

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

Author: Rebecca E. Grant—*Love is Unstoppable*

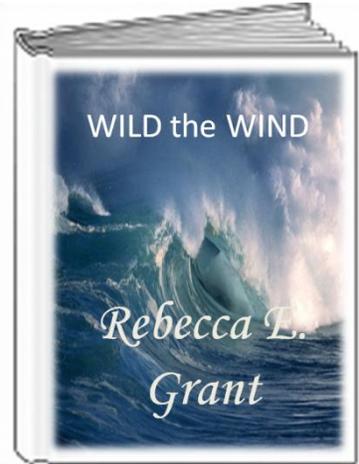
Title: **WILD THE WIND**

Category: Historical with romantic and paranormal elements

Release date: TBI

Description

English-born clairvoyant Abby Faxon doesn't know it yet, but she's destined to change the new world. All she has to do is agree to forget everything and everyone she's ever known, including the love of her life.



Cover Art TBD

To escape persecution and narrow-mindedness, captivatingly enigmatic Abby Faxon and her family flee England with one hundred Seekers, just as Abby is coming into *the gift*, which the women of Abby's bloodline have passed from generation to generation. More powerfully gifted than those who have gone before, already she's saved the life of Matthew Rockwood (Rock) the man her *Others* have revealed is her intended—a blonde, wild-maned man so bronzed, he looks like Light personified, although some, including Abby's mother, fear the darkness in him will bring about death and destruction. Yet, when two lovers are destined, not even one-hundred foot swells, an abyss, pirates, sickness and near starvation can keep them apart.

After an arduous crossing, they overshoot Jamestown and arrive at the mysterious island of Roanoke which legend claims has swallowed three previous entire colonies. What will become of them?

106,000 words

Excerpt

Chapter One—The Lion Man

July 29, 1612

The shot ripped Abby out of a dreamless sleep. She gripped the bed frame and half rose as the image of two hooded men invaded her brain. One held a smoking gun, the other brandished a bloodied knife. She smelled the acrid report, tasted blood, and fell back against the bed. The vision shifted away from the attackers to their victim, a deeply tanned, clean-shaven

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

man wearing nothing but breeches. Bleeding and broken, he raged at his attackers like a wounded lion, his blonde mane a wild wave.

The image thinned, edged out by a blinding white light and sledgehammer-like pain that split her head in two. Abby pulled herself up by the bed post and wished desperately for her mother, the only other soul who knew she had *the gift*. But her mother had been called away to help with a difficult birth. Abby forced herself to breathe deeply, allowing the pain in her head to subside, yet the image of the wild-maned man remained. He needed help. She must do something, but how? She had no idea who he was or where to find him. She briefly considered sending for her father or Giles, but her mother had forbidden her to ever speak of *the gift* to another.

A fortnight Earlier...

Her mother's face pulled into a troubled frown. "If the visions continue, they'll become increasingly powerful."

"If they continue?" Abby asked.

Her mother looked off into the distance. "This was your first vision. If you truly have the gift of sight..." She turned back and smoothed the hair from Abby's forehead. "It *is* a gift, daughter. And if you have it, you must keep this knowledge to yourself. They'll not understand." Her mother's voiced dropped to a whisper. "You would be dragged through the streets, branded a witch and—" she steeled herself grasping both of Abby's hands. "Promise me you will never, ever tell anyone."

"Not even Giles?"

Her mother's eyes flickered. "Especially not Giles."

"But Mother, I tell him everything. How could I possibly keep such a thing from him?"

"My daughter, you're nearly eighteen. It's time for you to realize what every woman must—we can't tell our men everything. They don't have the strength to bear it. Besides, you are not promised to Giles—"

Abby colored. "Nay, but I hope to be, one day."

Temperance Faxon studied her daughter uneasily. "Abby, do you think that Giles would welcome an ability such as yours? If you truly have the gift—"

"Why do you keep saying, 'if I have the gift'?"

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

Abby's mother folded her hands across her corseted waist. "For some of us like me, the visions come only a few times. But for your great grandmother Glennon, the visions came frequently. She had other remarkable abilities as well. The night you were born, she predicted you'd have the gift. I've prayed she was wrong. If you are a true seer..." Her mother ran out of words.

"Why would you not want me to have this gift? I thought you admired Great Grandmother Glennon."

Temperance nodded. "Aye, daughter. She had the gift of healing as well as sight, and taught me herbology years ago when times were more moderate. But in this enlightened year of our Lord sixteen-twelve, our scholars prefer the science of philosophy over practice. The church has been much influenced. Dark suspicion is cast upon those who would use herbs to heal the sick, and only a priest may claim to have heard the voice of God. Yet, those of us who have this gift know that the voices are messengers from above. This is why you must keep your gift secret, and it must be used wisely—always to help others. To do otherwise could bring about the ruin of you and those around you. I'll have your promise now that you will never speak of it to another soul."

"Except to you?"

"Aye, daughter. Except to me."

Nay, she could not possibly send for her father or Giles.

The vision receded enough for Abby to see out her bedroom window at the vast harbor below. There were still a few stars in the sky, yet already the air was stifling. Soon the wharfs men would make their way to the docks, shuffling with heavy feet as they did every morning, eating a breakfast of beans and onions on dark slabs of flatbread as they went. She felt a sharp twinge above her right temple and suddenly understood why the harbor beckoned. The injured man must be somewhere on the wharf. If she hurried, she might be able to warn him before his attackers could do him harm.

She shrugged into a fresh chemise, a rose-colored bodice, and tied on a matching skirt, but rejected the many layers of petticoats and other undergarments so popular, and frankly oh-so-tedious. To give her clothing the proper attention it required would take too much time.

Her courage nearly failed, she'd never been out on the streets alone before but she could fathom no other choice. She hadn't any coin to hire a hack, but her destination wasn't far, and

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

almost entirely downhill. She picked up her skirt and ran a few paces, then forced herself to slow. Without the customary lift from several layers of petticoats, her skirt dragged against the dirt, catching on an occasional twig or rock. Unaccustomed to walking in the street, she soon found that her slippers provided little traction and weren't up to the gritty contact with earth and stone.

As she turned on Cove street, she tripped over her hem, toppled off the side of the road, somersaulted down the hill and crashed through the roof of a supply shack. The sound of the tin roof collapsing around her nearly drowned out the angry shouts, a gun shot, and hastily retreating feet.

She landed hard, immodestly sprawled with the folds of her skirt covering her face. The breath knocked out of her, she lay blinded by her skirts and unable to pull in enough air to breathe or call out. With her naked lower half exposed to the elements, Abby deeply regretted her decision to spurn the customary layers of petticoats.

Powerful arms gathered her up. Her skirt fell into place and she found herself staring into uncommonly blue eyes. "*Mon ange*," he chanted, his voice smooth as melded steel. "I owe you my life. But you are injured."

He spread her out on something soft and began to speak quietly. "There's nothing to fear. We're in one of the supply shacks on the wharf. No one can see us."

Lungs silently screaming for air, Abby tried to focus on his voice.

"What is your name, *mon ange*?"

Her name? She fought against the desire to close her eyes and sink into the dark that beckoned. *Why couldn't she breathe? Why did he owe her his life?* Tiny white explosions detonated in her head. Her lungs collapsed.

The lion-man loosened the ties of her bodice and tore away the chemise from her shoulder. She tried to protest but a staggering pain sliced through her. The words jammed in her throat.

So this is how I am to die, then?

"*Non*, stay with me *ma petite*."

The lion-man straddled her body between his legs and placed his lips against hers. His blonde mane fell about her face. She tried in vain to pull away when the first violent burst of air

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

ripped at her lungs sending shockwaves through her shoulder and out the top of her head, and then another, and finally another until at last she could breathe.

He drew back, rocking on his knees and she saw him clearly for the first time. Blue eyes, like the deepest part of the sea, set wide and finely lashed. Broad forehead. Strong nose. His mouth—she blushed remembering the way his lips had forced hers open—the way he had exhaled his breath into her—his mouth was full. His eyebrows were white gold, lighter than the rest of his hair which was the color of fresh, clean straw, and fell in loose, thick waves.

Who is this half-naked lion-man whose muscular build rivals the most stalwart of sailors, whose hair is too long and unruly to be a gentleman, yet whose touch is tender, and whose English is refined and laced with French?

Able to do little else, she watched as he tore the chemise away from her other shoulder aware that she was now nearly entirely naked.

“Your shoulder is dislocated and badly torn. I need to reposition it. If I don’t, the pain will be intolerable. It will hurt *mon ange de la lumiere*. You must be brave.”

She felt a violent wrenching and heard an unnatural pop. Her ears filled with the ghastly sound of her own screams, followed by unrestrained retching. The lion-man held her against his bare chest, gently rocking her away from the sickness until her tremors ceased.

“It’s all right now, *mon ange*.” He set her away and a note of wicked amusement crept into the corners of his voice. “If you were wearing petticoats I’d be able to use them as bandages.” He smiled in a way that could only be described as intimate, “Come. We need to get you out of here before those thugs return. Can you stand yet?”

She tried. The pain in her shoulder had lessened but every inch of her body ached, her head felt as though it had been severed from her neck and would roll right off, and no matter how hard she tried, her legs kept buckling under her weight. She fell back into his arms.

“It’s all right *mon ange*. I’ve got you.”

Abby gave up trying to focus and moved deeper into his warmth.

“Do not leave me, *mon ange*. Try to stay awake. You’re safe now.”

How strange for this lion-man to call her his angel of light. She burrowed deeper to better feel the rich vibration of his voice as it moved up through his vocal chords. It seemed to be the only thing that made any sense.

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

“*Non, ma petite.*” He shook her gently. “You must fight the darkness. What is your name?”

When she didn’t answer he said in a quietly urgent voice, “Abby. Your name is Abigail Faxon. Say it *mon ange*. Abby Faxon.”

She tried to lodge herself within the vibration of his voice.

“You live in the white house with the blue shutters on Dynasty Road. Your father is John Faxon. What does he do? Say it with me Abby. He’s a retired judge and a former Oxford law professor. You must fight against the dark, Abby. Say your name with me, *mon ange*.”

If he knew her name, why did he keep insisting that she say it? She tried to do as he asked and found she could form the words in her mind, but they wouldn’t leave her lips. She opened her mouth but all she could push out was, “*mon ange*.”

She must have fallen asleep because the next thing she knew, he whispered, “Wake up *mon ange*. You’re home now.” He brushed the hair from her face.

Someone pulled at her. “Abigail, it’s Giles. What in the name of—why is her clothing torn?”

Abby screamed in pain and burrowed deeper into her lion, away from Giles’ outstretched hands.

The lion growled, “Stay back, I’ve got her.”

*

John Faxon paled. “Matthew—Rock—what the devil has gone on here? Why are her clothes —?”

“It’s complicated—she’s hurt—where is Temperance?”

“I’m here. Tell me what to do.”

Her calm strength helped to steady him. “Send someone for the doctor and start a bath—quick!”

Faxon shook his head. “He’s taken to his bed with consumption. Hasn’t been on his feet in two days.” He peered worriedly into his daughter’s battered face. “Who did this to her? Not... Metcalf?”

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

“She won’t be able to travel for several days. You’ll have to postpone your departure—I’ll tell you what little I know but we have to get her warm before shock sets in.”

Abby’s mother led the way. “Bring her up here. Tell me about her injuries.” Temperance called to the housekeeper, “Lily, we’ll need your help as well.”

Matthew followed Temperance up the stairs. “The injury to her head is the most serious. I believe she’s concussed and there’s a deep cut you’ll have to watch closely. Her right arm has a bad sprain—she’ll need a splint. Careful with her shoulder—she dislocated it during her fall. I reset it but it’s tender. The dirt needs to be scrubbed out of her wounds or they won’t heal properly. When she’s cleaned up, I’ll tell you how to treat her face so that it doesn’t scar.”

“You’ll stay and oversee things?”

“You know I can’t treat her. If anyone found out, you’d be ruined.”

“But you must, Matthew. There’s no one else.”

He deposited Abby into an iron tub. “I trust you can take it from here?”

Temperance paled and touched a hand to her throat. “The blood—there’s so much of it. What wound does my child have that would cause so much bleeding?”

“It looks worse than it is.”

“But the blood—”

Matthew swayed. “My blood... Take care of Abby—” Although he fought against it, Matthew sank to the floor grappling against loss of consciousness.

“Lily, remove Abby’s clothing and keep the hot water coming. Clean any wound you see with soap and then with this.” She handed Lily a small vial. “The onycha oil will speed the healing. “When you’re done, call me and I’ll help you move her to the bed.”

“But ain’t you gonna see to the child?”

“Matthew is more seriously hurt. Go now, you know what to do for her.” She called down the stairs, “John, Giles come up here quickly please. I need help getting Matthew into bed.”

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

Sounds jumbled. He heard the scrape of men's boots as John and Giles climbed the stairs, and Lily clucking away across the hall. "What'choo go running off for anyway? Ye's a devil's child I swear."

Strong arms half lifted, half dragged him. He tried not to cry out. Watery darkness threatened to pull him under. He must stay awake long enough to instruct Temperance about how to care for his wounds. It hurt to turn his head so he forced himself to concentrate on sounds. He could still hear Lily muttering across the hall, and the scrape of footsteps as the men went back downstairs. But it wasn't enough to keep his brain engaged. He closed his eyes and saw her flaming red hair and buoyant smile. Thinking about Abby would keep him alert.

Despite his pain, he almost smiled remembering her naked limbs and the scant red triangle between them. And, while he had a fair amount of experience separating women from their clothing, stripping off Abby's chemise made him feel like a criminal. If someone had stumbled upon them, that little scene could very easily have been misunderstood, and Abby's father was the one friend he didn't want to lose.

Matthew forced his eyes open. *Must stay awake. Focus on Abby.* Abby with the gently curved breasts that sprang free of her ruined clothing when he reset her shoulder. So lush, despite the scrapes and street filth. He desperately wished he could treat her himself. But he couldn't risk it—the cost would be too great to them all.

"Matthew."

He jerked awake. "Aye, I'm here." Cool and determined under pressure, this wasn't the first time he'd had occasion to respect the way Temperance Faxon kept her head in a crisis.

"The bullet grazed your shoulder. It's bleeding but the wound isn't deep and there's nothing to remove. You have a number of cuts—oh, my! You've been—" She broke off in mid-sentence and blanched.

His ears rang from the effort to speak. "Knife wound. Groin. Deep. You'll have to cut my breeches off."

She hesitated only a moment. When she'd peeled his breeches away from his body, she stared down and grew still. It took him a moment to realize the problem. His manhood lay across the knife wound. He tried to shift his body but he hadn't the strength. He stared at Temperance through glazed eyes.

Temperance called for Lily, sounding more ominous than any sea captain he'd ever served under.

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

Lily clomped into the room and stared. “Fainted did ‘e? Never saw a one of ‘em could take pain—oh, my! Well, there’s a brute, if ever I saw one.” She sniggered, “Some woman’s gonna have an awful time with that one. Can ye just imagine what that would feel like?” She elbowed Temperance in the ribs and winked. “Just an awful time, if ye know what I mean. Well, what’re ye waitin’ for? Take hold of ‘im and move it on over so you can get at that wound.”

But Temperance had turned to stone.

Lilly reached down and made the necessary adjustment just as casual as if she were flicking dust from a shelf. “Man like that can’t help but make a woman remember her younger days.” Lily muttered as she left the room.

“Stitch it,” he grunted.

Temperance’s hand flew to her mouth. “You’re awake—I thought—but Matthew—I don’t know if I can! I’ve never sewn flesh—”

“Won’t heal if you don’t. Wash—pack with lint. Stitch. I trust you.” He fell back against the bed unable to stave off the dark pool of silence any longer.

“Matthew.”

He resisted her voice.

“Matthew, you must eat.”

He jerked awake. “How long?”

“Nearly four and twenty. You must eat to build up your strength.” Temperance plumped the pillows. “Just a few spoonfuls.”

Wincing against the pain, he forced himself to sit up.

She sat on the edge of the bed and dipped a spoon into a small crock. Too late, Matthew realized she intended to feed him. He opened his mouth to protest and closed it around a spoon full of broth.

“It’s been a long time since anyone took care of you, Matthew. It shows.” She fed him another spoonful. “Where would we be without you, I wonder? Yet again, all these years later you’ve provided a service which we can’t possibly ever repay. We remain forever in your debt.”

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

“Abby?” he rasped.

Temperance fed him more broth. “She’s begun to heal, although I have some concern about her head wound.”

Instantly alert he fired off, “The abrasions? Infection? Does she show signs of incoherence?” He lay back exhausted.

Temperance set the bowl aside. “That’s enough for now. Sleep. You’re under our protection.”

“Nay, I shouldn’t be here. The *Chanterie* is leaving. You are delayed.”

“Hush. The gentleman in you will kindly be gracious enough to do as I say.”

Abby awakened famished but her body felt as if it couldn’t uncoil, as though someone had taken a rake and dragged it repeatedly over her. She hobbled to the mirror, and sank against the dresser, horrified. Battered body, tangled hair possibly beyond repair, and bent over like an old crone to keep her skin from splitting around her wounds, she wondered if she’d ever be the same. Her head raged, her shoulder was stiff, her arm was wrapped and immobile, but her vanity sustained the greatest wound as she examined her face. Ordinarily she didn’t think of herself as vain, but she found the prospect of never being pretty again, daunting.

“I thought I heard you up.” Her mother came into the room. “Some of your wounds are festering. They need to be scrubbed and treated again. Let’s get you back to bed.”

She spoke quietly, smoothing onycha oil and lavender deftly into Abby’s wounds. “You slept through your eighteenth birthday. Happy birthday, daughter.”

“But we were to sail for England on my birthday. I’ve ruined everything.”

“Nay, child, you ruined nothing. Your father and Giles have gone ahead on the *Chanterie*. There’s so much to arrange in England before sailing on to the new land, and they’re not needed here.”

“Giles went with him?”

“Aye. Giles will be a great help to your father.”

“And MaryPeace?”

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

MaryPeace came into the room carrying fresh smelling bedclothes. “I am here, sister. I returned just this morning and regret that I was away saying my farewells when you were injured.”

“Thank you MaryPeace. That will be all for now. Close the door behind you, please.”

Her mother turned back to Abby. “We’ll sail to England as soon as you’re able. A fortnight, I should think.”

“Unaccompanied?”

“Of course not. Matthew Rockwood—the man who helped you—is already recovered enough to go about his business. He’s agreed to accompany us to England, after which, he’ll return here to Delfshaven.”

“He’s not going on to America with us?”

Her mother’s eyes flickered. “No Abby, he is most definitely not.”

Lily brought a crock of soup made of beaten egg, barley and emmer gruel, sniffing loudly, “Nothin’ good can come of this. See what’s already happened? What do ye want to go traipsin’ off to some wilderness across the sea where wild animals and wild men—one or t’other will eat your liver.” She shook her head and left.

Abby settled into her bed grateful for its comfort but screwed up her face at the first taste of soup aware that her mother wouldn’t stop until she’d eaten it all.

Between spoonfuls, her mother said, “Tell me what happened. Another vision?”

Abby nodded.

“When it happens again, if I’m not around, you’ll tell your father to find me, no matter where I am.”

“Father knows?”

Her mother sighed. “Aye, he knows about the gift. In the days when your Great Grandmother Glennon still lived, your father had many occasions to see what the gift could do—and the many complications that can result.”

“Like what?”

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

Temperance continued as if she hadn't heard the question. "After she passed, we thought that chapter of our lives had closed."

"But what of my sisters?"

Her mother smoothed the rich strands of hair from her face "When your eldest sister Anna was born no one thought I would ever be able to have another child. In a vision, your great grandmother Glennon saw that the gift had not been passed on to her. Your father and I considered ourselves fortunate."

"But why?"

Still not answering, Temperance continued, "Then God saw fit to give us more children. When your sisters came, each pregnancy was a slow dance with death, and none of them had the gift, either. And then, so many years later, you were conceived. Your father was frightened when I told him. It had been so long between babies. MaryPeace was nearly ten. But I had no fear, Abby. You were joyful even in the womb. I knew it would be different with you. Yet that joy has not been without dread. For eighteen years I've been afraid you'd be like your great grandmother."

"But you knew I was—she told you I had the gift."

"Aye, and I prayed it would be more like mine."

"How do you know it's not?"

"Because when you had this last vision, I saw some of what you saw."

"You and I had the same vision?"

"Nay, child. The vision was yours. I only saw enough to know that the strength of your visions is so much greater than mine—and to know that you were in trouble—but I had no idea where you were. I rushed home hoping to find myself wrong. But now we must prepare so that we're ready for the next one."

Abby pushed the last spoonful of soup away. "No more," she pleaded.

Her mother relented and set the bowl down. "This makes your third vision. Tell me about it."

"But you saw it."

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

“I only saw fragments.”

“At first it was so real, I didn’t know it was a vision. There was a blinding light—I couldn’t see. I thought my head would split open. After awhile, I could see, but the images still floated above me, as if there were two worlds—me in my bedroom and me in the shack with the lion-man. Mother, why would I have a vision about the lion-man?”

Her mother almost smiled. “Is that how you think of him? He is rather lion-like.”

“But I don’t even know him.”

Her mother’s eyes darkened. “*You* don’t know him, but your father and I have known him a long time.”

“Why would someone want to hurt a friend of yours?”

Temperance placed a finger lightly over her daughter’s lips. “What’s most important is that you understand you are never to go off on your own again. If I’m not around, you must tell your father to find me at once. There is no need to mention the gift. He will understand.”

“But—”

“Don’t interrupt, daughter. I know that I said you must use the gift for the benefit of others. I’m certain this led you to believe that you were responsible for helping Matthew. But you are never to act on a vision again, without my knowledge.” Temperance gripped Abby briefly in an uncustomary hug. “You could have been killed.”

Never before had her mother spoken to her this sternly.

“In time, you’ll learn to manage the gift, and recognize when a vision is about to happen. There will be other things to manage about the gift as well.” She hesitated as if she intended to say more but thought better of it. “We’ve talked of this long enough today. And not a word to anyone. You may speak of these things only to me.”

“Aye, Mother.” Her eyes drooped. “Why am I so tired?”

“It’s the injury to your head. Rest now. As soon as you’re able we’ll open your birthday presents. Sleep well, my angel.”

Abby jerked wide awake. My angel? *Mon ange*? A flood-like heat overtook her as she remembered the way the lion-man held her, his naked torso a protective shield, and the complexity of his voice when he called her *mon ange de la lumiere*.

Author



Rebecca E. Grant

Love is Unstoppable

“Mother, you said the lion-man is a friend. Why haven’t I ever met him?”

Abby watched as any number of expressions shaded her mother’s face. At last she said quietly, “Mayhap we’ll speak of it later.”

He’d been dreaming. It was always the same dream. No matter what he did, it came out the same—he always ended up on the wrong end of the verdict. The dream left him feeling melancholy, sometimes for days.

Matthew stretched the length of his body noting his bed wasn’t nearly as comfortable as the one he’d slept in at the Faxons’ and carefully assessed his progress. Everything seemed to be in working order. A sling on his right arm protected his shoulder. He slid his free hand behind his head and looked down at the stitches so close to his groin. Temperance had managed well. He sank back and stared up at the ceiling.

How would he ever stay away from them, now? With those hired killers still after him, Delfshaven was no longer safe. He’d have to move on. America made the most sense. He’d have a clean slate. They needed doctors desperately. His medical credentials would never be questioned.

He made up his mind. Faxon had contracted two ships for the voyage from England to America. Matthew would book passage on whichever ship the Faxons weren’t on. In this way, he’d keep his distance—something he absolutely had to do until he knew he was free and no longer a threat to their safety—yet remain close by, just in case.

He sighed. At long last he was about to leave the nightmare of the last ten years behind.