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By:
Keira Andrews

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What people Say:

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Alex Grady isn't the easiest guy to like. He's snarky, cocky, and has zero filter; what he thinks, he says, and what he says isn't always nice.

Much of Alex's abrasive personality can be explained by youth and stress. Alex is only 20, and he has a real chance at winning the gold. That's his goal, his prize for training hard and giving up his life to skate.

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Alex has a hardass Russian coach whom he followed to Toronto and who pushes him unrelentingly (that's her job afterall); a supportive and loving family (his parents rock!); and a crush on the relentlessly nice Canadian pairs skater Matt Savelli (whom he initially refers to as Captain Cardboard).

Alex tells himself he doesn't have time for sex, much less romance, but following a tragedy on the ice, he can't help but me drawn to Matt, who's not boring, or shy, at all. Indeed, Matt has a dirty mouth and is a great kisser. Alex is a virgin, and that turns on Matt even more.

Alex is the narrator of the story, so we're not privy to Matt's thoughts, but he definitely reads like a complex character, with his own fears and ambitions. Matt isn't even out to his family, and he has to work long hours as a server to pay for his skating.

Alex is a perfectionist, but once he starts seeing Matt, he sort of loses focus. He pushes himself so hard, skating is no longer about joy. The fall is inevitable, and when Alex falls, he falls hard.

There were a few smoldering smexy scenes, and I had fun getting to know the secondary characters, especially Kenny the Japanese ice skater. Sadly, Kenny's straight, or I would beg for his story.

Keira Andrews

My new book is now available! This is an extensive rework of a novel I published in 2010. I put more focus on the romance and Alex's sexual awakening with on-page sex, and also updated the figure skating details, since men's skating has evolved greatly since I wrote this in 2009. I'm delighted to have this story back out in the world, and I hope you enjoy it!

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Sheziss

So, skating!

A sport I've always loved and, as I'm such a hopeless case, I've never followed closely. Skating has always been a sport from "other" countries: Russia, Japan, Canada, Scandinavian area (AKA: places where it's fricking cold!). Meaning of this: it rarely appears on TV where I live. But lately it's becoming closer and closer. Still, no response from my part. Wow.

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I liked it a lot, because it's a good book. However, there were parts that reminded me of Reading the Signs (a Canadian vs an American, Italian family, sports!). Not enough to say it's a copy, but enough to say it wasn't as original as I would have liked it to be.

This is supposed to be a YA-kind of book. At least, that's the original idea, the original premise. It doesn't feel that way, maybe NA, but that's it. I'm not speaking about the chemistry or the sex scenes alone, but about everything surrounding the main pair. It feels mature, but they are young, so of course there are misunderstandings and a phase of self-discovering.

It's true that at first the situation is hard to defend at first.

Alex is harsh and egocentric, only saying hurtful comments to everybody. I had a hard time believing he's so mean but at the same time, he has lots of awesome friends and good people around him at all times.

Seriously?

Jewel

When I was a kid, I loved watching the figure skating competitions. I've never been on ice skates in my life, nor do I actually have the desire to, but watching the athleticism and grace out there on the ice was just so awe inspiring. And Keira Andrews captures that perfectly, but from the other side, where the competitors are.

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Alex Grady, 20, is the reigning National US Champion. He's cocky and self-absorbed and has a tendency to run his mouth a bit too much. He has no filter to speak of and it gets him into trouble. A lot of trouble. He says what is on his mind without ever thinking it through and oftentimes, the things he says are, well, rather hurtful. He's had one goal since he was a child and that goal is winning an

Olympic Gold. The problem? Well, Alex doesn't take defeat well, he pushes himself harder and harder and he doesn't even seem to have fun. He doesn't see his successes as good enough, because they are not the Olympic Gold. Life is skating and working toward that Gold Medal goal. Alex isn't very likable. At first, anyway.

Matt Savelli, 24, is a Canadian pairs skater. He's handsome, gracious and just a really good guy. Matt is insanely easy to like. He's focused and dedicated and easy going. Matt, I liked pretty much right away. He's laid back and honest, without being a jackass. He's a little older, but a lot more experienced at life. He takes most things in stride, even as he reaches for his goals. He and his skating partner, and best friend, Mylene are the perfect pairs skaters. They've been partners for six years, since she was 13. I absolutely adored them both.

Alex took me the longest time to actually warm to. He did not start off likable, at all. But as with so many things, Alex's abrasive personality was a shield and he hid behind it like his life depended on it. He's never allowed himself to really have friends, so he's never learned how to actually interact with people. And he's certainly never had time for hookups, much less a boyfriend. It really isn't all that surprising that Alex is a virgin.

Matt didn't want to like Alex. And, well, Alex didn't want to like Matt, either, because he saw Matt as having no personality, at first. They were total opposites. And when they finally got together, after Alex starts to seem more human, I loved them! They were hot and sweet and Alex took to losing his virginity like he had been a starving man who just happened upon a free buffet. Their problems are hardly solved by being together, though, because Alex is still Alex and he still wants that Gold medal to the exclusion of anything else. And Matt isn't out to his parents, either, so that causes a fair amount of strife. But mostly, Alex has a tendency to be an insecure asshole, and say things he doesn't even really mean.

Overall, I really enjoyed

. Young love can feel so intense and considering these guys are both very competitive athletes, emotions can run high when mixing their competitive lives with falling in love. The ending of the story is a pretty solid HFN, but I wanted "more". It felt a bit too abrupt to me. I do hope Keira Andrews writes more of these boys in the future, though.

Optimist â™™King's Wenchâ™™ & MANTIES Champion

There is a lot to like about this story especially if you're a fan of competitive figure skating. It's clear Keira Andrews is from the amount of technical knowledge held within these pages.

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subjective and many fans of the sport take issue with; Keira Andrews addresses those issues diplomatically. The amount of effort, time, money and sheer intestinal fortitude it takes to make a ch

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subjective and many fans of the sport take issue with; Keira Andrews addresses those issues diplomatically. The amount of effort, time, money and sheer intestinal fortitude it takes to make a champion is also detailed well in an engaging way.

is told from and centers around Alex Grady. Alex's focus on becoming an Olympic gold medalist is myopic and borders on obsessive. I didn't really like him, though he's not a wholly unsympathetic character. As far as his characterization goes it's actually quite good and remains consistent throughout with his insecurities plaguing him and, more often than not causing friction between him and those in his life. There were things that I sprang off the page immediately about him and his character that as this story unfolded snowballed. I think that's the thing that I liked the least about this story, that an opportunity was missed to show how a sports psychologist could've helped him get a handle on his anxieties.

His relationship with Matt helps to a certain extent, but I found the love conquers all tactic a bit trite. Initially I thought their relationship was moving to Kinksville and thought that might bring some... grounding but, alas, it stayed vanilla.

There is snowballing and... generally they just like the jizz, each others, their own. I bet if they could get one of those fountain things...

Admittedly, I had to suspend disbelief at much of the sex since Alex is a virgin when they meet, but who am I to question the edifying power of gay porn? Just put your jizz goggles on and go with the flow.