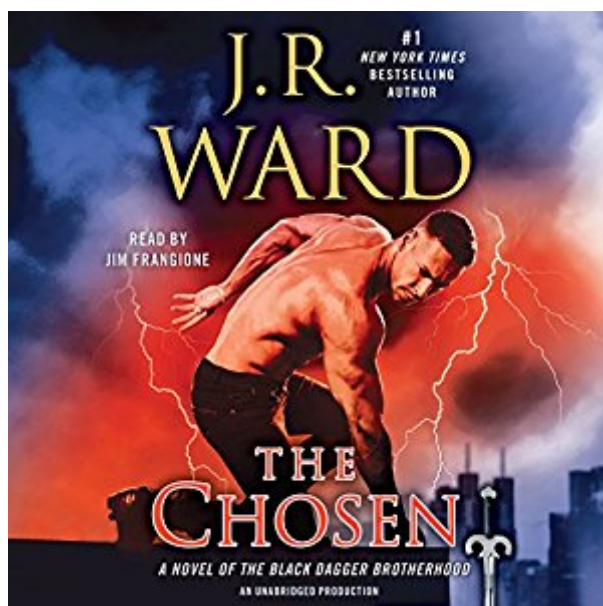


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The Chosen: A Novel Of The Black Dagger Brotherhood



Synopsis

A scorching forbidden love threatens to tear a rift through the Black Dagger Brotherhood in J. R. Ward's newest novel in the New York Times best-selling series. 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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm going to say what many people aren't saying: This book was the worst of the series, in terms of plot pacing, unnecessary angst, moral message, and character OOC-ness (out-of-character, as previously established by author). Before you jump down my throat for that, please just read the rest of the review to understand why I say this. MAJOR PLOT SPOILERS BELOW -- YOU ARE

WARNED!.....Let's go through the PROs of the book first, to give context to this review... Here were the things that worked well:- The Scribe Virgin's replacement -- Lassiter as the new "SV" (for lack of a better phrase) was an excellent use of this extraneous character in the series, and more thoroughly connects the "Fallen Angels" series with this one. It also allows us to solidify in canon the BDB universe's world-building (e.g. its cosmic beginnings, its cosmic hierarchy, etc.) fits in with that other series she wrote. Finally, it allows for character and over-arching plot development, which enriches the BDB canon overall.- Xcor/Layla's romance -- There is also a 'con' to this plot (see below), but in terms of Xcor's undying commitment to Layla, it was heart-melting. His kindness, that he only showed to her, his great respect for her, his endless resolve to be hers to the end of his days... *sigh* Disney, eat your heart out!- Xcor's background -- It's a tried and true tactic in this series that flashbacks seem to give a solid context for readers, building sympathy and ground them in the characters they reference. Seeing how horrific Hharm and Xcor's mahmen were to him as a child really tugged my heartstrings (I admit, I teared up at the scene where she left Xcor finally, chained outside, without a backward glance and he begged for her not to leave him). That was well-played, Warden. I totally fell in love with him right there. Well-played.- Theresa -- I admit, I was surprised by this plot device, until I realized WHY J.R. Ward included it (Selena was a Chosen, hence the title of the book, and most importantly, Tres is Lassiter's first mistake as new a deity, but it was well-intentioned on Lassiter's part and it seems to be, so far anyway, a hopeful thing for our Trez. We will see in the next book whether this one comes back to bite everyone on the bum, but for now, it was good to see him hopeful, and the introduction of a new character is always good fun)- Everyone's temporary anger-insanity, Vishous' emotional distancing from Jane, and Assail's screaming -- I'm putting money down that this is all just one big sneaky plot device that is a type of foreshadowing of an even bigger evil happening that hasn't been revealed yet, and no one's connecting the dots yet to see it within the Brotherhood. Qhuinn's and Tohr's irrationally violent responses, V's emotional blackout in regards to his shellan, and Assail's psychotic break all signal something ominous; all of the emotionally 'broken' people seemed to have heightened reactions to whatever is happening inside the mansion (note that it's not happening to anyone outside, or those who seem more stable in their relationships. I think that's why Xcor and Layla weren't really affected while in the cabin, despite their drama).- Throe's descent into evil -- And this one seems intimately tied to the same thing above. He was a bad man before, a user and emotional abuser, but by the end of the book, he's just straight-up psychotic. The loss of time scenes, in particular, were interesting, because they showed he was blacking out and losing minutes, which is a first sign of a psychotic break. Clearly, he's been possessed by the evil within The Book (which I suspect is the

Lessening Society's prophecy bible spoken about in "Lover Revealed", and which I further suspect is tied somehow to Lash's spirit). Throe's emergence as the new 'dark lord' makes the final battle with the Omega to come frightening for readers, because the Warden has made it clear in the past that she'll sacrifice key characters if necessary (Darius, Wellsie, Jane, Lash, Benloise, Selena, Anslem, the Scribe Virgin). Anyone could die in the final battles to come, and it seems Throe is the new axe-man.- Lyric II and Rhampage -- They are a welcome lightness to the series, with their sweet response to each other, and Rhampage's bowel movements.- Lyric I and Rocke -- I think everyone adores Blaylock's parents and finds them hilarious and irresistible. It was good that they received some screen-time again.- The end of the Band of Bastards/Brotherhood feud -- Resolution, at long last... and such that it's a happy ending for all! I particularly enjoyed seeing a side of the BoB that reminded us that they may have been raised in horrific circumstances, and had a rather bloody and careless past, but that their loyalty never wavers and their skills are equal to that of the Brotherhood, despite their lack of noble lineage. I suspect, sadly, many of them will be victims in the upcoming war, so we can prevent loss of Brotherhood life, but they are soldiers and dying for their lord's cause has always been in the cards for each of them. Enjoy 'em while you can!- Getting back to the Dhestroyer prophecy and the Lessening War -- I've been waiting for this for books and books, and now FINALLY we're back on track. I know this is a romance series, but it's also a hybrid paranormal fantasy series which means there is a plot outside of the main protagonists getting it on. I'm glad to see we're not forgetting that there's a war going on. Now for the book's 'CONS' list. Here were the things I felt turned this book from 4 or 5 stars into only 3 for me:- Qhuinn's going off the rails -- You knew I'd lead with this, right? I think most people are thinking it, too. I think that had any of us had a sister in real life whose boyfriend cruelly and maliciously slut-shamed her (here's a reminder of what he said, in case you forgot: "And you're right, I didn't want you, I've *never* wanted you--and don't get it twisted. I'm not jealous. I'm f*****g disgusted. I'm in love with a male of worth and I had to be with you because I needed an incubator for my son and my daughter. That and the fact that you threw yourself at me in your needling was the only reason I was ever with you." And this: "...not that I give a damn whether you live or die." And this: "So, yes, it's absolutely within my rights as a sire to pull a gun on her." And then he taunted Xcor, a bonded male, that he'd had sex with his bonded female. He laughed about it.), threatened her and Blay with physical violence (he shoved Layla and pulled a gun on her), and threatened her with her legal rights to their shared children, we would tell our sister to get a restraining order, move to a different home, go to court for full custody of the children on the grounds that the father was unstable and violent, and get that guy thrown in jail for the felony it is to

pull a gun and threaten someone's life. It's not okay just because it's Qhuinn, and most of us loved his character in the past. Sorry, but what he did was domestic violence at its most terrifying, and there's no forgiveness for that kind of terrorizing. That the Warden skipped dealing with that issue between Qhuinn & Layla completely and turned the issue on its head to make Qhuinn seem to be completely within his parent's rights to go ape crazy, and then further made the mistake of turning the issue again so it became about Blay being cut out of the baby's lives as a father was terribly irresponsible of her and sends the wrong message to women. For someone whose earlier novels dealt with the issue of domestic violence in a positive, empowering way for its victims (the creation of Safe House, Marissa and Mary working there with the various doctors in the series and with the King), only made this blow all the worse for those of us who work hard to end such violence against women. I just don't know what the Warden was thinking. All I can hope is that Qhuinn's irrationally violent response in this case was a result of some greater evil 'leaking' into his psyche, tweaking him off. Being under the influence of some magical evil is the only excuse I can find for this one, and the only way it can be forgiven.- Tohrment's betrayal to the King and viciousness to Layla - Ditto to the above in terms of excuse, because Tohrment is my favorite brother, honestly, and to see him so unhinged seemed totally OOC for him. He's had the penchant for opening his mouth and being cruel, yes (we saw it with Autumn in "Lover Reborn"), but he has never gone so far as to almost hit a woman or betray his solemn oaths. It was completely off the rails to see him act so odd. I can only hope this is given an explanation in the next book, or else I'll suspect the Warden is attempting to get us to hate him so she can kill him off in the future without audience consequence.- Another emotional break for V and Jane -- I thought we'd gotten past this in "Lover Unleashed", but apparently it's either pertinent to the next book's plot or fan-service to have V back in the midst of angst-central. Honestly, I'd have much rather preferred any additional angst in the story be Cormia and Phury's issue (this book IS called "The Chosen", after all, and having Cormia deal with something traumatic or emotional could be a good segue into her upcoming pregnancy with Aggie, as shown at the end of "Lover Enshrined", too). That the Warden didn't even really touch upon that couple when this was the perfect opportunity... Meh. And honestly, deconstructing V any further will probably end in many of us not liking him, especially if he cheats on Jane (we didn't get confirmation that he had one way or another| it was merely implied that he was thinking about it). That would be, for many readers, unforgivable.- Xcor/Layla's romance -- As I said above, this was also a 'con', because I found Xcor's character once the romance happened to be extremely OOC from how the Warden had previously established him. Now, I do understand that mating in the BDB universe is a revelation that does change the male. However, every part of Xcor's

dialogue when he interacted with Layla or admitted to others of his feelings for her felt like it was Phury or Saxton talking, not Xcor. I recognize that he'd turned over a new leaf, and that he was softening somewhat as a result of falling in love, but he was too... flowery. I wasn't convinced that this was Xcor actually talking to Layla, except the one time when he got angry with her for prying into his past. I also suspect that some of their scenes may have been unused scenes lifted from "Lover Awakened", because the hiding of his body from Layla in bed (with sweatpants pulled down -- shades of Z's first time with Bella, remember?) and hiding himself again in the shower seemed totally out of place, and even the intimate moment in the shower felt reused (read: Assail and Sola's first time). Furthermore, Xcor & Layla's "romance" was less sensual than I'd expected, honestly. I felt cheated by their love-making scenes, because they felt as if it was about the getting down to it, and not about a connection until the very end of their time together. It reminded me too much of "Lover At Last", honestly, which did nothing for my romance meter.

- the couched anti-liberalism/progressive movement snark -- One of the first things I learned in college when it comes to writing fiction is that shoving your own personal beliefs into established character's thoughts and words to make a political point to the audience is bad writing, as it destroys the 4th wall and can ruin characters. If the Warden has political views on climate change/science in general and the unique social issues pertaining to the Millennials, forcing that point through her characters isn't the way to do it, especially when it is so OOC it leaves a bad taste in your mouth about the character in the aftermath. I think we all know what I'm talking about here. Enough said about that.

- the Hollywood-ish "black mass ritual" "Yes, yes, I know that this is a paranormal-fantasy series and we, the audience, are supposed to give a pass to the magical aspects of the series. And we do, every time the boys molecularly-travel around, or someone scrubs memories, or Rehv reads someone's emotional grid, or anyone travels to the Sanctuary, etc. Heck, they're Vampires" the stuff of dark fantasy. And when the plot brought in an Ouija board in "Lover Unbound" to be utilized as some sort of mystical connection to the spirit world that could foretell the future, it was all in good fun, too, especially as it was a positive plot device towards the main romance in the book. In "The Chosen", however, the ritual that Throe engages in to summon his shadow assassin was too ridiculous to be taken seriously (motor oil, black candles, sesame seeds, argulua "come on, really???"). And that he picked The Necronomicon, er, The Book up while inside a "rats with tails" psychic's shop was the cherry on the cake. Talk about your clichés! Look, I'm non-religious, so I don't have a bone in the game, but even I thought this was hokey overkill of the trope. You can do better, Warden. Stop the stereotyping, invent something new and less silly

summoning demonic forces from Dhund, yes?- Fritz the Wonder Doggen - I think, by now, all of us get that Fritz is some sort of miracle worker and the guy you want on your side in any emergency to handle the little, but important details. He's funny, competent, but like Gandalf, he's also a deus ex machina plot device that wears thin over time. Use sparingly, Warden.- Who was leading the Lessers? " Okay, I've been through it over and over, and it's clear the Lessening Society attack on the warehouse was not at Throe's call, as he was busy murdering Corra, her mated husband, and their 14 doggen. So who's leading the bad guys now, because the last Forelesser was murdered by Assail and no one's been mentioned since as having taken his place. Also, how did they know about the meeting in the warehouse between the Brotherhood and the BoB? Either someone in the house is spilling secrets or Lassiter set them all up. Which would you prefer to believe, because I'd rather pick an Option C, if possible. However, I can't see one. Can you?- Timeline errors " I've been tracing the series, and the timeline is ALL MESSED UP. The Warden hasn't been doing her homework. According to this book, Tohr states that his son with Wellsie would have been 2 ½ years old by the time of "The Chosen" (and he died when he was only 8 months in the womb| Vampires carry for 14 months, remember?). Which means only ~3 years have passed since "Love Awakened" -- which starts ~1 year after Wrath & Beth's mating and ~1-3 months since Rhage & Mary's mating. Basically, that can't possibly be right, since the events and the cultural references the boys use (re: Miley Cyrus and her 2013 "Wrecking Ball" song is the one that really stands out as putting them at 2013 by the time of "The Shadows") establish a time frame that shows that by the time of "The Chosen", we should be almost 8-9 years out from the time of Darius' murder. That also means the timeline has shifted away from the epilogue of "Love Enshrined", when Aggie was born to Cormia & Phury within 5 years of their mating, which took place approx. 1 year after Zsadist & Bella's mating. Maybe that shift is a result of the Omega going back in time and conceiving Lash? So, basically, the Warden's timeline is all completely wrong and she needs to sit back down and realize that all those cultural references she's making when the boys talk or have talks in their heads with themselves--those date when events are transpiring in the story.- Humans are "rats with tails" " Yeah, that one's getting offensive now after so many books of reading it over and over again. I get why certain Vamps feel this way, but some of them are married to "rats with tails" or were raised in the world with "rats with tails", and all of the brothers have been saved by "rats with tails" (Manny and Jane and Butch) or have had relations and/or taken

blood from Ã¢Ârats with tailsÃ¢Â Ã¢Â, and the Vamps (and Trez and iAm) borrow their tech/clothing/rides/music tastes/entertainment/drinking enjoyment/drug fix from us Ã¢Â Ã¢MugglesÃ¢Â Ã¢Â, so maybe they shouldnÃ¢Â Ã¢Ât be thinking this way anymore? Just a thought, Warden. Long story short (too late!), Ã¢Â Ã¢The ChosenÃ¢Â Ã¢Â is rife with issues. Its main romance was so-so (meh), which was a huge let-down after several books of teasing between Layla and Xcor, its plot devices were uninspired and rehashed elements of older books, itÃ¢Â Ã¢Âs a bit preachy (politically speaking), and it is full of world-lore errors that can throw a fan out of the story and make them question the writerÃ¢Â Ã¢Âs researching methods. Not much here to recommend, except if youÃ¢Â Ã¢Âre a longtime fan of the series and just want to get to the end of this race. Have fun with it, but donÃ¢Â Ã¢Ât go looking for too much depth here. ItÃ¢Â Ã¢Âs a transition book, preparing you for the last of the series. My rec to the Warden: get yourself a new crit group of die-hard fans who wonÃ¢Â Ã¢Ât be afraid to tell you that something is wrong, logistically speaking. The group you have now brought you the epilogue of Ã¢Â Ã¢Love At LastÃ¢Â Ã¢Â, which was one of THE CHEESIEST endings to a romance novel IÃ¢Â Ã¢Âve ever read, honestly. Maybe itÃ¢Â Ã¢Âs time for a fresh set of eyes and opinions? Just saying.

After the Beast, I was hopeful this series had recovered its footing. (So hopeful, I preordered The Chosen) Yeah, I was wrong. So let's get this out of the way. ***SPOILER WARNING*** I'm a huge fan of the BDB series, but after the first six books, I think it should be taken out of the romance category. For one, people reading romance dig the Happy Ever After the first six books delivered. While I love how Ward has expanded the plot and has found a way to bring closure to the war, this love story was unfulfilling at best. Poor Xcor and Layla were downright cheated when it came to the steamy parts. It felt like a rushed romp instead of a joining of hearts. Mix that in with the Placeholder Selena, and yeah, where is the love Ward? Don't even get me started on V and Jane. V was my favorite from the beginning but cheating on your bonded either completely discounts how strong Ward is selling the the "bonded male" thing or is pushing V through the angst mill at the expense of his HEA. Either way, not romantic. Not even sexy. I understand Ward is a character writer and I would ride that roller coaster any day if the characters where true to themselves. But Qhuinn? Really? WTH?!? This is not the Qhuinn I had come to love. He is beyond brutal when he discovers Layla loves Xcor. What he yells at Layla and Blay is unforgivable. When he points the gun at Layla while she is holding their children? - No. Too far. I was hoping for a breakthrough for Qhuinn in this. Like this madness would lead to some deeper revelation concerning himself, but no. It was simply dismissed as a temper tantrum and forgiven without costing him anything except a brief

apology. And Tohr? Different person, same situation. I don't recall him ever speaking as ugly to a brother as he did to Layla. He gives the King (this lifelong friend) the finger and gives up his position in the brotherhood to kill Xcor because...well this is never fully explained. The only explanation he offers Wrath is that Weslie's birthday was a few days ago and that put him in a bad mood. Same false peace offering and quick apology and everyone is good. Apparently there is no sacred ground here. Aiming a gun at the mother of your children while she is holding them, betraying your lifelong friend, and cheating on your shellan when you are supposed to be a bonded male, are all great drama, but again, NOT romantic. NOT sexy. So really my advice is this: If they enjoy the drama and are not concerned with getting a Happy Ever After with romance, read on! Ward is an exceptional writer and has more than proven she can pull the emotional strings of her readers. Her world is captivating and the stakes are always high. However, if you are looking for the romantic closure found in the first six books, I would wait until the book releases and read the reviews before you dive in with a head full of nostalgia. For better or for worse, this is not the same brotherhood she began with - This is not your mother's BDB. Happy Reading.

Serious BDB fan here. This book as it took some turns I'm pretty sure were best left for future books was still BDB. For that, well I'm a BDB fan so yeah!!! I'm not sure going for spoiler alerts is gonna happen here but I will say. It was good to see the dynamics of Xcor and Layla with the brothers come out. Finding blooded family is always a win. So good there. V and Jane thing going on *growls* that needs its own darn book. Trez in mourning needs some time. Again a book on its own might have been the wiser. Benefit of doubt. I have always loved BDB from get go so on that note, JR Ward I hope you have a grand plan to play out all that was laid out in The Chosens book for future. Wow!!! It was a lot.

I liked Xcor and Layla's story great way it worked out. I always loved Lassiter he'll do great. What I hated is what V is planning on doing! Why the Hell doesn't he just talk to Jane, I mean really what a coward!. Also, V and Jane not only had their own book but they were also in Payne's Resolving their differences, regarding Jane's fear of V's cheating. I would have given this book as many stars as were possible but because of V I'm only giving 2! I hope the next book is about Teresa and Tres I love him. And of course Thor. the prick

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