



# Under the Hood

*Juanita Kees*

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## Under the Hood Juanita Kees

When Scott Devin buys a struggling car dealership in semi-rural Western Australia, the last person he expects to see in charge is a stiletto-wearing, mini-skirted foreperson — exactly the distraction a struggling, male-dominated workshop doesn't need! But there's more to TJ Stevens than meets the eye.

TJ Stevens has two major goals in life: to preserve her grandfather's heritage and to protect her teenage rehabilitation program — and she'll go to any lengths to do it. Scott Devin's presence is a threat to everything she's worked hard to achieve, so keeping him at arm's length shouldn't be a problem ... or will it?

## Under the Hood Details

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Author : Juanita Kees

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# **From Reader Review Under the Hood for online ebook**

## **Kimberly Russell says**

I got sucked in by the description and pretty cover but this book wasn't what I thought it was going to be. I wasn't thrilled with the plot and for some reason I couldn't connect with any of the sub characters. I did like TJ which is why I finished reading.

I received this via Netgalley for an honest review.

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## **Donna says**

Is it possible to care too much? There are kids that are in need of help and TJ has been working hard to get them that. She's set up an apprentice program at the auto repair shop she works at but now it has been purchased by a new owner will he shut down all of TJ's hard work? Scott isn't exactly running from his reputation on the other coast he is just looking for a new challenge. TJ and her kids prove to be just that. But his past is not far behind and someone doesn't want TJ to challenge the status quo. And then there is the attraction that rages between them and they both know workplace romances are a bad thing right?

I really enjoyed this story right up till the end. I can't say why without spoilers and maybe others won't be as bugged by the exclusion as I was. This is a sweet contemporary romance that takes place in Australia. BTW for all us yanks a chook is a chicken.

I'd like to thank Netgalley for allowing me to read this in exchange for an honest review

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## **Alice says**

Wow, this one was a surprise! I loved the fun atmosphere it began with – TJ is one kick-ass heroine on a mission. It's her mission to help troubled teenagers and the dangerous, mysterious criminal underworld surrounding those young people that really lent a spicy edge to this story. It's country based with that wonderful rural feel, yet at the same time it delves into modern-day issues. TJ is the heroine and Scott Devin is her new boss, and he's not content with his role - but he's drawn to TJ. She's gutsy, funny and on the ball - and it looks like she might need a hand with the teenagers – and the criminals. Against his better judgement, Scott gets involved in TJ's program for troubled youths, and pretty soon he's up to his neck in his own problems as his past revisits him and threatens to end the brewing relationship with TJ. It's simmering – but will they get it together and outwit the baddies? And will they shape the youngsters in their program? Great read. Can't wait for the next in this series.

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## **Kelly Rose says**

couldnt put this book down. I loved all the kindness and compassion of TJ. This is a very inspiring story that

shows we should never give up. loved the setting in the hills of Perth. A really great read.

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## **Maria Cope says**

3.5 stars, rounded to 4

See full review here: <http://lions-and-lambs.blogspot.com/2...>

### **Synopsis:**

TJ is a kickass mechanic who has set up an apprentice program at an auto repair shop for teens in need of help. Now that a new owner has purchased the shop, TJ is afraid her program is in jeopardy. Little does she know, Scott is not running from his problems on the east coast . . . he is searching for a challenge in his new home on the west coast.

After firing and re-hiring TJ, Scott becomes involved in getting the program up and running. Attraction is inevitable in this cute, yet oddly tragic contemporary romance. But will that be enough when the past makes an unwelcome appearance?

### **Opinion:**

The story was fairly short, but it packed lots of goodness. TJ is feisty, feminine, and ready to risk everything for kids who have nothing. It is difficult to give my opinion without mentioning spoilers, but I will say I gave this book 4 stars up until about that last 70-80 pages. The ending was left open and unresolved. With that said, I am really hoping there is second book in this series. I'm not sure where the author would go with the main characters (which is exactly why I will be reading the second book if there is one!), but maybe there will be someone for Marty. Marty! Marty! Marty!

I received this book from NetGalley in exchange for my honest review.

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## **Jenny Schwartz says**

First up, I loved the setting. The Perth hills are a place I grew up visiting. My Gran lived there and so did other family. Tall trees, gravel that hurts when you skin your knees on it (I was a clumsy kid!) and a sense of freedom. Juanita Kees captures the setting perfectly.

I don't know so much about cars, but I found the workshop scenes believable -- and I loved Sheila (in joke! read the book and you'll understand).

The issues addressed in "Under the Hood" are serious ones, intense, and handled well.

But most of all the story is a romance, and it delivers. Scott isn't a perfect hero, but he's genuine; a man who grows through the story and through his relationship with TJ. TJ (the heroine) is a strong character. I enjoyed how Scott called her "Tiger". Nice endearment :)

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## **Susanne says**

Scott and TJ are such lovely characters. One of the things I find most appealing about them is their strong social conscience. Neither want to lose any of the boys in their programme (and yes, I cried at moments in this book).

This is the aspect that really makes this book for me. The programme sounds real and valuable and I enjoyed these secondary characters who are integral to the growth of the relationship between Scott and TJ. I love that TJ is different to the 'usual' female protagonist. Steel-capped boots and overalls don't detract from her femininity but heels and high hair are equally great -- Scott loves both, and so did I.

And I can't wait for Detective Mark's story. He strikes me as a real catch. What will the woman who wins him be like?

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## **Brenda says**

TJ Stevens was determined; she was passionate in her job and the rehabilitation program for the troubled teens was high on her list of priorities. She didn't take any rubbish from anyone! When the new boss walked into the workshop and immediately gave her problems, she decided Scott Devin was a tosser. But Scott would turn out to be on her side, and he was equally as determined as TJ to see the program work.

But there was trouble on the horizon. Detective Mark Johnson was doing his best with the teens, but the drug culture was deep. Could they, between them, succeed? Or would it be so much worse than that? TJ knew what she wanted; she knew she'd never give up – but she was getting tired of the continual uphill battles.

*Under the Hood* by Aussie author Juanita Kees is the 2nd in the Under the Law series, and I enjoyed it as much as I did the first. Chilling, with a pace that keeps pulsing along, the twists and turns, tragedy and heartache are exceptionally well written. An excellent and topical plot, along with a strong and resilient main character in TJ, *Under the Hood* is what I love in Romantic Suspense! Highly recommended. Now to get to the 3rd!

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## **Nichole ~Bookaholic~ says**

I both liked and disliked this one. So I will break this out to what I liked and what I did not like

### **What I liked:**

I really, really liked TJ and Scott. I liked that TJ was a kick ass mechanic and what she was trying to do making a refuge for troubled teens, trying to keep them from gangs and off drugs. I liked how Scott came around and how involved he became in getting the program off the ground. And up to that point with a few minor exceptions I thought the story rocked. I stayed up way past my bedtime to finish

### **What I did not like:**

At about 75% is where my dislike started. At this point a "sordid" person from Scott's past makes an appearance, while I get why...I don't think it was necessary...it just seemed kinda gratuitous... I mean it's

pretty obvious the sordid person has hooked up with the “real” bad guy (I am not a writer so I could be totally wrong...but the story would have worked fine without this person making an appearance). There is tragedy, posturing, false accusations...TJ & Scott get their HEA and while we know “who done it”...that part is just left hanging...”they are just waiting for him to make a mistake and will be there when it happens”. I was sooooo disappointed.

Now maybe I am just a little to blood-thirsty....but I want the bad guy caught and to “get his just desserts” I mean it can’t really be an HEA if a part of the story is left unresolved right...now if this is going to be a series I can see leaving it where it ended...but for a stand alone/single book story to end like that really irritated me....It was like we had a well thought out story line for the majority of the book and then a rushed and incomplete ending.

I would rate the first part as 4 stars and the second as 2 stars so it averages out to 3 star rating.

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## **Desere says**

I have learned that a good action suspense read intertwined with romance needs to have enough action drama to get your attention to want to get to the bottom of the mystery but also enough heat between the two main characters to bring you that feeling of breathlessness and pure joy when it all comes together in the end.

In the new read from Juanita Kees I got all that and so much more. The story is about TJ she is a kick ass heroine that does not back down from what she wants and goes after anything and everything with her heart and soul.

She meets her match in sexy-I'll-make-your-engine-purr Scott when he comes striding into town and goes to great lengths to get what he wants, her car dealership and he is as relentless in getting it as he his hot!

The characters were both extremely well written and the author really used the fact that both are strong willed to bring some truly delightfully entertaining moments of conflict that gave me as reader the heat and passion I was looking for in this read.

The backdrop setting of a town in Western Australia was perfect it showed the heat of the land down under perfectly in tune with the heat between TJ and Scott (by the way Juanita I totally love that he hero's name is Scott it matched his personality perfectly).

I liked the mystery in this one very much it gave me as reader all the elements of danger with a twist and more drama lurking in the darkness keeping me on the edge of my seat for the read of a lifetime!

The dialogue was absolutely stunning as the author really let the words flow effortlessly and let me complete this read in just under two hours.

I also liked that the ending left room for another book as the mystery ended on a there is more to come note. I highly recommend this read for all Juanita Kees fans and lovers of romance with loads of action!

Excellent work Juanita keep them coming!  
5/5 star review

" Finding out what is under the hood by revealing sexy layer after sexy layer"

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## **Booknut says**

Rating:3.8/5

Cars, smouldering eyes, troubled teens and ice cold beers - that and more in *Under the Hood*, an Aussie novel with a raw undertone.

Scott and TJ are your Couple in Crisis. Their love-hate relationship is magnetic from the start, and TJ is one badass heroine! Scott tries his best to take charge of the struggling car dealership, but little does he realise the complexity of the dealership and its employees. The dealership is tied up in a teenage rehabilitation program, and gangs, drugs, violence and danger are an ever-present cloud that hangs over the day to day goings-on.

TJ's kind, open heart towards these teenagers makes you love her from the get-go. Scott is a hottie, but his smoking exterior isn't his only attraction. His friendliness, concern for the teenagers and his protectiveness when it comes to TJ are admirable qualities in a 'pompous arse' (as TJ eloquently describes him as). The teens are loveable; from Marty to the unfortunate Tiny. And Scott's dog Sarge is a heart-stealer as well.

Put all these characters in the setting of semi-rural Western Australia and you have yourself a winner!

My only criticism (not really a criticism - more like a note on what could be improved) was that I thought the attraction between TJ and Scott often overpowered the storyline somewhat. TJ's 'hot and cold' reaction to Scott was understandable, but did tend to get tiring when it occurred repeatedly. I would also have liked to have seen the main plot line develop further and to have been completed - I'm not sure whether a second book is in the making, but the book left the story unfinished. Towards the end (with the clues Tiny left behind) I was engrossed in the plot. But once again, with the ending, the emphasis turned once more to the Scott-TJ relationship.

Which isn't a bad thing (they're a very cute couple!) but I would have liked an ending that tied up the loose ends.

The humour was often spot-on, and made for some good laughs. An 'Aussie' myself, I wasn't completely sold on the amount of beer they all consumed - it seemed almost like each character downed two or three beers a day! - but I guess everyone has their preferences! And TJ definitely needed a good drink after some of the situations she had to deal with.

I praise Juanita for not over-doing the Australian aspects of the novel. So many authors tend to do this - and movie producers - but not Juanita. She manages to transport you directly to WA, but you're comfortably settled into your surroundings. The Australian lifestyle and environment is not thrown in your face every five seconds, with koalas and kangaroos invading the house and the neighbours wearing cork hats.

Juanita does away with stereotypes and gives you a raw novel that entertains as well as informs.

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## **J.L. Addicoat says**

Trying to run a business and put kids on the straight narrow is a tough job. There isn't any room for romance or love. But when new manager Scott steps into the picture, how can TJ keep to her rules?

An engaging story, showing determination, a wanting to help the misguided youth of the area, two old cars, and romance being denied.

An excellent start to what is going to be a must read series.

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## **Kerrie Paterson says**

I loved this book. The heroine, TJ, is feisty and caring. She's involved in a scheme to help young boys stay on the straight and narrow, and will fight tooth and nail for her boys. The hero, Scott, is eventually supportive. The setting is great and very Australian.

There are a few loose ends left untied, ready to be dealt with in the next book of the series. I'm looking forward to reading it :)

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## **Alex says**

The Deal: When taking over his newest dealership in semi-rural Australia, the least thing Scott Devin expected to find was TJ Stevens, the shop's manager and lead mechanic, wearing a skirt and impractical shoes and telling him to cool it while she deals with some stuff.

Scott is none too amused by this and quickly fires her, only to realize that TJ is pretty much the heart of the dealership and he hires her again.

TJ (short of Tiffany Jo, I think) is a pretty good mechanic and she loves working at the dealership, though not as much as she loves the teenage rehabilitation program she runs; and the de campground she inherited from her grandfather.

She doesn't have time for Scott... too bad she can't seem to get away.

My Thoughts: \*sigh\* From the cover I thought Under the Hood would be a fun, cute, fluffy story but it wasn't. It starts fun enough but then things get muddled pretty quickly.

The plot jumps from one thing to another with little explanation or link between events, so much so that I often felt like I was reading the cliff notes of the story, rather than the actual story. It was oddly episodic and overly complicated for it's length.

I liked Scott and TJ at the beginning, there were some cute moments between them but the development of their relationship seems to be on fast forward from the start which doesn't leave much room for character development.

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## **Lauren K says**

Under the Hood is Australian romance author Juanita Kees' first novel with Escape Publishing. The premise intrigued me instantly, a heroine who runs a car dealership in a small country town in Western Australia who wears mini skirts... I knew TJ Stevens was going to be an interesting character.

TJ is a mechanic and team leader and is well respected by her colleagues as she works hard and she's fair. She also has a stake in the dealership's apprenticeship for troubled teens and her passion and enthusiasm for this program is palpable. With the dealership being bought out by successful businessman Scott Devin, TJ has to prove herself and the program's usefulness if it's the last thing she does. This is a little more difficult than she thought when Scott Devin turns up at the dealership one week early and fires her almost immediately. There's an instant attraction between them and of course TJ gets her job back when Scott realises he acted prematurely following four resignations and a missing teen after TJ's dismissal.

Even though I enjoyed the story, I do feel like it was lacking something. As I write this review on a Sunday morning I'm afraid I may not succeed in articulating why exactly I felt that way.

I just didn't feel the connection between TJ and Scott initially, it felt a little forced in the beginning. I think the conflict was a bit weak too. Typically in romance there's the internal and the external conflict that create that create tension around the couple as to why they can't be together. Though the external conflict was present- neither wanted to overstep their working relationship of boss and employee- the internal conflict was really lacking. At the outset I could understand why TJ was reluctant to become involved with her boss, but as the story progressed this conflict wasn't strong enough to sustain the tension and I started to get frustrated. If the author had an internal conflict (e.g. fear of getting hurt/ rejected/ abandoned etc) to fall back on then the reason for keeping them apart would have been more believable. So, in this sense I found it hard to connect with the couple in their determination to remain just friends. Nevertheless, I did want them to work things out and I was satisfied with the ending.

I really liked TJ as a heroine and her passion for helping the teenagers, she really went above and beyond to help them and it sparked many other sub-plots in the story including a murder mystery. As the story progressed and the suspense heightened I found myself enjoying this story even more. Though I didn't know at the outset, this story forms part of a series (see the author's explanation [here](#)) as the murder mystery wasn't resolved and will likely be continued on in the next instalment.

Under the Hood is a promising start to a romance series set in country Western Australia by Australian author Juanita Kees.

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