



The Reckoning

Jana Deleon

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In a tiny bayou town with far too many wicked secrets, the sudden disappearance of a six-year-old girl is a mystery Sheriff Holt Chamberlain is determined to solve. But teaming up with Alexandria Bastin is a complication he didn't expect. Nor is he prepared to collide with the dark side of Cajun culture—and his own troubled past. The frantic search leads them to a place said to hold magic, an eerie island where Alex is also working her charm on him. At one time, he'd been forced to leave her brokenhearted. And now, dangerously close to the truth, he'll do anything to protect her from the evil that surrounds them—an evil that might hold the key to sending a little girl home....

The Reckoning Details

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From Reader Review The Reckoning for online ebook

Kim Hammond-beyer says

Good for harlequin

Had been on a DeLeon reading binge, somehow didn't catch that this was a barbecuing romance book. Still ok for what it is

Dawn says

normally really enjoy Jana Deleon, not sure if i will read the rest of this series.

Melody says

Alex's niece has been kidnapped and the lazy sheriff thinks she was taken but her father. but Alex, with the help of the sheriff's nephew is determined to find her. The kidnapping is reminiscent of the disappearance of 3 little girls years earlier. They find one of her barrettes on the mysterious doll island and then they find her father's leg in the jaws of an alligator. And someone is shooting at them. Small town's have secrets and sometimes the person least expected may hold dark secrets and motives.

Marjorie says

Alexandria Bastin comes to Mystere Parrish when her cousin's daughter goes missing. Acting Sheriff Holt Chamberlin must now investigate the disappearance even though his uncle keeps telling him there is nothing to it. Holt and Alexandria were high school sweethearts but he went into the Army while she has become a psychologist. Together, they must find the niece. Add the bayou, a woman with potions, guns, and dead bodies and you have one great read!

Wendy Sparrow says

Occasionally you stumble across an author and you immediately have to find and devour all that author has written...as soon as you can...like within a week. This series was a find. It has just the right amount of creepy and paranormal aspects to keep you hunched over the book anxiously, but not so much that you can't sleep at night. I loved the doll island. Soooooo awesomely freaky. The settings are so well-visualized that you feel like you're there. You can tell the author is very familiar with the area.

Definitely read these in order:

1. The Reckoning
2. The Vanishing
3. The Awakening

The romance in this is believable and sweet. This author definitely goes light on graphic details so you don't have to worry about sharing this series with a friend and them clutching their pearls and passing out.

I like to include my favorite lines and I really liked this one because it had a nice, powerful, dramatic flavor to it:

"Oh, honey." Sarah sighed. "You two are the most stubborn people I know. Almost as bad as me. Promise me that you won't let pride get in the way if it's possible for you and Holt to have a future."

"Pride? I gave up on pride ten years ago when I begged him not to leave. This isn't pride. It's survival."

Carmen says

"It's there, isn't it?" Sarah's voice sounded from the doorway, causing her to jump. "The crow. You saw it."

There was no point in lying. Alex was certain the look on her face had already given everything away.

"On a branch just outside the window."

"It's toying with us," Sarah said, a blush rising up her neck and onto her face. "Bring my baby back!" She strode across the bedroom and yanked the drape completely back.

Alex gasped in horror as Sarah screamed.

The doll Alex had seen on the island sat on the branch where the crow used to be.

This book won the Romantic Times Book Review Harlequin Intrigue Reader's Choice Award in 2012.

Like most books in Harlequin's Intrigue line, this is a perfectly adequate mystery novel, but less satisfying as a romance novel.

Alex is a psychiatrist. Her cousin Sarah's 6-year-old daughter Erika has been kidnapped.

Holt is a stand-in deputy. He ran away from Alex and her love for him 10 years ago.

Ten years ago, he'd run away to war - the one place he could be certain his past couldn't follow him.

Now, after returning from 10 years in Afghanistan, Holt's shocked to find that seeing Alex after all these years still affects him deeply.

Alex and Holt team up to locate little Erika, searching the spooky bayous for any clue.

...

This book has a strong creep-factor, with supernatural goings-on and voodoo practitioners living in the swamp. We have creepy dolls - there's a whole island called Doll Island where a woman who practices voodoo lives. She has tied dolls to the branches of plants all over the island. It's very creepy. Dolls in the mud, dolls on the trees, dolls everywhere.

And this doll's eyes were closed.

Alex felt her pulse racing in her temples. She took another deep breath and before she could change her mind, stepped onto the bank. The instant her foot made contact with the ground, the doll's eyes flew open.

We have crows, everywhere, seemingly following people and watching them.

"And then there was the crow."

"What crow?"

"It was on the clothesline outside Erika's bedroom window every morning for the last week when I went in to wake her. I closed the blinds and went outside to shoo it away, but every morning, it was right back in place."

Sarah shivered. "Last night, I heard a noise out back. I looked out the kitchen window and could make out the outline of the crow just sitting there. Like it was watching her, even though the blinds were closed."

And don't forget creepy dead crows:

The porch light didn't reach very far into the backyard, but its reach was beyond the carefully groomed flower beds. Alex could see the dark shadows lying at random on the lawn. All about the same size. The size of a crow.

We have gigantic alligators who occasionally eat people.

That's when Holt saw that it had something bloody clasped in its jaws. He sucked in a breath when he realized it was a human leg.

And voodoo practitioners who enjoy living on a private island where no one bothers them.

Something had happened to Alex and Sarah many years ago in that swamp - something they refused to tell Holt about, but something that scared them so badly it had changed them permanently.

...

The mystery was much stronger than the romance here. Seeing as a six-year-old girl was missing, I spent a good portion of the book silently praying that this wasn't going to turn out to be a book about a pedophile. I hate reading about pedophiles. (view spoiler)

The mystery is good for a Harlequin, well woven together and definitely kept me guessing.

...

The characters: Deleon just plunges us into a completely developed town with completely developed characters who already have complicated backstories and complicated relationships with each other. You are going to feel like you missed some books - but you haven't.

The best parts of the books were some of the conversations between Alex and Holt.

She checked the clip for the third time that morning, then slipped the gun back into the pocket, zipping it tight.

"I don't remember nines when we were kids," Holt commented. "Or is that something you picked up in the big city?"

"Actually, it belongs to Ms. Maude. I paid her a visit last night after I got Sarah to sleep."

"Ms. Maude? The crazy old cat lady on Miller Lane?"

"No. Ms. Maude, who likes cats, whose father was a Precision Military Weapons Specialist and who happens to have a target gallery in her barn."

"That explains a lot," Holt said, "especially about her single status."

"So what you're saying is that Ms. Maude might have married if all the men in Vodoun weren't a bunch of wimps?"

"I think it's safer if I don't say anything at all."

I was laughing. But there aren't too many cute scenes like that - more mystery.

...

THE ROMANCE

Well, there wasn't much of one - it takes a backseat to mystery, here. The reason that Deleon made Holt and Alex ex-lovers who had been together 10 years ago was so that you could believe it when they sleep together now and she doesn't have to build up a relationship or feelings in a short time-frame. Making the MCs have "a past" with each other makes it neat and allows her to focus more on the mystery.

The characters are fine - I didn't feel that they were shallow or slapped together, but on the other hand, neither one was endearing themselves to me.

Holt was fine until he decides to have sex with Alex - the woman he walked out on ten years ago, leaving for the army with no explanation as to why he was breaking up with her.

He'd known from the first moment he'd seen her again that his feelings were real. That time had only made them stronger, not diminished them as he'd figured would happen. But his return into her life was at the worst possible time. Even a woman as strong as Alex couldn't make a good decision under this much stress.

The appropriate thing to do was back off and give her some room.

YOU ARE A MORON. How could you possibly think that "backing off" and "giving her some room" would possibly be a good idea after TAKING HER TO BED!?!?!? Yeah, women love that. <---sarcasm Having sex with her and then acting cool and distant is DEFINITELY the right way to go here. <-----sarcasm.

And our little genius decides to immediately enact his plan by LEAVING ALEX TO WAKE UP ALONE IN A COLD BED.

Alex rolled over in bed and reached out with her arm, but all she found in her reach was cold sheets.

**Carmen is seething with anger* You call yourself a man?! *Carmen sneers* You piece of trash. I hope an alligator eats you. Only a pathetic, weak coward would make love to a woman who is in love with him - after ten years of absence - and then sneak out of bed like a fucking slimeball so that she wakes up alone. What a scumbag.*

And then he has the NERVE to be confused as to why she is upset with him. ARE YOU STUPID?!?!?

"Whatever you think," he said, but she could tell that he was a bit put off and confused over her dismissal.

Argh! Grow a brain cell!

...

How's the sex, Carmen?

Well. There's only one sex scene and it's only one page long. That's a bad sign. Deleon doesn't go into much detail (and you know how I LOVE detail). At least they use condoms, although the condom bit is a bit weird.

He moaned when she took the length of him into her palm, and whispered, "Protection?"

Alex stepped away long enough to retrieve her purse from the nightstand and pull out a condom. "I'm a doctor. I'm always prepared."

This baffles me on many levels. Alex is a psychiatrist. If you think that being a psychiatrist means you always have condoms with you, I have some shocking news for you. And I am unclear about what one thing has to do with the other.

Perhaps she was making a joke? o.O

But oh well. At least condoms were used, and that's all that matters to me.

Here is pretty much the entire 'sex part' of sex. I'll put it under a spoiler so that people who don't want to read sex scenes don't have to.

Don't worry, it's nothing to get excited about.

(view spoiler)

Well, I don't know about you, but that did absolutely nothing for me. Not even a spark of excitement. Like I said, this is more of a mystery book than a romance book, and that's definitely reflected in the book's (one, lone) sex scene.

...

Tl;dr - If you want a creepy, slightly supernatural mystery that takes place in Louisiana's steamy bayous, then you've come to the right place. If you want a steamy romance novel, look elsewhere.

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THREE REAL STARS, TWO ROMANCE STARS Three real stars because it's a decent book, but only two romance stars because there's not much romance.

Not available in Spanish.

Kristin says

Predictable mystery/romance but well written. Jana DeLeon hasn't written a book I haven't liked.

Laura AKA Loves 2 Read Romance says

Vodoun Louisiana is a tiny town full of dark secrets, but when a six year old girl disappears Sheriff Holt Chamberlain is determined to uncover those secrets. What he didn't expect was to team up with Alexandria Bastin. Years ago Holt left her brokenhearted but the future of a little girl depends on Alex and Holt getting through the past. A past full of secrets that someone want to stay secret.

This is the first book of Jana Deleon's Mystere Parish series. The setting is good and the descriptions make you feel as if you are in the swamp. The book had some interesting tidbits about voodoo and the people who practice it.

Megan says

Love this author. hooked on her books

Debbie Heaton says

In DeLeon's romantic suspense novel, Sheriff Holt Chamberlain is determined to solve the disappearance of a six-year-old girl in his tiny bayou town. Teaming up with Alexandria Bastin is an unexpected complication that adds to the burden of dealing with the dark side of Cajun culture and his own troubled past.

The search for the missing girl leads them to an island said to hold magic. But magic sparks between the two of them reminding them of their past. Holt once broke Alex's heart but now as the truth looms on the horizon, he'll do anything to protect her from an evil they can't see.

Paula says

This started getting to dark for me. Not that it is very dark just not to my tastes. The writing was fine.

Marie says

I am going ahead and admitting defeat. I read about half but cannot go on. It's not the worst story ever, but it doesn't hold my attention. Though, I will admit, I didn't realize when I picked it up off the clearance shelf at

the bookstore, that I had grabbed a large print version. I didn't anticipate this being a problem, until I realized I was reading a page in 30 seconds and was constantly flipping a page with was breaking my concentration. I think I'll try this adventure again with another large print book and see if it's just the words per page ratio that bugs me, or if the story was really as boring as it came across.

Sarah says

Released October 1, 2012, *The Reckoning* is the first of a three book series being released by Harlequin Intrigue featuring the citizens of the creepy Mystere Parish in the steamy bayous of Louisiana. Jana Deleon is one of my favorite authors, and her new series has a great start, establishing Mystere Parish as a place of dark secrets, danger, and strange happenings.

The book starts with a bang, when Alex is called home from New Orleans by her cousin Sarah, whose daughter has been kidnapped. The police in their small hometown think Sarah's estranged husband has taken his daughter, but Alex believes Sarah that a stranger must have taken her. As a psychiatrist Alex quickly prescribes something for Sarah, believing she needs help to stay calm and deal with the situation. I thought that was a little arrogant on Alex's part, and it took me longer to warm up to her than I would have liked. The acting sheriff soon arrives, and it turns out he is none other than Holt Chamberlin, the man who broke Alex's heart ten years ago when he left her and joined the military. Seeing each other again after all those years gives both Alex and Holt a shock, triggering feelings both thought long gone. But their focus is on finding the little girl, and they soon realize that not only did her father not take her, but the kidnapper is someone local, someone they know.

They find evidence pointing to a spooky island inhabited by an old woman believed to be a witch, who was implicated in the disappearance of three little girls over thirty years ago. When Alex was a little girl she and Sarah went to the island on a dare, and saw something so horrifying that as an adult Alex is still terrified of the place. Adding to the creepy atmosphere is the strange, watchful presence of crows, and the sinister appearance of dolls.

Alex is a strong, capable heroine, who is focused on supporting her cousin Sarah and finding her little girl. She is determined not to let her feelings for Holt show, believing that he has not changed much over the years. But Holt is no longer the same boy who ran away from both Alex and his father's legacy, and as they work together their feelings are rekindled.

Jana Deleon is great at blending mystery, romance, and a touch of the paranormal. Her stories have well-developed characters who have complicated histories. Her settings are like an additional character, because they are so vivid and real. When I read her books I feel like I can see, smell and hear the sounds of the swamps and the small towns.

Joy Byrd says

loved it and am enjoying the series.

Sandra Rae says

I think this is a great winning Gothic mystery that will keep you reading. A great story that kept me intrigued. would have liked it to be longer.
