



Trust Me

Jeff Erno

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Shawn Graham and Bobby Wilder couldn't be more different. Shawn is a devout Christian fundamentalist from northern Michigan; Bobby is a street-smart latchkey kid from southern Ohio. From an early age, they are both confused and troubled by their attraction to the same sex. Shawn believes that homosexuality is sinful, and a traumatic incident of childhood sexual abuse adds to his guilt and shame. Bobby has an image to maintain and flatly denies the possibility that his same-sex attractions even exist. He's just too cool to be gay. When they finally connect, their preconceptions are suddenly dwarfed by what they feel for each other. They become inseparable and fall deeply in love; however, love doesn't make life easy. Plans are in motion that will surely devastate the young couple. Painful experiences of the past overshadow happy memories, and heartbreaking obstacles loom over the possibility of a future. If Shawn and Bobby want to stay together, they will have to fight with everything they have.

Trust Me Details

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From Reader Review Trust Me for online ebook

Valentina Heart says

This book is somewhat conflicting for me. I've read Jeff Erno's work before and I was pretty amazed by the way he writes. It's shocking and emotional and often too sweet.

When I first started reading this one, I already decided that I would be rating it with a four. There was a lot of telling that was a bit difficult at times. And then the moment of discovery came and I was blown away. It was so emotional I kept blinking away tears while I kept on reading. And exactly that is what I love about Jeff Erno - with his brilliance, he makes you love it! Even when certain aspects of the book don't sit well with the reader; you still love it.

I was raised very religiously, and it shaped a lot of my self esteem while growing up, and not in a good way. By the time I recognized that what was right for my church was not necessarily right for me, the damage was done. And I'm not a gay man. The religious parts of the book really ticked me off (you'll know which parts once you get to them), but like I said, despite all that, the author makes you love whatever he writes.

The ending is too sweet for me, and I'm really not a fan of so much crying. Still, this book is a 5 star read and I'm happy to rate it as such.

Chris says

This m/m romance was a very mixed read for me. I really liked the base story, about two boys, one extremely religious, growing up in the 80s and trying to come to terms with their attraction to other boys. But I kept feeling as if I were being drawn into the story, only to be shoved out again, perhaps because there was too much telling and not enough showing? Additionally, the story had these odd, very meta-feeling lecturey interludes that did not work for me at all.

Lena♥Ribka says

Rounded up to 3 stars.

I liked the short novels of Jeff Erno and was excited to read at last my first full length novel of this author. Unfortunately my high expectations were not fulfilled.

The book told us the love story of Shawn Graham and Bobby Wilder growing up in the 80s, two boys with different and and the same time similar family background. They both were raised by a single mother without brothers or sisters. But Shawn unlike Bobby grow up in a very religious environment. The first time they met when Bobby spent his summer by his father's new family in Michigan. It was just a quick but fateful encounter, even if they had no idea about it at that time.

Jeff Erno presents a whole range of different topics, from sexual abuse and bullying through religion up to homophobia. The author can perfectly portray a teen outsider, like in his Invisible he knows perfectly how to rip your heart out and then put it together.

Only what worked for me in the short novel, didn't work in a full length one. And the main reason for it was

the writing.

I think that the book could be much better if it would have at least 100 pages less. The author told us the same situations again and again, from many different views. There are so many empty words, sentences, pages that took my attention from the story. In spite of I loved the boys I was reading about, at some point the repetitions became annoying and I caught myself skipping pages.

What bothered me apart from repetitions was a third person part. I have never had a feeling that it was told from the 13-15 years old boy's POV. It was told from a middle age male person, who TRIED TO BE a teen boy. On one hand they were too childish and naive for their age in some situation, on the other hand they were embarrassingly mature during sex scenes.

All in all, if you're a fan of a YA genre and enjoy heart-wrenched stories with HEA, you should try it.

I would say, the book is more suitable for MM-beginners, MM-old hands could be less satisfied with it.

Trisha Harrington says

This is a beautiful, heartbreaking book.

This book is just raw emotion. I do not have a better way of describing it. It was my second mm romance and it was heartfelt and poignant and just the right amount of funny in places. A book like this is not just a simple story and it cannot be described easily. But it can be recommended.

Bobby and Shawn stole my heart and left me feeling raw and in need of a hug. Trust me has a way of ripping your heart out and repairing you again and leaving you numb. The two protagonists are just stunning character and their stories needed to be told.

The more you read the more you need to read. Well that is how I felt and how I needed to feel. This book could have been ruined, but to be honest it was perfect and what it had to be. Its not easy and love does not always conquer all. But this book shows how it can survive through tough times.

To be put off of this book by the tough subject it brings up could be a mistake. There is only one scene with graphic content about the abuse and it was not as bad as other books I have read. Its up to the reader but I survived reading it.

I have a need to say more and yet I cannot find the words. It needs better than a simple review. It needs to be read and re-read and maybe read for a third time. Eyes need to look and brains need to take it all in. So that is all I will say.

Well done Jeff Erno, you have written an amazing book and one I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Fiona Goodman says

The story is about Shawn and Bobby who meet at the age of twelve and then again a year or so later. Shawn has grown up in a religion who feel that homosexuality is a sin and a chosen lifestyle and those who are gay are abominations in the eyes of the Lord.

Bobby, on the other hand spends his early childhood being raised by a neglectful mother who turns him out to live with his father after remarrying. He learns quickly to manipulate and use others. He has the attitude of hurt them before they hurt you and feels that the world is an untrustworthy place. His famous saying throughout the book is 'trust me' and he uses it to get what he wants from those around him.

It seems like an odd pairing, but the two boys find healing and love with each other. Bobby learns to trust more, and Shawn begins to accept himself as he is, not as others perceive him to be.

I really love this book because it doesn't just start at the two boys meeting each other, but goes into detail about their pasts that have influenced the way they see themselves and the world. The focus on Shawn is especially touching and at times very disturbing. Shawn has been raised with the expectation that he will be a leader in the church because of his pioussness and gentle manner. He is constantly at odds with himself and is filled with self-hatred due to his inability to live up to others expectations. His knowledge that he will be rejected by the church if anyone discovers that he is gay leads to feelings of shame and unworthiness towards himself.

The book mainly takes place between the boys 12-18th years. It is really a beautiful love story. There are some really shocking and heartbreaking events that take place in the book. These events are very realistic and are that much more disturbing because of this.

However, there is also great joy and love and taking the journey with these two remarkable young boys in the search of their happily ever after is definitely worth the time.

Julia ♥Duncan♥ says

This is one of those tragic cases where I liked the story, but didn't like the book.

Things I liked:

1. Characters. They were likeable.

Things I did not like:

1. Repetitiveness. Every few chapters the author summarized everything that had happened in the book so far. Why was this necessary? It's not like a TV show where I only get a small bit each week. I needed no help remembering that Shawn has no self confidence and thinks he is a terrible person and that Bobby expects everyone to abandon him. I got it the first time I read it. The next ten times made me want to smack someone. It's really boring reading about the exact same thing over and over again. And it made the book way too long.

2. Point of view. In theory the book switches between third person points of view, but several times the author actually stops to explain everything. For example at one point he tells you what Bobby is NOT thinking. But if we're in Bobby's point of view why are we told this? If he's not thinking it... then he isn't

thinking it and thus we shouldn't read it!

3. Tone of voice. This read more like a textbook than like fiction. I felt like it was preaching to me, especially the way the author stopped to over explain and over analyze everything. The book felt the need to tell me when characters were making bad choices or thinking bad things. I wish it had just told the story and let me figure the rest out for myself. Too much telling, not enough showing.

4. Accents. Normally these don't bother me overly much, I've read some crazy highlander-type books with over done accents, but this just got to me over the course of the book. Seriously though, not one character ever used -ing, it was always -in'. No one ever said you or your, it was always ya and yer. Also wanna and gonna. I was "gonna" kill someone by about half the way through the book. Even the adults spoke like this!

5. Depressingness. I read for fun. This book was not fun to read. I have read tons of books where horrifically awful things happen to the characters and this was still more depressing because there was almost nothing happy that happened ever. There were no moments of lightness to contrast the dark subject matter. The characters spent the majority of the book being miserable and I was miserable right along with them.

To summarize: Too long, too boring. Had to force myself to finish it.

Andrew Grey says

This blew me away. I started reading it while on a cruise and couldn't put it down.

Phil Ansell says

I've finally stopped crying enough to write the review of this book.

Trust Me is a beautiful, emotional, loving and heartbreaking story of two very different young men, who have faced a some pretty big issues growing up, but as teenagers find love and acceptance in each other.

I completely fell in love with both Bobby and Shawn, the main characters, and I honestly feel like I've just been through everything with them, the writing is that good. I particularly felt for Shawn, and the thoughts and feelings that he had resonated so much with those I had growing up, also myself being gay and Christian. Both the characters were full of depth and very real and I just hoped so much that everything would work out for them in the story.

I loved how the author addressed the issues of Christianity and homosexuality. He showed both how the horrific, hypocritical and judgemental side of Christianity can badly damage someone's life but also that there is a wonderful side to Christianity, found in love and compassion for others. It's so sad that there are many many people out there with the views of both Shawn's mother and his pastor.

There were plenty of moments of joy in the story but some really dark heartbreaking ones too, you are taken on such an emotional roller-coaster, and I challenge you not to cry whilst reading this book, I sobbed my heart out.

Deeply touching, intelligently thought provoking and tragically heartbreaking, with the most lovable characters, this book has it all for me and is absolutely one of the best books I've ever read!

Jenre says

I was attracted to this book because one of the characters is a devout Christian and I wanted to see how that would be handled in an m/m love story. In the end that aspect was done well, with a balanced view of both sides of the argument from both conservative and liberal Christians, but there were other parts of the book – mainly to do with the structure and the writing – which didn't work as well for me.

Shawn has been a Christian all his life. He embodies the stereotype of a devout young man in that he is gentle and kind, always seeking the good in others and working hard at school and at church. However, as he gets older Shawn begins to realise that he's possibly gay and that leads to much confusion and self hatred, especially when coupled with other things that have happened to him in the past. When Shawn meets bad boy Bobby, who is almost the complete opposite of Shawn in the way he lives his life, there's a powerful attraction between them and nothing is going to stand in the way of their love. Or so they think...

I found whilst reading this book that my feelings towards it would veer from one extreme to the other. In terms of the writing and the way the story was structured, it was very simplistic and lacking in subtlety. For example, the story follows a strict linear pattern beginning when Shawn is 5 and then following alternating viewpoints between Shawn and Bobby as they grow up and become teenagers. More often than not, we are told the story rather than shown. There's no withholding of information, no leaving the reader in suspense (except by breaking off the viewpoints at a cliffhanger and moving onto the next viewpoint), no use of subtle body language and action. Everything is in words, either the thoughts of the characters, the dialogue between them or the omniscient narrator telling the story of these boys' lives. In addition to this, the reader is often told the same information over and over again at various points of the book which annoyed me as I don't need to be retold something I learned earlier in the book. The simplistic structure and style of the book was a little dull, and irritating at times and at several points in the book I found myself getting a bit bored.

Having said that, just as I was getting bored, the author would hit me with what he does best – writing gripping, emotional scenes. There were several points in the book where something dramatic would happen, often involving Shawn, and I would be thoroughly engrossed in the story and what was happening to him. I was, at times, horrified, tearful and overwrought by what was happening on the page, and each time this happened I was amazed at how easily the story played on my emotions and how caught up in the events I had become.

The characters themselves, especially Shawn and Bobby, were very well rounded, especially as we really get to grips with their thoughts and feelings. Shawn is perhaps a little too perfect, and I sometimes found it hard to believe the depth of his self-loathing given that he has so much affirmation in his life. Out of the two heroes I liked Bobby best, and I thought the author did a good job in showing the circumstances that led to the young man that Bobby becomes. I also liked the positive influence that Shawn has on Bobby, and the way they click easily together and become firm friends. The love between them grows quickly, but given their age and personalities I could see that being a realistic turn of events.

This brings me to something which may be off-putting to some readers: The age of the heroes. They are 15, and the book does contain explicit sex, although written quite subtly. It didn't bother me, because I know full well that 15/16 year olds have consensual sex with those they fall in love with (in fact my best friend at school was having sex with her boyfriend at that age), but I can see how that may not appeal to all readers, so it's worth mentioning.

So, as you can see, I had mixed feelings about the book. I liked the characters, and even the secondary characters were fully realised, but found the structure of the book clunky. The emotional content was riveting but the repetition and the telling rather than showing, meant that parts of the book were also quite dull at times. If you're a fan of Jeff Erno's books then I don't think you'll be disappointed in this one, although it's nowhere near as good as his *Puppy Love* books, which I would recommend over this one for anyone who wants to try this author.

DarienMoya says

^^TRUST ME! ITS THAT GOOD!^^

4.5

Jeff has done it again, a book where I literally fell in love with both characters and later moved on to crying like a baby. I might be biased but I think Jeff is one of the best, his books always manages to touch something in me, and Trust Me was no different. Imagine the worst possible scenario for a young gay boy; imagine the worst possible scenario for a young boy. This book had it all, the questions of self-identity, the stereotypes and all the love. Moreover, the hot topic of homosexuality and Christianity.

Shawn Graham is your average teenager, he worries about fitting in and getting along with his peers. The unique thing about Shawn is that he is a devout Christian, a truly good person who loves god. Thing is Shawn is a little on the effeminate side, and that seems to drive people to bully him, and adults telling him he is not man enough. Combine everything with being just your average teenager; this is a lot for Shawn to handle. He questions his sexuality; his self worth, and if he is queer can he still be a man devoted to god or does god hate him now.

Bobby Wilder is your typical teenage bad boy, with problems at home and doing what he wants when he wants to. Only thing is Bobby seems to be attracted to other boys, and no self-respecting bad boy has those feelings. He does the only thing he can and that is to ignore his feelings. When situations leads him to live with his father, these feelings come back and they come hard, because Shawn Graham is everything he wants, and everything he should not have.

From the very beginning, this book hit me hard; there was an intense scene that had my heart breaking and the tears flowing. Mr Erno manages to embody all the teenage angst and struggles within this book and it sure is effin believable. The writing is edgy and truthful, makes no apologies about the content and gives a big "WHY NOT". As a gay man, why can't I love god and have him love me back; why not live, be happy, and comfortable with who I am. Why not just love.

I loved Bobby and Shawn together, their innocence and growing affection for each other was written wonderfully. I felt like a part of them, I got to watch them grow, cry and most of all fall in love and it was beautiful. Through hardships (man it was hardships), and I read this at a time where so many young beautiful innocent lives were lost and it made me cry so much more. Being a teen is bad enough, a time of questioning and self-hatred, and to bring bullying into the mix, and not feeling acceptance, it can be rough. This book walked that line effortlessly, and made me celebrate the small victories. I am in love with these characters, I am in love with this book and I guarantee that Bobby and Shawn will bring a little joy into your life. Loved it!

Andi Anderson says

Can someone hand me a tissue please? I loved Trust Me! I adored the characters and the roller coaster ride their story put me on. I laughed, I cried, I got angry and I rejoiced at the end. What an amazing coming of age story!

Anna says

Now that I have stop crying I can give my review (I hope it make sense). As I have stated before I can relate to Shawn I feel for him when it comes to our religious belief growing up as a PK (preachers kid) you are told the "gay people" are ging to go the hell and burn in the pit of fire and for a while I believed it (sad I know). It wasn't until my best friend came out to me that I really started to see that he was no different from when I knew he wasn't gay. But the turmoil that he went through was almost the same as what Shawn and Bobby went through.

This book was an incredible read I could not put it down because it had me from the beginning. The feeling and emotions that this book brought out in me was very surprising, from Shawn's molestation to wanting knock some sense into his mother for somewhat abandoning her son.

However, I'm glad that in the end everything worked out. I would recommend this book to everyone. Jeff Erno has really out done himself in this book, it was completely different from all the other I have read and I think that is what I loved about it. Bravo Zulu!!!

Jeff Erno says

Trust Me receives a 5 star review from Bitter Shade Reviews <http://bitter.failed-to-say.net/archi...>

Trust Me receives a 4.5-star review from Leontine's Book Realm Review Site
<http://www.leontinesbookrealm.com/201...>

Trust Me receives a 4.5-star review from Bookwenches. <http://www.bookwenches.com/january11r...>

Trust Me receives a five-star review from Romance Studio. <http://theromancestudio.com/reviews/r...>

Trust Me receives a five-star Recommended Read from Fallen Angel Reviews
<http://fallenangelreviews.com/2010/De...>

Trust Me receives a rave 4.5-Star Review from Three Dollar Bill Reviews.
<http://threedollarbillreviews.com/201...>

Book reviewer Amos Lassen of Eureka Pride gives Trust Me a five-star review.
<http://www.eurekapride.com/talk/showt...>

Trust Me receives the Golden Blush Recommended Read Award by Literary Nymphs
<http://literarynymphsreviewsonly.blog...>

Trust Me is now available at Dreamspinner Press. <http://www.dreamspinnerpress.com/stor...>

Robert says

Holy crap! What an emotional roller coaster!! What I thought was going to be just a sweet romance between two boys, turned into a gut-wrenching story of youthful innocence, true love, disappointment, broken hearts, betrayal, and redemption.

I haven't been this wrapped up in a story for quite some time. Wish I could give it more than 5 stars.

Major English (Laura) says

The last 25% of this book was absolutely horrible. The two main characters didn't interact for a whole year. It was incredibly redundant writing... The whole book was incredibly redundant writing, but I was able to overlook it...

But I am just mad, the last 25% was infuriating.

Also I read Erno's most recent book, *You Belong With Me*, and there are literally the same lines from this book that are in that book.

If the last 25% of this book was not so horrible, in content, characterizations and writing, this could have been a four star book. Shawn's mom was infuriating, her disgust of her son and then her sudden "epiphany" was disgusting. Shawn and Bobby not interacting for an entire year was infuriating. Shawn cruising in a park was infuriating, Shawn and Bobby being stupid and not talking to each other for a year was ridiculous... I could name a million more things....

I could write pages about what I didn't like about it, but I'm just mad. I stayed up late to read it hoping it would get better and other than a sugary sweet HEA it never got better, but at least it was a HEA.
