



Stroke to His Cox

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As coxswain of a Cambridge college rowing team, pint-sized Dave Tanaka has eight strapping athletes hanging on his every word, their strength at his command. Leading his crew to win their oars might be easier if Dave didn't have to hide his crush on Archie, the stroke rower – but as they prepare for their final race, Dave doesn't suspect that Archie is in the same boat as him in more ways than one!

Stroke to His Cox Details

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From Reader Review Stroke to His Cox for online ebook

Byakuya (White Night) says

Short and sweet, I quite enjoyed it.

Shawn says

I was very suprised by this little diddy. It's so short and the title so tongue and cheek that I thought it would be a total disaster. But... it wasn't. it was cute and sassy. Dave is just priceless. all 5'5 of him. I had to laugh at all the slight awkwardness of dealing with a guy who is so much taller than you. (i should know. I'm barely 5'5 myself.)

Its very cute and a good for a quick read.

Cole Riann says

Dave Tanaka is from the only Japanese family on the Isle of Wight and the coxswain of the Cambridge crew team. He is also only 5'5" and doesn't hide that he's a poof, and in his words "...what with angsting about being foreign-looking, angsting about being the music teacher's kid, followed by angsting about being a short-arse, by the time I'd worked out I was gay I just thought *Oh, what the hell, bring it on!*" Therefore, being the coxswain on the crew team is perfect for him — not only is his slight body type perfect for the job, but he gets eight strapping jocks to do his bidding, looking at him as if he's their god. He can barely keep his eye off Archie, the stroke rower, as this position of authority over the strapping straight hunk sparks his sexual fantasies. But, no matter where he lets his mind roam on personal time, while rowing Dave does everything possible not to alert Archie and the rest of the team to the hard-on those fantisies bring as he watches Archie's bulging biceps on the oars and strapping thighs as he moves forward and backward in succession, keeping the stroke to Dave's chants. Then, in a celebratory mood after the Bumps, Archie sets out to show Dave that he knows all about those fantasies and harbors some of his own.

This story was a sweet gem, not only for the blazing, sexual chemistry between Dave and Archie, but also for the funny and original voice Dave has as he narrates the story. Set in first person, this is an example of how a short story can delve right into a character with an original voice and vision of the world around them. That is often difficult to find in a short story, because there is so little time to get to know the characters, but it is done very well here because of Dave's quick wit. He is a handful and very intelligent. He often makes fun of the Neanderthal jocks who somehow got into Cambridge, though he loves them all the same. Likewise, the rest of the team treats him well, though they are sometimes crass. There is a good sense of camaraderie among the team that I really enjoyed. If Archie plays the role of the team's big brother, then the quote is true; Dave acts as their god, calling all their moves, always a few steps ahead of them, while Archie sets the example setting the rhythm of the strokes.

...

This was a great little story that didn't need a lot of angst or a heavy, dramatic pretext to accomplish it's goal of having an impact. In a subtle way, Dave's voice does that in a fun and sexy way. I love to read short stories that give me a happy break in my day and leave me feeling refreshed while the rest of the day I

chuckle as I think back on the story. I would love to see another chapter in the lives of Dave and Archie. I recommend this story, especially to those who like to read sports themes, and I will keep it around to read when I want a little pick-me-up.

For the full review, please visit [Reviews by Jessewave](#).

Tami says

Short, sweet and hot.

Kassa says

I love JL Merrow's sense of humor and even if this hadn't been highly recommended around the blogosphere I'd want to read a book titled "Stroke to His Cox." Yea I'm a perve but so are you so get this short delightful story. The writing is clever, witty, and full of innuendo and rowing terms. The characters are funny, entertaining, and like to twist the usual stereotypes on their heads. For a short story this packs a punch and leaves you wanting more of whatever Merrow wants to offer.

The premise is that Dave is the cox for some unnamed English rowing team. He's been harboring a crush for the stroke man, Archie, which comes to fruition after they win a major race. The story is told from Dave's first person perspective and he's funny, sly, witty, and incredibly provocative. He describes the power of being the smallest man on the river yet he commands the attention and obedience of his crew. The writing is very evocative as Dave talks about the rush of being the man in charge, of the coiled muscles leaping to action, the ambiance of the crowd and the excitement of the races. That energy is easily translated to the page and sweeps the reader up into Dave's world, on the edge of their seat waiting to see if the boat will win.

I have to confess that I know nothing about rowing and even though the story attempts to give some information about the positions and basics of racing and bumping, it kind of flew over my head. I still have no real understanding of the sport but that's ok because the dialogue and banter between the crew while Dave attempts to keep his *ahem* "feelings" in check is delightful and more than enough to compensate any lack of understanding. The various men joke and tease each other with a kind of ease that comes from a bit too much comfort. There is a nod to the latent elitist commentary from privileged English sons but this is handled well with humor and a deft touch.

The setting is somewhat vague – somewhere in England – yet the flavor comes across throughout the book. From the writing to the language, dialogue, and deliberate use of rowing terms during the sex scene, this short story stands out as something fresh and different. It's easy to see why it's been so well received and I can join that group and recommend this. You won't be disappointed.

Sue says

What a beautiful interlude on the River Cam!

Short, but marvellously handled by J.L. Merrow, one of my favourite authors. You really need to read this as an example of a perfect short story, where the characters are so damn real you feel you've known them for

years, and their love story is just so romantic it left me with a huge smile on my face.

Anna Goerlitz says

This was a re-read of this cute little gem of a short story. Hurray for snarky MC's and boat house sex. It's just a snack of 25 pages, but it's very enjoyable for a quick read with a cup of coffee or before bedtime.

Audrey says

[smaller top!! (hide spoiler)]

Josephine Myles says

Of all Jamie's many short stories, I think this has to be my favourite. Not only is it extremely amusing with two lovable leads, but I learnt a huge amount about rowing and there's a hot boathouse sex scene to top it all off. I love an "opposites attract" romance, and this is a perfect example of how to do it well. Tiny coxswain Dave refuses to conform to any stereotypes, and is one of the most characterful narrators I've read in a long time. I've read "Stroke to His Cox" several times now, and it delights me every time.

Disclaimer: I'm a good friend of Jamie's and I beta read this for her, so I can't claim to be unbiased.

Deeze says

Short but fun.

Heller says

I definitely watched way too much Olympic rowing this year. ;) I ran across this story and had to read it. Very cute but I needed a rowing 101 guide for some of the terminology!

Tiya Rosa says

HILARIOUS narrator, adorable love interest, undeniable underwear-dropping chemistry, and some of the funniest lines I've read from this author (and that's saying something!).

A GR friend mentioned in her profile that she'd read a grocery list as long it's written by Voinov. Well, that's me with Merrow, I think. She could scribble pretty much anything on any surface and I'd devour it. She creates such distinct and memorable narrators that I always wanna have coffee or a pint with them or bring them here in the Philippines and serve them balut and then braid their hair or something. Dave Tanaka in this

one was no exception with his obsession with his height and tolerant affection towards his crew and lines like:

"It's not like I hid the fact that I was a poof, but I made sure I didn't rub it in their faces. God, I wanted to rub it in Archie's face."

and

"...what with angsting about being foreign-looking, angsting about being the music teacher's kid, followed by angsting about being a short-arse, by the time I'd worked out I was gay I just thought *Oh, what the hell, bring it on!*"

Dave Tanaka, ladies and gents.

And since all Merrow reads have their corresponding Kinks soundtrack, here's the accompaniment to *Stroke to His Cox*.

ETA: Squee! Mini sequel FTW!

Eugenia says

Short, sporty, sexy, and sweet! This was a fun short story big on rowing in Cambridge; and even bigger on coxswain Dave's humongous crush on stroke man Archie. The name makes sense now, doesn't it?

The short coxswain and the tall rower...guess who tops? That's right, the one who gives the orders on the boat! I love me a break of stereotypes!

Lovely to read over a cup of tea or a lunch break...it's hard to go wrong with JL Merrow, her stories are simply lovely.

Well recommended! 3.5 Stars! And a big HURRAH for boathouse sex!

Kate says

Holy crap, that title. It's appropriate but really...the title. If you don't give a damn about rowing you might not like this short, funny, hot little book.

Julia ♥Duncan♥ says

Not gonna lie, rowing puns amuse me greatly. That, combined with JL Merrow's usual humor and Britishness, made this really fun to read. I was smiling the whole time. Even though it was short I felt like I got to know and like the characters, who were really cute together. There were also lots of nice little details woven in that made the story richer. Super glad I decided to read this.

