



TAMRA BAUMANN

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Even though Meg Anderson's hell-raising days are over, coming home to Anderson Butte isn't easy, especially when her impossible-to-please dad is the mayor and her do-gooder siblings run the place. But with another job lost and the gorgeous father of her daughter trying to make contact after disappearing three years ago, a break is definitely in order. Hopefully the little town filled with big, juicy secrets can help.

After being off the grid for years, Josh Granger, a man with his own secrets, wants Meg and his daughter back. But first he has to get past townspeople as protective as a pack of rottweilers. He's not the man Meg thinks he is, but he can't tell her why...not yet.

As Meg slowly warms to Josh, it's clear the old spark is still there. But when his secret is exposed—along with Meg's own shocking revelation—will it tear their family apart again, or bind them forever?

It Had to Be Him Details

Date : Published April 1st 2015 by Montlake Romance

ISBN :

Author : Tamra Baumann

Format : Kindle Edition 287 pages

Genre : Romance, Contemporary, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Contemporary Romance

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From Reader Review It Had to Be Him for online ebook

Colette Auclair says

What a pleasure this book was! It's the story of Meg, a young woman who raised hell in her youth--and made some enemies with long memories--in the Colorado resort town that was founded and is now run by her family. She returns with her adorable toddler in tow because she's broke and has nowhere else to go. Her powerful father pretty much bribes the entire town to make Meg pay for her past transgressions, except for her siblings, who (mostly) stand by her. (And yes, I smell sequels with these brothers and sister, and hooray for that!) Add to all this one handsome devil of an FBI agent, Josh, who loves Meg and is the father of her child, but had to abandon them due to a long-term undercover job. He's THS CLOSE to being able to tell Meg the truth about why he had to leave, but the case is not quite finished, so he has to wait.

Meg and Josh have crazy chemistry, and their relationship is believable and sexy. Josh has to regain Meg's trust, and Meg has to open her heart to him again, despite their past. Their daughter Haley is accurately portrayed as a true toddler, and the scenes with her and Josh are a delight. In addition to Josh's FBI secret, there are also some secrets in Meg's family, and a townful of colorful characters; they all combine to keep the pace brisk.

Oh, and grandma likes her shotgun. Just sayin.'

All in all, IT HAD TO BE HIM is witty, fun, well-written, smoldery, and full of surprises. Exactly what you want in a romance!

Dee/ bookworm says

I got this book for free with my Kindle First subscription.

Meg has a daughter with Josh, but Josh left her a few years ago. Now he is looking for her so she goes home to hide, but Josh follows her there. Unbeknownst to Meg, Josh is willing to leave his life behind to make their family work, or at least be a part of his daughters life. I like Josh's characters, seems like a very stand up guy. He does have his sketchy parts, but he has valid reasons for them. I feel like Megs character grows a lot in this book, and her family finally comes together after she finds out some horrible information. But I like that Meg doesn't give into the evil and tries to go the extra mile to prove people can change. Very good read. The ending did feel a little rushed. So did the relationship. If you have children you need to do what is best for them, boundaries are important. It seemed like they went from talking and introducing father and daughter to living together rather quickly. 3.5 stars

Raine says

Loved it!!!

First read of this author and fell absolutely in love!!! I like that the heroine isn't perfect and when trouble came around she would run away. I liked that she grew up in this book.

Nancy Stopper says

You know a book is gonna be great when you are introduced to a gun-totting, orthopedic-shoe-wielding Granny in the first chapter! It Had to Be Him is a great mix of romance, second chances, comedy, and a bit of suspense and intrigue thrown in. I really enjoyed how the author set the stage from the beginning of the book with Meg's return to town. Meg has some major obstacles to overcome with the town's - and her family's - perception of her due to her actions as a teen. The reader is immediately introduced to the dynamic of the town, and Meg's family, and you find yourself rooting for her from the outset!

The author does a masterful job of setting up the reader with regards to Josh. Meg's "introduction" of Josh made us fear and hate him before we ever met him - boy were we wrong! Josh endears himself to me as soon as I meet him, just as he began to win the town over with his sincerity. As soon as I got to know Josh, I was really cheering for Meg and Josh to solve their problems and find their happily ever after. Ah the innocence of youth - Haley immediately loved her Daddy and I enjoyed seeing Josh grow as a father. I liked Josh even more once I saw where he grew up and he developed his relationship with Eric - we all gained insights into Josh's background through getting to know Eric. I think it's evident that I really like Josh.

All in all, the author does a wonderful job of introducing us to Anderson Butte and the town that protects and defends their own, has an active gossip grapevine, and sports the occasional celebrity hoping to relax in anonymity. I look forward to visiting Anderson Butte again as other members of the town search for their happily ever after!

Lynn says

[No (hide spoiler)]

Lauren Christopher says

What a fun book! With a zany cast of characters (including a gun-toting granny, an old handyman named Zeke with a very large crush, a sexy silent sheriff, some catty old-high-school frenemies, and a diner waitress with quite a hairdo), we are welcomed into the town of Anderson Butte, Colorado, and into the lives of Meg and Josh.

Anderson Butte is a good place to run for Meg and Josh, since it's a town that knows how to keep secrets (as evident by the way they can pretend there aren't celebrities all over the place). But it's also Meg's hometown, so some of the secrets end up being hers. And she doesn't necessarily want them all out there.

Of course, hero Josh has his own secrets, too. And as they try to mend a past relationship that had gone really wrong, they must decide which secrets are worth keeping, which are worth owning up to, and which are in the way of love and forgiveness.

This is a lighthearted, fun read with a really deep well of emotion that made me root for Josh and Meg through the whole journey. Recommended for anyone who wants that deep sigh -- and big smile -- when

they close that last page at the end of a book.

I can't wait to read more about Anderson Butte! I sure hope all the siblings get their own story!

(I received an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review.)

Ali says

It Had to Be Him was a great, fun and light read.

When small town gal Meg finds her way home, it's for one reason. Not to reconnect with a family she never felt she fit into and certainly not to rebuild her mess of a life. No, it's to hideout from the man who knocked her up and broke her heart. However, sometimes when hiding from all the things you once wanted...you find all the things you never knew you needed.

I immediately fell in love with the small town of Anderson Butte. The fierce protective atmosphere was entertaining and quite humorous. Even though Meg is a bit of the town's Black Sheep, the way they embraced her as their own was endearing. Even though you can't love all it's residences, you can't help but love this small town.

Josh took it all in stride though, and for that, I loved him. He knew getting Meg back would require the acceptance of not just her family but the town as a whole.

Baumann brought a smile to my face countless times with It Had too Be Him. It's the perfect vacation read, easy and endlessly entertaining.

Ashleyjo says

Ehh, this type of story and writing just isn't my speed, style, nor taste.

It's a light, fluffy, ribbons and frills story set around a hefty dose of woe is me over mundane childish antics and the pulling of petals off the daisy .. 'He loves me, he loves me not.'

Aside from being boring, it requires you to suspend logic.. examples:

Batshit crazy town with way too much unbelievable about it.

Hey, I've known you a couple weeks but I think I'll just give you my business.

Three year absence between MCs where his last words were for her to move on... but he comes back to get her & she's not only not moved on but hasn't even slept with anyone since him. Hello, Disney movie~

Everyone seems to have more money than a Wall Street banker, except the female MC. But, no worries, she suddenly has 300k before the end of the book.

I hated the messages pulled from the story.. Examples:

Her family lied to her 'for her own good.' He lied, lied some more, and uses the line "it was for your own good." And she just accepts it all and berates herself for not being a better person and having more trust in people. THIS IS NOT an example of a strong, self-confident protagonist! It's a message of it's okay to lie and make choices for others without their knowledge as long as it's in their best interest.

It's okay for a dad to be a complete asshole.

My Gawd... Egging someone's car and setting up a pie in the face contest doesn't make for a troublemaker kid. This book turned a girl's normal youthful antics into just cause to berate her as the rotten apple of the town while another adult character's actual cruel, harmful antics were breezed over.

Bottom line:

Anyhoo, if you like marshmallow stories where innocent shit is villainized and actual wrongs are brushed under the rug, then this book is perfect for ya.

Sheri says

Readers who love snappy dialogue, a fast pace, and humor will love this book.

There are so many funny, yet heartfelt characters, the book brims with their charm. There's conflict, but the heroine faces it with self-effacing optimism and determination and hope. The hero is a charmer that you can't help but root for.

A book that sweeps the reader along on a fast-paced, laugh-out-loud ride.

I received a complimentary copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Kathleen Roth says

I knew this was going to be a fun story from the very beginning when Meg Anderson returns to Anderson Butte, Colorado, a small town filled with relatives, from the Mayor – her father, to the sheriff—her brother, and a gun-toting grandmother who peppered Meg's behind with buckshot a time or two in the past, things are about to get interesting. The best thing in Meg's life is her daughter, Haley. Other than that, Meg has managed to make a mess out of just about everything she's touched—including her relationship with Haley's father, a man who'd up and abandoned her and Haley before the girl was even born. But when Josh shows up in town, determined to step back into Meg's and Haley's life, he has a big secret that he can't expose, and that's going to cost him—especially with half the town related to Meg and wanting to run him out on a rail. What a fun read, but also one filled with poignancy and a few twists and turns that surprised me. I received this ARC for an honest review.

Trish R. says

Possible SPOILERS..

This had a few good twists to it but I'm not so sure I like the characters, any of them except Josh and two and a half year old Haley. On the other hand I liked the characters a lot. It was such a screwy story at times. What it amounted to was: Meg came back to town, her DICKWAD of a father told the whole town they were not to help Meg in any way, even Meg's brothers and sister, and everyone went for it because dear-old-dad ran the town. Then Meg finds out the family, all of them, lied to her her whole life. And she was really mad at them, for about a second. Josh, our hero, lied to her because he was undercover and had to leave her to save hers and Haley's lives and then he came back and she fell for him all over again and when she found out he lied she told him to move out because he lied to her and she would think about him seeing his daughter Haley. WTF? The author made Meg seem so stupid. I got the other books in this series and I will move on to the next. I just hope the heroines are written better than Meg was. This was somewhat of a mystery so that made it more enjoyable, much better than just the same old romance that's pages and pages of angst and misunderstandings.

There was explicit sex in this book but not really any sexual tension. And there was swearing, too. But it wasn't too bad.

And, I must admit, I cried at the awesome ending.

As to the narrator: I know that 99.9% of female narrators who do men's voices pretty much have all their men sounding alike, and I'm sooo OK with that. I couldn't care less if they sound alike as long as they DO sound like men. AND I like the way Ms. Rudd's men sound. The women all sound different, from old to slutty, whatever is called for. But mostly I love Ms. Rudd's emotions when she reads. I mean, she really, really laughs when it's called for, whispers, yells angrily, it's just amazing. I've always said that Katherine Kellgren could give lessons in being an excellent narrator but now I have to add Kate Rudd to my on-going list. I don't know about too many older audio books because I'd start to listen then the men would sound just like a woman and I'd have to stop. From 2014 forward some of the female narrators got better but some really don't care if their men STILL sound like women or not.

You can't beat this or Ms. Baumann's other books in this series when they're all Free Read, Free Listen. Nothin' better than FREE.

Emilia says

It has to be family

Gosh. I don't normally read books about adults, tending to stick more to NA and YA novels, but I'm really glad I gave this one a try. It was just so cute!!!! I picked it as one of my Amazon First Reads for this month and boy don't I love Amazon. They got so many good books and for someone who travels a lot it's super convent. Anyways, back to the review.

The writing was good. It wasn't amazing, but I enjoyed the nice flow of it and the distinct voice of both Josh and Meg. I was hooked from the very beginning, finishing this story rather quickly. I'm not an expert on adult novels, but I thought this would definitely be something my mother could easily get into.

The plot was engaging too. I loved the whole idea of this family owned town. And the whole business side of the novel was super cool. I would totally want to live in the town. They may not all be related, yet, they are definitely all one big family. The actual story was great. It's a romance so don't expect some crazy action. However, there is definitely tons of emotional drama and secrets. Familial issues, romance drama, petty blow-ups, and harsh judgements fill these pages. Overall, I think this novel had a captivating plot-line.

Oh the characters. They were all so cute!!! I loved Meg and the struggle she went through to prove the town that she had changed. She's so strong, someone who would and will never give-up. Plus, she's an incredible mother to her daughter, Haley. Then, we have Josh. He was not what I expected when we first heard about him. I thought he was going to be some jerk trying to redeem himself. He wasn't. He was a man who had never really had anyone to love and lose till Meg. Yet, he had to let her and their unborn child go all in order to protect them. Not very many people would be that selfless. I was rooting for him the entire time. Go Josh go!!! The other characters were great too. I loved Meg's family and how loyal they were to each other. However, I have to say her Grandma was the best. She was just so funny!

All in all, I recommend this story to those who are looking for a well developed romance and the bonds of family. This story centralized more on familial relationships more than anything else. Enjoy :D

Jen | Jen Talks Audiobooks says

As an avid romance reader who starts at 3 stars when a book is average, it's saying something that this one rates a 4 for me.

The plot here is an interesting one. At the outset, we know that Meg is a single mom who's returned to her hometown. She is a free spirit whose antics gained her the disdain of most of her small town - which is essentially owned and run by her family. Her guy Josh has left her as soon as he found out she was pregnant and she's running from him so she won't lose her daughter. The idea here that she was going to fall in love again - with him, the guy who had hurt her so badly - was something I wanted to see an author pull off. I was pretty skeptical.

I was really surprised when she did it. This speaks to the writing, which has a strong emotional punch. The plot is so-so. There are a lot of elements included that require suspending your disbelief: Meg is a helicopter pilot? And so is Josh? Meg takes Josh back when he continues to lie to her? Their daughter immediately loves her daddy? Meg's old friend hates her so much that she publicly shames her?

Despite those flaws, Baumann gave us a small town to love. Close knit, a town that keeps secrets and defends their own fiercely, even when the one they're defending is someone they don't hold highly. It's full of cliches but not the standard cheesy ones. A wise grandmother with a gun was just the right mix of gruff and protectively loving. Meg's dad never changes too much to become unreliable; he stays true to his initial character. And while Meg seems to trust far too quickly and for the wrong reasons, it works because of her own insecurities and past.

All that said, you really do have to suspend your disbelief and just be entertained. If you're looking for a

realistic story here, you'll be disappointed. But if you just want a quick, fun read that introduces you to an interesting town full of great characters, you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Kate Rudd is fantastic (as usual) as the narrator on audio. She voices each character with the exact amount of emotion and mood. Their personalities are distinct, probably more so because of the way she relates them. This book is likely less believable in print; Kate Rudd brings a lightness to the story that is easy and fun without being silly. It was a pleasure to go right along with things and not question them because of her narration.

This story introduced me to a town that I'm interested to know more about. Bring on the companion novels. I'm in, especially if Kate Rudd is narrating!

Jenn says

3.75 Stars

This book was about second chances for:

1. Love
2. Trust
3. Having a family
4. Life

Meg's family and town are not exactly fans of Meg. Her sibling's may love her and wish her the best but her father certainly doesn't believe she can do anything worth while. He doesn't think she can be responsible either. Sure Meg gave the town heck with her attitude and pranks growing up, but she deserves a second chance. Right?

Not everyone thinks she does. Especially her father and The Three Amigos. They all think she can't do any good and judge her harshly and give her a tongue lashing whenever they can. So she's set out to prove to everyone that she's not the person they think she is. It also helps that she has no where to hide out so she needs to stay in her childhood town, the one she had hoped to never return to.

See, her ex-boyfriend who shattered her heart and trust as well as leaving her alone and pregnant, is sniffing around and trying to find her. He has some secrets he needs to let out of the bag, but Meg doesn't know that, as well as trying to win his family back.

Josh, the ex, will run into some issues as he tries to locate Meg in her home town. The town rallies together, and are mostly related to each other, not to mention they are a very tight lip community. Which they have to be, as they have signed a contract "pact" as the town caters to celebrities.

Josh will have to jump hurdles with her tight lip family, community, and Meg's shot gun toting grandma who will definitely shoot you. That's not a lie, just ask Meg.

Meg has to come to terms with her trust issues with Josh, and people in general if she's going to allow Haley into Josh's life and him into hers and her daughters. Josh will need to come clean with his life and pray Meg can forgive him- which his secrets were justifiable. And they both will need to learn how to co-parent as another special person enters their life unexpectedly.

What I liked

1. Josh
2. The kids
3. Aunt Gloria
4. This book kept me glued the whole way through.
5. This book was exactly what I needed.
6. The whole aspect of the story.
7. The humor.
8. The playfulness between Josh and Meg.
9. Tara- even though she played a small role, I can't wait for her book, Book 2.
10. 85% good pacing - though I felt some things happened too fast and the end wrapped up too fast for me.
11. Meg- though I didn't like how the author made her "the best" at everything she did. Also, I thought she was a hypocrite at times when it came to her thoughts about Josh and second chances, or how everyone did the same thing Josh had to do and she let that go sooner than stuff with Josh- that bothered me the most.

Lexi Greene says

Darynda Jones meets small town romance. And what a romance. A secret FBI agent leaves the pregnant love of his life to keep her safe from danger, only to rile her beyond measure when he reappears in her life determined to make it up to her and their adorable two year old. Abandonment is no stranger to the family black sheep heroine who grabs the reader's sympathy and keeps them firmly in her camp for the length of the novel. She's got guts and courage to spare, and she's the kind of woman we'd all like to be: smart, compassionate and competent with a heart bigger than the small country town where her father rules the roost. This is a big, bold, heart-warming, heart-stopping romance with love in all its forms from a gun wielding grandma to a much loved old horse. Anderson Butte is a gorgeous lakeside town teeming with secrets from celebrities no-one appears to notice, to affairs, dragon-lady criminals, and old family secrets. The characters are rich and complex and the hero is to die for. Who doesn't love a man who despite life's knocks is good to the core? Tamra's funny, quirky take on life is evident on every page and I strongly urge you to take a chance on this one – it's a Goodie. It's better than a Goodie – it's every form of treat. The kind of story that leaves you bereft when the story's done and the journey's over. Let's hope there are more Anderson Butte stories to come!
