



Acclamation

Vee Hoffman

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Writing the first-person account of Michael Cassidy, who becomes a Catholic school teacher in the aftermath of the tragic death of his boyfriend, Hoffman balances beautifully lyrical prose with a sensual exploration of people and places.

Ashebrook, its warm community and the house inherited from his aunt provide a comfortable haven for Michael, but it's the friendship with neighbouring Butler family and their son Dominic that proves most rewarding.

Teacher, friend, soon confidant, Michael understands Dominic's secrets more than anyone in his sheltered Catholic community, but what else can he allow himself to hope for when love offers him a second chance?

Acclamation Details

Date : Published October 9th 2012 by Indie Inklings (first published October 7th 2012)

ISBN :

Author : Vee Hoffman

Format : ebook 404 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Lgbt, Contemporary

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From Reader Review Acclamation for online ebook

Pan says

I think I have read this about four times. Each time a new aspect presents itself, whether it is a character nuance or just a new perspective on Michael and Dominic's burgeoning relationship. What stands out everytime is the truth in their relationship. This is the beginning of something special.

5 times now (June 2015)

Jenni says

You know the difference between right and wrong. Murder, stealing, cheating...these are acts you avoid, of course.

But what about baser things like lying and lustng? What about when the lines blur between what you want and what you need? You're broke, hungry and have to feed your family, so you MUST take that food without paying for it. Is it wrong? A close friend gives you a gift that misses the mark. Do you tell her hell would freeze over before you'd wear that pink neon scarf?

What about love? What if one day you meet someone you're unequivocally compatible with only to find out that person is your best friend's partner? Or worse, your teacher?

And so begins the all-consuming story of Michael and Dominic. Theirs is a powerful tale about friendship, temptation and love's healing influence. Michael, a young teacher at a Catholic school, and Dominic, his younger (but mature in heart and soul) student, have more in common than their passion for great literature; they're also gay and hiding in plain sight in a community that won't accept or forgive them for what they are.

Set in the UK, *Acclamation* is so perfectly written it's hard for me to believe this is Vee Hoffman's first novel. The subject matter is taboo, and perhaps reading the description will put some prospective readers off the story. **If you're one of those, I'm begging you: give it a chance.**

Unlike other books I've read with a student/teacher story line, *Acclamation* goes well beyond the forbidden nature of the relationship to focus on the human beings involved, including Michael and Dominic's family and friends. The two men are fallible, with complex, emotional histories. They know the difference between right and wrong, but as can happen to the best of us, the lines of their situation have blurred.

Acclamation is a narrative, written from Michael's point of view. There are points in the book, though they're few and far between, where Michael becomes mired in his thoughts and insecurities. Stick with him when this happens. His ramblings are related to his past and his present intertwining, and are reflective of the things he knows he's not handling the way he should.

The eventual intimacy between Michael and Dominic is sensual and erotic, but entirely without pretension or discomfort. You'll want to know and feel and read more, but it's perfectly paced and feels extremely balanced.

At 404 pages, *Acclamation* is long, but you'll never feel it; in fact, you'll become crazed as you near the end, when you begin to realize the neat, tidy closure you crave is just slightly beyond reach. No worries: the second book is ready and waiting in the wings—as is the complete series(!), plus a short freebie available online and to be read between the third and fourth books.

I simply can't say enough good things about *Acclamation* without becoming repetitive and gushy and embarrassing myself, so I'll close with a promise. This book will live up to and surpass any expectation you may have, and I can't wait for you to experience all the feeling for yourself.

Baba says

1 star. DNF @26 %.

I usually don't rate books anymore that I have to abandon that early into the story. But I was so incredibly annoyed that I decided to rate it nonetheless. Fact is, if I could I would have given it 0 stars because it was so terribly boring.

Acclaimed is too long-winded, wordy and the opposite of compelling. It's a sleeping pill par excellence.

He lit up with astonishment. "That sounds like so much fun!" He ate carefully and slowly, though it was obvious by his enthusiasm that he would have gladly shoved three strips of beef into his mouth at once, if practised table manners did not forbid.

My **enthusiasm** flew out the window when I was a few pages into the story and already knew it wouldn't work out for me. At 5% I was ready to throw in the towel. I had to force myself to keep on reading and made it up to 26 %. That's the ultimate feeling.

This must be the most boring book I've ever read. The story was just "blah". *waves white flag*

Yep, the power of surrender feels very liberating.

I think this was my first and last foray into Vee Hoffman's writing den.

Onwards...

Mich says

"What's the use in dreaming, if you're not going to fly?"

What Indeed...

I am so, so in love with this book. Really. I was looking for something different than the regular m/m read, and I found it here from Vee Hoffman.

'Acclamation' is book one in a four part series about a Man who moves to a small town and becomes a teacher at a Catholic School in the wake of his lover's death.

Such a simple premise, really.

The book is written in the first person narrative, of one Michael Cassidy who is still grieving the death of his first love. In the midst of moving to a new town and starting work as an English Teacher in a Catholic school, Michael finds he has moved next door to one of his students, Dominick.

Yes, what you think happens, is exactly what happens- However the relationship between Michael and Dominic is really just so intense and beautiful, that you can't help to love both of them and grow with both of them. (and yes, it's a slow burn- but not as slow as some others I have read, and it's totally worth it)

I haven't read a book in quite some time, where I felt so emotionally invested in the story of the two characters. Every time Michael implores us, his "dear readers" just to bear with him, and hear how the story continues, there is no way you can't grin a little in anticipation.

This book really has a great mix of innocence, growth, sorrow and humor. Both Dominick and Michael are lovable nerds on their best days and just so absolutely relatable. There are also many literature/poetry references for those who enjoy that sort of thing as well.

I was initially worried about the religious undertones of the book, but they are necessary for the growth of the characters (and minimal to the actual plot).

If I had anything negative to say, maybe it would be that there were too many pop culture references, which sort of become odd as a book becomes older.

So happy I do not have to wait for book 2 to come out.

Shelby P says

This book is on the listopia for great gay fiction. I've recently read several from the list and had decent expectations for this one. If I'd not committed to reading this with a friend this would have been a DNF for me.

This book was too fucking long and too fucking wordy. Even at 90% it was a chore to get to the end. I skimmed so much and didn't really miss much. I have to say that I felt like I truly knew Michael and Dominic. They were real to me.

In the beginning I had some trepidation because I always kept thinking "when are they going to get caught in the act?" I never like having that feeling when I'm reading a book. It never did come to pass though.

I've since learned that this is a 4 series book. I can't even imagine why we'd need more than a second book to finish Michael and Dominic's story. I'm not even sure if I want to read the next book. I looked at the reviews

for Reclamation to see if I could get any spoilers. There weren't any. Well there are other books out there that I don't have to trudge through!

Jenna says

3.5 stars

I enjoyed the slow burn of this relationship, and found myself rooting for Michael to corrupt young Dominic's innocence. At first I liked the story so much that I was glad of the length, but somewhere around the halfway point, I began to get bored with Michael's wandering thoughts. It's a pet peeve of mine to be reading a conversation that is interrupted by a lengthy digression. It makes me forget what was last said, so that when the conversation is finally continued, I have to go back to figure out what they were even talking about. This happened in the midst of general storytelling as well, which made me want to smack Michael and say "Stick to the point!" That was the only real problem with the book, though it is rather difficult to ignore. I do want to continue the series to find out what's in store for these two, but hope for fewer rambling distractions.

Mandapanda says

Unusual and very long story about a 28 year old teacher, Michael, who moves to a small town after the death of his partner a couple of years earlier. He falls deeply in love with his 18 year old student Dominic and his feelings are reciprocated.

This is written in Michael's 1st person POV and is an intense look at the relationship that forms between the two young men. Both of them are so noble and self-sacrificing that the teacher/student dynamic is not remotely sleazy and instead comes across as a beautiful and inevitable love.

The pace is CRAWLING! And it's like the two of them live in a bubble where outside events rarely intrude. Michael's musings, agonizings, and eulogizing about Dominic and how wonderful he is, are addictive and frustrating at the same time. I had to skim a page or two here and there where he was going on too much. But I couldn't stop reading and will definitely pick up book 2 because this one ends at a pivotal point in their affair.

On the downside I found Michael's character to be inconsistent. At times he acted too much like a fussy old person and at others he was portrayed as young and hip and sexy. I preferred the young and hip version not only because I found it more believable that Dominic would fall for him but also because that version of his personality was more interesting to me. This book is definitely not for everyone. I actually have a bit of a headache since I finished reading, it was such an intense experience! lol

Silvio says

This book is neither an easy, light-hearted read, nor a disturbing, struggling one, but it's full of heavy emotions, at times overwhelming and mind-blowing it often left me breathless momentarily while my heart was beating frantically. It isn't a breath-stoppingly action-packed adventure, or a ridiculously, unbelievably

melodramatic love story, but a honest to God biography of a man who takes his love as a major and significant theme. It captured my attention completely. Even when I wasn't reading the book, I kept going back to it to ponder over details I thought imply double meanings. Several times I had to read at least twice certain paragraphs to fully understand them. And as an ESL reader, sometimes I felt like this book was too much for me, I was struggling hard, sure, but what I received was incredibly rewarding, and I'm glad I followed it to the end.

It is pretty long, over 160000 words, so occasionally I found myself getting impatient with some seemingly unnecessary events. However, like a friend said, those things are reflections of Michael Cassidy's feelings and his needs, his desires, his view of the world. Besides, with him being a cynical person who very much impressed me with how analytical and insightful he truly is, every details, regardless of how small it is, from facial expression, reaction, gesture to scenery, location or development, are in full descriptions and perceptions. Therefore, I got to know him more than I thought I ever did with other characters, and through his eyes, Dominic Butler as well.

This book's not without emotional and moral conflicts, what with the relationship between a teacher and a student and all. Although I don't consider it a very uncommon one, but there is a fact that it still and probably always will be strongly frowned upon. But as I mentioned above, their affair and the difficulties they are inevitably going to have to go through, are not described in a laughably overdramatic way, not in the slightest. On the contrary, their attractions to each other feel very simple and natural. They know their proper social places, they have different religious beliefs, but they also believe and accept their love for each other as a real and beautiful thing it really is as well.

One thing I admire the author specifically, is the way she handles the sex. She didn't jump right into it, and I'm grateful, very grateful, because 1. I don't know if I could restrain myself from hating the book a little, and 2. It doesn't feel right. I like that it's a slow-burned sexual tension that consumes them whenever they're together that made my heart beat fast and faster every time. When it actually happens it's intense and erotic and hot more than anything I've ever read so far.

I have to say that I also like very much the author's writing style. It's unique, engrossing and fascinating. It's not exactly true to say that it's a crucial factor which could decide whether I loved the book, but it's extremely important to the fact that I enjoyed it as much as I did.

Highly recommended.

Rebelexmachina says

4.75/5 stars. Acclamation is a beautiful book; a slow burn story of desire between a young teacher and his student, and a somewhat literary take on the m/m romance genre. The writing is superb, written from the POV of teacher Michael Cassidy, charting his attraction to student and neighbour Dominic, and his resulting moral quandary as the two find wrestle with temptation.

I believe a good writer can convince the reader of almost anything, and the fact that this taboo romance is so convincing, tantalising and sexy without being exploitative or predatory, is truly a testament to the skilful writing of Vee Hoffman.

John The Cosmic Wanderer says

Amazing writing! The words just flowed beautifully. Highly recommended!!!

100/100 STARS!

Victoria Zagar says

Michael Cassidy moves to the small British town of Ashebrook after the death of his boyfriend. As a gay atheist working at a Catholic school, he keeps his sexuality and non-religion hidden in the closet. On one unremarkable day, a chance encounter with his neighbor's son, Dominic Butler, leads to a friendship that will fill the hole in Michael's life. Michael's relationship with Dominic grows into something more as Dominic confesses his deepest secrets and desires. There's one problem with Michael's feelings; Dominic is only seventeen, and his student to boot. Dominic promises to wait until he is eighteen, and the two begin a deep, passionate and beautiful love affair in secret. But tragedy is always waiting just around the corner, and Dominic is about to have his life shaped by loss, a pain that Michael knows only too well.

Acclamation is hands-down the best novel I have read this year. It's a story told with such breathtaking intimacy, such longing and wanting that my stomach coiled itself in knots just reading it. It's rare for me to cry at a book, let alone at scenes that are not sad, but there were moments reading Acclamation where the sheer beauty of the thing overwhelmed me and I found tears springing to my eyes. The language is crafted with care, every word intentionally chosen and the book never seems to drag or pad itself out. Every scene is necessary to the book, and it is never gratuitous in its use of sex scenes.

You might worry, based on my description, that Dominic being seventeen at the start could mean this is a tale of coercion or abuse. Let me tell you that this is absolutely not the case. Dominic is an old soul, a man wise beyond his years, despite his lack of sexual experience. Michael and Dominic are equals in the relationship that grows between them, despite Dominic being far younger than Michael.

If you want chemistry in a relationship, if you're looking for a book packed with longing and wanting that doesn't race to the finish line, Acclamation will be a rare and fine treat for you. This is the kind of book that reminds me why I fell in love with M/M romance in the first place. It's not a porno with a pretty cover, or a lackluster story of going through the motions in a relationship. It's a story about love, loss and longing that will leave you reeling when you reach the novel's powerful conclusion. The next book is on my must-read list. Acclamation is a rare gem, a tale packed with real emotion that will keep you thinking and feeling about its characters long after you've turned the last page.

This review was cross-posted to Infinite Love.

Shirley Frances says

This is the story of Michael Cassidy, a 28-year old teacher who has experienced love and loss and it left him

scarred. He has made the best of what life has dealt him and has found a routine to his life, accepting that this was the way it would be. Then in comes Dominic Butler, a neighbor, and his whole world is turned on its axis. He starts feeling again, he questions, he ponders, he day-dreams and ultimately tries to resist. But it is to no avail. Dominic is not merely a soon to be 18-year old. He is an old soul. A handsome young man who is open, determined in his beliefs, strong, articulate and vulnerable. He is everything Michael would like in a partner and he is the one person he shouldn't want. A student.

To say that I was conflicted by this story would be an understatement. As a mother, could I condone the relationship between a teacher and his student? Do I take everything presented to me as a whole or in bits and pieces? As a reader, do I just discard my apprehension merely because this is fiction? Should I go with what my emotions are telling me or with the thoughts running around in my head? These were some of the questions I asked myself.

From the start, Michael won my heart. His story is one filled with both pain and hope and I really wanted him to find that happiness he had lost but still deserved. He was funny, self-deprecating and adorable as can be. I was immediately drawn to him. Connecting and embracing Dominic was not even an option. He was amazing in his own right. So mature and understanding, but yet so insecure and inexperienced. I wanted to take them both and give them a private place to be together but on the other hand I wanted to scold them. Ask them what the hell they were thinking and shake some sense into them. In the end, my heart won out and this I contribute to the author, Vee Hoffman.

She lured me with the first passages in the book, kept me enraptured throughout Michael's narration, renewed my interest with every piece of dialog that was exchanged, melted me each and every time they came together and just about broke my heart with the last line. The answers to my questions changed throughout the book and after I finished reading they were still haunting me.

It was brilliant.

But I confess that as a reader whose English is a second language, the writing was at times overwhelming. I also admit that I thought I would not like the single point of view element in this book. I was surprised that I did not miss Dominic's account of the story and I very much enjoyed getting to know Dominic mainly through Michael's eyes.

Vee Hoffman played it out perfectly. I appreciated Michael's apprehension and his efforts to fight this connection with Dominic and vice versa. I would have been disappointed if it would have been easily accepted by both characters - the outcome of my rating would have been very different to say the least. Another element that really affected my rating was the range of emotions presented in this book. There was passion, pain, love and happiness. But this was mixed up with grief, trepidation, bravery and acceptance. All of this, in addition to well developed and complex characters, realistic dialog, great humor and an array of well placed events, made *Acclamation* an amazing and very touching read.

I was lucky to have been chosen to read and review this book in exchange of an honest opinion and I am very much looking forward to the next book with an eagerness that surprises even myself.

Natalie says

Very romantic. The story is too long and too introspective, but I couldn't help but love this couple. The

sexual tension between them is just delicious. The teacher/student relationship is a potentially tricky subject matter, but I felt it was handled gracefully.

The book ends mid-scene, so it has the feel of a serial. (I don't mind, though, since the next book is already out and reasonably priced.)

Kukko says

This was an amazing story....but it was too wordy and too long.

When I started reading it, I was like.."Wow! Just Wow! This is amazing!". But about two-thirds of the way through, I stalled. I think I just got tired of Michael fawning over Dominic, and the awkward sexual encounters between the two MCs. The last quarter of the book was the most difficult for me. I eventually got back into the story...only for it to end...abruptly!

The entire story is from one POV and not much is left to the imagination.... as Michael drones on and on. I was not surprised that he had a copy of Marcel Proust's book on his shelf. I am guessing Proust was an inspiration for the author. I found the level of detail into Michael's thoughts overwhelming. Also for a contemporary story, I thought the characters were unnaturally formal in the way they spoke.

This is a great book....maybe even a classic....it's just not my cup of tea.

Kaje Harper says

4.25 stars - Michael lost his lover to cancer three years ago and he's been drifting ever since. He's functioning, getting through life, but not able to emotionally connect with anything or anyone. He moves to a small town to begin a new job as a Catholic school English teacher, because it's something his education fits him for, and he needs the money. But one October day he encounters the young man who lives next door. Dominic is brilliant, open, attractive and friendly. They strike up a friendship, and soon are having conversations about books and life. Dominic's father is seriously ill, and Michael, with his history of loss, can understand and empathize with Dominic's situation. Michael is smitten, and falling fast. But there's one big problem. Dominic is 17, and one of his students.

This book goes out of its way to make this a love story between 2 men ten years apart in age, but very similar in tastes and minds. This is the edge of taboo, with Dominic old and mature enough to make it seem plausible and appropriate, especially when he's the one who instigates physical parts of the relationship. Michael agonizes over the impropriety of it, but portrays himself as a man falling swiftly and deeply in love. And despite moments of doubt, I did take him at his word. Dominic is amazing, and knows he's gay, but is very isolated in his Catholic community, and would have been desperately hard to resist.

There are times when Michael breaks from his narrative to address "Dear reader" which pulled me out of the story a bit. And particularly because these are mostly added pleas to not judge him for his love and lust toward a seventeen-year-old, they felt a bit like a man who doth protest too much. I wanted his narration to convince me (which for the most part it did.)

While pedophilia is a hot button of mine, I do think there are mature seventeen-year-olds who relate to the world on an adult level. (I in fact knew one who had a thirty-year-old boyfriend and who was the adult and the dominant partner between the two of them.) And while a teacher is in a position of power, the two related primarily as neighbors, not teacher-student. So I was willing to accept this relationship at Michael's word.

The sex is very, very slow burn and not exploitative-feeling, although sometimes beautifully sensual. The language is often erudite, emotional and elaborate, but that's fitting to a man who is an English teacher with a classical education. (I give the book added marks for containing three words I had to look up.) As this book ended I was eager to move on to the next one.
