



The Killing Game

Toni Anderson

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Wildlife biologist Axelle Dehn isn't about to let anyone harm her endangered snow leopards—not the poacher intent on killing them, nor the soldier who wants to use them as bait. But Axelle is unknowingly entangled in a conflict that stretches back three decades, a conflict that could spark a war between two of the world's great nations.

British SAS soldier, Ty Dempsey, is on a mission to hunt down an infamous Russian terrorist in a remote region of Afghanistan. Dempsey hasn't failed a mission yet, but when Axelle is kidnapped by the Russian, he is forced to choose between duty and his heart. He risks everything to save the determined, prickly woman he's fallen for, but in doing so sparks a deadly series of events that threaten to expose the most successful spy in history. A spy who will destroy anyone who gets in his way.

The Killing Game Details

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From Reader Review The Killing Game for online ebook

CD {Boulder Blvd} says

This was about a 3.5 stars and I was debating whether to round up or down. It may have been more of a 3, but it was so much better than the other book I'm reading I rounded up.

The negatives included a lot of past/present jumping which made the story choppy and the characters confusing. In an attempt to keep who was the spy a secret from readers, and due to a lot of past/present characters there was a lot of characters that were hard to remember who was what. The plot moved slowly.

The positives included an interesting plot, some good characters and of course snow leopards. Every time the snow leopards were mentioned I got a picture in my mind of incredibly awesome they are.

Brooke says

I got this book as part of the "Dangerous Attractions" 10 book boxed set.

To be fair, I didn't get very far into this one before I gave up. It was B-O-R-I-N-G! At least, the beginning was too boring to make me want to continue. And the synopsis didn't bode too well for my interest peaking...

The gist: Axelle (the girl in the story) is a wildlife preserver lady. She's been tracking snow leopards in northern Afghanistan for at least a year. Ty is a British Special Forces guy. His unit (him and 3 other guys) are tracking a Russian terrorist through the mountains of northern Afghanistan. Dimitri, the Russian terrorist, is hiding out in the mountains of northern Afghanistan and he's hunting the snow leopards to sell because his grandson is sick and they need the money.

I assume Axelle and Ty will be meeting each other and they'll fall in love. Dimitri will somehow get a hold of Axelle and Ty will have to save her or Ty will try to protect her from Dimitri. Either way, Axelle and Ty will fall in love and live happily ever after.

I just couldn't even get far enough into the story for Axelle and Ty to meet. The first few chapters weren't interesting me enough and the gist of the story didn't really sound all that appealing. And I'll say I don't, generally, read the synopsis before I read the story (when the story is in a boxed set, as this one is), so I wasn't prejudging the story. I read the synopsis after I wasn't getting into it in order to see if it at least sounded like it might get interesting.

I just didn't care about the characters or the story line. It could be a great story, in someone else's opinion. It just wasn't, in mine.

Pamela(AllHoney) says

Axelle Dehn is a Wildlife Biologist and currently on a project to help the endangered snow leopards. When it appears that something is going on with her collared leopards, Axelle rushes to the remote area in Afghanistan. There she finds evidence of poaching. Ty Dempsey is a British soldier on a special op in Afghanistan. He and his crew are sent after a Russian spy/terrorist.

Lots of action but still there was enough time spent on a nice romance. Wonderful characters, including the secondary ones. There was an interesting turn of events and I got surprised at the end. A very fast paced book that grabbed my attention from the first page to the end. Toni Anderson is definitely on my auto-buy list.

Bea Charmed says

3.5 stars. Different setting, conservation theme, spies, espionage, betrayal, love, romance, and family drama. Some good twists and turns, and a steamy romance. Also, I want to know more about what happened to Volkov. Towards the end, I actually felt sorry for him.

Kathy Altman says

The Killing Game is an exhilarating, masterfully-crafted mix of life-and-death adventure and political intrigue. It's also a riveting romance, and with the author's trademark gritty and evocative prose, wily imagination and fierce respect for the plight of the snow leopard and the war-torn country it inhabits, this book is one unforgettable read.

Follow along on a thrilling, jarring, heartbreaking journey from the brutal, snow-capped mountains of Afghanistan to the more civilized but no less dangerous streets of London, as the stakes get higher and higher, the plot continues to twist and turn and the sexual tension climbs steeper than the highest peak of the Hindu Kush mountain range. The two main characters are damaged and complex and clash from the beginning, but though their goals differ, their core values don't, and it's oh-so-gratifying to watch them not only work together, but fight for each other. The setting is as beautiful and mysterious as it is hostile. And the epilogue? Brilliant.

The Book Worm says

Another great romantic suspense story by Toni Anderson, this one with a bit more emphasis on the suspense than the romance. I found *The Killing Game* harder to get into than some of Toni Anderson's other books, mostly because there are lots of different characters and because the flashbacks into the past are slightly disconcerting at first. Once the pieces of the puzzle start to fall into place, though, you realize how well the plot was crafted, with cleverly disguised clues thrown in from the beginning.

I'm rating it with four stars instead of five precisely because the deviously complicated plot makes *The Killing Game* harder to read, at least at first glance. The second half of the book is much more fast paced, especially as it rushes towards the end.

If you love a good suspense/espionage book with a touch of romance, you should not miss *The Killing Game*.

Sherry Fundin says

I love thriller/suspense novels and Toni Anderson is a must read author for me...then add a wildlife biologist wanting to save the snow leopards...YAY!

What do a British SAS agent, a wildlife biologist and a Russian terrorist have in common? Snow leopards. One wants to save them, one wants to kill them, and the other is caught in the middle.

I love everything about the book, The characters, both good and bad, they all have their part to play. The location and the objective, who wouldn't want to travel to Afghanistan on a mission to save something as beautiful and endangered as the snow leopard?

Toni Anderson writes some fantastic tales filled with danger, and this is another one I am happy to have traveled through. Keep up the great work and "I'll be back" for more!

See more at <http://www.fundinmental.com>

Anna Richland says

I originally reviewed this book for the RITA READING CHALLENGE at Smart B*tches Trashy Books. I gave it an A- grade, which I think translates to 5 stars here (I'd give it 4.5 or 4.75 if I could).

I enthusiastically recommend The Killing Game by Toni Anderson. If you enjoy tense romantic suspense, military heroes who are old enough to retire from the military (Ty Dempsey enlisted at seventeen and has served twenty-two years = a thirty-nine year-old hero) and heroines who are passionate about their work, then skip the rest of this review and start the book now. You can be most of the way through Chapter One before you finish this review.

If you need to be convinced, then here it goes. SAS Sergeant Ty Dempsey and Dr. Axelle Dehn are an amazing couple. She's an emotionally remote wildlife biologist (yet full of simmering passion, as a main character should be) who specializes in endangered snow leopards that live in the farthest reaches of northeastern Afghanistan. She has about fifteen layers to her, and I don't mean the thermal underwear and coats she has to wear in the Hindu Kush Mountains.

If you read "Afghanistan" and think "oh, it's a terrorist story, I'm done with those," fear not! The bad guy plot goes all the way back to the 70s and 80s when the Soviets fought in Afghanistan and everyone else was operating on the ground in secret capacities. It's a Cold War spy story that collides with modern romance! That's not a spoiler because the spy angle is clear from the beginning. The story includes a parallel plot of flashbacks from the life of the old Russian soldier-turned-poacher. He's a great foil for the hero.

That brings me to Ty Dempsey, a British SAS sergeant, and I regretfully have to admit that he and his teammates seem classier than some of their fictional American counterparts. He does not talk about sex all the time, and even ends up looking away with his scope when the heroine takes a quick outdoor shower. Instead of swapping tales of tail when he and his teammates are together, they talk to each other like this:

"Two Westerners? In these mountains? In the middle of the bloody night?" Baxter raised a skeptical brow. "They're either up to no good or they're bloody loonies."

"And yet, here we are, in these mountains, in the middle of the bloody night," Taz commented dryly.

"Aye, but we are up to no good," said Baxter.

"And you're a loony," Cullen added.

If that's not cute enough verbal interplay from the men, imagine them feeding bottles of yak milk to

orphaned snow leopard cubs.

Yes, pause on this image: A Special Ops team with British accents, baby bottles and white- and black-spotted kitties. But not regular household kitties. Because these are awesome dudes, they cuddle deadly predator's kittens.

We all need to see that. (Have you bought this book yet? Let me repeat: Special Forces with kittens!)

Okay, if that hasn't done it, what about the image of our hero Ty wrestling an adult snow leopard away from the heroine Axelle rather than shoot it because it's endangered, she's a wildlife biologist, he's crushing on her, she'll be pissed if he kills the animal, so he puts his gun away and uses his bare hands and a blanket to save her from a half-tranquilized leopard? And then he cleans her cuts. Oh, so gently. So, so carefully. Believe me, I would wrestle any form of wildlife, including the laundry room spiders, if Ty showed up bearing alcohol swabs. Anyone who has taken care of their own knife-to-finger injury while swearing the same word over and over and trying not to cry, this scene is for you. It shows you don't have to kiss to melt.

The writing is superbly flavorful. From Ty's masculine point of view:

The terrorist they were tracking had connections that gave politicians hard-ons the size of Cleopatra's Needle.

[FYI, that's an Egyptian obelisk in London like a mini-Washington Monument.] And:

He saw no weapons except the basic rifle they'd taken off with yesterday and the old AK-47 which was as ubiquitous as a dick in this part of the world.

Both Axelle and Ty have slow and believable awakenings to each other. This is not a wham-bam sex fest. They are characters with complicated pasts, who respect and admire each other and have a lot of baggage to work through before they jump into bed (although they do get there). But here's a taste of what's simmering in Axelle:

Handsome enough if you liked sharp planes and blunt features. She didn't. She frowned, trying to remember what she did like. He wasn't her type at all, but he reminded her she'd once had a type, and that was a first in a long time.

Reading Toni Anderson's descriptions of the narrow Wakhan Corridor, I was in that valley with her characters. She nailed the cold, the snow leopards, the dirt and the tents. Every detail felt authentic until I believed this story couldn't have taken place anywhere else. The setting was completely organic, and she used the caves, avalanches, gravel scree and everything that the landscape provided, as part of her story. Her use of the location added immeasurably to *The Killing Game*.

The thing that breaks many otherwise good romantic suspense stories for me is the suspense plot. These villains are complex with understandable motivations and no serial killers or mustache twirlers. Perhaps I should call them a villain and an antagonist, because one of them was a cause of conflict but not irredeemably villainous. I thought the complexity of having two different villains contrast with each other (especially in flash backs) provided depth to the conflict. Nice to see the bad guys have rifts and struggles both internally and with each other, too. These guys are traitors to themselves, their countries, their families and their souls. One struggles with what he's become and what he's done, one doesn't. Their complications kept me worried for the outcome.

Two things related to the suspense plot caused me to give The Killing Game a “minus” after the A rating. For some reason Ms. Anderson included a couple passages where one villain deliberately adopts mannerisms that might be construed as gay. It was odd and I didn’t see the point of including that in the story.

“Jonathon folded his hands one over the other. An effeminate gesture he’d cultivated years ago that served him well. Despite having had a wife and child, people believed he was homosexual, and he used the misconception to his advantage. Women certainly seemed to like it. Maybe it made them feel safe.”

That passage, and a few other short references to similar deliberate affectations, threw me out of the story because I was left wondering why ... why was the villain doing this and why should I care? It seemed to be unnecessary and didn’t achieve anything except to puzzle me. The author didn’t use that mock homosexual behavior of the villain in any way, positive or negative, to achieve anything over the story arc. It seemed to be both odd and gratuitous, but not in a good way. Upon reflection, I wondered if there was a direction she was going to go, but didn’t, and this got left in the text.

I have only one other criticism (and please note there are zero complaints about the awesome Ty Dempsey or the heroine Axelle, who I would like to wake up and become because she’s super cool). The great big confrontation at the end feels more than rushed, way more than “WTF-just-happened?” rushed. It’s like a Sharknado™ landed on the book. SPOILER: Over the course of about three pages, (view spoiler) If that spoiler happened, the result would be insanity. Contrast the way it plays out in the book with the real-life hearings on Benghazi in the US and the phone-hacking hearings in Britain. Read this book—because you must read a book where Special Forces feed kittens—and you will totally know when you get to the WTF point because you will moan noooo, that didn’t just happen. Remember the picture of President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton and dozens of other high ups sitting around a table watching the live video of the operation in Abbottabad against bin Laden? Think of that photo, and all those people in the room, and the months and years of work on the operation and still some of those advisors were telling Obama not to take the chance because of the risk of an international incident going way too far. I find it impossible to believe that even a British Prime Minister with a personal vendetta could order what happened. However, I loved Ty and Axelle and the rest of the story so much that this was not a deal-breaker, just a minus.

But wait ... the WTF thing is NOT THE END. No, in the final pages, Ty and Axelle and the awesome British SAS team rescue the kittens again! All was redeemed for me.

You know you need to read this book like you need to click on kitten videos.

(By the way, there were two short but gruesome animal-related scenes, but they felt necessary to me and the good characters responded appropriately. The plot would not have carried the weight and emotional punch without it, in my opinion, but your mileage may vary.)

Leah says

if I play a drinking game of 'spot the cliché' it's much more fun ...

Itsy Bitsy Book Bits says

Axelle just wants to save her snow leopards from a poacher. Tyrone is on a mission to capture one of the mostly deadly terrorists in the world. Dmitri just wants to save his grandson. Who will get what they want?

"It was a race against time and she didn't know who she was racing with or how to stop them." Axelle is a woman who doesn't trust easily, she likes isolation, and she loves her snow leopards. Someone is using their collars to hunt them and Axelle is going to find out who and why. Tyrone and his team are hunting for a man named Dmitri, who has been in hiding for the past ten years. Tyrone and Axelle's paths cross and they realize that they are searching for the same man. But it seems as if they are not alone in the hunt for Dmitri, a man accused of very heinous crimes for and against his own people. With a few governments on the trail as well, will anyone get the answers they are looking for?

An adventure that starts in the mountains of Afghanistan and moves about the world, this is part spy novel and part romance novel. It is wholly entertaining and insightful.

We all have a past, it's how we live with it that defines us. I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I was enthralled and swept up in Axelle's story. The pain of isolation, whether by choice or out of necessity is felt throughout. Every character has to make a tough decision and I felt the pull to do the right thing by all of the characters and rooted for everyone, even Dmitri. It just goes to show that we are all human and behind every man is a family who loves them, even if they are hard to deal with. I think this was written with such empathy and insight and I really appreciated it. In a time when our world is at war, it is important to remember that we are all humans. We all have a job to do, but we still have to do what we think is best. I'm just grateful Toni Anderson decided writing was her job and I will keep supporting her.

Sue says

The Killing Game by Toni Anderson will take you on a wild adventure from Afghanistan to England, thrill you and keep you guessing!

One of Dr. Axelle's big jobs as a wildlife biologist working for the Conservative Trust is studying the endangered Snow Leopards in Afghanistan. When Axelle discovers something is going on with her Snow Leopards that she tagged and is tracking, she heads back to the wild mountains of Hindu Kush to find out exactly what. Who she thinks is a poacher after her snow leopards soon turns into much more with the appearance of Ty Dempsey, one of Britain's SAS's troops, and his men. Ty is hunting his own 'prey' - a former Russian special forces operative turned terrorist who is supposed to have died a decade ago. In these frozen, deserted mountains, they soon discover the poacher and terrorist are one and the same...but what is he really after? No one can know for sure...because soon Axelle is the one being hunted. Before long, Ty finds himself not only hunting a terrorist, but fighting his attraction to the most stubborn woman he's known. At the same time, he's fighting to save Axelle from the enemy, he's on the verge of risking everything for her. Will he be successful in his pursuits?

The who, what and why of The Killing Game will take you to unexpected places, and Toni will mix the past and present smoothly from continent to continent. I could tell that a lot of research must have gone into The Killing Game...Toni's descriptive of locations will take you there and have you breathing that cold air in the Hindu Kish then listening to the crowds in London. Axelle and Ty are both very strong, independent people. Although they are different, in so many ways they are alike also and it was fun being along with them as they got to know each other. Axelle took a few more pages to grow on me, but she sure did and I admired her loyalty. Both Ty and Axelle have had their difficult pasts, and they've both found a way that works for them

to move on. There are also some strong secondary characters who I won't give away, but give The Killing Game so much more strength because of them. These people, thanks to Toni's writing, give us so much insight into past events that have shaped them, hence the story, and make us feel so much more for them. They enhance the plot, making you look at things a little differently each time.

I love Toni's writing and The Killing Game was such a great thrill! Toni draws The Killing Game out very well. You'll never be bored, but will be taken to an unexpected, thought provoking conclusion because stuff like this could happen in real life!

Toni draws The Killing Game out very well, taking you to an unexpected, but no less thrilling conclusion.

I would say the suspense/mystery of The Killing Game far over powers the romance, but the romance is definitely there...just taking a bit of a back seat while Axelle and Ty sort things out. I'd recommend this to any romantic suspense reader looking for a unique, intricately woven story that will really touch you.

Jacque Biggar says

I've always been a Toni Anderson fan, but when I saw the cover for The Killing Game, I knew I had to have it!

This story starts out with a fast-action scene and keeps the reader on their toes until the very last page.

Her descriptions of the Hindu Kush region of Afghanistan and the plight of the Snow Leopards who consider the area home are heart-wrenching.

The political intrigue made me feel like I was reading a James Bond novel, complete with SAS undercover operatives, spies, poachers, and government officials with an agenda of their own.

A very entertaining read!

I give The Killing Game 5 lovely kisses

First posted on It's All About the Romance

Lady Heather says

5 shiny stars!

I absolutely loved this book!

The story was fast paced, and had not stop action right til the very end.

The author did a fabulous job of keeping the reader (me) engaged, and the ending had a wonderful twist I did not see coming.

(Kudos Ms. Anderson for the way you put all the puzzle pieces together at the end!)

I really enjoyed how the author brought the H/h together. Neither one of them trusted the other, and they seemed like the most unlikely of couples... but the chemistry/attraction was something that neither one of them could deny.

This story had it all!

Suspense: ✓

Action: ✓

Broken-but-strong, intelligent, compassionate, domineering alpha lead: ✓

Broken-but-strong, intelligent, compassionate, sassy female lead: ✓

Mystery: ✓

Romance: ✓

Espionage/Spies: ✓

I highly recommend this book if you're a fan of military-suspense-mystery-romance!
I don't think you'll be disappointed.

Sunny says

There are a lot of good romantic suspense books, but it is not always easy to find a GREAT story. With the perfect balance of taut suspense and emotional tension, Toni Anderson delivers a truly fine read. The writing is finely honed, so crisp and detailed that it makes the mountains and valleys of Afghanistan come alive. There are so many unexpected turns that I was literally clenching my Kindle.

The two main characters are smart, strong-willed, and admirable. Each has a underlying strength of purpose to serve and protect so this attraction comes as a surprise. Neither is expecting the growing, sizzling attraction:

"Somehow--inconceivably--he'd bonded with this fiercely independent woman. They'd become partners in survival, and those feelings merged with desire in his head to create something mind-blowingly complex and yet utterly simple."

Both characters are married to their jobs and have shunned personal relationships as too risky and unwanted. This reluctant past serves to drive up the sexual tension between them:

"He didn't know the last time he'd wanted a woman like this. Like his brain was going to explode if he didn't have her, right her, right now. It was heart-pounding, skin-scorching, soul-blasting kiss, and he didn't want it to end."

I particularly liked the change of pace from American bred special op characters to the British SAS. The team has a slightly different flavor and I appreciated the backstory of Ty's Irish background. Through Axelle's work, I enjoyed learning about wildlife preservation and the benefits and drawbacks of endangered species study and protection.

IN A NUTSHELL:

This is a smart story. This is a sexy story. This is a well written story. This is one of my favorite romantic suspense stories I've read all year. I wish there was more!

Thank you to the author for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

Cindy ~ says

Realistic scene descriptions, endangered species, and plenty of spies made this a sure fire hit in my reading collection.

The book mainly takes place in a long mountain range that stretches between central Afghanistan and northern Pakistan where wildlife biologist Axelle Dehn had previously tagged the snow leopards there with a GPS tracking system. When 2 of the tracking systems go offline she rushes to the Hindu Kush in fear that poachers have started killing them for their fur.

What Axelle didn't know was she'd basically landed herself in the middle of a hunt for the one of the most sought after Russian terrorists. The Special Air Service is a regiment of the British Army and Ty Dempsey and his counter-terrorism team are there to bring back the terrorist suspecting of hiding in the mountains dead or alive.

What starts out as Axelle trying to save her snow leopards and Ty trying to catch a terrorist turns into a harrowing fight for survival and so many twist and turns in the world of spies and espionage. The author doesn't just leave character backgrounds to our imagination. We go back in time to find out what made the two main characters, the terrorist and double agents who they are today that all wraps up to a shocking conclusion.
