



Time Off for Good Behavior

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This effervescent debut novel will strike a chord with every woman who has ever been tempted to give her life an extreme makeover.--Wendy Markham, author of "Slightly Single."

Expressing anger is healthy.

Wanda's gonna live forever.

For Wanda Lane, life has been one long string of screw-ups. Her abusive ex-husband keeps threatening to kill her, she just lost her crappy job, and a head injury (sustained while diving off the witness stand to attack an obnoxious attorney) has left her hearing phantom music no one else can hear. It isn't until she hits the rock bottom of her bottle of scotch that she begins to wonder if maybe -- just maybe -- the problem is her.

On her pothole-ridden path to becoming a decent human being, she makes friends with Elizabeth, a single mother looking for her own solid ground; Father Gregory, the patient priest who counsels Wanda, even though she's not technically Catholic; and Walter, a Jimmy-Stewart-ish lawyer who is smart, sexy and single... and so far out of Wanda's league that she thinks he must have been sent from God as one last punishment for her past transgressions. Can an angry, lost woman find her way back from failure, or are second chances the stuff of myth?

Wanda's gonna find out.

You may want to move out of her way.

Time Off for Good Behavior Details

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From Reader Review Time Off for Good Behavior for online ebook

Tammy says

There are two things you need to know about this book: 1) Lani Diane Rich can write snark and kick ass heroines with the best of them. *Who knew?*; and 2) I was predisposed to disliking this book because it is (more often than not) categorized as chick lit. But honestly, it had warm romantic undertones and an ending that left me feeling very emotional. (In other words, I cried.)

Ooey gooey brownie points to the author!

The book opens with said kick ass heroine, Wanda, hauling off and punching a sleazy lawyer (a/k/a "Pencil Face") who is unfairly drilling her on the witness stand. She ends up in a coma for several days. She loses her job. Her ex-husband, George, calls her daily to either tell her he loves her or he threatens to kill her. Basically, her life is a big ole' pile of crap.

Along comes good attorney and beta hero, Walter, to rescue Wanda. Walter is described as looking like Jimmy Stewart - to the point of overkill - but I really liked him. He is patient. He is kind. He is perfectly lovable and sexy, altho I'm obligated to point out to you that the book has a PG rating.

The rest of this book is about Wanda's personal growth, self-realization, and romance. It is cleverly written with events and characters that add to the storyline. Not to mention the book is freakin' hilarious!

Wanda's thoughts and one-liners are worth reading the book alone. She is one of those characters you will either really love or really hate. Think Jen Crusie's Min in *Bet Me* or Cat in Jeanine Frost's *Night Huntress* series. Out of curiosity I had to look up other reviews on Wanda. Here is what the Smart Bitches had to say about her character ...

"Wanda is a fabulously faceted character: she's got at least six dimensions, and is what I call a Cilantro Person. People either love cilantro in their salsa and Mexican food, or think it tastes like soap. I've never met anyone who thought, "Meh. Cilantro." I'm sure no one in the backstory of this novel ever met Wanda and thought little about her afterward."

So there ya have it!

Sadie Forsythe says

I have to say I really enjoyed Wanda and all of her Idiosyncrasies. Honestly, the woman is just a little crazy for most of the book and the situations she finds herself in are patently absurd. So you do just kind of have to role with it to a certain extent. I think her terse relationship with Father Hard-Ass is my favourite. There is so much witty sarcasm, what someone else called snark, in this book that I couldn't help but be constantly amused.

True conversation:

My husband sauntered into the living-room chuckling.

Me: "What?"

Him: "Nothing. I'm just laughing at you sitting there grinning to yourself."

Me (waving my Kindle at him indignantly): "But it's funny."

Him (shaking his head knowingly): "I'm sure it is."

Me (lovingly to his departing back): "Bastard"

Yep, that's how it goes. Wanda's journey of self-discovery is one I think a lot of women can relate to. If we're all as lucky as her and can finally come to not only understand but accept ourselves life will surely improve. Of course she is helped along by a whole cadre of new friends and one AMAZING new love interest. Yes, Walter (aka Jimmy Stewart) is just far too good to be true. So of course it's impossible not to love him. It only took me an evening to read the book and I'm glad I gave it the time.

Wendy says

I wasn't shocked to learn that this was the author's first book but I still love her writing style and characters.

Jane Stewart says

If you are thinking about this book, I urge you to get the audiobook - not the physical book.

I believe some of the 3 star reviews by others would have been higher if they listened to the audiobook instead of reading the paperback or ebook. The audiobook narrator Hillary Hawkins is a COMIC GENIUS!!!! Hillary emphasized different words and interpreted things differently than I would. If I were reading the book I might say a line one way which would make the heroine unlikeable, but the narrator read it in a way that made me laugh.

Bottom line: I laughed many times!!!!

It also had one of my favorite tropes: Main character on a journey of changing herself.

There is a lot of swearing. But it's not like some books where a guy says the f-word in every other sentence as his regular way of talking. Wanda swears in response to things like when she is angry or insulting someone. I'm not a fan of swearing but I'm usually ok reading it. So, you need to be open to it.

I kept thinking how did the author come up with this character? And then I kept thinking how does she come up with so many funny lines? (But remember, if I were reading the line it would not be as funny as Hillary reading it.)

THE STORY

is about a smart competent woman who made stupid choices, including marrying a loser abusive husband. (She had a reason and I could kind of buy it.) She is divorced, meets a great guy, but delays a relationship until she can get her life fixed. There is a nice romantic ending, but most of the story is about Wanda and various people in her life.

DATA:

Narrative mode: 1st person Wanda. Unabridged audiobook length: 7 hrs and 36 mins. Swearing language: strong including religious swear words frequently used. Sexual language: none. Number of sex scenes: one, referred to no details. Setting: current day mostly Hastings, Tennessee. Book copyright: 2004. Genre: humorous contemporary romance.

Ginger Frizzell says

could only get through ~first 20% of this book & then had to stop. I didn't "get" the author's humor; seemed that she was trying way too hard (to either surprise readers or get a laugh).

Didn't care for the main character at all.

Kelsey says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. Wanda is so funny! Girl has more anger issues than I do! It's refreshing to see a character who doesn't always say the right thing. That makes it more real. You will not regret getting this book. It's not your typical read and that's what makes it so awesome. Wanda has such a cool relationship with most of the characters. I wish Elizabeth and Bones were in my life!

????? Yosbe ????? says

No se por donde empezar. Pero advierto, quizás mi review es demasiado subjetiva. Demasiado subjetiva porque he pasado por tantas cosas que ciertamente me sentí un poco identificada con Wanda. Y es que este libro no tiene nada de fantasía, cuento de hada ni heroes con superpoderes, pero si un príncipe azul quizás. Este libro es real. Y amo eso. Se lo recomendaría a unas cuantas que se que le haría tanto bien este libro.

Al principio pensé que iba a tratar de como una chica alocada iba y destruía su vida bebiendo como loca, y aunque eso pasó, trató más bien de como construirse. Además, ni tan mala suerte tuvo, solo que nunca apreciaba nada de lo bueno que le pasaba. Es ingenioso, dan ganas de reir y tambien te commueve. A algunos les parecerá melodramático?; Pero la vida real lo es. Me imagino a Drew Barrymore haciendo la prota y a un Keanu Reeves o Johnny Depp (quizas solo porque ellos son mis preferidos) acompañandola. Me recordó muchisimo a la pelicula "The Holiday" con Cameron y Kate. Diria que Lani Diane es la Nancy Meyers en libros. :)

Ashley Lauren says

Wanda. *What* a protagonist. She's spicy, saucy, and damn if she doesn't keep hold of your interest. I feel so pleasantly rewarded with this book. This is Lani Diane Rich's first novel and it sizzles. I picked it up for two reasons: one, I'm trying to get some more traditional "chick lit" under my belt, and two, it's a NaNoWriMo novel, and I have a special place in my heart for those. I didn't even need to keep that special place open, though, the character Wanda stole it all on her own.

Wanda's luck goes from bad to worse and, I have to say, a lot of it is her own damn fault. She's the kind of character who draws you in right away. The plot keeps you going. I was definitely drawn in by one after another event and with Wanda staying strong, wisecracks flying, it wasn't hard to keep the pages turning.

This book, for me, was an up and over winner. I love Wanda and her sassiness. Towards the end of the book, though, as much as I loved Wanda, I felt my appreciation for the book start to wane. Wanda is a great character for the reader because she is a pain in the butt. She perpetuates problems, she's eccentric and erratic. The problem is that I loved her –and so did the rest of the characters in the book. For such a catty attitude, there were far too many people who enjoyed her company, who fell over themselves to help her out. It just didn't quite fit. For as screwed up as her life was, she had so many people who were willing to take her in. To me, the answers were just a little too easy and, at times, super cliché.

Still, there was enough about this books and the characters that I loved to keep the rating up. It's a story that made me laugh, snort-laugh (which is more on the evil side), and feel downright tender. And feels are good.

Pick it up!

Read more of my reviews at: [The Roaming Reader](#)

Tom says

I don't know how I got this book. It was on my kindle and it must have been a promo or something because this is so far outside anything I would consider reading. I saw it on my list of books, wondered why I got it, opened it to find out and for the next two hours I read it cover to cover.

This is a fantastic personal redemption story. MIT doesn't matter that it's from a woman's point of view if your a guy reader. It's easily relatable and written in a great style that isn't super feminine but isn't non feminine. Just an excellent read

Spuffed says

I took Jane Stewart's advice and purchased the audio version of this book. The narrator was great and I enjoyed her reading very much.

Quick Rundown: Chick is on a path to becoming a bitter shrew and she knows it so she tries many things to

set her life straight and to get a better attitude.

I don't recall laughing out loud but I'm not prone to. But I did find the book very amusing and might listen to it again a couple years from now. I connected with the Chick on a certain level. I don't like to think that I'm bitter but I do have my days where stupid people just piss me off and others just make my life harder. So, maybe that's why her attitude didn't bother me like it did some other readers. And I have a potty mouth myself so that added some realism to this CHick's character.

Overall: A very amusing read/listen and well worth the credit on Audible. I might recommend for when you are just pissed at the world and can't vent or if you are just tired of so many of the Mary Sue characters out there.

Olga Godim says

Reinventing oneself is a slow and gut-wrenching endeavor. Wanda Lane, the heroine of this novel, only resorts to this painful method when she hit the rock-bottom of her life.

Since college, she has been hiding behind the mask of a rude, abrasive, non-caring broad with anger management issues. She has let the sensitive feminine side of her almost disappear. Constantly in terror of her abusive ex-husband, lest he finds her again, and the abuse resumes, she calls herself a 'wiseass', which is as good a definition as any. Hating herself and unable to believe that anyone could like her, she meets any friendship overtures with derision, invariably driving people away. Only a chance encounter with a charming single lawyer William forces her to reevaluate her priorities and attempt to revert to what she could've been, if her traumatic marriage didn't occur.

The complex, controversial theme of this novel is emphasized by a number of truly frightening situations and humorous little vignettes. Some of them made me chuckle. Others cause shivers of dread. All of them kept me turning the pages.

But... I can't truthfully say that I liked this novel or enjoyed it. I didn't. And the reason for that: I disliked Wanda. She is a rebellious, self-destructive bitch, and I don't like or respect such women. I don't understand her drive to self-ruination.

For half the book, Wanda either wallows in self-pity or drowns her grievances in whiskey. Hers are real grievances, I'm sure, but her troubles are not the worst in the world, and there are several solutions to her problems, none of which she even attempts. At least at first.

Until a perfect guy comes her way – suave, handsome, wealthy (he is a lawyer), and in love with her into the bargain. Only then does she make a push to clean up her act. As if a guy is a necessity for a woman to live with dignity.

Besides, William is not real. He is too good to be true. I've never met such men in real life, and I'm certain no one has. He is a 'prince charming' of the author's dreams, almost a metaphor. Why does Wanda need this Disney-style knight in shining pink armor to put her life together? As if her life is meaningless without a penis to enrich it. It doesn't feel right to me.

I've read everything this writer has written so far, in both her incarnations – Lani Diane Rich and Lucy March – and I intend to continue reading her. She is a great writer, even though her novels are uneven. Some of them I loved dearly. Others left me indifferent. This is one of the latter variety, but I hope the next one would be better. She can do it; I know she can do it. Can't wait.

Kourtney says

I bought this book on a whim when browsing the clearance racks. I always am looking for a new twist on chick lit, and in reading the back of the book I thought "I never read a book about THAT before!"

The first thing that grabbed me was the author's acknowledgements. Discovering that she wrote the first draft of this book during NaNoWriMo inspired me to join in this year (I've always wanted to but make excuses every time). The part that really grabbed me and made me start reading the book though was when she thanked the readers. "You may not realize it, but every time you read a book, you're validating every author who ever thought up a story and, despite the overwhelming odds, said, "I'm gonna give this a shot.\"" Awwww - you sucked me in!

The story idea is definitely original to me and it grabbed and kept my attention through the whole book. It is a quick read. I could connect somewhat with the main character, Wanda, because I too keep trying to "do something meaningful." Here's hoping I'll figure out what that is.

Louise says

If we're being anal about ratings this would be a 2.5.

So, the good:

Wanda is a pretty great protagonist. No bullshit.

The narrator of the audiobook brings some humour into the reading.

Some sensitive topics e.g. domestic violence are dealt with here quite well.

The not so good:

The plot- I just couldn't find anything here to hold my interest. Romantic fiction isn't my usual choice of genre so this is more likely an issue of mine than the book's. It won't stop me from trying more of Rich's works in the future, though.

JenniferJ says

I didn't fall in love with this book right away; in fact I was typically bored early on and wanted to just chunk it mainly because I don't think I liked Wanda and her smart ass mouth and attitude but after taking a moment to step back and re-evaluate my way of thinking I saw her in a new light and my whole perspective of Wanda changed and I began to enjoy the book a bit better.

Initially I was thinking of her as crabby and foul mouthed but then I took into consideration some of the things she had been thru, even though a lot of it was her own doing, and that she wasn't always this way and after a while it genuinely seemed she wanted to change but had no clue where to start. I went from hating her character, to feeling sorry for her, and by the end of the book I was all "You go girl!"

If you've ever had an identity crisis or just plain out felt there was no help for yourself then I think you will totally enjoy this one.

Megan says

Yesterday, I sat down at my altar, had a good cry and told The Powers That Be that I needed some effing help finding my way forward - it's not that I'm unwilling to do the work (I told them) but I simply couldn't see which way to go. Last night I picked a new novel to read and settled in to read this one. If anyone tries to tell you the Spirits don't have a sense of humour they aren't worth listening to on anything else because:

"Either life is full of coincidences, or there's no such thing as coincidence."

I haven't enjoyed a character as much as I enjoyed hanging out with (and being in the mind of) Wanda Lane since I read my first Stephanie Plum book. I was with Wanda the whole way through this book: I believed her and I believed in her. It was a sweet and charming read that had me laughing and crying at all the right moments and may have even restored my hope in my own possibilities just a little bit.

I'd tell you more about it but I'd rather go look up a few of Rich's other books now, and maybe dig out some post it notes for myself, so you'll just have to go read it for yourself.
