



Hard Eight

Janet Evanovich , Lorelei King (Narrator)

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Fugitive Apprehension Agent Stephanie Plum has a big problem on her hands: Seven-year-old Annie Soder and her mother, Evelyn, have disappeared.

Evelyn's estranged husband, Steven, a shady owner of a seedy bar, is not at all happy. During the divorce proceedings, he and Evelyn signed a child custody bond, and Steven is demanding the money guaranteed by the bond to find Annie. The money was secured by a mortgage on Evelyn's grandmother's house, and the True Blue Bonds Bail Agency wants to take possession of the house.

Finding a kidnapped child is not an assignment for a bounty hunter. But Evelyn's grandmother lives next door to Stephanie's parents, and Stephanie's mother and grandmother are not about to see their neighbor lose her house because of abduction.

Even though Stephanie's plate is full with miscreants who missed their court dates, including old nemesis and violent drunk Andy Bender and an elusive little old lady accused of grand theft auto, she can't disappoint Grandma Mazur! So she follows the trail left by Annie and Evelyn-- and finds a lot more than she bargained for. Steven is somehow linked with a very scary Eddie Abruzzi. Trenton cop and on-again, off-again fiance Joe Morelli and Stephanie's mentor and tormentor, Ranger, warn Stephanie about Abruzzi, but it's Abruzzi's eyes and mannerisms that frighten Stephanie the most. Stephanie needs Ranger's savvy and expertise, and she's willing to accept his help to find Annie even though it might mean becoming too involved with Ranger.

Stephanie, Ranger, Lula (who's not going to miss riding with Ranger), and Evelyn's lawyer/laundromat manager set out to find Annie. The search turns out to be a race among Stephanie's posse, the True Blue Bonds' agent, a Rangerette known as Jeanne Ellen Burrows, and the Abruzzi crew. Not to mention the fact that there's a killer rabbit on the loose!

Strap on your helmet and get ready for the ride of your life. Hard Eight. The world of Plum has never been wilder.

Hard Eight Details

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From Reader Review *Hard Eight* for online ebook

Jilly says

This one was a little bit of a let-down after the previous books. I mean, yeah, there were plenty of cars getting blown-up and a killer in a rabbit suit chasing her, but there was also a kind of sad undertone because of the break-up. I don't want sad and serious in these books! I read them to get away from sad and serious stuff. I'm a sad & serious avoider. It's one of my life-goals.

Stephanie is also not really improving as a bounty hunter. She is afraid of her gun, can never get her pepper spray out of her purse in time, and her stun gun is on the fritz. She also loses more handcuffs than a dom with erectile dysfunction. And, just like that dom, she is constantly unable to finish the job. It's kind of pathetic.

The GOOD news in this book is that she finally gets down and dirty with Ranger. It's about freaking time! A guy like that will definitely finish the job - a couple of times.

I want to visit the bat cave!

Anushka says

I am giving this book 5 Stars solely on the grounds that it was **beyond hilarious**. Never in my life I have read anything so ridiculously funny!

Every character, every situation was so full of rollicking stupidity that it made me burst out laughing. The mystery in this book was okay, I didn't really care much about it because in this installment we had an abundance of entertaining side kicks.

Albert Klough's description of looking like a Pillsbury Doughboy made me laugh lout loud EVERY TIME! xD

And the scene where he got stuck in a dryer is the epicest thing I've ever read, I laughed so much that my sides hurt.

Sadly, Grandma Mazur didn't have much role in this one and neither did Morelli but Stephanie's "fornication with the Batman" a.k.a Ranger made up for it.

Ranger.

That guy is so hot his presence makes me want to fan myself. The mystery surrounding his character makes his character even hotter.

Plus, there was THE Rabbit. And Stephanie's mom. And Valerie. Oh God, this book is the most humorous thing EVER.

Hard Eight was just priceless but still *Hot Six* remains the best and my favorite book in the series so far.

Tracy says

Another laugh out loud adventure!

? Sammy ?? says

Hard Eight is a fantastic Plum novel and is one of my favorites :) This story is about Stephanie helping out her parent's neighbor. The neighbor's granddaughter Evelyn and great granddaughter Annie have disappeared so Stephanie agrees to help find them. In the process of locating Evelyn and Annie, Stephanie crosses paths with a dangerous individual by the name of Eddie Abruzzi. Eddie threatens Stephanie to try and get her to stop looking for Evelyn and Annie.

One of my favorite parts of this book is the fact that Steph and Ranger finally hook up! I am a huge babe fan and hope that Steph and Ranger get a HEA. Ranger and Steph have a lot of chemistry together and I think that Ranger is more capable of helping her grow as an individual. In this book, you see just how far Ranger is willing to go to protect Steph.

Overall I would give this book 5 stars for the plot, humor, and the fact that Ranger and Steph's relationship grows!

Patrick Gibson says

Some dastardly doer named Eddie Abruzzi finally forces Stephanie Plum to have sex with Ranger. There, I've said it. Not really a spoiler. If you have been reading this series, you knew it was going to happen eventually. I have to hand it to Janet Evanovich—she really knows how to build her wispy writing to a satisfying climax. (Even though this particular orgasm took seven novels to achieve.) Part of the foreplay involves a new character with the great last name of Kloughn (pronounced 'clown') and as much as I hate to admit it—he made me laugh out loud. Both things I hate: laughing out loud, and admitting I'm reading books geared towards middle aged women and post-pubescent teenage girls. Come on, we all have guilty pleasures . . . Jesus, some people even collect stamps! I mean, really! For movies I like anything with flesh-eating Zombies (as opposed to Cheerios eating Zombies); for musical guilty please it would be Liberace's Greatest Hits (not really, you have permission to feed me to the nearest flesh eating Zombie if that ever happens); for books it would be the Time Life Series on Do-It-Yourself Brain Surgery and Janet Evanovich (watch out Stephanie Meyers, your in my sights for a book burning party). Once again, the plot is superfluous to the madcap characters. Grandma, Morelli, Lula and Bob the Dog all take bows (or bow-wows in some instances). Maybe my electrolytes have leveled off but I actually think the writing is getting better—at least in this installment. Aw hell, Evanovich probably has a whole studio of writers like on SNL, just cranking them out. That's okay, they are fun and a harmless diversion—as protected in the Constitution—the Right to Entertainment. (Or is that the Bill of Rights? Or the Declaration of Independence? I get them all mixed up. Oh, well . . . as long as we still have free HBO at the Motels along I-40, all is right with the world.)

Cyndi says

Out of all the Stephanie Plum books, so far, I think this has the scariest villain.

Reread-April 2018. The Plum's neighbor asks Steph to find her granddaughter. This leads Steph through terrifying encounters with a bunny and a bear. It's scarier than it sounds. Meanwhile she and Morelli are separated. Enter Ranger. Hubba hubba!

James says

Book Review

4 out of 5 stars to Hard Eight, the 8th book in the "Stephanie Plum" cozy mystery series, written in 2002 by Janet Evanovich. OK... so I cannot figure out for the life of me how Ms. Evanovich comes up with the hilarity in these characters. It's absolutely amazing to see the varying degrees of lunatics Stephanie has to deal with. In this book, it's less about one particular mystery, although there is a driving case she is working on. There are about 10 skips (bail jumpers) she's trying to chase, all the while solve little crimes and issues throughout the lives of her friends, family, and the people she's trying to capture whom she takes a liking to. She's in the wrong profession, but I wouldn't have it any other way. It gives me a regular dose of humor to enjoy. The main story, about a kidnapped child, though not funny, is handled quite well. You never know who to root for in these books. Sometimes I wanna see Stephanie put in these bad situations... I mean who wouldn't want to watch Lula trying to take control and become her own bail bonds woman.

About Me

For those new to me or my reviews... here's the scoop: I read A LOT. I write A LOT. And now I blog A LOT. First the book review goes on Goodreads, and then I send it on over to my WordPress blog at <https://thisismytruthnow.com>, where you'll also find TV & Film reviews, the revealing and introspective 365 Daily Challenge and lots of blogging about places I've visited all over the world. And you can find all my social media profiles to get the details on the who/what/when/where and my pictures. Leave a comment and let me know what you think. Vote in the poll and ratings. Thanks for stopping by.

Sarah says

Stephanie has a slightly different challenge to face in this instalment - she's been asked to track down a missing young girl on behalf of her very worried grandmother. Unfortunately the search puts her in the sights of Eddie Abruzzi, a nasty piece of work who is in business with the child's father. As the danger ratchets up a notch and Morelli continues to keep his distance after their latest fallout it's up to Ranger to come to Stephanie's aid when she needs him the most.

This series is just so much fun to read, I don't care that Stephanie is the world's worst bounty hunter who can't hold onto a pair of handcuffs for more than five minutes and who manages to get her cars blown up on a pretty much daily basis. Let's face it the worse Stephanie is the more excuses she has to call Ranger or Morelli in for help and that's never going to be a bad thing in my eyes!

These stories aren't meant to be taken too seriously but they are fantastic light entertainment. I pick up these books when I want something that is going to put a smile on my face, they never fail to make me laugh out loud and I just love Stephanie and the crazy people she surrounds herself with. **Hard Eight** sees her love life get even more complicated which makes for brilliant reading. Things are in the off-again position with Morelli but that just allows Ranger to finally make his move and bow chicka wow wow has that been a long time coming (but well worth the wait!). I can't wait to continue my reread of this series and I'm looking forward to finally finding out who she chooses in the long run.

Catherine says

You know what this series is like? It's *Casualty*. Each episode has a different story or two related to the job, and sometimes those caught up in it have some sort of connection with one of the regulars, but meanwhile there's a soap-opera plot which depends more on the personalities and out-of-work life of the main characters. A slightly new tale, a familiar formula and the latest status updates from people you've come to care for. OK, so this is bond enforcement in New Jersey, not A&E in Holby; the genre is comedy rather than drama; and you know Stephanie's going to get a car destroyed rather than knowing that person working in the factory is going to have a horrid accident - but you see what I mean don't you? If you're British that is. I think Alexander McCall Smith's No 1 Ladies' Detective Agency may be heading the same way too, although to a lesser extent. There are touches of it in Sue Grafton's alphabet books too. So, I wonder, is it an inevitable fate, or a necessary or/and sufficient condition for the success of a long-running series? Discuss.

Anyway, in spite of that, the one-book only plot is more centre-stage here than it was in Seven Up which does make it a little less manic, but no less fun than usual. This one has to include the most sinister life-sized rabbit since *Donnie Darko*. Also rather sinister is what happens to the villan at the end - Joe has good reason to worry about Stephanie methinks.

Gina says

Why-oh-why didn't Janet go into a little more detail about Steph's 'escapade' with Ranger? Darnit, I wanted more info than that! LOL! That's okay. He's still just as hot as ever. I enjoyed the story, but it still seems strange, the situation between Joe and Steph. Why is it that he can't accept wholly who Steph is and what she does for a living? Would he feel the same if she was a cop? If you ask me, the attitude is a selfish one, and he's really starting to piss me off. Wonder what the next story will bring. I adore this series, and thank everyone who turned me on to it. THANK YOU!!!

J.C. Hart says

Well, I think I am done with Miss Plum. Eight books and she is still terrible at what she does. People are always asking her why she doesn't get a new job, and I have come to the conclusion it's because she has an undisclosed death-wish, why the hell else would you do a job you're bad at where you are constantly putting yourself in danger? She doesn't take it seriously at all. ACK. I'm so annoyed. I've read reviews for books later in the series (17, 18) and it appears nothing changes between now and then, so I am just not going to bother. I might pick up the LAST book in the series to see what happens, but until then, they are all much the same.

Again, eight books and she is still back and forth with Morrelli, I'm really over this 'love' triangle, not only is it annoying, but it's not real. She loves Morelli, she knows she wants to be with him, and she could have him, but again she is stubborn and won't give up the job she doesn't enjoy that much, is crap at and would get her killed if she wasn't constantly getting bailed out by one guy or another (or in this case, her mother and sister!). It's the only thing standing in the way of her having a real relationship with the man she loves, and maybe, actually, finding some happiness.

If there had been any laugh out loud funny bits in the book, I might not feel so annoyed, but it all felt flat for me. I'm disappointed as these have been a go to light weight, fun read until now.

Anastasia says

Hard Eight by Janet Evanovich is the 8th book in the Stephanie Plum series. Bounty hunter Stephanie Plum is caught up looking for a missing mother and daughter when they go missing on a custody bond.

Unfortunately there are other dangerous characters looking for them as well. Another very entertaining and fun book, with Stephanie getting a lot of help from her friends and family. I especially love Grandma Mazur and Lulu. A fast-paced adventure that leaves you laughing.

Heather says

Finally, after seven books, Stephanie has fornicated with Batman, aka, Ranger. Major kudos go to Janet Evanovich for making my stomach flip without a whole lot of information. I've never even seen this Ranger, or Joe Morelli for that matter, and yet all I have to do is read a line and somehow they can send heat straight to my doodah, Jesus. I have no doubt that men everywhere would give their right arm for such a skill. The plots remain rather over the top, but I have come to find the ridiculousness endearing. And finally, my fear of geese has been validated. I have long since suspected that they were in fact the spawn of satan and my suspicions have been confirmed. Thank you Janet!

As per usual, hi-lights include:

1. Stephanie's mother kills a rabbit
 2. Andy Bender alludes capture, and heists Stephanie's car.
 3. Fornication with Batman
 4. When geese attack, how Stephanie discovered the power of the Cracker Jack
-

Tilly Slaton says

Lately, I've been spending a lot of time rolling on the ground with men who think a stiffy represents personal growth. The rolling around has nothing to do with my sex life. The rolling around is what happens when a bust goes crapola and there's a last ditch effort to hog-tie a big, dumb bad guy possessing a congenitally defective frontal lobe.

Stephanie and Lula make a wonderful team. They met in book one. Stephanie was just beginning her journey as a bounty hunter and Lula was still working the street corners as a 'ho.

Stephanie will usually deal with fear in her usual manner; doughnuts, fried crispy chicken or frozen cookie dough. This makes Lula the perfect teammate. She can eat the store and still have the smiling energy to go shopping.

In the first book of this series, *One for the Money*, both Stephanie and Lula suffer an insane amount of fear and physically traumatic and unimaginably paralyzing defeat. Bad guy, Benito, was a sexual sadist. A sociopath with limitless amount of perseverance when it comes to stalking and hunting down the women he chooses to play with.

After book *One for the Money*, everything has been more or less a giggling ride with Lula and Stephanie. In this book, *Hard Eight*, memories crash through them, and they are reminded of the terrible things they survived.

"I know who you are, too. You're one of Benito's whores. How did it feel to spend time with Benito? Did you enjoy it? Did you feel privileged? Did you learn anything?"

"I don't feel so good," Lula said. And she fainted dead away, crashing into Kloughn, taking him down with her.

Bad guy and super asshole, Abruzzi shows his ugly face in *Hard Eight*. One of the reasons book one really got to me, was reading about what Stephanie and Lula endured. To be utterly brutalized, raped and sliced apart and left for dead, this book really has its moments that I do not enjoy. Unfortunately, sometimes when you want the laughter, you must be reminded of the bad times as well. Perhaps that is what makes you appreciate the funny moments even more.

Stephanie suffers sadistic pranks in this book by a man who has only begun to toy with her. Of course, you have your usual assholes in Evanovich's books, but this one is a little different. The madness that drives Abruzzi is throat clenching and unbearable.

I turned my head to look, and a spider the size of a dinner plate jumped at me.

"Eeeeyow! Holy shit! HOLY SHIT!" I sideswiped a parked car, took the curb, and came to a stop on a patch of lawn.

From being attacked by killer rabbits, to finding themselves in a babysitting situation, Lula never disappoints.

"Listen to me, you punk-ass loser, you don't want to call me no Aunt Jemima or I'm gonna give you Aunt Jemima in the face with this fry pan. Only thing stopping me is I don't want to k-i-l-l you in front of the b-r-a-t-s."

Dealing with Morelli during an off on-again-off-again relationship, and Ranger's smooth sexy yumminess, Stephanie is faced with a dilemma. On one had, Morelli was a man she loved but whom didn't want to marry her. The feeling was mutual. And on the other hand, Ranger pushes himself against her body and life, leaving her toes tingling and thoughts rumbling through erotic dreams and nipple-teasing hard ons.

One of the coolest pages in this book explains the rules of Stephanie's house. I have similar rules, they just aren't followed.

I hung up and retreated to the living room. If you sat in front of the television in my parents' house, you weren't expected to talk. Even if asked a direct question, the viewer had the discretion of feigning hearing loss. Those were the rules.

Hah!

I love it.

This book slams you through the past and really leaves your chest hurting, a weight that seems to crush down on you. There are certain things an individual reader will react to. I don't like to read about women being brutalized. It upsets me.

I recommend this book to all mature adults. Moderate violence and mild to moderate sexual content. (Yay! You'll see .. woo hoo!) Sensitive content and some morally suggestive moments, but other than that, this book has my two thumbs up!

Now it's time for To the Nines!

Happy reading!

Benjamin says

In this book, bounty-hunter Stephanie gets a couple two-bit FTAs (failure to appear) to get back to court. She fails miserably a couple times and rewards herself with doughnuts. While juggling lusty feelings for both Ranger and Morelli, she gets an unwanted sidekick tagging along. After getting yet another car destroyed, her neighborhood cops show up to laugh at her. She goes to have dinner with her protective mother and smack-talking grandma, while her father rolls his eyes and quietly eats his dinner. Later, Stephanie and Lulu go on a stake-out, miss their quarry, and go out for pizza/shopping. Though both Ranger and Morelli try to protect her, she refuses to be cowed (though still shaking in her boots) and makes the final confrontation with the bad guy.

Sound familiar? That is essentially the plot of all of the Stephanie Plum books that I've read so far. Though it was cute at first, it gets old essentially reading the same story over and over again. I used to get the Plum books out as fluff to read on airplane trips. Now, reading it as a break in between other books, this just seems far too shallow with no real growth in the character over time.
