



Brave

Zoe Dawson

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In the season of hope, in the season of giving...

How far would you go for your friend?

Alissa Thompson has been the good girl her whole life. Her uninterested parents don't understand her hopes and dreams. But this Christmas when her steadfast childhood friend Charlie needs her more than ever, she can't back down. Crossing the line means being braver than she has ever been in her life. It means changing and growing and taking a stand.

Dakota Gray was brave in the face of debilitating fear. But he lost himself in that blood soaked day and has shunned everything he once knew. Now shattered and broken, he hides out in isolation, his wounds beyond healing. His heart closed, his emotions buried, he's a man on the edge of self-destructing. Little does he know that courage would be found in another searching for the strength to be brave.

Now snowbound in the Colorado Rockies one week before Christmas, Alissa thought this was about her journey and her friend, about setting him free. But from the moment she meets Dakota, she learns about what real bravery is all about. What real love is all about. But is the season enough, her courage enough, her love enough to heal this hero's brave heart and in the end set herself free?

Warning: This book is for mature audiences only!

New Adult Contemporary Romance.

Other books by this Author:

A Perfect Secret Series (Hope Parish Novels) New Adult Contemporary Mystery

A Perfect Mess

A Perfect Mistake (coming soon)

A Perfect Dilemma (coming soon)

Going to the Dogs series, Romantic Comedy/Light Mystery

Leashed #1 (FREE)

Groomed for Murder #2

Hounded#3

Collared #4

Brave Details

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Author : Zoe Dawson

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From Reader Review Brave for online ebook

Danna says

My copy was provided via NetGalley by Blue Moon Creative, LLC in exchange for an honest review.*

1.5/5 Stars - I don't like it but I don't hate it either.

Dakota came off as tortured soul who has unsuccessfully escaped the horrors of his past, retreating towards himself in an attempt to save himself from the pain.

Alissa, a girl who was doing all she could - even going against her family - to fulfill a promise to a best friend.

As I was through the first two chapters I realized that *this wasn't my cup of tea*.

I can be a sucker for romance but insta-love and insta-lust? It felt somehow *forced*. I'd personally prefer a much slower approach.

I find some of the descriptions a bit too much. Especially Alissa's descriptions of Dakota. I get the fact that he's hot. You don't have to point that out *every. single. time*. And what bugs me is the fact that she only met this guy and already, she feels comfortable - too comfortable, in fact. Having no qualms whatsoever of asking him to fetch her luggage. At least a little decency will be appreciated - after all, she came from a wealthy family. I was hoping she'd act more...refined.

I find Dakota's POV a little better than Alissa's. Although the fact that he wants her out of there but ended up carving her a walking stick and even ornamented it with flowers made me roll my eyes.

Parts of the book reminds me much of Fifty Shades. And what with Dakota having the last name of, you guessed it...Grey?! It has a lot of cliché and a bit dramatic for my taste.

I guess to me, the characters weren't that believable. They felt unreal.

I think I had to commend Zoe Dawson's writing for the fact that even though I did not like the story, **it still caught my attention**, and that is saying something. There were mysteries that kept me intrigued.

This is a must read for those seeking instant romance which I think, might appeal to a number of girls out there.

**This is the first book from NetGalley that I reviewed although I downloaded some other books on the said site before - I didn't know how to open .acsm files then - and I haven't got a chance to read any of those.*

Tina Lee Harris says

This book just was not my cup of tea. I think the premise of the story makes it seem as though it would be a great read. But it just didn't do it for me. I had a hard time finding the two characters falling into love so quickly after the past that each of them has.

Alissa is that girl that does what her parents say but they seem to overlook her. So when her best friend, Charlie, asks her to do something for him, she will do it. No matter what. This is his wish and she must do it. She will have to overcome some of her fears along the way in the snowy mountains of Colorado.

Dakota has been keeping to himself since the accident that changed his life forever. He has been battling his own demons in his own way. Being in the cabin away from everyone is exactly how he likes it until he spots this angel standing on the edge of the mountain. He knows he has to stop her from jumping.

Alissa and Dakota will have to learn to share their pain and past to move forward.

Deniz says

1,5 Stars

Review:

PLOT: Here lies the issue I got with this novella. This is the reason for the low rating. The reason for me hovering over I didn't like it

I didn't like most of the story line. I don't like the whole insta-love or insta-lust thing, I simply don't get it. This had both thrown in so honestly it made me roll my eyes right from the get go. Oh and add to that the one and only. And I just can't deal.

I was not impressed with the smut. It just was, I don't know... not for me? I found it not very enticing.

In general this was too cliché and too emotional and too grand gesture for me.

I did like the underlying message, or some of them. I didn't like how it was brought across.

The epilogue though is the reason I rounded this down. I know what it was supposed to evoke in me. But I just thought: "Really? Seriously are there men out there who speak like this?" To be honest should I ever have to face a situation like that - I would run! I am more of an action speak louder than words kinda girl. And forget the grand romantic gestures, they scare the crap out of me and make me wonder what hidden agenda there is to it. Yeah I know, I am a cold-hearted hard-ass B.

I think however **the story will appeal to loads of gals out there.**

PROSE: Having said all these things about the story line, just loved the Prose (reason I am hovering towards this is ok)

I love the way Dawson writes. **The novella was well thought out and well paced.** I loved how she added flashbacks and slowly unravelled the story. Dawson held my attention despite the fact that I wasn't sold on the story and wasn't sure about the characters. Which is a feat. I gulped this up and when I was finished I realised that despite me not really liking this, I was totally captivated. Sure speaks for Dawson's skill as a writer.

CHARACTER BUILDING: I didn't like either MC particularly well. They were too soppy and melodramatic for me. Oh and possibly not broken enough. The character building was done really well. One got to know them slowly, one reveal after the other. And considering this is fairly short, I ended up knowing a great deal about them. My issue was I couldn't find myself caring for them, they seemed to be carefully planned and not quite believable.

It's a must read novella for lovers of the genre and the author. And I am planning on reading another of Dawson's books, hoping that I will like that story line better next time

For more (reviews ect) of The 12 NA's CHRISTMAS on CLOSET GEEKS AND SLOW MO . click [HERE](#)

Kate ★ says

I received a free digital copy from Netgalley in exchange for an honest feedback.

I wonder where I found the strength to finish this. I've put it down a lot of times because I was really bored as it dragged on. I have no idea what to expect with this, but the cover caught my eye, and that was one of the very few things I appreciated in this book.

The whole story revolved around two characters - Dakota and Alissa, described physically perfect which was one of the major cliché factors. Both have a dark past they wished to hide, but slowly opened up through conversations and a lot of sexual tensions along the way. I have to admit that I was confused when the story began, but that turned to annoyance and even boredom before even reaching chapter 5. Things were so unreal. Can you imagine how the universe must have conspired for their paths to cross? How lucky for Alissa that Dakota was even a healer? In just a matter of few days they were changed into what they thought was impossible - creatures in the path of moving on. Alissa was described as one having compassion, but seriously she was just lusty most of the time. There was even a part when Dakota was opening up and Alissa was just kissing him (to bring him back to reality or more of taking advantage?)

Most of the time, they just held back from their lust, which Dakota attributed to the demons inside of him (and they appear every so often in the book). I think they should have just succumbed to the call of the flesh so this book would have been over sooner! Or, better yet, the author should have just stopped dragging it on since the story was predictable anyway. That was just 118 pages but seriously felt like forever! I'm happy that with their new resolve to be brave, but other than that, there was nothing else I've appreciated :(

Kristine says

Original review found at <http://kristineandterri.blogspot.ca/2...>

Alissa and Dakota are two lost and broken souls who are stranded together in a cabin on an Aspen mountain top by a blizzard and unusual circumstance the week of Christmas. If this doesn't make for a cozy and pleasurable pre-Christmas read then I don't know what does! Did I mention that Dakota is swoon worthy in a dark and broken kind of way?

Dakota has been closed off and numb since a traumatic event in his life and is not thrilled that Alissa is stuck in his secluded cabin with him. Why was she there and what was with the back pack? Alissa sees something in Dakota beyond the sad, broken man with the demons that haunt him. As much as they don't want to admit it and fight it, they make each other feel things like they never have before.

This story is haunting and beautiful at the same time. Both characters are beyond likeable and their stories are beyond sad. The chemistry between the two is sizzling and the way they come together is heartwarming. This was a quick but satisfying Christmas read for me and at the same time I think I found a new author to enjoy.

Deborah says

I don't know what to say other than I was blindsided by this novella by Zoe Dawson. Expecting a feel-good, sweet little Christmas story, **Brave** left me an emotional mess, crying in my room as I tried to get a grip and come to terms with what I had just read. I haven't done either...and I'm still crying. **Brave** is not a "Christmas" novel. Rather, it is one about life and love, sacrifice, soul-searing pain and soul-lifting joy, numbing fear and the bravery to face that fear in spite of yourself. The synopsis on this and other sites explains the plot adequately but in no way prepares you for the emotional storm of this magnificent little story. It may be short but it is powerful! Ms Dawson, I got it, I felt it, I lived it through your words. Now, let me wipe my eyes and blow my nose...again...and put the rest of your books on my wishlist.

Sue Stewart says

I finished this book and just sat quietly in awe at having experienced such a moving story!

From her entrance during the blizzard, (possessively dragging her pink and yellow backpack, with Winnie the Pooh on the face, behind her) to her subsequent fall over the cliff, rescue, and residency in the cabin, (sprained ankle and all) I absolutely loved Alissa! Her strength, in both her quest to carry out her promise to her best friend Charlie and to convince Dakota that he deserves more than this life of isolation, was the true catalyst in this story for me.

Dakota was living with the demons from his past and struggling to try to overcome them! Alissa said it best - "I was so thoroughly intrigued by him. His looks and body aside, there was something about him.

Something...wounded. I knew about being wounded, and maybe that was why I recognized it in him." His character development during this story is extraordinary!

And this is their journey, to overcome the demons and see if Love can really conquer all! And what an amazing story unfolds - filled with laughter and tears and hope! And a whole new meaning to the word "Brave"! Oh, and one truly Awesome Epilogue!

Zoe, thank you for allowing me the privilege of reading an ARC of this book

Gisbelle says

What a beautiful story! It was emotional and so heartbreaking. I loved both characters, their journeys and it was sweet and romantic how they fell for one another.

Christine Wallflower & Dark Romance Junkie says

3 Brave Stars!

Review to come

Amanda says

I received a copy of this book via Netgalley to read and review.

This book was so cliché it's comical, honestly I kept reading because it was funny how bad this book was. You know that Facebook friend of yours that is in a new relationship every month and the day they start dating she's like "LUV MY BOO!" yeah, that is this book. The characters fell in what I like to refer to as insta-love. This is a huge pet peeve of mine, you are not in love with them that fast, you do not "know their soul" shut up before I barf.

My other pet peeve showed up in this book as well, physically flawless characters. Like just give your character a flaw in their appearance. Nope, he's a perfect ten and so is she. From the descriptions they sound like models. Not everyone is perfect and I don't want to read about the perfectly beautiful characters. Except Gia the supermodel/drug addict who got HIV, I'd read about her.

The whole thing was super melodramatic. Every single thing is over the top. I didn't want to watch a soap opera, actually I've seen soap operas that are *less* dramatic than this. I can't tell you how many times that I read the word **demons**, like we get it, you have a tragic past. Can we move on ever? Or do you want to talk about your demons for another five pages?

The main character Alissa is very helpless and super bossy. I'm pretty sure I've sprained an ankle before and didn't need to be carried everywhere. She plays such a damsel in distress and Dakota is her knight in shining armor. But did I mention that he has **demons**? Because he does, he really has a tragic past. And oh in case you didn't hear the first forty times I told you, both the main characters are freaking gorgeous. Really, they're so beautiful, and tragic, they're tragic too. BARF

Another thing, their thoughts and actions don't match their words at all. They both act so damaged by their *tragic* pasts and super guarded about everything, and then as soon as one of them asks the other a question they spill their guts. Like you're either guarded or you're an open book you can't be both, pick one.

I thought maybe I'd like the ending of this book at least, they seemed to be moving forward. But don't worry they'll tell you a few more times that he's dealing with his freaking demons. The ending is way too "happily ever after" for me. I just wanted to vomit. Great go live happily ever after and I don't ever want to hear about these characters ever again.

RoloPoloBookBlog says

Brave by Zoe Dawson

Source: Author

My Rating: 5/5 stars

Dakota Gray's life is divided into two distinct categories: 1) the time before that horrific day and; 2) the time after that horrific day. Before that horrific day, Dakota was a talented and skilled nurse whose outlook on life was generally very positive. His kind nature and desire to help other led him to caring for others until that day robbed him of everything. Now, Dakota lives in total isolation, shunning the world and refusing to return to the life, the family and the friends he once had. That day lives on in Dakota's every thought and every feeling and he just can't see a path beyond the pain.

For Alissa Thompson, life should have been easy. Her parents are ridiculously wealthy and as long as Alissa follows the life plan her parents have mapped out for her, they will continue to pay for everything and make achieving "her" goals smooth and easy. All of this and more can be Alissa's as long as she doesn't expect anything like affection and/or concern in return. The only bright spot in Alissa's life has been her best friend Charlie, a friend she would do absolutely anything for even if it means defying her parents and digging deep to find just a little bit of courage.

Enter fate, a mountain, a hot guy cutting wood and, a wretched snow storm.

In trying to fulfill her promise to Charlie, Alissa finds herself trapped on a mountain top with a busted ankle and a rescuer who wants nothing to do with her beyond setting her injured ankle and pushing her out the door the moment the storm passes. Alissa is scared and hurt (in more ways than one) yet realizes that Dakota may be just what she needs to overcome her fear and begin to live her life. Dakota can't deny his basic nature and taking care of Alissa does come quite naturally. Both angry and confused by her presence, Dakota fights himself, his memories and Alissa before finally accepting that there may be hope for him yet.

The Bottom Line: Even at just 118 pages, Zoe Dawson's Brave will take you on a whirlwind ride beginning with page one and not stopping until the very last sentence! Dakota and Alissa are both beautifully broken characters who may never have dealt with their issues if they weren't forced into doing so. Thank goodness for that snow storm! Every moment with them is both heartbreaking and joyful as you see them learn to accept themselves and care for one another. Oh, and they have some steamy sex too ? Even in so few pages, both characters and their respective backstories are fully developed and left me with a real sense of satisfaction at the end. Zoe Dawson has mastered the fine art of packing a few pages with a whole lot of powerful!! Overall, this quick and emotionally charged novella will have you flipping pages at lightning speed and remind you of the true meaning of bravery and courage, love and friendship and, the holiday season.

Clever Girl says

Brave is a surprisingly heavy read and packs quite a punch in only 119 pages. Alissa and Dakota have been through a lot, things Dawson hints about but you have to keep reading to find out exactly what haunts them.

Brave is told from both Alissa and Dakota's points of view - I'm a big fan of dual POVs - we see Alissa on a

quest for her best friend and Dakota who is hiding out in the mountains and comes to Alissa's rescue. They are both suffering, both weighed down with guilt and grief, and together they begin to find a way to move on.

"I made it so you wouldn't feel hopeless. I know what that feels like, and it's the worst feeling on earth. I didn't want you to feel that way, ever." (location 1034)

I liked how Dawson showed the different kinds of brave, emotionally and physically, and how sometimes you are being brave just getting through the day.

"I told you I'm no hero, Alissa. I'm just a man...just a man."

"I know you are a man. You are so, so...brave."

"Brave? Do you really think so?"

"Yes, and you taught me how to be brave." (location 1155)

I did think the end was kind of rushed, a lot of big things happened (and yea for therapy! That's another kind of brave, seeking help), but I was happy to see everything tied up, to see how far both Alissa and Dakota have come.

Disclosure: ebook provided in exchange for an honest review

Jackie Kiwibooknerd says

All I can say is WOW.... I have not read anything by this author before but when I read the cover of this book, I knew I wanted to read it, and boy am I glad that I did.

This was a beautiful, sad, heartwarming tale of 2 broken and lost souls who find each other and ultimately heal each other.

Highly recommend..... plus I will definitely be reading more books by this talented author.

Caroline F says

Fantastic, beautiful, moving, dreamy and poetical. I loved this book! The author weaves magic of her own with her way with words. My heart ached whilst reading this novel but the ending was really uplifting.

old account (rl) says

1.5 stars.

At this rate, I don't think I am ever going to find a New Adult book that I can simply sit down and enjoy; something cute and light without all the ridiculous clichés: the perfect and flawlessly beautiful protagonists, the tortured hero, the instalove, you get the point. Why authors continue to use them is beside me. I do not understand the hype behind these sorts of books.

Where to start with Brave? There are so many cringe-worthy parts, I cannot even decide what to rant about first. How about I make a list? That sounds good. I like lists.

One: The introduction and instalove. I don't how many times I have said this, but it obviously needs to be said again: instalove doesn't work. Over and over again our protagonists are falling "in love" within a couple of days - weeks if we are lucky. I mean, sure, it would be nice to meet a nice human being and be head-over-heels in love with them the same day, but we all that doesn't happen. Why then do our characters?

Our protagonists in Brave, Dakota and Alissa, met at Dakota's family hidden cabin in the Colorado mountains during a blizzard. Alissa falls down a cliff-face and Dakota treks through the snow to save her... shirtless. Yes, shirtless. It was snowing and he was outside without a shirt chopping up firewood. Maybe my limited experience with snow (and by that I mean I haven't ever experienced snow) limits me but I am pretty sure that you are meant to rug up in snowy weather, not walk around half-naked! This is where my interest began to lag.

From there, Dakota carries Alissa back to his cabin and they find themselves snowed in for the next few days. Alissa's ankle was sprained during her accident, so Dakota (being an ex-nurse) has to carry her everywhere. It's ridiculous! Everyone who has sprained their ankle before knows that sure, it hurts, but after about ten minutes of icing it, you can walk about - with a limp, yes, but there is certainly no need to be carried everywhere.

Obviously, the first thing Alissa notices about Dakota is that he is hot - and we are then forced to listen to her drone about his great physique:

"He had a powerful chest that tapered down to a lean waist and amazing washboards like I have never seen in real life. His biceps bulged with a glorious curve of muscle that literally made my mouth water."

"Thick midnight black hair was brushed back off his forehead, tapering down the side of his strong neck, just brushing the heavy muscles of his shoulders."

"His muscles were hard, and I caressed the heavy ones on his arms and his wide chest."

... yeah, we get it. He's muscular. There is no need to tell us over and over again.

Two: Romanticised Illness. This is what niggled at me most of all. I absolutely despise how authors dare to use mental illness as a something sexy about their character or to add to the whole 'tortured' broody trope. PTSD is not something to throw at a character so they can play knight-in-shining-armour or damsel-in-distress. It a real - and very serious - mental illness that deserves to be written with respect.

If a topic like this is approached, it needs to be done well. This wasn't. Dakota's PTSD didn't seem realistic in the slightest. If he had said the word "demon" one more time in such an offhanded, casual way, I was seriously going to have to punch something. While I do not have personal (diagnosed) experience with PTSD - and do not want to make too many sweeping allegations - this was not an authentic portrayal. PTSD is not a trope or a plot device.

Three: The characters. The characters themselves were irritable, to say the least. Alissa was intolerable. She was controlling, insensitive and just gahhhhh! She was also a bit gullible. She actually said I trust you to Dakota not even a few hours after meeting him; he could be a serial killer or rapist for all she knows! She is also incredibly impolite. I can understand curiosity but she was the one that trespassed on Dakota's land, he

does not owe her the answers to all her nosy questions (though she tells him otherwise).

Four: The writing. I found the writing rather repetitive. The same things were described over and over again, using the same adjectives. This did nothing but add to my lack of enthusiasm to get into it.

Five: The ending. I cannot say much without spoiling the story, but the ending was ridiculous. I actually laughed out loud when I read it. It all happened a little too quickly for my liking.

In the end, there isn't much positive to say about this at all. I am really disappointed.

Review copy provided by the author for an honest review.
