

JAMIE
FESSENDEN

VIOLATED



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Derek Sawyer thinks he has it all—a high-salaried position, a boyfriend, a dog, even a new cabin on the lake—until a business trip with his manager and best friend, Victor, shatters his world.

One night of drunken horsing around in their hotel room leads to the most intensely personal violation Derek has ever endured. As if the humiliation of working under his attacker every day isn't enough, Victor reports Derek for sexual harassment. Now he's without a job, without a boyfriend, and the mortgage on the cabin is due.

Officer Russ Thomas has worked with rape victims before, and it doesn't take him long to sort out the truth in Derek's tale. With his support, Derek finally reports the crime, months after it happened. But restraining orders and lawyers further Victor's anger toward him, and even though a relationship develops between Derek and the policeman, Russ can't be there to protect him all the time.

Violated Details

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From Reader Review Violated for online ebook

Gigi says

I knew going into this book that there would be some heavy topics, including child abuse and rape. I bought it on release day last year and finally decided to give it a go.

The rape itself is on page, so we see every detail, but it didn't disturb me as much as I thought. What DID disturb me was watching Derek destroy himself after the rape. He competently shut down, lost his job and his boyfriend and started to basically sleepwalk through life. That is what really got to me. It was fucking heartbreaking.

When I hit about the 50% mark, things started looking up for Derek and the cute cop next door, Russ. I was all ready for emotional comfort and some sexual healing. But while Russ was loving and patient and supported Derek the entire time he dealt with the rape, other than a few crying hugs, there wasn't a lot of payoff for the brutal first half of the book.

The epilogue was a disaster. We get a "two years later" and Russ and Derek are finally now consummating their relationship. We missed *everything* in between. Well, that in between was what I was most looking forward to.

So, fair warning, the first half is quite upsetting because of all the injustices thrown Derek's way, and the second half didn't deliver the comfort I so desperately needed to make this book all right with me.

BWT (Belen) says

3.5 Stars

coughs...steps onto soapbox

"There is no such thing as 'rape prevention.' The only way for people to not get raped is for people NOT TO RAPE THEM."

steps off soapbox

This story was at times very hard to read. I think *anyone* who has been sexually assaulted, or experienced the aftermath of assault, whether personally or peripherally, would find this hard to read.

After Derek is raped by his manager, *and best friend*, Victor, he experiences what I thought felt like a very realistic depiction of the PTSD, guilt and despair that can happen after such a traumatic event.

The rape, which is really another character in the story, and it's aftermath, was almost chillingly well done. (view spoiler)

Derek's isolation was particularly difficult to read. As the reader we have a unique perspective, which allows us to see the abusive relationship Derek has with his fiancé, which he doesn't recognize until much later than the reader catches on.

(view spoiler)

(view spoiler)

(view spoiler)

The story is told with each chapter containing a dual POV - Derek and Officer Russ Thomas, Derek's lake neighbor.

Personally I felt the scenes flipping from Derek's POV, his life, rape and aftermath, over to Russ and his search for love, was off-putting. I wanted to read about Derek's story, not get to a difficult part and have the story change gears, downshifting rather radically at times, to Russ attending yet another pot-luck looking for love, or worse, Russ having sex with some guy.

I realize this wasn't a traditional "romance" story, but I still found it off-putting when Russ, who I know from the blurb has been slated to fall for Derek, has on-page sex with multiple partners *other* than Derek. However, once the two "get together" and I use that term *very* loosely, as Fessenden does an excellent job *not* sprinkling magic fairy dust over Derek to make the aftereffects of his rape magically go away, the POV changes are far easier to enjoy and flow more easily.

I thought I would cry more, but I spent most of my time angry...(view spoiler) The only one I never got angry with was Russ. Oh, and the dogs. I loved the dogs.

The thing is - this book made me FEEL. For that alone, I recommend.

This review has been cross-posted at Reviews by Jessewave.

Eli Easton says

I loved Jamie's "Billy's Bones", which featured emotional trauma, childhood abuse, and major PTSD issues. So i was looking forward to "Violated", which promised to deal with some heavy issues--particularly male rape and its aftermath.

I like stories that take me someplace totally new, even if that is a dark place. In "Violated", Derek is betrayed by someone he trusts and his trauma over it is slow-developing and far deeper than he expects. I can relate to that and I think it's realistic.

As usual, Jamie's writing is strong and I was pulled through the story. There's angst here, but good, fun things too. A nice mix and it kept me from feeling it was "too angst".

Cudos to Jamie for tackling such a unique subject! Oh, and I love the lake setting. Want to live there. :-)

Susan says

I didn't like this one. I like a little background on both MCs before they get together, but this was just ridiculous.

Derek has just bought a lake house with his fiancé Tim (I should say his ass of a fiancé. I had no idea what he saw in him), when he meets his yummy neighbor Russ. Of course Derek is engaged, so friendship it is.

Russ is a cop, who is tired of being alone. When he meets his new neighbor, sparks fly, but he doesn't do (almost) married men. But the two become friends anyway.

When Derek goes away on a business trip with his colleague and best friend Victor (since Derek never really liked Victor in the 20 years he has known him, I use the term 'best friend' loosely), he is expecting to be bored to death. What he doesn't expect is to be raped by that same best friend when they spend the night at a hotel.

Derek's life falls apart after that. He is afraid to tell anyone, because well, he is a muscular guy, and those don't get raped, right?

It's after Tim leaves Derek and he loses his job, that Derek really hits rock bottom. But he still has Russ as a friend. Or maybe something more. If Russ can get over the fact that Derek can't stand to be touched anymore...

This sounds like an amazing story, on paper. But I'm afraid the execution was *very* disappointing.

For the first 40% we get a complete introduction of Derek's and Russ' lives. We get to read about Russ finding a fuck buddy and having sex with him several times. We read about Russ finding out that said fuck buddy is together with his ex again. We then read about Russ going away on a sexy weekend to a 'clothing

optional gay farm', where he has sex with one guy for the entire weekend, but everyone else has orgies. I skimmed that entire part. It was unnecessary and way too long.

We also read about how awful a person Tim is. It gets kind of old if the current boyfriend/fiancé is ALWAYS a dick. Derek must have loved him, but I just couldn't see why. Why couldn't we just have a normal fiancé who just couldn't deal with Derek's moods after the rape?

And I really like it when a person needs help healing when he has gone through something traumatic. But for some reason I never bought it here. Derek was still so in the middle of it after a couple of months (as one would expect after being raped by your best friend), that I had a hard time believing he was ready for a new relationship.

Overall, nice premise, bad execution.

Jax says

My problems started when the boyfriend of five years and the best friend of 20 years were too awful to ever be allowed in someone's life and they just escalated from there. There wasn't enough character development to bring these guys to life and it didn't elicit an emotional response from me, which was really kind of the point with a story of this nature.

Kristie says

A very difficult book to read, with a difficult subject. I have a lot of thoughts on this one, and I know I'm not getting it all out in my review. After talking with a friend about it today (Mare), I realize that I still have a lot to say after writing my review. I guess that's good, right? When a book has an impact on you.

My review is at Boys In Our Books.

Lelyana says

This is, for me, an eye opener.

Not everyone dealing easily with PTSD and depression after what Derek had been through.

The rape alone, can make Derek traumatic, for touch. And Tim definitely can't deal with it. Instead of stay strong for him, Tim ran away. That's what some people do. But Russ is not just some people.

He liked Derek from the start. The chemistry was there. But Derek is never be a cheating man, and Russ don't do other people's spouse. Things are difficult.

There's sex with other men on page. Russ with his hookups, but understandable. It was before Derek. So, he can do whatever he wanted, to forget Derek, assuming Derek would marry Tim someday.

But Victor ruined their plan, and ruined everything Derek hope for.

Russ is one hell of a patient man. And I loved him just for that!

This is not an easy story, and not for everyone. I loved Billy's Bones, and I was expected the same. I wasn't disappointed.

Just don't read this book if you have issue with rape and PTSD. Otherwise, this is a good eye opener book, and I highly recommended it.

Martin says

OMG, this book is a must read!!

I know that m/m romances rarely come close to being of high educational value (unless you're a romantic who takes cues from them, LOL), but this one definitely is!

Derek Sawyer's story is deeply tragic and does not resolve in a fluffy HEA, because the traumatic events he experienced scarred him for life.

Things start out with Derek, who is a team manager at a security technology company, buying a cabin by a lake, which has always been his life dream. His fiancé Tim isn't too excited about it, especially when Derek and Tim run into the handsome neighbor, Russ, and his German Shepherd Max.

Tim's jealousy repeatedly hurts Derek who carefully tries to befriend Russ with whom he has more in common, it seems, than with his bitchy fiancé. Russ doesn't mind mingling with the couple, but Tim's open hostility towards him has him back up. He isn't interested in wrecking a marriage after all.

We get to know both Derek and Russ intimately. Russ is a cop and a loner who hopes to one day find a loyal partner, but all his attempts at dating turn out badly, the guys either just dating him because of a weird cop kink or they're just sleeping with him as a vacation fling.

Derek is more or less happy with Tim, if only the guy weren't so overly jealous. Tim even accuses Derek of cheating on him with Derek's colleague and gym buddy Victor, who has the sculpted body of a fitness god, but the character of a jerk.

(view spoiler)

So Derek ends up completely alone in his cabin with no income, a mortgage to pay and no friends.

Russ is still there, however, living his life next door and coping with his own difficult love life. He is slowly bonding with Derek, not yet fully aware what really happened to the guy.

When Derek trusts Russ enough to confide in him, Russ makes sure that Derek follows proper procedure by filing a police report against Victor and taking necessary steps to get a restraining order against the man.

Determined to keep Derek safe, Russ needs to learn to deal with something he wasn't expecting:

His urge to protect Derek keeps Derek from finding back on his own two feet and threatens to crush their budding relationship before it even has a chance to develop.

This story was a masterpiece.

It is certainly a traumatic read for anybody with a similar history, but still, I found it absolutely spot on, both psychologically and plot-wise.

I can easily imagine that men being raped by men often don't dare take any legal steps, for fear of coming off as weak. Derek went as far as not recognizing his own reflection anymore, seeing a muscular tall guy looking back at him, while he felt small, weak and helpless inside.

Jamie Fessenden is clearly becoming one of my favorite authors with this one. He goes where other m/m authors usually don't go and sheds light on the darkest corners of the human mind.

I also need to say a few words about Russ, because he's absolutely the best - THE BEST - character you could imagine. Sure, he was helpless in the face of Derek's trauma. He wasn't a therapist and often wasn't sure how to react to Derek's unexpected outbursts or when it would have been better to let Derek deal with things himself, instead of shielding him from all obstacles in life.

But Russ is simply the best guy. I loved him so much. His down to Earth attitudes, his kindness, his masculinity. I loved how he hopefully dated the deranged but handsome Ian who basically just used him as a sexual kink fest ("But... would you still be fucking me if I wasn't a cop?").

And I found Russ' exciting weekend at a clothing optional gay b&b totally heartbreakingly. It seemed as if nobody wanted more than sex from the poor guy, even though he reached out to the guys every single time. How could anybody NOT jump at the chance of being Russ' boyfriend??

And when Russ found Derek, he proved that he was a loyal partner and stood by his boyfriend through thick and thin, even when sex wasn't on the horizon at all.

I totally loved the guy. 5 stars for Russ! He was so real, you could almost touch him through the pages. Gosh, I'm fangirling way too much, sorry.

No kidding, this story was definitely an amazing, touching and enlightening read.

I recommend this to everyone!

5 stars and a top 10 favorite read in this year!

Aeren says

Quería que esta novela me cautivase, el tema me llama y soy adicta a un buen angst siempre que tenga HEA, sin embargo, debo decir que esta vez la historia para mi no ha funcionado. Soy plenamente consciente que es un tema peliagudo y en mi opinión, el autor lo lleva bastante bien, descriptivo sin caer en demasiadas explicaciones innecesarias, por desgracia, esto no sucede con el resto de la historia que está llena de un sinnúmero de detalles que ha hecho que me aburra mucho por momentos, nunca es buena señal cuando miro más de dos veces cuanto me queda para acabar según el kindle. Comenté que tenía serias dudas con los personajes porque en ningún momento he conseguido conectar con ellos o entender o 'creerme' que hubiese química. Como digo más arriba, he sentido que se cuenta demasiado, no hay lugar a una reflexión ni a interpretaciones, el POV dúal sólo ha servido para que el tempo sea aún más tedioso, en serio que no necesito saber qué opinan ambos de la misma escena. Tampoco necesitaba saber con pelos y señales las correrías sexuales de uno de ellos, insertando esas escenas en medio de los problemas de Derek, la verdad es que he pensado en saltarme cosas porque, (view spoiler)

Otro detalle que me ha hecho poca o ninguna gracia es lo acartonados que eran los antagonistas, en especial el ex de Derek, he visto villanos similares en culebrones, muy poco creibles, de verdad. Concluyo con lo que no me ha gustado porque no todo ha sido malo, se puede observar que hay un buen trabajo detrás del tema y el asunto está tratado de forma sensible, así que asumo que es una de esas veces en las que se puede decir lo de: no eres tú, es culpa mía.

Kim says

In this book, Jamie Fessenden handles a serious subject with a deft hand. Derek must face the repercussions of sexual assault: in his personal life, his professional life, his sense of self, and reactions he receives from others. Although this is a serious subject, the book isn't depressing at all. Touches of humor lighten things, as does the real emotion that grows between Derek and Russ. The writing is excellent and the story surprises in good ways. I think the ultimate message of the book is about healing and hope, and that's a very good thing.

I listened to the audio version of this, narrated by K.C. Kelly. As always, K.C. brings great depth of emotion to the characters.

Cory says

A solid book about a difficult subject. I will definitely read more from this author.

Lori says

Wow.

Thanks SheReadsALot, it was your review that convinced me to read this.

It was a decidedly good choice.

Sandra says

4.5 stars

This was a difficult read for me. While the assault in this book is not one of my triggers, I feel I must warn you to heed the blurb and be aware of what happens in this book.

This was a difficult read. It had to be even more difficult to write, so hats off to Jamie for managing to depict this horrific topic and its aftermath with honesty, integrity and respect.

When we first meet Derek in this book, he comes across as a nice guy, however brow-beaten into nothing more than a doormat to his fiance Tim, a selfish, uncaring, and jealous prick. Their relationship seems cracked, with Derek making excuse after excuse for Tim's behavior, while refusing to see what's right in front of him.

There were also some things in Derek's background, in his youth, that had serious consequences on how he viewed himself, his romance with Tim, and subsequently what happened to him.

What the author did here was build a believable character with sufficient background to make him realistic in his actions and thoughts. Derek seemed real to me, while Tim and Victor (Derek's boss) almost appeared to be one-dimensional - one a selfish prick, the other a near psychopath without remorse, justifying his actions much like any rapist or rapist excuser does. Victor triggered immense rage within me, and not just because of the assault, but because of his behavior before and after. He's a bully. He only thinks of himself and his image, he thinks that everyone wants him, when he's nothing more than an insufferable, disgusting pig.

Then Derek has to go to Tampa with Victor, who also for some inexplicable reason is his best friend. Their relationship appears to be based on friendly rivalry, working out together, and nothing much else. I didn't understand what Derek found interesting in Victor, or why he thought of him as his best friend.

The assault happens while Derek and Victor are in Tampa. For some reason, and this niggled at me and is part of why the book didn't reach 5 stars, they're made to share a room. It almost seemed to me as if Victor used company funding as an excuse to be alone in a room with Derek, as if he had planned this ahead of time.

Derek often comes across as clueless to other people's motives and intentions, possibly a result of his childhood, and seems to trust easily.

The actual rape and immediate aftermath of the assault were difficult to stomach, even though it is not dragged out in the book, and does not, even for split second, seem to be explicit simply for titillation purposes. It was tactfully written, honestly written, respectfully written.

What struck me most was the self-blame Derek falls into, and the self-hate that immediately followed, tinged by the words of his stepfather still ringing through his head. He displays all signs of having been assaulted,

no matter how hard he tries to hide it, and it speaks to Victor's and Tim's selfishness that neither sees nor cares that Derek is different.

Russ Thomas, the police officer who lives next door to the cabin Derek and Tim purchased early in the book, doesn't take long to figure out that Derek experienced some horrendous trauma, even though he doesn't know for a while just what kind of trauma. Attracted to Derek from the moment they met, even though he wouldn't poach on an existing relationship, he becomes a shoulder for Derek to lean on, and then more, as the truth comes out.

The author did a good job establishing a solid characterization for Russ as well, even though the switching POVs didn't really work too well for me, especially early on, when Derek and Russ aren't even on page together. This became easier to handle as the two men start to hang out, no matter how tentative and scared Derek still is around Russ, and then went away completely, when their relationship gets stronger.

There were some things that niggled. The depiction of the HR rep for one - I found it difficult to believe that this was realistic (and maybe I'm naive), but the reaction of HR to simply fire Derek without having any substantiated cause, and being given a completely different account from Derek, seemed a bit far-fetched. Derek's termination seemed to be more designed to keep the small fish from making any waves, and thus protecting the reputation of the company. This then follows the company's decision to room the men together to save money, which, while realistic enough on the surface, could then put the company in a position of having to defend itself for causing the situation that allowed the rape in the first place.

Tim's characterization, and his subsequent actions after Derek flees to the cabin, also fell flat for me. I couldn't for the life of me understand what Derek saw in Tim to begin with, but after that it was even more difficult. He seemed petty and insecure, and while I'm sure I was supposed to dislike him, I also felt that his character wasn't given any reason for acting the way he did, and thus fell flat for me.

I'm glad to got to watch Derek put the pieces of his life back together, with Russ' gentle support, and I'm glad we got to see their romance blossoming, with patient care and soft approaches. I'm glad that Victor got what was coming to him, and that Tim seemed to lose out as well. There is a hopeful tone at the end, and the sweet, tender romance between Derek and Russ is made stronger by what they endure to get to that point.

As I said, this was a difficult read. I'm sure it was difficult to write as well, but it's a book that needed to be written. The most important message in this book is that men can be raped, that it happens more often than we'd like to think, and that many, many men never report the assault because of shame and fear.

Just like women victims, men don't ask for assault either. They are not assaulted because they walk down the street in short shorts, or shirtless, or because they're drunk or passed out, or because they are out late at night by themselves. Men are raped for the same reasons women are raped - because the rapists have no respect for anyone else, and because their rapists feel the need for whatever reason to exert power of their victims, by holding them down, by forcing them to give up something that is sacred and should never be taken - the right to control their own bodies.

Yes, this was a difficult book, but I'm glad Jamie Fessenden chose to write it. I'd be even more happy if you chose to read it.

Highly recommended.

** I received a free copy of this book from its publisher. A positive review was not promised in return. **

SheReadsALot says

A Hearts On Fire Review

4.5 HEARTS-- Hello Mr. Fessenden. It's a pleasure to finally read your work. *pushes up glasses* I'm your newest fan. :)

I'm not one to hand out high ratings just because an author can handle a difficult subject. If anything, I'm even tougher on the story because I don't want pretty, simple happy endings once an 'owwie' is introduced. I recently read and reviewed a book on this blog where the main character was sexually assaulted and they miraculously recovered from the event to have sex with the new guy...in a few days.

I hate that.

Don't you think realistically it takes *time* to recover? Why must the victim jump back in the sex & emotions saddle to satisfy the reader instead of their self organically? Why can't the book give the victimized character due justice, a love story, a believable plot and back story?

If you're a reader like me who finds any of what I just mentioned your kind of thing, then let me introduce you to Jamie Fessenden's "Violated".

Because it is one hell of a book, without trying too hard. (Okay, I think there were minor quibbles for me. *Quibbles*, if you will.) But overall, excellent writing.

Told in dual timeline and alternating POV, *Violated* follows Derek Sawyer who has a sucky life with an overly jealous fiance, a sweet dog and a jerky muscle head best friend who is also his supervisor. Derek bought a vacation home/cabin in the woods of New Hampshire with his reluctant fiance, Tim and meets his hunky cop neighbor, Russ Thomas. Don't worry, no cheating happens. Russ is looking for love and tries social clubs and hookups but he keeps going back in his head to Derek.

The book title & blurb is a key hint as to what happened in the book. And it will be a deal breaker for some. **Trigger warning: rape and abuse.**

So let's just kick open the door without spoiling.

The rape and the aftermath. **Was it graphic? Yes.** And the aftermath was realistic. The PTSD. It struck a chord with me. A natural reaction for some might be the *should have, could have and would have done* in that type of situation but unless you've been in that situation, don't judge. It's a hard thing to do. And I can't judge a rape victim's choice. The numbers are out there, sadly each person doesn't get justice or get to see their rapist put behind bars. Nor does each victim seek counseling or speak up for themselves. I thought Derek's reactions to everything: before, during and after were true to life. Even the choice of rapist - Derek's best friend was statistically accurate, usually someone close to the person.

The rape **does not** darken the entire book. *Violated* is legit funny at points. There I am shattered along with Derek and then we cut to Russ who is hopeful for love and it doesn't work out. There is enough light to counterbalance the dark. I won't say 50/50 but it's frigging close.

"And I understand that Bill doesn't like having to wear condoms--he doesn't think it feels as good with one on--"

"Mom! Derek doesn't want to hear about what makes Bill's penis feel good."

Mrs. Thomas batted her eyelashes. "I'm sorry. Should we be talking about what makes your penis feel good instead?"

I swear Russ's mother is my kind of woman, super inappropriate and had no boundaries. I want to be her when I grow up.

I think the dual timeline worked for explaining the main characters and side characters (more so Tim the bitchy controlling fiance and Victor the villainous best friend). I got a deeper sense of how they ticked and worked. I understood their choices (if I didn't agree at that time I tried to remember, it's not what I want but what worked for the character) And the author really knew his characters.

I loved reading about real life men, struggling with...life. I enjoyed reading about Derek's struggles with his sexuality. He carried over resentment from his shitty childhood on what makes a real "man". I would love to do a case study on Derek.

As for the book's villain, I wish I could have had some alone time with him and a metal bat. I felt this way until nearly the end. And actually reading this guy, learning his thought process...he's just an idiot. I had my theory about him but I guess it'll remain a mystery.

The ending was fitting to the story. The justice? Closer to reality than not. And if you need to know, there is on-page sex in the book. The main characters have the majority of it with other people, but the story isn't about sex. And if you need to read about pure sex...why are you reading romance? Stroke fic is the better choice. ;) (Nothing wrong with that either.)

This book is about a connection between two men who weren't looking for it but got it anyway. It's quiet, but it is there.

This book is about rebuilding one's self after a tragedy, and not having a miracle delivered, or miracle penis solve the way.

This is **not just** a rape book.

This is romance, tame in comparison to some of the raunchier, popular titles that seem to be plaguing the feeds. I hope you catch the hint on what not to expect between the main characters too much.

The story ends at a great spot. It's a HEHEA <~~~ *Hard Earned* Happily Ever After. *whispers* The best kind.

And it works for the main characters.

Recommended for readers who don't mind the triggers, dual timelines and don't need a conventional HEA.

Tamika♥RBF MOOD♥ says

2.5 stars

This is going to be hard for me to rate, not because of the content solely based on the execution. I felt this was very much one-noted. I didn't get a rise out of myself reading this not one time. Certain parts of the story should demand a certain reaction out of it's audience, but this did not get one. Reading this story, I feel like the way it was written left it emotionally unavailable. It did not feel authentic at all. I say this as my own words, but I just felt like I was reading this, and felt completely detached from the story. I reached the end and felt absolutely nothing. I want to thank the author for being bold enough to write about this type of incident. I don't think people talk about it enough. Going into this I expected turmoil, tears, and just an emotional read and I didn't get it. I don't want to say everyone is going to have the same reaction, because they aren't but it was a straight read through. If I never picked this up, I don't feel like I would have missed anything.

The story itself was good. I liked certain areas of it. I disliked more than some of the characters, and the situations that the MC's found themselves in. The author did a good job on the subject. Its not something we read a lot about in mm with a realistic feeling to it. Derek to be reacted like an individual would in this situation to me. A couple of times, I felt myself wanting to throttle him for not speaking up for himself afterwards, but nothing can be done on my time. I applaud Derek for going to work with his attacker everyday and living, surviving, and fighting to get back to himself. This incident brought up Derek's dislike with himself. I think all the personal issues surrounding his sexuality might have impeded his recovery, but this is only my speculation reading it. Russ was a good guy, and character. I liked Russ with his sister, and I liked Russ with Derek. I did not like Russ on his own. It felt very filler-ish type. Like the author needed some space plugged up so we are just going to put Russ with these random people. I'm saying that because he needed someone else, I'm saying it like it did not feel real. Where was the connection between Russ and the other two guys? None, I felt zero hints of magic with them, sure they weren't long –term, but Russ wasn't the casual type of guy. I just think it should not have been in the story, it added n0thing really except me feeling like it was open space.
