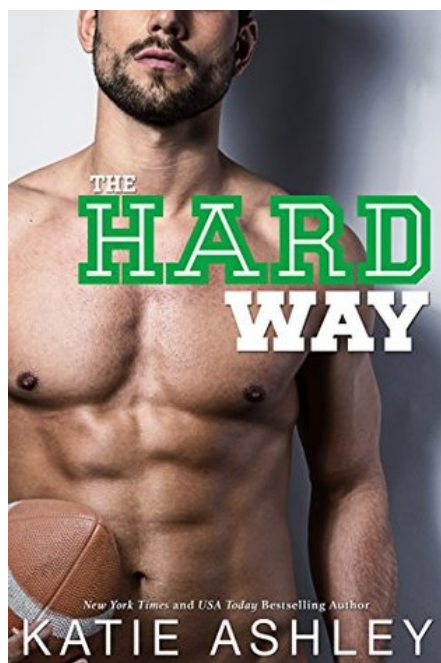




The Hard Way

Katie Ashley

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The Hard Way Katie Ashley

Cade Hall has always been the golden boy of the gridiron. Because of his talent at football, coupled with his father's wealth, he's always gotten his way. But when a night of drunken debauchery lands him in hot water with the college athletic board, neither his influential father nor his charming grin can save him. He finds it a total buzz kill when he is sentenced to community service with troubled youth at an inner-city shelter. But his nightmare is only beginning when his greatest high school regret is the very one in charge of the program, and she has him by the balls in more ways than one.

For Avery Prescott, senior year was a nightmare of epic proportions, and Cade Hall played the lead villain. After she fled her small town for college in the bright lights of Atlanta, she thought she had escaped the painful memories of her past. She never could have imagined Cade would waltz through the door of the outreach program she presided over. But Avery has news for Cade--she isn't the same shy, doormat of a girl she was in high school. Since she holds Cade's football future in her hands, she's more than ready to make payback a real bitch.

Will the two stay in the defensive zone or discover that sometimes life's greatest lessons are learned the hard way?

The Hard Way Details

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Sports Romance, Football

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From Reader Review The Hard Way for online ebook

Polly says

2 *the struggle is real* stars

I'm not going to lie, I almost DNF this one like 4 times. However I really really try to finish arcs so I pushed through.

Let me first say, I'm a huge football fan. HUGE. I know my shit. It was apparent to me early on that the author didn't. If there is one thing I can not stand in a sports romance is when it's not realistic.

There's a football player on the cover. The guy hardly did anything football related. The time lines didn't match up, and there was some info about money involved in college sports which is illegal. I just couldn't stop rolling my eyes.

On top of that I found the male lead to be highly immature and a tool. I never found him redeemable and the female lead was a doormat.

This book gets a yellow flag and a thrown headset from me,

Shayna says

I always enjoy the mix of sweet and sexy that Katie Ashley brings to the table. This second chance romance brought drama, angst, and heavy emotion to the forefront, leaving me turning the pages faster and faster. In addition to being a second chance at love romance, there is the sports romance aspect of THE HARD WAY. And you know I love me some sports romance! Ms. Ashley took it to a deeper level, and made me flip the switch on liking the hero of this story. Cade Hall was not an easy character to fall in love with. He was an arrogant and privileged asshole, who took everything for granted. If he wasn't sweet-talking his way out of trouble, he had his daddy do it for him. It didn't quite work out that way with his latest prank. He is finally being punished for his idiocy. His noteworthy charm will not get him out of working at the local inner-city shelter. There, he is forced to come to terms with his past and face the one he never forgot, Avery Prescott. Turns out, Avery also never forgot what Cade did to her in high school. Her heart was broken, and no amount of charm will be able to put it back together.

Cade and Avery has a hard journey ahead of them. Will they both stop playing defense long enough to get to the truth? Will these opposites attract in AND out of the bedroom? The hard road is a long one, but journey is one that romance readers everywhere will absolutely LOVE!

Katie Ashley will always be an 'auto-buy' author for me. No matter the genre, I am first in line to read her work. Her characters are complex, her storylines are always entertaining, and her writing is so amazing. The best part of reading THE HARD WAY was the growth of Cade Hall's character. There was a moment when all my hatred for his character melted away, and became the hero that Ms. Ashley gives us time and time

again.

New Adult and Sports Romance fans will simply fall head over heels in love with this book!

Emily says

Avery Prescott had a vivid memory of her senior year, especially the boy who broke her heart. Now four years later, that boy, Cade Hall waltzes in to the center she volunteers for entitled and feeling he should not have to do much to serve his penance for a blunder that has him facing possible suspension from football at Georgia Tech. Avery sees an opportunity to exact a little revenge for his actions years ago, but she worries that her heart is still involved.

Gut wrenching. I thought this was beautifully written, you feel the emotions especially with Avery that swirl around what happened to her. I appreciated the way that you could identify with peer pressure which I think Cade often fell into. This story is about redemption, second chances, and hope. Wonderful read, keep you hankie handy.

Jessica Alcazar says

Second chances everyone in their lifetime, at one point or another, will make a choice that will cost them dearly. They will want a chance to be able to repent. I believe in second chances! And they are one of my favorite tropes to read about in a book. No one's life is ever perfect. Things are said. Things are done. Sometimes they're good. Sometimes, not so much. The key to *bad* choices is that when faced with a time/place/way to right that choice, you grab ahold of it and right it. Cue The Hard Way!

Cade Hall is a *privileged* boy. He was raised to feel and think that he is untouchable. Is that on him? Or is that on his upbringing? I say this to you because after reading this story, I have read a *ton* of unfavorable reviews for Cade Hall. I am on the outside looking in and feel completely different. DO I think what happened in HS was okay? Yeah, no. But HE was a product of his upbringing. HE showed the man he really could be when the opportunity arose to repent. And I loved that *Katie Ashley* gave me a hero to root for :)

Avery Prescott was the shy girl. She kept to herself. She didn't come from money. Quite the opposite. She was attending the prep school on scholarship. And we all know how rich privileged kids treat those who are not.....And Cade was no different. So what should have been the best school year for any teenager turned nightmare for her.

But that was then and this is now

Today, Cade finds himself at Avery's mercy and it was a sweet, emotional, angsty, dramatic journey! This is my first read by Katie, and I will be following her from now on. Her style and voice was really good. She held my interest through the past and the present. The story was unfolded for us perfectly with the right amount of *past moments* to add to the present moment's story. It's really hard to please me as an avid reader with characters in this age group but I had very few eye-rolling moments and that in itself should tell

you this is a great book LOL #TRUST

Copy provided for blog tour review

Michelle says

Copy provided by author in exchange for an honest review

Katie Ashley has been an author that quite recently has been on my book radar since I first read my first Katie Ashley book last year. When I first read the synopsis of her newest New Adult sports romance, **The Hard Way**, I knew instantly that I had to get my hands on this book stat.

The Hard Way was definitely a fitting title for this book as the author wrote a story that was filled with angst, drama, second chances and love. The hero in this case, Cade Hall is living the privileged life. He is handsome, cocky, smart and of course one of the stars in his college football team. When Cade got upset over his grade from this particular professor, his stunt of rebellion didn't go unpunished. In order to keep his spot on the football team, Cade must serve his time volunteering at The Ark, a community center for inner-city teens.

Avery Prescott didn't have any easy life growing up. She had to work hard to get to where she is today and working at The Ark is something very important to her. In her final year of college, she thought she escaped her past but when Cade Hall reappeared at the center, all the painful memories came flooding back. Cade Hall was the reason why she wanted to escape that small town and never look back. Cade broke her and he was the villain in her story. But what happens when the villain becomes the unlikely hero? Will Cade be able to show Avery that he is sorry for the things that he had done and that he is willing to work hard to get love and affection? Or will Avery make it very difficult for Cade?

The Hard Way is a second chance sports romance that was brimming with lots of angst and drama. This is definitely one of those reads where the hero had to go through a hard journey of redemption. Cade is not an easy character to like in the beginning but Katie Ashley allowed readers to see a vulnerable side to him thus allowing his character growth to be possible. So if you are a fan of football, second chances, and new beginnings then this book is definitely for you.

Katie Ashley

Jayme says

3.5 stars. Emotional high school/college romance. Spoiled, rich bad boy meets a smart, poor girl. A few years later, they have a second chance at love. It can be nice read when it catch your market.

The Hard Way is about young - twenty, twenty-one - college kids. However the plot takes place during the

summer. It's a second chance romance with return to the past moments, to the beginning of Avery and Cade love in high school. After three years, they meet again and have a another chance at love. But not so easy. Cade has a bit of redemption to do, and the way for the two of them will not be easy.

Cade Hall is a spoiled rich kid. He doesn't appreciate what he has and expects his father to always gets him out of trouble. But this time because of a dumb prank, he is in such trouble that nothing will help him. He has to spend the whole summer to work at the shelter for risk teenagers. Where, it turns out, is working a girl, who he once really hurt and who will do best to make his life miserable.

I liked the moments when Avery bust Cade balls. It was funny and well-deserved. But the best part was the topic about the shelter. It was where are happening several heavily touching moments and where our heroes grow up. It had to happen some drama and grief that Cade could mature into adulthood and reclaim his beloved girl.

Sadly, there isn't much sports in this book, although the main character is an athlete, if you are looking for a typical sports romance, you will not find it here. But my rating of 3 stars is mainly due to the fact that it was a little too immature for me. I think, it's for someone younger, who enjoys a high school romance. I would prefer more mature feelings, even though the characters developed into a very nice young couple.

“We’d experienced some of life’s lessons the hard way, and now we had nowhere else to go but up.”

ARC kindly provided in exchange for an honest review. Thank you!

Rosa Sharon (iScream Books Blog) says

Learning lessons the Hard Way sucks, right?

Of course I was excited to get my hands on a Katie Ashley book. I must say, this was different from what I was used to reading from her. She took me back to high school, and it was a painful trip. Being inside Avery's head as she went through such a devastating experience was enough to put Cade on my shit list. I wanted to give him a bigger black eye than what he was sporting on the cover of this book. I wanted him to experience the same level of hell that he put her through. I admit that I thought it was fate that put him at the mercy of the very person who deserved the chance to make him pay for some of the pain he had caused her. It wouldn't take it away, but it would give her some satisfaction to watch him squirm. ***And I enjoyed it too...***

Cade was the privileged teenager with a powerful father. He was arrogant and cocky, never concerned about the consequences of his actions, knowing that his father would get him out of any trouble he found himself in. The girls were lined up to spend time with him, but they knew he didn't do relationships. He found no reason to work for it when he got it for free, anytime he wanted it. When he was assigned a team project with Avery as his partner, he tried to use his charms on her, but she saw right through him. She didn't fall for his lines and she didn't tolerate his douche-bag behavior. She called him on it...every time. She made him see himself through her eyes and for the first time he wanted to be a better man. But the time they spent together was away from everyone else. He was the only one who saw that side of her. To everyone else she was the

shy, quiet, poor girl who was at the fancy school on a scholarship. She wasn't popular, she was invisible... ***until she wasn't.***

Cade was doing well in college. He was passing all of his classes and excelling in football. He was very popular and enjoyed partying with his buds. Unfortunately, one of his most brilliant ideas happened while he was drunk and nobody could talk him out of outrageous prank that he was convinced he could accomplish without getting caught. ***Of course he got caught.*** And for the first time he found himself in a predicament that neither he or his wealthy father could get him out of. His money, his charm, and his talent on the football field were not enough to convince the college athletic board to let him walk away from his mistake without paying for it. Imagine his surprise when the poor little rich boy had to report for duty to the very girl who he had betrayed back in high school. One look at her face and he knew that his community service would not be an easy experience that he could finish and forget. ***Nope, he'd definitely be paying for both of his mistakes...***

Woo Hoo! That's when it gets really fun. I was excited to see the sparks fly. I wanted Avery to put him through the wringer and teach him a lesson he would not soon forget. I wanted him to redeem himself. I wanted him to have a good reason for what he did. And, I wanted to know what it was. While the story is told in multiple POV, the author did not let me in on the reason for Cade's behavior. I was mad at him, but I wanted him to win me over. I wanted to like him. I wanted him to prove himself to Avery and win her back. So of course I was on the sidelines, coaching Cade. Offering him my wisdom regarding groveling and gifts. Hoping that she would give him another chance to prove he could be a better man and that he had learned his lesson, ***the hard way.***

Romance Readers Retreat says

4.5 Stars

It's been a while since I read a New Adult book and this one definitely didn't disappoint at all.

In the past It's been no secret that I'm generally not a fan of chapters that revert to past events, I usually feel they affect the flow of a book for me however in this case, I have to say it was those parts I enjoyed the most and they were absolutely essential to the story anyway. It was these parts that were full of the most angst which really made me sympathise with Avery.

Cade was your typical College Jock. Lives a privileged life on the outside; Does whatever he wants and damns the consequences. That is until he meets Avery. I admit, I wasn't Cade's biggest fan for quite some time. I felt he needed knocking down a peg or two, despite Avery not putting up with his over inflated ego. However he eventually won me over. I especially loved the fact that he didn't seem to have a filter where his mouth was concerned, as he seemed to say things before engaging his brain a lot of the time, which made him such a fascinating character to me, with so many more dimensions than the All-American boy who was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

I absolutely adored this book and if I had to say one thing that let it down in any way, it would be that towards the end I did feel there was something missing , but overall I really did enjoy it and I really really hope that this is the first book of a series and there will be more to follow.

Kim says

4.5+ stars

An alcohol induced act of stupidity leads Cade Hall to community service in order to save his spot on his college football team. But he has no idea his past is about to take a bite out of his already chewed up a**. The program day manager is Avery Prescott, the girl who he nearly destroyed in the past.

We learn about their lives now and in the past and how it all went to hell. She is no longer the sweet innocent, awkward, tender-hearted girl who thought he had a heart under his outer facade. She is angry and still has internal scars.

Once upon a time she made him want to be a better man, but he failed. And years later, he appears not to have learned much from his mistakes and is still the same selfish, cocky guy always getting bailed out of trouble. And Avery is strong, determined, bitter, and she is now in charge of his daily dose of humble pie.

This is the story of two people who seemed like opposites--the rich boy who never really felt loved and the farm girl raised loved and overprotected. The popular A-list playboy and the introverted, serious, innocent nerd. But they were both intelligent, funny, and had big goals for their future. And they found a connection. But there were also a lot of outside influences and challenges stacked against them. And Cade was spoiled, self-centered, immature and too aware of social status. They were young and living in a diverse social situation and Avery ultimately paid the price for it. But now his past mistakes are all bearing down on him in the present, and he has no choice but to finally deal with them. But does he have what it takes to finally realize what is important and change for the better?

This digs into the importance of true family love and support versus being spoiled and bailed out when needed. It's about growing up, accepting mistakes, hope, and redemption.

Cade was a hard hero to like at first. He really could be an a**. He could be self absorbed, entitled, and impulsive. He was multi-talented and intelligent, but did not make smart choices. And he was deeply afraid of feeling anything real, of failure, of being hurt. It was easier to avoid complex emotions and attachments.

Avery has matured and is sassy, stubborn, and strong. But she was the only girl who ever reached him and saw his inner goodness and full potential. Is it too late to find it again? And will she even be willing to try since he hurt her so much in the past? Is he a hopeless case?

There is no easy road for these two. Their past is marred by betrayal and pain. Hearts have been broken, emotions run high, and trust is elusive. It is told in both points of view and gives us glimpses into both their past and present to allow us to see how things unraveled and how much there is to overcome to make it right. These two will have to actually communicate to have a chance of letting go of their past or moving forward, and they have plenty of personal challenges and growth opportunities to face.

But this is also about Cade being exposed to different people and lifestyles illustrating just how much he has taken for granted. His eyes are opened to the more dire and dangerous circumstances of some, but also how important a positive attitude is to achieving true potential. He is faced with difficult situations that he never imagined. I was invested in Cade's journey and seeing how he would deal with the changes and challenges. Life can be disheartening and even messy, but it is how people get through the bad times that show what they are truly made of. I really felt for Cade as he navigated through some harsh realizations and emotional situations.

This is a second-chance, opposites attract N/A romance with complex characters with the potential for growth that has a heavy side helping of angst, drama, and emotion. But it also has humor, sweetness, passion, and hope. This runs deeper than a fluffy sports romance and handles some difficult challenges and life lessons. I loved some of the pop culture references from eighties movies as they are so familiar and fun

to me...it helped lighten up some of the more emotional stuff.

I am interested in the side characters, Presley and Jonathan, that true Katie Ashley fans might recognize and I would like to read more about them.

I was gifted a copy in exchange for an honest review.

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Mari says

It's been a while since Katie Ashley wrote a sports related novel. Now set in college football Cade Hall has it all as an popular golden boy he has the smarts, athleticism, looks but that one drunken mistake lead to a wake up call. He had to grow up and learn the hard way so to speak. It's all fun and games and not taking things seriously until your faced with the consequences.

In the beginning I agreed Cade needed to learn a lesson, a little knock from the pedestal. The flippant attitude he had was not cutting it, he needed to know priveledges come responsibility. Past and present collide when he meets Avery Prescott the second time around. This girl may have not grown up with a silver spoon but had a humble childhood full of warmth and affection. She appreciates what she has been blessed with and works for it. Two different worlds that clashed before and had a falling out, appearances might be the same but how about on the inside? As we get a look into their high school days in flashbacks, it becomes where things have soured. Avery's hurt, anger and unresolved issues aren't to be taken lightly.

Has Cade changed and man up fix the rift from before? Get past the entitled jock persona. He was a big douche and troublemaker in his youth well partly still true. His other side is buried deep can Avery open that part of him and make it stay? The things worth having aren't always easy. He has a chance to make it right this time.

Katie Ashley tells a story about football, love and life in a college setting. With one athelete who has the ability to do more, be a better person and be thankful. A well rounded story filled with lessons, hardwork and emotions. A wonderful second chance story that's heartfelt. Jonathan seems like he has a story to tell that would be interesting. I missed Katie's kind of sports romance and this was a welcome treat.

*** ARC provided in exchange for an honest review ***

Arabella ~?AB?~ says

★★★ 3 Stars ★★★

Cade Hall is a football hero at his college, but after a drunken prank gone wrong, he is forced to work community service at a local shelter for underprivileged kids. This is where he comes face to face with his past, and discovers that the girl he very callously dumped in high school is his line supervisor.

Avery Prescott has never forgotten the humiliation of being publically dumped by the school God, and vows not to let him get off lightly when she is tasked with showing him the ropes. Her heart is locked up tight.

Told in past and present, this is the story of the popular jock and the nerd, but quite different to other books of this genre, it was more emotional and cute.

This was an OK read for me, I liked it enough to finish, but to be perfectly honest it just fell flat. I didn't connect to the hero at all, he was all attitude and arrogance, which I normally devour, but in this instance, he just didn't redeem his behaviour whatsoever, and I never fell for him at all.

Overall, it was a decent storyline, but unfortunately it didn't knock my socks off.

The Hard Way is a standalone new adult romance, told in dual POV.

ARC gratefully received from the author in exchange for an honest review

[image error]

JAIME says

This was a pretty okay second chance romance story where we have two kids from opposite worlds - she grew up on a farm, he in a mansion, the usual - who fell in love in high school. She gives him the old V card, and he calls her a pity fuck and denies all other involvement of her the very next day. Because, asshole.

Now, they meet up a couple of years later when, surprise surprise, he is still an asshole and has been ordered to do community service at a center for underprivileged kids that our heroine works at.

They duke it out, and some stuff happens that makes the bad boy good again and made me cry harder than I think I ever had reading a book. Shocking, really given my cold, dead, heart.

My big issue with this one is the football. If you're going to write about college football, make sure you understand college football. Throw on Sportscenter, watch a few eps of Around the Horn, pick up a copy of the NCAA handbook, pay more attention to popular culture (Johnny Football anyone??) or for the love of God, at least read my blog. There was a point that the author suggested our Hero (?) was making the big bucks playing ball in College. No. No, that doesn't happen. Or if it did, he's breaking NCAA rules and would 100% become ineligible, lose his scholarship etc. etc. Now, you can't put stuff like that in books, because I spent pretty much the rest of the book in my head wondering why the author would do that. And why hasn't it been brought to her attention yet. And why hasn't it been changed??

Anyway, still 3 stars because you got my black heart to feel, and I otherwise like your writing. Just lay off the sports or something okay?

Carmen Rae says

I am really finding myself struggling with this review. I don't know if maybe I need to sit back and think about it all for a little longer or if it's just that for half of the book I was pissed way the hell off and for the other half I was conflicted over loving the story and being devastated at a few of the twists and turns the book took us on.

I have tried to take a few calming breaths to try to put my thoughts in order but they are still jumping around like a kid on a sugar high. I started this novel with a bit of apprehension. I absolutely love asshole man whores who redeem themselves but I don't want them to redeem themselves for something horrible they have done to the h unless there is a major grovel and some really epic reason as to why he did it in the first place. I just want him to redeem himself from his bad boy ways to be the man the h deserves.

So on starting this book I kind of thought Cade had just been a dick in high school to Avery and it wasn't really anything personal and then she bumps into him a few years later and he is still a dick but he redeems himself and they fall madly in love and I get all swoony and want to throw my damp panties at Cade.

Alcohol...because no great story starts with milk. I read that somewhere on the Internet.

What I got was that Cade was way beyond a dick, I seriously couldn't get past what an absolute loser he was. And years have passed and he is still as self-centred and immature and just ugh. I wanted to see him get hit by a bus, backed over and then run over again. So I spent the whole book being upset about that.

Avery, I actually liked, but oh my god how could you think there is a single thing about Cade that is worth looking at, especially since you know him and he not once really showed any emotional growth. I mean sure there were a few times he said the right thing but I felt like Avery had four years of reasons to not trust that so I was waiting for her to kick him in the dick and move on.

So sounds like a pretty easy rating right. Hate the H, like but think she is stupid the h. Bam easy, yet I found I couldn't put the book down. I had to know what was going to happen next. I was invested to see if there was going to be a come to Jesus moment or just something like maybe that bus I mentioned earlier that I read the book in one sitting and I cried when the twists hit. I just wanted to see a little vengeance and some justice or just something and there was a little I just didn't feel like it was enough and I also felt that Avery had already forgiven Cade before then and she absolutely shouldn't have so yeah conflicted.

So now I sit hovering how the hell to rate it and I think right now it's a 3.5, however this could change if I wake up cursing Cade's name or something. But overall it was well written and intriguing and I would love other people to read it so we can call Cade names together. So please read it and message me. lol

Check out my reviews here

NMmomof4 says

DNF @ 74ish%

This is a second chance romance, and we get flashbacks from their senior year in high school to their present. As younger teenagers, they fell in love after spending time together working on a school project. They are

separated with the H acting cruel, and are reunited ~4 years later when the H is assigned community service at the same place that the h works.

I love a good second-chance romance! BUT I do need the reasoning behind the separation to be understandable and I also need some good grovel to enjoy it. Sadly, I don't think either of these things happened in this one.

I was continuing on because I wanted to know the reasoning behind his douchy behavior in the past. I felt like he was a major douche in both the present and the past, and the reason he hurt the h so bad was simply not good enough! I understood that he was in a bad situation to make him want to break it off, but his OTT cruel behavior I didn't understand at all.

I also was irritated that all he had to do was tell her what happened and apologize (4 years later!!) and she just forgave him. I guess I wanted some actual groveling and for the h to have some backbone before they started acting all lovey-dovey!

For my safety gals -- I don't think this is very safe for you. The H is a manwhore, and even when they were first developing feelings in high school he was sleeping with a f-buddy (who actually causes some drama for them).

I'm sure others will like this second-chance romance, but it just didn't work for me :(

Janna ♥ I'm A Sweet And Sassy Book Whore ♥ says

***This and other reviews can be found at www.imasweetandsassybookwhore.com ***

ARC

I am telling you this book whore has been reading some really amazing books as of late and The Hard Way is just another one added to that list. It's been a little but since I have read a Katie Ashley book, but the second I started I felt right back at home because I knew this would be another great book and I wasn't wrong. The Hard Way is a second chance romance between Avery and Cade, who had something special in high school and reconnects after Cade acts a fool and gets himself in trouble with his college.

The Hard Way isn't just your typical second chance romance, or even college romance, what it is, is something special. The circumstances of why Cade has to volunteer aren't as important as the lessons he learns, the connections he makes and the growing he does personally. Even the relationship between Avery and Cade is more mature, and although I wish he would have really understood what his actions did that day, I am glad he knew it and even after being an ass a couple times apologizes to Avery.

Avery was just as important to this story as Cade was but I think I am focusing on him more because Avery already was a good person who saw the real Cade even when he didn't see if himself. She was the perfect match for Cade, she brought out the better person in him. She had every right to never forgive Cade but it shows how amazing as a person when she is able to not just work with him but also remembering the connection they shared.

There is a part of The Hard Way that will bring tears to your eyes because sadly it is something that happens way too often. Being from Detroit this happens each and every day and it breaks my heart in both real life and fictional. The way Ms. Ashley handles not just the situation but afterwards touched a special place in my

heart.

The Hard Way was another second chance romance that not only I loved but one I recommend to all of you, and if you have never read anything by Katie Ashley, this is a great one to start with.
