



Talking After Midnight

Dakota Cassidy

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Her voice. The syrupy lilt that's her bread and butter at Call Girls, the prim little town's flourishing phone-sex company.

Hunky handyman Taggart Hawthorn is mesmerized by the contradiction: such sweet tones inside such a spiky shell! He wants to know more about mysterious Marybell, to hear more of her sexy talk—all for himself.

But Tag's attentions, delicious as they are, have Marybell panicked. She's been hiding a long time. She's finally got a home, a job and friends she adores. She won't have it all snatched away by another stupid mistake—like falling in love. So when Marybell's past comes calling, she and the Call Girls will prove no one handles scandals like a Southern girl!

Talking After Midnight Details

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Author : Dakota Cassidy

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From Reader Review Talking After Midnight for online ebook

Jennifer says

I received an ARC of this book for an honest review.

Aww man - this is by far my favorite Plum Orchard book. I'm full up, ya'll! I can't even put into words how perfectly constructed this story was. The plot was amazing, the most complex one. The love scenes were great, the banter between the two main characters was great. It was funny, sad - heartbreakingly really - romantic, steamy...it was everything a contemporary romance novel should be. Utter perfection. When I think Dakota Cassidy can't get any better, she does! I am in awe of her storytelling talent. There is a new standard around these parts - Dakota ruined the curve for every one else. I will compare all contemporary romances to Talking After Midnight. It is THAT good.

I'm actually surprised, because though I liked Marybell just fine, out of all the Call Girls, she was the one that stood out the least to me. I thought for sure Em's story would have been my favorite. But as I said in my review of Something To Talk About, Em is much better suited as a secondary character. I still stick by that, Emmaline was amazing in this book; she works best when she isn't the heroine.

This is the last book in the Plum Orchard series (guess it's a trilogy with a prequel). I don't want it to end. I really just want to beg her for more.

Uncensored comments straight from Kindle (sort of - it was a PDF, I took notes)

1. "But it wasn't as though there was any hiding from the three pretty faces full of concern, pressed against the glass of her front door like a trio of suction-cupped Garfields in the back of a car window." - I'd forgotten all about those little guys!
2. You can tell Dakota loves The Walking Dead, a lot of references to the show in her books as of late. ;)
3. "I can't just let you light my pilot for free." - Oh, it'll be his pleasure *eyebrow wiggle*
4. Awww! Second sex scene was not only hawt but the ending was so sweet! Put a smile on my face.
5. HAHA Marybell's lack of self control when it comes to Tag is kind of pathetic, but in a VERY hilarious way. Cuz isn't that how love happens sometimes? ;)
6. DOBY! :(
7. "I said you get the hell off this lawn or I'm gonna show you what a can of some good old-fashioned companionator whup-ass is, you bunch o' flesh-eating vultures!" - Oh LaDawn! This is what Dakota Cassidy does - in the middle of your heart breaking, and crying like a baby, you get this awesomely hilarious moment and it makes you laugh your ass off in between the tears and the snot.
8. "I'm tired of it. You upset my woman. That upsets me. I want to smash your face in right now. The only reason I haven't is that Maizy'll be home any minute and I know Em would ground me for life if Maizy saw your blood all over the kitchen floor." - Loved the image that popped into my head. Emmaline grounding Jax - HAHAHAHAHA!

Everyone should read this book. Even if you don't read the other ones in the series, please do yourselves a favor and read this book - it is amazing.

Jackie says

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BOOK SYNOPSIS

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My Thoughts

By now having spent two earlier ventures into the world of the characters who inhabit Plum Orchard Georgia

this third book is like coming home to find out what is going on with old friends. One of those friends is still kind of a mystery, Marybell Lyman is in your face with her multi-colored spiked hair-the Goth makeup and clothing-her piercings and most of all stay-away attitude so when she catches Tag Hawthorn's eye she has mixed feelings about acting on the mutual attraction due to the fact that of all people if Tag finds out the secret she has been hiding she is afraid the explosion to follow will be of epic proportions.

Some of us never have to worry about where we will lay our head, what we will eat for a next meal, whether someone is there when we need a shoulder to lean on or a hug to help ease our worries. Marybell Lyman however learned very early on that these things were not to be taken for granted. Once grown she found herself for the first time with a stable lifestyle, that is until it was all taken from her!

Now living in Plum Orchard she has made friends with her fellow co-workers and created a home for herself that makes her feel safe and secure, the problem is will she fight for what she wants or once again run at the first sign of trouble when it comes calling thanks to meddlesome Louella Parsons?

Tag Hawthorn was once the owner of his own construction company, until he was swindled out of it and he lost everything including the woman he thought loved him until she proved she loved his money more.

Having further lost his way by allowing himself to wallow in misery Tag gives in to the lure of too much alcohol, he almost loses the support and love of his brothers Gage and Jax until he is forced to face facts and get help. Now living in Plum Orchard Tag finds himself finally getting to the point he can face his past and move on, when he finds himself fascinated by Marybell he realizes that it is much more and works even harder to straighten out his life so they can have a future together if possible.

Two broken people who finally find the one who allows the pain from past betrayals to slip away, at least until one of their past secrets comes to light and has the power to tear them apart forever.

This is the conclusion to Plum Orchard series and it is honestly the most inspiring story of them all as it takes a long hard look at just how easy it is to find oneself at the mercy of others being forced to do things to survive that one would never do otherwise! The intensity of the emotions you will experience once again as these beloved characters face public animosity and the possible loss of one of their own means the tissues need to be kept handy, the laughter that some scenes invoke however will make the tears worth shedding!

[EArc from Netgalley in exchange for honest review]

Harlequin Books says

"Cassidy's writing is superb in the conclusion of the Plum Orchard series. She dives into the world of two people who are emotionally unavailable, but seem to have a calming effect on each other. The hilarious gang at Call Girls is still causing trouble for the small town, which does not want them there. The main characters have secrets, passion and lots of fun. Do not miss this book!" (RT Book Reviews) 4 1/2 stars TOP PICK!

miniseries: Plum Orchard #3

L.A. Williams says

Marybell Lyman is hiding in plain sight. She's created a deliberately shocking and counterculture look to keep people at arms length. She's an OG member of the phone-sex operator group of Call Girls, Inc. Her job is more to her than her paycheck, it's her family, friends, and security. Just when she thinks she's finally safe in her own little hidey-hole, Taggart Hawethorn makes her want to rethink the difference between being safe and being happy.

Tag is a rascal. He's working hard to prove that his past mistakes are just about behind him. He's charming, and sweet, and absolutely smitten by the colorful and prickly Ms. Lyman. Undeterred by her attempts to keep him at arms length, he woos Marybell in full view of God and the dreaded Mags.

Marybell would love to be Tag's girl, but if the truth of her identity came out, she could lose everything, especially Tag.

“I don’t remember confirmin’ our date.”

He popped open a bag of chips and dumped them on her plate with another grin. “Ah, but you didn’t deny it, either.”

“So if I don’t say no, it’s automatically a date?”

“That’s what the rule book says.”

“Who wrote this rule book?”

“Probably some desperate guy who couldn’t get a firm yes for a date.”

I received an ARC in return for an honest review.

Talking After Midnight is Dakota Cassidy's contemporary romance Plum Orchard series grand finale. As the last of the series, it's brought things to a close with a triumphant win. In my personal opinion, this was definitely a case of saving the best for last.

After one novella and two full length novels, the little town of Plum Orchard is well established. The citizens and their small-town doings have an authentic feel due to Cassidy's skill for world building. She didn't rest on her laurels here, as the politics between the Mags and the other townsfolk continued to unfold to the reader.

Marybell Lyman could have been another wounded-girl trope. Instead of being a hapless, hand-wringing victim, she proves to be that quiet, generous girl that's truly thankful for what she has and is aware how little it takes for everything to be lost. Her back story is heartbreaking. As more of it unfolds, empathy for her character comes easily. Her reluctance and fear ratchet up as she gets closer to Tag and starts to realize how close she is to real happiness that she can never have.

Tag's character is very well-rounded. In a female-centric genre where the male archetypes are abnormally perfect, Tag has real flaws. In the previous story, Something to Talk About, Tag is darker, angrier, and toward the end, just coming to the end of a dark tunnel of his own making. In Talking After Midnight, the reader gets to see his quick wit and indomitable charm. His blind attraction and wooing of Marybell despite all of her physically and emotionally manifested walls is somehow completely believable. It's never over-the-top or done as a nod to political correctness.

Many of the characters of the previous books are here, and they all have the feel of old friends the reader knows well. They lose none of their depth despite Marybell and Tag being more prominent in the book than the hero and heroines were in the previous novels.

The story arc builds Marybell's tension and both Tag and Marybell's growing feelings at a very smooth pace. While there's a lot of reflection by both characters on their own pasts, it moves the story along by reinforcing the motives of their behavior. Each remembrance is reflected by an event happening in the present.

Cassidy plays the secret card very close to the vest for quite a large portion of the story. Instead of revealing Marybell's secret quickly, the author makes hints that add to the page-turner quality of the book. Even when it's finally revealed, the reader doesn't know the whole story. It just keeps building up to be something truly worthy of Marybell's fear and hiding. Rather than ending quickly and easily once Marybell's secret is out, Tag and Marybell really have to work to come together. This, too lends weight to the situation and emotion.

Only one fly in my ointment - I really would have liked to see something more happen in regards to Louella Palmer and the Mags.

After having read just about everything this author has written, I am confident in saying that this series is her very best writing to date.

Tiffany says

Talking After Midnight is the third book in Dakota Cassidy's Plum Orchard series. Cassidy has mentioned that her inspiration for this series was the TV show "Hart of Dixie." That influence is definitely apparent, from the small-town atmosphere to the group of mean girl characters to the heartfelt relationships that the people of the town have with each other.

I thoroughly enjoyed the first two Plum Orchard books. While it took me a little longer to warm up to Marybell, the heroine of this book, overall I enjoyed this latest installment as well. I should note that it's much more enjoyable if you read the books in series order. The supporting characters are especially prominent in this plot.

Marybell is a woman of mystery who stands out like a sore thumb in the town of Plum Orchard. Her style is pure rebel, complete with colorful mohawk, multiple piercings and tattoos, and goth makeup. But don't make assumptions from her appearance, because she's an utter sweetheart, as her fellow Call Girls (of Plum Orchard's phone sex company) know well.

But even though Marybell and the other Call Girls have become dear friends, there's a huge secret that she has been keeping from them and everyone in the town. So things get really complicated when Marybell and handyman Tag Hawthorne start seeing each other. The relationship starts out casual (as relationships so often do in romance!) but the closer Marybell and Tag get, the more they both start to confide in each other. There are also elements of Marybell's past and upbringing that she slowly reveals to Tag. In turn, Tag shares his past failures with Marybell. But even after they're exclusive, Marybell is still holding back from fully trusting Tag.

This part of the story left me conflicted. On one hand, I understood why Marybell is so hesitant to reveal herself, to her friends but especially to Tag. Once the secret was finally revealed, I was pretty stunned. I

listened to this on audio and at the big reveal, I gasped loudly while driving in my car. Maybe I should've seen the twist coming, but it was a surprise for me.

On the other hand, I just wanted Marybell to take a chance and be fully honest with Tag already, especially after he told her about his awful mistakes. So I could see both perspectives and while I was frustrated at first, I understood Marybell's motivation later and this made me warm up to her more as a character.

Lastly, the ending was positively swoonworthy and I loved it so much.

I don't listen to romance on audio very frequently because I'm super picky about narrators, but the narrator for this book, Scarlet Chase, does an excellent job. She uses distinct voices for each of the characters and has a very pleasant, expressive narrating voice.

As I mentioned, the supporting characters are a huge part of this story and I'm hoping that the third Hawthorne brother will get his own book. If so, I'll definitely be continuing the series since I love Cassidy's writing style.

Heidi says

Four Stars: Another delightful installment in the Plum Orchard Series.

Marybell Lyman is hiding out in Plum Orchard. Every morning, she spends hours putting on her "people shield", layers of outrageous makeup, a brightly died mohawk, piercings and a colorful wardrobe. Slowly, she has rebuilt her life, and at last, she has found friends and a family amongst the girls who work at Call Girls. When Taggart Hawthorn comes to town, Marybell lives in fear that her secret will be exposed. Then when Tag insists on pursuing her, Marybell's traitor heart tells her one thing, while her head warns her away. Can Marybell come to terms with her past and find love, or will the horror of her past once again destroy her?

What I Liked:

*This is my fourth trip to Plum Orchard, and with each installment, I grow more fond of the town and its inhabitants. With every book, you get a new romance, a little drama and lots of sizzle. This is a series that can be read as stand alones as they are all companion novels, but I highly recommend binging and reading all three books and the novella. Come get to know the fun folks in Plum Orchard.

*This was my second favorite romance in the series. Marybell keeps pushing Tag away because of her treacherous past, but the harder she pushes, the more Tag pushes back. What ensues is a fun series of non dates where Tag attempts to woo and win her heart, while Marybell tries to drive him away. The more outrageous she makes her wardrobe, the more interested he becomes. Then it turns into sizzle and chemistry as two damaged souls come together. It is a romance of ups and downs, and learning to be honest. I liked the trials the couple endured and the way things settled out.

*A visit to Plum Orchard wouldn't be complete without checking in with all the old regulars, from the feisty Dixie, to the sweet mannered Em, as well as the hilarious LaDawn. Not to mention, you can always count on the nasty Louella Palmer to stir up trouble. I love hanging out with all the folks and catching up with the ladies from the previous books and seeing how their romances are coming along. Plum Orchard may not be the friendliest town, but you can bet that their is never a dull moment.

*I liked the mystery in this one. Marybell is harboring many secrets, and I was most curious to uncover the truth about her. Her story is heartbreaking, but full of hope and redemption. I thought the overall story line in this one was the best yet.

*Once again, I appreciated that this book comes to a complete resolution. All the loose ends are tied off and the questions are answered. Feel free to read any book in this series, you always get a complete, stand alone story.

And The Not So Much:

*While I enjoyed the overall romance, I was a bit disappointed that it moved into the lust part and there was a lot of steamy sex right away. I was expecting a bit more time for the romance to build, especially considering that both parties were damaged, but they jump into bed very quickly and the romance seems like it is based more on sex for awhile. It does balance out, but I felt like the romance aspect moved into the same pattern as the other romances in the series.

*Louella Palmer is the town mean girl. She is conniving and vicious, and you can always count on her to stir trouble. With every book, she has been the source of conflict, and I keep expecting something to happen to her. Either she will finally get bitten in the ass by bad karma or someone will slap some sense into her. I kind of thought after the second book, she would change a bit, but that is not the case, she is back to her old tricks. Once again, Louella manages to bring about chaos with a bit of far fetched resourcefulness. Something needs to change with her character.

*Perhaps it was just me, but I felt like the ending was a bit rushed. There is a big dramatic reveal surrounding Marybell as her past finally catches up to her. The girls rally around her and help find the truth. Then nothing comes of it. There is no public clearing of her name and no long term resolution for Marybell. The press will eventually come back. I thought a bit more closure was needed.

Talking After Midnight is another winning book in a charming series. If you are looking for fun, sizzling romances check out this series. I appreciate that the romances are without heavy drama, and I love the setting of Plum Orchard and its inhabitants. These books are perfect for summer vacations or anytime you want something on the light side. I am hoping that there are more books to come!

I received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own and I was not compensated for this review.

Posted@Rainy Day Ramblings.

Aimee says

I loved this story! I wish there were more to the Plum Orchard series. So much could happen, even still. The writing is on point and funny, these are lovable characters that shouldn't be missed. I love the idea of a "people shield"...we all wear masks, some are just more extreme than others. It's looking past those masks that makes this story a winner, as too few people care to see past the masks others wear. I tend to have the uncanny ability to see past those masks, but I don't use the information to hurt anyone. This was a sweet and hot story with a mysterious twist.

Christi Snow says

My Review:

This entire series has appealed to this reader who loves a serving of angst in her romance...and this book had

that in spades.

Marybell...wow, who would have guessed that she was hiding so much under that facade of makeup? And it goes so far beyond having a rough childhood, because she definitely had that. No, this book goes to the point of 'how much bad luck can one person have in life?' Marybell spent her whole life shuffled around the foster system...never with anyone she could count on and she spent a lot of that time basically fending for herself, but she managed it and graduated from high school with good enough grades to get a scholarship to college, where she was doing fairly well. She was in her senior year and landed a prestigious internship...an internship that cost her everything. Within two years, she was homeless and eating out of dumpsters when Landon rescued her off the street and took her under his wing. After the debacle of the internship, she became nationally infamous so she began to hide under a goth facade of heavy make-up and spiked hair that hid the vulnerable girl and her real identity. She's managed that way now for two years...until Tag.

Tag has his own road of hardships. He made a bad business decision which cost him everything financially. His resulting depression and alcoholism cost him everything else...besides his brothers. Now he's finally getting his life back and will to move on and he's intrigued by the sexy little Marybell. He has no doubt that the "get-up" hides some secret hurt, but he has no idea that his hurt and her hurt are tied together. She does...which is why she's insistent that he stay away from her...something he doesn't do.

Literally, my heart breaks in this book for Marybell. The levels of unfairness of what happens to her in this book and her life made me want to sob for her. And I just loved the way that Dakota Cassidy revealed her story. It's a very slow reveal. As the reader you know from the very beginning that somehow she is recognizable and that if Tag saw her without her mask, he would know who she was. But it takes a while for it all to come out as to how exactly they are tied together and by then, I absolutely loved her character and was completely emotionally involved with the entire story.

And like with all these books, I loved the phone sex girls. Landon did such an incredible thing with the creation of this company. All of them needed the support he offered and they formed their own pseudo-family. For someone like Marybell who has NEVER had anyone, this is HUGE. And it's why she is so terrified of her secret coming out. It's one thing to never have a support system. As a person, you get used to that. But to have it and lose it all would be simply devastating. She can't risk it. *sob* I did love her and her entire story.

I HIGHLY recommend this one!

Christy LoveOfBooks says

4.5

Talking After Midnight is the third book in the *Plum Orchard Series*, and I think it just might be my favorite. I've loved them all, but there was something about this one that I loved a little more.

Storyline – This is told in the alternating POVs of Marybell and Tag. Marybell is hiding. Literally. If anyone ever discovered who she really is, the media would descend on Plum Orchard, destroying the life she has built there. At the beginning of the book, we're not privy to what exactly her secrets are, only that it's a whopper. I started to worry a little because she made it sound like a huge deal, so I was going to be bummed

if it was something lame and not worth so much anxiety from her. However, it *does* turn out to be very anxiety worthy. I liked the way everything unfolded, and the little twists it had on Tag's life, as well.

Main characters – While reading the previous book, we had a little bit of insight to Marybell (a.k.a MB) and Tag. It wasn't anything big, but we saw there was something heavy weighing on both of them. Honestly, I was a little hesitant to read this book because it made me think the vibe was going to be a downer and the characters would be surrounded by angst. Wrong! MB and Tag were actually a lot of fun.

Marybell – At age thirty, she is one of the younger ladies of the series. She wears what she calls her people shield; gothic makeup, colored Mohawk, facial piercings, etc. Of course, looks can be deceiving. While the other girls in the series weren't technically phone sex operators, MB is. I really liked her personality and attitude, a nice mixture of tough and sweet.

Tag – He's thirty-four and the younger brother of Jax, Em's man from the second book. He's a recovering alcoholic and struggling with his own demons. He didn't sound like much fun at first, but the guy is hilarious! If you know me, then you know humor is a surefire way to my heart. It's hard not to love the guy.

Romance – Marybell and Tag's relationship was so much fun. She would constantly try to scare him off, but he'd just take it in stride. It was funny the way he would react ... or not react to her antics. The "nondating" aspect was funny and cute. It did get hot and steamy between these two quite a bit. There were some not-so-great moments when secrets came to light, but I loved how it all turned out.

Secondary Characters - Got to love the women of *Call Girls*. I absolutely love how close the women became, and how they have each other's backs no matter what. It was great to see how much Em has changed since the beginning of her book; she's definitely no pushover. In fact, there's a part where she was on fire calling a certain someone out on his idiocy, and it brought tears to my eyes.

There's also a beautiful part where MB and Dixie are discussing Landon and his role in MB's life before he died, and I could not contain the water works. I love how Landon was never physically present, or hell, even alive, during the three book, yet he is one of the most significant characters. I haven't read the prequel yet, so I don't know if he's in that one. But just reading the three full novels, he's made a huge impact.

I do wish something more would have come of Louella's character. She's been causing havoc from the beginning, so I wish there had been *some* resolve with her, whether it be positive (seeing the error of her ways) or negative (getting ran over by a bus). I guess she'll just continue to live the sourpuss life.

Overall - *Talking After Midnight* may be the last in the series, but it certainly did not lack in any way. Like I said, it was my favorite. I don't know if Dakota Cassidy plans to add any more books in the *Plum Orchard Series*, but if she does, I won't hesitate to read them. If she doesn't, then we're left with a satisfying end to a funny and sexy series.

New Adult e dintorni says

Chiacchiere di mezzanotte è il libro conclusivo della serie *Call Girl* che ci ha raccontato la storia di tre amiche e colleghes: Dixie, Emmaline e Marybell.

Tre ragazze che si sono conosciute grazie alla Hot line di proprietà di Dixie Davis e si sono legate fino a diventare inseparabili.

In questo capitolo conclusivo entriamo nella vita di questa strampalata ragazza, tutta piercing e coloratissimi capelli alla moicana che si nasconde dietro vestiti strani e voce roca e sexy.

Tutto quello che fa, il modo in cui si pone, i vestiti che indossa, sono come uno scudo che utilizza per nascondersi e non lasciare avvicinare nessuno.

Per la prima volta, le sue amiche, si ritrovano davanti una persona completamente diversa, un viso pulito, capelli privi di artifici e colori sgargianti e iniziano a pensare al perchè Marybell, ogni giorno, si ritrovi a essere una persona completamente diversa da quella che adesso, casualmente, possono ammirare.

Una persona da una doppia vita insomma.

Ma Marybell fa di tutto per nascondersi, offuscare con un velo spesso di trucco e colore qualcosa che continua a preoccuparla e a farle venire i sudori freddi per la paura di essere scoperta.

Complice una terribile influenza e due amiche impiccione, Taggart Hawthorn si ritrova a casa di Marybell e nella sua vita.

L'aitante giovanotto resta subito colpito da questa giovane donna influenzata, che gli si presenta dinanzi con un orrendo copricapo che le cela il viso e il capo.

Una scena davvero esilarante, devo aggiungere.

Da quell'incontro con la dolce moribonda, Taggart farà di tutto per scoprire qualcosa su di lei, e sarà proprio quello che Marybell non vuole.

C'è qualcosa che le farà temere di essere scoperta proprio da Tag e questo la porterà inizialmente a fuggire e a mettersi in situazioni a dir poco imbarazzanti.

Ma quando due persone sono destinate a incontrarsi...c'è poco da fare.

Quello che dovrà accadere accadrà.

A man a mano, cadranno come veli tutti gli strati di cui si era coperta in tutti questi anni.

Ne uscirà una donna spaventata, triste, che ha paura soprattutto di lui, dell'uomo che ha iniziato ad amare pur non volendo e dovendo.

Questa lettura è stata una bella scoperta, come gli altri due libri della saga ovviamente.

C'è emozione, romanticismo, c'è empatia con i personaggi.

La storia è scorrevole, scritta benissimo, ci sono scene esilaranti nello stile classico a cui ci ha abituati la scrittrice.

E' una lettura che fa emozionare e sorridere, che ti tiene impegnata per ore in modo molto piacevole.

I personaggi principali mi sono subito risultati "vicini".

E' una storia d'amicizia leale e sincera, e come non invidiare queste tre donne che hanno saputo costruire qualcosa di così vero e unico.

PER CONTINUARE A LEGGERE CLICCA QUI: <http://newadultedintorni.blogspot.it/...>

Alma Torres says

3.5...I wish there had been a rap up on other characters in this town and a quick glimpse into the future of all the call girls.

Sheryl C. Nash says

NETGALLEY

Kathy says

Talking After Midnight, the third installment in **Dakota Cassidy**'s highly addictive *Plum Orchard* series, is a little more serious than the previous novels. Tantalizing glimpses of Marybell Lyman and Taggart "Tag" Hawthorne have revealed frustratingly little information about either characters' pasts but learning their secrets is well worth the wait.

Marybell is not the average sweet Southern woman. Sporting a colorful mohawk, multiple piercings and a tough girl attitude, this phone sex operator definitely stands out in the conservative small town of Plum Orchard. Marybell's protective armor is carefully crafted to keep people at a distance, but underneath all the makeup and metal is a kind, caring and loyal woman whose past is full of hardship and heartache. Although she tries to keep her distance from Tag, he manages to slip past her defenses, but Marybell is afraid the secrets she is keeping will destroy their fragile relationship.

Tag has come a long way from the brooding, angry man we first met in the previous book. By all appearances, he has finally made peace with his demons and he is moving forward with his life. He is very intrigued by Marybell and he good-naturedly pursues her despite her flimsy attempts to rebuff his advances. Although Marybell is less than forthcoming about her own history, Tag is an open book when it comes to his disastrous past. Overall, their relationship is light-hearted, flirtatious and very steamy.

There are a lot of surprises in Marybell's past and she has excellent reasons for keeping quiet. But with the nasty and interfering Louella Parsons always digging for dirt, it is just a matter of time before everything comes crashing down around her. Em, Dixie and LaDawn are firmly in her corner but Tag is quick to believe the worst of her.

While I really liked the overall story, Marybell's part of the storyline becomes a little repetitive. It is easy to predict both Louella's role in Marybell's downfall and Tag's reaction to the subsequent revelations. While it is frustrating that Louella really never suffers any consequences for her actions, the characters always take the high road and resist sinking down to her level. Revenge might be sweet but Marybell is too classy and compassionate to destroy anyone else's reputation.

Talking After Midnight is a wonderful conclusion to **Dakota Cassidy**'s delightfully heartwarming and sometimes zany *Plum Orchard* series. I'll miss the Call Girls but I have loved watching their characters grow, overcome their personal issues and find their happily ever afters. While each of the novels can stand on their own, I highly recommend the entire series.

Romanticamente Fantasy says

“Chiacchiere di mezzanotte” è il terzo ed ultimo appuntamento con la serie “Call Girls” di Dakota Cassidy,

ritroviamo qui tutte le ragazze che lavorano per la società di Hot-Line fondata da Landon, l'eccentrico e generoso miliardario, ora ereditata da Dixie Davis e situata nella cittadina di Plum Orchard. Come i precedenti anche questo è un libro abbastanza corale in cui molti personaggi hanno le loro storie, ritroviamo perciò Dixie innamoratissima del suo Caine, ritrovato dopo anni in cui i due si sono odiati, proprio grazie alla gara indetta da Landon per ereditare la società e di cui siamo stati spettatori in "Parla con me", mentre Emmeline, direttore generale della Call Girls, vive felice e serena col suo nuovo fidanzato Jax Hawthorne dopo gli avvenimenti letti in "Raccontami di te", ed è proprio nella famiglia Hawthorne che abbiamo conosciuto il fratello di Jax, Taggart. I tre fratelli Hawthorne vivono insieme dalla morte della loro unica sorella, per aiutare Jax ad allevare la piccola Maizy di cui si sono occupati amorevolmente per anni, ma ora, che l'uomo ha trovato Emmeline, molto più brava di loro a cucinare e ad intrecciare capelli; Gage e Taggart stanno pensando di cercare una nuova sistemazione. Ex proprietario di una ditta di costruzioni Taggart è un uomo che non si fida più di nessuno da quando un abile truffatore gli ha fatto perdere tutto, compresa la donna che doveva sposare, che l'ha lasciato per un altro non appena il giovane si è trovato senza denaro. Depresso e senza voglia di lottare è entrato in una spirale che l'ha condotto per qualche tempo all'alcolismo, solo l'incidente capitato alla sorella e l'ultimatum dei fratelli sono riusciti a rimetterlo in sesto, ma da allora sembra incapace di fare programmi per il futuro accontentandosi di fare il tuttofare. Marybell Lyman invece è famosa per i suoi innumerevoli piercing, i suoi capelli alla moicana rossi e verdi, e il suo abbigliamento vistoso ed aggressivo, ma anche per la sua voce dolce e incredibilmente sexy che la rende la punta di diamante della Hot-line, assieme a LawDawn la specialista in telefonate sadomaso che frusta i clienti con... uno schiacciamosche. Le quattro donne della Call Girls hanno avuto un inizio difficile, ma ora sono amiche per la pelle sempre pronte a confortarsi, ed è proprio per questo che si ritrovano tutte davanti alla porta di Marybell quando questa si ammala di influenza, non riuscendo a simulare la loro sorpresa quando si trovano davanti una ragazza completamente diversa da quella che conoscono, niente più capelli colorati, niente piercing, ma una giovane donna dai bellissimi capelli biondi ed un viso molto dolce e... spaventato. Ci vuole poco perché capiscano che Marybell usa trucco e abito per nascondersi, ma nessuna di loro riesce a capirne il perché, anche Taggart assunto per fare qualche lavoretto nella sede della società è affascinato da Marybell, e più volte tenta di parlarle, ma la ragazza fa di tutto per non rimanere mai sola con lui ingegnandosi per non incontrarlo, ma la perseveranza del ragazzo farà sì che abbiano qualche non appuntamento a base di sandwich e ogni volta la ragazza giura a se stessa che sarà l'ultimo, perché lei sa, che se la verità venisse a galla la sua vita sarebbe di nuovo distrutta, e se Taggart scoprisse chi è lei in realtà la odierebbe con tutto il cuore. È stata accorta, è stata prudente, ma non ha fatto i conti con Louella Palmer la donna il cui unico scopo nella vita è rovinare le ragazze del Call Girl, la gola profonda delle malignità a capo delle Magnolie, sorta di club dedito al pettigolezzo più velenoso che ha reso la vita durissima a chiunque le abbia intralciato la strada, la donna che ha messo la foto del marito di Emmeline travestito da donna alla fiera del paese rendendo i suoi figli lo zimbello della scuola, che odia Dixie con tutte le sue forze perché le ha rubato a suo dire Caine, che per inciso non l'avrebbe sposata neanche se fosse stata l'unica donna della terra e che ora è riuscita a scoprire la vera identità di Marybell, ma le ragazze saranno pronte a lottare per la loro amica. È un libro che racconta storie d'amore, ma è soprattutto un libro che esalta l'amicizia e le seconde opportunità che la vita ti offre, Landon ha offerto a tutte loro il suo aiuto e la possibilità di cambiare vita e ora grazie alla loro amicizia Marybell potrà finalmente conoscere la verità e riappropriarsi della sua vita. Le scene d'amore sono dolci, la scrittura è fluida e i battibecchi fra le ragazze del Call Girls e Louella, che finisce sempre per avere la peggio, sono divertenti. Mentre il bel personaggio di Landon che pur morto già dalle prime pagine del primo capitolo aleggia benevolo su tutta la serie è davvero riuscito, un libro carino e piacevole che per essere apprezzato al meglio andrebbe letto dopo gli altri due, perché troppi sono i riferimenti con i capitoli precedenti.

Marita says

4.5 stars!

I loved all of this, except the hero, Tag, suddenly deciding to be the world's whiniest, self-righteous, woe-is-me-i-was-wronged-i-tell-you-WRONGED, obtuse idiot after the Big Reveal. Still, his grovelling was truly a masterpiece-he could give lessons to other obtuse heroes on how to truly atone for their stupidity, rebuild those bridges they were so eager to burn and melt their heroine's heart into a permanent love puddle in one smooth move!

I LOVED the heroine, Marybell (MB). She made no apologies for she was and who she pretended to be, but only apologized when her past mistakes (that weren't really HER mistakes) threatened to hurt the people she'd come to love. She was completely deprived of any chance for love and family of her own while she was growing up, but she had the biggest, kindest, sweetest heart regardless! She had no one to believe in her when her world went pear-shaped (and I mean like the biggest pear possible) save for Landon, who remains my all-time favourite character in contemporary romance-and he's not even the hero in any of these books nor alive in any save the introductory novella! She had very understandably large trust issues (and who wouldn't when you've been judged and convicted by the NATION and crucified by the media for something you had less than nothing to do with) and yet she still managed to take a risk with her heart and let people in a little at a time. She had more to lose than the hero ever did by trusting someone, and still she managed to do it much better than he did. Her resilience, self-sufficiency, courage, generosity and good humour was nothing short of extraordinary, especially given how she was let down and betrayed at every turn. The whole Doby angle genuinely made me cry my eyes out :(

Now I did love Tag and his ever-ready quippy banter with MB and his refusal to let her remain locked up tight in her protective shell. I loved that he was forcing himself out of his own protective shell at the same time too. I loved that he accepted that he likely wouldn't ever get over the true extent of how much he'd wronged his family and I like that this wasn't glossed over or that MB didn't grant him instant absolution for it. I loved that neither his brothers nor Em treated him with kid gloves where it came to his mistakes. They acknowledged them, he acknowledged, and all everyone tried to do was help him and themselves move forward and forgive him. I loved that he acknowledged that he likely did a shittier thing to himself and his family than had ever been done to him. I thought it understandable that he directed his rage towards the people who'd wronged him, because it's only natural to look for someone to blame (and they were definitely to blame). Like MB said, though, I did NOT like him thoughtlessly and blindly finding her at fault after everything he knew about her and everything she'd let him see. He held on to his "BUT SHE LIED AND IT BLINDSIDED ME AND WHAT PROOF AND HOW DARE" pity party waaaay too long considering he had reality shoved in his face by not one, but FOUR DIFFERENT PEOPLE in succession. Still, the boy made the best grovel play I've ever read and made up for his idiocy sufficiently in my book (even if I felt MB forgave him a bit too easily. Still who could blame her? His move was truly spectacular).

I loved revisiting the Hawthorne men and Em and the kids who were all awesome as always. I loved the way the brothers dealt with each other (with growing love and understanding and forgiveness and the lack of hesitation to shove truth bombs down your throat however reluctant you are to swallow that only siblings and other blood relatives can manage successfully :D), I love how Em dealt with the men and how she and Jax managed the kids, I love the continuing unconditional love and support between all the girls at Call Girls.

Louella, CHRIST, that woman only becomes more poisonous with time. I find it hard to believe that a town that was so reluctant to forgive Dixie for horrible pranks that did not necessarily cause serious, unfixable

harm that she carried out as a TEENAGER is so willing to turn a blind eye on the horrendously illegal, horrifically harmful and personal victimization she is handing out not only to Dixie who she originally hated for ridiculously stupid reasons but also to anyone remotely connected to her as well as their families (and this includes innocent children). What a truly atrocious human being. You know how some books have those gamma villains who are so compelling in their devious machinations and ulterior motives that you silently root for them. Yeah, Louella is the exact opposite. She has unbelievably selfish and two-dimensional motives but her ability to slash at anyone who doesn't bow to her whims is nothing short of demonic. Now I know PO was loosely based on Hart of Dixie and Louella is Lemon I'm assuming, but JESUS FUCKING CHRIST, Lemon is 1000 times better than Louella could possibly dream of. If I didn't know any better I'd say that woman-child (because she really has not matured beyond the teenager that was wronged by Dixie) has a serious case of not-getting-laid-enough-itis. I wish I could even feel sorry for her but the most compassionate emotion I can feel towards her is one of minute pity for being raised in the sort of toxic Magnolia-dominated atmosphere she was raised in. I sincerely hope Dakota Cassidy isn't planning on reforming her because she is one of the few characters in Romancelandia who is truly and horrifically irredeemable. There's no way DC could write Louella-turned-good that I would even *want* to read because a) I'm still waiting for Dixie to harness all her powers and decimate her and the Mags once and for all, b) How could ANYONE possibly come to terms with the sort of pure evil Louella has dished out to all and sundry?!, and c) I would never like and root for anyone who ended up being paired with her because frankly there is no possible level of grovelling witnessed in Romancelandia yet that would allow Louella to find someone who could love and support her 100%.

Her and her Mags are truly the epitome (an extreme, but realistic one) of everything that is wrong with backward-ass Southern small towns.

I didn't see any real sequel bait for Gage's story which I'm assuming comes next, apart from a throwaway hint that it might be Nella, whom I'm finding it hard to remember anything about. I did see that she was at the nursing home Landon was originally in in the introductory novella working as Landon nursing aide or something, so IDK. Still, looking forward to the next PO installment after this excellent one! I'm looking forward to how Gage and Tag's entrepreneurial efforts go this time around :)
