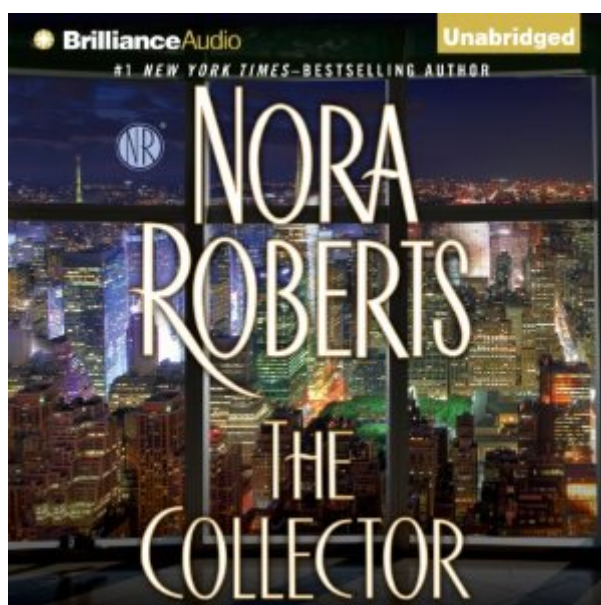


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The Collector



Synopsis

From #1 New York Times-best-selling author Nora Roberts comes a novel of a woman who needs nothing, a man who sees everything, and the web of deceit, greed, and danger that brings them together - and that could tear them apart...As a professional house-sitter and freelance writer, nothing ties Lila Emerson down - not her work, not a home, and definitely not a relationship. She spends her life moving from one job to the next, sometimes crashing at a friend's Manhattan apartment. And though she can appreciate her clients' extraordinary homes, their expensive collections, and their adorable pets, Lila has never longed for possessions of her own. Everything she has, including her heart, is portable. But when she witnesses a possible murder-suicide from her current apartment-sitting job, life as Lila knows it takes a dramatic turn. Artist Ashton Archer knows his charming, clever, and impulsive brother couldn't have killed his girlfriend - or taken his own life. His hope of unraveling what happened lies with Lila, the only eyewitness. And even buried in grief, Ash longs to paint the woman whose deep, dark eyes seem to hold endless reserves of strength and a fiery passion. Chalking up their intense attraction to the heat of the moment, Lila agrees to help Ash in trying to find out who murdered his brother and why. From the penthouses of Manhattan to grand Italian villas, their investigation draws them into a rarefied circle where priceless antiques are bought, sold, gambled away, and stolen, where what you possess is who you are, and where what you desire becomes a deadly obsession...

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Like the priceless Fabergé eggs the titular character covets, *The Collector* is not only gorgeous, but exquisitely crafted. The Master of Romance, Nora Roberts, has woven an engrossing tale of love, family, and the lengths some will go to possess that which they desire the most. At the heart of *The Collector* are Lila and Ash. Ashton is a famous artist from a wealthy and incredibly large family, but he is no spoiled rich boy. Ash puts his heart and vision into his paintings and saves his patience for his (over a dozen) siblings. I loved the juxtaposition of soulful painter and managing brother in Ash. What was even more fun was seeing him thrown a bit off his stride by Lila. She is a YA author with a promising career and a penchant for people-watching who finds her in a Rear Window type of situation, one which ultimately leads Ash to her. Lila is also the *ædo it yourself* type to the extreme. She has a way of drawing people to her, but she will never let herself count on anyone for anything (with the exception of her best friend, Julie) and she doesn't have any desire to risk her heart. Ash garners her sympathy from the start because of his heartache over losing his brother, Oliver, but his take-charge attitude rubs her the wrong way even as she finds herself reluctantly attracted to him. Though it is a tragedy that brings them together, Lila and Ash find what they never knew they needed in one another. Their romance is both lovely and fun as the banter, ups and downs, and slide into love is all classic Nora Roberts (and I mean that in the very best way).

Many Nora Roberts fans worry that she writes her many books following repetitive formulas that have been overused - the romantic formula in her Harlequin type books, romantic suspense in more recent books like *THE WITNESS* and detective thrillers when she writes the *In Death* series as J D Robb. In *THE COLLECTOR* Roberts has mixed up the formulas to make an entertaining, somewhat different, romantic suspense thriller which even throws in a sociopathic killer and some torture to spice up the mixture. Lila Emerson loves her nomadic life as a house-sitter for wealthy clients. She stays in some fantastic homes throughout the world looking after the home, the pets and anything else to make her clients' happy. She spends her spare time writing successful YA Werewolf style novels. In between house sits she stays with her twice divorced best friend Julie. Many of the houses have great views and she always takes binoculars in her pared down luggage. Her latest housesitting is a luxury apartment in central NYC which has great views of apartments across the way. Late one evening Lila is looking through her binoculars at a nearby apartment when she sees an attractive woman being attacked by an unidentifiable person. Within seconds the woman is pushed through the window and falls many floors to her death. Her male partner is found dead in the apartment by the police, with signs of apparent suicide. Through the police investigation the male

victim's brother, Ashton Archer, a handsome successful artist from a very wealthy family, seeks out Lila for more information. There is immediate attraction especially when he asks her to pose for him. As they get together personally they also start to work out what is happening. What follows has something for everyone's tastes.

I like Nora Roberts's books. I am a fan. The woman is prolific - in many languages. It would be impossible to pick just one favorite; I'd need a list of at least ten. That being said, if you are planning to write another book about a murder witness - it can even be said it was a mob-like murder - then you need to exceed what you have written before. One can't read this book without the mind blinking back to *The Witness*. *The Collector* does not have the depth of character development or plot development readers found in *The Witness*. And Nora Roberts undoubtedly knew there would be comparisons, but it's not a comparison I'm making. First, I was pleased I didn't run into those Nora Roberts phrases that seem to carry forward from book to book. That was nice. Second, the love-making paragraphs were almost non-existent when compared to other works. I'm okay with this. Do something different for a change. Why not? And okay, one true comparison to *The Witness*: I'm not even annoyed that there is also an artist in *The Collector* who paints whimsical beings - I just don't buy that the artist is a macho, take charge guy. However, the characters were not as well developed; I found them to be flat, one-dimensional. And our heroine and her friend seemed to be so chatty it became annoying - like watching a bad movie where you are thinking the scene could have been edited out. The chatty conversation didn't add to either the characters or the story. The relationships didn't really develop, either. Sure, the best friend (Julie) could have been doing quite a bit of relationship development when she and her ex-husband (Luke) were not front and center to the story.

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