

HIS FATEFUL HEAP ^{OF} DAYS



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Only a few months from his fiftieth year, Nikolas is feeling a distinct wobble in his formidable certainties. Aleksey Primakov appears to have become irrelevant. All he needs, therefore, is to be dragged into an adventure with Devon's answer to the three musketeers. How many times can he tell Ben and his moronic friends that a mutilated body buried on Dartmoor has nothing to do with them? But not only does this desecration slowly become their business, it cuts to the heart of the life they have created together. It's just as well, perhaps, that generals never do actually retire...

His Fateful Heap of Days Details

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From Reader Review His Fateful Heap of Days for online ebook

Cristopher says

I have just finished 1-7 of the series when this book came out. I didn't jump on this right away because I sort of needed some regrouping after the 7th book. (If you've finished the 7th book, then you'll understand why. Lol)

So here I am, having just finished the 8th book!

I say Mr. Wiltshire delivered again. This gotta be the funniest (and creepiest) book of the installment for me. Ben, Nik, Squeezy and Tim proved to be such a riot when bundled together in a mission. It was so funny to read, their banters, Ben's provocations, Squeezy's name giving (Radulf's Hole anyone? Lol), poor Tim's complaints, and Niks hilarious lies (he did not eat the cookies no. just 5 of it. Lol!)

BTW I love how something in Nik changed here, he was.. well, yeah the same arrogant, assertive, manipulating, cocky bastard but more..human. Lol. What the hell am I saying? Well, those of you who've known him from the start would probably know what I mean, for those who doesn't..well what are you waiting for? I swear he's one of those guys who's so unique I can't think of anyone else to compare him with. Ben have always been my favorite among the two.. Until now.

Anyway, the plot isn't the best of the series for me. But the characters and the writing of this book made this such an entertaining read.

I only have one regret. That I didn't read it sooner.

4 stars!

Kimmi says

If this is truly the end of the series i'll be mourning their loss for a long time. I wasn't this sad when Ty and Zane came to an end.. I especially loved the end with Ben and Molly.

April says

This series just gets better and better, and I adored Book 1 (Love is a Stranger). Seriously, READ THIS WHOLE SERIES!!!!

I loved the single main arc. Usually we get two amazing, but somewhat disparate parts, which still seem to work as a whole.

As to what is in store? Just wow! What a crazy, but fantastic mix! Hot love, of course, as the series has to live up to its name. The discovery of a body on the moors. A road trip with the boys (Tim and Squeezy and Radulf and PB). Lots of fun bonding where friendly games draw blood. Crazy-high tour of a Witchcraft

Museum. Special Forces camping trip! Old, dark legends, mysteries and black magic. The family/officer's mess is expanded. Lives are threatened. Blood is shed.

But our heroes are good... so good, in so many ways! And this was a wonderfully dark, adventurous, mysterious, mystical, read. And positive! I guess it has to be against all the darkness. There is also humor and fun here, too! It's just fabulous! Seriously. SO GOOD!!! READ IT!!!!

Dreamer says

4.5 stars. This episode features Nikolas scared of turning fifty and some evil deeds on Dartmoor. I particularly enjoyed Tim, the hapless professor, being dragged along by Squeezy, Ben and Nikolas on their special forces adventures.

'If Ben was happy, then (Nikolas) was happy - it was, he supposed with rueful regret, just another result of this being in love thing.'

Scarletine says

3.5 stars (**The extra .5 was for Nik using gun oil as lube. Probably the first time John has mentioned lube in this series :-p**)

I guess I'm the black sheep of the fangirls for not giving this book a glowing 5 stars. I have followed this series avidly from the start, and in fact these books are the most expensive e books i buy (I usually won't pay more than £4.99) I found this story entertaining, no doubt, but I can't help but be frustrated with the direction the series has taken in the last couple of books... and at the number of times John has teased with threats of 'doom' and 'the past coming to haunt Nik', and not following through, or leaving threads dangling.

When Kate was mysteriously killed off (by whom we still don't know, and Nik and Ben don't seem bothered to find out) John gave the impression that the Russian's had discovered that he was not dead, and infact living a luxurious life in the UK. There was talk of people coming to get him, and the fact he needed to protect his loved ones etc, but apart from the blip of Stefan and his evil grandfather, there was no apocalypse of Russian agents seeking to avenge the betrayal of Aleksey Primakov, and no mention of MI5 or 6 (who dropped the ball as they don't know they had an ex Russian General working for them) and whom, in reality would be keeping an eye on an influential man who was married to royalty and knows many, many secrets. One would think that with the number of people Nik has murdered, that he would have more than a few yokels and their devil worshipping or some god botherers to worry about.

(view spoiler)

It feels to me like the adventurous sexy thrillers that readers were given in the first 6 books in the series have gone a bit soft and now turned a little bit Scooby Doo. I do adore the connection between Ben and Nik, and think they are incredibly sexy together however, John has been churning these books out at a crazy rate, and I really think, if the series is to continue, he needs a break to regroup consider all of the threads he's left in the wind, because I assure you, there is still gold here!

Cerisaye says

I would read anything written by John Wiltshire, he really is that good. Forget any preconceived notions you might have about m/m...actually it does these books a disservice to shelve them under that genre because they are so much more than romance novels featuring two men rather than a heterosexual pairing. Wiltshire knows how to write. He does fantastic dialogue, funny, witty, snarky, can turn a beautifully descriptive phrase, and mix a page-turning brew of adventure thriller with a dash of horror creep. His books have a wonderful sense of place, Devon and Dartmoor in particular for this series, full of evocative descriptions and local colour to add depth and realism to the story. Above all John Wiltshire does characters you will love and care for and never tire of reading about because they develop and change like real people, adding layers of complexity while at the same time revealing more about themselves as we gain understanding and insight as to what has made them as they are.

He hadn't intended to tell them. He'd lived his life parcelling out the truth, coating it with lies and then obscuring that with evasion. He had intended to keep his discovery entirely to himself, but as he smoothed the creases on the table, it occurred to him that more than telling them, he was, in fact, sharing with them. It was something of a revelation. He wanted to share this with these three men.

Nikolas Mikkelsen and Benjamin Rider-Mikkelsen have now been together for something like a dozen years, and are still going strong. Exploring a long-term relationship and keeping it interesting over a series is more difficult than one-off romances, yet if anything John Wiltshire gets better as Nik & Ben's relationship matures and strengthens. *It was always death and blood for them. For the first time in his life, Nikolas had an insight into the strength of the desire to create life with someone.* He has space, too, over several books, to develop secondary characters such as Tim and Squeezy, as partners, and their relationships with Ben and Nik, and lovely it is to watch them, too. Wiltshire even throws in likeable female characters with their own stories and interactions with Nik & Ben and co.

These are flawed, difficult men, and we're now up to Book 8. Nikolas' 50th birthday approaches and he is understandably anxious about his continuing ability to attract and hold onto Ben, a decade younger, beautiful, famous now in his own right, very much an equal to his former boss. Much sarcastic humour, and skewering of image obsessed culture, but Nikolas' concern is very realistic. I am even older so I know, oh how I know! They are parents, too, and that is a whole different dynamic, two men working together to love and to hold, building around themselves an unconventional, but nonetheless strong, family.

Some readers looking for hot eroticism might feel short-changed by the lack of action scenes, though there are some, and up to Wiltshire's usual ***** standard. For me, however, there is more eroticism in lines such as:

Nikolas wasn't sure if the whole universe stilled, but he was pretty sure the movement and noise in the pub did, or perhaps it was just the four of them round the table, or even, he was willing to concede, just him, because his brain contracted, imploded and a rushing of air filled his ears. He opened his mouth and Ben fed him the meat. This is love, much more meaningful, and rewarding to the reader, than stringing together sexy times.

I love that Nikolas Mikkelsen has read *Wuthering Heights* and can quote passages (even if he can't recall where it comes from...senior moment, I know), and Squeezy watches *Game of Thrones* (of course he does!).

Sometimes even he and his carefully laid plans and strategies for deception were entirely undone by the genuine depth of love he held for Benjamin Rider-Mikkelsen.

In these dark times more than ever we need escapist literature, reassuring stories of love and friendships. John Wiltshire's books are my solace. The romance genre too often is superficial and disposable, but these books stay with you, due to the strength of the characters and their love for each other, not the stuff of rainbows and roses:

I told you that we burn; well the radiance of that great conflagration is like a shield banishing darkness...I see the manifestation of evil growing across the whole world, Ben. The lights of our civilisation are going out one by one, and we will be extinguished, engulfed by what is coming. Except here, under our shield, in the light of our fire.

Georgie says

A slightly downbeat ending to a riveting series.

All the usual ingredients are here - Nik & Ben waltzing round Devon being Beautiful, Rich, and passionately in love; Squeezy & Tim as comic relief; Molly Rose popping up to offer the Cute Toddler moment. There's only one plot in this book and it's reasonably simple - but, as with the previous volumes in the series, the plot is **not** the point. It's all about Nik & Ben's relationship. You'd think I'd get tired of this after 8 books.

You'd be wrong.

♣ Irish Smurfétté ♣ says

Reviewage on Prism Book Alliance®

~ EPIC LOVE ~

Like many of the books in this series, this one begins with the likes of Nik and Ben encountering an unexpected happening, all while they're trying to navigate what's going on between them. Because, ya know, it's never simple with them. I had to remind myself that this was 'just' a book, that this wasn't actually happening. Right now. In the real world. Yup, Wiltshire'd sucked me in once again.

Them. A unit. A singularly operating organism. That's how Ben and Nik are, it's how I think of them. This is also the way they are finally, *finally* admitting how they feel about and behave with each other. Ok, that's not right, they've done that for awhile now. What's different is, they are voicing, out loud, to one another, this reality they've shared for a number of years now. This is a major theme of this story.

As is the fact that they are a forever thing. No matter what they say, or obsess over, or do, or ignore, or try to pretend or anything else. They are forever.

Course, they have taken their sweet ol' time in, not just admitting but, sharing this with each other. Ya know, with those word type things again.

If he were forced to be truthful, which was a ridiculous concept to begin with, Nikolas would confess that Ben not liking his new plan was the main part of its attraction. Fortunately, no one would or could lever this truth from him, so his fiction that he was doing what was best for Molly Rose would be the one he'd present to Ben.

That's what one calls a nutshell, as in 'that's it in'.

~ shaking my head with a smirk on my face ~

Nik, will you ever learn? These kinds of plans don't work because, ya know, Ben knows this, too, even if it takes him a minute to realize it and catch on. He's getting quicker mind you. And, granted, not working out bit is sometimes a good thing, but still.

The main struggle, the big nemesis in this story is what's kind of not working between Nik and Ben. Fear, on both sides of this singular coin of a relationship. The thing is, they both feel it and are, of course, the cure for it. They've experienced the worst the world has to offer, so I understand the fear.

Then again, truth has its moments and shines through:

Nikolas studied Ben's beautiful eyes carefully as he made his next move on the board. "I've been thinking..." He trailed off at the long, theatrical eye roll this received and laughed, dipping down to kiss Ben. Sometimes even he and his carefully laid plans and strategies for deception were entirely undone by the genuine depth of love he held for Benjamin Rider-Mikkelsen.

Exactly.

I've never read *eight* books into a series, with a lone couple, in a longterm relationship, at the center of everything, and still felt compelled to read more about them and their life. To watch them working on that life, together. Thinking back on everything Nik and Ben have experienced, and survived, I can't help but put their relationship into the *epic love* category. I mean, we don't even need a category. These two just are who they are and there's no one else like them.

Tim and Squeezy play major roles in this story. The scenes shared by these two, or between Nik and Squeezy, or Ben and Tim, or Nik and Ben and Squeezy, or - you get the picture. We see even more aspects of everyone's personalities through all of these interactions and I loved every minute. An alternate title for this book: "Four unlikely but oh-so-perfect-for-each-other mates ramble around Dartmoor, showing their friendship and love for one another, while unknowingly rehearsing for an upcoming comedy gig".

Squeezy, my man, this goes especially for you. Wildly underestimated, you've been. The truth you speak, especially to Nik, is vital. I think I might even love you a little.

The physical chemistry between Nik and Ben should never be underestimated. It's alive and wellllllllllllllllllllll, my friends, alive and well.

Ben assisted him to his feet with a little glance that made Nikolas's pulse surge pleasantly. It was love, that was unmistakable; it was recognition of the unique bond they shared which was proved as much by Nikolas's wading into the fray on Ben's behalf as it was in other, gentler moments; but it was also a quirk of amusement at something, which Nikolas didn't understand but enjoyed just as much as the other things - Ben was allowed to laugh at him, it had been a long time coming.

Ok, that's not really steamy, but it gives you an indication of the level at which Nikolas's thinking is often operating. It's one of the things that makes this book unlike any of the others in this series in some ways. This is Nikolas's heart and mind and body in love with Benjamin Rider-Mikkelsen.

This is also the most humorous of all of the books so far. I lost count on how many times I laughed out loud, especially during the scenes involving all four of the guys. Cleverly tucked into these humorous conversations are many of the attributes they all share on some levels: silliness, kindness, maturity (I know!), inappropriateness, blabbermouth-y-ness, stubbornness, bravery, and yes, love.

About two thirds of the way through, it hit me like a rock right to the middle of my forehead: the title and what it means. It makes all the sense. All of it.

These characters aren't perfect, with their own attitudes and beliefs, and the experiences that shaped them. I had to remind myself of that a few times. Even so, I take them as they are.

As usual, Wiltshire includes some true surprises that you can't see coming, not even a wee bitty bit. In the end, though, it all leads to... that epic love. :)

A.B. Gayle says

Nikolas was running scared, and the enemy was relentless

Ben kissed deeply into his neck at the same time as he tipped over the edge into sleep, and Nikolas plunged after him, unwilling, even in this, to be left alone and in a conscious world where Ben wasn't present.

What a great quote to demonstrate two lovers generating more heat than the sun.

And what a great series it has been. Certainly the best I've ever encountered, both in this genre and outside it. An epic adventure right from the first chapter. Nail biting action, gut wrenching excitement, unforgettable characters, and an all encompassing love.

At no stage was I bored and, if at times I wondered where on earth the plot or the emotional arc was going, I felt confident that the author's story telling skills and character depiction would rise to the occasion. There were stacks of surprises, none more so than in the first few books where revelations shook not only the readers' minds but the minds of the characters as well.

We laughed and we cried along with Ben and Nik as they progressed on their journey. The lack of emotional attachment that some readers found disturbing in the start gradually gave way until, in this book, Nik finally acknowledges that he doesn't only love Ben, he is "in love" with him. But this isn't shown with wine and roses, it's done in typical Nik fashion

"I do not like being so much in love, Benjamin, and I blame you entirely."

The most disturbing aspect of the book were the two words "The End". Before this, each one finished with "To be continued" and the title of the next book. I gather that the author was always a couple of books ahead when each was published. But as yet, there is no Book 9.

Good news or bad?

If true, it's good, in a way, because some readers won't even start a series until they know they're complete. There's nothing worse than unfinished story lines or unresolved issues between the characters. Or, worse still, they go on too long until they "Jump the Shark" or just dwindle into nothingness.

If this *is* the final book in the series, it's a fitting one. There's lots of closure on many fronts, and right up to the end there is nail biting action and possibly the most horrific of all scenes to date.

But what of Book 8?

In tone, it's quite mundane. No exotic locations. We're not even sure for ages if there is an arch villain or a threat to them or their loved ones. Most of the action takes place within walking distance of Ben's birthplace and the expanse of Dartmoor, as the author draws on his local knowledge to paint a picture of an area littered with ancient relics.

In doing so, Books 3 and 7 are drawn on. Family and God. Many readers had issues with the inclusion of the latter, so, remembering that Book 8 was already written when Book 7 came out, it's interesting to see more of Ben's insights into what he did and why.

So we have the mystery/suspense/action core, centring around Dartmoor and its relics both ancient and new.

But, His Fateful Heap of Days is also a story about humanisation.

From a childhood where he was used and abused, Nik has donned an impenetrable suit of armour. Deflect, deflect, deflect. The first time we meet him, back in Book 1, Ben describes his "perpetual air of disinterested nonchalance". By the time this book comes around, Nik is struggling to regain this apartness, but the barriers are continually being chipped away by his entourage, both consciously and unconsciously. Now, nearing fifty and super aware of that fact, Nik is becoming human, and he's finding it scary.

It's amusing to watch someone who is not English, gradually realise that one of the most sincere expressions of love and affection in the British culture is being called names and made the butt of jokes.

Hence, when violence rears its ugly head amidst all this light hearted jollity and schoolboy style adventuring, they are caught by surprise. It's only through the intervention of an unlikely saviour that Nik lives to see another day. But when Nik and Ben regroup and go to the rescue of what they hold most dear, the gloves are off and no punches are pulled.

For once, this action only takes up a small part of the book, but it is shocking and heart stopping possibly because it is so unexpected.

So let's get down to spoilersville as I explain and give some examples showing why I liked this book particularly, both as a stand alone and as a wrap up book.

Nik has continued his workouts with Squeezy and, at first, Ben is jealous, imagining the worst. Once Tim reassures him that Nik is just worrying about turning fifty, the fun and games begin. Lots of jibes at Nik's expense about bad backs, early nights, needing glasses and taking it easy. At first, Nik doesn't know that Ben knows, but gradually he realizes that Ben is teasing him. Then he is miffed because that's not how their relationship is. He's the boss and everyone should pay due deference to him. This interplay between Nik, Ben, Squeezy and Tim is at the heart of the first part of the book. On the surface, it's harmless fun and some readers may think it irrelevant, but this is missing out on what it represents. The humanisation of Aleksey

Primakov into Nik.

Squeezy is shown in a new light. Totally irreverent and nonPC when with Ben, chiming in with unhelpful comments and references to movies of dubious worth: Centaur porn and the Human Centipede. But one on one with Nik, the “fucks” disappear and at one stage, commenting on Nik’s attempts to manipulate things and recommends he stops trying to cover up his fears with armor.

In Radulf’s top secret blog, which you can find here: <http://www.johnwiltshire.co.nz/radulf...> Squeezy is called “dog in previous life biped” (his highest compliment) and notes that *Almost all bipeds fall for dog-in-previous-life biped’s silence-inside trick. I learn from a master. Blond biped (Nik) suspicious. But blond biped suspicious of everyone.*

Have to admit to being somewhat embarrassing around dog-in-previous-life biped, reverting to utterly humiliating puppy-like fawning. Gave him one of my favourite toys. He gave me one of his. and in this book, even Nik develops a respect for Squeezy and Tim.

Squeezy is also one of the few to see past Ben’s beauty. He could see that Ben was always searching for something. He also comes up with some pretty deep thinking, expressed simply in keeping with his character.

“Ah, well. If everyone went through life listening more than they were listened to the world would be a better place.”

He even deliberately lies to Nik to test his trust issues and then says:

“So why not put that trust into practice a little and just tell him the truth?”

Finally, he postulates a different scenario surrounding Molly’s birth to make Nik (and Ben) think about bonds and relationships. He’s fucking awesome.

Poor Tim, who Nik derides as belonging to “Guardian Readers Anonymous”, suffers a lot. First we learn that he was hurt by Ben’s actions in Book 7.

“...you’re just mercenaries, Ben. You and him (Nik) both. You fight for the cause if and when it suits you, but you don’t wear the colours, haven’t sworn to the flag, don’t show any allegiance. When the battle’s over you don’t stay in country, and when the war resumes, you might just decide to sign up for the other side. Does that make it clearer to you? You rejected being gay. You said it was unclean. That’s me. I’m unclean.”

Nik also acknowledges that:

Tim Watson was the catalyst that had taken him from where he had been to where he was now—sitting in a Devon pub garden, feeling for the first time in his life that he’d like this life to be a bit longer than it was probably going to be.

Contrast this looking toward the future to the man who had to be chained to the bed for two weeks to get him to admit he was trying to leave Ben. For a change, Nik starts thinking about how others feel. He’d always thought about how they fared, but in remembering Squeezy’s comment about the best way to conquer fear, he even goes as far to lie to make Tim feel better:

“Ben cannot sleep well at night these days. He...frets...about you. About your friendship.”
Nikolas wondered briefly whether this was the first selfless lie he’d ever told. He saw, with an annoying remembrance of the moron’s contention about happiness, the smile of pleasure on

Tim's face. He added, surprised at himself, "He said you'd talked. That all was now well in the sandpit." He was going to embellish this with, "He's missed you," but this was a step too far. Then he wrinkled his nose and said it anyway.

These are baby steps for Nik but important ones.

This call (spiritual crisis) and Ben's subsequent desertion gets addressed a few times in this book, in fact Ben starts to wonder if it was more a call from his past, stemming from unresolved issues he has with his childhood, memories of which, especially his time at Horse Tor, gradually return. His lack of them (when Nik claims to remember his birth) suggests to him that they were buried deliberately as being too painful or traumatic.

And he has revelations about other aspects such as Nik's obsession with his beauty and Ben's own awareness of its power at times:

Even though he knew he didn't need to appear any more attractive than he was—and this was not vanity in his book; he was burdened by his looks as much as he benefited from them. Sometimes, in dreams, he still heard a guttural Russian voice saying, "Very pretty," and remembered on waking all that had followed from that assessment

His relationship with Nik has become more even.

Sometimes, such moments with Nikolas made all the rest pale into insignificance. Nikolas called Ben his true twin. They could not be less alike in so many ways, but sometimes, in a few precious moments like these, they had an almost otherworldly connection.

Now Ben is quicker to be sensitive to when things are awry between them.

He also knows how to manipulate Nik into doing what he wants. Suggesting he is too old to do it. And he can tell better when Nik is lying or not. If he says something is okay, he knows it isn't. Contrary, but that is how he ticks.

Nik has also come to terms with issues that irked him in the past. His jealousy of Ben's acting career which was part of the conflict in previous books has changed over time as exemplified by his attitude to Ben's fan mail which he refuses to admit he reads. Now Nik secretly takes pleasure in their adoration, as long as they don't get too close. He even wonders if God is punishing him for taking such a prized possession away.

And so to love

Now they take the time to enjoy each other, sometimes falling asleep where once they would have been fucking.

Was there anything better than kissing Ben? Nikolas didn't think so. He wondered idly as they ground their mouths together and their tongues danced whether he was getting soft in his old age.....He sometimes thought now he could stay kissing Ben for the entire day and never grow weary or impatient for more.

This more than anything is closure for those readers who wanted there to be more emotion between these two men. But these things can't be forced. They were a culmination of some pretty seismic shifts which took place over the course of the eight books.

Nik now has a new appreciation of his lover:

He associated Ben's power and hard-angled edges with security.

And Ben, in return, is sure enough of himself to interrupt their love-making to demand he be told what Nik is thinking or laugh while indulging in some cock sucking.

In fact, there is little graphic description during the sex scenes, but so many things bring their love making to mind. Even accepting a chunk of steak from a fork in a restaurant. They don't get to "moonlight and roses" more moonlight and jersey cows.

Yeah, it's funny

In fact, one of the best things throughout the series has been the humor. We laugh with them and at them. Especially at lines like this from Ben

"Read? I didn't actually re...I mean...version? Huh? You mean there are Bibles with different endings?"

and of course the hilarious Museum break in.

But later he's talking about Nik and Nik assumes he's talking about Tim as Ben says:

"I gave too much credit for supposed maturity and apparent intelligence. Didn't see the complete and utter fuckwit lurking beneath." Nikolas frowned. Tim was eight months older than Ben. This seemed a little harsh.

And while some readers may dismiss Nik's concern about age as over the top, perhaps they should wait until they are this age before making that judgement, remembering also that gay men may be a tad more sensitive about such things as looks, especially when Nik imagines Ben.

sleeping alongside something which should be put out for the bin men and then replaced with something more current—shinier, up-to-date, more knobs probably. Only with that moronic, irritating idiot with the dumb name could Nikolas admit that when he worked out and ran and drank his olive oil and whey, he was not waving but drowning...

It's funny in a way, that this man who faced down polar bears, tsunamis, death squads, cannibals and Chechen hit men is scared of getting old. Not from vanity, but because by doing so he might lose Ben and he is only able to admit it to Squeezy.

True Love

Nik understands what love is now and even sees the distinction between love and being in love

He'd loved him (Ben), but he wouldn't have claimed he was in love. There seemed to be a distinction between these two - no, he'd always maintained that little distance, always guarded that last bit of his freedom. Loving implied conscious will. In love was captivity. He was Ben's prisoner now, and he knew he would never seek to escape. It didn't feel like incarceration though. When he looked at Ben, he wanted to smile. Whatever he was in was exceptionally welcoming. For the first time, it occurred to Nikolas that love wasn't weakness. Love didn't leave you vulnerable. If it did, then you were in love with the wrong person.

and

Ben's snark was now audacious, blatant, and Nikolas had the almost unheard of desire to actually kiss him in public. It was the damn being in love thing. It was awful.

At times, Nik's almost in awe of this new feeling:

Nikolas very discretely gave him the finger and Ben laughed a deep-throated chuckle that began a fire of need in Nikolas's belly—no, in his soul. Being in love changed all kinds of meanings. He spoke many languages, but he was more than willing to learn another.

Wonderful sentiment, wonderful writing and again such a world away from where they were at the start of the series, yet a totally believable emotional arc given what they have been through in the meantime.

Because people can change

Now he understands what love is.

If Ben was happy, then he was happy—it was, he supposed with rueful regret, just another result of this being in love thing.

But he also now sees why Ben *could* love him. Something he's never really believed before:

Ben laughed and glanced back at him, and Nikolas felt a surge of overwhelming friendship and love from Ben, and, for one brief moment, as he had in the dream, he stepped outside his own corporeal form and saw himself as Ben saw him—a vast, Nordic-blond Special Forces soldier, windswept and so powerful it was as if he was carved from the very rocks of the moors themselves.

One of the important aspects of army training in this belief that sometimes men need to be broken before they can be reformed into something stronger. Every trial, every tribulation that broke them down and made us weep for them was needed, because it was only via their love for each other that they were both able to reform into something new, something powerful.

It returned to him then: all his authority, all his confidence. Everything surged along with his blood in this primal act, this transgression, this perfection and worship of being a man with another man in a place such as they were. He exploded into Ben and hung on to him, toes raised, shaking with furious pleasure until Ben sank to his knees, taking him down, still trapped inside, and they knelt there panting until the great rush was finally over.

So despite being in love and enjoying their kisses and their fun in bed, they both still relish the primeval strength of their relationship. Fitting in this very pagan setting with its images of randy goats and leering satyrs.

Ben has changed too. He has started to relax about the nature of their relationship. He's no longer angsty about it.

Nikolas would know he was there watching him. It was just the way they were together.

While this book has Nik becoming more human and therefore more vulnerable, it also shows the closeness they have. Twins was the comment at one stage, best friends at another. Getting satisfaction just by being

together. Knowing how in tune with each other they are. They don't have to be equals to have that. It's this confidence that provides me with closure if this is the last book in the series.

As so often happened these days, their fight was ruined by their inability to take each other seriously, and they collapsed onto their backs, panting and chuckling, arms loosely draped over each other's bellies, just scrunching fingers against warm skin and feeling heartbeats steady and strong. "In love."

Is it the Final Book?

JW has proved with "Ollie Always" and the "Royal Affair" series that he is not a one trick pony. A scifi novella is due out next month and, following that, the first in what he promises to be a series revolving around a book club, also located in Devon. I'm really looking forward to that one.

Personally, I would be quite happy to leave our heroes where they are. Still burning for each other but "in love". Maybe some short stories could be written to fill in the gaps in the current timeline. Give us a closer look at the way they met, or some of the early cases. Or maybe we can have vignettes featuring Miles and Emilia or maybe even Squeezy and Tim getting married (that would be a hoot).

But hey, I'm willing to be outvoted on that one.

Finally

I'll finish off by expressing my heartfelt thanks to the author for providing hours and hours of wonderful entertainment.

Before each book came out, I re-read the entire series (or most of them) in preparation. This never felt like a chore or a drag because the writing is that good. In fact re-reading, and knowing what happens next made some of the scenes funnier, more heart warming or more gut wrenching.

But most of all I have to thank him for creating such wonderful characters who now have cemented their place in my heart and mind. There, Nik and Ben will live on forever. And to cap it all, the true hero of the series (in his eyes at least) not only survives to the end but saves the day! He deserves a medal just for that (and whether you take that as the author or the dog, I'll leave up to you.)

An even longer review (including more quotes and illustrative photos) can be found on my blog:
<http://www.abgayle.com/blogs/his-fate...>

Em says

This was the best book in the series so far in my opinion and probably the funniest. I loved the boys hanging out together, it was an absolute riot, especially when they all went out onto the moors armed to the teeth, just for what was essentially a few miles. Nik made me chuckle when he realised they would be at their destination after only just recently setting out, so they all stopped for a cuppa. Like a bunch of boy scouts! If I'm being honest there is only one thing I'm not that keen on in my books and that's 'children' I would always

prefer it with just the guys, but hey ho!

He brushed his hand over Ben's.

"I would never eat Molly Rose."

"Nikolas! Jesus! What the fuck!"

"What! I said I *wouldn't* eat her!"

Simon says

4.5 stars. Not my favourite of the series to date but brilliant none-the-less. I miss the action-men thrillers of the first few books, the exotic locations, the horror of situation - the blood! Somehow the tigers are becoming pussycats, yes even Nik is somehow more domesticated, and whilst the plot was shocking at points, it was more light-hearted. Don't get me wrong, I love light-hearted, I just miss the "Scarey".

Anyone seen "Five Go Mad In Dorset" the tv skit on the Enid Blyton children's series? If you ever have the opportunity and you know dear Enid's characters, the tv comedy is hysterical; the break in at the Witch Museum was reminiscent of the skit's humour....almost Scooby Doo.....very funny.

So, I cannot fault the writing as per usual, the plot was great and the humour was as sarcastically tongue-in-cheek as ever. Characters that just happen to be gay so making the "sexual coupling" paragraphs irrelevant to the plot - my kind of book. Thank you JW. Another gold star.

Karen says

The plot of this book is as unlikely as ever but at least Ben and Nikolas seem to be recovering and are finally more stable. The Ben and Nikolas in the last half made me remember why I loved this series from the beginning. I can't say I enjoyed the mystery storyline but I loved witnessing the progress they made in their relationship. There is mutual understanding and they seem to be in a good place when the book ends. And I absolutely loved the humor in this book!

I'm having a hard time rating this book because I really liked it. But maybe I liked it because my expectations were so low after the last few books...

BEFORE READING

After the last few books...

??????? says

4.5

