



Winter Rain

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This edition is out of print.

What happens when love gets caught in the rain?

In this second volume in the Love in the Rain series, Del Dryden's heroines find shelter from a powerful thunderstorm in their feelings for each other, while Alexis Hall's heroes find the past between them washed clean by falling rain. Inara Scott's hero and heroine upend their lives with a kiss in the rain, while Serena Bell's characters set their world to rights in a winter storm. Rain helps Amber Lin's lost lovers find each other, light morning rain washes away evidence of a goddess's visit in Suleikha Snyder's story, and rain-slicked city streets provide a backdrop for a burgeoning romance in Tamsen Parker's tale. Rainy days bring solace to Cole McCade's hero, while Stacy Reid's heroine makes a bold journey toward love in a raging storm. Nine romance novelettes, edited by Sarah Frantz.

All proceeds from the volume will be donated to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (www.rainn.org), the largest anti-sexual violence organization in the United States.

Winter Rain Details

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From Reader Review Winter Rain for online ebook

Izzy says

This review like several others is based on Alexis Hall's contribution. This is the 2nd anthology supporting RAINN, which is a wonderful charity. I wanted to write a review quickly to further promote this anthology, which has contributions from some talented authors.

BEHIND THE MASK - Alexis Hall, is a superhero story, but being Alexis Hall this is different to your usual superhero yarn. This short story has heart and emotion. It has violence or does it? For nearly the whole length of this story I knew, which MC I empathised with, and then...the author turned all my preconceptions and sympathies on their head. Never writing quite what you think you want, Mr Hall writes what you need to read. I am including two quotes from the story which I thought had to be highlighted;

'...it was easy for people to love you when you were wearing a mask.'

and below such an important and wonderful quote;

'You never made me feel that I had to conform to your expectations to earn your acceptance..."That's the greatest gift anyone's ever given me. And I've always loved you for it."

Mel says

I bought this anthology to read Alexis Hall's story 'Behind the Mask', so this is the first short I review here and also the story I rated. More about the other stories underneath.

Behind the Mask

by Alexis Hall

S.U.P.E.R.H.E.R.O.E.S

Just when I thought I couldn't get more convinced that Alexis's talent is amazing, he writes me a (graphic) novel of superheroes. He draws every single picture in my mind and I am awed. Behind the Mask was stunning! So much so that I've already read it twice.

"This isn't a game, this is a story." A pause. Your story, Blake."

[...]

"It doesn't matter that I know who you are. It matters that you don't."

If the city wanted a villain, he would give them a villain.

The Ghost was made of pieces. Accidents, rumours, and wasted years. But Masquerade had been there all along.

And where the Ghost saw only Masquerade, Masquerade kept looking for Blake.

Will he find him, though?

I won't tell you much more about the story. Just know, this is everyone's superhero wet dream come true. A dark and mysterious past, unravelling.

A showdown of epic proportions.

A love so pure and twisted.

A heavy atmosphere full of hope.

I have read several graphic novels before, and if you haven't, 'Behind the Mask' might work different for you. For me, while I was reading, everything appeared like a drawn picture in my mind.

Black and white.

Sketchy in parts.

Close-ups and overviews.

I wasn't reading just a book, and I had no movie running in my head. I read a graphic novel and this was an awesome reading experience.

Alexis is a God and genius. 5 stars.

Okay, now for the other stories... It took me ages to get motivated to continue with this anthology, because I am very wary of hetero romance at the moment. I'll tell you why in a minute...

(I want to add shortly, that I have no problem with female parts as so many M/M readers have. I love to read F/F, too. So that is not it.)

I didn't expect that I would have so much trouble. I had to dnf the first 3 stories for various reasons:

Dream

by Delphine Dryden

I was positively surprised to see a lesbian romance in this collection, but could only manage to read two chapters because of the tiring inner monologue of the protagonist. Usually first person narration is my favourite, but I don't like it when nothing happens but the thoughts and musings of the host I'm stuck with. This was annoying and exhausting.

DNF 1 star

Sales Tax Not Included

by Inara Scott

My main problem was again the inner monologue, though it was less developed than in the former story. It was still annoying.

Additionally, I wasn't a fan of the premise: Rich man falls in love with a simple, not beautiful, but special woman.

DNF 1 star

Exposure

by *Serena Bell*

I read most of this story. It was easy to read, the protagonists were likeable, there was a tiny bit of a mystery surrounding past events. I also liked the setting in the woods.

But, and this is my personal pet peeve—everyone else probably does not feel weird about it, will probably like it—this story showed me again why I don't read hetero romance anymore.

The stereotypical depiction of man and woman while having sex killed this for me. It was especially annoying in this case because the female and male lead in this short had switched roles otherwise (and why the fuck are there roles???). She had to rescue him. How is that for a nice change! But as always, when they end up in bed it's all:

He led me to the air mattress and laid me down on it, and then he proceeded to make love to every inch of me with perfect, devoted care, kissing, licking, sucking.

Huh? Where is the independent woman I saw now? Oh right, she disappears as soon as kind and sexy—with a gigantic cock—man shows her how to finally have a good time, since orgasms in former relationships and with herself were so hard to come by. Gaaaah. Makes me want to vomit.

DNF 1 star

See... The next shorts might be good, I might miss out, but after 3 DNFs in a row, I decide to quit.

Sometimes It Storms

by *Cole McCade*

In the last week I've read some posts by the author that deeply impressed me and well, nothing else makes me want to read an author's book like that. Lucky me, I also realised that I actually already own something by him :)

SOMETIMES IT STORMS impressed me on several levels.

- The writing and language was utterly beautiful and I'm just a real sucker for this. Reason alone to check out more books by Cole.
- This was one of two heterosexual romances that I liked after a very long time of staying away from it. There were no stereotypes here, no roles to play. These two people were real and I loved them together. It's also written from his POV which is a reason why I think this worked so well for me.
- From the preface it was already clear that this book was gonna be strong on topics of abuse (in the past), and well, that's not really fun to read about, but the way it was handled was very balanced and respectful. The romance that lit up the sadder parts was very sweet and lovely.

There might have been a time when I had thought that some reactions or thought patterns by the abused person were over the top or annoying, but I'm happy to see that I have moved beyond that. How could I possibly judge that? I can't!

4 stars and I'll be reading more of Cole's books.

Amira says

Dreams by Delphine Dryden

2.5 STARS.

A very quick and sweet read about two people who had the hot for each other and finally had the opportunity to express it during a rainstorm. I liked the flow of the story, and the fast pace nature prevented me from being bored.

This story started with a dream...and for some reason I waited for the whole book, anticipating that the dream would be explained by her therapist. Bummer. LOL. It was still a sweet read, with mild romance and just a hint of the passion the two leading ladies could burn with. Wanted more background.

Sales Tax not Included by Inara Scott

3 STARS

Too short! LOL. I was loving this story, they were about to kiss and then I skipped the page and it ended. I had a WTF moment...out loud. Beautiful premise and I thoroughly enjoyed it. However the abrupt ending prevented me from loving it completely. Will the story be continued? Is it like a prequel to the full possibility of Chloe and Nash? I hope so!

Exposure by Serena Bell

3.5 STARS

So after reading this author Dear Reader letter, I paused and tried to find the tweet she sent that inspired story. LOL.

Now onto the story...I liked it, a sweet and fast pace read. I didn't get to spend much time with the characters, but I was not disappointed by what I got. I felt the connection, and I believed in the relationship that is obviously forming. A sweet read, but not a lot of conflict to really keep me on edge wondering what the heck would happen now.

Sand Dollar Cinderella by Amber Lin

5 STARS

I loved it. Short but so sexy and good. I rate it 5 stars for how my heart pounded and how much I wanted them to hook up....that is what romance is about! But man when it ended I yelled. LOL. I just want more, because it was so yummy and I wanted to see more of them, wanted to see them fall into more than lust...I wanted heart wrenching love. I know they cared for each other...but I didn't feel as if they fell in love, but I certainly saw the possibility of it.

Behind the Mask by Alexis Hall

3 STARS

When this story started I thought holy heck Batman! LOL. I was instantly drawn in by this author voice. It felt so different, but I really felt as if this was an episode of Batman. At times it read like a script the writing

was so bare bones, so stark...but it worked somehow. I liked the intensity and the edge...and anticipation that travelled through me as I read the pages, but of course I wanted MORE. A too quick read, and overall I like story.

Spice & Sand by Suleikha Synder

2.5 STARS

I didn't really like this one. It was beautifully written, but I couldn't seem to be pulled into the story at all. I did finish it because there was this need in me to know how it ended, but there was no sense of satisfaction in me. Hope someone else loves it because the lore this story was built from seems fascinating.

Remembering Yesterday by Stacy Reid

5 STARS

I really liked Ava and Devlin story. It was sweet, heart tugging and sexy. I spent time with the characters and I enjoyed that. I think this may be the longest story so far. Ava and Dev was a love worth rooting and fighting for, and the author style of writing really drew me and especially had me invested in Ava's journey from the first moment I met her. She was strong, capable, sweet and vulnerable all blended in one. I liked her. Devlin himself from the glimpses I got was a good character. Wished I had more time in his thoughts. Overall a quick and steamy read. I find myself anticipating the other Calhoun brothers' story and I hope they come soon.

Sometimes It Storm by Cole McKade

Will update as soon as I finish read it. Half way through and I love it so far. Great writing, beautiful pacing, interesting characters

Need by Tamsen Parker

Will update review as soon as I read

Patty McKenna Van Hulle says

I love the theme of the is collection of tale, RAIN! Sometimes good, bad or just as a FAIRY GODTHINGIE that gives folks a chance to wash away the bad or just RENEW! Also many of this stories are writing in 1st person & it is a writing style that isn't my cuppa tea & I don't like to judge authors for their characters' voices because I respect them too much, but I was asked for my honest opinion, so that is what my peeps will get.

Dream by Delphine Dryden

I don't enjoy 1st person tales, but Ms. Dryden had me ROFL with her humor. She starts with Robin's dream of an elephant playing a harmonica & the tune is "DELIVERANCE" & just kept PILING ON the laughter! Not my cuppa tea writing style, but I was asked for my honest opinion, so Ms. Dryden gets my score of 2 finger up & 8 toes for her HILARIOUSNESS GALORE!

Sales Tax Not Included by Inara Scott

Nash grew up on the RICHIE side if Rowenna, NC & pixie sized Chloe calls herself the white trash of town. Can "warm honey" Nash make spiked hair, non perfect & high school dropout Chloe believe that they can make one another their BEST? With some cleansing RAIN, you out never know! Ms. Scott's squeaky clean tale is about 2 opposites making an unbelievable connection, but I am a sucker for a hilarious tale of an unconventional couple, so she gets my score of 3 fingers up & 8 toes for her quickie!

Exposure by Serena Bell

Poor Jenny posted a NAUGHTY tweet & has been hiding in the woods ever since. Beck has always been in love with Jenny, but never confessed, so when her parents beg him (an almost counselor) to get their baby back from Timbuktu, he goes. He gets a wet NEKKID "ran out of battered for her vibrator" Jenny, a rain storm & warmth for survival & Jenny gets her much girlie parts very happy, a delayed orgasm & a wilderness love connection & they both get acceptance. Ms. Bell wrote her "AA BATTERIES REQUIRED" quickie is 1st person which isn't my cuppa tea, but her laugh a minute style saved this read for me & she gets my score of 2 fingers & 7 toes.

Sand Dollar Cinderella by Amber Lin

Poor Jaime has been smothered by her older brother & her past selfie mistakes & Ky is an ex soldier looking to put down roots in his hometown. Jamie's brother's BF has always been her secret crush, so when she is ready to unleash her inner BAD GIRL with a sexy red dress & cash her virginity check, who better than Ky to give her the 1st taste of Wham, Bam, Thank you ma'am! Ms. Lin popped more than 1 cherry in this UNDIES SCORCHING quickie & totally EARNS my top score of 5 fingers up & 10 toes for this FORBIDDEN FRUIT SYNDROME romance.

Behind the Mask by Alexis Hall

This quickie has 2 masked figures. the Masquerade & the Ghost. Both could be called heroes or villains, but they hide in plain sight. This was a slight gay romance, but mostly, with the rain falling over them, they earned 100% ACCEPTANCE. Now gay romance isn't my thing, but Ms. Hall used her males to show all that no matter who you are or what you love ACCEPTANCE is the greatest thing that one can give ALL & deserves my score of 3 & 8 toes just for that message!

Spice & Sand by Suleikha Synder

Ms. Snyder quickie is all about meddling Gods, lost & found soulmates, sexy dancing, jamming tunes & mythical NAUGHTINESS , plus she tosses all together with Hindu spices to create a twisted fairytale. Ms. Snyder gets my score of 3 fingers up & 6 toes for this far east flavored romance.

Remembering Yesterday by Stacy Reid

Ava was in a terrible car accident & lost the last 12 months of her life. She is the daughter of the town's richest family & when she see a amazing a\$\$ in a diner, her mind goes on overdrive as it's flooded with past NAUGHTY memories starring Mr. Specular A\$\$. Who is he, but the returning son of the town's dead drink or white trash as her daddy says. Can white trash claim his Princess forever? Anything can happen when the RENEWING RAIN falls. First, I have to state that Ava is a heroine who shares my own CRAVINGS for a SPECTACULAR A\$\$, so now to my thoughts. Now Ms. Reid is the author who asked me to review this ARC & I fell in love with her writing with her historical masterpieces, so I was humbled by her request. She always makes me smile, giggle, cry really UGLY cry, makes my pleasure center shiver & quiver & makes my FURRY reading buddy aka my furry blankie give me the evil eyeball or the angry CLAWS! Ms. Reid gets my top score of 5 fingers up & 10 toes for this fight for true love quickie & I can't wait to read the other BAD BOY Calhouns' stories!

Sometimes It Storm by Cole McKade

Ethan believes he is a damaged, disgusting & ugly soul & Aurelia suffered as a child, but she overcame it. When Ethan sees her, she is SWEET FIRE & prays she can cleanse his past sins. A heart wrenching quickie that makes this statement so true. "NO MATTERS HOW DARK IT IS THERE IS ALWAYS A ITSY BITSY LIGHT, BUT YOU HAVE TO WANT TO GRAB IT!" I am a romance sexist & don't normally enjoy male romance writers, but Mr. McKade WOWED & AWED me with this romance of FLAWED characters that need 1 another. He gets my top score of 5 fingers up & 10 toes for a tale that had tears

running down my face, pulling out my dented pompoms & cheering for the glorious & so deserving healing!

Need by Tamsen Parker

Ryn (love her name) has a happy life, but craves a good man. Sam is a good ole boy farmer who calls his mom about his great dates. Opposites attract in this quickie tale written in 1st person, but Ms. Parker writes with hilariouslyness GALORE & has fast paced dialogue, quirky sayings & biting NAUGHTINESS, so even thou 1st person writing isn't my cuppa tea, she gets my score of 2 fingers up & 8 toes.

ARC given for my honest review.

Pam Faste aka Peejakers says

“Winter Rain (Love in the Rain Book 2), is an anthology. This review is based on one story in that anthology, “Behind the Mask” by Alexis Hall, the only one I’ve read, thus far. I wouldn’t hesitate to recommend this book on the merits of that alone. However, if you need another reason to buy, this story is part of an anthology, It’s a fund raiser to benefit a an organization called RAINN, The Rape Abuse and Incest National Network, obviously a very worthy cause.

So, off the top of my head, before I convince myself I can’t write a fitting review for this wonderful story, these are my impressions of “Behind the Mask.”

Beautiful word imagery. Well, of course, what else? It’s *Alexis Hall*, people. But, that said, this story is a bit of a departure from what we’ve come to expect from this author. A story told in a more staccato style than we are used to. Also, in the third person. Also, with an alternating point of view. Also, in the present tense. So yeah, it’s a little different.

And it all works, perfectly.

“Behind the Mask” reads almost like a play, a screen-play perhaps. Fitting, as one main character is an actor and much of the story a bravura performance. It’s all snappy dialogue and narration that is almost reminiscent of stage direction. The action even plays out, rather brilliantly, in my opinion, against a backdrop of old movie sets. To paraphrase a quote from the story: “It’s theater”. Not of the absurd, but of the utmost significance.

On the surface, “Behind the Mask” is a story about super-heroes & super-villains. The characters are painted in vivid, comic-book colors: Our hero, The Ghost, in black & white, like the stark conception of good and evil you except to find in this sort of thing. His over-the-top arch-nemesis, Masquerade, in his crimson & gold. Evil minions swarming about. It’s so easy to picture it all, in your mind’s eye, like something out of the “Dark Knight” movies. Shadowy, atmospheric sets, echoing voice-overs, the characters dashing across the tops of the buildings, wheeling through the night in perfectly choreographed fight scenes, the appropriate music pounding in the background. Much of the dialogue, too, is stylized comic-book-ese, intentionally and deliciously melodramatic, the villain arch, mocking, hammy, a little camp, the hero . . . er . . . heroic and deadly earnest, as in this exchange:

“My dear Ghost.” Masquerade presses a hand to his heart. “We really must work on our banter.”

“I won’t let you hurt these people.”

“I know. It’s so terribly tiresome.”

“It ends here, Masquerade.”
“Every ending is a beginning.”

Please excuse me while I pause here, for just a moment, to say: “Squeee!” ;-)

If this was all this story was, it would still be fantastic, an amusing homage & send-up all-in-one, of the genre it apes, fun & funny & full of action and great characters, particularly the superbly entertaining Masquerade.

But of course it's really not a story about that at all. The title tells you what it **is** about. What lies **behind** the mask. The things we are afraid to show, to be, to feel. Maybe to even **know**, about ourselves. And about the difference one person can make. One person to come looking for us when we disappear. One person to not give up. One person to care care enough to pull out all the stops when it counts. One person, just one, to see not that face we present to the world, but the real, flawed, broken human we really are, and find us, nonetheless, valuable and beautiful and lovable.

Obviously, I loved this story.

I'm looking forward to reading the rest of the stories in this anthology soon. If it's anything like its predecessor, Summer Rain, I think I'm in for a treat :-)

Oh, & as always, my usual caveat that I'm a fan & friend of this author, so feel free to give that fact whatever weight you feel is appropriate as regards this review.

Amanda says

I started reading this book because one of my favorite authors Stacy Reid had written a story in it. I have loved every book she has written but Remembering Yesterday is by far my favorite. I loved the story of Ava Devin, how even with Ava's memory loss their love and chemistry was so great that just seeing him helped her to get some of her memories back. I have to still read the rest but know they will be good. The wonderful authors in the book are donating all proceeds from the volume will be donated to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (www.rainn.org), the largest anti-sexual violence organization in the United States.

Nicola says

Nine authors, many of whom are new to me, have come together to support RAINN – the largest anti-sexual violence organisation in the US. 100% of the proceeds benefits charity and, in exchange for a couple of \$£'s, (which let's be fair is probably less than we have lurking down the back of the sofa), we are given *Winter Rain* , nine short unlinked romances with a common element, *rain*.

Each story brings a unique situation and characters with painful pasts, real fears and vulnerabilities who show an immense and often humbling strength. There were moments that emotionally moved me and put me

through the ringer a little, and equally those that made me smile and held some heat, but what struck me was the depth of feeling, compassion, romance and above all hope.

“You make me smile. I look at you and see someone who isn’t perfect. I’m sick of perfect. Perfect is lies. No one knows that better than me.” – Sales Tax Not Included, Inara Scott

These stories make you *think*. They make you *feel*. And in some instances they hit close to home. But what is evident in each story is the message that, with the right person, light can prevail through the varying levels of darkness and despair. And without ruining the reading experience, they all end in not what I would term as a happy ever after, but more a happy right now, which I found fitting. Naturally, I had my favourites; Cole McCade’s *Sometimes it Storms* was stunning; poignant and beautiful, it broke my heart and I sobbed tears of sadness and joy, whilst Inara Scott’s *Sales Tax Not Included* struck a chord as it focusses on imperfection and Tamsen Parker’s *Needs*, indulged my love of a sexy farmer (I’m a Brit, it’s just my thing). There are authors now on my radar who wouldn’t have been had it not been for picking this up - equally there were a couple that weren’t exactly my cup of tea, but the bigger picture is that these authors have used their talent for a worthwhile cause, and for this I applaud each and every one of them.

Romances come and go, but some of the stories you will find in *Winter Rain*, and indeed the first book in the *Love In The Rain* series, *Summer Rain*, will stay with you long after you flick the final page.

Whilst this was a personal purchase, my review will appear on Read Your Writes Book Reviews.

KC says

Only read Alexis Hall's story "Behind the Mask" so far, which was wonderful and so very awesome.

Alison says

I read this charity anthology because it had Alexis Hall's Behind the Masks in it. His story was, by far, my favourite of the whole lot. It's a beautifully written short story about a superhero and a villain and I really enjoyed it. 4.5 Stars.

The other standout story for me was Cole McCade's Sometimes it Storms. The writing is lovely and the story is engaging. 4 Stars.

The rest of the stories: 3 Stars. All nice enough to read, but they just didn't grab me like the two mentioned above did.

It's definitely worth giving a dollar to a worthy cause for those two stories alone.

Stacy Reid says

Ok....I have only read the last story so far Sometimes it Storms by Cole McCade and ERMAGERD I love it!! I am diving into the remainder TONIGHT. Read em all and I really liked them. I did not love all story equally, but they were all quick enjoyable reads.

Julio Genao says

so far i've only read Alexis Hall's contribution (BEHIND THE MASKS), because i was a minor beta on the story.

but i can tell you that sucker's *fantastic*, with the kind of spare, atmospheric writing you get in the best noirish, superhero comics.

crackling good fun.

hope i love the others in this collection anywhere near as much as i loved his.

Kalel says

I liked all the stories. Some I enjoyed more than the others, but I truly liked the execution of all, and the obvious quality infused in this project. Overall it is a good buy and it is for a great cause. I have gifted a few copies to friends and I hope we continue spreading the word.

Kim says

Overall this was a beautiful collection of stories. Here are my favorites.

SOMETIMES IT STORMS by Cole McCade - 5/5 MY FAVORITE OF THE ANTHOLOGY. So hauntingly beautiful. Such a dark story with a light-filled message of hope. I'm not crying you're crying!

EXPOSURE by Serena Bell - 5/5 Loved this story. The heroine goes through a depth of self-discovery that's surprising considering the story's length.

SAND DOLLAR CINDERELLA - Amber Lin - 4/5 I wasn't sure how Lin would handle the false identity storyline - she handled it well and honestly, I'd love for this to be a full length book. I want to know how these two characters overcome their insecurities!

BEHIND THE MASK - Alexis Hall - 5/5 - Such wonderful writing. A beautifully creative story.

REMEMBERING YESTERDAY - Stacy Reid - 5/5 My 2nd favorite of the anthology! I really enjoyed these characters. I was happy to learn Reid is republishing this story (doubling it in size) and adding 2 more books to the series for the hero's brothers!

Maria Rose says

This unique and varied story collection contains a little bit of everything - erotica, sweet romance, awkward heroes and heroines, all vying for their place in a world where a little rain must fall on all in order for growth to occur. I thoroughly enjoyed all of the stories - such a wonderful variety of plots and author voices who added their contributions to this charity anthology to benefit RAINN. The following are short reviews of each of the stories in the collection.

Dream by Delphine Dryden

This story of two women, both suffering from mental illness, reclusives who find each other was a sweet tale of love and acceptance. I really enjoyed the imagery in this story and the author's voice as these two characters slowly reveal their attraction to each other in the peace and quiet of a home environment.

Sales Tax Not Included by Inara Scott

This was a wonderful tale of a man entranced by a rather ordinary woman and wanting her to see the real him and not the one the media has presented to the world. It was a very sweet and tender story and made the more so by Nash's pursuit of the reluctant Chloe and her eventual capitulation. It was a treat to read a story with a couple that isn't physically perfect, no rippling abs or perfect 10 figure. I loved it!

Exposure by Serena Bell

Sexual attraction is a key part of this story as Jenny and Beck find themselves alone and trapped in the woods, having to deal with their pasts together. This one was a sizzler and the love scenes were steamy and well written. I really liked both characters in the story, Beck as the saviour but Jenny as the one needing to realize that she doesn't need to be saved. Very enjoyable!

Sand Dollar Cinderella by Amber Lin

I thoroughly enjoyed this tale of the teenage crush turned into adult lust as Jaime turns to Ky to help her with her virginity problem. With both points of view presented, it was a treat to read. I really liked how Ky is willing to put the adolescent Jaime behind him and really see her as she is now, a grown woman who knows what she wants and is willing to go after it. With the added knowledge of Jaime's past difficulties in having intimate photos of her released without her permission, the idea of sexual consent becomes a key part of the story. A definite winner for me.

Behind the Mask by Alexis Hall

This author can be counted on to go the extra mile in presenting a provocative look at same sex relationships. It was an interesting superhero fantasy story, thought provoking and emotional. Definitely unique!

Spice and Sand by Suleihka Snyder

This one is a unique Indian fantasy story tale, filled with the imagery and language of a seductive culture and the reincarnation of love and lust. It's a blend of the modern day and the fantasy realm, with doorways

between worlds that lure the characters to each other. I can't say that I've ever read anything like it before, but I found it to be a delightful story.

Remembering Yesterday by Stacy Reid

I really enjoyed this amnesia love story, with two people from different worlds who find each other again and who must learn to trust again. This was a sexy story, lots of heat and sexual tension. I liked how Ava's memory slowly came back to her as she interacts with Devlin again, and how her love for Devlin drives her recovery.

Sometimes It Storms by Cole McCade

This emotional story is fraught with tension as bartender Ethan learns that he isn't made up of only his abusive past. I can't say that this one was an easy read (nor did I expect it to be), but it was riveting. I liked how Aurelie was patient with Ethan, giving him time to confide in her and not judging him or being too quick to dismiss him when their slow romantic relationship hit bumps and bruises along the way. In the end it was a redemptive story of the healing power of love. Great debut for this author!

Needs by Tamsen Parker

This was one of my favourites of the collection, combining a steamy love story with self discovery as Ryn learns that she is capable of change and restoration. The sexual tension between the couple exists from their first meeting, and I really liked how Ryn was comfortable with her sexuality and dictating the terms of their relationship (and that Sam was willing to follow Ryn's lead).

Eleanor (The Book Hammock) says

** This review will be short impressions of each story. You'll get my general feel of the compilation.

Dream by Delphine Dryden

Talk about a surprise. I've never read anything by Delphine, and for the first story in the anthology, the last gender pairing I'd expect is F/F.

Dream tells the story of a woman living away from her family, dealing with a job she loves and a boss she hates, dealing with a hidden crush and an unresolved dream that's been plaguing her for months.

When she finally acts on her crush, the surprising revelations are possibly the best thing that could happen to her.

Delphine Dryden's writing is wonderful, and while I'm not a fan of written thoughts (in moderation they're fine), I loved this story.

My rating: 4 stars

Sales Tax Not Included by Inara Scott

This little story had the potential to be amazing. I loved both characters and their struggles. The words seemed to flow easily and I soaked them up and wanted more, but then it just stopped without much of a closure. I'd have loved to get another chapter and not quite finish the story with bliss, but with more of a hint towards the future. It felt almost like the characters arc was left unfulfilled.

My rating: 3 stars

Exposure by Serena Bell

I'm officially declaring Beckett as perfect. But the story isn't about him. Much.

Jenny and Beckett's story spans their whole lives, but we only get a glimpse, less than 24 hours, even. And weirdly Bell managed to show both their arcs in that glimpse.

Also, there's some hot tent sex. Just sayin'...

My rating: 5 stars

Sand Dollar Cinderella by Amber Lin

This story is very simple. A young woman wanting to experience something. A man wanting stability. But with its simplicity, the story is wonderfully emotional. It also carries through a deep socially moral issue. And one more excellent point – there's light dirty talk and they act on it.

My rating: 4 stars

Behind the Mask by Alexis Hall

Fantastic story about acceptance and vigilantism. I really don't want to say much, just that it's really really good.

My rating: 5 stars

Spice and Sand by Suleikha Snyder

I have a problem. I really liked Snyder's writing. Spice and Sand is very well written, flowing, the story is original and very sweet. But when writing fantasy/mythology and mixing in heavy cultural and ethnic phrases and behaviors, it distracted me from the story. I found myself reading many of the parts a few times to get my mind back in the story.

I do have to say that the emotion and need jumped off the pages and was rather lovely.

My rating: 3.5 stars

Remembering Yesterday by Stacy Reid

I found another series to get addicted to. Oh boy...

We have the gorgeous town princess, the ultimate no-good bad boy and a memory loss. I especially loved how strong Ava is and how mature when confronting her parents and her past. A little schmaltzy there at the end, but nothing that will make me not want more of this world.

Remembering Yesterday is the first installment in a new contemporary series. Devlin and Ava's story is short and gorgeous, and steamy hot with a decently proportionate amount of angst. I'm adding the entire series on Goodreads when it becomes available. Gah. Can't wait.

My rating: 5 stars

Sometimes It Storms by Cole McCade

I think I love Cole McCade. First of all, I don't get to read male authors very often. Secondly, such fabulous contemporary writing... Anyhoo, this story. THIS STORY. It broke my heart. A lot. And then it made my heart happy and smiling. I'm feeling confident enough to recommend this compilation for Sometimes It Storms alone.

My rating: 5 stars

Needs by Tamsen Parker

Yay, another sweet story. Misconceptions are an issue with life. For everyone, I think. We just can't avoid it and normally we're not consciously critiquing ourselves. Needs is the kind of story that will make you reevaluate the things that most affect you and your life choices. And it does so with the simplest of plots.

Also, I'd read any Tamsen Parker story. Any day.

My rating: 5 stars

I think I can safely rate this compilation **4.5 stars**. These stories were clearly written by authors who care about the various issues RAINN was created for. They're well written, packed with feeling and are so very sweet.

This compilation is benefiting RAINN, so hey – what better reason than that to buy it? And you get some kickass, swoony (and steaming hot) stories to read in the chilly and getting chillier weather. And it's only \$0.99.

A special thank you to Audra North who did all the backstage work to put this (and the previous installment, Summer Rain) together.
