



Conversation Hearts

Avon Gale

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It's Valentine's Day, and grad student—and male escort—Levi Barron expects to spend his evening with a client who's paying him for his services in bed... not an assassin who needs to borrow the view from his hotel room in the morning.

With nothing to do but endure the company of his unwanted guest, Levi and the assassin, Sinjin, spend some time bonding over HGTV, minibar beverages, Flannery O'Connor short stories, terrible Valentine's candy, and the necessity of lying about their jobs.

Their evening takes an unexpected turn when they decide to indulge in their mutual attraction, and in the morning Levi doesn't know if he's spent the night with a hired killer or a hydraulic engineer with a very specific fantasy. Either way, the two have enough chemistry—in and out of bed—that Levi isn't sure one night with Sinjin will be enough.

And a message left in candy suggests the feeling is mutual.

Conversation Hearts Details

Date : Published February 10th 2016 by Dreamspinner Press

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Author : Avon Gale

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From Reader Review Conversation Hearts for online ebook

Avon Gale says

This is a Valentine's Day short story (35 pages) from Dreamspinner Press. I'd say it's a dark comedy with some sex, which is my preference for anything have to do with this holiday. Also, there's candy. And we all know how I feel about that :D

Tamika♥RBF MOOD♥ says

Avon Gale with the unexpected. I love the bleeding heart cover, totally misconception with the story though. Oh my goodness I loved it. If I could describe it in two words, I'll say "Dark Comedy". I feel like this is a what not to do situation if someone knocks on your hotel door. I really like the dark satire of the story, and sure I'm a big enough person to admit I don't who Flannery O'Connor is/was or even if she is real. Sue me. I didn't even get the itch to google, and I still thought it was a solid story. Such a cute novella, with both intriguing characters.

I wonder if Levi second guesses his job after this Valentine's Day weekend. Ha! I hope so or no. I really wanted more about these two characters. I loved the smart hitman who wasn't broody or mean, or silent. Sinjin was epic fun. I loved the conversations between the two. You definitely see the connection, and if either guy was able to meet on "normal" situations we definitely could see easily being together. The bouts of crazy holiday sex, conversation over the hatred of Fresca soda, education and everything Wicked good was a really solid read for me. Avon's style is really growing on me and I look forward to reading more from her.

Review to come @

Eugenia says

Sweet, witty & hot! Great writing.

Nancy says

Cross-posted at Outlaw Reviews and at Shelf Inflicted

I'm old and haven't done a good job keeping up with pop culture, so had to look up the following:

- RedTube
- Pete Wentz
- Jason Statham
- Hot Topic
- Property Brothers
- Surface texture paste

That said, my lack of knowledge didn't at all detract from my enjoyment of this story.

Levi Barron is poor graduate student working for an escort service. While waiting for a client who doesn't show, Sinjin arrives. Sinjin is as surprised as Levi, because according to the hotel database he hacked into, the room was supposed to be empty. Having Levi around seriously puts a crimp in his assassination plans. Sinjin wasn't planning to kill Levi, but he can't very well let him leave, can he?

This is a fun, fast-paced and clever story that is hilarious and also ridiculously hot.

I loved the banter between the guys, the tension, the red boxer briefs with little hearts, and the chalky heart candies with words on them.

I'm thinking I might like to borrow Levi's Surface texture paste. It may be less goopy than what I'm currently using.

Thanks to Erika for lending this to me.

Debra says

I tend not to read short stories but how can I resist Avon Gale!

This was wonderful. I would hit the one-click button so hard if Avon Gale ever decided to expand on Sinjin and Levi in a full length book *hint*. Full of what I'm beginning to think of as her trademark banter and some great sex, you'll be left wondering "did he or didn't he" and "is he or isn't he" but it really doesn't matter.

Chelsea says

Reread Feb 2018- grrr I just want more more more!!!!

Review

Loved that!! This was me reading this:

Then

And lastly

Loved it!!!

Optimist ?King's Wench? & MANTIES Champion says

Know what's better than a Fresca? Oh wait, everything.

I took the wind out of my own opening. Damn.

The blurb says it all but what the blurb does not include is the hotness of a bossy top and assassin who takes the lemon of finding an unexpected rent boy in his designated hotel room to pound the hell out of it into lemonade.

He gripped the edges of the blankets in his fingers and held on while Sinjin rode him hard, as hard as Levi wanted, hard like he could never quite manage to convince anyone to give it to him.

PRAISE JEEZUS!

The minifridge picnic and associated banter are just part of what I've come to expect from this author and what makes this short such an enjoyable little diversion.

For the most part...

The whole "hating the Red Sox" bit was, I feel, a bit heavy handed not to mention harsh, thus I've mobilized all of RSN to come to your house, Avon, for an intervention. We briefly discussed other options but ruled them out since "educating" fictional characters proved to be a problematic sell. However, in the sequel I *expect* Levi to have seen the error of his ways.

In all seriousness, this story is fun and hot and I loved the ambiguity we're left with regarding Sinjin. I got a kick out of the whole "Ironic" Alanis Morissette schtick and the other pop culture and literature references.

For only thirty some pages it packs a punch and is definitely worth a read.

An ARC was provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Jaime says

4 Stars ~ An Assassin and A Rent Boy in a motel room...what a coincidence

This was a cute story that was light yet dark at the same time. It sounds like a bad joke, A rent boy waiting for his client only to be held hostage by an assassin who needs his window. What starts out as two guys thrown together turns into a night of hot sex and some shared truths. Will there be more for these two after

one night? The answer might be written in conversation hearts!!

ARC provided by author in exchange for an honest review. Reviewed by Jaime from Alpha Book Club and Gay Book Reviews

~☆~Doni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~☆~ says

~3.5~

I prefer stories that have a definitive ending, even better if it's a HEA. *Conversation Hearts* ends on an ambiguous note. Is Sinjin an assassin or isn't he?

And was the whole night really a coincidence (not an irony; never an irony)?

A rent boy hooks up with an assassin against his better judgement. There is champagne and Fresca and those damn candy hearts. There's sex and banter. Lots of banter.

I had fun with this short story, and I'm still thinking on it.

I would love to read the full-length version!

Erika says

Completely unbelievable but a fun read nonetheless. Looking forward to reading even more from this author.

wesley says

This is exactly why I'm a big fan of Avon Gale's work! Just the right amount of **dirty, funny, and sweet** all in one little book.

Why, if I didn't have any date during V-Day, I would have dated this book and it would still end up with me having a good time.

BWT (Belen) says

Okay, so...the blurb literally tells you the whole story so you may be thinking - if I know what happens, why should I read this?

In my opinion, you should read this because **it's super funny, really sexy and very well done for such a short story**. Kudos to you Avon Gale!

My only wish? I really want this turned into a full length novel. I really want to see if Sinjin and Levi can be together. Oh, and I want a HEA, please.

Advanced Review Galley copy of Conversation Hearts provided by the author, via Dreamspinner Press in exchange of an honest review.

This review has been cross-posted at Gay Book Reviews.

SheReadsALot says

I stopped reading the blurb after male escort. I just added.

I'm built that way.

I think I saw assassin in there, so...I'm *golden*. *nods*

Julio Genao says

oh, hey, unexpected winner in the winter of my TBR discontent.

dangerously close to perfect, even if the fresca hate was, i felt, a touch too brown.

fresca. it's like angels dancing on your tongue in ok i'll stop now, it's just grapefruit soda.

when i asked my buddy reader how in the hell an assassin is gonna decide outta nowhere to let a witness live, she said:

"twu wuv."

so.

but yeah, this was fun, funny, and unexpectedly touching about as often as it was unsurprisingly disturbing.

can't tell me a guy sticking his dick in your face after giving you a smile that doesn't reach his eyes isn't creepy as fuck—leaving aside the knowledge he fixin to *completely fuck up someone's day*.

you know. with the assassination part.

but in the way of this story my disquiet was immediately negated by his doofy hair and a good will hunting reference.

avon gale has been added to the List of Approved Vendors.

CrabbyPatty says

Avon Gale, you are a dirty girl to the core ... and I adore that in someone, especially if that someone is the author of deliciously quirky M/M romances such as Let the Wrong Light In and now "Conversation Hearts."

This novella is just right at roughly 30 pages. We are introduced to Levi (graduate student / rent boy) and Sinjin (assassin?/ hydraulic engineer?) on a Valentine's Day eve that is about everything but "the love", what with an assassination on the schedule for tomorrow. Levi and Sinjin tentatively bond over HGTV ("You know, people wouldn't want an open concept kitchen if they knew how easy it was to get shot in one") but since the Property Brothers episode is a rerun, what's a hot tattooed guy and a dead-eyed assassin supposed to do until morning?

With sizzling sexual chemistry galore (a nice mix of on- and off-the-page) and perfect pacing, the ending is ambiguous and an utter delight.

I received an ARC from the author, via Dreamspinner Press, in exchange for an honest review..
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