



## A Fiery Baptism

*Lynne Graham*

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Why had Rafael Alejandro come back?

In the five years since her marriage ended, Sarah Alejandro has kept herself and her beloved twins out of the lime light and away from men like her husband. But now he's walked back into her life with the same whirlwind of passion that he once ruthlessly used to seduce her.

Rafael hasn't changed, he's still the thrillingly dangerous man she fell in love with. But Sarah won't let the desire that still burns between them ignite—she can't. Not if she is to keep her heart from going up in flames...again!

## **A Fiery Baptism Details**

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### abbra\_kadabra says

nothing new

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### boogenhagen says

Re A Fiery Baptism - Lynne Graham's fourth HP outing is a bit too realistic. It is very a dramatic story of young love gone wrong that gets a second chance.

There is lots and lots of LG's little tropes in this one, but at this stage of her writing they are mostly little seeds that have yet to bloom.

The story on this one is that the H and h met and married when she was 18 and he was in his early twenties and both of them were clearly not ready to be married. As the h says at one point, the H wanted to take her to bed and the only way he could get her there was to marry her. (This is a big LG trope for future reference.)

Which is funny that the h actually says that, because the sex between then was horrible. So if the H HAD gotten the h to try a tower of power ride prior to the nuptials, there wouldn't be a story here cause the h would have dumped him like yesterday's trash and probably joined a nunnery.

But moving on, the h and H marry and WWIII breaks out between the controlling H and the h's controlling parents. Her mother claims to be ill and the h goes to help her, after the H issues the ultimatum them or him. This ultimatum comes AFTER the H summarily dumps her birth control and tells her she is getting preggers whether she wants to or not. So it is a pregger h that rushes to her mum's bedside.

Where her father promptly gets pictures of a woman coming out of the H's hotel room and then has the h committed when she refuses to agree to a divorce. (The h had fallen in her distress over the pictures and the father claimed the h tried to hurt herself and her child.) Nobody was listening to the h when pitted against her father's ownership of the mental health facility, so the h waited it out for ten weeks and then moved to Cornwall with her mother's sister and got herself a life free of controlling slime swillers.

Now five years on, the h goes to a party and has three months until her divorce is final. The H refused to sign or something and so the h is waiting the mandatory statute of limitations to get her decree nisi. The H is there too, with some tart climbing all over him - later we find another woman at the H's place wandering about in a skimpy robe, supposedly she is the wife of a friend, but all I can say is the H must be REALLY good friends with the guy from the way this woman acts and she is currently staying with the H as well.

Not that the h is alone either, she has a potential future dating partner with her, but their behavior is actually that of people getting to know each other and of course the h hasn't banged the equivalent of an entire cheerleading squad in the interim, the h had been chastely waiting for her final dissolution and raising twins.

So the H follows the h back to her home and sees the h's twins - (another LG trope that will get used a LOT in the coming years, if an LG h is preggers, just auto buy two of everything.) Now he is infuriated cause the H's father, who also never sent the h's letters begging for the H to return and help her, lied and told the H the h had terminated the pregnancy. Mr. Bully Pants takes yet ANOTHER opportunity to bully and berate the h and force her to move to Spain where his extremely wealthy family lives or her will take her children from her.

(At one point the h claims the H has never lied to her, yet this whole thing about being being wealthy was completely unknown to the h - which kinda decimates the h's later declaration. In my opinion lies by omission are still lies and the H never told the h anything that was actually pertinent to himself and his life, until he could use that to force the h to comply with his wishes.)

There is some roofie kisses in the meantime and the H is furious that the h has obviously had other lovers in the interim cause she is so responsive back. Of course the H only claims that he had ONE tiny little pumping moment himself when he thought the h had termed the baby, but honestly I wasn't buying that.

Mainly cause he had enough mojo to get the h's motor running and he did NOT have that in all the time they were married and living together. So obviously the man had been practicing, cause this Mr. Bully Pants was too arrogant to read a manual and never cared enough during the actual marriage to learn to please the h, he just did his thing and let her suffer.

(I can only guess in his lady buffet sampling he met a few women who actually demanded that he work to make them happy if he wanted to have fun - probably in exchange for exhibiting his art. Since his art career was paramount to him, I am sure he gave 110% to that effort. Whatever it was, it was way more than he ever gave the h. Until now. BTW - H's having bad sex with h's will also be a future LG trope too. )

So we all go to Spain where the h gets marginalized with her children as she has the very real fear that the H will find out about her mental health vacation and use that against her. (I gave absolute validity to that too, because this sewer slurper would have.)

The H's family is horrible and the H had the requisite abused childhood up bringing that he never thought to mention to the h for the two years they were together, but now it is all the H's and he is good at bullying and orders. The h quickly learns to either comply and accede to the H's demands or lose her children and she can get out.

Eventually after some mopey moments and some back and forth and some h attempts at seduction, the truth comes out about the parent's manipulation and the h's stay in the mental facility. The H is sorta, but not really sorry and the woman in the photo coming out of the H's hotel room shows up for lunch.

The H, now that he has the h thoroughly cowed and her children pretty much alienated from her, invites his mistress to lunch. Except we are supposed to believe that is his cousin and not his close cousin tart on the

side and that the H never slept with her and the h is a terrible person for believing that.

(Does anyone need me to interject about what I think about that statement here? Really could this h be fed any more mushroom fertilizer? \* The OW actually being a relative is another LG trope too.)

So now the h has to grovel and swear that if the H says the sky is green she will believe it, (which is the overriding trope in almost all LG novels, that the h trust the H unconditionally,) then she gets to have lunch with the tart cousin OW and the H. We leave the H carrying the h off to get srsly even more screwed than she already is and that is the HEA. Which I didn't and still don't buy.

Mainly cause it is a huge LG plot trope to make the H an utter sewer slurper for the first half of the book and then redeem him in the second half - it is actually something that LG is really, really good at, even when the H's blatantly cheat- but she failed on that for me here.

LG is a master at giving the reader enough of the H's inner revelations to show us the other side of the story and in later works, the H's are never afraid to say they are sorry or if they are not. Most of the time an LG H will never lie by either omission or commission- even when the truth hurts, so you know if the H says it, he means it.

AFB was a valiant effort, but she just missed the mark in this one and I did not find a believable HEA cause the H was not believable and he never got off the bullying tactics long enough to convince me he really cared about the h - he never took the time to find out what pleased HER - it was only ever about him and how she wronged him and would always be wrong if she wanted something the H did not.

Fortunately we are just getting started on traveling the LG continent of HPlandia. So it is good to know she DOES manage to carry off the change the H from nematode parasite to worthy H in future books and she DOES eventually navigate the tricky waters of an H who can't please the h in bed and successfully pull it off.

But all that is for the future voyages in HPlandia. For this point and time, AFB isn't a terrible book, it has some complicated and believable back story and some really very human but not necessarily likable characters. The story works, but we get better character redemption in future writings and so while I am not particularly keen on recommending this for an HPlandia outing, it could be considered okay if you run into it.

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## Roub says

this was not awful but the characters were not likeable !! both rafael n sara were not very nice people. rafael bullied her n was atrocious, appalling behaviour. he wanted her 2 choose bet him n her family, dats an impossible situation 4 any1. he cud not even pleasure his wife in the martial bed, he was too impatient n did not give her what she needed. as 4 sara, she was a mean lil rich n spoilt madam. she knew nthg abt life n i think her upbringing rendered her frigid. she needed therapy. i dunno how all of a sudden (after 5 years) she cud have mind-blowing sex wid rafael !! it's no wonder rafael thought she had been wid other men ! the bigger fault actually lied wid her. she had many flaws. she had no trust in her husband, she was mean. she never made the effort of contacting him 2 inform him dat they had twins. she shud have done dat if not 4 rafael but 4 the twins. u dunt deprive ur kids of their father if u love them. der she was selfish. she did not bother bcoz she thought rafael was having an affair. an unfaithful husband does not mean a sorry piece 4 a dad

## **sbf20112011 says**

Yay, a Lynne Graham reunion romance. Not her best, but it's been a while since I've read a new (to me -- this is an old book) Lynne Graham story, so I was happy to have one I hadn't read yet. Loved this one for the emotional tension and angst. Liked the angle of having an emotionally repressed heroine and a hero who was totally comfortable with his emotions. And definitely interesting to have a history where the heroine hadn't enjoyed sex with the hero -- I actually wish she had explored this more, or at least shown the hero more shocked/thrilled to have her responding, since I'd think it would have been quite damaging to an alphas male psyche not to have the heroine enjoy his lovemaking. Overall, a great read for Lynne Graham fans.

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## **Missy says**

An intense read.

Rafael and Sarah had fallen in love and married in Paris. But little did they understand each other and how to deal with it leading to misunderstandings and pain.

Sarah was brought up learning not to show her emotions and not to do improper things.....and being young and naive didn't know how to handle her very sexy passionate husband. Rafael's passionate nature overwhelms her leaving her feeling like a failure and not knowing how to be sexy in bed, leads her to believe he will cheat on her. Rafael's passionate and demanding nature lead him to take charge and do what he likes without her consent. All this leaves them open for anger and betrayal.

You can definitely feel their passion and love for each other and the heartache left behind. Even with Sarah learning to be independent for herself and the twins she still gets overwhelmed by Rafael. It takes Rafael sometime to figure out how to listen to what she actually is saying.

A very angsty intense passionate read.

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## **Lunadune says**

I am through with these books of amore. The complacency in the male leads and degradation of its female counterparts leave me with much contempt. I understand these books are a fantasy portrayal of romance to what is porn to men. But after the same old rote character development and scenario it leaves my brain a'drip with moisture from the last vestiges of wit.

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## **Dianna says**

Sarah is a single mother, raising four-year-old twins. She goes to a party with a nice almost boyfriend at her best friend's flat and there, for the first time in five years, she sees her famous artist husband Rafael.

He's with some blonde floosy model type, and he stares at Sarah, while she chats with her almost boyfriend. The blonde floosy climbs all over Rafael, and Sarah is very uncomfortable. She goes home. Rafael follows. He's in her flat, and out comes her daughter. Rafael takes one look at the child and knows that he has been

denied His Rights! He thought Sarah had an abortion! They're still married, and now he's going to do such things with lawyers that will make Sarah suffer for her terrible sins!!

So from Sarah's perspective, Rafael was a terrible husband. She met him in Paris when she was 18 and fell in love. They married, and Sarah starved with him in his artist garret and did everything wrong. The sex was awful. Rafael was a controlling nightmare, which was really disappointing for Sarah because she'd been raised by controlling nightmares, and now this just seemed to be her life path. Then Sarah got pregnant because Rafael threw away her birth control, and she didn't really want to be pregnant. Then her mum pretended to be sick and Sarah went home and Rafael went to show his art in New York, and issued an ultimatum which Sarah ignored. Then Sarah's father got a PI to take pictures of another woman coming out of Rafael's hotel room, but Sarah was still willing to forgive him except he never answered her pleading letter, her father had her committed, and when she got out she just started raising the twins by herself and started waiting out the years until she could get the no fault long separation divorce.

And Rafael's threats to involve lawyers put her in a real bind, because she believes that if Rafael finds out she spent ten weeks in a psychiatric care facility he'll take her children away. So of course, she has to submit to his demands that she and the children move to Spain with him, and submit to the hurt of discovering that Rafael was rich and she never knew, and this makes it even more likely that he'll eventually kick her out and keep her babies.

So poor Sarah spends the majority of the book miserable and I spend the majority of the book disliking her children. I actually don't think Sarah liked them much either. Sure, she loved them and wanted to raise them right, but in every scene they are either being disruptive, or clinging to Rafael and ignoring Sarah. Once in Spain at Rafael's big billionaire house with his horrible family, Sarah gets a break from her children, but she doesn't get to really enjoy it. She's either busy brooding on how much Rafael doesn't love her and conveniently forgetting they exist, or brooding on how much they love Rafael, and how when he gets them a nanny her usefulness in their lives will be at an end.

So this book combines the absolute worst aspects, for me, of the secret babies plot. A mother who feels trapped and manipulated. Children who are just the worst, and who immediately insta-love on the new parent. It isn't so much overtly stated that Sarah is a Bad Mother, but that's there too. Rafael is immediately more capable at setting up discipline and boundaries than Sarah was.

I really felt for Sarah, which is why this book gets three rather than two stars. And Rafael's grovel when he discovers the extent of Sarah's suffering when he abandoned her is satisfying. But. While he's obviously not guilty of the original infidelity, he's had that almost obligatory one-time slip during those first dark days when he thought Sarah was aborting their child and betraying their love. I can get past that, but his unforgivable crime is almost two years of bad sex. He didn't notice, he didn't care, whatever it was: Sarah had a bad time in bed and it destroyed her confidence in her sexuality, and he did nothing to support her. This is baseline romance stuff: I can cope with a hero being the grottiest control freak and crazy stupid, but if he's not an attentive lover, what's the point?

This was a pretty miserable book. While Rafael's nature has mellowed a bit in the five years they've been apart, and while the marital relations are a thousand times better than they were originally, I don't really trust that Sarah's getting a completely happy ending.

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**StMargarets says**

An intense, complex second chance story with four year-old secret twins. There isn't a ditzy heroine, nurturing alpha or a goofy pet to be found. This is an early LG and it's very well done.

Our heroine does not live in a grotty bedsit. She is gainfully employed, her twins are well-taken care of – and she enjoys an occasional night out. The Spanish hero is an artist – famous now – and has not spoken to the heroine since he gave her an ultimatum four years before: choose between her parents or go with him to New York. He never signed the divorce papers so the heroine is waiting out the clock for their marriage to be severed.

They see each other at a party. The hero follows her home and discovers he is the father of twins. He is shocked because the heroine's evil parents told him that she had an abortion when he tried to contact her after his show in New York.

And so we start the long journey to understanding and their second chance.

I was impressed with the backstory LG gave the H/h. The way they were raised directly impacted their marriage. That they were so young (heroine was 18 – hero was just a few years older) compounded their troubles. The heroine's insecurities were upfront, but the hero's were hidden until the last half of the book.

We don't get the hero's point of view – so he actually has to talk to make the heroine understand him. Both of them had to drop a lot of bitterness before they could have a sensible conversation. There is a lot of conflict and tension in this story – right up to the end where the heroine helps the hero realize that is her personality to hesitate, to think things over, to not commit right away. He never realized the scope of her insecurities and she never realized how her coldness and mistrust (based on her philandering father) impacted him.

Neither the H/h are “likeable” characters, but I was interested in their story anyway. They were well-rounded characters with very human (again, not necessarily likeable) reactions to what life dished out.

The heroine's parents have a lot to answer for and I suppose the fact that the heroine moved to Spain with their grandchildren is punishment enough. I still would have liked more of a showdown though.

The heroine thinks the hero had lots of women during their separation, but he only confesses to one slip up in the dark days after he thought she had aborted his child(ren), and I tend to believe him.

Give this one a read if you don't mind conflict or less than perfect characters.

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## Becky says

This was intense and angsty...definitely felt hero's love for his wife...

LOVED the unusual element that during their first marriage, heroine was not enjoying the physical part of their relationship (a lot more realistic than sheltered 18 year old virgins being the best sex these slutty guys have ever had). Also LOVED that heroine stood up for herself a bit, at least in recognizing the hero was controlling and she had just transferred owners from her parents to her husband. Really loved the moment when hero realizes how horrible his threat to take heroine's children from her was!...finally, some real

remorse on that point!

Also enjoyed that Alejandro had reason to think heroine was with other men since he couldn't figure out who taught her to enjoy sex. (Wow, especially knowing he was with other women, and she thought he cheated, I would have LOVED for that to be true...but not happening in a Lynne Graham...she gets off on women staying pure for a man while he engages in sexual acts with other women.). Of course, double standard ridiculousness gets spouted with lots of exclamation points. Sure, i was f---ing other women last month, but i can't accept that you were ever with another man. Hero said lots of things that didn't make sense...lots of non-sequiturs. Maybe this was deliberate since English was his second language????

Hated that hero slept with other women, but she did seek a divorce so that mitigates a bit. Of course, at the same time he is sleeping with other women, he is refusing to grant the divorce, so is choosing to be an adulterer (and make his wife be one if she would have done what he did...) That to me is inexcusable. And hated that heroine is willing to accept his infidelity because she "loves" him. Yes, we learn he didn't cheat during the active marriage...but some things are a little questionable. He claims he isn't promiscuous but was with other women within the last month, as evidenced by his cousin's comments. So he isn't very trustworthy....at the same time he tells his wife that he doesn't look at other women WHILE he is with her...so as long as she sticks like glue...they will be fine. Maybe they can use the family bathroom? Aww, he does love her. And was willing to stay with her even when sex sucked. Maybe he'll be faithful.

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### **Consuela Rossetto says**

Pubblicato nel 1991 nella Harmony Jolly con il titolo "Cuore Gitano".

Come può la fragile e bella Sarah Southcott dimenticare l'unico uomo che abbia mai amato? Sono passati ormai cinque anni dall'ultima volta che ha visto suo marito Rafael Alejandro. E ora ecco che lui, con il suo fascino magnetico, riappare nella sua vita per caso, ospite anch'egli di una festa data da Karen, compagna di studi e di gioventù di Sarah. Lei si rende subito conto che Rafael non sa di essere il padre di due splendidi gemelli, Ben e Gilly, che...

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### **Saintlyjuliet says**

I had read this book before but decided to re-read it because it was such a long time ago and I miss LG. This was a cute story with quite a lot of angst.

The difference was that the 18-year-old heroine, though in love with the hero, regretted her marriage. It is obvious because the marriage meant she just stepped out of being controlled by her adoptive father to being controlled by her husband. She, being innocent and prim and kind of standoffish due to her upbringing, found sex unsatisfying much to the frustration of the passionate hero who was desperately in love with her.

Imagine his sense of failure. He wanted to curb her visits to her parents because they disapproved of him and he felt they would break up their marriage. All this and later the heroine finds out he cheated on her and so she files for divorce after some tragedy.

Cut to 5 years later when they meet each other in a party and the events lead to them getting back together.

I had a few problems with this book - firstly, how come the hero gets away with letting half-naked and arrogant models freely roam their apartment? He also seemed to have treated her badly by expecting a lot out

of her. She's 18 he's 24, he should have known better. I felt like her marriage was just one demand after another. He even gets her pregnant despite knowing she doesn't want to have a child yet due to the stormy state of her marriage.

Yet when they meet again everything is the heroine's fault. But what got to me is how much she was willing to forgive the hero. Sure, in the end the hero does redeem himself - not by grovelling or anything but just by expressing his love properly - and he does seem sort of fantastical, childish and naive which I have not seen in too many heroes of LG. He also does sleep with other women during the separation but judges the heroine for supposedly doing it. He was a mass of contradictions but actually pretty redeemable.

5 years down the line the heroine's character seems to be much better than it was before so it left me thinking she can handle the hero, especially because she got a mouth now.

4/5 stars - actually 3 but the 1 is for LG.

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### **RomLibrary says**

She is cosseted adopted daughter of rich couple. They meet in Paris. He pretends he is only poor painter. They marry. She is frigid. He is obsessed with her her parents hate hm. They all fight over her. Her father says he is cheating. She leaves him. Parents put her in mental hospital. He thought she was getting an abortion. He never gets her letter. They meet 5 years later at her friends party. Both there with dates. He follows her home and finds twins who are handful. She goes to his apt and one is of his ex lovers is there. She is no longer frigid and he thinks she slept around. Forces her back to Spain where she sees he is rich. He had turned back on family because they rejected him for being half gypsy. Line of no woman was more loved than you. Theme of this one is he fell hard for a very immature girl. In the five years since her marriage ended, Sarah Alejandro has kept herself and her beloved twins out of the lime light and away from men like her husband. But now he's walked back into her life with the same whirlwind of passion that he once ruthlessly used to seduce her.

Rafael hasn't changed, he's still the thrillingly dangerous man she fell in love with. But Sarah won't let the desire that still burns between them ignite—she can't. Not if she is to keep her heart from going up in flames...again!

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### **Azet says**

This was a real emotional rollercoaster full of crazy angst with the secondchance-love trope-which i OH SO enjoyed!

Many tend to dislike this book,and i can see why.There are so much bitterness between the hero and heroine to actually warm up to them.They hate/love each other passionately while they are hot in bed.Many hate that Rafael Alejandro had a one-night stand with another after his separation with Sarah.But i forgive him cuz A-he were drunk,B-he were heartbroken after Sarah demanded divorce,C-he though she aborted his child.It somehow surprises me that he even stayed celibate after that because they were separated for 5 years.I don't really see that as cheating either.It may be that on marriage papers,but not in my eyes.Not that way.

Rafael and Sarah had a very very very sexy chemistry Graham really manages to write in her own way!And the quick way the twins warmed up to him was so typical hplandia way!I really wonder if there is one book by Graham where the heroine doesn't stay celibate during separation,if there is RECOMEND ME,and it has to be written by Graham.!

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**Jacqueline says**

I didn't really care for this book. I couldn't get into the hero really.

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