



Romancing the Running Back

Jeanette Murray

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When Anya Fisher is asked to be the maid of honor in her best friend's wedding, she jumps at the chance to go to Santa Fe. There's nothing left for her in Atlanta—except a bitter and controlling almost-ex husband. Starting over as an online personal shopper is challenging, but not as much as having to plan wedding festivities with uptight groomsman Josiah Walker...

As a Santa Fe Bobcats running back, Josiah wants to make his mark on the field, not on the earth. A serious conservationist, he's all about saving energy. So why is he wasting so much on the flighty fashionista in his best friend's wedding? One kiss leads to another—and more. But when Josiah discovers that Anya has just as much substance as style, their harmless little fling may go into overtime...

Romancing the Running Back Details

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From Reader Review Romancing the Running Back for online ebook

Lara says

I didn't like Josiah's holier than thou attitude, and the way he instantly judges Anya didn't quite jibe with his tree hugging/love everyone life view. I think Cassie could have done more to smooth things over between them at the beginning. (She might have accepted Josiah's over-the-top attitude about washing vegetables, but she had to have known how Anya would have responded to the slightest hint of judgement.)

And for all the build-up of things with the ex, it seemed a little rushed to a convenient conclusion.

It's hard to enjoy a book when you know what's going to happen next, whether this is because it's been done before or things are just telegraphed very obviously. But I still enjoyed the writing, and Murray has created a fun bunch of guys.

I also really like how some of this is set at the same time as *Takes Two to Tackle*, so we get to see some scenes that we weren't privy to before.

1-Click Addict Support Group says

I love this series!

Each time I read a new title in this series I find a new favorite—and this time was no exception!

Anya Fisher is at a crossroads in her life and jumps on the chance to relocate and take serious steps towards her changing career goals. Helping to coordinate her best friend's wedding is the perfect opportunity for new beginnings and feeds right into her strengths.

Josiah Walker is the best man so must work closely with the maid of honor to make sure things go off without a hitch. Ensuring all goes smoothly, and out of the limelight, is a daunting task—especially when your partner is more concerned about color schemes and naughty shower decorations. Josiah doesn't have much respect for Anya's profession, which doesn't make for a harmonious working relationship...in the beginning...

Anya and Josiah definitely butted heads when they first met. The burly football player and tiny fashionista had little common ground but as they were forced into closed quarters, opinions began to change. And looking beneath the surface, they realized they more than liked what they saw...

The conversations between these two were sexy and smart, wonderfully sarcastic and just plain fun to "watch". With a wonderful blend of emotion and steamy, steamy sex, their relationship progressed quickly from 'unlike' to hot and heavy.

"You *slept* with him?" ...

"No. We just watched the nightly news while holding hands and thinking pure thoughts."

The stereotypes of each of the characters are obvious but it doesn't take long to find out there is much more

to each of them than that. When push comes to shove, they each are more concerned about the other's well-being than their own. Josiah... sigh, Josiah. I just want to wrap him up and take him home. No one would notice, would they?

Funny yet serious, emotional as well as sarcastic, there were so many opposites that come together to make a story that read way too quickly! I want, no *need*, more Bobcats! ~ Diane, 5 stars

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The Santa Fe Bobcats are back and we finally get Josiah's story.

Since Cassie and Trey are now engaged, Anya is back visiting Santa Fe to help with her best friend's wedding planning. Josiah gets roped into planning duties also because he is the best man in the wedding.

Anya and Josiah get off on the wrong foot since they both assume the worst of each other and, in turn, think the other is annoying. Though, after spending time together running errands, they realize that what they thought about each other was wrong—and that they actually like spending time together. Once they started to really know each other, they couldn't help but like each other more than just in a friendly way.

I loved this book! Sports romance is one of my favorite things to read, and this series continues to bring some great characters and their love stories. I liked that Josiah wasn't just a typical guy. He actually cares about the environment and is trying to live in a way that does the least damage. I liked how Anya had a lot of ambition. She came up with great ideas and she went through with them.

Now that I've finished the fourth book in this series I can't wait to read the next one! Keep these football hotties coming, Ms. Murray! ~ Leah, 5 stars

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### **Dabney says**

I read the first three books in this series back to back. I liked the first book, **One Night with a Quarterback** best and liked this novel second best. The hero is, again, so winning. The heroine was a little harder for me to love although she's not at all annoying. I'll definitely read the next book--I'm now a fan of this series.

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### **Sheryl says**

**\*4.5 stars\***

*\*ARC courtesy of Netgalley and Berkley\**

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### **Beth says**

4.5 stars

I love this series, Jeanette Murray writes a fantastic sports romance. I loved both characters in this but I especially appreciated Josiah's character because it was nice to see a sports player that wasn't a player or a

horribly arrogant ass (and she doesn't write characters like that in this series) and Josiah's was also different because of his eco friendly approach to life - I don't think I've read a romance book with the male lead like this one so he stands out. I also liked Anya and I loved the idea of the not-for-profit organisation she set up. It was great to see the characters we have met in previous books and we finally get to see Cassie and Trey's wedding, which I think was a great ending to this book. I can't wait for the next book!!

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## Anna's Herding Cats says

Reviewed for herding cats & burning soup.

Nom nom nom. So. I have a thing for the Santa Fe Bobcats. The guys are freaking lick.a.ble. The heroines spirited and lively. \*reader girl sigh\* Best combo ever.

Sooo Romancing the Running Back. The quick of it is that Anya has come to town to help her best friend with planning her wedding. And the best man? He'll suffer through having to work with her but he's so not on board with a bridesmaid he considers shallow since she's a fashion consultant. He's not about to make friends. Pesky attraction be damned!

Alright. So these two. Anya. I liked this chick so much! She's a kickass woman with a vision. Passionate about what she does, has a good heart and she's not gonna take shit from Josiah (we'll get to that in a second). She's had a rough go as of late and having to start over and I loved how brave she was with it. She jumps in a tackles things and is just kind and thoughtful. Murray writes the best heroines!

Aaaand then Josiah. Yeah, Josiah. I really loved his bits in the previous book but lordy he was just too much of a goody two shoes in this one and, well, kind of an ass and judgmental about her "shallow" job when he's over here saving the world playing football \*eye roll\*. There were peeks at the good guy he is in there but he was just too preachy save the world for me for a lot of the time \*deep breaths\* When he could stop with that and the quick judging of her he was great though.

"This isn't what I'm supposed to be writing down, is it? Because if so, you'll need to slow down."

"Pots and pans," she called out from inside a bottom cabinet. "Silverware, plates and bowls, cups--"

"How about I just write down 'kitchen shit' and call it good?"

She backed up from the next cabinet and flicked him a look that could have frozen the Abominable Snowman's testicles.

Now, despite Josiah wearing on my nerves now and again their romance was actually pretty fun. I know, I know. I totally ranted about him. But still I liked them overall and the kind of an enemies to lovers bit happening between them as they go about working on their friend's wedding together. They...tolerated one another and slowly grew on each other like fungus until BOOM nekkid yummy times and a reluctant friendship in bloom. lol .

They had some nice sparks and they did suit well. Both were passionate about what their jobs and had causes

they felt strongly about and they were dedicated to their friends which is always nice. I liked seeing them settle into friendship and find romance even if they didn't totally get each other's jobs/passions and just had to go with them.

All in all, while I didn't feel like Romancing the Running Back was the strongest addition to the series--the writing just wasn't quite as on point as the others and it was missing the little spark of humor I normally relate to Murray's books--it was still an entertaining read. The heroine was wonderful and I love the team as a whole and getting to spend time with them. I would totally recommend hitting this series from the start. It's been a fab one.

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## Crystal says

I really love this series and this book was a great addition! Josiah is such a sweet eco-nut!

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## Shari says

This review was originally posted on Delighted Reader

Romancing the Running Back by Jeanette Murray

### **They're not on the same page in the playbook...**

When Anya Fisher is asked to be the maid of honor in her best friend's wedding, she jumps at the chance to go to Santa Fe. There's nothing left for her in Atlanta—except a bitter and controlling almost-ex husband. Starting over as an online personal shopper is challenging, but not as much as having to plan wedding festivities with uptight groomsman Josiah Walker...

As a Santa Fe Bobcats running back, Josiah wants to make his mark on the field, not on the earth. A serious conservationist, he's all about saving energy. So why is he wasting so much on the flighty fashionista in his best friend's wedding? One kiss leads to another—and more. But when Josiah discovers that Anya has just as much substance as style, their harmless little fling may go into overtime...

The Delight

Football! Well my teams season is done and not sure what next year entails. While this is a football story, it doesn't have a ton of actual football time in it. Sure they have games, but you aren't there to see them. They travel, do their business and then come home. So the story stays focused on the characters in the now,

outside of football.

The Bobcats have been a fictional favorite football team of mine. Every guy is a prime candidate to matchmake, but this one left me scratching my head.

Josiah has been drafted into being the best man at his friends wedding. Known as the conservationist, he rides his bike when he can and owns a hybrid. Hoping to leave the world a better place when he is gone, he has a chip on his shoulder that rubbed me the wrong way from page one. While I agreed with him for the most part, he makes snap impressions of people that left me wanting to Gibbs smack him.

Anya Fisher comes to town to help her best friend with her wedding and bam! Is already hit with disdain over the amount of shoes she has brought with her by a jock without much conversation. Being a fashion shopper for women isn't a crime, nor does it make her an airhead, but Josiah right away labels Anya and the two get off to a very bad start.

For the first quarter to half of the story, I was thrown by just how stuck up, snotty and immature Josiah was being. Could someone remove the stick up his ass please? It only came out for Anya and I wanted to scream at him that he didn't give her a chance, but made a snap decision over a frickin' suitcase.

Anya was the saving grace. In the last book you got to see her doing what she loved, helping people. Starting up a non-profit to help teenagers get their prom dresses is a wonderful idea. She kept her head up and refused to back down to Josiah \*fist pump\* and put him in his place more than a few times.

While Josiah did change and come around some, he still had a stick up his ass for most of the book. Anya has a secret, but it is mostly something she doesn't think to tell Josiah, than just keeping it from it. It was kind of a deal breaker with me and crossed a line I didn't like. While she admits in her mind it was a non-issue, it really wasn't and I had to come down on Josiah's side for this one.

Around the ending I had some disbelief in how things go down. Right off the book didn't feel like a normal story that I have grown to love in the series. I was looking forward to Josiah's story and I think he came up short and so did Anya. You do get a few new secondary characters, which I looking forward to exploring.

So while it was still a good story, it lacked the coming together of two people that leaves me grasping for more of them. I was just kind of blah in the end and ready to write of these two characters as a lost cause. Not a bad book, just not up the the level I have come to expect for this series

### **Challenge Info:**

### **Literary Pickers: Notebook/Pad**

This review was originally posted on Delighted Reader

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### **Isadora Moraes says**

**3.5 to 3.75**

## Danielle says

Let me start off by saying I am totally loving this series!

Anya is looking to branch out on her own and her ex won't give her the divorce she has been asking for so when her friend needs help planning her wedding she heads to Santa Fe. Anya isn't looking for love but when she is paired with the best man things start to look up.

I really liked Anya and Josiah. They didn't start out on good terms but I thought their banter and snarky comments were a version of foreplay. After a few meetings with each other you can totally see the attraction between them and I liked how they just seemed more natural with one another.

One of my favorite parts of the book was when they had the couples bachelor and bachelorette party. They had a great time and I surprised when they played Friends trivia. Lol It was great and since I love that show I'm glad Murray included it in the story.

I really do enjoy each and every character in this story and series so far. Anya was strong and determined to make a go out of the career she wants. Josiah was smart and had this easy way about him. Although these two were total opposites the way they made it work was awesome.

The only real issue I had is while reading the author skips over time. An example is It starts somewhere and jumps two weeks later. I'm one of those people who want to know what's happening during that time?

I also would've liked to see maybe some on field time. Sure the players worked out, watch game footage but I missed the on the field time. Hopefully there will be some in the next book.

The ending ended up having an epilogue wedding of Anya and Josiah's best friends. I have to say I was so glad it wasn't them. It also had more promise that more Santa Fe Bobcats are coming soon! Yippee!!

If you love sports romance books this is definitely a book you should read!

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## Kim says

Anya Fisher is Cassie's fashionista best friend who has just come to town to help Cassie and Trey (One Night with a Quarterback) plan their perfect wedding. But her future plans are a bit up in the air. Josiah is one of Trey's team mates on the Santa Fe Bobcats. They meet, irritate, confuse, and misunderstand each other...but there is an underlying attraction. He is a practical environmentalist. She is a personal shopper and fashion consultant. He is intelligent, serious, and moody. She's smart, savvy, and her life is in transition.

They are thrown together more frequently with maid of honor and best man duties. They tend to bring out the defensive and antagonistic sides of each other. Their feisty banter and put downs start to give way to more understanding and enjoyment of their sparks.

I loved Josiah. He initially appeared judgmental and overly critical. He was kind of a bit egocentric in his ideals. But he was also a good friend. The more we saw his vulnerability and that he really was just a bit awkward, and how he began to respond and enjoy her, endeared him to me. And then he started to become a

hot, sweet, and swoony hero.

They find an odd compatibility even with taunting each other the more time they spend together. He begins to see she is not as frivolous as he initially thought. She actually has plans and ideas that are more in tune with his own ideals while using her abilities. And she begins to see that Josiah can be a great support and is not as judgmental and she thought.

Anya was normally the calm quiet one compared to her best friend. But Josiah tended to bring out her sarcastic, snarky, side. I enjoyed her relationship with Cassie and how she began to let her own guard down with Josiah. I admired her talents and work ideas. but had a hard time getting over what I considered was her big mistake and her keeping a huge secret.

Their relationship was a slow build...like no inkling of a kiss or friskiness until 50 percent. Then it zoomed into the relationship zone fast. There was no wishy-washiness about it or relationship angst that point But there was some external issues and conflicts...and some secrets. Some of her choices have some consequences and not everything their lives can be easily controlled. They had good chemistry. I loved how these opposites found common ground and mutual understanding.

And what would a Bobcats season be without some scandal or drama?

We got to spend lots of time with Cassie and Trey (One Night with a Quarterback), Stephen and Mags (Takes Two to Tackle), and even Killian and Aileen (Loving Him Off the Field). Cassie's younger sisters Mellie and Irene were also a part of the story.

I like the characters in this series and the camaraderie of the Bobcats which is why I keep coming back. Some of the pacing might be a bit off and I shake my head at some of characters' choices or minor plot issues. But it is still fun to hang out with them and see how their lives are progressing. This was funny, feisty, romantic, sexy, and sweet. The next one sounds interesting as well.

ARC provided by publisher in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Lesley says**

Love this series

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## **Cocktails and Books says**

This review was originally posted on Cocktails and Books

This is not my first book by Ms. Murray, but it is the first book in the Santa Fe Bobcats series that I've read and I really enjoyed it. Even though Romancing the Running Back is the 4th in a series, it is easy to read on its own.

In Romancing the Running Back, we follow Anya and Josiah as they move from antagonism, to friends, to lovers while they help their friends plan a wedding. Anya has several other things going on that prompted her visit to Santa Fe to be more like a relocation and those complications eventually cause problems for her with

Josiah.

I enjoyed these two characters and their quirks. They were fun to get to know and it was a treat to see their relationship progress. One of my favorite things was the fact that when Anya's past caught up to her and threw a wrench into things, Josiah didn't go stomping off to be mad, he sat down with her and talked about it.

The supporting cast was fun and added color and humor to the story. If you have followed the Santa Fe Bobcats series, you will enjoy seeing glimpses of characters from the prior three books and catching up with where they are now. If you are new to Ms. Murray's work, this would be a fun book to start with. It's a quick read and definitely worth the time.

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### **Teri says**

Started strong but fizzled near the ending. And who has a bachelor/bachelorette party before setting a wedding date???

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### **Lauren at Live Read and Breathe Reviews says**

#### **3 Fashionista and the tree hugger stars!**

*Source: eARC for Honest Review Courtesy of Intermix | Penguin Group*

I have such a soft spot for sports romance and this series fits the bill in sweetness and sports. This time around we have Josiah the tree hugger and Anya the fashionista. These two are the most unlikely pair but seem to work.

Even though this is part of a series, Jeanette has done a great job that you could read it as a standalone. Of course it's always better when you have the full back story. Anya is Cassie's best friend whose job is a personal shopper. At first glance she may come across as shallow and superficial but underneath her great style is a heart of gold. Josiah is the poster boy for leaving less of a imprint on this earth so when he first meets Anya he's quick to judge.

For Josiah he's torn, because his heart and libido are attracted to Anya, but his head is telling him that they are too opposite for each other. However, Cassie and Trey have a different idea and try to make these two fall together. Anya has her secrets and keeps too much close to the vest that it gets her in trouble. Once Josiah sees the real Anya he goes all in, so when her past comes to the forefront he's hurt to find out that Anya left a big part of her past a secret.

This was a super sweet sports romance, but it didn't leave me in the state of wow. I liked the idea of opposites attract and I think Anya and Josiah were portrayed well with this, but I felt their falling in love with each other WAY too fast that I didn't get to be enraptured by these two. Was it sweet? Yes. Did it wow me? No, but I was invested enough within the story that I read it through and in one sitting. Will I read more from this series? Yes, absolutely.