

SIREN BOOK REVIEWS

March 2011 Ezine

ISSUE #2

BREACHING PREJUDICES



Authors coming together to reflect change.

Dear Readers,

Breaching Prejudices is a free EZine, brought to you by many great authors, readers and friends. We've come together because we see an injustice, where we want to see change. Within these pages are passionate people who feel strongly about the mistreatment of people based on their sexual orientation. By using the tool we have handiest, our words, we offer them our support.

The inspiration for *Breaching Prejudices* was a single person. This man was treated unfairly, singled out by an entire network of people, simply because he chose to share who he was through his own words and pictures. The treatment he received was intolerable and his friends would not allow him to stand alone in this issue. No one should have to hide who they are.

From there, the idea of the next issue of our magazine being dedicated to this grievance grew as more and more people got involved, proving that a great many of us will not stand for finding fault with those who are, *who they are*. We are here in hopes of getting the word out that this isn't a matter to be shunned. Gays, Lesbians, Bi-Sexuals and Transgenders are not people to look down upon. This is *their* lives, to do with what they will.

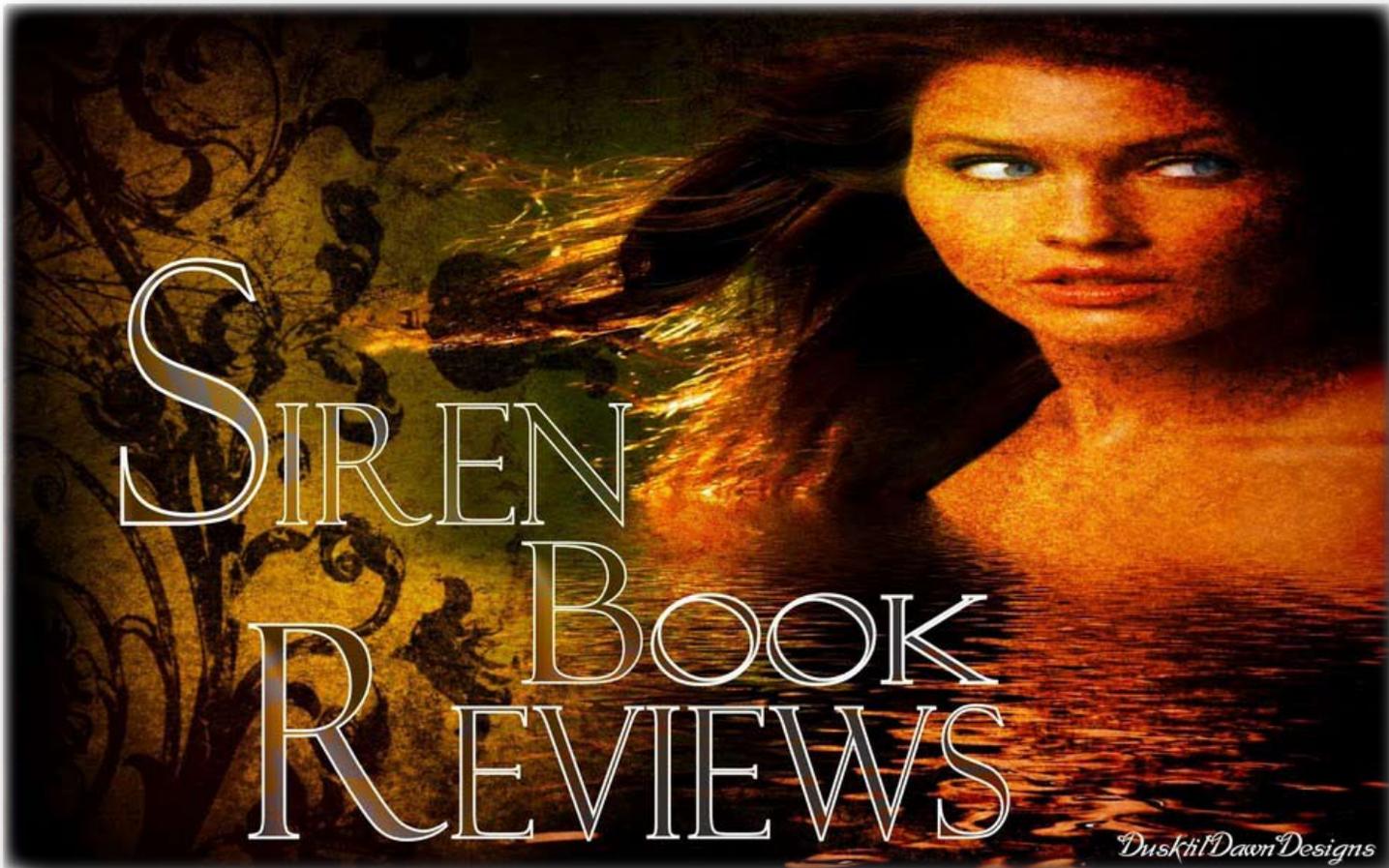
Siren Book Reviews has devoted our March Issue to GLBT Authors, and others who wish to have their say put into a formal medium. You will find within these pages, interviews, articles and short stories about the rights of acceptance.

And that is what we all want, isn't it, no matter who we are? Acceptance. For whom we were born to be, no matter our culture, heritage, or sexual preference.

Sincerely,

Kayden and Brigit

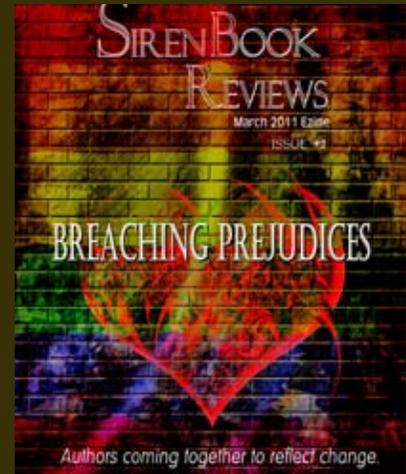
Owners, Siren Book Reviews



SIREN BOOK REVIEWS

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SBR SPEAKS WITH GABREILLE EVANS

There is a lot of public sentiment right now both for and against gay-rights and acceptance of an alternative lifestyle choice. How do you feel about this sentiment and what do you think we can do to help further the positive support for those who choose to live this lifestyle?

It's exciting to see the growing support and solidarity for the GLBT community! The repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. Several states now openly recognize gay marriage. More and more films are portraying gays and lesbians in a positive light. Society as a whole has come a long way toward acceptance.

In my opinion, most prejudice comes from ignorance. We fear the unknown, and our fear generates hate and contempt. We have to stand together, rise above the misconceptions, and redirect the ideology that homosexuality is wrong. As long as we continue to speak out against injustice, good things will follow.

Do you have advice to those out there, who experience prejudices from others for their lifestyle choices?

Do not compromise who you are because society dictates that you should act, look, dress, walk, talk, or breathe a certain way. Find yourself and embrace it with both hands. Surround yourself with people that accept you for the person you are, not who you choose to love.

Tell us about how you first got into writing and published.

I've been writing for as long as I can remember. I started out writing poetry, short stories, and essays in high school. I had a dream to write a book for a lot of years, but so many things got in the way: family, life, my own insecurities. Then one day, I sat down and started typing. I had this idea in my head, these voices that wouldn't go away, and I just had to get it down. I had zero idea what I was doing, and my first foray into publishing was a big fat rejection letter. But, I took the author's criticism, made the necessary improvements, and the rest is history.

How did you get involved in writing GLBT stories?

I love to read, and am a huge fan of M/M stories. What's hotter than a sexy, naked man? Two, three, or more of course! I don't know that it was really a conscious decision, though. I didn't sit down and think, "Okay, I'm going to write a homoerotic romance." I had Braxton chirping away in my head, Keeton shaking his moneymaker in the background. Then here comes Xander. He introduced me to his brothers, and I loved them all immediately. Everyone deserves a happily-ever-after, no matter if they're heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or asexual, and I love to write stories that represent that.

What advice would you give to aspiring GLBT writers?

Read, read, read. Ask a gazillion questions to anyone willing to answer. You're always going to have someone out there that doesn't like what you write or how you write it, but be true to your characters. Mostly importantly, find your own voice. If you don't feel like you write a particular genre well, write what makes you happy. I promise it will make someone else smile too.

Tell us more about your latest M/M release.

Leap of Faith is celebrating its second week on BookStrand's Bestsellers List. I'm really excited and a little overwhelmed with the amazing response.

Braxton is quirky and a bit overdramatic at times. Xander is an average guy, with a not so average secret. Braxton's ex, Mason, is just one of those villains you love to hate. I think each character brings something different and interesting to the story. I had so much fun with them that when I finished, I just couldn't say goodbye yet, and hence the Moonlight Breed series was born.

What do you hope readers take away from your GLBT releases?

I hope readers take away a few things. First, love comes in all shapes and sizes, and usually when you least

expect it. Secondly, true love doesn't discriminate. We all have something special that makes us unique. You shouldn't have to change anything about yourself to find someone special. Relationships take work, no matter what body parts are involved. From traditional to unconventional, every relationship requires honesty, trust, and respect.

What are your hobbies?

Between my family, my writing, and the gazillion other things I have to do in a day, I don't really have time for hobbies.

How do you come up with and develop your characters?

I honestly have no idea. I get an idea for a story, and then suddenly I have these voices in my head, yammering away. I'd love to force them to do what I want, but they usually have other ideas. Do you know how frustrating it is to argue with a fictional character?

What do you have in store for your readers in the future?

I have lots of yummy goodness coming soon! Keeton and Logan's story is right around the corner in *By the Light of the Moon*, the second book in my *Moonlight Breed* series. I'm finishing up books three in four in the series right now. Jade and Archias are eagerly awaiting the release of their story, *Race the Sun*,

the first book from my new *Chasing Forever After* series from Silver Publishing. I'm working on a M/M contemporary, as well as a couple of drama/suspense stories swimming through my head.

What is your ideal hero?

My ideal hero is someone that has flaws, but you can't help but love them. They always try to do the right thing, even if it means going against the majority. They stand up for what they believe in, and reach out to those that need a helping hand. Heroes don't need rippling muscles, tan skin, and dreamy eyes. Just a big heart and a lot of courage.

What is your favorite color?



Authors and Readers alike come see what is in store for you over at Redz World. Authors, of all genres, we are looking for others to come and share so stop by and check us out, then book your date to come play.

<http://redzworld.blogspot.com/>

I don't have a favorite color. I have favorite color combinations, which are constantly changing. Right now, I'd have to say red and silver.

What do you daydream about?

I'd like to tell you that I daydream about half naked bodies, chocolate waterfalls, and world peace. In reality, my thoughts read more like a "To Do" list. The closest I come to daydreaming is when I'm writing, but I have to be in front of my computer, with my fingers on the keyboard, before the words start to flow.

Do you have another job, besides being a writer?

I'm a fulltime nurse, coach, tutor, referee, chauffeur, cook, and maid. In other words, I'm a mom. When I'm not chasing monsters from the closets, washing a mountain of laundry, or baking two dozen cupcakes the night before a school party...I write.

Tell us the first five random things about you that come to mind.

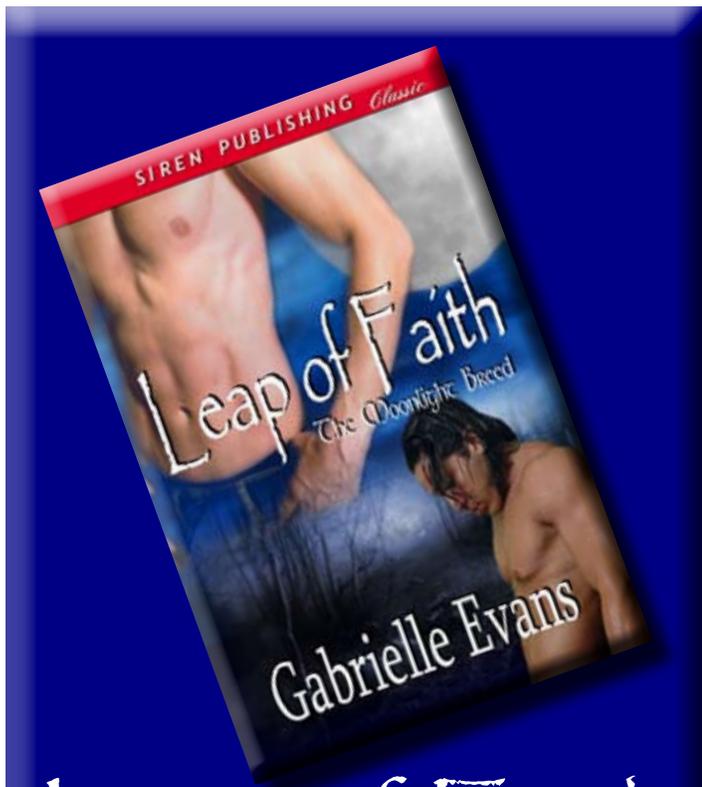
- 1. I have a huge crush on Anne Hathaway.*
- 2. I order my pizza without tomato sauce, but I will eat spaghetti sauce without the noodles.*
- 3. I cover my ears instead of my eyes during scary movies.*
- 4. I think piercings and tattoos are sexy!*
- 5. I can't sleep without a fan on, no matter how cold it is outside.*

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Smile! It makes people wonder what you're up to.

Where can our readers find you?

Come read my ramblings on my blog at www.gabrielleevansromance.blogspot.com Be sure to leave lots of comments! I love hearing from readers! They are the reason I get to do what I love! Stop by my website at www.gabrielleevans.com to check out what I'm working on, what books are coming soon, and other ways to contact me!



Leap of Faith [The Moonlight Breed 1]

by **Gabrielle Evans**

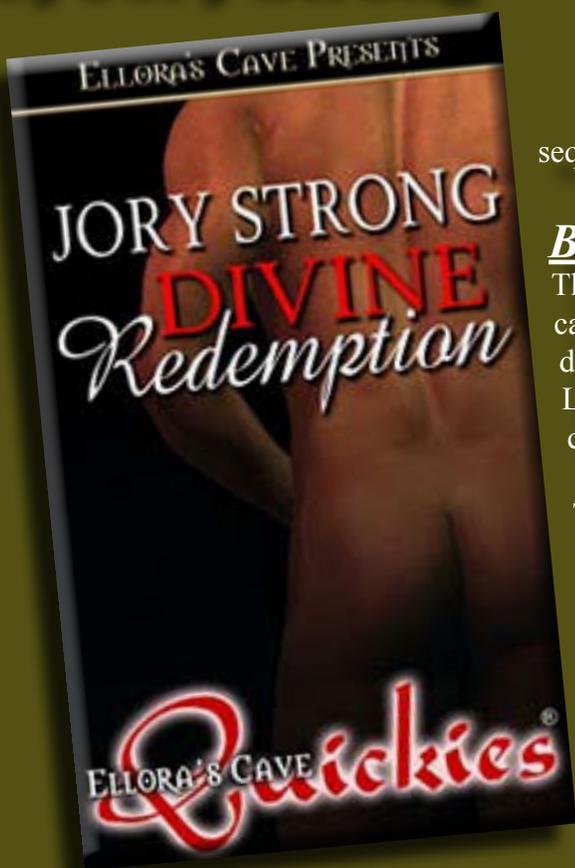
After kicking his two-timing ex-lover to the curb, all Braxton is interested in is getting started on his next graphic novel. That is, until he meets sexy firefighter and cursed shifter, Xander Brighton.

Xander has never given much thought to having a mate. Now that he's found Braxton, though, he will do whatever it takes to keep his new partner safe and happy.

But Braxton's ex-lover, Mason, isn't about to let them move on to their happy-ever-after without a fight. In fact, he will stop at nothing to reclaim his ex, and Braxton begins to suspect that Mason may be hiding an ulterior motive. With Xander's help, Braxton races to unravel the mysteries surrounding his ex before someone ends up hurt...or worse.

www.bookstrand.com/leap-of-faith

Divine Redemption *Reviewer* **by Jory Strong** *Stacey Krug*



Tagline

While a standalone, Divine Redemption is a loose sequel to Death's

Blurb/Summary

Their connection was instant, their attraction intense. Reincarnated souls reunited though neither consciously realize the depth of their bond. Temperance and Demetri love each other. Lust after each other. But a third waits, someone who will complete an already near-perfect union.

Thanos wronged them in a previous existence and, as the mortal son of Dionysus, was punished for it by the Fates. He's had lifetimes to repent, eons to witness the rebirths and deaths of the two people who have come to mean everything to him.

Now the Moirae have finally reunited the three of them, giving Thanos a chance to rekindle an ancient flame. For their part, Tempe and Demetri must choose him freely. While Thanos must avoid retracing old steps—and betray-

ing his lovers once again.

Rating

Four And A Half
Siren Stones

Genre

Paranormal Romance

Sub-Genre

GLBT (M/M)

ISBN E-Book

9781419928321

Publisher

Ellora's Cave

Buy-Link

<http://www.jasmine-jade.com/pc-8332-25-divine-redemption.aspx>

Review

I didn't get to read Death's Courtship which is a prequel to Divine Redemption, but it really wasn't necessary. Divine Redemption is a great story all on its own. The author's blurb at the opening of the story lays out the background and history of the characters and their relationships.

Divine Redemption dives right into the meat of the story with Temperance and Demetri in a steamy shower scene. While they have wonderful chemistry on their own, they feel like they are missing someone to make them complete. Then enters Thanos and his relationships, both past and present, with Temperance and Demetri get revealed. Fate and choices play out to give the plot a little twist.

The sex scenes between the three are erotic and hot, hot, hot! The author did a great job making you feel for the characters so that the scenes also felt loving and protective of one another. A well written ménage a trois.

Divine Redemption is quick and short, unfortunately, because when you get done you'll yearn for more!

This is a story that you won't put down until it's done!

Borrowed Time

By Cindy Jacks

He told me, “I have to live in DC.”
At the time, I didn’t understand why. Yes, I know that DC has an active and supportive scene for gay people, but my suburb in Northern Virginia is not so backward that a gay man couldn’t live openly. And John* had just lost his job. It didn’t make sense to me that he was refusing my offer to let him mooch off of me for a while.

“Don’t be stubborn,” I said. “Come live with me, just until you get on your feet.”

But again, he refused.

John could often be brash, impulsive, even self-destructive. But I didn’t know at the time that he was trying to save himself. Already considered low-income, he’d gotten into the DC free HIV medication program. If he moved to Virginia when I’d

asked him to, he would’ve had to apply for a whole new government-run program and he could’ve be waitlisted for months. Months he could not afford to go without his meds. At this point, John had already been hospitalized once for pneumonia and was being treated for a serious oral infection. He’d also wasted away to a mere shadow of his once hearty self. I knew my friend was sick, but he refused to admit it to me. To anyone.

I remember when John and I first met. He was good at pretending to be heterosexual. We worked for a pair of brothers who would’ve, at the very least made his life hell if they’d known he was gay, and probably would’ve fired him. When John first asked me out, I thought he was interested in me.

The day of our “date” arrived and when we left work, I told him, “I need to change at your place, if that’s okay.”

He grew nervous and suggested several other places I might change—including my own apartment which was forty-minutes away.

“What’s wrong with you?” I asked. “Just let me change at your place.”

Rolling his eyes, he acquiesced. When we reached his apartment complex and entered the elevator in the parking garage, he said, “Cindy, before we go upstairs, there’s something I have to tell you.”

His expression was so serious, I had to laugh. I asked,

“What? Are you Batman?”

Then he laughed. “No, I’m gay. I live with another man.”

Relief washed over me—well, relief and a little disappointment. I’d kinda been hoping he was Batman.

“I doesn’t matter to me that you’re gay. In fact, it’s cool. I’m a hag without a fag at the moment.”

He hugged me and took me to meet his boyfriend, Ken. Ken and I got along famously because we both liked Disco music and John couldn’t stand it.

During that first evening out, John confided in me that he was, in his exact words, an “AIDS widow.” Two years prior, his life-partner, Tim, had died of AIDS-related illnesses. I expressed sympathy, unable to grasp fully the pain John must’ve felt. I was only twenty-five at the time. I’d never loved anyone enough to call him my life-partner.

John drained his glass of wine and said, “Aren’t you going to ask if I’ve positive too?”

“No.” I furrowed my brow. “Just because Tim was positive doesn’t mean you are. And you’ll tell me if you want me to know.”

“Well, I’m not positive,” he said.

I nodded and smiled, glad my new friend wasn’t sick.

I was still wearing my khaki pants and polo shirt from work. No way I was hitting the DC club scene in that get-up.

To IMT – if I’d known you were living on borrowed time, I could not have inexcusably taken it for granted.

Years passed, nearly a decade. For most of those years, John was the most vibrant and exciting person I knew. Whenever we went out, something spectacular and ridiculous always happened. Like the time we crashed a cross-dresser's birthday party by accident. Or the evening I stumbled home with several strands of Mardi Gras beads—though it was August—I was covered in someone else's body glitter and missing a shoe. Then there was the time John's car started billowing smoke in the middle of traffic. He abandoned it in parking lot and said, "We'll deal with it after we get drunk. Let's go dancing." And we did.

The last few years that I knew him, he deteriorated rapidly. He loss weight. His teeth went bad. He looked, for lack of a better word, faded.

"Are you sure you're not sick?" I asked over lunch one day.

"I'm not sick," he insisted, shoveling a forkful of salad into his mouth.

Later that same year, John decided on a whim to move to Chicago to attend some prestigious piano tuning program. I hadn't known there was any such thing. By the time he returned eighteen months later, my marriage had fallen apart and I was leaving for Florida. I needed some time to focus on myself and my son.

One night, in June of 2007, while I was wallowing in self-pity, my cell phone rang. John's number flashed across the caller ID, but I didn't answer. I was too depressed.

Besides, I could call him another day.

In September 2007, I returned to Virginia, ready to resume a life I'd put on hold. I got my own place, started dating. Then, I called John, but his number wasn't working. So I Googled him, but instead of finding a way to contact him, I found his obituary. It stated that he'd died of a "lung infection" in July of that year.

Though I tried not to draw any conclusions, I had a good sense of what this meant. John had died, as his life-partner had, of AIDS-related complications. Several months later, once I'd worked up the courage, I spoke to his family. Sure enough, John had been HIV positive for twelve years. Our entire friendship. He'd chosen to hide the condition for a number of reasons, not the least of which were social stigma and the broken US healthcare system.

I'd be lying if I said that I wasn't hurt that John chose to hide the truth from me. However, I've come to understand his decision. We all hide the hurt and broken parts of

ourselves, perhaps wishing that they didn't exist or hoping that no one will notice that we are less than we pretend to be. But whatever flaws or defects John might've had, he was exactly who he appeared to be: the most fun, exciting, and crazy person I've ever known. He loved fully and with abandon. He was sensual and spiritual. Gregarious to a fault. Self-proclaimed vice-president of serendipities. My friend, who is dearly missed.

For those of you who are HIV positive, please do not suffer alone. Let your voices fill the air so that you can never be ignored. For those of you unsure of your status, get tested today. If not for you, for those who love you. HIV isn't a death sentence...only silence is.

**All names, but that of the author, have been changed to protect the privacy of others.*

GALE STANLEY
<http://galestanley.net>

HER BOOKS MAY BE SMOKIN' HOT, BUT AT THE HEART OF EACH STORY IS A ROMANCE.

The Romance Reviews:
"Ms. Stanley sure knows how to write great tension between the characters, making me read on with bated breath and anticipation. And when they come together ooh la la...be ready to combust."

SBR SITS WITH JOHN

This month, SBR had the chance to sit down with a man named John, who is living in a rather unique situation: the woman he married six years ago is now a transgender man whom you might've heard of--GLBTQ romance author, DC Juris. Here's what John had to say about life, love, and the pursuit of happiness.

SBR: Thanks for sitting down with us, John. Tell our readers a little about yourself.

John: I am a stay at home spouse, due to some health reasons. I love music, science fiction, and my home improvement projects. Halloween is my favorite holiday. We do a large setup and display for the kids and neighborhood each year. Otherwise, I take care of what I can around here, including the pets during the day.

SBR: You identify as a straight man, but your transgender spouse now identifies himself as a bisexual male. What's that like?

John: It's like living with your best friend, and your complete other half. Your football buddy, your confidant. And some days? Some dude that has thrown way too many pairs of socks on the floor.

SBR: What's been the most difficult aspect of living with a transgender person?

John: People look at you a bit strange when you're out. Not a big deal, as I have always been a large, different looking person. But sorting laundry is hell. (snicker) I think the worst is watching someone you love, and seeing them feel like they don't fit in their own skin. You have to be comfortable with the way the world sees you some days, and sometimes that doesn't seem to work. Being as supportive as you can each day is all that you can do.

SBR: Do you miss living with a female-identified person?

John: Sometimes I do, but that is totally normal. I miss frilly underwear... There are times, when you do miss the woman side of it all. I didn't marry a transgender person, I married a woman.

People do change. They become who they truly are with time, with understanding, and the freedom of their own choices of who they really are on the inside. I know

that I married a woman, but this person is still who I fell in love with, and is still my friend.

SBR: How have you handled telling your family and friends?

John: I have been as open and honest with my family, as I have been with my partner. People who truly care about you and who are open to the world, will choose to be a part of your life. The rest of them?? I think you have the feeling about what I would say.

SBR: Do you worry about how people look at you now, especially when you're out in public or among strangers?

John: I don't have much use for the ignorance of people. I know that we are loving, interesting people. You will always get looked at like you have three heads, or they will wonder if I am gay. Life is too damn short to worry about what "other" people think. So, you just live life each day, as well as you can.

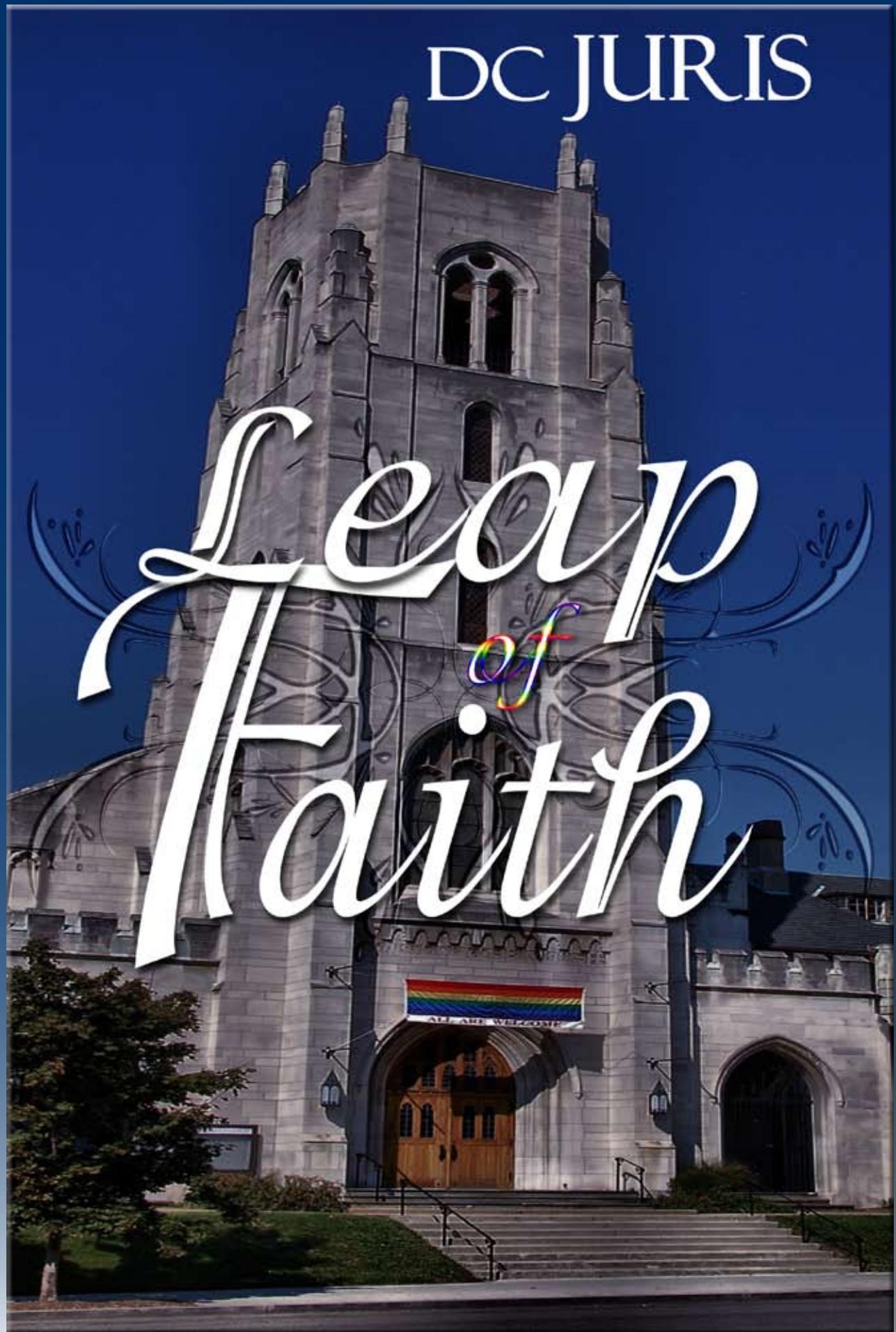
SBR: If there is one thing you would like to tell people, to help them understand more about transgendered individuals, what would that be?

John: People just want to fit in, and feel normal. How can they feel normal, if everyone is looking at them like a freak? Wasn't it said in the Bible, "Judge Not, Lest Ye Be Judged"? Imagine not wearing your favorite colors, or your favorite shoes, because it was deemed "not" appropriate for your gender. Anyone who has not liked their own curly hair, or being tall, or being short, now imagine not liking the gender you are. You know inside you are a man, but you have this woman's body that you don't see as yours. You look in the mirror, only to be unhappy that the person you are outside, does not fit with what you feel inside each day. I hope that this will help anyone open their own eyes a bit.



DC JURIS

*Leap
of
Faith*



Pastor Eric Decker strolled up the cobblestone path to his tiny detached office out behind Cherrygrove Fellowship Church, unable, as always, to hide his grin. From the ornate iron hinges on the red, wooden door, to the brick arches framing the stained glass windows, right down to the pots of marigolds lovingly planted by one of his church members, everything about this area filled him with an overwhelming sense of happiness and peace. As was his usual practice, he paused several feet from the door and took a deep breath that reverberated all the way down to his toes.

This morning, though, he'd been sent a little surprise. On his doorstep stood a young man he recognized right way; a man he'd been thinking about more and more recently. "Shane!" He paced quickly to the door, grabbing to shake the young man's hand even before he was close enough. "It's good to see you, son!"

Shane returned the smile and the handshake, pumping Pastor Decker's hand eagerly. "And you!"

"How long has it been?" Pastor Decker pushed the door open, stepped aside, and urged Shane in. Behind Shane followed another young man whom Pastor Decker didn't recognize.

"Seven years, Pastor. This is Jerry." Shane gestured to the other man. "Jerry, this is Pastor Decker."

Jerry nodded, reaching for his own handshake. "I've heard a lot about you, Pastor. It's an honor to finally meet you."

The heat of a blush spread up Pastor Decker's neck and cheeks. "Ah, well. I'm just a man, nothing special. What brings you back into town?" he asked as he took his seat.

The two young men exchanged a look and slid into seats on the other side of Pastor Decker's desk. "I'm getting married," Shane announced. "And I'd like you to preside over the ceremony."

Pastor Decker's chest swelled with pride. Shane had come such a long way from the confused, aimless child he'd been when they'd first met. Though Shane had moved away from Cherrygrove, Pastor Decker had kept abreast of Shane's progress—how Shane had finally mustered the courage to cut ties with his abusive stepmother, contacted his birth

mother, and landed a good job in the art field he had always loved. Shane had really come out of his turbulence a better person, and being a part of that humbled the aging priest.

"Your guidance and support were always so important to me," Shane continued. "I can't think of anyone else I'd even ask. The wedding is in a month, and I know that's short notice, and I don't have an official invitation for you, but—"

Pastor Decker waved a hand at him. "I don't need an official piece of paper, son. Of course I'll marry you. Who's the lucky girl?"

Another look passed between the two young men, and Pastor Decker watched with horror as Shane reached over and took Jerry's hand. Oh. No.

"I'm marrying Jerry."

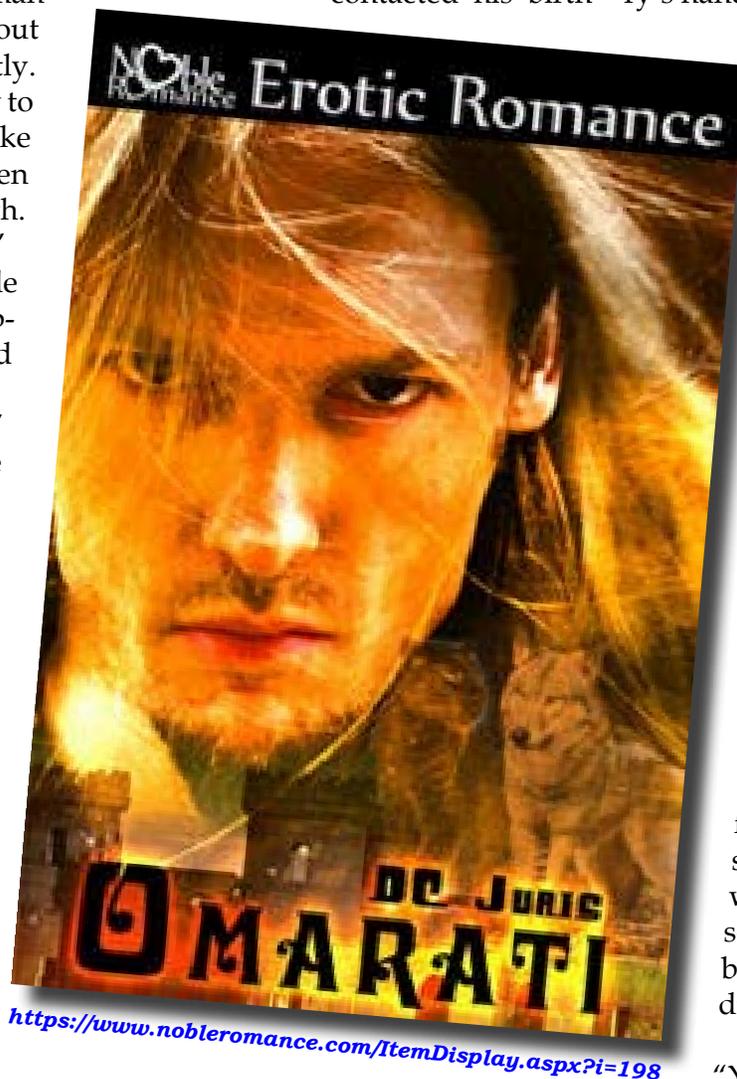
"Ah. I see." Pastor Decker swallowed hard. His throat had gone suddenly quite dry and painful. A sick knot coiled tight in the pit of his stomach. How was this possible? And what on Earth was he to say?

"Pastor?" Shane leaned forward, forehead wrinkled and eyes full of worry. "Are you all right?"

Jerry shifted nervously in his seat, refusing to look at Pastor Decker, focusing his attention instead on his own hands.

Pastor Decker ran a finger under his collar and shook his head. "No." He wanted to say more, give some sort of explanation, but really, the situation didn't need one, did it?

"No?" Shane echoed. "You're saying no?"



<https://www.nobleromance.com/ItemDisplay.aspx?i=198>

Anger surged inside Pastor Decker and he shook his head again, this time adding a snort for good measure. "Of course I'm saying no, Shane. This," – he gestured back and forth between the two men – "is not God's way. Surely you know that?"

Jerry let out a snort of his own and rolled his eyes. "Here we go. I told you this was a bad idea." He pulled his hand away from Shane and stood. "You can argue with him if you want. Good luck." He strode to the door, flung it open, and was gone.

Shane sagged back in his seat, shoulders slumped.

"What did you think I would say, son?" Pastor Decker asked, as gently as he could manage. He was a man of God, after all, a servant of the Holy Word. He couldn't condone such behavior even if he wanted to. And he certainly didn't want to.

"I don't know. I guess I thought..." Shane raised his head,

tears standing in his eyes. "I guess I thought for once, someone would love me as I am."

Pastor Decker's guts twisted. "I do love you, son."

"No, you don't." Shane stood. "You're just like everyone else. You just want me to be what you're comfortable with."

"It's not a question of my comfort. It's a question of what's right. A question of your soul." Pastor Decker placed his hand over his heart. "It's a matter of salvation, son. I can see where this lifestyle seems exciting and different. I can see how it would tempt you away from the right path. But, you must search your soul, search your heart, and find your way back to the light. I can help you, if you'll let me." Pastor Decker rose and reached a hand out to Shane.

Shane took a step back, tears coursing down his cheeks. "Jerry said we shouldn't bother, but I told him he was wrong. I told him you were different – that you cared

about the person, not the actions. I told him I knew you wouldn't understand why I am the way I am, but I knew you could look past it." He swiped at the moisture on his cheeks angrily. "But Jerry was right." He turned and ran out the door.

"Shane!" Pastor Decker called out, but there was no point. He went to the door and looked out. The two men stood just down the path, Shane openly sobbing, head on Jerry's shoulder, Jerry cradling Shane's head and murmuring. At length Shane straightened and nodded. Jerry turned him in the direction of town and gave him a push, then, to Pastor Decker's amazement, Jerry headed back up the path. Back toward Pastor Decker.

Palms sweating, Pastor Decker braced himself for the unknown. What did Jerry want? He'd told them no, and that should be final. Jerry approached, reached into the breast pocket of his suit jacket, and



Shapeshifting never sounded better!

Blood sex murder can the mind overcome the evil in the body?

http://www.lallagatta.com/eng/_visionquest.html

"It holds a familiar dark, violent appeal, which runs through many of Laura Tolomei's other books, yet she has spread her wings and written in a different point of view, first person, giving this story a fresh feel which works very well."

Review site: Sassy Britt of AR - An Alternative Read

Pastor Decker sucked in breath.

Jerry pulled forth a business card and held it out to Pastor Decker. "You should visit this place, before you make a huge mistake with him." Pastor Decker didn't take the card, and Jerry let out a belly laugh. "Go ahead," he prompted, shaking the card. "You can't catch the gay from me or anything."

Pastor Decker scoffed and snatched the card from Jerry's fingers. "I'm not quite that naive."

"Could've fooled me." Jerry turned and strode back down the path.

Pastor Decker turned the card over, raising an eyebrow at the bright rainbow, and the words typed under it. Universal Rainbow Celebration Church.

Universal Rainbow Celebration Church was exactly what Pastor Decker had expected. A giant neon rainbow adorned the area above the entry door; several others had been painted on the walls just inside. A dozen or so freestanding literature holders dominated each side of the foyer, all of them holding brochures and flyers on everything homosexual. He stepped closer to one of them hesitantly, peering at the topics assembled, from the rather obvious: When a Friend Comes Out, Answers to Your Questions About Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality, and Living Openly in Your Place of Worship; to the completely new-to-him: Living With a Transgender Person—Pastor Decker didn't even know what a transgender person was—A Gay Man's Guide to Safe Sex, and even Your Gynecologist And You: A Healthy Transman's Guide.

Pastor Decker shivered and took a step back.

"You can't catch anything by looking," an amused female voice chided him.

Why did everyone keep saying that to him? He turned to find a middle-aged woman standing in the doorway of the hall off to the right.

She was neatly dressed in black slacks and a maroon blouse, with long dark hair pulled up into a

loose ponytail that hung well past her hips. She extended her hand to him. "You must be Pastor Decker. I'm pastor Beverly."

He raised an eyebrow at her use of her first name, much less formal than he had expected.

"You said on the phone you wanted to talk about my parish?"

Pastor Decker nodded. "I had a request to preside over a wedding. A..." He glanced around to see if anyone was listening. "A gay wedding."

Pastor Beverly chuckled. "Come, let's sit down, and chat."

She led the way down the hall, by open doors, and Pastor Decker couldn't help but peek inside each one as they walked. They passed classrooms full of teenagers reading or doing crafts, a makeshift kitchen, a small laboratory, and what looked like a daycare.

At last, it struck Pastor Decker that it was Monday. "Shouldn't these children be in school?"

"They are."

"I mean regular school."

"This is their regular school. Most of these kids have been pushed out of mainstream school."

They arrived at her office and she gestured him inside. Pastor Decker took a seat across from her as she lowed herself into the chair behind her desk. "I don't understand," he asked. "What do you mean, pushed out?"

"Many were bullied to the point they no longer felt safe at school. In some cases, they were actually physically attacked."

Pastor Decker shook his head.

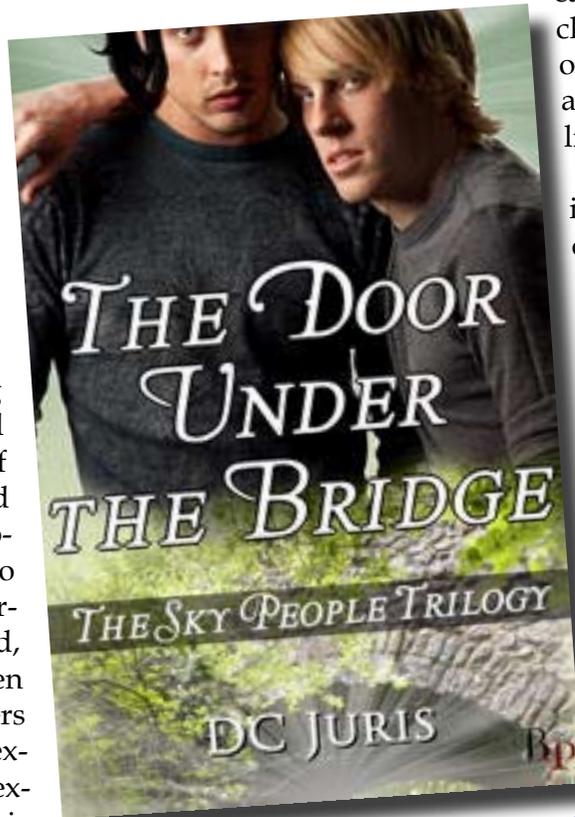
"That's not right. How could the school officials stand for such a thing?"

Pastor Beverly shrugged. "These children all identify as gay. They're second-class citizens."

"They're only children. They have the rest of their lives ahead of them to—"

"To what?" she challenged. "To get better? To see the error of their ways? That kind of thinking is what got them here in the first place. These kids don't need to be saved. They need to be encouraged and nurtured."

Pastor Decker shook his head. He remembered being young, not knowing what he wanted, not knowing what he believed. How was it possible that



<http://www.breathlesspress.com/erotic/the-door-under-the-bridge.html>

these children did? How was it possible that their lofty goals and ideals should be taken any more seriously than his had been, back then? "How can they already have decided their paths? They haven't yet seen the world. Isn't it better to show them their options, teach them the path of light, rather than indulge them in their mistaken choices?"

Pastor Beverly smiled. "You're making the assumption that being gay is a choice."

"Isn't it?"

She sat back in her chair and folded her hands across her lap. "May I ask you a personal question?"

"Of course."

"Let's pretend for a moment that you didn't join the clergy. Do you think you'd be married, instead?"

He shrugged. "Probably. I can't know for certain. I've never contemplated life without service to the Lord."

"Would you be married to a woman, or a man?"

"A woman, of course."

"Why?"

"Because," he sputtered. "Well, because I'm not homosexual."

"How do you know you're not?"

"I'm simply not."

"When did you decide you were straight?"

Pastor Decker shook his head. "What kind of a question was that? 'You don't decide to be straight. You simply are.'"

She grinned. "What makes it possible to be born straight, but not born gay?"

Pastor Decker frowned. "When the question was put to him like that, he really wasn't sure how to answer."

"This person who wants you to marry them, they're a member of your church?"

"He used to be. He moved away

several years ago."

"And he's come back to have you marry him? That's quite an honor, don't you think?"

"Of course."

"But you can't wrap your head around marrying two men, can you?"

Pastor Decker spread his arms wide. "How can I? How can you? That's what I came to ask you. How do you reconcile all of this with the word of the Lord? The Bible doesn't teach this. It tells us this is wrong."

"Does it?" She cocked an eyebrow and shrugged. "I suppose it's all in how you interpret the Bible. I see the Bible as a parallel to the Constitution. Both were written with the best intentions, based on the best information and beliefs of the time. But neither was meant to stand unchallenged and unchanged. How could they be? Who could've predicted the world we live in now? Who could've known about portable phones and computers, and a society where the other side of the world is a click away? If our world changes and evolves, our ideals must change and evolve as well."

Pastor Decker scoffed and fanned his hand in the air. "You're comparing apples to oranges. The Constitution deals with legality. The Bible deals with morality."

"Can you have one without the other?" Pastor Beverly asked. "And I'd put it to you that slavery is both a moral and legal issue. As was giving women the right to vote. What's different about gay marriage?"

"It simply is different."

Pastor Beverly rolled her eyes. "You can't just say it is because it is. I was once like you, you know. A firm believer that homosexuality was a crime; a sin against God."

"What changed your mind?"

She sighed and looked away.

"A couple came to me for advice and guidance about their daughter, who had come out to them as gay. They wanted to know what to do. I told them what I thought. I told them their daughter was sinning against God, that she needed to be healed and cleansed. They enrolled her in a straight camp—that's a place where people take homosexual children and try to take the gay out of them."

"What happened to her?"

Pastor Beverly looked up at him, her left eyebrow arched. "She killed herself. Left behind a note that said she couldn't take the pressure and the guilt and she said—and I'll never forget this—she said, maybe God just made me wrong."

"God doesn't make mistakes," Pastor Decker whispered.

"He doesn't, does he?" Pastor Beverly smiled bitterly. "And that got me to thinking. If God made me, and he knew what he was doing, maybe he made that child, and maybe he knew what he was doing. You see, that's the crux of belief, Pastor. If He is all powerful, then He is all powerful. If He's infallible, then He's infallible. Period. Which means He didn't make a mistake when He made people gay. If He made man in His image, then He made us all in His image."

"Even gays."

She nodded. "Even gays. Which doesn't mean you have to understand it, or like it. But maybe it means you have to accept it. Accept that there is a greater purpose, a greater meaning, and a greater design than what you can comprehend in your head." Pastor Beverly shrugged. "Death puts things into perspective."

Pastor Decker sighed. He had no issue with admitting God's power and infallibility. God did not make mistakes. But Pastor Beverly was

right – he couldn't have it both ways.

"The thing to remember," Pastor Beverly began. "Is that, at the end of the day, you're not being asked to become gay. You're not even being asked to accept homosexuality. You're just being asked to love another person. Plain and simple."

Just love another person. What greater thing was there, after all? But not a simple notion. Love was a complicated thing, full of give and take. Perhaps he'd been doing far too much taking, and not enough giving. Shane had sought him out—him, above all people. Shane could've gone to someone like Pastor Beverly. Someone new age, with rainbows on her walls. Instead, Shane had chosen him. It occurred to Pastor Decker that Shane's choice really ought to mean something.

"Would you like to meet some of the kids here?" Pastor Beverly asked. "You might find some perspective if you spoke to them."

"They've really been alienated from their schools over this?"

"They really have."

Pastor Decker made the sign of the cross over his chest and glanced at the ceiling. "I think...perhaps...that was not His intent."

"Hatred never was." Pastor Beverly smiled at him. "C'mon." She stood and held out a hand. "Take a leap of faith with me."



Back in his office that evening, Pastor Decker

pulled a scrap of paper from his pocket. It had taken him quite a bit of work – and not a little convincing – to get Shane's cell phone number from the young man's mother. Apparently, Shane had shared the results of their meeting, and no one was particularly impressed with Pastor Decker's attitude. Though he wasn't certain what they could've expected of him, he knew now that he had a chance to make amends.

He picked up the phone and dialed. Three rings went by, and he thought perhaps Shane had recognized the church's number and wasn't going to answer.

"Hello?"

Pastor Decker choked on a gasp. "Um..." He cleared his throat. "Yes, is this Shane?"

"This is. Pastor Decker?" There was a trace of hope in Shane's tone, and the recognition of it soared through Pastor Decker's soul.

"Yes. I've been thinking and... Well, if the offer is still open...that is, if you would still like me to preside over your...ah...wedding, I'd um..." Pastor Decker cleared his throat again. "I'd be honored." Silence filled the line, dashing his hopes. "Shane?"

"I'm here. Of course I still want you to marry us. What changed your mind?"

Pastor Decker smiled. "I took a leap of faith."

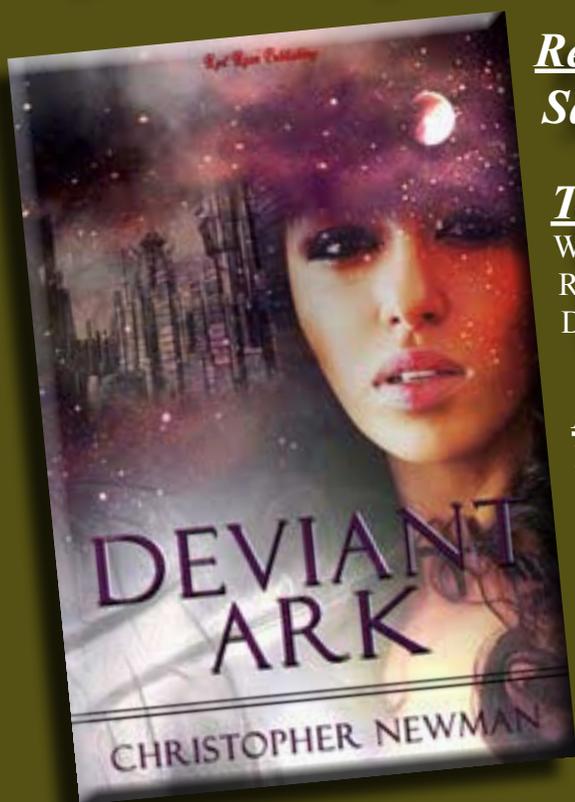


A Reading Nook

A place for readers
and authors
to come and chat

<http://brigittsjournals.blogspot.com>

Deviant Ark by **Christopher Newman**



Reviewer
Sally Sapphire

Tagline
While a standalone, Divine Redemption is a loose sequel to Death's

Blurb/Summary
It is the near future and Earth has vastly changed. Political, social, and religious reforms have melded the vastness of humanity into one voice and world. Deviant Behavior isn't permitted. An underground movement has sprung up to free humanity from terrible persecution, blind prejudice,

and false progression. Marlene Strombella, a native of the Mars Colony she hides her lesbian passions from the general public. She lives a lie, a false marriage, to avoid detection by the government. A starship of alien refugees has been granted political asylum from their home planet. Nicknamed "Dualies" for the tall, elegant aliens possess both set of genitals and are shunned by most humans. Marlene finds herself attracted to one of them. A willowy and elegant creature named C'est'a. She strives to come to grips with her fascination. But between her regular job, her role in the Resistance, and the "re-genderization" of her last lover Marlene cannot cope with it all. Does she have time to uncover the truth of her feelings for C'est'a, break through the distrust her would-be lover's race have for humans, and still carry out her covert operations? Or will Mars erupt into possible interstellar or inter-species war first?

Review
Deviant Ark is one of the most near-perfect reads

I've had the pleasure of enjoying in a very long while. I went into it with such high expectations that I was actually reluctant to begin reading it and risk disappointment. Much to my surprise, it fulfilled all of my expectations, and even presented a few wonderful surprises.

Much of the book revolves around the various conflicts between the 'straight' authorities, the 'deviant' human resistance, and the equally 'deviant' alien refugees of I'leana. In a future where the world has been homogenized under a single government and a single religion, deviance is not tolerated in any form. Gays and lesbians are hunted down, abducted, and forcibly 'reconditioned,' all broadcast live on TV as a form of state-sponsored entertainment. Meanwhile, the dual-gendered alien refugees are mocked as much for their gender as for their blue skin and pointed ears, confined to the worst human slums, and treated like slaves.

While a covert Martian resistance cell does exist, operating as much for political as for sexual reasons, they're simply incapable of driving the kind of change needed to allow the 'deviants' to find acceptance. There's a sense of hopelessness to their efforts, although you can't help but admire their perseverance.

What holds the story together

Rating

Five Siren Stones

Genre

Erotic Romance

Sub-Genre

Science Fiction

ISBN E-Book

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Publisher

Red Rose Publishing

Buy-Link

http://redrosepublishing.com/books/product_info.php?products_id=623

er and provides us with hope is the budding relationship between Marlene and C'est'a. It's a wonderfully awkward love affair, with Marlene unsure she can handle being attracted to a woman with a penis, and C'est'a exploring her first feelings for a human woman. Her parents are divided in their opinions of the relationship and end up presenting Marlene with a challenge to prove herself. It is through this challenge that Marlene not only wins their respect, but takes the first steps towards orchestrating cooperation between the resistance and the I'leana.

If the story has a failing – and it may have been intentional on the part of the author – it's that morality is so closely tied to sexuality. With one or two minor exceptions, the 'straight' population is portrayed as a bastion of cruelty and negativity. Similarly, despite a few rough edges, the 'deviant' populations, both human and alien, are almost portrayed lovingly and positively.

Ultimately, Deviant Ark is a serious science fiction story first, an LGBT romance second, and an erotic romp third. The story starts and ends with well-orchestrated space battles, and the climactic confrontation in the streets between the resistance and the army is as horrific as it is heroic. As for the sex scenes, they're sporadic, but inventive and exciting in their intensity. More importantly, the sex plays a key role in the story, exposing the alliances and deceptions upon which the fate of the world rests.

Recommended for anybody with an interest in the human condition.

Acceptance

by Takiya

Working late one evening at the gas station, making coffee for the about the twentieth time that night, a man approached me, asking what the flavors were. Not looking up, I told him it was cowboy coffee and Colombian.

I heard him say, "I won't drink that damn homo cowboy crap, damn homos are ruining everything."

Without missing a beat, I turned to faced him.

I had to tilt my head back to look up at this man. Looking back, I now realize I could have gotten myself into a lot of trouble. This was a big man who had approached me. When I say, I mean he stood six-foot-six. His skin was ebony black, and his shoulders were so wide, they blocked the aisle we stood in. His muscles rippled under his shirt, and his arms were the size of a small trees. He towered over me by a good foot and a half.

"You have no right to say that just because of a movie or someone's stereotypes," I paused, judging his reaction. He had moved his head back and his lips thinned into a smirk. He folded his arms across his chest. I

had caught him off guard.

He glared at me.

"Am I supposed to assume, since you're African American, I should run screaming that you're going to rob and rape me?" He looked down at me with something approaching a warning. But even so, I couldn't seem to keep my mouth shut. "And I am a short white woman, working all alone in a gas station."

His face softened.

"How does it feel to be stereotyped?" My tone was sharp. Then I realized I was speaking louder than I should have. He nodded at me.

"I never thought about it that way." He picked up the cowboy coffee pot and poured himself a large cup. "Is it any good?"

"It's strong, but not the way they used to make it. You'll enjoy it if you like a stronger coffee though."

"Thanks, you have a good insight." He turned and walked away. My entire body shook. Looking up at the counter, I saw my employee looking at me with total disbelief. I wasn't the type to cause a scene and that was just what I had done. Rolling my eyes at her, I turned and continued to make coffee, but I never looked at the liquid the same. Every time I'd pour a cup of the steaming liquid, I think about how, over just a cup of Joe, that just maybe, I had changed the way someone

thought.

A few years before this incident, I would have been that man. However, having so many friends and a family member who were homosexual, taught me to have a better understanding. To learned to care for them for *who* they were, not who they are attracted to. It had opened my eyes.

I have a close family member, Tracy that sat me down not long ago and explained in great depth about this subject. That it's really not all about the sex as so many portray, but the physical and emotional attraction they have with one another, just like any other couple. It's about love and companionship.

She'd known from the time she was very young that she wasn't interested in the opposite sex. They just didn't do it for her. She found the same sex to be more understanding and not as much of a mystery to her.

Tracy's spouse came and sat on her lap at this time. Tracy saw me turn slightly away from them. Even then, I wasn't sure about having to see them show public displays of affection. To me, it wasn't right. Tracy used that moment to turn the whole conversation on me.

She started asking me questions. Why was I attracted to Tracy's brother? Why not to his sisters?

Both of his sisters are very easy on the eyes, I might add. Sitting there dumbfounded, I understood in that moment what Tracy had been trying to tell me. I don't find them attractive in a sexual way. I find a man's body more pleasing in the same way she does the female body. Tracy laughed at me then.

"What about the way a man smells to you?"

"Smells?"

"Yes, the way they smell. Personally I find it repulsive. Women have such a sweet sent to them." She nuzzled her spouse. I had unconsciously wrinkled my nose. The thought of a woman's scent didn't hold the same appeal to me, as

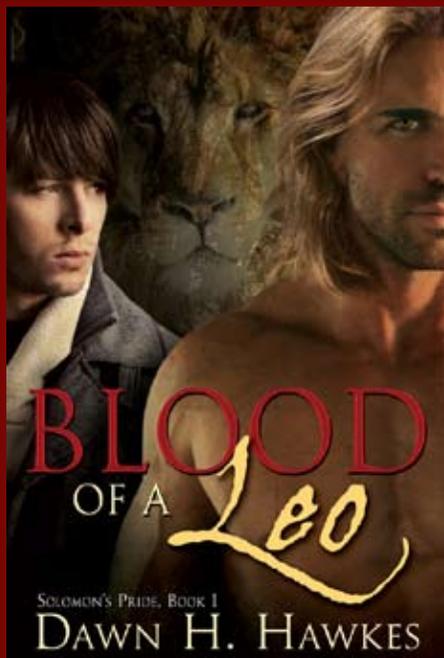
it did to Tracey. She took my reaction as having to do to her affection with her wife.

"You really have a problem with this?" With a sly grin, she kissed her wife again. "Haven't you ever felt so much attraction to a female that you wanted to taste their lips?" I hadn't ever personally, but knew a few women I worked with had. To each their own, I supposed.

"I see what you mean."

She glanced over at her brother with a smile to this day makes me giggle. "Shall we go dancing?"

My husband, Josh, looked over at me. He had been quietly standing in the kitchen, intently



BLOOD OF A LEO BOOK ONE, SOLOMON'S PRIDE by Dawn H. Hawkes

ISBN: 978-1-920468-12-5

Price: \$4.99

http://silverpublishing.info/product_book_info/glbtparanormal-c-53_56/blood-of-a-leo-p-161

Leo Adams was kidnapped and forced to serve as an unwilling blood donor for a coalition of vampires. One day, he manages to escape it...and straight into the lion-shifter Maddox's life.

Maddox is unsure of what has fallen into his arms, but he knows one thing. He will fight to the death to keep Leo safe.

watching us. Tracy had grabbed her phone, asking someone to babysit. He gave me a half smirk and picked up our child, putting her into her car seat. In the next minute, Tracey had packed us up in the car. After we'd dropped our child off with my in-laws, Tracey set about taking us out on the town to show me more of her world. Tracy's wife couldn't join us, since she had schooling to do

I'd figured we'd end up at a lesbian bar, but that didn't turn out to be the case. Tracey had picked a gay bar. I sat at the counter, on edge for quite some time with my husband and Tracey.

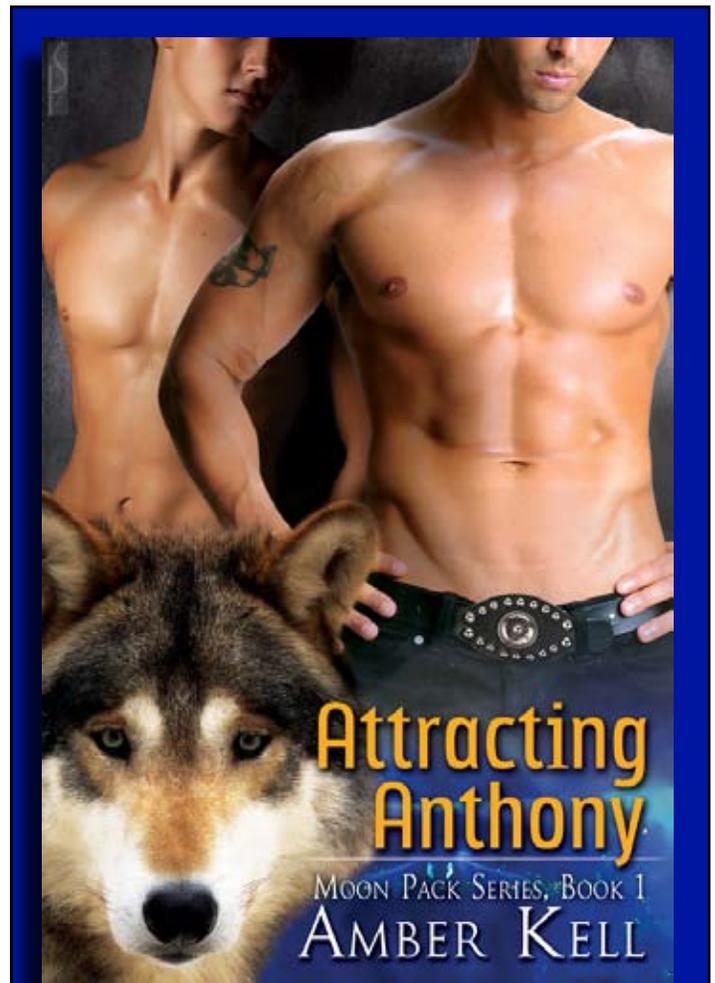
When I asked Tracey about her choice of venues, she gave me a simple answer: so I could be more relaxed and just watch the atmosphere without flipping out on her.

She felt that if I was able to relax with those around me, I could get a better understanding that those around me were just people wanting to be needed, wanted. Not put through judgment, like so many of us do. This was a place they could be themselves.

We were there for a long time. Tracey and my husband even managed to pull me out on the dance floor several times. Of course we stuck out like a sore thumb, but it didn't matter. I noticed right away one of the biggest myths about gay men couldn't be farther from the truth. Not a single guy hit on my husband. They didn't even try. Like us, the guys were just having fun and enjoying each other: in conversations, dancing, drinking and showing affection.

Tracy leaned over to me. "To love one another and to accept each other. That's what life is all about, right?"

I nodded. She was right. Did it really matter that this guy standing in front of me was attracted to other men more than women? No. It's just like a very thin person being very attracted to a heavy person, African American to a Caucasian, short to a tall. It's not what we are on the *outside* or how we are made that counts. It'd about where each person can find peace and love.



Attracting Anthony
Book One, Moon Pack
by Amber Kell

ISBN: 978-1-920484-43-9

Price: \$3.99

http://silverpublishing.info/product_book_info/new-release-c-1/attracting-anthony-p-162

Anthony goes to the club to start dating again after the death of his lover. He didn't plan on being anyone's mate. The pack alpha had other ideas.

I am a Writer

By Anon

I am a writer.

I am a writer of gay fiction.

I am a heterosexual writer of gay fiction.

I am a heterosexual female writer of gay fiction.

I am a heterosexual female writer of gay fiction, with a gay pseudonym.

As Shrek would say I am very much like an onion. When you peel away parts of my declaration it all boils down to the simple fact, I am a writer. It shouldn't matter who is sitting at the computer putting words and phrases together for the entertainment of many. It shouldn't be a problem that I am a heterosexual female writing M/M fiction for a thirsty crowd of readers who can't seem to get enough of my work. It shouldn't be an issue.

But it is.

For nearly twenty-five years I wrote medieval romances that had male and female leads. I wrote for my own enjoyment, never thinking for an instant I would ever be published. Mind you I read every historical I could get my hands on from the public library to hone my craft and make my work the best it could be. Then one day about five years ago I put my prejudice about gay fiction to the side and sat down with a book by DJ Manly and I was hooked. Bitten in the backside by the M/M bug. To this day I have not recovered. Instead I found I had

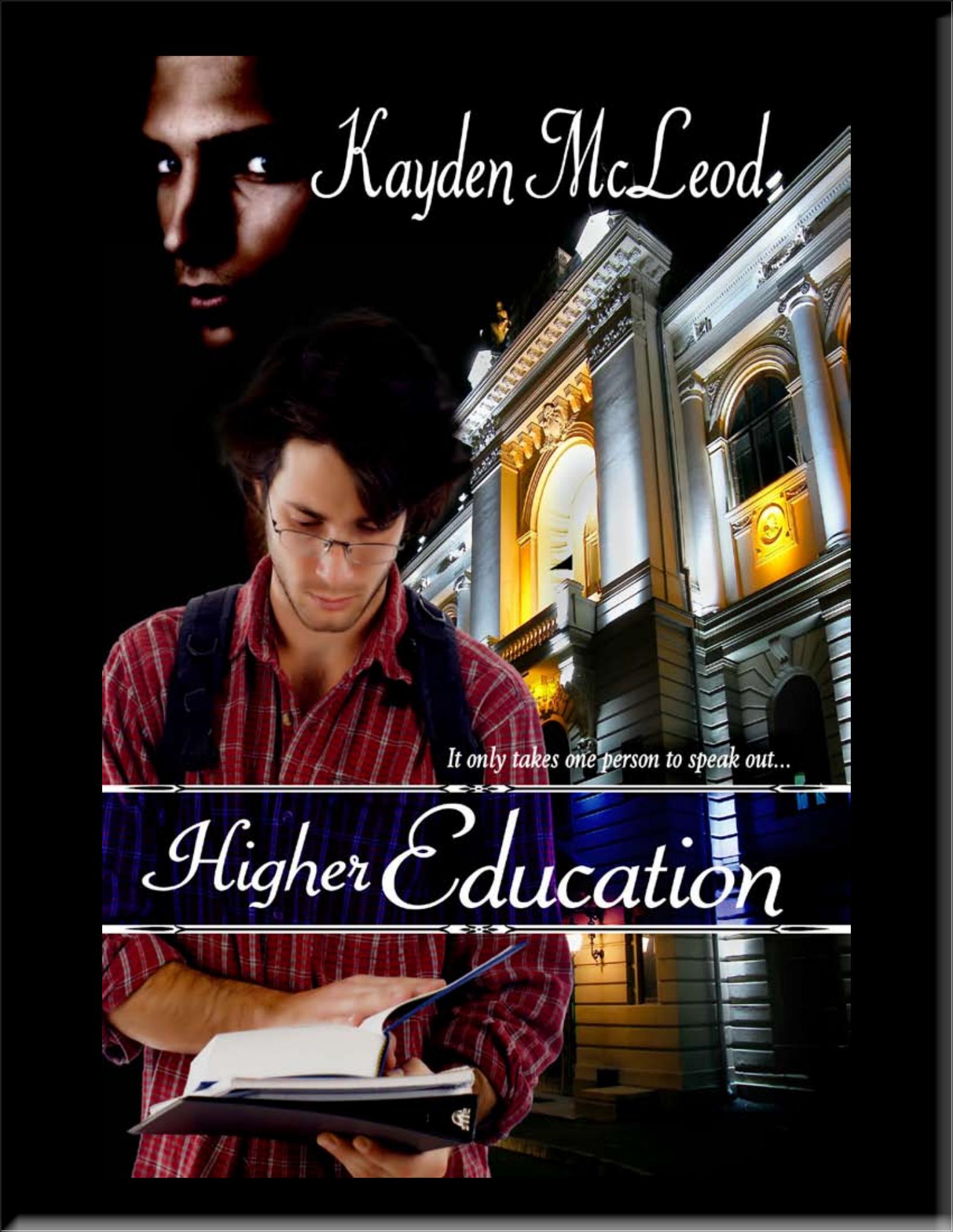
a burning desire to be published and furthermore NOT in the genre I had spent most of my life writing. I wanted to write gay romantic fiction. It took me a full year to get all the nuances down but it turned out I really had a knack for M/M fiction that made my heart sing. I created a pen name that I thought would be a good fit for what I was writing and protect me from the intolerance of gay anything at my day job. I had done my research and set about birthing my pen name, submitting my work for publication and in general, happy with my course of action. Unfortunately, I could not share my successes or defeats with my family because they are religiously biased against homosexuality. No surprise there. I fully expected their censure when they found out but felt I could hide behind my pen name and still pursue my heart's desire without causing my family any distress. Turns out my family wasn't the one I would have the most problems with.

I recently posted a question on one of the many author based yahoo groups I belong to, looking for feedback, and found out that even among my peers there is a contingent that feel I have somehow done them wrong by having a gay pen name. That they would feel cheated and lied to if they found out that I presented myself as a gay male in my bio's,

both on my website and in my books, then they found out I was a het female. HUH? Nobody batted an eye when they found out Nora Roberts and JD Robb were the same person. Granted she doesn't write gay romance but you get my point. Why should it matter whether the fingers on the keyboard belong to a male or female, straight or gay, African American or Caucasian, college educated or not. Why the prejudice? Why does it matter? Are my words less entertaining because you thought they were from the mind of a gay guy and now find they are from a girly girl? I have been reading books since I was five years old and not once did I ever put a book back on the shelf because it was written by a girl or a guy. I put them back on the shelf because of content. I either wasn't interested on that day in that subject matter or the teaser page didn't grab me.

I don't get any of this. Honestly I don't. I was born in 1961 and grew up in an environment of tolerance and acceptance. I guess I was a bit naïve to think that over the past 50 years the world would become a more tolerant place. That prejudice and bias about gender and sexuality would be a thing of the past. They aren't. It saddens me to admit that but there we are. I can only hope that in my daughter's lifetime she and her peers will find a way to make the world a better place. That they will stomp prejudice out of existence and replace it by embracing cultural diversity in it's many forms.





Kayden McLeod

It only takes one person to speak out...

Higher Education

Theo looked around the college campus with the steeply pointed charcoal roof of the main building. The turrets formed of white bricks and columns reaching high in the sky, reminded him of the grand structures he'd seen while on vacation in England with his grandparents. His fingers glided over the smooth bark of the maple trees. He loved how the sunlight hitting the trees sprinkled over the front courtyard, tinted the jade leaves a glowing yellow that to him meant *life*; something Theo respected above all others.

In fact, the ebb and flow of day-to-day living thrived around them. The intent, shining faces of countless students in a hurry this way or that made Theo grin. He liked it here: the mixture of peace and bustle, blended into a tradition in the course of a person's existence.

Higher learning. Secondary education. A chance to discover one's self in a way high school had never afforded a kid. Being here, in front of this place, almost made Theo wished he'd decided to pursue something similar to his boyfriend's journey. Funny really. He'd hated classes in high school, but Seth had worked with him, tutored Theo, to ensure he had a B average with the occasional

A to grace his report cards. While he supported Seth's decision to get into science as a career, Theo intended to follow his father's footsteps in owning and operating a lumber warehouse that also supplied his mom's furniture store with materials. Theo had worked there since he turned fifteen.

"Do you have any idea where we're going?" Ricky, Theo's best friend and Seth's brother, asked.

Theo shrugged. "Not a clue. Seth has avoided having me come here—and I mean he went out of his way. Every time I suggested it, he blew me off. Instead, he'd meet me at work or your house when he didn't have to study."

"You didn't even phone to tell him we planned on stopping by today?"

"Let it be a surprise."

"You know how my brother is about surprises," Ricky cautioned. His brow furrowed, obviously worried.

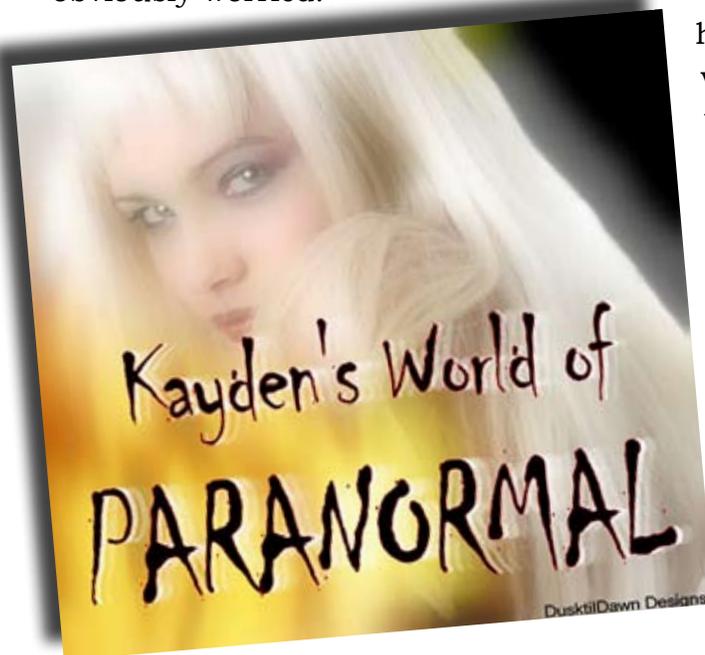
Theo didn't understand why he would be.

Did Ricky know something he didn't? For the first time, Theo couldn't help but wonder why Seth never did invite him here. Was it because he didn't fit into the college life? He'd heard about couples breaking up over differences and growing apart all of the time. He shook his head, dispelling a paranoia that had come from nowhere. These thoughts were idiotic of him to think. Seth loved him, and they'd long ago accepted each other. So, it had to be something else keeping Seth from wanting his boyfriend here to see him.

But what?

"Too bad," Theo replied. It had to be something. And he would find out what it was. Seth and Theo didn't hide anything from one another. They'd been through too much to do otherwise. "I'm an unpredictable man."

Ricky shook his head, and then walked toward the front of the building. "I'll bet he's in the library. This morning at breakfast, Seth told me about a big paper he had to tackle this weekend, and how much research he had to do.





He's pretty excited about it, actually. Which reminds me, are you coming to dinner on Saturday?"

"I wouldn't miss your mom's cuisine for the world, and then some. Damn, that woman can cook a mean steak, and just about anything else she puts her mind to. It's a wonder Seth can even stand the meals I serve him." Theo made a face. He didn't much care for them himself. He had talent with his hands for carving furniture, and the occasional sculpture, but the talent of a culinary nature had escaped him.

"That's because your idea of gourmet is mac and cheese with ketchup."

"Don't diss the M&C. It was a favorite growing up—and yours too, I might add." Theo rolled his eyes as he opened the door to the massive building, allowing a group of students to come out first. They eyed him with suspicion, and maybe just a touch of fear, having to look *up* at him. Their eyes skipped away as they took in his muscles that stretched his tee to the limit. He worked out every day to maintain his body. To some, Theo knew he could be intimidating—at least, to those who didn't know him.

Though, Theo didn't go through hours upon hours of training for the superficial reasons. Being groomed to take over his father's business demanded it, particularly when he tried to be hands-on with everything,

including the continuous heavy-lifting.

Ricky and Theo entered the front area of the building, revealing the elegance of the décor and vaulted high ceilings. His gaze touched the paintings in gold leaved frames, depicting scenes of county sides and times of old. The potted plants were lush and thriving quite well in the artificial light of the wall scones made of copper above them.

This was Seth's kind of place. Theo felt his chest swell, filled with pride for his boyfriend, and his relentless pursuits of secondary education. And not just any major, but a lifelong dream. Seth wanted to become a paleontologist. Theo remembered when they were kids and Seth had been just a tad over knee high—though he'd always been short—digging around in the backyard for treasures with his books surrounding him, as he'd try to indentify rocks and other bits. When Seth couldn't figure it out, he'd run to his mother with his findings, demanding what it was and which era it had come from.

"There he is." Ricky nodded toward the one-story high gaping hole qualifying for a door that lead into a library they could see over the countless people crowding the room. Theo gaped at the sheer size of the room. Theo figured he could comfortably fit two football fields inside of those walls.

And that was just what he could see!

Seth strolled through the archway, his

face displaying the usual serious intelligence he always exuded. His brow creased as he debated a piece of paper in his hand. Tucked under his arm, he carried as many research books as possible. Seth paused in his reading to push up his thinly framed glasses he hated, but had decided them a necessary evil.

Typically Seth wore contacts, but his eyes had been bothering him lately with the constant rotation of homework for a variety of classes every fulltime student went through. Theo smiled at that thought, believing the glasses gave him character, but Seth thought he looked “geeky,” which made Theo laugh. To him, Seth was anything but.

The piece of paper slipped from Seth’s fingers, floating to the ground. He bent to pick it up with a smirk on his face, Theo could see from across the foyer. This prevented Seth from seeing a group of people walking down the staircase to his right.

A chill, like an icy prophetic wind passed over Theo. Impossible in the dead of summer and that there was nowhere for a breeze to come from. The door behind him remained closed. Later, he might even call this occurrence clairvoyance. Or maybe it could be that Theo was now a gay man, who’d too recently been a teenager and had seen too many situations like this.

Eventually, somebody knew what to look for.

One of the guys raised his hand and brought it down onto Seth’s books. They went crashing to the floor. Some fell on their corners at just the right angle. One of the hardcover’s binding cracked. Seth looked down at this volume with an expression of mourning, more concerned with the text than he was with the guy who’d done it.

The aggressor turned away from Seth, laughing with his friends.

“Mark, you’d think with all the sports you all play, you’d have learned something called *coordination*. Daresay maybe even some grace,” Seth snapped, eyes meeting Mark’s when he turned back. His voice rang clearly over the noise of the people around Theo and Ricky, appearing not in the least intimidated by the action. He never would. Not where the public eye could see it. “Or is that too much to ask?”

“What did you say to me, freak?” the young man whirled around, causing his group of ten others to pause.

“This is going to get ugly,” Ricky called to him, several people separating them.

“It already is,” Theo snapped. Seth didn’t look surprised by the assault, which pissed Theo off more than anything. That told him this hadn’t been a first run-in with Mark.

Eventually, somebody knew what to look for.

How many times before now had something like this happened? A snarl worked up his throat. This would be the *last*. He darted forward, but he couldn’t get through the wall of people congesting the foyer. “Excuse me—

thank you.” A group of giggling women closed the brief gap between Theo and his goal. He fought not to yell at them, almost failing. “I’m in a hurry, please excuse me.

“Is your sense of hearing as bad...” Seth never got to finish. Mark took Seth by the front of his t-shirt, and shoved him against the wall behind him, stepping on the homework articles, and further scattering them. Theo winced as he watched the back of Seth’s head rebound off the brick column he’d been mashed against.

“You have no right to speak to me that way, queer boy,” Mark replied.

“That’s original,” Seth criticized.

From this angle, Theo could only see part of Mark’s face, but from what he could, it didn’t

give him hope. The viciousness and reference to Seth's preferences made a boiling flash of rage through his mind and heart. *Must the past always repeat itself?*



“He did not just call my brother a queer,” Ricky snarled, haunches up. “Seth!” he yelled, but his brother didn't look his way. “We're coming, bro.”

“Get your hands off of me,” Seth warned, blue eyes going dark with indignation and apprehension.

Theo was almost there. A couple more people to dart around...

“You're kind doesn't belong here,” Theo heard Mark say, nose to nose with Seth.

“And what *is* my kind exactly? Paleontology students? Or maybe you just don't like my spectacles.” Seth reached to deliberately push up his glasses yet again, with a slow laziness that belittled what Theo knew Seth felt. None of them saw what Ricky and Seth's boyfriend did. None of them would ever see the real truth.

Everyone always thought Seth was another smart ass guy, with no fear and a chip on his shoulder. They didn't look past that. And right

now, the crowd who watched the scene didn't notice the very slight tremor to Seth's hand. Or the way his skin around his eyes crinkled with dread he never dared show an antagonist, who would feed from the panic. He'd long ago learned what it was like for someone like this to *smell fear*.

High school had been rough for Seth. The bullying had been continuous and vicious, even before people had found out about him being gay. He didn't fit into any niche school kids had carved out of adolescent culture: too serious, studious and quiet. A geek, a nerd, the outsider. To say they picked on him was an understatement.

And then the rumors of his sexual preferences came out. The *real* hell began. After repeatedly being shunning and the beatings far more brutal than anything else he'd gone through, Seth went into deep depression. He lived the word fear, breathed it with every exhalation. He'd become

terrified of school and withdrew from everyone, including his family and Theo. Shut up in his room, all he did was read. He rarely ate and looked no one in the eye. Ricky and Seth's mom had gone into panic mode, trying

everything to get Seth to talk to her. Nothing helped.

Teenagers could be nothing more than snot-nosed kids with driver's licenses.

One day, Seth snapped and fought back. He'd given as good as he got. But in the end it didn't serve him well. Seth was suspended for fighting that same day. Even worse, the boy he'd beaten on came after him on the way home from school with every friend he'd ever had. By the time they were done with him, Seth laid on the sidewalk in front of a house, half conscious and bleeding, until the owner came home and called 911.

And then it all came out. Seth didn't talk though—he didn't “rat” them out. Students at school had been pulled in, or had talked to teachers of their own free will. Seth had been transferred to a new school the following week.

And those same rumors that had thrown Seth off kilter were carried from his old school to the new one. Seth

became cornered time and again, even though he stayed away from everybody. He went to school, talked to no one, did his work and came home. Yet they still managed to destroy what little progress the people who cared about him had accomplished.

Since Theo and Ricky still attended the old school, they had no idea what transpired to Seth in those days. Ricky had gone to the school to take Seth home one day. He'd arrived and Seth wasn't out front where he was supposed to be. For an hour, Ricky wandered around looking for his brother. None of the students or the teachers even knew whether he'd left or not. So Ricky found out what class had been his last.

Gym. Seth's biggest hatred of the educational system.

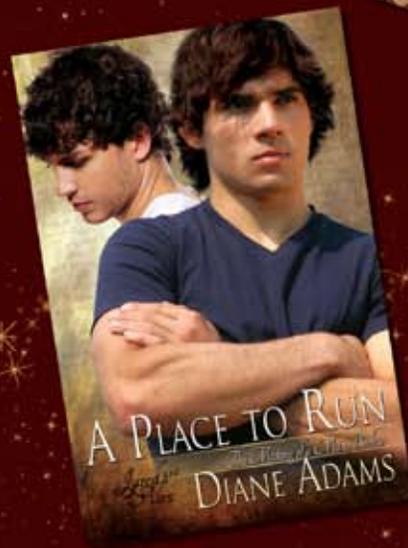
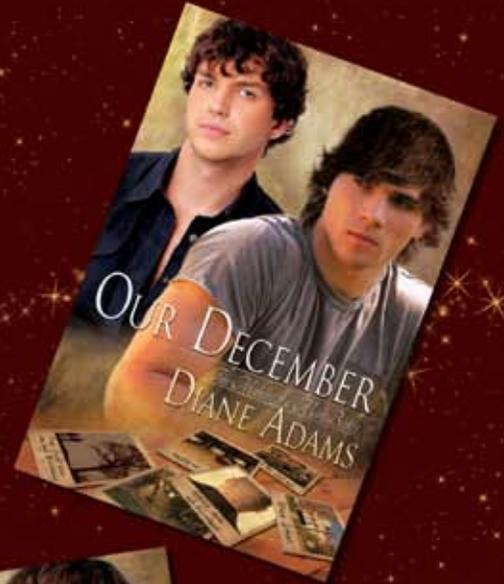
Ricky had found his beloved baby brother in the locker room. Seth was sitting in the corner of the shower stall, water spraying from the nozzle, but the wet floors had been stained red. The kid had slit his wrists.

It still hurt for Theo to think about how desperate someone had to be to commit suicide at fifteen years old. Theo was there afterward in the hospital. He'd dropped everything at work and driven there, to find his hopeless boyfriend pale and more introverted than ever. Ricky, their mom and Theo had spent the night and the subsequent days convincing Seth there *was* reason to live. Promising him no one else would ever hurt him like that again. Never.

Theo had gotten on his knees at Seth's beside, took his head and swore he would *personally* see it so. Ricky and their mom had stood at his side, hands on his shoulder, eyes tear-filled as they supported the couple.

And now, Theo had broken his heartfelt

Diane has a beautiful and lyrical way of writing. Her characters are expertly drawn - rounded and full of life. RJ Scott



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promise to Seth. He'd left his boyfriend alone to face the cruelty the world kept showing him for being nothing more than *who he was*. Couldn't it end? Why did people who chose not to conform to what others wanted, have to suffer? The answer couldn't possibly be to assimilate, lie to others and themselves. Theo refused to accept that.

No one should.

Theo stormed up behind Mark and his friends. He pushed past one of the guys, who had something to say on the matter. But he quickly closed his mouth when taking in the size of the man who'd bumped into him.

He waited until he stood directly behind Mark before he spoke. "Do as he said."

Mark turned, but didn't let go of Seth's shirt. "And

who are you to say anything..." he trailed off, as his gaze met Theo's chest. He sneered as Mark's eyes kept going up to meet an unfeeling glower.

"Take your hands off of my boyfriend, before I remove them for you." He waited, but Mark remained in shock. "What, you plan on calling me a queer too? Or maybe homo works better. However, the real question is, do you really think that's a good idea?"

Mark let go of Seth, but only so he could stumble away from Theo.

"Who the hell do you people think you are?" Ricky's cheeks reddened from his anger. The words burst out of him like a hailstorm. "How can you pick on someone, just because he's gay?"

Mark didn't do them the courtesy of

providing an answer.

"Who are you?" One of the guys from the back of the group asked.

"Seth's brother," Ricky snapped, running a hand through his dark hair. His eyes flashed with menace—a stick of dynamite ready to blow at the slightest spark. "Hey bro, I thought you said this was a first-rate school, with good people who could teach you science?"

Seth placed his closed fist against his mouth, and then cleared his throat. "It is."

"Then shouldn't they be refined and well, *educated*? Why do they act like their descended from cavemen?" Ricky's face showed no emotion, mirroring Theo's.

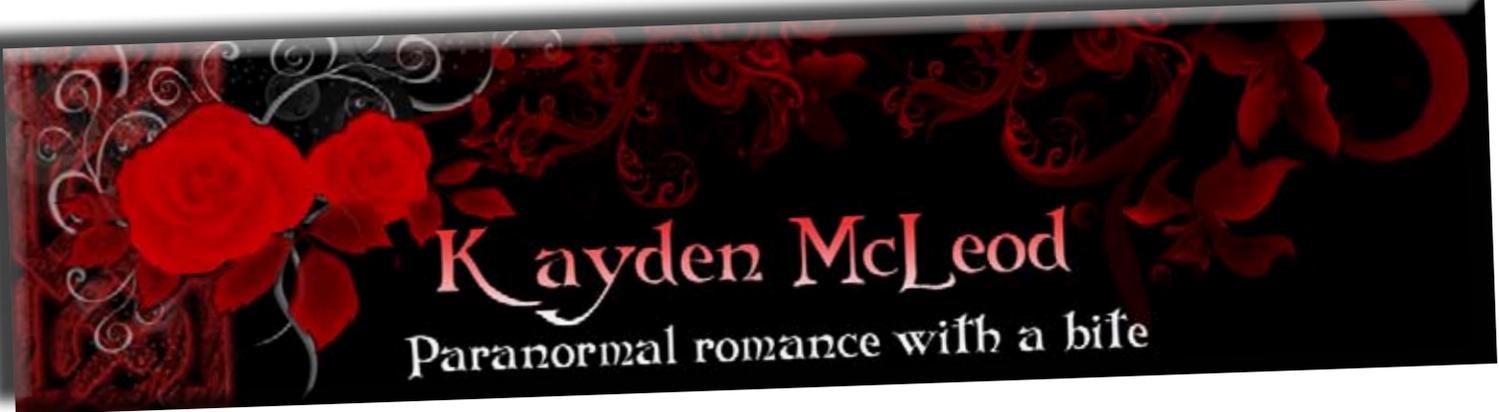
"Umm, Rick—the entire human race is descended from

cavemen," Seth reminded him with a grin. The relief on Seth's face made Theo feel better, but his agitation wasn't nearly settled. Ricky and Theo had shown in the nick of time for *this* instance. What happened tomorrow and the day after that?

"You're really Seth's boyfriend?" Mark demanded.

"Damn straight I am. And not too impressed with the welcome party, at all, if you can't tell that already. I thought adults went to college. I thought people in this era had begun to progress and accept that everybody is different and had a right to be. What are you twelve, with your head up your butt?"

Seth snickered, feeling safe enough now to begin collecting his books. Ricky stepped forward



Kayden McLeod
Paranormal romance with a bite

to help him, glaring at the students. One or two took the silent hint and backed away.

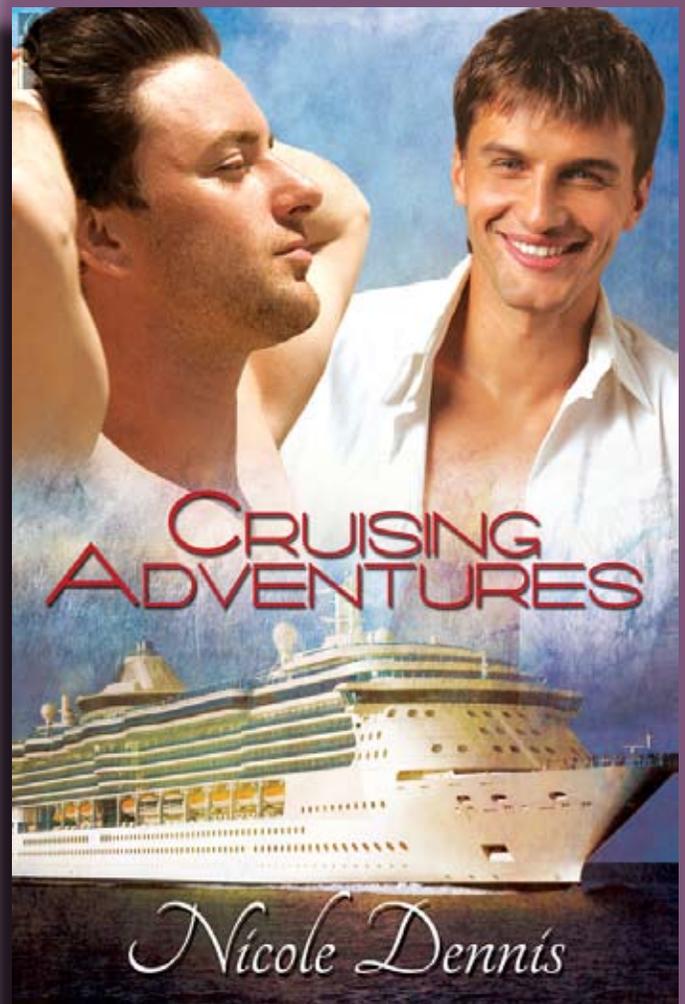
“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Mark said stubbornly. He’d gotten over his shock, feigning annoyance. The guy was still scared, and Theo could see that behind the pride. Now he wanted to save face, redeem his “manhood,” to look tough in front of his friends.

“Of course you don’t. *Your* kind never does.” Theo sneered at Mark’s expression of indignation. Then, he turned to address all of them at the same time. “All of you are horrible human beings, and no better than Mark is.”

“We didn’t go after Seth,” a girl in the group whined. “You can’t get mad at us.”

Theo turned toward her. “Your crime is just as bad. You stood here and watched, allowed it to happen. It doesn’t matter if you’re the aggressor or the observer! How would any of you feel if you weren’t accepted by everyone and shunned for a misunderstanding? Something you couldn’t help nor change—or even *want* to! What if you were pushed up against walls and beaten up? And while you are being degraded in front of an entire school like you don’t matter at all, every last person who has the power to help you, just stands there? Like nothing is happening—no more than a

television show or play. Well, let me tell you something, you’d go into depression. No matter what you did or said, there isn’t an end to it. Throughout your lifetime, someone is always there to knock you down the moment you finally get back up. A lot of people can be cruel, but kids—and to me, that’s all you are—have no sympathy for their fellow man if he doesn’t fit your perfect idealism. Some of you have God complexes, thinking you have a right to judge us because we’re the square that won’t fit in the circular hole someone decided must be the right way, *the only way*. You tease and abuse other people



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Price: \$3.99

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without having any idea what you’re doing to them. You think you can get away with it, and a lot of the time you do. There isn’t a punishment, and if there is, it can’t fit the crime you’ve committed. There are gay teens thinking less of who they are because of incidents like this one.

They hurt themselves or worse, commit suicide. Its people like Mark who make things like that happen.”

“Because what they’re doing is wrong, they have to be shown that,” Mark insisted, but his voice was quieter now, not as confident.

“Is it? I don’t think so. When you kick a dog and keep doing it, eventually it won’t get back up. You’ve messed with his head, made him believe he is *bad*. Wrong. Eventually, whether human or animal, what others do will affect the victim. But he isn’t bad. He isn’t wrong. It’s just some jerk too high on themselves and their own opinions, unwilling to see past their own arrogance and admit it’s *him* who is wrong. That someone else’s life choices have nothing to do with anyone else. People have the right to be who they

are. They have the right to not be scared, not to hide and wonder if the next corner they turn won’t push them or someone else over the edge.”

Theo said his speech in a calm tone, though his fists clenched and unclenched, wanting to punch Mark. But violence wasn’t the answer. Fighting fire with fire would only get someone burned. So he would try something else. “Mark, how did you meet my boyfriend?”

“In class.”

“Did he say something to you to make you mad, for you to hate him?”

“No. He never said anything.”

“So he did *nothing* to you.” Theo didn’t get a spoken answer. Mark shook his head. “Then tell me, how’d you find out he was gay?”

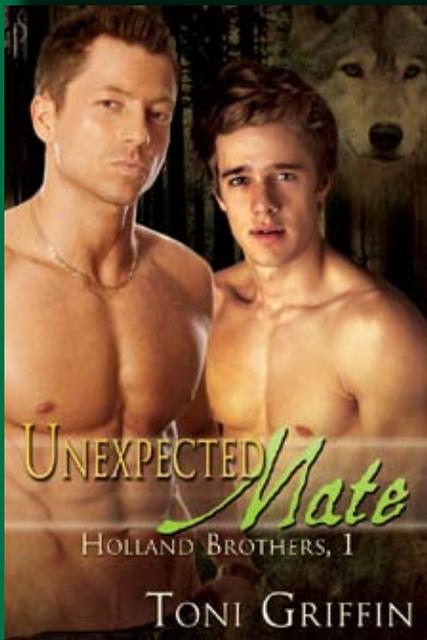
Mark finally looked away, looking just a little guilty.

“People that went to high school with him, go here too. They told us about him.” He nodded toward his friends, and not a one looked back at him. Mark didn’t want to be the sole focal point of Theo any longer, considering an even bigger crowd had gathered to watch the happenings. Theo’s loud voice had drawn attention.

“So you condemned him for nothing more than what you were told?” Theo said. “You just decided he wasn’t a worthy person of knowing, because he likes men?”

“Yes.” Mark had run out of arguments.

“What did you think—that Seth might hit on you or something? What makes you think he even wants *you*?” Theo’s voice dripped with sarcasm. “Does every woman you know hit on you, just because you have a third leg?”



UNEXPECTED MATE BOOK ONE, HOLLAND BROTHERS

by Toni Griffin

ISBN: 978-1-920468-82-8

Price: \$4.99

http://silverpublishing.info/product_book_info/new-release-c-1/unexpected-mate-p-177

Theo heard several women titter behind him, and it certainly wasn't in Mark's favor.

"No." Mark stared at his feet.

Theo should feel some satisfaction at the fact he'd humiliated Mark. But he didn't kid himself. Publically embarrassing the guy didn't help. And not only that, it made Theo no better than Mark.

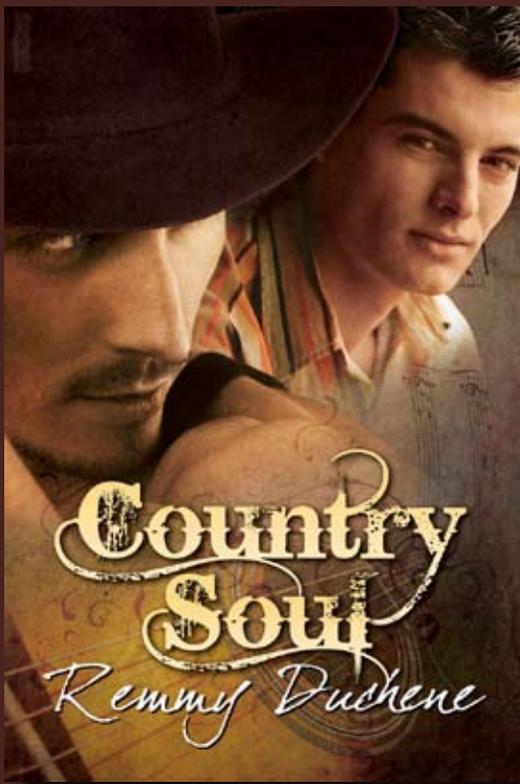
To change people's perspectives would take work, a lot of it. Each person saw the world differently, and to make them see there was nothing wrong with someone's choices would take an individual circumstance to gain success.

Disgusted, Theo turned back to Ricky and Seth, who waited for him, books in hand. "Let's go guys. We have better company to keep elsewhere."

"Okay," Seth said softly, and just a glimmer of that fifteen year old boy showed through. A spike had been shoved through Theo's heart to see this.

It wasn't fair. It wasn't right.

Why couldn't people see, understand and respect everyone equally? Seth was just a guy, wanting to go to a college to reach his goals. Just like thousands of other students, no matter their sexual preference, or where



Country Soul
by Remmy Duchene

ISBN: 978-1-920484-56-9
Price: \$3.99

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c-2/country-soul-p-211](http://silverpublishing.info/product_book_info/coming-soon-c-2/country-soul-p-211)

they came from, or what religion they celebrated.

Ricky, Seth and Theo began to weave through the crowd without saying another word. They thought they'd be left alone, as people moved out of the way to create a path to the door. Theo walked with his head high. He refused to return any of the looks the people around him shot their way.

A feminine voice called out Seth's name. He paused as a young woman and a few friends, both male and female came up to him. Theo tensed. He just wanted to get out of here. None of them needed another scene. He put his hand on Seth's back, moving closer to

protect him through physical proximity.

Seth glanced over his shoulder at him, with the first easy smile on his face. A silent message passed between the two men who'd been friends their entire lives and lovers for the past three years. It clearly said: *I'm fine, don't worry so much.* Seth trusted this woman, whoever she was.

"Hi Annie. What's up?" Seth greeted.

"Hey, Seth. Thanks for waiting. We saw and heard the tail end of what happened over there and your boyfriend's speech." Annie

smiled at Theo, who returned the sentiment. "Mark is a jerk, and what he did to you was unforgivable. You're boyfriend is right. It is just as bad to do nothing while another human being suffers for any reason, when the only excuse for doing so is because we were scared. It isn't good enough, doesn't absolve us of a single thing."

Seth smiled. "Thanks." He turned away, clearly thinking that was all.

Annie reached out to touch his arm, and he froze. It was a touch of friendship in a sea of hostility. "Did you know there isn't any sort of gay-rights movement group at this school anymore? The people who ran last year, graduated, and it wasn't continued. Not for the first time, I think it should be started up again. I want to, but I need help to do that. Would you be interested in looking into this with me and my friends?"

"That sounds like an excellent idea," Theo encouraged. Seth stiffened.

"I would like you to join too. I like your style and straight forward manner. It would be useful when dealing with so much red tape." Annie looked sheepish. "Though I have to admit, I don't know your name."

Theo was surprised by this unexpected offer. "Theo. And this is Ricky," He nodded toward Seth's brother, and then reached out to shake her hand that she offered him. "I don't actually go to this school."

"So? You can attend the meetings with Seth. I'm sure no one will say anything. You're kind of intimidating." Annie grinned. A teasing note had entered her tone. "Tell you what, I'm going to talk to some people, see what I can find out and we'll convene again. We will do everything we can to raise awareness, and try to stop this sort of thing from happening."

From there, Theo listened to the beginning of plans ranging from rallies, segments on the college's radio programs, to

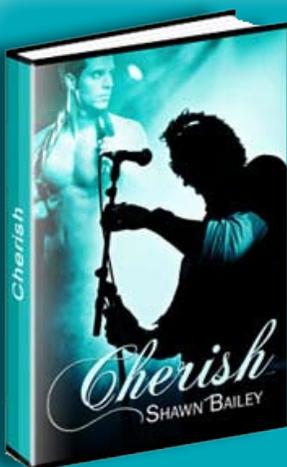
help-lines. He couldn't help the stunned feeling or the silly smile plastered on his face. The men and woman around Annie, gay, straight and in between, joined the conversation. None really had known Seth before now, as most of them were freshmen and they hadn't been here that long. But today, they learned something about one another. They found out that even though they were each their own person, there was a common goal.

Acceptance for one and all.

In the direst moments of life, there really is a light at the end of tunnel. It might be hard to find sometimes, but it is there. Where you least expect it to be. And once you find it, everything else can fall into perspective.

It will get better. The tide will turn. A sole drop of water spilling into the ocean called life, ripples outward and transforms everything. A single well chosen word can reflect change. It only takes one person to speak out.

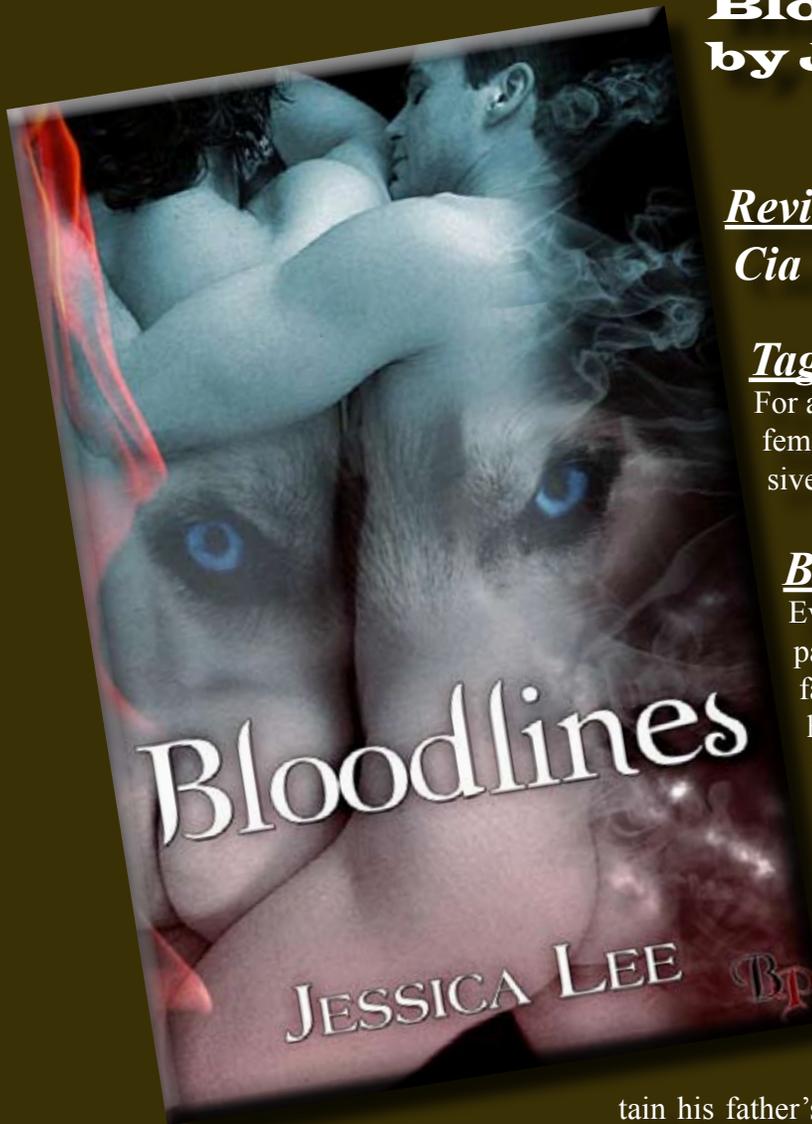
Will you be that person?



Cherish – coming soon from Phaze Publishing by Shawn Bailey

A strange tingly feeling went through Trinity Warren as he looked down into the face of the injured motorcycle rider. Gorgeous. He had a straight nose, full lips and a strong chin. Short jet black curls peeped out from beneath the helmet, possibly saving his life. The eyes fluttered and tried to open. Sooty black lashes dusted his upper cheeks like spider webs. Is it wrong to consider another man beautiful?

Brennan Demarcus focused on the face that looked down on him. Did angels have green eyes and stylishly coiffed blond hair? A soft finger stroked his forehead and the scent of cologne filled his nostrils. Was he dead? Because if he was it might not be so bad flying around the clouds with someone as lovely as this angel.



Bloodlines by **Jessica Lee**

Reviewer
Cia

Tagline

For an alpha male wolf shifter promised to a female, coming out has never been more explosive.

Blurb/Summary

Evin KinKaid, the only son of the KinKaid pack's alpha, has a secret. One that will tear his family apart. In one year, Evin is to succeed his father as alpha leader and continue the dominant bloodline of his family. There's only one problem: Evin is gay. When Evin is pushed into the bed of his intended female mate, he's forced to reveal the truth. And for an alpha male wolf shifter promised to a female whose goal is to one day be queen, coming out has never been more explosive. To Mason Thorne II, heir to Thorne Global Inc., life is a lie. To sus-

tain his father's love, Mason has agreed to stay in the family business and to one day assume his place as CEO. Instead of reaching for his heart's desire, he's settled for a life he never wanted. But an unexpected auto accident will send Evin and Mason into each other's arms and down a path toward a destiny neither man can escape: an eternity sealed in blood.

Review

From the beginning of Bloodlines I was captivated. Hatred sparked by a long vested friendship was crushing. I felt for Evin at the loss of a childhood friend and the tumultuous relationship within his family. Where stature is everything, Evin's lifestyle didn't fit and instead of accepting unconditional love, he lost it all. His strength is what drew me to him the most. He still made his way, found love oddly in Mason a human whose life mirrored his minus the shifter thing.

From there the story developed and mistakes were made. Confrontation couldn't be avoided and seeking help from estranged family melted the rest of me. Love doesn't come without sacrifice and Mason and Evin both proved their bond and love was strong enough to overcome any obstacle.

Rating

Five Siren Stones

Genre

Paranormal
Erotic Romance

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<http://www.breathlesspress.com/erotic/bloodlines.html>

Ethan Day

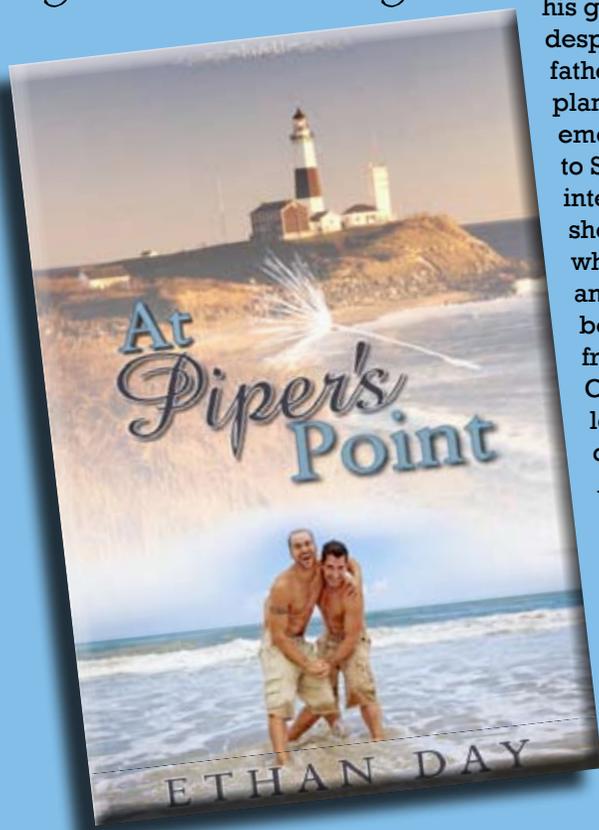
ETHANDAY.COM

INDULGE YOUR ADDICTION TO FICTION



At Piper's Point

by Ethan Day



Ten years and many boyfriends later, Cassidy Winters finally returns to the ancestral home of his grandmother, Sadie Hart, despite the best efforts of his father to prevent it. Cassidy's plans of a quiet, seaside ceremony to wish a final farewell to Sadie quickly unravel as interruptions run roughshod beginning with Neil who walks out of the ocean and straight into Cassidy's bed. The dominos topple one by one when the little dog he rescues from the hounds of hell bring him to Ben, the hunky vet who rescues Cassidy right back. News of his arrival spreads faster than Cassidy's legs, bringing his boyhood friend and first love Nate Sommers to his doorstep - leaving Cassidy spiraling into a multi-layered love snafu. As if the island wasn't getting crowded enough for Cassidy's good taste and bad decisions, best friends Ollie and Spencer arrive in time to witness the uninvited return of Cassidy's most recent ex, Teddy, who's refusing to stay dumped.

Fists fly and all hell breaks loose amid mojitos and martinis as Cassidy finds himself planning a huge party to celebrate Sadie's life. Accusations are aimed as arguments and libidos boil over, but even through the chaos Cassidy knows exactly what he wants. While he's certainly willing, he isn't sure if he's ready or able for love and life...At Pipers Point.

Wacky, loving characters, and screwball antics make At Piper's Point by Ethan Day the best book he has written to date -
Dark Divas Reviews

5.4.8x5 is a short interview consisting of five questions for one of the many awesomely great, and fabulous authors of gay romance.

The interviews will be questions about their books as opposed to personal questions about the authors themselves - similar to what you might find in the DVD Extra's of a film. Most paperbacks for gay romance are around 8 x 5 inches, which is where I came up with the snazzy name. It's meant to be a fun and interesting inquiry into the writing process and how the stories themselves came to be. Along with those interviews you'll be treated to the promotional blurb and an excerpt of the authors choosing. <http://addictiontofiction.ethanday.com/?cat=8>

ADDICTIONTOFICTION.ETHANDAY.COM

5.4.8x5

INDULGE YOUR ADDICTION TO FICTION





The organizers of the GayRomLit Retreat would like to cordially invite you to the first, of what we hope will become an annual literary event featuring Gay Romance in Literature. This is about bringing authors, publishers and readers together for an event unlike any other. A gathering place to hang out with people who read the same books you do. Get to know your favorite authors in a comfortable setting, ask all those burning questions about the books you love, and meet online friends at a one of a kind retreat.

We specifically chose the word retreat, which by definition is a place of safety - a refuge for those in attendance. Unlike your more traditional Lit-conferences the GayRomLit weekend will be centered on celebrating the fiction we all love and highlighting the authors and publishers who continue to support the

genre.

New Orleans is the location for the 2011 GayRomLit Retreat. From the Bourbon Orleans hotel, located in the famed French Quarter to the River Boat book signing cruise on the Creole Queen, we've designed and organized events and parties taking full advantage of the location while providing you with a multitude of opportunities to mix with the over seventy authors and six publishers who'll be taking part during the inaugural year of what we hope will become an annual event.

There will be no seminars or workshops - this is about showcasing the authors and publishers, along with the genre we all love. With registration for everyone set at \$100 per person we want you all to understand that this is not a money making venture

for any of the organizers.

All money collected will be passed along to attendees by way of food, goods, and/or services.

We hope you all will join us down in New Orleans, from October 13 - 16 of 2011, to get Steamy in the Big Easy.

For more information on this exciting event, please visit our website: <http://gayromlit.com/>

Who Dat!?!

Your organizers,

Lynn Lorenz - J.P. Bowie -
Carol Lynne - Ethan Day -
Amanda Young



Ethan Day on 5.4.8x5

Having done my fair share of interviews over the past few years, I began to notice the difference between the ones where the interviewer was familiar with my work and had personalized their questions accordingly, verses the type where I was given the same set of stock questions everyone else had been. Not that I'm casting any stones. I have a blog and understand fully how difficult it can be to keep it up to date with fresh content. I don't know how some folks do it. That being said, I think for an author, the interview process is a heck of a lot more fun and interesting when the questions put to them have been personalized to their work.

This is what I set out to do with my new series of interviews titled 5.4.8x5, which is basically a short interview consisting of five questions for one of the many awesomely great, and fabulous authors of gay romance. The interviews will be questions about their books as opposed to personal questions about

the authors themselves – similar to what you might find in the DVD Extra's of a film. Most paperbacks for gay romance are around 8 x 5 inches, which is where I came up with the snazzy name. It's meant to be a fun and interesting inquiry into the writing process and how the stories themselves came to be. Along with those interviews you'll be treated to the promotional blurb and an excerpt of the authors choosing.

As an added bonus, many of the authors I'm interviewing have agreed to turn around and do the same, by interviewing an author they love about one of their books. I can't wait to read these. I'm really excited about this new, bi-monthly series of interviews. I think it's going to be both fun and interesting to find out what other authors have gleaned from reading the wonderful stories written by their peers...not to mention what the authors will reveal about their own work, in the process.

I've already posted

interviews with Ally Blue, the very first to be featured in the 5.4.8x5 series, as well as Z.A. Maxfield, Lynn Lorenz, & J.P. Bowie. In the coming months you'll be treated to my interviews with P.A. Brown, Josh Lanyon, Geoffrey Knight, Carol Lynne, and many more. Ally Blue will be interviewing Rick R. Reed and Z.A. Maxfield will be putting the screws to me with questions about one of my own books.

With any luck, these interviews will give readers a little more insight into the authors they love as well as the books they write.

Much Love

Ethan

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To read the current interview or to catch up with all the others please visit the 5.4.8x5 section of my blog at: <http://addictiontofiction.ethanday.com/?cat=8>

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5.4.8x5

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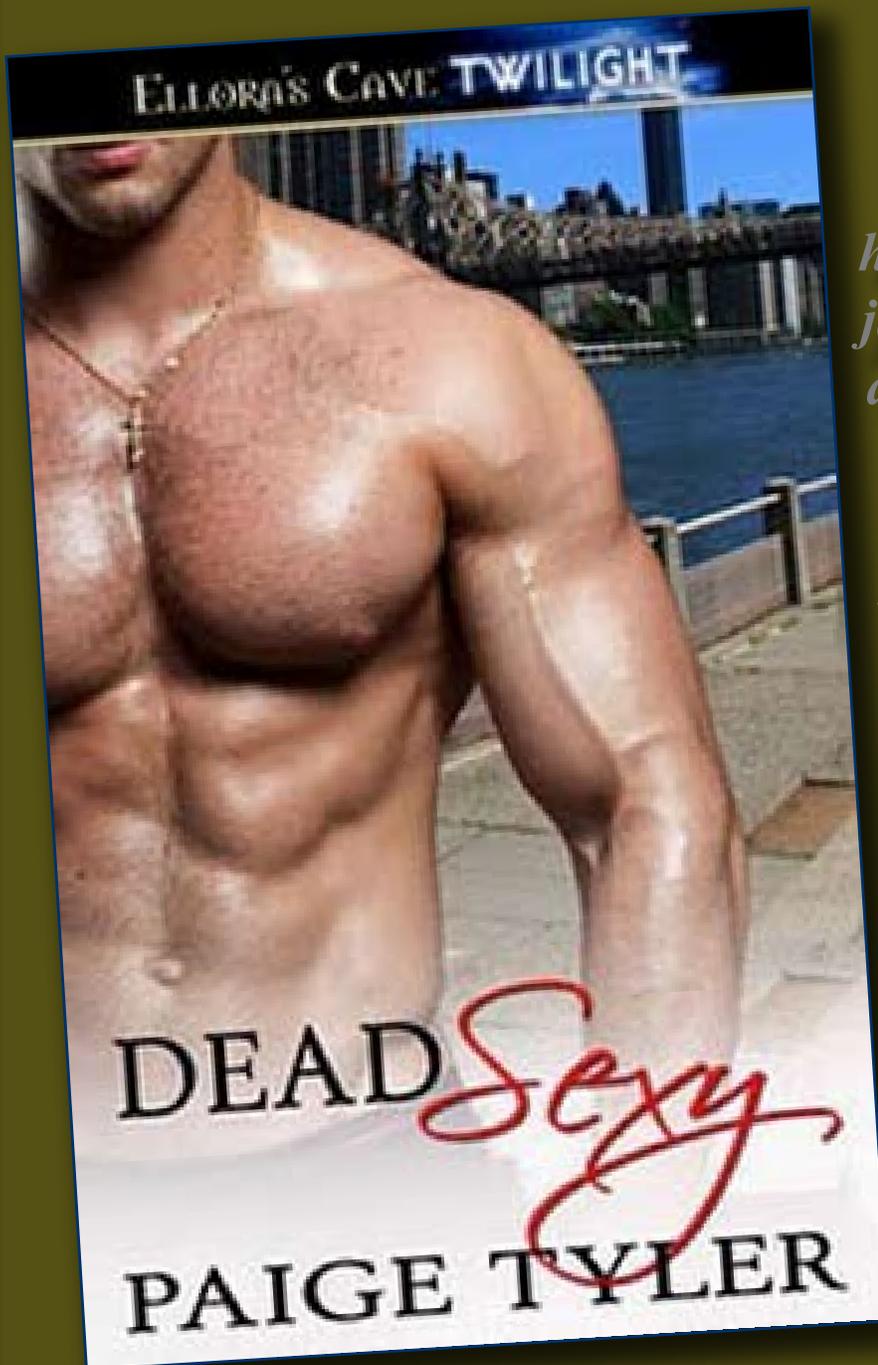
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Discrimination of the Painful Kind

by Dawné Dominique

It wasn't easy growing up with a big brother who was considered God, and a mentally retarded little brother who was smarter than us all; and it was doubly difficult being a twin to someone who was your complete opposite.

I had always thought our childhood had been normal, but without going into any details, we were as dysfunctional as everyone else was, maybe more so. It wasn't until ALL of us moved out on our own that we realized the importance of what siblings meant—that would we stand beside the other until Hell rained ice cubes.

Through the years growing up, I had met several twins. They were close, best friends, even. So why did my sister and I have such an odd relationship? All the things I liked, my sister hated, and vice-versa. She was sports orientated—I mean any sport she picked up she excelled at. I was taller, lankier and uncoordinated. So much so, my parents enrolled me in dance classes to stop the constant bruising from my many trips and falls. It did improve my dancing, but sadly, I still have as many bruises today.

The differences between my sister and I became more prominent in our early teens. She walked like a boy, talked like a boy, was even built like a boy. She was also tough as nails—used to beat the crap out of the kids at school—in higher grades—and guys! And she would stand ready to fight my battles, even if I didn't want her to. In fact, she was always in some kind of trouble. She had a probation officer when she was 14 because she tried to set a shopping mall on fire. Go figure. I never knew what went on in that brain of hers until later in life.

With twins, there's usually a Cain and Able. I considered her Cain incarnate. She could lie herself through the pearly gates, if need be. Man, the troubles

that landed her in, and worse, she always took me with her. Me, the lie was usually written all over my face, a characteristic I despised back then, but thankful I have now.

I was 15 when I realized she was gay. When I told her my theory, she bloodied my nose and gave me a black eye. I never broached the subject with her again, at least not

until the wounds healed and I learned to run faster.

This was not to say my sister didn't date boys. Hell, she was sexually active before I was, but had confided that she couldn't figure out what the big hoopla was all about. Back then, I was trying to figure it all out myself, so I was no help to her.

At the age of twenty, our lives took drastic turns. I had a baby, and she finished university and started a new career. She also began playing for a women's baseball team. I had met several of the ball players, and the majority of them were openly gay. It was no wonder they wanted my sister on their team; she was a fantastic ball player—played shortstop like a pro. It was at this time, she was engaged to a wonderful guy, but I knew she wasn't happy. Secretly, I had hoped this would be that one thing that would bring some realization...and boy, was I right.

One afternoon, my sister dropped in out of the blue and wanted to talk. I could tell by how uncomfortable she was, how she couldn't look me in the eye. When I asked her point blank, "Are you trying to telling me you're gay?" she paled like chalk. I laughed, hugged her, and told her that she would finally have some peace with herself. She worried about what our parents would say. I told her that they had known for years. Damn, was I wrong!

When our parents found out, they kicked her out of the house. My older brother and I were shocked, and disgusted! My father had once told me that he would never, ever kick any of us out, and this flew in the face of his words. With my father, integrity was everything. I wanted to ensure he heard what I had to say, and my big brother backed me 100%.

Mom and Dad were hurt to find out one of their own could be like that—an abnormality in the scope of normalness (if there is such a thing).

To me, this was discrimination at its cruelest...from one's immediate family.

Gay! Lesbian! Dyke! Such dirty words. Only degenerates could or would consider such a lifestyle. Why would any sane person choose to live this way, to be persecuted and ridiculed? It wasn't my sister's choice...it was inherent in her from the moment of birth.

She transferred to Toronto a few weeks later for a myriad of reasons, but foremost, so mom and dad didn't have to see or deal with her. A year would pass before dad would be diagnosed with a brain tumor and given a year to live. It was only then my parents came to terms with who my sister truly was: their daughter, despite her sexual orientation.

Growing up with a mentally retarded brother taught us patience and acceptance of others who were different; our father taught us that being a different color of skin made no difference; our mother taught us that everyone had the right to believe in whatever they wanted; our schools taught us that everyone was equal. That was way back when. So why is sexual discrimination as prevalent as ever?

There are some who believe that being "gay" is a disease, that it's catchy, like a cold, or you're a sexual deviant. To find this kind of thinking in our society today, especially with the social networks that are all the rage, is terrifying. Have we not learned from our mistakes? Have we not better educated ourselves? Have we not entered into the 21st century?

Today, my sister is married to a wonderful woman. She found her peace and happiness, and she doesn't care if she's looked upon as something different. First and foremost, she is a human being.

My dad is now gone, and my mom, well, she came to terms with my sister's sexuality slowly but surely. She realized that nothing could or would change who my sister truly was inside. Is she sad about it? At first, she was, but not now. With education, mom learned that her parenting skills weren't to blame for my sister's life-choice, because she is exactly who she is meant to be.

Diversity creates a world—discrimination destroys it.



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