



At First Light

Spike Pedersen

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In the heart of the Amazon Jungle a child disappears. Thousands of miles away this tragedy changes two lives forever as they are thrust together to save the young girl.

Piper Brown finds herself witnessing the child being auctioned on the wrong side of the knife-edge that separates luxury and poverty. And in that moment Piper knows one thing. She must return the child to her jungle home. Piper's daring act, and love for this girl will change her forever, and it may save her from her own destructive path.

Jesse Nickols is searching for meaning and happiness in his adrenalin fuelled world of hang gliding. When trouble finds him, he is forced to run once more. His search for contentment is rewarded and doomed when he finds himself caught up with Piper and her struggle to save the child's family from a tribal warlord's savagery deep in the Amazon Jungle.

Together they discover that inner strength and selfless acts are essential to being human; and discovering happiness.

Surprising, lyrical, and riveting; At First Light is that rare novel one is reluctant to put down; with characters so engaging, you will want to send them a Christmas Card. A world built of wonder, a world so real, it's pure escapism.

At First Light Details

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From Reader Review At First Light for online ebook

Stephanie says

I'm finally done reading this book. It took me forever to read it and get into it, but it's worth the read by the end. I would compare it to romancing the stone. If you like that, then you'll like this book.

Yawatta Hosby says

I enjoyed this 51 chapter book. It was action-packed with characters not afraid to pack up and leave their old lives behind to embark on a new adventure. I admired them for their bravery.

Jesse worked for his uncle as a construction worker. After an argument, he took off and headed to British Columbia. There he met the cook (a female not afraid to tell it like it was) and Za. They taught him how to hang glide. Then a pretty lady named Haylie joined the picture, so you can only imagine the male testosterone rising with both Jesse and Za trying to win her over.

Huntoon, a crazy bully, decided to taunt the newcomers (Jesse and Haylie). They were feisty with him, egging him on. I'm all for standing up for yourself, but sometimes you have to learn to read a person to tell when/if they snapped LOL. I loved the tension and conflict in these scenes, especially when Huntoon brought a gun to the bar and when he attempted to shoot Jesse while he's in the middle of the air hang gliding. It was sad that the cook died, saving his life. I felt bad that the cop made them leave without getting to attend the funeral or say sorry to her parents.

I also enjoyed the action in Brazil—the Amazon. Piper was alone in a foreign world; I couldn't even imagine. She connected with Evenel, a little girl. It was sad that her dad was murdered right in front of her, then the bad guys were selling her. Thankfully, Piper was there to buy her, ultimately saving her.

My favorite section was Haylie, Jesse, and Za sailed on a boat towards the Amazon. I loved the sexual tension. At first, I thought Jesse would win her heart, but she ended up with Za. Their flirting was cute. Jesse acted like a big baby because he wasn't chosen. I don't even think Haylie acknowledged it LOL. This opened the door for Jesse to pursue Piper when they finally meet. I thought they were a cute couple even though Jesse not listening to her caused trouble with Tohanna.

Tohanna was a violent bully who terrorized the tribe living in his jungle. It was interesting that the group left Canada because of a bully only to find one ten times worse in the Amazon. They also had to watch out for pirates while riding Pan's boat on the river. Pan was one of my favorite characters. It was pretty funny when he kept saying Piper would dehydrate.

I RECOMMEND this book to read.

Diane Rapp says

Hang gliders, river pirates, adventure, and love!

The title of this novel is deceptive. It sounds safe and cozy, does not conjure up the heart pounding

excitement, tragic loss, or emotional entanglements that make up this excellent book. The main character Jesse Nickols is an adrenaline junky who loves to ride his motorcycle “at first light” along hairpin turns in Door County, Wisconsin. His adventuresome soul needs the thrills. After quitting his job, he strikes out on a road of discovery. The trip takes him across the continent to meet other thrill seekers who “fly” hang gliders in hair-raising dives off mountains in British Columbia.

During the same time period Piper Brown arrives in Manaus, Brazil, a teeming city on the Amazon River. She’s a spoiled rich kid who studied languages in college. Piper is unprepared to confront a dangerous thug who traffics in children. Impulsively Piper rescues Evenel, a little girl captured in the jungle, and plunges into the perilous mission to save the girl’s tribe. When their two stories collide, the audacious team of hang gliders and Piper join forces to defeat a murderous adversary. Violence and death force the fun-loving vagabonds to mature quickly.

The vivid descriptions by the author are the most surprising and delightful element of this novel. Pedersen gives his readers lyrical portrayals of magnificent scenery, heart pounding passages of near-death antics, and poignant moments of sorrow. I’d never be tempted to “fly” a hang glider but this book provided that experience (safely in my own home). Spike Pedersen is a talented writer with stories to tell about fascinating characters. Read this adventure and you’ll become another fan

Ruth M says

At First Light is an action packed volume of riveting storylines, strung out individually in first chapters, but woven together nicely to complete an amazing ending. Written graphically, one can touch the flora, the landscapes of cities, mountains or jungle and feel the gut-wrenching emotions and drama. All senses are awoke while traveling through a mapquest journey. Colorful writing prompt visual displays of athleticism, mother nature at her best (or worst) and ability to feel the souls of youthful adventurers and deep weathered elders holding vessels of wisdom. Pederson sparks his writing with flavors of romance, horror and soulful friendships, not necessarily in that order. Unlike other typical books I read, this one kept me on the edge of my seat. The novel reached out to me saying "don't put me down". A.F.L. - worth more than the kindle download price.

Don says

Intense & Fast Paced Adventure Tale.

From start to ending this is one great story with a tremendously solid plot and extremely well-developed characters throughout.

I really found it quite difficult to put down until it was completely devoured.

Very top notch reading entertainment and an astounding ride to say the least! Well worth the 5-Star ranting.

And of course, my utmost thanks to Mr. Pedersen and Goodreads for giving me the chance to read and review this novel through a 'First Reads' draw.

Sandi Widner says

Oh, yeah! A five star rating for "At First Light" by Spike Pedersen! *****

Disillusioned with the seedy family business, Jesse Nickols turns in a new direction with an unknown destination. Fate brings Jesse to British Columbia, a region of free spirits and local jealousy. He joins two hang gliders whose only existence is time in the harness and the drive to conquer the mountain. But when a local logger confronts Jesse, there can be but one alpha male. Forced to run, they find adventure in the biggest rain forest on the planet.

At the same time, Piper Brown decides that another tedious trip with her mother to Rodeo Drive just might kill her. She disappears into the million-person city of Manaus, in the middle of the Amazon. While enjoying the privileges of affluence, she finds a child tied to a post with a bloody rope. One thought consumes her: find this child's home and return her.

However, she discovers the child's jungle home is embroiled in a war of genocide, where things she never dreamed of thrust Piper into action. If anyone is to survive, Piper needs an assassin. Can she ask Jesse to be a killer? Will it stop the revenge killings? Can he survive?

Dear Readers: Spike Pedersen's writing is lush and evocative! He crafted a book with great balance between action, adventure, suspense, travel, and romance. I found it was very hard to put down!

Joann says

It sounded like a good read but I couldn't get past the first few chapters. Throttle wide open and bike railing didn't do it for me. Plus there was a lot of swear words so it wasn't the type of novel I wanted to waste my time on.

Chris says

I received a free copy of At First Light as a gift in exchange for an honest review. The adventure premise of the book was compelling enough for me to accept though I must say that even just reading the initial book summary I was a bit concerned as to the quality and nature of the novel. At First Light is an ambitious story that, in my opinion, tries to do too much all at once. The book bounces between two distinct story lines for the first half (or more?) of the book with nothing to link the two other than the knowledge from the synopsis that they will intersect at some point.

Plot one focuses on Jesse and his adrenaline-addict style life. He races his motorcycle up and down mountain roads and around blind turns just to get his blood rising. He's dissatisfied with his life as a construction foreman and recklessly bounces around the site Parkour style trying to bring some excitement to the job. After the "last straw" on the job site, he sets off aimlessly on his motorcycle and randomly stops at a roadside diner in the middle of the lumber harvesting mountains of British Columbia. He narrowly avoids a fight, talks himself into a job and stumbles across a pair of other adrenaline seekers...this time in the form of hang gliders looking to use the science of air flow to take the ultimate flight. His engineering skills come in handy as he devises the best way to use the current and fly the peaks.

Plot two happens simultaneously and focuses on Piper, a young woman from a family with two much

money. In an effort to make a statement to her parents, Piper has run off to South America and is hiding out in the city of Manaus. One morning she stumbles across a child tied to a post and being sold on the street like livestock. Piper is enraged and tries to stop the sale. The natives laugh at her and try to conclude their business. Fortunately for Piper, she has plenty of money so she goes ahead and buys the girl. She takes the girl into her hotel room, cleans her up and feeds her. Then Piper decides to turn the event into her own personal crusade and sets out to find a way to reunite the young girl with her family. Piper hires a boat and sails up the Amazon in search of the native tribe. She learns that the tribe not only has trouble with slavery but also with the ultra-violent leader of a neighboring tribe. Turns out this guy is sadistic and evil and has methodically murdered all of the men and works to maintain his power and influence by spewing terror around the area.

These two plots bounce back and forth for a while, moving between one another every few chapters. Each story was interesting but without being directly connected, the alternating from one to another was distracting and felt disjointed. It also felt like each story potentially suffered from full and proper development because of the need to keep each story balanced against the other. Thus instead of two separate, distinct fully alive stories, I found myself reading two stories trying to mesh their tone and feel against one another. The result felt less than satisfying.

The stories finally work towards one another when Jesse gets into a fight with one of the loggers which results in a tragic and fatal confrontation. The local law basically says they can't do anything and suggests Jesse and his friends had best skip town. After a very quick discussion, the hang gliding crew decides to head to the Amazon and end up in the same small native village as Piper.

As the two plot lines joined up, the story worked to pick up the pace. Since Jesse's story was all about the adrenaline high, it was already fairly ramped up. Piper's story had been trying to maintain a similar feel and pace to Jesse's. So when the two stories came together and worked to ramp up the intensity I felt like the plot started whipping out of control.

Before I go too far down the rabbit hole and make you think I hated the book, I want to comment that I was impressed by the creativity and the overall storytelling aspect of the author. Taken from a high level, there is a compelling story here. Or more specifically, there are two to three compelling stories here. The writing was often very vibrant. Some of the descriptions of the settings and situations were almost poetic in their sensory presentation. Unfortunately, the mirage broke down for me in a number of situations.

First of all, as I mentioned above, the plot felt like it was trying to tell two or three or more stories. Even though these stories eventually connected with each other, the individual stories felt stifled by the need of the book as a whole to maintain the tenuous balance between each story.

Secondly, and possibly related to my initial struggle with the book, was that many aspects of the storyline felt far fetched and strained at the believability of the plot. From a distance, the behavior of our adrenaline junkies in the Amazon sounded plausible but when looked at from close up during the individual scenes, their comments and actions felt a little less natural. The "love at first sight" trope strained at the seams especially in its extremely literal nature (Piper was enamored with Jesse literally from the first instant she sees him). It might have been more believable if we'd gotten to know Piper better earlier on but in context it seemed ridiculous. Instead, the biggest things we learned about her is that she is a spoiled rich girl (who insists on ordering Spaghetti-*os* even in the heart of the Amazon) with a compassionate heart that makes her impulsively charge in to try and fight against slavery and torture. Smaller storytelling aspects also made me shake my head in an effort to believe them or even understand the reasoning. The adventure of the overall story was fun, but if I paused for even a second to think about what was happening, the illusion fell apart.

Finally, I found myself frustrated with the editing of the book as a whole. An editor could have helped with some of the continuity and plausibility issues noted above. In addition, there were a number of awkward

phrases, typos and grammatical issues that distracted me. The worst offender for me was the lack of good gender identification for one of the core characters. When this character was first introduced, there was a comment made by one of the characters that made me think the character was male. For the next hundred pages, this character is only referenced by a genderless "nickname" and no personal pronouns. There is never any physical description given to help flesh out this person. Instead, my mind conjured up a stereotypical image based on an old 70s-80s sitcom. Imagine my surprise a hundred pages later when a female pronoun is used in connection with this character I thought was male. I shrugged it off and thought perhaps it was another typo. Later we finally get confirmation of the character's gender as female. I actually took a few minutes to thumb back through the previous hundred pages to try and find some gender indication and was dismayed to find none.

Generally speaking, I felt like this book has potential. In fact, if you read it as pure escapism and try to read fast enough to not think about style, tone or balance, you'll probably really enjoy it. As for me, I was distracted by the discontinuity and found myself dizzied by the breakneck pace and changing balance.

**

2 out of 5 stars

Jerry Peterson says

From a high-speed motorcycle run on a dangerous road in Wisconsin's Door County peninsula to hang-gliding in the Canadian Rockies to a foray into the Amazon jungle to save a child, Spike Pedersen's first novel, "At First Light", is a tale of high adventure. If thrills and frights are what you're looking for, this is a book you should read.

Tamra LeValley says

I am not sure if I just liked this book or really liked it.

This is a story of a man and a woman who are each separately searching for what they need in life. The Rain Forest is where they both find each other. Deep in the jungle they not only fight for their lives but the lives of a tribe that is becoming extinct because of a tribal feud.

This book started out so slow. At approx. page 150 some action finally happened. I was disappointed at the plots set up. It felt as though I was reading two separate books at once. The one with Jesse who has become a man obsessed with hang gliding and Piper who has decided to live with a tribe in the jungle. Once the two of them came together is when I really really starting liking this book a lot. They made a dynamic team.

The author did a wonderful job of writing this book and the plot toward the end was fantastic. The characters were all likable except for Hallie. She was written as a spoiled child in a woman's body.

Over all a good book written by a VERY good author.

Goodreads Winner Book!

Jody says

A few different story lines that come together into an action packed adventure that will take you from Madison Wisconsin to British Columbia and into the Amazon. The main character Jesse Nickols quits his job and comes to join in with a group of hang gliders that are all out to conquer the mountain. They all want to see who can out do the other in the glide of their lives. Forced to go on the run, they find themselves in the biggest rainforest on the planet.

Piper Brown is a socialite who disappears into the city of Manaus rather than goes with her mother on a trip to Rodeo Drive. She comes to find a young girl tied to a post with a bloody rope. Piper sets out to get this young girl back to her family but it does not turn out as easy as it would seem.

This book will make you want to keep reading to see what adventure they will all come upon next, it is full of action, suspense, travel, and romance. You will not want to put it down. The characters will draw you in, they become very real to you. They all have separate lives that all come together. The part I found most intriguing for me was when Jesse and Piper's lives intertwined. I recommend this book to everyone, and I am ready to read the next.

I would like thank Spike Pedersen for giving me the opportunity to read and review his book, I can't wait for Volume II!

Sandy Richardson says

I won this book from Goodreads. I absolutely loved this book and couldn't put it down. The descriptions and thrilling adventure made me feel I was there in the Amazon! I did not want this book to end and I plan to read more books from Spike Pederson!

The reason I gave this great book 4 stars instead of 5 stars had to do with unbelievable or understandable parts of the story. Piper travels to the Amazon region for adventure and to use her linguistic gift. She stumbles upon a tribe with a unique, rare language. A mythical language found in obscure textbooks. Piper uses this language and is able to communicate with the villagers, they teach her as she teaches them English. Within a short time, other Americans make their way to this remote village and they are able to speak with the villagers without any problem. The second unrealistic part of this book was when Evanel is seriously injured and miraculously is healed of this life threatening injury without intervention.

Despite these few inconsistencies, this book is a great adventure story! The trips to the Amazon are well set up for both Piper, the linguist, and the sky diving group. Though it is obvious the trips to the Amazon are the highlight of the book, I was drawn into this story from the very first page. The characters are believable and their adventurous lifestyles made me desire to join them!

First light is referenced throughout the book. The first light of the day and all the wonder and possibilities that come with each day. Whether the first light is in the U.S. on a freighter, or in the Amazon there is always a wonder and happiness as the First Light dawns.

this was a page turner! I had a hard time putting this book down and cannot wait to read another book from Spike Pederson.

Henk-Jan van der Klis says

Two lives meet each other near the banks of Brazil's Amazon River. Jesse Nickols is disillusioned with family business leaves the known past for a uncertain future in British Columbia. He joins a couple of hang gliders to enjoy the beauty of flying above the earth. Piper Brown gets away to Manaus, the megacity in the Amazon heartland. She frees a bound child, and even returns her home, many many miles upstream. There, she discovers that the girl's family and fellow villagers are victims of cruel genocide. Piper has to do something against Tohanna, the ruler of the opposing tribe in the Amazon. Somehow Jesse and his friends enter a freighter, sail the Atlantic Ocean down to the Amazon Delta and even reach the same village. At First Light continues with even more killings, and the need for an ultimate sacrifice to let the revenge killings come to an end. With Jesse and Piper falling in love thriller, suspense, travel, adventure and a ove story aspects all deserve their place in this intriguing book.

Sherry says

I was looking forward to reading this book which I received from Spike through a goodreads giveaway. I was not disappointed in the pace of the story, it was interesting, the characters were well developed and the settings were full of adventure. It had what I would describe as a "redneck" style of writing with lots of weapons, shooting and action. I enjoyed the descriptions of the hand-gliding as its not something I have ever done but could feel the wind beneath me as I was flying through the story. Some slight discrepancies with the Canadian versus American cultural differences but these were not major issues. A book I would recommend. Thanks!

Linda Rorex says

Action adventure, pirates, romance what more could a girl want. I couldn't put this book down. I recommend this book by Spike Pedersen.
