



Selfish is the Heart

Megan Hart

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The national bestselling author of *No Greater Pleasure* delivers a new novel featuring a reluctant student of seduction.

To escape an arranged marriage, Annalise Marony decides to become a Handmaiden of the Order of Solace. But she is thwarted at every turn by Cassian, a teacher of the faith, who must test her dedication. Older than most of the girls, Annalise knows that she will be expected to please a patron in pleasures of the flesh-and she is not shy about teasing Cassian. And as they both play out the game of master and student, the secrets in their souls will either tear them apart-or bind them together forever.

Selfish is the Heart Details

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Author : Megan Hart

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From Reader Review *Selfish is the Heart* for online ebook

Francesca the Fierce (Under the Covers Book Blog) says

This review was posted at Under The Covers

"Selfish is the heart that thinks first of itself."

I had completely forgotten about this series and that I had to catch up reading it. I was so pleasantly surprised by this book it is my favorite in the series so far! If you haven't heard of the Order of Solace then let me tell you quickly. A group of women decide to offer their lives to bring solace to others. In whatever way it's required. They become Handmaidens for this purpose. Their lives are supposed to be selfless and devoted to others. Most people on the outside see them as whores.

In the previous books we've encountered a handmaiden sent to a patron who has gone off the deep end and they have to turn their lives around. This book was different. We actually get a glimpse of the life of a Handmaiden. It was a refreshing and different twist in the series.

Annalise, such a pretty name (very close to my mom's), discovers that her fiancé might be attracted to other things instead of her (mainly boys not girls) and creates a plan to get out of the wedding without major complications by saying she had a vision and that she is to become a Handmaiden. Of course without the true desire to service, when she gets there, a lot of what is required of her seems difficult to understand.

But she adapts well and learns a lot about herself. In this journey she also meets a man. Cassian is a professor at the Order, he used to be a priest and he has had a lot of heartache in his past that for the most part he has not gotten over.

I loved both characters and how they helped each other grow and understand each other. I was waiting for a resolution to their issues and Ms. Hart leaves us waiting until the last possible second. The writing? As always superb! Delicate and beautiful, it flows and transports you to the story. I can't wait to read the next book!

Julie says

Annalise Marony seems to have the perfect life. A life where she has wanted for nothing, even her future marriage has been taken care of. Not that she can complain, for at least her fiancé is someone whom she has known since childhood. All seems well on its way to the planned success and stability that she has always known. The perfect life, the perfect future family, a wonderful friend and companion in her future husband. Until the day of her betrothal, when reality crashes in and Annalise is slapped in the face with the true color of her world. No longer able to look through "rose colored glasses," Anna makes a fateful decision that will change all of their lives forever.

The Order of Solace appears to be the perfect opportunity to escape a life and marriage of nothing but duty, without the love and warmth she imagined it would always be. Although she is older than most of the incoming novitiates, Anna is determined to learn what she must to be accepted into the Order. However, she has been an intelligent, independent woman for much too long, and accepting the role of student oft times does not sit well, especially when the ex-priest, turned-teacher, Cassian, deigns to teach her the lessons he

feels she so deservedly needs.

Another very compelling story by Megan Hart in her Order of Solace Trilogy. A thought-provoking read with characters that again break the mold of the typical romance hero and heroine. This is what makes the story so refreshing to read. Again, this second book dances on the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable, but ironically within a very fanatical code of its own. This is a book sure to please, if you are looking for something out of the ordinary.

Alma (aka Mrs. Rhaw) says

i liked this story and for the first half it was in the 4* + range, but then somehow it lost its hold.

I love Megan Hart's books as she never ceases to rattle me emotionally. :)

Marielle Authier says

***1/2

Amy says

Pleasure and purpose. This is the ultimate goal of a Handmaiden who serves in the religious Order of Solace. A Handmaiden's greatest desire is to provide absolute solace to the Order's patrons - satisfying the needs of the mind, spirit, and body. *Selfish is the Heart* by Megan Hart is the third installment of the Order of Solace series and one that explores the story of a Handmaiden in training and a callous man who teaches the art of solace, but can't seem to find it himself.

Annalise Marony is betrothed to her childhood friend Jacquin Kirkol and she is looking for an escape. While their love is mutual for one another as friends, Annalise feels no passion for Jacquin and he is far from being sexually attracted to her. Due to their engagement being arranged by both fathers, Annalise knows that she must find a clever way to remove herself from the impending nuptials and therefore decides to become a Handmaiden in training of the Order of Solace. Annalise is intelligent, feisty, bold both in thought and action, and well versed in the faith, but has not put it to practice in many years. However, she is certain she can play the part required long enough to be able to end her pending engagement. Former Priest, now master teacher in the Order, Cassian Toquin is a man living with many demons. The greatest being the death of his twin brother, Calvis. Words unspoken. Forgiveness unsought. These are the emotions that drive Cassian to carry on with life and also shield him from allowing anyone near his mind or his heart. During her travels to the Order, Annalise encounters a man in the forest to whom she asks direction. Thinking her a privileged fool, the man purposefully sends her on the wrong path. After finally arriving and settling into the Order's Motherhouse, Annalise soon discovers that Cassian, the man who misled her in the woods is her assigned teacher at the Order. Both her intelligence and boldness to speak up and challenge Cassian in class infuriates and ignites him beyond reason. And, Annalise soon discovers a tortured soul in Cassian which fuels her to know him better and furthers a simmering attraction between the two. Once the attraction is finally acknowledged, both of their pasts come back to haunt them.

Megan Hart creates an imaginative, mythological world in her Order of Solace series and while the beautiful covers imply the erotica genre, it is not always the dominant tone in this fantasy/historical series. Though I have not yet read any of Ms. Hart's contemporary novels, I can see the allure of her style of writing. Rich in emotion and depth of character, *Selfish is the Heart* is my favorite of the three books in the series. The intense zeal and fury that is evoked from Annalise and Cassian's interaction caused me to feel like a third wheel who should not be privy to their heated exchanges. I was, at times, emotionally overwhelmed with Cassian's lack of self worth and Annalise's pursuit of tearing down his emotional blockade. But once they succumb to an intimate union, it's as if a dam breaks and they become uninhibited in their passion for one another. The strength of *Selfish is the Heart* is built upon its memorable characters which makes for an intriguing and emotional read.

Favorite Quote:

"He was a discontented man. He was a brooding puzzle. He was, Annalise thought, watching him through the fringe of her lashes, delicious."

3.5/5 stars

Darcy says

This book doesn't really seem to fit in with the other books. In the past books we had established Handmaidens, the books seemed to deal with their journey to find solace for their patrons. While in this book we meet Annalise who is just at the start of being a handmaiden, making the decision to become one on the spur of the moment. The story follows her journey, slowly following for all the beliefs. Along the way she seems to find solace herself and helps someone else find it as well.

One thing that I did enjoy with this book was the insiders view of the Order and just exactly what it takes to become a Handmaiden.

Susi says

Before I start this review I have to give a shout out to pattepoilue. She is one of the nicest and loveliest persons I ever met and without her I wouldn't have had the opportunity to read this book. Thank you! And thanks to Megan Hart too, for being such a wonderful writer and person.

Megan Hart did it again- she wrote a romance novel different from anything I ever read before. Sure we have the romance and the usual struggle till we get to our Happily Ever After but the way we get there is again something so unique, it will catch you flat-footed.

I enjoyed the first 2 books in The Order of Solace Series and I was always curious how these Handmaidens studied their profession before their first patron. I think I had many things in common with Annalise there, we both were full of prejudices and false ideas about how naughty this education would be.

Annalise went to the Motherhouse for the wrong reasons. She wanted to escape an arranged marriage. She is betrothed to her gay best friend but she knows with all her heart that they both will be unhappy in an union

like this. She had to find a way out of this without making their lives even harder as they already are. So she feigned a vision and ventured to the Order to become a Handmaiden. She is a strong heroine with a will of steel. She never backs down or is not once afraid to say what she thinks. She's not one of those cold hearted woman though, she is full of compassion and understanding for others. She stands up for what she believes and seems to be fearless in her actions. On her journey to the motherhouse she meets the dark and brooding Cassian and he leads her astray. Later she discovers that he's her teacher and not only this first meeting makes them clash together more than ones. They don't often agree about anything and their attraction to each other isn't helping them either.

Cassian has his own struggles to live through. He worked hard to become the hard looking and untouchable teacher he is now. He likes to be on his own, unbothered by the rest of the world. He likes to bath in his guilt without interruptions. And Annalise just won't let him hide behind his cold mask- she always picks at him without mercy but still he just can't bring himself to not care for her even though she's a nuisance.

It was totally refreshing to read about those two. It's really not your typical romance. Most of the time they are fighting and you always think now they will make up. *wink* I loved how Annalise was never afraid to tell Cassian and everyone else what she thinks but never was too much. I loved that she knew how to push his buttons and it was wonderful to watch them grow closer with every single fight. I think this is one of the facts why I love Megan Hart's books so much. She never goes the traditional way and so it never gets boring for us as the reader. I think Ms. Hart describes it wonderfully in this book:

"In her dreams, in the fae stories, such a declaration was always met with a kiss and an embrace, with mingled laughter and tears and followed by a wedding.
This was not a fae story."

Selfish is the Heart is by far my favorite Order of Solace novel. The heroine is wonderful independent and strong- I could completely relate to her. The hero is just wonderful broody and dark and both together made my heart ache. This series is so different to every thing else I read in this genre so far. As always I adore Ms. Hart's writing and her words just enthrall me from the first page.
Wonderful exotic fantasy romance- you won't be able to put it down and it won't leave your thoughts long after you closed it.

Silvia says

A change of pace from the first two books in this series, Selfish is the Heart was ultimately more satisfying. In this story the heroine is also searching for her own solace, and for her place in the world. The world-building and language that go along with it give this series a fantasy feeling, although there are no supernatural aspects other than religion.

Caroline The HEA Lover says

*(This was originally posted on **Book Lovers Inc**)*

This is the first book I read in the Order of Solace series and I didn't really know what to expect. Actually, to be honest I thought it was erotica and I made Susi (@Susi_Sunshine) laugh when after 100 pages I (frustrated) asked her when the Smex was coming. lol She then (slowly) explained to me that it was a romance not erotica. When I digested that fact it was far easier to read the book. I stopped expecting smex every other page and I really got into the story.

Annalise decides to become a Handmaiden of the Order of Solace to escape a marriage that would leave both her and her future husband very unhappy. She is betrothed to her childhood friend, but she knows he can't give her what she needs. He loves her very much but he is physically attracted to men and she wants a real relationship and the hope of building a family. In Annalise's world, Handmaidens dedicate their life to bringing solace to their patrons. Annalise realize feigning a Calling could be the solution to escape this marriage without anyone loosing face.

She travels to the Motherhouse where she will become a novice and study until she is ready for her first patron. Annalise knows it could take years before she is ready for a patron, which suits her perfectly. She doesn't really want to go through with it, only spend a few years away before she can finally call off the engagement. I was very curious about this 'school' for handmaiden. Like Annalise, I didn't know exactly what it would entail. A handmaiden has to please her patron any way needed, which also mean in the pleasures of the flesh. Annalise thinks she will learn about how to please a man with her body there, but she is very surprised to discover this is not what she will learn in class.

Cassian is a teacher of the Faith, he has a burden and a past that very few know about. He lives surrounded by hundreds of women but he's never let anyone get close to him. He feels guilty about something in his past and won't let it go. He is feared and respected, and there is a lot of stories associated with him. From the very first time he and Annalise meet there are sparkles going everywhere. Annalise is not like the other girls, she is older and bolder than most. I wasn't always happy with her, she is often too daring for me but I ended up liking her anyway. She doesn't accept his cool demeanor, she doesn't fear flirting with him even when he is pushing her away. Each time they meet they fight and while it could have been frustrating, in fact it built up the chemistry until the end. I loved how they always fight, I love the passion that is building slowly until it's too much for either of them to bear.

I really like Cassian and I loved the flashbacks giving us hints about his past and how he became who he is now. There is a lot of talk about religion and spirituality, but it never became too much even for me who is a non-believer.

This was a very unusual romance that left me smiling from ear to ear. I really like Megan Hart's writing, the words flow very easily and you can't stop once you started reading. I was happy with the HEA and altogether very pleased about this book.

I give Selfish is the Heart 4 1/2 bookies.

Quinn says

3.5 stars

I've been on a mission to read all of Megan Hart's books, in a quest to find one that comes close to the excellence of Broken. Sadly, I have yet to find any success, and her *Order of Solace* series seems unlikely to

take me any further toward my goal.

Selfish is the Heart, the third book in the series, was a mixed bit of a mixed bag for me. I found the first half of the book very slow going, then received glimpses of the author's excellence in the second half. Unfortunately, those glimpses weren't enough to save the book.

I did appreciate that *Selfish is the Heart* took a different approach to the previous books. Rather than tell the story of a Handmaiden and her patron, *Selfish is the Heart* provided us with the missing detail on the process of becoming a Handmaiden in the Order of Solace.

Annalise Marony is betrothed to a long-time friend and there is genuine affection between the pair; but when she discovers his secret, she is unable to go through with the marriage. Determined not to bring shame or disadvantage upon her family, herself, or her betrothed, Annalise devises a plan to keep the betrothal intact but ensure that the nuptials cannot take place. She will join the Order of Solace.

Annalise is different to most of the novitiates she encounters in the Order. She is older, wiser, and inclined to speak her opinion no matter the consequences. She is also not there with a genuine desire to serve or a strong belief in the faith. She will face many tests and challenges during her time in the mother house, but the biggest comes from her attraction to the ex-priest who teaches classes on the faith.

Cassian is a very complex man, and Hart does an excellent job on his characterisation and employs her considerable talent in slowly revealing the circumstances leading to him becoming the shuttered, unapproachable man that he is today. Annalise challenges him and refuses to allow his intimidation, something he uses to great affect on all others.

Although drawn to Annalise, he refuses to allow her in, yet she gradually erodes his defences until his control shatters in one of the very few but incredibly sexy scenes in the book. But Cassian has had a long time to perfect control of his emotions, and he is not the man that Annalise believes him to be.

I'm really at a loss as to how to rate this one. If the first half of the book had captured my attention, this would be a solid four-star read. But it was too much of a slow build up to the powerfully emotional second half. I think I shall have to settle for 3.5 stars. I see that there is a fourth book coming out in September – hopefully that will be the one that makes this series thoroughly worthwhile.

Bookfanatic says

This is probably my favorite of the Order of Solace stories. For those who haven't read the previous stories in the series, this is a stand alone book. It will broaden your understanding of this world if you've read the two previous Order of Solace stories, but it's not necessary. These stories are set in a world similar to Earth but with a completely different religion. In terms of speech, dress and customs, this world is more typical of our medieval times, but without all the prudishness and conservatism of our world.

What I liked: The heroine is witty, spunky, clever and funny without being too tough or too independent. The hero is intense and clever. Their relationship is a push and pull. Oil and water. The chemistry is palpable from their first meeting. About a third of the way in, I figured out what his secret was. It still moved me to hear him explain that part of his past. There's a lot of clever quick conversation and much of the story moves

through conversation. I like it when an author shows instead of tells.

What I didn't like: The secondary characters remind me so much of the characters in No Greater Pleasure, the second order of the solace book. You have the arrogant brother, the malevolent female, the housekeeper woman who doesn't like the heroine, the adorable little boy, not to mention some of the same plot such as (view spoiler)

Since this is a Megan Hart book, I wasn't sure if the ending would be inconclusive as it is in some of her other books. The ending like so many of her books comes quickly and without much buildup. This author can work more on her endings. It was a quick resolution to a dilemma that built up over the entire book.

TinaMarie says

Avoiding a marriage Annalise pretends to join the Order of Solace and finds more than she bargained for. While not as complicated as some of Hart's books, it was an enjoyable read

Greyland Reviews says

2.75 stars

The concept for this series is good but it's just a little lackluster for me.

Bookaholics says

Selfish is the Heart (Order of Solace) by Megan Hart
Paranormal Romance -Oct. 5th, 2010
4 stars

Selfish is the Heart is the 3rd Order of Solace novel by Megan Hart. This series is set in a fantasy/historical-like setting where special Handmaidens of the Order provide 'solace' to their patrons. (Usually men!) On their journey to provide their patrons comfort and peace they often find themselves submitting and giving them sexual comfort. However, in this story we are treated to a new look into the Order. Selfish is the Heart focuses on a novice who enters to train to become a Handmaiden.

Annalise is smart and bold. But she is attempting to join the Order with an ulterior motive. She wants to avoid an arranged marriage. Although she cares for her fiancé she does not love him and to complicate matters further he is gay! Annalise respects herself and realizes her marriage would be a lie and she wants a relationship that is real and filled with love if she does marry. She plans to stay a novice until she is no longer eligible (pressured by her family) to marry. On her way to the Order she meets a mysterious and handsome if brooding stranger who points her in the wrong direction. Frustrated and irritated with him she is shocked to discover he is one of her assigned teachers at the Order, named Cassian. They soon challenge each other and their heated and often repressed attraction for each other flares. But Cassian has secrets of his own and staying in the Order has allowed him to hide his pain behind a cold and indifferent mask. However, Annalise is determined to befriend him because this tortured man fascinates her. But just when a relationship

between them may blossom their fragile relationship is jeopardized as their past relationships return to haunt them.

This was my favorite in the Order of Solace series because I simply loved the feisty heroine. Annalise treasures her independence and is very strong-willed but not spoiled or bratty. Although Annalise learns a great deal about herself in the story she is kindhearted, spirited, and confident. I really get tired of the always self-doubting heroine, it was nice to have a heroine who was not put down upon or had low self-esteem. I especially liked her intelligence and her ability to catch Cassian off guard. (Which made their scenes together intense!) Cassian was a somewhat dark and brooding character. I enjoyed how he couldn't help his attraction to Annalise and how Annalise was able to tease him and bring him to life again. This was a slow moving relationship that really built upon itself and made me yearn for them to be together. But while there is a lot of longing in this story but not as much 'sex' as I expected for an erotic story.

Fascinating, sensual, and surprisingly touching and this is a heart warming story fans of Megan Hart will definitely enjoy.

Steph from the Bookaholics Romance Book Club

Nicole Johnson says

Selfish is the Heart (Order of Solace, #3) by Megan Hart was fiery and fierce. I read the first book in the series last year and decided to indulge on Hart's timeless descriptions of the Order and human nature. Set nearly 500 years ago, Annalise decides the best way to escape her arranged marriage is by returning to the faith and becoming a Handmaiden. She enters the Order and has Master Cassian Toquin as one of her teachers. Friction and sparks complicate this student teacher relationship...
