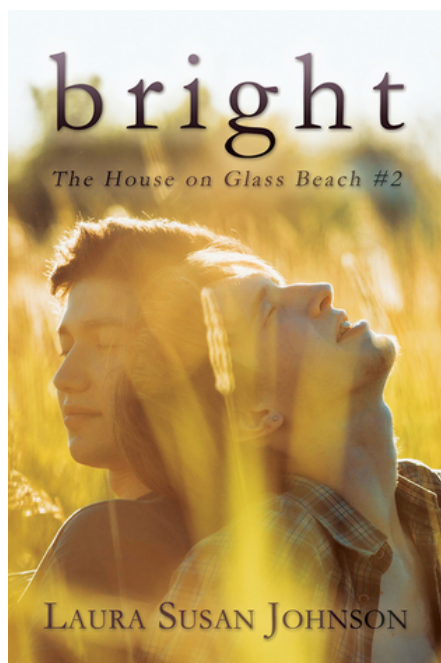




Bright

Laura Susan Johnson

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“They walk in artificial enlightenment, and it’s so limiting, so miserable, and they can’t even see it. It’s so bright around them that their shadows cover everything, and it’s so dark in their shadows that if you find yourself there, it’s very hard to know where to go to be able to see again.”

Monty and Walter are an unlikely couple who meet under the most extraordinary circumstances. They dive into a passionate secret relationship, and though they appear to be polar opposites in personality and lifestyle, they discover that they have a lot more in common than they realise.

Their love changes both of them as they navigate the rough and rocky terrain of sharing a home with Walter’s judgmental stepmother. No matter what tries to tear them apart, they come to the painful conclusion, again and again, that they are soul mates.

Bright Details

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Author : Laura Susan Johnson

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From Reader Review Bright for online ebook

Michelle MacIsaac says

Bright is a sprawling and captivating m/m romance about two men who, to the naked eye, are mismatched opposites. A bit long, but nothing a bit of editing won't cure, it's a sometimes overly thorough examination of issues like alcoholism, suicidal attempts and behaviours (Monty), paedophilia, (Natalie), living with incurable disease (Walter) mental illness, and religious oppression (Helena). More obvious are things like depression, suppressed rage, and fear in all four of the principal characters.

My biggest surprise came near the end, when four of the secondary characters in this book, four people you were sure you would hate after you closed the book, became sympathetic. I've spoken to the author about questions that have come up during my reading, and I hope she will publish an interview addressing these questions because this is indeed an interesting read that will get your thinking gears turning. For those interested in only randy sex, this book has far too much character study and seriousness and commentary about spirituality, but fear not, those who enjoy a well rounded story: The sexual content did not disappoint.

I honestly enjoyed it very much.

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

Free on Smashwords with coupon code DZ76H until the end of November!! (Thanks Joleen for the heads up!)

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view...>

sonia says

Amazingly sweet and amazingly brutal at the same time. Very good read.

Mario Legaspi says

Total: 9.5 of 10 stars for the whole book. Of book I ghost I give 10/10 stars. Great back stories of the main characters, well developed. Book 2 blind I give 9/10 stars. It was nice to revisit Tammy & Jamie from Crush! Natalie is a great new character to know from the inside. She narrates parts of the books, but mostly Walter & Monte tell their story much the same way the men from Crush told theirs. Monte is a lonely man, always searching for fun, too afraid of being hurt to not try to ruin his relationship with Walter, who is blind and in poor health. Book 3 the flame I give 9/10 stars. The book began to move fast. Maybe too fast. But all main characters are sympathetic (even Helena it turns out) (view spoiler) I would have given it a less rating if the story had not ended well. I don't think I could like a book with relationships of so much suffering ending with nothing more than sadness. There is always that chance Walter will die but the point is to live now. I could handle that.

I will write a better review when I organize my thoughts!

Liza says

Another insanely emotional book by Laura Susan Johnson. This is the second book in The House on Glass Beach series, and does have a couple of characters in common. It can be read as standalone, but reading the first book will give you a better understanding of some of the things talked about in this book.

Crush focused on paternal abuse. Bright was about maternal abuse, or how their mothers used religion to control and then abuse them. Just like the first book, this isn't an easy book to read, Especially when it comes to Walter's step-mother, Helena. I wanted to destroy that woman from the moment she opened her mouth. If there is a devil, it lives in people like her!

This is a story that starts with Walter saving Monty's life after he drives off the road drunk. From there, the story goes back and forth between the two of them, over the years, and also into the past. Then we also have Natalie, who enters their lives later on. We get some of her point of view as she becomes an integral part of their lives.

This story is emotional, destructive, redeeming, and hopeful. It will bring you to tears and make you laugh. There are points that drag, but it is worth it to get to the end.

Heidi M. says

The themes of this book were very interesting, especially darkness and light. It wasn't like popular culture references about dark being evil and light being good. In the beginning of the story, the character Walter says something like, "it's better in the dark" meaning he prefers not to see everything going wrong around him, and the wrongdoing of his stepmother, who has had him in submission for years. Throughout the book, there are numerous allusions to light representing badness or maliciousness or falsehood. Even more intriguing towards the end, the character Monty becomes introduces to his father's Apache culture and beliefs, and attends a sweat ceremony to cleanse himself once and for all of alcoholism and the anger that has inhibited his growth as a man. The symbolism of a sweat ceremony manifests opposite of what we are taught about darkness and light...the darkness of the tent represents the womb, a place of safety, nurturing and growth, but also of brutal purification so that the soul who emerges will be stronger, more mature, and determined to find the life God has always wanted for him. It is only after Monty puts his trust in everything represented by the sweat that he sheds all of the selfishness and hatred and becomes a good husband to Walter. Because for most of this book, Monty, although lovable and charismatic in many ways, has so many issues that he treats Walter very badly even without truly intending to. The sweat that transforms Monty is comparable to Christian baptism, a rebirthing.

I had to read this book at least 3 times in order to put it all together, but it has a very original story, like nothing I've read before. It was very unnerving at times, and if you have problems with the following: cheating after marriage, suicide attempts, religious zealotness, or the controversy of abortion, you might have to consider very thoroughly whether or not you can handle this book. I myself was creeped out big time when Helena traumatized Walter by blaring her radio late at night. I identified very much with Walter, because I lived in a situation very similar to his, and I understood too well what it's like to live with a person whose presence shrivels up everyone around them. He has reason not only to kowtow to her, but to fear her, and his instincts are dead on when she finally tries to smother him to death in a very frightening scene. Walter is a fragile man, suffering from a heart problem and left blind by an accident, but he's as strong as he

knows how to be given the way he was raised after his real mother's death.

It's interesting to note that the names of the mothers: Helena and Lucienne both mean "light".

On the bright side (you know the drill) the relationship between Monty and Walter, when it's good, is what I love about m-m fiction. And as with Crush, it isn't empty or shallow or relying upon raunchy descriptions. It's just sweetly dirty enough to talk about jelqing, splooging, and fisting, but it's done in such a guileless fashion that you almost cry tears of joy and pleasure. The fisting scene got to me because of how they both felt so close to each other.

I also want to go on record in saying that Bright is not a menage-a-trois story. Natalie does not have sex with either of the 2 guys. In fact, in one scene of artificial fertilization, a doctor notes that she still has her hymen. It's a hilarious scene in which Walter and Natalie curse out this nosey, judgmental doctor until he is driven to leave the room. Later, Natalie develops a crush on Walter because Walter has become sicker after Monty angrily deserted them after having a relapse of alcoholism, but Natalie has to face reality when Monty returns and Walter's health begins to improve.

I think the book is a tad long, and would benefit from some clipping, but at the same time, I didn't notice any particular dragging in any place, and I love the originality and the sweet spirit of this story. After so much badness and tragedy, our characters finally find happiness and their family.

Lisa ~ Books Are My Drugs ~ says

I received this book free in return for my honest review. I have not received any compensation for my review, it is freely given.

First of all there were quite a few typos in this book, but I was still able to finish. There's also cheating so don't read it if that's something that's a hard limit.

Walter meets Monty when he and his sister pull Monty out of the river after Monty goes off the road in a drunk driving accident post break-up with his latest boyfriend. Walter feels a connection to Monty right away & knows that there's something between them even though he's never been with anyone.

Monty is a drifter, doesn't want to be tied down to anyone or any place, but he quickly develops feelings for Walter that he can't help & even though he's self destructive he wants to be a better person with Walter.

The main problems for the lovers is Walter has an extremely difficult time asserting himself to his overly religious step-mother who takes every opportunity to belittle & torment Walter that she possible can. And Monty has demons of his own riding his back that cause great tension in the relationship as well.

I really wanted to smack both of the guys a lot for being such asshats. Walter for letting his stepmother & Monty walk all over him so much & Monty for being such a dickhead to Walter when Walter had been nothing but loving to him, forgiving him over & over for the cheating. I'm glad that in the end, Monty finally pulled his head out of his ass, got sober, went to counseling, & decided to be the husband he should have all along.

freeze says

I avoided this one for a while. I've seen a lot of made for TV movies about Baby "M" and whatnot, so I went into this story expecting a lot of baby drama or legal fighting between the surrogate and the adoptive parents. It was strangely refreshing to see that it was simply three friends who agreed to go into this thing together to help each other. I admit I was a little yucked out by the idea of two men having sex with a woman several years younger than themselves, but fortunately, that wasn't the scenario at all. The guys take turns jerking and their friend goes into the doctor to have the big moment done clinically. They don't see the female as either a womb for rental or a sexual partner, but rather a sister. Naively, all three of the principals fail to think things through before jumping in. One of the gentlemen could die at any time and his partner feels the time to have children is now not later. So they and their would be sister fervently attempt to get pregnant. It's pretty hard to take when things go so wrong for them, the most complex obstacle being when Natalie begins to fall for Walter. It's obvious early on in the book that she has an innocent crush on him, but things get very complicated later.

As a recovering alcoholic and prescription drug dependent, I really grew attached to Monty, even when he was acting self righteous and reprehensible, even after he broke a very big promise to Walter that he'd never leave again. It was six years before he broke it, but he still broke it. It was a relief when he reconnected with his parents who he hadn't seen in many years. He needed real closure with them in order to began repairs. Walter is a very damaged man as well, both physically and mentally, and the same kind of psychological carnage was inside of Monty's mind as well, just as Walter had told him. Helena, Walter's stepmother, is the catalyst for both negative and positive change. A man's relationship with his mother figure determine's a lot in his life. There's no way around that. Crush had a theme about relationships with father figures. Bright is about how a mother can affect her son or daughter. Even Natalie's relationship with her mother yields hard questions and no answers.

I would have liked a few things explained more, like why Helena attempted to overdose Walter and poison his Dad a few times. Also, more history about her mental instability would be nice. It was nice to read some more history about Tammy's child abuse, and to get some closure for him. Natalie's reaction to finally realizing she will never be more than friends with Walter was real and I'm glad the three friends did not drift apart because of all the hardships they had been through. The favorite thing I took from this book aside from the three's friendship is the profound love and genuine affection between Monty and Walter. I hope Idaho legalizes gay marriage soon so I can imagine these guys married for real.

Bonny Knox says

I'm not sure how to review this book . It left me feeling a little sad in a happy way ? Or happy in a sad way ? I love the story and all 3 of the principle characters. It was pretty frustrating and all to real . seems like in every relationship there is a jerk and a kissbutt . One is always selfish and immature while the other just lets everyone walk over him. The point is relationships take work and have to grow in order to be a success. All the chracters grow and learn and thus their relationship can stand the tests of time .

Rebecca says

This is the 2nd novel of acclaimed author Laura Johnson, who produced the deeply erotic and romantic "Crush," an angst-ridden tale

of two young men battling the emotional after effects of sexual molestation as they begin dating.

Bright is similar to Crush with its themes of love undaunted by prejudice and hate, but it is also quite different. Where Crush only takes place over a few months from 2011-2012 (barring linear flashbacking from the children's point of view) Bright takes place over about six years (2008 to 2014, with flashbacks that take place here and there in various points of the story). Beautifully told, Bright is the story of Monty, an in-denial alcoholic and suicidal man, and Walter, a native Idahoan confined to a life of farming and seclusion after a devastating accident leaves him blinded and suffering from heart disease. While en route to Las Vegas to a life of partying (much like Nicolas Cage in Leaving Las Vegas), Monty accidentally drives off the highway into the river and has to be saved by none other than Walter and his sister. Monty begins to question whether or not he really wants to end his life, and as he and Walter fall madly in love with each other, both men find themselves in uncharted territory as they take a huge leap into marriage and domesticity and even talk about having children.

In San Francisco, the couple meets a young woman named Natalie, who instantly becomes their soul sister and agrees to help them surrogate a family. But there has always, from day one, been one tremendous and dangerous slippery rock on their journey, Walter's stepmother and Monty's mother in law, a skulking religious nut whose behavior becomes more terrifying as each new chapter opens. Natalie loses 2 pregnancies under troubling circumstances, and the once strong fabric of Monty and Walter's marriage begins to unravel. Bright is a wonderfully real chronicle of the ups and downs of love and marriage...sometimes. At other times, it is a truly frightening look at the damage done by human "termites" and murder committed under the most benign looking facades imaginable. Evil indeed is based upon fear and slowly builds into violence and mayhem. Like Crush, Bright is a story of survival, warmed with hope and human dignity, but chilled with the reality of evil, a much more convincing "horror" story than any paranormal scare-fest can conjure up.

I can't talk about the conclusion of this sweet, sexy, scary story without completely ruining it, so I will just close with this: I loved it, and I hope everyone who read Crush will read this sequel (Natalie happens to be cousin to Tammy, one of the men in Crush).

Dawn says

I absolutely loved this book. I was like nothing I have ever read before. Walter is so innocent and naive and he loves everyone he touches or tries to. He sees in people before the bad is ever revealed to a fault. He tries to love Helena and look for a mother he lost way to young and unknowing to Walter Helena is so more damaged than anyone knows. As much as Walter loves to a fault Helena hates to a fault and blames it all on God or uses God for an excuse for her hateful ways. Helena is twisted and you hate her for almost the entire book until the end when you understand more of where she came from and then you feel sorry for her.

On the other hand I didn't know how to feel about Monty. You love him, you hate him, you understand him or so you think but he can be a down right jerk and poor Walter is so in love he just tries to see the good and lets Monty work out his demons and in the ends Walter is right. For most of the book I could not see it though and thought Walter was just letting himself get used. Monty loves Walter he just needs to find his way to Walter and while reading this book you live through Monty's emotional journey to find himself worthy Walter's love and in the end he finally does.

And last but definitely not least in comes Nattie, who loves Walter with all her heart but Walter obviously can't and won't return those feelings because he loves Monty. I love that they live one big happy and family and in the end they find peace and love not always the way they want it. I would love for Natalie to have a

story how she moves on from Walter and Monty and whether she finds a love that loves her back. This is a wonderful and sexy journey of life, love, growth and happiness. It was so nice to read a book that was a full but not 100 pages with a sequel coming. It is a full story with a kinda heart for some of the characters and hope for and end for Natalie.

Leafitterlady says

Beautiful and messy, like life!

This is a very realistic book for an m/m! I like to read fantasy and vampire m/m a lot, but this is a romantic thriller of a different kind. Much like *Crush*, this book fuses love, sex, God and spirituality. Many don't want their erotica mixed with anything God, but life is messy, not neat and tidy. Monty is angry and self-destructive, but he can't ignore Walter, the man who saved him from drowning. Walter is seriously ill, and losing his family one member at a time, when Monty comes to save his life too. The sex rocked my socks off, but the story is like a romantic thriller too. Great scary plot. I adore Natalie, especially when she told Dove off in the OB office! I got mad at Monty all through the book (view spoiler) but I love him too. I loved Walter too, and so glad to see he learns to stand up for himself. I laughed so much, especially at the part where Walter makes Helena & Dove "a lunch they'll never forget!" Great characters and a story I easily got absorbed into! If you loved *Crush*, I think you will love *Bright* too!

Patsy says

Laura Susan Johnson has created another unforgettable story of love and courage in the face of adversity. Do not expect a clone to "*Crush*". *Bright* is a different story, with 2 different lovers, but just as intricate, intimate and suspenseful as its predecessor. Instead of the kind of maliciousness that boldly shouts and curses our heroes, as in *Crush*, evil hides behind a benign facade, and as the author so appropriately describes, "an artificial enlightenment." *Bright* is a story of two achingly lovely men, inside and out, and their struggle to understand the love that binds them together so fiercely. They wage familiar family wars with one another about alcoholism, drug use, letting family members molest and manipulate them, and of course, the dangerous lure of life on the "greener" side of the fence. *Bright* is also beautifully frustrating because it's hard to hate any of the characters in this book...Johnson actually improves on her ability to make every character, even the ones who seem the most loathsome, someone you can identify with.

****So updating after reading the version with the removal of actual infidelity after marriage: I knew Monty was a jerk to Walter, but I also knew from reading his history in Mexico, the Dominican republic, and Indiana that he was a broken person. In the same breath, I wasn't feeling sorry for Walter all the time. Like hey man, you deserve a guy who will be good to you! Don't lie there and take that bs from anyone. I got even more frustrated by Walter's reactions to that kook stepmother witch. He has the legal right to drop kick her nasty ass off of his property, but he feels "trapped" by the fear she's fed him for years.

So actually, I'm glad the cheating was done away with. With Helena in the present and Lucienn in Monty's past, along with their individual physical and emotional health issues, Walter and Monty each have enough to cope with without Monty inflicting actualized pain. He does try to talk Walter into trying spouse swapping, but Walter refuses, and eventually, Monty has to learn the hard way to be happy with what freaky accidents give you.*****

It seems everything is stacked against the possibilities for happiness for Walter & Monty. Walter is sick with

what could be a terminal illness. Monty is still struggling to survive alcoholism, repressed pain inflicted by his parents, and suicidal feelings. When they unexpectedly develop a wonderful friendship with a girl named Natalie, the threesome's attempts to have children are met with even more heartache. In a nutshell, Bright is a wrenching story. I wanted to stop. Sometimes I had to for a while to compose my emotions. But in the end, I was glad to finish it. It was a huge reward, even though I had to go back to the store for a new supply of tissues!

The new version, published in Dec. 2K15, is greatly improved!

Therese says

A very inspirational romance about two young men and their long journey from attraction to love to marriage to family. It is a long hard road to travel but well worth the result. Monty is man living with chronic rejection and loneliness that he refuses to admit. For years he has felt rejected by his parents who are evangelical Christians and missionaries. When he discovers he is gay at age 15, his parents send him to live with distant family and from then on he harbors much anger against them. You will come to know his full story here and there as the story of his love for Walter, a sick man whose parents left him the farm, begins to change both men. Walter's real mother died of cancer when he was young, and he has always sought the approval of his stepmother, who is cold and distant. Somehow these men become each other salvation from their feelings of pain and rejection, but Walter's illness puts pressure on Monty that he is not used to, and time and again, Monty runs from Walter's love afraid to commit and risk being hurt by someone else he loves. Even so, he agrees to marry Walter because they just can't help loving each other. It is understandable that Monty is afraid, but it's also very upsetting, because Walter is a really good person. It was very sad to read about Walter being so sick, sometimes near death. His one big fault is he lets his stepmother treat everyone badly and doesn't stand up for himself or his loved ones. That ends up costing Walte dearly. Just when all seemed lost, things are restored to where they should be, but not until after a lot of sad and very unjust things happen to Monty, Walter and Natalie, their surrogate. Natalie is an intriguing character. Even reading, you can feel the sisterly bond she has with the 2 men. It is an instantaneous thing. Somehow they just click. Once in a lifetime a friend like that will come along and will take a huge piece of your heart. The friendship of these 3 people added something extra to the book. The love triangle aspect was realistic without being annoying or stupid, otherwise I would have wanted to throw the book down in disgust. I loved the book so much and was glad not to have to do that!

(view spoiler)

Naomi Favela-Gomes says

Poético , uma corrida contínua de estresse e beleza. Quando eu acreditava que os dois protagonistas foram finalmente vai ficar bem e viver feliz , outra crise iria surgir e , em seguida, o estresse e desgosto começaria novamente. Era quase muito difícil de acreditar quando a história terminou com todos os personagens da melhor situação.

A doença de Walter é a doença cardíaca e abuso espiritual por sua madrasta . A doença de Monty é o álcool e drogas e comportamento suicida por causa do abuso de sua mãe. Juntas, estas duas almas dar uma luta feroz e admirável contra as inúmeras atrocidades que querem separá-los. Muito semelhante ao Crush, o primeiro esforço do autor , mas também muito diferente. Walter e Monty são dois personagens novos e inesquecíveis da marca. Eu caí no amor com eles como eles mesclados de dois homens confusos e infelizes para uma

unidade. Sem decepção , no sentido erótico ou , as cenas de amor e sexo são quase sobrecarga sensorial. A cena Fisting em particular, é tão incrivelmente excitante como os amantes tentam adquirir o que eles precisam para fazer um bebê ! Eu nunca li nada tão sexual , sensual e emocionante ao mesmo tempo.

Como fez em seu primeiro livro, Laura Susan Johnson incorpora vários temas e significados em um título simples , de uma só palavra , e novamente cria um universo complicado dentro de uma família.
