

THE UNEXPLAINED POPULARITY OF PREGNANT PROTAGONISTS by Lynne Marshall

The following is a recap of a blog I wrote for the Medical Romance authors, **Love is the Best Medicine**. At the end, I've added several of the reader comments from that blog, which help explain the pregnant protagonist's popularity.

Sometimes I chuckle about the high incidence of pregnant heroines in our category romances, especially in my line at [Harlequin Mills and Boon Medical Romance](#). Being medical professionals, shouldn't they know better about birth control? As an author and a woman who believes in taking charge of my body, I scratch my head over the apparent popularity of the unsuspecting pregnant heroine.



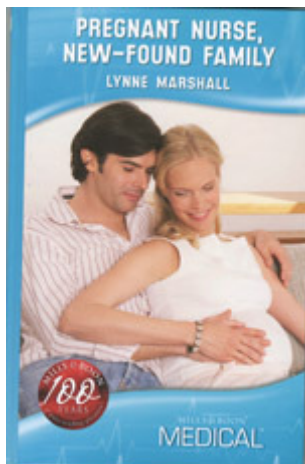
Nevertheless, pregnant characters remain in high demand. Perhaps it is the seemingly vulnerable state of a pregnant woman which calls out for a partner to help care for the future mother and child. Or the intense emotions that memories of our own pregnancies evoke for the readers. I'll never, ever forget the wonder of being "with child." I can only imagine the heady feeling of being pregnant AND falling in love at the same time, which frequently happens in our stories. It's a tricky process, for sure, and one written beautifully over and over by all of the [HMB Medical Romance authors](#).



Browsing through my own Medical Romance collection, as well as on the Mills and Boon and Harlequin websites, I've found these recent representative titles: *The Midwife's Baby* by Fiona McArthur, *Top-Notch Surgeon, Pregnant Nurse*, by Amy Andrews, *The Doctor's Pregnancy Bombshell* by Janice Lynn, *The Doctor's Royal Love-Child* by Kate Hardy, *The Sheikh Surgeon's Baby* by Meredith Webber, *The Italian Count's Baby* by Amy Andrews, *His Pregnant Nurse* by Laura Iding, and *Pregnant Nurse, New-Found Family* by me, [Lynne Marshall](#)! Each and every one takes a different twist or turn with a familiar plot point.

One of the toughest pregnant heroine plotlines to make believable is the woman pregnant with another man's baby, yet who manages to get the hero to fall in love with her anyway. This topic was handled beautifully in Fiona Lowe's debut novel, *Pregnant on Arrival*, as one example.

I come from an age when we used to suspect women of tricking men into marrying them by getting pregnant. Those same women soon found out that the "trick" turned into a long shot and often they'd wind up alone with a baby. As women's lib evolved women began choosing to get pregnant on their own, and sometimes men became reduced to sperm donors. Though realistic, neither of these premises generally works for the romance genre. In my debut novel *Her Baby's Secret Father*, I had the heroine pregnant from a sperm bank, and the way I worked around the hero caring for another man's baby was by involving him medically with the preemie's care, then later in the book revealing that he was the donor/father.



In my current release, *Pregnant Nurse, New-Found Family*, the usually chaste heroine is pregnant after one reckless night with the hero. She intends to have and care for the baby alone, but the story wouldn't be very romantic if I let her get away with that, would it? Rest assured I didn't.

As you can see, we Medical Romance authors must find innovative yet plausible storylines to have knowledgeable medical professionals get pregnant by accident. No matter how elaborate our plot, the bottom line is the pregnancy is a surprise! And a wonderful surprise it is, for who can resist the promise of a baby? And because the readers love them, we promise to keep writing pregnant heroine books!



Hottest Pregnant Women

Popular pregnant protagonists explained by reader comments.

“It’s heartwarming to have a man find a woman sexy when she’s pregnant because it’s the last thing she feels.”

“The pregnancy forces the hero and heroine to explore deeper situations much faster.”

“I like it when guys are excited about becoming dads.”

“It’s heartwarming to read about a guy wholeheartedly committed to a pregnant woman.”

One reader liked the challenge of how the author gets the hero and heroine to fall for each other under the circumstances. “Especially to love a woman **not** carrying his child.”

“The story is more emotional and the heroine has to become stronger faster!”

“We (the readers) get the fantasy of creating a family and getting the guy without all of the harsh realities.”

“The idea of creating a new life together is appealing. It’s fashionable, look at all the pregnancies in Hollywood.”

So I guess we’ve explained why the pregnant protagonist is popular, eh?

I don’t know about you, but I found some of these comments fascinating.

Until next month,

Lynne

who is wondering how she’ll manage to write another pregnant heroine for a future book...