



Sweet Surprise

Candis Terry

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Playing naughty or nice...

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Can lead to heartbreak...

Firefighter Mike Halsey learned long ago that playing with fire just gets you burned. He's put his demons behind him, and if there's one line he won't cross, it's getting involved with his best friend's ex. But when fate throws him in the path of the beautiful, strong, and off-limits Fiona, will he be able to fight their attraction? Or will he willingly go down in flames?

Or a sweet surprise!

Sweet Surprise Details

Date : Published January 27th 2015 by Avon

ISBN :

Author : Candis Terry

Format : Kindle Edition 384 pages

Genre : Romance, Contemporary, Contemporary Romance

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From Reader Review Sweet Surprise for online ebook

UniquelyMoi ~ BlithelyBookish says

Full review now posted...

Welcome to Sweet, Texas, where neighbors are friends, friends are family, and family is everything!

Description...

Playing naughty or nice...

Fiona Wilder knows all about falling in lust. Love? That's another story. Determined not to repeat past mistakes, the single mom and cupcake shop owner is focused on walking the straight and narrow. But trouble has a way of finding her. And this time it comes in the form of a smoking hot firefighter who knows all the delicious ways to ignite her bad-girl fuse.

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Or a sweet surprise!

Sweet Surprise is the fourth installment in Candis Terry's *Sweet, Texas* series, a series I absolutely adore. Each book is fun, romantic, and sexy, and gives me exactly what I look for in escapism reading.

In this book we finally get Fiona's story, and what a story it is! I have to honest, I'm not sure I really bought her being 100% happy with her ex husband, Jackson, finding his *happily ever after* with another woman, but after reading *Sweet Surprise*... well, there's no doubt in my mind that she is definitely that kind of awesome. She and Jackson, both. They care for each other, so much, in fact, that when it became clear to them both that they married for the wrong reasons, they divorced but remained close friends. That's a tough storyline to pull off, but Candis Terry does it with flying colors!

As I said, I adore this series. Ms. Terry never fails to deliver characters we can't help but fall in love with, whether they're the leads or the supporting cast. Mike and Fiona are great people with pasts they're trying to leave behind. And even though both have their demons, they're not needy. They are strong, intelligent, hard working people who want the same things we all want; health and happiness and love. And it's their normalcy that makes them people I believe in and relate to and cheer for and, truth be told, wanted to smack when they were being too dense to realize and admit the depth of their feelings for one another.

The bottom line...

If you're like me and enjoy the close knit feel of small town romances that come with fun, quirky small town folks and just the right amount of passion and steam, then you absolutely need to read this book! I do recommend reading in order so you get the whole back-story, but trust me, once you read Sweet Surprise, you'll want to go back and read them all, anyway. So save yourself the trouble and start from beginning. You won't regret it!

An eARC was generously provided by Avon Books. In appreciation, I'm giving them an honest review.

Morgan Wendel says

This book is about Fiona Wilder and Mike Hasely, and her daughter Izzy. During this book, I really enjoyed how Fi and her ex husband got along and had friendly conversations. Mike and Fiona met at a wedding reception for her ex brother-in-law Reno Wilder and his wife Charlotte (Brooks) Wilder. After the moment they met and danced together, Fiona knew that she liked Mike a lot, but didn't want anything to happen because she was scared and didn't want to hurt Mike. In the middle of the book, Mike and Fiona try to be a couple and it works out between them and Izzy loves having Mike around. Fiona knew that her and Mike were supposed to be together when he came and helped her finish her bakery that she bought. I would give this book a 10/10 because it was really well written and I never got bored during the entire book.

Lisa Filipe says

I don't think I thought that the Sweet Texas Series could get any better after Reno, Jackson and Jesse claimed their women, BUT...I wasn't anticipating MIKE HALSEY....Fiona....You are ONE LUCK LADY!!

He was just...A-MA-ZING...and the story was just so deliciously heart-warming...I was left with the yummy flutters and a few tears in my eyes...My Heart LOVED SWEET SURPRISE, and so did I.

Full Review

For all of you who have yet to read a Sweet, Texas Romance by Candis Terry...well...where have you been? No really...I am talking Smokin Hot TEXAN Brothers here ladies!! But in SWEET SURPRISE we get a hero who is still smokin hot...just not one of the Wilder Brothers, but the guy who wants to ravage the "Sweet looking, delicate" Fiona Wilder, ex-wife of Jackson (SWEETEST MISTAKE)...Little does this Smokin Hot Fireman know...Fiona Wilder is no delicate flower (well...at least she isn't when Bad Fiona comes out to play!)

SWEET SURPRISE was everything that I love in a romance, it had humor, it had sexual tension, it had romance and that "Falling in love" butterfly feeling...and it had FIREMAN MIKE HALSEY (Forget putting out the fire...Mike Halsey be heating the ladies up...Cold Shower warning!)

One of the best parts of the Sweet, Texas Series is that we get our favorite characters from the past releases in each story, which always enhances the element of FUN! Especially when Charli and Abby get going...they

crack me up! And my little Izzy...have loved her since she played dress-up with her daddy in SWEETEST MISTAKE...I love that Fiona and Jackson are both wonderful parents and have continued to be the best of friends even after their divorce. I have been waiting for Fiona to finally get her some...and boy does she pick the right man!

Fireman Mike...I LOVE him...I love the way he cares for his family, and even though he is so far away, he still is the "Man" of the family and takes care of them. And his relationship with his Avo (Grandmother)....I cried...Yeah I did...and You will too..be WARNED!! SWEET SURPRISE isn't easy on the heart...there is some breaking...and mending...and some Sweet Surprises...but all in all...it is a WONDERFUL addition to the series, and I hope that Candis Terry continues to write romance that steal your heart and comfort your soul!!

TOP TASTY READ!

Nereyda (Nick & Nereyda's Infinite Booklist) says

This is my second book by Candis Terry, and after loving her last book Something Sweeter, I was excited to read more by and continue the series. While I still ended up enjoying this one, I unfortunately didn't love it like her other book. The story was sweet and I loved the characters, but I felt like the story dragged on a lot in the beginning and felt really rushed at the end. But, it did make me want to know more of these close knit characters and I still want to go back and read the first two companion books in the series.

Fiona Wilder isn't technically a member of the Wilder family, but they all treat her as one of them anyway which was really sweet. As Jackson's ex-wife, Fiona is still very much a part of his life and the rest of the Wilder's. Sharing a daughter with Jackson and him getting ready to get married again can be a recipe for disaster, but Fiona and Jackson have a very rare and special relationship. They still care for each other deeply and Fiona and Jackson's fiance are actually really great friends, and the rest of the Wilder's really love Fiona. I absolutely loved how Fiona's relationship with the Wilder's was portrayed and found it so refreshing.

As Jackson' best friend, Mike has never acted on his feelings for Fiona. But when he helps her out by doing renovations to start up her new bakery, they both grow closer and the attraction between them is undeniable. It was hot and the anticipation was great. Like I mentioned above, I struggled with the plot more than anything. We have Fiona and Mike being attracted to each other for the first half of the book with nothing really happening. They didn't kiss until the 50% mark and she told him she couldn't be with him because she was a mother (I hate that excuse), they didn't go on their first date until the 85% mark, they had sex at the 90% mark, the conflict came at the 97% mark and was resolved too easily and quickly by 99%. I just wish they would have gotten together earlier, had spent more time together as a couple, maybe spent more time together before they had sex and definitely had spent more time together before their conflict. Other than my issue with the plot, I thought the story was really sweet. But what really made me enjoy this was the characters. I love the Wilder clan now even more than before. I'm looking forward to the next book about the youngest Wilder brother.

3 out of 5 stars!

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1-Click Addict Support Group says

Who doesn't love a book about a feisty baker and a hot firefighter? Certainly some of my favorite types of characters and this one doesn't disappoint! *Sweet Surprise* is book four in the *Sweet, Texas* series, but it can be read as a standalone. I haven't read the first three as of this review, but I will be moving them closer to the top of my TBR list!

Fiona Wilder, aka the feisty baker, is focusing on not repeating the mistakes of her past. She's a single mom, has just relocated and opened her own business—her dream—a cupcake shop. She has a wonderful support system: her best friend, Sabrina; her former mother-in-law, Jana; and, her ex-husband, Jackson along with his fiancée, Abby, as well as his siblings. Who needs love when you have all this change going on and for you in life?

Enter über hot, firefighter Mike Halsey. Mike noticed Fiona a few months ago at the charity auction and has been fighting his feelings ever since. Fiona is completely off limits—Mike's not going to break the "bro-code"—Fiona is Jackson's ex-wife and Jackson is Mike's best friend. But what happens when fate and a little bit of match making intervene? Can Mike put aside his feelings or will he finally give in to the attraction and willingly go down in flames?

Sweet Surprise was just as promised—a sweet surprise! I really enjoyed the storyline and the characters. Even though it is part of a series, it truly does standalone—I didn't feel like I was missing anything from the previous books, but I do plan to read all of them since these characters have certainly gotten under my skin! As for Fiona and Mike, I really loved them together. Their interactions and witty banter was fun, romantic and often hilarious.

"Okay, Mr. Bossypants, I know you Alpha-male firefighter types have a reputation with the ladies...But I'm not sure your knowledge extends to my personal needs."

"Maybe not yet...but I'm definitely willing to learn."

"Hard to fault a man with an appetite for education." ~ Missy, 5 stars

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What a sweet second chance romance! And there is a HOT firefighter! I was a little hesitant to read this book because my husband is a firefighter and some stories can hit a little too close to home, but I'm so glad I took the chance!

I didn't read the other books in the series first, but figured out quite early that it can be read as a standalone. There are some parts that leave you wondering just what happened in the other books, but you won't be confused.

Fiona and Mike. Where to start with these two?

Fiona was married to Jackson, and has a daughter with him. Mike is best friends and coworkers with Jackson... Hence the hesitation between the two to start anything.

These two have been burned by what they thought was love, and have more or less sworn they will never take the leap again. Both have huge hearts and will do anything for those in need along with friends and family.

I really fell in love with the story of these people who aren't smart enough at times to know exactly what they need. There were times I wanted to shake them and yell "WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?" and there were times when I said "oh, that was so sweet!"

So, if you are looking for a sweet read with some heat thrown in to keep you on your toes, this is your book!  
~ Devylnn, 4 stars

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### **Stacee says**

I requested this book because the tagline said it was for fans of Jill Shalvis.

The plot was predictable, but fun. The single mother card wasn't overly used and Izzy is a super cute kid. I really liked how the focus was mainly about the two MCs.

Fiona and Mike were likable. I enjoyed their story and for the most part how things unfolded. Never mind the fact that I'm a sucker for the UST if it's done well.

What I struggled with was some of the writing choices. There were several phrases and words that were repeated. There were scenes in the POV switch that were almost identical and I absolutely got tired of reading about how sexy or hot the other one was. Sure, someone is attractive, I get it. But to be so absolutely blinded by them that you zone out on conversations? No. Okay, maybe once.

It was a quick, cute read and I did enjoy it. I may even read some of the previous books in the series. It just wasn't the same as a Jill Shalvis book.

\*\*Huge thanks to Avon and Edelweiss for providing the arc in exchange for an honest review\*\*

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### **? Kimberly says**

#### **Espresso review of Sweet Surprise**

We met Fiona Wilder in previous novels and I have always admired her. Not every woman can be as gracious as she has been. She has a few hang-ups where happily ever after is concerned and I understood where she was coming from making it easy to connect. Firefighter Mike Halsey is in a word yummy but the boy also has major baggage. For me all of the issues each character had felt overdone. Just the fact that Fiona is his best friend's ex-wife would have been enough. The rest just weighed down the story and distracted me. The issues pulled me from the first part of the story. Thankfully, the second half picked up, as we moved around the issues and got to see them interact as a couple.

It was wonderful being back in Sweet and seeing all of the characters. Izzy was adorable and the description

of the cupcakes had me drooling. I want one of those caramel salted cupcakes in the worst way. Meddling, a wedding and heat in the kitchen made this enjoyable. Despite a few issues, I managed to close *Sweet Surprise* with a smile and look forward to the next book, *Truly Sweet*.

If you love small-town romances, with lovable characters, the Sweet series is one I highly recommend.

Copy provided by publisher. This review was originally posted at Caffeinated Book Reviewer

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## Danielle (Love at First Page) says

### 3.5-4 stars

There's no doubt that the books in Candis Terry's Sweet, Texas series are comfort reads for me. They are heartwarming, sexy, and satisfying, and the characters always bring the story to life. There's something about the author's writing style and her small town setting that feel like coming home. Or maybe like sinking into a hot bubble bath. Whatever the case, I'm happy I have these books to turn to when I need some TLC. I think it's always a struggle for me to find new romance authors, so when I *do*, I become a fan for life. Which means even though I was the teensiest bit wary of *Sweet Surprise*, I still expected to love it. And it's true, the book is sort of an oddball, but I finished with the same goofy smile and happy sigh as I did with the others.

Unlike most romance series, the family tree in Sweet, Texas is unconventional, to say the least. The first three books introduced us to three out of the four Wilder boys and their love interests, and *Sweet Surprise* brings us Fiona's book. Fiona is Jackson (brother #2)'s ex-wife and the mother of their baby girl. She has not only remained tight with Jackson and the Wilder clan, but she's also very close with Jackson's fiance/childhood sweetheart. Kind of weird, right? I mean, it's refreshing that this type of family dynamic exists in the romance book world, but I still found myself a little skeptical. To be honest, I didn't want to see how good of friends Jackson and Fiona still were, and I worried that she would be hung up on him. Thankfully that's not the case (neither were "in love" with the other, but got married because she was pregnant), but now we have to add in Mike, who is Jackson's best friend. I'm pretty straight-laced when it comes to romance books, so this set up took me for a spin. It works though, and I'm happy Fiona finally finds her chance at love.

Both Mike and Fiona are in similar situations - that's right, Mike is divorced, too. But he isn't friends with his ex-wife, nor did they ever have kids, but he's still troubled by the mistakes of his past and has locked up his heart ever since. Though he's attracted to Fiona, he's afraid to act on it since she's his best friend's ex-wife, and he doesn't think he's the man she deserves. Fiona has vowed to put her wild ways behind her and be a great mom to the daughter she loves more than anything. She's opening her own business in Sweet, and life is looking good... except she's incredibly lonely. She finds Mike super attractive, but she doesn't want to enter into any sexual relationship unless both parties are committed. Next time around, she wants true love.

Admittedly, the first 40% of the book is slow-going. It takes forever for Fiona and Mike to get over their hang ups and finally just *kiss*. While I like tension and build up as much as the next girl, I can also be a wee bit impatient, and I feel like the story wasn't moving along fast enough. There wasn't much actually happening, plot-wise, so that just made the pacing all the more frustrating. But once I reached the halfway point I fell in love. I'm glad Fiona stuck to her guns and wouldn't allow Mike to pursue her unless he was interested in a real relationship. I can totally relate to her wanting sex and love to be equal partners. Plus it was sweet seeing Mike let go of his past and try to be the man Fiona desired. The two spend most of the

second half together, learning about one another and falling in love. It's such a believable development, and the lack of drama had me sighing with relief. Maybe I could have used more sexy times, but Mike sure makes up for it at the end. He's an amazing guy and knows how to bring the swoon.

If you're looking for your next contemporary romance to read, I highly recommend starting with Candis Terry's series! Fans of Jill Shalvis and Rachel Harris will appreciate the small town setting and the genuine warmth that invades every book. I'm really looking forward to baby brother's book next!

\*\*\**Thanks to Edelweiss and the publisher for approving my request in exchange for an honest review.*\*\*\*

This review can also be found at Love at First Page.

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### ♥Rachel♥ says

**Sweet Surprise** book four in the **Sweet, Texas** series and focuses on Fiona and Mike, two people cautious with their hearts after past mistakes. I haven't read the past books, but it's not necessary to enjoy their sweet, very sexy romance!

Fiona is a single mother working to provide a stable, happy life for her and her daughter Isabella. She's guarded with her heart after jumping recklessly and too fast and ended up marrying someone who wasn't in love with her. Fiona gained a best friend (her ex-husband, Jackson Wilder), his family who love her like their own, and her daughter who she loves more than her own life, but she's determined to take things slow and with only someone she's serious about. I felt for Fiona, even though her life is mostly happy, being surrounded by several couples who are blissfully in love, one of them being her ex-husband, and it makes her feel a little lonely. Fiona yearns for her own special love.

Could Mike, the gorgeous, sexy firefighter be that man? Her hormones scream a big fat YES!! because she is powerfully attracted to this man!

Mike has got it *bad* for Fiona, but she's his best friend, Jackson's ex-wife, so that makes her off-limits, right? Doesn't matter, he can't stop obsessing over her:

**Aside from the sheer sexiness level, Fiona was the kind of woman a man wanted to adore and savor. To possess and protect. To make her his very own and never let her go. Crazy talk coming from a guy like him. But for whatever reason, he couldn't stop himself.**

Mike also has past that makes a future loving someone feel impossible. However, a series of events force Mike and Fiona to spend long hours together, in close quarters and make his desire for her impossible to set aside or ignore. Jana, the Wilder matriarch, had a hand in some of these events, nudging things along and her well-meaning meddling made me smile!

Mike and Fiona spend a lot of the book working together while secretly stealing glances, lusting internally, and ramping up their attraction to the point of combustion! They try to keep things platonic but "*resistance is futile*". Candis Terry excelled in building up sexual tension! But there was more between Mike and Fiona than just lust, and I appreciated they got to know each other before mindlessly jumping into anything. It made their steamy journey to a HEA all the more sweet and meaningful.

*A copy was kindly provided by Avon in exchange for an honest review.*

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## **Ami says**

### **3.5 stars**

When I started this book, I was giddy with excitement! The story opened in quite an alluring way as Fiona Wilder (Jackson's ex-wife) and Mike Halsey (Jackson's great friend) were dancing at Reno and Charli's wedding. I felt the chemistry between them, and I was desperately eager to read how these two find their happy ending. I loved Fiona – it's so refreshing to have a woman who still stays friends with her ex-husband – and Mike surely caught my eyes. Sexy fireman, people!

I will say this – when Mike and Fiona are in the same vicinity, I enjoyed their moments. Both are highly likeable characters, and the progress of them finally acting on their sizzling attraction is slow and steady but rewarding. I smiled frequently when I read Mike helps Fiona preparing for her cupcake shop or when he was bonding with Fiona's daughter, Izzy.

However, as I continued reading, the story lost its early appeal somewhat...

The thing is, I had a hard time believing Fiona's reasoning for not following the attraction that she is feeling towards Mike. Fiona keeps saying that she has a naughty side, a sinful alter ego, which has driven her to wrong choices in her life before. But I didn't buy it. Not when Fiona also states how that past leads her to her daughter and an extended family (by way of her ex-husband's) that welcomes her with open arms. So how was that a strong enough of a reason?

Not to mention that I didn't even get a glimpse of what sinful Fiona is like. She clearly is a good and responsible mother to Izzy and a very good friend for her ex-husband's fiancé. It's a weak base of a reason and it irked me after a while. What Fiona sees as a mistake for me became an issue that did not make sense – or what her friend, Sabrina, said as "*monster-sized ridiculously lame-ass comment*". This reluctance by Fiona dragged down the story for me in the middle and I was frustrated by it.

I also had problem with Mike's baggage. Similar to Fiona, Mike keeps saying that he has locked his heart away from romance because of his troubled family and disastrous marriage. However, Mike's family members are pretty much non-existent throughout the story. We never meet them. Heck, even when Mike visits them, it happens off-page. So how can I be convinced about that part of his life? I was only being told, not shown of his internal conflict. It would have probably been better for me if Mike's conflict only focuses on the fact that Fiona is his best friend's ex-wife. That situation is already complicated and intriguing enough. Then we could have more time of Mike making connection with Fiona's daughter.

... and I admit that I missed the Wilder boys, a LOT!

Overall, I did like this story – it's a good addition the whole series. It's a sweet and heartwarming romance with two people that I think are perfect for each other. Unfortunately, it's my least favorite of the whole series. Here's hoping that the last book, Jake's story, will be better.

## A Guest Review for The Blogger Girls

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### **Dani C. (Paulette's Papers) says**

Goodness knows how much I love a good small town romance! Thankfully Ms. Terry delivers another one for us with her book Sweet Surprise. I love the location – a small town in Texas which sounds similar to the place where I live. I just wish my town had a cupcake shop!

I have to say I am always amazed at how nice divorced people are to each other in books. I have found that in real life that is hardly ever the case. One thing that bothered me a bit was when Mike started having feelings for Fiona he should have immediately gone to his best friend and just told him. I think it was just silly for him to wait for so long before he actually did.

Sweet Surprise is the fourth book in the wonderful and enjoyable Sweet, Texas series. I love this series and Sweet Surprise is a sweet addition to it. I am looking forward to when the next book, Truly Sweet, comes out in July 2015.

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### **Julie says**

Sweet Surprise by Candis Terry is a 2015 Avon publication. I was provided a copy of this book by the publisher and Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

I have read one of the Sweet, Texas books previously and I loved it, so I was more than ready to dive into this one. I was not disappointed. I sincerely enjoyed this modern contemporary with adult characters who have real life issues that many can relate to... and a hot fireman.

Fiona is putting her life back together after her amicable divorce from Jackson. She is about to open her own pastry shop and is a mom to four year old Izzy. Fiona is determined to put her little wild streak to bed once and for all and make a success of her new business on her own without any outside help. Men and romance are off the table, for the moment at least.

Mike is Jackson's best friend and a fireman. He has a very complicated family and is the one everyone turns to during a crisis to fix things again. He has a big time crush on Fiona, but since she is his best friend's ex-wife, he thinks that is a line guys don't cross when it comes to women. It's in the code book and everything.

But when Jackson's mother "wins" him at a charity auction, she cashes in by assigning him over to Fiona to help get her shop opened. Mike is not thrilled with this development, not because he doesn't want to help Fiona, but because it's going to be pure torture being that close to her and have to keep his hands to himself. Sure enough it doesn't take long for the couple to realize fighting their attraction to one another is futile. But, there is a lot to consider. Telling Jackson for one, introducing Mike to Izzy, and all the personal baggage the pair carry around with them. But, don't these wonderful people deserve a little happiness of their own?

I thought this story was a down to earth realistic look at two people who have made mistakes in the past and are trying desperately not to repeat those mistakes. But, in their efforts to avoid screwing up again, and trying to be all things to all people, they are both paralyzed by fear, so much so they are missing the opportunity for happiness that is right under their noses.

Izzy is absolutely adorable! I was happy to see Fiona didn't all together lay "naughty Fiona" to rest. Mike has been pulling his family out of messes for so long it has come to define him. In a crisis, if they call, he drops everything and runs to the rescue. But, what about his own life? His own happiness? Can Mike finally let his family work out their own issues and focus on being the man Fiona has always dreamed was out there for her? The one she deserves?

I love when a contemporary novel these days employs more mature couples, adds realistic situations and conflicts, then shows the way to work out life's dilemmas without behaving like little whiny children, with all that over dramatic angst. There is real depth, and emotion, a few tissue grabbing moments, but the ending is absolutely the stuff fairy tales are made of. I think this book will appeal to everyone who loves reading within this genre.

Great Job! 4.5 rounded to 5

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### **Saly says**

This time it is Fiona, the ex-wife of hero from the first book who finds her HEA. Fiona was a great character, she had made mistakes in life but now her whole focus was on raising her daughter and not repeating her mistakes. And that made the hero, a firefighter who works with her ex completely out of bounds. She isn't in the market for casual. I liked how the heroine was very upfront with the hero on why she wouldn't give into the sexual tension between them. The hero had come from a life of hard knocks with loads of family baggage and he didn't see himself as a good bet. I liked how he kept helping the heroine out, even when she didn't need help and slowly opened himself up! Another great addition to the series.

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### **Jaime Arkin says**

3.5

If you're a fan of contemporary romance I think you'll love this series of books. I found this series by accident and I'm glad I did. I've anticipated reading each new one that comes along.

Fiona Wilder ... while not officially a Wilder family member anymore, she still is a huge part of the family. As Jackson's ex and the mother of his child, she still leans on the Wilder family for a lot of things. She's made many mistakes in her life, but now she's trying to set her life straight and make it on her own. As a single mom, and proud new owner of her life-long dream of a cupcake shop she's determined to prove to everyone she's not the screw-up she once was.

Firefighter Mike Halsey has been crushing on his best friend's ex for months and he's determined to stay away. He knows he's not the guy she needs in her life... but he just can't seem to stay away. With some crafty meddling from Jana Wilder Mike and Fiona end up being thrown together and it's harder than they thought to

ignore the growing feelings between the two of them.

So I'll say it right up front... this wasn't my favorite of the series so far. That's not to say that I didn't like this, because I did. It was a quick, light, fun and heartwarming read, and of course, I think Candis Terry writes a great story, and if you're looking for a sweet romance, where the falling in love part of the story is in the forefront then you're definitely going to like this one. I think where it didn't work for me was Fiona's own feelings about herself and her lack of moving on from her past mistakes. I know that it can be hard to do... believe me I do, but it just felt a bit forced for me.

Also... while I get that as a single mom she isn't just going to hop into bed with the guy, it was somewhat slow because I wasn't buying the sexual tension building up to the actual "event".... which doesn't actually happen until the very end of the book so that was a bit frustrating.

What I liked was that we got to see these two spend time together and the connection that formed between Mike and Izzy was sweet too.

If you're a fan of Jill Shalvis & Kristen Higgins you're definitely going to enjoy this series of books as well. I'm definitely looking forward to the next in this series!

Thank you to Edelweiss & Avon publishing for the advanced copy in exchange for my honest thoughts!

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### **Susan says**

Good story about two people who are trying to put past mistakes behind them and move on with their lives. Fiona is a single mom who is determined to get it right this time. She's left her party girl ways behind her and has opened a cupcake shop. She's divorced from Jackson, but they are still friends and good parents to their daughter, Izzy. She's got a lot going on and a new relationship is way down on her list of things she wants.

Mike is Jackson's best friend and has been attracted to Fiona for awhile. But getting involved with her would be against the "man code" so he tries to keep his distance. Thanks to some meddling by Jackson's mom, Mike finds himself committed to helping Fiona get her shop ready for business, something that puts quite a strain on his self control.

I loved seeing this relationship develop. Fiona starts out resisting her attraction to Mike. She's looking for a man who wants the same thing she does - commitment, family, someone who will love her for herself, and she doesn't think that Mike is that man. Mike starts out thinking the same way. He's attracted to Fiona, but he doesn't do relationships. His family life has made him reluctant to risk his heart, but he can't stay away from Fiona. The fire between them gets hotter as Mike helps her prepare her store for opening, but Fiona doesn't want to repeat past mistakes. Though it was hard for her to do, I loved seeing how she explained her needs to Mike and stood strong for them. It gave Mike a lot to think about, and I really liked seeing him really think about his past and what he wants for his future.

It was sweet to see them get to know each other. The heat was there, but they kept it under control as they focused on other things. There were some great scenes of them doing ordinary things like cooking dinner and taking Izzy to the zoo, all things that show Fiona that Mike is everything she wants. There are also some serious discussions, including Mike opening up about his family and what they have been through. Things

are moving along well when those same family issues crop up again and Mike has to go off and deal with them. Mike realizes that he has to decide what will have priority in his life, and if he can really be everything that Fiona needs. I loved the ending, and Mike's surprise for Fiona and Izzy was really romantic and adorable.

The secondary characters of the Wilder family and Fiona's friend Sabrina were all wonderful. I loved the closeness of the family and how, even though they were divorced, Fiona was still considered part of them. Jana Wilder, the boys' mother, was pretty awesome with her successful matchmaking ways. I really enjoyed the way that she got Mike to help Fiona. You could definitely tell she had ulterior motives. The others were all there to support Fiona with her business and help her when she needed it. I also loved how Fiona's friend Sabrina helped her see that she was pushing away something that could end up being very good for her. I liked the friendship she had with Fiona and would love to see her get her own story.

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