



Merger of Equals

Liz Winters

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Jordy had plans to spend the summer between his junior and senior year of college traveling around Europe with friends. Instead, his overprotective corporate CEO mother demands that he stay in New York City and help her evaluate the benefits of a potential merger. Jordy agrees, but resents to constant presence of his mother's spy, her administrative assistant, Ken. Until one night he sends Ken out on an errand and discovers a sketch of the two of them together that throws his life into a tailspin. After suffering through traumatic childhood events, Jordy believed he'd never be able to get close to anyone, especially a man, but he can't stop thinking about the drawing and Ken. Ken thinks that Jordy is out of his league and he has family responsibilities that mean he can't risk his job by pursuing his boss' son, but neither can he deny his attraction. Jordy and Ken have to decide if there are too many obstacles between them or if they can somehow create a merger of equals.

STORY INFO:

Genre: contemporary

Tags: businessmen/lawyers, sweet no sex, abduction/kidnapping, hurt/comfort, coming out

Content Notice: off-page deaths of background characters, off-page child abduction, discussion of past child abuse; discussion of past sexual abuse

Word count: 23,435

Author's note: This story has a Happy For Now ending, but it's only the beginning. Unfortunately, when the boys' tale took on a life of its own and grew much more complicated than I ever anticipated, I was unable to write out the whole story due to the LHNB event deadline and other simultaneous obligations. I am, however, planning a follow up that will tie up all loose ends and will hopefully be available in the first quarter of 2014.

This story was written as a part of the M/M Romance Group's "**Love Has No Boundaries**" event. Group members were asked to write a story prompt inspired by a photo of their choice. Authors of the group selected a photo and prompt that spoke to them and wrote a short story.

Merger of Equals Details

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Author : Liz Winters

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From Reader Review Merger of Equals for online ebook

Nick says

Thought I'd get more into this book than I did. I thought a lot of the writing and dialogue was stiff, and oddly formal. The story is alright, but like other reviewers, I found a few points where I doubted if Jordy's reactions would be psychologically accurate.

Mandy*reads obsessively* says

Another wonderful addition to the LHNB stories.

3.75*

Jordy and Ken both have baggage and trauma in their past.

Jordy especially had a very traumatic experience as a young teen and that has lasting effects on his life. Ken had to grow up fast and take on an enormous amount of responsibility at a young age, yet he doesn't resent it or complain.

They are both good guys and I liked the slow and understanding progression of their relationship, I could easily see this as a longer story. They both had so much more to tell and share.

And the title makes a lot of sense, I wasn't sure in the beginning, since at least financially and social standing there is a huge discrepancy between the two, but at the end, I really saw what Ms Winters meant.

Of no importance, but I just wanted to add, while reading my mind kept going to this book, just for what Jordy dealt with.

(view spoiler)

Lisa Arbitrary - AttentionIsArbitrary M/M Blog says

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#### **\*Edited to make note of the HFN ending**

3-3.5 Stars

This sweet M/M Romance Group's LHNB short handled challenging subjects very well. With dignity and patience. Well done.

I especially enjoyed how the two characters had somewhat similar backgrounds, in this case it made the story all come together.

**"She used to say that only the lucky few hear the call of their destiny, but those who do should follow their inspiration."**

**"Let me worry about what I deserve. I happen to think I deserve to be with a gorgeous son of a corporate tycoon."**

It was just a little too short. I could have used a follow-up scene, but I wonder if there's more in the works for these two.

\*This is indeed a HFN as is confirmed by the author. Via Liz Winters:

"I fully intend to write the rest, though, as soon as I'm done with my other writing commitments."

and

"If all goes well, I will be able to devote this year's NaaNoWriMo to the Merger With Equals follow-up and will have something properly edited and ready for readers by early 2014. Of course, that's assuming that life doesn't throw me any curve balls. That's never a completely safe assumption, but I'm hopeful:) And I will be sure to let you know when the story is ready.

So Yay!

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### **Annika says**

Sorry, not my cup of tea. Far too mushy and far too much martyrdom. Also, you actually never really learn how they deal with their problems. Each time we get to the point where tension appears we have a fade to black which leaves the reader to imagine how things might be solved/discussed or whatever. This bothered me the most because if the author chose such difficult topic she/he should deal with it and not leave it to the reader's imagination. It seems to me kind of lazy or badly researched.

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### **Eve says**

A perfect little gem of a story, just the right length.

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### **Connie says**

Another great story from the LHNB event, that you Liz!

I loved the broken MC characterization she did with Jordy, how finding a partner who understands where he is coming from frightens him, how he has to learn to share his demons and have someone beside him that will be patient and understanding.

And Ken, a boy who had to turn into a man far too soon due to some tragic events in his past. He is the perfect partner for Jordy, a young man who knows how important trust is, and can give Jordy all the time and space he needs until he finds himself and is able to open up and love.

The picture prompt is beautiful.

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### **Meep says**

The characters don't work for me.

One seems immature, petty and entitled while the other is a robotic saint he's so good and responsible for so much so young.

The mother runs a big sucessful buisness and yet is protrayed as niave and incapable - her son wants the family buisness to fail so he can do his own thing? That feels obnoxious and hardly the best buisness strategy.

Couldn't get into it at all so not rating.

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### **Kevin says**

I enjoyed the story but wish it had been longer. Once I got to know the characters I wanted to go further with them.

The explanation of their thoughts by the author was a tiny bit simplistic to me. There was also one mistake that I noticed: too was used instead of to.

The actual scene in the story introduction was not in the story, or if it was I missed it.

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### **Sandra says**

Offered for FREE from the M/M Romance Group's Love Has No Boundaries event. Thank you too all the amazing authors who participated!

I'm a sucker for animated pics!

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### **Pjm12 says**

Two damaged boys perfect for each other, complementing each other, working their way patiently towards each other. Hard to read really with all the sadness, but it does get happy.

Absorbing.

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### **Anke says**

3.5 stars

I liked it, but I found the writing style not fully to my liking. The flashbacks were mashed into the story, not set apart, the place they were set brought me somewhat out of the reading flow. Overall the whole tone of the story was a tad bit too easy, if that makes sense, for the severe problems Jordy had.

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### **Adrienne -kocham czyta?- says**

Good backstory and creation of the relationship. A bit too easy and saccharine and every-character-says-every-line-perfectly-filled-with-wisdom-and-maturity-and-depth. Because of this, even though there were tragedies in each MC's past, I didn't really feel emotional reactions toward either.

A nice read if the premise intrigues you (like it did me), but could have been much better.

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### **Louan says**

A sweet story with a lot of healing.

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### **Isha says**

Merger of Equals was a very well-written and thoughtful book. The trauma experienced by the two heroes was presented and handled with great care and sensitivity. The characters and their relationship was believable. Though Ken seemed a little too good to be true at first. What guy in his twenties is willing and even eager to take on the challenges of pursuing a relationship with some one who is as sensitive as Jordy? But then I realized that Ken's been through his own trauma that has made him the patient and giving person

that he is, and that's when it made perfect sense for these two men to be together. It really did feel like a merger of equals.

Can't wait for the follow up on Ken and Jordy's story!

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### **Gail Thompson says**

This is a free story written as part of the Romance without boundaries event. This is where writers of M/m romance were asked to select a photo and writing prompt supplied by a fan of the genre and write an original tale.

This story was very original and I really enjoyed that. I thought that the characters behaved in a realistic way when confronted with the traumas they went through and PTSD. Jordy was especially well written in this regard. I really felt for him, and also for those that care about him as they see his daily struggles. It warms the heart to see Ken choose a relationship that is so fraught with emotional difficulty and difficulty in any physical intimacy. It is nice to read that there is a future for abuse victims, and also that human connections do not always need to revolve around sex.

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