



Beginnings and Ends

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Suzanne Brockmann, bestselling author of *When Tony Met Adam* and the pulse-pounding Troubleshooters series, has been hailed by *USA Today* as a “superstar of romantic suspense.” In this original short story, available exclusively as an eBook, Brockmann returns with two of her most beloved characters from the Troubleshooters world: operative Jules Cassidy and his husband, Robin.

After years of playing the tormented actor Joe Laughlin on the hit television show *Shadowland*, Hollywood star Robin Chadwick Cassidy is ready for a change. Joe’s character embodies the real demons of Robin’s past—his struggle with his sexuality, his battle with alcoholism—and portraying the part has taken a heavy toll on his personal life. Robin’s husband, FBI agent Jules Cassidy, has noticed the strain and will do whatever he can to make Robin happy. And what Robin has in mind will forever transform his career, his marriage, and his family.

Includes a thrilling excerpt from Suzanne Brockmann’s novel *Hot Target*, featuring Jules Cassidy.

“Openly gay FBI agent Jules Cassidy [is] one of the most charming and original characters in popular fiction today.”—*Library Journal*

Praise for Suzanne Brockmann

“Brockmann strikes the perfect balance between white-knuckle suspense and richly emotional romance.”—*Chicago Tribune*

“Brockmann is a master of adventure, drama, passion, and suspense.”—*The Tampa Tribune*

Beginnings and Ends Details

Date : Published June 1st 2012 by Ballantine Books (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9780345540539

Author : Suzanne Brockmann

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From Reader Review Beginnings and Ends for online ebook

Sandra ~ ♥ Cross My Heart ♥ says

3.5 Stars - Short & sweet - a novella featuring Jules and Robin. I loved getting an intimate peek into the life of this couple. Of all the couples in this series, I think this pair deserves their hea the most! A Must Read for fans of these characters and this series!

Melissa says

Super short yes, but it IS a short story and I read other reviews beforehand so I knew to expect it to be a quick read. I loved it! I'll take a little Jules and Robin any day. I thought the story was written in a really unique way. I loved the fictional story about Joe. Really touching. Of course I was disappointed that it wasn't longer but like I said, I loved this update and so glad I got to read it.

Jade says

1.5 stars

This low rating has nothing to do with the little that we got to see of Robin and Jules, but it has everything to do with the lack of story that I paid for. If this was a free short story whatever I don't think I would have minded, but this was 2 dollars for a whole lot of nothing. We got more scenes about Joe Laughlin than we did of the actual "real" characters. To me that's kind of bullshit. I wanted to read about Jules and Robin and I got maybe 2 *small* scenes of them and the rest was some character that Robin plays and worse it was in the fake character's pov and universe.

With all of my complaining I do have to say that the little we got to see of the couple was really great. I love that they are going (view spoiler). I also really enjoyed that there was a partial sex scene for them. I feel like they only get really intense makeout scenes or the after math of sex, but no we got an honest to god (view spoiler) For anyone who is not for sex scenes don't worry nothing is greatly described or in detail.

Oh and a little warning it ends at 71% the extra almost 30% are previews for previous books. Needless to say I was pretty annoyed.

Catherine says

All these years later and I still can't get enough of Jules and Robin! They were the first M/M couple I'd come across in a romance novel and I fell for them both - *hard*.

This short story was a touching vignette which basically drew one phase of their lives together to a close and set the ball rolling for the next major step in their relationship. And when the two men are on the page together as a couple, it's magic. Seriously swoony territory. Unfortunately, Brockmann splits the focus so evenly between Robin and Jules as a couple and Robin as his television persona Joe Laughlin, that I sorta felt

cheated. Don't get me wrong, the parts of the story written about Joe's character were well done, but he's not Robin and Jules (and *they're* the ones I'm invested in).

Looking forward to seeing Jules and Robin (view spoiler) in the upcoming Troubleshooters novels. Here's hopping for some fantastic cameos!

Kaetrin says

Why I read it: I've read and enjoyed all of the Troubleshooters books and I'm a fan of Jules and Robin so I downloaded this one as soon as it was available.

What it's about: (the blurb from Goodreads) After years of playing the tormented actor, Joe Laughlin, on the hit television show Shadowland, Hollywood star Robin Chadwick Cassidy is ready for a change. Joe's character embodies the real demons of Robin's past—his struggle with his sexuality, his battle with alcoholism—and portraying the part has taken a heavy toll on his personal life. Robin's husband, FBI agent Jules Cassidy, has noticed the strain and will do whatever he can to make Robin happy. And what Robin has in mind will forever transform his career, his marriage, and his family.

What worked for me (and what didn't): It doesn't take a rocket scientist to work out what the beginning and end the title speaks of is - the end of the series and an addition to the family. I really don't think that's a massive spoiler. And, it's not that you actually see much of the latter in any event. If the story had been more about the "beginning" and less about the "end" I think I would have enjoyed this one a lot more. I didn't have massive hopes. I was never expecting an A read - the story is only 38 pages long after all. I expected a vignette maybe - a Jules and Robin slice of life. What I got however, was a lot of stuff about Shadowland - a fictional TV show set in a fictional world.

I was fairly confused by the way the Shadowland portions of the story were conveyed. Here is the opening of the story:

Shadowland, Episode 60,
"Eighth of Nine Lives"
Starring Robin Chadwick Cassidy as Joe Laughlin Los Angeles,
present day

Richie West ambushed me. The meeting is supposed to be about my contract for the next Pierce Cane movie, but I realize within seconds of walking into his office that this is about my past few weekends and the current rash of rumors.

Academy Award nominee Joe Laughlin! Thank you for coming in!...

Brockmann, Suzanne (2012-06-01). Beginnings and Ends (Short Story) (Kindle Locations 37-41). Random House, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

At first, I thought these bits were part of the script. But that couldn't be right. Then I thought "how does the viewer know what is going on in Joe Laughlin's head?" Then I thought, maybe it's a voiceover. That made sense. But the bits in italics didn't seem to fit as voiceovers either. Who says this? Even in their heads?

I'm so fucking stupid. I can't believe I actually thought Richie West was going to guide my coming out, like

a Sherpa leading me to a higher plain where honesty and truth prevailed. I can't believe that I didn't know— instantly— that if I did come out, he would drop me like a stone. He'd be certain that I would never again open a picture in this town.

Brockmann, Suzanne (2012-06-01). *Beginnings and Ends* (Short Story) (Kindle Locations 96-99). Random House, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

It didn't help that these bits changed tense from past to present.

There are 6 "chapters" and 3 are devoted to the Shadowland episodes. On the face of it, that would suggest that equal time is devoted to both storylines. That would be incorrect. The Shadowland chapters are longer. I'd say they make up at least 2/3 of the 38 page short. They are over the top dramatic and, to me, unbelievable. I thought that I would not enjoy watching such an overwrought tv show. I did not enjoy reading about it. The basic storyline was Joe Laughlin coming out. Not all that dissimilar to Robin's own coming out in a very public manner in *Force of Nature* - when he kissed Jules on a boat in full view of many TV cameras. In fact, the story seemed to me to be largely redundant. It had already been told - except much better in the *Troubleshooters* series, with Jules and Robin themselves, characters I cared about. I did not and do not care about Joe Laughlin. He is one step too removed from reality for me.

On a positive note, we did get a Jules and Robin sex scene which fans have been panting for. There was a part of the story where Robin had inadvertently had alcohol in his mouth. A big deal was made of it but it didn't really go anywhere. (I have very little experience with alcoholism. I assume the information in the book is true. But, such a big deal was made of it, why then did it go nowhere?). Jules and Robin hire a surrogate and that would have been a story I would have gobbled up. But it was just a sentence or two.

Overall, this was extremely disappointing. The book cost \$1.99. If I had enjoyed it, I wouldn't have minded too much, but given that I did not, I'd have to say it's over priced. People who bought *Born To Darkness* in hardback got the short free in the back of the book.

What else? So, I was disappointed. After I read the story and unrelated to doing so, I went to my Facebook page to check on my news feed. I don't do much on Facebook - mainly I follow some favourite authors. Suzanne Brockmann is one of them.

On Saturday, she posted this on her Facebook page:

Suzanne Brockmann shared a link.

Saturday

BEGINNINGS AND ENDS is being totally trashed on Amazon for not having enough Jules and Robin...? If you liked it, please post an honest review. If you didn't like it, that's okay, too. But like the song says, "Don't be a dick about it."

<http://www.amazon.com/Beginnings-Ends...>

I expected therefore that there would be many many negative reviews on Amazon based on her post. I felt uncomfortable because I didn't like the book either. I wondered what being a "dick about it" meant. I went and had a look. There was ONE 1* review when I looked on Sunday. There were 30 reviews in total, 20 of them were 5* - all from squeeing fangirls gushing about how wonderful the story was and many specifically referencing the 1* review in some manner - "I don't understand the uproar here..." etc.

I feel pretty uncomfortable about Ms. Brockmann siccing the posse onto Amazon. I was even more so when

I realised she was reacting to ONE negative review. While I wouldn't have said "SHAME ON YOU AND A POX ON YOUR PUBLISHER FOR SEEING THE DOLLAR SIGNS" as that reviewer did, I did agree with much of her sentiment. It won't surprise you to know that this review has been downvoted so much that it appears lucky last on the list.

When I finished Beginnings and Ends, the phrase that came to mind was "self indulgent".

After reading the Facebook post and checking out the Amazon review, I feel that applies even more.

Grade: D

E says

I can NEVER get enough of Jules and Robin....EVER! Short, but perfect! Thanks Suzanne for indulging this crazy fan with the perfect Jules and Robin fix!

Yvonne says

That was quick! I was hoping for more. If you were looking for lots of Jules & Robin, lower your expectations. There's only 6 chapters with 3 of the chapters about Shadowlands, Robin's TV show & showing Robin as his TV character Joe Laughlin. The remaining 3 chapters gives a brief glimpse of Jules & Robin & them making a decision for their future.

The story ends at 75% on my kindle. The remaining 25% is an excerpt from Hot Target (and not even an excerpt with Jules & Robin but mainly with Jane & Cosmos).

I understand this was originally included as an extra with one of Brockmann's latest books. As an extra this would be OK. Brockmann should have expanded the story when selling it separately because for what you get, this feels overpriced.

„•*°*!Gwendolyn!°**★°**★ says

Jules & Robin

A Troubleshooters Journey Into One Of The First MM Sweetest Romances Ever To Hit Mainstream.

From beginning to end was such a sweet read.

What an appropriate title for Jules & Robins finale! This series, has been great, and I look forward to more. But, this still feels like the end of an amazing journey. Jules has been the rock in most all of these books for me along with Sam, Alissa & Max. And, Jules finally gets his HEA completed in this little book.

Jules and Robin have been the heart of this series for me. As their personas were beautifully created with more than a touch of realism. It was a blast reading them moving forward in life together. The day to day life of a star and an FBI agent. This little glimpse was grand. Beware smexy scenes were not really on page. But...

Sweet Jesus this was an awesome read!

Anna says

3.5 stars: I liked this more than I was expecting due to some reviews I read before reading this. I missed Jules and Robin and I'm so sad this is the last we read of them because they were a truly amazing couple. Loved their scenes together, and I also surprisingly loved the scenes where it was about Joe, the character Robin was playing for his series; I really got into it, to be honest! So yeah, great short read that reminded me just how great these two are and how much I missed them.

Melissa says

I love this series and in particular Jules and Robin. They are a very special couple because in reading the entire series, we see how Jules has struggled to find his Happy Ending, and we see Robin struggle with his sexual identity and his alcoholism. This particular installment isn't the most in depth, it gives us a small look into how their lives are going, and I LOVE that!! I just want to be a fly on the wall, watching them daily. I might be a little obsessed with them. ;)

Now, for those who haven't read this series, and really don't want to read it all but still want to enjoy Jules and Robin, the two men meet for the first time in Hot Target. They meet again in Force of Nature, get married (umm, spoiler?) in All Through the Night, and have some book time in Hot Pursuit (view spoiler)

What's funny is Suzanne Brockman (on her website) has said that she had originally planned for Jules and Robin not to get their HEA in Force of Nature. She was like "I promise you (Robin) will get your HEA in 2 books, just hang in there." And she says Robin refused to cooperate, LOL!!! :-D That he demanded his HEA *now*, that he couldn't wait. That is just too funny, and I am sooooo glad she didn't piss Robin off.

This time I listened to the audio and I can't say I cared for the narrator. His voice didn't match Robin or Jules and while he did a good job, I just couldn't get over the fact that he didn't sound like them.

Mindy says

I have said this in other reviews of Brockmann's books (see this review), but when it comes to Jules and Robin, Brockmann has a tendency to become preachy.

I get that Brockmann's son has struggled to thrive in a often anti-gay culture. I get that she loves her son and wants to normalize his lifestyle. I even get that she would choose to use her gift of storytelling to get her message of acceptance out to the larger heterosexual community. And I'm ok with that, really I am. Force of Nature was one of my favorite Troubleshooter books.

Anyone who has followed Brockmann's writing for any length of time understands that she is comfortable writing about gay relationships. I think most of her fans are ok with reading gay romance - many even cheer just as hard for them as with hetero romances, if not harder. But as Brockmann has deteriorated from great author of homo- and heterosexual romance to preachy, pro-gay reformist, I think she's forgotten who her audience is.

We've gladly followed her lead into what for many of us was new territory and have found we like where she brought us. We are loyal and have been convinced that gay people can have happy endings just like straight people can. Brockmann should no longer have to feel like she must take every opportunity to get on her soapbox.

Fans shouldn't have had to sit through 2/3 of book that harps on how hard it is for a closeted gay actor to come out and still have a successful career. We know it's hard. While there are many successful real-life gay actors in Hollywood and on TV (Ian McKellan, Ellen DeGeneres, Anderson Cooper, Neil Patrick Harris, Ted Allen, just to name a few), they undoubtedly have a lot of hate and other issues to work through to keep their careers intact. I'm not trying to downplay the issues they face, however I don't think anyone who would willingly read a short story specifically about a gay couple needs to hear the whining. It just isn't attractive in anyone - gay, straight, whatever.

My other complaint about this story, which some other reviewers have brought up as well, is that most of this book centers on the coming out of Robin's TV alter ego. Why do we care whether Joe Laughlin gets a happy ending or not? I certainly don't. Laughlin was just a character Robin played, no matter how closely Laughlin's life followed Robin's. Robin got his happy ending when he married Jules - why do we need to re-hash that in Laughlin's character?

One last thing: why didn't we get to hear more about the baby? I would have loved if this short story followed Robin's and Jules' journey to fatherhood. I mean, Laughlin was a job; the baby is a real life-changer and something worth reading about.

I think going forward I will probably forego any exclusively Jules and Robin stories. I just don't have any desire to read whining and there are lots of other good books to read instead.

Duchess Nicole says

I love Jules and Robin, and was really looking forward to spending time with them. But most of this short was told as Robin in character for his TV show. There was very little Jules. BooHoo!

Still, it's worth reading. It just brought me back into Troubleshooter world and disappointed me. Since the series has ended, all this did was make me a little sad. But Jules and Robin get a sweet little HEA! So there you go.

Diana says

I decided to read this because short stories are about the only fun reading I have time for at the moment. I'm glad I had some knowledge of the series because I would have been a bit lost. Truthfully though it didn't

seem to me that you had to have read every other book in the series to be able to know what was going on in this. This is an M/M romance about an actor who has what's known as character bleed and isn't sure he wants to keep going. His FBI husband is there to help him through the decision and all the issues it brings up. It was a very sweet story, and I really need to start rereading this series.

Mollie *scoutrmom* says

These stories were too short for anyone who is not following the Troubleshooters series. Those of us who have read *All Through the Night: A Troubleshooter Christmas* will appreciate this more than those who have not.

One extremely hot sex scene but not too explicit for newbies to male-male relationships.

Simply excellent. The only problem is the whole thing is too short.

Jonetta says

This was the first time we get any real insight into Robin's *Shadowland* series and character, Joe Loughlin. It was so very revealing to see the parallels in the characters evolution and Robin's when he was dealing with the very same career dilemma. It was so very interesting and, of course, too short. Love anytime Jules is on the page.
