



# Bolero

*Joanie McDonell*

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## **Bolero** Joanie McDonell

*Bolero* introduces Nick Sayler, the private investigator who lives aboard a Hudson River barge with a brilliant savant, a retired psychiatrist and a stunning Creole girl. But Sayler's haunted by memories of the woman who took a bullet meant for him, so his good life is belied by a bad drinking habit.

Then an emergency room doctor's desperate call about a ballerina with no memory and nothing on her except his card, changes everything. If he can dip into his notorious past to uncover the secret that will save the dancer, maybe he can finally save himself.

"Joanie McDonell's *Bolero* is an auspicious debut — sophisticated, stylish, and sexy. We shall be hearing a lot more about Nick Sayler, a disenchanted hero in the classic mode." — Benjamin Black, author of *Christine Falls*

## **Bolero Details**

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Author : Joanie McDonell

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## **From Reader Review Bolero for online ebook**

### **Alan says**

Bolero by Joanie McDonell Ok so I picked this one up because it was on one of those annoying advertisements that Kindle puts on when you put it in sleep mode. I read the blurb on it and decided to give it a try. Well it didn't disappoint. Quick setting: The hero, Nick Sayler, is a Private Detective with a checkered past who is still dealing with the loss of his girlfriend. He gets a phone call in the middle of the night from a ER doctor saying there was a woman found beaten and can't remember anything, and the only thing on her was his business card. He doesn't want to help but when he sees her he is compelled by her beauty and the fact that she has the same violet colored eyes as his deceased girlfriend. Now he can't stop helping her. This really was a good "who done it" book. I couldn't figure out who the killer was until it was revealed in the end, even though during their investigation Nick mentions them as a suspect. My only issue is that the author tried to make some of the scenes more exciting but by doing so she left out details that would have been obvious. Such as one scene: The pet dog get wounded and they call the vet, the vet has a similar car to the killer, when the vet gets to the house the girl runs to the car and jumps in ready to go. The author doesn't mention that the girl should have the dog in her arms, and if she didn't have the dog why's she getting into the car with the vet when the dogs in the house? So the author leads us to believe that the girl is getting into the car with the the killer, and that wasn't the case. Other than that I really enjoyed it and will be eagerly awaiting book number 2

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### **Harley Brooks says**

4.5 stars. Loved this book. McDonell hooked me on page one and I couldn't put it down. I know everyone says that, but I'm a writer too, so passing on valuable writing time to finish another person's book is huge. This is the first in a new series. Nick Sayler is a character you want to strangle one second and make love to the next. Not a romance novel by any means, but enough romantic elements to hold my interest. I could not figure the plot out, which earns another point, and when the twist came, McDonell did a great job of creating the urgency within me as a reader, to want to push Sayler to move faster (strangle part). My only issue is that I got confused at the pivotal point near the end and couldn't quite grasp the possibility that this could really happen. I had to read it twice. Sounds vague, but I don't want to give any spoilers. This book is really good; the writing well done, and I highly recommend. Thanks McDonell and hurry up with book two!

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### **Beth deAcosta says**

#### **Slow read.....**

Started out ok but each page got longer and harder to finish.....stopped at 30% and that's it folks. NEXT BOOK!!!!

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### **Bob says**

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. Having said that though I am a die hard fan of the "damaged P.I." genre. The only P.I. books I read that don't involve a damaged protagonist are Robert B. Parker / Ace Atkins' "Spenser" novels. I have read Andrew Vachss's "Burke," David Levien's "Frank Behr," Micheal Harvey's "Michael Kelly," and Ken Bruen's "Jack Taylor." All except Burke are ex cops and all have experienced a tragedy which guides them along the way. And all of these characters have "friends" who are a bit shady or are straight up criminals that help them solve cases.

Add Nick Sayler to the group (Hello Nick!!). Nick was never a cop but he is a vet and he has a nagging leg injury and he likes to drink. He also has a tragedy in his past where the love of his life (the wife of a guy he was hired to protect) was murdered. So he has baggage.

yada yada yada.....you will like this book.

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### **Darcia Helle says**

Bolero is a fascinating story. Unlike many suspense and thriller novels that explore the gruesome details of the murders and the pursuit of the killer, this one delves more into the psychological and emotional journey of P.I. Nick Sayler. Written in first person, we are in Nick's head with an up close and personal view of his world. We feel the conflict pulling at him and the emotional turmoil he experiences along the way. Nick is a complicated guy with a complicated past. Like most of us, he drags a lot of baggage. This is often the story's focus, and it works well. I felt a connection with Nick, whose character is slightly damaged and very likable.

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### **Kelly says**

I really enjoyed this book. This is the first book I have read by Joanie McDonell and will be adding her to my to be read list. The writing was great and so were the characters. There was great character development along with a great story line that kept you guessing. And of course I have to love Nick, the bad boy turned to good guy and that he was raised by nuns and he lives on a barge...I mean what better premise for a storyline? I am looking forward to more Nick Slayer adventures.

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### **Yeva says**

I was not in love with this book. I couldn't really get into most of the characters, and the main character is weak. Just because a detective drinks Jameson, it does not necessarily follow that he's a great detective. This sort of reminded me of Magnum PI and not in a good way. I did like the detective team of Fallon and Goode. They were the most believable of the characters. The beautiful victim who couldn't remember her name but was probably a prima donna ballerina (really?) was just too lame. Then, we found out her name was Hadley.

The ending is just trite. Nothing about this book was exciting, but there were some heart-warming scenes. Not enough though to dull the pain from the horrible transitions in the plot. And yes, this thing was plot driven without a strong cast of characters.

It was disappointing, but I would like to read more about Fallon and Goode.

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## Ken Mahieu says

I acquired "Bolero" as the result of an ad on my Kindle, and I didn't research it properly; that won't happen again. Then I got to a point in the book where I just wanted it to end yet I kept plodding through, instead of quitting and saving my time; that won't happen again. As for the story, Nick Saylor is a PI who lives on a converted barge on the Hudson River near Weehawken. He answers a phone call and commits to helping an amnesia victim who has been brutally attacked, apparently the intended third victim of a serial killer. And we have our first cliché, the amnesia victim who forgets everything, conveniently. There are several other clichés, including a hero who has a damaged leg and seems to drink too much. By the way every time he talks about getting a drink, he just doesn't refer to it as a "drink" we have to hear the brand name, Jameson (my Kindle says it was mentioned 17 times - I wonder if books have product placement fees like movies). Another cliché - Nick is pining for Julia, his one true love, dead the past ten years (note to author - guys don't pine for dead lovers for 10 years). And the amnesia victim looks like....guess who. And did I mention that Nick spent a lot of time during his troubled youth period getting straightened out by an order of nuns (and I just finished "The Other Typist" which deploys the nun cliché also). I did have a few other problems with the book. Too many characters seemed to be the world's best \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank as appropriate). They were described as just about perfect in their chosen fields, few detectable flaws if any). Not sure what they were, but they weren't interesting, they weren't characters. Secondly, the cops-PI relationship didn't seem real - it was too friendly, too confiding. Much of the dialogue flowed well, but there were scenes where it felt stilted, especially between Nick and Julia where their exchanges seemed to morph into something from a romance novel. The climax was fine and there were some interesting factoids here and there but I still can't recommend "Bolero" and I will not read the next in this series.

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## Cherie says

Joanie McDonell's BOLERO introduces tormented private detective Nick Sayler in a new modern noir series.

Written from Nick's point of view, BOLERO is very well-written. McDonell breathes life into each character she writes. My favorite character by far was Meriwether. He's such a mystery, and I feel like we've just grazed the surface of who he is. The dancer intrigued me, and every moment, I wanted to learn more about her and all the characters.

McDonell excelled not only in crafting her dialogue and characters but her descriptions. I could see the barge turned houseboat and the various places in New York and Connecticut where the story takes place. I wanted to learn as much about who the dancer was as Nick and the dancer did. The ballet and dance references really added to the story. The complex and fast-paced plot kept me guessing at every turn, and I had no clue how it would end until the very end.

I would recommend BOLERO by Joanie McDonell to readers who like complex mysteries with a noir feel. I can't wait to read more Nick Sayler novels!

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## **Maddy says**

PROTAGONIST: Nick Saylor, PI

SETTING: NY/NJ/Connecticut

SERIES: Debut

RATING: 3.5

WHY: A woman with amnesia who has been attacked and had a "44" carved into her back has PI Nick Saylor's card in her pocket, which leads to the hospital calling him for help. Although he doesn't know her, he can't resist helping her. She reminds him of the woman he loved who was killed 10 years earlier. Nick lives on a barge with a savant named Meriwether and an elderly doctor who are his "team", along with NYPD detective Tom Fallon. The plot is good but suffers from the inclusion of some stupid and implausible actions. The strength of the book is in the characterization. The ending was less than satisfactory. Despite the first book flaws, the author shows great promise.

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## **Bruce McNair says**

Nick Saylor is a private investigator who takes on the case of a Jane Doe, a beautiful woman who has lost her memory and is about to be committed to a notorious psychiatric facility. Nick takes her to his home on a barge on the Jersey side of the Hudson River. That night an intruder breaks into the barge and confronts one of the Nick's closest friends. From there the action builds as Nick, his friends and the police struggle to identify both the woman and her attackers.

I found this to be a well-crafted story with believable characters, including his friends, the savant Albert Meriwether, the wealthy former doctor Edward Sloane, and Nick's absent girlfriend, Rue, whose promised return keeps him from straying with his beautiful client. Then there are the usual hard-nosed NYPD detectives, Tom Fallon and Linda Goode, who initially try to bring Nick and his client in for questioning but eventually provide cover and assistance.

From my perspective, there were a few minor imperfections, e.g. the British Royal family have corgis not spaniels and "loo" is common in the English speaking world outside North America. Also as the Khyber Pass is between Pakistan and Afghanistan, I find it a little strange that Indians would frequent a restaurant with such a name, especially as the real Khyber Pass restaurant in New York appears to be an Afghan restaurant. I thought it a little unusual to almost completely hide the identity of the perpetrators and their motives until the very end, but this did not detract from my enjoyment of the story. In fact, I was so attracted to this story that I finished this book in 3 sittings. This is a great start to a promising new series and career. I highly recommend this book to lovers of both crime/mystery and thrillers.

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## **Stephen Campbell says**

Ms. McDonnell does a wonderful job of creating interesting characters that I, as a reader, wanted to learn more about as the story progressed. The protagonist, Nick Saylor is an interesting and damaged man but he's just the tip of the iceberg in what I hope is the start of a long series. As every Spenser needs his Hawk, Nick Saylor has his Albert Meriwether, who is nearly as interesting a character as Nick himself.

I find myself recommending about one out of twenty books that I read - this is one that I immediately recommended to friends after finishing.

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## **Josh says**

*“Even cut and bruised and bleeding, her kind of beauty opens doors everywhere.”*

In BOLERO, the damsel isn't driven to the private dick, rather a late night call by a concerned doctor issues PI Nick Sayler with an attractive case surrounding a mysterious and beautiful ballerina who has lost everything (material and memory) except the PI's calling card. The victim of an assault has left the ballerina bruised and bloodied – the exact same way Sayler forges his friendships. In a nice bit of early symmetry this quickly establishes the PI as a man built on good fortune and friendships born from violence (generally as their saviour). There's a doctor, Sloane, and an assistant in Meriwether who form part of a faithful inner circle aiding Sayler in his endeavours, coupled by Fallen and Goode – a pair of determined cops who are willing to go outside the law and bring the perpetrator to justice.

BOLERO is a sequence of mysteries, first surrounding the damaged ballerina's identity, second a murder, third, an inscription left of the body of an assault victim with potential linkages to other crimes. For Sayler, the case becomes more personal as the ballerina's memory slowly returns along with her personality and care for her saviour. It creates an interesting dynamic when her relationship status, circle of friendship, and professional situation exposed.

The damp, constant rainy, wet and grey setting complements the theme of BOLERO. I particularly liked the depiction of the ballerina in constant light as a contrast to the backdrop to really add a feel of warm loveliness otherwise missing in the dangerous world.

I would love to read more of Nick Sayler's growing pains and journey from displaced child to determined private eye. Author Joanie McDonell paints a vivid yet slightly skewed picture of Sayler's past that demands attention. While not a new coming of age/origin concept, the Sayler in the now is unique, entertaining and worthy of further exploration. This PI is one with a lot of potential.

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## **Linda Eckert says**

### **Advice for future thrillers**

Too many “He said,” and “She said.” Read some Ernest Hemingway books to improve your dialogs. Ending is too happy. You have good potential.

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## **Heidi says**

### **A new twist on a tried and true plot line**

Great protagonist perspective and motivations. A true motley supporting cast. Someone for everyone to like.

New unexpected twists in a surprising story line of a tried plot line. I'm ready for the next Nick Sayler fiasco....

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