



Three Little Words

Susan Mallery

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Can first love turn into the real deal in a sizzling new Fool's Gold story from *New York Times* bestselling author Susan Mallery?

Isabel Beebe thinks she's cursed in the romance department. Her teenage crush, Ford Hendrix, ignored all her letters. Her husband left her for another...man. So Isabel has come home to dust off her passion for fashion and run the family bridal shop until her parents are ready to sell it. Then she'll pursue her *real* dreams. At least, that's the plan, until sexy, charming Ford returns and leaves her feeling fourteen all over again....

Seeing Isabel all grown up hits bodyguard trainer Ford like a sucker punch. Back when heartbreak made him join the military, her sweet letters kept him sane. Now he can't take his eyes—or his lips—off her. The man who gave up on love has a reason to stay in Fool's Gold forever—if three little words can convince Isabel to do the same....

Three Little Words Details

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From Reader Review Three Little Words for online ebook

Janis says

I loved how Ford and Isabel pretended to be in Love while Falling in love for real. Also I enjoyed the story of Kent Hendrix and Consuelo Ly falling for each other too. I just wish their mom would let the boys do the romance thing on their own. Denise Hendrix needs a book of her own. I can't wait to read about Taryn and the Football players.

Wendy Marcus says

Absolutely LOVED it!

Anna's Herding Cats says

Three Little Words was just what I needed this week. Something that would lift my spirits. That was sweet and heartwarming. That would make me smile and laugh a bit (or really quite a lot) and had some sexy going on. And it definitely gave me all of that. From a fun romantic set up to the crazy town it was a great escape that really made me want to be a part of this little community and group of friends.

I'm gonna go all girly and *squee* but it's a case of "fake mates" that have known each other for nearly ever and I freaking LOVE that set up. Isabel had a mad crush on Ford when she was 14 and for nearly a decade wrote letters to him while he was deployed. And...now they're both back in Fool's Gold and things have gotten a little more...complicated since Ford, in a moment of sheer panic, told his match making mama the two were dating. Now to convince Isabel to go along with it. Gotta love the jams men can get themselves into. LOL

I loved watching Ford and Isabel. There's a fun, sweet, comfortable quality to their time together. They tease each other mercilessly but you can tell even though they're pretending to be a couple they really care for the other and are quickly becoming real friends and much more than they'd planned. They're both dealing with personal struggles and I loved that they were there for and watched out for each other. The steamy bits when things moved along were pretty good too. Sexy and sweet. It was a great combo. It was just really fun watching them fall in love and seeing how their goals changed as they got to know each other better.

The small community was a great backdrop for the story. This town loves to celebrate. Everything. They have festivals and parties and are involved in each others lives and I love that. I did have a little trouble keeping some of Isabel's girlfriends straight (since I hadn't read the previous books) but I loved the friendship and teasing and would have loved to be part of their close and eclectic group.

I really had a great time with Three Little Words. The romance, the friendships, the writing. It's fun, it's sweet, it got me a little teary eyed and it made me laugh and, okay, yes, snort a time or two. And I just loved it. It's small town romance at it's best and one not to miss out on.

Reviewed for herding cats & burning soup

Lexy says

Three little words by Susan Mallory was a cute book even though it was number 12 in a series I still think it was cute and I would like to read more by her.

Dalimar says

Me gusta ésta serie,aún cuando continúo leyéndola de forma desordenada. Lo cierto es que éste ha sido el más simple de los que he leído, pero me mantuvo con una sonrisa durante toda la lectura.

Quizás le faltara un poco de romance,pero es super tierno. La historia paralela a la principal,fue genial. Ame mucho a Consuelo y me gustó que ela fuera la diferente y la de la carga emocional más pesada.

Sara says

Absolutely LOVED Ford & Isabel. Their characters had great chemistry, and all the laughs between them made the whole book fly by.

I wasn't a huge fan of Kent and Consuelo's story. Maybe because I wasn't a big fan of Consuelo's character or maybe it had a little something to do with the fact that I was expecting something to happen between Consuelo & Angel. I could've sworn that the last book hinted at it, but I guess I was wrong.

Either way, it made me want to go back & figure out the books in this series. There have been so many books so far that i can barely remember which ones I read.

Susan says

I have been looking forward to Ford's story and it was definitely worth the wait. Ford has returned to Fool's Gold to run his security business with his friends. After ten years in the military it is a bit of an adjustment. One of the changes he has encountered is his ex-fiancee's little sister - who isn't so little anymore. Isabel used to write to him when he was deployed and even though he never wrote back those letters had been important to him. If anyone can make him believe he can love it's Isabel.

I loved Isabel. In spite of the troubles she has had she is basically an upbeat person.

Her husband left her for another man. Their marriage hadn't been all that great, but she hadn't seen that one coming. It has left her with some real hangups when it comes to intimacy.

Her teenage crush on Ford resulted in her writing letters to him for many years, even though he never wrote back. Those letters ended up being like a diary, and now that she's an adult and living in the same town with him, she is a bit embarrassed about them. Seeing him again brings back those feelings. When he asks her to help him out by being his fake girlfriend she can't say no. I loved the way that they started out as friends. She teases him about his attitude that it's his patriotic duty to make sure women are happy with him even though

he will never settle down. She can also see past the charming, sexy surface to the pain that he still feels from some of the things he saw in the service. She has a great way of subtly coming to his rescue when situations, especially with his family, start to overwhelm him. I loved the way that their fake relationship started to become real, even though neither one would admit it. Isabel is able to trust Ford with the whole story of her marriage. That opens the door to a new closeness between them. Eventually Isabel has to admit to herself that she wants it to be real.

She is back in Fool's Gold to help out her parents who are on an around the world cruise. She is running the family bridal shop until they get back and put it up for sale. Her plans are to leave Fool's Gold and start a new fashion business with a friend in New York. The more time she spends doing this, the more she enjoys it. Isabel is very good at helping brides find just the right dress and also dealing with the crises that come with the job. She has various ideas on things to do to improve the stores, but reminds herself that she is leaving. I loved seeing the way that her goals changed.

Isabel has been reconnecting with old friends and making new ones. I love her relationships with those friends. They all support each other and help out wherever needed. I really enjoyed the conversations they had, especially about relationships. They are also there for Isabel when she hits a rocky spot with Ford.

Ford is a really nice guy at heart. He's a badass former SEAL and a bodyguard trainer now, but underneath he's sweet. Being back home has put him too close to his family at times. His mother is determined to get him married, to the point where she took applications for the "job" at one of the festivals. Ford feels that he's a bad bet relationship wise because he has never been able to commit to any woman for very long. He doesn't want to hurt his mother's feelings by telling her that, so he talks Isabel into being his fake girlfriend.

Ford left Fool's Gold when his fiancée (Isabel's older sister) broke off their engagement. He has spent the next ten years as a SEAL and avoiding coming home whenever possible. He remembers Isabel as Maeve's little sister and is stunned when he gets back home to see her all grown up. Even though he never answered Isabel's letters getting them is all that kept him grounded during some of his roughest times. Getting her to pose as his fake girlfriend has another benefit. He can try to get Isabel in bed with him. He really puts some effort into showing her his charming sexy persona and is a little put out when she just laughs at him. I loved the way that his boyfriend act starts to become more than just acting though he keeps insisting that's all it is. I really enjoyed his patience with Isabel when he found out what a number her ex-husband had done on her view of herself as a woman. Besides the superhot chemistry between them, Ford really takes to being her "boyfriend". I loved all the nice little things he does for her. I also enjoyed his whining about the estate she dragged him to and the way he ended up enjoying it after all. He also gets to know her well enough that he can see when something is troubling her and tries to fix it. I loved his panic when she was crying about her New York plans and how he called in reinforcements.

Most of the time Ford is really well adjusted at being back in civilian life. Sometimes, though, in social situations he starts to feel overwhelmed by everything going on around him. He finds that being around Isabel still grounds him. She notices when he starts to get tense and has a way of distracting him or the people around him until he gets himself back together.

I loved seeing Ford's relationships with his coworkers. His level of competition with Angel is so much fun to watch, especially when Consuelo threatens to hurt them both. He is also rebuilding his relationships with his brothers in the typically non-emotional way they do. I also enjoyed the way he and his former best friend, who married his ex-fiancée, cleared the air between them. He then helped Leonard set up a workout plan because Leonard wanted to look better for his wife (a little jealousy of Ford going on there). I loved the way that Leonard returned the favor by pointing out to Ford just what he really felt about Isabel, because Ford

was just too dense to see it.

There is also a great secondary romance between Ford's coworker Consuelo and his brother Kent. Consuelo had trouble believing that Kent was interested in her. In her view she is nowhere near good enough for him because of her lack of education and the things she has had to do for her job. Kent thinks that he's way too boring for someone as capable and fascinating as Consuelo is. She is really interested in him but has no idea how to relate to him, and frequently runs away as soon as things start to go well between them. I loved the way that they finally started to communicate with each other and realized that they wanted to be together.

Donna says

I had a really difficult time getting over the "eww" or "ick" factor of: The hero was the 1st lover to the heroine's older sister, now 14 years later he's now sleeping with the younger sister (the heroine). I just thought that was gross. Hence, the "ick" factor.

Once I pushed that to the back of my mind, the story wasn't that bad.

However, I'm not planning on reading anymore of the "Fool's Gold" books. It's a small town. And while it can't be classified as "inbreeding", too many people have slept with so and so, or they were married to so and so and now this person is sleeping with them and it's just a tangled up, jumbled mess. I don't like books like this. To me, it's disgusting and I certainly don't want to waste my time reading about it.

Too many books today think of this as "romance". No one is ever a virgin, they've had kids with someone else, been divorced, or slept around with different people and now are ready to settle down. The writers may think this is how the world is today (and it is to some extent), but there are still people out there with morals and I don't think they want to read about this kind of stuff anymore than I do. Also, I think the authors who write these books are also encouraging this kind of behavior because the readers just accept that this is the way the world is today so it's alright to behave this way.

I'm not a fan of Christian romance novels either. I just like romance novels and have been reading them a long time. However, the tone of the books have changed so much over the past few years making it seem like it's no big deal to have slept around as long as you used a condom.

I'd really like to see the writers and publishers go back to a more wholesome, romantic style of writing. To me, romance is not going on a first date and then sleeping with them. They may think that's how society leans, but I know there has to be more of us out there who aren't that way.

Joana says

4.5 stars

14 years old Isabel had a huge crush on Ford Hendrix. The thing is, he was her older sister fiance. When their engagement was and he joined the army, Isabel was crushed but devoted herself to write him letters.

In the course of 10 years, she wrote to him, poured her feeling and what she was experiencing. Since he never wrote back, it worked for her like a diary, where she shared all her fears and dreams.

She finally decided to stop writing him and move on with her life.

A few years later, and recently divorced, Isabel is back to her hometown, to run her grandma's bridal shop,

until her parents are prepare to sell it. So her dreams to pursue fashion and open her own shop in NY are on hold.

What she didn't expect was to Ford to also return home and start his own security business. And of course she wasn't expect for the reaction she still have to him. He is dark, mysterious and oh so cocky,aha.

"You're saying women want you?"

"All the time."

"How that must annoy you."

"I'm used to it. Mostly I consider taking care of them my patriotic duty." She felt her mouth drop open.

"Your duty?"

"Patriotic duty. It would be un-American to leave a woman in need."

But the thing she doesn't know, is that he read every single letter she wrote.

He doubted she knew what her letters had meant to him. How her words had kept him grounded.

What now starts has a friendship can develop to so much more. Can Ford really commit with a woman and can Isabel see her future outside NY?

When I started this book I had no idea it was part of a series and actually the 12th book in it.

It still works as a standalone , I enjoyed this story immensely. It was just what I was looking for, a fun and light read, with great MC and a wonderful and heartwarming romance.

Of course, there where parts regarding other characters, that I could gather that they had already a book of their own but that just made me curious to check out the rest of the series.

One of the things I loved about this, not just that first unrequited love (the letters were great) but how they start fresh several years later. Id didn't felt rushed, it was slow building, with dates, with conversations and the attraction between them.

And did I said the bantering? This 2 together are just hilarious, I stop counting the times they made me chuckle.

"No, that's not all. You can't undress me."

"Is this an Amish thing?"

"Amish? What do the Amish have to do with anything?"

"I don't know. Why can't I undress you?"

"What do you know about SPANX?"

"You want me to spank you?"

See? Hahaha, priceless!

If you're looking for a fun and light read, put it on your TBR list. It's just wonderful! *sigh

For this one and more reviews go to:
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**egalley kindly provided via netgalley in exchange of an honest review

Angela says

I say this each time, but this might be my all time favorite of this series!! I laughed so many times during this story, but there were just as many Awwwww moments, too. Sigh. This series gets better with each book. Amazing!

Tanya says

CALL THE FOOL'S GOLD FIRE DEPARTMENT! THE PAGES WERE ON FIRE FOR THIS ONE!!!!
The latest installment of Susan Mallery's Fool's Gold series does not disappoint. Isabel finds herself back home in Fool's Gold, but she insists it's only temporary. The boy she had loved at age fourteen from afar, Ford, has come home too, after a long stint in the military. Their friendship is endearing. Their paths are different but they really care about each other. Ford needs to get his meddling -in a good way- mother off of his back and enlists the help of Isabel. But will this be her last chance at real happiness? And how does Ford, who has never been in love REALLY feel? This story, which is quickly becoming my second favorite (last summer's All Summer Long is my all time favorite FG novel), has everything a good romance needs. The couple is lovable, the sex is steamy, and the girlfriends are a riot! Such a great read. Now I have to wait until September for Christmas on 4th Street!

Rachel says

3.5/4 stars!

When Isabel was 14 years old, she fell madly in love with her older sister's fiancé, Ford. When Maeve and Ford's too-young romance implodes because Maeve fell in love with his best friend, Ford leaves their small-town and joins the military. He becomes a SEAL and serves in the army for 14 years, leaving behind broken hearted Isabel. Isabel starts writing Ford letters, declaring her love for him, telling him about herself and her life and urging him to stay safe. Ford never responds, though. Isabel continues on with her life - she goes to school, moves to NYC and gets married. When her marriage ends, leaving Isabel broken hearted yet again, she returns to her hometown to house sit for her parents and regroup.

Ford has also recently moved back home, and unbeknownst to Isabel has been renting the apartment above her parents' garage. The two reconnect and find they have an easy friendship. When Ford gets her involved in a scheme to avoid his mother's nagging, the two begin spending a lot of time together. Is it possible that Isabel's feelings for Ford have survived over the past 14 years? Can Ford overcome his own demons and explore his true feelings for Isabel?

This is, I think, the 13th book in this series, but the first one that I have read. It could definitely be read as a stand-alone. I knew that I was missing some background about the other characters, but I was still able to fully enjoy this story about Ford and Isabel.

I really enjoyed this book. It was a sweet, nice, easy love story. Not much angst, not a lot of drama. Yes, it was a bit formulaic and predictable, but if you go into the book expecting that, you won't be disappointed. One issue that I have, and it's with a lot of books in this genre, is that the ending seemed a bit rushed. Maybe it's just me (probably is).

Overall, I really enjoyed this book and I would definitely check out more books by this author.

*This book was provided through the publisher and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Heather says

This might have been my favorite Fool's Gold story to date. Ford and Isabel have a history. Isabel has loved him from afar for years, when he left town after a broken engagement. She writes him letters – about life, love, and all the good and bad of her growing years. Now it's years later, and they're both back in town. She's licking her wounds, and he's found success and (unwanted) attention as the town's hero.

Ford is a fun character. Despite his years in the military (or perhaps because of them) he doesn't take much seriously, and he's very much at ease with her. I loved his relationships with the other characters (like Angel).

Isabel is a character dealing with a lot of changes, and broken relationships. The people she has trusted have broken that trust, and broke her spirit a bit. She's confused – about her feelings for Ford, about her personal and professional future – and she is learning to be both an individual and part of a strong community (particularly the female community).

I LOVED Isabel and Ford's romance. The backstory of the letters was adorable, and their chemistry is palpable. It might have started out as a way to kill time and have fun, but neither of them realize how quickly stronger emotions have developed – on both sides of their bargain.

I really enjoyed this story, and I can't wait to see what's next for the rest of the cast of characters she's developing.

Sandy says

I'm surprised I didn't find out about Susan Mallory sooner because her books are addicting. I love books that connect to each other and have characters from the other books appear. This could be made into a movie and I would watch it because it is fun and has a bit of sexy to it.

Isabel Carlisle and Ford Hendrix are not what I had expected honestly. I would have thought that Isabel would hate her sister for hurting Ford and well Ford would hate her sister as well for hurting him. From how I read my books, that's how the story line goes but this one is different. They both move on and didn't stay in

the past. The letters that Isabel sent to Ford when he was in the military kept him feeling like a human. When he comes back to Fool's Gold, Isabel doesn't seem to know how to start talking to him due to her letters and he never replying back.

I love the interactions/conversation that the two of them had throughout the book. Even better was the fact that Ford move into the place above her house/apt. Their chemistry was hot and there were some humor in there that I enjoyed. The side characters, Kent (Ford's brother) and Consuelo (a friend of Ford from the military) was sweet! I wished they had their own book but that's okay I enjoyed their story too.

Becky says

Review also on my blog.

3 1/2 stars.

I always want to like Susan Mallery's Fool's Gold books more than I actually do. Don't get me wrong—the setting is charming, the small-town feel is idyllic, and the characters are fun and quirky. They're feel-good books, to be sure. I have enjoyed much about these books—obviously, because I keep coming back for more. Lately, though, their “cookie cutter” feel is beginning to overpower their overall charm for me.

They start out with two characters—our hero and heroine—who aren't in/don't want to be in/never can be in a true relationship. In *Three Little Words*, it's Ford Hendrix and Isabel Beebe. Ford, recently out of the military, has never been in love and therefore assumes he never can be. Isabel is fresh from a divorce, and only in town temporarily—she's getting the family bridal boutique ready to be sold and then she's back off to NYC where she'll begin her own business with a designer friend.

Next our hero and heroine start some sort of relationship that for whatever reason isn't a “real” one. In this case, Ford's mother is anxious to marry off her last two single children—Ford and his divorced brother Kent—and Ford and Isabel agree to have a fake relationship to keep her off of Ford's back.

The hero and heroine, of course, always know the deal—they will not/cannot fall in love...but of course they do. In *Fool's Gold*, it's almost always the heroine who realizes it first, but she knows that she can never, ever tell the hero. Because then the gig would be up. (It's usually at this point that the heroine loses some of her appeal for me. Her inner monologue tends to turn a bit maudlin.)

But he finds out, and...leaves. The heroine is sad, so all the women of the town (okay, not all of them but it feels pretty darn close) converge on her house with frosty alcoholic beverages and yummy snacks. They drink together and commiserate with the heroine's plight.

Someone/something/the entire town helps the hero see the error of his ways. He rushes back to her, declares his love, and FINIS! story over.

In between each of these steps, though, we also see a huge amount of set-up for future books. We're practically hit over the head with future love possibilities galore, and it really begins to feel like they detract from the time spent on the current story. Oh, and there's always an older town resident or two running in and out of scenes, doing things that are vaguely disturbing: octogenarians drooling over twenty- and thirty-something guys and pinching their butts, mothers setting up a booth at a town festival to get applicants for their sons' hands in marriage, mayors who freely admit to knowing everything and blithely encouraging the

rest of the townspeople to just accept it....

Kind of scary.

Still, this installment had more going for it than some—mainly Ford and Isabel and their backstory. Once upon a time—fourteen years ago—Ford was engaged to Isabel's older sister. Maeve called off the wedding at the last minute, and Isabel, who had harbored a crush on Ford forever, was devastated. She wanted to make everything better for him. When Ford left town to join the Navy days later, she began writing him letters. She wrote letters to him for ten years, pouring out her heart to him in each and every one.

I know I'm only fourteen, but I love you. I'll love you forever and I'll write you every day. Or at least once a week.

Ford never responds, and finally when Isabel believes her current boyfriend is going to propose, she stops writing.

The letters are a really sweet touch. There're excerpts of some of them scattered throughout the book, and Ford uses the "I'll love you forever" comment to tease Isabel more than once.

Ford comes off as over-the-top confident of himself and his abilities, and though some reviews I read found this to be annoying, this was one of my favorite things about him. I loved his snarky comments. He totally didn't take himself at all seriously, and I found his cockiness endearing. What can I say? He reminded me of Han Solo, one of my all-time favorite movie heroes. I'm a sucker for the confident ones with a touch of bad boy.

For the most part the childhood crush-all grown up troupe was nicely done here. With a little less set-up for future novels and a little more originality in the overall plot arc, this would definitely have gotten a higher rating. It's a sweet, feel-good story. If you are a die hard Fool's Gold fan, you'll like it. If you like sweet contemporaries, it'll do.

(One thing that really bothered me, though--Isabel said several times that "Nothing ever happens in Fool's Gold" when Ford chastised her for leaving her door open. Hello? Wasn't a little girl kidnapped by a murdering psychopath two books ago? And didn't Ford take the culprit down? Why did no one else seem to recall this?)

In a nutshell: Though this is definitely the strongest of the current trilogy, it still falls prey to the too-predictable Fool's Gold formula. The charismatic hero and the adorable-ness of Isabel's letters bumped it up to a 3 ½ star rating.

I received a copy in exchange for an honest review.
