



## A Casual Weekend Thing

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Doug Heavy Runner left the life of an openly gay Miami police officer and returned to his home on the Salish-Kootenai Indian Reservation when his mother got sick. In the two years since she passed, he's carved out an empty life as a small-town deputy, relying on out-of-town one-night stands to keep him sane. Then he meets Detective Christopher Hayes, and they share a wild night so incredible Doug breaks his own rule and allows a one-night stand to grow into a weekend of amazing sex.

When Christopher travels from San Diego to Montana to deal with his abusive brother's suicide, he doesn't expect to find the man he spent the weekend with to be handling his brother's case. He certainly doesn't mind spending more time with Doug—but then an arsonist destroys the house Christopher inherited from his brother, and Christopher and Doug discover they are the primary suspects.

As they investigate, they discover Christopher's dead brother has set them on the trail of a psychotic pedophile who will stop at nothing to silence his last victim. However, the search for the victim goes horribly wrong, leaving Doug hospitalized and Christopher at the mercy of the killer....

## **A Casual Weekend Thing Details**

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## From Reader Review A Casual Weekend Thing for online ebook

### **Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says**

#### **I always wanted to know what a robot would sound like narrating M/M romance. Now I know.**

Ugh, this audiobook was not a strong one. While the narrator had a broad range of voices, they were all sort of... off. He gave each character a grating voice, and his narration of Christopher was stilted and odd. While it wasn't the worst audiobook that I've listened to (cough, cough The Fall), I had a difficult time getting into the story because of the reading voice.

Now, I have to say, when I heard this was a debut book from this author, I was very impressed. **It is a mature, slow-burn romance with some surprising twists and with two men that have more baggage than Samsonite.** I loved the diversity of the characters (I have only read a few Native American M/Ms, the others being by Sarah Black) and the way things seem to develop organically between the two MCs. Also the mystery... wow, really well done. I'm not a mystery reader but this mystery kept me guessing.

I did have a few issues with this book that kept it from being a "love" (not including that terrible narration... can you tell that I hated it??). This book tends to get caught up in the details. Descriptions tend to be overlong and I often found parts of this book to be slow moving. I think it could have been cut down by 50 pages or so and it would have made a tighter story.

I also think it tried to do a little too much. There were a lot of jumbled issues (childhood sexual abuse (<--- trigger warning), rape, domestic violence, trust issues, abandonment, PTSD, religious themes, and my least favorite (view spoiler)... the list goes on and on), and when you are combining that with a burgeoning romance, a mystery, and a police procedural, it ended up feeling a little cluttered. Also, these guys were too dense and non-communicative about their feelings for each other for my liking.

I think if the narration had been stronger I would have liked this a bit more, but it was still a pretty impressive book. I think it is a must-read for angst, mystery lovers who want something a little slower paced and different.

\*\*Copy provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review\*\*

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### **Line says**

Price drop at amazon.com right now: <https://smile.amazon.com/Casual-Weeke...>

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### **Mandapanda says**

Enjoyable m/m romance/mystery. The author really takes her time building up these characters who are both a bit fucked up. Detective Christopher Hayes is recovering from a shooting when he finds out that his brother (a convicted pedophile who he hasn't had contact with in 20 years) has committed suicide. On his way to Montana to sort out the mess he hooks up with a gorgeous man (Doug) in a gay bar. Later he's surprised to find Doug is the officer in charge of his brother's case. Chris has a lot of other stuff going on in his life. He suffers from ADD, he's been attracted to his straight man-whore partner, Ray, for several years, and he's addicted to ultra-marathons, a result of being figuratively 'on-the-run' from his brother since he abused him as a child. He's also dealing with the fact that his injury might mean the end of his detective career.

Police Officer Doug Heavy Runner (I love the traditional American Indian names - so poetic) has reluctantly returned to his home town to care for his sick mother, despite the local prejudice against Indians on the nearby reserve. He's closeted and has been through some pretty abusive situations when he was working undercover for the Miami PD. He's a remote area rescue officer and he finds Peter's body and works with Chris and the FBI to solve the case.

There's so much going on with these two MC's. Almost too much. I like that the story was layered and complex but I'm not sure if the relationship dynamics totally worked. I don't know if all the elements of their back-stories and personality traits felt real, or were entirely necessary, or even were completely resolved at the end. And there was more telling than showing with the romance, although it is still a fairly solid romance. I liked them together and their sex scenes were good.

I was actually impressed with the villains the author created. Peter was obviously a horrible character but his situation was complex enough to make him better than your average one dimensional baddie. The other villain in the piece was not clear at all. I thought it was someone else for a long time. I enjoyed the mystery and suspense and when I did actually realise who it was it was a bit nerve-wracking!

For the most part the author keeps her characters acting professionally and sensibly but there were two or three times when things they did lacked credibility. I was frustrated by the female character. Why did she have to be a psycho bitch? She's a well educated ambitious woman (the local coroner) and it didn't feel realistic that she'd be running around like a screaming fishwife.

What was the whole thing with Ray? I found it confusing. Unless the author was setting him up for a story of his own which I would be totally on board with. In some ways the dynamic between Chris and Ray confused my loyalties and connection with Doug as the love interest. I'm not saying it was a love triangle. Chris is definitely in love with Doug and not Ray. But it just felt weird and maybe even fake and I don't think it added anything to the story. Although I actually liked Ray and his unrepentant whoring ways, loyalty, and quick humour.

The ending is open in some respects (there is a HEA). But I really get the feeling that the author must have some plans for these characters. I could really read more about Chris and Doug, find out where they decide to live and what careers they choose. Maybe another murder mystery to solve together because the author is good at this crime stuff. Plus Ray... he's still bugging me. Please write a book about him.

So it's not a perfect book for me but it's still an enjoyable read by a promising new author. As usual I'm impressed with DSP's commitment to finding new authors and publishing novel length fiction. I'd have nothing to read without them!

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## **Andrea (Catsos Person) is a Compulsive eBook Hoarder says**

Second read, dates above for MMRG Ultimate Challenge February 1, 2017 - January 31, 2018,

February/March Bonus "State" Challenge, 1st trip, Montana

First read May 8, 2015 - May 12, 2015

I love, loved, loved this book!!! Can you tell I loved this book?

The two MCs were not that emotional or aaangsty as one can find with some MM MCs as far as Doug and Christopher were concerned.

They were low-key with each other because they kept reiterating that their association was casual recreational hot sex (this is my description, not theirs!). But they kept getting together, and then they talked about their painful pasts and formed a connection and love "sneaked up on them," as it sometimes is wont to do.

After rejecting an "offer" from a man whom he thought was straight, Christopher Hayes travels to Montana from San Diego as next of kin and heir to his loser ex-con brother whom he has not seen or spoken to in a very, very long time. There he meets tall, dark and handsome Doug Heavy Runner in a city gay bar the night before he needs to go and identify his big bros body. Hawt sex ensues.

Little does Doug, a county deputy sheriff, know that The blue eyed blond hottie is the next of kin for his most recent case.

But after they meet the next day when Christopher shows up too late at the coroner's office (it's closed) after getting hopelessly lost to ID the body where Doug is waiting, they don't curtail the Hawt sex. They keep seeing each other on the sneak tip.

Although Christopher is out at work in Cali, Doug is deeply closeted.

They share some of their issues and baggage (they each have enough of those for two sets of luggage).

What's cool, is that they both have issues, but for most of the book, they aren't aaangsty with each other. They're very chill with each other. They talk about themselves and their pasts.

Doug shared how he isn't accepted by his white co-workers (he's half native, but looks more native than white) at the sheriffs dept where he works and he is too white to be accepted by the other natives in his community in Montana. But there is more that he hasn't told Christopher about a past abusive relationship under which he is still living with the effects.

Christopher shares about some of the abuse he suffered as a child and about his dead deadbeat brother and how he is afraid that he may have to give up his job as a homicide detective with the San Diego police force because he isn't healing properly from a gun-shot wound by a suspect.

The author makes an excellent job of establishing a connection between these two hotties in a low-key way that I quite liked. No overwrought emotions or dramatics in the interpersonal relations between the two MCs

for a nice change of pace.

A very relaxing read.

Oh yeah, and the crime investigation was very compelling but very dark. Some individuals who have trigger issues may have a problem.

Otherwise, I highly recommend it!

This story ends with a HFN rather than a HEA. Ok by me because Fortunately, there are two more books in the series. Book 3 focuses on Doug and Christopher, but book 2 looks as if it will be a good read as well as it focuses on a romance between two characters that played a minor role in book 1.

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## **Vishous says**

### **buddy read with Glam <3**

I loved lots of things, I didn't love that much the writing style because all the time I had a feeling like something is missing. And by that I don't mean that something is missing to the story. Do I make any sense? I don't, don't I?

I'll try my best to express my feelings step by step :)

## **THE CHARACTERS**

Surprisingly I liked them all. Even the "bad" ones.

When I started reading this book I actually thought the lovestory is between Ray and Chris and that is because I forgot what I read in a review or the blurb and when I get my hands on the book to start reading I don't check again. Oh God how I wanted Ray and Chris together, I wanted that because everytime I see male gay partners in P.D. I think to myself "please let this be another Ty&Zane couple I can be obsessed about" ...but no....

### **Chris**

I loved him a lot! As a character I think he was perfect. There isn't one thing I would change about him. The way he handled every situation, the way he was open about himself... In the beginning I wanted to kill Ray for how he made him feel but later I thought how Doug and Chris are perfect for each other.

### **Doug**

When I first saw a chapter starting with Doug I was like "who the f\*ck is this man?", and yes then I reread blurb and someones review and I was so disappointed and so sad because I so wanted straight Ray to let Chris make him switch the teams.

Yes I loved Doug too, I tell you I really loved all the characters  
:D

But for someone with one specific problem in his past that made him unsure in one position, he sure did

change his mind and relax very fast when Chris put him in that position. And that is pretty much the only thing I had trouble with when it comes to Doug.

Both Doug and Chris had secrets in their past that they didn't want to share to each other completely. But as both being cops they made some assumptions of each others pasts and traumas and they never pushed for the other one to tell.

### **Ray**

Oh you stupid idiot! How could you be so stupid?! How could you do that?!?! Even though you explained yourself in the end I still think you were an idiot and manwhore as usual. I can not believe you were so stupid!?! that was not the way that was supposed to happen!

But I forgive you because I love you deeply and I think you are perfect and I would give anything to read your book and you are the only reason I am giving this one more star...

### **THE STORY**

well I kinda had a feeling who was a bad guy, so I was not that much surprised, but never the less I really enjoyed the story. The whole case, the characters, their pasts, their casual weekend becoming something more, how they had no idea they will see each other again and boom the next day they are both on Chris's brother case. I really loved it all.

when that casual weekend started I had a feeling like I was reading only sex scenes page after page...

*"You need a minute?"*

*"I do. Watching your cock jump as you talked about feeling my come leaking out of your ass was nearly enough to finish me by itself. Hearing you scream did the trick."*

.... but later it did get on the case again and I must admit I wanted that. I really wouldn't mind if there was only one sex scene in this story because I loved all the characters.

The only thing I had trouble with was the writing style. I don't know why but I just had a feeling like sth is missing all the time whenever I read any sentence. In total I loved the story, but I don't know.... I just didn't connect to the writing style that much. But I am not gonna make that affect my rating because I repeat, for the 100th time probably, I enjoyed this story a lot.

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### **Susan65 says**

This is one of the most well written MM stories I've read in a long time.

Christopher Hayes is a semi-closeted San Diego detective whose past is slowly revealed, and it explains who he is and why he does what he does throughout the story. His straight best friend and partner on the force is Ray Delgado. Christopher has crushed on Ray for years, but knowing that nothing will ever come of it, he never acts on his feelings. But Ray has secrets of his own and they are slowly revealed as well.

A shocking phone call, following on the heels of being shot on the job, adds tremendous strain to Christopher's already stressed out life. Add in one of Ray's unexpected and surprising secrets pushes Christopher further over the edge and he takes off without saying a word as to where he is going or when he will return.

Doug Heavy Runner is a closeted Native American detective in a small Montana town who doesn't seem to fit in either the white or Indian world. He is alone and lonely, but puts on a brave face and does his job exceptionally well. Being on the Search and Rescue team, Doug is the one who is called to recover a body found hanging off a cliff. The man apparently committed suicide, but the who, what, why and how are the mystery that is the heart of this story...and the reason Christopher and Doug meet.

The attraction between Christopher and Doug is immediate. But knowing that they live in different states and that Christopher's time in Montana is finite, they both understand and agree that what they have is just "a casual weekend thing". The sex between these guys is smoking hot and they easily fall into a pattern of what they consider "one night stands" without any pressure or strings attached.

But of course nothing is that simple, not the growing relationship between the two when Christopher's weekend is forced to extend into weeks instead of days, not when they realize that Doug's mystery suicide is connected to Christopher, and not when both of their pasts come back to haunt them.

The ending is what I would consider a HFN with a strong probability of a HEA. I would not be surprised to see Doug and Christopher's story continued in a sequel...as a matter of fact I would welcome it.

Extended review can be found at <http://heartsonfirereviews.com/>

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### **Natasha says**

Cute book.

Few spoilers, maybe.

I enjoyed it a lot at the beginning, but I'm not sure if it was worthwhile in the end.

There was a lot. I felt like this book had so many words for content that didn't need it. Maybe could've done with 50 fewer pages.

Liked Christopher. Didn't really care for Doug. Didn't really care for the insta-love happening. After 3 weeks of knowing each other, 1 of which Christopher is hospitalized and unconscious, the **L-bomb** is dropped. Ray turned out to be my favorite, at least he was funny.

The whole Brittany situation was stupid. She didn't need to be in this book. She didn't add any value to the story and when she finally finds out that Doug is gay, suddenly she isn't a psychotic bitch anymore? Okay.

The story kind of overlooks the fact that Christopher pines over his partner for four years, finds his doppelganger and writes it off as "a thing for brunettes" and everyone let's that shit go. Natasha can smell some deep rooted problems a mile away.

Oh also, everyone in this book (Ray excluded) seemed to be a fairly incompetent form of police officer (feeb's included) because the clues that lead to the actual villain were completely overlooked. I'm not saying I'm a genius for figuring out who the real culprit was, but honest to god, if the last words of a dying kid make it pretty fucking clear, maybe you're a shit detective.

Just sayin'.

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### **Smith Barney says**

**Great writer..well-paced..sexy minor crime thriller that's dialogue-driven and character fleshed.** But-I reeeeeeee..really wanted Ray and Christopher to hook up..as the chemistry between them was sooo there..and I totally failed to feel it between him and Doug..and unfortunately this affected my rating and inspiration for a man-loving gif.

**P.S.** Oh yeah and I'm so f'ing sick of these regurgitated cover dudes. We need like some law enacted preventing the same cover photos from being used more than once. It's really stupid.

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### **Baba says**

**4 stars.\*\*\*\*Review completed May 30, 2013**

Christopher Hayes is a homicide detective with the San Diego police department and currently off duty. His partner, Ray Delgado, saved him when he'd been severely wounded while chasing down a criminal. The bullet had pierced his right shoulder and it looks like it caused nerve damage as well since three fingers of Christopher's right hand are totally numb. As long as he won't regain a complete functionality of his right hand he can't go back on duty. Besides, Chris has a hard time to warm up to the prospect of a possible desk job, let alone taking early retirement on disability. Chris needs to talk to his boss Captain Jenkins, telling him about his predicament. Once there though, Jenkins has something else on his mind. He wants Christopher to call sheriff Brubaker in Elkin, Montana. Christopher is shocked when he hears that his brother has committed suicide in Lone Pine State Park. Peter Hayes's body has been recovered by Doug Heavy Runner. Doug is in charge of the backcountry search-and-rescue team in Baker County, and he is also the only member of the Baker County Sheriff's Department who isn't white. He is a Native American. Note to readers: Baba is a sucker for NA heroes.

Chris hasn't seen his older brother for two decades and when sheriff Brubaker is telling him about his suicide an old and long buried rage consumed him again. He doesn't want to feel anything because Peter wasn't worth mourning. After all, he'd been a pedophile and made Christopher's childhood a living hell. Peter is the reason why Christopher became a cop. He always felt guilty and wanted to stop his brother.

***"No," he managed calmly. "I'll have to contact someone to make arrangements for his disposition."***

In the end, though, Christopher has to fly to Montana to "take care" of his brother's body. The nearest big airport is in Missoula and when he arrived there it was too late to drive to Elkin. He decides to spend some time at a gay bar. He hooks up with an attractive dark haired man, and they are spending the weekend together. Finally, when he arrives at the Baker County Coroner's Office he is surprised to see his weekend lover again. It's Doug. It was supposed to be *A Casual Weekend Thing*, however, neither of them believed it would develop into something deeper and more serious. Aside from their impending relationship, Peter's mysterious suicide is the beginning of a complex and ugly case involving (view spoiler)

*"Mortens," said Christopher, before he could think better of it. "Cremation."*  
*Liedes nodded. "I'll give them a call. Are you planning on interring the ashes, or scattering them?"*

*Throwing Peter's ashes in the trash probably counted as scattering. "Definitely scattering."*

*"Yeah, I see what you mean now. I'm way sexier."*

*"Like hell, Delgado. He's..." "Christopher tried to look innocent. "He's..."*

*"I don't know." Delgado turned his head sideways. "He's awfully butch, isn't he? You got to admit I'm prettier."*

*"He is awfully butch," Christopher agreed. "And he's actually a nice guy. I don't have to guess at how he's going to stab me in the back every time he gets bored."*

*"Ouch. I'm not that bad, am I?"*

*"Yes. And he's..." Christopher could only smile.*

*"You've got it bad, Hayes. Go get dressed, dipshit."*

*"I'm gay."*

*"You can't be gay." She laughed nervously. "No. You can't be." We've had sex, Doug! Last time I checked I didn't have a penis!"*

*(...)*

*„You...“ She sat down at the table and took a long sip from her own coffee. "Are you sure?"*

*"Yes."*

*"But you don't act gay."*

*Doug didn't want to roll his eyes, but he couldn't help it. "You know, leather pants and flamboyant mannerisms aren't really a requirement for the label."*

Christopher is running like crazy for hours. Though there's more to it than staying in shape and being able to finish long distance marathons; running is perfect to clear his head, and there is a connection to his past. Since (view spoiler) Christopher could never really stop. He is "outrunning" his bad memories and the (view spoiler)

**Montana**

*"Doug rolled his eyes. "We've got these newfangled things up here called maps. They come in a big book called an atlas. It's a paper version of this"--he held up the GPS--"except that it has the roads labeled and color-coded, and it never needs to be recharged. It's terribly helpful, even if it can't give you turn-by-turn directions. Do you have any idea how dangerous it can be to get lost up here?"*

*"Your only family just died. I think I can forgive a little baggage."*

*Christopher turned in Doug's grasp and looped his arms around Doug's neck. "Doug, I don't have a little baggage. I have an entire set of matched and monogrammed luggage. Just because I don't whine about it doesn't mean it isn't there."*

### **Huelga Bird**

Overall I was very pleasantly surprised by *A Casual Weekend Thing*. It's an engagingly written story and absolutely worth reading. Great characters, a really intriguing and well-thought-out plot, good and witty dialogue, a nice little dose of humor, and sexy men lovin' are the recipe to hold my interest. The cast of secondary characters enhanced the story in a major way and the star among those protagonists was Ray Delgado. He is a good-looking and sexy guy with a very smart mouth. Yum! I hope the author is going to write his story. There is quite a bit going on in *A Casual Weekend Thing* but it never felt overladen and the plot was easy to follow. There is no denying it, Peter was a sick bastard and yet he deserved some credit because he knew what his suicide would accomplish. He jogged his brother's memory and put him on the right path.

**My main issue** was the first sex scene. Why Doug (view spoiler) I just couldn't buy it.

#### **Other minor quibbles**

I wanted more background information about Doug's assignment in Miami. Also, I'd've liked to see them talk MORE about their pasts coz there was so much meat to the bone and all I got was the bare bone (mostly). After all, we all know the saying '*A problem shared is a problem halved*'. As far as I can judge Doug's sexual issues came across as too glossed over. At 90 % Doug did something stupid, didn't you, Dougie? ;-) And last but not least, the ILYs at the end as well as the ending itself were too rushed and felt a bit anticlimactic. Besides, I wanted to see them a few months down the road, and I believe that an epilogue would have wrapped up their story perfectly.

While the ending was happy it was more a HFN not a real HEA which was perfectly all right considering their short "relationship".

I'm glad I gave this story a shot, and I'm looking forward to reading more by A.J. Thomas.

Recommended read.

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## **Ilhem says**

2,5 stars

I'm going to be a spoilsport but despite being ambitious, *A Casual Weekend Thing* wasn't more than an average read for me.

It seems to me that the author aimed at something perhaps not complex but rich. We have here many, too many plot lines, all revolving around the MCs and their hook up that lasts more than a weekend due to circumstances; plot lines revolving around the casual thing to finally join in the end in a big resolution. It's a great plan (if I read it correctly) and it had the potential for a great book. Or a series.

Cops, a partnership with sexy potential, a possible triangle, a mystery that deals with the difficult topic of pedophilia, survivors, interculturality, a painful brotherly relationship, grief, guilt, loneliness.....And a growing romance.

The first half of the book bored me. It is almost exclusively dedicated to the hook up and nothing much happens except sex. I can appreciate hot, messy sex but their reactions were illogical and everything was already set : they feel something special but no no no, it can only be a casual thing and we didn't move from this point. The scenes were then very repetitive to me and didn't bring anything to the story's development, nor to the characterization, nor to the growing romance, until finally the L word was spurted toward the end. As for the hotness, tough cops behaving repeatedly like blushing maidens doesn't turn me on.

I perked up when the mystery picked up and I liked the second part better but there were again way too many WTF moments and shortcomings to really enjoy it..

Overall, it felt as if the author had this big plan, and conflicts resolved themselves out of the blue, or people acted illogically, or we were given details that were irrelevant, because everything had to fit in and everything had to go according to the initial plan. It felt shematized, forced and/or far-fetched.

I probably would have overlooked many flaws if I had been emotionally involved in the story but I wasn't, my heart flat lined all along.

I'm willing to plead guilty for numbness and lack of focus but then again, it's the chicken-and-egg situation.

It was correctly written though; I liked this idea of Christopher, always ready to bolt, always running, I liked Ray, I appreciated that the author handled drama with restraint.

To sum it up, I liked the plan but none of the plot lines was sufficiently nor satisfactorily developed, least of all resolved.

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## **Kaje Harper says**

4.5 stars. I really liked this story about two cops, complicated guys with difficult pasts, who find each other over the course of a mystery involving the suicide of one man's brother. The characters are interesting, the relationship complex, and the mystery intense, (almost too much so at the end).

Christopher had a very tangled relationship with his brother, including a moment of extreme betrayal that separated them for over a decade. His brother, Peter, went through a cycle of prison and sex-offenses, and is now dead, leaving Christopher to deal with the aftermath. When he reluctantly travels to do so, he finds that the cop in charge is Doug, the man he just had a hot no-strings weekend with. And the aftermath of Peter's life includes arson and abuse.

Doug is half Salish Native American, and he left a job on the Miami-Dade force to come home to rural Montana when his mother was dying. He walks a difficult tightrope between white and Native worlds, serving outside the reservation but close enough that he sometimes bears the full brunt of the local prejudices. He had an abusive past relationship in Miami, and is still dealing with the reflexes and nightmares from that. On a rare weekend cruising, he met Christopher who pushes all his "like" buttons. From their first night together, he wants more. But given the circumstances, more than a few days of hot sex seem unlikely.

Christopher was in love with his straight partner for years, until that got messed up with one unexpected kiss. Doug looks a lot like his partner, and he's not sure where this new, intense attraction comes from, or is going. And the death of his brother is tearing open a lot of old wounds. But both men are cops at heart, and the mystery Peter left behind is one they are determined to solve.

I definitely enjoyed this book, including the character of Christopher's partner, who plays a minor role but adds complexity and banter to the mix. The mystery involves a pedophile, so readers should be aware. The role of Doug's ethnicity to me was well handled, neither ignored nor romanticized, nor overemphasized. The action went just slightly over my expectations at the end, although in the process, it set up some of the most fun parts of the book, as Doug and Christopher's partner meet. The ending is HFN, and I will eagerly snap up a sequel if it comes out.

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### **Trisha Harrington says**

This is definitely what I like to read when it comes to thrillers. The story was engaging and we had an actual romance plot going on, not just the crime solving aspect of the plot. The book was written by a new author and she did an incredible job.

I loved Chris and Doug, they were the perfect couple for the book. I loved their chemistry and the overall connection they had. Although this is insta-love, it didn't really feel like it. I'm not bothered either way, but for some, that can be a major turn off when it comes to a book. I will say, the relationship went at the right pace for the book. It didn't all bombard people at once, but it didn't take a long time for something to happen either.

This book is not a light and easy read. For me, that's a good thing. I like darker stuff. Fluffy is good, and I do enjoy reading the nice and easy reads. But sometimes I just crave something that has a darker twist. A Casual Weekend Thing fit the bill. You can see from the genre's that the book deals with some sort of abuse. It's also a thriller, so those two things should be pretty fair warnings for a reader.

I didn't figure out everything beforehand. So, the book kept me guessing the whole time. I like that in a book, especially when it's not as simple as finding the criminal and throwing them in jail. This book takes the reader on a journey. And I found myself really getting into the book. When you know who the killer is in a book, it can be frustrating, so I do prefer not knowing. But I also like knowing (without being told) who the

killer is. I don't like not knowing. Surprisingly, it didn't bother me that I really had to keep guessing.

The secondary characters are well written and integral to the story. Ray, Chris' partner, pissed me off sometimes. But in the end, I kinda liked the guy... Maybe... Eh, he was funny. I don't think I love him yet, though.

I highly recommend this book for fans of a good mystery/thriller with a romance plot. It's not a light story, but for fans of the genre's, it is a must read.

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### **Susan says**

For all intents and purposes, this should book should rank among my favorites. It has cops. It has a lot of San Diego references (my hometown). It has a small town element. Some drama. Some hotness. Money, right?

Erm...kinda?

I liked parts of this book a lot. I liked the two MC's. Christopher, the injured San Diego cop who's forced to small-town Montana to take care of family drama from the past, is broken but strong, sad but certain...and there's a power but a softness to him. He's sympathetic...and when we find out some of the dark parts of his youth...you can't help but want him to be ok.

Doug Heavy Runner is a Native American cop forced back to the small town near his tribe's reservation when his mother falls ill. He is in a nowhere job and doesn't quite fit in anywhere. He's got a heart of gold and is sexy sexy sexy.

This combination works...most of the time. And there's decent chemistry.

The story itself takes the reader into some really dark and yucky places and the mystery element was actually quite fascinating.

The only problem is, the book, inexplicably...bored me. I mean there was a 5 page stretch where the author over-details the history of San Diego Mexican gang signs. And I kept skimming...and skimming...and skimming...to get to the point of it all. There was one...but it was actually fairly minor.

And then there's the "casual weekend thing" thing. See...the two MC's hookup for a casual weekend thing. And when they run into each other, they decided to have another casual weekend thing. And when they tell other people about it, they make sure you know it's a casual weekend thing. And then there's the whole realization that it's not just a casual weekend thing. But neither wants to admit it's more than a casual weekend thing. SEE WHERE I'M GOING WITH THIS? We GET it! It's the title of the book. It's the foundation of what it's built on. You don't have to actually use the same words...over...and over again. (\*rant done\*)

And the whole partner-who-I-have-a-crush-on-who-may-or-may-not-be-gay thing was just a throwaway story bit...in my opinion.

Anywhooo...it was a decent enough read...you know...if you're looking for a casual weekend thing.

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### **Jenn says**

This was a very enjoyable mystery and romance book from an author I've never read before. There's a lot going on in the past with both of the main characters, as well as racial tensions in a small town, murder, abuse, a potential love triangle, familial problems, and all the turmoil of emotions that come from these events.

San Diego Detective Christopher Hayes is having a rough time recovering from a gunshot wound to his shoulder after chasing a criminal with the partner he believes he's been in love with for four years, Detective Ray Delgado. He receives the news that his brother he hasn't seen in 12 years has committed suicide in Montana, and on top of that, when he arrives at Ray's apartment to inform him he's leaving to attend to matters, he stumbles on his supposedly straight partner with a male one night stand. Needing the recovery time both from his injury and from the confusion and anger at Ray, he heads to Missoula, Montana thinking he'll cremate his brother's remains quickly and go from there.

Stopping along the way in a small town four hours away from Missoula, Christopher meets Doug Heavy Runner, a local law officer in Missoula that discovered Christopher's dead brother and is in charge of his brother's case. The sexual chemistry between these two men is both strong and realistic. They hook-up repeatedly in Christopher's hotel room, and later at Doug's ranch in Missoula. The author takes time to really build their relationship and growing attraction outside of bedroom activities. Both men suffer from painful pasts. Christopher from his own late brother, who was a pedophile, and his foster father that looked after his brother and himself as children. He has ADD and runs ultra-marathons, as a way to free his headspace, and these aspects show the reader how he's been on the run ever since he was a child. He's fled his family, his abuse, and sought a life that bettered himself and his community. Doug also had an abusive relationship, except it was with his boyfriend and he frequently has nightmares and panic attacks. I thought the way the author wrote ADD, the need to flee feelings, the guilt and shame, and the panic attacks were extremely authentic and never felt as if I was reading some case study.

I thought the story really grew during their moments at Doug's ranch. They discovered things about their pasts, their interests, family aspects, job prospects, and ideas for the future. There is a good bit of sex in the story, which makes sense because of the whole idea that neither planned on moving their fling into relationship territory. They both feel they have too much to overcome from Christopher needing to return to San Diego, from Doug still being in the closet, their pasts, Christopher's feelings for Ray, and all of the other relationship hurdles.

I really enjoyed the mystery element, too. The author initially provided numerous suspects or small hints here and there, and I loved the gang tags and other clues. The interculturality weaved throughout the novel was also very well-written, and I was so happy for both Native American and Hispanic characters. The topics involved in the crimes were tough, but I still thought it never became overwhelming or dark to overshadow the romance or even the humor. I did think two-thirds of the way in the mystery lost a bit of steam, as the villain became very obvious, and the tension as to the outcome started to slag.

I'm also just going to say it: Ray was my favorite character. I felt torn at times because so much of the book I actually wanted Christopher to start a relationship with Ray, even though I totally felt Doug was an amazing man for Christopher. Ray sleeps around, is cocky and has swagger, and is flat-out hysterical with his interactions with any other character, especially the bickering with Doug. I didn't really buy that Christopher could claim to be completely in love with Ray for four years, meet Ray's doppelganger (Doug), and in two weeks' time say that he wasn't in love with Ray, and that he was now completely in love with Doug. But I desperately need Ray's story. I so hope we get a second book with him finding his own love, someone that can go toe-to-toe with him, and to think of all that sexual chemistry makes me happy.

The story ends with a HFN for Doug and Christopher and I was very happy to read that the author didn't give them an easy fix. In the end, they knew they'd need to take things slow, figure out living situations, jobs, and much more. I hope we read more from them, as side characters in (hopefully) Ray's story! Overall, an enjoyable mystery with tons of humor, romance, and interesting characters. Recommend.

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### **Ezinwanyi says**

This book was suspenseful. I knew there would be a HEA/HFN, but unraveling the mystery kept me glued to my kindle.

Detective Christopher Hayes of the San Diego PD was recovering from a gunshot wound when he got news that his brother was dead. As the next of kin, Hayes travelled to Montana to make the necessary arrangements to bury his brother. There he meets a local officer named Doug Heavy Runner, and the two of them connected immediately. The only problem was that Heavy Runner is still in the closet as Elkins, Montana is such a small community AND Heavy Runner felt like his Native American heritage was a big enough battle to fight, without adding on homosexuality.

When the investigation into death of Hayes' brother revealed issues of pedophilia and murder, the detective had to stick around, and ended up getting more involved with Heavy Runner. As the past began to come to light, a casual weekend fling turned into more.

This was a good mystery. It was dark and gritty, but it wasn't predictable. The optimist in me kept hoping for some happier resolution, but the author kept it real and authentic. It was a good blend of a love story and a good thriller. I enjoyed the writing. It wasn't sappy, but it still made me smile at certain parts. I wished the author gave us a little more concerning Hayes' older brother AND Heavy Runner's past. He never quite discussed it with Hayes, so I suspect there will be a sequel in this story. I certainly hope so as I was fascinated by the story in this novel.

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