



Color of You

C.S. Poe

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Bowen Merlin—yes, that's his real name—accepts a position in the quaint town of Lancaster, New Hampshire as the high school band director. He leaves New York City for the snowy countryside of New England just in time for the holidays. With class, homework, after school activities, and a surprise Christmas concert to plan and rehearse, Bowen is plenty busy. And since he's never had much luck with romance, factoring in time to find Mr. Right isn't a priority....

Until he meets the proprietor of Snowy Ridge Apple Orchard, Felix Hansen. Suddenly, true love seems like a possibility for the first time in Bowen's life. The two are a perfect match and fill the skipped beats of each other's hearts. But as wonderful as Felix seems, he's harboring scars that could end their budding relationship when someone in town goes to great lengths to sabotage their careers.

If Bowen is to survive the holidays, he'll need to lean on old friends and new, convince Felix he's worth any hardship, and prove they can come out of the catastrophe stronger if they do so together.

Color of You Details

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From Reader Review Color of You for online ebook

CrabbyPatty says

Tall, skinny redhead Bowen is the new music teacher in Lancaster, New Hampshire and he's a wildly talented musician with sound-to-color synesthesia. Basically, his senses are "cross-wired" so he *sees* sound. "Like fireworks. Explosions of color." Classic music is white and blue, his bestie Scarlet has a deep pink voice, pop music is lots of pinks and purples, etc. Bowen doesn't come to town looking for love ...

But maybe, somewhere out there, was the man of my dreams. And he couldn't wait to settle down with a cello-playing, bow-tie-wearing teacher who slathers on SPF50 thoroughly before every outing.

Felix Hansen ("He had this rugged-meets-GQ look [...] with a jawline to kill for") owns an apple orchard in Lancaster (setting of C.S. Poe's "Joy") and is a divorced father with a teenage son Alan. When Bowen Merlin meets-cute Felix by spilling apple cider on his coat, Bowen thinks:

His voice sounded like amber. It was glittery and gold and slightly melodic, dancing before my eyes.

What follows is a courtship that beautifully unfolds: Bowen defying society's expectation that he conform to his "non-alpha-guy appearance" by being very comfortably dominant in the bedroom, while Felix needs "a partner who treats me like an equal but who ... respects I'm ... passive." Their sexual chemistry is undeniable and their relationship is easy and *very* satisfying. My only niggle is we get Bowen's POV throughout and I would have loved Felix's POV as well.

The tension and angst in the story comes from homophobes in the school and community that wreak havoc on the two men's lives. While I madly adored the love story here, the external conflicts didn't work as well for me, seeming a bit too far-fetched, but I realize that I'm probably in the minority here.

I loved this book in so many ways - the great characters, both primary and secondary, the depth of the relationship between Bowen and Felix, the quaint/quirky small town setting, and the epilogue was all kinds of perfect. 4.5 stars.

I received an ARC from Dreamspinner Press in exchange for an honest review.

Review also posted at Gay Book Reviews - check it out!

Ami says

2.5 stars

At first I think it is cute -- Bowen Merlin and his tendency to blurt things out plus sound-to-color synesthesia make him an interesting character.

BUT then all the cuteness get a bit tiresome for me. The "mystery" that happens around 70% mark ends up

feeling like an attempt to inject some actions or excitement rather than a well thought-of plot.

PLUS, it is pretty much insta-everything as well and I'm a HUGE fan of slow burn in romance. When everything happens within 22 days, and one of the characters says "*no one's ever made me feel really loved from the inside out*" after just 11 days, yeah, well, let's just say that it kills my enjoyment pretty much.

I'm not saying that ALL insta-cases are bad, there are some stories that work for me; it depends on the situation or the storytelling. This one, unfortunately, one that doesn't work.

Karen says

Apparently I've stumbled onto a Christmas story...this is what happens when you say see the authors name, say gimme and don't read the blurb...good thing I love Christmas, LOL!!!

And once again it's full review time...

Oh Christmas Tree, Oh Christmas Tree....how lovely are thy branches..

See this is what happens when you see the authors name and the narrators name and you go gimme' I want that...you end up reading a Christmas story.

There was a lot about this story that I enjoyed. First off we've got a high school music teacher who wears bow ties...sorry, my high school music teacher wore bow ties and I have to admit he was really nice...not exactly a hottie...although he did have two sons...oops, sorry I squirreled back to the story. Bowen also has a rare condition known as Chromesthesia, a form of synesthesia in which sounds are translated to colors by the mind and for Bowen it also contributed to his ability to have perfect pitch.

Bowen Merlin has accepted a position teaching music in Lancaster, New Hampshire. So he's packed up his life in New York leaving behind his best friend and roommate, Rachel and heads for the beautiful New England countryside. Where he quickly learns that he's not only teaching music but with only a two or three weeks to go before the holidays he's also got a Christmas concert to organize and life quickly becomes busy but not to busy to keep him from noticing the Felix Hansen, owner of Snowy Ridge Apple Orchard. Neither of these men are what they appear to be but what Bowen quickly realizes is that what they are is a match made in heaven. While most people wouldn't realize it Bowen likes to be the one in charge, while Felix...well, he's more than happy to relinquish control...or at least he would if he could just trust someone enough. Felix has scars and they're not all on the outside but Bowen's determined to show Felix that what they could have together is worth taking a risk.

I really liked Bowen. His upbeat and quietly determined personality was just what Felix needed. Felix's past hasn't been good. He's been hurt by the person he loves. The person he should have been able to trust above all else but they failed him.

As if there isn't enough going on Felix and Bowen suddenly find themselves embroiled in events that could not only tear them apart but ruin them both professionally as well. I honestly would have gotten more into this part of the story if it had been introduced a bit sooner and the resolution hadn't occurred quite so readily and easily.

Overall, I enjoyed this story and events moved at a steady pace from start to finish but I did feel a little let down by the resolution at the end, it just all seemed a little too quick and easy, but in spite of this I was left having a very enjoyable 6+ hour listening event thanks to the as always wonderful audio narrations of Greg Boudreax. So maybe this wasn't totally a 4 star read...I don't know but it was definitely a 4 star listen.

An audio book of 'Color of You' was graciously provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Debra says

Reviewed for Sinfully.

This story brought me so much joy and happiness. If I told you everything I loved about this book I'd basically just be retelling the whole story. I was immediately drawn in and practically read it straight through with a smile on my face most of the time.

Red-headed, bow tie wearing Bowen Merlin is the new music teacher in the small town of Lancaster, NH (which may be familiar if you read the author's novella Joy). Bowen has sound-to-color synesthesia, which allows him to see the color of music and voices. Spilling hot cider on the gorgeous Felix Hansen isn't the best way to make a first impression. He's immediately drawn to the beauty of Felix's voice and its amber color, not to mention the man himself. Bowen's insta-crush is strong and he's pretty dejected when Felix rejects his offer to go for a drink.

Felix comes off a bit shy but he quickly recovers and finds a way to let Bo know he's interested. This is just about the time Bo finds out one of his new students is Felix's son and that there is something in Felix's past that has left him scarred and unsure, so much so he hasn't dated in years. Bo is shocked to realize that with this man, none of it is a deal breaker. Bo has always been looking for a more submissive man, the kind he's usually stereotyped as, but someone who can be an equal in all other ways and it quickly becomes clear that Felix fits the bill perfectly.

As the days to Christmas countdown, the men juggle their jobs and their budding romance. I enjoyed every moment these men spent together, even when they weren't in the same room – cute texting and some smoking phone sex included. They communicate well, they have fun and they have crazy hot chemistry. There's dirty talk and just a touch of kink and it sizzled, but there was also plenty of romance and sweetness. Neither of those two is lacking when it comes to romancing each other and though the relationship does move pretty quickly, it all played out naturally.

There is a good cast of secondary characters including Felix's 15 year old son Alan, Bo's best friend Scarlet, and his new coworker Stephen. There are also a few appearances by the men we met in Joy who join forces with the others to help out Felix and Bo. Although things got a bit "Scooby crew" when it came to figuring out who was out to get Felix and there was a villain who was almost too stupid to be a functioning adult when it came down to it, I mostly didn't care because I was having so much fun laughing at their banter and enjoying the group pulling together and becoming a family of friends.

In the true holiday spirit, their friends and neighbors rally around Bo and Felix in their time of trouble to help save the day. With a sweet epilogue set a year later the book left me with a smile and possibly a happy tear or two.

C.S. Poe hit all the right notes in this story and it completely charmed me from the first page. Sweet, sexy, romantic, fun and tender, with a touch of holiday spirit. I would love to see more of Bo and Felix in the future. I know there's at least one more man in the story who deserves his own happy ever after.

C.S. Poe says

BOOK:

Dreamspinner Press: bit.ly/ColorYouDSP

Amazon: bit.ly/ColorYouAMZ

Barnes & Noble: bit.ly/ColorYouBaN

Google Play: bit.ly/ColorYouGoPI

iBooks: bit.ly/ColorYouITUN

Kobo: bit.ly/ColorYouKo

AUDIO:

Audible: bit.ly/ColorYouAUD

Amazon: bit.ly/ColorYouAMZAUD

*Read the excerpt on Goodreads under 'Kindle Edition'

Chris, the Dalek King says

Lancaster, New Hampshire is pretty much a Christmas-card kind of town. It just also happens to be worlds away from the kind of place that Merlin—no, not that one—is used to living in. But while it might not be New York, Lancaster does have its silver linings. And Felix Hansen might just be the most shiny silverest lining of them all. If only Merlin could get the guy to give him a chance. It probably doesn't help that Merlin is Felix's son's new music teacher, or that Felix has rather noticeable scars—both literally and figuratively—but in small-town New Hampshire there really isn't a whole lot to do. Wooing the nice apple-orchard owner over Christmas can't be that hard, can it?

My second C.S. Poe book for the month, the *Color of You* is pretty much everything I have come to expect from this author. Well written story, relatable characters, and a plot that keeps me turning pages way longer than I probably should be. It is also very much Christmas and Holiday Cheer...with a dash of mystery (just a *dash*) thrown in.

I have to admit, though, that I never really got over imagining actor Colin Morgan whenever the name Merlin was on page—damn you, years of fandom—but it quickly became something I could at least put in the back of my mind. Geeky, hipster-ish, Merlin was rather adorable in his own right, and Felix’s standoffishness really worked for me as a contrast to Merlin. And yeah, I kinda want my Christmas stories to be sweet and adorable, and this story more than gave that to me.

The ending—my only gripe, really—was a bit too tv-special. I don’t want to go into what exactly happened because that kinda ruins the last third of the story, but I will say a lot of it pushed the bounds of reality or common sense.

While the story turned a bit too much *Hallmark*—at least for my own tastes—near the end, I really enjoyed this story. So much so that I read it like three weeks before the deadline for this review came up. I was only going to read a chapter or two to see what it felt like, and three hours later I was finishing up the story and looking around for any crumbs I could lick off the metaphorical plate. I know people are going to be slowly packing up the holiday gear soon, and holiday stories are about to be relegated to the tbr pile for next year, but if you have some downtime in the next few days (or you desperately need some alone time away from all your family) I’d say give this one a go.

This book was provided free in exchange for a fair and honest review for Love Bytes. Go there to check out other reviews, author interviews, and all those awesome giveaways. Click below.

Heather C says

Loved this book! Couldn’t stop reading! 4.5 stars because the mystery plot was a little disappointing.

Nerea says

2.5*

I really expected to love this book. I’m a huge fan of Snow and winter saga and others short stories from this author... but this one has my kryptonite : THE INSTA-LOVE :(

I wish we had some more scenes between the mcs before the action starts. Maybe that was what makes me difficult to find a connexion between them.

Moreover, the small mystery and resolution was a bit too simple :/

On the positive side, the characters are cute good guys so I really like them. But as I told before I wish this has a slower and more entertaining knowledge of the other MC :/

?♥? Michaelle & ♥? says

4 Stars

Okay, so...let's start by saying that this book is everything I wish this other book (where a lonely single dad

meets his kid's out & proud teacher) had been. Yes, the specifics are different - but it's those differences that really appealed to me here. Like a twink-ish Ginger dominant taking charge of this big, shy, burly guy. Unf. (More of that please.) And a teen that acts his age. And the lack of a mentally unhinged ex creating drama. (There's enough of that from the antagonists.)

The writing was great, and most of the side characters, as well as the MCs, really shine in this one (as I think they do in every other CSP story I've read so far). If it weren't for the slightly caricaturistic portrayal of the "bad guy" and his stereotypical posse, I'd have rated this a little higher. But, stereotypes often portray how some people actually do act, so there's always that bit of truth in there (especially when it comes to the 'phobes). I'm not sure how a (view spoiler) gets that job being *that* stupid - I mean, come on...he didn't even bother trying to cover his tracks - so I guess I just expected a tad more from the "mystery" aspect since CSP does "whodunit" really well in her other books .

But still, I really did enjoy this holiday tale...and **once again** Greg nailed the narration. He gave each of the voices their own sound and personality, even the side characters. Seriously, is there anything he **can't** perform well? I'm not taking that bet...

Eugenia says

3.7 Stars.....I really enjoyed this tale by C.S. Poe set in the same universe as her novella, Joy. Insta-crush leading to insta-love in a matter of a week or two did not detract from the sweetness of the story, nor from the uniqueness of the characters.

Here the typical stereotypes of an alpha male and an submissive man are turned upside down. I found this a refreshing twist on a story that otherwise could have fallen into ho-hum land for me.

Again, Poe's writing helped add interest to this tale, especially in the raunchy, dirty talk flying out of our bow-tied music teacher. Ya, the sex scenes were hot.

Enjoy!

Bitchie says

[fire, breakup

BWT (Belen) says

Told in music teacher Bowen Merlin's single POV *Color of You* is set in the small town of Lancaster, New Hampshire. Bowen is in for a few shocks after moving up from New York city - from the bitter cold, to how welcoming his students are, to meeting quiet, but gorgeous, Felix Hansen.

When the relationship that develops between Bo and Felix heats up and comes out not everyone in town is

happy about it and the consequences are severe. Luckily Bo has his bestie, Scarlett, from New York, a foul-mouthed tattoo artist with cotton candy-colored locks and a fierce protective streak, and some new friends, along with Felix at his back.

Greg Tremblay, under his sexier Boudreax brand, does a great job with character voices and bringing a realism to the story and romance. Sure they fall in love in less than a month, but Greg, reading Poe's words, makes it not only believable, but I was cheering Bo and Felix on.

Color of You is a cute romance, filled with interesting elements and substance, great characters - both main and secondary, plenty of super hot and steamy sexy times, and a fantastic epilogue HEA.

This is a delightful listen, and for those who love sexy dirty talk and a switch up of the smaller man being the alpha and the bigger guy being more submissive, this one should definitely be on your radar!

4.5 Stars

Audio review copy of Color of You provided by Dreamspinner Press in exchange for an honest review.

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

~◊~**Doxni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~◊~ says**

~3.5~

I really enjoyed about three-fourths of this story. **Both MCs are sweet as hell, and I was happy to see a femme guy getting all toppy.**

I liked the small-town setting, the hurt/comfort overtones (Felix was injured in a fire years ago and carries physical and emotional scars), and the way music and synesthesia were woven into the story.

Bowen sees sounds as colors. Felix's voice is a warm amber, a sound Bowen can't forget. Bowen is endearingly awkward, but Felix's shy, withdrawn persona didn't quite match that of a successful business owner.

I think the story desperately needed Felix's POV. While I loved Bowen, I never felt like I got to know Felix.

But my main quibble is the dramatic turn of events toward the end. It's like you're walking along smelling the flowers when **BAM!** you get smacked in the face with a giant fish like WHOA.

The homophobia plot line wasn't necessary, and the way the investigation progressed was just ridiculous. Everything was at once too DRAMA-LLAMA and too easily resolved.

Had Bowen been in town teaching longer than three weeks, the ending would have been more believable; as it were, the way the students rallied around him, coupled with the Insta Love, about put me into a sugar coma.

Rounded up to 4 stars because this was a quick read with a decent amount of steam and I can't fault Poe's engaging writing style.

Joyfully Jay says

Updated for audiobook review.

Read Michelle's audio review in its entirety here.

A Joyfully Jay review.

5 stars

I SO loved this book! Bowen and Felix meet cute, and it was love at first sight...for them and for me. Both men are a little awkward with each other, but that doesn't last long. They fall for each other pretty quickly, but that's not an issue. I'm a believer in love at first sight and it felt right. Also, they become intimate almost right away. Again, not an issue. The first time they have phone sex was so sweet, and even though the talking was not dirty, just romantic, it made my heart beat a little faster. Bowen and Felix are incredibly sexy together. Bowen is awesome with the dirty talk. I love a good dirty talker, and C.S. Poe wrote those scenes very well.

Speaking of scenes that were written well, I have to compliment the author here. Bowen has a condition...not a bad one, just interesting...that allows him to actually see music. It's called synesthesia, and it's quite rare. I'd never heard of it before, so I found this to be interesting. It actually played an important role in the story and it helps Bowen and Felix to be even more charming...if that's even possible.

Read Kenna's review in its entirety here.

Candice says

I absolutely adored this story! I loved both Bowen and Felix.

I haven't been reading much because life has been so hectic and I'm just tired of adulting, but Color of You brought so many smiles to my tired face. It was everything I wanted and more. I loved the setting. I loved the characters. I loved the secondary characters (and that rarely happens). I even loved the kids! I don't like apple things, except for plain apples, but this story made me want to eat apple things. HA!

CS Poe is quickly becoming a go-to author for me.
