



Taste

Mickie B. Ashling

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What should have been a brief interlude turns into something deeper when Lil Lampert meets Grier Dilorio at the Taste of Chicago. Lil is in town visiting good friends Jody Williams and Clark Stevens, and he didn't plan to hook up with a younger man and discover a mutual love for architecture, interior design, and a unique sexual kink that keeps Lil coming back for more.

By all appearances, Grier is the quintessential bad boy who loves speed, tattoos, and leather, but Lil slowly uncovers another side: selfless, responsible, and tender, especially for Luca, the son he's had to deny. With Lil's love and support, Grier will make a decision key to opening the door to a possible future together, one that includes fatherhood, something Lil has dreamed of but has never dared to explore.

Author's Note: Spin-off from Horizons.

Taste Details

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From Reader Review Taste for online ebook

A Girl Has No Name says

2.5 stars rounded up to 3!

Lil, a successful architect is visiting two of his best friends in Chicago. Lil did have his fair share of hook-ups, but he didn't have a meaningful relationship so far and while he is feeling a little lonely sometimes, he is still very happy in his life. Together with his friends, he visits the famous **food festival Taste** and is suddenly facing a **very hot young stranger** with amazing tattoos and a catchy attitude. They quickly discover that they have **many common interests** and start to see each other many times during the following days.

But while **Grier** is charming, interested in Lil's profession and generally very intriguing to be with, he also comes with a **package of secrets and problems**. I love reading about **gay men with children** and this made this story interesting for me. However, **the whole plot was moving much too fast** - insta-lust is something I enjoy, but the insta-love in this story just didn't work out; not with all the difficulties this pair had to overcome.

And I don't even want to start about **the credibility of the whole story**. There was too much drama and **I couldn't understand most of the MC's reactions**. This was a little annoying - really! It was still an entertaining read and I might consider reading the other stories of this series.

Caroline Brand says

Loved it. Read it one sitting!! As was Horizons but dont tell the hubby!! Onto Daddio :-)

Lisa J. says

I'm beginning to sound like a broken record. The female in this story was atrocious. Jillian is definitely in the running for the bitchiest, most loathsome woman ever in a m/m romance. *Sigh*

Grier wasn't much better. He was a bystander in his own life. He blamed everything on Jillian and acted like he didn't have a choice in their little drama. It was his choice not to claim his son. He had seven years worth of excuses, but they all amounted to nothing. It was easier to paint Jillian as the bitch who wouldn't give him his rights instead of standing up to her. At any time, he could have revealed the truth to his family and taken away her power.

With all these custody issues and the nasty Jillian spouting nonsense, it was difficult to concentrate on the romance. I didn't feel the fire between Lil and Grier, even though I loved Grier's kink. After a few days, Lil was declaring his love and wanting a commitment. There wasn't enough build for me to get on board, and then the book ended somewhat abruptly.

Luca was adorable though, and kudos for the dad not being a total stereotype.

Chris says

Very good m/m romance about a San Francisco architect visiting friends (Jody and Clark from *Horizons*) when he meets a cute tattooed guy working at Taste of Chicago.

Cindi says

I started this series out of order. This is something I *never* do. I read Chyna Doll (#4 in the series - Luca and Chyna's story) first. I absolutely loved that book so I knew I had to go back to see where it all began.

In Taste I was able to see where Luca came from. Grier and Lil meet at the Taste of Chicago. Lil is visiting with Jody and Clark (from Horizons) and Grier is helping out family friends. When they meet? Instant lust. What follows is a lot of touristy stuff that ends each evening with hot sex. But it's not all sex and running around the city. Grier has a couple of secrets, one of which he feels should be made known. The other one? Could hurt him if the wrong person decides to use it against him (that person was a total bitch, by the way).

Saying more than that will give it away.

I really enjoyed this. I'm really eager to jump into Daddio to see more of these guys.

Full review can be found at -

Bitchie says

There was a lot to like here. Grier and Lil were both great guys, and the lingerie kink was hot, especially on a tattooed biker type. Unfortunately, this book suffered BFD- bitchy female disease. Jillian was horrible, and just when I thought she couldn't get any worse, she did. I also thought the story ended rather abruptly, just when the truth was finally out. It could have used at least an epilogue, so that the reader could see Lil, Grier and Luca as a family.

Valerie ❀M/M Romance Junkie❀ says

This could have easily been a solid 4 star read for me, but I am so sick of females on M/M romance being portrayed as evil psychos. Don't get me wrong. I know they exist, but it doesn't have to be that way. Jillian, and how she was portrayed, really ruined my enjoyment.

Feliz says

Dialogue-heavy, but a heartwarming story.

This book had some good points, like the characterization of conflicted, good-natured, caring Grier. He was even a bit too good, practically putting his life on hold for a child he had no official claim on. Lil was a great character, too. Although he had some stereotypical traits, I found him well-depicted as a formerly wildly flamboyant and still rather in-your-face gay man. Lil and Grier were good together despite the age difference; I liked the way Lil was patient and understanding with Grier's moods but didn't acquiesce in everything. Lil's support helped Grier take a new look at his life and make some very necessary changes. Both their behaviour fit their respective ages and personalities well. Not lastly, they were hot together.

From the secondary cast, Luca stands out. He's the epitome of a wonderful child, with his adorable lisp and his sweet nature. Everybody would love a child like him, and I totally bought how Lil was immediately taken by that little boy. This was another good point in the book, Lil immediately and consequently taking Luca into consideration as a vital part of his new lover's life. The way Luca filled a gap in Lil's heart Lil hadn't even been aware of was very well done; I could absolutely believe in those three becoming a family.

Other members of the secondary cast weren't that well drawn. I had problems especially with Luca's mother, Lilian. She did several about-faces over the course of the story – from sisterly friend to calculating bitch to overworked working mom to homophobic harpy and back. From the way she was first portrayed, her erratic behavior didn't quite fit, and neither did her neglect of Luca.

I also found the solution to all the issues with Luca in the end a bit convenient, but this had again to do with the unsuccessful characterization of Lilian. Really, this character could have profited from a serious thinking-over.

Full review at reviewsbyjessewave.com

Amarilli Settantatre says

da www.sognipensieriparole.com

TASTE

Finalmente un romanzo M/M che mette in mezzo anche una donna egoista e bugiarda!

Spesso la lettura di questo genere di storie d'amore prettamente maschili mi aveva lasciato un po' perplessa per la presenza delle figure femminili di contorno, quasi sempre ragazze zuccherose che sono le migliori amiche dei protagonisti, o madri generose e comprensive, o sorelle dal grande cuore. Per carità, nulla di male a immaginare donne solidali con le avventure/disavventure della coppia, ma è davvero così?

Ovvero, mi chiedevo, noi donne siamo sempre così aperte, smaliziate e capaci di assorbire il colpo derivante dal coming-out di una persona a noi vicina? Cosa succederebbe, invece, se uno dei due maschi della coppia fosse (anche) il nostro grande amore? E se lui non solo non ci contraccambiasse, ma volgesse le sue attenzioni in una direzione completamente opposta, magari proprio verso un altro "lui"?

Questo “TASTE” risponde in parte a questa mia curiosità, affrontando, oltre al solito intreccio (colpo di fulmine/passione/momento delle grandi decisioni), la tematica della gelosia e della rabbia femminile a seguito della presa d’atto che lo stupendo e bellissimo “lui” che ami da una vita non potrà mai amarti nel senso che vuoi tu.

“Ora sarò io a giudicare,” disse Lil. “Non avrei mai detto che tu fossi così romantico.

“Perché sembro un ragazzaccio tatuato?”

“Non dimentichiamo i tre piercing all’orecchio sinistro. Di cosa sono fatti?”

“Onice.”

“Se non altro, un ragazzaccio con del buon gusto,” scherzò Lil.

In ogni caso, la coppia protagonista non si dimentica: Lil, designer di successo prossimo alla quarantina, e Grier, venticinquenne molto problematico, non potrebbero essere più diversi per carattere ed estrazione sociale, eppure si trovano, loro malgrado, affiatati ed uniti nell’affrontare i problemi della vita concreta, dal mettere radici insieme all’allevare un figlio, avendo contro una donna ferita e delusa da uno dei due, e seriamente intenzionata a non rendere le cose facili.

Non conoscevo quest’autrice (che scrive nel tempo libero, oltre ad essere una manager e una madre di quattro figli maschi ormai adulti), ma ha uno stile piacevole e, soprattutto, riesce a piazzare qua e là scene di passione così infuocate e dettagliate che potrebbero essere spezzoni cinematografici già pronti.

Romanzo carino, molto carino, e la copertina di Reese Dante è come sempre strepitosa: questa cover-artist sa davvero come trasformare i sogni in disegni e colori.

Bark says

First Reads Win!

Architect Lil is visiting friends during the Taste of Chicago event when he spots a tattooed, muscled cutie serving up ice cream. Lil, ever the flirt, is delighted to find his interest (and ogling) being returned by the younger man. A little later they make plans to have a fun no-strings-attached hookup. They’re hot, they’re horny so why not, eh?

Though the two have some intense chemistry they don’t get to have their dreamy “hook-up” and kiss each other goodbye as expected. Instead drama happens (lots of freaking drama) and because of it, they are able to discover that, despite their difference in appearance and age (Lil is 37, Grier mid 20’s), they have a lot in common and enjoy each other’s company out of bed. This is new for both of them and as things go along they realize they just might be falling in love for the first time. Awwwws, I think my cold heart might’ve just melted a smidge.

I have to admit this story took me a while before I warmed up to the characters and fell into their romance. It starts off too info. dumpy and I felt as if I were being bombarded with too many facts about Grier’s past, his family and “friends” (most of whom were unpleasant to the point of cruelty) and his backstory as an out gay man who has no support system. Those who should love him basically walk all over and manipulate him for their own selfish means. All of this, right out of the starting gate, was a little too much to handle. I felt Lil

was getting the short-shrift and really just wanted them to get to knowing each other, minus so many issues, and for their romance to start heating up.

As the story shakes out we discover Grier has a young son named Luca whose mother, a childhood friend of Grier's, is a real bitch who has manipulated him into denying that he's the boys' father. She uses Grier as a convenient babysitter while degrading him because he's gay. Grier has put his entire life on hold in order to stay in Luca's life and given up on his own dreams. It's so, so sad that he's such a "pleaser" and frustrating that he doesn't stand up for himself. He looks all tough on the outside but in reality he's too tender-hearted for his own good. When he meets Lil, he's just coming to terms with the loss of his loving mom, beginning to stand up to his dad who refuses to believe he's gay and is dealing with a nasty, rude homophobe brother who sides with Luca's mother and makes matters worse. Poor Grier, his life really bites at this point and the author really makes you feel for him. Lil is there to lend support, to listen and take Grier's mind off his many problems with lots of hot sex.

Honestly, I wouldn't have blamed Lil for running far and as fast from the mess of Grier's life and have to give him props for sticking it through. He's putting others first, probably for the first time in his life, and it surprises him. I thought his slightly confused emotions were beautifully written. There's no denying the call of true love and mind-blowing loving and he realizes that pretty quick.

I'm glad I read this, despite that fact that my rambling paragraphs of complaint might make you think otherwise. When Grier and Lil are together the story buzzes with the strong emotions of brand new love and discovery. Grier ends up being stronger for knowing Lil and finds the courage and support he needs in order to get his life back on track. I despised mostly ALL of the secondary characters though with the exception of Grier's old dad who did try to understand Grier. His deep love for his son was always clear even when he was being a stubborn old fool. I also liked cute little Luca, despite the fact that he had a lisp that was a bit overwritten. He was sweet and gentle much like his daddy and he loved kitties. What's not to love?

Taste ends on a temporary fix/happy for now note and I'm good with that. I'd like to see more of these two experience life as a couple, and I'd like to get to know Lil better but only if all of the baggage is dumped!

Lightreads says

DNF halfway through. Why yes, I'm cleaning out my unfinished books, how can you tell?

M/M that I started out quite liking. Contemporary romance/drama set around a huge Chicago food festival. But then we got to the kink.

Look, here's the thing. A lot of M/M subscribes to the notion that what you are is how you fuck. You know, the smaller dude always enjoys being overpowered, that sort of thing.

Which is screwed up and uninteresting in equal degrees. But the thing is, you can't separate sex from character. And you *definitely* can't separate something as specific and personal as kink from character. I mean, you don't have to explain it, you don't have to draw nice straight lines from someone's specific trauma to why he likes asphyxiation. Really, it's better when you don't.

But kink doesn't happen in a vacuum. It's an expression of some really intense and fundamental emotions –

desire sure, but also antipathy, pain, joy, you name it. The kinky person doesn't have to know why, but there is a why, and the shape of that why – often done in the negative spaces by the writers who are really good at this – is what makes the kink vital and interesting. Also hot. This stuff gets installed in us in, like, the root directories. It's so deep in the operating system that looking at it is also looking at how we function. Or don't.

Which is what makes it interesting. And thus why this book, which wandered along doing food festival/family things for a while, and then basically out-of-the-blue was all, *hey, these dudes like to wear women's panties!* was so, so boring. I don't care. This is the sort of writing about sex that is all bodies and no brains. Sex acts aren't by themselves hot. Personal, contextual sex acts can be *blazing*.

And thus endeth Light on kink. For today.

Maggie Simms says

After reading Horizon, I was really intrigued to read more about Lil.

WARNING: review contains some SPOILERS

After reading several books by this author, I can see a trend. She does a phenomenal job at hooking you up on the book by starting it with a bang and adding some engaging angst. Then 3/4 of the way, the book will go OTT in the storyline drama with some or several eye-rolling moment(s). Luckily afterwards, we get a HEA.

What I liked:

-Lil. Lil. Lil. He was a kickass character. He knew what he wanted, who he was and did not let anyone get one on him. He got things done. He was funny and endearing.

-Catching up with Clark and Jody. And seeing that they are still happily together. After the whole stunt with how things went in the sequels of 'Cutting Cords' (which is still my favorite book by this author) I do not take HEA's from this author for granted. It has sure made me wary of checking out her sequels.

-Their steamy sex with all their little kinks and dirty talking. ;)

-Grier's dad. His changing his ways and offering loving support was refreshing.

-Oh, and did I mention Lil was kickass?

What I didn't like:

-Grier. I just found him very hard to root for. It was hard for me to connect with a character that acted as a doormat for most of the book. He allowed Jillian to manipulate him up and down and sideways. Everyone was constantly bailing him out:

*his mom acting smart leaving him the 'proof' that he needed.

*his dad acting quickly and getting the 'judge' which btw, Grier's response to his dad suggestion of calling the judge right away was answered with "now?" even though there was an imminent sense of urgency.

*Lil getting him the family attorney (though I really felt that Jillian must have been paying his retaining fee based on the biased advice he was giving them).

*Lil again telling him to get back when he decided to drive way with Luca after the family meeting from which he walked out because 'he couldn't handle it'; even though he was the one that had to claim his son and clear his name. His future and his son's were basically being determined at that meeting. At this point not only did I question his lack of balls but his dubious intelligence because I don't know a single person who wouldn't know that what he was doing would constitute kidnapping, especially with an imminent hostile custody battle.

-Jillian. She was a good antagonist but she remained very two dimensional and stereotypical. I wish there would have been a bit more depth to her with more layers.

Even with these flaws, the book was very entertaining. This author has mastered angst because her books are addicting.

Dee Wy says

Listened to this on audio and the narration was so "right on" that I think it added to my enjoyment of the story. Once I started this I couldn't put it down. Lil and Grier were so darn good together, I rooted for them the entire way though the book. Loved how sweet they were to each other, that Grier had a secret fetish and the role Grier's son played in the story, lisp and all (well done on the audio). So much to sink your teeth into and keep you engrossed.

Also listened to this as a standalone story. Characters from the first book made an appearance, but no need to read book one first, this is all new characters. But I'm so pleased with this author, I will go back and read book one.

Em says

I loved this book and even shed a few tears towards the end....well they welled up anyway! This is not your run of the mill romance and I loved the bit of kink thrown in for good measure!!! Would definitely recommend it.

Jason Bradley says

Talk about getting invested in these characters. I felt all their emotions. This would make a beautiful movie.
