Clarion Review

Erotica

A Secret Gay Passion: A Short Gay Erotic Love Story
Julian Black
AuthorHouse
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Two Stars (out of Five)

Julian Black's debut, *A Secret Gay Passion: A Short Gay Erotic Love Story*, begins when Nicky is twenty and terrified of someone discovering the fact that he is gay. His family would not accept his sexual orientation, so he lives in fear of the truth being revealed. When Nicky notices a handsome young man at the university, he takes a chance on developing a relationship.

The intensity of the experience and his feelings for Richard take Nicky by surprise, and soon they are spending every spare moment together. Richard is very open and struggles with Nicky's fear of coming out. They are in love, and there is no reason that they shouldn't be open with their feelings for each other. The joy that they feel when they escape for the weekend to another town encourages Nicky to open up to his family. While his mother is accepting, Nicky's father and brothers brutally beat him in a drunken rage. Nicky takes refuge with Richard, and they plan their wedding. Will Nicky's family members attend or not?

A great deal happens in this slender book. Nicky moves swiftly from closeted single gay man to out married gay man in the space of seventy-seven pages. Having learned about Nicky's fears and his family, the reader is quickly drawn into his relationship and sexual experiences with Richard. It is difficult to maintain a sense of time, however, as the story seems to move almost too quickly, without consistent markers to keep track of the passage of time. Because of the violent way his dad responds to Nicky's homosexuality, it is difficult to accept the ease with which the son forgives the father: "Richard made up with his dad, and I made up with mine," says Nicky.

The narrative tends toward the simplistic. There is a feeling of "this happened and then that happened" throughout the story. More threads of the story need to be woven together to generate interest in the characters. Similarly, the dialogue is hampered by short, declarative sentences and lack of transitions. "Richard replied, 'I'm going to rock your world apart.' 'Well,

I'd better be going,' I said." As the story progresses, the dialogue flows a bit more smoothly. There are also issues with grammar, sentence structure, and word usage. Lastly, there is a great deal of sexual exploration in this story, which leaves little to the reader's imagination.

A Secret Gay Passion is a love affair liberally infused with intense gay sexual experiences. While delving further into Nicky's reluctance to "come out" would have enhanced the book, readers will find that this story does offer an opportunity to experience one young man's painful journey.

Lynn Evarts