



The Chosen

J.R. Ward

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Xcor, leader of the Band of Bastards, convicted of treason against the Blind King, is facing a brutal interrogation and torturous death at the hands of the Black Dagger Brotherhood. Yet after a life marked by cruelty and evil deeds, he accepts his soldier's fate, his sole regret the loss of a sacred female who was never his: the Chosen Layla.

Layla alone knows the truth that will save Xcor's life. But revealing his sacrifice and his hidden heritage will expose them both and destroy everything Layla holds dear—even her role of mother to her precious young. Torn between love and loyalty, she must summon the courage to stand up against the only family she has for the only man she will ever love. Yet even if Xcor is somehow granted a reprieve, he and Layla would have to confront a graver challenge: bridging the chasm that divides their worlds without paving the way for a future of even greater war, desolation, and death.

As a dangerous old enemy returns to Caldwell, and the identity of a new deity is revealed, nothing is certain or safe in the world of the Black Dagger Brotherhood, not even true love... or destinies that have long seemed set in stone.

The Chosen Details

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From Reader Review The Chosen for online ebook

Jessica's Totally Over The Top Book Obsession says

4 Love is a matter between souls Stars

*****Warning There will be SPOILERS all over this bitch*******

******And a few long winded Rants!******

“Love is a matter between souls,” she said as she put her hand on the center of his chest. “Our love is between my soul and yours. Nothing is going to change that, not your past, our present ... or whatever futures we may find apart. At least not on my side.”-Layla

OMG I waited so long for Xcor and Layla's love story soooo long. When I seen their book was next I was so excited I was jumping up and down and dancing like a mad woman. True story!

To get ready for The Chosen I did a reread of the whole series to have all the details fresh in my mind. Especially the Xcor and Layla details as their love story's foundation was laid out in past books. So of course I was still in the middle of my reread when The Chosen came out on the 4th. Now I'm a total spoiler whore so the first thing I did was stalk Goodreads and read every detailed review I could find. So I was not going into this read blind. I knew that Qhuinn and Tohr acted like asshats. I just didn't know how much. So it pains me to give this book anything but a 5 star review, but I have to take a star off for the jackass that is Qhuinn. I will touch more on that later. There was so much going on in this book that I'm gonna break this review up into sections and touch a little on each subject.

“I love Layla. And I never once claimed her body—nor shall I. I will never seek her out nor set mine eyes upon her again. You want me to die? Well, I have. For every night she lives with you and your young, I am being murdered for I am not in her presence. So your goal is well-served and accomplished.”-Xcor

****Xcor & Layla****

OMG Xcor and Layla were perfect! Everything I wanted and more. Xcor was sweet, sexy, and brave. His past was so sad. I totally understand why he acted the way he did. I wanted so badly to go through the pages of this book and bitch slap his mom, dad, and nursemaid. The things Xcor would say to Layla would melt my heart. Layla really shined in this book. She kicked major ass. She was standing up for her babies and her man and she wasn't backing down to no one. She was amazing, strong and so fierce. The way Layla loved Xcor was beautiful. She didn't care about his past, or his lip. All she seen was the strong, honorable warrior he was. Xcor and Layla together were amazing. There was so much romance, sweet words of love, a deep connection and tons of passion. I loved every single moment I got with these two and wished I had more.

“With all of my black and withered heart, I love you, my female. I deserve not the earth beneath your feet, nor the scent of you in my nose, and never the gift of your blood, but I ... I am e’er grateful for the change that you wrought upon me. You have saved me, and the only thing greater than my love for you is my gratitude.”-Xcor

“I’m not afraid of you. I’m not afraid of anything.” She lifted her chin. “When it comes to protecting the lives of my young and the male I love, I will lay my life down in the path of their destiny, and if you beat me to death because of it, I will rise from the dead and haunt you to the point of insanity. There is nothing you can do to me that will make me back down. Nothing.”-Layla

Qhuinn & Blay

WTF was going on with Qhuinn. I have always felt Qhuinn was a bit of a drama queen, but damn he's done went and lost his fucking mind in this book. I would have completely understood him being mad or upset about Layla being around Xcor when she was pregnant because he didn't know that Xcor would never hurt her but Qhuinn was out of fucking control. The things he said and did. OMG! I can't even properly convey how badly he lost his shit so I will use some quotes.

(view spoiler)

Qhuinn should be the one to lose his kids and be kicked out. He was unhinged and abusive to Layla and Blay. He pulled a gun on the mother of his children while she was holding said young and he pulled a gun on his beloved mate Blay. Then he shot the gun in the house filled with not only his twins but other children and the King. He also tried to kill Xcor twice behind the king's back. He also ignored his daughter because she looked like her mom. Not wanting to touch her or even look at her. I don't know if I will ever be able to forgive Qhuinn for the way he acted in this book. And his "sorry" at the end pfff he can shove it up his ass for all I care. Blay made him do it. He didn't really mean it. He just wanted Blay back. I wanted to throat punch Qhuinn almost the whole read!

“Not in my fucking house!” He was so loud that the painting next to him vibrated on the plaster wall. “This is not happening in my fucking house! My shellan and my son are here—there are young under this roof. There are young in this fucking room!”-Wrath

“Just so you and I are clear, I will never be able to get what you just said out of my head. And the same goes for the sight of you with that gun in your hand.” -Blay

V & Jane

I am trying to be open minding with V and Jane. I really am, but V is starting to really piss me off. I mean did we not just play this game in Lover Unleashed when V was feeling like he missed his old Dom life and

Jane and Butch thought he might cheat on her. Now here we are again and V is pulling away from Jane and thinking of cheating on his mate. He just seems so unloyal to his shellan at the drop of a hat. Every time things get rough he is ready to cheat. Grow the fuck up V. Marriage is hard especially if you are married to someone who works hard hours like say a Doctor. You feel like you don't spend enough time together then go find Jane and spend some fucking time with her. Not that Jane is off the hook. They both need to make time for their relationship. But I swear if V cheats I don't think I will be able to get over that. Just sayin'!

When you were contemplating cheating on your mate, it was not easy on the conscience. And not something you wanted to do in the home you shared with her.-V

** Tohr**

Tohr is also starting to piss me off. I loved Wellsie and I was brokenhearted when She was killed but he is remated and I feel like he is being really unfair to Autumn. She feels like second place and I don't like it. If he wasn't ready to move on then he shouldn't have. Also the way he talked to Layla was bullshit. WTF is it shit on Layla week. I was glad that he pulled his shit together at the end and I thought it was sweet what went down with Tohr and Xcor!

“You haven’t looked at her all night. You won’t touch her. What the hell is going on?” Shaking his head, Qhuinn said, “I’m sorry, I’m not following—” Blay jabbed his finger at the carriers. “Lyric.” “I don’t know what you’re talking about.” “Bullshit.” As Blay glared at him, Qhuinn felt his exhaustion return tenfold. “Look, I’m not—” “I know I’m not her parent, but—” “Oh, God, not that again.” He let his head fall back on his spine and stared at the paneled ceiling. “Please, not again—” “—I’m not going to stand here and let you ignore her just because she looks like Layla and you can’t stand the Chosen. I’m not going to have it, Qhuinn. It’s not fair to your daughter.”-Blay and Qhuinn

Trez & Therese

It's too damn soon. It's been a few months and Trez already kissed Therese. I don't know how J.R. Ward is going to play this. Either Therese is a Selena look alike or Selena reincarnated. If she is a look alike then it will be like Trez is using her for her looks and I will hate that. If she is Selena, unless Lassiter tells Trez it will still fill like he is using her because she looks like his dead shellan. IDK but I'm going to try to keep an open mind.

Lassiter, Assail, Throe and everything else

Lassiter was awesome in this book, but really when is he not awesome? I love that he is the new Scribe Virgin. I can't wait to see how he runs things lol. Assail was making me sad in this book. He wasn't really in this book just talked about. He went into rehab last book and has lost his mind during detox. Now they don't know if he will pull out. Obviously Sola needs to come save him! What the FUCK is going on with Throe???? Did he just get possessed by a demon or something? All I know was he was freaking me the fuck out. For real he was creepy as hell and very evil. Watch out Brothers evil is coming. I loved Wrath, and all the Shellans in this book. They stood by Layla and supported her when Qhuinn was losing it. I am also looking forward to more about the Band of Bastards. And can I say that little Rhampage was so fucking cute. The way he kept eyeballing everyone like a little badass. Overall I really did love this book. I know with my huge rant about Qhuinn it may seem like I didn't but even though Qhuinn was a dick face Layla and Xcor were so epic they out shined his assholeyness. Lol is that a word?? Great read and I'm looking forward to

the next book. J.R. Ward is amazing more than 15 books into this world(counting BDL series) and it's still exciting and fresh!

“Wherever I go, you shall ne’er be far from me. Wherever I sleep, you shall be beside me. What I eat, I shall share with you, and when I dream, we shall be together once again. My love, you are not gone from me ever, and I shall not take another. Till the very night I die.”-Xcor

Lenore says

What an unmitigated complete and utter FUBAR of a book.

Ana says

[You can't mess with a couple's HEA. That is completely disrespectful. What was even the point? To add more drama into a series long past its prime? Smh. (hide spoiler)]

Stacia (the 2010 club) says

What in the fresh hell is this flaming pile of poo???

(psssst...obligatory *****Spoilers Ahead!!!***** tag. Turn back now if you don't want to be spoiled!)

I am having trouble even trying to process what just happened here. HOW could Ward have screwed up this story so badly? I didn't think it was possible to drop the ball and have it roll so far under the damn couch. By writing this review I'm over here sticking my arm underneath the furniture, cringing at the dust bunnies that I'm touching while retrieving Ward's ball. In case you can't figure out the symbolism, the dust bunnies are the random WTF? moments in this story that I'm going to have to talk about.

I came out of review-writing sabbatical FOR THIS CRAP?

How is it even possible for me to have to 1 star a book in one of my most-beloved series of all time? I mean, sure, the BDB has had cringe-worthy and frustrating moments before, but *not on this scale*.

EVERY SINGLE plot direction went awry in this book. Every. Single. One.

Let's dig in, shall we?

1. Quinn finally done lost it. You know, I never fully jumped on the 'Q's an a-hole' train before now. I kind of felt like people went in too hard on him in the past. He had a whole lot of hell to deal with in his life, and no one to teach him how to get past it. Blay, on the other hand, had the nurturing and loving that was necessary to shape him into a decent ~~human-being~~ vampire. But all of that went out the window when HE PULLED A MOTHEREFFING GUN on the mother of his child and SHOT UP A ROOM that his children were in.

And Layla was the one who needed to exit? If I were Wrath, both of their asses would have been tossed out on the street (and I sympathized with Layla in this situation).

I didn't even care about the Blay drama (which was completely unnecessary when there was Layla drama going on...too many open plots going, imo. Q and B should have worked out their lingering baggage in a previous or future book.). Yeah, so Q went off and said something he didn't mean to Blay. Big deal. Who hasn't done that? Are we just going to ignore that the meathead shot a damn gun in the house??? Layla should have been spitting angry. Yes, like a lizard or a dragon or whatever real or imagined creature spits.

And the fact that NO ONE is trying to put Q in therapy is a head scratcher. He has REAL issues that need to be dealt with.

Edit Also need to add that Qhuinn denying his own daughter affection and care because she looked like her mom is all kinds of wrong and f*cked up.

2. Wrath shuts down Xcor's execution. To be fair, I think that Wrath was the only one who would have been able to shut it down. But how was Wrath able to 'get over it' so quickly? Yes, Wrath can smell the truth, but if I was him, I would have wanted to know more, or I would have at least made Xcor jump through a few more hoops before giving him full access to conjugal visits with Layla in a BDB-owned property. Was this lazy writing on the author's part to move the story along so she had time to fit eleventybillion other plot finishers into one book? Did it occur to her that she could have wrapped up X and L's story while still leaving loose ends with Xcor and the others? More on this later when we get to Tohr's role in this debacle.

3. Layla and Xcor finally get it on in the most boring climax (no pun intended) ever. Layla *finally* quits dancing around her feelings in front of the brothers and you'd think that she'd have to fight hard to get epic alone time (maybe sex in a forbidden place while on the run). But nope. Wrath gives the go-ahead nod, and the injured walk to the bedroom for some loving and underdeveloped sex. Yawn. THIS was what we've been waiting for?

And why did Layla wait so long to spill the beans about Tohr? Why not say something when Xcor was ABOUT TO BE KILLED??? Maybe that would have given V or Tohr at least a moment's pause? WTF woman?

Also, I found it weird that X and L didn't end up discussing the kids until further in the book. Oh, btw, I had the twins honey.

4. Trez and Selena redux. Too Soon. Too Soon. This shouldn't have come up for at least another 5 books down the road. I would've rather had a peek at Marhkus instead. Trez should be living and trying to cope for a while, while we see him spending time drawing close to iAm and his sister in law (I would've liked to have seen a Catra cameo) and working on that family unit.

Edit I realize that Selena is tied to Lassiter stepping into his new role, so I get what happened to a point. I just wish that Lassiter had been able to find something else to dig in to, instead of this *right now*.

...and again with the 'little to no questions' angle. Okay, so he might not be wanting to look a pain-reducing gift-horse in the mouth, but why aren't we seeing at least a slight bit of the brain swirl that must be happening to him? He vaguely understands that Therese is 'different' from Selena (although not so different, when we as the reader know that she is a reincarnation), but 'new girl' really only *looks* like his Chosen. Her personality seems drastically different. And I guess this is good for moving on? *shrug* But he takes to Therese like a

duck to water.

She's familiar. She's different. She's familiar. She's different. My mind would be working overtime. Trez just gets a migraine. Cool, I guess...

5. Tohr Part 1. Tohr also done lost his mind. What was that garbage with Layla? The BDB have never been the most forward-thinking feminists, but they've always at least been *somewhat* respectful to the women. Most of their borderline sexism comes from off-color (generally meant to be lighthearted) comments and 'guy talk'...not from going toe-to-toe with the ladies. This scene had me feeling all kinds of uncomfortable. It didn't ring authentic to Tohr, even if he was due to snap. I would have preferred a long, drag-out, knock-down scene with Wrath (or Xcor) to this mess.

6. Tohr Part 2. AT BEST, Tohr and X could have had a tentative handshake (even that would have been pushing it...a head nod would have worked for me) and an understanding that they would come back to their feelings later. AT BEST. This 'happy little bow' garbage was rushed and wrong for this book.

7. Tohr Part 3. I'm not telling him to get over Wellsie, but...he's being unfair to Autumn. She STILL reads as a begrudging number 2 by an extra-long-overextended mile. In retrospect, his story would have worked better had he returned to the Brotherhood as a single man and gone at least a few more years (Lord knows we'll still be reading this series then...we still haven't seen Phury's predicted baby or Murhder's return) before finding Autumn. Maybe then, he wouldn't have been dealing with such fresh wounds that weren't even close to being ready to heal. FFS, poor Autumn has the patience of a saint. She doesn't deserve being Tohr's sex toy who he happens to also care about, but not deeply love as much as he should.

8. V and Jane - again. Sigh. I don't even know what to say here. This is not the first or even second go-round with these two. We're spoon-fed lies about how this couple functions differently than other couples, but are still (supposedly) very much functioning. But they're not, as witnessed in this book (which contradicts the last awkward no-baby-let's-fistbump conversation). And I don't care. V wants to cheat. I don't care. V feels distant from Jane. I don't care. I really hope that all of this is at least leading up to a scene where we finally see something worthwhile from these two. An epic reunion (and finally putting this mess to bed) is in order.

9. Throe gets creepy and the lore goes wonky. So we have extra magic now? Did I miss Throe's tie to the Omega, or was new world magic just plopped into the story that didn't exist before? I thought Lash was coming back? I'm so confused.

*Edit * I found out after reading a Ward fan gathering Q & A that Throe's book/shadow situation is tied to Davina (from the Fallen Angels series, another Ward offering) trying to break free, and that Lash will be back, and that there will be some changes coming for The Omega, so I guess there is a reason for all of this nonsense, even if it was introduced in a weird way that I don't like.

And I don't understand why Throe had a respectable, almost redeemable moment in the Fallen Angels series if he was just gonna end up this far gone. I wish that dark savior moment of his had never happened because it still messes with my head. I keep thinking that Throe's villain turn might be temporary, but nah...I guess we're going full V. And that's fine. The series needs villains. I just wish that we hadn't seen brief snippets of Throe as a potential ally for good in the past.

10. The ending - a.k.a. The Brady Bunch ain't got nothing on these brothers. There was NO reason the BoB needed to move into the mansion. None. With all of the property that the BDB owns? They couldn't

have been given their own barracks/dorm/apartment complex/office building/old ranch, hospital, amusement park, whatever? Yes, they're all gonna fight together now *wonder ~~twins~~ brother powers activate!* Yippee! (?) But in the same damn house? So we're just trusting them with the kids now after one fight? Again, we as the readers know that the BoB aren't all bad, but the Brothers aren't privy to the info that we get.

Come.

On.

Now.

I thought I recoiled when Rhage called Ruhn son. Boy, was I only getting warmed up for the main event. Ward went full summer camp with this BS. Xcor and Qhuinn bonding? Q letting X hold the babies? We couldn't have had this happen S-L-O-W-L-Y over the course of a few books? In THIS book, we might have seen Q being okay with X and Layla being together, but not ready for the kids to get up close and personal just yet. And that would've been more organic. X could have been patient and been happy just to have his girl for now. He could have bonded with the kids in the future.

As well...

Not everyone has to be related.

Not everyone has to work together.

Not everyone has to live together.

Sometimes people can just be respectful acquaintances, or buddies on the 'let's grab a beer on Friday' level. They don't all have to love and hug and share Christmas together.

What's next? Are the rest of the Shadows and some Sympaths going to join the fray? And by 'join', I mean hang out in the world's largest billiards room? Perhaps the dining hall could be expanded to a cafeteria.

Fritz must have one hell of a staff to clean up after these people who can't seem to do it for themselves...ever.

I feel like I might have more to say after I'm able to process more, but this is what I've got for now.

Melanie says

- 1.) Dark Lover ★★★★★
- 2.) Lover Eternal ★★★★★
- 3.) Lover Awakened ★★★★★
- 4.) Lover Revealed ★★★★★
- 5.) Lover Unbound ★★★★★
- 6.) Lover Enshrined ★★★★★
- 7.) Lover Avenged ★★★★★
- 8.) Lover Mine ★★★★★
- 9.) Lover Unleashed ★★★★★
- 10.) Lover Reborn ★★★★★
- 11.) Lover at Last ★★★★★
- 12.) The King ★★★★★
- 13.) The Shadows ★★★★★
- 14.) The Beast ★★★★★

Dying Buddy-reading with Paloma, because I love her so very much and she writes me name in the old language and warms my heart! ♥:

Again, I'm dumbfounded by how J.R. Ward can keep this series interesting and how she keeps me so heavily invested after fifteen books! I'm honestly at a loss for words, other than she is truly the PNR master and no one else can really compare. And finally, after what feels like one-hundred- years, ~~the Scribe Virgin~~ we are finally blessed with the long awaited story that belongs to Xcor and Layla. Be still, my heart.

This all being said, the truth of the matter is that this is book fifteen in a never ending series, therefore **this review will contain very mild spoilers** ! Please, do not continue on if you have not read this book or, more importantly, the fourteen other books leading up to this one!

“We don’t get to pick who we fall for, and trying to talk yourself out of emotions is a recipe for failure.”

Xcor and Layla's story was so worth the wait, and a complete joy to finally read about. The romance was wonderful, the sex was amazing, and the angst felt so very real. It was believable, and heartfelt, and everything I've been anticipating since their story-arc started!

First and foremost, I hate Qhuinn, I hate Qhuinn, I hate Qhuinn. I hate him with everything I am, and nothing he can ever say in any other BDB book can ever redeem him in my eyes. The things he said to Layla are unforgivable, and I wish for nothing more than for Blay to leave him, but continue to raise the babies with Layla and Xcor while Qhuinn is kicked out of the Brotherhood. When he called Layla an incubator, holy fuck, I legitimately saw red.

Tohr was also disgusting in this book. His vendetta because of an anniversary didn't even make sense to me, and then, like Qhuinn, the way he treated Layla was completely uncalled for. Can you imagine how these men would feel if some dude spoke to their *shellan* that way? Like, come on. At least Tohr did redeem himself in the end for me, but it still felt bad that he needed a reason to not be a dickhead.

Layla got so much emotional abuse in this book; it made me feel sick at times. And that ending, where *she* apologized back, physically hurt my heart. It was nothing short of disgusting and it just made me hate Qhuinn even more.

Xcor's backstory was nothing short of heartbreaking. Like, I cried so very hard. The abuse he had to endure, just because of the way he looked, broke me. Xcor's growth is outstanding, and truly the shining light of maybe this entire series. Seeing him see his worth and see that he is worthy of love is something I can't even put into words.

Also, can we take a minute to say how amazing it is that J.R. Ward has a main character with a birth defect, which is actually a very common birth defect that is never talked about, especially in PNR or just romance in general? I love how she showcases Xcor's birth defect, but never makes him his birth defect. J.R. Ward seriously knocks it out of the park when it comes to diversity, and she never stops impressing me. And Xcor is bae.

Wrath was the MVP of this book, besides Xcor and Layla, obviously. Wrath always saw reason, even if Beth was helping to guide him, and always did what was right. He is truly king for a reason, and I loved him so

much in this book! Seriously, he was everything.

And Beth, oh Beth! What a fucking Queen! She is everything and truly the glue that holds the entire mansion together. Her and Fitz, I'm telling you, without one of them the BDB would completely explode.

My other favorite was Lassiter! Oh, that boy is going to have some explaining to do in the next book. His personality is exactly what the Brotherhood needs, and he was seriously amazing in this book, especially that crazy ending.

Like, I know I just didn't read and obsess over The Beast to not hear anything else about Bitty in this book! Where the hell were Mary and Rhage? Seriously, I was so sad that they were pretty much MIA this entire book.

And Assail and Sola! Where is this good, good, good angst at? All we got to see was Assail still healing, but, Lord, I need glimpses of their story-arc to get me by.

John Matthew was only mentioned in this book one time, but since he is by far my least favorite Brother, I was completely okay with it.

Saxton made a couple cameos, and I loved every time he was mentioned, but every time I was pretty much just screaming into my book about how Blay should be with him and not gross fucking Qhuinn. I can't wait to see what J.R. Ward has in store for Saxton's story, though, because I don't feel as confident about the him and Throe OTP as I was in the last book.

“There is nothing wrong in this world or the next in finding out your own power.”

I feel like Vishous and Jane are going to split. Which doesn't really make sense, because they bonded, right? Like, we have been taught for fourteen books that there is no power on Earth stronger than a bonded male, but Vishous doesn't seem to care at all anymore. He played such a big role in this book, too, and I think it's just setting up for him to have a brand new story line and probably a brand new lover.

As much as I love the Shadows, I'm not sure how much I love this Selena recantation story line. I'm on the fence about it, but hopefully it feels better as it progresses. Also, Trez better be kissing the ground Lassiter is walking on. Seriously, what a fucking bro.

I loved seeing all the brothers, all the friendships, and all the wonderful dynamics that make the Black Dagger Brotherhood what it is. I am seriously so invested in this bunch of warrior vampires, it's unreal. I cried happy and sad tears so much throughout this book, I was such a hot mess, and I am not sure how I'm going to be able to wait for the next installment.

Yet, my inner pervert wants to say that there wasn't enough sex in this book for my liking. I mean, what was in this book was amazing, but it just seemed sparser than the average BDB book, in my very perverted opinion.

Also, at this point there are so many freaking points of view that it is actually insane. Like, it is not a problem for me, and I always remember who is who, but sometimes I sit back and think about all these people and I'm just like, "damn!" And just think, we will probably be getting six new points of view very soon!

My biggest problem with this book was the sexist things that kept happening, especially to poor, undeserving Layla. I understand that this book series has been built for years and years around the definition of pure alpha males, and I'm okay with that, but this book made the brothers do and say some very questionable things that had me very upset. If you could take out the sexism, this book would be a five star book, unquestionable. Yet, I can't unsee (*or unfeel*) it, so here we are.

I also understand that we as a society have a problem with identifying things/items with gender (i.e., little girls like pink bows and little boys like blue trucks), but the way Qhuinn spoke about the twins made me pretty pissed off. And everyone saying how Rhampage was a little warrior constantly, but how beautiful, perfect, and undateable Lyric was just grossed me out. Oh how far we've come, but oh how far we still need to go.

Okay, so that ending! Did it feel a little strange to anyone else? Like, is J.R. Ward going to time skip up ahead with the kids? I completely love reading about the younger generation in Black Dagger Legacy, but this book ending left me a little shook. Hopefully I'm just reading into things, but I'm super curious to see what J.R. Ward is going to do next. Regardless, I do trust her.

J.R. Ward is amazing, and I hope she keeps this series going forever, because I know I will keep reading for as long as she writes them. I'm so happy that Xcor and Layla finally got the happy ending that they have deserved for a long while and through very many books. And like I said above, I can't wait to see where J.R. Ward decides to take this series next!

“The Chosen Layla was what had changed everything for him”

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Katie Michaels says

I know a lot of BDB fans were not excited for this book. JR Ward alienated so many people (myself included) with the ending of The Shadows, and frankly, a lot of people hate Layla. I hated Layla for a long time, so I get that. But I actually was looking forward to this book because I love a tortured hero and I'm all about forbidden romance. I've kinda been burning for this pairing for years.

There were things I liked in this story, but a great deal that I didn't. I'm going to talk about the plot some, so if you haven't read the book and you want to stay entirely spoiler free, consider yourself warned. My main problem with this book was that Ward set up the conflict with the utter annihilation of Qhuinn's character. I'm not saying *Qhuinn makes bad choices*. I'm saying, *I hated Qhuinn. I wanted to set Qhuinn on fire. Qhuinn was unrecognizable from the character we've known in all the books leading up to this one.* That is not ok. He's not just an ass. He is cruel, violent, and vindictive. He is beyond horrible to Layla, and frankly, speaks to Blay in a way that is completely at odds with the devoted mate he has always been up until now. Ward turned this character into something else to force the story where she wanted it to go and I am not down with that.

I'm also disappointed that Xcor and Layla start the book already in love. Yes, we've had a ton of building in previous books but I wanted the money scene where they finally reveal their feelings, and (especially for Xcor) it's earth shattering and we get that big FINALLY moment. Their love was a given and I felt cheated.

Don't get me wrong, they are lovely together. I felt their desperation over their stolen moments and their abiding love, which is something Ward gets right. I just wish we would've had a big moment when they put their feelings out there for the first time.

As you know, these days Ward is all about the subplots, none of which I cared for. I especially Hated Trez's story with a Selena lookalike. Hated with a capital H. I hated Tohr's backslide. And I was completely unmoved by V's emotional disconnect from Doc Jane. I had to fight the urge to skim often in the side scenes, when I wasn't contemplating throwing my ereader in frustration.

I am interested in anything to do with the Band of Bastards. And the flashback scenes with Xcor broke my heart. Poor Xcor. He reminds of Zsadist. (Who I miss, BTW.) Such a gentle soul who has endured so much misery. I love how Layla changes him. He is so good to her! So heartbreakingly devoted and utterly in love with her. It's so lovely how she sees him... as a good man and a warrior. And I enjoyed her finding her own identity.

I also thought the big climax scene was pretty awesome.

But the resolution was super-rushed and way too easy. Especially when it came to Qhuinn. As much as Ward turned his character on a dime at the beginning, she did it just as quickly at the end. It felt shallow and unsatisfying.

Overall, I found the book very uneven. It had some really satisfying moments. But just as many disappointments.

Christy says

5 Stars!!!!!!

The Chosen is the book all BDB fans have been waiting for for years! I know I have. I had such high hopes for this book and was a little nervous to start it, but I can say with absolute certainty, it did not disappoint! In fact, it's for sure in my top 5 BDB books. I loved it so much!

??Ever since Xcor came on the scene, I was intrigued by him. I know he wasn't a 'good guy' at first, but with time and love, he changed. His and Layla's story was complicated and honestly, I wasn't sure if or how they could have a happily ever after, but I felt they deserved it more than most.

The Chosen centers around Layla and Xcor, and you also got a lot of Xcor's background you didn't have before. My heart broke for these two. It felt like they were fighting a losing battle at times, but they loved each other so truly. Layla doesn't care about Xcor's past or his deformed face/body, she only cares about who he is now and how he treats her. She loves him. He loves her. But will their love be enough?

??Of course this story wasn't only Layla and Xcor's. There were many other characters that played a big part. Qhuinn and Blay, Vishous, Wrath, Thor, Lassiter, iAm and Trez. Anyone who knows me, knows I love Vishous and Qhuinn so much! They are by far my favorite 2 brothers... but my boys pissed me off in this book. Especially Qhuinn. I won't go into it, but if you read the book- you'll get it. I forgave him at the end,

but Grrrrrr. And I don't even know where the V story line is going after this... I'm nervous about it though!

What I really did love was the Thor part of the book. Not at first maybe, but towards the end- Gah! Tears! I also am curious to see where Trez's story goes. God knows he deserves some happiness. And then Lassiter. I love this! Lassiter needs his own book ASAP! It's been announced that the next book in the BDB will be Assail's and Sola's. Even though they were hardly in this one, I'm looking forward to it!

Jilly says

OMG, I just wrote the longest review on this and then hit the freaking power button on my surge protector with my foot on accident and lost everything!!! Urge to kill!!!

There is no way in hell I'm rewriting the entire thing, which by the way was a literary masterpiece on why this book sucked so hard. Nope.

So, here's the deal:

Layla & Xcor: Horrible. Boring. Worst romance ever. Worse than Phury and Cormia!!

Quinn and Blay: Quinn suddenly turns into the Hulk and starts smashing. Blay gets butthurt and leaves him over something stupid he said. Much angst ensues.

Tohr: Turns into a raging psycho asshole with Quinn. #Twinsies

Vishous: Decides it's time to have an affair. Jane gives no fucks about his shit.

Lassiter: Only part that I like where it's going.

Fritz: The only thing deserving a star for this book.

"Sire! Oh, it is good that you have arrived home before the storm! May I get you a libation?"

"How 'bout a couple of bulletproof vests," V said under his breath.

"But of course! Would you care for the Point Blank Alpha Elites, or is this more of a bomb-detonation occasion requiring the Paraclete tactical vests?"

Thank you, Fritz, for making this book slightly bearable!

Carolina Carriço says

spoilers

After reading the book :

As I expected I absolutely loved **Xcor** in this book. I fell in love with wayyyyyy back and I was looking forward to his book and with high expectations. Even though some details in his relationship with Layla wasn't my idea of perfection, it all worked out.

Speaking of the lady of this book, I was never her biggest fan but she managed to surprise me and earn my respect. She was a badass mother and fearless defender of her mate. You did your job well, Layla.

Despite all this there were a few things that really **disappointed** me or left me confused. Let's start with the most obvious one.

Qhuinn, I found his behavior through out the book so out of character and mostly annoying. Not to speak it was excessive considering the outcome of the situation. It was just...ugh. Thank God for Blay for being so level headed and dealing with everything like a champ.

Second was Throe. Everything about his chapter was, first of all boring AF, second ridiculous and absurd. How the hell with the author explain *that*? It feels so foreign in this world of vampires and lessers.

Third and lastly, my precious baby **Vishous**. If he wasn't the love of my life, my sun and stars, my favorite character in the universe I'd be hating his guts, considering all this I still want to kick his one ball, have Rhage and Butch hand him his ass and put him in therapy. He's absolutely fucked up and is going to put himself in the worst shit. Is it possible that his paternal instinct is kicking in?! And since Jane can't have kids...well everything? It's a possibility, but not an excuse. Never a fucking excuse for his thoughts and behavior. I'm hoping next book will be about him. And he will get his head straight again so I can add book #16 to my favorites.

Even with all this *small* things, the main story about Layla and Xcor met my expectations, as mentioned above, therefore the four star rating. And I can't forget to talk about the end. That was worth it all annoyances and disappointments! I loved seeing everyone working together. I loved seeing the '*three fathers, one mother, two babies*' part. And I loved the prediction for Lyrac's future. As long as Ward sets her head straight and stops messing with everyone's personalities and adding useless bullshit to the story, everything will work just fine, and I will just keep on loving these books with all my heart and soul.

PS. Lassiter is the fucking best. I love him so fucking much. Seeing him in this book dealing with everything made me tear up and want to hug him tight until all hope was returned to him.

Don't read it if you want to go into the next books completely blind!

Some important news:

- Lash will eventually come back.
- Lassiter will have a book. And he's the Virgin successor.
- Bitty's uncle will probably show up before the 6 month time is over.
- There will be crossover between BDB and Fallen Angels.
- Warden wants to write a book about Nalla finding love.
- Saxton is having his own HEA.
- The Virgin won't have her own book.
- Blay and John are joining the Brotherhood. And Payne possibly as well.

- Xcor already redeemed himself. Nobody knows yet how tho.
- Throe's sister might or might now be dead.
- Sola has met a guy. Assail has no idea.
- No HEA for Havers. Warden hates his guts.
- She doesn't see a kid for Butch. Yet.
- Phury's kid will come back.
- She's writing another Insider's Guide. And she would like to write some stories in the Brother's past.
- No one will ever know about the Darius/John connection.
- Payne is up to something. She hasn't been around as much.
- No book for Fritz.

Full transcript: <https://www.facebook.com/JRWardBooks/...>

Dorsey aka ♥? Wrath Lover Reviews ♥? says

*** WARNING: THIS REVIEW CONTAINS SPOILERS!!***

3.5 Deceitful Chosen Stars!!

Sooooo.....I'm going to break this down by storylines (and there are many) as I did with the last couple of books.

Layla and Xcor

I was waiting what seems like forever for their story, whether you like them or not, or you just wanted to be done with them we waited a loooooong time!! Xcor, admittedly was not good guy, we find out that he suffered as a young boy, teen, and young adult and then throw in the Blood Letter finding and claiming him as his son those experiences hardened him and I have to say as much as I hated him (he did attempt to kill Wrath!!) I felt an overwhelming compassion for him. Layla was just as irritating as she has been in the last few books, I am not a fan of hers, but, I must say she was fearless mother and champion for Xcor.

Quinn and Blay

Quinn was a *total and complete asshole* throughout pretty much the whole book, he was an asshole to Blay, Layla, the King..... and pretty much anyone who got in his way (except Blay's parents, who are freaking awesome!). The thing is, I totally understand where his emotion was coming from, but, I felt that emotion should have been directed at Layla and Layla alone. I admired him for his devotion to Wrath, and the brotherhood. Xcor is the Enemy and that emotion should have been acknowledged.... *by everyone* !! I know a lot of readers now hate him...not me. I just keep thinking of everything he's done for everyone in the past, to name a few.....

I'm not happy that J.R. Ward chose to throw him under the bus....completely sucks that someone everyone loved is now **hated**, heartbreaking.

Blay tried to play peacemaker to keep "his family" together and Qhuinn lashed out at him during the

confrontation with Layla upon learning of her relationship with Xcor. Yes, Qhinn went too far, but, Blay should have been more understanding upon learning the depths Layla's deceptions...and in my opinion offered support to Q. In the end, everything worked out but it seemed like a lot of unnecessary drama.

Tohr

Torhment is still missing his Wellsie and still grieving at times, in this case her birthday. He still has bad moments and a pain that won't go away. Autumn is a good mate to him and doesn't seem to resent the time and emotion given to his first mate....I wonder how long that will last? He also learns of his family ties to Xcor and we're shown how torn he is about having a blooded brother and seeking the vengeance promised him by Wrath.

Throe

Throe is going to be a force to be reckoned with in future books....I'm still not sure what power he has, and more importantly from whom, it's all bad and scary evil!!!

Trez

If you follow JR Ward, you already knew this was happening ("Do you believe in reincarnation, because Trez will"...). We're introduced to Therese, a young woman (vampire) who goes to Sal's seeking a job, i'Am is blown away by her resemblance to Selena. Naturally, Trez sees her and is drawn to her as much as he tries to stay away.....I'm looking forward to seeing how this storyline develops.

V and Jane

Trouble is brewing and they are definitely growing apart, Doc Jane is extremely busy in the clinic with very little time for her mate and V is resenting it....which turns out not to be a good thing as his mind starts to wonder. We are left hanging on the issue which I have a feeling we'll get in the next *Black Dagger Legacy* book.

Lastly, we come to our favorite Fallen Angel Lassiter

The Scribe Virgin has named Lassiter as her successor. I'm definitely looking forward to the brothers finding out, and I can't wait to see what crazy ideas Lassiter has in store for the brothers.

Final thoughts.....

All-in-all, I enjoyed this book for the most part, but, I have to say the ending to the Q/Blay/Layla/Xcor storyline left a bad taste in my mouth....and tell me why did they (Q, Blay, & Xcor) all have to turn into a bunch of pansyasses in end....really WARDen? Where were the shitkicker badasses we know and love!? I was totally unprepared for the sappy lovefest they had going on. And really, did you have to throw Qhinn under the bus like that? Throughout the whole series he's been a loyal friend and brother, he's absolutely steadfast in his loyalty and unselfish to a fault....now (from the reviews I've read on Goodreads) he's **hated** by fans of the series for remaining **loyal** to the Brotherhood (unlike Layla) *so f*ing disappointing* !!

All the rest, I'm happy with. As always, I'm looking forward to more of my beloved King Wrath and the rest of the Brotherhood.

***Audio book reread on March 24th, 2018**

UniquelyMoi ~ BlithelyBookish says

Full rantview now posted

I'm am very conflicted in regards to this installment of the *Black Dagger Brotherhood* series. There were a couple things I enjoyed, but those things got lost in the bigger picture.

It's taken me days to process it all and try to decide how best to write this review. I've decided to break it down into sections, with spoilers hidden.

I'll start with Xcor and Layla because this is their story, and it was a long time coming.

Xcor and Layla (no spoilers) - I have always liked Layla because I see her as a product of crappy parenting. Her upbringing sucked, being raised to serve, her worth being found in and determined by her service to others. Her existence was serving the Brotherhood which meant not having a chance to think for herself, to dream, to hope for more - or to realize that there even *could* be more. I was thrilled when the Chosen were set free of their prison and allowed to live free, at last.

From his first appearance in the series, I loved Xcor and was excited to see where his story would go. No doubt he was a complete douche waffle bastard in the beginning, but I saw him as a male in need of redemption, and couldn't wait to see that redemption unfold. I wasn't disappointed. In fact, I love him and his back story even more!

I am thrilled beyond thrilled that Xcor and Layla finally have their *happily ever after*. It wasn't easy - but the most beautiful romances seldom are. They had many seemingly insurmountable obstacles, but they overcame them. They are the perfect example of opposites attracting, and I am glad this was their story. It was time.

Quinn (and Blay) - Quinn is okay. He's never been one of my favorite characters, but I did enjoy his book and wanted him to get his HEA. But I have to say - he's an ass in this story. I get why he freaks out, but (view spoiler)

V (and Jane) - What the hell happened here? Why are we even doing this? First off, they had their story a long time ago, then it was revisited with marital discord in a book within the last few years. Now here we are again being subjected to this couple (view spoiler) Why can't the WARDen just leave V alone?! She doesn't like him and he doesn't like her. Is she intentionally torturing him, or did someone spike her Rice Krispies?

What. ever!

Trez (and Selena) - Okay, here's another giant WTF??? It wasn't bad enough that Ward betrayed her readers (and the romance genre) by killing Selena off in that hot mess called *The Shadows*? What is happening to this series?? These vampires' lives are filled with drama, must there be so much *unnecessary* drama thrown in? NONE of this had to happen!! The BDB is beginning to read like a soap opera, for Fade's sake! (view spoiler) Maybe someday down the road it will make sense to me, but for now it just sounds like more backpedaling and a long, contrived stretch at trying to rectify a horrible wrong.

Tohr (and his role) - I'm at a loss here. I'm embarrassed on his behalf for the crappy story he was given in this book. Some things I get, some I wanted to scream at! (view spoiler) And I understand a lot of this was taking place on the night of what would have been Wellsie's birthday so Tohr's an emotional wreck, but for gawd's sake, (view spoiler)

Like I said, his role in *The Chosen* is an embarrassment, not only to himself but to the Brotherhood he defends and to us, the readers.

Lassiter - Sweet Virgin on a pogo stick! This is going to be one wild ride!

The bottom line - There was so much potential to *The Chosen* that, sadly, wasn't given the time needed to develop. It could've been beautiful but instead it was hurried. It could have been poignant but instead it was shallow.

Since 2008 when I read my first *Black Dagger Brotherhood* story I have been a die-hard, fiercely loyal fan. When things started getting a bit wonky... say, about the time of Phury's almost non-existent *happily ever after*, I still stood tall and proud and defended everything the WARDen gave us. It breaks my heart to tell you that I no longer feel that admiration for and devotion to her and her stories.

We pay a premium price for these books and we shouldn't have to wade through what amounts to nothing more than filler in the form of contrived drama, just to get to the main story line. We read romance for the *happily ever after*, as in, *EVER* after. Not 'happily 'til an author's breakfast cereal decrees otherwise.' That's not the foundation this series was built on! That's not what we longtime, die-hard, fiercely loyal fans hunger for. And saddest of all - that's not the *Black Dagger Brotherhood* I fell in love with all those years ago.

And oh, how I miss them.

P says

“Swear to me you will move forward,” he demanded. “I cannot be at peace unless you swear it.”

She put her hands to her face. “I feel as if I am breaking in half.”

I liked *The Chosen*, there was even a moment when I felt it was as good as *The Beast* or *The King*, but I just don't like the way all the conflicts are settled, which I will explain later in this review. And the romactic parts of Xcor and Layla weren't that intense - maybe I just expected too much.

And welcome to the island of self-doubt of Vishous. Because in this book, we get a free ticket to visit **V's insecurity** again. Oh god ! I'm so tired of this. Would it be better if we just move on and have other plots instead ? Like Lassister being enigmatic all the time ? Well, all I want to say about this book might be

confusing as myself right now. Frankly, I had no idea what would happen before I started reading this book. Xcor and Layla ultimately get their story and I really wanted to see if everything went well for the conflicts being flared since The King; therefore, I was really interested in Xcor even though I felt a bit off with Layla because she's such a whiny character and always holds the story back. And I definitely didn't understand how easy it is for her to change her attitude in an hour and turns herself into a naughty-sexy girl in the bed.

“With all of my black and withered heart, I love you, my female. I deserve not the earth beneath your feet, nor the scent of you in my nose, and never the gift of your blood, but I ... I am e’er grateful for the change that you wrought upon me. You have saved me, and the only thing greater than my love for you is my gratitude.”

There are too many POVs in this book: Xcor's, Layla's, Qhuinn's, Blay's, V's, Trez's, Therese's (She's gonna be a big jackpot in the next installment for sure), Thore's, etc. Although I hadn't had any problems with subplots before, I kind of felt everything being slow because of them dragging everything back in this book, especially when a climax comes, the story is cut like that and I had to wait for three or four chapters to finally see what's going on with the characters I was attached to.

About Xcor and Layla, I've reckoned before a chance for them to be together is all but impossible, and even if they get their HEA, it must be a long road and lots of atonement to be made. But the ending, I just couldn't believe it because (view spoiler) Just like that, except V's insecurity that will be a gigantic problem and subplot for the next installment exactly.

“Not in front of her. Do not do it in front of her if you have any decency. Send her away and then dispatch me.”

Qhuinn and Blay's quarreling was unacceptable. I sided with Blay all along when Qhuinn goes crazy and throws a tantrum at Layla who risked her babies with Xcor and kept it a secret. He says something bad to Blay, and if I were him, that would not be easily forgiven. But you know, at the end, (view spoiler)

What I enjoyed was that revelation, it was quite shocking for me to behold because I had no clue about what's bound to transpire. Yet I was made to focus on Wrath since the beginning. His size. His thighs. His shoulders. His biceps. His pec. I didn't take it for granted because it was one of many reasons that stuck me to this series.

The war is coming to an end. I do hope that I'll live to see the last book of the series, and have an opportunity to read Assail and Trez's story once again.

“Fore’ermore, I pledge my allegiance unto to you and yours, serving none other.”

Sophia Triad says

Xcor and Layla

“I’m not going to apologize for who I love. In fact, I’m grateful this destiny is mine. If I had fallen for another, I wouldn’t have been forced to be this strong – and there is nothing wrong in this world or the next in finding out your own power.”

After I finished "The Chosen", the initial thought that crossed my mind was this one:

This is clearly NOT a book about the Chosen, is it?

More precisely, this is a book that talks about everyone else except about the Chosen, Layla. Because Layla in fact knew what she wants and needs for a few books now. She wants Xcor and she wants her children.

****spoilers****

Layla and Xcor are already in love when the book starts. They will not deny it. They will not stumble on their decisions. They will not be sorry about them. They will not ask forgiveness from the others. They are ready to die for each other.

In fact they could have been already dead. Nothing matters for them anymore.

This is clearly a book about the Brothers, their mates, their friends, Lassiter, the Band of Bastards. And about the READERS. Isn't it?

It is a book that talks about how all these individuals perceive the implications of the relationship between Layla and Xcor. How they feel about it, when they learn the news. How they finally accept it.

It talks about their negative feelings, their remorse about what Layla had done. About her treachery. About the fact that she slept with the enemy. About the fact that she endangered her unborn children.

Layla just basically waits in the whole book. She is just waiting for the others to come into terms with her actions. And this is what she gets.

Of course Xcor and Layla will live in their love bubble for us to watch. They will finally have sex. They will finally exchange words of love, faith and commitment. But they could just as easy not say anything.

Because THEY KNOW. THEY FEEL.

The words and their sacrifices are only to convince the others. The outsiders. Even us the readers. Because as I said before, they are already where they want to be. And they absolutely know what they want.

“Layla should still be able to see those kids on the regular. They need their mahmen, and

whether you like it or not, she should be in their lives.”

“What are you saying, that she and Xcor take them to McDonald’s for fucking fries and a Coke?”

Well, apparently yes. That is exactly what Layla wants.

Unfortunately the understanding of Layla and Xcor’s true love and the knowledge of their strong relationship have made a few couples with thorns in their own relationships to face their own insecurities:

... Vishous’ insecurity about his love and commitment, about the time Doc Jane spends with him. About how much really Jane cares for him. About how much really V cares for her.

... Tohr’s still ongoing issues about his dead wife. Poor Autumn. How can you fight with a ghost for the love of your man?

... Blay’s insecurity about being a real father to Qhuinn’s children.

... Qhuinn’s insecurity that he is not the only one important for his children. Blay is important, too. Layla is important too. And Qhuinn almost destroys his relationship with Blay. And Qhuinn ends up hating Layla.

I have actually talked to a few fans who are not happy with Qhuinn’s behavior and they do not understand it. Well, I totally do understand it! This is just Qhuinn... Emotions run hot with this boy.

Let’s not forget that he is just a 30 something years old boy. He is still too young. Just a few years ago, he was getting wasted in the clubs having group sex at the toilets without caring for love and commitment but only for fun and good times.

It is not easy for him to be mated and to be a parent.

(I still laugh when I remember him a few books ago when he left his keys on his Hammer and someone stole it. It kind of reminds me Qhuinn being locked up in the Cave in this book. Another one of his goofy moments...)

Only the story of Trez looks a bit disconnected with the main story, but I have a feeling that the obvious resurrection of Selena is a result of his intense prayer and of Lassiter (the new scribe virgin hahaha) finally losing it and granting Trez’s wish.

“I just want her back. I just ... I only want Selena back. Please ... if there’s anyone up there, help me. Return her to me. I don’t care what form she’s in ... I just can’t do this anymore. I can’t live like this for one more fucking night.”

(I am sure that all the readers that have read “The Shadows” were also praying with him!)

I have a feeling that the situation with Layla has influenced even Lassiter. Lassiter will confess to Layla about how lost he is now. How much confused he is with his new job.

Secondary stories:

1. We are running out of bad guys. An old one is gaining more strength and he is rising. (Hint: No, not the Omega, Lessers are out of fashion).
2. The Brother’s mansion will be more crowded. Thank God there are enough rooms.
3. The humans keep wondering and searching for the supernatural and for vampires.

I am happy with this book. It did not blow my mind, but it was a worthy addition to the series. It did not leave me dissatisfied or angry or sad. It opened doors for many more stories for the series to go stronger. And I have fallen in love with the blind king all over again. I love you Wrath!

By the end of the book, I totally respected Layla and her decisions and her determination –almost as much as she started respecting herself:

*Yet she was still alive and she was here. Looking herself in the mirror.
And for the first time in her life, she respected what she saw.
Bowing to her reflection, she said softly, “Pleased to meet you.”*

P.S. Thank you so much J.R.Ward :) You rock!

(view spoiler)

Angela says

So there must have been some magic sparkle dust in the snow that made every single character act the opposite of what they normally would have. I ain't even mad at the characters for what happened in this book. It's not their fault. It would be the author's fault for this trash. I would be writing all day if I went through all the wrongness here. I don't even want to. I want to pretend it didn't happen. One star for remembering the war and the prophecy.

♥?elody says

First, that cover? No.

Much better.

(Please don't steal or edit this artwork. Thankies!)

Xcor

Layla

sigh

Second, let me start with what I enjoyed and talk about the featured couple since they deserve the praise and attention that other things seemed to have eclipsed and overshadowed them with.

Xcor & Layla

Lovely, sweet, beautiful, honest, brave, fearless. Funny how they have been pitted as the 'underdogs' and 'bad guys' by both the Brotherhood and readers alike who have hated this couple and yet they managed to show up and out how honorable, selfless, brave and LOYAL they both are. HA. These two showed more spine, strength, integrity and heart than the apparent 'good guys' in here. I was so proud of the both of them, how they stood their ground on their own and for each other. Layla especially. Go girl! Seeing her literally go nose-to-nose with snarling Brothers for her children AND the man she loves was just everything. Wooh! Standing ovation right there. She went even beyond what I was expecting for Xcor. I loved how she had Xcor's back through everything and went all lioness mode over him. Team Xcorla for the win! I'm happy they got their HEA and overcame the impossible. And I didn't realize Xcor is so poetic with his words. :P I also really loved all the different angles Ward built up to show Xcor is redeemed and could be forgiven by the Brothers. I was worried it would be too quick and easy and contrived but it wasn't.

"I have dreamed of touching you," he murmured. "So many times I have..."

Wrath

My boo. My man. My #1. Shout out to him! He still continues to be badass and a wonderful King. Your favs could neva! He showed so much integrity, compassion, firmness, and was the freaking calm in this sh*t storm. There were some serious laugh out loud moments with him and I will forever love the visual of Wrath physically muzzling V and going for his throat to shut him up. GOLD. STAR. MOMENT.

Phury

Phury!!!! Cormia!!! Long time no see!

Lassiter

He's already taking his role of SV very seriously and I love that. To see him be brought to his knees--literally--was great to see. Adds another layer to this character.

Blay

I love you. You are too good, kind, patient and loving to have to put up with this ish.

Tohr

Yes Tohr had his ragey dickhead moments in here (when it rains it pours apparently) but witnessing the hopeful tentative shocked awe of discovering you aren't so alone anymore and have blooded family was beautiful to see.

With a halting series of ungainly movements, Xcor held onto the male's shoulders and pushed himself back a little. Meeting Tohrment in the eye, he whispered, "My brother."

"Yes," the male said hoarsely, a sheen of tears making that blue stare glow like a pair of sapphires. "I am your brother."

It was hard to say who embraced who, but suddenly they were both holding on, one upon another, warrior to warrior.

Yes I'm still upset with him and the whole Wellsie mourning. Cut it out dude.

Now onto the big, bad and ugly.....

Qhuinn

Oy. Qhuinn did you lose your fucking mind? Ward did the most with him. I just don't understand why she thought going this far was redeemable or even realistic. In fact the only thing it managed to bring home is that Qhuinn still has a lot of growing up to do. A LOT. Going around trigger happy and acting like a homicidal lunatic just because your ass felt betrayed is not a good enough reason. Sorry but nope. Blay deserved better. Qhuay deserved better. She made him into a raging abusive psycho for unfair extreme reasons. His blind sense of self-entitlement and victimhood was truly astounding. I was prepared and expecting him to go off like a canon in here. But how he went off? Hell no. (view spoiler) And yet you can't get over Layla putting your unborn young in *possible* danger?? Take your own advice asswipe. I don't care how emotional you are, your actions and words are your own. Own it. And the fact that he was favoring Rhamp over Lyric because she happens to look just like her mother just proves he has no business being a father. I found this so disgusting and unconscionable. My biggest problem was that it took Qhuinn too long to see reason. His "I don't owe anyone shit" petty attitude through most of this really stank and was just asking for a throat punch. It made what was already really bad, just worse. Grow up dude. Grow the fuck up.

I expected better from you. And I didn't appreciate how everyone around Qhuinn let him act like a fucking child just because he's shook up over protecting his young. Bullshit. Wrath should have kicked him out of the Brotherhood. Period. I don't understand how waving a gun around your kids and on your mate is excusable.

If Phury could get kicked out for his smoking problem and slashing up bad guys, then so the fuck could Qhuinn for **threatening his loved ones with a damn gun**. The nonstop coddling over this character is fucking insane.

And as much as I love Layla, I still think giving Qhuinn children was a **huge** mistake on Ward's part. I've been saying this from the start and I stand by it now. Qhuinn is not grown enough or stable to raise 2 kids. He's still a child. Sorry but that's the damn truth. All this shit that went down here is perfect example of why. And good for Blay for laying down the law and showing some serious tough love. I honestly wish Blay had taken those kids as his own legally. *shrugs* #YesISaidIt #TeamBlay That's honestly how this should have ended. Blay taking those kids and Qhuinn working on redeeming himself and figuring things out with Xcor. This seriously effected my Qhuay love. The whole time I felt sorry for Blay for having to put up with his bullshit again. I'm not sure I can enjoy this couple anymore after this. Ward still has major work to do to redeem Qhuinn in my eyes. This should *not* have been resolved in this book, no way. It's too much and too soon to sweep under the rug. And as much as I love that Xcor was pardoned and welcomed by the BDB family, it happened too quickly and unrealistically for my liking. The ending was the most slapstick convoluted thing out of this entire book. How someone goes from near homicidal rage towards someone then to fist bumping besties in a matter of *days* is beyond me. I didn't buy it. Qhuinn should have been begrudgingly making truce w/ Layla and Xcor (just for Blay), not acting buddy buddy with Xcor. Ridiculous. If anything that was the most OCC moment for both Xcor and Qhuinn. It was one too many extra cherries on the sundae.

Vishous

Vishous I'm really tired of your ass. I really am. *sigh* We are back to this again? Really? Sorry Ward but I ain't buying it. I know you know you are full of sh*t with this one. Even your Rice Krispies have receipts and what you are saying now does not line up to what you have said and **WROTE** in the series and yes even prior to V and Butch's books. Try Book 1 Dark Lover. So please spare me with the fan-flaming 'omg the publishers made me do it! I never evah wanted Vishous with Jane' pot stirring.

Let me first be clear and say I'm reacting more to what Ward said at her book signing than what was teased in this book. V hasn't done anything damaging.....yet. But he's crossing that line quickly. He's right now all up in his head and feeling disconnected with Jane because she's always working at the clinic all the time (how is she always that busy though?) and he's feeling ignored. He's contemplating cheating. Someone explain to me how a **bonded** male can cheat much less even contemplate cheating? It goes against their nature and the rules of bonding. Hey asshole how about **TALK TO YOUR WIFE** if you are feeling a certain way instead of fingering your phone for possible hookups. His passive aggressive 'my mama didn't love me and my mate is too busy for me' emo shit is disgusting. I'm so over him. Grow that testicle back you are so clearly missing.

Here's my confession: I never liked or cared for V. To me he was always a cold, vain, emotionally stunted asshole. But with Jane, he came alive, she humanized him and made him feel. She made me care. I loved their story so much. It was raw, honest, emotional and unforgiving (and sexy AF too). And Ward already tried a revisit with these two in Lover Unleashed and it was one big clusterfuck contrived mess. Now she seems determined to mess with them again and I'm not sure there will be anything left of them worth salvaging and that really bothers me. Fuck that. Jane deserves better. I deserve better. You may just

systematically destroy one of your strongest pairings, and strongest works for more contrived angst to sell a story, and what a shame. Lover Unbound was damn good and one of the best books of this series. I will pray for Jane cause she sure as shit deserves better than this roughshod treatment.

And Ward I thought Zsadist was your favorite and you hated V? Now suddenly you love him?

How convenient.

Xcor/Layla

Yup you are seeing double and no it's not a mistake. As much I loved these two's sweet moments, I felt they took a backseat in here. A reader's biggest fear when going into a book they highly anticipate about a couple they love is the star couple not getting the attention they deserve. And that's pretty much what happened here. I didn't feel like enough time was spent on them, what scenes they had were too short and abrupt. And yes I would have liked longer sex scenes. The hot factor was completely missing and Ward played it so safe for reasons I don't understand. Oh that's right, she was too busy fucking around with Quinn and V's man pain to do these two justice. ? Layla is a freaking Ehros for crying out loud! USE IT. And all that emotional angst and tension that played out so beautifully in the previous books just seemed to evaporate in here, so I found some of their scenes a bit anticlimactic and unexciting. That sense of slow burn, urgency and anticipation was completely missing. I still loved their scenes but they came off very tame.

Trez & Therese

What is the point? Talk about jumping the gun. I'm already over these two I'm sorry to say. Too soon. Way too soon Ward. This could have had potential.....down the road. But the delivery here was so premature, gimmicky and anti-climactic. Readers already know it's Selena. So where is the surprise in this? And how is this even gonna work? Trez will know it's Selena but she won't? Excuse me but finding out a guy is crazy for you because you are the spitting image of his dead mate is a total mood killer. What was the point of The Shadows then? Some things should honestly be left alone. This just screams course correction, scrambling to fix a mistake. Slapping a band aid on it isn't gonna help Ward. (And BTW: we go from "my dog died so Selena had to die----->blame it on the Rice Krispies!-----> Lassiter brings her back as a "gift" because the SV left"????.....Absurd.)

The timeline

This is by far the biggest pet peeve of mine when it comes to over-arching series. Ward did the same thing in her FA series and it drove me nuts. Why the f*ck would you have your story unfold in only a matter of 3 DAYS in one book when there is so much that needs to be covered?? What's the rush? This isn't fan fiction or a Slice of Life. There is literally **no reason** for this entire book to only cover 3 days when you are talking about your main character needing to be fully redeemed, pardoned and saved from dying. Absurd. And being reminded of it in the last chapter is like a house of cards getting blown down all at once. It makes the entire story come off comical, flat and so unrealistic. Yes the hero and heroine already fell in love before this book, that doesn't matter. Xcor should have been the primary focus here and the timeline should have taken weeks, at the very *least*. Not 3 fucking days of everyone acting like lunatics and passing out "I'm sowies" at the very end. Nah.

Moral(s) of the story here: Don't make all your characters into flaming assholes and some things are better left alone.
