



Perfect Catch

Sierra Dean

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Truth is, as a young, stupid, nineteen-year-old townie, she *did* once date a player. That's how she wound up with her precious, nine-year-old daughter...and a determination to never make that mistake again. Alex Ross's arrival in Florida for spring training, though, shakes her resolve in a big way.

Alex, a catcher for the Major League's San Francisco Felons, has never let much get in the way of his game. One look at Alice changes everything, and he finds himself pursuing her with a single-minded purpose that plays hell with his concentration.

Booted back to the minors, he returns to Florida with his tail between his legs to work on his swing...and heat things up with Alice. But when rumors of their affair hit the sports blogosphere, Alice's career is put in jeopardy, and their love starts to look more like a strikeout than a home run.

Warning: When a catcher struggling with his swing meets a stubborn single-mom umpire, his bat won't be the only thing that heats up. Contains car sex, bed sex, sex sex, and a little angst for good measure.

This book was previously released by Samhain Publishing.

The new edition contains minor word changes but no story changes.

Perfect Catch Details

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From Reader Review Perfect Catch for online ebook

LJT says

4.5 Stars!

Review Posted on HarlequinJunkie.com

In Perfect Catch (Boys of Summer #2) by Sierra Dean, Floridian Alice Darling has a lot going on in her life. She is the single mother of a nine year old little girl, looks after her depressed brother, and works as both a waitress and a minor league umpire. Her inquisitive daughter is the result of a relationship she had when she was nineteen with an up and coming baseball superstar.

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Eleanore June says

While still a fine baseball read, it didn't have the spark the 1st in the series had. Alice and Alex's story was a little messy and somethings seemed unnecessary, while others needed to be rounded out more. The book ended with somethings unfinished that frustrated me.

Solid 3, but if I didn't love baseball romances it could have easily been a 2/2.5.

Amanda Byrne says

3.5 stars

Originally posted at Byrne After Reading:

Spring's just around the corner, and you know what that means.

Baseball.

Men in tight pants...hot dogs and peanuts...men in tight pants...fresh white chalk lines and bright green grass...men in tight pants...

Do you see where I'm going with this?

Alice Darling's lucky to be working as an umpire for the spring training games, and she knows it. She keeps her professional life and her private one separate with a simple rule: don't date ball players. After a whirlwind relationship with a player ten years ago ended with her pregnant and the man in question refusing to publicly acknowledge he had a daughter, Alice has plenty of reasons to back up her rule. Then she meets San Francisco Felon's catcher Alex Ross, and suddenly her rule isn't so simple anymore.

For his part, Alex will do whatever Alice wants, as long as it means they're together. Their relationship sputters along, but just when it's starting to gain traction, evidence of the relationship they're trying to keep private leaks into the blogosphere. Oops.

Alex is the big reason to read Sierra Dean's Perfect Catch. I liked the grumbly, loveable, pudgy catcher in Pitch Perfect, and I loved him here. He's sweet, cuddly, and yes, hot. He lost most of the pudge in the off season, and his uniform fits him quite nicely, thank you very much. More, he'll do whatever it takes to make Alice happy - he's not afraid of falling head over heels for someone, as long as it's the right someone, and he's old enough to know a good thing when he sees it. He treats her boundaries with respect, and waits patiently for her to push them herself, rather than doing it for her.

It is entirely possible that Alex Ross has earned a spot on my book boyfriend list.

Alice is a likeable woman. She's got a lot on her plate, but she handles it with style to spare, and her reluctance to trust Alex's overtures felt true - just as her acceptance of him did. She's smart enough to see that not all ballplayers are like her ex, and once she stopped using that as her yardstick, she opened up to Alex.

I just wasn't sure I bought the two of them together. While their characters felt full and fleshed out, their relationship didn't. It was a little rushed, a little patchy, and while there was definite warmth and comfort, I didn't feel a lot of heat.

The story itself felt a little rushed and patchy in places. It covers a span of a couple of months, and there are chunks of it where Alice and Alex are separated. Those chunks are where the connection between Alice and Alex falters, bringing the other parts of their lives into play, and the transitions weren't as smooth as they could have been. But Dean works in the baseball jargon with ease, and she handles the seriousness of Alice's situation - a female umpire working in a normally all-male profession - with the gravity it needs. There's just something missing, and I can't figure out what it is.

Like I said, though, Alex Ross is the big reason to read Perfect Catch. If you're looking for a change from the overbearing alpha-hole hero...yeah. Alex is the perfect antidote.

Copy of Perfect Catch provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Lisa says

This is book two in a cool baseball series by Sierra Dean. It's been a long time since I have read a baseball series so this is kind of fun before you even start reading if you're a fan of baseball or sports romance more so. We met Alex in book one if you're like me you fell in love with the guy. He's the catcher for the Felons baseball team. Back for spring training he is stuck on the side of the road with a flat tire which is embarrassing for him he has no idea how to change. Along comes Alice Darling who we also met in book one who is one of a few female umpires and does know how to change a tire. After helping Alex out she invites him over for pizza. She has no idea why since she has a policy not to date players and it's unprofessional to really even associate with them. Yet she let's Alex into her home and into her life that night. Now getting him out just became a whole heck of a lot more difficult. Alice has some major hang ups about baseball players some of them legitimate considering her job and some from old hurts from years ago. Alex has get creative if he wants to find a place in her life forever. Loved Alex and Alice even if she was all over the place with her feelings. His 5 pushy sisters add some fun to the mix and the bit of rivalry between Alex and Alice's ex provides a little bit of entertainment also. A awesome blend of baseball and romance and mixed feelings makes this one a winner for me.

Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

Slick's review posted on Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews

4.5 STARS

Review copy provided for an honest review

As soon as Perfect Catch released, I had to have it. Having read Pitch Perfect when it released, I knew there was no way I'd miss the next book in Sierra Dean's Boys of Summer series. In addition to loving the sport of baseball, I love the way this author captures the sights and sounds of the game and man can she write some frantically hot sex. Most of all, I love that her characters are flawed but figure out they are their own worst enemy and take steps to improve themselves. Her books evoke a wide range of emotions as her characters struggle to figure out their lives.

Alice Darling loves the sport of baseball. She especially loves being one of the few female umpires in the Grapefruit league. She's worked hard to make her place in a man's world and knows she has to follow her rules to make sure she keeps it. Sometimes though rules get broken especially when the heart is engaged and Alice finds herself in a situation she never believed would happen again.

When Alex Ross gets a flat tire driving into town for spring training he never expects to be saved by a woman, especially one he's met previously. When she invites him for pizza he's as surprised as she seems to be yet there is a connection he feels and he's pretty sure she feels it as well. However, she makes it known up front they can only be friends she doesn't date baseball players, he just doesn't understand why.

It was hard not to love these two right off the bat. Alice is determined to not be attracted to Alex but he's quite the charmer and he knows it. The thing is that despite being a professional athlete he's more settled than most and respectful of women (this he learned at the hands of his mother and four sisters). I admire the fact that he respected Alice's wishes especially after they had a slip up and that he wanted to include her 9 year old daughter when they saw one another.

It became obvious early on that he realized they were a package deal and Olivia was just as important to him as her mom. They didn't have an easy time of it; he's in town for spring training she lives there year round and yes, he will eventually leave. In addition, some really bad things happen causing some confusion, mistrust, and hurt feelings.

I'd love to say more but can't without some major spoilers but I will say this is a great book and there are a lot of ups and downs with some very tender and loving moments in between. There are some scenes that will have you laughing, some that have you scratching you head, and quite a few where you'll want to bop one or both of them over the head but in the end all of it will be worth it.

I loved the scenes where baseball was being played and often felt myself so caught up in these moments; I could hear the ball hitting the glove, the crack of the bat, and the cheers of the fans. That's some good writing my friends.

It's almost time to play ball and I for one can't wait, but until opening day I'm glad I have awesome books like this one to me entertained. Once again author Sierra Dean has hit one out of the park with Perfect Catch!

Nicole says

Review originally posted here: <http://thebookpushers.com/2014/03/10/...>

MinnChica: I love my sports romance, and although I'm not a huge fan of baseball, I think Dean does an incredible job of pulling the reader into the world of baseball and making you fall in love. I was really excited to read about Alice, because I thought her situation, being an umpire in a male dominated field, was really interesting, and I think Dean did a wonderful job handling the entire situation, as well as the romance.

E: I really enjoyed the first installment in Dean's Boys of Summer series so I was excited to read about Alice. I found the hints about some of her challenges earlier very intriguing. While I enjoyed a lot of what Dean included in this story, which MinnChica mention above, I found myself slightly disappointed with the resolution of a particular thread. Despite that disappointment I am looking forward to the next installment.

MinnChica: I was also a bit disappointed in this book. While I really loved the romance between Alice and Alex, I thought it was a bit rushed at the end. I thought the build up of their romance was really well done. I liked that they became friends first, that they took their time hitting the sheets because of Alice's love of being an umpire, and the possibilities of her losing her job if they were caught. However, once they had their big fight and were torn apart, I thought they came back together a bit too easily in the end. I would have liked the romance to be a bit more flushed out.

E: I did love the slow buildup and Alice's very real fears. I also enjoyed watching how their relationship altered the way they handled their professional lives. It demonstrated how interwoven feelings are with everything else in life. I think my favorite example was when Alex was in the batting cage and the old security guard started giving him tips on his swing. I also agree with MinnChica that the making-up appeared to go a bit quickly given the drastic effects of their relationship. I was more bothered by the appearance that the catalyst of their break-up never suffered any consequences. I felt given the impact there should have been some sort of mention about what Alice and Alex were going to do as a result of their discovery.

MinnChica: I agree completely with E. I felt as if that particular plot point was left dangling, and I wanted some kind of resolution as well. One of the things that I wish Dean would explore a bit more in her books is continuing the story a bit further after the "I love yous." I feel as if I need just a little bit more to really cement my belief in her characters. I think if there would have been an epilogue, or even another chapter as to where they were going to go next, I would have felt a lot better about the story overall. I can only hope that the next book in the series will take the time to update the reader on Alex and Alice's romance.

E: YES! I wanted that something more so I could feel their relationship had a chance. So much changed in Alice's life I wanted to see how the adjustment went. I also noticed Alex's increased awareness of how much additional pressure he had to perform in his profession given his changed life circumstances as well. I think if they kept the same deliberation as their initial romance build-up their relationship could work but I wanted to see their characters remain essentially the same. I hope the next installment does provide us a peek at how they are doing.

MinnChica: All in all, I really enjoyed the second installment of the Boys of Summer series. I love the way that Dean is able to engage the reader and make you fall in love with the characters and the sport of baseball. I adored Alice, and while I thought she got a bit shafted at times, I really wanted to believe in her chance at a relationship with Alex. I hope that Dean gives us a chance to see them again in future books, and that we get to see their HEA in action.

I give Perfect Catch a B-

E: Despite my complaints I did enjoy reading this story. I think the beauty of the romance build-up smoothed over some of my concerns about the stability of their relationship later in the story. I also thought Dean's detailed knowledge about baseball without drowning me in minutia really helped build the setting and let me grasp Alice's professional and personal fears along with what was at stake for both main characters. I am curious to see what she does with the next installment.

I give Perfect Catch a B-

The Romance Evangelist says

A copy of this book was provided by the author for an honest review at The Romance Evangelist.

Sometimes you read a sports romance where the romance is great but the sport isn't represented accurately. Sometimes you read one where the sport is spot-on but the romance is lacking. And then sometimes, if you're very, very lucky, you read a sports romance where everything is done perfectly. It can't be a coincidence that during this first week of the new baseball season, I got lucky with PERFECT CATCH, the second book in Sierra Dean's Boys of Summer series. (I also enjoyed the first book, PITCH PERFECT, but you don't have to read that book for this one to make sense.)

PERFECT CATCH is the story of a woman who's had to be everyone else's rock and how she finally finds the one guy who will be that person for her in return. Alice Darling may have made a huge mistake years before in trusting a professional ballplayer with her heart and her body, but her beloved daughter Liv is worth every sacrifice, even if it means working two jobs and swearing off all baseball players for good. And as a part-time umpire for spring training and minor league games, the last thing Alice needs is to be accused of using her feminine wiles on the players to get ahead. What she never planned on was the likes of Alex Ross crossing her path. It's easy for Alice to ignore all the guys when she's hiding behind her umpire's mask and gear. But it's harder to pass up a good-looking guy in a broken-down Porsche, especially when you're the only one who can help him change a flat tire.

Alex Ross thought this would be just another pre-season, just the usual six weeks in Florida needed to make sure his game was up to snuff before Opening Day. When his rental car got a flat, he didn't expect a beautiful woman with dangerous curves to be his rescuer. But Alex knows he'd like to get to know her better, whatever it might take. Despite how close they quickly become, Alice is sure Alex will be out of her life for good when spring training ends. But he can't get her out of his head or heart, and when that distraction leads him back to the minors to get back his pre-season form, nothing and nobody will be able to keep Alex from being the guy Alice really needs.

In the interest of full disclosure, you should know that Sierra Dean and I follow each other on Twitter. She's a diehard Detroit Tigers fan and I'm a lifelong Kansas City Royals fan, but we would never hold that against each other. Thanks to her tweets, I know she would no more confuse the infield fly rule for a ground rule double than she'd assume that any reader new to baseball would be expected to know either one. And that's what has made me a confident reader for her baseball-themed romance novels. Whether or not the romance ends up working for me, I'm always assured that every moment spent in or around the ballpark will ring true, without the added distraction of easily avoidable errors.

But make no mistake, the romance is just as spot on here as every little baseball-related detail. Alice has been let down by every person in her life except her young daughter: the brother who treats his depression with pills and booze, the mother who only sees someone who refused to diet down to nothing and trusted the

wrong men, and that particular wrong man who left them behind on his way to the major leagues. Why shouldn't Alex be the same? And yet, Alex is as different to the rest as day is to night. He refuses to let Alice paint him with the same brush as everyone else, but he also realizes that he has to go slowly if she's going to be able to trust in him. Of course, they both make mistakes, but none are too terrible or insurmountable between two adults who love and want to be loved in return. And when Alex and Alice finally find their happy ending together with Liv, everything that happened before just makes it all the more satisfying. Not a moment is wasted in PERFECT CATCH; every scene is essential. And all through the story, Alex and Alice's shared love of the game adds that special flavor that you can only get with a well-written sports romance. I can't wait to read the next one in this series.

***Danielle* says**

Alex
Alice Darling

3.5 stars
Read March 2016

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*Is their love a home run, or merely a pop fly?*

*Minor league umpire Alice Darling loves everything about baseball. That means hunky ball players are strictly off limits—dating one would be professional suicide. With a young daughter and a brother to care for, she can't afford to slip up.*

*Truth is, as a young, stupid, nineteen-year-old townie, she did once date a player. That's how she wound up with her precious, nine-year-old daughter...and a determination to never make that mistake again. Alex Ross's arrival in Florida for spring training, though, shakes her resolve in a big way.*

*Alex, a catcher for the Major League's San Francisco Felons, has never let much get in the way of his game. One look at Alice changes everything, and he finds himself pursuing her with a single-minded purpose that plays hell with his concentration.*

*Booted back to the minors, he returns to Florida with his tail between his legs to work on his swing...and heat things up with Alice. But when rumors of their affair hit the sports blogosphere, Alice's career is put in jeopardy, and their love starts to look more like a strikeout than a home run.*

*Warning: When a catcher struggling with his swing meets a stubborn single-mom umpire, his bat won't be the only thing that heats up. Contains car sex, bed sex, sex sex, and a little angst for good measure.*

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## **Juls says**

Alex and Alice first met through mutual friends and with their jobs nothing could come of the attraction they both had for each other. A year later and they are face to face and those feeling come back full swing.

Alice cant help but notice that Alex is looking good. Really good. He wasn't bad when she first met him but now he's looking more fit and yummier. The attraction is still there and she is super aware of him. But he's a complication she does not need to add to the mix and wants nothing to do with but the more she fights it the

more she gets sucked back in.

Alex is a pretty laid back guy but one look of Alice and he's all knotted up. She's drawn an impossible line that he's not allowed to cross and its causing him to lose focus, focus on something important to him. He's never allow anything or anyone to come between him and the game but now back in Florida and his temptation is just a stone throw away.

Can Alex get his mind back to the game or will he lose everything including Alice? Will Alice risk it all for a man that has made question everything? Can the two find a happy medium?

I really loved this story. Alex and Alice were so good together. Alex was attentive, loving and caring. Who could ask for more in a man? Alice. She doesn't know what a good man is and almost flubs this thing shes got going with Alex.

One thing that I really loved was that the author didn't rush things with this couple. Yes the had sex right off the bat, which was hot! But Alice was burned once and needed to be handled with kid gloves. The end was perfect for their story. There's no need to get married and have babies and all that to get your HEA.

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### **(Tori-Smexybooks) smexys\_sidekick says**

Originally posted at <http://smexybooks.com/2014/03/review-...>

Favorite Quote:

"I like pizza"

"If you didn't, I don't think we could be friends."

Die-hard baseball fan Alice Darling loves being a minor league umpire but being a woman means any and all baseball players are off limits; a lesson she learned the hard way nine years ago. With a daughter and brother to care for, she can't afford a single mistake. But when the sexy catcher for the San Francisco Felons arrives in Florida for spring training, Alice finds herself rethinking the no dating rule.

San Francisco Felons catcher Alex Ross plays hard, on and off the field, but one look at Alice has him suddenly turning his A game to other pursuits-mainly her. When Alex's concentration and batting goes south, he finds himself booted back to the minors to get his act together and things between him and Alice began heat up. When an innocent kiss suddenly throws their relationship into the limelight, Alice finds herself having to decide what's more important to her...her job or her heart.

Perfect Catch is the second in Sierra Dean's Boys Of Summer series. A sport dominated romance contemporary that balances the ins and outs of baseball with a humorous light hearted romance. Steady pacing with a personable cast of characters, witty dialogue, and multiple points of view on baseball from top of the mound to behind the plate keeps readers entertained up to a certain point.

Alice Darling is an interesting protagonist. She's a single mom who struggles with raising a child, supporting a mentally ill brother, and working in a male dominated field. Dean shows us that discrimination is alive and well in baseball. A bit of a spaz, Alice's reluctance to involve herself in a relationship with Alex is understandable. She has already been burned by a major league baseball player which resulted in the birth of her daughter. A daughter he refuses to acknowledge publicly. Intelligent and funny, her fears are real, especially when they prove to be true.

Alex Ross is a good old boy who just wants to play baseball. Not your typical ego inflated sports star, Alex is the perfect antidote for any romance reader who needs a break from domineering alphas. Cute and funny, his warmth shines through the story and I enjoyed getting to know him. Having played the field for awhile, he sees Alice and knows they have a chance for something more than just a few hot steamy nights spent beneath the sheets. You instantly know that Alex will do anything for Alice and that goes a long way in making me fall for him myself.

The romance is slow to start even though the physical aspects are explored right off the bat. Car sex + nosy cops = lots of laughs. Alex and Alice have wonderful chemistry. Dean takes it beyond simple attraction; letting them build a tentative friendship through texts and phone calls. A majority of their time in the book is spent apart when spring training ends and Alex heads out with the Felons. This both helps and hinders the storyline. Through the separation, Alice and Alex attempt to deal with issues affecting them individually. It also leads to misunderstandings and assumptions between them that makes the reader question the connection between them. There is a lack of trust that isn't so much resolved as it's passed over. Alice wants reassurances that Alex is there for the long haul but realistically this isn't possible as they just started seeing each other. Alex doesn't really understand how deep Alice's mistrust goes. One highlight in all this is that at least Alice realizes how crazy she is acts at times.

While I enjoyed the story overall, it's really cute, I felt that the multiple plotlines weren't resolved beyond a cursory glance. More answers were needed. I had expected Alice's job as an umpire to have a larger hold on the story. I was surprised after her job is threatened, she just accepts and walks away. As this was a major obstacle in her refusal to date Alex, it was dropped rather quickly. Alice's child's father was merely a plot device used to explain Alice's reasons behind some of her actions as was the person behind the release of a damning picture. We know what they did but Alice never confronts them to find out why they did it.

The ending is predictable as the main conflict wraps up in a nice neat fashion with some mild external help that once again doesn't reveal beyond the surface. It felt rushed and unfinished. We leave off with an epilogue that tries to assure us Alex and Alice are on their way to happiness though again, we don't see the steps leading us to that conclusion. I do hope that Dean addresses some of these issues in future installments as I would like to see more Alex and Alice.

Though I had issues, I found Alex and Alice to be delightfully down to earth and I enjoyed the humor that infects the storyline. Fans of humorous lightweight romance sports contemporaries should find this a welcome addition to their library.

Overall Rating: C+

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### **Jen says**

Alex and Alice

I love baseball romances. I really do. This one was cute but I question the level of trust between the H/h. They couldn't seem to get past certain issues. Full review to come on *Fiction Vixen* Book Reviews

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### **Kelly says**

This series hits the spot when I'm looking for something light and fun to take my mind off things. I'm not the

hugest baseball fan (or sports fan, if I'm being honest), but Sierra Dean's passion for the sport comes through loud and clear and gets me excited for how these boys are going to pull through whatever ails them.

Okay. So, Alex. He's a a sweetie. He really is one of the good guys who hasn't let his fame or wealth go to his head. It's unfortunate for him that Alice is still stinging from her ex's douche-baggery. Frankly, her ex is a jerk. I sort of desperately hope he gets what's coming to him and realizes what he's missing out on with the way he's been acting.

But this book isn't about jerky exes getting their just desserts. This book is about Alice and Alex. With Alice's job, she's in a sticky situation as far as dating a player goes. Her family life is a little messy... I'm understating that a bit, just so you know. She's down to earth and when she decides to go for something, she goes all in.

Enjoyable, sexy, and downright fun. The background players are a hoot and I have a few I'm rooting for to get a book down the line.

-Kelly @ Reading the Paranormal

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### **Stephanie Collins says**

If you didn't know from following Sierra Dean on Twitter that she's a baseball fan then you would definitely figure it out from reading this series. Baseball players, support staff and fans are lovingly brought to life by her with an eye for not only the good things that come from being in the lifestyle but the harsh realities players and staff live thru in order to be a part of this sport play out over the year.

We got to see Alex in the prior book in the series and I know I looked forward to getting to know this catcher a bit better. As we get to know him better we find that while he has had the typical love 'em and leave 'em lifestyle of the young, handsome, well-off player he really has a great heart that wants to find his match. He's got sisters that serve to keep him in line when it comes to the treatment of women but when he meets Alice he has no clue how to handle a woman that runs so hot and cold to him. He shows how much he wants to be a part of her life in so many ways in this book but I have to say the way he tries to include her daughter in things melted my heart. He really does try to treat both of them like princesses and treasures so you will adore this soft side. He's also extremely patient as he deals with Alice's issues that at times I just didn't see why he didn't give up but I loved that he was willing to tolerate so much from her as in the end they make a great pair.

Alice is not my favorite heroine in many ways but I liked her and understood most of why she behaved the way she did. I didn't always like her treatment of Alex but was happy that she owned her mistakes once she realized what she stood to lose if she didn't open her eyes. She loves her job as an ump and being a single mother but finds herself struggling with keeping her home together while fighting an attraction to a ball player. This attraction could ruin her career as an ump but can't seem to avoid wanting a man who fits all the things she thinks is horrible. She's been burned by a ball player before and paints every single one of them with the same brush. This of course creates conflict with Alex as she isn't open with him about her issues and it almost drives a permanent wedge between them as she always jumps to the worst conclusions with him. My frustration with her revolves around her willingness to forgive her brother for his actions but a man who has treated her with nothing but respect doesn't get any chances because of his career? I was happy when she finally wakes up to what she stands to lose if she doesn't change but jeez it took a while to get there.

I've got to thank Sierra for the chance to read this as I loved Alex and learned to love Alice. I'm ready for more more more...

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## Blodeuedd Finland says

I liked Alex in book 1 so I really wanted him to get his HEA, as I also knew who he would get ;)

Alex is well duh a baseball player who comes to Lakeside for spring training. He is, nice, yes nice and sweet and I liked him.

Alice does not date baseball players after what happened last time. She does had some issues cos of that, and she really should trust her gut more. Cos Alex is a really nice guy and she is lucky to have met him.

A romance that takes off fast, but still does not (figure it out). She has to learn to trust him, to see he is good for her and they both need to figure out where this is going.

Throw in an ex who is an ass, a cute kid, a brother with troubles and some meddling sisters. And baseball of course, and you got this book.

I do wonder if there is a book 3 and about who?

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## Ami says

**Perfect Catch** is the second book in Sierra Dean's "*Boys of Summer* series after Pitch Perfect. It features Alex Ross, the catcher for San Fransisco Felons as well as Tucker's best friend (the hero of book #1) and Alice Darling, who works as umpire for minor baseball league during spring training season.

I would like to commend Ms. Dean for featuring a woman with interesting occupation. Duly noted that the number of sport-romance books that I have read maybe lower than fans of this genre, but I think female umpire character in romance is quite rare. I was pretty excited with it.

Unfortunately, Alice's professional life as an umpire didn't have a bigger role than I expected. Considering the uniqueness of this job, I want to read more about the ins and outs of being a female umpire. There was one scene in the beginning, where Alice had to deal with an asshole of a player and I thought she was excellent there. She kept her head cool and didn't back down on her decision. I thought that scene was quite engrossing. Which was why I was disappointed that I didn't get more of that.

Instead, the story mainly dealt with Alice's issue in starting relationship with a baseball player. Alice held Alex in arm's length because she had been burned by a baseball player before. Almost a decade ago she dated *one* and she ended up with a daughter that he refused to acknowledge publicly. This made Alice distrusts baseball players in overall. In addition, Alice insisted that the relationship would not work anyway because they would have long distance relationship most of the time, with Alex traveling during the season, while she stays in Florida.

This became the source of my frustration with relationship. I could understand that Alice wanted to protect herself from making the same mistake, but she didn't completely stick to her principle all the time. Alice accepted Alex's offer for dating, had sex with him, and when Alex left, she text-ed him a lot. Also, Alice

realized that she was using the men (her ex and then Alex) as people to blame for rather than dealing with her own issues, but she didn't really stop doing it. Then when shit hit the fan, she immediately blamed Alex for everything, accusing him of leaking the reporters about their relationship in purpose.

Honestly, I found this push-pull reaction to be a bit off-putting and made Alice less than likeable for me.

Alex, on the other hand, was quite a darling. I thought he was sweet. When she was with Olivia (Alice's daughter), he tried to make a connection with her. Alex was also more of a beta hero: he wasn't domineering, he didn't stand over six feet tall, and he didn't act all possessive-like. He genuinely wanted to make the relationship work and he wanted Alice to see that he wasn't like her asshole of baby daddy. This made me in favor of Alex more so than Alice (gosh, they have similar names!). At times I thought that he deserved someone better. Especially the problem with Alice bled into the ballpark and hurt someone else in the process.

I guess I was expecting something a little bit different with the story -- especially since Ms. Dean had a very good premise of this story, with Alice being a female umpire and Alex a baseball player. I thought the complication of their situation would already be interesting to be explored, without Alice's rules of not being involved with baseball players.

Anyway, everything concluded rather fast in the end -- truthfully, I would expect Alice to do some groveling. I always say so when it is the hero that does the stupid thing; I guess it is fair that the heroine should do the same if she is the one messing things up.

All in all, this one falls into the okay category in my book. I really loved Alex but I had a hard time warming up to Alice. I guess in the end, their romance didn't convince me much to root for their happiness.

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