



Prey

By Lurlene McDaniel

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A teacher is supposed to impart a love of learning and a thirst for knowledge. It's a bit different with Ms. Lori Settles. All the kids are talking about how hot she is—and she is especially interested in Ryan Piccoli. When she starts giving Ryan extra attention, he's feeling more than happy—at first. He's used to being the class clown, but really he's a loner. One day after school, the friendship with Lori Settles goes farther than he ever expected. She's his teacher. She's at least twice his age. Intimacy with a teacher is wrong, yet it feels so good in every way. Soon, Lori is making demands and Ryan begins to feel overwhelmed, but Ryan refuses to even admit anything is going on. Something immoral is going on and before too long the choices made will change lives forever.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Lurlene McDaniel is the #1 author of inspirational fiction for young adults. She lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Day one. New school year. New school. Freshman status. Same old Ryan Piccoli. Me, myself and I, lost in the masses--heading to new classes, new teachers, new everything. This is the thing about big high schools like McAllister. People can look right at you, right through you, as if you're Casper the Friendly Ghost.

"Hey, watch where you're going, turd."

I've bumped into a senior, a jock, and he's snarling at me. I bow slightly and get out of his way. He'd stopped without warning in the middle of the hall. I say, "Sorry, my bad. I didn't see the traffic light over your head giving you the right of way." His pretty girlfriend looks me over, giggles.

The guy puffs up. "Take off, creep."

He turns and I take a chance and wink at his girlfriend. She's pretty, but off-limits.

She blows me a kiss when her boyfriend isn't looking and I watch them take off down the crowded hallway. Wait for it, I think, and am rewarded when she glances over her shoulder to make sure I'm still watching. Gotcha!

I can make people like me, even when they don't want to. A talent that got me through middle school--just ask my teachers. If you can't make them love you, make them like you. How, you ask? Make 'em laugh. A survival skill I learned early in life.

I'm wishing the day was ending instead of just starting. My summer was pretty laid-back, sleeping in and staying up until three in the morning on my computer. I hung at the pool at the country club, worked on my tan, lifted weights in my garage every afternoon. For a freshman nobody, I look pretty good. At least that's what some girls hanging at the pool said. Sure, they were only eleven and twelve, but girls' opinions are always worth something to me. With school starting up, though, talking to the global universe and gaming are over.

"Ry! Wait up."

I turn and see Joel weaving through the hall traffic. When he reaches me, he asks, "You home this afternoon?" He'd been a regular drop-by at my place through middle school. My dad's in sales and he travels a lot, so except for a housekeeper now and then, I'm pretty much on my own most days of the week.

"As soon as the bus drops me," I say.

"Forget the bus. I'll give you a lift."

Joel's had a car since July. I won't turn sixteen until December and that's when I hope Dad will get me a car. Until then, I'm at the mercy of the school bus and a few friends who have their own wheels. "All right," I tell him. "I got the new Grand Slam Poker game on Saturday."

Joel's eyes light up. "I'm in."

"It's tricky."

"Bring it on. You're lucky your dad gets you stuff like that. I have to save every cent and buy stuff I want myself."

Lucky? I think. It's a bribe, Joel, my man. Dad buys me stuff because he sheds guilt over leaving me alone so much like a shaggy dog sheds hair. His guilt is my ticket to the latest and greatest. A guy adapts.

The foot traffic in the hall has thinned and the first bell buzzes. "I'm gone," I say, waving my schedule.

"Wait by the gym," Joel calls, and takes off in the other direction.

My first class is World History from Ancient to Modern Times, and by the time I get there, all the seats in the back of the room are taken. I find an empty one in the middle of the third row and slide into it, curling my legs. Man, these things must be left over from some elementary school. The room smells of chalk dust and stale air. All schools smell the same. If someone blindfolded you and led you through a maze ending in a classroom, you'd know in an instant where you were by the smells.

The door shuts and a woman's voice says, "Welcome to WHAM--your free pass to Tomorrow Land. I'm Ms. Settles."

I look up because I can feel an undercurrent flowing through the room. I hear the guy next to me exhale a soft "wow."

Ms. Settles is gorgeous. Straight jet-black hair to her shoulders, skin the color of cream and big blue eyes so clear you could swim in them. Her body is as sexy as any movie star's, with curves and boobs and a sweaterdress that shows off her assets.

"H-e-l-l-o, Ms. Settles," a guy on the other side of me whispers.

The girls in the class are speechless. Probably because none of them look like that, poor slobs.

Ms. Settles is all business, walking down each aisle, her heels clicking, talking about history--who cares?

When she passes me, I catch a whiff of vanilla and see that she has nails painted pale icy pink, perfectly rounded and shiny.

In front of her desk again, she leans backward, resting her palms on the desktop and crossing her ankles. She isn't wearing athletic shoes, or old lady loafers either. Her shoes are black and high, with ankle straps that show off her smooth, tanned and perfect calves. She never stops talking about world history, her voice professional-sounding, but who can listen? I just keep seeing how pretty she is.

She asks two guys to go to the back cabinet and pass out the textbooks. They about fall over themselves to get it done. The thick blue book lands with a thud on my desk and I thumb through it. All the while Ms. Settles is outlining her program, test schedule and essay work for the school year. I hardly hear her words, just her voice. Pretty voice, too.

Then she starts asking questions. "Who in here thinks history is a waste of time?" Silence. "Who thinks the past is dead, so why bother studying it? Who thinks hard work equals good grades?" More silence. "Who thinks he or she can slide by because they're only doing time at McAllister, waiting for better things to come along?" Feet shuffle. She's speaking in teacher code, letting us know that her class isn't going to be a walk in the park. "This is my first year here, but I've taught middle and high school for over seven years."

I do rapid math and calculate her age to be thirtyish if she graduated college at twenty-two. She's old. So what? She's still jaw-dropping delectable.

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Ronald Smith:

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Oliver Whitley:

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