



Slings and Arrows

Josh Lanyon

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Carey Gardner receives an enormous box of chocolates from a secret admirer for Valentine's Day. Being a pretty straightforward kind of guy, Carey's not really comfortable with expensive presents from persons unknown, and he's less comfortable when his friends Ben and Heath tell him the story about a serial killer who once stalked the Hartsburg College campus.

Not that Carey really believes his secret admirer is up to anything very sinister—besides, he's already got enough problems falling for Walter Sterne, a brilliant but socially awkward grad student. Carey's friends are warning him against Walter, and even Walter isn't very encouraging.

Sometimes life really is like a box of chocolates.

Slings and Arrows Details

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From Reader Review Slings and Arrows for online ebook

Elisa Rolle says

It's common knowledge that I like college boys, they are always so cute, and the two in this novella are even cuter in their indecision, typically of an age that is not meat or fish, when you are on the edge of becoming the man you will be.

Carey is an average student, not particularly clever so that, he is doing good in College, but he needs to work a lot for it, he has good friends, he is on the swim team, he is not a nerd but he is not even a jock, he is cute but not drop dead gorgeous, and so he basically has to be committed on what he does. Then to this average guy happens something unexpected, two days before Valentine's Day he receives a box of expensive chocolate from a Secret Admirer. He has not idea who he or she is, but he would like for it to be Walter, the TA of one of his college courses: Walter is the odd one, aloof and seldom smiling, he is not even so handsome, but love is blind, and he is the one Carey is in love with. Maybe pushed by the search of this Secret Admirer, or maybe by the love is in the air feeling near Valentine's Day, Carey has the courage to approach Walter, and surprisingly Walter seems to reciprocate the interest. But Carey and Walter are so young and insecure, that when one offers a way out to the other, fearing the other wants it, but hoping he doesn't take the chance, the other thinks the same... it's like a pull and push, like pulling the stone and hiding the hand, sometime I wanted to knock them on the head to make them see the true, but in the end, they were so endearing and sweet.

I have already noticed it in the recent past, but here even more than before, I had the feeling that Josh Lanyon was really writing a true to good romance, even the little "mystery" of the Secret Admirer is really nothing in comparison to the love story between Walter and Carey. And despite their insecurity when dealing with feelings and the awkwardness when they have to admit them, sex instead is easy and nice, as it should be at their age.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/1935540122/?...>

Kelly H. (Maybedog) says

This was apparently Lanyon's first story with younger protagonists (college level) and it showed. It was a little awkward and simplistic. But there's not a lot you can do in a short story. I don't think it made good use of Chance. But it was well written and enjoyable. It just wasn't once of his best.

Fey says

At first I thought this series contained unconnected stories, turns out there is actually a strange connection.. The chocolate shop featured in the first book, is involved in this one also..

Carey is a college student (studying anthropology, and on the swim team), who gets a valentines gift of some very expensive chocolates. When he opens the chocolates in front of his friends they tell him the campus scare story about a serial killer that killed girls on campus after sending them anonymous valentines. This certainly doesn't help his nerves at all. Plus he's trying to deal with his crush on the anthropology teaching assistant; Walter.

Walter is a very socially awkward character, and comes across as very aloof and austere. So Carey has no idea if Walter even really likes him, let alone if he could act on his crush.

I thought this was a particularly creepy story. I found it hard to understand Carey's attraction to Walter, I get that the source of his cold attitude was just that he was socially awkward.. but I still couldn't find it in myself to soften towards him, he was just too creepy and mechanical.

Josh Lanyon talks in his little writers blurb about the college experience; *"I wanted to capture that sense of an insular but temporary world, and how it feels when you begin to make choices that separate you from your friends"*. I think on that point he did succeed, the setting and characterisation was very good on that aspect, but then I guess he did too well, because remembering my time at college (uni in uk).. just depressed the hell out of me! So I can't fault his writing, he's a great writer, but it just didn't agree with me.

See my other reviews of the *Petit Morts* series:

← #1 Hue, Tint and Shade | #3 Moolah and Moonshine →

Heather C says

This is a dark Valentine short. Josh can sure twist mystery and romance in such a short story. I wish a little more would have been explained in the end.

Kati says

2nd in the "Petit Morts" series of standalone stories and Josh Lanyon's first work about students! It was a really cute story and I liked both Carey and Walter, what a lovely couple! Though I did feel sorry for Ben, he needed some loving too. I would also like to see Chance from Sweets to the Sweet again, maybe in some other story - he was a very interesting character.

Jordan Price says

There's a subtle thread of unease going through this story that I like. The attraction between the love interests transcends stereotypes, because it could be seen as a typical jock/nerd relationship...except I never considered it that way because the protagonist and love interest were both such complex and realistic people, rather than romance tropes, that only much later did it occur to me that it was a jock/nerd setup.

Disclaimer: this is a book I published...this review is my reaction to it as a *reader*.

Joshy Sensei says

It felt too constricted for me and the characters weren't lovable.

AliciaJ says

I'm really enjoying these short stories by Josh. This one is set at a college campus in the Napa Valley.

Sandra says

[Are Carey and Ben still friends? Is Ben OK? I felt kinda bad for him. (hide spoiler)]

Irina says

Audible

A nicely done St Valentine's Day-themed story about a student and a teaching assistant.

It was my first YA/NA by Lanyon. I didn't expect *that* from him being used to his men in late twenties-thirties but it was entertaining nevertheless.

I liked doubting the main character, speculating whether he is a villain. It might have made me love him less but it had certainly kept me on my toes.

3.3 stars

A Girl Has No Name says

3.5 stars!

I really liked the first part of this *series* and while they can be read in any order, there is a slight connection between this second installment and the first story. Once again, I loved the **cover** and this time I didn't have problems to get into the story at all.

The story starts with **Carey** getting a huge and very tasty **box of chocolates from a secret admirer**. At first he feels a little irritated about the gift and the thought of having a secret admirer, but when Ben and Heath, two college friends tell him the **legend of the Valentine's Day murderer**, Carey can't stop feeling a little freaked out.

Could his secret admirer be **Walter Sterne**, a slightly awkward, but very interesting grad student Carey might actually be falling for?

I once again loved **Josh Lanyon's writing** and I immediately felt pulled right into the story. I enjoyed the way romance and mystery worked together and I can't wait to read more of these shorts from the *Petit Morts*

series.

Christina says

3.5 Stars

Emanuela ~plastic duck~ says

This story was unsettling and cute at the same time. I liked the college setting and the dark taste of the Valentine Day's killer and how it got weaved with Carey's secret admirer. I loved the main characters. Carey is a jock, but he's also an average young man, vanilla but not boring in his plain-ness. I think what makes him interesting is his being attracted to his professor's teaching assistant, Walter, a broody, not handsome man who Carey's friends call Skeletor. His going behind appearances to the heart of a proud but lonesome man is what makes him special. Even if the story is in Carey's point of view, the author is able to give us a round portrait of Walt, with his insecurities but also with his warm generosity. The candy shop scene with Chance deserves to be re-read after the end of the story.

Deanna says

The Walter Sterne made this story fantastic. Walt is described as Skeletor (love the He-man reference and quotes!!!). It isn't so much that he is socially awkward as that he doesn't participate. He can come off looking like a snob. But he isn't that either. He is a really lovely character.

Tara says

This book is many things and it was my first Josh Lanyon book. It was also the second book in the Petit Morts series.

The story takes place at a college. There is Carey, boy that is not only smart (he's an anthropology major), but he is athletic (he's on the swim team), and he's a nice guy as well. His roommate leaves much to be desired (not uncommon among college roommates), so he spends time with the guys next door, Heath and Ben. Ben is also an anthropology major, so when Carey receives a box of chocolates from a secret admirer, Ben starts tossing out potential people from their department. Around the same time, the attractive grad student that is the teaching assistant for the head of Anthropology Department seems to be taking an interest as well. Coincidence or something more sinister?

Again at the root of this story is a simple romance. I'm actually not sure how the paranormal element played out in this story, but I know it was there, because Chance and his mysterious candy shop was there. I think that even if someone was squeamish about m/m books, they could handle the 2 Josh Lanyon books in this series. I would equate it to a m/m version of chicklit. You know, the sex is there but the details are not as in-depth as in a standard romance.

