



Fool's Errand

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In searching for the man of his dreams, Patrick Beaton crosses paths with other searchers, in an inventive debut novel that is reminiscent of Armistead Maupin's *Tales of the City*.

Fool's Errand Details

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Author : Louis Bayard

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From Reader Review Fool's Errand for online ebook

Ajax1978 says

I first read this when it was originally published and maybe it just hit me at the right time, but man this is one of my favorite books, bar none. Or maybe I have an affinity for it because of a stint living in Washington DC for a while. Some may think it is long and moves slowly but I find that's part of its charm. There are 80 page stories that have two guys meeting, having sex, declaring their love and undying devotion to each other, and picking out apartments over the course of three days. The thirteen year old girl in me thinks, good for them! But the realistic gay guy in me thinks, Fool's Errand is crazily fantastically possible. Some may give this two stars and that's fine. Some people wanna smack me when I put peanut butter and syrup on my waffle. We all like what we like. And for me this has remained a five star book.

Antonella says

I liked it a lot, although I'm not going to re-read a few times like some other books. I'd say that it is slightly less than 4 stars, but I'm going to round the rating up because I really laughed a lot and it is quite original and well written.

Tim says

This is a sweet, funny, absurd tale of a gay man's search for the man of his dreams. The description of interpersonal dynamics of the small gay community that exists even in a big, cosmopolitan city are stereotyped accurately!

Lucas says

One of my favorite books of all time.

inbetween says

The order in which we read books, what came just before, matters. So does how we're feeling, where and how we're living, our age and experience of course, but if I keep referring to other titles and authors, it's not to name-drop (obviously; I'm not quoting Foucault after all) but to add meaning, even if only for myself. The bad/vital human habit of seeing patterns everywhere, although I think I manage to distinguish between those intended or real, and those just meaningful to myself.

I had started Fool's Errand ages ago and stopped after the first chapter. Like most books, it wasn't quite what was advertised. Although I hadn't disliked it, I'd feared it was just another gay-lifestyle yuppy thing. Oddly

enough, Rodi was much more that, while Bayard is - very moody, nearly Gale-y so far. The protagonist's tiredness is something I can sympathise with (although I hope it won't be "cured" by psychotherapeutic stuff), and his (ex)-bf is portrayed as sympathetic and keenly feeling, so it could either go Kenry-ish with a rediscovery and getting back together (which is a) my plan for NaNoWriMo and b) as I just remembered a classic of romantic screwball comedies) or he might find "Scottie".

The book is also the first that voices how women turn to lesbianism as a political, rather than sexual, gesture, even if it is with need and emotion, and I wonder how soon Patrick will come to embrace (?) the theatrical feminism of Alex's friends. Like Lionel in Closet Case, Patrick (even if not closeted) seems removed from "us" (them, gay men).

Surprisingly sad start, but rather welcome after the unsettling lack of real emotion in Rodi.

ETA-TWO: there is no sex. The only two descriptions of the only two encounters (that happen off-screen) had seemed promising to me (surprised + embarrassed, then fleeing before being washed), if the ending hadn't revealed there was nothing deeper to this than ... um, the author not liking (to write about) sex? Emotions being too messy? Barbara Cartland conservatism?

Trin says

I found this long and, for the most part, really boring. Patrick and his yuppie angst did not engage me, and all of Seth's quirks, which I believe were supposed to be endearing, irritated the crap out of me. I believe it is possible to tell a small, personal story that, even if it has no cosmic significance, is still meaningful and important in its own way. But everything about this book felt small and trivial, and it wasn't even redeemed by being *funny*. Instead it was nearly 400 pages of well-intentioned yawnsville.

Nathan Burgoine says

Patrick Beaton is a rare sort of gay male protagonist - he's not incredibly passionate, he's not perfect, he's romantic, but he's also got his head so far up in the clouds that he's a little bit of a sap and a pushover.

So, when Patrick decides that someone he saw barely (and maybe even in a dream) is Mr. Perfect, he starts to hunt him down. Between his hunting down Mr. Perfect in all the wrong places, he has to deal with a slew of complications:

1. His ex - who has hooked up with a Mr. Wonderful of his own.
2. Mr. Wonderful's ex - who wants Patrick to find his own Mr. Perfect to drive Patrick's ex to a jealous return, so that Mr. Wonderful comes back on the market. Did I lose you there?
3. Crazy rats.
4. The CIA.

5. His best friend's love life, and her meddling in Patrick's love life.

and

6. A confusing and unannounced visit from his father.

All in all, this is a heartwarming tale, and I liked the direction it went. The ultimate conclusion is a plausible one, amidst a novel that's just shy of slapstick in places. There's a gentle touch to this story, in both dialogue and Patrick's thoughts, and it was a warm and snuggly sort of reading experience.

Charles says

One of my favorite books ever. If I were *somebody* in Hollywood, I'd make a movie of this one.

Jean says

This book is lovely and endearing and poignant. As the protagonist searches for His True Love, of whom he caught a glimpse when helped by him at a party, his family and friends assist him along the way. Bayard's work is different in the very best of ways, but it makes his works difficult to describe. Recommended.

Vincent says

Great story set here in DC - out along the frontier near the Armory. But you gotta really like reading about gay guys obsessing about one another to enjoy it. And of course the usual straight women who like gay guys. A fun read though.

Mike says

I read this book several years ago- I'm not sure it's even in print anymore. Louis Bayard is a great writer and at the start of his career he wrote gay romance/humor novels along the lines of Stephen McCauley. I'm not sure if he had limited success, or his interests changed but Bayard ultimately switched to historical fiction based on actual events (like Mr. Timothy).

Anyway, this book is great. If you find it on Amazon or in a used book store, you won't be disappointed. The two MCs are charmingly flawed, and the romantic build feels very well-earned. It might be slightly too long, but more of a good thing isn't necessarily a flaw.

Punk says

A neurotic gay romance. Patrick Beaton's just seen the man of his dreams, except Patrick's got no idea who

he is or how to find him. Enter Seth, the weird ex-boyfriend of Patrick's ex-boyfriend's new boyfriend (got that?). Seth's got a plan for finding Patrick's dream man. A crazy plan.

Patrick's a little useless and a lot unsure. He's got no idea who *he* is or what he wants, and at times this book can almost be a little hard to take because of that, but for the most part it's just Patrick bumbling his way through life, and you can't really blame him for being sort of lame. He means well. He also figures things out, eventually.

Four stars for great writing, a happy ending, and a slow, cozy story. Would read again. And have.

Bill says

A good solid comic novel, close to 4 stars. He could have used an editor to help him cut this by about 100 pages, but it is a fun read (especially if you remember the DC of the 90's)

Trio says

Oh I totally enjoyed this book! What a fun read, literally laugh out loud funny. The author is so witty, I absolutely love the way he writes. Terrific characters and such a clever plot. Highly recommend!

Matilda says

This is another gem I found on the street. Light but very engaging. The plot had a lot of twists and turns and was unpredictable, which was very enjoyable and rare for me as an avid reader. I found I missed his voice when I finished it.
