



Reckless Hearts

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What do you do if you find yourself fantasizing about kissing your best friend? Sensitive guitarist Jake has been asking himself that same question for a long time, and there's no easy answer. Telling his dream girl—talented anime artist Elena—about his feelings might lead to the ultimate rejection, but not telling her just might kill him.

Before Jake can make his move, though, a new mysterious guy enters the picture in an unexpected way. In Elena's mind, Harlow is excitement personified: a rebellious yet kindred spirit who she instantly connected with online. Jake's gut is telling him that something about Harlow is off and that Elena is in way over her head, but the more Jake pushes the issue, the more he pushes Elena right into Harlow's arms—and into a tragic situation that neither of them could ever see coming.

Reckless Hearts is the second book in the sexy and suspenseful Wicked Games series, where lies, passion, and betrayal collide in the steamy beach town of Dream Point.

Reckless Hearts Details

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Author : Sean Olin

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From Reader Review Reckless Hearts for online ebook

Molly says

Huge thank you to the publisher for sending me a copy of this for review!

So last year I tried to read the first book in the "Wicked Games" series and I could not get into it and had to drop it. I was surprised to get this from Harper and thought that since they'd sent me a copy I'd give it a try. Thankfully things went MUCH better this time around.

Overall this is a quick contemporary read. The writing isn't anything special and I saw the twist coming a mile away. But I enjoyed the characters and the overall story. I would have liked more depth and more emotions... especially because Jake was supposed to be this deep, emotional guy. This was a very surface level story that was a bit predictable but like I said, I liked the characters.

I actually could relate very well with both Jake and Elena. I was in love with my best friend for a long time before I finally realized what a hot mess it was and left for good, so I could totally understand Jake's reservations over telling Elena about his true feelings. I could also understand how hard it was for him to see her obsessing over another person. And I've been in the situation before where someone I held dear to me wanted MORE than I could offer in that relationship and how hard it was to want to be close to that person, but not in the way that they wanted. I really enjoyed the struggle that both Jake and Elena went through and it was so hard for me to choose who I wanted to root for.

I also like how anime played a part in this. It was fun that Elena was so into anime and that she enjoyed drawing and animating things. I was a bit wtf at Harlow and his insistence that it was super easy to just get animators in Japan to notice some stupid American teen, but at that point I knew that Harlow was a jack-off.

Overall if you enjoy YA contemporary and are looking for a quick read then this should fit that need. And if you liked the first book then you should like this and if you hated the first book know that this one was MUCH better.

Stacy Books says

Jake and Elena have been best friends nearly their entire lives. They spend every day together, hanging out, and sharing with one another what each one loves to do: Jake is a song writer and guitarist; Elena loves creating anime based on their friendship. And of course, Jake is hopelessly, desperately in love with Elena. Then Jake has to move, and that's when their friendship really gets interesting.

When readers meet him, Jake and his mom move to her new husband's mansion in the richest part of a high society neighborhood. For the first time, Jake is without Elena, and is stuck in this alternate reality when he thinks things just can't get worse. Enter Nathaniel, Jake's step-brother.

Nathaniel plays the bad boy to a T; the reader will see the plot twist coming a mile away, but it's still fun to see everything play out. Without Jake, Elena falls into an online trap with Harlow, a boy she meets online. Elena falls hard for Harlow, but Jake knows this guy isn't what he seems to be. Of course, we know "Harlow" is really Nathaniel.

It would have been helpful to get into Nathaniel's head a little more; the chapters switch between Jake and Elena's points of view, so we don't really get to see why Nathaniel is so messed up. The plot is so thin, and it takes a while for the action to really heat up. This novel definitely isn't for serious readers, or readers who want to take away anything from a story. Still, it serves its purpose in being fun to read, or a good choice for reluctant readers. Apparently, it's part of a series -- one I definitely won't be too eager to pick up.

Ruthsic says

What do you do if you find yourself fantasizing about kissing your best friend? Sensitive guitarist Jake has been asking himself that same question for a long time, and there's no easy answer. Telling his dream girl—talented anime artist Elena—about his feelings might lead to the ultimate rejection, but not telling her just might kill him.

Before Jake can make his move, though, a new mysterious guy enters the picture in an unexpected way. In Elena's mind, Harlow is excitement personified: a rebellious yet kindred spirit who she instantly connected with online. Jake's gut is telling him that something about Harlow is off, and that Elena is in way over her head, but the more Jake pushes the issue, the more he pushes Elena right into Harlow's arms—and into a tragic situation that neither of them would ever see coming.

As a sequel, *Reckless Hearts* had a more engaging storyline than the previous one. Sure, it's a standalone novel, but set at the same high school, a couple of years later. Since the blurb practically gives away the storyline, I'll jump right onto my assessment. So, the story was some sort of nice-guy-versus-bad-guy, with Harlow out to destroy Jake for taking his life away from him. Jake knows of Harlow distantly, but later on realizes who he is. Meanwhile, Harlow has Elena wrapped around his little finger, and gets her to commit a crime. The manipulations in this book are worse, in that, first of all, he is doing it just to get back at Jake. Secondly, he is irrational about it, but also brilliantly executes it. Now that's a psychological thriller, without the actual thrills, but good nevertheless.

As for the characters, I couldn't feel anything for them this time around either. I mean, Jake is the Nice Guy, you know? The one who is sitting in the shadows, lamenting how the douches get the girls, which in this case, the idea was planted into his head via his stepbrother. He rejects the idea, but also lets it get to him, leading him to pushing her away and further into his arms. Now, Elena, who I agree has a shit home life, but damn girl, that is not a reason to throw caution to the wind and invite a practical stranger to your doorstep! She is stupidly naive about him, and for all her bluster about taking care of herself, she actually goes along with a stranger whom she knows next to nothing about. Hello, catfishing. And Harlow, well, his real identity is hardly a suspense, is shades of deranged and entitled - a dangerous combination.

The ending was the only part that was surprising, but also felt a little hollow. Nice to know that Jake went to the trouble of gathering evidence, but only to win her over, not for, I don't know, her safety? He was ready to not tell her, when she admitted her feelings for him, which struck me as him not respecting her as a person and more like a possession. His whole reason to go after Harlow is that he thinks he stole her from him, and Harlow's motivation coupled with that makes Elena like a doll that is being pulled between them. The epilogue - well, since the last one had an open ending, I think that goes for this too, which filled me with actual dread. I do and do not want a continuation, which makes my opinion about this book evident.

Received a free galley from Katherine Tegen Books via Edelweiss; this does not influence my opinions or the review.

Erin says

1.5 stars. The low rating is due large in part to disappointment. *Wicked Games* was a train wreck of awesomeness with characters that were complex and compelling. This companion? Not so much. The story dragged and lacked the suspense that made its predecessor so compulsively readable. Sad face here friends, a sad face indeed.

Diane Ferbrache says

Best friends, Jake (an aspiring musician) and Elena (online animation artist) are about to move to the next level when Jake's mother marries a hotel mogul. Jake finds himself in a new (much wealthier) town with a new stepdad and an obnoxious stepbrother. Elena, feeling abandoned by Jake, begins a relationship with someone she meets online. Jake is certain there's more to Harlow than his online profile would indicate.

In this teen romance there are no real surprises, just some plot twists and turns that keep the reader interested. Jake and Elena are sympathetic characters, we definitely root for them, and are not disappointed. Part of *Wicked Games* series all set in the beach town of Dream Point, I'm looking forward to checking out the rest.

Brad Sells says

The first book, *Wicked Games*, was such a twisted, gripping read, but hardly anything happened in *Reckless Hearts*. I called the twist at around the 20% mark, but what disappointed me the most was how draggy and slow this sequel was.

Sarah says

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to HarperCollins and Edelweiss.)

“When I’m with him, I feel, I don’t know. Reckless.”

This was an interesting story, but it wasn't as gripping as the first in the series.

I felt quite sorry for Jake and the position he found himself in; not knowing whether to confess to his best friend that he was in love with her, for fear of losing her altogether wasn't easy for him, and I could understand his indecision.

I didn't feel for Elena quite the same way I did for Jake, but I could sort-of understand her hesitancy to start something with Jake, even if she came across as a bit flighty.

"No way would he betray her by falling in love with her."

The storyline in this was mainly about Jake having secret feelings for Elena, and Elena not really having quite the same feelings, and instead chasing after a guy called Harlow who she'd met online. This online guy did have a bit of mystery surrounding him, but in my opinion he wasn't exactly a nice person! There was a bit of romance in this, but I didn't really like it all that much. There was too much hurt mixed in with the romance for me, with Jake's feelings not really being returned, and Harlow who wasn't exactly nice to Elena.

"Jake, you're my best friend. You mean more to me than anyone in the world."

The ending to this was okay, and there was a bit of a twist, it just didn't have quite the impact it was intended to though.

6 out of 10

Aly's Bookish Wonderland says

Review also available on 100% Rock Magazine!

"When I'm with him, I feel, I don't know. Reckless."

The first book in this series by Sean Olin, *Wicked Games*, was not my favourite. In fact, this reader found herself disliking everything about it: from the unlikable characters (which are usually the characters I always like) to the insulting way mental illness was handled in the context of the book. Unfortunately, despite wishing it were different, *Reckless Hearts* was no better.

This book is best described as a **train wreck**. Usually, I love reading about them with that sort of horrified fascination -- you can't not look at it, no matter how hard you try. Your eyes are just automatically drawn to the mess that will inevitably happen. This book is the **best kind of book**. At least, it usually is.

The truth is, *Reckless Hearts* is a fantastic cure for insomnia. For a book that is supposed to be thrilling, exciting and adrenaline-filled, I found myself falling asleep an awful lot. The characters -- particularly our main characters, Jake and Elena -- are boring and flat, nothing more than cardboard cutouts that stick to their lines and barely do anything exciting. They're supposed to be creative -- a musician and artist respectfully -- and fun, and have apparently known each other for years, yet none of that came through unless the author specifically *told* this reader what was happening. "Jake is writing some songs", "Elena is creating a new cartoon and eating crackers." The entirety of the book was narrated in a flat voice that inspired no feelings

whatsoever.

And the plot was no better. Although the excitement and action *finally* came through around the 83% mark (a LONG time to wait for anything to happen) it was over too quickly and left me wondering what the hell had just happened.

Elena and Jake have been best friends for years. There is nothing they do not know about each other, and nothing they can't speak about. Unless it's Jake's true feelings for Elena. He's fallen in love with her, but doesn't know how to tell her, and by the time he finally works up the courage to say something, a new guy has entered the scene and swept Elena off her feet. Harlow is everything Jake is not: exciting, daring, with a killer smile and a motorbike. Harlow, a person Elena met online. Harlow, whom Jake has a gut feeling isn't telling the whole truth.

And Jake is adamant on proving it.

This is where everything goes wrong, as far as this reader is concerned. Jake acts like a whiny, petulant child who stops talking to Elena the moment Harlow comes on the scene because he can't deal with his feelings. Rather than stepping up and being the friend he claims he is, Jake runs off with his guitar and a family pack of tissues and whines about how terrible his life is now that Elena has a new guy.

Elena, on the other hand, is dumb as rocks. It's like she's never even *heard* of 'stranger danger' or any horror stories about people met online. When you've only exchanged a handful of messages before he appears at your door, *anyone* reading would be wary because it disregards every safety rule. Not only that, but the fact that Harlow doesn't come across as a nice guy (and even claims to be hunted by some Cuban mob), she doesn't tell anyone about him, and doesn't even bother letting her family know where she is going and with whom. The basic safety net is completely ripped away, and for someone who claims to be responsible and sensible, Elena is really stupid.

The plot itself was handled particularly poorly, and I didn't like how it evolved. There were so many scenes that were downright unnecessary, and I couldn't believe that the entire book takes place within a month or so, rather than a year. Many scenes are dragged out over several chapters, which split between Jake and Elena (and sometimes a descriptive scene of a new cartoon Elena has uploaded) and so some parts are repeated twice (or even three times). Conversations between the characters are recycled and reworded to seem fresh and new when they're not; parents are absent and barely look after their children (or even care, it seems); the climax Olin worked so hard for was, unfortunately, a flop. I did not feel "gripped" or "thrilled" or even "mildly excited." I couldn't wait for this book to be over so I could take a nap.

I'd seen the "plot twist" coming from a mile away, and so the last 25% or so felt far too heavy and dramatic for me to cope with, but I'll give Olin this: He writes some very interesting, very good epilogues that leave me gasping for breath.

Unfortunately, *Reckless Hearts* was disappointing in every way, and definitely not my cup of tea.

For heart-stopping, wonderfully written YA thrillers, I suggest reading *Dangerous Girls* by Abigail Haas or *Liars, Inc.* by Paula Stokes.

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Desirae says

November 24th????!!?!?!?

...But still,

Dark Faerie Tales says

Review courtesy of Dark Faerie Tales

Quick & Dirty: After the enchanting, suspenseful first installment, I had high expectations for this second novel. Unfortunately, I was left feeling unfulfilled.

Opening Sentence: DP Movers – their slogan was, “you point the way, Dream Point!” – had arrived this morning at eight thirty.

The Review:

Jake is a sensitive musician who is in love with his best friend. His sudden move into his rich new stepdad's luxurious mansion has convinced him of his need to confess his love, but things keep getting in the way – namely, a boy that Elena has met online on her favorite anime website. Jake is seeing red flags and attempts to warn Elena of how she's being catfished, but it only pushes her away, and she goes running to Harlow. The chain of events that follows will, in the end, threaten lives.

Last year, I read Wicked Games for review and absolutely loved it, despite the mostly negative reviews (which I still don't understand. Guess I was the black sheep.). The novel was atmospheric, enchantingly written, with a healthy amount of suspense. That being said, I was thrilled to continue the trilogy and jump into its companion novel. Though characters from the previous installment are mentioned, the book centers around completely different characters, which I didn't have a problem with. The synopsis was utterly different, which, before reading, I was excited for – I was sure Penn would make something incredible. However, although I enjoyed this second book, I'm feeling underwhelmed.

The last story, I fell in love with a complex characters, even the wildly insane antagonist. For this novel, I thought the characters were pretty cookie cutter: the boy next door (literally) who is sensitive and plays guitar; the artistic, intriguing Elena; finally, the rebellious, spoiled son of a millionaire. I do give points for Elena being diverse, she was Cuban, I believe. She was in a bad situation – her sister was knocked up by a partying burnout that her father despises. Jake also was in an interesting setting, in a luxurious new home with a new family. Despite the situations they were navigating, I didn't feel compelled to read this novel like I had so compulsively been drawn into Wicked Games.

Watching Elena be catfished was a little annoying. Despite the way Jake communicates his concern to her –

which was a trainwreck – there were red flags all along. Really, she should have seen it coming. Harlow's character was definitely predictable, as well, and I saw from the very beginning the so-called "twist" that came along towards the end.

Altogether? This book was underwhelming. Yes, it had all the elements of a well-written story – diverse characters, an interesting plotline. Unfortunately, it all fell a little flat to me, and was in a sharp contrast to the first installment, which I found myself so entranced by. There were still really great passages, but I think that a lot of the times the book dragged, and it largely lacked the suspense that made the first one so readable. I think that I still want to read the third, of course, but this one wasn't as good as I anticipated.

Notable Scene:

They'd talked about what a relief it was not to have to try and impress each other – not to have to deal with the other person trying and failing to impress you – how they could actually be themselves with each other.

No way would he betray her by falling in love with her.

FTC Advisory: Katherine Tegen Books/HarperTeen provided me with a copy of Reckless Hearts. No goody bags, sponsorships, "material connections," or bribes were exchanged for my review.

Rebecca (Unbound Pages) says

This review and more can be found on my blog, The Library Canary.

****I received a free copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review. This has in no way influenced my opinion. The review below reflects my open and honest thoughts.****

I really enjoyed the first book in this "series", Wicked Games. Okay, it's not really a series. They are companion novels, but same concept as far as plot goes. The first one was a total guilty pleasure book for me. It was entertaining and screwed up and I couldn't look away. But this one just didn't grab me the way the first one did. Here's why:

I didn't care about the characters.

This is the number one reason why books lose stars for me. Flat characters. If I don't connect with the characters, I'm docking a minimum of one star, if not more. I didn't like the MC. So much so that I don't even remember his name right now and I read this less than a week ago. Oops. I thought he was really whiny and angst and I just never cared about him or his romantic plight. And the female lead. She was so... stupid. I can't use a better word for her. She was kind of an airhead in my honest opinion. She was very focused on getting a man and being with a guy and it annoyed the crap out of me. And she made the dumbest decisions. Getting on a motorcycle with some random dude you met on the internet? And even before that, giving the random guy on the internet your home address before making sure he's not a sociopath? Seriously girlfriend, use your brain.

The plot was extremely predictable.

I figured it out almost immediately and that made the book boring. I remember reading the first one and

being surprised at what ended up happening, but this one was just way too predictable for me. I wanted to be shocked, but nothing about this book surprised me.

The one thing I really liked was the music.

The main character is a musician and I did enjoy that aspect. I enjoyed reading about him writing new songs and how music gave him an outlet for his emotions. I loved that music brought him and his dad together. When something happens to his guitar, I'm not going to lie, I was a little heartbroken.

The sister relationship was on point.

The female lead has this sister who is pregnant and in a bad relationship. The sisters are nothing alike and so they don't always get along. But even though they were completely different people, they were there for each other no matter what. They would drop everything for each other and even put themselves on the line to stick up for the other. This was so realistic and I really loved reading about their relationship.

Overall this one was a miss for me.

I didn't enjoy *Reckless Hearts* as much as I thought I would. The predictable plot and characters I couldn't connect with kind of killed the book for me. I did like a few aspects of the story, but it wasn't enough to make up for the things it lacked.

Moriah says

It was crazy how Jake was right and almost got killed by his best friend on accident. But I REALLY wish that the book further elaborated on if Nate's new plan to get revenge on Jake at the end works or not....

Barb says

I hate to be too negative in a review, but I received an ARC from Edelweiss/Above the Treeline with the understanding I would give an honest review.

Reckless Hearts is a story of Jake and Elena who have known each other since they were in diapers. Jake is in love with Elena, but she is just a friend. Jake's mom marries a wealthy man who has a son named Nathaniel.

Nathaniel resents the "hippie chick" and her son who have come into his and his father's lives. He feels they are in it for all they can get. Of course, he actually is. He is a bad boy. He determines the best way to get to Jake is through Elena. He plots and carries out his evil plans. And, of course, Elena immediately falls for "Harlow" the character created by Nathaniel. After all, girls love bad boys and don't realize how wonderful the steady boy is that is beside her as her friend.

This is a trite story written with as many cliches and worn out lines as is possible to get into a book. The conversations are stilted, with lines you have heard in a dozen movies. Everything you expect to happen will happen. Nothing is unexpected or unusual. When Nathaniel asks Elena "how's tricks?" I had to recheck the

age of the book to make sure it wasn't written in the 1940's.

There is another book coming in this series. I won't bother. The epilogue in this book tells you all you need to know about the next title.

Paige (Illegal in 3 Countries) says

See more of my reviews on The YA Kitten! My copy was an ARC I got from the publisher via Edelweiss.

Diversity Rating: 1 – Tokenism

Racial-Ethnic: 1 (Elena is Cuban-American; another character named Arnold is Asian)

QUILTBAG: 0

Disability: 0 (Arnold has autism and is horribly portrayed/written)

Intersectionality: 0

Reviews for Wicked Games, the first novel in Olin's series, have been resoundingly negative and one of my friends calls that book among the worst she's ever read, but I got lured in by Reckless Hearts's love triangle, Florida setting, and promise of catfishing. It went as well as you'd think, meaning it didn't go well at all and I should really know better by now. It's an okay read but could do without making fun of the autistic kid Jake uses for his own gain.

If you're like me and didn't read Wicked Games but want to read Reckless Hearts, you won't be lost if you skip the first book altogether. They're more akin to companion novels than a solid series. The events of the first book seem to be a few years in the past and aren't mentioned except in passing as a hometown horror story. Jake and Elena are decent enough characters but nothing outstanding. Jake is your standard sensitive musician type and Elena is a Cuban-American weeaboo, but Elena is definitely the more interesting of the two because of the conflicts in her family (her sister is pregnant with a burnout's kid and the father of the family hates the burnout) and the way she feels the new class difference between her and Jake.

While they dance around their feelings for one another, Jake especially as the one of the two who acknowledges them at first, Elena is busy being catfished by a guy who calls himself Harlow. The true identity of Harlow is overly obvious and the antagonist behind the name is too Pure Evil to be a fun, interesting character. Like this "mystery," the writing tries too hard and has plenty of ham-fisted moments when it isn't being outright offensive like this:

"The dog," Arnold said darkly. "We will hunt him down. We will put an end to his dastardly adventures."

Jake didn't have the energy for Arnold's autistic melodrama right then. "Yeah," he said. "But have you learned anything yet?"

Autistic melodrama. That's all I need to say because there are no words adequate enough to express my feelings.

For all its flaws, *Reckless Hearts* is still compulsively readable in the way you stop and stare at any trainwreck because you want to see how much worse it gets. I don't recommend you read this or *Wicked Games*, though. There are better contemporary mystery/thriller novels out there and almost all of them refrain from insulting autistic people the way this novel does.

Faye, la Patata says

Don't we just love watching trainwrecks happen?

Last year, I read the author's *Wicked Games*, a young adult suspense thriller with extremely unlikeable characters who got themselves entangled in a situation that actually spelt complete and utter DISASTER. It was the sort of drama where you know everything was going to go *totally* wrong, and it was only a matter of watching everything explode. I do admit that the first book was suspenseful, the edge-of-your-seat kind of thriller that would make your heart pound, but because it had extremely unlikeable characters (as in I would have loved to go inside to slap them silly) **the connection wasn't really there. I didn't feel for them, heck, I wasn't even scared for them or anxious of what might happen.** Don't get me wrong, I love unlikeable characters, but unlikeable characters that you just CANNOT root for? You won't find me on the same page with that.

With that said, I think *Reckless Hearts* amended that... easily.

Yes, it still has the same trainwreck, but this time, with two rootable characters you just want to cheer on and will feel nervous for, and even an antagonist who is so awful and so conniving. **We have these characters plus a story that will put you literally on your toes... pretty much everything that I want in a suspense thriller.**

What are you to do when you're in love with your best friend next door but you have to move away across time because your mother remarried? You've been wanting to tell your feelings to her, but you're so shy and timid and so hesitant to "change" your relationship with her now that you made up some silly pretend girlfriend so she wouldn't think your love songs were about her? And what are you to do when one day, you suddenly end up having a problematic and conniving brother who is hell-bent not just on making your life hell, but to steal your very girl under your nose?

This is Jake's unfortunate situation. **Despite being so timid, I found him really adorable.** You could tell how much he cared for Elena, his best friend, and how much he wanted to give her the world. And at the same time, you can't help but fear for him too everytime Nathan is in the picture, because good lord, this guy is crazy. He is the kind of dude who'd do crazy, evil things just for the heck of it - without even a single blink. He uses bullying tactics to intimidate Jake and uses Elena's insecurity for making her fall in love with him (or an "image" of him he conveniently made up to torture Jake).

As for Elena, I found her situation kind of complex, too. Of course, she did things that I think were completely idiotic, but I kind of understood why she decided to do them. **When you're in a vulnerable situation and surrounded by problems, and you meet that one person that gives you some sort of sanctuary and makes you feel special, wouldn't you feel that temptation to simply give in?** That's why even though she contributed to the trainwreck they were bound to crash into, I didn't absolutely fault her for it. She was a victim just as much as Jake was. As much as you want to feel sorry for her, you'd want to bonk her on the head, too.

And let me reiterate: the plot in this book will put you *almost* over the edge. **It's exciting, it's crazy, and well, pretty intense. Especially if down the line, your life gets in danger, for something that started innocently.**

If I do have one complaint, it's that the antagonist didn't feel complex enough. This was mostly told in Jake and Elena's POVs, but in the previous book, all three characters had their own chapters but Nathan had almost none here, so we didn't really see what was going on in his head. It looked like he was only doing shitty stuff because for the heck of it and I kind of wanted more complexity from him.

I'm so happy that I decided to continue reading this author's works after her first one. Now I can hardly wait for the third book!
