



From Dirt to Diamonds

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He'll stop at nothing to settle old scores!

When Angelos Petrakos spies supermodel Thea Dauntry in a swanky London restaurant, he knows she's not really the effortlessly elegant woman she seems to be...

For Thea, Angelos's reappearance is disastrous! Dining with a viscount on the verge of proposing, the last thing she wishes to be reminded of is the street-smart, quick-tempered girl she once was.

A lucky encounter years ago with the gorgeous Greek tycoon enabled Thea to make something of her future. But Angelos can't forget how she used him—and he'll stop at nothing to bring her down. Not even seduction...

From Dirt to Diamonds Details

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From Reader Review From Dirt to Diamonds for online ebook

StMargarets says

Good lord, how do you rate a story like this? The hero was so mean - his actions of revenge against the young aspiring model who just wanted to work and not end up as a prostitute like her mother and grandmother were out of proportion to the crime. (She stole his watch after he gave her a job and then reneged on it. If she didn't give the photographer outside something of value, he was going to cut her face). Because of that (and because she was lippy when he took her out for dinner) he called the cops on her and was incensed when she gave the watch back and wasn't charged. He made sure she couldn't get modeling work, he also made sure she was kicked out of her apartment and that she lost the two menial jobs she was holding down.

When he sees her five years later on the day her boyfriend proposes, he is still out for revenge. He threatens to tell her fiancé who her real identity is unless she breaks off the engagement and poses as his "mistress." Heroine realizes he could make life hard for her aristocratic fiancé, so she complies.

Hero is still trying to figure her out. So he takes her to Switzerland where he spent a lot of time in boarding school. They go on Alpine walks, to a glacier, and eat nice food. It's a lovely respite from all of the angst, but of course it doesn't last. Heroine inadvertently drinks some apple wine (she never drinks) and the hero seduces her. He is shocked that she is a virgin. Heroine wakes up the next morning in despair. She thinks of herself as no better than her mother and grandmother. She hikes up the mountain and falls when the hero pursues her. She refuses to take his hand to save herself from falling.

Luckily she survives. The fall completely freaks out the hero who is now consumed with guilt. The heroine refuses to see him and returns to London on her own steam. Hero lets himself into her apartment (he made a copy of her keys while she was in the hospital) and then apologizes. Heroine finally explains why she stole his watch. Hero is even more guilt stricken. He makes his declaration.

At this point I wish JJ had given these two a breathing space. I would have believed the HEA more if the heroine had asked for some time and the hero had to suffer for awhile. I don't think all that hatred and mistrust could just dissolve in a few minutes. I also think the heroine needed some therapy about her own self-loathing and hang ups about sex that was based on her mother's and grandmother's actions and had nothing to do with her.

If you want angst and drama - this is the story for you. Not a lot of romance, though - so be warned.

Jenny says

Like many reviews said there was too much hate/negativity between them. It was impossible to believe in their HEA.

Diya says

the novel lost steam after chapter three and fell flat from there on. Everything from the hero's PoV was not reasonable.

Fanniny Moreno Zavaleta says

I'm lazy (shocker!) so I'll just leave the link of StMargarets review.

Why did I give 1 more star than StMargarets? Because I love geology (it's an important part of my career, plus I even have my rocks collection ??), that and his buying her chocolates (BTW did she eat them?) rested my hate for the H considerably, not that he didn't deserve to have his nails pulled for what he did to the h.

Anyways, tell Giles if it doesn't work out with the family friend he can call me... Meaning, I want to know if he has his book.

My fav part (view spoiler)

Debbie DiFiore says

OMG This book was intense. I hated it then I loved it. The hero was such a maniac. He was so cruel. I loved it when he realized he had been so wrong. I wanted more though. He really needed to hurt more. It was very intense. They didn't even have a relationship five years ago. It was just an odd read. So why four stars. Because he really grovelled. I never give four stars to stuff like this but I really liked the anguish. Maybe I am becoming hardened to the HP heroes because I have read so many of them. 99% of them are a\$\$holes. I loved the h though. I loved her strength and resilience and I loved that she made something of herself instead of wallowing in self pity. He really did her a favor in a way. Not in a good way but still. It was an intense read. I normally would have hated the whole book but it really got to me. I loved the redemption for both of them. He was not celibate while apart and normally that is a deal breaker for me big time but it didn't bother me in this one. I hated the hero so much it was like I didn't care. He was such a b@\$tard, I just didn't care what he did. I loved the epilogue and I loved his deep remorse in her apartment. She would have rather died than have him help her. I think it shocked the nastiness right out of him. Good angsty read. Would not really recommend to anyone because normally I would have hated this book and it does have major angst.

Dinjolina says

If this is love, what is hate?
I am afraid to ask.

This book had an unhappy ending because the heroine and the hero ended up together. Was that not the point, you ask me? Yes, it was. But this hero is in the uber crazy league! A rabid monkey is less of a threat. Really. So why would I want him to be happy?

And when it comes to retaliations? I think of the film Valentine's day. I am thinking he is the kind of man that would go on a killing spree 10 years later if you told him no on junior prom night.

Carol Storm says

I'd only read one other Julia James book before this, *PAINTED THE OTHER WOMAN*. It was pleasant, but nothing out of the ordinary. But this book, I'm going to take a chance and say it, was a classic.

I can see why a lot of experienced readers hated it. The hero ruins the heroine's life -- twice. But it's made very clear that she has lied to him, stolen from him, and responded to his indignation with seething contempt. We can debate endlessly whether anything Kat says or does justifies Angelo's brutally efficient domination.

But what is beyond dispute is that Kat is the toughest, most determined, most emotionally real heroine I have seen in a Harlequin Presents in a long, long, time. As Angelos (finally) says at the end of the book, her determination, her courage, and her integrity are truly one of a kind, even more so than her stunning beauty!

I liked the fact that this heroine was tough enough to take anything the hero threw at her. I loved the brutal ugliness of her childhood and how hard she worked to overcome it. Even the predictable creepy stalker with the knife only added power and intensity to the early chapters. Kat runs from one danger to another, out of the frying pan and into the fire!

The words I kept thinking of as I read this book were intensity, precision, and restraint. Julia James writes with passion, but that implies sloppiness or gushing overstatement. In this book, Kat's desire for Angelos and his for her are steaming hot precisely because neither one can admit the truth until very, very late in the game. I loved how Kat was so ruthless with herself, crushing down every thought and memory and desire that Angelos' presence called up. It only made the love scenes more explosive at the end!

Another thing I loved about this book was the flawless blend of the traditional and the modern in Harlequin Presents. The early chapters, where Kat is menaced by a knife-wielding creep, were written so forcefully and with such gut-wrenching tension that they really made you feel the modern dangers women face on the streets today. Yet the chapters in Switzerland (superb research and atmosphere by the way) felt so old-fashioned they might have come from the days of Mary Burchell. (Look up her books on Goodreads, you won't be sorry.)

Up until two weeks ago, I would have said that Caitlin Crews is the only Harlequin Presents author active right now who stands out -- the only one who upholds the standards of the old masters, whose work equals that of living legends like Rosemary Rogers and Mary Balogh.

Now I would say Caitlin Crews and Julia James are both leading the way to a new era in quality romance.

One technical note: I read this whole book on my breaks at work using my Amazon Kindle. This was the first time reading on Kindle totally captivated me and held my attention just like reading a print book!

Alexis-Morgan Roark says

This is one of those times where I have to remind the reader that the rating system on Goodreads is a reflection of whether or not I liked the book, and the ending just left me so darn cold and angry and...depressed. She deserved better. I can't see him grovelling enough if he gets down on his knees daily for the next decade.

Booklover says

This was an intense book,Angelos-Kat/Thea hate each other,Angelos thinks Kat is a woman who will go to any lengths to gain her goal,move up in career and Kat she hates Angelos cause he destroyed her completely,through her life Kat worked hard to gain respect and become something,climb out of pit of poverty and never look back but Angelos took it from her and she was again in that pit

Now its been 5 years Kat has adapted a new name Thea and has again climbed up from nothing to becoming something,she has met a good man Giles whom she doesn't love but cares and has vowed to become a good wife to him but then Angelos strikes again

From there on these two embark on their journey towards HEA,they are still many hurdles between them,their past history,Angelos misunderstandings about Thea,as time passes by they spend more and more time with each other and both get to know the real Angelos and Kat both fall for each other,they fight it but their love wins

This book had potential but it did not reach that peak,liked Kat a lot,liked the way Angelos-Thea spend time together at mountains and get to know each other more,but Angelos righteousness irritated me,who is he to teach lessons and punish people for their wrong doings

Overall an okay read

Vashti says

This book,the reader will either love it or hate it.This is not a soft ,fluffy read .The book is dark,sometimes I just wanted to throw Angelos Petrakos,the hero of this book down the hill.I really did not like him at all.The story opens with Thea aka Kat having lunch with the man she hopes to be her fiancée,Giles,an aristocrat.She is seen by a man from a past that she would rather forget until that past is thrown in her face by Angelos.Her past is a heartbreaker.Her mother was a drug addict,drinker and a prostitute to support her habits,her grandmother was the same.Each died at a very young age.The heroine has vowed never to be like them.Angelos gives a card to Thea and tells her to call him.Thea goes to see Angelos and he threatens to reveal her past to Giles as Kat Jones.There were a few chapters where you see Angelos and Kat,how they met ,the events leading to her arrest for theft and what caused her transformation from Kat to Thea.At this point in the book,I really hated Angelos....he blacklisted her in London and had her evicted from her dingy bedsit.She leaves London and moves to another city and one day has a revelation and decides to reinvent herself.Fast forward five years later ,Angelos succeeds in his attempt to break up her relationship with Giles and takes her away to Switzerland.Here they come to gradually know each other and semi let their guard down.Each realizes the truth about each other ,but still guarded.They make love one night after Thea

mistakenly drinks wine instead of the normal juice she drinks and is lulled into a more mellow mood. The next morning, she is mortified and attempts to run away. Angelos goes after her, but she falls down the mountain side after failing to grasp his hand. Thea survives the fall, is hospitalized for a day, then discharges herself AMA and goes back to London. Angelos follows, they have a long emotional talk, at this point I was tearing up. There should have been more of a grovel for Angelos, I would have made him suffer for all that he put her thru and more. The epilogue was nice, he was lovey then.

Shar says

This was one of the most unromantic M&B's I've ever read. More like a hate story than a love story. If not for the 'I love you's' in the end, this would have been an interesting revenge drama (because I did like the writing).

I missed the part where they fall in love; they spend the entire book distrusting/trying to destroy each other. The hero is a arrogant, vindictive psycho who acts more like a like power-mad gangster than a love interest (and the heroine didn't seem to any tender feelings (other than lust) for him,) so it seemed like her telling him ILU came out of nowhere.

I think there was too much hate/negativity between them (in the past) for there to ever be a believable HEA. Maybe I would have liked it better if the ending was less rushed.

willaful says

James is one of my go-to authors for angsty romance reads, but I have mixed feelings about *From Dirt to Diamonds*. On the one hand, I devoured it in one gulp, totally riveted. And it was interesting to see a Harlequin Presents heroine from the seriously bad side of the tracks, who genuinely deserves (to some extent) the hero's poor opinion of her. On the other hand, the heroine's scary situation sometimes moved beyond angsty into heavy, to the point that I would barely have been surprised if the story had ended with death rather than Happy Ever After. Overall, it was a somewhat uneasy mix of classic Harlequin Presents fantasy and painful modern reality. (Someone could also write a really interesting piece about the themes of class and classism in the story, though that someone won't be me.)

Kat is eighteen when she discovers her family tree is even worse than she once thought: a series of unknown fathers and addicted, prostitute mothers. She's determined not to repeat the pattern and sets out to escape her origins, determined to stay away from anything -- drink, drugs, men -- that might make her fall into the trap. The possibility of a modeling job brings her into contact with wealthy businessman Angelos, but their brief acquaintance quickly turns very ugly and leaves Kat almost destroyed. Five years later, they meet up again -- only now Kat has turned herself into Thea, a refined, elegant woman just about to marry a Viscount's heir. And Angelos is determined not to allow her to get away with it.

Fans of groveling heroes will enjoy this: Angelos behaves very, very badly, and he's very, very sorry when he discovers it. I thought it would have been better if (view spoiler) But I liked that their relationship develops slowly, and in a context of shared experience rather than the common pattern of the wealthy hero showering the heroine with expensive luxuries.

It won't be everyone's cup of tea, that's for sure, but it is a compelling read for those who enjoy very badly

behaved/repentant heroes and/or something a little out of the ordinary.

(I received this as an e-arc from netGalley.)

RLA says

At the begining of the book, the heroine Thea is dining with her boyfriend and he proposes. Thea is happy as she finally feels like she may be safe for the first time in her life. But this comes crashing down when she sees the hero Angelos and reminds her of both her difficult life and of the devastating events of five years ago. Angelos has never forgotten those events and vows revenge on Thea. We discover that Thea and Angelos met at a model casting for Angelos's business, at that time Thea was very brazen, standoffish and rough as a result of her upbringing in the care system. She was desperate to land the modelling assignment due to her very difficult situation. Angelos has initially cast her but then had withdrawn the offer. When Thea had gone to him to ask why Angelos misunderstood what she was offering. In desperation she had done something that drove Angelos to take actions that destroyed her life. Five years late and Thea has managed to rebuild her life and now Angelos is demanding she ends her engagement on the pretence of being in love with him or he will tell the truth about her past. He takes her to his home and they begin to get to know one another; Angelos begins to realise he may have been wrong about her, but Thea can never forgive him for destroying her life for the second time.

One of the things I like most about Julia James's books is that they are always full of angst. And that is DEFINITELY the case for this book. While on one hand I couldn't stand this book, on the other I literally could not stop reading it. It's like car crash reading!

The hero behaves so badly that it's just beyond belief, yet strangely it really works. The heroine is really quite heartbreaking, her background and manner are really quite daring of the author as they are as far away from the 'romantic fantasy' as possible. Some of the events in the book had me cringing, but I'm not sure if they could, or should, be changed. Although the ending is far too rushed, which did annoy me.

Only Julia James could write a book like this and somehow pull it off; it's full of her usual misunderstandings and very angsty, yet it's totally compelling. It is very reminiscent of the older and 'classic' Harlequin/Mills & Boon's so, perhaps, it will not be for everyone.

But I enjoyed it, much like I enjoy cake but know it's really not very good for me!

Originally posted at <http://everyday-is-the-same.blogspot...>

Jacqueline says

I had to wait until I was in the right mood to read this. It sure was a different sort of book. Steam kept coming out of my ears because she was so helpless against him. He just used his money and power to steamroller right over her. In both the past and the present she was trying so hard to better herself and he had totally no respect for her.

There was quite a bit of angst at the end and he did a major bit of grovelling but I do have to say that he needed to be even sorrier for destroying her life and I would have liked to see him do even more begging for her to take him back.

So upshot? I liked it in a totally over the top assshatty hero, downtrodden but plucky heroine with heaping helpings of melodrama kind of way.

Lynsey A says

Surprisingly this turned out to be a pretty good story. I wasn't sure at first while reading this one. At first the heroine annoyed me a bit but then the hero took the cake as a class A jerk.

However, as the story progressed I began to like both the hero and the heroine. Once they were in the Swiss mountains the story really got better. It was nice to see a peaceful time between the hero and the heroine with no fighting, etc.

There were some nice angsty moments near the end after the first love scene. Quite dramatic if a bit OTT. :) However, I enjoyed it.

Angelos's grovelling was excellent. I truly felt like he was ashamed of his behavior and hated himself for it. Sometimes when there is a hero grovelling scene, it still feels like he blames the heroine somehow. Not in this story. His love really shined through for me in this one.

Julia James is sometimes a hit or miss with me. This one was definitely a hit.
