



First Down

Max Walker

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Sean Drake is a closeted college football player coming up on the most important year of his life. He's been the star quarterback at the University of Florida for three years in a row and now he was facing bright NFL prospects. All he needed to do was stay focused on the game and come out a winner. Things get harder when Sean starts being stalked by a crazy fan and finds their advances only getting bolder and more threatening.

Connor Hawk works as a bodyguard for an exclusive agency in Los Angeles. He lives life day to day, protecting celebrities and politicians for a paycheck and then finding a random guy to ease the pressure over a night. He resigned himself to living a lonely life caring only about his work. That all changes when he gets flown to Gainesville for an assignment that alters his future in the blink of an eye.

When Connor and Sean meet, their chemistry is undeniable. Both of the men must come to terms with feelings they thought they were never destined to have. Meanwhile, the stalker becomes more persistent and ends up doing something unimaginable. Now, Sean is faced with a choice that could potentially push him out of the closet in the worst way possible or he could sacrifice the one person that ever made him feel complete.

FIRST DOWN is a hot and steamy, gay romance novel with no cliffhangers. It is the second book in The Guardian series but can be read as a standalone.

First Down Details

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Author : Max Walker

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From Reader Review First Down for online ebook

Fabi says

I liked the MCs. Both were sweet boys. I also liked the idea behind the plot. There are only 9 typos so I'm assuming it's been edited since the previous reviews were written. I really liked this line.

Their kiss felt like the cherry on top of a sundae made by God himself.

But overall, the writing lacked subtlety. It was formulaic not only across the plot line but even from paragraph to paragraph.

Chris says

This was better than the first book - a sweet sport romance. While there was a crazy stalker, I didn't really buy it - guess I don't get as emotionally invested in these characters. A nice easy read

Federica Lemme says

Firstly let me say that though this is the second book of the Series, it can be read totally as a standalone, so don't worry if you are like me and haven't read book 1 yet. We do have cameo roles from Tristan and Adrian (the two main MCs from the first book) because Adrian is Connor's brother, one of the MCs from this storyline.

But let's focus on the story.

Sean Drake is a college football player who is victim of a stalker. Since the episodes are getting worse and worse his coach decides to hire a bodyguard, Connor Hawk.

As I said Connor is Adrian's brother and he flies from LA to Florida to protect Sean.

The attraction is immediate but Connor doesn't pursue it because he believes that Sean is straight. Sean is indeed gay but deeply in the closet.

What begins as a work relationship soon grows into a friendship and then into something more.

Sean has always known he is into guys but he has never had a boyfriend or a relationship, he is a virgin.

Connor has a closet full of skeletons, he was thrown out of his house when he was a teen and his last relationship was very hurtful. Despite all of this they fall in love with each other, nothing seems too forced and I like the evolution of their relationship.

I like the interaction between the MCs and how the stalker side of the story added the mystery element. The author gave us a lot of potential stalkers but it's not till the end that you really find out who it is.

It was a very enjoyable story, Max Walker has gained a new reader even if I have found the ending a little bit rushed, but the epilogue was the cherry on top.

Though a sports themed storyline, I'm happy to say that the football details certainly didn't overshadow the storyline, so maybe if you are a die-hard fan of sport themed books you may be a little disappointed? For me, it was the perfect equal balance. Off to read book 1, I want to see how it all started.

Cadiva says

Another enjoyable romance in this series

I think I preferred this one to the first book in the series probably because while the stalker element of the tale was again just a little bit whacky, there was more of a slow burn build up in the relationship between the MCs.

The sex scenes were well done with emotional connection not just thrown in for the hell of it and the epilogue, while a tad cheesy, still carried an important message about being true to yourself and love always winning.

~◊~Doxni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~◊~ says

This wasn't bad for a free read. There were a few editing issues as seems par for the course with self-published books, but I've read worse (much worse).

The romance was sweet and steamy, full of sexual discovery and eye fucking.

I liked both MCs; even though Sean was closeted, he wasn't ashamed of his desires or being with Connor.

Unfortunately, the stalker/mystery plot, mildly interesting initially, took a dive into Cray Cray Territory at the end. The resolution just wasn't believable and made everyone involved with the investigation look like utter fools.

I am the biggest supporter of epilogues, but this one was OTT cheesy even for me. The last chapter was happy enough.

Romanticamente Fantasy says

Recensione in ANTEPRIMA

"Pensava di amare il suo ex, e sentiva che il suo ex lo contraccambiava, allora perché lo aveva tradito, buttando via quello per cui avevano lavorato? Quello non poteva essere amore. L'amore era un campo di fottute margherite, che fioriscono per sempre e si avvolgono intorno a un enorme letto con petali di rosa sparsi sopra le lenzuola bianche e immacolate. L'amore era guardare negli occhi di un altro e vedere la verità, vedere la sua anima vulnerabile che ti restituisce lo sguardo. Questo era ciò che Connor avrebbe giurato di aver trovato con il suo ex. Ma alla fine, tutto ciò che aveva ottenuto era una bugia."

Sean è il miglior Quarterback universitario del momento, è stato selezionato per giocare in NFL, e ormai rimangono poche partite prima che inizi la sua carriera come professionista. È un ragazzo molto positivo, uno bravo studente, ha scelto di studiare scienze politiche perché ama avere un piano alternativo nel caso qualcosa interrompesse la sua carriera sportiva. È adorato da tutte le ragazze della scuola, che però non

hanno mai avuto sospetti sulla verità. Infatti Sean non ha detto mai, neppure al suo migliore amico Tim, di essere gay, e non perché si senta a disagio con la sua sessualità: sa perfettamente che i genitori lo appoggerebbero in ogni caso, ma sa altrettanto bene che nel football l'omofobia potrebbe stroncare la sua nascente carriera. Per questo è deciso a restare da solo, rimanendo nascosto e completamente dedito alla sua professione. Ma da qualche tempo è stato preso di mira da uno stalker che sembra avvicinarsi sempre più pericolosamente. Il desiderio di impedire che il suo miglior giocatore perda la concentrazione proprio nell'ultima parte del campionato, fa sì che l'allenatore prenda misure di emergenza, imponendogli una guardia del corpo. Connor Hawk non ama in modo particolare lo sport, è più abituato a proteggere attori, in più detesta il clima della Florida, ma trovandosi libero da altri impegni accetta l'incarico, anche perché l'idea di vedere bei ragazzi palestrati non gli dispiace affatto. Fin dal primo incontro, si rende conto che l'attrazione che sente per il suo bellissimo cliente, che crede sia etero, potrebbe rappresentare un grosso problema.

Pur facente parte di una serie, questo libro può essere un bel stand-alone, l'unica cosa che lo lega a "Ti copro io" è che il protagonista è il fratello di Connor, che qui rivedremo in un cammeo insieme al marito. Connor stesso era apparso in modo fuggevole nel primo capitolo, e in questo modo eravamo già a conoscenza del suo passato e di quello del fratello. Figli di un padre estremamente religioso, il coming-out di Connor lo aveva visto cacciato di casa e disconosciuto. Solo molto tempo dopo aveva ripreso i rapporti con il fratello, che per anni aveva nascosto le sue stesse inclinazioni. Connor nasconde dietro il corpo palestrato, e il suo duro lavoro, un animo romantico, ha creduto nell'amore e nel per sempre, ma l'uomo a cui aveva dato il cuore lo ha tradito. Ora intende avere solo avventure di una notte, incontri fugaci per cui non rischierà più di avere il cuore spezzato. Ma Sean, con la sua dolcezza e i suoi modi amichevoli, riesce a risvegliare in lui emozioni che credeva perdute. Per Sean incontrare Connor è una rivelazione, ha creduto che lo sport sarebbe bastato per rendere piena la sua vita, ma le sensazioni che la vicinanza della sua guardia del corpo gli fa provare mettono il tutto sotto una diversa luce. E mentre i due devono venire a patti con i loro sentimenti, lo stalker è sempre più vicino, sempre più intenzionato a possedere quello che ritiene l'uomo della sua vita: è disposto a tutto per averlo.

È una storia molto dolce quella fra Connor e Sean, nasce dall'amicizia che scatta subitanea fra di loro. Insieme si divertono, riescono a essere se stessi, si scoprono a poco a poco. Ma per entrambi è una decisione ben difficile da prendere, ognuno di loro rischia la carriera e tutto ciò che hanno costruito. Non mancheranno momenti difficili e decisioni sbagliate che rischieranno di separarli per sempre. I loro personaggi sono ben descritti, le scene passionali sono dolci e avvincenti. Forse l'unica pecca è proprio la parte suspense: non ha grandi momenti di azione, se non nella parte finale, colma di adrenalina. Tutto però si risolve forse troppo velocemente, e ci si accorge che non era poi così difficile intuire la vera natura dello stalker. Nonostante questo, è una lettura molto piacevole, i due protagonisti insieme sono dolcissimi, l'ultimo capitolo è incredibilmente tenero, e invita il lettore a proseguire questa serie davvero carina e ben scritta.

Lucia63 - per RFS

Jacq says

Sweet read.

Lorraine Lesar says

You've got to hand it to Max Walker, a No. 1 Bestseller on his hands at Amazon and he got me to read a sports theme book!

First Down was reviewed on our Blog by another reviewer but I wanted to see for myself and have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed it. It kept me in my toes - I didn't work out who the Stalker was until he decided to put us out of our misery and reveal all, but made it sweeter to swallow with the delicious sex scenes (no pun intended).

My only one criticism would be that Connor didn't come across as a particularly good bodyguard, great lover but i just expected more from him in tracking down the Stalker.

****I would like to thank the author for the privilege and opportunity of reading this ARC. My review is an honest opinion of the book****

Threebooks over the rainbow.wordpress.com

BR11 says

I got it free on Amazon with Kindle Unlimited, so the price was right.

The good:

*The MCs were nice. Both of them are likeable and enough 'time', situations and dialogue happen to make their connection credible.

*I'm happy to report that this book has a top and bottom first timer. The author doesn't disappoint here. Steamy scenes.

*A HEA ending. Some Velvetta to be found in the Epilogue, but I'm not one to complain when a couple find their happiness.

*The cover. That Connor is pretty hot (although he doesn't match the character description).

The bad:

*The stalker/mystery plot. If we are going to have one, it better be more believable... I found myself rolling my eyes more than a few times over it. We are talking about a stalker that brings a bloody alligator tail with her all the way from FL to Hawaii. If that's not a dedicated stalker, I don't know what that is. We are also talking about some useless cops, an incompetent private eye and a lot of half witted people that cannot add two and two together.

*Bad jokes. These two were laughing to tears over 'jokes' that didn't even bring a smile to my face. I guess we can blame that to the amazing chemistry they have.

Happy reading, y'all!

Bev says

Enjoyed this one, but oh, it's in dire need of an editor to tidy it up. Yes, it's a typical jock in the closet story, but the love between the two MC's is an almost tangible thing. The weirdo stalker was fairly easy to spot if you read carefully, and the ending was....well, I'll leave you to discover it. Nice one Max, but **please** get an editor sooner rather than later. ;)

Love Is All Around says

Voto: 3.5

Sean Drake è una giovane promessa del football americano. È ancora all'università, ma le sue imprese sono così straordinarie che già molti reclutatori gli hanno messo gli occhi addosso. Sean ne è felice, ovviamente, ma al contempo si sente anche sotto pressione per questo. Non tanto per il suo gioco, perché sa di avere talento, quanto piuttosto per il piccolo, grande segreto che custodisce gelosamente da tutta la vita: è gay. E non ha nessuna intenzione di dichiararsi. È convinto di essere destinato a una vita solitaria fatta di bugie su incontri occasionali con donne rimorchiate nei bar e relazioni eterosessuali a distanza. È sceso a patti con la cosa, tuttavia come reagirà quando sulla sua strada si affaccerà Connor?

Connor Hawk è una guardia del corpo che vorrebbe disperatamente farsi una famiglia ma che ha ormai perso le speranze che ciò avvenga. Dopo il tradimento del suo ex, con cui aveva una relazione da due anni, si è convinto che l'amore esista solo nei film e nei romanzi e che nella vita reale possa esserci solo sesso, sesso, sesso, sesso e niente più che sesso.

Non ha nessuno che lo tenga legato alla California, così quando viene chiamato a svolgere un lavoro in Florida, per difendere un giocatore universitario da una stalker, nonostante il caldo sia un deterrente, decide di accettare senza pensarci su troppo.

Sarà proprio questa decisione che pareva senza importanza a cambiare tutte le carte in tavola e a sconvolgere il mondo e le convinzioni di Sean e Connor...

CONTINUA SUL BLOG

Jenn C says

Thoroughly enjoyable, fun, sweet, sexy read. Yes there was sex, sex, sex but the two MC clicked and were friends first, even if there was an underlying chemistry from the get go.

Aly says

Easy to read romance between the two perspectives of the protagonists, Sean and Connor. It was easy to differentiate between the two voices and both the boys' viewpoints were great to read about as both boys are generally likeable (and hot) characters.

All in all, I enjoyed this one. However, the side plots were majorly irrelevant at times with a lack of suspense, tension and angst. The subplot premise of Sean being looked after by Connor as his bodyguard was heavily dismissed as Connor didn't... actually do anything as a bodyguard?

There's a severe disconnect in what Connor says he will do as a bodyguard and his actions as a bodyguard. A lot of the time he 'says' things he will do as a bodyguard (eg. "I will keep my professional and personal life separate", but at the same time didn't resist Sean with much protest), it honestly didn't seem like he was doing a lot of protecting to me. In the book it was mentioned by the coach that he seemed that he hired a best friend rather than a bodyguard, well, that seemed accurate as it was the only thing Connor did really other

than romancing Sean.

With Sean, there was a lack of football - I don't mind it too much but the football subplot was only there for the; 'oh hey Sean's team just won another match! WOWZERS! oh and they're going to Hawaii for another match so Sean and Connor can romance each other up some!'

Yeah..... Football was not even really a thing.

Then the stalker side plot - I honestly didn't even feel like it was much importance. Other than a couple of letters from the stalker which made Sean scared for a couple of lines like a jump scare in a horror movie, nothing really happened until the 'big reveal'. Plus the reasoning behind how the stalker got that far wasn't explored, and the stalker's endgame? Well, that was largely brushed over by Sean and Connor's OTT HEA.

Good read if you're looking for brainless HEA M/M romance with a lack of concern for subplots.

Claudia says

this was a nice story and a good read but there were a few things that were a bit difficult for me
first the love at first sight thing. that can work but not always and although they had to work for it, it was a bit too much

second, in the middle of was a but too sappy for me. don't get me wrong I like a good romance but this was a bit much

third the ending was rushed but I loved the epilogue

nevertheless I liked the characters and it was a nice read. maybe I will read the first book as well

Sj Smithson says

Amazing

This book had me guessing all the way through about who the stalker was.... I was not disappointed. Sean and Colton work so well together progressing from football star & bodyguard to friends and then on to lovers.

The sex scenes are well written and many additional characters that made up this story were written enough about to get a sense of the circle Sean moved within.

Now to read book 1
