



Lover at Last

J.R. Ward

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Qhuinn, son of no one, is used to being on his own. Disavowed from his bloodline, shunned by the aristocracy, he has finally found an identity as one of the most brutal fighters in the war against the Lessening Society. But his life is not complete. Even as the prospect of having a family of his own seems to be within reach, he is empty on the inside, his heart given to another....

Blay, after years of unrequited love, has moved on from his feelings for Qhuinn. And it's about time: it seems Qhuinn has found his perfect match in a Chosen female, and they are going to have a young. It's hard for Blay to see the new couple together, but building your life around a pipe dream is just a heartbreak waiting to happen. And Qhuinn needs to come to terms with some dark things before he can move forward...

Fate seems to have taken these vampire soldiers in different directions... but as the battle over the race's throne intensifies, and new players on the scene in Caldwell create mortal danger for the Brotherhood, Qhuinn finally learns the true definition of courage, and two hearts who are meant to be together... finally become one.

Lover at Last Details

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From Reader Review Lover at Last for online ebook

Blacky *Romance Addict* says

full review posted

this will be spoilerish

*Quinn watched from a vast distance as his own hand reached out and touched Blay's face, the fingertips running over the five o'clock shadow. "I'm sorry."
Oh, God, to touch him. To feel the warmth of his skin, to inhale his clean, masculine scent.
"I'm sorry."*

I am a very big fan of the series, and I'm incredibly happy these two guys got their happy end, they really deserved it after all these years <3

That said, this could have been better. No doubt about it.

Still worth 4 stars from me because I liked almost all the other storylines and what little Quay had together <3

"I lived for the night, because I could go over to your house. It was the only thing that kept me going. You were the only thing, actually. It was...you."

The story

I've been trying to write a synopsis for a while now, and I can't think of anything to say. It's just, nothing really important happens here, there isn't any big deal with any bad guys, just them dealing with their feelings and being angry at one another.

After Saxton finishes his re-write of the law, he realises it's over between him and Blay, and they break up. Quinn doesn't know that, but is willing to have an affair with Blay all the same, just so he can be with him. That leads to some very steamy sex scenes, a whole lot of fights and misunderstandings, and a happy end at the very end of the book :)

The end.

"I just...wanted you to be okay....I just...wanted you...to be okay—"

The story - There is not that much happening in this one, it's mostly Qhuinn and Blay dealing with their feelings, and meeting a huge bunch of other characters.

There were a few action scenes and those were great :)

The romance - There really isn't much romance in this book, and since I am first and foremost a romance fan, it did not work for me there.

Maybe it was intentional, because we've got the romantic scenes in the previous books, the kisses and the glances and the heartbreak later on.

When this book starts, we already know Blay and Qhuinn are in love, only they don't know it.

They think about their feelings, but they don't talk about them.

There isn't any romantic interaction between them at all. Maybe in one scene. Or half a scene where it was a sweet gesture, but that's pretty much it.

The sex - Qhuinn and Blay interact in this book only when they have sex. Usually I'm all for that, why not, but I've waited 6 books for them to get together, and a couple of sex scenes don't mean sh*t when they don't talk and are angry at one another 90% of the book.

Anyway, the sex... I liked it. Yes I know there's no lube, bla bla bla, but it was hot and sexy even without it and without the preparation.

In my mind, they're uber-amazing vampires with special abilities. Who knows what they can or can't take in anal sex.

Most definitely, the female vampires have a SuperVagina that can take hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours of pounding. And after a little break, they can take more hours and hours and hours of pounding.

So those two not having lube really isn't such a WTF factor like the rest of them, that's why I just ignored it and enjoyed the hotness :)

It was steamy and sexy and that's all you need to know :))))

Page time - I gotta do this one too, sorry :(

Anyway, since I re-read all the previous books, I'm pretty much used to all the other storylines we get next to our main couple. It's just the way Ward writes and I can deal with that.

BUT!

The main problem here isn't the fact that she has too many other characters she writes about. I mean, this is a 600 page book, lots of pages for all of them, you'd think...

But no, what really sucks is that Qhuinn has quite a lot of page time, Blay has a lot of page time too, only both are SEPARATE!

That is the problem.

We see a lot of the MCs, just not in scenes when they are together, as in, the same room or something.

I'm very tempted to actually go through the book and count just how many pages there are with Qhuinn/Blay in the same scene. I would be somewhere between 50-100 I think.

That's sad :(((And most of those pages are them fighting. Yes sorry I'm on that again, but it just bothers me :(

The other characters:

Trez - Very interesting to read! I wanted to know more about the Shadow brothers for a long time, and I'm happy to be finally introduced to them :)

By what I could figure out, he's a sex addict who suffers from migraines, and is engaged from birth to a royalty.

In this book he falls in love with (view spoiler), and he decided he has to have her, even though iAm keeps telling him she's out of his league.

I wonder how their relationship will play out.

Assail - Very, very, VERY interesting to read, especially in the second half of the book! He's a businessman, a drug dealer who uses himself (dunno for what reason, I couldn't get that). He's distanced himself from both Xcor and Wrath, not wanting to get in the middle of their fight for leadership.

Assail is just so intriguing, especially in the scenes with Sola! Oh my! Loved them :D The last scene with him was a cliffie, I'm interested in what he'll do now ehehehehehe

Sola - She's pretty boringish, except when she's in the same scene with Assail :D Awesome then! Don't know much about her, except that she's a burglar and she was hired to stalk Assail.

And she has a grandma.

Saxton - I felt so bad for him here :(((I wish we'll see him more and that he'll get at least a novella or something with his happy end <3

Luchas - I have no idea what his angle will be in the next books, but it has potential for a good storyline. Won't say more.

The Band of Bastards - *pukes*

They are so damn irritating, I still don't like them.

Are they gonna have orgies for the rest of this damn series??? If only they were hot to read, I wouldn't say anything, but when an orgy makes you want to skip it, that's bad sex writing.

Anyway.

I don't really care about anyone from that group so if you want anything detailed, look elsewhere ;)

Xcor - *pukes again*

That guy... I can't stand him. And it isn't cause of the scar, Z has almost the same scar and I love him!

The way he talks irritates me. The way he thinks irritates me.

The fact that he wants to kill Wrath and become King is certainly not something to make me like him at all.

But! Ward obviously plans to force readers to like him because he's now in love with Layla, poor thing, and she's pregnant with Qhuinn.

Bla. Bla. Bla.

I wish I cared, but I don't.

There was one scene near the end with those two, and I bet it's all mushy to Xcor fans, but it was whatever to me, since I don't like him in the first place, I couldn't get into it at all.

And OMG I forgot!

The man is obsessed with his weapon!!! Yes, he hears his scythe (the lamest weapon for a vampire since they were invented) talking to him, and whispering to him, and telling him to go kill, and she likes to be bloody and Jesus but it's just mental!

The only other explanation is if the scythe is somehow cursed, that way he wouldn't be crazy.

Layla - She's ok. I have no problem with her, but then I can't say I really like or love her. I just don't really care about anything concerning her, or her love with Xcor.

There was a scene here when she showed some backbone, that was awesome so much that it went into my favorite quotes, and that's saying something :))

Overall

I think that's it. Don't hate me, but I had to rant about stuff that really bothered me, because this book is one I really anticipated, and I didn't love it like I thought I would.

The 4 stars is because even though Qhuinn and Blay didn't get enough page time together, I liked what they did get, and the ending made me cry like a baby, so...

A big help were the two side-stories I really liked, Trez and Assail. Totally interesting to read and they kept me going through the book.

The BOB. I'll just ignore them. Like the lessers :D

Qhuinn's lids closed briefly. And then he gathered Blay in an embrace that connected them from head to foot. "You're always there for me, aren't you."

"The truth was not something he wanted to share: Wild horses, loaded guns, crowbars, fire hoses, trampling elephants...even an order from the king himself could not have pulled him away."

Blay has been in love with Qhuinn for a long time, and was rejected so many times that he just totally gave up on it.

He is now with Saxton, Qhuinn's cousin, who lives with him in the Brotherhood's mansion, and works for Wrath as a lawyer.

Their relationship is pretty much only physical, because Blay always shut him out with personal stuff, still, Saxton was prepared to be with him, knowing Blay is in love with Qhuinn.

After they break up, Blay gets an offer from Qhuinn to pay back Saxton for cheating on him (Qhuinn doesn't know they broke up), and so starts their story in this book :)

"You and I...we grew up together, and that's it. Yeah, we shared a lot of stuff back then, and we were there for each other when it mattered. But neither one of us can fit into the clothes we used to wear, and this relationship between us is just the same. It doesn't fit in our lives any longer. We don't...fit anymore."

In previous books, Blay was the one with the puppy dog eyes, wanting Qhuinn even though he rejected him repeatedly.

Here, he was the one doing the rejecting :)

I totally love that!

Blay wasn't the suffering unrequited love poor thing like he was before, he gave up on moping around waiting for something that will never happen, and getting hurt in the process, and became pretty bitter and angry, but set on never getting hurt again by Qhuinn.

I think that's my favorite thing about both of them, they practically switched personalities, and it was awesome seeing Blay as the strong one, not giving a sh*t about anything.

Blay's family is just amazing <3 And it is because it's completely opposite from Qhuinn's.

It was nice to see him get accepted, and the ending with them was awesome :)

Anyway, there was one harsh scene at the end of the book where they fought, and I can't say it was nice to read that, especially Blay behaving that way :(

BUT, it helped Qhuinn put things in perspective, and well, make a happy ending :DDDD

"If he wanted to live, he had to completely focus.

Yet even as the conviction hit him, there was a split second when he thought, Just end this all now. Just be done with all the bullshit and the punishment of life, the almost-theres, the if-onlys, the relentless chronic agony he'd been in...he was so tired of it all..."

"If you were alone, I'd still be right on this carpet, on my knees, wanting to be with you. If you were mated to a female, if you were dating someone all casual and shit, if you were in a million different places in life...I'd still be right here. Begging you for something, anything—one time, if that's all you've got."

Qhuinn has made some major life changes in the past year, giving up sex and making a commitment to Layla.

He's grown more serious and reliable, so much that the Brotherhood noticed it, and with his incredible bravery in helping save Wrath from the Band of Bastards, he has gained their respect as well.

In the previous book, Layla was in her needling, with Qhuinn servicing her, and that led to them having a child now, with Layla experiencing troubles in her pregnancy, and Qhuinn dealing with the fact that he's going to be a father and have a family of his own.

He is still in love with Blay, and is prepared to be with him no matter what.

He proposes revenge sex, a way to get back at Saxton, and a way to finally be with the man he loves.

*"I love you," he said into the spray of the shower. "I...love you."
As he closed his eyes against the pain, it was hard to know how much of what ran down his cheeks was water, and how much was something else.*

Lately we got to see Qhuinn in some kick-ass action :)
Me likey! Him saving Wrath in the previous book was awesome, and in this one, the scene with the plain!!
Amazing!
When he broke down, OMG, so emotional!
I am glad the BDB wanted him to join them, because he totally deserves it :)
I couldn't stop laughing when they came to his room and he started kicking fighting hahhha :DDD
And I was glad when he was finally (view spoiler)
It was very touching, great scene.
The flashbacks were painful because his family treated him horribly, and that even more pronounced with the contrast of Blay's family totally accepting him.
Qhuinn with Blay...
Like I said above, it's like their personalities switched for this book, and Qhuinn became the one who is suffering for any scrape of attention from Blay, wanting to be with the guy in any way possible.
Although it was tough to read, I liked that he suffered a bit here :D
It made up for all the heartbreak he caused Blay in the past.
the big fight near the end was so so terrible to go through, and how Qhuinn was afterwards...
I felt bad for them both, but it was the wake-up call he needed, and thankfully, it worked.
The Epilogue...
Made me cry like a baby :)))
Beautiful :)
If only there were more scenes with them like that :(((
This next quote is my favorite from the book <3

"It was time for him to repay the strength...and in all likelihood, bear the pain that was going to come when he was turned down in a far more kindly manner than he'd provided for.

Forcing his lids down, he brought Blay's knuckles to his mouth, brushing a kiss against them. Then he gave himself up to sleep, letting himself fall into unconsciousness, knowing that, at least for the next few hours, he was safe in the arms of his one and only."

My favorite quotes from other characters:

"If any harm shall befall him, I will come after you, and find you where you sleep. I do not

care where you lay your head or who with, my vengeance shall rain upon you until you drown."

The woman shouted in alarm and tried to jump back, but, of course, her feet were stuck in their bindings. To keep her from falling over, he grabbed her arm with the hand that wasn't holding his cigar.

Now her blood ran with fear, and as he inhaled the scent, he hardened. Jerking her forward, he stared down at her, tracing her face.

"Be careful," he said in a low voice. "I take offense quite readily, and my temper is not easily assuaged."

She slapped him so fast and so hard, his head actually kicked back on his spine.

His first instinct was to bare his fangs and bite her, to punish her, to tantalize himself—because there was no better spice to pleasure than a little pain. Or a lot of it. He righted his head and lowered his lids. "That felt good. Do you want to do it again?"

"I just want to hold you," he said. "It's enough for me right now."

Nestling in, she fit herself even more closely to him. "Well, this is nice, too."

Yeah. It was.

And curiously terrifying.

"Wrath?"

"Yeah?"

"Are you okay?"

It was a little while before he could answer, before he trusted his voice to be calm, and level, and no BFD. "Oh, yeah, I'm fine. Just fine."

As he smoothed her arm, running his hand up and down her biceps, he prayed that she believed it...and vowed that what was happening just one door down the hall would never, ever happen to them.

Beautiful happy end for our boys, and I'm hoping we'll see A LOT MORE of them in the next books :)

buddy read with Shelly and Vishous

Stacia (the 2010 club) says

3 stars? 4 stars? I might be flip-flopping on this rating at least once or twice over the next few days. I actually had an easier time rewarding 4 stars to the previous books because my expectations weren't that high to begin with, and I felt like I'd been given more than what I was expecting. In the case of *Lover at Last*, I think the bar might have been set too high with all of the anticipation to see this relationship *finally* happen. I'm tempted to stay at 3 stars just for the mention of Ed Hardy footwear. *Douchey poser-wear?* Don't do that to my brothers! But then again, I'm tempted to go up a point because the mention of masturbating a snow globe was randomly thrown in there and it made me laugh. Decisions, decisions...

If you've read up through book 10 in this series, this review will be safe to read outside of the spoiler tags. Spoiler tags should not be clicked on unless you've read *Lover at Last*.

All of his life he had wanted to belong.

Quay's story = Great but not as epic as I was hoping for. (view spoiler) Although, I can say that the scenes with Quinn and Blay were intense - so thumbs up in regard to that. We readers got what we were waiting for, and that's good. For their portion of the book (which simply wasn't enough!), I was happy. Quinn's path to self-discovery got me choked up a couple of times.

He started to cry. Thank fuck for the hood.

Surprisingly, my favorite scene of all was not a Quay scene, but an interaction between Xcor and Layla. I generally shy away from using any sort of Romeo and Juliet reference because we all know how *that* tale turned out (hint : it wasn't good), but when two people from opposite sides of a war are drawn to one another, there's an interesting twist to the character turmoil. Without giving away any plot details, I FELT the raw emotion. I really want Xcor and Layla to get their own book.

"Do not cry." His thumb went to her cheeks. "Beautiful female of worth, do not cry."

You know who I don't want getting a book? Oh...just about all of the other characters who got side billing this time around. I found myself skimming a good portion of the book (outside of Quay, the brothers and Xcor/Layla, of course).

Assail and Sola? Please, no.

Trez? Eh.

What's next? All of the additional family members of the brothers? (view spoiler)
Is the Scribe Virgin going to break out and start getting freaky? I can't really tell anymore.
Will Lassiter ever be more than comic relief?

It's time to start wrapping this series up, Ward. The brothers have found love. Let's not start bringing in a bunch of new characters just to milk the series for all its worth. Quality is starting to take a backseat to quantity and I'd hate to see the appeal of the BDB dragged out way past its prime.

Tekla says

THIS REVIEW CONTAINS SPOILERS, YO.

I have waited six years to write this review. And in my mind, this was never the kind of review I imagined I'd post.

QHUAY RELATIONSHIP

The thing is that Qhuinn and Blay were pretty much ready to be together many books ago. JRW just kept coming up with plot devices and excuses to keep them apart. And the same happened in this book. They could have gotten together right when Qhuinn begged Blay to have sex with him.

Instead, Blay lied through the whole book about Saxton. And Qhuinn settled for the easy way out. He had Blay without having to face his issues. It was anticlimactic, and honestly, JRW had a long book to pace things right. But she decided to hold them back with a million different excuses and then wrap it all up in 10 pages. The flow was all over the place. I wonder what her editors do, tbh.

They told each other some pretty awful things that never got solved later on, too. There were attacks and accusations, but not real talking and development. It all happened off page. We were told they were talking a lot now, but we didn't get to read these conversations.

GENERAL PLOT

We all knew this would be a filler book, something easy to skip if you didn't want to read the "gay book". But honestly, romance aside, what else happened?

Also: "Back at the Mansion..." Really? *Really?* The amateurish bull in this book is unbearable. And the slang was out of control. I wonder if anyone working on this series still takes it seriously, tbh.

PARALLELS

There were parallels between Qhuinn and Blay through the whole book. Qhuinn's own demon was Saxton. And Blay's was Layla. And they both had similar thoughts in similar situations about them. The first time they had sex, Blay thought of Layla. And Qhuinn thought of Saxton the second time.

I still think this is a bigger issue than it transpired in the book. And that it's coming back in future books, considering how they share house with these people.

FLASHBACKS

I'm glad JRW decided to show us how the night of the Honor Guard had bigger consequences. They were two kids in a sudden grown-up situation and no one made sure they were okay afterwards. They kept it all inside and things were never going to work out for them if they didn't talk about it.

BLAYLOCK

He said so himself: His relationship with Qhuinn has always been under Qhuinn's terms. Blay places Qhuinn before anyone else, included himself. He sacrificed his own feelings to help Layla's pregnancy. It's not the first time he ignores what he wants to favor Qhuinn.

When has Qhuinn done this for him? JRW doesn't seem to care about Blay. And that's a terrible thing. The same way she tried so hard with Layla, I could tell she barely tried at all with Blay.

His development in this book barely scratched the surface. It felt flat and uninterested. His coming out to his parents was emotional but also cliché and an easy way out when everything was instantly acceptance and love. It lacked deep.

Blay lying through the whole book about he and Saxton still being together was a cheap plot device to help drag the inevitable. A clear example of how little JRW thinks of him.

Blay's character has always been defined by his sexual orientation. His plot line has always been about it *and* Qhuinn. He's never gotten anything else. His only other plot was Saxton, and still, that was just part of the "gay character" plot.

I've always seen something in Blay. Something that goes beyond his sexual orientation. I've seen *him*. His personality. The way he's strong, smart and compassionate. The way he places the people he cares about first. He sacrifices himself no matter the consequences. He's a fighter, but he's much more than that. He's genuine and kind. He's fierce and funny. And I'm pissed off he didn't receive what he deserves. Which is creating a family with his mate in his own fucking terms.

He's unselfish, he loves Qhuinn so much, I know he will accept Layla and love Qhuinn's baby. I know JRW is going to write him ultimately being a close parental figure to Qhuinn's daughter. And being happy.

JRW shoved a heteronormativity family crap down our throats *and* Blay's. The character defined by his own sexual orientation, the token gay character, he will always have to share his mate with a woman and a kid. Why? Because JRW wanted Blay "to be a daddy." And, let's face it. She always placed Qhuinn first. After all, this is not Qhuay's book, but Qhuinn's, right?

QHUINN

I *finally* understood Qhuinn a little bit more. As a character he always felt incomplete and unstable, as if JRW was still working on him.

We find out he had suicidal tendencies back when he lived with his family. And Blay saved him in several occasions. I thought it was inexcusable to keep this fact for 6-7 books. It's too big of a deal to drop the boom like that and then never deal with it again.

At the end of the book, Blay says something about therapy with Mary. And for the love of the Scribe Virgin I hope this happens. Because Qhuinn needs professional help.

His issues run deeper than we can see. Even now, we can't fully see the scars because he's still discovering them himself. He hide from the world, from himself so much, we still don't know him fully. And I think that realization made me empathic toward him.

He realized he had lived a lie without even knowing it. He thought he had things under control, he thought he knew what he wanted, who he was, and then boom. His life is upside down. Forever changed. He finally saw it. All thanks to Blay. *Again*.

My concern? JRW had six books, Qhuinn's book include, to develop this. And she chose to do so in the last twenty pages of LAL. She had a few great opportunities, life changing events where Qhuinn could have seen all this. There were many ways to develop this character right, but like anything else lately with this series: Badly Executed.

I can't believe 20 pages before the ending of their book, Qhuinn was still saying he was not gay. What the actual fuck. He had admitted this to himself back in Lover Mine, ffs! Making Qhuinn realize he's gay in two pages after "decades of lying to himself" is not the best way to develop such an important character's trail. It also means JRW forgot her own plot, *again*.

Qhuinn's anchor is Blay. He needs Blay, he needs Blay's strength to be able to face his issues. He couldn't do it alone. I see why Qhuinn loves Blay. But I still can't see why Blay feels the same way. And that's a big flaw to the book.

SAXTON

I felt truly sorry for Saxton. He was only a classy and respectful gentleman to Blay and Qhuinn. He broke up with Blay and stepped back, disappearing to let things happen between them.

I know no one gives a crap about him. JRW included. But I think it's so unfair. He took care of Blay when Blay needed someone. He knew where he was getting himself into and even then, he was good to Blay. Always. He fell in love, that's his only mistake. And now that he's hurting, there is no one in that house to support him.

I guess I must be grateful he's not dead (yet!).

SAXTON AND QHUINN

I thought what Qhuinn did was fucked up. It was not romantic, nor a great gesture. He nearly killed his COUSIN. Even if Saxton had cheated on Blay, NOTHING justifies what Qhuinn did.

Yes, bonded males are possessive and all that bullcrap. I just don't find the bonded males thing hot, at all. That was violent and psycho. And it did not show how much Qhuinn loves Blay. Trust me, it didn't.

Qhuinn never apologized to Saxton for what he did, too. They didn't have a proper talk in this book. And they are *family*. This really upsets me.

LAYLA

Nope. Still not liking her.

It's obvious through the whole book how hard JRW tried to make us like her. But the more she tries, the more I dislike her. All her ordeal with her miscarriage, and Harves... I just don't care.

I hated the fact that she told Blay about Qhuinn being in love with him. And then, when she realized her mistake she did nothing about it. And later on, when she wanted a male to tell her if she smelled pregnant again, she went to Blay!!! She's so incredible selfish, wow.

And no matter her epic Romeo and Juliet love with Xcor, I'll never believe Layla doesn't have feelings for Qhuinn. He was her first love. He took her virginity. And he's the father of her daughter. It's impossible she fully moved on. I find this a case of the "Because the Author says so." (BTASS from now on.)

To be honest, I'm just angry I had to include her at all in the review of QHUAY's book.

LUCHAS

Apart from the ridiculous name, I'm glad he's finally back because that means more Qhuinn (and hopefully Blay) in the future. It was, however, very anticlimactic. He's not a lesser or an asshole. I guess being kept in Omega blood for years makes someone look at their life, look at their choices.

THE OTHER CHARACTERS

So, what did the rest of the mansion think of Qhuinn and Blay? I was rooting for a similar scene to the one in LRb, where Tohr and what-was-her-name-again were at First Meal, and everyone was like "omg new gossip yay". Everyone assumed Qhuinn was with Layla, and Blay was with Saxton! So where is the gossip? Where are the stares? The whispers? The funny scenes? Goddammit, I'm so disappointed.

I'm not even talking about what the Brothers think of a gay couple. Fuck that. They don't give a crap. And neither do I. That's not the question. They are just a bunch of old gossiping ladies!

Btw, where was JM in all this????? THE FUCK?

FEEDING WITH SELENA

I imagine people found this hot? Sure, there was no contact with her. They were both fixed in each other. It was never about her. But... er, it just made me uncomfortable when Qhuinn had an orgasm while still feeding from her wrist. I just don't know why they couldn't wait to start with the sex until she had left. It bothers me because this is an example of their future feedings and just... Nope.

I found the whole thing so gratuitous and cheapening for Qhuay. I felt I was reading an "insert yourself" scene. I can imagine the future "lucky Selena", "wish I was her", etc comments. I feel like JRW used Qhuay to give certain readers what they wanted. I'm sure someone may even suggest they should have a trio at some point. And we'll go back to why not an OT3 HEA? I had enough of that crap for the rest of my life, tbfqh.

PREGNANCY

The baby clusterfuck still makes no sense in all this. Not even once did Qhuinn indicate he wanted kids in the series. When he talked about having a shellan, he was talking in terms of the far future. He's still young in vampire age. No one wants to be a daddy when they are 12, so to speak.

What hurts the most is reading him saying he wanted a family. Blay should have been his family. But Qhuinn picked a female and having a kid before Blay as his family. He didn't fight for Blay, he decided he wanted to pass his genes (one of his biggest issues, but who cares, right? BTASS) to a child because he always had wanted to be a daddy BTASS.

Gay couples are a family, too. Gay couples can have children. And not all couples (gay or straight) need to have children to be a family.

JRW wanted Qhuay to be daddies. And that's the only reason all this happened. Plot wise, it still makes no sense. And when it comes to the pregnancy none of the characters act IC or logically. Everything is a big BTASS.

Am I the only one who noticed how, when Qhuinn explained he wanted a kid, Blay did never question him why. WHY did Qhuinn want a baby? No one questioned this. Because the moment you do, you realize there is no reason. It's all a big JUST BECAUSE.

GAY SEX SCENES

WHY NOT LUBE?!?

I'm still not sure, but I guess they used their own sperm as lubricant? Which is still a big NO, btw. I just - Women have anuses, too. We know it hurts if you don't lubricate the area. And as far as I know, this is not Yaoi-land, where Ukes "get went" and have self-lubricating asses.

This is one of my greatest pet peeve when I read m/m.

In my understanding, JRW didn't want to get into too many details from the waist down. And it's quite hard not to be too explicit when anal prep and lube are involved, I guess. But that's such a letdown. I had to read some very detailed hetero sex in her books before. Sex I didn't care about. Naughty, dirty, detailed sex. And with Qhuay, she was so afraid of going too far, she even messed up the emotional factor.

Also, there are other things in this life besides penetration. That's such a heteronormativity point of view. Penis goes into vagina, yadda yadda yadda. A lot of gay men are not into anal penetration. It's still sex and it's still good sex without penetration. I just- gurl, if you don't want to write in the lube, then google some stuff. What about intercrural sex? Should I send JRW some links? What about the Non-Penetrative Sex page on Wikipedia?

They always had penetrative sex doggy style, too. (At least, I think so?? At some point I wasn't sure of their position, tbh. So much like a newbie fic writer.) This bugged me so much. There are other positions, okay? I missed a face-to-face full of emotions sex scene. Their sex was usually quick, without foreplay, emotions or much detail. Yes, Blay didn't want intimacy because he was scared (plot device BTASS). But after their love confession, I was expecting a highly charted intimate sex scene.

So. Disappointed.

What I found hot was their talk, especially Qhuinn's. Totally my type of dirty talking. But the gay sex was meh. I cried because AFTER SIX YEARS I WAS FINALLY READING A QHUAY SEX SCENE. But if you changed their names, the sex would have been pretty bad. Maybe it works for people who have never read M/M. I imagine some people will be outraged, even. I know that not all her readers are into M/M. But as an usual M/M reader, I have to say: Qhuay sex was so-so.

Especially compared to JRW's het sex scenes. I thought she was going to be so good at writing gay porn. After all, she's better at writing males. But she censored herself too much.

QHUINN BOTTOMED FOR BLAY.

I loved how Qhuinn felt well owned for the first time in his life. I loved that he considered he had lost his virginity. And how happy he was about giving it to Blay. But I was expecting him to tell Blay before, like he said he would. I'd have loved to see a more slow and detailed scene when Qhuinn bottomed. With more emotions involved.

I guess in general my biggest issue was the "surprise butt sex" penetration and the lack of an emotional connection between them while they were having sex.

HETERONORMATIVITY ROLES

Clearly this is a mainstream series aimed at a hetero market. So far, all we had were hetero couples. And it worked for them. But in the case of Blay and Qhuinn... There was no need to follow the same formula. None of them had to be "the girl" for their relationship to work.

In this verse, males do bond and are possessive. Females have control over males and get marked.

Qhuinn was possessive and marked Blay. Blay had control over him. Their roles fit in with male and female vampire roles. And that's just BS. We read Blay's bonding scent at the end. But we don't get an explanation of how it works now with two bonding scents. Or why Blay's bonding scent didn't show up first.

Blay never bit Qhuinn, either. And I really needed him to.

It just irritates me. The book tries to fight for equal rights. There are a lot of scenes where Blay wonders why he can't have what hetero couples take for granted. There is a coming out. There is a lot of talk of equality and love. And meanwhile, the gay couple follows heteronormativity roles.

It just makes me feel like JRW had good intentions but ultimately had no idea what she was doing.

Also, Qhuinn thinking of "turning Blay into a librarian, a hand model, hairdresser..." Are you fucking kidding me? Don't you see the problem in this statement?

THINGS I LIKED

- Blay giving Qhuinn his family ring.
- Qhuinn. On his knees. Begging for it.
- Blay saying he's Qhuinn's family and Qhuinn crying.

- When they slow danced.
- Blay playing with Qhuinn's PA piercing.
- Qhuinn being a cuddler.
- Qhuinn wanting to bottom for Blay.
- “We are going to break the couch.” “What... Couch?”
- Blay and his big boner at the gym.
- Induction Ceremony.
- V catching them and being fucking awesome about it.
- The airplane plot.
- Blay coming out to his parents.
- “Always. Because family is an always kind of thing.”
- Phury and Rehv bonding over the Tom Ford tuxedo.
- “Are you kicking me out of the house?” “No, you idiot.”
- Luchas apologizing to Qhuinn.
- Qhuinn in a tuxedo.
- “At the end of the night, will you come to me again?” “Yes, I will.”
- Qhuinn teaching Havers a lesson.
- Saxton being a classy slut. Wreck it, gurl.
- “I still want to fuck you.”
- Blay taking Qhuinn to visit his parents.

EPILOGUE

So, was that a proposal or a proposal and a mating ritual? And if there was a mating, why didn't we read it? After all, it's a gay mating ritual. We have never read one before. We knew how an induction ceremony worked and yet we read another one. (I'm not complaining, though. I loved the Induction Ceremony). We have read several mating ceremonies. But the first gay one was not included?

If it was a matter of space, Qhuay's mating ceremony should have had priority. It should have mattered more. If you want a book all about equality and such, show me a gay wedding. Stop chickening out midway. Make your gay men use lube and write their goddamn wedding!

FUTURE

I expect more Qhuay in future books without having to get more Layla by default. I refuse to value Qhuay having to include Layla and the baby. I'm not letting her ruin my OTP. I'm going to hold onto the moment Blay gave Qhuinn his family ring. To the moment when they slow danced together. To the moment when Blay said he was Qhuinn's family and Qhuinn cried. Because that's the core of the story, that's what all this was supposed to be about. Because Blay is Qhuinn's family.

Qhuay will always be my OTP. Because even with all the pregnancy crap and the many unresolved issues, when they are together, it's beautiful. It's like witnessing magic. And somehow it makes everything worth it.

Christy says

5 AT LAST stars!!!

It's no secret that I am a little obsessed with the BDB. Ever since I've started reading this series, I've been hooked. Although Vishous is my favorite brother, Qhuinn has always been a close second. There is just something about him I love. That being said, I have been SO EXCITED to read Lover At Last. This is the book that got me to start BDB in the first place. It was blowing up my newsfeed and I thought- PNR- m/m? YES! I have to read this series. I really feel its only fare to warn readers that it is almost impossible to write a review for this crazy long book without some spoilers, so readers beware.

"The difference between someone "loving" someone versus being "in love" was a curb to the Grand Canyon. The head of a pin to the entire Midwest. An exhale to a hurricane..."

Qhuinn and Blay's journey has not been an easy one. For the longest time, Qhuinn has been fighting his feelings for Blaylock. Blay has always been Qhuinn's best friend. The one person who was always there for him, no matter what. The one person he could count on. Who saved him from himself. Qhuinn's life was not easy. Growing up, he was treated as the 'family curse' due to his deformity. Some would say it's beautiful to have two different colored eyes, but to a family of aristocrats, it means you can't properly mate, etc. If Qhuinn didn't have Blay back then, he's not sure what he would have done.

"I lived for the night, because I could go over to your house. It was the only thing that kept me going. You were the only thing, actually. It was...you."

What happened to them? How did they get so distant from one another? Love. That's what happened. Blay has always loved Qhuinn, but Blay has also been in love with Qhuinn for the longest. Blay tries to be upfront and honest about his feelings in the past, but Qhuinn is just not ready to take that step. Blay tries to move on with Saxton, pushes Qhuinn out of his life. Qhuinn has spent the last year a changed man. He has been essentially celibate, he trains, he fights, he hangs with John occasionally. It's not the same. He misses his best friend. He's finally able to admit it. He doesn't just love Blay, he is in love with him as well.

Saxton has always known about Blay's feelings for Qhuinn. It's never been anything Blay has hidden. Eventually they break it off. Saxton is developing real feelings for Blay and he can't do it. So what happens when Qhuinn and Blay finally come together? It's beautiful, emotional and straight up hot!

"The truth was not something he wanted to share: Wild horses, loaded guns, crowbars, fire hoses, trampling elephants...even an order from the king himself could not have pulled him away."

"I'll beg for it." More with the caress of those devastating lips. "If that's what it takes. I don't give a fuck, I'll beg..."

?I wish I could say it was an easy journey for these two, but it wasn't. It was very difficult. A lot of old wounds, miscommunication etc. Our boys have changed so much from the beginning. Blay is a whole different man. He doesn't bend to Qhuinn's every whim, he is much more tough. And I just have to throw a shout out to Blay's parents. OMG I just love those two!!!! Qhuinn just broke me in this book. I thought I couldn't love him anymore than I already did, I was wrong. The 'sorry' scene, yeah- that got to me. He is such a special character. I just adore him. After all Qhuinn has been through in his life, I couldn't have been

happier when (view spoiler), but without Blay, it didn't seem like much to him. The moment of their confessions destroyed me. I was an emotional wreck. Cue the waterworks:

"I have loved you for years. I have been in love with you for years and years and years...throughout school and training...before transitions and afterward...when you approached me and yes, even now that you're with Saxton and you hate me. And that...shit...in my fucking head locked me down, locked everything down...and it cost me you."

"What." Oh, for God's sake. "Fine. Why wouldn't it ever work out?"

"Because I was, and I remain, utterly and completely and totally... in love with you."

My favorite Qhuinn/Blay quotes:

The end of Qhuinn and Blay's story left me with the biggest smile on my face :D I feel like they FINALLY got the ending they both deserved.

Although Qhuinn and Blay's story was the biggest part of the book, it wouldn't be a BDB book without other multiple story lines going on. Layla has a fairly large role in this book. She was ??very likable in this story. I haven't always been the biggest Xcor fan, but I am really hoping he can come to the good side. I would like a hea between those two. The Assail storyline- I really dug Assail. He seems like a pretty cool character. I would like to see more of him in the future. My favorite side stories was the shadows. I'm gonna throw in my two cents here- I WANT A TREZ BOOK! His story was so interesting. Then at the end (view spoiler) I really want to see where that goes.

I'm sure I left so much out of this review, I find these books so difficult to review, but I think I hit the important parts. The only tiny complaint I have, is that I wish there would have been just a little less outside stories, and more Qhuinn and Blay. Also, I would have liked for those two to get it together a little earlier in the book. I understand that their journey was difficult, maybe all their miscommunications, time apart etc made their ending that much sweeter though.

I feel like there are a lot of series out there that lose their steam after so many books, but thank god that's not the case here. Although books 2,3, and 5 have been my favorite, I can now throw book 11 in that mix as well. Had it's fare share of action, angst, romance, sex, and it was so emotional for me. I don't know if it was because I am so attached to the characters, but I felt like I couldn't reel it in while reading... I found my self tearing up multiple times, and straight up crying at others. Such a beautiful story. I cannot tell you how thrilled I am that this isn't the last book in the series. Although I am happy that Ward is focusing on some of the brothers and going back to their stories (The King, book 12- Wrath), I see so much potential with some of these other characters. I would be stoked to have a Trez book or Assail book. I can't tell you how exstatic I was that this book exceeded my expectations. A must read for all BDB lovers, and for those of you who haven't read this series, I can't recommend it enough!!!

Thanks to my girls- Anna, Lisa Jayne, Jennifer, Jen- for the fabulous buddy read xoxo

Sammy Loves Books says

I waited over four years and was tortured through four books of angst, just to get a Novella disguised as a Novel. That's right!! And I'm Pissed about it! I am gonna be in the minority with this review. Everyone is swooning over Qhuinn and Blay getting their HEA, but I feel that the Warden robbed, swindled, hoodwinked, and cheated us and Quay out of that HEA. There were so many unrelated stories going on, that I found myself hoping for quality time with "Quay". But what I got was a whole lotta time spent building up love stories for Xcor & Layla, Assail & Sola, and Trez & Selena.

Yes those stories were interesting, but they were not what I paid \$16 for. Quay may have gotten 25% of this book. J.R. Ward tries to force her fans to buy future books, by starting love stories of other couples in advance. But did I really need to muddle through three budding romances, when I've waited four fucking years for Quay? It cheapens her work! Let Quay share the spotlight with one other couple, just to entice me, but to butcher their book to the point that I have to "book mark" the Trez, Assail, Lessor, Sola, Layla, Xcor parts just so I can come back to them later, is UNFAIR to the FANS!! And I have been a fan from the beginning. I have all of the original hardbacks!!

The sex between Blay and Qhuinn was emotional, but I cringed when Qhuinn lost his backdoor virginity without any lube or even a finger to loosen things up a bit. I read enough m/m sex to know that what took place between these two didn't make sense. Vampires are not self lubricating and Qhuinn and Blay never used lube! And after enduring over 570 pages of Angst intermingled with stupid "high school" type misunderstandings, and lack of communication, we get a rushed confession of love in the final 5 pages of the book. The Epilogue picks up *two weeks later* and skips the honeymoon period that I had longed for. That I waited four years for. I would have been happier if this had been a novella, because that's what I got!

Now that I've gotten that off my chest, I'll write about a few of the things I loved.

Qhuinn

I loved the insight into Qhuinn's childhood and how he hid so much from Blay. Blay NEVER knew the extent of the torture Qhuinn had experienced growing up. I love how these two were always best friends and that they loved each other so much, that they allowed jealousy and insecurities to get in between them. I don't mind angst, but really wanted more for these two.

Blaylock

I loved the tender moments with Blay and his parents. I did however want to hit him over the head for not being honest with Qhuinn about his break up with Saxton! The book would have been so much better!!

Saxton

Saxton was written out of Blay's love life in a manner that was honest and respectable. I appreciated his honesty with Blay and truly felt sorry for him. I hope that he get's his HEA soon, because he is deserving. He likes warriors...maybe he and iAm will make a perfect fit.

Layla & Xcor

How tender and heart wrenching those two have become. They have that instant animal attraction that can't be explained or denied. That thing that made Rhage crazy for Mary, that made Vishous kidnap Jane! Yet they know that they are on opposite sides of this war. I loved the scene with these two and look forward to their HEA.

Assail & Sola

This love story is the sort that I LOVE! Instant attraction, respect, and jealousy. I thoroughly enjoyed their stalking of each other and hate that all of this wasn't placed in their own book. It would have made a great opening to their love story because these two Sizzle!!

Trez and Selena

Again, I am in the minority, because I didn't care about them together. Trez is a walking sex addict that has done everything with a va'jay jay. I'm just not impressed with him at all!

I know that one day I will re-read this book and I will skip every part that isn't Team Quay. I may rate this book higher at that point, but for now I am too pissed to go any higher than a 3 stars!

Rebekah Weatherspoon says

i've never rubbed my face this many times while reading a book. ever. like ever. and ive read some stuff that's made me want to end it all lately. also this was one of the first reviews where i actually considered using gifs, but i'll spare you.

short: this should have been called "There's very little meat in these gym mats." or "There's very little Blay in this paranormal romance which by all rights should be 50% Blay."

long: okay here goes. i did not like this book, at all. i'll tell you the bits i did like, or at least what didn't make me want to throw my iPad out the window, and then i will go on at length about what i didn't like.

EVERYTHING BELOW WILL CONTAIN SPOILERS! EVERYTHING! ALL OF IT! SPOILERS!

really this is partially a review i should have written after Lover Unleashed, but i was so pissed i just left a short review and went about my business. i need to get this stuff off my chest now. the rating on this stands though.

what i liked:

Xcor and Layla: their angst was perfect. their longing was perfect. the set up for their conflict in future books was perfect. i might actually read the next book just to skim to their parts.

the Brothers: they all popped up. it was nice to have all the boys back together in one way or another.

the little bit of sex that Blay and Qhuinn actually had: the lead up to the sex was horrible. the aftermath? horrible. the actual sex? totally fine. it didn't blow my hair back, but i was afraid it was going to be really really really bad and it wasn't really bad. just lubeless.

the reappearance of Qhuinn's brother: that actually added some plot to a book that was mostly set-ups for future books.

Qhuinn's initiation: HE'S A BROTHER NOW! YAY!

Blay coming out to his parents: it was sweet.

the lovey dovey bit at the end: I actually wont spoil this. the very very very end is super cute and only slightly ruined by a horrible reference to Don't Stop Believing.

what i didn't like:

the plots: this book is not about Qhuinn and Blay. i repeat. this book is not about Qhuinn and Blay. it's about Qhuinn, Qhuinn and Layla, Qhuinn and his brother, Qhuinn and the brotherhood and then Qhuinn and Blay.

if you are expecting anything close to what the couples in books 1-5 and 7 experienced, you'll be disappointed. otherwise you might just be psyched they end up together. i don't know.

after all that, she's setting up a love story between Assail/Rehv part two and this new mercenary human woman named Sol Morte. FUCKING MORTE! this couple is basically Rhv and more feminine Xhex. i didn't like this because ive read it before. Assail is exactly like Rhv. GIMME MURHDER!!! GIVE HIM TO ME NOW! then she's setting up Layla and Xcor and Trez and im guessing, Selena.

then there are the lessers and Xcor and the BoB. their scenes were just there and not really that interesting. people wanting Wrath dead, drug sales, sneaking around, tailing cars. oh and Qhuinn flies a plane, etc.

the actual conflict: so with each book before either the Brother or his Shellan have an actual conflict, the best one being Zsadist as he was severely traumatized and literally needed to learn to love and accept physical contact from someone he was madly in love with. here's what happens in this book: Saxton and Blay break up. Blay doesn't tell Qhuinn until the last 10 pages. that's the problem.

Qhuinn, who we have all known was at least bi, is also fighting the fact that he's not straight up until the very end, and Blay is afraid he'll want to keep their relationship in the closet. i think he would have come to terms with that way early on if Blay had just told him the truth. it was ridiculous. Neither of them really gets hurt, there's no kidnapping, no external threat. nothing. just some shit that could have been solved with one conversation.

the 12 POVs: i counted. there are 12 POVs.

Qhuinn

A black guy who would be a lesser if he didn't die.

Layla

Xcor

Assail

Wrath

Mr.C - forelesser

Trez

Sola

Zypher

iAm

Saxton

for what i think was meant to be a paranormal romance this was too many POVs. TOO DAMN MANY!

the lack of actual romance: the first two times Qhuinn and Blay have sex it's after traumatic events dealing with people in Qhuinn's life. Layla is having a miscarriage for the first half of the book. Qhuinn's sad and MUST FUCK TO LIVE. Blay is pissed about it, but goes along with it anyway. Twice. all the while Qhuinn thinks he's still dating Saxton. the sex scenes are fine, but not romantic.

im all for rough sex, but i expect a little romancing in books like this, but no. no romance. also no lube. they never refer to each other as "my this" or "my that" its "the fighter" and "the guy". Qhuinn is the fighter, Blay is the guy. I wanted them to give each other sweet vampire endearments like lellan or something. they also have undetailed anal sex. Qhuinn's dick is pierced and they don't use condoms or lube. that would kill Blay's ass. and she actually used words like "disengaged" and "retracted" when talking about Qhuinn pulling out of Blay. that is so unsexy

sexuality: the readers know Blay is gay. the readers know that Qhuinn is at least bisexual. this should not be something to be worked out at this point. Qhuinn also seems extra misogynistic in this book. and then they actually make some super stupid heteronormative joke at the end. gay couples are not trying to be straight couples. no one is the woman. when they get together they aren't confused about who is "in control". straight people, stop doing this. now. stop it. stop. just stop it.

there's also all of this weird slut-shaming stuff. the word slut is used alot. some males can have sex with tons of people, and some can't. it makes no sense. if a woman sleeps with anyone she's not mated to? slut.

Qhuinn is also hung up on his virginity that he supposedly gives to Blay when he bottoms for him. this made no sense to me what-so-ever. Qhuinn has fucked tons of people, tons of dudes. at this point he's already fucked Blay. he isn't a virgin just because he hasn't bottomed. nope nopeity nope nope nope.

FURTHERMORE from all the talk of m/m vampire love being looked down upon in vampland, i know lesbian or bisexual female vampires don't even exist. forget other sexuality or genders in-between.

also there's weird shit where the women knock on their doors all whisper soft and them men knock like MEN. ugh.

Ward's obsession with class: i mean do i really need to explain this? it's just annoying.

Women: okay, i get that this is a dude-centric series, but i have always hated how Ward did the women in her books. She totally clipped Payne's wings. she's such a punk compared to V, it's not even funny. every other Shellan mates and then just disappears, unless she's Jane, the most hated woman in the whole series.

here's what really chapped my ass, every woman who is not a Shellan or Blay's mom is some horrible annoying slut, especially in Xcor, Assail and Trez's POVs. i understand that they are hot, but every single woman they interacted with has fake breasts, is drug addict, or a whore who instantly throws themselves at these dude's feet with the worst pick up lines ever. i love big tits. i love cleavage. i love sex workers. love 'em, but they are lower beings in these books. im tired of that. especially the vampire whore that is feeding all of these guys. if she takes money she's a horrible whorey whore, but if she's a Chosen feeding half of the brotherhood, then she's a female of worth. Eff that Ess. also the male vampires can smell pregnancies and the females can't. eff that ess.

Layla's miscarriage/pregnancy: her young was about everything, but Layla and her young. it was about Qhuinn and Havers and then toward the end, Beth. yes, Beth. i was little annoyed with Beth at this point. the women in this house never hang out, but Beth attaches her ass to Layla in the hopes that her pregnancy hormones will jump start Beth's needing, 3 years early. WHAAAAT!

the lack of Bella: there is so much hubb-bubb around Layla's pregnancy and no one, NO ONE goes to Bella

to ask her advice. The only woman (besides Autumn who tried to kill Xhex in the womb) in the house who has carried a baby to term and they don't talk to her, at all. WTF.

race/cultural appropriation/Trez's subplot: i'll be honest, i should have stopped reading this series the moment Ward introduced Trez and iAm. they are Moors aka black guys, Shadows that are a different breed of vampire. they have darker skin and shaved heads? yeah let's go with shaved heads. upon Ward's insistence that the vampires have no race, i have no idea why Rhage is blond with blue eyes and Trez and iAm are described as black vampires of a different breed. it also doesn't help that they "work for" Rehv, they look out for Xhex even though she's mated, and they have special powers that other vampires don't have. Magical negroes much. in this book we find out a few more things about them.

1) they are from a tribe somewhere else. a tribe. i'm not sure if its in the Old Country, but i didn't get that. they are a peace loving, humble people with a matriarchal society, but deadly and cannibalistic. Trez and iAm are flesh eaters. if this isnt some National Geographic BS i don't know what is.
2) Rehv helped them get away from the tribe and that's why they work for him. they are actually in his debt.
3) Trez is mated aka promised to the princess of the tribe, who he has never met and doesn't want to actually marry. here's where i start getting pissed. Wrath was promised to Marissa, sort of. V was supposed to be primale and Rehv was supposed to marry his half sister. V and Rehv at least tried to suck it up and follow through on those promises and Wrath just straight up bonded with someone else.

Rehv gets a pass cause he had to marry his crazy sister, but V and Wrath never talked about these women in negative terms. Trez's perspective wife is a BITCH up and down a blue streak and there is no fucking way he is going back to live under her thumb. he avoids the priest who comes looking to bring him back. he's ready to run. a dead-beat nigga if ive ever read one. he fucks tons of humans(white women only) to make his body seem unworthy and then actually says he wishes he could get a human STD so he didn't have to marry the princess. what!!!! I am not here for that shit.

assuming this woman is also a Moor/Shadow, im not trying to hear about how she's not shit and we haven't even met her yet. he's leaving her for white chosen anyway, so. yeah. i'm hoping that iAm falls in love with princess so the Brotherhood can have an alliance with with the Shadows. at this point i actually don't want to read Trez's book. i'm just not up for how Ward is gonna spin this. i mean she has two black guys running a Goth club and an Italian restaurant. HUUUH!

Sol (Marisol) is Brazilian/Mexicana?, but she really does come off exactly like Xhex. there is one black human in the beginning of the book who is promptly killed. yeah. seriously, New York has never been this white.

finally, i do not like that half of the vampires talk with Blackents. aka speak AAVE or ebonics. if you refuse to put actual black people in your stories, don't borrow our music or dress or slang and in some cases shit you think is our slang, but really isnt. i thought V was black in the first book. i really did. he's almost 400 years old and from Europe. why the fuck does he talk like that? why does everyone but some of the shellans and the chosen talk like that? why? if you want to leave brown and black people out, fine, but leave our components out of it too. honestly Butch is the only person in the Brotherhood who should have any slang in his speech and it would be Boston-southie type slang. ugh x10.

sorry this was so long, but damn. this book was almost 600 pages. 90% of which was not about Qhuinn and Blay as a couple. i think Ward has really shifted their series over to Urban Fantasy. i don't know if i'll read the next book. i might actually go back and read Dark Lover. i miss the original couples.

Morgana says

swoon *panting* *drooling* *faints* My heart is still pounding!

I LOVED IT!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Zsadist is and will always be my #1...Vishous, Rehvenge and now Xcor have a special place in my heart but Qhuinn/Blay are my favorite couple...The wait was soooooooooo worth it...I want more!

LOVE THIS!!!!!!!!!!!!

Not a novella but a full length novel...YESSSSSSSSSSSSS! FINALLY!!!!!!!!!!OMGoddess I CAN'T BLOODY WAIT! Hurry up 2013...the wait is going to be torture!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

TEAM QHUAY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

OMGODDESS THE COVER IS GORGEOUS!!!!!!!!!! VA VA VA VOOM! *drool*

Anna (Bananas!) says

Joy

Happiness

Contentment

Also...

Yep, I liked it. The Qhuinn and Blay moments were touching, emotional, fulfilling, and oh yeah, scorching HOT. The first sex scene was so surreal, I thought I was reading fanfic for a second. I had to pause and collect myself. *It's really happening!!!*

Okay, so it wasn't perfect. There are certainly things wrong with this book (gay men CAN have sex in positions other than doggy style), but the reason I counted down the days to this release - all the things I've pined about and wanted for these two - Ward delivered.

OMG QHUAY HAPPENED. Enjoy it, fangirls. Did your boys get together? Did they have some great sex? Did they confess their hopes and fears, and most importantly, their love for each other? That's a big fat YES.

I mean,(view spoiler)

I'm perfectly satisfied with that.

And the other stuff...

Sola and Assail - I'm shocked to actually be interested in them. I might even buy their book. Perhaps. Mayhap. It could happen.

Trez and iAm - Slightly interested. It's just getting harder to care about the BDB world in general for me.

Layla - Do not care! Still don't care! Do not care at all! HEY! (This is where the skimming came in, hardcore.)

THE BABY - *not* gonna dignify it

Xcor and the BoB - I remember them being more interesting.

Zsadist - Involvement wholly inflated.

Wrath - Haven't cared about him since book two.

Saxton, my love, I have hopes for you: "At least Blay had gotten his true love. Now, if only Saxton could find his."

Lassiter - That's all? Some fucking Honey Boo Boo references? I want MORE. Gimme Lassiterrrrrr

(view spoiler)

The Lessers - Why were they included exactly? No, really. Why?

Okay, that was a lot of MEH. Feel like I'm forgetting someone... Maybe because there was SO much going on in this book besides the Dream Team. These subplots seem orchestrated to make you invested enough that you have to buy subsequent books. Then that book will have new subplots, more loose ends, a never-ending vicious cycle...

Ha. Nice try but no dice, Ward. You gave me my candy. Now I'm full. Forevah!

Oh yeah.

*At last, my love has come along
My lonely days are over
And life is like a song
Oh, yeah, at last
And here we are in heaven
For you are mine
At last*

My original hopes for the book:

I want a LOT from this book!! I want double bonding scents for starters. I want a gay mating ceremony, names carved in two backs, Qhuinn losing his anal virginity, alpha Blay, alpha Qhuinn, some groveling on Qhuinn's part, some romancing, some serious flirting, lots of Qhuinn humor and smart-assery, "I love you's"

that the other person actually hears for fuck's sake.

And sex, sex, sex! Top and bottom reversal galore. Blow jobs, hands jobs, any kind of jobs. All comers welcome! And I want to hear ALL about those piercings down below.

Also, I want Saxton to move on and mend his broken heart with someone new, hopefully in the next book. I adore Saxton.

Edit: Also, KISSING, would like some kissing.

Georgia ♥ Team Dex ♥ says

4+ FINALLY Stars

The story, we have all been waiting for. The book that we were raving about for a whole year and my personal initiation in the M/M genre. (details below)

Ladies and Gentlemen... (or Gentlemale if you part of the *glymera*)

Love. The difference between someone "loving" somebody versus being "in love" was a curb to the Grand Canyon. The head of a pin to the entire Midwest. An exhale to a hurricane.

Quinn is really the son of no one.

Rejected by his own family, without bloodline and relatives he is angry, frustrated and scarred. His only solace: fighting in the Brotherhood, his desire to built a family and have a child and his one and only comfort...

Blaylock son of Rocke.

Blay was always there for Quinn. Because he was in love with him. But when he broke his heart, he saw no other choice but to live his life and try a new relationship with a decent and surprisingly admirable man, Quinn 's cousin Saxton.

Blinded by pride and feelings of inadequacy, they are withering apart.

Will these two ever manage to be together? Will they pull their heads out of their asses and realise what is right in front with them? Or tradition and their own stubbornness will forever be between their happiness?

What the hell did I just read???

As I have mentioned with this book **I AM COMING OUT OF THE CLOSET!**

My first official M/M read, here in Goodreads!
And with Qhuay, it was a ride I'll never forget...

I have never expected so much passion and emotion. I felt invested in this story and I fell in love with these two incredible men...

Now, aside Quay, the rest of the book was a little all over the place... It signifies a time of transition and a fundamental change in the world of the brothers but I was really kinda bored reading all about Xcor and Sola and Elan and a bunch of others.. Now, if we were also getting, an extensive look into the lives of the mated pairs, I wouldn't complain, but alas not much of this happened.

The action aspect of the story was really good and the Brotherhood kicked some ass and closed ranks, so that part rocked!

Reading this book gave me a whole new perspective.

Weird Inner Dialogue/Random Thoughts:

? At the beginning: Breathe in... out... You can do it Georgia, you have survived cliffies and Nicholas Sparks books which then turned into movies, bad reality shows and your brother's teenage years. What is an M/M book???

? First sex scene: WOW! That's seriously HAWT, I was seriously missing out...

But wait a minute... Weren't things supposed to be.... *wetter*? Is this man part different from woman's ? Noooo can't be... Where is the lube????

? Layla=Dignity:

? Qhuinn's virginity: Sweet. Mother. Way to gooooooooooooo! Still no lube?!?!?! What is wrong with these guys? Is male vampires built differently? That can't be comfortable...

? Wrath petting George: Gosh I'm jealous of a freaking dog!!! PET ME WRATH!!

? Layla/Xcor: I survived an M/M book and now I gotta get through a freaking villain book?? OMG! What

else will happen to me???

? Qhuinn's Brother: What kinda name is Luchas??

? The incident with the hoods (not the first one, the OTHER...)

? The ending

Hey don't blame me... It was my first time!! :P

Game-changing and provoking, this the one book in the Black Dagger Brotherhood Series, you don't wanna miss.

Lora says

I ♥ Qhuay. Review to come.

Annie (Under the Covers Book Blog) says

4.5 stars

Picking up a new BDB book is like coming back home to old friends. You can't help but smile at the familiar faces. Like everyone else, I've been dying for this book and knew that Ward would be facing her biggest challenge yet. Blay and Qhuinn are the Brotherhood's most beloved members so she needed to give fans a book that would satisfy the crazy fantasies that readers have been conjuring up in their minds since LOVER ENSHRINED. I thought Ward reached a good balance and excelled with LOVER AT LAST.

For many, this would mark their first venture into M/M so Ward has the tough challenge of making Qhuinn and Blay's romance one that wouldn't shock people too much and also give enough so that avid M/M readers didn't feel cheated. Ward's talent as a writer is fully displayed with this book. Not only does she gift readers with scorching hot sex scenes that rock the chandeliers but provides enough heat and heart into the scenes so that it's just as emotional as it is physical.

Angst is one thing that has followed Qhuinn and Blay for most of their journey so it's not a surprise that

Ward would threaten to shatter readers' hearts once again in LOVER AT LAST. I could understand the personal barriers that Qhuinn and Blay would have to overcome on their own before they could accept their feelings for one another. It was just nice knowing that all their pain would lead to a lifetime of bliss. The epilogue is more than enough to make the romantic in me sigh with satisfaction. I was smiling from ear to ear through the entire last chapter, knowing that although this is the final chapter of their book, it is only the beginning of their time together for eternity. What a perfect ending!

That's not all that happens in this book! At almost 600 pages, Ward covers her bases. She takes a lot of time setting up future books in the series. Readers get additional POVs from Trez, Assail, Xcor and a new character named Sola. What surprised me the most though is Layla whom I didn't like before. Ward accomplished the impossible by making me love her. What Layla goes through in this book is crushing and in some ways, inspiring. Her strength shows and I think all women can sympathize with her. Suddenly, I find myself wanting a happily ever after for her too.

Ward exercises her writing skill by penning different POVs of the same scene, creating intricacy and depth in an already well-written series. Not many are able to weave such intricate storylines and have such memorable characters simultaneously. Only Ward can strike a balance and keep it entertaining.

LOVER AT LAST is everything that rabid BDB fans could want and more! At times, I felt like I had to take a break. LOVER AT LAST is so wholly engrossing and so brilliant that my little heart couldn't handle it all. Ward delivers heart stopping action and a fiery romance for two fighters who are most deserving while shattering reader's expectations and coming out on top!

Read this review at Fresh Fiction

SPOILERS BEYOND THIS POINT!! YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

As a M/M reader, I did feel like the sex scenes were glossed over a bit. Don't get me wrong, there's plenty of passion and heart, but it's definitely not as explicit as some of Ward's other sex scenes (*ahem* bathroom scene). Also....apparently there is no lube in the Brotherhood mansion. One word: Ouch. But all in all, I did enjoy reading it. Naturally, the dirty side of me rises and I wanted MORE! More kink! More sex! Bring it all!

Layla

Well shit. Here's a revelation: I like Layla. Yup, never thought I would say those words but here they are and by the end of this book, I had a complete 360 change of opinion on her. What Layla goes through in this book is crushing and in some ways, inspiring. Her strength shows and I think all women can sympathize with her. I know a lot of readers didn't like Layla because of her involvement with Qhuinn and I wondered how Ward would change that if she planned on writing a book about her but hell, she completely changed my mind about her. I'm eager for her book now. She needs to find happiness too.

Xcor

His last scene also changed how I saw this roughened warrior. For his whole life, he has been a lonely soul. Seeing this possessive side of him brings him to life and I cannot wait to see how Ward will give him a HEA. I want to know more about him.

Also, all the politics with the king and Rehv and Assail and all that? Loved. I was really impressed by the way Ward was able to weave the individual storylines into one another. And the different POVs of the same scene just proves her genius mad skillz.

Assail

I AM CLAIMING HIM FOR MY HAREM! He's hot. As simple as that.

Sola

Where did this chick come from? I love her attitude and love the way she handles herself with Assail. She's gonna be another kickass chick for sure. I love the set up Ward did for their book! Definitely makes me want it BAD. I'm assuming it's next?

Trez

It was nice dropping into Trez head once in awhile. But I had no idea that his problem was so extreme. It's going to be interesting to see how that spans out over the course of the next books and the fact that the Shadows have moved into the Brotherhood mansion just guarantees more fun times are bound to happen. His stuttering moment over Selena is the cutest thing ever. I'm liking this pair.

P.S. Butch and Lassiter fighting over the Red Sox? Fucking priceless.

Check out my team review with the rest of UTC here

The Qhuinn in my head - sometimes it changes

The Blay in my head - again, it changes

Lenore says

** This review contains some spoilers **

Halle-fuckin'-lujah!!! I've died and gone to heaven!

20 March 2013

I waited four years for this book. I discovered the series a little after *Lover Avenged* (book 7) came out. The Vutch ship had sailed and gloriously sunk, with the BDB world principles and rules uncompromised, with hearts returning to their place in many fans' chests ("*What do you mean they're gay for each other! Ew!*"), and Vutch shippers left to stew in their own juices.

But that heartbreaking confession of love, that unexpected, but oh-so-sweet, kiss in the Brotherhood's PT Suite, that pledge of protection had already happened between Blay and Qhuinn in *Lover Enshrined* (book 6) and it had already made my heart beat faster in my chest. It was anyone's guess what direction J.R. Ward intended to take that particular storyline (at first glance, she didn't seem very eager to take it anywhere,) but I started hoping. And shipping Qhuay. Hard.

The part at the top of this review about me dying and going to heaven was posted after I learnt Blay and Qhuinn were getting their own book in the series. Their story wasn't going to end up all hush-hush like V and Butch's (the author has alluded to Butch and V getting it on off-page,) and their significance in the overall story arc wasn't going to be played down by telling their story in a separate novella, as if they had to be segregated from the other males of the series because they were gay. They were going to be treated by the same standards as any other couple and I was over the moon about it.

In the past year, i.e., the period that intervened between the aforementioned announcement and the release of the book, discussions soared and expectations climbed to heights unprecedented in the series, with fans demanding, among other things and in no particular order: a full HEA for their favourite couple, full on m/m sex, lots of romance, bonding scents, a confession of undying love from Qhuinn, Qhuinn on his knees in front of Blay, Qhuinn bottoming, Qhuinn crying, Qhuinn suffering, Blay developing some backbone (what many fans call 'alpha Blay'), Blay coming out to his parents, and many more, ranging from the relatively typical and valid to the totally unrealistic.

Fast forward to last week, when I finally got to read *Lover At Last*. I tried to contain my excitement because I knew I wasn't going to be happy about everything in the book (not after a year of overenthusiasm and over-inflated expectations,) and I knew J.R. Ward has a habit of shooting herself in the foot when it comes to her plots and keeping her facts straight (*Lover Unleashed*, anyone?). And, like I expected, I didn't love everything about it. I won't get into many details, because this review is getting long already, but, to put it in a nutshell:

(view spoiler)

But, the thing is, J.R. Ward does that in all the BDB books, at least in the last two or three. I didn't feel she sold Blay and Qhuinn short and I didn't feel she didn't pay them the same respect. I think she did treat them by the same standards she treated all her previous couples and if she fell short in some respects it's not because it was Qhuay, but because it's J.R. Ward and her shortcomings.

Here, I would like to say a few things about the m/m parts in this book. (view spoiler)

So, in conclusion, for me, the most important things, the things that needed to happen (as mentioned above, in the paragraph about the fans' demands/expectations) **DID** happen and I'm over the moon about it. I could have ripped the book to pieces if I wanted to. I chose to focus on the beautiful parts in it (and there are quite a few of them), instead. And also embrace it and praise it for the ground it's breaking in mainstream fiction. It's a big deal for me.

The book isn't perfect and some hardcore fans and/or avid m/m readers will probably have issues. But it's the Black Dagger Brotherhood world and the way it works; and it's one of the most popular paranormal series out there. Thousands of people will be reading *Lover At Last*. The story of two men who finally pull their heads out of their asses and admit their feelings for each other. Two gay fighters. Out and proud and fully accepted by their peers. And that alone is awesome.

Jessica's Totally Over The Top Book Obsession says

4 Finding Yourself Stars

Spoilers

First 2014

Reread 4/11/2017

"I'm sorry I've wasted so much time - and if you don't want to be with me, I get it. I'll back off - I'll live with the consequences. But for the love of God, if there's a chance - for whatever reason on your side - revenge, curiosity...hell, even if you'll let me fuck you just once and never, ever again, for the sole reason of driving a stake through my heart? I'll take it. I'll take you...any way I can get you."-Quinn

Lover at Last is one of those books I enjoyed but didn't love. As much as I loved Quinn and Blay, I was very frustrated with Quinn pushing Blay away in past books and felt this read was going to be a very dramatic one. I just didn't know most of that drama was going to come from my sweet Blay. I mean wtf? Quinn in past book was acting wild, out of control, and reckless. Being a coward and pushing Blay away, hurting him deeply, while sleeping with everyone that crossed his path. In this book Quinn really manned up and changed his ways. I found myself hurting for Quinn and falling a little in love with him were as before I just liked him. Blay in this book flipped the switch and instead of Quinn he was the drama queen. I mean I love Blay and I understand that after years of Quinn pushing him away he is scared of getting hurt but damn. I thought it was so immature that Blay hid his break up with Sax from Quinn for almost the whole damn book. I mean come on are we high school girls or full grown warrior men?

"Just so we're clear, your cousin is giving me what I need. All day long. Every day. You and me?" He motioned back and forth between them with the cigarette. "We work together. That's it. So I want you to do us both a favor before you think I 'need' to know something. Ask yourself, 'If I were flipping burgers at McDonald's, would I be telling the fucking fry guy this?' If the answer is no, then shut the hell up."-Blay

"You have never been able to accept who you are," Blay bellowed, "because you're afraid of what people think! The great iconoclast, Mr. Pierced, crippled by his fucking family! The truth is, you're a pussy and you always have been!" Quinn's expression was one of absolute fury, to the point that Blay was ready to get hit - and hell, he wanted to have a punch thrown at him just so he could have the pleasure of corking the guy back. "Let's get this straight," Quinn barked. "You keep your shit on your side of the aisle. And that includes my cousin and the fact that you fucked around on him." Blay threw up his hands and had to pace before he jumped out of his own skin. "I just can't stand this anymore. I can't take this with you again. I feel like I've spent a lifetime dealing with your shit - "-Blay and Quinn

On top of that Blay was the one pushing Quinn away. Every time Quinn would try Blay would freak and bolt. I was ready to rip my hair out. Don't get me wrong, when they were together there was some smokin' hot heat, but the catty fighting between them drove me crazy. They would have this rip the clothes, raw, powerful sex then Blay would panic and run. Also I felt really bad for Sax. He was totally in love with Blay and to have to watch him move on with Quinn. Not to mention that Quinn almost killed him thinking he was cheating on Blay because Blay didn't bother to tell anyone that they were broken up. Sax handled everything with grace and dignity. I hope Sax gets his own HEA. I really liked the way Quinn was with Layla. The way he checked on her, supported her, and respected her. The way he roughed Havers up for

disrespecting Layla was awesome. I was really proud of Qhuinn's growth in this book.

"I'm right here," he said. "Dad's right here. I'm going nowhere. Just gonna wait until you're ready to come out into the world, and then your mom and I are going to take care of you. So you hang tight, we clear? Do your thing, and we'll wait for however long it takes." With his free hand, he took Layla's palm, and put it over his own. "Your family is right here. Waiting for you...and we love you."-Qhuinn and Layla

"No, nothing's ruined. Don't say that. You are where you are, and it's okay - " Qhuinn's head cranked around, leaving its cage of the hand that had remained, his blue and green eyes red rimmed and watery. "I have loved you for years. I have been in love with you for years and years and years...throughout school and training...before transitions and afterward...when you approached me and yes, even now that you're with Saxton and you hate me. And that...shit...in my fucking head locked me down, locked everything down...and it cost me you."-Blay and Qhuinn

I loved that Qhuinn was honored by being made a Brother although I wish John Matthew would have been made a Brother first. I'm going to be honest and say I didn't care much of the Trez and iAm story line. I was just kinda bored with Trez's whore ways and the whole forced mated crap. Now with Assail and Sola I'm mildly intrigued. I will just have to see how their story plays out. I smell drama coming for Beth and Wrath as Beth has got the baby fever and Wrath doesn't want to have young. Now Layla and Xcor omg I fucking loved them. There was some serious Romeo and Juliet vibes going on with them. My favorite part in the whole book was Xcor and Layla in the car together. I so melted into sappy goo. I mean I straight swooned. I really wished Xcor was the father of Layla's babies. I can't fucking wait for their book. Bottom line with Qhuinn and Blay's book is I love them as a couple but I didn't like the journey their relationship took to get to their HEA.

Here are a few of my favorite quotes:

"No. No, no - I chose this for myself. For the male." Her hand went to her abdomen. "I wanted a young. My needing came, and all I could think of was how much I wanted to be a mahmen to something that was mine." Those narrowed eyes closed again, and he brought up a callused hand to his face. Hiding his irregular mouth, he said, "I wish that I..." "What?" "...I were worthy to have given you what you desired."-Layla and Xcor

"Do you think of that night?" he said in a soft voice. Layla looked down at her hands. "Yes." "And it pains you, does it not." "Yes." "Myself as well. You are e'er on my mind, but for a different reason, I venture to guess." Layla took a deep breath as her heart pounded anew in her ears. "I'm not certain...it is so different from your own." She heard his head snap around. "What did you say?" he breathed. "I believe...you heard me quite well." Instantly, a vital tension sprang up between them, shrinking the space they inhabited, bringing them closer even though neither of them moved. "Must you be their enemy," she thought aloud. There was a long silence. "It is too late now. Actions have been taken that cannae be undone through words nor vows." "I wish it were not so."-Xcor and Layla

"You are in my dreams," he murmured. "Every day, you haunt me. Your scent, your voice, your eyes...this mouth." He shifted his hand around and brushed her lower lip with his callused thumb.

Closing her lids, Layla leaned into the touch, knowing that this was all she would ever get from him. They were on opposite sides of the war, and though she knew not the particulars, she had heard enough in the household to know that he was right. He could not undo what he had done. And that meant they were going to kill him. "I cannae believe you let me touch you." His voice grew hoarse. "I shall remember this for all my nights." Tears speared into her eyes. Dearest Virgin Scribe, for all her life, she had waited for a moment like this.... "Do not cry." His thumb went to her cheeks. "Beautiful female of worth, do not cry."-Xcor and Layla

Mel says

Kudos for doing an m/m story line in a mainstream series.

A big fucking F for execution.

Short version:

Quinn and Blay got a corny story and played ~~second third~~ fourth fiddle in their own book.

Longer version: (mild spoilers)

Well, where do I begin? This book was a huge disappointment. Granted: I've been invested in Quinn and Blay for such a long time that only something close to perfection would have satisfied me fully. But come on! This? With all the build up, with that premise, with all the possibilities, Ward brings us *this*? Was she even trying?

It seemed like she phoned it home—spelling mistakes and all—and took what could have been a beautifully rich story and delivered it in the most trite and unimaginative way possible. Petty lies, stupid misunderstandings, silly plot devices—I've seen bad fan fiction with more heart and inspiration.

The good:

- the sex scenes: no fading out to gray. We got the full deal. Kudos for that. And I'm willing to forgo the lack of lubing and prepping because, hey: vampires! They can come for twenty minutes straight, they are beyond such trivialness.
- some scenes with Quinn and Blay that were poignant and felt authentic, like the angsty scene in the tow truck, Blay comforting Quinn, the coming full circle in the club, Blay coming out to his parents, the family crest, Quinn's piercings, yay!

The sad:

- JM's POV: I missed it like crazy. Furthermore: seeing things from his side would have actually made a lot of sense. These are his friends. He has seen them struggle for years. He was also important regarding the ahstrux nohtrum part. He could have been the link to Wrath and Trez POVs. But no. For someone who played such a huge part in the lives of our boys, he got an awful little air time.
- the inner voices: I've said it before and I'll say it again: everyone is starting to sound alike. I know Ward has a typical style of writing but until a few books ago there was distinction between different characters' POVs. Now all of them have the same generic Brother-on-crack voice. Even the women. I didn't mind before with Manny or Tohr, or with Trez in this book, because I had never heard their inner voices before. But Quinn and Blay, especially Blay, also seemed to have lost their original voice. Only at a few instances did I feel like we had the real Blay back.
- Xcor: *oh, how the mighty have fallen*, indeed! So much potential; morally ambiguous, daddy issues, a possibly very interesting dynamic with Throe in last book (or was that wishful thinking on my part?)... and

all of it ruined. Pretty much all Xcor's POVs centered about his musings on Layla. Must she taint everything?

The bad:

- Qhuinn and Blay's story line: even without taking into account my hate over the baby plot, or the fact that I think Blay got the shaft, I think we can safely say the Qhuay story line was badly executed.

At the end of *Lover Reborn*, Qhuinn proclaimed "Our time has come". Seeing that life was too short, Qhuinn was set on not wasting any more time. Maybe I'm naive but all of that made me expect for... something to happen. Anything. For Qhuinn and Blay's story to be different from the little bits and pieces we saw of them in the previous books. But no: their story line was in set up mode for pretty much the first 80% in the book. Only the last 20% did their story move forward. And their plot took up not even one third of those almost 600 pages. Like my friend Tara said: "It's like reading the book before theirs."

More importantly: we have waited for Qhuinn and Blay to get together for years. And then still, we didn't see them *be* together. Except for the epilogue. In where important conversations and ground breaking moments are causally alluded to. What? I would have wanted to *see* all that! This way it seemed like critical issues weren't resolved and we missed out on the most important parts.

The unnecessary:

- the side stories: I can't count how many times I screamed "I don't care!" when I opened the next chapter to see the names of Assail, or Trez, or Xcor, or Layla, or Sola. In the old books side stories were relevant. They tied into the main story. Now, the side stories have absolutely no purpose, except for trying to sell us on new couples to ship for further books. And frustrating me to no end. And taking away from the main story!

The mind-numbingly annoying:

- Layla: I tried to like her, I really did. But come on! First of all: this book's title should be changed to '*Layla, all Layla*'. I think she featured in about 70% of the book. She had quite a few own POV sections. Next to that she was the subject of many of Qhuinn's and some of Blay's POVs, and 99% of Xcor's POVs.

Second: I know this book we're supposed to a) feel sorry for her, and b) be amazed at her strength and resilience, and all I can say is: fuck that! First of all: her 'standing up for herself' usually happens with easy targets: Havers (whom everyone hates already), Phury (who was always the underdog, and frankly: did a shitty job as Primale regarding Layla) and Fritz (now, that was just bullying!). I think it's hilarious how she suddenly loses the old world speech when she becomes 'assertive'. It's so contrived!

And in between she can only whine about sacrificing her virginity. Are you kidding me? She was all but begging to get laid by anyone with a dick in previous books!

And by the looks of it, Layla will play a major part for many more books to come. Ugh.

The tragic:

- the editing: granted, the editing has never been great. Ward's writing has become sloppier and sloppier. There is little attention to continuity of time, place, event and character (actions), and world rules are changed when convenient. But this book was the worst of the bunch. There is a typo on the very first page of the book. The first page! Also, for a book that is set a couple of years earlier, there are a lot of 2012 pop culture references. Other than that, Butch suddenly added 'wicked' to his vocabulary, V lost his 'true', Layla lost her Chosen speech completely at times, Assail got more Old Worldly by the chapter, rules around ahstrux nohtrum-ship changed, and Trez met Selena for the first time... while he had already met her back in *Lover Enshrined*.

All in all, *Lover at Last* was a huge disappointment, where Ward took what could have been phenomenal story and presented it in the most unimaginative way possible. It makes me really sad.

At the end, it wasn't a great reading experience, but it's closure nonetheless.

Farewell Qhuinn and Blay.

Adios Ward.

Monique says

Excellent... a game changer in the m-m genre and J.R. Ward delivered.

I love J.R. Ward and this series is mouth wateringly delicious, and like so many others I sit impatiently awaiting each next instalment, running scenarios and pairings through my head, trying to anticipate where she will take us next... and as an m-m reader, I was desperate for her to get this one right...

As usual we not only have the main story, Ms Ward also gives us side-plots, flipping back and forth between them all, leaving threads dangling, some picked up and seamlessly weaved back into the fabric of the story and others still unresolved leaving us to speculate her next move. There is not a moment of complacency, you might think you know where she is taking you and then a spanner is thrown in the works to take us in another direction... I was enthralled and captivated, and yes, at times frustrated and impatient but still turning the pages at an alarming rate, trying to absorb and digest each new piece of information. For me, reading this series is like catching up with family, sitting round the table and soaking up all the gossip... hanging onto every word and just being nosy as to the how, what, when, where, who and the why's of it all... and loving every minute!

The Band of Bastards are still in the periphery, Xcor is rethinking his plans on overthrowing Wrath. The lesser's are back and trying to rebuild their numbers and finances and seemed to have evolved somehow!?! We have a new character Sola, a love interest and someone I think will be further developed in the next book. Assail turns out to be far more interesting than I was lead to believe in the last book... not only that but he is very dark and domineering and was certainly pressing my kink buttons! Haver's is still an obnoxious arse, and another of the side plots involved the two Shadow Brothers Trez and iAm... I really enjoyed getting to know these two who have previously just been background decoration. Trez is quite a character, a bit of a man whore, petulant at times but he brought some humour into the book and made me smile. An old character reappears and I can't wait to see how that one is handled, the Brothers and their mates as usual dip in and out, with the usual undercurrent of snarky humour with Fritz the silent constant always in the background.

This book however is about the two boys we grew to love way back, when they were just themselves peripheral characters, pre trans vampires and John Matthews best friends. As readers we have always been able to see what they themselves were unable to fathom, that they did truly love one another, which is why it has been so agonisingly frustrating for us.

What is so beautiful about this story is that we really get to see the vulnerability behind the persona of the tough warrior unaffected by what life throws at him, a bitter and angry man whore, but ultimately he was just a lost soul, the child who had so longed for the love and affection he had always been denied, who felt alone in the world despite being surrounded by friends. Quinn doesn't see himself as important, his parents had done a great job of destroying his confidence, and he saw himself as flawed and nothing more than a reject, ostracised by his family and the glymera. Initially he dismissed his feelings for Blay, so being gay could not be added to the long list of fuck ups... but now it was because he felt himself not deserving of Blay's love. Blay is totally unselfish, caring and compassionate, a man of worth, with strong principles, a gentlemale, with all the finesse and finery that goes with it, yes, he is still a warrior of strength and honour and a fighter

like the others but his private life is more suited to a man of Saxtons aristocratic bearing.

Where we had always seen Blay as the character that wore his heart on his sleeve the roles were now reversed, Blay over the years of pain, hurt and rejection from the man he loves is now resigned to the fact that Qhuinn will never admit to his feelings so he had taken control of his life and emotions and had grown up in the last year he had spent with Saxton, convincing himself that Qhuinn was with Layla and he had finally found a female with whom he wanted to have young and mate with.

This would not be a J.R. Ward book if she didn't lead us down the tortuous path of the usual lack of communication and misunderstandings causing us undue stress. But we moved along to see that soul shattering hurt dispelled by bonds between them that were deeper than just sex, their relationship had been founded on friendship and a life shared with moments that they both treasured, and yes, they had lost their way... but together, they were all I was hoping for, their passion was intense, erotic and sensual with heart melting moments that just had me in tears.

If I wasn't reviewing this book, I could quite happily throw 5 stars at it... a) Because it's J.R. Ward. b) It's Qhuinn and Blay's book. c) I couldn't put the bloody thing down, snarling at anyone that dared interrupt me... But, as an m-m reader somehow I felt slightly cheated... we have 591 pages to finally get these boys some quality time, and yes they do get all hot and heavy with some very cold shower, panty melting moments but the out pouring of emotions was left to the end, which was beautiful and heart felt and just perfect, but we could have had the same ending but more emotional connection earlier on in the book rather than driving the angst card to the limit. There were other issues with the dealing of the relationship but I don't want to put spoilers out there for those still yet to read it.

Overall... I loved it, how could you not with our two boys and we are set up nicely for the next book and yet again trying to anticipate where the lovely Ms Ward will next take us on our journey with the Black Dagger Brotherhood.

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