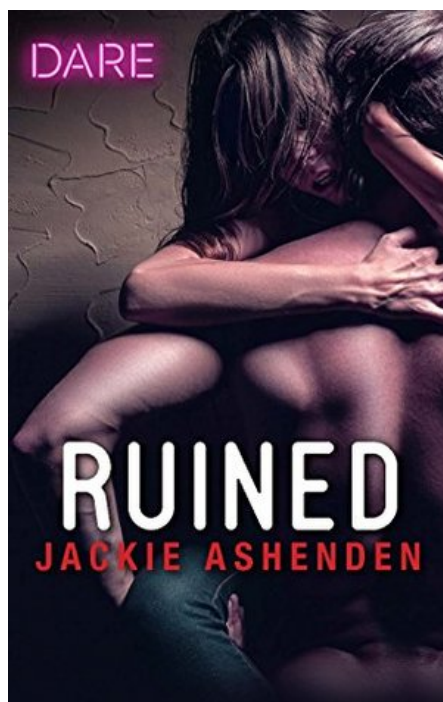




Ruined

Jackie Ashenden

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Ruined Jackie Ashenden

“We have to act like a real couple...”

The solution? Mind-blowingly real pleasure!

Dane “Smoke” Kingsolver and Cat Livingston need to fake a relationship to get her abusive ex off her back. Convincing people their friendship has heated up to scorching levels is unexpectedly easy! But when their red-hot chemistry threatens to ruin everything they’ve ever known can they go back to what they had before? And do they even want to?

Ruined Details

Date : Published March 1st 2018 by Harlequin Dare (first published February 22nd 2018)

ISBN :

Author : Jackie Ashenden

Format : Kindle Edition 172 pages

Genre : Contemporary, Romance, Contemporary Romance

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From Reader Review Ruined for online ebook

Lynsey A says

Liked but didn't love this first book in The Knights of Ruin series. I really only read it because I wanted to read Destroyed, the second book.

The heroine annoyed me at times with her lack of trust in Dare (or Smoke, his biker name). She has known him for 20 years. They've been friends forever. However, she let her past with her awful biker father and her abusive ex-husband cloud her judgement. I get it. She has a painful past but this man has been by her side and supportive of her, never betraying her, for **TWENTY YEARS**. The lack of faith in him was upsetting.

Dare had his own issues too that flared up at the end of the book and I feel was just done to add unnecessary drama.

Still I enjoyed the book and there were some quite hot love scenes between the two. (view spoiler)

The stuff with the abusive ex and his threats to take away the daughter were resolved off-page and I didn't like that. He was a vile human being but because his father is the Chief of Police and the Chief is in good with Keep, the President of the club, he basically got away with beating Cat. Didn't like it.

Maria Rose says

Ruined by Jackie Ashenden is the first story in The Knights of Ruin series. It's a steamy, edgy motorcycle club romance with a friends to lovers theme.

Cat Livingston rues the day she married her abusive ex-husband Justin but abides by the court agreement that gives him access to their six year old daughter. When he tries to break the rules and not give the girl back, Cat turns to the one man who has never let her down, her friend since childhood, Dane 'Smoke' Kingsolver.

Smoke is a member of the Knights of Ruin motorcycle club. He lives by the club rules, but he's always there for his friend Cat. To help her he needs to get her under club protection which means taking Cat as his old lady, at least in name only. It'll mean acting like a couple in public to make it look real, as everyone in the club already knows they are friends. Smoke's lusted after Cat for years but had never made a move before. Now that he has a chance to show her how good things can be between them, can he convince her to make their pretend relationship into the real thing?

For more of this review please visit Harlequin Junkie: <http://harlequinjunkie.com/review-ru...>

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

Leila Anani says

Cat is a single mother who's asshole ex is trying for custody of her daughter claiming she's an unfit mother. She turns to her best friend of over 20 years Smoke, a biker, for help. He suggests that they pretend to be an item so that a) the single mother stigma won't wash and 2) she'll then have an army at her back as his entire

club will protect her. She reluctantly agrees. The only issue - Smoke's been in love with her all along and soon realises that he doesn't want to pretend and wants to make her his for real.

Lots to recommend this one - I love the friends to lovers trope and this novel handles that really well, Cat really doesn't want to lose her only friend so her reluctance is well motivated. Cat and Smoke are really good together, I love how he bolsters her up and how much he loves her daughter - and the ring that he has specially made for her is such a beautiful touch.

Of course, you do have to suspend your disbelief that they've been friends for over 20 years and she's never even had an inkling that he might be interested in her - seriously? in all that time? not once? Also considering how alpha Smoke is - how the hell did Cat manage to hook up with her ex in the first place?

The other thing is Cat's submissiveness. I tend to prefer my heroines with a tad more aggression. Saying that she does punch Justin at one point and realises her power over Smoke and tries to use it. But Smoke gets her fired, seduces her against her will, tells her what to wear and beats up her ex - while she just laments how powerless she is. I would have liked a teeny bit more strength from her in certain places.

Really like the biker/code setting and this is a surprisingly emotionally rich romance which is nicely balanced with the sexy scenes. I also like how it jumps back and forth between Cat and Smoke's POV - which adds an extra depth to their character/motivations. A solid 3.5* and probably my 2nd favourite Dare title to date.

Carol [Goodreads Addict] says

RATING 4.5 STARS

Ruined is book one in Jackie Ashenden's new series, The Knights of Ruin. This book reminded me why I read Jackie's books. The writing was intense and compelling and edgy and I couldn't put it down.

Cat Livingston and Dane "Smoke" Kingsolver have been friends for twenty-three years, since Cat was five and Smoke was seven. They have been best friends through all of the bad things that they each had experienced, always being there for each other. Smoke was the only person that hadn't hurt Cat. Her own father hadn't wanted her. And when she thought she was in love with the Chief of Police's son, Justin, he had hurt her too, both physically and emotionally. The only good thing she had from Justin was her beautiful daughter, Annie. Aside from a little crush she had on Smoke when she was a teenager, she had never let herself think of him any way other than her best friend.

Now, Justin is making noises about trying to take her precious daughter from her. He doesn't really even want her, he just wants to hurt Cat. So Smoke has an idea of how to protect them.

Smoke is a member of the Knights of Ruin. It's the only family he's ever known. Except for Cat and Annie. He had kept his feelings for Cat a secret for so many years, trying to lose himself with other women. But now she needed his help, his protection. He would do anything for either Cat or Annie. He loved that little girl like she was his own. He has a plan but he's pretty sure Cat isn't going to like it. And it will finally put an end to his years of longing. He was finally going to make Cat his.

Both Cat and Smoke have darkness in their pasts. Cat doesn't ever want to let herself fall for another man

and allow herself to be hurt like that again. But there is something about Smoke that she can't deny. Could her feelings have been there for him all along? That she just didn't want to see them? That she was too afraid to see them?

I loved this book. These two were both so broken and yet so strong at the same time. Cat had trusted in her friendship with Smoke practically all her life. But she had to let down all her barriers to trust him in a different way, with her heart. And Smoke was so lucky to have his Uncle who was also the President of his MC at his back, to set him straight.

Cat and Smoke's relationship is smoking hot. Smoke has his own ways of breaking down Cat so she'll abandon her fears and trust him. We'll just say he has a very dominant way about him. The only thing I can complain about is that the ending was just so fast. After everything that happened, I feel like I wanted a little more detail. I really did enjoy this, though, and look forward to more from this series.

"He'd wrecked me.

He'd ruined me.

And I would never be the same again."

Natalia says

Really safe Mc story...

There are some party scenes but really generic...

Smoke was a amazing H... sweet, considered, possessive at the right level!!!

Cat for me was a little meehhh.

The sex was hot hot

Stefanie London says

I got to read an early copy of Ruined by Jackie Ashenden and I finished it last night. Holy smokes (see what I did there!) I enjoyed this book so much. BFFs to lovers will forever be one of my favourite tropes, and this book was so flipping good.

MC romances are not usually my go-to, but I'm a fan of Jackie's writing so I was thrilled to get a chance to read this before it came out. It did not disappoint. Cat and Smoke are so sexy and real, I felt their connection and loved how much they cared about one another. I was cheering for their HEA from page one. This story was hot and brought all the feels. Highly recommend.

Sparklybearsy^o.,.•~» says

A solid 3.75 MC stars

This was a first from this author and I think I saw the book on social media somewhere and jumped on the friends to lovers book.

Set in the MC world, always a favourite of mine and this didn't disappoint at all.

Cat and Smoke have been fiends for a long time, only Smoke has feelings for her but since he didn't catch any back from her he's kept himself in the friendzone while she got with someone else and had a kid. It's that ex now who is hassling her that Smoke steps in and she pretends she's his old lady to warrant protection from his club. And it's while in the fake relationship real sexy times begin to happen and it's hot hot hot.

I'm a real sucker for an overly protective chivalrous hero. If he's gonna beat up the bad guy and also make sure you've eaten then I'm bound to love him.

Cat and Smoke's story was an engaging one and I really enjoyed it.

Donna Repsher says

I was so excited when I learned that Jackie Ashenden was writing another MC series, since her entry in the Deacons of Bourbon Street MC series, the first MC romance I ever read, is what got me hooked on MC series, and once again, I'm hooked and I'm loving it. Ruined gets 5 stars from this reader.

Cat and Smoke met and became lifelong best friends when they were young children and neighbors, aged 5 and 7. Through all sorts of dreadful and abusive situations, as both children and adults, including Cat's unfortunate marriage to and divorce from Justin, the father of her daughter, Annie, their friendship never wavered. Even when Smoke joined The Knights of Ruin MC, something Cat hates with good reason, their friendship remained unbreakable, but all that is about to change in a major way.

As the novel opens, Cat shows up at the Knights of Ruin clubhouse, demanding to see Smoke. When she finally is allowed inside, she finds Smoke in a back hallway being "serviced" by one of the MC groupies, but when he learns that Justin has failed to return Annie from his visitation with her, Smoke is all business, and when he arrives at Justin's home, Justin already has 6-year-old Annie in his car and she announces to Smoke that they're going on vacation--i.e., he's planning to run away with Annie. Smoke has no problem getting Annie away from her father, but when Justin announces his intention to seek full custody of Annie, he hopes that his MC club will help him keep Cat and Annie safe. When he asks the president of the club, Keep, to help him, his request is refused. It turns out that Justin is the son of the local police chief, and the club has arrived at a truce with the police. Thwarting Justin's plan or hurting him in any way would end that truce. There is only one way that his club will help protect them, and that's if Cat becomes Smoke's old lady.

To say that Cat isn't thrilled with Smoke's idea is a huge understatement. She doesn't want to risk their more than 20 years of friendship. Smoke is the only person in her life who has never hurt or disappointed her. What she doesn't know is that although Smoke tells her that their new status will be just a sham to get the club to protect her and her daughter from her ex, that isn't quite his true intention, and that's when one of my favorite tropes kicks in, and this becomes a very hot, very graphic, friends-to-lovers story, but there are more than a few bumps in the road ahead for these interesting, engaging, and emotionally wounded characters.

This novel grabbed me from the very first page and it was almost impossible to put down. I loved that it was written with alternating narration, which lets the reader climb inside each of the characters minds to know what they're thinking and feeling, something that Jackie Ashenden accomplishes beautifully. My only wish is that it had been a longer read, which is a good sign that I wanted to delve deeper into these characters and see more of the early years of their friendship, but I always feel that way when I'm absolutely loving a novel, and this one, though gritty, violent, and raunchy, and definitely for mature readers only, was the perfect series opener. I can't wait to read the novels that will follow it.

I voluntarily read an advance reader copy of this novel. The opinions expressed are my own.

Geraldine Sadiku says

Hot sexy read set involving a friends to lovers story and so much more set around mc makes this one hot hot read.

Fiona Marsden says

I hate rap music. I make an exception for Eminem who somehow manages to sneak into my consciousness. Why is this important in a book review, you ask?

I hate motorcycle club romance. It's not my cup of cocoa. I cannot glamorize MC clubs in my head. I did NOT watch Sons of Anarchy.

However. I read this book. I've followed Jackie's career from the start and I like her writing. Don't always like her subjects.

The first time we see the hero "Smoke" he's with a MC groupie. I was like "eeeewww". But I got past it. It technically wasn't cheating because he and Cat were not together together. And it had a purpose. They've been friends for like a zillion years since he was seven and she was five but Cat has never willingly seen Smoke as a sexual being.

Now she needs help because her creepy ex is playing games and using their daughter. Another thing I don't particularly like. Cat has been married to an abusive loser. What was wrong with you, girl? You even bred with him. Damn.

So, after all these things I don't like, you wonder why the four stars?

Because once Smoke and Cat get together, it's explosive, it's emotional. It's damn good. Also a teensy bit HOT. *fans self*

It reminds me of all the reasons why I like to read her books. And also all the reasons why I sometimes hesitate.

I won a copy of this book on-line.

Helen says

I firstly have to say that I am a big fan of MS Ashenden's stories and was thrilled with this one a MC story, a friends to lovers story and another emotionally powerful steamy and sexy story that I practically gulped down.

Cat Livingston's childhood was pretty bad but she always had her best friend Smoke (Dane Kingsolver) there for her even as she grew up and fell for Justin Grant the father of her daughter Annie and he turned bad,

Smoke was there when she needed him, best friends forever. So when her ex is making trouble again Smoke is there again but this time the friendship heats up big time.

Smoke has grown up around a cruel father his childhood was not good either but Cat was always there for him, these days Smoke is part of a MC Knights of Ruin and he will still do anything for his Cat and now her daughter Annie. To protect them from her ex he decides that she needs to be his old lady Cat is so against this and the emotions run wild.

This story is fast paced and so very sensual, it is sexy hot as Smoke demands to protect at all costs and Cat, wow she shows strength and courage after what she has been through, but she fights Smoke all of the way because she does not want to lose her best friend but in the end when danger is close feelings and emotions blow up and love shines through. MS Ashenden you have done it again another story that is a keeper, fabulous hero and heroine strong, protective, and so very loving. I do highly recommend this one but keep a fan at the ready because it really is hot and erotic and even better it is the start of a series. I loved this one.

Lissanne says

Wow, this book was hot on every level it could have been. Cat and Dane have been best friends for decades, ever since they met when they were children. Of course, this book had me at 'best friends' since best friends to lovers is my favourite plot, hands down. Dane has loved her for years, but doesn't think she feels that way about him so he's bottled it for the sake of their friendship.

Cat has a six year old daughter, Annie, who loves Dane. Annie's father is Cat's douchebag ex, Justin, and she left him when he smacked her around one too many times. She works two jobs to support her daughter and lives in a crappy apartment. Justin is a lawyer and the chief of police's son, so when he threatens to go for custody of Annie, Cat turns to Dane, or Smoke, as he's referred to for most of this book (side note – motorcycle clubs are not my favourite trope, least of all because they all have club names which make me roll my eyes) for help. Cat knows Justin doesn't actually want Annie, but is only doing it to hurt her. So she asks her best friend for help.

Dane thinks the only way he can protect Cat and Annie is to have them under the protection of The Knights of Ruin, the MC club he's a member of. His uncle, Keep, is the president. The only way they'll protect the girls, however, is if they are part of the club, too – and the only way they can be is if Dane declares Cat to be his old lady to the club.

Cat doesn't take much persuading, because she's been hot for Dane for years but didn't think he thought of her like that, so she, too, has been hiding her feelings. When Dane suggests the plan, she says sex is off the table, but as soon as he tells the club they're together, he drags her into a corner and tells her to get down on her knees. Cat is helpless to resist and gives in to the lust and fire burning between them, and once it happens Dane refuses to pretend anymore. He wants Cat to be his old lady for real, and she's going to be because he won't take no for an answer.

They indulge in some seriously hot sex and Cat realises she's been in love with him all along, but is scared. Scared of losing him as a friend, scared of letting him in because he could ruin her. He shares her fears, but he wants a family. He wants to be Annie's father. So when Justin turns up at the unit and starts manhandling Cat, Dane beats the crap out of him.

Thinking he'll be facing jail time, he leaves Cat, even though he promised he never would. She's

heartbroken at the idea of living without him, and it's only when Keep tells him what a complete idiot he's being that he acknowledges it and goes back to the best thing that ever happened to him. I devoured this book. Read it. You won't be sorry.

Carissa says

I liked this book. If your looking for a quick mc read that has friends to lovers and marriage of convenience with a bit of an ex husband drama then give it a shot.

Timitra says

Rated 3.5 Stars

I liked Ruined but I didn't love it which mainly had to do with why Cat and Smoke got together and how said thing was treated as an afterthought. I don't want to say what it is because it isn't mentioned in blurb but you find out what it is on the first page. I wished the reason was more integrated into the story instead of it being used a prop to get the main characters together and yes I know the book is short but I still felt like it could've been more visible not just telling the reader such and such about it. I enjoy this author's work but this book didn't fully work for me.

Danielle says

Out of the three Harlequin Dares that I have read thus far, this one was definitely the hottest and sexiest one of them all. It was very racy. And like the hero's namesake, Smoke, this book was beyond smoking hot. This one had lots of chemistry going on. Lots of foreplay. And lots naughty times between Smoke and Cat.

Oh my goodness they just burned up the pages it was hard not to get hot and bothered. They had some of the hottest sexy times that I have read in quite awhile. That partly had to do with their insane chemistry, but the other part of it was they had this deep friendship that had developed over the course of twenty years, and they had quite a history together. They went through the ups and downs together. They just knew each other so well that they create this special bond with one other, a bond that went beyond just their chemistry. They had a trust there that was already built in before they engaged in some of those bedroom activities. So, it made the love scenes all the more powerful and poignant. It was something that they could only share with each other. And those loves scenes were doozies, let me tell you. That had to do with the love that they held for each other, and how it just built and built until it couldn't be contained anymore and was finally showed in a physical way. My favorite love scene was definitely when Cat finally gave up her control to Smoke and showed her trust in him as he did what he wanted to her, knowing he would never hurt her. It was a powerful scene, and it was nice to see Cat finally let go and let him in and admit her love for him to herself. Also a heartbreakingly beautiful moment was when Cat finally she told him that she loved him.

The fact this was a friends to lovers story was a plush too. This is my favorite trope of all time because there's already a established relationship between hero and heroine. I pointed to this above, but Cat and Smoke definitely had an intense friendship. A friendship that neither wanted to loose so neither one did anything to push their relationship to the next level so they held back. But with that came lots of intensity

and build up between the pair. Smoke was more cognizant about his feelings for Cat and wanting more while Cat kind of just was in denial about it and didn't think about it. So, there's was already this lovely anticipation between them once the book began, and I loved that especially when I came to realize that they both had feelings for one another, and that he always wanted more with her but never pushed. But I loved seeing the love and trust between the two of them and just special relationship that they had. It built so much to the story by the fact that they were friends first before they became lovers.

The reason that they had to face becoming lover was due to the fact that Cat's ex was threatening to take their daughter, and she needed help, and of course Smoke was right there for her to help and offer protection, but if they pretended to have a relationship then the MC club would put them under their protection as well. So, this added another layer to the story because of pretending, which was in fact very real. Nothing was fake about it. The only thing was Cat's denial that she had to quickly come to face because of the charade. Then she got into it so deeply, and as I said it turned very real quickly and things got released due to that denial.

What also was interesting for me was this was my first MC club type of romance. I knew that these were not suppose to be the most upstanding citizens of the world, but knew that the men had hearts of gold and they protected what they considered their own. And Smoke was a perfect example of that, but this book gave me a little taste of the MC club type world. I'll admit some parts were kind of shocking, and I didn't always like some of the things that were happening in that club, but it didn't deter from the story either. I think what really surprised me was how I wasn't bothered by how the women were treated in this book. They were treated like sex objects for the bikers pleasure, and they were also treated like possession like they were property and the biker could do what they wanted with their "property" aka women. Usually this would bug me to no end, and I would be utterly disgusted by the treated woman faced in this club, but again it didn't. I don't know why. Maybe it was how it was written, or I saw how Smoke treated Cat, and though he was possessive of her, he never treated her like his property or an object. That might have softened it for me. I don't if that's how all MC club type romances come off or if it was just the way this one was written, but this book was written in a way that it didn't turn me off.

I loved the character of Smoke. He was just the epitome of a classic bad boy, alpha male with a heart of gold. He was a beefcake. I just feel in love with him as soon as I saw him appear on the page. I loved how he was with Cat and her daughter. He was such a sweetheart to both of them. I could tell he genuinely cared about both of them and had for a very long time. He would do anything for them and sacrifice himself in the process. He denied his need for Cat for years believing he wasn't good enough for her, but once he realized that she in fact wanted him too, he went full speed ahead, and would refuse Cat to turn away from the powerful chemistry that they had and had always had. He loved bringing her pleasure and joy to her, and he was more than happy to help her with her vicious ex. He was very protective. He was a good man, and I really enjoyed him.

Though this book wasn't perfect and I had a couple issues with it, for most part it was really good and I enjoyed immensely. It was a plus that it was a friend to lovers story. Cat and Smoke had really nice chemistry and they were just smoking hot together. The love scenes were racy without being raunchy and beyond sexy with a big part of that having to do with the fact that Cat and Smoke already had this established relationship with feeling lingering beneath the surface that finally get dealt with. There was lovely anticipation and heat between them, and it was fun to see the explosion happen between the two of them. It was so good. I loved them together. But I also really loved how intense this book was from the love scenes to emotions to the danger of ex coming for Cat and her daughter. It reminded me a tad of a Lori Foster book, who I absolutely love as an author because she has so much richness to her stories. This one also had a lot going for it, and it kept me on my toes for sure. Getting a little taste of the MC club lifestyle was very interesting for me and makes me intrigued to read others stories like that. It was really the ultimate bad boy fantasy that could only be delivered in a romance novel. I can't wait to read more from this series, which I can see be very, very interesting.

