



# The Look of Love

*Crystal B. Bright*

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**You can't fight love...**

There's only one thing MMA fighter Gunnar Wells is more devoted to than his career, and that's his mother, "Queen" Elizabeth. An elegant African American woman who adopted Gunnar and his two white brothers, Elizabeth was there when they needed her, and they'll do anything for her. For Gunnar, that means running her hair salon when she suddenly falls ill. And if that's not awkward enough for the champion fighter, he'll have to work alongside Eboni Danielson, the other love of his life. The one he left behind to pursue his dream. The one he's never forgotten...

Between the salon and her volunteer work, Eboni keeps busy to keep her mind off the man who broke her heart. So when Gunnar shows up again, she does her best to stay cool—on the outside. But the more she watches Gunnar step up and help out, the less she can deny her feelings. Soon Gunnar is doing everything he can to convince Eboni to give him a fighting chance. Can she trust him again—even when old secrets and new dangers come between them once more?

## The Look of Love Details

Date : Published June 23rd 2015 by Lyrical Press

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Author : Crystal B. Bright

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Genre : Romance, Contemporary Romance, Interracial Romance

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# From Reader Review The Look of Love for online ebook

## Kathryn says

I've read Crystal's books for years, romances under both of her names, and she knows how to create an atmosphere that draws you into the story. I was drawn to The Look of Love for its setting (Virginia, where I live) and the premise of a "macho" man who hasn't forgotten his roots. In this first of a trilogy, MMA fighter Gunnar has come home to help his mother run her hair salon. Sounds easy, but there's baggage - namely the girl he left behind in order to achieve stardom.

Gunnar and Eboni are a great couple, fighting romantic tension and sparring over his mother's well-being. I look forward to the other two books and hope to see more of the supporting players who add to the setting.

ARC received from publisher via NetGalley

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## Gisèle Altagracia says

I wanted to love this book. Because: the hero is a MMA fighter, white and adopted by black woman (together with his 2 brothers, so there will be sequels) and he returns to town to help his momma run her beauty shop after she falls ill. *En passant* he'll try to fix the relationship with his ex-girlfriend and maybe even get a second chance to love. What's not to love? Sadly though, I ended up merely liking it.

The no's

- The H/h were not as like-able as they could have been. The hero Gunnar was quite ok, Eboni though, she was annoying as...euhm fuck. There. I said it.
- The plot was larded with unbelievabilities, (view spoiler)
- Unnecessary drama and overused tropes, (view spoiler)

The yesses:

- The momma: Queen Elisabeth. Her character was the glue that kept the story together
- The secondary characters were a hoot
- (view spoiler)
- The story was well paced and sometimes quite funny especially the hairdressing shop scenes. Even though I had a perpetual sense of Beauty Shop (y'all remember that movie with Queen Latifah?) déjà vu while reading those.

Overall, I liked it well enough. But I wanted to love it, so no more than 3 stars.

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## Karen's Bookshelf says

\*\*\* I was given an ARC copy for an honest review\*\*\*

Gunnar Wells had left home without a thought of returning. There were things he didn't want to remember, and people he didn't want to face. There was only one thing that could make him return home, his mother. When he got a call from her informing him of her sickness, he realized that it was time to go home and face his past and the people he left behind. Eboni Daniels had been a part of Gunnar's past, the part he wanted to take with him but she refused to leave with him and leave behind her family and the only home she's ever know. When the two of them come face to face, can the leave the past behind and build a future together, or will past secrets and present dangers rip them apart for good?

This was a really sweet story. What I liked about Gunnar was his need to protect the ones he cared. Gunnar and Eboni both came from humble backgrounds, so they both had ideas of a better life, just different ways of achieving that goal. In Gunnar's absence, Eboni had become really close to his mother looking out for her, and I think that endeared her to him more. At times Eboni could be a little immature in her actions, but she had a kind heart. She wanted to make sure everyone was taken care of. I enjoyed their journey of getting reacquainted and finding out that if it's meant to be, nothing steps in the way of fate. Gunnar has two brothers, so I look forward to reading their stories also.

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## **Nicky says**

I received this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.

The Look of Love is a story about a white man (and his brothers) being adopted by a black woman in Virginia. She runs a series of businesses and each brother grows up with a talent for each of the businesses. They all become sports stars, but are all called home when their mother becomes ill. This book is the first in a series and is Gunnar's (the oldest brother) story. Gunnar is an MMA champion and comes home first to see to his mother's Beauty Shop. He runs into former flame, Eboni, and they both soon realize that ten years apart wasn't enough to get rid of their feelings for each other. Gunnar and Eboni have to determine if what they had can work again or if it's safer to just stay apart.

This book had a lot of potential going in. I was excited to read it. It had a lot of my favorite book elements. A sports star going back home to a long lost love. An interracial romance. But the story didn't quite meet the mark.

What I liked: I liked the premise of the book. I liked the side characters. The other hair dressers were pretty hilarious and really added to the story. I loved Gunnar's brother, Gideon. I'm very interested in his story.

What I didn't really love: Eboni. I didn't exactly love Gunnar all that much either, but I did like him better than I liked Eboni. I think for most of the book, Eboni didn't really like herself all that much, so it was hard for me as a reader to like her. Gunnar just seemed kind of unreal. It was hard to picture him doing the things he did in the book. The writing was kind of awkward at first, but it seemed to smooth out later on in the book. Parts of the book seemed too unbelievable and as I read them, I spent more time thinking "that could never happen" than focusing on the plot. Other parts were pretty predictable. Pretty much everything that happened, you could accurately guess on the outcome. There was never an "I didn't see that coming" moment.

Overall, the book was a quick, fun read. It'll be interesting to meeting Gunnar's brothers in upcoming books.

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## **Boxy Frown says**

This is a sweet second chance love story set in Virginia. Check out Heroes and Heartbreakers for the full review First Look!

ETA link above.

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## **Terri says**

Review also found at <http://kristineandterri.blogspot.ca/2...>

**\*\*I received an advanced copy of this book from the publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. The expected publication date is June 23rd 2015\*\***

This story managed to deliver exactly what I expected from it, no more and no less. You have the story of two estranged lovers who try to deny their feelings until the point where they don't, at least physically and then emotionally later on. No surprises with this story.

There were a few steamy scenes for those who like that in the story. The usual amount of conflict and drama to keep the story going. Overall it does justice to the formula.

The one thing that I found a little odd was how Gunnar was with his mother. Here we have a huge MMA fighter who seemingly becomes a polite little child in the presence of his mother. I have been around several men who treat their mother's well but this seemed almost extreme. Do men like this actually exist to the point that they are lecturing others to watch their language in front of ladies, still opening doors etc. It seemed a little extreme. I do think it is good but not sure how prevalent it still is in today's society. Kudos to all the moms out there if they are raising boys like this.

Overall an entertaining read.

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## **L.A. Hendricks says**

I downloaded this from Amazon during one of my wandering around the site. I picked it because the blurb sounded interesting and the story is set in my hometown (Virginia Beach!)

This was a quick and pleasurable read. The story is pretty easy to follow and I was able to knock the book out in an afternoon. The characters are well rounded and rooting for them and their romance is easy. This is a perfect beach read and I heartily recommend!!

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## **P.e. lolo says**

A story of three boys being adopted by a women named Queenie, she now needs help because she is sick and the oldest one comes home. His name is Gunner and he is a MMA fighter. Queen wants him to run her

beauty shop, she has three different businesses and each one of the boys worked at each one and was good at the one they were at. This one he is arguing with Eboni who just happens to be a girl he liked before he left. One of the reasons he left was because he was into the streets pretty heavy, and gangs. This is really where he learned to fight. Now he fights in a cage but he is thinking that it is time to end that part of his life and settle down. The problem is whether Eboni will have again or not. A very good book. With just the right amount of drama and light heartiness to make the story flow. Like the characters and the story. I gave this book 4 stars. I got this book from netgalley.com. Follow us at [www.1Rad-Readerreviews.com](http://www.1Rad-Readerreviews.com).

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## **Lynda Garcia says**

### **Loving it**

I really got into this story...mama Elizabeth is such a character....raising 3 abandoned boys her own regardless of their race...Eboni and Gunnar's relationship is riddled with doubts and secrets....some were trivialities and some more complex...but in the end the love broke through all of the messy situation and conquered all....by the way thanks to Crystal for the Virginia Beach backdrop...It's a nice place to live.

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## **Monica \*\*can't read fast enough\*\* says**

Review to come

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## **Serena Akeroyd says**

This was a great read. I love athlete heroes, they just do something for me. Hehe. :D And when the hero is an MMA champ? Capable of beating a champion contender within 8 minutes and all because he's concerned about his mother?

Well, hell! Who couldn't love Gunnar?

The actual reason I didn't give this book five stars was Eboni, the heroine. She, well, she got on my nerves. I just found her a bit irritating. And Gunnar, to me, he just came across as this huge, confused bear, but he was so awesome! I lurved him!

The series was a pretty cool one. A black foster mom with three white foster boys, an interracial romance, but the best bit? This huge, strong bear was a freakin' hair stylist, capable of telling that Eboni had false extensions within twenty seconds! I mean, cool! I LOVED it! And by the sounds of it, the other brothers are just as talented in decidedly 'effeminate' careers. It rocks how the heroes transcend sexual stereotypes. To me, that was one of the best parts of the story.

My two problems rested simply with Eboni, I just didn't gel with her, but secondly, there were little things that made me go back a few pages to reread. Like, Gunnar, who adores his mom, hadn't been back to see her for 10 years. I know he had a past in his hometown, but I could deal with that, I just thought he'd met up with her on his travels. But then, he asks himself, early on in the story, if she'd remarried? That just made me scratch my head. I had to reread to make sure I'd understood it correctly. And I had.

But anyhow, not going to nitpick because this was a fabulously different story. Highly recommended! :)

“I received this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.”

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## Nichole says

### Wow and wow!

Just finished this story of Gunnar and Eboni, and I was not disappointed. The love flowing off each page and the 'who done it?' in the middle had me smiling. Great book and I can't wait to read the next title!

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## Whitney says

I love the “second chance at love” trope, so I was glad that I was approved to read this book by the author. However, I didn't love this book. I actually finished this book several days ago, and I'm still having a hard time articulating why this book wasn't really for me.

My biggest issue with this book is I didn't feel any chemistry between Gunnar and Eboni. There wasn't much of a romance between the two. They start off giving each other the cold shoulder, Eboni especially, even though the attraction is still there, but nothing really happens between them until the middle of the book. What hindered their romance was the slew of secondary characters that had more life in them than the main couple. While I enjoyed the beauty shop realism, I didn't care about Gunnar's scenes where he's getting to know the rest of the staff on a one-on-one basis.

I would really like to know why the author didn't just make Gunnar black. White guy in a do-rag? Typing it is just as ridiculous as visualizing it. I mean, I like the premise of a white guy being adopted by a black woman and having him obviously partake in black culture. But at the end of the day, he's not black and I felt the author was constantly trying to prove how “down” he was. Like, he's an MMA fighter who knows how to do a black woman's hair and make haircare products for them. I mean....okay. Sounds fake, but okay. I also wanted him to be more alpha than he came off as. Sure he was hulking guy who beats up people for a living, but so sensitive, gentlemanly and understanding that it came off like “The Perfect Guy”™ fantasy. They literally ask the “what's your ideal man” question in the book and OF COURSE Gunnar ticks off all the boxes, which had me rolling my eyes

And I dislike saying this, but the meddling mother, Queen Elizabeth--and geez that nickname was just as ridiculous as Gunnar wearing a do-rag--had more interesting presence than the hero and heroine. She was a bit much (I cringed so hard during the sex talk parts), but the book really would have been dull without her. She really upstaged the MCs and I don't think that's a good thing.

So much didn't make sense to me and caused me to suspend a lot of belief. First, you love your mother, but you stay away for 10 years? Speak off staying away, how are you not responding to messages that your mother is having serious health issues? Not one check-in? How old were Gunnar and Eboni when he wanted to leave and start an MMA career and she wanted to be engaged? Bright made it seem like they were late teens/barely early 20s when Gunnar decided to leave, so wanting a ring at such a young age didn't jive with me.

I thought the sex scenes (when they finally, FINALLY had sex) were hot albeit a bit technically. But when Bright found her stride, I felt more chemistry between Gunnar and Eboni in the bedroom rather than out.

While the first book in this series wasn't for me, I do want to see who Gideon and Thane end up with. My guess is Shay and Tisha (?) respectively and I'll definitely tune in to find out if my assumptions were correct.

2.5 stars

\*ARC given to me by the author in exchange for an honest review\*

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### **XxTainaxX says**

I really enjoyed seeing Gunnar and Eboni's development. The author did really well with the details of the story and the emotional ties are woven well. The concept and plot is unique and different. Something that really added value to the story. Queen Elizabeth is hilarious. I can't wait to learn more about this world that Ms. Bright has created :)

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### **Jeanette Book-Reviews says**

**\*\*3.5 Stars\*\***

Note: ARC provided by Lyrical Press, Kensington Books via NetGalley.

YOU CAN'T FIGHT LOVE... that first line of the book description was the reason I was drawn to it.

1st of the trilogy of the Mama's Boys, namely Wells Brothers.

This is where we meet Gunner "Guns" Wells..

He left Virginia 10 years ago on the Greyhound bus to pursue his dream of becoming MMA fighter, roll on to the present which is now that he's the Heavyweight International Ultimate fighting champion... he never forgets his roots. He gets a phone call of his mama which he always does before a fight... He then finds out that his mama is indeed in the hospital.

He decided to come home and help to run his mama's hair salon... problem is that the girl "Eboni" he sadly left to pursue his dreams works there too...

I seriously love the chemistry between them when they try to figure out what's the best way to care for Mama- she's better known as Queen Elizabeth!

Looking forward to read the next ones that feature other Wells brothers.. Gideon & Thorne.

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