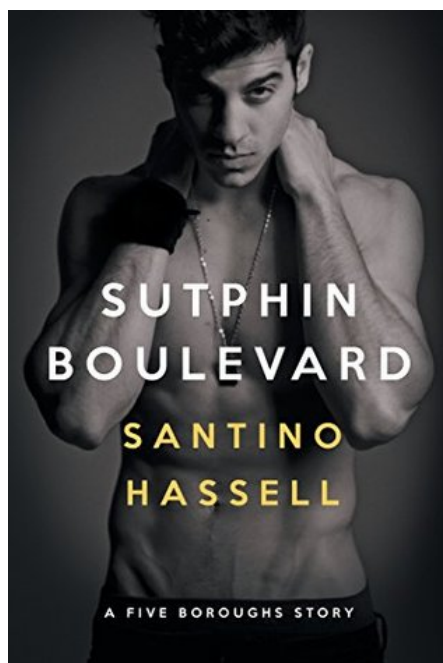




Sutphin Boulevard

Santino Hassell

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Sutphin Boulevard Santino Hassell

Michael Rodriguez and Nunzio Medici have been friends for two decades. From escaping their dysfunctional families in the working-class neighborhood of South Jamaica, Queens, to teaching in one of the city's most queer-friendly schools in Brooklyn, the two men have shared everything. Or so they thought until a sweltering night of dancing leads to an unexpected encounter that forever changes their friendship.

Now, casual touches and lingering looks are packed with sexual tension, and Michael can't forget the feel of his best friend's hands on him. Once problems rear up at work and home, Michael finds himself seeking constant escape in the effortless intimacy and mind-blowing sex he has with Nunzio. But things don't stay easy for long.

When Michael's world begins to crumble in a sea of tragedy and complications, he knows he has to make a choice: find solace in a path of self-destruction or accept the love of the man who has been by his side for twenty years.

Sutphin Boulevard Details

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Author : Santino Hassell

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Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Contemporary

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From Reader Review Sutphin Boulevard for online ebook

Kat ? says

Because this book made me feel All Of The Things, I shared all kinds of personal things. But in light of what's been going on I don't feel great about having those personal things here, so I'm removing my review and rating.

Vanessa North says

My original review written back in May:

I'm going to review this closer to release date, but trust me, you ALL want to read this.

Now, since the book is releasing at the end of this week, a more in-depth review.

When Santino offered to let me read this book, I jumped at the chance--I had just confessed to him that I had DNFed his most well-known series because it was too violent for my tender sensibilities (seriously, I haz those)--but I did want to try his take on contemporary romance.

In addition to being a lovely friends-to-lovers romance, this book is a raw, gritty, in-your-fucking-face look at alcoholism and recovery. As someone who is personally familiar with addiction, triggers, shame, avoidance, denial, etc. etc. etc., I appreciated that Santino pulled no punches on this score. From Michael's early denial about his alcoholism to the tedium and vulnerability of rehab, in this book, there is no sugar-coating the truth: addiction is an insidious, frightening, and devastating disease.

Another area where realism triumphs and makes this book a cut above the rest of the books I've read this year is in the depiction of Michael's family life. In this genre, families tend to be either amazing and awesome or OTT evil. Michael's family was difficult, contentious, sometimes supportive, sometimes homophobic, but in general pretty fucking real. I appreciated that they were neither the bastion of perfect support nor were they uniformly evil. And I particularly appreciated Michael's complex relationship with his abusive father--it gave tremendous insight into the way stress, guilt, and grief can trigger alcoholic episodes.

Anyway, all of that and some of the most scorching sex I've read in years. Get it, Nunzio.

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

[*3.5 stars*

I went back and forth with my rating on this for some time, wavering between 3 and 4 stars. However, in the end, I couldn't get over some of my issues with this story, and though I really liked parts of it (and that cover is just... *everything*), I'm going with 3.5 stars, rounded down.

When I first heard the synopsis of this story, I almost peed my pants in excitement. I've been meaning to read something by Santino Hassell for a looong time, a

Judith says

REVIEW & RATING REMOVED

Gigi says

This is my first Santino Hassell book so I went in not knowing what to expect. I read Renee's review, which convinced me to read it, and braced myself for "raw and gritty" and some exceptional story telling.

Michael Rodriguez and Nunzio Medici have been inseparable friends for over 20 years. Nunzio is Michael's touchstone. When the world gets too crazy, Nunzio is the person who centers Michael and makes everything OK. They went to middle school, high school and college together and currently teach at the same high school. Both men are gay but have never taken their friendship to the sexual level. (While Nunzio is out-and-proud, Michael is still in the closet with his family and co-workers.) All that changes (or so we are lead to believe) when they "share" a one-night-stand and have a threesome. The book is told entirely from Michael's POV so we don't hear Nunzio's thoughts, but Michael enjoys the experience and having his friend involved. It opens up dialogue about a "friends with benefits" situation with the boys and they decide to give it a go for now. While the sex is hot and satisfying for Michael, it begins to change their relationship in negative ways.

In the meantime, Michael's dead-beat, estranged father has asked to live in Michael and his brother Raymond's house on Sutphin Boulevard in Queens. Neither man is happy about the arrangement but agree out of a sense of family and the fact that their father's health is failing. This causes Michael extreme angst and he starts hitting the bottle harder than usual.

I should mention that both Michael and Nunzio have an *extremely* unhealthy relationship with alcohol. Both men drink to access when they go out and when they are kicking back at home. While it doesn't seem to be a problem for Nunzio, Michael uses alcohol to numb his pain over the complications in his personal and work life. A major event happens in the book that causes Michael to take his alcohol consumption to dangerous levels and that, mixed with his depression and anxiety medications, gets him into a whole mess of trouble. He completely cuts himself off from work, his family *and* Nunzio. Without Nunzio as his touchstone, he loses himself in a haze of intoxication.

This book packs some *serious* angst. It can definitely be defined as "raw and gritty" and there were times I wept at the sorrow Michael was experiencing. *I* would not categorize this as a romance, but Michael and Nunzio do get a HFN/HEA so many will definitely see it as a romance.
(view spoiler)

The sex between the two was hot and exciting, but other than some gentle post-orgasm touches, the two don't talk about or express their feelings for one another. (view spoiler)

I really enjoyed this book, but I have to say that one of the reasons I did was because I read it with a carefree, open mind. I knew there would be angst, but I felt prepared for it and I ultimately was. I have to pick-and-choose what books I read very carefully because of my "real life" stressors and what I *need* in a book at any given time. (I even have a shelf at GoodReads titled wait for a better mood where I save the high-angst books

for later, when I feel I can handle them. Honestly, most of the time I reach for light and fluffy romances mixed with hot sex that leave me happy and smiling. But everything was hunky-dory in my world and I was actually on a camping trip on the North Shore in Minnesota when I read Sutphin Boulevard so I was about as happy, content and relaxed as I could get. Angst was my friend.

I can **highly recommend** this book to M/M book fans who want to read a raw and gritty (thanks Renee!) drama about two best friends and how they navigate through pain and sorrow in the tough, working-class neighborhood of South Jamaica, Queens, New York. Mr. Hassell's writing is beyond excellent and he created characters that were easy to care about and suffer with.

This review has been crossed posted to Jessewave

Julio Genao says

extraordinary.

and refreshingly urban.

a modern romance novel, for a modern reader.

PS: DAT COVER THO

Alienor ✕ French Frowner ✕ says

[review and rating removed]

* Meli Mel * says

♥ ♥ ♥ 4.25 STARS ♥ ♥ ♥



'Something was building between us, something that took my breath away from anticipation, but also created anxiety about how little I could handle the possibility of it all going wrong.'



A straight to the point review. Sorry, kind of short on time these days.

LOVED:

- ♥ The writing was really awesome!
- ♥ Mikey and Nunzio's chemistry was off the charts smoking hawt!! *My lady bits were very happy about this.*
- ♥ That threesome with David, though. *Hottest sex scene I have read in a LONG time.*
- ♥ Nunzio's dirty mouth. *I need a Nunzio in my life.*
- ♥ The overall friendship and banter between Mikey and Nunzio.
- ♥ Nunzio's eyes.
- ♥ That story line. It was so much more than just sex, there were issues on depression and addictions. It was quite the journey seeing all of this through Mikey's eyes. It was just so well written.
- ♥ I was really able to connect with both characters.
- ♥ How caring and protective Nunzio was of Mikey.
- ♥ I was captivated by the story because again, the writing was so great.
- ♥ How real this book felt.
- ♥ The funny moments. *I seriously laughed hard in some parts.*
- ♥ The secondary characters. David and Raymond.
- ♥ Nunzio's unconditional love.
- ♥ The angst that had me even more hooked.
- ♥ And before I forget, I just plainly loved Nunzio.



"Maybe you don't want me here--" He brushed his fingers over my heart. "But I know when we're having sex, when I'm in you deep, you don't want anyone else. It's just you and me, and it's fucking perfect, and you're mine. That could be enough for me."

"I don't think that's true."



Things that could have been better:

- Oh, Mikey how you frustrated me at times. My poor Nunzio.
- An epilogue maybe? I just wanted more of Mikey and Nunzio happy together.



'My thoughts had rerouted to an option I'd never even considered before: my best friend, my one and only, my fucking soul mate. Nunzio.'



Overall, I really loved this book. It was real, steamy, and just beautiful. I loved watching Mikey overcome his struggles even though it was very hard and painful at times. I even liked Mikey's brother Raymond. David, you annoying in a good way "kid", how I liked you. I think he needs his own book. I highly recommend this one.

J *deep in the heart of Texas* says

4.25 Stars!

For real. This book was constant emotional angst. I get the whole "not a lot of romance" bit now. There was some. Buried really really deep.

Nunzio and Michael just went through so much.

Their relationship was a bit dysfunctional yet I was sucked in and had to see what happened.

Lots of highs and lows. Two steps forward and about eight back. These two just could not catch a break.

I wish, wish, wish we had gotten Nunzio's POV. I felt so bad for him at times.

The sex. The sex was straight up HAWT!

David was..

...I didn't care for his character all that much. There were times I just wanted him to go away.

But add in Raymond...

I just hope their book isn't such a downer.

Off I go to find something fluffy to read....with lots of hearts and flowers and maybe some rainbows and unicorns too!

Lenore says

[review withdrawn]

Baba says

****Review removed due to personal reasons. Rating downgraded to one star****

March 7, 2018

Sara says

Review Removed

Ele says

Totally mourning the loss of Michael and Raymond Rodriguez today. Sad days.
Review and rating removed from every single thing SH ever wrote.

Santino Hassell says

SUTPHIN BOULEVARD is on sale for \$0.99 until the end of December!!

So, this is my first non-ICoS related novel, and my first contemporary romance novel, which is simultaneously exciting and scary. You can get it from Amazon, All Romance eBooks, and of course the Dreamspinner website.

If you don't know what to expect, I can tell you this book is a mixture of things that are important to me. Family, teaching, the intensity of friendship and how that can change over time, sex, and of course New York City. You can also expect a fair amount of grit since it's me. ;)

I wrote the first draft of this book for Nanowrimo 2013 and it shaped into something I'm really proud of with the help of Lenore, Kate, Marleen, DW, Adriana and Piper.

It comes out on July 31 and I hope you guys enjoy!. :)

~☆~Dαni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~☆~ says

Review and rating removed
