



Pretty Pretty Boys

Gregory Ashe

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After Emery Hazard loses his job as a detective in Saint Louis, he heads back to his hometown--and to the local police force there. Home, though, brings no happy memories, and the ghosts of old pain are very much alive in Wahredua. Hazard's new partner, John-Henry Somerset, had been one of the worst tormentors, and Hazard still wonders what Somerset's role was in the death of Jeff Langham, Hazard's first boyfriend.

When a severely burned body is discovered, Hazard finds himself drawn deeper into the case than he expects. Determining the identity of the dead man proves impossible, and solving the murder grows more and more unlikely. But as the city's only gay police officer, Hazard is placed at the center of a growing battle between powerful political forces. To his surprise, Hazard finds an unlikely ally in his partner, the former bully. And as they spend more time together, something starts to happen between them, something that Hazard can't--and doesn't want--to explain.

The discovery of a second mutilated corpse, though, reveals clues that the two murders are linked, and as Hazard gets closer to answers, he uncovers a conspiracy of murder and betrayal that goes deeper--and closer to home--than he could ever expect.

Pretty Pretty Boys Details

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From Reader Review Pretty Pretty Boys for online ebook

Wendy says

I really enjoyed reading this one, but I have got to be honest here and say it also **pissed me the fuck off !!!**

Before I say anything more, let me inform you that this is **not a romance**...not yet anyway. As I have come to understand, the MC's don't even get together until much later in the series. That said...there was still plenty of sexual tension to choke on No steam though...just so you know

I myself am a big **mystery/suspense** fan and that is what this book is first and foremost.

This first book in the series opens with detective **Emery Hazard** coming back to his hometown to start a new job on the Wareduhra police force. There is a reason he once left and to say that he is thrilled to be back would be a huge understatement. As if being back isn't joyful enough, being partnered with his high school bully, **John Henry Somerset**, is the icing on the cake ...

While Hazard and Somers get kind of reacquainted, while hunting down murderers, white extremists and bigots, we get little flashbacks of their high school days...Which show us exactly why Hazard hates his hometown (and Somers) so much.

I gotta say, I was right there with him. What a **bunch of assholes**... I don't think I would ever be able to forgive some of the things that happened.

One of those assholes actually being Somerset !!

Now I know he was sorry and he really did try to make amends.... but I hold a mean grudge so I am not quite ready to forgive him yet... Doesn't matter how I feel about ot anyway, it's all up to Hazard to be honest

I got pulled into the story right from the start and the lack of steam/romance didn't really bother me....but... I also don't feel like reading 6 books until we get there so we will see how much I can take

I am giving this one 3-3,5 stars because I am still very angry about how some things transpired.

Can't wait to see what's next !!

This review was posted on Wendy's Wycked Words

Follow me

Diana says

RTC

Ariana says

4,5 stars

Absolutely brilliant.

Deeply complex characters, agonising issues, a gripping mystery plot, and amazing writing!

As many readers have stated, there is very little romance in the usual sense in this book, something that kept me from picking this up for quite a while. **Please don't make the same mistake.**

The UST between these two guys is intense and crackling all the way. We get one kissing scene, which is not quite what it should be (you'll see what I mean when you get there) and at the end of the book both MCs are with different partners.

Again ... **don't let this put you off.** There are six books in this series and obviously it'll take these guys a bit of time to 'get there'. So far it has been an incredible and highly enjoyable roller coaster. And I am more than looking forward to their journey!

Off to read book 2!

Excellent, with only one tiny niggle....
(view spoiler)

Thanks to all of you who nudged me towards this! ?

Katrina Passick Lumsden says

Well...

Competent writing, but the romance aspect depressed the hell outta me, and there were several typographical errors that any halfway decent editor could spot a mile away. Also, the term "all the sudden" which never fails to make my eye twitch with rage.

But seriously, I'm bummed...mostly because my expectations about how this would pan out were vastly different from what actually happened. If you're looking for a law enforcement romance, do yourself a favor and look elsewhere.

Lena♥Ribka says

I am not sure what I think about the series. But the first book was already promising. Probably I could say more when I'll finish the second sequel. The mystery part was not as good as the personal relationship between the MCs. What I know for sure at the very moment - **I want to read and to know more about Hazard and Somerset.?**

Detective Emery Hazard returns to his home town from the Saint Louis police department. Something bad happened back in Saint Louis - what exactly it was, we will never know - but it is why Hazard had to face a choice of either a boring office paper work for the rest of his life in Saint Louis or a new beginning as a detective somewhere else. The beginning turns immediately into the worst nightmare the moment he will be introduced to his new partner. John-Henry Somerset, one of his high school bullies, on whom Hazard had crush on many years ago, and who was also one of the last people who saw Hazard's first boyfriend alive before Jeff committed suicide. What role played Somerset in Jeff's death?

I'm conflicted (again this word) about the narrator's style. Tristan James has a pleasant voice that sounds the best during dialogues but it becomes monotonous during *author's parts*.

I enjoyed the writing and this relationship's *conflict* - and other conflicts in this first book as well - that offers many new and exciting opportunities for the future story-line.

Yes, I'm in.

The next book, please!

Shile says

Oh boy! This was a toughy one. I loved some parts and I really disliked some parts.

This book will not be for everyone, IMO it is so well written, it reminded me of those awesome BBC detective series.

The Characters

MC1: Emery Hazard

MC 2: John-Henry Somerset

Damn! These two are frustrating, complex, real characters. The author did an amazing creating your average flawed day to day characters, Ashe got me invested, I wanted to know more about them, so I kept going until the end. Not many will like them or even relate to them but the fact that they were who they were is the

reason by the end of this book, I freaking **LOVED** Hazard and Somers.

The Story

It is a murder mystery with a small dose of hinted second chance romance. The mystery was engaging, I kept guessing until the very end. The police procedures were a bit questionable but that did not keep me from enjoying the story. Again, if you do not enjoy Police Procedural books, you will be bored to death.

Detective Hazard goes back to his hometown of Wareduhra, to be a small-town cop, after losing his job in the big city. He is partnered with his former high school bully, Detective Somers. Now here is where most readers will probably have a problem, the depiction of bullying is brutal, and I had a problem getting through the flashback scenes that at times I had to pause the audiobook and take it all in. Remember this is a small town and this happened years ago when the world was younger than today, I had to keep telling myself that to enable me to continue.

Hazard and Somers start investigating a series of vandalism and a murder, and through all those we get to see their interactions. Hazard still holds a grudge against Somers for bullying him when they were in high school. Over the years Hazard built a wall that is so impenetrable but when he blows.. **HE REALLY BLOOOWS!**

Somers on the other hand is different from the Somers that Hazard knew. As the story progresses we get to understand why Somers was the way he was in high school but that is not an excuse for his behaviour. Some readers will probably have a problem with Hazard holding a grudge for so many years. I didn't, because if it happened to me I would hold a grudge for centuries. They say we need to let that shit go but it is not that easy. I still want charges to be brought against the town bully, I don't know if the statute of limitation applies here, I just want him to be held responsible for what he did!..

During the investigation we also get to read about the homophobia, racism, bigotry in Wareduhra, and oh dear lord! sometimes it went on and on! and it became too much.

I will put the quotes under spoiler:

(view spoiler)

Nico as a secondary character was a fresh of breath air in this book, he balanced the complexity of the other characters. I love him but i am afraid he will be hurt more than he can handle.

I will go on with this series, because there are so many loose ends, i hope the author does not leave us hanging.

As for the audiobook, uuuuummm! Just get on board with it! At least Tristan Jame's voice is pleasant to listen to. I just wish he would give the characters distinct voices, it becomes difficult to tell who is talking.

Damn! I think I went a little overboard! Sorry! Overall, I will give this book a rating of **3.75** rounded up.

Kaje Harper says

This is an interesting mystery series with a gay cop and his (probably, closeted) bi partner. Deeply enemies-to-lovers, as Somerset tormented and abused Hazard when they were both in high school (while fighting an attraction to him.) The plot is convoluted, and there is a lot of backstory for both these guys that gets deeply in the way of solving the crime.

At the end of the book, there is a case resolution, but very little has resolved in the relationship of the MCs. And I want to note a caveat - this continues through the series. I read through book 3, and these guys are the kings of never talking. They edge toward important information and then fight, hit each other, run away, get drunk, or have sex with someone else. Their issues damage their police work over and over. At the end of book 3, they have more information about each other, but the essential misunderstandings are still there (which is where I'm bailing out.)

So if you're a fan of gay mysteries with deeply damaged, flawed and complex characters, and a puzzle-cast of suspects, by all means check these out. But you have to have deep patience on the relationship front, and a tolerance for wanting to knock the MCs heads together multiple times in each book.

Caz says

I've given this a B for narration and an A- for content at AudioGals so that's 4.5 stars

Pretty Pretty Boys is the first book in Gregory Ashe's six-book series about Missouri-based detectives Emery Hazard and John-Henry Somerset. I really enjoyed the story, which boasts a well-crafted, intricate mystery and combines it with the difficult, angsty relationship between the two men, who have known each other since boyhood and whose shared history is a complicated one. I'll say right now though, that while there are romantic elements to the book, they're low-key and mostly confined to some really delicious sexual tension between the leads, so if an HEA or HFN in every book is a must, I'm afraid you won't find it here. We're talking slow burn, with an emphasis on the sloooooooow – although reviews of later books lead me to believe that the guys get there eventually. Each instalment in the series takes place across a fairly short time-span, and the whole series only spans a few months, so it makes sense that the romantic side of things would take a few books to get going. Even though the wait is frustrating...

Anyway. For reasons listeners are not (yet) privy to, Detective Emery Hazard has been forced to quit his post in St. Louis. He's offered the choice between being demoted to a desk job or keeping his shield and going somewhere else – and chooses the latter option, deciding to return to his home town of Wahredua – which he remembers as a dismal backwater – intent on finally discovering what drove his first boyfriend to commit suicide some fifteen years earlier. The place doesn't hold many happy memories for him. The only openly gay kid in a small, insular town, he was tormented at school by a group of three boys, and he still bears the scars – both physical and emotional – of that bullying, so returning to Wahredua brings back all those memories and more. He knows one of his three persecutors is dead, and he soon discovers another is a wreck of a man... which leaves him wondering what happened to the third, the town's golden-boy; the drop-dead gorgeous, charming and popular John-Henry Somerset.

You can read the rest of this review at **AudioGals** .

Renée says

4.5 stars!

I am truly blown away by the writing of this author. This story won't be for everyone, but it rocked my socks thoroughly.

Mainly a police procedural with murder mystery suspense plot, these two **very** imperfect MCs stole the show.

Important points to note:

- there is little romance in this one. The UST is there, but there is clearly more development in the subsequent books.
- there is a lot of hate speech, aimed at multiple minorities and privileged classes. The author does a great job showing how extremists of any nature can do damage. There are also flashbacks of severe bullying.
- there are some editing issues

Re: the above. I couldn't care less. The story is so well written that I am already fully invested in the outcome of the sloooooow burn going on here between these two detectives.

The only way this can be ruined for me is if our MCs don't get their eventual HEA.

Line says

FUCK! Dammit... Motherfucking shit!

sigh If you're easily offended, please cover your ears, close your eyes and ignore this one, because there will be swearing...

Lots and **LOTS** of swearing.

Gregory Ashe delivered one of my favourite reads this year, and those of you who know me, know that I am a fucking, grumpy, not-easily-satisfied, reader.

Mr. Big Empty was a masterpiece and if each book in that series had not had a price of around \$9 I would have gobbled them up.

As it is I am spreading my book-buys for as many authors as possible, and I wait for sales and other offers, since I do spend a lot of money on books.

When I browsed the mystery-section on Amazon, saw the pretty cover, the price **AND** Ashe's name, I hit the 'one-click-buy'-button so fast my keyboard almost cracked.

Because, please let me reiterate: **I LOVED** 'Mr. Big Empty'!!!!!! Loved it!

Both are long books, but Ashe's writing in Mr. Big Empty drew me in and didn't let go until the end, and this one was (in parts) no exception.

Here though there were a few spelling-mistakes and one place where the names were switched, but otherwise the writing was all Ashe, and I liked that a lot.

Sadly the writing cannot make up for the story and the MCs. And at around 40% I started asking myself:
"why are you still reading this, Line?"

Normally I would have thrown in the towel and returned the book long before this, but Ashe is really talented IMO (his style is very effortless and flowy, and that works for me), and I hoped that he would redeem himself and make me like Somers better or *something*.

Also the mystery was clever and had me guessing 'til the end.

However I did not even come close to liking Somers better and my rage-face and my **WHY**-face was prominent throughout:

... It's a day later, and I am still **RAGING!**

The next part might be spoiler-y, not in regards to the mystery, but in regards to the MCs and their history, so proceed with caution

(view spoiler)

Fuck this shit, so very fucking much! Seriously I am **SO** pissed, because it doesn't make any sense!

The mystery and the people and the setting is kind of great, but having this much rage for one of the MCs and really not **BELIEVING** the relationship between the MCs, makes me so sad... And ragey, if that wasn't clear.

This book could have been brilliant, but fell completely apart...

And I'm still **ANGRY**: fuck you Somers, you fucking asshole dipshit coward! I hope you drown in your own vomit on one of your daily benders...

ugh

I'm pretty sure I can't make myself read the second book arriving here in December. Gregory Ashe is **STILL** on the way to becoming a favourite of mine (and that should really say something, considering how much I raged against this book), but I fucking hated these MCs and the choices made for their interconnected stories.

Sofia says

Well Ashe has decided for a long and probably torturous road for these two. I better take a long breath and prepare myself for the journey.

A good mix of crime, mystery and personal.

Wahredua

Katerina says

Sometimes you just need luck. Luck - to discover something really precious and just to take it. You never know what to expect. But I had such a feeling, a premonition.... and then I dipped in and I lost myself completely. I loved it, LOVED it so much. I'm head over heels in love with Hazard and Somerset. My goodness.... I'm so glad that was just the beginning.

Pretty Pretty Boys was an absolutely phenomenal surprise. I am so happy to have discovered Gregory Ashe. An extremely entertaining week is now behind me and I had the great pleasure of spending this week with Hazard and Somerset. These two detectives have become very close to my heart within a short time. Brooding Hazard and all American boy Somers. The two are multi-layered characters that you get to know little by little. And you will discover some skeletons in their closets too. The collaboration between the two is put to the test by a number of events from their school days together. These are very moving moments that happened back then and which changed both of them. But that was so many years ago and Somers is no longer who he was at that time. The mystery was very exciting and is not the means to an end. Somers and Hazard as partners in the job are an explosive couple. Hazard has no sense of tactful communication, but he has a clear mind and is an excellent detective. Somers has more tactfulness, however, his private problems rub off on his professional qualities. And the friction points between Somers and Hazard are just delicious. Did I mention the incredible UST? Yes. You get these until you tingle with excitement...

I had a really great time with these two guys and cannot wait to see them again. And on it goes!

Emery Hazard

John-Henry Somerset - Somers

Hazard's eyes snapped open, the gold as hot as sunlight, and he raised one hand. With a bloody thumb, he traced the line of Somers's cheekbone.

"Jesus, you're beautiful. I've wanted to tell you that for twenty years."

For twenty years, give or take, Hazard had been attracted to John-Henry Somerset. He wasn't going to try to deny it now.

Enjoy!

Kathleen says

There were things I liked about this first-in-series story. The core story was very good and how could you not like Somers. But what I didn't like stuck out like a sore thumb: Hazard's constant juvenile, adolescent reaction to... just about everything. How does a person like this have a career in law enforcement? His interaction with his chief, other officers, Somers, and the general public was simply unbelievable.

Another thing that irked me no end (and won't be of interest to most readers) was the author did minimal research about police firearms. Very few LEOs carry a .38 handgun in this day and age unless they've been grandfathered in. They are usually the older cops. These guns only hold six rounds vs. 10–15 rounds for a modern pistol, are slower to load, and a long trigger pull. Nor do cops carry their privately owned handguns as their primary weapon. Even most small agencies issue departmental weapons. Some cops do carry their own backup weapons (like a .22), but even that is against most agency rules and they do so at their own risk. This kind of stuff pulls me out of a story.

I found the book to be extremely frustrating at times, mostly due to Hazard's illogical, juvenile behavior. Here's someone who should have had professional counselling years prior to becoming a cop. How he remained employed as a cop passed even my ability to check my disbelief at the door. I also found the procedural back-and-forth bordering on unbearable at times and the book in general could have used a closer copy edit. This isn't a bad book... I guess this writer just isn't my cuppa.

Laxmama says

First book by this author for me which then got me started on to his other series. This one has me interested the whole book and I am looking forward to book 2, there was an interesting mystery, tons of backstory between the MC's. The writing is well done - for me an overall great read. What I most enjoyed is I feel like lately all I see is so much of the same old same old books- everything about this was different - but well done.

Ele says

4.5 stars

Was I living under a rock? Who is this author? Have I found a new favorite series? What is even happening.
