



Too Hot to Handle

Victoria Dahl

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This good girl's going bad.

Merry Kade has always been the good girl. The best friend. The one who patiently waits for the guy to notice her. Well, no more. Merry has just scored her dream job, and it's time for her life to change. As the new curator of a museum in Wyoming, she'll supervise a lot of restoration work. Luckily she's found the perfect contractor for the job.

Shane Harcourt can't believe that someone wants to turn a beat-up ghost town into a museum attraction. After all, the last thing he needs is the site of his dream ranch turning into a tourist trap. He'll work on the project, if only to hasten its failure; until the beautiful, quirky woman in charge starts to change his mind.

For the first time ever, Merry has a gorgeous stud hot on her heels. But can she trust this strong, silent man, even if he is a force of nature in bed? When Shane's ulterior motives come out, he'll need to prove to Merry that a love like theirs may be too hot to handle, but it's impossible to resist.

Too Hot to Handle Details

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Author : Victoria Dahl

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From Reader Review Too Hot to Handle for online ebook

Cocktails and Books says

Great title, great plot, but the book didn't deliver. Victoria Dahl seemed to have all the right elements for an excellent book but the book title promised much more than the book contents contained.

The heroine, Merry, was portrayed as a woman that has thus far failed to do anything meaningful with her life. She has bounced around from job to job and lived with various relatives and now with a friend in a new location with a new job. Merry has no romantic attachments and most men relegate her to the friend category. She is determined to prove her worth with the new job. I was surprised that the heroine wasn't the usual strong, super efficient career woman. I looked forward to seeing the plot progress, but the author jumped into so many other issues that Merry's issues got lost in the shuffle. The reader is bombarded with issues of abandonment in Merry's childhood, her mother's decision to forbid her to move back in, a job that is not what it seems, and family members that resent her intrusion into their lives.

The main male character, Shane, has an equally rushed and chaotic descriptive pattern. Shane is the strong, hunky next door neighbor. His dad abandoned the family at age 10, his brother ran away, his mom lives in a distorted reality, and he's involved in a lawsuit to settle his grandfather's estate. It was difficult to form an attachment to Shane because the author brings up several of the issues throughout the book. You can't begin to really get insight into his character without these multiple issues intruding.

Eventually Merry and Shane make love after an earlier failed attempt. That was a bright spot but even then the author makes a point of letting the reader know that the event lasted less than an hour. That was confusing because earlier the author described Shane as being so overcome and exhausted as a result of his orgasm that he went to sleep. How long could he have slept if Merry arrives back home in less than an hour? How great was the connection if Merry jumps right up and runs home after supposedly being so satisfied? I was confused and frankly disappointed that the author took the time to point out that Merry hadn't had sex for over 2 years and Shane infrequently had sex only to find out that it was a short wham-bam-thank-you-ma'am. As a result I felt disconnected from the storyline again.

Merry learns that Shane is the grandson that is holding up progress on her job, confronts her cousin at a party, and is told that her mother is in a lesbian relationship with her former teacher. Poor Merry should she be concerned about her cousin's behavior, betrayal by Shane, her job, or her mother's lesbian relationship? She receives a message that Shane signs away his rights to 2 million dollars because of her and finds his dead father's remains after 20 years on the property of the proposed museum. She seeks Shane out, finds him at the sight of his father's demise, and they make peace. In the epilogue they finally say they love each other. The end?????

There were simply too many different storylines happening in this book. There were multiple events that I didn't add. Had I tried to write all the different branches from this story this review would have been endless. The additional information detracts from the main story and no resolution is really given to any of them. Characters were in the story but their entrance was apparently for no reason because their relevance was tangential and didn't add to the story at all.

I wish I could say I enjoyed the book, but I didn't. I found the characters irritating, and I think it's because I simply had no idea who these people were. I am grateful for the end and had the author not hastily put an epilogue to announce they were in love one would never have guessed.

Reviewed by Michelle for Cocktails and Books

Angela Carr (Under the Covers Book Blog) says

Review also posted at

"Ms. Dahl delivered another romantic and sexy cowboy novel." ~Under The Covers

Too Hot To Handle is the second installment for Victoria Dahl's Jackson Series. Just like Too Close to Touch, Ms. Dahl delivered another romantic and sexy cowboy novel.

Merry Kade finds her self staying at her best friend Grace's practically abandoned apartment since she's been staying with her man, Cole. Taking a chance to be close to her friend, she takes a job to be a town curator and becomes passionate for it. Unfortunately, one thing that's holding her back to success is Shane. Of course, she doesn't know that Shane has a hold on her project legally and financially. Shane also happens to be Cole's good friend and living in the same building as Merry's apartment.

I love Merry and Shane's story, similar to Grace and Cole, it has the boy/girl next door feel to it. Well, they all do live just next door to each other , but that's besides the point. They both have that persona anyone can just get along with. Merry is a t-shirt and jeans kind of girl , and with her, there are no pretenses. Any girl that can regrow virginity after years of celibacy and knows that being a cowboy is a job and knows it has nothing to do with the boots or hat is my kind of girl. And Shane, well, he's a bit more complicated. Though he has a bit of emotional past, he is still a very simple man. He is reserved but funny and sexy when he wants to be.

This book had steamy scenes that had me fanning myself, laugh out loud , and it had scenes that definitely made me teary eyed. Overall this book is a light happy read that I recommended to anyone who is in the mood for a feel good story.

*ARC provided by NetGalley

Bekah says

In Too Hot to Handle, we meet Merry Kade who doesn't really have any roots, but it desperately looking for a place to call her own. She's currently living on her best friend's couch and working on restoring a ghost town into a thriving tourist's attraction. However she soon finds her dreams of settling down and finally proving herself impeded by an incredibly hot cowboy and a pending lawsuit.

Shane Harcourt is our hunky cowboy who comes to light up Merry's very celibate life. Shane makes it clear he's good for any girl on a temporary lease, but you can't tie him down long-term. It's what's in his blood, passed down from his grandfather to his father to his brother. But then he meets Merry she blows him away when he's not looking. With Merry infiltrating into his life, Shane finds himself questioning everything he's

believed about his family and himself. He turns into a completely lovable hero who makes an incredible grand gesture.

Victoria Dahl delivers with the super steam in Too Hot to Handle, but I found the story a little empty, with very little depth. I didn't get sucked into the town or the characters all that much, but I definitely will still be checking out her books in the future. My favorite series of hers is: Talk Me Down, Start Me Up, and Lead Me On

Find my reviews at page 317.

Jess says

Review posted: Happily Ever After - Reads

Blog rating: B-

Merry "Slacker", as her family calls her, has never held a job for long, never had her own place to live, and she's trying to find her passion. She knows she's found it in the ghost town of Providence, a town that needs a curator to restore the rustic town and turn it into a tourist destination. The funds to cover this project were left by, Gideon Bishop in his will, but the man's grandson is fighting the will, claiming the money should be his along with the land he was left. Merry wants desperately for this job to work so she hires Shane to start the renovations not knowing what Shane's true connection to Providence is.

Shane is the grandson that's tying the restoration progress up in court. He's angry with his grandfather for leaving the money to the town and sees it as one last middle finger to Shane. Needless to say, they didn't have the best relationship when Shane was younger. Shane jumps at the chance to work with Merry, seeing it initially as a way to get the lay of the land and see what he might be up against as far as the town's restoration project goes. What he didn't expect was Merry herself and how her positive attitude and overall sunny outlook would impact his life.

I enjoyed Merry so much, she stole the entire show. She's a little bit quirky, nerdy, shy, spazzy, lovable and even with a childhood that had her and her mom living through some very lean and difficult times, she still always chooses to see the good side in everything. I loved that she doesn't really have a filter, if she thinks it, she usually says it. She's just a fun, extremely likable heroine and she wants to be seen as sexy. She's always been a guy's best friend. The girl he talks to about the girl he really wants to be with. She's tired of being the best buddy, so when Shane starts to treat her like she is sexy and desirable, she can't quite believe it's happening, she's not sure if it's real but decides to just go with it for as long as it lasts. I loved everything about Merry, from her general attitude about life, her tendencies to geek out over things like Firefly and Wonder Woman to her ability to really tell someone off if they need to be told off. I loved her.

Shane was a little harder to get. He's likable enough, but from the start, I didn't like that he was lying to Merry. I loved her so much and didn't want to see her get hurt but the writings on the wall early on that Shane is going to cause her heartache, not only with their personal relationship but because of his ties to this job that she loves with her whole heart. They do have great banter together and that was fun to see. Also fun is seeing Merry let herself enjoy sex with Shane. She's a bit shy and a little inexperienced and she lets herself be vulnerable with Shane, sharing fantasies and taking charge more so than she ever has before. Their romance seemed to go from 0 to 60 rather quickly however, I almost felt like I missed a chapter or a few

pages because one second they're in a bar, the next they're heading home having sex. But that abruptness aside, I did enjoy their relationship, I think I just needed a little more romance between them.

I wasn't a big fan of the first book in this series that featured Grace and Cole, but I really like Grace as Merry's best friend. She was so fiercely protective of Merry and only wanted her to succeed and be happy, I completely enjoyed Grace's role in this story.

I thought this was nice, fun read and would recommend the book for people to get to know Merry – she's so delightful! I didn't necessarily like the lie Shane ran with early on, he had plenty of chances to come clean (and I wish he would have done that sooner), but it added just a touch of angst at the end and ultimately I just wanted Merry to be happy, to find her home and her happy ending and she gets both.

Jenn Scranton says

This is one of those stories that you just have to laugh!! I have heard a lot about the author, Victoria Dahl, and I gotta say, the woman has talent! That being said... I hated the story.

Why the 3 stars, you ask? Because the dialog was funny as hell!!!

The plot line had no hope. It was dumb. It started dumb and it ended dumb. There was no saving that one. But what was funny was that I actually didn't mind because I looked forward to reading the quick wit!

Dahl really wrote a strong character with Merry and boy was that refreshing. The girl could really hold her own! Her sarcasm and sunny disposition was addictive and contagious!

I wouldn't recommend this particular book by any means, but I would definitely like to discover a new story with Ms. Dahl :)

ARC provided by NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Lexxie (un)Conventional Bookworms says

This review was originally posted on (un)Conventional Bookviews

I briefly got to meet Merry in Close Enough to Touch, and I was instantly curious about her. A strong woman, but one who has been put down more often than not, Merry has changed jobs many times, but she is set on making it in Jackson. Both because her best friend Grace lives there now, and because she's gotten the dream-job in restoring a ghost town just outside of Jackson. Too Hot to Handle shows a lot of the changes Merry goes through, and some of those changes are in part thanks to her neighbor, Shane.

Desty says

Judulnya agak2 menipu sih.. Shane-Merry mah ga hot2 banget, lebih hot pasangan Cole-Grace di buku #1.

Trus kerjaan Merry juga entah kenapa terkesan dipaksakan.

Yang lucu si nenek gaul Rayleen yang manggil Merry dengan nama Christmas...hehe

Sarah Eiseman says

Originally posted on Sarahsbookshelf.com:

I love series and I just finished Victoria Dahl's newest series the other day. I couldn't wait to get my hands on the second book in the series and was psyched to have some time this Easter weekend to read it. This book will probably make my top 10 for the year and it was laugh-out-loud funny.

In the previous book, Close Enough To Touch, we were introduced to Grace Barrett's friend, Merry Kade, who ends up being the heroine of this book. Merry is the embodiment of an optimist. She's always positive, very nurturing, and always has a smile on her face. This Pollyanna-exterior definitely gives off the vibe to others that she's either not serious or doesn't have all the facts, which as we learn through the course of the story, is very untrue. Merry ends up moving to be closer to Grace in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and in the process lands her dream job as the curator of a historical site called Providence. Little does she know that the site is involved in a legal dispute that basically hinders any real good she can do for the organization. Meanwhile, she meets her neighbor for the first time, a crusty carpenter named Shane. Merry, in her infinite cheerfulness, asks Shane to help her with some repairs at the site. He's not thrilled by the idea, but gives her his extra time and gets to know her better.

One of the main reasons that I enjoyed this book—and many by Dahl—is that the main characters were really honest. Merry was shy, awkward, and nerdy so often that I really felt like she was a real person. Beneath Shane's outer crusty shell was someone who actually laughed when a normal person would laugh, which I found to be so refreshing. Since I read a lot of contemporary romance, I find that some of the conversations end up being pretty serious once characters get to the bedroom. I think it's a nice change of pace to have some laughter, but also to have some real reservations, self-consciousness, and giggles.

I might actually give this book a second read soon. It's definitely worth the money and time. Dahl is a favorite author of mine and I can't wait for the next book in the series, So Tough to Tame, which will be released in October of this year. Can't wait!

Darcy says

It is hard not to like this book and that is mostly due to Merry, who is very aptly named. She has a way about looking at life, one where the glass is not only half full, but usually running over.

I did hate how Merry sees herself, as someone who can't find her niche, a woman who is not sex, but merely cute and that is on a good day. I love her friendship with Grace. Grace is good for her and seemed to call her on some things that Merry couldn't or didn't want to see for herself, plus no matter what Grace was there for

Merry.

I am torn with Shane. Part of me likes him, but the other part of me wanted to rip him a new one for his actions. From the start he knew what he was doing was wrong, but he still let himself fall for Merry. You just knew that the situation was going to blow up in his face, and actually, I sort of looked forward to it.

The fallout from what Shane hid was devastating, but the one good thing it did was allow Merry to show her inner strength. I loved seeing her rip Shane and Crystal a new one. She did it in a way that shed light on how bad their actions were and showed how bad of a person they were.

I didn't really want Merry to end up with Shane, I thought she could have done better, but Shane did win me over in the end with his actions and his find. The find was bittersweet, but it did allow him to take a look back at his life in a different light and get past the old hurts.

Christi Snow says

My Review:

There was a lot of story packed into this one book and these two characters. For that reason, there were times when the story seemed to be rambling and meandering slowly through...and getting a bit bogged down with it all.

Shane and Merry both have issues. Shane's issues date back to the men in his family which have a hard time committing. Merry's issues date back to a father who was never there and a mother who's a bit on the flighty side. But they've taken those issues and dealt with them completely differently in their lives. For Shane, he's used them as an excuse to never commit or get close. For Merry, she's used them as a further reason to embrace life and happiness. For both of them, they've left them with scars that make relationships really difficult, if not impossible.

There were times in this book when I had a hard time with both characters. Normally in romance novels, you want your H/h to be super-strong...that is NOT these two. Shane is fighting his family over the wrong things. In fact, I had a hard time understanding just why he was fighting them besides pure greed...not something you want in a hero. Merry has self-image issues. She doesn't see herself as someone who another person would want. The best part of the entire book was when she FINALLY stood up for herself. I wanted to stand up and cheer for her!

But with all of that, this is still a Victoria Dahl novel and I still enjoyed the actual reading of it. She has a humorous voice that I love in contemporary novels. I wasn't completely sold on these two characters, but there was enough good there that I still enjoyed the actual reading of the book. I liked the ghost town setting and what Merry was working to create there. It wasn't my favorite of hers, but it made for an entertaining read.

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

LaFleurBleue says

So much better in my opinion than the previous book.

The heroine in this one was the best friend of Grace from the previous, but luckily she had a totally different outlook on life, positive, sunny, full of goodwill and efforts. She was absolutely delightful, and what's more never perfect, as she had a few weird initiatives to reach her ends that ultimately backlashed but were quite funny to read about.

Her hero was more difficult to like. He started his interactions with her purely with the objective to get information out of her, without coming clean about who he was. And he never did come clean on his own. There were a few things that were too much, the pace of the story seemed just a bit too fast. However I enjoyed its reading very much and there were a few scenes by the end of the book which were really well managed, especially that when Merry explained to Shane that being sunny and laid-back did not make her a carpet for him to clean his feet on (my image, but representative of her arguments).

Cailey says

Forced upon me by Meredith with the promise of a free martini if completed, I went into this book. I was pleasantly surprised it didn't suck as much as the cover made it look like it was going to. Can we all just agree that romance covers are horrible? This book is about cowboys, ghost towns, Wyoming, and has a heroine who loves superheroes and Star Wars, there is never a pillow fight, and Merry would never wear that negligee thingy--the cover is dumb.

I liked the actual story of the book itself, even if the love scenes were a little gratuitous (but that is the nature of the genre). The plot is as follow: Merry is working to restore a ghost town in the mountains of Wyoming. However, there is a hold up with the trust for the ghost town--and that is the grandson of the man who wanted it restored. The grandson is suing for the money left in a trust for the restoration of the town, believing it rightfully his. Merry, a leap before you look type person, decides to take the initiative to hire a carpenter to begin the work, thinking if she just keeps going, it will be harder for them to take the money from the project. Turns out the carpenter she hires is none other than the infamous grandson, who initially takes the gig just to see what he can find out from the opposition, but surprisingly enough falls for Merry. When she finds out, hell breaks loose of course.

Overall a pretty decent tale, barring a few things. I liked Merry's quirkiness, and that she was a total geek. I thought that Shane (why are so many of them named Shane?) was a pretty well-rounded character as well, especially having a troubled background, conflicting thoughts, etc. If this book had had a different cover, I would not have been embarrassed to read it, since it is pretty much chick-lit I like, with extra sex scenes.

Rose says

Initial reaction: Whoa. Okay, I didn't expect this book to be as good as it was, what with a very clumsy heroine (who I'll admit I liked for the fact she gushed over Doctor Who and Firefly) and a hero who had a secret he kept burning along for a long time before telling the heroine who he really was, but I really liked this story. The steamy scenes were done well, and the chemistry between the leads was palpable and that which I followed well. I think the way the leads came to terms in the end was very well done. Surprised me for how they started out. Probably going to give this between 3 and 3.5 stars.

Full review:

"Too Hot To Handle" is the first I've read from the "Jackson" series (though it's really the second book), and

I'll admit it surprised me. I didn't expect to be drawn into the narrative and not be able to put it down until the last page. If there's something to be said in Dahl's narrative, she writes steamy scenes very well, as well as the play-by-play relationship between her leading characters. Often some of these characters tend to be hit and miss with me whenever I pick up her books, but I do appreciate the fact that she shows the relationships as well as she does, especially as I've followed her.

Merry Kade is a good girl - the best friend that anyone would like to have, whether male or female. But Merry feels frustrated for the turn of events that have led her to the point where she starts off in this novel. She's without a set career path and is crashing at her friend Grace's place - people have called her "slacker" Merry, and she's not fond of the term. She tries to keep up appearances within the company of a wealthy cousin, because her mother stresses the importance of family (though Merry's hurt that her mother has seemingly pushed her away for reasons unknown). She hasn't had sex in two years, and she doesn't think any guy will see her as more than the "best friend" and not as sexy or flirty. She's (extremely, no kidding) socially awkward, but her efforts have landed her a temporary job in Wyoming with a town restoration project.

Merry hires a contractor for the restoration, a "cowboy" named Shane who doesn't always know how to act around Merry. I actually found their initial interactions pretty funny, as Merry's really enthusiastic to get the project started and prove herself, while Shane's like "Uhh...." Shane's reluctance to do anything with the restoration is noted though, as his family ties have him wanting nothing to do with the project. He keeps this secret from Merry, and ultimately, you get the note that at some point, this will hurt Merry - it's just a matter of waiting for the other shoe to drop. There are plenty of awkward moments between the two, but it's worth seeing them interact and noting their subsequent chemistry.

I actually liked how Merry tells off Shane for his wrongdoing though, it made me think more of her character, and for how she shows herself in the latter portions of the novel, it made me think of Merry as more than a klutz (she has plenty of those moments, some admittedly did irk me). Shane's issues with his family are well shown for what they encompass, and I'll admit I was surprised at the resolution that showed itself to that thread of the plotline. It was a bit rushed in comparison to the build-up, but I followed it for what it offered.

In the end, this intrigued me enough to see where this series will go.

Overall score: 3.5/5 stars

Note: I received this as an ARC from NetGalley, from the publisher Harlequin.

The Window Seat says

After reading three books by Victoria Dahl with mixed results, I have accepted that even though she is a very talented, popular author, her voice just doesn't quite work for me. While I appreciate her hot sexy love scenes, I have difficulty connecting to her characters, and even sometimes dislike her conflicts. I liked Too Hot to Handle, the second book in her Jackson Hole series, a lot more than her first, Close Enough to Touch. However, there were still aspects of the book that I didn't enjoy.

Being the jack of all trades never bothered Merry. She even put up with her cousins' snide verbal digs, like

her nickname of “The Merry Slacker.” She always felt that just around the corner, she would find her passion. But once she turned thirty and her mother gently explained that she couldn’t be Merry’s safety net anymore, Merry started to wonder if she truly was a loser.

For the full review, please go to <http://www.thewindowseat13.com/2013/0...>

Lisa says

This is book 2 in the Jackson series but you can read either of these alone and be just fine. In this book we get a better view of Shane who is Cole's friend from book 1 and Merry who is Grace's friend from book 1. Merry is having a hard time figuring out where she belongs in this world. Nicknamed by family as a slacker and growing up poor without a dad she's had a rough time. She is usually perceived as just one of the guys by men she's not had good luck with men either. Finally she's got a job renovating a old ghost town into a museum town in Wyoming. A dream job for her as she enjoys the work and quickly falls in love with the ghost town. Unfortunately the job opportunity is not what it seems and the job might not remain hers. Trying to impress the people who hold the money she looks for a carpenter to spruce some things up so she can show how good it could be. Intro Shane Harcourt the carpenter. Yup! Shane is a Carpenter but he is also the land owner around the ghost town. He got the land but not the money from his grandfather's will when he died. He feels he should have gotten it so he's suing for it. Problem is Merry doesn't know that and she hires him. He likes her but doesn't know her and is hoping to glean info on what's going on by acting as her carpenter. It all starts to fall to pieces when he starts falling for her and eventually the cat is out of the bag and there is of course trouble. I liked this one. Both characters actually had troubling pasts. Shane's dad disappeared as a kid and the uncertainty of that has always affected him. Merry has issues with her family and missing dad as well. I enjoyed the story, the sex scenes were great and the conflict was intense at times. Both characters has issues to work through to find each other. Good solid read for me
