



# The Plunge

*Ruthie Luhnnow*

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## **The Plunge** Ruthie Luhnnow

Matt Harper has the perfect life—so why is he so miserable?

On paper, Matt's got everything: a degree from a prestigious university, a successful career, a beautiful girlfriend—but he's still not happy. One day, he leaves it all behind and heads to the mountains in a desperate attempt to find himself. Matt can't outrun his problems, though—and things only get more complicated when he meets a young, charismatic stranger he can't seem to stay away from.

Wild, passionate, and deeply troubled, Josh Day is interested in one thing: forgetting his crappy life. Whether it's at the bottom of a bottle or in bed with a fling, Josh moves too quickly and parties too hard to give himself a chance to think about everything that's gone wrong. When Josh meets Matt at a party, it seems like the perfect opportunity for his next hook up.

The two men are quickly drawn to each other, opening up to one another in ways they never have before. As Matt and Josh grow closer, they are forced to confront their inner demons. To be together, Matt will have to leave his old life behind completely and Josh must face the trauma he's been hiding from—but they find that love alone may not be enough to overcome their fears.

Will both men be brave enough to take the plunge?

The Plunge is an emotional m/m contemporary romance with hurt/comfort themes, plenty of heat, and a happy ending.

## **The Plunge Details**

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Author : Ruthie Luhnnow

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Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Contemporary, Sociology, Abuse, Lgbt, Gay

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# From Reader Review The Plunge for online ebook

## Michelle says

[ Like the whole situation with Josh's family. Does Josh ever r

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## **\*\*Kaycee\*\*** says

4.5

The author is new to me and I was pleasantly surprised.

The author did a fantastic job with character development and I truly felt the spark between the two main characters. I know I was emotionally involved with them because when they screwed up I felt like throwing my Kindle :) The supporting characters were equally if not MORE enjoyable and really added depth to the MC.

The book did touch on MH issues such as depression and anxiety, which I would have liked to have seen explored more in depth. And other than needing editing for missing words in the middle of sentences, I felt this was a fantastic story. A solid "5 stars" if not for these issues.

Looking to read more from this author!

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## Cadiva says

### Clever and emotive debut novel

3.5\*

There's a lot of cleverness in this novel, clever use of language, clever use of setting and clever use of emotions.

Its not a Mills & Boon style romance with a simple misunderstanding easily rectified, instead it's full of the complexities of humanity.

But there is also a warmth to it, at heart it is a tale of two lost and broken souls finding the right person to help them heal, not by being a crutch to rely on but by being a rock against which they can shelter against the bitter winds.

Lovely world building, some fabulous secondary characters and a lack of cliches make this a really impressive debut novel.

It's not all happy and bright but there is an honesty to the relationship which makes you believe Matt and Josh will still be seeing the stars together when they're old and grey.

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## Silvia says

## Great debut book

The Plunge is a great debut book! The plot and characters were well developed and the story had a great flow. I'm embarrassed to admit this, but I so identified with Matt, one of the MCs, who rather than confront his issues, takes a leave of absence from his high paying job, his ideal girlfriend, his upper crust family and escapes to a small town to wallow in his depression. There Matt meets another fractured soul in the person of Josh who comes from a barely working class dysfunctional family, in other words completely opposite of the lifestyle that Matt fled. Josh doesn't make it easy for Matt to get to know him due to his own dark and dreary past. Add to the mix, a wonderful character and best friend of Josh named Lindsey and we have a beautifully woven story. I loved it and am rating it 5 stars.

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## Cathy says

### Beautiful Story

This is one of the more honest and beautiful stories I've read in a long time. This isn't a love story of two perfect people rather a story of two wonderfully flawed people. This is a love story of two real people. I would love to see more of Josh and Matt and I can't wait to see what Ruthie has in store for us next. Excellent first story. She has a bright future ahead.

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## Ashley says

Listen guys, this is honestly such an important and amazing book. I knew it would be a favorite when I was only a 1/4 of the way through. It's an NA m/m romance and holy balls it's perfect. I mean, one of the mc's just flat out says he's bisexual. And it deals with mental health and I just don't think I can say enough good things. Read this if you love puppies. Puppies want you to read this book.

Trigger Warning for domestic violence!!

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## ~☆~Dœni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~☆~ says

I didn't connect with this story at all. The present-tense, third-person POV was jarring and distracting. I found myself skimming entire chapters, just waiting for the story to go somewhere.

There was a lot of angst, including mental health issues, and the ending was a weak HFN. These men had so many issues to overcome, I felt strangely let down and a bit depressed, not at all what I want after reading a romance novel.

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## avid reader 1 says

**\*\*Possible Spoilers\*\***

I was pleasantly surprised by this book. I've read other works by this author and enjoyed them, but this feels

different.

The Plunge brought me face to face with some of the byproducts of depression. The confusion and dissatisfaction that Matt experiences are finely drawn by the author, and it took her pointing it out for me to realize that they ARE symptoms of depression. He knows he needs to make changes in his life but is scared to let go of the comfort of status quo. So, he allows inertia to drag him down.

Josh is also experiencing mental distress due to intellectual and familial/abuse issues. He approaches sex as a purely visceral need for release and refuses to share any part of his inner self with his brief encounters. He barely allows his best friend to know any details of his life.

That Matt and Josh connect and allow each other into each other's hearts and minds is a hard-fought journey as neither are easily trusting.

Though there was an immediate attraction between them, the author made them get to know each other, even if only on a superficial level, before allowing them to become intimate with each other. They complement each other and offer the other some much-needed support.

The author forces us to look at their situations in a different way so that we can understand these sensitive and very real issues.

Their intimacies are incredibly hot, and the HEA is very satisfying.

The environmental descriptions are lovely, easily visualized and suitable for the scenes. The secondary characters are well thought out and supportive of the storyline.

I am voluntarily reviewing the advance reader copy I received from the author.

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## **MTULIPK says**

WHO AMONG ALL OF US HASN'T-AT LEAST ONCE-THOUGHT ABOUT LEAVING IT ALL BEHIND AND STARTING OVER FRESH?

COME ON...AT LEAST ONCE?!?

No matter if you're made of money or have absolutely none, most all of us have at least one time or another thought about throwing it all away and starting over. But, what if you could? Seriously? Would you?

That's the premise that "The Plunge" delves into. (At least, partially.)

I've read reviews that talk about what they should have done, or-if it had been real life-what would have been done.

I'M NOT GOING TO TALK ABOUT SHOULD'VE, WOULD'VE, COULD'VE.

I'm just going to talk about what IS in this book.

This book is sizzling with sexual tension. Every encounter is intense. The chemistry between Matt and Josh is apparent from their very first spotting of each other-just like the cliché-'from across the crowded room.' These two characters are each other's soulmates. The way the author writes puts you in the same room with them. Watching. Waiting. Prickling with tension. Wondering if now will be the time...will Matt finally relent? Will now be the time he gives in? How will Josh react this time? How will he react if Matt says "no" one more time?

? For your convenience, if you don't want a lot of details, you can cut to the last 2 paragraphs with this heart symbol. It will give you a quicker wrap-up.?

Matt suddenly shows up in a small mountain town, ready to stay for several months. The first thing he does, after renting a small cabin on the lake, is go to a restaurant where he meets a very special woman, a waitress, Lindsey.

Lindsey invites him into her close-knit group of friends, and family, (she has a "feeling" that Matt is, "somehow," going to be important to their group) and he's easily accepted by all. Just the way he is. No questions asked. Whereas he comes from such a pretentious, (very rich) keep your distance, family and upbringing, that he has a hard time believing that nobody cares anything about his background. Who he is, what he does, etc. He has never met people that are willing to just accept him for who he is NOW and only care about how he is with them. Thus, he eagerly welcomes these new people into his life. They give him freedom from what everyone else has always expected him to be, think, do and even say. As for so long he's sat on the sidelines of his own life and let everyone else decide how everything, in his entire life, would go. {And, yet, he wonders WHY he can't make the hard decisions about his own life, or figure out why he's so unhappy-didn't he do everything he was SUPPOSED to do? And, why is it that he just ran and left everyone and everything behind?}

Josh, on the other hand, is the complete opposite of the insecure Matt.. He lives his life however the hell he pleases and everyone else be damned. He says, and does, anything he wants, to whom ever he wants, whenever he wants. His opinion of himself is way too low for him to accept anything good or nice about himself. He's literally a musical genius, who genuinely doesn't see it.

Josh has had a rough life. A bad life. It shows in his attitude, his foul-mouth and even his carefree and careless attitude. Yet, for all that, people are drawn to him. He's always the high energy, manic, life of any party. And, he's ALWAYS drinking. He figures his life is never going to change, never going to go anywhere and never going to amount to anything. All in all, never going to be any more than the sh^t-mess it already is. So, in return, he doesn't give a damn about most anything or most anyone else. Especially not his own self. It's been his way of punishing himself. Making sure his life sucks and keeping everyone at arms length by making sure they don't care for him-just as much as he doesn't care for himself.

Ever since he'd made ONE mistake as a teenager, he's let his life spiral out of control to the point it's currently at. Not just "let" it spiral-but, "pushed" it into that spiral, himself.

Josh picks men up left and right. He uses them however he sees fit. Then, he dumps them, right where he found them, when he's done with them. He's so detached from everyone and everything that he's never even been on a "date." He's never spent more time with a man than it takes to get the "job" done. That's it. Nothing more. And, he has an endless supply of men available, living in a tourist town.

Yet, he's enigmatic, also. He doesn't care anything about any of these men. And, if they even try to ask him anything about himself, they get a scathing, tearing-down mouthful, worthy of being delivered only to someone's vilest, worst enemy. Certainly not someone just met moments earlier.

Lindsey was right. Matt is important to their group. Somehow, he seems to be the only person Josh responds to. He's seems to be the only person able to get through to Josh. Matt seems to be the only person able to give Josh hope. Plus, Matt not only gives him the love he so needs but, he helps Josh to ACCEPT that love, as well. Somehow each of them not only see each other's pain, but KNOW it and understand it. Each can FEEL what the other is going through, deep inside. With that first glimpse, across the crowded room, they both knew there was something different that drawing them to each other.

They're like missing puzzle pieces that slot together perfectly. Soulmates. They calm and quiet each other. They don't suddenly make everything alright. They don't make each other the perfect person they're supposed to be. They just help to soothe the insecurities in one of them and help douse the fire of rage in the other of them.

?And, there it is...this is the story of two broken men. Matt who needs to be accepted for being just who he is, and nothing more. He needs to learn to have the confidence to speak up for himself and do for himself.

Not wait for everyone else to do it for him. Not wait for someone else to direct his life for him. Which is something Josh is certainly an expert at (living freer) and can help him with. And Josh. Who is already accepted for who he is (remember, this is his group, too) but, can't accept that he's deserving of even a small amount of love. He needs to learn he's a worthy person. Not only worthy of someone else's love but, most importantly, worthy of his own love. And, the kind, quiet and VERY patient Matt is just the man to help him with that.

?Taking "THE PLUNGE" isn't JUST about the courage to start over physically. It's about the courage to start over psychologically, as well. To re-think all that you've been, up until now. It's about the courage to just let go of your life and just "LET IT BE." To have enough faith in yourself to open your heart and soul and let someone else in. Let someone see the real you, not only during the up times but, during the low, scathing times when you're at your ugliest with nothing to hide, and maybe, just maybe, let them give you a helping hand, if you so need it.

Take "THE PLUNGE."

Let go and LIVE .

Let go and LOVE.

I SOOO ENJOJOYED READING THIS FREE "ARC" (ADVANCE READER COPY) OF THIS BOOK "THE PLUNGE," FROM THE AUTHOR "RUTHIE LUHNOW," THAT I AM FREELY, AND WHOLEHEARTEDLY, VOLUNTEERING TO WRITE THIS REVIEW BECAUSE I HONESTLY HOPE TO ENCOURAGE OTHER READERS WHO MAY NOT BE FAMILIAR WITH EITHER THIS GENRE OR THIS AUTHOR TO TAKE A STEP FORWARD AND GIVE IT A TRY...I TRULY BELIEVE THEY WOULD NOT BE DISAPPOINTED!

MTULIPK

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## **Candice says**

I really liked this. I LOVED Josh. GAH! There are no words that can sum up my love for that boy.

Then we get Matt and he's all like...Matt. These two were amazing together. I loved them.

Throw in some amazing secondary characters, which for me is HUGE because I normally hate secondary characters, and we have a great story.

Matt is confused and comes to a small town to sort out his head. He doesn't plan on meeting such great people. People that are free to be themselves. I loved how Matt just went with the flow. He just waded right in and became one of them. It was great. I did HATE (view spoiler)

Josh was everything. Like I said before, I loved him.

Being from small town Ohio (and a tourist town), I LOVED the idea of the end of Summer party. We had something similar, but we just ended up at a kegger in the middle of a field.

I'm sure this book isn't for everyone, but for me it was what I needed.

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## **Dawn Reese says**

### **Decisions of a lifetime**

Great read. The story unfolds nicely and has you rooting for the characters. The friendships are real and you feel like you are on the periphery looking in. Kudos to Ruthie Luhnnow.

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## **Jovan says**

### **3.5**

“The Plunge” is a complex and emotional romance between two people who don’t know how to live, only how to survive. Matt survives by running away—first from what he really wants his life to be, thereby losing himself in the process, and then by running from the responsibilities he created. Josh survives by shutting out the ugly reality of his world and behaving in ways that he uses to reaffirm his belief that he is a terrible, worthless waste of space that doesn’t deserve and can’t have better.

The story highlights how denial, be it of your issues, your unhappiness or just a “straightforward” refusal to acknowledge your own pain can have hurtful and ugly consequences, not just for yourself but for the people who care about you. Josh’s denial causes him to lash out and knowingly hurt those that love him, while Matt’s causes him to latch on and refuse to release someone who loves him, even when he doesn’t want to be with her anymore, and causing her even more pain.

The story is not an easy read and can be frustrating if the reader is unfamiliar with the inability to do “simple, rational” things that severe anxiety and panic attacks can cause, a feature that does add length to the story by revisiting the same unresolved issues many times. Also, the book is written in the third person present tense, which some may not like but that I found refreshing; it gave the narrative a bit of space and reality. At times, first person books, especially jumping to multiple POVs tend to have inner monologues that sound like they are scripted for stand up comedians, and while sometimes funny and cute, the reader can’t help but roll their eyes at how unrealistic these inner narratives tend to be. So I found the POV choice beneficial to the gravity of Matt and Josh’s story.

While definitely not the book for you if you want a light, uncomplicated romance, still a worthwhile read.

**I voluntarily reviewed a copy of this book provided by the author.**

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## **Susan says**

SO SO SO GOOD! Intoxicating. Emotional. Beautiful. All of the characters, but most importantly Matt & Josh are so well developed... Matt is so importantly relatable to me. It's so well done and realistic with how Matt is questioning his life... it makes me feel a bit more understood, honestly. Both of these characters have a lot of stuff to work through but it's just so deep and moving and at the same time, hot as hell. Their



chemistry is perfect. I just love it. I need to read it again...

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## **David Durkit says**

### **Epic**

This is the second book by Ruthie that I've read. I read Almost Heaven first. This is an amazingly insightful novel, especially for a first book. It is long but I never tired of reading it. Her prose is velvety at times and a delight. I hope there are many more to be written.

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## **Krinessa says**

### **Awesome story**

There were so many things within this story that resonated with me. I truly enjoyed it. There were some minor grammatical errors and that's why I gave the story four stars instead of five. But honestly this story is five star worthy. Matt and Josh embodied so many issues we all can relate to. And the anxiety of major life changes if not really knowing what needs to change in your life but recognizing that some thing(s) must change and being too afraid to acknowledge this to even begin to work towards figuring out what those things may be keeps many, like Josh, refusing to deal until there is no choice but to deal because life forces you. It sucks. But I can attest that when it's all said and done, I was much better, much wiser, and stronger for it. Awesome story!

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