

# Darker Water

*Lauren Stewart*

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**Darker Water** Lauren Stewart

*This is an alternate cover edition for B00N1X6ZDE*

Some fairytales *begin* with a kiss...

## Laney

I finally get it. And to think, it only took my heart being pried out of my chest and stomped on five separate times by men who claimed they loved me. That's got to be a record, right?

Let me put it as simply as I can:

Fairy tales aren't real. Love is a lie. And, at least in my experience, sex never comes with a happy ending.

Fortunately, I still have B.O.B, and he'll never fall out of love with me. I won't walk in on him in bed with another woman either. Nope. As long as I keep supplying him with fresh batteries, B.O.B's only purpose in life is to make me happy.

And, damn it, I deserve to be happy. I'm a nice person. I work hard. And, most importantly, I've learned my lesson:

I will never, ever let a man near my heart again.

## Carson

My secret to happiness is to be completely upfront with what I want and, trust me, it has nothing to do with Laney's heart. Her lips? Hell yeah. A few other parts of her body? You better f\*cking believe it. But her heart? Nope. Not even a little.

Until it does...a lot.

Forget I said that. I don't have feelings for anyone. They were all ripped out of me when I was a kid.

This thing between Laney and me could be great. But we have to follow certain rules. We have a good time--no dates, no sleepovers, no expectations. When one of us is ready for something new or if she starts getting too attached, we move on with no hard feelings. Win-win, and everybody's happy.

I came into this thinking it would be the same thing as it had always been and that she was like any other beautiful woman.

It isn't. *She* isn't.

But how do I tell her she deserves someone better, someone who can love her, someone who's not broken, if I can't seem to let her go?

\*\*\*standalone contemporary romance/romantic comedy without a cliffhanger or cheating\*\*\*

### **Now Available**

Virtually Impossible (Once and Forever #2)

Deeper Water (Once and Forever #3) Carson and Laney's after happily-ever-after

Darker Water is a friends-with-benefits story inspired by The Frog Prince, and this is how Carson and Laney's fairy tale begins:

*Once upon a time there was a young woman who lived in a tall glass tower in the middle of a city. She wasn't incredibly beautiful but she was attractive, probably somewhere around the eighty-fifth percentile. She was smart, kind, honest, and good with animals.*

*But the most beautiful thing about her was her heart, for it was made of the purest of golds. Unfortunately, she wasn't very good at taking care of it, and over the years, it lost its shine. Because every time she met a prince, she believed him to be perfect--strong but gentle, brave, and caring. So, she would show him her heart and give it to him to hold, thinking he would take care of it.*

*What she hadn't yet realized was that there was a curse put on her...at some time...by someone. And the curse was this: The moment the woman gave her heart away and kissed the prince--believing it to be true love--the prince would begin to change. Sometimes slowly, other times quickly. But he always turned into a frog. And although the frog would give her heart back to her, each time it was a little more worn, a little less brilliant.*

*But the woman didn't give up trying to find a prince who would remain a prince, knowing that somewhere out there was someone who could heal her heart and break the curse by remaining a prince after she kissed him.*

*Then one day, she finally understood the curse's power. No one could heal her, she would never find a prince, and the curse would never be broken.*

*And so, clutching what was left of her heart, she gave up her search.*

### **Darker Water Details**

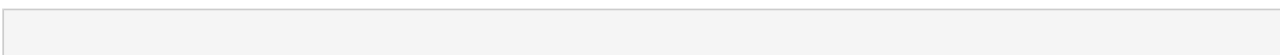
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Author : Lauren Stewart

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Genre : Romance, New Adult, Contemporary, Contemporary Romance, Humor, Funny



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# From Reader Review Darker Water for online ebook

**Christy says**

**5 stars!**

LIVE on Amazon!

Lauren Stewart is an author I had yet to read. I had no expectations of this book, but a friend I trust recommended it to me so I jumped in. Once I started reading, I didn't want to stop. I fell in love with both of the characters and their story. Such a funny, sexy and emotional read. There is no better feeling than taking a chance on an unknown (to you) and getting a 5 star read in return!

I was done lying to myself. Princes didn't exist, happy endings never happened, love was all make-believe.

?Laney Temple is over love. She is over happily ever afters and princes and relationships. She's been burned too many times and she is done.

After spending a few months alone, no relationships, Laney is happy with herself. She has a job she loves, a roommate/best friend and that's all she needs. One day in a coffee shop, she meets a man who is tattooed and gorgeous. He makes it clear he only wants one thing from Laney, and it's not love or a relationship.

Carson Bennett is outspoken, cocky, sexy and funny as hell. He can be an asshole and he knows it. He embraces it. Laney can't go without sex forever, so she thinks why not... Carson has made it clear the type of man he is so Laney is in no danger of getting hurt.

Laney might not be quite as ready for casual sex as she thinks, so she and Carson become friends. She needs to make sure she has absolutely no feelings for him before she'll let herself get intimate. Their banter and talks of their feelings cracked me up!

"Was that the first time?"

? "That I felt girlie about you? I think so."

"Good. I like you, Lane. But that needs to be the first and last time you get girlie on me, because that would fuck everything up. Know what I mean?"

?I nodded.

"Do you ever think us spending time with each other is one big, drawn out lapse of good judgement?"

?“All the fucking time,” he muttered, his lips grazing my forehead before he walked away.

“By the way, you’re in charge of making your own coffee from now on. Evidently it touches on some weird emotional erogenous zone for you.”

Laney and Carson quickly become the type of friends who spend all their time together. They really hit it off. But Laney still isn’t 100% sure she can take that step...

Carson is the best type of hero. He made me laugh out loud so many times... I mean, really, who says stuff like this?

“You know what’s worse than a woman giving you a hand job because she feels obligated to?”

?“What?”

?“Her not giving you a hand job at all.”

?He’s smart, charitable, tattooed, sexy and a little bit broken to top it off! Those are my favorite type! I loved watching him with Laney. They were fabulous together. Laney was one of those heroines you can’t help but love. The two of them together were fantastic.

The first half of this story was funny, light and full of the best kind of sexual tension. The last half was a little different. We got to see more of Carson’s past. It was much more emotional and way more steamy.

Can two people who have come to care about one another, who have become best friends really have a relationship where no feelings are involved? And once those lines are crossed, is there any coming back from that?

What’s worse than falling in love when you don’t want to? Falling in love with someone who can’t love you back.

After reading *Darker Water*, I can say with absolute certainty that Lauren Stewart has a fan in me. I’m so excited to read the rest of the series. Don’t worry- this is a stand alone with no cliffhanger- the next book will be about Carson’s older brooding brother Hayden. The writing was fluid and fast paced. This author was able to master writing a laugh out loud funny book without it being over the top, to write a sexy and steamy book without it being smutty, and write an emotional story without it being depressing. There was just the right amount of angst, not overly dramatic.

*Darker Water* is a wonderful contemporary romance full of fun, steam, humor, friendship and love. It’s one I highly recommend.

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## Lauren Stewart says

*He leaned forward and spoke conspiratorially. "I'm new to this being-friends-with-someone-I-want-to-sleep-with thing, so you'll have to help me out. What happens now?"*

*"I'm not sure. I'm new to the being-friends-with-someone-who-wants-to-sleep-with-me thing."*

*"You've never had a heterosexual male friend?"*

*"Of course I have."*

*"Then you're not new to it. He just didn't tell you."*

*I touched my cheek as I felt it redden. "Do you think eventually I'll stop blushing every time you say something?"*

*"I hope not. Would a friend tell you that your blush shows him what you'll look like after sex? Minus the I-just-got-fucked hair."*

*"No. A friend wouldn't say that."*

*"Then I think you're going to have to do most of the talking."*

\*\*\*

I've always said I would never write a contemporary romance. Then a friend challenged me to write one, thinking there was no way I could get to a happy ending in only one book.

Well, I did. It was 100x harder than I thought it would be, but I'm so happy with the end result. Darker Water is funny and tragic and sarcastic and meaningful. It's a very different genre from what I'm used to, but the writing and story style are still very much mine.

Now the challenge has morphed from writing a single, standalone romance into writing a series of *seven* standalone romances. What can I say? It's really fun. :)

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## Aestas Book Blog says

### UNIQUE, FUN, & SEXY!! I absolutely loved this book!!

The banter was awesome and the chemistry was sizzling. It was almost the opposite of a traditional romance — the hero and heroine were both openly set on NOT falling in love. He was all tortured and damaged but

also cocky and charming (and loaded with tattoos!!) ... Trust me, you want to meet him! ;)

One of the most refreshing things to me is finding a story that defies the norm. It's like a breath of fresh air, and that is exactly what *Darker Water* was. It was a contemporary romance twist on the Frog Prince fairy tale. I'm a huge fan of taking a classic story and putting a new spin on it, so this was right up my alley.

The story follows a girl, Laney, who'd been burned one too many times by jerks who claimed to love her, and so she decided that she was done with love. Clearly the whole thing was a myth. A fairy tale.

"Princes don't exist, happy endings never happen, and love was make believe."

So she stopped looking for it, stopped believing it would ever happen. And that's when Carson, her (very unlikely) prince, fell right into her life. Sure, he may have been charming, but his dark, painful past had left him bound and determined to never, ever, under any circumstances fall in love.

"Let me guess," I said. "You're different from every other guy, searching for the one woman who will complete you. You're considerate, caring, and really want a chance to know who I truly am."

"Not at all," he said... "Definitely not. Dear god no. That's not even close."

But this was perfect for her! She may have sworn off love, but she hadn't sworn off men, and when he proposed a one-night-stand of amazingness, she decided why not!! He was honest about it -- this was sex only. No strings, no commitments, no gooey emotional feelings -- just two people having a good time.

"I am one hundred percent screwed up and without a doubt the worst possible man a woman could ever have a relationship with... I've never broken anyone's heart because I don't stick around long enough to create any of those feelings."

Their banter was GOLD!!! I was chuckling to myself non-stop and highlighting everything!!!

"You know that 'Ribbed for her Pleasure' doesn't actually mean she's all taken care of and you don't have to do anything, right?" I asked.

"No one has put anything in my complaint box since I was fifteen. And I can explain that one -- it was just a simple misunderstanding."

So essentially the commitment-phobic guy who wanted nothing to do with relationships met the girl with a broken heart who no longer believed in love. It was a perfect match. The perfect arrangement. Until, against



both of their wills, they slowly began to fall in love.... ;)

"If it could be anyone," he whispered, "it would be you."

I totally loved their "non-dating". See this is why I said it was almost an anti-romance -- they were so determined not to fall in love or date or develop feelings or attachments or anything, that nothing about this book followed the typical development of a normal relationship.

"No hand-holding."

"Fuck no! Are you kidding me?"

"No whispering secrets in my ear."

"Unless it's something seedy or morally questionable that will make you blush."

"No getting my jacket for me. Or walking me to my door after."

"Does that stuff really still happen? In this century?"

"Not as much as I wish it did, actually."

"I swear I'll be nothing but rude to you the whole night," he said. "In fact, I might accidentally forget that I brought you and you'll have to find your own way home. You should bring some cab money just in case."

The fun, flirty banter was definitely one of the highlights of the book for me, but I also really appreciated that there was a more serious side to it too. Carson's past had genuinely damaged him and this got quite a lot of attention in the last half of the book. Oh, and this story was also quite hot!! Not erotic, but I was certainly fanning myself. It was all really just a great mix of everything.

"Carson, we can't."

"Shit." He backed up and adjusted his pants, his clenched jaw expressing everything he was feeling. "Expect me to be inside you about four seconds after you say yes. And don't make any plans for the rest of that week..."

...I don't want you to regret anything. So until I'm inside you, you're allowed to change your mind. Even after I'm inside you, you're allowed, although you might have to use small words and lots of hand gestures to get me to focus."

Heehee!!! :D

This is a standalone with a sweet, happy ending. I do wish it had an epilogue, but since this is first book in a series of standalones, I'm sure we'll see glimpses of Carson and Laney in the future. The next book will be about Carson's brother -- we got to meet him in this book and I'm very intrigued by his character and his story will be a contemporary twist on the Sleeping Beauty tale. Very exciting!! I'm so glad I discovered this series and now I can't wait for the next Lauren Stewart book!

**Rating: 4.5 stars. Standalone contemporary romance.**

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**\*J\* Too Many Books Too Little Time says**

**4--I Give it an F--Stars!!**

An F for **FUN** and **FUNNY**....

This was a fun take on the Frog Prince fairytale! Laney the girl who turned all of the boys in her life into frogs. Who thought she'd never find love.

"if you kiss a lot of frogs, all you end up with us sore lips and a bunch of frogs. And if you kiss a lot of princes, hoping at least one of them will stay that way, all you get is a horrific amount of disappointment and even more frogs."

And Carson, who thought he was anything but a Prince. Who thought he was the biggest frog of them all. Incapable of falling in love. Afraid to let himself try.

I loved the banter between Carson and Laney! They made their beliefs on love and relationships a joke and tried to make sure that neither one fell in love with each other.

Which brings me to my next F....**FRUSTRATING**...

Carson makes it known from the beginning that he only wants sex from Laney. And Laney knows she can't separate sex from her feelings. The sexual tension between Laney and Carson was delicious. They become friends and the tension builds and builds. The more they are together the more they like each other.

Carson's past was really heartbreaking. It was so obvious to me that they both were falling in love with each other but they neither one would recognize what they shared. And how different it was from every other relationship in their past. This got a little frustrating!

My last F is for the the **FADE** to black sex...

With chemistry between Laney and Carson as explosive as it was I'd have to say, the sex fell a bit flat for me. Such great build-up leading up to them getting together.....some of the sex was more detailed than others but most was pretty glossed over.

Still overall, I found this one to be a fun and entertaining read! And I'll definitely be checking out the other books in the series!

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## **Jennifer Lane says**

### **Deeper Water Is Better**

My Goodreads buddy Mitsy told me I must read Lauren Stewart novels, and I'm glad I followed her advice. I particularly enjoyed the ending of this contemporary romance.

Laney is stuck in a reverse fairytale, dating princes who turn into frogs.

*'You have to kiss a lot of frogs to find your prince.' My mother's favorite expression was completely wrong. If you kiss a lot of frogs, all you end up with is sore lips and a bunch of frogs. And if you kiss a lot of princes, hoping at least one of them will stay that way, all you get is a horrific amount of disappointment and even more frogs.*

When her boyfriend Kevin breaks up with her (oh yeah, he's marrying the woman he's been seeing on the side), she declares him yet another frog and swears off all men, amphibian or otherwise.

Five months later, she's hanging in a coffee shop when a cute guy flirts with her. She's not having it.

*"Trust me, you don't want me to get to know you, not if you like who you are right now. I'm cursed. I could turn you into a frog with barely any effort at all. Go find someone else to pretend to be in love with. I wish you luck."*

Naturally, her blow-off intrigues Carson to no end. Men do enjoy the chase!

For the first half of the story, there's a lot of snappy dialogue as Laney and Carson get to know each other...as they pretend they're not falling in love. I didn't feel connected to either character at that point. It's like they're in the shallow end of the pool.

Then Laney discovers why Carson says he can't fall in love, and I was hooked. Here he has a confrontation

with his mother:

*I rubbed my cheek and jaw to lessen the sting and get the blood moving. "It hurts even more than the hit does, but if you rub the area right away, you don't get as much bruising." My next words were soft. "My mother taught me that."*

I thought Carson's mother demonstrated good insight into why she stayed with abusive men.

There is excellent character development for both Laney and Carson. Laney learns that her needs are important. Finding our voice seems like such a universal struggle for women. Carson muses:

*She needed to learn how to say what she wanted instead of pretending she was fine with every decision someone else made for her.*

And Carson learns that he isn't doomed to repeat his father's abusive behavior. Laney pleads with him:

*"You're great and you're not broken and you won't hurt me. The only person you're hurting is yourself. Over and over in some stupid, useless kind of penance."*

With each other's support, maybe the water will be lighter and smoother for these two?

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\*\*\*?Yasmine?\*\*\* says

**4 STARS**

*'Princes didn't exist, happy endings never happened, love was all make-believe'*

**Genre:** Romance

**Cover:** 9/10 – love the symbolism

**Writing:** 8/10

**Heroine:** 9/10

**Hero:** 9/10

**Humour:** 6/10

**Hotness:** 3/10

**Romance:** 7/10

**Extra book Details:** Heroine & Hero POV; 1st person. Approx 360 pages. First in the series. Next book is about the hero's brother

**After another painful breakup, Laney finally understands that love is a fairytale. Every guy she meets, she manages to turn into a frog. All she wants now is a life without men. She's not ready for another broken heart.**

**Carson is completely upfront about what he wants. A warm body in his bed. Not only is Laney's body one of the best, but the rest of her is extremely intriguing. She doesn't want love? Well that's just fine, because he can't give her any.**

*'Darker Water'* kicked off exceptionally well. The characters first meeting was fab and incredibly banter filled. I couldn't stop grinning at the two of them. They were filled full of wit, had a great back-and-forth snappy dialogue and both had some excellent character traits.

The book isn't without it's faults. A little too much family drama. And it really needed a few good sex scenes, and not fade to black. It's not like the author can't write them, her book *'Hyde'* had some really good ones. Could have also done with an epilogue to round it off nicely.

I loved the way Laney and Carson kept on changing their arrangement around. I really enjoyed the amount of dialogue between them. And I REALLY loved how well Carson treated Laney. He was a very funny guy, and both of them were very fun-loving.

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## RJ says

DNF @ 50%

[spoilers]

**Strike 1:** The hero is a manwhore. But what I hated even more than that was hearing him go on and on about how much sex he has had. And he kept thinking about it giving me these damn visuals that really turned me off.

**Strike 2:** The heroine kept going back and forth between "Should I sleep with him or not?" and "Can I keep sex and love separate?" Bitch make up your mind! That went on for too long and eventually I got annoyed.

**Strike 3:** The heroine doesn't know this right away but we later find out that the hero and her bestfriend had a one night stand. She lives with her bestfriend and remembers hearing them going at it that one night! But she never saw his face. UGHH. I would never sleep with someone my bestfriend has slept with. That's just a big fucking no and something that you just don't do. Mmmkay? Especially when you remember her gushing about him the next morning. And then he wouldn't shut up about how good her bestfriends mouth was giving him a blowjob because apparently that's all he remembered. This 'I don't remember the faces of the women I sleep with' hero is so not my type.

Dammit, duped by the raving reviews again. I kinda liked the banter in the beginning but between the hero incapable of thinking about anything other than sex and the heroine being wishy-washy, this wasn't for me. I actually really hate the storylines where the hero's all "I can never love you back blah blah." They never seem worth the trouble. I find a hero much more attractive when he's not afraid of falling in love and even goes after it with the heroine.

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## Jess-i-ca ~Sometimes a Gif Witch~ says

I really enjoyed this one. The banter between these two was great. Wish it didn't really have fade to black sex

scenes but it was a decent read!

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## **Jennifer Kyle says**

### **3.75 ~ 4 Frog Stars**

*"He was so far from being the perfect guy, and that was what made him so perfect for me. No expectations, no emotional crap, no frog."*

Full review to come...

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## **Natalie The Biblioholic says**

I almost DNF'd this book within the first 10% but I pushed on through.

I tried. I really tried to love this book. But I didn't. I ended up doing a lot of this:

And then I felt:

After skimming through I discovered some components of the book that I did enjoy. Such as the witty banter; a damaged hero because Carson suffered through repeated traumatic experiences; and a heroine who had all but given up on true love.

I love when a story tackles issues that effect much of society and handles it with sensitivity. I truly believe the author accomplished that and I really appreciated her note on statistics and how to get help at the end.

What I didn't like: although the FMC was beautiful, smart, artistic, ambitious, generous, caring and compassionate, something about her got on my last nerve. Okay I have my reasons.

1. She was delusional. Like her thought process and reasoning was really messed up.

She went on and on about how she's been unlucky with love and relationships for 8 years.

She's 23 years old!

Now I'm not saying that one cannot find love before the ripe old age of 23. Far from it. But to make it seem that love was a **serious** issue/problem/dilemma for the 8 years proceeding that age is just plain ridiculous! IMO

Okay, so I had only one real reason not to like her. But it was enough to tarnish my opinion of her going forward. I didn't hate her. I liked her for the most part. I just couldn't get over this.

Additionally, while we got plenty of background on Carson, there was virtually nothing on Laney. How was I supposed to connect with her if I were able to get beyond her unreasonableness? I didn't. However, I absolutely adored Carson (the reason for the 3 star rating and for me not DNF'ing the book). Every single thing about him was interesting and amazing, especially his broken parts.

XO

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## **Laura says**

*I didn't sign up for the pain but here I am.*

In Darker Water we have this (non [hahaha!]) romantic story where Laney, a 23 years old artist, is leaving her love life behind. Too many frogs, she said. Love's just a fairytale, she said. And now she's done with men and love. She's not going to stay celibate and she's ready to try sex without any kind of commitment. Carson is a young man who has suffered a lot and the only relationship he wants to have are the few hours type. No commitment and only good times is his motto and when he sees Laney in a coffee shop he's sure she's the one for that day but when Laney's smart mouth and clever mind get in action and he finds himself wanting to spend more and more time with her all his fucked up issues come to play. Will Laney succeed in not falling in love or will Carson be her next frog?

I liked this book a lot and I don't know where to start!

Let's begin with Laney, shall we?

Laney is this cool girl who is sick of liars and assholes. She's got some bad luck in the relationship department and the only thing she truly wants is to be happy.

I really enjoyed her as a character. You could see how she was growing in the story and how she was gaining more and more confidence and she's just so damn hilarious and cute. I could relate to her quite easily. She was easy to read and I truly didn't have major issues with her and I **always** find something I didn't like. And I really understand her behavior toward men and toward Carson and even when she blamed herself I couldn't. I would be the same in her situation.

*Emotions can screwed us all up big time.*

And then we got Carson.

You gotta love this man, really, and that's what made it all worse.  
It feels awful when you care about someone who doesn't care about themselves.

Once you know the whole story, yeah, you can obviously see when he was coming from but still. I was so heartbroken. Like, he was really well written, man. His evolution is also palpable and oh the hurt.

Other thing I absolutely adored was their dynamic. They were so so **so so so** funny. And sexy. They were so good for each other I really have no complains about them at all.

One thing that I didn't like about the book was the pace it had. It was weird. First I thought the book was going *way too fast*. The first 10 chapters were like running in a race but then they got stuck. They didn't seem to move forward but then and, in the last 5 chapters, the pace was fast again. In a hurry. And I think that screwed a bit with the ending. I really enjoyed **all** the characters but I think Lauren has to think about how fast her stories are supposed to go.

Anyhow, this book was a pleasant surprise. I wasn't expecting to get involved this much and I'm really looking forward to the next book.

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## **Catarina says**

### **4 Messed Up Stars.**

Laney kissed a lot of frogs, searching for a prince. He never appeared and her heart suffered a lot from it. So she swore off men until she finds the perfect one.

Enters Carson. They met in a coffee shop and immediately became friends. They both want something more, but Laney isn't prepared to be involved with anyone and Carson doesn't do relationships. He has seen in his past what messed up relationships can do to a person and will not follow that path.

So even when they both know that there is something growing between them, they refuse to see it and settle on being friends with "some" benefits.

But when their pasts start to haunt them they have a choice to make: grow from it and admit their feelings and move on... or be afraid and stay eternally broken by it.

**Rating:** 4 Stars.

**Storyline:** This was a sweet NA romance with some refreshing elements. I've read amazing reviews so I had some expectations when I started reading it. It was a nice story, but dragged a lot in the beginning. I found myself wanting to skip pages and wondering when the good part would come. Eventually it did and the book really picked up... but that doesn't mean that for about 1/3 of the book I was bored. Nonetheless, if



you're a NA fan, this is a good bet.

**Writing Style:** First person. Dual POV. Engaging and flawless writing.

**Character Development:** This book was a rare event for me. Why? The hero annoyed the hell out of me. (Rare because is usually the heroine who does that.) Carson was sweet, sexy, broken, completely honest and stubborn as a wall. I just wanted to beat some sense into him. Laney was sweet and a little dumb. I liked her and I especially liked how she positioned herself towards the end. A nice group of supportive characters, I'm really curious about Hayden's story.

**Steam:** Hot.

**HEA:** (view spoiler)

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**\* Meli Mel \* says**

♥♥♥ 4.25 STARS ♥♥♥

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**"Someday it won't matter what you want. Hopefully someday, with someone, you won't have a choice. She'll come into your life and show you how wrong you've been about everything you've ever known. And you won't stand a chance against her, little brother."**

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

First and foremost, I want to say that I just LOVE the cover of this book. I am in serious lust with it. Makes me want to lick it ha ha! It's just so beautiful. Ok, I will stop now. Anyway, the story itself was just as great. I really freaking enjoyed this one.

The story starts with Laney getting dumped. It's that yet again, her relationship with a man has failed. She is so done with it all. She has given up on ever finding her "The one", getting married and having a happily ever after. She now knows that it was just not meant for her. As time passes, Laney is in a place where she is happy being herself and being alone. But a charming, tattooed, hot guy named Carson, that she meets at her regular coffee shop, could change that for her.

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**"I can't wait to see you, I smile like a shithead every time I see it's you calling, I want you to stay over every single night because I sleep better when you're next to me and the next day always seems brighter, better."**



The initial meeting between Laney and Carson was so damn refreshing. I loved the back and forth dirty banter so much that I couldn't stop from smiling (and this goes on throughout the book). Carson, just like Laney, is not interested in a relationship, and he says so. He just wants Laney in his bed. Just because Laney has banned herself from being in a relationship doesn't mean she isn't ever going to have sex, so she decides to see if it is possible for her to do this without having her heart involved.

Carson was awesome! I loved his cocky attitude, his random and sarcastic humour that had me laughing out loud, how sweet he was, and just his overall sexiness. He makes no apologies for being the way he is. He is totally comfortable in his skin. Carson and Laney grow closer the more time they spend with each other. There is something about her that makes him want to be near her even when they aren't having sex. Laney was just as awesome. I loved how not annoying she was. She was really chill and handled things great. She didn't whine or overreact. I really liked her.



**'But what he didn't know was that his heart was pure and beautiful and strong. And all he needed was the right woman to unlock it and set him free...with a kiss.'**



It did take a while before Carson and Laney had sex for the first time, but it didn't bother me because I enjoyed every freaking moment of the build up. I loved that I was really able to feel what these two were feeling. The connection between them was at times intense and I loved that. Despite there being an easy going and funny vibes at times in this book, there were also a lot of emotional parts. I didn't expect it to be that way. I felt for Carson's upbringing and how broken he was as a result of it. The amount of angst in this book was just perfect to me. The ending was really great. I was happy with it. This is my first book from this author, and now I am really looking forward to reading the next book and getting Hayden's story. I totally think you should give this one a read.

*~Ecapy gifted to Kris & Vik Book Therapy Cafe in exchange for an honest review.~*

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**TheCrazyWorldOfABookLover says**

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I really really liked this one!

Loosely based on the fairytale, The Frog Prince, this story was the perfect amount of funny, sexy, sweet, and emotional.

Quick background- Laney hates men. Hates relationships. Is over it all completely after being burned so many times. Insert Carson, sex on a stick bad boy with a heart of gold who tries to get into her pants the first time they meet.

They decide to be friends, and as you may have already guessed, eventually turn into more. But with Carson's huge list of issues (his background really was so heartbreaking), and Laney, who is scared she may not be able to stop her feelings from growing, their "relationship" is destined to become a fairytale gone wrong.

This actually wasn't what I expected it to be. The first half of the story was insanely funny, filled with sarcastic and humorous dialogue between Carson and Laney. But somewhere around the half way mark, it took a turn into dark water (see what I did there?).

This was an extremely well written friends to lovers story. I LOVED how sarcastic Carsen and Laney were, and I loved how even though there was so many funny parts to this, it was just as emotional as it was comical. I really can't wait for the rest of this series!

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◆\*Arianna◆\* says

*“You have to kiss a lot of frogs to find your prince.”*

Until she found out her boyfriend is a liar, cheating bastard, Laney wanted like everyone else for someone to love her and to find someone she could love, someone who respects her and didn't use her or manipulate her. But this was before, now she's done with men, with relationships and with love. She's single now, spending her time with her friend and roommate and creating art in her shop.

*“I was done lying to myself. Princes didn't exist, happy endings never happened, love was all make-believe.”*

One day in a coffee shop, she meets Carson. Carson is sexy, tattooed and he knows what he wants. And he wants Laney, no matter what. He proposes to Laney to spend some hot time between the sheets, no relationship, just sex and she accepts. Why not? Carson is the complete opposite of everything she used to look in a man and she's sure she will never fall for him.

***"He was so far from being the perfect guy, and that was what made him so perfect for me. No expectations, no emotional crap, no frog."***

But Laney is not ready for sex yet or to be in a no strings attached relationship. She never had a relationship like this because she can't separate physical from emotional. She wants to be sure, before making the same mistake, to confuse sex with love.

Carson wants to wait for Laney until she's ready for him, so they become friends, spending more and more time together. Soon both are ready for the sex part, but what happens when one of them wants more?!

***"I'd been looking for love for the last eight years. And when I finally stopped wanting and believing in it, it found me."***

I really liked this one! It was just what I needed and wanted to be – funny, sweet, heartwarming and emotional at times.

The storyline was engaging and the two main characters are lovable and relatable. I loved them both! Carson is an amazing guy and he's perfect for Laney, even if he doesn't know. He's funny as hell, sweet, smart and hot. He's considerate and patient with Laney and I adored him for that. I adored how he cares about her art.

I loved their relationship from the beginning when they started to be just friends. I truly enjoyed how their relationship progressed. All seemed real. They are sweet as friends and fantastic as lovers, because all the sexy moments between them are H.O.T and their chemistry so great and palpable. I enjoyed all the sexual tension between them and all the sexual innuendos.

All the funny moments between them are so great and hilarious at times and the banter between them terrific.

The angst and drama are not overwhelming which I really liked.

All in all, *"Darker Water"* was a great, funny and sexy read. Can't wait to read the other books in the series! I truly recommend this one!

***"...he didn't know was that his heart was pure and beautiful and strong. And all he needed was the right woman to unlock it and set him free...with a kiss."***

