



## Pride's Spell

*Matt Wallace*

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## **Pride's Spell** Matt Wallace

The team at Sin du Jour—New York's exclusive caterers-to-the-damned—find themselves up against their toughest challenge, yet when they're lured out west to prepare a feast in the most forbidding place in America: Hollywood, where false gods rule supreme.

Meanwhile, back at home, Ritter is attacked at home by the strangest hit-squad the world has ever seen, and the team must pull out all the stops if they're to prevent themselves from being offered up as the main course in a feast they normally provide

Starring: The Prince of Lies, Lena Tarr, Darren Vargas. With Byron Luck. Introducing: the Easter Bunny.

*Pride's Spell* is the third installment in Matt Wallace's Sin du Jour series.

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## **Pride's Spell Details**

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Author : Matt Wallace

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# From Reader Review *Pride's Spell* for online ebook

## **Barb (Boxermommyreads) says**

It's really hard to do this review justice without giving away too much because it's the 3rd in Wallace's Sin du Jour series, but I will start off by saying if you aren't reading this series, what are you waiting for? This is a perfect read for people who like fantasy, horror, hilarious plots and wonderful, badass, snarky characters.

"Pride's Spell" takes up where "Lustlocked" left off. And while I was afraid Wallace had broken my heart with the cliffhanger of the last book, I should have known he would know how to ease the pain with his next installment. In "Pride's Spell," half of the crew travels to L.A to do a catering job for a movie release, which the other half stays behind so clearly someone's plan is to divide and conquer. There is lots of action fighting demons as well as a killer Easter Bunny and a killer Santa, complete with demonic elves and reindeer. If that isn't enough to pique your interest, I don't know what is.

I would love to know how Wallace's mind works, but then again, it might be a scary place to visit. He mixes in numerous genres and candy-coats them with enough pop-culture references that most people can easily understand. I never thought he would top the Goblin King in the last book, but he came pretty close with some of the people/things in this one. I wish these books were longer, and I totally regret that it will now seem like forever until the next installment is released. "Pride's Spell" was a wonderful ride I couldn't wait to get on but like most roller coasters, it ended much too quickly.

I received an advanced copy from TOR in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Rori says**

Much darker turn than the first two, but these are still fun reads.

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## **C.S. Daley says**

I have enjoyed all the books in this series but this was easily my favorite. It was probably the killer.....oh I can't tell. Let's just say there are some crazy assassins roaming around in this book.

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## **Linguana says**

Less funny this time, more terrifying. But the tons of absurd action (fighting the Easter Bunny, anyone?) and the tension between characters make this another great instalment in the Sin du Jour series. These novellas are perfect to get you out of reading slumps, to lift up your spirits on a bad day, or just for any moment when you want to laugh about how all sorts of monsters are secretly living among us.

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## Simon says

The sole sequence with the Easter Bunny has more creativity, farce, and wonder in it than I can take. God damn, I love this series, even if it's silly, even if it's over the top (BECAUSE, actually), even if it uses a dog-from-a-box to resolve conflict.

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## J. April says

The same characteristic snark, humor, chaos, and surprising humanity that you've seen in the first two books. I would rank this one as better than Lustlocked, but not quite surpassing Envy of Angels. There are hints of some overarching plot lines and consequences of previous actions, which I appreciated.

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## Mogsy (MMOGC) says

4 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum <https://bibliosanctum.com/2016/06/17/...>

Pride's Spell is the third installment of Matt Wallace's Sin du Jour series of novellas starring the ragtag crew of New York's most exclusive kitchen and catering company. While these books can work perfectly fine as stand-alones, I was delighted to read this one and discover multiple overarching story threads and character paths finally coming together to form a larger picture.

Most of NYC's in-crowd have heard of Byron "Bronko" Luck, a celebrity chef who used to have his own upscale restaurant and even a TV show. Now he is the head of Sin du Jour and the boss of the Lena and Darren, two ordinary junior chefs who have suddenly found themselves thrust into a world of the paranormal and bizarre. For one thing, Sin du Jour's clientele is anything but ordinary. Lena and Darren's first gig with the catering company saw them cooking and serving up a banquet for demons. Their second major job involved providing the food at a goblin wedding. But just when they thought they've had it with the weirdness factor, Bronko happily surprises the two of them with an assignment that actually sounds halfway normal: preparing a grand feast for a Hollywood movie premiere.

The team is split up. Understanding on some level that this is a test, Lena and Darren accompany Chef Bronko to California with only a few other staff in tow, while the rest of the crew stay behind to take care of the paranormal convention circuit, and Sin du Jour's Stocking and Receiving department finally gets some well-deserved time off. Still, even as Ritter, Hara, Cindy and Moon are settling back to enjoy some much needed rest and relaxation, their enemies are not so accommodating. One night, all hell breaks loose as the New York team gets ambushed by the strangest group of assassins you could ever imagine. Meanwhile out west, Lena, Darren and Bronko are also dealing with troubles of their own, as they learn the hard way just how cutthroat the world of Hollywood can be.

No doubt about it, this was probably my favorite Sin du Jour tale so far. I was initially wary when came upon the book's premise, expecting another celebrity-laden story related to the entertaining industry like in the last book, Lustlocked. Instead, Pride's Spell had other ideas in mind. Matt Wallace deftly launches a two-pronged attack, hitting us with a storm of outrageous action and humor as both groups of characters scramble to deal with their respective crises. In New York, a wacky scenario unfolds as Ritter and his team are attacked by homicidal holiday icons, with the whole fracas finally ending in an epic showdown at Sin du

Jour HQ where Dorsky and his kitchen crew have been holding down the fort while the big boss is out of town. In Hollywood, Lena and Darren struggle to come up with a suitable menu to suit the fastidious dietary demands of pampered celebs, while Jett and Nikki have sequestered themselves away to prepare the greatest, most transcendent dessert experience the world has ever seen. They say that sometimes, the after party is even better than the main event, but as we soon see, this is most certainly not the case for the Hollywood team.

In spite of its absurd plot, I thought there was a lot more substance to this sequel relative to the previous one. Looking back at my review for Lustlocked, my chief complaint was that it felt very much like a “throwaway” installment, a fun side-story that doled out plenty of action and laughs but ultimately added little to the overall series narrative or how I felt about the characters. On the other hand, while Pride’s Spell was every bit as zany and twisted, I thought it offered a lot more when it came to emotional weight. Finally, we can see how Lena and Darren have been integrating into the Sin du Jour family, making friends and forming attachments. In between all the cooking and fighting, we’re also seeing glimpses of who all these characters are on a deeper level, like how they’re starting to connect with each other, what kind of backgrounds they come from, or what makes them tick.

This was especially true for the Stocking and Receiving team. So far, Ritter et al. have featured prominently in their own mini-adventures in each book, and this one was no exception. Like a company of mercenaries, they’ve always stood a bit apart from the kitchen crew in my eyes, providing some extra thrills and comic relief on their rare ingredient-hunting escapades. This however was probably the first time I thought of them as more than a sideshow to the series, gaining a little more insight into the kinds of lives they lead when they’re not off doing jobs for Bronko.

Pride’s Spell ended up being everything I wanted and expected out of a Sin du Jour novella. It’s ridiculous but fun. Humor, action, insanity and violence are still key ingredients in this madcap urban fantasy series, but I’m also glad that we’re starting to see more development in the characters and their relationships. There’s a sense of everything coming together here, even tying in some elements introduced from the first book in the series, making me hunger for the next course. I have a feeling it’s all going to culminate into something great.

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## **Rachel (Kalanadi) says**

*I received an e-ARC of this novella from NetGalley in exchange for a free and honest review.*

Oh my god, Matt Wallace, stop doing this to me! I get so hungry reading the Sin du Jour novellas even WITH the gross out bits, and you could at least share a recipe at the end, right? I don’t even know what a maple rum panna cotta IS, but I’d try to make that right now if I had the recipe. UGH.

*Pride’s Spell* is the third in the Sin du Jour series, and yes – the best so far! The catering service for the supernatural world gets double-booked, and line cooks Lena and Darren get shipped off to the second engagement in LA to cater a movie premiere. It’s supposed to be a *normal*, *not crazy* job. The special Stocking & Receiving Department even has the week off!

But it’s Hollywood, where eviscerated authors and the ashes of dead bloggers are offered to the zombie movie moguls in return for blessings on new projects. So, you know.... Pretty much what I was looking for. (I laughed out loud during that chapter. Oh man, the YA dystopia commentary!)

Also, this time there are vegetarian and vegan options! And Hell comes trying to kill everyone!

Why's this one the best so far? The opening prologue scene drew me in with growing horror in a way that a lot of prologues don't even really pique my interest. The characters are firmly established. I could feel the tensions and conflicts in the relationships. The humor and banter and one-liners have gelled. By this point, I and other readers should know what to expect, but are still going to be surprised and amused by how events turn out. The biggest compliment I can give here is that this story is *insane*, but Wallace pulls it off without it spinning out of control.

Overall, I was impressed that *Pride's Spell* felt strong and well-gauged. The parts fell into place easily and naturally. And it continues being one hell of a fun and wild ride! PLEASE let Cindy wear one of her magnificent dresses in a future book, because the woman deserves it. And everyone deserves a break after fighting off Hell and Hollywood.

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## Jen says

[ TaurusCon (an event for centaurs and minotaurs! [!!!]). (hide spoiler)]

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## S. Nash says

If you have not yet read the Sin du Jour series from Matt Wallace, or the short story "Small Wars" at Tor.com, hie thee to your bookseller of choice and get all three books, right now. *Pride's Spell* is the third book in the series.

Matt Wallace cooks up (obvious pun intended) a perfect blend of urban fantasy and laugh-out-loud comedy. Add a side of brilliantly rendered characters navigating situations that would reduce most people to quivering piles of Jell-O, and you've got a series that never fails to satisfy.

In this installment, executive chef Bronko has a problem. Sin du Jour is catering the yearly TaurusCon buffet for minotaurs and centaurs, and a booking for a Hollywood premiere comes in at the same time. It seems the Hollywood types had such a great time at the Goblin wedding (book 2) that they're clamoring for more. Bronko's only option is to divide the staff and go temporarily bi-coastal.

If the gamer geek in you is screaming, "Don't split the party!" your instincts are dead on. As soon as the staff are on opposite coasts, the shit hits the fan. On the East Coast, the convention goes off without a hitch because they expected at least some shit since they were serving centaurs. After they get cleaned up, they face an attack by unlikely assailants: The Easter bunny, Cupid, and a viciously evil Santa Claus. The battle is, of course, both violent and hilarious.

In Hollywood, the premiere party is dull to the point of numbing. The staff caters to the "eat nothing" crowd with variations on every food fad available. The real culinary fireworks are planned for the after party, where the VIPs are expecting a spectacle of epic proportions. However, the film producers have something even hotter planned for Bronko and his staff.

Pride's Spell does have plot elements that begin in the first two books. Wallace gives enough backstory that you'll be able to read this without trouble, but for the full effect, you should read the first two. Book one, *Envy of Angels*, is an award-worthy read. *Lustlocked* was an homage to the Goblin King (Yes, that one), published just a few days after his death, yet written before the public knew he was ill. There is another plot regarding Chef Bronko that began in *Lustlocked* that I'm avoiding because of spoilers.

I highly recommend the *Sin du Jour* series. The novellas are inexpensive, quick to read and guaranteed to entertain.

I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review originally published at The Bookie Monster.

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## carol. says

Wallace is doing an interesting thing with his urban fantasy series wrapped around the adventures of a catering firm the works with the supernatural. As he states on his website:

*"Each book has a standalone plot, in this case centered around a single event the company is catering, but it carries over a lot of the stories and character arcs from the last book. It's like an old-fashioned serial. There are cliffhangers, there are monsters of the week, and there's a fast-paced world you check in with every few months to get the next part of the Big Story."* (source page)

The books are a blend of culinary escapades, physical action and general silliness, wrapped around a curious emotional core and sprinkled with pop culture references.

In this installment, Bronko, the famed former tv chef is experiencing hellish torments. Meanwhile, his crew is obligated to catering engagements on opposite sides of the country--the half-and-half con in New York (although as Jett reminds us, that's *ablest* and is disrespectful to centaurs and minotaurs) and a movie premiere in Los Angeles. Newer employees, best friends and roommates Lena and Darren are in a tiff over her sleeping with the sous chef. It's complicated to work together when you aren't speaking to each other. Since the cooking and serving staff will be on the job, Bronko gives the Stocking & Receiving Department the week off. As we all know, the minute you are told to take a week vacation, things are going to go to hell. Or Hell will come to you.

While it is fun, the narrative is a bit choppy. Initial scenes alternate between Bronko's torment, the dastardly deal-making of Hollywood producers, Lena's perspective and events with members of the Stocking team. I'm not sure the sections with the movie producers was strictly needed, although it added to tension-building. It did give Wallace a chance to farcically describe the Hollywood system. It ran the risk of the ridiculous, but it was mostly entertaining: **"Apparently less than ten percent of all writers and directors are women."** **"We can't get it any lower than that," Producer Two complains. "A few are bound to slip through now and then. It's not a foolproof system."**

I enjoyed the dryly sarcastic tone, offering such insights as **"Behind him, Cindy performs a physiological miracle by rolling her eyes without her eyes ever moving in their sockets"** and **"In fact, in Hell it will become known as the single most horrific death ever to occur on Earth. That's like winning the Oscar**

**for best picture down there."** Unlike some pulpy urban fantasy books (looking at you, *Geekomancy*), I thought Wallace was able to keep congruence between events and tone, not losing sight that death and dismemberment are horrible. That said, there's also a bizarro element to the series, particularly when Hell sends 'false idols' after the team.

I've read the first in the series but missed the second, *Lustlocked* (now rectified), and my word of advice for would-be readers is that this is truly a serial in the old-fashioned sense. Unlike my recent reading experience of the frequently repetitive Mercy Thompson series, Wallace doesn't waste space on back story; often there will be no more than a sentence or two of explanation. I don't doubt that starting at this book will provide confusing on both the character and world-building fronts, much like picking up on the third or fourth episode of a sci-fi tv series.

While I don't think the Sin du Jour series is meant to be taken entirely seriously, there's a core emotional weight to them that is intriguing, particularly in this one based on pride. I've discovered is that Wallace has achieved his goal--these are perfect pieces for when I want to sit down and devour something fun.

My review for *Envy of Angels* here

*Many thanks to NetGalley and Macmillan-Tor/Forge for an advance reader copy*

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## **Suzanne says**

This novella piles on the craziness at a breakneck pace. There really isn't a lot that can be said without spoiling it - all of the revelations are oh so fun. I learned about how movies are "really" made in Hollywood - with a special nod to all of the YA dystopia. And I learned all about Hell's most elite hit squad. The catered party description was also fantastic.

Anyway, this whole series is really fun with lots of crazy ideas that make some kind of twisted sense. Thanks to netgalley for letting me preview this one.

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## **Gerhard says**

Mildly amusing continuation of the Sin du Jour saga ties in directly with *Envy of Angels*, or trots out the same tired tropes for a stale repeat, depending how generous you want to be. This series about a gourmet kitchen catering for supernatural clientele desperately needs new ingredients in order to become fresh again.

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## **Bradley says**

The third book's the charm. Or, actually, it's pure hell.

Not for us, mind you, it's all for the characters. And what a hell of a ride it is.

I mean, seriously, after the last book, which I thought was pretty good and definitely funny and fun, I didn't



quite expect a full and completely kick-butt tale of Hollywood human sacrifice, pools of chocolate, exquisite tacos from a truck, or awesomely choreographed fight-scenes.

I'm pretty sure that Tim Burton was not consulted for the Truly Strange bits, but I would be quite remiss if I didn't tell Mr. Tim Burton that he probably ought to read this book, tip his hat in serious pride for the spirit of this book, understand that this might be a good deal better than a lot of the more recent stuff he's come up with, and come back to Matt Wallace and tell him that Pride's Spell is now being made by him. I mean, fair's fair. This book is awesome.

I didn't even know, at least, not really, that all these wonderful chefs where so versatile with weapons! Or that evil cartoon bunnies could quite send such shivers down my spine.

So was it more a funny book, an action book, or a horror?

Well, heck if I know. All I know is that all three worked wonders in this one and I think this author has just earned a huge fan. :)

Thanks goes to Netgalley for the arc!

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## **Kdawg91 says**

OK, I told you a LONG damn time ago to read the Sin du Jour series and here we are book #3 and you haven't picked it up yet. WHAT are you waiting for??? Remember that time when you walked in on that famous ass British T.V. chef that screams lot and those two fantasy authors and those chickens at that El Ray network party? YEAH, that time..well that unholy sight produced these babies, and Thank the Lloyd and his mercy that they did.

These books are too damn fun. I am not reviewing one..I love them all like the pokemons. READ THIS SERIES!

(I'm done yelling now) 38 beans in a bowl of nine bean soup!

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