



Untamed Heart

Ally Blue

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Revenge can't heal a wounded soul. When Leon Fisher finds his lover butchered in their bed, he does what any good assassin would do: he gets revenge. But killing the murderer doesn't make the pain go away. Instead, it sends him on a vicious downward spiral into alcoholism and depression. In a bid to force Leon to sober up and regain his edge, his mysterious employers known only as "the organization" send him to a private property in the wilds of Alaska. In the lush and remote Tongass National Forest, Leon encounters Grim, a strange but alluring young man who saves Leon's life after a bear attack, then brings him to a cabin in the depths of the woods to recover. Leon doesn't expect to fall in love with this odd, subservient person, yet he can't deny what he comes to feel for Grim. But Grim has a past he doesn't talk about. A past just as dark and ugly as Leon's. And both pasts are about to catch up with them.

Untamed Heart Details

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From Reader Review Untamed Heart for online ebook

Straysod says

Whether or not this is a 4 or a 5 star book could probably be debated, but I am going with 5 because in addition to good characters, decent plot, and good writing, this book hit every damn button I have.

Possible minor spoilers ahead (I never know what really counts as a spoiler anymore...):

Bad-ass assassin who is nonetheless gentle and encouraging to his lover? Check. Abused/damaged MC who still manages to be sweet and kind and have a backbone of steel even after all he went through? Check. Good dose of action, enough tension to keep the story moving, but no torturously long separation between the MCs or inordinate amount of time making them suffer? Check. HEA? Double check.

I loved how the relationship developed between the two MCs. They were both coming from dark places, and the romance is so sweet. There may be a fairly instant attraction (come on, as hot as these two are, who wouldn't be instantly ready to get in their pants!?), but the trust between them builds at a natural pace. And the sex is smokin hot. I also loved that they got their HEA. A little overly-simplified/optimistic? Maybe. But they were such adorable characters, they totally deserved it, and what good is fiction if you can't give the guys you love everything they deserve?

A must read for any fan of m/m romance that likes assassins and/or wounded MCs.

Sarah says

I think this had potential. Liked the whole enforced closeness, living in the forest, subsistence living but then the story had some pretty hard to believe twists and turns, some of which made me uncomfortable. It was also difficult to suspend my disbelief. Not a favorite read.

Alyosha says

Very good story about a mostly ex-assassin who is saved by a beautiful, abused young man in the middle nowhere in Alaska.

3.5 stas

Lisa J. says

I can see this book as a movie. It's action-packed -- a bear attack, multiple killings, a daring escape. Then, of course, there's the romance. And there's a lot of romance on the pages here. The latter part of "Untamed Heart" is chock-full of sweetness.

We get two unorthodox heroes in "Untamed Heart." Leon is an assassin who's sent to Alaska by his bosses after he turns to alcohol to numb the pain after his lover is butchered. He's rescued from a bear attack by Grim, a damaged younger man who's got his own secrets and pain. They end up rescuing each other.

Some people like a lot of secondary characters in their book; I'm not one of them. I love when a couple is isolated in a cabin/elevator/island and we get time to know them as a couple, and they get time to know each other. At the beginning and end of this novel, that's what happens.

In the middle, the tension is amped up as Leon's and Grim's pasts catch up with them. I was anxiously turning the pages to see how it would turn out.

The story is told from Leon's POV, but the author did a good job of defining Grim. I felt like I got to know him too, though at a couple of major turning points, his POV would have been especially welcome. We're left with a few unanswered questions (view spoiler) but those weren't enough to detract from the HEA.

It's 3-for-3 for me with this author. She's given me an American Indian Elvis impersonator, a vegan hippie and now an assassin. Each of her books have surprised me in some way.

SueM says

This story involves two men, both with hidden scars from emotional trauma, who manage to find and heal each other. In many ways, it is a very harsh and brutal story, with both men capable of violent acts that would be abhorrent to most of society, but it also has some vulnerable soft moments as the two men discover parts of themselves that had long been buried under walls built in self-defense. It is a story of survival and redemption through love. It's definitely a dark novel but the end is bright with hope for a better future filled with love.

ElaineY says

I was rather put off when Grim was described as a skinny kid. Leon is 31 and he wasn't too happy when he was rescued by Grim then find himself attracted to him. I went "ugh" but persisted and when the skinny wildboy of Alaska turned out to be 20 years old, it was a little better. Just a little, though. I'm really not a fan of men into boys type of stories. Terribly double-standardish, I know, when I have no probs with 35 year old men falling for 18 or 20 year old girls back in the days when I used to read historicals.

Anyway, I took to Grim and felt as protective about him as Leon did. Some parts were a little overdone but overall, I enjoyed the little bit of suspense and watching Leon overcome Grim's fears. Though I don't like these May-December (or is it the other way around?) romances, the age gap was necessary for the plot. Even Grim being skinny was in keeping with the circumstances but after all's said and done, I'll continue to avoid such pair-ups...difficult since they seem common in gay romances. I know I have a couple more in my TBR list.

Update: 18 months after I read this.

I now love May-December romances and am able to not worry about the December dropping dead on May

Jo * Smut-Dickted * says

OMG. I loved this book. I see the "why" of people who had issues. I do. But I just didn't. The crazy mixed up mess - it was all just so freaking mesmerizing to me. I read straight through. From the assassin to the seemingly innocent kid to all the backstory..these 2 are super f&%ked up and pretty much perfect for each other. Did I think it was realistic? *snort* No. But who cares. I freakin enjoyed the heck out of myself. It had this anticipatory sense to it - from when Leon gets injured and Grim helps him, through their time at the cabin, through what happens next. I felt edge of my seat. I cannot say simply I liked the characters because I didn't at times. I mean hell Leon is an assassin and Grim's not as innocent as he looks. Neither is going for man of the year. I'd of liked to know more about the organization for sure.

Also this books WINS WINS WINS for the Best. Opening. Chapter. Ever. I was spellbound. S-P-E-L-L-B-O-U-N-D. How transfixing was that opener?

I'm not sure I've read this writer before but rest assuredly I will be picking up as many of her other books as I can. I clicked dead bang on (no pun) with her style. It's a little quirky - sometimes jerky and slow and fast but it suits me just right.

Another reviewer said she liked it because this is not apologetic. Leon and Grim - they both have pasts. Neither apologizes for it - they move on as flawed humans.

Alina says

FANTASTIC story!

I loved it to bits! The best I've read in quite some time!

I absolutely love stories with flawed characters and I especially love it, when at the end they don't magically become some sort of saints, no they are still flawed, but capable of love.

Don't get me wrong: both MCs are very sympathetic here, but it was so refreshing not having Leon regretting his past and feeling sorry for being who he was. No, he quit and got over it and accepted it as his past, no remorse and no sugarcoating. I almost gave up hope seeing this kind of thing in books.

The romance hit all my right buttons too, Leon and Grim protecting each other, Leon never even thinking of leaving Grim behind, ready to do anything to save him - it melted my heart <3 The sex scenes were so hot and just the right amount.

Personally I didn't have any problems with suspending my disbelief about the Organization. I'm a long-time fan of James Bond franchise, and I'm used to such kind of situations.

The ending and the epilogue were super satisfying! I hate it when the book just ends abruptly or the HEA isn't established enough, it always makes me frustrated and disappointed and here it was a perfect amount of sweet happiness for it to be completely satisfying, but not at all overdone *happy sigh*

I think I'll go and re-read Penelope one more time, because I'm not ready to part ways with the characters just yet ;)

ttg says

A very solid m/m action-suspense-mystery-romance about Leon, an assassin sent to an estate in the middle of the Alaskan wilderness to "recuperate" after killing the serial killer who butchered his long-time lover. Leon is rescued from a bear attack by a strange young man, and while healing from his wounds, he tries to learn more about his mysterious rescuer as well as steer them both clear of the organization that sent him there.

I have a severe soft spot for action/romance and this was a good read. This is the first book I've picked up by this author, and I thought her style was very nice and readable.

The things I liked:

- Good pacing overall. Leon and Grim don't spend the entire novel in the woods. After about the 50% mark, things shift to a new setting. Blue did a good job of giving you space to settle into the characters and what was going on, while not dragging the story.

- Both Leon and Grim are interesting, damaged characters that I could sympathize with, even though Leon is a hired killer. Part of the suspense and mystery in the first half also was tied to figuring out who Grim is and what happened to him prior to meeting Leon. Blue dribbles out information and hints slowly, so the reader, like Leon, starts building a dark hazy understanding of Grim's shady past.

- Sex does not heal all. Both characters have some big traumas in their pasts, and even as they become intimate with each other, that intimacy does not fix everything in the beginning. Especially with Grim's character, whose evolution and healing is very slow. It added a nice layer of realism to a story about assassins and shiftier organizations.

I also appreciated that Leon struggled to figure out how best to handle Grim, and sometimes he made mistakes, but his desire to give Grim what had been denied before kept pushing him forward. I liked how Leon works at shifting Grim to enjoy a more equal level relationship as opposed to letting him fall back into a submissive role. The latter would have been easy, and could have been written off as, "But he likes that role," but Leon kept encouraging Grim to voice his true thoughts and not fear retribution, and it was really satisfying to see Grim slowly shed his earlier conditioning. Overall, I thought Blue handled their relationship growth really well, and it's a big part of what I liked about the book.

- The author put time into the ending. This isn't a book that has the big climax, and then wraps things up in just a couple pages after that. I think the climax happened somewhere at the 75-80% mark, and the rest (it ended at 93% on the kindle) was devoted to wrapping things up.

I'm putting my thoughts about the ending behind a spoiler cut--(view spoiler) But even with those dueling thoughts, I did like that Blue gave the reader a very satisfying ending.

My issues with the book were:

- I had a couple questions about where Grim was getting supplies while he was in the woods. I got the part

that he was a skilled hunter, but I wondered about the other stuff. There was some explanation, but I think I needed it more spelled out to really understand. (view spoiler)

- There was no insta-love (thank god) but there was some insta-attraction that was a little strange at first. Leon was ogling Grim right after he woke up from being pulled out of the river, and I was all, "Really, Leon? You feeling it RIGHT NOW?" (Grim's "insta-attraction" on the other hand I thought could be reasoned off more since that was one of the ways he was taught to deal with people.)

- Both Leon and Grim's back-story traumas are crazy and could have their own books devoted to what happened to them. I'm not into super-dark reads about violence and abuse, so in a way, I didn't miss not being an immediate bystander to what happened. I also understand that the focus of the book isn't on the traumas, but on the healing, recovery, and realization of what they want going forward, but I felt like I was missing pieces. Why did the serial killer target Leon's lover? (view spoiler) Tidbits like that didn't wreck the book for me, but I did wonder about these things.

But overall, the points that I liked outweighed my questions, and I did enjoy the book, and had a helluva time putting it down. (In the middle of reading it, I went out to get a drink with a friend, and when she went up to get a pint, I whipped out my kindle and read for the minute and a half that she was away. I was just burning to find out what would happen next.)

So, if you're looking for a m/m action/suspense/romance, and don't mind reading about damaged characters working through their issues, this may be a good fit for you.

Donna says

This is the most understated 5-star read that I have ever read... it just slowly meandered through to the end and then I sighed and thought, "What a wonderful, sad, mixed up story that absolutely works for me!" What more could I ask for? ;D

Ally Blue is a writer that always ends up being a good read for me... I like that in an author! *grin*

Vicktor Alexander says

Okay, so when "Laddie" first told me to read this story, I'd didn't realize that I'd already read it three times before. I'll tell you how that happened. For some reason I keep forgetting the title of this book and each time I read it I see something that I didn't notice previously, so by the time I realize that I've read it before, I'm usually so into the book that I just read it again. I've yet to be disappointed. We'll just call it my "Blonde Moment."

I could identify with Leon and his need to avenge his partner after his brutal death, that driving force to go to any lengths, spend any amount of money and time planning in order to exact justice on the one who took your partner from you. I lost my fiance to brain cancer and I'm still fighting to this day to destroy the bastard that took him away from me, cancer (walks, marches, studies, organizations, etc). I must admit to smiling at the omniscience of "The Organization" which, if we're honest with ourselves, we all know to be the CIA, having served in the Army in Intelligence I'm aware of just how much power and knowledge our government

actually has and Mrs. Blue hit the nail on the head with that one, even if some of their dialogue made me chuckle.

Grim's past and his reactions to Leon made me sad. I understand how trauma and the events that happen afterwards, that guilt, that need for self-preservation can cause you to fall into a pattern that is hard to change, even though the person does. Leon's determination to overcome and help Grim to heal from his past, to see the reality, to realize that he was worthy of love and a life was so touching, that I actually cried a little. Leon's determination and will to fight for Grim was uplifting and his strength of character to not stop, to do whatever he had to do to rescue his lover was so encouraging and inspiring that it made me smile and root for him.

And for me, "The Epilogue Whore" (Don't know why I like that nickname so much but I do. LOL) the end was so perfect and so "sigh worthy" that I didn't feel the need to search for a sequel or anything further with their story. I actually gave a sigh of contentment and I feel, in my humble opinion, that had Ms. Blue written anything else, she would have spoiled the whole thing for me. Leon and Grim deserved their HEA and Mrs Blue gave them the perfect one.

Anyone who enjoys reading stories about healing after a trauma, finding love again, overcoming obstacles, fighting for love, action, and HEAs will definitely enjoy this book. I know I did, that's why I read it three different times and I haven't regretted it yet.

Susan says

4.25 stars

Now this was a nice surprise! I just picked something from my TBR on my Kindle. No reading the blurb, no going through endless reviews.

Leon is an assassin for a secret department of the government. But ever since a serial killer tortured and murdered his lover, he doesn't care about his life anymore. Even after he gets back at the serial killer, he's not feeling any better.

His boss send him to a remote place in Alaska to get himself back together. He's not allowed to refuse or he will be forced to 'retire'.

When Leon arrives in Alaska, in the middle of nowhere, he is surprised to find out how much he enjoys being there. He loves the woods and the feeling of seclusion. But when he goes hiking one day, he gets attacked by a bear. He is rescued by a young man named Grim.

Grim lives alone in a remote cabin deep in the woods. The people from the big house Leon was staying in, don't even know Grim is there.

When Leon recovers from his injuries, he notices just how pretty Grim is. But Grim seems shy and scared of him one moment and bold and sensual towards him the next. Leon only knows he has no desire to return to his old life the longer he stays hidden away with Grim...

I loved the action parts in this just as much as the romance parts. I always have a thing for assassins and

underground operations. The feeling of there being no way out of that life fascinates me to no end.

And I just loved Grim. Too bad we never got his POV, but I loved reading about him from Leon's POV just as much. Grim was such a sweet broken soul. There was some great hurt/comfort going on here!

This was an action-filled story with a sweet romance and lots of hurt/comfort touches.

Shannon says

Okay, this was a heavier read than I was expecting but I loved it. How I could like Leon so much seeing as he's an assassin is a mystery but there you go. He was so patient and kind to Grim that I just couldn't help myself. We didn't see much of his life as an assassin, it's just what he was. Poor Grim living in the woods, a broken young man in need of some serious reconditioning. The things that boy went through....*shudders*. Well told with some lovely smexing including a bit a felching which for some reason I find freaking hawt!

Monica Vidal says

As usual my reviews suck. I never know how to put my feelings on words. So I'll just say that I liked this book a lot. It's so hard to find good m/m books. They are usually just a bunch of sex and no plot, which drives me off, I must add.

But not this one. The plot is pretty decent: Leon has his boyfriend murdered and he ends up killing the guy who murdered his bf. but revenge doesn't bring him any kind of rest, till he finds Grim. Grim has a very suspicious and dark past, but once he finds Leon things are about to change.

Book has the necessary amount of angst that we all love, the good amount of sex to make it interesting and Leon and Grim are totally cute.

I recommend it.

♥Laddie♥ (Lee Lee) says

This was one of the first m/m books I read, if I remember correctly. It's a dark book and usually I don't go in for that but I devoured this one. I don't know if I'll ever re-read it but I'm glad that i read it in the first place.
