

“Desert Hope” (Vic P. Victory)

I had no idea what I was in for when I started this romantic novel. And that was a good thing, too. This book is going to capture your heart, by force.

One might think Amina lives a wonderful, calm life. She's forthcoming, has a job she's really invested in, has a wonderful and reliable best friend ... if it wasn't for the dark side in her life. This dark side is her boyfriend Oliver. A choleric tyrant who could very well cost her her life if she doesn't get away from him. But then she meets Malak, who, even though they had just met hours before, fascinates her right away. Will Amina be able to escape the life that is draining her of all strength and robbing her of the last bit of confidence?

Just the “debut” , the introduction of novel, had me already moved to tears. The words of the author, directly addressing the reader, hit close to home; it felt as if someone would tear out my heart and fill it up with truth, love, and courage. It was like somebody expressed my inner most fears. Something like that first had to sink in.

This romantic novel can only be described as a rollercoaster of emotions, especially, because the theme of the book is thrust upon the reader in such a brutal, but simultaneously impressive way. At one point I was about to put the book down for good. Not because it is in any way linguistically disappointing, but because the theme unleashed a tsunami of emotions in me. Alas, I continued, because I thought to myself “It's a romantic novel. It can only go uphill from here.”

The scenes are so accurately depicted, sometimes I was so involved, I actually feared for the well-being of Amina... It was incredible. So much happened in me: Fear, stomach cramps, tears, my heart raced, goose bumps that downright hurt...

Domestic abuse (no matter against whom – concerns all gender, age groups, and sadly even animals) is no easy topic. However, the topic is likely to be swept under the rug, if nobody

addresses it. Standing on the sidelines, one can hardly image what happens behind so many closed doors. The victims don't need our compassion. They need strength, somebody who has their back, who can bring them back to reality. And even though this novel brutally describes the acts of domestic abuse, it also demonstrates what happens if you break the cycle. When you escape. That it is not impossible to live on without the person that systematically tries to destroy you.

I immensely enjoyed how Amina's life changed to the better as soon as she embarked on her own journey... to see what a strong woman she is. I could literally feel it. And I thought it was incredibly interesting to join Amina on that quest.

The experiences and developments she had to go through in the book were superb. She fights herself back from the brink of death. And, especially during this part of book, emotional outburst from my side were quite common.

The characters created here really grew on me over the course of the novel. To me, Amina is like a heroin who conquers the terror behind closed doors. Joe is a really great friend, because she was there for Amina when she needed her dearest, and helped her see what had happened. And she was still there, even when Amina was ignorant of her own predicament. She never left her side, even though Oliver was erratic and unpredictable, and she herself experienced so many tragedies in her lifetime.

Malak was incredible. Right from the start. And he really did save Amina's life. In many aspects.

I don't think I need to say much about Oliver... People like him need to be punished. Period.

I really believe that this novel can help "tormented" people; however, I can't speak for all of them. Everybody deals with their destiny differently. But it is a book that can inspire courage; give the strength to fight for yourself; maybe even open some minds and eyes to the reality they are living; whether or not the person living with them is actually who they claim they are. Violence against anything and anybody is never the solution. And this book depicts that perfectly.

Despite all the emotionally charged scenes, the book remains a romantic novel which, in the

end, enriched my life. I'll award nothing less than 5 stars and the third place on my must-reads for Vic P. Victory.