



The Anatomy of Perception

A.J. Rose

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In the beginning, there was wreckage. Dane Perry's mother was dead, and the father who always said he'd amount to nothing blamed him. Dane swore he'd become something. He would be someone.

In the middle, there was escape. Rebuilding his life from the ashes of his mother's memory, Dane found success as a respected surgeon, and love in the form of Craig Dahl, a talented artist who became his everything. But there was also darkness, lies, and a crumbling foundation just waiting for the ground to shift.

In the end, there was a spectacular fall, illusions shattered, and for Dane, nothing more to lose. He was broken, damaged, and left with fierce demons. But from the bottom, the only way left is up. Dane renewed friendships and salvaged his career. The only thing he cannot replace is Craig. But Dane has a plan. Brick by brick, his foundation is rebuilt, and all he needs is for Craig to listen one last time.

In the beginning again, there's hope and tatters of love. Can Dane repair the damage with Craig? Can he rescue the only thing he amounted to that ever truly mattered?

This book contains vivid descriptions of symptoms of PTSD and events that can cause anxiety. Reader discretion advised.

<http://youtu.be/rng3S3MYe3I>

The Anatomy of Perception Details

Date : Published March 10th 2015 by The Grim Writer Press

ISBN :

Author : A.J. Rose

Format : ebook 378 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Contemporary

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From Reader Review The Anatomy of Perception for online ebook

Jaycee Edward says

AJ Rose's books are some of the hardest books on the planet to write reviews for, because the threads of her stories are always so interwoven that it's almost impossible to say something that isn't going to be a spoiler. Maybe it's because she knits.

This was not my typical AJ Rose reading experience. I usually block off release day and spend the entire day reading cover to cover. This time I didn't have that luxury and I ended up reading this in small segments. It's for that reason only, I had a little trouble following the timeline in the beginning. Most readers will have no problem following the jumps back and forth in time. (Those usually annoy the heck out of me, by the way, but for some reason, in Anatomy of Perception, I actually enjoyed them for the first time ever.)

Since I can't really discuss any specifics of the story, I'll take this opportunity to tell you what I love about AJ's writing. She has a way of selecting THE perfect words and using them create a movie in my mind as I read. Some authors paint me a picture with their words. AJ shoots video.

“I thought I was saving you from me.’ He detonated, arms flailing in an explosion of anger and pain and disbelief.”

“...his excited expression melted like a Dali clock.”

As I went through my list of highlights to write this, I realize I'd highlighted HUGE chunks of text – not just passages and paragraphs - but PAGES of text that moved me, usually to anger or tears. I highlighted practically the entire scene involving Craig, Dane, Holly and Braden at a restaurant. It led me to send Ms. Rose a message on Facebook in the middle of the night saying, “What is it with you and bathroom stalls?” (Still haven't recovered from that scene with Jackson in Queers).

There's a lot of angst, but humor sprinkled throughout. A scene with Craig's autistic students had me giggling in glee. But just like in real life, one moment I was cracking up over a student asking Craig, “What's happening in Dane Perry's pants that you want to see?” and the next moment AJ blindsided me with Craig stating, “I've been talking to Dane again for two months and five days.” Doesn't sound like much, but trust me - in the context of the story, it was like someone had thrown a live grenade in the classroom.

I don't know what was harder to read: watching Dane slip into the depths of hell or watching Craig watch him fall. Leave it to AJ Rose to tackle slipping into the grips of mental illness - in first person. Again... the choice of words here is huge.

“...a pending explosion felt imminent. The worms, they squirmed; the icicle, it froze and pierced; and the clock, it ticked in the dark. Outside the windows, nameless judges stared in at us, leaving me exposed and raw even as I tried to burrow and burrow and burrow into Craig's sunshine.”

“My insides were a mess, as though I'd eaten a slab of Jell-o and gotten on a roller coaster.” (How perfect is that??)

I adored Dane and I felt myself trying to help Craig and Holly hang onto him when he was slipping. And

Craig...? I loved Craig from the moment he appeared on the page and that love grew and grew and grew. Just thinking of him now is bringing me to tears. He's not perfect, but, dammit, he's got a beautiful soul.

It's obvious how deeply Dane loves Craig. He says himself, "I had Craig, who I loved so much I'd ripped myself in half to set him free...." But I realize now, I have no highlighted words of love from Craig to Dane - no giant passages or pages of declarations, but that's okay, because now that all the threads have been woven together, I see that this story was maybe never really about how much Dane loved Craig - but how much Craig loved Dane.

Oh, and if you follow AJ on social media, you'll get a big kick out of the description of Craig's new therapist. I was laughing through my tears.

Wyckedone says

Pardon me, but, who the hell rates a book less than five stars before it's out and before you even read it, huh? Fucking dilettantes.

Bev says

Not my favourite of AJ's work but her writing is excellent...as per usual. For me this seemed to drag in places which is why I took so long to read it, although I certainly wasn't phased by the timeline jumps. Craig I loved from the start, he was very open and forthright in his opinions. Dane was much more guarded and difficult to get to grips with, mainly I think because he had so many secrets and either couldn't or wouldn't share them with Craig, the man he'd lived with for 4 years or so, although it has to be said that when you read the story and get to know Dane's background, you'll understand entirely why he was so reticent. Glad there was a HEA though, and 4 stars from me.

Kazza says

First off, I wanted to love this book. Look at the cover and the blurb. It sounds and looks right up my alley but it did not translate for me. Too much melodrama and not enough connection with the MCs, and don't even start me on the bitch that is Sabrina. I don't like bitchy shrew secondary characters. Vacuous, vapid, narcissistic women who don't use their brains, which they have, no, better to use your bitchiness and your body.

It started interestingly enough but the chemistry was lacking between Dane and Craig. The past and present were repetitive and atonement did not occur as I would have liked, and when things were discussed or covered, I was no longer interested.

There is a great idea here and with some lines drawn through a number of situations, stripped down, more

raw and real, this could have been a very, very good book.

In depth SPOILER review at

♣ Irish Smurfétté ♣ says

3.5 Intriguing stars on Prism Book Alliance®

I was somewhat intrigued as this started, puzzle pieces of Dane Perry's life randomly revealed. Jumps back and forth between the past and present gave it a dreamlike quality, a nonlinear revelation of those puzzle pieces. It also meant it took a while to get a handle on the intended focus for this story. The more I read, the less important the flashback chapters felt. Events referenced in the present are then explained in great detail in the past. Unfortunately, for me, it was unnecessary and lessened the impact of those events taking place in the here and now, the built up tension lost.

Dane has been through a lot, his entire life a series of incredible personal challenges. He's internalized them, like most people do, and they've influenced every decision he's made, especially in regards to personal relationship, no matter the type. How does he work himself back into his own life? How does he try to help the ones he loves in understanding it all? Understanding him? *This* is where the story was strongest, when focused on the how and when and with whom Dane was struggling to do these very things, in the present.

There was a lot of research that went into writing this story: how hospital admin functions, internships and physical therapy, medical conditions, both physical and mental, and psychiatry. It all helped build the world of this story but it also overwhelmed it. The casualties were the characters and my ability to remain connected to them. Further, emotional gains made became emotional gains lost.

Dane's story is one of someone working extremely hard at overcoming their fears, especially those embedded by the very people who were supposed to treasure him and did not.

Craig is the man who... well, he just might be the one tool Dane is missing in his mission to change his life, make it better, make it *his* again. Actually, not again, but *finally*. I don't want to give anything away but they're good together when they're together. Compassionate. Caring. Forgiving. Truthful, no matter the end result. This is the biggest reason the chapters that take place in present day drew me in when they did. This was the story that was begging to be told, to be the star in the spotlight, not shuffled to the side of the stage, alternating with the past.

Rose's writing is always smooth, confident, and utterly honest. No exception here. I just wish the well written story had grabbed a hold of me, making it impossible to forget, giving me that feeling of oh my gosh I want to get back to reading this book. For me, that didn't happen here. I was curious but not compelled. This could truly be a case of it's not you, it's me. It feels like that must be the case given the evident research conducted, the depth of pain Dane carries, the excellent writing and all of the rest.

For me, this didn't punch the ticket but, given Rose's skills, I'm still glad that I read it.

Lucy says

3-3.5 stars

What worked for me.....

I liked Dane and his family drama. Even though he wasn't in the book much I loved his brother, he was my favorite character. I liked the beginning of the novel and I liked the final resolution between Dane and his father.

What didn't work for me....

The cartoon villain. She wasn't fleshed out and she ended up just bring your typical bitchy evil female character you find often in mm romances. Yawn.

The in between of the novel got too slow at times.

I did not like the back and forth between past and present. I really liked the present chapters but the past chapters felt repetitive since I already knew from the present chapters what had gone down, I wasn't really interested in more details.

Overall it was a nice reading experience and I was happy the two main characters found their way back.

Laura Miller says

really wonderful and moving

This is such a wonderful and moving story and so beautifully written. This story is a light read. It's full of sorrow and pain, but also love, hope and forgiveness. Tears will fall, so be prepared. Buy this book, read it and enjoy.

Diverse says

Just breathe! That's what I kept telling myself throughout this amazing and emotional story. Then I found myself saying it to Dane and Craig. The Anatomy of Perception is a plunge into the many shades of true love. True love isn't all flowers, candy, hugs, and kisses. Sometimes it's cruel. Sometimes between the hearts and hugs there is lies and regret. There's pain, always pain. Not always for you, more so for those who you love so deeply. Reading Dane and Craig's story was like being impaled with a knife of misfortune only to be embraced with something much stronger than the evils of the world.

This is a story about strength. It's a story for anyone who's had to climb up from rock bottom. Superheroes don't always wear capes. Sometimes they wield a scalpel or a paintbrush. There are forces on this earth that are beyond our control. You can't count on every day being perfect but you can choose who you can count on to get through the unknown.

I love this story so much that I cry just writing this review. AJ Rose has a knack for just getting it right. She understands life, she understands love in all its forms and because of that she translates it so very well.

This is a must read. A must own!

Mare SLiTsReaD Reviews says

2.5 stars

I love the stories of lovers reuniting. I love angst. I love the **feelings**.
I love the heartbreak. The fishers. The makeups to breakups to makeups. The chemistry. Butterflies. Tears.
Emotion.

I wish I could tell you I got all that ^^^ in this book. But I didn't.

But I will say I stuck through and didn't DNF.

There was just so many things that I found wrong and little that I found right.

Like Sabitcha.

Seriously???? Do people like her even exist???

Im all for forgiveness. But I think our boy Craig couldn't have had a little more back bone. Or like an epic fight. You know where words are thrown and there are tears streaming down your face? Yah didn't happen

And I couldn't get a real grasp on Dane. I wish I could have **felt** all his emotions but I didnt :(

Alas, I didnt feel the connection btwn the 2 MCs and that is a **BIG BIG HUGE thing for me while reading.**

Mare~Slitsread

Lala says

3.75 stars.

Overall, this was a solid, well-written story, with fleshed-out characters. I loved reading the hospital scenes..Dane being in his element, doing his job was fascinating.

I didn't care much for the two parallel storylines, past and present. Skipping years of the beginning of Dane&Craig's relationship made me miss the chemistry between the heroes. Aside from that, the book was too long-winded..I'd prefer it to be tighter. At times it just got a bit boring, though not to the point I would consider abandoning the book. There were too many man-tears and two villains who turned out to be not quite as evil as I would have expected.

On the plus side, I adored Holly. She brought the much needed lightness into this book.

Jules Lovestoread says

Dane Perry may have made something of himself – graduating med school and becoming a promising surgical resident – but underneath it all, he's a mess. The really cool part about reading this book, though, is that when we first meet Dane, he's already well on his way to getting his life back together. I love how AJ Rose begins her new novel *The Anatomy of Perception*. The start of this book means everything...Is it the beginning of the rest of their lives? Or, just one more thing that Dane is going to have to survive? SEE MY FULL REVIEW at The Novel Approach - <http://thenovelapproachreviews.com/20...>

Baba says

3 stars. Review posted March 15, 2015

Favorite quote:

In that context, I was waiting to no avail for Dane to be that outstanding patient advocate. However, just ignore my comment because the story obviously wasn't intended to go in that direction.

Me before reading *The Anatomy of Perception*:

COVERGASM. COVERGASM. COVERGASM. COVERGASM. COVERGASM.
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COVERGASM. COVERGASM. COVERGASM. COVERGASM. COVERGASM. COVERGASM.

I love this cover.

I also love this author's work. Usually.

Me after reading *The Anatomy of Perception*:

This book is still causing me one of the best COVERGASMS I've ever had. Also, I still love AJ's work. Usually. But...

I have said this before and I will say it again. I have no qualms whatsoever being sincere in my reviews. However, there are times when it sucks being honest, esp. when I have to review a book that didn't live up to my expectations and is written by a favorite author. Believe me, I would have loved to gush over *The Anatomy of Perception* and, since my reading year hasn't been stellar so far, I was hoping for a mind-blowingly great read. Yet it's a sad fact that AJ's latest book couldn't rock my book world. I'm also aware that it's not fair to compare every future work of AJ to her Power Exchange series (*Power Exchange*, *Safeword*, *Consent*). But I will regardless. Neither the story nor the characters of *The Anatomy of Perception* were on a

par with her Power Exchange series, let alone outmatch this outstanding series.

"I love you, and I want the world to know it. Even if you need time, it doesn't change how I feel about you."

He kissed me, his hands threading into my hair and clenching into fists, my scalp stinging as he pulled me in. He devoured me, bringing his leg up and around my hip to trap me against him. He electrified me, delving with his tongue like my mouth was his breath of life, and he wanted to own me. He did own me. He always had.

The story is told in two concurrent timelines. Dane, who is not out and proud, meets Craig, a hot street artist, in October 2005. Though when Craig wants to paint Dane, he declines.

"I'm sorry. I really can't. Maybe I'll see you around though."

"Me or my ass?" he asked, dropping his volume and giving me a wink. So he had seen me checking out the goods.

(...)

"Both." It was the best parting line I'd ever had, so I took advantage, chuckling as I walked away.

The next morning when Dane is on his way to class, he stumbles upon a commotion, people taking pictures of...Dane himself whose face is plastered billboard sized on the side of a concrete building. Dane, for obvious reasons that readers will get to know about, is not out for any kind of publicity and is eager to remove the graffiti as soon as possible. He asks his best friend (and beard) Holly to lend him a helping hand. Over the course of the next few months, Craig is happily drawing Dane's face all over Manhattan and Dane keeps removing the pictures. In April 2006 they meet again at the occasion of yet another huge graffiti of Dane. They have a cup of coffee and start to date.

Due to his PTSD and anxiety disorder, Dane had to bury his dream of becoming a surgeon and is working as a physical therapist instead.

Favorite part of the entire book:

(view spoiler)

To be continued...check out the picture / quote at the beginning of my review.

I felt the beginning was very promising, though it's unfortunate that the entire plot was impaired by a long-winded narrative. I wanted a 'tighter' story. Also, I thought the tale wasn't that compelling and somewhere along the way it simply lost its momentum. To be fair, I wasn't outright bored by it but it was too easy to put the book down. That never happened with Ben. I have such fond memories and simply devoured that ~~man~~ series. Here, however, I was actually glad for the story to be over. I know that does sound harsh but it's the truth. Emotion is center-stage for me personally. Reading a book means I live and breath emotion. If I don't feel "it" and if I don't really connect or care for the characters, then a novel sinks down to the vast sea of mediocrity.

I needed and wanted a boatload of groveling on the part of Dane. He didn't really have to work so hard to get Craig back.

I needed better palpable and blazing chemistry. The kind of chemistry I can feel in my fingertips and is

giving me goosebumps. The kind of chemistry that leaves me breathless with anticipation at their impending climax (pun absolutely intended). Get your dirty mind out your gutter please.

Even the sex (no BDSM in this book which was perfectly fine by me, BTW) left me more or less indifferent and that's not good. Though that might be the jaded reader rearing its ugly head. Well...

"That's so stupid," he said thickly. Finally, he looked at me, his eyes shiny. Shadows obscured the rest of his expression, but his eyes were kind and sad. "I would have helped. You know I would have been beside you the whole time."

Agreed! I also thought that the moment when everything fell apart and they split was so anticlimactic. Instead of empathizing with Dane, it made me dislike him extremely. Dane also acted quite melodramatic a couple times which, basically, never appeals to me.

Anyway, I would like to make it clear that I didn't mind the two concurrent timelines. Fact was, I found that concept interesting but it's unfortunate that I didn't feel dazzled, neither by the characters nor the plot.

From the blurb:

In the end, there was a spectacular fall, illusions shattered, and for Dane, nothing more to lose. He was broken, damaged, and left with fierce demons. But from the bottom, the only way left is up. Dane renewed friendships and salvaged his career. The only thing he cannot replace is Craig. But Dane has a plan. Brick by brick, his foundation is rebuilt, and all he needs is for Craig to listen one last time.

Not only the cover but also the blurb let my expectations shoot sky-high. But rebuilding that foundation brick by brick wasn't intense enough for me. It didn't consume me the way I was hoping for and, quite frankly, the forgiveness part happened too easily for my liking.

In any event, it might be another case of *it's me not the book*. Please don't let my opinion put you off. You might even end up loving it. It's not a bad read by any means, just not what I was anticipating.

"There's inspiration in devastation."

I would sign this quote without missing a beat because I *know* it's true.

Lisa says

I enjoyed this book and actually didn't mind the back and forth in time.

We started in the modern day and then alternated as the story of Dale and Craig was told.

Craig and artist, and Dale suffering from PTSD meet when Craig draws a picture of Dale. Over the coming

years their relationship is eventually destroyed by a turn of events which affect Dale. I thought the subject of PTSD was handled well in this book, with it being seen as a long term illness rather than something that can be diagnosed and gotten over quickly. I am also glad that Craig didn't take Dale back quickly but kinda of made him work for their HEA.

, • * ° *••Gwendolyn•°**★°**★ says

OMG PURE SWEETNESS & YET SO MUCH SADNESS IS INSIDE..

Is it worth the tears.

Yes!

I laughed , I cried and I rejoiced....and when he said.....

"I want you to fuck me so hard I can taste you. I want you to fold me in half and take me to that heaven you always found when I fucked you. I want you to love fucking me so much there's no other option but to be with me again and again, to wake up with me, and to paint that beauty on our souls for as long as we both shall live"

Be still my heart...sigh....

In reading this book I found that it captivated my romance loving heart from page 1.

I loved how these guys fell in love.

I loved how they met. And...

I loved how they loved.

Cuz...he wanted so bad...he said this

"I wanted our papery-skinned, wrinkly fingers tangled together while we sat in matching rocking chairs on some front porch overlooking a beach in Florida, because we'd retired there, reminiscing about the time we left a trail of clothes from the door to the bedroom. I wanted the whole happy ending, and not just the orgasmic kind. And I was willing to do anything with him to make it so"

Did he make it so?

(view spoiler)

This book take's a certain mood...there is NO action (like Safeword) but, the MCs are lovable you get to know them slowly. This is a lazy days read. I loved it.

BUT, PLEASE BEWARE!!

This writer seems to have a death in every book I have read so far, and that I'd NOT MY THING.

Also,

This book has-

Flashback's in every other chapter.

An unbelievably crazy typical Bit*h of a villain.

And, some piss me off sadness. (view spoiler) RIP. * SOB* A.J . Rose why do you keep doing this to me! * SOB*

It also has-

Manties!

Greatness within the storyline

Solid, well Nurtured Writing.

Feels that Captured my Heart.

A Beautiful Artistic touch.

And a message of Peace, Love and OMG, Hope (I love the father outcome).

It has a sensitive touch to PTSD, abuse, and mental illness.

And, it is an easy read. That is also heartbreakingly sad (see picture above) . But, I truly adored every page and every word.

But, my mind to believe that a transition from active resident surgeon MD to PT Physical Therapist? That simply did NOT work for me. I hated that part because he deserved the surgeon....after what he went through.

But, gosh, there is so much to love about this book. And, one of those things is that this book puts Art at the forefront. We have an Artist & Doctor~ Anatomy of perception.....such a clever title. This book awesomely places emphasis on the creative and beautiful mind of an autism babe. I love that so much that I find myself overlooking any minor flaws and embracing the Beauty of the book, and in this book there is a lot of beauty. Inside and out.

Evil Cat says

One extra star for an exceptionally good story idea, but the execution was a complete failure.

I'm not going to repeat the blurb, but a broken person trying to put the pieces back together and try for a second chance? Awesome idea for a story. Awesome. Unfortunately we never really get to see that struggle. And the way the sequence of events are put together is more focused on Dane as the victim of a really shitty

past, rather than seeing Dane bottom out and then struggle to recover.

This is written with the chapters alternating between the present and the slow progression of Dane's past from 2005 up until the moment of crisis that drove him and Craig apart in 2012. The pacing is slaughtered by two things: the irritating, repetitious push-pull of constant flashbacks that reiterate and flesh out whatever Dane says or thinks about his past; and the attempted slow build of the initiating events that led to the crisis. Rose was attempting, I think, to have both story lines, the fracture and the redemption arcs, climax at the same point in the book, but all it does is make this very long book drag.

It was an ambitious plan, but the way it's written robs Dane's present of any power, makes it a bit distanced and superficial, because you don't get to see why he fell apart, that happens later in the book, or any part of his efforts to put himself back together. That two years is missing out of this book. The story starts, poof! with Dane trying to get Craig back after having done "something" unforgivable a couple of years ago. The details of that initiating crisis aren't revealed until very late in the story (although you've got a pretty clear idea of what happened before you're 20% in because the author has given lots of general outline). The breakdown and crisis should feed the redemption story. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense when one doesn't lead into the other, but instead runs parallel to it.

As a result of all the dropped hints, half told bits and foreshadowing, the story felt mostly done about the 50% mark, which leaves the last 50% as an exercise in fill in the blanks. I skimmed a lot of the last half of this one because I was bored. Honestly, I didn't care about Craig, or Dane or whether they got back together. They didn't feel real to me and the constant jumping around kept me from feeling any attachment to the story.

The other problem(s) that bring this down close to a one star are the flatness of the side characters and the superficial, easy tropes that weaken a great redemption, second chances arc. To the point where I wasn't engaged and didn't care about what happened between Dane and Craig.

The best friend (beard) Helen is the standard way too helpful supportive female. She is bookended by the gay collecting ambitious manipulative female coworker. I know I harp on this, but there is no reason not to have fleshed out, balanced female side characters rather than various versions of madonna and whore. I'm tired of it and I will consistently mark down books where I see it.

This book badly needed a good developmental editor, because the ideas of the story had enormous potential, but instead it felt gimmicky and clunky.
