**The Climb Media Kit**

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**Tagline:** Author Amra Pajalić releases a sweet young adult romantic novella

**Short tagline:** When Zephyra and Noah are completing a one week bike marathon their friendship hits some unexpected speed bumps. Will their friendship turn into something more or will they crash?

**Medium tagline:** Zephyra thinks of Noah as a brother. Noah thinks Zephyra is the one. When they are completing a one week bike marathon their friendship hits some unexpected speed bumps. Will their friendship turn into something more or will they crash?

**Blurb:**

Noah and Zephyra have been best friends since they started high school. Zephyra thinks of Noah as a brother. Noah thinks Zephyra is the one.

Zephyra’s only interest in romance is between the covers of her favourite romance novels. Noah believes now that they’re sixteen it’s just a matter of time until their friendship becomes a relationship.

When they are completing a one week bike marathon their friendship hits some unexpected speed bumps. Will their friendship turn into something more or will they crash?

The Climb, a young adult contemporary romance.

**Lead In Post**

**Friends to lovers and slow burn romance**

*The Climb* was originally inspired by a chapter that never made it into my memoir *Things Nobody Knows But Me,* about my high school puppy love. Our relationship was a slow burn and our timing timing was always slightly off and he was always slightly immature and not ready for me, but he was the first boy who told me he loved me, who showed it, and with whom I shared my first romantic kiss of passion.

By creating Noah and Zephyra I had the opportunity to put things to write and tell a story about two friends and their romantic misadventures as they try and work out whether they should be more than friends. By writing in an alternating point of view I could play with my favourite romantic tropes of slow burn romance and friends to lovers.

*The Climb* references the physical climb of their bike marathon as well as Noah and Zephyra’s emotional climb as they traverse new territory of being more than friends and try and hit the right timing where they are both interested in each other at the same time.

I hope you enjoy this story about Noah and Zephyra, as much as I enjoyed writing it.

**Excerpt**

**Chapter 1**

'I won’t be having sex until I’m married,' she said.

Noah greeted her statement with stunned silence. 'What? You won’t? Why not?' he finally demanded when his voice returned.

'Because I want to be in love and know that it’s for real,' she said. 'He’s going to be the only one.'

An unexpected gift that romance novels delivered was her resolve to remain a virgin until marriage. All the heroines in her romance novels were virgins and while the heroes might dally with women of easy virtue, he would only marry a woman who was 'pure.'

'Okay,' he said. 'What about your husband? Would you laugh at your husband like that?' He returned to the topic that had started this conversation, the dangling penis.

‘I don’t know.’ She shrugged.

‘I thought you were going to have a boyfriend in year 10?’ Noah asked.

'Not anymore. I’m going to wait for my husband.'

‘But how can you be sure that he’s the one for you if you don’t have sex before marriage?’

'I’ll know,' she said.

**Chapter 4**

Zephyra sat on the picnic bench table that was perched on the hillside, her dark hair streaming behind her, the undulating hills of the national park forming a backdrop. He slowly undid his helmet, mesmerised by her joy. It was their second session in Brimbank Park, cycling up and down the walking and dirt tracks, developing their stamina.

‘Isn’t it a beautiful day to be out?’ She spread her arms out and smiled.

‘Every day with you is beautiful,’ he said without thinking.

She looked at him; her smile fading.

He drew closer and sat next to her. ‘Even when you’re stinky from sweat,’ he said, doing a fake sniff to break the tension.

She laughed, punching him in the arm. He sighed, fighting between the desire to make a move, and the fear that he should be patient and bide his time.

**Author Bio:**

Amra Pajalić is an award-winning author, an editor and teacher who draws on her Bosnian cultural heritage to write own voices stories for young people, who like her, are searching to mediate their identity and take pride in their diverse culture. Her short story collection *The Cuckoo’s Song* (Pishukin Press, 2022*)* features previously published and prize-winning stories. Her debut novel *The Good Daughter,* was published by Text Publishing in 2009 and won the 2009 Melbourne Prize for Literature’s Civic Choice Award and is re-released as *Sabiha’s Dilemma* (Pishukin Press, 2022).

Her memoir *Things Nobody Knows But Me* (Transit Lounge, 2019) was shortlisted for the 2020 National Biography Award. She is co-editor of the anthology *Growing up Muslim in Australia* (Allen and Unwin, 2014) which was shortlisted for the 2015 Children’s Book Council of the year awards. She works as a high school teacher and is completing a PhD in Creative Writing at La Trobe University.

Amra Pajalić publishes her dark fiction using pen name A. P.  Pajalic. She also publishes romance novels under pen name Mae Archer.

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