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Romance

Submerged
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Bethany House
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Set in Yancey, Alaska, *Submerged* is filled with action and mystery, engaging the reader from the first scene involving a dramatic plane crash and attempted rescue.

At the heart of this fast-paced narrative is a sweet love story between Cole and Bailey, two former high school sweethearts. Their brief relationship ended due to Bailey's infidelity, and they lost touch after graduation when Bailey moved to Oregon, where she immersed herself in the Christian faith, attempting to escape her past and reform her life. After completing a PhD in Russian history, an interest passed on from her beloved Aunt Agnes, by whom she was raised, she creates a new life for herself and becomes a respected member of the community as a college professor.

Believing she has left her destructive behavior and tarnished reputation behind her in Alaska for good, everything changes when Bailey is forced to return to her hometown after Agnes dies in a plane crash off the coast of Yancey. Intending to stay only a few days to handle the funeral arrangements and sell the store of Russian artifacts Agnes willed to her, Bailey's plans change when a series of events lead her to suspect Agnes's death may have been murder rather than an unfortunate accident. Bailey extends her trip indefinitely as she sets out to solve the mystery.

During her investigation, her life once again becomes entwined with Cole's. He was a member of the search-and-rescue team that responded to the scene after Agnes's plane crash, and he insists on helping Bailey uncover the clues. Cole and his brother and sisters quickly welcome Bailey back into their lives, and they become a surrogate family to her. As they all work together, old feelings resurface between Cole and Bailey when they realize they now share similar Christian beliefs, but Bailey doubts Cole will ever be able to forgive, or forget, her past indiscretions.

Pettry sustains a high level of suspense throughout the narrative, which has many

layers—including uncertainty over the outcome of Bailey and Cole's romantic relationship as well as a complex murder mystery. She fully engages readers in the lives of Bailey, Cole, and his siblings as they become amateur detectives and find themselves facing life-threatening situations.

Submerged will appeal to a wide audience, as it combines elements of romance, suspense, inspirational Christian, and historical fiction genres, providing something for nearly everyone.

Maria Siano