



Little Miss Straight Lace

Maria Elizabeth Romana

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The Unbreakable Series

***** A 2010 Readers Favorite Gold Medal Award Winner *****

When a dedicated researcher learns a bit too much about her client's new drug, the horrors from her past seem destined to return. Just as her life begins to spin out of control, a dashing computer security expert arrives from South America and seems the perfect antidote. But is his sudden arrival just the happy coincidence it seems? Find out in this three-book series of romance, mystery, and suspense that takes the reader on a roller coaster ride of murder, mayhem, sex, and drugs—of the pharmaceutical variety, of course—until the very last page.

Praise for the Unbreakable Series:

"Romana's characters are portrayed with skill, each is a credible person filled with foibles, warts and gaffes...the various twists and turns are handled with skill, are easily followed, and add depth and dimension often lacking in works provided by newer writers...Maria Romana's 'Little Miss Straight Lace' is a fast paced, keep 'em guessing and turning the page type read sure to intrigue readers who enjoy good writing, a bit of romance, a lot of action, and a downright good read..."

—Molly Martin, Midwest Book Review

"It was one of those books, I couldn't wait to finish, had to know what happened, but at the same time, I didn't want it to end."

—An Amazon reviewer

Books in the Unbreakable Series:

Little Miss Straight Lace

Little Girl Lost

Daddy's Little Girls

Read an Excerpt:

Robert spoke with open hands and a casual stance, "Look, fella, take it easy. We just—"

"O-okay, listen, I-I'll tell you the whole story. Everything. But I swear, I never did anything to her. Nobody did. Not on my watch, anyway. I took real good care of her. I swear. You gotta believe me!"

Nic's pulse quickened. He took a step closer and cocked a brow at the stocky man, "Who her?"

"Y-you know—your girl."

"My girl?"

"Y-yeah. You know...petite, brunette, pretty. Kinda..." The guy relaxed a little, pulling his hands away from

the fence, and started forming an hourglass shape with them.

Nic pursed his lips. "Okay. I know what she looks like." He lifted his chin at the stocky man, "So what are you talking about? 'Your watch'. 'Took care of her'. Where? When?"

"Come on, you know..." The tattooed man looked from Nic over to Robert, as if he expected a more reasonable interrogator—a Good Cop to Nic's Bad.

But Nic insisted, "Humor me."

"Well, uh, well..."

Nic took another step.

The tattooed man gulped and started talking, "Yeah, okay. See, when I took the job, I didn't know it was her, okay? It was only when I saw her close up, in the light, that I recognized her. I remembered her from the bar. From that night last summer when I pulled her off the stool. I mean, I didn't know who she really was. I just thought she was your date, your girl or whatever, okay? I didn't know she was like...one of you."

Keywords: Free Romantic Suspense, Free Mystery Romance, Romantic Suspense Series

Little Miss Straight Lace Details

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Author : Maria Elizabeth Romana

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From Reader Review Little Miss Straight Lace for online ebook

Gail Pointer says

This story revolves around some unexpected findings during the research of an abortion drug. Josie, the researcher who first stumbles upon the problem, is drawn into a dangerous web of deceit which threatens her and her closest friends. Nic is the computer expert called in to help with the mystery, who also ends up helping Josie with some of her personal problems, as she does with his.

Now I've got to say it: the plotline of this book is a bit convoluted. It's full of crazy twists, ironies, and coincidences. But so is *Romeo & Juliet*. Let's face it, convoluted plots are fun, as long as the story is still believable, and the characters aren't too stupid to live. And I think that's the case with this book. The characters are smart and colorful--they're messy and disorganized, they eat the wrong foods, and obsess over their golf games. The groundwork for the mystery is well-laid with all the little details that seem so innocuous in the beginning turning out to be important in the end.

Potential readers should be warned that there are a lot of touchy issues covered in this book--divorce, rape, abortion, even religious cults, and the language used by some characters is harsh but appropriate for their personalities. Despite the serious topics, the book never takes itself too seriously, managing to deal with the issues while never straying too far from its main mission of entertainment.

Kim says

This romantic suspense book was neither romantic nor suspenseful. As I read *Little Miss Straight Lace* I tried to give it the benefit of the doubt, hoping it would catch me up in the story. Though the beginning held a lot of promise, this book became very difficult to read. It started off with a plot that seemed interesting -- pharmaceutical data analyst Josie stumbles on to a secret -- so I was hoping for a pretty good story. However with its unlikely plot turns and jarring dialog it quickly became convoluted.

The book begins with researcher Josie noticing a problem with the findings of an abortion drug being tested. Josie's quirkiness initially seemed to portray a likable heroine I might be able to relate to. The unfamiliar world of pharmaceutical research was an unusual background to a story that I liked. The love interest is primarily computer expert Nic. He's called in to unravel the mystery. The suspense is provided by threats from a religious cult, Josie's suspicions about Nic, medical clinic violence, scars from the past impinging on the present, and villains who may or may not be threats. Unfortunately the story becomes less and less interesting as it continues.

The characters felt very flat and the romance didn't convince me. Some of the characters spent too much time exploring traumas from their pasts and too many other characters walked on and off the stage, which added to the clutter. The villains weren't frightening.

The biggest problem I had was how this overly long story bogged repeatedly with nothing happening for chapter after chapter. If I'd connected with the characters or enjoyed the writing style more I might've appreciated the nothingness, but in this case I couldn't. After a while I didn't care who won the day in the end or which couples worked it out, I just wanted something meaningful to happen.

My other big peeve was the writing style. It wasn't smooth. I quickly noticed this book was difficult to follow on a sentence-by-sentence level. There are far too many jarring, awkwardly timed bits like this: "BANG! An hour later, Shawn's office door hit the wall behind it..."

Additionally, the dialog was unrealistic, further keeping me from immersing in the story. "U-u-u-gh....A-r-r-g-g-h-h!" smacks the reader on the first page. Stuttering-style speech and oddly phrased sentences litter the book.

Overall, I wanted to enjoy it but I think it's of amateur quality. Little Miss Straight Lace offered an intriguing story idea, but the execution on this one just wasn't there.

Kimberly K. Myers says

Straight Lace

I loved this book. I can't wait to see where Josie and Nic's story go from here. I enjoyed traded about the others life in this book as well. Thanks for the opportunity to read this.

Mary Ann says

The sense of humor does add the texture to set the story apart from the typical romance, as does the duplicity in the business of creating new drugs and getting them past the FDC. Am still undecided about whether I'll continue the series or not.

Tanya says

This actually earns a 3 1/2 for a fun and lovable heroine. Her romantic interest, however, is too perfect to be believable, and the plot feels a bit forced. Still, a good vacation read.

Anne says

Little Miss Straight Lace has a great story to tell, a great cast of characters, and a wonderful brace of villains that you enjoy hating.

Josie Natale is a bio-statistician - she makes her living checking and correlating the data produced by pharmaceutical trials. She's good at her job and has earned a reputation for being by-the-book, never fudging numbers or cutting corners - Little Miss Straight Lace. Nic Remedian is a South American security consultant brought in by Josie's best friend to investigate threatening emails that have been received by various employees and appear to be coming from a religious cult.

The relationship between Josie and Nic is wonderful to see unfold. Josie is a vibrant character and so is Nic. They work well for each other. The supporting cast of friends and family is also well-drawn and fully fleshed

out, and the villains are both brilliant and scary.

My only problem with the book was the pacing. At points it would drag on, and on, and on, like the Energizer Bunny. As an example, Nic thinks he sees someone leaving Josie's apartment. He tells her about it and she thinks he's mistaken - and then NOTHING happens for chapters and chapters and chapters. I'd read something like that and would gear myself up for the action / confrontation to start and then it would just wither. It sometimes felt as if I was reading two separate books. One was a contemporary romance, and the other was a romantic suspense. For the first half of the book, it was straight contemporary with a smidge of suspense thrown in here and there, and then at the last half of the book the romantic thriller took over. I feel like the book would have been better if pacing and flow had been a bit faster.

Despite the plodding plot, it was still an enjoyable read. I was really rooting for Josie and Nic, they were a great couple. Miss Romana really nailed the chemistry between them and created something very sweet where you just ached for them to have a Happily Ever After. She delivered on that, too, in a very satisfying way.

Lucinda says

This is a free kindle book. The free kindle books end abruptly and continued in next book. Authors should finish the story.

Jo-Anne says

Josie is a researcher who stumbles onto some facts on an abortion drug. The information she's found pulls her and some friends into a threatening situation. A Computer expert, Nic, is called to help with the mystery and he and Josie help each other with personal problems.

This is an enjoyable mystery but you've got to be on your toes to read it. The beginning was a bit confusing and there are lots of twists in the story. Some of the topics in this story aren't for everyone so be ready to read about abortion, rape and divorce.

The characters were believable except for Josie. I wasn't drawn to her and one of the reasons was that she's suppose to be genius smart but doesn't remember to charge her cell phone. This sure wasn't good for business. I wondered how someone who was so smart could be so scatterbrained. Also there were a lot of characters and they were hard to keep track of.

The author says the end "leaves dangling threads" but I consider it a cliffhanger so be prepared.

Di says

Difficult book to put down, now I can't wait to read the next one!

Heather says

I have no idea what this book is about. I couldn't figure out what the beginning had to do with anything else. I couldn't keep track of the characters. The title makes it sound like it will be cute and fluffly, but it's not. And then it ends. Not like a cliffhanger. Like the author ran out of energy or decided that was enough for one book and just stopped.

But there's also a chance I wasn't paying close enough attention.

Plus the line "No chiseled Pretty Boy was he."

Michele bookloverforever says

seems to be first in a series. the plot seems a bit disjointed. probably will develop more surely in the sequels. lead female seems a bit ditsy. smart, loving but ditsy. Not a big fan of ditsy. could be because her brain processes so fast. she has some PTSD issues from a trauma in her past.

Cheryl Anne Gardner says

This book is a romantic suspense novel, but I felt it was a little more heavy on the romance than the suspense. Josie Natale is a genius bio-statistician who works primarily on pharmaceutical trials. She's your average brilliant person, great with the numbers, but not so great with the basics of life. She can't cook; she's always late; her apartment is a chaotic mess, and she has some difficulty forming lasting romantic relationships. Her current boyfriend Henry is younger than her, a bit mentally distant, and all her real friends think he's a prick. Josie Natale is one of those women who barely seems to have control of her life. Everything happens TO HER in this book like she is some sort of lightning rod. She knows this, and she blames her weakness on an assault she suffered as a teenager and then a later assault by a client when she refused to alter the data on one of her research projects, which would inevitably bankrupt the company. Josie's take-no-shit attitude and her closed off emotional state makes for no shortage of enemies and haters.

This all sets the stage for the suspense plot in which we have threats from a religious cult called the Warriors of God, leading to subsequent break-ins at various clinics. Research data is being stolen and altered, and when Josie's friend winds up in the hospital, it's time to call in the big guns: Enter security agents Nic and Robert. Nic is a security expert and his friend Robert, who looks like the man who assaulted Josie when she was a teenager, is an expert in cult ideology, having been rescued from one when he was a child. This will come in handy later in the story, which is a rollercoaster ride of drinking, eating, shopping, golfing, sleuthing, kidnapping, attempted murder, actual murder, and medical experiments with nefarious drugs.

The plotline of this book is all over the place with a lot of twists and well placed coincidences in order to lead the reader down various assorted sinister paths. Is Nic really a good guy or not? being the most obvious. There are a lot of characters coming and going – some readers might find this on-stage off stage scene setting a bit hard to handle -- but all were firmly grounded in their world. No one was super extraordinary, which made them believable. Nic seemed a little too perfect in the beginning, but he has his flaws too. In real life, you could run into any one of these characters on the street or in the boardroom. The romance is messy, all the characters are not without a few uncomfortable secrets here and there, and the detail is almost

impeccable. My only problem with the book was that I thought it was a bit long, and the pacing slowed for me during the mundane moments of shopping and girl talk and golf games and evenings with friends along with all the Freudian internal exploration and examination. I was more into the suspense plot not the romance between the sexy petite genius and the uber wealthy Latin security god, but that's just me: I am not a big romance reader. However, those who love romance will be thrilled with this one. The emotions are well articulated, and the romance is not without it's struggle.

As for the suspense plot, I thought everything was tied together quite well, and even though the HEA ending was predictable, it was not without its thrills. The book tackled quite a few unpleasant and important issues such as rape, religious cults, and most importantly the safety concerns we have about the pharmaceutical industry. Overall, I enjoyed the mystery, and I especially enjoyed the close knit friendships that existed at the start of the book and the new ones that were made by the end.

Nita says

The story is in-depth, with great character development, and a thoroughly thought out plot. The book was good, although, a little slow to start, but once it picked up, it didn't stop, and I couldn't put it down. The story is filled with what - at first- appears to be a brewing romance, but what turns into a mystery thriller filled with unexpected plot twists. The main character, Josie, is at times a bit...over the top, but not so much as to put the reader off. And her love interest is filled with all of the things women dream about finding in their perfect mate... A great read for a summer. I received a complimentary copy of this book in order to review it.

Jo Notary says

370p When a dedicated researcher from North Carolina learns too much about an experimental drug, the horrors from her past seem destined to return. Just as her life starts spinning out of control, a dashing security expert arrives from South America and seems the perfect antidote. But is his sudden arrival just the happy coincidence it appears? Find out in this series of romance, mystery, and suspense that takes the reader on a roller coaster ride of murder, mayhem, sex, and drugs 14of the pharmaceutical variety, of course 14until the very last page.

Riana Elizabeth says

Jan 2014 Erotica/Romance/Smut Review Challenge - to catch up on my backlog.

Story dragged. Too many non-essential characters thrown into the mix, without much delineation. Chemistry between characters was non-existent. Main female protagonist seemed holier than thou. Editing could've been helpful to trim scenes that didn't do much to advance the plot.
