



Caress of Pleasure: A Dark Pleasures Novella

Julie Kenner

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I'd thought that he was mine, the dark, arresting man who commanded not only my body but my heart. Dante had swept into my life, and I'd succumbed to the burn of passion in his arms.

I'd believed we had a love that would last forever, but he'd shattered my dreams and broken me into pieces when he'd walked away, taking a piece of my soul with him.

Now he has come back seeking my help, and though I try to keep my distance and protect my heart, I cannot deny that the fire between us burns hotter than ever. And I cannot help but fear that this time our passion will reduce us both to ashes.

Caress of Pleasure: A Dark Pleasures Novella Details

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From Reader Review **Caress of Pleasure: A Dark Pleasures Novella** for online ebook

Home Is Where the Wine Is Book Blog says

My Rating: 3.5 out of 5 Stars

This was my second 1001 nights Novella by Julie Kenner that I have had the pleasure of reading. You can read my review of *Caress of Darkness* here. This one follows the story of Dante. He is haunted by the memory of his once thought true mate, Brenna. Thirteen years have passed but the feelings continue to torment him. He refused to watch her burn in the flames like he has witnessed his brothers once thought true mates succumb to. So he let her go. You see when the immortals of the Phoenix brotherhood find a human that they believe to be their true mate they must join them in the flames and be reborn. Only one has succeeded, several have tried.

So when the knowledge of a mysterious brooch that holds the key to one of their lost brothers appears they must use Brenna's private acquisitions consultant business to acquire it. Brenna is less than amused by Dante's reappearance but she is more annoyed that her feelings for him have not changed.

Thirteen years of pent up feelings...they collide...HARD. But Dante knows that he must let her go even when she tries to convince him that her feelings are true and they are meant to be together. Will she survive the flames?

Thoughts: Again Julie's writing is beautiful and compelling. The only reason I did not rate this higher is I thought this should have been a full novel and that the characters appeared rushed at times. Would I recommend it? You bet! This is one hot little number that will leave you begging for more.

Favorite Scene: The bar and the martini [image error]

Favorite Quote:

"Very little scares me," she retorted. "Least of all you."

"Really?" Well, that makes only one of us. Because baby, you scare me to death. One look and you can melt me. One kiss and you could destroy me."

Sandy S says

3.75 stars--

ABOUT THE BOOK: Release Date April 28, 2015

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REVIEW: 3.75 stars

**SOME BACKGROUND:** The exclusive Dark Pleasures Club and the Phoenix Brotherhood are a group of immortal warriors and hunters whose mission it is to find a powerful amulet that will allow the immortals to cross between the dimensions. But there is always the requisite evil and in this the 'fuerie' will be searching for the amulet as well. As the name implies, the Phoenix Brotherhood are a group of supernatural warriors whose death will result in a rebirth by flames.

Told from dual perspectives- first person point of view Brenna, and third person perspective, CARESS OF PLEASURE focuses on the search for a phoenix amulet thought to hold the 'essence' of Merrick-one of the Phoenix Brotherhood warriors presumed dead. Enter Brenna, a thirty something woman who finds things for a price, and the woman Dante Storm has loved for thirteen years. Thirteen years earlier, Dante walked away from Brenna in the belief that she was not his soul mate, and in the ensuing years has never forgotten about the one he let get away. When Dante is tasked by the Brotherhood to make contact with Brenna, with the hopes that she is able to locate the phoenix amulet, Dante knows that his heart will want Brenna again and in doing so reveals the truth about his immortal existence.

CARESS OF PLEASURE is a quick read; a second chance, paranormal storyline that ends all too quickly in my humble opinion. Just as the story begins to pick up the pace the reader is blind sided, and Brenna and Dante's story is over. Our hero dies and Brenna walks through the flames in the hopes she is Dante's true mate. Saying that, our heroine is also quick to accept the Brotherhood's immortality without question but for the mere mention by Brenna that 'it almost felt like something she knew'. With this in mind, I am hoping there is more to Dante and Brenna's love story-perhaps a reincarnation similar to Mal and Christina's story. There is no explanation as to why Brenna has this feeling but I hope there is still more to come.

Own a copy

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## **Jillian Stein says**

Caress of Pleasure is book number 3.5 in author Julie Kenner's Dark Pleasures series as well as the 5th novella in the 2015 1,001 Dark Nights line-up. I have loved the Dark Pleasures series from the beginning and filled with heat, action, and mystery, this novella was a wonderful addition.

I always enjoy a story where former lovers who experienced a nasty breakup are reunited and put into a situation which forces them to be in one another's company again. This was the case with Brenna and Dante and oh my, the emotions run high from the very first time they lay eyes on each other.

When he calls on her for her expertise in her field and to help procure a rare jeweled brooch, she wanted to tell him no. It would prove to be easier said than done when she sees him and immediately all the feelings she had thought lay dormant awaken. She also realized he hadn't aged a bit. Not one wrinkle. Now she wasn't just on a mission to get a brooch, she was determined to know why he had crushed her dreams all those years earlier and what was going on with him and his eternal youthful appearance.

Those missions will throw her headfirst into a world she never knew existed. A world that not only held immortal beings but an enormous amount of danger. Those missions would also bring about another chance for the love she and Dante once shared.

When I first started this series I had been in a paranormal romance funk. With each release in this series and Ms. Kenner's unique take on the supernatural beings within these stories, I am reminded of just what makes PNR so amazing. It's a series I will continue to look forward to and one I enjoy more and more with each installment.

Thank you, Ms. Kenner, for another amazing read and for bringing us Dante and Brenna!

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## **Rebecca says**

I'm a huge J Kenner fan, but I've never read any of her paranormal romances. Caress of Pleasure was the perfect introduction to her otherworldly works; I instantly loved the idea of the Phoenix Brotherhood – where they came from, who they are, and what they do. A phoenix rising from the ashes, being reborn, and given another chance at life is a perfect metaphor to live by because being able to right wrongs and reunite with those one loves can turn a lonely existence into one worth living.

Thirteen years ago, Dante Storm and Brenna Hart shared an intense and passionate love that fiercely burned until Dante destroyed that bond because he allowed his eyes/head instead of his heart to decide their fate. Now, Dante needs Brenna's help and those locked up feelings that they've both tried to ignore since he left come rising to the surface, forcing them to confront the past and find a way to move forward either as second chance lovers or old flames that simply burned out.

Because Dante and Brenna's story is told in a novella, there's not a lot of time to shed light on their past because the present is what needs to be dealt with in the amount of space provided. Even with minimal space, Julie Kenner sets up Dante and Brenna's back story nicely, allowing readers to get a clear picture of what occurred and why neither of them has been able to let the other go.

While Caress of Pleasure is paranormal; it doesn't overpower the story line; it's there to illustrate what the

couple is up against and to move the plot forward, but at the forefront of the text is the love that still exists between Dante and Brenna, and the ups and downs they go through in order to see if what's between them is worth reigniting, even with the hurt, anger, and mistrust that still surrounds them.

A complimentary copy was provided in exchange for an honest review.

4 Poison Apples (The Fairest of All Book Reviews)

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### **Peggy Lee (Reading Keeps Me Sane) says**

I don't usually read paranormal stories but I took a chance on this story and loved it! It's a story of love lost, misunderstandings and immortality.

Dante Storm has only loved one woman, Brenna Hart. A future together was an impossibility because *"He'd fallen for a mortal, after all. And after thirteen years, the memory of Brenna Hart still had the power to wreck him."* Now in order to save one of his team, Merrick, Dante has to face the woman he left behind and ask for her help.

Brenna Hart is a private acquisitions consultant. She was once madly in love until Dante Storm snuffed out her light. Now Brenna keeps men at a distance. *"I played fast and loose with my emotions once before and I'd lost big time. Now I keep my heart locked up tighter than most of the museums I work with."* It has been thirteen years since she last saw Dante and when he reappears he doesn't look as if he aged a day.

Dante and Brenna feelings are rekindled, however it doesn't change the fact that Dante must walk away. There is one option for their happily-ever-after but it's risky if Brenna isn't Dante's true mate. A misunderstanding thirteen years ago may continue to keep them separated unless Brenna discovers truth.

This is a short story that packs a punch. It's a classic love story of love lost because of a misunderstanding with the twist of immortality. The conflicts were well developed and kept me turning the pages seeking the happy ending.

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### **viva says**

Thank you!

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### **Catherine (The Sassy Bookster) says**

3.5 Stars

Very surprisingly, this is the first book by Ms. Kenner that I have read and even though I knew it was a novella, I feel cheated because it ended too soon, just at the point I wanted more.

Thirteen years ago, Brenna and Dante had been in a relationship that ended when Dante walked away with no explanation to her. However, he walked away because he thought there was no future for them but has not forgotten her all this time. Now he is in need of Brenna's professional expertise to acquire an antique and save one of their brothers and they find themselves mixing business with pleasure even though Dante knows that he will have to walk away again.

Why did I enjoy reading *Caress of Pleasure*? In one word – Brenna. She is direct, vocal and honest about what she wants and going after it, with no apologies. Dante on the other hand, was quite distant and aloof and even his expression of his feelings for Brenna felt unemotional.

I liked that Ms. Kenner gave enough background on the other characters to satisfy those of us who started reading mid-series. However, the Brenna's easy acceptance of Dante's immortality is a little too easy. That said, I like the author's writing style and will be checking out the rest of her books.

\*I received this book for free from the Author in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.\*

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## **Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says**

Leigh's review posted on Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews

3.75 Stars

Normally I am a huge fan of Ms. Kenner. I love her alpha males and her down to earth heroines. I love the power plays and the stories and lives she crafts. And while I will typically branch out into the paranormal as a change of pace, and I liked *Caress of Pleasure*, it didn't pack the emotional punch for me that I usually get from her books.

*Caress of Pleasure* tells the story of Dante and Brenna, and how years before, Dante broke both of their hearts by leaving Brenna with no explanation and no looking back. But the truth was that Dante left to prevent the heartache he knew would come from a relationship between the two of them that could never last.

As an immortal, Dante would never grow old. He could die, but he was reborn in the flames like a phoenix rising from the ashes. A life together would only entail him watching Brenna grow old and die.

But when their paths cross again and Dante needs something that only Brenna can provide, his secrets are revealed to the woman that loved him with all of her heart and soul.

While I found the story to be interesting and the characters to be sexy and likeable, I think my issue stemmed from the fact that I was coming in mid-series. The author did a good job of setting up the background so that I was not lost, and it could be read alone, I still felt that I had missed out on the history of the supporting characters that it would have provided a lot more color to the current romance if I knew their stories as well.

In addition, I had a little trouble believing the ease of which Brenna accepted the truth. I suspended reality enough to accept that Dante was from another dimension and that he and all of his cohorts were more than

human. But Brenna accepting the idea that her ex-boyfriend was immortal? Sure, no problem! I would have expected a little hysterics or something!

Overall, I did like this book. Ms. Kenner is a wonderful storyteller with a knack for writing characters that I want to have a happily ever after. I just didn't lose myself in this story the way I wanted to.

Review copy provided for an honest review.

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### **Shayna says**

Who doesn't love a quick, sexy paranormal romance? If you are new to this author or the Dark Pleasures series, CARESS OF PLEASURE gives you a tasty bite of what to look forward to with Ms. Kenner's writing. Even if you aren't a big fan of the paranormal aspect of it, Ms. Kenner doesn't shove it down your throat, like some paranormal authors do. There is the perfect amount of paranormal in this beautifully done erotic romance.

In this novella, I was immediately entranced with Dante and Brenna's heartbreaking story. A couple meet, fall instantly in lust, turning to love rather quickly, and are torn apart without any explanation, only heartbreak. Years go by, and Dante finds himself drowning in the idea of having to see Brenna again, only to have to walk away because nothing has changed. Turns out that thirteen years has done nothing to quell his love for her. Brenna is still the spitfire he fell in love with, and she is demanding answers and his body one last time.

The chemistry was sizzling, the action kept me entertained, and the sex was off the charts hot! If you are looking for a quick, enticing, erotic read that will get you hooked to a great series, CARESS OF PLEASURE is your book! Paranormal fans will rejoice, and romance fans will swoon. I can't wait to read more of this series and dive back into the world of the Phoenix Brotherhood.

\*Gifted copy provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review\*

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### **Lynette Ottley says**

#### **Will true love win out**

Dante and Brenna reunite after being apart for thirteen years. Dante is immoral and has lived for hundreds of years. But will Brenna survive the fire challenge to show her love and make her immoral too. Read this exciting book and find out.

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### **Zita says**

An enjoyable second chance paranormal romance...



This is the second novella in the Dark Pleasures series.

Dante Storm is an immortal being in human form who thought he'd found the love of his eternal life thirteen years ago until he inadvertently saw something that changed his mind, so he left her with no explanation and an incorrect impression. He doesn't believe that she would've survived facing the flames necessary to become his mate. Yet he's never forgotten her, he's restless with those memories and regrets now that others of his kind are happily paired off. When the Phoenix Brotherhood obtains information about a gem housing the spirit of one of their kind, Dante's tasked with its retrieval. The problem, it was recently sold, the sale brokered by the woman that he deserted whose help he now needs, a woman who doesn't know the secrets that he keeps, and has every reason to hate him. He'll have to convince her and soon for time is of the essence.

In New York brokering a jewelry sale, Brenna Hart is stunned to run into the love of her life of thirteen years ago in a bar, the man that she'd loved so much that it terrified her at times. The past is brought to vivid life again, he's the same gorgeous man, time has not aged him and the craving that she felt for him hasn't dissipated. The calm and control that she's learned through the years eludes her in their moment of reconnection. She's angry yet she still wants him but she doesn't trust him, he had her heart once and destroyed it. That he needs her help perhaps may enable her to obtain some much needed closure. She makes him a deal that she hopes she won't regret for thanks to him she no longer believes in fairy tales and happy endings.

This was an enjoyable second chance paranormal romance with science fiction elements. Having read the previous novella enhanced this reader's understanding of the world portrayed. Though thirteen years had passed Dante and Brenna's emotions were as if they'd never been apart. Can love between true soul mates ever dissipate? Time is said to temper all things but in this case it couldn't for their love was meant to be. The time wasn't right for them in the past, lack of communication and Brenna's youth at the time helped to part them. Both protagonists were likable, their chemistry palpable, the sex scenes were steamy. As this is a novella the storyline was fast paced and occasionally felt rushed. Strangely, the first novella I found the words more seductive, there was more emotional depth without feeling rushed and an edginess that I missed in this one. Regardless this was an interesting story.

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## **Hilary says**

We return to Dark Pleasures to meet Dante. Like all of Julie's men, Dante is sexy as sin and stubborn to the point of frustration. When he walked away from Brenna 13 years ago he began the slow torture of them both. Now he needs her help in order to save one of his brothers from the Fuerie.

The team is back together in order to save a brother they believe was lost to the void. Along with their mission, an old love is rekindled, but is it strong enough to survive the flames of the Phoenix Fire?

Packed with all of the steam you would expect from the fabulous Julie Kenner, Caress of Pleasure does not disappoint. This Novella is a great read!

**\*\*I received an ARC in exchange for an honest review\*\***

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## **Kimber Hellmers says**

I just love Brenna....really. She is awesome. Another all-too-short story of the Phoenix Brotherhood, and I don't see any more on the horizon yet! That is so sad....Brenna and Mal's story totally gets to the heart of human/immortal issues when, after falling in love, Mal breaks off the relationship because, well, he's immortal and she isn't. You would think that's a problem, but in the end, it's not for Brenna! This girl is a fighter and when she sees the man who broke her heart all those years ago, her reactions are so great! I love how sincerely she is written. She is pissed, but still loves him, because they belong together. Not knowing what that really means, Brenna pushed for answers and doesn't give up. Hey, if a guy is willing to die for you, you know he's the one. Right? I'm kind of pissed at the other women that doubted her, even if they were just trying to protect their friend Mal. But hey! chicks have to have each other's back! Brenna proves to be the strongest of all of them as she is willing to sacrifice the most for love and life. Malcom is so stubborn! I wanted to ring his neck at times! He was taking the easy way out by clinging to the notion that she is not 'really' for him when all the signs point to the opposite. Brenna's willingness to navigate the paranormal world of Mal's should have been all the proof he needed, that and the fact that they have a scorching hot physical attraction....yea hot sex! Love this series! Please write more!

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## **Sultry Steamy Reading says**

I received an ARC of this book from InkSlinger PR in exchange for an honest review and as part of the book's blog tour promotions.

This novella is a quick and easy paranormal read that ended too soon, as far as I'm concerned. I feel like I was just getting to the good part when all of a sudden, it was over. I'm not saying that I didn't enjoy it because I did.

I liked Brenna. She had this no-nonsense honesty about her. She did not try to fight her feelings for Dante. Instead, she was brave enough to admit her feelings and ask him why he left her back then. As for Dante, I couldn't connect with him right away. He sounded so aloof, detached.

I liked him towards the end part, and I enjoyed that part where they tried to steal the gemstone. This novella is another great addition to the Dark Pleasures series as well as the 1001 Dark Nights books as well. Ms. Kenner is truly a name that represents great stories whether it's in the contemporary romance genre or the paranormal realm.

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## **Steph says**

When you're made up of pure energy and exist forever, it's kind of tough to find a mate that can keep up with you.

Dante Storm is a member of the Phoenix Brotherhood, a group of beings who are made up of pure energy and possess special abilities. He's watched his brothers pair up with their mates one by one, but Dante's situation isn't that simple. He willingly gave up Brenna Hart 13 years ago, cutting out his heart in the

process. When he's tasked with locating the same brooch that private acquisitions consultant Brenna has been hired to find, he'll have to make amends with the woman whose heart he broke. Brenna believed that her love with Dante was a fairy tale, until he walked away on the arm of another woman. Now he's back, and she'll be damned if she lets him walk away again!

CARESS OF PLEASURE is a novella in the Dark Pleasures Series by Julie Kenner, and also a stand-alone book in the innovative and fun 1001 Dark Nights Series featuring magical and mystical erotic stories by a variety of popular authors inspired by the classic The Arabian Nights tale. I read Caress of Darkness, another of Ms. Kenner's books that straddles both series and was a big fan, and CARESS OF PLEASURE didn't disappoint!

Dante and Brenna were a terrific couple and had chemistry in spades. Though his reasons for leaving her were solid, it was so sad that they wasted 13 years apart! With good characters, hot sex and a great storyline that feels whipped up in magic, CARESS OF PLEASURE is one sexy novella I definitely recommend!

Bottom Line: CARESS OF PLEASURE makes me want to read more in this most excellent series! - See more at: <http://www.theromancereviews.com/view...>

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