



## Shattered Dreams

*Sally Wentworth*

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His love was only an illusion

On her wedding day, Kate felt how miraculous was to truly love and be loved. As Hugo's wife, she knew the rest of her life would be blessed

Then Kate overheard her husband's grim plan for their future together--a plan of revenge against Kate! Desperately hurt and afraid of the stranger who was her husband, she ran away to Majorca, to heal her broken heart in safety and solitude

But she underestimated the power of Hugo's will and the compulsion that drove him to reclaim her--for better, or for worse!

## Shattered Dreams Details

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## From Reader Review Shattered Dreams for online ebook

### Verity says

The hero – the DUBIOUSLY honorable Hugo – was so vile, that to say he's a pig would be an insult to pigdom. Usually we get to see an alpha army bloke who's jealous / possessive but his Achilles heel is the heroine. I spent my precious time reading this crap alternately wanting to deliver a swift kick in his b@ll\$, or chop off his b@ll\$ & cram 'em down his throat. He's an utter asscrack, a coward who only employs all his combat skills to bully, abuse & torture his defenseless wife, all in the name of revenge. He's the epitome of Hell Hath No Fury like a Man Scorned. Behold the terrorist, w/ a capital T. He reminds me of the infamous Sean Culhane, sans the bitch-slap & rape (Hugo doesn't rape Kate 'cuz she turns on the waterworks when he tries). I'm always on the lookout for a controversial quicksand, but the book was so distasteful that I just had to eat my fav dessert in the aftermath, grilled banana topped w/ chocolate & cheese, cholesterol be damned. We have the requisite name-calling = Bitch, slut, nocturnal bo-peep, skinny coat-hanger. We have the gray-eyed hero, who's 10 yrs older than the red-gold-haired heroine. Are these physical traits the recipe for a corrosive relationship ? It seems like almost all of the HP books featuring psychotic heroes & domestic abuse victims got eerily similar attributes.

The book opens w/ a fairy-tale wedding of the year. Kate, the blushing bride is a drop-dead gorgeous model & Hugo, her dashing groom is a Guards Officer. She's giving up her career for him. The wedding bliss is short-lived 'cuz it rapidly descends into an irreversible nitemare. Right after the banquet, Kate overhears Hugo's vitriolic rant to his best man thru' the gaping adjacent door. He just read a report from his hired PI, an irrefutable proof in his warped mind, that she's a lying, gold-digging, two-timing bitch. The damning evidence shows that a man has been staying overnite' @ her flat, he pays rent & that Kate & her paramour were caught in a pic being lovey-dovey as he said buhbye in the wee hours of the AM. Instead of staying to clear up the big mis, she follows her 1st instinct to run away from him, which is equivalent to admission of guilt in his eyes. She goes to her BFF who's married w/ 2 kids. The mystery man is actually her half-bro who came for her wedding but got called away again to Argentina for a business emergency. U'd think that Hugo's paying the PI enuff to discover this, but nope. So Kate feels like a 3rd wheel @ her BFF's house, 'cuz 1 of the twin babies is sick & she doesn't wanna be a burden. Her pal suggests that she use their hut in Majorca. I'm sorry, the last time I checked, U need to get a VISA to get outta country, don't ya ? I mean, even tho' she has a passport, it's not like she can just ride her broomstick to SPAIN & plop herself down on the roof of the Majorca getaway villa. But whatevah. She leaves the next day & Simon, her BFF's hubby & long-time friend, drives her to the airport & gives her some pin money for her staycay. He also happens to be her solicitor & will start the annulment process & give her the heads up on how it goes.

We're treated to pages & pages of boring descriptions of the rusty Spanish plumbing, the exotic locale (hey if I'd wanted scenery promo, I woulda grabbed a travel brochure !) & Kate's daily mundane R & R routine. Yawn.

Thru' flashback, we're told of how H/H met @ a charity fashion show. Kate gave him the cold shoulder when he asked her out, after he noticed her strutting on the runway. He called her every nite' 'till she said yez, but she intentionally tried to turn him off, by putting on outrageous wig & outfit. It didn't work 'cuz he saw thru' her ruse. On the eve of her departure for a Greek modeling assignment, he finally kissed her. When he picked her up @ the airport, she realized that she's fallen in luv w/ him. She called it panache, but she's still uncertain of his feelings. Well it didn't take long for her to find out. 24 hrs later, when things got too hawt & heavy after their date, she backtracked & Hugo offered her to be his mistress 'cuz he thought that's the only way he could stuff his meat into her gravy. She got offended & kicked him out. I mentally cheered

that she hung on to her ol-fashioned principles despite Hugo's condescending opinion. U go girl !

Typical of stalkerific hero, he showed up a month later @ her house party. No ILY, just "I missed ya." & she fell into his arms again. When he took her to his parents' house, he popped the question. Of course, she sealed her fate by saying yez, it escaped her notice that the requisite ILY's missing.

So back her current predicament. While shopping, some dude follows her around & takes her pics. Apparently she's a bit slow on the uptake. She thinks he's just another admirer who's blown away by her looks, 'cuz it's a daily occurrence. It doesn't even occur to her that he might be a hired PI who's on soon-to-be-ex hubby's payroll to track down her whereabouts. What are the chances of that happening, right ? Spain is another planet. Anyhoo, 1 day Kate gets injured in her attempt to rescue a young Spanish gal in a potentially-horrific equine accident. The family feels indebted to her & insists that she stay w/ 'em while she recuperates. The gal's bro, Carlos, is in a quandary. He wants to marry his beloved, but she keeps putting off the wedding date. Kate agrees to help Carlos sway his future bride, by making her jealous. Yada yada. More pages & pages of snoozers. She unexpectedly bumps into Hugo @ a bar. She uses the "I don't know him from Adam" fib, to foil Hugo's attempt to kidnap her. Carlos's friends toss Hugo out, which is another score for Hugo to settle later on. In his book, that's 3 guyz (Leo, Simon, Carlos) so far she's been in the sack w/. Be afraid, be v. afraid, Kate, 'cuz this bastard really takes 'menacing bully' to a whole new level. We get a glimpse of how prisoners of war could become mentally ill. I wondered why Kate doesn't suffer from PTSD when he's thru'.

After Carlos' plan to make her fiancée jealous works, Kate takes the hint from Carlos's mom that she's de trop, so she goes back to her villa. Lo & behold, look who's waiting for her. Yep, the dreaded mental case Hugo.

The following chapters shoulda been titled the Entrapment. When she tries to dash away from him, he slams her against the wall. Now here comes the series of Kate's harrowing, traumatizing ordeal. He corners her w/ noone to turn to & nowhere to go. He seals shut all the shutters & windows & all avenues of escape. He methodically subjects her to a long, arduous mind games & 3rd-degree inquisition. When she refuses to give him the answers he wants to hear, he mercilessly repeats the mental battery cycle all over again, complete w/ the intimidation tactics of shining a bright light on her face & him smoking a cigarette like a chimney (hey lung cancer wasn't an epidemic yet back then, right ? Esp in a close quarter, the involuntary inhaling of tobacco smoke worked wonders during interrogation !). When she defies him, the shithead breaks down her resistance w/ his various army tricks. He puts his hand on her neck to force her down, grabs her arms & shakes her arms like a rag doll, dunks her head 2 X into the swimming pool just to show off his physical strength & demonstrate his superiority over her puny self, he orders her around & when to cook for him (I'm still amazed she didn't lace it w/ high dosage of pepto bismol). All this is based on his own sick, twisted conclusion that she's married him to gain money & position. Is he for real ? As if he's the ruler of all galaxies. What a wimpy douchebag. He got no b@lls 'cuz he can't terrorize someone his own size ! Bravo indeed. Did the HP editors cackle in glee during editing ?

<< 'No one plays me false and gets away with it, least of all someone I put my trust in. I said I'd make you pay and I meant it, and your walking out on me has only added to the account. There are only two things I want from you, and I intend to get them both before I kick you out of my life once and for all. And don't think you'll just be able to pick up your life where you left off. I've got money and I've got power, and I'm going to use them to make darn sure that no agency or publisher in Britain ever uses you again. You'll be finished at home for good.'>>

She endures the emotional massacre to a breaking point. He watches her like a hawk, is always 1 step ahead

of her & she knows that the harder she fights him, the more he gets a kick outta it. He fesses up that he meticulously planned all this, before her return to the villa. Wow talk 'bout vindictive. He makes it an art. He threatens to slap her when she's on the verge of hysteria. Gee whiz, he prolly didn't see it coming, did he ? What a joyride. The icing on the poisonous cake is that the only way she can prove her honesty is to let him ride her. Yez, whodathunk, the ol-fashioned way of proving one's innocence is to deflower her 'cuz in the 80's when the book's written, post-coital hymen restoration wasn't all the rage yet ? He's 1 nasty tyrant. When Simon calls her, it's like a lifeline, she tries to scream for help but all she gets is hubby's arm jammed against her throat. Suffocation is so sexy < snorts >. He traps her in an airless bedroom & when she manages to slither away thru' a tiny gap in the bathroom window, he catches her again, just like in those Texas chainsaw massacre movies. It ain't over 'till it's over. He wouldn't let her take a shower despite her griminess from rolling around the dirt fighting him off, while he gets the luxury of enjoying the swimming pool. If I were Kate, I'd prolly spear a fork in his eyes & ears while he's asleep, bloodthirsty wench that I am hehehee.

Her rescuer, Carlos, shows up to pick her up. A glimmer of hope, hallelujah ! Alas, the numbnut sees Hugo whipping out their marriage certificate & breaks his previous promise to Kate that he owes her a boon for saving his sista's life. He leaves her to her nutcase hubby 'cuz apparently in Spanish culture, a wife is merely a hubby's possession, even if the hubby is a deranged wanker. So she's reduced to her last desperate means to escape, by giving him the answers he's been wanting to hear. Yez, since 15 y/o she's been a couch-hopping ho to get modeling assignments. Nope, Leo wasn't the 1st who popped her cherries. Yez, she duped him 'cuz she & her half-bro Leo wanna milk him dry. Yez, she seals her fate once again 'cuz he gets all her confession on a tape, he'll use this to ruin her & Leo, he'll make her life a living hell that she'll wish she'd nevah been born !

Wait, there's more. A romantic HP is not complete w/ out the climax. The hero loses his touch 'cuz he forgets to lock the door ! Is that the light @ the end of a v. long, dark tunnel ? So Kate escapes once again, by stealing his car. We get treated to an intensely orgasmic high-speed car chase scene, w/ the bonus of explosion. Yay ! Kate rescues her kidnapper, @ this point I wasn't surprised anymore by the train of her thoughts. Oh no ! She can't let him die 'cuz she luvs the prick ! Even after all that trauma, she still luvs him & will go on loving him ! O.M.G. The term 'Glutton for punishment' should be re-defined. If I were her, I'd casually extend my hairy leg to tip his car over the brink & say "Ooops ! Didn't mean to do that ! Sorry, gov ! I'll C ya in hell !" Another lesson learned. B4 U travel to a foreign country, it'll be come in handy if U learned how to say "A rope? Don't you have a rope?" in Spanish, in case stalkerazzi hubby is on the verge of plunging to his death.

Dejected Kate goes back to clean up the villa, after leaving Hugo in the hospital. And The following passage warrants a smack upside her head :

<< Kate sat down on his bed and reached out to touch the pillow, then picked it up and held it close to her own face. She sat there for a long time in utter dejection, not crying, not anything, but eventually she managed to pull herself together a little. >>

After the H/H clear up the matter of Kate's promiscuousness, he doesn't grovel / apologize. He says he went a li'l mad after reading his PI's inconclusive report. Right, I was like, "I got news 4 U, butthead. That's not what I'd consider "Little". U went a whole lotta mad. U went berserk !" I had a long running commentary in my head throughout the book & by the end, I wanted to set the book aflame (alas, it's not a PB), esp when Kate says :

<< "Oh, Hugo, I'm as much to blame as you. If I hadn't behaved like a proud, masochistic fool, running away

instead of staying to....'>>

So the dimbulb SHIFTS the blame on herself that the creepy hubby's not the masochist, she is. W.T.F. ! They're 2 peas in a pod. She gives airhead 'models' a really bad name ! What a bad representative of HP. It's a manual for sadistic torture. Gotta be more selective in my HP now 'cuz it's so yucky. I luv gamma heroes but SW should learn a lesson or 2 from Anne Stuart. Blech. I wish there's an option for negative rating. Whoever let this book be printed shoulda been fired.

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### **Jenny says**

Couldn't finish. Hero was a sadist and a total psychopath!

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### **Nicole says**

Very violent for a M&B. do not read it if that disturbs you. H uses mental torture on the heroine, keeps her prisoner, treats her mean in general, hurts her physically while preventing her escape attempts, fake drowns her in the swimming pool etc.. The only thing missing is him putting burning nails under her fingernails to get her to admit to her sins. I loved the book anyway as I like the author's writing style and there was a lot of suspense in the book. No sex scenes, by the way, which I found in itself pretty unusual. The heroes behavior at the end of the book is not plausible. And no sane women would have taken this guy back. I would have wished for him to have to grovel more than one page or so. Therefore only four stars.

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### **Dianna says**

Model Kate's having a lovely time at her wedding to the Honourable Hugo. He's almost a millionaire, according to nosy onlookers (snort)! Unfortunately, her world is about to come crashing down. She's in the bathroom fixing her makeup, when she hears Hugo in conversation with his best man. Hugo has just received a report from the detective agency he had investigating Kate. Her flat belongs to another man, and there are pictures of her kissing the other man, in her robe, on the doorstep, just days before the wedding. She's a slut, slut, slut, and Hugo should have known better. He'd fallen for her pretend innocence, and if the only way he could get her in bed was to put a ring on it, then that's what he's done. But he'll make her pay! He'll make use of her soiled body but deny her the prestige and wealth she craves as his wife!

Kate is heartbroken. She goes to her best friend, who wasn't at the wedding because her babies were sick. BFF's husband is a solicitor and will start up the paperwork to get the marriage annulled, and Kate can go stay at the couple's little villa in Majorca while she sobs her heart out and waits for the marriage to end.

Usually, I'm into this kind of plot. Of course Kate is innocent and loved Hugo, and of course he's going to find her and be angry and she won't explain that the man in the photos is her half-brother, because she shouldn't have to explain herself to him. And then while they fight their passions get the better of them, etc etc. And for the most part, that's what this book is, but there are some hugely AWFUL things that Hugo does that are unforgivable.

Hugo gets very little background. He's an aristocrat, and works in the city in what Wentworth tries to make sound an impressive job. He's on boards. That's just sitting around in suits at meetings where women in maid outfits serve coffee in silver pots and all the men smoke and drink 3 bottles of wine at lunch. But before that, he was an officer in the Guards.

When Hugo shows up he gets Kate out of the relatively safe environment she was in, and locks her up in the villa. There, he interrogates her. He darkens the room and shines a light in her face and at first Kate is all 'hah hah, I've seen this in movies, it's not going to work.' And the insidious thought of the reader is that this interrogation technique is a fiction cliche, but it works. She can't leave, and he keeps asking her the same questions over and over again, and she's uncomfortable, and he psychologically breaks her.

Of course not completely, but it's frightening. And the next day: the torture is physical.

Hugo is out by the pool and Kate comes out, planning to go for a swim. He orders her to do something (I can't remember what, it's not important), and when she defies him, he holds her head underwater.

Repeatedly. When he finally lets her up for air she goes back into the house, and this incident is never referenced again. But that just makes it more chilling: Kate will later bring up the interrogation, and Hugo will later show remorse, but neither of them reference this scene again.

There's more, of course. Kate is isolated from the people she tries to get to help her, and is made aware that she isn't believed. She's abused.

And, I'm left with no sense that she's safe. Hugo reaches a stage where he is remorseful, and this is independent of concrete evidence of her innocence. He explains his actions are driven by anger and hurt, when he believed that he'd given his heart but that she'd betrayed him. We don't know anything about his past, so why he's driven to these lengths is untethered from any evidence of past pain. What we've got is that he knows how to interrogate and how to torture, that these skills were acquired during his training, and that he's chosen to use them on someone he says he loves. That's deeply, deeply troubling.

I can't rate this one. Either I'm being too sensitive to an author's attempt to try something different in a plot that is always emotionally fraught, and that I can usually enjoy even when it gets complicated, or whether Wentworth deliberately went too far and then failed to satisfactorily resolve it.

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### **Julz says**

OMG! If you're sensitive to any kind of physical abuse in stories, don't touch this one with a ten foot pole. I actually liked the story but not as a romance (*SNORT!*), but for the effing train wreck it was. You have to read this one with a "WHAT?!? You've got to be kidding me!" mentality. I read a lot of dark stories and can be a little desensitize but this one pushed the limit.

As I said, this should in no way be labeled a romance. Seriously! I have never read of a worst anti-hero outside of the horror genre. This is a story about a deranged psycho-stalker inflicting his revenge on a masochistic heroine who obviously has issues to let this maniac back in her life. Maybe the author's intention was to demonstrate how CRAZY someone would have to be to welcome back a man like this into their lives after being abused to this extent. You know, with the philosophy that it's easy to see the truth of the matter when it's happening to someone else.

The level of abuse/torture was astounding. My favorite ("favorite" maybe shouldn't be the terminology to use, but you know what I mean hopefully) was him stamping out her little bit of defiance, and proving wrong her assertions that he wouldn't *really* resort to violence hurt her, by throwing her in the pool and holding her head under the water TWICE! Yeah, she never went there again.

This author should continue this story in the genre where it belongs (horror!) and depict the lives of a couple like this, which would be full of his obsessive control issues and physical violence and her not being able to take a pee without fear of upsetting him. She can forget her free and easy English ways. A man like this is too threatened and insecure to allow her to even go to the grocery store alone--especially after he's shown her his true colors and knows she would be stupid to stay with him.

So, if you're a lover of horror, psychological thrillers, as well as romance, then you'll enjoy this one which has it all tied up into one tidy, jaw-dropping, W.T.F.! novel.

Plus you have the colorful, rainbow happy looking book cover to go with it. Ha ha! Should be showing the shower scene in *Psycho* instead.

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### **Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says**

**Update:** Well, it appears the buddy read has fallen apart, no big loss (sorry, Sarah), but I have to confess to paging through (in a Kindle-y kind of way) this old-timey 1979 Harlequin romance very late one night when my normal defenses against crappy romances were down.

This-- **THIS** --is why I give some romances two stars that other reviewers hit with one star. This is the one-star book to end all one-star books. This book defines awfulness. It's the most screwed up imaginable mix of virginity-prizing 70's attitudes and brutal, hurtful, torturing alpha males. And there's a happily ever after ending! The mind, it boggles.

If you're interested in a play-by-play recap of the plot, check out karen's amazing and very funny review. I can only add my heartfelt agreement to everything karen says.

Now excuse me while I go wash my hands and look for that bottle of brain bleach.

#### **Prior post:**

End of May 2015 buddy read with Karly and Sarah. Ignore whatever else you may read, it's really all **Sarah's fault!**

Sarah is looking for horrible, awful romances to rant about, and since karen's fantastic review of this one was permanently imprinted on my brain, I suggested it. And somehow the sticky web has spread to capture Karly and me. ETA: and Nenia! Let the rantfest begin!

I have to admit I still have a soft spot for alpha male romances (albeit not the torturing, rapey type), but I suspect this book may kill it right off.

Stay tuned!

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### **Diya says**

This was so so read and very OTT!! Seriously the whole situation could have been avoided but it was amusing at times reading this! Not one for reread though.

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### **Miki says**

I read this book a long time ago, but had forgotten just how repulsive it was. The "hero" finds out on his wedding day that a private detective has a photo of his new bride embracing another man at her door the morning of the wedding. Like a rational man, does he go and ask her who it was? Why no! Instead he throws a tantrum and vows to "make her pay"...not thinking that she's RIGHT NEXT DOOR AND CAN HEAR HIM! Duh. She runs away (of course) but he finds her (of course) almost immediately. Trying to make her confess to being a slut, he throws her in a swimming pool and holds her head under until she nearly passes out. He shines a bright light in her face and questions her relentlessly. He locks her up, lies to her friends to make her sound crazy, and, using techniques he "learned in the army", generally tortures her. Then (of course) he kisses her, and she (of course) can't resist him. UGH. In the end, she forgives him because he proclaims that he only did all that because he loves her so much and seeing that picture drove him crazy. She tenderly reveals that it was her half-brother, whom he'd never met, they laugh indulgently together, and all is forgiven. Good grief.

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### **Melanie♥ says**

This book gets three stars for its amusement value. I laughed through most of it because it was so bizarre and over the top. Our hero could have come right out of a WWII interrogation unit. He had no redeeming qualities whatsoever and any heroine who would forgive him belongs in the psych ward. What a fun read .

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### **Naima says**

Hugo, the hero, believes Kate (the "h") married him because she wanted his money, his social connections, his prestige, his sophistication etc..... So when Kate runs away on the wedding day, he runs after her and naturally needs to punish her for her wrongdoings when he finds her. So he locks her up in a house and tries to drown her. Nothing like near death experiences to win an argument and let your "h" know how wrong she was to mess with you!

Although, and this is horrid of me to say, I found myself wanting to throttle Kate repeatedly because the "big misunderstanding" was so so so stupid and just WHY THE BIG SECRET TSTL KATE??? If I had to write a HEA for this couple, I'd get Hugo on some hormone treatments because his emoting is rather unbalanced and I'm worried he might backhand an old lady suffering with arthritis who bumps into him in the supermarket check out line. While you and I might think the accident is caused from her joint condition, Hugo will just

KNOW that she is a goldigger/stalker who wants to kidnap both his first born son, his depends and his wallet. As for Kate, I think I'd get her a divorce, a puppy and some accounting classes at the local community college.

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### **Karlyflower \*The Vampire Ninja, Luminescent Monster & Wendigo Nerd Goddess of Canada (according to The Hulk)\* says**

Buddy-read with Sarah, Tadiana & Nenia (set for approximately the end of May)

**"Are we insane?", you may ask.**

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#### **Kat says**

Oh man, the reviews for this book make me feel all giddy and tingly.

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#### **Claire says**

Shattered Dreams? How about Nightmare on Elm Street in Majorca? This is how bad this book was: even 25 years after reading it, I still have absolutely no desire to rent a villa in Majorca with my husband. That would be just too creepy.

But I am curious to know what was going on in SW's head when she wrote this book. If she ever sits down for an "Interview with the Author" segment on TV, I want viewers to ask her frame of mind while writing this book.

Was she in the middle of divorce? a nervous breakdown? drug withdrawal? Because I still can't fathom how she could have imagined that this book would ever pass off as romance. I've seen Stockholm syndrome plots but this is just beyond the pale.

If she was trying to push the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable reaction to (perceived) infidelity, she very well transgressed it. The hero's villain's interrogation method of aiming the heavy spotlight on her is so eerily similar to the interrogation technique done to an enemy combatant. Dunking her in the pool is his version of waterboarding and putting her in a chokehold is his form of subjugation.

Then for the heroine to accept him back? I don't care what he says to try to convince her to take him back, she has a better chance of surviving till year's end if she lived with Freddie.

Bad book. Stay away. Or read -- to know what my horror is all about.

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## **karen says**

*"Now you know I can force you to do anything I want. So you'll sit there and you'll answer any question I put to you, do you understand?"*

the whole time i was reading this, i was thinking "if this doesn't end with him in a body bag and her discovering she has a behavior-altering brain tumor," i'm going to be sick.

but that's not how it ended. no, it is not.

review to come as soon as i finish shouting WHYYYYYYYYYYYYY???

could be a while.

still shouting. but here's a quote for you to enjoy for now:

*Hugo had looked so angry, so cruel, his eyes ruthless, his face implacable. And she loved him so much. So much that even the pain in her wrist was an exquisite kind of agony because he had caused it.*

yeah. it's like that.

attempt number three to review this book.

so, here's the skinny, and i'm going to spoil the shit out of this so if you are planning to read this and would like the plot to be a surprise, pretty much don't read this review.

kate is a model. kate is a virgin. kate meets a man she likes named hugo. hugo is very wealthy. kate won't give up her virginity. hugo proposes. kate and hugo get married. everything is magical and beautiful. kate has hair *that rare shade between red and gold.*

immediately after the wedding, kate overhears a conversation between hugo and his best man in which she learns hugo has, at the insistence of his suspicious auntie, hired a private investigator to spy on kate who has taken pictures of her (half) brother leaving her house while she says bye-bye to him in her nightie. kate has not told hugo she has a (half) brother. hugo assumes this man is her lover and announces to his best man that the only reason he married kate is because he wanted to have the sex with her. he calls her a bitch, a slut, and despite loving her unconditionally before this very moment, declares:

*"She's obviously marrying me for only two things: money, of course, and the social position I can give her. Well, it will be quite easy to keep her out of society, to have the door slammed in her face and keep her in her place, and as for money it's going to be the other way round. Marrying her has been an expensive business and I'm going to make sure that get my money's worth out of her before I kick her back into the gutter where she belongs!"*

and while it is perfectly okay to marry a girl because she won't put out any other way, it is COMPLETELY DISGUSTING to marry a man for his money and power, in his mind. even though she didn't, because the little fool is totally smitten with him. or was, before this. now she's pissed.

well!! so kate bursts into the room and tells her new husband that the man in the photograph was her (half)

brother, right?? and clears everything up and everyone is a little sheepish and apologetic??

NO!

instead of having a 4-minute conversation, kate decides to take her bags, all packed for her honeymoon, and just LEAVE WITHOUT TELLING ANYONE ANYTHING and jet off to her friend's vacation-home villa in majorca where she can be alone with her thoughts. because apparently, hearing him say that he only married her to get into her pants is a dealbreaker. please remember this for future plot points.

in majorca, she meets a dude who is having girl problems and agrees to pretend to be involved with him so he can make his reluctant-to-wed lady jealous so she'll realize she has to lock that down or lose him forever, like she's in some teen flick from the 80s. but hugo has followed kate to majorca and seeing this love-theater, thinks she is hooking up with this guy for reals, and since the house she is staying in is under her friend's husband's name, he assumes that guy is ANOTHER of her lovers. and again, INSTEAD OF TELLING HIM WHAT IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING, she just freezes and allows herself to basically be house-arrested by hugo, who puts her through a variety of physical and mental abuse, using tricks he was taught in the army. here are some quotes:

*"My God, you must think I'm green! I don't know what your game is, but I'm willing to bet that you've slept with any number of men, not to mention using your body to further your career. If you're trying to blow hot and then cold for some reason, why don't you come right out and say it?"*

she doesn't. she doesn't say anything.

*"Shut up, you're becoming hysterical. If you don't stop it I'll have to hit you."*

yeah

*Oh, hell! She'd fallen over a sheep!*

oh, yeah, and then she fell over a sheep.

*Hugo took a decisive step towards her and Kate hurriedly backed away, to be brought up short by a chair. Almost casually he reached out and pushed her into it, putting his hands on the arms and leaning down to loom menacingly over her. "You may be hard as nails under that beautiful exterior, but you're nowhere near tough enough to withstand me. That arm-lock wasn't the only trick I learned in the army; they taught me several pleasant little ways to make reluctant people talk. Oh, nothing physical, just nice, gentle persuasion, that goes on and on and on. And don't think I'll make it any easier because you're a woman. You'll get on your hands and knees and crawl to me before I'm through with you, my lovely, cheating wife!"*

let the games begin!!

they're not. like, at all.

to my thinking, there there are some things you can't come back from, and this is one of them:

*"So you think I'm too civilised to use violence, do you? I see I shall have to give you a demonstration."*

*He reached out suddenly to put his hand in the small of her back and pushed her in the pool, jumping in beside her a second later. As Kate came up and tried to look round, he wound his hand in her hair and pushed her under again, holding her there. Desperately she tried to break loose, tearing at the hand that held her.*

*She had been too taken by surprise to take a deep breath and soon she was fighting for air. At last he let her up, gasping and retching.*

*"So you still think you can defy me, do you?"*

*Kate took great lungfuls of air, her eyes full of antagonism when she looked at him. He saw it and deliberately pushed her down again. After the second time he hauled her out, letting her lie gasping on the side until she'd got her breath back a little.*

you see what i mean?? i could never, NEVER be with a man who said shit like *"I shall have to give you a demonstration."* oh, and also if he tried to drown me. that's also not cool.

and remember the dealbreaker i told you to bookmark from before?? when she was so upset that he had only proposed to get in her vagina?? well, check this out:

*He had hurt her in every way, both physically and mentally, she ought to hate him more than anyone she'd ever hated in her life, despise him even for the way he'd treated her; but she didn't know how could she when she still loved him?*

huh. so all the bruises and drowning and name-calling and sleep-deprivation and choking and all-night interrogations and locking her in and nailing shut the windows and accusations and rapey bits without actually raping her... not dealbreakers after all.

*"You don't hate me," he said softly.*

*His hands moved to cup her breasts, his fingers moving rhythmically against the thin material of her nightshirt. "You just hate yourself because I can make you feel this way." He undid the buttons down to her waist ... Kate turned her head away, tears of humiliation at his cold-blooded handling running silently down her cheeks.*

*Slowly he slipped the nightshirt off her shoulders. A tear trickled on to his hand and only then did he look. For a long moment he was quite still, then, "By God," he swore savagely, "you pull every trick there is on the book!" And then he was gone, striding swiftly from the room, leaving Kate to pull her nightshirt back on and sink to a huddled heap on the floor.*

i mean, crying over a little kidnap/rape?? you are pulling every trick in the book, you rotten whore!

but don't worry. eventually, the truth comes out. eventually. and he's SO EMBARRASSED!

and all is forgiven and they have sweet wedded union.

*With hardly any explanation or apology, he had got the surrender he'd wanted with such anger and bitterness. But there was no anger in him now, only passion and tenderness and an immeasurable joy.*

awwwwww. it's sweet, really. except it's not. at all.

this book is a million shades of fucked-up.

ladies, don't ever date anyone named hugo, and remember:

come to my blog!

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**xx Sarah xx (former Nefarious Breeder of Murderous Crustaceans) says**

?? Upcoming EPIC buddy read with Karly, Tadiana and Nenia. Because we're fearless like that.

?? Karly, Nenia and I are innocent bystanders here, this is all Tadiana's fault.

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