

STARTING OVER

By Barri Bryan

Linden Bay Romance, 2006

Reviewed by :: Amanda Brice
E-book

In *Starting Over*, Barri Bryan creates an eminently believable world, filled with ordinary people struggling with everyday, real-life problems.

Diane Carlisle feels as though her high-powered lawyer husband, Burt, takes her for granted. Although he does, Diane isn't exactly blameless in this situation. She hasn't had an independent thought during the course of their entire relationship. Quite simply, the couple has fallen into a rut after twenty years of marriage.

When her elderly aunt undergoes surgery, Diane returns to her hometown in rural Texas. Burt assumes it's a temporary arrangement, but Diane doesn't rush home to Dallas afterwards. Instead, she falls into a new routine with her old childhood friends and gets a job working for her former high school boyfriend.

Eventually, Burt begins to realize that he misses his wife, including everything he does for her—cooking, cleaning, laundry. But more importantly, he misses *her*. When his doctor alerts him to a high blood pressure problem, Burt decides to make a change. He decides he needs Diane. But her newfound freedom has given her a taste of something more than she has with Burt, and she's not sure she wants to go back to her old life.

This beautifully-written tale explores the complex feelings and emotions of a couple working to save their marriage. What makes such an ordinary story extraordinary is that Barri Bryan (the pseudonym for husband-and-wife writing team, Billie and Herb Houston) doesn't go for glamour or try to break new ground. It's simply an emotional story focusing on a common problem, one that many readers will relate to.

4 Kisses