

# Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

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PARENTAL ADVISORY EXPLICIT CONTENT

SEXUALLY EXPLICIT CONTENT AVAILABLE AT TEXAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS



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### RYKER

The view from the back of the pickup truck was pretty damn sweet. Like every Friday night, the bonfire was blazing, music was pumping, and the people I'd grown up with in this town were all here. Most importantly, my cousin, Nash, was here. Smiling, with his arm around Tallulah, who I credited for helping him find himself after his injury. He'd coached tonight at the game. He couldn't play, but he had been there on the sidelines, yelling at us, cursing like a **fucking** sailor. Made me grin, thinking about it. The win had made it perfect.

What the **fuck** was going on with all that? The girl was studying Blakely as if she felt sorry for her. Genuinely sorry. Not a pity glance. My stomach tightened. My chest felt weird. But something about that girl was affecting me. I didn't care that Hunter's hand was on her in a rather protective way. He needed to be ready for some competition. She was having to hurry to keep up with Hunter, and I didn't like the way he was pulling her along like a child. That annoyed me. I began moving in their direction, without thinking about what I was going to do or say, when she turned those eyes toward me again. Jesus Christ, it was like a boulder slammed into me. I was frozen again. Staring at her. Just when I was about to question my sanity, she smiled. Straight white teeth. As perfect as the rest of her. The purity of that smile was in her eyes. Nothing was there clouding it. Making you wonder what she was thinking or up to. It was the most real thing I'd ever experienced in my life. Hunter's gaze swung to me. He still looked annoyed and very focused. But he nodded his head. "Hey, Ryker" was all he said, not stopping. Her gaze was back on him now. She was staring up at him. She only came to his shoulders. "You have Literature first. But it's okay that you're late. I will explain. It's a substitute anyway. They fired the Lit teacher a couple weeks ago," he said to her. She frowned, looking confused, and then fell into a quicker pace beside him. Just before they turned the corner, she glanced back over her shoulder at me and gave me one more smile. Holy **fuck**. How did she do that? It was like a bolt of lightning in my chest, and I wanted more of it. I didn't care if her father was here. I didn't give a flying **fuck** where her brother was. I would do anything I had to if they'd trust me with her. Allow me to love her. Be with her. When the fireworks ended, I pulled back slowly until her eyes fluttered open to meet my gaze. Then moved my hands from her ears to

## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

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cup her face. I ran my thumbs over her high, freckled cheekbones. We weren't alone, but it felt like it. There was no need to speak. The silent language we'd so easily found before was still there. She loved me. She hadn't said it exactly, but I could see it. "Please don't leave me again." The desperation in my voice she could hear. Her eyes said as much. "I'm staying. Part of the negotiating with my father was I'd do the surgery. Then I would come back here after therapy, and he'd let me make my own choices. He would have to trust me."

## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

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If there had been a play where Hunter could tackle me, then he'd have taken the opportunity. He'd have gotten hurt. Pretty boy was meant to throw the ball, not give a hit. But the way he glared at me during practice hadn't gone unnoticed by anyone on the team. I took it. I didn't toss back a challenge, which was completely against my nature. This was all too important. Aurora was too important. I had to prove I wasn't a **dick** to Hunter and completely serious about getting to know her. He was my only obstacle. I had hoped our earlier talk had eased his mind some. I could see his cracking in practice for the first time, and showing emotion meant he'd had time to think it over today, and he was still against me.

## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

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Blakely tossed her long blond hair over her shoulder and rolled her eyes. "I'm with Hunter." She said it as if it made her safe. Dating the quarterback was the only reason she was here. At least she knew it. But Hunter was a junior. He wasn't originally from here, and we played well together on the field, but he was not one of my boys. This wouldn't save her **ass** if she pissed me off. "Don't give a **fuck**," I replied. "If he wants to leave with you, he can, but he won't stop me from sending your **ass** off." She opened her mouth to say something more, but Nova interrupted her. "Looks like he's already gone. Running." Nova sounded pleased. "Guess he was waiting until you walked off to make his escape."

Nash frowned at me, confused. "You seem real wound up about this." He paused, then began to grin. "Wait . . . are you interested in her?" He was going to be an **asshole** now just to piss me off. I wouldn't be getting **shit** out of him. My glare only made him laugh before he walked away. I'd have to wait until lunch to find her, that is if we had the same lunch period. Frustrated, I continued to my next class with a scowl on my face. My name was called out twice, but I ignored it, keeping my eyes open for any sign of her.

"Happy New Year to you, too," I said, not even attempting a smile. It wasn't in me. She looked at Nash and Tallulah and said the same thing. Just when she was turning to go, I heard a voice say my name that caused my heart to stop. Literally the sound made it skip a beat. Afraid I had imagined it, I spun around so **damn** fast that if I had been drinking, I would have fallen on my **ass**. Green eyes, freckles, with red curls bound up by the scarf around her neck. Everything around me went silent. I felt like I was standing in one of my dreams. "Aurora." I said her name, afraid I'd finally lost it and made her up. If I blinked, she'd be gone. I didn't **fucking** blink.

## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

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“What the fuck?”

Blakely’s tone, however, did make me smile. Whatever his reasons for running, she wasn’t happy about it. “Damn, bitch, what did you do to him?” Nova drawled, enjoying this a little too much. Girls could be vicious. In a fight, though, I knew Nova would take Blakely out fast. She may not be from around here, but I could tell by the way she carried herself that she was not a female you wanted to tie up with. She’d lived a much different life from me. Her parents weren’t around much. From what she said, I knew her grandmother had raised her. Once she’d mentioned her dad being in jail. I didn’t ask her any questions, because I wasn’t sure I wanted to hear the answers. My home life was a fairy tale compared to hers. Blakely glared at Nova, and I watched as Nova straightened, then turned from me to Blakely. Nova cocked her head to the side, and the threatening gleam in her eyes made me a little nervous. “You want some?” she asked with no emotion. Then she crooked her finger at Blakely in a *come and get it* way. Holy fuck.

## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

---

“Okay,” I told him. “What about your dad? Any idea how I’m gonna overcome his issues?” I was careful how I spoke about him because of Aurora. He was a prejudiced **bastard**, but he was also her father. “He is okay with this,” Hunter said, pointing at the two of us. “He’s noticed your change too. He was wrong, and although I doubt he’ll ever admit that, he knows it.”

## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

---

She placed a hand on her left hip and slightly cocked her body. The flash of challenge in her eyes was intriguing. She wasn't going to let this go. No guy would walk over her, and she scared me just a little. The intensity. I doubted she was used to guys turning down her offer of sex. "You've walked past me three times today and said nothing. Not even a glance in my direction. And I know I'm hard to miss." That last comment could be considered confident or cocky. To some it might be sexy. I wasn't sure I liked it, though. "I didn't notice you," I said, thinking she needed a little hit on that ego of hers. "But I wasn't looking."

Was that supposed to take time? I didn't think so, because I'd had years with Denver, and not once had he made me feel like Ryker did from the moment I saw him. "You've never dated other guys to give them a chance. It's always been Denver. You have no idea. You just met Ryker. He's new. It's exciting. He has sex with different girls every night. Sometimes two different girls in a weekend. Friday night he had sex with Nova. I've seen them in the halls together this week." The girl he'd been arguing with today. He'd had sex with her Friday? Was that what they were fighting about? Or talking about? Ryker didn't seem like a guy who would do that, but then I was just getting to know him. The memory of Ryker's kiss, the way he looked at me, held me . . . could the same guy have casual sex with girls? It didn't fit. He was sweet. Gentle. I shook my head, refusing to believe the rumors. Unless Hunter was there watching them, which I knew he hadn't been, it was just talk. Words. "Where did y'all go tonight?" he asked then. "The field," I told him, knowing he knew about the field. Hunter frowned. "Did he try anything?"

I always thought there must have been some trauma in her life to make her want to have sex with a guy so carelessly. I had judged too soon. Maybe she'd loved him. We may need supervision until the State game is over. Right now all I can think about is, never mind. I won't say that. Just knowing you want me too is making this harder than I ever imagined.



## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

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My mother never talked to me about it, and all I knew was it had gotten a girl **pregnant** back at my old school, and she'd left to go raise her baby without help from the guy who had gotten her **pregnant**. I always thought there must have been some trauma in her life to make her want to have sex with a guy so carelessly. I had judged too soon. Maybe she'd loved him.

## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

---

I didn't even give that a second look, because my guess was that Hunter was getting his balls handed to him for his escape Friday night. Blakely had come back, gotten drunk, and passed out, and Asa had hauled her ass home, carrying her over his shoulder. She puked on his feet. I missed it all, but that was the recap I'd got from Nash. Asa was a nice guy, but he loved his Chevy truck. He'd had to pay for half of it. His dad was tough. So after she puked on his feet and her clothing, she was put in the bed of his truck for the ride home. That shit made me laugh.

"Happy New Year, Ryker," Nova said as she stepped in front of me. After my drunken behavior the Tuesday of Thanksgiving week she had kept her distance. She'd shown up at Nash's place and been dressed to get attention. I'd had too many beers and made a comment about her not having on a bra. She'd thought that was an invitation and pressed against me before kissing me hard on the mouth. I'd been taken by surprise and slow due to the beer, but I'd gotten her off me, then taken her downstairs and sent her away. Telling her I was in love with Aurora and to please leave me alone. Move on with her life.

Teenagers out here alone could get away with a lot. I glanced out at the dark woods and wondered what went on at these parties. Then my eyes saw a beer keg on the bed of the old truck. I'd never had beer from a keg, but I had seen one

in more than one episode of *That '70s Show*. I recognized it even from a distance. I took my phone and asked: They let you drink?

She took two pieces of the meat pizza. I went to the fridge and grabbed her a bottle of water since there was no Cherry Coke. Although there would be next time. I'd be sure of it. Then I took a beer out for me.

When I closed the fridge, I looked back at her sitting on the barstool, and it hit me I was driving her home tonight. This was all new to me. I had to make smarter decisions. To think of someone other than myself.

I wanted to be better. I'd never cared about what anyone thought of me. I had always been living my life and doing it my way. Not anymore. I opened the fridge again and put the beer back, then grabbed a second bottle of water. When I closed the fridge this time, I was smiling. Turning to see her watching me now, I liked how she made me feel. "If you didn't have to drive me home, I wouldn't care if you drank the beer," she said. I hadn't realized she'd caught me. "Do Nash's parents not look in the

## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

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fridge?” “Not yet they haven’t. Nash has gotten away with a lot this year, though. His accident changed things,” I replied, and walked over to her to place both our waters on the bar. I grabbed a plate and put two slices of each pizza on my plate along with some wings, then stuck a piece of the cheese bread in my mouth before sitting back down.

## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

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Then add my lack of compassion to that, and this seemed like a very bad idea. I had worried about only myself most of my life. Which had been a big, easy ride until Nash had gotten hurt. I did care about that. Nash was my cousin, but we were as close as brothers. Nash being hurt had changed me. I wasn't the same jerk I had been, but I wasn't a Boy Scout, either. Nash's accident had been my wake-up call that life could change in an instant. Getting to know Tallulah had also taught me how shallow I had been. Just last year Tallulah had been overweight, and I had never paid her any attention except to make a joke at her expense. I wasn't proud of that, and if I let myself think about it too much, I felt like **shit**. I wasn't that guy now. Tallulah hadn't just saved my cousin; she'd forgiven me, too. Even when I didn't deserve it. That kind of generosity is humbling. It makes you think before you speak. I wasn't perfect, and **shit** still flew out of my mouth at times, but I was better. I just wasn't sure if I had changed enough to pursue someone like Aurora.

Hunter was, per usual at practice, focused on the plays, his passing game, and winning. I'd never seen a more driven athlete. He was the reason we hadn't struggled after our former quarterback, Brady Higgs, graduated. Nash had been working with the freshman quarterback, Kip. He had a **shitload** of natural talent. Hunter saw it like the rest of us. Because of it, Hunter had gotten even more intense. He had something to prove, and it only helped the team. Hunter truly seemed to love the game. I loved football too, but I wasn't as intense as Hunter. It was his number one concern in life. I could get distracted, unlike Hunter. I had a hard time focusing, due to Aurora. I doubted that Hunter had ever been distracted from the game by a girl. Which made me wonder just how much of an **ass** his father was. My dad put a lot of importance on the game, because it would send me to college. I didn't think that was the case with Hunter's dad. It was more, or at least that is how it looked to everyone else. When I was finally at home and alone in my room, I smiled as I lay back on my bed and started a text to Aurora. I'd debated all afternoon if I should text her tonight. Although the entire time I was arguing with myself about it I knew I was going to. I had dropped two passes and not given a **shit** about it. My focus had been Aurora. How was the rest of your day?

## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

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You didn't embarrass me, Aurora. You had me so damn worked up I wasn't sure if I should tell them to park the car and get out or thank my lucky stars for whatever I'd done to have you in my lap. I stopped you because I was afraid if we kept going I'd go too far. I wanted to. So very bad.

## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

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The fear in Blakely's eyes quickly replaced the anger. She backed up a step and shook her head.

"No. **Jesus**, what's your issue?" Her tone was a bit shaky as she tried to keep her cool. I felt a little sorry for her, and that was surprising even to me. Blakely spun and stalked off, walking faster with each step down the same path Hunter had just taken.

I began moving in their direction, without thinking about what I was going to do or say, when she turned those eyes toward me again. **Jesus Christ**, it was like a boulder slammed into me. I was frozen again.

Staring at her. Just when I was about to question my sanity, she smiled. Straight white teeth. As perfect as the rest of her. The purity of that smile was in her eyes. Nothing was there clouding it. Making

you wonder what she was thinking or up to. It was the most real thing I'd ever experienced in my life.

"Please tell me you're kidding," Nash said. "Nope." "**Jesus**, she's coming back. She's not gone forever.

She'll be back Saturday. Right? That's a week. Hunter said she was gone for the week." That was four days from now, which felt like a fucking eternity. Had she seen Denver? Maybe she would decide to stay

with her grandmother. I'd only had five days with her. Denver had years. Could what we had withstand

that? **Fuck**. "Some guys are coming over to my place to watch football and get away from visiting

relatives in their houses. You're coming with me," Nash said this time after glancing down at his phone to

read a text message. This was typical for Thanksgiving holidays. We watched a lot of football and hid

from family gatherings until it was time to eat.

"Don't you ever **fucking** talk about her like that again!" The roar of my voice carried down the hallway.

I was aware of it, but I was detached. "**Jesus**, man! I wasn't bashing her. Calm the hell down," Asa said

just as angrily, his eyes wide with shock.

## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

---

I rested my hands on her hips and pulled her closer to me. She wiggled against my arousal and thoughts of taking this back into the woods and away from the whole damn field party's viewing pleasure sounded like a wise idea. "Ohmygod, just get a damn backseat somewhere. No one wants to see that." Blakely's familiar, annoying voice was like ice over my head, but I only broke the kiss. I kept Nova up against me. "This field is mine. Might want to remember that." The threat in my tone was cold. I wanted it to be. I think I want to make up my own mind about you. That was brave. I was proud of myself. Ryker grinned and replied via text. Thank God. I was afraid I would have to beg. This way I look much cooler. I pressed my lips together to keep from laughing. Then tipped my head back to meet his gaze. We stayed there a moment, and the smile on his face was so genuine and almost excited that I found it hard to believe all these warnings I'd been given about him. He didn't seem to care about my being deaf. If he was a player, then why would he go out of his way to get to know me? What I was being told and the guy in front of me didn't add up.

He looked relieved and a little surprised I was agreeing. I wondered, if I'd pushed him harder, would he have given in to the driving-to-find-her idea. Possibly, but we'd both be in trouble with our parents, and there was little chance we'd find her. I didn't even have a damn phone number I could contact her on. "Thank God," he muttered, standing up. "I thought I was going to have to talk you out of that stupid going-to-get-her idea." If I could just talk to her. Know she was okay. Hell, if I could know she wasn't with Denver and hadn't forgotten all about me, that was what I needed. I also wanted to see her smile light up and make me forget everything else.

Nothing coming out of her mouth was making any goddamn sense. "What?" was all I could say.

## Book Review: Making A Play by Abbi Glines

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Girls and their gossip. I didn't like Blakely. She'd hurt Nash when he was down. But it was the second best thing that happened to him, getting rid of her, Tallulah being the best. I shrugged and took a drink. "Don't care if she's here or not." That was the truth. As long as I wasn't subjected to talking to her, I was good. I'd never thought much of her when Nash was with her either.

Teenagers out here alone could get away with a lot. I glanced out at the dark woods and wondered what went on at these parties. Then my eyes saw a beer keg on the bed of the old truck. I'd never had beer from a keg, but I had seen one in more than one episode of *That '70s Show*. I recognized it even from a distance. I took my phone and asked: They let you drink? Then I waited to see if he laughed at my question.



## **PROFANITY APPROXIMATE COUNT (and other sensitive words)**

Fuck – 57

Dick – 1

Ass – 23

Bitch – 1

Bastard – 1

Shit – 37

Damn – 67

## **RED FLAG**

Drunk – 2

Drink – 11

Beer - 12

God – 15

Jesus – 8

Pregnant – 2

Sex – 28

## **CONCLUSION**

**Not appropriate literary content for K-12 schools**