



Jace's Trial

J.M. Wolf

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Life is a trial full of obstacles that stand between you and your goals. Do you have the courage to face your own trial?

Jace Garrison was a musical prodigy at Juilliard ready to take the world by storm. Everything he could ever want out of life was unfolding right before his eyes, until everything came crashing down at once. With his muse gone, along with everything he loved, will Jace find the courage to move on?

Former Navy SEAL Gerard Ramhart had always played by his family's rules and traditions. Until he fell in love with Riley Garrison. Unfortunately, before Gerard had the courage to propose to the man he loved, Riley's life was taken away. Gerard was left devastated, with only his memories of Riley and the pain of losing him to keep him going.

One year after Riley's death, Gerard finally makes it to Riley's hometown in Abingdon, Virginia and meets his son Jace for the very first time. Two men grieving over the loss they shared, and during their time of heartache, something blossoms. Can Gerard help Jace find the will to live the life he's meant to have? And can Jace find his muse and accept his feelings for Gerard, despite the fact that Gerard once belonged to his father?

TRIGGER WARNING:

This book contains content of physical and mental abuse, grieving, and bottled emotions.

* This is Book 1 in the series, but can be read as a standalone story- no cliffhangers.*

Jace's Trial Details

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Author : J.M. Wolf

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From Reader Review Jace's Trial for online ebook

miss natasha stokes says

Amazing book and can't wait for book 2

OMG I normally don't cry when reading but this one had me crying more than once. It was hell cleaning my glasses of tears every so often lol. It was brilliant, amazing, captivating...you get the gist i hope. I can't wait for book 2. I fully recommend this book to anyone.

Jewel says

Loved the premise, but the execution...not so much. Too much telling, not enough showing where the emotional states of the MC's is concerned. Drama out of nowhere and the dialogue was ...odd. People don't really talk that way, in my experience. I struggled to finish this book, unfortunately. Everything seemed really superficial. This one wasn't for me.

Kaila says

This is the first by this author that I have read and holy crap.. it was amazing. I loved it so much. The emotions.. all over the place.. everywhere.. I felt everything so much. I even teared up in some spots.. especially one spot in particular (I won't mention because spoilers but when you read it.. you'll know lol) This story was a perfect second chance story.. it was also what I think is considered a may/december romance.. and it had a few twists and turns I didn't see coming. I cannot wait to see what is next because I know I need more as soon as possible. It was superb!

~◊~Doxni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~◊~ says

~1.5~

I seriously struggled to finish this one. I wanted to give a newbie author a chance, and I see a glimmer of potential, but the writing really got in the way of the story.

When I read a book, I want to get so caught up in the story, I forget I'm reading fiction and truly believe that the characters are living, breathing people somewhere; I want to know what happens next.

But there are other times ... well, when the stories I'm reading really don't ring true to life at all. *Jace's Trial* is such a story.

In losing Riley, both MCs lost someone dear to them: a father and a boyfriend. But I didn't feel the grief. I was TOLD Jace was broken, but I never made an emotional connection.

The dialogue was stilted and contrived. Too many adverbs were used to describe how someone laughed or spoke, when the emotions should have been conveyed through the conversations themselves.

Random people, like Jace's ex, appeared out of nowhere to create drama. The internal monologues were repetitive and heavy handed. And, frankly, I needed more conflict before the men jumped into bed together and Jace's problems were cured by magic dick.

Rounding up because I really believe the author tried. Alas, trying isn't always enough.

Alexu says

Loved it!

This story was amazing, full of deep emotions, love and lessons we all should listen to.

My heart was breaking for Jace as I read about his struggle with his grief but the way Gerard handled it and supported Jace? Amazing!

note to self: don't read this book during office breaks or while waiting for a meeting; people might ask about the puffy eyes

Both MCs were so strong and willful, overcoming grief each in their own way to find a hea none of them thought it was possible.

Loved it and can't wait to read the next stories in this series!

Merged review:

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Loved it and can't wait to read the next stories in this series!

Deanna Against Censorship says

Cannot wait to read next in series.

Out of heartbreak and loss, love grows. Emotional but beautiful story. I heard the music. I loved the cover. It was perfect for this book. Looking forward to the next book in the series.

Joyfully Jay says

A Joyfully Jay review.

3.75 stars

I love May/December romances. I also love a good hurt/comfort story, so I was excited to be able to read Jace's Trial. I found it was an interesting story that held my attention, smoothly transitioned from Jace's POV to Gerard's and back, and had likable characters with whom I was able to feel a connection. There were a few things I felt...unsettled about, and I will get to them later.

Jace and Gerard were well written, well fleshed out characters, and I was an instant fan. I wanted to hug them both as they cried over Riley. I wanted to get to know them as people, individually and as a couple.

I really felt for Jace. Not only did he lose his father, but he lost his muse. It was Riley who'd introduced Jace to music and helped him to want to spend his life making it. Jace simply lost that love when Riley was killed, and it broke my heart. Also, in an interesting subplot, Jace had been involved in a twisted relationship with a professor at Juilliard where he was mentally and physically abused. The poor young man was lost in life, working himself to the bone, and bottling up his feelings of grief, shame, and anger.

Read Kenna's review in its entirety here.

Truuss says

4.5 stars

Jace and Gerard

Warm and considerate written story. A lot of heartache in it. It is not a regular read....it has some emotions in it coming from a place... I don't even know how to describe.

After some devastated occurrence Jace has gone back living in Abingdon, a small place where everybody takes care of each other!

When Jace's father Riley came out they all had his back and were very supportive.

Jace and his father shared something important ... music... communication through music.

And now Jace can't anymore...

Gerard found the love of his life in Riley... before they could share their life together Gerard lost him...and Jace lost his father his muse....

Gerard will finally meet Riley's family after a year when he will be at the memorial ceremony.

When Gerard faces Jace the connection is instant, there is a crackling sound when they shake hands.

Gerard brings something into Jace's life and they both don't know what to do with each other.

Jace has unprocessed feelings of grief and Gerard wants to help him open up. There are some moving heartbreak moments...

There are demons from Jace's past and Gerard is determined to burn them down.

The question is if they can mend their already shattered hearts...

To watch Jace opening up and see the true him did something to my heart...

I really loved this story, It could have been awkward or very complicated but it wasn't. It was sincere and endearing...it was sweet with some very sharp edges. Their connection was instant, their lovemaking steamy, hot but drenched in a lot of love.

It was written in a passionate way, sensual, endearing, with hurt and above all with love....true love and second chances <3

Kindly received an arc from Gay Books Promotion for reviewing.

Gabriella (Gabi) says

DNF @57%

I give up. Too insta for me. I don't believe it.

The writing isn't bad, but there's also quite a few typos, commas missing, repetitive words and other minor grammatical errors.

I just lost interest.

Esther Alayeto says

An amazing story that takes you on a journey of two people recovering from a loss and having a new beginning. The storyline is phenomenal, it captivated me right from the beginning. It's emotional, dramatic, heartbreak and heartwarming. Jace and Gerard are wonderful characters with an instant connection but not sure what to do about it.

I voluntarily reviewed an advanced reader copy of this book.

Bree Nead says

This book was shared by an author whose work I love on her Facebook page. I am incredibly grateful that she shared it! I knew right away that it sounded like a book that I wanted to try. And I am so glad that I did! This was an amazing story and I'm thankful that I had the chance to read it. I will be (slightly impatiently, lol) waiting for more. I can hardly wait to read about Adam!

Elaine White says

Book – Jace's Trial (Trials in Abingdon #1)

Author – J.M. Wolf

Star rating - ★★★★?

No. of Pages – 222

Cover – Gorgeous!

POV – 1st person, dual character

Would I read it again – Yes

Genre – LGBT, Romance, Contemporary, May/December

Triggers – loss, grief, depression, rape (not on page), domestic abuse, stalking

**** I WAS GIVEN THIS BOOK FOR MY READING PLEASURE ****

Reviewed for Divine Magazine

Jace's Trial is the start of a new series and one that proves to be as touching, inspiring, and heartwarming as it is heart-wrenching.

First off, for an ARC copy, I was seriously impressed with how well edited it was. I know that there was another, more fully edited, version after the copy I was given, but I'm still impressed. ARC's are given on the basis that they're not the completed version, so I never usually remark upon the editing unless it makes it difficult to follow or understand the story. Here, there were so few issues that I barely noticed them. That's amazing and I love seeing it. The presentation of music notes and guitars was also a really addition, making it pleasing to the eye as well as well formatted.

When it comes to the story, this is one book that has everything. It hits hard on the emotions, but it also has lighter moments that don't make it feel oppressively heavy or depressing in any way. It deals with some very serious and important topics, without glossing over them or using them just for impact. They're true plot points and not only show who Jace is, as a person, but are part of his journey from who he was to who he will be.

Jace has always seen himself as too young, too naive, and without a backbone. He has bad taste in men and constantly thinks about his regrets. But, I love how his character explored the truth of victim mindsets. Jace was once in a domestically abusive relationship – both mentally and physically – and the way he is used by J.M. to explore the reality of that hard time of his life is both beautiful for the growth we see in Jace but also heart-wrenching because he felt so alone and isolated. Not only do we see Jace continually blaming himself – in the classic way that most domestic abuse victims do – but we also see his thought process for why he blames himself. That he feels like he gave in, that he allowed it to happen, and why. He explores the situations that felt natural, at the time, but feel wrong in a different light, with some distance.

And, can I just say, that I was concerned Jace hadn't said anything for a long time. For a good part of the book, I hoped and prayed that the entire Brett issue would have a satisfying conclusion and...it did! Thank you! I can't count the number of times that a guy like this has been a big part of an MC's story but it was all ignored or brushed under the "it's in the past" rug, so that there was no real conclusion. Here, I got peace of mind. I got to see Jace find his strength and the power that he'd always had, but never knew he possessed, to do something about the man who had so seriously impacted his life, both professionally and personally.

When it comes to the relationship Jace and Gerard have, I'll admit that I was intrigued but sceptical. I have never really been comfortable with "close family" relationship cross-overs, such as a dad's boyfriend moving on to date the son. It's always felt a little too close for comfort, for me, but I knew the skill of J.M.'s storytelling and had seen enough snippets in his private group to be convinced this could be the story to change my mind. And it did. There was real chemistry between these two.

Not only are Jace and Gerard smart enough to question the closeness, to wonder how Riley would feel about

their growing proximity, and what people would say or think, and about how weird it could be, but they talk. They actually communicate with each other and the people who care about them and their happiness. They share their feelings. They get to know each other. They spend time together. Yes, initially, it's all for Riley's sake, because he would want them to get on with each other and to know each other. But then it becomes personal and they realise that they're both suffering and maybe they can help make that pain they're carrying a little more bearable, a little less traumatizing, and less of a burden.

In the process, the insta-attraction becomes respect, understanding and a budding relationship. It's in no way insta-love. Sure, there's some intense and complicated insta-lust in there, but they're both smart enough to remain hands-off until they know where they stand with each other. I love that. I love that J.M. took the time to think about it and explore that relationship and all of its complications, when so many other authors have glossed over it. J.M. admits, through his characters, that some people (like me) would struggle to accept such a relationship, but he doesn't confine it's exploration to the MC's, he also has Jace's godmother, aunt and boss/second-father-figure talk through it with him on multiple occasions, asking how he feels, if he's comfortable, and challenging Gerard about his intentions. They challenge each other about how it will work, how they feel about it, and if it's weird. THANK YOU! Finally, an author who can see it from both sides and takes the time and care to explore both sides of the argument.

And can I just say...Jace's song lyrics are beautiful. They really show the extent of J.M.'s extraordinary talent. Not only beautiful, but thought provoking and inspiring, the lyrics add another dimension to an already great story.

There's one more thing I have to say about the writing, before I stop waffling...there's a lot of repetition. Now, while this would normally bug me to all Hell and back, I get it. Because, this isn't repeating things to remind the reader. It's not repeating things just because it's showing the same thing from two POV's or because one person is telling lots of people the same thing. The repetition here has a purpose. Yes, Jace repeatedly mentions why he left school, what happened within his relationship with Brett, his worries over his potential relationship with Gerard, and how his dad's death is affecting him, but it's all necessary. First off, it's made quite clear that Jace has been thrown off his usual mental equilibrium with his dad's death. His head had been thrown into a tailspin and his emotions are all over the place, so it's natural that he would be stuck mentally replaying all of his regrets and all of his pain, while trying to convince everyone that he's alright. But, most importantly, secondly he has to repeat himself. Because, writing Jace's POV without mentioning these important things would be wrong. It would feel like, as a reader, I was being deliberately deceived about his head space and his life. These things are too important to keep hidden from his own POV. At the same time, we can't read about how these things are affecting him and then not see him telling Gerard. That is a pivotal moment in their relationship and to avoid putting it on page, just because we already know the story, would have been wrong. So, although I have never said this before, kudos to the author for repeating these important events. They're vital to who Jace is, but it's just as important for us to see him dealing with them internally and then sharing them with Gerard.

~

So, why did I give it 4 stars and not 5? While brilliant and with a very touching storyline, there were times that I just felt Jace wasn't ready for this. Sometimes when he spoke, especially during the boyfriend conversation, I felt like he was still way too emotionally fragile for a serious relationship. He felt too young, too hurt and traumatized by the loss of his father and all it had brought out in him, to really be ready for something so serious and permanent. At times, I felt like he was more of an emotionally distant sixteen year old than the twenty year old he should have been. For that reason, I had to hesitate over how serious his relationship with Gerard became and how quickly. It was only two weeks. Two weeks of intense emotional

growth, revelations and a lot of serious thinking that went back to previous abuse. At times, I felt that he wasn't fully recovered from his relationship with Brett – flinching or expecting to be hit, when Gerard stopped the door from closing, etc. For that reason, I just couldn't allow myself to be so fully invested in the relationship. I loved it and how it was told, but I was also left with questions about Jace's state of mind and whether this was the best thing for him. He seemed so eager to fall in love, to be serious with someone that I was afraid he was searching for a distraction from his pain more than anything else. That he was trying to push all the bad things into the past by hiding them behind a happy relationship.

Saying that, I have to give some serious praise to J.M. for the way he dealt with the issues he explored in this novel. Exploring grief, friendship, family, freedom and trust, all in the guise of a small town where people looked out for each other, while Jace lost himself, found himself, and mentally examined his past and his future. Exploring domestic abuse in all its facets, from wanting out, feeling at blame, trapped, ashamed, responsible, afraid of judgement; the use of emotional and physical threats, financial vulnerability, the abuse of a position of power. The story is a strong but heartbreakingly tale that is so poignant in today's society of #MeToo and #TimesUp.

That, for me, is what makes it so special. The fact that Jace truly did go through trials and struggles and had to find the surface while drowning in his own life. The romance and the relationship were, for me, the secondary plot to all of that. They were a great added element, but it was Jace and his struggles that had all the power in this story, and used it to draw me in.

I can't wait to read Adam's popstar adventures in the next installment.

~

Favourite Quotes

“Everything needed to go. Locking them away was like locking the last piece of my heart, and I realized that my passion for music was another thing that the universe was taking from me. It took music away from me the moment it decided to take my father away from me.”

“My lyrics were like a diary, telling the world what I was afraid to admit out loud.”

“Gerard Ramhart entranced me, and that terrified me.”

“I pulled away from the most heated kiss of my life and rested my forehead against his. We were panting, our eyes closed, but we saw each other in more ways than simple sight. We could see right through one another, our affection, our fears, our joy, our sorrow. It was all on display for us to bear witness.”

Cadiva says

2.5*

I wanted to like this book more than I ended up doing as, on paper, it had so many tropes I love reading about.

Unfortunately, for me, it just didn't work for a number of reasons, not least being the lack of development given to the relationship between Jase and Gerard.

I know there's such a thing as instant love, that meeting with your soul mate, but I just didn't feel that here, especially since Gerard had been in love with Jase's dad and in a relationship with him only a relatively short while earlier.

The narrative was an odd jumble of styles too, told in first person alternative POV, it jumped around and the dialogue was, at times, odd and unnatural sounding.

Plus, at one point early in the story when the two men first meet, Jase's eyes are described almost simultaneously as both 'scintillating' and yet also expressing the *cold, blank and lifeless stare* his aunt had warned Gerard about. I scratched my head a bit at that point.

There's good points though, it's a nicely fleshed out world with some interesting secondary characters, there's potential for more stories in this setting and it's well edited in terms of proofing and grammar and the cover is gorgeous.

I think the author has promise and I will definitely keep an eye out for the next book in the series.

#ARC received from the author in return for an honest and unbiased review.

Line says

Freebie at amazon.com right now: <https://www.amazon.com/Jaces-Trial-Tr...>

Amanda Viecelli says

Wow, what can I say about this book? First of all, have tissues handy! I may be a bit more sensitive about the subject matter than most as, like Jace, I lost my father a few years ago, but I'd still recommend tissues! Jace and Gerard's story is a tough one for a few reasons. The relationships they each had with Jace's dad before he died were beautiful, and I'm glad that although he is not physically present as the book plays out, we still get to feel the depth of both Jace and Gerard's love for him, and in return, his for them.

Jace is a musical prodigy who dropped out of Juilliard a couple of years before this book begins. It's heartbreaking to see how devastated and disillusioned this young man is by everything the universe has thrown at him. I intimately understand his inability to fall apart outwardly, to properly grieve, and this is where Gerard comes in, at exactly the right time.

Gerard thought he lost it all when his love, Riley, was killed-in-action. A year later, he finally is able to go to Riley's hometown for his memorial and meet the family he hadn't had the chance to while Riley was alive. There is an instant connection between Gerard and Jace, but what exactly it is and what it means is something neither can quite figure out yet.

The journey these men take together to heal and (quite unexpectedly) fall in love is hard. There are no easy fixes here - it is raw, and gritty, and REAL. It's also beautiful in a way I couldn't help but love. The relationship that develops between them is sweet and loving, passionate and sexy. I love the support they get all around as well. The town of Abingdon is a wonderful setting, with great characters I am excited to learn more about as the series continues. I love Jace's best friend, Adam, and need to know just what is going on with him. Bring on book 2!!
