



The Reason I Stay

Patty Maximini

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Jack Daniels is the cure to all evils.

Sex should be casual and, preferably, anonymous.

Giving a damn is for nurses, philanthropists and suicide hotlines.

My name is Mathew Rogers and those are the values I built my adult life around. They are also the reason I had to forsake everything I loved in Seattle and embark on a solitary road trip across the country, with no direction other than searching for the next small town, the next girl, and the closest liquor store.

Boredom, frustration and a series of unfortunate decisions led me to the rickety-ass town of Jolene, Alabama—a town I wanted to leave behind from the moment I passed the welcome sign. But it was there where I met her. The girl who made me question everything I've always believed in, and the only one who has ever had the power to break my heart.

Her name is Lexie.

She's beautiful, and I'm pretty sure she hates me.

And for once in my life, I give enough of a damn that I keep finding a reason to stay.

The Reason I Stay Details

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From Reader Review The Reason I Stay for online ebook

Patty says

Originally posted on Bookish Wanderlove.

Opening Lines

“A moan comes from behind me and I freeze. Please don’t wake up. I peek over my shoulder and see her beautiful face framed by a halo of bright pink hair resting on one of the pillows. Her parted lips are pulled up in the corners in that subconscious fully-sated smile women sometimes get after a night of rolling in sheets. And man, this woman deserves it.”

I don't pick books in the "normal conventional" way that I'm sure most people do, what I mean is I don't read the synopsis first. When I came across *The Reason I Stay* I was instantly drawn to the cover. The use of colours, the crop of her face, the lips, everything about this cover screams a softness and swoon worthy read. I was already hooked onto the cover and sold but decided to read the synopsis which only made me more excited to read this book.

The Reason I Stay is told in dual perspective from Matt and Lexie, which I loved. When most authors do this there is normally more chapters by the main character, but Patty Maximini has an even amount of chapters by both Matt and Lexie that made me feel like I was finally getting the full picture into their romance, thoughts, emotions, and the scenery itself.

“The more one forgets himself—by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love—the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself.”

Viktor E. Frankl – Man’s Search For Meaning

Right off the bat I disliked Matt's character, ugh he got on my nerves! But I knew I would grow to swoon over him, and boy did I swoon. Throughout *The Reason I Stay* we really get to know Matt and I really enjoyed watching this character evolve, Patty Maximini perfectly executes on character development and growth. The above quote was placed before the first chapter and I found it to be the PERFECT quote that related to Matt's personal growth and journey through *The Reason I Stay*. And then we have Lexie, now Lexie is on my list of favourite characters. She's strong and doesn't take crap from anyone or let people walk over her. I loved their first interaction, Lexie gave Matt what he deserved which let him really thinking about his life and how he treats people. Lexie didn't make things easy for Matt which had me sitting her yelling "You go Lexie!" at my computer, but their chemistry starts to build and the love between them is so touching to witness.

Overall, *The Reason I Stay* is a beautiful, swoon worthy read that everyone needs to get their hands on! I found myself to fully invested in the story and characters and I just didn't want it to come an end. I kept telling myself I wouldn't get emotional but I found my eyes watering at just how beautiful this story truly is overall. Do I recommend it? YES!

Michelle Connor says

Great read

This book took me on a rollercoaster of emotions and I loved every minute of it, even the tears I shed.

Jennifer says

** A review copy was provided by Patty Maximini for the Blog Tour **

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~~ 4 Stars ~~

This was the first book by this author that I have read and I have to say it was quite enjoyable. I really liked the storyline and the characters she created. Even though this story starts a little on the slow side, once Mathew meets Lexie, the story totally takes off and became an easy and fun read. I thought the flow and pace of this book was good, I thought the author did a great job of giving us just the right amount of information to make the story well developed, but not overloaded in extra information we didn't need. I liked that this book was bogged down with a lot of extra drama, yes there is a little disturbance between Mathew and Lexie, but it is short lived. I will say that if you are looking for a love story that is "clean" and not focused on sex then this is the book for you. Even though the sex is the "fade to black" type, it really isn't missed in this story. She added enough of the steam and swoon factor that the sex wasn't missed.

Lexie and Mathew were great characters. Lexie was a snarky, independent but funny person. She loved fiercely and was loyal to a fault. She was handed some tough things in her short 22 years of life, but she didn't let it slow her down. She really took the phrase, when life hands you lemons, you make lemonade. She always tried to see the positive side of things. Mathew on the other hand was just the opposite. He was irresponsible, reckless and overall a complete a\$\$. He also was handed some tough things in his childhood, but he chose to go a different direction and withdraw from people and form any kind of connections with them....that is until he meets Lexie in Jolene , Alabama. These two totally didn't make sense together but it was weird because they did make sense together. (I know that's confusing, you just need to read the story.) I loved the banter between these two. I also liked the speed that the author took their relationship. It felt believable to me. I loved watching these two grow together and become better people for it. Mathew's change was the most drastic and I loved the person he became in the end.

We met a lot of extras in this story, but I have to say my favorite was Tanie (Lexie's BFF) and Kodee (Lexie's Goddaughter) Tanie was the best friend everyone wishes they had. I loved that she would normally have a mouth like a sailor but she didn't believe in swearing so, it was cute to see how the author became creative with her dialogue. Kodee was an adorable 7 year old. I smiled every time I read about her.

I would definitely recommend this book to anyone looking for a fun, and easy love story that isn't focused on the steamy side of the story!!!

To read more reviews go to Book Bitches Blog

D.L. Kane says

This was a great, light, New Adult read with a fun cast of supporting characters. I love the interactions between Lexie and Matt and was really pleased to read a book that wasn't all about the sex. The main characters are total opposites and they come together so beautifully.

The thing I enjoyed most about *The Reason I Stay* is simply watching Matt become a better person. Five Refreshing Stars to Patty Maximini and I will definitely be looking forward to more from her!

FicCentral says

Young attorney Matthew Rogers had made a mess of his life, and it's bad enough that he's not really allowed home for a while, at least until his last screw-up fades into yesterday's news. But roaming town to town with no real purpose is getting old, and there seems to be no end to his wandering in sight. But when a couple of random songs on the radio place him in Jolene, Alabama on nothing more than a whim, he runs into someone who just might be able to turn him around.

Waitress Lexington Blake's life certainly didn't turn out like she planned. But life in Jolene isn't too bad — unless you count the complete jerk of a customer who treats her like desperate trash. Never one to hold her tongue or conform to what everyone else thinks she should be, she doesn't hesitate to put him in his place, but the whole thing still manages to ruin her day long after he's blown out of town. But then the surly, conceited customer from hell keeps coming back, and his attempts to earn her forgiveness open the door to something much bigger.

The Verdict: It's incredibly easy to hate Matt in the beginning. He's completely self-absorbed, selfish, downright cruel to anyone he deems beneath him (which is pretty much everyone), and incapable of taking any responsibility for his own enormous mistakes. But that's what makes the book so interesting because, by the end, he's grown into someone you can't help but love.

Lexie is in many ways very much your small town girl — the real kind, not the typical book kind. She's kind and funny, loves her makeshift family beyond measure, and works a dead end job for pitiful pay. But she's also independent, wearing her heart in the form of a tattoo sleeve, and makes no apology for who she is. When Matt initially writes her off as some weak-kneed damsel in distress expecting him to carry her away from her nowhere town, she's quick to set him straight — and get him thinking.

It seems that the biggest reason Matt is such an ass is simply because he's been allowed to be anything or nothing — no one cared enough either way. Sure, he has a pretty awful relationship with his father, and losing his mother did a real number on him, but at heart he's not a bad guy at all, just a very alone guy. He's just always gotten what he wanted a little too easily, to the point that he feels entitled, and the last thing he expects is the words of some small town waitress to upend his whole view of himself. But she does exactly that, making him appreciate and wish for the simpler but fuller life she leads, and before long, they cross into a tentative friendship.

The story could have probably rushed these two into a hot and heavy romance, but instead, it takes its time. They hate each other, learn to tolerate each other, become decent to each other, and then grow the ensuing friendship into a solid relationship. Unfortunately, Matt's lack of true relationship experience leads to a pretty big secret, and when his past comes back to give him a good kick, it throws everything with Lexie up in the air. The way they both handle it, though realistic in anger and reaction, is ultimately good, and it actually seems to be the thing that forces Matt to face his past and embrace an entirely different future than he ever expected he'd want.

The Reason I Stay celebrates oddball families and genuine friendships, second chances and new beginnings, and romance at its best. It's not the good girls saves bad boy story one might expect — it's more. The character growth and development alone is worth reading, but the romance is what makes it great.

***FicCentral received this book from Xpresso Book Tours for free in exchange for an honest review. Even so, we're far too opinionated to let a freebie influence our thoughts or the contents of the reviews we post here.

Lustful Literature says

**** TARA 'S REVIEW ****

4.5 Mine Will Always Be You Stars

When rich boy Matthew Rogers' out of control lifestyle gets him in some hot water and something tragic happens, he has no choice but to get away from Seattle for a while. Taking a road trip to parts unknown, fate leads him to a small town in Alabama. Looking for the next girl to warm his bed, he meets Lexie. But Lexie is not like the girls that Matt typically runs into.

"That's one of my life rules: sex should be casual and, preferably, anonymous."

Lexie has lived in small town Jolene, Alabama all her life. When you live in a town like Jolene, everyone knows your business. Lexie has had her fair share of gossip and chatter talked about her, whether it be her deadbeat parents, her gay "dancle", her tattoos, or her past relationship, she just wants to live her life to the fullest.

"Every second we're together, you reach inside me and erase a bit of the guy I used to be." -le sigh-

When Matthew comes to town and sits down at her table in the diner she works in, this stubborn out of towner, gives her a run for her money. Learning to trust is not something Lexie is willing to do, can she finally break down her walls and let Matt in?

"You're a sun, Lexie. You bring light, and warmth, and life to everything around you."

Will Matt learn to change his ways and earn her trust?

~~~~~

**"I swipe my tongue across the space between her lips, and they open willingly to me."**

I was hooked on the book from the start. I loved the witty banter between these two. I was kept on the edge of my seat waiting to get to Matt's secret. I loved how these two interacted. While Matt's past was always focused on him, and him alone, he changes when it comes to the people in this small town. I could relate to both characters, and the storyline flowed really well. The whole story felt realistic and was easy to relate to.

**"Love allows us to be who we really are, and you did that for me."**

When things go haywire, and their relationship is tested, I couldn't help but hope that they would figure it out. Again, I was left on the edge of my seat unable to put my kindle down because I just had to know how it turned out.

**"I gave you my mended heart's last chance. I invited you into my life, my body and my house, and you hurt me worse than anyone ever did before."**

Overall, I would highly recommend picking up this book, it's a great story, and will keep you intrigued right up until the end.

\*\*A gifted copy was received by the author/publisher in exchange for an honest review\*\*

Be sure to check out more of my reviews at: <http://lustfulliterature.com/> & <https://www.facebook.com/lustfulliter...>

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### **Arlene says**

Loved it, loved it, loved it, just couldn't put it down, highly recommend

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### **♥?Melanie says**

\*\*\*\*4 Pedro For Governor Of Virginia Stars\*\*\*\*

This was a great story and easy read. It was not highly emotional but relaxed and enjoyable with some drama. Gotta say, love the southern aspect of the story.

Lexie was a independent, strong willed and responsible.

Mathew was stubborn, irresponsible, reckless and a total ass until he met Lexie.

The story between them was funny, sexy, smart and loving. The supporting characters were great with the story and made the story come together.

Good book and recommend.

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## **Eliza says**

[ Yes (hide spoiler)]

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## **Gillian says**

★★? 3.5 Stars ?★★

The book opens up with us meeting hottie bad boy Matt Rogers. Matt is taking a break from life, chicks, drinking and his privileged lawyer life in Seattle. We soon discover that this break isn't exactly his choice. Matt has been pretty much exiled by his father due to his bad boy-who gives a shit way of life. A way of like that draws nothing but bad publicity for him and family. He's been forced to drift from place to place for the last 4 months while his father and his people attempt damage control, for major life altering ooopppps on Matt's part.

When we meet the moody, bad boy he's had enough of drifting and is ready to head home, but with an unanswered phone call and a decision that fate is telling him it's not time to go back yet, he decides to let fate take over. Deciding that the next place mentioned on the radio will determine his final stop. Matt ends up in Jolene Alabama...the smallest town pretty much ever!

Matt pulls up in this one horse town in his fancy Maserati-Greta, his money, bad mood, an even shittier attitude and with the idea to keep moving on from Jolene as fast as he can. Despite what fate may have in store.

But what finds in this little town is the last thing he expects...

Meet Lexington Blake

Lexi is a waitress who happens to get stuck serving Mr. Moody while he stops in to eat at the Jukebox restaurant on his way though. She's adorable! She's all chocolate chips hold magic powers and no one's going to ruin my day, everything is all happy.

Until she serves Matt of course! Matt is a complete asshole to her, but she calls him out on his behaviour and doesn't put up with his crap. I instantly love her and her take no shit attitude!

As he leaves and is driving we see Matt's attitude take a turn...Lexi has clearly struck a nerve and has most definitely made an impression on our brooding bad boy. After reflecting on the things she has said Matt grows a conscience and decides to return to Jolene to apologize to Lexi in person. Matt decides that he may just want more than to apologize to Lexi.

He decides he wants her.

Matt trying to win over Lexi makes for some awesome reading! He's weaved himself into her daily life and into the lives of the people she considers family. Lexi does not make it easy for him at all. I found myself grinning many times at his flustered state and cheering on her while she tried to resist his persistence and oh so sexy ways. But of course resistance is futile and Lexi grows feeling for Matt after getting to know him and letting her guard down.

Once Lexi and Matt give in to the idea that they are definitely attracted to one another the story and heat meter picks up, but just not enough for me, I could have done with a bit more hot and heavy moments. And I do have to note that Matt and Lexi's feelings for each other grew kind of fast for me, making some parts a bit unrealistic and hard to believe in my opinion. But with that being said the story is still sweet with enough swooning little moments to make you smile.

And with such likable characters its easy to let them get away with the rushed loved!

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## **Heather says**

The Reason I Stay – Lexie and Matt – \*swoon\*

I'm jumping ahead of myself.

Matt was not a nice guy when the book started out. He was a love 'em and leave 'em without even a first name type of guy. He was arrogant and rude and typically the kind of guy that would have me near tears in a few seconds if he talked to me the way he first talked to Lexie.

He's left Seattle and is on a "sabbatical" because of some thing that happened. That has to be taken care of before he can go back to his life.

Lexie is a waitress at a restaurant in Jolene, Al, the city Matt rolls through on his way to really going nowhere because he has no plans. He just is tired of life as it is and wants to go back home.

Lexie, right off the bat I adored her. She is strong and doesn't take crap from anyone, not even a self centered a\$\$ who rolls into town in his maserati named Greta. There's something about her that has Matt thinking about the way he treats people and he needs to talk to her, to make things right, that is his reason to stay...for now.

I LOVED this book.

LOVED.

I have a serious girl crush going on with Lexie. She's perfect. Strong, but not so strong that she pushes everyone away because she doesn't need help from anyone. She doesn't let people walk over but she does it with a smile. She has a past that might leave some bitter but she doesn't let it harden her. She's just an amazing character.

Matt too.

While reading this book it was like watching him grow into a different person, the one he should be. As I was reading, I realized how life changing events can completely morph us into a different person. The first one happening when he was 16, the second as he got to know Lexie.

There was another character I adored though we didn't get much time with her. Lea. Though her part is small in the book she leaves a huge impact on the reader. She's another example of how life changing events can change who you are. It's just a matter of whether we let it change us for the good or for the bad.

Absolutely amazing read. I loved this so much and am looking forward to the next book from Patty Maximini!

Thank you so much for my copy of The Reason I Stay!

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### **Kirke says**

I really love it when I don't expect a book to be that good, but then it totally surprises me. This is one of those and I mean this in the best way possible. I expected everything to stay pretty superficial, lots of steamy moments and some over the top drama. What I got was well rounded and very lovable characters, some hot moments, well founded drama and great humor to top it off.

Mathew is a jackass, always speaking the truth, but without any concern of other people's feeling. This coupled with plenty of self confidence and a more than healthy amount of arrogance, doesn't make him that easy to like at first. Since no one has ever called him out on his behavior or gone against him, the guy really doesn't know any better. So when he meets Lexie and does exactly what nobody has ever done, Mathew is struck.

Now he can't get the pretty waitress out of his head and while he wasn't planning on staying in town for longer than a day, it seems he can not find him really willing to go. Slowly he actually starts settling into town, mingling with the locals and mostly getting closer to Lexie. Their was that instant attraction between the two, but their love had to grow. Mathew needs to learn to take responsibility for his actions and in general become a nicer person. It's not that he's a bad guy, he just made some stupid decisions and needs an attitude adjustment.

Luckily Lexie is fierce enough to go head to head with him. She tries everything not to like him, but when it comes down to it, Mathew is pretty irresistible. I loved how we got to see this attraction grow into a beautiful relationship and how they actually take their time to get closer. Also seeing Mathew settling down into this new town and life was so refreshing. Often that is not part of the story or it gets glossed over quickly. Through this I found to be able to really connect with these character and get to know them very well.

There is of course the necessary drama, as Mathew did run away from something, which he will need to face before this can work out between him and Lexie. Jolene, Alabama might be a small town, but there are now plenty of reasons for Mathew to stay. I fully recommend this story for all new adult book lovers who are looking for a good read with plenty of depth.

\*I received a copy from the author in exchange for an honest review\*

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## **Jessica says**

### **the plot**

The romance was ADORABLE. Although, at some points it felt like it was moving too fast and as if a bit of insta-love was occurring, which I wasn't a huge fan of. I felt like since the characters start off totally angry at each other that it was a bit weird for them to be getting so close so quickly. Especially since Matt had come across as SUCH a terrible person.

Beside that, I loved their relationship and felt like the story progress really well. I was hooked which is insane because I haven't been able to really focus on anything lately with all the stress I've been dealing with. The best part though was that this book was such an amazing escape from life.

I never have much to say about the plot in regards to romance novels, because everything is so central to the characters, so I'll move on to that section. :)

### **the characters**

Mathew is a 24 year old lawyer who has gotten himself into some trouble and is being forced to take time away from his home and life. His father wants him to get some perspective and to evaluate his life, but no one expects that that's exactly what Matt ends up doing, somewhat unwillingly at first.

Once he meets Lexie, who is sweet, funny, and strong, he's totally captivated. They get off to a rocky start, but it's not long before they're falling for each other.

Lexie was 22 years old and a waitress at a local diner in her small town and hasn't had the easiest life. She's a pretty simple character, I think, and it works because Matt is so complex sometimes. They suit each other. On the other hand, Lexie has had her fair share of drama and complications in life, too, so that might not be totally accurate.

I loved how each of the friends (mostly Lexie's, to be honest) were involved and played important roles in their lives. Sometimes it felt like they're were just there to further Matt and Lexie's romance, but towards the end, it's the total opposite. They make the story richer and I loved it!

I couldn't completely like Lexie or Matt because I kept disagreeing with some of the choices or the way they viewed other people. There was definitely some slut-shaming in Lexie's POV and Matt came across as very possessive of Lexie, which some people find attractive, but I don't. Also, Matt kept using the word 'Girl' as an insult... which is a real crappy thing to do. I don't know if that's a 'guy thing' or what but it really annoyed me.

### **overall**

This book was sweet, romantic, and very authentic (once you get past the insta-love vibe at the beginning). You will probably fall for Matt and root for them the whole time, even though they both have flaws.

There are a TON of really sweet quotes and lines that will make you feel inspired and giddy, too!

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## Alanoud R says

3.7 stars

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## Lisa says

\*ARC Given to Blog for Honest Review\*

4 “tucks his hair behind his ear” “taps her finger” “rose” Kisses

**OMG**...I did *not* know I was going to fall in love with those characters as much as I did...wow. I was completely pulled into this story, practically from the beginning and it was a rush of emotions from start to finish. *The Reason I Stay* was a fantastic angsty romance...exactly what I needed and gave me all the feels and then some.

Mathew Ian Rogers...**love** the name by the way...oh my Matty...my little reformed douche bag. There is no secret to the fact that before Matt gets sucked into Jolene, Alabama and all it's charm, he's a grade-A ass hole. He's selfish...a jerk...rude on his good days...pretentious without even trying...I mean, the list of his negative traits can go for miles...so I'm sure you're wondering *why* I liked him because...yes, even after all that, I **did** love Matt. Mathew is the prime example of the possibility of change. The problem with Matt is that for years...ever since his mom died...he hasn't been able to truly be himself. Once he stopped doing what his dad wanted or what he "should do"...he finally started doing what he loved and for no other reason that because he wanted to and it's like...presto – the awesome guy appears. I **loved** the change in Matt...he does a complete 180 but that also has a lot to do with a blonde girl that put him in his place and wouldn't let him get away with his shit.

**‘I spent my life saying what I thought, doing what I wanted, and never giving a damn. The weirdest part is that everyone around me always took my shit, and some even encouraged me. But Lexie didn’t, and it was fucking annoying and aggravating, and I hated it. It was also refreshing.’**

Lexington Amelia Blake...I may or may not have a girl crush on Lexie...she freaking rocked my face off. She's **awesome**...there is no other word to describe her. The poor girl has had some shitty luck but she's been very blessed to have some awesome friends and family surround her and support her. She doesn't let her past control her...she doesn't use it as a crutch – it happened, it sucked and she's going to do better for herself...and that made me like her even more. I **loved** how stubborn she was...how she didn't let anyone push her around...especially tall, blonde and sexy boys that are used to getting what they want. I also loved her tattoo and the meaning behind it...a beautiful representation of the people she loves. Lexie has this very magnetic spirit...it was *very* easy to see what drew Matt to her.

**“Matthew.”**

**I turn to look at her. There’s a weird mixture of emotions in her expression. Her lips are turned into a side smile while her brows are slightly frowned. “You should really go back to being a jerk, before I stop disliking you.”**

**The words confuse me for a second. In the next it sinks in and...Hell NO!**

**I cock a brow, and pull my lips in a smug smirk. “Are you sure about that? Liking me could be really good, Lexie.”**

**“I doubt it. I’m sure it’d be all kinds of bad.”**

OMG...Lexie and Matt...I don't know what it is about a couple that fights, but a part of me can't help but love it...and Lexie and Matt have some amazing combativeness going on. He is honestly a flat out ass...but he's a gorgeous ass, and unfortunately he does know that part. I couldn't get over how Lexie responded to him though, I really wanted to high five this chick for putting him in his place...cause *someone* needed to! Once we get past the initial fighting stage and they actually start to get to know each other...I was a gonner. His daily visits to the diner where she works...the ticks...the songs he plays her on the jukebox...they had this little flow and rhythm and I was lulled into lovey-dovey land...they hadn't even gone out on a date and I was **in love** with everything about them. So as you can imagine, the deeper they got...the deeper I got and I was completely wrapped up in every nuance about them.

**‘When the silence becomes too much, I ask, “What are you thinking?”**

**“Honestly?”**

**I nod. “Always.”**

**He smiles. “I’m thinking that with the jokes, and the beer, and the possibility of being frisked under the table, you’re kind of perfect, and I really need to convince you that even though you’re tired and in your work clothes, that this should be a date.”**

**I blink a few times, at a complete loss for words. What you reply to something like that?**

**What do you say to a man who says the most inappropriate things, and still makes you feel like goo? I honestly have no idea, but deep down I’m dying to let him convince me that this should be a date, because he’s kind of perfect too.’**

*The Reason I Stay* is a very interesting read for me...it's steamy, yet with no steam. I know...this sounds confusing...but there is sex, we just don't read about it. There's kissing...there's romance...there's swooniness galore (trust me...I was in a puddle of mush for more than half the story)...but this book was totally based off of the connection that Lexie and Matt built. They're perfect strangers, coming together and creating this crazy intense bond that just blew me away...that's not an easy task...but there were so many little details about the two of them that made me love them. Their quirks...like her dorky laugh and his smirk. Their nervous ticks...him brushing his hair behind his ears and her finger tap. And the fact that all these little nuances drew them to each other even more...he loved to make her laugh and she loved to make him brush his hair behind his ears...how can you not find that endearing? It's the girl who would never trust another man and the boy who had never been in a relationship and the way they came together and found love.

**“As for relationships, yes, I’ve never done them. But I’m the one asking, begging for a date, while you’re just being sexy and kissing me on the side.”** A shy smile makes an appearance, tempting me to kiss her again. I don’t, because this conversation is important. “So as far as I know, *my heart is the only one in line to be broken, and as crazy as it seems, I want to risk it. I really do, Lexie.*

**“I want it because I want to take you on dates, and learn how to do all that relationship shit with you.”** She laughs, and I think I see her eyes glistening with tears. I hope they are good ones, but just in case, I explain, “I want that because you change me. Every second we’re together, you reach inside me and erase a bit of the guy I used to be. Every second you turn me into this new man, with feelings, a sense of responsibility, a fucking conscience, and all this sappy shit I keep thinking and saying to you. And the worst part is that I like. I like it more than I like Greta and Jack Daniels. I like it like I like you, and I really *like* you.”

Oh if that was the only thing there was to love...but no...the supporting cast in *TRIS* is out of this world amazing. Tanie...or Montana (she and all of her sisters are named after states – it’s not even funny how much I loved that) is Lexie’s best friend...closest thing she has to a sister and is phenomenal. She is hilarious...she refuses to curse but her substitute for cursing killed me – it’s just brilliant. Then you have the rest of Tanie’s family...which is basically like Lexie’s adopted family...they treat her like one of their own which only made them more amazing. But the girl that *almost* stole the show...was Kodee...she’s Lexie’s goddaughter and her interactions with Matt...well...they just showed one more layer of awesome in that boy. She brought out a completely different side to him...a side that he didn’t even expect...but I loved every second of it. There were quite a few minor characters that didn’t have huge roles but all played special parts in making the story feel more real.

**“Really?”**

**I nod, and he shakes his head as if he’s confused, but the corners of his lips are curled up, hinting that he’s also amused, which in turn confuses me a bit. “That’s weird, ‘cause it makes perfect sense to me.” He turns his eyes back to the road and continues. “I haven’t stop thinking about you since we first met. I’ve wanted you since you yelled at me at the diner on Saturday, and after kissing you...I don’t really have a choice. I’m yours. You own every bit of my soul, so yeah...I want you to belong to me. Since girlfriend is the usual term, that’s what I want you to be. But as long as you’re mine, and I don’t have to share you with anyone, we can call it anything you want.”**

**Air. I need air.’**

I loved the writing...it was that perfect blend of emotional...angsty...with a hint of humor. We go back and forth from both of their POV’s...nothing is ever repetitive but it definitely gives a complete picture of what is going on with the story. I liked both of their POV’s...hearing both of their thoughts and emotions...it helped me connect that much more to them. The relationship that Lexie and Matt develop was quick...I’m not going to lie, but it was genuine and I *felt* it...which is why I never questioned it. Would it have meant a little more if Matt’s 180 hadn’t been quite so drastic...possibly. I really didn’t understand what all the rush was...that might have been my only complaint was that I wished the initial change had been stretched out over a few more weeks. The only other thing that bummed me out was the ending. We go through a ton of angst towards the end and in the span of a few pages...it’s done. I get wanting to wrap it up...but you’ve gotta give me a little fluff...I **love** seeing these two happy and it’s not that I didn’t get my HEA...but I just need more.

**“I needed to tell you that meeting you was the best, most life-altering event that has ever happened to me. You’re a sun, Lexie. You bring light, and warmth, and life to everything around you. And though I’ll always regret that I broke your heart, I’ll always be grateful that you broke mine. It made me a better, kinder, self-aware person who deserves someone like you. So even if you don’t ever give me another chance – which I really hope you do – I’ll forever be grateful to life just because I got to know and love you.”**

Well...I don't say this often but *TRIS* is a standalone. As much as I loved the supporting characters...there really is no other storyline...no other tales to be told...Lexie and Matt are happy and so...I'm happy. This is the first book by Patty Maximini that I have read, but I can definitely tell you it won't be my last. I already said I loved her writing but her ability to suck me into these characters and emotions as deeply as she did with *TRIS*...well, I've gotta experience that again.

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