



Swagger

Liz Lincoln

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“Tight end,” noun: 1. a position in American football, 2. NFL star Marcus James, 3. what any hot-blooded woman can’t stop staring at every time Marcus walks by.

Bree Novak is so close to earning her Ph.D. she can taste it, but she’s supposed to be writing her dissertation, not giving lectures while her advisor slacks off. The semester gets even crazier when veteran tight end Marcus James—Bree’s celebrity crush—enrolls in her “Intro to Physics” class. The man’s even hotter in person than he looks on *Sunday Night Football*. So why is Bree hoping he drops out? Maybe it’s because Marcus, with his cocky smile and chiseled body, is the ultimate distraction. . . .

Drafted out of college years ago by the Milwaukee Dragons, Marcus is taking advantage of a season-ending knee injury to finish his bachelor’s degree. Plus, thanks to a required science credit, he’s also getting to know the geek goddess who teaches physics. With brains *and* beauty, Bree is living proof that opposites attract. She’s even kind enough to give Marcus extra help with the material, as if she didn’t have anything better to do. And the more time Marcus spends with her, the more he realizes he’s not just crushing on his teacher—he’s falling for her.

Don’t miss any of Liz Lincoln’s mouthwatering Milwaukee Dragons novels, which can be read together or separately:

ON THE LINE | SWAGGER

Swagger Details

Date : Published September 18th 2018 by Loveswept

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Author : Liz Lincoln

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From Reader Review Swagger for online ebook

Ruthie Taylor says

~~I received a free copy of this book to read and review for Wicked Reads ~~

This is the second book in the series, and a really good read. It is undoubtedly a sports romance, although Marcus is currently on the bench due to an injury, so he is taking the opportunity to catch up on some studying. This leads him to meet PhD student teacher, Bree, as she is teaching his Physics module. So as well as sports romance, we get the student / teacher dynamic, and hey, it's physics, so there is a lot of fun geekiness thrown in. Give them both parents who can't help but know best and a couple of feline companions, and this really ticks every box - and I must add - in a really good way. In fact all my plans for my Saturday morning have been shelved as I had to finish this first!

Bree suffers from anxiety, and it is at an all time high as she gets close to completing her PhD. Throw in a truly awful replacement supervisor, who is the ultimate misogynist, and a bully to boot, and coping is becoming even more difficult. So meeting her longtime crush, tight end Marcus James is surely going to tip her over the edge. Instead, she finds a really good guy, who is patient, kind and weirdly seems to really like her back. It is really fun being along for the ride as she starts to realise this, and even more fun when she breaks some rules and turns rather unexpectedly into quite a sex kitten.

Marcus is not happy about missing a whole season, and Bree certainly helps distract him, but he has a feeling this is a little more important than just a way to pass the time. How it can possibly work with him being her student, and then Bree likely to leave for another job leads him to ask a favour of a friend... what ensues is complicated, but makes for a really good twist in the story.

Another really good installment, with some great humour, as well as some serious issues being considered, and the romance and passion was both engaging and believable. I am very much looking forward to the next book in the series.

The_Book_Queen says

4 1/2 STARS!

- ◆ Black NFL player (tight end). Currently out for the season due to injury
- ◆ She's finishing her dissertation for a PhD in physics (STEM heroine) + excellent anxiety rep (so damn real, it me)
- ◆ While injured, he's back at university to finish up his bachelors; she was wrangled into teaching a class . . . yep, one of his.
- ◆ Slow burn but then it's SUPER hot.
- ◆ Cake + oral (trust me -- there is NO food near the genitals! But I can tell you this: goals)

- ◆ Loved that all the characters are described -- be it white or Black or Indian or Latinx, etc. White is not the assumed default in this world
- ◆ Loved these two -- as a couple and as characters
- ◆ My only issue, small at that, was I wanted a stronger ending for them (and no, I don't need a wedding or baby epilogue for a strong ending, but rather I wanted to see them actually together and working things out, in their lives and in their relationship, before they cuddle into the sunset and the book ends, you know?)
- ◆ Excited to read more from Lincoln in the future (luckily I have book 1 still on my Kindle)

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If you wish to look at some quotes/thoughts I highlighted, please check out my Twitter feed

Mary says

I received a free copy of this book to read and review for Wicked Reads.

Bree and Marcus' relationship starts off slow, which I adore. They took time to get to know each other, their likes and dislikes, and became lovers. Marcus is the dream boyfriend: smart, good looking and a great listener. Downside: he reacts before he thinks and doesn't always *hear* what Bree is telling him.

Bree is working on a doctorate in a male dominated field and often has to put up with the 'old boys club' that still exists in the area of physics. Her own doctoral adviser seems to be the founding father of this particular faction. She's holding her head up, working on her dissertation and doing her level best to succeed where it seems that everyone wants her to fail. Including her own family.

Being friends with Marcus is something new, he's supportive of her work, her dreams and wants to help. However, the chip on her shoulder about people "knowing" what's best for her could derail their relationship before it gets off the ground.

Marcus also has some issues with his family not being supportive. His highly successful parents are both doctors as are his sisters. He's the only one in his family who's under-achieving. His success on the football field is nothing of note to his family. Their major concern is that he not end up with brain damage before he gives up the game. His season ending injury solidified his parents' belief that he needs to do something more meaningful with his life.

Bree and Marcus are good for each other in that they believe in each other and only to build the other up, rather than tearing them down. Marcus has to realize that Bree's independence is an innate part of her just as it is in him.

~~Wicked Reads Review Team~~

Paige Turner says

I really enjoyed reading this book. I realized it was the second in a series but you didn't have to read the first to truly enjoy Swagger.

The characters were interesting and found them to be a perfect fit for the other.

It did get a little relative at times and I would have loved another chapter or two but overall I would recommend this cute sports romance

Misty (Reds Romance Reviews) says

When an injury leaves tight end Marcus James sidelined for the season, he finds himself struggling with how to spend all the new free time he has on his hands, everything in his life revolves around the game, and if he doesn't that have that what does he have? He decides his time might best be used to finish the classes he needs in order to obtain his degree, which means he must take a physics class, and he instantly has reservations about it, that is until he meets his teacher!

Bree Novak is beyond gorgeous, funny, smart, and he has a feeling she is going to be an excellent teacher, but he wouldn't mind being more than just her student. But that would be crossing the line into dangerous territory...

Swagger is an absorbing little page-turner that joins the football world with the science world together, and boy what a entertaining duo they make! I really enjoyed this newest installment in the Milwaukee Dragons series, it drew me almost immediately, and kept me entertained the whole way through, who knew science could be so hot! The chemistry between these two burned brightly from start to finish, and every encounter they had was filled with so much heated passion and intensity that I found myself in need of a fan more than a few times! As a sports romance fan I have to say this one brought some serious game, the characters were great, the words were engaging, it was a win-win!! Highly recommend!!

I requested an advanced copy of this title from NetGalley, and I am voluntarily leaving my honest opinion.

My Pink Fairytales says

I stopped reading it at 30%. Six chapters were enough to bore me out of my mind.

Maybe it was the third person writing, the sporadic dialogues and the fact that nothing really happens!!!

Here's what I got so far: he's an NFL player, currently injured and trying to finish his education. He's equally nerd and jock. She's a physics TA and he's her student, of course. They meet on campus, she's a huge fan of his, their attraction for each other is obvious, but when I was finally ready for them to kiss at least, she says "we can't. you're my student." :insert eye roll:

So, my kindle says I need another three hours to finish reading it and I simply can't. I'm sure it's not the book's fault, so I would highly recommend you to give it a chance. I didn't click with it. It didn't suck me in, but maybe it won't be the same for you.

"ARC provided through Netgalley in exchange for an honest review."

Xan West says

[References to controlling ex. Controlling, disapproving family members, which gets challenged. Misogyny and ableism from family that gets challenged textually. Misogynist rescuing behavior from colleague/friend that gets challenged directly. Misogynist harassment and abusive behavior from dissertation advisor/boss that gets challenged by multiple people. Hero leaned a bit controlling, which was the central conflict in the story, and gets challeng

Alex (HEABookNerd) says

****Happily Ever After Book Nerd Blog Recommendation****

Series: Milwaukee Dragons #2

After an injury benches NFL star Marcus James, he decides to work on some of the credits for his business degree. **When Marcus meets Bree Novak on campus he's immediately attracted and intrigued by her nerdy but fun personality -- if only she didn't turn out to be one of his teachers.** Bree Novak just wants to get through these last months student teaching before she hopefully earns her Ph.D. in physics but it's an uphill battle with her sexist and neglectful advisor. A developing friendship with Marcus is great but they both know that anything more is against the rules and could jeopardize everything Bree is working toward.

I started reading *Swagger* and never wanted to put it down because it was so good; I enjoyed the first in the series, **On the Line**, but Liz Lincoln outdid herself with this sequel. **From the very beginning I was invested in Marcus and Bree's story and their developing friendship turned romance.** Both our hero and heroine come from families that have expectations about success and they're each constantly trying to prove themselves. This, along with a love of football and nerdy culture, created common ground for them to grow from. **I really enjoyed the friendship that's built first and it made the transition into a relationship so much stronger.** Because of the student/teacher dynamic there's a lot of tension as Marcus and Bree try to resist each other and, all things considered, they don't do a very good job staying away but that just means more tension and sexiness for the reader.

"He had gone from a sports icon to a human being. More important, he was her friend."

Lincoln creates some great characters in *Swagger* and I felt each was uniquely developed with great representation across genders, races, and disabilities while still making it feel natural and not like she was trying too hard. **Bree is one smart woman and she refuses to give up no matter how much resistance she gets from her family or her advisor.** She's unfortunately confronted with the sad truth that some fields are still an "old boys" club and I admired her restraint in the face of her advisor's terrible treatment. Bree is also incredibly independent though I felt like that causes some problems as she navigates a new relationship with Marcus. But the nice thing is that for the most part, **Bree and Marcus discuss their problems, desires, and expectations like adults and this was so refreshing!** I also loved that while Marcus might be a celebrity athlete he's also very humble and down to earth. He loves that he can be himself with Bree but it also seems like he's just naturally an easy going guy. He looks out for his team, works hard, and is dedicated to having the life he wants. **Marcus is definitely on my book boyfriend list!**

I only have one complaint about the book and it centers around an argument over Bree not wanting others to interfere and try to control her life. She's had that from her family and an ex-boyfriend and she's tired of it, justifiably. However, I felt like what Marcus did was nowhere near trying to control anything and was in fact just helping Bree to make a connection. I felt that Bree completely overreacted and while she had good reasons for it, I expected more of an apology from Bree. Instead, the "blame" is placed completely on Marcus and I honestly felt like he didn't do anything wrong. Other than that small complaint, this book was pure magic for me!

Copy provided by NetGalley for honest review

5 out of 5 stars

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**Happily Ever After Book Nerd**

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### **Bette Hansen says**

This was an enjoyable read. It has nice writing, a good flow and well developed interesting characters. Everything you look for in a good book. Nothing wow about the story but it is a nice romance. I enjoyed the maturity of the characters. No back and forth about their feelings, they handled situations the way would expect adults to handle them, and they actually talked about any issues that came up. Just a note while this is a "sports romance" there isn't much in the way of sports in this book. Overall I really liked this one and I think you will too. I recommend it.

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### **LeeAnne says**

This was just an okay read for me. The storyline progress is slow and I did a lot of skimming towards the middle. The main character, Bree, has had a crush on her favorite football player, Marcus James, forever. Marcus is injured and taking a physics class that Bree is TA'ing. Though the attraction is immediate there is a ton of build up to a kiss that she immediately stops because she's his teacher. Then we have a another few chapters before any more progress is made on the relationship front. I did like Bree's character a lot, she's a strong independent woman who is trying to get out from under her controlling family's thumb – and doing a bang up job of it by getting ready to graduate with her Ph.D. I was a bit less impressed with Marcus's character but really it's because I just wanted him to grab Bree and claim her LOL.

This one didn't leave me wanting more which was disappointing. Unfortunately, I probably won't be continuing with this series but I will most likely check out some of this authors other work as I really enjoyed book 1 from this series.

I received a free copy of this book to read and review for Wicked Reads.

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## Romance Schmomance (Malia) says

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This was a first time read by this author and I found it rather enjoyable. It was low on the angst and drama, which I definitely appreciated since I'm a bit of a mood reader. I loved how this was a lighthearted and sweet read!

I'll be honest and say that I haven't read many books where the heroine is a physicist. I enjoyed the insight of the life of a physicist especially a female one. The lack of support from her parents, advisor and sometimes colleague had me infuriated. And there's no doubt being a woman in this field, the unfair treatment probably happens more often than we think. I admired Bree so much for what she endured and her tenacity to keep moving forward to her goals. I will say that she overreacted a bit when it came to certain things that Marcus did even when he had the best intentions at heart. There wasn't any ill manner behind it at all and I think she was a bit too quick to react.

Marcus! A nerd slash handsome football player, I love that mix! I loved that it was a bit of a slow burn between them because he was a student of Bree's, sort of. They tried to keep it professional but eventually couldn't fight their feelings any longer. He was so sweet and kind to Bree and they're so well matched. I definitely connected way more with Marcus than I did with Bree. Marcus was an all-around solid dude and it was nearly impossible not to love him.

One thing that irked at me a bit was when race/ethnicity was specifically mentioned of the characters that are brought up in this book. I found it a bit weird and unnecessary to have. So it kind of threw me off while I was reading Swagger.

All in all, definitely an enjoyable first read from this author!

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## Maria Rose says

Coming at a timely juncture, Liz Lincoln's new contemporary sports romance Swagger, book two in the Milwaukee Dragons series, covers a lot of territory. Just like in real life, in this story about a football player and a PhD student, football and college are both in full swing for fall and the novel combines both aspects in a thoroughly enjoyable romance with a hint of the forbidden teacher/student trope. It also doesn't shy away from some serious topics, dealing with them in an authentic and believable fashion.

Marcus James is on the injury list with a damaged knee and in physiotherapy rehab while the Milwaukee Dragons starts their season. Instead of pining on the sidelines (well, there might be some of that, too) he decides to finish up some college credits needed towards his degree. Physics is not his forte, but the bright and engaging teacher definitely makes it a smart choice. His parents are both medical professionals and are thrilled that he's gone back to school. They hope it's a sign that he's going to quit football, especially on the part of his mother, who messages him weekly with new research on traumatic brain injuries. But Marcus isn't looking to end his football career anytime soon – this is just an injury time out until he can get back on the field.

Bree Novak is in the final weeks leading up to her dissertation and hopefully her PhD in physics. She's got a

lame duck adviser, an older man who doesn't think much of women in the workplace, never mind in a scientific field. He's stuck her with teaching a class, one that turns out to be an admittedly bright spot in her day when her celebrity crush, Marcus, turns up as a student. From the first time they chat after class, to the tutoring sessions he's sorely in need of, they have a connection; one that becomes a fast friendship and then something more.

Bree is cautious, not wanting to give her adviser any reason to derail her PhD by finding out she's become involved with a student. Besides, the odds of Marcus wanting to actually be in a long term relationship are remote, or so her clinical anxiety likes to tell her. She doesn't know where she'll end up after she gets her degree, having looked at employment opportunities out of state. Are she and Marcus headed for the real thing or will their diverging futures leave a relationship in the dust?

There's a lot to unpack in this solidly written and engaging story so let's start at the top. Firstly, the teacher/student relationship isn't one of particular concern with respect to their ages as they are both in their late twenties and Marcus is a few years older than Bree. Their friendship is out in the open (they have lunch together several times) and Marcus is seeing Bree for tutoring so it's not surprising that they are spending time together. Whether someone finding out that they are moving towards a more intimate relationship could damage Bree's graduate studies is a source of tension in the story but not an overwhelming one.

The environment the author creates for Bree as a grad student is (hopefully) familiar to anyone who has gone to college, realistically portraying the diversity of cultures and ethnic groups that study together. (At least, that is my personal experience so I was delighted with its portrayal here). Marcus is black and it's great to see the book cover reflecting this. Bree's best friend, fellow student and housemate Reina is Latinx, and uses a wheelchair in her daily life, and the author does a great job of incorporating all the details that can't be overlooked when accessibility is an issue. Marcus and some of his football buddies own a nightclub and since one has a family member in a wheelchair, they'd made sure to include a ramp. That Marcus is not only a talented football player, a serious student, and thoughtful, to boot, is another kink in Bree's original plan to keep him at arm's length.

Though it's becoming more common, it's still not the norm to discuss CTE – chronic traumatic encephalopathy – in a romance, though it's getting better as more is known about the dangers of concussions in impact sports. Anyone playing football is aware of the issue and Marcus more than most, with his neurologist mother having bemoaned his career decision from the start and now never missing an opportunity to try to get him to quit playing ball. Marcus loves football and has weighed the risks for himself, with plans to continue for at least a couple more seasons once his knee injury is healed. I appreciate that the author brings this up as an everyday topic the guys on the team discuss and debate.

You also don't commonly see characters who deal with anxiety and depression in romantic novels, though it is becoming more prevalent in contemporary romances. It may seem odd to want to include story arcs that don't automatically make you think of a happy ever after, but it reflects a growing trend in modern society and romance is nothing if not a reflection of trends and social norms. Bree's anxiety will show up whenever it's not wanted (of course) and the stress of dealing with a misogynistic professor who could derail her research efforts and her degree definitely doesn't help. When Bree shares her mental health issues with Marcus, he's understanding and offers help to her in whatever way she needs, having had a family member with a similar diagnosis. Marcus's support helps her to regain her mental balance more quickly in tense times.

But what about the romance? Well, it's exciting and sexy! It's a slow burn at the start, since the reasons for the couple to avoid getting involved are pretty clear. But hanging out together, and meeting each other's circle of friends, as well as Marcus' genuine friendliness and good nature make their mutual attraction difficult to resist. The resulting love scenes are sexy and emotional. The sharing of confidences and the challenges they both face from not always supportive family environments provide another link to make the

end of the school term not come quickly enough. Naturally there is a conflict that requires soul searching and compromise to resolve, but it all adds up to a genuine belief that this couple will have a fun and long-lasting future. Swagger takes football romance to the next level with a story that seamlessly blends important topics into a fun and engaging romance.

This review also appears at All About Romance: <https://allaboutromance.com/book-revi...>

A copy of this story was provided by the publisher via NetGalley for review.

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### **Susan McClintock says**

I received an ARC of this book from NetGalley for my honest review.

Marcus James is a tight end for the Milwaukee Dragons NFL team. He injured his ACL and is out for the season. He has decided to go back two college to finish up the last two classes he needs to finish his degree. One of these classes is intro to Physics, taught by grad student Bree Novak. Bree is finishing up her doctorate in Physics. She is having to deal with crippling panic attacks and a sexist advisor, who doesn't believe women belong in the Physics. She is a huge fan of the Dragons and Marcus in particular. This sets up the hot-for-teacher, forbidden romance between the two of them. I liked this story, but I didn't love it. What I loved about this story, Marcus. He is the perfect guy, an athlete, loves smart women, patient. I also liked that they had the female love interest as an academic in the STEM area. What drove me crazy about this story, Bree. When the inevitable breakup happens (this is not a spoiler as every romance does this), it was due to Bree being irrational. But of course the story put the blame on Marcus. Sometimes women are jerks too and they need to put on their big girl panties and do the apologizing. If you liked the first book in this series, you will enjoy this book.

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### **Samantha (WLABB) says**

Rating: 3.5 Stars

Sports romances are among my favorites. Therefore, seeing the second Dragons book was going to feature a STEM heroine had me really excited.

- Pro: Marcus had everything I look for in a hero, and won me over immediately. I especially loved it, when he would go through his memory index to try and figure out what he did wrong, and the way he attempted to curb his hero tendencies in order to respect Bree's desires to "save" herself. And bonus! He was a closet nerd, who engaged Bree in quite the Star Wars - Star Trek debate.
- Pro: I liked the common ground that Lincoln laid down between Marcus and Bree. They were both rather successful, but not in the eyes of their families, which was really sad. At least they had each other.
- Con: The ending was ok, but I would have liked a little more for these two. I really, really liked Marcus, and he deserved more. The good news is, that this is a series, and we can always get some awesome life update on Marcus and Bree in a later book.
- Con: I was a little surprised that the couple from the first book were so far removed from this story. Usually there is more of a connection between the current and previous MCs. I think I let out an exhale, when we

finally got a mention of them. I just expect more updates on past couples in companion books.

- Pro: The set up was great. Most of this sports romance took place off the field, because Marcus was recovering from an injury, but Marcus' "fragile" state worked well in the story, and made it more believable.
- Pro: Marcus and Bree were a fun coupling. The chemistry was great, and each brought out the best side of the other. I really enjoyed watching their romance blossom.

Overall: If you're in it for the romance, you will enjoy this one, because there is no doubt in my mind, Marcus will win your heart.

\*ARC provided in exchange for an honest review.

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## Jo says

This is not what I have come to expect from a sports romance.

The male protagonist is surprisingly sweet, and whilst I don't have an issue with that, it didn't really fit the character I expected, given his role on the field and his interactions with his parents.

Bree is a complete contradiction within her own body. One one hand, she is strong willed and knows her own mind. On the other, she has issues dealing with a misogynistic dinosaur of a professor.

That said, this was a perfectly enjoyable, light read. Ideal material for it you just want to while away some time in romance-land.

I voluntarily reviewed an advanced reader copy of this book.

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