

The poster features a composite image. The top half shows a close-up of a young woman with long brown hair, looking slightly to the side with a soft expression, holding a violin and bow. The bottom half shows a man in a grey hoodie singing passionately into a microphone, with a blurred background of a concert stage and an orchestra. A red diagonal banner in the top right corner contains the text 'Classic Collection 3'. The title 'ROCKIN' INTO ROMANCE' is written in large, yellow, serif capital letters across the center. The author's name 'NORMA JEAN LUTZ' is at the bottom in white serif capital letters.

Classic Collection 3

ROCKIN' INTO ROMANCE

NORMA JEAN LUTZ

Norma Jean Lutz Classic Collection – Book #3

Rockin' Into Romance

Norma Jean Lutz

Rockin' Into Romance

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All of the characters in this book are fictitious. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

A note from the author:

I love to hear from my readers. You may contact me here:

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A Word about the *Norma Jean Lutz Classic Collection*

During my writing career I've been privileged to have over 50 titles published under my name. Due to the nature of the publishing world in days past, most of these titles were off the shelves and out of print in a short period of time. Sad but true.

Now, a new day has dawned in the word of publishing. Digital publishing has created the opportunity for my past titles to be reintroduced to a whole new generation of readers.

These stories are timeless in spite of the fact they were penned several decades ago. Hence, I have chosen to call them the *Norma Jean Lutz Classic Collection*.

Rockin' into Romance is Book #3 in the Classic Collection series.

I'm excited to be able to bring these stories out of the files and into your hands. I hope you enjoy your read.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Norma Jean Lutz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

This book is dedicated to:

John Taylor Crow, Jr. (Jay)

More like a son than a nephew.

Your deep, heartfelt love of the land is inspiring and admirable.

And all too rare in this day and time.

May God bless every ridge you turn, and every seed you plant!

Chapter 1

Strains of Mozart's 3rd Violin Concerto moved smoothly across Arianna Stefanoff's mind. She hummed the melody softly to herself as she rummaged in her locker for her freshman literature book.

Inside her locker door hung a list of the day's assignments where she posted them for quick review. Why did there have to be so much homework just when she'd been assigned the solo for the Youth Symphony Spring Concert? The melody continued to play in her mind moving toward the point where she played the solo part. Her skin fairly prickled as she pictured herself executing it perfectly.

Mr. Myles, the Youth Symphony director, recently promoted her to first-chair violinist and had assigned her a solo part even though she'd been with the group less than a year. The promotion was an exciting privilege, but also an added responsibility. Instantly, her practice time had doubled.

Suddenly from down the hall came the strains of a different melody: "Love me, Baby. Love me strong. Love me on on on. Right on! Right on! Wah-a-wah wah, woo woo woo."

Arianna knew without looking around her locker door that it was Kara Sorenson. She also knew that Kara was wired with her Walkman and was bopping down the hall in time to the music pumping in her ears.

"La de de dum de ah de do. Woo woo woo." The sound grew in intensity as Kara made her way through the crowd of students. Kara's locker was two down from Arianna's. Presently, there was the sound of a rat-a-tat-tat drumming on Ari's locker door and two bright brown eyes peered around. Kara's drumsticks were two

Bic pens, the points of which were probably ruined by now. The girl was incessantly drumming on something.

"Hiya Ari." Kara pried an earphone from one ear. "Man, you gotta hear this one. Reid Lavelle's latest. What a mover!"

Ari shook her head politely. "No thanks, Kara. I'll pass." She turned back to the list on the door again. Ouch. Two pages in algebra. She'd almost missed it. She pulled out her algebra book.

Kara shrugged and collared her earphones. "Suit yourself. But you're missing a good one. Better than good," she corrected herself. "Absolutely wild!"

Wild was definitely a word Ari could use to describe the crashing noises she heard leaking from the earphones dangling about her friend's neck.

Kara was at her own locker now sorting out books for the weekend's homework assignments. "It's my treat at Chipper's this afternoon," she called around Mike Hoover's 6-foot frame. Mike's locker was between them. "You want an ice cream soda?"

"Sounds terrific," Mike answered stepping backward into direct line of Kara's view. "You buying?"

"Not you, you big oaf." Kara gave him a playful shove and he acted as though he were falling into his locker.

"Female Chauvinist," he accused her.

"I don't know." Ari glanced at her watch and mentally calculated her evening. Youth Symphony practice tomorrow, two pages of algebra, an essay to do in literature, and a test coming up in biology. Slowly she closed her locker door and skirted Mike to stand beside Kara. Mike stuck out his foot in mock attempt to trip

her as she went by. She wrinkled up her nose and made a face at him. "I've got a lot to do tonight, Kara," she said.

Kara straightened up from her locker and squinted her dark eyes. "Tonight? Kiddo, you've got a lot to do *every* night. I never saw anybody so gosh-darned busy. This is Friday! So relax." She tapped her forefinger on one of the many pictures of rock stars plastered inside her locker door. "That's him, Ari."

"That's who?"

"Reid."

"Reid?"

Kara leveled a look at Ari. "The one who was singing when I asked you to listen a minute ago. Did you forget already?"

"Oh sure. *That* Reid." Ari politely took a moment to give the picture a deliberate look. "Well, I must say, he's better looking than some of the others. At least his hair is normal."

The guy staring at her from the picture was blond with ice blue eyes and high cheekbones. The blond hair was brushed casually to the side, not sticking up in wild array like some of the other stars Kara admired. As Ari studied the picture, it seemed as though the rock star were looking right through her. She looked away. "He's pretty cute," she added.

"Hair normal? Pretty cute?" Kara placed a tiny kiss on her finger and applied it to the nose in the picture. "Such mild expressions for such a gorgeous guy." She riffled through one of many rock star magazines stacked on the floor of her locker, pulled one out and turned to a dog-eared page. "Let's see here," she began to read: "He's five foot ten, sixteen years old. Blond hair, blue eyes, born in a small

town in northern California. Presently living in Los Angeles. Loves to swim and surf." She closed the magazine and threw it back in the locker. "Hey, I offered you an ice cream soda. Your favorite. Let's go."

Ari grinned. "I heard you. What did you do, rob a bank?"

"I had two babysitting jobs last weekend, remember?"

Ari hurried to fall into step with her friend who was moving down the hall toward the front door. She nodded and mumbled something about remembering. But last weekend her father, Byron Stefanoff, had conducted the St. Louis Symphony in a televised concert. That momentous event had commanded all her time and attention. Probably Kara had told her about the babysitting jobs and Ari had forgotten.

It embarrassed her that she'd forgotten, because she was determined to be a good friend to Kara. When Ari first moved from Boston to the town of Glenwood just outside St. Louis, Missouri, it had been difficult, if not impossible, to fit in. Only when Kara moved into the neighborhood last year did she have someone whom she could call a close friend.

On her violin-lesson days, Ari's mother picked her up from school, which meant the opportunities to spend time with Kara were limited. And now her new friend not only wanted to spend time with her, but buy the treat as well. How could she say no?

Kara was chattering on about the assignment pile-up for the weekend, but as they approached the corner she paused. "You coming to Chipper's or not?" she asked.

Ari smiled and stepped out ahead around the corner where a gas station once flourished, but was now deserted with a yellowed "for lease" sign in the window. "Make mine chocolate," she said.

Kara made a little skip to catch up.

Kara had slung her coat over her arm, and the sleeves to her wool sweater were pushed up on her arms. March days in Missouri were tricky. You hardly knew from one day to the next how warm it might get in the afternoons.

Ari, however, couldn't afford the luxury of shedding her coat. A bad cold just before Spring Concert would not make Mr. Myles happy—to say nothing of Mr. Dorsky, her violin instructor. But just the feel of the warm sunshine on her head and the bantering of her friend beside her filled her with happiness.

As usual, Chipper's was filled with the mass confusion of loud voices and loud music — music she didn't especially care for. It affected Ari somewhat like Kara's house did. Inevitably at the Sorenson home the TV or stereo was turned too loud. Kara's two older brothers, Cal and Stan, had a rock band they'd formed with three other guys from school. So if it wasn't the TV or stereo blaring, it was their band pumping stomach-jarring vibrations out of the Sorenson's family garage. Kara begged to be able to play drums with them, but they told her to get lost.

Across the room in Chipper's, they heard someone call Kara's name and precariously they moved through the crowd to a table filled with girls they knew from school. Christy Anders was motioning for Kara and Ari to come sit with them. Tessie Dutton and Megan Wisner made their chairs skreek against the floor as they scooted over to make room.

Before Kara arrived in Glenwood, Christy, Tessie and Megan barely acknowledged Ari's existence. But after Kara burst on the scene, she sailed into the midst of the in-crowd, pulling Arianna along in her wake.

As if by magic more chairs appeared, and the two extra girls were shoe-horned into the group. Rock magazines were spread out on the table. Arianna recognized the blue eyes and blond hair of the boy Kara had told her about, Reid Lavelle. His picture was in nearly every magazine.

"Kara," Christy asked, "have you heard about the contest sponsored by *Beat and Blare*? The one that has a grand prize of a chaperoned weekend date in New York City with Reid Lavelle?"

"Have I heard about it?" Kara gave a little giggle. "I've already entered three times." She motioned for the waitress and ordered the sodas.

"Three times?" Megan squealed in her high-pitched voice. "Let me see those rules again." Several hands grabbed for the *Beat & Blare* magazine, but Kara had it first. "It says right here," she announced, thumbing for the right page.

"'Contestants may enter as many times as they wish...' See there? What'd I tell you?"

"Wow," Tessie gasped. "I think I'll buy a pack of 3x5 cards and enter fifty times."

The others at the table agreed with deep sighs. "What I wouldn't do to win that contest," Christy moaned, staring at a poster photo of Reid in another magazine. "He's so..., so *everything*."

"Mm hm," Kara agreed.

The waitress delivered the sodas and Ari took a long grateful sip. It was just as she liked it.

"What else do you have to do to win?" Ari asked. She was thumbing through another magazine trying to understand what it was that got these girls so excited. She had at various times tried to force herself to listen to and appreciate the music they listened to, but the discordant notes and the haphazard arrangements were irritating to her — like the sound of pots and pans being clanged around in a kitchen.

Presently she noticed a quiet had fallen over the group and looked up from the magazine to see all the eyes on her. She cleared her throat. "I mean, is this a talent contest, or an in-25-words-or-less contest? Just what is it?"

Megan giggled. "Well, one thing for sure. You don't have to know the life history of Beethoven or Bach."

Christy snickered. "Yeah, Ari," she said, "I guess you're about the only one here who wouldn't really care about a date with Reid Lavelle."

"Hey, wait just a minute!" Kara slapped the table soundly. "What is this? A judge and jury? Just because Ari doesn't go all out for our pumping sounds, doesn't mean she's dead. She thinks Reid's a real cutie, don't you, Ari?"

The eyes were on her one more time.

Actually she hadn't thought of Reid Lavelle as cute. Not nearly as cute as the guy who played bassoon in the Youth Symphony. Now *he* was cute. She'd been hoping for a long time that he'd at least say hi to her. She'd been smiling at him and everything. This Lavelle guy wasn't exactly cute. More a type of classic handsome with those clear blue eyes and high cheekbones.

"Well?" Tessie who was usually the quieter one of the group was on the edge of her chair waiting for an answer.

Ari took another sip of soda. "He's cute. The guy's a real doll." It sounded like something Kara would say.

The tension broke and the girls laughed together. Christy announced with a raised coke cup. "For a classical music lover, you're all right."

"See?" Kara insisted. "She's as healthy as any of us. And there's absolutely nothing in the rules that says she has to know his music or even like his music to enter."

Tessie's eyes grew wide. "Not like his music? Not *like* Reid Lavelle's music? That's not possible, is it?"

Kara waved her hand. "Oh Tessie, grow up. You know what I mean. A contestant wouldn't have to listen to it constantly like we do."

"Oh," Tessie answered. Then she screwed up her face. "But *I* have to listen to him every waking moment."

"Read the rules aloud, Kara," Christy insisted.

"And the prize," Megan put in. "Tell about the weekend date in New York City!"

Ari half-listened as Kara began to read the rules which were as simple as copying a name and address on a 3x5 card. Contestants must be girls between the ages of 14 and 17. There were stipulations against relatives of employees of *Beat & Blare* magazine entering, at which point, Christy said, "No such luck." And a girl could enter as many times as she wished, at which point in the reading, everyone around the table cheered.

Then Kara read the part that told how the winner would receive an all-expense-paid, chaperoned weekend date with Reid in New York City. The lucky winner would be flown to New York City from any point in the continental United States. The weekend would consist of a night on the town, dinner, and the theater. A sight-seeing tour which would take in the Empire State Building, Central Park, Times Square, the Statue of Liberty, and a ride on the Staten Island Ferry.

At the end of the description there were moans and sighs around the table. "It's absolutely, totally heavenly," Tessie said.

Kara closed the magazine. "Well, I've made my point."

"Point about what?" Christy wanted to know.

"About Ari entering. Not a thing in the rules against her entering." Kara slung her book bag up from the floor onto the table and pulled out a pack of 3x5 cards. "Here Ari. Got a pen?"

"What for?"

"To write your name and address. You want to enter don't you?"

"I suppose I could."

"Suppose? What do you mean, suppose?" Kara shoved a 3x5 card at her. "It's a chance of a lifetime."

Ari had already checked her watch and it was getting quite late. Someone slid a pen across the table at her. Quickly she filled out her name, address, age and phone number. "I've got to get going," she said to Kara as she scribbled.

"Anyone got an envelope?" Kara asked the group. "And a stamp?"

Christy removed a greeting card out of a yellowed, dog-eared envelope, and handed over the envelope. "I was going to give this card to Jon for his birthday."

"That was three months ago," Tessie said.

"I know," Christy answered lamely. "I lost my nerve."

Megan offered a book of stamps containing one remaining stamp with a torn corner.

"That the best you can do?" Kara asked.

Ari took the stamp. "This is fine," she insisted. "I'll address it and mail it when I get home."

"Nothing doing," Kara told her. "We've got everything we need and there's a mailbox right outside the door. Here I'll read off the address while you copy it down."

Again Ari hurriedly scribbled as Kara read off the Los Angeles address. She sealed the envelope with one hand while pulling her coat on with the other. "Come on, Kara. I'd better get home."

"Sure, sure. I'm coming. Well, girls, Ari's got lots of practicing to do. It takes a lot of work to get that complicated stuff right, you know." She mimed a violin under her chin, cocking her head and tapping her toe. That snared a few snickers from the girls and stares from others in Chipper's. "You should see some of the sheet music this kid has. You just wouldn't believe it. Way out, off-the-wall stuff."

Ari was at the door. "Come on," she called over her shoulder.

"Keep your shirt on. I'm right behind you."

They barreled out the door together. At the mailbox, Kara held the metal door down as Ari dropped in the entry. Kara let go, and it clanged shut.

The clang echoed in Arianna's head as they hurried toward home.

For the rest of Arianna's story

[Click HERE](#)