



Afflicted

Brandon Shire

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A high priced male escort and a blind gay man meet by chance. What ensues is a hot, steamy romance by two men looking for something more than a one night stand. But can they reach beyond their own insecurities to grasp what they really desire?

Meet Hunter Stephens. He's gay, tall, dark haired, and he's hot. Very hot. But he doesn't rely on the visual cues when appraising a man because he's also blind. He listens to the timbre of their voice, trembles at the touch of their skin, and luxuriates in the deep richness of the aroma of man. He's hard of the hand because he's a black belt and takes no shit, but soft of the heart because he's lonely and has been for a while.

Until he meets Dillon.

Dillon Chambers is straight man candy. He's a high priced male escort that works with an exclusive agency who handles only the wealthiest of clients. But it wasn't always like that for him. At sixteen he was thrown out of the house for being gay and struggled to survive, turning tricks on the street and finding food and a place to sleep wherever he could. He met two people that changed his life, but he has never met anyone who could change his heart.

Until he bumped into Hunter.

And now they are both Afflicted.

Afflicted Details

Date : Published September 5th 2012 by TPG Books (first published September 4th 2012)

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Author : Brandon Shire

Format : Kindle Edition 214 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Disability, Contemporary

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From Reader Review Afflicted for online ebook

J *deep in the heart of Texas* says

3.5 Stars!

Gigi says

This was my second read and I honestly don't remember the first. I gave it 5 stars so I thought it was worth a second shot since I haven't read the sequel. It ended on a very chiffhanger-y note so I'm surprised I gave it 5 stars. But it's a fantastic story and is so full of passion that I can't bring myself to take a star away.

I'm super excited for the sequel and am starting it right away.

Highly recommended.

Lisa Arbitrary - AttentionIsArbitrary M/M Blog says

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Afflicted by love's madness all are blind. – Sextus Propertius

--I'm a lousy human. I didn't want to read about a blind guy and a gay prostitute, but when Brandon Shire approached me and asked me to review his new book I was flattered. As a new blogger I thought, wow, someone discovered *me*. So, I looked into some of his other books (I glanced at his ratings on GR) and decided, "Okay, I can give this a shot.". Since this was my first read and review of a Brandon Shire book I honestly went into it expecting very little. I didn't really care for the cover and also, no one had recommended him to me before, so what could I be missing, really?

### THE WRITING

The question hung like flypaper swirling in the air, all the dead carcasses a tribute to that particular twist in life called consequences, which in this case remained unspoken.

I was blown away immediately. The writing style had a heavily descriptive tone and I was instantly walking

alongside the characters, feeling the setting. There were moments where I really had to dig for understanding, because I was both; learning the author's elocution, and because he made me reach to grasp a weighty concept.

I was just beginning to realize that this somewhat demanding writing style would require more concentration and effort than I usually give a "typical" romantic read, when the dialog began. I was delighted to find an easily readable, relatable tone that wasn't pretentious. The characters were as comfortable to listen to as the descriptive narrative was beautiful. A very enjoyable combination.

## **THE CHARACTERS**

Maybe he had been using the stink of independence to cover up his loneliness.

Hunter Stephens – Strong, sexy and fiercely masculine, Hunter is *not* what I expected in a blind main character. Independent despite his blindness, or more accurately, because of it. He is confident, coherent and extremely cognitive. Yet, he is wary. He doesn't want empathy. He wants to be treated as a man. He wants to be "taken" as a man.

...and wondered what it would be like to wake up next to someone like him and not feel like an accessory, not feel...disposable.

Dillion – He is beautiful, surprising and secretive. Overcoming the worst in human nature, he remains hopeful and wanting. Despite his successes he finds himself in an endless loop. He wants to leave the circumference and grab at something in the middle.

## **THE STORY**

Look at my gay blind friend, aren't I so socially forward?

A man who has always been treated as delicate, fragile and vulnerable needs to know he's *just a man*. Another man gives him his strength; unabashedly powerful sex is an intro to a deeper connection.

As I said earlier, I wasn't really into the premise, but I couldn't have been more wrong. This isn't at all about a weak, afflicted blind guy. It's about two strong men, two fighters trying to find out if they can let go. Two men taking a difficult step forward to learn whether or not they can be what each other needs.

I was simultaneously thrown into the subcultures of gay prostitution and blindness. Somehow, Shire found a

way to beautify and romance me, despite myself. I was overwhelmed with butterflies. I cried. I laughed and I learned, about me.

## **THE SEX**

**...he wrapped himself around Hunter like a soft vice of hard passion.**

Raw, descriptive, erotic as hell. The sex struck me as "a man's POV", which was fine with me. It was all the more gritty and in-your-face (often literally). Some of the terminology did make me a bit uncomfortable but it fits the story. Maybe I just need to get out more.

***What would his feet be like trapped in boots all day?* Hunter wondered. Not rank, no; a slight vinegar smell, like chips, only with a more sensual under-tongue taste.**

~~~

Possibly the most surprising aspect of the book, for me, was how even at the very end, the last two pages, I was experiencing a racing heartbeat and tummy flips. That NEVER happens for me. I was ready to scream at the lack of conclusion but now realize the story continues. The story stops in a good place but, I, for one, can not wait to read more about Hunter and Dillion and more, much more, from Brandon Shire.

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My thanks to Brandon Shire for providing me with a copy of his book in exchange for an honest review.

**Take a look at my Male/Male Romance Book Blog:**

<http://www.attentionisarbitrary.blogspot.com>

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**It's just me Shelly B says**

**Buddy read with Sarah, Anna and Rachel!!! Starting tomorrow!!**

**af·flict**

**[uh-flikt]**

**verb**

**1.to distress with mental or bodily pain; trouble greatly or grievously**

I know a lot of people loved this book and as sad as I'm to say this...it just didn't work for me. I felt as if the characters were very underdeveloped and not given their place in the book. The constant describing of all the

senses and smells took over the actual character development. I realize some of this had to occur due to Hunter being blind so that we could understand, see and feel from his point of view. Because honestly I did enjoy the few parts in the book where Hunter and Dillon actually talked and carried on a conversation. However, those parts seemed few and far between.

Another aspect that annoyed me was that Hunter always described Dillon as someone with body odor...that really bothered me. No one wants to get it on with someone who, "smells like a prison." To further describe that comment he elaborates and says, "He smelled of feet and armpits and ball sweat...." The point was he wanted it RAW and WILD and that's fine but I draw the line at smelling like armpit!

Next....the no condoms bothered me. It may not have been an issue if the topic of AIDS hadn't come up in the book and a lot of Dillon's friends had died from it. That's all I'm going to say about one.

Bottom line is the book and the characters were just a bit too sensitive for me. I like books just a little more on the edgy side. However, for someone who likes this style of book I truly do think they would enjoy it. The writing is fabulous, so I wouldn't discourage anyone from reading the book. Quite honestly I think everyone but me enjoyed it!!! So please read it and form your own opinion!

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## **Anna (Bananas!) says**

A book written from the POVs of a blind man and a prostitute as they fall in love? Yes, I'm there! I wanted to enjoy this book more than I actually did though.

There were moments of pure reader bliss, some very hot sex scenes, genuine humor, and beautifully poetic details, especially near the beginning. In particular I loved these:

- "What do you *see*?" "A deep green melancholy."
- He had a bruise on his hip that was large and fresh enough that Hunter could feel the still heat of it.
- The neck and chest were formal, diligently cut to be candy for the eye, a sweet Hunter could not taste.
- Through his own fault he had somehow unofficially become the vetter of lost key vocalists.
- Inside, all he could think about was the sound and the smell and the blood of Dillon; the feel of his arms, the breadth of his chest, how he nibbled as he wrapped himself around Hunter like a soft vice of hard passion. He was like a mallet banging on things well beyond and deep inside that place where the simple darkness of Hunter's missing vision could not go.

There were also passages where I cringed due to TMI, the story felt rushed, the connection between the MCs wasn't developed enough, and certain characters and actions strained credibility. By TMI I mean I don't need to know (view spoiler) Also, there was too much telling in some of the flashbacks, the Roland one in particular.

I'm interested enough to read the second book, partly to find out what happens to the characters and partly to try another book by this author. I'm not convinced I like or dislike the writing overall, mainly because this book felt underdeveloped to me.

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## Baba says

**UPDATE: Members of the Brandon Shire Fan Group will be doing a re-read & buddy read of *Afflicted* on November 26, 2012. You are welcome to join us! *Afflicted II* will be released on December 6, 2012!**

<http://www.goodreads.com/group/show/7...>

Review completed September 8, 2012

**Wow...what a fantastic book! Brandon sure knows how to write an enthralling and intense story. When you are reading *Afflicted* you can close your eyes and the words will be raining down on you, embracing you and you will be having a highly intimate and very animated visual.**

**5+++ shiny stars!**

***Afflicted* was a whole new sensory experience for me. Every single touch, every kiss and every smell have a deeper meaning. It will wash over you so smoothly and you will crave for more. It's intense. It's sensual. It's edgy.**

Dillon (Frank), a high-priced male escort, stumbled over Hunter on the street. They have great sex but it's not over yet. Dillon is coming back to Hunter's apartment over and over. This is not about a simple transaction, it's more personal. He can't get Hunter out of his head anymore. Hunter who is blind exudes confidence, lust and genuine affability. It's beyond Dillon why he can't stop thinking about him and he really does struggle to take the plunge into unknown waters. Because that's what it was: falling in love is uncharted territory for Dillon. For the first time in a very long time Dillon understood how deeply his father's rejection had affected his life. He is keeping people at a distance and he has issues getting emotionally involved with Hunter.

*Hunter had found the deep melancholy Frank had spoken of in his description on their way back to his apartment. It was in Frank's hands. All of it, right there in the slender wrinkles of his hands. The desperate resilience; the annoyed flamboyance; his personable passivity and his phobic aggressiveness; all trapped in the clever wrinkles of his fingers, the hard, unsociable cast of his knuckles, the safe hopelessness of the pads.*

Hunter's business was audio books--the small press, cult following kind of audio books. In the business he was known as 'The Ear' for his ability to match voice, character setting, and auditory scene. Hunter has a very acute sense of smell as well. From time to time he can be an over-sensitive yet insensitive d\*ck, and sometimes he could react pretty aggressively too. Everyone had treated him gently his entire life, like he was a fragile butterfly. He didn't want that anymore--that attitude enraged him. Hunter wanted Dillon to f\*\*k him like a man--he just wanted to be taken.

*"Smell the loam," Lydia had said, grasping a handful under his nose. "That's the smell of death." But Hunter found life in that aroma; he found regurgitation and the stubborn ache of an eternal spiral that left panic on those near its end. He smelled flowers bending in slow ruin, seeds hard and bold with new life, a river moving lazy through shallow greens. There was affection in that dirt; a touch of flesh meeting the crumbled hand of God. It was all the opposite of what his mother felt about everything.*

**Seeing, hearing and smelling these two guys together is a thing of pure beauty. The wonderful and at times incredibly lyrical prose meshes beautifully with the raw, lush, intense and edgy sex.** I have to say that every sex scene was driven by lust. *This was to be man sex.* These scenes are exceptionally well-written and highly erotic. Further, I absolutely loved to see how their relationship evolved from pure need for sex to affection and even tenderness. No worries though, the hot sex is still there, 'cause one thing does not rule out the other.

When I was 76 % done I could read one of the most touching and best annotation what love is all about resp. what love should mean to each and every one of us. It was another spellbinding and philosophical moment of utter beauty.

*What does love look like?*

Yes, you can see what love looks like. There are outward visual signs of affection; that glow in someone's eyes, a specific look. But first and foremost you can feel love and by doing that you don't need your eyesight. Feel it, touch it and listen to your heart.

Oh my, what's not to love about this book? *Afflicted* is a beautifully crafted work of love. Need, passion, hot and erotic sex, subtle banter, thoughtful dialogue and a truly fabulous and riveting narrative left me breathless and craving for more! Read this book, I'm pretty sure you wouldn't regret it. I also recommend *Afflicted* to those readers who would like to give the M/M genre a try. Enjoy!

Last but not least I'd like to mention that I love the cover. This slightly blurred vision of a gorgeous man is beautiful, and I think it reflects the story nicely.

*The very first time they were together, Dillon's hold was uncertain, a tentative embrace that held no absolutes, no dreams, but just now it was different; it was a grip that sat right on the edge of possession, a possession Hunter would willingly give, if asked.*

**I strongly advise you to read the author's note**

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!**

\*\*\*\*\*

Brandon is listening to music while writing. I quote:

*In writing my latest novel, Afflicted, there was an erotic scene I was working on and a certain song I was listening to at the time I was writing it. This song set the tempo and the rhythm of the mood that I was striving for so closely that I added a link to it within the e-book, hopefully allowing readers another level of interaction with the characters. (I haven't heard too much back on that yet, so we'll see.)*

BTW, Brandon is talking about the infamous shower scene and the song he is referring to is *Ain't No Sunshine*, performed by Melody Gardot (Live in Paris). Here is the link:



## Ingie says

### 5 Huge Stars - There are a lot of smells, sounds, feelings - an amazing novel.

**Some books are so much more** than a good book. They are magical books. The author has written a beautiful text, the words flowing, the environments are so well described and it's smells, sounds, feels and maybe it is some obscure characters - but it is sooo good. When you start reading the book, you have no idea what you will be invited to and after having finished reading, you are still in the book's warm feeling for long. For me, this was such a book. I got so much more than a romance that is about "guys who love guys" - I got a very good and well-written contemporary novel.

**Hunter - a tall, dark, gay southern gentleman** - is rather lonely and he is born *blind*. Hunter has a great need to live an independent life that is not hindered by his disability. With a disability, there are always others who want to help too much. As an adult, Hunter therefore partially broken with the overprotective mother and he now lives alone in the larger city. He also has a small, but successful, business with production of "narrow" audiobooks and his best friend and colleague is a kind of bitter and touchy woman named Margie. I just loved that lady.

“Why do we have to meet everyone in this shit hole?” Margie asked once again.

Hunter found his chair and sat. “Don’t bullshit me, Margie, the place is growing on you.” He smiled. “I can tell.”

“That doesn’t answer my question,” she said.

“It keeps people from getting their expectations up,” Hunter answered.

“There isn’t any place from here but up,” she complained.

“Exactly.”

**One day (the first page), Hunter picks up a man** in the street, an *male escort* who gives him an offer. The steamy attraction is direct and they have a hot encounter.

**Dillon, the male escort**, returning to Hunter with the money a few days later. This isn't "paid sex" for Dillon, but something else entirely. We may then follow the two men and their tiny little anxious step towards hot encounters, a growing friendship and great...

Both men have their own baggage with anxiety, obnoxious family relationships, some homophobia and particularly large inner loneliness and need of another man's soft hands, touch and confirmation.

**It's all lovely and beautifully described** - I feel WITH these two guys. Hunter is so strong, so funny and above all incredible in his way to enjoy every scent, every sound and every little part of Dillon's body. Dillon is damaged in the soul, have met so many men (for payment) and find it difficult to believe that anyone could love him. Both are young, beautiful, with big hearts but so afraid to believe in true happiness and

togetherness.

‘He smelled manly, muscular, and fucking hot. Hunter wanted him right in the doorway.’

**This, quite short, novel is a lovely little gem.** The author has done an excellent job and I will of course read the next book about these two wonderful guys. If you wish, a beautiful text, nicely described environments, well-described side characters, a lot of emotions, a little laughter and a romantic (very hot) story, I am sure you will love this one.

‘Hunter turned and kissed Dillon deeply before he rinsed off. He had never wished for his sight before, but he would have given anything at that moment to be able to turn and witness the beauty of the man that had just made love to him. He'd literally felt the change in Dillon's grip as he made love.’

**There is sweat, darkness, fear, tears, smells,** sounds, longing, need, touch, sex - all so beautifully described. Another great M/M novel. I love it all. Great work Mr Shire.

**I Like - ... and love!**

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The story varies between the two men's POV. We get a HEA but I obviously want to know more about Hunter and Dillon and their story forward. The following book is: Afflicted II and my review

Lenore says

Well, this book was a letdown. And I feel I have to clarify that the lyrical prose had nothing to do with it. If anything, it was one of the interesting aspects of the story. Also, if it makes any difference, I should also mention that the book isn't brimming with flowery similes, metaphors, analogies and collocations. There are several of them, yes, and some of them sound really strange and uncommon, but I'd say it's sprinkled, not packed with them and they're mostly found in the first 40% of the book. I guess what I want to say is, if you're avoiding this because of the language, maybe you should reconsider.

My biggest issue with Affliction was that it felt extremely unbalanced. The first half of the book was way too polished, while the second half was all over the place. The only thing I wondered about in the first half of the book was how did Dillon know Hunter was gay. How did he know Hunter would accept his proposition. Did he feel he would be safe (if he was wrong, I mean) because Hunter was blind?

Also, in the first half, the narrative felt paced, solid. The story felt like it had potential, despite having a somewhat cliché air about it. I liked the connotations of Hunter's name, I said in a comment somewhere that I felt Hunter wore his disability like an offensive weapon, not a defensive shield. His blindness carried a silent power with it. And I couldn't wait to see where the handicapped man/male escort storyline would go, who was really the afflicted one. Hunter or Dillon? Or both—maybe neither—of them?

To my disappointment, the story never took off. After Hunter and Dillon hooked up for the second time, it turned into a sappy, unoriginal romance, where Dillon quits his job as an escort because he feels he has found "the one," where Hunter dismisses the warnings of his "bestie," Margie, the stereotypical fag hag who delivers the standard line "hurt him and I'll cut your balls off" to Dillon, where any character/plot development that had started or was setup in the first half either went nowhere or stopped altogether (for instance, why include the Down syndrome boy subplot if you don't intend to do anything with it?), where the technical aspects of the writing became more and more frustrating (e.g., this book suffers from a serious case of the head-hopping), where what the author probably considered a smart plot twist fell flat and served only to feed the drama.

I won't comment on how Hunter and Dillon very intentionally avoided using protection when they had sex. Others have done it numerous times before me. I did notice it and wonder about it though.

The ending was very abrupt and it felt like the author wanted to get done with the story already. The misunderstanding was resolved, they had another round of passionate sex so the book should end, right?

Well, no. And if Mr Shire intended all along to split his story into two books he should warn the reader somehow. Maybe it would have worked a little better for me if I had known.

Kelly says

A brilliant book by an amazing writer. I am completely blown away right now. Wow, just, wow!!!

Shelley says

And this one begins with mine. I wished for something so special, I could surrender myself to every word.

Guess what?... like a gift my wish came true!

From the synopsis: *A high priced male escort and a blind gay man meet by chance. What ensues is a hot, steamy romance by two men looking for something more than a one night stand. But can they reach beyond their own insecurities to grasp what they really desire?*

You will find a story that might have been told before, not often perhaps, but most certainly not like this. For in the very first pages I discovered that this book is crafted by a true wordsmith, with a poetic lyrical talent that vividly transcends the normal experience of story telling.

Hunter is a gorgeous gay blind man, living very capably with his disability.

He is hot, muscled and 'a cock on him like a stallion' – Dillons words, not mine.

At the age of 23 and a 'societal virgin' he flees his mothers smothering over protective arms and finally immerses himself in independence. Blindness does not put Hunter in the dark, his handicap doesn't limit him,

he won't allow it. 'He exudes a confidence and an innate understanding that there are many more people blinder than he' – how very true!

The way he deals with his blindness is a lesson for all of us sightlings.

This discovery is an astounding gift; how Hunter can learn a life time of traits, insecurities, strengths and weaknesses by the smell, taste and touch of a stranger, has to be the most awe inspiring thing I have ever read.

He describes Dillon from his ears to his feet in a way that uncovers the man's soul, not just his appearance.

"His arms were polite, not secure, but patient; an endemic quality of his trade, Hunter had guessed. The neck and chest were formal, diligently cut to be candy for the eye, a sweet Hunter could not taste"

Dillon, oh Dillon! *clutch my chest*

From the age of sixteen when he was forced onto the streets by a betrayal so ugly and traumatic. He leads a lonely disposable existence doing the only thing he knows... 'hustling his ass'.

Hunter gets Dillon so right when he says:

"You smell like prison."

And that is exactly where Dillon is; a prisoner trapped in a never ending circle of shame and frozen emotions.

Like typical men, they have the great ability of non communication. They do however, manage to communicate their hopes and dreams through their bodies.

Every touch, taste and breath is a silent promise, no words just the lyrically tune of possession, courage, love and acceptance. The possible end to a lonely existence for both, if only one of them would ask it!

There is a moment so descriptively lyrical that I could hear the rhythm and beat of the sex lovemaking, perfectly match in the synchronicity of words. Mesmerizing!

Every descriptive note from Hunter is an introspective view that shook my jaded mind to an experience of awakening; and how liberating it is to see beyond sight.

Discovering how very blind I am, even with my vision is embarrassing. To actually close my eyes and see *everything* through my other senses is liberating.

In darkness you can discover a light of truth that is so easily hidden by literal sight; and thus a misconception of what is, by what we physically see.

What a profound realisation! What a lesson in humility.

I learned from Hunter is that there **is** a vivid clarity to be found without sight.

Dillon tells a ~~story~~ parable about love, recognising it and fighting for it. I was enthralled by him at that moment ...beautiful. He lays his heart on the table in the telling, and I am going to keep it safe for him, for both of them.

Highly recommended! I adore this book.

Thank you Brandon Shire!

Mirjana **DTR - Down to Read says**

*****3 Stars*****

These reviews are the hardest to write. The book was enjoyable, but nothing really wowed me.

I think this is the first book I've read with a blind MC...and I gotta say, I really liked Hunter. He was abrasive and a bit of an asshole, he didn't want anyone's pity, which of course appealed to me.

The book starts a little awkwardly, right in the middle of a scene, so you miss Dillon and Hunter's introduction...and things quickly took off after that.

I think my biggest stumbling block with this book is the writing. Neither character had their own voice, and the writing would drift from prose-y (I'm making that a word) to blunt and in your face. From melodic feelings to filthy dirty sex. It felt uneven and kept me off balance while reading.

Within pages you could go from:

Inside, all he could think about was the sound and the smell and the blood of Dillon. The feel of his arms, the breadth of his chest, how he nibbled as he wrapped himself around Hunter was like a soft vice of hard passion. He was a mallet banging on things well beyond, and deep inside, that place where the darkness of Hunter's missing vision could not go.

Huh? Too much. My eyes began to glaze over half way through that.

But then the author would get down and dirty and filthy and just...

He could smell the cigarettes in Dillon's hair and suddenly he wanted to ride Dillon's cock while he smoked one. He wanted to drag Dillon back to the couch naked as hell, straddle him, and lick Dillon's chest while Dillon smoked one of those filthy cigarettes in his house and rammed that big circumcised cock up his ass.

And just like that I was back in the game! Because let me tell you, the sex here...iiiiiiiiiiiiice (although I'm not so sure I'm on board with Hunter's smell fetish. Is that a thing?)

When I picked this book up, I didn't realize this was a duet, so I'm interested in seeing where the author is going to take Dillon and Hunter in the conclusion of their story. Things ended here in a really great place, so

I'm keeping my fingers crossed that the next book isn't some manufactured drama.

Rosalinda *KRASNORADA* says

In a few words, this book was:

Amazing

Flawed but

Fantastic at the same time

Longed-for

Impressive

Captivating

Tender

Emotional

Different

I wasn't sure about this one during the first half but somehow the story captivated me...

REVIEW TO COME

Blacky *Romance Addict* says

I really don't know how to write a review for this.

I only have 2 words in my mind that would really describe this book:

RAW & REAL

First I have to say that the writing style here is superb While reading the book, you get to experience the book, some points of it were so well described, I could actually smell, feel and see everything.

The whole world, the characters, their interaction, it's very raw. There is nothing lovey-dovey here. Their sex was raw, and kind of intense for me, Hunter describes how he likes the smell of sweat, street and man, and it can't get any raw than that.

The thing I loved the most was the world in the book. It isn't sugar-coated. It's very real, and I have to say I'm not used to reading stories like that. This was refreshing :)

Hunter and Dillon have a complex relationship, they both have troubled pasts (Dillon much more, I felt so bad for him) so the ending left me with hope that they willl work everything out considering everything, they deserve to have a big and beautiful HEA

I'm not really big on words, don't know how to write beautiful reviews, and this book deserves one, so if you're thinking of reading the book, read this one:

<http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/...>

Baba you're the best :)

Susan says

"REREAD WEEK" (Nov 26, 2012)

When I first read this book, it was still fairly new and there was just a handful of us swooning over it. Love that it's built a following. It's lovely. It's an experience unlike I've had with other books...calling on other senses to get inside the heads and hearts of our MC's. I'm reminded how Brandon Shire uses heightened descriptors with smell, touch, sound to tell the story. Shocking when I first read it, but really, really impressive (and sometimes funny...) during the reread.

After the reread, I definitely felt like the book is just an intro (and actually book 2 is released on Dec 6!). We got to know just enough about each of the characters, but their relationship is still so new (I think the whole book spans only 1-2 weeks of them knowing and falling for each other). Excited to read more!

New observation: I have no idea, really, what either of these MC's looks like. Shire definitely makes it clear that they're both gorgeous. But, I didn't get any "typical" description of height, hair color, eye color, etc. I wonder if it was intentional since one of the MC's is blind. But, it got me curious. And, it left me feeling a tiny bit disconnected to them since I couldn't picture them clearly in my head.

Original Rating: 4.5 stars

Reread Rating: 4 stars

ORIGINAL REVIEW

4.5 stars...

Kudos to you, Brandon Shire. This book was lovely and the way it was written felt LYRICAL.

I really enjoyed the angle of Hunter as a blind lead. The way things were described down to the tiniest detail permeated from the pages. Things we take for granted as "sightlings", had to be written from such a different perspective (smell, touch, sound) that it I almost wished I could have read this book with my eyes closed!

At first, it took some getting used to how VERY descriptive passages were: *"...the menagerie of odors that came with the entrance of each group...Vicks VapoRub, deodorized tampons, car grease, Kool Aid, grape chewing gum, sweat, leather, hair grease, more sweat, oranges, the curdle of sour breast milk, urine, Icy Hot, and a whole other host of industrialized miasma he couldn't even name..."* (I mean, c'mon...yuck!).

BUT, it is amazing how once you get used to it, those very details are what placed you smack dab into the middle of Hunter's POV. Suddenly, lines like: *"He smelled of feet and armpits and ball sweat and Hunter wanted to taste every single one of those flavors."* came across as ROMANTIC! (I wouldn't believe me either...until I read it!)

Dillon's and Hunter's relationship was beautiful and I loved getting to know the trauma and hardships of their pasts and seeing how it manifested into the insecurities for their present and future with each other. Very touching...

I'm dying to read the sequel...

Highly recommended!

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

FREE right now at Amazon US 8/31/15

4.5 amazing stars!

I hate you Brandon Shire because now I'm now going to stay up all night to read Afflicted II!!

I loved this book. The writing was so beautiful, just descriptive and flowery in the best ways. It was also so interesting reading about a gay, blind man. Talk about a unique topic. Oh and the chemistry! The chemistry was just electric and wonderful. The book was sweet and sexy and deliciously FANTASTIC! My minor issue is the rapid POV switches that left me a bit confused at times and having to re-read paragraphs.

::SIGH:: A great romance that I recommend to all my fellow m-m book lovers!
