



Benedict Hall

Cate Campbell

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In this richly layered debut novel, Cate Campbell introduces the wealthy Benedict family and takes us behind the grand doors of their mansion, Benedict Hall. There, family and servants alike must face the challenges wrought by World War I--and the dawn of a new age brimming with scandal, intrigue, and social change. Seattle in 1920 is a city in flux. Horse-drawn carriages share the cobblestone streets with newfangled motor cars. Modern girls bob their hair and show their ankles, cafés defy Prohibition by serving dainty teacups of whisky to returning vets--and the wartime boom is giving way to a depression. Even within the Benedicts' majestic Queen Anne home, life is changing--above and below stairs.

Margot, the Benedicts' free-spirited daughter, struggles to succeed as a physician despite gender bias--and personal turmoil. The household staff, especially longtime butler Abraham Blake, have always tried to protect Margot from her brother Preston's cruel streak. Yet war has altered Preston too--not for the better. And when a chance encounter brings a fellow army officer into the Benedict fold, Preston's ruthlessness is triggered to new heights.

An engineer at the fledgling Boeing company, Frank Parrish has been wounded body and soul, and in Margot, he senses a kindred spirit. But their burgeoning friendship and Preston's growing wickedness will have explosive repercussions for everyone at Benedict Hall--rich and poor, black and white--as Margot dares to follow her own path, no matter the consequences.

Benedict Hall Details

Date : Published June 2013 by Kensington Books (first published January 1st 2013)

ISBN : 9780758287595

Author : Cate Campbell

Format : Paperback 378 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Romance, Historical Romance

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From Reader Review Benedict Hall for online ebook

Mary says

A delightful debut novel from Cate Campbell set in post WWI Seattle. Excellent storytelling and historical relevance. Highly recommend.

Carol says

Enjoyable read - mystery mixed with romance.

Linda Bridges says

The Benedicts are a wealthy family in Seattle. The family consists of the parents and three grown children (Dick, Margot, and Preston) and Dick's wife, Ramona. The setting of the story is 1920; WWI has just recently ended, and Preston is having difficulties adjusting to life after the war. Margot is doing the unexpected by practicing medicine in a day and age when women doctors were few and far between and is facing difficulties from not only the male doctors but also from her own mother who doesn't consider her womanly enough. Into the family dynamic comes Frank Parrish, an engineer who had lost an arm in the war and had come to Seattle with the promise of a job. Unfortunately, the job did not materialize. However, he runs into Preston, whom he had known but not particularly liked, in the war. Through the Benedict family connections, Frank is able to get a job at the newly formed Boeing company.

But there is something seriously wrong with Preston which actually goes far back into his childhood. His irrational hatred for Margot and his belief in a sapphire he acquired during the war cause him to do everything he can to derail Margot's career and her budding relationship with Frank. As things spin out of control, everyone is forced to face some truths about their family and how to survive in a world that is nothing like the one before the war.

This book was nothing like what I had expected it to be, and I was glad of it. I figured it would be about a wealthy family (it was), and sort of an Upstairs, Downstairs type of story. Although that is part of it, the story is more complex than that, the characters are interesting, there is a genuine villain, and the plot moves right along. I look forward to reading other books in the series.

Beth says

I read this as part of my Reading-My-Library Quest (to read a book from every shelf). And upon looking up the author I see she is someone I like who writes as Louise Marley when writing SF. The history of Seattle is well executed -- I could actually follow as they walked around the city, which is very unusually for me. I liked the bits about medicine and the slow romance between Dr Benedict and Frank Parrish, the one-handed war veteran.

The "magical" stone thing didn't work for me. It made sense that the loser brother would think it gave him special powers, but the author seemed to agree as well. Given all the lucky breaks she gives it I think it

makes complete sense that someone would begin to wonder -- the stuff in the war, the healing of the maid after the abortion, the well-time heart attack/stroke, even the confident surgery. That strained credibility enough to throw me out of an otherwise good story.

Lynn says

I picked up an ARC at Barnes & Noble in Kansas City, where I am a part time bookseller.

Seattle, Washington is quite an interesting place to be in the 1920's. Men are returning from the War, jobs are scarce as businesses adjust to the peacetime economy. There's a family with a servants, and there are Chinese women with bound feet. It is a time of prohibition. Boeing is looking to build airplanes for commercial use. A lady doctor struggles for acceptance in a male-dominated world.

The doctor's clothes are sometimes bloody, but there are other bloody clothes at Benedict Hall. Young pregnant women, within and without, need the Doctor's assistance.

This is an unusual murder story, as we know the identity of the evildoer from the beginning. The plot twists and turns as evidence of guilt piles up.

There's a delightful love story woven in. A mysterious jewel from Jerusalem, brought home from the war, is just like its original owner: hard and brilliant and many faceted.

And, through it all, there's Blake, the steadfast butler/chauffeur/confidante. He's like the Greek chorus. He sees everything, and is wise beyond his years.

Susan says

If you love Seattle, strong women characters, Downton Abbey--read this when it's published. Historical fiction following World War II.

Kay Kenyon says

I don't usually read historical fiction, but this one did hook me. It's a fascinating glimpse of the 1920s in a wealthy home in Seattle, with a great cast of characters including a young woman physician, and several soldiers returning from WW1 forever changed. A psychopath is loose, but no one believes what he is. Campbell makes this all quite believable, a bit scary, and richly historical. Loved it.

Linda Finlayson says

Cate Campbell, aka Louise Marley, tells a good tale. Her series has been compared to Downton Abbey, but I think that is unfortunate. I'm a fan of Downton, but get irritated with the 2 second clips on its large list of characters. In Benedict Hall Campbell focuses on 3 main characters: Frank the taciturn WWI amputee vet,

Margot the outspoken and determined lady doctor, and Blake the caring butler who is Margot's champion. Set in Seattle in the 1920's the story is woven with interesting historical detail and beautiful descriptions of the west coast. I'm looking forward to reading the rest of the series.

Danica Harris says

Cate Campbell did an amazing job including various aspects of post WWI life. Between amputation struggles, women obtaining degrees/higher jobs in society, and life as a free slave. I couldn't help to hate the Preston Benedict and love all the other characters. This was my first WWI book, usually I read WWII books and I cant help but want more. Benedict Hall was refreshingly clean (except for a few angry curse words).

Marilyn says

Historical fiction in the 1920's. It was interesting to read about a woman doctor and social protocol of the time. The villain seemed contrived in his wickedness while his sister seemed so accepting of his actions.

Martha says

Overall, this book was clumsy. I enjoyed reading about Seattle in the 20s, and you can tell Campbell loves both the medicine and the history of the period, but the story was overburdened with contrived plot points.

Vickie says

I have already added the next in the series to my Nook. I rarely, if ever, do this upon reading a book in a new-to-me series. So that should tell you something about how much I LOVED this book!!

It's set in 1920 Seattle, has a cast of characters I loved or loathed. Strong feelings for characters on the page, but Cate Campbell made me feel them.

I loved the courageous Margot Benedict, who chose to be a doctor in a society who struggled with growing emancipation of women. I loved Frank Parrish, the man coming to Seattle to make a living with his strong engineering mind and only one arm.

I rather loathed the rest of Margot's family, except her father who tried to do the right thing as much as possible, but had a blind eye where his youngest son was concerned. Margot's mother was completely blind to her youngest son's faults, making excuses.

The youngest son, Preston, was a complete sociopath, pure evil with the face of an angel.

I applauded and admired Margot with her strength of character and fortitude and her love of the man who, to everyone else, was just the butler. But to Margot, Abraham Blake, was more a father and caregiver and confidante.

A finely woven tale, I kept turning the pages long into the night and it kept me on the treadmill long after my normal stopping time.

I cannot wait to read the next books in the series.

Highly recommended.

Mary Jo says

1920 Seattle. Nice easy read about a discordant family, wounded WWI vet and obstacles for a female doctor. I will continue with the others in the trilogy.

Gigi Ann says

I must say right off I bought this book for two reasons...First reason: I love the cover of this book, The Second reason: I bought it was because it indicated if you liked Downton Abbey, then you will probably like this book. It really didn't remind me much of Downton Abbey, other then the fact that it was set in the 1920s, not in England, but in Seattle, Washington.

However, Cate Campbell, the author did a good job with her debut novel. The story was full of intrigue, conspiracy, and a bit of light romance. I was drawn into the story by the characters, all different in their own way. Some of them you come to love, some you just like, and then there was Preston, who I grew to hate. He was so much a part of the story, I just don't know if I liked this story or not. When you hate a vindictive character so much it makes it difficult to even like the story, I guess that makes the author unique, some authors just don't have that kind of talent.

As far as how many stars I will award this book...I will have to think about this story some more, but for now I will award it 3*** I liked it but I'm on the fence as to how much I liked it. It was a historical novel which I enjoyed, so that made it a bit more interesting to me, but all-in-all I just can't decide whether I like it alot or just like it....

This book is a part of my Nook Library.

Cheryl Koltay says

Thank you for sending this book. Congratulations to Cate Campbell on her first book. 1920's Washington with men returning from war, jobs are scarce and women are fighting for more prominence and respect in the work place. A family trying to come to terms with these changes.....add intrigue, jealousy and yes, love! I found it to be very enjoyable reading and the author allowed us a glimpse of the struggles that many faced in this rapidly changing time.
