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But helping Martha leads to unforeseen consequences . . . including murder. When Martha's husband is found dead, the police show up at Alanis's door. And things only get more complicated as she tries to clear her name from the top of the suspect list. With her growing mastery of the tarot and the Fool card to guide her, can Alanis find her way to the truth before the killer gets to her first?

Fool Me Once Details

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From Reader Review Fool Me Once for online ebook

Melodie says

So glad I picked the first in this series up a short while back. Good stories, with enough snark to keep it interesting. Great characters with lots of baggage that keep a good story rolling and interesting. Recommend!

Diane Wilkes says

I hate it when I want to read the next book in a series immediately after finishing the newest book in a series. So it is with Fool Me Once, the latest entry transcribing the escapades of Alanis McLachlan, recovering hustler and (relatively) new owner of the White Magic Five & Dime, inherited from her late grifter mother.

Alanis has been on the level for some time, trying to atone for Mom's crimes by returning scammed monies to their rightful owners. Sad sack Marsha Riggs is one of the former patsies Alanis is attempting to assist. When Marcia's abusive husband Bill turns up dead, Alanis feels responsible for uncovering the real killer. Her long history as a con-girl stands her in good stead as she uses means both legal and not-so to solve the crime.

This second book in the series is packed with tarot interpretations from a fabricated-for-the-series tarot book, Infinite Roads to Knowing, authored by mom and Alanis' newly discovered half-sister, Clarice. The card descriptions are unique, spot on, and quite clever. They add significantly to my enjoyment of the series, which I probably wouldn't even have investigated had it not included the tarot element. Having said that, I think this book would appeal to any cozy mystery lover who appreciates a strong female protagonist.

Alanis is just that, yet she never seems inauthentically rugged--points to the male author for this feat. The romantic element is fairly dry and rote; the chemistry (or lack thereof) is a match for the lifeless Bill Riggs. (Would that be a dead match?) The lack of sizzle seems to me to be more emblematic of a masculine author to me.

Maybe I'm projecting, but I read a lot of women writers, and the aridity factor seems blatant in comparison.

I don't really care about that aspect of the book, though, since the mystery itself is reasonably well-constructed. Its greatest charm is the flow of the writing. Fool Me Once is a very quick and engaging read, and while I could use some more bonding moments with the peripheral characters, especially Clarice, the author has managed to sew things up nicely and plant a cliff-hanger simultaneously. A neat trick, that.

Another neat trick would be to greatly expand and publish Infinite Roads to Knowing. Based on reading the acknowledgments, it seems Falco is the tarot authority, and I'd love to see a tarot book by her. That's a commercial tie-in I would gladly support. It would pacify me somewhat until the third book in the series is published.

LORI CASWELL says

Dollycas's Thoughts

We return the The White Magic Five and Dime in this 2nd Tarot Mystery. Alanis' Tarot Card reading skills are improving but her main concern is helping people her mother conned out of their hard earned cash. Martha comes to Alanis to escape her abusive husband but when the husband is found dead she becomes the prime suspect and they think Alanis could be an accomplice. Thankfully she has a good lawyer for Martha, a friend not afraid to do a little breaking and entering, a sister with an internet hacker connection, and a keen sense to track down the real killer.

This story is so easy to easy to get caught up in. You know Alanis' heart is in the right place and she does go to great lengths to right her mother's wrongs. She is also quite savvy and doesn't get tripped up but those trying to con her or take advantage of her. She has grown quite a bit over the course of these books. The secondary characters are very interesting as well and the author brings them all together with an extraordinary plot with plenty of red herrings.

Each chapter starts with a excerpt from Alanis' mother's book, Miss Chance, Infinite Roads in Knowing, that Alanis is reading and to give us a little insight into the Tarot Cards. These are quite humorous.

The author did something I just hate :) he leaves is with a hook for the next book in this series! I hate that because we have to wait a year to get the rest of the story!!

For now this is a terrific mystery. While it can be read as a stand alone I truly recommend you start with The White Magic Five and Dime, you can read my review here. Then we can wait for the next installment together.

A Voracious Reader (a.k.a. Carol) says

4.5

*Book source ~ Library

After Alanis McLachlin inherits her estranged mother's shop, the White Magic Five & Dime, in Berdache, Arizona she tries to track down and make things right with old customers her mother has conned. After sort of adopting an abused wife that was one of those customers, Alanis then needs to find the real killer of Martha's husband when Martha is arrested for his murder. In only a few short weeks since hitting town, Alanis is once again smack in the middle of a murder investigation. She barely survived her last nose poking. Will she be so lucky this time?

I have to say, I'm loving this series. Alanis is a different kind of "heroine." She doesn't fit any kind of mold. In fact, she may have broken the mold. She goes about things in a way I never expect and it's all because of the way she grew up. I can't even begin to imagine her childhood, so she keeps me on my toes. The murder mystery kept me guessing and there are great secondary characters. All-in-all an excellent way to spend an afternoon.

❄ Pixelflocke ❄ says

Im Vergleich zum ersten Band war Alanis zweiter Fall eine ziemliche Enttäuschung. Der gesamte Plot war

so hanebüchen und der Kriminalfall und deren Aufklärung absolut lächerlich. Zum Ende hin wirkte es zudem sehr übereilt und passte irgendwie nicht recht zum sonst so gemütlichen Verlauf der Geschichte.

Was mich im Endeffekt bei der Stange hielt, war der grandiose Humor. Ich liebe Alanis als Protagonistin sowie ihren schrägen Humor. Auch ihre Dynamik mit Clarice ist toll, kam in diesem Band aber leider etwas zu kurz.

Miss Chance war auch wieder mit von der Partie. Ihre zynischen Deutungen einzelner Karten war herrlich!

Sally Ember says

A lot of fun with this sequel in what I hope will be an ongoing series with Tarot cards, independent investigators, bizarre characters and situations, and humor tinged with feminism. Really enjoyed book 1 and book 2 did not disappoint.

Recommended if you like strong female characters and an odd twist on Tarot cards in your mysteries.

Andrea says

Still enjoying Alanis' unique take on life and complex relationships. The tarot content here is fun and helps move the plot forward or offers nice framing for the chapters. I was a little surprised the events in this book follow so closely on the first book. I'm a bit worried about where book 3 will take us. I love this series but at some point it's going to need something more than dealing with the aftermath of Athena's death. Fun and enjoyable read!

Maggie Gordon says

Yeah, more Alanis McLachan and her odd life :) Last book, we learned all about Alanis' childhood with her con artist mom, and then the aftereffects of her mom's subsequent murder. Poor Alanis is still dealing with the fallout of mom's choices, and her attempts to help Marsha, one of the women her mother conned, might not be going the way that she planned. Marsha is arrested for murdering her husband, and Alanis needs to prove her new friend's innocence! Fool Me Once is a fun romp. Not too hard to figure out, but I'm never too fussed about being surprised with mysteries. The tarot addition continues to add a nice flash of difference and nuance to these books as well.

Anna Catharina says

Hand auf's Herz: Eigentlich hätte das Buch rein für die Story nur 1-2 Sterne verdient. Der Kriminalfall ist ausgesprochen mager und auch nicht originell, sondern mehr die lose Rahmenhandlung um Alanis und ihre kleinen Betrügereien gekonnt in Szene zu setzen.

Warum also 5 Sterne? Ich liebe den Humor und die Personen. Alanis, die mit allen Wassern gewaschene (Ex-)Ganovin, ist einfach zu unterhaltsam. Es kommt selten vor, dass mich ein Buch zum Lachen bringen kann, aber dieses hat es geschafft und das ist mir einfach mal 5 Sterne wert.

Wer sarkastischen Humor mag und nichts gegen eine wenig gesetzestreue und wenig vorbildhafte Heldin hat, dafür aber Abstriche in der Handlung hinnehmen kann, der lese dieses Buch!

Allie says

This second book was just as good as the first. I looooooved it!

OpenBookSociety.com says

<http://openbooksociety.com/article/fo...>

Fool Me Once

Tarot Mystery series, Book #2

By Steve Hockensmith

ISBN13: 9780738742236

Author's Website: <http://www.stevhockensmith.com>

Brought to you by OBS reviewer Andra

Synopsis:

After taking over the White Magic Five & Dime, Alanis McLachlan is trying to make up for her mother's con jobs by tracking down old customers and making amends. When Martha, one of the most loyal clients, comes looking for a way out of her abusive marriage, Alanis does everything she can to help.

But helping Martha leads to unforeseen consequences . . . including murder. When Martha's husband is found dead, the police show up at Alanis's door. And things only get more complicated as she tries to clear her name from the top of the suspect list. With her growing mastery of the tarot and the Fool card to guide her, can Alanis find her way to the truth before the killer gets to her first?

Review:

The easy flow of the series continues while reading this second book, Fool Me Once, in the Tarot Mystery series by Steve Hockensmith?. Alanis has a good heart and is trying to right the wrongs as a result of her deceased mother's (Athena) con's of times past, one wrong at a time.

The opening paragraph certainly grabbed my interest and got me excited for another enjoyable read in this series:

Anyone who says "I'm going to kill you," Biddle used to tell me, isn't going to kill you. Why would they be talking to somebody who's practically dead already? The ones who really mean it just say it with their eyes and then they do it. Learn to recognize that look, Biddle would say, and you'll have the edge you need to save yourself. Or at least you won't die surprised.

There was no further expansion of a romantic angle for this story. In the first book of this series, Alanis and Berdache Police Department detective Josh Logan were dancing around each other, but in this second book – no mention of Josh.

This book revolves around the murder of Bill Riggs (his wife Marsha is a friend of Alanis). I must say that I was seething at Bill (Marsha's horrid husband)! When he went running after his wife, I was left cold in the actions of this despicable husband. I do not condone his actions or words but I was heartened by Alanis' actions and words...standing up for her friend in grand style!:

"Get back here this instant!" Bill called after her.

"Don't you run away from me!"

He took a step to the left.

I blocked him.

He took a step to the right.

I blocked him again.

"I can do this dance all day, Bill, I said.

"You're not getting past me."

And that's when he turned The Look on me.

"You scheming [female sexual organ]," he said, "I oughta break your neck."

"[Female sexual organs] don't have necks, Bill," I said.

"You know what I mean."

I did.

There was consistency between books in the series with respect to each chapter beginning with a picture of one of the tarot cards and a brief description of the card...according to Miss Chance, the author of *Infinite Roads to Knowing*. I must admit, this time I found it a bit redundant. I was looking for another tarot card gimmick to catch my interest. But at least the verbiage was interesting :)

We are introduced to another fine law enforcement official of the Berdache Police Department, Detective Burby. Right from the get go there was friction between Burby and Alanis. And truth be told, since the love interest between the detective in the first book was not strong, I enjoyed the friction between them even more. The reader was also introduced to another "character" – G.W. Fletcher. Fletcher knew Alanis' mother (seems like everyone did actually). On their first meeting he let his irresistible smile shine through. That relationship is certainly one to watch as the series continues.

I also chuckled quite a bit when a previous customer of Athena came in essentially wanting a re-do for removing a curse on her money. Athena's solution was to have the customer "give her all or some of the money to the medium...who would (supposedly) return some or all (ha!) When the curse had lost its power." I was glad that Alanis came up with a viable solution that satisfied the customer as well as her higher moral compass.... (I.e. not ripping the customer off).

I do hope that future books of this series add a bit of a spark as the story was GOOD but I am hoping for a bit more zest in the lives of Alanis and her sister. A solid read which provided a requisite mystery, which I was not able to fully conclude until the end. A success in my opinion. Thank you Steve Hockensmith!

OBS would like to thank the publisher for supplying a free copy of this title in exchange for an honest review

Kristen says

I loved the second book in this series even more than the first! Everything I loved in the first book is ramped up in this one.

This series is like a cozy mystery . . . on acid! Seriously, everything about this story is extra sarcastic, extra funny, and extra ridiculously awesome, and I loved every single page of it.

Alanis is one of the best characters I've ever read. I love her backstory, which makes everything she says and does utterly and completely plausible, even though it all should be ridiculous or crazy or simply a bad idea. And all that makes for a crazy entertaining read!

The humour in this series totally SLAYS me! I laughed out loud [for real!] all the way through this book. From the hilarious "meanings" for the cards of the tarot that begin each chapter, to the completely snarky things Alanis says and thinks about what's going on, to the classic tv memories that are worked into the story in clever amusing ways, this book is one of the funniest I've read in a while. The extra cool thing is that even though most of the snark could stand on its own, it actually WORKS in the development of the story and totally fits with what's going on. That's what you call really great writing, which this series has in spades.

The pacing is also terrific in this series. It's a fast, easy-to-read snappy story that zips along easily and makes you really want to keep reading once you start, with many chapters ending with small cliffhangers.

Truly, I love everything about this series. I absolutely can't wait to read the third book, especially with how this one ends! Highly recommended if you like your cozies with smart, well-written characters, a terrific story line and a whole bucket full of sarcastic laugh-out-loud humour.

Melissa ♥ Melissa's Eclectic Bookshelf says

Fool Me Once is a great follow up to The White Magic Five and Dime!

Alanis is settling in to life running her mother's shop, trying to help right the wrongs caused by her mother's cons and living with her new sister when she manages to stumble upon a very unpleasant murder. Could her client, the wife and primary suspect, really be to blame?

Alanis jumps right in to investigate and the tale just takes off from there.

Hockensmith's writing style really sets this series apart..it's beyond quirky and has a vibe that may not be completely consistent with the "cozy mystery" image but nonetheless works to keep the reader engaged and having fun.

Secondary characters make this one. From Detective Burby who's all business, to G. W. Fletcher who can be counted on to do the wrong thing yet still manages to step up, to straight arrow Victor...we enjoy every moment of this investigation in their company.

The Tarot once again is featured heavily which makes the story that much more fascinating.

Not your typical cozy mystery...Fool Me Once combines mystery, great characters, the tarot and most surprisingly a healthy dose of humor. All of these elements add up to a terrifically fun read. I can't wait for the next in this series.

Yvonne says

Alanis McLachlan is back in the second "Tarot Mystery" series. In the first book, The White Magic Five & Dime, she inherited her estranged mother's tarot shop in Berdache, Arizona. Her mother had been a well known con artist who made a career out of swindling her clients of their money. Alanis may know nothing about reading tarot cards, but she intends to make up for all the bad things her mother did and perhaps even learn more about tarot cards.

One of her mother's clients, Marsha Riggs, seeks help from Alanis. Her husband, Bill, is abusive and Marsha wants nothing more than to get away from him. Alanis makes it her mission to make sure Bill never hurts Marsha again. When Bill turns up dead, Marsha and Alanis make the top of the suspect list. With help from some whacky friends and family, Alanis tries to find the real killer before she and Marsha end up with the same fate as Bill.

I loved the first book and I was not disappointed with this second one. The author keeps you at the edge of your seat. It's another page turner. The mystery storyline is self-contained in this book, but I think it's more enjoyable if you get to know Alanis by reading the first one. You will have a better understanding of her relationship with her mother and the whole story falls nicely into place.

Alanis is a great character. She keeps you laughing and she's not afraid to take a stand against the bad guys. The secondary characters truly come to life in this book – from Alanis new-found sister to the bad guys to a couple of romantic possibilities.

The author keeps you guessing with many twists and turns. The mystery is solved at the end, but there is a cliffhanger at the end of the book (which has nothing to do with the murder mystery – you don't have to wait for months before knowing whodunit.) I, for one, am anxiously awaiting for the next book.

FTC Disclosure: The author provided me with a copy of this book to review for this blog tour. This did not influence my thoughts and opinions in any way. All opinions expressed are my own.

Morandia says

Honestly, I would give this 3.5 stars except for one small thing. The very end of the book bumped it up to a strong 4 stars. Another fun tarot mystery, but I wasn't thrilled with many of the reversed Interpretations on the Wand cards. The upright ones I liked. The story was decent, and a fun read. I would love to see a bit

more on the tarot reads as they serve as an integral part of the story when they do appear. My favorite part was the last two pages though. OMG did not expect that!
