



Binds

Rebecca Espinoza

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Ophelia Brand's life is in shambles. Married to an abusive man and forced to act like the perfect politician's wife in public, her freedom has been completely stripped away. Alone and without purpose, Ophelia feels as if there isn't much in this world to live for. Everything changes when an employee kidnaps her from a state dinner. Ophelia is thrust into a new world filled with people who claim to be an ancient race of Mages. They also claim that she is one of them.

While the country falls into the hands of a tyrannical dictator, Ophelia finds herself torn between the friendly Reece who wants nothing more than to protect her, and Spencer, the leader of the resistance who sees her as a tool to fight the war. Tensions run high as Reece and Spencer both try to help her master her powers and unravel the spells that restricted her from using them. As revelations of her past come to light, and the war is brought to her feet, Ophelia must quickly make a choice of who to trust.

Binds is the first in a series of adult urban fantasy novels with sexy Mages, a sugar skull army, and an unfortunate set of Hello Kitty pjs.

Binds Details

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From Reader Review Binds for online ebook

Brenna says

***Binds* is Rebecca Espinoza's debut novel and I have to say, SHE TOTALLY NAILED IT! ME = FOREVER FAN!**

This book completely rocked my world. Although I was excited to start this in general, it completely exceeded my expectations. I sat down with it last night at 1am at 30% and around 40% I was thinking, "Hmm... *I'm thirsty, I'll get a drink when this chapter is over.*" Well, that never happened, I didn't move from my chair until I finished it. True story. Those who really know me, know how ADD I can be (even when I love a book), so that is **HUGE** for me!

Binds follows Ophelia (aka Phee), she is the (unhappy) wife of an abusive complete douchnozzle of a man (if you can even call the bastard that).

"Some people say that once married, people tend to let themselves go. Well, he decided to go the way of Anakin and let himself go to the dark side."

While performing one of her "trophy wife" duties of going to a political dinner, she is unexpectedly captured. The group responsible is part of a secret society of Mages who have magical powers and little does she know that she is one of them herself. The story follows Ophelia through finding out what it means to be a Mage. She also realizes that the race is going through a horrible time. There is pretty much a civil war raging and no one is safe.

This book has an extraordinary cast of characters. Immediately I felt connected to Ophelia. Although she has been married to an abusive man, she is incredibly strong. She doesn't label herself as the victim or think she deserves the violence than her husband inflicts on her. It is made quite clear right from the get go that she has done and will do just about anything to get away from him. She is also smart, beautiful, snarky, sarcastic, witty, seriously such an awesome narrator for this story! Then there is the group of Mages that live with her once she has been taken. Starting with Spencer, who is pretty much the leader of their little sector. He is kind of a pompous ass, but I still found myself liking him and laughing at the rude but usually honest things he would say. Then there is Cass and Jinx, two of the youngest of the group, teenagers who were freaking hilarious!

"*What is that by your eye?*" Cass asks, weaving her head around, trying to get a better look at this Jinx guy's face. "*Bwahahaha! Please tell me you didn't draw a teardrop next to your eye? Oh, this is comic hold! Hold still, I have to get a picture of this for the guys!*" LMAO!

Finally, we have Reece. This guy had me from the moment he referenced *Pretty Woman*. He is sweet, protective, and wants to help Ophelia more than anything else. And of course, he's gorgeous!

"I told you before and I will say it as many times as I have to. I'm going to be the one that

saves you ... everytime."

One of the best things about this book is the pacing. The story immediately sucks you in with Ophelia's unique voice, then as new characters are added you fall deeper in love. The world building of the Mage's is slowly revealed and explained in such an effortless way. Then the last 30% is an action packed ride of pure awesome with shocking plot twists and turns. I don't want to give too much away about where the story goes but it definitely has a little bit for everyone. Suspense, action, some hints of romance, and it's unpredictable. I had so many questions and theories, and while some were right on, many were unexpected and I love when that happens!

"Never again am I going to let anyone have any power over me. I feel reborn, revitalized, and energized for anything that may come my way."

4.5 stars

ARC received in exchange for an honest review.

I am so excited for more in this series! Rebecca is currently working on Bonds, #2 in the Binds series and in the meantime, she will be releasing a short story from Jinx's POV pretty soon! Yay - LOVE that kid! :)

*Teaser Pics taken from Rebecca Espinoza's author Facebook page. Check it out for more awesome teasers and info! <3

For more reviews go to Reality Bites! Let's Get Lost!!

Nina says

4 brilliant stars!

You're in for a treat, people! :>

Ursprünglich erschienen auf www.buchjunkies-blog.de

Als Ophelia 'Phee' während dem College Donovan Brand kennenlernte, dauerte es nicht lange, bis sie war bis über beide Ohren in den charismatischen jungen Mann, dem eine große Karriere in der Politik bevorstand, verliebte. Doch als Donovan schließlich um ihre Hand anhielt und die beiden heirateten, hatte Ophelia nicht mit der scharfen Wendung, die ihr Leben nehmen sollte. Denn kaum haben sich die beiden das Ja-Wort gegeben, wurde aus dem einst so liebevollen Donovan ein gewalttätiger und cholerischer Mistkerl.

Sieben Jahre sind seitdem vergangen, doch an Ophelias Situation hat sich nichts verändert. Nach Außen ist sie die perfekte Frau für ihren bekannten Ehemann, doch in Wahrheit ist sie mehr oder weniger eine Gefangene in ihrem eigenen Haus. Und es gibt kein entkommen. Denn Donovan und sein Vater sind, nach einigen harten Maßnahmen gegen Kriminalität und Armut, mittlerweile an der Spitze der Regierung angekommen. Und das bedeutet, dass jegliche Fluchtversuche von Ophelia vergeblich sind, denn die Brands haben ihre Augen überall.

Doch alles verändert sich, als Phee von ihrem Chauffeur Reece entführt und zu einer kleinen Gruppe von Rebellen gebracht wird, die sich nicht den Tyranneien von Donovan und seinem Vater ergeben wollen. Dort soll Ophelias ganzes Leben erneut auf den Kopf gestellt werden.

Denn unter den Menschen und von ihnen unentdeckt lebt eine Rasse von Magiern, die gerade ihren ganz eigenen Krieg ausfechten müssen. Und Phee ist eine von ihnen. Kaum einer der anderen Magier traut allerdings der Frau von Donovan Brand, der dafür verantwortlich ist, dass sie versteckt und in ständiger Angst leben müssen. Die einzigen, die sich Ophelia annehmen sind Spencer, der arrogante und launische Anführer der Rebellen, von dem sie meist nie genau weiß, was sie halten soll, und Reece, der nichts anderes möchte, als Ophelia zu beschützen, der aber ebenfalls seine Geheimnisse zu haben scheint.

Ophelia muss nicht nur lernen, ihre eigenen Kräfte zu meistern, sondern auch herausfinden, wem sie vertrauen kann. Denn ausgerechnet sie könnte der Schlüssel sein, um diesen Krieg zu entscheiden.

(Orphelia, Spencer, Reece & Donovan)

Binds ist der Debütroman der Nachwuchsautorin Rebecca Espinoza und gleichzeitig der gelungene Auftakt zu ihrer gleichnamigen Reihe. Als wir Ophelia zu Beginn der Geschichte kennenlernen, ist sie in einer ziemlich ausweglosen Situation. Noch ist sie zwar nicht ganz bereit aufzugeben, allerdings steht sie kurz davor. Phee hat kaum noch Kraft zu kämpfen und das hat sie zu einem relativ schwachen Charakter gemacht. Zumindest eben am Anfang. Sie hat die vergangenen sieben Jahren komplett abgeschottet verbracht und nur das von der Außenwelt gesehen, was Donovan ihr erlaubt hat. Von daher hat sie nie wirklich hinterfragt, was ihr Gatte mit seiner politischen Macht genau anstellt. Doch je mehr sie nach ihrer Entführung über ihre Vergangenheit und Donovan herausfindet, umso mehr Kraft schöpft sie auch daraus und entwickelt sich zu einem interessanten Charakter.

Auch die anderen Figuren haben einiges zu bieten. Wie gesagt sind die einzigen, die sich zunächst mit Ophelia abgeben wollen, Spencer und Reece. Die beiden sind ebenfalls Magier, könnten sonst aber nicht unterschiedlicher sein. Spencer ist der geborene Anführer und fordert Phee bei jeder Gelegenheit heraus, um sie zu ihrer besten Leistung zu motivieren. Dabei geht er meist nicht gerade zimperlich mit ihr um. Reece dagegen ist offensichtlich nur an Ophelias Wohl interessiert und beschützt sie wo er nur kann. Einer möchte sie um alles in der Welt beschützen und der anderen will sie dazu bringen, für sich selbst zu sorgen. Beide haben aber offensichtlich Geheimnisse vor ihr und sowohl sie als auch der Leser wissen nicht so recht, wem man vertrauen kann.

Da wären wir allerdings auch schon bei einem meiner beiden Probleme mit diesem Buch. Denn nach allem, was Ophelia durchgemacht hat, vertraut sie einfach zu schnell. Sie bildet sich ein Urteil nach ihrem ersten Eindruck und das ist für meinen Geschmack etwas zu naiv - vor allem für eine Frau mit Phees Vergangenheit. Sie ist einer dieser Charaktere, der im einen Moment felsenfest etwas entscheidet, nur um zwei Seiten später genau das Gegenteil zu tun (z.B. hasst sie jemanden und drei Seiten später hegt sie plötzlich ganz andere Gefühle für diese Person). Für mich ist das eine der frustrierendsten Eigenschaften, die ein Charakter haben kann. Allerdings erschien es mir so, als würde ihr Charakter gegen Ende dahingehend eine große Entwicklung durchmachen. Mein anderes Problem hängt mit der Auflösung zusammen. Denn auf den letzten Seiten erfährt man extrem viel Neues. Es gibt eine Enthüllung nach der anderen und während das

natürlich alles sehr spannend ist, ist es manchmal auch ein wenig verwirrend. Vor allem, weil sich Identitäten und Namen ändern und ich mir manchmal nicht mehr ganz sicher war, von wem jetzt gerade die Rede war.

Daran geändert, dass Rebecca Espinoza mit Binds ein ausgesprochen guter Start in ihre Serie gelungen ist, hat das aber dennoch nichts. Dafür ist die Geschichte zu spannend und die Wendungen zu gelungen.

Außerdem hat Rebecca Espinoza einen wirklich schönen Schreibstil, der nicht nur humorvoll, sondern auch bildreich ist und ein Händchen für interessante Charaktere.

Auch wenn das Ende wie gesagt etwas konfus ist (oder vielleicht auch gerade deswegen), freue ich mich jetzt schon sehr auf die Fortsetzung mit dem Titel Bonds, über die sonst aber bisher noch nichts bekannt ist. Binds selbst erscheint voraussichtlich am 4. April 2013.

Thanks to Rebecca Espinoza for providing me with this ARC in exchange for an honest review.

♥Rachel♥ says

3.5 Stars

Binds is a promising start to an original UF series. I am a newbie to the Urban Fantasy, but I'm quickly learning to be patient when it comes to UF. You don't get all your information in one book and things are not tied up neatly at the end. The world building, relationships, and romances are built slowly over time, and this makes it all the more satisfying when eventually things wrap up.

Ophelia is married to a powerful politician and tyrant, kept in a gilded cage, and unable to escape. She knows because she's tried. Her husband, Donovan seemed sweet and loving when they were dating but she now knows he's a monster. When kidnapped by a Reece, a member of a resistance group, and told that she has powers magical powers she is shocked, and doesn't know who to trust. She's told there's a bitter war between the government and the Mages and they need her help. As the evidence shown to her is irrefutable, Ophelia knows she wants answers and the only way to get them is to work with Spencer, the infuriating leader. She wants to know why her mother kept all this from her. And why didn't she warn her of the dangers surrounding her?

Like I said at the outset, UF is something you need to be patient with. Usually the first book is just the set up and slow introduction into the fantasy world, and relationships. Binds was no exception. I felt thrust into this world much like Ophelia with confusion and a desire to figure things out. I loved the whole magical world of Mages and the Binds they use to manipulate the world around them. I can't wait to see Ophelia really master her powers, because I suspect she's a force to be reckoned with.

Ophelia was a likeable character and I felt sorry for all she went through at the hands of her husband. She seemed so powerless at first and it was a bit frustrating. I also thought Ophelia seemed to be a little slow to grasp things that seemed obvious; the whole situation with Cass being one example. I'm not sure if it was because she was isolated for so long or if it was because she was kept in the dark most of her life. At any rate, I hope we see this change in the next novel. If the last 10% is anything to go by, I think it will. Ophelia finally seemed like she was getting the strength to stand up and take some action.

Now onto the men, we have Spencer the powerful and enigmatic leader, and Reece her gorgeous rescuer and member of the resistance. I hate love triangles and for just a second this looked like it was well on its way to being one. *groans* I'm happy to report that it didn't turn out that way. For me there's a clear winner in the romance department, but I'll let you figure that one out on your own. Let's just say there was a kiss that swayed me:

His soft lips contrast with the urgency I feel from him. It's as if it is the last moment of the last second of the last everything before the end of the world and we are both trying to make it count.

Romances take time to develop in Urban Fantasy, and I can tell there's going to be some big obstacles to overcome in the future. I think Ophelia is going to be ticked when she finds out things were held back from her, yet again.

Binds sucked me right in and I was surprised how quickly I breezed through. It ended just as things were *really* getting interesting with a lot of the major reveals left to the last 10% of the novel. I can't wait to see how things turn out. I just looked up the second book and I don't see any release date yet, but hopefully it will be soon!

A copy was provided by the author in exchange for an honest review.

Lise *friends don't flag* says

4.5 Spark-filled stars!

Such a good little Urban Fantasy story and it is just the beginning!

In this fantastic debut novel by Rebecca Espinoza, we are introduced to our heroine, Ophelia. She was raised by her magical Mother and best friend, Morgan until Ophelia's world as she knew it changed forever. It is when she is without her Mother she seeks the love of a man that is not what he seems- Donovan Brand is a power hungry abusive arse and I really detested him. Ophelia is belittled and tortured and although she has tried to escape she seems resigned to live this daily charade of obedient wife of the head of state and daughter-in-law to the Chancellor.

"I sink further into myself while zoning out and wishing that I were one of those bubbles, wishing for a distraction to get lost in the world amongst all the other bubbles and break free."

When the new chauffeur, Reece takes a detour home from the miserable dinner she had to attend for her husband; so begins Ophelia's discovery of her true self and the world she was never exposed to before.

"Don't worry; I'm taking you exactly where you need to go."

Even though I love Reece with his sweet protective personality, dark hair and green-eyed yumminess ... in steps Mystery Guy aka Spencer. When Ophelia meets Spencer she says "**Why is everyone so hot?**" But, she sees something else in Spencer as well.

"He's also looking at me in a way that tells me he would love nothing more than to run a blunt skewer through my heart. His eyes, the color of deep polished sapphire, are filled with that much hate."

The author does an awesome job of world building and explaining how life became the way it is now for the characters in Binds. Once Ophelia meets her new housemates; Reece, Spencer, Cass and Jinx the truth of what Ophelia is and what kind of world she lives in really begins to unfold.

Ophelia handles the abduction situation fairly well and even suggests that this is all a “larping thing” where they are role-playing. However, she soon discovers it is no game and there are serious matters of life and death and as she trains and learns from Spencer, Reece and the rest of the crew she begins to accept her true identity and learns how to be what she really is.

“You say that I am a Mage, and yet, I haven’t ever felt a spark off of anyone in my life.”

“You don’t have a monster inside of you.” “I don’t? But then ... what was that thing?” “That monster IS you.”

I loved the banter (posturing) between Spencer and Reece over Ophelia. It was witty and fun.

“You said that nothing would change with Spencer if you weren’t a married woman, but you didn’t say anything about me.” Reece’s grin could definitely be considered devilish now. He walks over to Spencer, who no longer looks so pleased with himself, and points his thumb to his own chest. “This guy: still in the running,” he says. If Spencer had said something like that, it would have sounded arrogant, but from Reece, it just seems playful and endearing. Point goes to Reece.”

But in the world of magic, power and secrets; life is not all witty banter. A war is brewing and secrets and deceit will soon be revealed. Where will this place Ophelia, Spencer, Reece and the rest of the cast of characters?

Well.. my friends you will have to read this and find out for yourself and I highly recommend that you do!

Thank you, Rebecca for sharing this wonderful story with me and I am so excited to continue the journey. I have a sudden urge to jump into a PT Cruiser and listen to Willie Nelson sing about Pancho and Lefty *winks*

Stephanie • Ideally Inspired says

First of all, this cover is fantastic. Not gonna lie, that was the first thing that had me interested in cracking it open. I didn't really read any reviews prior to starting this book, so I wasn't too sure what to expect. A friend of mine (the Marvelous Megan Simpson of "Reading Books Like A Boss" book blog) gifted me a copy of Binds after she read an ARC of this for her blog. Let me just tell you, it was a gift that keeps on giving.

This book had me captivated from the first page. The book is told from the POV of Ophelia, who is a great

female lead. She is hilarious. I loved getting through this story through her eyes. She has a pretty rough journey of "development" and progression throughout the book, but it was good seeing her growth into an ideal book heroine.

Enough about the lady, let's talk about the mens! (Time to bust out the gifs!)

Guuuuurl, lemme tell you about my man SPENCER.

The entire time, I kept thinking:

He got my juices flowing. Brooding, mysterious, dominant, and HAWT! LAWDY!

Oh Spencer. Be still my heart!

I don't even know how best to describe my over-swoony lustification (that's not a word, but I just made it one). DYING. Can't form words...

(this gif ^ was selected specifically for my sister-wives--you know who you are)

(view spoiler)

This book has it's fair share of wonderful characters and fantastical elements. Normally, I'm not as keen on the Urban Fantasy genre of books, mainly because authors can spend an insurmountable amount of time introducing all of the fantasy elements. At times it can leave me lost or confused while trying to keep up with the story. This was not the case with this book. Rebecca did an excellent job setting up the world of the Mages. I LOVED everything about "Binds". The characters, magic, romance, friendships, conflict, suspense, and action were all very well written. Rebecca's refreshing take on "Mages" kept things interesting, and I was constantly finding myself enthralled and fascinated.

If I could give this book more than 5 stars, I would. This book is addictive. As soon as I was finished, I wanted to read it again. I am so eager to see what else Rebecca will have in store for us in this series! I'm completely invested, bewitched, enamored, mesmerized, and absolutely dazzled by "Binds"! I just wanna shout it from the rooftops:

Hey Rebecca,

Joan (official heroine hater) says

First off, let me say that I'm not a big reader of the Adult Urban Fantasy genre. I've read a couple that I have enjoyed, but for the most part they seem to either: bore me, confuse me with the world building, the heroines are either too stupid to live or over-the-top badass and the heroes are either jerks or weenies. So, knowing that, how did Binds fare with me? Well, let's just say if more of the above genre was like this, I'd be a convert! I REALLY enjoyed this book....

World Building: Just about perfect. I wasn't confused-the Mages and their powers were explained well without all that info dumping that usually has me skimming or snoozing. I liked the twist on the world at the end and am definitely curious to know more. The only thing that has me wondering is where exactly this story takes place? I had assumed some unnamed place in the US, but use of the term "chancellor" has me questioning that. I've always attributed that term of government office to European countries, so now I'm not sure...

The Heroine: I love this girl, Ophelia! She felt so real and her reactions were spot on. Usually when these ladies are introduced to a world they never knew existed, they react with either buckets of tears or an unbelievably blasé attitude and are suddenly kicking ass all over the place-yeah, right. Not Ophelia! She was wary and understandably doubtful but open enough to actually LISTEN to the people around her. AND SHE ONLY CRIED ONCE IN THE ENTIRE BOOK, people!! This fact, right there, is enough to make me love her. And the cry did not go on for pages and have her hanging onto some guy and was 100% understandable-hell, I would have been crying, as well.

The Heroes: I actually find myself torn with these guys, which is unusual for me. I usually pick my "team" quite quickly and stick to him throughout. In this case, both Reece and Spencer have their pros and cons and I'm not sure yet where my loyalties lie. Both of them are keeping some seriously big secrets and when certain things are revealed, I found myself flip-flopping back and forth. I was leaning towards Reece, but sh*t, his reveal is a big one and I'm not so sure that can be overcome. Then we get to the epilogue, and damn if Spencer is hiding some big stuff as well! I'm dying to know how this all plays out...

The Writing: This is a first novel debut for this author and the writing was an A+! No typos, grammatical errors or bad editing. The action flowed perfectly, the dialogue was snappy, humorous, realistic and not stilted at all. The characters were believable and well rounded and didn't feel wooden. Really enjoyed some of the side characters, as well, especially loved Jinx!

Yes, the author is a friend of mine, but I think I've been very honest in my review of this book. Had I not liked it, I would have taken the coward's way out and just not written a review at all! Looking forward to the next installment and gawd, I hope we don't have to wait too long!?!

Ash Wednesday says

4 STARS

Any Bryan Singer fans here? No? Just me?

Reading the last two chapters and that sneaky epilogue, this book brought me back to that first time I

watched one of my favorite movies ever, *The Usual Suspects*... in that I had to be kind, rewind then press play all over again after not being able to process who Keyser Soze is.

Binds' blurb is pretty straightforward but the plot, for me, was pretty intricate. I think this was served best by the underlying mystery to the characters, in that not everything is revealed at first glance and you won't be spoon-fed. It's like being given the barest, deceptively light and fluffy essentials in your voyage, enough to be immersed and engaged at certain plot points but not enough to see the bigger picture. And boy, that's some big-ass picture. I'm not gonna lie, I had a bit of trouble keeping up especially towards the end and I'm still fuzzy with the Mages' logic as a race (view spoiler).

This frustrated me for a while because our author was leaving off a lot of loose ends as we went along (seriously I wanted to PM her and nagger). But for a book meant to be part of a bigger story, I think the loose ends that needed to be tied were neatly dealt with by the end, while the rest that were left alone sets me up quite nicely for the next one.

Ophelia was a slow burner of a heroine for me. She didn't come off annoying in the beginning but I felt a little detached, mostly because she was just reactive to everything that's happening to her and not volleying anything back. She slowly made her voice heard when (view spoiler) and became stronger still until her facing-off with Donovan towards the end. Her nonchalant narration of Donovan's abuse I think tipped the likability scale for me. It was almost like she's defiantly daring you to pity her.

I liked how the Reece-Spencer dilemma was handled in Ophelia's mind being relative to her insecurities of her strength. It echoes the very real feminine struggle of yearning to be cared for but at the same time wanting to be respected as an equal.

"I told you before and I will say it as many times as I have to. I'm going to be the one that saves you... everytime."

versus

"You want a hero, right? Someone who will come around and give you everything you've dreamt of, take you and show you the way so you don't have to find it on your own, hero to worship at your feet and blow smoke up your ass? You're looking for those things in the wrong person. I'm neither and don't ever wish to be. What I can offer you is a place to call home, a confidant who doesn't turn out to be an enemy, and a place in history that shows you were on the right side of the fight."

A chatty Cathy, that Spencer.

I really, REALLY look forward to Reece in the next book. Partly because that guy put me through the wringer trying to figure out WTF he really is and another part because there's a whole stretch of time in his past that deserves some telling. Though I've already picked out my team pretty early on and went with what George Lucas taught me:

(view spoiler)

So who is Keyser Soze?

I think every man in this book had a little bit of him in them... and its gonna be a joy watching Phee deal with each.

Kayla at MyBookMuse says

More reviews at: www.mybookmuse.com

4.5 stars*

ARC provided in exchange for an honest review

The debut novel by Rebecca Espinoza is intriguing, exciting, and well written.

Ophelia does not have the greatest life. For starters, her husband, Donavon, is the king of all creeps. He is physically, mentally, and emotional abusive. Donavon not only treats Ophelia as his trophy wife, but as his personal possession.

"Our life together has become a game to him, one of his favorite games to play, ever. He pretends he is a loving husband in any and all social settings, I pretend I am a loving and devoted wife in the same settings. We both circle each other like a couple of caged lions in private."

But Ophelia is not a willing victim. She is simply waiting for the right time to leave. And the right time to leave comes in the form of the hired help, Reece.

Reece kidnaps Ophelia and introduces her to a world unlike any she has ever known. A world in which Mages exist, and she is one of them. Reece assumes the role of Ophelia's protector, educator and possible suitor, but he is not the only one.

Spencer, the leader of the resistance, is cold, infuriating, and has that sexy douchebag vibe to him.

"How does he always pop up at the most inopportune times? It's like he has some radar in his brain that tells him the best time and place where douchebaggery may occur, and he follows it religiously."

But Reece and Spencer are not what they seem.

With Ophelia learning about her identity, hiding from her husband, and dealing with Reece and Spencer's pissing contests, the journey from abused housewife to a powerful mage, is action packed, thrilling, and downright shocking at times.

To say that this book left an impression on me is an understatement. By the time I got to the epilogue I was pretty much like this:

If your looking for a book with well developed characters, descriptive world building, and originality, then look no further. I was hooked from the first page, till the very last and I cannot wait for what happens next.

Megan • Reading Books Like a Boss (book blog) says

See more reviews like this at Reading Books Like a Boss

Stop what you're doing right now and GO READ THIS BOOK! This book is certified grade A unputdownable. I was shocked at how quickly it sucked me in. I cannot say enough good things about it. What's more is that this is Rebecca Espinoza's freaking debut novel. What?!? Mind blown. She is immensely talented. Not only is the storyline brilliant, the writing and character development is spectacular. If you're new to urban fantasy, start with Binds.

Ophelia Brand is married to Donovan Brand, the son of a crazy dictator who is trying to rid the world of all the Mages (those with magical abilities). I'm just going to come out and say it. Donovan is a mother flipping genuine douchecanoe (MFGD). Page one of chapter one, I had had enough of of Donovan. Next. Donovan beats Ophelia Tony Rawlings style because he's a MFGD. Anyway, Ophelia's every move is monitored by the "staff" and she has absolutely no freedom. Despite being in this terrible and controlling marriage for years, Ophelia is surprisingly strong and resilient. Her determination to move forward and make a better life for herself is admirable. Basically, Phee kicks ass. She is also extremely hilarious and makes "larper" jokes. So naturally, she is now one of my favorite heroines.

"Why is everyone so hot?" I don't even know how those words have slipped out of my mouth but I've said them, and directly to the hottest of them all, Mystery Guy. (I'm assume he must be Spencer).

Thankfully, we don't have to deal with Donovan for very long because Reece comes to her rescue (hello, white knight) and takes Ophelia away to Spencer's secret lair. Reece is part of an underground resistance movement that is opposed to current regime's rules and regulations regarding Mages. So why bother kidnapping Ophelia? Well, because she's got the magic touch. Partly due to her mother putting a Bind on her magic and partly due to her sheltered adulthood, Ophelia had no idea of the magic and power that lives inside of her

At the head of this resistance movement is Spencer. He is a dark and mysterious man who is willing to do anything for the good of his people. Since the New World Order took over, Mages have been forced from their homes and into reformatories. When we first see Spencer, he's cold and distant, yet I was drawn to him. As the story went on, I loved him more and more. Maybe that's because Spencer calls her Princess, and that makes me melt. But then, Reece is so sweet and helpful. He cares for her so deeply without question. Which one do I want Phee to be with?

"Finally having one other person in this world who cares feels like being tossed a scrap of food when you haven't eaten in weeks and then having hope that you may just survive the famine after all."

Rebecca Espinoza has crafted this creative, stunning, and captivating world of magical beings. I am absolutely blow away by how great this book was. The story flowed effortlessly and there was not one moment where I felt the plot lulled or dragged on. And the plot twists? Wow! I did NOT see the end coming at all. Granted, I suck at predicting things, but still the revelations in the last 15% knocked me on my booty!

4 stars

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Lucia says

3.5 STARS! I really enjoyed this! Excellent introduction into series!

My Ophelia:

My Reece:

My Spencer:

"My life seems to have been split sharply into two sections with a clean severance, like a knife cutting kernels off of a corncob. Before, it was a whole object, fully connected to itself, and after, it was scattered all over the plate; cut off, bereft."

Ophelia is not happy with her life. She is 27 years old housewife, just a trophy to her husband Donovan. She did everything to appease him, to support his political carrier but she failed at noticing what a horrible person he was until it was too late. Now, Ophelia is too deep in problems, unable to get away from her tyrannical husband. Until the most unexpected thing happens and she is kidnapped just to be told the truths about herself, her origin and to be introduced into the supernatural life she had never even dreamed of. Moreover, she will be exposed to the attention of two charismatic but totally different guys, however, can Ophelia trust anyone???

I really liked Reece. He was sweet, friendly, caring, understanding and very sexy. I could go on and on with praises. Spencer was arrogant but powerful and respectful person, nevertheless I could not connect with his superior and cocky behaviour. There is one thing that both of them have in common and it is the fact that Reece as well as Spencer have their secrets... Ophelia was very self-sacrificing person but she has her negative side too; she is not very perceptive. But she learns a lot, realizes plenty of things about herself and overall grows mentally in this book.

I read a lot so it is always a huge plus when book is able to surprise me with original ideas. And it was exactly the case with this book. Storyline kept me on my toes and guessing till the very end. You will be shocked by various revelations at the end, you will be entertain by funny and interesting side characters and you will probably swoon over some hot guys too. Binds was excellent introduction into this new urban fantasy series and even though there was no cliffhanger I cannot wait to read more about word of Mages in sequel Bonds!

* I received ARC by author as an exchange for honest review *

MORE REVIEWS ON MY BLOG [Reading Is My Breathing](#)

Ian says

4.5 Stars

I read this book in secret. I told a few people I was reading it but I'm a Goodreads friend of Rebecca Espinoza and I was a little worried that I just wouldn't like the book.

I'm sure some of you have experienced that moment when someone hands you their baby and you look at him / her and think to yourself, 'Wow, this is one ugly baby'...but you force a smile on your face and say, "Hello cutey"?

That's what I was worried about.

But this book is freaking amazing! It's a debut...and it's freaking amazing! OK, as you would expect of a first time author, her influences come through in this book and occasionally they come through quite strongly...but this book is freaking amazing!

If this is where she is starting from, I can't begin to imagine where she is going to end up in 10 years! Time to start begging for a signed copy, because a day is coming when I will be the coolest person in the room because I have a signed copy of *Binds*.

Oh...and that cover is sublime!

** Added 23rd September 2013 **

Ha ha...coolest person in the room!!

AJ says

HOLY FREAKING TWISTY STORIES!! I loved this book!

What a fantastic debut by Rebecca Espinoza, and a sensational start to an exciting and original new Urban Fantasy series. I love the premise, I love the world, I love the writing, and the characters are phenomenal!

Firstly there's our heroine, Ophelia. Trapped in a hideously abusive marriage, she is a trophy wife, kept isolated from the world and regularly beaten by her bastard husband. Kidnapped away by an unlikely ally, she is taken in by a group of mages (magical people), and discovers that she is actually one of them. Now don't go thinking that she is some weak little doormat... quite the opposite. Ophelia is strong, confident, and absolutely determined to build a better life for herself. Her reactions are very real, and even though she goes through hell only to be thrown into a totally bizarre situation, there is not an ounce of stupid to be found. WOHHOO!!! She's hilariously witty, and I love her voice as the narrator for the story.

"Umm...Jinx is it? I have no idea why you thought you needed protection from me before, but if you call me bitch ever again, you'll be needing protection from me in the future because I will be shoving my foot up your skinny little ass. Comprende?"

As she learns all about this new side of her, she also discovers that the world she knew nothing about is at war. With her country in the hands of a tyrannical dictator, her new people are in danger, and the group that has taken her in are fighting in the resistance - led by the enigmatic Spencer. Passionately driven and determined to fight for his people, he is rude and arrogant, but he has a softer side which comes out as he helps Ophelia realise her full power. He also has that sexy assthat-vibe happening.

“Wait a minute, who was in your room then?” ...

“That would be me,” Spencer replies smugly from the entryway. How does he always pop up at the most inopportune times? It’s like he has some radar in his brain that tells him the best time and place where douchebaggery may occur, and he follows it religiously.

Also helping Ophelia in her journey is gorgeously sweet and protective Reece. From the very beginning, he assigns himself as Ophelia’s defender, and I love how gentle he is with her, and how open he is about how much he cares for her.

“I told you before and I will say it as many times as I have to. I’m going to be the one that saves you ... every time.”

Quick shout out too to Cass, Jinx and Allie – the younger members of the resistance movement, each with an important part to play, and bringing some sensational moments to the story.

“That’s amazing. You’re five years younger than me and you’re the one giving me the much-needed advice. Thank you.”

“Yeah, well in all honesty, I just pulled most that stuff out of my ass. But still, you’re welcome.”

But there are lots of secrets, unknown motives and devastating betrayals. And Ophelia doesn’t know who she can trust. To be honest, neither did I. I had suspicions along the way of what may be going on behind the scenes, but just when I thought I had figured out what was going on, and I was coasting along nicely, along came that ending and slapped me across the face! Not just the ending, but the whole lead up to the ending. Soooo many twist and turns and revelations. I was in a constant state of ‘OMG’ moments right through until the very last page. It was awesome!

With a well developed and intriguing world, an unpredictable storyline with lots of shocks, fantastic characters, sensational banter, laughs and some action, this is a really well written Urban Fantasy. The pacing is brilliant, I was sucked straight into the story, and was kept interested the whole way through as the world unravels slowly, and gets deeper and more involved as the book progresses. The book finishes nicely, but there is a minor cliffy as we are left hanging after all of the revelations, and with a hint of romance in the making, as well as the threat of an all-out war looming, I am busting for the next book. I can’t wait to continue on with this series.

I loved it – 4.5 stars.

Crystal says

Ophelia’s life has literally been thrown upside down. She has just discovered that a whole different world and race of people exist alongside the drab, colourless one that she barely exists in. As she learns more about the unique Mage world and discovers how she fits in it, Ophelia begins to bloom. She’s been suffocating under her husband’s stifling presence for so long that she doesn’t even know her own potential. The real Ophelia is hidden under the façade she’s created for her life with Donovan and there are hints that this

woman is a lot stronger underneath than she may initially appear.

“We both circle each other like a couple of caged lions in private.”

You sense that Ophelia’s just been waiting for a chance to stand up for herself. Despite everything she’s been through, she sees herself as an equal to Donovan and hasn’t given up the fight by any means.

This story is fun! Even though Ophelia should be scared shitless a lot of the time, she doesn’t take everything too seriously. I laughed and smiled a lot despite her having been through some pretty serious stuff!

“It must be Reece’s idea of a joke. Haha, so funny. It’s going to be even funnier when I kick him in the balls the next time I see him.”

There is also romance. And no insta-love here! This is the sort you want to invest some time in and know it’ll be worth it. I loved the build up to a certain kiss between Ophelia and (view spoiler) – it gave me tingles. It’s lovely to experience Ophelia discovering feelings for a new man, after giving up on a HEA for herself.

“Against my will, my heart begins to wonder what it would feel like to have that man’s affection directed its way”.

The next book has been set up well. We aren’t left with a big cliff-hanger, just enough resolution, but I definitely want to keep reading to see what transpires with Reece, Spencer, Ophelia and the Mage war. The ending, and a certain choice she makes, gave me an insight into Ophelia’s true character and I loved it. Fist pump moment for Ophelia!

I’m very excited to add this review to GR and so happy for Rebecca to have officially published this book. Binds is a really imaginative and original story. It’s also very clever and funny.

Fred says

So excited to read this! Rebecca is a beautiful writer and an awesome friend, I know this is going to rock!

Lilly P says

4 stars

After reading Binds I’ve discovered two things about myself.

The first, that I am a PNR & (High- Low)Fantasy lover and second, that I love a good supernatural love triangle. All Things that can be found in Mrs. Espinoza's promising **debut** novel.

Besides the obvious differences between a PNR/Fantasy Romance and any other type of romance novels (like fairies, monsters and mages), the thing that I love most about them is the slow burn of the story.

Where a good contemporary romance novel always cooks with high heat causing the story to sizzle in its crescendo letting you know it's done . A good PNR lets the characters simmer for a long time with low heat while continually adding new characters or twists in the plot, developing layers and texture that eventually (hopefully) come to an aromatic, satisfying boil. I swear I’m not hungry... but I could go for some gumbo ;). Anyway, Binds has heavy influences from Moning's fever series so it sort of reads a little like fan fiction.

Very good fan fiction but still . It's kind of like the fever series meets aspects of Beautiful Creatures with a sprinkle of Daughter of Smoke and Bone except with an entirely new story .

We meet Ophelia or Phee, as I prefer to call her ...

while she's scrutinizing her mansion's food menus. She's married to a controlling, abusive man who isn't afraid to beat her if the wrong things are served for dinner so it's safe to say she's a little relieved when she's kidnapped by her *new* driver Reece...

after coming back from a gala her sadistic hubby makes her go to. She wakes up in Spencer's place.

A man ,who opens her eyes to the real world she's living in and introduces her to some of her truth. There's so many things going on already like (view spoiler) that it's safe to say ,Mrs. Espinoza is doing it right. She's left us simmering, wondering what the heck is going to be thrown in next and which of these hunky but very flawed men she's going to trust. I know who I am rooting for.;
