



# Handyman

*Claire Thompson*

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High-powered stock trader. Simple handyman. Can they find common ground?

Will Spencer is a player with a reputation for using and discarding lovers as easily as he earns big money on Wall Street. Handsome, sexy and openly gay, he's used to having whatever—and whoever—he wants at the snap of his fingers.

And what he wants now is his new handyman, Jack Crawford. But Jack is skittish. One lingering touch, one stolen kiss could send the older man into full retreat. Where Will might have quickly moved on to a more ready-and-willing partner, he unexpectedly finds himself wanting to go slow. With just a little coaxing, he's sure he can show Jack how good it could be between them.

Jack, a recent widower, never thought of himself as gay. Frightened years ago by an erotic encounter with his best friend, he focused firmly on his marriage. Now that his bed is empty, however, those deep sexual longings are rising dangerously close to the surface.

Their connection is deep, instant, and one that Jack tries to ignore. Yet friendship grows into an erotic journey that must cross a divide of different generations, backgrounds and worlds.

The prize is the one thing neither is sure he can handle—true love.

## Handyman Details

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# From Reader Review Handyman for online ebook

## Buggy says

Opening Line: *"Straight. The word popped into Will's head."*

With a sweet, moving and emotional story *The Handyman* was a pretty good read however definitely more on the sweeter side of the erotica scale. The set up here reminds me very much of Faith & Fidelity and its basically a character driven M/M romance with more sexual tension then actual sex scenes. In fact it's like 150 pages of really good foreplay before we get any serious action. (Although a couple of the kissing scenes are off the chart hot) However I enjoyed the slow, realistic pace Claire Thompson set for our virgins who are each as confused as the other, only in very different ways.

Will is a player with a reputation for using and discarding lovers as easily as he earns his money on Wall Street. Handsome, sexy and confident Will is used to getting what he wants however he is still a virgin when it comes to matters of the heart, never having allowed himself to open up and fall in love before. You can imagine his surprise when he can't stop obsessing about the older by 10 years Handyman he's just hired to remodel his kitchen.

Jack has been a widower for two years, he never thought of himself as gay especially after some fumbling with his best friend in high school sent him running. However he's lonely and confused and his deep hidden desires are just now starting to come to the surface, all in Will's fancy new kitchen.

As Will and Jack gradually grow more aware of each other there is of course lots of angst, miscommunication and finally shy tentative touches, meaningful glances and excited longing. These parts were very well written with the physical intimacy slowly escalating and I enjoyed the pace, it felt realistic.

Bit by bit Jack opens up to Will's advances and although shy scared and unsure the pair come to trust each other. Will is exceptionally patient and this is a new emotion for a man used to taking what he wants. During this time we are also given several long flashbacks into both of their lives which I quite enjoyed as I felt like I really got to know and understand their characters. There is also a ton of dialogue which didn't bother me I just wondered where these men that talk so openly about their feelings have been hiding? When we finally get to the sex scenes they're well written, erotic and full of love, just the way I like them.

There aren't many secondary characters here, however we do get to meet Will's booty call buddy and towards the end are also introduced to Jack's two grown sons in a rather disquieting manner. This entire scenario is played out well and I really liked the boy's realistic approach to dad's new status.

A well written and recommended read.

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## Melissa (Ever So Mela) says

### DNF 59%

I did promise a microscopic rant. So here it is...

It can't get any shorter than that.

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### **Susan65 says**

It was an okay read. Sweet in some ways and hot in others. The only issue I had was that it dragged on in places and i skipped ahead a lot.

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### **◆\*Arianna◆\* says**

#### **4.5 STARS**

*"Handyman"* is a very good slow-paced gay for you m/m that tells the story of Jack and Will two men who have their own fears, different fears, but who together they will find their peace and happiness.

Until three months ago, Will (30) had lived in the city, working as a trader in a prestigious investment bank. He took a break for his job and from the city and he's looking for a handyman because he wants to have some renovations done at his new house.

Jack, the handyman is in his forties. He has his own renovation company, company that he'd started years ago and that had provided a decent income for his family. Jack is a widower for two years, he has two sons and he's straight like an arrow.

From the moment he sees his new handyman, Will feels a strong attraction. He doesn't understand it at first since he's not into older guys. From the beginning Will feels a strong connection with Jack, even if he knows the older man is straight. He's not looking for a relationship, he never has a committed relationship ever, with anyone, but he can't fight his feelings for Jack. They start a relationship, the younger man showing Jack what exactly means to feel desired and loved.

Even if the plot is not complicated and the premise is nothing new I really liked this one! A lot, actually! For some reason I didn't expect to enjoy it as much as I did! I loved the slow build relationship between these two men. It felt real and I liked how everything progressed naturally. Also, the GFY aspect is done very well here. Both Jack and Will are very endearing characters. Will was fantastic. He is sweet and tender and he is very patient with Jack. He understands Jack's situation and the fact that is not easy to become practically someone else. He helps Jack to feel whole for the first time in his life and I loved him for that! Jack's development is also great and his emotions are described very well by the author.

Overall, a very enjoyable read!

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### **\*J\* Too Many Books Too Little Time says**

#### **4.5 Stars!!**

Based on the title and the cover, you would think this book was pure smut!

Instead it was a very sweet, slow build GFY/OFY romance! My favorite!

Will has taken a step back from his hectic life on Wall Street. He's on sabbatical and does some day trading from home. He's looking to have some renovations done at his house. Enter Jack, the handyman.

Jack is 14 years older than Will. He was married for 20+ years before he lost his wife suddenly. He has two grown sons. Two years have passed since his wife's death and Jack sort of just goes through the motions. He's content with his life but not necessarily happy.

Will has never really been a relationship guy and Jack definitely isn't his type. It's always been about the physical for Will. And with Jack, for the first time in Will's life, he feels an emotional connection to someone.

For Jack, this isn't the first time he has felt a connection with another man. His first experience with another man was with his best friend during high school. A time when he was too young to recognize what he was feeling.

Will and Jack slowly pursue their attraction to each other. The tension between Jack and Will was really hot. Jack's inexperience made him seem younger than Will. Will showing Jack how great things could feel physically, when they had such a strong connection emotionally! I loved it!

There was very little drama and angst. Just Jack and Will navigating through the newness of their relationship. I found it to be more sensual than smutty. It did end a bit abruptly, but I think I saw where there was a free short on the author's website. Maybe that will provide a bit more closure!

Overall, a solid read that I would definitely recommend!

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### **Katharina says**

I decided to read this book because I liked the blurb of the story. It seemed rather predictable, but sometimes I don't want originality, I just want a nice, easy, predictable read. And this is mostly the right book for that.

I liked the characters, especially Jack. Jack is an 'older' guy (actually 44 years old doesn't seem old to me, but it's older than most characters in romance fiction tend to be) who's been married for 24 rather passionless, but loving years and widowed for 2. He has had exactly one homosexual, on his side rather passive encounter that happened 26 years ago - and he managed to make himself forget about that pretty easily. Will, on the other hand, has always been gay, always known it, and lived it to the fullest - if that is what you call a countless string of one-night-stands and non-relationship encounters. He has sex, but he has no idea about love. But Will has just turned 30 and also considering his high-stress job he suddenly notices that something vital is missing in his life. So he takes a sabbatical, buys an old house in urgent need of renovations and hires Jack as his handyman. And despite Jack being everything he hasn't looked for so far

(older, not GQ-handsome, etc.) Will falls promptly in love. But Jack is straight, right? Or not? ...

So, generally I liked this book, Jack was great and a very believable character. He needed time to deal with his feelings for Will, for coming to terms with the change in his view of himself and the world in general. That makes sense and was actually refreshing. And I liked how sweet Will was and how patient (mostly). So that is a definite plus.

However, I had two issues with this story. The first one is actually a rather huge one and that is the writing style. It felt... stilted to me. Unnatural. A bit corny. I cannot imagine people really talking that way, especially to friends and peers. Well, not in the 21st century in the younger demographic anyway. It made me feel uncomfortable from the very beginning and although I got used to it to a certain extent it always put a damper on things. The second issue was the mushiness. Don't get me wrong, I like sweet, tender stories. But the way Will and Jack talked sometimes... well, it was more than sweet. It was red-candy-coma-sweet. Maybe that would have been okay, but together with the stilted language... it seemed too much for me. I'm not saying people cannot have tender moments. But the degree of tender moments in this story was immense. And slightly unbelievable to me.

Still, altogether a nice, easy read, especially if you don't have too high expectations. Reading it was generally time well spent, if only to get to know Jack and Will and to accompany those two for a while.

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## **Daisiemae says**

4.5 stars

Claire Thompson's book are either a hit or miss with me. Not to say she isn't a great writer, because she is. She has a tendency to write very erotic novels, while of course I love. BUT, in some of her books, I don't feel that the characters have an emotional connection between them. The heroes are always very sexy and the writing is sexually explicit, but I always prefer my heroes to have an emotional bond, also. In Handyman, I think she did an awesome job with the heroes having both physical and emotional connection.

At thirty, Will was working too hard and playing too fast. As a trader for a prestigious bank on Wall Street he was burning the candle at both ends. When he wasn't drinking gallons of coffee to keep his energy going, he was taking sleeping pills at night to get his overactive brain to settle down. When Will's boss dies of a heart attack in front of him, Will decides that he needs to change his life.

Three months after his boss died, Will finds himself on an extended leave of absence from his work, and owning a hundred year old house in the suburbs. The house is in desperate need of renovations though so, Will decides to hire a handyman who had been referred to him from a friend.

When Will lays eyes on Jack Crawford, the new Handyman, his first thought is "straight". Jack is nothing Will is used to be attracted too. He is older, shorter than Will, not particularly handsome but well muscled. In spite of being the total opposite of what Will has dated before, there is something about Jack that calls out to Will's heart. This is something that has never happened before. Especially with a man like Jack.

Jack Crawford is a hardworking, successful blue collared worker. He owns his own business and is a jack of all trades, so to speak. Jack has been fighting loneliness for the past two years. His wife of twenty-six years, died suddenly, and with his two boys being out of high school, he has been alone for a while now.

Jack honestly doesn't know what to think of Will. For one thing, Will treats him like a friend instead of hired help, and Jack has the suspicion that Will might be gay, and possibly attracted to him. This confuses Jack because once upon a time he was bi-curious with his best friend in high school, but since then has had no sexual attraction towards men.

As the two men get to know one another, they both are experiencing something new in their lives. Jack is attracted to Will and is starting to have strong feelings for him, and Will wants more from Jack than a physical relationship. Will is starting to fall in love with Jack, and that has never happened to him before.

I enjoyed the development of Will and Jack's relationship. There is a lot of dialog between Jack and Will. I liked that. It made me feel like they actually wanted to get to know one another instead of just jumping in the sack together. That was refreshing to me.

Also, I thought that the sex scenes in this book was very well written. Jack's inexperience and fear with becoming sexually involved with men was apparent, but Will's patience and love succeeded in breaking down that fear and insecurity, and Jack soon becomes a very active and excited participant in the bedroom. I really loved how they both learned from each other. I thought at times this book had some very romantic and sweet moments in it, and I really hated for it to end.

My only complaint is I thought the problem Jack had with his son's came to a result too easily. Too me, it was wrapped up a little too quickly, but honestly I was glad it was dealt with period, instead of being shoved under the rug like so many books do nowadays.

I don't know if I would say this is a gay for you themed book. Because of Jack's bi-curiousity with his best friend in school, Jack was forced to put his scared feelings and attraction he has for his best friend aside, because he had gotten his wife pregnant, and did the right thing in his mind and married her.

I think this book is about friendship, and the connection we have with one another. Will himself, actually says it best, when he comes to the realization that he is attracted to Jack, and has strong feelings for him as well...

"The heart wants what it wants." So true.

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**aksana - 4 - 8 - 15 - 16 - 23 - 42 - says**

3.5 Stars

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**Camille Adams says**

A strong story, a lovely one too. I especially enjoyed Jack's character and his tale of finding himself, love and a new life after having had so much taken away from him and so much else buried for over two decades. I love stories where people find their truth and are courageous enough to grasp it. And as regards courage, it's the trait I most appreciated in Will. He went after what and who he wanted.

Despite their miscommunications at times and fears and insecurities on both sides these men struggled past them to claim the love that had appeared in their lives as the gift they both recognised it to be. I liked. I liked

a lot :-)

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## Verity says

At about 10% I'd thought about DNFing this one. I found the writing to be a bit awkward, rough around the edges and the dialogues where as wooden as a plank.

Having said that, this is actually quite a sweet story about being brave enough to live your life to the fullest and giving yourself permission to be true to yourself.

Either the writing became a tad better later on in the book or the story was interesting enough to overlook any shortcomings, hence the 3 stars.

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## Audrey says

4.5 to 5 stars. Bare chests. Neckties. Toolbelts. Can it get any better??

This story was a Kindle lend that I will convert into a purchase. It was *that* enjoyable.

The story, in a nutshell: On leave from his Wall Street investment banker position, Will moves to the suburbs and buys a fixer upper house. Who helps him fix it up? Why, the titular handyman, Jack, of course. Will is gay; Jack's a widower who *thought* he was straight all his life...except for that one incident with his best friend when he was 18. O\_\_o Anyway, they become friends over the course of the home improvements, despite an attraction that Will feels for Jack that Will doesn't think he'll ever have the opportunity to act upon. Let's just say Jack's got some surprises up his sleeves (er...down his pants? heh), and awaaaaay we go!

The characters: I kind of fell in love with both characters. Like. <3 <3 <3 puppy eyes, drawing hearts and rainbows, sharing candy kisses love. Big bad sex on a stick Will was surprisingly vulnerable and sympathetic in his narrative POV, not knowing what to do when presented with this puzzle named Jack. He found himself wanting to take it slow, wanting to keep things at Jack's pace, wanting to make Jack as comfortable as possible. What the hell had come over him? Love, that's what. Say it with me...awwwwww.

Jack was adorable in both his cluelessness and his discovery of his sexuality. I'm not saying any of this is realistic - who knows if it is? All I know is I loved reading about it. It felt real, it felt emotional, it felt wonderful. I felt like I was falling in love alongside him, and it was big, scary, and exciting.

The romance: Loved it. The pace was perfect. It made total sense to me for them to be friends first, for Will to take these tentative steps towards being more-than-friends since he didn't know how these gestures would be received, for them to take things slowly overall. This wasn't a casual hookup - this was something more, and it deserved that effort to "do things right." There were so many factors involved - their age difference (Will's 30; Jack's 44), Jack's developing sexual orientation, Will's heretofore emotional barrenness - that the slower paced romance just felt right. It totally worked for me. And I thought it was just so so sweet and lovely to watch as it developed. There's a wonderful back-and-forth dance while Will tries to figure out how to navigate a slower-paced and slower-developed *real* relationship and, at the same time, while Jack comes to terms with his feelings for and sexual attraction to another man. They have mutual crushes (yet each also has his own misgivings), and it is absolutely adorable. Loved it. It was perfect for me.



Overall: Yes, please. More, please. My first Claire Thompson and definitely not my last.

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### **Vio says**

4.5 stars

I loved the way the relationship between Jack and Will developed slowly, they really got to know each other becoming friends before getting all hot and heavy, the build up was lovely and romantic. Will was very smart with his slow courting of a skittish Jack, who was fighting his attraction to Will and the realization he might be gay. The love scenes were tender as well as sexy, there were a couple of sizzling moments that were very, very nice. One sweet read, recommended for anyone who likes a true romance.

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### **Beck says**

Original review... Jack...a man of integrity, a man of his word...stoic, stable, responsible, reliable...what happens to a man like this when his only 'responsibility' is for his own happiness? Will...a 'player'...wealthy, self-assured and comfortable with his casual, shallow relationships...what happens to a man like this when he steps back from the frenetic pace of his life and contemplates his future? Together they explore 'virgin' territory...Jack's almost virginal innocence about sex and passion; Will's unfamiliarity with deeper emotions and commitment...this story is a satisfying and pleasurable read with an ending that leaves us on an upward swing to HEA...the smex is nice but the inclusion of all the sex 'dialogue' (ungh...ugh...ugh etc) took the edge off my enjoyment...recommended for readers who enjoy a 'sweet' romance.

After multiple reads ... This is still a lovely sweet romance but there is something that grates every time I read this book...it's the word ken (One's range of knowledge or sight.)...Although Thompson uses it in the right context within the story, I find it incongruous when spoken by the character Jack...it's just not a word that most people use in every-day vernacular conversation...just a little whinge...as I said, it's still a wonderful story & well worth reading. ★★★★★?

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### **Caipi says**

I liked the idea of the plot. The lovestory between Will Spencer, a 30 years old stock trader, currently on a sabbatical and handyman Jack Crawford, a 44 years old widower, whose homosexuality was long buried. Unfortunately I never had this feeling to be in the middle of the story. I've missed the spark. The dialogues were wooden and the flashbacks were too much. Truth be told I often had the urge to skip pages.

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### **Gigi says**

Review shortly!

