



Someone to Love

Donna Alward

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-The latest offering in the Darling, Vermont series is an emotionally poignant, can't-put-it-down, opposites-attract tearjerker. A true treasure from page one to the beautiful, touching ending. Alward's witty dialogue drives this powerful tale, but it's her little boy costars and her paradoxical, damaged hero and heroine that make hearts sing and rule every page of this sweet and steamy love story.- - RT Bookreviews Top Pick! on Someone to Love

SOME WISHES DO COME TRUE

Ethan Gallagher is a firefighter in Darling, Vermont, who followed tradition and pledged his love on the Kissing Bridge to ensure lifelong happiness. A few years later, he's a widower with two rambunctious boys who no longer believes in magic. But even he has to admit that free-spirited Willow Dunaway fills him with wonder...and an attraction he cannot deny.

Willow's come back to Darling a different girl than the one who left after high school. Overcoming her past and owning her own business has made her into a strong, independent woman. Single dad Ethan appeals to her in a way she didn't expect, even though settling down is the last thing on her mind. But after fire destroys the local food bank, the town rallies, and a fling between Ethan and Willow leads to unintended consequences. Can they find a way out of their heartbreak to make a home in each other's hearts?

Someone to Love Details

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Author : Donna Alward

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From Reader Review Someone to Love for online ebook

Terri says

At the time I'm writing this review, there's only one other review for this book...and it's not a good one. I totally disagree with the other review that the male character wasn't worth loving. He'd recently lost his wife and was struggling to raise his two sons on his own. Things are even more complicated because he's a firefighter and working their crazy schedule. As the wife of a firefighter, I can tell you that alone would be very, very tough and those circumstances would have anyone in that situation tied in knots and feeling like life was constantly dumping on them. No, Ethan didn't like Willow at first. I'm pretty sure most of us are guilty of judging by first impressions. I think it was awesome that Ethan was able to overcome his "aversion" to Willow's brightly colored hair and nose ring and go on to see all of the good qualities in her. Think of how often people don't overcome their prejudices to see the person inside. Willow had her own issues that were keeping her at a distance from Ethan. She had to let go of those as well.

I thought Ms. Alward did an amazing job with the emotions of the characters in this book. Yes, Ethan is a real jerk at times, but he owns up to it. That's an awesome quality to have. Once Willow explains her issues to Ethan, he is very understanding and compassionate. I totally loved him for that! They both had a lot to overcome in order to come together.

Ethan's sons played a pivotal part in the story. They were incredible and showed how Willow was slowly able to love the entire family, but also showed Ethan's increasing trust in Willow. Their physical attraction for each other has consequences that send them both back to where they started. Can they overcome the problems and find their way together?

I thought Donna Alward knocked it out of the park with Someone to Love!

Nicola says

4.5 stars

Someone to Love is a great addition to Donna Alward's *Darling, VT* series and with a brooding, widowed single dad, and a quirky, free-spirited heroine who is harbouring her own painful secrets, it's an emotional one.

"He is a grumpy shit, you know. But he has such a good reason. And he's got a good heart underneath."

Ethan and Willow are two people who are certainly not looking for any type of relationship, let alone love. He is still grieving the loss of his wife and trying to juggle his job as a firefighter with raising his sons, and she is focussed on putting the past behind her and running a successful cafe. And, whilst their chemistry is tenuous at the start to say the least, circumstances see them spending time together and slowly but surely they lower their guards, largely thanks to Ethan's two adorable little boys, Connor and Ronan.

Both Ethan and Willow are characters who you get to know and warm to as their story unfolds and they're as frustrating as they are loveable. But when they do cross over that line from friends to *more*, the passion is unleashed.

"I'm going to take you into your bedroom. I'm going to kiss every square inch of your body. And when

you can hardly take anymore, I'm going to be inside you. Fair warning."

This story took a path that wasn't entirely unpredictable for me, but I have to give props to Donna Alward for taking it the route she did because there are elements that are likely to split reader opinion. I was in the camp pleased she did because I felt wholly conflicted: I empathised with both characters yet at the same time I was equally furious with them, and when emotions like that are pulled from me, you'll get no complaints.

"Darling was, simply, home."

This is another series I can't get enough of and I can't wait to see how Rory and Oaklee's romance plays out.

Copy received courtesy of St. Martin's Press for an honest and unbiased opinion.

Ann Lorz says

Reviewed for Romancing the Readers Blog:
<http://romancingthereaders.blogspot.c...>

I have to say that I enjoyed Someone to Love almost more than Somebody Like You. I really enjoyed both Ethan and his sons. In fact, I like the whole Gallagher family. They really crack me up.

You met Ethan in Somebody Like You and right away you knew he had a wounded heart. But even with that he's shows you what a great father he is.

You learn in the first book that Ethan is a widowed father with two young boys. Right away you can tell he's feeling all the things mothers have felt forever. The feeling of never having enough time with your family, not really being there for them when you have to be at work.

You know they feelings.

I liked having the script switched and having the hero feeling overwhelmed and like he didn't measure up. Not to worry, Ethan was doing a great job so he had nothing to worry about.

Not only did I like Ethan, I loved Willow. She was such fun to read about. She really worked hard to take care of those around her. You loved how comfortable she is around Ethan's boys. Even when she's not sure what she's doing.

These two take a while to figure out what they both want but it does happen in the end.

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ARC received for a honest review

Kathleen says

4.5??

"I can't fix the whole world, Ethan. But maybe I can do something about my little corner of it. Imagine what would happen if we all did that? The world would be filled with happy little corners."

"The most important thing she'd learned during her time away was that taking care of other people was the best way to take care of herself. When she focused on others, and tried to make their day better, her day got better, too. Call it karma, call it whatever, she knew that giving of herself made it possible to receive good things in return. She was a nurturer at heart, which was a huge surprise considering her upbringing."

"...she liked to feel as if she'd balanced her inner perfectionist with acceptance and calm."

The main characters, Willow Dunaway, widower Ethan Gallagher and his two young sons, Connor and Ronan, are well developed and feel genuine and real. Ethan started out a bit prickly, guilty for needing help raising his boys and grieving for his former perfect life. In spite of secrets and flaws, these characters were loveable and would be easy to pick out in a park or any social setting.

I liked Ethan's musing about Willow, "She was a ray of sunshine that refused to go behind a cloud."

This story with its downs and ups and bumps like a roller coaster ride and even shed tears - frustration, sorrow, relief and happiness had me thoroughly engaged.

SOMEONE TO LOVE is # 2 in the DARLING, VT. SERIES by Donna Alward, but it can easily be read as a standalone book. I also enjoyed Somebody Like You #1 and look forward to reading Somebody's Baby the next novel in the series to be released.

Special thanks to Donna Alward, Justine Sha, NetGalley and St. Martin's Press for gifting me with a digital ARC of this novel in exchange for an honest review.

~ I apologize to the publisher for using quotes from my ARC that may not necessarily be in the finished copy of the book.

AnnMarie says

Someone to Love is the second book in the Darling, VT series by Donna Alward. I had the pleasure of reading the first book, but you don't have to have read it in order to fully enjoy this book.

Willow is the owner of the local health food cafe in Darling. Although she has had a tough life she has learned to love herself and be a more centred person thanks to her love of yoga and treating her body correctly, eating healthy food etc. She's been hurt by men, and by her mother and she's learned to not trust in love because it can only bring you pain. She's content with her life as it is, with her job, and with the friends she has. One of those friends is the sister of Ethan Gallagher. Another is his sister in law. Willow gets her first proper introduction to him when she is invited by them to one of the Gallagher family gettogethers.

Ethan is a firefighter. He's a single dad of two young boys, and he is still in the grieving process after losing his wife. He knows it's time he moved on, but he still hurts so much. He spends his time keeping busy with his job and his children. He is lucky to have a supportive family who help with childcare, though he does feel

guilty at how often he has to rely on them.

When Ethan and Willow sit next to each other at the family gathering, despite acknowledging, if only to themselves, that there is an attraction between them, they don't get on. Ethan is a grump, and seems to run down Willow's lifestyle. Whereas she is all that is sweet and light and hates knowing that Ethan seems to look down on her. It's definitely not a good start to any sort of friendship with her.

But as time goes on, through various occasions when they are brought together, they both start to learn more about each other, and the attraction grows. The problem is that both of them are scared to let themselves feel again, they don't want to trust, they don't want to love and lose somebody. They both have a lot of baggage. Can they learn to share the load, learn that it's OK to have feelings for another person, to learn to trust again?

This was such an emotional, passionately written story. Learning what Willow and Ethan have been through, especially Willow's past, brought a tear to my eyes. Of course there were plenty of light hearted moments, and some romantic moments too, this book definitely wasn't a depressing one. It was just very deep in places. I absolutely adored the relationship that formed between Willow and Ethan's sons, a lot of sweet moments there. Then there was the knowledge the author shared of all the wonderful sounding healthy foods at the cafe, and the various yoga moves, and deep breathing practising that Willow does. It kind of got me wanting to look into yoga by the time I was finished the book.

I loved the first book in the series, and I equally enjoyed this one. It's a book that makes you think, is informative, and makes you run the whole gamut of emotions. I cannot wait for the next book in the series if the first two are any indication of what it will be like.

I voluntarily reviewed an Advanced Readers' Copy of this book.

XxTainaxX says

3.5 Stars. Small town romance is not one of my go to tropes anymore after getting burnt out on a long running series that shall not be named (unless someone really wants to know lol) but this one caught my attention. Ethan is a widowed dad with some bitterness and a whole lot of reluctance when it comes to everything from romance to accepting help from family. Willow is a nature-loving free spirit that, at first glance, appears to be incompatible with him. For some reason, they work. They compliment and support one another in very good ways. I really enjoyed their progression from animosity to love. The inclusion of the children was done with great taste and tact and the emotional component of the same was heartfelt and genuine.

The plot was interesting but towards the end, takes a not altogether unexpected turn that was handled poorly by Ethan. It's not to say that he's not allowed to handle it one way or another, but how he acted did not feel congruent with the character I thought was well established by then. The reconciliation felt rushed and unsatisfying. Despite this, I enjoyed reading this story.

Safety: No others for either. No rape or abuse. Brief separation.

ARC received in exchange for an honest review.

Catherine (The Sassy Bookster) says

SOMEONE TO LOVE is a sweet and emotional story of healing and finding happiness again and a really great addition to this series.

A free-spirited, New Age-y heroine and an uptight, closed off single dad do not seem like a good match in any way, but Ethan Gallagher and Willow Dunaway have one thing in common: they have suffered loss and are still struggling to deal with it.

For Ethan, his wife's death caused him to pretty much shut down and the only things that keep him going are his kids and work. Willow took the opposite tack and is focused on making her business a success.

Their initial meeting was not exactly great but her affection for Ethan's kids is where they find common ground and their relationship progresses from a cautious friendship to more. Ms. Alward certainly took a risk with this story because the story wasn't a straight line to happy ever after for these characters.

Ethan and Willow were so different that it's surprising that they had anything in common. My feelings for them swung between annoyed and sympathetic, and I had some reservations about how the story played out. However, I particularly admired Willow's personal strength. Her history could have damaged her irrevocably but she was determined to make something of herself and she did.

Ethan's kids were a very welcome addition to this series and provided much needed humor. I also enjoyed the support their family and friends provided them as they struggled through their issues.

I think that opinions are going to be split on this book, but I enjoyed it, uncomfortable as some parts were and I'm looking forward to more in the series.

Disclaimer: I voluntarily reviewed a copy of this book. All opinions stated are solely mine.

Want more? Subscribe to my Newsletter on The Sassy Bookster.
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Alison says

I don't think this was in any way a bad book, it just isn't my sort of book.

This is the second in a series, I haven't read the first book but this was easy to read as a stand-alone.

Willow Dunaway has returned to her childhood town of Darling. "Things" happened in her past and she never intended to return to the place which caused her so much pain but for some reason she felt the tug of her roots and so she returned and opened the Purple Pig Cafe based on the philosophy of organic, local and fair-trade. She also wears vegan clothing and does yoga. She irritated the cr&p out of me.

Ethan Gallagher is the brother of one of Willow's two friends in Darling, and his brother is married to Willow's other friend. He is a fire-fighter, and a widower with two small children. Ethan is a beer and a

burger kind of guy, Willow is a veggie wrap kind of woman. They get off on the wrong foot when Willow meets his two boys on the green when Ethan is in a bad mood. They meet again at a Gallagher family dinner where Willow brings some bean salad which the Gallagher's generally avoid like the plague. She and Ethan are very antagonistic towards each other and yet they both feel an undeniable attraction.

It felt clear to me that the reader was supposed to relate to Willow and to think that she was a sympathetic character. As I said, she irritated me, she was narcissistic, she replaced one form of self-absorption with another and thought only of her own feelings. She lied to Ethan and then turned around and blamed him. She told him not to call her and then blamed him because she felt alone. She professed to love Ethan's children but made no contact with them when she and Ethan were at odds. Her food and drinks fads were (frankly) depressing and the non-stop yoga got boring really quickly. I also felt that she was economical with the truth when telling Ethan's sister what had happened between them which laid the blame squarely on Ethan.

I felt more sympathy for Ethan. He works long unsocial hours and relies heavily on family and babysitters to look after his boys. Luckily that is all irrelevant as he injures his arm in a fire early in the novel so he is conveniently off work for most of the story. After nursing his wife through terminal cancer he is desperately lonely and afraid of loving again, he also quite naturally feels that his attraction to Willow is disrespectful to his wife's memory.

I think this would work better for a reader who is interested in things like vegetarian food and yoga and would therefore find Willow more sympathetic. I also found some of the interactions between Ethan and Willow to be too flowery and new age (there I finally said it), too navel-gazing.

Now, the quandary, is this indicative of the series or was it just Willow? Should I read the next one? EDIT: I've read the next one and really liked it.

I received a free copy of this novel from the publisher via NetGalley in return for an honest review.

Bumped for release.

Libby Harrison says

I could not continue past chapter 2. It was disappointingly boring and not very engaging which is a shame because I was looking forward to reading Ethan's story.

Dani C. (Paulette's Papers) says

I should have skipped this one. No one can write a decent widower's romance and that makes me so sad.

Irene says

4 Heartfelt Stars

Someone to Love was an emotional and heartwarming read.

After reading the first book Somebody Like You in the Darling, VT series, I couldn't wait to read Ethan's story in Someone to Love. And I can honestly say I was not disappointed.

The storyline was beautifully written and brought out all the feels.

I loved Willow, she had a beautiful, thoughtful and caring heart. I admired how she took charge of her life after battling with her inner demons to come out stronger and sure of herself and not allowing other people's opinion of her and her life choices hurt her.

In the beginning, Ethan's character was not very likable. I found him grumpy, rude and judgemental towards Willow. I wanted to reach into my kindle and smack him on more than one occasion lol
But the more I heard from him the more my heart went out to him, I knew his actions and words were said because he was still grieving his late wife and scared of the feelings Willow was making him feel.

These two touched my heart with their story, I loved watching them slowly open up their hearts to let the other in, and I loved Willow with Ethan's adorable little boys, they truly made my heart swoon.

Someone to Love was an emotional rollercoaster of a read and a wonderful addition to the Darling, VT series.

Each book can be read as a standalone, and I highly recommend them all.

A big thank you to the publisher for the advance copy in exchange for my honest thoughts

Julie says

Someone to Love by Donna Alward is a 2017 St. Martin's Press publication.

This contemporary romance got off to a solid start, but sadly, faltered around the midway point and never fully recovered.

Willow Dunaway has returned to Darling, Vermont after going through some hard times. She now runs her own business and lives a free-spirited life, facing challenges as they happen and taking advantage of opportunities as they arrive.

Ethan Gallagher is a single dad with a high pressure job, coping with grief. When he meets Willow, he is not exactly impressed with her pink highlights and nose ring, but as it turns out, Willow is his sister's best friend and the two wind up crossing paths quite often.

The more time they spend together, the two complete opposites begin to forge a bond, but will their differences and painful pasts come between their budding romance?

I really tried to get into this book, but it just didn't work for me. I usually like the 'opposites attract' trope, because it can be pretty funny or fiery at times, but this one fell flat. I liked Willow in the beginning, but in my opinion, she pulled an unforgivable stunt with Ethan that wasn't fair to him at all. To be honest, I understood the psychology behind the decision, but still didn't agree with it, although I did try to empathize with Willow.

Ethan on the other hand, loosened up some, but remained a little aloof throughout, so the chemistry was erratic and shallow. The ending was rushed through, robbing me of any inspirational feelings of hope or a sigh worthy HEA.

This is not the best effort by this author, in my opinion, but, it was passable enough for a quick afternoon escape.

2 stars

Claire Robinson says

4 - **"Have you wondered if we're both just too damaged to do this?" Stars!**

The second book in Donna Alwards *Darling, VT* series gives us widower Ethan Gallagher's story. Oh and I forgot to mention, he's a single Daddy too!

This is definitely an opposites attract sort of romance, Ethan is pretty uptight and staid, especially at the beginning of the book, and I wasn't sure whether I was going to warm to him initially as he came across as a bit of a judgey ass in the first couple of interactions with Willow. On the opposite side we have a woman who is all about calm, Zen and staying firmly in her happy bubble. Its difficult to see where they are going to find any common ground that will kick-start a potential relationship between them.

"You're the first person to treat me like I am nothing special in months."

Ethans little boys Ronan and Connor were a huge part of the catalyst and I loved their inclusion into the story, but you also see as the story builds, that this is a couple that have more in common than you would initially assume, it also highlights that grief comes in many shapes and forms and it is something that we all deal with in different ways.

When a person stepped out of the dark and into the sun, it took a while for the eyes to adjust.

I think *Somebody to Love* has the potential to be a book that readers will either love or hate, the second half of the story errs into an area that I think will resonate strongly with some people and probably not in a good way, it resonated with me, but I was kind of expecting it to happen very early on after a few things were revealed by Ethan and Willow, so it wasn't as much of a shock for me as it possibly could have been. That said I can see both sides of the coin, and therefore understand the different reactions that different readers will have to it.

"Are we becoming friends do you think?"

"I guess we probably are. Kind of an odd combo, but there's nothing wrong with that."

I would call the authors choice of story direction a bit of a grey area, especially when you take into account both Ethan and Willow's pasts, but it wasn't dragged out too long, and the resolution was quick and pretty sweet in general.

I am really enjoying this series, the final Gallagher brother is up next in *Somebody's Baby* and I just know it's going to be another winner (probably because I have already read it!).

ARC generously provided via Netgalley, and it was my absolute pleasure to provide the above honest review.

Mandie Foxylutely says

This is the second book in the wonderful *Darling, VT* series. It has two of my favourite tropes – small town romance and opposites attract and I am pleased to say it fulfilled every one of my needs! The books can be read as a standalone as each are about the separate Gallagher brothers but so much better to read all so you know the backstory of what has gone on before.

Ethan Gallagher is one of the local firefighters who is a young widower with two young boys. His loss of his wife has understandably had a big impact on his life and his grumpy and standoffish ways are a coping mechanism for him. After all by not letting anyone close then he can't hurt anymore. His one love has come and gone for him so now his focus is on raising his young boys. But then Willow comes into his life via his sister and she is so different to any woman he has met. With her pink striped hair, her tattoo and her pierced nose, this earth woman is so far-fetched from his world. Or is she?

Willow is back in her hometown after a dark and depressing time. The issues she has coped with over the last decade have left her yearning to hide herself away and throw herself into her business, the local alternative café – The Purple Pig. Love is not for her as she has found out with a mother who has never cared for her and a disastrous first love with a painful outcome she still bears the emotional scars of in the present. When she meets Ethan she can see that he doesn't even like her but she cannot help feeling this kind of connection to him. After they both find themselves being brought into close proximity a gradual awareness and understanding of each other transpires which moves into friendship and surprisingly to so much more.

I absolutely love this series and I have been dying to get my grabby hands on Ethan's story as there is nothing more rewarding that to see a damaged and hurting man finally cast aside his darkness and find joy again in his life. The two young boys Connor and Ronan were so sweet and endearing and the way they took to Willow was so lovely to read.

The connection between the two main leads was delightfully built from a single spark to an abundance of passion and hot chemistry. The way that these two opposites came to support and eventually bring forth the change they both were needing to heal from their past was so compelling and brought forth a whirlwind of emotions.

This is an auto author for me now and the small town of Darling is an absolute firm favourite. I feel like I am part of the community now and I can't wait to catch up with the next brother. Luckily the wait is not too long. A definite must read and a strong five star rating.

*ARC kindly provided by the publishers, St Martin's Press via Netgalley to **Foxylutely Books blog** in exchange for an honest review*

Katie(babs) says

I really wished I could say I enjoyed *Someone to Love (Darling, VT #2)* by Donna Alward. This book has everything I like in a Contemporary romance from a small town, a quirky, independent loveable heroine, and a cast of friends and family members who help the hero and the heroine fall in love. The big problem with *Someone to Love* is that the hero is definitely not someone to love, including the heroine who should have walked away from him (and kept on walking) the moment he was standoffish and rude to her because he doesn't like how she dresses or her free spirit attitude, including owning a business that sells healthy and vegan type food. The hero continues his disdain and nose in the air, I'm better than you attitude even though the heroine is great with his two younger sons, who still miss their dead mother, and a father who is working all the time that he uses his family to watch his sons constantly. For some reason he's very suspicious of the heroine's sunny demeanor and her love of healthy snacks and yoga. Because the hero is a class A jerk, the chemistry falls way flat for him and the heroine, meaning I didn't believe their HEA, which then means this romance fails.

Willow lives in the small town of Darling, and owns and operates a unique bakery/café that sells organic and health type foods. Even though she works herself to the bone, she has a very positive outlook on life, although her past was full of darkness. Willow may or may have not tried to commit suicide, but it's vague, which may leave it up to the reader to decide if Willow did try, or just thought about it. Ethan is a single dad with two sons under the age of five. Ever since he's wife died, he's in a bad place emotionally. But he has a lot of support from his big family and parents. He and Willow cross paths at the park, and when they meet he is not the friendliest person to her. This continues many more times when they see one another, which for Ethan becomes worse when he realizes he's attracted to Willow who is the total opposite of his dead wife.

Willow tries to befriend Ethan and his sons, even going out of her way to babysit the boys and play with them. Even though Willow does this and establishes a big trust with Ethan's sons, Ethan is still not that welcoming. But then when Willow tells him about her past and how darkness almost ended her life, he changes his mind about her. You can guess where this relationship is headed.

I really liked Willow because she had a unique personality, but I just couldn't get behind her attraction to Ethan who is better off alone, taking care of his sons and trying to heal over the loss of his wife. The romance between these two is simply not there. The attraction is forced and uncomfortable to read because of Ethan. Willow deserves someone better than Ethan, who I can see getting into major arguments or fights with Willow in the future just because he didn't get his way.

Someone to Love is a pass because of the unbelievable HEA between a couple that are better off alone or finding love with someone else.
