



## Deep in the Count

*Madison Parker*

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Brandon plays baseball for Virginia Tech. Although his coach is confident he has a successful career ahead of him, Brandon's not so sure. What if he doesn't make it? What will he have to fall back on? He wishes he were smarter. He looks at his friend's roommate and thinks he'd give anything for that confidence and those brains. Because brains and confidence? That's sexy! If only he could get Corey to notice him, come up with a plan that would appeal to Corey's inner geek...

Corey's program of study and academic standing are sure to land him a good job in his chosen career field: cryptology. Those popular kids? They think that because he's a "geek" he's missing out on life, but they're wrong. He's got his eye on the prize and doesn't need the distractions of a social life. So why is he having such a hard time ignoring his roommate's flirty friend?

This story was written as a part of the M/M Romance Group's "**Love Has No Boundaries**" event. Group members were asked to write a story prompt inspired by a photo of their choice. Authors of the group selected a photo and prompt that spoke to them and wrote a short story.

## Deep in the Count Details

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## From Reader Review Deep in the Count for online ebook

### Christina Marie says

This was so frakking adorable.

I have a soft spot for a good nerd & jock romance, so this was perfect for me. If you're in the mood for something quick and sweet, then *Deep in the Count* is perfect for you too.

#### Brandon: The Jock

Brandon is on the Baseball team at his university. He's not exactly the typical jock character. He is out, a little awkward, and oh so adorable. Brandon needs help with his Statistics homework. He goes to the tutoring center where he meets Corey, who he is immediately attracted to. Naturally, he runs away (at first) because he doesn't want Corey to think he is just some dumb jock.

#### Corey: The Nerd

Corey is ridiculously smart, watches Battlestar Galatica, loves cryptology, carries a rubick's cube in his pocket, and he's confident. He's pretty nerdtastic. He is attracted to Brandon. However, he is absolutely not interested in starting anything with *anyone* right now. He's too busy being academic, decrypting codes, and Rubik's cubing it up on the weekends.

*Deep in the Count* owes a lot of it's greatness to the fact that it has the jock chasing the nerd. It's a unique spin on a common theme. I ate that shizzle up like fruit loops.

Brandon likes Corey's geeky, thinks it's super sexy.

Corey is completely uninterested.

So, Brandon decides to woo himself a nerd. It is the BEST THING EVER, because Brandon is all nervous and super awkward. **I felt like I was watching the bizarre mating rituals of the American Jock.** Brandon and Corey are total opposites, but they're probably perfect for each other. I loved watching Brandon try to convince Corey to give him a chance.

*Deep in the Count* is well written. Both characters are loveable. This is short, but it's sweet. And cute. And adorable. It just made my heart go all melty. You should probably abandon my words at this point and go read this!

**p.s.** The code at the end is fluffy goodness, and so worth cracking.

**p.p.s.** I would love to read more about Brandon and Corey. I'm even willing to beg.

### 5 Stars

## Meags says

### 4 Stars

I've yet to meet a Madison Parker story I didn't like. This was a great little story featuring my much loved nerd/jock combo. We have Brandon, the baseball playing jock who struggles with statistics and Corey, the super nerd who plays with rubix cubes, works as a tutor on the side and dreams of one day being a successful cryptologist. Opposites very much attract here and it was all sorts of sweet and adorable to watch these two come together.

I loved the strip games! I feel like strip games should be mandatory in pre-testing - I mean, imagine if your crush told you that for every practice question you got correct on a pre-test they'd remove an article of clothing? What an extremely appealing motivation technique.

I read this late at night and was kind of gobsmacked that in order to understand the final page I had to switch my brain back on and do some serious decrypting! I couldn't possibly go to sleep without knowing what Brandon's final messages to Corey were, so I kind of felt forced to work for it, but man, it was fun. What an original way to end a story. Much approved!

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## Bev says

**Woohoo, this LHNB event just keeps getting better and better. Loved this twist on a jock/geek story, really cute. 4.25 stars and**

Brandon is a jock, but doesn't feel that baseball is giving him everything he needs or wants...in fact, he's starting to wonder whether baseball **is** the future for him. One of his friends on the team Jack, is rooming with a math genius Corey, who is also very fond of cryptology (code breaking) and playing with a Rubik's Cube...yep go figure!! Jack is cool with the fact that Brandon is gay but not all the way out of that closet, and Corey **may** be gay...who knows?? Corey spends most of his time either in their room or at the study centre where he also tutors students who are not that confident in statistics, maths and whatever else....and yes, **I** would be in that queue!!

Eventually, Corey and Brandon meet because Brandon has to raise his grades in order to carry on with his scholarship, and he asks Corey to tutor him. I'll leave the story here, but be warned...lots of cryptic codes feature in this story (from both Corey **and** Brandon), and they play a wonderful form of strip statistics!! I really enjoyed it, and would love there to be an actual book in the future.

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### **Serena Yates says**

This is a very cute version of the jock/nerd story, with a solitary and withdrawn nerd who is determined not to "waste time on a boyfriend", and a jock who is fed up with being Mr. Popular all the time and never being on his own, not to mention his question whether "jockdom" is actually for him. Add to that the fact the nerd is into cryptology, and the fun can most definitely begin.

Brandon plays baseball, has a scholarship on that basis, but he isn't the typical "dumb jock". He's pretty good at math (just not the advanced bits, but then, who is?), he has doubts about his future to the extent that he isn't even sure he wants to play baseball as a career. He loves guys with brains, but is shy about approaching them, fearing their despising him because he's dumb. Corey, his friend's roommate, proves to be irresistible though, and Brandon's tactic to lure him in is pretty damned clever!

Corey has his life planned out to the second. Well, almost, but he's known he wants to get into cryptology from the time he was a teenager, He spends every free minute on honing his skills, and if he weren't also a tutor for math, he'd never see anyone outside class and his roommate. So far, he's been pretty good at avoiding pitfalls like personal relationships and boyfriends, but when Brandon enters his life, his "luck" runs out. Not that he's very upset about that...

If you like the jock/nerd combination, if you enjoy reading about college students who have very different views of life and their future yet manage to find common ground, and if you're looking for a fun read with lots of heat and some very cute action in a dorm bed, then you will probably enjoy this free short story.

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### **Deeze says**

A very enjoyable little short.

I loved the twist of the Jock/Nerd in this one.

The Cryptology slant was interesting, albeit way over my head lol. I can do the simple letter change ones but after looking up Kryptos I was lost lol.

This was a real feel good read. Perfect for when you want something light-hearted, sweet and romantic lol.

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### **Cindi says**

Full review can be found at On Top Down Under Book Reviews and at On Top Down Under's sister Young Adult site Greedy Bug Book Reviews.

I am a big fan of this author so I was eager to jump into Deep In The Count. It did not disappoint. Brandon is an openly gay jock (shocking, I know) and he falls for Corey, his friend's nerd roommate. Corey has his life planned out for him. Brandon, not so much. Once they meet, Brandon goes to great lengths to win Corey

over. The way this is done is very unique and it's done in a way that speaks to Corey's nerd site. I loved it.

Another great read by Madison Parker. I hope to see Brandon and Corey revisited some day. I would love to see where they go from here.

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*This short story was reviewed for On Top Down Under Book Reviews and Greedy Bug Book Reviews at the request of the author.*

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### **Ami says**

A cute young adult story with slightly different jock/nerd theme that managed to make me smile and feel happy. Here are my reasons:

- + Corey -- the "nerd" is the one that is more confident throughout the story. He is indifferent to Brandon's thinking that Corey's attractive. Corey is so focused on his dreams, he already has his life mapped out, and he doesn't have time for boyfriend. I love that. Usually it's the other way around so I love that it's NERD POWER!!!
- + Brandon is just so sweet and adorable. So yeah, he's the "jock", but he fumbles when he tries to ask Corey out. It's so cute to read Brandon telling himself that "confident is sexy". Awww, Brandon \*pats him in the head\*
- + The two friends - Corey's Samantha and Brandon's Jack -- are neither acting like fangirl or an a\*\*\*. I love that as well
- + The whole cryptology stuffs are fun!! But the statistic tutoring with NAKED quiz game is the most awesome!! I can't help grinning like a loon when I read Brandon's reaction. What an idea, Corey!!

And yes, I cheated to crack Brandon's message. Hey, that is what internet is for

Another easy favorite from this event.

PS: OMG, Baseball is the coolest sport ever -- all those baseball terms!! \*lol\*

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### **Bárbara says**

[I never read an

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**~◊~Doxni(elas) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~◊~ says**

Heavy on the cuteness, low on the steam; geek + jock prove opposites do attract.

Brandon did all the work here. I wanted Corey to try harder. The stripping games were fun, though.

One star deducted for the obnoxious ending. I want to read, not solve a puzzle.

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### **Exina says**

#### **3.5 stars**

A cute geek-jock story with an unordinary approach to the personalities of the characters: nerdy math genius Corey is confident and driven, while baseball player Brandon is not so sure in his future. But he is sure and confident in one thing, that Corey and he would make a great couple.

I loved the charming and smart way Brandon captured Corey's heart and swept his resistance away.

And the strip tutoring was fun! ;)

*Deep in the Count* is a lovely, enjoyable story.

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### **Cole Riann says**

Don't hate on me haters! This isn't out yet, but please visit the link near the end of the review, which will take you to Madison's blog where she talks about the story, the characters, and cryptology!

Review posted at The Armchair Reader.

This story is not yet available, just so you know. But, seeing it already on Goodreads meant that I just couldn't wait! So, Madison sent me a copy and let me know I could post it whenever I wanted, since we don't yet know when it will be posted. And this is me really, really, really hoping that it's posted soon because it's such a cute, sweet, happy story that I want to share my reading experience with all of you!

This Jock/Nerd college story doesn't rely on the typical trope. The prompt that started this story specifically asked for a different take on that trope, so what we get in this story is a jock that doesn't really like his own popularity and a nerd that doesn't want or need any of his own. Corey relies on his own genius to move him further in life. To him, college isn't a chance to party, but to make connections and actually learn. He's a student of mathematics, but really loves cryptology. Brandon is the star pitcher of the college's baseball team, but has always been uncomfortable of the popularity that and his looks give him. He's out and no one cares, but getting a date is a different thing altogether. Most people expect him to want to date another gay athlete at the school, someone like him, but Brandon has always been attracted to men smaller and smarter than him.

When Brandon finds out that his best friend's roommate is gay, he's curious to know more from his friend. Just seeing Corey's side of the dorm room gives him some ideas -- a worn Rubik's Cube, posters of Battlestar Galactica, and little armies of figures in their precise places. Corey is obviously a nerd, something that his

roommate and Brandon's friend continues to tell him. So when Brandon finally faces the fact that he'll fail his statistics class without tutoring, he's surprised that the cute guy who helps him is Corey. He's cute, *really* smart, and just happens to say no to Brandon every time he asks him out.

The continued rebuttals force Brandon to get creative, but at the same time Corey is succumbing to pressure from his best friend to get out of his room, take some time off from his work and flirt with a guy. Brandon just happens to be cute and already interested in him...

Sorry for going on so long there. The prompt for this story is really why the story is so wonderful. That and the fact that Madison Parker is really talented at putting together cute/feel-good stories. But the prompt that wanted, specifically, a story with a Jock/Nerd trope turned on its head is what makes this story unique and special. Throughout the story, when we'd normally expect the jock to have all the power while wooing the pants of the nerd (literally), we have Corey holding the reins. Brandon has shown his interest in him countless times and seems like he'll try to do anything to get Corey to recognize him in a romantic way and to make time for him among his math and cryptology work. But Corey already has firm goals placed in mind and is halfway to completing them. College for him is about forging the path to his future career, and he's got both feet placed firmly on that path. A romantic distraction is not something that he needs, or wants; there will always be time for a boyfriend later, when he's more established. So instead of what we expected from this trope, we have a nerd with all the power! Woo!

Madison has a lot of fun with codes and making codes in this story. Not only is it a GREAT way for Brandon to woo Corey, it's also fun for us because we're told a lot about different codes and how they're encrypted. And in the end (this *isn't* a spoiler!), the story ends with a code that we're left to solve ourselves. I had a lot of fun with that. Madison talks all about the story and ciphers on her blog, which you should definitely check out. She even explains a basic keyword shift and gives us a message to decipher.

It's good practice before reading the story!

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## **Anyta Sunday says**

4.5

Madison Parker is an autobuy author for me. This short story sealed the deal. What a funny, sweet, well-developed jock/nerd romance.

What I really LOVED about the story was:

The details. This story didn't feel generic, it felt like Brandon and Corey were real people each with their own likes and dislikes that gave them distinct personalities. Particularly the scenes from Corey's perspective. These really got into his 'nerd' voice, and his inner ramblings on math and deciphering encryptions were a treat to read. It really proved to me that this character was real, instead of just being told he was super brainy, etc. So A+ there, dear author. No 93% for you. (Readers of this lovely story will get that joke).

Also, I really loved the development between Brandon and Corey. It's only a short story, but thankfully they didn't get it on in the opening pages. The pacing felt smooth, and except for one scene in the middle, was pitch perfect.

Another thing this book is: interactive. It's fun with all the encrypted messages that Corey has to decode, and it certainly gets the mind buzzing: Now, what could *that* mean?

Well, I'll leave you to discover the fun of this short, free story for yourself. It's a QT  $\prod$  of a story.

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## ? Todd says

This short, free read was **cute, sweet and utterly adorable**.

Tall, blond **Brandon** is the pitcher for Virginia Tech's baseball team and he happens to think that **nothing is much hotter than smarty, nerdy boys**.

And how fortuitous for Brandon that his best friend and fellow team member, **Jack**, just so happens to live with such an enticing nerdlet.

Talk, dark and dorky **Corey** is the very epitome of geekdom. He studies non-stop, constantly fiddles with his **Rubik's Cube**, works at the math tutoring center wants to grow up to be a **cryptologist** and work for the CIA breaking codes.

So when Brandon's about to fail his Statistics class, which would cause him to lose his scholarship, he goes to the tutoring center for help, only to immediately fall in lust with his **nerdily-hot Rubik's Cubing tutor**.

Then Brandon remembers hearing Jack's roommate's name and his infatuation with solving Rubik's Cubes and makes the connection that Jack's roommate is none other than his Stats tutor.

Then while 'coincidentally' (read: yeah, right) visiting Jack and Corey's dorm room -- while Corey is there -- **Brandon asks Corey to tutor him** outside of the tutoring center.

**Both boys are totally lovable** as we witness their **awkward interest** in one another and as they get to know one another better.

**Brandon smiled at him again. "Can I carry you around in my pocket?"**

**"It would be a pretty tight fit."**

**Brandon's eyes sparkled. "I'd be okay with that."**

Then the **closet exhibitionist** **Corey** decides to incentivize Brandon during a quiz, where for each correct answer Corey would lose an article of clothing.

**Like strip poker** -- with math instead of cards. : )

But when Brandon asks for a kiss, Corey makes him work for that, too.

***"I'll make a deal with you. I'll let you kiss me if you get at least a B on your test."***

**Brandon smiled at him. "Consider it done."**

The rest of the story is a classic tale of cat and mouse, with **Corey fleeing and Brandon wooing and pursuing**.

But Brandon is smart enough to realize that a conventional chase isn't going to work with Corey, so instead he decides to use the **secret admirer** approach -- *with a twist*.

With Jack's help, Brandon begins leaving **encrypted messages** for Corey, which show that he's willing to put some thought and work into his courting efforts.

This both **impressed and enticed** Corey. To the point that when the notes *abruptly stop*, he's hooked and sends Brandon a **surprisingly-forward encrypted message of his own**.

**The book was a joy** and I really need to **thank my friend, Justin**, for this perfect recommendation.

Great job on matching up my profile's "***what I really like in my books***" section with this one! : )

It's a **free read**, so there's absolutely no reason not to read this **4.5 \*cockshot -&-Rubik's-Cube\* stars** gem.

(There's even an encrypted message *of your own* that you *\*must\** decrypt to figure out what Brandon tells Corey at the end, but don't worry, you can cheat (*like I did*) and decrypt it online.) ;-)

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**Macky says**

I love jock /geek stories, I love that these two cute guys defied the normal J/G relationship, the code breaking at the end is a fun idea and for me its another brilliant edition to the LHNB series of shorts. Thank you Madison, you've given us another winner. I loved the story.

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**Rissa (an M/M kinda Girl!!) says**

**HOMERUN!!**

This is definitely in the top 3 of my favorite LHNB stories and it's probably even in my top 5 of favorite jock/nerd type stories!

I was thrilled that Corey wasn't your typical nerd..yes he was into numbers, cyrptos and rubix cubes but he was confident (mostly). Brandon was more the shy and unsure guy and I found that very sexy for the baseball jock.

There study session was way steamy, the messages were a fabulous idea and although they weren't sweet the idea was uber sweet, the 'quiz' at the end...unbelievably HOTT.

This was definitely a HOMERUN in my book!

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