

bookreview

Novel about single young woman is warm, engaging

■ BY MELISSA DEMOIX
FOR THE DESERET NEWS

"THE LIST," by Melanie Jacobsen, Covenant Communications, \$16.99, 289 pages (f)

Melanie Jacobsen's adorable debut novel, "The List," will make the hearts of LDS romance lovers flutter. This entertaining story is bursting with delicious characters and unique settings.

"The List" shadows a tenacious 20something in her quest to manage the California single scene without getting hooked. The premise for the book is smile-inducing.

Ashley Barrett's mother and two older sisters married young — too young for Ashley's taste. She is determined not to fall into the same trap, so at age 18, she creates a bucket list of things she must do before she considers sliding into matrimony.

Included among items like "learn a language" and "get a master's degree," Ashley has also added "learn to surf" and "have a summer fling" to her list. Spending a summer with her cousin's family in Huntington Beach, Calif., seems like the perfect opportunity to polish off those last two items.

At a singles ward activity, Ashley discovers the perfect candidate, Matt Gibson, the ward heartthrob and popular surf instructor, may just help her do both. After some shrewd, covert action, Ashley persuades Matt to take her on as a surf student, but their relationship doesn't stay on the waves.

As Matt's charming and gentle nature shines through, Ashley begins to question whether she is willing to risk her list by letting Matt into her heart. Should she stick to her list or should she settle into an unexpected life that could be everything she never knew she wanted?

The book is engaging. Readers will be drawn to the characters from the start. The unique flavor of surfing culture adds a sparkling and creative depth to the tale. Everything about the story screams sunshine and warmth.

While the main characters bubble with personality, the supporting cast brings an energetic undercurrent that propels the reader forward. The characters are eclectic and lovable. They bring the story to life.

Jacobsen has created a work that will leave readers aching for her next novel. Melissa DeMoux is a stay-at-home mother who lives in West Valley City. You can email her at mdemoux@gmail.com or follow her adventures in motherhood at demouxfamily.blogspot.com.



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