



## The Dreams You Made in the Dirt

*Lisa Henry*

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*Dear Author,*

*MC1 (maybe eighteen to twenty years?) grew up hard in a dysfunctional family in a small remote community. His mother is gone and no one will say what happened to her. His father has always been abusive physically and emotionally. No one has ever stood up for him. He is smaller than average, making him a target for torment, but has had to learn how to fight for himself. He has the soul of a healer—naturally gentle and empathetic—but has learned not to trust as any time he has given himself emotionally he has been smacked down. Despite the way he is treated, he has never been allowed to leave and has nowhere to go as he has no education, money or friends/family to fall back on. When his father finds out MC1 is gay (not that he has had a chance to act on it), MC1 is bashed and left for dead miles from home.*

*MC2 (maybe twenty-eight to thirty-two years?) is a loner who has his own demons in his past (maybe ex-military/ex-con?). He is a natural alpha—protective and dominant. He finds MC1 and cares for him as he heals. Contrary to his promise to himself to stay detached, he feels a pull to MC1 and hates the sadness and despair in the eyes of his charge. He fights himself and MC1 as he finds he badly wants to earn MC1's trust. Who knows what can happen after that?*

*They are both capable of so much if they can find the right balance. I see the opportunity to have some emotional, hot scenes as they each give in to their natural instincts.*

*I'd love a HEA for these two battered souls.*

### Photo Description:

Two men embrace against a dark background. They stand, heavily shadowed, one in front of the other, chest to back, with arms entwined. They are tender, but at the same time appear desperate and vulnerable.

This story was written as a part of the M/M Romance Group's "**Love's Landscapes**" 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.

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The M/M Romance Group strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

## The Dreams You Made in the Dirt Details

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## From Reader Review The Dreams You Made in the Dirt for online ebook

~◊~Doxni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~◊~ says

[When the mystery is "solved," the police just show up to search the

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### Lilia Ford says

Loved this. There was an unusual quietness to the story, but I found it totally engrossing and moving. The characters felt very present and real. And then there's Dingo Creek--what a great name--and the abandoned quarry, which hover over the story like a creepy, haunting presence, a perfect background for the characters' nightmares. I especially loved reading a Lisa Henry story actually set in Australia! I hope there are more to come. Her picture of her homeland is definitely not the fun-loving, friendly place of American cliches. Extra shout-out for the brilliant title.

Bottom line: this was fantastic.

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### Kat says

..not going to lie. A bad start and my feed give me little incentive to dive into the avalanche of freebies this year's M/M Romance Group event has to offer. I'm not really eager to watch contestants go down in what seems like the book version of Idols' audition rounds. A huge thanks to the friends that make the selection process easier by weeding out the not so stellar stuff though!

I couldn't resist this Lisa Henry story and I wasn't disappointed. Sure, it's a bit run-of-the-mill and too short to have much impact, but she's good at the victimized kid/reluctant knight in shining armor thing. Just the right amount of sappiness, drama and angst suspense. Oh, and with a subtle instead of a grotesque HEA. Nicely done.

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### Julio Genao says

started really strongly, but came apart a bit, by the end.

pretty ok, with some nice scenes, but on the whole i'd have liked the story to play out a little more slowly, with fewer hints and a more satisfying resolution that didn't all tumble out in such a short time.

i wanted more, basically. henry has a soft touch with vulnerable characters, and it's always tough to let them go.

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## **Lisa Henry says**

It's my Love's Landscapes story! Hooray!

Thanks to Mel for a great prompt, and to the volunteers who helped knock this thing into shape. More or less. (They did the more, obviously, and I took care of the less.)

I hope you like the story, guys!

Anything you want to know about the story, ask away :)

Here's the direct link, for those like me who keep clicking on the wrong thing and going in circles:

<https://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/...>

And here's the link for the downloads: <http://www.mmromancegroup.com/the-dre...>

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## **Sheziss says**

I love the cover and the title, and it's Lisa Henry's so I was sold.

Her style is there, and I love it. She knows what she's writing and she knows what she wants to achieve.

The problem is... this is too rushed. In every sense of the word.

Too "insta-lovey" for my taste.

I liked the characters together but I had the sensation they both need more development, not only from the author's part, but also of themselves.

It's a way too soon, Aidan needs some growing-up, more healing. I'm not referring to the chronological aspect. He's too vulnerable, his mental fragility is obvious. He had been abused for years and years, and his mother left him behind. Also, he dropped out of school when he was 15 because of his dyslexia and is too dependent of Cole. I felt he was not ready for a sentimental relationship of this magnitude. I wasn't feeling comfortable with the sexual sphere here, and it was nothing to do with the age gap but with the emotional growth.

Cole is also too unstable, he's a veteran and he comes with his own baggage. He's supposedly the confident one, the one who provides safeness and protection. I'm not saying he's unable of such things, but I do believe he's still not prepared for what's to come.

I can understand Aidan's crush on Cole, as he saved Aidan's life and is the first person who has ever behaved well with Aidan. What I cannot buy is Cole's instant feelings.

What I meant to say is not that this story doesn't work, just that it needed more time in order to be really complete and solid.

The mystery part was unexpected. It comes in the very end and took me by surprise. I didn't see that coming, but makes a lot of sense.

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You can read this book for free here.

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**Lisa \*-\* GiViNg It To YoU \* LoCk StOcK & TwO SmOkiNg BaRrELs says**

\*\*\*\*3.75 Stars\*\*\*\*

*Beautiful Cover, Beautiful Title, Beautifully Told.....Just Beautiful!!*

*Emotionally charged story of two young men. Both suffering for different reasons.*

*Short and Sweet...but well worth a read!!*

*I'm just loving Lisa Henry at the moment...fast becoming one of my fav authors.*

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**Barbara says**

I knew Lisa Henry was good and this is was no exception.

Short, gentle,tender, and heartbreaking. This is all about abuse and overcoming it. A simple story with a little cinderella tale theme.

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**Meep says**

A simple hurt/comfort story with a little cinderella woven in. I enjoyed it until the relationship started, at that point I was majorly creeped out. Aiden came across as too young and far too vulnerable to be making those kind of decisions. For me this would need to be a full length story with some time given for him to gain

strength and independence first. I think perhaps Cole needed someone to care for though and I really liked his character.

There were a lot of story aspects I liked, they talked, didn't immediately jump into things, there's a CUTE DOG! Loved ♥ the quote that gives the book its title. All that's 3-4stars, but my impression of Aiden lowers it - (view spoiler)

I saw him as a kid regardless of actual age. Indeed when we met his father for the first time I thought briefly he might be the love interest! ...*boy was I wrong!* Aiden needed a supportive friend not a lover.

I left the story with a couple of questions (view spoiler) and the impression it needed to be longer, the relationship paced slower, Aiden given time to discover Aiden before considering Cole.

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### **Vivian says**

Love the title: evocative, poignant and perfect.

Definite hurt/comfort story set in the barren outback where the mood is as bleak as the surroundings. Emotionally charged story of one young man coming of age, tormented, and a PTSD vet new to town. This isn't a complicated short story, but it is tight and well wrought. Wonderful sensory descriptives add a lot to the tale. Very good if not an easy read. But, it's Henry--you gotta expect to pay for it.

Favorite quote: Is the one that contains the title and for spoiler reasons I won't highlight here.

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### **Jan says**

3.5 stars

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### **Laura says**

One of my goals for the summer is to read more short stories to find new authors and characters to love and follow. *But* that plan blew up in a flash when I spotted Lisa Henry's new short story The Dreams You Made in the Dirt. I tried to tell myself—"NEW voices, Laura." New! Haha...I couldn't resist though.

I love Lisa Henry's way with words!

**"It warmed him from the inside that he'd made Cole happy, even if it was only for now, for this most brief moment in time. It seemed like the sort of moment he would want to remember for the rest of his**

life."

Aiden and Cole's story and struggle has everything I love about Lisa Henry. Her heroes always seem to slip right under my wall of defenses. Men filled with pain and doubt. Haunted in many ways with pain, but can still reach out with love, comfort, and help. Aiden and Cole find each other at a time when a kind face, big smile, and safe place is just what they need to wipe away bad dreams.

Okay, okay. I'm not going to gush all over the place, but I need to say one more thing. Ms. Henry's way of creating a place for her characters and emotions on the page is one of my favorite parts of her worlds. Whether it is a tropical island, deep space, or in the middle of nowhere—her scenes and places always leave a mark on me. They feel so solid and real. I can still feel the sun from The Island. This time it was the isolation that seeped in my bones. A hard, closed off, quiet world with shadows and nights that "softened" into day. The words create such a vivid picture for me. I can feel the path of little yellow flowers on the wallpaper, smell the sizzling bacon in the air, and see the joy in a flash of a smile and blue eyes.

Yup. Safe to say I enjoyed this sweet, sweet story.

If you haven't met Lisa Henry yet, this story is for you! A free read and introduction to her words.

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### **Steelwhisper says**

4.5\* rounded up

Lovely short story of two young men suffering both from PTSD, though for different reasons.

Beautifully told, in an engaging, imaginative and absolutely not clichéd prose. Great plot to which I cottoned on only slowly. Kudos!

On top of that: this is one of the very few truly erotic stories I read in the past 6 months. All the intimate descriptions were fresh, suggestive and took me along, emotionally and as per the sensations they describe.

I swear, Henry is getting better with each project! Lovely, lovely story.

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### **Trisha Harrington says**

This was amazing, and wonderful, and emotional at times. Basically, it was so close to perfect. I would have loved something a little longer, though, because I would have loved a HEA. Don't get me wrong, the ending is hopeful and honestly left me wanting more, but everything wasn't as happy as I would have liked for the characters. Aiden especially.

Aiden and Cole were wonderful MC's. While both of them were damaged, it was Aiden who really wormed his way into my heart. What happened to him was so sad. He basically had no one and the only family he did have (2 half-brothers and his father) only made his life worse. His father, who was the worst of them, was definitely a monster and the discovery towards the end was proof of that, but even what he did to his own son was enough for me to hate him.

The age difference between the two characters might be an issue for some, but I think if you can get past the fact Aiden is only 18 and Cole is 10+ years older, you should really give this one a shot. It's beautiful and definitely makes you feel.

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### **A Girl Has No Name says**

*The Dreams You Made in the Dirt* got me engrossed immediately and I had to finish it in one sitting. **Aidan** is 18 years old and he grew up in a **highly dysfunctional family**. He is used to stay quiet, to not be noticed and he tries to keep himself out of his father's way. But one day, his father finds out about his secret and nearly beats him to death. But fate has another will and **Cole, an ex-military man** finds Aidan and takes him in. While Aidan is terrified at first and not able to trust anybody due to his childhood experiences, Cole slowly manages to get into Aidan's heart. A beautiful relationship develops, but a dark secret from the past is about to hurt Aidan once more.

I loved the writing style of the author and the way she managed to **make the characters feel alive**. I was suffering with Aidan and I was so afraid for him. The conversations they had were simple, but so intense. I have to admit that their **relationship advanced a little too fast**, I would have liked to read more about the time Aidan needed to heal both physically and emotionally. Due to the shortness of the story, a few important moments of the romance were kept too short.

However, the beautiful quotes and some very emotional scenes in the book transformed it into one of my favorite DritC reads so far!

Are you mad?

Why would I be mad?

I'm covered in mud.

Are you sure that's mud? I thought you were covered in the dreams you made in the dirt.

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**Amazing story, incredibly fitting title and beautiful cover! 5 stars!**