



The Picture of Cool

Laurie Boris

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Television producer Charlie Trager spends his days working with beautiful women on a daytime talk show. But underneath his cool façade, there's a hollow spot in his heart, waiting for the right man to ease his loneliness. Then he meets the show's next guest, a handsome young politician with a bad case of nerves—and a secret that could turn both their lives upside down.

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The Picture of Cool Details

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From Reader Review The Picture of Cool for online ebook

Al says

The Picture of Cool reads much like a contemporary romance novel. It has the same story arc as a typical romance with two minor differences. The first is that the ending is nontraditional although not so far off as to be unsatisfying to romance fans. The second is that rather than a hero and heroine it has two heroes.

The second contributes to some of the complications not found in a typical romance. However, this is a fun story that should appeal to open-minded romance readers in many of the same ways as a girl meets boy romance would.

**Originally written for "Books and Pals" book blog. May have received a free review copy. **

Melissa Bowersock says

I don't read a lot of short stories; I much prefer full books where I can really get into characters, their motivations, their relationships. This story, however, delivers all the punch of a full-sized novel in a very compact yet complete story. The characters of Charlie and Adam come to life immediately, not through description but through their actions, their thoughts, their hopes and fears. If there was ever a primer on "show, don't tell," this is it. Laurie Boris nails that. I love the fact that this story unfolds gently, tenuously, tenderly as two men cautiously explore their attraction to each other, keeping in mind all the time that a relationship could have consequences for more than just themselves. This is just such a thoughtful, respectful treatment of a much-maligned subject. Yes, the characters are gay. Don't like it? Don't read it. But you'll miss out on a lovely affirming story.

Brooklyn says

I did not like Adam. I understand that he was figuring out his feelings, but I really have trouble with cheating. I felt no true connection between Charlie and Adam. This story really didn't do anything for me.

Sheri says

I'm really torn on this one...like arguing with myself....
(yes, yes sometimes I actually argue with myself, don't judge!).

It has one of my "*ummm, no thanks*" that I always avoid in my books and **yet**,
I found this time was almost an exception.

Like, I *got* it and felt terrible for him and the person he was hurting. It was not forgivable, but at least more understandable than I've ever felt about this particular taboo.

I hurt for both MC's and typically this behavior instills an urge to twist a particular body part into animal balloons, and this time I wanted to hug them.

I think I want to hate it, but I don't or more precisely, I can't.

shakes head

You see why I am having the issues I am having in rating this one?

But then I think about the potential for a sequel and I want to find a way to add it to my need-to-read shelf, even though it doesn't have a name yet...

I want it...I need it...and I'll be back for more.

ps...d, you **cannot** read this one. trust me.

Julie Frayn says

This short story (or short novella) is oh-so perfect. It does end abruptly but that is because there is more to come - and I can't wait to read it. Everything feels so real, no cliches, no over-the-top portrayals. Just real people in real situations, falling in real love, and told by a master story teller with pure honesty. I loved it.

Rick says

This was a well-written glimpse into the lives and potential loves of a couple of New Yorkers. I enjoyed this short story very much, but my only drawback was the ending, which kind of left me hanging and seemed too abrupt. While I know it's a short, intended to tantalize you into reading more of the author's work, I wish this had stood more on its own as a complete whole.

Lori says

An interesting short that feels like it should be a longer story. The indie author left a note at the end to say the mc's story would be carried on in the next book so I'm hoping this freebie was just a taster of a meatier story still to come. A short and enjoyable read.

Nicole Storey says

I first met Charlie Trager in Laurie Boris' book, *Don't Tell Anyone*, and he was one of my favorites. Charlie is the type of man that makes women wish he wasn't gay, shoots hoops with the guys, and then throws back a cold one with his feet up. I think that is what I love most about this character, the fact that Boris created him realistically. I can't count how many times I've read a book with a gay character and the author put waaaayyy too much sugar in their gas tank. Know what I mean? Most of the gay men I know don't run around in capri pants or tote "men purses."

I also loved this book because it gave me a deeper look into Charlie's life – what he does on a day-to-day

basis, who his friends are, what he wants in life. I wondered about that after reading Don't Tell Anyone and was so glad that the author decided on a spin-off series for him. He's interesting without meaning to be and that makes him even more special to readers. I can't wait for the next book! Keep strong, Charlie! Your fans have your back!

L.B. Clark says

I'm a big fan of Laurie's writing for a lot of reasons--she creates compelling, complex characters, she evokes all sorts of emotion, and she interjects humor in just the right places in just the right ways. All of this is true for this short as well. I loved getting a glimpse into the beginning of Charlie's relationship with Joshua, and I loved that Laurie handled the difficult (and very real) situation they found themselves in was handled with so much grace and empathy. A beautiful, beautifully written little story. I can hardly wait to read more about these two.

Susan Lulgjuraj says

When reading a book about people and seminal moments, the characters have to be believable. They need to feel real and not as though they are forced into a moment for the sake of a story.

Boris did everything right in The Picture of Cool.

The characters are real and in situations easily imagined. The pain Charlie feels as he pines for Adam is something that any person can relate to. Their relationship is gradual and sweet.

It doesn't matter that the main characters are gay, anyone should be able to enjoy this book.

Boris leaves a note at the end stating she intends to make these characters part of a longer book, and one I fully intend to read. I actually wanted to learn more about the characters, including some of the supporting cast. The Picture of Cool is an easy, smooth read where the reader is pulled into the lovely story.

Ed Drury says

I've read several books by this author and have always become completely invested in her main characters. This short story gives us a chance to get close to one of her ancillary characters from another book. Actually, a couple of them if you're really observant; but I leave that for her other fans to discover. Regardless, this delightful story takes the reader into the city, into a different culture, and by that I don't mean Jewish. Though there is that too. What with the 'gaydar' and Yiddish hipness, the story is wonderfully human. Proof enough that none of us live on different planets when it comes to romance and love. It's all one world and we are just trying to live in it. That is the delightful message that I got from the story. It is a wonderful message to take from life. It appears that we will be getting more stories featuring Charlie and the other characters that occupy his world. This is great news for us fans.

Lynxie says

The rather quick introduction to Charlie and Adam (Joshua), otherwise known as the Trager Family Secrets Series. Laurie makes the budding romance between the two men both delicious and sweet, and sexy as hell.

Absolutely nothing explicit or in-your-face in terms of sex, this is a very soft opening to the romance, which will build into an amazing series.

I read book 3 first, so the events in this part are not new, but I got more information about the supporting characters, particularly Xander and Freddie. Both of which I adored already from their parts in book 3, and it helped to see them in this opening short story. It made the whole thing more realistic.

ETA: This book has a few themes that might bother some readers: cheating and children are part of the existing family.

If you want to try a glorious, sweet and sexy m/m romance try Laurie's Trager Family Secrets series, you won't be disappointed.

Stan Brown says

I feel cheated!

The story was engaging, and the two main characters were appealing. They seemed to be taking an unreasonably long time to get together, but OK, I was willing to go along with that, as they had one not-really-a-date after another. But then the story just ends, with nothing resolved -- no cliffhanger either. It just stops, with a dull thud.

A short story I could accept, or a novella; my issue isn't with the length as such. But a story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. This one is missing the final one third.

On top of that, outside of the two main characters, the others seemed shadowy and insubstantial. Between reading the first half during one morning's commute and reading the second half that evening, I forgot everything about them: that's how un-memorable they were.

I don't recommend this to anyone unless you enjoy bookus interruptus.

Dale says

I like where Laurie Boris is going with the character of Charlie, and the story. It's a contemporary theme that could do with some airing, and Laurie as usual treats sensitive scenarios and issues with a humorous, engaging but delicate magic touch.

Rich Meyer says

Laurie Boris really makes me depressed, y'know? She's just too good a writer. Makes the rest of us look like pikers, dagnabit. We have to stop her soon...

I was lucky enough to be a beta reader for this story, and I have to say that it's hard not to like it. Laurie's characters are real. Her prose is vivid and enthralling. The last time I read one of her books, I hated the characters; I mean, I wanted them all to be run over by steamrollers. The only character I liked was the pet bird. But I kept reading that book until the end, because the story just drew me in. That's the same thing that happens with *The Picture of Cool*.

If you're reading this, please get off your high horses first before buying and reading this book, as you are going to encounter a situation in it that some of you of a more moronic, sorry, I mean conservative, nature might find "offensive" or "evil" or some other moronic thing. Far too many idiots have that hang-up and if you do, this is NOT the book for you. Don't read it, don't leave a preemptive review, just go find a corner and live your sheltered life in deserved ignominy.

If you like a good story, a bit of romance, and realistic portrayals of human beings in love, then this is the book you **SHOULD** be reading.
