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When the only man Ellen Kent has ever loved, famous photojournalist Simon Riley, returns home to investigate his uncle's mysterious death, their long-ago passion is reignited, but someone is determined to keep them apart. Reprint.

Return To Me Details

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Author : Shannon McKenna

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From Reader Review Return To Me for online ebook

Dabney says

reviewed at **the passionate reader**

<http://thepassionatereader.blogspot.c...>

"Sometimes—in fact, lots of times—I just want a down and dirty bad boy hero who sweeps into town, throws the good girl over his shoulders and drags her off to a happy ending. This bad boy does and then gets the nice girl story has been done many times by Shannon McKenna, sometimes well (think **Extreme Danger**) and, unfortunately for this reviewer, sometimes terribly. It's hard to find much to like about Ms. McKenna's overblown **Return to Me**.

The hero, Simon, is a self-absorbed jerk whose behavior between the sheets is so aggressive it's kinda gross. The woman he's burning for, Ellen, he deflowered and then dumped seventeen years ago. But Ellen, an enabler if ever I've seen one, just lets him right back into her heart and other parts. I wish I could tell you why Ellen is such a pushover for Simon and his constantly feeling sorry for himself ways, but I can't because Ms. McKenna hasn't bothered to develop Ellen or Simon into in-depth characters.

Nor has she produced a coherent plot. As best I could tell, Simon left town after being accused of burning down a barn—we know he wasn't really isn't a bad guy because he did try to save the horses. Ellen stayed in town—and I mean stayed in town, it's as if she has never been anywhere other than LaRue—and became the controlling owner of a bed and breakfast. We are supposed to think she's sweet—as opposed to stupid--because she has an assistant who is terrible at all things bed-and-breakfasty but Ellen keeps her on, smiling benevolently when, yet again, Missy burns the muffins. Simon has come back to town because his uncle Gus shot himself and something about that just doesn't feel right to Simon. That doesn't stop him from constantly ruing that he's returned to LaRue. (He feels he is brings bad luck to the entire town—yes, it really is all about him!) There's a psycho villain who has disgusting flashbacks to Vietnam where he learned to enjoy setting others on fire. There's an uptight guy, Brad, who was engaged to Ellen but really should be with Cora, a woman whose reputation he ruined. (Cora and Brad are actually much more interesting a couple than Simon and Ellen although that isn't saying much.)

There's lots and lots of sex and none of it's very sexy. Both characters are described routinely as gorgeous, hot, and desirable, but given that neither of them were anyone I would ever want to meet, I found page after page of them moaning into each other's mouth just plain out dull. Plus, the idea of this couple reproducing is so appalling, I kept worrying that one of the bazillions of condoms—Simon is a lot like the Energizer Bunny--they were using might fail. When Ellen and Simon aren't in the sack, they spend way too much time feeling sorry for themselves. Ellen doubts herself for being with Simon, Simon doubts himself for being with Ellen. Halfway through the tale, I doubted myself for buying this book.

By the time I got to the incredibly bizarre scene where Simon and Ellen, escaping someone or something—it's all a blur—, find themselves in a hidden grove filled with huge animal statues made by Simon's dead mother, I gave up. I flipped to the end and was unhappy to see they appeared to having unprotected sex and planning a family. Hopefully, they and their progeny will never leave LaRue."

Bee says

This should be a 1.5 if that existed. I'm sure this book is great to some people. However I didn't care for a lot of the dialogue and I didn't like the male protagonist. El was better but she seemed weak...I mean....she is engaged to a guy who she doesn't love, isn't interested in sexually and can't stand his family. Has she ever heard of online dating? This book occurred in the present. It wasn't like she had to settle for the local townfolk and the first suitor that made an offer.

Spoiler warning:

I have no idea how to insert a spoiler warning since I never write reviews, so I'm hoping entering down a couple spaces work. Not that this is much of a spoiler. When the lead characters first mess around El is engaged. This goes right back to my weak point. I get that she really shouldn't have been engaged to Brad but it doesn't take away from the point that she was engaged. Not cool. She didn't even put up any resistance. Hard for me to root for main characters and a central romance when things like that occur.

Adrienne says

I just spent ages writing a review and it's disappeared, so here goes with review no.2 Hey Ho.

I read this a few days ago and have spent time deliberating whether it's a 4 or 5 star read so perhaps it should be 4 1/2.

Simon and El share a sad past, and whilst Simon has moved on and made a name for himself El has stayed in the same small town all her life and is now a successful business woman. When circumstances dictate that their paths cross again (albeit under sad circumstances) all the old shared feelings come back for both of them.

Seventeen years ago Simon, bad boy and rebellious teenager, was forced to leave LaRue following a sequence of tragic events. The town only holds bitter memories for him except for the times he spent with El, now he's back and the feelings of unease and doom are closing in again. Simon knows his time in LaRue is limited and falling in love with El is out of the question, so why is he getting angry all the time?

Since Simon left El has moved on and whilst she's never really stopped thinking about him she doesn't hold out any hope of ever actually seeing him again. Until he walks into her B and B that is. El knows Simon isn't the person he's made out to be, and she understands fully that he's here to tidy things up and then he'll be gone again, so it's best not to tell him what she really feels, just have some hot sexy fun, love him for the moment then let go when she needs to.

Simon is a tough Alpha type but, and it's a big but, he's very emotionally insecure this coupled with the feelings of foreboding that seems to follow him around make him not the easiest of people to get along with. El on the other hand is sweet and lovely but has enough emotional strength for both of them (and a good job too).

I loved watching how the relationship between Simon and El was re-kindled and the way they worked magic together with one hot sexy relationship. It was a nice relationship to read about when you understand the part they play in each others lives. And whilst Simon did and said some spectacularly stupid things I loved the way El stood by him b/c 'she understood and knew him'. I also loved the way Simons feelings slowly cracked through that tough heart to reveal a man who cared alot for his old friend.

The sub plot for this story fell quiet during the middle part of the book but it's an integral part of Simon and Els story so remains there slowly simmering in the background (without the sub plot Simon wouldn't be who he is) only to come back with vengeance towards the latter part of the story when all is revealed.

All in all a great read with some good secondary characters who kind of had their own little story within a story, which I found enjoyable. Will definatley read more by this author.

Fingers crossd this one will go even tho' it's not as good as my first review boo hoo:)

Ana T. says

I wanted a fast read to occupy me in the last days of November and so I grabbed this book. I haven't been to fond of McKenna's books I've read but this one ended up being better than the ones I tried before.

Seventeen years after bad boy Simon Riley sped out of town Ellen Kent has finally got her life together. She's very busy running her successful bed and breakfast in Oregon's LaRue River Valley. And she's engaged - to a man who doesn't exactly make her knees weak with lust, but so much the better. It's time for a quiet home with a family, dog hair on the sofa, all the trappings, even if she has to retool her emotional wiring to a much lower wattage to get it. After all, passion - of the pants at the ankles, lips in serious lock, hands roaming frantically on the way down the hall - well, it's just an unrealistic fantasy...like the man pulling up to her door on his motorcycle...

Simon swore he'd never come back to this backwater town where trouble followed at his heels. The only good thing about the place had been El Kent, who had been his friend despite his rep. Now, he's back to investigate his uncle's sudden death and face the demons of his past. But he hadn't counted on El's lush, sensual beauty, the innocent seductiveness of her every gesture. She has no business marrying that lacklustre clown of a fiance. What she needs is a serious wake-up call, the kind that starts at the mouth and leads down to complete abandonment and total ecstasy. He never expects his strategy to backfire and leave him so hungry for more...But Simon has done more than stir El's passions and his own. His very presence has brought danger into her life, and they will have to learn to trust each other if they want to survive...

I think things started a bit too fast between El and Simon and he starts chasing her even thinking he might not stay and that will hurt her. But once they were in a relationship I actually enjoyed it because while he is still rough she seems to become stronger, although a hard man Simon didn't seem as cavemen as McKenna's previous heroes. And there was a mystery regarding his uncle that I quite enjoyed even if I felt it could have been better explored, we knew who the bad guy was but it was interesting to find out the real story as the action progresses.

I had a bit of problem with El and Simon as characters because after a while it seemed they were taking a bit too long to solve their problems and when something happens near the end and Simon is accused by the cops the first thing he thinks of was running away and leaving El behind. That was what he had done all those years back and I was very annoyed that the same was going to happen all over again.

By this time I was more interested in the secondary couple's love story than El and Simon. Brad and especially Cora were really interesting people with a past story and a lot to catch up with and make up to (especially Brad) and McKenna really creates some sizzling scenes between these two. I wish she had given them more space.

Grade: B-

Carrie says

Return to Me is a decent book that somehow failed to grab my interest. It was too easy to put down. Part of the problem is the emphasis is on the romance instead of balancing the romance with the suspense plot. I also had the suspense plot figured out very early on, so there wasn't much to hold my interest. While Simon and El tried to figure out their relationship (El loved him and he figured he was bad for her), they had sex. Lots of sex. LONG sex scenes that went over many pages. I found myself skimming the sex scenes to get back to the meat of the story, which was would Simon quit being a douche to El and would they figure out where Gus hid the evidence he alluded to in his email? (view spoiler)

Although I felt like the sex scenes were fairly well written, I was pulled out of them by the things Simon said. The author puts words in this tough guy's mouth that no man would ever say. I would say the sex scenes, while not erotica, certainly qualify as romantica instead of mainstream romantic love scenes. I'm finding that these types of love scenes are not my favorite. I enjoy hot sex scenes, but there is a certain style of language I don't find sexy.

Zeek says

Shannon McKenna is about the only non-pnr, rom/suspense writer I read anymore. (well aside from Pamela Clare!) Thank God I haven't made it thru her entire backlist yet because I hear her latest couple releases haven't been as hot- (which tends to happen in a long series).

However, *Return to Me*, I'm happy to report, I thoroughly enjoyed!

Though it's not part of her McCloud Brothers series, it has all the hallmarks of a good McKenna read- a lost soul alpha hero, a heroine who knows and loves him to the depth of her being, sexy heat and a bad guy that won't stop till both are dead. (The bad guy part is really just background noise as far as I'm concerned, but you'll have this with a lot of romantic suspense now-a-days.)

Successful photojournalist Simon Riley has loved El Kent for a very long time. He never thought he'd see her again after the town wrote him off all those years ago as the boy from the wrong side of the tracks who would never amount to anything, but when his uncle turns up dead from an apparent suicide he must go back to face the demons of the past... and the one woman whom he could never forget. Little does Simon know

that someone in town is out to make sure those demons stay buried- even if they have to kill to do it.

As I mentioned above this book delivers on numerous levels- long lost love is an easy hook for me and the author sure knows how to maintain scintillating chemistry between her characters. I love that in a romance novel. The only drawback for me was the worn psycho killer plot and that character's obvious motivations. Still, if you like romantic suspense with an over the top heat factor, you can't get much better than a Shannon Mckenna novel- and this one is no exception.

4 out of 5 from me.

Caro says

Hubo una época donde devoré los libros de Shannon Mckenna, y en mi convalecencia (?) estoy abierta a todas las posibilidades, así que buscando en mi Kindle encontré este ebook, agregado hace bastante.

Siempre digo que cuando la pareja principal es opacada por otras historias secundarias y esos personajes te interesan más, entonces la novela pierde su atractivo. Me ocurrió exactamente eso; prefería a la pareja de Cora y Brad, y eso es un mal síntoma.

La historia es sexo, sexo, sexo, mezclado con los histerismos del héroe atormentado pero no en el buen sentido (si es que lo hay xD), este tipo tira más a emo con sus cabellos largos y ropa de motero. La mitad de la novela estuve pensando cuándo iba a bañarse y me ALEGRABA cuando la autora hacía que se duchara aunque tuviera que soportar otra escena de sexo tórrido bajo el agua.

En síntesis, el héroe prometía sexo del bueno y se quedó como Grey, que le dijo en la película a Ana "te voy a cog3r duro" y bleh, unos tristes chirlos y ya está.

Las escenas se repiten bastante: ella sucumbe, él lo disfruta, se aleja, discuten así muy cliché-mente como en una sit-com y el ciclo vuelve a comenzar.

Le pongo tres estrellas porque es una lectura ligera después de tanta oscuridad que estuve leyendo (Pennies de Pepper Winters, nada más deprimente para leer en un post-operatorio) y me hacía falta.

Kathleen says

Yet again another book by Shannon McKenna that I loved. This book grabbed me from the very beginning and kept me interested all the way through. The heat level was good for me and the hero was absolutely yummy. The heroine had eye's only for the hero and stuck by her man no matter what. The action was really good and the bad guy was completely crazy.

Thanks Kris for the rec :)

Wminbc says

I love Shannon McKenna!!! Plus a second chance romance with a hot scene on a bike!!! Oh, ya...while this man is slightly less uber, alpha than her other men...still loved him!

Bonnie says

I am pretty easy on erotic romance books. These are my escape, and as long as I find myself transported I am willing to overlook many things. This book was bad in so many ways that even I, with my low expectations, found little to like. I will list my 5 biggest issues.

1. The lead characters were terrible. Simon is an asshole of the highest order, and El is boring, weak, without pride, a terrible business person, and has no desire to know anything other than how to make good pies and please her man. I love baked goods and sex, but that alone does not make me a person worth learning about.
2. The sex was good. The characters were awful. Is there anything less the stuff of fantasy than people you don't like having great sex?
3. There seemed to be a message that empowered woman must flaunt their sexuality in the most obvious ways, and that women who don't walk around in corsets and Daisy Dukes are shriveled souls who are ignoring their inner strength. Yuck.
4. The language used during sexy times is really off-putting. I won't provide a lot of detail, but I will leave you with the two phrases that most squicked me out "girl juice" and "dick drool." 'Nuff said.
5. The secondary characters are laughable. Mousy employee, BMOOC who is a victim of his own act, defensive trailer park slut, deranged psychopathic pyromaniac, low-IQ evil henchmen, tight-ass rich lady political wife, corrupt sheriff. All these tropes and more. Yawn.

You don't want to read this, trust me.

Kim says

A boring story with a non-existent mystery. No build of tension around the villain's transparent intentions, which could have saved the fact that the reader knows who the villain is from the get-go, but the characters don't.

The book reads like it was written with a teenager's understanding of how 30-somethings act and speak (they speak of love like inexperienced teenagers; someone uses "Not" without any irony; the supposed town slut is called a "tramp" by several people), and the one-dimensional secondary characters who make up family and townspeople have 18th century values (oh noes: the unwed hero is staying in the heroine's home which has been converted to a B'n'B! Something untoward MUST be going on).

The hero can only articulate how sweet and beautiful the heroine is, and the BIG conflict between them is that the cliched hero isn't a "stickin' around" kinda guy. (But wait, then they have magic, condom-free sex, and he starts to feel differently)! That's when I quit.

Alpha male personality. I just wanted to give him a big hug. Ellen is the polar opposite...the shy, wealthy, good girl. It's one of my favorite dynamics in romance books. The depth of the characters is fairly thorough. There were a few points I thought could have been better explored, but for the most they had nice dimension. They had a powerful chemistry together, but were constantly fighting themselves over preconceptions, deservedness, and a host of other issues. Their relationship was very push-pull. I was rooting for them from the beginning.

The book - though I adored it - isn't for everyone. With such a strong, in-your-face sexuality throughout the entire story, there are a lot of people who won't care for it. There's nothing pretty or tame about the sex in the book. It's down and dirty and raw, but passionate at the same time. It's one of the things I loved most about the story. I've always wanted to read a romance book with a high level of eroticism but yet a complete romance. It's just not something you tend to find in the mainstream. Sex is more pretty and mild in those and more about the romance, which is fine most of the time. There's a lot of erotica on the 'net, but those are generally just gratuitous sex with no romance or just a smidge. So it was exciting to find a book with a bold sexuality and yet a wonderful romance to go with it. But with that said, like I stated previously, Return To Me won't appeal to everyone. If you like your sex on the vanilla side and sporadically occurring, then you'll hate the book so DON'T READ IT!, but if you like some chocolate with your sex you'll love it as much as much as I did.

So...fantastic book in my opinion. I can't read to go find more of McKenna's stories.
