



The Surprise Of His Life (Silhouette Special Edition #688)

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Lindsey Ellison had a problem. She was in love . . . hopelessly in love . . . with Walker Carr. It would all be so lovely, so idyllic--if only he wasn't her father's business partner and best friend . . . and her godfather! And, of course, Lindsey couldn't ignore the fact that he'd be totally shocked to discover her feelings. She had to forget him.

But how?

It seemed impossible, especially now when she was returning to Galveston to help her parents through a rough time. She had to convince Walker that she was the woman he would love forever. Lindsey steeled her heart--because when Walker figured out her plan, it was going to be the surprise of his life!

Silhouette Special Edition #688, August, 1991.

The Surprise Of His Life (Silhouette Special Edition #688) Details

Date : Published July 1st 1991 by Silhouette (first published 1991)

ISBN : 9780373096886

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Format : Paperback 252 pages

Genre : Romance, Contemporary Romance, Contemporary, Category Romance, Harlequin



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Verity says

Lindsey dumped her fiance after having an epiphany during her wedding rehearsal, that she's in luv w/ her godfather, Walker (serving as a stand-in to walk her down the isle, as requested by her daddy). She went to London to start a new job & sort thru' her conflicted feelings. 1.5 yrs later, she's back to home sweet home, due to the bombshell that her parents' 25 y/o marriage is heading to splitsville 'cuz daddy dearest is having a mid-life crisis. She's also on a mission, to settle an unfinished business w/ Walker, who still wonders why his goddaughter inexplicably canceled her wedding @ such a late stage. Lindsey becomes her mom's emo crutches as well as Walker's temp assistant 'cuz his secretary is out sick. Walker & Lindsey find out that Dean, her daddy, is bangin' a 19 y/o red-haired chick he met @ a diner. Being a positive matchmaker that she is, Lindsey tries in vain to set up her parents to patch things up. Instead, Bunny, her mom, takes a walk @ a beach after the disastrous dinner w/ estranged spouse & bumps into Don, a divorcee cum new confidante. Lindsey's dad sits up & takes notice. He's not thrilled that his soon-to-be ex seems to be moving on just fine w/out him, esp after hearing that Bunny's going back to school. Can we say double standard here ? It's ok for the 2-timing randy ol' goat to re-invent himself by skewering a broad 4 yrs younger than his daughter, buying a flashy sports car, dressing up like Don Johnson wannabe (red slacks, sunglasses, a multi-colored braided bracelet ? Seriously, dude ? That's so outdated!), but it's a big no-no for the dumpee to date anotha guy. Anyhoo, amidst all the family dwama, Dean also flips as he inadvertently catches the flaming going-ons between 47 y/o BFF & his 23 y/o daughter. Somehow this escapes his radar. Walker has always thought of Lindsey as Adam's (his only son) playmate, he feels wrecked w/ guilt by the illicitness of their relationship. Did I mention that Adam is a new daddy too? Yup, Walker is apparently a hawt grandpa, able to bag his goddaughter, whose birth he supposedly attended to.

Adam is too accepting, which was not realistic to me. I had to suspend disbelief that Bunny spills her guts on a tourist, a stranger she just met (all tell, no show). Stranger things have happened in romancelandia, I guess.

I thought this was the holy grail of all May - Dec luv stories, after being tantalized by all 5* Ami reviews (none less than that), but I had a really a hard time buying the romance. We know Walker isn't immune to Lynsey's come-hither looks. Walker's loneliness & grinding out @ the cramped office help in tipping the balance in Lindsey's favor. Forget that by the time H/h's twins graduate from high school, Walker will be on Medicare & may need a walker due to his arthritic knee. When Adam approves dad tying the knot w/ his BFF, that automatically makes Lindsey a grandma by 24 y/o. Twisted family dynamics are so delish, but again, my main problem was too much tell & li'l show. Not to mention the icky feeling throughout the book was too pervasive to ignore. By the 1st chapter, we're already told of Lindsey's realization that she got the hawts for her BFF's dad. It seemed to me Lindsey was in luv w/ an ideal man but it felt like I went to the theatre & the show already reached its peak 'cuz the subsequent pages are a showcase of one-sided angst (Walker's colossal guilt trip) & dealing w/ the devastation caused by Dean's mid-life itch to recapture his youth. After a harrowing brush w/ death, everyone seems to regain their senses that U gotta count your blessings. I wanted more internalizations by Lindsey & a broader pic of why / how she fell in luv w/ him. I appreciate the effort to show the contrast between H/h's tru luv & the parents' rocky marriage, but the sidestory stole the main characters' screentime & the book is only 252 pages. The conflicts had the potential to be explosive, but the emo punch got muted. It's sweet & we get the message that luv is blind & we can't always choose who we luv. A huge age discrepancy is no biggie as long as I'm convinced & can see how / why H/h fall in luv / lust, but in this case it didn't quite happen. We're constantly reminded of the long interconnected history. Even the epilogue we get treated to a "fatherly" kiss on her forehead. Too many unsubtle

touches to remind me of the forbidden, squicky feel of their relationship. I almost sprayed my fingers w/ Lysol afterwards B^P

I will read more by KK, I've read her other book, "The loving", written under Sandra Canfield, which was a solid & interesting time-travel book, w/ a crapola ending tho'.

Jacqueline says

Practically perfect book. May/December theme which is a favorite of mine. This story is very well written. He is her father's best friend and is the heroine's godfather. You know both characters intimately. One of the best portrayals of realistic emotions I've ever read. You watch the hero, Walker, become aware of Lindsey as a woman slowly and see him fight against the attraction he feels for her until finally he can't fight any longer. You see her try to get him to realize that she is grown up and is making a mature decision. She has known how she feels for some time and does not come across as too young to know her own mind at all. She's 23, he's 47. Most of the story is the two of them together so you get to enjoy the whole progression of their relationship. Every scene is necessary and nothing drags. You also get to see how their relationship is received by her father/his best friend. I didn't end up saying "boy I wish there had been a scene showing X or Y" like I do so many times.

CaliGirlRae says

Lindsay Ellison returns home after calling off her wedding while working in London. She comes home to find her father in the middle of a mid-life crisis, her mother desperately trying to hold on for control in her life and the man she has always loved, her godfather and father's best friend, Walker Carr to be the one rock in her life that will help her mend things with all parties.

A great story that not only focused on a burgeoning romance but also a commentary on getting older, the passing of youth into adulthood and the essence of marriage and staying with the same person over the years. I really liked the characters in this story and, although at times predictable, the storyline worked toward a satisfying resolution.

Saly says

There is no doubt that this book had a huge age difference, 24 years to be precise besides the fact that the hero was the heroine's godfather, but despite the icky factor I ended up enjoying the book maybe because I really liked Lindsey, she was mature yet child like, wanting her parents who were on the verge of divorce to get back together all the while grappling with fears and doubts about her feelings for Walker.

Eighteen months ago she aborted her own wedding when she found herself having thoughts about Walker, they alarmed her and made her feel dirty but in the intervening time she came to terms with her feelings and the conclusion that it was love and that love can happen anytime, with anyone.

The heroine's father is going through a mid-life crisis and is deeply unhappy himself, hurting everyone and himself and he is also having an affair with a 19 year old girl, his own daughter is 23.

Walker is also a grandfather and his son is 24. The way the heroine's father finds out about them is not pretty, it is the morning after and he finds Lindsey in his kitchen dressed in Walker's clothes and at that time Lindsey throws all that her father has done in his face.

All the age factor, everything was addressed in the book. Walker had fears and reservations and they were a given since things with Lindsey were new for him while Lindsey had had time to deal with her feelings and knew she wanted to marry him and have his kids. While Walker didn't want to limit Lindsey.

I also liked how the book addressed the marriage of Lindsey's parents and depicted how her mother came out of the shadow of her husband and accepted her husband back with conditions.

All in all I am rating this book higher in part because of the bold theme, I read a lot of tried and tested formula and enjoy it but something different is like a breath of fresh air.

Char says

The adultery in this book does not involve the hero/heroine so please don't let it put you off from reading a great May-Dec romance. Yes, the hero is 20 plus years older than the heroine & I usually don't care for stories where the hero is that much older but I loved this one. I read something else by Keast and decided to give this one a try. Glad I did. It's a keeper.

Leigh Anne says

I use to own an old copy but gave it away! I'm so sad I did. :(This is was one of my first older man, forbidden/taboo romances that I read when I was like twelve! Haha.

Melanie♥ says

*** 3 1/2 stars ***

This one came very highly recommended over on the amazon forums, so I had high expectations for it. Yes, it was a great May-December romance, but there was a slight "creepy" feel to the relationship. I could not get over the fact that the heroine and the hero's son grew up together. He was her godfather. Although he felt nothing romantic toward her until she was 23, there was just something not quite right about that. But that said, I did enjoy the book and was torn between rating it as a 3 or 4 star book. If there had not been the past history between the two, I would have added another star.

ALPHAreader says

I put a question to Amazon's romance chat board. I was looking for a good romance book about an older man/younger woman. I know lots of 60's and 70's Mills & Boon and Harlequin unwittingly set up the old man/young woman dynamic – simply because such a pairing wasn't at all unconventional at the time. I was looking for a more modern romance in which the older/younger relationship was the crux of the story, not

simply a given.

The book that came most highly recommended was Karen Keast's 'The Surprise of his Life' (1991)... and I *LOVED* it!

The trigger of the story is 23-year-old Lindsey Ellison returning home to comfort her mother through the divorce her father has sprung on her after 25 years of marriage. Lindsey had previously been living in London, where she fled after she broke off her wedding the night before the big day. Lindsey has mixed feelings about returning home – she's devastated about her parent's divorce and angry at her father's mid-life crisis that prompted it. But she's also nervous and excited – because returning home means coming face to face with the reason she called off her wedding. Walker Carr. Family friend who was in Vietnam with her father and is also her godfather. Walker is also the man she loves – despite his being 47 to her 23.

Walker and Lindsey are H-O-T. There's no explicit sex really, as Keast tiptoes around the more nitty-gritty smut. She never uses the word 'nipple' for example, but refers to the 'centre of Lindsey's breasts'.

Regardless, Lindsey and Walker are smoldering, especially because of the pent-up frustration Walker feels at having lustful thoughts about his goddaughter, and the illicitness of their affair. When these two do get together they burn up the page! It helps that the man on the books cover bears a striking resemblance to Cary Grant. Oh boy!

"You are different," Walker whispered, reaching out and touching her love-tossed hair with his fingertips.

"So very different."

A tiny smile budded, grew, ripened. "I grew up."

At that he began to gently twist the blond strands of her hair about his fist. Each roll brought her closer to him until the tips of her breasts brushed against his chest. Her neck was arched, her head angled upward.

"Did anyone ever tell you that you grew up in all the right places?" he said, his mouth only milli-inches from hers.

"I've been waiting all these years for you to tell me," she whispered.

Despite the age difference and the illicitness of a godfather/goddaughter pairing; Lindsey and Walker's romance never felt 'wrong' or creepy. It helps that these two have such obvious sexual chemistry. Walker is also a real gentlemen and is never flippant about his feelings for Lindsey, and he really struggles with their newfound romance.

As well as Lindsey and Walker's romance, there's the storyline concerning Lindsey's parents, Bunny and Dean. This is actually a really good accompanying plot as Dean takes increasingly drastic and ridiculous measures to fend off old age, including having an affair with a 19-year-old girl. Dean's mid-life crisis is a great counter-point to Walker's feelings for Lindsey, and only proves to highlight how different his relationship is compared to Dean's desperation.

Karen Keast is a pseudonym for Sandra Key Patterson Caulfield. She unfortunately passed away in 2003 – having written 13 books, all of which are either Harlequin or Silhouette imprints. Reading her backlist, she has quite a few books that really appeal to me – they're all a little bit old school, and that's half the appeal. You kind of have to go scouting for Keast's books – a few are available via Amazon, second-hand, and most of them are only US\$0.01 (not including postage + shipping). Others are a little more pricey for their rarity (US\$19.99) and some are simply out of print.

I loved 'The Surprise of his Life'. Loved it! No wonder it came so highly recommended.

Jenny says

Hero was the heroine's godfather and 20+ years older than her. I love this trope so I enjoyed this book. Heroine is ready to get married but she realizes she is in love with her godfather. She cancels her wedding and she is off to pursue the hero. Of course he loves her back but he has doubts that a marriage between them would last. She is too young for him and he doesn't want to trap her but heroine is pretty determined to win his heart.

Nicky says

I really liked this book. Im a HUGE fan of Older Hero romances and especially if the heroine has loved him for years.. Both Walker and Lindsey were extremely likeable and this author can definitely make you feel all the characters emotions.. My heart broke for Bunny at the start of the book. I literally hurt when I read how she was acting and how much she had changed.

I'd just like to explain my shelving choices right quick. When I shelved it "disappointed" it doesn't mean I didn't like it. But I was disappointed because I was looking forward to reading more about Bunny and Dean than Lindsey and Walker. The emotions I felt were much stronger when we got to read a little tidbit about them.

I mentioned that I was a huge fan of Older H romances but I have to admit this particular story had me a little off-put because of the years that separated the h/H.. This is the first book I've read with such an amount of years between them but it can definitely be overlooked.

Walker always mentioning how old he was did get old quick because he harped and harped on it. (but this happens in other books regarding a person's social status, wealth, weight etc. so it can be overlooked)

Overall this was a very good read and I read it in one evening.

Cheesecake says

Walker and Lindsey. I love May/Dec romances but this one pushes the envelope even for me. And yet the author manages to carry it off!

Walker is Lindsey's dad's best friend and the same age as him. He's 47 and she is about 25. He was there when she was born, has babysat for her and she remembers his first wife fondly (she died 8 years ago). She's the same age as his son. It's kinda weird and should be kinda kinky, but somehow it isn't. The author writes a slow-build romance for 2/3 of the book until they finally can't resist each other and then it's full steam ahead. The sex scenes are sexy but not as detailed as modern books are. I didn't mind. I thought they were perfect for the story and all that was needed. There was real chemistry between Walker and Lindsey and a believable depth of feeling. I was worried it would be horribly awkward when the truth of their affair out, but it wasn't, although it wasn't easy either. I gave it 5 stars despite it's being a bit slow for the first half because I found

his declaration of love just so romantic!

Malika says

Gawd the H was delish!! This would have been 5 stars if it wasnt for the secondary characters cheating it left a bad taste in my mouth... Nice how everyone uses mid-life crisis as an excuse to act like a douche,,, im no dude so maybe im wrong but the whole mid-life crises excuse to cheat on such a lovely lady doesnt wash with me... I wish she dated some other deserving guy, made him suffer and or grovel more.... Buutt no i wuv u and i forgive you for everything ! Please anyone give me a rope so i can hang myself!

Loved it and totally rec'd it :-)

bookjunkie says

I quite liked this; it was very well-written, but maybe a bit *too* realistic for my personal taste? Idk. I'm a huge fan of the much-older-man Hero, it's my *thing* tbh, but maybe it was just too real the way Walker thought about himself as over-the-hill and how the word "grandfather" hit him, and talking about his bum knee aching all the time and then thinking about how he'd be too old to play with any new kids he might have. That did a good job of dampening down my enthusiasm for the match, lemme tell ya. Gruff, tough "father"-type is hot; creaky old "grandfather"-type *NOT SO MUCH!!*

Still, I enjoyed the romance between Walker & Lindsey when he wasn't thinking about how very, very old he was. The turmoil each of them goes through when they realize their attraction to each other is well-depicted and convincing, and I enjoyed the chase once Lindsey got the memo that it wasn't totally unrequited.

I was unexpectedly blindsided by the anger I felt at Lindsey's dad. I sometimes skim secondary romance arcs when I'm too caught up in the primary one, but I couldn't ignore the one here between Lindsey's parents, who are about to divorce. Her dad's affair totally *infuriated* me, and I could barely keep it together. To throw away a loving and devoted wife of over 20 years for some skanky little baby bitch, OMG I was steaming mad. I wanted her mom to drop his ass and refuse to ever reconcile! It was the most angst I got over the whole book, I needed him to suffer *hard*. I wanted them to divorce and he would have to come home to a cold dark empty apartment and live on disgusting microwave burritos and think back on his ex-wife's delicious home cooking and warm loving house and maybe visit her one day and find she's making a new husband happy the way he once was, and realize that he threw it all away because he's a huge idiot moron. *I wanted that.* I guess my strong reaction is a testament to how good the writing was, and it's unusual as it wasn't even about the main characters.

Overall the romance was great but the book made me think more about the realities of mid-life crises than I ever have before. I hope when it happens it hits me and my guy the way Walker handled it; if my guy goes Dean's route I might have to cut someone.

AG Reads says

Reread. Still one of the best age gap romances I've read.

Vintage says

Mature and plausible romance with parallel stories.

The primary characters are the much younger heroine and her godfather falling for each other. She is the aggressor in the relationship while he is pretty horrified at what he sees as cradle robbing. It doesn't help that his best friend, the heroine's father, took too many stupid pills and has gone off the rails in his mid-life crisis. The h's dad doesn't miss any of the cliches: fast car, new clothes (new gawdawful tacky rainbow clothes), next best thing to a comb over, and sadly a twinkie younger than his daughter. The even sadder thing is she sounded like a sweet girl, and under Kristen Ashley or someone else she would have been the h.

Anyhoo, the paralleling May-December romances is seriously scaring the H, and he puts the stop on the romance after some epic sex.

All in all, a nice group of people. And, yes, I can't believe I am saying this, but once the errant dad gets his head out of his backend he's redeemable. the fact that the mother decided to step up for herself and leave him behind was his second wakeup call. I usually hate, despise and loathe second chances for cheaters, but I found this believable.
