



A Good Vintage

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Luke Scherer has turned bad romance into an art. When he catches his latest deadbeat boyfriend selling Luke's belongings—and his own body—to cover his debts, Luke decides he needs a vacation. He just doesn't expect his Napa Valley retreat to be a step into his past.

Eight years ago Mal Kuijpers was grieving his wife while his vineyard floundered. Hiring Luke for the summer put the business back on track and a smile back on Mal's face.

Nineteen-year-old Luke had just gotten out from under his father's thumb and started saving for his education, his last screw-you to his old man. Then he made the mistake of falling for his boss, his dad caught up with him, and Luke panicked—and fled.

Now they have another chance. Mal has his own share of closet skeletons, including a family he doesn't talk to and a dead wife he sometimes does, and he's gone without romance for years. He works hard to convince Luke he's worth more than a casual fling and asks for nothing in return, but Luke needs a relationship of equals. If Mal can believe in himself and Luke can believe in love, two hot summers might yield a lifelong reward.

A Good Vintage Details

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From Reader Review A Good Vintage for online ebook

AnnaLund says

Goodreads TOS-compliant review: (I think, let me know when they tell us what the rules are).

"The book I just read is about two (or three) lovely people, written in beautiful language, by a very good and prolific author. I liked it very, very much.

It is for sale on Amazon."

For my honest and true view of the same book, please read ...MORE

DISCLAIMER: As of today my reviews will all have this pretty face, so that all and everyone on Goodreads can stay happy and beatific. I'll let you know if I change my mind.

2,5 stars, upped to 3 for Goodreads, as there still are no half-stars to be found here.

Morgan Skye says

Luke is sent to Mal's vineyard when his latest boyfriend is found selling Luke's stuff and his own body! Mal was in Luke's life years ago when Luke was young and running away from Luke's abusive father. Mal, at that time, was a recent widow and considered himself too old and too sad to get involved with Luke at that time.

Now – Luke is feeling too cautious and insecure to want to jump right into another relationship, but Mal is ready and isn't shy about letting that be known.

The other major roadblock: Luke lives in LA, Mal in Napa. Luke is just now starting to really see his life on track and doesn't see how moving to the country can help his fledgling architecture career. Not to mention that Mal was married to a woman for years. Luke doesn't want to be an experiment.

However high the hurdles, these guys do manage to work through them all and we get a very HEA.

**

This is the first book I've read by herself, but I've really enjoyed her collaborations.

I think that if I had been reading this book it would have been a bit easier to appreciate the "flashback" style she used (at the end of each chapter is a snippet from the past to give us the back story of Luke and Mal). As a listener it was a bit disconcerting to be wrenched from a scene and thrust into the past... but it didn't detract from my overall enjoyment of the book.

I really like Mal as a character. He was seasoned but still had an air of innocence to him that was refreshing. He didn't play games and that was nice. I did think that it was odd that the couple would "fool around" without having sex for as long as they did, but I loved the relationship building that occurred.

The secondary characters were rich accompaniment to the main characters and I thought they added nicely to the overall book.

Audio

John Solo did a GREAT job with this narration. Mal's voice is growly and divine! He didn't make Luke over the top but was definitely a different character than Mal. I thought he handled the women's voices well and overall I really enjoyed listening to this story.

Book 4 of 5 stars

Narration 5 of 5 stars

Overall 4.5 of 5 stars

GayListBookReviews says

I enjoyed this story very much. It is not a dramatic book full of angst and misunderstanding. Rather it is a story of life, family, love, and grief. About overcoming and letting go of the past. Of honesty and courtship. Learning to accept yourself for a beautiful person who deserves love and happiness.

The story is told from both Luke and Mal's points of view and has flashbacks that are called Interludes that are peppered throughout. I enjoyed having the full story from both men and the insight into their pasts. The interludes are clearly marked and I didn't have a problem tracking.

Luke is such a wounded man when he comes to the B&B. Luke has been worn down by his past and unhealthy relationships and has come to believe they are all he is capable of or deserves. Not realizing right away that his brother, Val has arranged for him to return to the vineyard that was the happiest and healthiest time in his young adult life it is a shock when he sees Mal again. All of the feelings and desires come rushing back and Luke is unsure of what to do. He doesn't feel that he deserves to be happy or that he can have a healthy relationship, but Luke has never been able to resist Mal. He doesn't see what a kind and generous person he is and all that he has to offer.

Mal is just amazing. He is all heart, strength and steadiness. He is a good man and it shows in every aspect of his life. He wasn't ready for Luke the first time they met, though the feelings and need were there, he was just coming out of grief over the death of his wife. When Luke shows up again Mal knows what he wants and he pursues Luke with a sweet and gentle romantic passion and dedication that Luke is unable and unwilling to resist.

These guys are great. They have lived, enduring loss, loneliness, and making mistakes. They have both pursued their dreams against all odds and opposition and made most of them come true. What they really need at this point in their lives is each other and the life that they can have if both of them will believe, trust and let go. Their journeys, both together and apart, are beautiful and felt real.

Their families play a huge part in the story. Neither man would be who and where they are without the support and love of their families and friends. Gabriela, Jo, Rudy and even brother Eli for Mal. Val and his wife, Julie and Luke's best friend Lance. These people help to fill this world and make it genuine and enviable. I adored Luke's relationship with Val, they are brothers in the fullest and richest sense. They went through hell together and survived stronger and wiser. Big brothers can be a great gift (and a pain in the butt).

This is a slow, sweet ride. It is worth the time and patience. I want the story of what happens next. Whatever

comes, these gorgeous men deserve all of the happiness and love in the world.

Possible Spoiler in a Trigger Warning: (view spoiler)

Reviewed by Nina

To see more of this review and others like it please visit us at Gay List Book Reviews at www.gaylistbookreviews.wordpress.com

Tina says

I have been a huge Ashlyn Kane fan since I read the first in her “Lost Boys and Love Letters” series. She is one of my auto-buy authors. She has never disappointed me and A Good Vintage is no exception to that. I love a second chance at love story and this was a great one.

When Luke was in college, he worked part of a summer at a vineyard in Napa, CA. He was trying to escape his jackass of a father and earn money to further his education. He was nineteen at the time. When he was hired, the owner of the vineyard, Mal, was eight years his senior. Mal was grieving the death of his wife, who had died of cancer.

The attraction between the two was fast and strong. Mal thought Luke was too young and Luke thought Mal was straight, so while they both had feelings for each other, they were slow to explore them. Too slow as it turned out. Luke’s father tracked him down and instead of subjecting Mal, his family and employees to his father, Luke ran, leaving only a brief note for Mal.

In the following eight years, Mal hasn’t dated at all. Luke, on the other hand, has had a long series of one offs in bars followed by a string of boyfriends who weren’t worthy of him. His most recent live-in boyfriend was a gambling addict who sold Luke’s belongings and then his own body in the bed that he and Luke shared to cover his debts. When Luke saw this, he fled to the only family he had left, His big brother Val.

Deciding that Luke could use a vacation, Val books it for him. He just doesn’t tell Luke that it is at the same vineyard where he spent that summer eight years ago. Luke and Mal are both shocked to see each other after so much time has passed. They each have things in their pasts they need to tell the other. They want to try to have a relationship, but is it possible with all the things they have yet to learn about one another?

Ashlyn Kane has again created characters who feel completely real. Luke and Mal struggle with the same questions, insecurities and family skeletons as many of us. They both have so much to overcome and personality flaws that need to be hurdled if they are to be successful as a couple. The supporting characters play more than minor roles in A Good Vintage. They are as important as Mal and Luke to the story. They move the story along and are valued parts of each man’s life. Without them, Mal and Luke would never be able to come together.

I really loved this book. I have heard some people say they were uncomfortable with the writing style Ms. Kane used. The story was told in present time alternated with flashbacks, which Ms. Kane called “Interludes”. I personally enjoy reading the past and present unfolding along side each other. Reading bits of the past helps to understand why the characters are behaving the way they are in the present. The time that Mal and Luke spent apart and their lives before they met the first time are important components of who they

are now. Without knowing their histories, we can't really know them.

I loved the writing style. I loved the characters. I loved the second-chance at love. I loved the setting, the beautiful Napa Valley, which in and of itself seems like a magical place. A Good Vintage is just a good book. If I had to find a flaw, it would be that it ended rather abruptly. But the way it ended left it wide open for a sequel or for your imagination to take Luke and Mal wherever you think they will go. I like to do both. I'll dream up their future and hope like hell for a sequel because these characters deserve more page time! You have to read this book!

Barb ~rede-2-read~ says

Note: This book was provided to me by the publisher through Hearts on Fire Reviews in exchange for an impartial review.

Audiobook narrated by John Solo

After catching his current lover selling himself for drug money in his own apartment, it's not only time to split up, it's time for Luke Scherer to regroup, so he takes up the offer of a vacation at a B&B Vineyard in Napa Valley when it's offered to him by his physician brother. Val's got the money to send Luke away, and he's got an ulterior motive that Luke doesn't learn about until he gets there and finds out that it's actually the same vineyard where he worked for a summer eight years ago.

At that time he was hired by Mal Kuijpers who was a grieving widower struggling to take care of the vineyard without her. Told in flashbacks, we learn that Luke had a major crush on Mal and the feelings looked like they might be reciprocal, but they never went too far and Luke was hesitant to get involved with a man who was still in mourning. When Luke's estranged father suddenly showed up demanding a portion of the money he inherited when his mother died, Luke gave him the money he had been saving for college since he'd already put the inheritance money into his brother's medical college fund. Shamed by his father's drunken behavior, Luke left the vineyard without explaining why to Mal.

Eight years later, when Luke shows up for his vacation, Mal is shocked but pleased to see Luke and vice versa. Their relationship picks up where it left off, and the two quickly become friends again and eventually, just before Luke has to go back to his internship in an architectural firm, they become lovers. The long distance relationship is difficult, but they pull it off and over the next months they explore their pasts and talk about their hopes for the future. Luke doesn't want to make a long term commitment, because of his past bad luck in relationships and because of the disaster his parents' marriage was, but Mal is one of those mature, steadfast, goal-driven individuals who sees a bright future for the two of them and is willing to work for it and wait for Luke to get there too.

Both men have secrets from the past that they eventually share, including Luke's disasters with his father, and Mal's estrangement from his own family. Concurrent with the story, Val and his wife are expecting a baby, and when the infant is born, Luke has an epiphany about a future with Mal that includes the children and long term commitment that Mal has been hoping they'd have.

I liked this story, however, it was difficult to distinguish the flashback interludes which were interjected between many of the chapters while listening to the audiobook. If I didn't focus and happened to miss the word "interlude", I floundered while trying to determine if I was listening to the past or the present in the story. The narrator did a good job with the voices of the MCs, making it easy to distinguish between the two. The story itself wasn't terribly complex, and certainly not dramatic, but it's a nice romance for those who are

looking for a sweet M/M age-gap romance with a slow build to long term commitment.

Nichole (DirrtyH) says

this started out super good, like refreshing, THIS is how you write a book good. and then about halfway through, it was like" well, I told the whole story and I have some-odd thousand words left, what other random nonsense can I throw in?"

Good first half, very disappointing second.

Anke says

Another one of my 3 star reads. Not much to say about it - it waited patiently on my TBR; every now and then it popped up on lists like 'people also liked...' but then I forgot about it again. Finally I got around to reading it, only to now having to say - it didn't really grab me. It started really strong, but somehow my interest fizzled out. I finished, but the end was written as if the book didn't want to end :) lots of stuff happening on just a few pages.

Oh - and I really wasn't a fan of all the 'Interludes'. I think it would have been better to recap the past with a few chapters in the beginning. Several flashbacks were rather unnecessary.

Christy says

Hot men, wine, good food, love, and some angst. What more could I possibly ask for? 'A Good Vintage' by Ashlyn Kane is the third book of this author's works that I've read and due to how much I enjoyed the other two, I fully anticipated getting the most that I could from this story.

Luke is the saddest, most miserable person I've ever met at the beginning of this book. He's twenty-seven, has a good job, but he is horrible at relationships, with men and women, and judging character. His most recent boyfriend, Luke caught him selling Luke's belongings and himself to pay off his gambling debts. Just one more loser in a long line of poor choices. Luke's heart has been broken more times than he can count. He's still trying, unsuccessfully, to deal with his anger at his dad and the way his childhood turned out. His very well meaning, loving, but worry wart brother and his wife, Val and Julie, send him on vacation to a vineyard in Napa Valley. Luke spent a summer working at a vineyard when he was nineteen and it was the best and worst time of his life. Turns out this is the same vineyard, a little bigger, with a new name, but still owned by Mal, his boss he fell for the summer he was nineteen.

"Why didn't I know you'd be this persistent?"

Because Mal suspected, Luke didn't think he was worth the effort. But what he said was "I just know what I want."

Luke flushed a little. "I guess you came to hear the rest of the story."

"I came because I wanted to spend time with you."

Oh. My. Goodness. Mal and Luke were so amazing together, and not just sexually, although they could've set fire to the vineyard with their lust, but in all the ways that make a strong and lasting relationship. Scary for Luke because he doesn't know how those kinds of relationships work. A little scary for Mal, too, because he hasn't been with anyone in nine years since his wife died, and maybe he won't be good at the day-to-day. It doesn't help that Luke's time at the guesthouse is very limited and then he'll return to Los Angeles and his life, what there is of it. Two men, both new to relationships, who stink at communicating, begin a long distance relationship. Yeah, I know. Where's the punch line, huh?

I adored how the author fashioned the story with intertwining short vignettes from the past. Normally I'm not a big fan of back and forth, past and present, in a book, but these were done supremely well and were short enough that they didn't distract me from the entire tale, while simultaneously giving me the insight I needed at the time. This was definitely one of the better love stories I've read. It was gentle and sweet, with some drama, but overall it just rang true for me. I thoroughly enjoyed both Luke and Malachi and was happy to see them each get what they needed. Thank you, Ashlyn, for another winner!

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

Lauraadriana says

I've been waiting for a new book from Ashlyn Kane from pretty the moment I finished *American Love Songs* a couple of years ago. I loved the book and her writing style, so when I saw the blurb for this I jumped on the getting an ARC. Wine, food, and a "second chance at love" story?! It's like she wrote the damn thing for me! Luke and Mal were amazing, such a great love story. Luke and Mal's have a history. A summer eight years earlier they worked together at Mal's vineyard. Mal had lost his wife to cancer a year before, and Luke was trying to outrun a bad family situation. Luke was 19, Mal was 28. Things could not work THEN...But now eight years have passed, and they are right back where they started. Things could be different now.

This story has an interesting format where we get quick flashbacks in between each present time chapter...I am usually not a big fan of the flashbacks, but in this story they served as quick snapshots of information. They broadened my sense of the situation, and allowed me to get some sense of where either Mal and/or Luke were coming from. It was a VERY useful device, and because the author kept them short they didn't get tedious.

Luke has been unlucky in love for awhile, he seems to be going from bad to worse when it comes to partners. Men or women, they just all end up disappointing him...The last breakup left him wrung out, and feeling like this time he really needed to think about the choices he was making. His brother took him in for a little bit, and then rented him a cottage at a B&B winery in Napa Valley for a few weeks, so that he could think about things for a bit. Napa Valley, brought back memories. That summer working with Mal and the things he experienced, they way he left, the thought that it had been the last time he had felt truly happy. Mal had been a revelation, a scary one, but absolute. He fell in love with the man, and when his father came knocking, once again disturbing his life and his plans, so he left. That's were things ended back then.

Luke gone to pursue his professional goals. Mal with no real explanation of what happened, went on with his life, and for him that meant a life that put his vineyard at the top of the list, and romance at the bottom...That is until Luke walked into the picnic dinner of the B&B his brother had booked for him, and realized he had stepped right into a place of his past. Mal's place, his brother's intentions were not so innocent after all...So there they were, eight years older, a little wiser, and a bit more weathered, but with that feeling of rightness at the center of everything. Luke had his insecurities. Mal had his. They had baggage, and a lot to work out,

there were secrets and a past that could ruin whatever future they might hope for with each other.

I liked these guys a lot, and their difficulties made their story all the more genuine. I liked that it was rough for them, that just because they had something strong, it didn't mean they could get away with not thinking. That they could bypass how they could go wrong or what were the things they could do better. These guys earned their happy ending and they did it with a lot of courage. They just kept moving forward even if they were scared to death the whole time. The chemistry was NUCLEAR, I love them together, in bed, immersed in their passion, even with that they took their time. The secondary characters brought all kinds of flavors to the story, some levity, some angst, some clarity, some humor and even a little added drama, they well worked as a supporting cast.

Highly enjoyed this one and absolutely recommend it. I look forward to more from Ashlyn Kane in the near future.

For a complete post and to see the delish vegan pizza I made for these boys, go to [The Tippy Bibliophile](#)

Lada says

A reunion, mature romance. I liked it because Luke wasn't that stupid regarding his last relationship and that his next one was a lovely slow burn romance. I liked that there's an understandable background story for Luke and his behaviors, and I also liked his close relationship with his older brother.

There were a number of side characters; they're not cardboard characters, and they all helped enriching the story instead of being annoying pests. The thing that disturbed the flow of the story was the interlude/flashback. Yes, they're informative, but they also jarred me out of the present storyline.

All in all, I'm glad I finally picked up this old book, because it's definitely better than my previous book with similar theme.

Megan says

To take a line from the book this one hit me 'right in the feels'.

I don't know why it took me so long to read this book! I'm so mad at myself for letting it somehow get pushed to the back of my TBR list! I am so happy that I finally decided to see which of my TBR-Owned books have been there the longest and actually read them!

I really enjoyed this book! The two MCs were great and I really felt for them from the beginning!

Not everyone enjoys flashbacks in books but I felt the way the author handled the ones in this book was fantastic. They only added to the story and really helped me, as the reader, fully understand each MC better.

I will definitely be checking to see if the author has any other books.

Brandilyn says

I was in a reading funk last week, so I put a call out to my Facebook page asking for some recommendations. One suggestion was A Good Vintage by Ashlyn Kane. I adored her American Love Songs, and I enjoyed her recently released co-written project Hard Feelings, so I thought I would give it a try. As with American Love Songs, the format is a bit unique. It is the tale of two stories intermixed together. Don't get too concerned, it is easy enough to follow both storylines.

Luke and Mal almost started something eight years ago, but timing and an asshole father were against them. When Luke field Mal's home and Vineyard one night, neither thought their paths would cross again. Fast forward to the present, and with the help of meddling families, their paths do just that.

See my full review on Prism Book Alliance
<http://www.prismbookalliance.com/2014...>

Mysterious says

Less of a romance and more of a sprawling family drama.

Susan says

So I think there was a lot to like about this book. And I think maybe I enjoyed it...? (so NOT a good sign when you're not quite sure, huh?)

I'll admit there are times that I can be a lazy reader. And maybe that's what I'm being now. But this book made me try too hard. You see, Ashlyn Kane uses this style in A Good Vintage where she sprinkles "interludes" or flashbacks in between present day story points...in EVERY chapter, I guess to explain the why's and how's of what's going on. It's clever, I suppose. But, it just made me frustrated and confused at times and then disinterested and then impatient. And by the end...pooped.

The thing is, I quite liked the story of Mal and Luke. I loved the build of the relationship over time and the reacquainting after years passed. I enjoyed their hesitation, and their courting, and their growth. And their kisses...such tender and passionate kisses! It was a romantic story! There were also whispers of some interesting side stories along the way (but I'm not sure if those actually added to or distracted from the story itself)

I did, however, sometimes feel disconnected from the MC's because I felt a bit, even after all their time together past and present, that I still didn't know them. And sometimes I felt their behavior in situations were unlike what I thought about them...thus adding to the "do I know them?" feeling I was getting. I'm not sure what it was but I felt by the end that something was missing...like all the makings of a great book were there but it didn't come together.

I'm so on the fence about this book. It was an ok-enough read. I didn't hate it. But something about it left me

feeling unfulfilled, despite how long it was and the read itself was a bit laborious.

Still a fan of Ashlyn Kane's writing (American Love Songs), but this one didn't quite come together.

Tamara (?) says

No, this was the part where Mal broke Luke down into tiny component pieces and put him back together different. When this was over, Luke didn't know who he'd be. Just that he'd be Mal's, maybe forever. And even though the thought terrified him, he couldn't stop it. Didn't want to.

3.5 stars

I absolutely loved American Love Songs by this author, but then I read True North and I didn't like it and was kind of disappointed. Then came A Good Vintage and I didn't know what to expect and I was kind of dreading more disappointment. But I needn't have worried because this book hit the spot!

When Luke was 19, he left home and started working in a vineyard in Napa in order to earn enough money for his first year's college tuition. There he met Mal (then 28 years old), whose wife has recently died from cancer. There was chemistry between them and over several weeks they grew closer, but nothing ever happened because Luke picked up and left before it could.

Fast-forward eight years. Luke is a man who relationship-wise made one bad decision after another. He claims he's a poor judge of character, but I got the impression it was more like self-sabotage. His father was abusive, especially toward Luke, seemingly for no reason, and no matter how much Luke resented and even hated his father, he couldn't help feeling as if every beating and abusive word were somehow deserved, so naturally he doesn't deserve a boyfriend who's not a deadbeat like his father in one way or another.

When he catches his live-in boyfriend whoring out in their bed for money he needs to cover his gambling debts, Luke packs his bags and goes to his older brother, Val. Val sends him to a vineyard/b&b to relax, but 'forgets' to mention it's the same vineyard Luke worked at the summer he was 19, with its name changed. There, Luke meets Mal again. The chemistry is still there and the book follows them learning to be in a relationship - Luke in the first relationship with a man he actually trusts, Mal in the first relationship since his wife died. They are learning to trust each other and to communicate, and along the way you fall in love with them too.

What bothered me about this book is the number of unresolved events - (view spoiler) These are mostly minor events (or treated as such), but it's the stuff I wanted to know, because I loved the side-characters too. Also, the book ends with a HFN ending and I would really love to know whether the HFN turns into a HEA at some point.
