



Unrestrained

Joey W. Hill

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From Joey W. Hill—author of the Knights of the Boardroom series—comes a novel of erotic games and power plays, in which an adventurous woman attempts to break down her own barriers...

Athena is an accomplished businesswoman in control of every aspect of her life. But since the death of her husband, she's had the desire to explore submissive cravings she's had for some time. Unfortunately, Athena is known as a Mistress, because that's the role she's always played.

Her type A personality was strong enough to serve her husband as a Domme because that's what he needed. It's not until she meets Dale, a retired Navy SEAL, that she attempts to discover what her own submissive desires are. But letting go of her control is not so easy.

Fortunately, Dale is an accomplished Master who can help Athena live out her fantasies. And as she slowly surrenders to his touch, both of them will learn more about the nature of love between Dominant and submissive, and how it defies all expectations.

Unrestrained Details

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From Reader Review Unrestrained for online ebook

Athena Shardbearer says

Actual Rating

Overall: 3

Sex: 3.5

Story: 2.5

"We care for the ones we love. We hold on to them as long as God allows and gives them the joy of life. And when life has no more joy, we walk with them all the way to the water's edge, and hope for the day when we'll get on that boat, too, and see them again."

Athena is a widow and a Domme. It's been two years since she's lost her husband and submissive to cancer. She spent two decades building a company, lifestyle and home with him. She's lost without him, and doesn't know how to get herself back.

Dale is ex SEAL, Master Chief, that's retired due to losing a limb in combat. He was lost and finds his calling in Domme. He's so great he's called "Master Craftsman". These two find their way back from the struggles they go through, and Dale helps Athena really become who she's always been.

"Nothing is less in our power than the heart, and far from commanding, we are forced to obey it."

The problem that I had with this book is Athena. She was such a pushover, which I'm guessing is what a submissive is suppose to be like?? She's the CEO of Summer's Industries, a powerhouse of a woman, in the Private Club, she is a Domme and known as Lady Mistress. All want to be owned/subs to her, all want a chance because she's so good at it. Not once did I feel like she was this strong woman that they claim. Not once did I feel like she was this Domme that can make me beg for it. She's weak from the get go.

One night she visits Club Release and sees "MC", Dale, subbing a girl. She likes it so much she wishes he would do that to her. She leaves and is mugged outside the club at a nearby gas station. Dale saves her, he becomes her hero.

To me there was too much insta-lust, insta-love. He says it after four months! It was too much too fast. The sex scenes are pretty hot and his taking over was great...what I didn't like he took the Master/sub thing even outside of the bedroom. Ummm...no.

"I'm not sure this is going to work. I need things more defined."

"Like a car race on a closed track, there the circles are predictable, and when you hit the finish line, the race is over?"

"Don't judge me."

"I wouldn't suggest using that tone with me. I'm likely to react exactly as you're hoping I will."

"I apologize for the outburst, Dale."

Then he tells her to sit at his feet.

Nope, can't do it.

Now, I've read other BDSM books and this for me was really intense as far as how in depth the Master/sub thing goes. Maybe this is the reality of it? Maybe this is not a great book on this subject. Will I recommend it anyone else...hmmm no. Its not horribly written and the happenings are nice, but I'm not sold on the characters.

~ Stephanie Lynn ~ says

*****5 FREAKING AMAZING STARS*****

LOVED IT!!!!

Joey W. Hill has done it again. This is simply a beautiful story. So much emotion. Just **WOW!!**

Dale is a former Navy SEAL. I fell in love with Dale right from the start. He is the **BAD ASS SUPER DOM** but he has a southern charm thing going on as well.

Athena is a businesswoman. I love the fact she is over 40. Athena has to make sure everyone is taking care of but never looks after herself. (submissive tendencies yes indeed) And Dale is going to bring out those submissive tendencies.

Roy was Athena's husband (who passed away). She was his Mistress. After Roy's death it seemed like she gave up on the scene. Until she met Dale.

I do not want to go into to much detail but I will say this it is a must read. **Truly An Amazing Story.**

I love JWH writing!! It is like you would think she can not get any better and then BAM she does.

Duchess Nicole says

MY SYNOPSIS:

Athena was a Domme to her husband before he died of cancer a few years ago. Since his death, she has visited their club of choice but cannot bring herself to pick another sub. Not only does she feel too guilty, but no one seems to trip her trigger in the least. She has healed as much as she thinks she can from losing the love of her life. She thinks that maybe that part of her life is over, that her husband was not only her one true companion, but her one submissive as well.

"She told him that she'd be all right, that his Mistress would always love him. He would like her putting it in those terms, she knew. So his Mistress let him go, even as his wife sat at his bedside, clutching his hand, the loneliness closing around her when his breath stopped and he obeyed her."

Until she sees a certain Master one night at the club and is captured by his ability with his submissive.

Dale is a retired Navy SEAL, and considered to be one of the most proficient Doms at the club. But when he sees Athena's reaction to a scene between he and a sub one night and then gets the opportunity to play hero later when she's nearly robbed, Dale takes full advantage of his suspicions. Of course, he is correct in thinking that Athena's status as a Domme only stemmed from her submissive desires to do anything she could to please her husband.

In other words, she's always been a closet submissive.

My Athena:

My Dale:

"With a subtle demand, the power had shifted."

So this is the story of Dale teaching Athena to accept her true nature and to give herself to him, her Master. And in turn, she teaches him how to allow someone else to care for him...sort of.

MY THOUGHTS:

Boy, was I not ready for this book. I feel I need to clarify my experience with BDSM books so that you will understand my stance here. I've read a few of the genre. I know my limits, and I do tend to like the lighter, more playful punishments and scenes. I can handle the lighter stuff. That being said, a friend convinced me to give Joey W. Hill a chance, and two of her books went straight to my favorites of all time shelf. Neither of these books was necessarily light BDSM...in fact, each had a couple of very cringeworthy scenes. However, the characterization and the stories themselves were ultimately *beyond beautiful and so evocative* that I actually understood the BDSM elements **more than ever before**. I understood the need to submit, the need

to let go of all choices, the trust that it takes to give yourself over completely to this other person and expect them to not only push you past your limits, but to make you crave it as well. These books, in case you want to give them a whirl, are:

Rough Canvas

Ice Queen

Mirror of My Soul

However, this book didn't come even close to either the intensity of emotion or give me the ability to empathize with the characters. I couldn't connect with either of them. That was the first strike. I just felt like Dale was a very flat, one dimensional guy. We know a few facts about him...his Navy career, his sexual predilections, and a handful of things about his past. But we don't spend any real time with him as anything but a Master. I thought at first that I would love him, but I felt like I just kept expecting something to happen that would make me fall, and it never happened.

Same with Athena; all of the elements were there for me to click with this woman, and I just couldn't. She didn't come across as submissive to me. She came across as weak. She could pretend a good game in the corporate world, but in private, she was so unsure of herself, so timid and accepting of anything that Dale would do to her, I honestly ended up just being a bit disgusted.

A few specific things bothered me more than others.

1. *When Dale won't give her a safe word, AND he takes away the ability to gesture as well, because obviously he's been with her long enough (a couple of weeks at the time) that he will be able to read her body language.*

2. *When he gives her a ring gag and fucks her mouth...and afterwards, scoops up the drool and semen and feeds it to her.*

I stuck it out because I expected more, and I just kept getting more and more...spankings and punishments. I'd say that roughly 75% of this book was Dale punishing Athena. Like I said in an update, had this been a romance book and the 'scenes' been sex, it would have been laughable. As it was, for me, it was SO RIDICULOUSLY overdone. THIS was the reason I didn't connect with Athena or Dale. I could see them as nothing but a Dom and his sub. They stopped being real to me, and started inducing eye rolls.

While this book does not necessarily hard core BDSM, I would not categorize it as light either, mainly due to the sheer amount of 'play' going on. Not to mention, there is a huge difference in embracing your submissive side and just accepting whatever someone wants to do to you. I think there is a delicate balance there, and she missed the mark for me. I was more often either bored or horrified. And if there was romance here, it was way overshadowed by bruises and punishments.

QUOTES THAT MADE ME GO WHAAAAA?!?!

:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(

****"She'd wear skirts with liners the rest of the week, and keep the box of tissues at her desk so she could put some between her legs while in her office by herself, to staunch the near constant flow of arousal..."

(You may need to get that checked out. You may dehydrate)

:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(

**** "Master?" Her voice was rusty with tears.

He paused. "Yes, girl?"

"May I...thank you?"

"Do you think you deserve that?"

"No sir. But I want to give you pleasure."

:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:

****"Before he was done, she'd lost track of the count and was squirming, screaming, trying to get away. He proved without a doubt then that he was far stronger than she was, holding her in that position with one arm, bringing the brush down again and again until she was jerking at every blow, sobbing, clinging to his pants leg. Then he made her let go of him and put her palms back on the floor as he'd commanded, before giving her five more strong whacks. She squeezed her eyes shut and pressed her face into his leg, shuddering with the pain."

:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:

Buddy read with Baba, Kelly, and Glam :D:D Thank you ladies for the buddy read and for not holding it against me :D:D

Perry ★TBBSisterhood Blog★ says

3 out of 5

I just lost my Joey Hill virginity and let me say... WOW, the woman knows her BDSM and she can write it freaking darn well. I would have probably never picked this up on my own, mainly because I'd never read a book by her and I don't normally go for middle aged characters. I however stumbled upon it through Irene's review and decided to buddy read it with a bunch of enthusiastic Joey fans. It's not a question of being turned off by a more mature H and h. I find the thought of a middle aged alpha pushing 50, absolutely exquisite. I'd just never had the experience of reading about one. As human beings, we tend to gravitate toward what we know and this is something I'd never come across. I normally stick with characters either considerably younger than me or around my age.

Well, I'm glad I took the chance at a total unknown! (Awesomeness ensued). Otherwise I would have missed out on a beautiful love story full of heart and a deep, intelligent introspection on what it means to love someone. This goes to great lengths to explore what that love means for our sexual identity, and how a D/s relationship fits into all of that. If you want a book that thoroughly and patiently explores the psyche of BDSM from a loving standpoint, through mentally balanced, more mature lovers who have been through so much in life, READ THIS. This is for you.

And it couldn't be more removed from the New Adult stuff freely floating around these days.

I really liked this book. I think it was incredibly well written, skilfully and carefully woven, realistic to a tee. Athena is a 46 year old high Louisiana society lady who lost her loving husband of 20 years just 3 years ago. Dale is a SEAL veteran running a junkyard/dog rescue. He lost his leg during service and now wears a prosthetic leg. He's an experienced Master... with the level of skill a sub wets her panties dreaming of. They meet at Club Release (both are members) eyes connect... and BAM, they connect in other ways. The rest is a seductive, leisurely unfolding of the relationship that ensues, deeply sexual, highly soulful.

God, I really liked Dale, even much more than Athena, not that she was unlikable. She was great, maybe at

times a bit TOO perfect, which detracted from my ability to see her as a living breathing human being at times. But that man... that man is the stuff dominance and virile strength is made of. He was described in such rich perfection I felt like I could smell and taste him, and his perceived weakness of the missing leg only added to his devastating sex appeal.

I could have licked my iPad!!

Me while reading about Dale:

So why did I only give it three stars? I really like this book, one or two scenes I even loved. I did. I think my main problem was the pacing. As poetic, rich and descriptive as Joey Hill's writing style is, Athena's inner monologues oftentimes were so longwinded, so pervasive, the pacing slowed to a glacial crawl. Also, the romanticism of her style has a tendency to cross into purple territory at times. The story simmered but never truly, completely exploded. I wouldn't call it boring, just a bit too descriptive for my liking. I'm also a sucker for hyper-intense relationships, unexpected twists and heart splitting angst, which this wasn't really about. This was more of an cerebral journey, interspersed with a few HOLY HELL THAT'S HOT sex scenes.

I'm not too crazy about tropes where one of the MC's has already loved deeply before, so that may have added to the inability to cross from liking it to truly loving it. It does make for a good read it's just not a favourite trope of mine. While I appreciate that Athena's deep love for her deceased husband Roy, was constantly... and I mean CONSTANTLY referenced to in the book, it just isn't my preferred way to get lost in an erotic fantasy. I get why it was necessary, it was THE only way to be both realistic and respectful toward the memory of her lost love. This has got to do more with my own particular tastes than Joey Hill's decisions.

As to the BDSM in this book, the last scene at the club is pretty hard-core, involving (view spoiler). If you're adverse to hard-core BDSM practices, especially in a club setting then this is not for you.

If you want something very quick-paced, this is not for you either.

If on the other hand, you don't mind taking it slower, savouring a love story like a finely aged wine, taking your time getting to know every detail of the two main characters, down to the colour and pattern of the coverlet on their bed, this will rock your world. I think it's great for someone wanting to experience a love unfolding later in a couple's life, highlighted by deep introspection of what it means to be a Dom and a sub.

Geri Reads says

3.75 rounding up to 4 stars!!

As usual, Joey Hill superb writing comes through in Unrestrained. But while the writing may be exceptional, this book is far from being my favorite. I liked it and enjoyed aspects of it, there are parts also which I didn't care for as much.

What I liked...

- The older MCs. Joey is one of those authors who isn't afraid to have a 46-year old widow and 50-year old disabled veteran as main characters. That's one of the things I've always loved about her books. Which brings me to the second thing that I liked about this book.
- Dale being a disabled vet and a dom was great. It added complexity to his character. Most of the BDSM books I've read, a dom is almost always handsome, rich and physically perfect or whole. Again, kudos to JH for writing that into Dale's character.
- I also liked how Athena's relationship with her husband was written. It's obvious that they both loved each other very much and his death left a huge void in Athena's life, not just her being a Mistress but as a wife and partner.
- I also liked the parts when Athena and Dale are outside of their BDSM persona as master/sub. Their emotions and their vulnerability was more evident. It made me root for them, for their relationship. While these scenes were few and far between, there were enough of them to keep me interested in finishing this book.

That being said...

I must say that this book is a little too intense for me especially the spanking. Dale is a relentless dom. I say relentless because he never lets up. He's on dom mode all the time. I felt that he can still be a dom and still show a sensitive side but no. He's almost brutal in meting out those punishments. He doesn't ever let go of his control. Ever. His physical disability may have been a factor but come on, dude! Just relax a little. I would have loved to see him let go a little. He can be all dom in the bedroom and in the club but outside of it, the dude needs to chill.

I felt that the one thing that this book lacked, which could have changed the whole feel of the book for me was balance. I've read my fair share of extreme BDSM scenes to know that I prefer my books, be it a BDSM book or not, to show softness to balance out the harsher aspects. More romance to balance out the intensity of their BDSM relationship. But overall, this book is still a lot better than other BDSM books out there. :)

Wendy's Thoughts says

Unrestrained

4 Strong, Commanding, Willing, Released Stars * * * *

This book was about a lot of different things for me.

Although it was based around the Dominant/submissive relationship and all that entails with clubs; I got a much more than that from it.

What was so highly attractive from the very start was the fact these main characters were in their late forties.

These people had lived lives before meeting each other; they had experienced real tragedies and had to overcome them. They had responsibilities and were full formed. And they had loved; one had married and given everything to her husband in the way he had wanted it. The other had loved his career; his comrades, county and the satisfaction of being able to make things right.

We meet these two people both handling different issues; but both just as serious.

She lost her husband of 20 years to the ugliness of long term disease. In their day to day life, husband was powerful yet caring, running a multi- million dollar company with locations all over employing thousands. He was her man and she loved him. She loved him in a way that meant she would do whatever to make him feel the love. She showed through her help with fundraising and charity work for the company; doing events and affairs for their friends and then she showed him in the most loving of all ways... she became his Mistress to his need to be the sub. She took on that identity proudly, wore it like a cloak. They would be with their friends at their club and all would admire the way she handle the scenes with him. Clearly they were the perfect couple... her Dom to his sub.

But now her husband is gone and she is adrift... she has mourned his loss as best as she can... she has come out from the fog which she was lost in for over two years; she is here at the club watching from a distance. She doesn't feel the pull to be the Dom with someone new. She is here because it was a place of very happy memories with him and yet nothing is really right.

It is during this casual visit she sees Him. He is known as Master Crafter and he is doing a scene with a young wisp of a thing, Willow. He is working this like a conductor; ebb and flow... murmuring in her ear when needed, taking her to levels of bliss for her through all manipulation he see fit. She has given herself to him, the Master, willingly and has been rewarded for it.

This stirs something in Athena; recognition she cannot put her mind around. She watches; wishes it was her being handled by the Master and it is confusing. She leaves and ends up being accosted by thugs at the gas station right in view of the club. She is fighting them off as they try to take the rings her husband had given her. The fight is at the point where she is in real jeopardy and Master C steps in and handles these thugs easily. She is very disoriented and he takes care of her; she ends up at his home, sleeping in his tshirt with the overwhelming feeling of safety surrounding her.

As they both talk with one another, Athena learns Dale was a Navy Seal; he is now retired and devotes his time to training dogs in need of homes.

Dale sees who she is; he senses right away her confusion and uncertainty as he knows she is truly a sub not Dom at all. They have a connection; she is scared yet so drawn, she cannot stop her wanting to see if there is something for her to experience. Dale is open to see what she is about and how this will go. He agrees to meet with her at her home for a lunch to talk.

The lunch launches the rest of this story; and for me I liked all of the issues Joey E Hill addressed through it.

Yes, there is lots of sex with a Capital S. Yes, there is serious BDSM scenes; lots of them, varying in intensity. Yes, there is the terminology of Master and sir and all that surrounds it. This is a book by an author know for excellent writing in this genre.

But what really struck me about this book was the addressing of people with life experiences; older people trying to be open to love again. It is hard today being older and trying to meet new people.

Athena falls hard for Dale and starts to act as if she has the brain sense of a 16 yr old when it comes to her

feeling for Dale. It is so hard for people to put themselves out there and all of these NA books demonstrate that over and over again... so imagine how scary it is for an older woman to risk her safety to experience this kind of bliss.... She self sabotages numerous times... because she feels she doesn't deserve it. Eventually things happen for her to feel secure in Dale's heart and that is huge.

Yet what is even more stirring in this book is Dale.

An Alpha if ever there was one; Seal of the highest order, Major Dom; yet he has his own hurdle to deal with.... He was injured and lost the lower half of one of his legs. He wears prosthesis and has adjusted through diligent therapy and hard determination. He has learned to live with it and makes no apologies for it. But even though he is confident in who he is as a Seal; a friend; a man and Master, he still can be hit with insecurity, too. To allow Athena to help him in any way or care for him in any loving way regarding that part of him is difficult and he works hard to overcome it.

The creation of Dale and his life experiences were masterful. We received insight and a sly education about what our men and women in service experience when dealt this type of hand. I felt for Dale; I understood more of the challenges and made me take a moment to think of all the others experiencing the same type of thing.

These two are perfectly matched. They have their HEA in their own way. It is their love story with all of the ways they love each other and one of the continuing themes was just be who you are and your soul mate will be there for you as you need them to be.

Arc received in exchange for an honest review.

KC -- Reading Is My Superpower says

Wow...just wow. This was such an amazing story. It had me crying one minute, laughing the next. I stayed in a constant low simmer the entire time I was reading this. And I can remember scenes and the simmer returns. This book was holy hell hot!!! And yet, it pulled at my heart strings and I often wanted to reach in and give Athena a big ole hug.

The book takes you through Athena learning, accepting and understanding who she is. Not who she thinks or feels she should be. Or who everyone else perceives her to be. Dale was a patient and diligent teacher. Showing her things about herself she may never have figured out if left to do it alone.

Dale was an amazing master. His ability to reach in and understand where Athena was coming from, and understand her thoughts and feelings more than she did, was unbelievable. His patience with her blew my mind. He always knew when to be hard and demanding, and when to use a soft touch. He knew how to push Athena out of her box. He knew when to give her space. Although he looked out for his own needs and wants, he never once wavered from looking out for her. And his mastery of her will leave you panting for more. Someone find me a man like Dale...

I wish I could articulate how good this book was. However, I would have to give too much away in order to

really get my point across. This book was easily in my top 5 of 2013. They say you always save the best for last, and since we are almost at years end, I would say in this instant, it is most certainly true.

The journey to love between Dale and Athena will grab you and pull you in. Pull you in to the point that life will pluck your nerves because it exists outside of reading this book. It was the kind of book that you get so lost in you have to be reminded to feed the kids and do the laundry. The kind of book that makes you snap at people for having the nerve to interrupt your reading.

Unrestrained grabbed me to the point that I feel a Joey W. Hill marathon coming on while bypassing the 29 million other books I currently have on my kindle that I need to read....

Baba says

[spank-me (hide spoiler)]

Jennifer says

4 ON-MY-KNEES-FOR-DALE STARS!!!!

Fuck, you're good at this. I might keep you on your knees all the time.

My Dale:

Former military, gardener, dog trainer and junkyard operator. As well as an extraordinary Dom.

Dale is not your typical Dom. He doesn't walk around in suits. He's more of a black t-shirt and dark jeans kinda guy who gardens and loves dogs. Don't be fooled by this softer side. He is as hard as steel retired SEAL who is a Master of his Craft.

I LOVE Dale!!! Every time words came out of his mouth, I swooned or wiped up my drool!!! He is a big, soft teddy bear when it comes to taking care of Athena. But he is as hard as stone as a Master and demands her soul.

A Master is about more than demanding every corner of a sub's soul. He needs to be about protecting that soul as well.

If there was such a term as diabolical selflessness, she thought it would apply to him.

My Athena:

A refined woman to the bone, she was courteous to everyone, no matter what she felt.

Athena has a lot on her mind. She is a Domme, who lost her husband, and she is trying to find her way in life. She doesn't know where she belongs. She is the type of person to constantly wants to take care of the people she loves. She is a natural submissive, but she has no idea how to give up the control. Most of the book is Athena's constant struggle with herself in giving up control to her Master.

I certainly hope you aren't perfect. Else I'll have to make shit up to punish you.

I really enjoyed Dale and Athena's journey...and that's what it was...a journey. This was not an easy relationship. It was a struggle. It was real. It was hot and beautiful and had me reaching for the tissues several times!!!

I'm the one keeping you.

The tighter he held the reins, the more powerful the wanting became. The more she wanted, the more it turned him on, a closely intertwined strand that drove them both.

This was only my second Joey Hill book...I know! I need to read them all, and I will!

~IreneOust~ says

'Nothing is less in our power than the heart, and far from commanding, we are forced to obey it.'

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau

About 18 months ago, I stumbled upon my very first Joey W. Hill book called Hostile Takeover. It has since become one of my favorite reads and, as of a couple of weeks ago, the most read books on my Kindle. Needless to say, Joey has become one of my favorite writers. Her books never fail to pull me out of book ruts

& they always, *always* make me feel. If I had to describe Joey's work in three words, I would have to say it's **raw, erotic and poetic**.

Having said that, when I do recommend Joey's work to someone, my recs always come with the warning: Joey is THE Queen of BDSM romance but you won't find any pink furry cuffs and gentle spanking in any of Joey's stories. More often than not, her books depict 24/7 Master/slave relationships; her BDSM scenes are often hardcore and may include public humiliation, rope bondage, gagging, flogging, anal plugs, etc. and that's just foreplay ... So, if you are only willing to give it up to your partner in a missionary position under the covers and only with the lights off, easily offended and had nightmares after reading 'Fifty Shades of Grey', Joey's stuff may not be for you. But that's OK because, as they say, there are 'plenty more of fish in the sea' or millions more books to choose from on GR, right?? Even though Unrestrained, in my opinion, was pretty tame compared to some of Joey W. Hill's other books, it still has elements of typical 'Joey BDSM' so ... readers beware!

Now onto the actual book ...

So many things I absolutely LOVED about it! Where to even begin ...

OK, I'll start in the beginning, I guess.

Leave it to Joey to deliver an awesome love story with two mature [main] characters. When I say mature, I actually mean 'mature' - both are in their late 40s which is fabulous! Both have been through the ringer in life. Both have been married. One lost a spouse to an ugly disease, another to a divorce. Neither are looking for bullshit of early stages of dating since both have been there, done that and pretty much know what they want/need.

My feelings about this story can be summed up in this quote:

"It seemed every time she was with him, he gave her a cathartic cry as well as a shattering climax."

I swear, I thought I was going to have a whiplash because I literally went from being super turned on to an emotional mess in 2.5 seconds throughout the entire book.

Athena

Athena, in my opinion, is a typical 'people pleaser'. I can't tell you how many people I know personally who live their lives 'according to others'. They feel the need to please their parents, partner, boss, friends, etc. and end up 'faking it' through life rather than being themselves. I've always had such a hard time understanding why but I think this book helped open my eyes a little bit.

"Everyone assumed disguises to cope, to meet expectations. How rare a gift it was, to be truly oneself with another."

To see Dale give Athena the gift of letting go and being herself was beyond touching.

"Have you let everyone else be your mirror for so long you don't know your own image? Who you really are?"

So technically, accepting Dale's collar actually helped Athena become *unrestrained*.

Dale

"I said a man. Just because you're born male doesn't mean you know how to be a man."

Dale is a retired Navy SEAL who is now involved with a dog adoption shelter. I should really stop right here because that pretty says it all but here is a little bit of Joey math for you in order to explain how much I loved Dale: Master Ben of Hostile Takeover is my ultimate favorite Hero of Joey's (out of about 25 books of hers I've read so far) followed very closely by Marcus of Rough Canvas & Max of Willing Sacrifice and Dale reminded me of Max A LOT so Dale is pretty much up there with some of my favorite of Joey's men.

OK, back to Dale ...

"I'm right here with you, girl. Everything is safe with me. Everything you are."

LOVED it that he calls her 'girl' ... I think it was so sweet coming from such a macho guy and a ruthless Master such as Dale.

"You are a formidable woman, Mrs. Summers. But on those very rare occasions when you aren't invincible, that's where you rely on your Master."

"When your eyes are full of tears, you break my heart, girl. I forbid you to cry ever again."

LOVED how fiercely he wanted to possess and protect her!

"Thank you, Dale. For caring about me enough to come looking for me." "I already told you"—his mouth brushed her temple—"Caring for you is part of the job." "What job?" she asked, her heart beating high in her chest at his pause. Being her Master? "Loving you, girl."

"Will you stay with me tonight?" She wanted to be sure. "Try to keep me away."

There were so many 'AWWW' moments involving these two that I think I've highlighted the entire book! I swear, I haven't highlighted this much since I read The Original Sinners.

"It was as if she was captured at the bottom of his soul, staring up with reverent devotion at her Master, while he stared down at his most treasured possession, so treasured he put her deep in the center of himself."

This is a MUST READ for any Joey fan.

*** One of my favorite quotes in this book belongs to Jimmy though:

"I forgot the most important deal of a place like this is accepting one another as we are. Even if the face of that changes, the heart of it doesn't."

sigh How I wish this was the rule we applied more often in life ...

As always, thanks for an awesome BR, my lovelies! xo

Jennifer Kyle says

4.5 “Yes Master” Stars

This is my first Joey W. Hill book and it sure won't be my last! I **LOVED** the author's writing style. I'm not even a big fan of BDSM books but the manner in which this story was written had me hanging on each word as Athena a mature business woman (YES) finds a second chance at love after her husband's death. Athena played the dominant role for her husband, Roy and was known as Lady Mistress.

Dale Rousseau is a Dom, a retired navy seal who was total alpha! He not only catches Athena's eye but comes to her rescue in so many ways. Dale and Athena's story is well paced and for me totally believable.

This is a story that takes Athena from Domme to Submissive. The writing was hot and steamy while deep and thought provoking.

This story was not only sexy and involved punishments, ropes and blind folds but it also was a very emotional journey. Roy's words play through out the pages while Athena moves forward.

The couple's bond slowly builds throughout the story. Athena and Dale were so lucky to find one another. I more loved that they were in my age bracket and as a reader I could relate to both their feelings during my read.

Second chances are few and far between and this reader was pleased that Dale and Athena have another shot at love!

Deanna♥Pink Lady♥? says

5 Spectacular Stars

Things always felt more intense when restrained.

Sometimes you come upon a story where the author takes you on a journey through the use of beautiful words, where you are able to experience the feelings of 2 people wanting and needing more in their life. I was blown away by this book. I never expected to be moved so much, feel so much and be totally entrapped by 2 memorizing souls. This is a story of new beginnings, second chances, exploring new desires and of learning to trust again. It was **Incredibly Beautiful**.

This story is about Athena Francesca Summer, a 46 yr old widower, who is a runs a successful company but is at a cross road in life. She is still young but has lost her husband, the love of her life. She was Lady Mistress to her husband, his Domme, in their BDSM world. But since his death, Athena is going through the motions of living but she truly isn't living for herself. She is always concerned about everyone else, everyone except herself. Then one night, Athena meets someone who will change her life as she knew it forever.

Athena Summers

Dale Rousseau

This is definitely a book that didn't hold back in the BDSM department but it did not make me flinch or not want to read, it made me feel what a D/s relationship truly is. It wasn't the normal D/s story. This is a story of a woman who was a Domme for many years and is waken to the fact that may be she is a submissive. Can she truly embrace her new reality, can she trust this new man in her life, can she let go of the past and learn to feel again, to love again? Her journey is not easy and it is not without heartbreak. She struggles with her new identity, but in her quest for truth, Dale is at her side, never wavering and never far. He understands Athena even when she doubts herself. He is a true Dom and does not sugar coat what he is or what he expects.

She was to rely on his strength, his control. That was part of the deal. Perhaps that was part of what he desired and needed, as much as she desired and needed to feel it, a perfect meshing.

I loved experiencing Athena's awakening. Her emotions are real and conflicting and honest. Dale is a retired Navy Seal, divorced, and has baggage of his own.(view spoiler) I loved that these 2 were "older", had lived lives and were not perfect. If you want to read a beautifully executed love story, look no further. Their lives involve BDSM, so if that isn't your deal, then don't, but if you are okay reading about it, this one will absolutely NOT disappoint.

And my favorite quote-

My first Joey W. Hill book and it definitely won't be my last!!

Jacqueline's Reads says

4 Unrestrained Stars

Unrestrained is a mild BDSM read that cater towards the older demographic. If you are new to the BDSM reading world, this is the perfect book to dip your feet in.

I'm no stranger when it comes to BDSM, also, I'm an avid fan of books that pushes boundaries. So if you throw anything my way with some kink, I'm all over it. Unrestrained is a "sweet" read, in the sense, there's BDSM role play, but nothing too out of the ordinary. Also, I'm not a hug fan of reading books with older characters. I'm pretty fine with characters that are in their thirties, but when they are in their forties, it pushes it a bit for me.

Dale and Athena are two complete opposites. Dale is a blue collar worker and is handicap (I will let you figure it out). Athena is a rich widow. When she had a husband she was a Mistress, meaning, she was the dominate one in their relationship. Now, after two years since her husband has pass, she is trying to move on and can't help but feel a sense of pull towards dominate Dale.

Although I'm not a fan of rich Heroines (yeah, I love the alpha male billionaire), I love opposites attract kind of story line. You really do feel Athena's pain, her love for her husband is very apparent and even though it's been years, she just wants to move on and find herself again. Dale is a sweet man, I am not sure I could swoon over him, but I did like him as a character.

I enjoyed when Dale was dominate towards Athena, stuff like that just makes my body shiver and tingle all over. Yes please! If there is anything I love, it's reading about a man taking control. There's plenty of kink and steamy parts. Unrestrained would definitely fall into the Erotica genre.

I liked how Dale and Athena got to know each other and how they helped each other out. Dale with his handicap issue and Athena with getting over her husband. It's a very sweet book with yummy parts to keep you entertained.

An ARC was provided in exchange for an honest review

AMAZON

Author Interview and more - > [HERE](#)

Kelly says

DNF at 56%

I feel no connection to the two MC's and I'm not enjoying it at all, so I'm not going to finish it.

Thanks to Baba, Nicole, and Glam for reading it with me. ♥

Glamdring says

Buddy read with Baba, Kelly & Nicole <3

****Review to come****
