



## Sidelined

*Mercy Celeste*

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My, how the mighty falls.

After leading his team to two Super Bowl wins, being cut leaves quarterback Levi Brody reeling. Betrayed, scared, and picking up the pieces from a failed love affair, he abandons New Orleans for the speck-on-the-map Alabama town he left behind. He wants nothing more than to hide out and lick his wounds, but an interfering brother thrusts him back into sports—coaching high school football. Where once he'd ruled the field as star player, now he's taking orders from a very young, very attractive head coach. A coach with a deep-rooted hatred for all things Levi Brody.

Head coach of the newly formed East County High, Tracy Wright has his work cut out for him. Forming three former rival teams into one working unit is all that he can handle. The last thing he needs is an interfering golden boy. He has no use for Levi Brody, until discovering how much Levi has to offer both the team and Tracy.

Small town jealousy plus big city secrets converge, and just might leave both men Sidelined.

Book 2 in The Southern Scrimmage Series. Should be read after Six Ways from Sunday

## **Sidelined Details**

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Author : Mercy Celeste

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## From Reader Review Sidelined for online ebook

### Mallory says

I am very conflicted by this book. I have three major thoughts...

- 1) It changed the way I feel about Bo. I don't know if it should, but it does. It added conflict and complication to Bo and Dylan's relationship that did not feel resolved to me that while important for this book, I feel took away from the first book.
- 2) There was so much going on. Abuse? check. Lost Love? maybe. Cross Dressing? check. Any one of those would have been enough, but all of them? Because we had all of them I didn't feel that we really got any of them. The last bit of the book felt very rushed with Levi not really growing and Tracey just accepting. I mean, two personalities? I want to know about this, I want Tracey and Lev to explore this now that they know each other. The next book is about his brother but I would read another book about these two making this relationship actually work. Bo and Dylan had so much history to draw on, I could imagine their next steps (although MC really changed some of my thoughts) but Levi/Tracey are so new and just explored most of their secrets.
- 3) When I finished for the first time I really liked it and was thinking 5 stars, then I read book 1 again, and it made me reconsider because with that book fresh in my mind parts of this one made less sense. How long were Bo and Levi together? Book 1 says that Dylan was KIA for only 4 months but Levi said they were together for a year (i think) but didn't get together right away after the death. The timing is throwing me off, did he cheat? Was is technically cheating? Did he tell Dylan? Why do you do this to me authors?

So I'll read it again, and see how I feel. Maybe book 3 will clear some of these questions up for me. I hope so.

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### Cory says

Loved it!! Tracy and Levi were a great pair. I love wonderful banter between the main characters and these two didn't disappoint.

I also appreciate series that integrate the characters from the previous books in the current book. This was the case with this book and it really enhanced the story with some flashbacks that the reader wasn't privy to in the first book.

I'm totally hooked and will be starting the next book immediately!

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### JustJen "Miss Conduct" says

This one doesn't pack near the emotional punch as the first book. However, it is still quite good. We learn a little bit more about Dylan and Bo and about how Levi fit into the picture. It did feel a bit odd finding about some of that stuff now, as opposed to when the events happened (in Six Ways), and I wasn't too sure how I

felt about all of that.

As far as Levi and Tracey go, wowzers, were they hot stuff. They each had quite a few issues going on, though Levi bore the brunt of most. I really enjoyed watching Tracey keeping Levi in check and taking care of him. Also, I actually loved the little twist at the end but wish we could have seen a little bit more into it.

I'm a little apprehensive about the next book - Jude and Slayer? Guess we shall have to wait and see.

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### **Jennifer?Pher? says**

[Why was Tracy expecting Levi on the field when Levi hadn't lost his contract yet? I must have missed something because their initial meeting just made no sense to me. Tracy was pissed that he didn't show for practice but the night they met was the night that Levi lost his contract. Oh, and that sex,

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### **Meags says**

#### **1.5 Stars**

Somehow this sequel was able to completely decimate everything that made Six Ways from Sunday special for me. I have a lot of thoughts waging war in my head right now, and this review will likely be incoherent, but I have a bunch of shit to say and I think it will be mildly therapeutic to get it all out there, come what may. Also, be warned, when I have spoilers throughout this review, they are not to light spoilers!

Initially, I really liked Levi as a character. I sympathized with his physical pain (suffered from a sports injury), and the subsequent loss of his football career was a harsh blow that would devastate any sportsman in similar circumstances. So, at the onset of this story I was ready to feel and grieve along with Levi, and, hopefully, witness the turning pages of his new (improved) life after the NFL.

In many ways, I got what I was after – Levi headed home to 'Bama, met Tracy, and the two proceed to have a hot and explosive love-affair - which included a bunch of steamy *can't-keep-my-hands-off-you* sex scenes, and some ~~weirdly aggressive~~ dirty talk. It was undoubtedly hot and I was pretty happy at this point in my reading, but sadly, these feelings didn't last.

Shortly thereafter, the "flashbacks" began. These flashbacks, which were intermittently placed throughout the book, chronicled a bunch of moments from Levi's past, which heavily related to previously unknown events from book #1. Let's just say, I hated every single minute of every single flashback. The reader knowledge gained from these flashbacks unquestionably destroyed all the epic feelings I had for the first story and its MC couple, Bo and Dylan. (view spoiler)

Because of this, I just went and re-rated book #1 and took it off a bunch of shelves I feel it's no longer worthy of adorning. So you could say I actively hated what the reveals in this book did to book #1.

Another thing that bugged me was that the characters were all over the shop! The personality inconsistencies were mind-boggling, and definitely acted as another major deterrent to my overall enjoyment. (view spoiler)

This is all looking extremely negative on my part, but rest assured there were aspects of this story I enjoyed. Things that on their own, without all the above bullshit, would have made this closer to a 4 Star read for me. Including: (view spoiler)

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*BR with R! :)*

### **Jenni Lea says**

Oh, that was so damn good! The first book was touching and tore my heart out but this one made me laugh and laugh and laugh...

Even if I was one to rehash the gist of a story I don't think I could do that here. This story was so over the top and fast paced that I felt as if I was taken for a ride on the back of a Harley with the wind whipping through my hair while shouting with glee at the rush. I couldn't catch my breath. It was exhilarating!

Mercy Celeste, you are one talented mamma jamma and I can't wait to dive headlong into another of your amazingly entertaining stories. I'm a total fangirl now!

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### **Kazza says**

#### **4.5 Stars**

Review at **On Top Down Under Book Reviews** - <http://ontopdownunderbookreviews.com/...>

**Oh yeah, another sexy M/M read from Mercy Celeste. Football and conflict. I'm in!!**

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### **Sheri says**

Disappointed to say, book two actually swallowed a star from book one and did nothing but ignite anger and frustration.

*\*furiously mashes molars together\**

One question....**why???**

*\*flexes fingers in poor attempt to relax\**

I went into this book with high expectations. Straight up, I was counting on another great read. I truly enjoyed Six Ways from Sunday, and I was an eager book beaver wanting more. Not only were my hopes crushed, but I felt deceived.

So many things went wrong for me, I'm not sure where to begin....I suppose I should start with the costly penalty that tipped the game.

As I've said, book one was full of fierce passion, and this book completely betrayed that love. For me, it mocked the authenticity of Bo and Dylan's love. It was shocking and painful, like a slap in the face. Then 'the scene' where Dylan meets Levi, well, I felt like I'd been sucker punched. It not only ruined the book for me, but diminished the enjoyment I had for the first book.

Sadly, this wasn't my only problem.

The editing was loose, the passion felt forced, and the timeline was off.

*\*sad sigh\**

Levi Brody, successful Quarterback of a two time Superbowl NFL team, wakes up in a nightmare he can't shake. A game threatening injury tosses him to the sidelines and he tucks tail and runs home. Drowning his sorrows in the bottom of a bottle, he finds himself taking a stranger to his bed. Could this blond Viking King be more than a hot roll in the sheets? And is it possible their paths have crossed before?

Tracy Wright passes up his chance with the big dogs for the comforts of small town living. Yet to do so, big sacrifices were made, including a tight fit in the closet. When his high school rival (and first crush) begs him to claim him, he is more than happy to oblige. He warns Levi he's not a man that shares, but he never imagined the competition would be so hard to takedown.

Ugh....

This coulda, woulda, shoulda been a sure win...sorely it missed the mark.

My advice?

Don't miss *Six Ways from Sunday*, but take a pass on *Sidelined*.

**\*1.5 *ohh-no-you-didn't* stars\***

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### **Duck says**

My how the mighty falls? Yeah that's true but not in the way that you think. The story was great. Don't get me wrong - I liked Levi and I enjoyed the story. My problem is that I don't understand how the author can build up someone, namely Bo --- and show us this amazing love story that lifts you up and makes you just feel amazing in SWfS, showing he had such a reverence and connection with Dylan and then in Sidelined we find out not only does he almost cheat on Dylan, but he was still sleeping with Levi when he knew Dylan was alive?!?!?! I recommended SWfS to so many friends in person and online and now I feel like one of my favorite feel good books in recent memory is tainted. I have no issue with open relationships, to each his own. But in this case it wasn't that. For Bo to sleep with Levi up until the night before Superbowl that he supposedly dedicated to Dylan and was going to pick him up from the hospital? I can't imagine a worse fall from grace for a character than what I found out in this story. And I think it bothers me so much because I loved SWfS and now I can't look at it the same. No thank you!

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### **Heather♥ says**

1.5 stars

Book 1 in the series, *Six Ways from Sunday*, was almost a 5 star read for me so I was very excited when this story came out. It started off strong. My heart went out to Levi, who was having a tough time accepting his football career was over, and then he met Tracy, who was just what he needed. There was no denying they had chemistry and the sex between them was explosive and spontaneous. Tracy was a dominant possessive alpha while Levi was a pushy bottom who loved to provoke him.

But Levi was also a big bag of mixed signals. He flirted and had sex with Tracy whenever the man so much as looked at him, but he also spent a lot of time cutting Tracy down by pointing out his character flaws and criticizing him for choosing to remain in their small hometown in Alabama as a football coach/teacher. Besides running hot and cold all the time, Levi was also constantly dreaming or thinking of his previous lover, who just so happened to look an awful lot like Tracy. Levi was so caught up in the past and what he lost, that it soon felt like Tracy was nothing more than a substitute for who Levi really wanted. Levi was also trying to keep his distance emotionally and telling Tracy it was only sex between them. I had no trouble believing this because of the way he often treated Tracy. I felt bad for Tracy. He may have been overbearing, but he didn't deserve a lot of what Levi threw his way. Because of this, I had a hard time believing Levi's declarations of love at the end, when 80% through the book he was still ragging on Tracy, this time because

Tracy had outed himself for him. So why was it expected and up to Tracy to fight for Levi? Why would he even want to?

Another reason I wasn't able to give this book a higher rating was because I was disappointed in the direction the story took with respect to the main characters Bo and Dylan from book 1. The things that were revealed just about ruined book 1 for me. I almost wish I hadn't read this book because of that. Don't get me wrong. The writing in this book was great, it was the direction and content of the story that bugged me. This probably won't be a big deal for other readers but it's definitely a personal niggle of mine and pushed a major button. I just wasn't able to get past it to enjoy the story.

(view spoiler)

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### **Greg says**

I had trouble with the second story in this series. I might change my rating after finishing the book. I had problems after the first sex scene and I'm struggling to finish it. Personally, I didn't care for their first encounter. Do not care for "my bitches" as Tracy called Levi and his twinks that he would pick up, and it just didn't seem in character for Levi. Then, the bombshell that he was suppose to have been in a relationship with Bo, before Dylan was found still alive???? I am not sure when they were suppose to be seeing each other. Dylan was reported missing (dead) in August in the book and Bo said in his interview after repeating as Super Bowl champs that he was going to see Dylan who was found two months previous. Super Sunday is the beginning of February, two months prior would be beginning of December or the end of November. When was there time for another relationship to the point that Levi insinuated that he was in love with Bo? I know I am nitpicking, but the author could have done so much better with this story and the characters.

P.S. Just came to the part where they were suppose to have had sex together for a year... I believe the line from Bo was "I played with you for four years and slept with you for one year". In the last book, at the interview it said it was a year ago that Bo and Dylan had their picture taken from the last Super Bowl. In a flashback sequence we find out that around when the season started, after Bo outed himself, Dale Shannon asked Levi to room with Bo, hence the beginning of the relationship. THAT can't be a year. Because of this I am lowering my rating. Guess I should have read a little further because apparently Bo and Levi kept having sex even while Dylan was laid up hurting and recovering, still doesn't equate to a year.

This series had potential.

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### **R \* A Reader Obsessed \* says**

**Warning - This entire review is one big spoiler!**

1.5 Stars

This being an enemies to lovers story, I was looking forward to a lot of crazy push pull, some heady sex, and plenty of good times. What I got instead was a big slap across the face. Hard.

Let me clarify. Six Ways from Sunday was a great novella, full of fabulous angst, smex and romance - the kind of romance where love literally conquers all. That's where that book should've ended so we could all content ourselves with the HEA that Dylan and Bo deserved. Instead, their story intermixes with Levi and Tracy's here, and there are revelations that I never *ever* needed, nor wanted, to know.

**"No no no no no no...."**

That was me throughout the majority of the book.

This is purely my own personal preference and beef with this sequel. Despite that, there was quite a bit of heavy angst here. There was definitely some irresistible-can't-take-my-hands-off-you desires. And the smex was awesome. But all of that was entwined with a plot point that left me quite disillusioned. Maybe I shouldn't be upset that this author didn't take the typical path I'm so used to. Maybe I shouldn't expect a certain story or outcome or reveal just because it's easily crowd pleasing. But I *did* expect something - and that was to continue to bask in the glow from the first book!

Apparently life is unfair and that kind of thinking is bound to backfire and cause disappointment, because disappointed I was! I want my romances to be monogamous, faithful, and loyal. I want the fantasy! I want the sequel/spinoff to show the original MC's happy and content. I want a peek into their lives that will make me feel warm and cozy and blissful. What I got instead was something I could have lived happily ignorant of for the rest of my life! I don't want mention of Bo and Dylan with other people, I don't want to hear Bo and Dylan having feelings for other people, and I certainly don't want to read specifics about Bo and Dylan with other people. Why?? Why do this?? What was the point???

So the hardcore romantic in me really died several painful deaths while reading this, despite Levi and Tracy getting their HEA. This should've come with a flashing alert for poor assuming readers like me, and should you want more specifics, check out this fabulous review!!

You've been forewarned, and now you're prepared. Proceed at your own risk.

*BR with Meags who righteously shared the indignation and outrage!*

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**Traci says**

Ok, I absolutely loved this book. I liked six ways till Sunday, but this book actually made me like it even more. The part of the book that I was missing was the back story of what happened to Dylan during his recoop phase. The end seemed too rushed, but it was short book so I wrote it off. In this book, the author introduces another NFL player, Levi, who (I will have to reread six ways to see if I missed that) and Tracy, a high school football coach from a small town in Alabama. Levi is injured and will not be playing for New Orleans any more. Levi's past and present life mold him into a very interesting person who I absolutely fell in love with.

You see Bo and Dylan in this book a lot, and understand what happened to strengthen their relationship. Levi and Tracy hook up when Tracy shows up at a local bar and finds Levi drunk after being cut from the team.

Things go on from there, hints are dropped about their possible past, Levi helps to coach the QBs, Other characters are introduced, Slayer and Jude which the next book will be about... I want to tell you more about this book, but it is a short book and I don't want to spoil the unexpected...

Read this book and maybe reread six ways till Sunday.. Definitely read that first, but this one is SOOOOOO much better. Cannot wait until the third book.

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### **clear skies says**

Levi's heart was broken when Bo's heart was taken by Dylan. Now Levi has been injured beyond repair and has gone back to his home town to lick his wounds. Tracy is a high school coach who happens to have a Masters in Sports Medicine and English. The schools have merged making the once rivals now team-mates. Tracy can't get the kids to co-operate, but when Levi's brother gets him a gig at the school, Tracy is faced with the QB he had a crush on when he was a kid.

The characters are flawed and say a lot of shitty things. A lot of judgement, shaming, fighting and making up. I liked it. Reader's often bemoan when a character says something shaming, and recently we have the whole slut-shaming phenomena that people like using. People say judgemental things all day everyday. You say it. I say it. I love when author's co-operate that into books without being offensive about it.

The sex scene were hot as hell but there were two HUGE things that offended me.

1. Levi likes the more "feminine" side of life. That does not mean he has a split personality. A mental illness is not a fetish, not something sexy and Levi is NOT that. Now, considering his younger brother said that, it could be the author showing how uninformed he is about gender fluidity. I hope because someone who has dissociative personality disorder is not the same as a guy happening to wear lip gloss.

2. Bo cheating on Dylan. Bo cheated on Dylan with Levi when the man was off getting PT. The author then decided to justify this by making Dylan say that Levi and Bo saved him from himself. THE. FUCK. This upset me so much. I know this is fiction, but I always say spin this back on yourself and tell me would that have been fine? I highly doubt it.

I originally rated this as a '3' star but the cons outweighed the pros.

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### **SheReadsALot says**

#### **A Hearts On Fire Review**

**4.25 STARS**--"Sidelined", book #2 in Mercy Celeste's *Southern Scrimmage* series delivers a wallop. This should be expected because this author tells such wonderfully twisted tales. Please note you must read this series in order - "Six Ways from Sunday" is Bo and Dylan's story. And this book is about new characters, Levi Brody and Tracy Wright.

Mercy invites the reader to sweltering Alabama where her men love to dirty talk, have heart pumping, scorching sex (there's even some topping from the bottom!) and deliver memorable tales. Levi Brody returns

back to small town Alabama after being cut from his pro football team. He's injured and pissed...oh and sort of in the closet. He finds a job to assist the local high school football team and meets the six foot six, blonde Viking King aka coach Tracy Wright.

Tracy is used to small town life, so he is not ready to announce out loud to the public about who he'd prefer in his bedroom. But Tracy and Levi were old high school rivals. Apparently the tension and chemistry has not died after all those years. And let me just say, the sexy nicknames and biting that I enjoy so much from this author is once again thoroughly delivered.

And Six Ways from Sunday fans, we get to learn more about Bo and Dylan during some key points briefly referenced in book #1. Bo and Levi were football teammates and friends. It made for one *interesting* angle. If you had any lingering questions about book #1, they are answered in this book.

Tracy and Levi, their relationship starts off with a bang and continues into an explosion close to the end. Both men are damaged, have baggage and are passionate. There is drama (I mean, hello, it's Mercy celeste) but it is more palatable comparing to book #1. Homophobia, promiscuity, mental issues, childhood abuse...these themes are touched along with others.

Reflecting back, how the story started, I did not expect the ending. At some parts, I had to pause to see where this story was going but overall it delivered. It's dramatastic! Yes, there is a HEA but while book #1 might have crushed your heart at points, book #2 might have just rattled it a few times. It's angst, it's twisted, it gets a little cray-cray but it is a hell of a story. The ending will surprise.

So final words:

**This series:** I adore and wait anxiously for the next book later this year! We get a snippet of book #3, Offside Chance. :D

**Levi:** Hugs for him, lots of hugs.

**Tracy:** I just wish he was real so I could stare...and drool.

**This book:** Another winner from this author. It tugs heartstrings but not as deeply as Six Ways from Sunday. I think this quote is good summary for the tone of this book:

***"You're fucked up. I see that. I can see past it."***

So can I.

I always root for the fucked up crew. Their stories can be amazing.

Read this book.

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