



Stir Me Up

Sabrina Elkins

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Cami Broussard has her future all figured out. She'll finish her senior year of high school, then go to work full-time as an apprentice chef in her father's French restaurant, alongside her boyfriend, Luke. But then twenty-year-old ex-Marine Julian Wyatt comes to live with Cami's family while recovering from serious injuries. And suddenly Cami finds herself questioning everything she thought she wanted.

Julian's all attitude, challenges and intense green-brown eyes. But beneath that abrasive exterior is a man who just might be as lost as Cami's starting to feel. And Cami can't stop thinking about him. Talking to him. Wanting to kiss him. He's got her seriously stirred up. Her senior year has just gotten a lot more complicated....

Stir Me Up Details

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From Reader Review *Stir Me Up* for online ebook

Jen says

4 stars

At first glance, *Stir Me Up* seems like a steamy read that doesn't require a lot of focus; it appears to be a nice fluffy read with a stereotypical storyline. However, it proves to have much more than that; I was pleasantly surprised with Elkins' ability in telling Cami and Julian's story. *Stir Me Up* is a great romantic story, with the addition of self-discovery along the way.

First off, one of the many things I enjoyed about *Stir Me Up* was the food aspect. Cami works at her dad's French restaurant, and you guys know I love stories that incorporate French culture in any way. And goodness gracious, Elkins knows her food! The French cuisine and cooking played a huge part in Cami's self-discovery and I loved the way it was weaved into the story.

I wasn't quite sure of the romance at first, but as the story continued, I grew to love Cami and Julian together. They definitely start out rocky with an antagonistic relationship, but it grows to be very sweet and honest. Julian is totally swoon-worthy--even with one leg!

I admired watching Cami grow and find what she truly wants in her future, and the struggles she endures through are wholly realistic and illustrates how a true teen would experience right out of high school. And that ending? Perfect. Loved it so much, left the story on a really good note!

In all, Sabrina's debut, *Stir Me Up*, is one that you won't want to miss. I know for sure that I'll be looking forward to her future romance novels, because they are oh-so-sweet and fun to read. With the addition of food cuisine, a lovely romance, and a realistic journey of self-discovery, *Stir Me Up* deserves a thumbs-up from me!

Check out this review and more at Books and Other Happy Ever Afters

Estelle says

Review originally posted on Rather Be Reading Blog

Sabrina Elkins can tell a story. An absolutely addicting story. Here's why:

- **Cami has valid insecurities just like any of us.** It's her senior year of high school and all Cami wants to do when she graduates is cook. Not go to college like her dad wants, but to cook in a restaurant, like the one she has grown up in. It's not easy to balance what you want and what your parent wants for you. In addition, Cami is in a relationship that is leading up to her losing her virginity and she is petrified. She really doesn't want to. I wish more characters were open about this fear (instead of automatically being a crazy sex goddess before they've lost their virginity).
- **Since his injury, Julian is going through a lot of physical and emotional changes.** In ways, Elkes' characterization of Julian reminded me of Travis in *Something Like Normal*. He's seen some terrible things, he's been through a horrific ordeal, and he is angry. He is really really angry. Even when his anger is

displaced (most of the time), this felt so true to his situation. And his recovery? The details of his rehabilitation? I like that Elkes took the time to go into that part of it too.

- **Cami and Julian's slow burn romance. These kids did not rush into anything.** In fact, they deserve some applause because I think they did a commendable job of trying to stay away from one another. (It is kind of awkward since Cami's stepmom thinks of Julian as her son.) But you know, Cami is the only one who will put Julian in his place and when they start to warm up to each other, he's really nice and helpful and wants her to figure out what she wants out of life (with or without him in the picture). There's a friendship and tenderness there.

- **It's not all about sex.** Don't misunderstand me. This book is hot. (I think the first kiss goes down in history as one of the best ever.) But sex is not the end goal. It's just a thing that may or may not happen. And most importantly, the depiction and the moments leading up to all of it, it all comes down to a boy and a girl. Not who has more skills or what words they use to describe things. It's just about a boy and a girl.

- **Parental pressures.** Cami's restaurant-owning dad is concerned that he may not have been around for her much because of his work schedule. He so wants Cami to understand the sacrifices he had to make because of his passion for food, which is why he wants her to go to college and "do more with herself". I like how this plotline subtly popped up during the story. (And a main character with a serious hobby? Loved this. Elkins doesn't joke around either; there are recipes included at the end of the book!)

- **Lastly, it's funny.** Stir Me Up is not only about chemistry, or serious post-high school decisions. Cami has a great best friend who texts the best messages, and Cami's dad is a Grade-A food snob and this leads to some very interesting family dinners.

Have I convinced you? It was so nice to read a well-rounded new adult book with two characters that certainly had baggage, but it was believable baggage that made them oh-so relatable.

Don't miss out on this one!

BookHookup says

Christina and Celeste reviewed this book. Their original review for this title can be found **HERE** on The Book Hookup.

****SPECIAL NOTE:**** ***Celeste received a copy of this book via Kismet Touring and Christina received a copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley. Both copies were accepted in exchange for an honest review.***

♥ First Thoughts:

Celeste: 4.5 stars ooooh, as soon as I saw that Julian had serious attitude I knew I would love it...what a fantastic love story.

Christina: 3.5 stars but I'd round up to a 4! There were certain aspects of the book that annoyed me, but ultimately I liked Julian & Cami—they had great bantering fights and I enjoyed their chemistry.

♥ Plot, Pacing and Style:

Celeste: When Julian got seriously injured on duty in the marines, he moved in with Cami and her family to recover. Julian had massive survivor's guilt on top of his own serious injuries to deal with, leaving him pretty

surly. And that is an understatement. However, Cami doesn't let him get away with anything, and soon he finds peace when they are together. And lots (and lots) of sparks. The pacing was just right, I read the book nearly in one sitting so it definitely kept my attention. The story was told only from Cami's POV so we never got a chance to be in Julian's head. I have a feeling that Julian wanted to keep a lot of his thoughts to himself though and probably wasn't ready to share his side of the story, so I get it. I know he has seen things that I can't even imagine.

Christina: Overall, I was really into the plot and that the author's approach to Cami's after-high-school dilemma and Julian's struggles were believable and handled in a realistic manner. As for the pacing, it was only stilted in spots because of scenes that I felt were unnecessary, but I still read the book in one sitting, so it definitely held my attention. I think the author's style was very straight-forward and her prose wasn't very flowery, but it worked for this type of novel. I will say, though, any time Cami was cooking, I had to check my mouth for drool. You can tell that Ms. Elkins absolutely knows her way around a kitchen.

♥ The MCs:

Celeste: I loved how real both Cami and Julian acted. There were no games, but there were a lot of issues to be worked through. They both seemed to come alive when they were together, and it seemed like they made the outside world and all the bad thoughts disappear when they were alone. While Julian seemed to be the one with the tougher thoughts on his plate, it turned out he was the one who helped Cami find direction in her life. They both gave the other what they needed, and I love how they rounded each other out. I think so much of why I adored these two is their honesty with everyone and everything. If there weren't sure, they just spoke up. No one needed coddling for the sake of coddling.

Christina: Both characters read as genuine people, and I liked that. They were both no nonsense and direct with their interactions with each other and the other people. However, it was some of Cami's naivety and boldness that I felt was a bit too conflicting for her personality through parts of the story; it made me question her actions/behaviors at certain times. (Example: Like she couldn't talk about sex and how she'd act while having an orgasm, but she was ready to jump his bones.) While I found it irritating in some instances, it worked in others.

Overall, I thought both characters were enjoyable and I liked reading about how they found love and possible long-term anchors in one another. They really balanced one another out.

Oh, and I really admired that Julian pushed Cami to pursue her dreams while he went after his own. Often times, in books and in real life, couples try to shape their lives around their significant others. I appreciated that Julian didn't want either of them to have regrets about not going after their passions as their relationship progressed.

♥ Romance/Chemistry:

Celeste: I loved it! Sparks and all the tingly-ness of a first real, deep love. This was not an overly sexy read, but sometimes more to the imagination is swoonier and steamier. Trust me on this....it was a fantastic romance on so many levels.

Christina: They had wicked-good bickering sessions that had me giggling. I like that even though he was a hard-ass marine and wounded, Cami still wasn't going to take a verbal beating. She gave just as good as she got and I respected her for it. It was their arguing that led to a majority of their makeout session, and that's something I can get on board with. They're chemistry was definitely there. There were also some swoony

moments that made my heart pitter-pat, too.

♥ Title/Cover:

Celeste: Ok, the title is kind of cheesy, but yes, it fits. The cover is purdy, but I'm actually all set with Pepe and Sztella now. They seem to be overused. It still caught my eye though and was the first reason I picked up this story.

Christina: I went looking for this title because Jennifer L. Armentrout was praising it on twitter. So, it was a little startling to see Pepe and Sztella on the cover. (I wonder if that was weird for JLA at all???) It's not how I pictured either Cami or Julian (She said he looked like a scarred-up David Beckham. Yes and please!), so the cover models didn't work for me at all. I can handle the title just fine, though.

♥ Ending:

Celeste: Sweet, a very nice HEA, but I wanted a little bit more...maybe an epilogue?

Christina: I actually did a little giddy dance and "awwww-ed" out loud. It was cute and I was perfectly satisfied with it.

♥ Gripes/suggestions:

Celeste: While the ending was sweet, I would have liked an epilogue. Clearly Julian wasn't even close to working through all his issues and guilt. While he founds peace with Cami and knew life was worth living, I know his road wasn't easy. I guess I would have liked to see what happened down the road with all the bumps. I could have also done without the texts from Taryn. I'm not sure they added any value to the story and all the capital letters were distracting. However....maybe she is up for a book herself? I think she has a story to tell and she is ready for love.

Christina: Like Celeste, I wasn't fond of the text messages in the story either. I felt like their only purpose was to keep Taryn's presence alive in the book as her "BFF." There were also a few scenes spread throughout the book that just had me puzzled—like the palm-reading scene and Cami's intervention on Taryn's possible one night stand with a college guy, along with a few others. I can't figure out how they furthered the plot or what value they added to the book, so I really feel like they could have been edited out.

♥ Final Thoughts/Rec It?

Celeste: Yes yes yes. Loved it. A great romance that had my heart fluttering.

Christina: Sure! The book had the potential to be a little darker and heartache-y, but I enjoyed the cuter aspects of it.

♥ A very special thanks to Kismet Touring, Harlequin TEEN, & NetGalley for providing an early copy of this title for our review.

Debbie I Heart YA Books says

Stir Me Up was such a fantastic surprise. I wasn't expecting the level of depth that Sabrina Elkins created in this beautiful love story between Cami and Julian. Cami had me pumping my fists in the air. I love that she was a strong, self-assured young woman who knew her own self-worth as a person and didn't take Julian's crap, and that she gave it right back to him in the most badass, womanly grace. Yeah, I loved Cami. And yes, I did love Julian even in his jerkiness, because it was just fun to watch Cami bring him back to reality—that he wasn't going to get any self-pity from her, and she wasn't going to walk on eggshells around him.

Cami is turning eighteen and in her senior year of high school. She's coming into adulthood, and it's time she makes her own decisions for her life and her heart—her father, her boyfriend, college, and the ex-marine who has turned her life upside down. Oh yes, the gorgeous, sexy marine, Julian. The banter between these two is hilarious. Cami doesn't hold back her tongue with this marine, even if Julian is the guy who makes her heart swoon.

There were two more characters in this story that I enjoyed, and that I hope Elkins will give them their HEA. Taryn, who is Cami's best friend, and Luke, the boyfriend. They are super great characters that I also fell in love with. These two deserve a story all of their own.

Stir Me Up is a fantastic, beautiful and humorous love story. And all that's left to say is that I loved the storyline, I loved the characters, and most of all, I loved the spicy romance served up Hot in Cami and Julian's recipe for love! I highly recommend Cami and Julian's romance as one of the most heart-touching love stories that you will not want to miss.

Some of My Favorite Teaser Quotes

You insulted my dog and boyfriend and then called me out of work without asking,"
"Interesting you put the dog before the boyfriend there."

"I'm not an invalid," he says. "I don't need crap brought to me on a fu*king---"

A muffin hits him upside the face.

"Cami!" Estella chides.

"A hero is just an ordinary person placed in extraordinary circumstances."

"Who said that," Julian asks, looking up at me, "Emerson?"

"Actually, I think it was Spider-Man."

Julian turns to me. "This is who you're dating?"

"What's wrong with her dating me?"

"You mean other than the fact that you're a stupid, insecure suck-up?"

My Favorite Swoon:

I bury my head against him.

"Don't be embarrassed," he says, holding me. "You can't help it if you're on the verge of going nuclear whenever I touch you. "I glance up at him--he's grinning like he just won the lottery.

"You seem so bummed about this."

"Yeah. Really hurts a guy's ego." He turns me back so I'm spooned against him, and he starts kissing me behind my ear. "I may blow the roof off the house myself."

writtenbybee says

[or that's what she thinks until the very end (hide spoiler)]

Danny says

That was cute and hot and full of emotion!!! It wss deep and real and had two amazing characters. I couldn't have loved Cami and Julian any more!!!!. Basically this story has everything I'm always looking for!!!!

Fans of Katie McGarry will devour this book as much as I did.

Colette says

I'm going to be in the minority when I say this, but I really didn't care for this book. It saddens me, because I really thought I would love it. For the first half of the book I did. I loved how Cami gave Julian crap for being so moody and awful to everyone. I enjoyed it when she threw a muffin at him for being so mean once. I got to the 70 percent mark in the book and as soon as Cami and Julian got together I started struggling to continue reading it, and I don't know why because the romance part between them was really well done. The problem was with me-I just couldn't connect to either of them as a couple, but loved them otherwise. I just thought the tropes used were really predictable, and this was one of those Young Adult books that I just felt old reading it because so many little things bugged them that had I been in the age demographic this book was meant for I think I would have over looked them and fallen head over heels for Julian and Cami. As it stands, I think Cami was just a little too perfect...but at the same time it was nice to have a normal YA heroine who was just concerned about school, work and boys and not much else.

I thought the chemistry between Cami and Julian was great. I loved them together, but for me it was just too unbelievable. I just had a hard time with the hero being out of high school and in love with her even if there was only a 3 year age difference. I know this was a coming of age story, but Cami got on my last nerve with should I go to college or not? She thought her dad was being all mean by making her consider it, but I actually thought that was great parenting....which made me feel really old.

One of the things that really bugged was that we were told over and over again how many hours Cami works at her dad's restaurant, and how she passed out once from not taking a break because she worked all day long. You know what bothered me about that? There are labor laws that say a minor can't work more than 5 hours a day without taking a break. I know it's her dad's place and all, but having worked a lot of places I can't see why her dad just didn't follow the law and make sure she got her breaks, etc. I know that's the adult in me being sensible, but I had to wonder why it took so long for her dad to cut back on her hours, etc in the book.

I still can't really pinpoint where this book went wrong for me and why I ended up not enjoying it as much as I thought I would, but it might have something to do with the tropes in this book just not doing it for me, but I still always feel bad when I don't love a book like I think will....

Hallie says

So, I was sick a few weeks ago, and got pretty close to my personal "Yeah, it's serious, call the doctor" point of not being able to read. (Last time that happened was during the second of two attacks of flu within a few months, and the doctor came out and said it was almost pneumonia.) I did not get there this time, thankfully, but I needed a very specific *That Book*. The requirements were odd - no fantasy (to *read*, though I continued listening to *Rise of Empire*, which makes no sense even to me), yes humour, and could be all the angst but no tension of the wrong kind.

This book wasn't *That Book*, but it was close for a lot of the time, and mostly I enjoyed it more than 3 stars might seem to indicate. It was funny, it had good family dynamics and I loved the focus on Cami's passion for being a chef and lack of desire to go to uni for a back-up career option. I also enjoyed the difference of having the first boyfriend be a pretty decent guy, although there was a bit of a flip-side to that. After I'd finished, I really couldn't see much more in either guy except that Julian was even hotter than Luke, who'd been pretty hot himself. Didn't love that. Also after laughing quite happily at Cami's display of jealousy at the ski lodge, which really was pretty funny, I thought about the fact that it was kind of awful. Most readers would be indignant at a guy chasing off another guy through physical threats - jealous boyfriend? NOT CUTE - so why should it be different when the girl does it?

The thing that bothered me most though - again, mostly after finishing - was everything around Julian's use of the word "bait". Firstly it was offensive to Cami, given the situation, and secondly, it really requires a bit of retro-fitting that doesn't excuse what Cami - rightly, IMO - called Julian for: being an asshole. I think his behaviour *could* have been handled in such a way that it was a natural expression of his grief, loss and PTSD, but it wasn't. And the failure really turned it - to a degree - into a "It's your fault, you're too sexy" blame-the-girl. Which isn't how the book actually comes off at all, and I will admit that in reading more into it I'm pulling out an attitude that isn't necessarily there in the book, but it's definitely still problematic.

Also, in the nitpicky arena, where I do champion work - 1) a well-trained (in French cookery) chef, even one who'd only eaten Indian food maybe twice in her life, would have *known* that lentils don't get pre-soaked. 2) An old dog who's slept in bed with someone every night of her life will in very, very much all likelihood be attached to the person, not the bed itself. And the person with whom she's slept will know this, and bring the dog to her new bed. Doing otherwise seemed just shoved-in to make Julian behave like more of an asshole. 3) The area of Vermont in which they lived seemed very rural and isolated for such an upscale French

restaurant, for which Cami's father seemed to have no trouble finding highly-trained staff.

All the complaints and nitpicks aside, this did a lot to get me through some of the feeling-like-death-warmed-over stages of this illness.

Daydreamer says

I'm absolutely breathless! I loved this book SO MUCH. I came across it when I saw a giveaway by Jennifer L. Armentrout. She's my favorite author so I was definitely interested when I saw that she loved this book. I was in the middle of reading a not so good book when when I decided "what the hell" and bought Stir Me Up, I nearly devoured it in one sitting, unfortunately this thing called "real life" interrupted. The audacity! This book is an emotional terrorist (in a good way). It had me in the feels constantly.

When I wasn't in the feels, I was hungry. The protagonist is a chef and the way things are described are so vivid and perfect! I haven't loved any YA contemporary this much since Perfect Chemistry by Simone Elkeles. I loved all the characters and the story just developed so nicely. I also loved how the father was involved in his daughter's life. I feel like nowadays YA parents kind of don't exist. I'd definitely recommend this book to everyone! For 1.99 it's an absolute steal. I'm eager to follow Elkins through her writing journey! Hopefully she's working on something else already.

P.S: If I had to use just one gif to describe Julian, it would be this:

Sonja says

Woouooooooooooooow, this book!!!!!! I gave this five stars for one simple reason: the romance in it. It doesn't happen often that a romance works THIS well for me. I have absolutely zero complaints about the actual romance, it was perfect. In a lot of ways this was a quiet romance, it didn't feel flashy or anything- it just developed organically and watching that unfold on paper (or, er, my Kindle) was wonderful. Everything about their actual relationship was so beautifully done. I love hate-to-love relationships so much, but I will say that I did find Julian to (understandably) be a major jackass in the beginning, maybe too much so, and if his jackassery had gone on for 2-3 more chapters, I may not have loved this book as much - but then when I was at the point where I was like UGH JULIAN, PLEASE STOP, the book suddenly got so good I wanted to cry.

Everything else was handled so well, too. Cami didn't fit in with any of her friends, but they loved her anyway. She had a great family (including her stepmom and step brother, Brandon). There was zero unnecessary drama. Everyone in this book was generally a nice person (except maybe Luke, but who cares about him?).

(view spoiler)

I would love nothing more than to read a sequel for them. I WANT TO KNOW MORE. It's so rare that a standalone romance works this well for me, but it did. Everything I ever wanted.

So yes, READ THIS!!!! It's about quasi-step siblings (her dad married his aunt who raised him) who fall in love and it is PERFECT.

Lucina says

4.5 stars

Nice, but not as good as "Whatever Lives Throws At You".

Dangerous Dotz says

Kind of bummed about the \$1.99 I spent on this one. I had high hopes after reading over the handful of reviews made so far. But I stopped 55% of the way through. I just couldn't waste anymore time even though it's a short read.

I felt like there wasn't enough inner dialogue or self reflection by the protagonist. Cami's somewhat strained relationship with her father was unconvincing. Her reasons for falling for Julian and her sadness/guilt over dumping Luke was even less believable. Most of the book is filled with mediocre banter between characters - I needed more show and less tell. It also jumps from scene to scene without much finesse. I'm giving an extra star for the food descriptions though. It put me in the mood to watch an episode of Chopped.

Anyway, the story had potential but it ended up being big fat meh for me. And so the hunt for the next 5 star review continues...

Jessica says

Update: I meant to come back and change this a week or more ago but got caught up in school. This isn't a 4 star review for me- it's a 5. I cannot stop thinking about this book and obsessing over it. The more and more I think about the plot, the characters and their development- this book hands down is worth all 5 stars.

I first became aware of this book after seeing Sara from Forever 17 Books post it as one of her Waiting on Wednesdays. I have been on such a contemporary kick lately so when I got the email from Harlequin asking if I wanted to review it- I jumped at the chance. And I am SO very glad I did! I really enjoyed this book! I enjoyed both Cami and Julian's characters and watching them evolve as individuals and as a couple was definitely a huge bonus for me.

Cami is a 17 year old senior in high school who lives for working at her father's restaurant. Cooking is in her blood and she wouldn't have it any other way, despite her father's insistence she start looking at colleges. Cami's life is turned upside down when her father recruits her to go with his new wife Estella to help her nephew Julian, a Marine who has been critically injured while serving overseas. She is definitely not happy taking time away from the restaurant and her boyfriend, Luke. Luke and Cami's relationship is in the

discovery phase and is really starting to heat up. Cami, however, is not quite ready for sex and while she wants to explore these feelings she is also afraid of going too far and not being able to stop. I enjoyed Luke and Cami together at first, but after awhile, I just felt Luke kept pushing her and only wanted to spend their time together exploring each other. Cami wasn't exactly against the exploring, but she did have her limits and while Luke respected them, you could tell the two were pulling in different directions. As if Cami's life isn't complicated enough, Julian is coming to live with them while he recovers.

Oh, Julian. The boy stole my heart almost instantly despite his surly, negative attitude. When we first meet him, he is such a dark, angry character. He is unfriendly and bitter, wanting to be left alone. My heart shattered into a million pieces for him. Not only is he struggling with his physical disability and the fact he isn't the man he used to be, but mentally he is having to cope with the horrors of being overseas and watching comrades fall in front of him, knowing there was nothing he could do. He is haunted by what he has seen and blames himself for not being able to do more. Cami tries to treat him with respect and be understanding of him, but there comes a point where she's had enough. She's tired of tiptoeing around this guy, who has not only taken over her room, but has invaded her house with his negativity and brash exterior. I think Julian really ends up respecting her for not placating him and giving him special treatment.

Julian and Cami's relationship is very slow moving. I think the pacing was perfect. Julian is suffering from a very traumatic experience and has an injury that makes him feel as if he isn't whole. He has a lot of demons to overcome and has a long road ahead of learning how to live with his disability and then eventually accept it and move forward. As stated above in the blurb, this is considered Mature Young Adult due to sexual situations. I found that aspect of Cami and Julian's relationship to be absolutely beautiful. Cami doesn't see the broken man in front of her- she sees the young, good-looking, sexy Marine and she isn't bothered by his disability in the least bit. He makes her feel things that Luke never did and together, they both make one another feel desired, wanted, and loved.

"There are five smaller scars on his torso that I can see. He's so beautiful, like a young David Beckham only with scars instead of tattoos. I kiss each of them and then he pulls me up and looks at me like he's searching inside my mind for something." (e-ARC pg. 142)

There is so much more to this book than just a romance. Cami doesn't know what she wants to do with her future: she just knows she wants to cook. It's her passion, yet her father doesn't feel that she should have that kind of life. He wants more for his daughter- he wants her to get an education, to explore all her options before she makes the decision to be a chef. He has seen first hand how it can be an isolated, lonely life due to the sheer number of hours that are required to do such a profession. He doesn't want her to be overworked and not able to enjoy a family, which is why he is pushing so hard for her to go to school first. I love how prominent Cami's family was in this book. Most YA contemporaries don't place much focus on the main character's family, so I was pleasantly surprised at just how great a role Cami's father and step-mother played in this book.

Even though Cami is finishing up her senior year and is looking for guidance, Julian refuses to influence her in any way. He wants her to live out her dreams and explore life for herself. Cami needs to learn to be independent and focus on what she wants so she can discover her life's course.

"What I need to do is go out there and find out who I am. Explore the world a little. Taste it, take a bite of it. And then when I come back, not step into a footprint my father or boyfriend or anyone else made for me, but find my own way to make a footprint myself." (e-ARC 228)

This was such a beautiful book that highlights two characters' journey to self-discovery, forgiveness and

acceptance, and most importantly finding the kind of love that's worth saving yourself for.

Received a copy of this book in exchange for a fair and honest review

Sarah says

I am giving this a generous three stars because 1) the romance was really warm and sweet 2) this has a really great positive undercurrent to it regarding female sexuality and 3) it explored the legitimacy of non-college options for teens (attention YA authors: more of this, please).

However, there are loads of plot holes and contrivances that are pretty irritating and all the ends are tied up with a pretty saccharine bow at the end. I would have liked less of a happy ever after and more of a happy for now kind of ending, which would have been more realistic for these characters' circumstances. It irked me that Cami worked so many hours at her father's restaurant to the extent that it was an extreme child labor law violation. Any restaurant owner would know these laws very well and know that in most places those laws are enforced. If you're writing contemporary/realistic fiction, you can't ignore real life like that.

I'll write a longer review on the blog soon, and I definitely recommend this to romance readers looking for a solid YA romance, despite my annoyances with a number of elements.

Also, PSA to all writers and editors: it's "I couldn't care less," not "I could care less."

Edit: I wrote more here - <http://cleareyesfullshelves.com/blog/...>

Rachel says

STIR ME UP is a sweet, fun, romantic and absolutely heartwarming story by author Sabrina Elkins. It's a love story that brings together two unlikely characters – Cami Broussard, a high school student and chef-in-training, and Julian Wyatt, an injured war veteran and former marine.

When Cami first lays eyes on Julian, she is shocked by his injuries and her heart immediately goes out to him. But her sympathy is short-lived, as from the moment he opens his mouth he is rude and insulting. Having to adjust to his presence in her life and in her home is one thing, but she's not about to put up with his attitude. No matter what he's been through. And no matter how gorgeous he is.

It's not as if she doesn't have her own problems. Her father is pushing her to go to college. Her boyfriend is pushing for more of a commitment than she's ready to give him. And she hasn't figured out what she wants to do when she graduates.

But she certainly doesn't want to have to give up her room to an irritable and ungrateful house guest. One who argues with her. One who drives her crazy. One who she can't seem to stay away from. One who makes her feel things that her boyfriend doesn't.

Author Sabrina Elkins created an utterly captivating story that is both charming and sexy with characters that are lovable and sympathetic. She brought depth to her story through characters that have had to deal with

loss, face hardships and overcome incredible obstacles. She brought excitement with a love story that is at first flirtatious and fragile but which grows in its strength and its intensity.

She gave readers something unique through her character Cami's passion for food. And she gave them something to smile about with a story that delivers on its promise to stir things up for Cami Broussard.

STIR ME UP is a quick and incredibly entertaining one-sit read with a deliciously appealing dynamic between the two central characters. It is a must for fans of contemporary romance, love stories that promise the possibility of a happily ever after and stories that are well-written, engaging, thoughtful and romantic.

On a personal note...

When I picked up this story I could not put it down. STIR ME UP was a totally addictive and super-quick read.

I was expecting a story that was light and fluffy – a cotton candy read – but was surprised by its layers. Happily surprised.

I'd been an avid fan of chick lit before I started reading YA and it got to the point where each story felt formulaic – girl meets boy, girl gets boy, girl loses boy, angst, angst, angst, girl gets boy back on the last page. That was not at all the case here.

STIR ME UP was clever, it had depth, it presented some real issues. It had a main character who was strong and passionate and determined and focused. I loved that she was able to see Julian for who he was, not the injuries he sustained. And I loved that the author presented this in a way that was believable and not over the top.

The story spanned just about a year in the characters' lives. It took the time to develop the characters. It didn't rush the love story. It didn't make light of the seriousness of Julian's losses. It didn't present an unrealistic relationship between the characters. It didn't pile on the angst just for the heck of it.

It was sweet, it was romantic, it was sexy as hell at times. It had its moments of heartbreak. It had just the right amount of tension and angst.

The added bonus was how the author incorporated Cami's passion for cooking and for creating recipes into the story. I am not a foodie, nor am I a cook, but I loved reading those passages where Cami was preparing a dish for the restaurant or her family. It made her more three-dimensional, it made her interesting. It made this story unique.

And it made me love this story all the more.

Of course I loved the swoon-worthy marine. I loved the back-and-forth between Cami and Julian, the electricity, the sexual tension. I loved the romance and found myself hoping for a HEA – a rarity for me.

But it was everything all together that made this story as amazing as it was. It gave me all the smiles. It gave me the happy feels. And I don't say this often about contemporary romance, but STIR ME UP is a total must read.

Original notes/comments:

I loved this book. It was romantic and sweet and the perfect way to spend a few hours. I loved getting to know the characters and the romance felt real and believable and not over the top. It struck the right balance. What made this story stand out was Cami's passion for cooking and the detail the author went into, so that you as a reader could feel that to be true and not that it was used as a random element for the story.

I also enjoyed the time span for the story so that the romance didn't feel rushed.

This read left me all smiles. I will definitely be keeping the author on my radar. Can't wait to see what else she writes.
