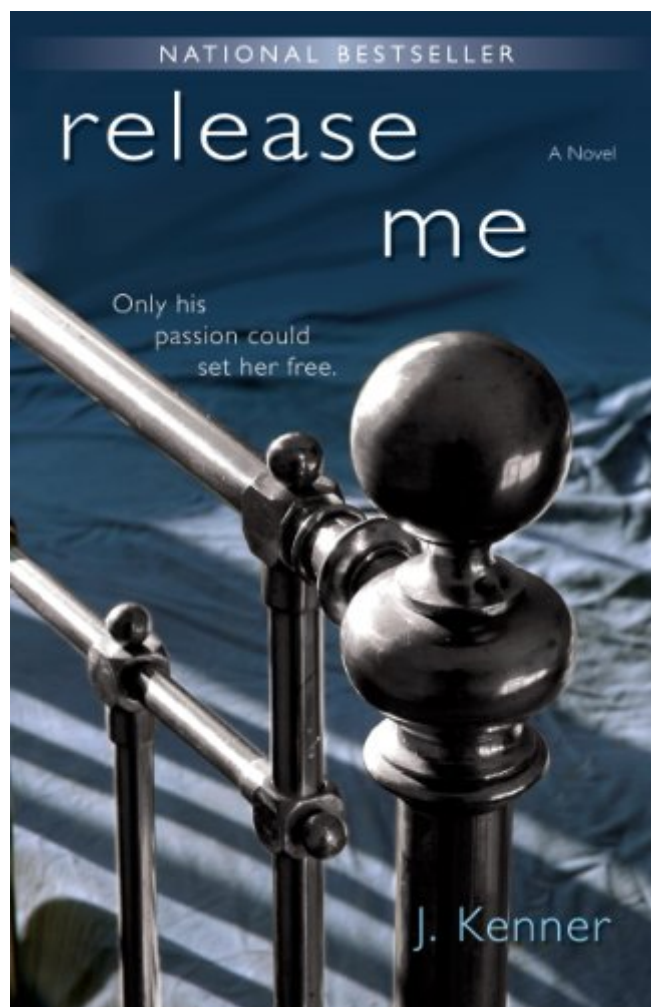


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Release Me (The Stark Trilogy, Book 1)



Synopsis

An emotionally charged romance between a powerful man who's never heard "no" and a fiery woman who says "yes" on her own terms. He was the one man I couldn't avoid. And the one man I couldn't resist. Damien Stark could have his way with any woman. He was sexy, confident, and commanding: Anything he wanted, he got. And what he wanted was me. Our attraction was unmistakable, almost beyond control, but as much as I ached to be his, I feared the pressures of his demands. Submitting to Damien meant I had to bare the darkest truth about my past--and risk breaking us apart. But Damien was haunted, too. And as our passion came to obsess us both, his secrets threatened to destroy him--and us--forever. NOTE: This edition includes excerpts from J. Kenner's Claim Me and Say My Name. Release Me is intended for mature audiences.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you are a fan of erotic novels with BDSM elements, then you are going to LOVE Release Me by J. Kenner. It is a well-executed, deliciously sensual romance between two emotionally wounded yet surprisingly well-adjusted protagonists. While there are some similarities to the Fifty Shades and

Crossfire series, *Release Me* is much less angsty and the characters and their relationship are MUCH more realistic. Nikki Fairchild and Damien Stark are wonderfully developed protagonists with dysfunctional pasts. Damien is a former tennis star turned bazillionaire entrepreneur. He is intense and domineering but he is also quite charming. Damien is a very private person who goes to great lengths to keep his personal life out of the limelight but he does reveal certain aspects of his past in order to maintain his relationship with Nikki. Nikki is a delightful breath of fresh air. She is a strong character that is self-sufficient and independent. While she does have submissive tendencies, Nikki is no shrinking violet. She stands up for herself and she does not allow her relationship with Damien to interfere with her career goals. Although the story takes place over just a few days, Nikki and Damien's relationship never feels forced or rushed. They take the time to get to know one another outside of the bedroom and there is not a creepy obsessive quality to their burgeoning relationship. The sexual relationship between Nikki and Damien is slow growing and full of exquisite anticipation. While Damien takes the dominant role he is willing to relinquish control to Nikki. The BDSM aspect is fairly light and consists of bondage, role playing, phone sex and spanking. *Release Me* by J. Kenner is an entertaining romance that is quite captivating.

I had a hard time trying to figure out how many stars to rate this book and after some thought I eventually decided on an one. This is the lowest I have ever scored any novel and here's why. To start the author takes a group of interesting characters and but does very little with them. There is neither depth nor growth for these characters. Whenever there is opportunity to show any sort of depth for these characters the author runs the other way. The side characters are all but forgotten due to Damien and Nikki's romance. In fact after the beginning they only ever make an appearance in the story to help with Nikki's increasing relationship with Damien. At some point we find out Nikki's two best friends (who have been there for her countless times) end up sleeping together even though one of them is currently engaged. Afterwards we hear nothing about them because Nikki doesn't want to be caught in the middle and instead chooses to put her focus on Damien. At the very least this makes her selfish and a bad friend for ignoring something that in so many ways is a big deal. Still even though this is annoying it is not why I gave only one star. Nikki and Damien's relationship (in my opinion it should be called a business transaction) begins when Nikki accepts Damien's proposal to do a nude painting for a million dollars. She stipulates that it must be done within a week so its fair to say the story takes place in about a week and a half. So we're clear Nikki sells herself to Damien and he makes sure that she knows he owns her. So as a reader I am supposed to be ok with two people suddenly falling in love in the course of a week given the way

the basis of their relationship. This I find annoying.

Nikki Fairchild is a recent business school graduate from Texas, now living in L. A. and working as an assistant for a successful businessman who is a rainmaker for technology innovators and he's a bit of a sleaze. Damien Stark is the head of a powerful business empire and educational foundation. When Nikki and Damien meet at a party, which is a business function for her, their first contact was emotionally charged and bizarre. The comparisons to the 50 Shades and Crossfire trilogies by E. L. James and Sylvia Day, respectively, are unfortunately true. I deliberately didn't read any of the reviews so I could form my own, unbiased opinion and still ended up with the same conclusion. At times, I thought of the main character as Eva, the heroine in Bared to You, since the first-person narrative was almost dead on to her. If I hadn't read these two series, I might have enjoyed this book more but there was nothing new or fresh here to keep me engaged or invested in Nikki and Damien. Putting aside the likeness to the other trilogies (and that's difficult to do), I at first found Nikki to be a potentially interesting character. She's a former participant in the beauty pageant circuit who escaped her mother's insensitive clutches to pursue her educational goals and is pretty smart in her own right. Nikki has lofty goals and is right thinking in her approach to achieving them. This all seems to fall apart when she meets Damien at the party and from there on out she seems to be in a lust-filled haze anytime she's around him. Damien was a former tennis star who was also (surprise) damaged as a young child and has transformed into a brilliant, mega-rich, beautiful, controlling business mogul.

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