

A Delicate Dance of Souls

Karen D. Hamilton

Yes and Also Press

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A Delicate Dance of Souls is a mature romance that's infused with spiritual ideas.

In Karen D. Hamilton's spiritual romance *A Delicate Dance of Souls*, characters navigate their feelings for each other and the mental blocks that have impacted their other relationships.

Nicole and Matt met by chance; their attraction to each other was immediate. Their nights together are hot and heavy; their relationship is vulnerable and eye-opening. They share their issues around past relationships with one another: Matt's service in Iraq left him with terrible memories that broke up his marriage; Nicole's sense of insecurity caused her to shut out men, including her best friend and former lover, Sam.

Though Nicole and Matt have an undeniable connection, they both know that their hearts belong to others. If they can shift from friends with benefits to just friends, they may help each other overcome their psychological and spiritual barriers, and even find true love.

Most of the story is told through Nicole's perspective as she handles her complicated feelings for the men in her life. Her thoughts are sensitive and wise; her knowledge about therapeutic meditation techniques enables her to help Matt reframe his feelings toward himself and his military service. Nicole is self-aware about being more competent when it comes to helping Matt than she is with confronting her own issues.

Despite Nicole's strong feelings for Sam, she pushes him away; he is hurt by her flings with others. Still, he is loyal, loving, and honest about his feelings. There's excitement and tension around their relationship as Nicole struggles to love Sam the way that he loves her.

Matt is more complicated: though positioned as strong and steadfast, he's also portrayed as emotional and vulnerable. He suffers from nightmares of Iraq and from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. His conversations with Nicole involve psychological grappling: with the inner child, dark parts of the human psyche, and reconciling the past.

The beauty and lifestyle of Wyoming play a large role. Matt and Nicole are driven by its serenity; Nicole and Sam's event planning work centers on Wyoming's ranching culture and clients who desire a cowboy aesthetic. Characters camp in the mountains; a rafting trip and fishing expeditions bring out the region's tourist elements even further.

Matt's ex-wife comes into the narrative later and is less developed than Sam, but Matt's love for her is clear in his stories about how they met and how hard their divorce was on his mental health. Matt and Nicole's sexual relationship is built upon mature expectations and open conversations; the balance between their desire for each other, and their love for others, is exciting. A predictable ending stays true to these characterizations.

The mature romance at the center of *A Delicate Dance of Souls* is infused with spiritual ideas.

DELIA STANLEY (January 30, 2020)

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