



# Heart Secret

*Robin D. Owens*

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## **Heart Secret** Robin D. Owens

On the faraway planet Celta, there are some things you can never tell—until someone discovers your Heart Secret...

When a virulent disease killed the woman he loved and her baby, Garrett Primross was left alive, a reluctant survivor. Now, as a private eye, he strives to banish the memories of his past and rebuild his life. The Healers of Celta have something else in mind: Discover why he survived.

He is monitored by Healer Artemisia Panax—his HeartMate, a love he never pursued. Still mourning his loss, he refuses to acknowledge her. Since her family was publicly disgraced, she's used to such treatment. She wants nothing more than to guard her livelihood and protect the secrets she's sworn to keep.

Thrown together by duty, Garrett and Artemisia find the body of the last Black Magic Cultist who ruined her family. Suspicion flares, but they have little choice but to investigate the crime together. When their own lives are placed in danger, they realize that denying their HeartMates is only denying their own future.

## **Heart Secret Details**

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## From Reader Review Heart Secret for online ebook

(Tori-Smexybooks) smexys\_sidekick says

Originally posted at <http://smexybooks.com/2012/08/review-...>

Heart Secret (Celta's Heartmate #11) by Robin D. Owens

Sci-Fi/Fantasy/ Romance

August 7, 2012

Berkley Trade

Favorite Quote: "I'm a woman, with a woman's heart and feelings and needs. And since you can't provide what I need-I'll find someone who can."

Garrett Primross lost his way and his heart when his childhood love and her child died of Iasc syndrome-a deadly disease that swept through his community and destroyed everyone it touched. As the only survivor, Garrett carries around survivor's guilt that keeps him mired in grief and impedes his ability to heal. He has always known who his HeartMate was but doesn't want her in his life. The thought of loving anyone else and losing them is unbearable. When a young child contracts the deadly disease, the healers approach Garrett for help. They want his blood as it seems to have a natural immunity to the disease and they also want to infect him with the disease and study his recovery. Garrett dreads this intrusion in his life. He doesn't want to relive that time and he also doesn't want to be in close contact with his HeartMate

Artemisia Panax (Mugwort) and her family were falsely accused of dealing in black magic and were stripped of everything. Their family name, home, financials, and self-respect. She now works as a second level healer, barely tolerated by the great lady who runs the hospital. Artemisia has no idea who her HeartMate is but assumes when he is ready, he will reveal himself. Artemisia travels through life carefully. She cannot afford to lose her job nor reveal the secret of her parents whereabouts. When Garrett is approached by the healers, it is decided that she will be the one to go into quarantine with him and watch over him. Upon meeting Garrett, she senses his animosity but is unsure of its origins. She only wants to care for her patient and get out of the job alive.

As Garrett and Artemisia spend their days and nights together, the attraction builds strengthening their bond. A bond that Garrett doesn't want and does everything possible to sever. In one fateful moment, Garrett does the unthinkable and soon finds himself at a loss when the one person he thought he didn't want, no longer wants him.

Heart Secret, #11 in Ms. Owens's Celta's HeartMates series, is one of the few books of hers I have read that revolves almost entirely around the protagonists relationship and only gives us tiny interludes concerning life on the planet and the others who inhabit it. It is set up to be read as a stand alone and that in itself is unusual. This one, like the last one, also seems a bit darker and edgier than earlier installments. We are now firmly in the future and focusing on the second generation of Celtas. I like how basic human emotions and situations are slipped into the storyline, reminding us that this is more than just a sci fi fantasy. We are given an intimate view, from a personal standpoint, showing the selfish, the cruel, and the autocracy that permeates this world. Once again, not everyone is nice and Ms. Owen's shows their faces and lets their voices be heard.

The story introduces our protagonists and gives us background into their lives in order for us to understand why they are the way they are. Garrett, a private investigator, is a hard, solitary man with a chip on his shoulder concerning the nobles. He has suffered great personal loss and keeps the wound fresh and bleeding in his heart. He has a unique relationship with animals but seems to have a problem when relating to humans.

Artemisia, a healer, has also suffered a great loss but instead of going inward like Garrett, she accepted and dealt with her wounds. She is now attempting to make a life for herself and takes a distant family name to distance herself from her family's disgrace. I liked how Owens's uses Garrett's and Artemisia's tragedies to show how different they are in temperament and personality. Garrett sees himself as a man against society while Artemisia tries to blend in and be accepted once again.

The relationship between Garrett and Artemisia is rocky. Very rocky. As stated earlier, Garrett does not want his HeartMate. In his grief and despair, he feels that by accepting his heartmate he will forget his first love. This translates into some severe misunderstandings and hurt feelings as Garrett finds himself fighting an attraction to Artemisia and taking it out on her. On many/several occasions, he is cruel and thoughtless, so wrapped up in his own grief, and I found myself wanting to smack him quite a few times. Their bond is strong though and we see many helping hands try and lead Garrett where he needs to go. Theirs is an emotional journey that is painful to watch.

The mystery and romance of the story blend well and play off each other nicely. The characters are all well developed and add depth and a sense of continuation to the arc of the story. We see some old faces and references from previous installments are made, adding a sense of continuous to the series. We also meet some very interesting new ones, which expands the world building and arc. I have always loved the fam storyline and Ms. Owens's continues to never disappoint. They are wonderfully three dimensional and add humor to the story.

The ending comes at you fast as the multiple story lines merge to form a finale that satisfies but left me feeling somewhat deflated. While I enjoyed the story, I did feel some things weren't addressed that should have been as well as issues that were unresolved. Regardless, I always enjoy visiting Ms. Owens futuristic world as her Heartmates always bring a wealth of magic and romance to the table.

Overall Rating: C+

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### **Melindeeloo says**

3.5 stars - Review to come but ... I liked Heart Secret - even though it pretty much had the heart of a short story and despite the fact that the leading man had some real jerk moments though - which the heroine forgave fairly easily. And I thought that there were loose ends to the story too - but I can see that if the next book stars the sister of the leading lady, some of those might get tied off there. There were lots of fam animals though which was fun.

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### **Jacqueline says**

This one was pretty good. The romance element was stronger here than in the last Celta book that I read. Plus the book stayed pretty focused on the main couple. The hero was interesting in his torment over events in his past. The heroine was a good match for him being quiet and serene. I just gritted my teeth though the sentient animal parts which I never enjoy in any book. It's fun seeing this series progress and how the second generation is coming on now. The author keeps finding new ways to tell the heart mate story and new ways to have her characters react to it.

## **Jen says**

Worth reading but not her best work.

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## **C.A. Szarek says**

Okay so I love the world of Celta and I always have. But this one was a bit slow-moving for me. And then the end seemed a bit rushed. The romance did the opposite spectrum thing for me--it was too slow and then it was too fast. I did like the book. Garrett was hot and the sex good like Robin's always is. I am having a hard time with being so far in the future from the other books. 15 years is a big jump even though this is the second of the series to be this far forward. I would've preferred that we stayed where we were in the timeline. But I'm hooked on Celta so I will just patiently-or not so patiently-wait for the next book I really hope this isn't the last one.

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## **Elke says**

Paranormal, Fantasy, Romance, Scyfy, Magic

**MUST READ.**

there are just too many great things to say about this book. so read it and you will know that it was the best decision you made this year.

Do you want to leave Earth,, but stay with humans? Then you want to go to Celta.

Are you a wandering soul? Then you want to go to Celta.

Do you believe in Magic? Then you want to go to Celta.

Need I go on?

**READ THE SERIES!!!**

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## **Laura (Kyahgirl) says**

4/5; 4 stars; A-

I enjoyed this story and it was good to see more characters that hadn't been featured much in other books of the series. Balmheal residence played a role, as did TQ. I thought Ura Heather a great hag in this story...hopefully she will get her comeuppance in a future story.

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## **E\_bookpushers says**

Love this series. Love Owens' voice. As this world continues to expand I get to see new glimpses. I also like how Owens circles back and includes characters who were introduced in early books. Seeing how they have changed and matured so they could be ready for their Heart Mates is great. I also like the inclusion of the new Fam species and the complex role they continue to play. It is great that 11 books in I continue to find

them just as refreshing and enjoyable as the first one.

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## Sworthen says

I still really like the overall worldbuilding of this series, but am minorly frustrated by the way the non-romance plot arcs are subordinate to the romance arc to the point of non-resolution. I was really hoping for a less off-hand resolution to the Healing Hall plot than was given.

(Also, excuses are given for the lack of Heart Gifts - but is that why the protagonists didn't have secondary flairs for hobbies in this book? Or is it that the world is too large to include what used to be standard features in this series, i.e. secondary flair-based hobbies?)

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## Lady Lioness says

**July 23, 2013:** Just finished this and now I get to start [Heart Fortune](#). I felt like I could probably skip this one and jump right to [Fortune](#), but I didn't want to take the risk of not having some crucial detail fresh in my memory. I freaking can't wait to start [Fortune](#), my lunch hour can't come soon enough!

**July 4, 2012:** I finished this book around 8pm last night and I'm still wrestling with how to write this review. I was all, 'Well, this is the part that I keep thinking about, but it's kind of a spoiler so I can't mention that,' and 'Well, the hero said this, but, no, that's a spoiler too.' I will tell you that a new Fam species get introduced and (this will date me), I immediately thought of the Care Bear Cousins.

I also keep going back and forth on whether this could be a stand-alone. On the one hand, it's pretty self-contained. This is the first book that doesn't really involve the FirstFamilies. Artemisia is technically a noble, but she's been disgraced. Therefore, you really only need passing familiarity with Celta's culture and social structure to understand the book. On the other, Owens has woven the book into Celta's history and it refers to events from [Heart Mate](#), [Heart Quest](#), [Heart Dance](#), [Heart Fate](#), [Heart Journey](#), the "Noble Heart" novella from [Hearts and Swords](#), and, most importantly, [Heart Search](#). Which, now that I look at the list, is about half of the books in the series.

This is one of the things I love about the Celta series, how everything's connected to each other. There's continuity and an event that takes place in book five can cause ripples that will affect book eleven. I love being able to see couples from previous books, of seeing their children grow up. Owens jumped into the future with [Heart Search](#) and continues advancing the series in [Heart Secret](#). The denizens of Celta are so conscious of how precarious their hold onto this planet is and they are fixated on the idea of leaving a piece of themselves behind for future generations.

That need for remembrance factors heavily in [Heart Secret](#). Garrett is very conflicted between his desire to avoid human ties and his need to have something of himself left behind. He was the sole survivor of a virulent epidemic, forced to watch his community die around him. That's a devastating thing for a man with a protective nature to experience.

The other main theme is the idea of letting go of the past. The scandal that affected her family has harmed Artemisia professionally. She is continually fighting against public opinion in order to achieve her goals. Being HeartMate to a man like Garrett isn't easy, given how tied he is to the past, and she is forced to

perpetually straddle looking back & moving forward.

Overall, I enjoyed the book. There were some weak points and a few things that I felt were lost in the shuffle. For me, this was a bridge book, gently easing us from the time jump in Heart Search into the future. The second generation has hit adulthood and they're going to start making their mark on Celta.

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## Jennifer says

I really want to know why Ura Heather has a job as the highest healer, when she's unethical, mean, lacks empathy, and doesn't seem intelligent. How is she the daughter of kind T'Heather? If the fams sending energy helped Garrett to survive, doesn't that need to be factored into the experiment? Why are healers so status conscious? Typically they are the least because they see humans in all forms of sickness, which is the great equalizer.

What is wrong with their society that the use of one common herb (among many) of a totally unrelated cult causes their peers to be able to strip a family of rank, employment, home, and nearly life? And if the FirstFamilies didn't approve it, why do they act as if the Mugworts were guilty? Even after they are cleared by the guard (planted evidence, really?), zero restitution was made and they are still treated like pariahs. Not to mention that the cult wasn't exactly a fearsome thing that would whip up a mob. In that book only a few people knew about the murders, the majority weren't affected at all (4 total murders, 2 of which were unknown to be unnatural deaths by the public until later), and then they caught the bad people - did the Families of the perpetrators also get hounded? Apparently not, since the Eryngo family is ok despite some decline in status. Even Sedway only suffered socially, and HER best friend was the cult leader, she was friends with another 2, AND she helped them cart their rituals (albeit unknowingly - if your friends become interested in eating fresh human hearts, beware). Then the victim in this book is one of the most hated men, with many people expressing their happiness at his death and not caring who did it (T'Blackthorn refused to track the murderer!), but they still treat Artemesia with suspicion and crappy attitudes for no reason (hello, ironclad alibi!). At the end, the murderer is even lauded as heroic and discreetly supported! Ok, I could stretch a point to say that she was doing the world a favor, but then she stabbed the raccoon for taking the knife, which was cruel and dumb since the reason she was angry was because she was looking for the knife. Now it's still not by the body...and she framed the cross folk AGAIN as if there wasn't enough damage done before. Obviously there are deeper issues here.

Isn't Gwydion around 17 in Heart Sight? How is he 14 here when Vinni is a teenager in this book but will be 32 in Heart Sight? For that matter, more importantly, Artemesia was 16 in Heart Fate, so saying she experienced Passage at 17 in a strange place where she couldn't release full Flair is incorrect. Gracelord Sorrel is "elderly," but his daughter was young 16 years prior and these people live around 200 years.

The Heartmate thing makes less sense the longer the series goes on. What about being told you are a Heartmate takes away your free choice? You can still refuse the Heartbond. In Heart Journey Del says that she can claim Raz as Heartmate because he kept her Heartgift. Is this an automatic marriage without consent? And the main religion - it's a duality, but there are multiple goddesses?

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## **Meril says**

Mind rape (which is forgiven) and stereotypical crazy villain: no thanks. Only finished due to getting more details on the world that will probably come up in the next book. I'm so disappointed.

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## **Deanna Roberts says**

OK. Robin D. Owens is on MY must have shelf. Amazon gets pre-orders from me every time I see one of her books.

I love the Celta world. Now, mind you, I am a SAP of the highest order, but these books go far beyond the typical romance books.

I love that they all have elements of romance, elements of suspense and intrigue, and just elements of all around fun. The familiars in this world just make me love not only the author all the more, but make me love Celta as a favorite series.

Thank you ma'am. You make my day!

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## **Estara says**

While I enjoyed revisiting Celta and seeing more about the interactions of the residences, especially the visit to the slowly awakening residence that was featured previously, the one without its own family - and more about how the oldest healer grove of Celta functions, I thought the story and specifically my empathy towards the hero Garrett really suffered when he was so idiotic as to take his grief out on his heartmate, whom he was aware of but had never gone after.

She simply forgave him too fast. It is shown that she is the peacemaker in her own family usually as well, but I really do not like having to see a man angst about (even when he has a reason) and be changed through the patience of a long-suffering woman. I much preferred Heart Journey in that regard. The fact that she was being bullied by the number one healer of Celta (how did that bloody woman even get that job if it asks for emotional empathy as well) because of rumors about her family didn't help. Or the fairly easy to deduct connection between Christianity and the Cross religion that no one except Artemisia's mum in this book seems to appreciate.

On the other hand it was nice that there was no question that Garrett would have to move to the healing grove and Artemisia would eventually inherit the care-taking there.

And while the prominence of fams actually made sense in the use that Garrett puts them to, I think they are being overused by now.

It was nice to see previous characters interact though, and they never stole the limelight. I have hopes for future couples.

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## Barb Lie says

Heart Secret is the latest book of Robin Owens' Heart Mate series, and it is the 11th book. I have really enjoyed this series, and Heart Secret continues the wonderful journey in the world of Celta. The destined mates in this book is Garrett Primross and Artemesia Mugwort Panax.

Garrett is a private investigator, whom we got to know in Heart Search. He is a friend of Laev T'Hawthorn. Artemesia, is a second level healer, whom we met in the last book also, and we know of her sister Tiana as Camellia's friend.

A few years have passed since a terrible sickness caused many deaths, including Garrett's ex love. He has never been able to get over this loss. Until now, there have been no repeat of this Iasc sickness, when a young boy becomes sick. The healers decide to be proactive, and they have asked Garrett to help discover why he was the only one who got sick at that time, and survived. They know it is something with his blood, and they want him to volunteer to help be a guinea pig. The first level healers assign Artemisa to be his healer, and they are locked in a residence to block the disease for getting out. Garrett is injected with the virus.

One of the fun things of this series, is how residences talk like people. Very cool. I enjoyed the Turquoise House (TQ) helping clean the germs, and talk to both Garrett Artemesia. Later we meet another residence in the Mugwort home...Balm Heal House.

While infected and sick with the virus, Garrett has many nightmares, and Artemesia learns about his dead love, Dinni. It is Artemesia who helps Garrett through the roughest part of the virus, which he eventually will overcome again. During his lock down, a kitten gets into the house and decides he is Garrett's FamCat. Rusby is adorable, and I totally fell in love with him. But then again, I love most of the fam animals of the Heart series. Later, Artemesia finds her own fam animal in Randa a cute raccoon.

Garrett, treats Artemesia coldly and mean early on. She has no idea why he acts like that to her. Even Rusby tells his Fam Man that he is so nasty with the healer. Truth be told, Garrett has known that Artemesia is his Heart Mate, and he has no desire to have any relationship, since he cant get over Dinni, and does not want to suffer the heartbreak again. In his arrogant behaviour, he tells Artemesia that she is his Heart Mate, and he is not interested in her. She is hurt, and angry. It is against Celta laws to tell your mate, who does not know, that she is your Heart Mate.

Heart Secret is also a mystery, as there is a murder, and Artemesia is a suspect, even though she has an alibi, being locked in the TQ house asleep at the time. The only reason besides finding the body later, is that her family was accused many many years ago of something they did not do. The murdered man was part of that. This disgrace is another reason why Artemesia is only a second level healer, though she is an excellent healer. Her boss, Ura Heather, was not likeable at all, a typical snob, and I hated how she treated Artemesia.

Working together to help the police solve the murder, Garrett finds himself becoming more and more aware of Artemesia. She ignores him, and has decided to search for a husband (not a heart mate), who will love her, and give her children. This also begins to bother Garrett, to see her with other men. As things get exciting, Garrett begins to open up his heart, and he sees Artemesia as his Heart Mate, and then works to woo her, and win her back to him.

I also enjoyed that Garrett used the feral animals for help to solve his cases. He fed them everyday, and we would watch them talk to him to tell him what was happening. A cute idea, to use these telepathic animals as his helpers to find clues.

This was a very nicely done romance, that grew over the course of the book. I enjoy the way Owens uses some of her characters from earlier books, and this was a great way to see them again. It was a great ending, as there was a big surprise in solving the murder. Another great addition to the HeartMate series. If you have not read this series, I suggest you start from the beginning and read them all. Life in Celta is fun, not to mention I want a Fam Cat for myself.

Barb  
The Reading Cafe

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