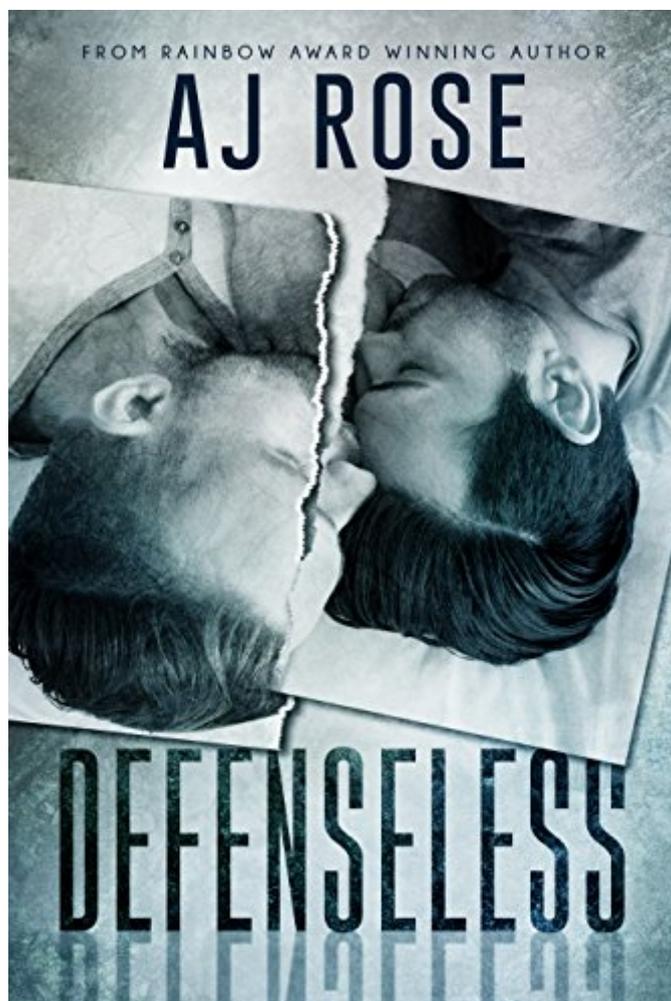


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# Defenseless



## Synopsis

From Rainbow Award-winning author AJ Rose, *Defenseless* is a gut-wrenching, heart-stopping story of love through adversity.-----Kyle Decker knew dating Jesse McGovern would change his life. Young and in love, and with the Supreme Court ruling in favor of marriage equality, the world is theirs to conquer. But their victorious Pride celebration ends in a savage attack, brutally demonstrating theyâ™re far from equal. Instead of wedding planning, Jesse and Kyle face an arduous recovery and a shattered sense of their place in the world, their once-promising future suddenly something to survive. While Jesse struggles with a permanent injury and its emotional aftermath, Kyleâ™s single-minded focus on Jesseâ™s recovery is the only thing keeping his demons at bayâ for now. What was a once-in-a-lifetime kind of love is now full of lies and resentment. With their dreams tattered and forever changed, trusting anyoneâ ”even each otherâ ”is daunting. So how can they have faith in twelve strangers on a jury? Theyâ™ve already learned the hard way it only takes a moment to become truly defenseless.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When SCOTUS ruled that marriage equality was the law of the land last year, the book shelves

flooded with gorgeous same sex romances. Men marrying men. Women marrying women. Love. Pure, amazing, rainbow love. And I adored it, I did. But I kept thinking, "There's no way this is the end. There's no way this ruling will end discrimination." I found it hard to accept all the hearts and flowers. Because though that wonderful day, June 26, 2015, brought laughter and smiles and legal acceptance. It did not end for everyone. *Defenseless* by AJ Rose is kind of the book I've been waiting for. It shows another side of that ruling. Reviewing this without spoilers is hard but I'm going to do it. This is a book built on emotions. Yes. Emotions. Because it's the emotions we feel that make us react how we do. The origin of them aren't always clear or righteous. They just are. We start with Jesse and Kyle moving in together, Pre SCOTUS. It's actually a good while before. Kyle is closeted from his family but Jesse is not. The dream to feel that blissful freedom to love is thick through the entire book. When you read a story knowing the equality will come you want to jump in and say, "Hang in there buddies. It's gonna happen." But Jesse and Kyle don't know this. They have a good life. Jesse's friends are A-MAZ-ING! Seriously the greatest people I think. I'll tell you my favorite secondary character in a minute. Anyway, we follow Kyle and Jesse as a couple. Living life and truly loving each other hard. It is really beautiful. Kyle does come out to his family and it goes meh. Bobby, Kyle's brother shocked me and yes HE is my favorite secondary character in this story. And then the ruling.

If you couldn't tell by the blurb, this is a powerful and moving story. I'm pretty sure there's not an emotion that AJ Rose missed in this book of love, loss and recovery, but the ride was definitely worth it. What should have been one of the best years of their lives turns tragic in a matter of minutes. Together for seven months, Jesse and Kyle have never been happier. In the past weeks they have moved in together, Kyle has come out to his family as bi-sexual and thinks it went pretty well and they have just gotten engaged on the heels of the Obergefell decision. Capping things off at Pride with their friends was the perfect celebration until everything is brought to a shattering halt by the actions of four homophobic animals seemingly bent on murder. The brutal attack takes place on page and it wasn't easy to read with the points of view of both men making it that more painful. Jesse suffered the most physical damage in the assault, but without diminishing that aspect, the focus is on how both men and their relationship are fundamentally changed by the psychological impact of what happened. The following year tests their strength and commitment to each other and it also brings out unexpected reactions from family, friends and complete strangers. As Jesse and Kyle are trying to conquer their anger, fear and pain, new wounds are created even as a growing support network does what they can to support and care for them. Then finally, almost a year later,

they have to relive everything all over again at a trial where they once again feel victimized in a search for justice and the ability to really move forward with the rest of their lives.

So happy, so in love and thrilled to be sharing their first apartment together, Kyle and Jesse are exhilarated when the ruling comes down for nationwide marriage equality. They rush to meet each other in the parking lot where they both work, although in different locations of the hospital, as they wait for the announcement. And then it comes. They won!!  
"We won?" • Jesse needed confirmation. It was too good to be true. Kyle laughed, almost manic as he grabbed Jesse in a fierce hug. He shook, and to Jesse's astonishment, a sob escaped, muffled by his shoulder.  
"We won," • Jesse whispered, squeezing his eyes shut.  
As I was reading, I was going through this, with Jesse and Kyle, celebrating with them. I felt as though I was right there, standing beside them. I was thrilled on their behalf and wanted to hug them badly and celebrate with them. I was a full body of goosebumps with tears flowing nonstop down my face. The writing is intense and powerful and this is the very beginning of the book and it doesn't let up. I knew I better bring in the whole roll of paper towels. I was going to need them. If I was writing this review with pen and paper I would have a waste basket filled full with wadded up paper where I've started over so many times trying to put my thoughts in order of what I want to say. I haven't looked at other reviews because I didn't want to know how anyone else described their experience with Defenseless. So, the best way I know how, here it goes. I had to pace myself because I'm a migraine sufferer. And, I'm a bawl baby (which sets off migraines) and not only am I invested in the story, I quickly am now devastated by the turn of events.

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