



Scars and Secrets

Avril Ashton

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After an undercover assignment that changed his life forever, FBI agent Donovan Cintron is barely hanging on to sanity. His new mission is to forget, by any means necessary, so he tries his hardest. Pills. Booze. The warm bodies that never quite measure up to what he'd had. What he'd lost. It's almost a relief when he learns his identity might be compromised—except he's not the only one exposed. So is the husband he hasn't stopped needing all these years later. He'd been aching to die, but for Levi Nieto, Donovan will live. To protect. To regret. To remember.

The realization that everything he loved was a farce sent Levi Nieto spinning out of control, and running away from the memories. Now Donovan is back in his life, still fully entrenched in darkness. Their physical connection is one thing, but the truth of who they are to each other remains trapped among the anger, violence and lies suffocating them. Fixing what's broken will take more than each man exposing his scars. Secrets—and blood—must be spilled.

Scars and Secrets Details

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From Reader Review Scars and Secrets for online ebook

Lorraine Lesar says

THEY worked.....

Scars and Secrets was the perfect title for this book. Let's be truthful, we all carry around a sack full of shit, and no matter how hard we try to avoid it being opened, that sack of shit always gets dug into, time and time again. It especially gets opened if you have Dutch as your boss, your father is a ruthless politician and your husband has left you....

Donovan is profoundly miserable in his dejection. His wounds are opened time and time again, booze, pills and nameless faces don't help, it's time to get his husband back, because they worked, they were unique in their loving. But to get him back, scars that were tattooed onto his soul and secrets that no one should have to carry alone, have to come out for everyone to see and that makes Donovan vulnerable.

OH WOW! Avril has done it again, this was great reading. Not only did we get Donovan and Levi's story, we had Israel and Reggie and many cameo parts - Juan Pablo Castillo, Dima Storm, Mateo Oliveros, Syren Rua with their husbands ? and the biggie for me...Daniel Nieto!

Now I'm reading this totally out of order and though I kept up with no problems, I need to read these in chronological order, which is proving difficult. I'm told DM is the girl on the Street, the girl in the know.....so DM, you gonna help out a fellow Ashton addict?

Makhda says

[

What I liked :

- I liked how the story goes. Even though they're too angsty.
- Rendezvous with Run This Town series characters. Israel played a big part in this book. I liked him and it's really good to see him again. :)

What I disliked :

- This one is too angsty. And not enough romance

Nazanin says

[Donovan's mission was getting close to Levi, knowing him and his secrets, and find out all about Levi and the Nietos (Levi's brothers). They want to know if Levi has anything to do with his brothers and their business. And if Levi's innocent they want to use him as a bait. Donovan's job is to get Levi to trust him. But falling for Levi and marrying him wasn't his mission! They had their happily ever after for just three years till everything was revealed and Levi found ou

Shin Mon Thway says

Lorraine is going to flay me alive when she sees my rating on this book. ? I admit that I'm a huge HUGE fan of Avril Ashton and I fangirled hard over her masterpiece "Call the Coroner". It was one of my very favorite reads this year and made it straight to my all-time favorite books. That being said, I didn't love this book. ? Now I need to find a dark, secluded cave to hang my head in shame and hide to avoid Lorraine's wrath. ? I think me being not able to enjoy this book has more to do with me than the book. While "Call the coroner" can be enjoyed to the fullest as a standalone, I think it's much better to read Avril Ashton's other books in order to really enjoy this one. While this book is described as a standalone and start of a series, too many characters from the previous books are showing up in this book. And I had no clue to who they are until the half of the book. ? And also, this book is about the two couples and not about one couple as advertised. This is about Donovan and Levi, and Donovan's brother Israel and Reggie. And too much emotional stuff is going on for me to really enjoy this novel. There was no plot .. or twist whatsoever. Donovan lied to Levi, married him under a false pretense so they parted and 7 years later, they reconciled, just like it was described in the blurb. There really was nothing new when it comes to plot or a dramatic twist. And I can't connect to both main characters in the novel so it's no wonder I find the novel not interesting. ? I think my opinion on the book will be very different if I read "Brooklyn Sinners" and "Run This Town" series before I dive into this "Loose Ends" series which I should have done it in the first place. So again, this is all my fault I guess. ? I'm going to begin by Avril Ashton books journey by starting from "Love the sinner" and I might reread this book when I finally get back to this series. For now, I need to find a hideyhole ASAP. ?

3.5 may be I wasn't in the mood stars

???????

~Volha~ says

DNF at 57%

No. Just No.

P.S. I could rant and say many things that have nothing to do with this author personally. Not my book, not my cup of tea. No disrespect intended. Therefore it will stay unrated.

Parvathy says

5 Stars !

Scars and Secrets is the story of an all consuming and soul-deep love between two men who were forced apart by lies, violence, secrets and the second chance which brought them together. Sometimes we read a book and we are so deeply affected by it that we feel we are on a roller coaster ride which never stopped. This book did that and I came out utterly destroyed and high on the emotions and love portrayed in this story.

Van and Levi were forced apart due to circumstances they couldn't control. The secrets Van kept led to the demise of their relationship and resulted in Levi leaving him. Levi and Van are two characters who are so complex and so intense that the love and the emotions they portray are tangible and it jumps off from the pages and hit you with the feels..! They are strong yet so vulnerable. They find their bliss in their mutual surrender and the all consuming love they share. Levi is angry and mistrustful of Van but underneath all the anger and hurt is his immense love for him. Van is so broken by his past that only Levi can give him the peace his soul craves. They both made their own mistakes and had to struggle to find their way to each other. What I loved is that their feelings and emotions, in fact everything in the book was portrayed in a realistic manner.

I have read about strong alpha men who love with everything they have but I have never read about two characters like Levi and Van whose emotions made my heart and head hurt by the intensity of it. The despair, the love and the angst in this book coupled with their mind-blowing sexual chemistry made a wonderful combination which was heady, gut-wrenching, and erotic. The author paints a world which is twisted, dark and weaved with a web of deceit, betrayal and secrets. The emotions which flows forth from the characters are deep, raw and will make your heart bleed with the sheer intensity of it. I fell in love with Van and Levi and their soul deep connection and the way they loved each other.

***Scars and Secrets* is a book which will leave you breathless and take you on an unforgettable ride. This book is filled with a bevy of wonderful strong alpha men, be it the main characters or secondary characters, who will make you fall in love with them all as the story progresses. I loved this book and now I really really cannot wait to read the next book in the series. Read this book for a gut-wrenching, intense, passionate journey which will hold your heart captive and never let go....!!**

This review will be cross posted in Gay Book Reviews

.Lili. says

I don't know what to say about this book.

That this book wasn't my cup of tea is evident. It felt all over the place; the drama was OTT, and although the two main characters were passionate about one another I didn't always believe it. I was often confused, too. There were so many names being thrown my way, and I had no clue who they were. This wasn't an enjoyable reading experience for me, and I should've DNF'ed it. There were a couple of reasons why I truckered through:

1. Once I realized this was suspense, I figured I'd try a genre outside my preference. I wanted to challenge myself and try something different.

and

2. I reached a point where I had already invested much of my time and figured I might as well finish it.

Should've followed my gut and stopped.

All this being said. There are a few things that are imperative I point out.

1. As you may deduce- I've never read this author. I had no clue she only wrote suspense. Had I known that I wouldn't have picked this up.
2. I didn't know that although this is book one in the series- this a spinoff her past books and those characters also play roles in her other books. Hence, why I felt lost when all these characters were popping up.
3. I also had no clue there was a prequel to this book that should be read before this one. Thank you, Ele for the info.

(Btw, I think 2 & 3 should be mentioned in the blurb, but that's just my opinion)

So although my feelings towards this book aren't favorable- I do take responsibility for not having done research about the author and her books. I won't even say whether I recommend this or not because it wouldn't fair. I wasn't sure about whether to rate it or not. If I was to rate it..

Reading enjoyment= 1 Star

But have to take into consideration the points I mentioned so I'll add another star. +1
= 2 Stars

PLEASE remember this review is coming from someone who doesn't enjoy mystery and suspense. I think if I did the outcome would've been different.

In conclusion:

Dear Book,

A copy of the book was kindly provided by the author to Gay Book Reviews for an honest review.

Bev says

Three days after finishing Scars and Secrets and I still can't stop thinking about this book. It exhausted the hell out of me and I loved every word.

There's angst, then there's Ashton Angst. My god does this author know how to work my feels! There were times I wanted to clatter Levi's and Van's heads together and tell them to wake the hell up. There were times my heart broke for them, given the twists and turns that were slowly exposed.

Absolutely bloody brilliant, and a well earned book hangover.

Tammy says

This wasn't a feel good light read but more of a survival and forgiveness read. The sex was hot and different and so many things and people going on it was hard to tell who you could trust or not. The next book is about Dutch who in this was hated by many so not to sure how I'm going to turn around my thinking.

Gigi says

It doesn't give a date here on GR but this was actually released *yesterday*: <http://goo.gl/CzCfjP>

From Avril's site: <http://avrilashton.com/?p=2565>

DarienMoya says

~PANTS? WHAT PANTS, MY PANTS DONT LIVE HERE ANYMORE!!~

5+++++ stars bitch

I am just....

Like where do I begin? This book was just a pure banger and I didn't want it to end. I know I'm getting an angst ridden read when it comes to Avril, but this had me choking on my own spit and had my heart racing, I haven't felt them feels since "*Watch Break me Break You*" left me ruined. *Scars and Secrets* is a thirst trap, and I am thirsty. My throat is mad raw!!

Donovan Cintron has got a job to do but that job didn't entail falling in love and building a family. The thing with keeping secrets is that eventually they come to light and leave a mess of hurt behind. That's what happened with Van, his secrets lost him his husband and family. With everything he does clothed in danger it's finally coming back to bite him in the ass and his husband and son are put in danger. It's time for the prodigal husband to make a return and save his marriage and in the process save his own life.

Levi Nieto found love and lost it. Lies and betrayals has shaped his life for the last seven years and he never thought he would be able to move on from that. Now his life, his sons life is in danger once again and it's all because of the man he married. Donovan came into his life to build him up only to knock him down. Now he's face to face with the man that left him wrecked and bodied, how can they move past all this hurt. One things for sure, their passion is blazing fire and it seems not even distance could dim the flames.

First of all, first off all...this f*cking book left me in tatters. That's not to say I didn't have a few problems but the pros far outweigh the cons and I feel like I been ruined for any other books I read this year. It's like Miss Ashton goes into brain and write the things that make me lose my pants. Levi & Van are walking, talking porn advertisement. I read sex scenes with a slight disinterest because I've been doing this so long, so it takes a lot to get my motor running. Their heat left me deceased and just shooketh to the core. I like them

together, I love them together but I feel like I hardly know them apart. Their surrounding overshadowed their story and I wanted to know how they fell in love.

“Want you to feel me” Levi’s mouth was at his ear, breath harsh, loud, broken. “In your fucking chest. When I come inside that ass, you better taste it on your tongue”?.?

The plot is one crazy twist after another filled with favourite characters from the authors other works. My heart was just in a happy place seeing characters that I know and love in one place coming together with a common goal and shaking sh*t up. A lot of interesting shockers here filled with Avril’s signature dramatic flair and I was all in for it. I swear I am just so in love with the freaking book its essence is dunked into my bones.

What I’m having a hard time with, is Vans addiction being glossed over and it was a full blown addiction. He had some demons and I feel they weren’t addressed properly. Man needs rehab, therapy, and a cleanse. Alas, I’m still all for this regardless of its faults I’m still utterly in love and ain’t nobody can tell me otherwise. I give kudos to Avril regardless of writing, high marks for diversity alone. Her stories ain’t filled with cookie cutter white boys all over the place, and all these bad boy types is my aesthetic. Hats off to my Jamaican rude boyz!!

Overall, this has been a pleasure to read and experience and I might be ruined for the rest of the year. Scars and Secrets is unapologetically Avril Ashton and I am looking forward to reading the series. I have to take them in small doses because I’m trying to live. I am a lifetime fan of this author. Big ups Avril, keep writing the mans dem!!

SideNote- Take caution going into this series if you haven’t read the other series (Brooklyn Sinners and Run This Town).

SideNote2- Walking around with a girl boner for the rest of the month.

Chris says

Really enjoyed this book and loved seeing some of Avrils previous series characters have major roles in this new series. As always, Avrils books are raw and gritty. There is always a major drama and high angst that leaves you frustrated, annoyed and eventually relieved. I liked Levi & Van and love Israels major role as a long lost brother. If you like Avrils underworld/ mafia style stories you will enjoy this new direction

Jewel says

~~BR with Karen, who is also serving as my tour guide, since I haven't read much from this author -- I could not do this without you, Karen!!!!~~

2.5 Stars

?I want to say I liked this book, but, I can't really. It was ok, I guess, but, I wouldn't read it again. Maybe I would have gotten more enjoyment out of it if I had read this author's ??*Brooklyn Sinners*??, and ??*Run This Town*?? series. But I liked ?All These Hidden Scars, ?a lot (thank goodness for tour guides!!), so I think that I'd probably still be lukewarm to ?*Scars and Secrets* even if I had read the others.

There were too many characters and relationship dynamics from other series to make this book (and likely series) a good stand alone read. If I didn't have a tour guide (thanks, Karen!!), I'd have been hopelessly lost!

And, definitely read All These Hidden Scars first. There is very important story arc information there, and you will need it. ?*Scars and Secrets* assumes you have information on critical plot points that were revealed in that prequel.

When Van and Levi encounter each other again, for the first time in 7 years, they went back and forth so much! They still love each other, but Levi is (understandably) still angry. So, Van is asking for a second chance (repeatedly) and Levi is saying no (repeatedly) and then the tables turn, just as Levi is coming around. Dutch just has to get the last word, causing Van to second guess everything - again... I would be ok with Van tossing that good for nothing SOB off a roof...after some heavy torture, first. Then it is Levi wanting the second chance and Van saying no.. I found that whole thing so exhausting. I wanted to smack them both.

But then, like magic, they are back together, having not really resolved anything, but they just decide they are all good now -- right before ?the feces hits the oscillator in a spectacular way. Because these guys just can't catch a break.

Between the exhausting back and forth between Van and Levi, and Van's wallowing and self destructive tendencies, I kind of wanted to shoot myself a time or 2. Or them. Yeah, we'll go with that. The melodrama is high, in this one. O.M.G.

On a different note, I do wish that the author would get a better editor. There were quite a lot of wrong names, or misspellings along with numerous punctuation and grammatical issues. I'm often pretty forgiving about editing issues as long as they don't take me out of the narrative, but they did here, because I had to reread passages to figure out what it was really meant to say.

My conclusion for ?*Scars and Secrets*? Meh.

I will continue the series, though, because I have fantastic tour guides, with Ele and Karen. They really make the reading experience so much better! If the next book is about Dutch, it is going to take some seriously good magic to make me not want him flayed alive...slowly...

Ele says

****3.5 stars****

Note: This book is supposed to be a standalone, but I strongly recommend against skipping its prequel, All These Hidden Scars. And, although I love the world Avril Ashton has created, I have to say that it can be overwhelming for a reader that hasn't read her previous work, considering that there are so many characters from Sinners and Run this town series that make an appearance and have a key role to the story.

That said, I really enjoyed Donovan and Levi's story, and up until 75% it was a solid 4 star read for me.

Long story short (since it's impossible to rehash without giving away the plot), Don meets Levi, his husband, after seven years of being apart. What happened all these years back, left deep scars in both men's hearts, and now it seems impossible to make things work again.

What I enjoyed the most, was the **back and forth, the push and pull between them**. It was exhausting but so real; both men still loved each other but were still hung up on past mistakes.

Tons of feels here! There was so much passion and emotion in the dialogue and their interactions, which didn't surprise me. **There is always fire between Avril Ashton's characters.**

As for the sex...well, I can safely say that **the sex scenes were among the filthiest I have ever read**, and the dirty talk made me feel...dirty. In a good way. I think? I'm not sure yet.

"I want you on my face." Those eyes burned Levi. "I want your ass smothering me as I eat it. Come the fuck here."

.....

"He smiled then let loose, spitting inside Van's mouth. Nothing else, but just that had Van's dick erupting."

.....

"I don't even care. I just want to come inside that hot ass and watch it drip, drip, drip..."

By the way, that last scene happens in an elevator. While somebody is watching.

But no matter how much I liked the majority of the book, the resolution happened too fast for me. **I felt like Levi and Van worked out their issues too abruptly**. And then all hell broke loose, which left me a little bit confused.

Also, I have to mention that there are a lot of editing issues in this one.

Overall, this is a classic Avril Ashton book. Although not my favorite by the author, I still enjoyed it a lot. Extra points for the brief cameo appearance of Syren Rua, one of my favorite characters. He makes every scene that he takes part in, shine.

The excerpts in the end of the book made me all giddy. I'm looking forward to the next stories.

Karla says

4 stars!

"Scars And Secrets" is book one in the **loose ends series**, but since I read the novella 0.5 All These Hidden Scars I knew the history between the MC, **Donovan** and **Levi** I knew it was going to be painful road. I mean these guys had almost everything going against them from betrayals, to lies, and miscommunication, like I said so much against them.

Once upon a time **Donovan** and **Levi** were married, but after **Levi** discovers his husband lied to him he left him. After being separated for years a new threat to **Levi's** brings **Donovan** back, and ready to get his man back, and keep him safe no matter the cost. And so their battle begins not just with their enemies, but with each other. How do you forgive and truly trust again?!

This book was a total angst fest, so many feels these guys gave me. The pull and push was frustrating at times, but so understandable, especially for **Levi**. Even though I'm not a fan of separation as I kept on reading I got that they need the time apart. Besides, they never stopped loving each other. My gosh when these two finally came together they were explosive! The sex was dark and gritty and both such dirty talkers.

Just when I think Avril Ashton has taken me to the highest of my emotions she proves me wrong. I also love the way she intertwines her characters from her other series its like they're all in a big family. I know **Dutch's** book is next and I thought about skipping his story, but I wanna see if he redeemed himself, besides I do love my anti heroes. ♥?
