



Object of Desire

Dal Maclean

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Tom Gray is one of the world's top models—an effortless object of desire.

Self-contained, elusive and always in control, he's accustomed to living life entirely on his own terms.

But when Tom comes under suspicion in the gory death of his employer, his world spirals into chaos.

Someone's framing him. Someone's stalking him.

And as old secrets come to light, Tom finds his adversary always one step ahead.

Will Foster is the only man Tom trusts to help. But Tom brutally burned all bridges between them two years before, and Will paid a bitter price.

If he wants to survive, Tom must prove his innocence to Will—and to the world.

Object of Desire Details

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From Reader Review Object of Desire for online ebook

Renée says

I love a good story. And as the second book from this author, her storytelling ability is proven once again. I couldn't put this book down. The tale that she weaves, with all of its twists and turns, was so compelling.

Those who read Bitter Legacy will know exactly what I mean.

He felt as if he'd been doing that since he became a model, more or less. Standing by. Letting events and other people carry him along. Not paying attention. Self-absorption had got him here.

Tom Gray is a supermodel. And most relationships with the people in his life are unhealthy. We are in his head exclusively, and I can say that he was.....interesting.

He always winds up hurting the people in his life. Because if he hurts first, he can avoid the hurt?

But the one he hurt most is back in the picture. Tom is being framed for murder. And that's the thing with Tom. The list of people who could be bitter and "gunning for" Tom is extensive.

The mystery in this book is excellent. Everyone has a creep factor. Everyone could be the bad guy. I couldn't put the book down for this exact point. 5++++ stars for that.

The romance though.....

Will and Tom have a dysfunctional relationship. All because of Tom. **Daddy issues.**

And while I am happy to report a HFN with an epilogue a few months down the line showing more of an HEA, I'm not sure I bought it.

Groveling aside, I didn't really believe Tom's change of heart about relationships.

Will was all the things. Love him and, frankly, thought he could do a lot better than Tom.

Overall, this was a win. And bonus - we got cameos of Jamie and Ben from Bitter Legacy!

Dal is now an autobuy for me. I get completely engrossed in her stories. Recommended!

Jewel says

?Dal Maclean has done it again. I read this all day, yesterday, and stayed up way too late last night, too. I did not want to put this book down. I was riveted.

I loved the suspense and the complicated MC's and the second chances trope and the total, honest to goodness -- MIND FUCK of a suspense plot.? ?Like this author's previous book, this one ?has romance,

suspense, at least one MC that isn't entirely likable (or entirely unlikable), a plot that keeps you guessing, and a hard fought HEA. ?

Tom Gray was an aloof, commitment-phobic fashion model. He shies away from anything resembling an actual relationship and insists that he's just not cut out for love and romance. In truth, Tom has some serious abandonment issues, so he always leaves first. That way, he is able to exert some control in a situation where he is afraid to be powerless.

Will? Foster? is the only man that Tom almost let himself care for. Like all the others, at the first hint of Will getting too attached, Tom was outta there. But Will wasn't like the other men in Tom's life and Tom never stopped caring. Will was a detective and very steadfast. Gorgeous, but not shallow. And when he fell, he fell hard. Losing Tom gutted him and sent into motion a series of events that altered his life.

After two years apart, and a whole lot of hurt, Tom and Will are thrown together again because Will is very good at solving mysteries and finding information. Their second chance does not come easily, and there is a fair amount of hurt to overcome before they can go on. This was a second chance story done right, IMO.

What to say about the suspense, though? Dayum, I can tell you that at 20% I thought it was (view spoiler) and at 35%, I thought (view spoiler) and by 80% I thought (view spoiler). In the end, though, it wasn't anything like I hypothesized. NOT A THING. The last 10% I was changing my hypothesis nearly page by page, and I was having a blast!

Holy fuck, Dal, thank you for this. Just -- thank you!

My dearest Christelle gifted me this book for my birthday! Thank you, love!!! ♥♥♥

Kaje Harper says

This book blends a complex mystery with a second chances slow burn romance in a complex but ultimately satisfying story. There are a lot of secondary characters, and emotional tensions, and red herrings, as the story winds its way to the conclusion. Tom, the main character, is a smart guy who was studying to become a forensic scientist when he was "discovered" and given the chance to become a top male model. He has a great career and is near the top of his profession, although it doesn't engage his brain the way science did. Still, he's very good at what he does, has men who want him, fans of all genders, plenty of money, and a few friends. He sometimes uses sex with guys as a kind of barrier, giving himself physically when it seems appropriate, but not connecting emotionally.

Once, Tom loved Will, but he had seen an example at home between his parents of how devastating obsessive love can be, and he's determined to keep it out of his life. So when he had to choose his path forward, years ago, letting go of Will seemed like the smart move.

Now a beautiful woman is dead, and Will, off the police force and acting as a private investigator, may be Tom's best hope of coming out of the investigation unscathed. But they have to decide if they can work together, with the past they share.

This one had a cooler tone than the author's first book. Tom is a man very deliberately shut off from his emotions, and that affect carries much of the way through the book. There are a lot of obsessive people, and some coincidences in the plot, although the intricate structure does hold together. A few times I questioned

Tom's right to be where he went and have the information he got. He made some bad choices, some sympathetic, some not. I loved Will, but only liked Tom and some bits of his backstory that might have been deeply affecting were muted by how he let himself react, or not react, to them.

Still, an intriguing ride through a mystery that I did not figure out until the reveal. I'm always pleased when a mystery plot manages to be a challenge. And the ending moved into warmer emotional territory. I'll read another story from this author.

Lena♥Ribka says

If you LOVES Bitter Legacy, the debut novel by Dal Maclean, as much as I do then you can understand what I felt when I started her second book: I was both, excited and VERY nervous. And my expectations were VERY high – **I knew what I COULD get, and I WANTED it.**

For me EVERYTHING, really EVERYTHING in Bitter Legacy was not simply right but just perfect. Can Dal Maclean do it again?

Yes, no doubts, she can. She knows well how to create an intriguing mystery, how to write an emotional roller coaster thick with sexual tension and complex multilayered captivating characters.

And with her new book she has proved it again.

Object of Desire is different, comparing to Bitter Legacy, though...at the same time there are MANY parallels between these two books. It is why, I could not help but make comparisons between them:

Mystery vs. Mystery

As in Bitter Legacy the background and the past events of the characters with their dark family secrets play a very important role in the mystery here. Be prepared: you won't get an easy *whodidit*-case: the mystery in Object of Desire IMO is even in a way MORE COMPLICATED, with many persons involved and many potential suspects. If you're looking for thrilling twists and turns and WTF-moments, you won't fall short of expectations.

Romance vs. Romance

To talk about the differences between the two romance stories in these books, I should start with the differences between the MCs.

Tom vs. Ben

They both are artists. While Ben works as freelance photographer, Tom is a top male model and if they would ever meet at one of the fashion shoots, they would stay on the opposite sides of the camera. Tom IS THE Object of Desire, he is simply and out of the question stunningly beautiful. It looks like many people not simply adore him for his beauty, but have a serious crush on him. That is both for him: a blessing and a curse. Like Ben Tom isn't a faithful type (or at least he thinks he isn't), he devotes himself entirely to his career and let people admire him. Like Ben Tom has his personal issues with being in relationship, but after you'll get to know him better, you'll understand his reason (of course later in the book).

Detective Sergeant James Henderson vs. PI and an ex-cop Will Foster

Will Forster is Tom's ex and the best male character for me here, but he is not a main protagonist, the story

is told from Tom's point of view. The title Object of Desire is reserved for Tom, but could be equally meant for Will – he is an eye catcher himself, big, muscular and EXTREMELY attractive, but if he knows it, he doesn't pay much attention to this fact, he is a reasonable type, sensible but right-minded, loyal and fair, he knows what he wants and WHOM he wants. Comparing to James (I just HAVE to, sorry!) Will is older and more experienced in many ways, among others also sexually.

Let us return to ROMANCE:

As Tom gave Will cowardly the brush off 2 years ago, he hoped their paths would never cross again. He still has a pang of conscience after breaking up his longest relationship in such a wimp manner, but when suddenly he becomes a main suspect in a murder case, he is compelled to use the professional services of the best PI, and it means of an ex-cop Will Foster. When they meet, 2 years after their break, because of the case, Tom realizes that his feeling for Will hasn't grown weaker, just the opposite.

What these two books have in common:

A good and COMPLICATED mystery, in both novels the past and the background of the characters play a key role. **Fears, hate, love, thrilling twists-** you won't complain. However the romance part – that was no doubt intense – didn't affect me as deeply as the one in Object of Desire.

It took me several weeks to think about my rating, and I must tell you, I'm still undecided. But I think that Tom was a main factor for my long considerations. I didn't get really warm with him. And the fact that the story is told from his view, didn't help to connect better to him either.

I like how this book ended, and I really enjoyed it, but bring a lot of patience with you – Tom will drive you mad. Not JOHN.

****ARC provided kindly by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.****

Jan says

Object of Desire felt extremely unbalanced to me. The mystery was great, in fact it was the only thing that kept me going as the romance failed big time.

I kamikazed in a relationship that happened in the past for a period of 7 months and didn't end well. Two years later, and here it's where the story starts, they need to face one another again, Tom drowned in guilt for the way he ended it and Will in resentment.

What didn't work for me was that, romance wise, nothing really happened. It was mainly sex and Will trying to save Tom's sorry ass from a stalker for the whole story.

It also didn't help that too little was given about their time together in the past. Therefore, I didn't feel any connection between these two guys. They had chemistry alright, but so did Tom with all the other guys he slept with, which emphasizes that chemistry alone is not enough to make a story a winner.

I needed an extra something in terms of relationship development, to add more depth. It would make Will stand out from the other guys and solidify Tom and him as a couple.

There are tons of good reviews, so just ignore my meh rate and go for it!

Apologies for going wild with the pics but I couldn't help it ;-)

Virginia Books says

2.5 stars

Huge disappointment.

I've been debating between boredom and annoyance since I started. It could be my mood, I'm not denying it, but still... a fail.

The thriller part is the best of the story but even the mystery is clouded by an MC I don't get, decisions I don't understand and assumptions coming from nowhere.

I've been in the verge of quitting from 20% and there was a moment (83% to be precise) that I was sure I was throwing the towel definitely because *come on, Tom, are you kidding!* and if I kept going it was because of that thrilling part. I needed closure. I needed to know.

I'll read Dan McLean's next book, of course I will. I loved (LOVED) Bitter Legacy and I like the writing. I think she's amazing building mystery, tension and creating a great atmosphere to develop both, even if Object of Desire lacks of the shiny moments of Bitter Legacy and the criminal investigation/clues/work is not as clever as it was in Bitter. Not near.

But it's not just that Will and Tom looked lost in front of the clues thrown their way, is the knowledge, the feeling that I'm finishing this book not knowing the main characters, not knowing them at all.

Home of Ramblings

Christelle says

****4.5 stars****

2nd book from Dal McLean : a riveting second-chance romance nicely intertwined with a mystery involving murders and stalking.

Tom, a model becoming famous, sees his world crumbling down : he's suspected of killing his boss, and has an admirer fast becoming real creepy. To make things even more awkward, he's involved with his boss's ex-husband and needs the help of his former boyfriend, Will, now a private investigator.

Tom has to face some disturbing challenges, revelations and realities about his fear of commitment and his attitude, less than perfect, and to open his eyes : nobody is who he thought was. But most of all, he has to analyse his relationship, whatever it is, with Will.

The plot about the murders and stalking is gripping, full of suspicion, creating doubts and uncertainty. And the possibility of a strong relationship between Tom and Will seems hopeless. Add a stellar writing, a great sense of place, an appearance from James and Ben from "bitter legacy", and of course a HEA that seemed unachievable and I got a winner in my hands.

Ariana says

4,5 stars

I loved Bitter Legacy (and if you haven't read it I would nudge you – impatiently - to try it!)
As for Object of Desire:

This author can certainly write a proper and **gripping whodunnit**.
No one is safe. Everybody comes under suspicion. We get a roller coaster of twists and turns.

I had a suspicion early on which proofed to be partly right, but certainly NOWhere near the eventual truth.

So why does this book get mixed reviews?
Certainly not for the masterfully done detective plot.
It is all down to **Tom.**, from whose POV the story is told.

And why? Well...

- Tom is solely focused on his career as a model. Nothing else matters.
- He doesn't do feelings and commitment.
- He sleeps around, throwing guys away like tissue paper.
- He has sex with two men he is friends with, leading both on by behaving emotionally irresponsible.
- OR to put it in Will's words:

The subject is charming and manipulative. Capable of targeted, deliberate cruelty to achieve a desired result. Either an emotional coward or emotionally unavailable unable to connect with feelings which aren't centered on self. He's in touch with his conscience, to some degree, and capable of empathy, but motivated exclusively by goals which don't demand an emotional return. Fame, adulation, money.

- In short – he is incapable of love and being loved.

A right a**hole then?

Well, he is and he isn't.

Tom is extremely complex. Being in his head is frustrating and, tbh, infinitely sad. We can see that he KNOWS he should be a 'better' man, emotionally responsive and open for a real relationship, but ultimately he is a victim of his upbringing and he simply CAN'T because ...

"When a person loved too much, they became the victim eventually, the corpse left behind. He'd known that all his life."

Not loving, not trusting someone are his **survival instincts** And they are stronger than anything else. Stronger than any guilt, any reason or any stronger emotions. Although Tom resents himself deeply for it(**"He should have warning sign round his neck"**), he finds it impossible to break through that barrier he's built around himself.

But then his boss is killed and Tom's life is turned completely upside down. People around him turn out not to be who he thinks they are. He starts looking at his job differently. His concept of who he thinks he wants to be is challenged, and most of all he meets Will again, the guy he had such "uncontrolled feelings" for, he had to break up with him two years earlier.

It is clear from the beginning that Will still has feelings for Tom. The author does a fabulous job getting this across (considering we are in Tom's head!). I could feel Will's heartache. I could see how he desperately tries to protect his heart from getting hurt further. His whole behaviour felt like a silent scream for most of the book.

I wanted to shake Will. Advise him to tell Tom to f*** off. I could hardly stand his quiet acceptance of Tom's hurtful behaviour and his willingness to take anything that Tom throws at him, particularly when it is obvious to us (and quite of few of the characters) that Tom is clearly in love with him. Just Tom does not want to acknowledge it.

So yes, I suffered for Will, but also for Tom, who simply can't let himself love. It takes FOREVER for him to see the light (too long imo, that's why I knocked half a point off). The procedure is extremely slow and I would have liked more on how and why he changed his mind in the end.

As for second chance novels – this is a prime example.

As for the detective plot – it is brilliantly written.

As for the love story – it is complex and anguished.

All in all: Highly recommended.

Mónica BQ says

2.5 stars rounded up

This is a fantastic piece of fiction. Everything about this book is interesting and engaging and well written.

This is truly great psychological thriller.

It is not, by any stretch of the imagination, a Romance.

There is not a single thing about this book that could be called romantic.

I feel like I could wax poetic both about the things I loved about this book and the things I disliked. But my predominant feeling upon finishing this is how disappointed I was in yet another book that's promoted and launched off the MM Romance platform and has not a thing in it that resembles a Romance. Yes, there's pairings in it. Yes, some people get together by the actual literal ending chapter (not even close to it happening before) and yes, it's two guys that end up in said relationship. None of that comes close to being the main plot, not even the secondary plot. It's not even a fucking tangent on the plot.

I'm just not here for that. It's deceiving and it's idiotic. Specially when you have such a good book in your hands. And I've got no patience left for it.

This is NOT a Romance. And no matter how well written it is, it is still NOT a Romance. I read somewhere that the author calls it a "Romantic Mystery". And still NOPE. It is not that.

It also reads, in feelings, very similar to the last book. It very much read like Ben's and Jamie's story but in reverse. We now got the POV of the immature twat that's too much of a chicken shit to own up to his own feelings, instead of having the POV of the reliable, grounded and open MC.

Judith says

4.25

Dal MacLean, once again, delivers a riveting story-full of mystery, and intrigue that had me second guessing just about everyone at some point.

Tom Gray is at the top of his game. It might not have been the career he envisaged for himself but he's a highly successful model. His stunning looks have made him an *Object of Desire* for a lot of people. Disillusioned by his parents relationship he's put all his energy into modelling and walked away from the only relationship he had two years ago with a then Police Officer, **Will Foster**

But when one of his employers dies in suspicious circumstances he's forced to face his past when Will enters his life again...

The murder/mystery element is an absolute winner here as Tom and those close to him fall under suspicion and certain pasts are revealed. Did I guess correctly?...yes and no. Dal MacLean weaves a clever plot here with many twists and turns.

The relationship between Tom and Will definitely isn't straight forward and was hard to read at times but I really don't want to give anything away, apart from saying Tom infuriated me at times. But you don't always have to love every character to enjoy a good story, right? and Will more than compensated...I just adored him.

Another great read by this talented Author and I can't wait to see what she comes up with next.

A recommended read.

An Arc of Object of Desire was kindly provided to DirtyBooksObsession in exchange for an honest review.

My reviews are posted on DirtyBooksObsession

Ele says

"A truly successful model is...an object of desire, Tom,"[...]

"You have to create someone that people can't help but want."

This book! This book totally **owned** me from start to finish. When I read Bitter Legacy I knew that Dal Maclean is a new force to be reckoned. *Object of Desire* established her as an auto-read for me.

I've come to realise that Maclean's books are not *just* romance or *just* mystery. It's the perfect blend. I don't usually go for romantic suspense but here I never felt that the romance took a backseat.

The main reason I liked this was the **second chance** trope. I'm such a sucker for that. Tom and Will don't meet each other for the first time. A few years back, they used to be lovers, right until the moment Tom dumped Will in a not so subtle way. As you can imagine, **lots of bad blood, animosity and awkwardness**. The more, the better.

Will was easy to like. He is the wronged party, the one who got left behind. He is the one who loved Tom and wanted him forever and, despite Tom's actions, he's willing to help him now.

I can see why someone might not like Tom (I felt exactly the same about Ben in Bitter Legacy). I did want to smack him too at some point. Not because he dumped Will in the first place or because of his unwillingness to commit to him. God knows I understand how much avoiding the sins of the father can shape someone's life choices. But because he kept giving mixed signals to others out of **guilt**. Poor Tom carried the guilt of the world on his shoulders, although he really shouldn't. And instead of making things better, he ended up hurting others.

"You're just afraid. So you always do the hurting first."

For me, Tom's claim that he didn't have any feelings for Will, not now and not ever, was **complete and utter bullshit**. He knew it, other people who saw him interact with Will knew it. Hell, even Will knew it. Tom felt **safe** when Will was there. **Jealous** when other people came close to Will. **Gutpunched** every time Will was disappointed in him. Tom never felt much for others. But for Will, he felt **ALL** the feelings.

"He could barely believe the strength of his desire, as if he'd been sexually asleep for two long years. This was always what it had been between them. Like being in love might be."

The mystery is a top notch experience! It kept me on the edge of my seat, full of surprises and plot twists right until the end.

The whole story is told exclusively from Tom's POV, but every character (Will and secondary cast) are perfectly sketched.

The ending (grovelling included) was perfect, and we get an epilogue as well. But I'm very happy to hear that the next book in this universe is about Tom and Will again, told from Will's POV this time.

Definitely a must read, especially for fans of romantic suspense. Highly recommended!

Simone says

DNF @32% and no rating

Sorry and it really pains me to say this, but it took me three days to get to 32% and I'm calling it quits...

As much as I *loved* Bitter Legacy, this one is not able to hold my attention - I'm actually bored - and I'm looking for excuses to get sidetracked. It is probably just my mood and I thought about putting it on hold, but then I skimmed to the end, only to find out that my suspicion who is behind the whole thing was right and now I have even less motivation to get back to it.

And on top of it all, it seems like I have a lucky streak. *Not*. This is the third book I've read/listened to recently where I disliked one of the characters - in this case it's Tom - and that doesn't make it any better. And the overuse of acronyms really did my head in. I would have liked to get an explanation, at least the first time they were used.

Lots of people do love this book and I think it's just another typical case of 'It's not the book, just me', so read it and I hope you will enjoy it more than I did.

Josy says

~ 4.5 stars ~

Well, this was a really great book! Like Bitter Legacy, it sucked me in and kept me entertained from

beginning to end.

I enjoyed the murder mystery very much and even though all my early guesses turned out to be partly right, I couldn't be sure of any of them until the very end.

The romance was an unconventional one but I loved both MCs - especially totally messed up Tom - and although the ending is 'only' a strong HFN, I have no doubt that both guys are in it for the long haul even though their relationship got off to a rocky start.

I'm looking forward to reading more from Dal Maclean!

~~~~~

I am in book heaven!!! Elf Hazmerso undercover avenger visited me and gifted this book to me!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I'm speechless and very happy!!

~~~~~

Guys! I need help with this cover!! What is this supposed to be?

Sofia says

I'm finished and I'm missing the book.

My second Maclean read confirms that I like her style, her writing, her mix of mystery and love. Setting aside the 'beauty' of her main characters, she does not write the conventional, in that her 'heros' are more flawed and fallible than is what is romancelandia's norm. Being outside the norms she works much more harder to still make the book work and I find her totally successful in this.

She convoluted and turned the mystery, juggling with clues and suspects like a proper mystery writer should and this was greatly appreciated. I like that thing that happens between a crime writer and the reader, when the writer plays with the reader's suspicions, making us feel like, nah we know what is going to happen, but then doubt creeps in, and then we are sure again and again and again

Recommended to British mystery fans.

Idrissa says

This book is the author's second shot at the mystery genre. Her first attempt, Bitter Legacy, had the most ambiguous blurb leading me to delay reading it for months. However, due to her Christie-like delivery of one of the best mysteries I have read this year, I had to automatically buy her second book.

First of all, fuck Tommy and everything he stands for. He is one of the most annoying protagonists ever written. Ever.

After that fuck Pez, fuck Nick, fuck Jena- fuck everybody in this book except former DI Will. Will isn't annoying- at first.

This book may be difficult to swallow since the protagonist comes off as a whining, self-pitying piece of shit who needs a kick up his ass to dislodge his head.

However, Tommy upcoming supermodel of the Self Pity Brigade has a stalker. Not only that, he is the chief suspect in the death of his lover Nick's wife. I promise you aren't reading a Days of Our Lives rip off.

Since everyone is an asshole, it makes it hard to wonder who to root for. In most instances, relatability with the MC leads you to want to give a shit about them and thus you keep reading until you solve the mystery for/with them.

Unfortunately, Tommy doesn't make you want to root for him. Or cheer for him. To be honest, at some point I wanted the stalker to succeed and whoever was trying to frame him for murder to succeed. I hated him that much. He wasn't even an airhead. He wasn't a stereotypical vapid cardboard cut-out of the beauty industry. He was actually smart. And occasionally glimpses of his humanity would shine through his annoying gorgeous head.

He is a lot similar to the MC in Bitter Legacy called Ben. But in that one, the author decided to make the hapless DCI James the narrator. In this instance, the victim- who is a vaudevillian victim of self-imposed circumstances- is the narrator. You may not give a shit about him, but Maclean weaves the story in such a way that you give a shit about what happens to him and the assholes around him.

As for the mystery, if you're a fan of well executed plot twists, I highly recommend this book. If you're a fan of gorgeously depicted men having gratuitous sex, I really highly recommend this book. If you're a fan of redeemable assholes, I'm not sure I recommend this book- but if you could forgive, Jake Riordan you can sure as hell stand Tommy.
