



Chief's Mess

L.A. Witt

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Anthony Talbot is in Anchor Point to visit family, but after two days of strife, he needs a break. A local gay bar is calling his name.

When Chief Noah Jackson sees that red head stroll into the club, he immediately wants him. They're perfectly matched, and before long, they're burning up the sheets. Noah can't get enough. Anthony can't stay in Oregon for long, but as soon as he leaves, he's counting down the days until he can fly back for more. And between his increasingly frequent visits, there's always phone sex, sexting, webcams . . . anything they can get.

But Noah's got a carefully crafted façade, and Anthony can't help noticing the slowly forming cracks. The scent of alcohol in the middle of the day. The extra drinks at dinner. The hint of red in his eyes. Anthony knows what it means. He doesn't want to believe it, but he's seen this before, and there's no denying it. If Noah doesn't get his downward spiral under control, he's going to lose both his career and the first man he's ever really loved.

Chief's Mess Details

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From Reader Review Chief's Mess for online ebook

Karen says

I'm thinking this ones on me...at least partially

So far I've really enjoyed this series both 'Just Drive' and 'Fear of Flying' were stories that I really enjoyed and I basically knew what this story was about going in to it.

Noah Jackson is a member of Anchor Point's military police. He's got a stressful job and unfortunately his solution for dealing with the stress of his job comes from a bottle and he sees no problem with this. As a matter of fact he's so on board with this that when a problem results from his drinking his solution is to make his life accommodate the drinking...can't drive home because you've had too much to drink...take a cab...problem solved because drinking less or not drinking doesn't even ping his radar as a reasonable solution. Noah is what is known as a functioning alcoholic. Unfortunately he's not as functioning as he believes people like his best friend and superior officer, Senior Chief Will Curtis see what's happening. I'm sure most of us have met or had someone like Noah in their lives at one time or another, I know I have.

While we weren't introduced to Noah in 'Fear of Flying' we did meet Anthony. Anthony is the supportive brother of Curtis's ex-wife. There was a lot about Noah's behavior that I understood in regards to his mildly paranoid behavior about how much Noah drank. I got that and I remember being so cautious about people in my life and how much they drank wondering how much and how often they truly drank. Honestly, it's not fun living like that doubting and never fully trusting until you're sure really sure that it's safe to trust that person because they aren't going to crawl into a bottle every chance they get.

Noah and Anthony start out as a hook-up one night of hot sex. But one night becomes a few more until Anthony has to go home. As time passes Anthony and Noah begin texting and then as they get to know each other and each remembers how good the sex had been they decide to take a shot at a long distance relationship.

You see the fact is that while I've known Noah, I've been Anthony...been part of the rubble left behind when the landslide stops. I've lived through the lies, the deceptions and justifications, the heartbreak of knowing you can't fix them. That they're the only person who can fix themselves and not until they're ready to. The frustration of knowing that you've reached the point where the only thing you can do is walk away and save yourself.

The one real issue that I had with Anthony in fact actually goes back to the events of 'Fear of Flying' and Anthony's lack of basic compassion and understanding for his brother-in-law Curtis. Logically I knew where it came from, but, I still can't say I liked it.

The concept for this story was good and while I liked it, I think maybe for me it came just a little to close to a reality that I've known which was a big part of the reason that I didn't enjoy 'Chief's Mess' nearly as much as the first two books. However, I am looking forward to the next book in this series...'Rank & File' is Senior Chief Will Curtis's story and while we did get a bit of Will's background in this book, I'm hoping that 'Rank & File'

will give us a all of Will's story and a peek at how things are going for the other men of 'Anchor Point'.

A copy of "Chief's Mess" was graciously provided by the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Jay says

2.5 stars – Considering how much I enjoyed the first two books in L.A. Witt's Anchor Point series, not to mention the other books of hers I have read, I had high hopes that I would enjoy *Chief's Mess* in spite of my reservations about the subject matter after reading the blurb. I'm not a big fan of romances where the big conflict deals with alcohol or drug problems. As it turns out, that really wasn't the problem I had with the book, but I definitely had a problem that kept me from enjoying this title as much as the others I've read by this author.

While taking a break from giving moral support to his sister and her kids while they visit her ex-husband, Anthony Talbot hooks up with Navy Chief Noah Jackson in a bar near the naval base in Anchor Point, Oregon. It turns into a week of the best sex both men have had in a long time and neither can easily forget afterward, in spite of Anthony returning to Denver. If you're a fan of reading dirty and rough (non-BDSM) sex, the hookup sex scenes are scorching hot. So too are the sex scenes when they start visiting one another periodically and the dirty-talking Skype scenes between these visits. Fucking hot!

After their first hookup, which happens before the 10% mark in the book, there is a sex scene in almost every chapter for the remainder of the first half of the book (and there are a lot after that too.) Unfortunately, a couple of other things about the book—a stylistic decision by the author and a characteristic about the two guys—took away from my enjoyment of both this nearly nonstop sexfest and the story as a whole, despite being things that normally don't cause such a problem for me. First, Anthony and Noah are both vers, meaning they both enjoy topping and bottoming, and they alternate positions right from the start. Yum! Second, like the first two books in the series, *Chief's Mess* is written using the alternating first-person point of view (POV). This is normally my preference for romances because when it's done well, it really gets me into the story.

Like so many choices authors make when writing a book, each of these things can cause problems for the reader if they are not handled carefully. For example, the use of alternating first-person POV carries the risk of reader confusion, particularly in sex scenes of M/M romances, because "me" and "him" are dependent on which character's POV is being used—there isn't the easy me/her versus me/him differential like in M/F sex scenes. In addition, a sex-heavy start to a book means not as much time for developing the characters or their voices, so unless the characters have very distinct differences in bed, the whole "I" and "he" thing can be confusing again. Furthermore, the fact that Anthony and Noah are both vers and swap positions often from one sex scene to the next, not to mention that they are both into the same sorts of things in bed, takes away yet another way for the reader to tell the characters apart in this situation.

The bottom line: all I really knew for sure at the halfway point of the book were the simplest characteristics about Anthony and Noah—things that I mainly got from the first two chapters of the book that introduced them individually before they met each other—and the fact that they were fucking. A lot of fucking. Too much fucking where I was confused about who was doing those hot fucking things to whom because I couldn't distinguish the individual characters' voices and I wasn't given enough names during the scene to act as signposts. And outside of the fucking, they really didn't do much actual talking that wasn't filled with innuendo and dirty talk to get themselves wound up for the next sex scene. Sure, that was hot too, but it

didn't help with my voice confusion.

My voice confusion quickly cleared up not long after the halfway mark because the not-fucking parts of the story became more important, where Noah's drinking starts to show as being problematic and where it becomes clear that the guys are falling for each other because we actually get more frequent scenes of them doing things together besides fucking. I wish there had been more of this in the front half of the book. If there had been, I would have been into the incredibly hot sex much more because I would have felt more connected to the characters for the duration of the book instead of the limited amount I ended up feeling during the second half.

What about the alcohol problem part of the story? The resolution was perhaps a little too quick and easy for my tastes, but I've certainly read worse. To be honest, there just wasn't enough time after the fuckfest in the first half of the book for me to be invested in the characters enough to get the big feels that I want when I read romance. It's a pity, too, because there were some clearly touching moments and great lines in the second half that would have had a much better impact on me if I had just been able to connect to the characters sooner.

It's difficult for me to give this kind of review because L.A. Witt is one of my favorite authors. But almost all of my favorites have one book that just doesn't work as well for me as the rest. *Chief's Mess* is that book for me in this case. That being said, I've enjoyed the rest so much that I eagerly look forward to the next one when it comes out.

The author and/or publisher generously provided me a complimentary copy of Chief's Mess in exchange for this fair and honest review.

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Ele says

2.5 stars

This could have gone better. I'll keep it short:

The good:

-I found that the "alcoholic in denial" theme was executed pretty accurately. Same goes for the ending and the way it all played out. We don't actually get to see the recovering period but I think this was a wise choice. The few pages that narrated Noah's struggles were realistic and more than enough for me.

-There is a lot of sex. L.A.Witt can sure write some epic steam.

-The setting. I'm coming from a navy town myself, and I can tell that L.A.Witt knows her way around navy/military settings.

The bad:

-There was a lot of sex. Yeah, I know I already said that. You know things are bad when you start skimming

sex scenes. Steam is good, but not when it's just a filler. This is a relatively long book, without a lot of plot. As a result, it got repetitive and boring. It was mostly sex, Anthony worrying that Noah is an alcoholic, and Noah being one but trying to hide it.

-Anthony (Clint's brother in law in the second book). I really got off on the wrong foot with this guy. In the very first pages, he comes off as a judgemental asshole. I understand that Clint treated his sister very badly, but his attitude towards Clint's PTSD and his lack of sympathy were appalling. I don't care if he came around in the end. He would have never approached Clint if he didn't need his help. Until the end, Anthony was a selfish, judgemental prick in my eyes.

I don't know if I'll stick with the series. I LOVED the first book. The next two...not so much. But I did like Will here, so I might give it a go.

Jewel says

This pains me to say, but *Chief's Mess* was a **huge miss** for me. Not enough plot and MCs I never warmed to make for disappointing reading. Well, at least the sex was plentiful and hot. LA Witt does know her way around a sex scene and the MC's had loads of chemistry in the sheets. But even that did not save this story for me. I'm sad that I didn't enjoy this story because LA Witt + military story is almost always a winner for me.

I wasn't super thrilled with one of the MC's of this book being an alcoholic in denial (Noah), but I knew he was going in and I hoped I would warm to him, eventually. I didn't, though. His part of the plot seemed to only be him hiding his drinking and it didn't seem that there was much more to him than him wanting his next drink and hiding it.

Also, I didn't expect to start off the book absolutely loathing the other MC (Anthony), but...well, I couldn't stand him. I didn't realize, before starting *Chief's Mess* that Anthony was the ex-brother-in-law of Clint in *Afraid to Fly*. If I had, I would have waited for some reviews before requesting this one, because I remember not being impressed with Clint's ex's family. At All. I hated how they treated Clint's PTSD so flippantly and blamed him for everything. And Anthony seemed to **want** Clint to fail in his sobriety just so he could tell his sister *I told you so* when Clint failed himself and his kids.

Anthony's attitude toward Clint made him super judgy of anyone he thought consumed too much alcohol. And I get that. But all we ever really got of Anthony was sex and judgement. I would have liked to have gotten to know another side of him. Anything, really.

The entire plot seemed to revolve around Anthony suspecting Noah of drinking and then finding evidence for that. And for Noah's part, him wanting his next drink and working out how to seem like he doesn't have a problem. And in between those moments, the MC's have sex, either in person or via Skype. Rinse, repeat. For nearly 300 pages.

There was a lot of sex in *Chief's Mess*. The one thing that Anthony and Noah really excelled at was sex. And it was hot, no lie. But I need more than that in a story, and I even started skimming the sex scenes because they were too plentiful. I wanted more substance. The writing was repetitive and I really think a fair amount could have been edited out and not missed. And while the story ended with Noah admitting he has a problem and getting help, I felt that whole process was super glossed over and too easy. It wasn't satisfying. But then

again, neither was the rest of the story.

ARC of Chief's Mess was generously provided by the publisher, via Netgalley, in exchange for an honest review.

Sophia says

Audio review

Anthony Talbot is climbing the walls during a tense family obligatory visit and takes his sister's blessing to get out for a bit leading to a hot encounter with smoldering Navy Chief Noah Jackson. I enjoyed this latest in the Anchor Point series particularly since, like before in the series, the author touches on a relevant issue for men in the naval service- or pretty much an issue with any relationship.

Chief's Mess is the third of the Anchor Point series. These books loosely tie together so they can be enjoyed in order or standalone. Chief's Mess ties to the previous Afraid to Fly through Anthony being the hostile ex-brother in law to Clint Fraser, hero of the earlier book. For those who loved Clint and Travis, this has some follow-up scenes and for those who are starting at this book, the encounter works fine, too.

Anthony and Noah start out hotter than a firecracker together. I will say this, LA Witt can write some heat. I was hot and bothered only minutes into this book. Whew! The torrid and sizzling sex blew my mind. They definitely had chemistry in the bedroom and that was the foundation of what was to come in their attempt at a long distance relationship. Skype? No this was Porny Skyping between a pair of dirty talking guys who knew how to rev each other past the red line.

At first, I was concerned that the hot bedroom (and non-bedroom) antics were going to be all there was to this one and I did skip of ton of those scenes when they were just lining up like dominoes and I was actually growing numb to it. But, after a time, the pair realized they wanted a relationship and of course, that was also when Anthony stopped denying the hints he was seeing that Noah had a drinking problem. This was when the book started showing its depth and heart for me.

Noah is what in my past we called a functioning alcoholic. He drank a lot and often, but he was staying just sober enough to get through his life. I thought the alcoholism element was handled about right as were all the characters involved. Noah's addiction is the main conflict in the story, but this is not a men's fiction novel so it's in the right balance with the relationship development. It wasn't focused on, but I also feel like Anthony had his own demons to deal with. I thought it was interesting that the spotlight was not on Noah only through this, but also Anthony. Like any person in a relationship with a recovering addict, the addict isn't the only one with his life on the precipice. So yes, this book dug deep and really shone when it hit the depth of the conflict for this pair.

Chief's Mess was narrated by Nick J. Russo. I felt he did an incredible job whether it was taking me right into this horny pair's bedroom scenes or leaving me crushed and teary-eyed when Noah and Anthony hit their lowest. He captured the pace of the story, its elements, and its characters fabulously.

In summation, Chief's Mess delivered a hot pair of lovers and a difficult situation that had me earnestly

engaged to see it all end well. Those who enjoy spicy m/m military romance should definitely give this book/series a chance.

My thanks to Riptide Publishing for the opportunity to listen to this book in exchange for an honest review.

Fabi says

5+++ stars

I'm trying to find my words for this review and failing miserably.

Bear with me because this story affected me on an emotional gut level.

But first, the fun part.

Anthony is on the prowl. It doesn't take him long to set eyes on Noah and reach out for what he wants.

...tell me you bottom, and we can skip all that and get out of here.

And that was the beginning of hot, sexy, vers scene after scene. These men were on *fahyere*.

Yes, sometimes this kind of thing is 'too much of a good thing'. But in this case, it worked. It worked because these guys had such incredible chemistry. Neither were looking for a relationship. It just sort of developed from their insane chemistry and compatibility.

They fell into a long-distance relationship.

We fit together. We just...we just fit. I knew how to make him crazy, and he knew how to make me crazy, and everything was so perfect and so intense...

If you haven't read the previous book in this series, I recommend you do so. Although this one can be read as a stand-alone, I feel like the background gleaned from the previous book added a whole other dimension to this story.

Spoilers ahead

Spoiler warning

You've been warned

Anthony is Clint's ex-brother-in-law. If you've read the previous book, you know Clint's marriage fell apart due to violent alcoholism. Anthony's resentment towards Clint, and what he put his sister through, is huge. Needless to say, Anthony doesn't have a high regard for alcoholics.

Noah...drinks.

Anthony rationalizes that everyone drinks. Sometimes people drink a lot. It's a socially acceptable intoxicant. In fact, it is so prevalent that it's hard to be sociable without it.

Yet...Anthony is uncomfortable with excessive drinking. He watched his sister's life fall apart because of it. When he notices that Noah drinks quite a bit more than he does himself, it makes him nervous.

I loved Anthony's courage to address difficult issues with Noah. Even when he was afraid of a conversation going sideways or starting an argument, he never backed off from discussing an issue that worried him.

But this was a long-distance relationship that only allowed them to see each other a couple of weekends a month, at most. Noah could make allowances for Anthony's discomfort with excessive alcohol for the little time they spent together. Anthony was important to Noah, so he did his best to modify his drinking habits when they were together. This helps Anthony put his misgivings aside and not give undue weight to the signs. Those signs are very, very difficult to see in a society that considers drinking alcohol a requirement to having fun. Everybody drinks!

Noah drinks...a lot

What follows is a heartbreak view of Noah's final slide down into alcoholism. Seeing both men's anguish. Feeling the helplessness that they both felt. It gutted me just as it gutted Noah and Anthony to be in that position.

It was easy to understand both sides of it because L.A. Witt did an excellent job with each viewpoint. The writing and editing is spotless. The theme addresses an important social issue that is mostly ignored in our society.

<<>>

I am not going to pull out my soap box on the subject of alcoholism because this is a book review. I am just grateful that there are authors like L.A. Witt who are not afraid to address serious issues in the tropes they choose for their books.

Review ARC graciously provided by Riptide Publishing via NetGalley

Catherine says

***** 2.5 Stars *****

For all the as-if-its's-our-last-night-on-earth intensity sex that our main characters have together, *Chief's Mess* is actually a pretty serious book.

The titular Chief, Noah Jackson, drinks. A lot. When we first meet him, he's in a bar on a weeknight and he's had a few. Okay, more than a few. But he's not slurring his words. He doesn't have blurred vision. He can walk a straight line and carry on a normal conversation. And he can *certainly* say "hell yes!" when a hot redhead walks into his favourite gin joint and propositions the heck out of him.

It should have just been a one night stand - a sexy memory filed away in their respective spank banks after they'd both come and gone on their merry ways - but it turns out that Noah and Anthony can't get enough of each other. One night turns into a week, and a week turns into a long distance booty call that has both men racking up the Frequent Flyer miles between Denver and Portland. Before they realize it, our guys have caught feels for each other.

But all the while, lurking just barely in the background, is Noah's drinking.

He doesn't have a *problem*. It's not as if he *needs* the alcohol to function, he just likes to grab a few drinks with friends to blow off a little steam after a stressful day at work. He likes a few glasses to enjoy while he's Skyping with Anthony in between visits. He just has a few to calm his nerves when he flies. He just has a shot or two to help him sleep at night or to ease the headache he feels the morning after.

You see? No big deal. Noah has everything under control.

Except it is, and he doesn't.

Eventually Anthony starts to see the signs and they aren't something that he can ignore, especially not after his sister's life was torn to shreds by her alcoholic ex-husband (Lieutenant Commander Clint Fraser from *Afraid to Fly*). So he expresses his concern and draws his line in the sand.

Too bad it doesn't take much for Noah to forget that line ever existed - forget that *Anthony* ever existed - and ruin one of the best things in his life.

Between (view spoiler), Noah has a come to Jesus moment and we start to see him pick himself back up by the bootstraps. Thankfully, his efforts aren't too little too late (that much should be obvious - this *is* a romance novel after all!).

The book finishes with - what else? - our main characters fucking like bunnies into the sunset.

I can't believe that I'm actually going to say this, but... I think there was **too much sex** in this book. Noah and Anthony had amazing chemistry on page from the get go, and they burned up the sheets in delicious ways every time they saw each other, but it got a little old after a while. Sometimes I felt as if sex scenes were included at the expense of tightening up the pacing or furthering the intellectual and emotional link between these two characters. Obviously this is a personal preference and many other readers will be *extra* pleased about all that banging. ;)

Now here's the part where I get a bit of egg on my face:

Early on in the book, I questioned Witt revisiting the theme of alcoholism in the military within the same series (she'd already covered this ground with Clint in the previous book). I felt like it might be a bit of a

storytelling crutch - a topic she knew would hit home with a lot of reader and would give her an opportunity for realistic drama later in the story. Put bluntly: something that would sell books to all my fellow angst lovers out there.

In fact, I was so perturbed by this idea that Witt might be (either intentionally or unintentionally) emotionally manipulating me to connect with her book and her characters using a very serious problem, that I did a little research on rates of alcohol abuse in civilian versus military populations. I mean, are military personnel *really* that much more inclined to substance abuse than the average joe, or is that something we all just assume because the stressful nature of their work seems like it *should* be difficult to bear up under without some sort of assistance?

Full disclosure: My grandfather fought as part of the Canadian Army in the Second World War. He joined up in 1942, landed on Juno Beach at 9:30 a.m. on D-Day, helped liberate Holland, and then continued on into Germany until the end of the war. He suffered from PTSD his entire life as a result of his four years of service, but he never touched a drop of alcohol.

The first peer reviewed journal article I landed on on a reputable government website stated that:

Although the rates were higher in the military than among civilians, most of the difference was associated with the higher-risk demographic characteristics of military personnel, who are more likely than civilians to be young unmarried males. Results indicate that the rate of alcohol abuse in the military is about the same as in civilian groups with comparable demographic characteristics.

With this study in mind, I was admittedly a little ticked that Witt had used alcoholism for a second time in the same series. It felt a little gross and opportunistic and I expressed that quite clearly in an early status update.

But after seeing my status update, a friend reached out to me and explained some of her personal experiences with men in the Navy - three out of the four of which had (or have) a serious level of dependence on alcohol.

This new information forced me back into research mode. I double checked my first source and, while the evidence still holds up as coming from a reputable source, I realized for the first time how outdated the study was - it was published way back in 1981. Whoops. That was a rather large oversight on my part the first time around.

So I did a little more reading and, according to a mid-2000s study endorsed by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (<https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publicatio...>), **nearly a third** of all young men employed by the DOD admitted to consuming five or more drinks on the same occasion at least once a week in the past 30 days. That compares to only about 18% of young civilian men who do the same.

Those are some pretty shocking – and heartbreaking – statistics.

No wonder Witt revisits alcoholic characters so frequently in her military books!

I won't apologize for my initial gut reactions to the themes of this book. Given my personal lived experiences, I had every right to be sceptical. But, I *will* say that I stand entirely corrected. And that I'm thankful that I'm more knowledgeable now than I was before I read *Chief's Mess*.

CrabbyPatty says

This is the third book in L.A. Witt's Anchor Point series but can easily be read as a stand-alone.

Anthony, an engineer from Denver, meets Noah in Anchor Point during his visit to support his sister Mandy, Clint's ex-wife from Afraid to Fly. Anthony comes off as a bit of an asshole and has **no** time for Clint, an alcoholic who put his sister through hell, and after spending the greater part of two days glaring at Clint, visits a gay bar where he runs into Noah:

"[Noah:] Can I buy you a drink?"

[Anthony:] "Yes, you can." The redhead looked me up and down in the most deliciously lewd way, and met my eyes again. "Or tell me you bottom, and we can skip all that and get out of here."

Chief's Mess is a bit of a mess, plot-wise, but the sex? Dear gawd, the sex is plentiful and richly described. Anthony and Noah are positively *platinum* in the bedroom and their sexual chemistry is off the frickin' chart. These two men connect (and connect and connect) on a very basic primal level and of the three books in the Anchor Point series, Chief's Mess wins the "Epic Sex" award hands down. Sexy? *Ooohhhh, yeah.*

However, plot and character development get shoved aside by all that *sex*. Basically Anthony and Noah have sex, sext, Anthony flies back for a weekend, sexSEXsexSEX, more text and calls, more visits, sex ... rinse, lather, repeat. In a nutshell, the pace of the book is way too slow for the amount of plot and the character development is negligible. Around 75% of the book, Anthony begins to strongly suspect that Noah has a problem with alcohol and while there is a resolution and an epilogue that deals with this, it seems a little too late.

L.A. Witt and a military setting is a great fit, but this book did not work for me. Just Drive is my favorite of the series so far, but I am intrigued by the next book Rank & File, featuring Senior Chief Will Curtis.

I received an ARC from Riptide Publishing, via NetGalley, in exchange for an honest review.

Review also posted at Gay Book Reviews - check it out!

Truuss says

Anthony and Noah...

This story has two parts the one before and the one after....

The one before is 77% of the story the one after the other 23...

I found it difficult to read. Not in complicated but the content... I knew what was coming and every time I was waiting for the train to crash... so it distracted me...I saw the signs and when it finally crashed, I could concentrate more, on the story, the dealing, the healing...luckily it was good and close to reality....because if it wasn't....i would quit this one...

It was (for me) a mild version of how it can go....

So the parts where I could concentrate :) were hot as hell! Smoking hot. Damn they were eager and hungry for each other. It was really fun to read. They were a passionate couple every time they were together....even online with cam...

Like I said... the figurative train..... it was hard, harsh, ugly and embarrassing. Sweet lovely Anthony I was proud of him how he stands up for his principles. I really want to bow for him....

It's so difficult to make choices in such a situation...

The part of Noah was fortunately mild put down...it could be very ugly and it wasn't....it was hard already but there was light at the end of the tunnel.

“For fuck’s sake,” he snapped. “Your drinking doesn’t become a problem the day it makes your life fall apart. Maybe you could stop before that point?”

I was proud of both men because it could be so so bad and they chose the right thing in life. The things that matter....in healthy circumstances, happiness and love...

Good written story with a lot of steamy hungry encounters. Their personalities were convincing and mostly pleasant... Absolute worth reading.

Kindly received a copy from Riptide Publishing through NetGalley

L.A. Witt says

July 2017.

ConM says

I loved this. After #2, I wondered about Noah. Clearly someone in need of help.

Anthony and Noah are perfect together. Hot, and Anthony is what Noah needs. Noah is a sweet heart, while being a bit of a mess...

Substance issues are not a favorite romance topic for me, but LA Witt handled this lightly. It was realistic (albeit overly optimistic, but it's a fictional romance), without being super angsty.

Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

L.A. Witt's Anchor Point series has been a bit hit and miss for me and that is really unusual for me and this author. Honestly, I love that this is set in a small town that is basically supported by the Navy base there, I love the incredibly flawed characters who are at different points in their lives, and I love that their journey to a happily ever after isn't easy, but worth it. However, in Chief's Mess I had a very hard time liking either character mainly because I didn't feel like I really got to know them and while I always appreciate a good

sex scene, I felt that for the majority of this book that was all there was between the two main characters. Granted this was a couple dealing with a long distance relationship, so the time they spent together, they were making up for lost time, and while it was stated they had long conversations, we weren't privy to them so it seemed like they jumped to the "I love you" stage without really knowing one another. While there was no denying the absolute attraction between them and the growing affection, I wanted to see them fall in love, not just f*cking their way through every argument, ever uncomfortable confrontation, and every minute they were together.

While in Anchor Point to give his sister support while she sees her ex-husband, who tanked their marriage with alcohol and violent rages, and his new boyfriend, Anthony Talbot heads out to a bar and meets Chief Noah Jackson whom he picks up for what he believes will be a night of sexy fun. One night turns into several and soon they are spending lots of time flying between Portland and Denver to see one another.

Anthony suspects Noah is more than a casual drinker and there are a few confrontations, but Noah is good at hiding it and since they only see one another every other weekend, it makes it easy. Honestly there is very little plot to this book other than their weekends together, their hot sessions over Skype when apart, Noah spiraling out of control, and Anthony burying his head in the sand a good portion of this book pretending that what he thinks he sees going on with Noah really isn't happening.

Some of the best moments in this book were between Anthony and his ex-brother in law whom he not only leans on once he figures out Noah's an alcoholic, but grows to respect when he realizes he judged him unfairly without understanding everything that was going on with him. This is where the real growth took place and I was disappointed that we really didn't see that between the main characters.

Although this book was completely sexy, it was lacking in plot and character development making it somewhat of a disappointment to me.

ARC provided for an honest and voluntary review.

Jordan says

OKAY OKAY, I give! I give! I had a really hard time from about 20% to 60% and I almost DNF'd it because it was just dragging me down but it got better and now I want more and I can't wait for book 4 to come out now and of course, now I get to play the waiting game.

But this one was good! Like 4.5 Stars good. I didn't like it as much as the first one, which I still think is the best of the series, but it was good and I get why everyone loves this book so much. Noah is probably my favorite single Anchor Point character to date. He had a problem. A drinking problem, to be exact. But being a sailor blurred that line between a drinker that can handle his alcohol and an alcoholic who can't handle his problems. It wasn't as though Noah had PTSD or any majorly traumatic event that he needed to drown himself in the bottle to escape, he just... drank to relax. A lot.

Anthony, who happened to be Clint's ex-wife's brother, loved everything about Noah. He loved his hair and his eyes and the way his hands felt on his bare thighs. But there was nothing that could prepare him to handle Noah's secrets. He watched Clint's drinking rip apart his sister's family and he was beyond angry with Clint when he arrived in Anchor point. But familial support and all that, so he was there. From the minute he laid his eyes on Noah he knew that one night would never be enough.

The romance between these two was nearly nonexistent at first. The feelings were there and neither one of them wanted to let the other go, but they were just weekend hookups and who gets that emotional over a hookup? Pfft. Apparently, Anthony and Noah do. They kept flying back and forth between Colorado and Anchor Point to see each other over the weekends and the more time they spent together, the more they wanted to wrap themselves up in a cocoon and just get lost in each other.

I loved the romance between Noah and Anthony because it went from 0 to 100 in probably three pages, because nobody can tell me that buying a ticket to come see that weekend hookup was just "for fun." Nobody spends that kind of money for a hookup, no matter how mindblowing the sex is, unless there are feelings or at least the likelihood that something more was going to come of it. They didn't even have an official, "hey, are we dating?" moment. One minute they were strangers, the next they were licking cum off of each other, and the next they were planning weekend trips to see each other and "boyfriend" slipped in there somehow. It all happened really fast and really slow at the same time.

But the one thing I love the most about this series is that L.A. Witt doesn't try to glorify the military with arm veins and abs of steel. M/M Military books almost always feature that sexy-as-fuck, super ripped, young alpha male but Witt isn't trying to pull any readers in with sexy stereotypes. This book is 100% real and the characters are *real* and I love that about this series.

This was a great addition to the series. The first book in the Anchor Point series remains my favorite, but this one got really close and I would definitely recommend it. You *could* read it as a standalone, but you really shouldn't because Clint plays a pretty important role in this book and it was really great knowing his backstory and not hating his face everytime Anthony had something shitty to say about him. So yeah, great series, awesome book, definitely recommended.

Gigi says

4.5 stars

I'm here for the sex! ~ Gigi, June 2017

The premise of Chief's Mess is the same as the first two books in the Anchor Point series; Just Drive and Afraid to Fly. Lots of sex, not a lot of plot and a conflict that separates our heroes for a few weeks.

Anthony is visiting his sister's ex-husband Clint (from Afraid to Fly) in Anchor Point where he meets Chief Noah Jackson at a gay bar. Lots and lots and **LOTS** of hot gay sex happens during Anthony's week in Anchor Point.

When Anthony returns to Portland, the men pine for the smoking hot chemistry they share and end up texting and Skyping to continue their casual sexual relationship. Pretty soon the boys are visiting each other every other week to further explore their insane chemistry between the sheets and eventually their long-distance-hookups turn to love.

The angst comes when Anthony releases Noah is an alcoholic and decides he can't deal with a man who keeps his head in a bottle. The conflict is short-lived and resolved mostly off page and that worked for me. Angst and I aren't on speaking terms right now.

I really enjoyed this one and it is my favorite of the series so far. The sex was hot, the dirty talk was filthy and the emotional connection that eventually happened was honest and very satisfying.

Fans of the Anchor Point series shouldn't miss this one. Readers who haven't enjoy the series, you should give this one a try. Making an appearance are Clint and Travis from Afraid to Fly, but it can easily be read as a stand-alone.

Galley copy of Chief's Mess (Anchor Point #3) provided by Riptide Publishing via NetGalley in exchange of an honest review.

This review is also posted at Gay Book Reviews

Morgan Skye says

I guess I never realized what a “button” alcoholism is for me. The MC Noah spends literally 98% of this in denial that he even has a problem. That was really, really hard to read. After reading how strongly Anthony feels about alcoholics, watching him – also in denial – was hard.

Most of this book is divided into either our MCs having really hot sex or angst about the alcohol issue.

I never warmed up to Noah, found his “conversion” to be laughably easy and not at all reliable, and in the end he never really won me over. Anthony was set up as a jerk in the first book, continued that in the first part of this book and though I warmed to him by the end I can't really say that I liked either of these guys much even at the end of the book.

For me, this was a total miss. I've really enjoyed the other books in the series, with the first being my favorite – but I can't say that I recommend this one at all.

There are some positive reviews out there, so I'd recommend reading those if the blurb/cover catches your eye. To be sure there is plenty of sex and that can be enough – depending on what you're after.

The writing was good, but I do think there was an awful lot of words that didn't do much to further the story.

2.75 rounded to 3 of 5 stars
