



Cardinal

Sara Mack

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Jen Elliott's world is falling apart.

Her boyfriend is married (not to her), the restaurant she works for sells out to a chain (she's unemployed), and her apartment building catches fire (thankfully, she didn't start it). Faced with a job search and living with her parents, a phone call from her brother changes everything.

"Come out here, Little J. Escape for a while."

Convinced to do just that, Jen finds herself on her brother's doorstep in Chicago. Armed with her guitar and a bruised heart, she plans to work on her music and contemplate her future. What she doesn't expect is to fall for the sexy, tattooed neighbor upstairs. From the moment Latson appears uninvited in her bedroom, the two can't help but wage a battle of sarcasm and wit.

Until the attraction becomes impossible to ignore.

Hopeful the universe is finally playing fair, Jen gives in to her feelings. She should know, however, that when it rains, it pours. When offered the unexpected chance of a lifetime, she decides to pursue her passion. Unfortunately, her dreams are tied to Latson's painful past. As time goes on and their distance grows, Jen fears fate conspired to bring them together only to tear them apart.

Cardinal is the story of losing everything you have to find everything you need.

Cardinal is a standalone, contemporary romance for ages 17+. Cardinal is a spin-off of Sparrow; however, the books do not need to be read in order.

Cardinal Details

Date : Published October 6th 2015 (first published September 17th 2015)

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Author : Sara Mack

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From Reader Review Cardinal for online ebook

Ashley Jeffers says

This book was simply wonderful. I loved the connection between Jen and Latson, loved that he pushed her to follow her dreams. It was so easy to relate to the characters (even the rock stars), and I loved the use of music throughout.

NMmomof4 says

2.5 Stars

Overall Opinion: This was a story that I felt was unique in many ways. We always get the rockstar H that leaves on tour, but in this it was our h. Our H was a rockstar, but he hung that hat when he became a single dad for his nephew. I loved Oliver! Though it was unique, I still don't feel like it will go down as one of my favorites or be all that memorable unfortunately. I liked the idea of the couple, but I didn't truly feel their connection. I realized this when the climax hit and I wasn't feeling any bit emotional for them. I praise Ms. Mack for having put these ideas together, but the execution just felt a little flat for me.

Storyline: This is Jen and Latson's story. They (officially) meet when Jen attends a party at his apartment with her brother. Jen just arrived in Chicago to stay with her brother after losing her boyfriend (who she found out was married), her job, and her apartment. They both feel a strong attraction, but Jen is not wanting to start any relationship with the way her life is such a disaster. She ends up working as a bartender in the bar that Latson owns, and they start a fun, flirty banter. She also meets his nephew, Oliver, that he has full custody of and builds a great relationship with him. Eventually after some chasing and wooing, they give into their attraction and start a relationship. Jen is then given the opportunity to follow her dreams and go on tour with one of Latson's old band mates. After some family, ex-groupie, ex-record executive, and personal drama...they find their HEA.

POV: This was in Jen's POV.

Overall Pace of Story: Ok. There were a few parts that I felt the urge to skim, but not too many (just parts that I felt were irrelevant to the overall story and that some editing could've taken care of). I wouldn't necessarily call it instalove, but there wasn't that much development of their relationship before some strong feelings were felt (not expressed until the end though).

H rating: 3 stars. Latson. He was moody at times that made him off-putting for me, and not just mysterious like some of the leading H's are (and I think might've been the goal of his characterization). I did like how he cared about his nephew though.

h rating: 3 stars. Jen. She was just kind of meh. I think she let him get away with the biggest conflict they had towards the end way too easily...he was hurtful, and she just swept it under the rug IMO.

Sadness level: Low. I didn't feel fully invested in the couple's connection to feel sad when they hit a rough patch...so no tissues needed here.

Heat level: Low. Fade to black. I didn't even feel that much sexual tension either (might go back to not feeling the connection at all).

Descriptive sex: No

Sex scene with OW or OM: (view spoiler)

Cheating: (view spoiler)

Possible Triggers: (view spoiler)

Closure: Way too abrupt of an ending for me. I reluctantly call it a HEA, but I needed to understand how they got to their epilogue a year later. (view spoiler)

Worth the \$?: It was kindle unlimited, so I'll say yes. If it wasn't included with that subscription, and I paid \$2.99...I'd probably say no...sorry.

S.M. Koz says

My favorite Sara Mack book so far!

I've read and loved everything by Sara Mack, but this one blew me away. It has everything I desire in books - hot rock stars, a strong female protagonist, a sweet romance, and an engaging plot beyond the romance.

Although I really enjoyed Sparrow by Sara Mack, the ending left me wanting more, especially for Jen. She got dealt a bad hand more times than once. Well, this book changes everything. I don't want to include spoilers, but let's just say Jen's life is turned upside down in Cardinal and probably not exactly in the way you'll suspect as you start reading. By the end, I got the satisfying closure I was seeking for Jen.

One of my favorite things about this book was how three-dimensional the characters are. I already loved Jen from Sparrow, but I got a better appreciation for her throughout this book. And, let's just say Latson is my new book boyfriend. What I especially like about him is that he's not perfect. He's got flaws, but the more we learn about his past, the more we understand where those flaws stem from. And by the end of the book, he's had significant personal growth, something that I love to see.

Another aspect of this book I really enjoyed was the glimpse into the rock star lifestyle. I've been on a rocker book kick for a while, but usually find myself disappointed because all the important details (e.g., performing, touring, practicing, meet and greets) seem to be glossed over. Not in this book. We get to see it all. Assuming Mack doesn't have a secret life as a rock star, I'm impressed with the amount of research she must have done to make all of this seem completely authentic.

Overall, I recommend Cardinal to anyone who likes sweet NA romance without overly explicit intimate scenes or anyone who likes rocker romances with a twist. As for me, I'll continue to read everything Mack publishes because she just gets better and better!

Cristina Aguado rodriguez says

Fantástico spin-off de Sparrow. Aquí seguimos la historia de Jen, a la que conocimos en el anterior. Ya fue uno de mis secundarios favoritos, y me quedé un poco plop por lo que la pasa en Sparrow, así que me ha encantado leer su historia. Con un principio un tanto desastroso, me encanta como se va desarrollando todo. Volvemos a tener unos secundarios divertidos y encantadores, y sobre todo Oliver, que es un sol!

Otra historia preciosa de Sara Mack

Christina Rodriguez says

Review coming soon! In the meantime go grab this book!! :)

Jessi says

I absolutely loved this book. It is was on those books that pulls on your heart strings and sticks with you forever. It would make a perfect movie (if cast correctly).

When life completely kicks you down, what do you do? Go visit your brother of course. Then you meet sexy bar owners/rockers like Gunner. Jen's apartment is flooded, she lost her job and her boyfriend is actually married to another woman. Her life couldn't get much worse. She packs up and heads to her brother. In walks Gunner, her brother's boss and neighbor. The chemistry in this book is off the charts hot. I totally need a Gunner in my life! I was worried for a little bit when Jen went on the road and her and Gunner grew apart a little and started to fight some.

I loved reading about Jen's and Gunner's relationship. It was so sweet and beautiful. The author put some much detail and care into it, it came across perfectly and will leaving people day dreaming about having a relationship like theirs. I think that Oliver was my favorite side character, and there are a lot of great side characters in this book. He was so cute and reading about big, bad tattooed hottie Gunner putting his life on hold to take care of him was so sweet. This is a must read book for everyone!

Emm Cole says

Oh Jen Elliott, how I missed you. When Sparrow ended, I know for a fact that I wasn't the only one who wondered what was next for Jen. She gets sort of a rough break, and you can't help but feel really bad for her. Cardinal starts where Sparrow left off, and this poor girl gets burned further. With nothing left to lose she packs up her car to go stay with her brother. After so much disappointment, Jen decides to put her happiness first and guys last. It's bad timing when this incredibly great guy named Latson walks on the scene. His entrance is pretty hilarious, by the way.

This entire story I just kept thinking I wish Jen and Latson were real. As a reader you can't help but be swayed by how fun their interactions are. These are people I'd absolutely love to grab a beer or coffee with, because they aren't artificially perfect but perfectly flawed.

In fact I wished most all of these characters could be pulled from the pages, because Sara Mack could write solid, lovable characters in her sleep. That's what really makes Cardinal shine, and it's the biggest reason this author's books are an auto-buy for me.

Cardinal as a story is like a nice cup of tea and your favorite throw blanket, and the warmth and realness of this cast of characters is a standard all contemporary romance should strive to achieve. I also have to note that the song lyrics throughout this story are rich with angst and heart, just beautiful stuff.

I won't do a summary of the book. Just kick back on your couch and enjoy a truly sweet romance. And if this is your first introduction to Sara Mack's work, good heavens. Go look up Guardian and Sparrow, because you're missing out.

Brooke Page says

The story line is so original. Every page drew me in, literally pulling me into the characters lives. If you love Rock Stars... you MUST read Cardinal!

Jen says

Can't wait for this one. It is based on me after all. Just kidding..but it's sure to be amazing!!

Jessica's Book Review says

Cardinal is a spin off of Sara Mack's novel Sparrow. I suggest reading Sparrow first even though they are different main characters the ending of Sparrow will be given away in Cardinal.

Cardinal tells the story of Jen. She just broke up with her boyfriend of three years and found out the new guy she was dating was married. She is completely down on her luck and now out of a job. She decides to move in with her brother in Chicago for some "me" time. Here is where she meets Latson. I am not really into the tattoo/band type guy but Latson is SO different! He has the biggest heart. He is raising his little nephew and is so sweet with him. He gave up his entire career to be a "dad" to his nephew. Latson & Jen have an instant attraction but its a long build up before they finally decide to be more than friends. Once they do it's like fireworks.

What is interesting about the story is half way through the book becomes almost like another story itself. Instead of Latson being the hot band guy, it's Jen who is the rock star. I loved that Sara Mack was able to make the female lead the rock star hitting the road.

Jen & Latson's story was really cute and believable. I loved them together. I enjoyed Cardinal way more than I did Sparrow. I am so glad she left Kyle... lol

I give Cardinal 4 stars.

Wendy says

3.5 stars

This was a sweet read. At the end of Sparrow, I did wonder what happened to Jen and it was nice to get her story. When Jen escapes to Chicago to visit with her brother, she wasn't expecting for her life to change. I really enjoyed the chemistry between Jen and Latson. The friendship that was built into their relationship showed how deep their bond really went. Those two together was so fantastic to read. And just like Kyle from Sparrow, I just loved Latson. What he was able to do to overcome his past was great, especially when it came to his nephew Oliver. I liked how Jen didn't let life get her down but was able to be better and accomplished a lot. I enjoyed seeing her transformation throughout the story. A good story from start to finish that will keep you entertained. It flowed very nicely and was an enjoyable read.

Malealeman1975gmail.com says

3,5

Tiffany says

Fantastic!! I couldn't put this one down. Fell in love with Latson and Oliver! I love a book that flows and doesn't miss a beat, one where I don't get bored. Cardinal is that book, from start to finish. Happy Jen got her happy ever after. Sara, you have done it again!

Mandy says

I received Cardinal in return for an honest review as part of the release event. Jen's life has taken a dramatic spin downwards from the fact that her boyfriend is married to another girl, her apartment catches on fire but it's just water damage, and she's lost her job. When the chance to leave town presents itself Jen takes the chance to visit the brother she's been putting off visiting. What should be a chance to relax, re-evaluate and figure out what she wants to do with her future may not be what is on the agenda.

Jen figures this is a perfect time to work on her music but is drawn into working as a bartender at the same club as her brother and the sexy neighbor from upstairs. The more time that Jen spends with Latson the more they start to connect, and after she has a chance meeting his nephew they make it official. When the chance to tour with his brothers band comes up she's torn between love and her music. At latson's instance she takes the chance it's only 5 months what could happen? Will their love survive the 5 months that they are on tour? Will is past come back to break them up?

I like Jen she's a total sweetheart who needs a good guy after what happened with her ex and I think Latson is just what she needs. They each have issues with pasts but they learn to accept each other and move past them after almost losing each other. I like the chemistry between the two it works well for them, and I'm a

sucker for a happy ever after. I also liked getting to know her brother Pete and his girlfriend Jules they are a great addition to Jen's life.

I haven't read the prior book so I was a little nervous but Cardinal is my kind of story so I knew I couldn't pass up the chance. The story is a fast paced contemporary romance that revolves around Jen and Latson as they figure out how to make it work. I actually had a hard time putting down Cardinal and finished it in a single lazy day it's a captivating story that captures the heart as well as the imagination. I really love the idea of a normal girl finding a happy ever after with a Rockstar even if he's no longer currently active after everything that happened. I really enjoyed the writing style the author uses it was easy to fall in love with her characters who are easy to connect with. I can't wait to check out her other books because I enjoyed Cardinal so much.

♥?Melanie says

Great fun read and loved Gunner.
