



Beneath the Surface

Melynda Price

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He was the last man she wanted to turn to for help. But when freelance journalist Quinn Summers uncovers a shocking secret with the potential to rock Washington, DC, she reluctantly finds herself on his doorstep. Someone intends to silence her forever, and Asher Tate may be all that's standing between her and a vicious killer.

Overbearing, arrogant, and insanely hot, the ex-marine Special Forces officer turned mercenary for hire is no bodyguard—especially when it comes to the stubborn woman who sets his blood on fire as quickly as his temper. Quinn Summers is a powder keg of trouble just waiting for a match, and he isn't surprised that the feisty beauty has made some dangerous enemies.

To survive, she's going to have to play by *his* rules—and that means stepping into Asher's world, where he controls the playing field. But in his fight to save Quinn's life, he just might end up losing his heart...

Beneath the Surface Details

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Author : Melynda Price

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From Reader Review Beneath the Surface for online ebook

Heather andrews says

Asher could be so sweet when he wanted to be, “sweetheart, after everything we’ve been through, do you honestly believe I’d ever let you go? You’re mine , Quinn. I would kill for you and die to protect you.” Oh Asher I couldn't help but love you, “do you have any idea how difficult it is to ride a horse with a hard-on? ” I loved Asher I pop loved this book, so much sexual tension.

TJ says

4.5/5.0

Great romantic suspense. And the best part? It wasn't rushed! It allows the reader to really immerse themselves but never drifts to boring. Great read!

Cierra says

Absolutely loved this book! Thanks so much to Montlake Romance for the opportunity to read it through NetGalley! Ashton and Quinn are great and the story was well-paced. I also like that it can be read as a stand alone even though it ties into other books within the Against the Cage series, which I now really want to read.

Dísir says

‘Beneath the Surface’ is a quick, though not unpredictable read, delivering in the first few pages at least, a pop-corn throwing moment when Quinn Summers discovers her dead roommate and a plot to off her. It’s a perfect setup and a plunge into heart-pounding action that had me rather excited initially, until the story meandered a little to focus on the romance as Quinn gets placed in Asher Tate’s custody.

Apart from main characters conforming to stereotype, ‘Beneath the Surface’ did have a decent, entertaining plot that threw me for a thrill ride or two, with a suspense plot that had the potential to be sharper and nuanced. (The ungrammatical German left me wincing though) The case of the mercenary group involved in human trafficking was interesting, though I had faint regrets that it didn’t become a bigger conspiracy to unravel with political ramifications thrown in. I wanted to be immersed in the complexity of the case, and with the characters, globe-trot to exotic locations, feel the dirt on my face and the gunfire more closely on my arse, but all these only happened in the last quarter of the book.

Quinn exemplifies the typical female lead, or at least how many romantic suspense authors envision their heroines: independent and strong, yet with a hurt past with less experience than her male counterpart and proves to be the only one who makes him work and sweat. It’s harder to like Asher though: smug, cocky and arrogant and thinks he’s heaven sent to women who can’t resist him, so it comes as a surprise that Quinn is the only one who can. He’s also a stereotypical male lead of romantic suspense - a somewhat tortured no-

commitment type who uses the convenient excuse of not being around long enough so all he'll take is sex (as evidenced by the very distasteful sex he has with another woman in front of Quinn at their initial meeting), yet has a protective gruff side for the woman he can't have. And then he finds he can commit after all when things come to a head.

What I found difficult to swallow was the case of instant love declarations after a night of blistering, adrenaline sex caused by a near-accident, more so because the non-committal manwhore suddenly flips to devoted monogamy like a light switch. I thought that most of their relationship was more lust-driven and concerned with bodily parts reacting when someone - typically in a state of partial undress - is near. Every action, no matter how innocent, was magnified to have a corresponding sexual awakening of some body part, contributing to the growing sexual appetite of both parties. With a connection that was little more than skin deep and made by proximity, it was hard not to question the validity of this pairing that didn't seem compatible beyond their want for each other.

My struggle with spectacle versus substance is never clearer each time I get down to romantic suspense and it's a tricky balance to get right for me at least. 'Beneath the Surface' isn't written badly but it lacked some edge and while I'm cautiously optimistic to see how Melynda Price might develop this series, I'm still sitting on the side of neutral and doubtful.

*ARC by netgalley
(always grateful, mind)

Dawn says

This book gives you pretty much everything from funny to serious, family and friends and traitors. From the first page to the last it keeps your attention. I didn't want to put it down. I have found a new author for myself.

Quinn and Asher meet at her sister's wedding, it didn't go well at all! She promptly leaves and spends two years traveling and writing. While in Haiti she runs across a human trafficking problem and leaves immediately. After returning to the states her camera and laptop have been stolen, luckily she had mailed herself the SD card via her sister's address. After meeting with the attorney general and returning home to find her roommate killed and a note that the killer will see her soon she goes on the run.

Because she doesn't want to bring Vic trouble she's told to go to Asher and he will keep her safe. She balks at that but knows she cannot do this alone and since the attorney general is the only person she talked to who knows she is home he must be the one trying to kill her. She has no choice.

Asher is not happy to find Quinn showing up on his doorstep and even less happy that his father dropped her off and left before he could send her packing. After realizing that she is indeed in trouble and Nikko has sent her he agrees to protect her and keep her safe until she finds the evidence that she needs to prove the existence of the traffickers and their faces if possible.

Quinn and Asher get to know one another and as new information comes to light things start to change and hearts begin to melt. She is being hunted and Asher is put to the test over and over. They both are strong and stubborn and it is a fun journey watching these two get to know one another. She meets his family and that is belly laughing funny. But danger is never far away.

Great book, great storyline, great characters. I loved it!

I received this ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Zita says

Great romantic suspense with a fascinating storyline...

Quinn Summers returned to the United States from Haiti with information she uncovered as a freelance journalist, her first stop was Washington DC to speak with the US Attorney General. When she returns home to New York City a ghastly surprise awaited her, sending her running to Colorado for safety to a man she hates, the arrogant, frustrating man she met at her sister's wedding. With someone wanting her dead to quash the story she's writing Quinn's forced to ask for help from the mercenary and she doesn't like it but she's not a fool, that the annoying man who is too damn sexy for her own good pushes all her temper as well as feminine buttons is a definite complication.

Asher Tate is ex-Marine Special Forces, now a mercenary dealing with coming to terms with actions from his military days plus current repercussions from a contracted mission gone awry and needing to avoid the unwanted public attention that it's generated. He's a sniper not a bodyguard but considering his friend sent his wife's sister to him for protection means he's stuck guarding the aggravating woman, that he finds her deliciously sexy and enjoys pressing her buttons will make living with her for the duration an exercise in control and she's a distraction that could cause them their lives.

This reader loves a good love/hate relationship story and this one really hits the mark. You have two strong willed intelligent protagonists who have a habit of antagonizing each other with a strong sexual attraction that underlies all their interactions that's off the charts. First impressions are hard to erase and Asher, while intoxicated, left Quinn with quite a negative impression of himself during the wedding they were a part of and his recollection of that time is vague. They both have reasons to deny what they feel and they'll have to come to some sort of a civil truce to co-exist if he is to keep them alive but who will make the first move towards it? And of course the more time they spend together they see other sides of the person that they find they can like and admire.

Asher and Quinn are great likable characters with emotional depth and relatable vulnerabilities. Quinn is the sassy heroine, she gives as good as she gets and is in trouble for doing the right thing, a stance that Asher can understand and respect. Asher is the tough protective alpha and though he likes taunting the feisty Quinn, he's a good man who's seen too much but knew enough to walk away to protect what was left of his soul. The banter between these two was rich in sexual innuendo and at times quite amusing, they don't always have a filter which had this reader smiling often.

I loved this read, great romantic suspense with a fascinating storyline that engages your attention, multiple points of view including that of the villain; the danger they faced was around every turn and there's a surprising twist that blindsided the hero to be dealt with. There are crossover characters from the Against the Cage series which were good to revisit. This is the third book I've read by this author and I've enjoyed every one of them and look forward to more, the author's imagination, writing style, and ability to bring such a depth to her characters and intricacy to the suspense plots has this reader impressed.

An advanced reading copy was obtained from the publisher via NetGalley.

Katie says

I absolutely loved everything about this story!!! I only wish that we could have more of Asher and Quinn's story!!!

Quinn is suddenly thrust into a role that she never wanted as a journalist who stumbles on a human trafficking ring while on what she thought was a PR assignment in Haiti. Suddenly facing a killer who wants to silence her forever, she must turn to the one person that can keep her safe without jeopardizing her sister and her family. Asher, the former Special Ops military man and most frustrating part of her sister's wedding party, is the only man that might be able to keep her safe, but he is reeling from a disastrous private mission that garnered him a front row seat at a high profile trial and a continuous scroll on the 24 hours news channel.

Ms. Price tells the story of Asher and Quinn in real time as he protects her and in flashes and perspectives from each character of the wedding where they met, which showcases Quinn's rush to judgement and Asher's man-whoring ways. This sets up the romantic tension between the two characters and enables us to see how first impressions on both sides may not be as accurate as everyone thinks.

The suspense is real with numerous attempts on Quinn and Asher that reveal her courage and his skill. Beneath The Surface is a true page turner with clever and humorous surprises like a twin and an alpha male MMA fighter, who also is quick to judge. Each time that you think that there might be a break in the action, there is another scene with even more action. Ms. Price is not afraid of bullets!

I loved the interactions among Asher, Quinn, and the secondary characters. Asher's family dynamics with his brothers were charming, and I wished that there were a few more scenes with all of them - especially Fisher. The only negative to this novel was that it seemed to end too quickly. I would have loved to have an extended story beyond the second wedding and more of both Asher's and Quinn's families.

Laura says

ARC Provided by the Publisher and NetGalley

I liked a lot about this book. The suspense was fairly well done, and it was believable. The romance was also well done, and I believed in the attraction between Quinn and Asher and that the attraction went back to the first meeting, even though they denied it...or tried to.

The writing was strong, the dialog was strong, the characters and their reactions seemed real, and how people would react in the same situation.

Unfortunately, I had issues with the pacing and the way the story-line was drawn together. The romance story and the suspense story never quite worked together for me, they always seemed like they were different stories that were lumped together, so it made the flow of it not as good as it could have been.

I do recommend this overall, but there were definitely some places that I skimmed, where the story lost my attention. And, I think it was because the shift in the mood was a little tough.

***This and other reviews also featured on "I'm A Sweet and Sassy Book Whore"
<http://www.imasweetandsassybookwhore.com>***

Luli says

Me ha costado terminar esta historia. Al final estaba tan desconectada que hasta empecé a leer por encima el final, que se supone debe de ser lo mejor...una pena.

Hay muchísimas repeticiones, incluso el malo se repite constantemente. Los protagonistas están toda la historia quejándose de que el otro no lo quiere, o de que son poca cosa para el otro, o de que no le ha profesado amor eterno, etc...

Además de estas repeticiones están las veces que los pezones se endurecen o que tanto el malo como el prota tienen una erección, que ha ocurrido durante absolutamente **toda** la historia. Muy cansino.

Protagonistas que no se soportan el uno al otro pero que no pueden evitar estar constantemente excitados y pensando en sexo.

Verdaderamente manidas escenas en las que ella se pone una camiseta blanca transparente y mojada para pasearse (sin querer!!) delante del protagonista...*roll eyes*

Una cantidad ingente de tacos. Los personajes son incapaces de hablar o pensar sin soltar varios en cada frase. A mí nunca me había preocupado esto, hasta ahora... demasiado...

Y por último pero no menos importante hasta en 3 ocasiones la protagonista decide hacer algo TSTL. 3 veces. Que igual soy yo un poquito pejiuguera pero me han parecido demasiadas.

Y como colofón está lo del malo maloso. Por favor, si existe la menor posibilidad de que vayas a leer la historia no leas el spoiler...te enterarías de quién es el malo...
(view spoiler)

Ha sido excesivo, desmesurado, repetitivo, cansino y predecible. Me ha aburrido.

ARC provided by Montlake Romance via Netgalley.

It has cost me dearly to finish this story. In the end I was so disconnected that I began to skip when I got to what should have been the better part... a pity. There are a lot of repetitions; even the bad guy is constantly repeating himself.

The MC's spent all the story complaining that the other does not love him/her, or that he/she is not enough for the other, or has not professed him/her undying love, etc... In addition to these repetitions are the times that the nipples hardened and the times on which both, the bad guy and the hero, have an erection, which happens during absolutely **all** the story. Sooo tiresome.

Characters who can't stand each other but neither can they avoid being constantly excited and thinking about having sex between them.

There are too truly trite scenes like the one in which she wore a thin **and** so-used-that-is-almost-transparent **and** white t-shirt (please!) **and** because she didn't dry herself properly the thing is plastered to her **oh-so-naked** body and she walks in front of the hero like this (without wanting to, of course!) * insert a big roll eyes *

A huge amount of cursing. The characters are unable to speak or think without releasing several in each sentence...never before had bothered me this, but here it have been excessive.

And last but not least, even in three occasions suffers the heroine TSTL moments, three! Maybe I am a bit of a nuisance but, come on!, three times? Poor woman....

And to top it all off there is the baddie... Please, if you think there is a possibility you would read this story, don't read the spoiler, I'll tell who de bad guy is...
(view spoiler)

It has been OTT.

Taylor B says

ARC provided by Netgalley.

Holy moly this book was good. It isn't short either and I literally sat and read it all day yesterday. I don't read romantic suspense very often anymore because I feel the author always tries to focus on the romance during the book and add in the suspense at the very beginning, while cramming in a perfect ending where all the loose ends add up. And while Melynda Price does write a romantic suspense story that works itself out, she also makes sure the suspense and romance gets an even amount of face time in Beneath the Surface.

Her main characters, Asher and Quinn, were both really well written. Asher is the ex-military war hero who feels the guilt of his time in the military and Quinn is a snarky spitfire who's trying to do the right thing and getting pursued by a killer in the process. Hence, she goes to Asher to get protection. Their interactions and conversations are quite entertaining, especially when they are still stuck in the "I hate you" phase of their relationship. They are both strong characters and that is what really drew me into the story.

And what kept me interested were the sections of the book from the bad guy's POV! Those were actually really great! And while I wouldn't exactly call this story predictable, I did figure out who the killer was chasing Quinn about fifty percent through the book. However! I was still glued to the page trying to figure out how the killer was related to the whole story.

Overall, I just simply really enjoyed this book!! This was my first book by Melinda Price but I will definitely be on the lookout for some of her next releases.

julia ? [owls reads] says

2.5 stars.

*

I can't be your friend.

Beneath the Surface was... unbelievable. That is the best way I can think to describe it. The writing was good, the pace flowed nicely, and the big twist at the end was very well executed and left me surprised. The problem was that the rest of the story was so suspended from reality I had a lot of trouble connecting with the characters and what was actually happening.

If you like big dramatic plots and action, you'll probably like this book a lot more than I did. Quinn, the main character, uncovered something that made her believe the US government was after her. I actually thought that had the potential to be a really good storyline, but alas...

One of the reasons why I couldn't believe what was happening was because it felt like a lot of things were casually forgotten for the sake of tension. It seemed like there were so many obvious ways that the government or an assassin *could* have found Quinn? So when they didn't, it just made everyone seem incompetent.

Quinn was really the biggest problem for me. She made so many stupid decisions one after the other, it was hard to believe she had any intelligence at all. She was judgmental and often rude at the beginning of the story, and I had very little sympathy for her. She did get a little better as the story progressed, but then so did the romance between her and Asher, which was also not one of my favorite things.

I thought there wasn't going to be any instalove when I started this, seeing as Quinn and Asher had actually met before, but nope. There was actually a line from Asher in a scene that illustrated perfectly why their romance wasn't really well-developed.

"You don't really know me, Quinn."

That was the feeling I got throughout the entire book when it came to those two. They had chemistry, yes. They were attracted to each other, yes. But I didn't feel like they knew enough about one another to make this anything other than instalove.

As I mentioned in the beginning, I really liked the big twist at the end! I didn't see it coming and was caught off guard when the major player was revealed. I thought that part was handled really well, and it helped end the book on a higher note for me.

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Series: Standalone.

POV: Told mainly from Quinn and Asher's POVs.

Content Warnings: (view spoiler)

Instalove: (view spoiler)

Steam: The book focuses more on the romance parts than the sex stuff.

Love Triangle: (view spoiler)

Cheating: (view spoiler)

Cliffhanger: No.

HEA: (view spoiler)

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ARC provided via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Erin OBrien says

Another hit by Melynda Price!

Quinn and Asher seem to hate each other from the moment they met. But maybe it's more of a love/hate relationship...

Quinn is forced to ask for Asher's help when she finds out someone wants her dead because of a story she's writing. Sparks seem to fly from the moment they see each other again. But they seem to fight it for as long as they can.

This story is exciting, nail-biting and sigh-worthy all in one. Definitely worth 5 stars

Coral says

Plot: 4/5

Characterisation: 3/5

Prose: 3/5

How much I enjoyed it: 4/5

WhiskeyintheJar/Kyraryker says

2.5 stars

I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

While in Haiti, freelance journalist Quinn Summers stumbles upon a sex trafficking ring. Gathering as much evidence as she can, she mails her SD card to her sister and has a meeting with an U.S. attorney general. Leaving that meeting not sure she can trust the government, she makes it back to her apartment to discover her roommate has been murdered and the killer left her a message telling her she will be next. Fearing for her life she contacts her sister and her brother-in-law tells her to go to Asher Tate.

Former Special Forces and just found not culpable in a massacre his security team was involved in, Asher doesn't want to deal with the shrew he meet at his friend's wedding. With her life in danger though, Asher knows he has to protect Quinn.

As they try to find out who is behind wanting her dead, Quinn and Asher fight their mounting attraction.

Beneath the Surface started out with a thrilling pace, we know Quinn has discovered something she shouldn't have and know she is in danger, but don't know who or where that danger is going to come from. The scene where she discovers her roommate was chilling and I was locked into the story. The action side of the story started off very strong but the introduction into our characters and how they were connected (why Quinn is going to Asher) stumbled along a bit and felt somewhat awkward. I checked to see if this was second in a series because it felt like I should have previous knowledge of the wedding Quinn and Asher meet at, it's not listed as part of a series but looks to maybe be an off-shoot of one as Quinn's sister stars in her own story in a separate series.

The first 30% of this story was highly engaging but the pace slows down when Quinn arrives at Asher's

place and they start trading barbs back and forth. Quinn caught Asher in more than one sexual encounter at her sister's wedding so she thinks lowly of him and Asher thinks Quinn is a shrew because of her very prickly attitude towards him. Quinn had a broken engagement two years ago that has left her bitter and after spending fourteen years in the Special Forces, Quinn has insomnia and drinks more than he should because of the things he has had to do. Quinn's bitterness felt forced while Asher's was more believable but not given enough depth to break him out of the standard cardboard wounded military man. The middle sagged as we get a bit of drawn out hating with heavy lusting between the two. However, by the fifty percent point, they both are declaring they loved one another; it felt rushed and drawn out at the same time. Their interactions consisted of barbs thrown back and forth and then lusting, their relationship didn't have any solid meat to it or layered depth.

The second half goes back to the action suspense storyline with Quinn and Asher dodging the killer chasing them. The pieces for a compelling storyline were there, sex trafficking hidden under the guise of charity work and the question of high up does it go with the people involved. Unfortunately, it all kind of fell apart at the end. Quinn's investigating of who is trying to kill her felt lackadaisical and the puzzle pieces for who, what, and why ended up being jumbled together, with a lot feeling like they didn't quite match up or were missing; it didn't make complete sense in the end.

It looks like this might be one of the first type (suspense/thriller) of story this author has tried writing and I definitely see potential here. Like I said, the beginning was highly engaging, I think the author just needs more experience tying everything together. There were some secondary characters (namely, Asher's brothers) that felt like they might be setting up to get their own stories; it would be interesting to see the author's growth in those.

Yvonne Cruz says

I received this ARC copy from Netgalley and Montlake Publishing for an honest review. What drew me to it was the summary and the cover.

That said , all I can say , WOW!!! It was an excellent story. If you are a fan of Maya Banks, you will become a fan of Ms Price as well. Ms. Price's characters are complex, well developed, imperfect and strong. I appreciated that she brought into light the after effects of war on our troops.

The story centers around Quinn and Asher. Quinn is a photo-journalist who has just returned to the USA after 2 years abroad. Her last location was in Haiti where she discovered and documented human trafficking. Upon returning to the US , she meets with the Attorney General and that's when her troubles begin. Asher is a friend of her brother-in-law's. Asher and Quinn met at her sister's and Nikko's wedding, and did NOT get along.

But Nikko an ex-military man, sends her to Asher. an ex-Special Forces commander, so he can keep her safe. Needless to say , sparks flare, at first not in a good way, but they make a truce. In the mean time, the killer after her seems to always find her and more than once almost succeeds. Sexual tension builds up and boy, do they ignite.

I am hoping that there will be future stories that include Asher's brothers.