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Elle Keaton

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Before Joey can decide what to do about it, he is swept into a terrifying scheme. Forced into helping a dangerous stranger in exchange for his family's safety, Joey begins a perilous journey into the criminal underbelly of Skagit. He will do whatever is needed to protect his family.

Buck Swanfeldt had a secret crush on Joey James in high school. Buck's social anxiety and two-year age difference made it impossible for him to approach Joey then. Life since high school has been challenging, and lonely. Eight years later, fate brings them together and Buck decides to act. He utterly fails. He would have left it at that, except fate seems to be intent on pushing Joey in his direction, and clearly, Joey needs someone at his back.

Dark, sordid secrets hiding in Skagit are bubbling to the surface, danger lurks in unexpected places. Buck has never been anyone's hero but something about Joey has him throwing caution to the wind. Together the two men take on a dangerous force greater than themselves. But sometimes our worst enemy is ourselves.

*warning may need a tissue!

This book is a work of fiction intended for mature audiences only.

No Pressure Details

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From Reader Review No Pressure for online ebook

Rennie says

Elle Keaton writes such likeable characters you can't help but become invested in their HEA. This was good, I'm a fan of the suspense element not being completely wrapped up in each book and continuing in some form in the next book (I'm assuming that will happen in book 3). Buck and Joey were adorable, especially Buck (you were right, Simone).
I'm really looking forward to reading book 3.

Tracy~Bayou Book Junkie says

3.5 Stars

I'll be honest, as a mystery/suspense story, this was a fabulous read. It's well-written and gripping and it kept me sitting on the edge of my seat, but unfortunately, the romance portion of the story failed miserably. In fact, it was practically non-existent.

I liked both Joey and Buck and from what we get to see, they are good together, I just wish the author had explored their relationship further and given it more page time for the reader to see it develop.

Although the romance potion was severely lacking, the story was interesting and a definite page turner.
Recommendable!

Michele says

Joey is an ER nurse at a hospital in Skagit, Washington. He is a boisterous, altruistic soul who volunteers at local animal shelters and loves his mother.

Buck runs an auto repair shop and we met him in book 1. He's the car enthusiast who bought Adam's father's collection of classic automobiles AND was involved in Micah's spur of the moment high speed car chase. The second is really out of character for the shy, closeted young man, who is so traumatized by his abusive father, that he's never allowed himself to have a relationship.

Of course, Joey runs into a bit of trouble with a human trafficking mobster and Buck comes to the rescue. Adam and Micah make cameo appearances as the "annoyed law enforcement agent" and "supportive friend" (if you've read book one, you'll easily guess which is which).

I enjoyed the sweet romance between Buck and Joey, but got sorta frustrated by Joey's impulsiveness and continuous need for rescue. The stories don't need to be read in order, but it helps.

Colette says

As good as book 1

Maybe even better. What I loved about Storm Season were the wonderful fully fleshed out secondary characters. In this book we get to learn more about Buck, the mechanic and Joey, a nurse at the hospital the night of the car chase in book 1. The story picks up where Storm Season left off introducing some new people and continuing the hunt for the traffickers. I thoroughly enjoyed this and can't wait for Book 3 in June!

Veronica says

I received a free copy of this book to read and review for Wicked Reads.

No Pressure is the story Auto mechanic Buck and nurse Joey. It is really sweet the way Buck 'accidentally' bumps into Joey at the supermarket at the beginning of the story. Buck doesn't have much in the way of friends or a social life so it is pretty brave of him to take the bull by the horns and make contact with Joey, hoping something would come of it.

A relationship begins to develop between the men against the backdrop of Joey having been dragged into some really nasty stuff by the criminal element in town. The author does an excellent job mixing the lovely budding romance with the danger Joey is in and the terror he is feeling. And I have to say for a while there I couldn't see how Joey was going to get out of the mess he was in.

Reading No Pressure made me happy even though it involved criminal involved in people smuggling. I love the way the author writes the romance so it takes time to build and I enjoyed being back in Skagit and seeing the characters I already know and love. I will shortly be reading book 3 in this series; Spring Break and I'm very much looking forward to it.

Heather says

No Pressure is much like book one, Storm Season, not because its a copy or too formulaic but because it's jam packed with a little bit of everything and the author meshes it together perfectly. Joey James is a nurse we met in book one who finds himself in a position he never dreamed possible, and it's not a pleasant one. Bucky Swanfeldt, who we also met in the first installment, has found that destiny has given him a second chance to get to know his youthful crush. Just like Adam and Micah from Storm Season, Bucky and Joey are facing a situation that could change their entire existence, good and bad.

The chemistry between Joey and Bucky may not be instantaneous since Joey didn't even remember Bucky when Bucky stopped him and said hello in the store but you just know its lurking in the shadows, kind of like when the bad guys are preparing to spring a trap. That's not so say I'm comparing Bucky and Joey's connection to bad guys just the "around the corner" feel.

Overall Series Review:

Luckily for me I didn't have to wait before reading No Pressure, I was able to go straight from book one to book two. Are these standalones? No. Yes, there are resolutions to the mystery in Storm Season but not the whole picture. You really must read them in order but you won't be disappointed because Accidental Roots kept me on the edge of my seat so much I probably would have been safer to just sprawl on the floor and neglect everything around me until I finished. Wherever you choose to sit, or sprawl, this is definitely a series that will hold your attention to the very end. Elle Keaton is new to me and with Accidental Roots she has certainly found her way towards the top of my author's to watch list.

Natalie says

Fast-moving and sweet

I've read books 1 & 5 of this series, so I know the books get better but this was good. I probably should have read the first one again, because I'd forgotten some details and side characters but I caught up pretty quick. I questioned some of the decisions Joey made and some of the law enforcement procedures but that didn't slow the story down either. I loved Buck and angst from his childhood made me feel for him. Joey was kind of a idiot sometimes but he had good intentions. The slow burn on the romance matched Buck and Joey's insecurities and inexperience. Good book and I'm hoping the rest are as good or better as this.

Tori Thompson says

4.5 heart review for Love Bytes Reviews!

A copy of this book was provided in exchange for an honest review. This review was originally posted at Love Bytes Reviews, please visit www.lovebytesreviews.com to see this and many more reviews, interviews, and giveaways!

Woohoo! That was a fantastic book! I'm going to start this by confessing something.... I read the first book in this series, and it was ok. I didn't dislike it, but it was a little long and scattered for me. I had already said I'd take this one, so I was going to read it, but I wasn't as excited as I could be.

I WAS SO WRONG TO FEEL THAT WAY!!!

Everything I had had issues with in the first book, was not an issue with this one! Tight story, engaging characters, good length, and great writing!

Ok. Now that that is out of the way, let me tell you about this story.

This book is also set in Skagit Washington, just like the first book. I live in Washington, not far from the area this book is set in, although this town doesn't exist, other towns mentioned do. Elle got the details of the area just right! So anyway, Skagit is a small town, fairly redneck, that seems to have a human trafficking issue. We learned about that in Storm Season, when Adam and Micah are drawn in to the mystery of who is doing what. One other character that got sucked in, thanks to Micah, was Buck. Buck is a great character, he's big and strong, but shy and reserved. As this story progresses, we find out he has some demons... He had an

awful childhood, and that has followed him in to adulthood. So Buck, poor shy, gay Buck, runs in to Joey at the hospital as part of the drama with Micah, but Joey doesn't notice him. Buck remembers having a crush on Joey in high school, but Joey never knew. Buck then runs in to Joey at the grocery store, and finally gets up the nerve to speak to him. And Joey doesn't remember that they went to school together. Then they bump in to each other again at the hospital, and eventually connect.

Joey has some serious drama going on. He's a local boy, like Buck, living on his own and working as a nurse at the local hospital. His mom lives nearby, and he keeps an eye on her. He leaves work one evening to discover a picture of his mother under the windshield wiper of his car. Then another appears. Eventually Joey gets drawn in to a big old mess. He's being blackmailed in to helping the local bad guys, as they are threatening his mom. He gets a dog, named Xena, and moves back in with his mom, but is continuously forced to help the bad guys. While Joey is dealing with his bad guy issue, his car dies. He calls Buck, who owns the local car repair shop. Buck begins to suspect something is going on with Joey, and calls in Adam and Micah. Which really starts things going.

This story focuses on Joey's issues with the bad guys, and I won't say how that all works out! But there is also this very emotional storyline with Buck and Joey. Buck really has some internal drama going on, and Joey struggles to help him, while dealing with his own shit. And trying to keep Buck out of it. Eventually Buck DOES get drawn in, which in some ways helps the two of them bond closer together. There are some great side characters too, Xena the dog was a big part of the story, and a character named Kon was as well. I won't say who he is, but I loved his contribution! Buck's employee/friend Miguel plays a huge part in Buck's healing, and I loved him too. Adam and Micah pop up, as well as a character I won't mention...

So one of my big issues with the first book was that it was too long and rambled some. I got lost in the characters and the story. This book was not like that! The story was much more focused, and the characters mentioned more involved in the direct storyline. That worked much better for me. Something about the writing in the first book bothered me, but I wasn't able to specify what it was. Also not an issue with this one! The writing was great!

My only issue this time was some editing problems. One character's name was spelled with an "s" instead of a "c" a couple of times. Joey became Joe once. And another character's name did actually change spelling intentionally but it confused me! I had to go find why it changed spelling, I apparently missed that moment in the story. But all of those were minor issues, I just thought I'd mention them though.

There isn't a lot of sex in this book, which was actually fine. The emotional bond between the two men that slowly develops more than made up for the lack of sex. I loved the story between the two of them, set against the drama of the bigger issue.

So yah! I loved it! I'm so happy I read this one, and I'm really looking forward to the next one! I'd still recommend reading the first one in the series so you know what is happening, but in my opinion this one is so much better! I hope we see more from Elle, I am looking forward to seeing her further develop as an m/m author!

Lori says

*A copy of this book was given in exchange for an honest review.
Review previously at BMBR.*

Okay. Well the truth is, this book was on my review list. I read and reviewed the first book and loved it - but I've got about a third of the way into it and am struggling with this one. Sometimes, if I'm struggling I go and look at others' reviews, to see if I can work out what it is I'm missing - or sometimes to see if I'm the only one with the problem!

In this case, one of the first reviews that came up was that of fellow unicorn and FABULOUS reviewer, Jenni Lea. God-dammit, I must be wrong, because, as you can see, she adored this book. Now, I'm still struggling to get into it, but it's been on my review list for a while so I wanted to get my outta date reviews up to date. Rather than just DNFing and giving the broken-heart review (I don't like to rate if I've not finished unless there is a strong reason why I've DNF'd) I asked Jenni Lea if she'd mind me posting her (fabulous) review, along with my DNF one. Of course she didn't because she's amazing like that!

I'm not saying no to this book forever, but for now it's a case of it's not you, it's me. Read Jenni Lea's review and she'll tell you all about her love for this book.

Jordan says

4/5 - This book is better than the first and features one of the best characters in the series yet: Buck.

The main MC of this book is Joey, who we met in the first Accidental Roots book, and I really liked him. He was a good supporting character in the first book and I was hoping that the next book would be about him. Joey was easy to relate to and despite this being a little bit of a mystery/suspense novel, I didn't get the cheezy feeling that I usually get with books like this. What I mean to say is that I loved that this book was realistic and there was nothing exaggerated or painted up to manipulate the plot for the author's liking. Keaton told it just like it was and it all made sense. These are the types of mystery/suspense novels I like to read.

And Buck, oh Buck. This guy is by far one of my favorite characters in this series. He's so huge but unsure of himself so he comes off as this very sweet but kinda socially awkward giant and reading about him flirting, or trying to flirt, with Joey just made my day! He kept stumbling over his words and he couldn't tell up from down or red from blue because all he had the time for was seeing Joey and trying to make Joey happy. It was hilarious because you could tell that he was embarrassed and confused by how attracted to Joey he was but he still pulled up his britches like a big boy and went after what he wanted.

The only downside to this book in my opinion is that the story took a little bit of a backseat to the romance. In books where the romance is the main plot, that works well, but there was more to this book and I was hoping to get a more in-depth look at all of that. It seemed like the crazy note issue took a backseat for a while when Joey and Buck were getting reacquainted and growing closer together.

However, this was still a really great book. I liked it more than the first book in the series and it has me really excited to read the next one!

Jenni Lea says

4.5 stars

Wow, I liked this even more than the first one! The characters, especially Joey and Buck, were engaging and I was able to relate to them on a deep, personal level. The storyline that was carried over from book 1 was wrapped up here in a satisfying and realistic way. Joey was a bit TSTL at times but it worked for me because it's in his nature to care for others, even to his own detriment.

Buck, now... Buck has earned a special place in my pocket and in my heart. Buck's a gentle giant. He's so innocent and awkward and he stumbles over his words when trying to talk to Joey and I just love him so. There's an instant attraction between him and Joey that has Buck so far out of his comfort zone he doesn't know whether to scratch his watch or wind his butt. It was a delight to watch him gather up his courage to pursue Joey, who, frankly, didn't need any encouragement. Buck is hotness personified (think Thor with the temperament of Gentle Ben). He's so adorable I just want to eat him up!

One of the things I loved the most about this book is the realism. Even with a fantastical storyline of mobsters, kidnapping, trafficking and whatnot, everything rang true to me. The relationship was anything but rushed and the fact that Buck realized he needed time on his own to get his head on straight and actually seeking out therapy before pursuing anything further with Joey was so refreshing to read.

Now, the blurb warns that tissues may be needed. I didn't agree with that at first. In truth I didn't agree with that for 98% of the book. But, damned if I didn't cry at the end. They were happy tears, but I did experience some serious facial leakage.

Elle Keaton is proving to be a masterful storyteller and I'm eager to see what she does next. This author is one to watch for, folks. The lady has some serious talent.

Diverse says

No Pressure is book 2 in Elle Keaton's Accidental Roots series. I recommend reading book one, Storm Season, first because there is some carryover and closure from there.

This book is the story of Joey and Buck. Buck rocks! He is everything. A fumbling sweetheart. When he's around Joey I just wanted to squish him. The attraction with these two is instant and watching Buck interact tugged at my heart.

This author really nails the chemistry with her characters and adds a believable depth to each one. I can't begin to explain how vital that is and Elle Keaton has mastered that.

Through all the drama and suspense this story had the pacing was on point with the plot and the romance. It flowed really well. Sometimes I feel rushed when there's action and love involved but not here.

The ending had me a slobbering mess so grab tissues. It's not a bad cry don't panic! I'm really enjoying this series and this author!

Simone says

4.5 Stars

Everyone has secrets. Secrets that should never be brought into the light of day. Secrets that are lurking under the surface of a small town and threaten to unravel its countryside idyll and ideal world.

Secrets two men involuntarily participate in, which not only causes quite a stir, but will change their life forever.

For Joey James, the nurse we already met in the previous book *Storm Season*, two things almost happen at once: a random encounter at a grocery store with a former schoolmate who never even was on his radar, but whom he suddenly cannot get out of his head and an alarming picture on the windshield of his car meant to blackmail him into helping out a criminal individual or otherwise his family would come to harm. Both are things Joey is in over his head, but it soon becomes apparent that the former will - and is even bound and determined to- help him coping with the latter.

Joey, the nestling of a big family, is a caring person by nature. That is the reason why he will be exploited over and over again by his much older siblings to take care of his parents. That is the reason why he takes in a stray, although there are no dogs allowed in his apartment. That is also the reason why he loves his job at the hospital, which causes him lately more trouble than he prefers.

He'd been thinking with his heart, with the part of him that hated pain and suffering, with the part of him that fiercely protected those he loved. It wasn't stupid to care. That's how he was built: he cared, often too much and too soon.

But Joey is lonely. The prospects to find someone who wants to share your life as a gay young man in a small town are pretty rare. When he meets a shy and socially awkward man who apparently knows him from yore and who immediately takes flight after a moment of embarrassment, he is curious about the conundrum that is Buck Swanfeldt, owner of the local garage. Fate seems to be intent on bringing both men together and after bumping into each other repeatedly, Buck slowly but surely becomes a safe haven for Joey.

As much as I loved Joey, it was Buck I loved more. Maybe because I could totally relate to him, being more on the shy side and socially awkward myself. I know how it would feel to screw up one's courage to address someone you had a crush on for years. I could virtually feel his embarrassment, but I admired him for doing something that would have been like a milestone in his life, but I could also understand his need to bolt when sliding into an awkward situation.

Buck always felt a bit like an outcast. He learned early on in his life that appearance is everything. His parents always pretended outwardly to be a loving family, while a look behind the curtain would have revealed a father who liked to bully his son at every chance he got and a mother who stood idly by.

Buck learned early to be seen and not heard, to listen for the undercurrents, to be very careful how he presented to his family and to Skagit. He figured they would never accept him for who he was, only who they wanted him to be.

I loved Buck for his fortitude to make something of his life, despite the low self-esteem his parents conveyed at him at every turn. He is the gentle giant you tend to underestimate and who never recognizes himself how gorgeous he really is.

And it was far from easy. Buck also lived constantly in fear of ending up like his father, but his inner strength helps him to acknowledge that he needs professional help to overcome his social anxiety and to get a chance at a love-filled life. Oh, and I loved him for grabbing the chance at love when it presented itself...

It was great to be back in Skagit. Elle Keaton creates an atmosphere that makes you not only just read the story, but feel like being part of it, like being *there*. Well, I could have done without all the rain and snow, but that just conveyed a feeling of reality. ;-) And the great characters did one more thing to make it authentic. I loved the humor in the story and the tentative pace the author brought the relationship between Joey and Buck forward. This might have happened a bit at the expense of steam, but it did not bother me one bit. Joey and Buck's relationship was just sweet and both are the perfect match.

The mystery part that forged a bridge between the first two books in this series was wrapped up nicely, but it took a bit of a backseat regarding the romance and all in all it was the perfect combination of both.

There are also a lot of interesting side characters I would love to read more about. Some of them I already shipped so hard, I can hardly wait to see if I am right and I wonder if -no, I *hope*- all of them will get their own book...

This review has been posted on Dirty Books Obsession

Lisa The Novel Approach says

Joey James has returned to the small town of Skagit, Washington. He works in the ER at St. Joe's, and loves it. He's a little flirty, always happy, and is an all-around caring person. He's been looking for that one special person, but still finds himself alone.

Joey was a definite surprise to his family, his siblings are much older, and when he graduated at sixteen, his parents were in their sixties. His parents always accepted who he was, and provided all the love and support he needed. Maureen, Joey's mom, still resides in the family home, and his dad is now in a care facility. Maureen keeps the large house in hopes that one day her children and grandchildren may visit.

Buck Swanfeldt has never left Skagit. He and Joey don't really know each other. Joey was a few years ahead of Buck in school, so they never connected. Buck now owns his father's garage, which he started working in at the age of eight. Buck never knew how to have a conversation with his parents—the only thing he could talk about with his dad was cars—but there were times when he hated talking about cars and had always wished for a better relationship with his father.

When Joey discovers he's being stalked, he moves back to his mom's and adopts Xena, a shelter dog, for protection. He's scared to death to tell anyone what he's seen and done. When Buck gets suspicious, he has his reasons to contact Micah, who gets Adam involved. Once again, Buck finds himself being dragged into the ugly world of human trafficking and child abuse.

What really clicked for me about this sequel was the way Elle Keaton gives readers an in-depth look at the diversity of Buck and Joey's personalities and upbringing. Joey is more experienced with his sexuality, and Buck's only experience was a disaster. Buck knows one thing for sure, though. Other men don't rev his engine like Joey does. Buck is an innocent, to a certain degree, and the way his parents treated him causes him to have to face his emotional issues. There are moments when things are sexy and sweet between Joey and Buck, but it's a gradual learning about each other. It's heartrending when Buck struggles with his fears and past abuse and has an emotional break down. Buck recognizes the need for help, and it's a little heartbreaking when he tells Joey he needs time.

Storm Season, book one in the Accidental Roots series, is a must read first because it gives more detail about Micah, Adam and Buck's involvement in the mystery that continues in No Pressure. I liked that the plot picked up where Storm Seasons left off, and that many of my favorite characters got to return. Two new additions are Kon and Xena, who bring many heartwarming moments to the storyline.

I really enjoyed No Pressure and hope that Elle Keaton will create more mysteries with the entertaining group of characters who inhabit the town of Skagit.

Reviewed by Maryann for The Novel Approach Reviews

Chris says

4 out of 5 stars

Description ~

Joey James has given up on his 'Prince Charming'. There is no such thing, he needs to be realistic about his chances of finding a lasting relationship. A chance encounter with a former school mate at the local grocery store changes everything-maybe.

Before Joey can decide what to do about it, he is swept into a terrifying scheme. Forced into helping a dangerous stranger in exchange for his family's safety, Joey begins a perilous journey into the criminal underbelly of Skagit. He will do whatever is needed to protect his family.

Buck Swanfeldt had a secret crush on Joey James in high school. Buck's social anxiety and two-year age difference made it impossible for him to approach Joey then. Life since high school has been challenging, and lonely. Eight years later, fate brings them together and Buck decides to act. He utterly fails. He would have left it at that, except fate seems to be intent on pushing Joey in his direction, and clearly, Joey needs

someone at his back.

Dark, sordid secrets hiding in Skagit are bubbling to the surface, danger lurks in unexpected places. Buck has never been anyone's hero but something about Joey has him throwing caution to the wind. Together the two men take on a dangerous force greater than themselves. But sometimes our worst enemy is ourselves.

My Review ~

No Pressure is the second book in the Accidental Roots series. It would be best to read these books in order as the plot is continued from the previous book. I'll admit that I didn't read the first book but I also didn't feel lost while reading No Pressure.

Joey James and Buck Swanfeldt grew up in the same town and were a few years apart in high school. Joey left their small town to get his nursing degree in Seattle but came home when his dad's dementia progressed. Buck stayed in Skagit and took over his dad's garage after he passed away. While they have their small town in common Joey and Buck are very different. Joey is an outgoing, slightly flirty nurse who isn't quite sure that he wants the heteronormative lifestyle as a gay man. Buck, on the other hand, is slightly shy, and until he saw Joey James in the grocery store, he didn't think he would ever find someone who would make him want more in his life. Buck totally takes that chance when he sees Joey in the grocery store but because he's not sure of himself he lets it go.

Eventually things work to get Joey and Buck interested in each other and then finally dating. Along the way though, Joey gets blackmailed into helping a dangerous man's associate who's very ill. As he gets pulled further and further into his man's goings on, Joey turns more and more to Buck as someone he wants in his life. Things eventually come to a head with Joey, which almost ends with him being seriously hurt. Luckily it all works out and both Buck and Joey are safe and unharmed.

Obviously there is more to the plot than that, but telling too much of it would give away a large portion of the plot. This is a story that needs to be read and experienced as you read it, not by reading a review. So, yes, Joey and Buck have some very sweet times and a few seriously sexy times in the story and there are even a few points that may have you reaching for the tissues. Overall this was a decent story with really good characters, good secondary characters, a solid plot that was well-paced, and enough relationship storyline to make this a complete romantic suspense book.

You're going to have a tough time deciding who you like more between Joey and Buck. They're both really lovable, well-developed characters that you want all the happy endings to happen for them. While I didn't get a chance to read the first book in the series, I enjoyed this one enough that I will definitely read that one, and hope that the author has more planned for this series.

This is definitely a book, and a series, that you should add to your summer reading list.
