



Final Stretch

Alison Hendricks

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Superstar NFL running back Travis Morrison has been chasing down the same dream since he was a kid. The down-home, aw-shucks, former Eastshore favorite has always known his talents lay with football, and he's never hoped for much more. But when the man he was going to marry leaks a sex tape of the two of them, Travis' golden boy image—and his world—is turned upside down in an instant. Keeping a low profile at his brother's place in Kentucky to save his career seems doable... if he can resist the temptation of his brother's smart-mouthed best friend.

Shane McMillan was on the inside track to the Kentucky Derby when a devastating accident destroyed his career and his confidence. After five years, he finally feels like he's managed to escape the limelight thanks to his best friend and the welcoming folks of Glen Springs. The peaceful life he's built rehabbing horses on his small ranch is everything he needs, until temptation arrives in the form of a disarming smile and a hot, athletic body. His best friend's brother is definitely trouble—but he's the kind Shane just can't seem to resist.

When a misunderstanding leads Travis to work at Shane's ranch, the growing attraction between them starts to burn out of control. Long, hot days lead to even hotter nights when fantasies become reality. Just as their desire starts to turn into something deeper, a photo of them becomes hot news that threatens to shatter everything they've worked so hard to achieve. With Shane's past exposed and Travis' career in jeopardy it all comes down to the final stretch.

Final Stretch is the first book in the new Glen Springs series which centers around a small, close-knit town in Kentucky. It's a full-length gay romance novel featuring a kind-hearted (but kinda naughty) football star, a gruff (but lovable) ex-jockey, a cast of well-meaning small town folks, and a little donkey who thinks he's a guard dog. This book contains explicit scenes that make the most of the rustic surroundings (ahem), so reader discretion is advised!

Final Stretch Details

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From Reader Review Final Stretch for online ebook

Fatimama says

I didn't like how fast Travis (H1) moved on from his almost-fiance although the ex was a douchebag who posted one of their sexy times without permission and wrote an story. Shane was also a dick near the end when he blamed Travis for stuff. I'm glad for their happy ending though.

D.M. says

The final stretch is the first book in Alison Hendricks new series Glen Springs. I've read most of her books, and I'm a fan of her work. I mean hot gay sports stories... of course, I'm hooked!

Travis Morrison is an NFL running back. He has worked hard all his life to create a squeaky clean good boy image. Unfortunately, his latest man has decided to leak a sex tape and Travis's world is about to be shaken up. He needs to get away for a while. His brother lives in Kentucky, and he wants to use the opportunity to mend broken bridges. Travis is on his guard, but can't help noticing Shane. He's hot and Travis is already feeling the vibes. Unfortunately, for Travis, he doesn't know he's about to embarrass himself.

Shane used to be a Kentucky Derby racer. He wants to avoid the limelight. Travis is his opposite in this respect, and he doesn't need his distraction. Sometimes love is found in unexpected places.

This is a hot romance and an easy read. 4 Stars out of 5. It isn't my favourite Alison Hendricks book, but it is worth the read.

Susan says

2.5 stars

This is a formula that will appeal to a lot of readers. I just don't think I'm one of them anymore.

We have the whole famous athlete looking for a quiet place to regroup, the somewhat boring start of a relationship, the dull sex scenes, and the angst and break-up at 75%. It's just not for me anymore.

Travis needs a quiet place after his boyfriend leaked a sex tape of them. And that's how Travis finds himself working at a farm to help out his brother's friend, Shane. The two start off on the wrong foot, but working together makes them start to see each other in a different light and it's not long before they stumble into bed together.

The relationship itself is all good and dandy, as long as they remain hidden away from the rest of the world. But of course the media gets wind of them and things go to shit. We get the angst and break-up at 75%, and then the big gesture to make up for everything.

I'm so tired of these kind of books. They're almost all the same to me nowadays.

I'm also not sure why I keep picking books with famous athletes. The media circus always makes me want to

throw my Kindle out the window.

Oh, and can I just say that I'm VERY against horse racing. I think it's awful to put horses through that sort of training and races. And don't get me started on the whole gambling side of it. So I was not happy when they talked about Shane's career as a jockey and how he wanted to compete again.

Briana says

1.5 Stars~~ It was almost ok...

The following review may contain mild spoilers...

but mostly... I'm just ranting.

The pacing of the story and progression of Travis and Shane's relationship was awkward for the most part. **If the scandal had been that Travis had a fuck buddy that leaked a sex tape and released an article attacking his public image instead of it being his boyfriend, the story would have felt like a natural chain of events leading Travis to Shane.**

Instead, the whole story felt off starting with the fact that he loved Jeremy and even had a ring in his pocket. He was going to propose to Jeremy, it blew up in his face, and **just a few days later** he is drooling over his brother's best friend Shane. Jeremy screwed him over, it was a total betrayal, but the aftermath seemed mostly about getting out of the spotlight to let the scandal blow over. Insta-lust/love stories are fine by me, but this felt **forced and rushed**. All the rushing made the characters' feelings hard to believe, which led to me not caring, making even a pretty good sex scene seem *mundane*.

I tried to let go of how it started, and jump into where they are and where they are going. *It didn't work*. While there were sweet moments, it just wasn't enough to make this romantic or realistic. I liked the town and the characters, so I'm excited to read the next book. As for this story, I just think that the plot was weak and Travis and Shane had a **lackluster** relationship. (view spoiler)

This is the first book by Alison Hendricks that I just plain did not enjoy. *I honestly don't know what happened here. It wasn't for me*, but I still really enjoy her work. In fact, I'm going to go read Jake's story right now... *teacher dating a student's dad....sounds good to me*.

Santy says

There's a very simple reason I've read every single book from Alison Hendricks and it's this: Her Books ALWAYS leave me feeling all warm and tingly (the good kind) inside. I don't know about you but for me that is a pretty good reason to stick to an author.

This book was the same. It made me feel all the feels and left me warm inside.

Our MCs were far from perfect but they apologized when wrong and made sure they made up for any failings or hurts they caused. I love this in people in real life so OF COURSE I loved reading about the characters doing this. I thought the "I love you"'s were a bit premature but hey! If they were feeling it who am I to say otherwise? ?

For a first book in a new series. I think this was pretty solid. I don't know who's book is next but I hope it's Jake's!

Don Bradshaw says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and new author. The sex was a bit too harlequin for me so I skimmed it. The angst was just right for the characters who were well developed and interesting. The story line did not get trampled under the horse's hoofs or get lost amid the scandal. More people should be reading this this fine story.

Isabella ~Mikku-chan~ says

~~*ARC kindly provided by the author to me in exchange for an honest review *~*~*

This book has a quite different setting from the other books by Alison Hendricks but still connection to the well-known football topic. This time it's mixed with a former jockey who's career is over when he hurts himself and his racing horse in the progress.

The story is well written and solid, the story builds from insta-lust to a relationship between the character and finally settles in a love relationship. I liked the pacing and along the way there were misunderstandings in variety.

It has a slight angst topic, first with Travis' scandal of being filmed while sex with his former boyfriend and later because of the attention it brings to the calm farm Shane is managing.

The tension rises from different topics and the reader's anticipation is constantly picked and sometimes shaken.

I liked how sexy the erotic was displayed, Shane and Travis really get along in bed but also in between. The new relationship is based on friendship, although the final trust isn't there (yet).

The way how Travis' brother Jack is introduced and displayed in the book gives hope about a book for him, he is a charming minor character and the way how Travis and he rebuilding their strained relationship and finally can be brothers is sweet and adorable.

The books has here and there a few flaws, still a solid read, a good writing, the reader's attention is constantly hold, therefore I give 4 out of 5 stars.

Review originally posted on my blog with added content Mikku-chan / A world full of words

Taya says

I finally get to mark this book off my TBR list. I agree with another reviewer that mention of the length of progression from Travis's former boyfriend to Shane. Travis was considering marrying this man who betrayed him and then moved on to new man very quickly in my opinion. It just felt like everything happened in a few weeks instead of months . I think it would have work better if the other guy was a casual hook up than a person you were thinking about marrying soon. I think the way he gave up his career was little baffling to me. He didn't sound ready to retire from football. One other thing that baffled me is Shane watching the sex tape (that part didn't bother me) and getting mad at the other for his performance and not fact he leak the tape. Travis's ex boyfriend was a loose end that never got tackled head on for me. It was mention but no real on page confrontation. Overall, I enjoyed myself but this had some issues for me.

*** I received a free copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.*

Emma says

just a teeny bit lacking - 2.5* rounded up because it wasn't unpleasant.

this is a nice pleasant low angst book. The two main characters are both likable. The story was fine but there was nothing I found magical. Still I might consider reading something else by this author if I am looking for very light easy reading.

Cadiva says

Loved this intro to a new series from Alison Hendricks

Low angst, moderate steam, ranch setting, hot NFL player, ex jockey, what more could you ask for?!

For me, not much as I just like Alison Hendricks' style of writing. This one centres around Travis, mired in a scandal and with a broken heart after the guy he was going to propose to leaks a sex tape.

I loved Travis, he was strong in character but with a vulnerability which came from never knowing anything but football. His relationship with his older brother was strained but you could sense within him the desire to make changes.

Shane also was flawed and his experiences had changed him in a different way, he was cautious and held back a bit but he held such passion inside.

Together they were just beautifully sweet and I'm looking forward to more in this setting.

Oh and the big gesture Shane makes - awesome.

Julia Begander says

A former jockey who now rehabs unwanted horses and an American Football player?! Even in my dreams I couldn't have hoped for a pairing like that!

I'm super passionate about **horses** and I even worked with race horses for a while (harness racing though); and I also love **American Football** (both my brothers play)!
So of course I had really high hopes!

However, the reviews were not that great, so I was expecting it to be really bad. But it wasn't! It was great, actually! Both MCs were really likeable and they had **great chemistry**. I got so excited when (view spoiler) - that was so romantic! And I actually squealed when it was revealed in the epilogue that they (view spoiler)! All in all the book just got better and better.

So why not five stars? Well, I think Travis was **very fast to move on** from Jeremy. I mean, come on, he was planning to propose, for fuck's sake! It's not like they just had an affair or something. So yeah, that was completely unrealistic.

Also, I'm not a big fan of books written in present tense.

But other than that, **this book was really great!** I can't wait to go and read the bonus scene and then the other two books in this series.

Mirjana ****DTR - Down to Read**** says

*****2.75 Stars*****

Based on the blurb, this book had a lot of promise, but unfortunately, I just didn't connect to the characters much.

Travis moved on from his scandal (and his almost fiance) too quickly. Considering that he was ready to propose to Jeremy, there wasn't much heartbreak or time spent dwelling on a relationship that ended on such a cold and greedy betrayal. I feel like the author didn't fully commit to this plot point, especially considering Travis's career hung in the balance because of the scandal. It was pulled out when needed, and didn't truly feel like a part of the story.

Shane's past also felt kinda distant to me. I just never really warmed up to him. I wanted to, but I didn't feel like the author fully "went there" with the issues he was having. I wish she would have expanded on the pressures he was feeling while competing. I needed to connect more.

I have to say that even with my issues, I was engaged the whole time while I was reading. No stutters in pacing or times where the book dragged.

The heat was moderate and done well.

I guess the best way for me to sum this up is that it was pretty enjoyable, but missed the mark when it came to the punch I was expecting based on the blurb. What a got here was a light tap on the shoulder.

*****ARC courtesy of author in exchange for an honest review*****

Amber says

I loved Final Stretch by Alison Hendricks. It's the first book in the Glen Springs series. I loved Travis and Shane. They are great together and have excellent chemistry and hot scenes. I liked how Travis immediately thought of hiding out with his brother when a sex tape gets leaked to the media, and he has to lay low for a couple of weeks. I like how they take the time to get to know each other finally. Moreover, I loved Shane and his small rehab ranch and his dream of one-day rehabbing injured racehorses. He also helps with troubled youths that his best friend Jake teaches. Jake is also Travis's brother. I loved the donkey that thought he was a dog and greeted everybody on Shane's ranch. Moreover, how Travis ends up helping out at the ranch to help stay in shape for when he gets to go back to the NFL after the scandal dies down. I voluntarily reviewed an advanced reader copy of this book.

Wendy Moore says

3.5 stars

Low angst, feel good read!! Both characters were likable, felt a little rushed but was enjoyable.

Ami says

3.5 stars

Despite started with a sex scandal that forces Travis to lay low, and Shane has a kind of traumatic trigger due to an accident that happens during his racing days, but in overall **Final Stretch** is a nice, low-on-angst, quick-pace story.

While Travis and Shane relationship is pretty much insta-love but somehow it doesn't bother me much. And I like that the small town seems to be quite welcoming towards LGBT people.

I LOVE all the scenes related to the horses, especially the ones related to Shane taking care of Apollo, the ex-racing horse. I always think this animal is majestic. I think I need to read more love-story about horses training or racing. Otto the donkey is also cute.

Having said that, I am quite annoyed with Shane near the end. I think he needs to do more groveling towards Travis. (view spoiler)

Part of my involvement in Joyfully Jay Reading Challenge Month 2017 Week 3: Self Published Book Week
