



## Bloodtraitor

*Amelia Atwater-Rhodes*

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*Predicting her rule was just the beginning.*

Malachi Obsidian has been his guild's prophet ever since he was a child. Years ago, he envisioned a future in which his sister, Misha, ruled and the vampires' empire was destroyed. His people have made many questionable decisions to keep their dream alive, and now Misha is finally on the verge of becoming queen of the serpiente, just as Malachi predicted. Only one obstacle stands in Misha's way, and she's prepared to do whatever it takes to remove it—even if it means selling a family member into slavery.

When a mercenary from the vampires' inner circle proposes a daring plan to bring down the empire of Midnight once and for all, Malachi must feign support for his unstable sister so his prophecy can be fulfilled. He must do it for his family, for his people—and for their freedom.

## **Bloodtraitor Details**

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Author : Amelia Atwater-Rhodes

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## From Reader Review Bloodtraitor for online ebook

### **Jessica Patzer says**

THERE ARE POSSIBLY SPOILERS HERE. I DON'T REALLY CONSIDER THEM SPOILERS, BUT I'VE BEEN KNOWN TO BE WRONG. SO THERE'S YOUR WARNING.

So... I'm not sure exactly how to feel about Bloodtraitor. On the one hand, I liked the flashbacks/visions, I enjoyed the meetings setting up the fall of Midnight, I enjoyed the short references to the future of Nyeusigrube, and I liked the completely random glimpses of life outside of Midnight proper. On the other hand... Malachi was every inch the "second generation slave" he kept talking about, despite very few actions to the contrary. He was a blank slate who pretty much got shoved from one place to another so that the more major players in this little war could talk to each other. I would honestly have had a better time reading this story from someone else's point of view.

I've also come to the conclusion that The Maeve'ra Trilogy seriously suffers from being a prequel to everything but The Keisha'ra Series. The big players in those books put in appearances here but there's no tension because we all know they go on to all but star in other stories. Hell, no one even gets injured aside from the slave characters we don't even meet or care about... and the ever-boring Malachi. I honestly think there should have been a break in the first-person narrative style here to include, instead, a third-person omniscient narrative... or something. First-person just did not do this book, or perhaps even this trilogy, any favors.

I won't likely be rereading The Maeve'ra Trilogy any time soon.

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### **Mrs. Brim says**

Love Love Love this author! I devour anything written by her since I was in middle school. I reread her entire works every year (that's how fanatical about this author & the world she creates I am).

That being said, I must admit that Maeve'ra is not my favorite of her series, but I appreciate how she weaves both worlds together (Den of Shadows & Kiesha'ra/Shapeshifters) & how it serves as a sort of prequel to both. This is particularly prevalent in Bloodtraitor. I also enjoyed seeing Jeshickah's original Midnight (as referenced in Midnight Predator).

Fans of her previous series will still be satisfied. I'm not sure that how much those new to the world/author will appreciate it.

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### **B. Jean says**

This was the best book out of the series (thank goodness), but I sure wish it hadn't ended so open-ended. Is there going to be another series?

Either way, Malachi was a much better protagonist than Kadee, and this book was a lot more eventful than

Vance's.

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### **Regularly Reads says**

A good ending to an epic series and another wonderful piece of the Nyeusigrube puzzle.

If you haven't read the Den of Shadows and The Kiesha'ra series, this series may not be near as enjoyable to you. I would recommend reading those two series first before taking on The Maeve'ra series.

As excited as I am for the new adult Mancer series (ive started the 1st book already), I can't wait to get back to Nyeusigrube.

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### **Alexandra says**

I have mixed feelings about this book. The writing is beautiful, its rhythm and flow make for such an easy captivating read. But the story, characters, setting are all so flawed, that its unfortunately unredeemable. These novels would be wonderful in an omnibus because trying to read them separately is a nightmare. They are the kind of books that you forget before your even finished. There is nothing to connect with, there is so much detail that you get no information. The timeline is fluid, past present and future are hard to separate, changing perspectives in each novel just adds to that confusion.

Overall I am glad to be done with this series, but am disappointed.

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### **Shawna (BacchusVines) says**

Spoiler-y review!

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Finally, the trilogy ends with Malachi's POV. I love his way of thinking and inner voice. He's hard on himself, with the death of both his brother and his adoptive father. His love for Vance and Kadee is extremely refreshing. And he's not caught up in some love triangle or complicated romance. And he's bisexual (?) I assume.

The takeover of the serpentine with Misha as Naga, the war planning with Nathaniel and the Shantel. I love the war planning. So many different cultures were explained in this book. I wish we could've had more time to be with the Falcons. But I'll take it. Reading this end makes me want to reread Wyvernhal so much. I need to understand how the world in Kiesha'ra fell and the world of Maeve'Ra was created. If Atwater-Rhodes could write fifty more books in both the Midnight and Shifter worlds, I'd be so freaking happy.

Overall, I enjoyed the time spent in Malachi's head. The conclusion of the book was open enough for us to speculate what happened after Midnight fell. I can see how Midnight Predator was set up, and I like having a more thorough connection with the vampires. My only complaint is the suddenness of the ending. How does Malachi fix the wrong he committed so long ago? What happens to Misha and Aaron now? Does the trio

(Malachi, Vance and Kadee) stay together, like we all hope? As usual, Amelia Atwater-Rhodes has written a series that swallowed my heart whole and gave it back in pieces.

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## Cyna says

I've been waffling about whether or not to do a review of these books, because right up until the last one, I wasn't quite sure what to say. They've been the literary equivalent of those Silence aliens from Doctor Who for me – the moment I take my eyes off a page, I completely forget what happened on it. I came out of the first two books with no particular feels one way or the other, except for a general impression of pointlessness.

It wasn't until I started Bloodtraitor that I found anything to hook on to, and with that as a reference point, it's easier to get a grasp on what, exactly, makes this series simultaneously totally forgettable and a complete mess. So here we are! Lumped-into-one trilogy review, let's do this!

The Maeve'ra is meant to chronicle the fall of Midnight, a vampire-run slave-trading empire that some Atwater-Rhodes fans might recall being introduced in the fourth Den of Shadows book, *Midnight Predator*. It's also a sequel of sorts to the Kiesha'ra, Atwater-Rhodes' shapeshifter pentalogy, and is the first of her books to blend the cultures and characters featured in both of those series into one functionally intermingled world.

As someone who grew up an avid reader of Atwater-Rhodes' books, I admit, it was kind of a thrilling novelty to see the Serpiente and Avian shapeshifters I liked so much interacting with established DOS vampires, like a big summer-event comics crossover. Miles Morales is finally meeting 616 Peter Parker, Ma! So cool!

BUT the novelty took a pretty steep nosedive for me once it became clear exactly how they're interacting.

**WE'RE GONNA HAVE TRILOGY-WIDE SPOILERS FROM HERE ON OUT, YOU'VE BEEN WARNED**

**CONTENT WARNING: DISCUSSION OF RAPE, ABUSE, SLAVERY**

The idea is that when the ambiguously European shapeshifters fled their homelands to live in America, they all ended up settling within like a five-mile radius of the already-established *Midnight*. In exchange for things like food and freedom and being allowed to live, the immigrant and native-but-not-that-way-I-don't-think shifters – Shantel cougars, Azteka quetzal and jaguars, Avian birds, and Serpiente snakes – agreed to abide by *Midnight*'s laws. They submit to its rule, tolerating and even occasionally participating in its flesh trade.

This is how by book three, both Serpiente and Avian princesses have been sold into what is essentially sexual slavery.

Talk about a buzzkill. I really liked the Kiesha'ra series, you know? I remember the culture and the characters fondly, so to finally be reintroduced to this part of Atwater-Rhodes' world only to find that LOL, the descendants of all those characters you liked as a kid are some monstrous vampire's sex slaves is the grimdest of nostalgic face-slaps. Add that to the list of things I never needed, ever.

It's also a bit of a bummer to see no remnant or mentions of the previous series come up in this one, aside from the shapeshifters' presence. I mean, I get that those books were set literally a thousand years before this, so obviously none of the same characters are going to appear, but this trilogy reads like the Kiesha'ra never even happened in the first place. The Avian and Serpiente are still completely segregated, nobody ever brings up Wyvern's Court, and there doesn't seem to be any particular cultural relationship between the two. The only real difference between then and now is that the snakes and birds aren't at war with or actively hostile towards one another.

I know, I know, the Kiesha'ra was like a millennia ago and only lasted for one generation, ~the blink of an eye~ in the context of time, so it's not unreasonable that this shared history might not have made that big of an impact. I just feel like from a meta perspective, there should be some sort of acknowledgement, you know? Something to make the previous five-goddamn-book-long series feel like it mattered. I mean, it's called the Maeve'ra, that kind of makes it sound like a sequel, right?

It should've just be called the Midnight series, imo, since that's what it's all about. Midnight, the vampires, and goddamn slavery.

I've got such complicated feelings about this slavery, I didn't initially even want to try and talk about it, because it feels like it's opening a big can of worms that I can't even begin to wrap my head around. There's so much baggage when you center a world around fictional slavery – especially when your fantasy trade is run by at least 50% brown men – but the Maeve'ra never really engages with slavery on any real historical level. I mean, it's set in a time and place when slavery was a Thing in the real world, and yet nobody ever brings that up.

What happens in Midnight feels very disconnected from any kind of reality, which I guess is just what you do when you just don't want to engage with that cultural baggage, huh? It's weird fantasy slavery where skin color doesn't matter, and people can reliably be permanently turned into will-less automatons in a matter of days.

Yeah, Midnight slavery hinges on this idea that the "trainers" who run it are adept at "breaking" people with a combination of physical beatings, probably rape, and psychological torture, and that to spend any amount of time in the "care" of one of these trainers means that you have been emotionally and mentally damaged beyond all repair. It's a really gross idea with icky implications that rears its head hardcore in Bloodtraitor, and it's the primary reason we're even talking about this series today.

Bloodtraitor revolves around a falcon/white viper hybrid named Malachai who, as a child, prophesied that his sister would become queen of the Serpiente, and that while she was queen, Midnight would fall. He and his found family, a band of exiles who call themselves "Obsidian", have spent their lives working to make this prophecy a reality. But in the midst of their planning, this prophesied sister, Misha, was sold to Midnight and spent some weeks there living as a slave. So in accordance with the World Laws of Slavery, when they get her back, she's ~\*~\*unhinged\*~\*~, ~\*~\*irreparably damaged\*~\*~, and eventually becomes an antagonist.

I have sooooooooooooo many problems with the way this series treats Misha, and the way it portrays trauma and trauma recovery in general. Malachai wanks on and on about how his real sister ~died~ at Midnight and how the woman who came back was broken, hollow, empty, "shattered and put [back] together in a new and vicious form", how he had to sit back after she returned from Midnight and "watch her mind rot", and like a bajillion other gross things that make it sound like someone who survived weeks of sexual, emotional, and physical violence isn't even a person anymore.

I mean obviously there is going to be lingering mental and emotional trauma. Obviously Misha is going to have some form of PTSD, obviously Misha would act differently from the way she did before she went in to Midnight. I'm not saying she should come back acting like nothing ever happened.

But the moment Misha makes the decision to pursue a course of action that Malachai doesn't agree with – doing something he's already done, himself, mind you – he declares that Misha's ~not his sister anymore~, she's ~hollow~, as though she were a fucking gourde, driven only by ~madness and rage~.

Narrative decisions reinforce Malachai's assertion of Misha. She gets no control over her white viper magic, using it ~unconsciously~ to ensnare people and bending them to her will, most notably the Serpiente prince. The two of them sell his sister, princess Hara, into slavery to get her out of the way, and then take the throne, immediately becoming (incompetent) despots under the guise of "severing ties with Midnight".

Most of that – most of it – would be fine if Misha and/or Aaron had ANY AGENCY WHATSOEVER in their villainy. But they don't. Malachai makes it clear that Aaron would be a fine prince if he weren't under Misha's influence, and as we've already established, Misha is being driven by her ~crazy~.

The sad part is, I think that the book heaps Misha's villainy on her trauma to try and make her more complex and sympathetic, but the execution here is terrible. Even putting aside the agency issue, the book makes no effort to empathize with or develop Misha AT ALL. In fact, she's barely even IN this series. Despite ending up a major antagonist, Misha has only a handful of lines, and ONE perspective sequence in which she pulls a Shevaun-eats-puppies.

That would be bad enough if Misha were an anomaly in our trauma = irrevocably broken data set, but she's not, she's just the most "active" example of it. There's actually a discussion about how the hundreds of men, women, and children in Midnight are unsalvageable because they're slaves. When the supernatural coalition rides into town to burn Midnight to the ground, they decide that the slaves have to burn too, because they're incapable of functioning in the outside world. Because trauma. Because broken. Because unfixable. Because not people anymore.

It's just like...you know people can learn to cope after experiencing things like this, right? It's hard, and maybe not everyone succeeds, but it is possible. They're not lame animals, you don't have to fucking put them down.

Ugh, I don't know, it just struck me as insulting and cynical and really, really gross.

Another thing that's pretty gross? None of the bad guys pay for any of this.

Yeah, we get a three-book trilogy about slavers, abusers, and rapists, and the only characters who die at the end are a couple of good guys, and the slaves. Every single fucking one of the trainers escapes to cameo and/or BE LOVE INTERESTS in books set after Midnight's fall. And I mean, okay, that is INCREDIBLY unsatisfying, but you might call it, I don't know, some sort of grey morality tale (~BAD GUYS AREN'T ALWAYS PUNISHED IN REAL LIFE, OKAY??~), and I might be forced to swallow that explanation, if, IF, this series didn't just reek of not knowing how to BOOK. Like at all.

Setting aside the unsatisfying resolution and the gross treatment of rape/abuse survivors, this series is still a technical mess, starting with the fact that none of our protagonists are relevant to the story being told. Like at all. They contribute almost nothing to any of their individual books, and even less to the overall chronicle of Midnight's fall. They're essentially cameras given sentience so that they can be in the room while all the

important stuff happens, but never affect any of it.

Would Bloodwitch's plot have worked without our perspective character Vance? Well, that would require Bloodwitch to actually have a plot that affects anything. But it doesn't. Vance introduces us to Midnight, spends an entire book getting woke, and then in the last ten minutes is the oblivious carrier of a vampire-killing disease. Now, if that disease brought down Midnight, sure, it might be understandable to follow the Trojan horse used to penetrate its walls, but the disease comes to nothing. Deus ex Azteka shows up, goes "Nah, this is a trilogy, bro", hits the abort button, and NOBODY DIES.

Bloodkin would be affected not at all by Kadee's absence. She stands there while the Shantel argue about selling their prince into slavery, stands there while Vance negotiates with the vampires, and I'm pretty sure that's about it.

And HOLY CHRIST MALACHAI. Malachai's SOLE JOB in Bloodtraitor is to run from important scene to important scene and STAND THERE while they play out. Malachai is such a living framing device that every chapter opens with a dream or vision featuring either a flashback or an important scene happening SOMEWHERE ELSE. Malachai is so useless that about halfway through, these scenes start focusing on the Avian princess Alasdair and by the end, the book acts like it was meant to be about her all along. Malachai is SO USELESS that he is goddamn fucking ASLEEP during the book's climax.

I shit you not. The protagonist is ASLEEP during the climax that this trilogy has built up for two and a half books so that his psychic power of being a living TV can allow the narrative to focus on where the REAL action ostensibly is.

This is just, like, astounding incompetence. If Malachai is so useless to the story that he has to be asleep for the climax so that we can see the important shit, WHY IS HE THE NARRATOR????????????????? If all of the little alternate-perspective chapter openers are SO IMPORTANT to the plot, why are we not just doing a third-person omnipotent, multi-character perspective???????

There is SO MUCH SHIT that comes in out of nowhere in this last book, and it ends with SO MANY DANGLING PLOT THREADS, I don't know what to make of any of it. The scenes with Alasdair, the randomly appearing falcons and falcon treason????, Nathaniel's tangential love story with anonymous slave girl???, the pointedly articulated witch drama, the disappearing Avian queen????, the trainers that are allowed to flee Midnight unpunished, fucking MISHA AND AARON, who we leave running the Serpiente kingdom into the ground.

All of that is left up in the air, and like one last boot to the stomach of proper resolution, the last couple of chapters have Malachai renouncing what seemed like a core-to-his-character vow to never serve a monarch ever, and pledging himself to Alasdair with the promise that he'll put her and Hara on their respective thrones. The epilogue doubles down on this bullshit sequel hook, with a brief journal entry from Alasdair talking about her feelings and speculating about the future, AS THOUGH THE BOOK WERE ABOUT HER ALL ALONG, WHICH IT WASN'T.

Then it's over, and I'm just sitting there like what am I supposed to do with any of this? This is the last book in this trilogy. Ain't no more coming. The next thing Atwater-Rhodes has in the pipelines is the first book in a new series set in a completely different world. SO WHY ARE THE LAST THREE CHAPTERS OF THIS BOOK SET-UP???

This thing is a mess. But the worst part is, putting even that aside, this series still fails in the same way the

last bajillion Den of Shadows have failed for me:

#### **EVERYTHING FEELS THE SAME**

These characters all sound the same. Vance, a fourteen-year-old quetzal boy who's lived his life in a glass cage sounds exactly the same as Kadee, a fifteen-year-old-girl whose life has been divided among four vastly different cultures, and they both sound the same as Malachai, a nearly thirty-year-old man.

Despite being set in 1780-I-don't-remember, there's no sense of that in the characters or setting. We get some token mention of the Revolutionary War, but aside from that, everyone speaks and acts the way they do in the set-during-present-day Den books, or the set-a-thousand-years-ago Kiesha'ra books. Culturally, it doesn't seem like the Serpiente or Avian have evolved or changed at all.

Characters still get stock descriptions: hair, eyes, skin, boom we done. **SO MANY PALE CHICKS WITH BLACK HAIR.** The effect is that every Amelia Atwater-Rhodes character who has not been featured on a cover exists in my head as a hazy collection of hair and skin color without facial features, like I'm looking at them through frosted glass.

So yeah man this was just a clusterfuck. I wish it wasn't. I've got real nostalgic attachment to this world, I like the shapeshifters, and Vance's story is actually a reasonably good allegory for someone coming to terms with their privilege. But the narrators are just **SO BLAND.** The story structure is a mess, the handling of trauma is gross af, **EVERYONE IS USELESS, NOBODY GETS PUNISHED FOR THE TERRIBLE THINGS WE'RE TOLD THEY'VE DONE, and THERE'S NO ENDING!**

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#### **Jaimie says**

A lot of my complaints about the previous two books in this series are still present in this final volume, but this one slowed down just enough to be slightly more palatable. Once again, we switch perspectives to a different character (Mallachi the white viper seer, who is really the root cause of a lot of the political drama in the series), which I think helped my reading of the book; his story is much more familiar and ingrained in the larger story than our previous narrator and his childhood living within the confines of Midnight lend his dual perspective a lot of credibility and interest. For most of the book we seemed to proceed at a normal pace - characters traveling, gathering intelligence, and making plots to overthrow the vampire regime - but the finale of the book wrapped up much too quickly and left far too much unanswered. The series could really use another book to tell the story of what happened after the fall of Midnight, so I'm hoping that Atwater-Rhodes continues writing in the same universe to give us some closure!

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#### **R. says**

I still struggle with this series. On the one hand, it's nice to finally get the full story about how the first Midnight fell. There are also a lot of names mentioned here that are referenced in the original Den of Shadows and Kiesha'ra series as well as the sakkari's foretelling linking to a lot of those events. As an actual book series, it falls short. There is very little actual development and nothing short of characters getting jostled to and fro resulting in a rather anticlimactic fall of Midnight. There is a lot of talk about slaves and how they often are inside and out of Midnight depending on their generation, which is seen more clearly in

the very front and center actions of Malachi and most of the Obsidian clan.

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### **Elizabeth says**

3.25/5

I'm not really sure how to feel about this series in general. I feel like it had a lot of wasted potential. I also feel like it would have been beneficial to have multiple perspectives in each book, instead of just one perspective.

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### **Danielle Bergeron says**

Took me a long time to read because i went out of my reading phase... It was a good book, but the ending left more to be desired...

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### **Heather Wade says**

Amelia Atwater-Rhodes tells another great tale of different species becoming allies for a greater cause. When Malachi Obsidian seems to have no choice but to go against his sister Misha, soon to be crowned Naga to the serpents, he soon finds himself her scapegoat and wanted for treason. Malachi has to try and control his own magic, see the future but all he sees is the past, but doesn't realize that is what saves him. He tries to protect both Kadee and Vance, but is afraid that they will choose different lives away from him once this is all over and Midnight burns. He finds in the end that to set things right, he has to see the once queen Hara and the second bore sibling to the Avian thrown Alasdair back on their rightful thrones to win. This book makes you wish that Atwater-Rhodes does not stop this series, we need to know what happens...Atwater-Rhodes always keeps us wanting more and this book does not disappoint.

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### **Lynn Clark says**

Wow! Yes!!!! Finally!!! Midnight is done after 500 YEARS!! Can I just take a minute here and have a mini celebration?! There is still so much work to be done and this book brought back some characters that I've wondered about often so it was nice to see them again. Btw, one of my favorite authors. You are in trouble missy! Sara was awesome.. I want to cry! Anything else and there would be spoilers but.. FINALLY!!! Now, to re-read all her books for a refresher and then re-read the Maeve're Series again. Next!

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### **Courtney says**

This was a good conclusion to a fun prequel trilogy. This one was told from Malachi's point of view. He was always an interesting character to me and I enjoyed seeing the world through his eyes for awhile. This whole

story started from a prophesy he gave as a child and now he has to decide what is worth sacrificing to see that prediction come true. His crazy sister has set herself up on the serpiente throne and the wicked vampire controlled Midnight must be ended. Not all will survive the battle. I loved the ending of this and now I just have to reread Hawksong and the Den of Shadows quartet. This trilogy was the beginning of everything that happens in her other books. I've been looking for an excuse to reread them, and now I simply have to.

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### **Samantha says**

Not necessarily a review. But I have a theory that connects with the ending of the Kiesha'ra series.

At the end of Falcondance, Hai takes a glimpse into the future and sees two royal females, one serpiente and one avian. The avian has just had a baby--half hawk, half white viper. The vision mentions a white viper standing away from the two royals, not worried that anything will happen to his child.

The vision also mentions that this takes place when humanity has taken over a large part of the earth, and that shapeshifters have been pushed to the outer limits of civilization.

A) Maeve'ra takes place during the 1800s. Humanity has done what it was foretold to do-- it has increased and caused the shapeshifters to be away from humanity.

B) At the end of Bloodtraitor, Alisdair is going to be the new queen of Avians. Through whose help? Malachi's. What breed is he? White viper/falcon.

COULD HAI'S VISION OF THE FUTURE POSSIBLY BE OF MALACHI AND ALASDAIR HAVING A CHILD TOGETHER???? And the serpiente royal is Hara??? THAT WOULD BE AWESOME.

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