



[Married in the Nick of Nine](#)

(PRLEAP.COM)

July 5, 2014 - "If you look in the dictionary under determined, you'll see my smiling face," says Los Angeles author and playwright, Alretha Thomas. After fifteen years of trying to become a published author, Thomas has signed a four-book deal with Soul Mate Publishing.

Sold by Stacey Donaghy of Donaghy Literary Group to Deborah Gilbert at Soul Mate Publishing, the deal includes all four standalone books in Thomas's Cass & Nick series: Married in the Nick of Nine, The Baby in the Window, One Harte, Two Loves, and Renee's Return. All the books fall under women's fiction. Married in the Nick of Nine, the first book in the series, about a young woman turning thirty who wants to meet, fall in love with, and marry "The One" within nine months, was released July 2, 2014 and is available on Amazon.com.

Thomas says she knew she was destined to be a writer when her fifth grade teacher chose and read her short story aloud to the classroom. However, she says she had no idea the road getting there would be so long and winding. After graduating with a journalism degree from U.S.C., Thomas soon realized her heart was not into journalism and that she wanted to write stories rather than report them.

Her journey began in 1999 when she wrote her debut novel, Daughter Denied. Upon completion, she pitched the story to agents and publishers, but there were no bites. Thomas says she spent a few years pitching the novel and then shelved it for several years. She says she was told her writing was strong and even came close to landing representation on a few occasions, but in the end there was no deal. The reasons varied from the market being too competitive for a first-time author to a lack of interest in her story. Then in 2008, inspired by Obama's decision to run for president, she decided to self-publish.

Daughter Denied, loosely based on her dysfunctional childhood, was embraced by readers across the country. This inspired Thomas to write her second novel, Dancing Her Dreams Away. Again, she sought representation to no avail. Instead of quitting, she forged ahead and self-published Dancing Her Dreams Away in 2011.

Southern Cal Author's Dogged Determination Leads to Multi-Book Deal

Written by Australian Business

In 2012, three became the charm when her novel *Married in the Nick of Nine* piqued the interest of Donaghy. Thomas said she was at the hair salon when she received an email from Donaghy expressing how much she loved the story. Thomas says she almost fell out of her stylist's chair when she read the message. Donaghy signed Thomas and then began to pitch her book to editors. After a year, Gilbert, also impressed with Thomas's writing and storytelling ability, made an offer.

"It's a long-awaited dream come true!" Thomas says. When asked why she never gave up, she replied, "I tried, but over the years I became addicted to trying. There was a fire burning inside me I couldn't put out."