



He Didn't Have To Be

Tracey Michael

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Dear Author,

He didn't have to do it, but he did anyways. He's like that. It's one of the many reasons why he's my best friend. What did he do?

He kissed me.

In front of everyone.

They say actions speak louder than words, and with just one kiss... he silenced every one of his jock friends in true Griffin style.

The only downside now is that I can't stop thinking about his lips pressed firmly to mine, and just how right it felt. I've never really thought about Griffin in that way, after all, he's straight, but now I can't stop thinking about him period. And sometimes, out of the corner of my eye, I catch him watching me in a way that makes me wonder if he can't stop thinking about me too.

Griffin is my past, my present... Is he my future too?

Photo Description:

A black and white photo accompanied my prompt. A blond man, early twenties, is being kissed by a taller, dark-haired man, also in his early twenties. Behind the men, there are small white festival tents and trees.

This story was written as a part of the M/M Romance Group's "**Love's Landscapes**" event. Group members were asked to write a story prompt inspired by a photo of their choice. Authors of the group selected a photo and prompt that spoke to them and wrote a short story.

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The M/M Romance Group strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

He Didn't Have To Be Details

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From Reader Review He Didn't Have To Be for online ebook

mah1 says

Cute read and even though I'm getting exasperated with all these friends to lovers stories in the Love's Landscape event, I have to say this deserves bonus points for having minimal amount of pining and for the fact that the feelings were a new thing between them.

Lori says

Best friends to lovers. My ALL time favourite theme. Thank you for this super cute story - I'm definitely feeling all gooey inside now. A great prompt, darling story and sexaaaay front cover. And all for free. BARGAIN.

(And - the story to complete 2014's reading challenge!)

Kudrat Kaur says

1,5 rounded up. ETA: Upon reflection, rounded down.

ETA: The extra half is there because it gave me a nice distraction from this mindfuck of a book I started reading, and I need something absolutely different. This was. But, I think the most fun I had with this book was while writing this review. Reflecting on it. Pointing out everything that was wrong with.

This was pretty bad. But, the premise was good and the characters... could have been good. It's just, there was potential, but the author made a bad call on making this into a short story. I'm sorry if that's rude, but there's a list of reasons why this just doesn't work. On the other hand, if the author decides/d to expand, to properly explore the characters... Well, I think it would have potential. As a short story, there's just too much left unexplained, and I understand that short stories are even harder to pull off than full length novels because there's less space to get your readers enamoured. It's just, Ms. Michael failed to enamour me. Simple as that.

Too much is happening, and it just doesn't flow.

The period from "i've never thought about you like that" to "i love you from afar" to "i love you too" to "let's have a random orgasm because why the fuck not?" to "why is there even an epilogue? because i don't care... at all" is too damn short.

The author has put way too much in here, and not given it time and space to grow.

One kiss and BAM suddenly your BF is someone you love.

NO!

Let the realisation settle in, give me SOME ANGST because 1) one of the MCs is supposedly STRAIGHT and 2) see 1.

What the everliving fuck?

There's even a random kiss with some other hot dude - because of course there has to be one. How else is the other MC going to be spurred into action, making him forcefully realise that he's in love?

NO!

Btw. What about the homophobia?

One of the MCs (whose name started with a T... Toby?) got his face bashed in, had a concussion and he fainted in his own vomit.

Where are the repercussions?!

NO!

Oh! And you tell us that said MC was also turned away from his house once he turned legal in one sentence and then leave it at that?

NO!

What about the repercussions of that **public kiss**?

What about his basket ball career? How will the team deal with it, since they were so openly bashing T(oby?).

Having an understanding girlfriend is wonderful. Truly. But. That's it. She was actually pretty cool.

The writing bothered me a bit too.

The characters were complete morons too.

The story was too fast also.

There was no connection between the MCs too.

Oh! And everything felt just thrown together because, why not?!

On second thought, 1.5 rounded down because of said review and reflection process. Good idea, far from ideal execution. Could have been much >>>much<<< better.

ETA: My apologies, completely forgot. Thank you to the author for writing this story for the Love's Landscapes event :) I may not have been positive, but I do appreciate the work and effort that goes into creating a story and then making it freely available to all of us.

K says

3.5 stars

Contemporary GFY story - I'd say NA because of the character ages, but this could quite easily fall into YA. Toby and Griffin have been best friends since middle school and now share a room in the college dorm. Toby is gay and is in love with Griffin, who is straight and has a girlfriend. When Toby is harassed by Griffin's team mates, Griffin kisses him in front of them, making Toby even more confused. The harassment escalates, and as it does Griffin realises - with help from his supportive girlfriend - that he feels more for Toby than just friendship. This is a fairly light, fluffy read despite the harassment, with a sweet ending.

Cristina T. says

This was a nice, low on angst, friends-to-lovers story, which I thoroughly enjoyed. It was fast-paced, and the set-up was great, but the story felt a little rushed, and it was over way too fast.

Griffin and Toby have been friends for years until a kiss meant to make a point to bullies turns their friendship around. From that moment on, they see each other in a different light and decide to explore that, finding that they are a good fit, despite Griffin being supposedly straight. The development of their relationship felt natural and there was no unnecessary drama going on.

All in all, it was a sweet story and I even liked Wendy.

Prompt photo

His best friend dressed in a suit happened at funerals and weddings, and once a year, the basketball banquet. Toby's mouth went dry. He blinked and shook his head. "Who are you and what have you done with my best friend?" Toby teased.

"I saw that," Wendy whispered, close to his ear.

Barbara? says

This was a quick and free friends-to-lovers. Toby and Griffin have been friends since high school. Neither have ever looked at the other as anything more than his best friend until after a kiss.

I had a few issues such as I wanted to get more in Griffin's head and his struggle with suddenly having feelings for Toby since he has never looked at another guy before. My biggest issue though is that Griffin spent the majority of the book with a girlfriend. I like that Wendy wasn't an evil bitch and all but she took it way too easily. Not that I need that drama, but it was really glossed over in every which way.

It just had so much more potential for a really good best friends-to-lovers story. It was just too short and rushed.

Vivian says

Charming, GFY story featuring two collegiate athletes.

Best friends since middle school and roommates now, Toby and Griffin are constantly in each others' pockets and it's never been anything more until... One moment changes everything. Sweet and fairly angst free aside from a major trauma this story is a smooth read.

Sunny says

Cute story, sweet characters. I really liked the set-up, and the developing story, but the ending came up awfully fast. Also, I wish the story about the harassment/assault hadn't been dropped. What happened with that?

Kristan says

A cute friends to lovers/ GFY romance.

Neither Griffin or Toby have feeling for each other until one day, while Griffin is defending Toby from a group of bullies, he kisses him to prove a point. From that point on, both begin to look at each other differently.

That being said, Griffin has a girlfriend. But, the way in which it was written and explained, didn't make that fact uncomfortable at all. It didn't feel like cheating - there were no hurt feelings. What was nice to see was that Wendy was well written and a strong, supportive character unlike most of the "other women" that we often read in this genre.

I did feel like the writing was a little disjointed/ jumpy at times, and I would have liked to know what happened with the basketball teammates that were harassing Toby.

There was a very sweet epilogue (I adore epilogues) and the author did a great job at adding the prompt description into the story.

Julesmarie says

College-age friends-to-lovers gfy. Delightful!

It was super short, and there were things that I wished were explained better (which coach found Toby in the locker room, for example. Because unless the college is significantly smaller than I can even imagine, I have a hard time believing that the swimming coach would have Griffin's phone number, or that the basketball coach would recognize a member of the swim team who's had his nose broken) but I completely enjoyed how both the friendship and the chemistry between them was portrayed. Especially in such a short story.

And the fact that the girlfriend wasn't a harpy is a definite bonus!

Ami says

Nice if not forgettable friends-to-lovers story. Probably because it's only 8k. Bonus point for the girlfriend NOT being bitchy though

Crispy says

Wholesome story of college age friends to lovers. GFY but this aspect seems a natural progression and fits with the characters and their history. A slight tinge of darkness with one of the MCs needing to deal with a

bullying homophobe who eventually resorts to violence. Mostly though this is a mildly sweet and well written romance with a young adult feel to it.

Mandy*reads obsessively* says

A cute short addition to the LL event.

They've been best friends forever, but one kiss, one that was more of a joke on the homophobe teammates turns that all upside down.

I liked a lot about this short, the girlfriend is sweet and nice (no worries, no cheating) the MCs don't act stupid or have some blown up misunderstanding and the epilogue sealed the HEA.

Trisha Harrington says

So this was a hard one to rate, but I finally decided on a 3. My issues with this weren't huge at all. I actually found myself liking this quite a bit. I just didn't get that warm happy feeling I would have liked to either.

Griffin and Toby were likable characters and Wendy, the girlfriend, was really likable too. I liked the way the whole thing was done. But I didn't like that Griffin and Wendy were together for more of the story than Griffin and Toby were. Well, that's what it felt like to me at least.

Meep says

It's a nice simple little story but I found the pacing off. It felt young and from the moment of the kiss it continued at a break-neck speed there was no deliberation or conflict and I'm not sure how much time passed before the HEA.

Liked the immediate honesty with the girlfriend, though I thought she seemed very mature and understanding, for his part I was happy - no cheating, no silly misunderstandings, and for her part she was nice.
