



Living the Vida Lola

Misa Ramirez, Melissa Bourbon Ramirez

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Meet Lola Cruz. After paying her dues as an intern, she's now a full-fledged detective at Camacho and Associates. Her boss is Manny Camacho, a *muy caliente* former cop with a mysterious ex-wife, a Lara Croft look-alike girlfriend, and a sudden personal interest in Lola. Her first big case? A missing mother who may not want to be found. And to make her already busy life even more complicated, Lola's helping her cousin plan her *quinceañera*, and battling her family and their old-fashioned views on women and careers. She's also reunited with the gorgeous Jack Callaghan, her high school crush whom she shamelessly tailed years ago and photographed doing the horizontal salsa with some other lucky girl.

Lola takes it all in stride, but when the subject of her search ends up dead, she realizes she has a lot more to worry about. Soon she finds herself wrapped up in the possibly shady practices of a tattoo parlor, local politics, and someone with serious---maybe deadly---road rage. To top it all off, her treasured postcoital pictures of Jack are missing! Still, Lola is well-equipped to handle these challenges. She's a black-belt in kung fu, and her body isn't her only weapon. She's got smarts, sass, and more tenacity than her Mexican mafioso-wannabe grandfather. A few of her famous margaritas don't hurt, either.

Debut author Misa Ramirez, a blond-haired, green-eyed gal with a passion for the Latino culture and authentic Mexican food, has penned a delicious mix of mystery, romance, and all-out fun. Filled with sizzling scenes and side-splitting humor, *Living the Vida Lola* is a thrilling ride that will have you up all night.

Living the Vida Lola Details

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From Reader Review Living the Vida Lola for online ebook

Catherine Spinelli says

A fast paced and witty read! The main character is a Latina PI learning the ropes and coping with family expectations and love life issues. It is a fast read and very entertaining.

Gail says

I had to read a book with the character named Lola and Living the vida Lola! Lola is one of my fantasy names!!

And this book is great. Lola is an almost thirty something girl living in Sacramento upstairs from her parents. To their eternal consternation and disapproval, she's a black belt and a private detective. She is living her career dream ever since she stalked her brother's friend Jack when she was 14.

Lola fields a missing person case. As she starts to investigate she finds a card of a reporter who is -- lo and behold -- Jack, he of her adolescent fantasies and stalker behavior. As they move inexorably and sexily together, the case takes on a more dangerous and complicated turn. Exciting and funny, Lola solves the mystery and gets the guy, well at least sort of. Lots of unanswered and intriguing questions to be explored in a sequel...or two...or three.

Funny, fun, and an affectionate look at tightly knit Mexican-American families through the eyes of a woman who is both traditional and modern; cool and old-fashioned.

Melliane says

Mon avis en Français

My English review

I saw a very nice review about this book, it was even compared to the Janet Evanovich's series. So you as you think, being a fan of the Stephanie Plum novels, I could not wait to start it and see for myself how it was. Even if we can compare Lola and Stephanie by their disdain for guns, I do not think the two books are really similar. The two novels are very different, although the genre is the same.

Lola is a young detective in a big office and only dreams to show her worth. And now Manny, her boss, gives her a new case, although Sady, another associate, does not agree with this choice and even far away. This is an opportunity for our young heroine to show what she can do. And even if her methods are unorthodox, returns are felt quickly. A mother has disappeared under mysterious circumstance and Lola is determined to understand what happened. But things get complicated when the young woman is found dead, drugged and drowned. And if that was only that ... Jack, her love of adolescence, is back in town. This man she spied when she was younger, taking pictures of him in a compromising situation to keep them until today. So of course, even years later her feelings remain the same and the photos are stored in her closet.

Well ... until her brother finds them out and steals them in order to blackmail her when it suits him. Everything changes, however, when she learns that her little crush is not one-sided and that Jack would love to be with her. Her girl dream comes true but she is still suspicious, Jack was well known for being a womanizer. But how to say no to such a man? Impossible. Yet he has many secrets that we do not discover this time, but I'm sure Lola will soon discover the truth.

I did not really expect a book such as this one, I thought I would have something really crazy and it's actually not the case. This is not a bad thing, but it was different from what I thought. Lola is funny, bubbly and determined to do what she wants. And nobody, not even her family, that she loves more than anything in the world has the right to judge her on her work. She loves what she does and is passionate about her job that is her life. She perfectly complements her brother, who, like her, is a really strong character. I loved them both and it was very funny to see the blackmail they set to achieve their purposes. Jack is also a great character, one we can only love, although there are a lot of questions about him like the ones about Dolores. But how can we not appreciate this protective, courageous and loving man? I'm sure they will form an explosive couple. I had a lot of questions about Manny, and I do not really understand what he wants from our heroine. There is something I could feel throughout the book, without being able to put my finger on. Stay tuned!

I was quite surprised to see that the investigation took so much space in the story. I thought it would be something lighter, but this is not the case. The survey is fully developed throughout the story with a very interesting ending. In fact, I didn't expect the truth behind the case of the woman disappearance. Well I must say that Lola has quite an extravagant way to find information. The history between our detective and Jack is also quite present, it must be said that she thinks about him all the time and is still in the middle of his path. It was nice to have a story so constructed and I'm curious to see what the author has for us for the next volume. This introduced us to the characters, highlighting the secrets they hide, but knowing Lola, it will not take her long to find out what happens.

Erin L says

Lola Cruz is a fairly newly licensed PI, but she's wanted to be an investigator for almost her entire life, ever since she stalked her high school crush and snapped pictures of him from the bushes. As a PI, she's given a case to look into a missing woman. Things get complicated in both the investigation and her life as her high school crush, and brother's friend, comes back into her life while she's getting deeper and deeper into the investigation.

Death threats, dates, and a quincinera family and history blend together to make a fascinating mystery and a delicious romance. I wasn't sure before starting this if I'd continue on the series, but now I need to see where things go.

Amy says

Per my usual reviews I won't bother rewriting the synopsis on the jacket (sorry, pet peeve of mine), but will tell you my opinions. I'm torn on my thoughts of this book. I liked the characters okay except I found Lola to be a contradiction sometimes. She was supposed to have passed several years of internship with the PI firm she works at and so one would think be reasonably skilled, and be a black belt in kung-fu, run miles

everyday, and do yoga. Oh, and she is 28, so not totally naive about the world. This description of her makes me think tough, smart, and self-reliant. At the beginning of the book she was, but then somewhere along the way as the mystery was "heating" up she made stupid mistakes and seemed helpless. It reminded me of Kinsey Millhone having a head injury and forgetting herself to wake up as Stephanie Plum. I love both of those characters but the author needs to pick one to make Lola seem more believable.

The reason for the quotes on the heating up part of the mystery is that I'm not sure it ever did. A lot of work needs to be done on the mystery side of the plot. It wasn't well thought out or cohesive. I think researching actual PI practices would also be helpful. They played a little loose with the law as far as apprehending criminals before they even committed a crime. There is a difference between being a bounty hunter and a PI.

I want to read the next one in the series because I do think it has potential. I really hope the author works out the character issues and thinks up a better mystery. Just an observation but I found it interesting that the author manages to translate all the Spanish phrases in the book for you even though they are rather elementary and not exactly how Spanish speaking and especially Mexicans speak. However, the one phrase she doesn't translate "hijo de la chingada" is way more interesting and from being married to a Mexican exactly how they speak.

Susan says

This sparkling debut novel, set in Sacramento, is narrated by Dolores (Lola) Cruz, a detective at the Martinez agency. She's been assigned a missing person case, and is determined to find the woman, who disappeared leaving her six year old son behind. What can her high school crush Jack, recently returned to town as a reporter on the local newspaper, have with her case? She's found his card among the missing woman's possessions. And is Jack--hotter than ever--really interested in Lola? Speaking of hotness, her boss Manny--who is no slouch in that department--has also been giving her messages that Lola can't quite interpret. Meanwhile, Lola is still living in an apartment above her parents' house, and fielding Mama and Papa's complaints about her dangerous job.

Aurian Booklover says

It took me a while to get into this book. I am still not sure if Lola is smart, or fluffy, and things just come to her. As I don't speak or read Spanish, I did not really like all the Spanish/Mexican words used by all the characters. I am Dutch, I can read French, German and English besides my own language. But Spanish is mostly beyond me. So not knowing what precisely was being said, time and again, threw me out of the story.

Lola is a beautiful 27 year old woman, still living at home, in an apartment above her parents house, shared with her brother. They are both saving for their own house, and enjoy the cheap rent. But Lola is starting to feel the constant company and censure of her parents. They don't like her dangerous job, and want her to do something safe, and preferably work in the family restaurant full time, get married and give them a lot of grandchildren.

When Lola was 15, she had this huge crush on the most popular guy in school, and kind of stalked him where ever he went. She even made pictures, and caught him once in the backseat of his car with another girl. She still has the picture of a naked Jack in her dresser drawer ... And now Jack is back in town, and as he was her brother Antonio's best friend, she is bound to run into him again. Does she want to see him, or

would it be too embarrassing?

Lola likes her job as a private investigator, she likes her colleagues, except for Sadie, who seems to do her best to discredit Lola. But her handsome boss, Manny, has faith in her. He gives her an important case, a missing mother, and Lola is determined to find her. Talking with whomever knew Emily, she stumbles upon a sad tale, a mother grieving for her dead son, and wanting someone to blame for it. But she went to the wrong people to get help, or did someone kill her for a different reason altogether?

And now Lola is following the same route Emily did, and someone is really not happy about that. Is someone trying to scare her off, or is someone really trying to kill her? And not caring if she is alone or not. Her family wants her to quit her job, and Jack is also not happy with the danger she puts herself in, but he does stand beside her.

Lola tries to matchmake between her friend and co-worker Reilly and her brother Antonio, who is really not interested, and Antonio sets her up with Jack. And every time things get nice and hot, something interferes. I did not really like her brother, as he tries to embarrass her in front of Jack a few times too often, that was no longer teasing. And he could be nicer to Reilly or just tell her kindly he is not interested. Not just try to run away.

I did like parts of the book, and parts were confusing. I never got a good enough grip on the story to make me figure out the killer or the plot, and it was not all that difficult, but very convoluted. I do have the other two books in this series, and I will read them someday. I liked Lola for the most part, she is feisty, she is feminine and still though. She also refuses to carry a gun, as she does not want to accidentally shoot the wrong person. She is good at Kung Fu, and as she says so herself, her body is her weapon.

Still, it was a fun story, and the attraction between Lola and Jack is off the charts, I enjoyed those parts. But both Jack and her boss Manny are very secretive about their past loves, and now Lola is determined to find out. Is Manny really interested in Lola, or just using her to make Sadie jealous?

Lola's parents are the oldfashioned kind; a woman's place is not in a man's job. She needs to get married and have children, and work in the family restaurant. I do feel very sorry for Lola, as her mother tries to make her feel guilty every single day for not listening to her, but well, it is Lola's life.

6 stars.

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Jan says

silly but fun, along the lines of a Latina Stepanie Plum.

Lisa says

I got "Pleating For Mercy" by Melissa Bourbon and thoroughly enjoyed my introduction to Bliss, Texas. Deciding to check out the author's website I discovered the "Lola" series written as Misa Ramirez.

I have to digress here and state that I read... A LOT. So for me to spend more than \$8.00 on a book (especially in digital format) I have to really enjoy it. There are so many methods to obtain literature (audiobooks, libraries, paperbackswap.com) I have to really justify to myself spending on books. (I'm not a cheapskate I just read so much I have to explore all options to get my "fix").

The "Lola" series sounded fun (I am addicted to Stephanie Plum and Izzy Spellman) and just like the type of series I would enjoy. However it's ten bucks on Nook. I decided to download the Christmas prequel novella "The Lola Cruz Christmas Story". Darn, the book was like how people describe drugs from a dealer. Once I had a "taste" of Lola's world I needed more. There is no audio (hint, hint) and I have no patience to wait for paperbackswap.com to get the book to me. So I downloaded it courtesy of the instant satisfaction my Nook provides.

I actually read the book last week. However, I needed to re-read it. The dialogue was so crisp, the banter so great that I had to go back and do it all again. I wanted to make sure I hadn't accidentally skimmed over a witty remark, know with certainty I hadn't missed a single thought Lola had.

Lola (and her family) are relatable and charming. The storyline is inventive and exciting. And with my birthday next week I'm going to treat myself to the next book in the series!

Jacob Proffitt says

I'm not really sure why I bothered finishing this book. I was emotionally finished with it by about the 2/3 mark, though I'd been coasting by the halfway point. I think I was just curious whether or not Lola finally gets with Jack or not.

The problem is that I didn't care much for Lola. She's kind of a spaz for someone who is in her late twenties and in an established profession. And she's a *huge* spaz for someone who is supposedly a Private Investigator. Of course, it didn't help that Lola has some reflexive stupidity about things like guns and politicians (also: I'd like to know where she found a Republican Assemblyman in Sacramento. I suppose that, since he was supposed to be corrupt she *had* to imply he was a Republican...).

The biggest detriment to the book is how Ramirez completely wasted Jack as a character. I mean, an investigative reporter and a P.I.? That's built-in conflict/synergy right there, that is. But it's completely unused. Not to mention that he's supposed to be, you know, smart and stuff. But all he is to Lola is a hot bod and long-term crush. Once it became clear that he was nothing more, I quickly lost faith that Ramirez was developing anything interesting. Unfortunately that was borne out by the ending.

Other problems with the book:

- the central mystery only barely holds together and depends a lot on some pretty unreasonable premises (starting with a person who would be stupid enough to have the motives they did and yet smart enough to get away with the crime for as long as they did).

- Lola's agency is populated by adults stuck in emotional adolescence.
- Reilly's obsession with Lola's brother was supposed to be funny but came across as creepy, instead.
- Antonio's motivations make no sense whatsoever at any point in the novel (particularly with regards to the photographs of Jack).

Yes, that's a lot of dumb packed into a novel-sized package. I'm sorry for it because Ramirez isn't a bad writer at the detail level. It's "only" characters and plots that she messed up. And I *did* finish it when it comes right down to it.

A note about Steamy: This is a *really* light steam level. There's *no* actual sex but the couple of groping sessions are detailed even if somewhat short. I almost didn't flag it at all, but there's enough there that those sensitive to such things ought to have fair warning.

Kat says

she is working in a pi agency. she found the robbers of a market. she doesnt get along with the other woman in her office. the boss is hot

her crush from high school moved back from SLO and she is trying to get with him. she is trying to figure out what happened to a missing lady that turned up dead. her son died from a heart infection after getting a tattoo

while she was at the tattoo place asking questions she got her belly button pierced and its turning all kinds of colors. she needs to go to a dr! never heard how it healed up, maybe next book which i ordered

her crush got shot in the arm. her brother got in a car accident meant for her when he borrowed her car. her parents want her to quit her dangerous job. she wants to move out to her own apt, not above her parents

will be fun to read the next book and find out what happens.

SallyHP says

This was such a fun read! Very reminiscent of Bondswoman Stephanie Plum...loved it, and can't wait for the next chapter in the Lola Cruz saga!

Stephanie says

I really enjoyed reading this book! I love how the author used spanish & spanglish thru the entire book.....one can relate! The characters are real....Lola can be any one of us! Very enjoyable.....

Sheryl says

This is a great new series! It was very entertaining.

Jeanette says

I enjoyed reading this book. The characters are likable, but not sure if I want to read more of the series.
