



## Carry Me Home

*Rosalind James*

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## **Carry Me Home** Rosalind James

Paradise, Idaho, may not be the largest town, but for newly minted professor Zoe Santangelo, it's the first step on the path to her big break. After teaching in a small Idaho school, her next stop is the Ivy League, and no one is going to stand in her way. She'll do what it takes to move up, to protect her students from a creepy campus stalker—and to protect her heart from Cal Jackson, the hot, hunky cowboy who keeps coming to her rescue.

After a career-ending injury, Cal has left professional football behind and come home to work the family farm. He's determined not to get mixed up with any more city girls who don't want to settle down with a country boy. But after he rescues sassy geologist Zoe from a snowy ditch, he can't stop thinking about her. Can Cal keep Zoe safe from whoever is targeting her—and can he show her that having ambition doesn't mean she has to sacrifice love?

## **Carry Me Home Details**

Date : Published June 16th 2015 by Montlake Romance

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Author : Rosalind James

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Genre : Romance, Romantic Suspense, Contemporary Romance, Contemporary, Suspense

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## From Reader Review Carry Me Home for online ebook

### Monique says

Review written: June 16, 2015

Star Rating: ★★???

Heat Rating: TBD

*I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. I was not compensated for my review, and I was not required to write a positive review. The opinion expressed here is my own. The Advanced Reader Copy (ARC) of this book was received free via Netgalley.*

I'm a long time reader of James' Escape to New Zealand series which I like a lot. This book is nothing like those. Where the New Zealand books have a breezy and relaxed authorial voice, this is taut and fraught. Where those books may address issues, they are not the dominant focus of the books; here it is. Where they are stories where locale is as much a characters as people, this is not true here.

I honestly struggled with this book. One of the things James does well in her other books is break down stereotypes. Here it felt like stereotypes were used extensively, and not broken down. While as people, I liked Zoe and Cal, both had a tendency to say things that felt more like "As the author, I'm going to put these words in your mouth now". I'm not even sure they really felt three dimensional. And I hate saying this about a book by an author who is an autobuy for me.

The bad guy was... mediocre, and yes, that is a pet peeve of mine so he was probably on target for most people, just not me. I also had it figured out very early on; yes, another pet peeve. Zoe was a geek, who still has a chip on her shoulder about it. Cal was... you know, honestly, it felt like Cal was made for Zoe. He was the exception that proves the rule: a jock who is also a brain, not a cheater, not cruel, just ordinary. And that kind of ruined him as a character for me. Even when he got mad and hurt, he was so incredibly gentle about it, as if somehow he had to bend over backwards to be the "nice, sweet, gentle, philanthropist, ex-jock with a bleeding heart". It felt fake.

I did like the sexy banter between Zoe and Cal. That was a nice slow burn that really ramped up the sexy. James always gets the sexy banter just right. Overall, I'd say that if you are generally not into romantic suspense and really like the Escape to New Zealand series, this is a book you might like, but it is very, very different from those books.

(view spoiler)

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*This review is ©June 2015 by Monique N. and has been posted to Netgalley and crossposted to Amazon.*

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### Procyon says

(I received an advance copy of this book, in exchange for an honest review [neither fear nor favor!]).

Although I enjoyed the suspense, I think the thing I liked best about this book (well, aside from Cal and Zoe's blossoming relationship and the teary-eyed culmination of same) was that James invests her Paradise, Idaho setting with the kind of authenticity that makes the place feel real. This is not just a lot of busy arm-waving over some tractors and wheat fields, it's more like taking you to a real place, one where nature can be brutally hostile and achingly beautiful at the same time and where everybody knows each other, and each other's business, upside-down and inside-out -- and that's both a good thing and a bad thing. In this particular small town, there's also a college and, rather more alarmingly, a creepy psychopath with a planning fetish. So they've got that going for them.

The plot revolves around Zoe Santangelo, a geology professor at the college, a newcomer to the area, and a woman who's let her career aspirations pretty much drive her whole life. Cal Jackson is the local-boy-made-good in the NFL, where more than just his shoulder got busted up, and he's now returned to the farmhouse his great-grandad built and the town he grew up in. After a bit of a rocky start, Zoe and Cal start to click pretty nicely, and you get to enjoy their deepening relationship for a while, including some considerable steaming up of the faculty-office windows, until... well, I don't wanna go to Spoilertown here, so let's just say there are Problems, even aside from Creepy Psycho Dude.

There's an action-sequence climax, which is quite well done (would make a good movie scene, if they ever filmed this). But it's really the emotional climax you're reading a book like this for -- the drama after the drama, so to speak. And that's really the highlight of the book. If you can wring an emotional response from me, you're doing pretty good, and this book did that in spades. Can't recommend it enough, if you like sexy, heart-tuggy romance set in smalltown America.

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## Jessica's Totally Over The Top Book Obsession says

**4 This was life. This was living Stars.**

**\*Spoilers\***

**"But I wasn't counting on this place. I wasn't counting on you. Who knew I'd be such a sucker for a take-charge guy with a kind heart?"-Zoe**

**"Now, don't drop anything in my beer while I'm gone, Professor," he told Zoe. "I know you want my body, but control yourself. I'll do most things if I'm asked nicely."-Cal**

Okay so I actually read this series out of order and read the 2nd book first. I got the 2nd book, Luke's story from Netgalley, loved it so much that I had to go back and buy the first one so I could get some yummy Cal. And Cal did not disappoint. I loved Cal, loved his sense of humor. My God the things he said. He had me laughing all through the book. I thought he was sexy, sweet, and playful. Cal had a heart of gold. I really liked Zoe too, but she drove me nuts at times. Zoe had some daddy issues. I could understand why she had the issues she had, and why she was so driven. But I love Cal and felt super protective of him so it annoyed me when she kept him at arms length hurting him, even if I liked her and could understand her.

**"Go on," he said. "Make me ridiculous. You can even win. I'll give you the trophy and tell you that you won. But I've been straight-up here. You're the one with a hidden agenda, and you can't even see it. You've been so busy assuming that you can't trust men, that you can't trust me, you've gone and**

**done the exact same thing to me you're always worrying about. You telling me you don't see that?"- Cal**

**"Well, I guess I haven't found that out yet. If I'm ever going to. I've worked for this all my life. I've planned for it. I want to be with you. I don't want to break up." If that was begging, too bad. She was begging. "But I can't just give up my dream, can't you see that?"-Zoe**

I loved Cal's parents and of course I loved all the Luke I got in this book. Mmmm the yummy Jackson brothers. I would like for Rochelle, Zoe's best friend to get a book. The plot was great. I had no clue who the bad guy was. I thought it was one guy for almost the whole book, and was shocked when it was someone else. I really enjoyed this book, just not as much as the 2nd one. I really like Rosalind James writing style. I am so glad I found her book Hold Me Close on Netgalley, now I have new beloved author to stalk, and more awesome books of hers to discover.

**"Okay," he said, "I won't. I won't tell you that I've got this real dirty little fantasy about sitting right here in this chair, putting you over my knee, flipping up that pretty blue sweater dress of yours, and giving you the spanking of your life while you wriggle under my hand. I'll just keep that one right off the table. So to speak. Because the desk might figure into it again, too. I'd have to look at what I did, wouldn't I? While I did.....everything else."-Cal**

<http://jessicasoverthetopbookobsessio...>

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## **CD {Boulder Blvd} says**

I've renamed this title to Bait and Switch. We are set up with a serious minded, career oriented college professor. She's female and she has successfully established her career in the science field of geology. And she is "presented" as this role model for female students. This should be all kinds of good, but... And there's always a "but".

Some story line spoilers here, but I won't give away who the stalker is.

And this is where the switch comes in. This is where this story went all kinds of wrong for me.

She's really not what is presented. She's daddy's little girl trying to make daddy happy with a career he's helped her choose. She is then presented as too stupid to know what she really wants career wise. In fact maybe she really doesn't want to advance in the career as the "boyfriend" Cal has to rightfully show her, she really wants to be a wife and mother and teach. (It's the only way to have good "print" on a tombstone.) She goes from being what daddy wanted for her to being want the boyfriend wanted for her. So, hey - we need a new role model here.

And it's a really bad presentation of switching because Cal is all kinds of bad "hero" material. He's presented as this awesome hometown hero who made good in the NFL, got injured and came home to be a farmer that looks out for his community. But, you have to fit into the buckets he creates for you. Zoe is too stupid to be able to dress herself. Poor helpless little Zoe. She has to have Cal sneak in a dress that miraculously shows up in her friend's closet so she can borrow it. Her clothing choices aren't good enough for Cal. She has to look the part of his arm candy. This is all kinds of wrong. It isn't for her, it's for him. And he becomes sneaky and not up front to do it. And now that she's dressed the part, then yeah she instantly falls into his bed. Let's

not worry about the fact that they really don't know each other. I skipped the sex scenes as the build-up to them was anything but sexy.

And then just to make sure we take the notch of her professionalism down even further, Cal just shows up at the University, audits her class and then bangs her in her office. Skipped this sex scene as well as I was pretty well fuming by this time. This might as well have been some billionaire CEO banging his assistant and I totally try to skip those type of stories.

And the punch line - after banging her in her office they run into another professor who talks about Zoe's career track is to end up as a research professor at a more prestigious school. And Cal he's all kinds of furious for her not telling him that she's not the little woman who will simply drop everything for him. Except they never had a discussion about her career because everything has been about him. But yeah, he blames her and she accepts the blame. He is so not the hero type. Just another alpha caveman pounding his chest.

And why haven't they had this discussion - because most of their dialogue has been rather juvenile and definitely not that of getting to know each other and what their dreams are. In fact, Cal and Zoe's dialogue is about the worst dialogue in the book. Next to Cal pounding his chest and demanding answers and information so he can determine who the stalker/rapist is.

Could the story have been good. Definitely! It had all the potential. Solid suspense plot - though not enough time was spent on it. In fact having Cal bluster about demanding information definitely falls outside of a good suspense story line. Solid secondary characters. I really like Amy who was to be the first victim that we are introduced to. She fights and surprises the stalker. It's always good to have a baseball bat and a good swing. Even Zoe is given a couple of good defensive moves against the stalker. But in the end the story failed by not focusing on what makes a strong story (good suspense and character development) but following the too cliché antics and less than desirable actions of the lead characters. The story had 4 star potential but just scraped 2 stars.

In the end she has to change for him. She has to give up "stuff" and be who he wants. He doesn't have to change a thing about himself throughout the whole story. He gets to stay the spoiled selfish little boy.

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**Dorsey aka ♥? Wrath Lover Reviews ♥? says**

### ***3.5 Cowboy Loving Stars!!***

This is a new to me author and I enjoyed this romantic/suspense story even if I found it somewhat predictable. The author kept me interested and I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the main and secondary characters.

Zoe is a professor at a small college in Paradise Idaho and Cal is an ex Pro Football Player who returns home

to Paradise after a career ending injury and takes over the family farm. Cal and Zoe meet after he comes to her aid when she's in a car accident during bad weather, soon they are running into each other often and the attraction they feel is too strong for either of them to ignore.

Zoe finds danger in this small town when one of her students is attacked and nobody but Cal takes her seriously. Zoe is not the type of person to let thing lie and bulldozes her way into making campus officials take action....Now she's the one on danger and Cal makes it his business to protect Zoe even as their relationship hits a snag.

I'm looking forward to more Paradise, Idaho books, next up is Hold Me Close, I'm not sure who's book this will be but I'm hoping it's Lucas' (Cal's brother)!!!

\*I purchased this Audio book because it is narrated by two of my favorite narrators Natalie Ross and Phil Gigante, and was not disappointed, as always they gave a 5 Star performance!!!

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### **Laura L says**

I was given an advance copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. I was not compensated or required to write a positive review. The opinions expressed are my own.

I have read and enjoyed all of Rosalind James' books, and was excited to see her switch to a romantic suspense genre for this book. Two things to note: I almost skipped this book because I was unsure of the ex football player, farmer character, and the setting in a part of the country that I do not have real fond memories of. Sometimes I shy away from romantic suspense because I do not like graphic violence.

Having said those two things, let me tell you, I loved this book! Cal was a well developed character, who did not fit my football player stereotypes, which Zoe seemed to hold as well. I really liked that the women in the story were not weak victims who made stupid decisions to get into the situations that caused harm. Zoe and Amy were smart take charge women.

Rosalind did a fantastic job of incorporating the life balance for career women. I loved the part where Zoe's Dad offered to pay to get her eggs harvested and frozen so she could keep her career on track. We were just talking at work about how companies are offering that to their employees. And, the way Zoe fought to bring the attention of college rape, and law enforcement's response into the story was very topical. I have 2 daughters in college, and it is something I worry about every day.

Whenever there is a dog or cat in a book, I worry about if they will be a victim, just like that one character in a movie who you know will meet his demise. So I must say, I love Junior and his instincts and he made it through the story.

I absolutely loved Zoe, Cal and the supporting characters in this book (who I hope we see more of in future books). Zoe had a career path in mind, and I really like how that path changed when she realized she loved teaching and did not want to give that up for research. Instead of her deciding to stay because of Cal. You could feel the love of Cal's parents and brother, and how they supported and influenced his decisions in subtle way. Okay, so Luke was flat out funny with his dialog with Cal sometimes, and was a well written sibling interaction.

Looking forward to more romantic suspense books from Rosalind James, especially if we get to see more of the characters from this book. Even the one bad guy, if it means karma catches up with him.

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### ♥Rachel♥ says

Zoe is focused on the goals drilled into her by her father, a completely selfish man, IMO, and doesn't know how love and family can fit in. That's okay she has Cal to help her with that. He's funny, confident and successful, even though Zoe misjudges him at first they soon click. Good thing because Cal is exactly who you want in your corner when you have a stalker after you. There was a lot of sexy, fun banter, but this story was a turns scary, and the end had me on the edge of my seat! The mystery of who is behind it all is good and kept me guessing!

Review also posted at The Readers Den.

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### Glamdring says

#### **\*Buddy listening with B\***

Phil Gigante... <333333

**\*DNF - I managed to hold on until chapter 7, I think. I really couldn't bother the extra concentration to keep up between the too many flashbacks and back to present time switches... Also, the author didn't manage to keep me interested in her characters, which is a pity because the duet of narrators is my favorite one.**

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### Obsidian says

I freaking loved Rosalind James Escape to New Zealand series. The last two books were not as great as what came before, but I still loved all of the books though. I was hoping her new series would be just as great as Escape to New Zealand, but this Paradise, Idaho series is definitely not going to be for me I think.

The prologue shows a college girl named Amy driving and realizing that she is being followed by someone in a truck. She's scared and runs into a store and hides. We change perspective and realize that Amy was right to be scared because someone is stalking her and means to rape her.

From there we transition to chapter 1, named "In the Ditch". We have college professor Zoe Santangelo who is on her way to teach her class. She hits black ice and ends up in a ditch. A strange men pops up at her door and acts like an ass when she doesn't roll down her window right away and rebuffs his offer of help and instead reaches out to Triple A. Then a cop shows up and tells her she should let the stranger help her (his name is Cal) and takes off.

I am going to tell you right now, this probably was not a good book for me to read in my current mindset. There is a lot of not all men crap happening throughout this book that ticked me off and there is a lot of

stupid stereotypes revolving "geeks" and "jocks". The topic of rape comes up a lot, and also consent, and oh how Zoe needs to just give up her dream because Cal wants to marry her and have kids and acts like the whiniest thing that ever lived when she doesn't fall all over herself to do what he wants.

Oh, I hated Cal. I should say that right up front.

This book goes back and forth between Amy (college student), Zoe, Cal, and the rapist's points of view. This book is listed as romantic suspense, but no, there was very little romance in it. And when the topic of rape is in a book, it didn't make me all warm and fuzzy about Cal and Zoe either. I think that Rosalind James wanted it both ways, but it didn't really work as a romance novel at all.

I wish we had stayed with Amy more in this book because she trusts her feelings that something is not quite right and feels more and more like someone is watching her. I totally cheered when James wrote the scene where Amy got the upper hand on the rapist and loved it even more when she realized her boyfriend who was not supporting her, was not the guy for her.

I liked Zoe a lot. She is a no nonsense geology professor specializing in water found in rocks. Her dream is to teach in Paradise, Idaho for a few years and go to a big research college like UCLA one day. She has divorced parents that I really didn't get too big a handle on except her father is a cold fish and her mother is a hopeless romantic. When Zoe first meets Cal she is justifiable standoffish because hey she's a woman on the side of the road with a guy she doesn't know. I have never rooted against a guy so hard while reading a book, but I did root against Cal.

Cal sucked. He is a former football player, turned farmer who is still nursing his wounds from his ex wife cheating on him and then leaving him for one of his teammates. Cal is offended that Zoe doesn't trust him right away and that she is suspicious of him. He makes a quip about how safe Paradise is and then we of course go to Amy and her stalking so I think that was James way of showing how foolish he is, but seriously. He does a whole He-Man will protect his woman thing when he and Zoe get together (of course they do) and he realizes she may be in danger. And I hate how he talks about how he hates how she dresses all of the time. It wasn't cute. He wants her to dress sexy and if she was doing it for her then I would have been okay with it. But there is a scene where he picks out a dress for her to wear when they go out (he buys it without her permission) that made me want to stab that guy in his neck a thousand times.

We have some secondary characters I am sure going to be the characters in book #2, but I am not going to get into them here because I am not reading book #2.

The writing wasn't that great. I think I was supposed to be thinking how cute and sexy Cal was but all I thought was what a jerk he was always. I liked reading about geology and I liked how Zoe taught. But I did hate one of her lectures about geeks growing up to be beautiful, wonderful, smart, and rich. So if these kids don't end up like that, they are failures? She sets up this geeks versus jocks thing that doesn't work. And we also have thrown in how a jock frat boy raped her college roommate and friend so that is supposed to show why Zoe hates all jocks? I don't know, it didn't make sense to me. I think it should have shown why Zoe was careful around men and even though she got not all men do that, she was still careful to ensure that she was safe.

Also there is some crap from Cal about when you die that your tomb says what's most important about you so he seriously says to Zoe that beloved wife and mother is most important. I literally screamed so if I am not married or have kids screw me then? He sucks.

The flow was awful throughout this book. I think because we had so many POVs we were flashing to. Also you had to not paid attention at all to not realize who the rapist is. I was the least surprised person ever.

The setting of Paradise never comes alive for me at all like New Zealand did for me. There didn't seem to be a lot to do besides drinking and going to a bar, or going to someone's home.

The ending sets up a HEA that I honestly wish didn't occur. I think it would have been better for the couple to realize that Zoe's dream was still valid and she could still take a couple of years to go to a bigger school and achieve her dream. Instead the whole book was about her turning from what her father wanted for her for years to turning to what Cal wanted. Didn't seem like a step up to me at all.

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## **Literati Literature Lovers says**

### **Solidly Written Romantic Suspense**

I borrowed both the audio book and kindle edition via kindle unlimited. If you aren't a member I do recommend this as a definite purchase, you won't waste your money. First the suspense part is good and has enough tension to have kept me riveted. The romance is a grown up one, no insta love and actually some real problems not just made up ones filled with bogus misunderstandings. I was getting tired of romances and wasn't feeling the character's connections. The formula was stale, as most contained insta love and woman that I found too naive to connect with. James wrote a strong woman in Zoe, and yes Cal is an alpha, but a flirty alpha with a sense of humor and a kind heart. So in this book you have two alpha personalities falling in love over time, add the danger and viola a book that isn't a waste of money. The audio book version was very good with a male narrator doing the male parts and a female doing the female voices. Well worth the listen.

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## **fleurette says**

I have some mixed feelings about this book. This was my first from this author and definitely not the last one.

The beginning is great, fast and interesting. It got my attention. But then either the story slowed down and started to drag a bit either I lost my mood for this book. The first one third I read very fast and that stopped in the middle. Fortunately, somehow the last one third was again a fast read for me. So, yeah, I'm not really sure where is the problem.

The characters are one of the best thing of this story. Zoe and Cal are great and I really enjoyed the interaction between them. I like it when the hero is softer and romantic than heroine, it's a refreshment after all those typical alpha men. Also, the reason behind their split is quite believable. I totally liked the secondary characters and they are the reason I read the other books in this series. For a moment I wished for Rochelle and Luke to be together but now I think that it is okay that either of them has his/her own story.

The suspense part is okay. I wish it was a bit more developed. But it is generally okay while not being very innovative.

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## **Sparkymom says**

I can't remember ever reading anything by this author before, but the preview on Net Galley sounded

interesting. It turns out I'm really glad I requested an early copy. The story had great characters. I especially enjoyed Cal's dialog. He was really amusing and was a great counterpart to serious Zoe.

Zoe is a college geology professor in a very small town. While she takes an interest in her students, she mainly has her eyes on the prize her father has pushed her toward for most of her life, an ivy league professor position and the academic accolades to go with it. Cal is the small town football hero who made it big but came back home. He values his family and is trying to make the family farm profitable and help better his community. The two first meet when Zoe runs off the road in the snow and Cal stops to help. Cal sees something he likes in the prim buttoned up professor and pursues her full out. Zoe is too career focused to give him much of her attention but finds herself liking him nonetheless. When Zoe finds herself helping a student who was attacked and almost violated, she places herself in the attacker's crosshairs. Cal finds himself unable to stay away from Zoe and ends up doing everything he can to protect her and win her over.

The story had many ups and downs and hints to throw the reader off course. I really enjoyed reading it. I hope Cal's equally amusing brother, Luke, gets his own story. I would love to check it out!

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### **book\_luv\_r says**

I love how this author writes. Unfortunately, this is the second book in this series that I didn't love the female lead character. Zoe is so boring. What the heck does Cal see in her? Take me back was so much better than books 1 and 3. Going to read number 2 now. Out of order, I know...

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### **Blacky \*Romance Addict\* says**

I don't know how to rate this...

romance - 3 stars

suspense - 1 star

narration by Phil and Natalie - 5 stars

These two should do every audio EVER!!!!

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### **maggieandteddy says**

I've read Rosalind James' Escape to New Zealand books & loved all of them.

What a surprise to read Carry Me Home, set in Idaho. I appreciate the fact that it's winter- SNOW and ICE all over the place. Fluffy, puffy snow. Sorry... I live in SoCal, so I went into a wintry scenic trance. Ms James sure does paint (write) a pretty picture(book) setting....

Anyway, I know that it could have taken place in summer or winter. Nope. Idaho--the story has to start out cold and the characters have to deal with it. The people of Paradise, Idaho know how. Not Zoe, she's a recent transplant from California. She does spend some time sliding on the ice. Zoe is an assistant professor of Geology at the local college. She's very intelligent and capable in a male dominated field. Outside the classroom she's a little backward in the dating department. The Geology department secretary, Rochelle is her funny bff and is supportive when Zoe wants to get out there and have fun, then go back to her teaching

and research. Zoe meets Cal. Cal comes to the rescue-of course there's chemistry. I loved the lines that Cal comes up with. Not too smooth at all. He tells Zoe to keep wearing Rochelle's clothes! Zoe has schoolmarm taste in clothes. Rochelle has dresses that are figure flattering. I was getting used to the back & forth flirt-sparring. The story then went into suspense mode with a stalker/mugger on campus. Around 40% or so, the suspense built up. I think that it kept Zoe and Cal from getting closer- for a while. I wish that could have been reversed and have the suspense built up a little later in the story. One of my favorite parts of the entire book is JUST WHEN YOU THINK THEIR GONNA.... Cal's ex shows up! Don't worry Cal is brilliant. One of the best damn "tell offs" that I've ever read. Cal is a great guy and he's so sweet to Zoe-but boy does he ever tell his ex WHAT FOR! This is near the beginning of the book, so whew, we got that out of the way! The romance/smexy time is worth the wait but not until after the 50% point.

This is 3rd person POV, alternating Zoe and Cal, and small parts 3rd person POV with the mystery/unknown stalker's POV. I thought that was a great tension builder. Ms James, you surprised me with the Bad Guy's ID! There's also a role reversal where the h is the ambitious one and the H is the one that is all set to plant to his roots and stay put.

I liked the ending, and the epilogue. I wish that there was more into the future, but I'm sure that there will be another story with another couple. Luke (Cal's brother) and?? (Rochelle??).

I'm giving this 4.5 to 5 stars, cuz I love RJ's writing and I really enjoyed this one!

ARC provided by NetGalley. I gave my honest review.

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