



Any Closer

Mary Calmes

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Part of the First Time For Everything Daily Dose 2011 collection

Charlie Ryder has a colorful past, painful memories, and an embarrassing secret. After three years working for Leo Foster's construction company, Charlie's worst fears are realized, and Leo finds out what Charlie has worked so hard to hide. When Leo meets the revelation with absolute love and acceptance, Leo has to trust that Charlie's love isn't just gratitude, and Charlie has to learn to trust again, period. It's going to take a lot of work for these two men to get any closer.

Any Closer Details

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Author : Mary Calmes

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From Reader Review Any Closer for online ebook

Amy Lane says

This absolutely charming, sweet summer book featured acceptance, faith, and the joy of a long-term crush finally being acted upon. Charlie was adorable, Leo was gruff and kind and clueless, and together, they were a joy to spend an afternoon with. Short, sweet fun:-)

Nikyta *Miss Forgetful* says

This short story was both cute and funny. I loved the fact that Leo was so oblivious to Charlie liking him and I loved that Charlie had a 'horrible' past that Leo felt he needed to coax out of him. I loved Leo's family and how they took Charlie in right away. I wish there had been more of these two because I'd love to read more about how their relationship works with working together and Charlie still dealing with what happened to him. Still, I love this book.

Ele says

2.5 **

Serena Yates says

This is a wonderful story: sweet, touching and very hot. The only thing 'wrong' with it is that it's too short.

Leo is an amazing character, gruff on the outside but really caring and loving deep-down. Someone you'd want on your side not just because he can protect you, but because he accepts and cares about you. The way he reacts to Charlie's revelations is great. He is a bit slow on the uptake as to what that means, but, hey, nobody is perfect.

Charlie has been severely hurt, but you'd never know it if you met him. The way he has come back from his ordeal is admirable, and he really deserves the happiness he wants with Leo.

If you like your stories short and sweet, with a big dollop of emotions and an extremely happy end, you will probably like this one.

Meags says

3 Stars

That was...kind of...odd?

This story was going along nicely, until about the 70% mark when everything just went to (what I like to think of as) extreme-MC levels of over-the-top dramatics. To be fair, sometimes I'm way on board with this sort of Calmes storytelling – *cough Steamroller cough* - but sometimes not-so-much. Sadly, this was a not-so-much kind of time for me.

The reveal at the beginning of the story regarding Charlie's past was kind of appalling – seriously, there are some sick bastards out there who deserves all sorts of bad karma. I immediately felt sympathy towards his character, which necessitated my need for Charlie to be instantly inundated by all things happy and good, like puppies and rainbows and other sweet and fluffy shit like that.

It seemed clear to everyone but Leo – Charlie's boss and friend – that Leo was that one thing that would make Charlie one happy boy, if only Leo would realise what a perfect offering he had right in front of him in Charlie. There was a lot of obliviousness going on here, which I often enjoy, but didn't quite feel authentic in this instance; instead, I just thought Leo was kind of daft, which didn't bode well for his overall likability.

Regardless of this, I was rooting for these men to get at least a HFN (which they got – yay!), but unfortunately their relationships transition from friends-to-lovers felt maddeningly fast towards the end of the story. In fact, those final scenes were just downright confusing and cluttered, throwing Charlie at Leo in a way that didn't sit well with the rest of the story up to that point.

So it seems this wasn't one of my usual *MC must be a powerful sorceress* reactions, but still a sweet and easy little read to pleasantly pass the time.

Annery says

I read/listened to this last year and must have been in a grumpy mood? I'm not super versed in Mary Calmes's style but I don't think this is too far off the mark and apparently I like it. In any case up one star because Greg Tremblay deserves all stars.

Charlie Ryder has been working for Leo Foster's construction company for three (3) years, making his way up the the ladder by learning every aspect of the business. What was he doing before? That's what Leo finds out at the beginning of this story and it sets in motion the events of the next couple of days. I'll say no more about the plot. I will say that I loved Leo, his family, and his work family too. Loved how blind/oblivious he is but will innately do the right thing. I loved that he's exactly what Charlie needs and how he doesn't even know he's in the running. I also think there's quite a bit of food for thought when you dwell on Charlie's former life, how young he was, and the events that transpired.

Sadly I couldn't go 4 1/2 or 5 stars because, though I got that he had to act that way almost out of desperation in the face of Leo's obliviousness, the Charlie of the last act was too ... out of character? Dunno. He just didn't seem like the Charlie we had been presented with during the rest of the story. Also I would've like to know more about Charlie. Maybe adding another "day" so that things would develop more organically would

have been better IMO. In any case I enjoyed it & GT particularly.

Marte - Thunderella says

*** 3 second chance stars ***

Audio edition, narrated by Greg Tremblay.

2 hours 54 minutes

Overall: 3

Performance: 5

Story: 3

BWT (Belen) says

Talk about timing...I literally just re-read this story three days before it suddenly appeared in my Audible feed. Which meant I wasn't exactly chomping at the bit to download it...until I saw who is narrating: Greg Tremblay. Ding, ding, ding! Instant download!

This short novella is entertainingly narrated by Greg Tremblay (*naturally*) who subtly brings out the nuances of this hurt/comfort story. This is one of Calmes' darker premise stories and I eat it up with a spoon every time. Leo is a lovable grump, and Charlie is obviously (to everyone but Leo) head over heels for Leo.

"I've been here, living in your world, for the past three years. I've seen you mad and happy and hurt and... I've seen it all, but never once, in all that time, have I seen what you look like when you're in love. I wanna see that."

My only complaint, which is always the same with Calmes' novellas - I WANT MORE! I really like Leo and Charlie and want more of their story.

All in all the story is really enjoyable and Tremblay's narration is wonderful.

Recommended!

This review has been cross-posted at Gay Book Reviews.

Read 09/2014, 07/2015, 01/2016 (2)

FantasyLiving says

Leo gave Charlie a chance with a job at his construction company, when Charlie was recovering from a major trauma. His faith and support has gone a long way in helping Charlie heal and move on. Leo never questions Charlie about why he looked so broken when they met, and as long as Charlie continues to be an asset to the company, he has no intentions of ever asking.

When the truth finally comes out about why Charlie needed the hand up, Leo lends even more support and acceptance, being the steady rock that Charlie has come to rely on. Now Charlie is looking at Leo a little longer, and holding him a little tighter, and trying to get across that it is not just gratitude he feels for Leo. Is Leo able to accept this new affection that Charlie is offering, or is his conviction about maintaining the friendship box he has placed Charlie in, the wall that will prevent something more from developing?

Come and read my thoughts at

Susan says

Audio edition

I just love everything Greg Tremblay narrates.

This is a short story about Leo and Charlie, who work together and are friends as well.

Charlie has been hurt in the past and Leo just wants him to be okay. We got some lovely hurt/comfort here.

When it seems Leo is oblivious to Charlie's feelings, Charlie decides to seduce him to make Leo see him.

Because it was so short it ends when Leo and Charlie finally get together, but that was okay. It was nice, sweet, and we got some sexy times at the end.

R * A Reader Obsessed * says

A nice little Calmes ditty. Not as ridiculously absurd as some - this actually started off with a heartbreakng, sickening revelation.

Charlie has been hiding from a terrible incident from his past, and when the truth unexpectedly comes to light, Charlie's finally ready to move on and claim the man he loves - his boss.

Leo has always tried to maintain the utmost professionalism, never seeing Charlie as anything more than just his best friend. Nevermind the fact that he's gorgeous and perfect and fits into his life seamlessly. Apparently though, Charlie has other ideas, and who is he to argue?

Sweet and sexy but just too short to be properly developed! Darn!!

Amy says

AudiobookNarrated by Greg Tremblay***I really enjoyed this one! Very sweet friends-to-lovers story. Charlie is a former porn star trying to get over some traumatic events in his past. And Leo is his friend and boss who is completely clueless about Charlie's feelings. I loved Charlie at the end when Leo's ex showed up at his apartment :)

Sue bowdley says

For a short read this is amazingly full....Charlie and Leo....What Charlie went through four years ago was bad but damn he's found a good friend in Leo.....I've not read many of Mary Calmes' books but I certainly love her writing style...A great short tearful read x

Kelly H. (Maybedog) says

Had so much promise but fell flat. This is probably my least favorite Mary Calmes book, which is very disappointing. It felt rushed and it wasn't as funny as usual. The ending was pretty sudden and I wanted a little more, maybe an epilogue.

I've been complaining lately that I'm uncomfortable with the sexism in Calmes's books. This one wasn't nearly as bad. While the office person was a woman, she was kick ass, although that reminds me too much of Heinlein's heroines. But the main character and his family were way too tolerant of racism. Here's part of the relevant passage:

"My grandmother always said that if my fahter had just married Susie Apelt like he was supposed to, that I would have had blue eyes instead of brown. I shook my head and explained that I wouldn't even be me without my mother, but she would just wave her ahnd dismissively like I was stupid. Of course I would still be me, just better. My eyes would be the right color. But it was okay; my [Puerto Rican] mother didn't care, because she and my grandmother had become friends over the years. It was, my mother said, generational. My grandmother categorized her friends: my Korean friend Jean, my black friend Tanya, my grandfather's dear Chinese friend Tommy. It was ingrained in her to see the race of a person, just like it had never been ingrained in me to care."

It's one thing to "categorize" people because that's just how you were raised (although that should change over time with exposure to people of different cultures) but saying it's no big deal that a woman says her granson would have been better if born to a white woman because he'd have blue eyes is disgusting. Yeah, he'd still be him but with blue eyes, but that's disapproval because of his hereditary race traits and also just not approving of how he is.

I also didn't like how the MC thought two people divorced because they weren't happy but that wasn't a good enough reason to "split up a home or a family." That's absolutely a great reason. Kids raised in unhappy opens tend to have a lot more problems than kids whose parents divorced and then found happy lives where

the kids could see happy relationships modeled. It wasn't relevant to the story or the completely nonjudgmental character and I feel it was put in just to make a point. This conservative attitude fits with the stuff I mention above and it's soured me a bit on her writing.

But back to the writing. There was major info dumping over and over and the characters ended up talking things to death. There was too much we were expected to read between the lines. For example, at one point a minor character is attacked at home but it's a big scene and we are never told who the attacker is, just a hint by what he says.

I loved Charlie but there was too much time in the book without him in scenes that weren't necessary to the plot. There was so much potential in his past trauma that wasn't explored really. Leo is just kind of there, not really active in his own life. The scene when his mom and dad are arguing was really good, vivid in my mind, and yet his scenes with Charlie were often one dimensional; only the last couple of chapters were better but they also talked everything to death and it was typical Mary Calmes characterization with people wanting Leo.

It hurts to say this but 2.5 stars rounded down because of the racism and judgmental tone.

Valerie ✶M/M Romance Junkie✶ says

all of the stars are for Greg Tremblay. I'm a Mary Calmes fan, but Greg is the ONLY reason I listened to this one. This story just didn't work for me at all. I was at a complete loss with the relationship development (more like lack of development). Thank goodness it was short and had great narration.
