



Dominus

J.P. Kenwood

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In AD 107, after a grueling campaign against Rome's fierce enemy, the kingdom of Dacia, Gaius Fabius returns home in triumph. With the bloody battles over, the commander of the Lucky Fourth Legion now craves life's simple pleasures: leisurely soaks in fragrant baths, over-flowing cups of wine, and a long holiday at his seaside villa to savor his pleasure slaves. On a whim, he purchases a spirited young Dacian captive and unwittingly sparks a fresh outbreak of the Dacian war; an intimate struggle between two sworn enemies with love and honor at stake.

Allerix survived the wars against Rome, but now he is a slave rather than a victor. Worse, the handsome general who led the destruction of his people now commands his body. When escape appears impossible, Alle struggles to find a way to preserve his dignity and exact vengeance upon the savage Romans. Revenge will be his, that is, if he doesn't lose his heart to his lusty Roman master.

Dominus is a plot-packed erotic fantasy that transports readers back to ancient Rome during the reign of the Emperor Trajan. This is the first book in an alternate history series—a tumultuous journey filled with forbidden love, humor, sex, friendship, political intrigue, deception and murder.

Dominus Details

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From Reader Review Dominus for online ebook

Sherwood Smith says

What it says on the box: m/m erotica set in an alternate imperial Rome. Setup a popular one currently in m/m, one hero being sold as a sex slave to the other. But what caught my attention was some readers's description of the voice, a blend of smart, sarcastic modern idiom blended with a familiar sense of ancient Rome that brings the characters to life.

There is a whole lot of up-front raunch, but with a minimum of victimization/humiliation, the latter being pretty much a turnoff for me. The sex slaves being totally into it, along with that voice of sheer fun, turns it into a kind of comic-book-world romp in the best sense, while still plot things happen that ratchet up the tension nicely.

The second half really begins to accelerate the plot, leaving . . . a cliff hanger!

Now I have to read the second.

Rain Carrington says

Gaius!!! I love him! I love all of the characters, love the book! I knew I was going to but it blew me away! The story is HOT HOT HOT HOT HOT and sexy and funny and sweet but still keeps you on edge. It's everything you want in a book, m/m or otherwise! Thank you for a terrific Read!!!

♣ Irish Smurfétté ♣ says

Full Reviewage on Prism Book Alliance

This story is set in A.D. 107, Rome, with ultra-high society the arena in which all of the characters are doing their best (and worst) to make their way. However, this isn't an historical book in the traditional sense, not when you take into account the language and tone. Favorite examples? "Hissy fit", "twit" and "bloody brilliant", to name a few. Know what this means? When you read this, take the language as seriously as a birthday balloon and just enjoy the ride. :)

There are some POV changes early on and this made it confusing sometimes and difficult to determine who is thinking or saying what. I crinkled my brow here and there, thinking, "now, who was that?" Once I figured out the rhythm of the less obvious changes, I did start to enjoy the various voices of these characters.

Also? There be some funny shit in this here story. Yeah, I could get all fancy schmancy but it would all just lead back to humorous, which this is. True humor isn't easy and it's pretty well done here.

Oh, also? Plenty of swearing going on here to satisfy anyone's love and appreciation of such bawdy talk. That's me. :D

Daft. Bugger. Shagging. Oops! Excuse me, I was having a flashback. ;)

These characters range in age from around 21 up to nearly 40 and everywhere in between. This did help greatly in aiding the “buy-in” for this story, the motivations for characters (some very obvious, some not so much at all) and some of the more serious events throughout. Most of all, the many different relationships were given weight due to some of their ages and how long they’ve known and (loved, hated, cared, tolerated) and dealt with each other.

I think we can add one more thing to the up and down nature of this read: the sex. Some is hot and will cause the heart to race, while some is not really at all. I couldn’t ever decide if that was the sex as described itself or partly due to the circumstances of some of the scenes. I almost have to say it was the former because some of those settings were meant to raise one’s temperature and didn’t quite get there.

Along these same lines, it took me awhile but I finally realized a thread running through much of this that just didn’t quite sit well. It also surprised me because, when it works, it doesn’t bother me at all. I guess it comes down to the fact that you can’t just say someone is “mine”, there needs to be backup, history, something to make that believable and have the intended impact. Everyone seemed to “belong” to someone else, physically and emotionally. I know we’re talking about things like slaves, rules, partially freed staff, Dominus, Domina, etc., but it all felt heavy handed. It sometimes dampened the humor and the heat for me. This also means that the featured pairings, old and new, sometimes suffered from a feeling of being forced, not organically grown.

On the flip side, there is some unexpectedly strong emotion in this story. It comes from two characters that feel like they are the real stars here, despite their smaller font size on the front of the marquee. Really damned good and is a perfect example of the opposite of what I was just describing up there. History and tenderness and loyalty and pain and caring and love. All of these are demonstrated in both small gestures and those of a more grand nature. This was a relationship that deserved more exploration.

There may not be a lot of story here, not a lot of movement in plot, but the characters are front and center and they do highlight well the skill this writer possesses when it comes to people and their secrets, desires, fears and hope. It’s not easy to juggle so many characters and yet make them all feel relevant, complex and worthy of spending some time with and I got a good dose of that here.

I think it’s safe to say this was an uneven read: a gentle roll downward with the modern language, then on the upswing with the funny, then down again with the unclear changes in point of view, only to head back up towards the summit with some of these characters.

Gaby says

“You are an incorrigible rascal, aren’t you? I fear that when it comes to you, c??el, I may have inadvertently opened Pandora’s box.” - Gaius

I really enjoyed this book. I liked the Author's writing style, it's quite different from what I've read before.

Dominus is the first installment of this series. It takes place in Ancient Rome, and it deals with a lot of issues that were part of the era. Slavery, of course, is part of this.

Gaius is a very important man in Rome. He's a gorgeous man, a warrior that has fought for his people for a very long time. Gaius has a weakness: his boys. Gaius' boys love him beyond belief and would do anything

for him and to stay by his side. Gaius, for his part, loves his boys and does anything to keep them happy, and more importantly, safe. While Gaius is a wicked, lusty bastard who's never really been in love before, but that changes he meets Allerix, a beautiful Dacian, who keeps rebelling himself against his Dominus' orders.

Allerix has a secret and tries to keep it safe. If his secret sees the day of light, there's a chance that he won't.

This novel is about a forbidden love between two men that for being who they are will have to struggle a lot to be together.

I'm really looking forward to read the next book! :)

J. Taylor says

2.5 Like I quite liked it even though it's about sex slaves and one of them is forced into it. It's not exactly the master/slave I was looking for as in there's no chemistry/tension between the two and I feel the captured prince was unutilized in the story for what he could have been. I was much more invested in the guy's friend and his slave-now their relationship I would love to see a backstory on.

Also are Gaius and Allerix supposed to be endgame because I don't get it, they barely spent together in this, Allerix only slept with Gaius in the end as a step in the direction to get out of his situation and before that he was being forced into it, that combined with their complete lack of chemistry between them and I just don't really see how that will be turned around.

I won't be continuing. I just didn't care enough to want to even though it did end on a cliff-hanger.

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

Kindle freebie 12/27/17

Nata Felicjan says

Dominus was my first take on M/M historical fiction, and boy, am I hooked. I just loved the style, the characters, the details, the profanity, and by the time I finished (I read it in one sitting), I was searching desperately for the second book (which came out after an agonizing few weeks).

I saw on this page that many people had problems with all the stuff I just loved about Dominus, so I thought I'd write a detailed review, and since I'm a huge fan of list, here are

The 5 Things I Love About Dominus (Which Are Sometimes Very Unjustly Listed As Faults):

1) The Style and the Gargantuan Amounts of Swearing: Seriously, if you've ever visited Pompeii, or read the graffiti, or even if you've read Catullus's later poems, or I could quote some Martial, you'd know that the Romans were really, *really* foul-mouthed. It didn't really matter that they would call someone a shit-face in senate, or a cunt on a wall, they'd done it early and done it often. Also the ironic, light-hearted style was a treat, sometimes it reminded me of Petronius when the author described some ridiculous characters (although

I didn't particularly like how my favorite empire was described as an entitled brat). It was an interesting contrast to the dark side of the story, the war and its horrors overshadowing the whole plot, the nasty system of slavery, the inequalities of the Roman society as a whole.

2) The Characters: Alright, I have to admit, when I read a romance novel (or basically anything that includes people getting involved with each other, which is, when I read literature, period), I just love beauty made into words. I loved the thorough description beautiful hair, eyes, faces, bodies, the detailing, which almost made me feel like I was touching them. Maybe I'm shallow, or maybe, just *maybe* it's an inherent part of human nature to be strongly drawn towards beauty. So I found the characters' radiant beauty (I mean, basically all of them are stunning) and their constant lust really amusing, whether it's "realistic" or not. Also I felt like beauty and sex are the only good things that ever happened to them: they all have very sorrowful, complicated lives (even the billionaire Gaius, I mean he waged wars, for crying out loud, the rest would be spoiler I guess), they're mostly alone with their thoughts and feelings, and the only time they can make a connection is when having sex with each other. It's also kind of a contrast, like the style.

3) The Master-Slave dynamic: I know... I know. But. At first I had a hard time coming round to appreciating how it was described in the book. I mean how can a man overpowering another be *sexy*? Well, apparently it can. It's not the system I praise, gods forbid, it's just that I guess love and lust are rarely politically correct. You can be attracted to all kinds of depraved stuff, things that you wouldn't approve of, like, ever - it just turns you on. And in life, of course, you need two consenting adults, but it's a book, and there are slippery slopes and disturbing bits about it - for me it added to the complexity. I mean the reader is never asked to approve of everything he/she reads - the reader is only asked to consider it. I never told I was comfortable with this stuff - in fact, that was the most *uncomfortable* thing about it -, and I'm on the edge of never even believing a slave could have genuine feelings for his master, apart from Stockholm Syndrome... but still. I have a million thoughts about it, and it's great.

4) Nobody's Fucking Poor: So I have to admit I'm a Historian, and I have studied the Romans quite a lot, and guess what, we mostly know about the rich. It's quite obvious, they could write, moreover, they could hire the best of the best to write about them (seriously, to parallel the case, imagine Donald Trump commissioning Jonathan Franzen to write his praise for 3 zillion dollars - and he does), and actually, they were more sparkly and interesting. I mean, every rich person has their unique way, but every poor person seems very similarly poor - which is untrue, but that's the general idea. For now, we know very little of Rome's poor: they lived in houses built from cheap materials that never remained, they never had works of art in their homes, they buried their dead with little pomp and few grave goods - for Archaeologists and Historians, it's really hard to figure out how exactly they lived their lives (we're trying though).

5) Oh The Details & The Historical Accuracy: (Which is not listed as a fault, but I still love it, so here it goes.) It's one of the perks of having studied Classics, but I really loved the descriptions of certain objects, buildings, artwork. I can imagine the author has researched the era thoroughly. I also appreciated the depiction of Emperor Trajan, whom I always thought of as an enlightened tyrant, like Louis XIV. His history with Gaius adds a really dark touch to the main character's storyline.

Also, the porn. I really like that, too.

Pandora says

I wish I could give this novel a higher mark, but there were too many things I didn't like. The prologue is

useless and with a language that rivals a cowboy novel. And boy, they talk dirty. Also, too much sex and hoping from a bed to another for my taste - I like a bit more story than sex.

Plus, the modern language made me wonder if I was reading a contemporary or a historical novel. So only 2 stars:(Too bad, it had potential.

Marc | Rainbow Gold Reviews says

I received a review copy for this book quite a while ago, but I struggled with it. Historical gay fiction is not my usual reading fare, but ancient Rome has always fascinated me. However, I have a hard time facing some of the realities that were common in that time. The author has a great gift of making history come alive, but that also means the slavery she writes about feels real as well. I had to stop reading a few times, but I was hooked enough by the story that I could not give up and kept trying.

I think for me it is easier to read the story of two Gladiators or Roman slaves who fall in love, because they are the victims of a system that I despise. This story is not quite as black and white. There are several major characters who get their POVs told in different chapters and they are all complex, flawed and very human. While it took me a few tries to get into the story, once I did I was completely hooked and read the remaining 75% of the book in one go.

This is the story of Gaius Fabius, a decorated Roman commander and Allerix, the Dacian prince he buys as new pleasure slave. It took me a while to warm up to Gaius. I didn't like how he treats some of the people he encounters, he owns slaves and is part of the slavery system that was in place in ancient Rome and he just behaved like a total prick in the beginning. Allerix on the other hand really helped me to get into the book. He is introduced later in the story and is someone I could really identify with. He is new to slavery and the Roman ways and feels like a prisoner of war, as Gaius is the man who defeated the Dacian forces in a bloody war. He seems smart and likable and tries to get the monster's trust to get his revenge.

Everything is more complex than it seems, though. Gaius is not the monster he seemed to me and Allerix in the beginning. While he is a man of his time and does not share my modern perspective, he does treat his slaves with respect, despises unnecessary slaughter and just wants to live a peaceful life. He had a horrible childhood and has to play a dangerous political and social game.

The book starts and ends with an archeological dig in modern times and I'm not really sure yet how it all will connect in the end. It was a surprising and refreshing way to start a historical book, but for me the book's greatest assets are the wonderfully complex characters in the past (whether or not one likes them all from the beginning). Their relationships are as complex as their personalities and make the intrigues and mysteries in the book so much more compelling.

Gaius is the central figure and all other character seem to be connected to him in some way. I have already mentioned his connection with his new pleasure slave Allerix, but there is also his relationship with his adoptive father, the relationship with his adoptive father, with his cunning wife, his former slave and the two other male pleasure slaves as well as the sexual relationship with his best friend. I don't want to take away from the book, so I will not go further into why these relationships are intriguing in very different ways. These characters really draw you in and make it impossible not to read on. You need to find out what happens next! That is especially true for the 'cliffhanger' in the end. While it does not leave readers uncertain about a character's fate, it will leave them anticipatory about what will be next for Gaius and all the other characters.

Thankfully, the next book is already out and just as good, if not better (as it does not need to spend time

introducing the major characters).

My Rating: 8.5/10 Pots of Gold (85% Recommended) - Compares to 4.25/5 Stars

Shin Mon Thway says

Storywise, this book is incredible. It was set in the ancient Roman Empire when glorious Romans blatantly indulge themselves with pleasure slaves of both sexes.

The story focuses on the victorious general Gaius and a former Dacian prince called Allerix who's now the pleasure slave of the General. The story is quite complicated with a lot of characters to catch up. There was a lot of usage of Romanian, Italian and some Latin. Though I can always find the translations on google, it would really have been fantastic if they provide the translations of those sentences at the bottom of the page. I also wish there was a glossary since there really are a lot of characters to catch up to. However, I'm a bit disappointed that after around 300 pages of this book and approximately 5 hours of reading, this book was still at the mere beginning of the journey of these star-crossed lovers. I checked the description of the second book in this series and that one is a bloody cliffhanger too. I wonder how many more books there will be in this series before it eventually reaches either to a HEA or a tragic ending. Although story wise, the novel was incredible, sexwise, this book was ok. The smut could be a lot hotter and wilder if the author indulged us with a bit more explicit scenes.

I loved both MCs, Gaius and Allerix, and a lot of other interesting side characters. Gaius is firm but kind and a caring master and Allerix is a battered soul who is now recovering from the love and care of his master. There were a lot of sexual practices and indulges of these notorious Romans in the book which are sexy and attractive. The relationship between these two MCs is not easy and will take much more time to achieve an indestructible one. The plot and the ploy of these glorious Romans where they play games for the power and pleasure is simply enticing and fascinating. I'm really looking forward to reading the next book.

Well deserved 4 stars

???????

Anna says

I am dissatisfied with this book. It contains the tropes that I love, it is well written and I didn't mind the modern language(enjoyed it even)so I should be happy, yes? yeah, but not really...

Almost every character is either a beautiful, daring, super-smart, crazy "bastard" or a sexy/cute lad/scamp-which was just plain ridiculous. They are all lusty and horny every minute of the day, no matter the circumstances. The porn could be best described as nonsensical and sleazy; author tries way too hard for sexiness, while it just had me rolling my eyes or skipping the whole thing.

In my opinion there was too many characters and storylines introduced which left us with not enough time for

a relationship that I actually cared about (or wanted to)-between Allerix and Gaius. This part is not explored enough, there is too many shortcuts and no growth. Basically, Allerix hates Gaius because he killed his family, he hates what Gaius stands for and so on and on, BUT it all loses importance in the face of Gaius' sexiness!!! Gaius will scratch his balls and poor Allerix is lost to the world of passion...

The book wasn't entirely bad there were things that I liked and found refreshing (like the relationship between Gaius and his wife). I believe J.P. Kenwood to be a good writer, talented even and despite all the things that irritated me I found myself caring for two of the characters- Allerix and Nicomedes. I see this book as a lost opportunity, it could be a really epic story and instead we got something passable.

P.S. Book ends with a cliffhanger. I know it is pretty popular to end movies or series this way, but I don't agree with the philosophy that stands behind it. When a story is good people will come back for a next part anyway, and ending with a cliffhanger is making them come back.

Michael Joseph says

My full review of Dominus can be found on my web site.

Lisa The Novel Approach says

It's a pretty rare thing when I can say a book hooked me completely just from the prologue and epilogue but really, everything that happened between those two chapters was the icing on the proverbial cake. JP Kenwood's Dominus is an Alt History erotic novel that begins and ends in the current era but largely takes place in the year 107 AD, in the Roman Empire under the emperor Trajan's rule.

The book opens at an archeological site in modern Rome, where a mystery is uncovered, one involving characters who're soon after introduced and then are left to carry the remainder of the story until the epilogue brings the plot around full circle. Gaius Fabius, the red haired Roman warrior who led the battle to conquer the Dacian nation is the lusty Dominus whose story is told in those central chapters. He is a man whose charm and libido rival each other for dominance throughout the story, as he masters his slaves, both male and female, while also attempting to gain control over his latest, and most costly conquest, a fiery spoil of war, Allerix, a Dacian prince whose heart is in jeopardy of becoming lost to the man who has already robbed him of his freedom.

There are several central characters in this novel, or at least characters who are integral to the storytelling. Maximus, a former pleasure slave now freeman, along with two sex slaves, Simon and Nicomedes, who help to flesh out Gaius as both a man and as a master. Lucius Petronius is Gaius's long-time friend and illicit lover, and it was this friendship of equals that showed a much softer side to the Commander. The relationship Gaius has with the women in his life, from his wife to his slaves, serves to illustrate that sexual labels didn't apply in certain cases, but sex most certainly had social restrictions placed upon it. It was widely accepted that sex between a master and his male slaves was a right. Sex between a man and his male peer was not, an interesting and puzzling distinction that gave an emotional edge to Lucius and Gaius's bond.

The relationship between Gaius and Allerix is only just beginning to be explored in Dominus, and I'm anxious to see where the author is going with their story, especially as it ties in with the beginning and ending of this book. Murder and political intrigue promise to play a pretty significant role in the lives of these two men as the story progresses, and the author has baited the hook to guarantee I'll be back for Book Two to see where these characters will go.

Dominus, as a whole, reads something like a long prologue to the promise of something more; what's inside the covers of this installment is the slow burn, where the introduction of all the players needed to happen now so the real meat of the story arc can be told in the next book. The build up to the storyline between Gaius and Allerix was a little like torture at times, but my need to see what would happen between these two men kept me turning pages, and has left me anxious for more.

If you go into Dominus expecting a detailed historical drama or a simple genre romance, your expectations are off base. Read this novel for the bounteous pleasures of the flesh and the promise of the mystery yet to come that JP Kenwood has delivered so handily.

Reviewed by Lisa at The Novel Approach

Heather C says

Too much head-hopping and it doesn't appear that this will have any romance in it... Stopped at 12%

Chloé says

4.5/5 : the story is great, the plot is very intriguing and this Antique Rome really pulled me in. But I felt we need more between Alle and Gaius. But on the other hand, JP Kenwood do not rush things between those two enemies. I love that realistic streak. But I am dying for more of them ♥? now book two ?
