



Documenting Light

E.E. Ottoman

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Documenting Light

E.E. Ottoman

Documenting Light E.E. Ottoman

If you look for yourself in the past and see nothing, how do you know who you are? How do you know that you're supposed to be here?

When Wyatt brings an unidentified photograph to the local historical society, he hopes staff historian Grayson will tell him more about the people in the picture. The subjects in the mysterious photograph sit side by side, their hands close but not touching. One is dark, the other fair. Both wear men's suits.

Were they friends? Lovers? Business partners? Curiosity drives Grayson and Wyatt to dig deep for information, and the more they learn, the more they begin to wonder — about the photograph, and about themselves.

Grayson has lost his way. He misses the family and friends who anchored him before his transition and the confidence that drove him as a high-achieving graduate student. Wyatt lives in a similar limbo, caring for an ill mother, worrying about money, unsure how and when he might be able to express his nonbinary gender publicly. The growing attraction between Wyatt and Grayson is terrifying — and incredibly exciting.

As Grayson and Wyatt discover the power of love to provide them with safety and comfort in the present, they find new ways to write the unwritten history of their own lives and the lives of people like them. With sympathy and cutting insight, Ottoman offers a *tour de force* exploration of contemporary trans identity.

Documenting Light Details

Date : Published August 31st 2016 by Brain Mill Press

ISBN :

Author : E.E. Ottoman

Format : Kindle Edition 292 pages

Genre : Romance, Lgbt, Transgender, Contemporary, Gblt, Queer, Adult, Fiction

 [Download Documenting Light ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Documenting Light ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Documenting Light E.E. Ottoman

From Reader Review Documenting Light for online ebook

Chasia Lloyd says

Stunning, quiet contemporary romance between a trans man and a transfeminine nonbinary person. There is a lot of pain and anxiety unpacked between Wyatt and Grayson while they work on solving a mystery behind a photograph. More importantly, there is a ton of love and tenderness. I enjoyed this book very much.

tw: character with a past suicide attempt, misgendering

Rachel says

One of the best books I have read this year. Such a lovely, beautiful, quiet story. An excellent examination of the past and what it sometimes means for the future and how we shape our lives based on it. I absolutely loved this and all the emotions it made me feel.

Shira Glassman says

[we never actually find out who the men in the photograph were (hide spoiler)]

namericanwordcat says

This is rich romance filled with nerdy historical details of Upstate New York, queer history, and reading the text of photographs.

It is moving looking at falling in love between two working class people--one a trans man and one gender queered person not yet out.

There is angst and the ties of family and work in the middle of this winter. The writing is lyrical and academic and tender.

The love story hopeful but realistic. Very good

4.5!

I am always wanting an epilogue!

Sadie Forsythe says

4.5

I devoured this thing! It arrived with the afternoon post, about 3:30pm and I finished before going to sleep. I

hardly set it down long enough to eat dinner and put the kiddos to bed.

Grayson and Wyatt make an incredibly cute, though painfully awkward couple. They and their budding relationship are sweat and slow to boil. There's sex, but it's not the point. These are two people learning to love and accept each-other and themselves.

It's not a flashy plot, but it's darned effective. And some of this is affected by the importance of the mundane. They must make tea, cook dinner and wash dishes a dozen times in the course of the book. And while I felt that repetition, I also recognized that this was two people living life. Meals get made, laundry gets washed, carpets need vacuuming. People fall in love and find new purposes in life. Who needs billionaires bad boys or alien, monkey, space pirates for that?

I did think some of the book's themes were telegraphed a little too aggressively, eclipsing the story in favor of the occasionally didactic message. But more often than not it managed to find the right balance and the writing is just beautiful.

Iben says

The loveliness of this book was uplifting for me, after a long summer of stressing about gender issues, myself. Reading about a nonbinary MC, and feeling connected felt...healing, I guess. Both because I haven't dared to think of myself in those terms until recently, and because good books with well-written nonbinary characters are pretty rare gems.

Wyatt knew what it was to live with his cards permanently close to his chest, to always have a part of him unacknowledged and unseen.

Documenting Light feels personal for me, in a way that makes it hard for me to say much more about it. It is well written, well edited and not too angsty - but still doesn't *not* address real issues (so some trigger warnings are surely needed, but I'm not the best at those - please look up other reviews to make up your mind about this if that's something you need).

Most of all, Documenting Light is a book that made me feel less alone in the world. Thank you for writing it, EE Ottoman.

Kelly says

I really enjoyed the pace of this story and the gentleness of the romance. What really makes the book stand out, however, is the discussion of queer history, and the importance of claiming that history so that no one exists in a void.

K.J. Charles says

Well that was bloody good.

The characters. Grayson and Wyatt are so real and raw it pulls your heart out. Just trying to get by, struggling

with the endless crap, major and minor, the weary grind, and still managing to find hope and joy and inspiration in each other and for themselves. Incredibly human, for good or ill, and relatable.

The writing. I don't think I've read a romance where I highlighted so many quotes. This from Wyatt when he's trying to find the courage to tell someone, anyone, he's nonbinary:

When it came to trans people, he usually knew, no matter how stealth, real or passing. Like he'd been reaching out for something for so long, he didn't realise he still had his hand extended until someone reached back.

Nnnngg. So good.

And I loved the premise, the photograph, the thoughtfulness about history and power and representation. Just, loved it. A really intelligent, moving romance. You want this.

Maarja says

This was such a sweet, beautiful, slow story, and I really enjoyed it. It shone through that the book's events are obviously close to the author's heart. Although I'm not very knowledgeable at this, I felt the trans aspect was written very well, respectfully and honestly, showing the characters and their emotions realistically. The love scenes, while not many, were really hot, but also tender and loving. And finally, the historical research part of the book was fascinating! I kind of hope the author might write a follow-up, about the progress of their research, maybe Wyatt coming out to their family, them building a life together? But even if not, the book ended at a nice place - it's just my greediness talking here. :)

♣ Irish Smurfétté ♣ says

Full reviewage on Prism Book Alliance®

Everyone should be reading this book. Right now. Skip this effing review because you should be reading and experiencing and forever carrying this book with you. Yep, everyone.

Now, if you insist on reading this review, I thank you, but in return I insist you read this story.

Wyatt is kind, caring, and in tune with their siblings and their mom. They work downtown for a judge on sensitive cases. The family has had struggles, including right now with their mother living with the beginning stages of Alzheimer's. Wyatt is hard on themselves, overly so sometimes, though I understand where it comes from. The pain runs deep, yet hope for the future and its possibilities are irrepressibly bright.

Grayson is quiet but deliberate, and he's confident in his work as a curator at the local historical society in Binghamton. He's a researcher through and through, the love of it coursing through his soul. His family situation is much different than Wyatt's. The pain of past experiences, the anguish, doubt, and the hope are the same. Will they be able to force off the masks they each wear and realize this, take refuge in it, celebrate

and live it? That's the story we have here.

Sometimes when you did historical research, you hit a dead end and that was that – nothing more to find. Still, it was going to hurt to tell Wyatt. He'd been so excited to identify the people in this photograph.

This is the spark that leads to the meeting of our two main characters, wanting to discover who are the two men in a nearly century old picture, what was their story. The above passage reflects two things: Ottoman is deep inside the heads of both Grayson and Wyatt, giving us crystal clear insight to their feelings and how they see themselves fitting, or not, into this world; but on the flip side, we're told more than we're shown about the connection that begins to build between them throughout this story. I sometimes felt more of a connection to the story itself than either of Grayson or Wyatt. However, Ottoman brings their emotions to the surface at full speed, even in the quiet moments, and they run the gamut. Yup, we have complex human people here. I feel the sadness, disappointment, self-criticism, and the hope, desire, and drive to demand of life what each of them wants.

I think some of this disconnect comes by way of too-simple sentence structure. It doesn't happen often but, when it does, it works to cut down the all too real emotional build taking place between Wyatt and Grayson, and between Wyatt and their family to a lesser but just as important extent. However, through most of this story, I'm right there with them, feeling, understanding, pulling for them, fighting the anger and isolation, and wanting a world where their masks are unnecessary. This is a personal story.

Throughout most of this, Ottoman's prose is beautiful, spot on, and works in harmony with the story. Imagery is important in conveying, not just physical place and how the characters fit inside it but, the emotional state of mind of a character. It's valuable, and I can never get enough:

Hands shoved in his pockets, he looked over the river. It was high now, fat with the melted snow, although not as high as it would be in spring.

(I do not miss upstate NY wintertime. :))

I love Ottoman's use and examination of history and how it's subjective, not objective as it's often approached and presented, and can't help but be recorded and studied through the personal prism of each of us. The deep need for connection to both the present and that past that many of us feel is made relatable and important, poignant and revealing through that single photograph, to begin, and more as Wyatt and Grayson deal with their own. The connection between Grayson and Wyatt wavered here and there for me, but the connection I felt with each of them is a forever thing for me.

"All I want..." Their voice was soft. "... is the possibility that there is a space for people like me to exist in history too. To have a past. To look back with pride and say people like me lived and loved and endured. That's all I want."

If, as a society, we didn't impose a system of such binary-centric gender identity and strictly defined sexuality, if we chucked all that out the window, the pressure felt by many (most of us?) to fit in, hide, ignore, live in fear, would disappear. This would be good for everyone. We're all worthy. Until that happens, the struggle continues and we have to keep working towards inclusion and making it real in everyday life.

I recommend this book to everyone: this is the kind of fiction everyone can read, wade through the emotions, and gain a better understanding of ourselves and our fellow human beings, one of the reasons we're all here.

To witness something was to give it a life of its own outside of yourself. Wyatt felt that was the most fitting for speaking of the past.

And a damn good way to improve the present and promise the future.

Izzy says

Full Review on www.allaboutromance.com/book-review/d...

This is a sweet, gentle romance and in my opinion an important book.

*For those of us who have gone before.
Your stories will not be forgotten.*

Wyatt's mother is in failing health due to Alzheimer's, so he, his sister and her fiancé are moving her into an apartment. They hope it will be easier for her there than at the large family farm. While at the farm, Wyatt finds a photo hidden between the ceiling beams and insulation. This photo is obviously old and pictures two men sitting either side of a table. There is a nervousness about their expressions and the candid nature of the portrait calls to Wyatt. He approaches the local historical society to see if they can shed light on the photo and those pictured.

Help comes in the form of Grayson, a trans man and very well qualified historical researcher. Grayson works part-time in a deli and part-time at the historical society, as neither job is well paid. However, history is his joy and despite being disowned by most of his family when he transitioned, he strives to keep his skills and love for history alive.

After a slightly disastrous first date, mainly due to Wyatt's awkward behaviour, Wyatt decides to try again and makes the big decision to explain by coming out for the first time as genderqueer, to Grayson. During an emotional conversation, Wyatt asks that Grayson uses the gender neutral pronouns – they/their/them – as I shall from now on, where relevant, in this review. Mutual interest in the lives behind the photo binds the two closer, as they begin a relationship which allows them to be themselves.

There is something so intimate about the bond between Wyatt and Grayson that made me feel grateful to be allowed into their world for a while. The plot is set against the backdrop of family and financial worries, but together, Wyatt and Grayson face both with tenderness and love. Grayson has an accepting brother with two little girls who love Uncle Grayson, and Wyatt's sister and Mother know they are attracted to men, but not that they are genderqueer / nonbinary.

Generally, people react badly to what they don't understand. I think readers are the same and they avoid novels, even romantic ones where they do not understand the protagonists. Documenting Light shows that love is between people and that queer people are not to be feared. It is sad that lovers and their stories should have to be explained. However, showing by example in enjoyable romantic novels like this will maybe help, and reduce the concern often displayed in a currently heteronormative society.

Grayson and Wyatt, by searching for answers regarding the two men in an old photo, reveal to the reader the reality of being erased from history and often abused in life. There are some beautiful insightful passages – like this one where Wyatt wonders how Grayson will react to them –

When it came to trans people, he usually knew, no matter how stealth, real or passing. Like he'd been reaching out for something for so long, he didn't realize he still had his hand extended until someone reached back...

Unease settled on him when he thought about the way some binary trans people were toward nonbinary

trans people like him. Would Grayson see him? Geeky, unsure, but also with a nice smile, pretty hands – and Wyatt liked to think he was funny...

Or would Grayson just see a man in a dress?

The story of their search for information about the photo is interwoven around their love story, family troubles and what Grayson has had to endure in his young life for being true to himself. The author doesn't harp on about this, but rather, slowly reveals the consequences of his family's abandonment and its impact on Grayson's life.

Their research becomes a method of revealing themselves to each other, whilst revealing hints about the treatment of queer history, women's history and the history of people of colour and marginalised backgrounds. It was fascinating to read about the enormity of history while enjoying the intimate, small story of two people falling in love.

I said that I felt this book is important – I do. If people fear what they do not know then this gentle sweet story can give any reader an insight into what it is like to live and love, as an ordinary trans / queer person in the twenty-first century. More than that, it urges the reader to consider what it is like to be erased from history...

Mel says

I've been a fan of EE's for nearly two years now and I've read and admired all their work. They has a mention on my very-favourite-authors list (containing only 4 authors) and that's due to them having made an actual lasting change in my life.

With Documenting Light they has published their first contemporary romance, venturing out of their SFF (comfort) zone. It is an important book and it is just as much their usual brand as it is different – meaning they is true to themselves, yet claiming new territory.

Documenting Light is a very quiet and laid-back book. It's slow and lovely and the fact that it takes place in winter only highlights that. As always, EE is very gentle with their characters and caring. They takes their time to introduce them, gives them a background and family, and moreover, writes them a happy ending that is exactly made just for them.

Documenting Light is a love story about two very real people and it has nothing of the fairytale like romance elements we so often find in books of the romance genre. At this point, it gets a bit tricky since I don't want to give anything away... But, sometimes life is difficult – often, actually – and problems don't go away only because we find a partner. When reading a book, I sometimes catch myself musing about what the author probably intends to write for the characters to give them the best happily ever after. It's just so neat. There's a problem and look, here's the solution. That's where Documenting Light is different and that's one of the things I like the most about this book, because it challenges the standard romance narrative and instead of giving us romantic cures for problems, we have just two people getting together and sharing their every day and personal struggles, which is even more fulfilling to read about, since we're shown a story of love that could very well be us.

Apart from the romance, the search for the people in the old photograph takes up an important role in the book as well.

It was odd, when he stopped to think about it, to never see yourself reflected in history, to have

no sense of yourself in time. The idea that you could be linked to others across time and space based on shared experience—it had always seemed like it didn't apply to people like him.

I really liked this and was curious about the men in the photo and wanted to get to know their story. Where are they from? Why was their photo taken and why was it hidden in the house? It was absolutely engrossing (although I am not at all that interested in history) and also allowed for good pacing and plot development and the musings about research and science today being heteronormative, just like everything else, were really interesting, too.

I have only two very small niggles here. In the last third of the book the flow is a little bit missing, or rather the chapters/story lines feel a little bit next to each other, while before it felt more as a whole. I also do not entirely buy how abruptly Wyatt and Grayson get intimate with each other, since everything thus far had been going so slow and hesitant.

I hope it is not too pretentious of me to claim that we can find a lot of EE in this book and in this it is and feels very much like an own voices book. Their being trans themselves and their fight for equality shines through the pages and their love for history and research is palpable. I believe that this book is very close to their heart and I'm thrilled that they shared this with us.

I loved reading this book very much. It's unique, very well written, and I hope you'll give it a try! Highly recommended.

In case you missed it, have a look at the interview with EE here...

Genre: contemporary romance

Tags: trans, queer history

Rating: 4.5 stars

Blog: Review for Just Love Romance

Disclosure: ARC in exchange for review, *buys anyway*

Apolishedreader says

This is a lovely story. I am unsure how to review this story and give it justice, but I think everyone should read it.

Grayson and Wyatt meet over a photo that Wyatt found hidden away. Wyatt is immediately intrigued by the photo and wants to learn more about the two men pictured.

Along with growing as individuals, their relationship deepens as they research this photograph.

They are both complex individuals in their own unique ways. Grayson transitioned a couple of years before and he is still working through the realities of that when he meets Wyatt. Wyatt is dealing with an ill mother and their own feelings that, though they understand on a personal level, has not been able to vocalize to others.

They are beautiful and sweet and real. These two are going through real life situations, handling them in such a realistic way that you forget you are reading a fictional novel. They are fleshed out as individuals and their story is clear and concise. And, when I was done reading this one, I sighed deeply and daydreamed about Wyatt and Grayson's future. So, dear author, should you ever decide to share any more of their story I would be happy to read all about them.

This book makes you think and feel. It makes you think about the history of whole demographics of people whose stories are left untold, buried, lost, forgotten. It makes you mourn for those stories that you will never know. It makes you want to learn more about people today so that their stories will not be forgotten. And it makes you fall in love, not just with a story but with two people who deserve a happy ever after.

Ellie says

Oh, that was so sweet and tender and heart-warming! Everybody needs love and affection and a place in the world and they the right to it, they deserve it and when get the chance to have it, it can be beautiful!

Full review which is also posted on Ellie Reads Fiction

This book is an example of why I love reading in general and reading romance in particular, stories like this one are magical and they help us see and relate to each other as human beings regardless of the differences between us.

The romance between Grayson and Wyatt is slow going, unassuming, it takes time to develop, all this making it real. There is a strong attraction but both of them are shy, a bit insecure, coming to terms with their own selves and being with another person did not come easily to either of them. Add to this some serious real-life family/professional issues they were dealing with and connecting with another person the way they did was both soothing and taxing on them.

The need for human connection, for acceptance especially for marginalized people, though I really feel most people have this need and most of us feel marginalised in one way or another. I loved how understated this story was, just ordinary, yet special people, struggling to find their place in life. That desire not to be alone and to have someone by your side, someone you can share yourself with, it spoke to me so much.

My only minor quibble is that at times the messages of the story came off as too strong to the point of being didactic. I liked the easy flow of the writing, though occasionally the unfolding of the story seemed too slow, falling too much into scientific discussion of historical research rather than following the characters on their journey towards happiness/fulfillment.

I very much liked focus the author put on the everyday aspects of life - two people meet, fall in love and slowly mesh their lives together. There are awkward moments, and setbacks and both welcome and hurtful intrusions of family but ultimately it's a story of two people dealing with being trans who find the way to be a couple, to love themselves and each other.

Lenore says

Interesting premise (well researched too), amateurish writing.
