



## Crimson Desert

*Melissa Jane*

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## **Crimson Desert** Melissa Jane

Crimson Desert is Book Two in The Bittersweet Duet. Little Doll (Book One) is essential to the development of the series.

Now back across the border, LAILA realizes that all had not been as it seemed at the Florez mansion. Learning to trust the man she wanted dead was going to take time. Time was not on her side.

For AIDEN, the damage was done. There was no going back. Except for one thing... revenge.

Giving up was never an option for JUAN. Not even now when everything had changed. He lived and breathed the thrill of the chase and this time the end prize was too great to lose.

This is a dark story where the taste for love and revenge clash in the most unforgiving ways.

## **Crimson Desert Details**

Date :

ISBN :

Author : Melissa Jane

Format :

Genre : Dark, Romance, Romantic Suspense

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## From Reader Review Crimson Desert for online ebook

### Manda Kelley says

#### Manda's 4 Star Review

Even though things did not go as planned Laila finds herself back across the border and away from the evil Florez mansion. The only problem is she is now stuck with the one man she doesn't trust and the man who is responsible for taking away the only thing she had left. Laila soon realizes everything is not as it seems. Aiden had kept a very important secret that could change everything. Armed with some new allies Aiden and Laila set out to try to free themselves once and for all. Its a dangerous game of cat and mouse when Juan decides not to go down without a fight and is determined to kill Aiden and keep Laila as his own.

Wow! What a crazy ride this book takes you on. I started book 2 the moment I finished book one because there was no way I could wait to find out what happens. Again the author takes you on an amazing roller coaster ride filled with twists and turns. You will not be able to put this book down as the whole story unfolds. From start to finish the action is nonstop and the storyline gets deeper and deeper. I am really glad I was given the opportunity to read these books. Melissa Jane has done a wonderful job bringing to life this amazing story. Bittersweet Duet is a must read and I look forward to reading more from this amazing author!

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### BooksandBeyondFiftyShades says

Now back across the border, LAILA realizes that all had not been as it seemed at the Florez mansion. Learning to trust the man she wanted dead was going to take time. Time was not on her side.

For AIDEN, the damage was done. There was no going back. Except for one thing... revenge.

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\*This is a very emotional series. I laughed. I cried. I was even scared for her life many times throughout this book. I have hated Juan from the beginning. Who wouldn't? I was a little uncomfortable reading a few things but if you understand the story and you can picture the plot then really ALL the uncomfortable things are ok. I really enjoyed this story.

While reading this book I felt like I was watching a movie. There were no questions. Everything gets answered shortly after the question is poised. I really enjoyed the end of the book. I was happy and cheering them on the whole time. I'm trying so hard not to give too much away. You're just going to have to read the series for yourself. I hope you enjoy the ride. I sure did. I highly recommend this book.

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### Jenn's Book Obsession says

4.5 Stars!

What an exhilarating journey! This book picks up right where book one left off and keeps you glued to the pages until the very end. Melissa Jane does an amazing job bringing this story to life. It's filled with so much

action and passion that leaves you sitting on the edge of your seat.

The turn of events and how everything came to be was not something I was expecting. Talk about getting that 'Oh shit' moment from the beginning. And then from there you're just pulled in. I was so consumed with this story. I was torn between reading slow to savor all the details and reading fast because I absolutely could not wait to see how it all played out.

I had knots in my stomach anticipating what was coming next. Laila is one fierce, strong woman that refuses to allow anyone to break her. No matter what she goes through and the feelings she struggles with she just refuses to become a victim. I absolutely love that about her character. She's put through hell and back yet she fights until the very end.

Heart pounding action will have you seeing this play out like a movie in your head. Aiden is just badass and I love how he remains calm and takes control of every situation they come across. He is unstoppable and will have you weak at the knees. I adore all the little nicknames he has for Laila. His sweet side had me swooning and totally falling in love with him.

Love, hate and vengeance fuel the war and Aiden and Juan will have their standoff. Juan is truly mental and it's all for the love of the game. But does he have what it takes to bring down Aiden?

Loved this book, love the story and absolutely LOVE the ending. I'm looking forward to reading more from Melissa Jane. This series is one you do not want to miss.

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## **Escape Reality with Books says**

What a stunning conclusion to Laila and Aiden's story!

It's filled with action, suspense, violence, yummy steamy scenes and the thrills keep you glued to your screen as you follow the story being played out in front of you.

The story takes off where Little Doll finishes in that Laila has been kidnapped by Aiden and Jorge and has been taken back across the border to San Diego and has just learnt that Ethan is alive. Juan is still obsessed with Laila and is chasing them to take Laila and to kill Aiden for his betrayal.

Laila, Ethan, Jorge and Aiden take off across the Country with the help of an ex-Marina buddy of Aiden's in a thrilling and suspenseful cat and mouse game with Juan following closely behind.

It all comes to a head in Mexico at the mansion when Aiden decides he has had enough of being chased and wants to take out Hector and Juan so they can be free to stop running.

Laila again proves what a strong character she is having gone through so much trauma and still being able to pick herself up and willing to fight.

For a former drug and human trafficker, Aiden redeems himself by proving to Laila that he wants her and is willing to give up everything to keep her safe.

Danny is a great secondary character. He's funny, witty and willing to help out at any cost. Crimson Desert is twisty, dark, violent and amazing!

I was given a complimentary copy in exchange for an honest review. Reviewed by Tanya.

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## **Jos says**

5 Dark, Suspenseful, Awesome Stars!!!

Loved, Loved, Loved this sequel:) I loved the writing as it flowed seamlessly, the storyline, it was sick, dark, twisted and yet the intense heat between Aiden and Laila, yum, the "players" in this story were well-written so much so you loved the good guys and boy truly felt the hate for the the bad guys. This story was the perfect conclusion for Aiden and Laila. It was fast-paced, it was suspenseful and mysterious and yet it also had those "sweet" filled moments too..... For me, the story had it all:)

All I can say is Aiden, oh Aiden, he was hot, sexy, swoon-worthy, arghhhhh he was the epitome of warped perfection!!!!!!! Laila, I truly loved her....Her character was perfect for Aiden and I just loved every bit of them. Now, I would love a short little novella on the two of them in the future and see where they ended up...any kids, just anything to know they are doing GREAT because they both deserve nothing but true bliss:)

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## **KC -- Reading Is My Superpower says**

I absolutely LOVED this series. Melissa Jane has become one of my new favorite authors and I can not wait to see what she comes up with next.

Crimson Desert is the conclusion to Little Doll. I couldn't wait to get my hands on this one after the cliff hanger in Little Doll. So when this one showed up on my kindle, I ready to go.

Laila has been rescued from the horror house of Hector, but she has a long way to go before she is actually safe. There was so many little hair pin turns in this one, that it kept me on my toes. I thought I had it figured out, and then a curve ball would come my way and I was left with my jaw on the ground. I needed her to get her HEA.

I have to admit, Iam struggling with how to write this review. I don't want to give anything away. And there are so many shifts and changes that make the story what it is, that any hint of what is to come would take the element of surprise. And that element of surprise is what helps make this book (both books actually) the fantastic read that they are.

I absolutely loved Aiden. He is everything a good anti hero should be. Alpha to his core, with a tender side that is reserved for Laila alone. My heart shattered for him and one point. I could not believe the secrets that came out that had been covered up. And I never saw them coming. It was a fantastic twist to the story, even if it was heart breaking.

Juan is the third "main character" in this crazy plot twisting ride. And for as bad as he was, I loved him too. He was the perfect balance of evil to Aiden's good. And even though he was the "bad guy" I couldn't help but to like him. The life he grew up with had molded him into the man he was, and Im here to tell you, he is crazy. Totally crazy. There is something not right about him, but I wanted to reach in and make life better for him. I wanted him to get his HEA. I wanted him to find his way out of the lifestyle because the perfect mate

made him want to be better. But his obsession with Laila and his bone deep hatred for Aiden, was the driving force in his life. Just wait until you see what happens... it was not what I was expecting. And it was brilliant.

I am doing the hope dance that there is something coming soon from this author. And I am crossing my fingers and toes that it will be about one of the guys that were helping Aiden. I know, I know... who are they KC?? You'll have to read to find out ;)

You need to read the 1st book in the series, *Little Doll*, prior to reading *Crimson Desert*. You will be completely lost if you don't. But I promise you, if you love a good Romantic Suspense novel, you will not be disappointed.

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### **Steph Moles Krayeski says**

Have you read and enjoyed novels such as: *The Dark Duet* by CJ Roberts; *Escape From Paradise* by Gwendolyn Field; or *The Heart Has Reasons* by Martine Marchand?

If you have an appreciation for the darker, grittier side of things, then I would highly recommend that you read *The Bittersweet Duet* by Melissa Jane! This romantic-suspense thriller had a similar kidnapping/captivity theme as the above-mentioned books. Yet this series possessed its own unique, gripping storyline that captured and held my attention throughout both books!

*Little Doll* (Book #1) and *Crimson Desert* (Book #2) centered around a powerful Mexican cartel family, the Florez's. Hector Florez, a ruthless, sadistic Mafioso boss, and his two sons, Juan and Aiden, ruled the criminal underworld of drugs and sex trafficking. Their family's obsessions, secrets and lies, and need for revenge...just might lead to their demise.

Ultimately, this was a tale of survival, betrayal, and retribution. This two-part story provided plenty of action, a sea of emotion, and tense, nail biting moments! And near the end, I experienced an "ah-ha moment," that sudden realization that everything came full circle! It was the perfect "cherry on top!"

*Warning:* These novels contained explicit scenes of mental/physical abuse, sex trafficking/sexual assault/rape, violence and murder. If you have an aversion to any of these triggers, you should avoid reading this series.

**My Rating: 4.5 Stars!**

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### **Heidi Sturgess says**

The dedication was private, beautiful and so appreciated ♥

Still trying to catch my breath from being sucker punched at the end of Book #1 "Little Doll" I'm rather eager to sink my teeth into *Crimson Desert*.

So the truth is revealed to Laila as to how Ethan's path crossed with Aiden's and I'm an emotional mess! I'm crying, I'm angry, I'm relieved and it's actually just a huge emotional clusterf@#\$ Aiden shows real compassion and understanding and Laila is hurting which is understandable. Hell this chick has balls of steel.

She's strong yet gentle, she's a survivor in all senses of the word.

We also get to see more of Danny, Aiden's friend and partner from the Marine's. We also see a different side to Jorge....he's more than just a hired thug. Jorge may have been Aiden's right hand man at Hector's place but not all is as it seems .....

Our friends may have crossed the border but they're not safe yet and Hector's reign of fear ,terror and power seems to have no bloody end !

Jaun has other ideas than Hector where Laila is concerned ....his obsession with her is both a blessing and a curse. Why blessing? It's that very obsession that is going to be his downfall !

Quite honestly I'd love to get Hector and his demon minions and torture them myself oh the things I have thought of ....

The stakes are definitely higher in Crimson Desert and this becomes very obvious when Laila in all her "wisdom" does something with disastrous consequences but in her defence she thought she was doing the right thing. Towards the end things really heat up and again it's an emotional roller coaster for me !

Jaun has seriously lost the plot and what he reveals to Aiden brings me to my knees !! Jaun truly is the devil's spawn !!!

An awesome HEA to a brilliant read !!! What a beautiful and amazing love story that developed amongst such cruelty.

The sad thing with both Little Doll and Crimson Desert is that in it lies a truth ... a very scary and very frightening reality. Not everyone has an Aiden.

May these sick people be brought to justice and may the victims recover and heal ♥

Another ★★★★★ shout from the rooftops read!

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## **Louise Seraphim Reviews says**

Again, another unforgettable and amazing story. This second part in the story of Aiden and Laila was 100% full on action from the first page.

In Little Doll, Book 1. Laila goes off hunting for her missing brother, Ethan. Whilst hunting for him in San Diego, she is captured and taken. She then wakes to find she is bound and blindfolded in a van. Once she knows of her surroundings. She finds herself in a huge, sprawling Mexican mansion. Yet it's in this opulent home she finds she is actually a prisoner and a slave. Whilst imprisoned in the home of the man who is known as Águila to most people, Laila is tortured and raped, and prepared to be sold to someone who likes to do things much worse than the Águila and his son Juan. Yet, his other son, Aiden, after having seen enough of what goes on his home for 2 decades, has had enough. Then he sees something in Laila that he just can't shake off. He is determined to help her in any way possible. That is just a short summary of Little Doll to lead us in to Crimson Desert.

Crimson Desert starts off right where Little Doll left. There was a quite a big shocker for the ending of Little Doll and now we get to find out more. With Laila and Aiden on the run now, every page is laced with sheer tension.

The first part of this book has Aiden explaining a lot of truths to Laila. We were left thinking the worst of Aiden, and Laila didn't know who to trust any more. She thought Aiden was the only person left she could put her trust in and he let her down. It's here in Crimson Desert, we find he didn't. It was all part of a bigger plan.

This book shows the tension and nail biting moments, whilst they are trying to get as far away from Mexico as possible. Even though they have some help, people are still getting hurt along the way. We also find just

how far the Áquila's reach in America is.

Plus we find out how badly Juan, Aiden's brother wants Laila too. He sees her as his now, and will stop at nothing to get his claws back in to her. The amount of times that Laila ends up being taken is awful. Yet still her strength is amazing. She just keeps on fighting, no matter what they do to her.

I also found the relationship between Aiden and Laila was perfect. Considering what they both have to go through to get to be together, it just seems to make them stronger. The times when they are alone, are tender and intense, yet still incredibly hot. Whatever happens, it doesn't stop them from wanting to fight whatever they have to be free of Aiden's family.

Also, Aiden's friend from his past, Danny is quite a strong figure in this book, and I absolutely love him. He is deadly, yet manages to have the most amazing sense of humour. Perfect friend in all the situations they get themselves in. I found myself wondering what his story was too, as he was such an awesome character to follow.

I would most definitely say, Laila is a cat with 9 lives in this book. Stronger than steel, and has an amazing way to compartmentalise everything that has happened to her. Yet, I loved her. I thought she was a perfect lead character and everything she did, screamed 'kick ass survivor'. Also her ability to turn from shock to revenge was excellent. I was definitely thinking revenge was a perfect plan, along with her!!

Like Little Doll, this book had some pretty deep and risky subject matter to it, but again, it was done incredibly well. The pictures author Melissa Jane paints with her writing, are grim and dark but they are done in such a finely detailed way, it's perfection. Like art.

I love finding a new author that wows me, I just hope she is a fast writer, so I have more to read soon! ;)

An overwhelmingly huge 5 stars!

\*\*I was given a copy of this book in exchange for a fair and honest review\*\*

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## **Andrea Turner says**

\*\*\*\*\* FIVE OUTSTANDING STARS \*\*\*\*\*

This conclusion to Laila and Aid's story is Epic!!!! I literally finished book one and two in three days. I am going to miss these two for sure.

We left off with a dead man walking. Yeah Ethan came back!! But things get a little more twisted when reality hits. Laila is besides herself, and discovering the man you have feelings for just lied to you is devastating. But this little group has to stick together before the devil and his minions find them. On this journey secrets are revealed, and let's just say the truth will set you free.

Laila and Aid's relationship is in turmoil. Can she honestly trust him after everything?? Can they have a normal life? Will staying together get them killed? Will he gain her trust again? Can he kill the only ones that took him in?? So much excitement in this book I tell ya!!!! Oh and good ol' Juan shows his ugly face again and things get a little tricky, but my lips are sealed. Mwah

But, seriously if you loved Little Doll then this is a must read!!!! If you read that one and haven't gotten this one then you are CRAZY!!!!

Great Job Melissa, these two now have a place in my heart!

## **Rob says**

This is the conclusion of Laila and Aiden's story and it certainly didn't disappoint. It was an absolute train of suspense throughout.

With Juan hot on their heels and determined to get back what he considers his, Laila, Aiden, Ethan and Jorge are on the run.

I felt connected to the characters in this book. I could understand why Laila had a hard time trusting that Aiden was acting in her best interests. I knew she did what she did to protect Aiden and Jorge even though it was a facepalm moment and I just thought trust him you silly girl!!

I liked the bromance between Aiden and Jorge, how one friend will literally put their life on the line for friendship.

The confrontation scenes were awesome but the author had built the suspense to such a degree, that you knew that when it was time to pay the piper it was going to make for good reading.

Knife fights, fist fights, bombs and a shootout were excellently choreographed by the author so I really felt I had to duck.

This book is brilliantly written and is original. I thought the first book didn't really contain original ideas but this book certainly did. I have never read a book where it covers a whole cat and mouse chase and the author did it fantastically well.

I cannot fault the execution of this story. I could feel the blows, I could taste the metallic blood in my mouth and I don't think my heart rate dropped until the very end! The author definitely has talent and I would put her in my to read list without hesitation.

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## **Nadia Debowska-Stephens (Obsessed by Books) says**

"You are a cancer, so filled with hate and destruction."

Hector has tirelessly built the reputation of the Aguila to be one that is synonymous with fear and dread. An empire built on horror and pain yet one woman Laila is the key to his destruction. His son Juan has become obsessed and will stop at nothing to be able to be the one to crush her, own her and revel in her pain. Hector's reputation is damaged as she is the repayment for a special order that started the whole mess. He needs her back and fast. Will family loyalty or the desire for her ownership win?

Picking immediately up from where book one left us with our jaws hanging open, we quickly learn about Ethans rapid descent into the criminal underworld of drug trafficking and how one special order changed his loyalties. Unable to watch as underage girls were lined up to be sold to a known monster Ethan and Aiden set a plan in motion to bring the whole scheme down. Treading carefully as the Aguila's reach is far and wide

their plan was running smoothly until Laila stumbled into the mix.

This action packed story has our rag tag band on the run, trying to keep one step ahead of the Mexicans whilst learning so much about each other. The connection between Laila and Aiden runs deep and even at times when he has pushed too far she can't deny the pull she feels. Laila grows into a magnificently strong survivor, taking each moment of horror absorbing it and learning from it. Aiden relives the tragic events of his childhood and realises that the truth is more damning than he was first led to believe.

With a climatic showdown taking place where all the players first assembled...who will walk away?

A 4.5 star epic read!

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### **VEL says**

4 Solid Mafia Cartel Stars!

Loved this two part series by Melissa Jane.

Innocent female, Laila, looking for her brother, Ethan. The only family she has. She ends up in the wrong place capturing the attention of the most cruel Mexican cartel members, unbeknown to her.

She ends up kidnapped by the notoriously drug dealers and traffickers Juan & Hector. They're seeking revenge and payment of stolen revenue.

Laila's innocent search for her brother lands her as a prisoner objected to the most horrible and degrading inhuman crimes.

Is her one saviour going to be Aidan? Or is he just a mafia criminal liar playing games with her mind and heart!

Is her only destination to be sold as a sex slave or be killed due to her disobedience.

This two book novel had me engrossed with the story line learning the fate of Laila. A storyline full of gruesome crimes, twists and turns, thriller and suspense with unexpected love & bravery.

One to definitely Read!

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### **Sammy ?? says**

4 Bittersweet Stars

I'm going to review both books in this series as one. I read these back to back because I had to know the outcome. I'm a big fan of Dark Romance. I love how fast paced they are, that they hit a lot of emotions and that there's always someone to have a love/hate battle with.

Laila hasn't heard from her brother Ethan in weeks, since their parents died they got into a routine of checking in with each other twice a week. After going to the police and getting nowhere Laila decides to take matters into her own hands. Armed with flyers of her brothers face, she goes in search of the only family she has left.

While asking locals for information, little does she know she's playing into the hands of the enemy. Waking up in the boot of a car Laila assumes the worse, but what lies ahead is far worse than anyone could imagine.

The Florez family are Mexico's most feared. Dealing in everything from Drugs to human trafficking they will stop at nothing to get what they want. After Ethan betrayed them, they go after the one thing that will bring him out of hiding his sister Laila.

Juan Florez is the Cartel prince. Growing up in a house of sex and violence, he's one sick individual. When he sets eyes on Laila he becomes obsessed, the need to possess her fuelling his twisted mind.

Aiden was taken in by the Florez family after the brutal murder of his parents when he was 7 years old. He's learnt to block out the criminal activity going on around him, that is until the feisty blonde turns up and everything within him wants to fight to save her.

I loved Laila, that girl was no walk over, she fought tooth and nail to survive the horrific events during her stay at the Florez Mansion.

After a month there's still no word on Ethan and Hector the head of the Cartel family gets impatient, revealing the only way to settle the score will be to sell Laila as a sex slave. Aiden knowing full well how sick and twisted these people are, he volunteers to train her in her new role. What neither of them dreamed of was that they would form a bond to escape the hell hole together.

This is a story that takes you on one hell of a journey. Although not as dark as some captive books I've read in the past it's defiantly one that made me question my own sanity, because why on earth would I find myself taking a liking to Juan. Don't get me wrong I loved Aiden and for me he was perfect for Laila, but the way Melissa Jane portrays Juan had my evil smile showing it face.

Secrets, betrayal and murder are just a few of the things that make this series great. Melissa Jane is another Author I'll be adding to my rapidly growing list of new releases to look out for.

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## She Hearts Books says

I couldn't wait to read this book after the end of Little Doll. I wanted to see what was going to happen next

with Laila. She is now on the run with Aiden who has taken her from the cartel. Of course Juan isn't going to just let her go, so he is chasing them down to get her back and kill Aiden.

This book is pure action from beginning to end. Melissa keeps you on the edge of your seat wondering what Aiden is doing and if Laila will ever be free of this nightmare. She will find out a secret that changes everything including her desire to kill Aiden. I won't even tell you what it is except to say that I was totally shocked when it was revealed. Love that about this book.

I give Crimson Desert 5 hearts!

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