguas Cristalinas — this place looks good to me,” Jonathan commented as they pulled into town, road weary and ready to plant his feet in one spot for a few days. “Think it’ll be real enough for ya?”

Abby gazed out the window, taking in the architecture and large open-air market in the center of town, noting with pleasure the lack of touristy feel. “This might work,” she said, smiling as she continued her visual inventory. “In fact, this might work out fine.”

Abby liked Aguas Cristalinas, and Jonathan loved Rafe’s, where they spent almost every afternoon after Abby finished her daily exploration of the area, enjoying the festive atmosphere and a few cold beers before staggering to one of the local cafés for dinner.

They lingered in Aguas Cristalinas for the remainder of the second week and well into the third before Abby decided to extend their trip. “I’d really like to hang here a bit longer,” she told Jonathan over a dinner of authentic cuisine. “Is that all right with you?”

“Sure, why not?” Jonathan shrugged, flashing an irresistible smile as he leaned back in his chair and took a long swig of his Dos Equis. “I’m not doing anything else anyway.”

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About Magnolia Publishing: Founded in 1999 and headquartered in Pineville, La., Magnolia Publishing has emerged to become the largest and oldest independent book publisher in Central Louisiana. Now entering its second decade, Magnolia—a family-owned, specialty publisher—serves up nostalgic literary treats for *Audiences Who Are Southern or Southern At Heart*. This, coupled with author, Vicki Allen—and her ability to articulate southern ideals and sensibilities—has created a loyal following of multi-generational fans. In April 2009, Magnolia released *Drink One To Me, Christian Bennett*, the fourth novel by Allen, whose previous works include *For Molly*, a southern coming-of-age story (1999); *The Search for Shannon*, fiction finalist for the Oklahoma Book Award (2000); and *The Return* (2002). Allen’s books are available in select boutiques and specialty gift shops and online at Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, Booksamillion.com, MagnoliaPublishing.com and others.