

Clarion Review ★★★★☆

ROMANCE

Hostile Takeover: A Love Story

Phyllis Piano

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Hostile Takeover is an enjoyable book for those yearning for simpler times and a love story with heart.

Just about everybody enjoys a good romance novel, and Phyllis J. Piano's *Hostile Takeover: A Love Story* delivers a fun, fast read.

After falling in love at first sight as young students at a high school grad party, Tam and Molly quickly become inseparable. He's in a rock 'n' roll band; she's hoping to become a lawyer. At the bash, Molly locks eyes with Tam's steely gray-blue ones, and, well, that's it. Although friends, family, and everyone in between warns Molly to stay clear of a musician, she takes matters into her own hands.

Molly and Tam go through their many trials and tribulations—from infatuation to love to planning a life together for the long haul to a major misunderstanding that splits them apart for a painful seventeen years. But a chance meeting brings the now-adult characters back into the same boardroom in the lead-up to a hostile corporate takeover involving their two companies. Old feelings surface—good and bad—as they are literally face-to-face. What happens after this meeting shows how love really can conquer all.

As soon as Molly and Tam are introduced, it's clear they are destined to be together. The dialogue is playful, easy, candid, and heartwarming, as well as sincere, loving, and memorable. Tam tenderly calls Molly "Mol," showing just how important she is to him early on. Rounding out the cast are characters like Tam's older brother, Tunny, who is a cowboy at heart; Molly's assistant and right-hand gal Cissy, who is always available with lattes and a shoulder to cry on; and Molly's down-to-earth parents, Fred and Margaret, who help her on her journey, whether through Margaret's delicious cooking or Fred's logical advice.

Piano's plot flows smoothly, as it follows the lives of these two souls who clearly belong together despite the odds. It's a joy to witness their separate success stories, other loves, and finally happiness. Molly has lost her husband to cancer and Tam has just gotten divorced. To see them reconnect through it all is heartwarming.

The author served for three decades as an award-winning corporate communications expert for many large companies, and it shows. From the many SEC rules and regulations to full disclosure of the consequence of even small talk between parties, it's a quick lesson in corporate takeovers for the novice.

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DEBBIE L. SKLAR (December 5, 2016)

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