



Hard

Cheryl McIntyre

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THIS IS A FULL-LENGTH, STAND-ALONE, ADULT ROMANCE

I have been staring at her for three months. Watching her. Memorizing her.

For ninety-two days, I've looked into those lifeless green eyes.

And for ninety-two days she has inspired me in ways I never knew possible. A muse, unbeknownst to her. Motivating me. Encouraging my darkest desires.

I'm a man who knows what he wants. And what I want is the beautiful and broken Holland Howard.

My name is Jensen Payne—photographer, autocrat, lecher, Scopophiliac. I am who I am and I will not—*cannot*—change.

WARNING: THIS BOOK CONTAINS POSSIBLE EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS FOR SOME READERS. PLEASE TAKE THIS WARNING SERIOUSLY.

Recommended for readers 18+ ONLY.

Hard Details

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Author : Cheryl McIntyre

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Genre : Adult Fiction, Erotica, BdsM, Romance, Dark, Contemporary, Contemporary Romance, Erotic Romance



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From Reader Review Hard for online ebook

Selene says

Steamy read with a little bit of substance. The epilogue was great!

Sunniva Dee says

Better Than Fifty

Besides Fifty Shades, this is the only Erotica novel that has left me *thinking* after I finished it. I loved Fifty, which was completely new in theme, style, as well as on the top hundred list on Amazon back when I read it. This isn't to upset Fifty Shades lovers--we should all be happy a new great one is out, right--plus I want to say this out loud: **HARD is better. Much better.**

In HARD, you get a great love story, deep characters--one of them of a kind I guarantee you haven't met before--and without taking away from the **sizzling descriptions**.

Like most readers who have discovered Cheryl, I've read all of her books. Her writing is brilliant: never-failing, beautifully flowing storytelling, and deep, well-developed protagonists you can feel, almost touch as you read them. Then, there's the effortless chemistry she creates within troubled, budding relationships. HARD is no exception in Cheryl's authorship.

The author took chances with this book, though; it's the first of hers that I'd pull out of the New Adult category and wedge snugly in on the Erotica shelf because of the intense, unpredictable passion. To be honest, I'm not much of an Erotica reader. I might have written a couple verging on the genre, but in general, I find a lot of Erotica lacking in the plot department.

But Jensen... hmmm.... he's something else.

Sure, as a reader I might want hot sex. But isn't it just so much better when you can have an all-consuming, moving story and real characters as well? To not ruin your fun, I won't go into the dilemmas and conflicts treated in HARD. All I will say is that they are handled expertly, and if you're anything like me, they will make you gasp, cry, and swoon. Then, there's the ending. And the way it left me crying the *best* of happy-tears!

Happy, happy reading.

Jen says

I dove into this book not really understanding what exactly I was getting myself into. I will admit that the first 39% I was concerned that this read was going to be just hot sex. Now I know what your thinking!!! What the heck is wrong with that? The truth is though, I do like to have SOME substance to my reads. It can't just be about sex and that's it!!! I am happy to report that once I got past that hump (no pun intended..really!!!) there was indeed some major substance to this story, and it turned out to be quite an enjoyable one at that! This was my first read from Cheryl McIntyre, and I can honestly say that it won't be my last. She has a lot of talent when it comes to her writing, and yes; she writes a darn scorching hot sex scene! LOL

The prologue begins with a woman named Holland Howard. She ends up having a major tragedy happen in her life, and to top it off her husband does something that is unforgivable. Holland ends up a shell of herself and feels absolutely nothing. She leaves her life behind and literally never looks back. When she gets settled into her new life, she is working in a bar where unbeknownst to her; a man has been watching her for the past three months. She is so wrapped up in her own emotional pain..or I should say her own numbness because truly she doesn't feel anything; she doesn't know that Jensen Payne is watching her intensely.

Jensen is a photographer who carries some major secrets. He is a very private man, and quite frankly he has every reason to be private. He has what is called: Scopophilia--which is the love of looking... Needless to say, when he comes across Holland, there is something so beautiful and haunting about her he can't get her out of his mind. He convinces her to leave with him one night; which frighteningly didn't take much because she just doesn't care about her safety or anything else. They end up at his apartment..and all I will say is; Let the games begin!!! WHEW! And believe me...they begin all right.

Holland gets the surprise of her life when Jensen is able to make her feel..At first it is just a little something; but it is enough to have herself become intrigued by this unique man. As these two very broken individuals come together, they have a ton of things to learn about one another. Will they be able to heal one another? Or will they remain the empty people that they are?? Their journey turns into an interesting one, and slowly as surprises are revealed, I became more and more engrossed into reading their story.

This is a unique stand alone book that will for sure make you sit back and think about how hard it can be to rise above the tragedies in each of our lives. One of my favorite quotes says it all:

"Nobody can take your misery away, that's yours to keep all your own. Find the person who can make you forget you were miserable in the first place."

Cranky - The Book Curmudgeon says

***** 5 Cranky Stars *****

*Warning: This book explores dark and controversial themes.

Scopophilia or scoptophilia: An expression of sexuality, referring to sexual pleasure derived from looking at erotic objects e.g. erotic photographs, pornography, naked bodies, etc.

Yes, I admit, I had to look the definition up in order to understand what this book was about!

Holland started out her life living the American dream. She was married to her best friend and had her dream job. Over the first few years of her marriage, tragedy strikes leaving her only a shell of the person that she used to be. Unable to cope, and with just the clothes on her back and her car, Holland leaves everything familiar behind.

Jensen Payne is fighting his own demons. He stumbles into a bar one day at the lowest point in his life and sees Holland. Instantly, he's addicted and there starts a relationship that will change the both of them.

This is an extremely emotionally charged book with subjects that were hard to read. I was riveted with the storyline and look forward to reading more of Cheryl McIntyre's work. If you're looking for a dark, emotionally intense, clothing optional book, then grab a fire extinguisher and one click your copy today.

Second Crankster!

It's been awhile since a book has made me feel like this one! This book brings you through the gamut of emotions all while breaking your heart and putting it beautifully back together!

Synopsis:

I have been staring at her for three months. Watching her. Memorizing her. For ninety-two days, I've looked into those lifeless green eyes. And for ninety-two days she has inspired me in ways I never knew possible. A muse, unbeknownst to her. Motivating me. Encouraging my darkest desires. I'm a man who knows what he wants. And what I want is the beautiful and broken Holland Howard. My name is Jensen Payne—photographer, autocrat, lecher, Scopophiliac. I am who I am and I will not—cannot—change.

Jensen is a sexy as hell, broken alpha man that takes what he wants. He thinks that one taste of Holland will sate his obsession he's developed for her... He was so wrong!

Holland is a hollow, broken woman that wants nothing more than to feel just that... nothing! Jensen awakens something in her that forces her to feel again.

Both of them are keeping their private lives to themselves, not sharing anything, and using each other to help them forget. Falling in love with each other was inevitable, but that didn't mean that they didn't fight it as long as they could.

In order to heal each other, they both would have to share their secrets and heal on their own.
This was my first book that I've read by Cheryl McIntyre, but it most definitely won't be my last!

Arabella ~?AB?~ says

★★★★ 3.5 Stars ★★★★★

Now LIVE!

Amazon - <http://amzn.com/B00UW0GTSK>

Amazon UK - <http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B00UW0GTSK>

Scopophilia: Sexual pleasure derived chiefly from watching others when they are naked or engaged in sexual activity; voyeurism.

Our hero Jensen *suffers* from this affliction and when he sets eyes on a fiery haired woman who looks lost and alone and sad, he has an urgent need to get to know her on the most basic level.

Holland has experienced an unimaginable loss that has left her a shell of a woman who cares about nothing other than getting through to the next day, if that. She used to have a good life but now she lives alone in a small attic apartment and works at The Pub as a waitress.

**"I'm on a wheel of misery, running as hard as I can and getting no closer to my end goal.
Acceptance."**

Jensen has been watching her for a while but Holland doesn't even notice the man who comes into the bar often to order his Whiskey Sour, until that is, he makes his move. Holland blindly follows him home and this is the start of her sexual awakening that will slowly bring her back to life.

Jensen is someone who likes to be in control. He doesn't need to know why Holland is so sad all the time, but he loves to watch her come undone under his touch.

— — — —

There were two facets to this story, the emotional and the erotic. There was a lot of sex in this book. Jensen & Holland have lots of kinky sex involving ropes and cameras, he loves to capture her when she is looking

most sexually vulnerable and Holland for the first time in a long time, feels alive when they are together in this way. Jensen is scared when he realises that he starts to develop feelings outside of the bedroom. It isn't what he normally does.

"Talking like this, sharing my personal shit - I don't do it. I bind. I photograph. And I fuck.

There's no point in anything else."

Personally, I found the erotic part overpowered the emotional side and I that really was the only thing preventing me from rating higher. I think if this book had been slightly longer and with more emphasis on the poignant side of the story, it would have definitely worked better for me.

Saying that, this book was a passionate one and it will break your heart to hear how Holland has literally stopped living after suffering from loss, devastation and betrayal.

I loved seeing her slowly coming back to life and being there for Jensen when she finds out that he is also harbouring a secret that has prevented him from taking relationships to the next level. I also really loved Jensen's pop as a character and the epilogue was lovely.

It was definitely unlike any other book I have read before and would most certainly recommend it for any erotica fans.

This is a standalone novel, told in dual POV.

ARC gratefully received from the author in exchange for an honest review

Lana ❄️Dirty Girl Romance❄️ says

3.5 Stars

Nobody can take your misery away, that's yours to keep all your own. Find the person who can make you forget you were miserable in the first place.

If I wasn't completely sold by the synopsis of this book, the prologue alone was enough to suck me in completely. I mean, talk about starting things off intense. That first chapter will grip you by the heart and hit you straight in the feels. Holy hell.

Hard is told in alternating POVs from Holland and Jensen. Jensen, having lost everything that meant anything to her is now an empty shell of the woman that she once was. She no longer cares...about everything. Having experienced one devastating loss after another, the final loss is just the straw that finally

breaks the camel's back. She picks up the meager belongings she cares about and moves away from everything she knows. She doesn't want any connection or memory to her old life. But the one thing she does take with her is her grief.

I've been told there are five stages of grief.

Just five.

Then you're fine. You move on. Live your life. Everything goes back to normal.

I must be doing something wrong because I seem to be repeating them over and over again.

I'm on a wheel of misery, running as hard as I can and getting no closer to my end goal.

Jensen Payne is a photographer and Scopophiliac. A collector and appreciator of beautiful things. And if there's one thing that he loves more than looking at beautiful things it's capturing them on his camera. The recent object of his obsession is the beautiful but broken Holland, a waitress at a pub that he frequents. Unable to get her out of his mind or spend his lust with any other woman but her, he propositions her...and isn't shocked when she simply accepts.

Women typically have one of three reactions to my fervent perusal. They either want to slap me, fuck me, or run from me.

Jensen is definitely a man that likes his sex dirty. Now when this synopsis tells you that this is erotic, it really means EROTIC. Holy panty change, Batman. A good 65% of this book is pure sex. There's dirty fuckery, kinky fuckery, rough fuckery. Lots of fuckery is what I'm trying to tell you here.

That moment when her body becomes all nerves and sensations, consumed with pure and utter bliss.

I want to witness that.

I NEED to witness that.

I have to CAPTURE that.

If there's one way that Jensen and Holland connect, it's on a physical level. Both of them have their dark secrets and neither is looking for anything other than a physical connection. But somewhere between panted breaths and sweat-soaked sheets, something begins to form between them. Something...more.

I always expected I'd be alone in darkness. I never dreamt I'd find light near the end. It hurts to hope. It hurts to care. To want. To need. I shouldn't feel this way. I CAN'T.

While I like a hot sex scene as much as the next girl, at times it was almost overwhelming here. I could have done with a little less sex and a little more story. Shocking, I know. I'll give you a moment to absorb that.

This book was unique in its own right because I can't say I've ever read a book with Jensen's particular affliction and I've never even heard of Scopophilia ever before so that was something new. Holland's story was heartbreaking to read (view spoiler), and sometimes I felt that the abundant amount of sex almost overshadowed the emotional story that the book also had. I did enjoy it quite a bit, and I absolutely loved the

epilogue. I wish there was a little more time spent on the emotional connection between Holland and Jensen, beyond just the obvious physical one, but I can't complain too much. It was still a unique, sexy and different read.

ARC courtesy of author in exchange for an honest review

For more reviews visit

Cheryl McIntyre says

This is my novel, and I don't often rate my own novels, but I am so proud of this book, I'm rating it, damn it!

I am constantly pushing myself to try new things as an author and I definitely did that with *HARD*. I stepped way outside of my comfort zone to write a story, that I hope, proves erotic books can have deep, meaningful story lines and well-developed characters, as well as hot sex. They can still make you think and feel and cry and smile. I hope I've accomplished that. <3

NMmomof4 says

3 Stars

Overall Opinion: I was expecting a darker read because of the synopsis, but it still was enjoyable. I personally would call this more erotica than romance, because there was a lot of sex going on. It was pretty hot sex! I didn't fully feel their connection (other than sexual) to understand the transition into love tbh. I'm not a huge fan of erotica for this reason. I wanted to get deeper with these characters, and I also wanted to see them succeed! I also think that the conflict that the h had towards the end (view spoiler) and the fact that the H changed his mind so drastically (view spoiler) were a little too easily resolved. While I do think we get a HEA, I still wanted more so we could see how they got through some of the big struggles they still had to face.

Brief Summary of the Storyline: This is Holland and Jensen's story. Holland experienced a traumatic event and she leaves her old world behind and ends up in a small town working at a bar. Jensen notices her one night, and becomes obsessed with watching her. One night he gets tired of watching her, and they end up going back to his place where he can photograph her. They start up an affair that eventually turns into more and they fall in love. There are some big secrets revealed and some pains to work through...but they do get a HEA ending.

POV: This alternated between Holland and Jensen's POV.

Overall Pace of Story: Good. I read it quickly. It flowed well and I never skimmed.

Instalove: No. Instalust? Yes.

H rating: 3 stars. Jensen. He was ok. He was dominant, sexy, and all about the h. He had an unfortunate future that was out of his control, so I understood a lot of his behavior.

h rating: 3 stars. Holland. She was ok. She was really damaged from her past, understandably so, and I felt bad for her.

Sadness level: Low/moderate. I did tear up a little bit, but I never needed any tissues. This does cover some sad themes.

Push/Pull: Yes (view spoiler)

Heat level: High. This is what I would classify as erotica. It seemed to be more sex than story. Does have some light bondage and D/s situations.

Descriptive sex: Yes

Safe sex: Yes. (view spoiler)

OW/OM drama: Minimal (view spoiler)

Sex scene with OW or OM: No

Cheating: Not with mcs IMO (view spoiler)

Separation: Yes (view spoiler)

Possible Triggers: Yes (view spoiler)

Closure: This had a cute jump ahead epilogue with a HEA ending. BUT...you guessed it! I wanted more! I wanted an even farther jump into their future to see them functioning and happy with what was happening with the H.

How I got it: I paid the \$0.99 on Amazon for it.

Safety: This should be either Safe or Safe with exception depending on personal preferences (see triggers) (view spoiler)

Val Shameless ?? Steamy Reads ?? says

4/7/16 Re-read...scrolled past this when looking for a different book on my kindle, remembered how

much I enjoyed it, and decided I felt like a revisit...just as good.

Review posted at: <https://shamelessbitchyskanky.wordpress...>

Original Review:

All I can say is **WOW**.

This one - and how much I enjoyed it - really took me by surprise.

Quite honestly, I barely skimmed the blurb for this - but I trust Cheryl McIntyre and I was in the mood for something short - so I thought, why not?.

Well, for something so short, it sure packed a massive punch that *hit me right in the feels*.

The lead female in this book is my favorite kind of female character: calm, self-contained, and uncaring of what other people think.

And the lead male is my favorite kind of male character:
self-contained, confident, and over the top alpha.

So both of these favorites together?

WIN - WIN

And a WIN - WIN additionally paired with good writing and a fast paced, character driven plot?

You guessed it.

Mimi says

HARD..

5 UNEXPECTED STARS **

when I started reading this ,I thought it would be the typical book where the girl falls for the hot dominant that has a mean streak .

I was not so far off ,but the story it tells about Holland , really took me by surprise . I really felt so sad for her ,I couldn't imagine how anyone could really cope with such a horrible and sad thing happening to them. Oh and her no good husband what he does to her afterwards I just wanted to kick him in his family jewels .

Holland some how is able to move on with her life but really just living as a robot ,that is until one day Jensen walks into the pub she works in . He invites her to his house and she accepts she really doesn't care that he is stranger and a bit odd she just doesn't care much about anything anymore so nothing holds her back from going with him.

Jensen Payne ,is a hot, tall mysterious man . He loves looking at beautiful things and taking pictures of beautiful things . He had lost his love for taking picture a while back that is until he saw Her .

So , I thought Jensen was kinda freaky in the beginning like omg!! This guy is going to kill this girl. After reading a bit more I totally fell for him ,I thought that his weird obsessive way with Holland was super cute and hot .

I love how they become each others savior . How they get lost with each other in a very sexy way. And although they have there mishaps they still manage to fix each other and find something they both losthope I loved it !! I did not expect this book to be anything like it was ,don't get me wrong it has a lot of sexy scenes and most of the book is about sex but I totally loved it!!!!

warhawke says

Genre: Erotic Romance

Type: Standalone

POV: First Person - Dual

Rating:

A personal tragedy led to the crumbling of Holland Howard's life, leaving her a walking shell of her former self. She left everything she knew for a clean start in a new city, with a new life, hoping to leave her pain behind.

Jensen Payne was a photographer who was slowly losing passion in the art. That was until he found his muse

in the sadness that surrounded Holland. They both found the comfort they desperately looking for in each other. But relationship didn't come easy when one was running from the past, and the other dreading the future.

When I first read the blurb, I was enticed by the idea of a stalker story with a hint of darkness. But it turned out to be not the case at all. The book had BDSM elements but it wasn't dark per se.

When you no longer care if you live or die, life becomes surprisingly...simple.

I like Holland's character with how her grief was portrayed. She deflected her emotions by numbing herself to it. It made her do potentially dangerous thing without much thought.

I don't want to be responsible for someone else, or worse, someone be responsible for me. I already know how my story ends. I am not trying to confuse that.

I like Jensen too. It's interesting with how his affliction led to his condition. It was totally understandable why he was that way. He was afraid with the possibilities in his future.

Being an erotic romance novel, there were a lot of scorching sex scenes in this one. I especially love the ones that involved bondage. One of my favorite scene was when the table was turned.

Story wise, Hard had a huge potential of being a poignant erotic romance. However, I felt it fell a little short. The first 50% of the book was too slow especially considering the book is not long. The first half was filled with mostly sex with minimal story development. It only picked up in the second half of the book.

I'm jealous of the moonlight. Of the way it kisses her body and holds her tight. Of the way it embraces every piece of her that it possibly can. The way it sees her in ways I cannot.

The second half was more into the emotional aspect which I really love. I think I would love this book more if this aspect was given a little extra attention because each of their individual issues had potentially heavy hitting direction.

Overall, I did enjoy the two aspect individually, but would love it if they were merged stronger.

NOTE:

As many of you already know, our friend Sasha is battling brain tumor and struggling with her life. I'm dedicating this review in honor of her. It couldn't be more appropriate considering the title and the underlying issue of the book. This is a hard time for all of us. No matter what the outcome, we will stay strong for her because she has always been the strongest one, suffering in silence. We love you Sasha!

For more reviews/reveals/giveaways visit:

~ Cariad ~ says

Perfection!

Seriously this one's a book of the year contender for me...

Mother of fuck, I really, REALLY loved it - 5 stars aren't enough! Here's my review...

PRE-REVIW:

So happy!

Michelle says

5 Loved It Stars!

What a hot quickie before bed!!

Holland is lost! She has been through so much pain that she is on autopilot. Only getting by. Putting on a fake face for everyone to see.

Jensen sees Holland. He's been watching her for months. Coming into her place of work and ordering the same drink every night. Jensen knows Holland doesn't notice him. Holland does something to Jensen. He can't wait to get her to his house and bind her up and photograph her. He also wants to fuck her.

These two gradually get into a nightly routine of endless pleasure filled nights. Whew!! Fans needed!! lol I loved how Holland and Jensen gradually became more than fuck buddies. How they slowly started giving each other pieces of their pasts.

I loved Pops (Jensen's dad)!! He made me laugh!

This was a great erotic quickie:))

CC says

4.25 stars.

Hero: Jensen Payne

Heroine: Holland Howard

Holland is trying to escape her pain; a pain that is so consuming that it numbs all her other emotions and senses. Jensen is trying to avoid pain. His denial is so overwhelming that it stimulates all his senses and feeds his affliction of scopophilia. Their connection and acceptance of each other is initially superficial in that Jensen is attracted to Holland's emptiness and Jensen is seeking solace; they do not question each other's motives, but their attraction is palpable and sustainable. Jensen is very much in control and has no qualms voicing commands or filthy words and Holland responds like a moth to a flame.

“I’m no white knight. I only yield one sword, and there is nothing gentlemanly about it.”

“He grasps my wrist around the cuff of the sleeve. His thumb overlaps his thumb, long fingers, his eyes locking onto mine. The way he looks at me, the way his fingers tighten, swear he is remembering the way I looked tied to his bed.”

“I’m not going to fuck you, Holland, Jensen says, his tone low, rough and commanding. You are going to fuck yourself and I’m going to watch.”

Throughout this book, the reader can relate to Holland and Jensen and the alternating POV's add to the development and understanding of each character. In the beginning, I was a little worried that Holland's character was going to be a little too static, but the author was able to take her character to a place where she deserved.

This story unites two characters that compliment each other and is told in such an understanding and lovely way that you cannot help but root for their happily ever after.

I recommend this book and look forward to reading more books by this author.

Note: As the warning in the GR book description indicates, some may be sensitive to Holland's loss from the outset. (view spoiler)

3.5 STARS

From the prologue I could tell this one will be an interesting read. It's gripping, intense and heartbreaking. It presents the heroine, Holland, a woman whose life is shattered when she experiences an imaginable loss. She's lost, she doesn't care for anything, trying to cope with her past as best she can. She started a new life and now she works as a waitress in a Pub. Holland is not like every woman. And Jensen knows it because for 92 days he watched her at a bar. He is drawn to her beauty and to her brokenness. Jensen is different from other men as well. He suffers from scopophilia, the deriving of sexual pleasure from viewing nude bodies, sexual acts, or erotic photographs; voyeurism. Jensen loves photography, he's a collector of beautiful things and he also loves a good submissive. He loves to be in control.

"Most people throw away broken objects, discarding them like trash. As if they are somehow less important, less perfect, less beautiful. I frame them. Stare at them for hours. Enjoy their striking flawlessness."

One night he invites Holland at his home to spend the night with him and she's willing to go with him, a stranger. She knows she's reckless, but she doesn't seem to care. They spend one hot, passionate night together, but one night is not enough for both of them. They start an erotic, sensual relationship, they get to know each other a little, but not significant details about their past or about who they really are. Soon feelings get involved, secrets are revealed and everything gets complicated.

I really, really would have liked this one to be a little longer. I enjoy this author's writing style and the way she tells a story. Like I mentioned above the story was intriguing from the prologue and I immediately wanted to know more about the heroine, Holland. I figured out it will be an emotional read, but I didn't expect to be as steamy as it was. It goes without saying I didn't expect the emotional part to be overpowered by the erotic part. I can't say I loved this aspect of the story, but I didn't hate it either.

As much as I get 'to know' them, both main characters were great. I really felt for Holland. She's a broken woman who eventually will find her way with the help of a man, a man who is suffering in silence, a man who's struggling to accept the future, his future, Jensen. And I have to say I really liked him for that. Jensen was a great man. He tries not to get attached, but he can't resist Holland's beauty. I found Jensen's affliction very interesting. I didn't even know about it or what it means.

The sex scenes are hot and passionate, but they weren't enough for me to be invested in the story like I would have liked. The side characters are great and engaging – Jensen's sister and his Pop – and I enjoyed the dual POV. I think the author did a smart job writing this novel from both characters' perspective.

Overall, a great read!
