



## The VIP Doubles Down

*Nancy Herkness*

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**The VIP Doubles Down** Nancy Herkness

**In the witty, sizzling finale to award-winning author Nancy Herkness's Wager of Hearts series, a haunted writer conquers his demons with the help of a feisty muse and a passion that doesn't play by the book.**

Gavin Miller, the billionaire author of a bestselling thriller series, struggles with a grim secret: he hasn't written a word in more than a year.

Writer's block is killing his spirit and jeopardizing his contracts with his publisher and his Hollywood producers. Prodded by his agent, Gavin reluctantly agrees to see Allie Nichols, a sassy physical therapist tasked with treating the novelist's severe neck and shoulder pain—and maybe his writer's block, too.

The tempestuous Gavin and no-nonsense Allie soon find themselves entangled in a steamy affair that sparks Gavin's creativity again. But their manipulative ex-lovers and Gavin's lingering childhood scars threaten their happily ever after. Can Gavin and Allie find their way to love when the stakes are high and the obstacles are overwhelming?

## The VIP Doubles Down Details

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Author : Nancy Herkness

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# From Reader Review The VIP Doubles Down for online ebook

## Vikki Vaught says

I have thoroughly enjoyed Wagers of the Heart series by Nancy Herkness. I met Nancy at RWA2015 but had never read any of her books. When I decided to read The CEO Buys In, I fell in love and found the wager between the three men intriguing. Needless to say, I was immediately pulled in. I could not wait for the second book in the series and fortunately, I received an ARC from the publisher for that I as I did for The VIP Doubles Down, thanks go to the publisher. Let me say up front, I would have gladly paid to read both these books!

Allie Nichols' life has taken a downward turn. She's out of work because her ex-husband would not leave her alone at the rehabilitation center. When she is offered a chance to help Gavin Miller, her favorite author, she is excited, but it turns out the sessions were his agent's idea.

Gavin is having the worst case of writer's block imaginable, and it has caused severe pain in his shoulders. When the physiotherapist his agent hired shows up, he wants nothing to do with her, but the feisty woman convinces him to allow her to use electrical stimulation on him. Although he sends her away after the treatment, within fifteen minutes, his pain is reduced and he calls her back for more sessions.

Imagine his surprise, to discover that not only does she relieve his pain, she stirs his muse. Perhaps he can benefit in more than one way from his time with Allie, and her energetic personality and beauty certainly calls to him on a personal level. When things heat up, he begins to wonder if he just might have found the woman of his dreams.

The VIP Doubles Down grabbed me from the first page and held my attention until the last. Ms. Herkness' writing style flows smoothly and her pacing is excellent. I enjoyed getting a glimpse of the other characters from the other books in this series. I also loved Gavin's housekeeper and driver.

Allie's character has lots of fire to match her red hair. Her determination to hang in there when Gavin practically closes the door in her face had me rooting for her from the start. I loved her down-home West Virginia attitude. Her genuine desire to help others, even her deplorable ex-husband touched my heart. Although, her lack of guile and inability to see through his manipulations gives her plenty of grief later in the story.

Gavin's character is tormented by more than writer's block and physical pain. His late father's refusal to see his success eats at him, and the abandonment he feels from his mother's desertion when he was a child, keeps him locked in the past. While normally his cantankerous behavior would be a turn-off, the lost little boy he keeps hidden, called to me, so I fell in love with him anyway.

I loved The VIP Doubles Down, and I will miss these characters, but If I know Ms. Herkness, she will manage to give them cameo appearances in her future books. If you like emotionally-charged romances with complicated characters, then you will love this book. While this one is easily read without reading the other books in this series, I do recommend reading them as well. Happy reading!

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## **Mindy Lou's Book Review says**

This is the third and final in a 3 book standalone series. You do not have to read previous books to enjoy this one, but it does have the couples from previous books.

We met Gavin in books 1 & 2 and to be honest, I didn't really like his character. He was bitter and sometimes mean. We also got to see a good side to him when he tried helping Luke and Amanda in their book. I always wonder how an author is going to turn an unlikeable side character into a likeable main character, I should have more faith. Nancy Herkness did a great job of changing my opinion of Gavin.

Gavin's worst feature in previous books became his best feature in his own book. His bitter snarkyness matched up well to Allie's sass. I really enjoyed these two bantering. Of course, Allie's sass brought out a better Gavin. He even admits to purposely provoking her because he loved to see her riled up. It made for great chemistry in the book.

He still has a few douche worthy moments but the author displayed growth in his character as he and Allie grow closer together. This was a fun series to read. ARC provided by NetGalley.

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## **booksofallkinds says**

This is the final instalment of the Wager of Hearts series, and while it can be read as a standalone, I highly recommend reading the series from start to finish, as these characters will really get under your skin and burrow into your heart.

Gavin Millar cannot overcome his writer's block and with pressure mounting from all sides, his mental anguish is showing itself in a physical way too with severe back pain, but he feels it is no less than he deserves. Against his wishes, he agrees to see a physical therapist recommended by his agent and while Allie eases his physical pain, she also starts to work her way under his surly attitude and helps to free his creative spirit too. Allie is trying to make a fresh start with her life after her recent divorce to her childhood sweetheart, and she really needs her freelance business to be a success. But she did not bet on the instant attraction to the brooding Mr. Millar. The more they get to know each other, the more Allie wants to do whatever she can to ease Gavin's burdens, but she has learned from the past that she cannot give everything for nothing in return. As their unbelievable chemistry explodes, Gavin will do whatever he can to keep her by his side, but as the pain from his past collides with his present, will his fear of trust destroy everything? And then there is the matter of the wager...

With excellent characters that you will instantly care about, enchanting settings, and vivid descriptions that pull you into the story, *THE VIP DOUBLES DOWN* by Nancy Herkness, has everything you want and more from a romance novel. Allie is one of my favourite characters from the series as she is so caring and selfless, but yet strong enough to stand up for herself when she has too. Gavin is the epitome of the brooding writer, who doesn't want to face the demons from his past that are eating him up from the inside out. The development of the relationship between Allie and Gavin was so enjoyable to watch, and their heat together will leave you blushing!!! *THE VIP DOUBLES DOWN* by Nancy Herkness, like all of her other stories, is essential reading for romance fans and I cannot wait to see what is next!!

\*I voluntarily reviewed this book from Netgalley.com

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## Carol says

4.5 stars.

ARC from netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

This is the third and final book in the "Wager of Hearts" series and what a fitting end to this with Gavin Miller's story (the successful writer).

What I truly like about Nancy Herkness's writing is the way she builds her characters so as the story develops they become very real and relatable. She has an elegant and somewhat traditional style that separates her from other contemporary romance writers and works so well within the storylines of all her books.

I have read all three in this series and loved them all. Each one felt so unique and had a very different storyline but all three men had initially found themselves in the same set of circumstances - wanting to meet a "real" woman worthy of a relationship and hence the wager they set.

Allie Nichols (a newly divorced physical therapist) was the perfect woman for the cynical, untrusting and suspicious Gavin because she was easily able to match his wit and yet she was also kind and gentle, with an innocent small town quality about her. She very soon has a noticeable healing effect on his wounded psyche as well as his injured body. She is the perfect cure for his writer's block.

Really good, warm and emotional story.

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## Phoenix77 says

This review is featured along with more mini-reviews at **All About Romance**

Nancy Herkness creates perhaps her darkest hero in The VIP Doubles Down. Each of the men brought to life in the Wager of Hearts series has demons they have to battle, but Gavin Miller is perhaps the only one who has been losing the war.

Gavin is a popular suspense author fighting the world's worst case of writer's block. Everyone around him can see that he's fallen into a depression after the death of his father but Gavin is the kind of man to shun help of any kind. His literary agent forces him to get treatment for the physical problems his emotions are creating and she hires a therapist without his permission. The beautiful Allie Nichols needs the job after her ex-husband got her fired from her last one but the agent warns her that Gavin isn't happy with the arrangement. In their first session together, Allie sees that Gavin desperately needs her help but is unwilling to acknowledge there's a connection between his physical pain and the mental block he's experiencing.

It takes a while for Gavin to become the kind of hero that a reader can fall in love with. He's prickly, snarky and uses his gift with words to try and out-talk an opponent. Allie is plain spoken and grounded, so while she's enamored by Gavin's celebrity she's more concerned with the wounded man behind the cutting remarks. Allie's passion and love for Gavin's books lets him rediscover his own love of the characters and stories that saved him from an upsetting childhood. Allie becomes his muse, not only to create again but to open himself to the joys that exist outside of his penthouse.

When Gavin's trust issues rear their ugly head it takes the story into a direction that feels wrong given how

the relationship was unfolding and the final resolution is rushed to make up for his mistake. This lowered my grade a bit, but shouldn't discourage a reader from taking a chance with the story. It's an enjoyable contemporary featuring a Billionaire who knows how to treat a woman right.

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## **Martha Martin says**

May contain content that could be construed as a spoiler/spoilers.

So now the Wager of Hearts series is finished. As I said when I reviewed *The All-Star Antes Up*, I simply cannot write a review of this book without including the previous two.

I don't care what has been said about these three books being "stand-alone" novels, I would never recommend that a person begin reading this series with this book or with *The All-Star Antes Up*. They are better understood if they are read in order:

*The CEO Buys In* (No. 1 in the series);  
*The All-Star Antes Up* (No. 2);  
*The Irishman's Christmas Gamble* (a novella about Frankie Hogan), and  
*The VIP Doubles Down* (No. 3).

Before I write my review of *The VIP*, I need to come clean about my bias. I purchased *The CEO Buys In* on July 22, 2015, and read (present tense) it over and over again. I can only assume it came to me at a time when it was exactly the kind of story I needed to read because I have never grown tired of it and I still want to read it again after I reread it. I can't explain it because I don't understand it myself.

I really loved Nathan and Chloe but I also loved Luke and Miranda and still reread *The All-Star Antes Up* too. I'm just drawn to the series. In the novella, you get to really meet Frankie Hogan and learn how she became the owner of the Bellwether Club. Now that I am through pitching the other books in this collection it's time to do what I set out to do.

*The VIP Doubles Down* concerns a snarky, angry, distrustful, best-selling author, Gavin Miller (GM). His hero is a spy, Julian Best (JB) whose love interest turns out to be a double agent. As a result, JB loses his ability to trust her.

As a boy, GM's mother "deserted" him, just walked away one day, and he has never heard another word from her. His father, Herbert Miller (HM) owned a feed store. He was angry, cold, and indifferent. GM was expected to help out in the store even though he loved to read (which he had to hide from his father).

When GM became a teenager, his father remarried. HM believed that, because the woman had children of her own, she would be a good mother for GM. The stepmother disliked GM and was against his doing anything other than helping his father. GM virtually became "Cinderfella."

The stepmother could not understand why his father let GM leave home to go to college. HM told her he promised GM's mother he would see that their son got a college education, which did not sit well with the stepmother.

After college, GM moved to New York and started work on his "dream job," writing. After many months of

sharing a roach-infested apartment with several other young men, he finally hit pay dirt. His first book about JB was bought and turned into a mass market paperback. which was well received. GM became wealthy when it and subsequent books were turned into movies.

JB has a love interest, Samantha Du Bois (SD), who turns out to be a double agent - a woman he cannot trust. The author also has a life that revolves around women he cannot trust - his mother, his step-mother, his former fiancée. Art imitating life?

But now, GM is in the midst of a long-standing writer's block which has caused him to miss the deadline for having his next book ready, he has also missed his deadline extension. Then his father dies and he goes to rural Illinois for his funeral. Upon returning, late one evening, he meets Nathan Trainor and Luke Archer at the Bellwether Club. All three men are in the midst of a crisis and, ultimately, they enter into a bet regarding finding someone who will love them for themselves and not for what they have or for what they can do for them.

At this point, GM is so far behind with his next novel that the production company which turns his books into films releases the cast from their contracts, believing there will not be another JB film. Because he cannot seem to put a single word on paper (or a computer screen), he is under considerable stress which is causing serious mental and physical problems - depression, knotted muscles in his neck, back, arms and legs, and too many attempts to alleviate the stress with alcohol. Protracted tension will do that to you

At this point, GM's agent, Jane Dreyer (JD) decides that he needs help relieving some of his physical tension. So she hires Allie Nichols (AN), a physical therapist, to "work GM over."

AN is a strong, determined young woman. Marriage to her high school sweetheart has ended in divorce. Her actor husband, who can't find work, has quashed her career by showing up at the rehab facility where she worked drunk, not once but twice, and was abusive to the patients. The facility had no choice but to fire her.

AN is not looking for a romantic interest since she is still reeling from the damage done to her heart by her ex-husband. She is now trying to get enough work to feed herself and her precious, little, gray cat, Pie (once again art imitates life). AN is one step away from being bankrupt and homeless when she is hired by JD to help relieve GM's stress through physical therapy.

Do Gavin and Allie find true love or is he destined to be hurt again by a woman whose presence he has come to need? If I say anymore, I will say too much. But now you know the cast of characters and how they fit together. Of course, Nathan and Chloe, Luke and Miranda, and Ben Cavill, M.D. put in appearances too. The only couple missing are Randall Johnson and Kate Chilton from Nancy's first book, A Bridge To Love (and subsequent books - I love how Nancy weaves her stories together by inserting people from previous books into the current book - in this book, it happens to be the veterinarian and his wife, Tim and Claire Arbuckle, from AN's hometown, Sanctuary, West Virginia, who make an appearance.

By the way, Nancy, while Ben Cavill was not part of the original "bet" that started this series, he has been an important part of all of the books and deserves to have his story told too. Can't you please write a book about Ben and, of course, you must tell us about Grandmillie - since you failed to satisfy my curiosity about how she would fare traveling to and from New Jersey to North Carolina for Nathan and Chloe's wedding. And, where was Grandmillie going to live after the wedding? Don't you think Grandmillie at least deserves a novella?

So you see, you have two more books in this series to write. Chop, chop!!

P.S. I loved the name of the author GM assisted at the book signing - it didn't escape me that you put the names of two of my favorite authors (who just happen to write romantic suspense) together to come up with that name. You are a clever one, Nancy Herkness.

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### **? Jeri's Book Attic ? I like says**

The VIP Doubles Down (Wager of Hearts #3) by Nancy Herkness is the last book in this series and I am sad to see the characters go. But as we know with this author they might not be gone forever as they tend to make cameos in other novels at certain times. The writing style of this author is also one that stands out from others in that genre. From the first page on it feels refined and formal but it fits the setting of the books.

I fell in love with this series with its first book, because the characters – even though they seemed unattainable at first - always felt real in the long run. The reader always had the feeling that no matter how extraordinary the plot sounded it still felt as if this could actually happen to anybody at any time.

The banter and developing relationship between the leads felt natural which I really liked and it is something that allows the reader to connect with the characters and feel with them.

I am not sure why but in this special case I directly had the complete stage setting of the TV show Castle in my mind and the characters in the book got the faces of that tv show. Even though my mind changed the roles slightly to fit the book it worked. So I think lovers of that TV show will also really like this book in a way. Our male lead might feel like a harsher and edgy version of Castle but still it worked.

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### **Katie(babs) says**

The VIP Doubles Down is the third and final book in this trilogy that I couldn't get enough of. You had three rich men (all of whom started with nothing and became rich because of their hard work and dedication to their careers). This book features Gavin Miller, a multimillionaire best-selling author who has a major case of writer's block. If he doesn't write the next book in his blockbuster mystery thriller series, he may end up in early retirement, including the end of his series being adapted to the big screen (or taken over by a ghostwriter). Gavin is also in major pain because he's so stressed out. His agent recommends a physical therapist to help him relax so he can write easier. Gavin is dead set again it, until he meets the woman who will not only mend his body but his heart- Allie.

Allie is in dire straits. After divorcing her actor husband who dropped her for bigger and better things, she



needs employment, and fast. She is struggling trying to get her business off the ground. But when she is offered a position with Gavin, she is over the moon. She loves Gavin's books, so much so, she knows every character and book by heart. When she meets Gavin, he's less than receptive to her. But she won't be undaunted. Because she's so good with her hands, Gavin hires her, but only for a limited time. But then then he finds out she knows everything and anything about his books, he hires her as his personal assistant. She's his own personal bible who can help him get the creative juices flowing so he can write again.

Even though at times Gavin comes across as surly and has a bit of an ego because of his fame and fortune, Allie connects with him, as he does with her. But there is one major problem for these two, especially for Allie. Gavin is very attracted to Allie and wants a sexual relationship with her. Allie realizes if she crosses that line, she has to quit working for Gavin. But Gavin is a sly guy and is a very tricky, so much so that Allie falls for his seduction. Soon Allie has given up being Gavin's physical therapist, but will stay on to help him write his book. But then a blast from Allie's not so distant past shows up, making Gavin suspicious and second guessing Allie, which could ruin their new found happiness.

The VIP Doubles Down is the hottest book of this trilogy. Gavin is this cranky, yet smoldering type who is frustrated by so many things, stemming from his issues with his dead father and his step-mother who never accepted him as an author, even though he's a successful one. Because he can't come to terms with his own past, he risks losing a lot, and not his fortune. He risks losing the love of a good woman- Allie, who has been dealt a lot of bad cards mainly because of her immature and selfish ex-husband.

Both characters have some interesting quirks, which seems to help with their chemistry for one another. Nancy can write one heck of a love scene. There are many here. Allie is plucky and very independent. Gavin is set in his ways, and ends up relying on Allie too much, which leads to some big misunderstandings before they can have their HEA. But the outcome here is satisfying and leads to many sighs and smiles.

Nancy has written a very enjoyable contemporary romance trilogy that has a nice spin on the millionaire hero trope, and the women who walk into their lives and turn it upside for the better.

A must read for any romance reader.

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## **Mandi Schreiner says**

This is book three of the series centered around a group of three male friends who make bets about whether they will find true love. This is the first I've read of the series and it stood alone well. The bet thankfully didn't play too much into this story - I don't like it when there is a bet, which leads to a relationship, and the eventually the other person finds out about the bet and gets offended etc... It's always so predictable! It happens in this book but there is much more to the story so it didn't have that much of an impact.

Gavin is a self-made billionaire who writes a very popular action-suspense series which has been turned into blockbuster movies. But as he tries to write his next book, he can't find any words. He has severe writer's block and doesn't know what to do. The pressure of getting this book finished so the movies can continue is intense. The stress of this is causing really bad neck pain, and his agent sends over a physical therapist to help him out, something Gavin doubts will cure him.

Allie is a physical therapist in need of money after her now ex-husband got her fired. Allie comes in and

works her magic on the grumpy, stand-offish Gavin. And as she eases his pain, Gavin finds she also allows his words to flow. They share an attraction and Allie goes from physical therapist, to Gavin's love interest. Allie is a huge fan of Gavin's books and movies, and she becomes his assistant, keeping his series organized and used as a sounding board for his ideas.

It took me a little while to get into this one - like I said, I'm not a huge fan of bets placed on relationships and while we get a recap of previous characters from previous books, I wasn't super interested in them. Gavin started very cranky and cold and I wasn't sure if I was going to like him as a romance hero, but I'm glad I stuck with the book because he really opens up and their romance unfolds at a nice pace. It's not too rushed, as Allie has several PT appointments with him as they get to know each other. Once they start a physical relationship, they do fall for each other pretty fast, but it felt natural for that to happen. I warmed up to Gavin and I like how he courted Allie and wooed her. This book is quite sexy too.

Gavin has trust issues as his mother left him when he was young, he has a bad relationship with this step-mother and his father who died. Fear of commitment rears its ugly head, and it takes some pep talks from his trusted friends to bring him around. Allie is wary as well of their relationship since he is a billionaire and lives a life so different from hers. But they work it out in the end, and have some sexy scenes along the way.

Grade: B-

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## **Carvanz says**

### **3.5 STARS**

What a sweet romance this turned out to be.

Allie has recently lost her job as a physical therapist and is recruited to help Gavin, a writer suffering from back and neck ailments as well as a severe case of writer's block. Gavin doesn't want anything to do with her but after their initial meeting and the relief he experiences, he relents and has her return. He soon comes to understand that she offers more than physical relief, she has become his muse and he finds the words flowing again.

Ms. Herkness affords the reader the ability to experience the relationship from both points of view in prose that flows without issue. Secondary characters from the previous books add to the dimensions of the main characters rather than stealing the show. Unfortunately, there are those characters that have their own agendas which have nothing to do with the happy ever after of the hero and heroine. Added to that was some uncertainty on Allie's part as well as fear on Gavin's and we have just enough angst to keep it interesting.

I was extremely busy with life activities during this reading and I knew it was interfering with my full enjoyment of the book. I am still rating according to my overall experience but please take into mind that that experience was tarnished to some degree.

No need to read the first two books in the series, but I wouldn't mind doing so.

ARC provided for honest review

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## Tijuana \*BookTwinsReviews\* says

A perfect ending to a fantastic series. I've enjoyed each book in the series immensely. The VIP Doubles Down takes an interesting spin on the Cinderella story. It's very subtle, but quite enjoyable to see similar elements of the two stories explored in this manner.

Gavin has long been my favorite character. His gruff nature and tendency to get under the skin of the other billionaires has certainly entertained over the course of the last two books. I knew his story and the woman who claims his heart were going to be fantastic. I enjoyed the previous two books in the series and the formula works very well in this one as well. Wealthy business seeks the love of an everyday woman who cares for him and not his money or status. The women are all strong, feisty, and take no BS from their wealthy lovers.

**Here's the breakdown:** Gavin is a world-famous author suffering from writer's block and back pain as a result of stress. His publicist hires a physical therapist to help him overcome the physical pain, but she ends up doing so much more than that.

**What I enjoyed:** Gavin has been my favorite character throughout the series. He's been in pain in the butt to the previous businessmen, which endeared me to him. He not only brings a bit of humor to the earlier books by pushing everyone's buttons. In this book, he gets as good as he gives.

Ally is a perfect match for him. She's recently separated from her ex-husband and looking for a fresh start. She refuses to become so caught up in another man that she loses her sense of self. However, that doesn't prevent her from giving in to her desires. She balances her work, professional, and personal life perfectly. I enjoyed the relationship development immensely.

The backstory for each character is well done, but I was blown away by Gavin's past. It was brilliantly plotted.

**Overall**, this is a very enjoyable book and magnificent series. I recommend it to readers who enjoy romance with just a hint of emotion and humor.

**Audiobook review:** Lauren Ezzo's performance is brilliant. I enjoyed it very much and would definitely recommend other titles performed by this artist.

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## Kim Reads (Read Your Writes Book Reviews) says

The VIP Doubles Down is the third and final book in Nancy Herkness' Wager of Hearts series. The series focuses on three billionaires who meet in an exclusive club and end up betting valuable possessions on finding true love. The men are all at a low point in their lives and really truly want to find women who love them for them and not what they can buy or do for them.

While this is the third book, it can be read as a standalone. I however, have read the two previous books (The CEO Buys In and The All-Star Antes Up) and went into The VIP Doubles Down with a severe disdain for Gavin Miller. The billionaire writer is annoying, condescending, grouchy, irritating, and just an overall pain in the butt. I was pretty sure I was going to loathe this story and that Gavin had absolutely no redeeming qualities. I could not have been more wrong.

I found The VIP Doubles Down to be very different from the two previous books. The differences start with the way the story opens up, continues on with the amount of sex involved, and ends with the emotional

carnage involved. Nancy definitely saved the best for last. But hey, that's not to say that Gavin is my favorite hero of the series. That title belongs to quarterback Luke Archer. But Gavin was full of surprises. I didn't expect his story to be so emotional or for him to hide years of pain behind his money and snarkiness.

With Gavin seeming to be a miserable man, I couldn't imagine what woman could possibly take him on. Turns out, Allie Nichols was just what he needed. This physical therapist not only worked to heal Gavin's body so his mental well-being improved, but she also worked to heal his soul.

I love that Nancy gives readers a look into what it's like to be a writer. She provides humor when needed, but doesn't take away from the story. She has written several heartbreaking moments, but also manages to put in heart-warming times. I love that in the end three billionaire strangers who have nothing in common end up being the best of friends who truly care about each other.

Now, if only I could convince Mrs. Herkness to write a story about a certain private doctor with me as his heroine, I would be a happy girl.

**\*\*Received a copy from the publisher and reviewed voluntarily.\*\***

Rating: 4.5 Stars

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### **Anna's Herding Cats says**

Reviewed for herding cats & burning soup.

Amazon: <http://amzn.to/2prFE7C>

Nancy Herkness totally charmed me with her Wager of Hearts series. Three sexy alpha males who in a drunken moment made a bet. A bet to... find true love. How stinking cute is that? Yep. They have one year to find the women who make them swoon. So much fun! The VIP Doubles Down was all about Gavin-- the writer with a massive case of writers block and a damn hard time trusting anyone. Especially women.

So. Basically everyone is worried about Gavin since he's WAY past deadline and dude is wound up real tight. His agent is figuring maybe if they can get all tense bits sorted out his writerly bits will get flowing again. And in comes Allie-- the physical therapist-- ready to whip him into his shape. Much to his dismay. He really just wants to be left alone to have a good grumble.

I really loved these two. Gavin's all growly and cranky. A bit cynical and jaded. And Allie's pretty much his opposite. And not at all afraid to give him hell when he started getting ornery. They had a fun dynamic and whew boy they had some steam between them! Even if they resisted real hard early on. It was nice seeing both grow as people and deal with some life issues along the way, too.

The writerly aspect was fun and totally relateable. Seeing what Gavin went through with trying to get his muse back after 8 long months of writers block. Seeing the two work together to get his body back in sync with his mind. With bringing his characters and world back to life. It was neat seeing that side of his life and how she inspired him.

All in all, *The VIP Doubles Down* was an excellent addition to the series. I love these guys and the women who won their hearts. Sweet, sexy and sporting a little sparkle. Herkness has a new fan for sure. I'm really hoping some of the secondary characters-- like their doctor friend-- get their stories told as well.

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## **Alison says**

So this is the third novel in the *Wager of Hearts* trilogy about a group of crazy wealthy guys who belong to a mega-exclusive club and, one night when they are drunk and feeling sorry for themselves, make a bet that they can't find true love within a year. I didn't read the first book, *The CEO Buys In*, but I enjoyed the second *The All-Star Antes Up*. Strangely, when I requested this book from NetGalley I didn't realise that this was part of this series and I didn't recognise the author's name; I thought it was a stand-alone.

Anyhoo, the third and last billionaire bachelor is Gavin Miller. He has written a series of mega-successful spy novels which have also been turned into a film franchise, he has a house in Manhattan and one in the Hamptons, a helicopter and a yacht. Sadly, he also has writer's block and has missed a deadline for the first time. The studio is on his back because they insisted on changing the ending of the last film to a cliff-hanger and now they want a film, like yesterday!

Allie Nichols is a recently divorced (and unemployed) physiotherapist, struggling to make ends meet when Gavin's agent employs her to help Gavin with the physical manifestations of his issues.

At first Gavin is resistant to Allie's ministrations and asks her to leave, although he does offer to let her keep the money for the five days that are already paid for. But after he feels marginally less tense from 15 minutes use of the stim unit (basically a gentle electric current applied to the stress areas), he invites Allie back to give him more therapy. Although Allie has been specifically warned not to talk to Gavin about his books (or films) or his writer's block, she is soon revealed as possibly his number one fan with an encyclopaedic knowledge of his books. Allie and her late mother used to share the books and then discuss them extensively.

Gavin and Allie are complete opposites. He had a harsh childhood, his mother left home when he was a child and he never heard from her again. His father was distant and hard to please, he remarried when Gavin was a young teen and his step-mother treated him like an outcast. He has a reputation for being grumpy and he is rich beyond the imagination of most people. Allie, on the other hand, is a Pollyanna character, even though her ex-husband was a narcissistic actor who demanded total support 24/7 and got verbally abusive if he was disappointed, she lives in a tiny apartment and is barely making rent.

Allie and Gavin are attracted to each other but Allie doesn't want to lose her only paying client and she refuses to break the PT code of ethics by sleeping with a client that she is treating.

I was really enjoying this book, probably until about half-way. I liked Allie, I liked Gavin, I liked the situation and the way in which the two of them were dealing with each other. Then about half-way through I got the feeling that the novel was maybe resolving itself too fast, or perhaps there wasn't enough angst because all of a sudden we seemed to be inundated with Gavin's wealth - look at his cars, look at his houses, look at his helicopter etc, etc. And the sex! Don't get me wrong, I love a sexy book as much as the next person but my eyes were rolling and TBH if I never read about Gavin and his two fingers again it would be too soon, it seemed like every other page had them getting down to it. It was a pity because Gavin's 'stupidity' which is the cause of the angst at the end of the book could have been explored more, it was a novel explanation for a standard guy-move and I think it could have been made more of.

Maybe I am being uber-critical because, let's face it, the premise for this series is a bit fantastical anyway. So, if you like your romance on the multi-billionaire side (with more than a hint of *Pretty Woman*) and lots of sexy times this IS the book for you.

I received a free copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in return for an honest review.

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## **Karen Laird says**

### **THE VIP DOUBLES DOWN**

Wagers of the Heart – Book 3

By

Nancy Herkness

### **SYNOPSIS**

Gavin Miller, the billionaire author of a bestselling thriller series, struggles with a grim secret: he hasn't written a word in more than a year.

Writer's block is killing his spirit and jeopardizing his contracts with his publisher and his Hollywood producers. Prodded by his agent, Gavin reluctantly agrees to see Allie Nichols, a sassy physical therapist tasked with treating the novelist's severe neck and shoulder pain—and maybe his writer's block, too.

The tempestuous Gavin and no-nonsense Allie soon find themselves entangled in a steamy affair that sparks Gavin's creativity again. But their manipulative ex-lovers and Gavin's lingering childhood scars threaten their happily ever after. Can Gavin and Allie find their way to love when the stakes are high and the obstacles are overwhelming?

### **REVIEW**

Every once in a while I have the privilege of reading a story that reaches down deep, that connects on a special level. It is these stories that are filled with the same magic that the fairytales of my youth captivated me and drew me into their special world. A world where the hearts of the hero and heroine twist and bleed in their misery and longing for what we long for most—love, kindness and acceptance.

Within a few opening pages, I began feeling the magic draw me into the story of Gavin and Allie as each fought their own demons. But there was more. Having had the opportunity to read two previous novel series written by Nancy Herkness, I have come to know her and her style of writing. I also have a common touch point with my love of West Virginia and the wonderful years that I had the privilege to live in the same area of the woods where she grew up.

Suddenly, I realized, that this was more than just another of her very well written books. This is a book of her heart. It comes out in the pain of the author struggling to write. It shows in the despair at trying to grasp for words from the thin air of a muse who has left residence and taken her word-craft with her. Only one who has starred into that bleak dark void could understand and write of it with such passion. I felt the pain, saw the tears slide off the page.

Introducing Allie, a gentle woman born and bred in the depths of Appalachian West Virginia, was the light to the darkness of Gavin. Even though she had demons of her own, the light that glowed from within and the prevailing positive outlook on life of her people kept the story light. Overtones of a masterful Literary “Beauty and the Beast” came to mind.

The VIP Doubles Down is the third book in “The Wager of the Heart” Series. Each of the books is easily read as a stand-alone novel, but read together as a unit, each shows the growth and development of her characters as the overall storyline progresses. The growth of maturity in the relationships between the characters and the affect of love on the lives of the couples graces the pages. Love is prevalent in living and

lives, not words.

With the writing of this, her third book in the series, Nancy Herkness shared her heart. She poured her laughter and tears into the pages and allowed us to see the soul of a writer. Oh yes, she still had those steamy scenes that readers seek, but the soul of this book went far deeper and touched the very soul of this reader.

I wish there were more than FIVE STARS to give this book. I love how she ended the story and would love to have been able to turn another page or two to see where it went.

A CEO, a quarterback, and a writer walked into a bar. . .”

Gavin waited for the ripple of laughter to die down before he said, “And they came out better men.”

#### ABOUT NANCY HERKNESS

Nancy Herkness is the author of the award-winning Whisper Horse series, published by Montlake Romance, as well as several other contemporary romance novels. She is a two-time nominee for the Romance Writers of America RITA® award. Her new series, Wager of Hearts, follows the romantic adventures of three very wealthy men who make a life-changing bet.

A member of Romance Writers of America, New Jersey Romance Writers, and Novelists, Inc., Nancy has received many honors for her work, including the Golden Leaf Award, the Maggie Award in Contemporary Romance, and the National Excellence in Romance Fiction Award.

Nancy graduated from Princeton University where she majored in English. In addition to her academic work in literature, she was accepted into Princeton's creative writing program, and her senior thesis was a volume of original poetry.

After graduating, Nancy had a varied career which included retail management and buying, COBOL programming, computer systems sales and marketing, and a brief stint as a receptionist at a dental office. Once her children were in school full-time, she sat down and wrote A Bridge to Love, her first romance novel to be published.

Nancy finds nothing odd about writing in the genre she calls “the “Rodney Dangerfield of the literary world. It gets no respect.” She explains: “I was trained as a poet, but from the day my grandmother gave me my first Georgette Heyer novel I wanted to write romance. Romance is the genre of optimism, and that's why I like it.”

A native of West Virginia, Nancy now lives in suburban New Jersey with her husband, two mismatched dogs, and an elderly cat. She cheers loudly for the New Jersey Devils hockey team.

For more information, visit Nancy's website: [www.NancyHerkness.com](http://www.NancyHerkness.com)

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