

## Romance Heroine

HARVARD ALUMNI follow their interests to unpredictable places. Julie Cotler Pottinger '92 earned a degree in the history of architecture and then entered medical school at Yale. But the fruits of her labors are not in medical or architectural journals: they sit on the romance novel shelves of bookstores. Find her under the pseudonym Julia Quinn, right next to megabestseller Amanda Quick. Pottinger has already written more than a dozen Regency romances and one, *An Offer from a Gentleman*, spent a month on the *New York Times* bestseller list.

Her career sprouted in her undergraduate years, when she decided to take a stab at writing a romance novel like the ones she so enjoyed reading. Her talent for happy endings must come naturally: she didn't devote herself fully to writing until she was already a success in the industry. "I started...my first novel the summer after my junior year, while I was working for Harvard Student Agencies...but when I got back to academic life, I found I had absolutely no time to write, and my novel, which was all of four chapters long, sat in my computer until the following summer," she says. Intending to become a doctor, she enrolled in summer school after graduation to complete her pre-med requirements. There she found that "chemistry didn't take up nearly as much time as I'd feared, so I pulled out my book and started working on it again. I finished it up about 10 months later, and I sold it the same month I was accepted to the Yale School of Medicine."

Although she deferred enrolling for two years, during which time she finished three more novels, Pottinger did eventually return to the classroom. Once there, she says, "It took me about two months to realize that 'this writing thing' was actually something very special. I withdrew from medical school, and I haven't looked back."

For Pottinger, not looking back has meant both producing a steady stream of work and perfecting her craft. "Romances focus on the love story between a man and a woman and have a happy ending," she says, but "what you do within your genre's structure is entirely up to you. By now, she has developed her



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own brand of romance: "I've become known for writing funny romances, with an emphasis on dialogue over description." Her latest novel, *When He Was Wicked*, touches on the difficulty of learning to love again after losing a spouse. "I try to add deeper layers to the story while maintaining the lighter, humorous style," Pottinger says. "I want to write entertainment, but I believe that entertainment can be intelligent and well-written." Nonetheless, she is aware of the value of marketing. In addition to the solitary work of writing, Pottinger attends Romance Writers of America conferences and maintains a promotional website, [www.juliaquinn.com](http://www.juliaquinn.com). And her choice of pseudonym was a conscious attempt to be shelved next to Amanda Quick.

Her undergraduate architectural studies may not be the source of her novels, but Pottinger's years in Cambridge provided her with more than the occasional inspiration for character names like "Margaret Pennypacker." "I married the guy I met on the second day of freshman week [Paul Pottinger '90]," she says, "so I guess Harvard is responsible for my unshakable belief in love and romance!"

~EMER VAUGHN

reunited in the Winthrop courtyard in 2001 and have been together ever since." Nineteen classmates along with several friends from '94, '95, and '97 attended. The couple live in New York City. Kareem is a third-year resident in psychiatry at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, and Marit has jumped from reporting and producing for public radio to working in series development at VH1.

**Aaron Kesselheim** writes, "On July 23 in a large cathedral in Miraflores, Lima, Peru, **Atul Bhatia** married Yanira Erika Carrillo Vila. **Vas Kottas**, **David Binder**, and I attended. Atul started business school in Peru, and Yanira is studying to be a school teacher. The wedding was conducted entirely in the international language of love. Also, **John Abbott** married Natasha Fung on July 10 outside of San Francisco. Jason Kim '95 was best man, and **Eric Save**, **Chris Dubois**, and I attended."

Married: **Erica Cheng Lee**, J.D. '99, and Gene Lee

(U. Mich '94, A.M. Chicago '95) at the Sagamore Resort in Lake George, N.Y., on May 25, 2003. **Sarah Schooler** and Sarah Cho, M.B.A. '05, were bridesmaids and Patrick Chu, J.D. '99, was an usher. **Chris Choi**, **Jeffrey Tong**, M.M.S. '98, Ph.D. '00, **Caroline Choi Kim**, M.D. '00, **Howard Kim**, Perry Wu '89, Esson Lin '93, John Demers, J.D. '99, Dave Park, M.B.A. '99, Grace (Chung) Park, J.D. '00, Joyce Chen Hsueh, J.D. '00, Shivam Mallick Shah, M.B.A. '99, Lauren Brouhard, M.B.A. '02, Sue Perng Lee '98, J.D. '01, Philip Lee, J.D. '00, and Lydia Fan Wong, J.D. '99, were guests. The couple live in New York City. She is working as the assistant general counsel at Ziff Brothers Investments, a private investment fund, after four years as a corporate associate at Davis Polk Wardwell, and he is a vice president at the Cypress Group, a private equity fund. "I would love to hear from and get back in touch with old friends and classmates."

Contact her at [erica\\_cheng@post.harvard.edu](mailto:erica_cheng@post.harvard.edu).

Born: to **John C. Mitchell** and Emily (Wood) Mitchell '97, a daughter, Eleanor Grace, on April 12. See class of 1997.

**Frank Pasquale** writes, "I've taken a job as a law professor near New York City at Seton Hall Law School, teaching intellectual property. I'd love to hear from classmates in the area. Another classmate, **Tiffany Graham**, has taken a professorship at Villanova." Contact him at [faprip@yahoo.com](mailto:faprip@yahoo.com).

**Betty Shamieh** had an off-Broadway premiere of her play *Roar*. She is performing in her play *Chocolat in Heat* in a cross-country tour and was invited to present it at the Loeb Drama Center for the Harvard community this past February. Contact her at [blshamieh@yahoo.com](mailto:blshamieh@yahoo.com).

Married: **Jerry Smith** (M.D. Columbia '00) and Haley Steele '99 on June 5. See class of 1999.

Married: **Jean Tom** and Charles Stowell (Prince-