



## Fidelity

*Lia Black*

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*Librarian's Note: An alternate cover for this ASIN can be found here*

*How far can a man go in the name of faith?*

He was once the Angel of Fidelity. Worshiped by a mortal knight, Fidelity fell in love with him, and lost him. Heartbroken and believing he'd been abandoned, The angel fell from the Empyrean into the darkness of the Abyss. Now, he is Fydelis, the demon of Regret, and put to the task of collecting the soul of the knight he once loved; a man who no longer recognizes him for what he'd once been.

Father Gareth De'Aubyn is a man tormented by his past and ready to sell his future to save the souls of the people his army once threatened. He's traded his armor for a cassock, and his sword for a hammer, working to help build a village for the refugees of war. When his church is attacked by unknown assassins, Gareth is mortally wounded, and with his dying breath, he calls to the Empyrean for help.

But his god does not answer.

Instead, a demon, terrible and beautiful, heeds his call, asking him to give up his soul for a chance to set everything right. Bargain made, Gareth relives that fateful day, but this time he has the power of a demon to fight off the attack.

They set out on a journey together, Gareth tasked not only with the surrender of his own soul, but those of twenty others who've tried to escape their fate. Yet each day brings a mystery that tests the barrier between good and evil, and changes everything that Gareth thought he knew about faith, love, and *Fidelity*.

**Content warnings:** Graphic violence, fantasy-based theosophical overtones, dub-con, rape, heavy on the dark at times, snarky banter, hot and sweet m/m sex.

## **Fidelity Details**

Date : Published May 1st 2015 by VineDark/ BlackHouse Press

ISBN :

Author : Lia Black

Format : Kindle Edition 213 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Romance, M M Romance, Dark, Paranormal, Angels, Historical

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## From Reader Review Fidelity for online ebook

### Jason Bradley says

4.5 stars. This was an incredible tale. With some editing, this could definitely be a 5 star read.

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### Amba says

Lia Black is known for her brilliant characters. She writes about real people, who have a past and the scars to prove it. Her latest work is the strongest yet.

In 'Fidelity', we meet a holy man, Gareth. All his life he's been faithful to his god and his people, and in his hour of darkest need, he calls for help. But instead of his Creator hearing him, it appears that his call has been answered by the Sunderer, the god of darkness. Instead of an angel being sent to save him, a demon is sent instead.

The demon Fydelis is sexy and playful, as he teases and tempts the good cleric Gareth. Gareth is a man of deep and abiding faith, whose devotion to his absent patron and to his flock is both inspiring and moving.

As she always does, Lia creates characters and a story that are more complicated than they first seem. The impossible duo of holy man and demon must work together to find the truth about the world and each other.

Lia Black has done it again. Your faith will be rewarded.

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### Don Bradshaw says

Well written with really three stories woven into one. There is Gareth's crisis of the faith in which he leaves the Brotherhood to become a village priest. There is the journey of Fydelis and Gareth to collect souls and clean up the mess that the Crusaders left behind. Lastly, there is the love between Gareth and his guardian Fidelity now become Fydelis. This was a wonderfully complex story that could have benefited by better editing. This is my first book by Ms Black but will not be my last.

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### Tully Vincent says

Well-written with excellent pacing, this story had me enthralled from the gripping first scene onward. Dark and not for the faint-hearted, one particular scene at the beginning took my breath away with its grisly, shocking cruelty. But amidst the bloody battle scenes, there is humor, small joys, and sweet tenderness. Amidst the dismantling, we are put back together. The ride to get there is gut-wrenching, heartbreaking, and painful to read at parts. And I bloody well loved it. All of it.

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## Reflection says

Fidelity is a magical tale that weaves a love story amongst issues of faith and failure. It was like reading a fantastical allegory.

Gareth De'Aubyn was once a Crusader. Now he is a man of the cloth hoping to build a better world for his flock. Whilst a Crusader, Gareth chose Fidelity to be his guardian angel.

Unable to protect his flock from assassins Gareth prays for divine intervention from heaven's Creator. Instead his prayers are answered by a demon sent by the Sunderer, god of the underworld.

Fydelis is literally a tortured soul who believes that he has fallen from grace as Gareth's Guardian Angel and that his love for Gareth caused his fall. Fydelis is tortured by the Sunderer (and those scenes are very dark most certainly not for the faint of heart) who is amused to send him to watch over Gareth once more and ensure that he completes his bargain to reap twenty souls before handing his own soul over to the Sunderer forever.

Gareth and Fydelis spend time together and gradually their unlikely friendship builds. They find strength in each other and on their journey exchange views and ideas. Gareth may have sold his soul to the Sunderer but he remains true to the Creator.

Fydelis discovers what it is like to take human shape and his discoveries are both amusing and touching. Gareth with Fydelis' prompting reassesses his life and some of the conclusions he has reached.

Meanwhile the guys have a mystery to unravel about why Gareth and his flock were in danger. Together, they test everything they thought they knew about each other, faith, love, and fidelity.

I found this tale endearing despite its dark themes, the story is rich in character development and conversation that ranges from witty to philosophical.

Having no faith background myself, I have a fascination and interest in theology. I also hold a wariness of books aiming to preach or convert. I need not have worried, this is a thought provoking and interesting study of faith and love and I found it darkly beautiful and engaging. I read this largely with a big grin on my face reminded about the delight and magic of life and love, of redemption and hope. A great read, wonderfully told.

I received a complimentary copy from the author in exchange for an honest review as part of the Male/Male Romance group's Don't Buy My Love event.

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## Nancy says

### **Cross-posted at Outlaw Reviews and at Shelf Inflicted**

Father Gareth De'Aubyn, former Crusader, is wracked with guilt for his part in the destruction of innocent

lives. Now a priest, he has an opportunity to repair some of the damage he caused and atone for his sins. When Gareth is gravely wounded during an attack on his church, his pleas to his god are answered by the demon, Fydelis.

In return for Fydelis' help in saving his life, protecting his followers, and seeking vengeance against his attackers, Gareth must sacrifice his soul to the Sunderer god, Malaketh, a nasty piece of work and Fydelis' master. Fydelis isn't just any ordinary demon, though. He was once Gareth's guardian angel, and just because he now possesses cloven hooves and a forked tail doesn't mean he stopped having feelings for Gareth.

I'm watching *Supernatural* now (yeah, I know I'm late to the party) and was keen to read a story about a regretful priest and the reluctant demon that turns his life upside down.

The story went down as smoothly as a mug of cheap lager, pleasant tasting and drinkable.

What I liked:

- The slow-burning romance between Gareth and Fydelis, two broken men who must overcome the difficult hurdles of loneliness, regret, and grief.
- The humorous banter between Gareth and Fydelis that offset the violence and despair.
- Gareth's unshakable faith and kind heart.
- Gripping and well-paced story.

What didn't work so well:

- One-dimensional villains. I would have liked some insight into the minds and motivations of Malaketh and General Karathis.
- Fydelis' telepathic ability was interesting, but not fully explored or utilized. Similarly, his ability to enter Gareth and direct his actions.
- Interesting minor characters, like Yeol Havram and Paetrik, deserved far more page time.
- The graphic physical and sexual torture of Fydelis by Malaketh felt distracting more than disturbing. Because Malaketh lacked any depth and Fydelis did not appear to be permanently affected, these scenes failed to have any impact on me.
- Errors, plot holes, and incoherency in places made this a sometimes frustrating read.

For example:

Does Fydelis have a soul?

“He felt himself shatter; his heart, mind, soul, and spirit breaking into a million pieces. He collapsed on top of Gareth, kissing his throat as tears ran from his eyes and he sobbed like a child.”

Or doesn't he?

“They ignored both Gareth and Fydelis, for neither of them had a soul for the taking, but something else seemed to draw their notice.”

By the time I finished reading, I was fast forgetting details in the story. It felt just like getting to the bottom of that mug of cheap lager and yearning for a richer, more full-bodied beer.

**\*Book provided by author in exchange for an honest review.**

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### **Lia Black says**

7/30/2015 UPDATE:

Smashwords edition now available!

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view...>

3/30/2015:

**SPECIAL PRE-ORDER PRICING!**

Order from Amazon before the May 1st Release and save 40%!

(Anyone who has already purchased the book at the regular price will be given a credit by Amazon).

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### **Samantha says**

I feel like I have been on an abusive roller coaster - or that I went to war with these two.

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**fi·del·i·ty**

**f??del?d?/**

*noun*

faithfulness to a person, cause, or belief, demonstrated by continuing loyalty and support.

When Fidelity thought that his love had turned his back on him, he fell from Empyrean in search of him, but instead he was drawn into the Abyss, where his soul was ravaged and his pure essence made corrupt by the Sunderer. His life and death is a series of gruesome episodes, torture in which he is torn and ravaged, only to be made whole once again, but not as Fidelity, as Regret, and a creature now named Fydelis.

When Gareth calls for help, the Sunderer finds a new means to toy with Fydelis - a torture that doesn't come with tearing skin and shredding bones, but instead a sort of abuse of the heart.

But Gareth, a Crusader turned priest, has no idea what he's getting himself into when he sells his soul to save the lives of his flock. What starts out as a cry for help soon becomes a twisting journey in which no soul is safe and both Fydelis and Gareth must come to terms with the future that lies ahead. But what if the mortal never truly turned his back on Fidelity? And what if together, they can be something more?

*"Why not you?" Gareth whispered softly. "Who shall deliver you, my Fidelity?"*

If you know Lia Black for anything, it should be that her stories have a way of taking a life of their own. She manages to create a world that goes beyond expectations and becomes a real, breathing entity. This story is no different. Within it she creates a world corrupt and yet holding onto its Faith. The religion she creates is intriguing and inspiring, holding a shadow of those we recognize today, but twisting into something more.

There are some unbearably dark moments in this, times when you may cringe or turn away, wishing for the pain to end for Fydelis, but are still unable to stop reading. I had moments of that, particularly in the first time we see Fydelis being literally dismantled by his master. The raw details are truly breathtaking and macabre. And yet, despite this world of pain and death, she manages to weave in moments of humor that are surprising and comforting.

Additionally, when I want battle, I want something bloody and fierce, and this story delivers. It doesn't try to hide the details of blood or bone fragments. It's not for the lighthearted, but for those who do enjoy being taken on a wild, exhausting ride, this is for you.

I went through a range of theories in my head, none of them grasping the full extent to what Lia had brewing in the story, and when it was all revealed, I was left feeling bruised, battered, and somehow rejuvenated. The ending of this story could not have been more right for these two characters. Imperfections remained, but it just so fitting for it to end where it did. I was left smiling from their journey.

I wonder what it's like in the mind of Lia Black, to have such vivid, brutal, and equally beautiful stories coursing through your thoughts? I imagine it's a wonderful place to be, and I'm truly thankful to get to experience this piece of her creativity.

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### **Teresa says**

\*\*\*\*Reviewed for Prism Book Alliance®\*\*\*\*

I loved Lia Black's Worthy, and when I saw this new offering I wanted to read it too. I read the warnings and ventured forth. I must mention that the warnings did not lie, but you must put emphasis on the graphic violence, dub-con, and rape and not let the hot and sweet m/m sex bit lure you into a false sense of security. There is hot and oh so sweet sex, but it comes later after much pain. It is worth it, so worth it, but it is brutal getting there.

Fydelis is tortured by his master in horrific ways, but this is not the focal point of the story. The point is the faithfulness of Gareth, his fidelity, to his god and his guardian. The play between good and evil is ever present. Even in service to evil Gareth does deeds of good, and in seeking help for good he commits his soul to evil.

The world is sort of like ours, with talks of holy crusaders and a good god and a devil like Sunderer. In fact I thought it was just a paranormal version of our world, but the theology is subtly different. Ms Black did an

amazing job of putting me right in the story. The world was vivid and real.

I loved the relationship between Fydelis and Gareth. The back and forth and the feelings between them were so real, so transcendent.

There are heartbreaking moments, and moments that I almost couldn't bear to read, but the end was so beautiful I cried. If you can stomach the violence and the dark, the reward is great for this is truly a love story.

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### **xxkitsunexx says**

I have read 3 books by this author so far in the past week all of them have great stories more centred of the plot than the romance but wow is there heat between the main character i like it when books don't just jump in to romance and that being the main plot and take over a story Lia Black books has the push and pull to a tee and very intriguing stories i couldn't put down.

i could read All her books again once i have finished the rest of them :-)

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### **Didi says**

#### **4.5 stars rounded UP**

WARNINGS: dubcon, tortures, graphic violence

*I received copy of this book from the author through DBML program in exchange for an honest review.*

The blurb piqued my interest and more so when a friend recommended this to me. So when there was a chance to read the book, I grabbed it. And boy was I in for a treat! Granted, historical though the story might be, it was not my usual choice of reading; but that didn't stop me from enjoying the story.

Fidelity was the guardian angel Lieutenant Gareth De'Aubyn worshiped since his days as Knight of Faith, the Crusaders. When Gareth turned his back on his brethren and chose to serve people as a priest, he unwittingly caused his angel to fall from Empyrean, turned into demon of Regret called Fidelys and be unwilling plaything of the Sunderer in the Abyss. When a group of assassins attacked Father Gareth's flock, his cry for help was heard by the Sunderer; Malaketh sent Fydelis to make a bargain - Gareth's soul for saving his flock's lives. Gareth also had to collect tarnished souls for the Sunderer as payment for the lives saved, with Fidelys accompanying him through the journey.

Despite the character being a demon, I loved Fidelys from the start. First I felt for his agony enduring brutal tortures in the hand of Malaketh. He's an unusual demon, a complicated mix of good, bad, strong and fragile at the same time. Gareth was too perfect a human; he could even cope with his attraction and lust over Fedelys. They made a balance combination.

Some of the dubcon scenes were a tad too graphic to my taste. On the other hand, they fed on my sympathies

to the fallen angel. The plot borrowed the Crusades and their campaign in the middle ages but altered it into a new one with unholy ambitions, tainted souls and dark magic. And this was not exactly a good versus bad fight, as Gareth was actually on missions under the Sunderer order. Admittedly, the question I had all through reading was: where was the Creator during all this upheaval. I shouldn't have worry though: He was there. \*winks\*

Romantically wise, this story may not have the "everybody happy" ending, least not in a conventional way. But the twist and turn of the story and Fidelys and Gareth's building emotional closeness made more impact because of it. And surprisingly, terribly monstrous as Malaketh was, I wish there were a bit more glimpse of him in this book. There remained some questions concerning the Sunderer for me. But overall I so enjoyed this book - thus the rounded up rating! :D

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### **Optimist ?King's Wench? & MANTIES Champion says**

I know some are going to look at the tags for this book and go...

But just hold on a sec.

Yes, it can be brutal. When it comes to a battle between good and evil there's bound to be some bloodshed. Right? But at the end of the day it's a love story that involves sacrifice. And fidelity.

#### **Would you be willing to sacrifice your soul for your beloved *and* maintain your fidelity to that person?**

That is the question that both Gareth and Fydelis must answer.

Gareth is the textbook definition of "good". He's moral, pious, altruistic and faithful; he feels "singularly tasked with saving mankind." He's a former Crusader turned priest of a small village that's been plundered by marauders when we first cross paths with him. During the melee he calls upon his estranged Guardian, Fidelity, for assistance.

Fydelis appears instead with an offer to turn back the clock, assist Gareth in avoiding the total destruction of his village in exchange for his acquiring 20 souls and surrendering his own at the end of the mission.

#### **Gareth accepts because he's Gareth.**

He and Fydelis set out on their mission with loads of tension between them. Fydelis is a demon with the face of Gareth's beloved and a source of constant lust and subsequent shame.

Shame for lusting after the flesh, a sin for which he's been punished throughout his life and for which he uses the scourge upon himself.

Shame for being disloyal to Fidelity.

Shame for being weak.

Fydelis struggles with being around Gareth because he is Fidelity. There was some misunderstanding betwixt the two (which isn't explained well) and believing that Gareth had forsaken him he went looking for him and fell into the clutches of Malaketh, the Sunderer god.

Malaketh likes nothing better than torturing his favorite new toy and fallen angel. It is torture what he puts Fydelis through. Most of their scenes are told in flashback fashion or without extensive details, but there are a couple that are cringeworthy and will break your heart and leave you shuddering for Fydelis.

"But Regret has always been but one aspect of Fidelity. It is the most negative outcome of an otherwise noble sacrifice. Gareth embodies your lost other half-*Attainment*"

Black weaves a compelling and visually stunning quasi-historical, mostly AU tale with two affecting characters I'll not soon forget and a shit load of adventure and battles. There are many religious overtones with secondary characters that kept the pacing at a near frenetic pace.

The sex was medium hot, but it did have (view spoiler)

It was a long time coming I'll tell you that. I thought I was going to drown in UST Lake along with these two.

My only niggle other than the aforementioned murky misunderstanding was the endgame with Malaketh. It left me feeling a bit... unfulfilled? In a state of disbelief?

Really? Is there a follow up because I can totally see him being all...

**I'm in the 4.25-4.5 star range so... I guess I'll round up?**

Recommend to all the people who didn't stop reading when they saw my tags.

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**Meka♥books says**

I have to say **Fidelity** took me a while to read and get into. Once my brain grasped the notion I was reading a book on faith and loyalty I was good to go. I was amazed by author Lia Black's writing and **Fidelity** blew my mind away with its complexities.

**Fidelity** is completely different from the two other books I read and loved by Lia Black: *Worthy* & *Where Willows Won't Grow* as **Fidelity** is dark, gritty, & many passages for me were reminiscent of movies and/or biblical references.

I'm trying to write this review without any spoilers and it's tough.

What made this book enthralling are the characters Father Gareth and Fydelis who are both broken in their

own way. One of my favorite revelations was when Fydelis stated:

"Faith, in its own way, brought me to this point. I, too, felt abandoned by the one I believed in." He closed his eyes and let out a bitter laugh. "And now... now I see that it was all my own doing, for he never left me. I lost my faith in him."

This statement hit home with me as I have felt this same sentiment and had to realize my God has never left me but **I** temporarily left my God.

As I previously stated, **Fidelity** is a dark read. It is a read that showcases non con, deals with fornication, talks about whipping in relation to faithfulness.

"The pain is both punishing and purifying...

Additionally, I liked the titles each chapter had and the black/white book cover. There was an execution flaw for me with the plot but was not a big deal because it could be open ended for each reader to decipher the results on their own. At any rate, **Fidelity** is a twist on faith, loyalty, regret and love. If you're open to a thrilling ride of sacrifices, consequences, guardian angels, demons, and devotion then I highly recommend this book. **Fidelity** gets 3.5 devilishly faithful stars upgraded to 4 for overloading my senses while reading.

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\*\*\*I received a free copy of this book from the author via IndiGo Marketing & Design in exchange for an honest review\*\*\*

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### **Claire says**

Wonderful characters, and fascinating interaction. It's as if Lia Black knows me and prods at the uneasy recesses of my mind, often making me horrified / aroused.

A rich and complex book.

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### **Al says**

A colourful and sometimes gruesome story about Gareth, Fydelis and The Sunderer. It manages to combine the characters journey with big issues such as faith, morality and love. Dear god but these fellas are taken through the mangle hahah.

I was very taken with Fydelis :D

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