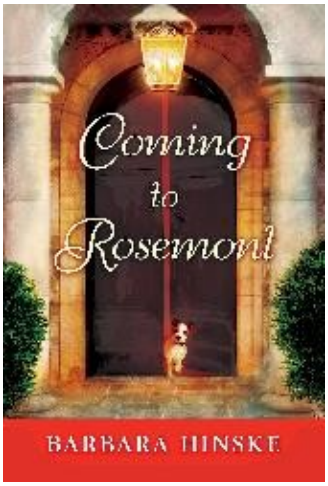
Coming to Rosemont

By : BarbaraHinske

Forensic accountant Maggie Martin survives the sudden death of her husband, the charismatic President of Windsor College, only to uncover the secrets of his carefully-concealed double life. Dealing with the financial and emotional wreckage left in Paul's wake, she is stunned to learn he inherited an estate known as Rosemont in the seemingly-serene Midwestern town of Westbury. Why had he never told her? Maggie travels to Westbury for the stated purpose of listing Rosemont for immediate sale, but what she really seeks are answers to her all-consuming questions about her sham of a marriage; her sham of a life. She never anticipated the seductive charm of Rosemont. Throwing her trademark caution to the wind, and over the objections of her opinionated grown children, she pulls up stakes and moves halfway across the country, determined to make a fresh start in Westbury. Behind closed doors, however, lurks a cadre of evildoers, playing with multiple wild cards of fraud, embezzlement and arson. With a quiet, orderly -- and distinctively solitary -- life in mind, Maggie is instead thrown headlong into a crusade against political corruption, where defeat and retreat are not an option. Still bearing the scars of betrayal, will she find joy, romance and possibility in Westbury? This fast-paced, smart novel has enough twists and turns to make the reader want to buckle in! Coming to Rosemont is the first book in the Rosemont series.



Published on
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Maggieâ s flight arrived late and she hurried to the rental car company. She was relieved that there was no line and she was able to walk right up to the counter. Her hopes of getting on her way quickly, however, were dashed by an agent in a talkative mood. He didnâ t take the hint from Maggieâ s clipped answers that she was in a hurry. She did her best to act with patience she didnâ t feel, and snatched the keys from his hands when he finally held them out to her. She firmly declined his offer to review the features of the car and headed to the lot at a trot.

If she made really good time, she would get to the Westbury Animal Hospital in time to pick up Eve. Maggie was anxious to see her new companion and was equally as anxious to avoid a night at Rosemont alone. She called the Hospital from the car and said she was on her way but might be a few minutes late. The young man told her that he had to leave on time that night but that Dr. Allen was usually there for a while after closing and would probably let her pick up her pet. He promised to let Dr. Allen know she was on her way.

Maggie concentrated on the drive. This was no time to miss her exit. She arrived in the parking lot at twenty minutes after six. The lot was empty and her heart sank. She stumbled as she hurried to the door and it was flung open, and an ecstatic Eve bounded out to greet her.

Maggie dropped to her knees and threw her arms around the squirming dog. â You donâ t know how much I appreciate being able to have Eve with me tonight,â she beamed up at John. â My flight was delayed and I had a Chatty-Cathy car rental agent. I drove like a maniac to get here. Iâ m really very grateful you waited. The lot was empty and I thought that I was too late.â

â It was no trouble. I was catching up on paperwork,â John assured her. â I live on the other side of the Square and walk to work, weather permitting. I usually stop at one of the restaurants on the way home for dinner.â

â Are you done? Would you like a lift home?â

John knew an opportunity when he saw one. â I just need to lock up,â he said. â Are you hungry? Or are you full of delicious airline food,â he mocked. When she shook her head and indicated that she was, indeed, starved, he proposed that the three of them walk over to Peteâ s for dinner. They could leave her car at the Hospital and she could drop him off at his house after dinner.

Pete tucked the three of them into a cozy table by the window. Only a handful of the other tables were occupied, but Pete was doing a robust weeknight takeout business. The special was old-fashioned baked ziti with homemade bread and a salad. A sign announced that customers could add Lauraâ s pie of the day â which today was blueberry â for five dollars more. â I wish I could have fed my family at Peteâ s when my kids were little,â Maggie idly mused.

John helped Maggie out of her coat and she relaxed back into her chair. Eve curled up at their feet. She ordered rainbow trout and a house salad. John opted for salmon on a cedar plank and a cup of homemade vegetable soup. While they waited for their food, Maggie filled John in on her preliminary conclusions from her review of the bank statements.

John whistled softly. â Weâ ve got trouble in River City, thatâ s for sure,â he said. â I know a pretty fair percentage of the people in this Town,â he continued. â Hard-working, decent people who take care of their families, their homes and their neighbors. Give-you-the-shirt-off-of-their backs kind of folks. We canâ t let a few crooks ruin what so many have worked so hard for. I wonâ t stand by and let that happen.â

â Iâ m looking forward to getting together with the committee again. Iâ m sorry that the subject is so dire, but itâ s helping me meet people and makes me feel useful,â she added. John considered this silently.

â I was always so busy helping Paul with the social obligations of his job,â Maggie resumed. â We had something on the calendar almost every night of the week. Paul used to say that if they gave awards for best supporting actress in real life, I would win hands down.â As she said this, Maggie realized that Paul hadnâ t said that for many years. And she wasnâ t so sure that being the best supporting actress in someone elseâ s life was such a compliment, anyway. Maybe she was just a really good doormat. She shifted uncomfortably and continued, â After Paulâ s death, all that stopped. The college got a new President and he and his wife took over. Iâ ve been feeling adrift. I have a lot of energy and have time on my hands. Tonya Holmes really impressed me. Iâ m looking forward to helping her.â

John smiled. â So tell me more about this mysterious Maggie Martin thatâ s just blown into town.â

â Believe me â I am not the least bit mysterious,â she replied with a laugh. She told him about her education, her consulting business, her kids, and her childhood. He kept her talking through the main course and into the piece of blueberry pie they agreed to split. His question about what she liked to do for fun caused her to pause. â You know, Iâ m not sure.â She smiled ruefully. â Most of our free time was focused on activities connected with the college. Iâ m not really sure that I enjoyed a whole lot of it. I was too involved in the doing of it all,â she admitted.

John looked into her eyes and waited patiently for her to continue. â To be honest, Iâ m glad to be making a fresh start in Westbury,â she said. â I didnâ t feel at home last week in California. My only second thoughts are about leaving my granddaughters. But Iâ ll be back on business regularly and will see them almost as much as I ever did. I guess that should tell me something. Shouldnâ t it be hard to turn your back on a life youâ ve spent more than twenty years living?â she asked with a shrug.

â Iâ ve monopolized the whole conversation,â she continued apologetically. â Iâ ve been around self-absorbed people my whole life, who do just that. I positively hate it. And now Iâ ve done it! Iâ d like to know more about you, John,â she said. â Were you born and raised here?â

John looked at his watch as he snatched the check from Pete. â Iâ d be happy to tell you about myself, but itâ s getting late. I think that discussion will have to wait. How about we do something Saturday night?â he asked. â Maybe itâ s time you found out what you like to do for fun? Is there anything that comes to mind, or do you want me to surprise you?â he asked.

Incredibly, she heard herself accepting in a voice that sounded absolutely giddy. â Surprise me,â she added, to her further astonishment. Maggie barely paid attention to their conversation as they strolled through the cold night to collect her car. Her mind was racing as she realized that she had accepted her first date in more than twenty years.

Barbara Hinske is a practicing attorney who inherited the fiction-writing gene from her father. She began her career as an industrial engineer, but found her true passion in the law. She has two grown children with her exceedingly kind and good second husband, who died of cancer in 2006. Lucky in love, Barb married another exceptional man and father of two in 2010, and they live in their own Rosemont with two adorable and spoiled dogs.

Learn more at www.barbarahinske.com.

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