



## The Canary Club

*Sherry D. Ficklin*

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## **The Canary Club** Sherry D. Ficklin

“Bad Luck” Benny is a fella from the wrong side of the tracks. Recently released from jail, he has vowed to keep his head down and stay out of trouble. But he also needs to care for his ailing sister and the rest of his struggling family, and he’ll do anything to make that happen—even if it means taking a position with a notorious crime boss. He soon finds himself in over his head—and worse still—falling for the one dame on earth he should be staying away from.

Masie is the daughter of a wealthy gangster with the voice of an angel and gun smoke in her veins. Strong-willed but trapped in a life she never wanted, she dreams of flying free from the politics and manipulation of her father. A pawn in her family’s fight for control of the city, and with a killer hot on her heels, she turns to the one person who just might be able to spring her from her gilded cage. But Masie is no angel, and her own dark secrets may come back to burn them both.

Two worlds collide in this compelling story of star-crossed lovers in gritty prohibition-era New York.

## **The Canary Club Details**

Date : Published October 16th 2017 by Clean Teen Publishing

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Author : Sherry D. Ficklin

Format : Paperback 325 pages

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## From Reader Review The Canary Club for online ebook

### Kathy-Lynn Cross says

As I stare at the last line, "Is it 1927 or 2017?"

I was giving an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

After reading the Canary Club stories, Gilded Cage, All that Glitters, & Nothing Gold, I couldn't wait to see how everyone's lives would tie together.

Masie and Benny's story collides during the era of fast talking dames, loud jazz, and bootleg gin. Masie Scholtz is tough but classy, sassy but smart, she doesn't take lip from no one, no one but her daddy. Dutch Scholtz is one of the main mobsters running the city, and his daughter's life as the speakeasy's canary. But as Masie starts to believe that she'll never get out, her ticket to freedom comes bleeding through the front door. Bad Luck Benny, with a new start, after severing a few months in the pen, comes home to find out his bad luck has rubbed off on the family. With his rap, honest work is hard to find, until he runs into an old friend. Dickey's got a gig for him that might mean easy money. On his first day, true to his name, bad luck hits him with a bullet and a golden ticket to the inner circle of the notorious gangster Dutch Scholtz.

With his new position as Masie's bodyguard, they end up spending a lot of time together and slowly friendship blossoms into something more. Mob families draw lines - cops begin to harass Benny - a trusted friend is looking for blood - and on top of daddy losing his temper, Masie realizes the Canary Club's caged door is closing fast.

Once again, Sherry Ficklin has torn my heart out. I can't disclose why, you'll have to read the story. I was hoping things would change for a certain character, but he's too far gone into the madness to be saved. The Canary Club gets five teary-eyed stars from me. (I'm a sucker for the bad boys.)

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### Cianna Sunshine & Mountains Book Reviews says

Outstanding! Sherry Ficklin has long been a favorite author of mine since the day she hooked me with the Queen series, and then left me crying in tiny pieces. She's a master of the craft, and she can totally emerge you in any genre she chooses but my favorite is historical fiction and The Canary Club brings us into my favorite genre crafted by an amazing writer.

I adore Masie. The glimpses we got of characters and their stories in the novellas were NOT enough because Masie is exactly what I love about the 20s. A woman who is bold, brave and unafraid to challenge what society says she needs to be. She's the daughter of one of the most powerful men in the city, but she dreams of living her life on her terms. College, big city, big stages. But, until she can find the strength to break out of her family, none of that is possible.

Then we meet Benny, this kid is just wonderful. Sweet, kind, loving and always in the wrong place. He's got the nickname "bad luck" and it is so true, except one time his bad luck landed him in the perfect place, to meet the most beautiful girl he's ever seen. Love, luck, drama and some heartbreak befall benny but he keeps going.

I highly highly recommend this book. I'll be getting the paperback when it releases because this book deserves to be showcase and talked about all the time. The time period is perfect. The slang, the culture, the

clothing. Ficklin nailed it and now I don't wanna be called anything but "Baby Vamp" from here on out. This book is well written, clever as heck and pulls your heartstrings. Grab a copy and join the club! You won't regret it.

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### **Stacy says**

I am torn about this book. For purely a fictional story, it was ok..... romance, suspense, crime, good plot, emotional connection to some of the characters, etc.... But the author took a tale out of history, with a cast of people that actually existed and changed some of what actually happened, to end up having a totally different outcome. This is the story of Dutch Schultz, the infamous mob boss. In the book, he is given a daughter named Maisie who is involved in a minor way in her father's illegal activities. In real life, Dutch's daughter was Anne Davis Flegenheimer (Dutch's true surname) and was far too small to have been involved in any of his business at the time of his real-life death. Many of his "business" associates and employees actually existed including Vincent "Mad dog" Moll, Joey Noe, "Legs" Diamond, Dixie Davis, and Otto Berman. His son J.D. (John David Flegenheimer in real-life) also plays a big role in the book, but in reality he was Anne's little brother being just a few months old at the time of his father's death, and not a grown adult as in the book. Dutch's fictional daughter, Maisie falls for naive Benjamin "Benny" Fleisher who get innocently drawn into the racket out of desperate need for money to help support his family fallen on hard times. He is also fictional (though I have suspicions that his character is comprised of two real life mobsters Benjamin "Benny" "Bugsy" Siegal and Eddie Fleisher, but that is just a guess). The book ends with Dutch going to prison rather than being killed by his associates. The book should have a forward, telling the reader that some of these people did in fact exist, but that the author had taken literary license with the story, and written a "what if" instead. Because no thought to educating the reader to the real facts, it can be misleading-- if the reader is ignorant of the real people, then they may believe that the entire story is purely a product of the author's imagination, and if they had heard of Dutch Schultz, but not entirely aware of the story of his dealings and friends, they could be misled into thinking that it is accurate as far as bare bone facts and that the author had just fictionally filled in details. I believe if the author would include some sort of clarification, it would improve the book as a whole. I would surely give it a higher rating had it been present.

Book read for [twogalsandabook.com](http://twogalsandabook.com)

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### **Finnessa says**

\*Thanks to Netgalley, the publisher, and the author for providing me with an early copy in exchange for an honest review.\*

#### **3.5 stars**

*Having people fear you gives you power. Having them love you gives you influence. Having both, well, that's how you build an empire.*

This has got to be the most refreshing setting after all the fantasy I've been reading. And that's what sold me on this story. I'm not sure there were enough gangsters, drive-bys and illegal actions to truly capture the era but I still thoroughly enjoyed it.

The romance is a focal point in this book. A couple other reviews said it's insta-love and it kinda is. They

also said Masie is too modern and she probably is. Someone said their personalities didn't have enough depth and I agree. I'd also like to add that Benny is way too competent for a seventeen(?) year old. But I did like Masie's confidence and sashaying everywhere. Everything would've been a bit more plausible if they were older. That being said, I didn't mind and it didn't hinder my reading experience. (view spoiler)

The slang tended to be a bit much, unless that's how they talked back then. (Applesauce?)

The plot could've used a bit more attention as the romance kinda dominated it and (view spoiler). I hope the next book strengthens Masie's and Benny's personalities and gives them some dilemmas to work over and highlight how the outer conflicts will change them.

The descriptions were good and colorful, just the way they should be. And there were several insightful comments throughout I appreciated.

Overall I sped through this book and am looking forward to the next one.

Some favorite quotes:

*"You can always trust a dishonest man to be dishonest. It's the honest ones you have to look out for"*

*"Because that's what war does. It never destroys the people who need to be destroyed; it just punishes the people who get in the way."*

*"Only thing open after midnight are bars, legs, and morgues."*

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## **Moira says**

Number of pages: 325

Number of times read (including the time before this review): 1

Rating (out of five stars): 1.5

Release Date: October 19th 2017

*\*Thank you to Netgalley and the publisher for providing a copy in exchange for a review. My opinions are honest and my own.*

I requested this one on a whim thinking I wouldn't get accepted. I was genuinely interested in the premise, but I thought the setting of the 1920s wouldn't work for me. In the end, I think everything but the setting ended up not working for me.

Let's start with possibly the most controversial of my gripes: Masie. I have a lot of issues with her characterization, but one in particular stands out; she comes across as far too modern. The thing that put me off from the beginning was the long paragraph near the start of her first chapter where she railed against her oppression as a woman. I'm not condoning the oppression of women in any way (I quite like my rights as a Canadian female), but I see this sort of thing far too often in historical fiction books. It feels like the authors making sure readers know their opinions on the oppression of women. But here's the thing; I'm not reading historical fiction to learn about the authors feelings on how women were treated in the past. I'm reading historical fiction to see what life was like in \*insert time period here\* in \*insert country here\*. If I wanted to know how the author feels about life as a woman in 1920s New York, I would follow her on Twitter. Yes,

there would have been women in the 1920s who genuinely railed against the oppression they faced (and power to them), but people in the past did not rail against their oppression as often as is represented in YA historical fiction, and that is where the issue lies.

Then there's Benny. In terms of historical accuracy, he appeared to be well done. My issue with him is rather that he is not a very realistic character. It feels like the author made a list of all the characteristics she would want in a partner, and Benny was made. I don't think I can pinpoint a bad quality Benny has, and that's an issue.

The romance between Masie and Benny is one of the most glaring cases of insta-love I have read in a long time. They basically look at each other for the first time and are infatuated.

The other problem I had with the romance is that it messes with Benny's characterization. Benny is set up as someone who cares a lot about his family, but as soon as things heat up with Masie, he doesn't really mention his family again until he's saying goodbye at the end.

The secondary characters also aren't done very well. It is clear from the way everything is set up that if you don't like Masie and Benny, you're not going to find another character to connect with. The rest of the characters are completely forgettable, including Masie's father, the reason there is any semblance of a plot.

Speaking of the plot, nothing ever really happens. The whole book is centered around the romance, but since they are infatuated at first glance, there's not a whole lot to it. There's no watching them fall in love with each other, as their every thought is already focused on the other.

Overall, *The Canary Club* features nothing to recommend it, earning it 1.5 stars out of 5.

You can read more of my reviews on my blog.

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### **Caitlyn says**

This'll be a review in compendious notes:

1. I preferred Masie over Benny as she was the fatter, richer character (in the figurative sense) and her character conflict more absorbing: is she as delicate, fragile, as her father regarded her depressed mother? Does she share her father's compulsions for sin and cruel vice? How much will she sacrifice to keep her own hands—and those of her brother, friend, father, and the boy she loves—from filth?
2. TCC would have benefited from further characterization of secondary characters. Why does Masie love her father so, when he abuses and uses her? Why does she still care for her former friend Vincent, now a coldly ambitious, fiendish aspirant who starves to own the booze empire? What of Benny and Dickey's longtime friendship (oft mentioned yet not once expounded on)?
3. Plot was absent for the most part—and tangled when present.
4. Romance was at times saccharine and at others moving.
5. Finale was rushed and unrealistically neat.

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### **Jessica (BookObsessedJess) says**

Thank you to NetGalley and the publishers for giving me an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review.

The Canary Club is set in prohibition era NYC and is filled to the brim with flappers, corrupt cops, and gangsters. Are you intrigued yet? You should be.

The story picks up when "Bad Luck" Benny is released from jail. Initially he vows to "keep his head down," but he also must care for his sickly sister as well as provide for his family. Not quite an easy task considering the times. Eventually he ends up taking a position with a notorious crime boss, Dutch Schultz.

ENTER, Masie!

Masie is the daughter of said notorious crime boss. She is as strong-willed as they come, but trapped in a life she never wanted. This book held no punches in exposing how women were treated back then, and still today to some extent, unfortunately. Masie is a pawn in her father's fight for control of the city.

Star crossed lovers much?

YES PLEASE.

While I wasn't *over the moon in love with this book*, I still enjoyed reading it. It kept me intrigued as to how it was going to play out in the end and left me satisfied enough to where I don't feel I have to pick up the next one. Not saying I won't, but I like the option.

My biggest complaint is that I really wanted a good "Mob/Mafia" story. Meaning that I was hoping for *ONCE* that we would get a guy from the wrong side of the tracks, make his way up into the world and really take to it. I didn't want a "let's start a revolution" book where people try to change the way things are, I have read too many of those. So, this complaint is the primary reason why it gets 3 stars from me and not a higher rating.

**TRIGGER WARNING:**

Abuse (both physical and emotional)

Attempted rape

Mistreatment of those with mental health by institutions

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**Nely Cab says**

Just wow! Review coming soon. Add this to your TBR!

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**Delia Devin says**

*Thank you to NetGalley and Crimson Tree Publishing for providing me with an ARC in exchange of an honest review.*

When I think about historical fiction, my mind wanders to a time before real toilets existed. It went over my

head that the genre does not only include a time before both world wars but also a time like the roaring 20s.

In Canary Club, we follow "Bad Luck" Benny who emerged from the wrong side of town, fresh out of jail for a crime he didn't even commit. With the heavy desperation to feed his family, he stumbled upon a job that opened doors into a scathing world of gangsters and their corrupt businesses. It also led him into the arms of a certain canary with a golden voice, Maisie Schultz, whose father just happened to be one of the leading crime bosses and also Benny's own boss.

With Sherry D. Ficklin's poetic, yet straightforward writing style, I was easily swept away to the 1920s New York with its fringe dresses, speakeasies, slang, and over the shoulder gestures. This was a melodramatic, thrilling read that made my heart accelerate with every conflict that arises. And while the story itself focuses on its romantic aspects, it does not completely abandon the grittiness of the mafia world.

I do think a trigger warning is necessary (there are some scenes that involve both physical and emotional abuse), but I would definitely recommend this book to any YA reader who's in need of a breath of fresh air from all the mainstream contemporary and fantasy plots.

My in depth review will be posted under the spoiler warning:

(view spoiler)

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### **Sara says**

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

A very YA look into the world of prohibition era New York, with a dash of gangsters and a frothy romance thrown in.

Canary Club follows 'Bad Luck' Benny - fresh out of jail, and Maisie, daughter of the local 'mob' boss who Benny ends up working for. Maisie is head strong, like her father, yet vows not to follow in his footsteps. Benny is determined to keep on the right side of the law, yet is drawn into a murky underworld in order to

provide for his ailing family. With Maisie facing trouble as the pawn in her families fight for control of the city, she turns to the one person she thinks will be able to help her. But can love win over business?

I enjoyed the author's descriptions of prohibition New York. It's an area of history I know little about, and I adsorbed every little morsel of description that was written about it. The slang used is also rather delightful, and for the most part the story itself is well written.

However, this is where it sort of all starts to fall apart for me as I really didn't like either of the main characters. Maisie is rather one dimensional, naive and doesn't really have much going for her. At times I found her boring and shallow. She also comes across as too modern for her era. One of my gripes in historical fiction is making a female character appear to be so brazen in her 'repressed woman' status for her time period, which Maisie frequently laments. It seems really out of character for a woman of her era to express herself in such a way, and it irritates me.

Benny, as Maisie's love interest, doesn't seem very realistic - he's a mash up of every 'down on his luck' 'jack of the lad' character that's been done before, and far better. Again, he's very one dimensional with no emotional depth and little development throughout the novel.

The plot itself is very centred around the romance elements, and unfortunately it's a case of instalove at its finest. There's no build up to Benny and Maisie falling in love etc. or even any courtship - it's just instantaneous infatuation and it all feels a little bit too 'sweet'. You'd expect a bit of grit for a gangster book. Speaking of 'grit; the 'big bad' is also extremely one dimensional, with little input from the author with regards to making him appear more human and less a simple plot device to provide a problem to the main characters.

I think that's one of the biggest issues with the book - there's just no depth to any of the characters.

The rest of the plot is also rather flat and predictable. I guessed what was going to happen constantly, and I was never surprised by anything in the plot. Because of this, I did unfortunately find myself getting bored. The whole story line just felt a little underwhelming and rushed - especially the ending. I would have preferred it if more time was spent developing and delving deeper into the characters emotions. Because it was so lacking, I just couldn't get emotionally invested in anything that was happening.

Unfortunately underwhelming for me, but I think this will definitely appeal to those looking for a heavy dose of romance mixed with a sprinkling of history.

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### **Sherry Ficklin says**

This is my book, so, of course I'm quite biased. I do hope you all enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it! And be sure to grab the prequel series on sale now, *Glitter and Gold: A Canary Club Anthology*!

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### **Amanda says**

**My review can also be found here:**

<https://devouringbooks2017.wordpress....>

*I received a copy of this book from Netgalley and Crimson Tree Publishing. All opinions are my own.*

When I recently read Bright Young Things I mentioned in my review that I didn't think there were enough gangsters in that book. Well with The Canary Club my wish was granted! **When I spied a book up for request by Sherry Ficklin that was also set in the 1920's, I couldn't request it fast enough!** I remembered how much I absolutely loved Queen of Someday and I was stoked to read another title by the artist in prose that is Sherry Ficklin. I can say, quite happily so, that The Canary Club met and exceeded my high expectations.

I was swept into the 1920's as I started reading. Into a world of gangsters, speakeasies and forbidden love. **This is a period that I love and know quite well, but Sherry Ficklin makes it come to life and transports me in time better than any other.** The book feels authentic for the time period, as it is filled with slang from the 1920's. In comparison Bright Young Things feels like a romance novel playing dress-up, it doesn't have the same authentic feel.

Now I read romance novels, or novels with a romance aspect, practically everyday. I often find myself understanding the love interest, or seeing the attraction. But this is the first time in a long time that I truly found a book *romantic*. This was a romance that swept me off my feet and pulled at my heartstrings. The heat radiated off of the pages.

The plot was well thought out and the pacing made it hard to put down. I found myself staying up until the sun rose so I could finish reading. I was so engrossed in the world of gangsters and speakeasies that I didn't realize the time passing until I heard birds chirping. The realism and dirty deeds of these gangsters was gruesome and horrific, exactly how gangsters are supposed to be.

I would push this book at anyone who asks me for a recommendation. Being the second novel I've read by Sherry Ficklin I can say she is an author who will bring you back, no matter what it's about I will read anything by her. I can't wait to get my hands on another of her titles.

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### **Anna (Unquenchable Reads) says**

<https://unquenchablereads.wordpress.c...>

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### **Tânia says**

Read from October 12th to October 25th

**Plot:** After three months in jail for a crime he didn't commit, Benjamin "Benny" Fleisher is back on the streets of New York. He wants to stay away from trouble, but his family is going through difficult times –and to make everything worse his little sister is very sick and in need of special medical care. When no respectable business gives Benny an opportunity to earn an honest salary, Benny finds himself working for a notorious crime boss, Dutch Schultz. Quickly climbing through the ranks after saving Dutch's life, Benjamin has to struggle to keep his integrity while losing his heart of gold to the only girl he shouldn't, the daughter of his boss, Masie Schultz, a flapper with the voice of an angel whose only desire is to set free from her father's bloody schemes and gang war. When the world of Benny and Masie collide nothing ever will be the same

again...

**Writing:** Have I ever told you that the roaring 20s is one of my favourite times? All the Jazz and bright lights and flappers. Oh, and the Lost Generation! I love the Lost Generation –I've a soft spot for Zelda Fitzgerald who is very misunderstood. Anyway, in *The Canary Club* Sherry D. Ficklyn brought the 20s back to life with all the good and bad. I enjoyed the vivid descriptions of New York during the prohibition time. Moreover, the use of slang from the time made the story seem ever more real. I'd like to stress that it is clear the author did a lot of research –from the language to the medical procedures for mental illness. I must confess that the ending felt a little bit rushed –the author could have taken a little bit more time to develop it since it was the big finale. But since there is going to be a sequel, I'm not going to complain much.

**Characters:** Benny has a golden heart. He wants to do what is right, but his bad luck always drags him to very complicated situations. One of Benny's characteristics that I enjoyed the most was how far he would go to protect those he loved –no matter how difficult was the path he had to go through. Masie was a flapper in every sense of the world. Although a few times I found her insufferable, and a little bit entitled, I did warm up to Masie when it was revealed how much she had suffered (and still was suffering) at the hands of her father. Also, I enjoyed how she understood the world isn't black and white and how she walked in those grey areas.

**Romance:** In *The Canary Club* the plot centers on the romance between Benny and Masie, told from their perspective. I always love a story about forbidden love. And, although I don't mind instalove as much as I mind love triangles, I was disappointed when it happened. I wanted Benny and Masie to slowly fall in love in world of crime and mobsters. Also, I felt it was out of character for Masie to fall instantly in love with Benny because, as she pointed out, she had never loved anyone before. It would show so much character growth if the relationship between them grew slowly.

All in all, I can't wait for the sequel of "The Canary Club" to be released. That cliffhanger!

**TRIGGER WARNING!** There is mention of rape as well as of physical and physiological abuse.

[I received this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you.]

Tânia @MyLovelySecret

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### **Anna McGuire says**

So first off I was giving an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

All opinions are mine and mine alone no other opinions were considered while writing this.

I read the back story to each of the characters and I was enthralled and could not wait for the full book. The story is set in 1920 New York. It has all the glitz and glamour of Art Deco New York. You feel like you're walking through New York with flappers everywhere. The story is about gangster Dutch Scholtz daughter Maisie and his son J.D along with Benny, June, Dickie and Vinnie. The story covers what happens when Benny by bad luck or maybe good saves Dutches life and becomes part of the crowd. There are little twist and turns that I don't want to spoil but each character brings something unique and amazing to the overall story.

Maisie's character is much more complex than you are first led to believe, she is loyal, smart and feisty while maintaining some of the innocence of the time. She has heart and truly cares for those around her but doesn't let emotion stand in the way of fighting for what she wants.

Sherry has written the book in such a way that you won't need to read the novellas before hand however they do allow you a little more background. I'm looking forward to reading more of her books.

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