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Nikki Hunt thought her night couldn't get worse when her no-good, cheating ex ditched her at dinner, sticking her with the bill. Then she found his body stuffed in the trunk of her car and lost her two-hundred-dollar meal all over his three-thousand-dollar suit. Now not only is Nikki nearly broke, she's a murder suspect.

Former cop turned PI, Dallas O'Connor knows what it's like to be unjustly accused. But one look at the sexy-though skittish-suspect tells him she couldn't hurt anyone. The lead detective, Dallas's own brother, has the wrong woman and Dallas hopes a little late-night "undercover" work will help him prove it . . . **Previously published as *Don't Mess With Texas*

Don't Mess with Texas Details

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From Reader Review Don't Mess with Texas for online ebook

Christi Snow says

My Review:

This book had absolutely everything that I love in contemporary romance! It was fun. It was entertaining. It was suspenseful. It had a wonderful story line. It had wonderful characters. It even had an amazing sub-story that moved me to tears. Wow! I loved this book!!!

This book is the first book in a trilogy about three former cops: Dallas, Tyler, and Austin, who started a PI business after they were framed for murder and spent 16 months in prison, unjustly accused before the facts came out. Their goal with the business is to eventually get revenge on the drug dealer that framed them, but also to help others find justice when they are unjustly accused. One of those unjustly accused just happens to be Nikki, who is being accused of killing her ex-husband, who was found dead in her trunk. The cop investigating the murder is Tony, Dallas' brother. They were eating dinner together when the call came in and just happened to be eating at a restaurant next door to the store where Nikki discovered Jack in her trunk.

The story line in this book builds and twists and bends, but at the heart of it, is a fabulous romance. I loved both Nikki and Dallas. These are two divorcee's who have been burned by love and neither one of them want to ever go through that again, so they both have big-time commitment issues. BUT they can't resist when their sexual chemistry becomes combustible, especially since they are living together for Nikki's safety.

This book is one full of characters that make it charming and irresistible:

*Dallas, Tyler, and Austin- these guys went to jail for 16 months. Can you imagine that as cops? OMG, and they are more than a little bitter about it, but it has created a bond between the three of them that is unshakable, no matter how much hell they give each other.

*Nikki- Nikki is scarred after being abandoned by her parents to a grandmother that wasn't even related to her and by a husband who couldn't keep his dick in his pants. She's an artist and owns a gallery, but is barely keeping her head above water financially.

*Tony- Dallas' brother and the detective on Nikki's case. He's a hard-nosed cop trying to get to the truth, but all the evidence is pointing at Nikki as the killer. He is also dealing with the loss of his wife who he has been estranged from for 9 months, LeAnn. Their story was emotional and heart-rending. OMG, I bawled at the end of their story.

*Nikki's grandmother and her crew- This elderly group is doing a play of Annie Oakly. Nikki's grandmother is Annie and she is a character. So funny and so sweet. She was an amazing addition to the story.

*Ellen- Nikki's employee and best friend who is also stabbed the night Jack is murdered. I LOVED her esp. when she was doped up on morphine...OMG, so freaking funny!

*Bud- Dallas' gassy dog who likes to sleep in the coffin that was left behind in their offices. He was always great to provide a bit of a silly funny into the story.

Really, this was just an amazingly fun story. I laughed. I definitely cried. I had no idea who the bad guy was. It kept me guessing and it most definitely kept me entertained. I love that it is set in Texas and that the three guys are named after Texas towns. My ONLY complaint that I have about this book is that the next one isn't out for another year, *Blame It On Texas*, out Sept, 2012. *whining*

Jacob Proffitt says

This is a fun, light romance even though the plot has Nikki on the hot-seat for a murder rap most of the book. I guess the tone sets that expectation and the feeling that Dallas is competent at his job cements it. Which lets Christie Craig get away with a light touch in the face of a kind-of dire plotline.

And I *really* liked the Dallas/Nikki romance. They're both a little broken, but that just means that they need each other that much more. So that part was pretty sweet.

What I *didn't* enjoy was the secondary romance with Tony and LeAnn. It smoothed out in the end and managed to swing around to touching (seriously, there were tears), but the first three quarters (and particularly the first half) of the book has mountains of stupid. And it featured my least favorite trope: someone deciding to come clean and be honest about their feelings only to wuss out at the clutch point and say something *completely stupid and utterly unconvincing* instead.

Despite evening out in the end, I kind of wish Craig had cut the Tony/LeAnn story and stuck with Nikki and Dallas. Alone, this would have been four stars, easy. The complete disaster that T/L started as had this heading for a grudging three stars on rounding consideration. The ending pulled it well past a three, but I can't quite justify four—it was just too painful to get through.

A note about Steamy: Low steam. There's really only one full-on explicit scene. A few others start, but they all cut early after the flirty bits. There's enough of those that it almost boosts it to mid-levels, but not quite.

Sandy M says

I always have the best time when I read a Christie Craig book. I constantly smile, sometimes laugh, and usually sigh quite a bit over her heroes. In this new trilogy she's given us three very drool-worthy men who have been betrayed, nearly lost everything, and are now doing what it takes to help people who find themselves in the same predicament they were in at one time, when those who should have stood by them instead turned their backs and left innocent men to suffer dire consequences. You can just imagine what kind of scars that left on our gentlemen.

Nikki is contemplating getting back together with her cheating ex-husband. She needs financial help, you see. Otherwise, there's no reason for her to give up her current life to go back to the old one that didn't work for the longest time. But she's promised her grandmother she'll have cable in her room at the seniors' home. So Nikki is meeting the ex for dinner to talk. Thank goodness on seeing him she realizes she can't go through with her crazy idea. However, she's determined to get a meal out of it. Things never progress past their first few words to one another and Nikki stealing a shrimp from Jack's plate, because Jack is in the middle of a phone call that doesn't sound good at all. He walks out of the restaurant to finish his call, leaving Nikki to pick up the check. Pissed and ready to kill the jerk, what she's not ready for is finding him really

and truly dead. In her trunk.

Taking on cases in which he and his partners, all of them ex-cops, just know the suspect is innocent is how Dallas, Austin, and Tyler make sure others don't spend time in jail wrongly accused of a crime. Sixteen months behind bars is no picnic, and if they can stop that from happening to someone else, they'll do whatever they have to to keep injustice at bay. Nikki is now one of those people, and Dallas is immediately taken with this woman who barfs all over him. Twice. And the laughs begin. If you've not read a Christie Craig book before, you're in for a delightful time on top of the mystery of who killed the ex and the fun times in the bedroom.

Though Dallas' brother, Tony, the cop, keeps looking at Nikki as his prime suspect, despite Dallas' involvement in the case and with her. And speaking of Tony, we get a lovely secondary romance with him and his estranged wife, LeAnn. They've suffered a horrendous loss which drove them apart, and Tony's tired of LeAnn still pushing him away. So he takes his homecoming into his own hands, moves back home, and drives the woman crazy with his sexy antics. But LeAnn gives as good as she gets, turning the tables on Tony quite nicely. There are other secondary characters who are loads of fun too: Nikki's grandmother and the old-timers running around in their Annie Oakley get-ups, and even Bud the bulldog, who loves his coffin for sleeping, gets into the picture, falling in love with Nikki too. He's not as slow as Dallas. Good dog.

Dallas has his reasons, though, for being slow. He's kept the ladies at bay after some lovin' and he likes it that way. Though since he's met Nikki, he's not sure why. And he's not sure about the feelings that have cropped up whenever he's near her. Nikki does acknowledge her growing feelings for Dallas to herself at least, knowing it's best to leave now and not let things go any further, especially when the man concentrates on the here and now and not the future. But every time Dallas looks at her, touches her, kisses her, everything else falls away and he talks her into one more day.

The dialogue is snappy and fast, so pay attention. Everyone gets into the fray at one point or another, free-for-alls that are hilarious. We get to know Austin and Tyler a little, and I enjoyed their relationship with Dallas. Going through their unjust incarceration, losing the support of those who should have stood behind them, well, it definitely brought them together in more ways than one, and I'm looking forward to their books.

I thought twice about not mentioning the stupid and frivolous lawsuit the Texas Department of Transportation brought against Ms. Craig for an injunction to stop this book's release, claiming the title infringes on their logo for their anti-litter program. But, nah, their overzealousness and overreaction ("The book," TxDOT's suit says, "contains numerous graphic references to sexual acts, states of sexual arousal, etc.") has been the best advertising on the planet for Don't Mess with Texas. As a retired court reporter, I'm glad the judge is one with good sense to see the case had no merit. You don't always see that in the legal system, which plays into the pages of this book so nicely. So if you've just thought about buying DMwT and haven't yet done so, get out there and pick it up now. You'll have a great time reading, you'll be supporting one of the genre's best authors, all the while sticking your tongue out at injustice of all forms. Never thought you could contribute so much by being a romance reader, huh?

See my complete review at <http://www.goodbadandunread.com>

Karen says

I have mixed feelings about this book. This is one of those stories where the two main characters are the ones I like the least. All the supporting characters are more interesting people with more interesting story lines. My biggest issue with fun, flirty, girly books like this is all the stereotyping. I find this kind of novel rarely shows realistic (at least in my world) portrayals of men and women and their relationships with each other.

Nikki Hunt did not kill her ex-husband. Really she didn't. He invited her out to dinner, a very expensive dinner, and left her to pay the bill. OF COURSE she mumbles and grumbles about wanting to kill him-- who wouldn't? So when she finds him dead in her trunk, her words come back to haunt her and now everybody thinks she did it.

Dallas O'Connor is a former cop who was wrongfully accused of murder. He's now a PI intent on clearing the name's of others who have been unjustly accused. He meets Nikki and now he's a special sort of PI: a Dick who thinks with his dick. (Sorry, I could't resist.)

He runs his PI firm with two other ex-cops named after Texas cities: Tyler and Austin. And the name of their firm is (ready for this?) Don't Mess with Texas.

There is a subplot involving a kid named Nance. Dallas took his case because he truly believes the kid is innocent. Sadly, Nance's story falls flat as Nance is used as a plot device to further the relationship between Dallas and Nikki. His case and the solving thereof didn't have any oomph.

There is another subplot involving Dallas's cop brother Tony and his estranged wife LeAnn. Those characters are far more involving and perhaps they should have their own book.

So what did I love about Don't Mess with Texas? The humor. The interactions between the characters. The farting dog who sleeps in a coffin. Nana and her crazy group of Ol' Timers. They were great. Dallas and his relationship with his brother Tony and their dad. Tony and LeAnn's relationship. The brotherly type love between Dallas, Austin, and Tyler. It made me want to eat cupcakes.

What I hated: The played out stereotype of guys thinking about nothing but sex. Really?? Way too many mistakes an editor should have caught. Tons of them. Am I the only one who picks this stuff out? The mystery took backseat to the romance and ultimately was resolved in an unsatisfying manner. I was pages from the end of the book thinking "Are they even going to tell me who the murderer was?" And when it was finally revealed I was like "Oh...whatever."

Splage says

Easy, cute read with a sexy, sweet hero who likes to save people, especially damsels in distress. Loved the almost final love scene between the H&h. Let's just say a high school fantasy, but the hero's nightmare.

LaFleurBleue says

My first book from this author and most probably not the last.

My rating would be around 3.5, if I could, as the editing wants improvement. But I enjoyed this reading throughout and it made me smile regularly, so I feel generous enough to round it up.

It's a light-hearted romantic comedy, with an underlying investigation. The tone is often quite funny, without

getting into eye-rolling farcical moments. Overall it was a pretty down-to-earth people-next-door type of story and characters. Basically there's one hot scene in the whole book, though the attraction between the characters cannot be doubted.

I also really enjoyed the secondary story between the hero's brother and his estranged wife, though it was blacker than the average tone of the book. It also dealt with a difficult topic that I really stumbled across (view spoiler)

Besides the editing and some grammar mistakes, the ending felt a bit rushed.

I recommend it though to readers looking forward to a light and entertaining, though realistic enough contemporary story.

I might well get the following two in the series and would look forward other books from this author.

AH says

Don't mess with Texas is a nice, light romance perfect for summer reading. I liked that this just wasn't only a romance, there was a murder mystery as well. The story revolves around our two main characters: Nikki and Dallas. They meet when Nikki is accused of murdering her philandering ex-husband. Of course, the meeting is a little spectacular. At first, Dallas thinks that Nikki murdered her ex. After all, she left a restaurant muttering to herself about killing her ex because he stuck her with the bill. As Dallas got to know Nikki, he realized that she was incapable of killing even a fly. He also finds himself attracted to Nikki.

I liked the romance aspect of this book. The romance built slowly and was accentuated with some "potholes" along the way as Nikki and Dallas got to know each other. There was also a side plot with Dallas' brother Tony trying to win back his estranged and grieving wife LeAnn.

I loved the supporting characters. Nikki's Nana was a hoot and a power to be reckoned with. I also enjoyed the side story of Dallas' brother Tony as he tried to get his estranged wife LeAnn back.

All in all, a fun summer read.

~ Becs ~ says

I bloody loved this!!

It's light-hearted and fun and fluffy and yet I managed to care deeply for the characters and what was happening to them. It's contemporary romance mostly with a light smattering of suspense to keep the story rolling.

There's a strong theme of people being falsely accused throughout the whole novel and that's how we meet our heroine Nikki Hunt - an impoverished artist going to meet her ex-husband Jack Leon for dinner. He's been begging her for a reconciliation since she discovered him indulging in a bit of How's Your Father on her prized antique sofa with the hired help a year ago. She's finally agreed to meet him for dinner thinking she can go back to him because she's hard up and he can probably pay her Nana's cable bill. We'll get to Nana in a bit. One look at him and she realises that she can't not even for Nana's cable - he promptly abandons her at the restaurant and saddles her with a \$200 bill that she can ill afford.

Nikki manages to tell just about everyone she encounters in the next hour that she's gonna kill her ex just as said ex turns up very much murdered in the boot of her car.

Now we get to meet our hero - an ex-cop-ex-con-turned-PI Dallas O'Connor. He's with his homicide detective brother Tony when he gets the call about Jack's unfortunate demise and attends the scene with him. He instinctively thinks "the ex did it" until he notices she's rather green around the gills and goes to steady her when she promptly vomits all over first his shoes and then square in the middle of the chest. Despite this inauspicious beginning, he is very taken with her and decides to take her case as she is suspect no 1 and he specialises in people wrongly accused having done time himself for a murder he didn't commit.

To go any further would be to spoil the plot but it was the richness of the characters including all the background stories that made this story so unputdownable. Nikki's Nana was a total scene stealer always managing to crash a scene with the rest of her Ol' Timers having been dragged away from Annie Oakley dress rehearsals in full costume. I could just see it!!

There's also a very touching secondary love story between Dallas's brother Tony and his estranged wife LeAnn who separated 9 months ago in the most tragic of circumstances. They really tugged on my heart strings and I desperately wanted them to get past their issues.

We also have Dallas's widowed father who's in a sad and lonely place but is about to get hoovered up and dragged back to happiness by Nana's Ol'Timers not to mention Bud, the coffin-dwelling flatulent dog!

Best of all Dallas has 2 ex-cop-ex-con-turned PI drooltastic partners who are both waiting for their tortuous path to a HEA in future books.

It's a whole lot of fun - there's serious issues of false accusation and betrayal and guilt but there's also a lot of humour. Just think cupcakes and bedbugs. I think this is pretty much close to perfection as far as contemporary romances goes.

Can't wait for the next book - bring it on!!

5 stars - contemporary romance

Samantha says

I'll admit I had high hopes for this book. It seemed really cute and I had heard a lot of good things about it. But no matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't get into it.

Nicki Hunt needs cash because she's flat broke. If she doesn't get money soon then she's going to lose her art gallery. After getting a phone call from her wealthy ex-husband, she goes to dinner with him thinking that maybe she'll be able to overlook his cheating scum-bag ways for a reunion. After he vanishes in the middle of the meal on a phone call and doesn't return Nicki finds herself stuck with the bill. Fuming, she returns to her car only to find her ex dead and stuffed in the trunk. Nicki is immediately the prime suspect with only P.I. Dallas O'Connor believing that she didn't do it.

Craig has a light writing style that I typically enjoy in contemporary romances. However, a lot of the jokes in the book seemed like cheap shots; such as a gassy dog and birds pooping on nurses. Dallas also didn't work for me. I think he was supposed to be an angsty character who slowly starts finding some happiness. But this just didn't work with the slap-stick comedy tone of the book. Next to that it made Dallas seem pouty and a bit of a tool. I did like Nicki though. She was an entertaining character and I loved her relationship with her grandmother. Despite that, I probably won't be picking up another Craig book in the future.

Anne OK says

(Book #1 in Hotter In Texas Series)

Absolutely a delight to read. Christie Craig has hit a homerun with "Don't Mess With Texas." I laughed, teared up, laughed, sighed, laughed, blushed, laughed and laughed and finally finished the last page with a bit of sadness because I did not want this book to end. It made for a great weekend of reading pleasure.

UniquelyMoi ~ BlithelyBookish says

"I wanted to talk, but I wasn't going to talk about sex. Not that I don't like talking about sex. I just prefer having sex to talking about it." He grinned. "But talking about it isn't bad."

Don't Mess with Texas is my introduction to Christie Craig's writing, and a delight to read! It was fresh, funny, and steamy and I loved the world she wrote. The characters are interesting, quirky people who I want to know more about. Now, I'm fairly new to the straight, non-erotic, non-suspenseful Contemporary Romance genre, and unfortunately I don't often find the stories detailed or interesting enough to hold my attention. Thankfully that's not the case with *this* story!

Story blurb:

Nikki Hunt thought her night couldn't get worse when her no-good, cheating ex ditched her at dinner, sticking her with the bill. Then she found his body stuffed in the trunk of her car and lost her two-hundred-dollar meal all over his three-thousand-dollar suit. Now not only is Nikki nearly broke, she's a murder suspect.

Former cop turned PI, Dallas O'Connor knows what it's like to be unjustly accused. But one look at the sexy-though skittish-suspect tells him she couldn't hurt anyone. The lead detective, Dallas's own brother, has the wrong woman and Dallas hopes a little late-night "undercover" work will help him prove it . . .

I loved the 'if something *can* go wrong, it will' theme of the story because rather than angsty, those things were all handled with humor. Some of the funniest moments in the story could actually have been dismally dreary, but Ms. Craig did a great job of keeping it light, easy to follow and a joy to read. The family dynamic between Tony, Dallas and their father was laugh out loud funny at times, as well as heartwarming and poignant. The interactions with Dallas and his partners, Austin and Tyler – anyone else notice they're all named after major Texas cities? – were also pretty darned funny at times, and that's all part of what made the book so fun! But I have to be honest and tell you, Bud, the English Bulldog with flatulence issues was one of

my favorite characters. And speaking of Bud, this was one of my favorite scenes:

Her heart swelled with hope. “We should start all over, try dating, and just see—”

He put a finger over her lips. “No.”

Her chest grew tight.

“I don’t want to start over. I want you back at my place. Bud hasn’t been the same. He’s not eating right. I carried him to the vet and he said he’s depressed. He’s farting like crazy and there’s no one there to laugh with me about it. It’s pathetic.”

She chuckled. “This is supposed to make me want to go back?”

He smiled. “You love Bud. Don’t deny that.”

She took a deep breath and decided to be honest. “He’s not the only thing I love, Dallas. And that scares me because if you don’t feel the same way—”

“For God’s sake, Nikki, what the hell do you think I just said?”

She considered his question. “Saying you want me to share your dog’s farts is not saying you love me.” She laughed.

He dropped his head back on the sofa and laughed with her. Seconds later, he looked at her. “Then let me say it. I love you.” He kissed her nose. “I love all of you. There’s nothing I don’t love about you. The way you talk to yourself. The way you care about your crazy grandmother and her friends. The way you accept people and make everyone happy. Including me. You make me happy, Nikki. Do you know how long it’s been since I’ve been happy? Oh, and I love your body. I really love your body.”

She smiled. “I love you, too.”

“And my body?” he asked, his blue eyes twinkling with sexy humor.

She laughed again. “I love your body, too.”

The bottom line – This was a really enjoyable read. Christie Craig knows how to write fun, sensitive, honorable people who I couldn’t help but fall in love with! And the secondary characters were just as interesting, entertaining and captivating as Dallas and Nikki. And speaking of secondary characters, I think one of my favorite side stories was watching Dallas’ dad, recently widowed, find new friends and reasons to keep living. I’m hoping that there will be more books coming because Austin and Tyler both need a *happily ever after*.

This ebook was provided free of charge by netgalley.com in behalf of Grand Central Publishing, in exchange for an honest review.

Rachel- Goodbye Borders says

Overall I guess liked it. It kept me engaged. Nikki annoyed me, I thought she was winy (oh poor me!) and a bit stupid at times. Dallas wasn't much better. He would think about how hot Nikki was at inappropriate times. I did enjoy the side romance with Tony and LeAnn (and it all would have been fine much earlier had they TALKED). The who-done-it was a bit of a let down.

The best parts of this book: the coffin sleeping dog (and dog farts) and Nikki spewing vomit all over Dallas. I normally don't notice typos unless they are obvious. This one had some ones I saw (like Brain for Brian).

Pamela(AllHoney) says

Nikki Hunt meets her ex-husband at an expensive restaurant and then gets stuck with the bill which she can't afford when he disappears. Then she leaves for the grocery store and finds her missing husband dead in her truck. Enter the police who know the wife or ex-wife is usually the best suspect. (It doesn't help that Nikki says she's going to kill him in the hearing of two different people.) Along with the police is Dallas O'Connor, a former cop who was framed for a crime and spent time in prison and is the brother of the cop in charge of the murder investigation. Now Dallas is a private investigator and ready to take on the case and keep one more innocent out of prison. Dallas' brother, Tony O'Connor, is estranged from his wife and wants her back. In addition to investigating the murder he is trying to woo his wife, LeAnn, back into his life.

This turned into a fun, delightful, and entertaining read. The whodunnit wasn't all that difficult to figure out but the romance was sweet. In fact, both of the romances were sweet. There are a few heart-wrenching moments but the tone of the book was light. There were some great extra characters that included Nana, Nikki's grandmother, the members of the Ol' Timers group, Dallas' dad and, of course, the English Bulldog, Bud. Anyone looking for a light Contemporary Romance with a little mystery will surely enjoy this one.

Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

DMWT is a whole lot of book for a great price!!! \$5.99 for the ebook, which makes this naughty girl really happy =)

Where to start...I read this book at the close of one of the most hellish weeks I've had in a long time, it didn't take long for Christie to have me smiling and chuckling. (for Naughty D's friends that only like Erotic romances, I have to tell you this is 100% contemporary romance, but definitely a great read)

Dallas is a former cop, who's ex-wife deserted him when times got rough, therefore he's sworn off all relationships, except for no strings attached booty calls. Nikki is a divorced artist who caught her husband with one of her gallery employees and divorced him. Neither Nikki nor Dallas are big on trust, but from the minute Nikki pukes all over Dallas, he's drawn to her and swears to help prove her innocence. But there's a big problem, a string of bad things keep happening to Nikki and it's making Dallas want more..maybe. And the fact Dallas's brother Tony is the investigating officer in Nikki's ex-husband's murder case does not help matters. Dallas' attempts to get Nikki in bed and Nikki's attempts to fight it are funny and cute. I don't think I'll ever be able to say or hear the word "cupcake" without giggling again. Dallas' business partners Austin and Tyler add in humor to the developing relationship and I love the teasing between the three men.

There is a secondary relationship between Tony and his estranged wife LeAnn, that had me just as enthralled as the developing romance between Nikki and Dallas. Tony and LeAnn's story is about two people being torn apart by the unimaginable, but still being in love. I have to admit I was pulling for them and there were moments in their story that brought tears to my eyes.

To view the entire review visit:

<http://www.guiltypleasuresbookreviews...>

Jacqueline says

3-1/2 stars. Not quite as amusing as other CC books that I've read but still a good solid mostly lighthearted read. Lot's of interesting characters and a solid lead couple. There was also a side story about the hero's brother getting back together with his wife which was nice. There was an interesting little mystery which played out well. One thing I like about CC is that the crimes in her books are more normal type crimes. No serial killers or terrorists etc. Just ordinary police work or in this case PI work. The story isn't all technical but neither is it just glossed over as a way to get two people together. If there's a PI and a client then I want to see some effort involved in solving the crime. That was nicely done here. I enjoyed both the heroine who thankfully did not do any TSTL stuff and the hero who knew what he was doing job wise but really made mistakes in their relationship but he was so charming and sorry and rather bumbling that you really couldn't hold it against him.

Looking forward to the next one.
