



Strike Out

Jordan Ford

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Baseball is her life, but a musician is strumming on her heartstrings. Will they strike a bad chord or make the perfect double play?

Max Barlow never takes her eyes off the ball. With a rare college baseball scholarship up for grabs, she can't afford to lose focus. But when she accidentally stumbles into the music room on her first day at Armitage High, she can't help but notice the hot guitarist. And he's made it clear he wouldn't mind giving her lessons...

Rock star Cairo Hale has a reputation for being able to play his way into any girl's heart. But his streak comes to an end with tomboy baseball player Max. While she makes him promise to keep their lessons a secret, it turns out she's an absolute natural. It looks like Cairo's generous offer has blossomed into so much more...

Max is torn between her team responsibilities, her newfound passion for the guitar... and her dreamy tutor. When she can no longer balance her double life, Max must make a choice that could change her future for good...

Strike Out is the second standalone book in The Barlow Sisters' Trilogy, a series of simmering YA contemporary romance novels. If you like endearing characters, love-ballad-worthy chemistry, and a hint of mystery, then you'll love Jordan Ford's sports romance series.

Strike Out Details

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From Reader Review Strike Out for online ebook

Bobo's Book Bank says

STRIKE OUT is book two in the Barlow Sisters series and although it's a standalone, the plot flows better if read in order. Max's story is a young adult, opposites attract (baseballer & rocker) clean, contemporary romance. Here's what I love about Jordan Ford's writing...not only are they well written and fast paced but they illustrate REAL LIFE connections and explore REAL LIFE problems. It's so easy sometimes, as a parent, to forget what life's like as a teenager; the expectations of parents, the hardship of "fitting in", the pressure to make certain choices. Ms. Ford managed to portray Max and Cairo's teenage characters fabulously. I FELT the wonder of Max's first kiss and the giddiness in Cairo's stomach when he realized his feelings for Max. I EXPERIENCED the fear and shame of getting caught in a lie. I also loved the deep, heartfelt connections between the sisters and the attention to family dynamics. (My sister's & I were never that close as teenagers but are DEFINITELY very close as adults!) This is a wonderfully sweet coming of age tale with a touch of mystery and a dash of drama! Told from dual POVs with a happy for Max and Cairo end but an "OH NO!" end for little sis, Chloe.

Lola says

I received a free copy from the author and voluntarily reviewed it.

I really enjoyed book 1 in this series, so I couldn't start book 2 soon enough. And book 2 was even better. I really liked the topic this book dealt with and I got sucked into the story from the start. Max's future is all planned out, she's a great baseball player and her father hopes she can get a scholarship. But Max isn't as into baseball as everyone think she is, she would love to learn how to play music. And that's the chance she gets in this book.

I liked the set-up and I could really connect with these character on certain points. It deals with the topics of expectations, pressure and following your dreams. The struggle between doing what people expect and what you really want. I enjoyed seeing Max discover music and her struggle on how to handle it felt very believable. I did agree with Cairo that she shouldn't keep it a secret, but on the other hand I could also understand her fear and how tough it was to admit say she didn't want the future her father had planned out for her.

Max and Cairo are so perfect together. I liked how Cairo helped Max discover the beauty of music. Seeing them grow closer and try and figure things out was awesome to read about. They were just so fun to read about and I liked how their romance build slowly at first with them getting to know each other through the music lessons. And while Max had difficulties with her parents at times, Cairo had the most awesome parents. I liked reading about Cairo's interactions with his parents, they might've been a bit too perfect, but it sure made for some great scenes.

I also liked how the romance wasn't filled with drama but there are some complications and things they struggle with, which fit this book well. I also like books with drama now and then, but the low drama thing really works here and I liked how any miscommunications got cleared up pretty fast. They really listened to each other and found a way to make things work.

It mostly reads like a contemporary romance book until a bit of suspense later on. To be honest I found the suspense better interwoven into the story in book 1, here it felt a bit too sudden. I did like the plot line with her uncle and how that tied into things, but it just felt a tad off how the suspense went from none to suddenly a very suspenseful scene.

Another thing I have to mention about this book is when it takes place. At first I was a tad confused as this book start on their first school day in their new town, which is what we already read in book 1. But once I read further my impression gradually changed into being impressed by how well the author handled it. Yes parts of this story overlap with the timeline of book 1, but you get to see different events and things from another point of view and it didn't feel at all like we got to see the same things again as it was very well written. And we get these small hints of what happened in Maddie's story so you can tie things together with when everything's happening.

We also get to see a little bit more of Maddie and Chloe. For about 50% of the book it takes place during Maddie's story and then the later half takes place after book 1 ended. And we get to see Maddie's reaction when Max tells her what's going on with her and we see some glimpses of her and Holden, which was fun. There's also the set-up for Chloe's story in this book, with some small hints that something is up with her and then that ending has me so curious about Chloe's story. I wish I already had the last book.

To summarize: I enjoyed this book even more than book 1. Cairo and Max are great couple. The romance is low on the drama, but there are some struggles and complications, it was the perfect balance. It also deals with topics like expectations and following your dreams, which I really enjoyed reading about. I was so fun to see Max discover her passion and figure out how to fit that into her life. It also was very well done how this book half took place during the timeline of book 1, but it never felt like events of book 1 got repeated, but we did get to some bits so you know where in events of book 1 it took place. I wasn't sure if I would like this why of telling the story when I started reading, but it really worked out. And in this book we get some hints about what's up with Chloe and I can't wait to read book 3!

Jillian Mitchell says

Jordan Ford has done it again! I love this book so much because it brings out yet a new scenario. Max has a lot of pressure on her from her Dad and family to play baseball but has always wanted to do something else. She just feels like if she does she will let her family down. Max gets overwhelmed trying to make everyone else happy until someone finally helps her find her happiness. I absolutely adore the interaction between Cairo and Max because he knows just the right way to help her see who she wants to be. He never asks her to become something he wants, he just teaches her how to free and it's a beautiful thing. Seeing how not only they grow each other, but accept each other wholeheartedly for whom the other is, is inspiring and that is what makes this such a sweet romance. I have always thought the best partners are those that push each other and challenge each other to be better and to be who they want to be and that is what these two do. This is an amazing book filled with intrigue, adoration and even stressful moments but it just makes their romance that much better. I fully recommend this book to anyone, especially those who have loved her previous books!

Leanne ~ Tales From The Heart says

I'm loving this series, but the ending.....argggghhhh when's the next one out?

This book runs parallel along side the first book, this is the second sister Max's story. Her secret romance with both a guy and a guitar. Her family think she is playing baseball, but she's growing up and persuing her own dreams. She gets caught up in some scary drama and her father cracks the whip in fear. I can't wait to read the 3rd sister's story as I have a feeling she's also rebelling.

Bravo Jordan Ford, I thoroughly enjoyed this story and this series and highly recommend it.

Emily Pennington says

Max Barlow is a talented young baseball player who has an opportunity for a rare baseball scholarship to college. When she meets Cairo Hale, she can't turn down an offer to give her guitar lessons. But Max's parents have always made plans for her life and she has always followed their wishes. Now she has a choice between what they have decided for her and what her heart wants.

This is a coming of age type story. The characters are likable and the story line is well done. But what will a girl who never had to make important choices do now, especially when those choices are in direct opposition to her parents' wishes? Will she find the courage to stand up to her parents? Or will she give up on the important things in life – happiness, love, growing into adulthood? I recommend this book. We can all relate to this time in our own lives when we had choices and challenges. Those choices are not always the right ones, but making them is part of growing up. See how Max handles her choices. I was given a copy of this book and voluntarily chose to review it. My comments reflect my honest opinion.

Merissa (Archaeolibrarian) says

Strike Out hits the ball waaaay out of the park! Don't get me wrong, I still love Maddie and Holden, but wow... Max and Cairo! Max has lost her love for baseball, but has no idea how to tell her father when all his hopes and dreams rest on her. That's a lot of pressure on a young woman. On her first day at school, she gets lost and finds herself in the music room. There is a red Stratocaster in the room, and she can't help but be drawn to it. Cairo, the resident rock star, finds this strange blonde girl near to his precious guitar, but he doesn't think that she is there to steal it. Instead, it comes about that he offers to teach her how to play guitar - and Max finds something, and someone, who brings her alive.

Now, there are parts to this book that I didn't like - for example, how Max keeps Cairo a secret. I didn't like it, but I completely understood it, and my heart broke for both of them. Like I said in the first paragraph, Max is under a lot of pressure from her father, and doesn't want to disappoint him. The thought of losing the music though, and having to play baseball forever, hurts her more than she can say. Jordan Ford did an amazing job of making this so real. My emotions were swinging like a pendulum as I read, just like Max and Cairo's were.

The first part of the book takes you over ground already covered in Maddie and Hayden's story, but from Max's perspective. You never feel like you are bored reading this, because something is always happening that you didn't know about before.

This book had no editing or grammatical errors that disrupted my reading flow. The scenes changed

smoothing, flowing from one to the next. The characters continue to engage the reader's interest, and you get updates on how things are going for characters you have met previously. No middle book slump for this series. Highly recommended by me, and I can't wait for Chloe's book.

* A copy of this book was provided to me with no requirements for a review. I voluntarily read this book, and my comments here are my honest opinion. *

Merissa

Archaeolibrarian - I Dig Good Books!

Secretly Adorkable Readers says

Strike Out is the 2nd book in the Barlow Sister's series & this is Cairo and Max's story which is my favorite of the 2 so far! Who wouldn't love a HS rock star falling for the tomboy who plays baseball!

This is all about priorities and Max doesn't want anything to interfere her dream of becoming the best baseball player so she can make it to the pro's in college. Or is this her true dream or is she hiding the truth of what she really wants?

Cairo wants to show Max that there is more than baseball and he knows she is holding back but will Max fight for her dream or will it tear their relationship apart before it gets started? I just love this author's writing and how she keeps you intrigued with her stories and yearning for more! That ending!!!! I need more and cannot wait for Chloe's story!

Renee Adams-Cook says

Today I'm reviewing Strike Out written by Jordan Ford

This story is the 2nd in the series, behind Curveball (see previous review)

This one is centred around Max, Maddie's twin and the 'Middle' child. Max is the star hitter of the Baseball team and her father has his sights set on her getting a college scholarship for it. Growing up her entire life has been Baseball. She discovers another love/talent she has and when the schools Rock Star finds out about this, he makes it his mission to help her pursue it.

I really enjoyed this book. I have 2 sisters so these books are really speaking to me. At one point or another growing up, 2 have bonded leaving the other on the outer, so I could totally relate to the problems the three girls have and their drifting apart. Like Max I'm in the middle and felt like I was always doing what I knew would make other people happy but I got to a point where I just said, I'm making me happy now. Luckily my parents weren't as firm about my future as Max's.

I really love how she wrote Cairo. Book after book featuring 'Rock Stars' its all about the women they have fawning over them and them always 'gettin some'. I love how Cairo had girlfriends and not random hooks ups. It showed his character was more about the music and not the lifestyle. I love how even though he wants to make it big, he has college plans and dreams. I loved the bond between him and his parents. Unlike

other books where the rock star is rebelling, he is so stable within his home that he is genuinely a really nice guy. I honestly loved everything about him. Avan Jogia is the perfect muse for his character. ?

Max's character was so relatable, as I mentioned. I know the feeling of not wanting to disappoint anyone, that you put everyone else first. I was glad, even though it was in secret, she managed to find herself that made her happy.

I found the supporting characters in this story really enjoyable and Cairo's parents... ♥?♥?♥? Best Parents Ever!

I cannot wait until Chloe's book. Those last few paragraphs have me hooked. ?

Paz Vivanco says

5/5 freaking stars to this amazing book!

The first thing I want to say is that I connected so deeply with Max with all of her fears about the future, who she really is, what does she want to do with her life... that's definitely me. Jordan really captured that very well.

Now let's talk about the sexy musician; Cairo Hale. Oh boy! I really want him as my boyfriend. I fell in love with him from the very start, he was always so honest and trying to help Max in every way he could. If that's not love, then what is?

And the last thing I need to say about this awesome book, without throwing some spoilers, is that the mysteries on these books are only getting better and better! Because it's not only romance what you'll reading this book, there's also something else going on that'll leave you gaping!

Jordan Ford has done it again! I can't wait to read the last book in this wonderful trilogy!

Nana Pickrell says

I was privileged enough to receive a copy of this book from the author for an honest review.

This is the 2nd book in the series following the story of Max and Cairo. Max is the daughter that follows what her parents have planned out for her until the day she see a Stratocaster electric guitar in the music studio and her fingers itch to touch it. What follows is her struggle between doing what her parents want and doing what she feels in her soul. A journey from a young teenager scared to tell her parents what she really wants to do with her life to a young woman who finds the courage to stand up for herself. I loved it and can't wait to read Chloe's story.

Jennifer G says

Strike Out returns the reader to the story of the Barlow Sisters. Max Barlow is a baseball prodigy. She is going to be one of the first girls in the country to play for a college baseball team. Her dad has it all planned out for his Maximus. Nevermind that Max is over baseball and dreams of music. Nevermind that when she gets the opportunity to learn guitar, it turns out that she's a natural. Nevermind, that music makes her feel alive, like baseball never has. Music is magic. It's her passion, but Max is too afraid to disappoint her father, so now she's living his dream, hiding her's.

Cairo Hale is the frontman and lead guitar for Velocity. He's beautiful. He's considered a man-whore because there is always a girl on his arm, but he's not. Anything, but. He uses girlfriends as a shield against all of the women who want him. From the moment he sees Max looking at his guitar like it's the treasure he feels it is, he is consumed with the idea of teaching her to play. When this idea comes to be, he's happier than he's ever been. He loves how alive she becomes with music; seeing her pure joy. He loves being the one to bring this magic into her life. It takes him much longer to figure out that he wants more than to only be her teacher. It's hard though, since Max is convinced that she will lose him and her music if her father finds out. She convinces him to keep their relationship and the lessons a secret. This creates a wedge between her and her sisters as well at a time when the family is already experiencing a rough patch. Family drama on several fronts and it turns out Max isn't the only one keeping secrets. Some drama can be worked out by talking, some drama turns out to be more serious, even deadly. And secrets end up being revealed sooner or later. Choices must be made. People end up hurt, angry. But the Barlow's are family. They may not agree with each other, they may hurt each other, but they love each other. When times get rough, the sisters draw closer to one another; they always have each other.

Once again, the characters make this story special. Max and Cairo are good together. They bring out the best in one another. Max has never thought for herself. She has always followed the plan set for her by her father. Her father comes across as insensitive, demanding, unobservant, and even uncaring at times, but I don't think he's as bad as it seems. Max is scared and out of her element when it comes to thinking for herself and speaking up for what she wants. I don't think she's truly a coward, just new at going against her father's wishes. Cairo is mostly wonderful. The first full day these two spent together was perfection. He created so many lovely moments, but he wasn't perfect. He was less understanding than he should have been towards Max's justifiable fear of her father, because he has the world's greatest parents. We should all be so lucky! He has never had to disappoint his parents or stand against them. He has no idea how painful this can be. As someone who cannot even put pushy women in their place, he shouldn't call anyone a coward. The side characters all add depth to the story. Mads and Chloe play their role as the Barlow Sisters. I can't wait until these girls have worked through their growing pains and are back at full strength. Velocity plays a key role within the story. I love band dynamics and like Roman and Austin. I cannot stand Latifa. She embodies everything I dislike about female characters; nasty, jealous, deliberately hurtful. Nope, not a fan. And Uncle Conrad is a force of nature that impacts everything.

More than anything this is a coming of age story. It's a girl growing up, deciding what truly matters to her, deciding what is worth fighting for. It's about falling in love, showing courage, and becoming your own person. These Barlow Sisters are easy to connect to, easy to love. You can't help rooting for their happiness. This one ends on a scary note. Can't wait to see what happens next!

Linda says

By the time I finished Curveball, I knew Max was going to be my favorite sister, and I was right. Nothing against Maddie or Chloe, but Max was the sister that I related to the most. And I loved how the author managed to tell Max's story in tandem to parts of Maddie's without making me feel like Curveball was just being retold. You knew Max had a secret when reading Maddie's story, and I couldn't wait to see what that was. Just as we know Chloe has something going on, but no idea what it really is.

Max is one of those girls who would be hard to dislike. She was tough, loyal, had her own style apart from her twin, and she played baseball. Although considered the tomboy, she was vulnerable too. She never had a boyfriend and was unsure how to behave around Cairo, the first guy she was actually attracted to and her relationship with her dad? Yeah, she wasn't as tough on the inside as she came across. I absolutely loved Cairo. In Curveball, he came across as aloof or standoffish (not quite the right word) when in reality, he was just very into his music and band, but still a really nice guy. And I loved him and Max as a couple.

This was definitely my favorite book in the series, but have to admit I was left intrigued with the ending. I had really, really hoped that Chloe would end up with the one guy most would not expect her to be with and was glad to see that I hit the nail on the head. I cannot wait to read the last book of the series. In my opinion, these are getting better with each book.

Emmi says

This second book in the Barlow sisters trilogy has everything I love about Jordan Ford books
a touching love story
just the right amount of suspense
surprising twists
wonderful secondary characters
and m u s i c

I think it's the music that makes me love this book even more than the first one ?

And Cairo of course, 100% bookboyfriendmaterial

Love him because he is honest and considerate and brave and he stole my heart because he „sees“ the real Max and just wants her to be happy.

„And I'll keep fighting for you because I love being around you, talking to you, playing guitar with you, kissing you.“

Cairo and his parents are my fav family, they're really adorable together.

And that first kiss...awww heart fluttering.

I did not expect Max and Cairo's tender romance to be so swoonworthy ?

Jordan Ford's writing has once again given me all the feels and now I'm impatiently waiting for book#3 because I need to know what's up with Chloe...

ARC provided in exchange for an honest review

Aurora - Whoo Gives A Hoot says

** Read more of my reviews at Whoo Gives A Hoot **

I generously received this ARC from the author in exchange for an honest review...

Ever since devouring Curveball (Maddie's story) a couple weeks ago I have been super anxious to get my hands on Strike Out, the second installment in the Barlow Sisters trilogy, because I wanted to see what Max's story had to hold. All I can say is that I was certainly not disappointed because as always Jordan Ford (aka Melissa Pearl) knows how to deliver a binge-worthy read.

This story is all about following your dreams and discovering that if you put in the hard work that you can achieve anything you put your mind to. Max Barlow is the kind of person who always does what is expected of her. Her entire world is turned upside down when the Barlow family relocates to Armitage, California during the middle of the girls senior (Max & Maddie) and junior (Chloe) year. Suddenly she is expected to work overtime to keep her spot on the boy's baseball team. If her life wasn't chaotic enough enter Cairo Hale, the rockstar. The chemistry between Max and Cairo is undeniable right from the start, but she continues to fight it because she thinks she needs to focus on her father's goal - to secure a full-ride scholarship to college (sending three girls to college isn't cheap). When music starts to invade her thoughts she must decide if following her father's plan is the best decision.

Max is perhaps my favorite of the three Barlow sisters, although I must admit that I love them all for completely different reasons. Now that I've devoured Strike Out I seriously cannot wait to get my greedy hands on the final installment of the series, Foul Play (Chloe's story), especially after that intense ending!

Bel says

Follow your dreams is the the main theme in this second book in the Barlow girls series. Max is Maddies twin sister and her whole life has been spent playing baseball. A dream she thought she wanted until they arrive in Armitage and she lays her eyes on a beautiful guitar in her new high school's music room. She is spotted by Cairo Hale, school rockstar and frontman for the band Velocity. He sees her passion for music instantly and offers her guitar lessons.

However like a Romeo and Juliet tragedy, Max decides to keep their lessons a secret as she knows her father will not understand her change of heart from baseball to music. As far as dating, from the outside they appear to be a complete mismatch, the sporty girl and the rocker. However, music can bring anyone together and if Max is brave enough to take a stand, she may change her destiny forever. Loved this second installment and can't wait to now see Chloe's story.
