



Flirting with Disaster

Victoria Dahl

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There's no hiding from sizzling chemistry...

Artist Isabelle West has good reasons for preferring a solitary life. Tucked away in a cabin in the woods, she has everything she needs...except a red-hot love life. That is, until a hard-bodied US marshal threatens to unearth secrets she's spent years protecting. But giving in to the sparks flying between them can only lead to one thing...disaster.

Tom Duncan lives by the letter of the law. But no one has tempted him—or confused him—more than free-spirited Isabelle, who arouses his suspicion and his desire. As their connection grows, and their nights get hotter, they find their wild attraction might shake everything he stands for—and expose everything she has to hide.

Flirting with Disaster Details

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Author : Victoria Dahl

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From Reader Review Flirting with Disaster for online ebook

Lexxie (un)Conventional Bookworms says

Sexy, hot, including great characters, mystery and a lot of romance.

This and all my other reviews are originally posted on my blog **(un)Conventional Bookviews**

WhiskeyintheJar/Kyraryker says

******Full Review******

3.5 stars

I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

When U.S. Marshall Tom goes door to door alerting people to the Marshall's presence in the neighborhood for the next couple weeks as they protect a judge presiding over a case, he meets a very standoffish woman. His Marshall senses start to go off and he suspects the woman is trying to hide something so he decides to do a little more digging. Isabelle hates cops and what the Marshall presence could mean to her safety, she's not who she has been portraying to be but her lies is the only thing keeping her alive. As Tom and Isabelle get closer, lies and danger swirl around them and only trusting one another will keep them alive.

Isabelle is a very prickly character who some might have a problem with warming up to right away but her strength and confidence will have readers pulling for her to let Tom in. As always, Dahl does a masterful job at writing a thirty plus woman who has grown to claim herself and her sexuality; there is something freeing, uplifting, and deeply satisfying when reading a Dahl heroine. Tom is a soothing balm to the over abundance of excessively alpha males, he may hold a hand over Isabelle's mouth while they have sex so her friends don't hear but when she brings it up the next day he is going to blush. He is a strongly take charge guy with an adorably intimidated and slightly embarrassed side to how straight forward Isabelle can be at times. It is easy to see why they are attracted and how they bring out the best in each other.

Flirting with Disaster is the third in the series but with just a few appearances by the heroines from the previous books, it definitely works as a standalone. The lust between Tom and Isabelle gets rolling right away and while Tom's Marshall assignment of protecting a judge sidetracks the main relationship at times, it works as a credible device for the original reason to keep our couple together. Isabelle's past and how it leads to her false identity and why she is hiding out could have been the star of the show on its own; the story felt crowded with Tom's job issues too. The drama, mystery, and danger were interesting but with secondary characters, that had to be mentioned but were just blips on the radar to readers, there were too many cooks in the kitchen. In the end, it all together got a bit unwieldy at times but ultimately came together.

While I think this is the weakest in the series so far, it is still a solid addition. If you're tired of New Adult and want the wonderful experience of reading about an adult woman who knows her own mind and is comfortable with her own body (and in this case don't forget about the cute, charmingly sexy hero Tom) then this book and series is a must for you to pick up.

Jess says

I had actually been really hopeful about this book, because I'd like the others in this series more than I'd expected, so I'd hoped that Dahl and I were getting back to that autobuy place after her first Jackson series didn't work for me at all. But alas, this one reminded me of why she stopped being that in the first place, which is a shame, because like I said, I wanted to like this book.

The reasons it didn't can really be boiled down to two things: 1) Victoria Dahl isn't as good at writing romantic suspense as she thinks she is and 2) whatever the hero's protective streak, I couldn't believe a career U.S. Marshal throwing his entire professional life away on someone that he'd known for a week. Whenever Dahl goes down a suspense route, it always ends up the weakest element of her stories and I wish she'd stop. If she wants to write edgier contemporaries, that's fine, but find a different place to pick the edge up. As for the hero, I think this was just a particularly bad case of insta-lust ending up as something more than it should have been, and while sometimes I can swallow that, the circumstances of this particular book left me unable to do so.

As ever, the sex scenes were pretty good, but since I'm not reading her to read erotica, that wasn't really enough for me. She remains firmly a library only author.

Wendy's Thoughts says

3.5 When is a Lie a Lie Stars * * * 1/2

If you are a lover of contemporary romance, then you are probably familiar with Victoria Dahl. She was one of the first transitions from Historical to Contemporary Romance for me. Her trademark, in my mind, is casual, sassy reading... meaning it can be read in one sitting or you can break it up and nothing will be lost.

This book stayed with her trademark; sexy, hot times, some intrigue and a couple who would end up together by working through whatever they had to...

Throw in some strong secondary characters, a location with a personality of its own and you have a solid Dahl read.

This is not my favorite Dahl but it has some very well written moments and questions about trust. It also has the set up for her next installment... and I am always happy with another Dahl adventure.

A gifted copy was provided by Harlequin through NetGalley for an honest review.

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Jae says

I have never been a fan of the insta lust scenarios.

The hero came into town for a job and after crossing paths with the heroine a few times they slept together. And 10 minutes after the sex, she finally remembered to ask him if he had a wife/fiancé/girlfriend back home. Insert "rolling eyes while thunking head on desk" emoji here.

That was the moment I started flipping through the pages just for the heck of it. And a few pages towards the end they declared their I love you-s. So that all was tide and tidy.

Not feeling the lurve, **3 Stars**.

Alexa says

We get to the final girl from the trio that has been, and sadly I didn't like her book at all.

First of all, Isabelle's character doesn't make much sense. The author tries to paint her as an stereotypical artist, forgetful of everything but her art. However she doesn't exhibit any fanciful artistic traits. And her forgetfulness feels almost... forced. I kept thinking that she just didn't make sense.

And then we have Tom, the super hot US Marshall in his 40s who has a saviour complex and is completely dreamy, but somehow it's not married (again, makes no sense)

Tom meets Isabelle and immediately realises there's something fishy about her. So he starts digging and once he finds out what's wrong, he decides he has to fix it, even if she doesn't want any help at all.

"He had to help her, get her free of this mess and do it with enough skill that she'd forgive his dishonesty."

I was ok with him checking on her past. That's him doing his job. But 'helping' her is him just being a nosy bastard. Fuck that.

I found myself skipping parts of this book to make it to the end (which I guess tells you everything)

Aileene says

Ok after reading the first book I was far too hesitant to pick this one up but read I did coz that's me I need to read the sequel to see if the author will finally give me what I want. I proceeded with caution though and was surprised that it was no similar to the first install.

The story was focused to Isabelle West and US Marshal Tom Duncan.

Our heroine whom I (frustratingly) can't picture in my head wears cup / size D, free spirited, enjoys the serenity of being alone and a woman that's very comfortable in her own skin. She works from home as an

anatomical painter, has very few friends and harbours a secret that forced her to live like a hermit. As expected our hot Marshal had sniffed it the first time they met. He was too curious about her and whilst she was a mystery, he can't deny that she was a distraction that makes his thoughts wander to dirty dirty places.

What I liked about it were:

1) the story was just pretty ordinary. There were no twists and the clue was right under my nose but failed to see it. You see, from books I have read they have honed me to search and decipher hard to find clues but this one, THIS ONE! it was just there and I missed it. Imagine me banging my head against the wall then hang in shame for missing it.

2) One other thing was the sex scenes. They were straight forward and never out of place (unlike the first installment where they just b*nk every single damn time)

3) And lastly I'm neck deep in love with the TV series The Walking Dead and as soon as I read US Marshal, boy oh boy, a one sexy Rick Grimes (Andrew Lincoln) *grabs a pillow and hugs happily* invaded my head taunting me with those side glances I was truly crazy about.

What didn't work for me:

1) The mention of grenade launcher..I found it too too far fetch

2) The last chapter. It was unwanted. It should've ended at the chapter before it.

Verdict: Recommended

Rating: 3.5 stars

I didn't give it a massive 5 coz I had a glimpse of what this author can create. She created this, I know she can top it. And on that note I will definitely reach for the third installment to devour.

Purrrrrr...

Oooh Rick, you can handcuff me anytime everytime anywhere everywhere you please, I won't resist ~grins~

Britt Marczak says

Received an ARC from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review

If you're looking for fun, flirty, sassy, and easy-read romance, Victoria Dahl will always be your best bet. While this wasn't my favorite of her books, it was still an enjoyable read.

As always, I think I love Dahl's heroines the most. They're confident and aren't afraid to tell it like it is. They're not ashamed of their sexuality or their wants, and I think it's beautiful. Isabelle certainly fits this description. She felt like a real person, with a real personality, flaws, and good qualities. It was fun to watch how the relationship she has with Tom changed.

Another refreshing aspect is the ending. It's not a fairy tale ending, with sparkles and rainbows, but two human beings working together to make a relationship work. It feels very real, and that's admirable. Not to diminish the over-the-top HEA of other romance books, because I love those when they're done well, too. I simply commend how *real* and humanized all aspects of this book felt, even down to the ending.

I find that a lot of romance books put the hero as the main focus of the book, but it's the heroine who is the real focus here (and in most of Dahl's other books). Tom was written well, too, don't get me wrong. It's just refreshing when books by women, for women, focus on the women most.

In addition, the feminism weaved into the story is also definitely welcome, and I wish I saw it smoothly added into every romance book.

The plot/conflict wasn't exactly nail-biting, but I never expect that with these books. These really are books to curl up with when you just want an easy escape for a few hours.

Alp says

3.5/5

This one wasn't totally what I expected, but I enjoyed it for the most part. I can tell you that my interest was immediately piqued when I read this book's blurb. It sounded very promising so I thought, why not? And after finishing it, I found the plot even more complex than I initially thought. Victoria Dahl has the unique ability to combine elements of romance, drama, and humor into a compelling love story!

The romance part was well-written. The sexual tension between the main couple was palpable and intense. Even so, I don't think I can confidently say that the sex scenes were all mind-blowing. Some were good, of course, but the rest was just mediocre.

And about the main characters...I absolutely loved Tom. He was endearing in his own way and he was a very good man.

But Isabelle... I don't know. I didn't like her but didn't hate her either. Frankly, she didn't do anything that really ticked me off, nor did she make me feel negatively toward her. She made me feel nothing in lieu. I don't know why I felt indifferent toward her, but well, it happened.

The supporting characters in this book were awesome and together they helped make the story engaging and readable to the end.

All in all, this was a lovely and sexy older woman/younger man romance read. If you're fond of this trope, then you'll definitely enjoy this one!

Sunny says

4.5 Loved it!

Mature, funny, quirky, and flirty. Such a good read. More review to come.

Auntee says

Wow, this one was quite enjoyable and I didn't have any real issues with the hero and heroine like I did with the previous book (Looking for Trouble).

Free-spirited artist Isabelle West was feisty and endearing and I loved how she (eventually, after a hostile first meeting) teased and flirted with by-the-book Deputy U.S. Marshal Tom Duncan while trying to protect the *big secret* she had in her life. Isabelle had some big trust issues (especially with members of the law); Getting close to Tom (who was in Jackson Hole to protect a federal judge) was dangerous but the poor girl couldn't help herself! Tom was serious and reserved (he even blushed when faced with naughty talk!) but get him in the bedroom and he was a tiger.:) Once these two got together they really set the sheets on fire! But then curious Tom (who *sensed* that Isabelle was hiding something) discovered part of her secret, and that put him in a tough spot. Does he protect the woman he cares about, or does he do his duty? Or is there a way to do both?

Tom...a sucker for a damsel in distress

This book had plenty of character development, a nice RS subplot to go with the scorching romance scenes, and was quick paced. I liked quirky Isabelle and adored Tom (gotta love a blushing hero). I enjoyed catching up with Isabelle's friends (Lauren, Sophie, and a new friend, the judge's daughter, Veronica--soon to have her own story (Taking the Heat). I enjoy Miss Dahl's writing style--love the touches of humor and the details she provides. Her books always have pretty hot love scenes too, to go along with the well thought out plots. This one kept me turning the pages, wondering how Isabelle and Tom could get their HEA with her big secret between them. I was happy to see how it was all resolved, and hope we see this couple again in the next book. 4 1/2 stars

**ARC provided by the publisher via Netgalley*

Jill Sorenson says

This book made me think deep thoughts about real life and prickly heroines and Victoria Dahl's oeuvre. I have this idea that she writes two kinds of books, funny ones and melancholy ones. My favorite, *Close Enough to Touch*, is on the melancholy side, beautifully written with a tough heroine to like. She's an LA makeup artist who'd rather die than do hick bride makeup (IIRC). I'm kind of a hick bride type and I felt insulted by her attitude. She grew on me and I ended up loving her, but it was a rocky start.

Same goes for this book, which is a little darker and more contained than the others in the series. This is a indoor midwinter story with a slower spark. I see a lot of myself in Dahl's heroines and sometimes it's not enjoyable, like trying on swimwear in harsh light. I didn't really get into it until about 20%, and by 50% I was riveted. I love her family mysteries (re Shane's father's disappearance from *Too Hot to Handle*). The US Marshals details are finely drawn, as if Dahl interviewed a marshal extensively or knows one in real life. It's

clear that she put a lot of time and effort into getting this right--more than many suspense authors do, tbh.

Can we talk about that first sex scene? Humminahummina. When he puts his hand over her mouth to keep her quiet...mmm. So, so hot and character-specific. I loved that Tom could control himself but didn't want to, and I'm a sucker for a conflicted lawman hero. His character motivations are perfect throughout. I also liked Isabelle's wild enthusiasm for sex and her reclusive-artist vibe. The cat was cool too. A solid 4.

Really looking forward to the next!

Anne says

Story-wise this one is a solid 3 stars. I didn't dislike it, but the plot really didn't do much for me one way or the other. Readable without being memorable. In other words, it was average.

Well...yes. Because sometimes average is good enough for a romance novel. At least, it is to me. I'm not normally one to recommend a book that didn't wow me with the plot, though.

However, this little gem has something *better* than a plot!

It has a grown-ass woman in her mid-thirties who is incredibly confident about sex, her body, and her life in general.

And isn't that just a miracle?!

Well, yes and no. I mean, to be very honest, I feel sexier now (at 41) than I ever did at 25. You young ladies listen up, there's nothing to fear about getting older. In fact, it's pretty fantastic!

I mean, sure, there's a few extra lines and a bit of jiggle in odd places, but every year I've been alive a little bit more of that **GiveaFuck** mentality that used to tie my stomach in knots just...falls away.

I've got *another* grey hair?

Damn! Turns out I look foxy with some silver shooting through my locks!

And the sex scenes in this thing? *Sizzzzzle!*

No, there wasn't anything crazy-kinky happening, but they were HOT! A lot of it had to do with the sheer amount of **confidence** that oozed off of Isabella. She was that kind of sexy that older women specialize in, and she *knew* it. No apologies.

Growr!

Another thing this book does well is the interaction between the women. There's too many books that

showcase the catty bullshit, so it was nice to see one that focuses on what solid friendships look like.

Like I said, I'm not one to push average stories on anyone, but if you're a *mature* woman in the market for a romance that doesn't focus on a heroine who still has taut skin? Girl, you gotta check this one out!

Lana ✿❄️Dirty Girl Romance❄️✿ says

3.5 Stars

I love Victoria Dahl's writing. Her heroines are just the right dose of assertive and her heroes are always just the right dose of sexy and sweet. The set up for *Flirting With Disaster* sounded absolutely fabulous, and while I enjoyed it for the most part, it also failed to really fully grab me.

Isabelle West was a difficult heroine for me to truly warm up to at first. Being the loner that she is and comes off to be, it's hard to imagine ever liking her. However, as the author began to peel the layers to get down to the true reason for her solitary ways, she begins to grow on you. I also appreciate a heroine that owns her sexuality and knows what she likes and never feels bad about it. This is a woman that's just in it for the pleasure for the sake of pleasure. She doesn't overthink it and she doesn't look down on herself for it. It's difficult to find in today's mainstream romance and I really enjoyed that aspect of Isabelle's personality.

U.S. Marshall Tom Duncan is a hero that you'll fall for right away. This is not a manwhore or player or asshole. Which is just another thing to appreciate about Dahl's heroes. They have this realness quality to them. There's no overdose of angst or back and forth. The conflict in this story comes from the past that Isabelle is hiding that may now be coming back to haunt her and Tom's determination to find out what it is and help her through it.

Flirting With Disaster was a lovely slow build kind of romance with a dose of suspense. Unfortunately it just didn't grab me as much as the previous 2 books in this series have. I found myself losing interest and easily setting the book down several times. As a result this dragged a little and it took me considerably longer to finish than it normally would. I found the addition of the other secondary characters to be slightly distracting considering nothing ever really came from their presence in the story, if that makes sense.

A good addition to the series, but not my favorite. I'm certainly looking forward to the next one since I enjoy this series and the set up for Veronica's book sounds pretty damn delicious.

ARC courtesy of publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review

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Carmen says

She didn't love Tom, either. She hadn't known him long enough to love him, and it was impossible anyway.

But there was something there. Some comfort and maybe even trust.

Isabelle is hiding in a cabin in the woods. No, this has nothing to do with Joss Whedon. She's escaping from her past and living in secret.

Tom is a U.S. Marshal who takes an interest in Isabelle. Will he fuck everything up for her in his misguided desire to "help" her?

...

OKAY. I have some problems with this novel.

What, BDSM again?

No, although remind me to talk to you about the sex.

Tom was what was annoying me about this novel. He's a U.S. Marshal and he notices Isabelle is very squirrely when he talks to her on a routine investigation. He then arbitrarily decides that "she's in trouble" and he has to "help" her - so as a result he's having sex with her while investigating her and trying to get her to tell him her secrets.

Even though Tom was trying to be a knight in shining armor and save the damsel in distress, it's clear what he's doing is fucking up Isabelle's life for no reason. Then the shit hits the fan, and it's completely his fault.

I was annoyed and exasperated with him for the entire book. I don't know if I would have been able to forgive him the way Isabelle does.

FEMALE-POSITIVE

Dahl is such a feminist and female-positive writer. I should have mentioned this earlier, but since her and I don't see eye-to-eye on men and on sex, this flew under the radar in my first two reviews, but I'm mentioning it now.

She always writes about women who seize their sexuality, take their orgasms (as opposed to just waiting for a man to give them one), and are comfortable with their bodies and with sex.

But Isabelle had discovered that freedom was the best thing about getting older.

She'd felt a touch of it when she turned thirty. She'd suddenly felt less like a big kid blindly feeling her way through the world and more like an adult. Then at thirty-five she'd realized she was at that age when so many women really started to worry. That they were too old now. That they hadn't married or had children. That this was their LAST CHANCE to really live.

Isabelle didn't feel as though this was her last chance. She felt as though she was finally free. Capable. Happy with herself. Comfortable with her body. And allowed to say anything she wanted to out loud, even if it made a grown man blush. Maybe especially if it did.

She loved it. She couldn't wait to be forty. She was going to own that shit. And then at fifty, when strangers would stop hinting that it was time to settle down and have some babies, and just start looking at her with pity? That would be glorious.

It's rare that I read this kind of stuff in romance novels.

"It's really hard for a woman to like sex."

"Because guys are terrible at it?"

"No," she laughed. "Even aside from that. We're taught from day one that we're supposed to resist it. That we'll eventually be talked into it. That we don't want it as much, and we definitely don't need it. Not like boys do. I believed that. So much that I wasn't the least concerned that I'd never had an orgasm. Because lots of women don't."

He nodded.

"Can you imagine that? I mean REALLY. Think about that. What if you had sex your whole life and never came?"

Tom frowned. "That's awful."

"It is awful!" she shouted, laughing again. "And that was almost my life! But then I figured out how much I liked sex and exactly how I liked it... Jesus, that's even more confusing. To be a woman and like sex. To want things just as much as the man does and still be treated as if you've given in and given something away. It's no wonder women hit their sexual peak later in life. It takes decades to find the confidence to have good sex."

Tom was frowning harder now. "How so?"

She shook her head. "Some men can make it hard to feel good about it afterward, no matter how much you liked it. Men say things like, "I got some" or "She put out," or whatever that dialogue is. Girls are stupid cows giving the milk away for free. And suddenly you feel like you were conquered."

This is a great thing to put in a romance novel, and I really like it. It also has the benefit of being true - I can't even tell you how many women I know who have sex but never orgasm. It's very sad, it makes me very sad. Some of these women are my good friends, but they never take my advice to either a.) dump their boyfriends or b.) tell their boyfriends what they want and need in bed. They are too afraid. :(Also, tons of women don't even know what they want and/or need in bed because they've been taught that masturbation is dirty and nasty and therefore never touch themselves. This doesn't help matters. No man is making them come and they can't even make themselves come. It's a sick society we live in, for sure. Still even today we have to deal with this "sex is filthy, good girls don't do that" shit.

ANYWAY, don't get me started. I'll rant all day and night if you let me.

My point is, that Dahl is great at putting feminist and very female-positive stuff in her books. Not just this one, in the others I've read, too.

HIGHLIGHTS

Dahl is funny and makes me laugh. There's an absolutely priceless scene where Tom discovers what Isabelle does for a living and it's HILARIOUS. I was laughing and laughing.

And there's a black lesbian side character in this (view spoiler). Extra points. And Dahl is just like, "She is a

black woman and a lesbian." Not like, "her mocha skin blah blah blah" which would have had me retching. Thank you SO MUCH for not doing food/skin comparisons, Dahl. Extra points.

How's the sex, Carmen?

Oh, thank you for reminding me to talk about this.

Dahl is good at writing sex. Her being good at writing sex is not the problem. Actually, I thought the sex in this novel was mostly good.

So... what's the problem? Spill.

Sigh.

Okay, all the sex scenes were great, except at the end, (view spoiler)

Besides that sex scene, the sex was good. I can't say "great" because I really feel like there's a disconnect between what Dahl considers good sex and what I consider good sex. For instance, she just kind of pities or sneers at men who are kind and gentle in bed. For example, Lauren's love, Jake (from Fanning the Flames) is kind of teased and condescended to because he is good-natured and sweet. I like good-natured and sweet. But Dahl seems to promote the idea of "If you're not getting fucked hard and rough, you're not really happy or satisfied. If a man is gentle and sweet with you in bed, he's misguided and cute, but not able to give you orgasms or make you truly happy." And I disagree with that idea.

All her heroines really enjoy and engage in fucking. Don't get me wrong, fucking is great! Sex that is fast or a bit rough or a bit forceful definitely has its advantages and its uses. I'm not against fucking. But making love and doing things sweet and slow is ALSO great. And also sexy. That's not really portrayed here. Dahl doesn't think making love is sexy. Only fucking. I get the message Dahl is trying to impart - "Seize your sexuality! Take what you want in bed!" - but I mean, what if what you want is something a little more sweet and slow-moving? You're SOL, and must turn to a different author to get that kind of book.

Also, as a side note, there is hand-gagging (during sex) in this book. That's not a problem for me (obviously it's consensual etc.) but it might bother some readers, so I'm mentioning this in case that bothers you.

...

Tl;dr - Tom was annoying me. I couldn't believe he was so misguided in his attempts to "help" Isabelle when she clearly didn't want or need his help.

Also, while Dahl is a good sex-writer, we seem to be a bit at odds with our views on sex. So I can't say she's my favorite sex-scene writer.

But I loved Dahl's female-positive messages that are not only present in this book, but other books of hers that I've read.

This is a good book with an engaging storyline and believable characters.

THREE REAL STARS, THREE ROMANCE STARS

P.S. Isabelle is also an introvert.

"But I can't. Too much work." That wasn't exactly true, but Lauren probably understood that Isabelle had reached her limit of socializing for the week. She needed time to not speak to anyone for a while. Except Tom. That she could handle, but only because it led to other forms of relaxation.

That's kind of unique and interesting to see in a romance novel.
