



Designs of Desire

Tempeste O'Riley

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Artist James Bryant has forearm crutches in every color from rainbow for fun to sleek black for business. He even has a pair with more paint splatters than metal. After his family's rejection and abuse from a man he thought loved him, James only just gets through the day by painting. He lives in constant fear that he's not worthy of anything, let alone love.

As CEO of his company, Carrington Enterprises, Seth Burns is a take-charge kind of guy, and he is instantly smitten by the artist helping with his newest project. When he witnesses James suffer a panic attack, a protective instinct he never knew he had kicks in. He truly believes nothing is unobtainable—including James—if he's willing to put in the time and effort.

James is shy and confused by Seth's interest in him as a person. With Seth's support, can he work through his fears to finally find the true love he deserves, or will someone finally land the crushing blow he won't survive?

Designs of Desire Details

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From Reader Review Designs of Desire for online ebook

Catherine says

*** DNF @ 20% ***

This story and these characters had promise, but the execution of both ended up being a hot mess.

I powered through the awkward writing and cheesy dialogue. I got past the fact that Seth ordered food for James during the couple's first date. I willfully ignored the way my eye started to twitch when Seth called James "Pet" after less than a 24-hour acquaintance. But I had to throw in the proverbial towel when Seth stood over James while hand-feeding him his breakfast the morning after their first date.

Nope. Nuh uh. I can't. I can't *even*.

Seth ended up being creepy, James came across as weak (even though I'm fairly certain this was the exact opposite intention of the author), and the whole whole thing had a Harlequin romance novel circa 1985 vibe to it.

Think I'll pass on future work by this author.

Ricardo says

So, this book starts really well but somewhere along the line I could feel myself starting to cringe when the writing became overly melodramatic, with totally exaggerated responses and BDSM scenes that sounded more like a class than an actual scene. There were a few original bits (like the mention and super quick explanation of EDS) and I really enjoyed the playful aspect with different-colored arm-crutches.

There is nothing wrong with the book except too much melodrama in my opinion. There are many inconsistencies in the plot (e.g.: James supposedly has no money, thinks of himself as poor, yet he owns a 3-bedroom home with a studio for painting, a car, and doesn't seem to have any problems paying for his health expenses) and the characters are one-dimensional.

Nikki McCarver says

I was truly blown away by the emotion that is so prevalent and expressed throughout this book. I found myself tearing up several times during this book, and finally at the end just having a good happy cry. James was such a tormented character, that I really couldn't believe he was still able to cope with life. This book hit home on so many real issues that are still going on today. I hate the fact that people tend to be ruled by their ignorance and that bigotry and prejudice are still so prevalent in this society. James grew up in an unsupported household that actually encouraged abuse. How many other children have grown up that same way due to other circumstances? I'm a firm believer that good and bad are found within the person, not in their lifestyle choices or skin color.

Seth on the other hand was raised in a hate-free environment, with a family that supported his choices and stood by him. How wonderful would our society be if we all were nurtured in this same environment? I'm actually glad Seth was able to show James that not everyone had the narrow minded views of his family. It helped heal him as a person.

This book will definitely take you on an emotional roller coaster ride. I would love to read another book by this author! It is definitely a top pick. My only regret is that I cannot give this book more than 5 spiders!! I do hope the author returns to write about Chase. I see a swarthy bodyguard in his possible future..lol!!

Jackie Mckenzie says

I loved this book and I am so happy to find out the author is planning a series for these guys. The supporting characters were wonderfully written and deserve to have their stories told. Please read my full review at The Novel Approach and pick up a copy of this book, you will not be disappointed.

<http://thenovelapproachreviews.com/20...>

NancyM says

1.5 stars

I was really looking forward to reading this book. The blurb is lovely, and the excerpt was intriguing. This is what I got;

There was random tidbits everywhere, random people named and then never seen again, it seems they were only introduced to cause an MC anguish and that was all. Chase - I was 99.9% annoyed with him throughout the book, he was in their personal business way too much. I'm actually surprised that he wasn't in the bedroom directing the MCs during sex. Things you thought would be important (view spoiler) were brushed aside; only learning about what happened in regards to some things towards the end (and it's through those darn random tidbits!)

Wendy Ann says

Reviewed for Hearts On Fire Reviews - 3 1/2 hearts

Some characters have the worst luck (whether in finding the right person, family issues, etc.), but James might rank up there at the top of the list with multiple ex's who were despicable and a family that should be shot for the evil things he endured either directly or through lack of support from them. It's a wonder that he didn't have more issues – such as being introverted or emotionally scarred. His physical and psychological issues were hard enough to read about, and yet, he showed enormous strength of character. It was easy to see why Seth felt compelled to protect James, but was equally amazed by his strength.

There were a lot of threads going on in the plot for this one. Given its novella length, a couple of threads

ended up a bit loose vs. being solidly woven into the story. For example, there is a hint of BDSM D/s elements here but they ended up feeling more awkward than central to the story. A little more of the back history on each character would have helped answer quite a few questions.

On the plus side, I enjoyed the portrayal of a strong character facing life challenges and coming out ahead. I enjoyed the supporting cast of characters and the concept that the family you make can be equally (or even more) important than the one you are born with. I enjoyed the support and encouragement Seth provided to James that helped him flourish. And, I enjoyed the spark between Seth and James.

There are no doubt going to be elements of this story that some people will really enjoy while others will dislike. As a whole, I enjoyed this story and thought it was a good first book from this author.

Lauren says

This story was actually kind of difficult for me to get through and I have to admit that I ended up skimming through a lot of it. It started off well, but then nothing really happened to make the story stand out. Nothing grabbed me, and there was very little substance to the story. There was no strong plot line that kept me wanted to turn the page to find out what would happen next. I didn't connect with the main characters as much as I usually do, and I just found it very difficult to get into and to keep going.

One thing that really bugged me was the use of pet names. It actually drove me crazy after a while, and I'm the kind of person who usually loves that sort of thing! I'm not one to complain over the occasional use of pet names. In fact, I usually encourage it. But seriously, "baby" and "pet" were really overused here to the point where I found myself rolling my eyes every time Seth used those words. And I've always disliked the term "pet" anyway, so that didn't help.

The story wasn't terrible but it was very slow and felt as if it lacked any real direction. It was very sweet, but maybe a little *too* sweet in places. There were a few scenes that felt rather contrived and certain parts just didn't feel particularly realistic. When I'm reading contemporary romance, I like a degree of realism. This didn't really have that.

Something that particularly confused me were the hints at BDSM. We were told about a past relationship where Seth had engaged in sexual practices that involved inflicted pain on his partner. The author also had James call Seth 'Sir' every so often and threw in words like "submissive" which all hinted at a BDSM theme, but then the author never really followed through on it. I'm not against BDSM at all (even if it's not something I read too often and even then I don't read anything too hardcore) but it would have been better either to leave that out completely or to have actually fully incorporated it into the story. It just ended up seeming random and out of place here.

To be fair, I'll outline a couple of things **I liked** about this book:

- Chase was an interesting secondary character and although he was a bit interfering, he was a great friend to James. I appreciated that. It was nice to see that James had a support system and that Chase was so protective of his friend. Okay, so there was one drunken scene where he was a bit of an idiot, but overall he was a good guy.

- I'll admit that Seth and James were cute together. It was overly sweet and corny at times (which elicited many eye rolls and snorts of laughter), but it was also very lovely too.
- James wasn't portrayed as the poor cripple or as someone who couldn't do anything for himself, and I liked that. I'm glad the author didn't portray James as being physically weak or incapable.
- The writing was good - not perfect, a few typos here and there, but still good.
- This isn't actually related to the story, but I love the cover. Seriously, it's stunning.

Overall, this book wasn't as good as I had hoped. It wasn't what I had expected after reading the blurb, either. I'm left feeling rather disappointed.

Candice says

2.5 Stars

Wow. So ummm...when did James sign up to be in a D/s relationship? When did Seth have the right to come waltzing into James's life and start demanding things? What gave Seth the impression that James would tolerate that?

See, I am not into the BDSM life. I don't understand it, but that's me. Personally, if I were, I wouldn't let it get outside of the bedroom. Seth ordering food for James without giving him a choice? Laying out clothes for him to wear? Telling him exactly what will happen on a given day? Seth calling James 'pet' and James calling Seth 'sir' out in public? Yeah, that wouldn't fly. Personally, I saw Seth as being an arrogant asshole. He came into James's life and took it over. It really pissed me off, especially since knowing his background and all of the abuse James suffered.

To be honest, I was ready to put the book down at 50%. I couldn't do it anymore. I was getting so upset, I just thought why the hell am I putting myself through this? But, instead, I got drunk. 6 beers later, I picked up the book again and drank 3 more while reading it. So after 9 beers, I was finally able to finish it and somewhat enjoy the role reversal. I liked that James said eff you this is my life. I didn't care for Chase butting in (view spoiler) Then Seth held onto a BIG secret after knowing everything about James.

Have I mentioned that I think people are too forgiving?

I will ask this. (view spoiler)

Overall, if it wasn't for the booze I wouldn't have been able to finish this. Seth is an asshole. James is a sweetheart, but for some reason attracts abusers. He also has the inability to say no, which really pisses me off.

.5 Star round up for James finally letting Seth have it! (twice)

V says

This story started soooo good, and then shit hit the fan and it went down the hill.

Unnecessary drama, BDSM(WHAT THE!!), some readers hate the "baby" endearment, in my case I can't stand the "pet" endearment and this spoil the story for me a huge deal.

I didn't know the story was going to turned up that way otherwise I would have never bother to read it.

Mandi says

started off ok, but wayyy too much going on that's never really explained or glossed over. and I didn't think James needed someone who treats him like a child, takes over his life, and makes all his decisions for him. after everything the poor guy went through, he needed a partner who made him feel stronger and more independent.

Lisa The Novel Approach says

I would be more than happy to read more books by this author, and I would love to see Chase get his knight in shining armor also. No matter all the turmoil James is put through, he does get his HEA and more than he ever bargained for. If anyone deserved it, James did.

You can read more of Jackie's review at The Novel Approach

LiveYourLife BuyTheBook says

2.5 Stars

A "Live Your Life, Buy The Book" Review

James Bryant is an artist currently working in a design firm where his immediate boss constantly gives him a hard time and only gives James the jobs no-one else wants. When he gives James a new brief, he assumes it's more of the same, until his best friend and co-worker informs him that it's "not like most of the scraps Brian-the-dick tosses you." In fact, it's for a chain of hotels being developed that cater specifically for the GLBT community, and the CEO is hot!

When Seth first sees James he's instantly attracted to the man who, although suffering from a physical disability, refuses to let it define him. Seth wants James and is determined to get him. At their second business meeting on site of the first hotel, James runs into his ex, who's a part of the construction crew and has a panic attack as memories of his abusive past come flooding back. Seth calms him and reschedules James' presentation for later that afternoon. After the presentation, Seth makes his move, informing James that they are going to dinner, where he proceeds to order for James. A week later and Seth arrives at James' studio attached to the house. After the tour, Seth orders take-out for them (as he feels like Indian and doubts that James can make that) and the night ends in sex.

This is not so much an insta-love as it is an insta-relationship. There's no build up, no getting to know the

characters, no discussion before Bam! They're suddenly dating. As we learn later when he states that James is submissive, Seth is apparently kind of a Dom but his behaviour mostly comes across as overbearing, controlling and manipulative. Seth really needs to work on his communication skills. There's no discussion about a relationship, never mind any form of a BDSM one, yet Baby and Pet abound pretty much right from the start. It's like the author is forcing a fast connection between the MCs instead of letting it happen organically.

About a quarter of the way in, we learn that James actually has a genetic condition that contributed to the severity of his injuries sustained in an accident caused by his abusive ex. And that's how the majority of information is given – piecemeal and often in an almost throwaway fashion after the fact. I think that was one of the biggest reasons I had trouble feeling any connection to either character, their relationship or the story. So much of the information is either only hinted at or doled out later on with people from the MCs pasts suddenly cropping up out of the blue and other things glossed over, so it's really hard to understand the why of something. The narrative jumps all over the place, essentially answering the question before it's even asked thus putting the answer out of context.

There is absolutely no indication to gauge how much time has actually passed, not only from the beginning of the book to the end, but also from one scene to the next. To me, it only seems a matter of weeks, a few months at the most, but the characters talk and act as if it's been quite some time. The writing was a bit clunky – it's like chunks of the book had just been left out, the dialogue was often stilted and there was a lot of telling rather than showing. The sudden change from one scene to the next was very jarring. One minute we're in the middle of meet the parents and the next we're suddenly in a sex scene. I had to keep stopping and get my brain to change gears. I felt like the author was trying too hard with flowery descriptions like “his piercing blue orbs” and “his hungry, throbbing entrance” along with a fair bit of sugary sweetness.

The premise sounded lovely and I was hoping I would love this book. In the end, it just felt like the author was trying to cram too many different things into the book. BDSM elements, insta-love/relationship, tragic past, childhood abuse, a kid, evil grandparents suing for custody of said kid, abusive ex's (3 of them!), mystery, threats, a homophobic family and psychotic brother and mother. The result of which is all of those elects feeling underdeveloped.

Although I certainly have no objection to it, I'm not usually all that fussed on kids in romance books, but in this case it actually made things more interesting. I really liked Danni. She was definitely my favourite character. In fact, The extra half star is just for her. The cover is gorgeous.

Andrew Grey says

I enjoyed this story very much. the characters were vibrant and the story carried me through my reading hours. I rarely get time to read any more and this was a great way to spend the few hours I get.

Thomaidha Papa says

1.5 Hearts

Review written for MM Good Book Reviews

<http://mmgoodbookreviews.wordpress.com/>

Just how much is too much?

This was the main question popping in my mind while reading this book. I did not like this at all. The overbearing plot that was suffocated with so many elements and incidents, so much hate attacks onto one single person was plain and simple unreal.

We get to witness a most non-realistic relationship blooming seemingly out of nowhere. Seth and James met and in a matter of – God I don't even know how much time passed as the concept of time was a blur and you could never really get a grasp of it – a heartbeat they became not only a couple, but a family, with a child in the ready and a happily ever after that was more than Godsend. The premises of their relationship were non-existent, the bdsm element that came with it as a non-negotiable fact was ludicrous, and I had no idea how the “Sir” calling on James’ behalf came about? Especially since James was so hell bound on not having a “kinky” relationship to begin with. The obsessive and controlling behavior on Seth’s part was quite surreal, so much so that had me cringing and questioning the sanity of that character. James’ reaction to him came awfully near to a person suffering from Stockholm syndrome. They simply did not make sense. Nothing they did really made sense.

And as for the abuse James suffered from practically everybody in this damned story that was just too painful to read. And again I come to ask myself; just how much is too much? Because what I read surpassed even that.

I made notes on thing I came across that were out of context or lacked credibility or out of the sphere of reality altogether. But as I reviewed them in order to get my wits about and write this review so it could be constructive I saw they were too much and sorting them out and writing them down would make this review an essay on this book.

So I'm not going to dwell and linger on them. For me this book was not good and required a serious case of revision before it went out on the shelves, because while the idea was enticing, everything failed to make it an enjoyable read.

Thommie

Anke says

[to a BJ at 14% of the story during their first private meeting outside of business (hide spo
