



The Good Neighbor

Jay Quinn

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“Quinn invests *The Good Neighbor* with effortless prose that's a pleasure to read, a nimble sense of nuance that gives it complex emotional texture, and a deep intelligence about how couples can love each other while dealing with imbalance in their lives. This is the good gay novel about suburbia and its torments that John Updike won't ever write.”—Richard Labonte

“In rich, languid and perfectly nuanced prose, author Jay Quinn traces the arc of each character . . . casting a unique spell over many of the assumptions and stereotypes of suburban family life.”—Curled Up With a Good Book

Praise for *Back Where He Started*:

“Jay Quinn's masterpiece. You don't have to be gay, Catholic, or Southern to enjoy this wonderful book. Engrossing and inspiring.”—Gay Today

Rory Fallon is walking his dog when he notices activity at the house next door. New neighbors, namely, the Hardens, are moving in—Austin and his wife Meg, along with their two kids. Rory introduces himself, and can't help but notice how intrigued Austin is when it's mentioned just who Rory lives with: his partner of many years, handsome Bruno Griffin. Indeed, the last thing Austin expected in this small Florida enclave was having a gay couple for neighbors. But life has more surprises in store, for Austin and for Rory, and soon new questions are asked, about love and about marriage, and how their roles help define—and alter—the people around them.

A main selection of the InsightOut Book Club.

The Good Neighbor Details

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Author : Jay Quinn

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From Reader Review The Good Neighbor for online ebook

Jacquelin Edwards says

Mediocre plot, less than stellar characters, underdeveloped, self indulgent, utterly predictable. The predictability I can handle, but the book was lacking any real depth. Bleh.

Collin says

Another book for the beach. I read this in Provincetown.

Kealii Ballao says

Gay Neighbors.... so far it seems there might be a straight bi curious neighbor who is hating his life.

Tim says

Set in an up-scale, suburban, planned community in Florida, this is a story of two couples -- one straight and the other gay. The dynamics of love and friendship they experience reflect their personal histories, class, and prejudices of each other. All the adults take steps toward learning the interplay of sex and love.

Rachel says

I very much enjoyed this novel about two households in a upscale Florida community. Rory and Bruno are a longtime gay/bisexual couple who have had their share of ups and downs but are firmly committed to each other. Rory is basically a house-husband and contentedly plays the role of "wife" for Bruno, a financial analyst. Bruno is a big, muscular, aggressive guy and their relationship is very slightly tinged with dominance and submission. Meg and Austin are their new neighbors, a husband and wife who move next door with their two young sons. The novel explores perception of gay men, in particular with the character of Meg whose homophobia is gradually eased as she gets to know Rory and Bruno. Conflict occurs when Rory discovers that Bruno has cheated on him with a woman during a business trip to NYC. At the same time, Austin discovers that his friendship with Rory re-ignites his long-buried bisexual tendencies. Almost reluctantly, Rory has a few sexual encounters with his neighbor, mostly because Bruno's cheating has hurt him, or because Austin seems to need him so desperately. Rory's motivations for cheating are never clearly stated, and that's probably what makes him such a fascinating character. But Austin is too engrossed with Rory, and the situation becomes dangerous. Unbeknownst to the cheating pair, both Bruno and Meg are aware of the infidelity. Bruno has been guilty of so many trespasses, he does not let on that he knows his boyfriend has cheated. Meg is considerably more unhappy about it, insisting that Austin get an STD test before he touches her again. However she eventually accepts that, despite his craving for sex with men, Austin truly does love her and their relationship weathers the storm. Bruno arranges to be transferred so that

he and Rory must move, which they do every few years, seeming to enjoy this lifestyle. This allows the situation between Austin and Rory to cool down and presumably things are back to normal for everyone.

The only weak character in this whole book is Meg, who comes across as a bit shrewish. Because Austin was laid off for being a whistle-blower, and only marginally contributing to the family expenses with his freelance work selling medical equipment, she has had to act as head of the household. Money issues inevitably lead to conflict within couples, and it's very difficult for the one person who is supporting the entire house not to resent the other who is unable to contribute to expenses. When Austin orders a new suite of furniture for the boys' den, Meg and he squabble about it, and the author's sympathies lean towards Austin, although to me it does not seem unjust to criticize an unemployed husband for spending his wife's money on furniture from Pottery Barn. Meg is portrayed as rendering her husband impotent, but in my view, she is merely refusing to let him pretend that he is the main breadwinner. Happily, Austin is vindicated by getting his old job back.

Altogether this was a great read, revealing much about the inner lives of bisexual men and the gay and straight people who love them. I would love to see Jay Quinn write more novels featuring Rory and Bruno.

Sherard H says

The Good Neighbor by Jay Quinn has the upshot of being set in a Floridian suburb, which is great because as a Floridian, I can speak to the Florida suburbs first hand – how the houses are almost always new, and almost always cookie-cutter; how everyone avoids lounging about outside where the Florida heat radiates off of the asphalt and the sidewalks (if you're lucky enough to have a sidewalk – a surprising number of new neighborhoods don't), and especially avoid being "neighborly". The skies are almost always bluer than blue with an almost perfect 180 angle unobstructed view, and nothing in the world can feel more unearthly.

Choosing this as his setting, Quinn has certainly had some advantages, and when you consider the subject matter, it seems even more unreal. But, while it's an interesting summer read, there's not much takeaway value from this novel for me, except for a statement that one of my fiction teachers said that resonated within me while I was reading this: *always have a good editor or two*, she said, *because once your submission hits the presses, that's it*. And she was right; all it took was one or two glaring typos in this novel to take me out of the storyline, and that's why I can only give it 3 stars.

Gerry Kelly says

Fun, light, gay novel

Kevin says

Overall a good book. Two of the characters are well developed, two of the characters are sort of one

dimensional until much later. I found that annoying, so rated it as okay instead of great.

The author does take you on a metaphorical journey. Part of it is predictable, and part has somewhat unexpected twists.

Quinn is excellent in descriptions of places and male emotions, with this book I almost felt like I was 'on the set' in Florida.

Don't read this as your first novel by Jay Quinn.

Okay, but not exceptional.

Katie Canepa says

Soft core porn; super lame exploration of sexual identity. Embarrassing that I purchased this book

Matt Kats says

Absolutely awful!!! The writing is terrible, the characters are clichés. No one should be subjected to this book, ever.

Ije the Devourer of Books says

Another excellent book by Jay Quinn.

Jay Quinn is one of my favourite authors. He writes beautiful stories about life in all its ups and downs, with gay characters at the centre of his stories. Jay never forgets that gay people have families and friends and these aspects of life are woven into his stories so that what we see is a depiction of real life. We see realistic stories and situations that we could find ourselves in irrespective of our sexuality.

The author shows us that indeed there is more to life than our sexuality or our gender. He reminds us that life happens to all of us.

In this story life happens to two sets of neighbours. Rory and Bruno are a couple and they have been together for more than 20 years. They have had their ups and downs and separation but life for them is together with each other. They live in an expensive new residential development and the last house is yet to be sold but when it is sold the new neighbours move in.

Austin and Meg are the new neighbours. They have two children and Meg has an overwhelming job. Austin is dealing with a break in his career and finding himself working in something that isn't his true calling. At the same time Meg is speeding along in her career.

Meg and Austin get to meet Rory and Bruno, and Austin realises that they all knew each other in passing back in college.

What soon becomes apparent is the deep love and passion that Rory and Bruno have for each other. This shows Austin what is missing from his own life and he yearns for the lost intimacy he once had with Meg. Austin is in a bad place and feeling vulnerable. He was forced out of his job because of his integrity and now he works from home in a job he dislikes and which doesn't really pay well. He has kind of lost his place as the breadwinner and leader of the family and it hits him hard. His wife doesn't really see or understand what he is going through. And that is hardly surprising because she is very much caught up in her own life.

Meg is overwhelmed in her job, neglecting herself, her children and her husband. She also has the temerity to look down her nose at the gay couple next door. Alas like so many of us she cannot see her own lack and fails to deal with her own problems not realising that her neighbours have an enduring and deep love for each other despite the difficulties in their past.

I found her irritating to say the least. Work life balance lady!! Work life balance!! Especially when you have young kids. I did not like this woman. She looked at everything through the lens of her work. Her job was a problem and she knew it because it was demanding and competitive but she couldn't see how it was distorting her life and eroding her family life.

The book shows how Meg isn't honest about what the job takes out of her. Unlike many of us who grit our teeth at work but who are very aware of the difficulties of the work place, she doesn't really see that her professional world is corrosive.

She becomes hard and insensitive. She has no time for her husband and looks on him as less than a 'real man' because he is down on his luck and needs her. She looks down on more untidy mums who don't have careers and her children are wary of her. Nothing is good enough for her.

But she likes Bruno next door because he is macho and successful even if he is gay.

Meh!

This is the first Jay Quinn book in which I have come across a woman I don't like. All the others have been ok, sometimes flawed but very human. Not Meg. And I disliked her.

Anyway moving on....

So Rory and Bruno have a deep enduring love for each other but it hasn't come that easy. Bruno is quite domineering and controlling and jealous of anyone who looks at Rory whether they are male or female. Rory is part of his safe world and belongs to him. He likes change and progress for himself but he wants to keep Rory under his thumb and controlled. He loves Rory deeply but he is stifling and an ass. He is also selfish and sneakily unfaithful.

Rory is like Austin. He isn't a doormat but has given so much of himself to Bruno through love and career sacrifice. He has given up his own dreams and talents because he loves so hard. But he too has dreams and aspirations.

So both Rory and Austin with their unfulfilled aspirations become unlikely friends and share life's problems with each other. Both of them acting as a buffer against their more selfish spouses.

This is a story of how deep love can also harbour deep selfishness. It is a story that reminds us we should not take love for granted. It is something that needs to be treasured, nurtured and valued. There is no HEA

without hard work, love, sacrifice and awareness. If one person carries all the load in the relationship then it has the potential to eat away at all that is good.

And it was such a lovely story, told in the gentle, beautiful way Jay Quinn tells all his stories.

Dalisay Diaz says

The story was somehow relevant nowadays. Most especially to the young men involved in same sex relationships. I am not being judgemental but from what I know, it is very easy for them to jump into casual sex with anyone and claim to be in love with their respective boyfriends or partners. Though the delivery of the story was really good, I somehow felt emphatic to the characters. Most especially Austin. He was a good father and husband but circumstances happen once in a while that made him do things he was not really into. I am in love with this story. I treasure long-term relationships and I value fidelity like diamonds in my Momma's ring. Kudos, Jay Quinn. Thanks patrice for the book. ;)

Marco says

This is the easiest and one of the most relished book I've encountered so far. Little to no angst (!), mature characters, and a plot that has no complicated frills and whatnot. I could have read this in one sitting but of course life expects you to be at the beck of its call so there. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!**

Cbernard3 says

This novel hit a chord in me. I was upset that I had finished it. I just wanted it to go on for another 100 pages!!

Ellen says

This is literally a slice of life from 2 families: one a gay couple, the other a husband and wife and their 2 boys who move into the house directly next to the gay couple.

Both sets of neighbors are hesitant when it comes to meeting the other, but things happen that bring them close, but not in the usual way.

The book itself is longish, but it was so interesting that to me it went by quickly. It was really just going back and forth from house to house, but it was well written and kept my interest and made it so I wanted to know how all of the issues would be resolved.

It ended abruptly, but after I had a second to think about it, it made sense.

I won't say this was a fun read, but more of a story that made me think. I enjoyed it and will more than likely be reading it again in the future.

