

Always Red

Isabelle Ronin

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Ronin's is a series that holds fast to the notion of true love and the classic ideal of a rescuer.

Always Red hinges on the idea of love conquering all and being worth any cost.

Veronica, called Red, has just had a devastating argument with her love interest, Caleb. After falsely accusing him of cheating on her, she discovers that she is willing to wait, fight, and earn Caleb's trust and affection back. She now knows that she loves him. Up until now, it has been Caleb who does as much for Red, citing his immediate and unrelenting sense of rightness in their relationship.

Red and Caleb face problems of differing upbringings, social class, and opportunities. Caleb is rich and spoiled. Red has come from a turbulent and lonely life. He is used to getting what he wants, and she is used to keeping people at arm's length. Their conflicts hinge heavily on these differences, and quirks in their interactions are sometimes uncomfortable.

Caleb is presented as a romantic but is sometimes controlling, though his easily piqued temper is often forgiven after continuous apologies. Red, who has an abusive father, notes the similarities between Caleb and her father but brushes them aside. Such concerns aren't addressed in depth, and the leads don't grow beyond them.

The story follows much-loved genre conventions, with problems quickly solved, misunderstandings that abound, and situations that reach quite dramatic heights. This is no bad thing; *Always Red* is, simply put, a romance novel that fits a niche. Its story is reassuring; there is never a question that Red and Caleb will wind up together. It finishes what it starts. Ronin's is a series that holds fast to the notion of true love and the classic ideal of a man swooping in to rescue a damsel in distress as its cornerstones.

SHANA CREANEY (November/December 2017)

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