



Awakenings

Jayson James

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Dear Author,

I'd always considered myself sort of asexual up until now. In high school no one interested me and I was too busy with schoolwork to date anyway. I figured I didn't have a big sex drive or I just hadn't met the right girl. However, the more time I spend with my roommate, Ben, the more I'm reconsidering everything.

The more he walks around half dressed the more I keep noticing him. Even if I am attracted to him, which I'm not sure that I am, I don't think he would be into me. He seems like the type of guy that girls flock to. He couldn't be interested in me, could he?

Requests: Clearly I'm angling for a gay-for-you here, folks! It can be a double or single GFY, lots of sexual tension (please!), slow build romance, lots of heat. I would rather no BDSM but some light stuff wouldn't bother me.

Photo Description:

The photo is of a muscular guy in his early 20's with smooth tan skin and dark brown hair that is combed back to spike up. He is standing behind a vacuum cleaner in a pair of blue boxer briefs with a grin on his face in what appears to be a bedroom and the picture seems to be candid.

This story was written as a part of the M/M Romance Group's "**Love's Landscapes**" event. Group members were asked to write a story prompt inspired by a photo of their choice. Authors of the group selected a photo and prompt that spoke to them and wrote a short story.

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The M/M Romance Group strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

Awakenings Details

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From Reader Review Awakenings for online ebook

Meep says

Naked teenage roommates fantasy#whatever.

Read it as that and you may like it. Not my cup of tea, though thanks to the author for joining the freebie event (I'm not 1starring these unless something *really* bugs me)

I went from thinking young writer to thinking older writer trying to write young characters. It felt that bit off. There are scene changes and minor time leaps that left me confused to what was going on.

Ben came across arrogant and I was WTF'ing over his constant strip and wiggles, there was something wrong about the way he appeared to crave attention and compliments but at the same time be uneasy with them; I was honestly thinking over-sexualised child-abuse victim, and it's not that kind of story!

The Solo formerly asexual suddenly saw him different, didn't even need to bang his head or anything. There's nothing here to indicate they're friends and the 'flirting' seemed odd.

Then the ending...

multitaskingmomma says

Original Blog Post:

<http://www.multitaskingmommas.com/201...>

Awakenings is a Gay For You or GFY story about two college roommates who gradually got to know each other, got used to each other, and basically just fell for each other. These two men were poles opposite and yet they fit perfectly.

This is set in a college campus where both Ben and Solomon, or Solo, are roommates. There is no mention of a fraternity so I am not sure about that. The story starts out with both young men already very comfortable with the other so there is no insecurity on that end. When Ben and Solo start doing things beyond what straight guys usually do when there are no girls around, it starts out with little discomfort which made Solo question himself and their relationship. Ben is so secure in his masculinity that he can shed his clothes without modesty be it in the privacy of his room or outside the dorm. Solo cannot but keep his eyes on his friend and soon has thoughts that (he thinks) he should be ashamed of (but is really not). Ben is not helping as he just keeps being who he is and continues to instigate some encounters that both young men wholeheartedly jump into. Their verbal sparring is quite revealing and yet Solo tries half-heartedly tries to ignore it and epically fails. It was not a surprise when others looked at them and immediately concluded they were a couple.

This is a very short and light read and yet I really loved it, especially as these two men reminded me so much of two friends in college who were straight as arrows, ran naked on the grounds most times even when the

snow was falling and were considered as the bestest of friends. I had concluded then they were a couple but their fraternity brothers always denied it. Well, needless to say, on our third year, they were inseparable and did confirm in the end they were a couple. They never acted or looked gay, in the sense that many think gay men should act. Definitely, the two were a sarcastic/comedic duo and played Lacrosse so were hunks in their own right.

Now, Jayson James is an author whose writing style is quite different from the rest out there. His stories ring true, and his work comes across, to me at least, as a man telling a story usually does: sarcastic, realistic, blunt, no hesitance, and blunt. Did I say blunt? Which makes me love his work even more. That there is a bit of erotic here is a bonus hehehehehehe.

I must say though, I am stomping my feet here, I want more of Ben and Solo.

Shout out to the author!!!! Let there be more of these two, please!

Anke says

The whole story moved around in circles. Adding some inconsistencies and it was a difficult read.

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

My prompt and I'm kind of terrified to read it... 1.6 average rating among my friends scares me.

Anna K?avi?a says

Reminded me of Wes and Toren just as boring.

Nothing happens, except two roommates decide they fancy each other.

“That bitch Melody and I are no more. I broke up with her before leaving. Nice present, huh?”

Doesn't Ben sound like a nice guy?

But she totally deserves that because Solomon thinks so.

This made me laugh out loud. Melody had been Ben's girlfriend since they met at a campus Halloween party. I'd let it slip one night that I thought she was a bitch, and Ben, rather than getting mad, basically

agreed with me, saying, "I can see why you would think that." For several weeks I wondered why Ben had not broken up with her, since all I could see that she'd brought to his life was drama.

Camille Adams says

Well that was agonizing.

The prose is so terribly stiff it puts me in mind of an ESL speaker. It features little to no contractions and exceedingly awkward standard English with weird word choices.

The story itself is no better. It's boring, underdeveloped, tedious, meandering and makes shoddy work of a prompt that had potential.

Moreover, the GFY element goes to pot in this. It could have been so good. But this was totally unbelievable, inconceivable and confusing while being utterly uninteresting. Stripping, constantly? Was that supposed to deliver some UST?

Oh, additionally, the characters were awful specimens as well. Flat and one-dimensional, misogynistic and immature. Another story where gay points are accumulated by deeming a woman a bitch.

If you want to see what a college dorm room friends to GFY could be try Winter Chill: A Gay Novella.

T.M. Smith says

Solomon, Solo, has never really identified himself as being gay. He's never had a boyfriend, or a girlfriend for that matter. He has dated girls, held hands, and even kissed one once. But more so to fit in with what his friends in school were doing. When he gets to college he and his roommate instantly click and become best friends. Just normal guy stuff at the start. But then Solo finds himself noticing Ben more and more, little things, like the fact that Ben prefers being naked to clothed.

Ben is an exhibitionist of sorts, at least where his roommate is concerned. I don't think he intentionally tried to get a rise out of Solo. He's just not ashamed of his body and enjoys the attention that people pay it. Over time though something grows inside him. He finds himself attracted to Solo. Where the two have always been very flirtatious by nature, it's never been a serious attraction or invitation to Solo to pursue. But late night mutual jack off sessions and some pretty sexy dreams are about to change all that.

I'm not entirely convinced that this is a GFY story. I think this is more of a story of two young men that identify as being attracted to each other, and that coupled with the strong bond of friendship, love and trust that they have for each other already just make that next step a no brainer.

Jayson James writing style is not for everyone. It's very raw, realistic and young at heart. While there were a

few things lacking here and there throughout the story, overall I loved the way these characters were portrayed. And for the reviewers complaining about the lack of sex, you do realize that James writes Gay YA, don't you? Not every book in the genre has to be full of lust and passion. Sometimes young men are just getting their footing and wrapping their brain around their attraction to another guy.

Great job Jayson! Loved the story, loved the cover and I can't wait to see more from these two young men.

Sandra says

Offered for FREE from the M/M Romance Group's Love's Landscapes event. Thank you too all the amazing authors who participated!

I hate to be the first person to review something and have to do it poorly, but unfortunately, this just didn't work for me. The whole gay-for-you-college-roommate story is one of my all time favorites (Not Just Friends and His Undoing being two of the best), but this felt forced. The awkward flirty banter wasn't cute or quirkily "odd" as the author was going for, it was just weird.

And I didn't get a vibe of super close friends or romantic chemistry, or *anything*. It was just a lot of banter, some weird strip teasers, and random filler information. I was sticking it out to get my cherry on top at least, when I realized this is one of those end-at-the-beginning stories. Now I'm okay with a HFN short story, *if* I enjoy the journey. Unfortunately, this was all build up and no delivery.

Lizzie says

Offering up a story for all the world to see is a difficult thing I imagine for most people. So, I applaud the author for his contribution to the community and offer up two stars for the effort.

With that said, I didn't care for this at all. Though there were no obvious editing errors, the use of the language was awkward and stilted. Such formal speech from two young guys in their first year of college just didn't jive. At least when it's not part of a character's personality. There was also an incredible amount of repetition of the same plot points.

The story read like an incredibly detailed synopsis. "I did this, then he did that, then we did this." The depth of the story was lost in the mundane details of their life. The vagueness of showers, dressing, un-dressing, eating. All valid details when it comes to young men but these aren't the makings of a romantic story. Even the sexual tension was overrun by these things (view spoiler).

Christina Marie says

Oh sweet baby Jesus, the dialogue.

I probably should have DNF'd this, but I *had* to know how it turned out. Sigh.

Basically, I thought the writing was awkward (that dialogue...I can't even). It just kept taking me out of the story, and I wasn't able to enjoy it at all.

1.5 Stars

K says

Just reaching 3 stars

Cute story of college freshmen. Narrated by Solo, who has previously never been sexually interested in anyone male or female, slowly falling for his room mate Ben, who is something of an exhibitionist. Nice to see the author stayed away from any sort of jock/nerd combination.

Debbie McGowan says

Definitely heading for four stars. I loved the connection between the two MCs - it felt very authentic. I was in their dorm - a fly on the wall.

The narrative threw me from time to time with jumping forward, but overall, this is a wonderful story that is one of few I would have no hesitation in recommending to YA readers, because it is "sexy" yet innocent. It feels like real adolescence and the way crushes are realised.

Good, yes. I'm off to add the author's other stories to my "to read" shelf.

Catherine says

Firstly, I want to thank the author for taking time out of his busy life to participate in the Love's Landscapes event. Without people like you willing to give your time and creativity freely, asking for nothing in return but feedback from your readers, the M/M reading community wouldn't have this wonderful event each year. So THANK YOU!

My appreciation for the author's efforts aside, however, this story just did not work for me. I love a college-aged GFY as much as the next girl, and I found the idea behind a character who self-identifies as asexual finally experiencing a sexual awakening for that one special person (a sexy man, of course!) intriguing. Unfortunately, all of that was laid out in the prompt and it was the overall execution of the story that I found lacking.

While both likable enough, I didn't find that either Solo or Ben drew me in and demanded that I become invested in them or their relationship. There just weren't enough deeply emotional and angsty or sweet and gooey moments between the characters to build that sense of connection between them and me, and I found the constant stripteases awkward and repetitive. So, when the story ended with (view spoiler), I just kinda *shrugged* and moved on.

I think my biggest difficulty with the story was that the narration and the dialogue seemed overly formal for a story about two college guys in their early twenties. It was also the exact same voice for both characters, so you couldn't always distinguish which one was talking at any given moment. The lack of contractions and overly concise use of language made the story feel stiff and stilted - like the story had been edited within an inch of its life.

I believe the author's relatively new to the publishing world, though, and may find a more relaxed, natural rhythm to his writing with time and experience.

Steelwhisper says

DNF, 1.5* rounded up. Boring.

Sheri says

Welllllll, this was no good.

cringes

Sorry.

I could ramble and babble about everything that was 'off' for me...

but let's just leave it at that.

It was off.

****2 good-try-better-luck-next-time stars****
