



The Ground Rules

Roya Carmen

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The Ground Rules Roya Carmen

1. Don't sleep around.
2. Don't kiss and tell.
3. Be nice.
4. Don't text or call.
5. Don't fall in love.

The rules are simple...until they aren't.

I have everything I ever thought I could want: a nice home, a job I love, two beautiful girls, and my husband, Gabe - my high school sweetheart who still rocks my world. If you ask anyone to describe me they would say, "Oh, Mirella? She's such a nice girl." And I was...until a mysterious, peculiar man and his beautiful wife enter our lives.

Weston and Bridget Hanson are no ordinary couple—they're stunning, enigmatic, and sexy as hell. During the course of one unexpected evening, my ordinary world is turned upside down. How could it not be when Weston and Bridget propose the unthinkable? And when the unthinkable is so very tempting, giving in becomes inevitable.

It sounds so logical and simple. Just five rules and we can all have what we desire. But the heart doesn't follow rules, and now passion, jealousy, and confusion threaten to tear everything apart.

Two beautiful couples. Five simple rules. One hot mess.

The Ground Rules Details

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From Reader Review The Ground Rules for online ebook

Sharon ∞👉 is an emotional book junkie 👈∞ says

4 - 4.5 ★'s

I just knew that when my little ears perked up at hearing my friends talk about how *emotional* this book was that I was going to give it a chance. And I'm happy to say they were not wrong but I just had no idea how strong my feelings would be!

Gabe and Mirella have been together since high school, got married and have two wonderful kids. Their life is great, their *sex* life is great...there are no serious problems. But then they meet Weston and Bridget when they go out on a date and it turns their whole life upside down.

Weston and Bridget have an open marriage and they want Gabe and Mirella to participate in a couple "exchange". Meaning they go on dates...*and have sex* with each other's respective spouses. But, oh yes, there are rules! Right there you just know that those rules will be broken!

This is where things got intense for me. Mirella went back and forth about going forward with this and Gabe seemed to be "too" okay with it, even looking forward to it. I would have loved to get his POV about things...then, maybe I would feel better about it.

Eventually, Mirella does go forward and the lines become a bit blurred. I wish there was more discussion on the whys of things and much more discussion between Gabe and Mirella.

I'm torn about my feelings towards Mirella. Part of me wishes she never went through with it and the other part understands her feelings.

There is an interesting ending and an even more intriguing excerpt for the next book of which, unfortunately, there is no release date at this time. Hopefully, we don't have to wait too long!

Favorite quote:

♥ ♦ The Rules: ♦

1. Don't sleep around.
2. Don't kiss and tell.
3. Be nice.
4. Don't text or call.
5. Don't fall in love.

Hulya Kara Yuksel says

"I wish you were mine."

Oh my goodness... What the hell I just read? Arrgggh!!! Don't get me wrong I read a lot of dark romance books (which they were included kidnapping, torture etc type of books) but none of them fucked my mind just like this book... It's so fucking hard to choose side... Mirella married with love of her life but on the other hand she's feeling attraction to another man. She and her husband Gabe are agreeing couple swapping with Weston and Bridget. Both sides are knowing what are the rules and this is just sex. Nothing more nothing less but here is the million dollars question for you. When you contact with another human being with your body how can you shut down your emotions?
So yeah, this is so fucked up!!! :-/

"You're like a wicked itch I just can't seem to scratch enough."

Oh Weston, you broke my heart so bad... :(

Ps. Dilek, thank you so much for the recommendation darling. <3

Brandi says

4.5 Stars

The Ground Rules was such a fresh story, I have never read anything quite like it. It's unconventional, a bit taboo, and utterly addicting. Gabe and Mirella have been happily married for 20 years, with two beautiful daughters, they have a simple, but happy life. Yet, a simple night on the town sets forth a series of events that changes their lives as they know it. When their dinner reservation falls through, they find themselves sharing dinner with Weston and Bridget, a glamorous, wealthy couple. Attraction sparks, and the proposal that follows, shocks Mirella, yet she finds herself very tempted.

There's a fork in the road. If I go one way, my life stays as it is, wonderful and simple. If I choose the other path, my life could possibly get really complicated.

Couple swapping. Sex. No emotional attachments, sounds easy enough right? (I just have to say, I am a jealous woman. No way in hell I could ever do this. lol) . Intrigued by the arrangement the couple offers, Mirella and Gabe - decide to give it a shot.

This book was a non-stop anxiety fest. In a way, it felt like watching a train wreck in slow motion. I knew it

was coming, the angst and crash, I just didn't know when it would happen. Is it possible to have a sexual relationship with someone without becoming emotionally attached? Will Mirella and Gabe's marriage survive this arrangement? This was definitely a unique read, and I'm looking forward to seeing where the story goes.

Told in Mirella's POV, this is book 1 out of 3.

So excited to have won a copy of this book! A big thank you to Allison and Jasmine over at Reading Escapade Book Blog, you ladies are awesome! xx

Dilek VT says

5 well-earned stars... And maybe more... a lot more...

This book is about two couples and their adventure of couple swapping or couple exchange as they call it.

The rules are simple...until they aren't.

- 1. Don't sleep around.**
- 2. Don't kiss and tell.**
- 3. Be nice.**
- 4. Don't text or call.**
- 5. Don't fall in love.**

Well, my heart is a mess now.

I never thought "**a couple swapping book**" would do that effect on me, but it did, I am undone. It was heart-wrenching, full of emotions as well as hotness.

I read it in a constant state of panic wondering where their crazy decision will lead them. It was utterly addictive. The book kept me on edge, it kept me spellbound...

My heart was about to explode all through the book. It was as if the writer was reaching my heart through the pages of the book and squeezing the life out of it...

I felt as tortured as the main character, Mirella.

I cried where she cried, I smiled where she smiled, mimicking her feelings.

It was as if everything was happening in front of me for real.

At one point, when everything got out of control, it was as unbearable for me as it was for them.

Wow, such good writing!

I am dumbfounded and speechless, overwhelmed by so many different emotions...

This is an original, out of the box and an utterly different story of love. Do read it. It is not a dirty couple swapping book. It is highly emotional and so very-well written.

Never in my life had I craved that much for the second book in the series. It is right in front of me on my kindle and I am as scared to touch it as I want to consume it.

I guess I need some fresh air...

I don't know how things will evolve from here in the second and third books so I want to write my whole review after I complete the series.

For the first book, I can just say this, though:

It is perfect. It is flawless.

It is like nothing I have read before. It is something else.

A very dangerous territory and a risky plot to write about!

"Couple swapping" is a subject – a very delicate issue when chosen for the plot of a book.

There is this "thin line", you know. You are definitely walking on "thin ice" as a writer. If not skilfully handled, it may just end up as something cheesy, or even obnoxious.

Well, here the success of this book lies in how dear Roya Carmen handles it, in how she deals with it. This amazing writer did an amazing job out of it and this book touches your heart, creating all sorts of feelings.

I started this book out of mere curiosity and it took me by surprise. It by far exceeded my expectations and it owned me.

I would like to thank the author for this beautiful book that has taken me to a very unforgettable journey.

The plot:

In the book we have two couples and their story is told from Mirella's point of view and this goes on like that until the end of the series.

The swapping arrangement first seems hot and attractive to them and they think they can handle it. There are rules to follow or otherwise things get complicated.

(* *Addition after finishing the series: We learn the real reasons behind needing and accepting such an arrangement in Book 2 & 3.*)

Unexpectedly, two of these four people begin to develop an emotional bond towards each other. Theirs is an unconventional love story because falling in love with a man in a swapping arrangement does not happen every day!

When it is only lust and physical pleasure, as in the case of the other couple, this arrangement sort of works, but when feelings are involved, as in the case of the second couple, then it becomes too painful...

So, their fantasy starts to become a painful one.

I will not be able to look at lavender roses in the same way ever again. They will always remind me of this story.... and these words:

"Why lavender?"

"You know why..."

I highly recommend that you read this book... I know it is far from safe but it is really worth reading. It is not a dirty/naughty book just for fun, it is deep and it is unique...

Which team?

P.S. I have read some reviews and seen that people are choosing sides.

I am on **#Team Weston**. That has been so from the very beginning (to be specific, since the moment he said "You know why..") and I doubt if that will ever change no matter what he does.

(* Addition after reading Book 3: .Still #Team Weston)

OK, I reiterate: Don't miss this series... They will blow your mind!

Now, take a closer peek...

“This is what we’re going to do.” He is all business. The walls have been built up again. “You will meet me at my office,” he explains and then pauses for a moment, “...or I can come to you if you wish.” I listen to him, not saying a word. “We’ll meet in a neutral environment, and I promise I won’t lay a finger on you.”

*God...this guy is so out of my league.
Which is fine.
Because I certainly don’t have any intentions.
It’s just a little crush.
Okay...a big crush...I admit it.*

I am not obsessed. Well, maybe a little. A little wee bit.

“I chose them,” he corrects me, his eyes are dark and absolutely devastating. “I chose the flowers.”

This is where I should offer a simple thank you, but my intuition tells me we’re having a between-the-lines conversation. I bite my lip and after a long, intense moment I ask, my voice quavering, “Why lavender?”

He doesn’t answer me. He doesn’t even look at me. Instead, he fiddles with his place setting, readjusting the cutlery just so. The man is driving me insane. I seriously start to think he might be missing some synapses in his brain, particularly in the lobe responsible for social interaction skills. Or something like that... And just as I look away, he says, so softly, I barely hear him. “You know why.”

*“I just have never felt a connection with another man...before.”
“Before?” he asks quietly. He knows too well what I’m trying to say. I turn my head away. I can’t look at him. He inches closer. “I want to see you again,” he breathes against the shell of my ear.
I can’t do this. I so desperately want to. But I can’t. I can’t do this to Gabe. I turn to look at him. His beautiful eyes are fixed on me, threatening to melt my resolve.*

His lips sweep over mine, and I open my mouth for him. My whole body warms. This is the kiss I’ve been

waiting for. Ever since the one in that little Italian hole-in-the-wall, I've been waiting for this kiss—uninhibited, passionate. I could do this all night. Just this...might be enough. If we just kissed, I might not jeopardize my marriage, I might not fall so hard. If we just kissed...

I've had a taste, and now I can't do without.

I'm not used to this. Gabe is not like this. His style is fast and furious—he plows on through and hopes I can catch up with him. Weston, on the other hand, likes to take things slowly. He likes to explore. He likes to tease. He likes to hear me beg. I had never realized being with another man could bring such a different experience. And I eat it up. I love being teased, taunted, and brought to the edge of desire. I love being explored and adored and handled softly.

“You do that,” he says, kissing the tip of my nose. I kind of like when he does that. He seems obsessed with my nose. It's sweet. “Why do you do that?”

“Do what?”

“Kiss my nose and stuff?”

He smiles, staring at my nose for what seems like an eternity. I almost start to feel insecure—I don't exactly have the daintiest of noses. “It's that adorable freckle right here,” he taps it with the tip of his finger, “I love it.”

I laugh out loud. “I hate it. I've always hated it,” I confess. “I hate them all. But that one...it's the biggest. And smack in the middle of my nose. I hate it the most.”

“I think every single freckle on your face is exactly where it belongs. Especially that one.”

I think I'm going to melt.

“Mirella,” he says softly, grabbing a hold of my wrist.

I jerk my arm away. “Do not touch me.”

He backs away. “I'm sorry.”

I can't count how many times he's said he's sorry now—and it's starting to wear on me. “You never loved me,” I whisper, still aware the girls are sitting not far away.

He sighs and closes his eyes. “Mirella...” he says softly.

“You've destroyed me,” I cry. I see what I've been searching for in his eyes...pain.

“The way I feel about you is the reason I had to do this.” His words get to me. “I'm falling in love with you,” he says, his eyes not leaving mine. “And I told myself I would break things off as soon as I could, if it ever came to that.”

It's what I've wanted to hear all along, but somehow, it doesn't change a thing now.

Dee Montoya says

**** 4.5 Fascinating Stars****

This is the kind of book that will get under your skin, take over you mind and prevent you from doing or thinking about anything else for the duration of the read. Just WOW!!!!!!

Gabe and Mirella have been together a long time, they were high school sweethearts and now are married with children. Their lives are busy with work and raising their two beautiful girls, they don't have much time for dates or adult time but their sex life is very active because even after eighteen years, these too still have the hots for each other.

One night, Gabe and Mirella manage to get away to enjoy dinner and a show, and while waiting for their table at the restaurant, they meet a very intriguing couple. Both husband and wife are gorgeous and smart and the four of them clicked right away. Weston and Bridget Hanson want more than a friendship with Mirella and Gabe, they want to share a sexual experience where they date each other's spouse, an open marriage arrangement where the four participants agree and play by the rules.

1. Don't sleep around.

2. Don't kiss and tell.

3. Be nice.

4. Don't text or call.

5. Don't fall in love.

The rules were simple...until they weren't.

They say rules are meant to be broken but when any of these people try to change the game, there will be consequences, will they be ready to accept them?

I loved how unique and real this book felt. It is told from Mirella's POV, and I thought that was a brilliant move on the author's part, because she was the most approachable character of them all and it made me feel that much closer to the story. I cannot wait to read the next two books in this trilogy. Even though this first book doesn't end on a cliffhanger, there's still a lot of questions that were left unanswered and I would love to have a clearer picture inside the future of both couples. Romance, steam and thrill this book has it all, don't miss out on it!

J o d i B i b l i o p h i l e ♥ s a y s

This book is so under fucking rated! Like how the fucking fuck haven't I ever heard of it until the other day? (God bless my book friends)

I'm going to keep this short and fucking sweet.

I FUCKING LOVED IT!!!

If I could I would roll this story up and shove it up my vagina so it can just live there forever.

Weston is YUMMY!! I want to lick him from the tip of his nose to the tip of his penis.

Those sex scenes were off the charts HOT!!!!

It was fun and I enjoyed every minute of it...my muff loved it too.

Bravo to this author. So nice to read a book with some healthy swinging! Hopefully there is dogging in the next book.

Amy | Foxy Blogs says

"For me, it all started with a pink dress."

A sexy pink dress leads to a night out for the married couple of Gabe & Mirella. Through a series of events they are situated with another married couple, Bridget & Weston, who are both elegant and sophisticated. The story is told through **Mirella's** point of view. Her and Gabe have a solid relationship and have been together since they were teens. Their family consist of them and their two young daughters. They make a perfectly happy little family.

"Lust at first sight."

Let's call a spade a spade - these four had the hots for each other at first sight. The sexual attraction was high and not in the orgy type of way but instead in the "couple exchange" type of way. Bridget & Weston have an open marriage and have done a 'couple exchange' in past with 2 other couples.

"...big dirty secret."

Well, to make this arrangement work - rules are created for the purpose of keeping everyone's sanity.

1. Don't sleep around. | 2. Don't kiss and tell. | 3. Be nice. | 4. Don't text or call. | 5. Don't fall in love.

On paper it makes sense. Unfortunately, Mirella, isn't good about keep rules and leaving their dirty secret SECRET. Her feelings for Weston leaves her an emotional wreck.

"This is about sex. Plain and simple."

The Ground Rules has a lot of sex in it. At some points I got a little bored with all the sex. *ssshhhh, I know I'm in the minority* I was intrigued with the premise of this story because in September I'll be celebrating 20 years with my husband. I wanted to see how good-girl Mirella dealt with blurring the lines in her marriage.

When I saw the cover of this book I hesitated to read it because I thought it was possibly two women on the cover. A friend assured me it's not two woman and this is definitely a story about m/f relationships.

'The Ground Rules' delivers a taboo story that will have you wanting the next book.

SERIES:

Untitled Untitled

A trilogy

****Won this book on Agents of Romance. Thank you, Agents, for the book. ****

Jennifer Kyle says

”What if we hadn’t been in that closet playing dress-up? What if Claire hadn’t picked out that dress? What if it hadn’t fit? What if...”

This was such an exciting, sexy, taboo, deliciously torturous, addicting story that I just ate up from the beginning to end. Roya Carmen’s writing was addicting her characters were relatable and the “Couple Exchange” was simply off the hook. What I wouldn’t do for Bridget, Gabe and Weston’s povs.

Mirella and Gabe are high school sweethearts, married with two beautiful little girls who head out for a night on the town just the two of them. What they didn’t plan for was a hot Ken and Barbie type to offer them to share their restaurant reservation for four with them. This story is told in Mirella’s pov so we are gifted with how taken she is with Weston Hanson right from the start and how Gabe is taken with Bridget Hanson and how nice it was to have a new couple friend.

”Trust me, Ella, a man knows when a guy wants to fuck his wife.”

Once the night is over our couple hears back from Weston and Bridget Hanson and soon they find that this married power couple with children of their own are into swapping partners with a nonnegotiable set of ground rules: 1. Don’t sleep around. 2. Don’t kiss and tell. 3. Be nice. 4. Don’t text or call. 5. Don’t fall in love.

Mirella has second and third thoughts since she has only ever been with her husband and feels a pull more than physical with Weston.

”As much as I wanted to end this, I’m still willing to put everything on the line- my sanity, my marriage my heart.”

I mean seriously what if he’s horrible in the sack? Let’s not forget how eager Gabe is to agree with the arrangement. I loved Mirella and Weston’s dates together, dinners, learning about one another and of course their physical attraction.

”I wish you were mine, he’d said before we’d made love. A wicked itch I just can’t seem to scratch, he’d

said after. It was me who chose you..."

I tried to take Gabe's word for his relationship with Bridget that it's just sex as agreed upon but ugh one never knows right! Having only Mirella's pov gives a reader her acceptance that Gabe is happy with the arrangement and willing to call it off whenever his wife wants. Mirella is lying to her husband because she starts to fall in love with Weston. Could her feelings be reciprocated? Where does that leave Gabe and Bridget and is their relationship "just sex"? Is this arrangement truly over?

This story was so damn addicting I didn't want this story to end and I may go mad waiting on the next book. One click my friends this was refreshingly different and so well done!

◆*Arianna◆* says

4.5~5 Stars!!

From the moment I've read the blurb I knew this book will be a great read. With such unique, original premise I didn't expect something else. *"The Ground Rules"* was like nothing I've read before. It was taboo, it was intense, it was provocative and it was a very gripping read. I love taboo reads. I found them very intriguing and this one didn't disappoint.

A very refreshing read, *"The Ground Rules"* tells the story of a married couple, Mirella and Gabe. They are high school sweethearts married for almost twenty years. They have successful careers, a great marriage and two beautiful little girls. Their life is not necessarily boring, but it's not as adventurous as it used to be when they were younger, without any worries and responsibilities.

Their life change for the better...maybe...when they meet Bridget and Weston Hanson, a 'Barbie and Ken' couple, very attractive and rich who are mesmerizing. They meet in a restaurant when The Hansons are willing to share their table with them. They start to get to know each other and Mirella is glad they met them. After all, they don't have many couple friends. What she doesn't like too much is how attracted she is with Weston, a man who's not her husband.

"I don't trust you,"(...) . "You'll take me to this wonderful place and somehow manage to kiss me."

He cocks his head, a huge smile on his face. I am amusing him thoroughly.

"And if you kiss me, Weston...I'll completely fall apart."

She never betrayed Gabe in any way so she feels bad for feeling this way. Gabe is attracted with Bridget as well, but it doesn't matter because they part ways thinking they will never meet again the glamorous couple.

But they are wrong, because Weston and Bridget contact them and make them an offer they can't refuse. Even if they know there's a possibility 'this thing' could complicate everything, they can't deny how intriguing everything is. The offer? To swing their partners. There will be pre-planned dates and they will have to respect some rules.

1. **Don't sleep around.**

2. **Don't kiss and tell.**

3. **Be nice.**

4. **Don't text or call.**

5. **Don't fall in love.**

***"The waves of ecstasy hit me, and it's so good, it's almost painful. He moans into my mouth loudly, reaching his own climax. His fingers dig into the flesh of my cheeks, but the pain feels wonderful.
I will never get enough of this."***

This was a book who was supposed to feel wrong, but well...it didn't. It was forbidden, erotic and maybe realistic as well. I'm glad I waited two days to write this review, because when I finished it I didn't know how to feel about it or how to rate it. Told entirely from Mirella's point of view, "*The Ground Rules*" was wow...so different. I enjoyed her POV a lot, but I have to admit there were numerous times when I really wished the book was written in multiple POVs. Yes, not dual, multiple because I had to know how this 'strange experience' affect all these characters. Anyway...Mirella is very easy to like. Yes, obviously she has her own flaws, but overall she was a great character. She's a great mother, friend and even wife. Her character is well developed and her inner conflict is very well done. I really felt what she felt...most of the time.

Weston was the most intriguing character IMO, even if we don't get his POV. But through Mirella's eyes we get to know him enough. He's rigid and pragmatic, cold and detached from everything, but he also is considerate and sweet. He's definitely not perfect, but he's perfect for Mirella. He's a better match than Gage IMO. I admit there were times when he was frustrating as hell, but I liked him.

I loved their dates and their sweet moments together. Their attraction is palpable and the sex scenes between them are great. For the most part I liked the pace of the story, but at times felt a little too slow for my liking. Anyway...the plot was smart and the angst was there. But for some reason it didn't feel too much.

I really can't say anything else, because this is a book you have to experience for yourself.

Overall, this was a fantastic, addicting read and I can't wait to read the next books in the series, especially after I read 'that excerpt'.

“Why lavender?”

“You know why.”

Lisa *-* GiViNg It To YoU * LoCk StOcK & TwO SmOkiNg BaRrELs says

4.5 YoU HaVe To BrEaK ThE RuLeS SoMeTiMeS StArS

Man, that was fly!!

I absolutely LoVeD this read.

Couple Swapping....oh you just know it's gonna get complicated!!

Great Read....thoroughly recommend

Alexis *Reality Bites* says

Spoiler Free Review

4 STARS out of 5

Genre: Adult Romance (Erotica)

Series: Book 1 in series

This book. This book. This book. THIS. BOOK.

In The Ground Rules two married couples seemingly meet by chance. They soon become friends and later decide to swap partners to spice it up to gain some fun and experience in the form of sexual gratification.

These are the ground rules

1. Don't sleep around.
2. Don't kiss and tell.
3. Be nice.
4. Don't text or call.
5. Don't fall in love.

The rules are simple...until they aren't.

This book started off a two star read and slowly inched its way to four solid stars. Now, I should let you

know that I started the book in the afternoon after seeing it as a recommendation in a thread on Facebook. I then finished it that night. So yeah, I was definitely glued to my kindle; only stopping to cook dinner and get some play time in with the kids before bed. Then I was back ALL UP IN THIS BOOK! I had to know how it ends!

While out on a date night married high school sweethearts Mirella and Gabe find themselves dining with a couple their opposite; rich and sophisticated compared to their middle class rough around the edges. Dinner goes well with Gabe completely at ease chatting with Bridget, hitting it off in a flirtatious yet innocent fashion. Mirella and Weston however have an...uneasy start. That is until Weston tells Mirella a few things he's noticed about her simply from observing.

At the end of the night both couples go their separate ways yet Mirella can't stop thinking about Weston. When the opportunity presents itself for the foursome to unite again they willingly go. However it's the call for a private meeting that takes place where things become more apparent. Desires surface. The Ground Rules are set. They couple swap. Rules are broken. Hearts are tested. Marriages are tried.

The Writing: In all honesty I found the writing to be fair. It didn't stand out in any spectacular way, yet it didn't fall short. It just sort of hovered in the middle. If that makes any sense to anyone but me.. Personally, I'm positive that the plot itself carried most of the weight. It intrigues you. You want to know; where is this going? How will it end? Will it destroy people; if so is there a way to restore what was lost?

The Characters:

Mirella- I'm sorry I could not stand her. I wish we had multiple pov's she was kind of bland to me; but that's just me. After the tease for book two I really wish I'd gotten THAT persons pov as well as Mirella's. Just sayin.

Gabe- love him!!! I'd give anything to be in his head, to get just a snippet.

Weston- peculiar yet he slowly pulls you in. He kept me reading. Plain and simple, Weston had me by the palms! If he was on the scene I did not want to put my book down!

Bridget- I want to know more. I don't really know her.

My Sweet and Sour

My Sweet- The tease given at the end...

Let's just say I'm off to cyber find the author to discuss a few things, like say how soon she can get me book two! NEED. WANT. MUST. HAVE. NOW.

My Sour- having Mirella's pov. Wish we got more from the other characters.

Notes share: Below is a few notes I wrote in my kindle while reading!

-Weston and Bridget breeze in with an air of polished sophistication.

-Weston is intriguing. That alone pulls on my attention!

Final Thoughts:

I surprisingly enjoyed it! I failed to hold a strong connection with Mirella. I wish I got both her and Weston's pov. I have no idea why I never fully connected. I'd like to add that this book is NOT for everyone. Read at your own risk.

Cliffhanger???(view spoiler)

HEA??? (view spoiler)

My Ratings

Writing Style- The writing was cool. Like I said the plot and the idea carried the weight. Well that and Weston ;)

POV Told in her(Mirella's) pov, I was not happy about that. I failed to connect strongly with her.

Plot/Storyline- A date night for two married couples turns into a mate swap. Only feelings take control for two of the mates. Rules are broken.

Steam Factor-(Lo-Med-Hi) I say High. On a scale of 1-10 I say 8

Entertainment Level-(On a scale of Lo-Med-Hi) I say High

Overall- I enjoyed it!!!

Now go forth and read. Then come tell us about it on Goodreads!

Allison ♥?Will Never Conquer Her TBR♥? says

*****Our blog is giving away 3 ebook copies now! Giveaway ends 7/1/15 6PM EST. (FB link at bottom of review)**

4.5 Swinging Stars!

When a close friend on Goodreads was reading this book a few days ago, the blurb caught my interest immediately. Only when she texted me how awesome it was, did I stop and drop everything to read it. Sometimes I just can't wait! And this book did NOT disappoint. Thanks, Jen babe...fist bump! Oh, my kids say I'm not supposed to SAY fist bump. But I digress...

The Ground Rules was just *different*.. Refreshingly different. When we read some 100+ romance novels a year, it takes *different* to set a book apart from the rest. This one succeeded in spades!

Gabe and Mirella are a happily married (almost 20 years) couple in Chicago. Both career people with two sweet daughters. When their reservation on a special date night got screwed up, they instead find themselves

dining with a very wealthy, astute, GORGEOUS ~~Ken and Barbie~~ couple...**Weston and Bridgett**. They graciously offered their table of four to share and hit it off right away. Strangely enough, both couples also have a crazy attraction for one another. And so the ~~swinging~~ story begins...

When Weston and Bridget contact Gabe and Mirella with a proposition, they're both thrown back. It's so unusual yet they both find themselves surprisingly intrigued and up for it. Gabe and Mirella are very happily married but mixing things up a bit can stir up the excitement, right? Not to mention the strict rules to keep everything clear... Pre-planned dates. No communication outside of such dates. Meaningless sex. No strings attached. Weston is very clear regarding their proposition. Almost clinical...but Mirella can't resist her attraction to the gorgeous, serious, suited man.

The Rules-

"One is monogamy, the second is discretion, the third is respect, the fourth is appropriate contact, and finally, we have emotional detachment."

The Ground Rules was completely in Mirella's point of view and I really wished we could've gotten her husband Gabe's POV also. I felt 100% engrossed in her and Weston's story, their growing attachment, yet I felt Gabe and Bridgett were off somewhere in the distance. I was dying to know how his *dates* were going.

This book was seriously an angsty tug of war with emotions versus physical draw- an intense desire to be with with another person from deep within your bones yet knowing your heart **MUST** stay detached. Knowing you have permission to do the *deed* yet not fall emotionally attached. Is it possible?

I do have to admit, I was often thinking to myself **who** was watching their two sets of children while each couple is out gallivanting with each other. It's a lifestyle I'm not familiar with yet I find fascinating in a taboo kind of way. Because of that, I found myself devouring the book when I really really have a million other things I need to be doing...like sleep. But sleep be damned, this was a damn good book! And a hawt book, I might add!

I'd highly recommend **The Ground Rules** for fans of a bit of unconventional freakiness in their love stories. I mean, the subject of couple swapping is a bit...taboo, don't-cha think? It's not a swoontastically *romantic* book, but more so a book about finding that person your body craves to it's core yet your bound to another...even when you have permission to embrace the physical. Can you avoid the emotional? Can your heart stay detached when your heart is promised to your husband you DO truly love?

Read it and find out...

The Ground Rules is book one in a trilogy. Had I known that I probably would've held off. Duets keep my interest. Trilogies don't. Oh well- hooked now. It doesn't end in a true cliffy yet leaves the reader anxious for more...

Mindy Lou's Book Review says

Now that I have had time to digest this book, I think I need to update my review. I'm kind of an emotional reader. I can very easily get mad on behalf of a fictional character. After reading this book...I just wanted to punch someone, mainly Gabe. Kudos to this author because even though I hated this book, the author definitely got a reaction out of me and it lingered for days.

I don't necessarily need rainbows and sunshine, but I do need to know that my couples are it for each other. I can even get on board with a heroine changing partners if the one they end up with is the true Hero. My issue in this first book is that I have no idea if that is where this is headed or not. I'm pretty ticked off with all the characters. Maybe to the point that I won't be happy no matter how this ends. The behavior of all the characters didn't portray love to me at all and I have no one to root for. To sum it up, that's the issue. I don't want to root for any of them.

I'm doing a group reading on this series and if it wasn't for that, I most likely would have dropped this series. I will admit to a curiosity about where the author is taking this as well. To be continued...

Jess-i-ca ~Sometimes a Gif Witch~ says

4.5 - What the Actual Fuck - Stars

I just read a book technically about cheating.....

AND I Liked it!!

Mirella

and **Gabe**

have a great marriage with great sex. They were high school sweethearts and have been married for quite some time.

But they are approached by a couple they met,

Bridget

and her husband, **Weston**

regarding a "couple exchange"

Can Gabe and Mirella's marriage handle this? Can they have sex with other people without anything getting in the way??

Or is it a totally bad idea that will lead to disaster??

I really really really need the next book....Like Stat...Please write it fast. :)

Saffron says

4 "Absolutely loved this messed up arrangement" Stars!

I just finished this book like five minutes ago and I think I'll burst with so many feelings.

Lately, whatever I touch turns out to be crap or maybe I have become crappy myself. I don't know what's wrong but I am glad this book was the exception. It was highly angsty and it kept me at the edge of my seat right from the start. I was dying to get to the end and find out what happens.

If you have read the blurb you know this book is about "couple exchange/swapping". Which is essentially cheating but not quite since your partner knows what you're up to. Weston and Bridget meet Gabe and Mirella at a restaurant. They all hit it off. And before long, Weston proposes an unlikely arrangement to Mirella. Also, he is quite the control freak because he has these rules in place. These are called The Ground Rules. They are obviously in place to make this arrangement run smoothly without any complications.

Right from the start, we know that this is going to end badly. I mean, how can it not. You have insane lust for this man outside of your marriage and you are a pretty emotional woman. So yea, obviously you will mess this up and fall in love. This is what happens with Mirella,

Anyway, I very much enjoyed Weston and Mirella's dates. Though it did get a little repetitive after a while. Weston was just too adorable and sweet and nerdy for me to not like him. Right from the night they all met for the first time, I fell in love with his shy, socially awkward demeanor. But he is extremely controlled and alpha in the bedroom.

I know its been said that more POVs in this story would be nicer. But I didnt mind getting only Mirella's POV. I think she had a pretty good perspective on things. In any case, as I said right from the start I had my mind made up that Gabe and Bridget. They were just annoying side characters and I didnt want to get inside their heads anyway. Now Weston's POV would be totally welcome. Not having it didnt take anything from the story but having it would totally be cherry on the cake for me. I just loved how nerdy he was!

I would definitely recommend this to people who like their stories angsty and are not afraid to get very little to no sleep at night. Also, who like to wait in agony for the sequel...
