



Menagerie

Lara Santiago , Fiona Roarke

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What's a girl to do with five hot guys who need her for their sexual survival? Create a weekly schedule. Accidentally transported to an alien spaceship, Valerie Thornhill inadvertently volunteers to be a virtual sex slave for five men. A shortage of females and her blatant curiosity aboard the alien vessel conspire and set fate in motion. The fact that the five are sexy and attractive is helpful when she learns the term of service is three years. Forbidden to show favoritism within her unusual household for the duration of the long trip, Valerie still can't help falling in love with the most intriguing one of her male harem. The fact that she is apprehensive about his demeanor and overall size only heightens her desire for him. When the aliens discover Valerie's indiscretion, the ultimate price for her desire may jeopardize the return trip to Earth for all of them.

Menagerie Details

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Author : Lara Santiago , Fiona Roarke

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Romance

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From Reader Review Menagerie for online ebook

Chappy says

I found this book quite intriguing. The writing is not super but the plot is original.

Valerie gets unintentionally transported onto an alien ship. This happens quite often as a side effect of the near proximity of the worm hole the aliens travel through.

The aliens here are benign and don't really play a central role in the story. The transported humans must be kept in stasis until they can be put back where they belong...but only on the trip back. So they must wait 3 years for their return. In order to keep the human healthy, they exist in a sort of "Matrix" type environment. Since sexual release is deemed essential for human health, they are put together in groups and the women must see to the men's happy times. There are 5 times more men, so the women must chose a group.

Valerie selects Hawser and his 4 partners Johnny, Frasier, Mark and Dominick.

The ending kind of threw me for a loop and I'm not sure how I feel about it.

Julie (jjmachshev) says

Actually read the e-book. 3.5 stars

"Menagerie" by Lara Santiago was pretty interesting. It's a sci-fi/fantasy kind of erotic story that had a very different premise.

Valerie is NOT looking forward to her mother's visit. See, Valerie is a little larger than current fashion dictates and she's tired of hearing her mother, and others, tell her if she just loses a few pounds she can 'catch' a man. One minute she's jogging up the path and the next thing she knows, she's on a ship in a room with a bunch of other women and there's a BLUE man talking to them! Blue dude says their job is to 'service' a group of men, 4-7 men, to keep them sane for the next three years and then the aliens will return them to Earth at almost the exact same time they were inadvertantly scooped up. Needless to say Valerie is sure she's dreaming AND she's ADD anyway so she keeps missing parts of Blue's talk AND she's not sure she can just have sex with strangers. Then enroute to the 'claiming area', Valerie takes a wrong turn (because it looks so much more interesting) and runs into a gorgeous guy. She decides to let him/them/his group be the ones to 'claim' her...after all, at least she's spoken with him and he seems to like her looks and body.

I don't want to give too much away and the story dragged in some places, but it was a VERY interesting ending. There is no menage in the story. Valerie has sex with 5 different men, but each at a different time. Interesting premise and very different from the normal human abduction stories.

C Joy says

Despite the average reviews given by other readers, I decided to go ahead and read this one, and I wasn't disappointed.

I was drawn to the humor and tone of the story. Being a plump girl myself, I understand Valerie's desire to lose a little weight before her mom's visit. I didn't expect to like this one at all; given the title, I expected it to have a forced story, or no story at all, similar to a f**kfest. The title was misleading because one would expect a gangbang, but no it's not like that.

I didn't even mind the sci-fi because it's just on the side, and that's saying something because I'm not a sci-fi fan. When Valerie was transported to the alien base, it was funny how she thought all of it was a dream, with her still wearing grey sweats. I liked how the aliens were named after their skin color and how the system works.

The story was written very well, I had no difficulty distinguishing the guys from each other. They're very different and Valerie is required to sexually service them individually, so there's no menage whatsoever. In this world, the ratio of men to women is 5:1, and the men need sex to sustain their health, though why abduct humans in the first place wasn't really explained.

Valerie is a troublemaker and she's very likeable, she breaks all the rules and isn't sorry for it. I liked all the guys here, and at first glance Valerie is a slut because of her multiple partners, you'll realize she really isn't because in this world's standards, it's considered normal.

I didn't expect the romance here, and I loved it all the more. I'm not spoiling anything because there's an incredible twist in the end. Of course, the sex is a sizzling 5 stars. Though this may not be a super read, it's a good read all the same.

Jill Dunlop says

Vanessa Thornhill while out for a jog finds herself planted face first in the dirt as she blacks out. When she comes to, she finds herself sitting a class, aboard a spaceship with a blue alien explaining the rules she must follow for the next few years of her new life. At first she just goes with the flow believing this to be a very vivid dream. Next thing she knows, she is being told how the ratio of women to men is five to one. She will be paired up with a group of men, whom she will have to service sexually. The men's survival depends on it.

Menagerie is a silly, short book that is easily entertaining. There is nothing too deep or meaningful that will come from reading it, but it's a mindless way to pass the time. Vanessa and her entourage of five men are mediocre characters. Each man had a distinct personality as to easily distinguish them from one another. Really for me, only one man stands out from the crowd. Vanessa finds herself playing favorites and she starts to feel extremely guilty about it. I liked this part of the story and how Vanessa has to deal with this issue. It gave the book more of a purpose than just being all about sex. I still would have wished for more exploration of this issue than just the superficial attention it received.

There was a very interesting plot twist at the end of the story that was very creative on the authors part, but again, I would have loved to see it developed a little more. I wouldn't say there was anything that I didn't enjoy about the story, but it didn't totally knock my socks off either. It was just an average read for me. It was short and easy to read and it entertained me, but it definitely could have used some jazzing up.

Rapid Reader says

The flow of the story is a little bit jumbled up. At some scenes I had wished that the author would indulged more, to get that perfect momentum/pacing.

Jacqueline says

Just okay. The writing was kind of stilted. The first half of the book was a little draggy. After she began to have problems in the second half of the book, my interest level picked up. There was quite a bit of sex in the story but it wasn't particularly hot or memorable. Sex isn't plot though and this story needed more plot. As I mentioned, the second half of the book had a lot more tension because there was more going on in the pages than just bed hopping. The sci fi element was okay if a little hokey but there was quite a bit of potential which was not fully developed.

Big spoiler here, read only after you've read the book. (view spoiler)

Judith says

One of the most unusual sci-fi books I have encountered. The heroine is witty and thoughtful, an independent female who is accidentally transported to an alien spaceship, one where humans are taken out of our time/space reality into a time/space continuum completely different than ours. For three years she is assigned to a group of five human males for whom she provides sex twice a month each, and who will die without that kind of encounter. Her relationship with each man is different, their responses and the dynamic between them is different. There are some surprising twists in this story and some scary stuff--the aliens monitor the humans and call them on the carpet when they step out of line. Two of the men are into bedroom dominance and in asking her to choose a safe word, she chooses 'zoo' which in French is "menagerie." Thus, the title of the story. Even though I am not usually "into" sci-fi literature, I found this story quite interesting and appreciated the tweeking that Ms Santiago developed that made a very surprising ending. Again, a most unusual read!

Jasmine says

I was genuinely happy with the plot resolution, and there was a twist I did not see coming. I wish the role of the aliens was explained a bit more. I understand that it is a completely contrived situation, and that the plot doesn't really matter, but more world-building would have been interesting. I'm glad the book jumped forward to different points in time. There is another woman in the book, and we never find out what happens to her!

TW there is description of a nightmare in which a character is raped.

Lyndsey says

If you like books with multiple sex partners and lots of sex then this might be a good book for you. Valerie a conservative accountant is accidentally transported to an alien space ship for three years where she is required to service five men during that time frame. Along the way Valerie develops special feelings for one of the men and she can't help but fall in love. As the end of her servitude comes to a close, Valerie wants to be able to find her love on the other side but the aliens say no. What will they do to find each other in the end? Guess you'll have to read the book to find out. Happy Reading!!!

Alicia Burns says

I wasn't sure I would enjoy an erotica- and BDSM-themed story that's also a sci-fi in nature. I was right; I enjoyed it extremely! It was a sizzling treat, being able to live vicariously through the heroine and to devour the delicious idea of engaging in wild, rough, and blistering hot sex with multiple partners! If I were to be taken in an alien spaceship and this would be the kind of "test" I would be put through, I would make a thrilling and gratifying vacation out of it! Having her own male harem and being faced with the challenge of not playing favorites can prove to be overwhelming but she eagerly accepted and completely relished the many delicious possibilities offered to her! Of course, the heart being the heart, she was bound to feel more for one than all the others and for that she risks not being able to return home. You're gonna have to pick up the book to find out what happens!

The Cat Bastet says

I think the main reason I liked this book is that it outright handed me the rubric for evaluating heroes in menage. And in romance in general.

If there's two guys it's easy. They're pursuer/distancer. They may switch up, if the book is long, but that's what they're doing.

If there's three, they're generally Papa Bear (surly), Mama Bear (nurturing), and Baby Bear (sweet and fun).

I'm not sure what four are. Four seems like a weird number.

But five! Five, they're aspects of the same dude. But...

In truth, they're always all aspects of the same dude, no matter how many dudes there are. This book just literalized it, which actually helped me realize that truth.

Also, if there's just one, he's probably pursuer/distancer, all in one, and switches back and forth, which is why solo heroes in romance are on the whole douchier than menage heroes.

Bookaholics says

Menagerie by Lara Santiago

Oversize trade paperback release date: July 23, 2008

4 Stars

This book is an amazing futuristic romance with a big twist! The entire premise is a fun and highly erotic ride.

Valerie Thornhill is accidentally transported onto a spaceship where she must become a sex slave to 5 different men for 3 years! Each man has a very different personality and all of them are very attractive.

Valerie cannot help falling in love with one of the men! She is torn by her 'duty' and any preference in her behavior which can undo the companionship of the group.

The different men and Valerie's growing dilemma make for HOT reading. It was surprising to discover which male Valerie gradually grew to love and her anguish over feelings she cannot control. I was touched by the relationship with her preferred lover. At first he seemed one-dimensional, but as Valerie grew to care for him, so did I!

Lara Santiago pulls you into her world. Her writing is deceptively clever as I never saw the surprise ending! If you are looking for a quick read with entertaining turns, this is the book. Another satisfying futuristic romance by Lara Santiago!

Reviewed by Steph at Bookaholics Romance Book Club

Kay says

4 ½ Stars! ~ The aliens, as they travel back through a nearby wormhole to earth, inadvertently scoop up humans. It will be a long three-year wait for the humans before they can be returned to earth, so the aliens put them into stasis. However, to protect the health of those captured they've discovered that they must stimulate brain activity via induced dreams, and for the males those dreams must include sex, at least every other month. Valerie is a bit of a klutz, and eager to let this dream ride on. She'd lucked out her group of five men are all sexy and gorgeous. First, there's Hauser, he's the front man, the man with charisma and confidence. Then Johnny, he's playfully inventive, and very much an artist. Fraser is the brainiac of the group, equally sexy but more serious and logical. Mark, though easily a bad boy, he's also the one easiest to talk to, the best friend. And finally, there's Dominic the giant, his stature is intimidating as is his dark brooding personality, Valerie's a bit afraid of him at first. Each man steals a piece of Valerie's heart, but surprisingly it's Dominick that actually captures it.

I'm not much of a fantasy / paranormal fan, but the premise and the book excerpt for this one intrigued me. I'm glad for that, as I've found a delightful author that can weave a very believable fantasy. I loved the dynamics of the five men and how Valerie shared different aspects of herself with each one, except for when it came to Dominick with whom she shared all of herself. Valerie is a fun strong willed heroine, often naïve

in a very charming way. Dominick is a man tortured by his own desires and his struggle to control his very dominant nature. Though he's protective and possessive, he's very much taken in by Valerie's generosity with all the men in the group. Not once does Valerie lose sight of why the men need her, and it's their well-being that keeps her grounded. There's a lovely twist to the ending, one that I was very pleased to read. Though there are explicit sex scenes and on a one on one basis multiple partners; this is very much a love story, one I couldn't put down. Ms. Santiago has a refreshing voice and I'm eager to read more from her, hopefully more of this intriguing world. This one's for the keeper shelf!

Anna says

This book actually started out a bit lame and Valerie was airheadedly annoying, however by the time it got to the end and everything was resolved I really loved the way it had worked out. The heroine had gotten quite a bit better and Dominick was just gorgeous. Surprisingly the twist had flitted through my head early in the reading process as a possibility but with it just being such a weird set up I didn't focus on it and promptly forgot - hence why I enjoyed the end!

Sandy M says

My biggest beef (heh) with erotic romance most of the time is the gratuitous sex and no storyline to be found (I do have my moments when I don't mind reading über-horniness), and there's a lot of those out there. This book comes close to that, and while the story itself is not thought-provoking, it is full of imagination, at least giving the reader an okay "reason" for all that sex. And for good measure it's sci-fi, in essence, asking you to suspend disbelief for a while longer, just enough to get in that much more going on between the sheets.

Valerie is sucked up into an alien spaceship by mistake, a side effect of its inhabitants passing so close to earth when accessing a wormhole to take them home. Earthmen cannot survive in their world without sex at least every thirty days. The more the better for the men. So because the ratio is five to one in favor of men, each earthwoman must service five men to help keep them alive during the three years it takes for the ship to return near enough to Earth to return everyone within seconds of where and what they were doing when they were abducted.

So before she enters the mob of men looking for a woman for his "team," she meets Hauser and he gives her the lowdown on how the choosing will work. They agree she'll pick him, assuring her she'll like the other four men she'll soon meet. Johnny, Fraiser, Mark, and Dominick each have their own merits, of course, their own way of making love.

Valerie begins the time of her life until it's Dominick's turn. He's a huge biker-type guy and he scares her, but he's also the one that makes her feel the most in bed and out of it. There are strict rules the aliens have laid down, but both Valerie and Nick are rule-breakers. The number one rule is not to play favorites among the men, but her feelings begin to grow for Nick, much to her surprise, and she wants to spend her free time with him and only him, while still servicing the others, whom she also loves but just in a different way.

While this book is by no means a keeper, it amused me enough on the premise alone that I kept reading. I have to admit that I did like the relationship between Dominick and Valerie from the beginning. I was disappointed here and there in the dialogue and there were a few little inconsistencies in Valerie's past, and

her feelings and actions in what she's doing in the present. I was curious how the author was going to end it all due to a certain theme that ran throughout the book, but she pulled it off it credibly enough. In fact, I rather enjoyed that ending when they were all back on Earth after their adventurous journey.

I almost wish she'd gone with a romantic suspense with Dominick and Valerie as the hero and heroine. They definitely could have pulled it off.

See my complete review at <http://www.goodbadandunread.com>
