



## Strings Attached

*Nick Nolan*

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### **Strings Attached** Nick Nolan

Adolescence is a hazardous way of life for 17-year-old Jeremy Tyler; his father died in a mysterious accident when he was a child, and his mother has since descended into alcoholic hell and forced rehab; that's when he's sent from the Fresno slums of his childhood to the posh estate of his overbearing great aunt Katherine and her censorious husband—liberated from an economic prison, only to land in an emotional one—and is overwhelmed by the change. It's not easy for him to fit into the upper crust, particularly because he's trying to hide how much he's attracted to other boys. Jeremy's story of breaking free from the strands of dishonesty, deceit, and self-doubt has its parallels to the tale of Pinocchio, but Nolan's take is totally contemporary: think the TV series *The OC*—girls with mean cheekbones, well-built guys with snotty attitudes, and Jeremy in the role of heartthrob Ryan Atwood. He's a good-looking kid, with a sleek swimmer's physique—and the swim team's champ is out to get him. He dates one of the smart-set girls in an attempt to keep his hormones at bay—but that doesn't do him much good. Nolan's debut novel is a kitchen sink of genres—coming of age, coming out, mystery, romance, erotica, even a dash of the supernatural—that add up to an impressive story about the passage from boyhood to manhood.

### **Strings Attached Details**

Date : Published March 9th 2010 by AmazonEncore (first published January 1st 2001)

ISBN :

Author : Nick Nolan

Format : Kindle Edition 338 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Lgbt, Fiction, Gay, Young Adult

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## From Reader Review Strings Attached for online ebook

### Jay says

Title: String Attached (Tales from Ballena Beach, #1) Audiobook Version

Author: Nick Nolan

Narrator: Luke Daniels

Cover Artist: N/A

Publisher: Brilliance Audio

Reviewer: Jay

Genre: Contemporary

Type: Romance

Pairing: Questioning & Gay

Length: Long Novel (10 hours & 15 minutes)

Heat Rating: ????

Book Rating: ★★★★★

I had a hard time putting this one down. I just wanted to know what would happen next and would Jeremy be happy. The author suggest that there is a Pinocchio theme to the story. I didn't really see that but nonetheless enjoyed this story. I have read all three of the stories in this series and I have to say you must read them all to get the complete picture. This was Jeremy's story, the next is Arthur's story, and the third is their story. This is truly an amazing set of books.

Complete Review at WoDF - String Attached (Tales from Ballena Beach, #1) Audiobook Version

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### Al says

It's like reading The Fresh Prince of Bell Air. If Will was white, the show was actually gay porn, and somehow a murder mystery became involved. Oh, and if the writing was awful.

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### Iain says

Pure fluff, but very enjoyable fluff which I would happily recommend to anyone looking for an enjoyable holiday read. It's gay YA, which I reckon is a tricky genre to pull off in terms of tone, and to be fair I think the author does a good job. However you do get a sense that this is his first book - there are some great passages and descriptions and others which tend towards cliché. Critics might think of this as a gay O.C., but equally so would fans! So, while I'm a bit surprised it won some awards, I thoroughly enjoyed this troubled young man from wrong side of the tracks gets chance at redemption which is laced with family secrets and danger while discovering himself and his sexuality! The ending comes rather abruptly with a final chapter to tie virtually everything up in a big pretty bow. Also, the Pinocchio analogy never feels very convincing and the author's afterword where every aspect is spelled out does not actually help to convince me otherwise. But - and I actually think this is maybe the most important thing about this book - there are still not that many books out there for young gay men and women looking for some reflection of themselves and their feelings as they grow up. This may be a broad brush portrait of gay youth with more than a touch of the fantastic, but I can imagine - and hope - that it will find many readers, young or old, delighted to get caught up in its

cocktail of adventure, love and loss.

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## Lena♥Ribka says

### *Audible*

I decided to mark my audio books with an extra sign, because I don't want to mislead you.

As I've noticed, audio books that I enjoyed make often a different impression on my GR friends when they pick up an eBook after reading my review. No, it is not an excuse for loving a book, that someone might not, but just an attempt to explain that I have other criteria in rating an audio book, comparing to an eBook. A good audio book is for me 60% a plot and 40% a performance.

And Strings Attached had all my attention during listening to it. Yes, thanks to a terrific narration by Luke Daniels. He created a wonderful movie in my head, that had everything I needed to enjoy it. Let me say so: it started like a family drama, changed to Disney sweet tale, and then turned suddenly into a thriller, with a mystery part, that normally would make me roll my eyes. But here it was just about right. I totally bought it and ate up without hesitation. A poor boy who suddenly became a rich boy, whose life changed from one day to another, but who kept his heart at the right side.

**A charming, sweet, quick pacing and multifaceted story-line, well-developed characters, many touching moments, not without a Disney influence, and an excellent narrating. What do you need more?!**

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## Kassa says

Strings Attached attempts to take a classic tale mixed with a teenage coming of age story, throwing in a splash of mystery and danger, some sexual tension, and a happy ending to tie everything up. The result is mostly successfully and the story is a very enjoyable to read. It has an engaging storyline, likable characters, interesting dilemmas, and a flowing writing style that is easy to read. On the other hand, the writing is overly descriptive in some parts and the style changes partway through the book which drops important resolutions abruptly. Yet the natural charm of the writing and story still manages to come through and ultimately keeps the book engaging even if it didn't have to try so hard to add so many elements. If you're looking for a solid coming of age story that is light and easy to read, Strings Attached fulfills that desire well.

The plot weaves several elements together all revolving around the main character Jeremy. Jeremy is a poor kid of a drunk, ex-drug using mother. Her manipulations and selfish behavior have pretty much scared Jeremy emotionally and when he's sent to live with his rich relatives, he experiences a pretty big culture shock. The main thrust of the story deals with Jeremy's life as he goes from rags-to-riches while struggling with accepting and identifying his sexuality, his future goals (college?), and reconciling the death of his father so long ago. The mystery portion revolves around this death and whether it was an accident or not.

For the most part, the story does a good job of keeping the various pieces moving together. Initially the book reads like a continuous narration as each successive chapter picks up exactly where the last one left off. Included is an incredible level of superfluous detail such as driving instructions down to the left/right turns at all intersections and going class by class through Jeremy's first day of school. While this level of detail is not really necessary, it's also not bad or distracting in any way. The quick pace keeps you interested even

through the detail. Yet the narrative style changes about halfway through when suddenly the story jumps large chunks of time and details are noticeably missing.

While the leaps in the timeline again aren't bad in theory, important events are skipped or dropped entirely only to be mentioned in passing later. This shows a very sharp contrast to the detail orientated earlier part of the book where everything is included and now scenes that should be included are not. Important turning points to Jeremy's sexuality and understanding are not resolved and in fact, you're left wondering what happened at all. Part of this disjointed new narrative plays into the mystery aspect, leaving it very interesting but too easily resolved. There ends up being no real mystery. Instead the facts are simply told in a pretty quick manner instead of being shown and crafting palpable tension.

What shines in the book though is the voice of Jeremy. He is the main third person narrative even as the point of view does jump around a bit and his young, coming of age tale is engaging and interesting. Some of the dialogue reads slightly mundane and antiquated yet it has a real appeal and understanding for that young adult range in a story for adults. There is thankfully no big high school trauma and drama, yet the outside antics are enough to keep the quick pace going and the pages flying by. His confusion, mistakes, yearning, and emotional cracks all create a great character with enough charm and delight to carry the story through any stumbles and foils.

Strings Attached is not perfect and I don't think the Pinocchio theme is important or well integrated, even after reading the author notes. It's not detrimental though and the age old coming of age for a young gay man is one that resonates even without tricks or extraneous drama. Even with the somewhat darker tones of the plot, the writing keeps the story light and interesting and above all, pretty enjoyable to read. For those that enjoy young adult books that are targeted and meant for an older audience, this offering delivers an imperfect but worthwhile story. There is also a sequel so you'll want to start the series now. I personally am looking forward to reading more about Jeremy's adventures.

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## Juxian says

### 4,5 stars.

I liked this book a lot more than I could expect. I felt doubtful about it, because I generally don't like YA and because I knew there was almost no romance there. But at the same time I felt curious and I thought I'd give it a try, in the worst case it'd just be another book I'd DNF. Well, I didn't feel like DNFing it at all and reading it was very, very enjoyable.

For one thing, it didn't have that annoying YA flavor, and I know everyone puts their own meaning into it. For me, a lot of YA books feel like they target such a narrow audience, like they are probably EXTREMELY interesting and important for teenagers but for everyone outside the age group it's like watching the life in an aquarium - pretty but has nothing to do with you. Okay, 'Strings Attached' didn't feel like that. The main character was young but his problems were human and relatable. It was fascinating to watch Jeremy grow and change, discover things about himself.

I liked Jeremy very much, and other characters were sympathetic as well. Tiffany, who was so easy to hate, and yet probably the most touching moments of the book were connected to her. I liked Ellie and Reed, I think they were multi-dimensional and fun. Aunt Katharine had her idiosyncrasies but in the end I really cared for her. And I was happy for Carlo finally getting what he wanted - and sad at the same time, because I'm fascinated with Arthur, too... and I can't wait to find out what happened next with them all.

I enjoyed the plot itself very much. Okay, me being a naturally distrustful person, Jeremy's turn of fortune didn't feel like a fairy tale but like a long set-up to the mystery, nicely suspenseful and full of premonition. And I loved (view spoiler)

Loved the symbolism, it was not very subtle but okay, at least it was impossible to miss. And sometimes it's

good to be unsubtle, like with the boat Tiffany and then Jeremy see, because it was touching and beautiful. Can't wait to read the next book!

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### **Nichole (DirrtyH) says**

I read about a third of it, plus some flip-aheads. Frankly, the writing is bad. Not only is it bad, but it's smug. Nick Nolan thinks he has written a Masterpiece and the arrogance of it shines through every page. There was only so much I could stomach.

I flipped ahead to his little "afterword" where he explains how subtly and deftly he weaved in references to Pinocchio. Yes, Nick, you were very subtle. Like a freight train.

The book really suffered from a lack of editing. I had to fight the urge to pull out my red pen. It just really needs a good buff and shine to tighten it up. Maybe after that it would be a decent read but I didn't have the patience for it.

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### **Chris says**

Good but uneven m/m romance about a high school senior who discovers, after his alcoholic mother ends up in treatment, that his dead father's family is wealthy. His transition to a life of privilege while he tries to figure out who he is and what he wants does not go smoothly. The author's afterward reveals numerous references to the story of Pinocchio, only a few of which I caught. I'd suggest including a forward with an abbreviated version of that story to help the reader...

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### **Wicked says**

3.5 for the story

4.5 for the narration

1 for the overabundance of filler which nearly had me DNFing

3.5 overall.

I have a "like a whole lot/hate" relationship with this book.

Let's start with the good things. Luke Daniels. I listened to the audio version and that is what got me through the book when I would have otherwise given up. His performance is brilliant and I can't wait to listen to more of his work. Jeremy is an interesting character and the story is an engaging coming of age although the mystery aspect was a little predictable, it was handled okay I guess. The characters all felt authentic for the most part, and of course I fell for Arthur the butler in a way that I need to know more about him.

Now the not so good. The book was too wordy. The descriptions were extremely detailed. Now, most of the time that is a good thing but it got to a point that it seemed to be unnecessary to the story. I think I would have enjoyed it more if the story would have been tighter and the heavy Pinocchio references would have stopped smacking me in the face at every turn. I realize that this is the first book of a trilogy and perhaps that is why I didn't love the book the way I wanted to. I usually am not a huge fan of first books. I will be continuing the trilogy because I want to know more about Arthur. I just hope that the next book works better for me.

### **Mary Myers-Huff Barger says**

I read Strings Attached over 2 days, I could not put it down.

Nick Nolan does a fantastic job of weaving a coming of age tale into a nice mystery. Jeremy Taylor's father was killed in an accident and he is left with an alcoholic mom. When she hits rock bottom Jeremy is moved in with the rich Aunt he has never met. Trying to be what she wants and trying to figure out if he likes boys or girls as well as worrying about his mom leads him on a wonderfully tragic story. These characters feel like people that you would know in real life. And the descriptions of things make it a great book!

I cannot wait to read the next book!

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### **Rosei Constance Rothee says**

I fell in love with this book! Wow! What a ride!

Plenty of mystery, gay youth angst, opulent atmosphere and what I require in my reading...love. The love has got to be there or I hang it up.

Writer Nick Nolan weaves a terrific story which is as fun as it is smexy!

(That's smart and sexy! {:^D) The characters feel real and I fell in love with them myself!

Thank you author Nick Nolan!

This was a splendid read!

(I feel GREAT!)

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### **Elisa Rolle says**

Until I haven't read this book I was thinking that the "strings attached" of the title was a way to refer to emotional links, and in a way it's like that since Jeremy, the 17 years old who is the main character of this coming of age novel has never had the safety you usually find in a family while you are growing up: his father died when he was only a little baby, her mother has an alcohol problem that prevents her to be a real role figure, and they are living far from any relatives. Considering all of this, Jeremy is even a good boy, he has no rebellion feelings and he is probably only waiting to be independent to build his own life and stability.

Then suddenly everything change, Jeremy's mother has to be recovered in a rehabilitation center and Jeremy is sent living with his great-aunt, a woman who Jeremy barely knows and only since his mother hates her. Katherine is a very wealthy business woman, living in Ballena Beach, a rich heaven for rich people and their rich kids. Suddenly Jeremy loses even what little stability he had and he is in the hand of Katherine, who wants to watch, and drive, his every step. Katherine is probably the Mangiafuoco of this modern version of Pinocchio, the puppeteer, and Jeremy is the puppet. There is even the fairy godmother (fata turchina), Arthur, the cat and the wolf (il gatto e la volpe), Reed and Ellie, and I'm not sure if Lucignolo is Cody or Carlo... but considering that Lucignolo is the bad role model, then I think it's Cody, since Carlo is indeed a good role model, an openly and proud gay teenager.

It's not that Carlo is perfect or has a perfect life, on the contrary, he is still grieving his mother loss, and his

father has practically disowned him for being gay; he is so unsure of himself, due to the instability of his family origins, that Carlo is always trying to prove that he is there, in the center of the scene. Sometime he is even too much and so Jeremy is almost scared by him.

Jeremy is a guy with a lot of doubts. One thing he is pretty sure, he likes boys; but this is something that he doesn't want to consider as a possibility, Jeremy is already considering himself an outcast, that adding to it also the gay chip will be too much. And so Jeremy tries to be the perfect straight guys with a beautiful girlfriend and the right circle of friends, but his desires are always there.

Even if there is a love story or two, this is not the story of Jeremy's search for true love; Jeremy is 17 years old, he has time to find Mr Right, in this moment is more important for him to understand who he is and what he wants. So even if he has relationships in this novel, mostly platonic, I don't think that in the end he has really reached that level of self-confidence he needs. At the end of the novel, he is still a teenager, still with all his open questions; he has maybe some clues more to understand the puzzle of his life, but he is far from resolving it.

Even if the events around him are monumental and life-changing, Jeremy's personal life story is simple and tender, the story of a misfit who wants with all himself to find his place in what he considers the world, and that, in reality, is only a neighbourhood and an high school. Real life is still out there, and Jeremy has yet to taste it.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/0982555016/?...>

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### **Michael says**

Nick Nolan is such a great writer.

The setting near the sea brought back many of my childhood memories.

The characters were well developed.

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### **Maggie Simms says**

This was a miss for me. I wish I had nice things to say about this book but the way I feel is that it was a waste of my time and money. I almost DNF. The characters were total caricatures and the book was just plagued with cliches. Aunt Katherine spoke like a character out of a movie from the 50's or 60's. ALL the other female characters were slutty, and trashy. I felt disconnected from the main character or any other character. I also didn't buy the little romance that there was in this book.

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### **Carl says**

### **A good story**

It's rare for me to find a good gay novel, but this one really held my interest. And did it without using explicit sex scenes to leave me panting, or annoyed, until the next one. I'm really looking forward to the next book in the trilogy.

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