



## Rising Freestyle

*Vivian Arend*

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From *New York Times* bestselling author Vivian Arend.

*Stuck between a rock-solid man and a hard place...*

Melanie Dixon's body may have recovered from a horrific climbing accident, but her nerve is long gone. So is the natural enthusiasm for life she took for granted. Tired of being scared, beyond ready to conquer her fears, she pulls up stakes and moves to her brother's new hometown to start over. Her first step is the most terrifying—to tackle the wall at the local climbing center.

Derrick James is mesmerized by Melanie's dark beauty, and equally impressed with her climbing abilities and determination. Watching her re-tune rusty skills spurs a desire to partner with her—on and off the ropes. Melanie's a compelling mix of wit, sensuality and vulnerability, and it's his delicious task to convince her the scars on her body are no match for the heat rising between them.

Then a man from Melanie's past shows up, pushing their relationship to the edge. Nathan King wants photographs for a "where are they now" series, but his side agenda is more personal in nature. A proposal that brings her out of her sensual shell and onto a precarious sexual ledge. Where trust is crucial...and too easily shattered.

*Previously published in 2011.*

## Rising Freestyle Details

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## **From Reader Review Rising Freestyle for online ebook**

### **Carol Ward says**

I think the thing I liked best about this book (aside from the smokin' hot sex) was the way the hero, Derrick, stood by Melanie and encouraged her to do whatever it takes to help her recover. I also really admired Melanie's determination to overcome her trauma. The descriptions of climbing were so well done it really tempts a person to give it a try (too bad I have a fear of heights).

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### **Laura's Book Addiction says**

Way better than the first book.

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### **Christi Snow says**

Review reposted from my Smitten with Reading blog...

#### **My Review:**

This is just really a fabulous book. Melanie had a horrific fall from a mountain a couple of years ago (she was a world class climber at the time) and is still dealing with the scars both mentally and physically from that. She has scars that run down the entire side of her body and is VERY self-conscious about them (to the point that she wears only long sleeves and pants all the time.) She is trying to gain back some of her love for climbing by climbing at the gym with Derrick and they quickly become involved, but he is aware of her self-doubt issues and wants her to see how beautiful and competent she still is. When Nathan comes with the article proposal and camera in-hand, Derrick sees a way to improve Melanie's self esteem in all the areas of her life.

OMG, Derrick is an AMAZING guy. He knows (Melanie has been very upfront with him) that there is huge sexual chemistry between her and Nathan. Rather than feeling threatened by that, he sees it as the perfect way to help Melanie. What's better for your self esteem, but to have two gorgeous guys panting after you?!? He's willing to take the risk of losing Melanie to another guy if it will help her in the long run. All together now....awwww.

There are some fabulously sexy scenes in this especially when the photography comes into play. Nathan...really just another fabulous guy. He really, really likes Melanie, but he sees how good she and Derrick are together and doesn't ruin that for her. And then there's Derrick...let me just tell you, a guy that handles ropes all day...WOW!! Derrick could tie me up any time he wanted. Some seriously sexy scenes with the ropes...HOT!

There is so much emotion and warmth and friendship in this book. It is really wonderful. I LOVED the relationship between this trio. They are blurring the lines where things could get really uncomfortable really quickly, but they NEVER let any of that interfere with their friendship...always keeping things light and healthy. It was really wonderfully written and made me happy just reading it. And the ending...simply perfect! Fabulous book!

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### **Michelle the Romance Witch says**

very sweet, sensual and a remarkable story of the power of human (female?:) ) determination. was looking forward to this story for a while, i just hope that we get to have Nathan's book sometime in the future too.

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### **Darcy says**

I really loved the spirit of this book and how Derrick was open to anything that helped Melanie heal. Her climbing accident sounded horrific and I can understand why she had body issues afterward and of course it didn't help that her first time to be intimate with a man he bailed on her. So I was glad that Derrick's reaction was 100% different.

I wasn't sure what Nathan showing up would do to Derrick and Melanie's relationship. In some ways I was glad of Nathan's plans when he first came back to town, but I was also glad when he backed off.

I found it interesting that as the three of them worked on the photos they all realized that they had a voyeurism/exhibitionist streak. I was also impressed with Derrick's reaction and calm acceptance of Melanie's attraction to Nathan. His frank talk to the other man was also a surprise, yet it made sense too, I just hoped that Melanie would understand why Derrick picked the route he did.

Melanie's reaction was great and the scenes with all of them were fun and filled with love and acceptance.

I loved how things ended with them all. I just wish that there was some way for us to see the pictures, because they sounded amazing.

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### **gremlin says**

This was an enjoyable story of a woman finding her way to love, and rebuilding her confidence after a devastating accident.

Melanie was a climber, until a rope broke, and she fell. She rebuilt some of her physical strength, but she's had no nerve for several years. She decides to try to get it back by taking climbing lessons from the sexy Derrick.

Derrick doesn't care at all about the scars on her body - he just thinks she's hot and a great person. It takes him a while to get that across to Melanie though, and then he has a unique idea to get Melanie to believe again that she's a sexy woman.

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### **Ni\_kii says**

Review done for <http://scorchingbookreviews.blogspot.com>

Mel used to love climbing until a horrific accident left her with massive scarring and a fear of heights. She turns to Derrick, and his climbing tuition, after deciding that she has lived in fear for long enough. Watching each other's body closely day after day leads to an attraction that neither can deny. Pretty soon, they are starting to enjoy their after-hours sessions as much as the climbing. A spanner is thrown into the works by the appearance of hunky photojournalist Nate. Mel has had a crush on Nate ever since she was in her teens, and he proves to be even less resistible than she remembers. Nate has tracked her down to do a "where are they now" piece on famous athletes. (Well, that's the reason he gives her anyway!) It's clear that Nate and Mel are attracted to each other, it's equally clear that Mel and Derrick have started to develop feelings for each other beyond lust. The scars that the accident has left Mel aren't only physical so can Derrick and Nate put aside their differences to try to heal her together?

My, oh my, I loved this book. I know you're all in shock that I liked a ménage tale :D However, this is NOT a typical ménage. Melanie was a fabulously complex heroine. Before the accident, she was this fabulously talented and confident woman. The accident left her with physical scarring and this, along with the horrible comments made by a man she took to her bed, had left her introverted and ashamed. She had made the decision to begin her mental recovery long before she met Derrick and that strength of will made me like her. Derrick was amazing. Not only was he sexy, not only was he completely kinky but he was also the most generous lover I think I have met in a story such as this. Everything he did was to make her feel beautiful, to make her see that the scars were not the only thing that he saw. The sex scenes were explosive; I can safely put my hand on my heart and say Vivian Arend writes good sex! My favourite (yes, I'm going to put a spoiler) is a Shibari scene... I do love a man that can put rope to good use :D

At first, the addition of Nate caused me a little dismay. I don't normally like bringing a third person into an existing couple, it tends to feel a little wrong. However, Nate isn't brought in as traditional third. Nate is brought in as an aid to making Mel feel good about herself (Don't worry readers, he enjoys being used in such a way!) He is another lovely man, a contrast to Derrick, but it's clear that he cares about Mel just as much. One thing that I admire about this story is its foray into voyeurism. Anytime this has been touched on in other stories I've read, it has tended to feel a little seedy, a little peeping Tom-esque. In this book, it's accepted and even used as a plot device. It was hot...I liked it!

This novella was fabulous. It had complex characters, kinky sex and a plot that you could sink your teeth into. I haven't read the first in this series, but I managed to keep up OK so I don't think sequential reading is essential!

I want a Derrick.

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### **LaFleurBleue says**

I did not like this one as much as the previous book. Quite far from it.

The characters did not seem real either. I never really could empathize for the heroine, though that should be one key emotion for readers, as she's described several times as a strong survivor. Her will to climb again seemed born more of stubbornness than deep inner need, so I could not really relate to that either.

And the sub-plot to justify the menage scene seemed just dumb and off to me.

The hot scenes did not work as well either.

That's rather a miss on my side.

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## Nicole says

Review originally posted here: [http://thebookpushers.com/2011/07/06/...](http://thebookpushers.com/2011/07/06/)

Publisher: Samhain

Publish Date: Out Now!

How I got this book: eARC from author

Arend is one of my favorite authors, but with the trend of menage books popping up all over, there are a few of her works that don't always sit well with me. I was excited to read this one, then halfway through I got a little leery, but I should have known that Arend wouldn't disappoint

Melanie was once a fearless rock climber, but an accident left her scarred and petrified to attempting climbing again. But she wants to face her fears and goes to the local rock climbing center to try and face her fears once again. At the hands of Derrick she starts to come more and more out of her shell, more willing to push further and further along.

As the two get closer and closer to each other and Melanie gets closer to overcoming her fears, things are suddenly disrupted as someone from Melanie's past comes back into her life. But, Nathan might just be able to provide the little nudge that Melanie needs to not only overcome the mountains, but also learn to accept the scars that have taken her self esteem.

From the moment Derrick stepped out onto the page, I was in love. He was strong willed, handsome, and the kind of guy who wanted to stand behind Melanie; he was supportive and loving in everything he did for her. He was the perfect kind of sexy romance hero. I absolutely loved the two of them together. They had instant chemistry, both emotionally and physically.

When Arend introduced Nathan to the story, I instantly didn't like him. He wanted his chance with Melanie, and while he was willing to take a step back because of her involvement with Derrick, I wasn't too sure I would like the dynamic with their little mountain experiment. But, I have to admit that I didn't hate him forever. I did appreciate the way that he was able to help Melanie get over her insecurities with being scarred from her accident. That and the fact that he was so willing to play second fiddle to Derrick made him redeemable in my eyes. This wasn't the typical menage interlude, and for that I was so happy!

One of the other things I really liked was the different sport that Arend introduces in her Xtreme Adventures series. The rock climbing moments were intense and exciting. If I wasn't so afraid of heights and falling, I would be tempted to try it out! Plus, if I got a sexy instructor like Derrick who was willing to do some of the same sexy things to me... \*fans self\* Well, I might be willing to take a chance!

All in all, I was really happy with the second installment of the Xtreme Adventures Series. The romance between Derrick and Melanie was sweet and the characters had me falling in love with them. The sexy times were (as always for Arend) totally hot. For any sports or adventure lovers, this book is a must read.

I give Rising, Freestyle a B

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### **Melissa Vasquez says**

HOT!!! I loved the tension and story line. Sorry I dont want to give away the story. I did not want to put this book down. I was sitting on the edge of my seat wanting to know what was going to happen next. I am hoping there will be more to come. B-)

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### **Booklover1335 says**

review coming soon! 4.50/4.00

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### **Natasha A. says**

**For anyone who loves:**

**Characters that need a reminder that they are strong and beautiful**

**Men who stand by their woman**

**Voyerism**

**Why did I read it?**

**Because I love Viv.**

#### **My Rambles:**

Ok, right up front I will let you know that I adore Viv. She was one of the very first ebooks I ever read (her first ebook published actually!) and she was one of the first authors who befriended me over on the Samhain yahoo group. It truly has been amazing watching her grow and become the author she is today. I really do wish her the best, and if she keeps this up I know she will get to great heights!

Now, for the review...

Loved it. I loved how you thought the book was heading in a direction with the three characters, but it didn't go where you thought. And you know what? I loved it. I loved that Nathan saw something and didn't want to ruin it. But what they did do? That was damn hot. Ms. Arend sure does know how to write the steamy scenes.

By only complaint, and she has heard it from me before is that I want a full length novel.

**Quality of writing: 10/10**

**Pace: 10/10**

**Plot Development: 10/10**

**Characters: 10/10**

**Ease of Reading: 10/10**

**Enjoyability: 10/10**

**Overall: 5/5**

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### **Helyce says**

Previously reviewed for Smexybooks.com rating B+

Rising, Freestyle is the story of Melanie Dixon and her struggle to take back her life and regain confidence in herself after a horrible rock climbing accident. When we meet Melanie it's been about three years since her accident. She's physically recovered from the injuries she sustained in her fall, but emotionally she still has a long way to go. She wants to get back to the active life before her fall, but her fear overwhelms her at times. But regaining her body's athleticism is minor compared to her need to see herself as a desirable and attractive woman. Melanie's body is scarred on one side of her body from her shoulder all the way down to her ankle. She hides her scars with long-sleeves and pants. When she attempted intimacy with a man after her accident, he reacted horribly when he saw her scars so Melanie has not been with a man since.

Melanie takes a big step, moving to a little town where her brother lives and slowly gets back into climbing at the local gym owned by Derrick James. Derrick knows about Melanie's accident because he's friends with her brother, but he really has no idea about Melanie's emotional struggles and her body image issues. All he sees is an attractive, athletic woman and he wants her. Melanie is attracted to Derrick as well, but she's afraid, worried that he'll react badly to her scars. When Derrick asks Melanie out to dinner she accepts and they begin to date. When they move forward to sex, Melanie shares her worries with Derrick and realizes very quickly that he doesn't care one bit about her scars.

Derrick and Melanie are enjoying their new relationship when Nathan King shows up at the gym one day. Melanie has known Nathan for most of her life. His sister is Melanie's best friend and Melanie had lusted after Nathan for most of her teenage years. Melanie is thrilled to see Nathan and surprised that her old feelings of attraction have surfaced. Nathan is a photo journalist and he's come to photograph Melanie for a "where are they now?" piece for his magazine. Derrick knows Melanie well enough by now that he can see clearly her attraction to Nathan and Nathan isn't even trying to hide his attraction to Melanie. The kicker, Derrick doesn't seem to mind. In fact, he sees an opportunity to convince Melanie how beautiful and desirable she is once and for all. When he approaches Nathan with his idea, Nathan is shocked. When he realized that Melanie and Derrick were together, he wasn't about to step in and ruin what they had. Derrick's plan, however, put things into a different perspective.

What follows is a weekend in the wilderness where Melanie, Derrick and Nathan learn things about themselves that they never realized.

Rising, Freestyle is my first read by Vivian Arend, and I really enjoyed it. This is a very different kind of ménage story and it's really done in such a beautiful way. It seemed so odd to me initially that Derrick would want to include another man when his relationship with Melanie was so new but Ms. Arend wrote it in such a way that it just seemed like the most logical step in order to finally free Melanie of that last strand of self doubt she had about herself as a woman. The author's beautifully descriptive writing, detailing positions against the backdrop of the wilderness as Nathan snapped his photos was so well done I swear I could see them in my head. In the end, when Nathan presents the photo book to Derrick and Melanie, their emotional response to the photos just leapt off the page. I'm thoroughly impressed that the author packed such a touching story in just over 100 pages!

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**Mary Lauer says**

I didn't like this one as much as Falling. I didn't realt feel like I had insight into Derrick, why he loved her. You understand why he makes the choice he does about Nathan (and boy do I want to readhis story!), but his feelings aren't as clear as Jack's in Falling.

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### **Jessica says**

2.5 stars

Three years after suffering from a horrific climbing accident and rejection at the hands of her lover because of the scar tissue riddling her body, Melanie starts to develop a relationship with climbing instructor Derrick when her old crush Nathan shows up to take photographs of her successful recovery.

First up, Nathan... um, maybe I'm just not the right demographic for human interest stories, but his whole job assignment -- to find victims of horrific crashes years later and take pictures of them -- seemed creepy and, I don't know, fetishy?, exploitative? But, those sorts of stories sell reams of tabloids and newspapers, so maybe I'm in the minority on that. Melanie seemed ok with it, and that's really the important part for the story.

Melanie. I didn't really get her need to have an extra guy along to admire her body when she was already happily developing a relationship with Derrick. But, I also don't get the appeal of rock climbing, so I was totally willing to accept that as a personality quirk -- I still don't get it, but it does have enough internal logic within the story for me to be ok with it.

Strangely, it's Derrick that I found to be the most disappointing character. Nathan, I quite honestly didn't like, and Melanie isn't someone I totally relate with, but I admired her willingness to take risks despite her fears. But Derrick? He's too shiny, perfect. He's strong, smart, adventurous, gets along with Melanie's family, owns his own business, sees the internal and external beauty of Melanie, is happily willing to bring in another man to fulfill Melanie needs... just until the point when it would interfere with their relationship. I mean, he's perfect... perfectly boring. He has no quirks, no bad habits, no communication issues, no personal problems of his own. He's like wish fulfillment, not a real character.

But, like my lack of interest in human interest stories, I do expect to be in the minority on this. The writing is smooth and the characters and plotting are internally consistent. It was all just a little too smooth for my personal preference.

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