



Lily White Rose Red

Catt Ford

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Meet Grey Randall, a hard-boiled detective whose sense of humor makes it hard for him to stay strictly noir. It's 1948 in Las Vegas—the newborn Sin City—and he's just landed his first murder case. He's more at ease among the lowlifes, but his new client, a beautiful, wealthy woman, a real femme fatale, moves in the upper crust of society.

Grey's hot on the trail of a killer, despite obstructive cops who don't want a private dick sniffing around and digging up secrets. And he starts getting close to the truth, but one of his suspects, Phillip Martin, AKA Mr. Big—AKA Mr. Beautiful—proves to be a man who could force Grey to reveal a dark secret of his own.

Lily White Rose Red Details

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Author : Catt Ford

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From Reader Review Lily White Rose Red for online ebook

? Irena ? says

First of all, this is not a romance. Some readers who avoid romance will take one look at genres on Goodreads and turn away from this book. And what a shame that would be! The Dreamspinner Press categories are a bit better: Novels, Mystery, Suspense, Americas, Historical. Having a gay protagonist doesn't make a book MM Romance! It wouldn't bother me since I read romance too, but some readers don't and they would miss a great story because of it.

'Now in 1948, drinking and gambling might have been legal, but many other things were not. And that's where I come in. I do things that the cops can't. In the city of neon, I shine a light on things that some people would rather remain in the dark.'

'My name is Grey Randall, and I'm a private dick.'

I loved it. It is a noir mystery with all the right and expected ingredients, but with its own touch. You have your PI who appreciates a beautiful *femme fatale* as much as the next guy, but hates when people say he is skinny (It's *Wiry!* for those interested). It's not his fault (or theirs) he isn't interested the way they expect.

A young rising singing and dancing star had been murdered and left in an alley. Another retired one hires Grey to investigate because the police isn't working as fast as she'd like. I really liked her character.

As you would expect, he discovers all kinds of secrets regarding the city, the police, dancers and singers, casinos, illegal underground clubs and so much more. Of course, not everyone is happy he is on the trail.

Now, for the 'romance' part. There is only a hint, a promise of one and since I do not avoid romance and I like how different this one might be, I hope there will be a second book about Grey Randall, Private Dick.

Kassa says

Book One of Catt Ford's new detective series is off to a great start. Slick characters and a decent mystery are enough to carry this fun story but the era appropriate prose really brings this over the top in the best way.

Many stories about the roaring 40s throw in bits of dialogue or phrases that are reminiscent of the time period but this story is steeped in the language of the time. This helps make up for any stumbles and issues that may arise and some definitely do with the main character. However the good pace and well used sexual tension has delivered a great start and one I can't wait to continue with.

Immediately we're introduced to Grey Randall, the first person narrator. Grey is a tough private eye, ex-military, that has settled in Vegas and made a decent life. When a well-known dancer comes to Grey to help find a friend's killer, Grey is excited for the case. The tracks and clues lead him to a hidden gay club and a host of possible suspects. From cops to big shots and everything in between, Grey must keep on his toes and his pants zipped despite temptation to figure out the truth behind all the smoke and mirrors.

The plot reads similar to classic noir films. In fact in many ways I could see this story as a black and white film with flashes of red or white whenever Lily, the classic *femme fatale*, was in the scene. From Grey the private eye to the big shot casino owner rumored to be with the mob to even the closeted club owner that

Grey just can't stay away from, the entire cast reads along familiar and well-loved lines. Many seem straight out of noir film and fiction, even so much that I recognized a lot of the moves Lily did from great films. However, instead of ruining the story or making it feel too cliché, this all works to invoke a great time and era. These well-crafted outlines may not surprise anyone but fans will be thoroughly entertained and delighted with the classic ambiance and characters.

Part of this is the great choice in prose and writing. From the very beginning to the end, the writing keeps up the era and time period incredibly well with few, if any, slips. There are no occasional mentions of dames but instead Grey consistently acts, speaks, and quips like a private eye from the noir time period; albeit a gay one. There is a nice sexual tension and homage to Lily's beauty and sex appeal that Grey acknowledges even if he's not particularly interested himself. There are also several undercurrents and themes running along that help craft a great background to a new series. Most of the recurring characters are introduced and developed just enough to be memorable without having too many players moving in too many directions.

Some of the plot twists are predictable and the connection between Lily and her friend is obvious immediately, just as the killer is obvious as well. However this didn't take away any enjoyment and the quick pace and great writing really carry the story. The character of Grey definitely stumbles the most unfortunately as he comes across rude, uncouth, and selfish. This is fine when depicting a rough and tumble private eye (or dick as he's called by everyone else) but when trying to put him up against a slick object of lust, it falls apart somewhat. The first sex scene (of only two!) is absolutely fabulous and shows both Grey's mercenary nature and a true example of a sex scene furthering the plot. This is not only smoking hot, but incredibly fun to read. The last sex scene is superfluous and more of a nod to readers but who's going to complain since it's a great scene. It does however highlight the juxtaposition of Grey's in your face rudeness with Phillip's suave demeanor. It really made me wonder why Phillip bothered with Grey at all but no doubt these two have more encounters in future novels, especially since the ending is left dangling.

Another great aspect is the honesty with which issues of the day are handled. From race relations to homosexuality and even the obvious infidelity and reputation of dancers, the entire feel of the story is authentic, honest, and compelling. The fact that each of these problems brought up is portrayed as close to the era as possible helps the continuity of the story. There are no breaks to downplay or try to apologize for the time. Instead the story lets the great noir feel shine in all its glory and seedy actions.

This first offering is more mystery and introduction than romance and I didn't mind at all. Some readers may be disappointed so know going in that the romance is the least important element but there is a lot of great sexual tension from all angles that help make up for that and the potential for romance is huge as the series continues. The best part of the story again for me is the writing. I loved the prose, dialogue, and quick banter from all the various characters, even the minor ones and that had me turning pages eagerly. This is quite the cast and I can't wait to see where it goes from here. Although not very romantic per se, if you're looking for that classic noir feel, check this out.

Jenre says

I've had this in my TBR pile for years and pulled it out because I've been playing LA Noire on the Xbox and it seemed to fit my mood for the 1940s USA. I enjoyed it on the whole. The characterisation was solid and the mystery kept me guessing. It was nicely hard boiled in places and my only complaint was a slightly saggy middle and a disappointing romance sub-plot. There was more chemistry between Grey and Lily than

with the romantic interest. A pretty good read which is more 3.5 stars but I've rounded it up. I notice there's been no sequel, unless I've missed it somehow, which is a shame really as maybe the author was going to develop the romance as the series progressed.

Vin9 says

Noir-style 1948 Las Vegas soapish murder mystery with lots of humor and a touch of romance. Not much of a romance novel and the ending resolution is left open ended for sequel. On positive side- witty, humorous dialogues and great characters like Grey, Charlotte and Artie. The only thing I can complain is the murder mystery which dominated majority of the book suddenly took back burner in the last part and got tied up "too nicely" to be believable.

Kimberly says

Private detective Grey Randall hasn't exactly had the big cases since he moved to Las Vegas. That all changes when famous Vegas dancer Lily McIntyre strolls into his office with murder on her mind; her protégé's murder, that is. Lily wants Grey to track down Marguerite Saint-Ville's killer and Grey is all-too-happy to catch his first murder case. What Grey doesn't count on is the case taking him to Lambda, a high class, highly secret club for gay men. Nor does he expect the instant attraction that flares when he meets Phillip Martin, AKA Mr. Big, AKA Mr. Beautiful AKA one of Grey's suspects. It's hard enough for Grey to "keep up appearances" concerning his choice of gender when it comes to his choice of partners, and it's doubly difficult when the case keeps throwing him in Phil Martin's path. He'll have to juggle his desire for Mr. Beautiful, a client who isn't telling him the whole truth about the case, cops who don't want a private dick butting into their case, and a host of shady characters if Grey hopes to solve the mystery of Marguerite Saint-Ville's murder.

Catt Ford weaves together murder, mobsters, secrets, and lust to deliver a detective novel unlike I've ever read. Lily White Rose Red reminds me of the noir detective films of the 1940s (the era in which the story is set), albeit with a few delicious twists that wouldn't have made it to the silver screen back then. I fell in love with Lily White Rose Red's snappy dialogue, it's smart, hard-boiled detective, and a certain suspect said private dick just can't resist. Lily White Rose Red is a fast-paced, energetic story, one that kept me reading into the late hours of the night. Grey's humor is infectious and I can't express enough how much the banter in the book charmed me. Like all good detective stories, everyone is more than they seem on the surface, and it was a delight to peel back the layers not just of Grey, but everyone else in the novel.

In Lily White Rose Red Ms. Ford captured my attention from the very beginning and before I finished the first five pages, I was in love with the book. Lily White Rose Red was a joy to read all the way through. It's sensual, exciting, and, best of all, it's pure fun. I Joyfully Recommend Lily White Rose Red and I can't wait to see where Ms. Ford takes Grey and Phil next!

Recommended Read. Reviewed for Joyfully Reviewed.

Alli says

3-3.5 Great noir story. A lot of Sam Spade/Philip Marlowe flavor with a dollop of m/m on top. Not much romance, but seemed like the start of a series so that may develop.

Grey's object of desire didn't quite mesh for me; he was a question mark through most of the book & the interaction was just off. Hopefully that will change as the series progresses.

Barb ~rede-2-read~ says

I liked this story, though it is a historical and they aren't my favorite, but the rhythm of the story was reminiscent of the old Dragnet TV series, or 77 Sunset Strip, both vague memories from my childhood. (Yes, I am that old.) And I could picture Rita Hayworth as the actress who hires Grey Randall, private dick, to solve the mystery of the murder of a young woman. It was definitely different from the usual and the mystery was really great.

There wasn't much of a romance, simply a one-time blow job encounter in the office of "Mr. Big" early in the story and sex that was treated as casual at the end of the story, though it appears that the casual will eventually grow into a relationship as the story goes on. So all in all, if you are a fan of post WWII historical romance, mysteries and stories that are less about the relationship and more about the mystery, then you should like this one.

Sineala says

Gay noir hardboiled mystery set in 1940s Las Vegas! It's a pretty fun read, with a sense of humor that I thought was appealing. The mystery wasn't that tricky; I am appallingly bad at mystery novels but even I got this one. I would have liked a little more romance (or, really, any relationship) between the main character and his love interest. Hopefully if the author writes a sequel there could be some more of that.

Snowtulip says

This was definitely more mystery, than romance, but this book completely appealed to me. It had this amazing sense of time and place, I could completely imagine 1940's Las Vegas and the glitz and glamour of the time. I am completely left with the beginnings of a potential romance and no sequel in sight to let me know if it builds further!

Emmie says

4.25 to 4.5 it took me about ten to twenty pages to get into the language and writing style but then it flowed really well. I think I couldn't tell initially if this would be an ironic self aware storyline or sort of a mockumentary tone. Neither of those is probably most accurate descriptions to use. It was really good and

moved quickly. The ending was a little too easily wrapped in terms of the suspense but it makes you very interested in the next book. And also it was nice to like the main character, sometimes this style of book can feel overwrought to me. Like I'm reading a karaoke version of an old movie, but I felt like this author avoided that. :0)

BarbaraAnn says

This was a good mystery with characters I loved. The secondary characters were compelling and I would have loved to see a sequel (or multiple sequels) starring some of the side characters - particularly Reggie, Jazz and Carrie.

Hollis Shiloh says

This was good. Too bad it never turned into a series. Sometimes I'm in the mood for hardboiled private eyes, and this was a good dose of that, plus humor, all with gay characters. A good read.

Misty says

**** 4.5 Stars ****

A Great Classic Noir with a gay twist. It's a shame there isn't a sequel!

Susan says

It took me a while to adjust to the style and the language of this story but once I did it really grabbed me. There was a lot more focus on the murder mystery and detective side of things than on the romance, although the beginnings of it were there. Hopefully there will be more books to come so that we can see it develop.

Mercedes Hightower says

HILARIOUS. SOOOOOOO Want a 2nd
