



Protection

S.A. Reid , T. Baggins

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When Gabriel MacKenna enters Wentworth Prison in 1931, he promises himself two things: never to be bugged and never to turn prison queer. Tough, smart, and ruthless in a fight, he quickly makes a name for himself inside. But Gabriel, saved from the noose by a social crusader, is serving two life sentences. And life is a very long time to endure Wentworth with no comforts but prison food, card games and cigarettes. To survive endless days without the touch of another human being...

Five years after Gabriel's incarceration, Joey Cooper arrives at Wentworth. Every convict claims imprisonment through a miscarriage of justice, but Joey is truly blameless. Trained at Oxford as a physician, the young doctor is innocent of prison culture and too handsome for his own good. Facing eighteen years behind Wentworth's towering gates, Joey cannot hope to survive without protection. And protection is just what Gabriel MacKenna offers. At a price...

Protection Details

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From Reader Review Protection for online ebook

Deeze says

How to review?

Firstly I have to say this is not my normal choice of story. I much prefer my nice safe comfort reads. But saying that, this certainly kept my interest.

In the beginning I was unsure of this story and almost reluctant to read, but without realizing it I was half way through and totally connected to Joey and Gabe.

The beginning was hard to get through for me, and I disliked even hated Gabe at that time. He was a conundrum at times. One moment a champion of the underdog the next a mean bully only interested in himself.

Joey I felt for immediately. Firstly convicted of a crime he didn't do, then attacked almost immediately. His response and thoughts after were totally believable and heart wrenching.

After the start I couldn't see how things could evolve, but when they did it felt right and real.

The story that unfolds is heartbreaking. A telling of human emotions and suffering. A very gritty read, no sappy hearts and flowers love story, although towards the end the love is definitely there.

I have to congratulate her on the dialog too. In a lot of books, especially ones set back in time, I find myself stopping to question things that are said or the way they are said. But in this case I felt very much like I was eaves dropping on a real mans prison in the 1930's.

Miz Reid certainly held my interest through out, and is an author I would look out for.

Recommended but not for the fainthearted. For anyone looking for something outside their comfort zone. Worth the risk.

ETA:

I finally got around to reading the free short epilogue. I was hesitant to read as I thought the ending for Protection was fitting and would be spoiled by something more, I was wrong! The short add on fits perfectly.

Read S A Reids reasoning here <http://mmromance.wordpress.com/2012/0...> or just the add on here <http://mmromance.wordpress.com/coda-b...>

ETA I have been thinking of this book recently and after talking it over (with myself lol), I've decided this really was worth 5 stars so I'm upping my rating.

T.A. Webb says

Gabriel MacKenna is a hard man. Sentenced to life in prison for a double murder, he is determined to be

nobody's boy. He will do whatever is necessary to protect himself; no man will force him into a homosexual act, and he will yield to no one. In 1931 England, prison is a hard reality. And Gabriel will be the hardest man there.

Dr. Joseph Cooper enters Wentworth Prison sentenced for a mistake. A God awful mistake. Killing a woman and her unborn baby. He walks into prison with his head held high, innocent, not knowing the danger all around him. Young, handsome, and very vulnerable.

When Gabriel sees Joey, he decides he needs punishing, and as had man at Wentworth, he is just the man to do it. So when Joey enters the showers, Gabriel follows and takes what he wants, leaving Joey a broken, bloody, raped mess. And then adds insult to injury and becomes his cellmate.

Joey would rather die than face rape again. And tells Gabriel so. And then tells him his story. What got him in prison, what destroyed his life. All men in prison are innocent - it is the oldest story in the book. But something...touches Gabriel and changes his mind. He desires Joey, like he has never desired anything in his life. But he will not take it. He will protect him, but not force. Not again.

As time passes, the two forge a truce of sorts. But will Joey ever forgive Gabriel? hat drove Gabriel to commit the murders that have him in prison? And what kind of future is there for these two men in the life in which they are trapped?

This book, this stunning, harsh, broken heart of a book, took me to places I did not want to go, showed me things I did not want to see, but then Then it taunted me with hope and love and redemption and pain and heartbreak. And damn it, I wanted it. I wanted these two men to have a future, against the odds and the circumstances and the realities. I wanted like they wanted.

"But because in this place where he'd lost so much, when nearly every comfort had been taken away, he alone had the power to forgive Gabriel. And with the realization of his power came the sweet temptation to use it."

Power where least expected. Love and romance where most dangerous. Where can it all lead? Somewhere bittersweet, somewhere fine, somewhere terrible.

Read this with your heart. S.A. Reid has made me open mine, grabbing me and never letting go.

Tom

Susan says

I so, so, so liked this book.

Shock the heck out of me, but I did. I typically can't handle this kind of violence...prison non-con borders right along my hard limit. But, something about the way the author writes Gabriel makes him sympathetic despite his horrendous actions. Conflicted, lonely, uncertain, brutal - but proving that LOVE can bring out the best in anyone.

Reading the relationship between Gabriel and Joey grow from force and hatred to something beautiful was painfully exquisite. And as Gabe's love for Joey grew, he continually demonstrated sacrifice...wanting

someone else's best interest above your own.

Being the sap that I am, I was very thankful for the author's CODA... Helped me digest it all.

I may have to read this one again...

~*~**Princess Nhya**~*~ says

Solid 4.5 Stars

I knew when I bought this book that I was going to wind up bat sh*t bonkers, after reading it. Why? Cos this story has what I call "*The Human Condition*" written all over it.

I mean this whole book had my emotions everywhere.
I was like...

A few other scenes had me like...

And the ending? OMGAWD! The ending had me like...

We've all heard, read, seen movies, even watched the news with the gory tales of what prison life is like for some. Maybe even from loved ones who have experienced it for themselves. Make no mistake, this book is raw, gritty & brutal with some of the details of that life.

We see here choices being made from all kinds of perspectives. Those things that drive us to choose things that under any other circumstance, may not have ever even entered our minds. With **Gabriel & Joey**, through their eyes, you see these harsh truths. The pain, the brutality, fear & uncertainty of it all. Yet still under all the gruesomeness & muck. The pain & beyond, you witness a rare and all consuming love that cannot be defined. That refuses to be put in a perfect, understood box of normalcy. It is what it is. So let's just leave it at that.

Gabriel I HATED this man. And I hate him even more for making me not only feel for him, but understand him. And dare I say it? Forgive him. He is beyond complicated. He is a man who has done many, many bad things. Yet he still has many good layers of his heart that always contradicted his actions. But if you pay attention, you'll see & understand why.

Joseph(Joey) What would I do if I were him and in his situation? Honestly, probably the exact same things that he did. The same choices I would have made. This man broke my heart. The things he had to endure. The fact that everything, and I do mean *everything*, was taken away from him through no fault of his own. But he still somehow in the midst of all of this never lost his power. He still remained who he was to his very core. He is one very beautiful and honorable man.

These 2 men had me balling, screaming, cursing, blushing, & everything in between.

If you're looking to read a standalone m/m romance, with the complicated text of circumstance & a bittersweet ending, then I HIGHLY recommend that you read this book.

The only other advice I have to give, if you decide to read this, is...

Julio Genao says

Compelling, more than a little beautiful, and sad as fuck.

A little clumsy in the beginning; musically measured in the middle; and nearly perfect at the end, which I found almost literally stunning.

I didn't see it coming, and I'm glad, because it felt real—as real as the best of what came before.

I'd have preferred not to have been in Gabriel's head at all; for it to have been purely Joey's perspective all the way through. It would have heightened the violence of the opening scenes, and rendered the whole a kind of elegiac portrait of MacKenna through Joey's imperfect sight.

Still.

Powerfully touching, with some passages ascending to the sublime.

I've read the coda.

I found it moving, and superfluous, and profound, and silly.

But I remain: *destroyed*.

I had to stroke a cat until the blubbing stopped.

Sofia says

[

I've gone with you as far as I can. I'll be waiting for you.

(hide spoiler)]

Baba says

Review completed December 13, 2012

"The price of protection is simple. You have to let me touch you. Kiss you. Not every time the lights go out. Not every night of the week. But -- enough."

It's kinda strange but after finishing this novella that ended at 77 % (!) I was so stunned that I felt nothing at all. I didn't shed a single tear. I guess it happens now and then that you feel the full impact of a story a day or two after you've closed the book. Anyway, I'm sitting in front of my laptop, trying to gather my wits to write a decent review and everything is crashing down on me. *Protection* is difficult to review, so bear with me when I'm not able to knock it out of the park.

"I've gone with you as far as I can. I'll be waiting for you."

1936, Wentworth Men's Prison

What does a man do who has no chance at a life outside of prison? As a matter of fact when there are no women around to satisfy a man's needs he turns to other male inmates. And Joseph (Joey) Cooper comes in pretty handy. He is a doctor convicted of malpractice and gross negligence. The rules are simple: appease one man, remain alive and uninjured.

Cooper was beautiful, yet not feminine. As a free man, Gabriel's appetite for sex had been prodigious. Now that he knew he couldn't last another thirty, forty, or fifty years on the occasional hand job or suck off, perhaps it was time to accept masculine beauty?

There is a (view spoiler) at 11 %. Fortunately it's only a short "interlude". If you think you cannot handle it then I suggest that you skip it because what follows suit is remarkable and really worth reading. Only shortly thereafter these two men become cellmates. They are starting a halting and strenuous "relationship".

"But just now I offered you a cigarette and you took it. Let me light it and you're mine. Meaning you're protected from all the bull-necked, ham-fisted motherf@@@ers who'd kill you trying to love you. No man in Wentworth will touch what's mine."
"I don't want you to touch me." (view spoiler)

Despite his wrongdoing I really liked Gabriel. His background is intense and painful. With that said, I believe he deserved some compassion. Even though Gabriel thinks that some wrongs can't be undone he'll (view spoiler)

(view spoiler)

Protection is an engrossing and heart-breaking little read and it goes without saying that you shouldn't read it if you are looking for a comfort read. The characters are complex, intelligent, likable and believable. I

enjoyed the (smart) interaction between Gabe and Joey, and fortunately there is no turn into Sapsville to be found here. Some parts are painful and gritty, others are beautiful. In conclusion, the author delivered a well-written story that ends without a HEA, and yet there's a grain of salt that I'd call hope.

(view spoiler)

Putting two fingers to his lips, (view spoiler)

"My own love." Gabriel traced a finger along Joey's hairline, pushing an errant strand back in place. "My only love."

One can find love even under severely adverse conditions.

Adam says

Well, this was sad. But also engrossing.

I was hesitant going in to this, because prison romance doesn't sound like fun. The violence, the rape, and the inevitable angst are just a bit much for me. But I decided to give 'Protection' a shot, and it was pretty good.

The thing that makes this book stand out is that the progression from hate to love went a direction that I haven't read before. In most of the MM non-con books I've read in which the victim falls for the aggressor, the relationship is always questionable, with it being more akin to conditioning. In 'Protection', there's anger and fear on the part of Joey, and actual remorse from Gabriel. Did it make what Gabriel did any less heinous? Absolutely not. But did it make Joey and Gabriel's gradual relationship and reconciliation more believable? Definitely.

That's not to say that the violence is only momentary in 'Protection'. It's constant, and Joey and Gabriel are at the centre of it. Even when they grow to care for each other, there's still a shadow of what happened between them lurking over their shoulders. Add in other violent inmates, and the setting was pretty tense. It was a 1930s British prison, after all.

The ending caught me completely off-guard. It was way out of left field, which took me out of the story for a bit. But the end result was still the same. I wasn't expecting a happy ending, and I didn't get one. Though there was some closure, which was good.

Overall, I liked 'Protection'.

Kat says

God, this novella! On my favorites shelf this little gem goes.

I buddy-read Protection and it's actually pretty rare for my partners in crime and I to be unanimously impressed. But the author with the misleading penname pulled it off once again! If it's up to me, I'd say T. Baggins is probably one of the better writers in the M/M genre, and she really deserves to be on your radar. You don't want to know how many times I've heard people mention that they're surprised or blown-away by this author's work, not having expected it because she's so underrated.

And at first glance, this prison story is little more than a humble novella with a cheap-looking cover (no matter what version you pick). But, oh man, appearances – like pennames — can be deceiving! Rather than another horny fantasy about inmates that reads like themed porn, this is a beautifully written and touching story that managed to linger in my mind for days to come. The brilliant thing about Protection is that it packs a punch, but at the same time is neither very grim nor overly sweet. I think it's one of those stories that could click with many readers for various reasons. There's constant breath-holding tension, but no angst overkill. There's heartbreak and sadness that may have turned me into a blubbing mess. But thanks to the undercurrent of sensuality and tenderness I was a blubbing mess with a smile on my face.

This author made me root for her characters, despite them not being perfectly sympathetic lads. No, the men in Wentworth prison are brutally violent (there is a rape scene that can be stomach-churning, so be forewarned), but they are also lonely and longing for affection. More than anything, they feel real. Protection is set in England's 1930's and the author did enough research to get the ambiance right as she tells the bittersweet story of a young doctor, Joey, who falls from grace when he is accused of the gross neglect and following death of a pregnant woman. Within the prison walls, the noble and attractive young man soon finds that he's the weakest among the wolves. When he captures the interest of the leader of the pack, Gabriel, his immediate future looks bleak.

“They won't help you,” Gabriel said softly. “You know I tell you true. I'll help you. I'll protect you. But I'll have payment. Pick up the cigarette. Let me light it. Tell every man in Wentworth you're my girl. I'll go to my grave defending you and expect no more than a kiss before bed at night. Or thereabouts,” he added, grinning.

“I'm no girl,” Cooper said, lips curling back from even white teeth.

“My boy, then. Or just mine. But pick up the goddamn cigarette before the Lovelies decide to give it a go. Eight against one is hard odds, even for me.”

Protection kept me on the edge of my seat the entire time. Or rather, I arrived at the office with blue-purplish bags underneath my eyes because I read on when I should've gone to bed. It was impossible to put down. If I have to mention one thing that I liked less though, it's probably that due to the novella-length, the big leap from trauma to something else entirely between the MCs felt a tad rushed. A somewhat slower progression would've been more plausible. Oh, and although I personally adored the subtle ending (an ending that isn't at odds with the bittersweet story that comes before it for a change, outstanding!), if you'd rather have a dash of sap (or a huge splash of it), you'll be pleased with the included Coda, that offers an alternative ending.

earlier ramblings

I just remembered how much I hate going to the dentist. Hate it.

Moving this one to my probably not shelf. But then again, who knew that prison life could be this fucking awesome?!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKtdTJ...>

Lisa Arbitrary - AttentionIsArbitrary M/M Blog says

~ ~ ~

This book is completely worthy of an exceptional review. It touched me so deeply and poignantly though, that I'm having trouble with getting my feelings on the page. Bear with me. Maybe a reread will help me see more clearly.

EXCEPTIONAL

~ ~ ~

Take a look at my Male/Male Romance Book Blog:

<http://www.attentionisarbitrary.blogspot.com>

Jason Bradley says

oh my god! This is beautiful! A work of art. Why isn't everyone reading this? NOW!!!

Lena♥Ribka says

DNF at 65%

My oh my.

I'm in the minority here. But I was not even able to finish this very popular on GR novel.

In the future I consider to avoid a prison theme in MM books. And if I'll pick something about a prison, then only PWP. In this case I don't need to question a plot.

A melodramatic, full of cliches unrealistic prison overly drama without any historical atmosphere, with stereotypical characters, a very predictable plot, and unappealing sex.

Not for me.

DarienMoya says

May 2018

This still tew much!! ????

Love it till the end of time!!

~~~~~  
^^A MUST FREAKING READ!^^

### 4.5

S.A Reid is definitely a fave author of mine, and this heartbreaking tale makes her an author to watch out for. Something Different was the first book I read by this author and I loved it so much. Protection is another winner, though both books are as different as night and day.

Gabriel Mackenna is serving two life sentences, with no chance of parole. He knows he will live and die in prison. He decides he's going to rule his permanent home, because he refuses to become bitch to any man. He is both respected and liked by guards and inmates, and they know you don't mess with anything that Mackenna owns.

When new inmates arrive, Joseph Cooper is a part of the new arrivals. He is completely unaware of the effect he's having on the men, especially that of Gabe Mackenna. He is completely unaware of the things about to befall him.

When the men meet for the first time, it's no sunshine and rainbows. Gabe is violent and evil and Joseph suffers in a way no man should. He becomes victim to a man, who protects victims. All this happens because of Gabe's anger towards himself for feeling something for Joseph, something he said he would never feel for another man.

The story progresses by showing the relationship between Gabe and Joey. Though not an easy start, it does become a genuine relationship. I am just all sorts of impressed by the realism in this story. Everything is believable, and nothing ever becomes too over the top. Though it depicts the harsh times of prison life, there is an undertone of lightness in the writing, and found myself smiling and wanting the best possible outcome for the lovers.

I loved Gabe, which is unbelievable because he isn't the most likable person in the beginning. I fell in love with him, and I am just so happy he had Joey and they had each other (cries). It was beautiful and let me just throw this out there \*some kind of seriously hot\*.

Overall, I loved this book! The story will not be for everyone because it doesn't have a HEA, but why avoid a great book to avoid disappointment and sadness (it would be your loss). The writing is excellent, and the story beautiful and it's what I think jail life would have been in the 1930s. I wrote this review without giving away spoilers, and now it's up to you to experience Protection, you will cry the saddest/happiest tears (though that just might be all me).

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## Kaje Harper says

This book does not have a happy ending in any sense, but it is an enthralling read. The historical setting of a prison in England on the brink of WWII feels wholly authentic. The two MC's are unusual, complex and captured my interest from the first moment. Gabriel managed to be a sympathetic character even through events that should have made me as a reader turn against him. The ability to engage the reader to this extent with this man is an amazing achievement for author S. A. Reid.

Joey is sympathetic as the young doctor unfairly railroaded to prison by men he trusted, but it is the enigmatic Gabriel, serving life terms for the murders of his parents, who steals the book and the reader's heart. There is violence here, and pain, and the love while it becomes rich and sweet is set in an environment that will not be kind. If those facts don't push beyond your reading comfort limits, then I highly recommend this book.

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### **Breann says**

Wow. This book was kind of amazing. I don't really know what I expected but I certainly didn't expect THAT. I wasn't expecting such a heartfelt romance that brought me to tears.

What a wonderful story these two men had, given their situation and where they started. They had a shaky start, to say the least. But the way their relationship progressed? \*sigh\* Even though Gabriel did unspeakable things to Joey in the beginning he really turned out to be a true partner for him. He was loving and generous. He just *cared* for Joey and was very selfless. Their story was a heartbreaking one since we *knew* there could be no HEA for them. One of them was going to get hurt, that's just the way it is. Even knowing it was coming it didn't make it any less devastating.

Nothing at all what I expected but so much more. I was totally taken by surprise.

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