



Trust Me

Laura Florand

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She's nobody's damsel in distress...

Top Parisian pastry chef Lina Farah is used to fighting for her success. But when a violent attack shatters her security, she needs a new tactic to battle her dragons. What better way to banish the monsters under her bed than by inviting a sexy SEAL to tangle the sheets?

He's a professional dragon slayer...

Elite operative Jake Adams has never stayed in one place long enough to form a lasting relationship. Lina's fire and beauty tempt him to give her the hot affair she craves. But her spirit and courage make him long for more. Can he convince a woman seeking forgetfulness to dream of ever after...with him?

Trust Me Details

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From Reader Review Trust Me for online ebook

Em says

I gave this a C at All About Romance. My full review is here: [Trust Me](#)

Laura Florand is a new-to-me author, but after reading so many positive reviews of her books, I thought I would like **Trust Me**, the third book in the *Paris Nights* trilogy. Unfortunately, this is a terrible book to try and read as a standalone and trust *me* when I tell you not to make the same mistake. If you are determined to give *Paris Nights* a try, read *Chase Me* first. **Trust Me** is a mostly introspective look at the aftereffects of the terrorist attack that takes place in **Chase Me** on the woman who thwarted it. I was lost (and annoyed) when the story opened, easily distracted as the story progressed, and disappointed when it ended. **Trust Me** tries to be and do too much, and unfortunately, it isn't very romantic or interesting. Although the problems our heroine deals with are timely and merit our attention, the book fails to strike the right balance between those concerns and the love story at its heart. Truthfully, it was a bit dull.

My biggest complaint, and why I rarely read series out of order, is that **Trust Me** relies heavily on the book that precedes it with nothing to indicate that this is the case. I disliked backtracking over passages I'd already read, and needing to seek out reviews of the earlier books for the basic context required to move forward. Lina Farah, the focus of this book, is a Michelin starred pastry chef at Au-dessus restaurant. The granddaughter of Algerian immigrants, she's ambitious, talented and fiercely independent, and has never let her sex or race keep her from achieving her dreams. In *Chase Me*, her cousin Abed, a terrorist, targeted Au-dessus because he hated Lina and her best friend Vi (the head chef). Lina survived the attack by throwing liquid nitrogen on him, but Vi and her boyfriend Chase (get it?), an elite counterterrorist operative, are hospitalized with gunshot wounds. At the start of this novel, Ms. Florand assumes you already know all this. By the time the story picks up, Lina is now venerated as a hero for her efforts.

Trust Me jumpstarts in Lina's PoV as she attempts to slay a dragon. Well, she's trying (and failing) to carve a block of ice into the shape of a dragon. Pay attention, because Ms. Florand loves this metaphor and you'll revisit it over and over again whenever Lina struggles to overcome her memories of the attack. Frustrated when the dragon falls apart, Lina gives up and returns her attention to the pastry kitchen at Au-dessus. Watching over her is one of Chase's counterterrorism teammates, Jake Adams. Jake fell hard for Lina when he met her (I think? It happened in *Chase Me*. Ahem.), and after her brave and heroic take-down of Abed, his admiration and affection for the fierce and beautiful pastry chef has grown and he's determined to keep her safe. Jake's fellow counterterrorism teammates in Paris are aware of his feelings and though they love to tease him, they allow Jake to watch over her. Lina is similarly attracted to her handsome protector, but wary of his intentions. Is Jake watching her because he wants to keep her safe? Or is he watching Lina because she's Algerian and could have links to terrorists?

For the first half of this book, it's a frustrating wait as Jake and Lina dance around their attraction to one another. Struggling to overcome her anxiety over the attack, Lina decides having sex with Jake will help (why not?). Just when Jake is about to approach Lina and ask her out on a date, she pre-empts him and asks for no-strings sex instead. Lina, suspicious about Jake's motives and emotionally wrecked by the attack, is reluctant to develop a relationship with her sexy protector, but hopes a physical relationship with Jake can help her feel alive again. He's offended (but flattered) by her offer, and willing to do whatever he can to help her overcome her demons. Via his PoV, we know he wants something more significant with Lina and is ready to make major changes in his life in order to prove it to her, but he's willing to wait and help her – for now.

Jake doesn't give Lina quite what she wants – at least not right away, and we spend the better part of the novel in a frustrating slow burn as Lina works through her feelings about Jake and the attack, and Jake decides he'd rather have a sexual relationship with Lina than none at all. But once Lina has a taste of Jake's sexytimes, she also decides she wants more. When she finally confesses she wants more out of their relationship, their mutual attraction flares into a deeper and more soulful connection right away. The sex is good, too – but you'll have to take their word for it, because not much makes it onto the page. Right away, Lina is happier and emotionally stronger than she was before the affair; Jake revels in her happiness and wants more of it. In a few rapid chapters, Lina begins to conquer her dragons, the restaurant triumphantly re-opens, our couple get their HEA and the book ends.

If that last bit seems a bit rushed, then you know just how the book felt. There's a lot of long, dull introspective passages from both principals about their feelings, Lina's incredible desserts, their friends (I thought they were annoying and pretentious), and the love and passion they feel for each other, but not much else. Aside from a few visits to the hospital, the development of new desserts that mirror Lina's transition from a fragile, damaged victim to fierce heroine/fire breathing dragon, and some sexy times, *Trust Me* simply repeats and revisits the terrorist attack and Lina's reaction to it.

Although I sympathize with Lina and her experiences, Ms. Florand spends way too much time in her head and not enough time developing the relationship between her and Jake, or on Lina's newly minted status as a hero of France. And that's disappointing because she's smart and brave and likeable and he sounds like a great guy. I particularly loved Lina's fondness for Jake's freckles (he's covered in them), and her vivid and vocal appreciation of them in bed and out.

Jake makes a nice alpha hero; his protective nature and spot-on instincts about just what Lina needs to recover emotionally and physically are admirable. I had a harder time connecting with Lina, despite how much time we spend in her head. The character, though beautiful, ambitious and intelligent, is developed entirely in the context of the attack and her feelings for Jake. It's hard to identify with her apart from those things, and the cover of this book makes visualizing her challenging as well. Lina is of Algerian descent and despite the 'foreignness' of her appearance, she's fiercely proud of her heritage. The golden color of her skin and her curly jet black hair are also much admired by Jake. But this cover? It's almost an insult to the whole point of this book...

My full review is here: [Trust Me](#)

Rhode says

I kept wondering if a PhD candidate may someday use this book as a big part of their thesis on the evolution of feminist romance in the early 21st century. Don't get me wrong -- the characters are compelling (oh god, those lickable freckles), the romance is swoony, and there are many thoughtful, highlight-worthy passages. I especially liked how the heroine navigated being a Muslim in public. And her mother was fabulous. Plus some desserts I would give anything to eat IRL.

It's just I could almost hear the author thinking to herself about what it means to be a strong woman today, and in turn what that means to be a man who is attracted to her. As well as what it means to be a contemporary Muslim and a terrorist-fighter who loves her.

Which is not a bad thing - in fact it's fascinating. I really wanted to grab the author afterward and sit down for a nice long conversation, maybe roping in some other folks as well.

The hero is largely drawn to the heroine because he has seen her being strong during a terrorist attack (during the prior book). I kept thinking, how is her strength so unique to him? He's spent years in the Middle East surrounded by women coping with similar things. Plus, WOC in parts of the US that he himself is from are under parallel pressures. Why is this particular woman The One after thousands of them? Sure, she's a great chef, but he's in love due to her strength under attack - and that's NOT UNUSUAL. Is it that he just got woke? He does grow as a feminist through the book, learning to think twice before opening his mouth sometimes (and that's a joy to see.)

I also had lots of thoughts around the whole military, special ops, American SEAL thing that we see on full display here. At times in the text, it feels like the author is joining into the greater romance community's near fetishization of these men without thinking. We hear about his flat stomach, his firmly suppressed emotions, his deep need to protect, how great he is at being a sniper (which I found revolting, exulting in the ability to kill is kinda gross), his loyalty to his brother soldiers, his anxiety-laden hyper awareness in open spaces....

We also get two viciously worded passages about soldiers' wives who cruelly divorce wounded husbands. This pissed me off because it felt misogynistic and hugely one-sided. (Research shows military wives can be more loyal than non military wives. Also, military wives pay enormous prices for being married, including a ridiculously high rate of domestic violence, being a single parent for months on end, and having truncated career paths.)

On the other hand, one passage clearly states that this hero has become aware American forces are not in the field to protect innocent people, but rather to make money for weapons manufacturers and protect the profits of the oil industry. What a relief to finally see this documented fact in a romance novel instead of jingoistic, patriotic pablum!

So, on one hand the author is joining in with the choir adoring the military, on the other hand she's a cynic.

All of these thoughts pulled me to and fro. So, yay freckles. Plus chocolate and a modern Muslim heroine. So, yes how fabulous. And yet, not quite there yet. I feel like the author herself is partway to being woke. Or perhaps she's keeping one foot in the old skool world to allow her readers to catch up?

P.S. Please, if I have one dream for the future, it would be fewer books fetishizing the size difference between the hero and heroine. At least here we hear about her formidable use of a chainsaw, knives and strong wrists. But she's still teeny tiny compared to the hero. I'm so sick of that.

Jess says

I feel like this series makes me very aware of how fast Florand's romances happen and not usually in a good way. That said, I liked Jake and Lina together (Lina is amazing!), and I loved the idea that a man giving up his career to be with the woman he loves doesn't make him smaller, but instead, it makes him bigger because it's him making himself worthy. I dug that.

I really like her other in progress series better, though.

Keertana says

Of course I loved this! Laura Florand can do no wrong.

♥Rachel♥ says

Lina Farah fought and survived a terrorist attack, and it's shaken her. But she's a pastry chef for a two-star Michelin rated restaurant, and you don't get to that position in life without courage, persistence and drive all of which make her determined to get past the overwhelming fear that creeps up when she thinks of what could've happened. Lina would rather distract herself with the sexy American guard, Jake, stalking her kitchens to keep her safe.

Jake is used to meaningless one night stands with his work as a Navy SEAL, a permanent relationship has been a tough thing to pursue, but he's ready for a change. He doesn't just want to be used for sex as a distraction by Lina. Her braveness, loyalty and beautiful spirit make him long for a future with her, but he's not even sure she likes him.

Jake and Lina are tentative and careful, because at first they have trouble deciphering each other's true feelings. I really felt for Jake, he was a total sweetheart; a sexy, possessive, protective sweetheart and he was ready to lay it all out on the line for Lina! I connected with him more than Lina. She wasn't really taking a good look at Jake, the man beneath all that hard, sexy appeal, instead she was just thinking of a way to forget her fear. Granted, Lina was traumatized, and she did sort through her feelings for Jake pretty quickly once she clued in. Even with the more serious feelings Jake and Lina have, there is a playfulness to their relationship, counteracting their vulnerabilities and doubts. Their relationship was passionate and fun, as well!

Jake's teammates provide some laughs as they torment him over his obvious feelings for Lina. I especially love the book club and Ian's fake nerdy glasses in response to Lina's supposed attraction to shy, geeky guys.

As usual, Laura Florand astounds me with her writing. She delves in deep, getting right to the center of her character's hearts, (and mine in the process!), she writes *beautifully* without overly wordy and distracting prose. Lina and Jake's romance was heartfelt, and just so lovely!

A copy was kindly provided by the author in exchange for an honest review.

This review is also posted at The Readers Den.

Sania says

[No (hide spoiler)]

Eri says

Not to be biased but Laura Florand is one of my faves and of course I loved this book. I'm ridiculously into her writing, characters, dynamics and chemistry etc. and if you haven't yet I highly recommend you pick up one of her books seriously.

A real review to come when Lisa finishes this book and we stop procrastinating...

Deborah says

How I love these strong amazing women that Laura Florand creates. I have to say I also love the strong, sweet, sexy men that love them.

The emotional recovery after a traumatic event is so intense and challenging. I loved Lina's way of creating something beautiful over and over again and sharing it with Vi and Chase and his team.

I absolutely adored strong and steady Jake. He was so sweet to Lina. I loved his reaction to Lina's unusual request (don't want to spoil it) and how he stuck with her and helped support her yet wouldn't let himself be used except on his own terms.

Add dragons and freckles and you have an amazing, fabulous book once again. I can't wait for the rest of this series!

Mandi Schreiner says

This book picks up right after events in Chase Me (the series can be read as stand alones.) In Chase Me, there is a terrorist attack in a well-known restaurant, and some people are injured. Lina, our heroine, is the pastry chef and it was her cousin who initiated the attack. Lina is Arab-French, her grandparents immigrating from Algeria to France a few decades ago. Because her cousin is an actual terrorist and she is muslim, suspicion unfortunately is attached to her. She is extensively interviewed by French counter-terrorist units until she is cleared and during that time, a quiet, large American man stood off to the side, watching everything.

Jake is a Navy SEAL, whose team was on alert that this cousin could be a terrorist and was unable to stop him before he made an attack. Jake has seen a lot in his eleven years as a SEAL, and still finds his job exciting, yet tires of all the death. When he is tasked with keeping Lina safe after the attack, he quietly falls in love with her from the sideline. Jake is a big, strong, alpha guy, but a tiny bit awkward when it comes to dating. He fears commitment and is tired of having random, anonymous sex with women. Lina has had the scare of her life, and needs to feel alive again. After she gets to know Jake a little, she suggests a "friends with benefit" situation, and Jake is hurt she only wants to have sex and not really get to know him. Lina did not mean to offend him, thinking that he probably would love to have "just sex." With her world turned upside down, her kitchen closed for the near future until it can be put back together and the threat of another attack dissipates, Lina needs to feel and to touch and to explore...and preferably with Jake, whom she feels very safe with.

"Has anybody ever tried to kiss every single one of your freckles?" she asked, spreading her fingers against him, her eyes tracking him in fascination.

The shock of that thought tightened his whole body. Oh, shit, this was not going to end well for him. "There must be a million." He tried to make his voice dismissive. Casual. We're just hooking up for sex. That kind of casual.

A sparkle of sensual mischief in her eyes that just slipped right between the folds of his towel and grabbed him down there like he'd never taken the edge off in the shower. "I bet I've placed a million sea salt flakes precisely in my life. I'm pretty patient and thorough."

Lina is a world-class pastry chef and at the age of twenty-six has earned two Michelin stars, which is pretty unheard of in the pastry world. She is fiercely proud of her work, and has dedicated her life to it. I love how Laura Florand writes food. It can be chocolate, spun sugar, the most delicate creations, the most robust flavors - she makes sure the readers are experiencing it to the fullest extent. She never disappoints in this area.

She also doesn't shy away from the racism that Lina must feel being French-Arab and having her own cousin be a terrorist. Lina is a fighter and whether it's fear from the attack or coming up against a predominately male profession, she still stands strong. I liked her so much.

Jake is a little more quiet, and I think his SEAL buddies outshine him in this book. Don't get me wrong, I love some good banter between friends and we get that a lot in this book but Jake stays more in the background. They all give each other a hard time, especially when Jake's teammates realize he has a crush on Lina:

Ian beamed at her. "Ma'am, this must be about the most delicious thing your humble servant has ever tasted."

Oh, for God's sake. Since when had Ian had a Southern drawl? Jake shot him a bird behind Lina's back.

Ian just grinned and focused on Lina, whose chilly look had disappeared for him.

Definitely looking forward to the rest of the team getting books.

There isn't a ton of action that really happens in this book, but a lot of page time is devoted to Jake and Lina's courtship, and I liked that. I'm not sure I feel like we ever really meet the genuine Jake - it's almost like he has his guard up with the readers for the book, but overall a nice romance.

Grade: B

Jan130 says

I finally went back and finished this one after a long break. It was a little slow in the middle, but now I've finally finished it I did like it overall. I don't like this series as much as Florand's other two series, *Amour et Chocolat* (my fav series), and *Vie en Roses*. But still, the books are all very romantic in feel and the Paris settings are lovely.

This one seemed to start a little abruptly. It did continue on directly from the previous book, (Chase Me) but I'd kinda forgotten that one before I started this one so I had to try to remember the previous characters and what was happening etc.

This book is very topical, as part of the storyline deals with the effects of terrorism on the Parisian population and the heroic efforts to just deal with it and keep living a good life. I liked this aspect of the story. And Lina, a pastry chef, and Jake, a SEAL, were a good match - both strong, spirited characters.

But the romance did move pretty slowly. Frankly, not much happens in this book. There was a bit too much to-ing and fro-ing and flirting around their romance before they both really admit their deep attraction. However once they actually got together, it was more satisfying. And there is a delightful scene in the restaurant at the end of the book. It's been done before, but it's done well here. Very sweet.

So, I will continue to read new Laura Florand books as they come out, but this one wasn't her best IMO.

namericanwordcat says

Our heroine Lina is recovery from a terrorist attack which she foiled in the kitchen of her restaurant where she is an acclaimed pastry chef.

Our hero is an American on a black ops team working with the French to prevent such things from happening.

He fell in love with Lina when he witnessed her bravery and her deep caring for her friends oh and she is hot and fierce as well.

The wonderfulness of this book is all the little details like a flower opening that I don't want to ruin. It is a quiet book that charts the coming to terms with a new reality, two career driven people falling and love, and emotional healing.

There are moving and complex exploration of war, politics impact of each life, racism, sexism, gender relation all with a deft and gentle hand.

Lina just wants Jake for sex at first and he rightly resents it and I adore that start but I also adore how Lina knows mistakes can be corrected and we all can begin again.

A really lovely read!

PS Jake and his freckles are hella hot

I was given this book for my honest review. So there you have it!

Nadia says

That was lovely! The insta-love is strong with this one (as with all Florand's novels tbh), but she makes it work. She almost makes me believe that love at first sight exists and that it doesn't turn to disgust after you get to really know the other person. Can't wait for the next book!

OMFG YAAAS THANK YOU BOOK GODS I HAVE BEEN BLESSED

but seriously tho, for a long time there was nothing from Laura Florand and then two books in three months and they both sound amazing and I'm just so happy

Marie says

after taking a few days to review it, i can only say that i'm conflicted about this one.

i loved the setting, the heart of the story, the way Laura dealt with the trauma issues, the way she wrote the romance which was oh-so-breathtaking like always, i liked seeing characters from previous books again, i liked discovering new characters (Bonjour elias!!). But and it's sadly a big 'but', i was really put off by the hero and the heroine fundamental traits. Their romantic sides, the way they behave etc i had no problem with, they were very easy to like and matched very well together. The things that i disliked was that one, Jake was an american soldier being active in France (honestly, with the political relationship we have right now, with what we have to deal with in our country, the american hero saving the french damsel in distress...NO and the fact that Lina never calls him up on the american politics?? and their army issues?? it makes no sense to me) and that two, i felt like Lina's character could have been more "algerian". i was so excited when i read that Lina was algerian in the previous books and i could not wait to see how Laura would write her and her family and her culture, and even though i really appreciate that Lina is not reduced to being a POC heroine, i would have loved to see more subtlety and depth on that side...

Nevertheless, it was still a beautiful, sensual romance to read with good developments of both characters on their own issues, which despite everything i just said, made me so attached to them that i was sad their story was already ending... I recovered pretty fast though, seeing that the next book will be about Elias, my so french maghrébin guy <33

that little hint of the story is too hot and too much already

Talltree says

3.5 slow paced stars.

Its nice how LF is dealing with very real issues even in romances - in this one it was Islamic terrorism that tries to put down achieving women. In the last one it was dealing with the h's Nazi historical family connections. Thought-provoking...

Saly says

I prefer her 'French heroes' and I think this series is totally not for me.
