



A Man Like Mac

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When Keely Wilson turns to Mac McCandless for help, an intense but unacknowledged attraction between them is rekindled. First, though, Keely has to accept a devastating change in Mac's life and face the loss of the career she mistakenly believes defines her as a person. A Man Like Mac is a powerful story of courage, acceptance, and the ability of love to heal the wounded heart.

A Man Like Mac Details

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Author : Fay Robinson

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From Reader Review A Man Like Mac for online ebook

Janet says

A day late but hopefully not a dollar short: this is my "how did this end up on my TBR shelf" book for July 2012. It was recommended by Ridley who blogged about protags w/disabilities for Dear Author. It was an unusual choice for me to read because I don't usually read the Harlequin Superromance line and I also shy away from books about folks that are out of my frame of reference. From the back cover: *As Keely Wilson discovers, you don't often meet a man like Mac. He's overcome adversity and met challenges that could have destroyed him. He's not only handsome, determined and sexy, he knows exactly what matters in life. And to Mac, Keely matters...*"

Mac is would-be Olympic runner Keely Wilson's former track coach. Keely was involved in an accident and to help get herself back into fighting trim, she tracks down her former coach. She is surprised, ok, stunned, to find that he's in a wheelchair (the result of a shooting). What struck me from the first page was how much Mac and Keely had in common -- although Mac was way further down the path of realistically assessing his life options. Keely held onto her Olympic dream for a long long time and it was heart-breaking to see her come to terms with her options for the future. She was never going to run competitively again but there was a lot more in her life, if she would only realize it.

I've never read a book that was as earthy, frank and humourous about what a disabled person could and couldn't do -- somehow Fay Robinson wove the pertinent details into the plot without info-dumping or voyeurism. Very impressive. This was not a book about a gorgeous guy in a wheelchair and a gorgeous gal with a leg injury. It was a book about real people sizing up themselves and each other. We all have limitations, some from birth, some from a life-accident and some from adult-onset diseases. We all deserve stories with a happy ever after -- they shouldn't just be for "perfect" young 'uns.

Excellent book -- I'm glad I took it off my TBR.

Erin Burns says

This book is frequently found on lists about disabled heroes, particularly on positively rendered disabled heroes. It was published in 2000 and is not actually released as an eBook nor is it currently in print. While there are plenty of used copies for very cheap, isn't it better to be able to get things for free? So, I found a copy of this on OpenLibrary. It's available to anyone for check out with a free OpenLibrary account. There is only one copy so if you are looking for it, you may have a bit of a wait, but still, free is free.

So first, practical considerations. This is a scanned copy of an older book, so you will definitely want to read in browser or download the PDF version. It's well scanned and clear to read, but the color of the pages and some slight text fading is likely to make OCR text recognition for the epub version rather dodgy.

As for the story itself, it's pretty good. Mac agrees to train Keely following a devastating accident despite the fact that he knows she'll never run professionally again. Keely isn't a particularly sympathetic character, so that balances out the rather heart breaking situation so this isn't an overly saccharine book. Mac isn't perfect either, he's a little too irritatingly self-sacrificing and a bit too manipulative with Keely. He also has some of

the worst timing known to man. I enjoyed how prosaically their respective disabilities were treated both in general life and in their intimate lives. It's discussed very frankly and in fact, there's one extremely humorous situation where Keely does something completely crazy to make Mac feel better when something embarrassing happens. There's also no magic cure for either of them. They certainly get their happily ever after, and their own version of miracles (It is a Harlequin Superromance after all), but they're practical and plausible sorry if miracle, which is refreshing in a romance novel.

If I were strictly rating this based on writing style and characterization I'd probably rate this 3 stars, but the deft handling of the disability gives added depth to what would otherwise be a somewhat mediocre book so I'm giving it a solid 4 stars.

Cross-posted

Lisa Birch says

My first time reading a Superromance, and I thought this book would be filled with conflict trying to draw it out for many more pages than necessary. Fortunately, I was wrong!

The book opens with Keely being treated in emergency doctors who didn't expect she would live, let alone, walk again. Soon, Keely is chasing down Mac, her old coach from college. Both of them had feelings for each other in the old days, by Keely's romantic notions are dashed when she discovers Mac is in a wheelchair.

There's plenty of conflict (mostly internal), and enough outside drama to keep the pages turning. I really enjoyed this book and learned a lot from it. Fay Robinson has also done some impressive research.

Rebecca says

I started reading this book, got bored, skipped to the end, got interested again, skipped back to the middle, read through to the end, went back to the beginning and read through to the middle again.

It's a M&B, so it was completely possible to read it like this and still know what was going on with the story - at no time did I find myself confused or wondering what was going on.

I think if I'd stuck it out for a few more pages at the beginning I might have gotten hooked in the proper order. This is well-written, easy to read, deals with non-typical romance subject matter (handicaps, sexual relations with disabled people, giving up on your dreams, HAE that aren't what the characters wanted, but are what they needed).

I don't read many M&B these days but every now and then I like to revisit one of my favourites, and A Man Like Mac will be going onto that list.

NTE says

Pro - both the hero and the heroine are dealing with disabilities, and both are dealing with them differently - almost as if people with disabilities weren't some homogenous group and had individual personalities and reactions to things? Or as if your relationship to your self and your body would change or evolve over time? Who'd have thunk? Anyways, I liked both of the characters (even though the heroine was edging close to the TSTL line, at times), and felt like their relationship grew in a pretty realistic way.

Con - I know that authors have no control over the cover art, but I'd just like to point out that not only is it a ridiculously cheesy portrait of a couple, but, in a book where there are two main characters with mobility issues there is a very clear picture of a staircase in the background. What the hell is that about? Stairs with a lift would've been nice - would've been, you know, true to the story and all. Or no stairs, that could work too... why are they there? Sorry: pet peeve...

Good book though, for the most part.

Selina says

I really liked this book! This was a very realistic romance, which I think is difficult to find. They manage to get together about halfway through the book (and this isn't a spoiler- it is a romance; of course they get together!), and then have to deal with some of the starker realities of being in a relationship. Of course, some of their difficulties are more pronounced, but overall, quite realistic.

I found it difficult to like Keely in the beginning, and that is where the 4 stars comes from instead of 5. She seemed so stubborn, which is fine, but her reaction to Mac and then her blind stubbornness grated on my nerves.

I really enjoyed this book. Definitely not fluffy, but great to see a realistic depiction of a relationship!

Jane Stewart says

Nice story but not great.

It was nice to see how guys in wheelchairs date, dance, have sex, and do other things. It was a good story. It was interesting. Sexual content: moderate.

CAUTION SPOILER:

This was different from most romance novels because Mac was in a wheelchair. After she sees him, Keely wants to avoid having a romantic relationship, but later she falls in love with him.

Amber says

Well written love story with a good premise. Humorous and truthful. I like that Mac wasn't the only disabled

character, but they should have lots of healthy disabled/non-disabled relationships. I didn't care for the lead girl so much, but I didn't dislike her enough for it to ruin the story.

Jennifer Leighton says

Very unique. The heroine is an injured runner who wants to train to race again and her coach is the hero. He's 12 years older than her, secretly in love with her, and in a wheelchair. A 5 star read. It won a RITA for best first book also.

Saly says

I was glad to find this book at UBS but be warned this book is not for you if you are looking for fluff. Mac was the best hero ever, who gave up his dreams of running to raise his siblings at the age of 22 & then went into coaching where he met Keely who wanted to be a runner, he taught her for four years of college & had a thing for her, not that he did anything about it.

The book opens up with Keely in an accident & then months later when she is still trying to go against what the doctor said, that she won't be able to competitively run again. She knows one man who can help her, her old coach Mac so she goes to see him & then is shocked to find that he is a paraplegic. Her reaction to him at the start is to scream & in the start she can't look at him or his legs though she doesn't have a problem with any other men like that, later on when she confronts the issue head-on, realizes it is because she cares for him & is attracted to him as he is.

Mac got shot while trying to save someone & he went through rejection & a whole host of emotions before accepting his new reality & now he's happy with it since it is what he has. He helps Keely get comfortable around him & he agrees to coach her because he knows that she cannot run again & needs someone there when she accepts this.

Keely's whole life & identity was tied around being a runner, it was her salvage with her parent's crappy marriage & something that made her father proud. I really disliked her attitude towards her mother & the habit of looking at her father as a saint, when he falls from his pedestal & she looks beyond her memories she realizes how despicable she has been to her mother & I was glad that Mac told her off about this.

I also liked how Keely was sensitive to what Mac could do & not do about making love. They couldn't do it conventionally since he couldn't have an erection but still their love life was satisfying & I liked how they gradually progressed to this stage & how Keely shows him that she accepts him for who he is & even shouts at him when he questions his own worth(RE: his job).

Of course when she realizes that she cannot run again it is an emotional moment & she runs away, lost, not sure what to do but she does make it up to Mac. I liked the ending as well, how they mentioned her struggles to get pregnant.

You often read about books where heroine's have unrequited love in this case it is the hero & he is the best guy ever, sweet, sensitive macho, a true package.

A pretty deep book.

Ridley says

For Olympic runner Keely Wilson, all it took was an instant for her entire life to change irrevocably. While out for a run a car runs a stop sign and hits her, leaving her in critical condition and doctors telling her she'll never run again. For Keely, however, running isn't just something she does, it's who she *is*. Determined to prove the doctors wrong, she heads to her alma mater and Mac McCandless. If anyone could get her back into competition form again, it's her former coach - once she recovers from seeing him in a wheelchair.

Mac takes her on against his own better judgement. He's seen the doctors' reports and medical records and knows she'll never be able to run competitively again. But Keely has always been a weakness for him, as he was a little bit in love with her when she was a student, and he can't quite fight the desire to spend this time with her. Besides, if any running coach is in a position to help her both with running and accepting changed circumstances, it's him.

While this is in essence an issue novel about disability, it goes about it in a completely accessible manner. It refrains from any long winded info dumps or lectures and lets the story tell itself. Not only that, but it's mostly Keely's story about her running and her life. Mac's paraplegia is not the book's gimmick by any means. They're two people balancing each other out. Mac encouraging Keely to find a way to acceptance so she can move forward and Keely pushing Mac to reclaim the racing dreams he gave up when he had to raise his siblings after his parents died, albeit as a wheelchair racer.

I loved all of the characters in this book. Mac's good friend, next-door neighbor and fellow cripple Alan is as flirty and carefree as Mac is reserved and grounded. Alan's outrageous wife Vicki, with her unironic beehive and pronounced Georgia drawl, had me laughing out loud with her frank cripple sex talks that scandalized Keely. Keely herself is a complex character. She's a mess of mother problems, daddy hero worship and identity issues. Mac is there to help her work these issues out, even taking her to task at a point in the book where I wanted to strangle her myself. Definitely a strong character focus to this book.

As I'm a tough critic when it comes to disabled protagonists, I have to say I loved the treatment Robinson gives it here. She doesn't sugar coat any of it, yet the novel never loses the romance or heat. Mac was proof that great sex encompasses more than just the old in out, as he truly feels nothing below the waist, and that the body's greatest sex organ is the one between its ears.

In fact, the novel has perhaps the ballsiest thing a romance heroine has ever done. As the hero is wallowing in self-loathing after wetting the bed during the night, she turns it around on him, asking if he'd be disgusted with her if she were the wetter. When he insists it's irrelevant, since he was the wetter in reality, she evens the score. Probably the most shocking, hilarious and somehow rather sweet thing I'd ever read.

I did have some issue with the end. Robinson seemed to want to play Santa and grant their every wish in the last 20 pages or so. This resulted in some rather convenient and unbelievable events. Since they happen after a satisfactorily realistic resolution to the main conflicts, they don't harm the book all that much.

In summary, it's the anti-Phantom Waltz. It wasn't perfect, but it was an achievement in that it's a realistic look at disability, complete with no boners at all and bed wetting, while still being completely romantic with an optimistic HEA. I was impressed and touched at the same time. I'd highly recommend it to anyone who

likes something a little different.

Renée Dahlia says

This book is nearly two decades old, so perhaps that is the reason why some of the language around wheelchair users grated for me. On the plus side, this book did make me want to read more books written by authors who are disabled (own voices) rather than this book written by an abled writer. The research done by this author is great, and issues of labeling aside, it dealt with disability in a fair fashion. The second half of the book was much better than the first from this point of view.

However, I struggled to like the heroine in this book. She often came across as brattish and self-centred, and it made the romance uncertain for me. Yes, she does have a crisis at the end, and apparently sorts herself out, but it seemed rushed.

The hero was wonderful, probably too forgiving, but also kept to his principles when it mattered.

Carrie says

A Man Like Mac is a both very different, and very much the same, as other romance novels. The fairly typical romance story is made unique by a hero who is a paraplegic. If Mac were not in a wheelchair, you'd still have a story, albeit a much less interesting one. Mac is Keely's former college running coach who agrees to oversee her recovery training after she was hit by a car. Keely is determined to return to racing, while Mac is determined to support her while she tries, all the while knowing she has little chance of a comeback. Keely is single-minded and independent, and somewhat commitment phobic. Mac is fighting his attraction to Keely, knowing her future plans won't include him. Secondary stories involving Keely's family and some staff problems for Mac help round out the basic romance-novel plot.

But that's *not* the whole story. Mac was injured four years earlier, leaving him without the use of his legs. He's worked hard to adapt and grow, and has made his life a success, complete with a promotion at the university, good friends, and wheelchair sports. Robinson does a superb job incorporating Mac's disability seamlessly into the story. Using secondary characters along with well-written dialog, the author informs the reader about many aspects of life for those in wheelchairs, including the challenges of a physical relationship.

This isn't a perfect book. At times the writing was uneven and the romance story felt cliched. Also, the secondary story involving the other coach felt forced and uneven. Keely often acts like a spoiled child throughout the first three-fourths of the book and at times I had trouble understanding Mac's attraction to her beyond the physical. But ultimately, this is a story about growing up, letting go, and making the most of what you have. Keely eventually finds her footing and I was able to warm to her.

Megan Jordan says

I received this book through a book share. It was actually an enjoyable read and a believable love story. The treatment of both characters' injuries was realistic and not over the top. Fun and fast read.

Bianca Chiriac Suciu says

One of the best books i've read lately. Very realistic. I would recomend this book to everyone.
