



Time Served

Julianna Keyes

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Dean Barclay had nothing to do with my decision to flee my old life, but he is 100 percent of the reason I vowed to never look back.

I've never forgotten how it felt to follow Dean—dangerous, daring, determined—away from the crowd and climb into his beat-up old Trans Am. I was sixteen and gloriously alive for the first time. When I felt his hand cover my leg and move upward, it was over. I was his. Forever.

Until I left. Him, my mom, and the trailer park. Without so much as a goodbye.

Now Dean's back, crashing uninvited into my carefully cultivated, neat little lawyerly life. Eight years behind bars have turned him rougher and bigger—and more sexually demanding than any man I've ever met. I can't deny him anything...and that just might end up costing me everything.

Time Served Details

Date : Published March 23rd 2015 by Carina Press

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Author : Julianna Keyes

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Genre : Romance, Contemporary, Contemporary Romance, Did Not Finish, Adult Fiction, Erotica, Adult

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From Reader Review Time Served for online ebook

Michelle [Helen Geek] says

03/28/2015 --

Well .. I've found a new author. I loved this book. The story pulled me from the very first. The characters were written with depth and were edgy. It isn't a "nice" story, its one you could sink your teeth into and really feel.

Found this one through Jane Litte -- Dear Author blog. She gave it a B rating, but also marked it as a Recommended Read. Loved her review. The cover on this one POPPED too which pulled my eye.

What things did I like about this one:

1 -- Mentioned before, the story plot. This guy was a kid that made a few bad choices that he paid for as an adult. Got in with a wrong crowd and got addicted to spending money he didn't earn. He makes no excuses. Paid his time and is trying to get life pulled back together. In walks the woman that walked away from him 10 years ago. At a bodega they meet again. And so it goes.

These people were edgy. They weren't nice nor are they the whiny people like we see so often. These are people trying to live life and somewhere along the way lost the meaning of "living" -- wagging the dog .. know? WE can all identify with that. We spend significant time as youth trying to figure out what to do with ourselves while life happens around us. We think because we have the iPhone, the best clothes, the best shoes, cars, jobs, etc., that this is life and how life is supposed to be when life is really meant to be felt. If you ain't feelin' it, then it probably isn't worth much. This book is all that.

2 -- The characters -- mentioned a bit of it above, but this really is about two people trying not to have a relationship. Fighting that soul deep need for each other. They can't think of anything other than the past to keep them apart, but the past is really hard to let go of. What now? Well, lets just give it another day, another week, how 'bout a month. They really can't live without the other now that they've found each other again. How did they last as long as they have without the other? They are the very air each needs to survive. This is about two lost soul-mates finding each other again and how circumstances won't let them give up again.

3 -- The cover POPPED for me. You feel something when you see this. It *is* intimacy and you immediately want to know what these two people think and feel. Or, I did anyway. Rarely does a cover grab me to this degree. This one does. It SCREAMS "Read me NOW." The title could have been most anything, but is appropriate. It tells you a bit about the story, so good -- accomplishes its' task. There was a place in the book that the author said something I thought would have made a better title, but who cares. The synopsis could never do this one justice. This book is about emotion. That simple.

What could have been better?

1 -- Well .. I thought Rachel a bit cold. I get her. I do. She was in survival mode. The circumstances around her leaving Dean. I get it. The author writes this character like a man would. She seems to take emotion out of her decisions. I guess we can call this maturity, but I don't think so. She is at the very verge of personal psycho-social issues. Can she come back from that place? When she loved Dean she was so young. When a love like this comes to the very young they don't always treasure it like they should. They think it will always be like this -- and we know it isn't. Compound this with her childhood and her lifelong embarrassment about her background, and yeah, I get it. I would have liked a bit more warmth from this

character. Dean had to work so hard.

2 -- There were a few places where I got a bit confused. Lost a bit of the smooth flow for me. I re-read those portions and nope, didn't help. Just a few places, but enough to break my flow, so have to note it here.

3 -- The smexy times abound in this one. Could it be rated as erotic? Maybe. I read erotic and this one didn't smack of erotic to me. So, for this reason, a few places or scenes lost the intimacy and felt a bit over the top. Rather gratuitous. I remember thinking .. "ugh, here we go again." I skimmed a bit. Thinking is never good.

I've found a new author. Going to read the complete [3] backlist now and be on the lookout for anything new by Julianna Keyes. I love when that happens and thank Jane for her honest review that pointed me here.

I'll re-read this one again and again -- so going on the favorites pile too.

If you decide to read this one, hope you enjoy it even half as much as I did.

Happy Reading!

~~~~~

**Overall Rating = 4.5 Stars**

**Book Cover / Book Blurb / Book Title = 5 / 4 / 4 = 4.5 Stars**

**Writer's Voice = 4.5 Stars**

**Character / Secondary Character Development = 4.5 / 4 = 4 Stars**

**"Did I like" Hero / Heroine = 5 / 4 = 4.5 Stars**

**Story / Background Story Development = 5 / 5 = 5 Stars**

**"Did I like the Damned Thing" = 5 Stars**

**Ending = 4 Stars**

**Worth the Chili = 5 Stars -- [\$3.99 on Amazon]**

**Smexy [HEAT] Rating = Steamy**

**283 pages**

*First sentence: "Next up for auction is the honor of naming the naked mole rat recently born at the North Campbell Zoo ..."*

*Last sentence: Eventually he presses a kiss to my temple and says the simplest, truest thing. "We've got time."*

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**Angie Elle says**

*Thank you to CARINA PRESS and Netgalley for providing a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.*

**Time Served** is a story about a man and a woman that share a sordid past. When their paths cross years later, sexual sparks reignite.

If you're picking this book up hoping for a tone similar to the one found in **Just Once**, you're going to be shocked. While there may have been some gruffness in **Just Once**, there was also an undercurrent of

sweetness and romance that you won't find in **Time Served**. I found myself in an unfamiliar place upon finishing this book. I didn't particularly like either of the main characters in this one, and it made it hard to root for them to find their way together. They just seemed to bring out the worst in each other. Having said that, there was something about their story that hooked me.

Rachel and Dean were both from the wrong side of the tracks, but Rachel worked her tail off to finish law school while Dean ended up in prison for armed robbery. One of the things I really enjoyed about this book was Rachel's perception of her present life. I didn't always like the things she thought about people, but it was clear to her that while she may have been able to change her income and the sort of people she surrounded herself with, the grass wasn't necessarily greener on the other side. And those thoughts constantly plaguing her were realistic. She'd spent a large portion of her life being judged, and it was a knee-jerk reaction to judge back; it was something she wasn't able to let go even after all these years. On top of that, she was so harsh in the way she judged herself, I can see it spilling into how she thought about other people. It might not be flattering, but I do think it fit with her character. Dean was a jerk from the get-go, and the moments when he departed from this were so few and far between that it just wasn't enough for me to ever warm up to him. His gruffness wasn't just part of his exterior; it's who he was. The time he spent in prison, and probably age, mellowed him out some, but it still didn't seem as if he regretted what he'd took part in or learned from his mistakes. Again, while this may not have been flattering to his character, it felt like such a realistic depiction of how his circumstances shaped him that it can't be overlooked.

Here's where my problem was with the book: the relationship between Rachel and Dean was awkward at the best of times and harsh at the worst. I felt like their relationship from the past was relied upon to solidify their current 'romantic' connection, but I didn't see there where was any romance in their past. It was just really good sex. Oddly enough, it felt like they turned to each other in the present because of convenience, while at the same time it was incredibly inconvenient for both of them. I think Rachel, especially, was so scarred from her past that Dean was too much of a reminder for her to be able to move on. This book is classified as a romance, but I think erotica is a much better description. There was a lot of sexual chemistry between the characters, and those scenes were very well written.

I really enjoyed the glimpses into Rachel's professional life. Seeing the case she is currently working on through her eyes is where we're able to learn how compassionate she really is. It's her personal journey that I enjoyed most about this book. She has a lot of baggage she is carrying from her past, and Dean is the catalyst for bringing those emotions to the surface. While I don't think his presence in her life is the healthiest scenario, I do think realizing how scarred she is and how much she needs to get past things is the silver lining to his appearance.

Overall, this book was an entertaining read and there was something about it that made it hard to put down. If it's romance you're looking for, I think you may be disappointed, but if you're looking for a woman coming face to face with her past and trying to work through it, you might enjoy this one.

*This review was originally posted at Badass Book Reviews.*

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## **Mandy says**

4.25 stars - I'm going to be totally honest when I say that at about 20% into this book, I wanted to DNF this book. I couldn't stand the heroine, Rachel. She came across as stuck up and mean. I didn't like her reasoning for leaving Dean. I'm so glad I continued reading this one because the evolution of Rachel's character was

really good, it just took a while to get there. Rachel and Dean were high school sweethearts. Rachel left Dean without saying goodbye and never looked back. 3 weeks after Rachel left, Dean was involved in an armed robbery and went to prison. When they run into each other at a bodega years later, Dean demands that Rachel talk to him. His demands don't stop at talking. The sex in this book was off the charts hot. There was also a really interesting court case Rachel was working on. What I really liked about this book is that it wasn't all hearts and flowers, there were some intense feelings between these two, including love, hate, anger and lust. I really ended up enjoying this book and recommend it to anyone who enjoys an angsty romance.

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\*\*ARC provided in exchange for an honest review\*\*

### **Lisa says**

*ARC provided by Carina Press/NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.*

This book made me *feel*. It made me really *think*. Can you change who you are by running away from your past? Can you better your life after making a terrible mistake? This book took me on an emotional journey. Rachel and Dean both were trying to move past the hurt and unresolved feelings as they navigate towards their future, whether together or apart. At times I cringed at the hurtful things Dean and Rachel said to each other but at the same time I understood their need to have their guard up. I really enjoyed the pace of their story. It felt realistic considering their history.

By the end of this book I felt like I had been on a rollercoaster of emotions and when the ride was over I was happy I boarded.

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### **SamJ ★Needs a HEA★ says**

*copy received via Carina Press/Netgalley in exchange for an honest review*

Unfortunately this book was not for me, I found it very very difficult to connect to the heroine, or even like her. She seemed at times, very derisive of those around her, she pretended to be well bred, yet seemed to sneer at those who were, and expected Dean to be living in some crappy trailer park, not having made any changes to his life, as if that was just her sole right.

It felt too much, like she spent a lot of time telling us as a reader, how smart she was, how much she cared about the people and not just the case, yet that never really came across. I need to be shown, not told this by a character, for it to ring true.

Her "rivalry" from what I read, came cross like sour grapes - calling the other woman a "whore" and telling us she slept with 1,2 or all 3 bosses, again, too much tell and not enough show. Was this true, or just Rachael's reaction to another woman who was actually just as good as, or better at the job? Sour grapes again, as the other woman had actually came from a privileged background.? Maybe there was something more in it later on, but I got pretty bored and skim read it a lot, but to start with, it did not come across well

and make the heroine more likeable in my eyes.

It made the heroine just difficult to connect to and as I say, I found myself disliking her hugely.

I did like the character of Dean and the idea behind their story, but again, how Rachael left him seemed cruel and she spent the better part of the book, or at least to this reader, thinking she is better than him because of her job, when in reality she seemed not very nice.

Too much time was spent on her job and the case she was on, getting far too bogged down in the details of that, and taking away from the romance, so even when we got to the end (although I admit to skim reading large parts of this book) that their HEA did not ring true. Even 8 months down the line, Dean was still not sure of Rachael or trusting her to stick around, making it feel more like a shaky HFN as opposed to a HEA.

But as I say not every book can be for everybody. I just find once I start to dislike a person, and they get my back up - as the heroine did here, it is very hard for me to change my way of thinking and like them.

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### **christine danielle (Bibliophilic Madness) says**

FOR MORE REVIEWS AND GIVEAWAYS, DO CHECK OUT MY BLOG:

PLOT: 5

CHARACTERS: 5

COVER: 5

### **OVERALL RATING: 5**

Rachel Moser left her life behind and Dean Barclay once she got the chance to leave her trailer life and go to college. Now she's a successful lawyer in Chicago with a hot accountant to boot.

But when she meets Dean again she doesn't know where to fit him in her polished lifestyle.

### **WHAT I LOVED ABOUT THIS BOOK**

When I requested this book from Netgalley I wasn't really expecting much since I was afraid of what I would find. When thinking of ex-convicts I always remember Ted Bundy for no apparent reason. But I was surprised when I adored this book. So what I loved about this was how true to life the story was. I've read countless of books where the hero was imprisoned and there would be something that proves that "he was just framed" or "he did it for a good reason" but here in this book, Dean wasn't like that. He did what he did because he liked it.

He never said anything to prove his innocence and he just took his sentence with the knowledge that what he did was bad and he needs to pay for it. Another thing which I loved about this book was the love-hate

relationship between the characters on the first parts of the book or is it lust-hate relationship?

Dean's attitude was so bad but I weirdly liked it. That made his transformation to somewhat-sweet-guy something I could appreciate more. Rachel was someone I didn't like at the first parts because she could have said goodbye to Dean before leaving him. But then I realized where she was coming from then I began to like her character.

### **And can we talk about their sex life please.**

It was so hot and heavy I was afraid I would combust just by reading. I loved how it wasn't romance and flowers (not that I'm saying it's bad) but it was full on sex that's hot and heavy.

Time Served was surely a great read that you should really check out if you want a book that's sexy but still has a bit of sweetness to it.

*received digital edition from publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review*

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### **Vashti says**

Not a bad book. The heroine was a problem for me, I thought she was a hard ass bitch and not very likeable at all. I don't know what he saw in her. Well maybe his 8 years in prison left him desperate in his quest for vengeance against the heroine because she left him 10 years prior without a goodbye and he turned to strong armmmed robbery and got caught.

Lots of sex scenes, did not feel the love connection with this couple. There were some huh moments for me as how he could afford his apt , it was stated his deceased Mom left him money when she died and he could not touch the money untill a year after his release from prison. He had lived in a trailor park with his Mom till he was sent up river. My question is; if she had all this money alive, why are you living in a trailer park? why not spend the money on better housing in a better neighborhood . The epilogue was better and kinda,sorta made up for the heroine hence the 4\*\*. Now the hero I did like, he was broody, sexy and built like a Mack truck, but for a guy who was in prison and a fighter/boxer, no tatts, what!!!!

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### **MBR says**

Time Served by Julianna Keyes is a book that I will treasure among the hordes of books that are published today. All because Julianna dared to write a hero that might not be well received by certain readers because he doesn't turn into a "girl" the minute the heroine re-enters his life. I mean this in the nicest possible way, but I seriously find it absurd when heroes who are described as formidable, reticent, and especially not to mention if they have a bone of contention with the heroine so to speak, that turns sappy once the heroine turns up; I feel like throwing the book at the wall when that happens. The fact that writers like Julianna Keyes are rare makes me want to treasure this gem some more. Because God knows when I would be able to read a hero like Dean Barclay.

Rachel Moser is an upcoming lawyer at one of them prestigious firms that has three names to its title. Rachel

works hard, works night and day to make her dreams come true. That dream being one that doesn't include looking back at the past that she had walked out on, the life she had left behind, including Dean, the man she had loved and who had loved her in return. While Rachel would rather cut off a body part than admit that something is amiss in her life even as she climbs the ladder of ambition one by one, there is that teeny tiny part of her that wants something more.

Dean has done his time and is trying to sort out his life. The only thing he wants when he encounters Rachel after all that time that has passed is to fuck her and this time be the one to walk away from her, no questions asked. But every touch and every kiss that burns hotter and wilder than the one before proves one thing – that Dean isn't immune to the woman who held his heart, body and soul in her hands before she had walked away without a word or a backward glance and that she still has the power to bring him down to his very knees.

Time Served is written in first person from Rachel's point of view. There is no part of the story that is written to show Dean's point of view and that somehow made this book more alluring for me. To gauge Dean's reactions through Rachel's eyes, to see him react in ways that might seem ungentlemanly to some, were actually the bits that I loved. The bits that I found brought out honest reactions from a man that had been hurt and hurt bad when the woman he had loved with all his heart had left him. The fact that he was possessive to the extent that made me breathless from wanting, the way he could take a scene from zero to hundred just like that; those were the bits that made me fall, and fall hard for him.

Like I said at the start of the novel, Dean is not the type of hero who becomes apologetic for who he is, or does a 360 degree turn on his character, all because of the heroine. Dean is very much his own man and he proves that every single time he walks into a scene. Dean and Rachel had been born into shitty lives through no fault of their own. Rachel had had ambitions even back then which had made it possible for her to walk away. But neither Rachel nor Dean had ever gotten over each other which is evident once the ball gets rolling.

There are multiple facets to both Rachel and Dean that makes it easy to fall for them both. They have both made mistakes – they are both human. That was the most relatable factor for me as I was reading this book. Not to mention the panty-melting variety of scorching passion that Dean brings to the picture – and man, can he bring it on! The cover on this book doesn't cheat, let me promise you that – it delivers every ounce of what it promises and then some!

The epilogue proved to be the icing on the cake for me when it came to Time Served. After all that Rachel and Dean go through to come out victorious in the end, the epilogue made my heart smile – because they both deserved the happiness that was so evident when it all came to its ultimate conclusion.

I see that there is a second book in the series out already, and that too the lead being the nemesis of Rachel in Time Served. I am definitely going to take a look because I can't wait to see how Julianna makes the heroine someone worthy of the reader's time.

Most highly recommended!

And, Dear Julianna, please never stop writing characters who are true to themselves. You are a rare breed in the world of romance today. Love, me!

**Rating = 4.75/5**

For more reviews & quotes, please visit, [www.maldivianbookreviewer.com](http://www.maldivianbookreviewer.com)

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## Alyssa says

\*\*\*Review posted on The Eater of Books! blog\*\*\*

Time Served by Julianna Keyes

Publisher: Carina Press

Publication Date: March 23, 2015

Rating: 5 stars

Source: eARC from NetGalley

\*\*\*Warning: this is an adult book, and for the eyes of mature readers\*\*\*

Summary (from Goodreads):

Dean Barclay had nothing to do with my decision to flee my old life, but he is 100 percent of the reason I vowed to never look back.

I've never forgotten how it felt to follow Dean—dangerous, daring, determined—away from the crowd and climb into his beat-up old Trans Am. I was sixteen and gloriously alive for the first time. When I felt his hand cover my leg and move upward, it was over. I was his. Forever.

Until I left. Him, my mom, and the trailer park. Without so much as a goodbye.

Now Dean's back, crashing uninvited into my carefully cultivated, neat little lawyerly life. Eight years behind bars have turned him rougher and bigger—and more sexually demanding than any man I've ever met. I can't deny him anything...and that just might end up costing me everything.

What I Liked:

Woah. Woah woah woah. I honestly did not expect to enjoy this novel THAT MUCH. In fact, I would never have even heard of this book, had it not been for the lovely Dear Author's tweet about it popping up on NetGalley. I took her recommendation and got the book... and boy do I NOT regret that whim. It threw a wrench in my packed March review copies reading schedule, but I could be happier than it did.

Rachel Moser left her trailer park life behind and went to college - and made something of herself. Now a successful and driven lawyer in Chicago, she doesn't expect to ever revisit that life again, or to interact with anyone from the town. But Dean Barclay, the boy she left all those years ago, is now in Rachel's new town. Recently out of prison (on parole), he works in a warehouse and boxes in a gym nearby. Rachel's organized, structured life turns upside down. Dean is a wildfire, and a new case at Rachel's job isn't helping her. She could lose everything all at once if she's not careful.

Rachel is a very hard-working, diligent, driven young woman. She puts her heart and soul into her job, and really cares about her clients. She works seven days a week, and has a schedule of events for every day. She's constantly checking her phone for messages, emails, texts about work. Everything, to her, is about work. She came from such meager and poor ends, and now that she is successful and well-off, she is determined not to lose her comfortable life. She doesn't want anyone to know about her past, before she put herself through

college and worked her way up to where she is.

I really liked Rachel. I feel like I could identify with her somewhat (though I'm not a twenty-eight-year-old lawyer). She's worked hard every day of her life, coming from a very poor family and destitute background. She is very intelligent, very caring, very selfless. She is ordered and precise, which I totally understand. I'm pretty OCD myself, and so if a hurricane like Dean Barclay came back into my life and with ten times the force... well, I'd be wary too.

At first, Rachel is adamant against seeing Dean. They meet randomly, but then he singles her out and gives her his address and number. She pleads to him to leave her alone, but in her heart, she knows she doesn't want to leave him alone. She left him all those years ago, and she asks him to forgive her, but it seems like he is out for blood. Or sex. He missed her, all those years in jail. See, he and some of his friends robbed a bank just shortly after Rachel left Dean. He did something incredibly dumb and impulsive. I like how the author doesn't try to make it seem like it was an accident, or it was circumstantial, or that Dean is a good person who got caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. There was not sugar-coating this event, on Rachel's part and on Dean's part.

Eventually, Rachel gives in, and goes to Dean's place. He says he wants to get her out of his head. So they get intimate. She leaves, but she can't stop thinking about him. Apparently it's the same thing for him. So they meet again. And then fight. And meet again. And disagree. The story goes on, showing the progression of their new, tentative non-relationship relationship. Rachel realizes that she really cares about Dean towards the end of the book, but she also realizes how much he's been hurting her, and she him. I like how their relationship isn't a typical progression of "like" to "love", or "lust" to "like" to "love". It goes from irritation to lust to more lust to distrust to trust to like to love. Kind of. It takes forever for them to build trust, because they keep hurting each other (not with other people, but in different ways).

So there is a ton of depth to Rachel and Dean's relationship. There is a ton of depth to both characters, too. I already talked about Rachel, but Dean is also a very well-rounded character. He spent years in prison, and is now on parole. He wanted to make Rachel hurt (emotionally) as much as he did, when she left him. And when he sees her, in the beginning of this book, that is exactly what he plans on doing. Except that nothing goes according to his plan. He's rough, demanding, an alpha, totally macho, but he falls for Rachel all over again.

The progression of feelings and emotions was pretty well-written, in my opinion, and I really REALLY liked the chemistry and sizzling scenes in this novel. There were plenty of them, and guys, this author knows how to write some seriously steamy scenes. There were at least three hoooot scenes that had me staring at the pages. That being said, this novel is NOT for the prude or those that don't like seriously explicit sex or sexual activities. Because, you're in for a lot of it, in this book. Lots of very well-written scenes, lots of good steamy times. Lots of explicit stuff. So. Just so you know.

I loved the chemistry. I loved the romance. I also loved the story. I really liked watching Rachel and Dean pull and push each other. Dean is a bit controlling and demanding, which bothered me initially, but eventually, I liked when Rachel also got control of the non-relationship relationship. I liked the non-romance-related stories too - Rachel's case, which a co-worker is currently giving her a run for her money. Rachel also finally goes back to Riverside, which is a disaster and a blessing in disguise. The romance is huge in this book, but the other stories are really important too.

I loved how Rachel grew as a character. Dean too. I can't say too much without being too specific and giving

away the ending in several areas, but Rachel makes some serious decisions in the end of this book, and I was taken by surprise. Except I also wasn't - I knew something had to give, in many different aspects of Rachel's life. I'm really happy with her choices, though I would definitely have been scared out of my mind if I did what she did.

Overall... I loved this book. I've read a ton of my favorite scenes over and over, and now that I've read the whole book, I want to read it again in its entirety! It's good enough to read, and reread, and reread, and read again... Love love love!

#### What I Did Not Like:

Believe it or not, there were things that I didn't like about this book, but they weren't huge. Actually, it was more like one thing. I didn't like this ONE scenes, when Rachel is panicking, and Dean tries to calm her down... I didn't like what he did to make her panic, and what he tried to do to make her calm down. The whole situation was his fault, and then he handled her panic badly, in my opinion.

Of course, this is ONE scene. And in real life, men do stupid things like this all the time (so do women, but in this particular case, it was Dean who messed up). So. Take this "dislike" as you will.

#### Would I Recommend It:

To romance readers - YES! It's not erotica, so you don't have to be an erotica reader to enjoy this one. I really like romance novels, but mostly historical romance novels. This contemporary romance novel is really, really great. Probably a favorite of the year - so far, it's winning (but we're in early February, so, it's a bit early). But if you love romance novels, definitely give this one a chance. It's really cheap, so you're getting a great deal!

#### Rating:

5 stars. I think this is my first 5-star read of 2015! I've read 22 books so far, so that's pretty great. I don't give many books 5 stars (more 3- and 4-star ratings), so I feel like when I DO give 5-star ratings, the book really deserves it! Like this one.

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### **Wollstonecrafthomegirl says**

My GOD, Keyes can't half write the dirty talk. Off the scales good. Sex scenes were fantastic and plentiful. And around all of those sex scenes Keyes has weaved a believable story with believable conflict which adds to the sex and relates to the sex. I took to Rachel, the heroine, I could understand and sympathise with her life. The pull of a job you've worked towards for so long but you aren't certain you're enjoying. The ultimate struggle to decide what you really want and accepting that. The whole story is from Rachel's POV which necessarily means that Dean is less well developed and he did feel like a vehicle to allow Rachel to grow as a person. His characterisation was less subtlety handled, but then, he's a less subtle, nuanced person, so perhaps that's the point. All in all, a thoroughly enjoyable read.

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~ Stéphanie ~ Tied up in Romance ~ says

**DNF 88 %, NO rating**

I'm mad right now!!

I can't believe I spent 2 days reading this!

Damn that girl is beyond stupid!!

The story was promising; the characters seem a little broken but good. I've never read a second chances story between an ex-con and his ex-girlfriend so I was thrilled to start.

Rachel has left her home-town without a backward glance. She left her life at 17 but she also left her boyfriend Dean without an explanation and without even a note.

Ten years later, Dean is not the same man as he was in his teens. After spending eight years in prison for a crime he did commit, he never really forgot about the one girl he was with when he got 19. So when he sees her again, he is mostly angry.

But lust gets in the way and they seemed to not be able to keep their hands from each other.

I'm going to keep this short and simple:

**Rachel** What a selfish b\*tch!

I thought she was very judgemental and she has a lot of prejudice. She had the opportunity to leave town and she did but now she is acting like a spoiled girl!

Every once in a while, you are reminded that she is a successful lawyer and that Dean for example is under her.

Several times when he pays for something, she seems embarrassed because she thinks he doesn't have enough money. She is also ashamed to show off Dean and to be seen with him.(Their relationship is secret until 80 %)

**Dean** I don't know. I wanted to like him but truthfully after 88 % I don't know him.

He uses sex to get to Rachel. He was angry, cold, offended and he had every right to feel that way. Who wouldn't be mad after being dumped the way he was? But at some point, you have to let it go.

After 60%, you get a glimpse of who he is but before that he shrugged a lot, complained a lot and he only wanted to fuck! Maybe getting his pov would have given another perspective, a better view of his feeling. I'm not against sex in a book, I LOVE sex in a book but too much is too much. Yes this is me complaining there's too much sex in a book

They have sex whenever they met but no talking... What a way to resolve their problems

So why did I DNF it at 88%? Because normally I would say that if you are this far in a book why not finish it? Now I understand better when I see someone else DNF a book after the 75% mark.

In the last scene I read, Rachel was ashamed and pissed because Dean stood up for her in front of everyone at a job function cocktail.

What's your problem girl? You are scared to loose your job? Here's a hint: You don't like your job!!

I'm sorry but with only 12% left I don't know how Rachel can redeem herself and how they can profess their love for each other (because yes we are not even at the point where they are in love)

*~ARC provided by publisher for an honest review~*

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**nick says**

Ooof! STEAMY

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**book\_luv\_r says**

You'd think this book was terrible based on my rating. Well the writing was great, the story itself drove me crazy. Let me flash back a few years and explain:

I went to college with a girl and became instant best buds. Soon I started to realize her whole world revolved around having the best of everything. It was exhausting trying to compete with her. I had to pay my own way for EVERYTHING. She got a hefty stipend each month from daddy. She didn't have to work 40 hours a week like I did, just so I could pay for things. We parted ways after a few years because I just couldn't take her selfishness anymore. Fast forward 15 years and I get a phone call from her out of the blue. By this time I had three kids and was blissfully happy with my husband. My life was/is perfect. All she talked about was the fancy condo she had bought, the infinity car she drove, and finally the engagement ring she still had after she broke things off from a rich sugar daddy. She was so proud of herself. I was appalled. She had turned into the most shallow person I had ever met.

When I read this book, I instantly thought of my ex friend. They may have had different upbringings, but the end result was the same. I kept reading this book and felt sorry for Dean. Why would he waste his time with her. She constantly acted like she was too good for him. Not very sexy. I could not for the life of me ever justify not communicating with the one you left behind, all because you were afraid you'd stay in a trailer

park.

It's hard to read a book when all I want is for her to fail and fall on her face. She didn't deserve Dean. At all.

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### **new\_user says**

**Amazing.** I read contemporary so rarely, I didn't have a shelf for it until now. I always prefer a little magic mixed in. I'll make an exception for Julianna Keyes' writing.

Great prose, dialogue, and character development. I understood Dean and Rachel so well and their dynamic was smokin'! So was Dean! Those hoodies, LOL. Boxer/gym rat love, LOL. The leads' mutual (working class) backgrounds and history were so interesting. It's also difficult to pull off, as the author did, so much conflict without ruining either character's image in the reader's eye. And the characterization was so subtle, I was impressed- for example, hinting at Parker's, er, colorfulness and slipping in Haines' color without much ado. She has a deft hand. Her romance is more authentic and less contrived, compared to the norm. I am a fan.

Very curious about Oscar, smooth but nice. Loved Parker, his friendship with Rachel, her internal struggle with her roots, the Erin Brockovich-like case, the Chicago setting. I'm a little shocked that villainess Caitlin is the heroine of the next book. Hopefully Keyes will convince me of her happily-ever-after! **Do you love vulnerable but tough heroes, reunion romances, and a touch of D/S without all the accouterments?**

**Read *Time Served* now.**

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### **Cristina says**

...starting this book.

Have you ever read a book in which you can't actually pinpoint what you don't like about it but it's just not working for you?

Well this is it for me...so I decided to cut my losses short and move on...

**\*ARC generously provided by Netgalley in exchange for an honest review\***

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