

Flawless

Cat Grant

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Steve Campbell used to be a player, until a mid-life crisis opened his eyes to his long-repressed love for Connor, his soon-to-be-married best friend and business partner. Coming out at thirty-eight means learning how to date all over again, and this time, Steve's not willing to settle for empty one-night stands. He wants the real thing.

Gil Alvarez has never had it easy, struggling through childhood and rejected by his family for a body that didn't match who he was inside. A skilled driver and mechanic, he's working hard to make his auto shop a success. The last thing he needs is a rich white guy in a candy-apple-red Ferrari tempting him, but Steve's ready smile and easygoing manner prove irresistible.

One brief, intimate encounter leaves them both hungry for more. Gil's not ashamed of who he is, but he's terrified that Steve will reject him—or worse—when he discovers what Gil can't find the courage to tell him.

Flawless Details

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Author: Cat Grant

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From Reader Review Flawless for online ebook

DaisyGirl says

[trans-man (hide spoiler)]

JustJen "Miss Conduct" says

I really enjoy this series. I was excited to see Steve find someone for himself. I don't think I was paying very much attention when I read the blurb, as I planned to read this regardless. So, I was a little surprised when things started making sense.

Another solid story in this series. I can't imagine how this would be for someone so I really don't want to comment either way, but, suffice to say, it was very well done. Saying any more will give too much away. Read it and enjoy. I'm looking forward to more.

Catherine says

*** 2.5 Stars ***

Jewel says

Steve is recently out bisexual man and he is feeling alone now that his best friend Connor is happily coupled. He meets Gil by chance one afternoon at the beach when his Ferrari wouldn't start and Gil got it started. They go out a couple times, but Gil runs hot and cold and keeps running away or pushing Steve away out of fear that Steve will not accept him.

While the subject matter needs attention and exposure, I don't think a novella is the best format. There is no time to really deal with the issues that arise. So, an interesting premise, but it didn't really work for me overall.

Sandra says

Not sure what to think of this. What first seemed a rich boy/poor boy romance novel isn't what I got. And that part was great.

My main complaint is that it was too short, too rushed, and didn't give Steve and Gil adequate screen time to explore their feelings for each other. And while I applaud the author for including a trans character in her story, I thought that Steve's acceptance, after the initial conflict, came too quickly and was too neatly done as a wrap up on this novel.

The writing was very good, and it's what drove the book to a three star rating. I wish that the author had taken a bit more time to fully explore the characters and the situations, instead of shortening the book and thus short-changing both her characters and her readers.

I received a free ARC from Riptide Publishing. A positive review was not promised in return.

V says

I haven't read many books about Trans- gender Female to male, I haven't found many books about this type of stories.

I have read a few about male to female transgender that I find fascinating, sad, interesting...

This story was very nice, and I love the 2 main characters, however, I have so many "I wish" that it took 1 star from my rating.

I wish it didn't have such an unfinished ending and it was longer, I wish the story didn't feel rush so we have the chance to find out more about Gil.

Such a wonderful story deserved to reach the full potential.

Never mind, this was such a lovely, emotional story and I still loved it.

Tully Vincent says

This is book 4 in a series, but I didn't read the other books in this series. I'm not 100% sure if that impacted my overall opinion of the book, but I tend to think not.

Although it's a quick read at under 100 pages, there's plenty of depth here and the author doesn't sidestep too awful much along the way. The locations read excellent, providing just enough detail to set the scene perfectly. The car theme woven throughout the story worked well for me. And I quite enjoyed the two main characters who couldn't have been more different.

Admired Gil's courage and determination to stand up and be who he felt he was meant to be. I did sorta wish he'd been a bit more gutsy in one scene with his ex, Chas. . . but that's just cuz I'd have loved to see him kick that asshole's butt or at least take him down a notch. I found the other MC, Steve, extremely believable and real. The former geekiness, high intelligence but social ineptitude & cluelessness, and a sometimes narrow-minded focus on work—I know several guys just like him.

Another way the MCs differed intrigued me. I'm always shocked when I read about folks who claim to have such insights into their sexuality or identity at a very young age like Gil described. Maybe I was a slow bloomer (or a moron?), but it took time before I thought about, let alone processed, such things. In retrospect, there were signs, but back then, did I have a clue? Hell, no. So I relate to Steve who took longer to figure shit out. These two characters show it can happen either way and both are normal.

That being said though, the way Gil describes how he knew that (view spoiler) was a bit too glossed over and simplistic for my liking. I understand how he wouldn't maybe fully verbalize everything to Steve, but surely his internal dialogue could have given us more insight into him. Also, I wish the story were longer so it could have provided a more definitive HEA. The HFN was ok, but I really wanted to see how the couple progressed beyond that first coming together! How their physical and emotional relationship grew and

developed. And I'm sad that it's the last in the series because I want a revisit with this couple!

None of these quibbles would have kept me from giving it a five star rating. . . but one thing did. The comment Gil makes about bisexuals — "I've tried bi guys too and you're all the same. You want your little adventures in Gay Town, but once they're over, you're gone. . . " DAMN, I hate that. Even though I know that in RL so many have a misconception or prejudice against bisexuals, I do not want to read it in my books especially when its being said by someone who I would have sincerely hoped wouldn't be so judgmental. That burned me--its one of my few piss-me-off-every-time buttons. So 4.25 stars

Overall, an extremely enjoyable novella which I'd recommend. My second read by this author, and my favorite so far. I may read the prior books in the series soon.

Gabbi says

I've read several books by Ms. Grant and I've enjoyed them all. She has a way of really getting to the heart and soul of her characters and she always writes an interesting, compelling story. The blurb does an excellent job at describing what the book is about, so I won't rehash it. Instead, I thought I'd write about why I liked this book and why I recommend it.

Since the blurb hints at what's going on with Gil, I don't think I'm spoiling it by confirming he is a female to male transsexual. Unfortunately, there are not enough books written about transgendered heroes and I admit I couldn't wait to read this one! I'm very glad I did! Ms. Grant does an excellent job at portraying Gil's fear of rejection because he is a transman. Even though Gil is afraid of being hurt, I quickly found myself admiring his strength to live the life he's meant to live, as well as, his willingness to give Steve a chance to win his heart. Gil is definitely a memorable, honorable hero and I truly loved him.

Like Gil, Steve is another likeable, interesting character. I thought his patience and determination to be with Gil was an honorable one and I loved the way he cared for Gil. It was so easy to fall under the spell of these two men and I enjoyed every minute I spent reading about them. My only gripe about the book is that I wished it had been longer. I do hope Ms. Grant will one day revisit these characters and allow us to watch these two men really achieve the happily ever after that they truly deserve.

Flawless is a beautifully told story that lived in my heart and mind long after I finished reading the story. If you are looking for a well-told romance between two very special men, this is definitely the book for you! Highly Recommended!

Reviewed By: Gabbi

Susan65 says

Whoa!!! Talk about a surprise. I did not see that coming. WOWZA!

There is no possible way to review this without giving anything away so just read it and I bet you say

Emma Sea says

Even though I tried very hard, I didn't particularly like the book. I just found it wishy washy, with a lack of character definition (EDIT: I just saw someone shelved it under 'vapid protags': that seems to sum it up), and a vague HFN that really, really grated. The whole motor racing sub-plot seemed . . . unlikely, and undercooked***; as if it was only thrown in there to prove that, Hey Gil likes cars, Gil's definitely a guy! And Chas got Put On A Bus in a car. That seemed extremely clumsy.

I'm a sad panda. I was looking forward to this.

Gender essentialism rant follows:

Every time I write about my opinion of a transgender character in a book someone unfriends me. So, knowing I'll probably upset someone with this review, even though I don't mean to:

10 shiny stars for having a transman as an MC: woot! for diversity in m/m!

Here's my problem: it was so shallow. I don't understand a single thing more about transmen now than I did before I started the book. Now the question is, should I? It's an m/m romance, not gender studies. But the complete lack of any depth to Gil's character really pissed me off.

Gil explains that he knew he was a guy from an early age:

"My mom couldn't understand why I was interested in cars instead of clothes and makeup, when it was all I could do to keep from screaming every time I got my period . . . When I turned fifteen, my folks threw me a quinceañera. I had to get my hair and nails done and wear a long white dress and dance in front of everybody I'd ever met. It was hell."

OK, I'm prepared to have my ass kicked and get told I'm out of line, but DA FUK? Geez Wayne, boy does that sound like gender essentialism to me.

I'm completely and utterly fascinated by gender: how it is defined, performed, communicated, and how it changes over time. I am therefore incredibly interested in people who identify as trans, because I want to know how they *know*. This is where I completely HATE the fact we're not telepathic: I *wish* I could get instide other peoples' heads.

I only know inside my head. I know I hate wearing heels*, I hate tight dresses, I like figuring out how stuff works, I don't like shopping, I don't like social chit chat. I indentify as *human*, a human with a uterus, and I understand that other people will classify me as female because of visible biological characteristics (e.g. breasts). Understandably it pisses me off when people make assumptions about my abilities or preferences based on my assigned gender. I assume it pisses other people off too, but the lack of general rage I see around me suggests either assumptions generally fit predilictions (this doesn't resonate as likely with me, but evidence-based research says there's an element of truth there, for some people), that cultural gender training in very early childhood reinforces choices seen as appropriate to a large degree (seems most likely), or the pleasure in successfully performing gender and meeting expectations outweighs the desire to participate in

one's preferred activities (probably a bit of this in there too).

Liking cars and disliking high heels does not make anyone a man: and it doesn't make Gil a man. What is it that does? What tips the balance? Please note I am not saying that Gil isn't a man! But . . . gosh . . . I wanted something in here to just . . . put me in Gil's head, to understand, just a tiny bit.**

Am I just expecting far, far too much from a 91 page short?

*Actually I cannot believe there's a human on the planet who *likes* wearing high heels, even if people might love that wearing high heels signals they they have successfully learned to perform femininity (can be enjoyable or can simply be a job requirement), makes them sexually desired (can also be very enjoyable) communicates to others the gender that they wish to be associated with (enjoyable), or fucks with the expectations of the gender they are associated with (also enjoyable). And, you know, it's not like wearing heels is any kind of biological imperative. There weren't female Australopithecus afarensis wandering the grasslands of Ethiopia 3.2 million years ago with shortened Archilles tendons, requiring our ancestors' toolmaking ability to sharply develop so we could have little wooden platforms to walk on.

**Also, yes, I know that no-one owes me any explanation for their gender self-alignment! No-one has to explain themselves to me. I agree. I wonder stuff like this about everyone, not only people who identify as trans. What does it feel like to feel like a woman? Do other women feel fundamentally different, inside, than I do? I find it most perplexing and fascinating.

***EDIT: 4 May

A blog post of Cat Grant's solved the car racing thing for me.

As a story it would have made more sense if Gil had solved his problems through restoring a classic carwith Steve's help, of course:) Gil works as a mechanic, he's spent years building up his business, going without so his shop can prosper, and he and his Dad used to bond over a car restoration project. Working on cars *defines* Gil; it isn't what he *does*, it's who he *is*, in the way the most fortunate of people do for a living what they'd do off the clock anyway.

The character of Chas is introduced to take away Gil's restored car (Chas is then swiftly removed, as noted above). This means Gil can't use the labour of his hands to redeem himself (a bit of a narrative classic that I'm admittedly particularly fond of), but rather Steve gets to ride in on his valiant steed:

and rescue Gil, by letting him race his Ferrari in sports car club races for bucketloads of cash.

Now reading the story this annoyed me greatly, because while there is a bit of a redemption story involved (in a street race Gil ended up totaling the car he and his father built, so this is his do-over) the car racing functions as a Hey, Let's Put On a Show. It's a sure thing; there's <u>never any tension in the racing</u> (it's so easy to win Gil lets Steve drive for a while). And they're not even street races: it's just so . . . well, like I said in my review, UNDERCOOKED!

But in her blog Grant explains the real life inspiration for the story has "owned - and driven! - a string of

racing cars." QED: there's racing in the story. While it remains an unsatisfying narrative turn, at least I now understand why it's in there.

Christy says

I've been on pins and needles waiting to read this fourth book in Cat Grant's 'Irresistible Attraction' series. However, I was a good little reviewer and didn't let this jump ahead in the queue no matter how much I was salivating for Steve's happy ever after. Because you see, I despised Steve in the first installment, I learned to like and respect him in the second, and now I was ready to adore him. Thank goodness, Cat Grant and I were on the same page! There was also something in the blurb that nipped at my curiosity. Just a little something that made me go "hmm, I wonder", and it niggled at the back of my head until I had to see if I was right in my wondering.

I thought the way Steve and Gil met was hysterical. Here's Steve kicking his Ferrari because it won't start and yelling at it, when Gil walks up, asks if he can help, and thirty seconds later Gil has that sweet ride started up and purring. The following morning, though, when Steve calls him at nine am on a Sunday, upset because whatever Gil did has made the Ferrari really difficult to drive, and Gil heads over only to find out that Steve has never had any software updates done on a car that is basically a giant computer...well, that's when I laughed really hard. Especially when it takes Gil about ten minutes to install the updates. *snort*

Steve and Gil begin the ultimate hesitant dating dance with Steve wanting to spend more time with Gil, and Gil knowing it's never going to work and being afraid to tell Steve his secret. Gil is positive that once Steve knows that'll be the end of any dating for them, but Gil can't quite bring himself to tell Steve yet. So, instead, they end up racing the Ferrari for money. Well, Gil's driving and Steve's making the bets, a perfect partnership.

It was so much fun watching this story and these guys come together. I totally fell for Gil and my heart broke for him many times until he got his happy ending, too. Since I can only say that yes, I was 100 percent right in what I thought, but I can't tell what it is because that'd be a spoiler, you'll have to read the book to find out if it's as interesting to you as it was to me. And, yes, I adored Steve when it was all said and done. Thanks, Cat.

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

Shirley Frances says

Steve has been lonely, longing for something more than one-night stands now that he has finally accepted his sexual orientation. He has everything a man should want - a great job, money and a fast car. Now all he wants is to find that real connection to someone else.

Gil has had a rough past, especially with his family's acceptance of who he truly is. He is in a place where he is working hard to make a life for himself, living from job to job to make ends meet and sometimes fearful of how people will react when they get to know him.

Steve and Gil meet when Steve's sports car doesn't start and Gil steps up to help. Steve is immediately attracted to Gil, but he doesn't know how to go about getting a date with the guy. This whole business of dating as a gay man is new to him and he is afraid of being rejected, especially now that he knows he wants something permanent and not only a hook-up. Gil, on the other hand, is so focused on Steve's financial status that he immediately dismisses his attraction to him, thinking he is like every rich man that comes to his shop. Later on he relents and their journey in finding something real begins.

I admit that when I read the previous books in the series, Steve didn't caught my attention one bit. I had not read his story as was related in Doubtless. However, I am happy to say that he finally caught my eye and his story was amazing.

I loved this story! Cat Grant did an amazing job in bringing to the page a story of understanding, letting go and second chances in love. Flawless was packed-full of emotions ranging from fear of rejection on both parts to acceptance of an unexpected situation and ending in elation at finally finding someone worthy to fight for. I especially enjoyed how the character's complexity added to development of the story. As each layer was peeled away from the characters, I got to know them better and fully came to understand where each was coming from. Once I got to understand that, I truly felt connected to both of them and found myself cheering them on. I wanted to smack them upside their heads every time they overreacted, cried with some of the emotions presented and had a happy grin on my face by the time the book ended.

Of course, the chemistry between these two was easily palpable, but I appreciated the fact that the author took her time bringing them together. Steve and Gil truly did have issues to overcome and obstacles to get through to be together and if those weren't dealt with as the story progressed I wouldn't have enjoyed this story as much.

Cat Grant's writing was everything I have come to expect from her and then some. She managed to bring to the page a complex concept and she did it well. It showed that she did her research, which helped me to further understand Gil's feelings, hesitations and actions. She did a wonderful job of keeping the subject matter accurate while still making Steve and Gil's story interesting and entertaining.

Although Flawless is the fourth book in the Irresistible Attraction series, it can certainly be read as a stand alone since the author does a great job of giving you enough back story for you to know what has happened in previous installments without making you feel overwhelmed. I only wish the story was longer. I would have loved to see how Steve and Gil's relationship developed further.

I received this title from Riptide Publishing through NetGalley in exchange of my honest opinion.

Christi Snow says

My Review:

I've read the rest of this series, so I thought I knew what I was getting when I accepted this book for review. I should have read the story description better. I won't spoil the book, but it definitely was not what I was expecting and was my first book that I've read like this.

We've met Steve before...he's a guy definitely in the middle of a sexual epiphany. This is a guy who's been a player, with women, for a long time. Until last year when he discovered that he was in love with his business partner. He's since decided that he's actually bisexual.

Gil runs an auto repair shop. He's someone who's on the edge...his business is barely hanging on, his ex is hanging on too much, and Steve just makes him nervous.

They both really, really like each other despite the issues that keep coming up between them. Most of the problem is coming from Gil who's hiding something that could affect Steve's perspective of him. It colors everything in their relationship.

Like I said, this is the first book I've read with this particular circumstance. While I have no personal issues with it, I found that it wasn't something that appealed to me as a reader. It definitely affected my enjoyment of the book. And I'm not sure why...probably just because it's such a foreign thing to me. I also had real issues with the way that Gil let it come out. He just set himself up to get hurt, because he blindsided Steve, so it didn't give Steve a chance to act with anything BUT shock.... He was completely blindsided and that wasn't fair to either one of them.

There was a happy ending, but the overall feel of the book gave me an unhappy, unsettled feeling and that's not what I want from my reading.

I received a complimentary copy of this book in return for an honest review

Feliz says

4.5 stars

There's Steve, a wealthy physics scientist who drives a Ferrari and who's only recently accepted his bisexuality. And there's Gil, a Ferrari mechanic who worked hard to open his own shop and is still barely scraping along. Gil is a trans-man, but former horrible experiences have him tongue tied with fear of rejection or worse. Steve, on the other hand, is utterly clueless, which makes for an awkward moment--to put it VERY mildly--once they give in to the mutual attraction that started with Gil teaching Steve how to drive a Ferrari. There's also a leftover asshole from Gil's past who keeps calling him Gabi and wastes no opportunity to exploit Gil in the worst way. The only part of the book that I thought less than perfect since as far as I'm concerned, the matter with Cas was solved too easily (then again, there's potential for future conflict here, so I won't complain too hard but rather hope for a sequel). Otherwise, I loved this book. Steve and Gil were perfect for each other, both having exceprienced rejection for their outward appearance, both having gone through freeing transitions. Steve may be clueless, but he's willing to learn; Gil may be bitter, but he hasn't given up all hope yet. What it comes down to in the end is two people falling for who they are and who they could be to each other. Beautifully done and sincerely recommended.

Blue Bayou . says

[You know I wasn't sure how this was going to play out. I was hoping for 'just a real story'. Personally I didn't want abuse or any external reasons that would 'help explain'. I personally believe that how you feel inside is how you feel inside. And with this story that's what I got. Gil is trans. No question. He has issues that would be natural to him and dealing with other peoples phobias. Steve is a knight in shining dented armor. For my first trans story I was delighted. It was