



## Mr. Hotshot CEO

*Jackie Lau*

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## Mr. Hotshot CEO Jackie Lau

As CEO of Fong Investments, I'm a busy man. In fact, my family claims I'm an obsessive workaholic, and when they force me to take two weeks off, I have no idea what to do with myself.

While brooding over an espresso, I meet Courtney Kwan, a biomedical researcher who savors the little things in life. And, suddenly, an idea strikes me—I will pay this woman to teach me how to enjoy my vacation from work.

Soon, I find myself doing crazy things like baking cookies, reading for pleasure, buying a phallic cactus, and falling in love. But Courtney is dealing with some serious issues of her own, and I fear that when I return to work, I won't be able to give her what she needs, and I'll lose her forever...

## Mr. Hotshot CEO Details

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# From Reader Review Mr. Hotshot CEO for online ebook

## Natalie says

Really enjoyed this one. I found myself laughing a lot with this one too. There were so many funny scenes whenever Julian's brother Vince was present. Loved the progression of Courtney and Julian's relationship.

While there were lots of scenes that made me chuckle the book does deal with the serious topic of Courtney's depression. There's no love curing depression in this, and after Julian screws up he does understand that Courtney's depression isn't something he can fix.

Also there's a lot of yummy food described in here. Julian in his forced two weeks off learns to enjoy life, and embraces cooking and is infuriatingly good at it! As he is with everything lol

So I enjoyed this and i loved how close Courtney is with Naomi and we get some more sister bonding in this and get to see Julian with his brothers too. I hope Vince and Cedric get books, they intrigue me. Looking forward to more books from Jackie!

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## Em says

OH MY GOD!!! Jackie Lau hurts me so nicely thank u, Jackie! Julian and Courtney are so freaking adorable and their courtship and progression is so lovely to read.

Representation: Chinese heroine / Chinese hero!!!! Depressed heroine.

Tropes: overworked CEO, pretty woman but like,,,, no prostitution,,,

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## Darcy says

This one charmed me from page one. First off it was Julian with his uptight ways and crazy family. Then there was Courtney, who reveled in the simple pleasures of life. I loved that Julian hired Courtney to help him find fun and how Julian's family kept stopping by. You knew that lines would be crossed between Julian and Courtney and quite frankly I was cheering for it to happen. As it happened these two just got cuter.

When Courtney's issues popped up I wanted to help in any way that I could, was glad that Courtney was strong enough to talk to Julian about things. I hated how things went from here, how Courtney let this horrible thing win, glad when Julian didn't listen to Courtney, but did it in a good way. It made the ending so great!

On a side note, Po po was my favorite character, loved how she let everyone know what she wanted and crouched it by "I'm 89/90 years old and will die soon." Whatever it takes to get what you want!!

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## **Lisa says**

### **Also on Romances Ever After.**

Mr. Hotshot CEO is my first Jackie Lau book and oh my god, why is it so hard to review a book that you love? Jackie's writing is so easy to follow, the story flowed seamlessly... I have no idea what to say about this book because I love it too much. It pains me that I can't put my feelings into words and do this book justice but I shall try in this post.

I was pretty much charmed with Julian Fong from the start. He's different from the CEO heroes I've read about--he isn't an alpha-hole, for one. In fact, he is pretty much a normal guy who just happens to be a workaholic. It wasn't until I read Mr. Hotshot CEO that I realized how much I've wanted a normal CEO, so this book is fresh air for me. Julian's kind, respectful, smart (he speaks five languages fluently, what even the fuck) and \*gasps\* sexy too?

And rich, don't forget the rich part, Lisa.

Can somebody yell "husband material"?

I loved Courtney Kwan immediately when I met her, too. There is a quiet intensity to her that I like, and I'm fascinated by her ability to live in the moment and savour little things. Her thought process re: her depression is quite hard to read. She has a lot of internal struggles, mostly related to how she might not be able to experience normal things (e.g. having a healthy long-term relationship) because of her depression.

Julian and Courtney's first meeting is one of my favourite first-meeting styles ever. I, too, wanted to be approached by a handsome man in a coffee shop and be offered five grand in exchange for two weeks of teaching him to do fun things. Easy money! I love Courtney's influence on Julian; she had him relax for the first time and doing things he's never thought of doing. I love that food played an important role in Mr. Hotshot CEO. There were so many food details in this, I wept. Jackie actually did a thread on the food she featured in this book.

Oh, did I mention Julian bakes? HUSBAND MATERIAL (!!!).

I don't know what lemon squares are but I want them now.

Julian and Courtney are so easy to root for. I love reading them having fun with each other doing mundane things like walking in the park and eating gelato. That's the main reason I love Julian and Courtney together, I think? They had a lot of fun with each other outside the bedroom, and that is so important to me.

I also love how Courtney's depression is dealt with re: Julian and Courtney building a real relationship together. Julian messed up a couple of times, sure. He was The Fixer, and he first thought Courtney's depression as something he could fix by throwing money at it. He learned quickly, though (he's smart, after all), and how they resolved that conflict is probably my ultimate favourite thing about this book (there were pens and papers involved).

I love the secondary characters in Mr. Hotshot CEO. Courtney's siblings are great, but the show-stealer is definitely the Fong family. I laughed a lot whenever Julian's brother Vince appeared. He is ridiculously funny, I want him to have his own HEA too. In fact, I'd love it if both of Julian's brothers get their own

books. I kind of squealed when Julian's brother Cedric mentioned that he traveled to Malaysia! I'm so starved for rep, I swear. Julian's mother and grandmother are also the greatest.

"It's good to try new things, isn't it? They can make your brain think in different ways. Good for creativity. Good for business."

"You're saying an orgy might be good for my business?"

Overall, I didn't expect to love Mr. Hotshot CEO this much but yeah, I did. My heart was so full reading the epilogue. I'm so glad I still have Grumpy Fake Boyfriend to look forward to--it's going to be a long, hard wait for Jackie's new book to come out so at least I have something to tide me over. I really recommend this to everyone who's looking for a rom-com to read, but be sure to check Jackie's thread of trigger warnings first.

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### **Ekaterine Xia says**

So you wanna love a CEO...? Sorry, I'm a bit giddy because this is the first time I've organically come across an Asian descent hero in an English-written romance novel.

That said, major part of the charm of this book is that Julian and Courtney are just people. Their ethnicity isn't made much of; it's not a major thing in the story. They just are, as people, and that's such a refreshing thing to see.

I really enjoyed Mr. Hotshot CEO - Courtney and Julian were funny, relatable, and it was a joy seeing them fall in love. Seriously, who else can say that their first adopted named thing is a phallic cactus? All of the supporting characters were great too - Julian's grandmother is a hoot and I adore his brothers. Hey, good siblings take each other to orgies....\*cough\*... no never mind.

I did think that things snowballed a little fast. Julian pretty much goes from zero to orbit, but I can roll with thinking that's a hallmark of a good CEO. See what you need, efficiently go after it, and reap all the rewards. Also, Courtney's mental illness is a huge thing in the book, essentially a major plot driving force, and yet we don't get to see how Julian and Courtney deal with it together. Things are glossed over, next thing you know it's happily ever after and that's fine and all, but I would have liked to have seen how they coped with it. Personally, I've lived with major chronic depression for as long as I've had memory and nothing's really helped it, so it just would have been extra cherries on top if it had been handled more thoroughly.

That said, there's plenty of cherries in this story to make me happy. Can't wait to see what's next. Maybe one of Julian's brothers?

Disclaimer: I received a copy for review.

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### **Amanda says**

4.5 stars, rounding up

I thought this book was even better than its tropetastic predecessor, Grumpy Fake Boyfriend. The protagonist of this book, Courtney, is the sister of Naomi from the first book, so she and Will make a few appearances.

Julian is a workaholic and CEO of an investment firm. His family basically forces him to take a 2-week vacation because they're worried about how much he works. He's initially very resistant to the idea. One night not too long after he's forced out of his office, he's in a local coffee shop and he spots Courtney enjoying a gingerbread latte. He's noticed her before and thinks she's cute, and he's also noticed that she seems to enjoy the "little" things in life, like having a latte (as opposed to his espresso that he drinks just for the caffeine boost). He approaches her and offers to pay her \$5000 to live with him for 2 weeks and teach him how to relax.

It's one of those far-fetched set-ups that only works in romance novels, but I totally bought it. Courtney is a bit freaked a first when he approaches her, but she's also noticed Julian before without knowing his name. She feels reassured after finding out who he is because his family is well-known in the Chinese community in Toronto, so even though they are strangers, she doesn't worry about her safety. Plus she plans to give the money to her sister, Naomi.

They have instant chemistry but neither of them wants a relationship--Julian because he works too much and Courtney because of her mental health. Little does Julian know that Courtney has depression and has severe depressive episodes every 5 years. She's approaching the 5-year mark, and she's convinced she can never have a relationship because her last serious boyfriend in college dumped her in the midst of her worst depressive phase.

Even after he learns about her depression, he vows that it doesn't make a difference to him. And he does that annoying thing that people who don't have depression do and ask her if she's tried different solutions and I like that Lau worked this into the book because it's SO RELATABLE. He has good intentions but he's helpful at all. Julian really struggles with the idea that he can't just throw money at her problem and "fix" her. But something I loved is that he DOESN'T fix her. She's a person and she doesn't need to be "fixed." I really, really appreciated that.

The mental health rep in this book (which is own voices for depression) was excellent. My depression isn't quite the same as Courtney's--I don't have episodes every 5 years like she does--but it was such a realistic portrayal of the kind of irrational thought processes that you have when you're depressed. The way people try to help you and are actually super unhelpful. And it shows a healthy view of relationships not FIXING depression but being supportive of it. We also don't see them instantly fit together when Julian goes back to work--we see them work through a "normal" schedule and that made their HEA feel even sweeter.

Really look forward to more books from this author in the future :)

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## **Jess says**

This book was a little bit too much of an ask for me, simply because there didn't seem to be enough time to get to where they got.

The heroine has recurring clinical depression that does not respond to treatment, and the major episodes come every five years. Because of this, and because her college boyfriend left her in the midst of one, the heroine has decided that she shouldn't be in a relationship because it's not good for her mental health. Totally

fine! She and her sister have planned a trip to NY for when she thinks she'll be in episode, because it will help, but then her sister has to pull out because of finances. This leads to the hero, who has been forced by his family to take a seventeen day vacation. He doesn't know how to not be at work, but he's noticed the heroine savoring coffee before and so he decides to offer her five grand to teach him how to relax.

That is a lot and we aren't even to the relationship yet.

Anyway, they do this and pretend like they're going to be platonic (she's living with him, did I mention that), but eventually they sleep together and have feelings for each other, but this is all supposed to end in two weeks. And their relationship over this period is sweet. I don't ever want to suggest that I don't like them as a couple, because I do, quite a lot, in fact. (This also made me want to try pineapple buns? I didn't even know those existed.) But then they try to go past their deadline and the heroine gets closer to her depression and she breaks up with him, because she doesn't think she can rely on anyone else and she's worried that she'll end up so depressed that she'll be back on suicide watch if he leaves her.

(Again, she is in charge of her mental health. This is fine and actually seems to be a perfectly rational fear to me.)

But then he wins her back and they get through her depression and we get an epilogue, which is again, sweet. But it was just so FAST and that is asking them both to take on so much, when they just met and she really doesn't know how she'll react to being in a relationship again. I just wish that there had been more time or they'd met at a different period? I would have really loved an established relationship dealing with something like this actually, where they both know it's coming, but they met in a good period and the hero hasn't seen it.

I really like Jackie Lau's voice, though, and I'll be curious to see where else she goes with her writing.

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### **Katie says**

Does a book count as triggering if you skim the parts you're scared will trigger you? I am not rating it for that reason, but yeah. The way depression is described is well done.

I don't think I was ever totally convinced about either of their reasons for not being a relationship, but then-- isn't Courtney's reason my reason for skimming the book?

Also, I want to remember this line:

*Whenever I make a decision, I ask myself, "Is this good for my mental health?"*

PS: Read Jess's review. She says smart things.

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### **Maria Rose says**

Jackie Lau is a Canadian author writing diverse romantic comedy, something she definitely achieved in her first Kwan Sisters novel, Grumpy Fake Boyfriend. I thoroughly enjoyed that story about the romance that results when an introverted male science fiction writer does a friend's sister a favor by playing her boyfriend

for a beach weekend. In Mr. Hotshot CEO, the author turns her sights on another of the Kwan sisters, who ends up in an unusual situation with a handsome, very rich, workaholic CEO. She also tackles the more serious subject of depression in an authentic but not depressing way (a feat in itself) to make for a thoughtful, funny and uplifting romance.

Julian Fong, CEO and President of Fong Investments works long hours every day and even when he's got free time he ends up doing something productive like studying another language. As his father recently had a heart attack and retired, his family worries that the same thing will happen to Julian and gives him an ultimatum – he has to take two weeks of vacation or Po-Po (his grandmother) will start bringing possible brides to the office every day to distract him and get him married off. He acquiesces – to the vacation – and on his first day off ends up at a coffee shop eyeing the 'latte lady' whom he's seen several times before. She always seems to be so delighted by a simple cup of coffee. Maybe she can show him how to enjoy his forced vacation.

Courtney Kwan is a research scientist who has clinical depression. Every five years she goes through an extended episode where just getting out of bed in the morning can be a chore. With experience, she's learned coping skills and the important self-care that helps her get through it. As a result of her illness, when she's not depressed she takes great joy in the little things in life, like a good meal or a hot cup of coffee, or the scent of flowers. Julian approaches her with a proposition – come live with him for two weeks and show him how to enjoy life the way she does. In return he'll pay her \$5000, a sum which will enable Courtney and her sister to take a planned trip to New York City that they'd had to cancel for financial reasons.

Had any other man come up with this offer, Courtney would have dismissed it as a bad come-on. But Julian's reputation as a generous, smart man with a philanthropic family precedes him. She decides to take the opportunity for the money, and though sex isn't part of the deal, there's no denying the attraction between them and it soon becomes apparent they won't be able to resist temptation. Courtney can't afford to fall for anyone because the devastation of a breakup, especially at this time in her life would make her depression that much worse. But when Julian wants more, will she be willing to take the chance that it could last?

Depression is a topic not usually seen in romantic comedies. The depression that Courtney suffers has been life threatening for her in the past, and she has tried all manner of treatments, from medication to therapy and hospitalization. None of them have worked and she's tired of well-meaning people suggesting 'cures', knowing that the best way to work through it is to follow her own self-care plan. The author has said that she's written Courtney's experience as a mirror of her own battles with depression, and it's an eye-opening experience to understand how some people experience this devastating mental illness. When Courtney experiences some symptoms while with Justin, she reluctantly shares her struggles with him. She'd hoped to be able to hide it from him for the two weeks are together, but in the end, because they are connecting so well, she tells him about it. Instead of being deterred, Julian is all the more determined to show her that she'll be able to count on him in bad times as well as good ones. Courtney's struggle to decide whether to trust Julian with her heart makes for a compelling story with legitimate reasons for her concerns.

Because both Julian and Courtney are of Chinese descent there are lots of references to the Chinese Canadian community in Toronto and its history. Julian is in the unique position of being very rich and also of ethnic descent, and his family worked hard to build their reputation and wealth from very humble beginnings. Racist attitudes towards the Chinese in the early parts of the previous century made for extra challenges for their family. Fong Investments is a multicultural company, a reflection of Toronto which also prides itself on its diversity. A warning, too – don't go into this story hungry! The descriptions of food will have you wanting to make a trip to Toronto for all the culinary treats! From pineapple buns, to dim sum, to banh mi



and gourmet restaurant meals, you'll want a snack beside you while you read.

Family is important and Julian's Po-Po adds some humour and fun as she is definitely the matriarch in charge. She's delighted when she meets Courtney and has no qualms about wanting her to become a daughter-in-law. For all their wealth, the Fongs are down to earth and very likable. Courtney's own family is not as supportive as she needs them to be, except for her sister Naomi, who takes Courtney's depression seriously, while her parents and brother didn't think she was seriously ill in high school when she ended up in the hospital after a suicide attempt, and they still struggle to comprehend the seriousness of her illness. But there are positive signs that they are changing for the better and that is heartening to see.

This wouldn't be a romance without the development of a relationship between Julian and Courtney and that proceeds at a pretty quick pace, since there's a two week time limit at the start. Friends first, and then lovers, there are several sexy scenes that cement their emotional connection even as Courtney is trying to keep herself from falling for Julian. He has no such qualms though, and definitely wants to continue things once he goes back to work. Balancing their new relationship with his normal working hours means making some compromises and figuring out how to show Courtney he's serious about sticking around no matter how bad her depression gets. All in all, the author does an excellent job of combining laughter and romance and sex with the reality of depression, giving an uplifting story and hope to everyone who suffers from mental illness that they deserve to love and be loved in return.

This review also appears at All About Romance: <https://allaboutromance.com/book-revi...>

A copy of this story was provided by the author for review.

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### **Alice Wilder says**

Oh man, was this book ever great. A few things right off the bat--

-I'm always nervous about books that are written from the man's perspective, but this book alternates between Julian and Courtney, which I love.

-This book definitely has heat, but know going in that it's also about living with clinical depression.

I loooved this read. The premise is wild, but as soon as the flirtation started I was totally on board. It was also so lovely to see a woman like Courtney with mental illness have a real love story. I've dealt with an anxiety disorder all my life, and could relate to many of the doubts that Courtney had. Lau does a masterful job of balancing the joy of falling in love with the realities of living with mental illness.

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### **Kristiej says**

Normally I wouldn't touch a book with this kind of title as I'm much more of a blue collar type hero. But it wasn't that long ago that I read the previous book in this series, Grumpy Fake Boyfriend and I was so charmed by it I wanted to keep reading this author. The heroine in this one, Courtney Kwan is the sister of the heroine in the first book and she, along with her boyfriend, play a role in this one.

Julien Fong is the CEO of a very successful investment company. He had taken over when his father had a heart attack and since then has become a complete workaholic. His family gangs up on him and INSIST he

takes a two week holiday, no visiting the office, no calling the office, no business emails, nothing. Julien is at a complete loss on what to do. He doesn't take vacations, he just works and he needs to find something to do or he'll go crazy. He spies a young woman in a coffee shop, one he has seen in there before and she seems to take such enjoyment in such simple things such as the smell of coffee and he does something very impulsive. He goes up to her and offers her 5,000.00 if she shows him how to relax and enjoy life for the next two weeks.

Now it turns out that he couldn't have made his offer at a better time. Courtney was planning on a trip to New York with her sister Naomi but Naomi couldn't make it because of financial reason and this trip is Very Important to Courtney. Julien is very well known and admired as a successful businessman in the Chinese community in Toronto so Courtney agrees. She even agrees to move into his penthouse for the duration – in the spare bedroom of course.

This book is just as delightful as the first one. I found myself grinning and chuckling a number of times and found it hard to put down. One of the most delightful characters is Julian's brother Vincent. He is such a riot and such a scene stealer. He sparkles in every scene he's in. I hope sometime Ms. Lau has something planned for him.

But it does have a serious tone to it. Courtney suffers from debilitating depression and she can tell that one is coming on. As one who also suffers from depression, I found the author did such a good job in describing the effects of depression and how it can ruin relationships. While those who have never experienced it and figure the sufferer can simply 'get over it', it's not something we can just get over. And while in a depression, it's the worst thing one can imagine. There's a voice in our heads drumming into us over and over again that we are worthless; that no one can love us, that we are much better off alone or in extreme cases and thankfully mine isn't this bad, but better off dead.

Courtney knows she should tell Julien but the voices have started and previously while in a depressed state, a boyfriend had broken up with her. Because of that and the rejection she has felt from her family, with the exception of Naomi, she feels she can't have a relationship and is destined to remain alone and childless.

I loved both Julien. He's such a sweetheart even though he is a white collar hero and Courtney, I could really relate to. Normally she's a very fun and upbeat person who really does 'stop to smell the roses' kind of person.

This book is SO good and I SO recommend it.

While Julien's family has been in Canada for a few generations, Courtney's family have come to Canada more recently from Hong Kong. I'm planning on delving quite a bit into the more diverse books I already have and plan to make them a regular part of my reading life.

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**The\_Book\_Queen says**

**4 1/2 STARS!**

**CW: Depression, talk of suicide**

◆ Dual 1st POV

- ◆ STEM heroine (biomedical researcher)
- ◆ CEO (financing)
- ◆ He hires her to teach him how to have fun - temporary roommates!
- ◆ Fun, charming and sexy + emotional and relatable

I loved the Julian wanted to help her and care for her and understood that he couldn't fix her depression -- which, yes, made him upset at one point, but even then he kept his head out of his ass enough to still realize that this is her battle to fight and she knows best. But he can totally be there for her and that's what she needs -- love and support.

I very much look forward to reading more from Lau. I have book 1 still sitting on my Kindle (bad TBQ, bad!)

But I also loved Julian's interactions with his brothers, especially his playboy younger brother, and I need him to get a story. And the middle brother, too (author). JUST GIMME ALL THE BOOKS, JACKIE, KTHXBYE

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**If you wish to look at some quotes/thoughts I highlighted, please check out my Twitter feed**

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## **Christine says**

This book made me fall in love with Julian and Courtney ... and with Toronto's gorgeous food scene. I wanted to read this for the sheer pleasure of an Asian hero and Asian heroine whose relationship had nothing to do with their ethnic background. Food was what brought them together. The magic started with Courtney and Julian connecting over a gingerbread latte and soon lemon cherry sour cream gelato, soup dumplings, and pineapple buns made me long for a Toronto CEO to cook for me. Bring your appetite, because Courtney and Julian aren't just lovers, but real lovers of good eating.

”Ah, but the primary purpose of my gingerbread lattes is not as a source of caffeine.”

“What is the purpose?”

“They make me happy.” She states it so simply.

Julian is the workaholic CEO of his family investment business whose concerned family forces him into an involuntary two-week vacation. At a loss on how to relax, Julian offers to pay Courtney, the gingerbread latte girl, to teach him how to enjoy life during those two weeks. And I have to say that I fell in love at first page with the Fong family, before I even got into Julian and Courtney’s romance. Po Po, his grandmother, was the best ringleader:

”You can’t refuse,” Po Po says. “If so, I will make your life miserable... Every day at lunch, I bring new woman to your office. Will say you’re looking for nice bride. Also, will play

Chinese opera music outside your door all day. Very loud.”

I loved Julian’s sweet but oft-clueless brothers almost as much as their adorable grandmother. Note to the author: can we have a series where Po Po matchmakes for Vincent, the orgy-attending, naked calendar-posing brother, and Cedric, the brother with writer’s block?

This story is the perfect antidote to anyone getting bored of the alphahole billionaire master of his destiny trope. I loved that Julian was teased and pushed around by his interfering family, as well as Courtney’s, and that he was almost boringly down-to-earth:

”Maybe Julian has a private jet you can take?” I stop myself from rolling my eyes. “I do not have a private jet. Terrible waste of money, and I’m not a billionaire. We’ll fly on Porter from the island airport. If that’s what Courtney wants.”

In contrast to the lighthearted family moments and sinful food porn, the darkness of Courtney’s lifelong battle with depression made her budding relationship with Julian a true battle revealing that money really can’t buy happiness. But when it counted, Julian, with some misplaced guidance and encouragement by his brothers, learned not only how to enjoy life but how to be there for Courtney for good times and bad.

I’m looking forward to more in this series; hoping for more food porn and more Fong brothers!

Note: I voluntarily read and reviewed this ARC generously provided by the author.

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## **Lexie says**

I want to start this review by saying two things:

- 1) this is not as light hearted as GRUMPY FAKE BOYFRIEND. There are many cute fluffy moments, but it’s core is about a woman struggling with clinical depression and her learning to accept it doesn’t mean being alone.
- 2) This book was HARD for me to read at times. I’ve never been diagnosed with clinical depression - as part of my general anxiety diagnosis and my specific social anxiety diagnosis my therapist documented "depression episodes" directly related to my anxiety.

As such, while I have not experienced the exact same nature of Courtney’s depression (no one can ever truly experience depression the same way) I have experienced ELEMENTS of it.

This is all to say, I recommend this book with few reservations, but please if you have depression or know that reading about a person who is trying to get a handle on their own will trigger you, ask someone who knows your triggers to read the book first. (UPDATE: The author has a very informative thread here on twitter that I recommend reading if you are worried. She’s also very responsive and welcoming of questions about specifics you may be worried about).

The rest of my review is behind a spoiler cut since I’ll be discussing some pieces of what Courtney is going through.

(view spoiler)

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**Darbi Bradley says**

THIS WAS SO EXCELLENT

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