



Battle of Will

Sasha L. Miller

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At a memorial service meant to honor the dead and mark the beginning of a truce between Skirfall and Morcia, Ackley spies a figure who does not belong—a mage interrogator whose presence will only cause harm should the Morcians realize who he is and all the people he has tortured. But the problem rapidly grows much worse than that when Ackley realizes his true purpose is assassination of the Morcian crown prince—an assassination Ackley prevents, but at great cost.

Banished from his own country, bound magically to the crown prince of his enemies, Ackley is certain of just one thing: whether he can figure out how to break the spell or not, his death is assured.

Note: This story is part of LT3's Serial Fiction line

Battle of Will Details

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From Reader Review Battle of Will for online ebook

Yblees says

An Excellent read. My first from this author, and I was very pleased.

It's M/M fantasy romance, but the focus is on the fantasy, rather than anything else.

Also, one of the few m/m books I can run on tts(text to speech) on my reader without having to plug the headphones in. In other words, family-friendly, apart from a bit at the end! *heh*

One little niggle; alternate chapters used a particular character's first or last name alternately. Well, I missed the bit early on in the book which introduces his full name, so it was a little confusing how the character's name kept changing. Later on, I figured out it was because the POV was switching between the two MC's. While this would not have been a major problem had I been paying attention earlier on, it does seem to indicate that there really wasn't enough difference between the author's writing to really showcase the double POV style of writing, and the whole narrative could have been done just as well written entirely in the third person.

The reason this didn't get the full 5 stars is that the story was a little too predictable - both the sub-plots and in main ending were wholly expected. Still, it was a very good read overall.

Fehu says

This story has a lot of action and not the one in bed. I really enjoyed seeing how two enemies have become friends and slowly progressed to lovers. Battle of Will is a great fantasy story first and it just happens to have two male protagonists. There is a great plot with danger, magic, treason and treachery.

Ackley was a bodyguard to a prince before he was banished and unwillingly has become bound to another. I liked Ackley, how he didn't behave differently just because he was with a prince and talked back. He didn't just roll over or let the prince do as he pleases. Actually the mentioned prince wasn't bad either, he was not a selfish prat and actually did realise his feelings for Ackley before it was too late.

The plots against them, there quite interesting and I really enjoyed the mystery of discovering the traitor. Here also lies my only complaint or a reason for a sequel: A traitor was a big deal and he made a lot of things happen, I find it a bit unbelievable, that it was just this one person and that there were not more people involved. The matter was dropped and not mentioned again and considering how long it took them to find the one who murdered a king, well the matter was solved too easy in the end.

Otherwise I loved this book; it had great characters, an interesting plot and some pretty good writing.

Deeze says

A long interesting story with a compelling plot and the slowest but sweetest romance aspect, this was everything I hope to find in my stories.

Ackley was a snarky moody character that I loved immediately. There was just something under the surface that called to me.

Beorn I took a little longer to warm up too. At first he came across as an ungrateful snob but it didn't take long for him to start seeing sense.

Leavey was an interesting side character but I was left with a few questions about him. I hope one day we will get his full story as I sense a troubled past with him.

Overall this appealed to my medieval/magic fantasy and I was so happy it was long enough to satisfy me as I find most shorts by this author leave me wanting lol.

Nikyta *Miss Forgetful* says

This review can be found at [The Blogger Girls review site](#).

When Ackley saves the crown prince of Morcia from possible death, he inadvertently gets magically bound to the prince. Now tasked with being constantly within Prince Ealdwin's presence, the two must figure out how to counter the spell that brought them together. But what's a Skirfallan mage supposed to do when he's in a country that hates his very race and his every action is only met with suspicion?

In the m/m genre, one of the things that I find lacking is the amount of true high fantasy stories out there. You have what I call 'contemporary fantasy' which is basically fantasy elements in a contemporary setting and 'semi-fantasy' which is a fantasy world but with only the bare bones for descriptions. Battle of Will is, in my opinion, a classic high fantasy tale filled with a ton of descriptions, two prominent warring races, a royal prince, a traitor and a forced bonding between enemies. Basically, everything I could want in a fantasy!

And how I loved every second of it! From the moment that Ackley realizes what is about to happen to Prince Ealdwin to the last word in the story, it satisfied all my cravings for a true high fantasy tale. It has a slow build-up, with descriptions left and right about the war, the layout of the country, and the spells that Ackley is forced to look through. You have the very real animosity between Ackley and Ealdwin, the inability to believe what the other is saying is the truth and the very real possibility that if someone kills one of them then the other will die too. It has some action, some twists and some sweet moments written in a way that had me spellbound throughout the book.

The characters have such depth that I felt like I knew them each personally. Ackley is very surly and stubborn. He's not afraid of saying what he wants especially to a prince and absolutely will not back down even when Ealdwin is at his most scariest and intimidating. Ealdwin isn't used to anyone sticking up to him so Ackley not only confuses him but intrigues him. I loved how Ealdwin was a respected prince who had no issues with fighting the war from the front lines but I also liked that even with their situation, Ackley couldn't put away his bodyguard instincts and not protect Ealdwin, even when he didn't need to... or want to. It was sweet the way they hated each other but slowly created a friendship that had so much trust, there was never any doubt of the other person's actions... until Ealdwin tried to show Ackley his true feelings.

I had a few issues with this story, though. My biggest being that I felt the resolution to who the real traitor was and how to deal with him very anticlimactic. With everyone that was killed and everything that happened to not only Ealdwin and Ackley but to the King of Morcia, I expected more action to be taken to handle the King's killer. I felt there also needed to be more editing considering there was a lot of typos, grammar mistakes, punctuation errors and inconsistencies throughout the novel. Also, while I loved that the fantasy and the desire to end the war was front and center of the story, I wished we could have seen more of the developing romance between Ackley and Ealdwin. I feel like we were missing just a little something

between them.

All in all, even with its flaws, I still really enjoyed the story. It's more fantasy than a romance and focuses more on the journey Ealdwin and Ackley go through from being enemies to allies. It has a lot of world-building and descriptions with an emphasis on the daily work of a prince turned King. I absolutely loved it and recommend it for those who enjoy a good, meaty fantasy that has very little romance. I'm also hoping we'll get more stories in this world because I'd love to see what happens next especially if it involves Leavey getting his own HEA!

Julio Genao says

author: I wrote 500 pages about mutual respect, thinking, and clerical work.

LT3: ok we'll do it, here is your debilitatingly nondescript cover, you're welcome.

me: ...no. not even for Beyoncé tickets.

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

Flory says

To be totally honest this book was very good in my opinion; i read many reviews complaining mostly about it being slow paced and / or too vanilla, but i couldn't agree less because not only the almost non-existent sex scenes added depth to the slow burning romance (to me) but also the story pace never really bored me.

Nonetheless i'm giving it two ***disappointed / okay*** stars (which is even higher than what i'd actually give it were i to follow my stormy feelings right now) and not more because the epilogue kind of ruined my expectations for the romantic relationship's future. (view spoiler)

Uh.

... okay. well, as long as they're happy.

Now, it's alright if other readers enjoyed the finale and found that arrangement convenient for everyone as much as the MCs did; personally i believe the only thing very convenient there was Ackley's too much perfect-to-be-true coolness with all of that. And i'm never too okay with solutions that scream too much "comfy for a hea sake" to me, especially if those choices are life-changing for the MCs. I guess i'm one of those who need more exhaustive tête-à-tête introspective and heartfelt-emotion discussions and moments, in those cases. (hide spoiler)] Which is a pity, because this was at least a **four stars book** up to that point.

AE says

If I was going to describe the book in one word, it'd be: OK.

The fantasy plot is rather slow, which is okay, but it needed some tension or pizaaz somewhere that it wasn't getting. I'm okay with a gradual build of romance. Slow cooking is fun, but literally until the last 100 pages, you would assume these men were asexual beings with zero interest in sex, naked bodies, cocks, orgasms, etc. There is like, no attraction built up even when you get to the building romantic nature of their relationship, unless you count one character thinking about how delicate the others hands are.

Then we get to the end finally putting the leads together, and we get an epilogue that really should not have mentioned the heir problem. Problem that it is, we haven't got a stable foundation to say-- oh that's an okay thing to do to settle the issue. Instead it presents an unpleasant problem with an unpleasant solution and decides to use cheap sex scene to placate us.

Sighhh. I don't have the heart to one star, but I'm not ever reading this again.

Lilia Ford says

2.5

(this review is vaguely spoilerish)

This book is in a favorite genre and boasted an intriguing premise, two solid leads, and an exciting opening scene, but reading the book itself was an experience in frustration. As in most novels, the author plays things close to the vest in order to maintain suspense and develop her dynastic-cum-mystery plot as well as the romance. But at least for me, both key aspects were seriously mishandled: virtually all the significant dynastic events were front-loaded in the first half, culminating in the various crises at the palace--those were not fully resolved but nonetheless disappear from the book.

As far as the romance goes, there was enough action in the first to obscure the fact that the two leads appear to have no sexual feelings for each other (or for anyone else for that matter) only a growing respect in each other's honesty. The first mention of any attraction comes at 70%--of a 500+ page book. That might work if there'd been action instead, but once the heroes leave the capital, we get a series of narrative delays and feints, ones which mostly consist of the characters doing paperwork, drinking coffee (mentioned more than a hundred times), receiving and sending messages, moving to another camp and repeating those activities. In the midst of this, both heroes repeatedly ponder speaking to each other and then decide not to in favor of

more paperwork or coffee. Those few significant events that do happen are buried amidst the tedious ones, and despite hints that some of these mundane activities might be more than padding--a messenger bursts! through the door, there are repeated mentions of a secondary character's magically locked! trunk that seems suspicious--literally none of it leads to anything. There is barely any dialogue between the two heroes, little sense of their formative experiences or previous relationships, sexual or otherwise, or the general society's attitude towards same-sex relationships; they don't even think about anything interesting--neither Ealdwin nor the reader ever does get the details of Ackley's experience with Taceo, though it's hinted he might have some baggage there. Bizarrely, given that the two heroes are forced by magic to stay close together (eventually being handcuffed together), anything sexual is barely acknowledged and then almost instantly repressed--again with the help of paperwork. (view spoiler)

I admit that I put a pretty high value on careful, efficient story-telling: a key criteria of that efficiency is that descriptions of mundane activities such as getting dressed or eating should be carefully chosen and deployed to further world-building, plot or character development--they should never be repetitive. Used as they are here as the primary instrument of narrative delay, I found them infuriating. And it should be said here, that I tend to react most negatively to books where a glaring (to my mind) technical or editing problem unnecessarily ruins what would otherwise be a pleasurable read.

I'll just put in here that one thing I really did like about the book was the way Miller defied the tendency of fantasy novels to feature mostly male characters, especially in positions of power. There appears to be no gender bias in professions in Morcia, with women serving as generals, soldiers, doctors, and royal council members. The effect was refreshing and something I hope more authors imitate.

Tereza says

!!! - Beware: SUPER LONG review with TOO MANY gifs and some spoilers!

Battle of Will is one of those books you can't wait to read.

And for very good reasons.

Before I start, let me say who should NOT read this book.

People who:

- 1) *want insta everything*
- 2) *want sex from page 1*
- 2) *want at least three sex scenes in the book*
- 4) *do not care about the story, just want the fucking. If you know what I mean.*

So, now that we've addressed that... let's continue.

I've read a lot of M/M fantasy books. Many of them were real good.

Battle of Will is without any doubt one of the better written ones.

It is very important however to understand that the book really **DO** lacks insta everything and this **IS** a very refreshing thing to see in an M/M book.

The relationship between the characters was built slowly and had more of an *enemies to allies* and *enemies to friends* feel. In this the book reminded me of *Captive Prince Volume One* by S. C. Pacat.

? **Just a few facts about how Ackley's and Beorn's relationship progressed during the book:**

(view spoiler)

So as can be seen there was no love at first sight and it all took time (a LOT OF time). I did however like the gradual rising of the mutual awareness.

Now:

? **What I loved:**

(view spoiler)

? **What I didn't mind AT ALL:**

(view spoiler)

? **What I disliked:**

(view spoiler)

I loved this book and will re-read it in time.

4.25 very nice stars!

Wyndslash says

A proper fantasy story. I love the deep characterization.

Noafinn says

i like most of it, but the epilogue...ruined my fantasy!!!, especially heir problem by sleeping multiple times with woman, and i don't like the way Ackley react with no jealousy at all or object as if no big deal, that's not what i expected from m/m books...BIG NOOOO....

Alexandria says

The slowest burn I have ever read.
Still enjoyable.

Roxana Rangel says

What can I say. I really loved the story. It does not have any kind of insta love, and there is not almost not sex on it. However, the story is so interesting a keep you wanting to know more on every page, that you don't feel the need for steamy hot scenes. The love between our characters develops slowly what makes the story believable. It very well written. I promise you will love it too.

Nijin says

I was excited when I started the book, anticipating development of characters and their relationship in unusual magical world. Neither happened. MC were at best two-dimensional, flat and boring, their supposed relationship nonexistent. In very uncomfortable conflicting situation they behaved nonchalantly. There was no embarrassing moments created by forced close proximity, like taking a bath or going to the toilet. No sexual desire whatsoever through entire book and in epilogue the big love happens - hmmm, like they both were asexual and then bam! here it is - cock, penetration and all on the last 3 pages. The only thing MC did often and explicitly was drinking coffee, good coffee, bad coffee, with sugar or without it. If you are a coffee addict trying to quit I would not recommend this book to you, as well as to anyone else.

Alaska says

During the first 100 pages of the book I was convinced this would be a 5 star read. But in the end I gave it barely 3 stars because I got so incredibly bored during the remaining 200 pages.

I didn't mind that there was no big love story, in fact, I would have liked it better if the author had built a friendship between the two MCs instead of a squeezed in romance. Seriously, on the last twenty pages she suddenly remembered that there was supposed to be some romance in this book and it was more like an after-thought. There was no real chemistry between the MCs, not on a romantic level. Yes, they fit together as friends but I didn't believe the romance.

Ackley didn't much develop as a character and I lost interest in him pretty soon.

And the endless scenes of "I work on the spell, sometimes with Leavey although he is incompetent, sometimes alone and so concentrated I don't realize there is a world around me". Yes, I get it. Ackley works on the spell. Everywhere. Constantly. I started flipping pages whenever he did it.

There were good scenes in this book and usually I like Sasha's books but this one was not for me. I know in a few weeks I have to think hard what it was about because nothing really stuck out.
