



Last Diner Standing

Terri L. Austin

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Rose Strickland is having a blue Christmas. Her friend is arrested for attempted murder, her sexy bad guy crush is marked by a hit man, and her boss is locked in an epic smackdown with a rival diner. Determined to save those she loves, Rose embarks on an investigation more tangled than a box of last year's tree lights. With her eclectic gang at the ready, Rose stumbles across dead bodies, ex-cons, chop shops, jealous girlfriends, jilted lovers, and a gaggle of strippers in a battle for freedom she might not survive.

Last Diner Standing Details

Date : Published December 3rd 2012 by Henery Press (first published July 17th 2012)

ISBN :

Author : Terri L. Austin

Format : Paperback 296 pages

Genre : Mystery, Cozy Mystery, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Romance

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From Reader Review Last Diner Standing for online ebook

Oksana says

Having read the first book in the Rose Strickland Series last week, I was right away hooked onto it, and couldn't wait to read the next one 'Last Diner Standing'. You can guess, that I had really high expectations about it, but they were all justified.

Just like the first installment, 'Diners, Dives & Dead Ends' focuses on its main character Rose Strickland navigating the crime world of Huntingford City. This time Rose is trying to prove the innocence of her friend Janelle, who is accused of hitting her ex-husband (known from the previous book as Asshat) and murdering his lover Crystal (or Chicken Licker). Janelle swears she didn't do anything, but she may go to prison for life if her innocence isn't confirmed. Besides, she has two kids to raise, and if she is imprisoned they will go into foster care. Rose is a true and reliable friend, and she believes Janelle wholeheartedly. In fact, she starts her own investigation, when the police once again turns out useless.

Rose Strickland is the kind of character I couldn't help but admire. I already mentioned in my review of 'Diners, Dives & Dead Ends', that she was a very refreshing type of heroine. She is a loyal and devoted friend, has a good head on her shoulders and a wicked sense of humor. But what is also great about her is that she is very independent and won't let anybody make decisions for her (Even Sullivan, though he really tries). It's been a long time since I really loved a book character, but Rose is so amazing. She is the type of person I would definitely be friends with in real life.

But, as a matter of fact, 'Last Diner Standing' simply abounds in a set of good, well-developed characters, both main and supporting. It's not like other books where you only care about the main characters and all the others fade into the background. In Terri L. Austin's books everyone has their own story, either funny or mysterious, but all intertwined with Rose's.

I loved the addition of the diners' confrontation as a side-story. While Rose rushed all over the town in search of the real killer, there were some really funny things happening at her workplace. Ma, the owner of the diner Rose works as a waitress at, is all worked up about her rival Rudy now serving breakfasts, too. But Ma isn't going to let this pass, her diner has been famous for their breakfasts for many years. And now Ma isn't going to lose, even if it means for her to start serving lunches, which slowly exhausts both her and her staff. The battle of the diners was such an amusing plot line and after reading about Rose's dangerous adventures, it was a good contrast to let my mind relax at this humorous drama.

What was only a hint at romance in the first book, now is a strong growing attraction between Rose and Sullivan. Their romance may be considered forbidden (what with Sullivan being a high-profile criminal), but just like Rose I could easily forget about it, when Sullivan was so attentive and caring. Again it was a good contrast, as it showed that not every criminal is heartless, like those Rose met in her investigation. Some of them are normal people, who just happened to be on the other side of the law system.

The cozy mystery books by Terri L. Austin are the first of this genre that I've read, and now I've become a real fan, especially of this particular series. I'm in a desperate need to get my hands on the continuation, I really hope it will come out soon. These books are the ones that can make you forget the time and place you're in, as their intriguing plots won't let you stop reading till the very ending. Thanks to Terri L. Austin for such a wonderful reading experience!

Samantha March says

Terri L. Austin is now on tour with CLP Blog Tours and Last Diner Standing

This is a mystery series not to miss! I read and absolutely loved the first in Rose Strickland's series, Diners, Dives & Dead Ends, and was really looking forward to the second. It was great to meet back up with Rose and her crew — Roxy, Axton, Ma, Sullivan— welcome some new faces, and follow our feisty heroine as she gets involved in a new crime. This one revolves around her friend Janelle, but sure enough Sullivan gets involved and the sexual tension is always there when he and Rose are together. It was hard to put this one down and I'm happy to report it took me right up until the end for me to figure out the killer, and I'm so impressed at how well-written and engaging these novels are. I'm very much looking forward to reading the third!

4.5 stars

deviantReads says

Had the book for awhile and hasn't had a chance to get to till the other day and so loved it. Again all around fun read and mystery to solve Rose is a great girl full independence and never ending drama following her lol. Sullivan has become more hotter in this book and has more appearance involvement with Rose and love how they feed of each other vibe knowing there's more to explore. Fun reads girls and that sidekick Roxy and Axe love them. I miss waitressing and all the gossip a dinner can off but yet feel so homey.

Jj says

OH MY GOSH!

LAST DINER STANDING was better than Austin's first book, DINERS, DIVES & DEAD ENDS, but there's only 5 stars to give. Anyway ...

Rose Strickland is awakened by an early morning call from her study-buddy from her first book, Janelle, with bad news—Janelle is in jail accused of putting her ex, Asshat, into a coma. As we learned in the first book, Rose's loyalty to those who make the cut into her small circle of friends knows no bounds. She goes into action to help clear her friend's name so Janelle can get back to her children before Christmas. Rose has some of her group around her that we got to know in the first book (like Roxy and Ma), plus we get to see Ax's character develop in this book and so get to know him better.

Rose's relationship with Sullivan is still there and still complicated. And more heated. As the area bad guy, he's got questionable morals. But he cares deeply for Rose and she finds herself drawn to him. The chemistry between them is intense.

All of this sounds so serious, and this book is a little darker than the first (which I love), but it is interspersed with the witty dialog and hilarious situations I expected from Austin and it had me laughing out loud. Austin

has a fast-paced, no nonsense writing style that keeps me engaged in the book and moving along. I can't wait to see the next one.

Joni Stevens says

Another exciting Rose adventure. I enjoyed this book as much if not more than the first book, Diners dives dead ends. I really enjoy the friendship Rose, Ax, Roxy and Janelle have. Maybe I'm partial to the author since we live in the same city, she really captures the normalcy of living in Missouri. I feel like I can relate to these characters. My Bff and brother are just like Roxy and Ax. I LOVE JANELLE AND HER CRAZY FAMILY. Henry is definitely growing on me, he is a Jack of all trades for sure. Now for Sullivan, I love him! I was happy that Rose and Sullivan's attraction is growing. I am hopeful by the next book they will be officially a couple. (fingers crossed). I will be anxiously awaiting the next book in this series!

LynDee says

No sophomore slump for Terri L. Austin! I loved the first book in the Rose Strickland series over the summer and was very excited to get an advance reader copy of this one. I've read other series where the second book didn't live up to the first, but that was absolutely not the case here. Austin's characters are realistic and lively, and we get to know Rose and her crazy gang of friends better in this story, which throws our amateur sleuth into a new case on page one, when her friend is arrested for attempted murder. The small-town PD doesn't look for suspects, because they think they have the assailant in custody, so Rose and company have to find the real criminal and get Janelle home to her babies for Christmas.

What ensues is a mystery with plenty of twists and lots of suspects, and a few moments that made me put the book down because I was laughing too hard to see the page. I love mysteries that keep me guessing til the end, and I didn't have the bad guy pegged until Austin wanted me to.

I did receive an advance copy of this novel, but was under no obligation to review it or say nice things about it.

Esther Somorai says

Advance Reader Copy

I won this book through Goodreads, first-reads giveaway. Thank you.

First of all, I liked the basic mystery aspect of this story and how the characters present themselves good or bad; whether committing the crimes or investigating the crimes, depending on each characters' role in the story. It was a fast read and really kept my interest. The only thing I didn't care for was some of the bad descriptive language or phrases used, but still not nearly as bad as in some books.

Vickie says

I admire Rose Strickland so much. She was born into a wealthy family, but veered off onto her own path, much to her family's dismay. Or at least her mother's. Rose keeps to her path. Yes, she works at a diner. Yes, her friends are a bit (a lot) quirky. Yes, she's taking classes when she can. She's making her way the way she wants to go.

The diner is a challenge since the owner wants to move on to more than just breakfast and lunch to keep in competition with the joint down the street that has started serving breakfast. Them's fightin' words... And Rose's forbidden fruit, Sullivan, has a hit out on him. One of Rose's friend's is accused of killing her ex-husband.

Rose has her hands full, but she will do anything for her friends. They are the family she wasn't born to. They accept her for who she is, varied path and all. Definitely recommend.

Larissa Reinhart says

Terri L Austin delivers the goods in her second Rose Strickland mystery. The first -- DINERS, DIVES & DEAD ENDS -- gave us a hilarious, thrilling romp as we got to know diner waitress Rose, her missing stoner buddy Axton, her anime-loving friend Roxy, and the sexy, dangerous Sullivan. All are back in the sequel. In LAST DINER STANDING, at work, Rose finds herself in the middle of a diner war. At home, her family is giving her the cold Christmas shoulder for not towing the country-club line. Her sexy bad-boy crush Sullivan has a hit out on him. And to top it all off, Rose's friend Janelle is arrested for the coma-inducing assault on her ex-husband, Asshat.

As Rose scrambles to help her friend by finding out who put the hit on Asshat, she quickly becomes embroiled in a entangled web of strippers, chop shoppers, and mob bosses. Austin finesse between humor and suspense as she keeps the story moving forward at a fast pace. I was extremely happy to see Sullivan back in action and was not disappointed with the results. The diner war between Ma and Rudy is hilarious. And Rose puts the detective work learned in the first adventure to good use in the second.

A great sequel to a wonderfully written humorous mystery series. I can't wait to read number three!

Tammy says

This was a brilliant second installation into the Rose Strickland series. Often authors drop the ball on book two after a wonderful first book, but not in this case.

All our favorite characters were back . Each one felt like an old friend. With the exception of the mother who you just love to hate! We laughed , we cried, we were on the edge of our seats. The mystery was a good one with twist and turns and fun plot unpredictability. I was very entertained and think anyone who reads this charming little series will be.

Rose is a genuine character. She is smart funny and has a heart of gold. This is an absolute must read!

Ian says

When her good friend is accused of attacking her ex-husband and putting him in hospital fighting for his life, she calls in Rose to investigate and uncover the real culprit. As she investigates she uncovers a plot to kill Sullivan, the town's crime boss and the guy she is desperately trying to not be attracted to. With all the clues suggesting that the cases are linked they team up to solve the crime, catch the hit man and get her friend out of hot water.

Last Diner Standing isn't the greatest book ever written. If I compare it to other books that I've rated 5 stars, (*Daughter of Smoke and Bone* for example), it really isn't in the same league. So why am I rating it 5 Stars? Well, in my opinion it's about as good as a cozy mystery can get. Putting it up against a book like *One for the Money* by Janet Evanovich, it more than holds its own...and it's even better than book one in the series.

Paula Phillips says

After the first book , you would have thought that Rose would have just stuck to two things - her job as a waitress at the local diner and finishing her Bachelor's Degree after all these years. She does try but when she gets a phone call at 3am in the morning from her friend Janelle, informing her she has been arrested for the attempted murder of her ex-husband known as Asshat aka Sheikh Johnson she feels compelled to help. Now Rose along with her ex-boyfriend \$450 a hour lawyer Dane will try and clear Janelle's name and find out who is framing her. The task though won't be easy as it turns out that the ex-husband was involved in something so deep and very dirty and there is no way he is ever going to come out alive. When one of the prime suspects turns up dead , Janelle is being made to look more guilty and so Rose reluctantly turns to Gangster Hunk Sullivan for help. Has she found herself now over her head or will everything work out for the best ? Meanwhile at the Diner - Ma has work cut out for her as a new diner has opened up and is stealing her breakfast customers. So it is a game of may the best diner win and see who will be the Last Diner Standing.

Diane Vallere says

Rose Strickland, diner waitress/amateur sleuth/righter of wrongs finds herself helping out a friend who's accused of putting her man in a coma. The cast of characters from *Diners, Dives & Dead Ends* return, though some not for long. Rose's determination is fierce, whether she's battling bad guys or handling changes at the diner that take an equal toll on her. And getting to watch how Rose handles her attraction to the hot, not-completely-on-the-up-and-up Sullivan adds an extra dimension to her. Go Rose Stickland!

Terri L. Austin's writing so so darn readable that I polished this off in a couple of hours. I highly recommend this series and hope there are more to come!

Brooke Banks says

I won this book in a Goodreads First Reads Giveaway.

Tried of the same old trite cozy mysterious? Of the never ending love triangles that weebles wobble til it drives you crazy? Of the ridiculous plots with lack luster logic in a town where everyone knows everyone? Of heroines that claim independence and having moxie when all they do is faint and flutter their eyelashes? Of Ms. Perfect Gorgeous with a crew that devotes entirely to her but she never does things for other people and you question how anyone can stand her?

Want realistic regular people who are likeable *and* will call asshat an asshat? Want a mystery that keeps you guessing and *you never see the end coming*? Want to laugh out loud? Want a little heat but **not** a wildfire that scares even rabbits to stop fucking while the characters don't?

Then this is the series for you!

I actually enjoyed this one more than the last. There's more information on the cast of characters and we start to really get to know them. I really liked how the other side of people were shown, people that are usually demonized and shunned. It brought a nice balance. In the romance department the vying for Rose's affection from the entire male population has died down which lead the way for things to get rolling with one person. I'm warming up more to the main attraction dude though I share Rose's hesitation.

The case with helping Janelle was more emotional causing us to see connections, past and present, in a different way. It was a nice switch from everyone being tediously timid and only helping due to Rose's insistence on following a case. The two usual groups were doubtful, cautious and useless while everyone else kicked it into high gear. More laugh out loud moments while the dialogue, characters and actions usually left me smiling.

I was quite happy in general and have really no complaints. Nothing stuck out at me as unreasonable, illogical or otherwise stupid. The clues were clues and the surprises were actual surprises. No nit-picking or little gripes. I don't know if I just enjoyed it too much to notice or there wasn't anything to have a problem with, but this nit-picker is rather satisfied.

Lynn Farris says

One of my favorite new writers is Terri L. Austin. Her debut novel, "Diners, Dives and Dead Ends" made my 2013 list of Best Books for Book clubs. I liked that it forced us to look at our definition of success, explored complex family dynamics and considered many moral issues.

The same great cast of characters is back in 'Last Diner Standing' and family dynamics still take center stage. In it she looks at the people that we consider our family. For Rose Strickland, the main character, she really has two families, her biological one and her selected one of misfits that take care of each other.

For the rest of the review see: <http://www.examiner.com/article/read-...>

