



The Coil

L.A. Gilbert

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Sandwich-maker Mattie Green has one goal: escape San Diego, move to New York, and attend art school. But to make this a reality, he needs to get his GED—not easy, since he can't read or write. Until he can, he's stuck working at the diner and selling himself on the side.

Mattie's legitimate job isn't without perks. Every day the quiet, sophisticated Simon Castle comes by to work on his latest book. Mattie wants more than to pour Simon's coffee and make his lunch, but he's sure Simon is out of his league—until suddenly he's not.

Simon Castle's life is complicated, built around his career and a son who requires a lot of time and attention. It's not a life well-suited to the inclusion of even a part-time prostitute, so he resolves to keep his relationship with Mattie casual. However, the longer he knows Mattie, the deeper his feelings become. The idea of him with another man tortures Simon, but he can't ask Mattie to be his alone and jeopardize Mattie's hopes for New York—no matter how much he wants Mattie to stay.

The Coil Details

Date : Published October 10th 2012 by Dreamspinner Press (first published October 9th 2012)

ISBN : 9781623800215

Author : L.A. Gilbert

Format : ebook 286 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Contemporary, Disability, Erotica, Bdsm

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From Reader Review The Coil for online ebook

Emma Sea says

2.5 stars. I mildly liked this book.

It's only the second book by this author I've read. I thought that this would be like *The Ghost on My Couch*, so I was ready for cute and sweet, but this was completely different.

If I want dark and angsty then I want *dark and angsty*. I found this had too much angst to be adorable, but not enough to be a hair-rending tearjerker. It was wishy-washy (even Mattie's prostitution was wishy-washy) and I get the feeling that Gilbert was trying to write in a way that didn't come naturally, because she thought that was what people wanted her to do.

One thing I particularly didn't enjoy was the structure of the book. The story takes place over three and a half years. The opening is at the end of those three and a half years, then we skip backwards to the beginning to see how the MCs got there. So immediately there is no tension, no suspense, because we can see exactly what happened, and we only have to learn the details of how we got there.

Also the characters were fairly bland. It seems to me that Mattie only likes Simon because he has no self-esteem and this is the first person who ever treated him halfway decently. And I do mean *half-way* decently, because Simon is a huge jerk, and I am uncomfortable about why Mattie keeps forgiving him and going back. I think it's because Simon is his only option. In a different book Simon would be the bad guy who the true love rescues Mattie *from*.

And although Simon annoys me with how he treats Mattie, that's all we get, that's his entire personality. He's a weird blank space. I don't understand why Simon even likes Mattie: he seems to be convenient for Simon, because he won't press for more than Simon can offer.

With these guys there's the sense that they are both the easy option for the other, rather than *Ghost on my Couch*, where there was a sense that these two men had actually found the one person who would love them and treasure them for themselves.

Also, Mattie's whole schtick is that he's an artist, but nowhere do we hear about what he paints. What kind of art is it? Details help me create a world in my mind when I read the book, and would tell me a lot about the kind of person Mattie is supposed to be.

Simon's son is autistic, and it's nice to see an autistic character, but it does mean there's a certain lack of emotion when he is involved in scenes. However, he was very well-written, and this was the best feature of the book.

♥Laddie♥ (Lee Lee) says

There was a time when I could write coherently about why I loved a book but apparently this is not one of those times so...

SQUEEEEEE

Awwwwwww.

No way!!

Oh. My. GOD.

LOVE!

dies of cuteness

YES!!

brought back to life by the amazing

sigh of contentment

The End.

Note: For all those people who don't like kids in their book, there's a kid in this one. A wonderfully, adorable, smart and lovely little boy.

Susan65 says

The ending was AMAZING. So many parts of this story drove me crazy but the epilogue made all the badness, sadness and craziness just go away.

I need to think before i finish my review but i wanted to put it out there that the ending was spot on.

Update:

Strong story about a single dad raising an autistic child who's reluctant to bring a man into his son's life. Simon is a successful writer who adopts his sister's newborn after she dies in childbirth. His partner, who doesn't want to be a parent, leaves him. His homophobic mother tries to legally take Jamie away. And so Simon feels he has no choice but to give up his life to care for Jamie. His only support is Sarah, his friend and Jamie's teacher.

Mattie is a very young, illiterate but aspiring art student who struggles to survive on his minimum wage job. He hooks on the side to buy food, art supplies and rent money when he's short. He hates it but feels he has no choice.

Mattie and Simon are both hot for each other and both feel the other is "out of his league". They make it work in a casual sense. Soon though, they both begin to feel more but Simon won't risk Jamie by bringing Mattie into his life, and Mattie needs more, he wants to be seen as a person not just a "nobody".

This story was a little over 200 pages but it felt like a 1000 page book to me. It was good, but until the ending, I was hoping for more.

Sheziss says

Somebody find me somebody to explain this book to me!

'Cause I think I'm broken. Not broken because of the FEELZ, but broken because I didn't feel a thing!

I want a different book. I want a book that makes me feel the angst the characters live in. I want a book that makes me worry. A book that manages to pass on the feeling of loneliness, sadness, desperation and defeatism, and also a book of brightness, happiness, overcoming and hope. The MCs live that but I didn't. I felt curiosity and a little bit of liking but nothing further than that. I want empathy and to be on the verge of emotions but that didn't happen. It was just ok and disappointing.

Mandy*reads obsessively* says

Ok, where to start..

I really enjoyed the author's other books so when i saw she was coming out with this one and a rent boy story on top of that, I knew I had, had, had to have it!

I think loving her other books so much I had a preconceived notion going into this and they were promptly blown away.

I loved Mattie, he is absolutely wonderful, vulnerable, strong , pragmatic, idealistic and just plain sweet!

I am also very happy he has Ty as a BF, he needed someone who was really in his corner and telling him uncomfortable things without judgment! *sigh* I so wish Ty had been the love interest!

Jamie, sweet Jamie, he plays a major role in this book, both on page and as a plot device.

Now Simon...hmm..I am very conflicted about him. I admired him, he is a great father and a good man, he was also a selfish and immature at times, I thought. I found it ironic that he kept harping on the 7 yr. age difference, since he often acted like a spoiled teenager. He wanted it all, but only on his terms and says things without thinking about the repercussions.

(view spoiler)

Now Simon redeemed himself in the end, I thought his decision to do what was best for Mattie was great, I just had a huge problem with the way it was done.

(view spoiler)

Now, despite my niggles I still liked this story and I might have made Simon sound worse than he is, I just liked Mattie so much that I had trouble with him being happy with the scraps he was thrown, until he wasn't anymore! Thank goodness, and ironically Simon really helped Mattie see that!

I also have to add that I love the title of this book and when Mattie explains it...I know exactly what he means and it was such a great metaphor.

Deeze says

I've read this authors previous two books, The Ghost on my Couch and Witness, and enjoyed them both very much. But this book takes it to a whole new level.

To say I enjoyed this book is a complete understatement.

This book had everything I love in my romance stories, a geeky guy, a really hot guy that's insecure and a kid. But this had so much more. This had a real story, a real love story.

The feelings of both Mattie and Simon are laid bare. I admit I spent a fair portion of this book wiping my eyes, especially when I read how Simon felt when his mother turned her back on him.

Then Mattie explaining how he felt. The falling through the cracks? OMG that could have been any one of us.

Seeing these two together, the early struggles and later the way they fit so easily together was a true romance.

Jamie was an added delight. This is no perfectly sweet kid or obnoxious brat. Jamie is a real little boy. He will steal your heart and make your arms ache to hold him.

A wonderful story. Recommended to all looking for a true love story.

ETA Not much I can add except this NEEDS a follow on. I want to see how these guys are doing. Just how did Jamie cope with the move or did they stay and Mattie moved back, and a big part of me hopes they adopted a kid together. I can see these guys helping another special kid.

Akanksha♥ Søren? says

Awww fuck, where to begin :') :')

I abso-fucking-lutely LOVED the book :D

The story was amazing, the characters were amazing.. This book is amazing, and its not only for people who like m-m but for anyone who just wants to read an absolutely heart warming book. The sex was not graphic or even detailed. It was just mentioned. Thats it, so I guess people who dont read m-m too can read this book. So seriously, do read. Its beautiful, pure and amazing.

Simon, I seriously wanted to bitch slap you at least 3times in this book, but hell :') I LOVE YOU. Strong strong strong man who loved with all his heart but seriously you are seriously too thick at times.. :D <3

Mattie <3 Omfg.. HOT and just so strong and brilliant and just amazing. Love so pure, will so strong. He is just amazing and so bloody sweet!!!

Jamie, I love you little man :D

Ty & Sahra, Such amazing friends <3

"I'm losing masculine points by the second here." "Scratch your balls or something." - LOL!!!!

Lenore says

Rating clarification: The second star is for the fairly accurate portrayal of the high-functioning autistic child.

Ami says

I had one thing going for me when I picked up this story. I was spoiled by friends who read this first (and yes, I did look for the spoilers). For me, it's a GREAT thing because it helps managing my expectation. It makes me enjoy the story more because I'm not getting blindsided with anything. And you know what? I LOVE this!

Mattie

Mattie is wonderful! I love his determination to get GED, to get out from his poor situation, and keeping his eyes of going to New York. He's funny and sweet and endearing. Unfortunately, I agree with what Emma said in her review, that the part with Mattie being a prostitute to help himself financially is a bit "*wishy-washy*" (Emma's words). I'm not sure if it's a necessary plot because it feels like a half-cooked idea.

Simon

I know that he totally acts like a stupid idiot. A VERY STUPID IDIOT (I'm seething and wanting to slap him right there on Chapter Seven). However, I also feel I could give him second chance because he's actually a decent guy, with an adorable child. His stupidity might stems from various things: his mother practically kicked him out when he told her he was gay, his sister died and leaving him with Jamie, and then his lover left him after realizing that taking care of Jamie was a lot of work. He didn't have the balance in his life to see the right thing to do. He worries so much about everything, especially if it involves Jamie.

In a sense, Mattie is "luckier" because Mattie has his best friend-Ty, to help him from time to time, including keeping him in track. Simon? Not so much. So of course, he screw things up. Older doesn't mean wiser :). So, I'm happy that Mattie finally speaks up, demands Simon to "do something and fight for them", and sets things straight. I LOVE that part.

Jamie

He's adorable -- I want MORE of him. I'm complaining that I don't get enough of him

Other secondary characters: Ty, Sarah, Simon's Mom

They're all great -- it's lovely to have secondary characters that are so supportive. Even Simon's mother, despite the rough beginning, she comes through for her son and grandson

Now, I know other reviewers don't really like the way that Simon tells Mattie to go to New York, without any type of contact what-so-ever. I share Ty's position here; I think Mattie *settles* to be with Simon and

Jamie because Mattie thinks that this kind of happiness is 'closer', something that he can hold on to (since Simon loves him). While New York is something different, something scarier. I don't want THAT for Mattie after everything he has been through. I don't want him to settle. So I applaud Simon for pushing Mattie to go.

I actually love the idea of the blank postcards as "promise". For me, it means a whole lot more than said/written words. It brings a nostalgic sense, like in the old days, where lovers during wartime cannot contact one another for years, and only hang on to letters or memories. With so many technology today to communicate, it feels different :)

And that ending? That ending is PERFECT :)

Kaje Harper says

This book has a very true to life portrayal of what it's like to parent an autistic child, and the challenges, joys and life changes that go with that. Simon is impressive as a single father to his dead sister's child Jamie. He adores Jamie, and works to make his life as good as possible.

When something goes wrong, Simon blames himself for failing to smooth Jamie's path enough, and that felt very true to life - we all want to make the world give our kids a break, especially when they face extra challenges. But although he admits to having resented Jamie once, in very understandable circumstances, he's otherwise amazingly (almost unbelievably) patient with all of Jamie's limitations and reactions - he surprised me a little by never once even being irritated at Jamie in his thoughts. His love for his child is his guiding principle and unvaried. Having his child's teacher as an accepted and available babysitter probably does help him keep his sanity, and Sarah is a nice secondary character. In some ways, I actually liked the times Simon was obnoxious to Mattie, because they were understandable if not admirable human reactions that made Simon feel more real. And there were real issues between the two men that made the conflicts work.

Mattie is a guy with no education, no money, a dead end job, and a dream of getting his GED and going to art school in New York. He's working every angle he can, and occasionally tricking to make ends meet. Falling for the cute single dad who comes into the cafe wasn't part of the plan. But maybe love and family are a better goal than art school. Mattie's recurring fear, though, is whether Simon can live with the things Mattie's done to get by, and consider Mattie his equal. Mattie is sweet, strong and unsure of himself. He has some hard times to get through, and keeps his integrity as best he can. His interactions with Jamie are adorable. And his best friend Ty was fun, if nosy, a bit domineering and overprotective.

I enjoyed a lot of this story, but it also hit a few of my pet peeves. (view spoiler)

The epilogue was sweet and lovely, but lost a little of its glow because of my feeling that it should have been unnecessary.

Having said that, I read this all in one day - it flowed well, held my interest, Jamie was beautifully portrayed, and I did care about both main characters.

Macky says

This novel fell into a category that I've come across a few times, it held a lot of promise but sadly on finishing it I was left feeling a bit underwhelmed. Like a lot of books it starts off great, a good hook at the beginning in its prologue and introductions to some good characters. There are some serious subjects to explore like autism and a single gay parent having to cope with it and of course as mentioned in the book's description - prostitution and what makes a person turn to that! Unfortunately both subjects didn't have the impact I thought they would, especially Mattie's foray into prostitution. Apart from one iffy moment with one of his 'clients' and Simons' jealousies the whole subject seemed pushed in the background and Mattie's own background didn't seem bleak enough to put him in that position, OK he was short of money but he had a job and a roof over his head, the despair needed to push somebody into doing something as dark as that just wasn't present in Mattie as a character! At the beginning Jamie who is a high functioning autistic 4 year old, features heavily and is a lovely little character who pulls your heartstrings but when Simon (his dad) and Mattie get together he disappears into the background more and we hear about him but don't see as much of him afterwards. Don't get me wrong he's 'there' but he doesn't feature when Simon and Mattie are together as he's with his teacher and Simons' friend Sarah - a very nice character. In fact Mattie meets him once in the beginning at the cafe but doesn't again until fairly near the end. Towards mid story I got a little bored with it because it seemed to lose momentum and got bogged down with too many relationship issues between Simon and Mattie whose romance was a bit hit and miss for myself. I liked Simon and understood why he worried so much about his and Jamie's future but he also came over as a bit selfish sometimes, especially regarding Mattie, who was a very endearing and likeable person. There were moments that I enjoyed very much but overall I was disappointed hence the 3.5* rating. Very well written and some great characters but some of her subjects were underused and she could have pushed the boundaries a little more on others. Readable but not a keeper.

Anke says

4.5 stars

Wonderful book! From beginning to end I was drawn in. Jamie was just too cute in all his specialness - is that a word? Well, the whole book was a joy to read, although the Kleenex were nearby and in use, sniff. And Mattie - I so felt with him. And with how he at some point stood up for himself! Yes! And Ty was the best friend. Simon on the other hand really needed a good hard shake several times during the story. The end was just wonderful and fitting.

Natalie says

3.5 stars. I love this author, and *Witness* is probably among my top five favorite m/m romances ever. This book feels like L.A. Gilbert really took to heart all the reviewers who said *Witness* was too *nice* and decided to pile on the angst. Part of me liked it, and the other part feels conflicted.

What I loved: Mattie. What a sweetheart. I really ached for him as he struggled with making ends meet and earning his GED.

What I was lukewarm on: Simon. Simon was a harder nut to crack. It was harder to understand his motivations. Even though the reasons were made clear in the story, I hated how he treated Mattie. He atones for it the best he can, but it still rubbed me the wrong way.

What didn't ring true: (view spoiler)

Overall, the writing is good. I was engaged enough to read this almost in one gulp. Be aware that this is also a very kid-centric story, if you're sensitive to that sort of thing. (I'm neutral on it.) Simon's autistic son, Jamie, plays a huge role in the book.

Manfred says

Simon is an author, who raises his nephew Jamie, a 5-year-old autistic boy. Mattie works in a sandwich shop, he dreams of being an artist, but to get into art school in New York he needs his GED first, not an easy task, if you hardly know how to read and write. Still, even if he struggles he fights and if he needs to hustle a little on the side to make enough money for living, that's okay for him.

When they meet both know, that there is no space in their life for a relationship. They become friends with benefits but both can't deny their feelings to themselves.

There is a lot going on here, raising an autistic child is not an easy task and Mattie has enough problems going on as well.

The book starts very cleverly 3 years after they first met and they are not together anymore- or so it seems. That really made me wonder how that happened and what happened and why???

The story is really heartwarming, it was a great read and I enjoyed it a lot. There was a lot going on and it always felt right and true to the story. Both main characters were very lovable, believable and their struggle and their fears felt real as well.

For me, this was above average and I would give it solid 4.5 stars and a general recommendation!

P.S. One thing that really doesn't fit this book is its cover. You understand it when reading as the story about that coil is revealed, but seeing the cover you expect a completely different kind of book and it absolutely is not what you would expect, so go for the blurb and if this appeals to you, the book is great, don't expect any ideas the cover might give you resembling the story!

R.B. says

Damn that was great.

Mattie and Simon both have to make hard choices in their life.

Mattie is an illiterate young man and artist working low paid job, hooking occasionally to have extra cash so he can pay for his reading and writing classes and painter's supplies, dreaming about acquiring GED and studying at an art school in New York. He is so sweet and compassionate, determined to make his life only better.

Simon is single parent living his life for his wonderful little son Jamie, who's autistic. He was left struggling all alone by a person that he thought that would be his life partner so welcoming new people into his and Jamie's life is not easy for him. I was teary eyed while reading first chapter where I met Simon and Jamie and learned about everyday routine they had developed, about how wonderful, fulfilling and yet heartbreakingly raising autistic child may be.

Mattie was lucky to have such a wonderful friend in Ty and lover who put him first and gave him chance to realize his dreams, to grow and get to know himself though this decision was painful for them both.

I say it again. It was really great book.
