



Callie's Embers

Marie Piper

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Deputy Jasper Tanner wants to show Callie Lee he's a real man.

Jasper has been in love with Callie since she was an upstairs girl, and he was one of her whiskey-swilling clients. But when Callie remade herself as the owner of a successful saloon—the saloon where she once sold her affections—Jasper became a better man in order to win her heart. He built himself a house and a new life, and he works hard to make Cricket Bend a peaceful and decent town.

Callie Lee is determined to be her own woman...

After a hard heartbreak, Callie figures men aren't worth the trouble. She doesn't have time for them, between managing her business and running for mayor of Cricket Bend. But she can't keep her eye and heart from straying to the handsome, red-haired deputy.

However, Hank Porter spells trouble for the budding relationship...

Hank and Callie have a past...a past that doesn't bear scrutiny when you're running for mayor. To save her chances of being elected, and to save good friends from broken hearts, Callie has no choice but to pretend she's back with Hank, or leave Cricket Bend forever. But Jasper won't let anyone keep him from the woman he loves, and he's willing to go down fighting to prove it.

When passions are stirred up and old grudges surface, they might just set Cricket Bend aflame.

Callie's Embers Details

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Author : Marie Piper

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Blurb:

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Veronica Nagorny says

If you like love triangles but want something more, pick up this book. This thing is like a love tesseract.

I won this book in a Goodreads giveaway and the author signed it for me. The package included a bookmark and a mini sewing kit. (Marie Piper: if you see this, thank you so much!!) Judging by the cover, this is a romance, also known as one of my favorite things to read. Upon closer inspection I see that this is the third book in a series of which I have not read the first two, so my review and perception might be a tad skewed in regards to the theme of the series and not just the one book. Just a little heads up before I start the proper part of the review!

Callie Lee is a former prostitute who used to work the upstairs at a saloon in Cricket Bend. She has a son with a former flame, and is in mourning over another who has been lost and killed. She now owns the saloon, with no seediness upstairs. Just good old liquor and star-spangled swinging doors. Jasper Tanner has been in love with her for years, and treats her son as if he's his own kin. He tries desperately to woo her, seemingly successfully, but would it stay that way?

This is western historical fiction, centered around romance, set in saloon and gun-slinging times in the heart

of Texas.

Wee-woo! Wee-woo! Not for kids! Steamy and scandalous scenes underneath a willow tree should not be shown to young readers! (Everyone else, I recommend you read this book because those parts are very nicely written *wink*) There's no outright explicit but it is heavily implied and very nearly mentioned, so I would say more mature to mature readers only for this one.

But seriously! Five stars! One for the steaminess, one for the characters, one for the beautiful town of Cricket Bend, one for the imagery that had me smiling at a bound stack of papers like a madman, and last but not least, one for Marie Piper's splendid writing. I wish I started with book one so I could live the story from start to end instead of just the end of the trilogy. Oops.

The cover is so pretty. I love the colors in the background; like the most vibrant sunset you could imagine. The oranges and reds in the sky play along with the word "embers" in the title. The couple's embrace is sweet and sensuous, and the text/font works well with the cover as a whole. The design is beautiful.

Some bits and chunks I liked:

"Fishing," Callie answered. "Jasper takes him out by the creek."

"Do they ever catch anything?"

"Usually about four or five pounds of mud."

"All that [being reckless] didn't make me happy. I needed a place to hang my hat, and I needed a porch on which to drink my coffee before I start the day."

"Men were not reliable creatures. I wasn't in their nature. They were like dogs, always off sniffing at something. But Jasper, he was something else."

"Jasper's good looks came from a combination of gentle features and the biggest heart in all of Texas, and every piece of him she got to know made him look better and better to her."

"Like her mother, she'd only ever wanted things, prestige, and didn't care about the things that really mattered in life. If she'd thought of them at all, she'd have been home with her husband instead of sneaking into a barn at night chasing Jasper."

"I have never hit a woman in my life, Ellie, but if you don't shut up and go home I might change my entire life philosophy."

At one point one of the male characters tells Callie that "men have needs, you know." And she says, "women have them too." YES MAMA! GO FOR THE KILL!

"And knowing that Porter is here, slithering around in the grass waiting to cause trouble, has me in mind to do some snake shooting."

Ooh, get ready to squirm: "He lifted her up and carried her over to Luke's desk and set her down on it. 'Here and now?' Callie giggled as her eyes darted to the cells. Jasper smiled. 'Not here and now. The next time I make love to you, there'll be flowers and wine and you'll not doubt I mean it to be forever.'"

"You're a disaster, but you're my best friend and I'm so happy for you."

"Jasper grew warm from head to toe at the memory of Callie laying before him in the jail. If that had been begging, he'd be happy to spend the rest of his life on his knees begging her."

Completely unrelated to the rest of my review, but I found a typo in the book. On page 29, it says, "He was always where when Callie needed a hand" (Piper). I take it that "where" was supposed to be "there," but I could be wrong. If so, firstly I apologize and second, please explain this line to me because obviously my reading ability falls short of it!

The book made sense to me without having read the first two. I see that the Fires of Cricket Bend series is like a collection of standalones, based on how this title worked. There was introduction in the beginning, as well as background, evidently from the first two books.

The writing is super cozy. Piper's style is like someone you trust telling you a story they've heard for years and years. This world is obviously so real that you'd swear you were there. The conviction and power with which Piper writes helps establish a distinct connection with each of the characters, as well as the little town itself. And my oh my, does Jasper's house sound absolutely cozy, with those pecan trees and a horse out back.

Read this. If you like romance, read this. If you like romance books with plot and substance and something of a less trashy variety, read this. If you like saloon men and big old dresses and Texas western towns, read this. I highly recommend it.

Harley Easton says

I received an ARC of this book for my honest review

I've been waiting for Callie's story ever since Haven's book came out last year. It certainly didn't disappoint. Callie's Embers takes us right back to Cricket's Bend with the same cast of characters, but all has not been perfect in the far-from-sleepy little town. Without tossing about spoilers, I can say that Matthew and Haven haven't been having the easiest time since the first book in this trilogy. Callie Lee has been hiding news from her friends and trying to raise her son alone. Jasper has been doing some growing up and Sheriff Anderson has had his hands full with a couple of feuding farmers threatening to cause trouble for the town.

All the favorites resurface in Cricket Bend as Piper takes us on a journey filled with unexpected heartbreak, sweet simplicity, and plenty of action. While Marie can write a steamy romance scene, I found myself also enjoying the quiet moments in the book, especially the scenes involving family dinners and how various characters relate to Callie's son. Piper has grown her characters, crafted them in a way that makes them almost solid. Readers can sympathize with the characters in Callie's Embers, really understand the motivations behind certain actions even if they don't agree with what a character does.

As with most of Piper's books, I found Callie's Embers to be a quick, lighthearted read that sprinkled light bits of morality between the escapism. Cricket Bend is a place where women have resolve that matches their imagination, even trouble-makers can prove to be genuinely good, and neighbors take care of each other. I'm going to miss this little town and can only hope Piper decides one day to let us revisit it.

Randi Perrin says

In this one, Callie is dealing with quite a few forces, which almost break her. There's Hank, who shows back up in town wanting to be a part of her life. There's Jasper, the deputy who is trying to court her. There's Nate, her toddler son. There's the saloon which she now runs and is her "baby" behind Nate. And then

there's the fact she's going to run for mayor of Cricket Bend.

It's all a little much for one person to handle, especially accusations fly, feelings get hurt, and the town burns. (Literally or figuratively? Or both? You'll just have to read to find out.)

Predictable? Sure. But that's also related to Callie's character. A character as strong-willed as Callie is going to go through things with a take-no-prisoners approach and will not be deterred along her way. As someone who is like that myself, I can appreciate that about her.

It was a great way to wrap up the series. Happily ever afters all around!

Abby Lewis says

Goodreads Giveaway Win.

Won this book, it was the first I have read by the author. Pleasantly surprised. A brilliant novel, quick to read too as I am a fast reader. Little bit of drama and romance, must read.
