



# The Hurricane Lover: a novel

*Joni Rodgers*

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## **The Hurricane Lover: a novel** Joni Rodgers

During the record-smashing hurricane season of 2005, a deadly game of cat and mouse unfolds and a stormy love affair is complicated by polarized politics, high-strung Southern families, a full-on media circus, and the worst disaster management goat screw in US history.

As Hurricane Katrina howls toward the ill-prepared city of New Orleans, Dr. Corbin Thibodeaux, a Gulf Coast climatologist and storm risk specialist, preaches the gospel of evacuation, weighed down by the fresh public memory of a spectacularly false alarm a year earlier. Meanwhile, Shay Hoovestahl, a puff piece reporter for the local news, stumbles on the story of a con artist who uses storm-related chaos as cover for identity theft and murder. Laying a trap to expose the killer, Shay drags Corbin into her agenda, which goes horribly awry as the city's infrastructure crumbles.

The Hurricane Lover is a fast-paced tale of two cities, two families, and two desperate people seeking shelter from the storm.

The author, a NYT bestselling ghostwriter living on the Gulf Coast, writes knowingly about the dramatic megastorms, weaving in authentic meteorology and riveting transcripts of actual emails sent and received by FEMA director Michael Brown (later released through the Freedom of Information Act.)

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## FROM TRISKELE BOOK BLOG

"The Hurricane Lover is the story of two former lovers from polar ends of the deep political divide who collide – sexually, emotionally and in every other way – as Hurricane Katrina rolls over New Orleans and a predatory serial killer called Queen Mab takes advantage the ensuing chaos.

Corbin is a meteorologist, one of the best hurricane forecasters around – a liberal, a Democrat and an alcoholic. Shay is a small-time TV presenter, fobbed off with stories about ice cream and Ziploc bags – a former beauty queen and daughter of a wealthy and influential Republican. He is on the trail of Katrina and she is on the trail of Queen Mab.

I have never been to Louisiana or to Texas (where part of the action takes place), nor have I ever lived through a hurricane. But there is a filmic quality to the writing that means that the book played out in my mind in a series of vivid images. Rodgers has an ear, too, for the rich language of the Louisiana: colourful, gutsy and laced with Old French.

Katrina, of course, provides a gift of a setting for any thriller. No one reading it can doubt that the jeopardy of the hurricane is real – no need here for writerly exaggeration. And Queen Mab is a frighteningly plausible killer – a modern take on an old nightmare, using the Internet to lure her victims into traps she baits with their own lusts.

Shay and Corbin have a chemistry that flies off the page. They are an impossible pairing, striking sparks off each other at every encounter, yet you find yourself rooting for them to find a way past their differences and be together, because they are also perfect for each other.

The book has an undoubted political edge. It's hard to miss the deep underlying anger at the woefully

inadequate response to the hurricane. It comes through in Corbin's railing against head-in-the-sand attitude of the authorities, and also in the verbatim reproduction, as chapter headings, of published emails to and from the Head of FEMA – the organisation charged with preparing for and coping with the disaster. Yet Rodgers avoids polemic by giving the 'opposition' their own rounded, sympathetic characters.

This is a powerful book that deserves to be read both for the yarn it spins and for the real-life story it uncovers.

Highly Recommended."

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