



California Thyme

Casey Dawes

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Mandy Parker doesn't want to turn out like her mother, an aging actress desperate for the love of the crowd. Avoiding anything Hollywood related is vital for Mandy's sanity; however, a bad economy forces her to take a job catering to a movie crew.

Since the woman he'd loved married his best friend, James Lubbock has put women far behind his career in the movie business. The assistant caterer is attractive, but he's more focused on figuring out who's sabotaging his set.

Sparks fly between Mandy and James, but can they overcome their painful pasts to risk a chance on love?

California Thyme Details

Date : Published April 7th 2014 by Crimson Romance

ISBN : 9781440580925

Author : Casey Dawes

Format : ebook 292 pages

Genre : Contemporary

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From Reader Review California Thyme for online ebook

Paula Phillips says

Growing up in a family of actors and Hollywood status can do two things to a person, it can lead them into that life or they can grow to resent it and everything that it represents. For Mandy Parker, she took the second option as daughter of actress Lola Parker and actor/director Dane Russell . Hollywood is what tore her family apart and stopped her from seeing her Dad. Now twenty years later Mandy is working as a waitress/chef in a small Californian town and life is plodding along for her as she has just opened her own catering business. Enter James Lubbock, he is a film location scout and has decided to have a film set in Mandy's town. He meets Mandy at the restaurant she works at and they start chatting, Mandy has a defensive wall up as James reminds her too much of the father she hasn't seen since she was five. What happens though when James offers Mandy a deal that could get her catering business off the ground by helping cater for the film set. Will Mandy agree or is her heart that set against anything Hollywood , she will turn down the job? Could this be the job though that will have Mandy breaking down the walls she has built around her and in doing so, opening her heart to new possibilities and in the same sense getting some closure on old wounds that need healing ?

Find out in this Hollywood Read by Casey Dawes.

Victoria Rainey says

Romancebookworm's Reviews

Mandy Parker hates anything Hollywood related due to how it affected her childhood. Mandy is almost desperate not to turn out like her mother to the point of going to a therapist to help her face it. Mandy also has trust issues that also affect her. Mandy is one woman who has trouble dealing with her childhood and her childhood affects all the other aspects of her life. Mandy works as a caterer attempting to make a go of a catering business.

James Lubbock is a hot and sexy man. James works as an assistant locations manager. When he meets Mandy sparks fly and he works hard to earn her trust. I liked that James was willing to work with Mandy and all her issues. Many men would have walked away.

I loved that James helped Mandy deal with the past but never pushed at her. He was very understanding as she faced the past not just with the therapist but her mother and father as well. The chemistry between James and Mandy are blistering.

I found this book well written. The main and secondary characters were interesting and engaging. Overall, this was a fabulous book. This book kept you on your toes all the way through.

Ashley says

This was a sweet story and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Casey has a way of creating characters that were well rounded and goal oriented. I am actually a little bit speechless when it comes to this book. I did struggle to get into it at first but after a couple chapters things just started to flow and make sense. Congratulations on a well written book Casey!

Rating:

4 out of 5 stars

Peggy Bird says

Because of a childhood haunted by her mother's self-centered obsession with her career in Hollywood, Mandy Parker wants nothing to do with anything in show business. Instead she works as a caterer in a small coastal California town. James Lubbock is the assistant locations manager for a movie about to be shot in town. He and Mandy have an obvious attraction to each other but she fights it, seeing him as representing everything she wants to avoid.

But attraction--and the chance to make her mark as a caterer--are hard to resist. In the end, Mandy has to deal with her past to have a future.

I've thoroughly enjoyed all of Casey Dawes "California" series and this one is no exception. Her characters are sympathetic, the love stories sweet and the endings satisfying. Although each book is a stand alone story, reading all of them is such fun, it's worth doing.

Jen says

I love the journey we take with multiple characters. Reminds me of decisions I made that steered the course of my life. Lovely story.

Star says

Mandy Parker wants nothing to do with Hollywood. Both her parents were actors and the Hollywood lifestyle tore her family apart. She's happy being a waitress and a cook in a small town, even though her mother doesn't understand. When she gets the opportunity to be an assistant caterer on a movie set in her town, she takes the job for the experience (and the money). What she doesn't expect is her reaction to James Lubbock, the set manager. James is interested in Mandy, yet his flings are usually over before they start ever since he lost his girl to his best friend years ago. Both James and Mandy have broken hearts and difficult pasts, but maybe their future can be bright. *CALIFORNIA THYME* is a sweet romance novel with enjoyable, but not necessarily memorable, characters. It was nice to see two people who weren't at the top of their profession or super alpha-personalities working toward where they'd like to be in life. There is a bit too much 'should I, shouldn't I' for a majority of the book for my taste, but the story concluded well with a nice HEA. *CALIFORNIA THYME* is a good read for the beach or camping!

Pam says

Mandy doesn't want anything to do with Hollywood or the people from there. She also doesn't want to become anything like her mother Lola. She has dreams of getting her own catering business going and finding a good man to be a husband and father to her future kids. To make some money she agrees to help caterer on a movie set. She doesn't plan to fall for one of the Hollywood types but when she meets James she begins to rethink things. James has his life planned out and falling in love right now isn't one of them. He has been burned by love before and now wants to put his career first. He has never met anyone like Mandy before. They both have bad past they need to get over and they just need to decide if falling in love is worth the risk.

A little mystery at times, love, betrayal, a painful childhood, laughter and so much more are in this book. It really surprised me. I was expecting just a love story but got so much more. Mandy is a great character who at times you may want to shake. She has let her mother run her life even after she got away from her. Her mother's actions and lies have clouded her judgment on many things including herself. She is sweet, a very hard worker but unsure of her emotions. I liked her. James was betrayed before and now doesn't plan to ever fall in love. He kinda goes back and forth whether he wants Mandy and yes at times you want to shake him as well. I have to say straight up I hated Mandy's mom Lola. This woman is like a spoiled child with a me, me, me attitude. Besides those three there are many more fascinating characters to meet. The mystery comes in when someone is out to destroy a movie. You try to figure it out as James and Mandy do. I have to say I had it wrong. There is also love in this of course as James and Mandy fall for each other. I love them together it just takes them a while to get there. They have to learn to let go of their past and make an effort to move forward. This is an amazing book that will be sure to please many.

Linda Rimer-Como says

A great story full of emotion as one woman tries to find her way to a satisfying life despite her awful childhood. She has many issues to overcome on her journey to love and happiness. The storyline was well written, moved along nicely and the characters are believable and well defined. I enjoyed this book and hope to read more from this author in the future.

Gifted copy for review.

Gaele says

Starting a bit slowly for me as Dawes took the time to establish necessary elements for scene and character that would prove useful further on, I reached the point where the story took hold and kept me reading on. Incorporating the film industry, and the behind-the-scenes elements that really are where the drama ensues, and the day-to-day monotony of a movie set, with a quickly developed and solved sub-plot with a saboteur, the story rolls forward giving a solid feel for characters and place.

My huge hang-up in this story was the character's lack of forward movement for far too long: Mandy likes

James, James likes Mandy: neither has the sense to deal with their multiple issues and move forward. I understand the need, really I do, but this just seemed to drag on over the same issues, repeatedly. At some point, you have to stop blaming your past, your upbringing and your fear and make a move.

And they had issues: Mandy's are childhood related, a bad parent and a divorce where she was the obvious pawn has her struggling with daddy and abandonment issues. James is licking his wounds after a bad break up. Neither is incapable of being honest in their discussions about relationships, but Mandy can't seem to manage to make a decision. Of course there are other factors, and she doesn't seem to make a decision about focusing on work and herself, or a relationship, or even making a choice before one is made for her.

But, they do manage to engage in some honest discussions and make a bit of progress before the end, and while I didn't see a great growth trajectory in their own personal choices, I did see the relationship strengthen despite the outside interferences. Dawes wrote a 'clean romance' where the sexual elements are behind closed doors, leaving everything to the imagination. Curiosity about a happy ever after or a happy for now kept me involved and interested until the final pages. Not a light, easy, 'you know what will happen' romance, there is plenty of character depth and angst, emotional pulls and pushes to keep you thinking and wondering long after the book is over.

I received an eBook copy from the author for purpose of honest review with Tasty Book Tours. I was not compensated for this review: all conclusions are my own responsibility.

Beth Cutwright says

At first, I couldn't grasp the story as the transitions from paragraph to paragraph and chapter to chapter didn't feel cohesive. But then I reached the point where I was hooked and couldn't put this short romance novel down. I enjoyed the characters who were quite well developed and the characters did seem to drive the story. Mandy Parker carried a lot of baggage from her childhood. James Lubbock had suffered a great loss with a former girlfriend who broke his heart. Both wanted a career they could count on. Neither wanted to give up their dream.

The story line was interesting; someone was up to sabotage Lubbock's career. Mandy needed to find the truth about her father, Dana Russell. The romance was thick with need, but I applaud Dawes for being a clean romance author. Her characters were given the opportunity for an intense romantic encounter, but it was left to the reader's imagination. Clean romance? It's almost unheard of these days, but when I find it, I enjoy it far better than reading explicit sex scenes!!

I see much potential in this author. Nicely done, Ms Dawes!

InD'tale Magazine says

Ms. Dawes has a soft approach to this touching romance. There is compassion and patience shown for wounded souls getting a chance at true love and how they deserve to experience it.

Read full review in the 2014 June/July Double Issue of InD'tale Magazine.

Alexa Nichole Demers says

This was an enjoyable quick read. I thought that the flow of the book was really great. There wasn't much confusion and it was easy to follow. This book became a page turner once Dawes got you hooked in the story. This was a clean contemporary romance novel, not something that you can find very often. I don't have anything against sex scene...Love 'em but sometimes it's nice to read a clean read.

The characters are where I had some of my problems. I understand that they each had their own past and problems but I at some point it got old with them being on the fence through the whole book. I like to see at least a little of the couple being an actual couple and 85% into the book Mandy was still on the fence about almost everything in her life. She did want to make a risky decision. I respect that I just didn't get enough of them as a couple.

Other than I that I thought the book was really interesting and a great read. James is not the typical Hollywood lead we would read about. He isn't rich and he isn't the boss or anything. He is still working his way up to his goals. Mandy is still so confused about what she wants from life but the only things that make her feel alive anymore are James and the new job as a movie caterer. I really liked the other characters. They helped both protagonists through some situations and decisions and they were great friends.

This book was a good read and I would recommend it to anyone that loves a quick, fun and clean romance.

Nikki Barrett says

The life of Hollywood isn't for everyone. Not all enjoy the glitz and fame that come with it. Mandy has had enough of that life and she tries to avoid anything and anyone that comes from there. And then walks in James. He's sexy, she's attracted to him, and maybe a fling wouldn't be so bad after all....

James knows what he wants. Love is out of the question. He's got good things going on. He just needs to get in town, do what he needs to do, and move on. Then he meets Mandy. The attraction is on. Hearts are at risk. Feelings at stake....

California Thyme is full of everything! Emotion, regret, ghosts of the past, and more. I felt a lot of things for both Mandy and James. Not always positive emotions, but I definitely 'felt' them in this story. Mandy has a lot of things she just feels unsure about. James is a great guy and he's had a lot happen to keep him from trusting and really letting his heart do the talking.

This is my second book I've read from Dawes, and I have to say I'm definitely keeping this author on my watch list. I love the emotions, the great writing, and the way she keeps me invested in the characters. I need to snatch up the other books in this series that I haven't read yet.

Karen Bainbridge says

A well written contemporary romance with lots of twists and turns. 5 stars a gifted copy from author/publisher for an honest review. California Thyme is a very well crafted story, strong, battered, characters, all with emotions to deal with which could change the outcome of the story I was rooting for my favourite character Mandy Parker and hoping that she finds some security in her life. I loved this book, California Thyme tremendously lots of shifts in tempo most of which worked I loved the ending and hope there is another story in store for us. Excellent work Ms. Casey Dawes I give California Thyme a well deserved 5 stars, I loved the ebb and flow of the story and the strong well crafted characters.

A little strange at the beginning setting the story-lines but it soon became a page turner which I could not put it down. A clean contemporary romance something so hard to find now days, thank you Ms. Dawes! California Thyme starts with Mandy Parker young woman with lots of emotional turmoil made worse by the divorce of her parents when she was five, her being with her mother and thinking her father hates her! Mandy has a dream of becoming an independent caterer but at the moment she is working as a waitress part-time and cook at her friend's Inn. .

Enter James Lubbock a young man who is a location manager on a film shoot up in Yosemite National Park, but he is taking a holiday at the same Inn. He also has a life plan which leaves no time for romance, his plan involves becoming a studio owner in a few years assuming that everything falls in place according to his plan. He has no time for romance because he is suffering from a broken heart after his girl marrying another man! He is scouting out scenes for shooting the movie and getting everything set-up.. he has to succeed to proceed on with his plan. He has arranged for Sally's Catering to supply all the meals on the shoot, but Sally is looking for someone to buy out her business and also this will be her last shoot!

Mandy and James meet accidentally but both of them feel sparks! James asks her to come out for supper with him James tells Mandy about 'his plan' to be a big studio owner in so many years with no room for romance.. but would love come into the picture? Not if he can help it but there is something about Mandy which he wonders about but no he has to keep his mind on the plan!! Mandy doesn't want to have anything to do with him after that because her mother is a big Hollywood star who is also very needy! Lola Parker wants Mandy to leave California and come home to New Jersey because that is home, but all she wants is someone to look after her! Mandy stands firm she has a new life in California and is not to be her mothers home and her constant parade of men... When Sally finds out that Mandy is a superb cook and also runs catering company she wants Mandy to buy it but Mandy's budget is non-existent for investing all her plans are for saving up for a new car! Mandy does agree to work for Sally on the movie!

Mandy is worried that she has the same problem as her mother although there is nothing to suggest it, she worries. Sally is a wonderful friendly boss who shows Mandy the ropes for providing enough food for the cast and crew on location, lots of hard work and long hours but Mandy finds she loves it! The one thing she doesn't understand is James one minute he wants to see her and the next she does not know what he wants from her especially because of his plan.. also strange little things are happening on the shoot which are aimed at the discrediting James. One of the crew Doug(James assistant) likes Mandy and would like to spend time with her, an older actor George Stubbins is also interested in her but she is not interested in him! there is something wrong about him! Then Lola Parker, her mother, shows up on the set really upsetting and she does not know how she found out where she was! Mandy tells Lola to go home to New Jersey and do her play.

Will Mandy buy Sally's business? What is going on with the things disappearing from the shoot, who is doing this and why?

Will James stick to his plan? What is the connection between Lola Parker and George Stubbins? Will there be any happy endings?

This is the fourth book in the California Romance series and if they are all as good as this one, I see a very successful career for Ms Casey Dawes. Congratulations on a job well done I will be getting the rest of the

series, very enjoyable well written story.
