



Fish Out of Water

Amy Lane

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PI Jackson Rivers grew up on the mean streets of Del Paso Heights—and he doesn't trust cops, even though he was one. When the man he thinks of as his brother is accused of killing a police officer in an obviously doctored crime, Jackson will move heaven and earth to keep Kaden and his family safe.

Defense attorney Ellery Cramer grew up with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth, but that hasn't stopped him from crushing on street-smart, swaggering Jackson Rivers for the past six years. But when Jackson asks for his help defending Kaden Cameron, Ellery is out of his depth—and not just with guarded, prickly Jackson. Kaden wasn't just framed, he was framed by crooked cops, and the conspiracy goes higher than Ellery dares reach—and deep into Jackson's troubled past.

Both men are soon enmeshed in the mystery of who killed the cop in the minimart, and engaged in a race against time to clear Kaden's name. But when the mystery is solved and the bullets stop flying, they'll have to deal with their personal complications... and an attraction that's spiraled out of control.

Fish Out of Water Details

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From Reader Review Fish Out of Water for online ebook

Josy says

~ 4.5 stars ~

I really liked this book! Vey intriguing, fast-paced mystery; I laughed more than I thought I would, given the things the MCs had to deal with; the characters were great and the narration of the audio book was perfect.

I'm definitely going to read the next book!

Simone says

Nothing to add to my original review, but I loved it even more the second time around, so I decided to round my rating up this time! ?

*****4.5 stars*** and my crush on Greg Tremblay grows stronger and stronger!**

But I also have a new crush on Jackson and Ellery...

I saw that *Fish Out Of Water* got pretty mixed reactions. Some people were not thrilled with this book because it is apparently a bit different from Amy Lane's other works. Well, this was the second book I've read from her, with *read* being a bit of a stretch here. *Chase In Shadow* was my first and more like a skimming fest for me because it bored me to death. What can I say? Apparently I'm a mystery whore and when my brain gets something to chew on, I'm a happy little camper. ;-)

The mystery part was not the reason I enjoyed this book, though. I totally fell in love with Jackson and Ellery, and maybe I'm a pretty undemanding person, but where some might complain that there is not enough romance here, I soaked up every bit of intimacy between both men and thrived in it. I loved their bickering, their tender moments and their lovemaking. I don't know how much Greg Tremblay contributed to it, or if I would have loved it as much if I 'only' read it instead of listening to the audio, but I have to say that he did another amazing job with his narration and I'm pretty sad that the sequel is not available on audio yet. But of course that won't keep me from delving right into the story. ;-)

~☆~Dœni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~☆~ says

If you follow me on Goodreads at all, you know that I love Amy Lane's work. **Amy Lane is a goddess.** I even wrote an ode to Amy Lane in my review of *Shiny!*

So I say this with a heavy heart, people. This book didn't really work for me.

I don't like mysteries, and this book is a mystery. It's 80 percent mystery, maybe 20 percent romance.

And the romance isn't sweet. It's not angsty exactly, but it's gritty and rough around the edges. The MCs don't get together until the halfway mark, and even then it's a lot of back and forth.

Jackson Rivers is a callous former cop. He's a man of many appetites and fucks around with men and women both. Jackson's mom was essentially absent, and Jackson was left to fend for himself until he met Kaden and his sister Jade in eighth grade and was unofficially adopted by their mom.

When Kaden, who is black, is accused of killing a white cop, Jackson steps in. He wants defense attorney Ellery Cameron to take the case because Ellery is the best damn trial lawyer he knows.

Jackson and Ellery have a frenemies situation going on, but once Ellery gets to know Jackson, he pursues him aggressively. Ellery is prim and controlled, but he likes it dirty in bed. Jackson doesn't want pleasure to get in the way of business, so he resists Ellery's advances. Until he doesn't.

The mystery, which revolves around who framed Kaden and WHY, is racially charged. Jackson and Ellery do a lot of investigating and talking.

Lane does a great job keeping the book authentic. The dialogue is sharp, and the story moves forward at a fast clip.

Honestly, I just didn't feel that heartstopping connection between Jackson and Ellery. I was waiting for the three little words that never came.

There's also this at 3%: **Jackson has banging sex ON PAGE in vivid detail with his ex-girlfriend. Which FUCK NO.**

This book didn't read like typical Amy Lane, and I think that's why I didn't love it. It's not that Lane has a formula; her stories and characters are distinct, but even in her angstier stories, there's all-consuming love, two MCs who fit like lock and key, and a HEA. The ending here is a HFN at best.

***Fish Out of Water* is edgy and urban. But it's not a romance, at least not my kind of romance. If you enjoy mysteries, this one's for you.**

Christelle says

I liked it but didn't fully enjoyed it.

Jackson is a former cop who had been shot while trying to pin his dirty partner. Now a PI in a law firm, he asks for the help of Ellery, one of the lawyer, to defend his best friend who has just been accused of killing a cop, not an easy fate, especially if you're black and from a poor part of the town.

Opposites attract each other and Jackson, rough around the edge from his shitty childhood, his What didn't work for me was the immediate...insta-love (no, the L word was never mentioned)...insta-lust (no, they have known each other for 6 years, nothing happens and then, bang)...insta-connection, maybe,

even though I didn't really get the connection. There were some romance, tenderness and steam but not enough for my taste.

Also, I like mystery/thriller and it was nicely fast-paced but, and here, I quote another reviewer, it felt a little convoluted. And, maybe it's me, but I had the feeling that the police force was depicted as almost fully corrupted, the good cops being an exception and that got me uncomfortable.

Overall, not a bad read for me, I liked the "family connection" and the plot.

Karen says

While my original review of this book is the same. I'm adding my review of the audio version here as well. It'll be here below the book review.

4.5 stars rounded up because it was closer to 5 than 4 for me so rounding down was so not happening.

Ok for starters, with this one I need you to forget everything you thought you knew about this author...just chuck it out the window. Before reading 'Fish Out of Water' my book count for Amy Lane was 29 stories/novellas/books...whatever. So while I'm by no means an expert my point here is I really, really like this author, I am familiar with her writing. Sadly and happily I still have a few stories/novellas/novels of hers to read 36 according to my list, see not an expert or even close.

Still of the 29 books that I've read none have been even remotely like this one. If you're not a big fan of mysteries, thrillers, whodunnits whatever name you want to apply there's a really strong chance that this one won't be your cuppa'. On the other hand if you are pull up a chair and let's talk.

I loved this book for me it was total comfort food. I cut my adult reading teeth on Mary Higgins Clark, Phillip Margolin, Steven Berry, John Sandford, James Patterson and a few others. Even a lot of the urban fantasy that I've read contains a mystery/thriller tone to them. So when I saw this one honestly I was torn could she do it? Could the author who writes sweet, fluffy, romance laced with oober hot sex and some awesomely over the top characters give me a mystery that kept me as engaged as her other books did? Would I like it? Yep, I was more than a little nervous but even more than that I was curious so of course I made grabby hands at the chance to find out.

Jackson Rivers is a PI working for the same law firm that employs Ellery Cramer and these two have danced around each other for years. Both thinking they're out of the other's league.

They are essentially polar opposites. Jackson basically raised himself having a mother who was too busy with her drugs and men to really care what became of him. While Ellery grew up knowing only privileges and comforts that someone like Jackson would only ever dreamed of. Jackson wears leather jackets and jeans and drives an older model Toyota...think 10 years plus, Ellery wears designer suits and drives a shiny new Lexus. Jackson's bi and does one night stands no commitments made or needed, Ellery's gay and does relationships not one night stands.

When circumstances put these men on the same case in a race to save the life of Jackson's best friend, the brother of his heart not only do bullets fly but so do the sparks and snark. This is not an easy relationship but as Ellery gets to know Jackson the real Jackson he becomes determined that it's a worthwhile relationship and he's got what it takes to make it work.

The mystery aspect of this story kept me reading without fail. I wanted to know it all everything and the only way to get that information was to keep reading so I did. There was definitely a dark side to this story dealing

with greed, corruption and the inequalities of a justice system that judged based on color and social-economic background and not necessarily how guilty you really were.

Truthfully I can't say that I didn't want more relationship development between Jackson and Ellery because I really liked the interaction between these two, it kept me totally entertained to see who was going to back away first only to be reeled back in. Resistance really was futile on both their parts. Neither of them willing to back down but both still cognizant of the other's thoughts and feelings. For me this pairing worked. It wasn't a gentle romantic relationship partly because of events but mostly because it just wasn't how they worked.

Now I want to have a nice little babble about the secondary characters in this book there were several. For Jackson there was Kaden and Jade. They were his family and his anchor. He'd known them since they were all kids. Jade was also his ex but still family and friend and she works at the same law firm as Ellery and Jackson, Kaden is Jackson's best friend and one of the few people he's never had sex with, then there was his tenant Mike with the good heart and the totally politically incorrect mouth, who was also a good friend. And one of my favorites Billy Bob, who was a rather mangled looking Siamese. I'm very partial to this breed of cat having belonged to a few myself.

Now I've saved my personal best for last. The person who for me was the icing on the cake in this book and possibly one of the most epic characters I've encountered in a very, very long time was Ellery's mother. I loved her...

The woman stood up and sort of... imposed herself into Jade's place. She was barely taller than Jade, with dark brown hair and familiar, fine brown eyes. Her face was lined, not heavily, just enough to know she was old enough to have no fucks left to give about anyone's opinion.

and she didn't but she did it with style. She was fearless and had total faith in her son...

"...Now go bring back someone's head on the front of your Lexus for Mommy, okay?" She batted her eyelashes and he grinned, showing all his teeth.

To Jackson she became 'Lucy Satan'...

"Darling, what use is being shot if you're not stoned to the fucking gills?"
There was something very wrong with this woman. Something amok. But Jackson was out of pain and—

Seriously everyone for her alone this book was worth reading. I know I want a mom like her or maybe I just want to be her when I grow up.

Thankfully the ending of this book made it abundantly clear that there will be more. Don't panic it's not a cliff hanger...exactly. Our guys are in a good place but for me this felt like an ending with a lot of opportunity for more...so maybe not so much an ending as a beginning.

An ARC of 'Fish Out of Water' was graciously provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

When listening to the audiobook is as good as...

the first time you read the book it's worth at least a 1/2 star in my opinion. I read this book back in July of this year so not quite 4 months ago and it got happily got 4.5 stars at that time and I have to say usually even

if I do a re-read it's a year or 2 between readings, but I really, really liked this story so when I was given the chance to listen to the audio book, I thought why not. It's narrated by Greg Tremblay who my friend Heather will tell you is fantastic! Well Heather, I think I might be inclined to agree with you because I enjoyed this so much that I could have happily started listening to it again as soon as I was done...or at least I would have if I didn't have 3 more audio books waiting for me and a whole stack of other 'oh-my-god-I-need-to-read-this-now-books'.

I'm going to start this with my review of the book and since that hasn't changed and I stand by my original review of not quite 4 months ago so just scroll back up to the top of this review and you'll find it there. Why rehash what's already been said, right?

Now, for the audio portion. I'm admittedly a novice when it comes to review audiobooks, I'm not a novice when it comes to what I like and what works for me. Part of the reason I asked to review 'Fish Out of Water' was because I was curious to see how this one would work for me since it's a book that I've already read.

Needless to say Greg Tremblay has another fan. I was more than a little impressed with the narration of this book. His voice was engaging and effortless to listen to. The voices that he gave to the characters worked for me and while they may not have been the exact voice that my brain conjured up the first time I read this story neither did they conflict with my concept of the character and they were consistent which is to say that Jackson sounded like Jackson from start to finish and at no time did I confuse characters because voices suddenly changed. Overall it felt like I was getting the chance to see or I guess I should say hear this story from a different perspective.

One of the things that I found I really liked about Greg Tremblay and the narrator from my previous audio book is their ability to maintain consistency in the voices. Simply put Jackson and Ellery sounded the same at the end of this book as they did in the beginning and this is something that I have to admit, I like many others I'm sure, have come to realize that this is an integral part to producing a quality audio book.

An Audible copy of this book was provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

March 6/7, 2018 - third time around with this one nothings changed and I loved it and now I'm off to love ...today's going to be an awesome day!

CrabbyPatty says

3.75 stars. Fish Out of Water is driven by a set of suspenseful murder mysteries - the present-day murder of a dirty cop, supposedly by Jackson's best friend Kaden, and the mystery from 8 years ago involving the murder of Jackson's partner, another dirty cop. Jackson's childhood dream was to become a cop who made a difference, but after wearing a wire to get evidence against his partner, he is shot and seriously wounded and leaves the police department, becoming a PI.

Jackson, Kaden and his wife Rhonda and Jade (Kaden's twin sister) have had each other's back since middle school and their sense of family and complete loyalty to one another is richly described by Amy Lane. That relationship really gives some strength and intensity to the story. Jackson: "No relationship had ever been as important as the family he'd clung to when nobody else gave a shit."

Unfortunately, we don't get the same treatment with Ellery Cramer. Ellery briefly refers to his nerdy years and relationship with his mother, but for the most part, he's an unknown quantity. What we *do* know about

Ellery is he's an exceptional lawyer who has seriously *lusted* after Jackson for the past six years.

Jackson is a "walking condom commercial" with a long history of one-night stands - no one gets a second night because "being attached meant having your heart ripped out." That is, until Ellery agrees to take up Kaden's defense and the two men find themselves drawn into an incredibly dirty, steaming hot hot hot relationship.

Ellery lost himself for a moment, Jackson's hands everywhere: stomach, flank, thighs, backside, neck, chest—nipples, oh dear God, his nipples! He regained control naked on the stripped bed as an equally naked Jackson rifled through the bedstand for the jumbo box of rubbers and giant bottle of lubricant. "Could you be any more seventies porn star," Ellery snarked, breathless. [...] "Spread 'em," Jackson growled.

Fish Out of Water delivers an intense plot as well as a sizzling relationship between Ellery and Jackson, but at times the murder / mystery plot felt overly convoluted with lots of matters unresolved, until I realized the book ends in a **cliffhanger** ... not relationship-wise, but as far as getting the answers to the larger conspiracy in play. I'm looking forward to the next book in the series, getting that conspiracy figured out, and checking in on Jackson and Ellery.

I received an ARC of this book from Dreamspinner Press in exchange for an honest review.
Review also posted at Gay Book Reviews - check it out!

~Volha~ says

I was pleasantly surprised when I started this book. There were many contradicting reviews, and I didn't know what to expect. I really liked this story. My 45 highlights prove that! LOL I wondered about the name of the book "Fish Out Of Water" and who it was meant to represent. First, I thought that it was Ellery but maybe it was both. Ellery is that rich nerd kid who nobody liked at school and who never felt accepted, and when he starts a relationship with Jackson he first does not know how they fit. Jackson grew up in the low income area struggling to survive, he got betrayed over and over, and he thinks he is not worth much and that he would bring the person close to him down. When Ellery comes into his life he does not know how they fit. They are both fish out of water.

This is a book about two men from two completely different walks of life that collide unexpectedly and from the moment they are together they each know deep down that neither will walk away. They fight and tease like cats and dogs, they work together like a well-oiled machine, they burn the sheets and then in the middle of the night they sooth each other's hurts and keep nightmares at bay. Someone is out to get Jackson Rivers. He survived once, but this time it involves his family and one man who came close enough to see his battered soul and love him anyway, warts and all. They dodge bullets, car crashes, thefts and dirty cops who will stop at nothing to wreck one family's life. It's a constant roller coaster of ups and downs, wins and losses, safety and danger.

I loved both Ellery and Jackson. They each were so different but they meshed so well in all aspects, they complemented each other and the way Ellery saw Jackson made their budding love so precious. I loved the humor, the sarcastic banter, all the secondary characters and, of course, Billy Bob the cat with penchant for German shepherds. Not a boring minute! This is a thrilling, romantic and intense read! I loved every page and I highly recommend it!

Meags says

4.5 Stars

Fish Out of Water may just be my favourite Amy Lane story to date.

That's a pretty big deal, guys! See, over the years I've had a bit of an odd relationship with Lane's books. I've often felt detached from her characters and their stories, and sometimes I've even felt a personal disconnect between myself and her writing style. Sure, there have been a few that I've generally enjoyed and positively rated, and there have certainly been none that I've downright hated, but I've never read one I could truly say I loved... until now.

I regard *Fish Out of Water* a crime-suspense story first and foremost, and a romance story second. Needless to say, both elements worked really bloody well for me personally.

Private investigator Jackson Rivers and defense attorney Ellery Cramer are thrown together to work a complicated and dangerous case when Jackson's best friend/brother by rights is accused of killing a cop. It becomes obvious very quickly (at least to the reader and the MCs) that the whole thing is a set-up, seemingly involving a bunch of dirty cops.

Jackson is no stranger to police corruption. He was previously a cop himself, almost losing his life when he tried to reveal some of the corruption going on around him. Even though it's been a few years since then, apparently the bad eggs are still out there, and this time Jackson's determined to put a stop to it, but he'll need Ellery's smarts and ingenuity to help him bring the bad guys to justice once and for all.

Now, all Jackson and Ellery need to do is reveal the players involved and find iron clad proof to tie them to the case, all while fighting their rapidly growing mutual attraction – an attraction that Jackson certainly doesn't want to give in to and one which Ellery begins to pursue with dogged persistence with the goal of getting his man. Then there's the little problem of all the bodies that begin to pile up around them and the fact that multiple attempts are being made on their lives. Oy.

This was gritty and utterly gripping. The corruption of cops has always been a plot line that's left me feeling uncomfortable and downright raged on more than one occasion, and those feelings of anxiety and disgust were definitely felt here, but the story was told in such a way that I was riveted to the page, caught up in the action as the Ellery and Jackson raced to uncover the corruption going on around them. It obviously didn't hurt that their slow burn romance and eventual hot like burning physical encounters kept me wanting more of these two. They had a great dynamic and I enjoyed watching Ellery convince Jackson that they were an imperfectly perfect match.

The ending was fairly open-ended, with the main plot wrapped up but with plenty of loose ends floating about for later stories. I'll definitely be returning for the sequels because Jackson and Ellery proved just too good to quit.

Audio Edition:

Two words: *Greg Tremblay*.

Enough said.

Wendy says

I am a huge fan of Amy Lane's "Johnnies" series and "Beneath The Stain". You know what I am also a big fan of ?? Mystery and suspense ! So I knew I had to read this series. I was a bit apprehensive though, because so many of the reviews said, that the romance factor was pretty low. Since I like mystery/suspense so much, I don't need a whole lotta romance to keep me happy...but I do need some !!

Thankfully ... I got plenty to keep me very very happy ! I actually thought Jackson and Ellery were quite sweet together ;) Sure their relationship is a slow burn one, and it sometimes fades a bit into the background, with everything that's going on, but damn... they were HOT together.

Jackson Rivers had a very hard time growing up. His mom was very young when he was born, and he had to practically raise himself. She was too busy whoring herself and doing drugs. That is, until his best friend Kaden's mother, takes him in at 16. Jackson becomes part of their family. Kaden, his sister Jade and Rhonda, Kade's wife are all Jackson really cares about. He has a lot of one night stands, with women as well as with men...but non of them are special to him. Non but Jade that is...he dated her for some time, when they were younger and he still has a "sex arrangement" with her.

Now for those of you who are grossed out by girl parts....this book does open to a scene, where Jackson is having sex with Jade. I myself still read plenty of mf, so I don't really mind, but in this particular case, I could have done without it.

Especially since Jade plays a big part in both these books, and their "former" relationship, just made me like her less. I always get very invested in the main couple and I can deal with exes, since most of the time they leave...but in this case...she was considered family. She wasn't a bad person, she was actually really nice. The whole thing just annoyed me a bit.

Jackson used to be a cop, but an IA investigation gone wrong, and Jackson getting badly hurt, put an end to his aspirations. Now he is a PI working for a prestigious law firm. A law firm, where Ellery is a lawyer.

Ellery is quite the opposite of Jackson. He gre up with a silver spoon in his mouth and though his mom is not a conventional one...she is a good mom and she does love him very much.

When Jackson's friend Kaden is arrested for the murder of cop, Jackson can't think of anyone but Ellery, to help clear his friend's name.

Ellery has been crushing on the rough PI for years now and Jackson himself has quite the hard-on for Ellery.

Not in a relationship kind of way of course...because Jackson does not do relationships...too bad Ellery seems to think differently.

These two start working the case together, and soon they surrounded by dirty cops and flying bullets. There was plenty of action going on in this one !! While ducking bullets...sometimes succesfully and sometimes not...they become closer and closer.

The mystery part had me on the edge of my seat, while their relationship has me swooning and cussing. Jackson is not the easiest man to be in a relationship with and all my sympathy went out to Ellery !! I loved Ellery...and his mom.

This might not have been a full on romance, but it totally worked for me. Like I said, I am a huge fan of mystery/suspense. I loved these two together, they were both hard and tough guys, so seeing that bit of sweet every now and then, made it extra special to me ;)

This one does end on a bit of a cliffy. Not so much relationship wise though.... more to do with the mystery/suspence part ;) I highly recommend this one to people like me who like their mystery /suspense books, with a bit of romance ;)

Diana says

Fish Out of Water is definitely a change in the fluffy and sweet Amy Lane books that I have read in the past. This one is certainly grittier.

Jackson Rivers has been watching Ellery Cramers for a long time. As Private Investigator for a criminal defense firm, Jackson has watched the attorney destroy witnesses on the stand. When Jackson needs help for a family crisis, he wants Ellery on the case.

I adored both Jackson and Ellery and even though Jackson doesn't think he is worth it, Ellery is there to prove that he will be there for him. The slow burn, back and forth bickering was absolutely perfect. Yes, the romance takes backseat to the mystery, which is totally realistic, in my opinion.

This book was picked for me by my friend Jill, as part of the TPAM Pick for Me Challenge. I know she is tired of hearing it, but this book was absolutely perfect read for me, and I can't wait to jump into book 2. Thanks, Jill

BWT (Belen) says

3.5 Stars

It became obvious by the end of the story that this is the start of a new series, mainly because the cliffhanger ending leaves the reader in suspense of several dangling threads in the storyline.

I'll admit *Fish Out of Water* started off very rocky for me, first because Jackson is unabashedly bisexual (not the part that threw me, I really liked this aspect of the story), a bit of a manwhore, and there is on page, descriptive sex with a woman very early on in the story (this was the part that bothered me...and left me in an "ewwww" state for a loooong time). I'm not opposed to girly bits, etc. in my M/M books...I just like to have prior warning, you know?

The second reason why this was a bit rocky at first for me was because it seemed like Lane was trying to channel Rhys Ford...and not doing too well with it. But full props to Lane, she finally got into her groove after about a third of the way in, the easy banter and sarcastic humor got a lot better, and the flow of the story moved along *a lot* easier.

Neither Jackson or Ellery were really hugely *likable* characters, but they fit together really well, and **there's a really nice thread of hurt/comfort here that I loved**. By the time they finally came together sexually (well over halfway through the story) they'd built a rapport and had a kind of snarky sarcastic but totally respectful however grudging it may have been relationship by that point that made the sex even hotter. And the sex is hot. And dirty. And hot.

This isn't a romance, but I knew that going in. It's a mystery. Dirty cops abound, there's only a few people who can be trusted...and once the story stopped trying so hard it settled into a good rhythm and flowed nicely making it a real page turner by the end. Which is why I didn't even see the whole cliffhanger ending coming.

All in all though, I liked it and I'll definitely come back for the sequel.

Advanced Review Galley copy of Fish Out of Water provided by Dreamspinner Press in exchange of an honest review.

This review has been cross-posted at Gay Book Reviews.

Jewel says

Ok, I am officially ready for book 2!!

-----Original Review: 4 Jul 2016-----

Amy Lane does a mystery! And though this isn't my favorite Amy Lane to date, I did rather like it. Does the mystery overtake the romance? Yes, it does, so if you prefer your romance to be in the front seat, you probably won't enjoy this one as much as some of her others. The romance between the MC's is different than Amy Lane's usual fair. It's done in the middle of the action and is less sweet - overall - than some of her other books. I like mystery & suspense, though, and I felt that *Fish Out of Water* was done rather well, once the story got going.

I do want to mention, because I know people for whom this would matter, that near the beginning of *Fish*

Out of Water, Jackson, who is bisexual and happily single, does have on page sex with a female secondary character. It didn't necessarily bother me, but I was caught off guard by it. It is the only sex scene in the book that does not involve the other MC, Ellery, though, which I appreciated.

Fish Out of Water is full of action. Jackson, who is a former cop and now is a private investigator, gets pulled into a case involving dirty cops, which is what took him off the force 8 years ago -- he turned in his partner, who was dirty, and it got him shot and almost killed. Suffice it to say, Jackson doesn't trust the local cops and he's seen time and again the racial disparity between the white cops and the mostly minorities of the neighborhood Jackson grew up in.

Jackson Rivers grew up in the 'hood. His mother was a drug addict and Jackson got emancipated minor status at 16. He moved in with his best friend, Kaden's, family, who by then was pretty much his family. They took care of him, and Jackson feels like he can never repay that debt. He and Kaden's sister were on again, off again all through high school, until they migrated into a friends with occasional benefits kind of thing (the sex scene mentioned above was with Jade). Jackson keeps pretty much everyone at arms length, but he will do absolutely anything for those he considers family. So when Kaden gets arrested for murder, Jackson pulls out all the stops to find the real killer and free the man he thinks of as a brother.

Ellery Cramer is a young attorney whose skills in the courtroom are the thing of envy. He grew up in a wealthy family and has an Ivy League education, so unlike Jackson, Ellery has had every opportunity practically handed to him. But he works hard for his reputation and he's not afraid to go where the case takes him. Jackson pulls Ellery in to defend Kaden and help him find the real killer. It took me longer to warm to Ellery than it did to Jackson, but once I did, I really liked him. He's kind of like a dog with a bone and when he decides that he and Jackson are going to give the attraction between them a shot, he stops at nothing to get what he wants.

In *Fish Out of Water*, both Ellery and Jackson get shot at - repeatedly - followed, get evidence tampered with and destroyed, and sometimes manage to only stay a step ahead of the bad guy(s). And they do all of it together and manage to have some super hot sex along the way (sometimes you're just thankful to be alive!). It didn't really feel like a romance, since the romance part is secondary, but Jackson and Ellery end this one with a strong HFN, and I am hoping that they will get their definite HEA in an upcoming story. I wasn't left wondering if they would still be together next week, but they don't feel "settled", either.

Fish Out of Water is definitely set up to be a series, since not all loose ends are tied up. The mystery of Jackson's shooting eight years ago gets resolved, but there is still a loose thread out there that pertains to the current case, and the ending is a touch cliffy. I'm looking forward to seeing where Amy Lane takes us next!

ARC of Fish Out of Water was generously provided by the publisher, in exchange for an honest review.

Caz says

I've given this an A+ for narration (duh!) and an A- for content at AudioGals.

It will come as no surprise to anyone who regularly reads my reviews that I will listen to Greg Tremblay read just about anything. When, a few weeks back, I saw a new release with his name on the cover – Red Fish, Dead Fish by Amy Lane – I was keen to review it, but then saw it was the second book to feature jaded ex-cop-turned-P.I. Jackson Rivers and hot-shot defence attorney Ellery Cramer... so I had to find book one, and oh, my – am I glad I did.

Having grown up in poverty, Jackson Rivers has fought hard for everything he has. Neglected and essentially abandoned by his junkie mother when he was a boy, he was lucky enough to fall in with the Cameron family: Kaden – his best friend at school – Kaden's sister, Jade, and their mother, Toni, a warm, loving woman who was more of a mother to him than his biological parent ever was. The Camerons are the only family Jackson has ever known and he is fiercely loyal and devoted to them. Thanks to Toni's love and care, and Jackson's own determination, he grew up 'right', and eventually achieved his ambition of enrolling in the Police Academy. But his life was forever changed when, as a rookie, he was paired up with a much older, more experienced – and dirty – cop.

You can read the rest of this review at [AudioGals](#) .

Line says

Right you are. For reasons known only to GR, Amazon and Line's brain (okay it became quite a comprehensive list) this book was not marked as 'read' and my highlights were gone from GR. So that of course meant I had to read it again #sorrynotsorry #notcryingariver #thiswasagooddecision

Ellery and Jackson are amazing MCs and Amy Lane has spun a pretty solid mystery. My biggest niggle was the not-finished story and that they had 'known' each other/worked together for 6 years but never really talked. I sort of felt that that was too convenient and weird. " Even colleagues in the most obscure corners of the company I work in, I see and talk to once a year at the company holiday parties.

But all in all a fantastic MM-mystery-romance that I will read again.

Hollis says

You know when you just don't have any idea how you feel about a book? Yeah, that's my FISH OUT OF WATER experience. So many excitement elements -- corruption! tragic backstory! crushing on your frenemy! reluctant relationship! -- but like.. I don't know? Did I ever like any of it?

This was my first experience with reading Lane's writing and at times it was sharp, snappy, and other times I had no clue what was going on. I get that the new thing is to now slowly reveal backstory or previously established relationships buuut I felt like I was missing more than I was getting. There were some touching, but weird, dynamics.. and that applies to most if not all the characters. Some of whom I really just never liked, too, and sometimes the ones I did like were just so damn off the wall or bizarre.

My mind kept wanting to draw comparisons to BAD JUDGMENT by Sidney Bell but honestly there isn't a lot of parallels. But I wish there had been, maybe I would've liked it more. Yet there was still that sense of intensity that I felt in Bell's work, so even when I found myself putting this down or being distracted, I was still drawn back to it. Also, I'm not sure how I feel about this as a series. Is it just a duology, she asks, hopefully? I probably wouldn't have read this had I known it wasn't a standalone but here we are, so, whatever!

Going to slap with this with a three because that feels like a nice middle ground for this 'what even are feelings' thing I have right now.

