



Worth Keeping

Susan Mac Nicol

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Abused horrifically as a boy, Nick Mathers has come to terms with his existence as a man. Mostly. Other days life seems a little much. Especially when Nick knows he'll always be alone.

On those days his thoughts turn black. He walks the Norfolk coast and considers the frigid embrace of the waves. And then, one stormy night, he finds someone who's tasted just that. The beautiful stranger on the beach is near death, and Nick rushes him home to slowly nurse back to health. As he does, he finds a love unlike any other.

Owen Butler's body is as warm as the sea was cold, his heart as big as an ocean. And Owen is a man who swears to repay the favor. Nick can yet be saved from himself, and he will see that he is indeed a man ...
worth keeping.

Worth Keeping Details

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From Reader Review Worth Keeping for online ebook

Bitchie says

Very good, very angsty story. Suicidal man meets suicidal man, and they manage to heal each other, but it takes a LONG time, at least for one of them. This story features attempted suicide, and past abuse, both sexual and physical, just in case this is a trigger for anyone.

Mona says

An emotional, heart wrenching and at times, difficult read. A story filled with love, healing and new beginnings.

"Leave me." Whispered words said between chattering teeth. "Let me die." Nick's throat closed up at the sincerity with which they were spoken.

Two broken souls, find themselves seeking peace in the crashing waves of the sea. Only to save each other from the oblivion they seek.

He imagined his body sailing free, finally finding shattered peace on the rocks below.

A difficult and painful journey they travel...where old habits surface, pushing them back into the past.

This was about pain. The razor blade glinted on the white tiles just beside Nick's hand...

Before finally, finding their way to a brighter and healing future.

"You make me feel things, things I never thought I would. As if I do have something to give."

Mandy*reads obsessively* says

I read this author's Waiting for Rain and enjoyed it a lot.

This book couldn't be more different, but it was just as engaging and held me captive.

it was a dark and stormy night.. really, it was, the night Nick's life would change forever.

He finds Owen washed up on shore and saves him, although I think it could be argued, they saved each other.

Owen is just what Nick needs.

To say Nick had a horribly abusive childhood and trauma would be an understatement and his boyfriend Brad just added to that.

He's resigned to living, existing, he has friends and a very loving adoptive father and the great Socks, his pet monkey.

But he's not happy, he has a lot of dark times and thoughts, self harm and thoughts of ending it all.

Owen is getting over his lover's death, but something about Nick has him sticking around, even when Nick does his best to get rid of him.

They love each other, but is that enough?

Their road is bumpy and a little rocky, then add in Brad **que JAWS music** and they have a lot to overcome. It was sad and difficult at times, but I got the pay-off I needed to make it worth it.

Shakisha says

3.5 Stars...

I enjoy Nick and Owens story.

Nick was just so broken and his childhood was anything but.....I was driven to thoughts of violence at what he went through and who was behind it all. I won't say anymore or than as I don't want to give it away but yeah it wasn't pretty.....he was in darkness all the time...so alone. I wanted to just wrap him in a big hug and smother him in love.....

Owen is Nick's light even though they met in the saddest of circumstances. I loved Owen's strength and his willingness to be open and vulnerable even when Nick could shred him with words...my heart broke in ways for Owen he was willing to do whatever necessary to show Nick he was loved.....

The ending felt a bit rushed there was all this build up to the "CLASH" of Nick's past and present and I felt like when we finally got 'round to it, (in the last 10% of the book) it was sorta now you see me, I'm the big bad wolf....now you don'tproblem solved.....and that's it. I was just like WHAT! I felt like this scene should have happened a bit earlier and the last 10% should have been more focused on the MC's relationship.. there's no epilogue, I didn't feel like I got any real closure. Maybe I just wasn't ready to say goodbye....it just didn't quite do it for me. Hence the 3.5 and not a solid 4

The supporting characters were great and Justin in particular is a hoot!

Gitte TotallyBookedBlog says

Reviewed on: <http://totallybookedblog.com/2014/01/...>

G&J: 4.5 Stars

“Leave me.”...”Let me die.”

Gitte: Wow, there's no doubt in there Jenny, Susan Mac Nicol sure writes beautiful, flawless and emotional stories. I think I've cried every time I've read one of her books. Her characters are lovable, funny, and sexy and have a real emotional depth to them. This time we got cheekiness too and a monkey named Socks, which I loved and made me laugh! I have to say I found Worth Keeping had just about everything you'd love in a story; angst, passion, drama, suspense and humour in abundance and the fact that the insta-love didn't bother me speaks volumes about the class of this lady's writing!

Worth Keeping was extremely dark at times; covering rape, abuse and violence, the writing is so brilliant, I sometimes felt sick and had constant tears in my eyes. It was also full of love, hope and inspiration.

“Please fight for me..”

It’s about two guys who both have a different type of tragedy in their past and need to learn to heal and find true happiness again.

“What are you scared of?”

So why not a 5 star? Well, now that this is the third book I’ve read by this Author, the formula has gotten a tad predictable. Don’t get me wrong, I loved everything about Worth Keeping, it was just too easy to foresee what would happen next. You felt the same didn’t you Jenny?

Jenny: Absolutely Gitte! Firstly, I know when I pick up one of Susan’s that it’s going to take me on an emotional and enlightening journey that will surely touch my heart and, in between a lot of other feelings, Worth Keeping certainly did just that. It was a tragic, painful, dark and yet wonderfully triumphant story of love against the odds.

“Close your eyes and let me help you forget for a while.”

And yes, I do agree that the formula is quite predictable after a few books so I knew from the start how the story would eventuate but getting there was such a memorable journey and it really did mess with my emotions.

Nick’s story in particular broke me. What this man had experienced in life...well, you can’t comprehend.

“He’s a difficult son of a bitch but he’s one of the strongest and bravest men I think I’ve ever met.”

Yet, in amongst the heaviness of Nick’s story we had the cheeky humor of Owen, the passionate chemistry between Nick and Owen and the suspense throughout the story and YES! Let’s not forget Socks who, I might add, completely stole my heart! This little cheeky monkey was just gorgeous and had me giggling like crazy and in tears in the scenes when he became upset. This little guy was something else! The cast of characters in this story were just beautiful. Nick’s Dad in particular was such a fun and loving character. His love and devotion for Nick was as extraordinary as was the man himself. Of course, not everyone was loveable. Don’t even get me started on the horrid Brad Mayhew!!!! This author certainly does have a way of portraying these evil characters that leave me seething! What a cruel bastard he was. And Sid and Barrett...hmmmm do I detect a fellow Floyd fan here Susan?

Gitte: So we have Owen; funny, sweet, stubborn and gorgeous Owen who lost the love of his life and is unable to see a way of living no matter how long has passed. Owen’s grief is overwhelming to the point where he washes up on Nick’s shores. Bless him, he had no idea what he’s in for with Nick and his ghosts and the path he’s now on. However, Owen has the willpower of many men, a huge heart and he doesn’t give up. His heart takes a real battering in this story and at times I wanted to shout at Nick for not realising just what he had in this beautiful man as well as the fact that Owen too has suffered.

‘Owen thought fiercely that there was no way in hell he was ever leaving this man alone with his demons. Hell would freeze over before that happened.’

Owen loves with passion and his sense of humour is infectious and so endearing. He’s perfect for Nick and has the patience of a saint as well as the staying power Nick needs. The way Owen got through to Nick and

helped him on the road to recovery and realising its okay to love was beautiful and inspiring. I think Owen is one of my favourite characters by this Author as he had some cute and funny quirks, he was completely lovable and so very passionate. He had an immense understanding of Nick and an empathy that knows no bounds.

Jenny: I think Nick knew what he had in Owen but he just didn't have the confidence and self-love in himself to believe that a man like Owen would love him and want to be with him. He constantly questioned his own validity and self-worth.

“You just can't bear to be happy.”

He was teetering on a path of self-destruction and self-loathing and it was going to take a lot of strength and a man of Owen's substance to bring Nick out of himself.

Nick had suffered through so much in his life. Abused and used by a mother who should have nurtured and protected him and belittled, humiliated and abused by man who he thought loved him. Nick had survived under the most horrific of circumstances. In Owen he found a man who never judged and always accepted Nick for the broken man he was.

“You don't need fixing, Nick. You're great just the way you are.”

To hear Nick recount his story was shocking and heart-breaking. It was difficult to read and so raw and real was the telling that I just wanted to jump in my Kindle and hug Nick to assure him everything was going to be alright. It was testament to Nick that he tried so desperately to open his heart to love and trust. Owen became the saviour Nick so desperately needed.

“Sometimes you might just have to fight me for it. Please fight for me, Owen.

Yep, this story of two very broken and beautiful souls captured me completely.

G&J: So, we have to re-iterate that this Author will always be an automatic one-click for us. Her writing is flawless and her flawed characters are completely lovable. There's always something quirky and fun in her stories as well as drama, angst and heaps of passion! We can highly recommend!!

Nic says

When Nick rescues Owen, the man he finds washed up on the beach, he doesn't realise that he has saved the man who will end up saving him. Nick is a broken man, haunted by the horrors of his childhood. He has fears and nightmares and even after years of therapy and with the love of his adopted father, has yet to find peace.

"He'll be all right, Socks," he whispered. "He has you and me and Don. We'll get him right. Damn man won't stand a chance against a force like us."

Nick is used to being on his own. The one and only time he trusted anyone enough to let them in, he found himself the victim of further abuse.

"I know I push you away. I'm not used to having anyone knowing about me still

accepting me for what I am. Sometimes you might just have to fight for it. Please fight for me, Owen." His voice trembled.

Nick is lucky to have found Owen, someone who can see past the scars to the man within but also sees the scars as a sign of the strong man Nick is.

The scars on his body made him even more beautiful in Owen's eyes. They were badges of survival and perseverance, emblems of the man's courage and his past.

Owen has had his own share of heartache and Nick gives him a second chance at life and love.

This story has it's dark beginning and Nick's tale of childhood abuse may upset some - it is upsetting but I believe handled well - and the issues of self harm and suicide may not make easy or comfortable reading for some. It is emotional, heartbreaking and absorbing, showing both the darker side of life but also showing that where there is love there is hope.

A copy of this book was provided by the author in return for my honest review.

Visit my blog if you want to see all my m/m reviews in one place! Because Two Men Are Better Than One!

Giulio says

Dnf at 50%.

I really tried to finish this one, just to prove ~~Loeder~~ "certain people" wrong. But let's face it, I can't.

I'm tired of authors who employ the theme of male sexual abuse as a mere plot device and/or for a dramatic effect only. It sounds.. sick.

The plot: suicidal man meets suicidal man. After their double failed suicide attempt, their first thought is to be in each other's pants. Sure, why not? But there's a problem (life can't be easy, you know). One of them never bottoms nor tops and the other doesn't swallow..

In a vain attempt to give depth to the abuse theme, the Author is proud to let us know that Nick, raped horrifically as a boy, has gone through several therapists and psychological counselling.

They were called active sexual therapists. They would teach you about sex by doing it with you, teach you about how ways to give and receive pleasure in a way you were comfortable with. Based on how you reacted to men or women they tried to guide you into a path that felt right for you

I hope this a product of the Author's wicked fantasy, because the thought of sending a teenager rape victim to a brothel concealed as a sex clinic really scares me to death. Please, tell me it isn't true.

Oh, but there are a few hilarious moments, meant to lighten up the atmosphere, like when Owen spots a boy who's gone to the lighthouse with his teacher and classmates on a school trip.

The boy reached down inside his trousers and started stroking himself. He was fairly hidden by the shade of the ridge of pine trees that fringed the hillside and no doubt thought he was out of sight. Owen nodded. "I take it you were enjoying the scenery then?" His eyes travelled down to the boys groin where the ridge of his erection could be clearly seen. The teenager glared at him. "And if I was? What's it to you?" Owen gritted his teeth at the teens attitude. "The man you were just wanking yourself off to happens to be my boyfriend. And while I'll admit he's a perfectly good male specimen to wank off to, I have a problem when someone else does it."

I've been a horny teenager, but I never "choked the chicken" in plain sight during a school trip. It wouldn't have helped my (already low) popularity amongst my school friends. Am I the weird one?

And the evil ex-boyfriend was simply ridiculous.

As a friend of mine once said, **time better spent doing grocery shopping** .

Let's quickly forget about this one.

Susan65 says

Yet another wonderful, angst filled, but loving story by Susan Mac Nicol. I think I have a new auto buy author and that just thrills me to death. Also, that cover is beautiful!

Speaking of thrills, this book is packed full of them...some good, a lot not so good. These poor guys, especially Nick have been put through the wringer. Nick is a difficult man to love but his history and circumstances completely forgive him his impossible at times trespasses. He has many hangups, but who wouldn't in his position?

Owen is a gem, a white knight who gives Nick hope. Hope that he can actually have a real relationship, hope that he may be worthy of real love, and hope that he may actually be worth keeping.

But Owen is suffering too. His grief was drowning him in a sorrow so deep he didn't think he would ever be able to reach the surface. Losing at love once left him convinced that his shot at a HEA was now dead and buried with his lover, Jules. What he didn't expect was to be that lucky man who cupid's arrow found twice.

Worth Keeping is a story of brutal atrocity, acts so heinous your head will spin, but also of unconditional love, and a hope so pure that the evil that began Nick's life was extinguished forever by the devotion of his adopted father Don and his lover Owen.

Definitely a story worth reading and one that is highly recommended.

See full and extended review at: <http://heartsonfirereviews.com/?cat=5>

Chappy says

Re-read Aug 18-19, 2017

Loved this haunting tale.

Nick has lived through hell and it unfortunately still affects him deeply. When Owen washes up on his island, they are both wary. But these 2 can save each other and find love at the same time. Super hot sex but very meaningful as well.

Don is a great father and Socks the monkey is so cute...Brad on the other hand is a cruel lunatic.

JustJen "Miss Conduct" says

Susan Mac Nicol knows how to write a solid story and is especially good with damaged characters. This story was heartbreaking and emotional, yet full of love and humor with some hot sex thrown in for good measure. She manages to paint such a vivid picture of this quaint location that makes you long to visit these guys for one of Nick's lighthouse tours.

When Nick meets Owen, they are both in pretty bad places. Owen is trying to recover from the fairly recent sudden loss of his lover, while Nick is trying to cope and live with his horrific childhood past, not to mention the abuse of his last boyfriend, Brad. Owen manages to get past some of Nick's walls and decides he wants to be there for Nick, in whatever capacity Nick will allow. He has some pretty big, yet completely understandable, hang-ups, especially where sex is concerned, but Owen manages to convince Nick he will take whatever Nick is comfortable giving.

Nick is one messed up dude, and things do not go easy for him and Owen, to say the least. They have setbacks and arguments, but in the end, they allow their feelings for each other to take the lead. He is still dealing with nightmares, and his healing is a long-term process, but Owen is a huge part of Nick's healing and hopefully successful recovery.

This story has some wonderful side characters in it, including Nick's adopted father, Don, his ex-boyfriend, Daniel, and especially Daniel's boyfriend, Justin. Special mention must go to the star of the show, Nick's pet monkey, Socks, who ends up playing a pivotal role in the outcome.

I did not love this story quite as much as *Saving Alexander*, but that is mostly due to my own preferences. However, I believe many others will love it for those same reasons, so I highly recommend this, as well as all of Ms. Mac Nicol's other fabulous books.

I received a copy of this book from the author in return for a fair and honest review.

Review can be found at [The Blogger Girls](#).

Traci Kurtz says

(I received an ARC for a honest review)

Worth Keeping is the third book of Susan Mac Nicols' that I have read and reviewed. I keep thinking she can't keep up this level of writing and characters. Not with the amount of emotion and trauma that her characters live through. Dear god the angst.

She can people. She can.

Nick is beautifully written, here is a man that has lived through a past that should have broken him into something unrecognizable as human. But thanks to the compassion, love and determination of his adoptive father he has grown into man that is for the most part, a survivor. Yet,he does still suffer. I understood his pain and why he would be so self destructive and cruel, even to Owen. Let me rephrase that. Especially to Owen. To have lived through what he has, the most frightening thing in the world must be to risk trusting in love when he knows he will never 100% okay. So believing that Owen will stay through the bad days is almost impossible for him to accept.

Now to Owen, he is both my favorite part of the book and the one little gripe I have.I would have liked to have had a bit more of them dealing with his issues in the book. But I can admit that may just be because I love him so.

Owen comes into Nicks life when he reaches the lowest point of his and this is probably why he falls so quickly for the gorgeous,mysterious stranger who saves him. He can be stubborn and selfish, hiding behind snark and sarcasm. But at his core he is compassionate and loving, just wanting to make Nick smile. When Nick starts to let him into his past Owen shows him that they could make it work.

One of my favorite things about this book was the sex. With Nicks past, they had to be open about what he was comfortable with. Owen was not just understanding, he seemed to take it as a fun challenge to see what other options they could come up with. Not to mention his cute embarrassment over his own little hang up.

While most of the book centers on Nick, there are some lighter moments. Socks the monkey should get a nomination for best pet in a book. Don, Nick's adoptive dad, is great. I love the way he is open about sex, much to Owen's embarrassment. And poor Daniel is going to need a army to keep Justin from getting killed.So in between the heavy stuff I got some things that kept me from downing a bottle of Jack Daniels all at once.

Now of course it is not going to be that easy. I did mention the ANGST didn't I? Things happen to trigger demons from Nick's past. And this is where I truly fell for Owen. While he loves Nick and would never abandon him there comes a point.....Hmmm darn that is a spoiler...just go read the book. Lol

P.S. There is an actual bad guy in this book. And Susan may be sued by all men named Brad at some point in a class action lawsuit. He was that creepy and nasty. I was muttering physical threats to this character to the point where my husband(not named Brad) was worried about his male parts. He has asked that I now warn him in advance when I am reading her books. He has nightmares about acid torture threats from when I was reading Saving Alexander.

Kaje Harper says

This is the story of a man who is still healing from a childhood of betrayal and serious sexual and physical abuse. Nick was eventually rescued, fostered, and has had professional counseling (which I appreciated.) But he's still struggling with depression and self-harm, and has chosen a remote place to live and paint, and to dance on the edge of despair. One dark moment, he's standing on a cliff when he sees another man washed ashore half-drowned from the sea. He rescues Owen, and finds a connection with this stranger who has deep pain of his own.

I really enjoyed the first part of this story, as the men got to know each other. Nick's background was horrific, but the story didn't wallow in it too much, while still making him believably unstable. Owen goes fairly quickly from the depths of grief, to being Nick's white knight, but I liked him a lot.

The story did fall back on one overused trope I saw coming from early on and hoped to avoid, but didn't. Significant spoiler:(view spoiler)

This was otherwise a fast read that pulled me along, eager to find these men a happier ending.

Candice says

I've put off reading this for months. I picked this up for \$0.99 back in April, but I think I was afraid to be disappointed or something. I've read Susan's Stripped Bare and I loved that one. Then I forgot I had it in my stash, but I found it last night and decided to give it a go. I am glad I did.

Although, I will say, I'm shocked that I didn't cry as much as I thought I would. The only place I cried was during dinner and the panic attack. My heart broke a bit there.

I really wanted to love this. But, I couldn't. For one, I didn't believe Owen. I did not doubt his love for Nick, but I didn't buy his boat jumping. I didn't buy his can-do attitude after attempting to take his own life. I didn't buy his 'let's jump right into bed, even though I probably have hypothermia and still grieving'. Then I didn't like his stunt he pulled at the hardware store. I think that's when I kind of said to myself "Owen, you really are quite the asshole" even though I had no right to say that.

Nick, oh man Nick. I felt for him. I did. I just didn't like his attitude. Too hot and cold for me. Which I really can't blame him for, but it was just too much. I felt like he was a teenager with his drama queen attitude.

I did like Don although I didn't understand him at times. (view spoiler)

I HATED Justin. Don't ask me why, but he rubbed me the wrong way.

LOVED the setting. OMG. We have a lighthouse in my hometown and I love going and just relaxing out by the water. It's been a while since I've been there, so when I go home next I'm definitely taking a trip.

(view spoiler)

Overall, it was just okay :(

Oh and now I totally want a Capuchin. Wonder how much my husband will hate me if he comes home to find one in our house. Socks was just too damn adorable. LOVED him :)

Karlijn says

This story is hard to describe. It was beautiful written, but the things in both their pasts were awful. And yes, I cried a lot during reading this. It is horrible if a mother does this to a child and I really can't understand that a mother is capable of doing this. But because of storys like this (and in the media) we can't pretend it isn't there.

Susan did a very good job of describing Owen's past and current condition. And I hope with all my heart that the Nicks' out there in the world find such an amazing friend like Owen and and dad like Don.

“You don’t need fixing, Nick. You’re great just the way you are.”

multitaskingmomma says

Full REVIEW

A word of WARNING: Although this is first and foremost a story of romance and survival, this is also a very dark book. There are references to sensitive topics like assault and battery, pedophilia, rape, and suicide attempts.

I was at page one and the visuals of the story playing out was just - - - freakish, for lack of a better word. I am completely astounded. As the words continued to spill, so did the mental images. It was like reading a movie play out in front of me. And the cold of the sea spray. How did the author do this? I've had this type of reaction before, but only from a handful. A loose handful.

I had trouble wrapping my brain around this one. There were events that hit deep inside and it was difficult to focus without recalling horrific injustices done to children. Having worked with many pediatric cases, including abuse, it was very difficult to separate Nick from them. The author researched well, it is pretty evident from the start. Thing is, this did no read like research. It was an intimate peek into the mind of a survivor, the feelings of despair and a very, very low value of self-worth.

Nick's past abuse was what almost broke him, but it is also the very thing that made him such a strong individual. Owen's losing a lover was just as painful an experience. Yet, it is also the very thing that made him very strong. Had given him the strength to stick it out and just embrace Nick. Show him that despite all and in spite of all, he was definitely worthy.

The romance between these two men was hard to take. For those who are not familiar or privy to such pain, it can be hard to imagine. And yet, I found myself sinking into their romance. Fought the battle with them and cheered them on.

Though I did say this is a dark book, there were a lot of lighthearted moments. These were just so typical of men. I found myself laughing hard to the Daddy Do-Gooder and the weapons of mass destruction. Those were brilliant! Reminded me of some stuff sold on Amazon. hehehehe The Snake Oil reminded me of some Ninja moves. Sorry, it was just so hilarious.

There was also the fantastic group of friends who were such a surprise I wish the author would just give us

their very own book. It would be a blast to have to read Daniel and Justin. And of course, who could forget about Don? This one. Wow. He just made me cry. His was a heart of gold.

But it was really Owen who showed Nick. That he, Nick, was deserving of all the good things life could offer.

I have to reiterate that this book is or may not be for everyone. That said, it is a beautiful story of survival. It is a story of two men who fought for their lives and there are times they can trip and fall, but somehow they do manage to pick themselves up and face life. Embrace it. Enjoy it. Love it.

Love each other.

Show each other and the world - they are both Worth Keeping.

One bit of advice: it is best not to rush reading through this. This is a book, a story, that cannot and should never be rushed. It has to be thought over. Savored. Read it, and see what I mean.

Susan Mac Nicol is Bestselling author to Saving Alexander. Review [HERE!](#)

Some of the proceeds for this book are being donated to the NSPCC -National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.
