



Love and Other Hot Beverages

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This novel includes a frank and important discussion of emotional relationship abuse.

How do you fit a hunky construction worker back into the closet? Very carefully. Todd is recently brokenhearted, out of a tough relationship, and in Colorado. He misses queer culture: home meant “working construction, meant pretending to his parents that he had a girlfriend, meant shame and guilt and inward seething.” Translation: not fun.

The one thing that lightens his days is Sebastián, the office boy at his work site. Brought together by their love of good coffee—not to mention some sexual attraction—the two men begin a relationship. Are they in it for each other, or is it just an escape from their toxic exes? *Love and Other Hot Beverages* is an emotional M/M romance that takes on heavy themes of emotional abuse in LGBTQ relationships.

As Todd and Sebastián sift through their respective emotional baggage and their attachment issues, their sexual attraction deepens as well. In one particularly moving scene, Todd leaves an AI-Anon meeting, only to find that his ex is ready to try dating again. Parents, coworkers, and friends add a nice, nontraditional angle to this romance.

Characters do not always ring true, though the author strives for authenticity, and characterizations are sometimes heavy-handed and stereotypical. This undermines the plot’s emotional arc and can make sex scenes feel clinical and flat.

Importantly, *Love and Other Hot Beverages* includes a frank discussion of emotional abuse in LGBTQ relationships, and the fallout of either leaving them or staying in them. Todd and Sebastián both grapple with the push-me-pull-you dynamic, all along reaching for something better within themselves and in each other.

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