



Maldeamores: Lovesick

Mara White

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Maldeamores (Lovesick)

Lucky and Belén's Story

A Heightsbound Prequel

Belén: I've loved Luciano ever since I can remember, desired him before I even knew what it meant. He's always been the only man in my life—my constant protector, and his rejection only intensifies my need.

Luciano: I've never known a love more fierce than the one I feel for Belén. But I force myself to deny her no matter how much it hurts.

Our love is a sickness and both of us are infected.

Because there's no cure for being from the same family

Warning

This novel contains graphic sex scenes, including: incest, F/F, and ménage, M/M/F. Some drug use and violence.

Maldeamores: Lovesick Details

Date : Published May 25th 2015 by Heightsbound

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Author : Mara White

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From Reader Review Maldeamores: Lovesick for online ebook

Rosa Sharon (iScream Books Blog) says

A match made in hell...

I have very mixed feelings about this book. On one hand I salute the author for being able to cause the extreme emotional fall-out I'm currently experiencing. I can honestly say that there are only a handful of books that I've read that fall into this category. I don't regret reading them because they touched my heart and have stayed with me in spite of the hundreds of books I've read since. It's one of those books that torture you by holding your mind hostage and refusing to let go. It's almost to the point that I want to go back and decide not to read it just to save myself from the heart wrenching experience of suffering with the characters who experience such a hopeless but all consuming love that is "*destined for difficulty.*"

While I read, I knew it was taboo, but how do you tell your heart to stop loving? Luciano thought, "You are the best and worst thing that's ever happened to me." That is kinda how I feel about this book. I recognize the talent, and I give credit for the ability to rip my heart out and make me think and feel and cry and feel anger and frustration and hopelessness. Mara, I'm sure that the reviews are going to fall on both sides as the readers rant about what you made them feel, some will appreciate it and others will hate it, but they will all feel something from the journey you took them on. I can't honestly say that if I knew going in what I would have to experience if I would be brave enough to do it. I feel like I deserve a reward now, maybe a certificate noting my accomplishment, recognition for having survived Maldemores?

Sissy's Romance Book Review says

'Maldeamores' by Mara White is the first book in the series "Maldeamores" This is the story of Lucky and Belen. This book starts at the beginning of their lives and keeps moving through their years so show case how they became to have these feeling for each other and how they felt along the way. This book comes with allot of emotions that does take you on a roller coaster ride. This does end with what I would call a somewhat cliffhanger that sets you up for the next book.

"My honest review is for a special copy I voluntarily read."

<http://sissymaereads.blogspot.com/>

<http://booklikes.com/blog>

<https://romancebookreviewforyou.wordpress...>

<https://www.tumblr.com/blog/romancebo...>

Pick a Book says

4 estrelas

Uma coisa que não se pode negar: a autora foi corajosa. Pode até ter alguém que tenha imaginado esse final, mas meio que duvido. Foi muito arriscado e muito inesperado.

Acho que pra mim o impacto foi diferente pois esses dias fiquei sabendo que ia ter o livro 2. Se precisa? Hum... Como leitora que ficou presa na história, eu gostaria de ler sim. Mas se realmente precisava? Não sei.

Acho que como livro único ficaria sempre aquela pulga atrás da orelha. O livro era pra ser único, mas agora 2 anos depois a autora resolveu dar continuidade porque muitos fãs pediram.

Tipo, o final é assim... xô te contar. A autora te leva numa viagem em alto mar. Te joga fora barco e você fica lá flutuando sem saber se morre ali ou se alguém te resgata. Tipo isso que ela faz.

MALDEAMORES conta a história de Lucky e Belén. A história começa exatamente quando Lucky nasceu até eles se tornarem adultos. Seguimos a vida dos dois - dois pov - sobre como cresceram juntos, protegendo um ao outro e... Escondendo (nada bem) o amor que acabaram sentindo um pelo outro. Ah! Os dois são primos. De primeiro grau.

História tabu, mas que rolou de uma maneira diferente de outras histórias tabu que já li. A autora ao invés de jogar pra um lado dark, ela focou no drama do amor proibido. Além de trabalhar o amor verdadeiro, como ele pode deixar uma pessoa mal e a co-dependencia. Como o próprios personagens uma hora dizem " Você não escolhe quem ama". E isso pode trazer alegria, mas nesse caso o foco é o outro lado. O certo e o errado perante a sociedade. É bem sofrido.

Eu sinceramente não achei que fosse gostar no começo. A história tava boa, mas a Belén criança e adolescente chorava por qualquer coisa! Sério. Qualquer coisa! E isso me irritou. Mas foi só no começo. Porque depois o livro me fisgou de um jeito e não largou mais. E esse é o motivo de dar só 4 estrelas. Pensei em ignorar isso porque a história é muito boa. Mas acho que vou guardar meu 5 pra sequência que espero que seja maravilhosa.

Tô aqui imaginando se eu tivesse lido em 2015, quando foi lançado. Como minha resenha teria sido diferente. Apesar de ser uma série, são casais diferentes, e na época MALDEAMORES terminaria assim. Te deixando chocada e dando um final sem final. Na verdade eu acho que eu estaria xingando a autora de vários nomes rs.

Isso aqui foi mais um desabafo. Um livro que demorei 2 anos pra pegar pra ler... E que de repente me deixa assim. Sem reação. Não me arrependo de ter demorado. Justamente porque o dois sai no final desse mês. Não vou esperar tanto.

Se recomendo? Não sei. Histórias tabus são difíceis de agradar. Eu só sei que não me arrependo. Adorei o livro, quero mais e espero pelo melhor.

*** Pick a Book**

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~IreneOust~ says

Whoever said 'a heart wants what it wants' must have been talking about Belén & Lucky. I swear, this journey these two my heart hurts. What a beautiful story of love and sacrifice. I won't say much but I will say this: it took me no time at all to become Mara White's newest fan and I am here to stay! Her writing style is so ... real. At times you almost feel as if you are there, in the Heights, with the gang. Growing up. Confused. Getting high. Loving. Hurting. Denying yourself the undeniable.

If you love the elements of taboo in your reads and can keep an open mind, I urge you to read this beautiful

story. I can't wait to dive into book 2 to see what life throws at two of my new favorite characters.

Cheers!

Ari says

4.5 totally fucked up stars

Read the review at Readin' Under Street-Lamps

WHAT THE MOTHERFUCKING FUCK JUST HAPPENED HERE!!!

I will not lie to you people, I loved this book, but it was a serious mind fuck. And do get intimately acquainted with that word because I shall be using it a lot in this review. And I mean a LOT.

I was really tempted to throw this book out- I won't deny that. I mean that ending! I feel like someone should've warned me about it, because dude that shit is not cool! I don't care how much you hate me, warning me about an ending like that is national fucking priority! Argh! I wanted to rip every single hair out of my scalp. And I mean s-l-o-w-l-y.

So yeah, the angst was turned up all the way alright, and I was totally feeling the heat, and someone *looks side eyed at Mara White* forgot to turn it off. Even long after it was over!! Because where the fuck is Malentendido woman!!!! Someone come save my head, because it is aching from being banged on hard unyielding walls so many times.

On to the main story now- this book revolves around two kids- Lenny/Bel (Belén) and Lucky (Luciano). They've known each other for forever. They've loved each other for forever. And now they wish to be together for forever. Only problem? (Because you know that there is going to be many problems because duh). They. Are. Cousins. First cousins at that. Like their-mothers-were-real-sisters first cousins.

Yeee-aaah.

Talk about taboo bitch.

They both get crazy attracted to each other when they both hit the teens, but where Bel just wanted Lucky to be hers and for her to be Lucky's, Lucky couldn't run away faster and harder, because he felt that their attraction was completely wrong. And that constant rejection of his convinced Bel that it was a sickness. One that she spent years of her life trying to get rid of.

Poor girl.

That is literally just it. That is all the story is about, and that is all that you need to know about the story. But oh-my-GOD! For a premise so strong and a plot so simple, White totally destroys you with her writing. I've read a lot of books, as you might already know, and so yeah, I've come across a lot of writing styles. Almost every author has a unique accent, and I've come across the one that White writes in, but still, it's easy for me to say that she is quite different. It took me no time to warm up to her style, and once I warmed up, the temperature just kept rising to feverish pitches.

There were moments in this book that straight up made me uncomfortable- and no, they were not when Lucky and Lenny were getting intimate. That was hot. But Lenny's clinical outlook at sex hit too close to home for comfort. And a few more instances. Like literally every scene where she and Jeremy made out-ugh, I wanted to rip his dick off and shake her crazy hard and scream in her face. And the whole thing with Jaylee. Don't remind me of that. Nuh-uh. I don't want to remember it.

One thing I completely loved about this book was how obsessed Bel was with Lucky, and how resolute she was that he was the one. Even after everyone disagreed with her. Gotta commend the girl on that. I mean it's not like everyday you see someone going gaga over their cousin, and determined to sleep with them, and putting love spells on said cousin. Man is that woman a complete nutcase.

And don't get me started on Lucky. That bastard! That absolute self-serving selfish piece of shit BASTARD! I LOVE him, don't get me wrong, but I kinda hate him too. Especially after that wretched ending. Oh my god. Someone get me a new laptop because I think I might have broken this one. I've never had such a strong reaction to a book ending on a cliffhanger before, but this one literally pulled a violent outburst out of me. I was so crazy for Lucky, because he really proved himself to put Bel's needs before his own, but then he went and did what he did (spoiler: no he did not cheat), and now I'm completely mad. So I've decided to do us all a favor, and keep from ranting about him until the next book is out and he has eaten mud to beg for my redemption.

But on a serious note, this book was very angsty, completely taboo, and so goddamn beautiful that I just can't stop myself from being all angry lovey-dovey about it. Do I recommend this book? Definitely! Go for it if you wanna check out something totally inappropriate and totally wonderful and something totally unforgettable.

I tip the jar back and forth and Lucky's name barely moves. It's magnified by the honey and the paper has come unraveled a bit. This is going in the fridge behind Hector's beer where no one will find it.

Luciano Cabrera will feel my love and be sweet on me forever.

Angie - Angie's Dreamy Reads says

It's **LIVE** on Amazon and it's **ONLY 0.99!** This book is awesome → <http://amzn.to/1H8LM8h>

"We're both each others poison, but we're also each other's only antidote."

WOW. WOW. WOW. WOW.

I have so many things to say.

SO. MANY. FREAKING. THINGS.

First off, I was not planning on writing a review for this book. I told the blogger I received the ARC from that I've gotten away from writing reviews of late. I don't know... I feel as though people don't read them and yet I find myself *needing* to get my thoughts down about this novel. I feel myself *needing* to release the conflicted feelings that are eating at my soul. My heart is bleeding right now. It's aching. And in the midst of my pain there are so many emotions I can't get a handle on.

I feel as if this book has changed me as a reader. As if it's taken a part of me and altered it. So I write this review for Belén and Lucky. I write it because I have fallen so deeply in love with these gentle souls. I have taken their pain as my own. I have soaked in their desperation, their undying need for one another, and I can't seem to let them go.

This book owned me.

It's stolen me.

It's made me it's own.

It's so very good, I feel possessed by it.

Ahhhh! Anyway... here is my overall review...

The truth is, I accepted the ARC without reading the blurb. I was told that a friend of mine (who I trust wholeheartedly) had read the novel early and loved it. That was enough for me. I went ahead and started reading and when I was 5% in, I thought, "*Hmmm... This is odd. Why are we reading about cousins?*" <<---- Bahahahahahaha! Again, I hadn't read the blurb. I had no freaking idea.

Anyway, I ended up talking to said friend one day and *Maldeamores* happen to come up in conversation. I mentioned that I had received an ARC and she was like, "*OH MY GOD. THAT BOOK! That book is amazing. It's powerful and dark, forbidden, yet so well written and developed.*" Of course, I was glad to hear that but the more I thought about the "**forbidden**" part of her comment, the more it had me pausing. **AND** then out of nowhere it punched me like a fist to the jaw!

OH MY GOD!!!

This is a book about cousin's who fall in **LOVE**.

My initial response to learning that was.. **NO. NO. NO**, I can't go there. Incest is a **hard limit**. It's not something I want to read about. I was ready to message the blogger and back out.

But then something happened...

I took a day or two and sat on it. Over that time, I grew curious. A little blossom began to spread it's petals inside me and I decided to read. I decided to stop being closed minded and **TAKE THE RISK**.

HOLY F***ING SH*T.

I'll tell you right now, this book has **CHANGED ME**. It's awakened me. And it makes me sad to think that I would have turned *Maldeamores* away because the subject matter made me a little uncomfortable and in doing that I would have **MISSED OUT** on a story that was going to rock my world and shatter it open into a million shards of red glass!

Ahhhh.

So as I sit here and write my review, I'm desperate to find words to describe what this author's done to me. I want to find a way to *urge* you to take the very same chance. I think as readers we have to stretch our boundaries and try new things, even if those things are out of our comfort zone. When we do that we grow as human beings, our brains, our emotions expand, and we are able to delve deeper into our preconceived notions of right and wrong.

I'll say, I'm a ball of conflict right now. I swear if you were around me you could probably feel the waves of raw emotion I'm emitting. There's so much depth in this story. And I have to say, this author is brave. *Maldeamores* is not something everyone is going to pick up and most readers who are like me will read that blurb and think, "*Ahh, maybe not.*" **AND THAT KILLS ME.**

I implore you to take the chance. Just take the chance. You might surprise yourself. I know, I fell deeply in love with everything that makes up this novel.

OMG. ***wipes cheeks***

This story is dark and raw, it's gritty and rough. It's filled with pain and angst, and a soul deep yearning you feel in your bones. I'm not sure what I was expecting once I realized the content covered "incest" but it wasn't like anything I read.

This was deep, the kind of deep that literally penetrates you, spears you open, and makes you question yourself.

I'm sitting here and still, I ask myself, "*What the hell?*"

"How could I go for this?"

"How could I be so accepting?"

And yet, I want to scream, "*Who cares?! You can't change who you love.*"

And you can't.

Love is a choice but it's also not. Love is something that takes ahold of you and sometimes you can't control who you feel most connected to. I think as human beings, we need to be more accepting. We need to be more open.

That said, I know it's wrong, but my heart doesn't want to accept that.

These characters... they felt **REAL. TANGIBLE. PALPABLE.** I couldn't help but love them fiercely and root for them relentlessly. It was impossible not to.

As you begin to read, you fall in love as they fall in love. It's tentative at first, your heart expands and twists slowly as you follow them from childhood into adulthood. It's a journey and the connection between Luciano (Lucky) and Belén is kinetically powerful. It's as pure as it is wrong and I think that's what makes this book so fantastic--you truly want what they can't have.

It's an honest to goodness forbidden romance.
True to its core.

And by God, did I want them together. From pretty early on in the book I was **SOLD.** It's something I can't wrap my head around. This topic was *my* **HARD LIMIT.** And yet as I was reading I felt the urge to go to war for these characters. The fact that their love was deemed wrong by society standards didn't seem to

matter. It began to feel insignificant and that is a testament to this authors writing, that she could take something that would typically make me shudder in disgust and turn it into something that had me yearning is just **WHOA**.

It's unreal.

It's magic.

I don't know what else to say...

GAH! I don't want to get into the plot of this book. This review is more of a way for me to express the way I was moved. I can honestly say, I was stunned by how addicted I became and also how much I learned from the story itself.

I learned that love is inexplicable. It's an emotion that cannot be tamed. And even if you desperately don't want to feel it, it happens. I learned that those feelings, as wrong as they might be, can still be pure and clean, even though they go against every moral fiber inside you. It's so f**cking powerful.

I have no words. This story is something you need to read. It's something you have to journey through to grasp.

Mara White has blown my mind. She's taken me to a place I typically would not *ever* want to go, and more insane than that, she's made me want to go back there.

I'm not done with these characters, even though the story is done.

I want more and I think this is a book that I'll always look back on and remember. It's a book I will carry with me.

"When the pen falls into our hands, we can't erase the past. All we're allowed is the chance to create a new ending."

These characters are beautiful.

This story is emotionally combustible.

And this novel is sure to have you thinking and feeling.

It's more than a five star read.

It's unratable.

And this is an author I will most definitely read again and again!! **BRILLIANT**.

GAH ---->>> *"She is raw. Pure emotion. Savagely in love with me and willing to sacrifice whatever it takes."*

Beth says

My initial reaction immediately finishing the book:

FUCK YOU, BOOK! I HATE YOU! COMPLETE TOTAL BULLSHIT! I'M SO FUCKING MAD RIGHT NOW! YOU GAVE ME ALL THOSE EMOTIONS. MADE ME INVEST AND CARE ABOUT THOSE CHARACTERS. AND THEN... THAT. FUCKING. ENDING. AFTER

EVERYTHING THEY WENT THROUGH??? HELL NO!

I have had some time to reflect for a few days, and I don't see how it's possible to rate this book. I enjoyed 90+% of the story, but I absolutely loathe the ending. I don't think I can ever read another book by this author because I don't feel I can trust her to give me a satisfying ending. I mostly read HEA but not always, and that's usually ok. However, in this case, I just felt angry to the point it took me hours to fall asleep. I was so unsettled and upset. Those are not the feelings I desire after reading those characters' lifelong journey.

Ellen ♦ Book Bellas ♦ says

WOW!! Another passionate, loving and emotional book from Mara White!! I had the great pleasure of reading an early copy of Maldeamores and I haven't stopped thinking about it.

Heed the warnings on this one because Maldeamores is unlike any book I've read. Belén and Luciano are star-crossed lovers, fiercely in love but forced to deny their true feelings for each other. Like Mara's other books, I felt anxious, emotional, distraught and fascinated by these two characters and their tumultuous journey. The writing is stunning, sharp and incredibly erotic and the characters richly detailed. I was drawn into their world and was stunned by the turn of the events. These two are truly "lovesick" and simply cannot live apart from each other.

There are some very graphic and steamy scenes in this book, but they fit in with the story and add fuel to the deep emotional bond Belen and Luciano share. If you like to be challenged and thrilled when you read, then Maldeamores is the book for you. It is not an easy story but I loved the rollercoaster ride of emotions! Mara White is a talent to watch and I hope she will keep on writing these complex, sexy stories.

"When the pen falls into our hands, we can't erase the past.
All we're allowed is the chance to create a new ending."

Baba says

[I think that's what happened when (view spoiler) (hide spoiler)]

Dee Montoya says

4.5 Forbidden Stars*****

Luciano and Belen have always been together. They lived in a complicated world where they could only count on each other. Their love grew bolder and more intense as they grew up, becoming an addiction, something that both were ashamed of, but a love so fierce, that nothing could destroy it, no matter how hard they tried. They were both born with this powerful love inside them. Blood, a lifetime together, and their toxic love will forever bound Lucky and Bey.

Intense is the most accurate word I can use to describe this story. Luciano and Belen fought against their love with everything they had, they made big sacrifices for each other but nothing ever worked. Maybe only death could finally bring closure and help them move on, but even then I'm not even sure.

I will post a full review of this book, once I finished the second installment of this duet.

Samantha says

My initial reaction after I finished reading this was, *I can't even rate this right now because I'm so upset*. I need a fucking happy ending and this book didn't give me that. It gave me some half assed shit that actually left me more than upset, I was half in angry tears. The taboo theme was what drew me in because they say God punishes lovers by reincarnating them as close family relations (usually siblings).

I liked seeing the tension between the two characters and watching them struggle to deal with their feelings for one another even when everyone around them and society is telling them their feelings are wrong. Their love for one another is magical and sweet. I didn't like the ending and I won't apologize for being so upset about it. I feel like the author had a lot she *could* have done with the ending but fell through. Personally, I wanted Luciano and Belen to find their happiness together somehow instead of the way it ended. Yeah, I'm spoiling the book but I'm pissed the fuck off so deal with it.

The writing wasn't bad, the characters weren't bad, and the taboo themes that were twisted within this story are not the reason the rating is so low. I just can't get past how the last few chapters dropped the ball and the ending. I just can't do it so Mara White gets 2.5 very disappointed stars from me. I have enough disappointments in my real life without having to not have a great, wrap it all up with a bow happy ending in a novel.

Arabella ~?AB?~ says

★★★ 3 Stars ★★★

I totally enjoyed this forbidden love story, it was angsty, I liked the writing and I felt really connected to the characters.

The story starts when cousins Belén & Luciano (Lucky) are kids, they are as tight as brother and sister and the closeness of their mothers ensures that they are always together. Lucky looks after Bey and being only 9 months apart they are best friends as well as family.

**"Belén. My cousin.
My own heat wave.
The flame to my fire."**

We grow up with them, and as they hit puberty and feelings start to change we experience Belén's shame and Lucky's struggle to resist his beautiful cousin. Whilst Bey distracts herself with school, Lucky distracts

himself with drugs and girls on the streets of Washington Heights, New York.

**"Belén, I love you back.
Sometimes I love you so bad I get sick from it.
But we can't do that.
We can love each other without that part.
We have to."**

Although this is a taboo story, all I kept thinking was that it's actually not against the law to marry your cousin, and I felt like their mothers would have actually been OK with their relationship, so for me I was so frustrated that they felt so bad about being together.

This was a raw and gritty story, which contained MMF and a dash of FF. It was steamy and emotional, I really did enjoy reading it but I was left feeling discontent with how it all panned out.

This story is told from childhood up until they are 20 and it was a solid 4 stars from me right up until the end, in fact, in my opinion the epilogue killed the book, which I find a shame. I just don't understand why it had to go in the direction that the author took it in. If you are looking for a happy ending, you may be in for a shock.

This is a standalone prequel to the Heightsbound Series, told in dual POV.

ARC gratefully received from the author in exchange for an honest review

Olga therebelreader says

First of all, I need to clarify something. My low rating doesn't concern the taboo themes of this book - the love between two cousins, the homosexual encounters or the ménage relations. So, I have none of those issues with this book personally.

What I liked in this book was that the story flows smoothly and the writing is rich and polished. Also, I liked the dual POV.

What I do have an issue with is the frivolous plot and the childish dialogues and lines. The plot wasn't interesting and the sex scenes were too graphic and not at all inspired.

I really expected this story to make my skin crawl. At the very least, I thought it would make me shiver or give me a shock. But I didn't feel anything. I didn't feel any connection or emotion with this story. It feels choppy to me, and for such a dark plot, I at least wanted to feel something.

Finally, I found the end of the book quite unrealistic, foolish, bizarre and unwise. I felt it was rushed, not well developed and abrupt.

So it loses a star for the characters, the plot, and the sex, leaving it at 2 stars. Not terrible but could have been better!

ARC kindly provided by Book Enthusiast Promotions via NetGalley in exchange for my honest review. Thank you.

KceeReads says

An unconventional love story which is probably one of the most beautifully written of its kind, *Maldeamores* by Mara White was an initially uncomfortable reading journey for me, yet I must tell you that it became AMAZING as I progressed. I have read several taboos in my life but nothing about an H and h who really are introduced as blood related. I knew what I signed up for when I read the blurb on the ARC form. **I knew what I was reading was about first degree cousins, but what I wasn't ready for was the unexpected twist and turns this book put me through.**

The MCs are in their young adults as you start the book, and their alternating POV will send mixed feelings to your mind and heart because **the thoughts of these two are just raw and very carnal. It's hot but very wrong to think they're well, yeah... cousins.**

Maldeamores will push its readers to their limits, specially if you're not much of a forbidden romance reader. **The premise of the book may be about a love so wrong, but Mara White poured so much more in the story of Luciano and Belén. Angst, the pain and beauty of young love, and how tormenting it is to be in love with somebody you cannot fall in love with.** This is a well- developed love story that's more on the narrative side. I usually prefer reading more dialogues, but getting in the head of these characters was an inexplicable experience.

I HIGHLY recommend it to anyone who loves reading taboo and who do not really mind cliffhangers. Yes, it's a cliffy but the next book is coming real soon, so I'm not sure how I am going to read another one if my heart and mind are still in Harlem with Bey and Luc.

Natasha is a Book Junkie says

FULL REVIEW + EXCLUSIVE DELETED SCENE NOW POSTED:

“When will I ever be free from this sickness? When will love stop feeling like a curse?”

It doesn't happen very often that a book makes my mind spin in such a way that it takes me weeks to collect my thoughts, rein in all my initial reactions, and get over my inherent reflex to just *scream* at it. Because this book was just...whoa! And while a taboo scenario such as this one almost always makes my skin quiver from the forbidden allure of it all, Lucky and Belén's tale redefined everything I thought I needed in a love story in order to walk away happy, it crashed all my preconceptions to smithereens, and it left me reeling in a haze of second thoughts. This is not a traditional romance by any stretch of the imagination, but it is a romance nonetheless, and a very poignant one at that. It is undogmatic in its approach, bold and broad-minded in the way it presents this unconventional love story to the reader, and it pulls us in like a whirlpool,

regardless of what we keep telling ourselves we should be thinking, or feeling. Skillfully written, the unique prose as much a part of the story as the evocative scenes it describes, this is a book that was difficult to walk away from, nearly impossible to stop thinking about, and I'm still mulling over it, dissecting it in my mind and slowly coming to terms with the fact that some love stories hurt until the very end. And beyond.

"I'll die without you. There will never be anyone else for me, Lucky. Ever. I don't want there to be."

Raised in one of the poorest New York City neighborhoods by two first-generation immigrant sisters from the Dominican Republic, Luciano 'Lucky' Cabrera and his cousin Belén have been close since birth. Their earliest memories of falling asleep in the same crib, of always being there for one another, and of loving each other for as long as they can remember, have shaped the way they felt about each other all throughout childhood, making their unbreakable bond something that equally confused them as well as gave them comfort.

"Belén. My cousin. My own heat wave. The flame to my fire."

We follow them through adolescence and into early adulthood, we witness all the ways such a unique bond between two first cousins could become an inextricable part of their emotional makeup, ultimately playing a key role in whom they end up falling in love with—each other.

"My glass heart sits trapped at the bottom of a honey jar with Lucky's name permanently written all over it."

But loving one another has always felt like a curse for Lucky and Belén, their hearts and bodies drawn like magnets, but their minds telling them that such a love is wrong, abhorrent, and never to be. We feel their struggle from the moment they become aware of those feelings, we see them hide them, battle them, succumb to them, hate themselves for them, and that struggle continues to define the way they perceive relationships, love, and even their own sexuality. For Belén, Lucky has always been the only man in her life, someone who made her feel safe and loved, and the only man who has always ignited her body in a way no one else could. But while Belén expresses her feelings towards her cousin openly, her innocent heart always winning over reason, Lucky tries to deny his heart what it desires the most, knowing that Belén is the only woman who could ever quench the ever-raging fire coursing through his veins.

*"Belén had a way of opening me up that was addictive. I wanted to f*ck her. Jesus Christ, did I want to f*ck her! I wanted things from her that I never wanted from a girl."*

And yet, he keeps fighting her advances, wanting her to have everything in life—children, a husband to feel proud of, a proper family—everything that he could never give her.

"I'll keep pushing you away, Belén, a million times if I have to. All that means is that I love you better than I love myself."

A story of tremendous passion, of a love that should never be, of a bond that endures no matter what in all its tortuous beauty, and ultimately, shines selflessly and for all eternity. But do not expect to be able to predict its fate, because the author keeps throwing curveballs at us from start to finish, and the sting of them never stops hurting. Often in the best possible way. This is a book I will recommend wholeheartedly to anyone wishing to have their minds stretched, prickled, aroused, shocked and even stunned into silence in the end, at least for a moment, because this is a story that will leave you agonizing over a million different feelings, pondering over a million possible aftermaths, and if you're anything like me, eventually feel at peace with it all.

“What happens if one of us moves on and the other can't move at all?”

[4.5 STARS}

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