



# Bad Beat

*Sarah Curtis*

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## **Bad Beat** Sarah Curtis

Bad Beat: A hand in which a player with strong cards is unexpectedly beaten by a lucky draw.

Nico Conti has never regretted joining the family business. Through hard work, loyalty, ruthlessness, and dedication, he earned his rank as Capo and his army of soldiers.

With the life he leads, a good woman is not in the cards—until one comes along and turns his world upside down.

Olivia Miller's childhood was anything but conventional. Raised in a brothel, her mother protected Olivia from that life until she became sick. Now Olivia must be the protector.

Taken as collateral by Nico Conti in a business dispute between families, Olivia is desperate to get home—until Nico makes her an offer she can't refuse.

Or can she?

Because to save the one she loves most, Olivia will need to ignore the sacrifices made for her and barter herself to the man who holds her future in his hands.

Author's note:

This is a full-length, steamy, contemporary romance novel without a cliffhanger. It is part of a series, but each book is a stand-alone centering on new main characters. Due to sex, language, and violence it is recommended for persons over 18.\*\*\* HEA \*\*\*

## **Bad Beat Details**

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Author : Sarah Curtis

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## **From Reader Review Bad Beat for online ebook**

### **Sarah says**

IT'S LIVE!!!

Here's a link until GRs catches up. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B074NX4W2P>

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### **Lorraine Lesar says**

OMG....that epilogue!!!

I was going with 3.5\* because This Thing of Ours (a Gamblers spin-off) had the edge for me. Then I read the epic epilogue - Nico came good ?, so it has to be 4\*.

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### **Carvanz says**

I absolutely loved this book! Sarah Curtis knows how to do strong possessive alpha heroes and her latest book Bad Beat has one of the best alphas I've read.

In the process of following a lead to someone who is doing business in his family's territory, Nico finds Olivia. She has had a different kind of upbringing and is in the wrong place at the right time. Nico decides she fits into his plan to hold those who injured his friend's woman accountable. He has no intention of becoming involved with her. She is a pawn, that's all.

Olivia just wants to help her mother in any way that is necessary. The price of doing so is not a consideration. When Nico assures her he will keep her and her mother safe, she gives in.

This wonderful book takes you through so many steps of this couple's relationship as it grows. It's not something you get a chance to experience often and it was refreshing and unique. I really loved reading how they grew together and eventually were able to embrace the L word.

This is a fast paced read with some incredible secondary characters that I'd love to read more about. Sprinkled with just the right amount of humor, plenty of scenes that will make you smile, oh so much steamy

goodness and even some suspense.

It doesn't get any better than this!

Dual POV

Safe

No apparent triggers

Can standalone

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## **Eve Recinella (Between The Bookends) says**

This is an OK cover. Good use of graphics. Good representation of the story and hero. OK composition and interesting title work.

To start with I am going to admit that I am in a bit of a mood funk today. And I am guessing that played a big part in how nitpicky I was being while reading this one. Pushing that aside I will say that I did enjoy it overall.

The writing was good. The pace was excellent and I never felt the need to skim. There was some OW drama that was pointless (IMO) since it didn't cause any issues. I am SO over ridiculous cartoon villain like behavior from OW in these books. Especially in a case like this where it didn't cause a problem at all and was wrapped up with very little fanfare. There was a nice array of secondary characters as well. Although the mother felt a bit like an afterthought and I would have liked to have seen more involvement in the story from her character.

Olivia was a sweet heroine. I don't have a lot to say about her. I liked her personality. I do wish she would have shown more backbone at times instead of settling when it came to how she thought Nico felt about her. Nico, on the other hand, I had a love/hate relationship with. For the first 40% of the book his constant inner thoughts about using her and sending her back, not to mention his hot/cold routine grated on my nerves. The first couple times he had sex with the heroine felt cold to me. Especially the one in the dressing room. I did warm up to him as the book went on, but I still ended up being annoyed at his inability to admit he loved her right up until the book was almost finished. The whole Valentine Day thing pissed me off immensely, and I wanted Olivia to take a stand and decide she deserved more than a guy who couldn't love her.

But like I said, even with the things that annoyed me I still got sucked into the story and ended up enjoying it. So two thumbs up from yours truly.

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## **SB\*needs low angst books\* says**

2nd read and still love it just as much as the first time. I read a book that was very disappointing and needed a good read so picked this one back up and it is so apart of my re-read list! I love the dogs names and I love the idea of bed picnics.

Nico Conti was helping his friend Alec with some trouble that his woman's brother brought to her door. In cleaning up the mess he finds out someone is infiltrating on his territory and goes to confront and warn them. While at the office of the man he finds is behind everything he sees Olivia and is taken by her beauty then takes her as collateral.

Olivia is confused when she is taken by the handsome powerful man but needs to get back home to take care of her sick mother. She tries to escape but when she fails she makes a deal with Nico to get help for her mom. Nico agrees in exchange for time with her and she agrees since she does find him attractive. When the man that had been helping her wants her back, Nico will not give her up and marries her but will love develop between them after getting married and will she her being married kept her safe.

I have to say this is probably my new favorite by this author. It even surpasses her 1st book for me which I loved. I loved both characters and enjoyed the time they spent together as they got to know each other. I loved the epilogue. I just loved it. This just really worked for me. I also liked that his mafia business didn't take over the romance or try to be uber gritty either. So big thumbs up for me.

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## **Mindy Lou's Book Review says**

Despite not wanting to sound like a tween, I have to say it. OMG! Let's see if I can do this book justice. First, let me just say I turned into a total sap when I finished the epilogue. I actually sighed like a lovesick fool. I love that Sarah Curtis went a bit edgy with this story. I'm a sucker for the unemotional Hero and Nico was above and beyond my expectations.

After getting a look into what caused the rift between Nico and Alec, this book started off where "All In" ended. We got Nico's POV of the motel scene when he came to Alec's aid to save his girl, River. That scene led to Nico following the trail of what got Royal, River's brother, into the trouble that pulled River in. This is where it all begins for Nico.

One look at Olivia and Nico was a goner. Except he doesn't know it. He's a rational man. He's only taking her to stop the thugs from moving in on his territory, right? It can't be because she actually means something. He's gotta keep her a bit longer than planned. It's smart business. It's not because he can't let her go, Right? Oh Nico. \*Shakes head\*

Nico is the son of a mob boss. The empire will be his someday and he has trained since he was 18 to show no emotions, to be strong, patient and deadly. He's been this way for so long, he doesn't even know what emotions are sometimes. Until Olivia. Sweet Olivia. The daughter of a prostitute who sheltered her so she could have a better life.

I absolutely loved how the author gave such a sweet, slow burn love. We got to see in actions instead of words how these two become more to each other than they possibly could have expected.

The book was all about them as a couple learning each other and facing obstacles together. Such a refreshing change. The way Nico treated Olivia is every woman's dream come true. The fact that he was so good to her even when he was clueless to his feelings made it even more special.

I don't know how the author can top this one. Love it! ARC provided by author.

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## **Heather Blair says**

4.5 stars

This was like Pretty Woman, mafia-style!

I thought Sarah Curtis outdid herself with the first of The Gamblers series, , because, come on, Alec and River were awesome. Nico, though, Nico caught my attention right away. I was bugging Sarah for his book before I finished Alec's!! lol Gotta love them bad boys.

And make no mistake, Nico is BAD. His choice to join the family business cost him his best friend and any chance at a good woman. Or so he thought.

When he makes a snap decision to kidnap beautiful Olivia and hold her as collateral in a looming turf war, Nico has no intention of letting her get under his skin. But when the itch gets too strong, Nico decides to handle it—with a business proposition.

Nico's deal isn't one Olivia ever saw herself accepting, but circumstances leave her with no choice. She doesn't expect keeping him out of her heart to be the hardest part of their arrangement.

There was a lot of twists and turns here, but I'll let you experience those for yourself. (It's more fun that way!!)

FYI, some OW drama occurs. (mild)

I loved these two together. I ADORED Olivia's escape attempt(OMFG!! I laughed so hard!) but Nico himself was the big draw here. Definitely my favorite Sarah Curtis MC to date!

This is one delicious swoon-worthy, panty-melting, tear-jerking, breath-stealing book!!!

SO why aren't you reading this already?!?!?

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## **Nicole says**

I'm a huge fan of Sarah Curtis's books.

She writes books that I know I'm going to love for many reasons, but the two major ones are:

- 1) she writes THE BEST alpha males;
- 2) her books are always safe! No cheating ever!

Nico is hot...just look at the cover!! And I loved our h, Olivia. They had great chemistry even though they started out not really liking each other. It's got a bit of suspense to it which I really enjoyed. And the Italian phrases that were used I especially liked...being half Italian, that was a nice touch.

We also got to see what Alec and River are up to. Now that put a huge smile on my face!

Another great read by Ms. Curtis!

\*ARC received in exchange for an honest review. \*

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## **Leo (Queen of the Rants and the Crazy) says**

Of course another virgin.. Why not??

I'm not opposed to reading a book with a virgin heroine as long as the hero is one too but we ALL know those are unicorns..

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## **?Tonya? says**

It's Live!

**\*\*ARC RECEIVED IN EXCHANGE FOR AN HONEST REVIEW \*\***

After reading book 1 in this series, All In, I was wishing, hoping and praying for a book about Nico. I just knew this man would bring some good alpha.

Nico was broody. He didn't let many in. He chose the path of his father - even when it cost him his very best friend (Alec from book 1) at a very young age. It felt like he turned off his emotions and didn't let anyone in. Once he saw Olivia, those walls were put to the test. He often tried to internally reason with himself about what he was feeling, attempting to downplay his reaction to Olivia. Even going as far as nearly making a huge mistake in order to convince himself he didn't want her. I personally would have loved him to face his feelings earlier on in the book.

Olivia was a really good heroine. She was young and while she grew up in a less than ideal situation, she was actually very sheltered. Caring for her ailing mother left her very few options and she had come to realize that her fate was really not in her hands. Once she met Nico, she started to feel things that she never thought she would have the opportunity to feel. I did wish she would have stood up for herself a little more and not

just accept what scraps she was given. Even put Nico on the spot- but her past and the fact that she never imagined she would even have someone like Nico, left her willing to settle.

- no cheating
  - mild ow drama (hero had never been in any kind of relationship with her)
  - mafia violence
  - steamy scenes
  - good secondary characters that I hope get their own stories
  - an epilogue about 3 years out
- 

**Ashi- A hopeless romantic girl :D says**

**5 " I love Nico" stars**

?DAMN! after a long time i enjoyed a book this much?

After reading 'Alluring' and 'All in' i knew Sarah curtis writes exactly the type of book i look for but after Nico there is no doubt left..

If you love-

Alpha possessive hero

Sweet heroine

Virgin heroine

Mafia bg

Cute relationship

Then you will definitely love this book!

Because for me those facts were enough to enjoy the hell out of this book!

I loved each and every character..

I like that even the semi-villian got his hea ( won't spoil it for you)

I loved the MC's relationship progress... how they fall in love.

Our main characters Nico and Olivia were srsly made for each other♥♥

Nico- Mafia man - A capo



Being in this life made his heart hard and Olivia melted it..

OLIVIA- A sweet girl who is stuck in this life due to circumstances..

This book will sure give you those bad boy falling for sweet innocent girl feels and who doesn't love to read that type of story?

Other points-

I found Nico's family very interesting and enjoyable..  
That Grandma Rosella thing cracked me up!

What I really want to say is if you want a good book with awesome characters and fine hotness then this is the book for you!

This book was also my first beta read and I was really lucky that it was fun to read and very enjoyable..

Thanks Sarah for choosing me for this and writing this amazing book!!

ARC generously provided by author!!

xxxxxxxxxxxxx B.R reviewxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx  
whoopie!

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## Stacey is Sassy says

### **It's like a fairytale except Prince Charming holds a switchblade...**

While reading *Bad Beat*, I had to keep reminding myself that Nico was a baddie. Nico is in the Mafia and his Dad is the Big Boss. We learn at the very beginning that it had been Nico's plan from the time he was a child, to work for his Dad. The family connection did not give him a free ride, he had to work and whack a few people to get to his position. But, at times, it was easy to forget that he had a switchblade in his pocket and a gun at his back. See, I forgot, because he was kind of sweet in a bossy, alpha, you are mine, kind of way.

Nico has learnt over the years that it's better to not show emotion. Emotions and affection can make you weak. When Nico's childhood mate, Alec needs his help, he doesn't hesitate to use his connections. Unknown to Nico, this favour leads him on a path that brings him face to face with the one woman who can crack the barrier he hides his emotions behind.

Olivia's led a very sheltered life. My first thought when she was introduced was – how did a very sheltered 22-year-old end up dressed like a prostitute? Oh, it would be easy to assume she's acting out in rebellion, running away or has been lead down the wrong path. Turned out I was totally wrong and wasn't even close.

So, the very innocent Olivia happened to have caught the eye of two very influential Mafia guys...on opposing sides. They're both bad, but one is just a wee bit ickier than the other. Lucky for her, the less icky one is Nico, and he wants to help her. Olivia's mother is ill and she can't afford all the medicine she needs to buy for her to get better. Nico offers to get her away from the icky mafia dude and look after her mother, in exchange for certain services (wink, wink, nudge, nudge).

Nico originally planned to wham, bam, thank you, ma'am Olivia, but those plans changed once he realised that he wanted to be the only wham bammer in her life. He manages to talk her into marrying him and they wham bam till their hearts were content.

Now, while all the wham bamming is going on, there are few highs and lows that Nico and Olivia have to face. There's this psycho chick who wanted Nico, baddies who want to separate them, and baddies who want to use them. Nico does his Prince Charming act, with a switchblade and his gun, saves the day and carries his princess off to their castle.

I really enjoyed *Bad Beat* and struggled to put it down when I needed to go to work...and exercise...and help hubby celebrate his birthday today. I really must love my hubby, I stopped reading at 90% (when the baddies were being extra bad) to do the birthday thing.

There are a lot of sexy times in this story and you definitely get to see their connection with all the wham bamming going on. I did get a little frustrated with Nico and his drawn out determination to keep his heart locked away. Yeah, Nico, those heart flutters mean you *FEEL* something for Olivia, you dodo head. I also thought that sweet, little Olivia was a little too naïve and innocent. All good though and got my requisite heart flutters and goofy smiles by the end.

I definitely think Sarah Curtis' talent has increased with every new release and this is her best work yet. I will be reading more of her stories in the future.

*Stacey is Sassy, received a complimentary copy of this story. The copy provided is not the final copy and may be subject to edits and changes.*

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**Nicla says**

[Yes (hide spoiler)]

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**French Press Bookworm Blog says**

Give me more!!! I loved every word of this book...

What I loved...

Nico! I mean his name alone is freaking sexy but throw in his hard stare and sweet words or when he speaks Italian and I'm done for. He was hard and kinda brutal(in a good way) and oh so sweet to his woman. I loved that even though they met in an odd way it didn't take away from what they built.

I loved the story line. And I'm a sucker for any book with some mafia goodness.

One word...Brussels sprouts...pretty sure I spit water all over the place with that line!

After starting and finishing so many books lately this one was refreshing. It didn't feel predictable and had something that just felt new for me. Some stuff I didn't see coming and I loved that

What I didn't like...

When it ended!

Seriously if you haven't read anything by this author your missing out. One of my favorites

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## **Janie says**

This author has fast become a favorite of mine. I haven't read a story by Sarah Curtis that I haven't loved yet. Ever since reading All In, I have been waiting for Nico's story. I was so intrigued by him and what happened between him and Alec that caused their falling out. We know that Nico has mob ties and he is very unapologetic about the path he chose. And even though he and Alec had a falling out, he doesn't hesitate to be there for Alec and River when they needed him most.

So Bad Beat begins where All In ended and we get to see what Nico does after that to protect Alec and River. This is how he meets Olivia. Olivia has grown up in a world that most of us have only ever read about. Her upbringing and choices that she had to make are the reasons that she even crosses paths with Nico.

I have to say when the book began, I was worried that I may not like Nico as much as I first thought. But then as I was reading, I realized that I knew what Nico didn't lol. This will make sense when you read the book. His actions, words and gradual changes are what show the reader what is truly happening here.

I truly loved Olivia. She was sweet and so selfless. I honestly felt like she could have been bitter from the hand she was dealt, but she never was. Her reactions to situations were totally believable to me and she was much stronger than I originally gave her credit for.

I loved that we got to catch up with Alec and find out what is happening in his and River's lives. This has a little bit of everything. There's definitely romance, some suspense, betrayal and a sense of family. I am hoping and praying for Marco's book. Please, please, please Sarah, tell me you're writing his story.

ARC generously provided by the author!! Thanks for not making me wait until release day!!

