

**PROTECTING HER ROYAL BABY
(HARLEQUIN ROMANTIC SUSPENSE\THE
MANSFIELD BROTHERS) BY BETH
CORNELISON**



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Protecting Her Royal Baby (Harlequin Romantic Suspense\The Mansfield Brothers) By Beth Cornelison Exactly how a straightforward concept by reading can boost you to be a successful individual? Reading *Protecting Her Royal Baby (Harlequin Romantic Suspense\The Mansfield Brothers) By Beth Cornelison* is a really simple activity. Yet, exactly how can lots of people be so careless to review? They will prefer to spend their leisure time to chatting or hanging around. When as a matter of fact, reviewing *Protecting Her Royal Baby (Harlequin Romantic Suspense\The Mansfield Brothers) By Beth Cornelison* will certainly provide you more opportunities to be successful finished with the hard works.

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She stared in stunned silence at the man standing in her living room, a man she'd once trusted. Working to shake herself from the numb shock that locked her throat, she blinked hard and scrubbed her hands over her face. "Why didn't you tell me any of this last winter? Don't you think I had a right to know what...who I was involved with?"

He had the decency to look guilty. "I'm sorry. I didn't tell you for this very reason. I knew this was how you'd react."

She exhaled harshly. "Well, it is rather... startling news, wouldn't you say?"

"I know. But we'd agreed what we had was a vacation fling. I didn't think I'd ever see you again. I didn't think I'd...develop feelings for you. And I never thought you'd—"

"Get pregnant?" She rubbed her hand over her ninemonths-swollen belly and grunted. "Well, neither did I. But here's the proof that condoms aren't one hundred percent fail-safe."

"Indeed." He gave her a worried grimace. "The question now is, how do we hide the baby? How do we protect him?"

"Protect him?"

He took a step toward her, his hands spread. "If anyone finds out he's my child, my bloodline, they'll want to kill him like they've tried to kill me."

A thread of fear tugged inside her. "But if I don't tell anyone who his father is—"

A shattering of glass at her back door cut her off. He cursed in a foreign language she didn't recognize.

"It's too late," he said, his voice tight, panicked. His eyes were round with alarm and apology. "They're here. They know." He shook his head. "I'm so sorry. I didn't think anyone had followed me."

Adrenaline spiked inside her, and she sidled closer to him as crashing sounds filtered from the back of her house. "I don't understand. Who—"

"There's no time! You have to go! Run!"

"But you—"

"You can't worry about me. You have to save our child!" He pushed her toward the front door. "Hurry! They'll try to kill you, try to kill him."

A dark-clad figure appeared from her kitchen and raised a long-muzzled gun. Fired.

The father of her baby pushed her to the floor as the bullets whizzed over them. The jolt as she hit the floor sent a sharp pain through her belly, and a warm gush of fluid trickled down her leg. She clutched her middle, worried for her baby.

In the next second, he was shoving her up and toward the front door. "Go! Hide! Don't come back here!"

Bullets pelted the wall near her, and she screamed. How had her life become such a nightmare?

Snatching the keys to her old car from the peg by the door, she raced out to her front driveway as fast as a pregnant woman could run. The pain in her midsection grew, and she nearly doubled over. With a quick glance over her shoulder as she tumbled into the driver's seat, she saw three men now in her living room with her baby's father. They held him by the arms, restraining him, a gun at his temple.

Nausea swamped her. They would kill him, she was sure. But why? What was their motive?

One of the men burst through the front door, following her. He raised his weapon, and she gunned the engine. The thunk of bullets hitting the rear of her car spiked her fear. She gasped and scrunched as low as she could in the seat as she sped away. Tears blinded her as she raced down the street. She didn't know where she was going. Away. To hide. To—

Another sharp pain gripped her stomach. More warm fluid puddled beneath her. Oh, dear God! Her water had broken. The fall in her living room must have started her labor!

She held her belly and cried out as the contraction tightened. Forget hiding. Her baby was coming. Doubling over in pain, she raced down the highway, praying she could reach the hospital in Lagniappe in time.

The car was coming right at him. Weaving. Speeding. With him at twelve o'clock.

Adrenaline shot through Hunter Mansfield. Irritation and alarm nipping the back of his neck, he slowed to a stop along the rural Louisiana road where he jogged every Sunday afternoon. He assumed a ready stance on the balls of his feet, prepared to jump out of the way of the erratically lurching vehicle as it neared. The glare of sunlight reflected off the windshield, preventing him from seeing the driver. A drunk? A distracted teenager?

The small blue Honda's engine roared, and the car lurched forward, its wheels kicking up gravel as the passenger-side tires moved from the pavement onto the narrow shoulder. Hunter braced himself, rapidly weighing whether to dive for the four-foot ditch to his left or feint right into the road, assuming the car wouldn't correct its path in time. Both posed risk.

The ditch.

Just as he shifted his weight to spring to his left, the sun slipped behind a cloud. He caught a glimpse of a face behind the steering wheel. A woman. A startled, frightened look. A last-second swerve, tires squealing.

He jumped aside but not fast enough. The sedan clipped his hip as he launched himself toward the ditch. He landed with a tooth-jarring thump. Rolled. Pain streaked from his shoulder down his arm.

He twisted to watch the Honda rocket past, grumbling an invective under his breath.

Still traveling at a high speed, the car overcorrected from the swerve to miss him and fishtailed. In seconds, the driver had lost control. The sedan careened off the road at high speed, flipped and rolled into the ditch.

Horror punched him in the gut. Scrambling to his feet, Hunter ran down the road to the inverted car and crouched at the broken driver's window. "Hey, are you okay?"

A pained and panicked cry came from inside.

Unable to see the front seat even from a squat, he got on his stomach and peered inside. The sight that greeted him backed his breath into his throat.

The woman lay crumpled on the roof of the sedan, which was now below her. Her forehead was bleeding. Her face was wrenched in a mask of agony. And she clutched her... rounded belly.

Hunter's anxiety ratcheted up a notch. She was pregnant. And judging from the pool of bloody fluid under her hips, her water had broken in the crash.

Another wail of pain from her confirmed it. She was in labor.

"Damn," he muttered as a chill slid through him, despite the warm autumn sun. "Ma'am, are you hurt anywhere other than your head?" He reached in far enough to put the car in Park and turn off the engine.

She turned wild blue eyes toward him. Frightened eyes. "Don't hurt me!"

He raised his palms. "I won't. Calm down."

"Please! Don't hurt me. I'm not—" She stopped with a gasp and a moan, holding her stomach.

Hurt her? What the—

"I'm not going to hurt you, ma'am. Why would you think—"

"My baby!" she gasped between shallow pants. "It's coming!"

"Yeah. I see that." He jerked at the Velcro strap that held his cell phone strapped to an armband while he jogged, and dialed 911. "I'm calling an ambulance now. Try to slow your breathing. You're hyperventilating."

Another frightened groan answered him, and she cast a nervous glance around her. "Where am I? What happened?"

Hunter arched an eyebrow. "You don't remember?"

Her brow puckered, and her eyes reflected anxiety, confusion. "Something's wrong. I can't."

He frowned. How hard had she hit her head? Was she a meth user? Mentally unstable? He studied her face, but her smooth, unblemished skin and her white teeth didn't show any telltale signs of drug use. She was, in fact, strikingly beautiful, with a youthful oval face, thick golden-blond hair, clear blue eyes and lush red lips.

"Try to calm down. Take slow, deep breaths. No one is trying to hurt you." When the emergency operator came on the line, Hunter quickly gave the man the bullet points of the situation. Location. One-car accident. Woman in labor. Bleeding forehead. Possible delusions.

When he'd been assured an ambulance and police were on the way, Hunter switched the call to speaker setting and put his phone on the ground by the car, leaving the line connected as instructed.

"Ma'am, I'm going to try to open the door so I can help you." Crawling onto his knees, he pulled at the crushed door. Though it gave a little, the bent frame was jammed. Hunter rose to his feet for better leverage and tried again. The shoulder he'd landed on when he dived into the ditch throbbed, and he paused long enough to roll his arms and loosen the muscles.

"Ow!" The fear behind the woman's cry spurred him to act faster, put everything behind getting the door open.

"Hang on, ma'am. I'm coming." Propping a foot against the dented frame, Hunter pulled on the door with all his strength. Sweat streamed down his already damp back and brow, but with a creak of straining metal, the door finally gave way. Getting on his belly again, Hunter crawled inside the flipped car and sidled up to the injured woman. "Okay, ma'am. Help is on the way, and I'm going to do what I can until they get here."

Instead of the relief or gratitude he expected, the woman's expression reflected terror as he drew closer. "No! Don't hurt me!"

That again? Hunter huffed. She was the one who'd almost killed him with her erratic driving! He took a deep breath and touched her arm lightly. "I'm not going to hurt you. I want to help."

"But someone was... I think, someone was coming after me. I feel... I can't remember..." She seemed so distraught that Hunter paused.

"Who's coming after you? Why were you in such a hurry?" An abusive husband maybe?

She swallowed hard, and her brow furrowed. "I don't know." She tipped her head and gave him a funny look. "Wh-who are you?"

"My name's Hunter. I saw you crash, and I'm here to help you. Do you remember anything about the accident or why you were driving so fast?"

"I." She closed her eyes, wincing, then gave him a frightened look. "I had a contraction...and then I was upside down, and my water had broken and...you looked in the window...and—" She cried out in pain, drawing her shoulders in and cradling her belly again.

Hunter took her hand in his and patted her wrist.

"You're okay. Take a deep breath and blow it out through your mouth."

He racked his brain for what he could remember about childbirth from when his nieces had been born. Darby Kent, the mother of one of his nieces, had been one of his closest friends since college, and he'd stood by her through her pregnancy, practicing breathing techniques with her and coaching her on the way to the hospital for her delivery. Though the specifics of the labor breathing weren't coming back to him at the moment, he knew hyperventilating was not good. Which was what the woman was currently doing.

"Hey, look at me." He moved a hand to her cheek and angled her face toward him. Her wide, fearful eyes latched on to his. Their piercing blue hue and vulnerability socked Hunter in the solar plexus, grabbed him and held on tight. "I'm not going to leave you. We're going to get you through this. I know you're scared, but you need to calm down. Take slower, deeper breaths or you're going to pass out."

She closed her eyes once, then refocused on him. Some of the panic in her gaze eased, and she slowed her breathing. She inhaled deeply, if shakily, and blew it out with a whimper.

"That's my girl." He gave her a warm smile and squeezed her fingers. "Now...what's your name?"

She stared at him blankly for a moment, then frowned.

"I don't know."

Hunter drew his eyebrows together, an uneasy stir in his gut. "You don't know your name?"

She blinked, clearly confused, and panic edged back into her eyes. "I don't know! How could I not know?"

He shifted his gaze to the gash on her forehead. "That cut on your temple says you hit your head in the crash. Do you remember anything about who you are or where you live? Are you married?"

The pregnancy suggested she might have a husband somewhere who'd be worried about her, but her left hand had no rings. Although...his sister-in-law had stopped wearing her wedding ring during her last pregnancy because her hands had swelled.

Tears filled her eyes, and a visible tremor shook her. "No. It's all a blank. I just...have this feeling...something bad happened. That someone wants to hurt me..."

He dabbed at the bleeding gash, where a goose egg was now swelling, with the hem of his shirt. "Okay, memory loss happens sometimes after you hit your head. Clearly that's what's happened, so...let's see what clues we have in the car. Do you have a purse? A wallet with your driver's license?"

"I don't knooooow...." The word evolved into another wail of agony, and with a grimace of misery, she gripped her stomach. "It hurts so much. Oh, God, don't let anything happen to my baby!"

"Breathe through the pain, honey." Hunter stroked her hair with one hand and squeezed her fingers with his other. "Did you take a Lamaze class or anything?"

Her blank gaze flicked to him. "I don't—"

"You don't remember. Right." He exhaled through pursed lips. Memory loss meant she wouldn't remember who from her family or friends to call to be with her. He needed to find her wallet or her cell phone or something that would give them some helpful information. But at that moment, his first priority was keeping her calm. Delivering the baby, if it came to that. Damn! Where was that ambulance?

A cold sweat popped out on his lip, but he swallowed the nausea that rose in him at the thought of delivering her baby. He had to keep it together for her sake. "All right. We can do this. You're gonna be fine."

When she squeezed his hand back, he met her teary gaze.

"Thank you, Hunter." She raised her free hand to wipe her face and flicked him an attempt at smiling. "For staying. I'm scared, and I don't want to be alone."

Hunter's heart cracked, and he wiped the moisture from her cheeks with a crooked finger. "I won't leave you alone. I promise."

His assurance seemed to relieve her mind, and she drew a slow, deep breath. When her next contraction hit, he coached her through the pain, reminding her to breathe deeply and slowly. She squeezed his hand with amazing strength, and when her pain eased, he dropped a light kiss on her forehead. "That's it. You're doing great."

Come on, ambulance! Anytime now!

Between her contractions, Hunter searched the tumbled sedan, an older Honda Civic that reminded him of the jalopies Grant used to tinker with in their driveway when they were younger. The car was made pre-air bags...a safety feature that would have served the woman well today, judging from the growing bump on her head and her memory loss. There was nothing in the glove box that told him who she was or where she lived. No registration papers or car title. Odd. She didn't seem to have a purse or wallet with her, either. Also strange based on the habits of the women he knew. And no cell phone? What was up with that? What woman in this day and age went anywhere without her cell phone?

Hunter kept his frustration with her curious lack of identification to himself, not wanting to upset her further. Another contraction gripped her, and he shifted his attention to her again. She was bearing down, her teeth gritted, her forehead creased with effort.

"Oh, hey, no!" Hearing his panic in his tone, he paused a moment and forced a smile. "Try not to push...yet. The ambulance is bound to be here soon. Just...hold on a little longer." He dabbed again at the bleeding cut on her head and the perspiration rolling into her eyes. "Why don't we focus on something else?"

"Like wh-what?"

He glanced around for an object that might hold some interest or personal meaning to her. Darby had called it a "focal point" when she'd had her daughter four years ago. Hunter had been charged with making sure the picture of his brother Connor, the baby's father, whom they'd believed at the time was dead, made it to the hospital.

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A woman in labor. A man on a mission. The Mansfield Brothers series continues...

All Brianna Coleman remembers of the near-fatal accident is the hero who saved her. Not her name or the father of the baby she delivers hours later. Until news of a coup in a foreign nation triggers a memory. Her baby's father is the missing member of a royal family...and her son the next target.

After saving them, Hunter Mansfield won't abandon them. But can he defend them against international assassins who pursue the newborn? He'll do anything—pay the ultimate price if necessary—for one chance to protect the woman he loves and her little prince.

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- Binding: Mass Market Paperback
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He had the decency to look guilty. "I'm sorry. I didn't tell you for this very reason. I knew this was how you'd react."

She exhaled harshly. "Well, it is rather... startling news, wouldn't you say?"

"I know. But we'd agreed what we had was a vacation fling. I didn't think I'd ever see you again. I didn't think I'd...develop feelings for you. And I never thought you'd—"

"Get pregnant?" She rubbed her hand over her ninemonths-swollen belly and grunted. "Well, neither did I. But here's the proof that condoms aren't one hundred percent fail-safe."

"Indeed." He gave her a worried grimace. "The question now is, how do we hide the baby? How do we protect him?"

"Protect him?"

He took a step toward her, his hands spread. "If anyone finds out he's my child, my bloodline, they'll want to kill him like they've tried to kill me."

A thread of fear tugged inside her. "But if I don't tell anyone who his father is—"

A shattering of glass at her back door cut her off. He cursed in a foreign language she didn't recognize.

"It's too late," he said, his voice tight, panicked. His eyes were round with alarm and apology. "They're here. They know." He shook his head. "I'm so sorry. I didn't think anyone had followed me."

Adrenaline spiked inside her, and she sidled closer to him as crashing sounds filtered from the back of her house. "I don't understand. Who—"

"There's no time! You have to go! Run!"

"But you—"

"You can't worry about me. You have to save our child!" He pushed her toward the front door. "Hurry! They'll try to kill you, try to kill him."

A dark-clad figure appeared from her kitchen and raised a long-muzzled gun. Fired.

The father of her baby pushed her to the floor as the bullets whizzed over them. The jolt as she hit the floor sent a sharp pain through her belly, and a warm gush of fluid trickled down her leg. She clutched her middle, worried for her baby.

In the next second, he was shoving her up and toward the front door. "Go! Hide! Don't come back here!"

Bullets pelted the wall near her, and she screamed. How had her life become such a nightmare?

Snatching the keys to her old car from the peg by the door, she raced out to her front driveway as fast as a pregnant woman could run. The pain in her midsection grew, and she nearly doubled over. With a quick glance over her shoulder as she tumbled into the driver's seat, she saw three men now in her living room with her baby's father. They held him by the arms, restraining him, a gun at his temple.

Nausea swamped her. They would kill him, she was sure. But why? What was their motive?

One of the men burst through the front door, following her. He raised his weapon, and she gunned the engine. The thunk of bullets hitting the rear of her car spiked her fear. She gasped and scrunched as low as she could in the seat as she sped away. Tears blinded her as she raced down the street. She didn't know where she was going. Away. To hide. To—

Another sharp pain gripped her stomach. More warm fluid puddled beneath her. Oh, dear God! Her water had broken. The fall in her living room must have started her labor!

She held her belly and cried out as the contraction tightened. Forget hiding. Her baby was coming. Doubling over in pain, she raced down the highway, praying she could reach the hospital in Lagniappe in time.

The car was coming right at him. Weaving. Speeding. With him at twelve o'clock.

Adrenaline shot through Hunter Mansfield. Irritation and alarm nipping the back of his neck, he slowed to a stop along the rural Louisiana road where he jogged every Sunday afternoon. He assumed a ready stance on the balls of his feet, prepared to jump out of the way of the erratically lurching vehicle as it neared. The glare of sunlight reflected off the windshield, preventing him from seeing the driver. A drunk? A distracted teenager?

The small blue Honda's engine roared, and the car lurched forward, its wheels kicking up gravel as the passenger-side tires moved from the pavement onto the narrow shoulder. Hunter braced himself, rapidly weighing whether to dive for the four-foot ditch to his left or feint right into the road, assuming the car wouldn't correct its path in time. Both posed risk.

The ditch.

Just as he shifted his weight to spring to his left, the sun slipped behind a cloud. He caught a glimpse of a face behind the steering wheel. A woman. A startled, frightened look. A last-second swerve, tires squealing.

He jumped aside but not fast enough. The sedan clipped his hip as he launched himself toward the ditch. He landed with a tooth-jarring thump. Rolled. Pain streaked from his shoulder down his arm.

He twisted to watch the Honda rocket past, grumbling an invective under his breath.

Still traveling at a high speed, the car overcorrected from the swerve to miss him and fishtailed. In seconds, the driver had lost control. The sedan careened off the road at high speed, flipped and rolled into the ditch.

Horror punched him in the gut. Scrambling to his feet, Hunter ran down the road to the inverted car and crouched at the broken driver's window. "Hey, are you okay?"

A pained and panicked cry came from inside.

Unable to see the front seat even from a squat, he got on his stomach and peered inside. The sight that greeted him backed his breath into his throat.

The woman lay crumpled on the roof of the sedan, which was now below her. Her forehead was bleeding. Her face was wrenched in a mask of agony. And she clutched her... rounded belly.

Hunter's anxiety ratcheted up a notch. She was pregnant. And judging from the pool of bloody fluid under her hips, her water had broken in the crash.

Another wail of pain from her confirmed it. She was in labor.

"Damn," he muttered as a chill slid through him, despite the warm autumn sun. "Ma'am, are you hurt anywhere other than your head?" He reached in far enough to put the car in Park and turn off the engine.

She turned wild blue eyes toward him. Frightened eyes. "Don't hurt me!"

He raised his palms. "I won't. Calm down."

"Please! Don't hurt me. I'm not—" She stopped with a gasp and a moan, holding her stomach.

Hurt her? What the—

"I'm not going to hurt you, ma'am. Why would you think—"

"My baby!" she gasped between shallow pants. "It's coming!"

"Yeah. I see that." He jerked at the Velcro strap that held his cell phone strapped to an armband while he jogged, and dialed 911. "I'm calling an ambulance now. Try to slow your breathing. You're hyperventilating."

Another frightened groan answered him, and she cast a nervous glance around her. "Where am I? What happened?"

Hunter arched an eyebrow. "You don't remember?"

Her brow puckered, and her eyes reflected anxiety, confusion. "Something's wrong. I can't."

He frowned. How hard had she hit her head? Was she a meth user? Mentally unstable? He studied her face, but her smooth, unblemished skin and her white teeth didn't show any telltale signs of drug use. She was, in fact, strikingly beautiful, with a youthful oval face, thick golden-blond hair, clear blue eyes and lush red lips.

"Try to calm down. Take slow, deep breaths. No one is trying to hurt you." When the emergency operator came on the line, Hunter quickly gave the man the bullet points of the situation. Location. One-car accident. Woman in labor. Bleeding forehead. Possible delusions.

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"Ow!" The fear behind the woman's cry spurred him to act faster, put everything behind getting the door open.

"Hang on, ma'am. I'm coming." Propping a foot against the dented frame, Hunter pulled on the door with all his strength. Sweat streamed down his already damp back and brow, but with a creak of straining metal, the door finally gave way. Getting on his belly again, Hunter crawled inside the flipped car and sidled up to the injured woman. "Okay, ma'am. Help is on the way, and I'm going to do what I can until they get here."

Instead of the relief or gratitude he expected, the woman's expression reflected terror as he drew closer. "No! Don't hurt me!"

That again? Hunter huffed. She was the one who'd almost killed him with her erratic driving! He took a deep

breath and touched her arm lightly. "I'm not going to hurt you. I want to help."

"But someone was... I think, someone was coming after me. I feel... I can't remember..." She seemed so distraught that Hunter paused.

"Who's coming after you? Why were you in such a hurry?" An abusive husband maybe?

She swallowed hard, and her brow furrowed. "I don't know." She tipped her head and gave him a funny look. "Wh-who are you?"

"My name's Hunter. I saw you crash, and I'm here to help you. Do you remember anything about the accident or why you were driving so fast?"

"I." She closed her eyes, wincing, then gave him a frightened look. "I had a contraction...and then I was upside down, and my water had broken and...you looked in the window...and—" She cried out in pain, drawing her shoulders in and cradling her belly again.

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"You're okay. Take a deep breath and blow it out through your mouth."

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"That's my girl." He gave her a warm smile and squeezed her fingers. "Now...what's your name?"

She stared at him blankly for a moment, then frowned.

"I don't know."

Hunter drew his eyebrows together, an uneasy stir in his gut. "You don't know your name?"

She blinked, clearly confused, and panic edged back into her eyes. "I don't know! How could I not know?"

He shifted his gaze to the gash on her forehead. "That cut on your temple says you hit your head in the crash. Do you remember anything about who you are or where you live? Are you married?"

The pregnancy suggested she might have a husband somewhere who'd be worried about her, but her left

hand had no rings. Although...his sister-in-law had stopped wearing her wedding ring during her last pregnancy because her hands had swelled.

Tears filled her eyes, and a visible tremor shook her. "No. It's all a blank. I just...have this feeling...something bad happened. That someone wants to hurt me..."

He dabbed at the bleeding gash, where a goose egg was now swelling, with the hem of his shirt. "Okay, memory loss happens sometimes after you hit your head. Clearly that's what's happened, so...let's see what clues we have in the car. Do you have a purse? A wallet with your driver's license?"

"I don't knooooow...." The word evolved into another wail of agony, and with a grimace of misery, she gripped her stomach. "It hurts so much. Oh, God, don't let anything happen to my baby!"

"Breathe through the pain, honey." Hunter stroked her hair with one hand and squeezed her fingers with his other. "Did you take a Lamaze class or anything?"

Her blank gaze flicked to him. "I don't—"

"You don't remember. Right." He exhaled through pursed lips. Memory loss meant she wouldn't remember who from her family or friends to call to be with her. He needed to find her wallet or her cell phone or something that would give them some helpful information. But at that moment, his first priority was keeping her calm. Delivering the baby, if it came to that. Damn! Where was that ambulance?

A cold sweat popped out on his lip, but he swallowed the nausea that rose in him at the thought of delivering her baby. He had to keep it together for her sake. "All right. We can do this. You're gonna be fine."

When she squeezed his hand back, he met her teary gaze.

"Thank you, Hunter." She raised her free hand to wipe her face and flicked him an attempt at smiling. "For staying. I'm scared, and I don't want to be alone."

Hunter's heart cracked, and he wiped the moisture from her cheeks with a crooked finger. "I won't leave you alone. I promise."

His assurance seemed to relieve her mind, and she drew a slow, deep breath. When her next contraction hit, he coached her through the pain, reminding her to breathe deeply and slowly. She squeezed his hand with amazing strength, and when her pain eased, he dropped a light kiss on her forehead. "That's it. You're doing great."

Come on, ambulance! Anytime now!

Between her contractions, Hunter searched the tumbled sedan, an older Honda Civic that reminded him of the jalopies Grant used to tinker with in their driveway when they were younger. The car was made pre-air bags...a safety feature that would have served the woman well today, judging from the growing bump on her head and her memory loss. There was nothing in the glove box that told him who she was or where she lived. No registration papers or car title. Odd. She didn't seem to have a purse or wallet with her, either. Also strange based on the habits of the women he knew. And no cell phone? What was up with that? What woman in this day and age went anywhere without her cell phone?

Hunter kept his frustration with her curious lack of identification to himself, not wanting to upset her further. Another contraction gripped her, and he shifted his attention to her again. She was bearing down, her teeth gritted, her forehead creased with effort.

"Oh, hey, no!" Hearing his panic in his tone, he paused a moment and forced a smile. "Try not to push...yet. The ambulance is bound to be here soon. Just...hold on a little longer." He dabbed again at the bleeding cut on her head and the perspiration rolling into her eyes. "Why don't we focus on something else?"

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He glanced around for an object that might hold some interest or personal meaning to her. Darby had called it a "focal point" when she'd had her daughter four years ago. Hunter had been charged with making sure the picture of his brother Connor, the baby's father, whom they'd believed at the time was dead, made it to the hospital.

Most helpful customer reviews

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

A Lovely, Light Read!!

By Monica Cardoza

In love with two men but who has her whole heart. Will she be able to choose the right man to spend the rest of her life with? He walked out on her but the other one has been with her protecting her making her feel safe.

I could not believe everything that was happening to this poor pregnant woman. It seemed that a black cloud was following her around and it would not leave her. If it wasn't for this man for taking his run who knows what could have happened to her. I know that my emotions were all over the place with this story not only was I frightened for her, I also felt sorry but most of all I hated how confused she seemed. I knew that it was going to be a hard read for me when her emotions were heated for him but then she didn't know what she felt for her baby's father. The what if's were really killing me, I wanted for her to go with the flow and tell Hunter that she had feeling for him it was there in her eyes, the heat was there.

Brianna Coleman and Hunter Mansfield met in the worst circumstance possible, she was running away from danger and he was trying to escape the vehicle that was coming at him. In the middle of her driving away from danger her water broke and her labor pains were coming strong. I could not believe that she was somewhat able to concentrate on driving but soon she found herself in a bad position. Hunter wanted to help her and it seemed that Brianna didn't want for him to leave the only thing she knew was that she felt safe with him.

Brianna has lost her memory and she is now trying to figure out why she senses danger and of course protecting her baby boy. Who knows for how long her memory will be gone but Hunter doesn't want to leave her alone after what he found on her car. He was going to accompany her to her home and stay with her until her family came or the baby's father came to get her and their child. Only that when they go to her home they find it ransacked, who could have done it.

Little by little her memory is coming back but it seems that danger is still lurking to the point that they have to leave her home because something awful happens. Now they are with his brother but for how long. Brianna finds out who the father is of her baby but could she have been in love with him, why did he walk away. Does she love him or could something happen between her and Hunter? Hunter knows that he should not be looking at her like he wants to gobble her up but he can't help it. He is attracted to her and he wants to

protect her and her son. I love how Brianna named him after Hunter that was a lovely thing that she did.

Brianna knows that she can't continue staying where she is at maybe if she goes to Cape Cod maybe something will jolt her memory. Hunter is not very happy but he is going to go with her. Brianna should have never gone there because something bad always happens the moment that you leave your safe haven. Remember Prince Cristoff is still out there, is he behind the incidents that have been happening to Brianna? Could there be someone else behind it? Can Hunter walk away from Brianna in order for her to be happy with the Prince and her baby? Will Brianna be able to walk away from a family she could have with Prince Cristoff or will she choose Hunter?

Protecting Her Royal Baby was a wonderful read that I enjoyed immensely. I know that the journey isn't smooth for Brianna and Hunter between her amnesia and the possibility of her being in love with the father of her baby and him with her. They could have a wonderful life except that she was running away from people that were trying to kill her baby and he was priority. I thought this story was beautifully written and I know that I hung on each word. I know when an author captivates my attention from the very beginning that it's going to be a great story. I know that I didn't want to put it down but at some point I did have to go to sleep. The characters were well developed and love when a read is just easy to read. The chemistry between Brianna and Hunter is evident from the beginning the moment that he was helping her in the accident. The heated stares that they shared, the passionate kisses that they shared were hot. There was one disappointment and that was it was too short. I wanted a long epilogue; I wanted to know what happened in their future.

I truly recommend this story to all readers that just love to read a lovely, light read that will bring a smile to your face.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

thrilling romantic suspense

By A Customer

Protecting Her Royal Baby

Beth Cornelison

Harlequin Romantic Suspense, Jun 3 2014, \$5.50

ISBN: 9780373278756

Bud explains to his pregnant lover who he is and warns her to flee as assassins have arrived to kill him, her and their unborn. Brianna Coleman runs for her life and that of her child. While jogging Hunter Mansfield avoids an out of control car that ends in a ditch. He helps the pregnant driver, who is in labor and suffers from amnesia.

Her vehicle has bullet holes so he believes her contention that an unknown adversary stalks her and her child. Hunter takes her to safety. As she slowly recalls events, Brianna and Hunter fall in love, but he fears for her life and that of her baby when she insists she needs to go to Cape Cod where the truth and danger await.

The second Mansfield Brothers romantic suspense (see *The Return of Connor Mansfield*) is a thrilling drama as the beleaguered heroine does not know who to trust except her Good Samaritan rescuer to help her in *Protecting Her Royal Baby*. Although the amnesia segue is an overused technique, readers will root for the brave couple (Hunter's only fear is losing Brianna to her lover and her only fear is losing baby Ben) as they struggle to stay alive and keep her child safe.

Harriet Klausner

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Exciting right from the start!

By [Monica Pulliam](#)

Exciting right from the start, this book will keep you on the edge of your seat. Hunter is out for a jog when he is almost hit by a car right before it wrecks. Poor Brianna loses her memory in the car accident while she is in labor, then she has all of this danger to deal with as they try and figure out her history and keep her safe at the same time. Hunter keeps her safe for the next couple of weeks, and she ends up falling in love with him. She finally remembers who the baby's dad is and knows she was once in love with him as well, so she is conflicted. The baby's dad is the Prince of a foreign country, and his whereabouts are unknown. She finally finds out what kind of danger she is in when she ends up getting kidnapped by the Prince's cousin. Turns out, the Prince is being held captive, and his cousin is planning on killing him to gain control of the throne. Very exciting this book is full of drama, action, danger, and mystery.

[See all 8 customer reviews...](#)

PROTECTING HER ROYAL BABY (HARLEQUIN ROMANTIC SUSPENSE\THE MANSFIELD BROTHERS) BY BETH CORNELISON PDF

Your perception of this book **Protecting Her Royal Baby (Harlequin Romantic Suspense\The Mansfield Brothers) By Beth Cornelison** will certainly lead you to acquire just what you precisely need. As one of the motivating publications, this publication will supply the presence of this leaded Protecting Her Royal Baby (Harlequin Romantic Suspense\The Mansfield Brothers) By Beth Cornelison to accumulate. Even it is just soft file; it can be your collective documents in device as well as various other gadget. The important is that usage this soft file book Protecting Her Royal Baby (Harlequin Romantic Suspense\The Mansfield Brothers) By Beth Cornelison to read and also take the perks. It is what we indicate as book Protecting Her Royal Baby (Harlequin Romantic Suspense\The Mansfield Brothers) By Beth Cornelison will certainly enhance your ideas and mind. Then, reading book will likewise improve your life top quality a lot better by taking excellent action in balanced.

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She stared in stunned silence at the man standing in her living room, a man she'd once trusted. Working to shake herself from the numb shock that locked her throat, she blinked hard and scrubbed her hands over her face. "Why didn't you tell me any of this last winter? Don't you think I had a right to know what...who I was involved with?"

He had the decency to look guilty. "I'm sorry. I didn't tell you for this very reason. I knew this was how you'd react."

She exhaled harshly. "Well, it is rather... startling news, wouldn't you say?"

"I know. But we'd agreed what we had was a vacation fling. I didn't think I'd ever see you again. I didn't think I'd...develop feelings for you. And I never thought you'd—"

"Get pregnant?" She rubbed her hand over her nine-months-swollen belly and grunted. "Well, neither did I. But here's the proof that condoms aren't one hundred percent fail-safe."

"Indeed." He gave her a worried grimace. "The question now is, how do we hide the baby? How do we protect him?"

"Protect him?"

He took a step toward her, his hands spread. "If anyone finds out he's my child, my bloodline, they'll want to kill him like they've tried to kill me."

A thread of fear tugged inside her. "But if I don't tell anyone who his father is—"

A shattering of glass at her back door cut her off. He cursed in a foreign language she didn't recognize.

"It's too late," he said, his voice tight, panicked. His eyes were round with alarm and apology. "They're here. They know." He shook his head. "I'm so sorry. I didn't think anyone had followed me."

Adrenaline spiked inside her, and she sidled closer to him as crashing sounds filtered from the back of her house. "I don't understand. Who—"

"There's no time! You have to go! Run!"

"But you—"

"You can't worry about me. You have to save our child!" He pushed her toward the front door. "Hurry! They'll try to kill you, try to kill him."

A dark-clad figure appeared from her kitchen and raised a long-muzzled gun. Fired.

The father of her baby pushed her to the floor as the bullets whizzed over them. The jolt as she hit the floor sent a sharp pain through her belly, and a warm gush of fluid trickled down her leg. She clutched her middle, worried for her baby.

In the next second, he was shoving her up and toward the front door. "Go! Hide! Don't come back here!"

Bullets pelted the wall near her, and she screamed. How had her life become such a nightmare?

Snatching the keys to her old car from the peg by the door, she raced out to her front driveway as fast as a pregnant woman could run. The pain in her midsection grew, and she nearly doubled over. With a quick glance over her shoulder as she tumbled into the driver's seat, she saw three men now in her living room with her baby's father. They held him by the arms, restraining him, a gun at his temple.

Nausea swamped her. They would kill him, she was sure. But why? What was their motive?

One of the men burst through the front door, following her. He raised his weapon, and she gunned the engine. The thunk of bullets hitting the rear of her car spiked her fear. She gasped and scrunched as low as she could in the seat as she sped away. Tears blinded her as she raced down the street. She didn't know where she was going. Away. To hide. To—

Another sharp pain gripped her stomach. More warm fluid puddled beneath her. Oh, dear God! Her water had broken. The fall in her living room must have started her labor!

She held her belly and cried out as the contraction tightened. Forget hiding. Her baby was coming. Doubling over in pain, she raced down the highway, praying she could reach the hospital in Lagniappe in time.

The car was coming right at him. Weaving. Speeding. With him at twelve o'clock.

Adrenaline shot through Hunter Mansfield. Irritation and alarm nipping the back of his neck, he slowed to a stop along the rural Louisiana road where he jogged every Sunday afternoon. He assumed a ready stance on the balls of his feet, prepared to jump out of the way of the erratically lurching vehicle as it neared. The glare of sunlight reflected off the windshield, preventing him from seeing the driver. A drunk? A distracted teenager?

The small blue Honda's engine roared, and the car lurched forward, its wheels kicking up gravel as the passenger-side tires moved from the pavement onto the narrow shoulder. Hunter braced himself, rapidly weighing whether to dive for the four-foot ditch to his left or feint right into the road, assuming the car wouldn't correct its path in time. Both posed risk.

The ditch.

Just as he shifted his weight to spring to his left, the sun slipped behind a cloud. He caught a glimpse of a face behind the steering wheel. A woman. A startled, frightened look. A last-second swerve, tires squealing.

He jumped aside but not fast enough. The sedan clipped his hip as he launched himself toward the ditch. He landed with a tooth-jarring thump. Rolled. Pain streaked from his shoulder down his arm.

He twisted to watch the Honda rocket past, grumbling an invective under his breath.

Still traveling at a high speed, the car overcorrected from the swerve to miss him and fishtailed. In seconds, the driver had lost control. The sedan careened off the road at high speed, flipped and rolled into the ditch.

Horror punched him in the gut. Scrambling to his feet, Hunter ran down the road to the inverted car and crouched at the broken driver's window. "Hey, are you okay?"

A pained and panicked cry came from inside.

Unable to see the front seat even from a squat, he got on his stomach and peered inside. The sight that greeted him backed his breath into his throat.

The woman lay crumpled on the roof of the sedan, which was now below her. Her forehead was bleeding. Her face was wrenched in a mask of agony. And she clutched her... rounded belly.

Hunter's anxiety ratcheted up a notch. She was pregnant. And judging from the pool of bloody fluid under her hips, her water had broken in the crash.

Another wail of pain from her confirmed it. She was in labor.

"Damn," he muttered as a chill slid through him, despite the warm autumn sun. "Ma'am, are you hurt anywhere other than your head?" He reached in far enough to put the car in Park and turn off the engine.

She turned wild blue eyes toward him. Frightened eyes. "Don't hurt me!"

He raised his palms. "I won't. Calm down."

"Please! Don't hurt me. I'm not—" She stopped with a gasp and a moan, holding her stomach.

Hurt her? What the—

"I'm not going to hurt you, ma'am. Why would you think—"

"My baby!" she gasped between shallow pants. "It's coming!"

"Yeah. I see that." He jerked at the Velcro strap that held his cell phone strapped to an armband while he jogged, and dialed 911. "I'm calling an ambulance now. Try to slow your breathing. You're hyperventilating."

Another frightened groan answered him, and she cast a nervous glance around her. "Where am I? What happened?"

Hunter arched an eyebrow. "You don't remember?"

Her brow puckered, and her eyes reflected anxiety, confusion. "Something's wrong. I can't."

He frowned. How hard had she hit her head? Was she a meth user? Mentally unstable? He studied her face, but her smooth, unblemished skin and her white teeth didn't show any telltale signs of drug use. She was, in fact, strikingly beautiful, with a youthful oval face, thick golden-blond hair, clear blue eyes and lush red lips.

"Try to calm down. Take slow, deep breaths. No one is trying to hurt you." When the emergency operator came on the line, Hunter quickly gave the man the bullet points of the situation. Location. One-car accident. Woman in labor. Bleeding forehead. Possible delusions.

When he'd been assured an ambulance and police were on the way, Hunter switched the call to speaker setting and put his phone on the ground by the car, leaving the line connected as instructed.

"Ma'am, I'm going to try to open the door so I can help you." Crawling onto his knees, he pulled at the crushed door. Though it gave a little, the bent frame was jammed. Hunter rose to his feet for better leverage and tried again. The shoulder he'd landed on when he dived into the ditch throbbed, and he paused long enough to roll his arms and loosen the muscles.

"Ow!" The fear behind the woman's cry spurred him to act faster, put everything behind getting the door open.

"Hang on, ma'am. I'm coming." Propping a foot against the dented frame, Hunter pulled on the door with all his strength. Sweat streamed down his already damp back and brow, but with a creak of straining metal, the door finally gave way. Getting on his belly again, Hunter crawled inside the flipped car and sidled up to the injured woman. "Okay, ma'am. Help is on the way, and I'm going to do what I can until they get here."

Instead of the relief or gratitude he expected, the woman's expression reflected terror as he drew closer. "No! Don't hurt me!"

That again? Hunter huffed. She was the one who'd almost killed him with her erratic driving! He took a deep breath and touched her arm lightly. "I'm not going to hurt you. I want to help."

"But someone was... I think, someone was coming after me. I feel... I can't remember..." She seemed so distraught that Hunter paused.

"Who's coming after you? Why were you in such a hurry?" An abusive husband maybe?

She swallowed hard, and her brow furrowed. "I don't know." She tipped her head and gave him a funny look. "Wh-who are you?"

"My name's Hunter. I saw you crash, and I'm here to help you. Do you remember anything about the accident or why you were driving so fast?"

"I." She closed her eyes, wincing, then gave him a frightened look. "I had a contraction...and then I was upside down, and my water had broken and...you looked in the window...and—" She cried out in pain, drawing her shoulders in and cradling her belly again.

Hunter took her hand in his and patted her wrist.

"You're okay. Take a deep breath and blow it out through your mouth."

He racked his brain for what he could remember about childbirth from when his nieces had been born. Darby Kent, the mother of one of his nieces, had been one of his closest friends since college, and he'd stood by her through her pregnancy, practicing breathing techniques with her and coaching her on the way to the hospital for her delivery. Though the specifics of the labor breathing weren't coming back to him at the moment, he knew hyperventilating was not good. Which was what the woman was currently doing.

"Hey, look at me." He moved a hand to her cheek and angled her face toward him. Her wide, fearful eyes latched on to his. Their piercing blue hue and vulnerability socked Hunter in the solar plexus, grabbed him and held on tight. "I'm not going to leave you. We're going to get you through this. I know you're scared, but you need to calm down. Take slower, deeper breaths or you're going to pass out."

She closed her eyes once, then refocused on him. Some of the panic in her gaze eased, and she slowed her breathing. She inhaled deeply, if shakily, and blew it out with a whimper.

"That's my girl." He gave her a warm smile and squeezed her fingers. "Now...what's your name?"

She stared at him blankly for a moment, then frowned.

"I don't know."

Hunter drew his eyebrows together, an uneasy stir in his gut. "You don't know your name?"

She blinked, clearly confused, and panic edged back into her eyes. "I don't know! How could I not know?"

He shifted his gaze to the gash on her forehead. "That cut on your temple says you hit your head in the crash. Do you remember anything about who you are or where you live? Are you married?"

The pregnancy suggested she might have a husband somewhere who'd be worried about her, but her left hand had no rings. Although...his sister-in-law had stopped wearing her wedding ring during her last pregnancy because her hands had swelled.

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Protecting Her Royal Baby (Harlequin Romantic Suspense\The Mansfield Brothers) By Beth Cornelison Exactly how a straightforward concept by reading can boost you to be a successful individual? Reading Protecting Her Royal Baby (Harlequin Romantic Suspense\The Mansfield Brothers) By Beth Cornelison is a really simple activity. Yet, exactly how can lots of people be so careless to review? They will prefer to spend their leisure time to chatting or hanging around. When as a matter of fact, reviewing Protecting Her Royal Baby (Harlequin Romantic Suspense\The Mansfield Brothers) By Beth Cornelison will certainly provide you more opportunities to be successful finished with the hard works.