



The Beast Without

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Reylan is everything a Sydney vampire aspires to be: wealthy, handsome and independent, carefully feeding off companions plucked from the gay bars of Oxford Street.

When one of those companions is killed by Jorgas, a hot-headed young werewolf prowling his streets, Reylan reluctantly puts his cherished lifestyle of blood and boys on hold to help a mysterious alliance of supernatural beings track down the beast. It can't be that hard... not when Jorgas keeps coming after him.

But there's more to this werewolf than a body count and a bad attitude. As their relationship grows deeper and more twisted, Reylan tastes Jorgas' blood, reawakening desires the vampire had thought long dead. And what evolves between them may be far more dangerous than some rival predator in the dark...

The Beast Without Details

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Author : Christian Baines

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From Reader Review The Beast Without for online ebook

Sarina says

4.5* Review written for Love Bytes Reviews.

This book has been on my to be read list for quite a while now and I'm seriously regretting that I hadn't read it sooner! From the characters to the setting, I just adored this from start to finish, even when I wanted to knock some heads together along the way. :)

Reylan is a 153 year old Blood Shade (for the love of God, don't call the man a Vampire) that prefers to be left alone and spends his days either sleeping, eating or spending time with his friend, Ross. His attitude is probably his most defining characteristic and he isn't afraid to snark at anyone at the slightest provocation. Jorgas has his own set of problems, one furrer than the others, and despite his fascination with Reylan he can't seem to help but throw out bucket loads of attitude to go along with his anger management issues.

Despite how they met and how they keep clashing when together, I loved seeing these two men interact; they both profess to pretty much hate one another and keep throwing out how they're each going to kill the other one day but, when needed, that all gets put aside to handle bigger problems. (By the end, the death threats were almost coming across as fond to me and I couldn't help but smirk a little.) Reylan also went beyond the expected in order to help Jorgas and that spoke to his character more than anything else I'd read about him at that point. The story itself was entertaining and the pacing was great; I loved all the different elements the author wove together. There are also things that were touched on here that I'm hoping will find their way into the next book. :) Either way, this was a great story with fantastic characters that I'm really looking forward to reading more about.

If you enjoy a good paranormal story or are looking for characters that don't immediately fall into each other's arms, I'd really recommend you give this one a look.

<http://lovebytesreviews.com/2017/01/2...>

Pixie Mmgoodbookreviews says

4 Hearts

Review written for MM Good Book Reviews

Reylan is a Blood Shade, he is *not* a vampire and is likely to rip out the throat of the person who calls him one, he lives his life in the shadows visiting nightclubs to pluck his meals. Reylan is picky about those he chooses and when one is attacked by an uncontrollable werewolf, Jorgas, Reylan decides to do what he must to get the werewolf off his tail. But Reylan discovers that Jorgas' blood reawakens something he thought long lost and he finds it difficult to do what he must. With the Arcadia Trust wanting the werewolf Reylan comes to an agreement with them, but he still doesn't trust them. With his relationship with Jorgas becoming more complicated with every meeting Reylan has hard choices to make.

This is a nicely dark and puzzling paranormal that's refreshing with it's beastly werewolves and unapologetic Blood Shades (vampires). Reylan comes across as quite a vain man, he is very picky about the blood he consumes and is easily offended. Jorgas is a young man who is struggling with a monster inside him, the

vampi.... er Blood Shade might be the only one who can help him, but losing control constantly doesn't help his case. With Reylan's friends trying to persuade him to help the Arcadia Trust and Reylan's own reservations, Reylan doesn't know what to do. But he discovers many hidden connections that seem to have the Trust's fingerprints on them.

I found this to be a very interesting read, I though there were many connections that could lead to further books because of the questions left unanswered. While I found it to be brutal in places, it also seemed to have a slight thread of humor to it that lightened it in places. The descriptions of the werewolves and Blood Shades was great, there was no magical shifts but brutal painful changing, there was no incredible speed and sparkles for the vampire and he certainly isn't *that* charming. The storyline is very interesting and you get pulled in as you try to understand how things are connected, the Arcadia Trust, the church and the strange experience Reylan has with the book. The storyline surrounding Jorgas is vague except his strange attraction to Reylan but it becomes very clear in the last few pages.

I recommend this to those who love the good old fashioned brutal werewolves, vampires without a care in the world, a very interesting storyline with many threads and a thoroughly enjoyable read.

Noah says

Line says

Man this was close to being a perfect read!

BUT I had a few issues that made me end at 3 stars.

Nothing in the universe Christian Baines has built, is like any other shifter/vampire/fantasy I've read. This book is dark, gritty, well-written and quite subtly AND in-your-face humorous.

However be warned there is no hanky-panky smexy times in this one AT ALL. And that was freaking annoying, since the chemistry between Reylan and Jorgas was definitely there.

Okay, so Reylan is a vam... Nope, no, I'm sorry he's a Blood Shade and a very independent one at that. He lives with his cat, his polish renter upstairs and hangs out with his friends/protégés Ross and Isobel. He hunts for 'lunch' at different gay nightclubs in Sydney 4-5 times a week to avoid starving. Blood Shades are sort of asexual beings, when the 'change' happens they lose their libido, so to speak. However the people they feed from are caught in a sort of sexual haze and can have an orgasm when they're being chewed on.

One night when leaving with his 'lunch', a Flesh Master attacks them. The Flesh Master is Jorgas, and he is not doing so well with his change.

Jorgas kills Reylan's 'lunch', and this is the first time we get an insight into Reylan. This dude is unapologetic, he's sarcastic, he's rude and quite ruthless. All in all he's a GREAT character, seriously I loved him, BUT GODDAMMIT why did the Blood Shades have to be non-sexual beings? UGH! *stomping my foot*

Reylan lets Jorgas go/looses him that night, and decides: I'm washing my hands of this situation.

But alas, poor Reylan is not finished with this.

Ross tries to get him to go to the Arcadia Trust, a society trying to bridge the gaps between the different species of supernatural creatures and assists in keeping the supernatural community under wraps. Reylan is not at all interested in going, but is brought there by one of the Cloak Walkers (invisible people).

The Arcadia Trust wants help; so far 3 young people are dead (4 if you count Reylan's 'lunch'), and they think that Jorgas did it. Jorgas apparently has an unhealthy obsession with Reylan, and is now following him (again their chemistry... UGH) and thus begins a quite well-written mystery. I did not guess who the bad guy was at all, and there were a few twists that went well with the story and the MCs.

I thought the world building was great, however confusing with all the new expressions used for creatures, that already have established names. And I really really thought that Reylan was awesome, he was so snarky and rude, it was great!

But the lack of smexy times, means that I cannot give it more than 3 stars. It really is MISSING from the story, and it is quite obvious when Reylan and Jorgas get it on, that something is lacking.

The ending is HFN and the relationship between Reylan and Jorgas is tenuous at best. I'm unsure if I want to read the second book, since it took some brain capacity for me to keep all the expressions and origin stories straight. But I'm hoping that maybe the bond between Reylan and Jorgas will change the dynamics for the better....

Yes, I mean for sexy times, apparently I have a one-track-mind!

Argona says

Beast without was a very interesting and refreshing read. The author has created his own unique world based on fantasy and paranormal elements that are very well known. A world in which nothing is as it seems. He has managed to create something new! Beast without is a dark, complicated, violent, gory plot-centered story with very interesting mysteries hidden in the shadows, nice suspense and enough amount of sexual tension.

There are many interesting species in this world. Species that are present in many paranormal books but somehow have been reshaped into unique and original beings of "Beast Without"'s world. Vampires aren't really Vampires and Werewolves aren't really Werewolves. There are also Withes, Shapers, cloak masters and even invisible beings. All with their own special abilities and characteristics.

I have always been a fan of Vampires but not all Vampires. My Vampires are dark, cold, intelligent and tend to alternate between good and evil, depending on their own benefits and agenda. And that's why I loved Reylan. He is not a Vampire... He hates being called one and finds it insulting. He is a Blood Shade, a species slightly different than what we know as Vampire. In this world, Vampires are urban legends but Blood shades are real. Reylan is old and experienced and has his own sense of morality. He considers his own well-being first and foremost. He is not a cold brutal killer but he kills without hesitation when he decides that he has to. Against his own will, he gets involved in a series of murders and since he is the stubborn type, refuses to back down or do things the way he is told. He prefers to solve mysteries his own way.

I was slightly disappointed when I realized blood shades are not sexual beings and only take pleasure in blood but hey, that's something new. It's a huge risk that this author has taken and it works! And don't be disappointed. with Jorgas's appearance, come great mysteries, newly-awakened desires and of course, violence and gore.

I have always loved Vampire/Shifter stories. These two species have a very intriguing and complicated twisted love/hate relationship and that's exactly the kind of relationship Reylan and Jorgas share. They are both dark and complicated characters sharing a dark and complicated bond.

Jorgas is a Werewolf but like Reylan, he is not considered one. He is called a Flesh master. He is young, lost, angry and confused. He is also violent and brutal and he chooses to rely on Reylan, a blood shade, for some reason that none of them can actually comprehend at the beginning.

"Beast Without" is a very original paranormal book in a sea of paranormal books. Why not 5 stars when I loved this story so much? That's because the story feels unfinished. Reylan and Jorgas reach a certain inevitable point in their complicated violent relationship, a big mystery is solved, they make personal decisions and then the story stops there. Why? Their romantic relationship has a long way to go. I see no sequel to this amazing story and no signs that this is actually a series and I can't figure out why. I like it when a book has a mystical atmosphere and not all questions are answered at the end. But "Beast without" feels like a beginning to a wonderful paranormal series. I was introduced to an original paranormal world, to hidden societies and covens, to well-written secondary characters that the author explains in details and to a very intriguing newly-formed alliance of supernatural beings and yet, I don't get to learn more about them. Sometimes they play small parts and then they fade into background. Why share so much information and details if that was going to be the case? If I ever see a sequel to this book, I will come back and add the last star.

Lisa The Novel Approach says

I have read many shifter and vampire stories before, but not one that was anything like this one. Calling someone a vampire is an insult. In this book they are Blood Shades and they are born, not made. Then we have the werewolves that are actually referred to as Flesh Masters. Along with these two species, we also get to meet the Shapers and Cloak Masters; they are witches and invisible people respectively. I believe this is one of the more original supernatural books I have read in a while.

See the entire review at The Novel Approach: <http://thenovelapproachreviews.com/20...>

JustJen "Miss Conduct" says

4.5 star review by The Blogger Girls.

Boy, do I love a gritty paranormal that is different than the norm. In this world, there are vampires and werewolves, though they prefer to be referred to as the less derogatory terms of Blood Shades and Flesh Masters. We quickly learn that everything we know from books, tv and movies is basically a bunch of b.s., especially where vampires, excuse me, Blood Shades are concerned.

Reylan is one such Blood Shade who basically goes about his business until one of his "companions" is attacked and killed by Jorgas the werewolf. Reylan decides he needs to take out Jorgas and is further lured into doing so when he is introduced to the leader of The Arcadia Trust, an organization working for the alliance of supernatural beings. All is not as it seems were the killer is concerned, as Reylan finds out when he catches up to Jorgas.

Reylan, up to this point, has basically been a non-sexual being. He lives to feed with little to no sexual pleasure involved. That is, until he is awakened when he feeds from Jorgas. These two share a sort of bond, but they really don't embark on any type of relationship as you would expect. They work together to try and clear Jorgas' name and find many more things are not what they seem. Secrets are being held by more than one person or being, and you never really know who the good guys are.

I found this to be a really interesting story. There is a lot going on with the Arcadia Trust that we really only get a glimpse of at this point. There is a lot more to the myths or background of the Blood Shades and Flesh Masters, but that is only touched upon as well. This ends on a HFN note, and while many questions are answered, there are still quite a number outstanding.

I really liked Reylan. He pretty much makes no excuses for himself, tells it like it is, and is generally a witty, mysteriously sexy being. I felt like we only just broke the surface where he is concerned, and I really wanted to know more about him. He and Jorgas seem to be in a very fragile give and take place with their relationship, and I am really excited to see there is more planned for them, as well as the rest of this world.

The story is very well paced, and reads very smoothly. While writing up this review, I noticed it has a pretty steep price tag which will undoubtedly deter a lot of readers. However, if you can get your hands on this one and are looking for something with more focus on the paranormal, as opposed to a romance, I highly recommend you give it a try.

B.A. Brock says

As a blood shade, Reylan's life centers around getting his daily fill of blood, which he frequents gay clubs for—but he's not gay. Reylan just happens to prefer the bolder notes of a man. Sex has little meaning for him, and the rumors that a vampire can't get it up are not without merit, but who cares about all that sexual nonsense when blood is everything?

One night he has his feast ready to usher off to his apartment, where he'll satiate his lover's desires while satisfying his own, when his hookup is brutally murdered in front of him by a raging flesh master. Reylan couldn't give two fucks for anyone but himself, and despite being cautious and a bit lazy, he's more than a little affronted at the flesh master's disrespect. A hard earned meal is fairly won, after all.

He leaves his would-be lover to die and escapes the flesh master's rage, but against his better judgement he looks into the man behind the beast. The flesh master turns out to be a very young man named Jorgas, and his further investigation leads him into more intrigue than the older blood shade cared to be involved with. But he's involved now.

On top of that, Jorgas keeps turning up where Reylan least expects, as if he wants to be found, and the two are forced to confront the possibility they may have an unhealthy obsession with one another.

The worldbuilding for this series is somewhat standard for a dark paranormal vampire book. It starts off cerebral, like *Gun to My Head* by Dira Lewis, and toward the end winds up plot heavy and action-packed like the *Nightside* by Simon Green. It most resembles *Sandman Slim* by Richard Kadrey. In other words, be prepared for some crazy plot twists and some fucked up gory shit.

This novel was perfect for someone like me. It was gritty, didn't spoon feed me with telling or unnecessary details, and it was eloquently written. The style of the voice was a engaging. Reylan speaks to us as if he's

recounting a series of events, a bit like Interview with a Vampire by Anne Rice. He admittedly comes across as vain and callous, but I am a loud and out fan of antiheroes and asshole protagonists and he certainly doesn't disappoint—let that also be your warning.

Reylan's moral compass is more lawful neutral than evil, but aligned according to laws we aren't accustomed to in the human realm. He barely bats an eye as people are ripped limb from limb. If he does raise a brow it's because it insults his blood shade sensibilities—what an unfortunate waste of a good dinner! Even his friends are more mentees to him than actual friends or family. It's hard to see him settle down into any sort of normal relationship by our standards.

It comes as a bit of a shock when Jorgas and he develop a sort of attraction, a relationship that is quickly attacked by the entire paranormal community and brings to light dark secrets of the past. As the community comes together to weigh in on Jorgas and Reylan's extracurricular activities, it stirs up ancient feuds and threatens to tear the world apart. Reylan, old and set in his ways as he is, finds astounding new depths to his stone-cold heart. Maybe it isn't enough for him to simply endure the tests of time. Maybe there's something more in undeath to fight for.

Nathan Burgoine says

Recently, I got to be on a panel at the Saints and Sinners Literary Festival where the topic was Evil and the Supernatural. One of the best parts about being on a panel is meeting new authors (or meeting an author face-to-face for the first time) and this panel meant I got to meet Christian Baines, Marie Castle, and Christopher Rice. When I'm on a panel, I try to read what I can by the authors ahead of time. I'd already read a couple of Rice's books (though I nabbed and read a copy of Blind Fall), I read Baines's novella The Prince and the Practitioner, and I read Castle's Hell's Belle - finishing it just before I had to run to breakfast before the panel.

On the way back to Ottawa, I found myself on many delayed (and one cancelled) flight, and so, having already enjoyed The Prince and the Practitioner I opened up The Beast Without.

I was a quick fan of Reylan, a 'Blood Shade' (read: vampire) who lives in Sydney, and who has an acid tongue and little patience for those around him who do not measure up to his standards (and few do). The enjoyable culture of Sydney as well as the mythology that Baines has twisted just a bit to the right of usual complement the tale: these are not your typical vampires, witches, or other things that go bump in the night. There's enough of the typical that they're recognizable, but in Baines's hands, they're given a refreshingly new vibe. In fact, the world-building Baines did left me wanting more - hints are dropped, and not all of them fleshed out in this one book. I can only hope there will be more.

What Reylan faces is a self-loathing werewolf, Jorgas, who might just be too far gone already, as well as a secret society (even to Reylan) that has come forward at the worst time to get him to help solve the problem of the wild and murderous Jorgas. It all gets more and more tangled as the story progresses, and you're soon left pondering if there's any way that Reylan can make it through unscathed, and without sacrificing any more of his morality - not that his morality is particularly stable as it is.

Fans of the earlier Laurell K. Hamilton books (before they became pretty much horror-erotica) will enjoy this one, as well as anyone looking for a refreshing new take on some older mythology. I'm certainly curious to see what's next from Baines.

Andrew Hofman says

I had an absolute ball reading this novel. It didn't leave my side until I was done. The writer's sardonic wit combined with a modern, self-aware, second-guessing vampire protagonist pulls you into a styled, sexual, brutal and all too real vision of Sydney's underworld. A great cocktail of humour, blood, desire and myth. The characters are intensely vivid and even those who are supernatural, for better or worse are infallibly human. I may have awoken my roommate in a laughing fit at 3am and most definitely have developed a deep understanding of the people reading 50 Shades of Grey on the subway when they come across a steamy scene. If you like your Vampires(Blood Shades) bloody and not to be reeking of apathy or doused in glitter you will love this book. The character-driven plot is an amazing ride and to the writer I simply insist "More Please!!!"

Maya says

I am left with a couple of questions I wish were answered but I definitely liked this book. That being said, this story is not for everyone. Anyone looking for a sweet vampire/shifter book that is published en mass these days will not find it here. This world is brutal with lots of blood and gore and MC's with poorly functioning moral compasses. I happen to enjoy that though.

Kazza says

4.5 Stars

The Beast Without s a rather complicated book to review. However, I will say it is an interesting, dark at times, snarky and witty at times, paranormal, that has a say on current issues as well. A slightly different slant on vampires and paranormals it is set in my home town - I appreciated the (correct) use of Sydney at night in the context of this paranormal read. Very accurate.

Nice first book and I hope there will be more sooner rather than later from the author. My review at - <http://ontopdownunderbookreviews.com/...>

Rhode says

Parts of it I liked a great deal, in particular the world building which brought some fresh angles to the genre, as well as the hero's asexuality. However, parts of it I was mystified by.

Firstly, our hero who is supposed to be a strong, intelligent 150 year old being, who has made it through all sorts of challenging times and places, is ...ineffectual at survival. He's continually beat up, tossed about, nearly losing fights except for dumb luck. And it's always close to dawn but he's not gotten around to having a meal yet that night, so he's weak. It's like reading a story about a race car driver who's always about to run out of gas and it's his own fault.

Secondly, I don't understand why he chooses his three particular companions over others. None of them are terribly compelling. They're all, to my mind, dull young men who are under 25 mentally if not physically. Bear in mind, this is a 150 year old asexual hero, so you would think anyone he wanted to hang out with would be really interesting to earn it. Nope.

Thirdly, my favorite character is killed for no damn reason plotwise or in actuality besides random stupidity of males being males.

Lastly, our hero has a dull life. He gets up, he goes to nightclubs full of kids dancing to find someone to feed on, he has a quiet cup of tea with his bestie (who is the mental age of 19) and then he goes to bed. Every night. For years and years. Don't you think he would have developed any interests, hobbies or skills after 150 years? Instead, he's oblivious to local PNR politics, anything happening globally, and anything besides a handful of nightclubs and his favorite tea shop.

Xing says

Rating: 2.5 stars

Let me state that the prose is well written. Despite not being a fan of first-person POV, Reylan (the vampire Blood Shade) is an interesting enough character. The world is interesting enough, one that is riddled with the supernatural and societies that seem to govern these creatures living in the shadows of an ignorant humanity.

But overall? Meh.

My eyes were glazing over too much detail. I understand that a richly developed world needs to be detailed oriented and have a nice cast of secondary characters. But do we REALLY need to know so much about Ross, Isobel, Patricia, Sophia and her little 10 yo friend who's name I can't remember, Kelvin, Brett, Father Issac, the drunk girl at that emo club, Rory, Dorothea and other characters that I can't remember off the top of my head? I felt like I knew even LESS of Jorgas, who I originally thought was the other MC in this book. But by how much attention and word count he received, I felt he was more of another secondary character.

And the so called relationship between Reylan and Jorgas? It felt so shallow. Like they hated each other, and then they were having a blood sucking-induced orgasm? Like...really?! Maybe this is the norm for vampire-inspired stories, but apparently this really isn't my thing.

So yeah, the story is very violent and gory. There's a lot of blood involved. Lots of loose ends that makes me think there has to be a sequel (if not, then that's another thumbs down). But overall, I just wasn't impressed.

Kristen Burns says

3 Stars

Full Review:

I received a free copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.

At the time of writing this review, I've already read the first two books in this series, and I felt the second was a lot better and fixed pretty much all the problems I had with this one. That being said, this review is for *this* book, and I still have to be honest, so...

Things I Liked:

- The story/plot was good.
- The violent/darkish aspects were definitely to my liking. I mean, the sex scene was basically half sex, half beating the crap out of each other. Sex and violence all in one scene, what more can you ask for? ;-) (But just to clarify, the sex was consensual. And the violence was practically consensual too since they seemed to be quite enjoying themselves.)
- The rocky nature of Reylan's and Jorgas's relationship (I use that term loosely as it wasn't romance but rather more of a fascination/one-time sexual thing) gave them an interesting dynamic.
- The turmoil in Reylan (the protag) over always wanting to be alone and being an asexual creature (the vampires in this book are impotent) but then suddenly having some sort of interest in Jorgas and being filled with lust and passion by him was also an interesting aspect of the story.

Things I Disliked:

- All of the above things I mentioned had a lot of great potential, but I felt like it wasn't fully explored to the extent it could've been.
- The dialogue often felt unnatural. It was kind of choppy sometimes to the point that I was left feeling confused as to what the characters were talking about. At other times it seemed like Reylan was having a sarcastic battle of wits with every character he came across.
- Reylan was too judgmental and condescending. I like surly, disgruntled, snarky characters, but he came off more mean than funny to me.
- I didn't like the breaking of the fourth wall. I'm not a huge fan of first person to begin with, and characters talking directly to the reader always takes me out of the story.

Things Neither Good nor Bad but Still Worth Mentioning:

- I've noticed a lot of other reviewers mention how unique this portrayal of vampires was, but, as someone who reads a lot of vampire books, I found this to be a fairly typical, classic, sexy version. I don't mean that as an insult though; every version doesn't have to be "different." I enjoy this version just as much, and I definitely like the pleasurable blood-drinking!

Overall, I felt the positives and the negatives were fairly even, but, as I said, there was a lot of potential in the relationship dynamics and inner turmoil, enough that I decided to continue with the next book, which I did enjoy significantly more. So not a bad read, and I'd recommend the series if it sounds like your kinda thing, but this first book didn't blow me away.

Recommended For:

M/M paranormal readers who like a fairly classic, sexy version of vampires, complicated relationship dynamics, and a bit of darkness/violence.

Original Review @ Metaphors and Moonlight
