

# 'Destined To Meet' Certain To Excite

After forgotten anniversaries and receiving vacuums for birthdays, women have often doubted whether men can truly be

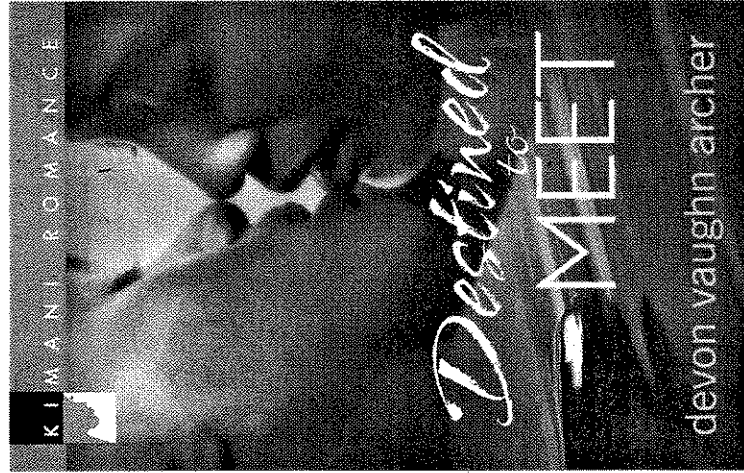
by GENOA BARROW  
OBSERVER Senior Staff Writer

romantic. R. Barri Flowers makes an argument for the affirmative with his novel "Destined to Meet."

Writing as Devon Vaughn Archer, the book is published through Kimani Romance, part of the Kimani Press line of African American themed books put out by romance giant, Harlequin.

"As a male author, I am thrilled to lend my voice to the romance genre, similar to other best selling authors such as Eric Jerome Dickey, Richard Paul Evans, Nicholas Sparks, Ian Casper and James Patterson," shared Archer, a former Citrus Heights resident.

While wildly popular for their escapism qualities, romance novels can be formulaic at times — girl meets guy at Fortune 500 company or French Chateau, they start a relationship, his family interferes and they fight and break up, only to find their way back to each other's arms in the



end. It's the same whether it's a White couple or if the characters are Black. It's what happens in between those constants, however, that keep us coming back for more. The conflict, the idea that love will conquer all and yes, the no-holds barred, down and dirty,

Make You Sweat Just Reading It sex. We live vicariously through the protagonist's exploits and Archer has done a great job of creating characters who we'd love to pretend to be for 250-odd pages.

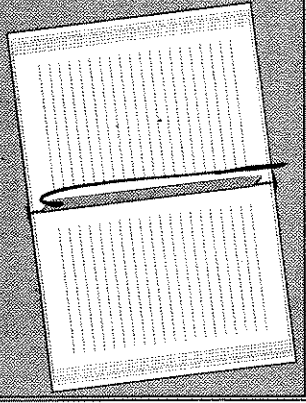
Courtney Hudson, a children's book author, and Detective Lloyd Vance, an Alaskan bachelor, are beautiful people — she a "cross between Alicia Keys and Tracee Ellis Ross" and he "a dead ringer for Will Smith" — who meet at a club and turn a one-night stand into more. The tragic death of Courtney's cousin and roommate, and the fact that she and Lloyd had a past, threatens to cool things off before they get too hot and heavy.

Not to be dismayed, things do get hot and heavy. "Courtney felt she would melt on the spot from the searing heat of Lloyd's burning kiss. Her legs grew weak as she clung to his neck," Archer writes.

"Consumed by the embers burning wildly within, Lloyd kept up his part of the bargain as their open mouths crushed into each other's with the desperation of starved lovers, searching through tongues and teeth for every treasure to be found," he continues.

Don't know about the rest of the

## BOOKED SOLID



male species, but Archer definitely has one vote for Mr. Romance.

"Destined to Meet" is currently number five on Harlequin's Top Ten Books About Love. Its author was also featured as the special guest author on eHarlequin.com.

In 2006, Archer became the first man to have his own book published for Harlequin's Arabesque line with the contemporary romance "Love Once Again." His other titles include "Christmas Heat" and "Dark and Dashing." Under the name R. Barri Flowers he's also published the legal thrillers "State's Evidence" and "Justice Served." His next romance contribution will be "Kissing the Man Next Door," due out in May 2009.