



Harder

Robin York

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In Robin York's provocative new novel, two young ex-lovers find themselves together again in the shadow of tragedy—and an intense, undeniable attraction.

Caroline still dreams about West. His warm skin, his taut muscles, his hand sliding down her stomach. Then she wakes up and she's back to reality: West is gone. And before he left, he broke her heart.

Then, out of the blue, West calls in crisis. A tragedy has hit his family—a family that's already a fractured mess. Caroline knows what she has to do. Without discussion, without stopping to think, she's on a plane, flying to his side to support him in any way he needs.

They're together again, but things are totally different. West looks edgy, angry at the world. Caroline doesn't fit in. She should be back in Iowa, finalizing her civil suit against the ex-boyfriend who posted their explicit pictures on a revenge porn website. But here she is. Deeply into West, wrapped up in him, in love with him. Still.

They fought the odds once. Losing each other was hard. But finding their way back to each other couldn't be harder.

Harder Details

Date : Published July 1st 2014 by Bantam

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Author : Robin York

Format : Kindle Edition 352 pages

Genre : New Adult, Romance, Contemporary, Academic, College, Contemporary Romance

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From Reader Review Harder for online ebook

Jaime Arkin says

"We go deep and then deeper, falling, spinning. When he's with me, I'm never lost."

Harder picks up almost 3 months after the end of Deeper. The West & Carolyn that we fell in love with in the previous book is no more. West is determined to leave his hopes and dreams of what could have been behind and start living his life in reality and that means no more Caro. But then he reaches out to her in the middle of the night when something tragic happens and Carolyn feels she has only one choice... she goes to him and finally sees him in the life that he never wanted her to see him in.

To say this book put me through the emotional shredder would be an understatement. Things happen and are said and done here that completely gutted me and had me on the verge of tears and my heart shattered for these two. (No spoilers here but PM me if you need a heads up) But despite all the emotional trauma that York has had me endure, I'm not sorry I read it, and I will read these books back to back very soon.

Ultimately this story is one of redemption and love and hope. Feeling worthy of the love that someone has for you despite a history that may make you feel like you don't deserve anything good.

*"There's hope in the world.
I just have to find it."*

God West... My heart breaks for this man. There were times I just wanted to punch him in the nuts and run away and I wanted Caro to do the same, but then there are the times that you see how his past has affected his feelings of self-worth and all the things that he does make a sick kind of sense. He's this completely different person when he's back in this place he grew up and it's so heartbreaking to see the difference. Caro is an amazing character. Normally you guys know I'm all about the boys in my books, but to be perfectly honest I have a total crush on her. She's so strong and determined and she's absolutely a bigger person than I could ever be. I love the continuation of her story from Deeper and how she deals with the revenge porn lawsuit and ultimately the resolution she decides on... but in addition to that, you see her growth as a character from the start of book 1 and just how mature she's had to become and ugh... there is this one scene that completely blew me away and when you read this book you'll know which one I'm talking about. It's just a reflection of her love for West and her maturity and it was perfection.

"I can't ruin her. That's what she means. I can fuck up, but I can't ruin her."

Robin York is an amazing story-teller, she gets inside her characters and shares every single nuance with us readers. You can't possibly walk away from any of her books feeling like you didn't know these people she's sharing with us. She is one of the few authors who I have come to count on to blow me away with deep, meaningful, layered stories. (If you didn't know her adult pen name is Ruthie Knox & you must read her entire backlist) Deeper and Harder fall into the NA category, a category that I've become hesitant to pick up as of late, but once again, Knox reminds me why she's on my all-time favorites list.

I picked up this book and didn't put it down until I turned the last page. If you're looking for a story that has amazing characters and a deeply emotional and layered story you must pick up this series. If you haven't read Deeper yet, please do so ASAP. Harder is out in July and I can't wait to put a copy on my bookshelf right next to book 1.

I have to add that I kind of hope we'll get some more in the form of Krishna and Bridget... *crosses fingers*

Thank you to Random House/Bantam for the advance copy in exchange for my honest thoughts.

Geri Reads says

5 Caro & West stars!

It's one of those 'difficult to read and even more difficult to rate' books. My usual M.O. for books that have this type plot device would be to DNF it so fast or get ragey about it. My friends know this about me and I have stepped on my soapbox on more than one occasion. But once in a while it works and it adds another layer to the story. It doesn't make for an easy read but once the rage is over, you get that nice little HEA at the end, it makes everything worth it.

"All the songs are love songs, and this one is ours."

Harder picks up 3 months after Deeper ended. West is in Silt and Caroline is in Putnam. For all intents and purposes, they were over. Caroline and West was no more. I think this is an important thing to remember, at least for me, in light of happens at 20% in the book.

When West's biological father died, Caroline decided to be there for West even though West doesn't want her anywhere near Silt. When they saw each other, everything was different. West wasn't the same guy Caro fell in love with. He was basically a stranger: bitter, angry and desperate.

Caroline did the best she could to be there for him but West was having none of it. And in what could be the cruelest and most boneheaded move ever, West set out to destroy Caroline's hope for him the only way he knows how: (view spoiler)

I'm not going to lie. Many who loved Deeper will probably hate this book because of what West did. I hated what West did. Hated it. I cried when it happened. I raged at Robin York for taking this story in this direction. I couldn't fathom why Caroline didn't rage at him or kicked in the balls. It was tough. I didn't want to continue but I did. And if I may be honest, it was touch and go for me until at about 59% or so when West and Caroline started talking.

It was then that Robin York painstakingly laid bare every motivation, both right and wrong, of each character, West especially. While Deeper was focused on Caroline's fight against those who wronged her, Harder was very much about West's fight for survival. In this book, the reader gets to see his home life (shitty), his mother (deplorable human being) and Frankie (his only joy) in Silt.

"I knew as soon as you came through the door, I'd ruin it. There wasn't any way not to ruin it, and it made me so fucking angry, so that's what you ended up seeing when you did come

outside. How angry I was at the world for making me and you impossible."

I still didn't like what he did but I understood his character more. I felt that Ms. York did a good job of showing me, the reader, how wrong West was in his thinking. She really did. At the same time, she used what happened there as a catalyst for Caro and West's relationship to finally move along.

And when they finally did get their act together, it was absolutely beautiful to read. Add to that Ms. York's majestic writing and it was just smooth-sailing from then on.

I love her. Caroline Piasecki.

I always will.

Another thing which I loved about this is how Caroline's story finally came full circle. Did she get her vengeance on Nate? No. But what she got out of it was even better. I just loved how that part of the story was resolved. I was a little afraid this would get swept under the rug. And frankly, after what happened in the first 20%, I thought this book was going to be about West "winning Caroline back" and the "revenge porn" element to the story would fall by the wayside. It didn't. In fact, it couldn't have gone better. I felt that Caroline's decision was fitting and it really worked for me.

I also loved that Frankie, West's sister, was a prominent figure in this story. It was heartbreaking to read about her childhood and how West essentially raised her. Her presence in the book also gave added insight into West's character. A big part of his motivation was Frankie and this book afforded the reader a glimpse into their heartbreaking relationship. His whole family really and the place he came from added layers to his character.

In the end, I really did end up loving this book despite its imperfect characters. Great writing has a lot to do with it, of course. But most of all, I loved these characters so much. I hated them and loved them at the same time. I don't exactly know why. Maybe because they were written as honestly flawed people, which made their struggles all the more relatable to me. I dunno. But I loved it.

Definitely one of the best I've read, so far, this year.

**An ARC was provided by the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.*

**Quotes used in this review are from the ARC and could differ from the published copy.*

Michelle [Helen Geek] says

April 2017 -- Definitely 5 Stars. Third read. I've read some real stinkers, so really appreciate the books that engage me and keep me engaged. Ruthie Knox at her very best. Wish I had more like this.

10/12/2015 -- Finished the second read for this one and even better the second time, I think. Very good and just what I needed.

05/25/2014 --

Overall Rating = 5 Stars

Book Cover / Book Blurb / Book Title = 3 / 4 / 5 = 4 Stars

Writer's Voice = 5 Stars

Character Development = 4 Stars

Story Appreciation = 5 Stars

Ending = 4 Stars

Worth the Chili = 2 Stars -- [\$9.99 pre-order on Amazon]

Smexy [HEAT] Rating = Moderate

352 pages

Robin York is Ruthie Knox. I found this out after I had written the review for "Deeper" where I praised this author's "debut" book. I felt a bit silly. Just had to tell you this ..

This book isn't perfect, but it is very definitely a 5 Star read. I connected with this NA read as written by Robin York. Tremendously. I read TONS of NA and so much of it is the same ole' stuff. Most of it lacks true writing talent by the author. Most I rate poorly. Not here. This book is one of the very best I've read -- any book, any genre'. Yes. It is that good.

What did I really like?

1 -- GREAT characters. Most of the time it's all about the Hero in a book for me. In this one, I think I appreciated our heroine more. Caroline was amazing. I loved her in Deeper and fell even further for her in this one. There is a scene -- and if you read the book you'll know exactly which one I'm talking about -- she displayed such emotional intelligence. More than I ever could have. You've heard the term .. cut your nose off to spite your face? Well, when I'm in high emotion, I tend to do this. Regrets abound. I like that she didn't do this. She knew what she wanted. She also knew that it may never happen, but she wasn't going to hurry it along. She was going to have her say and so she did. God. I was so engaged. Amazing writing. I didn't know if I agreed with her, but knew I appreciated her need. GAH!!

West. How do you pull yourself out of a world into another when you really don't know if there is even something else out there? You only know this can't be all there is. There has to be something else. How do you do that? How do you allow yourself that HOPE?

2 -- HOPE. This is the story behind the story here. Hope. If we don't have hope, what do we have? Sometimes hope is the simple things. You take it one day at a time until you see that flicker of something else. Just a flicker. What courage it takes to get to this place. What work. HARD work and to be only 19, then 20 and then 21. To have to figure it all out yourself and to NEED to do this for your little sister. Your heart. This is West. He is amazing. Caroline and West are really perfect for each other. Their love flies off the pages and into your heart.

3 -- The story. This incredible story. I don't even know what to say about it. I just connected. This is why I keep trying NA. There is such joy in watching new young adults figure it out. Learning some of life's tougher lessons. Figuring out what they want and then watching them work hard to get it. When it is done right .. an AMAZING read. This one is DONE RIGHT!

4 -- Secondary characters. I enjoyed them all. One honorable mention is out to Joan. She was doing all she could to help keep things together for Frankie and West. It wasn't enough. She knew it, but it was all she really could do. In the end, her note to West was perfection.

5 -- The title really plays a part in the book -- just as the Deeper title did. I say to my kids .. "don't make things harder than they have to be." Also, "sometimes you have to know when to get out of your own way." It was pretty interesting seeing some of my soul deep life philosophies play out in this story. It is so true. We have to make sure we aren't throwing roadblocks up before we even get started on things that are important to us. A true life lesson -- usually learned the hard way and life is really hard enough without our help in making it Harder.

There are one of two things that weren't perfect.

1 -- The price when it is released in July will be about \$10. I really hope you don't let that stop you. The publisher should be ashamed of themselves for charging this. You can guarantee that the author won't get any more than if she had self pub'd this book.

2 -- There were a few clunky places where the book transitioned and lost me for me a minute. Just a few and it didn't knock me off of any of my reading joy. But, it did happen, so I'm mentioning it.

3 -- Nothing else really.

I hear quite a few people say they don't read NA or they try not to. I completely understand. There is a lot of crap out there -- just look at my "less than 3 shelf." Saying this .. this is a really great book that just happens to be about two college age people. You can class it NA if you'd like, but I class it as a really great book / series. This and Deeper are now in my favorite pile and I know I'll read it again. And again. They make me think and make me feel good. These are people I'd really like to know. Talk to. Have a conversation with. What greater praise?

Happy Reading!!

ARC provided by Random House Publishing Group - Bantam Dell via Netgalley in exchanged for an honest review.

A note from this reviewer. Ruthie Knox is hit or miss for me. I've enjoyed a few of her stories, but not every one. I don't think this will be the case for me and her alter-ego Robin York. Robin allows her characters a depth of emotion I find lacking in Ruthie's books. She lets the story play out and doesn't try to artificially trim it to meet some publishing requirement -- or it seems so to me. If you aren't a huge fan of Ruthie, don't let this stop you from trying Robin's books.

Duchess Nicole says

2.25 Stars

I'm not sure what to say. I feel like this second book is so far away from where I wanted/expected it to go that it's not even Caroline and West any more...it's some other couple. I feel like the author was trying to teach me a lesson here. Forgive, be passive, forgive, be a doormat, forgive forgive forgive.

I'm just not that forgiving. Certainly not in control of my emotions enough to just have a small, quiet conversation before letting it go. I don't even care about vengeance. But a little begging and groveling are in order. I want proof of shame, guilt, SOMETHING more than what we got here. **I want passion, I want fireworks, and I want it in every aspect of a romance, not just between the sheets.** I want it when they fight, when they kiss, when they *breathe*.

I thought they found that kind of zest for each other in Deeper.

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ This is my thoughts at 50% ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

I'm at the halfway point and decided to wait a few days before continuing. I'm hoping that the second half of this book finds me happier than I am right now. I wanted to jot some thoughts down first. *Deeper* was one of my favorite books so far this year, and I've been stalking *Harder* for months...literally every day waiting to request a copy.

One of the things that really struck me about Caroline and West was how much they leaned on one another and filled each other up. From the first moment they met, really, there was that magnetic pull. And when they became friends over time, it was apparent that they found solace in one another. Both of them were such GOOD people. Regardless of how book one ended, there was no doubt in my mind that they cared for each other deeply.

However, after reading what occurs within these pages, I'm not so sure any more. What happened to the strength that Caroline found before? Where are her big girl panties? Where is her backbone? And West...yes, he was somewhat abrasive at times...it's understandable. I don't have unrealistic expectations. However, there are certain lines that you just don't cross when it comes to your loved ones. West is in some less than savory circumstances, what with his deadbeat parents and vulnerable younger sister. Caroline is there for him in all ways, and not only does he not show appreciation for it, he actively disrespects her to such an extreme that I'm not sure I can forgive him. And it's so deliberate, so *calculated* and coldhearted. And for what? To save his pride?

So my character descriptions at this point:

CAROLINE: a whipped puppy dog with no pride or sense of self preservation. She pretends to be strong but every single aspect of what made her stronger, she's ignoring at this point.

WEST: At first attempting to be honorable; now, sinking to new lows, whiny, pity-partying incessantly and so, SO disrespectful as to be almost scornful. Stubborn, stubborn, and self destructive.

I know that each of them are, in their own way, trying to do good things. However, just because you are in a bad place in life does not give you the right to treat others with such contempt, nor does it excuse doormat behavior.

I will finish in a few days, hopefully with a sunnier outlook on these two.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ This is my thoughts on the last half: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

My thoughts haven't changed a whole lot. I appreciate what York was trying to do here, but I just don't agree with it. Life is hard. If you lash out at loved ones **in such a harsh manner** every time something terrible happens, you lose the faith and trust that they have in you. If these two stay together, get married, have a family...there will be times that are worse than this, I can guarantee it. And beginning your lifelong commitment with such a breach of trust is a hard line for me.

What's really sad is that had a mere **TWO PAGES BEEN LEFT OUT OF THIS STORY** I'd have probably five starred this. Well, okay, maybe four. What happens is **too intentional, too calculated to be as personally devastating as possible**. For someone to be able to look at the person they love and demolish their self esteem, confidence, and sense of self in that manner is not okay with me. And again, had the after effects been handled differently, I could have rated this higher. But COME ON! (view spoiler) Don't get me wrong. I'm all about forgiveness. It's absolutely necessary in any lasting relationship.

But that forgiveness has to be wanted, it has to be asked for, and in this case, it needed to be *begged* for. This passive, instant, odd way of handling it was a major turn off.

Imagine for a moment if the gender roles were switched here...I can very nearly guarantee that readers would be singing a different tune.

I was already primed to be upset with the way the romance played out, so it was no surprise that the rest of it left me feeling empty as well. With regards to Caroline's lawsuit against her ex that posted revenge porn pics, I was unsatisfied with that as well. The pride and toughness that she began to display in Deeper just seems to have left her. The two men in her life have both done despicable things, and she seems to be of the mindset that it would be very grown up and mature to just not put up a fuss. The ending, especially, (view spoiler) was the last eye roll that I had left in me for this girl.

I'm not being sarcastic or condescending at all when I say that I'm very sad how this was handled. I realize that some readers, and the author, will feel like these characters...some of them...took the high road, and that lessons were learned all around. I suppose a big kudos goes out to them, but I'm just not that compliant. Robin York (Ruthie Knox) is absolutely a wonderful writer...she's evocative and intense and pulls me in. However, she is very hit or miss for me when it comes to her characterization. I end up either loving or hating her protagonists. I'm sad for Caroline and West because at this point, I'm just ambivalent where a few months ago, I felt obsessed.

Copy provided by the publisher for review

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

4.5 Persistent Stars

Ok so originally after reading book one I was like

but now after hearing info about this book

but then my BBB J says I should still read it...IDK WHAT TO DOO!!!!

So I decided to read it and see for myself....

There was that one part where I thought West should:

And Caro did get a little stalkerish:

But overall my final thoughts were:

And just because I found this one and thought it was funny....Do I care whether or not you like my review?

Polly says

This review (or lack there of) contains spoilers. If you don't want to know explicit details DO NOT SCROLL DOWN!!!!

I'm so pissed off and I didn't even read the book. Yep that's right. Thanks God for ARC's and people that will let me know ahead of time so I don't waste money on garbage.

Deeper was one of my fav books I've read in a year. I read it even though knowing that was a epic cliffhanger, which I usually hate. I messaged author let her know that I loved it and what I hoped what happen in this book. Let's just say she took that and made this book the worst thing possible. I'm not one to love stupid angst.

I'm literally fucking disgusted at the fact that the author actually felt the need to have West go down on a old married woman right in front of Caroline KNOWING she was watching.

But wait they will get their HEA. FUCK THAT!!!! I wish Caroline would have beat his ass. That's what he

deserves. No redemption, ever.

So no I will not be shelling out my hard earned money for stupid, and actually disgusting drama.

Some people may like that sort of thing. I do not. Good luck with her ventures going forth. You just lost one fan.

Mallory says

Thanks to the magic of ARCs I am now no longer reading this book... which is a shame because I LOVED the first book and so badly wanted an HEA for West and Caroline.

I can't understand why the author would take the book in the direction it heads, or why certain things had to happen. It's like taking the readers' hearts and stomping on them for the sake of drama. I don't have time for that because there are too many other good books out there.

So alas I will not be reading this.

And as for West...

J *deep in the heart of Texas* says

4.5--**Hard On the Heart**--Stars!!

We first met West and Caroline in Deeper. I fell in love with their story. Their struggle. Their journey. It was painful, it was cruel, it was filled with hurt...but also hope, and want and desire.

My heart broke at the end of Deeper. When Caroline and West were torn apart. West to return home to protect Frankie from their asshole father. Caroline to remain in Putnam and fight for her freedom. Freedom from the intrusion of having her naked self splashed across the internet.

It's been 2.5 months since West left for Silt, Oregon. I really struggled with the state of West and Caroline's relationship at the beginning of Harder. We left them with hope, with promise, with love. And we returned to them with hatred, anger, sadness, longing, regret.

A tragedy brings Caroline to West and to Silt. West doesn't want her there. But West saved Caroline in

Deeper and it's her turn to save West. Whether he knows that's what he wants and needs or not. And she never gives up.

"All I can do is stay. Love him. Hope."

West is ashamed. He hates who he is, where he comes from. What his life represents. If Caroline is good....

"The world belongs to Caroline, but it doesn't belong to me."

West believes he represents the bad...

"I'm a villain. I deserve venom. A kick in the ribs. Disgust."

West's actions towards Caroline made me rage. The choices he made, regardless of the intent were almost unforgiveable. It broke my heart. Shattered me.

"I used sex to make you leave me. It was...that was something special between us. Sacred, even. And I turned it in to a weapon. Turned it on you."

In a way what happened was a catalyst. A turning point for West and Caroline. It was the only way for West to push Caroline away. To make her leave. To make her give up. And her reaction was exactly what West needed.

West is stuck. Stuck in Silt. Drowning in the responsibility of caring for Frankie....making a living. He exists. He doesn't live. The only way out for him is to leave Silt. To take Frankie. To finish college. To not let his past win.

"It's not so bad to waste your life. It's not so hard. What's harder--what's fucking impossible--is thinking that you've got a future and then losing it."

While there were times I didn't agree with Caroline's reactions to West, I understood them. She was easy to

forgive, easy to forget. Because her love for West meant more than the hurt he caused.

Poor West, he is just so lost. Lost in his duties to Frankie. Lost in his desire to not repeat his past. Lost in his feelings for Caroline. Just lost. Trying to go from surviving to thriving.

West returns to Putnam. Determined to thrive. Determined to make a new life for himself and Frankie. Determined to move on. Determined to forgive and forget.

And so they do, West and Caroline forgive. They let go. They give in to the pull. The connection that keeps them from being apart. They allow themselves each other. To love. To be. To live.

"You feel good to me now."

"That's all I want. To be good to you."

"Be good to me forever."

"I hope I get to."

"We decide. You and me."

West and Caroline's journey was not an easy one. There were times I was angry, I was gutted, I was heart-broken right along with them. Beat down and kicked. But in the end, West and Caroline came out stronger. Better. They fell **harder**. They loved **deeper**.

Francesca says

DNF at 60%

To say I'm disappointed is a massive understatement. I really liked Deeper - *loved* Caroline and West - and was interested in seeing where their story was headed. I'm not big on romance novels that are split into multiple books. Invariably, the story drags out, unnecessary drama is added, and you're left wondering what was the point of the second book. Even given my reservations, I was so enamored with West and Caroline that I anxiously awaited book two.

About the only thing I liked about this book is the name, Harder. It fits the book perfectly. It was harder to like Caroline and West, harder to give a shit about what they were going through, harder to actually get through the book, harder to like anything about it.

The Caro and West in this book are not the same. West is a depressing, whiny asshole who pushes everyone away, and yet his friends still want to be friends with him. He spent the first half of the book (and maybe more) complaining about how much his life sucks, yet not doing anything to change it. A few times he mentioned wanting to drive himself off the road and I couldn't help but want to do it for him - just get the misery over with.

Then there's Caroline - who I actually hated more than West. She was worse than a doormat. Letting West treat her however he wanted. Constantly forgiving him because she 'loved' him. Claiming West was only trying to push her away and ruin her. Sounds like the type of guy I'd want to be with.

If you loved Deeper, I'd suggest skipping this book. I wish I did.

Kassiah says

July?!? I think I'll die before then! I neeeeeed itttt

Jacqueline's Reads says

4 Angsty Stars

Harder was a bit hard for me to read. I'm not a huge fan of angsty reads, but I did find myself glued to the pages and wanting to pull my hair out.

West went back home to take care of his family and Caroline is dealing with a heart break.

What I do love about Harder was that Caroline and West weren't separated! I really hate it when I read book 2 of series and the main characters aren't together anyhow. I know Caroline and West aren't together persay, but a few months later, we pick up where the rocky relationship left off.

West's father dies and Caroline travels to comfort and be with West.

West

I have a lot of opinions of West. He's the definition of damaged, tortured, messed-up Hero. He has to take care of his mother, his sister and deal with his terrible dead father. He doesn't think he's good enough for Caroline and he does EVERYTHING he can to push her away.

Caroline

I would describe Caroline as a lost puppy. If you ever loved a beaten down Heroine, then she's perfect for you. Caroline does everything she can to be there for West. She stays where he wants her to, does what he wants her to do and constantly texts him and even gives him a no string-attached sex. I know, I shake my head too.

Overall

For the first half of the book, it's very hard for me to like West. As much as I love a jerk of a Hero, West does some terrible things (and in my opinion) is unforgivable. I understand why he does what he does, but does he have to be so mean to Caroline?

Caroline stays with Frankie and West stays with Bo. For days, West doesn't see Caroline and Caroline just

wants to comfort and be there to West. Caroline wants West to leave his hometown and go back to school.

West smokes, is mean and basically ignores Caroline. There are a few moments where they have conversation, but it's really short and your heart breaks for Caroline.

What got me really hooked is just all the tension! You want to punch West in the face and just scream at Caroline to slap West silly. There's a lot of drama and you feel for both parties (as much as West bothered me, I did feel for him).

It's not a perfect relationship, but it's a very intense story. If you want drama, angst and love the series to begin with, then you will be happy with this one.

An ARC was provided in exchange for an honest review

Series Order

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For more, <http://jacquelinesreads.blogspot.com>

Sara says

Great conclusion! I LOVED this!! L.O.V.E.D it!

First let me say, there is no cheating in this book. Caroline and West broke things off in book 1, remember??

Now, does West do something that will piss you off? Yes. But, the way Caroline handled it made sense. The more you learn about West, you will forgive him. So please don't let that deter you from reading this book. Please.

Review to come..

Lana ❀❀Dirty Girl Romance❀❀ says

5 Deeper and Harder Stars

You have to let yourself want what you want as hard as you can, as deep as that goes, even if it scares the fuck out of you.

Wow. Just wow. As much as I loved Deeper, Harder managed to absolutely blow me away. It shattered my heart into a million pieces, and then slowly mended it back together, piece by piece, managing to bring a captivating and emotional story a full circle. Robin York's writing is both poignant and uplifting, and she has easily moved to the very top of my favorite NA authors. I do not recommend reading this book without

having read Deeper first, it will simply not be the same. So let's move on to the review, shall we?

It's been some time since where Deeper ended, and although it's not made clear what happened, it's obvious that Caroline and West are not together anymore. Their relationship is stunted at best, tumultuous at worst.

Before we crashed and burned, though, I liked the person I was with West. He made me vulnerable, but he helped me be stronger, too.

In Deeper we saw West take a broken Caroline, and help put her together. He was her rock, her shoulder, her everything. But when Caroline put herself back together she was stronger, and this book paints that picture perfectly.

I cannot tell you how refreshing it is to read about a heroine in a NA novel that is as emotionally strong as Caro was. Because that's precisely what she was. This was not a girl that flew off at the rails, she knew what she wanted and she fought for it...even if she may never win.

Yes there's an event that happens here that had me screaming and raging in anger and devastation. But as I read more, I understood why it happened and the choices that were taken place. I may not have liked it, but it fit the story. It fit THEIR story.

Caro's reaction to this was something that really made me think. She did not react in a typical way that you would expect. She showed an immense amount of emotional maturity and intelligence, which was truthfully a first for me. I think I loved her character all the more for it. It was obvious that she knew West suspected a certain reaction from her, but she knew why he did what he did, and she knew what he needed.

I could tell you how much I'm hurting, or I could get out of the car, slam the door, hitchhike to the airport because fuck you, fuck you, West, how could you do this to me? How?

What I can't do is pretend I don't know what you did," I say. "Or pretend I don't still care about you.

If in the first book West was Caro's rock, then in this one it came a full circle. The depth of Caroline's love for West was evident in every word and action.

As for West? My beautifully broken, hurting, fucked up West. As much as I wanted to hate him for what he did, I just couldn't. My heart hurt for him. The more I read, the more it hurt.

He was so lost in the first half of this book. His heartbreak is palpable. What he does to push Caro away is terrible, don't get me wrong. But you can tell he felt he had no choice. And while he succeeds in one thing, he fails in another, because Caroline refuses to give up on him. Caro was the strong one here, she needed to be, to help West find his way out of the dark

She knows who she is deep inside herself. I can break her heart, but I can't break her pride. I can't break her. She's never going to let that happen.

I want her

All the time, like a virus, a disease I caught, except the other way around- like a cure I caught a year ago, and it's inside me, winding through my veins, pumping through my heart.

His hope and hopelessness is swallowing him whole. He wants, but he doesn't think he can have it. He doesn't deserve it. But it doesn't stop his yearning.

Spark. Spark. Flame.

The whole time, I was trying to convince myself that the flame didn't look like hope, didn't feel like it, but I've never been any good at that kind of deception.

That spark in the dark, that wavering flicker- Caroline. Hope.

For me, they were always the same thing.

The first half of the book was an emotional roller coaster. The feels, the pain, the heartbreak, it was devastating. But there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and the second half was the light.

What I truly loved about the book was that Robin York didn't throw in any more additional drama in the end. There was no unnecessary angst, the angst that was there was intricately important to the plot, not excessive. She manages to take the story a full circle while painting a love story that's emotional and touching.

If you loved Deeper, you will love Harder. There are events here that may take you out of your comfort zone and make you question what you feel. It will capture you and draw you in. It will break your heart and then put it back together. I'm in love with Robin's wring, story telling, and her words. I really hope she continues this series with another couple...like perhaps Bridget and Krishna? (Hint, hint. Nudge nudge) LOL!

Highly recommended read. If you want a NA romance that's unlike any you've read before, this is a must read.

*****ARC courtesy of publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review*****

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Brandi says

4.5 Stars

It's been 3 months since Caroline and West said goodbye. Caroline is still in Putnam and West is in Silt, and they are no longer together. But when West calls Caroline and tells her his father has died, she jumps on a plane. She is determined to be there for him, even though he doesn't want her in Silt. When Caroline arrives and is reunited with West, she does not find the boy she remembers. He is distant, angry, bitter, and harder.

He's so much harder than he used to be. All this armor between him and the world. I want him to know that I see it there. I know what it is, and if he wants to take it off with me, he can.

While Caroline is trying to support West, he is continuously pushing her away. And, oh boy, does he know how to succeed. It was painful. I felt it through the pages. My heart broke – but it was so well written, the hurt, the desperation, it added so much emotion to the story. I would not change a thing.

There is going to be LOTS of West hate. But you won't find it with me. This boy is broken, all kinds of screwed up. Lost in obligations, and self depreciation. He is drowning.

It sounds easy-telling yourself you deserve good things. Letting yourself want them. Letting yourself claim them.

It sounds easy, but it's not. For a guy like me, it's right next door to impossible.

Caroline and West hit rock bottom – but it serves as a turning point. I felt for these characters – the good, the bad – I understood their motivations, right or wrong – I understood. In *Harder* the reader sees West, his struggle to survive, to let go of his past and grab a hold of his future. To learn how to not only survive, but to thrive.

Go after deep and make it deeper. Accept that life is going to be hard-that everything worth having is worth fighting for- but don't fucking make it harder than it has to be. Don't put yourself in between the life you've got and the one you want.

When West realizes the changes he needs to make, he heads back to Putnam. Determined to find a way for him and Frankie to thrive. And when Caro and West come together, I rejoiced. I love these characters, and I was proud of them fighting their battles, together and apart. Great story about life, love, forgiveness and the lessons we learn along the way.

ARC kindly provided by NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Yomi M. says

Rating Clarification: 4.5 stars

What a way to end this series. I was so enamored with Caroline's and West's story and I couldn't be happier with the way it ended. I have to admit that West did do something at the beginning of the story that I didn't like but I don't think it took away from the story at all.
