



## After the Hurt

*Shana Gray*

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**After the Hurt** Shana Gray

**Shana Gray's provocative novel features a resilient fighter going round for tantalizing round with the one that got away—a headstrong woman bent on seduction.**

Pepper Chapman refuses to throw in the towel. Six months ago, she made the biggest mistake of her life. Blinded by grief after her mom's death, Pepper abandoned the man she loves. Now she wants a second chance at everything she gave up: strong hands driving her to ecstasy . . . a deep voice whispering naughty promises in her ear . . . the future they'd planned since they were teenagers. So Pepper comes home looking for forgiveness, ready for a new beginning—if he's willing to give her a shot.

Retired MMA star Tank Sherman may be used to low blows, but Pepper's emotional sucker punch left him reeling. Trying to ignore the pain and forget the pleasure of her body beneath his, Tank is prepared to ring the final bell on their relationship. Then Pepper shows up out of the blue, radiating pure sex. But Tank won't let himself get hurt again, and that means resisting the heat that still burns between them. Because if he takes Pepper back, he knows he'll never be able to let her go again.

**Includes a special message from the editor, as well as an excerpt from another Loveswept title.**

## After the Hurt Details

Date : Published March 29th 2016 by Loveswept

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Author : Shana Gray

Format : Kindle Edition 211 pages

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# From Reader Review After the Hurt for online ebook

## Emma says

After the Hurt shows how a single event can throw lives into a tail spin making people question who they are and their purpose in life. When the event is tragic the weight of grief, regret and guilt (whether deserved or not) can cloud a persons judgement to the point they feel as if they have nothing to offer anyone else and leaving is the best for everyone, unable to consider for a second the hurt their departure may cause.

Following the death of her mother, this is exactly what happens to Pepper, suffocating under the weight of her grief, she re-evaluates who she is as a person, finding herself to be little more than a burden to those around her she leaves her life and love in order to gain some much-needed perspective. Unfortunately, she is unable to explain her feelings and leaves without decision causing the devastation of Tank's heart. Six months without contact, Pepper is a changed woman, having gained self-awareness she returns to her home in the hope of reconciling with Tank. Although her actions were thoughtless and caused a great deal of hurt to both herself and Tank, it was unintentional, Pepper was blinded to everything outside her own pain. It is only through her gaining self-awareness that she realises the thing she wants most in life is Tank.

Taking responsibility for her actions, Pepper's unexpected return creates conflicting emotions in Tank, from bitterness at her leaving to relief at her return. Tank does not do well at processing his emotions creating additional damage to already fragile feelings. The chemistry between Pepper and Tank has never diminished and neither has their connection as much as they try to deny it. With the intensity of their relationship, I felt as if there was no obstacle they could overcome because they were each a half of a whole they could only be together.

The thriller elements within the narrative did add to the tension but I felt as if they were a little superfluous to the overall story, although it did provide a clever device with which to control elements of the plot and the decisions the characters made based on the events taking place.

I am hoping we get to see a story for Tank's sister, Megan, in the future as she deserves her own happily ever after ♥

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## Tifferz says

2.5 Stars, 2.5 Flames

Pepper thought that returning home after 6 months would be hard but she did not expect the cold shoulder from her first and only love, Tank. Heart-broken and admittedly a bit mean, retired MMA fighter Tank gets a wake-up call when his long lost love returns on a busy night at the bar they co-own.

The premise and synopsis of the book is what drew me in. Well, the cover was not too shabby either. Sadly, this book fell short for me. Tank and Pepper could have been great characters but they were contradictory. When Pepper enters the in the first chapter you connect with her because she is quiet, anxious, and vulnerable about Tank's reception of her. Then when we get to Tank's POV, she is totally different. She is in-your-face party girl. Even after she proves she changed he still perceives her as such and she acts that way which does not help her case.

Then there is the lack of dialog or explanations between the characters. There is so much inner dialog I found myself skimming pages to get to the good parts. Which did not happen until the very end. I thought I would love Tank because of his fighting spirit and loyal heart. However, he was such a coward. Never wanted to confront Pepper or explain what he needed or wanted. Add in random events that leaves readers with so much unsolved questions that it brings no satisfaction when you get the end. Plus, it is not part of any series nor does it look like one will be in the near future. The sensual tension and chemistry was great but it seems that was all these characters cared about. There is not much on why and how well they connected in the past to make you believe they last in the future.

Overall, it was a decent read but not something I would be picking up again. Great chemistry aside, there is no growth between the characters and the unsolved problems left me empty.

I was gifted this book by the JeepDiva in exchange for an honest review. The opinions and ratings are my own and I was in no way compensated.

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## **Claire Robinson says**

1 - "Did I offend?" Star.

**DNF @ 23%**

I tried I really did, but as a reader I personally enjoy a bit of story development with my inner monologue. By the point I stopped reading Pepper and Tank had said about 30 sentences to each other, most of them no more than a few words long, and I was still struggling to understand what was going on apart from the fact she's returned unexpectedly to Toronto from a six month trip to Bali after the untimely death of her mother.

Add in another completely random woman by the name of Olivia, who may or may not be stalking Tank after only three dates, and this is a story for me that needs to give out more pointers in its early stages as to what its actually about.

*It was the stuff that romance novels were made of...*

Notsomuch, told from dual POV, or should I say dual inner-monologue you really see a lot of the inner working of this pairs minds, and I can't really say anything coming from either of them really endeared me in anyway either, and I think this is the main problem, if you want to fill a book with lengthy inner monologues you need to progress the story within them as well as develop the reasonings the characters are at the point they are with each other, you don't really get that and because of it I had absolutely no investment or interest in seeing whether he lets her back in his bed or not.

Not a winner for me on this occasion, the author is new to me as well, in all honesty I am not sure I would look too read more after reading this one, if this is her usual writing style I am pretty sure it wouldn't work for me in future books either.

ARC generously provided via Netgalley, I am sorry I cannot offer a more positive review on this occasion.

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## **Jen says**

### **DNF @ 25%**

This is becoming a habit for me this week.

I gave it my all with this one but it's just not working for me. Lately my biggest pet peeve as a reader is having to suffer through an abundance of inner monologue without the actual character dialogue and interactions to back it up.

Basically, I need more than just the deep thoughts and ruminations.

When I have to flip back several pages to try and figure out what the hell the characters were talking about in the first place, it's an issue.

*ARC provided by the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review*

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## **Linda says**

"After the Hurt" Was a hard read for me only garnering three stars. I had higher hopes since I enjoy second chance romances which this was, but what hurt the story for me was the excessive inner dialogue with both main characters, Pepper Chapman and Tank Sherman the storyline could of used more communication and time between the two. I will give the author five stars for steam factor she write some steamy scenes most though only memories of the characters or daydream sequences.

The story is told in a dual point of view which I do like.

Tank Sherman and Pepper Chapman have been together since high school and all through Tank's career as a MMA fighter, planning and looking forward to a lifetime together when their world fell apart Tank's sister in a life threatening car accident and then right behind that Lepper's mother being diagnosed with cancer and then suddenly dying. The loss of Pepper's mother stars her over the edge and she picks up and leaves not telling tank were she is going or when she will be back, breaking his heart.

Pepper shows back up in his life six month later a different women to find a different colder Tank determined to win him back; she throws herself into working at the restaurant they started together that he has spent the past six months pulling l, the finishing touches together on hoping to show hi she is committed to him and their business.

Some drama ensues with an interim girlfreind, crazy the best description for her and then a break in and feelings of some one watching them which turns out to provide a little excitement which is over all to soon.

In the end , we do get an HEA but it takes a while to get there.

Arc copy provided via Netgalley for an honest review.

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## **Laura says**

This story was so boring. There was hardly any dialogue. It has alternating POV's from Pepper and Tank but we just get pages and pages of their internal thoughts.

There is hardly any plot. The small mystery plot in the story was ridiculous and over in a page or so using 'tell' not 'show'. This was like a debut self published attempt. It was dire.

ARC provided by Netgalley.

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## **Char (1RadReader59) says**

At the time of a loved one's death, we are so consumed with their passing that we can't seem to celebrate their life or be with those offering us comfort. Then when you find out a simple act of your kindness like bringing a sandwich and splitting it with your mom caused her the infection that killed her you distraught. When in reality the chemo that lowers her immune system along with the contaminated tomato, along with her body fighting itself was what killed her. Her body just couldn't fight it all. Pepper Chapman couldn't see the facts and she couldn't forgive herself.

No matter how many times the man she loves, Tank Sherman, former MMA fighter, told her. The fact that she had a hand in it was just too overwhelming for her to take. Pulling her down into a spiraling depression. Right in the middle of them trying to care for also Tank's sister Meg, a lawyer, who was struck by a drunk driver. Plus, they were well into the throws of construction of Octagon their Bar and Restaurant.

When one day when Tank wakes up she's gone. She needed to get away but doesn't tell anyone. Here he has loved her since they were teens. Yet, she just disappeared without a trace. No, phone calls, no texts, and no mail. Just gone. Six months later she just walks back into the fully finished bar and waits, no one is around but the door is open. So, she waits on Tank. When he comes out she wished she hadn't the urge to both grab him and hold on. But she waited for him to make the first move.

He wanted the same thing but he was hurt but if he grabbed on this time he never wanted to let go. But he didn't know if he wanted to ever be hurt like that again. Then for Tank, reality sets in with the pain and hurt coming crashing down on him that she left him behind like he was nothing.

Pepper's fingers twitched to touch him but she could see the hurt and the pain in his eyes she caused. He was not going to make it easy on her to make amends and come back home and explain her grief. She knew she had to try no matter how long or how hard he pushed her away.

I really enjoyed this story between Tank and Pepper. The chemistry between them was steamy and hot. Without the sex scenes. For me they seemed forced in some respects in some of the places the characters just had IT, it was like the author was expected to have it so she wrote it. Tank and Pepper just steam it up without it. I give this: 5 stars. Provided by netgalley.com. Follow us at: [www.1rad-readerreviews.com](http://www.1rad-readerreviews.com).

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## **Cheryl Graham Petit says**

ARC provided by publisher in exchange for an honest review and honestly... I don't know what I expected,

but definitely not this. I found the story-line was lacking and didn't flow smoothly. There were too many pages of inner thoughts that were quite repetitive and you lost interest. This book was not for me.

I received an ARC of this book for an honest review.

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### **Donna Repsher says**

I received an ARC of this title in exchange for an honest review and here it is--2 stars.

I've always been a fan of second-chance romances, which is why I requested an ARC of this novel, but it certainly failed to meet my expectations and here are some of the reasons why:

1. As a grammar nerd, the writing was a hot mess of mixed metaphors, incorrectly conjugated verbs, sentences starting and ending with conjunctions and prepositions, dangling participles, split infinitives, and that's just for starters.
2. By the time I was halfway through this novel, there were, at most, 20 lines of person-to-person dialogue, and even at that, it was seldom longer than a single sentence. Reading nothing but internal dialogue becomes incredibly annoying as well as boring because it doesn't advance the story one iota.
3. The characters. Pepper was so enamored of Tank, she was speechless, even after leaving him without a word or so much as a note for 6 months. I've lost more than few dear friends and family members over the years, but if you love someone and need to get away for a while, leaving a note is hardly an impossibility. Tank, he's a retired MMA fighter who professes to have loved Pepper, yet when she suddenly reappears after having been missing without a word for 6 months, does he even ask her where she's been when he finds her sitting at the bar--of course not.
4. Action. There isn't any. While we read that these two people love each other, there's no evidence of it, and although their endless inner dialogue says they're hot for each other, there's no sex, and no steam outside of that.

This is the first time I've read this author, and I can only encourage her to continue writing, spend some time learning the basic rules of grammar, learn about how to plot a novel and develop your characters so that they have some depth.

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### **Carlene Inspired says**

2.5 Stars

The offer of second chance romance sucked me in again with the story of Pepper and Tank, old lovers with 6 months of distance between them after Pepper ran off without a word. I love the idea that these two had so many years behind them and were willing to give each other a chance to right the wrongs. While the characters had this intense chemistry between them, there was a lack of dialogue and the inner monologue skipped around a lot, so I never felt connected to either character. The book does a great job of showing how love can win and I enjoyed reading the character's face their own personal fears to allow room for the other.

However, I just never fell in love with Tank and Pepper as a couple, the story just didn't flow for me.

I read this is one sitting, because I kept thinking maybe the action is coming soon...but it just never happened. I expected so much more between an MMA fighter and a headstrong woman that had years of love behind them and 6 months of turmoil between them. I felt like the few action scenes relating to breaking and entering and stalking were inserted to make it more interesting, they just felt out of place. I mean seriously, you've got a crazy girl showing up at random hours, someone in your apartment that a girl only just moved into, and now a guy making gun hands at you? Is this not alarming? I felt like Tank thought of himself as so strong and able to handle it that the alarm bells didn't go off for anyone else, which could have made for a super entertaining fight scene with a lot of people involved...but whatever. He just didn't feel like an MMA fighter to me, just a big strong guy with a bar. Then there's Pepper, who I so wanted to love, but she was so flippy floppy. There were so many opportunities for her to prove her changes, to fight for Tank, but she just kept letting things happen. Sure, it worked out in the end, but only due to outside influences. Girl, if you want your man you go and take him, don't make fricken scones! I also feel like the 6 months were never really addressed, just forgiven after the chemistry was proven to be alive. I really struggle with romances like this, because it never addresses the trust or the individual characters. I really expected so much more.

I liked where this book was headed and the general plot line, just could have had more in the way of character development, relationship building, and action.

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## **Kristine says**

Original review can be found at <http://kristineandterri.blogspot.ca/2...>  
2.5 stars

\*\* I received an advanced readers copy from Random House- Loveswept via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you!\*\*

This book was just OK for me. I struggled through parts of it and found myself skimming the pages on more than one occasion.

Pepper came back in the hopes of rekindling her relationship with Tank after leaving without a word six months earlier. Her mother passed away and she blamed herself and fled in order to try and heal. This was my first issue. It was just too unbelievable. Pepper and Tank were in a serious relationship since high school, lived together and owned a business yet she couldn't turn to Tank for comfort?? Taking off made more sense?? It was just a little flimsy as far as a believable plot.

The story was told from both Pepper and Tank's point of view. Normally this is something that I love but I didn't in this book. It was extremely repetitive. Pepper would see Tank and then think about what she would like to do to him or have him do to her. Next it would go to Tank's point of view where we would get to read about what he wished he was doing to Pepper or what he wished she was doing to him. This happened over and over again. Instead of building anticipation it got old really fast and the page skimming commenced. There was just way too much tell and too little show. Most of the book happened in their heads.

The other thing that I didn't quite understand was the "mystery" part of it. What was that? It seemed at first like it would play a pivotal part in the plot but then it just kind of flopped. It was less than exciting and ended

before it really even began.

This book just wasn't for me but I will admit that Gray does know how to turn up the heat. I just wish it wasn't mostly in their heads.

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### **A. Cook says**

So, what happens when run away from the love of your life and then suddenly reappear? Don't know? Well, don't worry because its a head scratcher for me to.

I love a book that have both lead characters on equal footing. Pepper the reformed spitfire abruptly returns to the wintry cold of Canada from the soothing tropics of Bali with the hopes of winning back her *true love* Francis (aka Tank). After six months of no communication Tank may not be so open to Pepper.

The lead characters were well thought out for *After the Hurt*, Pepper an attractive red head and Tank the huge and sexy retired MMA fighter. Both characters drove me a bit bonky with their constant uncertainty about one another. Also, interaction with secondary characters was very limited so there wasn't anything really to break-up the *merry-go-round* that Pepper and Tank were on. Overall, 3.25 rating for finally getting to the HEA.

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### **Brandy Castenada says**

After the hurt by Shana Gray was an addicting read I couldn't put down. Every page is more wonderful than the other. This is my first book by Shana Gray, and I enjoyed it. I liked the main couple as well as the side characters. She has written an amazing read full of twists, emotions, and steam. This story was told in first and third person points of view of Tank and Pepper. Pepper Chapman refuses to throw in the towel. Six months ago, she made the biggest mistake of her life. Blinded by grief after her mom's death, Pepper abandoned the man she loves. Now she wants a second chance at everything she gave up: strong hands driving her to ecstasy a deep voice whispering naughty promises in her ear the future they'd planned since they were teenagers. So Pepper comes home looking for forgiveness, ready for a new beginning if he's willing to give her a shot. Retired MMA star Tank Sherman may be used to low blows, but Pepper's emotional sucker punch left him reeling. Trying to ignore the pain and forget the pleasure of her body beneath his, Tank is prepared to ring the final bell on their relationship. Then Pepper shows up out of the blue, radiating pure sex. But Tank won't let himself get hurt again, and that means resisting the heat that still burns between them. Because if he takes Pepper back, he knows he'll never be able to let her go again. I loved watching Tank and Pepper fight to get over their pasts so they could have a bright future. Their chemistry was off the charts, hot, steamy and so adorable. The more time these two spend together, the more they realize that it could grow into more, but with both of their futures a bit unknown, they have to be willing to take the leap into a future with each other. There are plenty of emotion in this book and at times I got frustrated. I would defiantly recommend this book to all my friends who read the same types of books I do.

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## Samantha says

3 just not that great for me stars. I like messed up stories that ultimately lead to happy endings. It works for me because it's more realistic than getting together and everything being sunshine and rainbows. I expected this book to get me emotional, which it didn't. I also expected to really get involved in the story, which I didn't. It was just an okay read for me and that's why it just gets 3 stars.

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## Michelle says

*ARC provided by publisher in exchange for an honest review*

**“She held his hands more firmly in case he tried to pull away. It broke her heart that he seemed completely unaware of the fact that she was almost dying inside. He’d known her so well ; how could he not see she’d never lost her love for him? Pepper organized her thoughts, shielding her true feelings. At least for now. Her fragile heart depended on it.”**

I am a big fan of second chance romance and so when I read the blurb of **After The Hurt** by Shana Gray, I was intrigued and I couldn't wait to read this book. But sadly this book was just okay. It lacked the story line to keep me entertained as I found it to be lacking the deep emotional pull for me to love the characters especially the heroine, Pepper. I like the concept of trying to work things out but the inner dialogue of Pepper and Tank were beginning to feel repetitive and so it didn't draw me in that I found myself skimming through. This book was missing depth, the connection, and the feel of every second chance romance. Don't get me wrong this book had so much potential but sadly it was not the book for me.

*Review can also be found on Four Chicks Flipping Pages: <http://fourchicksflippingpages.weebly...>*

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