



# Freedom

*Jay Kirkpatrick*

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## **Freedom** Jay Kirkpatrick

In a future Earth, Patrick Harvey, newly promoted Class One Empath, dreams of the independence his position brings and the apartment he's saving for. His first solo assignment is treating John Doe 439, a man found outside the city, battered, traumatized, and apparently mute.

Despite a strong taboo against Empaths forging romantic relationships, Patrick realizes he feels a strong attraction to his patient. Soon he learns the man is a high-level Psychic Talent named Jac. Then Jac reveals that there are abusive people hunting him for his gifts, and Patrick's uncomplicated world explodes.

Jac needs to meet up with his companions and flee the city before anyone else can find him—but it may be too late. Word of Jac's talents has leaked to Central Government in Chicago. If Jac wants to retain his freedom, he needs to run—now. And if Patrick wants to explore a relationship his society tells him he can't have, he'll have to exchange the safe fetters of his job for the uncertainty of liberty.

## **Freedom Details**

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Author : Jay Kirkpatrick

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# From Reader Review Freedom for online ebook

## M'rella says

This is it. Another DNF for me :( 2 stars is for what I've read so far.

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I am sure it's a great book, everyone says so.

Unfortunately, there is so much going on with switching POVs and Tenses, it's too annoying. Not confusing. Annoying. Present tense was never my favorite, so it must be me.

The story takes place in a dystopian society, which has no problem discarding pretty much anyone if they don't have something valuable to contribute. Yet two men, both John Does, are picked from the side of a highway, treated for their wounds and completely taken care of ...in exchange for what? Nothing? Why? Out of the goodness of that society's heart? On an odd chance they might be empath's? Why was this charity extended to the two unknown, left for dead men, but not to other people, who live outside the city limits? What interested the higher-ups in this particular couple? 45% into the book and that fact is still not explained.

I am not even going to start on Patrick, who I don't get a chance to see as a whole person and do not get a chance to know outside work and a rare interaction or two with his one friend. All I know is that he is a good man at heart. Kudos for him. Anything else? I have no clue, even tho the book is written from his POV and did I mention I am 45% in?

I might give it another try later, when I have more time, but right now I am filing this book under DNF.

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## Elizabetta says

Food for thought, that's what this book is. This is more than a futuristic gay romance, it is a look at something we view as a basic necessity in life, and a gift: freedom... the dictionary calls it:

- \*the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without restraint**
- \*absence of subjection to foreign domination or despotic government**
- \*the state of being physically unrestricted; not being imprisoned or enslaved**
- \*the power of self-determination attributed to the will**

But it is also a state of mind.

Patrick Henry is our hero in *Freedom*, and he seems to have never really thought deeply about his own freedom within his world. That is, not until he meets his patient, John Doe#439/Jaq. Little by little, Patrick's

eyes are opened to what his 'perfect' life really is, and just how much he has given up for safety and security.

*Freedom* takes place in an alternative universe, 'new' Las Vegas, New Earth. It is post-apocalyptic, post cataclysmic— we never really learn what the 'Burst' is that so devastated the country, leaving a society divided between those who are 'in' and those who are 'out'. The former live in protected, walled Cities, under guaranteed safety but also severe structure and surveillance (cameras are everywhere; citizens are tagged with tracking devices); while the latter live in the back-and-beyond in near anarchy, are seen as degenerates, are left to a scrounging subsistence.

For Patrick, living inside the City has always been the goal. There, at the Empath Center, he can use his abilities to help others. In this world, some are born with extra-sensory abilities: empathic, telepathic, telekinetic, and these gifts are highly sought-after by the powers that be. These valued abilities are the tickets to life on the Inside. Patrick is a Class One Empath and he is given his first big case, to work with Jaq, a severely beaten and raped, mentally broken, shell of a man found left in the desert to die. Patrick is anxious to prove himself, excited to finally help someone in need, spurred by the challenge of finding the key to Jaq's mental prison.

But who is really the needy one here? As he finds out more about Jaq and his life on the Outside, Patrick discovers the limitations in his own life. Perhaps Jaq has known greater freedom than Patrick has ever imagined. Patrick's whole world is set on end as his eyes are slowly opened to what he has given up for that safe and secure life. He also becomes aware of long suppressed emotions sparked by his close interaction with Jaq. The scenes where Patrick works to help Jaq out his nightmare are some of my favorites.

Patrick learns that security comes at a personal cost, and it is easy to make correlations to our present day situation— with surveillance cameras on every corner, drone technology, data mining of phone and internet correspondence in the name of security, the Patriot Act— insidiously and surely, freedom is being altered.

This book is very strong through the wonderful first half. The writing, plotting and pacing are well done, the characters, all of them, compelling. If there is a weakness, it is in Patrick. He is at times frustrating, seemingly naive and too malleable: he has allowed himself to be manipulated by those in charge, he has buried his head in the proverbial sand. It is hard to believe that he could be so oblivious. What saves him is his purity of soul and his nurturing, kind spirit. On the other end, Jaq is a truly unique character, a man of hidden depths. It's a mistake to discount him, he is more than he seems. The second half of the book is a little less satisfying— it does have great action and drama, but there is an OTT bad-guy who just turns goonish. Also, Jaq and Patrick are separated for much of it... and leaving the cocoon of their blossoming intimacy is jarring.

For me, *Freedom* draws parallels with where we are right now in our own 'negotiations' for security and safety and how these will inevitably affect our access to freedom. This raises it to five stars. Oh, and it is a great love story too!

For this review and other great M/M book reviews and discussion, give aways and lots more, please visit:  
The Blog of Sid Love

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**ttg says**

4.5 stars - I thought this was a pretty phenomenal sci-fi read, and one of the better books I've read in a while.

I would qualify *Freedom* as primarily sci-fi, with an m/m romance as secondary. The romance in it is definitely meaningful, but this is a sci-fi/dystopia novel first.

The story follows empath Patrick who is tasked with helping a mysterious and withdrawn John Doe who had survived a vicious assault in the Outside, the wilds beyond the City where Patrick lives and works (and which is tightly controlled and monitored by the government.)

Using his empathic powers, Patrick works through the puzzle that is his mystery patient, and slowly the man unveils before him, and the discovery reveals new truths, sensations, and feelings that Patrick had never considered before in his stark, clean, protected, and touch-free world.

Reading this, I was reminded of the free dystopian reads *The God Eaters*, with its similar themes of government testing and also *Esperanza*, with its themes of growing new societies, and how often those communities need to be poly in order to survive. I also was reminded of the YA classic *The Giver*, since both works deal with the awakening of its MC from one belief system to another.

For those who dislike poly-romance, don't worry. It doesn't take over the love developing between the two MCs, but it's definitely part of this new world, and is really one more layer of the "Freedom" that the characters are fighting for.

I thought this was a wonderful read as well as being very surprising and different. It has a few things that I usually don't like (multiple POVs and also shifting 3rd to 1st, depending on the section) but overall, the story was strong enough that it didn't bother me too much. The first 60% I think was the strongest, as it closely focuses on the unveiling of Jac and the growing intimacy between Jac and "Parri", but really I thought the whole book was a very worthwhile read and very well-paced, so I never wanted to put it down, and when I did, I often thought about it, and wanted to get back to it.

If I had a down point, it would be that I wished the epilogue had been a little bit more embellished. I think that's the romance fan in me wanting more together-time after the journey.

For fans of future, sci-fi, and dystopia stories, I really recommend it. This will be on my top reads for the year, (and since it seems to be really under the radar, is a contender for most under-hyped. Maybe that can change by the end of this year...)

Great book. Highly recommended. And this is the author's first and only novel so far. I very much hope she writes more. She's a voice to watch.

This review was first posted at Boys in our Books.

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**Nancy says**

**Posted at Shelf Inflicted**

While I'm not one to judge a book by its cover, it makes me very happy when the cover is directly relevant to the story and characters within and captures their essence so perfectly. Just one glance at the cover and I knew that life would not be easy for Patrick, Jac and other sensitive individuals possessing empathic abilities.

Patrick Harvey's abilities were sufficient enough to land him a position in the Empath Center. Even though he misses his friends, he feels lucky to live a comfortable life and not have to endure the subsistence living conditions of the Outside, on the outskirts of New Las Vegas. His first and most challenging assignment is treating Jac, a man who has endured so much emotional pain and trauma that his mind is a chaotic jumble and he is unable to communicate. Patrick uses his empathy to gain his trust and learn the source of his suffering. It takes a bit of time, as Patrick learns that Jac deeply distrusts the white uniforms of the Empath Center staff. The more he discovers about Jac, his friends and family, his strong empathic abilities, and a life totally different from anything Patrick ever knew, the more he begins to question his own life and values.

The first part of the story, Confinement, was about Jac's treatment at the Empath Center. There were glimpses into Patrick's life, his friendships and his work. A vibrant cast of characters is introduced, and Jac's talents are revealed. Though pain and desperation permeates the first half, making it intense reading, I was gripped right from the start and fell in love with Patrick and Jac. The second part, Escape, is told in multiple viewpoints, is fast-paced with much less emphasis on Jac's and Patrick's developing relationship and more on their relationship with their friends, their growth and change. Escape is not easy and Patrick and Jac really have their work cut out for them. Jac's talent makes him attractive to his enemies, who just want to break him. Thanks to their supportive friends who have a desire to build a strong sense of community, there is hope for those with talents.

If you like thoughtful science fiction in a dystopian setting, well-drawn, strong and diverse characters, intense emotions and an engaging plot, then look no further.

This is the first novel by Jay Kirkpatrick and I certainly hope it won't be the last.

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### **Mandapanda says**

3.5 stars. I adored the first part of this novel where Jac was being slowly awakened by Patrick but the second part when they were on the run was not as appealing. I'm not sure why but I felt that their connection was lost. Still a good m/m romance for fans of the Dystopian genre.

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### **Heather C says**

**Umm...this was different! And I LIKED it!!**

So this is set in a post-apocalyptic New Las Vegas where humans have developed powers of the mind...Empaths, Telepaths, Telekinetics...and Illusionists. Patrick, a Class One Empath, has finally been given his first solo case: a John Doe who has been tortured and raped and left with a mind so broken he can't even communicate.

I was initially confused for a bit since I didn't read the blurb before starting, but once I got into it I couldn't

put it down! It was different and I loved the characters and I wanted to see all the questions answered. Then, instead of turning into a romance, it turned into a fight for freedom...but still kept me interested.

The first half of the book was pretty much a 5 star read for me, but the second half was all over the place with so many point of view changes. This has to be the first book I've ever read that incorporated both past and present tenses along with first, second and third person POVs! And while it was done well, IMO, throughout the first half of the book, it got pretty sloppy in the second half. Plus, I felt it should have had a longer ending to better explain the HEA. Still really liked it, though.

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### **Kynthos-the-Archer (Kyn) says**

*[[Note: He is endearing to me and I like him this way because I have a kink for ABDL.(goog*

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### **Kassa says**

I chose Freedom based on a suggestion. I didn't read the blurb but went in with high expectations. I quite liked the book for most of it, though once the group broke out of the hospital and were on the run, things started to fall apart. The ending is nicely wrapped up but I was left with a lot of questions. Most of all I couldn't buy into the chemistry between the two lead characters and I found one of the lead men to be weak and uninteresting. These two issues definitely killed some of the reading enjoyment for me. At the same time the writing and creativity are high and I'd cautiously recommend this one. I'm on the fence whether I'd read this author again.

The premise is a post-apocalyptic society where survivors are classed with Talents. These are Psychic talents that manifest in a variety of recognizable ways. Patrick is an Empath and works at a local hospital. He is assigned to treat an unknown man who was picked up off the street, battered and bruised. This unknown man, Jac, has numerous high level Talents and is soon endangered because of them. Now Patrick and others must work to free Jac before he can be apprehended and locked in a lab.

The actual plot is somewhat more complicated and complex than the simplistic summary may suggest, but those are the essential elements. The creativity is pretty high and the author/story did a good job incorporating decent world building and background information. There are no clunky blocks of exposition but instead a smooth transition of dialogue, information, and action. The prose is clean and evocative. The first half of the story while Jac is in the hospital is especially riveting. The dynamics between the characters and details incorporated make for a quick, exciting read.

I especially liked the character of Jac and the interplay between him and Patrick. I could see a connection, of some sort, and sped through the pages with ease. Once Jac's partner, Rob, is introduced and the group quickly leaves the hospital then the plot, pacing, and interest fell off sharply for me. Here the plot suffers, as there are additional characters that feel distracting, even as they have a point and are interesting in their own right. The race to get away from the government worker feels very uneven - hurry up, wait, hurry up to confrontation. There are additional peripheral dramas, such as Jac's mental wanderings, that left me confused as to their purpose.

One main issue I had during this part of the book was that Patrick completely unravels. He turns from a

somewhat competent man to unintelligent, naïve, and ineffectual. He literally does nothing to help anyone and in fact hinders numerous people in multiple ways. His abrupt shift from compassionate worker/friend to naïve foil made me dislike him and he never recovered in my opinion. His connection with Jac feels weak compared to the strength of Rob and Jac's bond. I never really saw why Jac was so enamored with Patrick or why he would chose him over Rob. I can extrapolate and make assumptions but I didn't feel that connection between them.

On the plus side I think the story is creative and well written. It has good world building, a complicated and fascinating cast of characters (all of whom I liked better than Patrick), and a decent story. For most of the book, the pages fly by with interest but the last third kind of lost me as a reader. The plot and lead character turned and never recovered for me. I'd cautiously recommend this as it's an enjoyable book on the whole, but I'm not sure I'd trust this author again. If readers aren't as turned off by the last third they should enjoy this considerably more.

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### **Ery says**

MandyM really said it well. This story was amazingly good in part 1. I loved the story, loved the characters, loved everything.

The premise of *Freedom* is pretty much what you would expect, given the title. The reader catches a glimpse of a dystopian society, in a world after "burst", where psychically-talented citizens live in the cities, and those without talents are largely relegated to the "outside" or, depending on their connections, are allowed to live in the city but are given thankless jobs.

A John Doe is found outside, horribly beaten/attacked and as a result is borderline psychotic. Patrick, a somewhat talented empath, is brought in to help assess and heal the tortured mind of John Doe. As part of this, the reader gets to experience the building relationship of the two men in a sterile society. Through this relationship, Patrick comes to realize that his "safe and secure" society isn't what it seems.

Kirkpatrick excels at writing the budding relationship in, writing a riveting story, and providing an underlying warning, or mistake to the story- without becoming preachy. Excellent writing.

Where the author started to lose me, similar to MandyM, was in part two. The MCs are temporarily separated, the story focuses more on an ensemble cast (with multi-person head hopping!), and the story takes on shades of an action film. It really felt a bit like *Firestarter*, to be honest.

Still, I really (really) enjoyed the writing, and looooved the first part if the story. So.. A 3-3.5 overall. Certainly recommended, and I will absolutely check out future work from this author.

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### **Lisa Arbitrary - AttentionIsArbitrary M/M Blog says**

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4.8 Stars



**Splendor/Tragedy**  
**Serenity/Anguish**  
**Humanity/Brutality**  
**Touch/Disconnect**

An absorbing read that was equally exhilarating and thought-provoking. I was immediately pulled into this book by expressive writing and palpable characters.

Written in a Part 1 – Confinement / Part 2 – Escape format; Freedom is a captivating look at post-apocalyptic earth where psychic ability determines your status in society. Everyone is tested and ranked according to their abilities and usefulness. The higher one tests is not necessarily a good thing. Having “Talent” is the difference between living a hard street life or being a useful member of society. **OR**, being a tool to be broken.

**”People like you and me, Paddy, we’re the lucky ones,” he said quietly. “We tested nicely into pre-established categories. We’re Talented enough to be useful, but not Talented enough to be interesting.”**

Plus, the cover is striking and perfect for the story. It's the best depiction I've seen in a while.

### **THE CHARACTERS**

**Patrick Harvey (Paddy)** - Naïve, intelligent, gentle and kind. Patrick has much to learn about a world he thought he knew well.

*I wanted to know what was in his mind, what his Talents were, how his life had been. I wanted... I wanted to taste his mouth again, to feel those hard but tender fingers touch my skin. I wanted... wanted...*

You can have.

**John Doe 439 (Jac)** - Unique, special, Talented. Jac changes Patrick’s world while relearning it himself.

The additional characters; Charlie, Sam, Rob and more are all fully realized and completely interesting. Ms. Kirkpatrick truly fleshed out each secondary creating a very full story.

### **THE STORY**

Newly promoted Patrick gets a crack at his first solo case, John Doe 439. John Doe has seemingly lost all decipherable communication skills, but Patrick is determined to make progress. Slowly the two learn to communicate and then, more importantly, to connect. The astounding beauty within Jac (John Doe) reveals itself to Patrick gradually, but others are becoming aware of his ‘specialness’ too. The world is turned upside down when we see that it isn’t Jac who is unclear, but instead Patrick who must decide whether to follow Jac into the unknown or remain in a world of deception.

*He is changing me in ways I didn't know I could change.*

A tender moment, one of the most special lovemaking scenes I have read, cements the reader's need to see Paddy and Jac survive. But there are many, many difficulties and even interesting current (real life) moral issues you may have to come to terms with in deciding whether their relationship works for you. Lots of food for thought here.

No onscreen sex, but the stunning impressions made by the romance are dazzling.

### **THE WRITING**

There's an interesting usage of mixed POV's which flowed surprisingly well. I believe this is a first published work for Jay Kirkpatrick, and if that's true, this is an outstanding effort. The author has shown humanity's capacity for ugliness and brutality, compassion through touch, and how strong community can adapt to survive to create awareness of what is truly important.

*Patrick stared at the white toilet on the white floor against the white wall in his tiny white bathroom and listened to the sound of illusions shattering.*

### **EXCEPTIONAL**

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I truly want to thank Dreamspinner Press for taking a chance and sending me an ARC of this fantastic novel. Thank you.

~ ~ ~

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

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

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**Kelly H. (Maybedog) says**

[they end up in a menage relationship with women. (hide spoiler)]

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**Silkeeeeeereads says**

It's difficult to write a review that contains no spoilers, and even more difficult to try to describe how beautifully this story was written. Thanks to Lisa for writing a great review which pushed me over the line to read this book.

The two MCs, Paddy and Jac, are brought together when Paddy is given Jac as a patient. Paddy is a Level One Impath and was told he needed to evaluate and see if there was anything worth saving in Jac. Jac had been physically injured. He made no sense when he spoke and no one thought he would recover. Paddy learns why no one was able to understand Jac and from there, they learned how to communicate with each other.

There is a sweetness to Jac that I dare anyone not to fall for. He is the kind of person you want to cuddle up to. His personality is generous and more than special.

Paddy is trying to figure out why he is so drawn to Jac and what was so great about Freedom.

There are very few books I give five stars to, especially ones that aren't dark, emotional erotica. This is one of those books that I can't describe other than to say I wouldn't have missed it for the world. I hope you don't miss it either.

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## **Julianna says**

Reviewed for THC Reviews

"4.5 stars" *Freedom* is a fascinating post-apocalyptic/dystopian story that takes place in an unspecified future time frame after something called The Burst, which while not explained, I assume to probably have been an EMP or something similar. The bulk of the story takes place in New Las Vegas, where only a chosen few live and work within the city. The rest are pretty much relegated to the Outside, which appears to be the outskirts of the city and in between the two is the NeverNever. In this future society, there are Talents and Non-Talents. The Non-Talents are exactly what you might expect, just normal humans. The Talents are special humans who've developed various psi talents. They might exhibit as empaths, telepaths, telekinetics, or other psychic phenomena, some of which are only known to the Talent Management Center, an organization that seems to oversee the various operations around the country that were put in place to identify Talents. The TMC basically ignores Non-Talents, using them in menial type jobs, while those who exhibit a moderate amount of talent will be trained for more specialized jobs within the cities. However, those who exhibit talents that go above and beyond, essentially become lab rats, who are tested over and over to figure out their limits until they are mentally broken. Although most don't realize it, the TMC rules with an iron fist and are a pretty evil organization. I would have liked to know a little more about them. Are they the new government in this futuristic society? The fact that they have the Marines at their command seems to suggest that they either are or have some sort of government backing, but overall, the author doesn't go into that too much. They are, however, a very scary organization with equally scary people working for them.

While the dystopian aspect of the book is very intriguing, at its heart, *Freedom* is very much an emotional human story. Within this landscape, we're introduced to Patrick, who is a mid-level empath, working in the psychiatric wing of a medical facility. He and his two best friends were tested years before. His friend, Charlie, didn't have enough talent to qualify to move into the city, but Patrick and Charlie's girlfriend, Evie, did. Patrick was trained for the job he now holds, while Evie was taken elsewhere and later released back into the Outside. After being tested, she was said to be too psychologically damaged to work and hasn't been the same since. However, no one really suspects that it was the TMC who did the damage to her. Patrick is

pretty content in his job and has just been given his first solo case working with a John Doe who was found nearly dead by the Escapeway. The man is practically wild and doesn't appear to speak or write except in gibberish. Using his empathic talents, Patrick soon realizes that his John Doe is much more than he seems on the surface and the longer he works with the man, the more he comes to care for him in a non-professional way. He also starts to realize some things about himself and about what's going on in a wider sense, not only within the facility but the world outside as well. Patrick eventually comes to understand that his patient is in grave danger and he knows he cannot betray him, but he must make a difficult decision about whether he can give up the comfortable life he has in the city for the unknown world beyond.

John Doe 439 is really a young man named Jac, who has partial amnesia. Due to severe injuries, as well as emotional trauma, he sustained when attacked by the Purples, humans who've gone feral, he's forgotten who he is or how he came to be at the medical center. All he knows is that his older brother always taught him to fear the All-Whites, and now he's locked up in a place that's completely white and only tended by people dressed in white. Into this frightening landscape comes Patrick, who treats Jac with gentleness, dignity, and respect. Gradually Jac begins to trust Patrick, especially after they connect psychically. To say that Jac is a sweet and gentle soul is almost an understatement. To many around him, he's viewed as weak and easy prey, because he possesses an almost childlike quality. Even after he remembers how to speak, he does so in the way a small child might, dropping syllables and sometimes mispronouncing words, something his friend, Rob, calls a form of baby talk. Jac has an interesting backstory as to why this is that I won't spoil for readers, but one of the reasons is that it's much easier for him to simply communicate telepathically. There aren't a lot of scenes from Jac's POV, but on the rare occasions we get a look inside his mind, particularly after he starts to calm for Patrick, we see an intelligent man with a tremendous gift. He has psi talents above and beyond anyone who works with him has ever seen before. Patrick isn't even certain what to call some of his talents. Again, I won't spoil anyone by saying what they are, but he truly is a wonder. He's also a deeply affectionate human being who loves to give and receive touch from the right people and in the right way, which as a touchy-feely person myself, I loved. When he finds out that Rob also survived the attack and they're reunited, Jac is like a clinging vine who must be physically connected to him at all times, which made me question at times which of the men he was meant to be with, Rob or Patrick. The answer is kind of both but in different ways.

Initially the bulk of the POV scenes belong to Patrick with a few glimpses inside Jac's troubled mind, but as the story progresses and moves outside the medical center, we get more and more scenes from other characters' perspectives. There's Patrick's top-level empath supervisor, Sam, who recognizes Jac's talents early on and starts covering up some of the things he can do. Sam ends up being a whole lot more than he seems at first. Patrick also has a co-worker, Dana, who works with Jac, too, and ends up helping in a lot of ways. We get to see things from Rob's POV as well, as he supports Jac and gives so much of himself to the man he thinks of as a brother of sorts. Then there's the evil Julia from TMC, who's a bully determined to get her man and break him, but she didn't count on him having help and being so powerful himself. If memory serves I think these were the only characters who got their own POV scenes but there are plenty more supporting players such as Charlie and Evie, and several other Talents, as well as at least one Non-Talent who we meet as they make their escape and who played integral roles.

Overall, *Freedom* was a story that very much drew me in and kept me reading. I thoroughly enjoyed it, so that being the case you might be asking yourself why I knocked off the half-star. Well, the main reason is that as wonderful as it was, I still felt it had a few weaknesses. First, I was a little reluctant to even classify this book as romance, because that part of the story is rather subdued and kind of secondary to other events in the story. The plot simply doesn't follow the two men on the same track that most romances do with them meeting, forging a relationship, and falling in love. These things do happen, but in a much different way than what I'm used to. There's no explicit sex and I don't even recall them saying, "I love you," although it's

fairly apparent by their actions. So for me, this was more of a sci-fi story with a light romance on the side. Then there were the questions I mentioned earlier about the greater world outside New Las Vegas and exactly what was motivating the TMC. Lastly, the author wrote the book in a number of different styles. Patrick alone was written in first person present tense when he's interacting with Jac, first person past tense when he's taking case notes, and third person past tense when he's interacting with other characters. Once we start getting into the other characters' POVs, they could be either first or third person, and I can't say I understood the differentiation on those. I did get used to it and was never confused as to whose perspective I was reading because each POV change is clearly labeled with the character's name and setting, but for some readers this may be jarring. Despite these perceived weaknesses, I still couldn't help giving the book keeper status. I'm fascinated by all thing to do with the inner workings of the human mind and psychic phenomena, so that alone kept me glued to the pages. I also loved all the characters and felt like I was very much a part of their world. This was such a good read, I was quite surprised and a little disappointed to discover that this is, so far, the only book Jay Kirkpatrick has written, but if she (yes, despite the male-sounding name, this is a female writer) ever writes another, I'll definitely pick it up.

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## **M says**

I really enjoyed this book. It's a pretty typical dystopian novel set in a future where some people have supernatural abilities and are sought after by shady government agencies. It's well written and compelling. The romance is basically a non-entity so don't be fooled by the tags. But some of the characters are cool and that was actually enough for me. What I didn't like was the last 5% or so. It was rushed and awkward. Last minute book montages are fast becoming a pet peeve of mine.

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## **Nova says**

3 - 4 stars.

To be honest, I'm not really sure how to rate this book.

It had lots of good ideas and likable characters but sometimes I wanted to know more. More about the cities, the Outside or all the other places. I wanted to know what exactly changed the world. What was this "Burst"? Or why is the government breaking high level talents? Just to see what they can do?

Then there's the POV or rather the change of POV's. It was easy to follow and I knew all the time who was talking but I would have liked it more if it weren't changing so much.

Finally the romance part. For readers like me, who don't want to read sex scene after sex scene, this book will be a pleasant surprise. The relationship between Patrick and Jac is more like a sub-plot and the talents and what's happening to them or Patrick's realization, that the world isn't just black and white, the main plot – what I really really liked!

So, yes some niggles but I still enjoyed it.

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