



## Hot Summer Nights

*Jaci Burton , Carly Phillips , Erin McCarthy , Jessica Clare*

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**Passions ignite in these all-new stories from four bestselling masters of contemporary romance...**

In **Jaci Burton**'s *Hope Smolders*, struggling divorcee Jane has put her personal life on hold to raise her kids — until she runs into Luke, her ex's former best friend, who convinces her it's time to start having fun again.

**Carly Phillips** takes you back to the town of Serendipity, where overworked Alexa has an instant connection with a sinfully sexy football star on the dance floor. A one-night stand evolves into multiple nights when Luke decides to teach the good doctor about his own brand of fun. But when it's time for him to leave town, will these *Perfect Strangers* be able to say goodbye for good?

In **Jessica Clare**'s *Legend of Jane*, an intrepid Bloggess catches the eye of local law enforcement when she gets caught trespassing. Luckily, Luanne wouldn't mind getting handcuffed by Officer Hotness...

Single girl Chelsea is tired of feeling like the fifth wheel on her weekend jaunt to Lake Placid, until she gets stuck out in the cold and finds a muscular knight in shining armor to warm her up — in **Erin McCarthy**'s *Ice Princess*.

## Hot Summer Nights Details

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Author : Jaci Burton , Carly Phillips , Erin McCarthy , Jessica Clare

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## From Reader Review Hot Summer Nights for online ebook

### **Sue Galuska says**

I took this book with me on vacation to the beach. It was a great, fun, summer read. The book contains 4 short stories from Jaci Burton, Carly Phillips, Erin McCarthy and Jessica Clare.

In Jaci Burton's Hope Smolders, Jane a divorced mother of two tries to cope with life after her ex just up and left. In walks in her ex's best friend, Will and sparks ignite. Will tries to get Jane to enjoy life for herself and has fun getting Jane to come out of her shell. This was a really sweet story.

In Carly Phillips' Perfect Stranger, Dr. Alexa Collins spends all of her life working, being the perfect doctor and daughter her dad wants her to be. After a rare night out, Alexa meets Luke and has an unforgettable one-night stand. Luke is in town for only a few days and Alexa ends up spending a lot of time with him. Alexa has to decide what she really wants out of life, running the hospital like her dad wants or following her own dreams. Another great story from Carly!

In Jessica Clare's The Legend of Jane, Luanne has a job where she video blogs The Legend of Jane and does all types of silly things. On one occasion she is caught by sexy, good boy cop Hank. Hank likes all the silly things she is willing to do because he would never do those types of things. Luanne just likes the sexy Hank. This story made me laugh out loud.

In Erin McCarthy's Ice Princess, Chelsea is on a ski weekend away with her friends and their boyfriends right after she was dumped by her boyfriend. After Chelsea gets herself locked out of her hotel room on the balcony in the cold, she decides to jump down from the second story balcony and is caught by Brody, a sexy, lonely guy whom she'd love a one-night stand with. The funny things that happened between these two kept me reading.

Get this book. You will not be disappointed.

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### **Maryann says**

Cute book!

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### **Julie Alvarez says**

The 4 stories in this book were amazing and pulled you into each one. Every story made you wish you were the female in each one and you had a man in your life like each hero. The book also had 3 of my most favorite authors: Cary Phillips, Jacie Burton, and Erin McCarthy. Recommend the book to all contemporary romance readers.

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## **Susan says**

Passions ignite in these all-new stories from four bestselling masters of contemporary romance?

Series: Hope (Book .5)

5 stars

In Jaci Burton's "HOPE SMOLDERS," struggling divorcée Jane has put her personal life on hold to raise her kids -- until she runs into Will, her ex's former best friend, who convinces her it's time to start having fun again.

This story is the introduction to Jaci Burton's new series. I've already read the first book in the series, *Hope Flames*, and really enjoyed it, so I liked going back and reading about Jane and Will. Jane is the single mother of two who has been struggling since her husband walked out two years ago. All her energy goes to taking care of her kids, her house, and her two jobs. There isn't a lot of time for fun.

Will is surprised by the attraction that he feels for Jane when he sees her again. He feels guilty about not checking up on her and the kids after her husband left them and decides that now is a great time to introduce some fun into Jane's life. So he talks her into a date with him, which goes really great - until an emergency with her daughter breaks it up.

Jane had a great time on the date and the "afters" were wonderful. Will was even supportive and caring with her daughter at the ER. She worries about risking her heart and those of her kids by getting involved with Will. Over the next several weeks things go great as Will makes a place for himself. Jane is very independent and reluctant to allow herself to depend on anyone, especially a man, which ends up creating some conflict. Will was a real sweetheart of a guy. He wanted to help Jane have fun again, but he was also interested in the kids. I loved seeing him make sure there was plenty of time with them as well as alone time with Jane. When they run into a rough patch, I really liked that Will reacted realistically with anger and hurt, but was able to see her point of view after he had a chance to calm down. Jane's issues were also realistic, though she had to have them pointed out by both Will and Chelsea before she was able to let them go.

I liked the ending and seeing them work out their issues. I especially liked Will's understanding of Jane's fears and that he shows he has the love and patience to persevere.

Series: Serendipity (Book 4.5) Serendipity's Finest (Book 1.7)

5 stars

Carly Phillips takes you back to the town of Serendipity, where overworked Alexa has an instant connection with a sinfully sexy football star on the dance floor. A one-night stand evolves into multiple nights when Luke decides to teach the good doctor about his own brand of fun. But when it's time for him to leave town, will these "PERFECT STRANGERS" be able to say goodbye for good?

Loved this story. Alexa is an overworked doctor who takes a night off to help a friend by taking her out. She meets Luke, a pro football player who is in town for a few days visiting a friend and the chemistry between

them is hot. After a couple nights together, Luke sees a need in Alexa that he's more than happy to fill.

Alexa always wanted to be a doctor and her personal preference was toward pediatrics. But her father, the current chief of staff of the hospital, has been grooming her to take over his position when he retires. She works long hours in many different parts of the hospital, hasn't had a date in months, and barely has a social life with her best friend. There's something about Luke that got her attention that very first night and made her forget about work for awhile. When she gets called to the hospital for an emergency, she finds Luke waiting for her when she's done, offering to take care of her.

Luke was drawn to Alexa from the moment he met her. First he saw her beauty and felt their physical attraction. He saw the loyal friend when Cara needed her for backup. Then when Cara got hurt, he saw her change into the intensely capable doctor. He is fascinated by all the layers he sees in her. After taking her out for breakfast and then spending the next 24 hours with her, he really wants to get to know her better.

Alexa gets a little spooked by the intensity of what she's feeling for Luke and tries to pull away, but he doesn't let her get away with it. I loved their conversation when she owns up to what she did. Luke wants a chance to show her how to have some real fun, and has no trouble standing up to her father to make sure she gets it. I really enjoyed the mental image of her father standing there with his mouth hanging open because of it.

The time with Luke, and the example he has set of having a balanced life, makes Alexa more aware of how unhappy she has become with her life as it is. When Luke invites her to come to Texas with him and meet his family, she has some hard truths to face. Meanwhile, back in Texas, Luke is still hopeful that things aren't over between them. I loved Alexa's solution and really hope to see them appear in a later book to see how they are doing.

Series: Bluebonnet (Book 2.5)

3 stars

In Jessica Clare's "THE LEGEND OF JANE," an intrepid Bloggess catches the eye of local law enforcement when she gets caught trespassing. Luckily, Luanne wouldn't mind getting handcuffed by Officer Hotness?

Luanne has come to Bluebonnet to live with her sister while she is out of work. To pay the bills left over from a sleazy boyfriend, she has a video blog of her doing crazy things. The income from the ads is her only income right now. The story starts with Hank finding her filming herself attempting to do "cowtipping" in a local field. She wants to film him arresting her, and he isn't going to cooperate. Both of them are attracted to each other, but they seem to be total opposites in personality.

Hank comes from a long line of cops and likes what he does. Bluebonnet has been pretty quiet up to now and he really doesn't want Luanne's kind of craziness messing that up. But there's something about her fearlessness and fun that really appeals to him. They start dating and having a good time together, but her blog antics are always at the back of his mind. Hank is very conscious of his place in the community and fears what could happen if her actions start to reflect badly on him.

Luanne started the video blog as a way to pay off the bills that accrued when her ex-boyfriend ran up credit

cards in her name. She got caught by Hank while filming one of her pieces, and was immediately attracted to him. They start dating, but she knows he has some issues with the things she does for her blog. She keeps doing them in spite of it.

I had a hard time connecting with these two. I got really frustrated with Luanne because it seemed like she was ignoring the very real problems her videos were creating. Hank's concerns didn't appear to bother her at all, which is not the attitude you should have about someone you supposedly care for. Meanwhile, Hank seemed to be pretty uptight about her work. He seemed to like the way she was so different, but wasn't willing to see that what she did wasn't hurting anyone. He was too concerned about the way it looked.

Though it all worked out in the end, I hope that they both learned a little bit about themselves and their relationship.

4 stars

Single girl Chelsea is tired of feeling like the fifth wheel on her weekend jaunt to Lake Placid, until she gets stuck out in the cold and finds a muscular knight in shining armor to warm her up -- in Erin McCarthy's "ICE PRINCESS".

This story makes me think of the Sesame Street song "One of these things is not like the others". The anthology is Hot Summer Nights and the three other stories take place during the summer. This one is in the middle of winter. Huh?

That being said, it was a cute story. Chelsea is on a ski weekend with some friends. She was supposed to be with her boyfriend too, but they had broken up. She feels a little out of place as the others are still paired up. When she gets locked out of her room on the balcony Brody comes to her rescue. There's a definite attraction between them, but they miss connecting after the rescue.

Brody is a former skiing champion who is now one of the ski instructors at the resort. He's happy to see Chelsea again, as she ends up being his student the next day. The ski lesson was pretty funny, as Chelsea is a total klutz on skis, but she has a great attitude and sense of humor. They make arrangements to meet later, and things get pretty hot from there. They are well matched and feel like there is more to what they could have than just hot sex.

I really liked the way that they made the commitment to spend more time together after that weekend and really get to know each other. Loved the ending and how it all worked out for them.

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### **Nicole says**

Review originally posted here: [http://thebookpushers.com/2013/07/02/...](http://thebookpushers.com/2013/07/02/)

I really enjoyed this anthology, and most of these authors are on my auto-buy list. I was especially excited to read about Burton's new contemporary romance series, and I can't wait for more!

Hope Smolders by Jaci Burton is the start of her new Hope series, which I'm super excited to read more about. Jane is a single mother, whose husband left her with two kids and more problems than she ever expected. The last thing Jane thinks about is having fun on her own, as her kids, their finances, and keeping her jobs stays a large priority in life. Her ex-husband's friend Will is determined to show Jane a good time, especially since he finds himself attracted to her.

I liked this story because it was such a great second chance story. I felt so bad for Jane and all that she had to go through with her horrible ex-husband, and although Burton made him extremely unlikable, it didn't feel like it was done to make Will better. I love the romance between these two because it was a balance between sexy, flirty, and innocent. They seemed to spend as much time alone as they did becoming their own little family, and I loved that. Burton also did a great job introducing the fabulous characters-to-come in the Hope series, and I'm so excited to read more.

I give Hope Smolders a B+

Perfect Strangers by Carly Phillips is a new edition in the Serendipity series, and probably my favorite story in the anthology. I love the town of Serendipity, so getting a chance to do a quick re-visit before the next novel was fabulous. This book tells the story of Alexa, who falls instantly in lust with Luke at the bar one night. The chemistry is off the charts, and although they do nothing more than share a sexy dance, you can tell these two had a love-at-first-sight moment. I usually find it difficult to find stories like that realistic, but something about Phillips writing always convinces me, and I adored this story.

I think the other thing I really liked was that this story took place during the same timeline as the last full length novel, so we got a chance to see things from a different perspective. It was fun and different from Phillips norm. I would really love to see someone who doesn't usually enjoy love-at-first-sight books give this one a try, because I think Alexa and Luke do a damn good job of convincing themselves, each other, and the reader that they will make it in the long-run.

I give Perfect Strangers an A

Legend of Jane by Jessica Clare was one of the stories I was most excited about, and ended up liking the least. I'm a die-hard fangirl of Clare, so the fact that I didn't really connect with this story was a bit of a let-down. Jane AKA Luanne does wild and wacky things for her blog to supplement her income while she is out of work. Being arrested by a local sheriff opens her eyes not only to the possibility of love, but also the harm her new career is having on her family.

I thought Luanne was kinda annoying, refusing to listen to anyone tell her something negative about her blog, all the while she bitched about it every chance she got. It seemed a little out-of-character that someone who was willing to go to such lengths as "Jane" wouldn't be willing to do the same on her own in the field she really wanted to work in. I just didn't enjoy this story as much as I hoped.

I give Legend of Jane a C

The final story, *Ice Princess* by Erin McCarthy was a cute winter romance. Chelsea and her boyfriend broke up right before their romantic weekend, and Chelsea makes the best of it. After falling into the arms (quite literally) of a local hunk, Chelsea thinks things might be looking up. Especially when said hunk turns out to be her sky instructor. From that point on, Chelsea is given the chance to learn more than just how to navigate the slopes.

I thought this story was cute, but I also felt like Chelsea and Brody rushed a bit with their vacation romance. While they didn't profess their undying love for each other after the end of the weekend (thank god) it did seem as if they were quick to think things would work out after only a weekend together. In many ways their situation was similar to the Phillips story, and yet I just didn't believe in it as strongly. However, it was a cute and sexy story, as McCarthy usually delivers.

I give *Ice Princess* a B

Overall this was a strong anthology with well-rounded stories. I loved the chance to dive back into *Serendipity*, as well as get the chance to sneak a peak into the new world of *Burton's Hope*. The contemporary romance fans will enjoy this great beach read.

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**figuranta♥?addicted♥?to♥?books♥? says**

4 stars

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**Diana von Dinchen's Welt der Bücher says**

Meine Meinung zum Buch:

Zwischendurch mag ich Kurzgeschichten wirklich sehr gerne. Sie sind kurz, knackig und schnell gelesen.

Wirklich überzeugen konnte mich nur die Story von Erin McCarthy. Die Geschichte ist lustig, leidenschaftlich und die Gefühle wurden sehr gut dargestellt. Ich mochte Chelsea's Sarkasmus und ihre taffe Art sehr gerne. Aber auch der männliche Part ist nicht zu verachten. Der Schreibstil von Erin McCarthy ist locker, leicht und sehr flüssig.

Die anderen 3 Kurzgeschichten fand ich dagegen teilweise wirklich langweilig. Da kam einfach gar nichts bei mir an. Nicht nur die Spannung hat gefehlt, sondern auch jegliche Leidenschaft und Romantik war wie weggeblasen. Was ich wirklich schade finde, denn gerade von Carly Phillips Kurzgeschichte hätte ich mir viel mehr greifbare Gefühle gewünscht.

Fazit:

Nette Kurzgeschichten für zwischendurch, die mich aber größtenteils nicht erreichen konnten.

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**Tammy Sargeant says**

Read this strictly for Carly Phillips. Alexa has finally gotten her happy ending in *Perfect Stranger*. I've been waiting for her book, kinda bum it came out as a short story and not a full book. It seemed she had more

hiding in all the other books when she was a side character. Glad she didn't let anything stand in front of her happiness. This was short, sweet and too the point. God bless that football playin' Texan.

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### **Magpie67 says**

Hot Princess: Sexy and Fun! I totally love Chelsea and her mouth. It was great she was able to meet someone who got her humor and knew what she needed in the bedroom. I loved that they both had dogs and were willing to commit a year of commuting before making real decisions. I loved all the references to the Fairy land world too.

Hope Smolders:

The Legend of Jane:

See Perfect Stranger review on it's own. Carly rocks as contemporary, modern romance author and at moment I'm loving Erin McCarthy

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### **Erin says**

In Jaci Burton's "Hope Smolders," - Read 5 pages and nearly fell asleep. So didn't bother. Totally skipped.

Carly Phillips "Perfect Strangers" - I don't even remember reading the first 5 pages. Skipped it.

Jessica Clare's "Legend of Jane," - This is the reason I read this book, as I've been reading the Bluebonnet series. I could not stand Luanne/Jane. I liked the main male... whose name I can't remember now, and isn't listed in the blurb... so apparently doesn't matter at all? I liked him. He was quiet, and boring but I still liked him. Not overly thrilled by the whole story though because Luanne/Jane was so annoying. She absolutely hated her blog, but if anyone ever said anything not even bad about it, but constructively trying to help... she would flip out on them.

Erin McCarthy "Ice Princess" - I did read this one. I liked it. I liked Brody. However, I did not like Chelsea very much. She was annoying and vapid, and I am snarky don't get me wrong, but literally every single thing that came out of her mouth was caustic snark, some of which didn't even make sense. And there is snark.. and then there is being low class. I'm sorry, but not everything needs the response of "does a bear shit in the woods?!"

And she was absolutely obsessed with a killer trying to kill her while she was skiing. It made absolutely no sense, and was just annoying to the point where I gladly would have been the one trying to kill her. She put herself in every one of the situations she found herself in... and very much was TSTL.

Also... WHY WAS THIS ONE IN AN ANTHOLOGY CALLED 'HOT SUMMER NIGHTS' ?! IT'S SET IN WINTER! DOING WINTER SPORTS! IT WASN'T SUMMER! THERE WAS NO SUMMER INVOLVED.

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## **Cheri says**

While I enjoyed all of these short stories, I did favor the last 2 :)

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## **Daniela says**

These are short steamy quick feel good romances. Perfect for the beach or lazing on a hammock. Each of these authors are an auto buy for me so this was an extra special treat.

Perfect Strangers by Carly Phillips: returns to Serendipity with overworked doctor Alexa who meets hunky pro football player Luke. She expects it to be a one night stand but he has other more permanent things in mind. I just love the confident man who realizes he has met The One.

The Legend of Jane by Jessica Clare: Ms. Clare is a new author to watch. The more I read of her stories the more I want to read. This is a cute story about Luanne who started video blogging her outrageous escapades to make money. She gets arrested by straightlaced, hotty Officer Hank. A cute sweet story. Made me smile.

Ice Princess by Erin McCarthy: Very cute, steamy, sexy, steamy, snarky, funny, steamy, one night stand turned romance. Did I mention steamy?

Hope Smolders by Jaci Burton: good read with enough character development to make the romance believable. Will is a strong honest man who has an interest in Jane a divorcee with children. He wants her and makes sure to include the children. Jane is gun shy after being married to an alcoholic and drug addict.

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## **Book Reading Gals says**

Title: Hot Summer Nights Anthology; Hope Smolders, Perfect Strangers, Legend of Jane, Ice Princess

Series: Hope .05; Serendipity bk4.5;

Authors: Jaci Burton, Carly Phillips, Erin McCarthy, Jessica Clare

Genre: Contemporary

In Jaci Burton's "Hope Smolders," struggling divorcee Jane has put her personal life on hold to raise her kids—until she runs into Luke, her ex's former best friend, who convinces her it's time to start having fun again.

Carly Phillips takes you back to the town of Serendipity, where overworked Alexa has an instant connection with a sinfully sexy football star on the dance floor. A one-night stand evolves into multiple nights when Luke decides to teach the good doctor about his own brand of fun. But when it's time for him to leave town, will these "Perfect Strangers" be able to say goodbye for good?

In Jessica Clare's "Legend of Jane," an intrepid Bloggess catches the eye of local law enforcement when she gets caught trespassing. Luckily, Luanne wouldn't mind getting handcuffed by Officer Hotness...

Single girl Chelsea is tired of feeling like the fifth wheel on her weekend jaunt to Lake Placid, until she gets stuck out in the cold and finds a muscular knight in shining armor to warm her up—in Erin McCarthy's "Ice Princess."

I love anthologies because it gives you a chance to test drive other authors and see whether you would like them or not. I have found some of my favorite authors this way. With this anthology however I'd already read each of the authors two of whom are on my auto-buy list. Because it is an anthology I will review each book individually and grade it then give the book as a whole a combined grade. (Yes that is the teacher in me coming out :))

Perfect Stranger: Ok I'm going to admit I thought for sure Alexa's hero was going to be Sam Marsden, and I was looking forward to some out of this world fights and smexy times. When Carly said Sam wasn't Alexa's I was a little bummed, but also curious as to who her hero could be. I wasn't expecting Luke.

Luke is one of those heroes who is ready to settle down. He's not actively looking, but he's also not going to ignore an instant connection with a woman who intrigues him, and Alexa intrigues him. I loved how he got Alexa and knew what she needed. When it's time for him to leave he asks Alexa to come with him, knowing she will probably say no, but needing to put his feelings out there.

This is one of those sweet love stories that made me fall in love with romance in the first place.

Grade: A

Ice Princess: By the time I got to this story I was reading in bed and was told to either put the book away or go read in the living room as I was laughing so hard at the antics of Chelsea and her misadventures in Lake Placid. From her first meeting with Ben, to her attempts at learning how to snow board. I loved every minute of this story, and went back and read it again as soon as I was finished reading it.

Grade: A

Legend of Jane: Having never read a Jessica Clare book I wasn't sure what to expect from her. While I enjoyed this story I wasn't as invested in the characters I should have been. In fact by the time I'd finished the entire book I'd completely forgotten all about them.

Grade: B

Hope Smolders: I'm a huge Jaci fan so I was excited to read the opening novella for her new series. However three chapters in and I didn't care what happened in the story. Jane came across as a bitter divorced woman who lumped all men in the same category as her ex. I loved the hero Luke however, and thought he could have done so much better than Jane. I was so irritated with the way she treated him I have to admit this book became a DNF for me. I'm hoping the next book in the series is much better.

Overall Grade: B+

Review by: Heather

Check us out at <http://www.thebookreadinggals.com> and discover more great reviews!

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## Ashley F says

This review was posted at Tsuki's Book Blog on August 15, 2013.

Hope Smolders (Hope Bk .5) by Jaci Burton

I tend to be a bit hesitant when it comes to novellas containing kids. They often end up being placeholders for conflict and this one was sort of half-and-half. The premise followed Jane, a divorcee, with two kids. While working her second job she runs into an old friend of her husband's. Will is a sexy, highwayman who suddenly notices Jane and her kids after avoiding her for a few years. Now he decides to date her, show her a good time, and try to make her happy. It was a romantic little story.

I really liked Will and how he subtly manipulated the situation so Jane would have fun. They had a history so I could get behind the relationship. I hate novellas that are about 80 pages and have a couple meet and practically commit for life in the matter of a few days. In this case they at least had a history. The romance was flawless but by the time I got to the major conflict, I found it contrived.

Honestly I understood Jane acting in self-defense and looking for an excuse to get rid of Will. I understood her anger towards her ex. Truthfully I got it. My issue was, the unnecessary quality of the conflict in a short novella. When it came up I sort of thought, "Predictable. It was about that time." I hate when the moment of conflict is predictable. I'd rather it be implemented in an interesting or unusual way. When I can call it two pages out, it's not implemented well.

Overall I enjoyed my first foray in Jaci Burton's romances but it wasn't my favorite in the anthology. The hero and heroine were interesting individuals but they were more suited to a full romance. I wanted closure with the ex. I wanted her to get her chance to punch him in the face. I wanted to the kids to get some justice. I wanted all of it. Instead I got a fight and tentative let's be together. I was disappointed.

3 Stars

Perfect Strangers (Serendipity Bk 3.5) by Carly Phillips

As another first I'd never read anything by Carly Phillips. The premise was interesting enough. Alexa, an overworked doctor, goes to a bar one night to cheer up her friend when she runs into football star Luke. Luke is fascinated by the cool, sexy Alexa and decides to show her a good time while he's in town. He quickly discovers she's miserable and dealing with a boss who's her father. The father is a bastard and continues to work her to the bone. Problematically he's leaving town in a few days.

I really enjoyed the characters in this one. Alexa was cool and collected and just trying to get through the day. I couldn't help but respect her drive. She desperately wanted to do well in front of her father but she didn't know how to get out of it. She was miserable. I loved her interactions with Luke as he started to coax her out of her shell.

I was pleasantly surprised by Luke. I thought he would be a bit more stereotypical jock but he was very sensitive and caring. I loved the way he was a family man who made it clear he would not go to an awards show but he would never miss a family birthday. I don't typically make 'aw' sounds but I'll admit I did. He was so adorable and I wanted one of my own. He was there pulling her out of her misery and he was sexy and sweet? Seriously, sign me up.

The conflict was expected yet implemented well. I knew the conflict would come down to her job and it did. Luke wanted her to access her life and get out from under her father's thumb. At the same time, she was scared. Naturally they fought and she had a showdown with her father. Go her! After that it was a matter of the happy ending.

I loved the open ended quality of this novella. A lot of novellas try to wrap everything up in 80 pages and it is a bit unrealistic. Luke and Alexa only knew each other for about a week. Realistically babies and weddings were not on the table. Sure they reconciled but they had a future to work out. I liked that.

4 Stars

Legend of Jane (Bluebonnet Bk 2.5) by Jessica Clare

This was the funniest novella in this anthology. I had sub-par feelings about Ms. Clare's first Bluebonnet book but I figured I'd try the novella regardless. I'm glad I did. I spent a great deal of time laughing over Luanne's antics. The premise followed blogger "jane"/Luanne coming to Bluebonnet to live with her sister. While trying to go 'cowtipping' for her vlog she gets arrested by hunky cop, Hank. As they begin to date, both wrestle with her vlog and her future as "Legend of Jane".

Luanne was hilarious. She did crazy, crazy things all while saying exactly what was on her mind. I always love a character who is willing to speak her mind at all times. She just went for it. She recognized the attraction with Hank and she threw herself into it. She was light, fun, and enjoyable to read.

Hank, on the other hand, was a little stick in the mud. Sure he was sexy and romanced Luanne just right. The problem was he was way too concerned about what others thought of him. Every single bit of conflict in the story surrounded his fear others would lose respect for him. I personally wanted to reach through the book and shake him a bit. I absolutely detest conflicts about appearances.

Understandably Luanne was unsatisfied with her job so it was a natural conflict. My major problem was over his unwillingness to recognize his idiocy. Yes her job could be embarrassing but he basically told her, quit or they were done. I hate ultimatums and I particularly hate them when they are ridiculously one-sided and unjustified. I can understand protection and I can understand the person wanting her to do something she loved but he was more worried about his appearances. I was just disgusted by it. I loved Luanne but I couldn't stand Hank.

Unfortunately this is another strike against Ms. Clare in my book. Hopefully any of you reading this will try it out and let me know what you think.

2 Stars

Ice Princess by Erin McCarthy

I always like a cute little snow story and this certainly fit the bill. Chelsea is the fifth wheel on a ski weekend and is feeling the loneliness. When she gets stuck on the balcony of her room she tries to climb down and is rescued by Brody. Later, surprise surprise, her rescuer ends up being her ski instructor.

The romance was light and fluffy and all sorts of wintery goodness. I loved the damsel in distress routine from the strong, capable woman. I'm partial to rescue stories as long as the woman isn't a damsel the whole time. Chelsea was a strong, independent woman and she tried her hardest to succeed in everything she was

challenged to. I loved the scenes of her trying to ski and being terrible at it. She just kept trying. Brody was equally interesting. He was, naturally, an injured olympic skier who now taught lessons to stay on the mountain.

Their romance was spicy but realistic. They had just met each other and it seemed realistic they would want a future but recognized their shortcomings. They weren't together long enough for weddings or babies to enter the plans and they knew it. Their biggest issue was the distance. She lived miles and miles away but as their romance grew they had to decide whether or not to try over the distance.

It was a cute, fluffy story and worth the time for a short novella. While not the best story in the set, I enjoyed it and would probably read another novella by Ms. McCarthy.

3 Stars

#### OVERALL

3 Stars

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#### **Heather Lire says**

I loved the Carly Phillips and Erin McCarthy stories. I liked the other stories.

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