



# Playing Knotty

*Elia Winters*

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## **Playing Knotty** Elia Winters

*Bondage meets bookworm in this sizzling erotic romance about a shy bookshop owner who discovers an exciting new side to herself when an old friend opens a bondage workshop in the back of her store!*

Emma Green has never been very confident. When Ian Cooper, an old friend, asks to rent out the back room of her bookstore for a bondage workshop, she agrees because she needs the money. She isn't expecting to participate, and she definitely isn't expecting to enjoy it. But all of Emma's expectations fly out the window when she tentatively agrees to be Ian's bondage model for workshops and exhibitions—and her success in the role upends all previous notions she had about her body and her desirability.

Now, Emma must learn to reconcile these conflicting images of herself while dealing with another conflict: Is Ian just another playboy, or everything she's been looking for?

## **Playing Knotty Details**

Date : Published March 16th 2015 by Pocket Star

ISBN :

Author : Elia Winters

Format : Kindle Edition

Genre : Romance, Erotica, BdsM, Adult Fiction, Contemporary Romance, Contemporary



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# From Reader Review Playing Knotty for online ebook

## Anne Dirty Girls' Good Books says

This is the first book by Elia Winters that I've read, but I'll certainly be reading more! I loved practically everything about it!

Emma is a pretty shy bookstore owner who doesn't really know anything about bondage or rope play when Ian asks if he can use her back room as meeting space for a bondage class he teaches. She knows Ian from high school and he often shops at her bookstore. She's not sure about the bondage, but she needs the money, so she agrees. Then she uses the power of Google to learn a little more about bondage and finds a kink she didn't know she had. When Ian asks if she'd be his model for the class she agrees.

There was so much to enjoy about this book. Emma has self esteem issues, especially as related to her appearance and weight, but she's pretty comfortable with her sexuality. She has the bigger character arc in this story as comes to realize her own self worth.

Ian is pretty much perfect from page one, and I was fine with that. He probably had some flaws somewhere, but I didn't notice any.

The story of their relationship was solid and incredibly hot! The rope play was described with just enough technical detail for me to picture what was going on. There's enough time in Emma's and Ian's heads to understand why they are turned on by it. While this book would technically be a BDSM book, it's really only got the Bondage part of BDSM, with very little of the D/s and no M at all.

There are some geek references in the story that were icing on the cake to me. Ian plays board games with his friends. They were games I've played and loved. Ian and Emma each have good friends and their time with friends advanced the story and was entertaining. I particularly liked Brent, Ian's game store owner friend who is both lazy and ambitious.

The only thing I didn't like about the story was a misunderstanding that happened toward the end of the book. It was resolved fairly quickly, but I wish it had been addressed immediately. Overall, the rest of the book easily compensated for this misunderstanding.

I'd recommend this book to anyone who enjoys contemporary romance. It's going on my Best of 2015 list and I'm looking forward to more by Elia Winters!

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## Michelle says

Shy and insecure, Emma Green is about to get an eye opening experience when her former classmate, Ian makes a request to use the unused space attached to her book store. In need of the cash, Emma accepts his request and does a little research into a side of Ian she never expected.

When Ian informs Emma that he gives instructional classes in bondage, it becomes clear that the idea turns her on. When his model has to cancel, Emma surprises herself when she volunteers and after one night of knot tying... these two can't seem to keep their hands off of each other. But Ian can't seem to tell her about

the crush he's had on her for years and Emma can't seem to let go of the insecure girl that lurks inside.

Gah. Okay this is one of those romances where so much would be solved with a little communication. This drives me absolutely crazy. I get that it's there for the story, that it gives the angst and all the drama a voice, but come on! How can two people bump uglies so much and not be able to hold an honest conversation! Emma was very insecure. Sure the author gives you the back ground as to why, but it did drive me nuts.

There were times when I skimmed past the scenes that involved other characters just because some of the scenes seemed to be out of place, not really driving the main story forward. It became a little difficult to stay focused when we veered off the main plot a few times.

Overall this was a cute read that had some funny moments. The characters drove me a little too crazy to fully enjoy the story though. I need some backbone with my characters and both seemed to be lacking in that department.

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## **Albert says**

Playing Knotty by Elia Winters is a different take on the current deluge of bondage erotica that is in the market. There is no dom and submissive relationship here and no BDSM, only the B.

"..His phone beeped, the reminder he'd set earlier to check in online for his flight. As he printed out his boarding passes and conference paperwork, he imagined Emma's reaction to the real reason for his trip to Ohio. Sweet, straitlaced Emma would probably fall over if he told her he was leading rope bondage workshops at a kink conference. It wasn't something people expected of him: as an accountant, he was supposed to fit the stereotype of an accountant..."

Emma Green has heard her whole life how she wasn't thin enough, not pretty enough and not successful enough. From her friends, from her mother, from the relationships she couldn't keep. In money trouble, she hastily agrees when her old friend Ian Cooper asks to rent out her storeroom, behind her book store to hold classes. It is later when she learns what the classes consist of that she has second thoughts. Ian is the leading authority on rope bondage. How to tie lovers up, what rope to use, where to place it and how to place your lover in the position you want them in. Still Emma agrees and more so, agrees to be Ian's assistant for the class when his regular model is unable to attend.

What Emma learns about herself and her desirability during these classes flies in the face of everything she has even been led to believe about herself. Under Ian's careful bondage, she becomes more free than she has ever been. More beautiful and more independent. But is what she is feeling real or just a part of a play put together by Ian for his class.

"..Crunching across the gravel on the way back to the car, Emma stared up at the stars, bright and clear away from the lights of the city. Boston glimmered across the bay, seeming impossibly far. Her night seemed like a dream. And as with a dream. she was worried it would all dissolve once they drove back into those lights, reality pushing back down around her again. She'd found a new Emma tonight, one who was sexy and

worthy and desirable, one who didn't have to apologize for existing, for being who she was. As Ian started the car, she felt the irrational fear that, as they drove away from this magical place, new Emma would slip away..."

Playing Knotty is a beautiful novel of empowerment and self awareness that comes from within a person, regardless of their physical well being. By allowing herself to be tied up and put on exhibition, Emma finds a beauty and desirability in herself that has been denied to her by all those who love her. Even more, she doesn't need to be bled or beaten to achieve it. It is through this expression of vulnerability that she allows to show and that she allows to given to her, that Emma comes to full flower.

A tender and very sexy novel.

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## **Sandy S says**

3.5 stars

ABOUT THE BOOK: Release Date March 16, 2015

Bondage meets bookworm in this sizzling erotic romance about a shy bookshop owner who discovers an exciting new side to herself when an old friend opens a bondage workshop in the back of her store!

Emma Green has never been very confident. When Ian Cooper, an old friend, asks to rent out the back room of her bookstore for a bondage workshop, she agrees because she needs the money. She isn't expecting to participate, and she definitely isn't expecting to enjoy it. But all of Emma's expectations fly out the window when she tentatively agrees to be Ian's bondage model for workshops and exhibitions—and her success in the role upends all previous notions she had about her body and her desirability.

Now, Emma must learn to reconcile these conflicting images of herself while dealing with another conflict: Is Ian just another playboy, or everything she's been looking for?

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REVIEW: 3.5 stars--PLAYING KNOTTY is an adult, contemporary erotic romance storyline that focuses on rope and knot play-the 'bondage' part of BDSM. This is bookstore owner Emma Green, and accountant/bondage instructor Ian Cooper's storyline. Most of the storyline takes place in and around Boston and Emma's book store-PROLOGUE.

Told from alternating third person perspectives, the premise follows Ian Cooper as he endeavors to find a suitable location and model for his next bondage instruction class. Enter former high school acquaintance Emma Green, who has some available space at the back of her store. It just so happens that Emma is in need of a quick influx of cash and Ian offers room rental and modeling fees if Emma is willing to be his 'bondage model'. What ensues is Emma's introduction into rope and knot play, something she takes to like a duck to water.

Emma has some issues of self esteem; raised by a mother who was always concerned about physical beauty and image, Emma has always believed she is not quite good enough, pretty enough, slim enough or smart enough to make it on her own. Ian happens to be the man who sees a beautiful woman who has no problems

with the kinky side of Ian's life

Nine years earlier, Ian had a small crush on his high school friend and lab partner Emma Green. Fast forward to present day and all of Ian's fantasies are about to come true. The sexual relationship is enhanced by their mutual arousal through rope and knot play, and in this their friendship and working relationship takes the next step forward.

The secondary and supporting characters include Emma's employee and wanna be poet Bethany; Emma's friends Alina and Margot whose expensive tastes are not conducive to Emma's current financial situation : Ian's best friend Brent who owns a small 'gamers' shop ; several members of Ian's workshops and weekend bondage role players; and Emma's slightly dysfunctional family including her younger sister Julia whose own life is now affected by their mother's need for perfection and control.

Saying that, I did have some issues with the couple's lack of communication outside of the 'bondage scenes'. Most of the anxiety and uneasy situations in their relationship were caused by confusion and misinterpretation of body language and communication with one another in their daily lives. In this, my enjoyment level of the storyline was affected by the misunderstandings and heartbreaking beliefs that neither one was interested in a permanent relationship yet no one was willing to make the first move. I know this is where the storyline conflict arises, but it made for some awkward and frustrating moments.

There is also an enormous amount of detailed description and information about bondage play that shows the author's research and personal experience with ropes and knots. At times, I found myself lost in the intricate explanation and information trying to imagine in my mind the 'how' and 'what' of the narration. I found myself struggling during the 'how to' and 'play by play' scenarios-I think my eyes glazed over a time or two.

Elia Winters puts her own spin on the BDSM writing genre-one where bondage and knot play are at the center of our couple's sexual awakenings and arousal. If you are looking for something a little different; a little out of the 'ordinary' give Playing Knotty a try.

PLAYING KNOTTY is an interesting read; a detour from the usual BDSM storylines where the hero has a need to discipline the female. The rope/knot/and bondage play shows a different side to a lifestyle that many people are not wholly aware.

Copy supplied by the publisher through Netgalley.

[www.thereadingcafe.com](http://www.thereadingcafe.com)

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## **Literati Literature Lovers says**

Considering the fact that Playing Knotty by Elia Winters is billed as BDSM, some readers may find the word I'm going to use to characterize it a bit strange. The word is one my father used frequently to describe things that gave him pleasure and just made him feel good. That word is. . .delightful. Yes, book lovers, I found Playing Knotty to be one of the most delightful books I've read in a long time. Filled with an entertaining and plentiful amount of information about rope play, it tells the story of how a woman who has never felt

attractive learns to love herself and the man who ties her up.

Playing Knotty is edgy without being dark as some books with elements of BDSM can be. Both Emma Green and Ian Cooper are very sweet characters whom readers will want to get together. Emma is a young woman who has spent her life tied up by a self-image that her abusive mother ingrained in her. And yes, I did say Emma's mother was abusive although not in a physical sense. I think any parent who actively encourages a child to accept that he or she deserves less than the very best life has to offer is abusive. Every one of you who has ever had even the slightest problem with your weight is going to want to tie Emma's mom to a chair and force feed her a Big Mac! As a matter of fact, I think one of the things that made this book so delightful to read is all of the characters (with the exception of Emma's mom) are very likable. Another delightful aspect of this book is the slow and tentative way Emma and Ian develop their relationship. Prepare to love Ian as he helps Emma untie some of the knots of her youth while he shows her how to be tied up with some very grownup knots as he nudges her toward seeing herself as a beautiful woman worthy of the love of an attractive man. There will be fist bumps when Emma finds the courage to tell her two best friends what she really thinks and there will be shouts of delight as Emma faces her demons to try to salvage a family relationship that seems headed for disaster.

I love a story with a friends to lovers theme and this book is no exception. There is plenty of that kind of angst that makes you want to lock the characters in a room and yell "Just talk to each other for heaven's sake!" and while there is a HEA for those who need one, the characters will have to work for it a bit. There is some pretty technical information about the art of knot tying. . . more than most of you will ever want to know, but the author actually has some illustrations and descriptions [HERE](#) on her website to help readers get the picture. Believe me, there is more to bondage than neckties and handcuffs! I highly recommend this book to readers who love a book that's sweet, tender and steamy, and just a little bit knotty.

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## **Jeannie Zelos says**

Playing Knotty, Elia Winters

Genre: Romance

Review from Jeannie Zelos book reviews

Well, this isn't a very long read, around 3500 kindle locations, but its packed with heat, and a fun story. Emma- I loved her, she'd worked hard to get past her mothers constant comments about her weight, and yet its easy to see how it still affects her, how she tries to dress to disguise her curves, even though as Ian says, she's gorgeous. Its affected her confidence to in that she doesn't stand up for what she wants, even with her friends, but has this need to go along with whatever they say, as she just wants everyone to like her. That's down to her mother, and when we see them all together at a family meal its easy to see why. Later in the book when her mum does some explaining I found I felt so sorry for her, and could see her reasoning even if it was flawed, and that from really disliking her and seeing her as a bully I came to like her...I enjoy when that happens, when my perceptions are changed, and it made me think how easily we judge people sometimes without knowing all the facts.

Then Ian comes along – he's an accountant but also does rope bondage workshops and is active in the Kink world. It comes as a huge surprise to Emma, but in fact it really brings her out. She can see that Ian's aroused by her curves, that he enjoys seeing her tied up, and it makes her feel very sexual too. So much so that right

from the first time they're soon in a hot and heavy sexual frenzy each time they work together. She's come along way but...she still lacks confidence, and doesn't know if what she and Ian have is a relationship, or just hot and convenient sex. She wants more but years of just fitting in with others leaves her unable to ask him. He doesn't make it clear what he wants, but we can see that for him its because he knows she lacks confidence, and doesn't want to push her outside her comfort zone and lose what he hopes could be more than just friendship and sensual sex.

Its looking good, they get closer, Emma gets more confident and then...an overheard snippet of conversation brings things crashing down. Can they get back on track or is it all going to fall apart? Well, I was so frustrated – wanting to shout “JUST TALK TO EACH OTHER” -but no...things got more stilted and I was in despair for them. I really wanted to shake the pair of them

Stars: Four, a fun and erotic read.

ARC provided by Netgalley and publishers.

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## **Rachel says**

This was my first book by this author and after inhaling it, I can honestly say it won't be my last. From the first page to the last I was captivated by this book. There really is no other word to describe it.

The author has written a book about an often taboo subject in rope play and made it into a love story that was surprising, tender and hot. Not an easy thing to do with what this reader thinks is a fascinating subject.

What happens in this beautifully written and descriptive story really is an awakening of her soul for the heroine in Emma. It was wonderful to see her go from a quiet, yes woman to an assertive and confident woman, with horrors of all horrors, her own opinion on things.

We see the hero Ian bring out a surprising side to Emma, one that he never expected from the girl he's had a crush on since high school. Through his tutelage in bondage and encouragement he sees the other side of Emma and it only make him want her more.

“You're beautiful like this. Like a work of art. A sculpture. I wish you could see yourself.”

When accountant Ian asks bookstore owner Emma to rent her spare space at the back of her shop for his workshop, neither knew where one simple request would take them. They embark on a journey of discovery and soon find themselves falling for the other.

But can Emma reconcile that the person she has become under Ian's attentions is really who she is and who he wants or will her insecurities ruin her new found confidence and chance for love? As for Ian, will an overheard conversation derail the happiness he has found with Emma and chase him away from his perfect match?

“There's nobody here but us, Em. How about you stop pretending and tell me what you want?” You, she wanted to say, her lips even forming around the word. His gaze was on her mouth. His eyes shone dark, feral, and he wanted her. This wasn't just him teasing her or flirting; he wanted her the way a man wanted a woman, and the hell with all of it, the hell with whatever tomorrow was going to bring: She was going to have him, at least for tonight.”



I really have to say that the rope play is very sensuous and really, how the author has managed to convey the beauty, freedom and sensuality of the acts is amazing. You can really imagine how Emma and Ian are reacting to each tie and knot.

This book was a fantastic read and one I'm glad I stumbled across and gave a try to. I hope you do the same, it's worth every word.

Be warned this book does contain bondage, rope play, voyeurism, hot sex, sexual enlightenment and a very hot rope master.

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### **Lindsay says**

I first read this a couple of years back and I have been devouring Winters stuff since, but I don't like reviewing books that I haven't read recently so I reread it yesterday.

Emma owns and runs a book store with a large back room space. When Ian, an old high school friend, notices it and finds out that the normal location for his rope bondage classes has doubled its charges he proposes renting it for his classes. Emma is intrigued, and when Ian's bondage model gets the flu, she steps in to the role.

So what's going on here is extremely light BDSM (only bondage is featured here). Ian is a long-time rigger and has been long aware of his kink. Emma on the other hand is a complete newbie, but she's wildly turned on by the bondage she's being shown and Ian himself. The actual plot concerns Emma's poor self image and low self-esteem and where these have come from and how she blossoms as she begins to embrace something that she really wants.

It's positive, fun and lacking most of the gender rubbish that's so prevalent in romance books that use BDSM. Highly recommended.

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### **Tiffany says**

3.5 STARS!

Charming, courageous, and lovely <3

This is one of those books that might change the way you see rope bondage, or any other act you may think of as taboo. Why? Because our lead character doesn't just learn about a new lifestyle (like the rest of us), she also embraces her bold and adventurous side that she's kept hidden for so long. You might think, "yea, yea, yea, this is just another BDSM book about two people falling in love. Whatevs!" Err..I don't think so. At least for me it wasn't. \*shrugs\* For me it wasn't about the relationship, but more about Emma finding her own voice. Emma will become the girl you can familiarize yourself because of the insecurities we as women might understand all too well. Those voices that tell you, "no, don't wear that, you'll look \_\_\_\_." We've all done it. Though, sometimes those voices become louder and don't go away so easily. After meeting Ian, Emma starts the road to hushing those little devils, so she can accept her body and herself. <3

It just so happened (coincidentally before reading this book) that I watched The Duff, a movie about a girl who tries to reinvent herself because she thinks she's the ugly duckling in her group of friends. Oh, and SPOILER ALERT: She's not. She's beautiful, and learns that she doesn't need to impress anyone for boys to notice her. She's funny, smart, and finally learns to believe it, too. Much like our girl, Emma.

Ian has had a crush on Emma since high school. He stops by her bookstore frequently, just to get a chance to see and talk to her. Emma doesn't mind because she **likes** chatting with him. He's sweet and thoughtful, and exactly the type she would go for. But, she doesn't think she would be his. :(

WRONG! ;)

Once Emma agrees to be Ian's bondage model, things begin to change. I mean, of course, right?! :D Ian brings out the sexiness in Emma that she's been covering for so long. Thanks to her mom and others, she has low self-esteem about the way she looks. Her mom constantly would tell her things she shouldn't wear because they weren't made for her body type, or they were "indecent." She's consistently frowned upon for getting second servings, or eating certain foods in general. She never felt confident at home, or outside of it really. Now, her sister is going through the same situation, but now that she feels comfortable and great about her body, Emma's able to stick up for not only her sister but herself as well.

Ian also brings out other parts of Emma that are buried and scared to come out. She's sometimes afraid to be the free-spirit she knows she can be, by staying quiet and keeping things bottled in. Now, she's more comfortable saying what's on her mind and being open about her feelings—something she's never been able to do out of fear of losing people she loves.

Emma, people have been judging me my whole life. At some point, I realized that by obsessing over it, I was giving them power over me. So I just said 'fuck it' and started doing what I wanted.

High five, Ian! Like I mentioned earlier, to me, this book was all about a shy girl becoming a confident woman. Bondage isn't just about "getting off." It's about fully opening yourself (no pun intended) to someone, and letting yourself feel **and be** vulnerable, and exposed. Emma, through the whole introduction to this new world, learned a lot about herself and how to feel comfortable in her own skin and not be afraid anymore.

...For some people, bondage is freeing." He snorted. "That sounds stupid. I mean, bondage reveals who people are. It lets them be themselves. It's hard to hide who you are when someone's taking down your defenses like that."

New Emma is now unapologetic and feels sexy, beautiful, and cherished!

*Playing Knotty* is a feel-good book, that will make you smile and leave you feeling radiant. :)

Wonderful read!

Review from [TheNovelTease.com](http://TheNovelTease.com)

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## **Talk Books To Me says**

Karia's Thoughts:

1. TALK TO EACH OTHER DAMMIT!!!
2. Learning is fun!
3. Teaching is rewarding!
4. Accountants can be kinky!
5. Book girls...now they can be super kinky!

This book was very well written and edited, but I was still screaming at the book. My biggest, prickliest, most irritating pet peeve (PP) is when couples do not talk in a book. One would think that with the actually talking they did do regarding the ropes, the tightness, the positions, that they would talk about how it felt to feel the ropes, how it felt to have their hearts tighten and flutter, how it felt to be put into the position of booty call...But, alas no. Thank goodness Emma finally put her big girl panties (and by big girl panties I mean her red thong to deliver her "I love you, but you don't love me" speech)...and told Ian that she cared even if he didn't. Ugggg...why waste time people! Life is short, tell people you care for that you do, kiss boys and girls and men and women that you love/lust, and most definitely, do not let a day go by letting a loved one not know that you love them!!! Enjoy!

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## **Jessica Alcazar says**

I received this ARC from Gallery, Threshold, Pocket Books VIA NETGALLEY for an honest review!

This book turned out to be SO much more than what I expected. I can't even begin to explain all the emotions that ran through me as I read not only Emma's journey of self discovery but also her inner growth in accepting herself as she was and allowing others to really see her! OH, and Ian .... my GOODNESS, that man was absolute perfection on the inside and out. A little slow on the take (lol) but just wow!

When I first read the blurb for this book I just assumed it would be just another book on kink, but it was so much more! I even learned WAY more than I wanted to ever know about roping! The book was very thorough when it came to this art. To the point that I can see how some people might consider it overkill, but me, OH NO, Elia Winters made the bondage scenes so beautiful and sensual and sexy, that even the 'beginners workshops' had my panties damp! LOL

SO the gist is, that Ian has had a crush on Emma since their high school days, but not a pinning type crush, more like he crushed on her in high school but did nothing about it and after HS, he just moved on and didn't really pay it any mind.....Until he did! Now Emma, she was COMPLETELY clueless of not only his past desires, but the desires that had awoken in him once again when she said yes to his proposition of renting out her backroom to do some bondage workshops. Long story short on that front, Emma agrees, she becomes his model, hence the beginning of Emma's journey of self discovery and a relationship long over due :) There's a lot of ups and there's a lot of downs and TONS of miscommunication and/or lack of communication that cause both Ian and Emma some roadblocks, but in the end ..... yea, they get it :) The sexual chemistry between these two was incredibly portrayed for us by Ms Winters. Only a very talented writer could make me buy that a shy bookstore owner would just blink and POOF, now she's a bondage model AND, she likes it. And I bought it, hook line and sinker! I was hooked from page ONE! GAH, every scene they played out together was just SO incredible beautiful! LOOOOOOVED IT!

I really liked the way that Emma's self esteem issues and self worth issues were NOT the center on the story, but her journey was. I promise you will understand that if you read this book, which you MUST! Like IMMEDIATELY!

The only tiny problem I had with the novel, is its conclusion. Ms Winters took such care to unfold a beautiful story and make it come full circle for us, but the conclusion was really rushed. And as a reader, I would have liked to have had more time to enjoy Emma and Ian and all her friends and family as Emma finally finds her voice :( BUT still an EXCELLENT read I would recommend for EVERYONE!

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## **Wminbc says**

While overall good, excellent writing and editing...my PP was front and centre in this book...Talk to each other dammit!

Review is up on the blog:

1. TALK TO EACH OTHER DAMMIT!!!
2. Learning is fun!
3. Teaching is rewarding!
4. Accountants can be kinky!
5. Book girls...now they can be super kinky!

This book was very well written and edited, but I was still screaming at the book. My biggest, prickliest, most irritating pet peeve (PP) is when couples do not talk in a book. One would think that with the actually talking they did do regarding the ropes, the tightness, the positions, that they would talk about how it felt to feel the ropes, how it felt to have their hearts tighten and flutter, how it felt to be put into the position of booty call...But, alas no. Thank goodness Emma finally put on her big girl panties (and by big girl panties I mean her red thong to deliver her "I love you, but you don't love me" speech)...and told Ian that she cared even if he didn't. Ugggg...why waste time people! Life is short, tell people you care for that you do, kiss boys and girls and men and women that you love/lust, and most definitely, do not let a day go by letting a loved one not know that you love them!!! Enjoy!

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## Michelle says

[image error]

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## Christi Snow says

### My Review:

Okay, the publisher sent me a request to review this book and I was sold when I read the story description...a shy bookstore owner who discovers her inner kink? I'm there. But this was so much better than even I expected.

Emma is like just about every girl out there. She has a few pounds to lose, but her self esteem is worse than most because she grew up with her mother, who constantly criticized and lectured on how a "big" girl should act, dress, and eat. She's learned to hide her figure and even worse...to hide her true self from the world. This book is epic just in watching Emma come to realize how much she's hiding from the world and how she's the one ultimately paying for that.

And how she ultimately finds her inner peace is purely begun because of Ian and how he sees her. Ian was that ultimate nerd in school who grew into his looks. Now he's an accountant who is also a bondage instructor in his free time. He's had a crush on Emma ever since high school, but her self esteem is such that she simply doesn't see it. His bondage classes have several issues at the same time...he loses his meeting place and then his model gets sick at the last minute. Emma comes to his rescue in both instances and that sets up the story.

I liked the way this story played out. The bondage is life-changing for Emma. It puts her in a position she never would have considered before....being open and vulnerable and suddenly her life view of herself begins to change. As she sees herself through Ian's eyes and even the eyes of the observers to their bondage scenes, she sees just how skewed her viewpoint of herself has been. I loved getting to read about that change in her.

And it's a fun romantic story too. Ian and Emma were friends in high school, but they were never that close. Just acquaintances ...although he did have a crush on her that he never acted on. Watching them rediscover each other was really heart-warming. I also liked the additional story lines of them with their respective friends and the way those friendships impacted the outcome of the romance.

This was just one of those books that I flat-out enjoyed. The romance was sweet. The overall theme was beautiful. The bondage scenes were incredibly sexy...I loved it when Emma took charge of the ropes...whew, that was HOT! This was my first read by this author. I need to check out more of her writing.

I received a complimentary copy of this book in return for an honest review.

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## ~ Becs ~ says

Well, this was a sweet contemporary romance but not quite the edgy affair I was hoping for. It's the story of Ian and Emma. Emma owns a bookstore and is struggling to make ends meet. Ian, an old High School friend, pops in occasionally to buy books and notices she has a spare storage room and asks to rent it for one of his 'workshops'. Turns out he is a rope bondage instructor and his model cancels at short notice and Emma steps in and I think you can guess where we go from there.

While I did enjoy this, it wasn't quite what I was expecting. I think it's possibly my expectations that were misplaced though as I was looking for a kinky little number and that's not quite what I got. This is very much BDSM lite focussing only on the **B** in **BDSM** and Ian isn't a dom – he's more of a switch who likes to tie girls up and likes to be tied himself so if you're looking for a commanding, self-possessed dom, you're not going to find it here.

I also found this HUGELY frustrating – Ian and Emma are quite possibly the most awkward new lovers in the known universe. The minute sex was over, they couldn't meet each others eyes and were like bashful school kids. Both of them have strong feelings for each other but are too reticent to say anything and plenty of misunderstandings ensued! It was a bit like the blind leading the blind here. They're both as bad as each other.

Emma is seriously lacking in confidence and self-worth and I found being in her headspace for 300 pages a rather difficult place to be. She doubts herself at every juncture and appeared to have virtually no self-esteem. After a while, she's just plain exhausting.

Also, the secondary characters – I found myself skimming over those scenes. In that respect, it read rather like a second book in a series and Ian's best friend Brent and his wife Missy felt like they'd been the central characters in a previous book but a bit of research reveals that to be wrong and I found it hard to see the author's motivations in lavishing quite as much attention on them as she did. They don't add to the story and I hurried them along to get back to the main event – Ian and Emma.

What was done **REALLY** well here was the rope bondage scenes. While not always sexual, they're intensely sensual and obvious strong attention to detail and loving affection went into writing those scenes. They're so well described that I could follow them perfectly as Ian wound the ropes around Emma. Even when they're not leading to sex, I found these scenes incredibly **HOT** and they were absolutely the highlight of the book for me.

So, it's an enjoyable contemporary romance with some gorgeously sensual rope bondage scenes and a central couple that I kind of liked even though I wanted to slap them with a wet kipper sometimes.

## 3 knotty stars

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