



Hits & Mrs.

Karen Stollznow

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We all need a little magic in our lives but can we tell the difference between magic and lies?

Gil Godsend is the world's greatest psychic medium.
Claudia Cox thinks he's the world's biggest fraud.

Once a professional skeptic, Claudia spent many years trying to expose Gil, but no one believed that the charismatic and handsome psychic could be a con artist. They would rather believe that Claudia has sour grapes because she and Gil were once lovers. Unable to reveal him to be a fraud, she moves on with her life and founds Suspicious Minds, a detective agency that catches cheating spouses. Years later, a few of Gil's disgruntled female clients come out of the woodwork with shocking stories to tell. They beg for Claudia's help. She convinces these grieving widows that Gil is using magic tricks to give the appearance that he's a psychic medium and that he can't really talk to the dead. They want revenge. With the help of famous mentalist Banachek, Claudia masterminds plans to catch Gil in the act of cheating but each sting fails dismally. Gil comes out smelling like roses while Claudia looks like a fool.

Will Claudia ever expose Gil as a charlatan? Maybe he really is psychic. Or is something more sinister going on behind the scenes?

Hits & Mrs. Details

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Sam Mills says

In this book, Gil Godsend is a celebrity psychic who can't seem to do any wrong. Claudia Cox is his nemesis, but also his ex-fiance. When a few of Gil's clients come to Claudia to complain about his unscrupulous behavior she comes out of the woodwork to expose him as a fraud. Have you ever seen those famous TV psychics? This book exposes all of the tricks used by John Edward, Theresa Caputo, Allison Dubois and others. Is Gil a fraud though? I won't spoil the ending for you. Read this book.

Robert Johnson says

I must admit that I do not read as much as I would like to. Unlike some books I can only read 1 or 2 chapters, but with "Hits and Mrs" I was taken in from the very first chapter even before that. This is a very entertaining and informative novel, full of mystery and wonderment as to how you think it will turn out next, whilst enjoying the journey of the story. I do hope that Karen Stollznnow continues to write more novels and I will be sure to read them.

Carol Fritz says

This book captured my attention immediately! I couldn't put it down. The characters were very well written; their descriptions painted pictures in my mind to the point I would recognize them at first sight! Loved the concept of the many small stories inside other stories. I did not want the book to end! Karen Stollznnow I want more!

Jaz says

I was eager to read this book as soon as it was released. I read it in three days. It's THAT good! I loved the first chapter, it was so creepy and hooked me right in. I know psychics like that who abuse their clients. This book is a page turner. I didn't know what would happen and right up until the end I was still guessing. A fun and very true story.

Tristan Miller says

Hits & Mrs. initially caught my interest because of its topical nature. It's about professional skepticism, a subject that Karen Stollznnow has a lot of personal experience with (as well as a healthy degree of cynicism).

However, I found the book to be disappointing, being more interested in explaining hot and cold reading than it was in carrying a coherent plot.

The first thing that struck me about the book was its similarity to TV series *Jessica Jones*. Jessica Jones is a former superhero, currently working as a private detective specializing in cheating husbands. In the series, she faces off against an abusive ex slash supervillain with the power to control people. In *Hits and Mrs.* Claudia Cox is a former skeptical activist, currently working as a private detective specializing in cheating husbands. In the book, she faces off against a manipulative ex slash villain with the power to read people.

The similarity to *Jessica Jones* did not hold for very long, as well it shouldn't. However, once the comparison was in my mind, I found the differences disappointing. The villain of *Jessica Jones* is a metaphor for abusive relationships or drug addiction. If the villain of *Hits & Mrs.* is viewed within such a metaphor, then the denouement is rather unsatisfying. Furthermore, *Jessica Jones* was praised for refusing to depict the actual acts of rape, refusing to give in to the inevitable sensationalizing. *Hits & Mrs.* goes ahead and shows it, which is representative of the book's less sensitive attitude towards sexual violence.

But let's talk about this book for what it is. It felt like an attempt to explain how psychics work. It walks the reader through all the little details of hot reading and cold reading, and it explains the social dynamics surrounding celebrity psychics. If this were a work of nonfiction, it would end up being rather dry and didactic, but since it's a work of fiction, it can actually depict examples of psychic techniques in their full glory. And while it's usually difficult to garner sympathy for skeptics who debunk cherished beliefs, this work of fiction manages it handily.

But for a work of fiction, it's still kind of didactic. I think maybe there were a few too many hot reading scenes. There was also a plot hole or two that really bothered me, as if the author paid more attention to the details of the infodumps than to the details of the plot.

(This review is an edited version of my blog [here](#).)

Marissa says

Goodreads Signed Win Copy

Some say Gil Godsend is the greatest psychic medium while Claudia Cox thinks he is just a fraud. Despite their history together and once engagement, she has been seeking his downfall for years.

Claudia starts to get suspicious of her ex again when she gets a few complaints of him from widows who he ended up sleeping with. They want revenge but is afraid to expose how they were duped. Claudia seeks the aid of her friend a mentalist as they try to bring him down to no avail.

Can Gil be for real or is he a good con artist? How gullible can we be when we want to believe something even when everything is questionable? It was an interesting and humorous read.

Carol says

I thought this was going to be a romance novel at first. Sure, there's some sizzling stuff in here, but it's so much more! This book has a great plot and so many unexpected twists and turns. It's very funny but also thought provoking. I highly recommend Hits & Mrs!

Matthew Baxter says

This book gets you hooked right from the first chapter! You instantly make decisions about how you feel about the antagonist and you spend the rest of the book griping onto those early feelings with white knuckles regardless of the new information that pops up. It really keeps you guessing and hard as you might try to predict what comes next, the "psychic" will constantly surprise you. With as many surprises as Gil gave me, Claudia saved the best for last.

I found this book very easy to read and there is a lot of real world knowledge to be gleaned from it. Always try to be aware of when someone is tricking you out of your money but also be aware of when you are fooling yourself and just handing it straight to them.

Colton says

Awesome book, highly recommend it!

Kelly Martinez says

Great book! The short chapters allowed for quick reads while waiting to pick up children from school, activities, etc. I was blindsided by the ending and left wanting more. This is the first book I have read by Karen Stollznaw and I plan to grab another real soon!

Logan Baxter says

I am loving this book! One if those books you can read for hours and regret nothing.

Robbie Shofner says

This was a fun read!

The book takes a nice journey into the world of psychics vs. skeptics, using inspiration from real-world scams. You will walk away from this book with some knowledge of what cold reading is and how it works, as well as some of the techniques used by faith healers over the years, but the information is seamlessly integrated into the story- it never feels like a textbook. The novel is part detective novel / part romance, and

both aspects are delivered with skill.

Troy says

A canny skeptic is determined to take down a charismatic and clever psychic medium with a connection to her past. This book features a great storyline, complex characters, and a complex plot with interesting surprises along the way!

Donna Barney says

I was taken in by the story and enjoyed every page!

Robin Lynn says

Hits & Mrs. Hits & Mrs. is Karen Stollznov's foray into the world of fiction. She is an accomplished writer with several non-fiction books under her belt, as well as being co-host of the Monster Talk podcast and a researcher of all kinds of extra-normal goings on.

CW: rape and sexual assault

Hits & Mrs. is the story of Claudia Cox and Gil Godsend. Claudia is a skeptic, trying to expose Gil for the charlatan he is. Gil is a self-professed psychic, trying to continue his past filled with deception. Or is he, could he possibly, be psychic? Is there a chance that Claudia is wrong about his actions?

Claudia has spent several years putting Gil out of her life and her mind. But once she thinks she's clear of him, several of his clients come to her with disturbingly familiar stories. Stories of Gil sexually assaulting them after one of his "personal reading" sessions. This inspires Claudia to open herself up to investigating Gil again. Hopefully for the last time. But each time she thinks she's caught Gil, something goes awry. Is he just that good at predicting her actions based on past experience, or is there something more devious at play?

Dr. Stollznov has brought the worlds of psychics and skeptics together in a way that I've never read before. She uses her vast knowledge as an investigator to expose most of the tricks that psychics use to dupe people, in an informative and entertaining way. Bringing Banachek (also known as Steve Shaw in the real world) into the book as Claudia's mentor is a brilliant move. It allows the reader to get more insight into psychics and how they operate, and also makes good use of his past work as a psychic to expose those very same tricks that he used to dupe people.

There are a few issues, there are characters that slut-shame sex workers a few times, there are several rapes, and the backgrounds given for both Gil and Banachek are rather long. But the backgrounds do work in the story, so it's not a terrible issue. And the rapes are well handled, there is no victim shaming from Claudia. There is a scene later in the book that sadly plays out like most rape cases, with the victim being blamed and the accusation being dismissed as "he said, she said". Sadly, this is a glaring example of rape culture, and of the dismissal of any claims women make about assaults against them by men in positions of power. (Not an attack on Dr. Stollznov's book or writing, just a sad observation on the state of women in our world.)

There were some plot swishes that I didn't really see coming, some choices that Claudia made that I didn't expect. They added some extra interest into the end of the book, and the final reveal was completely unexpected.

I highly enjoyed the book, and am already passing it to several friends who I know will find it enjoyable as well. It's a fairly solid introduction to the skeptical movement, and the exposition of psychics as con artists. I think people interested in the skeptical movement will enjoy it, and people who are interested in psychics may find that it changes their opinion. Especially once they learn the tricks of the trade.
