



**SCORCHER** — Borders on erotic. Very graphic sex. **HOT** — Most romance novels fall into this category. Ranges from conventional lovemaking to explicit sex. **MILD** — May or may not include lovemaking. No explicit sex. ★★★★★ **GOLD PHENOMENAL** — In a Class by Itself. ★★★★★ **TOP PICK FANTASTIC** — Keeper. ★★★★★ **COMPELLING** — Page-Turner. ★★★ **ENJOYABLE** — Pleasant Read. ★★ **PROBLEMATIC** — May Struggle to Finish. ★ **SEVERELY FLAWED** — Pass on This One.

gets closer to the answers — and to Valentine Hart. But someone is keeping a secret that could get them all killed. (ZEBRA, Feb., 368 pp., \$7.99)

**Terri Dukes**

## BY BREAK OF DAY

**M. L. Buchman**

★★★★ **HOT**

*The Night Stalkers series continues in true Buchman style with high-octane action, perfect attention to technical details and sizzling-hot love scenes. Going one step beyond, Buchman pleases his readers with fan-favorite cameo appearances. Take note: A character cheat sheet might be needed. But if you are a fan of military romance and haven't tried a Night Stalkers book, what are you waiting for?*

**SUMMARY:** Captain Justin "The Cowboy" Roberts has had it real bad for Captain Kara Moretti since he met the Brooklyn-raised beauty. However, Justin and Kara are polar opposites in everything. The two things they have in common: They are both members of SOAR ... and then there's the little fact that their chemistry is combustible. Kara is a known heartbreaker, yet when Justin pilots his helicopter on a top-secret

mission deep in the Israeli desert, will Kara realize just what she's got before it's too late? (SOURCEBOOKS, Feb., 352 pp., \$7.99)

**Susannah Balch**

## EXTREME HONOR

**Piper J. Drake**

★★★★ **HOT**

*Drake's latest centers around a tough, appealing alpha male in dog trainer David Cruz and the spitfire Lyn who has a gentle gift for healing dogs. Drake's sharp storytelling shines with an engaging plot that's thick with tension and sizzling with David and Lyn's attraction.*

**SUMMARY:** When dog whisperer Lyn Jones shows up at David Cruz's dog kennel with a huge attitude, demanding to work with Atlas, a dog suffering from PTSD, the ex-soldier bristles. When he sees the effect Lyn has on Atlas after one meeting, he concedes. A slight breach in security has David suspicious of Lyn, and when he goes to confront her, he ends up rescuing her from two attackers. With Lyn in danger, David feels driven to protect her, as his heart continues to be drawn to Lyn. (FOREVER, Feb., 336 pp., \$5.99)

**Melanie Bates**

**M/M**

## A FORCED SILENCE

**Cate Ashwood**

★★★ **MILD**

*Ashwood's novel is a major attention grabber, but sadly, readers may lose interest as the storyline slowly drags out too far. Adam and Sam are well-developed characters, and their banter is really heartfelt. But the wait for Adam to come clean and confess his true feelings seems like forever. The murder and mystery aspects round out the book, though.*

**SUMMARY:** Paramedic Adam Carson has no intentions of coming out of the closet anytime soon. He almost changes his mind when he reunites with forensic pathologist Sam McKenna, a former classmate. Sam has bitter feelings toward Adam because he taunted him throughout school. When they're called to a murder scene, Adam and Sam have no choice but to work closely together as the investigation begins. The spark between them cannot be denied, but Adam still isn't sure if he should confess to Sam what his heart is telling him. (DREAMSPINNER, Dec., 200 pp., \$14.99)

**Jaime A. Gerald**

## Genre Spotlight

## Dystopian Love Story

REBECCA ZANETTI is kicking off 2016 with a new series, *Scorpius Syndrome*. The first book, *Mercury Striking* (Zebra), drops this month, so we chatted up the author to get the scoop.

### What are you most looking forward to exploring in this new world you've created?

The *Scorpius Syndrome* is a little darker than my other series, but there's still a strong thread of hope through the characters. I'm looking forward to exploring the idea of the world as we know it basically ending and figuring out what comes

next. The people in power in the real world right now, the ones efficient with computers, the stock market, finding tax write-offs ... probably wouldn't be in power if basic survival became key again.

### The storyline is fascinating. What kind of research went into this series?

Oh man, so much research! And I have to say that a lot of it was frightening. As humans, we're one good virus, one wild asteroid or one apple-sized black hole away from being wiped out. I didn't know that, and I kind of wish I still didn't.

### The Rippers in the story are similar to zombies, but also different. What made you want to go for something zombie-adjacent and not zombies?

Zombies are monsters with no brains. I mean, they're not even alive, so I really didn't want zombies. Plus, they're being done so much. I wanted villains who could be as cunning and dangerous as the heroes in the story.

### If you were stranded in this post-apocalyptic world, would you survive? I think I would survive,



partially because I don't live in a busy city. We have water and wild game and even edible berries where I live, so we're covered for food and water for a while. The initial disaster would be the biggest threat to survival, obviously, but after that, the things we take for granted might take us down. — Jennifer Peters

For more, visit [RebeccaZanetti.com](http://RebeccaZanetti.com)