



Just Be You

M.E. Parker

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When Scott Cohen got word that he'd been nominated for a Grammy, he wondered if the universe was playing some cruel trick on him. Of all the songs he'd written, why did it have to be that song?

Over ten years had passed since he'd written the song and even more since Scott had become obsessed with Marshall Donovan, his brother's best friend. It didn't matter that Scott hadn't seen Marshall in years. Nor did it matter that Marshall never belonged to him or even that Marshall was straight. Scott never managed to stop thinking about him.

When Scott got a call from his manager asking him to submit a song for a movie and a call from his brother Abe informing him of Marshall's engagement to Julia Sterling on the same day, Scott took it as a sign. It was time to say goodbye and forget Marshall Donovan forever.

Submitting 'Just Be You' to the movie executives was supposed to be Scott's way of letting go—of forgetting, of saying goodbye. But his plan backfired when the movie became a box office success overnight and his song was nominated for a Grammy. There was no way he'd ever be able to forget. The song would follow him for the rest of his life and so would his unhealthy obsession with Marshall Donovan.

It didn't help things when he found himself face to face again with the man who had consumed his thoughts for years. No, it didn't help at all when he saw the still very sexy and very straight Marshall Donovan for the first time in eight years. It didn't matter what would happen between them. As soon as he saw Marshall again, he knew that giving up his obsession wasn't an option...

Just Be You is a standalone, full-length, 'brother's best friend' romance novel. It has 'gay for you' and 'first time gay' themes, is stocked full of STEAM, heartache, laughter, and has a guaranteed happily ever after ending.

Just Be You Details

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From Reader Review Just Be You for online ebook

Susan says

For the first half this book ticked all my boxes. A cute insecure guy with a crush on his brother's best friend with lots of pining. Then the two end up in a remote cabin together where said best friend turns out not to be so straight after all. Oh yeah, I was in heaven. But.... I could see the angst coming a mile away. And since I had 50% to go, I was wondering what the author would use to fill the rest of the book. So yes, we got unnecessary angst. I was not happy with that.

Scott has had a crush in his brother's best friend since he was 12 and Marshall was 16. The two always seemed to share a special bond, but when they got older they grew apart.

Scott has never been able to forget about Marshall, even though he hasn't seen him in 8 years. When his manager asks him to send a song for a movie in, Scott knows the perfect song for the movie. He ends up sending in a song he wrote when he was in his teens. The one inspired by his love for Marshall.

Scott never would have thought the movie, and his song, would be such a hit. He even won a Grammy! But just when he told the press he is indeed involved with his manager, pictures of his manager in a compromising position show up. Scott is not happy with the fall-out of this, so he ends up at his parent's remote cabin.

Meanwhile Marshall has just broken off his engagement and needs a place to just be for a while. He doesn't know Scott is at the cabin too when his best friend suggests he go there to decompress a bit.

Scott doesn't mind Marshall being there at all. The two reconnect and spend all night talking. When the power is out, they grab all the blankets and pillows and fall asleep in front of the fire place.

When they wake up pressed together it is clear there is more than just friendship going on and Scott takes a risk to kiss Marshall...

I really liked how these guys got together. I liked how they talked about Marshall freaking out and how they got past that. But.... I most definitely did not like the angst in the second half.

(view spoiler) That is a plot point I never agree with.

There was also a slight misunderstanding thing in the second half that added nothing to the story, just added more distance between them. Yes, things were solved pretty fast and it wasn't dragged out, but it still really brought down my enjoyment of this book.

Overall I thought this had an amazing start, but slowly fizzled out due to unnecessary angst to drag the story onwards.

An ARC of Just Be You was generously provided by the author in exchange for an honest review.

Bea says

I would've rated this higher, but unfortunately there were a bit too many grammatical errors that I wasn't able to disregard them anymore. Initially it was just my finicky problems with punctuation, like misplaced or missing commas, that sort of thing. But eventually there were mistakes with the pronouns - like the classic "you're" and "your" mistakes - which I really hope would've been spotted during the editing and proofreading processes.

Also, I couldn't enjoy it as fully as I hoped because of the unnecessary drama. The angst was terribly manufactured. It wasn't even a case of lack of communication. Rather, I felt like the angst was due to Scottie not wanting to hear Marshall out and deliberately misinterpreting Marshall's words. In some way, I understood Scottie's misgivings, especially because all his life he believed Marshall was straight - but you would think that at that particular point, Scottie would've had a little bit more faith, given Marshall's actions and words. It was just a frustrating situation, which thankfully didn't last long.

That being said, I liked the premise a lot, even if the execution and the technicalities were a little lacking. (Slight spoilers but, why would someone with a concussion use electronics and watch Netflix?) Marshall is also such a sweet main character; he had his own flaws and insecurities but deep down inside he is refreshingly introspective, and he knows what he wants and isn't afraid to reach out for it. Even if he kinda was a little dumb too, when it came to Abe.

Pretty enjoyable read, overall. I'd like to know the lyrics of "Just Be You" though!

Ula'ndi Hart says

I only read 100'ish pages of this book.

So NO rating. Cause that wouldn't be fair.

I don't want to DNF it either. I don't think it deserves that either.

What I want to say is this book has it all. If you read the description, it makes you want to read it because who won't like this angle?

You've got Scott, in love with his big brothers BFF since he was knee high, and he writes these letters to Marshall. He has journals full of them in fact. It immediately got my attention.

Then you've got Marshall. Straight and engaged. Unhappy.

Problem is now I'm 100'ish pages into a 295 page book and I'm seeing the train smash a mile away. (the unnecessary train smash - that being the problem) I've just read a epic book and I'm thinking this is just my inner bitch reeling from a terrible book hangover.

I'll finish this sometime later and let you know what the verdict is. But at this moment it's not cutting it for

me.

Alex says

what a beautiful discovery! I discovered this book by chance but the plot struck me immediately and I bought it. Really loved this story!!!!

Bati says

This book is like strawberries with whipped cream, a bowl of beautiful juicy red cherries, lemonade on a summer day.

Sweet, charming and lovely story about the song with a very important message, that always worth just be yourself and nothing is impossible. Even Marshall Donovan and his dimples ;)

JenMcJ says

This appears to be a first all m/m book for this author. The writing is solid and the editing was ok but had issues. I liked this one and I'll commend the author for writing very good emotional connection on one side of the couple. I believed Marshall was in love but the effort with Scottie was unbalanced. I just didn't get the same warm fuzzy for Scottie even though he was the longest invested in his feelings. He just never seemed to grow past the original "crush".

Even though I did like it despite the uneven character development, it was still another predictable later life gay realization with the requisite unnecessary and undeserved self esteem issues and lack of communication from both sides but mostly Scottie. Scottie really needed to grow up.

It's hard to write a new spin on any type of romance book but you still have to try.

Nicki - The Overflowing Bookcase says

Scott has always had feelings for his older brother's best friend Marshall. But it is not until his song that he wrote about Marshall is used in a movie and winning a Grammy for that song does Scott realize the feelings never went away. He needs to let it go - as Marshall is engaged and is not gay. Getting away from reality and spending time at his family's cabin in the woods is supposed to be Scott's private time, but when Marshall shows up after his engagement break up, Scott gets more confused. When sparks fly and passion ignites, the two partake on an emotional and sexual journey that makes Marshall admit he has never felt love with women and he is in fact gay. Can the two continue away from the cabin when the rest of the world is involved? Or will it be a weekend tryst that ends when they go back to their separate lives? With awesome characters that I fell in love with from the first chapter and a storyline that had everything: emotion, honesty and an overall sense of completeness, this book should not be missed. Once again, M.E> Parker does not disappoint.

♥Bibi's Book Blog♥ says

I was lucky enough to BETA read this amazing story, and received an advanced copy. I did love the book so much, that I purchased my own copy today

Have you ever wondered what would happen if your dreams did come true? If the guy you've been in love with for years and years suddenly realises he wants you too, would it be the happiest day of your life? Or would you be too scared to believe in your luck? Would you dare to take the leap of faith?

Ever since he was a kid Scott have dreamed of his brother's (Ape) best friend, Marshall Donovan. But even though Marshall at times seems like Scott's Knight in shiny Armor, he knows it can never be. Marshall is straight. He likes girls and would never look at his best friend's little brother that way. As time passes the inevitable happens, the boys part and start their individual futures with college, boarding school and then careers. Scott moves to L.A. in the hopes of making it as a song writer, while Ape and Marshall moves to New York and launch a successful tech company. Even though, Scott and Marshall don't have any contact, Scottie is still dreaming of Marshall and the day he saved him from getting his geeky arse kicked, the day he told him to never change. His exact words: just be you.

In present day Marshall has just gotten engaged and so, when Scott gets the opportunity to submit a song for a movie, he writes a heartfelt goodbye letter in his journal where he says goodbye to the dream of Marshall. Scott's song makes it big, so big in fact that he's nominated for, and wins, a Grammy. His "thank you" speech is just about the most beautiful speech I've ever been so lucky to read. It shows a lot about this character; his personality, family relations, goals and dreams.

Due to a twist of faith and unhappy breakups, both Scott and Marshall need to get away from everything for a week or so. And it turns out that the perfect getaway place to lay low, is a cabin owned by the Cohen family. Neither of them knows each other are there, so when Marshall opens the door, the last thing he expects is to see Scott who he hasn't seen for eight years.

This gay Romance story swallowed me whole and put me through every imaginable feeling. I was ugly crying. I was laughing. I felt my heart break into a million pieces and be put back together. In short; I was with Scott and Marshall every step of the way and I loved their story so much.

I usually don't like to compare authors, because every voice and message is unique. However, this reminded me so much of Song of Achilles. "Just Be You" has nothing to do with mythology or anything like that. No, it's the relationship between Scott and Marshall that reminds me of Patroclus and Achilles. Obviously, SoA is different on so many levels, but the pureness of the relationship between the main characters in this book was, in my humble opinion, just as beautiful and well written.

Personally, I love the attention Ms. Parker gives to all her characters – main and secondary characters alike. And I especially enjoy that her development of said characters doesn't mean they change personality, she's awesome at helping them overcome their fears and/or shortcomings in a way.

Line says

Your gay, Harry!

All the sudden, there shined a shiny demon...

ugh This story wasn't bad, **BUT** when I notice (and get annoyed about) the language and spelling mistakes, I don't even want to think about what my clever, educated friends here at GR will think. And I am not a native English speaker, but this was so **SO** cringeworthy at times.

And can we just... I hate it when authors use the expression: 'another thing coming', it's 'another **THINK** coming', but at that point I just accepted that this author didn't have an editor!?

Yes, you can use the other expression as well, but linguistically I'm sticking to the original saying

So, I did end up giving it 3 stars and that is because of Marshall and the fact that it was kind of cute at times. Marshall's reaction to his own sexuality and his grown-up responses to their situation made me happy, though Scott was annoying as fuck.

Scott acted childishly more than once and his high-handed approach to Marshall and **THEIR** relationship and how Marshall was supposed to '*find himself and fuck a lot of dudes*', pissed me off.

'Of course' we needed the 'relationship-angst' and the crisis for the MCs to overcome. But Marshall was in his thirties for fucks sake! At some point you (Scott) need to stop and just listen to what's being said.

Another issue with this (and this is a personal pet peeve of mine, so some won't find this ridiculous) was Marshall and his parents and their abuse.

For reasons unknown everybody hugged and loved and laughed and forgot that Marshall's dad use to be an abusive alcoholic, who smacked Marshall around during all of Marshall's childhood and teenage years.

"Luckily" Marshall's dad is on the mend from his fucked-up kidney and will be there to hang around Marshall and Scott's future kids... /S

deep sigh whatever... I do not buy this 'forgive and forget-crap' and I do not understand how Marshall can just hang out with his dad, like it '*ain't no thang*'.

As I mentioned there was the '*normal*' conflict at around 70% (with heaps of miscommunication and no-communication), but all in all it was a sweet romance with some great characters (Abe and Audrey for example) and an okay 'first novel' for this author.

Lisa Cullinan says

Loved this book!

What a pleasant surprise! I'm saying that because I decided to randomly pick a book from my almost 800 + unread books on my iPad's kindle app.

Scottie, who has secretly been in love with his older brother's best friend since he was a kid, knows it was all for naught considering Marshall is straight.

Fast forward twelve years—Scottie and Marshall as well as Scottie’s older brother, Abe, are all successful in their own right. Sometimes success comes with a price though. The two of them each wind up in separate situations, leading them to Scottie’s parents’ cabin unbeknownst that the other will also be there. What they find out about the other, and how they explore this new side of something that was always there is sweet, sexy, heartwarming and awakening.

Love the storyline, and the characters (supporting cast as well) were funny and lovable. Definitely recommend this one. I’m glad I chose it!

Elizabeth says

This books has the potential to be very good. This is my opinion only but for me there were a few problems.

1. Editing - I'm not a person that freaks out about this and I usually overlook it especially if they don't throw me off. Here though they threw me off and stood out.
2. The unnecessary 2nd half of the book. The book was on it's way to being a winner at roughly 50% but took a straight nose dive into unnecessary bullshit.
3. Character flaws - Scottie has been in love with Marshall his entire life. There is no way on gods green earth he would have behaved the way he did after they come together.

Anyway that's my list. There are good things.

1. The buildup.
2. The history shared between the two MC's and the glimpses we get of it.
3. The sex.
4. The acceptance and understanding of Marshall and his important people.

Solid but needs work.

Elise ✕ a.k.a Ryder's Pet ✕ says

??????*It's started out good and then...*??????

The story centers around **Scott ‘Scottie’ Russell Cohen** (26) and his brother's best friend, **Marshall ‘Marsh’ Maxwell Donovan** (30) who he hasn't seen in eight years. That all changes when both ends up in the cottage to hide without knowing the other one would be there. The rest is history. This book had so much potential. It was cute, funny and fast forward. But it was too fast forward. I was expecting a 'gay for you' romance novel, however what we got was a day upon meeting each other again after eight years, Marshall blurts out that he's gay. One day. Yes, you read correctly. **I had expected a story that was slowly leading up to the 'straight' character realizing he was falling in love with a man**, too see him struggle since he's supposed to be straight, yet here he is wanting to be with a man so much he can't breathe without him. Well, yeah, it wasn't what we got. At all. **Because all it took was one day**. One day to see the 'missing' piece. *One* day. That annoyed the crap out of me. But still, it was cute and made me smile, but the fact that the one little thing kinda ruined things for me.

“It was my fault. I should have known better. I shouldn’t have picked violin this year. I’m so

stupid.”

Marsh’s eyes filled with anger. “Stop it, Scottie. This isn’t your fault. Lewis Braxton is a fucking coward and a pretender. Don’t change. You got it? Don’t try to be something different for those assholes. Okay? Just be you.” He ruffled my hair.

Other characters:

? **Lucas Todd** (35), Scott's manager. Signed with him while he was still at Julliard in New York. He'd been my manager for five years and he was a notorious flirt. (view spoiler)

? **Audrey**, Scott's only real friend in L.A. They became best friends in high school. Somehow, they both managed to get accepted to Julliard. They'd been practically inseparable for the last ten years. She'd moved to L.A. a few months before he had, after accepting a job with one of the biggest PR firms in the music business. She also becomes Scott's publicist.

? **Abe Cohen**, Scott's older brother. **Rachel 'Rach'**, was one of my best friends and Abe's wife.

? Dr. **Margo Cohen**, Scott's older sister.

? **Julia Sterling**, Marsh's ex-fiance. Brett Sterling, her dad and one of the biggest tech owners in the country.

? **Saul** and **Barbara Cohen**, Scott's parents.

? **Hugo**, Scott's little white dog.

“I should make you return that piano,” I told him.

“Not gonna happen.”

I smiled at him. “Good, because playing that thing is almost better than sex.”

“Hmmm...maybe I should return it.”

I fake gasped, “You wouldn’t!”

He winked at me, “Never.”

Quick basic facts:

Genre: - (Adult) Contemporary Romance.

Series: - Standalone.

Love triangle? - (view spoiler)

Cheating? - (view spoiler)

HEA? - (view spoiler)

Favorite character? - Marshall ‘Marsh’ Maxwell Donavan, I guess.

Would I read more by this author/or of series? - Not really.

Would I recommend this book/series? - Not really.

Will I read this again in the future? - No.

Rating - 2 stars.

Earlyn says

Marshall and Scott

What a well written romance.

This is a friends to lovers story.

Scott has always loved Marshall. The day Marshall saved him from a bully cemented that love. Fast forward right years, later because of circumstances they ended up in the cabin together.

This gave them time 're ignited their attraction.

Lovely sweet summer reading.

Joyfully Jay says

A Joyfully Jay review.

4 stars

I read a shorter, erotic book from this author recently and I was interested to see what she would do with a longer novel. The book focuses mostly on Scott and then Marshall as they work toward a relationship. Scott has always been enamored of Marshall ever since he was a kid. It's part first crush and part hero worship, but even though Marshall is Scott's brother's best friend, they had their own friendship. It's now years later, and while Scott is living his life and has dated, he has never forgotten Marshall.

Through a series of events, Scott and Marshall wind up snowed in together at Scott's family's cabin. Marshall had been attracted to men in the past, but growing up with an abusive, alcoholic father had him locking that part of himself away so tightly, he never acknowledged it was there. Until he sees Scott all grown up.

Read Michelle's review in its entirety [here](#).

Nanna Sander says

3.5 stars

Cute and fluffy story about childhood friends who meet again a decade later and fall in love. At one point, I thought it was gearing up for The Big Misunderstanding, but luckily that quickly wound down again. The first half was near perfect, but it lost a little bit of its umpf along the way.

The story covered everything to create a well-rounded story- and timeline, but all encounters (and to some extend characters) lean more towards the shallow side of the shallow-depth spectrum, which is not necessarily a bad thing depending on your preferences, I just prefer mine a little more three dimensional and deep.

There is a serious need for another round of editing as there are quite a number of mistakes here (your/you're, we're/were, missing words etc.), and it almost lost the half-star because of it, because it happens frequently enough to make it impossible to ignore (at least for grammar nazis such as myself).

One thing I was never in fear of was misunderstanding which character says what as each and every sentence in the dialogue is peppered with the other's name. "Uh, Marshall, what is this?" "Well, Scottie, it's *insert whatever here*" "But Marsh ..." "I know, Scottie, but.." and so it goes... A little bit of a pet peeve for me, but I was pulled enough into the story to get past it most of the time.

Oh, and did you all notice just how sparkly Marshall's emerald eyes were??

