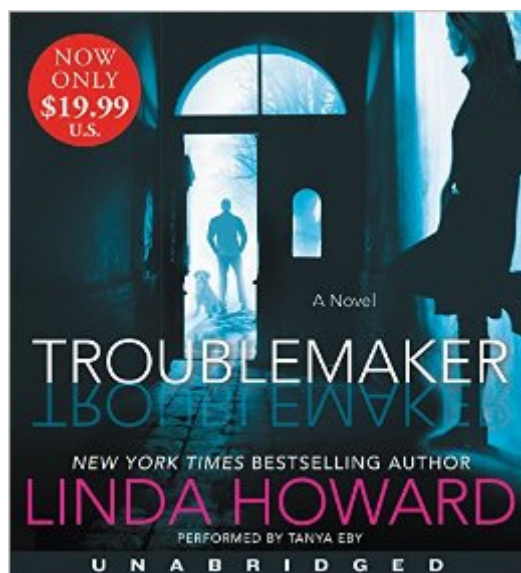


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Troublemaker Low Price CD: A Novel



Synopsis

When Morgan Yancy, an operative and team leader in a paramilitary group, is ambushed and almost killed, his supervisor is determined to find out who's after the members of his elite squad. Because of worries that this unknown enemy will strike again, Morgan is sent to a remote location and told to lay low. But between a tempting housemate he's determined to protect and a deadly threat waiting in the shadows, keeping under the radar is proving to be his most dangerous mission. As the part-time police chief of a small West Virginian mountain town, Isabeau Boe Maran doesn't need a mysterious man in her life—especially a troublemaker as enticing and secretive as Morgan. She already has her hands full reining in the residents of Hamrickville after a personal dispute goes violently awry. The harder Bo and Morgan fight the intense heat between them, the closer they become, even though she knows he's hiding from something. But discovering the truth could cost Bo more than she's willing to give...for it might just cost her life.

Book Information

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[Authors, A-Z > \(H \) > Howard, Linda](#) #1155 in [Books > Books on CD > Romance](#) #2688

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Customer Reviews

I've been a fan of Linda Howard's for quite some time, particularly her slightly older works (White Lies is my all-time favorite of her books, for example). I'm also one of those fans who has found her more recent offerings to be....not in-keeping with her work of the past, in terms of overall quality. Happily, I think this novel marks a return to form for her. The good: Morgan and Bo are well-developed, interesting characters. He is a counterterrorism agent who chafes against weakness, but isn't so unrelentingly alpha that he's without charm and humor. She is a small town chief of police (which is a mostly administrative position) who has worked hard to get her head above water, and though she is friendly to those around her, has mostly closed herself off from

developing truly deep connections with people, courtesy of a childhood marked by constant change, uprooting, and ever-changing family dynamics. Her love of her dog, however, is deep and unconditional, and really gives the reader a look at the extent to which she can care (and even sacrifice) for those she holds most dear. When the two characters initially meet, it is not by choice, at least on her part, and there is a long stretch during his initial convalescence that is civil, but not much more. In other words, this isn't a case of the oft-maligned insta-love that permeates many a romance nowadays. She helps him heal, while he pushes himself to regain his strength. They learn about one another's lives and pasts, bond over Bo's dog and their mutual loathing of sitting around doing nothing, and only once there is a good bond in place does attraction enter the mix. Once it does, a decent amount of heat enters the picture, and the relationship proceeds organically over the course of about three months.

I don't think I've ever been this confounded when reviewing a book. I am an ardent Linda Howard fan; I believe I have read everything she's written, including the novellas and lesser-known stories from her earliest writing days. After reading TROUBLEMAKER, I peeked at a number of sites to determine if my surprise in the story was shared by others. I found an overwhelming amount of support for the impressions that were also my own. This story is promoted as Ms. Howard's standard "romantic suspense. Although her novels have varying ratios of page time spent on character development, relationship, suspense, romantic tension, sex, mystery, etc., despite my preferences for more of less of each area of focus, I have enjoyed each of her books tremendously. TROUBLEMAKER loses all of the magic found in telling a balanced story, which Ms. Howard provided effortlessly in her other novels. This is not a romantic suspense story; its tone is radically and irrevocably affected by the author's blatantly overemphasized depictions of every action, reaction, and imagined thought process of the female protagonist Bo's dog, Tricks. I honestly do not know how to explain the depth of imbalance and narrative harm caused by this unchecked inclination in which the author indulged. It was as if the author could not control her need, which often read as obsessive, to not just include Tricks in every scene, but to literally write every scene around the dog. Tricks actually becomes the relationship surrogate for Bo and Morgan, the male lead, as we read uncomfortable scenes in which the protagonists seem to be able to express feelings and desires only when they express themselves through the dog.

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