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Adam is the 16-year-old most parents would love to have: he doesn't do drugs, comes top at school and regularly practices his cello. But there is another side to him, which comes to the fore when he falls for laborer Sylvain and gets sexually involved with two friends. The results are explosive in this passionate story of illicit romance and teenage angst-a combination that is eternally popular with gay readers.

Adam Details

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Author : Anthony McDonald

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From Reader Review Adam for online ebook

Martin says

It took me a while to get used to the formal style but it didn't detract from my enjoyment.

The characters and plot are fairly two-dimensional but its never boring.

As far as sex is concerned, it's all very restrained; there's little to embarrass your grandmother.

Roxanne says

Everyone seems to like this book but i didn't get the fuss. I know it sounds weird but it was a bit too wordy, everything was over described and it didn't really add to the book. The plot was bizarre and not in a good way. The characters were awful, they seemed like horrible people, and it made you want to chuck the book. The ending was just as bad. Didn't get the fuss or the hype.

Suki Fleet says

This is one of my all time favorite books. I cannot praise it enough. The writing is just so beautiful and evocative it swept me away- I feel I lived the rural French setting, the sensuousness of Adam's relationship with Sylvain.

I found the ending a little strange but it did not detract from the novel, just puzzled me a little.

Suki Fleet

Cor Cordium says

3.25 Stars

This was really difficult for me to rate. I liked it, it was well written, but way too wordy. It was distractingly wordy. I found myself scanning and skipping a lot of material to get to the story.

Adam was really confusing. He's a 16 year old boy. He excels at everything he does. He's articulate, talented, intelligent and lives an extremely privileged life. He meets an obviously, mentally unstable man (who is constantly referred to as a boy) and develops a sexual and emotional relationship with him. What sane man exposes himself to a child? Even a 16 year old would know this is inappropriate. The guy is disheveled and not too bright. He was 21 at the time, but he was a grown man. I would run like hell. At least run like hell after he fucks you into the ground hard enough to break your teeth. How does anyone confuse that with rape? The guy fucking raped him!!!

Then, I thought...when I was 15, I was conned by an older man that he loved me more than anyone, I also

believed that he was my world and he was the one and only. A person that young might be needy enough to believe it.

Adam said how much he loved Sylvain then had sex with 2 friends, repeatedly, over a short holiday. I was incensed. How did this innocent kid turn into such a slut? Then I remembered...he is 16 years old, newly sexually active, confused and his hormones are running wild. There's no chance of pregnancy and (possibly) no disease...I say...GO FOR IT!

Then completely out of the blue, Sylvain kidnaps Adam when he is supposed to go home. Adam is a victim (seemingly willing) with a full-blown case of Stockholm Syndrome. I realize that Sylvain was totally obsessed and I was really uncomfortable with him from the beginning, but to me, it did come out of left-field. There was too much black-out time after Adam was recovered...in my opinion.

This is one of those stories that I think would have benefitted from a dual-POV...even minimally so. I would have liked to have seen Sylvain's mental illness mentioned. I would have liked a little glimpse of his thought process and obsession with Adam and his mental decline when he stopped his meds. I know this was a book about the 16 year old Adam, but it would have been helpful for a reader to understand a little perspective into what was going on with Sylvain.

I guess my problem with issues in books such as mental illness, self-injury, sexual/physical/emotional abuse, suicide, etc, is they are very serious issues and should not be skated over. It's a real problem in our society. People are suffering every day from these issues and most people are privileged enough not to have to go through them. Maybe I take them too seriously.

Anthony McDonald is a fabulous writer, it was just my feelings on the subject matter that I had a difficult time with.

Dan says

I simply loved this book and fell in love with the writers poetic style.

Noel Roach says

Written in a 'literature' style rather than the more 'pulp fiction' style of most books with a gay theme. I have seen other reviews that criticise this as being 'too wordy.' Personally I rather enjoyed having to pay attention to what I was reading and grab the dictionary on occasion. The more formal use of language and idyllic rural French countryside setting give the book a historic or at least a timeless feel. It is only the mention of email, that allowed me to place the novel into a late 20th/early 21st century time frame. I do get tired of what I call 'porn-with-a-plot-line' type gay novels, but I thought McDonald could have maybe given us an extra sentence of explicit sex activity at some points in the book; Adam's sexual activities are after all major plot and theme points in the book. Adam is a novel about a 16-year-old gay teenager exploring his sexuality using adult, intelligent and occasionally explicit sexual language and not the G-rated language of a YA novel or the XXX-rated trash of a 'one-handed-reading' porn story. This is not the best book I have ever read, but given

some of the books I have rated 3 or 4-stars, I just had to give this one a 5-star rating.

Benjamin says

Sixteen year old Adam is in France from England for a year with his parents; his father's work has assigned him there. Adam is a well behaved lad, with a great talent as a budding cellist, he also realises he is not interested in girls, he prefers boys. While in France he continues his education and gets on well enough with his French peers, but it is the twenty two year old farm labourer Sylvain who gets his attention. Handsome dark haired and tanned, Sylvain captures his heart; they fall in love and carry on s clandestine affair. But how will it all end?

We follow Adam's exploits with Sylvain, their many adventures into the French countryside and their expressions and explicit demonstrations of love; and also Adam's interactions with his schoolmates in France and England.

This is a delightful story, Adam is a very likeable boy, and he has some very loyal friends, Sylvain is equally likeable and quite innocent for his age. The writer appears to have a good knowledge of the locality and its flora, which comes over in the narrative. While it could be criticised for being a little too good to be true at times, it is nonetheless a very pleasurable read. *

Danni says

I'm at a bit of a loss about what to say because any words I string together sound a bit lame after reading this book. It really is beautiful.

It tells the story of Adam, a rather precocious 16 year old who has moved to France temporarily with his family. So what can I say about Adam? He is intelligent, he is a talented cellist, and he likes wanking. Oh, he really likes wanking. He really, really likes it, be it on his own, up a rope in gym class, with his school mates, thinking about his school mates, in the woods, up trees, with the new rather delectable 22 year old farm boy (Sylvain) he meets in the woods...Did I mention he likes wanking? Yeah, he kind of does.

Now, this of course makes it sound very PWP, and with the amount of orgasms Adam has in this book (I won't even try to count) in all honesty it could just be a smutty little coming-of-age tale, but the way it is written is so amazingly beautiful, it's not that at all.

You see, Adam happens to fall in love with Sylvain (who incidentally has a mental age of 14) and Sylvain happens to fall in love with Adam. Which would be fine (actually, no it wouldn't because of a hundred problems inherent in the relationship) but the simple love affair it is, is also incredibly complicated, partly because of Adam's complete inability to keep it in his pants. And Adam's complete inability to form any coherent thoughts when the slightest hint of sex is involved (which for Adam is all the time).

While this book is definitely erotic, it is not particularly explicit. Quite often in fact you are just told that 'they make love' but the fact that Adam's thoughts are so sexually charged makes the whole feel of the book pretty erotic, if that makes any sense whatsoever.

The author writes so beautifully that you don't just 'read' this book, you 'feel' it. You feel the beauty of the countryside, you feel the confusing rush of emotions that are constantly bombarding Adam, you feel the

intensity of first love, and you feel the absolutely undeniable thrill and pull of temptation.

Now, a few reviewers have mentioned that the language is too descriptive, and this initially put me off reading the book. I tend to like fast-paced stories, without too much flowery language, but as soon as I started reading this I forgot all about my preferences for snappy little scenes and just enjoyed the absolute beauty of the language used. The occasional use of French adds to the atmosphere of the book, although I could see how it might be frustrating if you had no knowledge at all of the language, but in some cases I think it is necessary, such as (view spoiler)

This author is truly a cut above. His use of language is beautiful. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. Oh, and did I mention it's beautiful? I think I may have done once or twice.

Dana says

This is a fast read and kept me interested, but ultimately the plot was somewhat off-putting. The central romance is a little odd -- a 16-year-old boy and a 23-year-old with the apparent mental age of 14 -- so I found it hard to feel invested in it. Adam's bed-hopping didn't help, even if this fickleness is authentic teenage-boy behaviour.

It seems like everyone Adam meets is gay, which is slightly unbelievable, as well as the fact that three different boys declare their love for him. Um why? He's not that interesting. And since when do boys throw the "I" word (love, not lesbian) around like that?

Peter says

A moving exploration of the confusions of gay adolescence. The book is sensual, but the sex scenes do not dominate the story. The characters are interesting, and the story stands alone, although there is a sequel and we are left interested enough to want to know what happens to the relationships. My only quibble is that all the main characters, including a 23 year old, are prodigiously productive, and if the author assumes this is normal, based on his own adolescence, then I feel sorry for the author's mother and her washing machine. But the book is not primarily about the orgasms. The focus throughout is the emotions, characters, and plot line, so it works very well as a novel. A delight to read.

Kim says

What an odd and fascinating book. Adam's relationship with Sylvain was crazy and inappropriate and I wasn't sure exactly who was the teenager and who was the adult at times. I did enjoy Gary's talks with Adam where he tried to make the teen see that he was behaving recklessly. There's a lot of wanking going on here (which, I guess makes sense when you're dealing with a sixteen-year-old boy and his male friends), I found the constant descriptions of this a little tiresome. I am looking forward to reading the next book in the series where Adam is in his early twenties.

Jeff Erno says

Adam is a modern-day adolescent love story set in rural France. Adam is a sixteen year old boy from England who moves to France when his father's engineering company dispatches him to work on a bridge construction project. While there, Adam adapts rather quickly to the French language and culture and develops friendships with a handful of his school mates. He also meets an older boy, age 22, while exploring the countryside one afternoon.

Adam's acquaintance, Sylvain, is ruddy and extremely manly. At once Adam is attracted to him. Months earlier, while still residing in England, Adam had first discovered his homosexual attractions when he engaged in repeated sexual exploration sessions with his best friend Michael. When he begins to realize that Sylvain is attracted to him as well, he picks up where he left off in his pursuit of sexual self discovery. They embark upon an ongoing sexual relationship and ultimately fall in love.

When Michael visits Adam a few months later, a mutual friend Sean tags along. For ages Adam has harbored a secret crush on Sean, and he is conflicted over how to reconcile these feelings with his relationship with (and commitment to) Sylvain. Adam ends up having sex with both Michael and Sean during their visit.

Eventually, Adam has to face the reality that his father's temporary post in France is going to expire and the family will be moving back to England. He is distraught, not sure how to break the news to Sylvain. When he finally informs his lover that he will be soon leaving, Sylvain takes drastic measures, taking matters into his own hands as he attempts to force a solution to their dilemma which is anything but practical.

This story was a mixed read for me. There are numerous things about the book that I honestly loved. The writing was superb. The romance and physical intimacy were beautiful presented. I was able to relate to Adam, and I grew to genuinely care for him, as flawed as he may have been.

In my view, the author presented a touching story that depicted a teenager sampling three very powerful variations of love for the first time. His relationship with Michael represented an enduring, most often platonic love, a love that will likely continue throughout his life. They are best friends and share a connection most others are incapable of understanding. Sean represents infatuation. He's the unrequited lover (at least for a season), the one Adam pines for and fantasizes about. Sylvain is the person with whom Adam ultimately falls in love.

I understood these distinctions, and although it was unsettling at times to see Adam approach sex so casually, I also accepted the context. My personal viewpoint is that there are many sixteen year olds who are sexual active, even promiscuous, but it didn't sit right with me as I tried to mentally frame his sexual behavior within the context of his overall identity. Adam seemed to be an intelligent, well-mannered, and possibly even fastidious young man. Then this other side of him made me think of him as being slutty and replete of any firm morals.

I ended up questioning myself, wondering if perhaps my issues with this depiction were culturally based. Perhaps my attitude toward sex is far too Puritan as opposed to European.

Setting this issue aside, I also took issue with the characterization in the story. Yes, the story is primarily told from Adam's POV, but I yearned to understand Sylvain more. I struggled a bit with their romance. Was it

supposed to be a classic opposites attract type relationship? That certainly was the case, Adam being intellectual and a bit cultured while Sylvain was a simple farmer. Adam was younger with a slender, boyish body, and Sylvain was a grown man. Adam was a deep thinker who had big dreams while Sylvain could not see beyond his limited scope of experiences on the farm.

Sexually Sylvain dominated, yet Adam was completely in control of the relationship. Adam had intellectual superiority, and the fact that he was proud of this fact made him at times seem snobbish. There was a part of me that hated him for this.

Is such a relationship possible for two people who are so opposite one another? It seemed a stretch for me. If only I'd been able to see more of who Sylvain was, maybe I'd be able to "get it". Then again, maybe there was no more of Sylvain to show. That was the point. He was a simple person, with limitations, and love transcends such things.

It also irked me that the author often used such verbosity in his prose. He provided a minutia of detail that was unnecessary and often included blocks of text (dialogue) that were in French. Perhaps a bilingual reader would be able to appreciate this. To me, though, it was confusing. I grew weary of trying to decipher the French quotations by using context and wished the author had simply translated them. Although the writing itself was beautiful, I think there is something to be said for the adage, "Less is more."

Overall I enjoyed the challenge of this read. I was stirred emotionally and I learned some new vocabulary in the process. I also really did grow to care about the main character. I think readers who enjoy stories that are non-formulaic and atypical may appreciate this read. And readers who appreciate the beauty of the written word over the plausibility of the plot would rate this book highly. In other words, the writing can be appreciated even if the story itself is not.

Logan says

I'm really thankful for the community of people on this website. Without them, I wouldn't have all these great books to read. That being said, this book was fantastic!

I fell quickly in the French country side that was painted for me so vividly I thought I was there. Words flowed effortlessly for this author, excellent follow-thru, this author spins words with such an eased Caress he is a beautiful poet. His characters were insightful, witty and had a voracious appetite for being young and using it to their full advantage. Making the same type of mistakes we all do at that age, regardless of how cliché it may be. This book had. Breakneck passion, impatience and the lack of cynicism we seem to impregnate ourselves with at such an early age now. Truly a breath of fresh air. I recommend this work to any and all.

Ron says

Well written book.

The story and characters development was very good. An easy read that has a sense of reality. At times it stretched beyond reality.

Lloyd says

I enjoyed the bookwell written and evocative of place (rural France) and adolescent discovery.
