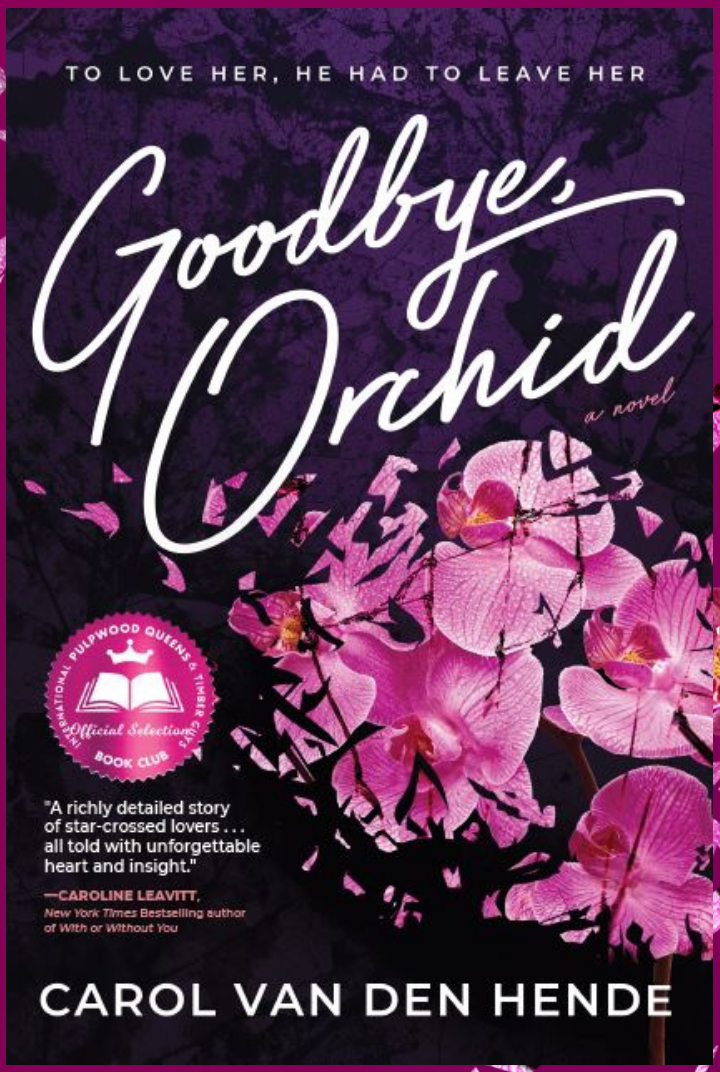
Goodbye, Orchid
Book Club Kit

What happens when an entrepreneur suffers an accident that changes him forever, and he has to decide: to love his woman, will he need to leave her?



Order this award-winning novel via QR code or visit linktr.ee/cvdh

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The opening chapter, in which Phoenix suffers an accident after leaving Orchid at the airport, begins the story at a critical juncture. What clues foreshadowed the difficulty Phoenix and Orchid would encounter after that?

2. The title *Goodbye, Orchid* is evocative and enigmatic. How does the theme of hellos and goodbyes echo throughout the story?

3. For most of Caleb's life, he often feels inferior to his twin. How does Phoenix's accident change Caleb's understanding of himself?

4. After the accident, Phoenix's stated rationale for leaving Orchid is to protect her. Later, when Caleb starts to advocate for Orchid, he asks his brother, "Who are you trying to protect? Her, or you?" Do you agree with Caleb that there are other reasons for Phoenix's refusal to see Orchid? Which ones are you most sympathetic to?

5. Orchid has lost a great deal in her early life—her parents' death, abandonment by her uncle. How do you think these experiences shaped her, and contributed to her drive?

6. Discuss the depiction of Phoenix and Caleb's relationship as twins. They've taken divergent career and life paths, yet in what ways are they alike?

7. What does the novel illuminate for you about adapting to a disability? How do you perceive Phoenix's experience after reading the whole book?

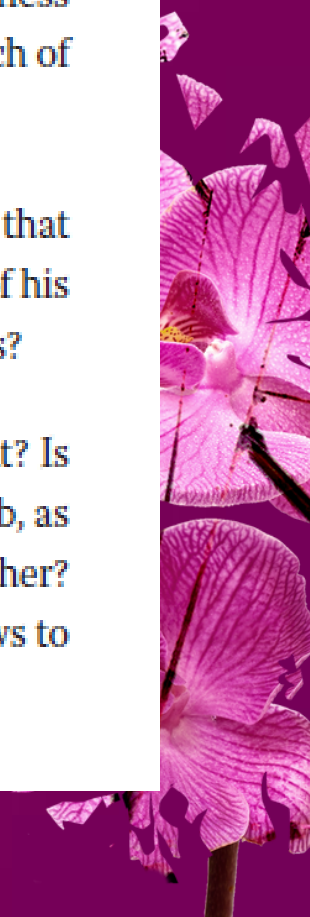
8. One key turning point in Phoenix's recovery is Caleb's surprise trip to Walter Reed Medical Center. How much did that visit change your perceptions of Phoenix's injuries?

9. After Phoenix returns to work, he meets and dates Rina. Did you root for them to stay together or break up, and why do you think that is?

10. Several people in Phoenix's life protect and care for him. For example, his mother Veronica, his assistant Liv, his business partner Dex, his brother's ex-girlfriend Sascha. How does each of them contribute to or hamper his recovery?

11. Phoenix ends up hurting the person he's trying to protect. Is that transgression forgivable? If so, is that because of the extent of his suffering? because his intentions are noble? Or other reasons?

12. Who grows the most as a result of dealing with the accident? Is it Phoenix, as he learns to relinquish his perfectionism? Caleb, as he accepts the weight of responsibility for helping his brother? Or Orchid, who overcomes her aversion to trauma, and grows to understand her hyper-sensitivity as empathy?



CAUTION: Spoiler Alerts

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13. After the initial shock of learning about Phoenix's accident, Orchid takes matters into her own hands. How do you feel about her decision to enlist Caleb's help, and the ways in which she tries to connect with Phoenix over their Easter weekend?

14. In the last scene of the novel at Tish's wedding, Phoenix tries to find the right moment to tell Orchid how he feels, while Orchid, believing this is goodbye, tries not to get swamped with emotion. How does each of their final actions reflect their love for one another? How does this affect your feelings about each of them?

About the Author:

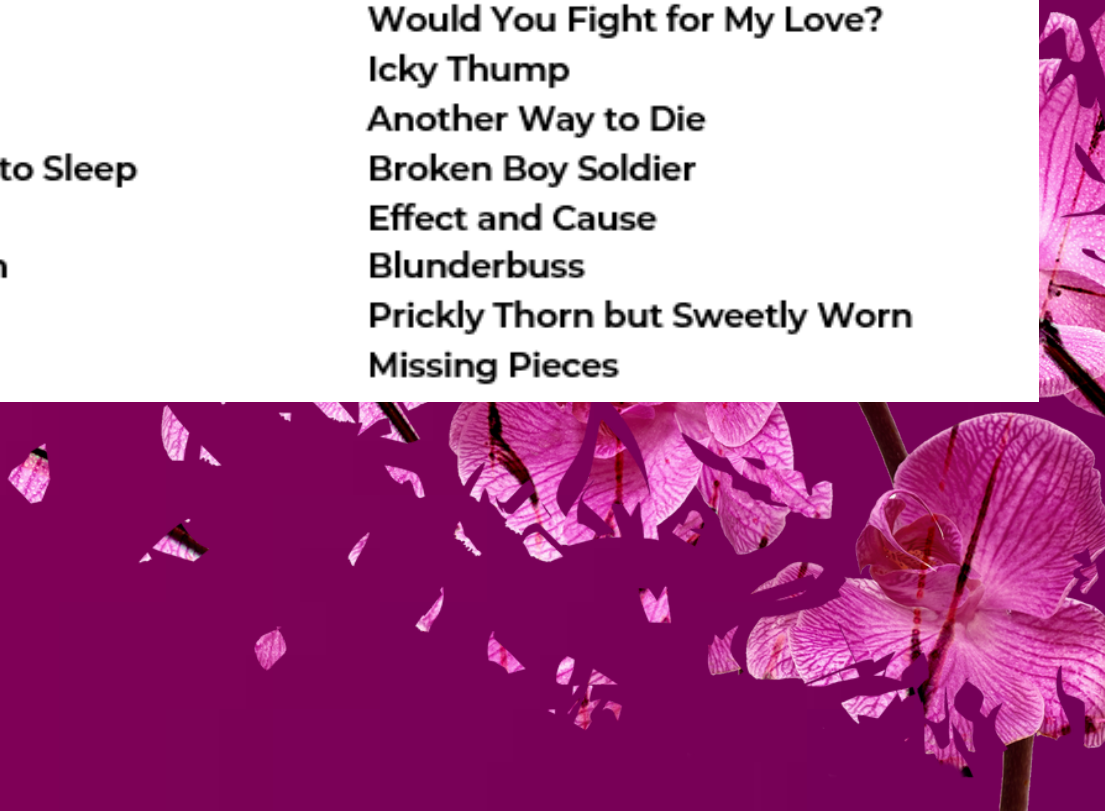
CAROL VAN DEN HENDE is the award-winning author of *Goodbye, Orchid,* which aims to inspire of empathy and hope. She's also a speaker, strategist, and serves on nonprofit boards.

One secret to her good fortune? Her humorous husband, fun-loving twins, and rescue cat, who prove that love really does conquer all.

Jack White, Raconteurs, White Stripes playlist

Temporary Ground
Many Shades of Black
In the Cold, Cold Night
Intimate Secretary
That Black Bat Licorice
I Can't Wait
The Air Near my Fingers
Dead Leaves and the Dirty Ground
Weep Themselves to Sleep
A Martyr for My Love for You
I Think I Found the Culprit
Black Math
Blue Veins
The Switch and the Spur
Store Bought Bones
Blue Orchid
There's No Home for You Here
The Denial Twist
Alone in my Home
Love Is Blindness
Catch Hell Blues
Call It a Day
Little Ghost
Want and Able
I Guess I Should Go to Sleep
Who's to Say
Salute Your Solution
I'm Shakin'
Hold Up

One More Cup of Coffee
Sixteen Saltines
Freedom at 21
Steady as She Goes
You Don't Know What Love Is
You Don't Understand Me
You've Got Her in Your Pocket
Bang, Bang
These Stones Will Shout
Trash Tongue Talker
Death Letter
Two Against One
It's True That We Love One Another
Girl, You Have No Faith in Medicine
Hypocritical Kiss
Seven Nation Army
Love, Interruption
Hip (Eponymous) Poor Boy
Yellow Sun
Lazaretto
Great High Mountain
Would You Fight for My Love?
Icky Thump
Another Way to Die
Broken Boy Soldier
Effect and Cause
Blunderbuss
Prickly Thorn but Sweetly Worn
Missing Pieces



Which party do you want to host?

Chapter 34: Y O U D O N ' T K N O W W H A T L O V E I S

Agency holiday shindig

- fresh figs with a triangle of brie
- curry samosas
- beef wellington in puff pastry
- tuna tartare on cucumber rounds
- vegetarian mini quiche
- vodka on the rocks

Chapter 45: H I P (E P O N Y M O U S) P O O R B O Y

Phoenix & Caleb lunch at counterAgency

- Breaded chicken, catfish po'boy, or meatball parm

Chapter 49: A N O T H E R W A Y T O D I E

Pre-Easter meal:

- Veggie lasagna with béchamel sauce
- white asparagus
- watercress soup
- champagne

Chapter 54: M I S S I N G P I E C E S

Tish & Tom's wedding:

- salmon filet
- buttered rolls
- chocolate Chambord cake
- Patron tequila
- bottles of Bud

Who would you cast as:

Phoenix

Orchid

Sascha

Caleb

PRAISE FOR

GOODBYE, ORCHID

"A richly detailed story of star-crossed lovers . . . all told with unforgettable heart and insight."

—CAROLINE LEAVITT, New York Times Bestselling author of *Pictures of You, Cruel Beautiful World* and *With or Without You*

"A book full of soul and heart about love, loss and redefining oneself. I adored this modern, important take on the power of love."

—KARIN TANABE, author of *A Hundred Suns*

"*Goodbye, Orchid* tugs at readers' heartstrings and takes us on an emotional roller-coaster ride through this serious romance, layered with trauma and lost love. The characters—including Phoenix's twin brother and friends—are richly drawn, and the themes are timeless. But it's the story that kept me turning those pages and hoping for a satisfying ending. Van Den Hende did not disappoint."

—SUSAN CUSHMAN, author of *Friends of the Library* and *Cherry Bomb*

"*Goodbye, Orchid* is a beautiful book, full of deep, thoughtful truths as well as hard-won wisdom for its protagonists. All the characters are richly drawn, and the author never shies away from showing us their flawed humanity. Their individualized and honest perspectives make the journeys as surprising as they are engaging."

—CHRIS KIPINIAK, actor, writer Marvel Comics, The *Truth* podcast, co-creator *BEHEMOTH*

"Ms. Van Den Hende tells a heart-pounding story of survival, resilience and true grit."

—InD'tale Magazine

"An inspiring and explosive novel that shows how two people confront the misperceptions in their lives."

—LARRY KIRSHBAUM, literary agent and publishing advisor

"As a combat decorated and wounded veteran, I was truly captivated by Carol's storytelling. Phoenix Walker captures the mindset, roller coaster and daily heroics of my experience after being injured. All around excellence."

—DOC JACOBS, Bronze Star with Valor and Purple Heart-decorated Navy Corpsman, CEO Doc Jacobs Foundation, author of *There and Back Again*

"In this most worthy novel, the protagonists' lives are shattered and they re-emerge champions, showing a true test of character. Phoenix is all of us, unconquerable until we're conquered. A tale of sacrifice and rebirth; heroism is in the details."

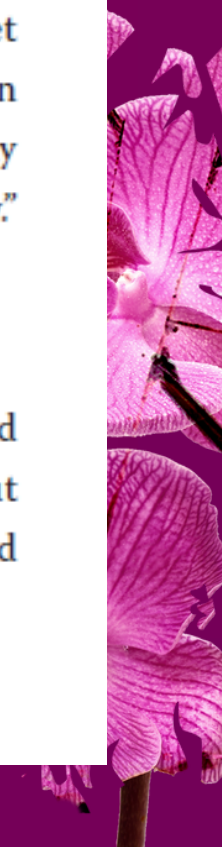
—SSGT AARON MICHAEL GRANT, author of *TAKING BAGHDAD: Victory in Iraq With the US Marines*

"Carol Van Den Hende has written a wonderful, heartbreaking yet heartwarming novel, perfect for our times. I couldn't put this book down and was captivated by the main character, CEO Phoenix Walker. I highly recommend reading *Goodbye, Orchid*, and sharing it with everyone you know."

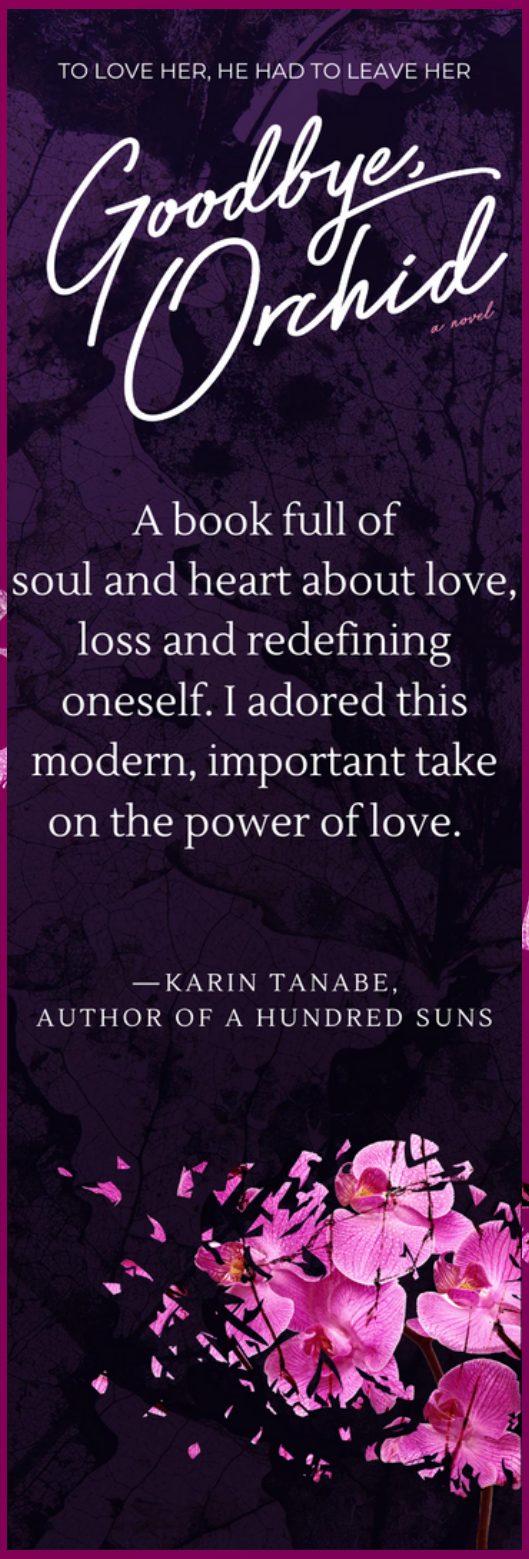
—MICHELE KESSLER, chief executive officer at REBBL Inc.

"A human drama that traverses every emotion, *Goodbye, Orchid* reminded me how life can change in a second. It's a beautifully written tale about the power of true love to overcome deep-seated misbeliefs. Phoenix and Orchid's story will forever live in my heart. Highly recommend!"

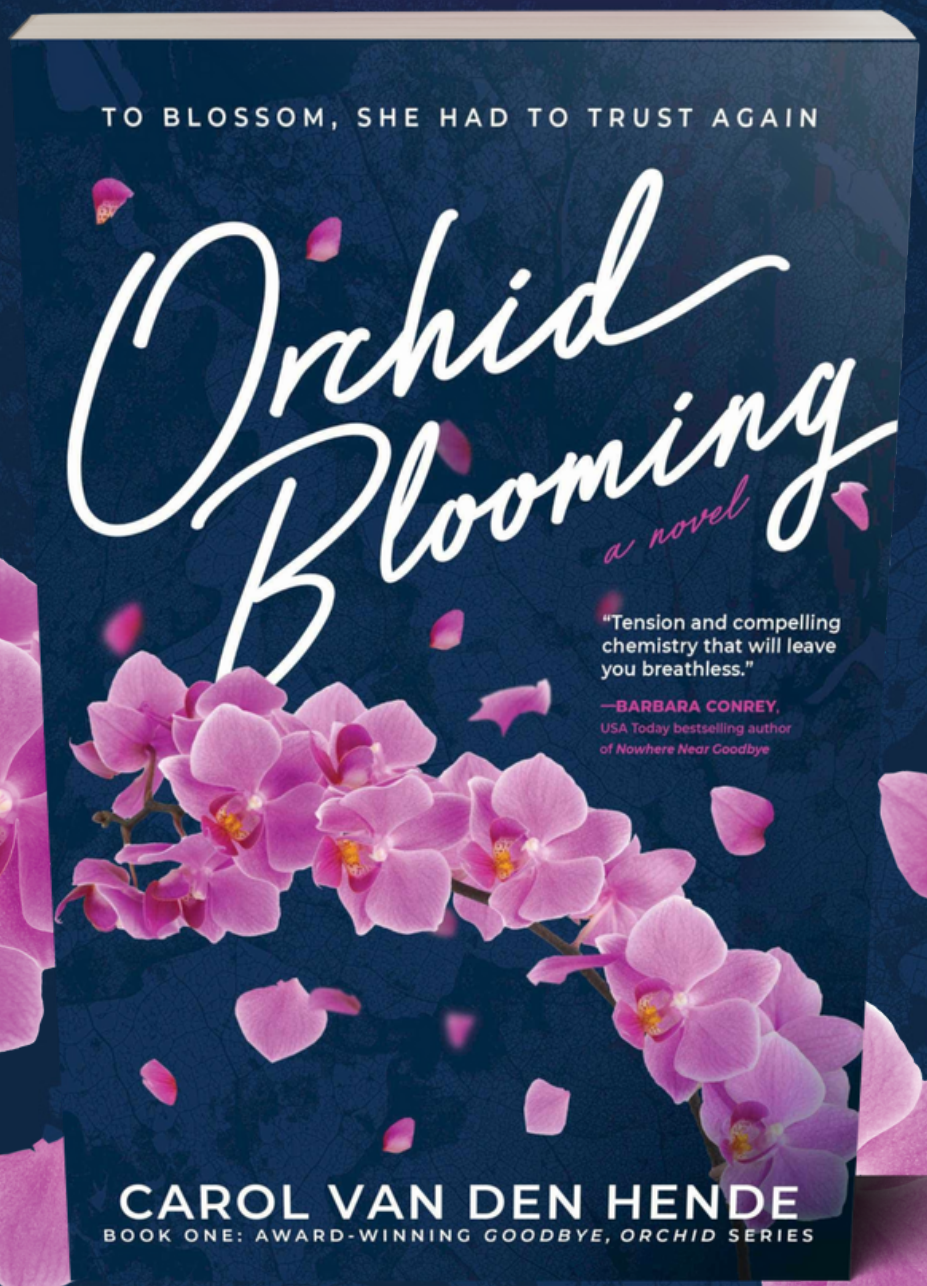
—GORDANA GEHLHAUSEN, *Project Runway* couture designer



Printable bookmarks



ALSO LOOK FOR ORCHID BLOOMING



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