



The Sheriff's Christmas Surprise

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The morning after Thanksgiving, Enrique "Rick" Santiago, the sheriff of Forever, Texas, opens his front door and discovers...a baby! Before he has a chance to say "who's the mommy" big-city lawyer Olivia Blayne arrives to claim the adorable infant. She's relieved to find her nephew safe, but is on a desperate search for her missing sister. Rick's only too happy to help, even if he and Olivia instantly clash.

Olivia's high-powered life is about responsibility—not laughter, love and holiday joy. But something about joining forces with Rick leads her to realize that there are more things missing from her life than her sister. And passion has its place—even if it is only temporary. After all, her time away from her job in Dallas can't last forever.

Or can it? After all, Christmas is a wonderful time for surprises!

The Sheriff's Christmas Surprise Details

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From Reader Review The Sheriff's Christmas Surprise for online ebook

Toni says

Someone left a baby on Sheriff Enrique Santiago's doorstep. He goes into town to see if anyone recognizes the baby and in comes Olivia Blayne, a lawyer from Dallas. It seems the baby is her nephew, and she's looking for his mother her younger sister.

Rick offers to help her find her sister, who has been injured in a car accident.

I liked Rick's character from the start, caring and sensitive. It took a minute to feel compassion for Olivia. She came off as too controlled and rigid.

Harlequin Books says

Miniseries: Babies & Bachelors USA

Carmen says

SEX MILDLY DISCUSSED IN THIS REVIEW

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to run into you like that," she apologized in a deeply melodic voice that reminded him of aged whiskey sliding down the side of a thick glass on a chilled winter morning.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with Harlequin's line "American Romance," let me tell you that usually deals with cowboys, small towns, and family. Family meaning babies. Lots and lots of babies.

Look at this cover. Look at this title. I mean, come on. The title is hilarious. The cover, I actually like. To be truthful, I really like modern Harlequin book covers. I know that they get made fun of a lot. But I like them. So we've got a sheriff sitting in a rocking chair, smiling at a grinning baby, with a noticeable Texas flag over the fireplace.

This is part of the "Babies & Bachelors" miniseries. Yes, that was a thing. Apparently.

...

Enrique "Rick" Santiago wakes up and discovers an infant (3 months old) has been abandoned on his doorstep without so much as a note.

At first he thinks his deputies are playing a joke on him, but eventually he goes to the diner to investigate. There he runs into the baby's aunt: a stunning, blonde, high-powered attorney from Dallas. This is Olivia Blayne. She has been taking care of her train-wreck of a 24-year-old little sister Tina since their parents were murdered ten years ago.

Can Enrique help her find Tina? Will Enrique and Olivia find love together?

...

The plot seems to hinge on the two judging each other. Olivia is worried that a small-town sheriff won't be able to locate her sister. I didn't find that too bad. Enrique's judgments annoyed me much more.

"You've got a good eye," Rick commented, impressed. In his experience, women who looked like Olivia Blayne didn't know their way around cars, much less absorb that much about them.

Fuck you! How about this one, about 10 pages later:

Secure in his manhood and comfortable in his own skin, it would take a great deal more than a petite blonde in expensive high heels and a designer suit to rattle his confidence. Her apology, however, did surprise him. He would have put money on her never actually apologizing for anything she did.

Fuck you! LOL You can see what I mean - he thinks she's a self-absorbed fancy rich snob who doesn't have much practical knowledge and doesn't care about stuff like being kind. He does this solely based on the facts that she's pretty, she's a lawyer, and she's from Dallas - NOT based on any actual actions or words on her part.

Then there's the whole baby angle. This romance is based on the idea that family (read: being parents) is all important and that a "parenting instinct" (read: being good with kids) is a huge turn-on. This is one of those books where the leads melt while watching each other change diapers. And of course the book (view spoiler). This is a very family-above-all, you-need-to-marry-and-procreate line by Harlequin. Whether this kind of thing is "sweet" or "stomach-turning" is, of course, your own personal opinion. I can understand both!

Enrique's asshole inner monologue on his preconceptions about Olivia aside, I rather liked him. I have a real weakness for amused, patient, laid-back men who take things slow and don't have a temper. So if I didn't know what was going on in his mind sometimes, I would have him pegged as the perfect hero.

Sometimes Olivia came off as a real moron, and that was annoying.

One thing about the book that I have to comment on: they don't treat death as seriously as I would like them to. Instead, when people die in this book, or when the characters talk about the dead, it's either brushed off as unimportant or rather selfishly seen as "how does this death affect me" rather than "it's terrible that a person died." Now, this might not bother (or even register) with some people, but I was unnerved by it.

There's a horrible murder of a rat. :(

And Enrique "makes sure" that Olivia eats a few times, "for her own good" and I'm like "I'll eat or not eat whatever I want. Dictate my diet to me and lose a limb, asshole." This is a personal pet peeve of mine.

Lastly, the idea that (view spoiler) That really upset me.

...

How's the sex, Carmen?

This is one of the LEAST steamy Harlequin lines you can read without going into Inspirational (read: Christian) romances. This is a pretty chaste book.

At one point, Olivia chastises herself

Oh, damn, Liv, you ARE overwrought, aren't you? Stop having R-rated thoughts about Rick Santiago and focus on what's important.

o.O Let me tell you, she has no R-rated thoughts in this book.

I was wondering if they were ever going to kiss, and was not sure we were going to get much more than that.

They do finally kiss at 76%. And they DO surprisingly end up having sex. But it's very vague sex.

What is "vague sex," Carmen?

Well, it's sex where you - the reader - can't make heads or tails of what's going on, no matter how hard you try. Let me give you an example:

She felt as weak as a thin thread and as resiliently strong as a steel wire as Rick brushed his lips along the more sensitive areas of her body, bringing about a quickening that was equal to nothing she'd ever experienced before.

I, Carmen, want details. WHICH sensitive areas? What exactly is he doing? He could be kissing anything from her neck to her vulva, I have no clue. o.O

Here's a description of what I'm GUESSING is Enrique going down on Olivia - again, there's no real way to know.

As he explored, caressed, suckled, the excitement within her grew until she almost couldn't breathe, couldn't pull in enough air to sustain herself. A cry of ecstasy escaped as she felt his tongue taking possession of her, inciting a mini-riot within her very core.

He could be kissing her mouth, her breasts - I really have no flippin' idea.

Then I'm GUESSING (using my advanced romance-novel reading skills like a ninja!) that he fingers her to a second climax. I'm going to bold how Ferrarella phrases Enrique fingering Olivia.

*When it was done, when she couldn't hold on to even a sliver of a second longer, Olivia fell back on the bed, exhausted and all but disoriented. In a haze, she thought she heard Rick laugh softly and then felt the warmth beginning all over again as he **started to take her on a second journey, the route different, the result identical.***

This time she cried out his name, clutching at his shoulders like a woman about to go spinning off the edge of the earth and desperately trying to anchor herself before that happened.

Before she disappeared into space and became nothing more than a speck in the heavens.

Then they have penis-in-vagina sex.

There was no way she could have been prepared for this. For the crackling rhythm that flashed through her body over and over again as he entered her and then began to move his hips. She breathlessly hurried to

synchronize her movements to his.

They went faster and faster, racing to catch the ride of their lives.

She heard him make a sound as he was swept up in the moment and heard her own voice blending with his as the whirlpool seized them both at the same time, lifting them up, freezing in the moment and then, slowly, receding again.

Even though this sex isn't described how I like my sex described, I really appreciate what Harlequin is doing here. One of the best things about Harlequin is that they have a line to fill every niche, and I think it's nice that women who don't want NO SEX (Inspired) but don't want DESCRIBED SEX (Blaze) can come here to this "American Romance" line and find something in between: also known as "vague sex."

As for me, I'm a Blaze type of woman all the way. I also love Harlequin's Historical line. I'd say those are the best Harlequin lines FOR ME, but every reader is different and I like that Harlequin provides for that.

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Tl;dr - If you appreciate gentle, starting-a-family-is-all-important, small-town-values romance - this is definitely for you. In my opinion, it was too bland. Not only the sex, but the whole plot AND the characters themselves were pretty bland. I don't think Ferrarella is a bad romance novelist - trust me, I've read some terrible ones - but the nature of this line of Harlequin is probably a little too mild for my tastes.

TWO REAL STARS, TWO ROMANCE STARS

Not available in Spanish.

Harlequin American Romance November 2010

Kristin Backus says

Really surprised with how much I ended up enjoying this book. It was hard to get into but the end was a breeze along with being a bit predictable. Over all good.

Janet Robel says

Predictable! Those looking for a quick, sweet read will find it here. There's not really much of a holiday theme, but Christmas is mentioned towards the end. Sometimes, I find that reading shorter novels are a palette cleanser for in between the lengthier more complicated ones.

Kathy says

A lovely, sweet romance. The characters grew on me as I became invested in their stories. A lovely, warm Harlequin romance.

