



Stilettos and Steel

Jeri Estes , Suzanne Gagnier (Photographer)

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Stilettos and Steel by Jeri Estes is based on a true story.

San Francisco, 1969. The counter culture revolution front lines have overrun the city. Golden Gate Park littered with nude, flower crowned hippies burning draft cards in a psychedelic haze. North Beach rocks with the San Francisco sound of Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix while Otis Redding bemoans Sitting on the Dock of the Bay. Free love seduces tourists and soldiers, as topless club barkers pack 'em in under Carol Doda's flashing neon tits. Jessica Rawlson, an attractive middle class young lady joins the migration to the city on an adventure of sexual self-discovery and personal independence.

Fate leads Jessica to the infamous red light district where a gangster/lesbian subculture thrives. The Tenderloin District is alive with sultry femme fatales, corrupt cops, hustlers and homos. Love, lust and murder share the sidewalks with queens in high heels and high hair as suburban perverts cruise on a safari of lust.

Jessica embarks on a riveting journey from street prostitute to mastermind of her own empire. Her walk on the wild side offers intoxicating freedom and power. Straddling moral boundaries, shuffling lovers, appeasing mob bosses and the heat, while keeping vicious territorial predators at bay, is the price to survive at the top.

Stilettos and Steel Details

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From Reader Review Stilettos and Steel for online ebook

Norma Kotva says

I am a 43 year old married woman and when I first heard about this book I purchased it out of mere curiosity of the story line, and it has been a captivating book, I have been able to get to know each character every step of the way I feel that I am a part of this story. My husband and I have used this book as a way to spend time together and we both have enjoyed every page. It is filled with love, drama and an in depth look at the TL. I would recommend this amazing book to absolutely anyone who is interested in a well written book. I hope that anyone who reads this will rush to purchase this amazing book. Jeri Thank you for such a well written book and for allowing us to enter the world you lived in and to really learn what each and every person in it was like. I feel like I know Carmen, Junior, Bunny and I can go on and on.

David and Norma Kotva

Coleen says

Well I am quite pleased to finally have the privilege of posting a review for the riveting book..."Stilettos and Steel"....What a delight for the daring....I couldn't put the book down, anticipating Jesse or Bunny's next move....I even put my daily soaps on hold....knowing that I'd get a real thrill.....a real saga that would quench my thirst...a close to true story to boot. Basically, this is novel based on a true to life story of Jeri Estes in the 60's in the Tenderloin of San Francisco. I received immense knowledge and information of the area because of our author's experience and familiarity with the area....I was born in the late 60's and didn't experience that life-changing time. I feel like I was living right out of Haight-Ashbury....A flower-power child..... The Tenderloin catches her eye....a place that would change her life forever. Falling into prostitution and crime, a pimp-boss monopolizing the Tenderloin with her courage, force and stamina, Jesse attracts some of the most sultry, sexy, provocative, perilous and risky people at the time in the world.

This is an unbelievably tantalizing story with credible and captivating characters. A fascinating plot and snappy dialogue...keeps this reader on edge. It seemed as if I was there, participating interactively with such a creation....I felt like I was living it...many a times I couldn't put the book down.....Now it may seem hard to believe, I read the manuscript before the deals....I was quite moved and impressed...

This book is best-seller, hooking with every word.

Such an eloquently written work, the lives of Jesse and Jeri parallel, implementing only the best.

Jeri entangles you in a web of intrigue, drama, mystery, sex and suspense, all waiting to be engulfed.

The moment I clenched this work....I couldn't put it down....I am anxious to see the star-studded movie extravaganza and the sequel!!!! A must read!

Thank you Jeri for your brilliant mind....

Always, Coleen Driscoll

Monica says

"Pimping was the ultimate power play. My most powerful tools of persuasion however, were charm and sex."~Jesse This is the kind of book that draws you in, especially because while reading this, for me anyways, makes me feel like I'm there with the characters. Everything was described in such detail it brought my imagination to life in fantasizing about each events that took place. To me, that's an amazing author. I absolutely enjoy this book and wanted more...referring to finishing the book, I wish it didn't end. I highly recommend anyone and everyone to read Stilettos and Steel.

Bookwarrior says

As a college student it's hard to find a book that's a real rush. With so many lectures, parties, let alone Greek Mythology I've read it all! That's why I call myself h book-warrior! The only thing I like more than a good book is a cute girl. I saw a cute girl reading STILETTOS AND STEEL. I asked her if that was her on the cover, she blushed and I started reading the book.

Now the book is unbelievable. Waves of interesting characters guided me to a whole new world. Imagine traveling to the 60's and riding along with business women unlike any you've ever known. As I read the book, I gravitated towards Estes' vibrant descriptions of the unknown streets of the TENDERLOIN. Like an electrocardiogram, the author recorded each spike and emotion a human being can actually feel.

I would like to know what everyone else thought about the book. Now I did say I was a warrior, but after reading this book, I think I've become a warrior with a heart.

Cheers

Arnold Snyder says

"Stilettos and Steel" is a look at the sixties like you've never seen them-a world of renegade lesbian teenagers who turn to prostitution, drugs and turf wars for protection, in a society where they were considered outlaws. Forget peace and love-this is life on the edge. Jessica was a Valley girl with a future of proms and football games, when she fell in love with her best friend. Predictably, a familial crisis ensured. Unable to continue her"normal" teenage life, Jess ran to San Francisco's rough and ready tenderloin district, and a new career as a Pip in a brothel where "her" girls are all lesbians, sleeping with men to earn their keep. As tragic as these girls' lives are, it's even more tragic that they turned to the street as the only way to survive and, ironically, be themselves. It's "The Godfather" played by teens and twenty-somethings, "West Side Story" with an all-female cast, a Raymond Chandler novel with tough broads and babes. As showdown looms, who can be trusted when friends are lovers, and lovers, friends- or enemies.

Arnold S

Alicia says

Suspense, love, thrills, and humor- *Stilettos and Steel* have it all. From the first page of Jeri Estates novel, I was enthralled into the captivating and dark streets of the Tenderloin.

Fast paced and with a series of twists and turns, this book left me wanting more with each page turned. I could not possibly put it down.

I fell head first into the city of queens and pimps with so much fast talk, romance, money, and love- one of the most intriguing books I've read in such a long time.

This book is for the open-minded.

Those seeking adventure, darkness, and don't mind to get down and dirty with the law.

Fell in love with this novel and with it's unique characters.

It's *definitely* a must read.

The ending was a perfect mix of contempt and cliff-hanger.

I was so happy when it ended, but at the same time I wasn't.

Is certainly on my Christmas wish-list this season.

Barbara says

The best shadow comes to light book about lesbians, transgender, prostitutes/pimps and the public they swerve through I've ever read. Mostly a true life historic hurdling at a dizzying rate about the area in San Francisco know as "TL" or the Tenderloin in the 60's. The main person "Jesse" is a baby butch, who started out in the TL as a young prostitute and becomes a pimp. She is person with the stamina to survive street walking. She had to sublimate her native boyish traits to appeal to the tricks and emphasize them to maintain her relationships with her women. They were in a business partnership of understanding that few outside the "Life" ever witness. The violence and acquisition of money, power and "respect" while negotiating with confused corrupt police, insecure grandstanding pimps and the "Trick Willies" is a fluid intersection visible by virtue of this book. The women have more strength, will power and intellect that will ever be revealed unless it brings in a dollar. The "squares" do not care nor understand prostitution. They want to exchange money for sex and be done with it. This is about the world tricks do not inhabit, they are merely backdrop for the passion, growing discontent and creeping fear that accompanies the life where there is no where else to go if you are gay, but the TL. Being Gay in the 60's one could face the possible arrest for walking down the street holding your girlfriends hand or being in a GAY bar. The "3 Articles of clothing" law was in effect and one could not wear the clothing of the oposite sex or one could be arrested. The drag Queens and Kings could be proud in the "Life" and respected but no where else. There are voices silenced by the life in the TL, people thrown away. Whether by themselves or by others. This is for them and that there is life after the "Life". I was there. I was a teenager with louder & prettier friends so I was in the shadows of the shadows. I read the book twice in a week. Once to remember the places she had been, twice to savor the characters.

Read this book.

Bobby says

Fabulous read. On the edge of my seat the whole book. Arresting characters. Real emotions. Ms Estes penned her characters with the boldness of a Samurai solider, slashing through political correctness, wielding a sword of honesty. Lisbeth finally has company in contemporary literature with a protagonist whom you've never seen before. I was a research librarian during the sixties with a propensity towards adopting hippies. Considering myself an intellect, who was very broad based, I thought I had read them all. Stilettos and Steel completely shattered my concept of there's nothing new under the sun. The story line is shocking at times and graphic, with a wonderful twist; Estes has the ability to throw a literary strike at will. Stilettos and Steel introduced me to a world of women gangsters that I did not know existed. The read was so satisfying since I knew it was based on a true story. It was filled with sex, suspense, glamor and violence, but most refreshingly at the core, a deep love story.

Denise DeSio says

Jeri Estes has made it no secret that Jesse, the protagonist, in her novel, Stilettos and Steel, is closely modeled after her own life. So let's hope that all of Estes' former Catholic school teachers are dead or demented, lest they run across her book. Not that a Catholic school girl turned lesbian runaway is a shock anymore, even to a nun, but a lesbian runaway turned butch whore gangster professional pimp would surely make Sister Marie Ella Phant blanch and lock herself in the confessional booth to self-flagellate for not having been a better influence in the classroom.

It all begins when Jesse, discovers she's gay and, fearing a parentally mandated lifetime of "asylums, shock treatments and lobotomies" the 16-year-old flees her comfortable middle class home and ends up hooking in the Tenderloin, San Francisco's sex mecca. By 19, Jesse is broke, shooting smack, and inches away from death when Bunny, an experienced high-ticket whore, takes a shine to her. (Wouldn't you?) In no time, Bunny cleans up Jessie's drug habit, prinks her up in shiny new duds, and turns her into the dildo-packing butch heartthrob of every lesbian hooker in the district.

Armed with a mental catechism of best business practices, gleaned from watching her father manage a stable of door to door Electrolux salesmen, Jesse uses her charm, swagger, sexual energy and good looks to draw a loyal stable of cheap, mid-priced, and high end whores. Offering fare for any budget, Jesse soon becomes the "head-pimp-what's-in-charge of the Tenderloin.

Abashedly, I have to admit that I was momentarily swept away on a sea of political incorrectness and tempted to cheer for the twisted girl-pimp's rise out of poverty (Who's your daddy?). But Jesse lives the high life just long enough to piss off her competition. When a big brutish thug with the mentality of a small soap dish--. Why am I telling you this? Read it yourself! Suffice it to say that the outcome brought me to my senses and left me righteously redeemed.

Do I bristle at Este's glamorization of her character's dirty deeds? As a fairly political lesbian, and totally honest person, I have to say that I do. Taking power away from male pimps in order to form a female-owned stable of whores doesn't win any prizes for breaking through the glass ceiling, in my book.

Fortunately, for Estes, I don't review books for feminist values or superior moral content. I review books for the author's use of language:

"...the air stole through my silk shirt...the neighborhood lost its civility.....gossip flowed like sewage."

I review books for well developed characters like the amoral Jesse, who still believes that a Catholic god has her back, and the beautiful Carmen, whose fierce devotion to her butch and dreams of a house in the suburbs would make Jerry Springer proud. I review books for peripheral but colorful characters like Johnny Fuck-Fuck, Little Bastard, Tattoo Jean, Two Bits and Helmet Head.

I review books for smart humor, like the hilarious scenes in which it dawns on Jesse that Bunny's girlfriend, a "six-foot dyke with 350 pounds of undisciplined flesh" might view Bunny's interest in her as a problem.

Lastly, I look for a good story with interesting events. You can't get much more interesting than this band of misfits with its own distorted code of honor, in an explosive setting where anyone might turn up as a corpse.

If you're the type who spells women 'womyn', protests the attendance of male children at the Michigan music fest, and thinks Venus De Milo is pornography, fine. Don't read this book. But anyone who enjoys a well-written book with story elements that create a highly engaging read, I urge you to run right out and get yourself a copy. Did I mention the hot sex? Oh but you probably don't want to know about that.

Kudos to Estes for her riveting tale, and especially to her editor and copy editor who did a hell of a job putting it together.

Proble45 says

From the onset Stilettos and Steel had me engulfed. While the book is of the "noir" variety, it is so much more than that! From the intricate character development to the skillfully paradoxical all-encompassing yet precise plot, Stilettos and Steel has a way of reeling the reader in. From an English major who specializes and now teaches the classics, this book is amazing. Jeri has a unique quality of giving life to all of her characters, protagonist (anti-hero) and antagonists alike.

This novel is undoubtedly bereft of monotony and filled with excellence. I found myself at times teeming with apprehension and suspense in the most positive way --the way only a good novel can do. One of the best things about this novel is that anyone can relate to it and extract their own emotion from it. While I have never lived in San Francisco, in fact I wasn't even alive in 1969, I could relate to the inner turmoil Jessica is wrought with. Jeri's manipulation of Jessica's development is outstanding, evocative, and cunningly brilliant.

Without spoiling it for the rest of the readers who have not yet had a chance to read it, I will leave you with this. If you have EVER felt a sense of ambiguity, perilousness, torture, inner turmoil or a longing to evolve this book is for you; furthermore, if you have ever felt joy, entitlement, clarity or confidence this book is for you. It doesn't matter who you are: man, woman, husband, wife, single, gay, straight, transgender, black, white, brown, rich, poor, young or old; this book is for you!

I have had the distinct pleasure of having a number of conversations with Jeri and she is brilliant in the only way a great writer can be. Do yourselves a favor and pick up Stilettos and Steel immediately, as in, YESTERDAY!

Gabriella Gabriel Dillmann says

This book was great! The dialogue, the characters, the visual description, all honest and totally riveting. Once you start reading, you won't want to stop! Can't wait for the movie!!!

Tiffany says

Being a reader, I am always looking for a book I can relate to. With the broad variety of characters, in the novel Stilettos and Steel, Jeri Estes makes it very easy to connect. I always hear the same old reviews about different books, "I couldn't put it down". For this book, it's not that I COULDN'T put it down it's that I DIDN'T WANT to put it down. As you read line for line you meet all types of gays, straights, druggies, alcoholics, hippies, gangsters and pimps of all races. Each character grabs you in their own way, pulling you to turn the page. This 1960's based book is an emotional journey on its own. The words feel real and as you appreciate them, you'll travel through love, hate, violence, happiness, and curiosity in each chapter. Its genre ranges from action, comedy, romance, and even mystery. It has a little something for everyone. Boring? Absolutely not! It is truly and honestly a great read! I highly recommend you buy the book and read it.

Ronel says

I am halfway through this book...at this stage I absolutely LOATHE the main character Jesse. Let's see what happens onwards...

One probably has to see the story through the lens of another era where the stereotypical butch/femme relationships were more the norm than today.

I absolutely cannot stand the misogyny, the cruelty, the abusiveness and the entitlement of the main character. For her a woman is something to use and abuse. Everyone is classified, tagged and depersonalised. An example of this the constant use of phrases like "the hot femme".

The scene where she rapes her girlfriend, for whom she professes her undying love is just horrific and inexplicable.

Maybe I do not understand the time in which the narrative occurs, maybe I do not understand the butch/femme thing, maybe I just think that people like Jesse should be deported to Mars...

But I am not finished with the book yet and maybe my opinion will change.

The theme of the role of the female gangster/pimp is an interesting thing though. And that is why I am still reading the book.

Wendy Harrison says

A must read for any opened minded lover of books.

if you read this book is a must.!

as i began to read i got chills up my spine,

as i grew up right where it began for ms estes.

the book kept me up till i finished.

i laughed, i cryed,felt for each person

that came along.

with an ache for wanting to know each person more.

it was gritty! the book has teeth and humor,

in a col world. the slapstick was great,the love

was with great feeling and passion.

it'sguts and heart left me wanting more.

didnt want it to end, i read most of it to someone out loud
and left them begging me to finnish it.!

filled with emotion, lust,money,power and gang warfare.

unlike anything out there. refreshing,different.

a learning expereince of the 60's.

i did not know it was like that then.

so from this book i got a lesson, a rush and a thirst for
everyone person in each chapter.!

kuddo's for keeping it real . thank you jeri estes
for the thrill ride!!

Karen Martinez says

"Come on in," I said to the tits n' pearl girl. Bunny looked up at me sweetly and I instantly felt that strange

masculine power well up inside me. The alluring femme sauntered into the room. Her tight ass under the pink capris made me want to bend her over the side of the sofa and fuck her from behind. This thought startled me, because I hadn't made love with anyone since Carmen. Sex was just a job for me. To desire this pretty young woman caught me off-guard....

Very well written Estes!
