



## **By Degrees**

*Elle Casey*

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**NEW YORK TIMES and USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR, ELLE CASEY, brings readers the New Adult Romance BY DEGREES.**

Celebrities all suffer from the same disease. I call it the create-your-own-reality disease. Most of them start out normal, like you and me, but somewhere along the way they lose sight of up and down, left and right, and then eventually right and wrong. It's my job to fix that.

Who hires me, Scarlett Barnes, otherwise known as 'The Normalizer'? Agents usually. Producers sometimes. They know they can trust me to be professional, discreet, and above all, not personally involved with my clients. I come in, I take over their lives, and I get them back on track. Help them remember what it's like to be an average Joe.

My latest job acquisition? His friends call him Tear-It-Up Kilgour, but I just call him Tarin - lead singer and guitarist for the band By Degrees. I have thirty days to get his butt back on planet earth before he loses his record deal, his movie contract, and possibly even his life. I've never failed so far, and I don't plan on failing this time either, even if Tarin has other ideas.

*Content Warning: This is a New Adult Romance, perhaps not suitable for younger readers due to foul language, sexual situations, drug use, and obnoxious rock-n-roll musicians.*

**A message from Elle about this book:** Every time I read another story about a Hollywood star or famous musician going off the deep end, I wonder how they got there. How it was that all the people around them weren't able to or willing to stop it from happening. It must be easy when a person has more money than he or she can ever spend and people hanging around are leeches, for a person's view of reality to get really skewed; and that's a real shame for these talented people who have so much to share with the world. For years I've imagined this great job I could have where I'd hang out with celebrities who've lost track of the real world (the place where my readers and I live) and get them re-oriented, re-focused on what matters ... clean the garbage out of their heads and their lives. Then of course, I couldn't get that thought out of my head until I wrote a book about it, so here it is! By Degrees. The title of the book is actually the slogan of the Scottish clan Kilgour, something I learned on a trip I made there in the year this book was written.

## By Degrees Details

Date :

ISBN :

Author : Elle Casey

Format :

Genre : Romance, New Adult, Contemporary, Contemporary Romance, Music, Musicians

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## From Reader Review By Degrees for online ebook

### Val Shameless ?? Steamy Reads ?? says

This was 5-star for me until the ending. I really liked Tarin and Scarlett. But I'm sorry, after all they went through he ditches her for days without a word because he instead chooses to go and play dad to his dead druggie ex-girlfriend's baby? Just no.

Call me a bitch, but once he found out he wasn't the child's father, I don't understand why he would willingly financially support a woman who would say she was pregnant with his baby when she knows he might not be the father cause she's a groupie skank that sleeps around and wants to bag herself a rock star. And he agrees to sign on as the father on the birth certificate? No.

Yes, I get that children are innocent and all that jazz. But the minute he found out he wasn't the father he should have been peace out. If any of us normal folk had a guy friend in Tarin's position, we would call him an idiot for doing anything other than that.

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### Mary says

*"By degrees is a way to get past any obstacle. It's also the way things can change in your life and you can become something you would never imagine for yourself. By degrees...little by little."*

I honestly don't know if it's just me or if the NA books I've been recently reading just don't really have what it takes to blow me away and captivate me. This was a book by the same author who wrote **Shine Not Burn**, which I completely devoured and so this was an auto-read for me. So straight to the point: I liked the story but it just didn't pull me in as much as I wanted it to.

This was definitely a different kind of rocker romance. For one, it got me so emotional because a huge aspect of this story was so close to what happened with Cory Monteith and all those who have lost their way because of drugs and just never came back. Scarlett Barnes is known as *The Normalizer* because she's someone who successfully normalizes a celebrity whose life has almost gone to ruins because of booze, drugs, women, excess partying, and everything in between. Tarin Kilgour is her latest "project" and is someone who closely resembles and reminds her of the one man she wasn't able to save.

The story went quite as expected and the author did deliver on writing in a very addicting way. I loved the small moments in between when Tarin would shed his cocky and asshole-ish demeanor and go soft and more human once in a while in front of Scarlett. The supporting characters were also quite endearing, especially Scott, Jack, and Tarin's bodyguards. But of course, no one really gets an easy happy ever after in their world and both Scarlett and Tarin are rocked by toxic people around them as well as the secrets they've buried deep inside.

Thank God though that neither Tarin nor Scarlett ended up being so annoying because everything that happened even the angsty part of the story were well justified and well constructed within the story. I wasn't really expecting that ending and surprisingly, I was actually okay with it. It was unconventional but living in

the crazy world of fame, fortune, and rock 'n roll... there's really no such thing as *normal*, right? Needless to say, this was a nice enough story and a different kind of rocker romance for all the rocker romance junkies like me.

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### **Christine says**

[I love the whole bad boy, man whore, but the heroine has to be number one and when your skanky, druggy ex-girlfriend comes by and says "you're the daddy" but later you find out you are not the daddy, but you feel that you are obligated well then, that is honorable. However, don't treat the heroine poorly in the

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### **Wanderlust says**

Loved this! I must try to review it later

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### **Dee Montoya says**

#### **4.5 Hilarious and Entertaining Stars\*\*\*\***

Having loved *Shine Not Burned* sooooo freaking much, I was very excited to read another book by the talented Elle Casey, and once again she delivered. *By Degrees* is a funny, sexy and smart read that now has a place on my favorite books shelf.

The story plot was interesting and unique; I mean I've never heard of anybody with a job title as the Normalizer, so that was enough to get my attention from the start, all the characters were funny and extremely lovable ( specially Scott, he was my second fave) and this book was true to its title as the story was building the excitement *By Degrees*.

Tarin was the total Rock Star package, he was every bit of bad boy, tattooed, sexy and very passionate musician and our heroine Scarlett was incredible. Having lost her Rock Star boyfriend from a drug overdose two years prior; Scarlett now works as the Normalizer, which basically means fixing the lives of those musicians who are drowning due to high fame. She gets hired by Agents or/and Record Labels to help artists quit drugs and alcohol, get rid of all the bad influence people in their lives and get them back on the right track, and Tarin Kilgour is her next project.

The book started a little slow for me but once it started to pick up after a few chapters it was one hell of a fun ride, I was laughing and swooning like if it was on sale, and then out of the blue almost at the end it got so intense and dramatic that my heart was racing and I loved it!

I highly recommend it! This is one of those books I know I'll re-read in the future when looking for something romantic, funny and uplifting...

**I'll Love you 4eva Tarin Kilgour** (yep! I'm totally his groupie)

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## **Jacqueline's Reads says**

**I LOVE Elle, yes, I'm on a first name basis with her, we are best buds and by best buds, I mean, I stalk her. LOL Anyhow, I love Shine Not Burn and I need to read this ASAP!!! I'm always in a mood for a good laugh.**

*Scarlett Barnes has another name she goes by sometimes. People call her The Normalizer when they need her to take care of a certain kind of problem. A certain kind of Hollywood problem.*

*Celebrities all suffer from the same disease. I call it the create-your-own-reality disease. Most of them start out normal, like you and me, but somewhere along the way they lose sight of up and down, left and right, and then eventually right and wrong. It's my job to fix that. Who hires me? Agents usually. Producers sometimes. Occasionally a spouse or other concerned family member (although I'm usually skeptical of those calls, but that's another story). They know they can trust me to be professional, discrete, and above all, not personally involved with my clients. I come in, I take over their lives, and I get them back on track. Help them remember what it's like to be an average Joe. I attribute my success to my take-no-prisoner's attitude. I don't have time for games or playing around. I've closed down every job in thirty days or less, and no one, not even the most outrageous celebrity screw-up will ever change that, hard as they might try. Case in point, my latest job acquisition: his friends call him Tear-It-Up Kilgour, but I just call him Tarin - lead singer and guitarist for the band By Degrees. I have thirty days to get his butt back on planet earth before he loses his record deal, his movie contract, and possibly even his life. I've never failed so far, and I don't plan on failing this time either, even if Tarin has other ideas.*

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## **Jess-i-ca ~Sometimes a Gif Witch~ says**

[ The baby's name was Geneva? I mean.....Geneva?? Where is the baby's actual father? Doesn't he have a right to know about his kid? They basically are stealing a c

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## **Sera ~ Catty Reader says**

4.5-5 star read right until the end. Terrible, TERRIBLE ending. I feel cheated. Horrible ending to an otherwise great story. I understand wanting to do things differently, but please let it make sense at least. I may also be shocked when you run me over with a truck, but also most likely dead. Like this story. Shocking? Yes. Fun? No.

It sucks even more because the rest of the book was really good. Oh well. At least I enjoyed most of it.

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## **Angela Bee Bee says**

Got tissue? Lea Michele sings, "I've got a new beginning, I will fly, like a cannonball."  
<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=H-KhJmh074A>

*Freedom*

*I let go of fear and the peace came quickly*

*Freedom*

*I was in the dark and then it hit me*

*I chose suffering and pain in the falling rain*

*I know, I gotta get out into the world again*

This book was perfect timing for me.

When I was feeling disenchanted with reading..this was my lifesaver.

To feel the magic of a hot sweet musician, wanting to just linger and re-read the sex scenes.

The sad awful truth that fame is a torture device, too much for beautiful young people.

And God, the beautiful ending. I was so prepared to hate it, but I adored it. Perfect closure for these two, great continuity, subtle yet all there.

Total lady hard-on for Elle Casey.

And I don't even care what anybody thinks, I loved Tarin....even if his name looks like Train.

He's got a bit of Kellan's magic with boyishness and dark intensity mixed in and sexy, just yep. Yep.

Whatever this woman puts in her coffee, I dig it.

I've got a few favorite inked rockers, mix these two together to make the perfect Tarin;

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## **Devon Hartford says**

I'm impressed every time I read a new book by Elle Casey. She is consistently hilarious, crafts believable and lovable characters, and takes me into a world that I want to inhabit. I love the dynamics between her characters, and the situations they end up in. There's always tons of exciting drama, and heart-wrenching emotion. By Degrees was a twist on the rock star romance, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I look forward to Elle Casey's next book. And the next, and the next, and the next...I'm hooked.

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**\*\*\*?Yasmine?\*\*\* says**

## **5 STARS FOR MY NEW FAVE AUTHOR!**

Totally loved this awesome romance.

In the beginning, we are introduced to professional ball-buster Scarlett Barnes. Her reputation precedes her.

She's dubbed 'The Normalizer', a consultant to the stars, the ones that have gone off the rails that is. Agents, managers, friends, family, contact her and hire her to take care of these out of control Hollywood Celebrities. She's hard hitting, straight forward, informative and intelligent. She performs almost military style operations, taking over the clients lives and rehabilitating them into normalcy.

*'I hit strong and I hit quick, but then I pull away and let things settle out. Eventually, he'll figure it out for himself. Hopefully, he'll do it before his client ends up dead.'*

Her new client is Tarin Kilgour, lead singer and guitarist for the band By Degrees. He's aggressive, confrontational, drugged up, whoring... and in general, fucked up. And Scarlett has 30 days to kick his ass into gear.

Scarlett spent the best years of her young life loving Austin, when he became a A-list rock star, he soon started doing drugs, acting up, getting drunk, much like Tarin is now. She's still grieving over Austin, feeling guilty that she never helped him get himself back on track.

*'There were so many signs I ignored. Or maybe I felt powerless to control them. Either way, it was no secret Austin was in trouble and I didn't do anything to stop the train wreck from happening. I was too weak and afraid. But not anymore. Now I am in complete control. I will not let Tarin down.'*

Scarlett's ball-buster exterior just about covers her broken insides, she cannot talk about Austin without breaking down, her heart has been shattered, she watched him destroy himself and she didn't act. Tarin brings back all those feelings, he's also incredibly hot, and she's finds it very hard to work with him.

*'He looks sexy. Lost. Tragic, but on the edge of greatness again. I want to take a picture of just him like this and save it in my head forever. An energy hums out from him that inspires me to do whatever I need to do so he can be all he is again.'*

**I loved this book, Scarlett was interesting, there was a lot of sides to her, she's fiesty and tough, but also very sad and funny. She really made this book for me, her and the side characters were great, there's lots of witty dialogue between her and Austin's younger brother Scott, who's almost like her side-kick. Tarin is a typical cocky tortured rock star, but through the book we see is real person shining through. The end was tragic and wonderful. I'd really love to see a book about Scott.**

*Writing style: 9/10*

*Characters: 9/10*

*Romance: 8/10*

*Hotness: 9/10*

*Ending: 9/10*

*My star ratings:*

*1\* Complete trash*

*2\* Waste of time really, but I carried on for some reason*

*3\* Half decent, sometimes down to personal preferences*

*4\* Could read this again, only a little thing is missing, maybe more humour or romance etc...*

*5\* Would read this again and again, unique story, adore this author*

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## **Janee says**

### **Warning**

This was pretty harsh reality on what people go through with death. Sounds morbid I know, but Scarlett took two years to get over her guilty of Austin death. She finds the connections with people that have the same guilt over Austin. Tear jerker read, fair warning.

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### **\*J\* Too Many Books Too Little Time says**

BR with my BBB Jessica!!!

This was my second Elle Casey book, the first being Shine Not Burn--which I loved. So for me, this one was not quite as good. But I did like it. I think the thing I like most about Elle Casey's books is that the storyline is unique and different. I hate to compare it to Shine Not Burn because they are two completely different books but I did find myself missing elements from Shine in By Degrees--such as the humor.

Shine had such great banter amongst the characters. I unfortunately found a lot of the dialogue in By Degrees to be a bit on the cheesy side. I also thought the story developed a bit on the slow side only to have so much happen in the end. I loved the premise, I thought it had great potential...just for me the execution wasn't quite there.

Scarlett lost her long time love, Austin (who was a musician), to drugs. As a result, she has made it her mission to help other musicians who have found themselves having the same problems. Her latest client is rockstar Tarin Kilgour. In the process of helping Tarin, Scarlett discovers that he is connected to her past and to Austin. She is drawn to Tarin and she's not sure if it's as a result of his connection to Austin or for other reasons.

Over time, Tarin and Scarlett develop feelings for each other. But when the connection between Tarin and Austin is discovered it stops things before they can even get started. There are a whole boat-load of other obstacles preventing them from being together as well--a tour, loads of guilt, crazy stalkers, old clients, exes.

Tarin and Scarlett eventually decide to give a relationship a go--but it has to be long distance because Tarin goes on tour. Towards the end of the tour, the story takes a crazy turn (at about the 92% mark) and I really didn't care for the direction it went. I definitely wasn't expecting it. I really thought Tarin and Scarlett had enough going against them up to this point that it was almost overkill. Before they can overcome one obstacle they were thrown another one.

And for such a major thing to happen (view spoiler) before they really even have a chance to have a real relationship--one where they actually in the same town, not doing it long distance. I just didn't feel like their relationship was developed enough to warrant them suddenly becoming (view spoiler). I would have liked to have seen more of the relationship development. After they've both worked through their issues. Not have them thrown in to this extreme situation.

Overall, this one just didn't really work for me. I am a fan of this author though and will definitely continue to check out her future books. This was a standalone with a HEA.

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## **Sbell says**

No. When I started this book, I was really excited because it sounded like it was so totally my thing. There were parts of this book that were GREAT. I loved Tarin and all of his messed up ways. I really liked Scarlett and her relationship with Scott. Scarlett seemed to be really together, she was mature and knew what she wanted, I like that in my female characters. And then, WTF....

### **SPOILERS:...**

So I am supposed to believe and embrace that Tarin basically abandons Scarlett with no contact, no voicemail, no texts, NOTHING. For weeks. Then he has her taken to a location where he drops the bomb on her that he is going to raise his dead ex-girlfriend's baby. And oh, he also had her put his name on the birth certificate because he didn't want the child to not have a "father" on the certificate. He basically told her hey, I know I haven't spoken to you about this and did not consult you with ANY of this eventhough we were planning our lives together, but if you want me I am a package deal...with my dead girlfriends baby. Then this strong, independent woman says sure! and they ride off into the sunset strolling the baby.

This just did NOT work for me, and I hate it. Because like I said it had moments of greatness. The ending was not believable and very rushed.

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## **Katie(babs) says**

By Degrees by Elle Casey has a great premise, featuring a strong female protagonist and the celebrity rock star lifestyle setting that has become very popular this year. I was riveted for the first 1/4 of this story, but then I started seeing cracks in the plot, including the characters' motivations. First of all, I don't understand why this is a New Adult. It's isn't. It's a contemporary romance because the heroine who's 25, runs her own company and doesn't have any traits that a New Adult heroine embodies. Just because a main character is 25, doesn't mean it's a New Adult. I honestly think Elle categorized By Degrees as a New Adult in order to grab readers who enjoy reading this sub-genre. Sorry, readers, this isn't a New Adult, and you'll be very disappointed. But if you like contemporary romance, and can suspend your disbelief, then Be Degrees may be the book for you.

The heroine Scarlett acts much older than her age. I really feel this story would be much better if she, and the rock star hero Tarin were aged by a few years because many things here don't add up with them. Scarlett is called in to fixed celebrities who are out of control and on a path to destruction that could lead to their career ending, or their death. The reason she does this is because the love of her life, her rock star boyfriend she knew since she was a kid, who died from a drug overdose two years prior to the event here, makes her want to help others who are close to ending up like him. In less than two years Scarlett becomes this very skilled professional, aka a fixer, everyone in the music industry, and I guess Hollywood, look to for help. It doesn't come across as believable at all. Perhaps if Scarlett was older and had a few more years of experience, it would be believable, but in this case it 's implausible. Also we're not given any real insight on Scarlett as a whole, regarding her past and why she is the way she is. Why and how does she get this amazing

professional experience? Nothing is explained. It's all told and not shown. I did like her strong personality, but when all is said and done, she comes across as too one-dimensional.

Tarin was more rounded, but the way he's portrayed doesn't make the reader sympathize with him or want him and Scarlett to get together. Tarin is a man slut lost in a drunken and drugged out world for no real reason. In less than two weeks, Scarlett falls for Tarin, faults and all (and he has many, unattractive faults), because he reminds her of her deceased rock star boyfriend. This doesn't endear me to their relationship or their chemistry Elle tries hard to show. It fails on the whole. I don't see why Scarlett would break her one rule- don't get sexually or emotionally involved with a client like she does with Tarin. A past client of hers, Jack, another rock star hottie shows up, who she has much better chemistry with her. Tarin and Scarlett together were DOA from the moment they locked eyes, and all their gushy lusty feelings exploding between them was bland.

More than half way through, this dragged to the point I almost DNFed. The ending is too pat and ridiculous because a major obstacle was removed, a death of a character, so Tarin and Scarlett can have their HEA.

By Degrees had a lot of promise but failed in so many ways. It's a forgettable read with too many head scratching moments for me that fail.

A pass.

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