



# Carnal Innocence

*Nora Roberts*

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## Carnal Innocence Nora Roberts

Nora Roberts, bestselling author of *The Reef* and *Genuine Lies*, mixes scorching passion with icy suspense in her classic novel of murder and infatuation in a southern town now available in hardcover for the first time.

In the small town of Innocence, Mississippi, days are long, nights are fragrant, and secrets are hard to keep. But when a brutal killer starts claiming the lives of the town's most attractive women, lifelong neighbors are forced to wonder if the culprit is a stranger lurking in the bayou...or someone right next door.

World-famous concert violinist Caroline Waverly knows nothing of the murders when she arrives in Innocence. Burned out from a childhood lost to endless rehearsals and an all-too-public breakup with the conductor who was her lover, Caroline is looking for a little peace and some time to think. She hopes that a stay at her late grandmother's house the one with a covered porch just made for soft summer nights will provide the tranquillity she needs. But Innocence has something else to offer Caroline: a man named Tucker Longstreet.

Blessed with the Longstreet good looks, lazy charm, and family fortune, Tucker is a tall, cool drink of water and he knows it. He likes to keep his romances short and shallow. But one look at Caroline, and Tucker realizes that she is unlike any other woman he's met. Tightly coiled and coolly reserved, Caroline is determined to fight him off. She might be able to do a better job if she hadn't felt an unexpected thrill at his ardent advances...and if she hadn't been so scared after finding a third murder victim in the murky waters behind her home.

For Caroline Waverly, a beautiful summer interlude could turn into much more or could stir a killer's crazed dreams. Because there's just one small problem with her new romance: Tucker is the leading suspect in the killings.

## Carnal Innocence Details

Date : Published December 1st 1991 by Bantam

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Author : Nora Roberts

Format : Paperback 512 pages

Genre : Romance, Romantic Suspense, Contemporary Romance, Mystery, Contemporary, Suspense, Fiction

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# From Reader Review Carnal Innocence for online ebook

## Paraphrodite says

4.5 stars. The South really came alive in this book, a lot of it due to the brilliant narration by Tom Stechschulte. Those Southern accents were just so good, coupled with a great story and this is a fabulous romantic suspense, even 20 years later.

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## Laura (Kyahgirl) says

3.5/5; 4 stars; B+

I read the paperback of this book so many years ago that I couldn't remember much except that I enjoyed it. When our Audiobook group was discussing the great narration of the audible version I thought I would check it out. I really did enjoy this new to me narrator, and he brought the rating up a bit.

I liked the way Nora Roberts lays the ground work for her stories. With her descriptions of the town, the people, the main characters and the tidbits of history, I had a crystal clear impression of the world this story took place in.

Overall, I enjoyed the mystery and the characters. The romance was a bit weak but all the other things going on in the story made up for it.

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## D.G. says

You are probably dying to ask me...What are you doing reading a romance published in 1991? Isn't it terribly outdated?

Well, I read it because the audiobook came HIGHLY recommended by friends and I put a lot of stock in friend recommendations. And yes, it's a bit outdated – there are no cell phones, no internet and the police procedure is a bit iffy (we know better now that an FBI agent shouldn't be consorting with the sister of a suspect) but the book is old enough that it doesn't feel weird, if that makes any sense.

**Carnal Innocence** is the story of a small town in Mississippi with a serial killer in its midst. I'm not much for books set in small towns –in general, most authors paint them too idyllic – but I was charmed by this one. Probably because Ms. Roberts didn't portrayed only the good (charming characters, great atmosphere, neighbors supporting one another) but also the bad (race tensions) and the ugly. And with a serial killer on the loose, there's a lot of ugly going on.

Caroline arrives at Innocence after spending some time in the hospital. All her life, she has been a good little girl who does what her Mommy wants but after some therapy, she realizes that she needs to change if she wants to be happy. Her first encounter with Tucker Longstreet wasn't promising and like her, I didn't like him at all. Unlike most romance heroes, Tucker is portrayed as an easy going guy who's favorite thing to do is to take a nap. In the first few chapters, his family is described in all its infamy - they are the richest people

in town but there's an alcoholic older brother, lazy but charming Tucker and a twice divorced younger sister who loves the gentlemen a little too much.

At the beginning, one of Tucker's affairs comes to life and I was a bit outraged that he would date women from a different social strata. Didn't he realize that some of these women wanted more? Then, I realized that I was being patronizing: these women knew Tucker way better than me and decided to date him. Why should he bear the burden of their expectations? He didn't owe them marriage anymore than a poor guy would, especially when he hadn't made any promises. As the story continued, I felt like the heroine: against my better judgment, I couldn't help but be charmed by Tucker – that Southern accent in the audiobook really helped. He was funny, handsome and charismatic, a lover of poetry with a big heart and with most depth than most people realize.

The mystery is excellent with a lot of layers. It's about family feuds and madness. I won't go into details because I don't want to give you any spoilers but it was very well done. I figured out who was the murderer before the denouement, but even I was a bit shocked.

Please note that race tensions are an aspect of the story and some characters use the N word. It didn't bother me because it made sense in the story but I want to mention it in case some readers are offended by the use of the word.

The unabridged audiobook narrated by Tom Stechschulte was simply scrumptious – I think already mentioned the deliciousness that was Tucker's accent. Even with the glowing recommendations, two things made avoid this audiobook for while: the length and the cover. The unabridged version is almost 18 hrs. but once you get started, you get caught up in the narrative and start enjoying every time Tucker tells a story about his ancestors. You also forget about the scary cover!

Overall, an excellent romantic suspense novel with great characters and ambiance. Completely recommended!

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### **ShoSho says**

A great old book that's not dated at all! Loved the mystery and all the details that went on, it was a really long book .

I had guessed the killer correctly so I'm proud of myself! lol

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### **?Susan? says**

This was a three and a half star southern mystery that was punched up to a four star by Tom Stechshulte's narration. Nora did a wonderful job making the foliage and surroundings so real that I felt like I was there along with the characters. The murder mystery was a pretty good Southern drama with original characters mixed with some romance and a bit of comic relief.

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## Jane Stewart says

Well done romantic mystery suspense. I was engaged all the way through.

Wonderful character creation. Wonderful dialogue. Various conflicts are well done.

An example of fun dialogue: Tucker is this slow talking rich southern man who sleeps with a lot of women. Heroine is not interested. He makes a seductive comment to her. She says "You're sick." He replies "I do feel a fever comin' on."

I loved the way clues and things came out gradually during the book - like the clue someone saw that led them to discover who tampered with a car. I loved Tucker's relationship with a teenage boy -- heartwarming.

### AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR:

I recently heard Judith Ivey doing a southern accent that was irritating. Tom Stechschulte (this audiobook narrator) did a wonderful southern accent. And he was soooo sexy as Tucker. Wow. And he did women well - no effeminate gay guy sounds. He did so many different voices well. He's now one of my favorite narrators.

### OTHER BOOKS:

Nora Roberts is hit and miss with me. The hits – my favorites are: Carnal Innocence, Born in Fire, Angels Fall, The Witness, Northern Lights, and Sea Swept.

### DATA:

Narrative mode: 3rd person. Unabridged audiobook length: 17 hrs and 55 mins (402 pages). Swearing language: strong including religious swear words, but not often used. Sexual language: moderate. Number of sex scenes: about 9, but most were vaguely referred to with no details. Setting: around 1991 small town Innocence, Mississippi. Book copyright: 1991. Genre: romantic mystery suspense.

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## Kathleen says

Narrator was good, but I didn't care for it. Too depressing. Quite dated. Felt even older than 1991. Almost didn't finish it, but wanted to see if I had the villain pegged (yes).

Addy-Lou, Bobby T, Billy Lee, Lulu, Della, Darlene, Earlene, Christy, Sissy, etc..... My poor little head hurts. So many southern-fried characters — it was a trial to keep track of who belonged to which family.

I didn't laugh once, and rarely smiled. I like to laugh. I like heartwarming romances with a dangerous, suspenseful edge and witty dialogue. (Well, I did chuckle when someone fell into an open grave, but that scene wasn't meant to be funny).

Except for watching young Cy overcome his fears and find refuge in Tucker, there wasn't much to lighten the heart. Just basically a depressing read with a predictable plot and a "let's-wrap-it-up-quick" ending.

**A downer with a morbid tone:** I did like the lead characters, Tucker and Caroline, but the book is not uplifting or amusing. Too many sluts screwing everything in sight, married or single — I'm talking about Josie, especially, but also Eddy-Lou and Darlene. Raging alcoholism. Wife abuse (Vernon and Austin). Two

crazed Bible-thumping psychos. A race-hating scene straight out of the KKK. Mutulation, madness, murder. Blood sucking and biting. Also, far too much religious profanity -- it's on every other page. Rude.

Even the ending is dismal. By the denouement of the killer, this hokey hamlet has been condemned to a miserable future, full of hatred, hurt, and so much guilt. Caroline should have told Tucker what really happened, and should have explained the past history. As things were left at the end, (view spoiler)

For a book written in 1991, a huge percentage of the characters were happy to entertain lung cancer. It seemed that every man in the book smoked Chesterfield.

Nature versus nurture? In this case, it all came down to nature. So what does that portend for Cy?

As I said, I did like Tucker and Caroline, but I didn't fully buy into Tucker falling so hard and fast for her. A more credible love affair? Caroline and her new puppy, Useless. Loved that name — a play on words with Ulysses.

A far better book is this author's more recent publication, *The Witness*, narrated superbly by Julia Whelan. There were some similarities between Caroline's coldly controlling mother in this book and Abigail's horrible mother, Dr. Susan Fitch, in that book.

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## **Carrie says**

ETA: 4/7/12 The unagridged version narrated by Tom Stechschulte is now available on audible.com!

5\* for the narrator/narration. Listened to this on audio narrated by the masterful Tom Stechschulte. Absolutely amazingly deep, sexy voice. Recommended if you can find it.

While listening to a book on audio the reader is forced to listen to all the description and not skim. I'm guilty of skimming at times, especially when the action gets going and I'm on the edge of my seat. While listening to Stechschulte's excellent narration of *Carnal Innocence*, I was struck by the rich details Roberts includes in her book. She never rushes a scene, either. She sets it up and then almost plays with her readers, slowing down the action and making you wait for the punch. But her descriptions aren't fillers only there to increase word count. The words paint a picture, enabling the reader see the muddy water, and feel the steamy heat, and smell the marsh. Her writing is vivid and alive. Roberts has written books I don't care for, but when she's on, she's amazing. And she's "on" more times than not.

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## **SB\*needs low angst books\* says**

Innocence is a small town and the most prominent and success family is the Longstreet siblings.

Tucker Longstreet is the hero and one who loves a good nap and when the mood strikes willing woman with no relationship complications. He is in charge of the many businesses his family has interest in. He is one very laid back type and one who takes life as it comes. He is not one to get worked up for many things unless it is needed or pushed to it and many underestimate him. His last woman has just confronted him. She is upset that he let her loose but has been telling her friends that marriage will happen so she argues with him

and claims she is pregnant in a front of many in the town at a bar in order to save face and force his hand. Dumbstruck, he is very confused about what to do with her claim and if it is true.

Caroline Waverly, the heroine, is a concert violinist and coming to live for a time in her deceased Grandparents home left to her. She has suffered a breakdown from stress and exhaustion. She also discovered her fiancé cheating and has broken off her engagement as well as several concerts she was touring for. She has always been under the thumb of her mother who is all about status and doesn't acknowledge her roots. Caroline has always done what she was told and now that has come at the price of her health. She is back in the small hometown of her mother to recuperate and find herself and what she wants instead of the life planned out for her.

Tucker and Caroline first meeting doesn't go well and even though Tucker is attracted to her and she him, Caroline refuses to consider someone who she feels is like her ex. Tucker then has a huge issue when the woman who claims she is pregnant by him turns up dead and Caroline is the one who discovers the body at the spot they first met and on her property. The thing is she isn't the first woman to turn up dead and all of them have the same crime earmarks. His friend and Sheriff, Burke has had to enlist the help of the FBI for the cases. While the town is turned upside down due to the murders and suspicion is on many, it will be a case that ends up revealing a lot of secrets along the way as well as too.

I enjoyed this book but I didn't love it. I wasn't a big fan of Caroline and I had issues with Tucker at times too. The case was interesting though and I was surprised by what came out and who did it. This was one that had lots of characters and could throw you off if not paying attention to who is who.

I got the audio of this and the narration was excellent. He was good at the making the characters sound distinctive as well as the emotion that is needed. This is set in the early 90s and in the South so it contains some racism (including the use of some racial slurs by some characters but it fit for the type of people they were) as well as no cell phones and things like that. It to me fit the time, the small mindset of some people, and the small town mentality that can happen too. I think overall it could have been more of a 4 but some things felt unfinished for me and because I wasn't as into the main characters it fell a little short for me in that area even as I enjoyed how the story unfolded and getting to know the characters too. It also picked up speed as it went also which helped it too. But a decent read over all.

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## **Dina says**

Tucker and Caroline, according to Lifetime Television:

Me likey!

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## **Anita says**

What I love about Nora Roberts' books is she makes sure that the reader is easily drawn to her characters. She paints vivid pictures of both Tucker and Caroline from the very beginning of the book and continues to develop them through out. I loved how Tucker and Caroline seemed to bring out the best and worst in each



other. Since this book was published over two decades ago, there are a lot of cultural references that are dated and cell phones just didn't exist then. Just ignore them and enjoy a fantastic, vintage Nora Roberts book.

Caroline is in Innocence, MS taking a much needed break from her life. Her grandmother recently passed away and left her the farmstead, a place Caroline always considered home. With her career as a the leading concert violist, she sorely needs the peace and sense of place she remembers from her childhood visits. Shortly after she moves in she finds a murdered woman. She also finds herself drawn to the town bad boy, Tucker Longstreet.

Tucker is infamous for his good ole' playboy ways, but there was something about him that makes him a cut above the rest. He has never lied to his women and when Edda Lou accuses him of making marriage promises, then claims he got her pregnant, Tucker is not about to go merrily down the aisle. When Edda Lou turns up dead, her father takes a dive off the deep end and goes after Tucker.

There are several plots and subplots swirling around the small southern town of Innocence where gossip is the primary form of communication and it is hot and sticky. The mystery surrounding the killings in Innocence, with Tucker being a prime suspect, is a good backdrop to intensify the emotions these Caroline and Tucker have for each other.

### Mahdi Lotfi says

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## Dorsey aka ♡? Wrath Lover Reviews ♡? says

### *Solid 4 Stars*

I really enjoyed this book and the narrator was fantastic. My only complaint was there are sooooo many characters involved at times it was confusing and I would have to stop and remember who's who. I really didn't figure out who the killer was till about 3/4 or more into the book...I kept changing my mind. Very good storyline and characters with plenty of aghast and heart beating scenes.

*Tucker and Carolyn*

The hero Tucker Longstreet is not my average kind of hero he's very "Non Alpha" but he is so endearing with his many family history stories and southern charm it's hard not to fall for him just a little.

The Heroine Carolyn Waverly is a world famous violinist. She's very lonely and alone although she does have family, as an only child and a child prodigy to an overbearing mother she is suffering in more ways than one and decides to take some time off and heads to Innocence, MS.

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## Lea's Audiobooks Hensley says

Unabridged audiobook version from Speaking of Audiobooks dated 9/30/10:

Narrated by Tom Stechschulte

Attempting to listen to a bad copy of Carnal Innocence, I just knew there was so much to enjoy that I was missing because of all that extra noise. Giving up on my library copy, I was delighted when my friend offered to loan me a copy. I totally fell into the story and in love with Tucker. Tom Stechschulte's narration is superb and I believe it's his interpretation of Tucker that made him so, well, to die for! There are a number of suspense plots (probably too many for my taste if I had been reading) that, when added to some well written characters, make this unabridged audio version into pure entertainment. Although released in both CD and cassette tape formats in 1999, it can be difficult to find affordably. Hopefully your local library's copy is better than mine although, I must add, that Carnal Innocence was on hold when I returned it to the library. Even after eleven years, it's still a popular audiobook.

NOTE: There were a few scenes I didn't want to hear - they were definite "skim" territory if I'd been reading. But the narration by Stechschulte and the hero Tucker made this one 5 stars regardless of the violence.

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## Elisabete says

Gostei bastante deste livro, apesar de não me ter cativado tanto como outros que já li da Nora. Tem bastante suspense e mistério e um pouco menos de romance do que é habitual, mas o pouco que tem é muito giro e divertido, dei umas boas gargalhadas com as personagens deste livro, principalmente com o Tucker (uma personagem masculina um pouco diferente das que a Nora costuma criar, mas não menos cativante) e com a prima Lulu. Mas o que me cativou mesmo foi a parte policial, nunca imaginaria que era o assassino... foi o livro que li ate hoje em que mais me surpreendeu descobrir quem estava por detrás de todas as mortes, só por esse aspeto já é um livro que vale a pena ler. Também foi muito giro descobrir um pouco mais sobre a forma de vida e de pensar das pessoas do sul dos EUA, fez me lembrar um pouco o meu Alentejo, tudo muito devagar e todo o rodeio que damos às palavras para chegar realmente ao assunto que interessa...muito giro lol é um livro que sem dúvida vale a pena ler.

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