

BALL & CHAIN



ABIGAIL ROUX

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Home from their unexpected deployment, the former members of Marine Force Recon team Sidewinder rejoin their loved ones and try to pick up the pieces of the lives they were forced to leave behind. Ty Grady comes home to Zane Garrett, only to find that everything around him has changed—even the men he went to war with. He barely has time to adjust before his brother, Deuce, asks Ty to be his best man. But that isn't all Deuce asks Ty to do, and Ty must call for backup to deal with the business issues of Deuce's future father-in-law.

Nick O'Flaherty and Kelly Abbott join Ty and Zane at the wedding on an island in Scotland, thinking they're there to assuage Deuce's paranoia. But when bodies start dropping and boats start sinking, the four men get more involved with the festivities than they'd ever planned to.

With the clock ticking and the killer just as stuck on the isolated island as they are, Ty and Zane must navigate a veritable minefield of family, friends, and foes to stop the whole island from being destroyed.

Ball & Chain Details

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From Reader Review Ball & Chain for online ebook

Susan says

[

I, however, did not love this book.

My personal opinion (*my opinion...*) is that it's the weakest of the series. It's not that I didn't like where the author was taking the s

Vishous says

This breaks my heart.... To give a 3 star to any book of this series is just hard for me to do, but as much as I would love to bump it one more star... I just can't :(

I am a huge fan of this series, loved all the books so much that I was sure I will love this one the same, but it's like the magic is gone, and I just want to cry...

I felt like I was watching/reading Hercule Poirot (which I must admit I am addicted to since childhood), but not even close to good as that.

Stranded on the island because of the wedding, bodies dropping like flies, killer among them, having 4 main characters (read = 2 hot gay couples).... But as usually the suspense part never delivers... And I am ok with that because that is not the reason why I read this series. I adore spin-off Sidewinder series too, and thought I hit the mother of hot gay book... But just no...

It just lacked in everything. It was too sweet, to mild, too... meh...

The only thing I seriously loved in this book is "LOUDER" scene... God that was hot as hell!

Zane is my precious, I love Ty too, but Zane... Zane is my one and only love! My numero uno book boyfriend... and even he didn't deliver here...

Seriously this just breaks my heart....

Deborah says

Re-read 29th April - 1st May 2018

The first time I read this book I was so disappointed and angry. I love Ty and Zane and I felt cheated that this

wasn't anything like the book I'd wanted and expected.

The Grady's in Scotland including Chester and his shovel.

I'd expected a read with lots of humour and loads of Ty and Zane. What I got was lots of plot and loads of Nick and Kelly.

Even though I'm doing a full series re-read I very nearly skipped this. I'm so glad I didn't.

I enjoyed it so much more this time around. That could be in part because my expectations were so low plus I knew what to expect. This time around the balance with Nick and Kelly didn't bother me as much and it wasn't as bad as I'd remembered.

The re-read was a nice surprise and while it's not my favourite I am upping my rating from 3* to 4*.
For this Agatha Christie type of whodunnit.

I missed the humour and Ty's T-shirts but it's a much better book than I'd remembered. I've included my original review.

Original review.

With all the previous books I've had them on pre-order or bought them as soon as they came out, time got away from me this time and before I knew it reviews had appeared and they were definitely mixed so by the time I started reading I was a little concerned that this wasn't going to be the book I'd been waiting for. But it started well and I was loving it, after a few pages I was fully back in the Ty and Zane zone and loving every minute of it. The last book *Touch & Geaux* wasn't an easy read and the same could be said for this one to a certain extent especially Ty and Nick, parts of this book are heavy and not always easy to read but it's there for a reason. I've read several of the reviews and agree with all of them, this isn't the best book in the series and in my opinion there's too much plot, which in most books wouldn't be a bad thing but the strength of these books on top of a solid story is the relationships, humour and interplay between the characters and it gets a little lost amongst all the murders and mystery. When I discovered the storyline for this book was Deuce and Livi's wedding set in Scotland I couldn't wait to get back in touch with the Grady's but the humour that surrounded them in *Sticks & Stones* wasn't present here and again, although I appreciate it's a different book I think the plot overpowered the characters to a certain degree. It's a difficult call since we complain if a book doesn't contain enough plot to keep us interested but I personally, with these books especially like the characters, relationships and humour more and I have to say I can't be the only one that missed Ty's T-shirts.

Another complaint was that these are Ty and Zane's books firstly, we love them and read these books mainly for them, or at least I do but I did feel that they also got lost a little in this book. Nick and Kelly while great had too much of the book for me, they have *Shock & Awe* I want more Ty and Zane.

Giving a star rating for books like these can be difficult since the standard is so high and all the previous books have been so good, if I was just rating this in isolation compared only to the other 7 then I would give it 2 but if I'm being honest this isn't a 2 star read.

Ingela says

Written April 21, 2015

3.8 Stars - The guys are as always yummy lovely together. The adventure was maybe so-so but I can't

but be glad and satisfied once again

Book #8

I'm a year late to read this eight part (and then hopefully directly also the very last ninth book *Crash & Burn*).

There were some less happy reviews last spring when it was newly published but I more or less happy danced (amazed and stunned) seven times before I picked up this one, so I simply couldn't imagine *Ball & Chain* to be disappointing. Or, was I wrong?

I'm not stunned but this was absolutely okay

I might be blue-eyed and too addicted but a book with these main characters is always, ALWAYS, enjoying. I truly wished for more Ty & Zane time here but the all over plot, the suspense parts, and all old friends together on a small Scottish island (for a wedding) were fun enough for me. — Not the very best but nearly a 4 star read without a doubt.

Paperbacks for favorite series...

I actually read an old fashioned paperback. It felt nice to pick a "real" (smart looking) white Cut & Run book from the bookcase and once again disappear into my dear old friends exciting world.

These two unforgettable FBI Special Agents, **Ty Grady** and **Zane Garrett's** thrilling work life and wonderful (steaming hot and so awesome sweet) manly gay partnership is always a joy to hear more about. As more or less everyone out here:

I LOVE, Love, love Ty & Zane's amazing grandly romantic story.

”You know if we get out there, I’m just going to ask you to marry me again.”
Zane’s grin widened further. “I’ll risk it.”

Isn't it swoon'ish beautiful and cute when Zane call Ty "Doll"? So tenderly sweet. Awww!!!

It's not necessary to say much more. There are already hundreds of reviews to read. I'm just looking forward to find some time for the last and ninth instalment (and to order yet another stylish white paperback to my Cut & Run collection).

I LIKE - always for ever and even this eight round

Blacky *Romance Addict* says

New Ty and Zane book!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

March 17th, 2014.???????????????????

I want an early release!

Bella says

I thought about giving this book at least a star more because this is cut&run, because this is Ty and Zane, because I love them too much to hurt them with only a one star rating but I simply can't. This book was the worst in the series by far, it actually reads like it was written by a fan that had only skimmed the other books. The writing style was so heavily different from the other books that I simply can not fathom how Abigail Roux would ever let this be released. I am hurting for a series that I have been following for years and that I have loved with all of my heart.

(view spoiler)

Kenya says

[But since last May/June, I'd kind of been dreading this book, fearing that Ty and Zane might be reduced to bit players in their own story, and sadly, I feel like that's exactly what happened. To be clear, the Ty a

Stephanie says

2.5 stars. First off, I didn't like the writing style at all. It's different than the last 7 books. Too much smirking, cackling, and the characters acting juvenile. They came off more like Keystone Cops than battled hardened Recon Marines/FBI Agents/Boston police detective. We were told Ty & Zane changed during the 6 months apart but not shown. IMO, that was a huge mistake in writing. Their reunion and the subsequent weeks Ty were home before leaving for Scotland were glossed over and (view spoiler) THAT had me scratching my head.

The mystery part of this book was weak and boring. Too much running around by the MAIN FOUR CHARACTERS while I was left wondering what the hell Burns, Earl, Stanton and the others were up to. Not once was I trying to figure out who was behind it. So by the time I got to the end, I was tired and just ready to be done with it. But I did enjoy the plot twists and (view spoiler)

This story lacked that spark that made me love Ty & Zane and this series that the previous 7 books had. I had very little emotional connection to them while reading this story. And I was left wondering WHOSE series this belonged to? Ty & Zane or Nick & Kelly? Because Nick WAS the star of this book. And I'm a HUGE Nick/Kelly fan (I SERIOUSLY LOVE NICK!) and also a Nick/Zane shipper, so I enjoyed their page time but felt that Ty & Zane were side characters and the only time they got first billing was when they had sex.

Overall this was a huge disappointment.

Christina says

1.5 Stars

Ok, here we go. Time to review Ball & Chain, book 8 of the Cut & Run series. Oh wait, silly me, this wasn't part of Cut & Run, this was Nick's book and clearly should of been part of the Sidewinder series. I'm not even sure what to say because I like Nick and I liked Shock & Awe and even though Nick completely stole the show in Ball & Chain, I didn't think his role should have been as substantial as it was. Kelly is still a mystery to me and was kind of boring. Trying to have two couples in the forefront only served to bring both couples down.

How did Ty and Zane become side character's in their own series? This is a clear indication that this series should have ended. Zane completely disappeared in this book. Granted, I saw this coming within the last few books but sadly he was reduced to being placed in Ty's back pocket and only came out to play when Ty needed some companionship. GAH! Zane was such an amazing character. That leads me to Ty. I am so sick of hearing about Ty and his family's little quirks. Yes, we already know he has a fear of horses and heights.

Do we have to be reminded in every book? It was cute and funny the first time but it got old fast. I guess that's all there is to Ty now. Then we have the fact that there was nothing going on between them as a couple. Ty was gone for 6 months and supposedly he and Zane both changed, but we got no development on this front. We were told this but you'd think since this was supposed to be their book we would have gotten one conversation, anything to support what these big changes were and how they got through them. Nope, nothing. All we got was them laughing, smiling, and grinning. Grrrrr.....I felt very little connection between them. Even (view spoiler) I felt more between Nick and Kelly than anything between Ty and Zane.

Now, let's get to the ridiculous plot. I never read this series for the mystery plots because they were always secondary to the strong characters of the earlier books. The mysteries always had plot holes but I could typically ignore them because of the characterization and the strong connection between Ty and Zane. Now since the characters are brought down to a fraction of what they were, what do we have left? Nothing! The mystery was so convoluted that I really didn't care how it turned out. I can't tell you how many times I had this dumbfounded look on my face because of some of the absurd logic in this book, like (view spoiler)

Now on to the things I did enjoy. There were a few :) (view spoiler)

I'm more than ready for this series to end.

Catherine says

I woke up yesterday morning to find a veritable barrage of messages from friends in my email inbox, on Facebook, and all over Goodreads. All of these messages were variations on a theme of:

“OH MY GOD! IT’S HERE! IT’S HERE! *BALL & CHAIN* HAS BEEN RELEASED EARLY! OH MY GOD! TY AND ZAAAAAANE! *SQUEEEEEEEEE!!!*”

And, because I love Abigail Roux’s Cut & Run series probably more than is healthy and I’ve been waiting almost five months for this moment, my reaction went a little something like this:

“OH MY GOD! IT’S HERE! IT’S HERE! *BALL & CHAIN* HAS BEEN RELEASED EARLY! OH MY GOD! TY AND ZAAAAAANE! *SQUEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!*”

It was completely undignified (and I don’t care in the least). I’m not ashamed to admit that in that moment of discovery, had I needed to, I would have pushed small children, the elderly and even my own mother out of the way to get to my pre-ordered copy of *Ball & Chain* as soon as humanly possible. Thankfully, my Kindle is almost never further than arms-length away and a few clicks of a button later, *Ball & Chain* was mine.

Unfortunately, while I enjoyed the book and the opportunity to revisit two of my all-time favourite characters in the M/M romance genre, *Ball & Chain* didn’t quite manage to live up to my expectations.

Going into this book, I had high hopes for the mystery plot. I know that a lot of fans of this series merely tolerate its over-the-top mysteries and conspiracies because they provide a colourful backdrop for Ty and Zane, but I’ve always secretly loved them. They’re ludicrous, but that’s what makes them the perfect guilty pleasure. So, when the first dead body was discovered on the island, I was practically rubbing my hands together with glee and mentally preparing for all the snark and puns that were going to come my way.

But there's no way to sugar-coat this one.... This plot *completely* jumped the shark. Even *I* couldn't suspend disbelief this far. The body count? The reactions of the main characters? The motivations of those involved? The sheer number of those involved? The utter absurdity of who was behind it and the Machiavellian levels of machination and foresight it would have taken to pull off something of this magnitude?!? Good God! I felt like I was in a bad episode of *Murder, She Wrote*.

My brain just kept crying, "Abort! Abort! BAD plot bunnies! BAD!"

Thankfully, Ty and Zane still have insanely good chemistry together. When Zane and Kelly were standing at the docks waiting for the Sidewinders to disembark at the beginning of the novel, I had butterflies in my stomach because *Zane* had butterflies in his. His excitement and uncertainty and love were tangible and I couldn't wait to see how everything played out. In the end, their reunion was sweet and cheesy and exactly what I was looking for from that moment. And that first sex scene in Scotland?! HELL-O! When I finished reading it, I had to look around see if I could bum a cigarette from someone. That shit was H-O-T.

But beyond that bedroom scene and a whole lot of truly adorable hand holding and shoulder nudging that made my heart happy, Ty and Zane's dynamic fell a little flat for me in this one. There were some serious emotional landmines stepped on in *Touch & Geaux* that got roughly shoved to the side when the Sidewinders were suddenly recalled to duty. Ty and Zane had had six months without any communication; presumably they'd both done some serious thinking about themselves and their relationship and their future together while they were apart. In fact, Roux told us that they had. She also told us that they'd both changed, that Ty's temperament was different now than it had been before his deployment. And yet... I didn't really see any evidence of any of this. As far as I'm concerned, it was a whole lot of *tell* with very little *show*. I mean, heaven forbid the characters have a conversation about something this important.

One thing that I was really happy to see in this novel was the significant strides Roux took forward with Nick's character. When we were first introduced to Nick in *Divide & Conquer* (Cut & Run #4), I actively loathed him for trying to come between Ty and Zane. I thawed towards him a little in *Armed & Dangerous* (Cut & Run #5) and a little more in *Touch & Geaux* (Cut & Run #7), but I still didn't actively *like* his character. I read *Shock & Awe* (rolling my eyes at how Sidewinders turned out to be the most gay Marine Force Recon team in history) and thought that he and Kelly made an adorable couple, but I could really take them or leave them.

But *Ball & Chain* changed all that. It gave me a glimpse into Nick's family history, his flaws, his fears, his demons, and a little about how dark and capable of destruction he really is. It shed more light on the complexity of his relationship with Ty, and filled me with warm fuzzies every time he looked or touched or even *thought* about Kelly. He'd finally become a three-dimensional character to me and *demand*ed that I become invested in him. And I am.

Unfortunately, *Ball & Chain* is a Cut & Run book, not a Sidewinders novella. And although I enjoyed every moment that Nick was on the page, I couldn't help but feel that the emphasis Roux put on his character in this novel detracted from the heart and soul of this series – the relationship between Ty and Zane. I felt that this was especially true given that the most emotionally stirring and tense moments in the books – those moments that most connect me to the characters - happened between Nick and Ty, leaving Zane to feel like a third wheel in his own story.

And don't *even* get me started on the final few pages of the book! I could hardly believe how Roux sabotaged the drama and emotion of Ty and Zane's final scene in the book by prefacing it with not one, but *two* Nick-centric scenes. Individually, they were good scenes, but HOLY STOLEN THUNDER, BATMAN!

:(

Let's be real: Roux's books are always fun to read. I love the characters. I love the universe they inhabit. I even loved that Roux threw in practically every inside joke that this series had into *Ball & Chain*. Any time a character tried to utter the word "vacation" (the "Lord Voldemort" of the Cut & Run series) or when Ty had to get on the horse, I felt like Roux was sending her fans a cheeky little wink - like every joke was a "thank you" for sticking with the series and supporting her work. I thought it was sweet.

But I can't lie, even to spare feelings. *Ball & Chain* is the weakest book set in the Cut & Run universe and Roux needs to seriously up her game if she's going to end the series on the high note it deserves.

*** 2.5 Stars ***

Sara says

I can officially mark this as read and that's the most positive thing I can say.

Taking a year off before reading this again did help, I admit I wasn't as grumpy, but this is Ty & Zane and I was bored. The mystery started out decent but about half way through I started skimming to get to the "big deal" I already knew about.

Nick & Kelly didn't bug me as much this time 'round and I like that Ty figured out how to get his answer.

There were a few surprises at the end that will make the next book interesting.

At the end of it all; I had to read this. I owed it to one of my favorite couples who I fell so hard for in the first book and continued to adore... I mean, this IS TY & ZANE after all.

So... here is to finishing and hoping the next book unfuck's its shit and ends with the biggest HEA these two deserve

***** *Original Review - 3/11/2014* *****

Putting Ty & Zane in a time out for now. I can't keep reading and feeling this way about my boys. My boys...what happened to one of my favorite couples EVER? Ugh. I am stopping at 41% and frankly I skimmed most of that.

I am sad.

I am beyond upset.

I am quite frankly pissed off right now.

Maybe I will come back to it when I feel like trying again, maybe I won't.

I agree Nick, *"It's like a bad joke."*

This sucks.

Buda says

This is a difficult review to write because I have so many disjointed thoughts on the book. First I'll say that as *Sidewinder #1.5*, it's a massive success; but as *Cut & Run #8*, it's a tragic failure. When I start to write a review, I remind myself to review the book I read, not the book I *wanted* to read. That's particularly troubling here because of all the wasted opportunities and silly inconsistencies.

The penultimate book in any series should leave readers breathless for the last installment, the final time we get to spend with heroes (and perhaps villains) we've come to love over the course of the series. It should build tension in the relationship (I'm not talking about angst) and make us fall in love with those characters all over again. We should be counting the moments until that final adieu. For example, *Death of a Pirate King* (Adrien English #4) accomplished this perfectly. *Ball & Chain* does not.

As anyone who read it knows, *Touch & Geaux* opened up a world of hurt in Ty and Zane's relationship. None of that was adequately resolved at the end of that book. But absolutely none of it is touched on in this one, not by Ty and Zane. Roux mentions repeatedly that Ty returns from *Sidewinder's* last deployment (the return opens this book) as a different man. Yet that isn't shown. It's *told*. In fact, it's here that things start to go awry. Strangely, there is no welcome home sex. There is no welcome home conversation. Ty comes home and basically the next T&Z scene is two weeks later. Missed opportunities for both.

Roux uses this book as a launching pad, of sorts, for the forthcoming *Sidewinder* series, with Nick and Kelly having expansive narrative time. I like Nick. I like Kelly. I like them together. (Full Disclosure: I read the free version of Nick & Kelly getting together but have not read *Sidewinder 1*.) And Nick's background with his father does come into play near the climax of the island mystery, so I see why it's included early. However, Roux does an enormous disservice to Ty and Zane fans by focusing so much on Nick & Kelly. Ty & Zane are almost secondary characters in their own series book.

By 13% into the book I was irritated by all the forced levity being *told* to me. These boys were laughing like a pack of demented hyenas high on nitrous oxide. The sad thing was, most of what they were in hysterics about *was not funny*. It continued unabated throughout the first third of the book and then reappeared often enough in the rest of it to annoy me again each time. Here are a few usage counts:

laugh 148
snort 42
snicker 14
smirk 26
swallow (a lump, etc) 24
chuckle 28
howl 8, (with laughter) 5
double over 2
cover/hide his/her mouth (sometimes to hide a laugh but not always) 15
cover his eyes 3
"covering the words with his mouth" HUH?? 1

When the boys get to the island for Deuce's wedding, all sorts of issues crop up. Not just for them, but for the

reader as well. When have Ty & Zane not packed? When in eight books has Zane not had his knives? In this one. If Ty has just returned from a traumatic deployment, wouldn't it be even more imperative to him that he be armed, especially when his brother specifically calls to tell him he needs help and asks him to bring one of his Force Recon buddies--and his gun? Apparently this escapes Roux. Ty & Nick actually share a gun. I am not kidding.

At the risk of putting too fine a point on it, the mystery is a clusterfuck of clusterfucks. There seem to be two or three separate operations going on at the same time, all getting in the way of each other. The "bad guy" reveal might sort of make sense in the grand scheme of things if it didn't seem like something dreamed up in the middle of writing the ending of the book. Honestly, it makes less than zero sense. Why would this bad guy go through all that trouble when one simple bullet would do the trick? Am I forgetting something crucial from *Touch & Geaux*?

It is perhaps the final scenes that are the most frustrating, including the bit where a 10-year-old child *snickers* about something he most likely wouldn't understand IRL. The last three or four scenes are huge, life-altering scenes. For Nick & Kelly. They're well-written and emotionally charged. For Nick & Kelly.

Ty & Zane do get the final scene in their own book, but only just. And frankly, I found it to be a mere shadow of what it was supposed to be. These two men have been through so much together that the final scene in their penultimate book should have had me in tears. I skimmed. Again, I am not kidding.

Finally, when the hell did Ty become an 8-year-old girl? He says a variation of "Ew, gross!" six--SIX--times. Also, in what world would a badass Force Recon Marine say to other badass Force Recon Marines, "You stay away from his heart, that's mine."

I'm leaving out a lot, but I'm getting irritated again so I'm going to close this review. As for the rating: I didn't actively hate it, so a 1-star is inappropriate (besides which, my heart just can't stand the thought of rating Ty Grady & Zane Garrett that low). It is a solid 2-stars and absolutely no more.

If you have not read beyond book 6, please do yourself a favor and stop the series right there. It's the perfect ending. If, like me, you have crossed that magical divide, we're in it to the end. I will read *Cut & Run* #9 because I have to, not because I want to. I can only hope and pray it's better than this.

I think I'm going to read *Cut & Run* again so I can remember the real Ty & Zane.

(*Edited to add the count for snort. How the hell did I forget that? Christ on a cracker.)

Heller says

2.75

Well.

I don't want to say that I'm disappointed but well...I'm disappointed. I have more questions than answers after reading this one and it just felt disjointed.

Ty and Zane have been apart for six months. Zane has changed since that time and he wants Ty to see it but

it's never really addressed. Ty has issues since coming back but it's glossed over. Sure there's a couple of nice hot sex scenes and an some intimate moments but where's the conversation? I know it's been said in other reviews but this felt like a Nick/Kelly book.

I like Nick and Kelly. I like their dynamic and I'll read their stories but I just felt like there was too much of Nick's backstory here. Way too much.

I get this was a destination story but I missed the FBI team and how they got just a brief mention and then it was Scotland. I was looking forward to those conversations and they didn't happen. We didn't even get reaction to Ty's retirement. I craved this part from the ending of the last book and it was a non-issue here. I was just left wanting more from Ty and Zane and I didn't feel like I got any payback at all.

I love Ty and Zane, love them. I don't feel that I got to know them any better after I finished this story. I would have been happy with just the first few pages and the last few pages, those gave me joy and a real feeling for the characters.

Of course I'll be reading the last book in the series but comparatively this was, for me, the weakest of the lot and I put it down several times and almost didn't pick it back up again. Not a good sign.

Smith Barney says

DNF 50%. This series and I have come full-circle. Time to cut & run.

I cannot say I'm overly surprised. I think my poor response to Shock & Awe somewhat prepared me for where I thought this series was headed even back then. I remember giving that only ★2★ stars and doing so for Ty & Zane. I didn't want to. But I did. I figured it wasn't their fault their writer drove them off such a short f'ing pier.

But this..this..was such a sad state of affairs and an even bigger disappointment..than I could have imagined. Poorest excuse of a follow-up to this long-running series than I can even express without being brutal. And it pains me to say but not half as much as it would have pained me if I read it to the f'ing end. I think that would have been like witnessing their executions.

Page sharing in an established series with the new character dolls of 'Nick & Kelly' just felt so appallingly-transparent and market-driven.

My issues were much of the same share with many of the other reviews.

Writing and character material should improve with time over a series development. Characters should enrich and not appear as just side-props and or afterthoughts. Many readers can sense written priority shifts, divided attention spans, and fragmented focus. Ball & Chain had to be the biggest black-bottomless-mess-of-a-rabbit-hole I think I've ever witnessed a writer fall down.

It's always disappointing and difficult to pull the plug on a series I've enjoyed supporting. But when my dogs start bailing and leaving the room..there's a problem.

For my own self-preservation and rather than settle for literary crumbs of starvation I'm going to remember

the Cut & Run/Ty & Zane of yesterday and get off this manic-merry-go-round series. This writer won't miss one less reader, as I have no doubt many others will replace me along the way and I salute them.

It was a Hell of a ride while it lasted.

Monica Vidal says

Wow. Don't even know what to say...Let's just start by saying that everyone who knows me for a while knows how much I love Ty and Zane. Hells, I proud myself into having convincing a lot of friends to read the C&R books just because I couldn't stop talking about them. Ty and Zane are my babies and I lost count of how many times I've read the other books of the series. That being said, it's with my heart a little bit broken that I said I didn't like this one at all. In my humble opinion it's the weakest one of all the series. Again, IN MY OPINION, you don't have to agree with me, it's just my opinion.

I am not very good with words and English is not my 1st language, so I apologize for the half ass review but I'll try to be keep it simple. Also, SPOILERS AHEAD. (view spoiler)

Ok, I'll stop talking cause this doesn't even sound like a review, it's more me ranting and venting. Sorry about that folks, but I am disappointed and I am really super sad. Book characters are not just characters to me. They are my people, they are my guys, I care deeply for them and it just break my heart when they don't get what I feel like they deserve. But hey, maybe that's just me. And again and one more time: this is just my opinion.

Lena♥Ribka says

1,8 stars.

If I have to describe *Ball & Chain* in one word, it would be

RIDICULOUS .

I'm so pissed off with this book, I'm angry, and I'm sad, and I'm disappointed, everything at once.

AND I HATE WHAT THE AUTHOR DID TO TY AND ZANE.

Who else has the same feeling after finishing it?

I knew, I'm not alone.

I can say NOTHING positive about this book.
Except that I managed to read it to the end.

I could start my review with:

First of all I would like to say how I adore this series...blah-blah-blah...Ty and Zane are my favourite couple...blah-blah-blah...BUT...

The **sad truth** is that this book has nothing to do with my favourite series and with my favourite couple.

If it were the first book of the *Cut & Run*-series, it would have been the last one for me.

It has never been a suspense part that attracted so many readers to this series - it was actually the weakest point of it - but we all knew it! The suspense part has never played a big role here, it was always secondarily.

We loved this series, I loved this series, because of Ty and Zane.

They were the central magnet, the main pillar, the most important essence of the series.

Well...they were not present here. And if, then I didn't recognize them. Somebody replaced them with their doubles that maybe looked very similar to Ty and Zane but they didn't possess their skills and charm.

It is why they were downgraded to the supporting actors by the scriptwriter. And it is why I'm so disappointed.

They deserve more.

They are more.

about Nick and Kelly!

If the last book of the series is supposed to promote *Sidewinder*, then I'm over here. You can do it, but without me.

I am not going to read it.

If you want to know more, read Christina's review and Rachel's review, they got right to the heart of the matter.

P.S It's time to say Goodbye to Ty and Zane...Guys, I will always love you.

Jenn says

So, Ty and Zane are back again and I was curious how this 8th book would go considering the ending of the last book, the new side series with Kelly & Nick, and the book before the series finale. And I have to say I'm seriously disappointed in the wasted opportunity and poor editing. It didn't make me enraged like the last book did, but it did sadden me with how Ty and Zane have just been pushed to the side, in a way, and become that series that perhaps has gone on too long. This series most certainly wasn't my first in this genre, but Zane is probably the first character in m/m that I deeply fell in love with and I wanted so much for this to end on a high note. I didn't hate it by any means, but it lacked any emotional pull and I was quite frankly bored to death. There were also quite a few choices in scenes that left me questioning the reason and the plot felt too fanfiction-y and convoluted.

This is the thing about series or even standalones for me in romance. Sure, I'd love it if both characters and plot were outstanding, but if both aren't, I really need one to impact me in a large way. The author isn't really great, in my opinion, with plot, but I've always enjoyed her characters, intimate scenes, and dialogue. But...this book lacked all of that and I was left with a big **Nothing Burger**. In my opinion, this is the weakest book in the series.

First off, the editing in this is SO bad. Seriously. The repetition killed me. For example:

Smirk – used 26 times

Swallow hard/Swallow past the knot – 24 times

Chuckle – 25 times

Laugh – 100 times

Licked/Licked lips – 21

Narrow/Narrowed eyes – 39 times

It was so incredibly distracting and felt lazy. But here's the other thing about the editing and then consistency. It's mentioned several times that Ty is a changed man after his deployment. *"Ty hadn't come back the same person. The more time they spent together, the clearer that was to Zane. He smiled less, he joked less, he was quicker to strike."* He's come back haunted, the light in his eyes diminished, etc. But that makes NO sense in regards to what the reader is given because he is constantly smirking, laughing, chuckling, snorting, what have you. How am I supposed to believe he's been greatly affected by this last deployment when you haven't written the character that way?

There were also a lot of corny phrases that made me laugh and I'm sure that wasn't the author's intention.

"...like a balm on an open wound he hadn't realized was there."

"...like a drop of water to a dying man"

“No one had lifted Zane’s burden for him; he had shed it himself, like a caterpillar unfolding its wings to become a butterfly. Ty would never tell Zane he thought of him like a butterfly, of course.”

“He was on the edge of completely falling apart. Thank Christ Ty was there to keep him together, just like he’d always been.”

“Ty was wearing a red Santa hat with a white fluffball on the end, and the fluffball hit Clancy in the head when they hugged, but she didn’t seem to care.”

***Because being hit by a fluffball is reason to break down and cry? The paaaain! Fluff in the face! Fluff in the face!

Now let’s get back to another wasted opportunity that I felt would have helped me enjoy this book more. Ty and Zane were separated for 6 months. And 6 months after a huge bomb of coming out on Zane’s part and him alone without Ty OR any of the Sidewinder guys he’s grown to love as friends. I needed those 6 months described to me in some way, something to give me an emotional connection to what he went through and to what he and Ty felt during those 6 months apart. Everything runs so smoothly for these guys when they are reunited it just felt...meh. Even the small amount of intimate scenes didn’t do anything for me. There was one that I guess was fairly hot, but because it felt like a show and a little Sex A,B,Cs I kept waiting for something more interesting to happen between them sexually. And you can’t keep writing Deuce calling during sex. It’s not cute anymore. These guys used to have personalities and they felt very cardboard cutouts in this book. Lots of reminiscing about past experiences with nothing new to the table. They were going through the motions and I didn’t feel Zane in this book. Just a name with some dialogue. I truly didn’t feel anything while reading Ty and Zane, and I used to in the earlier books, and I imagine that’s largely due to the lack of tension between them now.

I did think some of the scenes between Nick and Ty were great, but the lack of consistency with Ty read very strange to me. He seemed extremely needy, downtrodden, whiny, etc. and it threw me honestly. But when they were discussing their friendship, I liked those parts. That felt genuine.

Then there’s the plot. I think I got what the author was going for in that regards. It felt very Agatha Christie’s *And Then There Were None*, mixed with *Clue*, and a whole lot of the TV miniseries *Harper’s Island*. And inspiration is one thing, but this felt like fanfiction. Hell, even on *Harper’s Island* the guests all arrive for a wedding. It felt so much like those three stories that it became distracting rather than fun. And for the love of holy why, why did that plot go off the rails like that? **Just why?** If it had been a fun little weekend murder mystery caper, I really could have enjoyed myself. But with every reveal it just went further into Stupidville. Sometimes restraint is a beautiful thing. Just saying.

By the way, side note: the reason for picking that Maid of Honor was quite possibly one of the dumbest things I’ve ever read.

And also, wasn’t this book set in Hawaii and then changed to Scotland? Is that why the characters were all wearing Summer clothes in the middle of Winter?

Then there is Kelly and Nick. Not that I’m all enraged or anything, but I think it was a disservice to both couples to have them in there as much as they were in a Ty and Zane book, especially the second to last book. Another reason why I felt a lack of connection with the supposed main couple. I honestly was floored with how much Nick and Kelly were in this, and not only that, but a HUGE moment happens and it bugged the crap out of me for two reasons. One it took away from Ty and Zane’s moments and two, I can’t see how

the author can't not revisit that in Nick and Kelly's own book, so we'll just get more repetition. And surprisingly, Nick and Kelly were funnier, more charming, and likable than Ty and Zane, although I do feel like once again Nick has an unnerving personality change. But more than that, this felt like Nick's big shining moment. He's the one that's the hero, is struggling, changing his life. She also conveniently changed the story for him & this idea of him being a near son to the Grady's out of the blue was ridiculous. I mean if he was such a second son to the family, why wasn't he invited to the wedding in the first place? I can't understand why the author wrote *Ball & Chain* like this.

So, overall, I didn't hate it, I didn't love it, and I probably won't remember a damn thing about it in a few days. Disappointing way to start closing out a series of two of my most beloved m/m characters. I'm really hoping for a beautiful ending with the 9th book, though.

Trisha Harrington says

OMFG! That book was just... wow! Thank God I didn't hear any spoilers because.... UGH!!! The next book might kill me.

Do not read this review if you don't want to be spoiled.

I woke up this morning and saw that this came out early! **Early!** So I raced over to Riptide to download it and I didn't stop reading it until I had finished. My God, this book was just... I'm blown away. And I don't know how to say it without ruining this book for others. So just avoid spoiler tags if you don't want to know.

For a long time I wasn't really as into this book as other ones. Yeah, I was really enjoying it. But it was staying at a 4 star rating. Maybe it was all the Nick and Kelly stuff that was mixed in with Ty and Zane, which I didn't really want. **I wanted Ty and Zane not the other two.** Then you add the fact most of it was Nick ~~who I don't really like~~. So that was a downer, but I sort of see why it was included, although it hasn't swayed me towards reading the next Sidewinder book. I'm just going to wait and see what happens. Maybe I'll finish this series before I move on to the other one properly.

Anyway, this book was so good and I was so happy with where Ty and Zane went here. This book didn't really test their relationship. And I was grateful for that. But we did get a few shocks along the way. One for Zane, two (sorta) for Ty. One wasn't exactly all Ty's, it was his family and I will admit, I was kinda sad for a while. (view spoiler) And that was connected to the whole mystery in the story and it was **soooooo** good. I was devouring it and trying to put two and two together. And then we got another shock and I am now thinking really hard about stuff I have wondered for a long time now.

And then we get to the ending. So, as I stated in my review earlier, this was a 4 star book and it wasn't really swaying one way or the other, it was just... 4. But we had a few scenes that made me smile really hard, and I think those were part of the reason I was able to still really enjoy this as a solid 4 instead of it sinking. So when the ending came and (view spoiler) I was finally like **HELL YES** And I realized that it was probably going to end up one of my favorites of the series.

Overall, I was so happy with this book. It was everything I wanted, but I didn't know it yet. It's kind of set up the next book already. And now I'm really excited about reading it and I hope will will get some more answers. But this is definitely a 5 star read for me forever.

Baba says

3 stars. Review posted March 12, 2014

Me before reading Ball & Chain...

Me after reading Ball & Chain...(I'm talking about my frame of mind) *Baba raises eyebrows*

“I don’t know who the fuck to trust out here. I’m at the ‘shoot first and feel bad later’ stage.”

Shoot! I feel bad for saying this installment didn’t wow me at all. I enjoyed certain parts of it, however, I have more than a couple complaints. It’s more pleasant to begin with the stuff I enjoyed. So let me cut right to the chase of the matter.

The (view spoiler) lovey dovey mayhem right at the beginning of Ball & Chain was great! It gave me the warm fuzzies. <333

I also loved a lot of the scenes between Ty & Zane and Nick & Kelly, i.e. Ty & Zane (view spoiler) On the other hand, I was wondering if it’s realistic that Ty (view spoiler) Oh well, that’s Ty, right? I don’t really complain because I enjoyed the (view spoiler) very much, yet it’s just a (justified?) observation. As expected the smexin’ was hot and I loved all their good-natured bickering. I got some good laughs out of it, for sure.

My favorite quotes:

“Scotland?” Zane echoed, perking up. “Does that mean Ty has to wear a kilt?” I wish!

“You’re the only person I’ve ever been with who made me want to try things like that.”

(...)

“I mean that all the experiences I’ve ever heard of in life...I want to have them with you.”

Chester began to cackle at the end of the table.

“I’m the only Grady who didn’t get lucky last night!”

Nick dropped his fork and put his hand over his eyes.

Chester grabbed his arm and shook him. “You want to bang something too, sonny, you can borrow my shovel!”

“Tyler, come on!”

“This is police brutality!”

Now let me address the not so good stuff.

The way (view spoiler) I was ~~expecting~~ **hoping** (emphasis on hoping) that a part of book 8 would be set in the Middle East. Stupid me, that's just wishful thinking. Why would something like that happen when we don't even get to see how the guys in Ball & Chain have been murdered? There's talk about how awful it was and all that but it's actually rather harmless coz the guys are dead already when we are confronted with the gory details. And no, I'm not a blood-thirsty reader but it could have helped to enhance the plot, make it more...thrilling? That's the crux of the matter, I didn't particularly care about the mystery and plot. It was 'meh', somewhat messy and bland in my opinion. Besides, my interest petered out during the second half of the story because it wasn't engaging. Also, I found it mighty convenient how every (view spoiler)

The frowning, scowling, winking, chuckling, smiling, laughing and giggling and raised eyebrows were all over the place. I guess it's time for me to check in with my sons, they love to read cartoons on a daily basis. They could update me in that regard because I'm pretty sure cartoon characters frown and chuckle all the time with the occasional *twack* and *boom* thrown into. *Baba frowns and scrunches nose* BTW, Nick and Ty freaking out made me *raise my eyebrows* for once because that felt a bit stilted. Plus, some TSTL moments made me roll my eyes but that's probably irrelevant. And dare I say that a few scenes bordered on being cheesy? Come to think of it, I'd say Ball & Chain escalated in a weep fest somewhere along the line.

We all know that everything has to come to an end. And even though the prospect of letting Ty & Zane ~~ride~~ drive into the sunset is upsetting and sad, it's going to happen nonetheless in the next and final installment of the Cut & Run series. I think this story reads like a prolonged goodbye for Ty & Zane, but at the same time it's also a transition to the Sidewinder series because Nick and Kelly acted as the second main couple in Ball & Chain. Since I enjoyed Shock & Awe (and Nick) very much, I'm excited to tackle Cross & Crown and I really hope that Abigail Roux will deliver a couple great and fresh stories.

All in all a decent enough read but it left me underwhelmed. In fact, Ball & Chain is my least favorite in the Cut & Run series.

„Unfuck your shit, Scotland!“

<http://baba.booklikes.com>

Richard says

Dear Ty and Zane,

Please know how sorry I am that your beautiful love story was lost to the (\$)spin-off(\$).
I loved you, I was loyal.

Also know, I have no interest in the continuation of Shelly and Dick's story that will tried to be spun in a half dozen books, undoubtedly.

Thank you for the laughter, joy, tears and heartache, you will be missed.

We should not have ended this way.

Most fondly,
Richard
