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Jennie Lucas

DEALING HER FINAL CARD



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If my card is higher, you'll belong to me, obeying my every whim, for as long as I desire."

As Bree Dalton hears the icy words of Russian Prince Vladimir Xendzov, the man whose ring she once wore and life she once ruined, she nervously accepts the biggest wager of her life. Her body for a million dollars.

Bree knows better than to doubt the steely ruthlessness of this man. With everything to lose and the weight of Vladimir's gaze upon her, she will have to play the best she's ever played—or run the risk of losing herself completely....

Only the most innocent touch can melt their ice-cold hearts.

Dealing Her Final Card Details

Date : Published January 22nd 2013 by Harlequin (first published January 1st 2013)

ISBN : 9780373131228

Author : Jennie Lucas

Format : Mass Market Paperback 192 pages

Genre : Harlequin, Harlequin Presents, Category Romance, Romance, Contemporary, Contemporary Romance

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Summer says

I have not been much into reading lately as nothing seems to hold my attention for very long. I have started several books only to leave them midway. But along comes this book which by no means the best I have ever read however it grabbed my attention from the very start.

Hero Vladimir Xendzov wins the Heroine Bree Dalton in a card game. Bree had joined the card game in order to win back money that her sister had lost. I really admired her courage when Bree is playing the game. The rest of the story concentrates on Bree and Vladimir relationship as he denies his love right up to the end.

This book has a good storyline with depths to the characters - a great book to pass away the afternoon. Looking forward to Kasimir's story who sounds just as ruthless as Vladimir.

Dalia says

4.5 stars

The first installment of the Princes Duet is an intense read with a fast paced plot with unexpected twists, an alpha H, a strong h, a love affair that went sour ten years ago, a fateful game of cards and brothers' feud. Jennie Lucas doesn't shy away from having flawed characters. Bree is an ex con artist who turned her back on her old life and tried to make a better life for her and her baby sister, Josie. Vladimir is a ruthless and cold hero - even with his younger brother Kasimir - but he is not really as heartless as he thinks he is. Except for the slave for life part, I totally enjoyed the book. JL is a great storyteller. Her writing is powerful. The book sizzles with tension. No moment of respite for the unwary reader. I kept holding my breath, turning the pages, impatient to know what comes next. Kasimir's revenge didn't destroy Vladimir and Bree's powerful love. Can't wait to read Kasimir and Josie's story.

Lynsey A says

Apparently I was getting ready to read the 2nd one first...only 2.99 on Kindle so I guess I'll get it so I can read in order...

After Reading:

Enjoyed the book although, I guess the HP books aren't what I am into reading as much these days. It's been over a week since I finished this and my new Outlander obsession has wiped much from my mind about this book. LOL I did like it, as I enjoy all of Jennie Lucas's books.

Cady Lorenzana says

My first book for 2015 and I made the right choice. Hah! JL doesn't really disappoints.

Vladimir is a ruthless businessman and so was he with Bree. He bought her and bed her. Yet, you'd see how he would turn marshmallow to her! He would do something bad to anyone who'd hurt her. Even it's just a prick of a needle! Love that scene on that dress shop though. And please include the scene about the wearing the fur coat. It would be the same for me because I really love dogs!

But what I love about this book is that they changed each other. Bree from being a con person and Vladimir being the ruthless one.... even though I really didn't see him like that because of how he cared for Bree. I really feel how he cared so much for her.

Enter Kasimir... oh God! I have heard about him in To Love, Honour and Betray... didn't know he could be that ruthless! This character... I really feel the bad side. Yet, I would love to read his own story, too!

Love this one. Beautifully written. Looking forward for Kasimir's story!

Charlie says

We have the first of 2 books here about 2 H Russian brothers who somehow are princes and their keeping it in the family h's who snare them.

In this the first book we meet older brother H ~~Dracula~~ Vladimir who falls in love with poker playing con artist Bree who tries to con him and his brother out of a load of money. Her actions actually cause the chain of events that sets up a 10 year feud between the 2 brothers when younger bro (and hero of book 2) tells his brother she's conning him and after his money.

The h really is a total scheming con artist that was out to steal his money and quite possibly ruin his life if she had succeeded but that's ok because the money would look after her and her little sis (they are of course orphans) so it's ok right? I'm sure the jail cells are full of fraudsters who just did it for love and their marks are waiting to greet them with open arms when they get out right? It really annoys me that she is perceived as all sweet and innocent and did it for love when in reality if an OW had done this to the H we would be hoping for her comeuppance not a HEA.

The H was really annoyed at his little brother for pointing out the truth (and accidentally blabbing it to a reporter) so he cons him out of their mining company that was about to become worth a billion dollars after already betraying him by selling a family heirloom and the family land which lil bro loved.

So yeah... neither of these 2 were a prize but the h is actually the catalyst for all that happens and I honestly don't think she deserved the H to be so forgiving of her especially when she betrayed him again by tricking him into signing away his company and he knows this and does it anyway. He is definitely the more redeemable of the 2 he gives his company away to save his future sister in law "retires" and buys the h a 100 million dollar hotel to run as a reward for her betrayal. He also bought her a cute puppy rather than a fur coat so pet bonus!

At the end she's loving life running the hotel and far too busy to give the H babies. I felt quite sorry for him at the end and have given him an extra pity star. I can't help but feel like the H ended up with a gold digging con artist here dressed up as a h and it's a testament to the author that she didn't come across as a total and utter

conniving witch.

Be happy the H is happy in this one, his alpha manliness has been well and truly crushed and this h is leading him around by his crotch.

Jenny says

I am so in love with this book! The intense drama and tension between Bree and Vladimir radiates off the page. Their mutual attraction and lust was sizzling and electrifying. Their love affair was so heated and intense I was literally on the edge of my seat. Great love story, steamy lovemaking and the characters were well developed.

Not to mention that the more you learn about Vladimir the more empathy you have for him, can understand more of his need for control and how his ruthless character developed. So sweet how eventually the heroine melts his cold black heart. Jennie Lucas is without a doubt my favorite Harlequin author.

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

Since the hero in this book, Vladimir shows up as a peripheral character in the last Jennie Lucas book I read, *A Night of Living Dangerously*, I decided to reach for this one. It also happens that the hero is Russian (and I swoon over Russian heroes). Talking about drama, wow!

Man, this book was sizzling. The whole scenario and the dialogue and action was crazy. I couldn't believe the bet that Bree makes. I completely understand why. I loved that she isn't the typical, sweet, butter wouldn't melt in her mouth heroine. She has a history of being a card shark and con artist from childhood, but decides to go straight when she falls in love with Vladimir. Even though he abandons her and turns his back on her.

Their reunion is titillating, to say the least. There are some pretty outrageous moments in this book. A couple of scenes are just all kinds of inappropriate, but I couldn't tear my eyes away from the page. It works for the book, and I like that the author wasn't afraid to go there.

I liked the descriptions and imagery of St. Petersburg. I wanted to be there, feel the cold on my skin and experience the over the top luxury with my own eyes. The Hawaii scenes were good, but since I am a contrarian who'd rather be walking around in a snow-covered vista than on a beach, I liked St. Petersburg more. Plus, it's Russia. Enough said.

Vladimir could throw money at Bree like nobody's business. He really doesn't get that she didn't want his money. That she loved him and wanted to protect her sister. That she had changed and wanted to do the right thing, but she was between a rock and a hard place. Vladimir is the real deal. He's really ruthless, ambitious and cutthroat (in the boardroom). He doesn't change over night. A broken heart made a fundamentally decent young man into a shark, and it takes time for reunited love to change him back. I felt that his character was very three-dimensional and I liked that. Bree was also well-developed. Towards the end, she had me worried. I really thought she was going to go through with something that was just so wrong, even if she was doing it for the right reasons.

This was another book I couldn't put down. I give it a thumbs up on the drama and the sizzling romance. Lots of romantic tension and also tension in hoping that the characters get a clue and eventually own up to their love for each other and doing what's right out of love. I thought this was a very good book.

Leona says

A bit too sordid for my tastes, but I could get over that if there was a bit more depth to the whole thing. (I know it's an HP. How can I expect much depth.)

I struggle with JL's work because she tells me they love each other, but she doesn't show me. Also, the whole "v-card" bugs me. Now she's telling the truth?

Not my cuppa.

Jess the Romanceaholic says

This is a Quickie Review. For the full review, please visit The Romanceaholic.

Expected Release Date: January 22, 2013

Publisher: Harlequin

Imprint: Harlequin Presents

Author's Website: <http://www.jennielucas.com/>

My Source for This Book: Netgalley

Part of a Series: Book 1, Princes Untamed

Series Best Read In Order: N/A

Steam Level: Steamy

Favorite Tropes: Holy Crap She's A Virgin!, Con Artist, Revenge

Pet Peeves: Overly Self-Sacrificing Heroine, Contemporary: Virgin Heroine

I don't think I've ever had the pleasure of reading a contemporary romance that featured a heroine who used to be a con-artist in the past, at least not one that didn't have some sort of urban fantasy feel or something, and so this book grabbed me from the very beginning and refused to let go.

The fact that Vlad and Bree were estranged lovers, with an enormous

misunderstanding in their past (or was it?), added quite a bit of delicious tension. Even though I think some readers may find Vlad to be overly brutish and possibly even cruel to Bree, I felt it was, for the most part, pretty well deserved.

With a fresh storyline to appeal to modern readers, but enough of the scandal, betrayal, and money that keeps us coming back to the Harlequin Presents line year after year, I loved it.

Recommended for self-sacrificing heroines with sketchy pasts, bitter heroes who revel in revenge, and of hot chemistry that neither can deny.

A very solid 4.5/5 Stars

Suzie Quint says

Emotionally, I liked this book and it would have earned 4 stars except for a couple of inaccuracies.

First the heroine is presented as being almost a poker savant. While poker is actually an easy game to learn, it's a hard game to master. Anyone who really knows the game will tell you that it doesn't matter if you're a championship player up against a bunch of rubes; the best player can lose any given hand. What makes them winners is that they will win over the course of the night. To walk in and bet everything you own on one hand, a hand that hasn't even been dealt yet, that's a chump bet. This paragon of poker does it not once, but twice. For that the story lost half a point.

The other inaccuracy is why I usually steer clear of virgin heroines. Frankly, I'm appalled at widespread this error is, but the hymen is not buried deep inside. It's actually visible to the naked eye. (Coz really, remember those historicals where the virgin is "examined" to see if she's still a virgin. How did you think they did that?)

KatieV says

I love the *fantasy* idea of the heroine being won in a bet, sold, etc. Guess it's kind of a kink of mine. Totally loved that this hero was so desperate to make her happy, yet going about it so wrong by throwing money at her.

This is very tropey: Hero wants revenge until he realizes h was innocent because 'oops she's a virgin', hero controls heroine's life by manipulating her with her love for a family member, hero is broken and thinks he can't love/doesn't deserve it, but desperately needs the heroine....

Basically a dysfunctional mess that only has a HEA in HPLandia :) Some hate these tropes, but I love it so and though this one was one of the better done examples.

lily waheed says

God , that was intense
love you Jennie lucas ?

Sandra says

Bree Dalton (who's 28) and her younger sister Josie are living in Honolulu, Hawaii where they have been working at a hotel/resort for the past couple of months. One night, a worried and distraught Josie wakes Bree

up and tells her that she lost a lot of money in a poker game she was persuaded to play with a group of men and she now owes a hundred thousand dollars. Bree is obviously upset but knows what she must do---go play poker with these men and win!

Bree is *very* good at poker. She and her late father "Black Jack Dalton" had been swindling people for years. But ten years ago, when Bree was eighteen, she met a man she was going to swindle (hero Vladimir Xendzov) and fell for him. He proposed. But when Bree was going to tell Vladimir about her unsavory past as a card-shark his brother beat her to it and Vladimir abandoned Bree and turned her over to the sheriff. After this Bree fled with her sister, quit playing poker, and went straight. But now it seems she has no choice but to play again. Bree goes to the poker game and to her surprise and dismay Vladimir is one of the men there.

Bree wins back the money her sister lost at the poker game. But Vladimir suggests one more game, between the two of them, winner take all. If Bree wins, Vladimir will give her one million dollars. If Vladimir wins, Bree would be his (to do with as he wishes) for as long as he wants her. Since Bree and her sister have been running from the people they owe money to for years, she figures she and her sister Josie would be set for life and they would finally be able to pay off their debts. So she agrees. They play. Bree loses, and Vladimir wins!

Bree ends up being separated from her sister Josie, who gets driven away (Vladimir assures Bree that Josie is safe) and Bree goes/drives with Vladimir to his private palatial Hawaiian mansion where she will be his for as long as he pleases.

Vladimir (who is now 35) resents Bree. He feels he was duped/betrayed by her ten years ago when he found out she and her father were fleecing tourists in Alaska (where she lived) and Bree was about to swindle him too. He didn't realize she was about to tell him all about her past. But his brother told him first. Vladimir also doesn't get along with his younger brother Kasimir and they have sort of been enemies and rivals. As the story progresses Vladimir realizes he has misjudged a lot of people and he tries to make amends. He was overbearing and ruthless at times, but at other times he was quite sweet and sexy. I did like him.

I really liked Bree. She was feisty at times and really stood up to Vladimir. When he said something to her that she didn't like she sure let him know! I enjoyed their sparring. Bree was a very warm heroine and cared a lot about her sister and she saw the good in people. She was drawn into conning people by her late father who was devastated by his wife's/Bree's mother's death which changed him. He turned to drinking and gambling and started taking Bree with him to card games so she learned quite early in life how to con and trick people. But when she fell for Vladimir she vowed to go straight and she did.

This was a romantic and entertaining read. I loved the settings---sunny Honolulu, Hawaii and snowy Russia (St. Petersburg).

Bree and Vladimir had great chemistry and they also had some sexy love scenes. I liked how they learned to trust each other in the end. I really look forward to reading the follow up story with Josie and Kasimir.

Saly says

Rating 3.25 stars

Over the top HP drama!

StMargarets says

This is a story that brings the drama, but most of it was sordid and there is something hollow underneath it all and left me feeling more depressed than uplifted at their HEA.

The heroine staked herself in a poker game to extract her sister from a 100,000 dollar debt. She won that, but then she pushed her luck and played her final card against the hero to finally emerge from her Breaking Bad-type father's debts. That she still had her v-card at 28 as her final, final card is what springs her from the life of slavery the hero has sentenced her to for betraying him and breaking his heart ten years before.

Slavery? Really?

Before playing that final card, the heroine actually scrubs floors in an act of ritual humiliation like she is doing penance for the wrongs she did to the hero. That was not fun to read and the having the hero's point of view didn't help. Are these real people?

Once the hero comes around and takes the heroine to winter-locked Russia and lavishes material goods on her, my existential angst kicked in. What's the point of extreme wealth? Where are the other people? We just see bad guys and a terrified shop girl.

I don't think alphas should inspire fear in people – there's a fine line between strong man and thug. Yeah, it's great the heroine could keep him from firing the poor girl – but who wants to be the H's moral conscience if he doesn't have one of his own? The gilded cage motif was depressing. Thank goodness the puppy showed up.

Perhaps I'm unsatisfied with the HEA because the thread with the h's sister and H's brother was left dangling for the next story. Instead of love and forgiveness conquering all – revenge and money are still the primary drivers of behaviour. If you like a walk on the darker side of the street, you will probably like this one. It's well done, but not my cuppa.
