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Posted on 09 October 2017 By Amy Jo Cousins

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Break, #4) ? Weplayit.co

An actual blurb and pre order links will be coming soon, but in the meantime, I can tell you that you will meet the two heroes of LEVEL HANDS when you read THE GIRL NEXT DOOR Rafi and Denny are a big part of Cash and Steph s reconnection, and I was super excited to give the boys their own story in LEVEL HANDS Sneak peeks and giveaways of LEVEL HANDS will be happening in my newsletter over the summer Sign up at if you want in on that goodness Right I m going to go back to staring at Rafi s arms on this cover Sigh. Whoever writes these Samhain warnings deserves ALL the money and the rewards They sell me on every fucking book out there. [Read E-pub] ? Level Hands (Bend or Break, #4) ? When It Comes To Love, There S No Such Thing As Smooth SailingRafael Castro Is So Far Out Of His Element He Can T Even See It Any Carlisle College In Massachusetts Is A Long Way From His Chicago Home, Even Farther From His Dominican Republic Roots The Only Thing Keeping Him Attached To His Last Nerve Is The Prospect Of Seeing Denny Winslow Again The First Time They Met, Denny Taught Rafi To Fly Across The Water, Rowing Hard In A Knife Like Boat Now, Two Years Later, On The Wings Of A Rowing Scholarship, Rafi Is Attending Denny S Elite College Even Before The Excitement Wears Off, Rafi Is Struggling With Classes And Fending Off Rumors That Denny S Family, Not Rafi S Talent, Won Him His Spot To Quash The Gossip, Rafi Tries To Steer Clear Of The Man He Wants A Plan That Evaporates In The Fire Of Renewed AttractionBut Carlisle S Academic Pressure Cooker Has Rafi Barely Treading Water And When A Family Crisis Hits, Both Rafi And Denny Must Pull Hard To Keep Their Relationship From Capsizing In Rough Waters Warning Contains A Surly Dominican American Guy Determined To Show No Weakness, A Golden Boy Who Knows His Soft Spots, Some Seriously Dirty Bachata Dancing, And An Excellent Excuse For Voyeurism In The Locker Room Level Hands by Amy Jo Cousins is the 4th book in her Bend or Break series I ve read books 1 2 and really enjoyed them, but I skipped book 3 because it was M F I m not sure if not reading book 3 did a disservice in the end I ll start with the negatives firstThis book started off very strong It starts with a glimpse at Rafi and Denny saying goodbye to each other after finally sharing their first kiss Fast forward to Rafi gaining a scholarship to Carlisle where he will be reunited with Denny As I mentioned, it started well I love second chance romances and I m a total sucker for New Adult I was loving the sexual tension and for the first half of the book I didn t mind that the story is only told from Rafi s POV After the first 50% though I became very frustrated The constant pull and push Rafi went hot and cold throughout the entire book I understood his insecurities at first but after a while being in Rafi s thoughts was exhausting It didn t help that just when I thought we d get somewhere something else would happen to push them apart view spoiler First it was the insecurities, then Denny s accident, then his sister s accident, and then Rafi s anxiety hide spoiler Love, Love, Love it I rarely do

personal reviews but this book touched me on so many personal levels that I can't help it. If you care about an objective review of the book, I will put something like it on my blog and leave the emotional stuff here. So, here goes nothing. It's Rafi's book through and through, not just because the story is told from his POV. Don't get me wrong, I loved Denny quite a lot and he has a strong presence in the story, but Rafi got me teary-eyed a time or two in this book and I felt so, so close to him. It is uncanny how much I could relate to some of his college experience given how different him and I are. I'm a 36-year-old white heterosexual woman from a small country in Europe and he is a 20-year-old gay African Latino guy in what I understand to be one of the best white boys and girls colleges in the US. Fresh out of high school at the age of 18, I got accepted in the best university in my country to study English philology, British and American studies. Now, it's my home city, so I lived with my parents at the time and didn't suffer from racial or sexual abuse like Rafi, but the pressure to fit was real. Some background info: this all takes place less than 10 years after the fall of socialism/communism in Bulgaria, and many things that are common and taken for granted in Western culture were still new to us, and it was yet another thing to navigate and get used to. All Western philology studies were sort of reserved for children of the political and party elite until recently, and even in my day, many of my colleagues came from such families. And there was me: none of my parents had gone to university, none of them knows any foreign language. I had to figure most of the university stuff on my own. And I have to tell you it was a struggle. Because I'm an overachiever, because I was studying something I loved but it was not easy. Some of my professors in the first year did their best to break the little confidence I had. I've always been good at school stuff, if nothing else, and there was I, suddenly feeling like I didn't know how to write or read literature any more. The icing on the cake was 2 semesters of Latin, which came out of the blue, and I didn't even know where to start with. The academic pressure felt brutal, and I thought of giving it all up. The only reason I view spoiler didn't search for professional help/support like Rafi did, hide spoiler. WTF is this 400 pages of Rafi worrying about everything. That's what this is: Rafi Fretting For 400 pages. Headdesk 1.5 Stars. Rafi was beyond frustrating. We got over 400 pages of Rafi being insecure and whiny. He annoyed the hell out of me. I get his concerns and fears, but no matter how much I empathized, I couldn't like him. All the back and forth with Denny didn't help any. I really thought this was going to end up the other way around, since Rafi intrigued me in the last book and Denny was just the pinning teenager, but wow, was I wrong. Denny shined, and I grew to like him even through all his faults. We didn't need so much info on rowing or the cameos of past MCs. It just made the book drag. It was too long and drawn out. I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review. The one thing I can say about this author's work is that her characters are not clean-cut. Her characters' reactions to real-life situations felt genuine. Rafael is one depressing motherfucker of a character. He just wouldn't let you just breathe before shit hit the fan. The man just couldn't allow himself to be happy. I skip book 3, so I have no clue how much background on Rafi or even Denny there is. I don't

understand how someone who had the balls to come out in high school could be so self deprecating in college He spent too much time in his head and being so self conscious that killed the romance part of this story As for Denny, I didn't feel him and really had no background or maybe I miss it by not reading book 3 His was just a understanding prop for Rafi This definitely not my favorite and you really need to be in heavy angst head space to really appreciate this book This was a good book but I was not prepared to handle this level of angst. Aaaaand now for the bad news I truly wanted to like this story much than I actually did. Rafi, Rafi, Rafi, man, I'm telling you For 407 long pages, he truly wore me out on nearly every single page I had hoped for an upbeat book with plenty of, Wow, I'm in college and having the time of my life And the most awesome guy I've ever met digs me, which is fucking amazing That's not what I got, at all This book contained so little joy for me. Instead, Rafi was a complete worrisome Negative Nancy, where nearly every single aspect of his life held no joy I swear, the man could turn lemonade back into lemons with his nervous energy and mood swings. Yes, I get that not every person out there can be completely positive and happy, happy, joy, joy 24/7. But, when a guy as awesome as Denny worshiped the ground that Rafi walked on, the very last thing that he should have been doing was ripping his head off and shitting down his neck Repeatedly For several of those 407 pages. For a large part of the book, I honestly hoped that Denny would get back with his ex boyfriend from New Orleans, which is not a good sign in a romance. I realize that the heart wants what it wants, but I truly never got much of a clue as to why Denny was so head over heels for Rafi. Not even the HEA ending got me very excited, because I had the feeling that Rafi was still going to turn into an anxious, explosive dickhead the moment that things got tough. I found being inside Rafi's head for the entire book to be exhausting and I was pretty much glad when I got to the last page. 2.5 stars due to Rafi, but rounding up because of Denny My copy of the book was provided by the publishers through NetGalley for a fair, unbiased review. I received this book as an ARC through Net Galley in exchange for an honest review. I was really disappointed by this book I liked what I saw of Rafi and Denny in the last book, and I thought that their budding relationship was sweet I was very excited to read this book, but Rafi drove me nuts in this book I understand his frustrations, and his fears, but I did not like the way he took them out on the people around him, especially Denny He blew so hot and cold throughout the course of this book One minute he loved Denny and the next minute he knew that they didn't fit, and it would never work It frustrated me especially because it was all Rafi making decisions for Denny, and never sitting down, and talking it out like adults I liked that Denny got mad, and Denny pushed back, but he seemed a bit too good to be true, and he was always waiting not matter how much Rafi hurt him He was almost a bit too much of a martyr. I also didn't appreciate Rafi's attitude towards his new home It seems like he never really tried to understand the area where his college was located, and took for granted that the white kids around him were just as well off as Denny I didn't like all of his comments about New England white boys kind of

drove me crazy You want to be treated as an individual and not a stereotype, and I appreciate that, but maybe you should extend the same courtesy to others That and maybe learn a little about New England Just a bit.The plot was a bit slow, and so much of it felt like Rafi s own self created drama that I had a hard time really feeling badly for him Things started to change towards the ending, but by that time it felt like too little too late, and I just didn t care enough.

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