



Safeword Davenport

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Dana has never submitted to anyone but her husband -- he trained her, taught her to submit. He's been dead a year and a half though, and she's beginning to consider the possibility of dating again. She sticks to vanilla at first, but quickly realizes she's going to need more. As she's considering the idea of finding someone who would enjoy hurting her without requiring her submission, her life is complicated by a Dom who pushes all of her buttons.

Safeword: Davenport is the first half of Dana's story, it's the personal part of her journey, and has a Happy for Now ending. Safewords: Davenport and Chiffon is scheduled for release August 3, 2012, and will give the rest of her story.

Warning: This title contains graphic language, consensual BDSM, bondage, intense sensory deprivation, extreme electrical play, and the use of toys including clamps, canes, plugs, cages, paddles, whips, and floggers.

Safeword Davenport Details

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Author : Candace Blevins

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Genre : Erotica, Bdsm, Adult Fiction, Menage, Romance, M M Romance

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From Reader Review Safeword Davenport for online ebook

Steelwhisper says

I wished I could give this a better review. I really do. I was rather hard on myself and it took me several weeks to decide on this review.

The reason I am so reluctant is that I agree with Ms Blevins that we need BDSM novels which are about the real BDSM out there, instead of just some figment of the imagination. She tries hard to achieve this and in some areas she certainly has made the cut.

Unfortunately however there is so much else wrong with this book that it almost entirely outweighs the good. I'll state the obvious first:

This book needs an editor, a good editor. The editing process is not just about checking for typos and grammar, it's also about cutting out the fillers, the bloat, the surplus. It's about making a story tight and lean, about taking out explanations and too much exposition where not needed, it is about making your prose pleasant to read. All of that is lacking in Safeword Davenport. One could cut out some 30% of the word-count and end up still with way too much chatter.

Editing is also about "voice". Not just that of the author, which is overly loud in it, but also with the voices of the characters, which are non-existent here. No one has a distinct own voice, with the exception of Jacob and he but marginally. The rest is undistinguishable.

These are the more obvious faults. For a romance, BDSM-themed story and a story about love and death I find myself left out there with zero emotion. There is none, again with the minor exception of Jacob. Everyone else was as moved and emoted as much as a block of stone. Yes, the author "said" these people emoted, but she never showed it.

Which leads to the next two purely craft-oriented faults: there is absolutely no "show" in this book, it is all "tell". I've never fully understood this writer's adage until reading Safeword Davenport, because it contained so much incessant, boringly worded telling that it was very slow to read and I had to force myself repeatedly to continue reading. This too is something an editor would catch and try to change, though of this there is so much of it that I doubt it would reach the editing stage with a publisher.

Sometimes fine, funny or interesting dialogue can make up for the lack in prose, but here as well this book fails. The dialogue is robotic, unlikely, contains way too much blunt exposition and is wholly uninteresting.

All put together this means that Safeword Davenport reads, at the craft-level, like a first draft needing many, many revisions before it is presentable.

On to the subject matter and meat of the story. I am in the lifestyle myself, a hard player, so I would expect a story to at least stimulate me a bit, make me have emotions, catch my breath, reminiscence or want to do something myself. Unfortunately this story is lacking here as well.

I could not connect to the characters and I had trouble in even believing their reality as human beings. Things between them did not progress in a believable manner either and I had several WTF-moments where something they said or how they acted took me way out of the story. They felt, again with the exception of Jacob, like soulless dolls played with by a listless puppeteer.

Lastly the BDSM itself. While above I applauded the fact that many times Ms. Blevins tries very hard to represent BDSM as it takes place in real life, she incorporates fragments and insinuations which I do not believe belong here and which can be dangerous for the reader to take for granted.

One of these is meta-consent, especially as given here without at least acknowledging that it makes an already illegal act not just factually illegal, but also depriving the players, especially the dominant, of every mitigating factor they might have in a courtroom. Consent has to be informed, given by an adult in the full possession of their faculties and has to be retractable at any moment in time to be legally valid. In a book trying that hard to be realistic I'd like to see this addressed, and not just as some lip-service, but indeed by showing (not telling!) what is the consequence of such a lack.

The second problem is worse and comes on the heels of meta-consent: punishable safewords. I've no idea whether this is the latest fad, but it shocked me into putting the book aside for days. Punishment of safewords reduces the concept to absurdity. Not just that any and every submissive I have ever met already thinks hard and often far too long to safeword, if they now have to expect something very unpleasant on top of disrupting a scene and potentially upsetting the Dominant, the whole thing becomes very unsafe. Not just for the submissive, also for the Dominant who might continue to play while the partner already goes beyond their health or sanity. This makes consensual BDSM play suddenly ride on the edge of straight abuse, both emotional and physical. To see this so off-handedly proposed is quite shocking. Add to that that negotiation during scenes just doesn't happen in my personal experience, especially if it touches important things like this.

What also belongs here is the atmosphere of higher, farther, further which pervades the concept of BDSM in this book. Instead of concentrating on pleasuring each other, being emotional, sharing true intimacy, I had--all the time--the impression of competitors in some soulless game, a game played against each other, but also against everyone else. Maybe that's the different culture, because I noticed this a lot in erotica from the USA, but here it really bothered me.

I cannot recommend this book. I'd have liked to, because it tried to be something which is very much needed, and unfortunately the errors and faults overshadowed the positive points far too much for comfort.

All that said I would love to read a well-edited story from Ms. Blevins.

=====

Edit:

After all put together 4 clear retaliation ratings on a short story of mine I've adjusted this rating downwards from 2* to 1*.

Additionally I make available here the background for my criticism of the author's unhealthy take on BDSM, which facilitates the perpetuation of abuse, assault and rape. Given that the author maintains being a BDSMer in real life this is quite unjustifiable:

http://www.salon.com/2012/01/29/real_...

<http://purrversatility.blogspot.com/2...>

<http://yesmeansyesblog.wordpress.com/...>

<http://yesmeansyesblog.wordpress.com/...>

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Dark Haven says

To the world, Dana Bennett is a confident and successful interior designer. But emotionally, she is still struggling with her husband's passing a year and a half after his death. Dana is selected by Zachary Irving to renovate his house 3 years after his wife's death. Her initial empathy for his loss turns into interested curiosity as it becomes apparent he and his wife practiced a D/s lifestyle. It's a lifestyle she and her deceased husband practiced as well. Despite her interest in Zach, she never dates clients and doesn't plan to start now. But after 7 months, their working relationship ends removing the impediments which kept them from getting to know each other on an intimate level. Though Dana will miss Zach's presence in her life now that the job is over, she doesn't feel she's ready for another Dominate/submissive relationship. It's up to Zach to change her mind.

This is another gritty and realistic portrayal of the Dom/sub dynamic by Ms. Blevins. Dana Bennett is an emotionally vulnerable character still tied to her past marriage, but she's not a wimp. She's strong in her convictions and in her negotiations when she decides to take a step toward her future – a D/s relationship with Zach. Their sexual exploration cracks Dana's emotional barrier and she realizes she cares for Zach. This realization intensifies her internal struggle that a new love is a betrayal to her dead husband. She's walking an emotional tight rope and Ms. Blevins conveys her ordeal perfectly.

Sometimes it's just hard to let go of something that was wonderful in our lives; it's human nature to want to hold on. I could definitely relate to her struggle. This is the emotional battle that Zach must wage with Dana – to move on from her past love. It's a battle he's already been through himself. His wife died a few years earlier and it's because of his plan to alter his home... to let go of his past- that he meets Dana. The characters' empathy for the other at the beginning of the story really engaged me in their story line and I was hooked. I desperately wanted to see them happy.

This book isn't just whips, chains and bondage- though there is a lot of that in this tale. The story is a journey between two people as they deal with their pasts, embrace their present and hope for a future together. It's a poignant and emotional ride that becomes more intense when the BDSM dynamic is introduced into their relationship. This dynamic is intense, painful, exciting and smacks of realism (no pun intended). Some of the BDSM scenes were shocking and difficult for me to read because I'm not into Dana's extremely painful masochistic kink. However, Ms. Blevins adroitly uses Dana's need for extreme pain to add another emotional layer to the story, because Zach must not only accept that Dana needs intense pain, but he must learn to give it to her if their relationship is to make it. Two other facets that made this book a page turner for me were the introduction of two secondary characters- Jacob, a male submissive, and his master, and Dana's friend, Brent. They added an extra bit of kink to this story and they play a key role in Dana's journey. I can't say anymore than that, but it was an eye opener for me.

Though **SAFWORD: Davenport** is an emotional roller coaster ride, be forewarned this is a scorching **HOT** read. There are scenes of dominance and submission that will curl your toes and have you running to take a cold shower (or grab a mechanical aid). This book is a keeper and one I will definitely be reading again. In the meantime I look forward to reading the second part of Dana and Zach's story. **SAFWORD: Davenport and Chiffon**. (Copy supplied by author.)
(www.darkhavenbookreviews.com)

Sally says

Safeword Davenport and Safewords: Davenport and Chiffon are two halves of a longer story, one that begins with a woman slowly, almost reluctantly, recovering from the death of her husband (the only Master she's ever known), and a man recovering from the death of his wife (not the only, but the most significant slave he's ever known). There's a romance there, a promise of an outwardly seeming normal relationship, but one built around the idea of a total power exchange. As you might expect, it's a story that blurs a lot of lines, and occupies the shadows between those lines.

Between fantasy and reality.

Between romance and erotica.

Between domination and sadomasochism.

Between pain and pleasure.

I struggled with this one a lot, finding myself equally drawn to and repulsed by what was happening. The romance worked (both despite and because of the darkness), and the power exchange itself was undeniably attractive. Dana and Zach are both fascinating characters, well-rounded and well-developed, and the supporting cast is far more than just the usual Master/Mistress/slave background participants. I quite liked the start honesty of the writing, and the loving attention to detail in every scene.

Having said that, the shadows had me uncomfortable, particularly those between pleasure/pain and domination/sadomasochism. Personally, I am quite attracted to the idea of the power exchange, to the giving up of control, but Blevins takes it to an extent I've never before encountered. The idea of a safeword is something I've always known as being synonymous with 'stop' or 'enough,' a clear request to be respected without question. Here, there is a price to the safewords, a request granted but only at a cost. While the story rings true, the authenticity of that 'reality' definitely challenged my 'fantasy.'

For me, the second book was definitely the stronger (and more balanced) of the two, mostly because it introduced a level of honest communication and the fair exchange of ideas that I felt much more comfortable with. Jacob and Brent really bring something special to the story, which rather surprised me, since I wasn't sure what kind of role they would ultimately play.

Definitely a remarkable tale, and one that's exceptionally well-told - so long as you don't mind some winces and shudders mixed in with your gasps and shivers.

As published on Bending the Bookshelf

Jacqueline says

My review might skew the results here but this is what I felt about the book. It was very clinical and seemed like a primer on how to have a BDSM relationship. Every t crossed and i dotted. Very dry. I didn't find it sexy at all. There was much more about the heroine getting over her dead husband than anything else really and the hero was very secondary in this story. As an added note, having accidentally hit an electric fence too many times in my life, the idea of electricity being in any way enjoyable sexually was beyond my comprehension. Plus if you're interested there was a bunch of stuff about her learning to be a Domme which

doesn't do a thing for me so was just pages I personally had to slog through.

So read other reviews to see if you might match more with their feelings than mine before you turn down this book based on my review.

? BookAddict ✍️ La Crimson Femme says

This is my FAVOURITE book by Ms. Blevins. In this lovely story, we are once again treated to some intense and arousing SM. No one does SM in a M/f relationship as good for me as Ms. Blevins. I can definitely tell by the way she writes, she's in the lifestyle. I do know the back history of why this book was written so for me, it moved me much more.

Dana is a widow. She submitted to her husband who was her world. He was a Dom with a sadistic streak. Some of the punishments Dana went through had me crossing my legs and going, "ow! NO! NO! NO!". I would never misbehave if I was Garnet's sub. As a result of Garnet's death, Dana has left the lifestyle abruptly, leaving all friends behind. She's even sold or given away all her lovely BDSM tools and furniture. I can understand this as the memories must be overwhelming.

For a couple who lived in each other pockets so deeply as Dana and Garnet did, I can't believe she hasn't died out of sorrow. If anyone would die from losing a mate, I would think Dana is one of those who would. I'm impressed with her ability to pull herself out of the depression and continue with her work as an interior decorator.

She meets Irving who is a mad scientist when it comes to electricity. He's designed some amazing electric sex machines as a hobby due to his profession. I'm a bit frightened of him, actually. I have to be honest. All of Ms. Blevin's Doms frighten me a little. Not in a bad way, but in a way where I know I could never meet their needs or desires. They are way too intense for me. I'm more of a D/s and BD kind of gal. The SM is too much for me. I love to read it and I enjoy vicariously living through it. That is about my limit.

Irving has his own issues as his wife who was his 24/7 sub died in a freak accident on vacation. My heart breaks for both Irving and Dana. They both suffered so much and they aren't exactly healed. Becoming lovers doesn't exactly mean happily ever after for them.

This is what I liked about Ms. Blevin's writing. It doesn't just all of a sudden work great and we live happily ever after. There are set backs which are realistic to life. It feels as they take steps forward, they also take steps back. While frustrating, it makes the story that much more poignant for me and totally believable.

Let's get to the good stuff. The BDSM parts. HOLY MOLY is it HAWT! Every scene had me wet with quivering desire. The punishments were pretty heavy and it would certainly discourage me from ever doing anything "wrong". I'd follow the rules completely. Dana's ability to handle pain is beyond me. I'm a wimp when compared to Dana. Irving's creativeness is sadistically genius. I always say, perverts are very creative and Irving proves my point.

I won't go into details of each BDSM scene I enjoyed. I don't want to spoil it. Let's just say, many kinks of mine were showcased explicitly and exquisitely. Lastly, Brent and Jacob rocked my world. I wasn't expecting another couple in this story to be intermixed. It was divine. Since this original story is now split into two, I have to say, anyone who reads this first part will yearn to read the second half. It's amazing. I highly recommend this BDSM lovers who enjoy D/s and SM. If you like electrical play, this is definitely one to try. Another winner by the talented Ms. Blevins

Cami Hensley says

<http://steamyside.blogspot.com/2012/0...>

When even the parts of the story that are not directly involving sexual acts are steamy, you know its going to be a STEAMY read! Candace Blevins really delivers a multi-layered BDSM novel in this book.

Dana lost her husband, who taught her everything she knows about submitting and her masochistic tendencies 18months ago. She has come to terms with the fact that the part of her life that contained her submission for another was over.

The very first meeting with Zach makes her face her undeniable attraction for another man in ways she hadn't felt since her husband. The more she learns about Zach, the more she is turned on.

Zach had to bury his wife and is in the process of making changes in his house so that her presence is not so strong in every single room. He has no idea the chemistry he will feel for the interior designer he hires.

The descriptions of the difference between Masochism and Submissiveness is great to read about. Often times its one or the other and authors don't go as in depth as Blevins does. The journey of self-discovery for Dana really makes this story. She goes through so many ups and downs and second guesses everything while learning so much about herself and her needs.

Just when you think you understand where this story is going, Blevins throws you for a loop in the form of Brent and Jacob. Being able to have a secondary relationship to dissect really adds to the story as a whole. The complicated relationships between all couples in this story really feels like just the tip of the iceberg and the sequel will definitely be on my Next To Be Read list!

There is some hardcore TPE (Total Power Exchange) that may not be for the faint of heart when it comes to BDSM, but everything in this story adds to it as a whole. Pay attention to this an the Warning in the Synopsis to make sure this is the story for you. If you do not have an issue with any of these things, you will definitely find this a Fantastic Read!

Dee says

Lets just say your kink isn't my kink. Well that's not entirely true, I'm all for female tops and pegging, but that scene even missed the mark for me. The way it was orchestrated almost felt robotic. IDK.

I didn't get the dynamics between the characters. Maybe if what's her name hadn't started as a submissive in a hard-out TPE relationship, in the first half of the story, I would have been able to go with her topping. But there was no middle ground she did a complete 180 literally, from being caged to topping.

In fact, I couldn't connect to any of the characters it was almost as if the author put so much time into the safe sane and consensual acts she compromised on character development. ((ducks for cover)) Though I wasn't entirely sure what to make of th, agreed, no safe word punishments.

In short this story has a lot of kinky delights that is sure to appeal to many readers, unfortunately I wasn't one

of them.

Annabel Joseph says

Good lord, no one writes kink like Candace Blevins. Only someone who's BTDT can pull you in and push all your kink buttons so accurately.

Let me begin by saying that I almost didn't read this past the first couple chapters. I could tell the kinks coming up were not "my" kinks, but I was drawn in to the emotional storyline so I continued on. Good lawd, I'm so glad I did.

This books gets five stars because I got super sexy hot over scenes that weren't in my personal comfort zone of kink, and that's something. By "super sexy hot", I mean, I had to stop in the middle and place an order for sex toys. THAT kind of hot. When you're reading a scene that you KNOW isn't in your realm of preference, and you're still turned on beyond belief, that is...that is amazing, and that's what Ms. Blevins does here.

With that said, the kinks aren't overly sick or anything. I just have a very narrow sweet spot for what turns me on. Some of the kinks in this book that were outside my comfort zone were electricity, heavy pain, close confinement, singletail whipping, and a short short section describing a flesh hook scene that is what almost made me put the book down. Luckily there wasn't anything else about that.

On the plus side, ooh...anal. Lots of smoking hot anal. Several ultra hot menage scenes. Some EXTREMELY hot dominance scenes between Zach and Dana. His dom persona really did it for me. Surprisingly, Jacob the male submissive also did it for me. My GOD, if you had told me I'd fall for a male submissive I would have laughed my ass off but those scenes where Dana topped Jacob were beyond hot.

Aside from the individual kinks, she did so many things right in this book. She made the sex scenes and psychological entanglements complex, and yet it worked without any confusion. In a way I think Candace is one of the few authors who could have done this because she does have an "on the nose" style of characterization. Her characters are rich, but they are almost unnaturally honest and forthcoming and they don't mess around with subtext. They say what they mean and mean what they say. Usually in books that would irritate me but here it's necessary because otherwise the emotional aspects of the four main characters and their various dynamics would have become too complicated. PLUS, this allows her to concentrate on the sexual side of the relationships...and there was so much sex. So much hot, hot, hot sex. Did I mention my toy collection grew in the reading of this book? Have some money set aside for that before you begin.

I've talked a lot about the sex in this review but there was an almost painfully lovely emotional storyline too, about a widow overcoming her dependence on her old partner and finding the permission she needs to move forward with another man.

Overall, this did what I wanted it to do--it turned me on. It also did MORE than I expected it to do, which was to challenge my limits of what I believed was hot. In a way, Ms. Blevins pushed my boundaries just like a good dom, giving me more than I thought I could take--and making me like it.

Now for a cold shower.

Jo * Smut-Dicked * says

No one does pain better than Candace. Here is a world where pain lives. Where it breathes, strokes, and caresses. The feelings of the masochist are so deeply and well explored here that you really do come out of it with fundamental understandings. I love her books because she gets it - on the BDSM RealMeter this comes in at the top!

I enjoyed Dana and Zach. Dana was rich and vibrant and somehow ordinary in spite of all the stuff that she had been through. Someone who could be a friend. No BDSM Club Doms that stepped out of GQ here (although there is a sub who might have..yummy Jacob!)

I'll admit I didn't see the parts with Brent and Jacob coming and boy did that add a lot. So many layers but for me it felt like Dana had been stripped down to nothing by her loss and now it was time to build back up (so not peeling back the layers but carefully layering on until the picture is complete..like artists layer color). Although I seriously doubt my pain level tolerance is even remotely what Dana's was the feelings are much the same.

I am the opposite of BA - much of the D/s stuff I was uncomfortable with but for the pain parts it was a complete Yes Yes for me.

The thing I loved the most is the sheer variety - I cannot say I've read many of the things that happened here before - they are so unique. It is like Christmas morning with "oh oh oh let me unwrap *that* one over there!"

This one was much more emotional as well. An excellent story with amazing BDSM scenes and fun rich multi-layered characters. A must read for BDSM fans, especially for those who perhaps don't understand the masochist frame of mind (even if they do a D/s one). Highly recommended!

Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

Kitty's review posted on Guilty Pleasures

I started this book knowing (just by the title) that I would be reading a BDSM book. First, let me tell you that Ms. Blevins writing is extremely explicit. Second, I am as "Vanilla" as the flavor says so I went to some BDSM sites to make sure what I was reading was authentic before I started this review. Third, hold on, breath and prepare yourself for a wild ride through a true D/s

, M/s relationship between Dana and Zach.

Warning: This book is not for the faint at heart. It is a heart-wrenching, heavy read with extreme BDSM play. If you are looking to see what a true Total Power Exchange (TPE) involves, this is the book to read. I did have to put the book down several times and absorb what I was reading and try to get into the total mind-set of what Dana and Zach were doing. With that said.....

Dana is recently widowed and was married to her Dom. They did not live as 24/7 Master/Slave but their sex was extreme and Dana dwells on pain – an absolute Masochist. After Garnet passed, she left him and the life behind, started her own design business and refused to think that she would ever be Submissive to another person. She left that life behind and did not intend on going back.

Zach is also recently widowed. The difference, he is a true Dominant. He lived in a 24/7 Master/Slave

relationship with Bethany. He is an inventor of sorts.....working with solar electricity. But, in reality, electricity is his turn on. He is not a Sadist. He's ready to move on...find someone to share his life with, he thinks Dana may be the one:

"She told herself if Zach weren't a Dom they might have a chance; but a little voice in her head whispered she wouldn't be drawn to him if he were vanilla.

Taking a seat on a nearby sofa, Zach looked up and said, "I want someone else to love — to share my life with, grow old with. I'm a Dom, so they'll need to get off on submitting to my control in the bedroom and playroom; but otherwise I don't have any specific requirements in mind."

He wasn't giving her enough to work with. She tried another tack. "Bethany was twenty-four/seven. Do you want that again?"

"Not necessarily," he said, shaking his head as he leaned back and rested his arm on the sofa's armrest. "Not at first, for sure. I want twenty-four/seven availability for sex, but I prefer a partner for everything else. Maybe pick an occasional week or two for a full-time dynamic where I spend brief periods micromanaging her, but not on a permanent basis." He shrugged.

"However, if we fell for each other and she needed an Owner, I could do it again."

Realizing what Zach was offering wasn't too far off of what she was looking for, Dana agrees to see where it may lead but cannot commit to a long-term TPE with him. She still has issues with Garnet's death and feels that she needs to work through them before committing. Zach is willing to wait and work with her to bring her libido back.

I really do not want to give away much more of the story here. A lot happens between Dana and Zach. There is wax play, electric play, caging, extreme bondage, an extreme scene in a swimming pool, a double flogging and so much more. We are also introduced to Brent and Jacob; a Dom from Dana and Garnet's past and his Submissive. They will play a big part in bringing Dana and Zach together as one and they give Dana the experience that she needs to totally understand Zach.

As I said in the beginning, this book is not for the weak-minded or faint at heart. If you don't know what a Total Power Exchange is – you will know by the end of Safeword: Davenport. I absolutely loved this book, the power Dana had and the power she handed to Zach was unbelievable. To know that you are absolutely loved and adored, no matter what, it a total high. I enjoyed the way the book was written. There was no down time, you weren't sure what Zach was going to do next to or with Dana. There were strong, dominant scenes and there were sweet, loving scenes. This book covered it all and showed me a side to BDSM that I had no idea about. Thank you for enlightening me, Ms. Blevins.

Cynthia says

Reviewed at Bitten By Paranormal Romance

The warning label above is there for good reason. **SAFWORD: Davenport** is a novel about Dana learning to move on with her life, after suffering the loss of her husband, by rediscovering herself through BDSM.

Dana meets Zach when he hires her to redesign/redecorate his home. His wife, Bethany, passed away about the same time Dana's husband, Garnet, did, and wants the house to reflect more of his style. Although, dead and gone, both Bethany and Garnet play considerable roles in the story. Dana and Zach keep their relationship strictly "business" until the house is completely redesigned.

Seven months later, however, the initial attraction has only grown and Zach asks Dana out on a “date”. At the end of said date however, Zach kisses Dana and asks her home,

“to drip hot wax on you until you’re encased in it, and then flog it from your body and either make love to you or fuck you – depending on where the energy takes us.”

Dana responds with an,

“Okay...for the wax and flogging anyway – not certain about the fucking part. I’ve never had sex on a first date, but this feels like more.”

As Dana and Zach begin to explore each other’s needs, Dana soon realizes she needs more and calls on Sir Brent, a good friend to help her. Dana is a masochist, but doesn’t want to give her submission to a Dom in order to find satisfaction.

SAFWORD: Davenport is told from Dana’s POV. For all of the sex play, scenes, etc., happening in this story (and trust me there were P-L-E-N-T-Y), it wasn’t very exciting. It read more like a “how-to” manual. Zach didn’t seem to be very emotionally involved with Dana. Also, a Dom never, ever, ever says, “*you can’t safeword out of—Do you agree?*” When a sub isn’t capable of doing exactly that!

I would recommend this book to those that enjoy reading this genre. If you aren’t familiar with this type of lifestyle or aren’t comfortable with total submissiveness, total power exchange (TPE), or sadomasochism, I highly suggest you pass this one by.

Saha says

I am having trouble beginning this review. This book is out there. WAY out there. Exactly where I want it. All the hardest, deepest, most unusual, most non-vanilla, most taboo and absolutely hardcore elements of BDSM are included in this story. I sincerely thought I would become overwhelmed and not be able to manage it all at once. But I did. And it was **panties-soak good**.

Dana is a widow and an interior decorator, who gets fascinated by Zack (also a widower) and his cage-coffee table. They start a D/s relationship, which fuels quite a few feelings inside both of them. A weekend at her gay friend Brent’s house where she tops his 24/7 submissive, Jacob, reveals Dana’s switch tendencies. Zack, not the jealous type, allows her to explore that side of hers. How will this sizzling hot foursome work?

Brilliantly. THAT is how it will work.

Yes the characters felt a little similar in their flatness, but the practices and the descriptions made that easy to overlook. Sure there are some honest-to-God issues about punishing someone for using their safeword, or amending the terms and conditions of a “contract” *after* it has come in effect... but just as it happens in real life, the characters had the chance to back out. And they didn’t, which means that it may have been unconventional, but it sure wasn’t unconsensual. Not once did I feel while reading this book that any single

character was "forced" to make a choice, whether out of fear or out of the will to submit and not disappoint. So that's a HUGE plus right there.

There is no one way to live the lifestyle. Bisexuals and switches aren't "greedy". Polyamory is not a sin. When you're safe, sane and consensual, there is no right and wrong. In this amazing story (part one, as it continues in "Davenport and Chiffon") I was made to feel a lot more secure in my own preferences and fantasies. It was absolute reading about the character's conflicting natures, and her struggle to combine them in a way that won't hurt herself most of all, and those she cares about.

B.E.A.UUUUTIFUL!

Michael Dunellen says

This was an exploration of something I hadn't really thought of before a few months ago. I used to think of submissiveness and masochism as two sides of the same coin. I have come to realize lately that there really is a difference - you can be a submissive without being a masochist, it just isn't always easy. But this was a very serious look at the reverse - can you be a masochist without being a submissive? Dana wasn't sure but I think in the end she found the answer she was looking for as well a whole side of her personality she hadn't explored before.

It took me a while to really find my way through this.

I have to be honest. I didn't like Zachary at first at all. If the story had been about his relationship with Bethany I never would have finished it - too many of the things he described pushed all my buttons - in just the wrong way. And actually I wasn't a big fan of Garret either - punishing someone for using their safeword to me is much worse than not having one at all. I think it was the pool scene that finally got me to calm down. When it was just about sensory deprivation and he didn't try to drown her, I finally decided their relationship might have a future.

I got to the end of the weekend and didn't see where we were going at all. I have to say I really enjoyed the second half. I really liked Brent, Jacob and especially Max. And by the end, I actually found myself liking Zach although he still has a ways to go for me.

There is some real emotion in this book. I was prepared for the ending but the infirmary scene really caught me off guard with the emotional impact evoked.

Early on, I was having mixed emotions about the sequel. Now I am looking forward to it.

Lindsey Brooks says

Three and a half stars.

I have waited quite a while after finishing this story before writing this review. I was really ready to thoroughly enjoy this story. I have a great deal of respect for the author, who writes so authoritatively about the contemporary BDSM scene, and I liked her earlier books very much. I don't want to sound overly critical, because I don't think this is a bad story, just for me it was an unsatisfying one (so far - I haven't

finished the second half yet).

I had difficulty relating to the hero and heroine, and found it hard to sympathise very much with either one. Zach, in particular, made it very hard for me to like him - and in the end I didn't. He came across as completely self-absorbed and I found myself wondering at times if he cared very deeply for Dana at all. He seemed determined to always have his way, whatever Dana wanted (and very often he knew she didn't want what he was doing or about to do), and it seemed to me that several times she allowed herself to be taken a lot further than she would have liked to go. I had difficulty with the concept between two people who were lovers of "consent to one thing and you consent to all", which Zach seemed to insist upon, as well as the times he only accepted her safeword if she agreed to be punished for using it - edgeplay maybe, but then more than once he seemed to deliberately set her up to fail purely so he could punish her. I know she's a masochist but she was already having problems accepting the submission he wanted from her and I couldn't see how that would help her. Nor did it seem very fair or honest of him after all of the frank negotiating they had done.

As in the author's previous stories, there seemed to me to be more telling than showing in the story. Although both of the main characters said they felt affection for the other, neither appeared to do much to demonstrate it, and I couldn't help feeling Dana was too wrapped up in seeking the pain she wanted and Zach in getting the level of submission and control he required for them to feel anything very deep for one another. There was something clinical and detached about their conversations and attitudes around each other, including during their negotiations, and it left me feeling somewhat detached from their story, instead of fully involved and really wanting them to get their happy ending. For me Dana's relationship with Brent and Jacob had more warmth. Jacob came across as the most sympathetic character in the book, to me. I liked Max too - an honest, up-front and considerate sadist, who could have given Dana everything she was seeking. By the end of the book I found myself wishing she had waited until he had sorted his life out and gone with him instead of Zach.

I don't want to give the impression I didn't like the book. I did; hence the rating. I just felt it could have been better if I could have bought into the idea that real love was developing between Zach and Dana, and that is not the impression I have so far. It is important to remember this is only half the story and the outcome still unknown to me, so I may well discover I am judging them too harshly. I was undecided whether to read both books and then review the whole story, but eventually have done this with only about a third of the other read so far. I have to add that a book which I find so thought-provoking for such a variety of different reasons could never be considered as anything but well worth reading.

Themis says

3.5 stars for me.

Not sure why but this is an other book that took me a long time to finish. I found it hard to connect with the characters but saying that I liked how she tried to find herself after her husbands death.

Spanking, TPE, Mfm
