



# Piece by Piece

*Teodora Kostova*

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## **Piece by Piece** Teodora Kostova

Sometimes to reach the surface you have to fall to the bottom first...

For the past ten years, Riley Davis's life has been overshadowed by the tragic death of his partner. Fluctuating between alcohol induced daze, clinical depression and throwing all his time and effort into his business, Riley doesn't believe, or even hope, that his life will ever be worth living again.

Until Sonnie Frye drops by his haberdashery shop, changing his life forever.

Sonnie is a man who likes getting what he wants, when he wants it. He's worked hard to establish himself as Queen Victoria theatre's chief costume designer, collecting multiple awards – and high-profile clients – along the way. Sonnie is used to putting his needs, goals and desires first, unwilling to compromise his own happiness for anybody else.

Until he meets a handsome shop owner whose eyes are so sad that they immediately tug at Sonnie's heartstrings.

Seeing something he wants, Sonnie is determined to get under Riley's skin and, preferably, into his bed. But he soon discovers the task is not that easy. For the first time in his life, Sonnie may need to put someone else's needs before his own, and re-evaluate what really matters in life.

Will the two men stand side by side to overcome their differences, and everything else life throws at them? Or will it all become too much to bear, shaking them to their very core, destroying everything they've worked so hard to achieve?

## **Piece by Piece Details**

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## From Reader Review Piece by Piece for online ebook

### Aerin says

This book....what is this? If it's supposed to be a successful MM romance, it failed big time. I had the feeling I'm reading about female characters most of the time, because let me tell you, these men reminded me of those plastic mannequins we see in stores all the time, so physically perfect, it made me sick.

I get that some men have feminine attributes, they are what some of us would call pretty, but to be constantly reminded of it, over and over and over again, annoyed the crap out of me. Riley is 42 years old, he's a man that's no longer exactly in his youth. I don't mean to say that 42 is old, no way, but it's not exactly young either. Yet he is so perfect!!!!

*Riley'd inherited some fortunate genes from his parents – his skin was wrinkle-free, and his hair didn't have any grey among the dark waves.*

I call bullshit! At 42, no matter how good your genes are, you'll have a few fine wrinkles, it can't be avoided! Unless a plastic surgeon played with your skin to make it perfect, you're not going to be flawless at that age. And the fact that he has no grey, not sure what to think about that. I've never seen any 42 year old with absolutely not 1 gray hair, it's all part of the aging process, but maybe Riley's genes are that great! However, grief takes a toll on our bodies! Look at anyone in real life who's spent 10 years grieving for a loved one to the point where they tried to end their own life a few times, they look older, they basically wear their pain. So I don't believe that Riley, who's been using alcohol as a mean of coping, is as flawless as the author says. I want my men to be men, real and flawed, not some ideal that's not probable in real life.

And guess what, Sonnie is just as beautiful, because God forbid we have some average guys in these books.

*His hair was dark and cut in layers around his face, reaching just below his jawline. The guy was tall, probably an inch shorter than Riley's six-foot-one, skinny, with elegant long limbs. Riley's eyes were immediately drawn to Sonnie's hands as his long fingers caressed a roll of red satin fabric. Just as Riley was about to make his presence known and stop gawking at the man like an idiot, Sonnie turned and faced him, fixing his brown almond-shaped eyes on Riley's face. His Asian features complemented his bone structure and made his appearance even more exotic.*

And by the half way mark, I've heard so much about Sonnie's bone structure and high cheekbones, I even dreamed about them last night. Gah!!!

And then the crying! Oh lordy, so much freaking sobbing! I get that losing your lover is painful and unthinkable, but it didn't happen recently! It's been a decade! I don't think you still sob like that after a decade just because you thought about them! Time has a way of making everything less painful, and thinking about the one you lost WILL make you sad, but it won't make you sob. Whatever!

And Sonnie spends a good part of this book being shocked, his mouth falling open, at different things. Silly things that warrant no shock what's so ever.

And then that psychiatrist Dr. Harley, telling Riley the reason he's not bothered that Sonnie is so much younger than him is because Riley still lives in the past. WTF??? First of all, Sonnie is 32 to Riley's 42, that's not such a big age difference. If Sonnie was 19 years old, I'd maybe think she might be right, but in this case

all I could think was IS SHE FUCKING KIDDING?

*"Have you ever wondered why you've never been bothered by the age difference between you and Sonnie?"*

*The doctor asked, crossing her legs and propping her chin in her hand.*

*"What?" Riley asked, confused. "What does that have to do with anything?"*

*"I've never seen your partner, and you've never mentioned he was so much younger. Which means you're not at all concerned about it. Have you ever wondered why?"*

*"No," Riley admitted. Should he be concerned about it? What did the doctor mean with all of this? "It's never been a problem for us."*

*"I'm not trying to make it a problem, Riley. Please don't be offended." She uncrossed her legs and moved the chair closer to the bed. "And the reason why it's never bothered you is because you still live in the past."*

There is no fucking plot in this book, there's plenty of sobbing, all the way the end! They're all beautiful and perfect! And last but not least, there's too much telling and not enough showing.

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## **Sylvia says**

This story was heartbreaking and very sweet.

I just Loved Sonnie he waited for his forever man until he was ready

I couldn't do it.

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## **Kathryn says**

Piece by Piece is the third installment in the West End series and I have to say I think it is my favorite so far. And seriously, getting to know Sonnie and Riley was just too fun. Now, don't get me wrong...It wasn't all giggles and romance. There were some true hard times for these two. Riley's past truly disrupted his present as well as his future. My heart ached for him and all I wanted was to see him happy.

And guess what...only one person could really do that...SONNIE!!

Sonnie is such an amazing character. Full of life and a totally in your face personality, you are drawn to him. He is definitely that bright spot in the room that everyone gravitates toward.

So when he and Riley meet, it was explosive and you just knew that these two were going to change each other's lives.

Their relationship was so real. Such struggles that every couple go through...

Man...just a wonderfully written story with complex and intriguing characters. Once you dive in, you won't come out until you are finished...

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## **Ele says**

*"I love you just as you are, with all your broken pieces and all your sorrow and all your past."*

**Riley is not just a man in mourning. He is totally unable to let go of the past.**Running his shop and his

friendship with Penn keep him sane....but numb. Until he meets Sonnie. Sonnie in this story has nothing to do with the stuck up asshole/drama queen/ snobbish bitch we met in book 2.

Although it is kind of a long book it is well pace and I liked the time stretch.

Sonnie loves Riley but this love is not enough to save him from his grief. Eventually Riley hits rock bottom and realise that if he wants a real life with Sonnie he has to work on himself first.

There are only two things I didn't handle well.

-So much crying!

-So much angst! Well, this is an angsty story, but sometimes the grief and the sorrow became too much for me and I had to take a short break.

The epilogue was great and I admit it left me a bit misty eyed...Overall it was a good read. I hope this wasn't the last of West End stories.

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## **Caroline Brand says**

### REVIEWED FOR PRISM BOOK ALLIANCE

I love you as you are, with all your broken pieces and all you sorrow and all your past.

It was very clear at the end of Mask, book 2 in this series, that there was more to come and that the story had to belong to Riley and Sonny regardless of the fact that they had only just met each other.

Piece by Piece picks up once again at that first meeting when Sonny visits Riley's shop with Penn. Sonny can recognise a handsome man when one is in front of him but he can also see the sadness in Riley and I think initially their friendship begins out of curiosity with Riley fighting it every step of the way.

Teodora's portrayal of Riley and his all-consuming grief in this story is beautiful, poignant and heart-breaking. We have met Riley before. He is a great friend of Penn's and although we knew he had loved and lost nothing could prepare you for the grief that he lives with every day. The pain written onto the page is overwhelming and at times so bleak I wondered whether Riley would ever start living again.

Sonny is tenacious and a man used to getting what he wants. He is also someone that shows an unlimited amount of patience and care with Riley as he tries to help him navigate back into a world where he can live instead of just exist.

This was a true story of love. There was no instant gratification as every step of progress they made was slow and painful. For most of the story there were three people in the relationship and how is anyone expected to compete or live up to the memories of a ghost.

The ending, like their entire story, has no quick fix. For Riley to have suddenly gotten over his grief because Sonny came into his life would have been a disservice to them both and very unrealistic. With Sonny's help Riley gets to a place where he is ready to start healing but that last step must be taken alone even if that

seems like the most difficult thing in the world for both of them to comprehend.

I think this may have become my favourite book of the series!

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## **Joyfully Jay says**

*A Joyfully Jay review.*

### **4.25 stars**

Piece by Piece is a novel that is set in the world of the West End series. This novel, however, can be read as a stand alone. While both Sonnie and Riley were introduced in the second book, Mask, this is their complete story. This story is also a departure from the style of the first two books in the series as these men are older than past main characters in the series and the story has a much deeper, somber, and emotional tone. This book runs parallel to Mask and the MCs from that book, mostly Penn, do appear in certain scenes. What works so well here is that some of the scenes are familiar from Mask, but are shown from a different perspective. This gives new readers all the information they need, but gives readers that have followed the series a new and unique perspective.

This is not an easy book and there is so much grief. Riley is beyond broken to be numb to everything except for the blinding, searing pain that Richard's death left. His depression is constant and complete still after so many years have passed. His pain is so visceral that he cannot even see Richard's sister, who looks remarkably like Richard, without having a full on anxiety attack. The pain does not get erased. When Riley meets Sonnie it gives him something to look forward to, but this is not the book where Riley meets Sonnie and his pain is put to rest. Riley and Richard had an extremely co-dependent relationship and the author does a great job of displaying how fractured Riley is. Sonnie is used to living life for himself. Yet, he really steps up for Riley, becomes his friend, and doesn't push him even when he knows that Riley has become the love of his life. The author takes us on a downward spiral with Riley as he cannot move past his love and devotion and ultimately guilt over his continued need and desperation over his feelings for the loss of Richard. Although the story is a slow build, it's the emotional intensity that is the slow burn, not the physical relationship. The intimate scenes between Riley and Sonnie are heated, emotional, and at times healing. They also increase in intensity and desire and become a catalyst for Riley's shifting pain.

**Read Michelle's review in its entirety [here](#).**

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## **Veronica of V's Reads says**

This is a series book, but it is not necessary to read them in order.

Sonny Frye is a demanding costumer, known for his fantastic creations for the West End Queen's Theatre in London. Struggling for inspiration on a new project, he turns to a junior colleague, Penn, whose designs are stunningly creative. Penn introduces Sonny to his good friend Riley--who owns a fabrics and finishings shop that carries the exact type of vintage satin Sonny needs. Riley is stuck in a grief loop ten years deep.

Riley met Richard when they were newly adult, early to mid-twenties, and spent years together before Richard

was struck by a hit-and-run driver and died. Since then Riley has had two suicide attempts and struggles daily with anger and guilt.

Sonny doesn't realize all he's getting into when caught in Riley's sad gaze, but he knows it's a stronger feeling than his usual attraction. Over the course of several months, Sonny and Riley develop a friendship--with Riley (seemingly) finally breaking out of his sheltered misery. Still, there are backslides, and Sonny's there to catch him when he falls. Thing is, Riley falls deep and hard--when Sonny and Riley begin to get physical, he's guilty for finding love with another man than Richard--but he's also guilty that he can't love Sonny as strong as he loved Richard....

As for the book, I did enjoy the slow burn. Sonny's such a rock, and Riley's admittedly a mess. Just when I thought he got his act together, he broke down again. The interplay between his growing affection for Sonny and his guilt/grief over Richard is heart-rending. As a person who suffers depression, I've had first-hand experience of the disordered thinking Riley lives with.

I think there was a bit of a drag, however. It's truly difficult to write about depression without getting bogged. I liked that Riley got himself the help he needed, but the way he went about it was frustrating to me. Also, I wanted to see his healing, and those bits were related in terms of sporadic letters to Sonny--who was the dearest of hearts and waited for Riley to return to him. The resolution was very touching and lovely, and I wished for just a little more time to bask in it.

It's a good, solid love story, with characters that are compelling and real. Riley's grief is real, his reluctance to let go of his love is a roadblock for a good long time, but he rescues himself, which was admirable.

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## **Mark says**

Until I listened to this book I never knew what a big business making and designing costumes is for the theatre. This is the first thing that went through my mind when embarking on this story. I always find it so fascinating to read about people, their jobs and daily life as a backdrop. Seriously, romance aside, I've been introduced to so many different areas of life with my reading it's always a surprise to see where I'll end up next. It's in this backdrop of costumes, fashion, theatres and shows that we meet Sonnie.

Sonnie is chief designer and not only for the theatre but also a fashion designer in his own right. When Sonnie first walks on stage I thought, yeah, typical superficial, fashionista but then he warmed to me and as the story progresses deeper qualities came into view that I didn't think he possessed after first introductions. He is upbeat, knows what he wants and goes for it. This could also have been his undoing towards the end of the book but all's well that ends well.

He is looking for material for a wedding dress he's designing for an important client and goes to a haberdashery shop. Yes, I couldn't believe they still exist today but they do. All kinds of material are to be found in this shop and it almost made me run out, buy a sewing machine and get creative - lol! Anyway, this is where he meets Riley the shop owner. It soon becomes clear there is an attraction there but Riley doesn't know quite what to make of Sonnie at first. Riley is withdrawn, lives for his shop, well practically busies himself so at first I thought he was quite aloof or standoffish. Sonnie has to do the chasing but it isn't without its problems. Then we get to the real root of Riley's problem, he is still mourning or grieving for the death of his former partner who died in a road traffic accident 10 years before. This grief that Riley has for his former partner is all consuming and not healthy. I first asked myself that this was ten years ago, shouldn't

he be over this by now? I don't wish to sound unfeeling, of course you always carry the scars, but Riley's situation and how he deals or I should say isn't dealing with it isn't healthy at all. It's all consuming and suffocating meaning he hasn't let anyone into his life for ten years, has thrown himself into work and his shop and doesn't let many people get close. But there is something in Sonnie that he finds endearing and starts to open a small door for him to let him inside.

When Sonnie finds out about how broken Riley is inside he definitely has his work cut out for him. He masters it wonderfully with a great deal of patience, more than I would have for sure and never would have expected from Sonnie. That's the unexpected I found in Sonnie to be honest. Would never have guessed this when I first met him at the beginning of the book. But as their love develops there are of course many bumps in the road to overcome. Riley needs someone like Sonnie to help him get out of the unhealthy rut he has ensconced himself in. It's always worse around Christmas time when the accident happened for Riley and he falls into a state of grief and depression that is unbelievable. I could feel the weight of Riley's grief gradually choking the life force out of him as he spirals down and down. Only due to Sonnie does he manage to pull himself together and not do anything stupid.

And here we have the crux of the matter. Riley's issues stops him from opening up to Sonnie completely. He is still in love with his former partner and he can't see a way to let go of this grief and love he has in order to move forward with Sonnie. I suppose this is natural enough but if it stops you from moving on with your life then it is debilitating. Sonnie has the patience of the saints and the understanding to go with it. I don't think I would have stuck it out that long. But Sonnie's love for Riley is strong and believes that together they'll be alright. Truth is Riley needs professional help and he seeks out a therapist, one he saw at the beginning right after his former partner's death. Now, when it comes to therapists sometimes I admit of my own volition that I'm always sceptical and this was no exception. I'm not a believer in over analysing things, my own personal view but there you go. At first it seems that she is only making things worse rather than better, my scepticism was proved right at least when he starts to see her. But I guess this is something Riley has to face and work through otherwise he's never going to be able to be happy 100% with Sonnie. This is what the therapist sees and she is right. Riley does pull through but he needs sometime on his own which he takes in the form of a sabbatical and goes to India for six months. When he comes back he is ready and the story ends beautifully.

Both protagonists are wonderfully written and well balanced. Ms Kostova has taken two characters from opposite ends of the personality spectrum but has managed to mold them into one until they become a ying and yang symbiosis at the end. This is a story about broken pieces and the title is very apt as Riley as to put himself back together piece by piece. I did feel exasperated at times with Riley and just wanted to slap him to pull him out the funk he would get himself in. But Ms Kostova's writing draws you into this dark place where Riley is and felt it consuming me just like it did Riley., Through this came the understanding for his situation. There are some very poignant moments and right at the end even I had a slight lump in my throat with what these two have achieved. they can now look forward to a bright future together.

### **Narration**

So with a story set in the West End of London of course it's fitting to have a British narrator. However, as I have mentioned before I'm always a little wary about narrators who British or have British accents. If they're not careful they come across as being too BBC or "posh" which does absolutely nothing for the narration of a contemporary M/M romance. Makes it all a little too unbelievable. Well, I'm very happy to say that George A. thorn got it absolutely right. The accents were natural, no received pronunciation giving it a false or BBC sound to it. The voice of Sonnie I found perfect. If there was criticism then for me personally and my ears at times Riley's voice characterisation came across as as being a little stupid or dense sounding like an East End thug rather than a manager of a haberdashery business. Again this is only how my ears interpreted at



times. But it certainly didn't detract from the narration as a whole. I would definitely listen to other books narrated by Mr Thorn.

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### **Len Evans Jr says**

It's very late (1:30am) and I am a mess from finishing this book... it has definitely been an emotional roller-coaster... need to go to bed now so I will write the rest of my review in the morning.

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### **Teodora Kostova says**

Pre-order is LIVE on Amazon!

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00V7CSFYs/r...>

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### **Pavellit says**

Wow! It's a mixture of feelings, and unfortunately not all of them are so positive.

**Riley**, 42 yo, lost his partner 10 years ago. Ten years. It's been ten years since Richard has died, but he has been cocooned into his daily routine, so much so that even an invitation for a drink or a movie after work has seemed horrifying. Until he meets Sonnie. The beautiful, energetic and kind Sonnie.

*"You make me feel, Sonnie. Do you know how long it's been since I felt?" .....*

*".....and then you come along with your sexy smile and your confidence and your honesty, and you make me want to feel again. You make me want to have a life, to dream about the future, to have friends again....."*

**Sonnie**, 32 yo, is a very talented costume designer. None of his relationships has lasted more than a few months. But there is something about Riley that intrigues him at the moment of their first meeting. He sees Riley as a sexy, charismatic and very charming. But when he looks in his blue eyes he sees sadness. He'd love to know him better and he would be happy if they become friends, because nobody deserves to deal with so much sadness on their own, and because there is something buried under all that sadness, wanting to be uncovered. He wants Riley so bad, but he is ready to give him a space to overcome the ghost of his past, who does not stop haunt him. He is ready to wait.

*"So you know he's broken."*

*"I can put him back together,"*

*"Yeah? And how the hell are you going to do that when nobody succeeded in the past ten years?"*

*"Piece by piece."*

Even though, it was revealed the tragedy in Riley's past, the first part was sweet and sensual, warming,

building up their romantic relationship. Loving to see the way Sonnie was there for him – calling him every day, taking him out on weekends, practising yoga together, took him to a vintage market, and made him a picnic in the park. So energetic, so full of life and charisma! He didn't mind getting to know the man Riley had had – had loved so much.

However the second piece was a bit triggered into some horrible meltdown, which did not fit well in the first part. I know losing someone you love is everyone's biggest fear, but there the wound seemed so fresh. It'd been a decade, but for him felt like yesterday. Actually I wondered how exactly he survived under that pressure. There were some attempts to 'deal' with, but 10 years. I love the English school of writing and plotting- natural and sophisticated. I love less when it's been mixed with a Hollywood exaggeration and sprinkle stardust (I mean the mainstream. Oscar' nominees usually are different) to look more dramatic and glamorous. That's exactly how I saw the second part. Nevertheless, overall it's been a nice experience.

~3.5 stars~

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

Heartbreaking and angsty, *Piece by Piece* packs an emotional punch.

Riley can't let go of his grief, and as supportive and loving as Sonnie is, he's not enough. Riley has never gotten over Richard's death, and the guilt he feels for wanting Sonnie, wanting to live again, is all consuming.

My heart went out to Riley, but it also went out to Sonnie who tries so hard but gets left behind time and again.

The slow burn really worked here; the relationship never felt rushed. The time the MCs spend together, doing yoga, talking, walking in the park, showed the strong connection between them.

I wanted more laughter, but the HEA was beautiful, all the more so because it required sacrifice and work from both men.

Sonnie, never the patient one, waited and waited for Riley to find peace.

"Honey, I'm home" has never been more poignant.

This book can be read as a standalone, although I enjoyed book two as well.

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**Sandra says**

solo 3 stelle per la delusione datami dal personaggio di riley, forse mi aspettavo troppo dopo i 2 precedenti romanzi della serie

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## **Philomena Callan Cheekypee says**

This is the third and final book in the series and what a fantastic read it was. It's an emotional m/m standalone.

This is Riley and Sonnies story. After losing his partner Riley is a mess. He's hit rock bottom and doesn't see any light at the end of the tunnel. That is until he meets Sonnie. Sonnies a fabulous character. I totally loved them both.

The author has written a brilliant solid and emotional story. I loved how the characters were portrayed so read. This is definitely on my to-read list. Loved it.

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## **Tess says**

"I can put him back together," Sonnie replied. They might as well get it all out in the open.

"Yeah? And how the hell are you going to do that when nobody succeeded in the past ten years?" Penn asked, anger lacing his words.

Sonnie squared his shoulders, standing up to his full height, not appreciating being doubted. "Piece by piece."

This is Riley and Sonnie's story. They were first introduced by Penn in Mask and, in fact, some of the timing overlaps that of Mask. Riley was Penn's friend and proprietor of a haberdashery. Sonnie is the chief costume director of the Queen Victoria theatre where Penn works.

Although he lost his partner 10 years ago, Riley is still grieving and hasn't been able to start "living" again. Sonnie is attracted to him instantly, sees the sadness behind his eyes and wants to do everything he can to take away Riley's sadness and bring him back to life. I love that Riley and Sonnie are older -- 42 and 32. I also love that the relationship started slowly and that they became friends, and then best friends before becoming lovers. This is a fairly slow, meandering story as Riley and Sonnie gradually start their relationship. I think this is what was needed as Riley had some serious issues that needed to be dealt with. On the other hand, I think some readers might find the story to be a little too slow. My other minor criticism was that there seemed to be a number of editing issues, particularly in the first half of the story.

Ultimately, though, this was a gentle and beautiful story of two mature men finding love and overcoming a terrible grief to start a life together. Although not necessary, I would recommend reading Mask first -- it was an enjoyable romance with very unique elements.

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