



Working With Heat

Anne Calhoun

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For now, Milla Jackson is an American in London, but she's also been an American in Paris, Rome, Prague and more. She's working hard to combine her love of travel and growing social media presence into a career, even involving her followers in her (somewhat dismal) dating life. When the combustible heat between her and her best bloke, Charlie, explodes, she's unprepared for the secrecy of "friends with benefits."

Charlie's an artist who's already been burned by one woman who used social media against him. He's determined to keep his hands on the glass he works with—and off the irresistible Milla, who's sure to share every detail with her followers.

Will their best intentions survive a secret relationship? Or will the heat transform their fling into something that can overcome Milla's fear of permanency and Charlie's reluctance to trust again?

Working With Heat Details

Date : Published May 12th 2015 by Cosmopolitan Red-Hot Reads from Harlequin

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Author : Anne Calhoun

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From Reader Review Working With Heat for online ebook

Annie (Under the Covers Book Blog) says

After reading a bunch of books that were less than stellar, **WORKING THE HEAT** was the one book that got me out of my reading slump.

At 99 pages, Anne Calhoun delivers a scorcher that gives Milla, an American living in London the dream man she has been looking for. She hopes to give her career a boost by engaging her blog readers to follow her journey to finding the perfect man through social media. Date after date ends unsuccessfully and instead of moping around, she goes out with her bestest friends and tries to keep her chin up.

One of her best friends is Charlie, an artist who is also on the rise. Strictly friendly, these two have great chemistry together so it came as no surprise to see Charlie and Milla explode on the pages when they got together.

Anne Calhoun is such an expert at creating these sensual scenes that feel almost forbidden as they are good. While the bulk of the relationship has been already established in the beginning of the book, Calhoun nicely translates that into a believable romance that sizzles.

While I really enjoyed both characters overall, Milla's constant social media presence kind of got annoying after awhile. I definitely feel like I connected with Charlie a little more.

Red Cheeks Reads says

Working With Heat by Anne Calhoun is my first read from this author and overall I am intrigued and interested in checking out more of her work. Sexy and a fast read I was excited about the fact that the book takes place in England and follows a girl who blogs about her travels. A big fan of books where I get to feel like I am traveling along with the characters I was excited about this but would have loved more from Milla's travels and blog. With this being a short novella there was not enough time to delve into all I would have loved to get more into all those aspects but that being said this was still a fun and sexy read.

Milla lives in the public, sharing her whole life with her blog's followers as she lives abroad and explores all over the world. She even goes as far as letting her followers choose her next blind date and posting about the results of those disastrous dates. Charlie is closed off a reclusive artist who hides from the public and is content to stay in the shadows. When these two friends finally give into their attractions they find that while their bodies mesh perfectly their lifestyles do not.

Overall, this was a fun and fast friends to lovers story with a dash of angst and a sprinkle of humor. I look forward to trying out more of Anne's work in the future and would love to have even more of Milla and Charlie's story!

~miranda

Baba says

3.5 stars. Review posted April 17, 2015

"I'm going to call the police and report you for breaking the Act for the Regulation of Personal Electronic Devices, section nineteen--abuse of a mobile," he said as they crossed Commercial Street.

My favorite scene:

Her breath caught. It was such a profound act of trust; while it was unlikely she'd slit his throat with a Gillette, the sheer masculine confidence in the move, laden with desire, seduced her without so much of a touch of his finger. The air in the room seemed to flutter at her skin. She shifted herself, felt the slick heat between her thighs, watched a smile tug at the corners of his mouth.

Rating clarification

3 stars for the first half and 4 stars for the second half. **I really need half stars because I neither wanted to give it 3 stars nor 4 stars.** Ultimately I rounded up due to the *Charlie* bonus and the lovely ending.

Working With Heat is a friends to lovers short story which features the additional topic (view spoiler)

Charlie Tanner is an East End boy through and through and a talented glass artist. To finance the renovations of his house, he's renting out rooms to Milla and her friends Kaitlin and Elsa. They love to attend the weekly pub quiz (that was fun, BTW). It's also the place where Charlie and Milla react to their attraction for the first time.

Milla is American but born in England and, due to her father having been an MP military police, she'd been raised all over the world. She's working as an assistant at the Darmayne Gallery in Mayfair and in her free time she's blogging. Posting pictures and writing a travel blog became second nature to Milla at an early age. As it is, Milla is practically addicted to her cell phone and the internet. Her need to share many moments of her life online, clash with Charlie's need for privacy. Besides, due to his ex-wife and a negative and painful experience, Charlie fought hard to rebuild his life and career and isn't interested to put everything he's worked so hard for in jeopardy.

"I don't want anyone to see me."

For a novella, the ending was well-rounded and satisfying because there was...surprise, surprise...an **epilogue**. Thank you, Anne! Guess what I enjoyed most about this quick read? Reveling in my Charlie Hunnam musings. It goes without saying that Charlie Tanner offered ample inspiration. I think that *Working With Heat* will *work* quite fine for a younger audience. Both main protagonists are in their 20s (Milla is 24 and Charlie 28). Honestly, I'd be lying if I said that I connected easily with Milla. I didn't really have a handle on her and she wasn't interesting enough for me. In fact, I thought she came off as...shallow isn't the word I'm looking for...maybe way too carefree? Though the story itself had quite a bit of depth, mainly due to the beautiful glass descriptions as well as Charlie's artistic talent and background.

"We love the finished product so much it's easy to forget the ugliness that goes into making it. I wanted to honor the Londoners who made things other Londoners consume, and the historically significant part of the city that's rapidly disappearing into Canary Wharf."

What bugged me was that Milla tried (emphasis on tried) to date casually while at the same time enjoying a couple rolls between the sheets with Charlie. Don't get me wrong. There was absolutely no cheating in this story. However, that combo of failed dating and heating it up with Charlie wasn't quite my cuppa. As expected, the writing was very good. What surprised me however was the not overtly explicit sex. I don't complain about it, I'm just stating a fact. Then again Anne has such a terrific way of creating a sensual atmosphere, explicit sex isn't a prerequisite anyhow. Although I felt underwhelmed by the first and very short sex scene, the other scenes were enjoyable. I think *Working With Heat* is more romance and not really erotic romance.

If you are looking for a quick and easy yet entertaining read for in between, then it might be worth giving *Working With Heat* a shot.

"All relationships fail until one doesn't."

Steam 2.5 - 3

Recommended read.

All quotes are taken from the pre-published copy and may be altered or omitted in the final copy

*****ARC provided in exchange for an honest review*****

Jackie says

Somehow forgot to write a review of this Calhoun novella after receiving an advance ARC from Goodreads. Perhaps because I love Calhoun's longer work so much, I found this story of a travel blogger/uTuber and her artist landlord/friend turning-into-lover story not as fulfilling as I might have wished. But still, 100 times better than most novella-length romances out there.

Lauren at Live Read and Breathe Reviews says

3.5 I love Charlie Stars!!

Source: eARC for Honest Review Courtesy of Cosmopolitan Red-Hot Reads from Harlequin via NetGalley

Genre: Adult Contemporary Romance Novella

Standalone

My Working With Heat Review ...

I'm a huge fan of Anne Calhoun so as soon as I saw this title I jumped at the chance to read it. With Anne's stories they are usually full of erotica but a realness to her characters and stories that you can relate to. In this story there was less heat but still loads of sensuality.

Milla is an American girl living in England, who is a part time travel blogger and works at an art gallery. She happens to live with two roommates/friends Kaitlin and Elsa, whom they rent from their friend Charlie. Charlie is a bit of mystery. He's sweet and charming but holds back because of his own known past. He's also a great artist who's medium is glass. Through Charlie's art you get to see more into his soul and find out more about him.

Milla is a carefree type of girl who likes to travel, social media and is on the dating scene. As she uses social media to date and connect with the world its also what holds Charlie back. Weekly the group of friends conjures together for the weekly pub quiz night and post hash one of Milla's dates. After her latest round of bad dates her and Charlie grow closer and cross the line from friends to lovers. Not wanting to ruin that line they toe on it very carefully. Sometimes they step over it and other times Milla jumps away and back to public dating.

As much as I got that part of Milla, I didn't quite connect with this part of the story because if she is so 'in like' with Charlie why continue on with this public facade of dating? They quickly learn that once the line was crossed you never really can go back, but with Charlie's reluctance because of his past and Milla's need to explore. Where does that leave them?

Once again Anne has delivered another good story that can connect with many on many different levels. For a novella it was nicely paced and evenly rounded filled with sensuality, love and a bit of angst.

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*ARC provided by publisher

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Froggie says

Unexpectedly good! It actually has a plot and character development. I was engaged in the story most of the book. I wish it was more in-depth though.

3.5 stars.

SuperWendy says

My reading mood has been the pits lately, and this one started out slow for me. Pleasant, nothing offensive, but it really wasn't grabbing me. I'm glad I stuck with it though and didn't chuck it aside because of my current case of Reading Ennui. Things perked up for me in the second half. The heroine starts to come into her own and while the hero acts a little irrationally at the end to spur on "the big fight" - it leads to a really well-done ending. A B- read for me.

Tiffany says

I had trouble with this book for a few reasons. First, while I'm a huge fan of Anne Calhoun's work, this book is a departure from her normal material. *Working with Heat* feels like a New Adult novel, which is not one of my favorite genres or what Calhoun normally writes. Also, since this is a Cosmo Red-Hot Read, I went into the story expecting it to be more lighthearted and not so angsty, but there are definite moments of drama in this one. However, all that being said, it's really well-written, which is why I'm giving it three stars.

Milla is an American who lives in London. She works in an art gallery but her real passion is her social media presence. She writes a travel blog and is constantly updating her various accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube). And when I say she's constantly updating them, I mean she is posting things ALL the time. Because of this, I really struggled to like Milla. She's not a bad character, but her obsession with social media drove me nuts. I'll admit, I'm pretty addicted to my phone too and always have it close by, but Milla can hardly set aside her phone for five minutes at a time. It's pretty sad. She's so focused on building her "brand" through constant selfies and tweets that I'm kind of surprised her friends put up with her.

One of those friends, Charlie, is a painter turned glass artist and vehement Luddite. Eventually, Milla learns the reason for his anti-technology stance: he was burned by his ex via social media, which hurt him not only personally, but also professionally. So, it was really curious to me that Charlie would even consider getting involved with Milla, given how deeply she's immersed in her online persona.

Milla meant well, but he felt more than he wanted to feel, which meant they were banging into each other like shins against furniture, hurting each other.

Granted, Milla and Charlie's relationship starts out pretty casual and they agree to keep it a secret from their group of friends. But it's still really odd to me that Charlie would want to get involved with her, even on a casual level. Since they're already friends, the chemistry between them is built in from the beginning of the story, but I don't know that it feels entirely believable. Maybe if the story had been longer and their relationship had been more developed, I would have believed it more easily.

Lastly, the ending feels a little rushed and wraps itself up pretty easily. After Charlie's earlier hesitation, I think it should have taken him longer to adjust to Milla's public persona.

I didn't care much for Milla and Charlie as characters, but I enjoyed the narrative itself, if that makes sense. There's a level of sophistication and beauty to Calhoun's writing style that sets it apart in my mind. So,

despite the fact that I didn't love this book, I always love Calhoun's unique voice and that's the best part of this book for me.

I received an advance copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for my review.

willaful says

(reviewed from an e-arc provided by NetGalley)

Short, hot contemporary read, bad dates, no-strings fling with a friend... to be honest, this had "not really my thing" written all over it. But I thought this author might make it work for me, and I was right.

It's not that the story doesn't fulfill what it promises in the blurb, but it doesn't feel the need to do it stereotypically. Milla, a travel blogger and youtube personality currently stationed in England, has a refreshing attitude towards her bad dates -- she cuts her losses and moves on. They might be funny, but they don't make her ridiculous.

And being with Milla is a genuine risk for Charlie: he's been badly burned by a (literal) East End Boy and West End girl marriage, *and* by social media. His trust in her as a friend and lover, nonetheless, is adorable. Of course there's a conflict, but part of what I most liked about this story is that the characters change, but not through any kind of coercion. It's always their decision.

If you like blokes with beards, this is the book for you. Many of the sexiest moments in the book involves Milla's fascination with Charlie's beard:

"The sharp edge of his scruff scratched deliciously at her lips as she brushed them back and forth across his mouth, tempting him to open them."

"His beard, she discovered, had reached the soft, curling stage. She stroked it with her palms as his mouth coaxed hers open, savoring the sensation of smooth, hot tongue contrasted with the denser, soft hair around his lips."

And then there's a shaving scene...

Charlie's art is also used for sexy metaphor. He "had learned patience handling sand heated until it became liquid, pliable. He'd learned how to seduce a woman by working with heat." But it's not *just* that, but an integral part of his personality. His commitment to his art, and what it says about him, gives substance to the story.

My only complaint is that the short format leads to a few initial short-cuts of telling rather than showing. I pretty much forgot about that as I read on. This isn't a heartbreaker like *Breath on Embers*, but confirms my opinion that Calhoun is one of the authors who really makes short form romance worth reading.

RachelW (BamaGal) says

No star rating out of respect for one of my (usually) favorite authors.

Oh, my...was this really written by Anne Calhoun? The story was not for me...at all. It wasn't advertised as NA, but the leads were very immature 20-somethings. Goth, seriously? Hugely disappointing, very short read. I finished it, but by sheer force of will.

Talk Supe says

Fun, flirty, young, sweet, and a bit cheesy. Fab shorty!

Mmeguillotine says

3.5 It's not that I didn't like this one. There were things I liked a lot (for example, you slap a smudge of eyeliner on a hot artist-type boy with a self-destructo, goth badboy past and I'm super into it), but overall, I missed the depth that I usually find in Ann Cahoun's work. Unplumbed depths, that's what I found in this cute and unique novella. I like the depths. Plumb the depths!

nothing to see here, just a pisspour excuse for a review. move along, please. I can't be relied on for this today

Maggie says

I don't want to say this is my favorite of the Cosmo Red Hot Reads, I've read a lot of them and I will admit my memory isn't as good as it should be, but I will say I really enjoyed this one. To me this is kind of the most normal and relatable of the Red Hot Reads.

Milla is a 24-years-old art gallery employee and travel blogger. She grew up moving all over the world as a military brat and having a blog and vlog and Instagram and Twitter was a good way to keep in touch with everyone (note: Milla made me feel old). Her internet travel life has seeped into her real life and she includes things about her daily life in London, including dating and trivia night with friends, in her posts to thousands of people.

Charlie, Milla's landlord and friend, is more reclusive. After being burned badly in his divorce the artist holed up and shunned any type of notoriety and publicity. He is both intrigued by Milla's openness and joy and scared of how much she puts out there on the Internet and by how attached she is to her phone.

Milla and Charlie start a secret friends-with-benefits relationship, with Milla still going out on dates with other guys, but it's clear they are both really into each other. Not only do they have steamy sex, they also talk and enjoy each other's company and are generally adorable together.

Yes, there is that thing that drives a wedge between them like in all romances, but it wasn't totally drawn out and angsty like it could have been. Overall this is a fun, steamy, interesting, smart story that I would definitely recommend!

I received an electronic review copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley (thank you!). All opinions are my own.

Maria Rose says

This sexy and captivating novella is the story of Milla and Charlie. Milla lives her life in the social media spotlight, featuring everything from where she's eating to whom she's dating on her twitter site and working towards getting her jaunts sponsored by a travel or media company. She loves being in the public eye, and living in London has given her plenty of opportunity. Rooming with two other girls in a flat owned by reclusive artist Charlie, he's her opposite, avoiding any and all recognition locally even for his artwork though he enjoys spending time with the girls when it's just friends hanging out. When one night between Milla and Charlie turns their friend relationship into a secret love affair, it's clear that it's going to be hard to keep their hands off each other in public the more time they spend together. But can two people with vastly different views on where they are headed find common ground?

I loved this story! First of all, it was a treat to see London laid out for the tourist in me, with its quirks and charms and eateries and such. Milla is a fun, friendly, vivacious character, perfectly suited to the social media life. She's able to laugh at herself and her disastrous dating life (helped by her social media minions). She's attracted to Charlie because he is so different from her - still friendly and fun to be with but much more subdued and definitely not eager to be in the limelight. He's extremely talented as a glass artist (and I really enjoyed the detailed research in that regard) and she's in awe of his skills - his magic hands work wonders on her in the bedroom too. There is a sexual chemistry that comes alive when they are in the room together and it's no surprise that their friendship has led to this clandestine affair. But Charlie's hesitance to take things public stems from a nasty previous relationship which ended in public ugliness and he is torn between his feelings for Milla and her obvious need to be in the limelight. I thought their relationship felt very realistic - complete with tension, conflict, sex and emotion. I actually found that when the conflict inevitably arose, I could not put the story down until I had finished. The secondary characters were all interesting and added great banter and camaraderie to the story. The result is a steamy tale, full of some laugh out loud moments to go with the drama and a sweet, romantic ending. Definitely one for the reread pile for me! 5 stars!

Note: a copy of this story was provided by the publisher via NetGalley for review
