



# Heartless

*Diana Palmer*

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**Heartless** Diana Palmer

## Secrets abound on a Texas ranch...

As a teenager, Gracie worshipped her stepbrother, Jason, a strong, silent cowboy who left home early to seek his fortune. Now the wealthy owner of Comanche Wells ranch, Jason has finally come back home and discovered that the little girl he knew is all grown up.

In a moment of unbridled passion, Jason realizes that he's falling for Gracie. But Gracie harbors a shameful secret that makes her deeply afraid to love. Stung by her rejection, Jason leaves, ready to put the past?and the one woman he can't have?behind him once more.

Gracie thinks she's lost Jason forever. But when danger threatens her she can only hope that her long, tall Texan will come blazing home to save her.

## Heartless Details

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# From Reader Review Heartless for online ebook

Lu Bielefeld \*read.laugh.love\* says

BEST REVIEW EVER

Update: Re-read in January 2015

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Bgurl (don't h8 me cuz I'm honestful) says

**NOTE TO FELLOW READERS: *If a book's heroine straps on a fanny pack, stop reading IMMEDIATELY and throw it out! Or you WILL get Chlamydia and DIE!***

Actually, that's unfair. Chlamydia at least has a cure and I'm pretty sure whatever disease Diana Palmer's *Heartless*, is afflicted with does not!

Egads, this book was bad! Just awful! Horrendous! Really, really, really.....well....really BAAAAAAAAAAAAAAD! And, stupid me just kept on reading! Why? Because I HAD to know JUST how bad it could get! Yeah. Apparently I'm a masochist. Who knew?

Past experiences with old romance novels written by authors that crank them out like puppies at a puppy mill, have taught me that I will most likely be subjecting myself to a cringe worthy read. Every once in a while, however, I *do* discover a hidden gem. For this reason, I continue to dip my toe into the old-school romance pond. Sadly, *Heartless*, turned out to be a disgusting cesspool instead of a mountain fresh, spring fed stream.

Alas. *Heartless*, wasn't a total waste of time because I definitely learned something from reading this book. For instance, if I were to write a romance novel, here are four things I would NEVER do:

**1). Have a heroine wear a fanny pack.**

Remember that episode of *Sex in the City*, when Carrie Bradshaw tells Jack Berger that New York women wouldn't be caught dead wearing a scrunchie? Well, no hero worth his salt would fall in love with a woman sporting a fanny pack. It's just not sexy! Neither is the word "fanny" for that matter; so, I'd probably scrub that word from my vocabulary all together!

*Which leads me to...*

**2). Have a hero don a white turtleneck sweater.**

Never, in the history of fashion, has a white turtleneck sweater made a man look macho or hot. Unless, of course, said turtleneck caused the man's body temperature to *actually* rise. In which case, the reader now has an image of a sweaty, red faced, un-macho, white turtleneck sweater wearing hero stuck in their head and

that's not a visual anyone deserves to be saddled with!

*\*Shudders in revulsion.\* Moving on...*

**3). Write a romance novel while hungry.**

Why? You ask? Because I may become so obsessed with food that I write a scene where my hero (upon being informed that his beloved has been kidnapped by torturing, raping, murdering thugs) does nothing but whine about how hungry he is and how he can't eat because there's no one to cook for him, so he asks an FBI agent to make him an omelet. And bacon. And CINNAMON TOAST!

I kid you not, folks. The hero in *Heartless*, asks the Federal Agent who is there to find his kidnapped step-sister to make him F-ING CINNAMON TOAST! UGH! When I read that, I felt like weeping from the torture I was inflicting on myself. Yet, did I stop? Hells No!

I'm so ashamed of myself.

*Last, but not least...*

**4). Underestimate the intelligence of my readers by creating a thirty-four year old hero who acts like a self-centered four year old.**

Yeah, I'm a wee bit insulted by a hero who treats his cattle like precious children and WON'T employ environmentally unfriendly farming methods but WILL stand by and let his bitchy villainess of a fiancée insult and drive away the step-sister he raised and the servants he's known since birth because his *witty-bitty fwee-wings* were *herwt* when his step-sister wouldn't let him paw her boobs. But maybe it's just me. I'm funny like that.

Do yourself a big favor and learn from my mistakes, skip Diana Palmer's *Heartless*. To be safe, I'm skipping everything ever written by her. Judging from the reviews of Ms. Palmer's other books, they're probably just as awful.

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**KatieV says**

3.5, but what the heck? I'll round up since this is by far my favorite DP (not that I've read many).

What I've disliked about some of her books is the in lurve h and the hot/cold H. He wants her and resents it. Stupid penis! Actually, she's not pretty enough or sophisticated enough for his not so little guy. Dammit, he's THAT awesome. Don't be a hater. \*eye roll\*

This hero wasn't such a bad guy. He had his jerk moments but he knew he wanted the h. He did get engaged to an eeeeevil OW, but that was to make Gracie jealous.

The heroine is a fairly typical D.P. Mary Sue. Is there any woman in Jacobsville who isn't an orphan with a deep dark secret making her fear sex? So far, there's been an orphan with a super powered hymen, an orphan victim of a serial killer, and now the orphaned daughter of a sadist who put her mother through hell and turned the h off ever having sex. I'd like to know the ratio of orphans to non orphans in Jacobsville. That town of 2000 has a vast overpopulation of EVERYTHING. It's hilarious.

So why all the bitching for 3.5 stars? It's not really bitching, I was actually very entertained. This was some OTT cheese-o-rama. I was seriously disappointed when Tiny Tim didn't pop up and say 'God bless us, every one' at the end.

The evil OW was priceless. I love animals, but I can't stop giggling over her master plan to have the h's elderly cat, Mumbles, euthanized. He'd just gotten out of the vet hospital for a kidney infection! Yeah, he scratches the furniture, but this is friggin Mumbles we're talking about here. Jason gave her to Gracie when she was orphaned, doesn't that mean anything? Maybe the OW was just angry at her parents for naming her Kitty.

Don't worry, both Mumbles and Gracie along with the other misfits from Jason's mansion were sheltered by good ole Barbara from the diner.

Of course that didn't stop Gracie from being kidnapped and held for ransom by a deposed S American dictator. He was a swell guy though. Just ask any of the 500 secret Feds hiding out in Jacobsville.

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## **Karen says**

Cowboys. Check.

Innocent virgin. Check.

Christmas hater. Check.

Pregnancy Scare. Check.

Chest hair of awesomeness. Check.

Deposed dictator/druglords/kidnappings. Check. Check & Check!

Diana Palmer novels are my numero uno guilty pleasure. Guaranteed to get me out of any reading slump and put a smile on my face.

Heartless was no exception. I have only read one other Diana Palmer book – Dangerous and you can read my review here to see why I love her so. (<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/77...>)

The plot? Nah – you're not getting that here from me – let's get to the good stuff.

Alas, there was no drinking game worthy repetitiveness in Heartless but there is still plenty to discuss.

Careers I feel worthy of applying to now that I've read Heartless: rancher of rare Kobe beef, executive of a gaming company, party hostess, deposed dictator.

Shrew of the year award goes to: Stunning swimsuit model Kitty – who hates kitties, and Christmas, and everything else it seems, except redecorating.

Deposed dictator of the year: Machado. He drugs people and kidnaps them for ransom but he's so sweet....and he doesn't deal drugs like that evil Fuentes bunch he's forced to work with. Awww. Let's help him and get him back in power stat – and give him money!

Man of year award/A\*\*hole of the year award: Jason – our intrepid cowboy/mutli- millionaire, business tycoon, rancher, lover of Kobe Beef – but not to eat (?), amazing brother (?) who has been there every step of the way but has never been there at all, never drinks but has drunken rages on a regular basis, can hang the moon and the stars...he's perfect....except when he's a complete ass. I love him. (except when I'm mad at him)

Favorite Jason quote: " This beautiful creature curled up in his arms had obviously found him irresistible and now he faced the prospect of having a fathered a child with her because of his lack of control" .....

Yup, he's just that studly. The ladies can't resist his gravitational pull. Poor guy.

My \*head desk/wtf\* moment: Gracie had been drugged & kidnapped by Machado and released, now Jason is drugged & kidnapped by Machado. What's a girl to do to help save her man? Call Machado directly of course. They're old friends....she even has his cell phone number!

On my Diana Palmer rating scale I rate this one slightly less than Dangerous. Mostly due to the lack of drinking games.

Note: there isn't currently a "Diana Palmer rating scale" but there should be and I'll get right on it!

Also, I really loved Jason and Gracie. Didn't see that one coming. In Dangerous, Killraven (total neanderthal) and Winnie (TSTL) were so unlikable but in Heartless I was rooting for Jason & Gracie as a couple.

So onward I go onto the next DP novel – "Lone Star Winter" TWO Christmas themed stories in one book! I hope they don't hate Christmas!

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## **Vintage says**

Boy howdy. There is fiction, then there's DP's world.

I honestly don't know what to say.

SPOILERS below...

The hero who is so hung up on his stepsister that after one kiss gone wrong goes out and gets engaged to an OTT evil OW model with bad decorating skills, but enough evil OW talent to scare off the heroine and ALL the family retainers.

Hero impotent with evil OW and just blames it on work related stress.  
The heroine who struggles with ...everything.

The kidnapping, guitar playing, singing potential OM General of unnamed country that wants to Kiss her and love her and squeeze her and hug him and call her George..

And I'm barely halfway through the book!

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## **Lauren says**

### **Heartless**

1 Star

#### Synopsis:

Gracie Marsh worshipped her stepbrother Jason while growing up but now her feelings for him have evolved into something more intense. The feeling seems to be mutual but Gracie has a secret that makes her deathly afraid of love. Stung by her rejection, Jason leaves and sets in motion events that may change their lives forever.

#### Review:

OK, here goes my first and, hopefully, my last really negative review.

This book is awful but it is not the borderline incest that turned me off. Rather the characters are one dimensional and vapid, and the story is ridiculous.

Gracie's characterization makes absolutely no sense. There is an inconsistency between her supposed mental deficiencies and her obvious social skills. Also, she becomes a teacher even though she apparently has a severe learning disability – weird. In addition, she is a perfectly sweet doormat and for too accepting of Jason's rejection and snide attitude. It is a pity that she didn't put him in his place when he came home with Kittie the cow. Her reason for keeping her past secret from Jason is also inexplicable – there is nothing shameful about it, and depicting it as such belittles women who have suffered from abuse.

Speaking of Kittie, Jason's engagement to her is a completely idiotic plot device. First, her bitchiness is way overdone and is obviously meant to contrast against Gracie's almost angelic status. Second, Jason's reasoning for becoming engaged lacks credibility.

Jason is an obnoxious hero and borderline abusive. The scene in which he sets up an employee to be humiliated is a case in point as is his allowing Kittie to treat his family so badly.

The preposterous kidnapping subplots only add insult to injury. An honorable, sensitive kidnapper who just happens to be trying to save his country from a dictator and needs to kidnap people to fund his coup? The fact that there is not one, but two kidnappings? Perhaps this is an allowance for gender equality as there is one for the heroine and one for the hero?

I could go on and on but I'll stop now as I'm sure my point is made. This is definitely my first and only Diana Palmer book.

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## **jenjn79 says**

I probably sound a little bit like a broken record every time I review a Diana Palmer book, but the sentiment stands true: this is a very typical Palmer book. It's got all her formulaic mainstays. Still, I rather enjoyed this

story.

*Series note*, though this book isn't officially part of a series, it is set in the fictional Jacobsville, TX area, where many of Palmer's books take place. Including the popular Long, Tall Texans series. This book can be read as a stand-alone, though.

Gracie Marsh grew up rough. Her family was dirt poor and her father was essentially a sexual sadist. He used and abused her mother terribly, and Gracie's Mom made sure her daughter understood that all men wanted was to humiliate and hurt women in bed. She warned Gracie never to marry or get involved with men. And after a terrible event that ended in her father's death, Gracie had no reason not to believe her mother.

When her mom remarried to Myron Pendleton, his son Jason came into her life. Gracie kept away from him, but slowly Jason won her trust. Over the years, their friendship grew, but then Gracie began to see him as more than a step-brother and friend. She had feelings like a woman would have. But Gracie believed she would never be able to have a relationship with a man. Sex terrified her. What Gracie didn't know was that Jason wanted her as well. And one night things get close and Jason's feelings are revealed. Gracie is terrified and pushes him away. Feeling rejected, Jason leaves town and manages to find the best way possible to get back at Gracie...by getting involved with another woman. From that moment on, Gracie's life turns upside down. She loses her home, she has to learn to stand on her own, and then she's kidnapped. Jason comes to her rescue, but they'll have a lot to work out if they want to build a relationship.

If you read that summary, you can probably see that this book fits right in line with a typical Palmer book. In certain ways, I almost felt like it took bits and pieces of other Palmer books and slapped together in a new one. But otherwise, it's got all her usual stuff: a brooding hero, a naive virginal heroine, the hero being an asshole to the heroine, and whatnot. Plus it got other staples of hers...the "we shouldn't do this since we're not married" deal, the hero having a hairy chest, the heroine being small-breasted, etc. Every Palmer book has those too. It's kind of silly if you think too much about it. So I try not to.

This book reminded me a bit of her book *Lawless* in certain ways, but the hero wasn't quite as much a jerk in the middle of the book. He's still an idiot, but just not a total lost cause.

I liked Gracie, though. She's not very wordly, and rather sheltered, but she had some spunk hidden inside. I liked how strong she was in dealing with everything she went through in the book. She could have easily been a spineless, weepy heroine, but instead she picked herself up and moved on. I enjoyed that.

The romance was fairly good, angsty yet sensual. And the whole thing with the kidnappings gives the book some variation. Actually, I thought the whole deal with the kidnappings and the character involved in that was rather interesting. I'm hoping Palmer keeps going with that storyline.

All in all, though, this is like any other Palmer book. Which is a bad thing and a good thing. For those of you who are Palmer fans, then I think it's safe to say you'll probably like this one. As much as her books and her writing formula annoys me at times, there's something that just keeps yanking me back to read more.

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## **Ana M. Román says**

Diana Palmer se empeña en hacer a sus heroínas tan increíblemente inocentes que ya se pasa.



En este caso, aunque entiendo muy bien que de niña le supusiera un trauma ver la condición en la que terminaba su madre no es entendible que con veintitantos años siga pensando que así son siempre las relaciones sexuales. ¿Dónde ha vivido? ¿Debajo de una piedra entre las montañas? Vamos que no, no es creíble para nada.

Además, pasan unas cosas que me llevan a pensar que en realidad no están tan enamorados como deberían. Y lo digo por dos hechos:

(view spoiler)

Aún así no está mal para pasar un rato, como tantas otras de su mismo sello. Pasable y nada más.

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### **Jenny says**

Gracie has always loved her step-brother. They are not technically related but they grew up together. He adores her as well but he doesn't know how to make her see how much he loves her. Gracie is a very sheltered young woman and scared of intimacy. When Jason makes a move on her she rejects him. He feels hurt and rejected. He gets engaged to a shrew, Gracie leaves his house, becomes a teacher, Jason realizes his fiance is a bitch but it might be a little too late.

Super romantic story. Jason is crazy about Gracie and I'm happy he didn't betray her by sleeping with his wacko fiance. Gracie is a typical Diana Palmer heroine, a genuine sweetheart who wins everyone over with her warmth and strength. A great read!

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### **Cheesecake says**

Gracie and Jason. Jason is a super wealthy guy and Gracie is the daughter of his father's second wife. He finally gives in to his passion for her but she runs off scared. She has some skeletons in the closet that he doesn't know about. He gets his nose bent out of shape by her apparent rejection and runs off only to come back with a fiance in tow. A super snotty evil Fiancee (of course). Grace who had been hoping to talk to him and explain her reaction is now forever silenced by the evil OW between them. In one reckless action of jealous vindictiveness, Jason has ruined it all. When Jason returns it is to find his house remodeled, his staff fired and replaced with snooty good looking younger types and no sign of Grace or her fat cat. Throw in a benevolent south american dictator and his kidnapping cohorts, and you have a pretty crazy book. It's not really 4 stars, but I enjoyed it and Jason was heartily remorseful and grovelled well ; )  
Lots of cameos from other DP Heroes. I did find it odd how out of character Jason acted when the OW was around. But I guess it cranks up the angst.  
For those who hate OW stuff (view spoiler).

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## Addie says

DNF at 42% and I only got that far because I skimmed like crazy. Other reviews sum up why this is so awful. I have no clue how this is rated as highly as it is.

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## Chantal ♥? says

Ok compare to some of the other books DP wrote in the recent years this was a winner. If you know her formula this is the same but I enjoyed the whole fun relationship they had going. She was an awesome heroine and the kind of girl that you could be friends with. And he was a very misguided man who only really wanted the heroine and was confused on how to get her. It was a great story worth my time. I would recommend this book to those who enjoy romance and the misunderstanding that come from repressing ones feelings. Filled with drama and fun. I enjoyed it and keeper.

Happy reading!

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## Lynsey A says

This was definitely a DP where the hero redeemed himself and in fact wasn't a jerk through 80-90% of the book. At the times he was a jerk he was kicking himself for the way he was acting so that helped.

It was a typical DP read with the innocent, virginal heroine but Gracie really had some backbone on her and wasn't afraid to stand up to Jason. There were some references to some problems she had due to an incident in her past but it wasn't played on very much in the book, in so much that readers forget there is a problem and wonder why it was even mentioned.

A very interesting character was introduced in this book, Emilio Machado, someone who I know we will see a book about, hopefully in the near future. At the time he was introduced I wanted, however briefly, for Gracie to end up with him. This was during Jason's jerk moments but that was quickly resolved and readers will understand why.

All in all this was a good read. I believe that Diana Palmer fans will like this book.

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## ♥?elody says

**\*\*I'm giving you fair warning, this review will be filled with snark and quotes I pulled from the book. I have to find some entertainment where I can when it comes to this book. It's all in good fun too! Sorry for the ramblings in advance.\*\***

Finally finished this! It says so much when you let out a sigh of relief when you get to the last page of a book. :/I'm sorry Diana Palmer but you and I are going our separate ways. I tried very much but this did not work for me for several reasons. Same grievances I had in Night Fever I had here, but here the problems were much more obvious and less forgiving. The set up of this story had the potential of being one ball of

romantic angstiness but it just completely collapsed on itself not even half way in. The characters seemed to have the emotional maturity level and depth of 15 year old teenagers. Very one-dimensional characters and painfully underdeveloped writing.

## THE CHARACTERS

Gracie, sweet kind-hearted incredibly naïve overly-sensitive Gracie. She's had a wide-eyed crush and been in love with her step brother Jason for years since her mother married his father. Jason pretty much looked after her and saw to her every need since she was 14 and moved in with his family. Buying her extravagant gifts and letting her live in his mansion. She seems to carry the world on her shoulders (in her head), she's such a dear who takes everything to heart with quivering chins and maidenly gasps and blushes thrown in there. She was too fragile and sensitive for my tastes. And her doe-eyed fear/awe/hero-worship of Jason and eagerness to please him just made me...uncomfortable.

I love shy less experienced awkward heroines, but here it was too much and weird rather than charming. Her overly-dramatic martyr the 'sky is falling' personality just grates the nerves. And the author trying to show her finding strength and sass just came off more comical than anything because it was so extreme and out of character.

I don't know, I loved the idea of stepbrother and stepsister fighting their growing attraction to each other. And before anyone gives me the side eye for that, there is no blood relation and they didn't know each other their entire life so I didn't mind it. I'm not a perv, honest! I just really like angstiness situations. My fault I thought I was gonna get a tortured angstiness brooding couple instead I got Marsha and Greg from the Brady bunch.

## -\_\_- AWKWARD

As for the hero Jason, he did absolutely nothing for me. In the first few chapters he came off like a chatter box who would tease and joke around then morphed into a glowering angry jerk who liked to storm off in rages through the rest of the book. RME. Spare me. And his 'payback' ploy after Gracie rejected him is a stunt a 17 yr old hot headed boy would do instead of a 35 year old man. It was so ridiculous and juvenile. And his passive aggressive 'what happens, happens' attitude after magically getting a fiancée just didn't make a lick of sense. How far up your own ass do you have to be to see how stupid & careless you are acting towards the people you love? When Gracie runs off after their ~~awkward~~ "hot" misunderstood kiss in the rain, Jason is hurt and humiliated. His pride is hurt so what does he do? He gets drunk and ends up in bed with a vapid venomous cartoonish she-devil model named Kittie, who sinks her claws into him the minute she finds out he's a millionaire. And he completely lets her. After waking up in bed next to her with no memory of what happened the night before, he freaks out thinking that they had unprotected sex and she may be pregnant. So he decides they should get engaged and wants to bring her home with him because hey! Why not? he's always wanted to be a father (and he's so damn giddy over the thought of having a child with a virtual stranger WTH?) and this is the 'best' it's going to get after losing Gracie. Oh and he can't *WAIT* to see the look on Gracie's face when he struts in with this 'beautiful creature' on his arm. -\_\_- Again, how old are you? Where is your damn brain? What century do you even live in?? I'm embarrassed for you dude.

At this point, I wanted someone to just kick him in the balls and stuff him into a box. Complete idiotic jackhole. And oblivious doesn't even begin to cover how dim witted he acted to all of Kittie's outlandish over-the-top schemes to steamroll his life and run everyone out of his own house. GMAFB. Half the time he kept moaning & brooding over not even caring about her and wanting to end the engagement, but he keeps putting the inevitable off, letting everyone in his home continue to be miserable and be run off by that little shrew. Grow a damn pair! And Kittie's huffy 'old people!' rants couldn't scream any louder that she's the BAD GUY. I couldn't even take this character seriously because she was such a flat silly poor OTT caricature. Seriously she's vindictive enough and motivated enough to snoop around the household staffs' personal lives and expose their numerous secrets (and there are about 5 of them I lost count afterthat). Just...why? All that effort seemed so pointless to me and was trying to make her even more loathsome and antagonistic than she already is. Not necessary.

Moving on...

## THE PLOT

So central story focuses on Jason and Gracie and the big awful shameful secrets Gracie is hiding from Jason (secrets plural because Gracie's got a bagful but I only found 2). Her mother was in a abusive relationship with Gracie's father, a volcanic tempered drunk who would beat her and throw her around in and out of the bedroom. One particular episode is so extreme where her mother runs out of the bedroom with a blood soaked bodice where her husband bit her. Yes you read correctly, he *bit her* on the chest, so badly that her entire night gown is *soaked in blood*. He must have some serious chompers to do that much damage. RME. That memory is forever seared into Gracie's brain plus her mother's stern relentless warnings that all men are lustful animals who will inflict harm on women in order to gain pleasure. They are complete animals! Stay away! Gracie takes that advice to heart, literally. She's never had any kind of relationship with a man platonic or otherwise because of that and is terrified to have sex. So naturally that little heated kiss in the rain where Jason fondles her and kisses her near the boobage area freaks her the hell out and she runs off. I could understand the fear since she witnessed what her mother went through but honestly? Her mother sounded like she came out of the dark ages. And it was brought home more than once how many times her mother warned her about it and made her promise to never let a man near her. I mean really? This is what you are going to teach your child? Gracie's other big secret is her brain affliction. The same infamous night where her father is gunned down after the fight with her mother, he throws Gracie against a wall head first. It caused her to have some minor brain damage where some of her motor skills aren't 100%, but it's just described as her 'clumsy quirks' (why wasn't she checked out by a doctor for this?). These two things are the big shameful secrets (I still don't understand why they had to be secrets??) that Gracie and her mother tried very hard to hide in fear of scandal if word ever got out about the abuse. Um.. scandal? Seriously?? Domestic abuse is a sensitive subject of course but the characters in this acted like it was a world crime to have it made public. It's shameful and just *dirrrrrty*. GMAFB. This isn't the 1800s nor Regency London, yet Gracie's mother went to such extremes to cover up their awful history so no one would ever find out & also so her new husband at the time (Jason's bigot father) wouldn't find out how poor they were. Because of this, her mother decides to pass off Gracie as her step daughter and changed her last name. Um ooookay.

As for the rest of the plot, just a bunch of contrived cooky set ups that included 2 kidnappings, one of Gracie and one of Jason by evil kidnappers led by a Spanish dictator or some other silly nonsense. Random much? What the hell did this have to do with the story? Oh yes and another secret was smooshed somewhere in here too about Jason's family inheritance, his birth mother and his dead father's whoring ways. Dun dun dun! One too many wackadoodle contrived secrets if you ask me.

Speaking of Contrived things:

- *"Drunk men can't sexually perform."* Really?? That's news to me. Is this some kind of special condition that I don't know about? (This is coming from the 'experienced' hero's POV by the way. Palmer I'm a little concerned)
- You need a PhD or Masters degree to become a teacher, Gracie has neither. So her magically getting a teaching job (her first job *ever*) at a community college and giving lectures in a matter of days after declaring her 'independence' from Jason is nice but not so easy as one, two, three.
- A woman using her own money to pay a ransom to free her husband and pick him up from Mexico all by her little ol' self without the cops is impressive but hilarious. Ha. I wish!
- A woman who is sexually promiscuous = her having orgies. O\_o

Scandalous! How come nobody told me this?! Got it.

## THE WRITING

Just going to get right to the point with examples...

### Awkward phrasing & dialogue:

*"If she hadn't run from him that rainy night, she was thinking, all the anguish in between would have been spared. The thought lay in her expression.* (I didn't know thoughts could do that, interesting. And *'she was thinking?'* Thinking what??)

*"His dark eyes opened into hers, soft and quiet."* (I didn't know eyes could do that either)

*"How do you give a rattlesnake half a chance, offer it first bite?"* (whaaa?)

*"No, don't prevaricate."* (say what now?)

*"You're such a cat Gracie."* (Um..thanks?)

*"Grr...great balls of fire, is that the time?"* (Gee golly wiz I don't know!)

### Summarization in present tense:

*Gracie overheard her talking to someone on the phone, bragging about her sexual exploits with a variety of men. She was engaged to a man who was dynamite in bed, she told the listener, so as long as he could satisfy her, she'd stay with him. But there was a Middle-Eastern prince who also coveted her, (me: rolling my eyes so hard) and he was much richer than Jason. Relationships were such a bother, she sighed. Men only wanted sex, but when they were rich, it was no hardship for her. She could fake pleasure as long as the gifts she got in return were expensive.*

This is all coming from the heroine's POV where she remembers overhearing Kittie talking on the phone with a friend. She's summarizing the whole thing in present tense, including all the small irrelevant details. Couldn't the author just give it in dialogue format instead of the character painfully rehashing every. single. bit of the conversation like some summarized narration? It's the author's job to narrate, not the characters in this case. And the author had the annoying habit of doing this throughout the book. It reads very strange and heavy handed and becomes incredibly long winded to read through. Don't have the characters tell me what

happened, show me!

**Dated as Shit Writing:**

*"He let out a word that had the women in the room flushing." Jason! Gracie exclaimed, shocked.*  
A word like...**fuck**? Oh my! How unbecoming!

*"Besides, it's not so scary when I think about doing it with yo..." She clamped down hard on the word."*

What? Sex? SAY IT. You won't burn in hell if you do. I promise.

*"He felt the faint resistance that quickly gave way to his ardor."*

*"While the ruffian was manhandling her, she tried to remember the other moves Marquez taught her. If she could just get...her...hands...free!"*

Excuse me...did you say *ruffian*?

The writing in this just came off like a weird western romance stuck in a historical setting but tried really *really* hard to be contemporary. The dialogue, character motivations and interactions are incredibly dated. I felt like I was reading about a virginal young heroine from the 1800's. The time frame of this story is never specified but it's definitely contemporary but not written like one. Comments like this: "did you two quarrel?" "protect her from amorous advances" "quickly gave way to his ardor" didn't make sense and her mother's bloody bodice (really Palmer? *a bodice*?), Gracie's canopied bed & long cotton night gown with tons of lace and hand-knitted doo dads on her bed spread seemed very out of place.

**And of course...THE SEX TALK! :D**

*"Yes! Feel me, Gracie. Feel me...going into you!"*

*"She clung to him, her eyes wide-open with shocked wonder as she saw his face. It was so intimate, she thought wildly. So intimate!"*

*"Kiss you so hard that your mouth would be swollen from the intensity of it!"*

*"Harder, Jason, harder, harder...!"*

*"Hold me. Feel me driving into you. Feel me...exploding...inside you!"*

And finally **THE EXCLAMATIONS!!!** Can't forget those:

*"In a few seconds, she knew, his teeth would bite into her, and she would look like her mother had, bleeding...!"*

*"His arms were contracting, and his mouth was opening, as she knew it would...!"*

*"If Gracie died, he had no reason to stay alive. He had nothing left. He had...!"*

*"Come here to me!" He pulled her down into his arms and wrapped her up tight.."*

*"I would love that!" she whispered huskily." -\_-*

Say it LOUDER. I CAN'T HEAR YOU!

Dear Mrs. Palmer, do you know what whispering entails? How about huskily? Cause I really don't think you do.

And cue the violins:

*"Her eyes were closed. "It was a nightmare. And we were so poor, Mrs. Harcourt. Some days I couldn't go to school because I didn't want people to see me wearing the same clothes every single day of my life...!"*

Please...stop...talking...like **THIS...**!

So yeah, clearly I had more fun writing this review than reading the actual book. lol The writing was a pretty big driving factor in what derailed this for me.

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## **Riona says**

I finished 2 chapters and felt like I needed to take a shower in bleach.

When you grow up as brother and sister there should be no romance. But really - There should be no romance between a wealthy cowboy and his mentally retarded step sister. I don't care if there is some unknown reason for her mental retardation - that is the result of whatever unknown thing happened in her past later in the book.

You don't tell your sister (step or otherwise) to just lay back and think of England. You don't ask your brother what you should wear. You don't involve siblings in some strange un-sexualized version of an S&M/Male Dom relationship. What should I wear Jason? How should I do my hair Jason? Should I wipe with my right or my left hand Jason? (okay... the last one is just me venting... but I didn't finish the book... I was just expanding based on what I did read - it could be in there somewhere).

Shame on you Diana Palmer for such a creepy book. And I read the reviews on amazon... some people say

you have multiple books where step-siblings end up in love. Did you secretly lust after your your step-brother? Perhaps a cousin? Or even your actual brother. And also shame on you for trying to convince us that Gracie isn't mentally retarded and that she is even any where near ready for the mental portion of a sexual relationship.

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