



Heart in Hand

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Hockey RPF

Darryl had realized very early on that for better or worse, he would be linked to Aleksey Kuznetsov for the rest of his life. But he never expected anything like this.

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N.B. Two versions available: the public version with fictionalized names, and a private version only available to registered users of AO3.

Heart in Hand Details

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From Reader Review Heart in Hand for online ebook

Lauraadriana says

This book made me feel **Triumphant**...Like yeah the **Good Guys DO win sometimes and when they do...Well, IT'S FUCKING GLORIOUS it's what it is!**

First of all I can safely say this so far is the best Sports book I've read in this genre. Sure, it has stiff competition but still, it is fantastic. The scenes that are focused on hockey were great and most of all I seriously loved the reverence and respect that was given to the Spirit of sportsmanship, playing with pride and honor, being a team, understanding that there are things more important than individual glory...It was all SO well done.

But to the important stuff, the boys...In this book "Star" is spelled **O-V-I-E** What a character! Ovie he stole the show, my heart, and not a little bit of my friggin' sanity!!

Alex Ovechkin is together with Sidney Crosby undisputedly the the best in the NHL. He is a Russian powerhouse. He doesn't have an Olympic Gold Medal, and hasn't won the Stanley Cup, but he is the best there is, but so is Sidney, who actually has the trophies and medal to prove it.

They are rivals kind of, but since Sid has the trophies and Ovie REALLY wants them too, he asks Sid if they can practice together in the off season. They do, and Sid realizes that Ovie despite his loud and obnoxious ways is actually a great guy. They are so different Ovie flashy and fun and Sidney serious and methodical. Despite all that they become friends and end up having to keep that going for a show being filmed featuring the two of them...Things happen, a bet gets out of hand and well...Things progress. Sid had no clue what he's doing, Ovie is not very clear in what he wants, and that of course can only end in some major fuckery.

I cannot explain how much I loved this book. It was beautiful, seriously it was. It gave such an uplifting view of what people can be in the face of serious difficulties. How those who you least expect can show **FIERCE** bravery and love. That when it matters people will stand up for what is right and fair. The families, the teammates, friends in this book were amazing.

Those two men, oh they killed me slowly. Ovie's character was **COURAGE** and **DIGNITY** and Sidney was **FEAR** and **ATONEMENT**...Together they were **FORGIVING**, and willing to move forward when they go their chance...They got it all in the end, but they had to fight hard for it...Ovie the whole time, he was like a warrior and Sid, he hid, but he did what was right in a moment that mattered.

Damn I loved this book, and it's FREE!

Lenore says

I had no idea who Sidney Crosby and Alex Ovechkin were before reading this. Nor was I any ice hockey expert. To be honest I am still not interested in learning more about either the players or the sport. Heck, it took me some twenty years and a very patient and persistent husband to understand what an "offside" is. And that's football. Do they have offsides in ice hockey?

But I digress.

This reads like a young adult story, really. Very light to no explicit content and two heroes thinking and

behaving like teenagers. From what I gather, the RL players are not much older anyway. It's a single POV story (Sidney's) but that's OK because seeing Ovechkin through Sidney's eyes makes him come across funnier.

This is also the cheesiest story I've read in a long time. If only coming out were so easy. If only reality TV producers were so considerate. If only people (and celebrities at that) decided to go ahead and do it because of some touching letters from some kids. If only bosses and colleagues and family and friends were so accepting and supporting. If only the first thing everyone heard when they came out were "there's nothing wrong with being gay".

This story doesn't exactly glamorize coming out but it doesn't make it sound all that bad either. That's a good and a bad thing at the same time but I'll choose to see the good side here and think that it could make some people out there smile and feel all warm and fuzzy inside. It certainly had that effect on me.

Oh, and Kate? I'm still a Sidney person :)

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

****4.5 stars****

When I first started this book I wasn't sure I would love it. I'm not much of a sports fan and this book has a ton of sports talk in it. But little by little it won me over. It won me over big time.

I'm not big on plot summaries so I'll talk more about general feelings I had about the story. This might be a bit ramble-y... First of all, I wish AJ and Darryl (I read the version that didn't contain the names of real players) had a better first time together, if you know what I mean. The writing of this moment was too rushed for my taste, and I was pretty shocked as it was happening. Overall, I wanted more intimate moments and less sports talk (but maybe that is just me). I did fall in love with them as a couple but I felt like I could have used some more kisses and those details. More tenderness. Did they even kiss at all really during the story (except for a side of the mouth kiss later?)? I'm not sure.

However, I was dying to see what would happen to them as a couple by the end of the story. I was so anxious! I was totally like this:

That last game and that award ceremony... just wow!!

John The Cosmic Wanderer says

re-read 2018: wow this was actually better the second time around. There's instalust at the beginning which will put some readers off but if you keep on reading the story just grows on you. and that ending was just so good! Too bad the author did not write a ff up story. 5 stars

2014

I thought I was gonna hate this. There were some Seriously? Oh Cmon! moments here and I almost decided not finish it but this book actually grew on me . I wanted more of it. 5 stars!

Heather C says

This turned out to be surprisingly good! To be honest, this was nearly a DNF for me. But once I got to around 30% I really connected with Sid and Ovie and couldn't stop reading it. The characters seemed so *real* to me.

It took me a while to get used to the third person present tense narration style and I think the beginning dragged a bit. It wasn't romantic in the beginning nor was there any sexual tension to keep me hooked. In fact, there was hardly any sex at all and its pretty much fade to black or not very explicit. But there are some really sweet, tender moments between Sid and Ovie that made me *sigh*. My biggest issue was the slow parts that seemed to go on and on and on and on and...

I ended up loving the ending! (view spoiler) It seemed like a very long time to get to a HEA, though. First I wanted to strangle Ovie. Then I wanted to strangle Sid. Then back to Ovie. They were so frustrating and stubborn I wanted to strangle them both! But the ending was great. A bit predictable, but still **great!**

All the hockey stuff didn't bother me at all, even though I live in the South and know absolutely *nothing* about the sport. I like sports books and manly men and I did find it somewhat interesting. But it does go on and on and on...about hockey.

Oh, I must not forget to say how much I really liked all the secondary characters, too. Taylor (Sid's sister) was awesome and so was his parents. Ovie's family was great and so was his teammates. I even liked poor, *clueless* Malone!

Now that I've finished, I miss Sid and Ovie :(

Gigi says

Wow, this book kicked my ass in a big way! I guess I was expecting a happy hockey romance, but I ended up drowning in the angst. I am NOT a good crier!

If you are looking for an epic tale of love and loss (but with a HEA, don't worry!) and can handle some *serious* ugly-cry angst, between two gorgeous hockey players, this book is for you! **Recommended.**

Chris says

4.5 stars. Very good m/m romance about two hockey players on rival teams who become friends - and more - through an unusual turn of events. I got sniffly more than once while I was reading this one. What didn't work so well for me were all the hockey details in the last third of the book, which got to be a bit much. (Note that this is, as Kate puts it, set in an alternate universe and features two real-life NHL players.)

Reread: Just as good, if not better, on the reread. My eyes leaked this time, too.

Rereread: Yes, I totally read this twice in less than a week. Got a problem with that?!

Mandapanda says

4.5 stars. Wonderful free online romance between two ice hockey players with a real showstopper of an ending that will bring a happy tear to your eye. Sid Crosby is one of the best players in the National Hockey league. He's approached in the off-season by one of the leagues most brilliant yet inconsistant players, the extroverted Russian, Alex Ovechkin, to train together and help Ovechkin improve his game. Their good natured sparring and rivalry make their practice sessions more and more popular with fans and eventually they're approached by a television network to make a reality show about their practice and upcoming season. After a rash bet their player friendship changes into a surprising and irresistible physical relationship. But this becomes a rollercoaster ride of emotion and self-questioning as one of the guys falls in love and the other one is forced to come out.

OK, Ovie is just the most adorably mischievous and crazy guy ever! It's no wonder Sid goes mad for him. He's funny, provocative, eccentrically foreign, and SO BRAVE! And I love Sid too, much quieter, always the perfect team captain, but frightened and insecure as well. I know nothing about ice hockey (not a game you see often when you live in the tropics!) so the fact that this is fanfic of two real life people didn't put me off at all. It was like reading a great original m/m romance. And the sporting talk was fine for me. Not too much at all. Highly recommended! (thanks to Chris for spotting this in her updates)

The author is kind enough to provide it as a download in various formats from the link provided so no need to read on your computer or copy/convert pages of text.

Natasha says

Who'd. Have. Thought.

Natasha Snow loves a hockey fanfic. HUH.

It's just... it's just so GOOD! It is!

I read because stories like this make me feel the way this story made me feel.

That's all there is to it.

Kaje Harper says

Wow. This story just displaced Tigers and Devils as my favorite sport-centered M/M book. The characters are perfect, the plot is clean (although the initiating episode gave me a little pause.) The story becomes wonderfully angsty, believable and painful enough to put an ache in your chest. The hockey background is

very well done - enough emphasis to be central to the story of two professional players but not too much. The relationships of the guys with each other, their teammates and family and the wider world, are the centerpieces of this story.

Sid in his tentative awakening and uncertainty is wonderful, but it is Alex, with his humor and silliness and great heart who will make you fall in love. The plot-mover of this book is a misunderstanding, but in this context it is wholly believable and you'll only want to kick both guys a little bit.

God, I wanted more. Wanted to see the fallout from the next day after the end of the book, wanted to see the guys together moving forward, but that's because I'm greedy. This may have been fan-fic/slash, but it is on my list of best books I have read this year. Highly recommended.

Xing says

Rating: 4.5 stars.

So how does a person, who failed his sports exam in 6th grade PE class, realize that a novel focused on ice hockey is an absolute win? When said novel makes him WISHED he played and loves the sport!

My knowledge of ice hockey wouldn't impress anyone older than the age of three. But that's okay, it's not necessarily required for Heart in Hand. If anything, ice hockey is really the setting for a love story between two of the National Hockey League's (NHL) biggest rising stars: Darryl Colton (Canadian) and Aleksey (Alex) Kuznetsov (Russian). Both NHL stars play on American teams.

Darryl is a pragmatic guy who is strictly by-the-rules. Yet for some reason, Alex manages to get under his skin. Alex's 6th grader enthusiasm (Darryl's wording, not mine) and open heart begins to slowly make Darryl come to conclusions that could not only jeopardize his NHL career, but his personal life as well.

As for Alex's character, I think it's safe to say that most people would absolutely love him! He's a big guy who's never afraid to crack a joke, laugh at himself, lend a helping hand (to both people and stray kittens!), and...okay, you get the point, right? He is adorbz x 1000. And I think it's for this reason that when shit hits the fan (because that ALWAYS happens with these sports star M/M fiction), the BIG FALLOUT occurs, and the STRUGGLE afterwards, you can't help but bust the big, fat ugly tears!

I think my biggest complaint for Heart in Hand was the amount of time that Darryl and Alex are apart after the fallout and big misunderstanding (probably 25-30% of the book). I wanted more Darryl x Alex, and I almost couldn't forgive Darryl even until the end.

Almost.

But yeah, he redeemed himself. Just barely, but I give him props for what he chose to do.

So once again: you don't have to be a hockey fan to enjoy this read. Are there some hockey info that are strewn throughout the book? Yes. But either a quick Google search or simply ignoring that detail doesn't affect the overall enjoyment for me. Because I wasn't looking for a sports novel when I started this. I was looking for a love story, and that's exactly what I got. I just never imagined that there was so much love out there: among fans, friends, family, teammates, and lovers.

Eva says

5 gold hockey stars

The great rivalry... a simple bet turned into something more

I have a soft spot for sports books and really enjoyed this story which is based on 2 real-life hockey stars in the NHL. I fell in love with both MCs but especially with Alex with his humorous nature and a shiny character with a big heart of gold.

The development of the tentative romance side was very tender

“And Darryl can feel his heart somersault slowly out of his chest, straight into the possession of the man whose head is currently cutting off circulation to Darryl's right leg. At that moment, Darryl Colton falls in love with Aleksey Kuznetsov.”

But there were few issues to deal with...

This book gave such an uplifting view of what people can do in the face of serious difficulties. How those who you least expect can show bravery and love. That when it matters people will stand up for what is right and fair. *Sigh* The families, the teammates, friends in this book were amazing.

The feel of the book is just wonderful. (view spoiler)

Overall this was a fully developed story with character depth, real emotion, real hockey being played by the MCs, great secondary characters, great friendship, great humor, great angst, and last but not least, a great love!

Completely hit the spot and want more. Loved the ending and I wish this was a true story.

Wonderful recommended sports M/M romance

Heller says

This is the best sports MM story that I've read. If I could give it more than 5 stars I would.

Full disclosure here, this started out as a RPF (real person fic) about two NHL players Sidney Crosby and Alex Ovechkin. The version that I read was altered to change the names to Darryl Colton and Aleksey(AJ)Kuznetsov, the characters are still unmistakably the RP and because I'm familiar with them as players I'll honestly say that I found that a bit uncomfortable. I love a good sports story but I've never been a fan of the RPF but this was recommended to me so I just had to give it a chance and work with the altered fic. I am so glad that I did. I think if you're not familiar with the actual players the fact that was originally RPF won't affect your enjoyment of this story. If you are a hockey fan I encourage you to just read it and go with the flow, you won't regret it.

This was such a fun story but it had some pretty intense moments, the premise of the reality show just worked so well and was such a great hook to get these two to interact through the season.

I don't think I've read another sports fic that was so authentic. The writing here is so natural and funny and the ways that AJ tries to get Darryl to loosen up were hilarious and this story just made me laugh and laugh. Lots of pranks on both sides here and chemistry is just off the charts. AJ is tremendously charming and loveable where Darryl is so serious and intense so seeing how they play off each other and see the build-up to their attraction was just such a treat to read.

(view spoiler)

I really enjoyed these characters, a lot, and would love to see a sequel to this fic. It was disappointing to come to the end of the story but the epilogue is priceless and had me howling. If you love a sports MM story with lots of humour but also some lovely intense moments this is really a story you HAVE to read. I cannot recommend it enough.

Ami says

****** THIS REVIEW IS BASED ON THE ORIGINAL RPF FAN FICTION; Thus the names I wrote in this review space were different than the blurb ******

I do have to say first, though: I know nothing about hockey, its players, or NHL. I live in tropical country; we have sun all year long. So hockey has never been in my state of mind. You talk about soccer or badminton, then I know. Not hockey, though. I think BECAUSE of that, it's easier for me to accept this story. I've never been a fan of real people slash -- feel like it's too stalkerish. But since I know nothing about

these players, I can think of it as original M/M story instead. And no, I will not stalk Google to find out about them, or watching youtube. Just not my thing; again, feel too stalkerish ...

So, on to the story. Oh, my, what can I say that haven't been said by anyone else? I guess there isn't any. So I'm not going to

... except that this is a story about triumph.

I love the built-up to the relationship (even if that first bet is just outrageous!), the slow realization that Sid feels when he realizes his feeling for Alex (or "Ovie") and the fact that he's gay, the blowout and how Alex and his team and NHL handle Alex's announcement that he's bisexual, and how the story resolves in the end.

I think Alex is just an admirable character; he's charming, he's persistent, he steals my heart from the very beginning. But how he handles the 'scandal', how he stands up for himself, how he protects Sid, and how he reaches out to those kids ... I have tears during those segment alone. Let's just say I wish I know one Alex in my life.

I wish Sid step up earlier -- but in a sense he's also more private than Alex. He doesn't deal with his feeling better, after only focusing his life to be better at hockey. So even if I slightly think Sid needs more groveling, what he does in the end, it's just perfect.

The epilogue is cute :)

All in all, definitely one of the best M/M sport stories I have read. Especially because the author treats these people and the game itself with respect. Read the part where Alex answers the question whether he wants to win the Cup or not, and you will see what I mean.

"But it's what the sport teaches you about life that's really most important. At its best, hockey teaches you discipline, courage, loyalty, friendship, honor. It teaches you to work hard, it teaches you to trust in others, it teaches you strive for something greater than yourself."

I guess I end up talking more than I intend too at first *lol*

Technical warning: Present tense (I know some people hate that), 3rd person narration (but Sid's perspective only), and few typos. But, it's FREE, and the author provides multiple format, so suck it up people!!!

Kat says

Hi! Completely clueless ice hockey virgin here!

Ever since I fell down that fanfiction rabbit hole, I enjoy preach.. I mean, sharing my love for these fantastic free reads with you guys. After nibbling from Merthur and Sterek for a bit, I decided it was time to give another popular source of inspiration for fanfic a go: ice hockey!

So, Heart in Hand: the author mentioned being taken aback with the popularity of her work outside the fandom, and as a result changed the names of the two MCs, famous ice hockey players, to fictional names. I didn't care either way, none of these names rang a bell for me. Still, I wish I hadn't googled that Russian ice hockey player with 'shaggy hair and gap-toothed grin'. That's NOT a gap-toothed grin! It's like someone got

a bazooka and blew half his teeth out!

See how clueless I am? I thought the poor dude had suffered from a bad childhood case of malnutrition. But apparently, missing teeth are all in the game and a token of toughness.

This book is 300 pages long and would have been much more compelling if, let's say, one third had been cut out. Heart in Hand has a ton of potential, but damn, does someone needs to kill her darlings! In my eyes, the author lacked a little intuition here. She failed to sense what parts were important (there's too little Unreleased Sexual Tension (UST), meaningful looks and touches, chemistry and actual decent sex instead of dull off-page sex) and what parts needed to be trimmed down (endless recaps of TV episodes and games, lengthy summaries of mundane stuff). Then there's the two MCs, whose prepubescent state of mind and simplicity got on my nerves a bit. Worse, their UST got killed off pretty much right away by a surreal bet that resulted in what could've been the most awkward and cringe-worthy...well, you can decide for yourself when you come across it..

So much potential wasted.. I must have disliked this story, right?

Uhm, no I didn't! Heart in Hand is a diamond in the..mwah, make that AN AMETHYST IN THE ROUGH! Despite my pet peeves this was an enjoyable read! I even experienced a tiny tsunami of feels and angst! Can you believe that this toothless Russian guy actually grew on me? It didn't take long for me to start rooting for him; he was such a pain in the ass fun guy. I was amused. Props to the author for making his character come alive. Compared to him, his American love interest felt neglected. God, but he was a boring bugger.

In a nut-shell: it doesn't matter if you know heck about ice hockey. If you're up for a long and flawed, but angsty feel good story, make sure to download Heart in Hand (for those who are interested: the original work with the RL players can still be found on Archive Of Our Own too). Chances are that it will conquer your heart. I know it sort of managed to win mine.
