

STAR QUALITY

By Lori Foster, Lucy Monroe, Dianne Castell

Erotica Anthology

Brava, 2005

Reviewed by :: Lisa Bradley

This anthology headed up by the much-loved Lori Foster is a sexy, fun read. The three authors vary in style, yet their stories are linked together by two running themes. Each story is set in the apple orchard town of Delicious, Ohio, and the characters in each story are affected by the power of a full moon.

The first story up is Lori Foster's "Once in a Blue Moon". Stan Tucker has an unusual gift, although at times he considers it to be more of a curse: during a full moon he can hear snatches of other people's thoughts, and with the onset of the rare Blue Moon (when there is a second full moon in any given month) his gift magnifies and he can hear everyone loud and clear. He is plagued both by the banal, everyday musings of those around him, as well as by their innermost secrets.

The most intriguing secret he discovers is that shy, widowed bookstore owner, Jenna Rowan, is as attracted to him as he's always been to her—and her ideas about him are smoking hot!

I found certain elements of the story a bit implausible. After a first date Stan claims he 'cares about' both Jenna and her two children, that he's always wanted to be a father and doesn't care if the children are his own or not, and he wants to marry Jenna, a woman he's previously known only from afar. To me, this just didn't ring true. But if you can suspend that disbelief, what you have is a very sweet, romantic tale with the sizzling love scenes Lori Foster is famous for.

The second story is "Moon Magnetism" by Lucy Monroe. In this tale wrought with sexual tension, Ivy Kendall's job as the manager of an old-fashioned B&B style inn is perfect for her-- until her sexy boss, Blake Hawthorne, shows up and insists on adding technical upgrades to the inn. For Ivy, this means the end of her job, because a strange hereditary response to the full moon makes her body literally magnetic, ruining any electronic devices nearby. She decides that since she'll soon no longer be working for Blake that it's time to give in to the magnetic and distinctly sexual pull she feels toward her employer, and when she does, sparks fly.

The love scenes are sensual and burning hot, with just a bit of light kink thrown in to keep things interesting. Ms. Monroe's writing style is fast-paced, and I found this story to be the most entertaining of the three.

Last but not least in this trilogy is "Moonstruck" by Dianne Castell. Julia Simon's life changes in a most unusual way during one particular blue moon: everything she wishes for comes true, including her wish for hunky private investigator, Marc Adams, to lust after her. The ensuing adventurous rendezvous' take place everywhere but in bed. But does she dare to wish for Marc's heart, as well as his body?

The sexual tension will keep you panting, but the actual love scenes felt a bit glossed over. Still, clever and funny dialogue keeps the story moving at a good, spanking pace.

The varied voices of the three authors mesh well together. Lori Foster fans will be pleased with this sexy and thoroughly entertaining romp, as will those discovering her for the first time.

Four Kisses