



Junk

Josephine Myles

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Letting go is the first step to healing...or bringing it all crashing down.

When an avalanche of books cuts off access to his living room, university librarian Jasper Richardson can no longer ignore the truth. His ever-growing piles of books, magazines and newspapers can no longer be classified as a “collection”. It’s a hoard, and he needs professional help.

Professional clutter clearer and counselor Lewis Miller thinks he’s seen it all, but even he has to admit he’s shocked. Not so much by the state of Jasper’s house, but by the level of attraction he still feels for the sexy bookworm he remembers from school.

What a shame that Lewis’s ethical code forbids relationships with clients. As Jasper makes slow but steady progress, though, the magnetic pull between them is so strong even Lewis is having trouble convincing himself it’s a temporary emotional attachment arising from the therapeutic process.

Jasper longs to prove to Lewis that this is the real deal. But first he’ll have to lay bare the root of his hoarding problem...and reveal the dark secret hidden behind his walls of books.

Product Warnings

Contains a level-headed counselor with a secret addiction, a bespectacled geek with a sweet tooth, a killer “to-be-read” pile, embarrassing parents, a van called Alice, and deliciously British slang.

Junk Details

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Author : Josephine Myles

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From Reader Review Junk for online ebook

Tina says

Jasper has been living as a hoarder since his mother died years ago. His house is filled with books and newspapers. As he is a librarian and surrounded by books day by day, he can't help himself but collect them. He wants the books to stay safe in his care.

Lewis, still living with his parents at the age of thirty (wtf?), is a professional clutter clearer and counselor. He helps Jasper deal with his hoarding problem and the two of them are immediately attracted to each other. Lewis isn't the perfect man either, he has his own issues and doesn't want to get involved with a client. His own feelings though don't ask for ethical barriers...

The first half of the book was a bit hard to read. Although I instantly fell in love with both of the guys I think the main focus stays a bit too long only on Jasper's OCD's. I'm sure the building-up is necessary, but I enjoyed it immensely when the romance-part got the priority it deserved. I loved that Lewis is so gentle and careful with Jasper. He doesn't try to force Jasper into clearing his clutter, he gives him the time and the space Jasper needs to do it by himself. The process Jasper and Lewis go through is fascinating, and the romance very sweet.

The supporting characters are awesome, too. Carroll, Lewis' sister is great and his parents are so hilarious with their nude fetish. I really liked Jasper's friend Mas, who is yearning for love and friendship, and I'm looking forward to reading his story. :)

Thanks to Bev, Gina and Macky for another awesome buddy read. :)

Loederkoningin says

It's a lousy job, but someone's gotta be the odd one out there. And who is more experienced than I, the *Magnificent Anti-Raver*? :p

Okay, whatever. I'm going to quickly scribble down my thoughts here. Will keep things very short and to the point this time. This book wasn't for me. No issues with the writing itself, which was effective and enjoyably interspersed with British charm and humor. And then there was Jos, the awfully Dutch Dutchman, whose attitude hit close to home and made me laugh. At first I was excited about the hoarder concept as well. It's an item that's really hot on TV these days, and with good reason. Slightly wonky individuals who transform their homes into dumps and are then tenderly coerced into tidying up...well, it makes for juicy television, with the added bonus that your own home suddenly seems incredibly spotless.

However, I thought the author really milked the concept here. Kept describing the situation over and over again (the guy's a hoarder. He therefore hoards things. I got that after the first few descriptions of his home). With acne-scarring, old-fashioned glasses and all sorts of insecurities, the MCs were both what you would consider perfectly normal guys. Maybe that's refreshing, yes. But it doesn't make one greatly anticipate the sex-scenes. When you add to that the fact that the hoarder guy obviously had to work through unresolved

traumas, mostly about his dead mother, who he therefore brought up throughout the story (mama this, mama that)..

I don't know about you, but panicky mama-boys are one hell of a mood killer for me.

Then, in what felt like a contrived attempt to create drama and stretch out the UST in an already very slow-paced and lengthy book, the other MC constantly gave mixed signals because he felt starting a relationship with the hoarder would be 'unethical'. At some point, I just didn't appreciate being played like a puppet on a string anymore and sin-skipped to the ending.

All things considered, I can see why others would enjoy *Junk*, but it was too dowdy and dull for my tastes. Never mind though, I'll just keep playing that m/m *meadow*.

Heidi Cullinan says

I have autobuy authors, and one of them is Josephine Myles. As soon as her books come up for preorder on Amazon, I click the green button, and often I'm so excited a book is coming that I do it several different times, which makes Amazon point out I can't buy the book because I already did. So you can imagine my squeal when she asked if I would mind giving her a quote for her upcoming release, *Junk*. Of course I didn't mind—but now I got to read it EARLY! I WIN GOODREADS.

Having finished a few days ago, this is what I have to say about *Junk*: If you love romantic tension, that squishy, delicious yearning that comes from knowing two people should be together but can't be quite yet, if your favorite thing in the world is watching the sweet, delicious dance of souls showing their vulnerable sides in hopes of connecting (and of course they do eventually connect)—then this book is for you. Stop what you're doing and go buy yourself some *Junk*.

The premise of *Junk* is that Jasper is a book hoarder who hires and then falls in love with Lewis, a clutter specialist. If you're looking for a vulnerable hero, look no farther than Jasper. He's smart, he's geek-sexy, and he has some terrible shadows in his past, ones he has tried to wall off with books, magazines and newspapers. I admit when I saw the book was about hoarding, I got nervous. My husband and daughter love watching the reality show *Hoarders*, and my associations with the disease are not good. They like it because they both suffer from clinical anxiety, and they do a delicate dance while the watch of going, "Thank God I'm not that bad" and recognizing their mental scripts in the hands of someone who feels compelled to save their own feces. There are no feces in *Junk*. There's no animal hoarding, no rotten food, none of the things that hoarders are known for that send most of us into the hurl-zone. What you do get, though, is to feel the shame and pain and helplessness of someone who has allowed his possessions to take over his life and doesn't know how to wrest that power back.

Enter Lewis, whose secret to helping hoarders is that there but for some pretty steely willpower goes he. Of course this same habitual restraint—between bouts of almost mad leaping into what he shouldn't do—is what keeps him from returning Jasper's affections. He obsesses with the idea that Jasper doesn't truly want him, that this is transference. He fixates on the not at all incorrect notion that it's not wise for therapists and patients to engage romantically. There's even the wrench that when they'd been in high school together, Lewis had a crush on Jasper and hasn't seen him since—is his attraction leftover from then? Is this because he can't make a relationship work and has terrible taste in men?

What makes this book beautiful is the way that the two men help each other. As much as Jasper needs Lewis,

Lewis needs Jasper. I loved Jasper most when he went too far too fast. When he would stand in his book-and-paper-filled hallway and blurt out that he wanted Lewis, wanted to be his boyfriend. I loved it because it was so raw and vulnerable, so real—and yet the result of his naked confession in real life, to a therapist, would likely never result in what happens for the two of them.

In the same way I loved Damon Suede's *Hot Head* for its embrace of trope, I loved *Junk* for its shameless embrace of the fantasy of therapist and client. Yes, in real life, this is almost never a good idea. This is not real life. This is a novel, a fantasy, a tale of romance and tension and connection told through the vehicles of hoarder and client. The reason it works is because underneath the masks are two broken men and because they are put in the frame of a romance.

This is the thing that romance does: it takes material from the usually lonely, messy, disappointing real world and fixes it. No, normally Jasper and Lewis can't get an HEA. Even if they were meant to be together, Lewis would say no on principle, or be broken the wrong way, or Jasper truly would be only clinging to Lewis as a savior and not seeing the true man beneath. Not here. In *Junk* Myles gives Jasper almost more sight than Lewis. Jasper is innocent and honest, and he lulls Lewis to him with determination, with the kind of openness and pure, naked self we all wish we could be brave enough to show. Lewis is hesitant, but only because deep down what he wants most of all is the kind of connection Jasper seems to be offering, and he's afraid to risk finding out that once again it isn't real. The reader sees all this almost immediately, and this is a romance—we know it will work out, and watching that happen is delicious.

This book made me feel squishy and happy and snuggly and wonderful. It's one of those I will reread several times, particularly when I need a happy place. You should go read it too, as soon as you can.

Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/Junk-ebook/dp/B...>

Samhain: <http://store.samhainpublishing.com/ju...>

Nook: (not yet available)

Mark says

A delightful story with vibrant characters and a British touch. I loved the whole idea of this story and its concept. Dealing with a serious issue, but done very sensitively, leading to an entertaining and fascinating read.

Jasper is a hoarder; he hoards books in his house until he can hardly get into any of the rooms in the house. It's also a dangerous and life threatening situation; one book avalanche and he could be buried forever if not seriously injured. After adding one book to another one of his mountainous piles it collapses and makes entry to that room impossible, blocking the door. He realises he needs help and rings a company that are specialists in such things. Enter Lewis and his twin sister Carroll. Lewis is a psychologist and helps with the emotional upheaval with people like Jasper, dealing with what they experience when having to let go of their possessions. His sister is a counsellor and also deals with the house clearing process.

When I started reading about Jasper although he has a problem with hoarding I couldn't help but endear myself to him immediately. Jo's writing brings characters to life and I immediately connected with Jasper. He is helpless and lost, a bit of a nerd, a loner with a heart, the type of person I just wanted to cuddle and make everything alright for him.

When reading about his hoarding problem with books I must admit I did reflect on myself and books. All I can say is thank goodness for the electronic possibilities and my e-reader. When I look at my to-read list, it made me reflect what my house would look like if I had all those books in paperback form. My house probably wouldn't look a lot better either. Jasper has a reverence for books and some of his attitudes I couldn't help but agree with.

This is a serious illness, but Jo writes about it so sensitively it just wants to make you help Jasper too. We find out later in the book that his hoarding problem stems from a much more deep rooted problem concerning his relationship to his mother. When he bears all later to Jasper I almost cried reading about what he experienced and had to go through. No young man should ever have experienced what Jasper did. Especially not at an age where he should be out enjoying himself and spending time with friends. There was even some good all round advice for everyone in this book.

Can't argue with that! Good piece of advice there for myself.

When Lewis and Carroll arrive on the scene the attraction between Lewis and Jasper is there, but as Jasper is a client Lewis is determined to keep a professional distance. Although it is obvious that Lewis is good for Jasper and they would fit together perfectly, Lewis always tries to keep the moral high ground professionally. They also realise that they knew each other in school, but more Jasper admiring Lewis from a distance as Lewis was out in school and Jasper not. As the attraction grows and becomes undeniable Lewis's internal conflict increases and it takes Jasper to make him see what he is feeling, leading Jasper a merry dance all the way. Lewis can't accept what is staring him in the face and comes up with half-baked plans and excuses to deal with it! Even his sister, mum and best friend, Brandon, also give Lewis an ear bashing to get his act sorted out otherwise he might lose the best thing that has ever happened to him. There were times I could have slapped Lewis myself due to pure frustration and exasperation!

Lewis's parents are academics and completely "hippy" in their attitudes, among other compromising views they have on life. Always a source of embarrassment for Carroll and Lewis as kids growing up and continuing into adulthood! However, there's no denying the love that the family has for each other. Jasper is invited to lunch to meet them. Well, Chapter 25 turned out to be one of my personal highlights in the book. This is the stuff a good British sitcom is made of. Absolutely delightful! This chapter left me literally gasping for air after fits of laughter. I was still giggling to myself for days after.

Another character that plays a role is Yusef the café owner down the road. He is as large as life and is very much part of Jasper's world. Later Jasper is to learn he played a bigger part in his life than he ever gave Yusef credit for.

As Jasper starts to get to grips with his life and shows progress which for him is a big deal, it at this point Lewis becomes impossible. Almost a nice reversal in roles, but Jasper's tenacity wins through in the end!

The characters in this book are vibrant, pithy and really jump out of the pages. You can love every single one of them. I loved the "Britishness" of this book, as a Brit myself it's like a breath of fresh air, loveable characters and situations I can really relate to. They are normal guys, not honed, not chiselled, no six-packs, no bulging biceps / triceps or any other kind of 'ceps' for that matter. Jasper and Lewis are just down-to-

earth, normal people managing life's trials and tribulations, falling in love and trying to get through everyday. However, in the usual and mundane we can always discover the unusual and special.

The plot develops and unfolds at a nice speed and I found myself willing Jasper on in his fight to get his life back into order and find a new beginning; leaving the junk, physical and emotional, of his past behind. This takes a lot of strength and sometimes everyone needs the love and support of people close to them.

Jo manages to write extremely sensitively about the very difficult issue of hoarding, that affects many people, with heartfelt tenderness and empathy for those struggling or trying to find a way out of their hoarding problem. It's all too easy for society to turn their noses up at such people, but I'm personally sure this has become an illness of our times and has become worse in the last few decades as we have more possessions, have become more materialistic and are becoming an ever increasingly disposable society. All Jasper wanted to do was rescue the books and the wonderful literature and information contained within.

This book is wonderful – go read it!

Jo will be joining us for an interview and giveaway over on Sinfully Sexy Book Reviews on the release day of Junk on 27th August 2013. I'll be putting her through her paces and have lots of questions about the book and other things, pop on over to get the gossip.

~ This book was provided by the author in return for a fair and honest review ~
hd

Susan says

The premise for this story is really fascinating to me: Jasper, a man with some past emotional hurts hides from life as a hoarder. He calls in a professional "clutter cleaning" service that deals with these very situations and in walks Lewis, the man of his dreams.

Kudos to Josephine Myles because I don't think she took the easy way out in this one. It was...labored...there are layers upon layers (much like the books upon books stacked high in Jasper's home) of issues that have to be dealt with emotionally with both these characters to get you through their friends-to-more relationship. And I felt the anxiety so clearly as Jasper tries to take control back of his life and move past the 'exhaustion' of being a hoarder.

My hesitance to fully embrace this book is that ^^this situation is a lot to deal with. It would have been enough for me. But, throw in a you-used-to-be-my-high-school-crush scenario, along with a twink-with-sass-friends-with-benefits, and a therapist-with-his-own-issues arc (including nudist parents), and I started to feel like storylines were being hoarded as well. And it was all going to cave in on me at some point.

I had a hard time getting through the book...taking lots of breaks in between reading. Thing is, I really like both these characters a lot. There's a real sensitivity to each of them and Myles' writing feels like a total commitment to get them right. I wanted to see their story play out and I wanted it to work. I was just...tired...by the end.

All in all, it was enjoyable enough. I liked it. I don't think it will be for everyone. It takes some stamina and

perseverance to get through. But, Myles' writing is, as usual, entertaining.

One personal note: Lewis...his own issues...I very much connected with him. There were bits of him on page where he explains his excessive shopping and gifting and why he does what he does...and I felt...exposed. We're very much alike and it was both shocking to read, but reassuring that if Myles wrote it, someone somewhere must also be experiencing it. And for that, I'm thankful.

To join the discussion, visit us at:

Josephine Myles says

I've wanted to write about a hoarder for a while, as I'm absolutely fascinated by documentaries about people who've filled their homes with so much stuff they can no longer get into some of the rooms. I suspect part of my obsession stems from my own issues around acquiring and letting go of possessions. I'm much better than I used to be, but there have been times in my life when I've been forced to let go of vast quantities of "useful" stuff I was hanging on to. Mainly clothing and fabric, but also lots of books and magazines.

Hoarding can be pretty revolting when unsanitary items like rotten food are involved. Jasper isn't that kind of hopeless hoarder. He just has a problem with books, magazines and newspapers.

The catalyst for getting me writing this was watching a Channel Four documentary series called *The Hoarder Next Door*. The very first episode featured the story of Nigel, a man who had fallen into depression after the loss of his partner, Sid, and had subsequently built up a hoard that completely obliterated the beautiful home they'd shared. Nigel's story touched me, and watching psychotherapist Stelios Kiosses help him recover and move on was deeply affecting.

Jasper isn't in exactly the same situation as Nigel, but there are parallels, and Lewis is determined to help him using all his skills as a professional therapist and clutter-clearer.

This story isn't the unadulterated smutfest you might be expecting from me, and although there are a few sex scenes, for some reason these two characters kept finding reasons not to jump into bed together. They didn't want to swear much either. I'll admit I was perplexed by this strange behaviour, but decided to trust Jasper and Lewis, and remain true to the story they wanted to live out.

I hope you enjoy the results.

Jo x

NB - The Junk Blog tour is now underway! Here's the itinerary (links to be updated as the posts go live), and there are prizes at every stop, along with a grand prize (details of that on my website here):

27th August - Release Day Interview - Sinfully Sexy Books

28th August - My Shameful Secret - Joyfully Jay

29th August - The Books I Will Keep Forever - The Novel Approach

30th August - On Losing my Series-Writing Virginity - Pants Off Reviews

3rd September - What Kind of a Hoarder are You? - Mrs. Condit and Friends Read Books

4th September - Junk or Treasure? The Things People Hoard - The Armchair Reader
5th September - Help: My Heroes are both Geeks! - Tam Reads, Writes and Rambles
6th September - Embarrassing Parents - Well Read

R * A Reader Obsessed * says

3.5 Hearts

Unique in topic, I was intrigued about this story on hoarding. Often fascinated and a bit uncomfortable, I felt empathy and sympathy as I rallied for the two MC's to achieve success in their lives and each other.

Jasper definitely has some issues. He knows it and wants to change, but he's just so scared to take that first step. His stash of books, magazines, and various paper paraphernalia, all with potentially useful knowledge, has taken years to acquire. Such a collection has filled his house to the brim, as only a small pathway from the door to the kitchen and his bedroom remains. Jasper knows he's a prisoner of his own making, however, just the thought of throwing even *one* thing away sends him into a tailspin of anxiety. In a moment of frustrated desperation, he makes a call for help.

Help shows up in the form of Lewis and his sister, who make it their business to empower people to get rid of their hoards. Lewis knows Jasper from their teenage years and once the connection is made, it serves only to bolster their mutual attraction, as Jasper recalls their past association. What might've been awkward is thankfully not an issue since Lewis is a calm and steady force, never with any judgement. He slowly urges Jasper to figure out the reasoning behind his need to collect and gently coaxes him out of his hoard induced safety net. Lewis wants to help because that's what he does, making his desire for Jasper all the more conflicting. When it's reciprocated, he knows this is the worst time to start up a relationship.

What ensues is a back and forth between these two - yearning, resisting, giving in, and pushing away. For what seems like the first time ever, indecisive Jasper knows what he wants and that's Lewis. Jasper sees how good they are together, how perfectly they match up, but Lewis is not without his own personal problems and tendencies, all mocking him in the form of a slew of bad past relationships. Lewis knows his faults and somewhat doubts his own judgement, afraid to get too attached to Jasper, fearing that once he achieves success, Lewis will no longer be needed. Despite his inner turmoil, they fall into a "friends with benefits" arrangement, each wanting more but unsure of how to go about it.

These two were very likeable guys. That always makes difficult topics or situations go down nice and easy. There was a definite poignant vulnerability seen in both these men that added emotional weight. It doesn't hurt at all that they were also quite hot and smexy in between the book piles and packed boxes, not to mention just plain, simple bed sheets! Not surprisingly, both Jasper and Lewis finally get their shit together, and it was a sweet, though abrupt, happy ending. I'm going to assume that that was on purpose, urging readers to read the next story about Jasper's friend Mas. So yes, I'm hooked and look forward to seeing a thriving Jasper and Lewis in the periphery of the next installment!

Thanks to the author for a copy in exchange for an honest review

Bev says

Shed a few happy tears at the end of this one, loved the ending. A romantic novel from Jo with a twist, that twist being that one of the MC's was emotionally disturbed to the point where he could have been buried under piles of books at the drop of a hat!! 5 stars from me and

Time is short, so let's get this show on the road. I adored **Jasper**, no other word for it, completely and utterly adored him and yes, I totally got where all of his anxieties stemmed from. A mother who didn't really treat him as her son once he'd come out and she realised that there would be no grandchildren (obviously not true nowadays, but there you go), she gave up fighting her leukaemia but still bullied Jasper into helping her commit suicide, and the **GUILT** he felt about that totally consumed his life from that point on, resulting in the hoarding that could possibly have killed him. My husband is a hoarder of paper...not on Jasper's scale I hasten to add, most of which he thinks will prove useful at some stage...I can tell you it's a good job I love him and we've been married for nearly 30 years or I would be very tempted to bring out **that** stick !!

I wasn't sure about **Lewis** at first, but he seemed to be a romantic sort, so I knew that it was only a matter of time before he came to his senses and decided that he couldn't live without Jasper, and the present of the 6th edition of *The Little Prince* clinched it for me.

Friends, well **Mas** turned into a wonderful mate once he realised that he and Jasper were only ever going to be friends with benefits, and that had stopped when Jasper realised how deeply he cared for Lewis. I would love Mas to get his own HEA in the future, he was a snarky little so-and-so. Jasper basically had no friends at all...thanks mum...and needed all the support he could get, and so **Yusef** from the café down the road became a sort of surrogate 'dad' to Jasper, and discovering that he and Jasper's mum had once cared for each other but that she wouldn't take it any further as she was still heartbroken over the death of Jasper's dad was sad. Who else is there, oh yes, Lewis' friend **Brandon and his boyfriend Jos**, who were there when Lewis needed to vent and ask for advice, Brandon especially as he was Lewis' best mate.

Finally, we come to Lewis' parents who were...unconventional to say the least. I liked them, but don't know if I personally could have taken a boy/girl friend to their house knowing that they'd only grudgingly put their clothes on...yes folks, his parents walked around their house in the nude...each to his own, and Lewis' twin sister **Carroll**, who was the strong woman character in this story and the perfect foil sometimes for Lewis having that stick up his backside!!

Quotes I liked, and there were quite a few....

'Do you often get tired when you think about sorting them out?' 'All the time. It's exhausting.' He looked around at the books on the landing, and it hit him. This wasn't a home anymore, This was a burden. The weight of all those hidden words, dragging him down until he could barely find the energy to read a sentence, let alone file a book correctly. 'Just being here is exhausting. I go out running in the evenings just to get away from it. Funny how much more energy I get as soon as I'm out of the house'.

'A look passed over Lewis' face. Haunted....disturbed? Jasper couldn't quite place it, but he knew exactly why it was there....'Assisted her suicide?' Jasper choked back the bitter laughter those innocuous words called up. How could they explain the truth of what he'd done? 'I murdered her. She drove me mad, and I murdered her'.....'You can share it with me. I won't tell anyone else, I promise'.

'I think I'm starting to understand what got you started hoarding'. Jasper couldn't hold back a wry laugh 'Care to enlighten me?' 'You'd just let your mother go and were all alone. You didn't want to let anything else go. Couldn't handle the responsibility. And yet you didn't want to have to be reminded about her all the time, so you started stacking the books in front of everything. Covering it all up. Building walls around yourself. Around your heart'. 'They're not there anymore' *You own my heart* he wanted to say, but didn't quite have the courage.'

'Jasper stayed where he was, but Slinky (Mas) began trotting towards him. 'You would not believe how much he talks about you. I've spent the whole day hearing Lewis this and Lewis that. The man's got it bad. I hope you're going to treat him properly, or I'll break your legs. Well, not me obviously, I couldn't even pull the legs off a fly. But I know people. One person, anyway. But he's big and butch, and he'd totally do whatever I asked him to if he thought I'd make it worth his while'.

'Whenever, I felt like giving up, I'd think of the things you taught me. It's like you never went away. Not really. Not when you were in here' Jasper pointed at his head, then smiled sheepishly and moved his hand to his chest 'And here'. 'You're just an incurable romantic aren't you?' Jasper smiled 'Yep'.

Thanks to Tina, Gina and Macky for the buddy read

**** I'm reliably informed that Mas's story should appear [hopefully] in May 2014, thanks Mandy ****

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

2.5 stars

I'm a pretty big Josephine Myles fan, with *How to Train Your Dom in Five Easy Steps* being one of my favorite books, but this book... yeah, it didn't quite work for me.

I've had a fascination with hoarders for as long as I've known that hoarding was a thing. I actually totally understand the mentality of a hoarder, and I've been wanting to read a romance with a hoarder MC for a long time.

I'm not sure that this was that book for me.

I found the MCs to be developed and charming, but I had some issues with them both entering into a romance where there was such a professional conflict of interest and when Jasper was in such a needy, tumultuous state. It felt... wrong, and kind of icky. Even though Lewis wasn't an accredited therapist, he and Jasper had a therapist and patient sort of relationship, and it felt like it was just the wrong time to be entering into a relationship. Sure, I know Lewis thinks of these things and discusses this conflict of interest a lot, but it still felt off to me.

I also found the pace to be way too draggy. It was almost a somber book, and the heavy tone with the slow pace made this book almost unappealing for me. I wasn't motivated to pick it up and read it, which was a shame.

I liked many aspects of the story, but my overall lack of interest combined with the fast pace of the romance (which I found to be morally questionable in the first place), led me to my 2.5 star rating. It wasn't a bad

story, but it didn't rise much above "okay" for me.

I *am* excited about Mas's story, though. That one sounds VERY promising.

Copy provided in exchange for an honest review

Gina says

I have always avoided the shows that talk about hoarders, I simply don't understand the compulsion. So when i was asked to do a BR I was worried I wouldn't enjoy it. I am happy to say I enjoyed this book thoroughly! This romance book gave me a small insight into this terrible affliction, compulsion.

Jasper is a university librarian, since the death of his mom he has been collecting books, magazines, paper. Piles of collections litter his home and prevent him from accessing most of his house. Jasper has finally decided he needs some help, so he contacts a professional clearer and counselors.

Lewis is a psychologist and a professional clearer with his twin sister Carroll. They are hired to help Jasper clean out his house and help with the emotional side of how he reached this point.

Jasper is a sweet adorable nerdy man and my heart went out to him witnessing his hoarding compulsion rule his life. Getting a peek into his mind you learn how lonely he is, how much he wants to interact with others more, invite them to his home, how much he just want to relax.

Lewis is a man who wants to fix things, people. And as he helps Jasper he starts to have feelings for him. Torn between his feelings and his professional ethics not to get involved with a client he waffles back and fourth. What I loved most about Lewis was witnessing he was not perfect. Lewis has is own issues he works on, like shopping. OMG I so understand this one! LOL. And his compulsion to "fix" the men who he gets involved with.

There was so much I loved about this story, it opened my eyes to a few things and gave me a sweet romance as well. If you are looking for a book that scorches your fingers as you turn the page this is not the book for you. But, if like me you are looking for a story that gets in your heart and makes you care about the characters then this is most definitely the book for you!!!

And a great big thank you and kiss to my friends Tina, Bev and Macky for the fab Buddy read!!

Mandy*reads obsessively* says

It's out !

4.25*

Wow, what a story.

I downloaded it immediate this morning when Samhain sent my notification email (*thank you Samhain for that service*).

I spent almost all day in Jasper and Lewis's world and loved it there. I'm actually very upset that it's over. Jasper is a hoarder and it was very interesting to see the reasons behind it, even though they weren't conscious thoughts, it is always amazing what your mind and subconscious, your feelings and conscience actually cause in physical manifestations.

In Jasper's case hoarding, but I know it can have so many ways of materializing.

I so felt for Jasper, most of us all carry guilt and regret and at least some anger about things we can't change, I don't hoard (much;) but I so identified with a lot of his feelings, especially this quote: **....."made him want to howl at the unfairness of it all. That some were healthy and others sick. Some happy, others bitter."**

My goodness that resonated with me...

Even his therapist admits to having issues himself, and I can tell Lewis has issues, even if I think they are different from the ones he thinks he has. :)

There is actually very little sex in this story, but a lot of friendship and longing, loving, healing and need.

I very much enjoyed this story, it had a very different setting and it felt very new and fresh for me.

There was a small cameo by Brandon and Jos from Jo's story in Winter Warmers which was nice. (I admit to knowing that I had read about them before but had to ask the author *where*).

Also Mas will be getting **his own story** in May of 2014 and I for one am **very excited** for that one.

Kaje Harper says

I really enjoyed this story of Jasper, a librarian whose home and life have been taken over by the books he hoards. He has moved beyond collecting, into an obsessive accumulation of anything with the written word, stacked in piles and filling rooms, until sometimes a book avalanche keeps a door from opening. He has reached the point where the books circumscribe his life so much, that he finally works up the energy and nerve to ask for help.

Carroll and Lewis Miller run a service specifically for hoarders, which combines practical help with a low level therapy. In the past they've faced some far worse situations than Jasper's home-threatening books. At least this job is clean, with no pet feces, no decaying food, just rooms filled with paper. But for Lewis, this job will prove to be his most challenging, as he comes face to face with the guy who was his first crush, and who has become a sweet and lonely man.

In real life, a romance between any kind of therapist and patient is very inadvisable, for both ethical and power imbalance reasons, even when the professional relationship as low-key and under-qualified as Lewis's therapy for Jasper. And the author acknowledges that, as Lewis struggles to keep himself from falling for the man he's trying to help. She also very skillfully shows us Jasper's strengths, his intelligence and honesty and courage, and Lewis's weaknesses, like his loneliness and the shopaholic tendency that he himself struggles to keep under control. The men seem more equal than the usual therapist and patient, and you can almost feel what they see in each other.

There is some lovely tension here, sexual and affectionate, as the men try to decide what they need, and what they have a right to give each other. The underlying pathology of Jasper's hoarding is also well done - neither so profoundly abnormal as to make him unsympathetic, nor so superficial as to seem contrived. The hoarding

aspect was something novel in the usual array of life-damaging problems authors give to our MCs. The presentation was realistic yet sympathetic, (and will draw an occasional wince from all of us who have stacked bookshelves two deep and still come home with one more bag of books. What stress would it take for the comfort of the written word to become an obsession for me?)

There were some laughs in here too. The Miller parents were almost caricatures of sixties hippies, saved by a warmth and good-humor. Jasper's ability to sometimes laugh at his own failings was endearing. I read this book straight through, and enjoyed it a lot, and I know this will be a comfort reread.

Ann says

Firstly, I am a huge Josephine Myles fan and I really was able to put my finger on why with this book. When describing the characters in her books, I can't use any stereotypes. I can start out that way, hot nerd, twink, jock, alpha, whatever. Then I start reading further, get to know the characters, all their flaws and quirks, and all the lines get blurred. Now I'm not reading about things happening to a character, I'm reading about people. Fully fleshed out, multi dimensional people.

Jasper is a hoarder of books, magazines and newspapers. He's finally had enough of his lifestyle and loneliness and calls in a company that clears clutter. That company is manned by twin brother and sister Lewis and Carroll.

What a smart thing to have one of our heroes hoard. Who is a more sympathetic audience than the GR masses? Imagine your TBR shelf full of physical books, not virtual ones. How overwhelming is that shelf now? But Jasper doesn't need our sympathy, he's a lot stronger than a cursory glance would give him credit for. He's been through a lot, too much, alone. Lewis is his clutter clearer counselor who has some serial monogamy issues that he is trying to break in himself. Neither one of them are at their best and both have a lot of work to do.

Mutual attraction abounds but there is the huge complication of the quasi patient/therapist connection. As a reader I really want these two together, but I can't help but agree that it is probably a really bad idea given their circumstances. I cheered when they would make a connection and then the big girl brain would remind me of all the things they each needed to work on to bring their best selves to any potential relationship. At times I wanted to throttle Lewis and his handling of Jasper's feelings for him, but it was just a reminder of Lewis' flaws as well.

As much as Lewis helped Jasper, I can't help but think Jasper may have helped Lewis more. One true sign of being in love is wanting to become your best self. Jasper said it best when he thought "He wasn't about to let the man run away from true love. That was what this was. It must be, if it has the power to inspire him to better things."

While the subject of this book may sound like it should be depressing, it absolutely isn't. There are heartbreaking moments, sure, but overall it's more hopeful than anything else and it makes you appreciate the part of love that is so easy to forget, being your best self for the one you love.

Highly recommended to anyone with an overflowing TBR shelf.

Macky says

BUDDY READ WITH TINA, GINA & BEV 2013 Thanks guys! :D

I am **SO** not a hoarder. I hate clutter and mess and I adore having a throw out on a regular basis...I find it cathartic and I love it when I know that even stuff in my drawers (which is out of sight) is all tidy and nice and bonny!

So I find it really hard to understand how people cope when it gets to the state that poor sweet Japer had got to, where he practically couldn't move for the amount of books, magazines and papers that filled his house and where there was a real danger of him getting trapped or even killed because of it. < shudders >

It really seems unbelievable that a person would let themselves to get to that point, but of course this is not just a hobby that's gone too far, its a very sad psychological problem that needs a professional therapist to get to the root of what's caused that obsession before there's even any thought of starting to throw stuff out and in Jaspers case its Lewis and his twin sister Caroll who become his saviours in more ways than one!

Jo has very sensitively written a story around a subject that could have been dark, gloomy and depressing but in her inimitable style she's given us something completely opposite to that. Yes it was poignant and certainly no laughing matter when it came to Jaspers problems and deep seated issues with his mum but at the same time it was lightened by the attraction and relationship between Jasper and Lewis which was full of delicious tension, tentative touches and near kisses but also had its ups and downs because Lewis himself wasn't without issues, mostly he felt guilty that starting a relationship with a client would be unethical but he also had a bit of an addictive nature as well that he was trying to keep under control... nothing on the lines of Jaspers though. However it was still sweet and romantic and had some very funny moments involving Lewis' hippy dippy, outré, naturist ma and pa, the Millers who had me in stitches with their ' naughty ' comments that constantly had Lewis and Caroll squirming with embarrassment in front of their boyfriends. Classic!

Then there are the supporting characters. All deserving of a mention because they add so much to the story, not just full of life Caroll and Lewis' mum and dad but there's Mas, a very likeable character and Jaspers f**k buddy at the start of the book, who I'm hoping and praying (hint hint) will get his ' sugar daddy ' in his own story, Brandon and his Dutch lover Jos, Lewis' best friend and voice of reason and of course the wonderful, kind cafe owner Yusef who was such a sweetie and one of my favourites because of his connection to Jasper. All secondary characters who helped make this book the truly enjoyable read it was. I loved it.

Please don't let the subject matter put you off because you'll be missing out on a right little gem. Thoroughly enjoyed every single word right up to its satisfying and sigh inducing ending. Just lovely. .

Debra says

4.5 stars

I have to admit to a bit of a fascination with hoarders so this book was on my radar for a while.

Jasper is a quiet librarian living alone since the death of his mother. His house has become a prison of his own making, full of books, newspapers and magazines to such an extent that the doors to many rooms can no longer be opened and he has only small pathways to get from one place to the next. It has gotten to the point that being in the home causes him such great anxiety, he has finally gotten up the will to call for help. This help comes in the form of Lewis and Carroll, brother and sister clutter cleaners. Unknown to Jasper, Lewis was several years behind him in school and harbored a crush on him. When Jasper realizes who Lewis is he soon reveals the admiration he had for the out and proud boy Lewis was in school. Lewis has a background in psychology, but has chosen to work with his sister in their small business.

The attraction between the two men is immediate and quite apparent to all those around them. Lewis battles with not only his past history of getting too involved too fast with men he is looking to change, but the ethics of getting involved with a client, while everyone around him pushes him toward Jasper. Lewis himself has a bit of a compulsive shopping problem, leaving him with little money and living at home with his crazy parents.

The men spend their time working on Jasper's house and trying to get to the root of his need to acquire and hoard. When they can no longer resist the physical attraction Lewis tries to set some boundaries, none of which work particularly well for him.

The heart of this book, however is Jasper. Jo Myles has written a character you can't help but feel for. His loneliness and guilt are holding him prisoner. He has not had a relationship other than quick hookups and his one f**k buddy, Mas (another sweetheart of a character) and he cannot have anyone over to his home making friendships difficult. His yearning for love and friendship is so pure, I felt my gut twisting for him every time he reached out.

There are a number of well written secondary characters who form the support base of both Lewis and Jasper. I also loved the honesty between the two main characters, each trusting the other with information they have withheld from others in their world. The physical relationship between the two men has a nice slow build, different from other books I have read by the author, that I really enjoyed. I'm looking forward to reading Mas's book in the future.
