



# Private Display of Affection

*Winter Sandberg*

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**Private Display of Affection** Winter Sandberg

A Harmony Ink Press Young Adult Title

Hugo Thorson knows he's gay, but coming out during high school is not part of his plan. His parents are open-minded, but Hugo doesn't want to add more stress for anybody, especially his dad, who is fighting terminal cancer.

At a summer job he meets and befriends Kevin Magnus, and before long, their friendship becomes something more. Kevin knows this will anger his overbearing father, so he decides to protect his secret by dating a girl at school.

Hugo plays along, but it's still hard to watch the two of them together just to make Kevin's homophobic father happy. And when Hugo's father dies, he realizes he can't go on living the lie. He comes clean to Kevin, who decides Hugo's true feelings are more important than his father's expectations.

One fact remains: Kevin and Hugo's relationship must always be hidden behind friendship, lies, girlfriends, or secret kisses. Will they find a sanctuary big enough to hold their feelings?

Adapted as a Young Adult edition of the novel Spark by Posy Roberts, published by Dreamspinner Press, 2013

## Private Display of Affection Details

Date : Published December 12th 2013 by Harmony Ink Press (first published December 11th 2013)

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Author : Winter Sandberg

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# From Reader Review Private Display of Affection for online ebook

## AnnaLund says

4,5 stars, rounded up

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

**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."

DISCLAIMER: My reviews now 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. See the real review above for my thoughts on this book.

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## Sandra says

ARC Review - Private Display of Affection The flashbacks from the novel Spark by Posy Roberts are explored here in a young adult novel, covering the friendship and developing relationship between Hugo and Kevin. I would have liked the author to delve a little deeper into the emotions of the young men, which on occasion sounded flat, but this is a great companion novel, or could be read before reading Spark.

Full review soon.

Also, Peder Magnus is an ass.

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## Lainey Phantomhive says

I did not know this was a companion piece to something else, but that means I have even more to read now!

I loved this sweet story. Even without having known the characters from other works I connected and loved them both instantly. Hugo was my favorite. I wanted to protect him so bad!

The romance is sweet and the story is heartwrenching. The sanctuary idea was a beautiful piece to a beautiful story. I hope places like that really exist!

Now I am off to read the rest of the books!

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## Beacullen says

I almost didn't read this book because I had read the rest of the series and thought I knew their story. Wow what a surprise this book was. So much was explained, where the star came from in their relationship, how close they truly were in High School. I read the part about Hugo's mom giving them the sex talk while at work, OMG I laughed so hard. Its great!!! Kevin was so mortified lol. I love how Hugo's mom and sister make them feel so safe there, its they safe haven, and Kevin truly needs it. I think it made me hate his dad even more, what an ass. REally great story, so sweet, made me even more happy knowing how they end up.

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## Brandilyn says

Oh Kevin, what are we going to do with you? Your father is a douche of the highest caliber, yet you can't help but yield to his demands. You profess to have feelings for Hugo, but you can't let anyone know. It is 1994, and you are about to be a Junior in high school. What are you to do?

Winter, my dear, you broke my heart into a thousand pieces. Oh yes, you mended it, but you took your sweet time doing so. Poor Hugo, all he wants is to be around Kevin. He is willing to sacrifice his own desires to keep his best friend in his life. Kevin just needs a wake up call. Unfortunately, it takes a lot for him to finally get that wake up call, and I am not entirely sure he ever truly gets it.

The fact that I am still talking to the characters (and the author) a full 15 hours AFTER I finished the novel, should tell you something. I loved this story. Hugo has so much love and support. He is so strong, even though he is going through some stuff no 13-16 year old should ever have to face. He knows himself. He knows what he can handle. Kevin, on the other hand, from the outside, has a picture perfect life but is a mess on the inside.

Find the Full review at Prism Book Alliance <http://www.prismbookalliance.com/?pos...>

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## GayListBookReviews says

I want to give Private Display of Affection all the stars, all the love to this perfectly crafted book. It is so much more than a romance.

Winter Sandberg you are amazing! I couldn't help but fall in love with Kevin and Hugo, especially Hugo. I marked a new reading record with this one, couldn't put it down.

I felt the butterflies, all of them. I felt Kevin's pain as if it were my own. He tried so hard to please his father; he sacrificed so much of himself for a father that in the end was not worthy of Kevin's love and sadly didn't know his son at all.

And again, the family unit in Hugo's case is strong, a mother that is open to her children, a mom that does not run scared from discussing safe sex. A father that even facing the worst point in his life, takes the time to love and accept his son fully. Leaving nothing but love and warmth after his departure.

I love the “Gay Sanctuary” concept; find a place for these boys to be true to themselves. A place where they felt completely accepted, and loved. And where they could enjoy their love, and explore their new relationship.

The secrets and lies will eventually hurt their feelings, hearts will get broken. But their love is strong and deep, they know it and we as readers know it too.

I got to the end and wanted MORE! Like, so much more. Not because the story was missing something, but because I didn't want to let them go.

Thankfully, there are several books, with more adult content that follows the story of Kevin and Hugo and what the futures bring them.

The writing is beautiful, the romance is sweet and innocent, the character development goes hand in hand with their transition and their life changes. These are characters that will stay with me for a long time.

Reviewed by Connie

To see more of this review and others like it please visit us at Gay List Book Reviews at [www.gaylistbookreviews.wordpress.com](http://www.gaylistbookreviews.wordpress.com)

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## **Tina says**

Hugo and Kevin are back! Or we are back. Or something like that! Private Display of Affection is Winter Sandberg's YA adaptation of Posy Roberts's novel Spark. Spark is book one in the North Star Series, so named because of a compass keychain one character gives to the other early in their relationship. I loved Spark, Fusion and Flare, the three novels which made up the original, adult series.

Private Display of Affection takes us inside the early years (actually just the first year) of Hugo and Kevin's relationship. We have read about them as adults with flashes of their early time together. Now we get to bear witness to the time when they met and first got to know one another. Little bits of it felt like a re-read. This was due to the memories Ms. Roberts included in Spark. But most of Private Display of Affection felt new, as it was completely fleshed out and told to us as it was happening, not just in brief glimpses of something that happened years in the past.

This was a most enjoyable read. I fell so in love with Hugo and Kevin, the men, in the original series. It was a privilege to meet them as the boys who were growing into the men I knew they would become. I found that I love them just as much as boys as I do as men.

Hugo knows he is gay. The only person he has told is his older sister. He knows he can never come out in the small city where he lives because it is an incredibly intolerant place. Kevin and his parents move into town the summer before Kevin and Hugo are to start their Junior year of high school. They meet at the Hormel plant where Spam is made. They both work there for the summer. Hugo asks Kevin to have lunch with him. Kevin has never had sexual thoughts about boys before. He also is terrified of what his father, the ever appearance minded tyrant, would do if he found out that Kevin and Hugo were more than friends. His father doesn't even approve of Hugo as a friend because Hugo has no social value and is unable to provide Kevin

with the social standing his father covets.

So a plan is conceived. Kevin has a “girlfriend” but still sees Hugo. It breaks Hugo’s sensitive heart to watch Kevin making out with a girl in the halls at school. He can’t take it anymore and distances himself from Kevin. Then, when Hugo’s father dies, Kevin is forced to face his feelings for Hugo and makes changes in his life that enable him to be with Hugo more often. But they agree that they can never be open about their relationship outside of Hugo’s house. Hugo’s older sister and mom are awesome. They are loving and supportive and educational to the point of complete embarrassment. I firmly believe every gay teenager would benefit from having a mom like Ruby. Hell, every teenager, regardless of sexual orientation needs a mom like Ruby.

Private Display of Affection is the first in a YA series of adaptations. There are to be three or four total, which will take us to the point in time where Spark begins. Even knowing the rough road ahead for Kevin and Hugo and knowing I will cry my fool head off, I look forward to reading every one of the books Ms. Sandberg writes about these characters. Onward to Senior year to see what trials and parental restraints are put in the way of true love! Very publicly recommended.

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### **Brown Eyed Girl ~Suzanne~ says**

I really wanted to like this book. I liked Hugo and his family and I liked Kevin just fine. Kevin’s father is way over the top and it’s sad to think that there are people like this out there. I had a hard time relating to Kevin’s family relationship because I’ve never seen or experienced a family dynamic that OTT. The way it was written didn’t make me feel anything but frustration. I wanted to sympathize more with Kevin but I just couldn’t connect.

I think there’s more telling than showing in the book and it dragged for me.

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### **Lisa The Novel Approach says**

Private Display of Affection takes us inside the early years (actually, just the first year) of Hugo and Kevin’s relationship. We have read about them as adults, with flashes of their early time together. Now we get to bear witness to the time when they met and first got to know one another. Little bits of it felt like a re-read. This was due to the memories Ms. Roberts included in Spark. But most of Private Display of Affection felt new, as it was completely fleshed out and told to us as it was happening, not just in brief glimpses of something that happened years in the past.

See the entire review at The Novel Approach: <http://thenovelapproachreviews.com/20...>

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## **Liza says**

Private Display of Affection is a prequel to the Spark series by Posy Roberts. It is an expanded version of the flashbacks of Kevin and Hugo in high school, how they met and how they fell in love. I was already a huge fan of the Spark trilogy, but this made it even more special. I loved watching Kevin and Hugo falling in love, seeing their first kiss and their struggles. It expanded more on Kevin's issues with his father and Hugo's loss of his father. Winter Sandberg did an exquisite job of giving us their story, adding to what we already knew from the original trilogy. I recommend reading this if you've read Posy Roberts' series or as a starting point for the books!

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## **Connie says**

I want to give Private Display of Affection all the stars, all the love to this perfectly crafted book. It is so much more than a romance.

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I felt the butterflies, all of them. I felt Kevin's pain as if it were my own. He tried so hard to please his father; he sacrificed so much of himself for a father that in the end was not worthy of Kevin's love and sadly didn't know his son at all.

And again, the family unit in Hugo's case is strong, a mother that is open to her children, a mom that does not run scared from discussing safe sex. A father that even facing the worst point in his life, takes the time to love and accept his son fully. Leaving nothing but love and warmth after his departure.

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The writing is beautiful, the romance is sweet and innocent, the character development goes hand in hand with their transition and their life changes. These are characters that will stay with me for a long time.

Reviewed for Gay List Book Reviews

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## **Melissa says**

So much to say about this book and I'm not sure my mind will let me get the right words out.

This is a young adult adaptation of the book *Spark* by Posy Roberts. I hadn't read *Spark* before I started this book and I think I'm glad because I got to fall in love with these boys NOT knowing what the future held for them. I didn't know about their adult counterparts or what they went through, I just got to watch two boys fall in love despite the struggles they had to go through to be together.

Hugo isn't ashamed of being gay at all, he just knows that in order to make it through his high school years in a bigoted small town means he needs to keep certain parts of himself hidden from the public. He's also dealing with his father dying on top of everything going on with Kevin.

Kevin's father is the type of villain that everyone loves to hate. He's controlling and manipulative and only cares about money and success. He pushes his views off on his son and uses his power and manipulations to make Kevin do as he wants. Kevin has to hide behind a fake girlfriend and more often than not, caves to the pressure that his father puts on him.

Despite all of the struggles, it was beautiful to watch these boys discover who they are and how perfect they are for each other. They deal with feels of jealousy and inadequacy, but they are there for each other. They learn together what it means to love someone unconditionally and in each other's presence is the only place that either boy feels like they can be just themselves and not be judged or ridiculed and the other boy will love them just the same.

Kevin isn't used to the feeling of unconditional love that he gets from Hugo's mom and sister. Their house is a 'gay sanctuary' and it's where both boys learn about the ins and outs of how to have a healthy sexual relationship too. I loved that this author spent time on the subject and using Hugo's mom, Ruby, to do the educating was brilliant. I love her! This is something a lot of teen boys don't know because their parents are too scared to talk about it or the boys are too afraid to come out and ask and we all know that's not something that's discussed in sex ed in high school.

All in all, this is a beautifully written love story about discovering yourself with the help of your soul mate and finding the person who becomes your sanctuary forever, no matter what happens in the end.

Beware, there is a lot of angst in this book and I cried so many times I stopped counting. By the end my eyes were red and puffy and my shirt was spotted with tears and snot and that's the mark of a great story and story teller! 5 huge stars!!

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## **Dana says**

Reviewed for Rainbow Gold Reviews. A copy was provided in exchange for an honest review.

I love romance novels, particularly m/m romance novels. I love the beginning stages of a relationship and the intimate moments between the characters. Lately I have found a greater appreciation for coming of age novels with young adult characters discovering who they are as people and who they might be attracted to. *Private Displays of Affection* is one of those stories.



Hugo is a high school student in the summer before his junior year when he meets Kevin. Both boys are more mature than most other boys their age, but for completely different reasons. Hugo's dad has terminal cancer and though his parents have been trying to fight it with doctor visits and procedures, Hugo has to face the knowledge that his time with his dad is limited. He keeps his sexuality secret during this time so not to rock the boat. But Hugo knows he is gay and he doesn't question it and isn't ashamed of his desires. He is remarkably well adjusted and mature for all that he is facing.

Kevin's father is demanding and pushes him to be the best he can be. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but he also wants Kevin to follow the career path he has laid out for him and that he has taken himself. He doesn't care that Kevin makes good friends instead wants him to make good connections. Kevin's mom says that is how he shows his love, but I can't buy that. Love someone means it's unconditional and the other's happiness is more important. If he could balance that out instead of controlling Kevin's every move, perhaps Kevin wouldn't need to hide his entire life from his father. New to the town and school, when Kevin meets Hugo, he finds someone who cares about what he thinks and wants for a change. His previous thoughts that he was straight come into question as he gets to know Hugo more.

The friendship and relationship that builds between the boys that summer is extremely sweet. They learn a lot about themselves as they explore each other. There is intimacy between them, and let's be honest, most teenagers are sexually active. The author does shy away just short of describing the acts they perform, but acknowledges they are performing them. It worked really well for me with the ages they are. As school starts though pressures from Kevin's dad and what being out at school could mean for them leads the boys to hiding away their feelings and possibly find girlfriends to secure their stories.

Like all young love stories, feelings get hurt and they have doubts about their future. But the maturity they both display and the feelings they let grow over the summer are stronger than the obstacles in their way. I really enjoyed reading about the two of them. I found myself wishing for a better relationship for Kevin and his family, but that would require his father to change his ways. Hugo's family was amazing. They not only accepted Hugo and loved him for who he was but they took Kevin under their protective wings and showed him the compassion he had been missing. The end of the book is HFN if anything as the boys start their senior years of high school. It feels like they have what it takes but there is so much that can still occur that might drive them apart. They are young. I can only hope for the best but it's sort of open ended.

Private Display of Affection is a prequel of the North Star Trilogy by Posy Roberts so you can bet I will be reading that soon. In the mean time I definitely recommend this sweet story of self recognition and young love.

8.5/10 Pots of Gold (85% Recommended) – Compares to 4.25/5 Stars

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### **wesley says**

I am disappointed because I expected to ride The Big Feels Train with this book. I mean, look at that cover. Sadly, I'm not a big fan of the author's writing. It lacked the needed emotion I crave from books. It felt robotic and mechanical, to me. The dialogue also felt unnatural. The narration felt summarized and hurried, although the paragraphs were actually really lengthy.

I also thought the plot was shallow. I didn't like how everyone, not just the MCs, felt it was okay to use someone as a cover to continue hiding a relationship, which was "frowned upon".

I'm hoping Posy Roberts' books from the series will be better.

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### **Melissa says**

I just finished reading this book and I find myself in love with these boys. Such a sweet and real story. Hugo is such a brave young man who has been forced to grow up quickly due to his ill father. Kevin has been forced to grow up fast due to an oppressive father. Hugo's family is supportive and nurturing and they welcome Kevin into their home knowing his limitations.

Loved Hugo's mom! She was so open and honest!

I shed a few tears with this one and my stomach hurt at times, but it was great. It's going on my favorite shelf!

5 stars for me!

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