



Smoke & Mirrors

Charlie Cochet

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Life for Dexter J. Daley has never been easy, but he's always found a way to pick himself back up with a smile on his face. Taken from his home, and the arms of his boyfriend and THIRDS partner, Sloane Brodie, Dex finds himself in a situation as mysterious and lethal as the Therian interrogating him. Dex learns what he's secretly believed all along: his parents' death wasn't an accident.

Discovering the whole truth about John and Gina Daley's homicide sets off a series of events that will change Dex and Sloane's lives forever. As buried secrets rise to the surface and new truths are revealed, Dex and Sloane's love for each other is put to the test, with more than their relationship on the line. If traversing the waters of murder and secret government agencies wasn't enough, something inexplicable has been happening to Dex—and nothing will ever be the same.

Smoke & Mirrors Details

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Author : Charlie Cochet

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From Reader Review Smoke & Mirrors for online ebook

Shile says

That's me in the corner
That's me in the box of shame
Saying, it's ME not the BOOK.

4 stars for the Audiobook

2.5 stars for the story

The Good

-Dex and Sloane together, they are an amazing couple.

-The banter between the characters was still there but in small doses .

-The Sex was hot.

-Ash, he was the best part of this book, I love him and Cael.

-Maddox what an amazing Dad.

The Bad

-The Batman storyline. Dex turned into a brooding Bruce Wayne. And lost his charming funny self.

-This book reminded me of all the Tv Series that lost plot, True blood, Vampire diaries where almost everyone turned into a wolf or a vampire. Ugh! And I hate to say Cut and Run when Super Nick was made to shine and Ty & Zane left in the background. Here Dex was made into Super Dex, Sloane and other Team members took a back-seat that pissed me off. Dex fighting off Sloane and six Therians.

This especially (view spoiler) Really? Like Really?

The Ugly

-Spark appearing at a convenient time, giving half-truths and then being forgiven by Dex just like that?

-The TIN thing is just fucking ridiculous.

I don't think i will read book 8, just going straight to Seb and Hudson story.

R * A Reader Obsessed * says

5 Stars!!

Whew!

Well with an ending like that, Cochet hopefully guarantees us with infinite stories of this duo and their extended family and all the adventures they are inevitably going to have. Props to the brilliant set up ensuring that this can indeed go on forever. If only, right?

I admit, my love for the relationship between Dex and Sloane grew slowly, just like it did between them, and once they proclaimed their devotion, that's when I was totally caught. The connection, the intimacy, the blatant need for each other, just simply did it for me.

However, nothing comes easily for these two. Throughout this series, the struggle for peace between humans and the shifter populations of Therians is what drives the plot every time, and of course Dex and Sloane get caught in the crosshairs. Harsh truths come to light here, threatening them professionally and definitely, personally - all of which leave many unanswered questions. They must be a strong front together as a new evolution (figuratively and literally) is uncovered.

So to hammer the point again, the intensity between these two appealed to every reason why I love romance. This is some *hardcore* shifter possession and obsession, making me want all the couples to mark each other up and bask in their bond. However, this series has always been about Dex and Sloane and that's where it definitely shines, and why they now reside on my short list of favorite m/m couples.

Thus, **5 big stars** for the entire series as a whole, which in its entirety is quite the awesome saga. I've got to hand it to Cochet - she deftly brings some of the best humor and angsty feels I've read to date, making this a standout creation!!

Renée says

THIRDS fans won't be disappointed with Book 7. I've been waiting for this one since Ms. Cochet left us with a cliffhanger in the last book. And coming back to my favorite couple makes me giddy.

The opening of the book is a little hard to take. Dex is kidnapped, which we knew from how the last book ended, but what happened during this time is a little hard to experience with him. What becomes even more obvious throughout this book, beginning with his kidnapping, is that **something** is up with Dex. Something is changing within him.

What I loved about this installment is that there are a lot of questions answered from the sketchy pasts of several characters. Dex and Sloane may be more connected than they've ever realized, and Seb and Hudson may finally be making some progress.

What I'm **NOT** entirely enjoying is the continued plot with the TIN. This "secretive" group that no one besides Dex and Sloane know about are dragging them further and further away from their friends and family. I'm not a fan.

I overall enjoyed this next installment, specifically being able to come back to Dex and Sloane, and I can't wait to continue the journey!

Barbara? says

Dex is one of my favorite characters of all time. I love his quirks and humor. I wanted to stab Sloane when he hurt him. Thankfully he gets his head out of his ass but I can hold a mean grudge. His gesture at the end helped me towards forgiving him. Let's hope he continues to be better. Poor Dex though. My heart was literally hurting with him. And don't get me started on Cael telling Dex he was partly to blame. No, just no. Sloane is the one who is stunted emotionally and taking for granted Dex will be there every time he decides to run.

To me all the drama was OTT. I wasn't expecting all that and it was a little too much imo. I mean (view spoiler) It was just a bit too much for me especially with all the other stuff going on.

But, anywho, I still love this series and will continue on.

Nazanin ex-Profile says

I can't get enough of this series! I usually don't like re-reads but I can totally see myself reading this again in the near future! On to the next book.

R.J. says

What can I say... it was bloody awesome... ;)

Janie says

I am loving this series so much. I'll be sad when I get to the end. Dex is still as amazing as ever. And I really love Sloane too. He does something really stupid in this book but it's not unforgivable. The secondary characters add so much to this series. Can't wait to see what comes next.

Wendy says

I couldn't wait to get my hands on this one, especially after the cliffhanger we were left with.

I didn't know which direction this book would go and I have to say I'm quite happy with how everything turned out, although I am a bit worried, that Dex and Sloans journey will take them away from friends and family. I just hope this is not the direction the author will take it.

I won't be able to say too much, since I don't want to spoiler anything.

The book begins with Dex's kidnapping (which is not a spoiler, since it was in the last book). This was very hard on Dex (and me).

After Dex gets back it's starts to get obvious that something is very wrong with him.

I really liked the mystery element in this one. This books goes back to the murder of Dex's parents and what was really going on at the time. Those of you who have read "Thirds, beyond the books", already know a bit more about his parents and what they were about. The storyline also focuses on the mating bond between Dex and Sloan, and how deep it goes. It was very sweet. Those two are falling more and more in love each day...

What also surprised me, were the very hot scenes between Sloane and Dex...damn

To make a long story short, this book had a lot of things I liked. It had some sadness, some anger, mystery, suspense, hotness, a lot of love, family, friends and ofcourse some laughs.

With everything that was going on, Dex wasn't always his usual funny self, but he still made me laugh plenty of times.

I've said it before and I will say it again....I can't wait for Hudsons book...I really love his British ass !!

5 stars from me and I can't wait to find out what else is gonna happen to this team badasses !

Karen says

Holy crap!!! If you love THIRDS you need to read this book...

So first he did...and then that happened...while they went...and then someone said...and they found...and he was...while no one knew...then they discovered...and he took...and that made him so angry that he...and everyone was...while he was so hurt and couldn't...and they all had to...silly kitten, of course I'm not really going to tell you what happened, where's the fun in that...but...

I will tell you how amazing this book was and that if you want to read this one and truly appreciate how

awesome it is in the scheme of things you absolutely have to read the first 6 books in this series there's just no other way to do it...ok, there are the audio books but still it's the same end result. No matter how you look at it, 'Smoke & Mirrors' is not a standalone story. What it really is, is the story that fills in a lot of the blanks. It's the missing link so to speak.

If you happened to read my review of the last book 'Catch a Tiger by the Tail' or probably that of more than a few other people who read book 6 in this series than you know we were left hanging onto one hella' scary cliff by our fingertips. Thankfully Ms Cochet picked up with this book right where 'Catch a Tiger by the Tail' left off but where she took us from there was on an incredible journey of adventure and discovery.

Throughout this series there have been so many questions that have been leading to this story. Questions about Dex's parents, about the first gen recruitment center, the recruits themselves and first gen purebred Therians, etc., etc. and while I'm sure we by no means have all the answers 'Smoke & Mirrors' definitely took a huge step in the direction of giving us answers, but, not all of these answers were easy for our MCs to deal with. Boundaries were pushed, relationships were tested, things weren't always what they appeared to be and when everything was said and done some things were never going to be the same again. But different is a word with a very fluid meaning. It can mean different as in for the worse or different for the better or maybe, just different as in not the same as it was.

I have enjoyed this series so much each book has been a fantastic story filled with mystery, suspense, adventure, love and passion making it really hard for me to choose a favorite. I do however, feel that 'Smoke & Mirrors' has become one of the most integral books in the series because of all the connections from the past and going forward that it brings together. For me this book feels like a turning point in this series and while I'm not exactly sure what direction Ms Cochet is going to take the series in I do know I'm definitely going to follow.

An ARC of *Smoke & Mirrors* was graciously provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Kyle says

Back to the great books I'm used to from Charlie Cochet!

After being very disappointed with Book Six: Catch a Tiger by the Tail (see my review), I was very pleased that Smoke & Mirrors was back to the excellent story telling I've come to expect from Charlie Cochet. If you've read Book Six you probably remember it ended with a cliffhanger. Smoke and Mirrors begins when Catch a Tiger left off, with Dex a prisoner being interrogated. He keeps being asked just one question, "Where did his mother hide the file?" Of course Dex has no clue what "file" they are asking about. During his interrogation and eventual torture, he learns what he has always suspected, his parents death was no accident.

After his escape, Dex and Sloane set off to discover the truth about John and Gina Daley's murder. But things are changing. Their relationship. Their team. Their jobs. Their friends. But most of all, Dex is changing!

First the good. The plot is excellent. The drama and tension starts building right from chapter one. There is really never a let up in that slowly building tension. The relationships between the characters continue to develop and strengthen. This lead me to become more and more attached to the characters than I had before. The sexual encounters between Dex and Sloane were exciting and well written. The conclusion was rewarding and exciting because it provides the possibility for more THIRDS books or another series.

The bad, personally I love the gay male characters. They are strong gay male role models. They work in a difficult job and perform above and beyond expectations. But then so often you find them with their heads on someone's shoulder crying. It seems like such a contradiction. For example, could you see Dwayne Johnson putting his head on Vin Diesel's shoulder and having a good cry? Yeah, I didn't think so. Do I think it could happen? Sure under the right circumstances. I just think it happens way too often in the book. As flaws go, it's easily overlooked.

Great book and great series!

Steven says

This series is starting to feel... blah. I dunno if this one just didn't have as much action, or had too much "feelings" and crying and emotional stuff, but it felt like, I dunno... less like men fighting side by side against bad guys and being naughty in the bedroom, and more like a girly romance novel/chick lit that just happened to have male protagonists. This is an issue I find that I have with so many of the female MM authors. It starts to feel like it's more aimed at female readers and less at the actual gay male readers. No offense intended to female MM readers or female MM authors... just hard to know how to accurately write something you'll never really get firsthand experience in ALL the time.

Sorry about the rant. This one wasn't BAD per se, just kinda boring.

Dalia says

In the seventh installment of the THIRDS series we get a lot of answers to a lot of questions. There's so many interesting informations and moments to talk about, but then again, it's very easy to spoil anything. One thing's for sure, there's an exciting change coming.

When Dex is interrogated by a lethal Therian, he learns that his parents were deliberately killed. The truth hits him quite hard and, as if this wasn't bad enough, there has been something inexplicable happening to him. Also, with all the crazy series of events going on, him and Sloane have to deal with some serious ups and downs in their relationship.

I'm your home.

This book feels way more domestic than all the previous ones, which I think is nice and sweet in a way. I loved the gritty beginning and I gobbled up the hurt/comfort as well as the hot sexy times. I enjoyed myself immensely with the interactions, closeness between Sloane, Dex and their family and teammates. More importantly, I adored the little plot twists through the whole story. I'm really happy with how things turned out and I certainly can't wait for more.

Now excuse me while I go read this all over again because I already miss everyone.

This review has been cross-posted at Gay Book Reviews.

Expected publication: July 2016 + a cliffhanger *sniffles*

Elise X a.k.a Ryder's Pet X says

??????*Can Contain Spoilers*??????

We're finally back with **Dexter 'Dex' Justice Daley** (35? 36? How old are they now?!) Defense Agent for Destructive Delta (used to be a homicide detective; the Human Police Force) and his Team Leader **Sloane Brodie** (37? 38? 39?), who's also his jaguar Therian partner and lover, centering the book. Book six left in quite a cliffhanger with Dex missing; kidnapped right from Sloane's arms without him noticing. And this one picks up right there. Something is wrong with Dex, but those who know, **keeps Sloane and Dex in the dark**, expecting them to just go alone with it. Then there's the fact that the past is catching up to the present and no one knows where's up is anymore.

Sloane hauled him inside, slammed the door behind them, and pounced. He kissed Dex ravenously while divesting him of his clothes. Buttons popped, clothes were torn, but Sloane couldn't care less. All he could think about was being inside Dex, of claiming his mate. His. "You're mine," Sloane hissed, cupping the back of Dex's neck and bringing him in for an ardent kiss. Dex pressed himself up against Sloane, his fingers digging into Sloane, as if he feared Sloane would slip away.
"Yes. In every way, yes."

Overall, I actually have no idea how to write this review; I have so many emotions! Oh the heartbreaks! The book made me cry, for God's sake! It was quite a ride, full of action, friendship, love and family. And pain. So much pain. Yet there was such a beautiful story as well. **Dex and Sloane is so gorgeous and beautiful together**, their bond so powerful, and only getting stronger. I can't wait to see where the story will go next for them. I had seen a tiny - okay, it was big - spoiler for this book, so I sorta knew what would happen to Dex, but at the same time.... man, I hadn't expected that. (view spoiler) <-- **DO NOT READ SPOILER IF YOU HAVEN'T READ THE BOOK!** On to the next.

Dex's chest rose and fell with short, rapid breaths, his pupils blown, and his terrified gaze on Sloane. Oh God, it was like he was dying. Tears pooled in Sloane's eyes, and he brought Dex's fingers to his lips for a kiss.
"If you're wrong," Sloane choked out, his eyes on Dex as he addressed Austen, "I'll never

forgive you.”

Austen’s words came out a whisper. “I know.”

Other Characters:

→ **Isaac Pearce**, a Homicide Detective. His brother, **Gabe**, who had been a THIRDS agent and died a year ago; had been killed by a Therian informant. Though that proved to be a lie; Isaac had killed his own brother. Gabe used to be Sloane human partner. Sloane and Gabe were sleeping together. A year before Gabe died, it had gotten pretty serious. They’d been together four years. Got killed in book two.

→ **Anthony ‘Tony’ ‘Sarge’ ‘Sergeant’ ‘Sir’ Maddock**, Dex’s adoptive father and a sergeant at the Therian-Human Intelligence Recon Defense Squadron (Destructive Delta) otherwise known as the THIRDS.

→ THIRDS Destructive Delta Agent Tech Expert, **Cael Maddock** (27?), Dex’s adoptive little brother and a cheetah Therian. **Rosa Santiago**, his human partner and Destructive Delta’s crisis negotiator and medic. Both Recon agents.

“Cael—”

“If you weren’t ready to be serious about the two of you, you shouldn’t have marked him.”

The words were like a slap to the face, especially since the same thought had shamefully crossed his mind. He’d been so sure.... No. He was sure.

→ **Ash Keeler**, a lion Therian and Destructive Delta’s entry tactics and CQC expert, and his human partner, **Julietta ‘Letty’ Guerrera**, their weapons expert. Ash’s also Sloane’s best friend. Ash and Cael finally got together in book five.

Ethan Hobbs, a Therian Tiger and Destructive Delta’s sniper and his human partner and lover, **Calvin ‘Cal’ Summers**, their demolitions expert. Hobbs suffers from Selective Mutism and Social Anxiety.

→ **Rafe** (the oldest brother), Team Leader for Alpha Ambush and Tiger Therian and **Sebastian ‘Seb’** (middle brother), ~~Agent for Theta Destructive~~ newly promoted to Team Leader for Theta Destructive. Was once on Destructive Delta but was transferred after his relationship to Hudson ended in a breach of protocol and civilian loss. Is a Tiger Therian. Both Hobbs’s big brothers. We learned in book six that Rafe has gotten the Therian Acheron Syndrome as their father..

→ Dr. **Nina Bishop**, THIRDS Destructive Delta’s medical examiner and a human. Rafe and Nina are together.

→ Dr. **Hudson Colbourn**, THIRDS chief medical examiner, and a Canis Lupus (wolf) Therian.

→ Lieutenant **Sonya Sparks**, for THIRDS Unit Alpha and a Cougar Therian. Partner to human Tony. Sparks is part of TIN—Therian Intelligence Network; as an undercover operative . Sort of the Therian version of the CIA. They exist, but technically they don’t. Austen, the SSAs works for them.

→ **Louis ‘Lou’ Huerta**, Dex’s ex-boyfriend of four years.

→ THIRDS Agent **Ellis Taylor**, Team Leader of Beta Ambush, and leopard Therian.

→ THIRDS Agent **Levi Stone**, Team Leader of Beta Pride, and white tiger Therian. Got arrested for being a mole inside the THIRDS and part of the Ikelos Coalition in book three.

→ **Osmond Zachary ‘Zach’**, Agent for Alpha Sleuth in Unit Beta and brown bear Therian. Has six brothers working for the THIRDS.

→ **Bradley Darcy**, bartender and owner of Bar Dekatria and Jaguar Therian.

→ **Austen Payne** (23? 24?), Squadron Specialist Agent (SSA) for Destructive Delta and a Cheetah Therian. Is a undercover freelance operative for TIN (Therian Intelligence Network).

→ **Angel Reyes**, Member of the Order. Former member of the gang Westward Creed.

→ Dr. **Abraham Shultzon**, was the head doctor during the First Gen Recruitment Program who was personally responsible for the wellbeing of the THIRDS’ First Gen Recruits. He was also responsible for the tests that were run on the Therian children. He was recently (book five) apprehended by TIN for creating an

unsanctioned Therian mind control drug, and for kidnapping THIRDS Therian agents for unsanctioned project.

→ **Arlo Keeler**, Ash's twin brother killed during the riots in the 1980s.

→ **Beck Hogan**, a Tiger Therian and leader of The Coalition. Dead: Fell to death.

→ **Drew Collins**, a Cougar Therian and a part of The Coalition; Hogan's new second-in-command. Dead: Ash snapped his neck..

→ **Felipe Bautista**, was Drew Collins's boyfriend of ten years and a wolf Therian.

→ **John Daley**, Dexter J. Daley's biological father. Anthony Maddock's best friend, and partner at the HPF. Killed during a shootout in a movie theater during the riots. Human.

→ **Gina Daley**, Dexter J. Daley's biological mother. Worked for the CDC in NYC. First to volunteer to work with Therians. Killed along with her husband during a shootout in a movie theater during the riots. Human.

→ **Darla Summers**, Calvin Summer's mother. Human.

→ **Thomas Hobbs**, Ethan, Sebastian, and Rafe Hobbs's father. Suffers from Therian Acheron Syndrome. Tiger Therian.

→ **Julia Hobbs**, Thomas Hobbs's wife, and mother to Ethan, Sebastian, and Rafe Hobbs. Human.

→ **Benedict Winters**, THIRDS appointed psychologist.

→ **Admiral Abbott Moros**, Chief of Therian Defense. Tiger Therian.

→ **Mr. Wolf**, a wolf Therian who called himself Mr. Wolf, but that's just one of many aliases. He's a freelance professional. One of the best.

“That won’t happen.”

“Really? Because I’m losing count of your broken promises.”

That stung. “Now hold on a second—”

“No. I’m done.” The blazing anger and heartache in Dex’s blue eyes hurt, but the damage had been done. Dex gave a sniff and shook his head. “I’m not going to ask you to stay. I won’t beg you to be with me. Go do whatever it is you gotta do, but one of these days, the pieces you leave behind will be so broken I won’t be able to put them back together, and when that happens, I can’t promise you I’ll be here when you get back.”

Quick basic facts:

Genre: - (Adult) Paranormal Romance (M/M).

Series: - Series, Book Seven.

Love triangle? - (view spoiler)

Cheating? - (view spoiler)

HEA? - (view spoiler)

Favorite character? - Dexter 'Dex' 'Rookie' J. Daley.

Would I read more by this author/or of series? - Yes.

Would I recommend this book/series? - Yes.

Will I read this again in the future? - Probably not.

Rating - 3.5 stars.

***J* Too Many Books Too Little Time says**

["proposal" (hide

Jewel says

4.5 Stars

Series note: *Smoke & Mirrors* is **not** a stand alone novel. At all. Not only are the MC's a well established couple at this point in the series, the overall story arc spans all of the books. So, if you are new to this series, start with *Hell & High Water*.

Ok, now to the good stuff!

Smoke & Mirrors is the 7th book in Charlie Cochet's *THIRDS* series. It's been such a fantastic ride getting here and I think this might be my favorite book, so far. Fans of the series won't be disappointed.

The story hits the ground, running, with Dex waking up tied to a chair. And if you've read *Catch a Tiger by the Tail*, then you know his predicament is not the sexy kind. Nope. Dex has been kidnapped, by FSM knows whom, and they seem intent on doing him a fair amount of harm. And it all comes back to Dex's parents who were killed more than 30 years ago.

There certainly is a lot of action on this book, and I can tell that we're nearing the end of the main series. More conspiracies are uncovered and Dex is right smack in the middle of all of it. As usual. Finding out about his parents, and mother specifically, and how they were connected to everything happening now is a lot for Dex to take in. And not just for him. It hits Sloane pretty hard, too, and for a few minutes there, I kind of worried for my favorite *THIRDS* couple. But no, the worry was unfounded. It was just Sloane being a bonehead. But they both come through that even stronger than before.

I can't say much else about the story without SPOILERS, and I don't want to do that to any of you. I will say that I love where *Smoke & Mirrors* took me. And I love where it took Dex...and I think we haven't seen everything, yet! And, although, *Smoke & Mirrors* doesn't end on a cliffhanger, like *Catch a Tiger by the Tail* did, waiting for book 8 might just kill me. But lets hope not, because I want Seb and Hudson's HEA (at last!) and then, finally, I want to see how this amazing journey ends.

*ARC of **Smoke & Mirrors** was generously provided by the publisher, in exchange for an honest review.*
