



Perfect

Judith McNaught

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A rootless foster child, Julie Mathison had blossomed under the love showered upon her by her adoptive family. Now a lovely and vivacious young woman, she was a respected teacher in her small Texas town, and she passionately lived her ideals. Julie was determined to give back all the kindness she'd received; nothing and no one would ever shatter the perfect life she had fashioned.

Zachary Benedict was an actor/director whose Academy Award-winning career had been shattered when he was wrongly convicted of murdering his wife. After the tall, ruggedly handsome Zack escaped from a Texas prison, he abducted Julie and forced her to drive him to his Colorado mountain hideout. She was outraged, cautious, and unable to ignore the instincts that whispered of his innocence. He was cynical, wary, and increasingly attracted to her. Passion was about to capture them both in its fierce embrace...but the journey to trust, true commitment, and proving Zack's innocence was just beginning....

Perfect Details

Date : Published November 1st 2016 by Pocket Books (first published January 1st 1993)

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Author : Judith McNaught

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From Reader Review Perfect for online ebook

Sam (AMNReader) says

Screams

*Rips book apart

Throws it to the ground

Jumps on book until pulverized

Gets out lawnmower

Mows over it multiple times

No just no.

I'll start with the positive. This book made me and my reading buddies Whiskey review here & Obsidian review here wonder:

Is consent consent if you are a hostage?

I'm of the mind that no it's probably not.

The other positive, it was good, infuriating fun to read with those two.

And, really that's where my positivity sinks into the ground like the pulverized book in a solid rainstorm.

I was kind of hooked at the beginning. I wouldn't call it good, I'd call it kind of fun to read. Call it novelty, I give you permission. And then Julie, our 'heroine,' who is incredibly perfect due to her pious family who adopted her at 11, built a snowman. And I thought, "Well, what is this fresh hell?" And the book Perfect answered me back with a resounding, "Just the beginning, Sam."

Characters always have questionable choices, kind of like regular people. And just in case you want to read this, I won't go into the complete nonsense of this book. Why would you want to read it? Some people LOVE this book! For me, it just hasn't aged well. The hero is incredibly emotionally manipulative. Sweet and innocent Julie is far too perfect and your basic TSTL for me. The dialogue made me want to scream, just like the rest of the book. Or as I said in a b-r thread, "Lord knows their dialogue makes me wants to rip out my eyebrows by individual hairs."

They were always 'joking' when they weren't really. My eye got twitchy....And twitchier. See, apparently if you save someone, it negates former bad acts, makes former bad acts unbelievable, and future bad acts like sexual assault and abuse just something that will never happen again.

Also, women in this book are told constantly to calm down. So aside from overbearing, dominant asshole men and women who think it's their duty to cook, they all overreact and talk too much.

There's also an incredible amount of rehash and replays in this book, so it rounds out at something like 700 pages. Not to brag, but I could've done it in like 150...

Not since Blue-Eyed Devil have I loathed a book so completely that i finished. And funnily, this reminded me of that from the get-go, which should have told me something.

There's lots of good stuff over on b-r thread

Jan says

This book was such a great surprise!

I've **started** 5 books and was getting quite desperate to find my mojo back when this book was recommended to me.

It is kind of an all-in-one, packed with action, mystery, comedy and romance.

However, what touched me the most was the suffocating feeling of helplessness due to the injustice committed against Zach.

Balance, harmony and justice rule my sign: Libra (?). I despise injustice.

So, let me start getting the negative out of my way first: grandma Stanhope.

My only issue in the story is that I was left holding a grudge against her.

She didn't deserve forgiveness so easily.

What an evil witch!

When that predictable "making peace" scene happened I had to roll my eyes, only to soon be taken by surprise with another tearful moment. One of the many I have to say.

"I'm Jamison Zachary Arthur Stanhope."

So that was it!

Now that the bad is out of my way I am ready to tell a little bit about this amazing story.

Julie is a teacher in a little town - She is fiery, funny, stubborn, witty, intelligent, brave, generous and compassionate.

Zack is a Hollywood actor/director on top of his game – Until his wife is murdered when they both were shooting a movie and Zack became the principal suspect.

Condemned for a crime he didn't commit Zack is sentenced to 45 years in prison.

Two lives destined to collide by fate when Zack decided to escape from prison after 5 years behind the bars. Julie was the unfortunate person who crossed his path when Zack needed a car to get away.

Firstly she innocently offered him a lift but soon she found out who Zack really was and his plans to get out of the Country. Horrified, she attempted to escape but there was nowhere to run.

Julie was then taken hostage and kidnapped by Zack.

After a few unexpected events they were forced to stay a few days in a recluse house in the mountains waiting for a chopper – one more step towards his final destination: South America – when he finally would

release Julie.

In these few days a resentful, cynical, disillusioned and callous Zack gets to know Julie. His defences started to crack. A heart enfolded by ice because of too many injustices done to him, started to melt.

Beside her idealism Zack felt terribly old and jaded. He was nine years older and a thousand times harder than she, and yet something about her softened him and made him like being soft, both of which were new experiences for him.

Julie is one of the most amazing female characters I had ever come across. She had an ugly past which could have shaped her in a bitter person. However, she took the only good opportunity life handed over to her when she was 11 year old and did the most of it to become a better person. And what a beautiful and captivating person Julie turned out to be. Zack didn't stand a chance.

Loved it! Grippd until the last page

Thanks Jessica <3

Gavin says

I'm not a giant fan of contemporary romance, but I've always had a soft spot for Judith McNaught's books. Mainly because she was the first romance author I ever read! I'm not entirely sure why, but I always find her stories engaging and enjoyable. This one proved no different.

This was not my first read of Perfect. It is however the first time I've read it in many years. This time around I did spot a few more flaws. Some of the authors views are a touch dated and a few of the supporting characters got completely forgotten about towards the end. That said, none of that overly hurt my enjoyment of the story.

The story is interesting enough. Zac Benedict, former movie star and Hollywood golden boy, has spent the last 5 years in prison for the murder of his wife. He escapes from prison in the hopes of proving his innocence. Unfortunately things do not go smoothly and before long he is forced to snatch a hostage in the form of Julie Matheson. This is a romance so of course the pair fall madly in love with each other!

I liked both Julie and Zac. They were different characters, but I liked them as a pair and enjoyed their story. The non-romance part of the plot was also fairly interesting, which is always a plus.

Rating: 5 stars. I'm going to keep the original rating for nostalgia's sake.

Esther says

This was fantastic and wonderful and, poignant, moving, touching, affecting, powerful, stirring, emotive, heart-rending, heartwarming, impassioned, etc....

I think you get the picture.

I love this book and it deserves a ten star rating that's what this book deserves!!!

I'll never get tired of reading Zack and Julie's story. Absolute Perfection!!!

Blacky *Romance Addict* says

DNF after 200 pages.

**You know, I usually have a lot of patience when it comes to books.
I don't mind if they first do it at 70%.
They don't even have to do it at all.**

**I don't mind if the story progresses slowly.
It doesn't have to progress at all.**

AS LONG AS I GET MY HEROES IN THE SAME SCENES TOGETHER!!!!!!

Separations in the book I just don't like, ever!

In this one, the hero and the heroine didn't even meet until page 150!

I mean, THAT much detail about their pasts is really, REALLY not necessary. I could give you a recap of everything that you need to know in a couple of sentences.

Anyway, I thought I could continue after they've actually met but by then I completely lost interest in it and now I simply don't care about the book at all.

I had the same problem in the first book from this series and I thought it would be different, but sadly, no.

So here's me saying goodbye forever to Judith McNaught's contemporaries :)

Miss Kim says

Well what can I say? The title says most of it. I found this book Perfect!! I loved it, and couldn't put it down for the first 450 pages. Then I had to work and was so ticked that I couldn't get right back to it. It was written in the early nineties, and does have a little bit of a dated feel, but that didn't bother me at all.

In the late 70's, Zack was brought up in an extremely wealthy, yet cold family environment. At 18 he is heartlessly thrown out. He ends up in Hollywood working a job that happens to land him on a movie set. The director 'discovers' him, and he becomes the biggest movie star in the country overnight. In 1988 he is convicted of murdering his wife, a famous actress. He's sitting in jail in Texas five years later ready to execute his escape plan.

Julie was born on the streets of Chicago and abandoned. She fell into the system, moving from home to home. Because of her life as a small child, she had a lot of health problems that kept her out of school. Yet, her teachers promoted her to the next grade anyway, because she was 'a good girl'. By age 12, she was basically illiterate and starting to hang out with the rougher kids. She is given a break by a psychologist that places her in a wonderful family in Texas. She grasps at this new chance for life with both hands and never looks back. Over the years, she lives her life 'perfect'. She becomes a school teacher for at risk and handicapped children, she's active in her small town community, and she's 'kind of' engaged to a man who is soon to be a minister.

After part of Zack's original escape plan gets botched, he ends up carjacking Julie and making her drive him to a secluded cabin in Colorado. You can really feel the torment with Zack not really wanting to involve her, but he is in survival mode. He can't let her go; because he knows she'll go directly to the police. Or will she? After a few days, she begins to see what a complicated, yet caring man he is. She starts to doubt that this man is capable of murdering his wife. They spend a week together in total seclusion. She falls in love with him, and he will not admit it to her or himself that he loves her too. Once he feels it's safe for him to leave the cabin and send her on her way home, he coldly severs ties with her and she is crushed. He intends to hideaway from the world and live as someone else, and she wants him to try to prove he is innocent of murdering his wife; let alone guilty of kidnapping.

This story is so emotional. I teared up a lot. I was rooting for both of them the entire time. Zach has never felt love from anyone before, and he has such a hard time accepting it; especially from someone as pure as Julie. When he finally admits he loves her in a letter, it is SO good! There is good suspense plot, action, tears, joy, passion... I just loved it.

Sophie ♥ says

Rate: Infinity and beyond ∞

There is no review I could ever write that will do this book justice. I can't even say this book is perfect, not because it's cheesy, but because this book will never be just one word. Reading this book isn't just reading some words on some pages and enjoying the story. No, these seven hundred and four pages are like nothing I've ever read before. I can't even say that any of the other Judith McNaught books I've read come close to the brilliance of this one. As much as I loved Paradise, Matt and Meredith's story kept coming close to but not reaching as far as Perfect did. Paradise made me feel every emotion I have ever felt before but Perfect made me feel those and so many new emotions. Emotions there aren't even names for yet. Perfect had me trembling so hard, tortured, sobbing for relief and frightened to the point of nausea but somehow there was never a moment where I wanted it to end.

To sum up briefly, Perfect tells the story of Zack Benedict, once the most admired and adored actor/director of Hollywood but now a convicted murderer serving a 45-year sentence for a murder he didn't commit, and Julie Mathison, the kind and endlessly loving school teacher who devotes all her time to helping disabled children and illiterate women. After Zack successfully escapes prison, he abducts Julie and forces her to drive him to a hideaway house in the Colorado mountains. Initially Julie is frightened and desperate to be released from captivity but with every minute spent in the presence of Zack, she soon realises he is no murderer and her treacherous heart falls in love with him even though doing so will only guarantee her a lifetime of heartbreak, pain and longing.

From the beginning to the very end this novel took my heart and ran away with it. Zack was easily established as the tortured and dispaired hero who desperately deserved someone to love him. Julie's kindness and unwavering love were exactly what Zack needed. I say that Julie's love was unwavering because even though she did betray him, she never stopped loving him ~

"And you," Zack said somberly, tipping her chin up, "are an angel. Do you have any idea how I've felt every time I watched you on that film?"

She shook her head, and he said, "I felt loved. Incredibly, completely, unconditionally loved. Even when you thought I was a deranged murderer, you were still fighting and crying for me."

At first I found it hard to come to terms with Julie's betrayal but in the end I didn't find myself blaming her. She truly did believe she was doing the right thing but the way it happened was so tragic it tore at my heart. The scene at the Mexican airport will forever stay with me. When Zack and Julie are reunited the book takes on the same playful tone it did during their happy moments in Colorado but this time Judith McNaught lets readers enjoy the laughter and joyfulness without heartbreak around the corner. The last 80 pages of the book are filled with the tiny moments that make love whilst the first 600 or so show us the angst and agony of achieving something so magical.

If you haven't already read this book, I would recommend this to you with all of my heart. My all time favourite book and definitely one I see myself re-reading over and over.

Mei says

The title says it all: **PERFECT!!!**

I loved everything in this book: Julie, Zach, the story, the simplicity of the words used to tell it, the way it was written, the witty dialogue, the secondary characters, their stories, the immense love Julie and Zach had for each other... **ALL OF IT!!!**

The way Ms. McNaught writes is simply **WOW!!!** It just touches something in me and I simply melt!

Every part of this book is so interesting that I don't know where to start!

The part of Zach's life before meeting Julie with the descriptions of the movie world; the part of Julie's life when she's an illiterate and orphaned street urchin; the part of Julie's strife to help the less fortunate being them illiterate women or handicapped children; the kidnapping part, the falling in love part; Zach's useless fight to do the right thing for Julie; Julie's defence of Zach's innocence; the friendship between Zach and Matt...

There're so many beautiful things in this book that it is very difficult to choose the best or the more touching one!

It's rather long, but as I read I was wishing that it were even longer, just to be able to stay with everybody and keep reading and reading and reading!

This is a wonderful, wonderful book and every romance reader should read it.

It is even better if you read the previous book in the series, so you can get to know Matt and his story!

Mo says

My re-read was just as **PERFECT** the second time around.

“She wept with shame for her lack of will and with fear for a love she couldn't control.”

I loved this one. It's an oldie but stands the test of time.

Rugged, charming, alpha hero.

Sweet, hometown, innocent heroine.

What's not to like?

**Long ago and far away? I dreamed a dream one day?
And now that dream is here beside me
Long the skies were overcast?
But now the clouds have passed?
You're here at last
Chills run up and down my spine
?Aladdin's lamp is mine?
The dream I dreamed was not denied me
Just one look and then I knew?
That all I longed for long ago was you
Chills run up and down my spine?
Aladdin's lamp is mine
?The dream I dreamed was not denied me
Just one look and then I knew?
That all I longed for long ago was you**

For the first time in his life, he finally knew how it felt to have a home and a family. Julie was his home, his family

It had drama, romance, laughter, tears, family, friendship, misunderstandings, make-ups ... everything I love in a good book.

Loved catching up with the characters from the previous book, Matt and Meredith.

Karla says

5 Stars! Very enjoyable book with an epic quality!

Perfect is a rather lengthy read at 674 pages, but I was never bored and the story was just riveting! The author draws you in with the compelling history about the main character's childhoods and the circumstances that bring them together. This takes up a good chunk of the book, but has you understanding Zach's hard exterior and why Julie is so eager to please. It was an interesting and necessary set-up and made them easy to relate to.

What really sealed it for me was that the last 60 or so pages that give the reader wonderful bonus material. It was extra time to spend with the characters under different circumstances after a read that left at times left me very anxious. Those last pages summed up the book wonderfully and felt like a beautiful extended epilogue

There was some laugh out loud moments and plenty of dialogue which broke up the narrative and made it easy to connect to the characters. I also enjoyed the appearance of two characters from *Paradise*, the first book in the series, who played significant roles in this book. Which I might add is another amazing read and would recommend being read prior to *Perfect*. It's not imperative, but Mathew and Meredith's story is just as compelling as Zach and Julie's, and when they show up in this read you'll understand who they are.

My only complaint is that two secondary character's fates felt unresolved. One of them had a key role in Zach's life and the other in Julie's. It might not bother other readers, but I felt the need to know what happened to them and hope they have a book of their own. Still a 5 star read for me and I look forward to reading more of Judith McNaught's books, she is an exceptional author!

Obsidian says

So here's the thing. I love, love, love romance books. I love the HEA, I love the hot sex scenes, I love a guy that is totally into the heroine and the heroine being kick ass. But as we have all said here time and time again, older romance novels are problematic. There are a lot of tropes that just don't get done anymore unless that's a genre that you are trying to market to these days. These book had a whole mess of issues that made me cringe. Then again, this was written in 1993 so I was trying to give McNaught some leeway here, but honestly there was so much other stuff that didn't work that I just could not give this above two stars. I bought this book and have no intention of even looking it's way again.

I think that McNaught's historical romances are set up a bit better than this book though we still have the trope of heroine does something and hero takes it badly without listening that appears twice in this one. We also have the heroine is a virgin and has the best first time ever trope. Let us not even get started on the TSTL kicks that Julie kept getting on throughout this entire book.

"Perfect" is book two in the Paradise contemporary romance series that McNaught wrote. Book one is "Paradise" starring other characters that appear in this book as secondary characters (Matthew and Meredith). Book two is focused on Zachary Benedict and Julie Mathison.

Zachary Mathison is thrown out of his family's home by his grandmother. Zack then is able to turn around and become a stuntman (of course he did) and from there go on to acting and directing. He ends up being a highly respected actor and is now in the process of directing his wife in what many are calling an Oscar caliber film. When Zack finds his wife in disarray with the lead actor on the film and demanding a divorce. When a scene involving a gun leads to her death, Zack is then charged and convicted of her murder.

Julie Mathison is a foster kid that is shuffled around until someone realizes her potential. She is eventually sent to live with the Mathison family in Texas and promises she will do whatever she needs to be the "perfect" daughter, sister, friend. She eventually grows up and becomes a teacher and is happy with her life with her boyfriend (I think his name was Greg) even though she feels like something is missing from their relationship (it's the sex Julie, that's what is missing).

When Zack escapes from jail he eventually comes across Juile at a cafe, Julie because she realizes he has on new jeans and invents a reason for why he would have on new jeans (no I am not kidding) gives him a ride where eventually Julie figures out that Zack is an escaped convict who then takes her hostage. He just has to guys cause he's so drawn to her. I mean he's been in jail for five years (ughhhh).

That is just the bare bones to this story. We also have a plethora of characters in this one. Why McNaught got into Julie's brother Ted's romance in this one made no sense. That is honestly why this book was so

endless and went on for more than 700 pages. She could have just broken up Ted's story and at least laid out the bare bones in this one without taking away from the main story.

That said, Ted sucks and can kick rocks. Most of the men in this story just sit around and either treat the women they supposedly care/love like crap through verbal and sometimes physical abuse (Zack and Ted) or they sit around and decide they know that's good for the woman (Zack, Paul-the FBI agent who falls for Julie, Julie's dad, Ted again (you still suck) or the feel like they have ownership over Julie's chastity (Julie's freaking father). The last few chapters of this book are actually about not having sex before marriage. I could not deal with this many men in my life being that up in my body.

To wrap it up most of the men (not Matt) are awful and I honestly thought the character of Paul was a freaking chump. Who hangs around someone who is not into you at all?

Katherine and Meredith were better heroines in my eyes than Julie. Julie is passive through this whole freaking book. And her going from being a virgin to all of a sudden wanting to have sex with Zack, who has kidnapped her by the way blows my mind. I wonder if McNaught even thought of the implications of Stockholm Syndrome? Zack repeatedly makes Julie tell him she believes that he is innocent. I mean even if she didn't believe it, you are alone with a guy with a gun what are you going to say/do? I think that would have been an interesting side road for her to go down.

The initial part of the book with regards to writing held a lot of promise. I always get annoyed when an author rushes the backstory to characters to get to the meet cutes and all. But McNaught did a very good of setting up Zack and Julie's circumstances. However, as I said above, there was way too much going on. This book did not need to be 700 pages. The flow was up and down depending on where McNaught took the story. Sometimes we would follow Zack and Julie around, then we would shift back to Ted and Katherine, Matt and Meredith, and then freaking Paul.

The writing in this book hurt my soul sometimes, but hey at least Sam (AMReader) and WhiskeyintheJar/Kyrarker are having fun making fun of it.

Some of the passages where I include the percentages just so you can see my notes/comments as I was reading:

1 percent—"If you don't like my offer," Margaret informed her in a steely voice, "then I suggest you get yourself a job as a waitress or find yourself a pimp, because those are the only two careers for which you're fit right now."

DAMN.

19 percent—"Julie had never before offered a hitchhiker a ride; the risks were far too high, but she decided to do it this time, not only because he'd changed her tire or because he seemed nice, but also because of a simple pair of jeans—new jeans."

So Julie is not smart is what you are saying. Also don't tell me how she doesn't even let men come into her home and she's all let me give a total stranger a ride cause of his jeans.

24 percent-"He had tasted her lips and felt their response to him. His starved senses wanted to feast on the entire banquet."

He has literally kidnapped her at gunpoint?! Maybe wait a while on the hot smexy times.

28 percent-"Have something to drink," he ordered, thrusting a long-stemmed glass toward her. "Drink it, damn it!" He made a visible effort to soften his tone. "It'll help you relax."

Ughhhhhhhh. I mean sure, let's get her drinking so you can do whatever. Gah.

31 percent-"My father is a minister!" she wept. "He's a respected man and you've made his daughter into a public slut! I'm a teacher!" she cried hysterically, "I teach little children! Do you think they'll let me teach children now that I'm a national scandal who wallows in the snow with escaped murderers?"

You have literally just kissed the dude! How do you go from that to I am a slut?! Also I should not be laughing at this, but I am.

31 percent-"I've spent the last fifteen years of my life," she sobbed brokenly, struggling harder against his grasp, "trying to be perfect. I've been so perfect!" she wept,"

You have been lame and exhausting. I have only been reading this for a little bit, but no, you have not been perfect.

40 percent-"Apparently, she had withheld her virginity from her own boyfriend, who obviously loved her and wanted to offer her respectability and a future. Tonight, however, she was willing to surrender it to an escaped convict who was incapable of loving anyone and who had nothing whatsoever to offer her."

Enough said.

42 percent-"Her body stiffened with the brief pain, but before he could react, her arms were around him and she was opening for him like a flower . . . welcoming him, sheathing him."

I love how back in the day all virgins in romance land either had the easiest first time ever or were

assaulted by the hero. FYI these two didn't even use condoms. I can't with Julie having sex with a convicted criminal and not even thinking about STDs. AIDS was a thing back in 1993 and my first thought would be men being raped in jail or raping others and ugh this is why sometimes I have to yell at myself to just read and not get all actually about books, but it's hard.

44 percent "Now she looked at the man she loved"

So much wrong here I can't even.

FYI, you can follow Whiskey's buddy read updates, here: 10 percent

25 percent

50 percent

The ending was ludicrous. I am not a fan of male characters being abusive to the heroines and it all just getting wiped away. There of course is HEA that honestly I don't see is remotely believable, but hey at that point I just wanted to be done with this.

◆ Anna's "a?????g\$" ◆ says

3.5 stars

Once again I'm impressed with the author's ability to tell a story and create such a well-developed storyline.

And once again I didn't get the maximum satisfaction from it.

After reading *Paradise* and all of the reviews here I was sure I was about to read a story of epic proportions:

A prison escape?

A tortured, cold, brooding hero?

A smart and strong heroine?

The enemies-to-lovers trope?

"I'm falling for my captor" theme?

A slow burn romance?

Except the proportions were not so *epic*...

I can't say I didn't enjoy it because I did. I liked the story but it was so damn long. It took forever for the main characters to meet and then to finally get together.

Sure, the hero had some brooding and asshole qualities but his mood swings and behavior changes from cold and grumpy to saccharine sweet and sappy were giving me whiplash.

The heroine, on the other hand, was too perfect, too idolized in my opinion.

And the whole prison escape thing?

It seemed kind of laughable to me.

I don't know much about the U.S. legal system and prison rules and policies (except from movies) but I don't understand how a person serving a sentence of imprisonment is allowed to drive a prison warden to town every week and go grocery shopping and do other chores *alone* and *unsupervised* ?

Overall, this was a lengthy and quite an exhausting read with an interesting plot lost in the sea of details and twists. I don't know why, but I feel like this author's descriptive style just doesn't work for me.

I'm sure I would have loved it more had I read it when it was first published.

When you pick up a book twenty years after its publication, this is what you get (although I still love these guys to pieces):

Zachary Benedict had the animal magnetism of a young Sean Connery, the talent of a Newman, the charisma of Costner, the raw machismo of a young Eastwood, the smooth sophistication of Warren Beatty, the versatility of Michael Douglas, and the rugged appeal of Harrison Ford.

WhiskeyintheJar/Kyraryker says

For quotes/comments as I read and others commentary: Buddy Read Perfect

700pgs. 700 PAGES

The first 30% was good, with amazing development and laying foundation down for our characters. In newer published books, that first 30% would have been edited down to around 10%. I miss layers like that. Having said that, oh my god, could a lot have been edited out. I think. Secondary characters that seemed to add depth to the story, characters, and setting, started to become skim worthy as they didn't seem to add to the main arc. There's twin sisters that add flavor and a thinking commentary storyline but towards the end, I was wondering what the point was. Adding to a lesser degree, the heroine's boyfriend Greg(?) and the storyline of a FBI agent falling in love with heroine. They add to the layers of the story but they also meander the reader from the main arc and end up disappearing with no real conclusion; I was left with "what's the point?"

This would not only satisfy your old tv show Dynasty cravings, this would fulfill 3 seasons worth. I feel like I lived three lifetimes reading this. Season One is the childhood of our heroine and hero and the development of how they came to be as adults, Season Two is the November sweeps lust, murder, kidnapping, and D-rama, and Season Three is the lies, betrayal, revelations, and happily ever after.

All this D-rama of secondary character stories, lusting, murder, and life living is told through an early '90s romance view point. I ended up not liking the hero because of his overly aggressive, I know you love me/want me so I'm going to sexually man handle you until your body forces you to admit it, a heroine who could be read Mary Sue-ish with some innocent, too sweet to be real, 26yr old virgin, wishy washy, and "Perfect", a puritanical vibe, and a overhanging view that good wives are cooking and doing laundry.

The murder mystery got a bit washed out as it was pushed to the background by the D-rama and not for my 21st century woman self, views. After I read the last sentence, I started to think about the ranting review I was going to type up, until I saw the Author's Note. Due to our heroine's childhood, she grew up illiterate until the 5th grade. As a result, she becomes a middle school teacher and after hours teaches adult women to learn how to read. Then in the note, the author talks about how harshly illiteracy affects women, which is also shown through secondary characters (heroine's grown women students) she weaves in how women are trapped in abusive relationships and poverty because of their illiteracy. She brings up a program called "Literacy. Pass. It. On.", a program funded by Coors Light and how it is working to help women gain literacy. I looked the program up and through my weak, quick research it went five years and earned 5 million dollars (looks like they were shooting for 40mil). Was this whole book, a story rife with sexism and clearly a prevailing view of its time, showing and relating to women, a cloak for a message of how women are held back and a way to help prevent that? Maybe, maybe not. It is why I love the romance genre, because there is a message here, even if its veiled, because maybe it had to be. Social commentary and women reaching out to women, hearing, acknowledging, and addressing our issues, that is what is commonly hidden behind those bare chest men covers.

Did I like the story as a whole? No, too much editing needed, main couple's relationship was not built on a believable, solid foundation, and the whole Dynasty-like D-rama. However, the sub-plot of illiteracy and its harmful effects on women and how we can help them? Sign me up every time. (Secret: The romance genre is chalk full of this and why I'm signed up a lot for these books)

The Literacy. Pass. It. On. Program is not around anymore but please considering donating whatever you can at any literacy non-profit/charity. Share the love of reading

boogenhagen says

Loved Zach. Hated Julie the betraying, preachy cow and was massively disappointed that she did not die by

a toilet seat to the head. She was utterly useless and I hated her with a passion. But the writing was good and the story fun. Except for Julie.

Barbara says

It's "Prison Break" meets "Pretty Women" (minus one fabulous hooker) meets "Cinderella"...THE BEST book I've read since "When He Was Wicked" (by Julia Quinn). And I just loved how McNaught wove a piece of "Paradise" in with it. It was nice to catch up with Matt and Meredith (and their little girl)! So ladies this is a MUST read...I've never steered you wrong before, and I'm not gonna start now!
