

Heart Attack and Vine

Phoef Sutton

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In this follow-up to Phoef Sutton's debut, *Crush*, a novel that Lee Child called "as slick as a switchblade with a pearl handle," Los Angeles bodyguard and bouncer Caleb Rush, known as Crush, finds himself in the midst of a new mess to unravel.

Rachel Fury, Crush's old friend and a long-time con artist, returns to Los Angeles with a new name and a new career, that of a powerful movie star. When Rachel hires Crush as a bodyguard, though, Crush is drawn into a world of criminals, secret deals, and violence that will take all of his wits to navigate. Rachel and Crush's relationship is intriguing and charged: early on, Rachel tells Crush that they are both the "last of a dying breed," and though they have a history with each other, by the very nature of Rachel's career, trust is never certain between the two. And yet, to Crush at least, Rachel is reliable and loyal, which makes the connection between the pair even more intriguing. Sutton also delivers unexpected bouts of humor in the midst of the dark, action-packed novel: for instance, Rachel, now a rich and famous movie star, tells Crush that one thing she's learned in show business is that people should never quit their day job—an amusing prospect, considering Rachel's conning.

The background on Rachel and Crush's history, along with Crush's past, makes up the bulk of the beginning of the novel, but soon the work dives into the unique problems that Rachel's fame and connections have brought her, including a criminal underbelly that threatens both of their lives. From here, *Heart Attack and Vine* is relentless in its action, as Crush travels all over trying to protect the woman he is bound to by duty and by his past. *Heart Attack and Vine* is sure to please readers who enjoy high-stakes thrillers filled with glitz, glamor, and unpredictable femmes fatales.

STEPHANIE BUCKLIN (Winter 2017)

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