

The Story Behind the Novel

LOVE AT FIRST SPITE

by Anna E. Collins

I don't consider myself a vindictive person. Do I sometimes hold a grudge? Sure. Did I occasionally engage in sisterly tit for tat growing up? You betcha. But, generally speaking, I'm more inclined to let karma do her thing undisturbed.

This is why when years ago I read an article about buildings constructed as a means of payback, the concept stuck with me. The Alameda Spite House, The Montlake Pie House, Boston's Skinny House, The Virginia City Spite House... The list goes on. All designed to wreck a view, one-up someone, or stake a claim on land rightly owned. All designed out of spite.

Looking at pictures of these houses, it's easy to feel both the desperation and the triumph of the feat, and I find that duality fascinating. To most of us, this is next-level revenge—the lovechild of a carefully nursed grudge and a refusal of common societal norms. But for a select few throughout history, nothing less would suffice. Who were these people? Why couldn't they move on without making these bold gestures?

Unsurprisingly, the answer was most often found in the remnants of a relationship gone bad, and so the idea for ***Love at First Spite*** was born—a romantic comedy about Dani Porter, an interior designer who simply refuses to turn the other cheek when her fiancé cheats on her.

Dani is like most of us—a novice to grand revenge schemes. But what she lacks in experience she makes up for with a ride-or-die cousin and a landlady with money stowed away for a rainy day, neither of whom care much for unreliable men. Together with her wing-women, Dani dives headfirst into building a small (but tall) vacation rental on the vacant lot next to her ex's house to mess with his view and his peace of mind, and to prove to herself she's not one to be stepped on.

Now, a story about revenge can veer into many different genres, but with a romantic comedy in mind rather than a sinister thriller or introspective literary novel, as Dani sets out to get even, she falls for the stern architect helping her draw up the house. The question is, how do you open your heart to someone new while dwelling on the past? Answer: you don't. Consequently, the closer Dani gets to her goal of building The Spite House, the more she wonders if winning revenge could mean losing something infinitely sweeter with her new fling...

One piece of information I've always found missing from the articles about real-world spite houses is what happened after the build was complete. Did the vindictive person get satisfaction? Did the parties make up? Were they able to move on?

Writing this book was my chance to have some fun answering these questions, and in true romcom fashion, Dani's revenge journey is a bit of a roller coaster. As for the aftermath of *her* spite house, I hope readers will find the resolution both entertaining and thought-provoking—a tongue-in-cheek cautionary tale for what might transpire if instead of love at first sight, you go for love at first spite.

Love at First Spite: A Novel

By Anna E. Collins

On sale January 4, 2022

Trade paperback original

9781525899799

\$15.99 US | \$19.99 CAN

