



Muscling Through

J.L. Merrow

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The bigger they come, the harder they fall... in love.

Cambridge art professor Larry Morton takes one, alcohol-glazed look at the huge, tattooed man looming in a dark alley, and assumes he's done for. Moments later he finds himself disarmed—literally and figuratively. And, the next morning, he can't rest until he offers an apology to the man who turned out to be more gentle than giant.

Larry's intrigued to find there's more to Al Fletcher than meets the eye; he possesses a natural artistic talent that shines through untutored technique. Unfortunately, no one else seems to see the sensitive soul beneath Al's imposing, scarred, undeniably sexy exterior. Least of all Larry's class-conscious family, who would like nothing better than to split up this mismatched pair.

Is it physical? Oh, yes, it's deliciously physical, and so much more—which makes Larry's next task so daunting. Not just convincing his colleagues, friends and family that their relationship is more than skin deep. It's convincing Al.

Contains comic misunderstandings, misuse of art materials, and unexpected poignancy.

Muscling Through Details

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Author : J.L. Merrow

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From Reader Review Muscling Through for online ebook

Monique says

I read the first passage of this book and I just knew I would Love It... and Love it, I did!

This book is a love story of two very different people, from opposite walks of life, beautifully narrated from Al's point of view and is almost childlike in it's simplicity. Al has an innocent honesty with no filters, the delivery of which is authentic in his British regional dialect, I could actually hear his accent in my head!, his unintentional humour had me laughing out loud through out the book...

Even though there are two main characters in this book, Al and Larry. The star of the show is Al, as we see this very loving relationship unfold through his eyes and with his voice.

Larry, who is small in stature and described by Al as 'pretty', is a Professor in the History of Art at Cambridge University, highly intellectual and used to the finer things in life! Al is in awe of Larry's beauty and intelligence and unselfishly wants nothing more than for Larry to be happy... his heart is fit to bursting with the pride he feels towards him.

Oh Al... my sweet, loveable, endearing, gentle giant. He is huge, covered in tattoo's with a nasty scar on his face, thanks to a broken glass in a bar fight, he is a typical lad about town who likes nothing more than going down the pub with his mates and having a pint. Larry on the other hand prefers his nights out at the Opera, Theatre, or the occasional dinner party with colleagues and fellow Professors from the University.

Al see's the simple beauty of life without it's complexities, uneducated with no self esteem, describing himself as 'thick as pig shit'. He therefore has no expectations from life and is never disappointed with his lot, empty promises are what he expect's! Larry... bless him, peel's away the insecurities, accepting Al for the meek, mild mannered fellow he is - warts 'n' all. Larry never condescends him, despite his simple nature and laughs with him, rather than at him!.

Unfortunately Larry's family and friends see something completely different and they really don't care about voicing their pompous, conceited, bigoted opinions in Al's company, while my sweet, sweet Al is totally oblivious to the educated barbs and remarks voiced purely to humiliate him!

I wanted to cry at his humility... he only see's the good in the world, thinking himself insignificant in the bigger picture. He is not good with words, but when he expresses himself in the way only he can with total innocence and honesty... Oh dear lord, the tissues were out again!

This is a really 'Ahh....Bless', book and I truly loved their refreshingly different relationship and even though we have the word 'fuck' in the first and last sentence, I wasn't feeling the sex scene's and yes I do mean that literally! It was described rather than felt, left me unsatisfied and detached and I wanted wonderful. It probably wouldn't have been fitting in the context of the book for Al to all of a sudden sprout a new vocabulary and animated descriptions just to satisfy my carnal needs!

This really is a feel good kind of book, highly entertaining and something I could relate to. If you are wanting an m/m book which is hot, hot, hot... this is not for you! but if you want sweet and loving, get it

now!

For more reviews, please check out... Sinfully Sexy Book Reviews

Susan says

4.5 stars!

Late to the party...but I made it.

“Muscling Through” is such a ridiculously sweet love story that I dare even the coldest, hardest of hearts to try NOT to enjoy. Definitely one of those that causes the physical reaction of a warmed heart and a smile on your face.

Larry & Al are in LOVE and its ok, everyone! I don't want to debate about intellectual disparity. I read it more as an opposites-attract storyline and that love can be as simple as finding someone who makes you happy.

But what I enjoyed most, and what I found myself wishing for more in RL, is the CLEARNESS of the communication. Al says what he's thinking and exactly what he's feeling...no games, no manipulation, no pretenses. It felt refreshing in its simplicity. I'd love to be in a relationship where everything that needed to be communicated was put out there...both in words and in signs of affection...

Loved it. READ IT! :)

Kaje Harper says

This is a sweet novella, completely dominated by the voice of the narrator. Al is that rare character who is neither bright nor intuitive, but who brings so much honesty and goodwill to everything he does that the reader falls in love with him from the first page. Not much happens here, although the bits with the mothers are nicely done. But the whole story will leave you feeling warm and happy.

Nick Pageant says

Truly charming little book narrated by the most endearing lug you'll ever meet. Loved it.

Blacky *Romance Addict* says

“You must’ve been waiting for someone like me to come along,” I said. I meant, because of the big bed. But Larry looked at me all funny and said, “Yes, I think I was.”

This book made me so happy The first chapter got me laughing like crazy, and my smile stayed on for the two-three hours it took for me to read this

Books like these make me wish I knew English better than I do, because I just don’t know the words to describe this book. It was just amazing. And totally different!

The story

I loved it! The beginning! OMG I don't remember the last time I read such a good introduction to a book, it had me laughing from page one :D Such a great idea for their first meeting , Al and Larry's paths cross in an alley, where Larry mistakes Al for a mugger/rapist :D

He's scared sh*tless, and begs Al not to hurt him.

Al doesn't really understand why Larry's so afraid of him, thinking he must be drunk or something.

The dialogue in this scene, OMG I coludn't stop laughing! Al kept saying stuff that Larry misinterpreted and that got him even more scared

Here are one of my favorites :D

“I tried to give him his wallet back, but he had his eyes shut again, so I put it in my pocket. I think he needed to get to bed. “I’m going to get you home and in bed,” I told him.

He wasn’t walking too good, so I put my arm round his skinny little waist. I could have snapped him in half. “I could snap you in half,” I said, and I smiled so he’d know it was a joke, but he still had his eyes shut.”

“He was standing by a knife block with this big knife in one hand and a phone in the other. I thought, he’s going to have trouble trying to dial one-handed. “I’m calling the police,” he said in this funny high voice.

I didn’t get why he wanted the police, but the knife in his hand was shaking all over the shop, so I went and took it off him before he could hurt himself.”

Anyway, Larry soon sees his mistake, and after he apologizes, they go on a drink and soon after that, they hook up :D won't say any more, if you want to know, read the book :D

The characters

Larry is a sweet guy, and I liked him very much, but the spotlight goes to Al all the way. Don't really remember ever reading about a character like him before, and it was refreshing to see someone different in the lead role.

I don't really know how to describe Al to you all...

He isn't educated, and sometimes doesn't understand when Larry's talking all smart with him :D

He's totally straightforward, always says what's on his mind in the most direct way.

He doesn't get sarcasm and has a very simple view of the world.

He can't understand why Larry wants to be with him, and same goes with Larry.

He is such a good person, I just loved the hell out of him

There was a point in the book where my heart ached for Al, and how he couldn't understand what was wrong with him and Larry but the ending was just so beautiful

The only awkward point was the sex, kind of weird to read. Still, even with that, I absolutely loved it! A book that can keep me smiling/laughing out loud from first to last page, and one that made me love the characters so much, deserves a 5 star rating without a doubt

Mandy*reads obsessively* says

Sweet, charming and fun!

Recommended!

July 2011

I keep rereading this book and if anything I love it more each time.

ETA: I did a reread yesterday, and have to say, for all of you who have this book and haven't read it yet, please do it now! You are missing out on a simply beautiful story!! Come on, you know you want to!!:)

ETA : I am in a crappy mood so I am doing a reread on advice (hi Anke) and I'm sure this story will improve my mood for sure!

sigh this is a story I'm pretty sure I will never tire of, Al is a real sweetheart, I just love him, and all who know me, know I'm greedy, I would love more of these two, and Ali and Minnie and Mum....

Rosalinda *KRASNORADA* says

Just a few quick thoughts, I think all my Xmas reviews are gonna be quick ones...Menos es mas, right?

*I hate it when characters meet each other before 10-15%.

*I hate it when characters kiss each other before 33%.

*I completely hate it when characters are living together before the end of the book.

*I love it when there is a banter between characters, when they play it hard to get.

But guess what? This book had all points for me to hate it but I LOVED IT. Don't ask me why, I just LOVED the writing style, it was so freaking good I would have read a thousand pages about them having tea. I am dead serious.

And I absolutely LOVED the last line, I cannot even put it under spoilers because some brats will open it and it's just too good and too goosebumps inducing that I want you to experience it for yourselves.

I know people often say they're going to do stuff for you when they don't really mean it

SO FREAKING TRUE!

I highly recommend this one. Loved it!

Alexis Hall says

Sort of brought to you by Reading Project 2015.

Felt vaguely bad for being tepid on *Slam* (not that anyone cares, except me) - so I thought I'd write something about how much I adore this.

I think Merrow might be the Queen of short-form fiction. It's just a perfect little jewel of a book. An ideal comfort read - "like your favourite cup of tea" as Liz says in her review.

An unlikely love story between a Cambridge professor and ... well ... a tattoo-ed giant of a man who is generally considered to be a bit stupid, the twist being that the narrative is told entirely from the latter's POV. What that they have in common -- apart from desire, and then love -- is, hilariously enough, sensitivity. They are both a little lost, a little melancholic, a little inclined to to be too-hurt by the world, despite their disparities in appearance and life experience.

It's so completely lovely to see them come together and slowly, carefully learn to make each other happy. And, obviously, the book very gently explores a lot of the issues closest to my heart: class and masculinity and the mutual care-taking of love.

Because it's a Merrow book, this is funny as hell, but it's got as much as heart as it's narrator.

I reiterate: I have all the love for this book.

Ingie says

4 1/2 Huge Stars - big Al is such a sweet charmer - irresistible!! A wonderful little gem and a perfect heart-warmer for a romantic like me.

I've always liked this kind of stories. Like the movie Forrest Gump and the novel; The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, and others. Stories told through someone else's eyes, someone who sees things a little differently, hear what is said etc and which of us others are seen as a bit simpler, slightly odd or less sharp people, etc. In a nice way, but still. If such a story is really well done, becomes it usually neither, silly, overly sentimental or Hollywood smeared but it becomes hopefully touching, funny and cute. This was a such story and I LOVED it - a amazing fun, romantic and touching little short story on 85 pages that I hope many, many more will read.

This wonderfully charming story is narrated by Al's always so wise voice. Al is maybe not smartest guy on the planet, but he knows what he knows and doesn't know, see what he sees and hears what he hears. To a question, you get a straight answer. Al is very far from many of us often overly analytical people. It is what it is, and that truth is usually accepted by Al.

One night in an dark alley meets the big, **muscular but pretty simple guy, Al**, by chance, a small, thin, but according to Al's opinion, such a **beautiful posh guy named Larry**. Larry, an clever university professor, is this evening slightly drunk and he misunderstand the whole situation.

"Please go" he said. "Just take my money - take anything - and go"

I didn't get why he wanted me to take something, but he seemed really worried about it. So I looked around, and he had a bowl of fruit on the side, so I grabbed an apple, 'cause I always get hungry after I've been drinking.

"I'll take this, okay?" Then I left him there, but I took the knives and I hid them in the hall cupboard, just in case.'

Sure, we can reflect on the credibility of this story, that two so intellectually and socially diverse people like Al and Larry would stick to each other. That the two, especially Larry, would get what they both need in a long and loving relationship. Is it likely that these two can become a loving couple? But why not, every day, we read books about ordinary young girls with a pretty face that hits ten years older super hot business leaders and billionaires and finds love for life. How likely is that? But sometimes it happens, someone gets the prince and I wholeheartedly believe in that dream.

Sometimes it happens!

This is a fictional romance, and it's about epic love, well, everything's permitted. These two guys won at least my heart. The whole book is full of lots of wonderful thouhts and quotes and dear Al has a heart of gold. A heart that he gladly gives to his smart, not always so wise, lover and dream-man, Larry. There is only one word for Al - he's adorable.

'I went and kissed him to wake him up just like Sleeping Beauty. Although I guess with me it was more like Beauty and the Beast.'

'Larry said that Michelangelo was a poof, so I wondered why he'd sculpted a guy with a really tiny cock. But I know when you go to old houses, the doorways are much smaller, 'cause people were shorter then, so maybe cocks were smaller too. It makes me glad I wasn't born a few centuries ago.'

Worth every minute, it's well written, genuine and honest. Furthermore, it was über super romantic, heartbreakingly sweet and it was pretty steamy between this two guys. And something that always makes me extra happy: *A better than best HEA*.

If you missed this cutie, read it now! It is a "boys who loves boys" romance, by in my opinion, so much more.

Last of all, let me just say; I hope and believe that relationships like Al's and Larry's can work even in real life. As a friend said - *is there love, anything is possible*.

I LIKE - charming, funny and beautiful!

Audrey says

Loved it. Want to wrap it up in a bow, bathe it in stardust, and give it kisses.

This is a romance, but not in the traditional sense of "will-they/won't-they." Rather, this is more like a relationship study as we see, through the narrator Al's POV, how he and his partner have come to be where they are today. Going into the story, I knew that Al was a massive, rough-looking working class bloke, and his partner was a poshy Cambridge art professor. So, yes, the story of their getting together - and staying together - piqued my interest already.

What I didn't know, though, was how much I would absolutely love and be charmed by Al's narrative voice.

Here's the thing. Al's a simple guy. As in...he's not too bright, and he's the first one to state that. He's not disabled, *per se*, but he's a simple guy who's not quick on the uptake. He takes things literally and at face value and is a big softy who thinks people generally have positive intentions. Misunderstandings on his part abound, but he's rarely aware of them, even though we, as the readers, can read easily between the lines to see what the true intent of the other characters is. He doesn't understand compliments unless they are absolutely direct, and, at the same time, he doesn't understand insults, which is excellent for him (he continues on in his merry way), but can be a little uncomfortable for us and for his partner. That's actually an aspect that I think could make someone squirmy - like our "further" knowledge makes us superior to him in some way. I didn't feel that way, really; rather, I was charmed by Al's POV and misunderstandings and thought he was really precious and unique. Al is perfectly happy and content in his POV, so for me, it worked.

There isn't much "action" by way of crazy shite going on in the plot. This story was about the relationship, how it developed, and how Al and his partner came to understand each other beyond "just fucking" (Al's words, not mine). Don't get me wrong - there's stuff going on, including, yes, plenty of sexytimes to sate one's romance reading need. Actually - fair warning - there's a lot of sexytimes.

We also get what you might expect in the class differences set up that their two stations in life present. Al is well aware of his working class roots and that he's "not so clever," and he's perfectly comfortable and content

with what he does and where he is in life. He's a poof. He likes to draw. He's attracted to Larry, but he knows Larry is posh and should be with someone cleverer. Al is remarkably self-aware and self-actualized without being aware of others' oblique intentions. Another interesting aspect is Larry's discovery that Al "likes to draw." We see Al's development into an artist, but oh no no! Don't call him that! He just likes to draw and, when they acquire the materials for it, he likes to paint, too. It's very sweet, and I loved how Al expressed himself through his art.

I loved this story. Absolutely devoured it. It took a lot of writing chops to create such a strong and vivid narrator who himself was unaware of what others meant, but through whom we, as the readers, could still recognize what was going on even when the narrator himself could not. It was really a unique reading experience, and I'm so happy I had the chance to ride along in Al's brain for the 80 or so pages that he let me. I thought the ending was rather abrupt, but then, upon reflection, I realized that anything else would not be in keeping with our simple-living narrator Al.

Em says

This has to be my absolute favourite feel good book of the year. I fell in love with Al by the end of the first paragraph when I read these words....

I just smile at them, 'cause they're his mates, and it's all right. It doesn't matter what they say about me, just as long as they're nice to Larry.

Muscling Through is such a simple story really, Al meets Larry, they start dating, move in together and fall in love. But it's told in such a touching and humerus way you just can't help but fall for Al and Larry and want the absolute best for them both.

This is one book that I just know I'll read again and again as a pick me up!

Baba says

FULL REVIEW NOW POSTED

4.5 stars.

An amazing and very unconventional love story between brains and muscle power. Yes, it's so true: Beauty is in the eye of the beholder!

Sweet. Real. Believable. Sad. Yet incredibly hilarious at times.

I cannot deny it, this story packs a punch.

Muscling Through is the love story between big and tattooed Al and Larry, a diminutive and very pretty

Cambridge Art History Professor. One evening they met in a dark alley when Al is taking a piss. Brainy Larry thinks Al is a criminal and is scared shitless. The story takes it from there.

What makes *Muscling Through* so special is the characterization of Al and Larry. They are real and very believable. This little gem is quite an eye-opener. Open your eyes and you will find love, talent, and personality in many different forms. With that said, Al is artistically talented. He is very happy when he can express himself by creating his beautiful paintings. Sadly, there are so many people who remain blinded by their own narrow-mindedness and intolerance. Personally, I think we should encourage and accept diversity much more. Our modern world is too much standardized and too fake at times.

Al. You're something. A masterpiece.

Toby gave me a cheque for my paintings that sold at the do. It was more than I make in six months pulling in punts. I didn't know what to spend it on, 'cause my mum said she didn't want me to buy her nothing. So I was going to buy Larry something, but he said I should spend it on something I always wanted. So I bought a cat. I asked Larry first, because it's his house and all. The cat didn't cost much, because it was from the Cats Protection League and they don't have posh cats there, only ordinary ones. I didn't want a posh cat. I got Larry for when I want posh.

On Tuesday we were both a bit sore, so we went to the gallery with Michelangelo's David in. He looks a lot like Larry, but for a seventeen foot tall guy, he's got a really tiny cock. Larry's cock is a lot bigger than that. Larry said that Michelangelo was a poof, so I wondered why he'd sculpted a guy with a really tiny cock. But I know when you go to old houses, the doorways are much smaller, 'cause people were shorter then, so maybe cocks were smaller too. It makes me glad I wasn't born a few centuries ago.

The story is told in first person POV. Al is the narrator. The author did a very fine job at portraying Al's personality. He's for sure not the brightest bulb but then again, I think that made him even more likable—he's totally endearing and such a good, loyal, and kind soul! And Al wears his heart on his sleeve. I adored his simplicity to look at things, people and the world in general—it made him very real and pure. Honesty at its best. Kind of what you see is what you get. I'm pretty sure you'd love this bear of a man. Oh yeah, I heart you, Al! *smooches* His take on social situations is sometimes incredibly funny, uncomfortable or at times very sad. The writing style is simple, fresh, and honest. There's no frilly or flowery stuff to be found--nothing superfluous at all. Admittedly, the plot is ordinary, however, I thought it accommodated Al perfectly. As a matter of fact, it would have felt contrived if the reader would have been "forced" to deal with a complicated storyline. Al and complicated? Nah! That's a no-go!

Why not 5 stars?

The story is a bit too short and I didn't particularly like the sex scenes. They are kinda detached; I wanted more emotions and not just a quick f*ck.

Muscling Through is a very satisfying and enjoyable story--so worth the read! I had so many LOL moments and I'll always remember dear Al. You're putting a smile on my face right now. Again.

I'd highly recommend this book to those readers who would like to give the m-m genre a try. Enjoy!

"Don't ever think I don't like the way you look. I love the way you look."

My chest felt all funny, like it needed Larry against it, so I put my arms round him and hugged him tight.

Julio Genao says

Spend a few minutes with me. I'm super-excited and need to write about this amazing book for a bit.

In the hour or two I spent reading this I must have caught myself twenty times with my brows drawn up in astonishment, my mouth hanging open, and this watery, pathetic little noise in my throat that was something between a delighted 'Ohh!' and an affectionate 'Aww!'

And then, because it's very short, it was over. And I couldn't think of anything else for a while.

Over and over, I returned to our narrator, Alan Fletcher. Why should I be so enthralled? Why am I still smiling? What the fuck are 'horses doovers'?

(view spoiler)

He's a lot of things, our Alan. Before I started reading the book, I went through a few threads of discussion dealing with the discomfort some people felt reading about a relationship between people at wildly divergent extremes of intelligence. Some even went so far as to view Alan as autistic, though everyone agreed he was—at the least—a very, very simple man, mostly because he could never keep up with the conversation of anyone around him.

Some even thought he was flat-out retarded. But he's not.

He's blind to needless abstraction, not stupid. He's pragmatic, not coarse.

I ask you—who among us never needs a moment, once in a while, to work out what other people are going on about? To parse what is real beneath the layers of theatrical pretense? To see what's hidden beneath the clattering strata of armor all of us wear every day, which we gild with our self-deception—in futility, of course, because our armor is encrusted with passive cruelties like politically expedient barnacles, razor-sharp with cynicism—but we never really notice any of it, because it's absolutely routine to us all?

Who among us dares to walk the Earth without girding our tender hearts thusly?

So he's simple. No two ways about it. But he's a lot of other things besides. He's physically huge—the image of him stuffing himself into a Volkswagen Golf is fucking hilarious—and also scary-looking. His vicious but sweetly juvenile tattoos will tell you more about his nature than someone else might reveal by cowering under designer labels or hipster street-cred. He's very gentle, and even-tempered, and possessed of a profound honesty—a comprehensive inability to dissemble—that takes your breath away.

But above all, he is good. Perfectly good. And he needs to be—for this is fiction, after all; this is parable, and it is in stories just like this one that we build our allegory from the purest distillation of our most vital—and dangerous—ideas.

Yes. I'm comparing a gay romance novel to George Orwell's 1984. I really, really am.

He is the embodiment of an idea. Of what it is to be Good.

Heed the spoilery evidence below:

(view spoiler)

Skim through your friends' reviews of this book. Notice the words people use to describe it and the character of Alan Fletcher. Notice how many times people say he's "endearing," or the story is "heartwarming." Everyone from my most jaded and grumpy Yoda-analogues to the sweetest, most hysterical fangirls I know *adores* Alan. Even if they're blind to the structural elegance of this compact book, or unable to discern the keen sense of language required to tell a story in a vibrant and authentic voice without dropping unexpectedly out of cant more than once or twice, they know that they love him, and they tell you so.

In all-caps. With, like, gifs of hearts exploding into glitter, and shit.

They go absolutely *bananas* for him, even if they've never studied writing, and don't know how truly difficult it is to narrate in the first person—in any tense—never mind using the classic literary device of the Unreliable Narrator. What J.L. Merrow has done here is nothing short of marvelous, because she's built her book on that very device and all its limitations, to tell a story that is, *somehow*, still incredibly rich and nuanced. A story about the difference between what people see with their eyes, and what they feel with their hearts. About people who hear, but do not listen. About what people know, but do not understand.

About covers, and the books under them.

Everyone loves Alan Fletcher, even if they never notice any of that dorky writer-stuff, because he's a pure example of what we aspire to, and what we cherish. We are genetically predisposed to care for him, to go all pie-eyed and gooey-smiled, to squee with a sudden rush of affection for him. He's an archetype of what we admire, and desire. He is the damsel, and the hero. The wise old sage... and the innocent babe.

He's also got a big dick. And who doesn't love a big dick, ya?

Drop everything. Read this. Read it today. If you only get the merest slice of what this nearly flawless little book has to offer (and lets be clear on this: I'm talking about what is integral to your very humanity), it will still be one slice more than you got yesterday—and more than what you'll get tomorrow.

Shelley says

This is the story of Alan and Lawrence, told by Alan, completely from his point of view. A love story where they meet, shag, move in together and just live life with all its ups and downs. So what's so special about that then?

Well it's Alan of course!

Alan is not your typical narrator, some might call him simple minded or autistic. Alan is a simple man, but not quite a simpleton. General society certainly might find him to be a few matches short of a full box, and I say that in the kindest way.

Reading his story I cannot help but feel that it is reminiscent of listening to Forrest Gump tell his tale.

The difference is that Alan is English and doesn't look a thing like Forrest (thankfully). I loved being able to relate to his use of the typical common English language *slang* phrases. The writing is so perfect that you can hear his accent and vocal nuances perfectly.

Lawrence and Alan are two blokes who are the polar opposites of each other in every way. Lawrence is tiny (in Al's eyes) real pretty, educated, posh and from an upper middle class family. Alan is a giant brute of a man, his body decorated in tattoos and his face marred with a scar that leaves him with a sinister antagonistic smile which has no true reflection on his nature at all. He is uneducated and views life at face value; uncomplicated, literal, and honest. A commoner with a single working class mum – who is hilarious. His every word endeared me to him. The first date and Alan says:

You got a lovely smile," I said, because I knew that was true. He went all pink. "Are you a poof?" I asked. I didn't think he minded. And even if he did, there wasn't nothing a little bloke like him could do to me, so that was all right.

"Er, yes. I hope that's not a problem? His ears went so red it was like sunburnt, and he leaned back a bit.

"Nah I'm a poof and all."

Alan had me giggling, grinning, laughing out loud, my happy emotions where all over the place – in such a good way. He doesn't mean to be funny, he is just so literal in his thinking that it can only fuel my terribly dry sense of humour.

The world really needs more Alan's!

Despite this rather unconventional pairing, they are Yin and Yang, a perfect pair. The diversity in their lives leads to very funny moments.

I can see where a few of my fellow readers had issues with the sex. It does not come across as a sensual erotic telling, it's told in the only way Alan knows how. He likes it, he gets hard and he f#cks. Alan doesn't have the words to tell it any other way, so I get him.

I keep wanting to say "aww bless him" when I think of Alan, especially when he says stuff like this:

we watched old Charlie Chaplin films. I like them 'cause you don't have to be clever to get the jokes. I never thought someone smart like Lawrence would like them too."

Aww ...Bless Him!

This is so refreshing, the writing is bloody perfect and I'm still grinning like a fool! Even if you don't read m/m this is just so deserving of the two hours it will take to read it. It's wonderful!

Sheziss says

Saliva holds important functions in the human's physiology. One of them is to protect teeth. And here I was at a risk of losing them because I just couldn't stop smiling!

First I have the man of my dreams. Then I have Al. Due to romanticism or Disney or whatever sociological reason, I have that image of my perfect guy in my head. But if I ever find my own Big Al in this world I hope I'll be intelligent enough to grab his at his ankles and never let go that chance at happiness. It would be a crime.

I was having an awful week while reading this book. It was one row of crappy days in which I almost lose hope on humanity. One of those when we realize we are selfish and only think about our own benefit: man is a wolf to man. And that, as a species, is totally normal. The stronger one is the one who survives. But humanity has progressed in that thought. Or it should. Al doesn't know the word "meanness". It's just not in his dictionary. So, is he really more retarded? Or more advanced than most? I had a teacher at school who said that in her whole life, she only met one person who was totally unselfish. I hope I find that person soon. I guess it's like Halley's Comet, you are lucky if you do find that person once in your life.

Al is simple. In every sense of the word. There is no pretension and no lies, only adorable honesty and blunt authenticity. Al is unforgettable. I have read some books with limited characters before, but very few of them are that touching.

“Al. Listen to me. I love you, okay?”

“Okay.”

This book made me smile, and I'm glad for that, because I really needed it, and because it's just so charming I was enamored instantly. I loved it was from Al's POV. The story and the characters and the style are deceptively light. But very profound thoughts and big truths are shown here, they were unexpected but welcome. It made me laugh, it made me dream, it made me believe. Just perfect.
