



Innocent Prey

Maggie Shayne

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To save innocent lives, they'll have to risk their own.

Self-help superstar Rachel de Luca and Detective Mason Brown have finally given in to their overwhelming attraction to each other, but neither of them is ready to let physical passion turn into full-blown romance, so they carefully maintain an emotional distance. Then a judge's daughter disappears, and Mason has a terrible sense that it's connected to the most recent case they solved together: the abduction of Rachel's assistant.

The discovery of a string of missing women, all young, all troubled, seems like a promising lead. But there's no clear connection between the missing girls and the high-profile young woman Mason is trying to find. He realizes that once again he'll have to rely on his own well-honed instincts and Rachel's uncanny capacity to see through people's lies in order to catch a predator and rescue his captives. But can they do it before Rachel becomes his next victim?

Innocent Prey Details

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Author : Maggie Shayne

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From Reader Review *Innocent Prey* for online ebook

Dina says

Borrowing Rachel's words, "*You're shitting me.*" ;)

Margreet Asselbergs says

<http://ripeforreader.blogspot.com/201...>

My rating: 4.5 of 5 ??

I adore this Brown & De Luca series by Maggie Shayne!! Absolutely phenomenal blend of eerie suspense, sardonic humor and almost reluctant romance.

After spending the bulk of her life blind and managing to build a successful career as a motivational writer, Rachel de Luca is gifted with vision through the organ donation of a serial killer. Mason Brown is the detective who started hunting a killer and ended up facing off with his mentally disturbed brother responsible. That is how Brown and De Luca were introduced.

Since, Mason has taken responsibility for his dead brother's two son's and he and Rachel have tentatively started an as yet undefined physical relationship. Mason's work and Rachel's unexplainable 'insights' continue to throw them back together and pull Rachel into Mason's active investigations, despite her misgivings. The pragmatic Rachel is not quite sure what to make of her extreme sensitivity to nonverbal signals and disturbingly accurate intimate knowledge of the victims. Mason isn't much clearer on what is going on, but has full confidence in Rachel. They make quite a formidable team.

Although both continue to be a little gunshy calling a spade a spade when it comes to their relationship, and while not much is necessarily verbalized, Mason and Rachel make significant strides toward a clearer joint future.

A fascinating and highly addictive series by Maggie Shayne that I will follow till the last word is written. Very highly recommended, but read the entire series, despite the fact that each book is a story in itself - it makes for a better reading experience.

?Grins, spins, thrills and chills with Brown & De Luca....?

Copy provided in return for an honest return.

Anita says

Actual Rating: 4.5 Stars

About halfway through the book, I sent my BFF a recommendation for this *Brown and de Luca* series telling her that she really needed to start reading these books. I think they would be right up her alley with a nice balance of crime thriller to romance, and not too much explicit sex (which would be much more to her liking than any of the other more racy romantic suspense books I've recommended in the past). There's the blind bulldog, Myrtle, and a lot of family interaction between Rachel, Mason, and the teenagers.

Actually, there are no explicit sex scenes whatsoever in these books, which really dampens the heat level of the book in my personal opinion, but it doesn't usually stop the chemistry between our main couple from being good. I mean, I don't need sex scenes in my romances to make them good romances, but the relationship between Rachel and Mason so far has been based on some invisible bond the two share that I'm not entirely feeling. It shows that they work well together, and they banter like the best couple in the world. We don't really get the explicit sex scenes, but the two talk about screwing like bunnies *a lot* throughout the book.

But there's still something about their romance that seems to be missing a little bit of sizzle.

And no, I don't mean that the books need sex to spice up the sizzle of the main couple's romance. I've read plenty of other books where the couple convey a great deal of chemistry without sex sprinkled into the mix. Heck, I've watched a lot of television series and movies where the couple are completely chaste and still seem to exhibit more chemistry than Rachel and Mason have been projecting since the first book.

I just feel like they're missing something.

But that's beside the point, because I really just LOVE this series for so many other reasons outside of the slightly lukewarm romance. And I say slightly lukewarm if only because I can see where their romance is a great development. Rachel and Mason make a great couple! They're an excellent partnership. They ARE having sex all the time, and they act so naturally around each other that it's wonderful! Again, I'm just not really feeling the sizzle.

But aside from that and some of the cheesy dialogue at the end of the book (as well as a few little quibbles here and there), this book was damn near perfect. Okay, maybe it wasn't damn near perfect; I still don't like the switching POV narrations. But I loved the book and I love how the series is developing from Rachel's connection to other organ donor recipients... to something much bigger and badder.

Her self-named "NFP" powers, the acronyms for "Not Fucking Psychic" powers (**snort**), are taking an interesting direction, and somehow managing to convince me of the connection from other stuff introduced since the first book. And I'm buying it!

I love that the scope of these books are expanding into other potential directions and possibilities. I love that we get to continue seeing Rachel's character developing with each book. She has so far gone from a cynic--even about her own self-help books--to a "maybe I'm starting to believe the bullshit I dish out" type of attitude. And it's great, because even with that, she still maintains her crass personality, the consistent cussing, and an underlying innocence that probably could only be okay on a thirty-something because of her reborn eyesight.

I enjoyed the premise of the main conflict in this particular book as well, and much more so than the first book; although the second book has a much more intriguing criminal mystery.

As per usual, all the characters are great, even with the introduction of new characters, and more book time by recurring characters.

And then there's the snark and the awesome that is Rachel de Luca. I mean, sure, she goes a little overboard in her mind meanderings throughout the narration sometimes, but I've come to expect it and I love her all the same. Myrtle is awesome! The kids are cute. Mason could use a little more tweaking because he's coming off as Mr. Perfect with the proper romance novel hero flaws--he had so much more depth to his personality throughout the first two books, and he kind of fades into the background in this one.

And I also miss Amy, Rachel's assistant who doesn't really make an appearance at all in this third book.

But mainly, I just loved reading this. A lot.

2016 Reading Challenges:

- Goodreads Reading Challenge
- BookLikes Reading Challenge
- COYER Summer Vacation 2016 -- **Bingo Board Three | Square C1 -- Paranormal**
- Can You Read a Series in a Month? Challenge

Marcela (BookaholicCat) says

Originally posted at The Bookaholic Cat

Innocent Prey is the third book in the Brown & De Luca series by Maggie Shayne.

I'm going to do something different today. I'm going to give you five reasons why you should read Innocent Prey.

1. Rachel de Luca. Rachel is one of my all time favorite heroines. She went blind when she was 12-years-old, twenty years later she recovered her sight after having a cornea transplant. Apart from seeing her sight brought many changes to her life. What changes? You need to read this series.

I love seeing the world through her eyes because it makes you realize all the things you take for granted. But that's not the only reason I love her. I love her because she's smart, sassy, witty and all around very real. She is one of those persons you would love to have as a friend.

2. Detective Mason Brown. Mason is the perfect hero, he's not only handsome as hell, he is also intelligent, caring and very loyal. He is willing to go the extra mile and more to protect those he loves, he did it in previous book and he does it again in this one. He's what I called a swoon worthy hero.

3. Mason and Rachel's Relationship. Mason and Rachel have come a long way, they are together, but not officially. They are both afraid of scaring the other by showing too much interest, but what they can't see is that they are both feeling the same way. It was highly entertaining to see them play around their feelings, pretending not to want what they both wanted... and the end! OMG! The end!!

4. The Mystery. The mystery is well plotted, with enough twists and turns to keep you on the edge of your seat. I'm usually really good uncovering the whodunit, but I'm happy to say Mrs. Shayne really surprised me with this one. Well-done Mrs. Shayne, well done!

5. The Writing. Maggie Shayne knows how to write, she knows how to snare the reader with her words and she does it once again with *Innocent Prey*. She found the perfect balance between mystery, romance and humor, making *Innocent Prey* an impossible to put down book. I don't remember when was the last time I highlighted so many quotes in a book. I'm pretty sure if I hadn't read an eBook but a physical book I could have easily used it as a lantern.

6. Myrtle. Myrtle is Rachel's blind dog. I love pets in my stories and Myrtle is exceptional. She just brings so much joy to story and makes it richer. I love how Rachel is with her and I love how Myrtle shows us that even blind you can enjoy simple things in life.

This was supposed to be a five reasons post, but *Innocent Prey* is so good I needed more than five... Actually I could have gone on and on gushing about this book, but that was not the idea.

Let me just close by telling you that I don't remember when was the last time I enjoyed a book as much as I enjoyed reading *Innocent Prey*.

Do I recommend you to read this book? Hell yes! Go read it now! But... even though this book can be read as a stand alone I recommend you to read this series in order to get the full effect of what Brown & De Luca series is all about... you can thank me later.

Lexxie (un)Conventional Bookworms says

*I received a free ARC of *Innocent Prey* from Harlequin MIRA via Netgalley in exchange of an honest review*

Another awesome and exciting installment in the Brown and DeLuca series! And, of course, a nice side-order of romance, too.

This and all my other reviews are originally posted on my blog [**\(un\)Conventional Bookviews**](#)

Linda Strong says

I have now finished all 4 books in the Brown & deLuca series. And I enjoyed each and every one...and every one seemed a bit better than the last.

In the last one, *DEADLY OBSESSION*, there are two imminently bad women after the combined families of Brown & deLuca. One is Brown's insane sister in law who is adamant there is a demon who wants to harm

her boys and Rachel. The other is a very hot nurse who develops a wild crush on Brown and decides that everyone close to him must die so that he will have no one left to love except her.

There's been enough action to run a roller coaster. I enjoyed the murder mysteries in each of the books and I really liked seeing the families interact with each other....typical families. :-)

I gave the entire series 5 stars!

Quynh says

4.5 stars

Rachel and Mason, along with his nephews are living their lives as best and normal as they can. When Mason gets pulled into a meeting with a judge, whose daughter has gone missing, he gets an uncomfortable feeling about the whole thing. So of course, Rachel become involved as a consultant considering the missing girl is also blind. What Rachel gets from the scene of the abduction is that it might be connected to her assistant, Amy's kidnapping (book 1.5). As more girls are going missing and dead bodies are turning up, they must work fast to find the people behind the kidnappings.

There are so many things that I love about this series. The writing is engaging, the plot keeps me guessing, and the characters become more lovable by the chapters. Myrtle and Josh are adorable as the bond between dog and boy grows. Rachel and Mason's relationship keeps blossoming. As much as I would like them to admit to their deeper feelings about each other faster, the pace they're going at follow their personalities and suit them very well. There were lots of great humor and banter that I've come to expect from these books, and I've enjoyed reading and laughing at every one of those moments.

I'm loving this series the more I read it and there's only one book left before I run out so I hope Ms. Shayne writes more of them!

Dianne says

I can't seem to get enough of this series. Rachel is a total kick-butt heroine and Mason is apparently a George Clooney look-alike cop. In this novel we see the two battling through their emotions while they both come to the conclusion that they love each other. Mason has taken over bringing up his nephews (as we know from the last book *Wake to Darkness* (A Brown and De Luca Novel)) and Rachel is still getting used to being sighted and trying to still tell herself that she is NOT a psychic!

This book will prove Rachel wrong on so many levels that it is almost funny.

This book was another that I devoured in a day and was at the edge of my recliner while doing so. I am always so disappointed when the book is finished. I just want it to go on and on. I especially loved how it ended with a wee, tiny bit of a cliff hanger!

This book is about the abduction of a Family Judges newly blinded daughter, but you quickly come to find out that this one abduction encompasses many more. You may want to read the novella *Dream of Danger* (A

Brown and De Luca Novel) it is free for the Kindle, before reading this book, since both stories are intertwined. It is not necessary but it is recommended.

Mei says

I received this book from Netgalley for my honest review.

First of all, let me say that I **LOVE, LOVE, LOVE** this series!

The heroine, Rachel, is fantastic! She's full of witty, intelligent, interesting thoughts that sometimes come out of her mouth and sometimes remain inside her head! The balance between the two is incredibly fantastic! Her view of the world is peculiar. She regained her sight a few months ago and she's trying to adapt to life where visuals have great impact. Still she's very much rooted in her non-sighted world where her eyes are not necessary and where other senses are much more important and valuable.

I love how Ms. Shayne took me on a voyage inside Rachel's head!

The pacing of the story is also one of the reasons I enjoy this series so much! The crimes in which Rachel is involved are very interesting and very real-life like. We read about them daily in newspapers... unfortunately...

There's also an interesting twist about Rachel's paranormal bouts. Rachel being true to herself doesn't believe they're paranormal and fronts them in her usual levelheaded way! :)

Then there's her relationship with Mason that keeps growing. Here she starts regretting her decision to keep things light between them and Mason too regrets accepting it! I loved how they dance around this pink elephant in the room! LOL

There're also all the secondary characters I enjoyed in the previous books: Mason's and Rachel's nephews and Myrtle, the blind dog. They play a very important part in the building of Mason and Rachel's relationship and in Rachel's "new" life.

So, let me repeat: I **LOVE** this series and would recommend it to everyone who like a wonderful, interesting and well-written Romantic Suspense!

Jonetta says

I keep thinking this series will begin losing some of its appeal and that's just not happening. Rachel de Luca and Mason Brown keep things fresh and interesting.

In this latest story, a young woman, recently blinded as a result of a car accident, turns a street corner and just vanishes. It appears she was abducted and being a local judge's daughter, the investigation starts down that track until it begins to tie in with the disappearances of other young women. And, it also seems to connect with the earlier abduction of Rachel's assistant, Amy, some weeks ago (see the novella Dream of

Danger).

The mystery is thorny, the suspense chilling and Rachel's offbeat humor just as wonderful as ever. I couldn't put this one down either and I'm also hopelessly in love with Myrtle, her blind bulldog. Rachel and Mason's relationship is evolving naturally and romantically, consistent with the personalities of both, but never eclipsing the main story. This series has the best of everything.

Laura (Kyahgirl) says

4/5; 4 stars; A-

This series continues as a strong romantic suspense + humour series. I love the combo. Rachel and Mason are growing in trust with each other as they continue to be sucked into murder cases that set up Rachel's NFP (not f*cking psychic) alarm bells.

I don't know how realistic the aspect of the book is about dealing with a devastating loss such as loss of sight but that doesn't stop me from appreciating the author's insights into this trauma throughout the series. Also, I absolutely love the blind Bulldog, Myrtle.

Vera Maslow says

Brown & DeLuca Series Book #3

Really love this series as a romantic suspense light. The characters have personality. There is humor mixed in that appeals to me. The case is interesting. Even in book 3 it is still fun and fresh. The dialogue seems natural. I don't know how believable the content itself is, but certainly enjoyable.

Kathy Martin says

Rachel agrees to help Mason when a judge's blind 20-year-old daughter is kidnapped. The judge asks the chief to investigate quietly which seemed suspicious to Mason and Rachel too. Rachel doesn't want to admit to being psychic but she has all the hallmarks. Apparently her new senses weren't only because she got a serial killer's corneas.

Rachel uses her insight into people to help Mason who has his own cop instincts. They are sleeping together but are still resisting having a more complete relationship. But both of them are becoming unsatisfied with this arrangement. Both of them want more.

While they are busy trying to track down the judge's daughter, they soon realize that this connects to Amy's kidnapping at Thanksgiving. It is also connected to other disappearances of young girls who age out of foster care and then disappear.

As usual, Rachel puts herself in danger to help solve the case and Mason arrives in the nick of time to save her. I liked these characters and really enjoy each new adventure. It is nice seeing Rachel come to realize that she really does believe all the self-help, positive-thinking stuff she writes. I love her relationship with her

aged, over-weight and blind bulldog Myrtle. I also like her growing relationship with Mason's nephews Jeremy and Josh.

This series has been growing stronger with each book. I can't wait to see what happens next for Mason and Rachel.

Kathy says

Setting: Binghamton, New York – judge's home; Whitney Point, New York – deLuca's home 4-mile-long dirt track and reservoir with; streets of Otsiningo Park; Whitney Point High School baseball diamond; apartment over tattoo place in Endicott, Triple Cities; Backwater State Penitentiary (abandoned); almost finished bomb shelter in woods – trap door in ceiling, round hole in ground;

Characters:

Detective Mason Brown: raising his 2 nephews, regular booty calls with Rachel, both feeling more than can share with the others; Chief stepping down, and seems to be grooming Mason for the job (he's had to pull out his funeral suit, and his wedding suit for a few glad handing meals the Chief set up);

Rachel de Luca: enjoying her time with Mason, also not expressing her deeper feelings; starting to believe her own books; her 'talent' expanding – when she touches victims (or their blood) she can 'see' their deaths – no connection to Mason's brother;

Inner Bitch: the cynical voice of Rachel, that questions the good things in her life;

Judge Mattheson and wife Marianne: family court judge; though we don't know until the end, he killed someone accidentally with his car, and 'ran'; when blackmailed to provide names and current locations of aged out foster girls, he does so; when his daughter is missing, he is afraid it's tied together... starts to tell the truth, but has a heart attack... starts to tell truth in hospital, but 'nurse' comes in when Chief with him, and puts insulin in his IV, and he dies.

Stephanie Stevie Mattheson: Judge's only daughter; 23 years old; blinded by car accident 8 months earlier (father's karma?) and is angry, resentful, withdrawn, irritated when they push the self help, positive attitude books on her (like de Luca's); she has a 'blind coach' – a temp from the Judge's office, and when coach sends her down the street by herself, she turns the corner intending to teach the coach a lesson, but 2 guys in a van tumble her into the van and kidnap her;

Loren Markovich / Uri Orloff: siblings; Stevie's life coach and into the kidnapping / sex slave trade; Uri is the muscle, Loren the brains;

Jacob Kravitz: Stevie's exboyfriend; she ran away with him when she was 17, and her father made sure that the he spent maximum time in jail for statutory rape; Jacob knew about the judge's hit and run, which angered him all the more when in jail – and he ranted to Uri, his roommate in jail; Uri approaches him a couple of months earlier, with his sweet sex slave business, and he turns him down... but when Mason and Rachel come to him to question him about Stevie, he figures they wouldn't believe him – and so he told Uri yes, and was looking for an opportunity to save Stevie (and he does, shooting Lorena before she can shoot Stevie and Rachel);

Mitchell Kirk: Stevie's current boyfriend... a flirt, superficial, monied – I had him as the sex slave pin, but... a red herring;

Amy: Rachel's assistant – kidnapped and rescued in earlier short story... was mistaken for Verona who was eventually taken... Rachel 'felt' that the attempt on Amy was tied to Stephanie – and it did;

Verona LaMere / Lexus Carmichael: the other two women kidnapped and held with Stevie; Lexus a 'cutter', and cut all three of their names into her belly; when they make an attempt to escape, Lexus is shot – and when the police find her body, they know it's all tied together; as she dies in Stevie's arms, she tells them she's saved them;

Special Agent Vanessa Cantone: (aka Special Agent Beyonce): When Lexus' body found, FBI brought in... she is gorgeous, strong, independent; she hears Rachel telling Mason of her vision when she touches Lexus' blood in the abandoned penitentiary – and she believes Rachel is psychic... and we come to find out after the Chief's job (she has a daughter, and wants a safer, more confined position) – I'm sure we'll see more of her;

Rodney Carr: social worker, with a big heart; gay; with the judge in the hospital, they need another resource, so they drug him and take pictures of him with a hooker – so as to blackmail him; his partner knows better – and he contacts Mason when they make the demand for information on a foster home graduate;

Misty / Christy... Josh / Jeremy: Rachel's nieces – Mason's nephews; Josh loves Myrtle... Jeremy doing better, probably because of Misty's friendship plus;

Summary:

With good detective work, and Rachel's visions, and Rob's blackmail note... they set up that Vanessa go undercover as the girl to be kidnapped... but Rachel has 'foreseen Vanessa's death – shot in a hole' so she drugs her, dresses up in the clothes, and hits the street... and just as Mason realizes it is Rachel, the van pulls up and they kidnap her...

Her phone is tossed, but she has vanessa's phone – and they miss it in her bra... she gets tossed in with the 3 girls, and relying on Stevie's leadership, and Rachel's common sense, they come up with a plan – Rachel knowing that Mason will find her... but they're not going to let them take them anywhere... just as they are running into the woods, Mason finds them, see Lorena taking aim, and he yells Down... gun shot, Lorena falls (Jake shot her)... Mason thinks Rachel shot... and his heart comes out – he tells her he loves her etc...

And they are closer... they were able to find 13 other girls that Lorena et al had sold... ahhh

Memorable scenes:

"Maybe the bs I wrote was a little bit true. If you wanted it you could have it. There was more to it, of course. But that was the basis of every book I'd ever written. And it seemed like my own bs was determined to rove itself to me."

About her relationship with Mason, and her hesitancy to commit wholeheartedly: "Yeah, his family was a mess. Rache still hadn't run screaming. Well, she had. A couple of times. Just not from him."

Blind dog Myrtle: "She tilted her head to one side at the words all gone. Her least favorite words in history, besides go to the vet. Then she sighed heavily and collapsed, because bulldogs don't lie down, they just drop. I knew that she knew I was a liar, and she knew that I knew that she knew it."

“The chief held up a hand. ‘No, she’s right.’ Then he looked me in the eye. ‘Sit down, Rachel.’ The words I don’t work for you, so don’t f...g tell me what to do were on the tip of my tongue, but I bit them back. He was being bossy, but he’d been through a lot and I’d just sort of insulted his friend. So I sat. I imagined Mason was about to fall over dead and aks the chief ow the hell he did that, but now wasn’t the time.”

When Rachel seems to be in risk, Mason and the kids are staying with her – and as the kids are going to sleep, Josh tells them its okay if Mason sleeps in Rachel’s bedroom (not to sneak in after they go to sleep)... he figures she’s lonely since her dog sleeps with him instead of Rachel... :) and Jeremy just grins and nods;

Douglas Meeks says

There are several layers to this novel, all of them are thoughtful and well written.

The romance between Rachael and Mason is touch and go through most of the book until you are ready to slap them to see if they are awake. It is obvious they care for each other deeply but are a bit slow about coming to that conclusion on their own for various reasons logical and idiotic.

The murder mystery they are going to work on is exceptional and tinged with a good dose of paranormal which livens things up a bit, add in a armature sleuth like Rachael and things tend to get chaotic quickly.

The mystery revolves around girls that are being kidnapped and held for sale to the highest bidder, the depth of the organization in this criminal enterprise is what the big question is in addition to where the girls are before they get sold off and lost forever.

This is a first class mystery with top shelf writing and characters you feel like you know, very enjoyable reading and highly recommended.
