



The Price of Temptation

M.J. Pearson

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Stephen Clair, the notorious Earl of St. Joseph, has a lover he can't afford, a social calendar that's out of control and a libido that rules his life. If he can't gain control of his finances, his social calendar and rid himself of his lover, he will fall into financial ruin. Could the youthful, handsome and dependable Jamie Riley be the solution to his problems?

Jamie Riley has a secret that keeps him from accepting the sexual advances of his employer, Stephen Clair, and a past he would like to leave behind. But Stephen Clair is a handsome man who knows how to awaken a passion that Jamie has been trying to suppress, and carries a price that Jamie would rather not pay. But it isn't easy to ignore passion, especially when it's so temptingly close.

Julian Jeffries, lover to Stephen Clair, has found a way of living the high life without lifting a finger. It isn't until Julian notices that Stephen has been spending time with his latest employee, Jamie Riley, that he begins to worry about losing everything he'd schemed to have. Now Julian needs to find a way of getting rid of Jamie Riley without raising suspicion. And, as Julian knows, the best way to do that is to dig into Jamie's past and find something to use against him.

The Price of Temptation Details

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Author : M.J. Pearson

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From Reader Review The Price of Temptation for online ebook

Kati says

"The Price of Temptation" is M. J. Pearson's first published gay historical romance. It's set around 1815 and tells the story of Stephen Clair, Earl of St. Joseph, and his secretary Jamie Riley.

Jamie Riley becomes the secretary of Earl of St. Joseph. Stephen is a good-hearted man who collects misfits but at the same time, he can't keep two coins together. And so, Jamie helps his new Master sort his accounts... and falls in love with him. Stephen is determined to seduce Jamie because he grew tired of his current lover Julian, who is the flirtatious, experienced but dumb and greedy sort of a man. But Jamie's mother was a kept woman and it destroyed her life and so Jamie is determined never to be someone's play toy. One night, Stephen makes love to Jamie but in the morning, thanks to a terrible misunderstanding, Jamie runs away and finds himself coin-less on the streets of London...

This is a very cute story similar to various het historical romances set around the same time - mostly it reminds me of the het stories of Julia Garwood: there is plot, intrigue but a good dash of humor too. The funniest thing is probably the ensemble of Stephen's house that ranges from a gay valet to a cook that can't cook and a female coachman. And it's also very touching how the household learns to like Jamie quickly and they do whatever they can to get him and Stephen together. Another thing that's quite cute is the nickname Stephen chooses for his little secretary: Mouse. A little grey Mouse :)

Pearson's strong points are the cute beginning and the strong middle of the story. Until Jamie runs away from Stephen, the story is very engaging and really holds the reader's interest. But then, Jamie's life on the streets and Julian's revenge, the dungeons under Madam Novotny's brothel... It feels dragged-out and rushed at the same time. It's really strange. And especially the ending is rather abrupt. Stephen saves Jamie from the dungeon and wham, two pages later it's The End. Suddenly, the whole thing feels emotionally underdeveloped. Jamie escapes rape and torture but it has almost no effect at all on him :(

Should I compare this book to "Discreet Young Gentleman", another book by M. J. Pearson, I would say I liked the second one better. But this one is still very good and offers a nice gay historical romance - there is not enough of them out there (at least of the ones that have a happy ending). I would give it four stars out of five.

JV says

Mamma Mia! Good heavens! I picked up this book because... look at that bloody cover! That was the smexiest cover my eyes had ever laid upon — leaves a lot to the imagination, aye? You might also be wondering why the bloke's having such a stiffy. Now, as to why he's having a tumescence or some sort of induced priapism that I just couldn't point out, don't ask me, I'm clueless as well! All I can infer is that he's more than your average joe, probably gifted in the Department of ~~Schlong~~ Schmassive. Is he a grower, shower, or just wearing Aussiebum? I doubt that they have Aussiebum back in those days where a gentleman's package is lifted high to the heavens with, of course, their Wonderjock technology — ladies, you have your push-ups and maximizers, we need to show-off too!

I must admit that I have digressed from the main story, but who wouldn't want to discuss that, right? Now, on with the review!

Regency London, 1816 — James "Jamie" Riley, a reserved, intellectual, young lad, becomes a tutor to the children of Robert Clair, the current Earl of St. Joseph until a tragic accident happened. The supposed tutor, instead, becomes the new ~~secretary~~ ~~sexy~~ secretary/historian/planner/bookkeeper of a good-hearted, dashing yet libidinous new Earl, Stephen Clair, who can neither keep his hands to himself nor control his growing expenditures. However, thanks to Jamie, everything in that house changed, of course, for the better and for the benefit of all the workers who lived there. In a short span of time, Jamie's feelings towards his lord begin brewing. Stephen, tired of his vain, greedy, and golden-head actor-lover Julian Jeffries, he pursues and seduces the ~~extra~~ virgin ~~olive oil~~ Jamie one night. From the art of osculation and the various stages of dishabille, Jamie — even though he has a secret past that he wants to be kept buried, even refusing the sexual advances of his master — finally gives in to the passionate Stephen. The temptation is, indeed, a price to pay. The following morning, however, Jamie flees due to an unfortunate misunderstanding between them. The search for Stephen's true love goes on, but not without the hindrance of Julian, the vile serpent, who wants to get rid of Jamie for good; and it's only just a matter of time before they find him...

The Price of Temptation was actually a good break where literally every M/M romance book I've read was screaming intercourse everywhere, on every page! This one has the tension, but what I love here is the great foreplay (both intellectual and sexual) which makes it an amazing regency romance with a little pinch of angst. Pearson's prose is well-written, couple that with witty banter, then you're all set. The supporting characters were awesome, to wit, Aunt Matilda, but the others were quite unnecessary and the ending was a little bit rushed for my taste, those were my gripes for this novel.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to take my leave and commission a painting from a professional artist to recreate this homoerotic book cover, and perhaps, ~~hang~~ hang it on my wall. I am looking forward to my everyday reaction of:

Credit: Studiosplatter

Kathleen says

I loved this book! I haven't read a good historical, well any historical, lately and I didn't even know I was missing it. I enjoyed the twist the story took near the end and the unexpected actions of the bad guy. I also liked that Jamie made Stephen work for it and didn't just roll over and give in. This book also had a fantastic and deep cast of side characters that were wonderful and three dimensional. 5 stars!

ETA: I just bought this book with the new cover (borrowed it upon first reading) and used calibre to convert it so I could add in the awesome old cover! :D

Jamie says

3.5 stars

Jamie Riley has traveled from Yorkshire to London with the promise of a tutoring job from an Earl and his Countess. But there is a new Earl, Stephen and Stephen has no children. He also has a flamboyant male lover. His valet encourages him to hire Jamie as a secretary. Jamie is quite successful in organizing Stephen's household and Stephen begins to find him more than just a "mouse". The household staff makes for entertaining secondary characters and I thought the descriptions of the workings of the household held up to historical scrutiny. The acceptance of Stephen and Julian was a bit more unbelievable and the turn the story takes into melodrama took the story down a notch for me. But this was as entertaining as any m/f historical I've read and I did like Jamie.

Dana says

Not quite as good as Discreet Young Gentleman, but still a lot of fun to read. And look at.

Ami says

**** This has new cover but I'm sticking with the original. Because look at his package! ****

I am having quite a difficult time rating this actually...

I give 2-stars for Stephen Clair, Earl of St. Joseph, that idiot earl that left me fuming throughout the book.

I give 3-stars for the whole story (it started rather strong, but then meandered in the middle, and picked up again, then ended!).

I give 3.5-stars for the darling Jamie Riley, the timid, shy, kind-hearted virgin (!) secretary who stole Stephen's heart.

So where does that leave me?

Okay, let's start with the story first, shall we? Lately, I have a fondness towards choosing historical/regency MM because it offers me something that I've been missing from contemporary MM romance. Namely "courting". I'm not a seeker of the shy young virgin and dashing haughty duke/earl/lord situation story – because it reminds me too much of why I got bored with MF romance. However, I realize that in MM, it provides a progression in the relationship, a courting, and I don't have to worry about instant attraction, instant love, or the wham-bam-thank-you-Sir sex fest in the gay club situation.

Oh, and NO "BABY" as an endearment! *lol*

That was why I decided to pick this one. It started quite strong, with Jamie Riley, a shy young man who arrived at Earl of St. Joseph's house to take a position as a teacher for the Earl's children. Only to find out that the Earl died along with his family and his brother has taken the title. Jamie ended up as Stephen's secretary. I enjoyed the immersion of Jamie to the house, with its colorful staff who came to the household with their own 'scandalous' background.

But then the story became a bit too dramatic for me. Probably because of the STUPID Stephen Clair and his penchant for the extravagant life, and his idiotic perception of keeping a lover like Julian Jeffries (VERY EVIL actor!). Seriously, I thought Stephen was a character that dragged the whole thing!! I disliked him immensely. I never really believed that he was able to change his ways. I was hoping that Jamie could find a better lover than Stephen. I mean, during a very critical moment where Jamie left the house (we got a huge misunderstanding moment, dear readers), Stephen became all mopey and emo, and returned to the embrace of Julian. I mean, WTF Stephen?!? Stupid IDIOT Earl! I wanted to kick him to the curb!!

Anyway, I'm rambling ... uhm, yes, so the story went back on track. I actually loved how the rest of the St. Clair's staff was putting their heads together to save Jamie (it was kind of fun!). Including Stephen's Aunt, whom I thought KICKED serious ass! Although the ending after the rescue was rushed and again, it didn't make me believe in Stephen's attempt to be a better man.

So it was quite enjoyable, despite the weak second half, and the stupid character that I had to endure.

karen says

the price of temptation appears to be elephantiasis of the testicles.

DarienMoya says

^^HMMMM JUST CHECK OUT THAT COVER^^

More of my reviews and thoughts on my blog [PANTS OFF REVIEWS](#)

THE COVER- I know what you all are thinking, "what the hell is in his pants"? Well truthfully, I have no idea, but I really do love the cover. I love his stance and the other guy kneeling at his feet. I find it to be very sexy, and makes me wanna say, such cheesy lines like "Is that a flashlight in your pants or are you just happy to see me", or "Is this a stick up and are you here to take my clothes". The possibilities are endless and his breeches are nice and snug, another squeeze my balls a leggo my ankle pants.

What I really loved about this book is that it reads like a true historical romance. It was sweet, sexy, and had a certain innocence, which increased the sexiness like by 36%. It offers the handsome and sexy rake, the innocent but tough virgin, and the vile villain. I love historical m/f romance and it no surprise that I loved this one.

Stephen is gay and has always been gay, he does not hide who he is and also has an expensive kept man, in other words a mistress man. He is struggling to make ends meet, but you gotta keep up appearances for the infamous "ton". His household is barely getting by but he has a few loyal servants who won't leave his side. Until Jamie arrives looking for a job and then all hell breaks loose.

Jamie has arrived from the country to the city, promised a job by an earl he thinks he has it made. Until he meets Stephen the man he is to serve, and the one who tempts him so much. Jamie's job is to get Stephen out of the financial dumps and help him bring money in. Jamie can't help falling in love, and will succumbing to Stephen mean that he will become a kept man?

Let me tell you about this book, it pissed me off. Stephen is such a man; he sees his mistakes but he just does not pay attention to them. He wants Jamie but still keeps his whore of a man, and he is one whore of a man. He is a bad little gay slut. Though there are faults with Stephen character, he is likable and very caring to Jamie. I enjoyed Jamie; he was tough, yet gentle, innocent but not stupid. He wanted more than sex and was willing to leave the man he loved, because he would not just settle.

Real Talk- I read a lot of m/m books, and there is always something about size and precum. Like the slippery trail of precum, and the leaking tip and precum everywhere. On someone's chest, a puddle on the floor, in someone's eye etc..... This book has none of that, and if it did; it would have entirely changed the tone of the story. Did I miss the precum? Mmmm not really, it was a welcomed break.

I was really happy with this book, I loved the fact that everyone knew of Stephens preference for men, and label it folly of the youth, but god forbid he falls in love, then he is depraved and disgusting. What can I say people are ridiculi. I give it 5 stars for the authenticity of the historical genre, and his nice package in those breeches. I wonder how the ride on a horse would be, something to ponder.

Sarah says

An incredibly charming, funny and irreverent read, *The Price of Temptation* is one ebook I'd love in print. Following reasonably traditional historical romance lines, minus a heroine, this was very entertaining and I cannot wait to read *Discreet Young Gentleman*.

Stephen is such a likable rogue, one cannot help but want someone to take him in hand. He's rather flighty and not remotely interested in anyone other than himself. Or so he'd like you to think. Underneath this raffish exterior he has odd moments where his generosity of spirit shines through. Apart from these isolated instances, he seems to spend the rest of his time looking at his new secretaries arse or swanning off with his paramour. He's a bit of a shit. Poor Jamie doesn't really know what's hit him! I'll give Stephen credit, he does try to stay away from his delicious new secretary, but the lure of what is beneath Jamie's gentle, sweet breeches and frock coat is just too much. heh.

Despite being a historical novel, it did not fall into the trap of making it all about how their love has to be hidden away and kept on the down low. It's there, but not in your face and making one feel maudlin. The characters were believable and engaging and I found myself, with fingers crossed, hoping the bad guys would get their comeuppance. The tension builds beautifully and the ensuing smex is glasses fogging good. There is something inately grubby about sex written in this era, or maybe it's just me. O-o I really enjoyed the secondary characters too, they were well fleshed out and I liked the cook and Charles the valet a great deal. They provide lovely depth to the story.

On an aside, the original cover by Sean Platter rocks! LOTS!! The new ebook cover is very nice, classy

even, but for me the original is super cool and rather naughty.

A gorgeous historical read and an author I cannot wait to read more of.

<http://sharrow.wordpress.com/2009/10/...>

Edina Rose says

Regency MM romance.

It is romantic, funny and quite light in spite of some angst near the end.

Typical regency plot, the Rake and the Innocent. Great secondary characters:

- The Rake's lover, greedy & diabolical but beautiful like a fallen angel.
- The Rake's best friend, his only real friend.
- The Rake's old, rich and eccentric auntie
- The sarcastic butler,

And a few others.

The Innocent is, of course, all alone in the big bad world!

This book is a delight

Jenre says

I have a confession to make here: I love Regency historicals. In fact before I discovered m/m, I read almost exclusively m/f historicals. When I began reading m/m, I looked at *The Price of Temptation* several times as I was interested to see how an m/m book would work in a Regency setting. However, because the book was only available as a paperback, I hesitated to buy, mainly because I was highly embarrassed at *that cover* being seen by anyone whilst I was reading it. Now, however, the book is about to be released as an ebook (and with a new cover) so the time is ripe for a review for those, like me, who couldn't risk being seen with it before!

The book opens with ~~heroine~~ hero Jamie who arrives at a grand house in London ready to take up a new position as tutor to the three sons of the Earl of St Joseph. This arrangement had been made some months before, just as the Earl was taking his family on a trip through Europe. It had been decided then that Jamie would start his post in the spring after the return of the Earl. However, when Jamie arrives he discovered that the Earl and his family have died tragically and the new Earl is Stephen, a general wastrel. Stephen takes pity on Jamie and offers him the post of secretary. Jamie soon settles in and is loved by all, except Stephen's 'mistress' Julian, who is jealous of the close bond Stephen and Jamie have, and so fearful that Stephen will not renew his contract with Julian, he plots Jamie's downfall.

If you like Harlequin/Mills and Boon Regency historicals, then you will love this book. It contains all the recognisable plot devices in spades. Jamie, the almost too good to be true hero/heroine figure; Stephen the wastrel rake; disapproving servants who are won round by the sweetness of Jamie; a cartoon villain in the form of Julian; a big misunderstanding; lustful looks and ‘oh no we can’t’ kisses (and more) between the heroes. Marvellous.

I have to admit that the characters are a little two dimensional. Jamie is good, he’s efficient, in the short time he is Stephen’s house everyone loves him, he nursed his sick mother through her illness and saves Stephen through the power of his virginal love. However, by the end of the book, the only impression I am left with about Jamie is that he is ‘a nice person’ as that seemed to be all there was of his character. Stephen too is the epitome of a Regency Rake. He spends money (that he doesn’t have) like water. He keeps the male equivalent of a mistress, he gambles, he visits houses of ill repute. Alongside this are the ‘hidden’ depths that all romance rakes seem to have: his servants are either retainers, kept on past retirement or because of sentimental reasons, or waifs and strays ‘rescued’ from other less worthy noblemen’s houses. Plus his rakish ways are brought on by grief over the death of a much loved brother and his family. By the end of the book, Jamie’s goodness had turned Stephen into that second Regency historical character – the Reformed Rake. This use of well worn Regency stereotypes didn’t bother me too much as I was having far too much fun seeing them applied to an m/m romance. However, those of you who are looking for originality may need to look elsewhere than *The Price of Temptation*.

One part that I really liked about this Regency historical is that the reader gets taken to all the places not often seen in a Regency, ie. the brothels and gambling dens that the heroines of m/f don’t go into (or not often anyway). It was interesting to see this from a male perspective, especially in Stephen’s reactions to the other noblemen. The more female aspects of Regency society are represented by Stephen’s tough, battle-axe aunt, who completely steals the novel from under the heroes’ noses. I liked her very much and the scene where she ‘tells it like it is’ to various members of noble society after they wish to shun Stephen was just wonderful.

It was in the scenes with society that I felt the novel was on more shaky ground. Nearly all society members accept that Stephen is gay and even that he brings Julian, his ‘mistress’ to society events. This just didn’t ring true for me, even though it is explained that society will accept most things as long as it’s not shoved in their faces. I could accept that Stephen would still be invited to society events – his noble status guarantees that – but to bring Julian along would, I feel, have been a step too far for the society of the time.

Overall, I really enjoyed this light romantic read. Those of you who are complete sticklers for historical accuracy may gnash your teeth at some of the liberties taken in it, but it didn’t bother me. The setting on the whole, seemed accurate enough and I liked that at one point in the book the setting is taken away from the privileged life that Stephen inhabits to the poorer, seedier side of living in Regency London. I’d recommend *The Price of Temptation* to those who like historicals, especially set in the Regency period and those looking for a quick story of temptation, jealousy and the redeeming power of love.

Erastes says

I won’t say I didn’t enjoy this, because I did. It was possible to unhinge my research head and treat it as a “romance novel” with all that that genre implies. Brooding hero, delicate (but rather stubborn) hero who isn’t going to let said BH get into his pants unless it’s true love – not if he can help it! (all whilst being swept along by his own desires)

So yes, it's an enjoyable romance read. I liked the characters in the main. The BH (Stephen) was suitably brooding and sufficiently dissolute to make me happy. His kept man (Julian) was nicely venal without being a cardboard cut out and the hero (Jamie) was all right, although far the weaker of the main characters in my opinion.

Characters

I liked Stephen a lot. He was a product of his time and circumstances. He'd lost his family and was drifting further and further into dissipation and was more than ripe for True Love to Redeem Him. As much as I liked him he certainly deserved The Wet Fish Clue Slap around half way through, because he wouldn't shake off the wastrel Julian he was hanging around with for the lack of anything better), he struck me as a very true man – being led around by flattery and his libido – and like a lot of rich men, he had lost the ability to tell whether affection was real or bought.

Jamie I never quite connected with, he held many of the attributes of the good romantic hero(ine), he was Good. He was self taught, (no education other than some old vicar in Yorkshire, but he could read Greek and was a published historian) He stepped into the running of great house and went from personal secretary to librarian to house steward, taking over Stephen's budget and starting him on the road to solvency with a speed (the book encompasses about 3 months) and an ease that would have impressed even A Woman of Substance. But he didn't impress me, I was a little bored with him – I never quite felt I knew him, perhaps it was his lack of flaws. He just started to get interesting towards the very end of the book, and I would have liked to have seen a bit more of that.

But overall, he was just a bit too passive for my liking, I have to admit.

There are many other secondary characters, which make for lively interaction. My favourite was Stephen's Aunt Matilda.

Period Feel

It owed a healthy nod more to Heyer than to Austen, which was more obvious to me, (and to be honest I wouldn't have been able to stomach), if I had not been reading my first Heyer at the same time as I was reading this, and therefore understood more clearly where the jargon came from.

The thing that jarred me is that really, the characters seemed to me to be modern day characters in a period setting. Their language vacillated from Heyerisms to Modern Day – “Jesus!” and “f*ck” are used as swear words, and someone says that they've “blown it” – another says he “needs to get laid” at one point, Jamie has a cute nose, and so on.

The household is so liberal it's unrealistic – Stephen is not just casual or fraternising with his staff, he treats them as his equals, near enough, from the scullery maid upwards. (He's an EARL) They all give him advice and he sits and chats and plays cards with them. I also couldn't manage to believe that, in a society where buggery and sodomy was punishable with such regularity and fanaticism, that Stephen would get away with being a self proclaimed sodomite in 1816. Granted, being rich and influential, he might have been able to side step any conviction, but he would have been prey to blackmailers, scandal mongers and certainly ostracised from all polite society. He'd get away with it once, but not in a serial fashion in the way he does. Not without some other prop to sustain him – a great wit, a playwright, a bosom friend to Prinny, a huge and powerful family or something like that.

I did notice other small anachronisms and some sayings that are (as far as my research goes) only attributable to Heyer – but I only noticed them because of months of research into the same period so they won't spoil the book for the general reader, and it will enhance the enjoyment for the Heyer-philes as they will find it familiar. There were however, some nice true details – the fact that the Elgin Marbles were in the British Museum in 1816, waiting for the Duveen Gallery to be built, good solid research into where Hanover Square is in relation to other streets in London.

However, as I say, it's a decent enough read, although all in all I felt that it was all a little rushed and at 200 pages, it could easily have extended to 250-300 without harming the book at all, just to give us a deeper insight into the characters.

If you like m/m and you like Heyer, you'll probably like it, but the anachronisms kept the rating down.

ttg says

3-3.5 stars – A pretty fun historical romance. Fans of m/m regencies may especially like this story of poor Jamie, who has come to London with his last few coins to take up a position as a tutor for a Lord's children, only to find that the Lord and his family had died in a terrible accident and the household was now run by the rakish brother. Fortunately for Jamie, he gets a job as the house's new secretary. Even though he finds Lord Stephen overspendy and irresponsible, and Stephen finds Jamie mousey and unappealing, especially compared to his foppish actor lover, but they slowly start to realize the other's good qualities and how much better they feel when they are together.

The parts I liked: I really dug the first half--it was full of delicious regency/historical fun times as Jamie got acclimated to his new life and did the push-away/come-closer dance with his attraction to Stephen. The side characters who peppered the story, the servants and Stephen's awesome Aunt were also a lot of fun to read.

Pearson's writing style was also highly readable, and I loved all the period details she flitted into the story, making each scene easy to picture, whether it was Stephen's library, Jamie's forever-cold upstairs room, or an amazing indoor picnic at his Aunt's mansion.

What was harder for me: Somewhere around 63%, the big Misunderstanding happened, and then the MCs separated for Emo Separation Time, and were apart for the next 30% of the book. During this time, intrepid Jamie tried to find work, but ends up in the villainous clutches of Stephen's jealous actor lover (WHO IS SUPER EVIL). Stephen is very emo and mokey, and decides that moping with his Evil Lover is fine since Jamie left him, which made me feel a lot less sympathetic towards him.

Thankfully, Jamie is rescued during a drawn out climax which was almost comical for how long it took to get people to rescue him. (I was skimming at this point. "Get to Jamie, you imbeciles!") FINALLY, they are together, and have a 3-5% or so for a quick reconciliation and ILYs/sex, etc. I felt a little apathetic by this point, and wished Stephen was a way better person for Jamie. There definitely wasn't enough realization on his side.

The story has a fun classic feel to it though, so if you like historicals, you may totally dig this. For me, I loved the energy of the first half, but I wish the separation time had been shorter in the second, or the reconciliation was longer.

I think the old/original cover is the TOPS though. It's so pulpy and lovely and makes me think of trashy dime novels, and I just totally dig the feel of it.

I'm sad that the new ebook version doesn't have that cover. (And is that guy on the cover supposed to be Jamie?? That guy's haughty face makes me think of terrible villain Julian WHO IS TERRIBLE.)

In the end, a fun read. I'll definitely check out more from this author since even though this one fizzled a bit for me in the second half, I love that she went all Super-Regency and I'm psyched to try her other historicals.

Jenn says

Look at that cover & package! It's like Disney's Beauty & the Beast does m/m!

Snowtulip says

This is one of those books that as you read along, you notice that you are smiling. This isn't action packed, angst driven drama, just a steady sweet love story that makes you happy.

I really enjoyed the cast of characters in this book and they completely breathed life into this story and made it so fun to read. The end reminded me of one of those old school capers, where everyone is involved in taking care of the situation, no one is left behind and everyone wants to be a part of the action.

Truly enjoyable read!
