



## Before the Storm

*Leslie Tentler*

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## **Before the Storm** Leslie Tentler

Six years earlier, Trina Grissom disappeared, on the run for her life. Now living under an assumed identity—as Samantha Marsh—she still struggles with the dark secret she harbors and the fear she might one day be found. When she moves to the coastal town of Rarity Cove, South Carolina, to open a café, a handsome widower begins to chip away at the walls she's built to protect herself.

Mark St. Clair lost his wife two years ago in a tragic accident. Head of the grand St. Clair resort, he distracts himself from his lingering grief by running the family business and caring for his troubled young daughter...until a beautiful restaurateur sets up shop in town. Before meeting Samantha, Mark was convinced he could never be drawn to another woman. But as his attraction to Samantha grows, the mystery surrounding her deepens.

As the two begin a hesitant courtship, double perils emerge. Someone from Samantha's lurid past comes calling, threatening to expose her. And a powerful hurricane is forming in the Atlantic with the small beach town in its path. Trapped in the storm by the brutal man who wants vengeance on Samantha, she and Mark must fight for their lives.

## **Before the Storm Details**

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Author : Leslie Tentler

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## From Reader Review Before the Storm for online ebook

**Baba says**

**2 stars. DNF @49%. Review posted September 19, 2015.**

I liked the cover and the premise of Before the Storm. I also thought it started off rather decent but, unfortunately, took a turn into boring no-man's-land fast.

*"Just tell me you'll think about slowing things down."*

*"There's nothing to slow down."*

Seriously. It **was** extremely slow already. If they had slowed things down even more, they would have come to a standstill.

I love me a slow-burning romance, but give me at least some sizzling hot chemistry, some great sexual tension, for Pete's sake. Mark is thirty-three-years old and Samantha is twenty-seven-years old. Yet these two acted like awkward and insecure teenagers. Don't get me wrong, I don't want an obnoxious alphahole, either. However, what I love is a no-nonsense-wants-to-take-charge alpha man who knows what to do, how and when. An alpha man who is also gentle **and** a gentleman. Well, Mark definitely did not meet my expectations and the heroine wasn't anything to write home about either. In fact, she pretty much acted like this, "I want him but I can't have him. I can't do this, I'd rather not..." Yada yada yada. Instead of choking me with annoying delaying tactics, I wanted them to move forward.

And then plenty of this...

She's lowering her gaze and blushing all the time, she's fiddling with her hair, she's insecure and nervous. Surprise, surprise because he's blushing too, he's insecure and nervous too, his throat closes around the flaky pastry and custard filling coz he's surprised at Mercer's offer. She has butterflies in her stomach and small knots of pleasure form insider her. Her stomach is fluttering. Old resentment squeezed her lungs. Blah blah blah. I also noticed that the characters in this story were pressing their lips together constantly. And once again my eyes threatened to pop out of their sockets because I rolled them all the time.

Except for my issues, the writing was ok. This being said, I just can't keep on reading something that bored me out of my mind. I'd rather DNF and start something else.

*All quotes are taken from the pre-published copy and may be altered or omitted in the final copy*

*\*\*ARC courtesy of Left Field Press via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review\*\**

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## Crina (Reading Addict) says

Romance, thriller, mystery, hm. I enjoy these genres, especially thriller and mystery, but I have expectations too. And in this case I was disappointed and after 28% I fell asleep on my kindle... after my eyeballs rolled so hard that they rolled under the bed.

How can you say that a slow paced book like this, with flat characters, that are so cliché and common, with a writing style that is boring and wooden, with a plot so cliché and boring is mystery thriller. How?! Is not even a cosy and easy, light read; unless you want to sleep very well and you read this instead of taking pills.

This is just a boring and plain book that moves SO slow, full of clichés, and which made me DNF it at 28%, because I couldn't do it anymore. And if after 50% it gets better and explosions happens and the characters stop being so fake and superficial and stop acting as 5 years old when they fall in love for the first time, then I lose. But I'm fine. At least I can get my eyeballs back.

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## Sarah says

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to Barclay Publicity and NetGalley.)

*“When she closed her eyes, she was back in that Memphis apartment again – shivering, shards of cobalt glass around her, her hands stained with blood.”*

This was an okay adult contemporary romance, but the pace was a little slow for me.

I felt quite sorry for Mark in the way he was struggling to raise his daughter after his wife's death, but I found it a little bit harder to connect with Samantha.

The storyline in this had a bit of mystery as we didn't know exactly what had happened to Samantha previously, as well as a contemporary romance storyline between Mark and Samantha. There were a couple of sex scenes, but nothing really explicit.

The ending to this was satisfying, and things were wrapped up pretty well.

6 out of 10

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## Jonetta says

Samantha Marsh ran from her old life six years ago and completely reinvented herself. She's a chef and owns a gourmet café in Rarity Cove, South Carolina. When hotel owner Mark St. Clair and his adorable daughter happen into her life, she resists what may be the relationship she's always dreamed of, for their sakes. Fear of her past coming back to haunt them is the basis for that resistance but Mark's persistence takes her under.

I really loved this story starting with the beautiful cover, which is a perfect representation of what's inside. Samantha and Mark are delicately crafted characters, considering their tragic backgrounds. As much as I hate relationships where one of the partners is harboring a major secret, this was a bit different as it's clear from the onset that Samantha is hiding something. It just makes Mark work harder to gain her trust and he behaves in ways true to his nature.

The suspense side of the story is truly ominous and is always in the background. It culminates in an exciting climax that had me riveted. To say more would be spoiler-ish.

There's a strong sense of place created, the coastal area of South Carolina figuring prominently in the story. I've visited the area and appreciated how well it was represented. It is an important part of the plot.

While the premise of the book is not unique, the writing is so well done and the characters so finely developed it feels fresh. It made for a lovely reading experience and I'm hoping this develops into a series (more Carter and Mercer!). 4.5 stars

(I received an ARC from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review)

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### **Catherine (The Sassy Bookster) says**

I absolutely love BEFORE THE STORM! It's well written, with an engaging plot, suspenseful and will have you experiencing a variety of emotions - from anticipation to terror and everything in between - alongside the characters!

Samantha Marsh has not had an easy life but Rarity Cove, South Carolina is her chance to start over and make something of her life, and her business Café Bella is it. Her secrets are so dangerous and sordid that she has chosen a lifetime of solitude over dragging any man into the mess of her life and her attraction to a member of Rarity Cove's leading family, while unexpected but very tempting, is not going to change her mind. What Samantha does not count on is her hunger for a connection and how safe Mark makes her feel.

Since the death of his wife in a car accident, Mark St. Clair has buried himself in his work running the family hotel and taking care of his five-year old daughter and despite pressure from his family, he has resisted all involvement. That changes when Samantha Marsh sets up shop in Rarity Cove. For the first time since his wife's death, Mark is interested in a woman and determined to win her over despite her reluctance to get involved with him and the secrets she obviously has.

But secrets never stay that way for long and unfortunately, Samantha's carefully constructed life begins to unravel when her past follows her to Rarity Cove and her secrets are exposed. Mark also has to contend with frayed familial relationships and the interference of well-intentioned family members.

Danger, secrets and complex sibling relationships combine to make BEFORE THE STORM very appealing. Ms. Tentler creates very interesting characters and I love the deliberate and measured pace of the book, how

every scene was calculated to add to the story, from Samantha and Mark's first meeting to the explosive end, and how even the most ordinary scenes had a thread of tension woven through them and kept me on edge, just waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Disclaimer: I received this book for free from the Author in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

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### **Kate's Corner says**

**I started this book and somewhere along the way I lost interest but most likely is that I realised that this is a common plot and has been done a thousand times. I need something new to keep me entertained because that is why I read. DNF 32% this book was on hold to begin with so I guess it was just a matter of term.**

**Please note this is my personal opinion. It might be a unpopular review but I can't change it.**

**Book given in exchange for an honest review from Barclay Publicity via Netgalley.**

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### **Linda Strong says**

Leslie Tentler is not a new author to me. I have read her Chasing Evil series. I knew what I would find with her latest book... and I wasn't disappointed.

Samantha has a secret. Samantha isn't even her real name and she's been on the run for 7 years. She has a secret past .. and she left a dead man behind, taking with her only an old ragged teddy bear that was given to her as a child and her mother's cameo locket.

Mark is a good looking widower with a 4 year old daughter to take care of. His daughter has not spoken since the night her mother was killed in an auto accident. He's still grieving .. but when he meets Samantha, something comes back to life for him.

I loved the characters! Samantha and Mark are so deliciously drawn. Carter, the actor-brother, is usually trying to stir up trouble and is the first to discover Samantha's past life. Olivia, as their mother, is terrifyingly real. Mercer, his younger sister, rounds out the family ..and she is also keeping secrets from her rich, snobbish mother. And Emily is such a sweet child.

When Samantha's past catches up with her, she's not the only one in danger. And everything comes to a head as a hurricane releases its torment on their small town and its inhabitants.

I was riveted to the suspense side of this book and enjoyed watching Sam and Mark slowly overcome the obstacles and give in to their attraction.

My thanks to the author / NetGalley / Barclay Publicity /Left Field Press who furnished a digital copy in exchange for an honest, unbiased review.

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### **Abbie says**

(I received a copy from Netgalley, In exchange for an honest review.)

I felt quite sorry for both Samantha and Mark in this. Mark was going through a lot, and Samantha went through life looking over her shoulder, which can't have been nice.

This was an okay read, but I found the pacing to be slow, so the story dragged at times.

Overall, An okay read.

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### **Judy Collins says**

Top 50 Books of 2015. "Best New Romantic Suspense Series."

Talented *Leslie Tentler* returns following her smashing crime thriller, *Fallen*, landing on my Top 30 Book List of 2014, with a riveting new series, (*Rarity Cove #1*), set in a small coastal southern resort town on the outskirts of Charleston, SC — in *Rarity Cove* with **BEFORE THE STORM**.

**A solid drama**, from deep human emotions, mystery, danger, crime, and romantic suspense rolled into page-turner, as the past rears its ugly head, at the most inopportune time.

#### **Meet the Main Characters:**

**Samantha Marsh**, (aka Tina Grissom) keeps to her herself, a natural beauty, moving to the small coastal town of *Rarity Cove*, SC to open a café. She is ready for a fresh start and her life seems to finally be back on track. Her life dream is finally coming true as she escapes a horrific past.

She has changed her looks, her body, and her identity. *Now Ms. Marsh is the woman with the "to die for cupcakes"- and now her landlord, has found more than her cupcakes quite intriguing.* However, she cannot have a normal relationship. She has to continue to look over her shoulder, as she *senses someone is following her.*

**Six years later**, after escaping her past, she finally has *Café Bella* on Main Street, and is a successful business woman. No one knows her real story, and she wants to keep it that way. She is mysterious. She has put all she has, into her new café and keeps her distance, living in a small apartment over the café, not

getting too close to anyone.

She lives in fear every day, of her past coming to find her. (*Tentler keeps you in suspense, as to the nature of her dark secret, which is peeled back layer by layer, for an ongoing mystery which goes much deeper*). Can she pass up on a future love affair, due to her fear, which holds her back? *She cannot put Mark's family in danger.*

**Mark St. Clair** does not care about dating—his goal is to bury himself in his work as the driving force behind the century old Hotel Grand St. Clair Resort, the family business, and the premier vacation destination on the Atlantic seacoast some forty minutes outside of Charleston. He is still grieving his late wife of two years. Top on his list of worries is his five-year-old troubled young daughter, Emily—who has not spoken since his wife was killed in a car accident.

**Mark's mother**, Olivia the family matriarch is the typical Southern society snob---(Dorothea Benton Frank fans will relate); if you know Charleston—you will understand; wanting Mark to date again, and sticks her nose in his business trying to fix him up with the Southern's finest—white pearls and "Bless Your Heart" type. Mixing with the most elite and country club set, she does not care for Mark's newfound friendship, and strong attraction to the new woman in town. She is determined to find out more about her background, and a more suitable companion. *Only the best for her son.*

**Carter, Mark's brother**, a soap opera star is accustomed to having his way with all the women; with his fake airbrushed looks and charm. He and his brother are rivals, from years past, both dating Mark's former wife. Now Carter is back in town for a movie shoot, and meddling in Mark's affairs. Will he once again, try to hit on Mark's new woman?

Then of course there is **Mercer, Mark's sister** who has her own private relationship with older professor, Jonathan.

**Luther, one of my favorite** characters, has been in prison with a past of his own. He works for Samantha. He was honest about his past, and Samantha knows all too well about second chances and dark pasts. She gives him a second chance working her at her café in town.

Olivia, Mark's mother turns her nose up at his kind, thinking he is a trouble maker. Of course, when there is trouble, everyone looks at him. However, he might just be the one to help this crew out of danger, as a devastating tropical storm approaches. *Hint: Could we please bring back Luther for his own story?*

**We also have more** than one villain, with a score to settle. Devin Leary is a slime ball and he will stop at nothing to find what he is after. There is someone more dangerous than on the surface--a bigger more evil plan of stolen jewels, the Maffia, a cliff, a Cadillac Escalade, money, a brother, pictures of a past life, a motel; and worse, a devastating storm approaching.

**A multi-layered story** as piece by piece, Sam's story is exposed. She never wants Mark to learn of her sordid past. Carter starts digging and is the one to investigate into a world of corruption, and old scores to be settled—revenge.

Everyone is going in different directions trying to keep their own secret, and all the while there is a dangerous man in Memphis, Tennessee who is out to find the one who got away, and the stolen jewels.

**As most of my fellow reader** friends are aware, I am not a romantic chick lit fan. I typically go for crime,



legal, psychological and mystery thrillers; however, I will read contemporary romantic suspense (meaning not the romantic fantasy type); the emotional tragedy, mixed with crime, danger, and mystery, which is a nice combination. Ordinary people enduring hardships; overcoming, adversary, coming out even stronger with some humor mixed in. *Before the Storm*, fits this category, perfectly. (think Sandra Brown)

I fell in love with *Fallen*, when introduced to the Atlanta author last year. Being an Atlanta girl myself, growing up in the Carolinas and working for many resorts and hotels (some in Charleston), I loved the setting, as well. The resort, the café and the culinary parts . . . (Ideal topic hitting my buttons). Plus the well-developed characters. I enjoyed Samantha and Mark's relationship --two different strong people from different walks of life. Sam's past was such a vast contrast from her present life, and Leslie does an amazing job flushing out each one.

For me, **BEFORE THE STORM** is a cross between *Nicholas Sparks*, *Kristin Hannah*, *Sandra Brown*, and *Patti Callahan Henry* (I know a range; however, fans of all these will enjoy the mix). I read Spark's new *See Me* directly following *Before the Storm*, and fans will enjoy the strong dynamics of both; characters are determined to survive their past against all odds--for a shot at a new life--when things keep pulling them down back in the mud.

**Strong emotional** human dynamics, tragedy, suspense, mystery, and thriller sprinkled with complex love relationships— character-driven. Tentler builds a love story, surrounding by layers of mystery and suspense. I think fans will enjoy the last portion, with the intensity and danger-- *as things begin to explode with a few surprises you do not see coming*.

What I enjoy about Leslie's style--her writing is fresh, and contemporary; each of her books deliver something new and different, making her books appeal to a wide audience.

**Before the Storm** is a book you will want to read in one sitting, so set aside the time and curl up for an engaging mystery. I could not put it down until I reached the end. INTENSE.

**\*\*Low Tide (Rarity Cove #2)\*\*** Low Tide Coming June 12, 2017. #amreading. Top 20 Must-Read June Books

*A special thank you to NetGalley, and Barclay Publicity for an ARC in exchange for an honest review.*  
Cover love.

JDCMustReadBooks

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## Coral says

Plot: 4/5

Characterisation: 3/5

Prose: 3/5

How much I enjoyed it: 4/5

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## **Anne OK says**

This go-round we get something a little different from one of my favorite romantic suspense authors. Under a new identity, Samantha Marsh tries to escape the mistakes of her past in a new place. Mark St. Clair is a single dad raising his small daughter and running the family business. Both of these characters have resisted any romantic involvements – until Samantha arrives in Rarity Cove. The romance and suspense are well blended.

Of course, secrets never stay hidden and the past eventually finds Samantha. That's when the suspense really kicks into gear and there is plenty of it from both sides of the aisle. Mark's life isn't uncomplicated either. Between the secrets, danger, family upheaval and interfering family members there's plenty to add to the mix.

Once again, Leslie Tentler creates a gritty and tightly wound plot, with characters that are multi-faceted, assuring readers that they'll be highly entranced in this one.

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## **Kjen says**

4 Stars... Tentler writes excellent romantic suspense, and this is no exception. Samantha and Mark are a very likable couple. Throw in a tortured past, some evil bad guys, and a hurricane, and you've got a recipe for a good read!

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## **Petra says**

Before The Storm is an impeccably written romantic suspense novel with a good mix of love story and thriller.

Samantha aka Trina has recently opened a little shop in South Carolina where she lives under an assumed identity after escaping a harrowing ordeal. She meets and falls for Mark, a widower with a young daughter who hasn't spoken since her mother died in a car crash. Both cautious due to their pasts and their responsibilities, Samantha and Mark slowly establish a relationship, but then Samantha's history catches up with her just as a hurricane is about to hit their little seaside town.

While the actual plot wasn't particularly new or original, I really enjoyed Leslie Tentler's engaging style of writing, and I loved all the interesting characters she created. Before the Storm is a really sweet contemporary romance with some thrilling and dark suspense elements that can be enjoyed leisurely on a rainy afternoon. This was my first book written by Leslie Tentler, but I have decided to catch up with her Chasing Evil series because she impressed me with her writing.

Thank you to the author and the publisher for providing me with a complimentary copy via NetGalley in exchange for an unbiased review.

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## Emmeline (The Book Herald) says

*I kindly receive this ARC from Barclay Publicity, Left Field Press via NG in return for an honest review!*

Rating- 4.5 stars

***"Devin had the smile of a snake, and his lean, hard frame appeared ready to strike. Trina already knew the full extent of his bite. His poison."***

My goodness! This book was awesome but so suspenseful I scarcely could breathe! Alright, alright, let's hope straight to the plot!

*Trina Grissom died 6 years ago, Samantha Marsh was born.  
On the run, hopeless yet hopeful, fearful of her own shadow.  
Samantha Marsh always has to watch carefully who she comes into contact with, because surely her past will catch up.  
She has a secret...a secret that could ruin everything she has worked so hard to build, it could ruin everything she did to recreate herself.  
Abused. tortured. alone. on the run.  
Samantha keeps away from everything and everyone,  
but when a man with his brown hair and cerulean eyes appears in her life, dare she hope to have a chance to love a gentleman?  
The problem is this gentleman is a millionaire, in the spotlight, the owner of a grand hotel.  
How can someone who has to hide, suddenly be placed as the center of attention?  
Especially when a lecherous cur has made it his hobby to find her.  
No matter where you run, the past will find you.*

Ohmygosh, this book! Bravo Tentler \*claps\* you made me bite my nails and almost have a panic attack, bravo!

This book was soooo good!!! Romantic suspense are my thing at the moment. I seriously can't get enough and this ticked most of my boxes!

The moment it began i was hooked, i literally read it in a few hours because i was just so mesmerised by this story! Which means that the writing is freaking awesome. Tentler certainly knows what she's doing and knows how to keep you on your toes and keep you guessing.

I definitely think that if you are a fan of Romantic suspense then this will be your honey!

That being said, **WARNING-** There is a scene and slight description of rape, attempt rape, physical abuse, language and prostitution (sort of) in here! So if these are some things that you aren't comfortable with, I'm just letting you know that they are there.

Okay now on to characters! I loved all these characters, i really did. Man, Luther is amazing. I know when you'll read this you're going to think I'm a weirdo but he truly cared about people...well the people he liked i should say.

Mark St. Clair could you please be real and possibly marry me? thank you very much! hehe that should tell you how much i liked him!

Samantha was a really great character, she's such a strong- capable woman. However, I think with what she went through, the author made her trust Mark a little too quickly if that makes sense. Honestly, I think that if you went through this cornucopia of abuse, you wouldn't trust men very much but she did, and quickly too...\*shrugs\* that bit was mildly unbelievable but this book is so good it's easy not to focus on that.

I think you'll really enjoy this!

Stay awesome!

-The Book Herald

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## **Amanda says**

This book was interesting and enjoyable. I thought the characters were interesting. The storylines where romance mixed with mystery. I though Samantha's backstory was very sad and I am glad things worked out for her in the end.

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