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When Someone Steals Your NOOK and Spends \$238 On Erotica

Posted by Lauren Passell × July 19, 2013 at 12:15 pm



I was hesitant to buy a NOOK—I'm one of those readers who takes pride in collecting her wares and surrounding herself with them like they're old friends. I enjoy ~~forcing them upon~~ passing them out to friends. I like the smell of a book. I like folding the cover back and spilling wine and spaghetti sauce on it. I like underlining and folding back the pages.

But I live in New York City, and my bookshelf space is extremely limited. When I started having to store books underneath my kitchen sink and in my underwear drawer (seriously), I caved and bought a NOOK. It didn't take long for me to adjust. I could bring 100 books with me on vacation, all in one slender tool. I could hold the device perfectly with one hand, the other gripping a subway pole. I could read it on the Stairmaster with ease, turning pages with the press of a button. This isn't an advertisement for the NOOK—to each her own. But I quickly wondered what had taken me so long to make the switch. I couldn't find a single downside to owning all my books on one small electronic device.

Then my NOOK was stolen at the gym—I had left it on that damn Stairmaster. I didn't worry about it or report it right away; I thought I might find it. Fortunately, I was awake and on my computer at six in the morning the next day when I started receiving email notifications. *TIE ME IS NOW IN YOUR NOOK LIBRARY. SURRENDER YOUR LOVE IS NOW IN YOUR NOOK LIBRARY.* By the time I registered what had happened, there were 30 books purchased, and they were rapidly piling on. I looked at my cat, who was sitting on my lap, and immediately suspected he had done something to my account. But remembering that

Monty only loves historical fiction, and all of these books seemed to be erotica, with the words “bondage” or “lover” in them, I realized that at that moment, while I was sitting on my couch, someone had my NOOK in her hand and was on a shopping spree—and I was picking up the tab. Struck by a wave of unsettling discomfort, I panicked and called my credit card company to cancel the card that was attached to my account. Below, an incomplete list of the books that were downloaded onto my device before I could stop the madness:

Surrender Your Love, by J.C. Reed (“Meeting Jett was like lightning. Dangerous. Better left untouched. And better forgotten. But lightning always strikes twice.”)

Wild Orchids, by Karen Robards (“Prim mid-western schoolteacher Lora Harding is in for the summer vacation of her life when darkly handsome American Max Maxwell slides into her rented car in steamy Cancun, Mexico, and orders her to “drive” at gunpoint...”)

Alpha Bad Boys (7-in-1 Box Set), by Shayla Black, Olivia Cunning, Lisa Renee Jones, Lexi Blake, and Cat Johnson (“Brothers Gavin, Slade, and Dex fall hard for Gavin’s new secretary, beautiful Hannah Craig. The oil executives know they must give her time to get to know them before she can choose one...who will seduce the virgin and keep her for his own?”)

Tie Me, by Olivia Cunning (“His heart is tied to his past... Her heart is tied to her work... They’re bound to become entangled...”)

Heart Of The Billionaire, by J.S. Scott (“Can two people with so many years of hurt between them learn to trust each other again?”)

Sweet Persuasion, by Maya Banks (“For five years, Serena has run Fantasy Incorporated and has devoted her time to fulfilling her clients’ fantasies. Never her own. Until now...”)

Their Virgin Hostage, by Shayla Black and Lexi Blake (“In the wilds of Alaska, the three men try to pry Kinley open, only to discover she’s both stronger and more innocent than they imagined. Her sweet beauty melts their suspicion and steals their hearts. Together, they awaken her passion and brand her as their own.”)

Innocence Defied, by Lainey Reese (“When business brings him to New York City indefinitely, Gage Hollister is sure that somewhere in this massive city, there must be a woman whose need to be dominated matches his thirst to dominate.”)

Going Cowboy Crazy, by Katie Lane (“If Faith wants to avoid heartbreak, she’ll have to show a certain ruggedly handsome cowboy that this crazy-impossible love is worth fighting for.”)

Anything He Wants, by Sara Fawkes (“Lucy Delacourt’s temp position isn’t quite her dream job but it pays the bills. The highlight of her day is riding the elevator in the mornings with a handsome stranger. Tall, dark, and sexy as hell, Lucy knows he’s way out of her league, but a girl can look, right?”)

If you can learn a lot about someone based on their library, I knew everything I wanted to know *and more* about the person that had stolen my NOOK. Except for who she (*presumably* she) was! I wanted to step all over her, with the powerful thighs I had earned stepping on that Stairmaster while reading *Lord Of The Flies*! Who was this woman? In addition to these books, she had downloaded several free books, including *His Voice, His Command*, by Vonna Harper (why?) and, surprisingly, a subscription to the *New York Times* (I hadn’t taken her for a *Times* girl).

After a phone call with B&N Customer Service (this is before I was employed by B&N), the books were deleted from my account and I received a full refund, except for the *New York Times* subscription, which I kept. (Thanks, NOOK caper. I didn’t even know I could read the *NYT* on my Simple Touch!) So whoever had taken my NOOK still had it, with only the books that I had purchased before it was stolen, which were still on my account. I was bitter, but slept easier at night figuring the woman could stand to diversify her library a bit—it might do her some good to read *Christopher Hitchens*. But then I wondered if I needed to diversify, too. Maybe this whole debacle was a sign I needed to start reading *Girls Only: Pajama Party*. I guess I’ll never know. The worst part was that my recommended books became totally off-mark. (No, Barnes & Noble. I would not be interested in *Mile High*!)

This is not an advertisement for the NOOK, but it *is* a public service announcement. The B&N customer service employee alerted me to a helpful function on the device—you can protect your purchases with a password, something I advise everyone to do. Right now. Stop reading this and do it. I’ll wait.

~

Anyway, I continued to frequent the gym with an eye out for my NOOK, and for the person who was vile enough to steal from me, narrow-minded enough to not buy *one* true crime book (which I would have

enjoyed), and stupid enough to wait to ransack my account till 6 a.m. Had (s)he started pressing the buy button at 3 a.m., when I was snoring in dreamland, (s)he could have spent hundreds of dollars more. (The final tab was \$238.)

Protect your account, everyone, unless you want to accidentally diversify your library. The NOOK game is a risky one, but one that I've found is worth it.

Have you ever been a victim of literary identity theft?

Tags: embarrassing situations × erotica × funny things × nook × reading × romance

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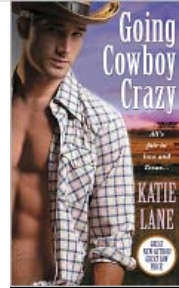
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15 comments



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Sue V • 4 hours ago

Interesting article. I don't have an e-reader device as I download my e-books to my phone and laptop. However, I am disturbed by the author's prejudice towards the genre the NOOK thief downloaded.

From the article:

"If you can learn a lot about someone based on their library, I knew everything I wanted to know and more about the person that had stolen my NOOK...surprisingly, a subscription to the New York Times (I hadn't taken her for a Times girl)."

I ask, "Why does this surprise you, Ms. Passell?" Is it that readers of erotica and erotic romance couldn't have an interest in the articles written for one of the most widely-read and respected newspapers in the world? Or that readers of these genres have no intellect to speak of? Or is that they are so vapid the only thing they can comprehend is "mommy-porn" (to use a vile catch-phrase spawned by the Fifty Shades phenomena)? Romance readers know well this superior attitude, having been dealing with it for the last 30 plus years of the genre's existence. Because, of course, anything written by women for women dealing with emotions (and sexual activity) is just pap for the brainless female.

I call this the "Sneering Literati" attitude, a phrase coined because of the looks and attitude I received on multiple occasions when shopping at (surprise!) Barnes & Noble. This attitude is one that says, "Why are you sullyng our store buying this crap? You can pick up the same thing at Wal-Mart, which is obviously where you belong, intelligence-wise." Never mind that the romance genre has consistently been the best selling genre of books for YEARS, to the tune of over a billion dollars a year (that is in the US alone--I don't have the figures of

see more

18 Reply Share



Anna@herding cats • 2 hours ago

You know. I get the message of protecting yourself and your Nook you're trying to get across but this was a really terrible way to go about it. I'm pretty shocked at the negative attitude towards romance/erotica and that the thief is the close minded reader that needs to expand her reading list. Unbelievable that B&N would think it's a good idea to talk badly about such a huge portion of it's readers.

To say you can tell a lot by what she picked? Really? What exactly. I love most of those authors. Have read some of those books and plan to read others (wont be buying them from B&N now though)--what exactly is it you now know about me?

Was she right in what she did? Absolutely not. But there are better ways to get your point across without insulting a huge section of your customers. Or, well, former customer in this case.

14 ^ | v Reply Share ›



SheriV • 3 hours ago

Wow! I love several of those books and authors. I might seriously not replace my Nook when it goes and instead get a Kindle. Way to isolate your loyal fans Nook

13 ^ | v Reply Share ›



Chris • 3 hours ago

Wow, if I were one of the authors who poured their blood, sweat and tears into the erotic romances above, I would be seriously aggrieved by this article. Just because they chose to write about everyday human emotions and natural human relations makes them lesser? Really Ms. Passell?

As it is, I am one of the many millions of articulate, well read and well educated women who have purchased and (gasp!) read many of the offending works referenced above.

Romance readers are subjected to this kind of prejudice every day and this is why I never set foot in a Barnes and Noble anymore. This is also why I traded my nook in for a kindle several years ago. At least I don't find articles on Amazon owned blogs touting someone's literary superiority over mine just because I like a little smut with my character studies.

Way to go Barnes and Noble, nothing like offending the readers of the largest selling genre in the United States. Hopefully attitudes like this will keep you warm at night as your ship continues to sink.

10 ^ | v Reply Share ›



Melissa Schroeder → Chris • 2 hours ago

Readers and authors. The sales overall have started to fall for all genres on the Nook. I know because I still rank high with new releases but find the volume has diminished over the last year. It makes it hard not to go ahead and bite the bullet and put all my books with KDP select. The only reason I don't is because I have readers with Nooks. With this attitude, it makes me wonder how much longer that will last though.

5 ^ | v Reply Share ›



Sue V • 3 hours ago

As a follow up, I would ask you to consider whether Ms. Passell would have felt compelled to write this article if the title had been:

1. "When Someone Steals Your NOOK and Spends \$238 on SCIENCE FICTION"
2. "When Someone Steals Your NOOK and Spends \$238 on BIOGRAPHIES"
3. "When Someone Steals Your NOOK and Spends \$238 on GRAPHIC NOVELS?"

I'm thinking, no, she wouldn't have written the article. Or at least the article would not have had a bias against the genre the thief chose; instead she would have presented an article about why it is important to secure your Nook with a password. Unfortunately, she doesn't value erotica the same as other genres, which led to an expression of her prejudices.

9 ^ | v Reply Share ›



Karen Hogan • 3 hours ago

It stinks that your Nook was stolen - and excellent advice to add passwords. Your attack on the romance and erotic romance category, though, is unnecessary. Don't worry, no one will care if you read a book with (gasp) a sex scene in it.

8 ^ | v Reply Share ›



Kitty Kelly • an hour ago

Wow way to isolate an entire group of readers. I am sorry your Nook was stolen by someone so disgustingly horrible. It must be an embarrassment to you and your entire family to have those purchases soiling your reputation. The fact that BN would post something so negative to an entire community of readers fascinates me. I am not going to stoop to your level and judge you by what you read (I will however judge you for this post) and it certainly doesn't make you come across as any better than the rest of us. You clearly are not truly concerned about those of us who enjoy erotic (shhh cover your eyes so you don't see that dirty word) romance and those poor authors. They must just be wasting their time and effort putting out filth like this. Never mind the fact that this genre is filled with bestsellers and authors with massive fan following. I don't own a Nook and never buy anything from B&N and this article just provides more reason not to. Thanks for you bigoted opinion on why we should add passwords to our ereaders.

7 ^ | v Reply Share ›



Mary Kirkland • 2 hours ago



While I'm sorry that you had your Nook stolen and charges racked up against your account, it seems you are more upset that the woman who stole your device would sink so low as to buy *gasp* erotica or romance titles. I am a little bewildered by your blatant prejudice against these types of books. I myself have read several of those titles and I don't think that that as you said, "If you can learn a lot about someone based on their library, I knew everything I wanted to know and more about the person that had stolen my NOOK." that you can learn a lot about someone based solely on the books they buy.

So while I feel bad that you had your device stolen and money taken out of your account, I do believe that your attack on Erotica and romance authors/readers in general was in bad taste.

6 ^ | v Reply Share ›



grapeapril75 • an hour ago

While I am all for protecting your device with a password, I think you went about things wrong in this article.

You made assumptions and attacks on readers of erotica/romance that are untrue. I read a lot of the mentioned authors and so many others. However, I am not unfamiliar with the Lord of the Flies and War and Peace. I just choose not to be closed minded about my reading. I enjoy variety and am not a literary prude.

It is questionable that Barnes and Noble would let you insult such a large percentage of the reading population. Erotic Romance is on the rise and the authors are even dominating the New York Times Best seller list, probably one of the reasons your thief wanted the subscription.

Glad picked the Kindle where they celebrate all readers!

3 ^ | v Reply Share ›



David Michael • 4 hours ago

Y'all better trade your Nooks in for Kindles!

1 ^ | v Reply Share ›



Jerri • 4 hours ago

I have both a password to first get onto my Nook and then a password needed to complete the purchase (also have both on my Kindle)

^ | v Reply Share ›



Joykins • 4 hours ago

" So whoever had taken my NOOK still had it, with only the books that I had purchased before it was stolen, which were still on my account." -- If she downloaded the books she bought before you had them removed, and then shut off networking permanently, she probably still has them. I don't know what the odds are on that, though.

^ | v Reply Share ›



Kevin Regis • 5 hours ago

My iPod was stolen in a hotel. I have the nook app installed, so I can still fulfill my YA book cravings whenever my nook is too big to carry around. Fortunately, you cannot buy nook books via iPod, but the BN employee still suggests for me change my password. From then on, I know that BN will help you in all your needs.

^ | v Reply Share ›



Beth Carpenter • 5 hours ago

The very first thing I did when I got my Nook was to put my passcode in. NOBODY knows my code. Not even the person I trust the most with my Nook, My mom.


^ | v Reply Share ›


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The 4 Most Traumatizing Books From My Childhood


 HA!
When Someone Steals Your NOOK and Spends \$238 On Erotica


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The Children's Books We Still Love as Adults


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10 Books I Didn't "Get" Until I Was Older


 YA
A Comic-Con Reading List: YA Edition


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 FICTION
A 10-Quote Argument for Reading Tao Lin's *Tai Pei*


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KID STUFF

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