



## An Intoxicating Crush

*E.M. Lynley*

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**An Intoxicating Crush** E.M. Lynley

*A Delectable Novel*

Simon Ford's success is hard-won. He grew up in Napa and resents the rich people who have moved into the valley, changing the culture by opening boutique wineries and pricing the locals out of the market.

Austin Kelvin runs an award-winning winery his father started after making a fortune on Wall Street. He lives the posh lifestyle Simon resents but secretly longs to attain. However, Austin's world isn't as luxurious and privileged as it seems: he didn't inherit his father's business savvy, and his winery is going under.

When Simon's boss sends him to covertly scope out Kelvin Cellars for a possible takeover bid, Simon sees it as a step toward attaining his financial dreams. Until he falls hard for Austin. The feeling is mutual, but when Austin learns the real reason for Simon's initial interest, he suspects Simon's seduction is merely a means to procure the winery at a bargain price. If there's any hope of winning Austin's heart, Simon will have to risk it all to prove Austin is more than just an intoxicating crush.

*Like all Delectable novels, this book includes the recipes used in the story.*

## An Intoxicating Crush Details

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Author : E.M. Lynley

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# From Reader Review *An Intoxicating Crush* for online ebook

## Lena Grey says

When Fate decides that two people belong together, it doesn't necessarily mean that things will go smoothly. In '*An Intoxicating Crush*' by EM Lynley, Simon Ford and Austin Kelvin learn this in spades. At first, things seem great, but when outside influences and secrets kept, explode into the forefront, both men learn a hard lesson in expressing their feelings and being honest in spite of their injured pride.

Austin has a passion for wine and the ambition and drive to make the winery he inherited from his father successful. He's a hard worker who often puts the winery before his well-being and he's lonely. He meets Simon and feels a connection with him right away. Austin is a very open person who wants to believe only the good in people. When he and Simon get together, he quickly falls in love. It's especially nice that he and Simon have a lot in common; it gives him someone he can share his interests with. When it looks like Simon has betrayed him, his anguish is palpable. He's angry and broken-hearted and rejects Simon. Austin is stubborn and, even though he's in trouble financially, won't ask his father to help him. Austin doesn't want his father to see how bad things actually are. He really wants to be successful like his dad, but is not as gifted in the business end of things. When his father approaches him offering help, Austin begins to see things in a different light.

Simon is a hard worker like Austin, from a lower class family, who has had to struggle to get where he is. He's grown up to resent rich people like Austin, who he assumes present a better-than-thou attitude; but, Austin quickly dispels that myth by being down to earth, humble, and hard working. Simon wears a suit and works in a financial office where Austin wears jeans and works outside with his hands. Simon gains Austin's trust and he confides in Simon about the winery being in financial trouble. Since that is Simon's expertise, he gladly gives Austin advice. Unfortunately, Simon's boss totally misleads him, goes behind his back, and uses his relationship with Austin to plan a takeover of Kelvin Winery. Simon is as shocked as Austin is when it comes to light and it leaves both men are left broken-hearted and disillusioned.

This book certainly was delectable, food-wise and drink-wise and very enlightening in methods of wine making. It was easier to like Austin since he's so open and enthusiastic; Simon was harder to like, his emotions not as obvious, but he certainly redeemed himself in the end. Together, they made sparks fly, especially in bed, but as companions as well. The contrasts in the book are good too, i.e., Simon and Austin, Austin and his brother, and Austin and his father. There were some surprising twists in the plot which made it more intriguing. It's a story which reminds us that good communication is the key to any successful endeavor.

I'd recommend this book to anyone who enjoys good food and drink, has an interest in wineries, and loves a happy ending. Thanks, EM, for the education about wine and food and for introducing us to Austin and Simon.

NOTE: This book was provided by Dreamspinner Press for the purpose of a review on Rainbow Book Reviews.

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## **Dianne says**

This was an enjoyable, sexy – and savory – story set in the lushness that is Napa Valley. I really like how the author utilized her knowledge of vineyards and the wine industry to help weave Simon and Austin's story. Having been to Napa, I could picture the setting perfectly. Her skillful writing absolutely brought the vineyards, charismatic wine cellars, and rolling hills to life as beautifully as the human characters.

Read my full review here: <http://liveyourlifebuythebook.wordpress...>

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## **Ed says**

This is the first book by E.M. Lynley that I have read but after finishing it I doubt it will be the last. The story takes place in modern-day Napa, the heart of California wine country, and centers around the relationship of Simon Ford and Austin Kelvin. The two men come from entirely different backgrounds and have very different personalities.

Simon is a native of Napa who has a deep resentment of the nouveau riche who have moved to Napa and spoiled his birthplace by opening boutique wineries that are squeezing many of the locals out of business. He never knew his dad; his working-class mom raised him entirely on her own. Simon is bright and ambitious and has recently started working at a firm headed by the ruthless Mr. Tuchman. Due to his strong work ethic he is quickly making a name for himself there.

Austin comes from the opposite side of the railroad tracks. His father made a fortune on Wall Street and then moved the family to Napa where he opened a winery, just the sort of family Simon so deeply resents. His dad and older brother have lost interest in Kelvin Cellars but Austin has turned it into an award-winning venture. On the surface Austin lives the privileged lifestyle Simon resents but secretly craves. Austin's lack of business savvy though threatens the future of the business and he is struggling to keep it afloat while doing his best to keep his struggle a secret to everyone including his family.

Simon's boss sends him on a covert mission to check out Kelvin Cellars to explore the possibility of a buyout of the business. Simon views the assignment as a golden opportunity to advance himself at the firm and improve his lot in life. While there Simon and Austin are almost instantly attracted to one another and soon become involved in a very passionate relationship. Their relationship is threatened when Austin learns of the covert mission, making him seriously question Simon's intentions.

The author clearly has a great wealth of knowledge of the wine industry and weaves that knowledge through a fascinating and very believable story. This was a very enjoyable and quick read. It also had some of the steamiest sex scenes in it of any book I have read in a long time. As a gay man, I am in awe that the author who is a woman was so capable of depicting in such graphic, erotic detail the intimacies these two men share. At a writer's conference I attended earlier this year, one of the speakers noted that writing sex scenes can be tricky, something I have discovered in the course of writing my own first novel. The issue becomes how to raise the temperature and increase the heart rate of the reader without sounding ridiculous or silly. There are books, blogs and classes dedicated to this very issue and so I do not intend to write at length on the matter. Certainly the author did an incredible job of raising my temperature and increasing my heart rate

while reading the descriptions of Simon and Austin's love-making. Reading this review you might get the impression that this is a work of pornography and if so that is entirely inaccurate. This is a very well written story that just happens to have some steamy sex scenes in it.

I could see myself going on a binge reading a lot more books by this author. This is one of her newer works and there are quite a few others that involve erotic M/M themes. I regard this as my guilty pleasure novel of the year and will keep her in mind after I have read something dry and/or disappointing and need a little pick-me-up to entertain myself.

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### **Aya says**

This was an OK read. The storyline itself was fine albeit predictable and I particularly enjoyed being immersed into the world of wine. Unfortunately, the MCs did not do it for me, Simon in particular. Simon was judgmental and self-centred; Austin, was hot tempered and stubborn. Their internal musing got tedious fast and both characters had so many moments that left me going 'WTF?'. Consequently, I just couldn't connect with them and I didn't much care. Despite all this it is well-written. My two stars really comes down to a matter of personal taste.

★★?

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### **Susan Laine says**

4.5 stars. Ms. Lynley shows her writing skill and her expertise with this story. Her knowledge of the wine industry is substantial, yet it never felt like I was being given a lecture. There were a few instances of long-winded reflections, but considering how many secrets both men had, their internal conflict was a necessary evil.

Austin is endearing. He's shy, but approachable. Simon is more realistic in certain ways. He sneers at the rich and their ways, yet he secretly wishes he had wealth and land of his own. Many people are like this, showing one face to the public, one for the mirror. I won't rehash the blurb. The guys fall for each other fast and hard, unlike ever before. But... there's a monster lurking behind the scenes: Mr. Tuchman, Simon's boss who for some reason wants Austin's winery bad. This provides for the main external plot conflict and some distasteful scenes where you want to punch the smirk off Tuchman's face and shove Simon out the door to make his own way.

I admit this story made me think about the wine industry in a new light. Not a fan of wine myself, I had not considered how divided the industry is between the true connoisseurs who value tradition and flavor and the dilettante owners who think only of investments and money. The contrast was made clear. Austin represents the traditionalists, and Simon secretly does too. With each other they get the chance to be themselves—until their secrets spill out and a fire ruins the winery.

Though there are some long passages of inner thought that last for several pages, I still like Ms. Lynley's writing. I always feel truly immersed into the worlds she creates with her stories. When I stopped reading this, I was actually disoriented for a moment. The story's captivating, even though the pace is deliberately

slow. We get the chance to really know Austin and Simon, and I was sad to leave them when the story ended.

The sex in this story was refreshing because the two men didn't automatically know what the other wanted. There was no magical mind-reading going on. Austin and Simon talked about what they wanted, what roles to take, inquired what the other liked. Though the attraction was there from the first touch, the falling in love wasn't instantaneous. I liked that, the slow build, the getting to know each other bit.

Though part of the Delectable series, this is a standalone. It's not a requirement to read the other books. I recommend this to all who like their plot bunnies both internal and external, their heroes sweet but flawed, their dialogue realistic, their action subtle, and their sensual scenes hot.

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## **Ryan says**

I'm really not sure what the hell is wrong with me, but I can't stop reading gay romance novels right now. It seems to be this huge addiction I have, that no matter how many I read, it's never enough. Let me put it this way, I would have to review a book a day for over a year, and I still wouldn't be done writing reviews for the books/novellas that I've already read. It's ridiculous and I know, but I keep getting my grubby hands on more. It's a good thing that it doesn't take that long to read them, even a 500+ page book on a NOOK is a piece of cake.

I have found that through all this reading, I'm developing the taste for certain authors, and for certain story lines. I'm not a huge fan of anything paranormal, so werewolves and vampires are out. I've read a few of them, but they don't really do anything for me. I've found myself gravitating towards the hyper-masculine plot lines: cops, firemen, soldiers, cowboys, ranchers, and various other "manly" stereotypes. I also like stories that feature a normal every day couple, if they happen to be rich and have killer bodies, as they face the trials and tribulations that only a romance author can dream up.

EM Lynley is one of those authors that I seem to enjoy, not as much as a few others, but more than most. The characters, like Austin and Simon, seem to be grounded in reality and not an idolized version of what a gay man is supposed to be, even if they are incredibly gorgeous and rock the perfect body. It's the emotions behind the couple that seems to feel the most real for me with these two characters. Their insecurities shine through as much as their virtues. They are both complex men who find solace and love with each other, something that I'm still looking for in my own life. Which might explain my addiction to romance lately. I've taken myself out of the dating pool for so long, that now I'm starting to think it's time to dip my toes into the water again.

That's not to say that reading romance is going to give me the best outlook for such an endeavor. Life isn't a romance novel. As much as I would love to meet a guy like Austin, I'm not holding my breath. And at my age, while I'm not willing to settle, I know that happily ever after is a little more work than the brilliant endings the typical romance book personifies it to be.

I guess you want to know about the book though, not my odd ramblings you have been treated to so far. Simon and Austin are the kind of guys that I could be friends with, they seem to be a little bit more laid back and well grounded than a lot of the heroes I been reading about lately. They are at the same place in life, even if it doesn't appear to be at first. Austin looks as if he has everything, while Simon is doing everything he can to get everything. In reality all they are both looking for is a happy home and someone to share it with. They

find it in each other, and even when it appears as if the obstacles in their way are insurmountable, it's obvious that the foundation to recover is already established, and that there is really nothing to worry about.

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### **Hrtnsoul28 says**

I was surprised that I learned so much about wine just reading an M/M romance.

I was not sure about the romance between Austin and Simon. It is hard to read a book when you really do not like one of the MC's. It made it hard to even imagine why the one would get with the other.

I can't say that I totally fell in love at the end either. I will say the characters had more communication between them that I found refreshing. There are times I rolled my eyes. Cooking with no pants or underwear with only an apron on I thought would have been interesting. The sex scenes were the only place I found Austin and Simon compatible.

I will say the twist had me wanting to wring a neck. It actually had me not liking Simon even more, to put up with things like he did.

The best part was the description of the setting, made me want to visit Napa. I also want to buy a few cases of wine too. I may just try a Napa styled grilled cheese with it.

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### **Sarah Madison says**

One of the things I've always loved about the Dick Francis novels is that along with the clever con, we as readers are usually treated to an in-depth look at some industry that I'm unfamiliar with. That is exactly the thing I've come to expect from an E.M. Lynley novel, only with far hotter sex scenes than D.F. ever managed!

In this story, we get to see the ins and outs of the wine-making industry: the hard work, the perilous dependence on weather and good luck, the delectable end product. The author does such a great job of depicting the Napa valley wine industry that I could practically taste the end result! Not to mention the tasty recipes as a bonus!

Austin and Simon make a wonderful pair, and Simon's position as a broker, with his job putting him in conflict with Austin's interests, makes for the right amount of external conflict to keep this story simmering along nicely. You want things to work out between them so much, but you can't see that happening without one of them making huge sacrifices. Fortunately, the author is cleverer than I am!

This story is part of the Delectable series, but can be read as a standalone. I know I'm going to be checking out the rest of the series now!

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### **Michelle says**

This book was technically well written, but I couldn't get emotionally invested in any of the main (and secondary) characters. They were too one dimensional.

It is very obvious the author has spent time working in the wine industry, as the wine and food notes started to get very ho hum showing off knowledge that just fluffed out the storyline. So I wasn't at all surprised to read in the author bio this was so. (reminded me of another author who lived on Okinawa for a couple of

years and totally killed her story by over-relating her knowledge of the Island to the detriment of the characters and storyline).

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### **Benjamin Wong says**

DNF 40%

I know it is an interesting read if the two MCs are a study in contrasts, but these two are just plain blah. First and foremost, 3 books into the series and I still do not get why the author would create an MC that a reader will practically hate! Initially I thought that it was only the previous 2 books, but even this had me hating one MC and rolling my eyes and snorting about his irritating thoughts and actions. Simon just came across as a bitter, jealous, envious and childish person. And the best thing was his bitterness kept being reiterated every few pages or so!

And in contrast, if the other MC is someone you hate, the other MC should be someone you empathize with and root for right? But Austin came across as simply dull and blah to me, unlike the previous 2 books where I at least liked, and rooted for the other MC.

Tried as I might to finish it, I did not feel myself wanting to reach for my ereader to delve into this book like so many others that I enjoyed. Eventually I just decided to just give it up and move on.

I might still come back to the other books in the series since the premise sounds promising, but this was just simply an utter miss for me.

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### **DeeNeez says**

What a surprise, this book way better than expected. I really appreciated the insight and knowledge of the wine industry. There is so much more to the business of wine making, the subtle flavors and how it pairs with food, than I ever realized.

I loved Austin from the start, but it took almost half the book before I could sense that chemistry with Simon. He was just too judgmental about others who grew up with money. But that's the flaw Simon had to overcome for his character growth. I just wished it didn't take so long. The last half of the book was more enjoyable for me.

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### **Sadonna says**

I enjoyed this story about two guys involved in different sides of the wine industry. I have friends who are BIG into wine and go to Napa a lot and are friends with the folks who run the tasting rooms, in wine clubs, etc. I really didn't know that much about any of the things behind the scenes and liked that I learned something new in this story.

I also liked the evolution of Simon in this book. He has a pretty rigid view of the winery owners and the "new" people in the valley - which I'm sure is very true to life ;) He begins to realize pretty early on that



maybe he's mistaken about Austin. Of course he makes mistakes which sets up the conflict in this story perfectly. When he finds out that Austin's life hasn't exactly been a bed of roses either, he really does find himself caring for him and trying to help him.

I hope that we get to see more of these guys in future books in this series :D

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## Didi says

2.5 stars

I supposed the last 30% or so made up for the continuous inner whining, sneering, judgey and jealousy Simon had for rich spoiled folks of the valley, and how his way of earning money was the most decent ways of living. He appointed himself St. Simon.

The intrigue was pretty predictable, the solving made in an "*aww, so sweet!!*" sort of way. And I survived ranting the whole time reading this...

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## Becky Condit says

**Please leave a comment on Lady McNeill's 4 1/2 sweet pea review at Mrs Condit & Friends Read Books. All comments will be entered in GIVEAWAY contest. Contest closes 7/23.**

An Intoxicating Crush was another excellent novel by EM Lynley. Ms. Lynley has quickly made it to my autobuy list because not only are her stories romantic but I love all of the details and information that I learn in each book. In this case, the story is based around a winery and the wine making process. Throughout the book I learned so much about the process and as a non-wine drinker I found it so interesting I wish I actually liked wine. Not to imply it is overrun with details but rather it adds background and depth to the story.

This book features Austin Kelvin who is trying to make a success out of his father's wine business. In fact his father checked out of the business years ago and Austin is solely responsible for its current success. In fact the business and the wine making is his passion but he is a micromanager who is drowning in the details. He knows how to make really good wine, but doesn't know how to make the business successful. Simon Ford has been sent by his company to investigate Kelvin Cellars because his company is considering trying to buy the winery. Sparks fly immediately between Kelvin and Simon but Simon doesn't want to risk his job by forming a relationship with Austin while working on the project. Thankfully the project appears a bust and Simon and Austin begin a tentative relationship. Ok maybe relationship is a little strong because each are really tentative with what they want from each other. They may have said it was about the sex but the two are a really good match and quickly form a serious relationship.

I loved Austin because of the passion for his business. He wasn't some rich kid running a business from an office. He was out there getting his hands dirty and he is the reason behind the success. Simon took a little time for me to warm up to. I felt like he flip-flopped a little in the beginning. With alternating points of view, he came across one way when I was reading Austin's POV but then he appeared differently when it was his

POV. That seemed to even out after the first couple of chapters and I grew to really like Simon. There is a lot of angst when Austin learns why Simon originally came to the winery and it seems their chance at a future is over. It quickly turned into a story that I couldn't put down. Overall I really loved the main characters. There is a great group of secondary characters and I liked the storyline. It is a spicy read because Austin and Simon are hot together. Great story!

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## **LiveYourLife BuyTheBook says**

### **4 Stars**

A "*Live Your Life, Buy The Book*" Review

This was an enjoyable, sexy – and savory ;-) – story set in the lushness that is Napa Valley. I really like how the author utilized her knowledge of vineyards and the wine industry to help weave Simon and Austin's story. Having been to Napa, I could picture the setting perfectly. Her skillful writing absolutely brought the vineyards, charismatic wine cellars, and rolling hills to life as beautifully as the human characters.

Kelvin Cellars started as sort of a plaything for Austin Kelvin's Wall Street magnate father. It fell to Austin to tend to and make a go of the business when his father and brother abandoned it for other pursuits. To Austin, the vineyard was never just a hobby or a passing fancy. He lives and breathes the grapes, the land, the dance with nature and the art of mixing flavors to blend exquisite wines. It's a passion for him and his talent for it has even won the vineyard some medals. Unfortunately he also has to deal with the marketing, the bookkeeping, the maintenance, the bank loans, and basically... making ends meet. His dedication and long hours of work make for a lonely life.

Austin has a loyal staff and a very supportive friend in Penny, his business manager. Austin's brother Logan does come around to participate on occasion, but no longer has a real interest in the vineyard and wonders at Austin's devotion. Austin hides the fact from Logan that the vineyard is in some potential financial trouble, and he has had a buy-out offer from a firm called Galaxy. It's not what he wants at all, but he knows others will try to force his hand. He hopes that an upcoming wine tasting /dinner event will help turn things around, and help the vineyard make it to crush, the time of year when the grapes are harvested. The success of the event, and of crush, will give Austin a better idea of future revenue.

Simon Ford is a Napa Valley native. His mom scraped and worked hard to raise him as a single mother. He takes issue with fancy well-to-do outsiders who have come into the valley and are seemingly taking over from the locals. He is actually envious of their wealth, and would like to attain his own. Simon goes to clubs, very much enjoys various hooks ups, but has nobody serious in his life, which is how he prefers things. He takes care of his mother by providing her a nice house to live in and he is seemingly on the fast track for success, working as an assessor at Vintage Partners, an acquisition firm. Simon's boss sends him out to the wine tasting at Kelvin Cellars to scope out the operation for a potential buy out – Galaxy is interested...should Vintage Partners be?

When Simon arrives at Kelvin Cellars, it is swiftly apparent to both Simon and Austin that there are sparks flying between them. But what to do about it? Simon is miffed, he had had no idea going in that Austin was gay, but he sure suspects his boss did and set him up to meet Austin on purpose. Simon wonders if it was assumed he would try to play Austin and glean information by getting close to him – "in his pants" close. Fact is, Simon find himself quite genuinely attracted to Austin and the feeling is mutual. Austin actually finds the fortitude – after some goading by Logan and Penny – to pursue a relationship with Simon, albeit a

casual, mutually satisfying, sex-based relationship. Mmm hmm, yeah –right! It starts out that way, and the two are indeed very hot together,

The sex is amazing from the get go, but eventually they find themselves investing much more time and emotion on each other than either originally intended.

I really liked Austin right away, and was cheering him on to be successful with sustaining the vineyard, and in finding a lover. He seemed so utterly alone. Simon had

me clenching my gut. I was really worried that he was going to scheme, use and manipulate....then be all remorseful and try to vindicate himself. I really have a problem with overt manipulation by main characters in a story. As it turns out, Simon took the high road. Oh, his actions led to a fall out between he and Austin, and some major explaining had to be done, but his lies by omission meant to protect Austin worked very well to create some of the conflict in the story.

Again, the author deftly used her familiarity with wine, wine making and food throughout this story. Personally, I found the details about wine and vineyards to be extremely intriguing, and of course vital to the story. Many of the scenes involving food and wine, along with the implicit details of Simon and Austin indulging in them, were damn provocative and smoking hot sexy. Yeah, the guys had some awesome chemistry together – both in and out of the bedroom. They really worked well as a team when it came to working to save the vineyard. I love how they both came to realize that their pre-conceived judgments about the other were way off base. One thing I would have liked to have seen more clearly portrayed during their sex scenes would be the evolution of their emotions toward each other – the journey from casual sex to making love.

It was great to see some unexpected plot twists and turns. I love how characters who initially seemed to be in the background, but actually kind of ticked me off, turned out to have some backbone and redeeming qualities. I do believe Austin was surprised as well!

EM includes many recipes at the back of the book that are used throughout the story. I personally recommend the Gruyere Grilled Cheese and plan on trying out more of them.

Thanks EM for another tasty treat. More Simon and Austin would go down really well, in a manner of speaking!

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