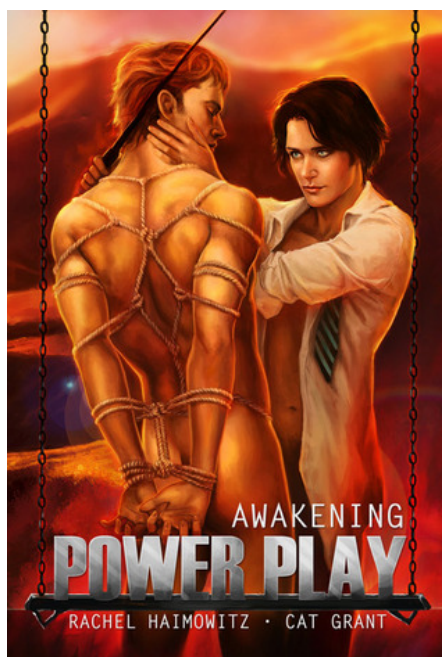




# Awakening

*Rachel Haimowitz , Cat Grant*

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**Awakening** Rachel Haimowitz , Cat Grant

Give me six months, and I'll give you the world.....

Brandon McKinney is a man reborn. Newly awakened to the notion of consensual power exchange and the submissive urges inside him, he begs for a second chance from the man who opened his eyes to this world: Silicon Valley superstar Jonathan Watkins. But no birth is absent pain, and Brandon's is no exception. He fears he's not strong enough to see it through.

Jonathan knows better. He's seen the iron core inside his new submissive, and the wounded heart inside him too. He means to teach Brandon to heal the one with the other. They have five months left on their contract, after all, and Jonathan has done more with less before.

It's tough to stay objective, though, when you're falling in love. Shame Brandon doesn't feel the same. He's only there for the three-million-dollar payout at contract's end—a fact that Jonathan, nursing his own wounded heart, reminds himself of each day. For even as Brandon's barriers break and his mind expands, even as he grows to love his place at Jonathan's feet, he'll never love life with a sadist—especially one who cannot escape the public eye.

NOTE: This title is a sequel to Power Play:Resistance and should be read in series order for maximum enjoyment.

## Awakening Details

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Author : Rachel Haimowitz , Cat Grant

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## From Reader Review Awakening for online ebook

Wynne Katherine says

*Fucking yes.*

This book man, I swear to god. I freaking loved it!

When the first book has been a little bit all over the place with the Dom-Sub relationship that was going on between Bran and Jonathan, this book took a whole 180 and turn the whole thing around (in a good way)

Like I said in the first book, I believe in learning curve. And it seems that my trust in Jonathan and his ability to guide Bran to realize what he needs and who he can be has proven to be true. Despite his errors in book one, he more than redeemed himself in this book.

***“All this . . . the whips, the chains, the Yes, Jonathan and No, Jonathan and even the fucking cages . . . all this was here to push him into all the things he wanted, all the things he needed—the secret things, the shameful things, the things he thought he couldn’t have or didn’t dare ask for, the things he wasn’t strong enough to face on his own”***

And when I thought I just couldn't love Jonathan and Brandon anymore, they just turn around and prove me wrong. I swear my heart is bursting with love for these two. Often when I read books, I will always find myself love one character more than another, and for me that is normal. Until I read this series. I have never love both characters as equally as I did with these two.

Not to mention, all the sex (BDSM) scenes are awfully hot, and I might or might not have been squirming in my seat the entire time I am reading this book.

Despite all that I mentioned above, the one thing that got me coming back and always wanting more? Is the connection these two have with each other. They are so well attuned to each other that sometimes they don't even need to speak to understand what the other needs. And it's just...I'm at loss for words. I can't quite exactly describe the connection they have with each other, my vocabularies are not vast enough for that. But trust me when I say what Jonathan and Bran had together was everything I'd imagined a Dom and Sub have in a BDSM relationship.

Thank you, Ms. Haimowitz for bringing me along on such a wonderful ride. Both Jonathan and Bran will be characters I will keep close to my heart and treasure forever. Thank you for writing such a wonderful masterpiece and sharing it to the world.

***“I’ve got you. And even if I didn’t, you’re plenty strong enough on your own. But I do have you, of course. Always.”***

For more of my reviews, click : [here](#)

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## Lisa Henry says

Wow. Okay, I read that in record time. I may have saved time by forgetting to breathe.

This was intense. Brandon's transformation was nothing less than spiritual -- or maybe all that talk of offering up sorrows is talking me right back to when I used to hang around the local Catholic Church as an impressionable teenager. Just for that one young priest who wore a Batman t-shirt, a cheeky smile, and spoke *Latin*. But that's probably not relevant, so I'll start again.

This was intense. I know that some other reviewers have had an issue with Brandon submitting to pain when it wasn't one of his kinks, but that felt like kind of the point to me. Brandon's submission meant that he put Jonathon's needs first, and that was a huge deal for both of them. I'm still not sure how I feel about Jonathon, he seemed to jump from sadistic asshole to cuddly teddy way too quickly. I'd like to spend more time in his POV to really get a handle on him.

I loved Brandon's journey, and the scenes between the guys were hot.

It definitely feels like more of an HFN than an HEA, but that's okay because that means we might see the guys again. More, please?

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## M says

Wow. Okay. There's really nothing I can add with this review. I don't quite know how to articulately express how conflicted I feel about this book, well, about this couple, really. But here goes. I've always told myself that I much prefer MM romance over hetero stuff because it had the capacity to be truly egalitarian in a way that gender dynamics often don't allow in male-female relationships. This obviously is not always the case, heterosexual relationships and gay relationships can be equal or unequal. But it's just what I tell myself. Either way, inequality in a relationship makes me very uncomfortable, not in bed, mind you - I can handle that one partner is sexually dominant and the other submissive, but just in general life and in their interactions. That's kind of how I felt at the end of this book. Whatever happens, this relationship was manufactured to be unequal. It's called *Power Play*, I get that this is the point of the book, but I'm bothered how much I enjoyed it. I think what bothers me most is how Bran was so reluctant; other BDSM stuff I've read has always had the sub gagging for it, but that wasn't quite the case here. It also made me wonder about the egotism inherent in being a dom. My discomfort is not unpleasant, though, I feel like it's making me question my assumptions about relationship dynamics and what makes people do the things they do to each other.

That said, I devoured this book the way an experimental psychologist might watch her subjects. Avidly. I just couldn't wait for what they would do next. It was like watching the world's only exciting tennis match. I found the slow shift of consciousness very interesting. And, oh boy, was it hot. Ultimately, I really enjoyed it. It's a spectacularly well-considered piece of fiction.

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## Dreamer says

Upgraded to 5 stars on my second re-read. A superior explicit M/M BdsM romance that concludes the story of Brandon and Jonathan. Somewhere in the back of my mind, I'm thinking 'abuse' but I still derived a wicked pleasure from this book.

*"Why me, Jonathan?"*

*"I saw you sitting in that dingy old bar, and you shone like a beacon, Brandon. So bright and beautiful and fierce. A fighter. Hungry..."*

*And to be honest, I wanted to be the one to tame that beast. Such raw power in you Brandon. So much strength. So much pride. And danger too - a lion with a thorn in its paw. You were hurting. You are hurting. And I wanted to tame that, too."*

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## Feliz says

Even though I had VERY mixed feelings about the first volume, I was determined to read this - mostly to set my mind at ease about Brandon, whom I'd really come to care for. And it was him, too, who saved this book for me. He's really such a strong personality, someone who, despite the bad cards life dealt him, took his fate into his own hands and made the best of what he had. The methods he resorted to in order to achieve his goal were a bit... extreme (after all, it's not to forget that it was him who sold his freedom and bodily autonomy away in the first place, even though I still can't forgive Jonathan for dangling this particular bloody schnitzel in front of a starving lion - serves him right he had his hand bitten off, metaphorically...) though in the end, I wasn't wholly satisfied with Brandon's answer to Jonathan's question. Neither did I buy it, nor made it an awful lot of sense, blurted out like this. (which was the only real issue I had with the story arc and the writing in itself, by the way. Plot, writing and editing were otherwise amazing)

I still don't like Jonathan an awful lot, though he, too, redeemed himself somewhat (I know I wrote this the last time, too. He did come to be a better man, though; still the terribly clichéd super-rich Dom, but he was supplied with at least SOME human traits this time)

This book was much easier to endure than the first one for several reasons. For one, the authors wisely kept the bestiality down this time; this is still heavy BDSM, but not the taser, starving, dehumanizing mess the other one was. Secondly, this time Jonathan finally bothered to TALK to Brandon, to take Brandon's inexperience into consideration and to EXPLAIN things to him. The dynamics between them worked much much better this time; it really felt as if Jonathan had done some serious thinking and did his share of the work instead of leaving all the heavy lifting to Brandon. Come to think of it, yes, I think I ended up liking Jonathan anyway. Well. Perhaps a little. Some.  
Or...

...there, this is what bothered me most about both books. While the first depicted Brandon being brainwashed by every trick in the book - take any random guy, beat him up, starve him, deprive him of useful tasks, isolate him and threaten him with electroshocks and whippings long enough and often enough, and he WILL kneel at your feet, suck your dick, feed from your hand and sing any song you want him to - the second one was somehow even worse in this regard, because Brandon agreed. He *kissed* the hand that wielded the whip, (view spoiler) begged for the pain he feared. I didn't really know what to make of that. Serious Stockholm syndrome? Brainwashing so thoroughly the washee didn't even realize what hit him, in the true sense of the word? Or was this really the birth of a brand-new, as-of-then blissfully unaware submissive, his tendencies hidden so deeply it needed a godlike being like an all-knowing Dom to take one single look at him and decide, yes, you need my help, and I'll beat you until you realize that? I can only repeat myself and

say I don't know. What I know, though, was that this book and its prequel engrossed me, made me think about the characters and upset me in a way testament of which is this long rambling review. I understand why the first book *had* to be the horrible butchery it was, so the bloody chunks could be put back together in the second book. I'm just not sure if the way this happened was enough for me. If you come outfitted with a stronger stomach than I do, by any means, try this duology and see for yourself. The writing alone is certainly worth the read.

PS There's one character in here I really really hate with a vengeance, which is Sabrina, Jonathan's housekeeper. She creeped me out. Would've made a first class concentration camp guard.

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## Tere says

Ok, I'm a literary masochist of sorts because every so often I end up reading books about 24/7 TPE relationships, and really, those fuckers really hurt me, even physically. Anyway, I was curious about this story since long ago, even though I knew I wasn't going to enjoy it very much.

So why not? what could be possibly go wrong? And there was book one.

I hated it, I still do, will do forever, maybe; I can't even bring myself to rate it, I wanted to **Burn it**. One thing is not quite enjoying a book (like in Uneven) or plain disliking it (like in Duck!), but Power Play: Resistance was simply **tortuous**, gut wrenching torture. Jonathan was most definitely NOT a Dom, simply a sadist. I had absolutely zero sympathy for him, I wanted him arrested, choked and/or death (~~and I'm getting pretty tired of the, not wealthy, but freaking billionaire Dom, like, no money, no whip, right? \*sigh\* but that is not this book fault so let's move on~~)

But I put on my big girl panties and carried on, keeping in mind "book one was so awfully distasteful, book two can't possibly be worse, it can only get better, right?"

It does, but I still hate Jonathan and didn't enjoy this plenty.

This book is all about growing up, both Jonathan and Bran really grow up as individuals and as a couple. I found it really touching, the pacing and flow of this book. The way they evolved, they learned (BOTH, for god's sake, not just the freaking dom teaching the sub like a god). The sex is intense, at times way too intense, but the tender moments are wonderful, they learn to communicate beautifully in this book.

Actually, everything that was absent in book one appears here in all its glory: Sex both partners enjoy, communication, carefulness, patience, tenderness, happiness.

But I still think Jonathan and Sabrina are distasteful characters and Brandon is always in the worst end of everything. It seems to me he's scared of his partner and his punishments until more than half of the book, which, really, can't mean they're in a healthy, sane relationship. And I can't over the last punishment. I hated how Jonathan was cleansed of his mistakes by doing... nothing.

If anything, my last impression is that Brandon is brainwashed and he's the only one sacrificing anything for having a relationship with Jonathan. He is not a masochist and never will be, yet he's up for canings and whippings because 'Jonathan deserves his pleasure'. I also don't think he's a full time slave, more like a bedroom submissive, yet Jonathan goes for 100% or nothing. In my mind, I like to imagine there is a third book in which, either Brandon leaves Jonathan for good, or Jonathan has to sacrifice something and/or loses

anything (he's way too spoiled)

Also, I still feel cheated with the epilogue. I dislike when the authors skip showing and they just tell what happened. (view spoiler). Anticlimactic, but I wanted Brandon to be happy, Sadly, he's with a sadist who likes to pose as a dom.

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### ? BookAddict La Crimson Femme says

This book was AMAZING! I LOVED IT. I cried. I laughed. I melted. Oh dear lord, Jonathan is bi. I'll lay down at his feet. Absolutely FABULOUS! This is a must read. I hope my official review will be approved so it can be posted soon.

Okay - to tide people over until my official review comes out...

### **RACHEL!**

You delicious heart ripper, you. Just rip out my heart why don't you? Yes, I'm talking about you.

I was

(That Japanese character is also a Chinese one which means hit.)

At one point I was

then for the China trip I was

the end of the trip

Because honestly, Bran felt like

while Jonathan said

and I'm going

And the ending I'm going

and when I read the epilogue

So now hopefully my review will be posted and I'll

My Official review is here.

Mine is the second review.

"You can't swing a cat without hitting a male Dominant in this city." Jonathan tells Bran. Seriously? Where is this city? I can't walk several feet without tripping over a submissive. For a Dom-less submissive, this city Jonathan and Bran live in must be amazing. In POWER PLAY: AWAKENING, Bran is back with Jonathan to finish out his contract. In the first book, Jonathan is supposed to be this amazing Dom who is much sought after by many a submissive. The first book captures Jonathan at his worst because he was not a Dom I would ever respect. He crosses so many lines and breaks a man for no other purpose than his own selfish desires.

I prepared myself for the follow up. There was no way Jonathan could redeem himself in my eyes. Within the first chapter, Jonathan not only turns from hated villain into loved hero Dom, but I'm also falling hard for him. Jonathan completely owns up to his mistakes to Bran, and in this story, we are allowed into Jonathan's mind more than in the previous. Jonathan tries very hard to help Bran and his methods are what he should have done all along. This is not to say the five months are perfect. In fact, there are several instances of one step forward and two steps back. Those are realistic and make the story more poignant.

Ms. Haimowitz and Ms. Grant do an excellent job showcasing the TPE D/s SM relationship. The breakdown of Bran's walls until he understands why he built up these walls was difficult to watch. As Bran transfers more and more of his power to Jonathan, it's a beautiful submission blossoming. Seeing Bran long to eat out of Jonathan's hands is sexy as well as endearing. Learning that Bran is more into BD with his preference for restraints, despite his adamant denials is definitely a hard epiphany. The hardest for Bran is the SM part. He does not handle pain well in the sense that his childhood of parental abuse is too tied with beatings. Unfortunately, Jonathan is a hardcore sadist. There were times I couldn't fathom how the authors would be able to overcome this obstacle. Ms. Haimowitz and Ms. Grant soar over this hurdle in a manner that is believable and moving.

There were a couple of drawbacks to this story, which did not decrease the five star rating. It's due to some of the secondary characters. Sabrina (the housekeeper) and Solange (a former submissive) are both despicable. They do not understand where Bran comes from and they are immediately judgmental. Both of them should know better. Yes, they are friends with Jonathan and are protective of him. However, that does not mean they should treat Bran so callously. Sabrina is the bigger disappointment with her lack of compassion and specifically her hateful words. It appears she can only tear a person down instead of help build a person up. She's spiteful and a poor teacher. Solange is just a jealous bitch. Her cruel words are uncalled for and if Bran were a lesser person, tattling on her, Jonathan will most likely cut Solange out of his life. She's petty.

The BDSM scenes and specifically the punishments are much milder in this story. If the first is about punishment, this second one is about self-discovery. While it is unrealistic to expect BDSM to be therapeutic

and cathartic, this story thrives on both for Bran. Jonathan is completely masterful and while he still makes mistakes, he works them out with Bran. Bran's growth in this story moves me to tears. He makes Jonathan proud and the reader sighs with relief and pride. This lovely artwork in writing is highly recommended to BDSM lovers who enjoy a window side seat to a breathtakingly beautiful relationship in the making. Buy this book now!

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## **Danny Tyran says**

Once again, I was riveted, emotionally invested and totally riding the high while reading this book. The hurt, the hardcore scenes, the lust, the shame - all of these finally lead to the acceptance, the connection and the love that I so craved for these characters. I cried, I laughed, I was expectant, I was angry. These authors poured all this to the page and like an addict, I was left still wanting more.

In this book, which picks up right after the ending of Power Play: Resistance, we get to see a different side from both characters. For once, Brandon is honest with himself and really tries to do better. He finally accepted that he had changed and that Jonathan had a hand in that and he needed his help to get through it so that he could finally let go of all his anger, his hurt and accept himself and live. And then there's Jonathan, finally accepting that he made mistakes. That he didn't go about it the right way that first time and that he needed to really dig into himself and find another approach to get through to Brandon.

To say that they were apprehensive when they resumed their contract is an understatement. Hell, I was apprehensive myself and I was cheering for them to get it right in book one. But could Brandon learn to let go? Could he trust Jonathan enough to do that? And did Jonathan have it in him to do what was best for Brandon? All these questions were in the back of my mind. Yes, they agreed to be honest with each other, to communicate and give it their best try. But I couldn't help the doubts. I just threw myself into the book and hoped for the best.

I so loved Jonathan in this book. He gave his best to Brandon and even when he failed he acknowledged it immediately, without hesitation. I had to admire that about him. He took the lead and guided Brandon in a way that helped him become comfortable in his own skin and accept things that in the weeks prior he would have protested about. He was with him every step of the way, through the hurt and the tears, while riding the high and drowning on the lows. He melted me in ways that no other Dom I've read about had ever done. And I fell in love with him a little more with every passage I read.

Brandon proved me wrong. He gave his best and in the end he won my heart. I admired his strength and perseverance throughout this journey. He fought himself every step of the way. There were times where he might have been doing all the right things outwardly in an attempt to please Jonathan, but inside he had a ranging war of emotions where shame had a starring role. It was when he accepted his needs and his desires that he really shone. It was beautiful to read how he gave himself to Jonathan. How he gave himself to the unknown and trusted Jonathan to be there to bring him out of it a better man. He gave of himself to Jonathan - for Jonathan - and it was exquisite. I cried when that happened. He went deep within himself and gave everything he had and my heart just opened up to him and accepted him in. Such strength and beauty. It was wonderful!

The writing, once again, was brilliant. The authors really put me through the ringer and left me reeling. They took each and every emotion and put in on the page in a way that I truly could connect to these characters - feeling their pain, understanding their insecurities and needs and forgiving their failures. I got my happily ending and I still want more.

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## Emma Sea says

### Cat Grant and Rachel Haimowitz are my Dommies

When I started in their service, it was so hard, you know? It hurt. I mean, Jonathan was such an asshole, and *such a bad Dom*. **Not even** a Dom! Just a sadistic wanker! It was difficult, and painful. Prolonged.

But rather than fighting the pain, I let it wash over me. Through me. I found the pleasure *inside* that pain. And that pain/pleasure was goooooood.

And then it got really challenging, and *scary*, because I didn't know what was coming. I was worried the second book would suck. I was so afraid! But despite my fear I made myself believe in my Dommies. I just let that worry go. I let myself drift. I trusted that they would bring me back safely from the place they'd taken me to.

And then they did :-)

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Please do not read beyond the spoiler tag if you have not read book one. Just go read it. No actual spoilers for book two follow.

(view spoiler)

## DarienMoya says

~OMFG! THIS BOOK IS AMAZING!

5+++++

I don't even have the words to express how awesome this book was, no freaking words. This will be another review where I am unable to express the awesmazingness packed into 292 pages. Cat and Rachel has outdone themselves with PP: A, and after fangirling over book 1, I am stone cold obsessed with Power Play: Awakening. Jonathan and Brandon are a tattoo on my heart and in brain. *Impossible to Forget*.

*Power Play: Awakening* picks up right after the first book, which left you wondering how things were going to work out between Brandon and Jonathan. Their relationship was a disaster from the beginning but there were glimpses that something beautiful would be the result if both men were to let go of their hang-ups. Well Brandon is willing to give it another go, and what a sweet second chance it was.

With 5 months left in their contract, Brandon has to completely submit and face things about himself that aren't pleasant. He is willing to try, and when his head lets go of the things he believes a man shouldn't be doing, and his heart accepts that there is no shame in submitting. Together the men create a rhythm filled with such sweetness, such pain, and love.

A love not recognizable from the beginning but you can feel it in their actions, the moments of tender vulnerability, and the fact that they are willing to do anything for each other. However, it is not always rainbows and sunshine with Jonathan being a hardcore sadist, and Brandon not being a fan of pain. It's a freaking match made in heaven y'all. Because he want's Brandon not to want the pain, he want's his real tears and he wants his suffering, above all else he wants Brandon to take the pain for him. *To willingly suffer for him*.

Jonathan has come a long way from the man he was in book one. He is patient, loving, and so freaking sexy he made my pants lose pants. His character spellbinds me, and I think I dream about him at night. Brandon broke my wee little heart. His headspace was bit fucked up, but I loved those moments when he gave in. It came so natural to him, and makes you wonder why was he fighting it in the first place.

You could argue about whether both men feelings are genuine, based on how the relationship was started. I think a long the way the money became a lesser issue, because the money became an excuse for Brandon to stay. It was the only way he could cope. So Brandon you ain't no ho, because sometimes we need that anchor to keep us to a place. *If you are a ho? You sure are a smart one ^\_~*

Overall, I loved the crap out of this book. The writing was superb, the story excellent and the characters the freaking best. I am a huge fan of BDSM books, and they are sometimes never done right, never written with the respect that is needed. The Power Play series was written with respect, and a sure knowledge of the scene. This will forever be one of my favourite reads. **Just Simply the Freaking Best!**

*Thanks to Rachel Haimowitz for providing me with extra pants, because yes a lot of pants were lost in the reading of this.*

**SideNote- That fucking book cover! That Is All**

## Ery says

The perfect ending to a perfect(ly, blissfully) painful (in a good BDSM way) book. I didn't want this ride to end. I may have cried a little when it did.

Books like this/these are why I love BDSM. I want the pain, I want the misery and perseverance, if only to see the slow, reluctant emergence of a new personality. Or, an old, buried one.

The authors rocked, I'm in love with Brandon, and blissfully happy to have read this - but then, I like pain :)

Minor complaint - which doesn't detract from the artistry of the story but.....I thought the flip from pain to pleasure (I.e. book1 to book 2) was rather fast. And.. I may have missed a point in the story that makes me feel that way - Haimowitz & Grant are sneaky theme/thought writers like that. But it was enough so that I really didn't/couldn't understand the characters' motivations for even considering going back/taking back. Still, other than that I found this story flawless, thought provoking, and mind-boggling.

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## Sara says

*"Strong enough themselves to weather the storm that was largely their own brewing, they turned loose and plundered the wrecks that floated about them."* ~Jack London, The Iron Heel

Never has a quote been truer for the story of Jonathan and Bran. I honestly think the authors did a fantastic job of mind fucking me until I was in sub space with Resistance and then sensually stroking me until I submitted on my knees in perfect posture with Awakening. This, **THIS** is the story I wanted!

*"You're too smart not to learn from your mistakes, Brandon, so why are you here?"*

*"Because you're too smart not to learn from your mistakes, Jonathan."*

Bran is back, he has come back to Jonathan. Unable to deal with what he has endured at the hands of the sadistic Dom and unable to deal without it the week he has been away. The duo reunite and realize what went wrong...they lacked some serious communication. Well boys, I don't like to rub it in but, I told you so!

I am going to toss this out there right away; that quote up there at the top, that is the perfect way to describe reading the first book. It was tough, it pissed me off and made me rant about it for at least 1,000 words but it was necessary. You had to get through the dark, the hurt, the pain, the shit ton of misunderstandings to the point where I was yelling at fictional characters to understand the beauty of Awakening. Ugh, what brilliant titles for these books, it describes exactly what is written on the pages.

So, Bran is back and he and Jonathan are going to resume their relationship but try harder with the whole talking deal and honesty. What happens that first night just had me in awe. The change in both men was amazing. Jonathan became the man I wanted him to be in book one, my sadistic Dom with a side of morality. Yeah, it only took a few pages for the ice around my heart to melt for him. He wants Brandon so much that he knows he screwed up and is willing to work at this. To take it slow and to make sure that he not only gets

what he needs but gives Brandon what he needs as well as teaching him.

***I suppose I could threaten to beat him. There were better – if perhaps less fun – ways to instruct the man. Especially now that he'd come to understand just how much Brandon had to learn – not only about being a submissive, but being, well, himself.***

Oh Jonathan. You made me so mad but you, Sir, turned me into one big pile of gooey mush more times than I care to admit. I am sure I could count each time if I tallied up the highlights with just you in them but I won't. I can't be that creepy, can I? *Maybe?* The way you cared and **took care** of Brandon this time around was breathtaking. The explanation of each scene was what I wanted. You did it for me right? The scenes were so brutal but beautiful and the praise was heart wrenching that yes, I got choked up at that first BJ out of the cage. How could I not? You gave so much with just a simple gesture. You listened and learned who Brandon really was and what he needed. The coaching, the teaching...have I said that before? I think I have gone all floaty thinking about you. Dammit.

***"Don't you know by now, that I will never let you fall?"***

***"I know Jonathan, but...what if you don't catch me in time?"***

***"I will catch you. And until you believe it, I suppose you'll simply have to take it on faith."***

Bran...Bran...Bran. You came back to Jonathan and I was scared for you. That first chat had me on edge but seeing you transform was again, beautiful. The strength and courage you had to learn to trust, to trust Jonathan that he could take care of you with simple things as feeding you to making sure you came out of each scene. I knew my heart was with you in Resistance but you dragged my head into this one. The submission, YOUR submission was transcendent. The fight against submitting was turned into the fight against what controlled you from the inside, the nagging destructive voices and with the skill, patience and yes love of Jonathan, you blew my mind.

***But Jonathan believed he could do it. And if Bran had learned one thing, it was to listen to the man. To trust him. Jonathan had never once asked something of Bran that he hadn't turned out to be capable of giving, no matter how much Bran may have doubted it at the start.***

This book, I am in love with it. I still have strong feelings about where Resistance took me and I stand by what I said. I have never been so mad at a book yet wanted to read the next one the way I have done with Power Play. I am beyond pleased with the turnabout of Jonathan and Bran's story. This really was an Awakening; not only for the boys but for me as well. It felt as if this was not a sequel but a rewind, reboot and relive the way it was supposed to be. The way Jonathan and Bran learned to trust one another, either in the dungeon with or without guests, up at Big Sur (some of my favorite moments, the beach with s'mores...sigh) on that discovery of a trip and in the Epilogue, I was enamored, entranced and enchanted through each page and when the last one was turned, I was sad it was over.

***"So what changed?"***

***Brandon looked him dead in the eye and said simply, "You."***

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## **Nazanin says**

### **3.5 Stars**

I have some mixed feelings about this one! I don't know I liked it or hated it! At some point, this story took me out of my comfort zone and I don't know in a good way or bad! It was just at the same time I didn't want to read it anymore and I couldn't read it faster! Yes, I found the love between them but I didn't like Jonathan in this book! I think I liked book one because of Bran's fighting back but in this one, he seemed so calm and I wanted to see that fierceness again! Told in dual POV, 3rd person. It's the second installment in the "Power Play" series and has to be read in order. All in all, I don't know what's my feeling but nevertheless, I hope you enjoy it!

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## **Heather C says**

**I've been so scared to read this book ever since I read Power Play: Resistance.**

### **I kept asking myself:**

- ◆ Will Jonathan find more creative ways to torture Bran?
- ◆ Would Jonathan learn from his past mistakes?
- ◆ Will Bran ever *like* Jonathan beating him?
- ◆ Will the sex be hot this time?
- ◆ Can Jonathan and Bran have a real life HEA?

...and all of my questions were answered to my satisfaction...of course I'm not going to spoiler on *ALL* the details! Maybe a few.

### **Some of the reasons why I loved this book:**

- ◆ The writing is so beautiful and descriptive, even though some of the content is hard to stomach at times.
- ◆ The authors were able to get me to like Jonathan. I even felt sorry for him on occasion.
- ◆ Jonathan was more patient with Bran and actually took the time to teach him during the "scenes".
- ◆ There was communication this time, even if it was in the form of Q & A sessions involving more demerits than rewards.
- ◆ The sex was so intense! Every scene was a turn on for me and I think the one with the clothes pins was the most beautiful BDSM scene I've ever read. (view spoiler)
- ◆ There were many sweet tender moments. (view spoiler)

### **What bothered me most about this book:**

- ◆ My knowledge of this lifestyle is extremely limited, but I *still* couldn't help questioning if it was really

possible for Bran to reach the point that he did in the end. The ending was a little rushed and I feel like I was "told" and not "shown" how he really got there.

♦ I wanted to know what kind of relationship Bran had with Sabrina by the time they reached the epilogue.

**4.5 Stars** Overall, I definitely think this book did the first one justice; especially considering how far Bran and Jonathan needed to go in order to reach some type of harmony. Plus, this is fictional romance...

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## Jo \* Smut-Dicked \* says

I cannot say after the emotional wreck I was from reading the first in this series that I wasn't ready for a break. I liked this one. You get the same fabulous writing - at least through about 50% in or so. After that it feels a bit different. This is more regular BDSM themed and not so heavy with the torture/abuse like the first one was. I was still absorbed - just not quite so emotionally invested.

Warning: Spoilers likely!

I thought Jonathon calmed down and became more rational here. I didn't like him any better than the first one though. I did hate him less.

I didn't see true evolution of him at the level I expected- though at least he seems to get what he's done to Bran and what the impact of that is going to be. He talked and explained more. He did not lash out in anger. Those are good things.

I was also happy he accepted Devon's advice to get away. Unfortunately that meant it still had a Stockholm Syndrome feel due to isolation and control. Even being in Bran's head more didn't help me to conquer this feeling.

Jonathon is still too much all about Jonathon. He does whatever he wants when he wants too bascially. He seems selfish and that may be what I react too - and why I don't really believe him capable of the level of love Brandon deserves.

Mostly it seemed like he did things for Bran only because it was the only way to not drive him completely away with the pain. I never felt he wanted to do it out of love. That's what I needed for this to hit 5 stars. I wish he had expressed more (or we'd of viewed it more) the carrot pieces of the pie. It does start to evolve mid way through but it was too slow for me. As much as he wanted Brandon to give him everything I don't really see what he was willing to give up?

Then I found it incredibly ironic that in his marriage there was no S/M. Mmhmm.....so clearly he could temper that to meet in the middle. I mean he didn't die or anything for not being able to give hardcore pain to a spouse. Yet he never does even give an inkling that he is willing to compromise. Why? Perhaps this is being colored by my own personal BDSM beliefs as someone who is in the lifestyle (at least on a low level) but (right or wrong) I always read characters and think about whether I'd want to be with them. Hazard I guess. He's a no go for me. Not even for all the luscious yummy pain he could give.

He does get kudos for not reacting so much out of anger, actually living up to his word on the limit, cooking, and for coming through with the contract payment. I did like that he was able to be sort of flexible with the shopping. Given Brandon's past I was very happy with how Jonathon dealt with it. One of the few times I actually thought good of him. However it got kind of ruined by the set-a-sub-up-for-failure which is pretty close to a deal breaker for me. It destroys trust which is a hallmark.

Brandon was also just o.k. here. I didn't really hook-line-and sinker- the whole transformation. I expected the peace to come naturally if it was supposed to be what he needed, wanted -- but nearly every time he had to overcome a natural reaction that seemed more authentic and honest. Instead of him actually changing it had the feel of him freaking out, figuring out what he should be feeling, and then changing his reaction/action to fit that. Pavlov's dog more than true discovery. Seems like it would be exhausting. Instead of truly believing he had to translate into action. I wanted him to just believe. Corny maybe.

I couldn't shake the feeling that I was supposed to be thinking he had gained everything when I just couldn't see it. I REALLY hated the airplane when Brandon acted like a 3 year old - I felt like he regressed rather than progressed. I was like oh man the bratty sub thing..great. He pushed everything in the first book - but I wouldn't class him as bratty. And towards the end when he was constantly spacing out. I still don't get that - but that's probably personal. I have no desire to be able to do that. I don't like being unaware of my surroundings.

Nicky and Devon being included actually made the contrast between the relationships so profound. Much as I liked seeing them I'm not sure it was helpful at all. It just emphasized how different it could be if the pain was matched up...how good.

Because I still have major issues with the pain level. I don't think they are well matched at all in this - and I don't see it surviving. *It is important for me to note it is NOT about the pain itself - I'm a masochist and I love a good caning..so my problem is not pain per se* I guess I prefer in consensual stories that pain levels match up better. I mean it's one thing to give a 6 cane stroke punishment...quite another to beat someone with a vicious rubber flogger. I make a distinction in what I like to read -- and I don't like punishment much which definitely affected me in these two books. It is all about beating and punishment. There is almost no correction or discipline used that is not about pain. Given the huge voluminous ways you can discipline or correct someone I didn't understand why it always was about the pain. The only reason to me was that Jonathon was only willing to offer the one way of correction. Sorry. That's a fail. I like balance. I don't feel like there was any achievement of that here.

I get that a sadist likes to see someone in pain. Hell I'm a masochist who LIKES pain.

Yet I think that gets tempered by love (should it exist) into some sort of compromise if the match isn't there- even if not all the time a nice percentage. Perhaps it is just too difficult a concept for me to understand the mindset that needing to be pleased and needing to see and be offered suffering in noncon or reluctant ways over rides the love for another. Platitudes notwithstanding - no amount of good boy's could shake this feeling for me.

Clearly there is a dependency relationship that Jonathon has done his best to cement - and Brandon is very dependent. I just didn't think it fit at all who Brandon was - or who really was meant to be. I would have maybe felt different if the ending was over YEARS instead of mere months. I don't think months are enough time to really figure things out. I wanted to see Bran be successful and achieve some goals and then make decisions. He bought a business, built a house, and started college in 14 weeks. It would have felt more real to me, believable, if he had gotten his degree and THEN gone back. Though the last chapter or so had one of the better feels to it and for the first time I really got that glimpse of what Bran might have achieved really with his confidence level with the teacher. I don't know that I ever got the impression though that confidence was a problem before -- downtrodden yes. Confidence no.

Great smooth and clear writing. Clearly a great duo.

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