



## **Drown**

*Alex Jones*

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Dom Sal is the star quarterback of his high school football team. His charming, earnest personality has girls tripping over themselves to be with him. Everyone knows his family lives in the St. Michael Charity Housing, but all that matters is how many touchdowns he can score. And Dom never lets them down. No one knows he hides a secret--he dreams about men.

Damion Adrik is the school freak. His gothic style and cold, biting sarcasm keeps everyone at arm's length. His all-too-perfect family is a prison cell, and he's slowly destroying himself from the inside out. No one knows he has secrets of his own and that he's tormented by the darkness he takes comfort in. No one truly sees him, until Dom.

When these two worlds collide and the spark of attraction pulls Dom and Damion together, both boys are faced with choices that will break their realities in two. While conflict with parents and peers drives them closer together, their inner battles threaten to destroy the relationship they fight so desperately to keep. In the end, they must choose whether to be true to themselves, and each other, or to drown in the lives they built before.

## **Drown Details**

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# From Reader Review Drown for online ebook

## Whitney says

[TW for talks of suicide and self-harm]

I wonder how long ago this book was really written before it was published. I'm not sure of the author's age, but bands she mentions were popular (and still made music) back when I was in high school and I'm 25 now.

I sympathized with Damian and I didn't at the same time. What he went through was tragic. How his parent's dealt with that tragedy was abismal. And Damian's coping mechanism was heartbreaking. I knew cutters and I knew they have to be going through a lot for them to self-harm. I just really hated his bratty behavior even if it might've been justified. I hated his parents for not being actual parents instead of letting Damian do as he pleases. And if I had put my hands on my mother, I'm sure she would've snapped out of her comatose state long enough to knock me so hard I'd land back in the womb and she'd start over.

I wish Dom's other-side-of-the-tracks life was explored more. His life with his mom and stepdad. I feel like Dom's story got drowned out in favor of Damian's. Was Dom a cutter or lived in the emotional state Damian did? No, but I empathized a lot with him. It's painful watching someone you love spiral downward and not know how to help them without being dragged down too. I loved Dom and think he handled everything well considering. Also, religion was a big part of Dom's life, but it really wasn't explored that much. We don't really see him struggling with reconciling his religion with his sexuality, so his part of the epilogue didn't really make sense to me.

I think this would be a decent YA novel to pick up, but it could be triggering for teens. Overall I think this was well-written with solid characters.

3 stars out of 5.

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## Sachi says

### Exactly what I hoped it would be

A popular jock and an unpopular goth falling in love whilst battling prejudice, religious beliefs and the Goth's unhealthy addiction to self harm.

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## Melanie Broyles says

This story was filled with so much emotion and such beautifully crafted characters that I felt like it was too real at times. The story is about two high school senior boys who come from two totally different worlds, but both have pain and secrets that they must deal with before finding love and realizing that it's worth fighting for. I loved reading Dom & Damian's story, how they overcame not only their own prejudices about one another but also facing adversaries that took courage, faith, and love to over come.

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## **Madeleine says**

Wow! Just WOW.....! This book was really amazing. You get to follow two unlikely matched boys grow to not only love each other, but love the life they're given. One in faith of God and the other in faith of pain and desperation, my heart really went out to them both. They made a perfect pair of love and forgiveness.

This book was filled with so much emotions, so much strength and weakness. Through their good times smiling, and through their fights, you really get a feeling of real life with these two characters. The love they so clearly have for each other saddens me at times. The one afraid to love and be left behind, and the other loving but in sore need of confirmation from the other.

Sadly it also reflects on one kind of character we got in this world, this time (sadly) as so many times before, in the form of jocks. Oblivious to what kind of actual damage they do by keeping their "image" up and by closing their eyes to what love really is all about. The loving parents who's lost in a memory, and the hurting teens.

(view spoiler) I exploded. I wanted to throw the book on the floor, jump and scream at it, then finally throw it in the garbage. Obviously I couldn't do it. (Thank the Lord.....!) Furious at both Dom and the author I read page up and page down. Then it finally dawned on me. It wasn't Dom's battle to fight. Sure he would be there for Damion when he needed him, but it wasn't his battle to survive.

This author really opened my eyes on the subject, and I'm not ashamed to admit just how wrong my way of thinking had been. It was a real wake up call. Even though my heart sank to the bottom of the universe when Damion (view spoiler) The book made so much sense in so many ways it shouldn't have. I actually cried, and then when Dom (view spoiler) while showing him so much love when doing so, I was a total goner. Dehydration by crying times thousands!

This book is a juicy taste of real life and a wakeup call for so many reasons.

Why it got so many bad reviews, I frankly can't understand. Sure it's a matter of taste in books, but if people are too blind to read between the lines on this one, then I really feel saddened by them.

I can proudly say that this book (and author) earned its rightful place on my top shelf. Now and forever... Job well done Alex Jones!

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## **Erin says**

I was a bit surprised that I liked this book as much as I did. Normally when people write about teens the angst is really overdone but I didn't get that from Drown. Damion and Dom are an odd couple but I think that the only type of person that could have reached Damion would have been someone like Dom.

I wanted more, but it's not that I wanted more from the story (I loved the story)...more depth maybe? I realize that if the author had gone deeper into everything that happened the book would have been way longer than

the 400+ pages it already was but I sort of felt like forgiveness came too fast and things were resolved too easily, if that makes sense.

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## **Betryal says**

I think what grabbed me first on this book was the amazing cover art. I don't usually, but rather see what the story is about first and if that's appealing to my tastes then I'll scoop it up. In this case you really can't judge a book by its cover. I'm not saying it's a shitty story because there's much of it I did enjoy. How well it was written, next to known in grammar errors and the whole thought put into place to make it something good, and then there was some aspects of it that I didn't, so I'll touch on both.

The characters themselves appeal to the audience. I mean what wouldn't? You have your goth boy and you also have your jock. Two different guys in completely different walks of life and the only thing they have in common is they're both...gay.

The storyline in and of itself wasn't too bad, and the whole outcome is very appetizing, but here's what got to me about it:

First, for both of them their first love scene could've had some details and not been closeted. Don't get me wrong here, I have my moments where I'd prefer if the book had no sex scenes at all than have nothing but the bump and grind in every chapter, but this book could've had at LEAST one. I feel if you can get very graphic and detailed on Damion's cutting, you can put their first time as more than a tackle, touch and it's over before you blink. It made me feel detached to the story and rather tough to connect with what the characters felt for each other.

Which brings me to my next view. I think we are pretty much clear that Damion is goth, but did he have to be referred to as 'the goth' all the time? This made me grind my teeth. Even Dom wasn't called the jock as often. Dom was sweet and understanding. Too understanding under certain incidents that took place, whereas Damion was self centered, didn't care about anyone else and full of pity for himself. He wanted someone to love him yet pushed it away when offered. Confusing. I don't think the two ever met eye to eye.

Lastly, I get that Damion, notice I'm not saying the goth? :snickering: is a cutter, but he wasn't cutting in this story persay, he was friggin mutilating himself every chance he could and that was too often. Along with drugs and the booze which I'm surprised he didn't get alcohol poisoning from.

I would have liked to have seen Damion receive some counseling since with all the doubts Dom kept having that he couldn't help Damion with his self mutilation issues that in the real world would have required the help of professionals. So I was a little disappointed with that.

I was also confused with understanding if they were actually in high school or college. It seemed that practically every student had their own car, except for Dom.

I know my likes stem at 40% in comparison to my dislikes at 60% but that's just the way it is for me.

I will quote: I will not allow this to deter me from reading future stories from this author because the storyline could improve in other books of his. Every author should be given the chance to prove their writing

talent.

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### **Amy says**

This was a very emotional and heartwarming story. I loved the boys, they were so different but so alike in so many ways. I'd love to see a story for James because he changed alot through this book, and I'd love to see the effect it had on his life.

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### **John says**

Very disturbing but compelling and quite realistic portrayal of self-harm mental illness. Thisbook demonstrates just how much harm parents, adults, peers and society affect the lives of our children. Sends a tacit message that society needs to address these issues conclusively. The coming ut, self ID as gay is accurate and shows a depth of understanding of the miriade concerns. Portrays courage and resolve in dealing with being gay...and so manyother issues.

Cant wait to see what is next from his auhor.

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### **Lauraadriana says**

It's really more like **1.5 Stars** since I managed to finish it.

First thing, this book read more like a really promising rough draft than an actual book that I would be happy to pay \$5.99 for. The editing was ATROCIOUS. BAD just BADDD. I actually went back to check if it was self-published. It is not, it is through Rebel Ink Press, I guess part of their rebellious spirit is rebelling against grammar rules.

The use of nouns in this book pretty much ruined my reading experience. The author overused the words "the goth" and "the jock" to refer to the main characters, it was ANNOYING. Please in the future, don't be afraid to use pronouns!

So about the story...Dom Sal is a high school JOCK in a town somewhere in the USA I presume, since at no point in the book there was any indication of where they were. He is very religious, he is also poor. Damion Adrik is a GOTH in this same high school, he is rich and he is super fucked up. They get assigned to work together for a history project and they start a relationship.

Dom, the jock, despite the fact that he is a Christian and believes homosexuality is an abomination persues this relationship with Damion, the goth, and Damion, the goth, despite the fact that he is suicidal and HATES EVERYONE most of all jocks is also willing to be with Dom, the jock. **SEE HOW ANNOYING NOUN OVERUSE IS!!**

See the thing is this story was shallow, the idea was good but there was no detail, NO DEPTH. I still don't know what the kids even looked like! I had no sense of how to picture them in my head, physically how they went together.

The Cutting. That was an issue for me. Damion was a cutter since his childhood, hurt himself when his feelings of anger or frustration overwhelmed him. Fair enough that is something a lot of teenagers deal with. Thing is I didn't think that it was written very well in this story. These types of subjects need to be written after lots of research and with A LOT of sensitivity and A LOT of respectfulness and I didn't sense any of that in this story, and the graphic description \*shakes head\* JUST NO!

I don't even know what happened with these boys, they were all over the place, I'm surprised they were even ealive by the end of the book with all the crazyness going on.

The parents were a MESS, the kids pretty much on their own, they were seniors in high school, but not once was there any mention of college. I do not know what the hell happened in this book. I really don't. The religion thing apparently was resolved at some point too, not sure when though.

There was no explicit sex, which makes me think this is supposed to be a Young Adult book, I'm not sure that teens should be reading this. The drug use and the self-destructiveness of Damion was in the book, but how he got better was not. I mean I have to assume he had to get professional help as fucked up as he was and that he wasn't just "healed" by the love of his seventeen year old boyfriend who grew up in a house with an alcoholic mother and a stepfather that threw him out for being gay.

This book needed like another 50 more rounds of editing before it made it to Amazon.

Can't really recommend this one.

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### **Manuela says**

I liked the core of the story, the relationship between the two main characters, the way Dom helped Damion with his issues and the way Damion ultimately found the strenght not just in Dom but in himself too. But the book suffers of a few problems. The first and biggest one to me is that the author often uses "the jock" and especially "the goth" for the two main characters. I can deal with it a few times, but after a while it becomes very distracting.

The second problem was the point of view: the story is mostly told in alternate third person point of views of Damion and Dom, but sometimes the two POV shifts so quickly and repeatedly and confused me as to which one I was reading. Plus, there are some random parts that are told from the point of views of other characters. The final problem is that I wasn't entirely happy with the way things were developed in the last part of the book. I think the story lost something there in terms of realism.

But overall, in spite of those problems, I did enjoy the book and I'm glad I read it.

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### **Macky says**

I did want to like this novel but unfortunately I just couldn't, it was full of angry , destructive and ugly natured characters and was overloaded with so many depressive subjects that it became harder and harder to wade through the book. I practically forced myself to finish the book but it was hard going in the end and there were big chunks that I glossed through just to get there, I think I was trying to see if there was any light to be found but if there was I didn't see it! Because of the nature of the book I couldn't even bring myself to sympathise or like the two main protags, they both had major issues but after a while I found myself not

caring and I should have!

I could see the direction and style of book that the author wanted it to be and in her defense is obviously tackling some serious issues but in doing so has forgotten that to make a story interesting and readable there has to be a balance of light and dark, some humour to balance out the sadness, some poignancy instead of all the harshness and the odd 'nice but quirky' character to counteract the angst ridden ones. There is also a slightly weird religious undertone that underlies some of the characters, and that doesn't work for me either but in that case each to their own, I don't not believe but I'm not particularly religious.

One other thing that is a pet peeve with me is when authors will insist on giving their characters monikers like "the jock", "the goth", "the driver" referring to them as that instead of using their names!

Overall this would be a 2.5\* because there is nothing wrong with the writing and the intention. Who knows this could be a 5\* rating for someone else, just not for me.

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## **The FountainPenDiva, Old school geek chick and lover of teddy bears says**

Dear Author,

Goths are NOT all like Damion. Yes, we sometimes do wear all black, and tend to live in our own heads. Considering the dreck all around us, sometimes our imaginations are a safer place to be. We are not a bunch of death-obsessed, anti-social, satan-worshipping psychopaths. Believe it or not, there are Christian Goths! And lastly, Marilyn Manson IS NOT GOTH! He has made that fact *perfectly* clear and yet even now people still link him to the subculture. I'd have more respect for an author who actually KNOWS what goth music consists of (and it's a lot more diverse than most people realize). I would have rated this book higher had there been a mention of Siouxsie and the Banshees, Bauhaus or Sisters of Mercy.

Drown had the building blocks of a great story and in spite of the character fail, I actually cared about Dom and Damion (oh my goth, so typical but what do you expect). Dom's soul-searching was quite poignant and I'm certain mirrors the real life struggle of being both Christian and gay. That was one of the reasons I didn't just give this story an automatic fail. The other reason was the cover was really nice. Too bad the book didn't quite measure up.

What drove me stark-raving batshit was the endless use of "the goth" or "the jock" when describing the main characters: "the GOTH said this" or "the JOCK said that". How about just writing, "Damion said..." or "Dom said..."? Oh and just for diversity's sake, there was Chance's girlfriend Angela better known as "*the Latina*". I'm sort of surprised there was no "the black guy" tossed in.

I don't mind the lack of explicit scenes because they're not always necessary. Damion was pretty self-destructive, but what can one expect with messed-up parents like his. Damion was pretty much on his way to his own personal hell having been the child who wasn't like his deceased brother Adi and lacking any support from his overachieving parental units. Still, I managed a modicum of sympathy for their plight though I hated their behavior as well. Losing a child is extremely difficult and that had a lot more to do with Damion's behavior than his being a goth, but one wouldn't know it.

Finally\*\*\*spoiler alert\*\*\*How do you let the guys who beat up and verbally abused Damion in the parking lot just get away with what they did? Seriously? There was just no reasonable resolution. No, HEA's aren't



necessary either, but if the story is an HFN--Happily For Now--at least the loose ends should be tied up in a more satisfactory fashion.

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### **Firenz says**

[suicide attempt (hide spoiler)]

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### **Micha says**

I like the subject, just not the way it's written.

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### **John Sontag says**

This is one of the most beautifully written books I have ever read. Waves and currents and pools of exquisite prose form a compelling tale of two young men from vastly different backgrounds. What they ultimately find together is love and healing, and a future together.

Dominic is an athlete, the high school's star quarterback. He has everything. He has the admiration of the entire school. He has a beautiful girlfriend and the rest of the school worships him. He is academically gifted. But he comes from a broken home, living in poverty with a cruel stepfather.

Damion is a goth who has secrets. His family is rich, but uncaring. He uses drugs, drives his Jaguar too fast, and takes pride in being totally outcast and friendless. He also self mutilates himself to escape the pain of a lost brother, and to somehow cope with his own life's agonies.

One day, a history class assignment brings the two together, in an unlikely assignment. They must partner on an assignment. Part of the assignment is to get to know each other. What follows is a very compelling and truly unique love story. But it is a story filled with pain, regret, sorrow, and a real depth of emotion. Every page is filled with anxiety, frustration, and revelation. There is nothing trivial to be found in this story of mutual discovery.

The author takes his time in building his main and secondary characters to such a degree that they begin to become real. Alex Jones has a very special talent for knowing how to construct a really engaging and realistic story that captures the reader's heart and soul. I'm sorry to say that this is that rare and special time when no one seems to see what I took away from this story. I wish it could have had a wider audience, because it is truly deserving of one. Ms. Jones is in a class of writers that ranks among the finest. It is our loss that we have not heard more from this gifted author.

I can not say enough about how this story made me feel the heartache, the terror and the despair of its main characters.

Lengthy enough to be a complete novel, not one of the 200 page romances we usually find, the story covers a great deal of current problems facing the emerging generation of the LGBT community. Bigotry, fear, self loathing and hate fight against love, understanding and acceptance in this most worthy story of a relationship

between two star-crossed lovers. Overall, a very satisfying experience.

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