



Hard to Handle

Christine Warren

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The only male among four sisters, Michael Drummond is no stranger to women's strength and formidable will. But when a fierce woman warrior from another realm bursts into his life, bringing with her a battle between good and evil, Michael is overcome by an explosive dose of desire that only this stunningly beautiful woman can inspire.

The first and only of her kind, Ash is a lone female gargoyle, a creature destined to protect mankind from Demons determined to unleash their darkest forces.

But her bone-deep instinct to do battle is turned off-kilter by her untamed attraction to the dangerously handsome human she can't stay away from. If they manage to keep the world safe, can they turn the passion crackling between them into a love that will withstand the test of time?

Hard to Handle Details

Date : Published February 7th 2017 by St. Martin's Press

ISBN : 9781250077387

Author : Christine Warren

Format : Mass Market Paperback 296 pages

Genre : Romance, Paranormal Romance, Fantasy, Paranormal, Magic

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From Reader Review Hard to Handle for online ebook

♥ WishfulMiss ♥ says

. . . love is the greatest weapon the Light has against the Darkness. Love is a source of happiness, of joy, of contentment. It's a source of *life*, because people who love each other build lives together. They build families together. The Light doesn't care who's male and who's female and which one carries the sword in the family. The Light just wants us to love.

Aaahhh! That line was so beautiful and had me feeling all mushy inside! I loved this read. I loved that there was a role reversal, because Ash is the first female Guardian in the history of their existence and she was such a warrior. Definitely no damsel in distress here! She was freakin AWESOME!

Lol, her H, Drum took some getting used to. I admit at first I found him to be too much of a scaredy-cat and I wanted him to be more assertive but after taking a step back and reevaluating him, I can see that his reactions (although OTT) seemed the kind of reaction a normal average guy would have when faced with the end of humanity as we know it. I get it, doesn't mean I had to like how long it took for him to stop his whining and step up, but I get him a bit better now. Once he accepted his role in the grand scheme of things he was 100% better imo.

This had some crazy fight scenes that were done really well and the smexy times were pretty hot. Especially if the fast and hard variety is up your alley. This is part of an ongoing series and this is the fifth installment so there are four other couples we see and hear about that, if you're not familiar with, might get a bit confusing trying to keep them straight. I didn't think it effected the story's impact at all and I was still able to really get into Ash and Drum's story.

The romance was speed-of-light fast! One minute Drum is mistrustful, resentful and a huge mother effin jerk to Ash and then BAM! He's overruled by his libido and all up in that poor little gargoyle! I definitely think that a bit more time could have been invested in Drum and Ash getting over their initial dislike for each other before things went down that road, but it all worked out in the end and I was just happy Ash got her mate! Oh, and that the end of the world as we know it was averted . . . until the next book! Haha!

*** ARC provided for an honest review ***

Heather says

The next installment of Christine Warren's Gargoyle series introduces us to a twist in the plot. Guardians are supposed to be male, they have always been male, until now. Ash is summoned after one of her brethren is destroyed and she doesn't understand why she exists. Michael is present when she is summoned and he is very hard-headed in his belief that magic does not exist. Even when it is before his eyes he wants to refuse it, and Ash's, existence which of course brings tension between the couple. He hates the fact that he is thrust into a world he doesn't want to belong to and he takes his anger out on Ash. Their passion when it happens is so explosive, I loved it. They were intense and once they give in, it is all over for the both of them. They, individually, of course, acknowledge that the other is their mate. Ash doesn't believe she will have a happy ending like her brothers because she is female and the story of the original 7 Guardians finding their mates can't include her because she isn't into females. She wants Michael but doesn't believe she will end up having him as her mate. The battles are intense and two previous Guardians and their mates come to aid Ash and Michael save his sister and the world from another Demon being freed from its prison. I

enjoyed their story, I loved their passion, and I was entertained from beginning to end. Warren knows how to tell a tale of love, passion, and excitement. This was a Netgalley read.

Teresa says

will post review tomorrow

Paraphrodite says

Solid 3 stars.

The premise of a female gargoyle Guardian "Ash" was interesting. Unfortunately, Drum as the ignorant male "Warden" was a bit of a jerk. And it was hard to believe that all it took was a romp with Ash for him to change so drastically.

There were a lot of repetitive introspection that got a bit tired, but I did like it when some of the previous couples make an appearance to help with the latest disaster. And I hope Drum's younger sister Maeve gets her own Guardian, because she seems quite plucky.

Celestine says

I had to seriously harden my heart for this review. Plus talk myself into it. Be brave. Because I feckin' (to use Michael Drummond's Irish slang) was disappointed.

This is a house-published book by an author with 30-some books under her belt. It is the fifth in a paranormal gargoyle series that averages ratings above four stars. I hope the other four were better, because I was underwhelmed by the lack of chemistry between the love interests, ticked off at the pacing, and irritated by the hyperactive, scattershot approach to the demonic minions and the mystical hyperbole it takes to conquer them. Maybe these deficiencies would not have been so glaring if I had read the first four books in the series, but I didn't. I walked away from this book thinking it tried to be a standalone and didn't come close to achieving it.

Female gargoyle Ash has been suddenly called to life in Dublin, Ireland to fight evil spawning in the region. On the night of her birth, she encounters brother / sister duo Michael and Maeve Drummond. There is an instant attraction on Drum's part to the Amazonian warrior with wings and shapely thighs. Sadly, the love connection is hampered by the coldness of Ash and the immaturity that leeches out between Maeve and her brother. There is a considerable amount of disrespect between the siblings (Maeve smacks Drum in the back of the head in front of a complete stranger, and it becomes a "thing" in the novel, plus he is continually chided by the women in his life for his lack of manners). I think these little arguments were supposed to be cute; it simply made Drum seem even less of a hero to me. Add in his constant yelling and grouching and grumpiness, and I was truly turned off his character at the beginning. Fortunately, Warren seems to have forgotten that quirk in his personality by late in the book.

The pacing. It was a problem. Certain things are repeated again and again. If I had to read one more time about how irritated Drum was at having his bartender life interrupted by the stone woman, I was going to scream. And that was just in the first 25% of the book. There were also inconsequential scenes that would receive undue attention, such as the PAGES devoted to setting up a camp site and cleaning a burn wound, while what truly interested me - Drum learning his Warden magic - got ONE SENTENCE. Grrrr.

Finally, there is a lot of telling, preaching and inside the head convincing, rather than experiencing. The sermon on love conquering all at the end was a purely lazy device. So was the clumsy explanation of the dimensions, the planes, the Seven, the Shadow, the Darkness, the ghouls - yeah, you get the point. Both Ash and Drum had to have conversations inside their head to convince themselves they were in love. It certainly couldn't have been done through romantic tension (because there was none) or through imminent danger because the author was too busy throwing yet another mystical being and new magical talent out for there to be an emotional epiphany. The cornucopia of villains was ridiculous. Most were lucky to last for two pages. Such a missed chance for the development of a true villain or terror. It felt like Harry Potter on steroids at times, and the villains were less menacing. I expected more since we are constantly told it is an end of the world scenario. Sadly, the protectors of the Earth are a nitwit band of humans and gargoyles who digress into comparisons with Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote, and worry about their "preplan plan" and their "actual plan plan."

Book source: ARC from NetGalley.

Mindy Lou's Book Review says

3.5 Stars!

I read a gargoyle story years ago on fan fiction and really liked it so I was very curious about this book. Being a female gargoyle, Ash was a great character. I had no issues with her as this role even though you might associate a gargoyle as male. Also I think the author did a good job of making her attractive. Gargoyle's in general are not pretty. This was definitely a unique story and while I had no issues with Ash as a gargoyle, I didn't like Drum at first. He came off as a bit of a coward to me in the beginning. He wanted to get rid of Ash as soon as he met her and wasn't going to help her if it wasn't for his sister nagging him into it. I just like a stronger male in my stories. Overall, a great read and I really want to try one of the other books with the male gargoyles. This can be read as a standalone. ARC provided by NetGalley.

Cassandra says

My Thoughts - 5 out of 5 Unicorns - I loved it!!

***I choose what I read and review based on what intrigues me!!

The cover is deceiving because you think you are looking at the Guardian, but you are not! Tricky Tricky!

This is the 5th book in the series, and it is for adults only due to the steamy content. I highly recommend reading the series in order because the characters are much better when you understand them through their own book story :)

This book departs from tradition, and I loved it! I was very confused in the beginning, but I don't usually read the blurbs because I like to be surprised. And I was surprised!

At first I thought Drum was a tool, but he was protective where his family was concerned which I admired. I think he didn't realize how much potential he had in the wake of his mom and sisters' talents and thinking his was nothing of value and only a parlor trick. I grow fond of him especially his protective streak. Ash is a typical warrior and also more lost than most Guardians due to the circumstance surrounding her. She is just as protective as Drum, and it makes for entertainment for sure! Of course, I really loved when Kylie and Wynn joined with snarky conversations that are most amusing. I couldn't put this book down, and I'm sick as a dog right now!

I highly recommend this book and series to all readers to love rock hard men...and woman....get your minds out of the gutters...gargoyles rule! You definitely want to read if you love Christine's work too! I can't wait to see what Christine sculpts next!

Bayareabookaholic says

A gargoyle is summoned from the earth to resist the Dark- there is supposed to be an assisting Warden to greet her, instead she finds Maeve a woman who sees the future and her brother Drum who can tell you where lost things are found. This motley crew are challenged with resisting one of the greatest challenges presented by the Dark in Aeons...

Marta Cox says

As a long time fan of this authors Others series it was a no brainier for me to read this her new Gargoyle series and what fun it has been so far. With this the fifth instalment though she takes a whole new departure and introduces the very first female Guardian! Yep there have always been seven male Guardians to rise up alongside their human Wardens and battle the evil Demons but this time surely someone has made a mistake? Well Ash looks and acts like her Gargoyle brothers and she too knows her sacred duty but how can she proceed without a Warden to guide her?

Well allow me to introduce Drum. He is part of an Irish family who have what I can only describe as 'talents'. Powers, abilities if you will that his family have found pretty useful. Yet when Drum and his young sister Maeve get caught up with Ash it's clear she is going to need more than just human help, she will need to find her Warden and luckily Drum has the ability to somehow find things so perhaps a person won't be too difficult? It's going to have to be quick though as the Order of Eternal Darkness have just decided to step up their game!

I really liked the idea of a warrior woman stepping up and upping the ante. Yet I just found the first half of this slightly less frantically paced than usual. It took me a while to realise what was wrong and then after a situation occurs that necessitates other Guardians and Wardens getting involved I knew what had niggled away at me. You see Ash whilst brave and driven isn't as snarky or funny as previous heroines. So when they appear and it's all lets get cheeky, wind each other up and generally be humourous whilst trying to save the world the lighter touch just worked.

So much more happening in the second half which definitely worked for me. Drum and Ash are clearly going to be a good team but he did kind of spring things on her. One minute she's a stone creature who can become flesh and the next she's being kissed by an inebriated Drum with no idea why he wants to kiss her! A slight spoiler in that their physical relationship takes off quickly with the innocent Ash suddenly giving barrel racing cowgirls a run for their money and I was kind of tempted to shout yeehaw !

I did enjoy the story and I'm left wondering if any of Drews siblings will feature again. Maeve was certainly interesting but the rest of Drews family with the possible exception of his mum didn't seem to be as vivid

which given their 'talents' seemed a shame. Luckily though with two Guardians and their mates popping in it turned out to be a book that entertained me and Ash finally got to see that love could conquer all. These are my voluntary thoughts on an advance reader copy and is my honest opinion.

All Things Urban Fantasy says

Review courtesy of All Things Urban Fantasy:

I don't think I've read too many stories featuring gargoyles, and I loved that Ash, the heroine in *HARD TO HANDLE* is the first female gargoyle to ever exist. She's been summoned because evil is brewing, and she's ready to fight with claws, wings and a giant two headed axe. She rocked, but it was her romantic interest that really sold the book for me.

Although he isn't a giant winged stone creature, Drum isn't as helpless as an everyday human. His family has various gifts, and his centers on finding lost things. He's always passed it off as a parlour trick, because he knows that if it's known about or can be used to find missing people, he won't allow himself not to use it. It made for a particularly interesting character, who wants to help people, and knows once he starts, his conscience won't let him stop. It's very rare in paranormal romance to find male characters who show weakness, especially fear. Drum's protectiveness of his family is the only thing that convinces him to help Ash when she needs to find her Warden, the human who summoned her.

There are fun bits of humour throughout, which keep the tone light even though the characters are facing the end of the world.

"I always thought it was kinda there in the name. Hell. Mouth. Seems pretty self-explanatory. Didn't you guys get Buffy the Vampire Slayer over here?"

"Please, God and Saint Peter, don't tell me we're going to have to deal with the vampires."

Dag looked disdainful [...] "Do not be ridiculous. Such creatures do not exist."

"Well, that's something, I suppose."

The writing is much better than other paranormal romances I've read before, with the characters examining their feelings with eloquence and interesting metaphors that make reading a breeze even between the action scenes. Although there was a bit of a drag when the book inevitably caught up readers to the four previous books' heroes and heroines, I quickly forgave it and hopped back into the action. *HARD TO HANDLE* does feel like a middle of the series book, but there was enough fun and action to make it worth reading whether you're into the series already or not.

Sissy's Romance Book Review says

Hard to handle 'Hard to Handle' by Christine Warren is book 5 in the "Gargoyles" series. This is the story of Michael Drummond 'Drum' and Ash. I have not read the other books yet so for me this is a standalone book. Drum has a bar in Ireland called Skin and Bones where he also has all sisters for siblings. But they do have a few special gifts that sets them apart. Drum is able to find things. When out with his sister she senses

something and shortly after Ash appears. Ash is a woman Gargoyle who job is to protect humans. Her brothers have found their mates and Ash is certain that she will not. But the more she gets to know Drum and they start to discover more 'gifts' he didn't even know he had. It starts to work out that he might be her Warden. This was a exciting read that has made me want to read the other books in this series! "My honest review is for a special copy I voluntarily read."

April Symes says

Hard to Handle' by Christine Warren is book 5 in the Gargoyles series and wow it feels as fresh as if I was picking up and reading book 1. In this book, it is the story of Michael Drummond and Ash.

In this book, we are introduced to the first female Guardian/ gargoyle-- This book departs from tradition, because in previous books there were the male guardians to the female human Wardens but in this book, we have a female gargoyle which is totally awesome. Ash looks and acts like her Gargoyle brothers , she knows her what her sacred duty is but how can she proceed without a male Warden to guide her? Ahh that is where Michael Drummond aka Drum comes in.

Drum is part of an Irish family and they have certain talents or abilities. These abilities have come in pretty useful to him and his family, including his sister. Drum owns a bar , comes off at first as kind of a jerk but that is surface glance. He is very protective of his family and a bit unsure where he fits in because he doesn't think he has any of their talents when he does, his hasn't come thru yet. Oh he will grow on you and his interaction with this female Gargoyle is unique—Ash is fierce and independent —there is a chemistry, a heat between them. He doesn't know what to make of her but he is interested in her. She has come to save the world and is ready for battle while Drum is trying to figure out what is going on.

There is a bit more action in this book than in previous books, in my opinion. There is also a lot more sexual tension and humor between the MC. The action and romance is great and while some spots did run slow, overall it was a good read. I loved Drum's sister and I hope she gets her own book soon. Overall, this was a solid Gargoyles read and I look forward to the next in the series.

My rating: 4.5 stars *****

"I voluntarily reviewed an Advance Reader Copy of this book in exchange for an honest review****"

Nalla Reads says

Originally posted on NallaReads

ARC received from the author for an honest review

When The Darkness' threat looms closer than ever before how will The Light find a new way to stop them? For the first time in Guardian history, Ash has awoken as the first of her kind, a female Guardian in the midst of a war between good and evil. Michael Drummond has always been around gifted women, sisters with innate abilities who tend to save the day. But when his sister's premonitions lead him to Ash's claws...he's got to open up to a whole new world he never new existed.

The past books in the series has featured all sassy female Wardens and male Guardians whose attitudes reflect their stony nature. This book was so refreshing that Warren decided to go with a female Guardian! Drum was his own style..not quite sassy but sarcastic and stubborn. The banter between the stone faced Ash and Drum was so entertaining to read. I loved Warren's take on Drum's female family members and their "abilities". They were just enough of old Irish tales that it held a sense of superstition behind them.

We got to see a glimpse into each of the previous Guardians lives and even Wynn and Kylie joined in he adventure when The Darkness's operations moved to the eastern world. Warren always writes the perfect amount of action and suspense as to how the Wardens and Guardians can save the day. In theory we'll have two more novels and two more Guardians to discover!!!

A SEDUCTION STRONGER THAN STONE

The only male among four sisters, Michael Drummond is no stranger to women's strength and formidable will. His Dublin pub, the Skin & Bones, is his refuge, a reassuringly masculine retreat. Until a fierce woman warrior from another realm bursts into his life, bringing with her a battle between good and evil...and an explosive dose of desire.

The first and only of her kind, Ash is a lone female gargoyle, a creature destined to protect mankind from Demons determined to unleash their darkest forces. But her arrival on Earth is more confusing than she expected: her bone-deep instinct to do battle is matched only by her untamed attraction to stubborn, stalwart Drum. If they manage to keep the world safe, can they turn the passion crackling between them into a love that will withstand the test of time?

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Christine Warren is the author of the Novels of the Others, including *New York Times* Bestsellers ***Big Bad Wolf***, ***Walk on the Wild Side***, and ***One Bite with a Stranger***. Born and raised in coastal New England, Christine Warren now lives as a transplant in the Pacific Northwest. When not writing (as if that ever happens), she enjoys horseback riding, playing with her pets, identifying dogs from photos of their underbellies, and most of all reading things someone else had to agonize over. She has been assimilated by Twitter (as @ChrstineWarren) and Facebook, where you can follow her thoughts and witness her being ridiculous firsthand, and she always enjoys hearing from readers via email sent to Christine@ChristineWarren.net.

Carol [Goodreads Addict] says

Hard to Handle is book five in the Gargoyles series by Christine Warren. In this installment the battle continues against the evil that is threatening mankind and all we hold dear. But the newest addition to the band of Guardians is not another sexy male guardian but a female.

Michael Drummond or Drum, owns a bar called Skin and Bones in Dublin, Ireland and lives a happy if not uneventful life. If you can call uneventful when you are the brother of four sisters. The Drummond family, though, do have gifts that set them apart from others. Drum can find things, something he considers a silly parlor trick. But his sister, Maeve, has the gift of sight. The Drummond family is tight knit, the bond of love that ties them together goes deep. That is how this all began, Drum not wanting his sister to be out alone that night, the night his life changed. The night he met Ash.

In the previous books we have met four guardians, gargoyles that were awoken from their stony slumber by their female wardens who would eventually become their mates. All four of these guardians were hot, sexy and alpha males. Historically, guardians were always male, until Ash woke up. She is just as shocked. She knows she is the first of her kind. She has no idea why she was awoken or who woke her. Michael and his sister, Maeve, are the only ones present and neither of them are wardens. But she has no choice but to accept their help until she can figure things out.

“She was a warrior who couldn’t find the battlefield, and off it, her purpose became unclear. The only foe she could see at the moment was uncertainty, and against that, her axe was useless.”

It doesn’t take long for the evil to seek out Ash and it becomes clear in the heat of battle that Drum possesses gifts he wasn’t even aware he had. It also becomes clear that Drum is her warden. In the beginning their relationship consisted of bickering and anger. Drum did not want this. But the more time they spent together, the attraction became stronger until they could no longer fight it.

“His last thought was that the woman above him had just changed his life forever. After this, he would never have to watch her walk away, because wherever she wanted to go, he would go right behind her.”

As Ash and Drum gather forces for the epic battle, their bond continues to grow. Ash, though, believes that the fate of her four brothers finding their mates would not apply to her. She believes that after the evil has been vanquished, she will be sent back to live as stone until she is needed once again. But she can’t imagine the pain of leaving Drum. She is determined to absorb every bit of joy from their bond as she can in the time she has with him.

“Somehow, in the last few days full of chaos and fear and danger, this unhuman woman had become Michael Drummond’s true north. Whenever he looked around, his compass pointed straight at her.”

I have to say that with this one, I missed some of the humor I enjoyed in the first books. But as always, the last twenty percent of this one was intense as the showdown was upon them. During this time the bond between Ash and Drum had grown so strong that I finally really felt their connection. There are a lot of details regarding the dark forces at work. Perhaps it’s the length of time between books but I did have a bit of

trouble keeping the details straight. There are supposed to be seven guardians and since five have awoken so far in this series, I assume there will be two more books. I look forward to the guardians finally winning over evil and getting their chance at living happily ever after with their mates in peace.

Douglas Meeks says

I have read all of these gargoyle books and while all of them have been good I felt like we were getting into a bit of a rut with them, this book brings us out of such a thought and adds a bit more humor into the mix also which was a welcome addition.

Ash and Drum were a good match once they decided not to hate each other. The romance was done well and the overall plot was very good although I would have enjoyed seeing some of the secondary characters fleshed out a bit more (his family).

There is a good amount of action which makes for a good story, the sex was IMHO a bit overdone but not horribly and it had a few things that did NOT go like you thought things were going to go which is usually a good thing and I felt it was here.

Bottom Line: I really enjoyed this story possibly more than I did the last 2 but I have loved them all but the last one to really "knock my socks off" was book 1 but there is an overarching storyline that we are slowly getting to and looks like it will be one of those battles to save the Earth but the real reason I like these books is usually the romance from unsuspecting females with previously hunks of rock :) While I AM an action oriented reader I would have liked a bit more romantic comedy interjected in the next one as this one did and maybe less prior knowledge. 4 Stars and highly recommended.
