



Stealing Taffy

Susan Donovan

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Ten weeks in a swanky Arizona rehab center has done wonders for Tanyalee Newberry. She's turning over a new leaf – no more manipulating men, shoplifting, or forgery for her! But when her flight home gets rerouted in bad weather, she ends up sharing a hotel room (and seven hours of mind-numbing sex) with her airplane seatmate, a complicated Northerner who is clearly not who he says he is. Tanyalee sneaks off while he sleeps, leaving a bracelet as a memento of their encounter.

DEA Special Agent Dante Cabrera wakes up alone in a Washington, DC hotel room, bested at his own “love-‘em-and-leave-‘em” game by a sexy Southern belle. A pink and silver charm bracelet engraved with the word “Taffy” is all that's left of the wildest night he's had in years. And because his transfer request was denied, it's back to the hills of Western North Carolina Dante must go. Weeks pass, but Dante can't forget the taste of sweet Taffy.

When an ongoing investigation leads Dante to a little girl Tanyalee mentors in a community service program, their anonymous hotel hookup gets dragged into the bright light of real life. Is there more to Tanyalee and Dante than a one-night stand? Has Tanyalee unwittingly put herself and the child in danger? Can Dante save them both?

Stealing Taffy Details

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From Reader Review Stealing Taffy for online ebook

Tiffany says

Stealing Taffy by Susan Donovan is book #3 in her **Bigler, North Carolina** series. Although this book works as a standalone--I haven't read the first two books in the series--the plot borrows heavily from the preceding books, so I suspect they're best read in order.

Tanyalee Marie Newberry is a true Southern belle. She's also a convicted felon who forged her granddaddy's signature on loan documents and hacked into his bank account. Additionally, she slept with her sister's boyfriend, tricked him into getting her pregnant, and convinced him to marry her. Then, when she miscarried, she lied to him about it. When he found out, he divorced her.

Tanyalee is clearly not a stereotypical romance heroine. In fact, she has just returned from a stint in rehab for her unhealthy relationships, compulsive spending habits, shoplifting, and love addiction. On her return flight, she meets a handsome and mysterious man named Dan Carnes. Tanyalee introduces herself as Taffy (her childhood nickname) and concocts a fake story about her life, unwilling to tell the truth about who she is, for obvious reasons. The two of them hit it off immediately and when their flight is diverted, they end up spending a sexy night together.

Dan is actually Dante Cabrera, special agent for the Drug Enforcement Administration. That's not the story he tells Taffy, of course. They have explosive chemistry, but when Dante wakes up the next morning, he's alone. Taffy has bested him at his own game, leaving nothing but her charm bracelet behind to remember her by.

Back home in North Carolina, Tanyalee is on a mission to make amends to all the people she has wronged in the past. There are quite a few people on that list, but first she has to find a job and start fulfilling her community service hours. It turns out that Dante is working a case out of the Asheville field office. He and Tanyalee run into each other unexpectedly and the sparks fly between them all over again.

There's quite a bit of plot going on in this book. There's Tanyalee's desire to redeem herself and transform into a better person; Dante's work and some demons from his past; Tanyalee's tenuous relationships with the people she has hurt, especially family members like her grandfather and sister; and a local girl who Tanyalee is determined to befriend. On top of all this, there's an undercurrent of suspense with the drug case Dante is working.

Right away, I liked the author's writing style. It's comedic, but I never felt that she humiliates the heroine. Speaking of which, Tanyalee is difficult to like because of her past transgressions; however, she has such a good heart at her core and that really comes out to shine throughout the story. Even though she has made some awful mistakes, she's the type of character you actually want to root for because she sincerely is remorseful and wants to change. Likewise, Dante has a lot of baggage in his past. So in a sense, he and Tanyalee are perfect for each other because they have unique insight into each other's lives and understand each other on a deeper level.

I would have liked the book more if there hadn't been quite so many conflicts going on simultaneously. At times, I found it hard to focus on the relationship between Tanyalee and Dante because of all the drama happening on the periphery of their developing romance. On the other hand, I loved the parts where the romance is at the forefront and would have liked to see more of that.

The small town setting, bolstered by its many characters, is both heartwarming and comical.

I would recommend *Stealing Taffy* to anyone who enjoys a small-town romance with a fair dose of comedy mixed with poignant moments and a dash of suspense. Overall, I enjoyed this author's writing style and will look for her books again in the future.

I received an advance copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for my review.

WhiskeyintheJar/Kyraryker says

3.5 stars

Danielle says

Stealing Taffy was a cute and fun read. The story line was different and from that moment I wanted to read this. I might not have read the first book in this series but I have read Susan Donovan books before and I love her writing!

In this story we meet Taffy who is fresh out of rehab in Arizona and is on her way home to NC. While waiting for her plan to arrive to take her home she sees a sexy guy, Dante. They end up sitting next to one another on the plane and Taffy starts telling him her whole life story which was a really funny moment. While Taffy is being honest Dante is keeping things unwrapped because he's a DEA agent and telling her all about him would be a mistake. But after one hot night Dante can't get her off his mind and sets out to find Taffy. Only fate has other plans and pretty much drops Taffy in his lap.

This story was funny, sweet and had a little mystery involved. The mystery portion looks like it starts in book 1 but don't worry Donovan pretty much catches you up so you aren't feeling lost. Taffy was a funny yet sweet character. Sure she did a lot of things wrong but I could see right away how bad she wanted to correct all those things and earn back some of the relationships that are strained. There were some slow parts and a lot of repeated things but overall I really enjoyed this one and the humor that was brought to it.

Cathy Geha says

Laughter, lust and love made this a wonderful book for me to read today! I was laughing before the end of the first chapter and though there were amends to be made by Taffy before she could find her happily ever after it was just the book to make my afternoon relaxing and fun.

Tanyalee Marie "Taffy" Newberry was new to me as a character and one I was charmed by. I loved the way she and Dante Cabrera met while traveling and acted upon their mutual interest never thinking they would see one another again. It may not have been the best thing for Taffy to be doing just out of her stint in rehab but then again, perhaps it was.

Some might find this a silly book but I found it filled with joy and possibilities and the idea that no matter how bad your life may have been or how badly you have treated others there is the potential for more and better in the future – if you are willing to do what it takes to make it happen.

I have not read other books by this author but did enjoy this one and hope to read more of her work in the

future.

Thank you to NetGalley and St. Martin's Press for the copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Kimberly says

2.5 stars. My review cross-posted from Wit and Sin: <http://witandsin.blogspot.com/2017/01...>

Return to Bigler, North Carolina and see a former villain become an endearing, slightly daffy heroine in *Stealing Taffy*. Susan Donovan had an uphill battle turning Tanyalee into a heroine I could like. Tanyalee's past and her treatment of others (especially her sister, the heroine of *Cheri on Top*) was despicable and there was no excuse for it. The newly-reformed Tanyalee in *Stealing Taffy* is a woman who doesn't make excuses for her past and is trying to make amends, and I actually liked her villain-to-heroine arc. The new Tanyalee is a bit out of her depth when she returns to her hometown, and I liked seeing her work on being a better person. Part of her efforts includes mentoring a troubled young girl, Fern. Fern and Tanyalee's relationship was, for me, the highlight of the book. The two of them gave this book genuine heart and had it just been their respective journeys, I would have adored *Stealing Taffy*.

Where the story falters is the romance. Dante is an interesting hero with lots of potential, but we never go into depth on any of his issues. Because of this, he felt a bit cardboard, and this was a pity because Ms. Donovan tells us he's a hero with issues of his own, ones that are passed over in favor of other storylines. Mostly Dante feels like a springboard for other characters (Tanyalee in particular) and plotlines to bounce off of. His relationship with Tanyalee is fluffy and fun, but there's a real case of missed opportunity. I couldn't connect with the characters and the romance felt superficial, so I was left wanting more. *Stealing Taffy* isn't a bad book – it's enjoyable, lighthearted entertainment – but the romance is missing heart. With a bit more depth, this book could have gone from ok to great.

FTC Disclosure: I received this book for free from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Laura says

ARC Provided by the Publisher and NetGalley

This book was like sitting down with a nice hot chocolate on a cold night (or a glass of wine on any night). It was a pleasure to read, it was enjoyable, and it just had a smooth feel to it...I don't know how else to describe it. It felt real. It had conflict, but the kind of conflict you would have in real life. Taffy was likeable, if a little crazy (but hey, she admits it). Dante was funny...the DEA agent learning how to handle the kind of crazy she brings. And, well, he likes her so he handles it well.

There is nothing about the book that is particularly angsty...but that is not to say it lacks emotion. It doesn't.

I enjoyed it. The characters were amusing and believable, the writing was strong, the pacing was even.

I recommend this book.

***This and other reviews also featured on "I'm A Sweet and Sassy Book Whore"
<http://www.imasweetandsassybookwhore.com>***

Jen says

2 Disappointing Stars

In the past, I've loved me some Susan Donovan. Knock Me Off My Feet is one of my favorites from my super early romance reading days so I'm not joking around here. Given that, it pains me to say *Stealing Taffy* was a disappointment for me.

Okay, that's a little harsh. I think a more accurate statement might be that this series in general just isn't my cuppa. It started out weak but I really enjoyed I Want Candy, thus my requesting this little ditty.

My main issue is the fact I wasn't really looking for a Tanyalee story in the first place. I went in with an open mind, but there was a whole lot to overcome. She was a manipulative ex-wife and sister respectively to the couple in the first book of the series and I only kinda sorta warmed up to her in the second book. Despite the return of Dante the hot cop, I didn't get quite enough good in this one to make me care about Tanyalee.

I still love Susan Donovan's writing but unfortunately I just don't think I needed this particular character's happily ever after.

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

Jacob Proffitt says

*This is third in the series and characters and events in the previous books (mostly the first) play a heavy role in this one. Which leaves me kind of torn because the earlier books are definitely helpful, but this one is **so very much better** than the others that it's a shame that they're first. Seriously, if you can put up with references to past events you just know are depicted elsewhere I recommend starting here. Donovan does a good-enough job explaining everything that needs explaining in this one. I think.*

I just loved this story. It starts strong and never lets up and only falters very slightly at the very end. And even then I'm going to give it a pass because I *loved Tanyalee and Dante just so very much*. I'm not sure if Donovan just did a fantastic job skirting the edge of cliché without falling in (you can make a case for insta-love, manic-pixie-dream girl, and intrusive fate) or if I was just so into the story that I decided to accept the best possible reading of the motivations and events. At any rate, I know I'm gushing a little bit and I'm just going to roll with it.

The thing is, Tanyalee is such a strong character and so engaging in her quest for redemption that I was emotionally invested early and strongly. Someone coming out of rehab is at their very most vulnerable as they start the difficult process of using the newly learned skills and routines in the real world. It's clear from the start that her rehab was honest and likely complete, but it's also clear that the pre-rock-bottom woman had dug a world of hurt for herself and that it would take some uncommon strength to go where she knew she had to go. Asking forgiveness and making amends are some of the toughest steps on the road to recovery

and I just loved Tanyalee's determination and courage in pursuit of becoming healthy.

And Dante is a dream without being too perfect to believe. So he's good too. Also, buff Special Agent with that bone-deep protective vibe gets me every. single. time.

If you read my review of the second book, you'll know I'm not a fan of the thriller aspects in Donovan's stories. It's as weak in this one as it is in the others. Only, it's also a heck of a lot less present and doesn't really change anything important about the characters. That final thriller bit was pretty laughable in a lot of ways, but at least the main characters didn't do anything egregiously stupid or completely out of left field.

So maybe I dropped the overall rating to 4.5 rounding to five. Or maybe I just didn't care and left it at five. I don't know and since there's no visible difference in the GR rating system, five stars it is...

A note about Steamy: There are two explicit sex scenes. They're integral to the story and character arc (even though effectively bookending it), though, which tends to lower their impact on my steam tolerance. So this is on the border between light and medium for me, though it might register higher for others.

Alp says

“Dante, that woman is perfect for you. You’ve always liked the wildest ride in the amusement park.”

I adored this book. SO VERY MUCH!

I really don't know how to come up with a review that can do justice to this book. Stealing Taffy was such a wonderful read! With the author's excellent writing, lovely plot, and amazing characters, no wonder I couldn't put it down even for a minute.

Welcome back to Bigler, North Carolina!

After ten weeks of rehabilitation, Tanyalee Marie Newberry was heading home to meet her probation officer due to her suspended sentence for forging her grandfather's signature on a loan application. While waiting for her flight, she spotted a hot guy in the boarding area. She tried to check him out without him knowing, but suddenly, he looked up from his phone and as soon as their eyes met, sparks flew.

DEA special agent from Brooklyn, Dante Cabrera, was assigned to work on the meth case in North Carolina. He missed the city life and couldn't wait to get a transfer out of the South. On his flight to Raleigh, it was a big surprise for him to find out that the empty seat next to his happened to belong to that beautiful woman who just ogled him a little while ago.

They introduced themselves and had some conversations. Both of them felt strongly attracted to each other but tried to keep themselves under control. But then the captain informed the passengers that they had to be diverted to Washington, D.C. because of bad weather. They decided to stay overnight together in a hotel room, and then catch a flight the next day.

Dante and Tanyalee had one scorching hot night together. In the morning, she placed her silver bracelet on the bed before quietly leaving. They both never expected to see each other again, but fate always has its way of bringing people together. Their paths crossed again. They realized that it was hard for them to keep their hands off of each other, and it was even harder to not fall in love with each other. And with each passing day,

their feelings only grew deeper and stronger.

“What I’m saying is that my life hasn’t been all that fun for the last few years. I didn’t realize how much I needed to cut loose and laugh the way I did tonight. There’s not a damn thing to be embarrassed about. You gave me a gift. You give me a gift every time I’m with you.”

Anyway, there was one big problem... As a DEA agent, Dante couldn’t be in a relationship with Tanyalee because she was on felony probation and keeping company with a known criminal was against administration policy. This left him with only three choices: broke up with her, took a transfer, or quit his job. However, whichever choice he made, it would certainly break their hearts into tiny pieces...

Well, I loved Tanyalee. Oh yes, you heard me right! I can't believe I say this but I loved this woman. *So very much*. Who would have thought this bitchy, obnoxious Taffy from Cheri on Top (the first installment in this series) could transform into an endearing, sweet, compassionate, and strong woman in this book? Of course, she used to be a very bad person, hurt many people, including, no, in fact, especially her own sister. She stole from her grandfather, manipulated people to get them to do what she wanted, and used men to pay for her shopping. But after rehab, she regretted and was truly ashamed of who she used to be and what she used to do. Therefore she intended to make amends to all the people she’d hurt. I really admired her determination to be a better person and to stand on her own two feet. And most of all, she’s funny in a cute way! Every time she said *“Thankyousoverymuch”*, I couldn’t help but let out a laugh and shake my head in amusement. This woman is just incredible!

“She’s got a big heart underneath all that false bravado. She’s smart, too, and needs to give herself credit for how well she can read people. She’s fun. She’s beautiful. And I think, more than anything, she really wants to do the right thing from here on out.”

Dante... *sigh* He is the man of my dreams. My new book husband. He’s so good and sweet to Tanyalee. He’s caring, understanding, patient, thoughtful, and very protective of her. Aww...I loved this man. *So very much*.

I was very fond of the adorable characters in this book. These small town’s people were wonderful and they seemed to truly care about Tanyalee. It was very beautiful seeing them giving her a second chance and welcoming her back with open arms.

It doesn’t matter that the plot was simple because for me, it was well-knit and very refreshing. Thoroughly hit the spot! There were some emotional moments that made it really hard to hold back my tears. But some delightful moments, especially when Dante and Tanyalee were together, literally brought me so much joy my heart nearly burst. The epilogue was super sweet—loved it!

This is, hands down, one of the best contemporary romance stories I’ve ever read. I loved every page I read and enjoyed every single line of it. This was a perfect mix of wonderful romance, good humor, entwined with a touch of suspense and excitement, and also a sweet HEA that will definitely melt your heart!

“And what I like about you most of all is that you try so damn hard—you’re really pushing to be the best version of yourself, and that makes you more beautiful to me than you can imagine.”

By the way, thankyousoverymuch, Ms. Donovan for writing this beautiful, heartwarming story. You did an outstanding job!

♥ WishfulMiss ♥ says

Not ur typical h, Tanyalee (aka Taffy) is brash, materialistic and kind of a terrible person. On the inside, because on the outside she is really, very beautiful. This is about a person finding the courage to change. Its a redeemed villain story.

I thought I'd be able to root for a person who turns a new leaf but I had a hard time connecting with her because she was so outrageous. There was so much rehashing of her past and it just highlighted all her bad points. I couldn't really see her redeemed.

Dante was okay (not as bad as Taffy) but aside from the great sex, I didn't see even a hint of tenderness between them or anything that made me think these two could make it in the long run.

I was still giving this the benefit of the doubt, even after reaching 17%, (view spoiler)

This J.J. eventually marries Cheri, the h's sister but (I already dont like him because how can you love some one but have sex with someone else??) on top of that, the h still feels resentment, anger and sadness over this! Its too messy for me. (hide spoiler)] After that it was a struggle to keep going. I couldn't push myself through any more. DNF @ 42%.

Overall the writing was really good, but for me, this was a case of "not connecting" with the MCs, so no rating on this one.

This seems to be part of a series so if you haven't read the previous books, the names and past events might be a tad confusing at first. I might pick this one up later but for now, my tastes just don't mesh with this one.

*** ARC received for an honest review ***

Quirky Omega says

Well that was a crazy read. (I mean it from the bottom of my ever-lovin' heart.)
And I thoroughly enjoyed myself. It was hilarious, at times somber and all time entertaining.

Plot

Taffy (but she prefers to be called Tanyalee- her actual name.) hasn't been a model human-being. Like at all. But after a series of events forced her to re-examine herself and check into a rehab for a variety of issues (that included co-dependency, kleptomania, tendency to lie. These aren't even the whole list!). Since her release she's determined to make her amends, change the way she has lived her life and carry through with all the steps of her programme.

On the way back to Bigler, she has an earth-shattering one-night stand with a mysterious but hotter than sin

man.

Yet it was wasn't meant to be for only one night and both are put together in the same small town and this time, it is near impossible to stay away from each other.

MY OPINION

Oh mah Gawd!

Taffy is one hell of a loco, funny as hell chick. She is the stereotypical girly southern belle with that twang and a saucy attitude.

Susan Donovan has given her such hilarious dialogues in the book, it is difficult to hate her. She may be annoying and her past actions leave everything to be desired but the way she's focused on apologising to everyone she's ever hurt, however difficult it may be, is admirable. At no point do you feel sorry for her because you know that she needs to do it. Both for the people she's genuinely hurt and for her own peace and happiness.

Her relationship with Dante is so wild, I almost couldn't believe it. But because I was having such a gala time laughing, I threw all my logic out of the window and went ahead with them. How else would I be able to handle a guy who knows he is attracted to batty women but still moons over Taffy who is the queen of loony-tunes?

I guess I liked this book for the very reason some others didn't. Having read about Taffy's idiocy and villainy previously it is hard to believe her transition. I for one respected every tough "sorry" that she had to say out aloud. But I also grew to respect her. And that is all I needed.

JG says

This was a decidedly fun and quite quirky romance with its larger than life characters, an almost soap operish plot line and an entertaining viewpoint about a villainess turned heroine named Tanyalee Marie Newberry of Bigler, North Carolina. The third book in the series, Stealing Taffy can be read as a standalone and although a reader might initially get lost at the beginning, they would soon pick up on the storyline. Tanyalee aka Taffy has been a bitch her whole life but now she has decided to turn over a new leaf. Things are seen clearly when one is arrested for forgery and fraud. So doing community service and going to all types of anonymous meetings for all types of addiction is the least she could do for a clean slate. But having a one hot and wild one night stand is probably not a good idea for a starting afresh. Definitely a good idea to leave the gorgeous fellow a goodbye charm bracelet and disappear.

Dante Cabrera has an illustrious career as an undercover special agent but having his latest assignment extended is not in his cards. So when he sees a gorgeous, clearly delusional woman who is definitely attracted to him well then might as well act on it. He didn't figure that his one night stand would become that unforgettable. So when Taffy and Dan meet again in the most bizarre of coincidences (where they were both caught lying!) it becomes one long laugh out loud romance that would have you turning the pages. Stealing Taffy and its irreverent humor and quite memorable characters are a treat for romantic comedy fans, its not for the politically correct but its definitely pure entertainment.

ARC provided thru NetGalley by the publisher

Anna says

***ARC received from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I'm a big fan of SD and fell in love with her writing with . It seems like she used to write more frequently so I was pleasantly surprised when I saw a new book from her. I almost forgot about Tanyalee (Taffy) from this series. Talk about a tough heroine to like/root for based on her previous actions. Quick recap: seduced/deliberately got pregnant with her sister's one true love, stole from her grandfather, married solely for money, was mean and nasty to people she considered beneath her (basically everybody). So with that recap it's hard to figure out how to root for a heroine whose basically been a bi*ch her entire life. Somehow or another SD succeeded, at least for me, in redeeming Taffy and making me give a you know what about her.

Dante, the H, was sexy, smart, and for some reason fell in love with Taffy, the felon. I love a law enforcement hero and one with realistic weaknesses too is icing on the cake.

I do think there was something missing between the two MCs on an emotional and physical level. I kept waiting to feel more for them together as a couple than I did. I felt at times I was reading more about two separate individuals than about two individuals who become a couple if that makes sense. I just couldn't invest in them as a couple and had to take a few stars off for that.

Eve Recinella (Between The Bookends) says

Tapped-Out @ 50%

I hate to not finish a book, especially when it is so graciously provided by the publisher. Alas I just COULDN'T keep reading this one. Everything was just so over the top ridiculous. I loathed Taffy from first introduction. How in the World did the author think a character with her apparent background would make good heroine material?

I really am bummed, because I was really looking forward to this one...

Anita says

ARC provided by the Publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Susan Donovan is a wonderful romance writer. I've read several of her books and enjoyed them all. She blends romance, humor and quirky characters to entertain you. This one has a touch of mystery/suspense in it too. I usually recommend that a series be read in order, but... if you read this series in order you will pretty much hate the heroine and have a tough time overcoming that. Taffy is flawed and far from perfect, but determined to change. I can really relate to that.

Tanyalee (Taffy) Marie Newberry is a real piece of work. When she was upfront about her misdeeds to her

seatmate on her flight home from rehab in Sedona, AZ, I was floored. She seduced/deliberately got pregnant with her sister's one true love, stole from her grandfather, got engaged solely for another guy's money, and she is a definite user of the male sex. Yes, Taffy has left quite a trail of destruction in her wake, but she is determined to follow her stepping stones and set things right.

None of that really mattered to Dante, he is just looking for a hot one-night stand. Dante Cabrera, DEA agent, is not exactly a choirboy either. He has some problems of his own and he isn't even honest with Tanyalee about who he is or what he does. Well, she isn't honest about some things either. He gets his hot one-night stand and plans to leave without a backward glance, but it is Taffy who does the disappearing act.

Of course, these two will get back together. Dante is in Bigler, NC as part of a law enforcement task force and Tanyalee is doing community service as a big sister for a troubled girl that may have information that Dante and the task force need about the drug organization. Well, both Tanyalee and Dante also have this off the charts sexual chemistry that is awful hard to ignore too.
