



The Bacchi

Belinda McBride

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The Bacchi Lefi Dhrahn lives a life of luxury and decadence, but is tortured by memories of a lost love. He survives the pain by surrounding himself with sex, beauty and all forms of self-indulgence. When he meets the alluring Inspector Afton Teris, Lefi believes the detective will make a very nice addition to his string of conquests.

He doesn't count on falling in love.

Afton Teris is a Valoran hermaphrodite and like all members of his species, is stern, cerebral and disapproves of the frivolous prostitute. Afton orients as a male, but the beautiful Lefi Dhrahn stirs him sexually, making him question everything he knows about himself. To further confuse his emotions, Afton finds himself tempted by the forbidden pleasures surrounding the Bacchi.

When a kidnapping ring strikes close to home, the two go undercover on a brothel barge to investigate a slavery operation. There, Lefi is confronted by painful memories from his past, while Afton is faced with a horror that threatens his future, and perhaps his very life.

Their survival lies with one another, but only if Lefi can set aside his pain and listen to his heart.

Note: set in the same universe as An Uncommon Whore

The Bacchi Details

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From Reader Review The Bacchi for online ebook

Heather♥ says

I really enjoyed reading An Uncommon Whore and When I Fall, so I was delighted to learn that this book would be set in the same universe. Any small mention of Helios and Griffin is always welcome to me and The Bacchi introduced us to a whole new set of interesting characters as well.

The beginning of the story was more of a slow read for me because it focused a lot on Afton's confusion/denial of his true sexual orientation and Lefi's broken heart. Since the Valoran have both male and female sex organs, I figured they would be putting both to good use without a second thought, so I didn't at first grasp why Afton would even be struggling with his attraction to Lefi. And he struggled for quite a while too. But then we learned that the Valoran specifically choose to orient one way or the other and their physical appearances would adapt accordingly. Homosexuality was taboo and the Valoran who were gender neutral were stigmatized. My biggest fear since Afton was attracted to Lefi was that Afton was going to turn into a freaking girl because his body would eventually change by having a male lover (thankfully we dodged that bullet). Lefi's experience, open-mindedness and support made him the perfect partner for Afton and allowed Afton to not only accept that he was gender neutral, but to flourish. He embraced his nurturing feminine side (and yes vagina) (view spoiler) but remained fiercely protective and strong. The uptight, serious little Inspector came out of his shell beautifully and there were so many erotic moments between Afton and Lefi.

Then there's sexy Lefi (love the cover)! How can you not love a man with green hair and nipples? He definitely had a mischievous flirty side yet was so tender and caring to everyone around him. But even though he had feelings for Afton, he still tried to push him away. He told Afton they could have a relationship with sex and affection, but not love because his heart was broken and would never mend. It took me a while to wrap my head around the idea that Lefi's dead twin sister was also going to be his wife. The bond between twin Somians is strong and the twins usually mate other sets of twins so they can stay together in some fashion, but for Lefi to marry his sister and have children with her made me think of hillbillies. O_O I could understand his pain over the loss of his twin, and his attempt to be noble to spare Afton any pain associated with Lefi being a Bacchi, but to still deny his feelings even when he realized Afton was now his "heart" was a little frustrating. But he stepped up and rescued Afton in more ways than one when it mattered.

The investigation into the kidnappings/sex slave rings on the brothel barge was full of drama and angst and definitely held my attention. The misery and despair of those poor lost souls, especially the Valoran Rev, was heartbreakin, as was the reveal of Lefi's painful past. And after all that, just when things seemed to be finally settling down and going the right way for Afton and Lefi, something else happened to ratchet up the suspense again. (view spoiler)

I really loved the epilogue and now anxiously await the next book to see the surprises in store for Helios and Griffin :) Bring on the royal wedding!

? BookAddict ✨ La Crimson Femme says

Returning to the UNCOMMON WHORE world is a fabulous adventure. This time, two new species are introduced and boy, are they hot. One is the Valoran and the other is Somian.

Afton is the Valoran who is an officer of the law. He's by the book and kind of sheltered. This is typical of the Valorans because they are rigid and prefer structure. The interesting thing about Valorans is that they have both male and female sexual organs. As a child, they pick if they are male or female. Those who accept both are labeled as gen and considered throwbacks. These gen designations are the artistic and flamboyant ones who the Valorans want to eradicate from their society.

Lefi, the Somian, is on the opposite spectrum. They are sensual with mating habits that offend the Valorans. Somian are always born as twins and they mate with another set of twins. Some of them even have a special sexual organ which makes them high in demand.

In THE BACCHI, Afton and Lefi have been dancing around each other because Afton is a gen in denial while Lefi is one of the highest ranking members in the Bacchi guild. The Bacchi guild encourages and pays for their members to earn accreditations and degrees in higher education. Lefi is not only a therapist, but he is medically certified too. These are all secondary to his first vocation, which is prostitution.

The Bacchi is a respected brothel type guild. It's an interesting concept and not too different from the houses in Jacqueline Carey's Kushiel trilogy. It's also similar to the geisha culture in Japan before the westerners bastardized it. It is also reminiscent of parts of India and their reverence for certain priestess in sexual orders. These were also destroyed by western colonization. While this concept is not new, Ms. McBride did bring a fresh look to it and it's admirable. One can only wish guilds like this existed in real life.

This tale is an erotic awakening and journey for Afton with Lefi guiding him. The self-discovery and sexual scenes are all hawt and moving. It is a shame that Afton's gen designation is considered shameful. He really is the best of two worlds. He possesses a dick with balls at the same time he has a pussy and clit. To have him as a lover would be out of this world. Lefi definitely feels this way as he seduces and falls in love with Afton. The two of them bring out the best in each other and it's a lovely thing to watch. With their special sexual organs, their sex is also kinky hot fun. Ms. McBride writes excellent sexual tension.

This world Ms. McBride created is wonderful. The different cultures with the good, bad and ugly exposed makes it feel so real. The attention to detail in how she creates each alien race enhances this world. It's a Trekkie's erotic fantasy come to life. Her writing voice is smooth and thoughtful. She captures the reader's attention and lures them in until they are totally vested with the characters and plot. The plot itself was well crafted. It wasn't too complicated yet it was enough to add suspense and the required conflict.

This is truly a beautifully written erotic alternate world fantasy novel. One can only hope she returns to this world again. There is hope as the end of the book left a little hook, which implies another book will be written where we would see Helio and Griffin again. This would be marvelous since the ending of this book leaves the reader yearning for more. This erotic novel is highly recommended for kinky folks who enjoy fantasy with aliens.

Marsha Spence says

Loved everything about this! And the ending; the ending!!!! Already looking forward to book 4! I really enjoy Afton's growth and self-discovery along with Lefi's love and their relationship.

Brenda Maldonado says

I am entranced by Belinda's characters and the world she created. The sensual Somian Lefi and his stunning Valoran are breathtaking. I've adopted them! Add to that key bits and pieces that expand the richness of the world and advance the overall story arch and the result is a perfect addition to the series. I can't wait for the next installment!

While I am sure The Bacchi makes a fine stand alone story, it really should be read as part of the series for maximum enjoyment. (1. An Uncommon Whore, 2. When I Fall, 3. The Bacchi)

PS: I am extremely picky about m/f showing up in my m/m. In general, it's a big no-no for me. I really liked this series and fell compelled to read the story despite the author's warning. The m/f sex in this story is perfect and necessary. It's an integral part of who the character's are rather than a denial of their true nature or a way of inciting jealousy. Please do not let the m/f warning stop you from reading this fantastic story.

Belinda McBride says

Author's Note: While The Bacchi is a m/m romance, the reader should be aware that there are instances of m/f sex. :) Its not part of the Uncommon Whore arc, but does contain plot points relevant to Helios, Griffin and Co.

Elena says

4.5 sensual, steamy stars!!!

You might call this book a spin-off of the Uncommon Whore series... It probably should be best read after An Uncommon Whore, When I Fall and Prince of Faith. But I suppose you could also try to read it as a stand-alone...

The Bacchi is only marked as the "Uncommon Whore verse" because it evolves about completely different MCs, though living in the same time and space as the Dayspring "gang" from previous books ;)

We actually met the main character, **Lefi Dhrahn**, in When I Fall - he was the healer who helped General Griffin Hawke to cope with his trauma and recovery after he'd got terribly wounded in a fight.

Lefi is a creature extraordinaire! He's a Somian - his race is unusually colourful (literally!!!), extremely sensual and innately gentle. That's why, with their usually pastel colouring, beautiful bodies, natural carnality and generally sweet nature - they make perfect sex workers. But don't be fooled - Lefi is "no common whore" as he says himself. The Somian is the best of the best - he's one of the top-of-the-range members of the Bacchi Guild - the organisation gathering the best-qualified, luxurious sex workers in the universe!!! But Lefi is much more than that! He's also a psych therapist, a highly-educated one. That's why, as we learn at

the beginning of the book, he'd spent almost a year on Neo Domus healing and helping Lio and Grif's family and the rest of the Astrum/Talisian community.

Now the titular Bacchi lives on L17 - a small planet in the Landis system - where he pursues his courtesan/healer career and... chases after **Afton Teris**, a Valoran ICE Inspector... ;)

You see, Lefi is exquisite with his amethyst-coloured eyes, long, dark green hair, green *nipples* (!!!) and other splashes of colour on his body. He almost seems en ethereal being...

Afton is a Valoran, and a law enforcement officer - both of which seem to be great obstacles in his relationship with Lefi.

Whereas the Somian are very sensual and don't hide it - they love exotic food, dance, public displays of affection, sumptuous decor and luxurious, decadent fabrics - the Valoran are cold, rigid, very confined in terms of their feelings. They have sharp minds (perfect for scientist or doctors), atavistic, predatory instincts and they never show their feelings. Oh, and they're **hermaphrodites!!!** - a small but important detail.

Although they have both female and male genitals - they choose in their childhood which sex they "orient" more - in Afton's case he feels that he's male. Only then they develop more gender-like characteristics (like breasts, more delicate face features etc.)

Afton, as a Valoran male, is very professional, annoyingly pedantic, wears only black uniforms and straight, sleek hair.

So, how do these two, totally opposite creatures fall for each other?? I don't want to spoil you too much so I'll only say that this book is actually a detective story set on a distant planet and on some space barge than a real sci-fi... As Afton and Lefi unravel a very dangerous, sex trafficking case, they also learn each other.

Lefi teaches Afton to appreciate colours and beauty and helps him determine his sexual identity. You see, Afton is... (view spoiler)

Afton also gives Lefi a great gift. The Somian always come in pairs - perfectly matching, closely emotionally bound twins. If Somians lose their twin, their other half, they despair and simply wither and fade. It's almost impossible for them to survive such a terrible loss. When Afton learns about Lefi's sister's death (long time ago) and his deep, still buried grief - he, in turn, teaches the Somian to love and be happy again...

The Bacchi is simply **beautiful** and so very different from the Uncommon Whore universe. It's so sensual, full of colourful descriptions, places and images. Simply imagine the places like this:

And textures/fabrics/items like these:

And you will know what I'm talking about! Sometimes it felt more like *Arabian Nights* than a sci-fi read ;)

Again, the world-building was exquisite, the different species varied and interesting, the crime story part full of dangerous events and technological/scientific problems. I only took away 0.5 star from my rating because the main twist was too predictable for me (in comparison to previous books).

And, for those who've read the whole Uncommon Whore series - The Bacchi brings **the most perfect ending for Lio and Grif's story!!!** :)

Highly recommended! Not only for Lio/Grif and Mark/Caius fans. But be aware: this book is **only good for you** if you don't mind the girly bits down there and their good, thorough use during love-making! ;)

MLE says

This was an amazingly well developed sci-fi romance. I loved the thought that went into the different species, and cultures that make up this book. They were so well drawn, and so interesting that they really made this book work for me. There was no one perfect group, or people and they each had their own weakness and strengths, and their societies felt just as real as their biology.

In the beginning I thought the romance between Lefi and Afton might have been moving a bit fast, but then I remembered that the bond between them has been forming over a year's time, and that their first meeting in this book was not actually their first meeting. I like how well they support each other, and how Lefi helps Afton to accept, and embrace his true nature. It's not about Lefi making that realization for Afton, but giving Afton the understanding, and space to come to grips with who he is, and how his family affected his identity. I also like how Afton accepts Lefi, and helps him recover and deal with the pain of his loss. There is no magically healing sex, but Afton is able to listen to Lefi, and to give him the space and support he needs to grieve. The secondary characters are well drawn, and feel just as diverse and nuanced as the main characters, and added much to the story.

The notion of gender is explored in this story, and was very interesting. It added so much to the story. What makes a person male or female, and what meaning gender has apart from the physical. At times Afton's, and even Lefi's, notion of feminine identity is a bit outdated, and stereotypical. I understand it coming from Afton, his society is very traditional, but it seems like Lefi would have a more complex understand of what it means to be feminine or masculine. I liked the idea of the gender neutral, and the balance between masculine and feminine I would just have preferred a bit more nuance to those roles.

The sex is nicely done, and different from anything I've read in other books. The biological differences feature, but it didn't feel like they were added just for sexual kink. The author did a good job creating a balance between both characters. It never felt like either was dominating or using the other. There were parts

of this story that might have seemed cheesy, or overdone in another story, but the author did a good job avoiding the truly flowery prose that would have taken it over the edge, and really bothered me.

The mystery is really well thought out, and I like that the characters are thinking beyond the immediate issue to the larger implications, and starting to make plans about how best to confront that issue from many different angles. They don't forget what they have set out to do, but they don't let their objective blind them to what lies beyond that. It's also not something they can fix on their own, and the secondary characters really play a large role in the solution.

I really enjoyed Lefi's culture, and religion. It was nice reading about a people for whom sex is so natural, and basic. I was uncomfortable with the relationship between twins of differing genders, but there was nothing abusive, or demeaning about the bond. I loved the faith his people had, and their Goddess, and how their religion was about love and acceptance not shame and fear.

I really enjoyed this book, and hope to read more about this universe, and the people that populate it.

I received a copy of this book through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Jo * Smut-Dickted * says

Simply awesome. This was every bit as good as the others in the series - in fact it might be just a titch better. Lefi and Afton are so perfect - and so perfect for each other. Although this has passion it is not that white hot passion that will make you pant - it is the slow measured full and rich passion that opens the heart to the joy, happiness, and contentment you can find in the one that is meant for you. The world building was, as always, great. I loved the secondary characters just as much and want Rev's story soon! Highly recommended! Don't miss this one!

Miralinda says

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Emanuela ~plastic duck~ says

This book is set in the same universe of An Uncommon Whore, and we have a small glimpse of Hawke and Helios. The story revolves around Lefi and Afton.

Lefi is a sex-worker, but he's more a therapist than a prostitute. He belongs to the Bacchis Guild, which is a

sort of union which forms and protects sex workers. He is a Somian, a race that seems to be born for sex, as many characters say in the book. He's a green-haired, highly sensual creature, who carries a smile on his face, but has sadness in his heart. Somians are born as twins who live their whole lives in a very close relationship. After Mhara, his sister died, it's as if Lefi has lost his heart and his will to live. Afton, the Inspector he's met on many occasions, with his pale skin and dark hair, with his prude bearing, is a sort of challenge for his seduction skills.

Afton is a Valoran. His race is proud and uptight, and they carry both sexes, male and female. They choose which gender to embrace and their appearance changes accordingly. There are Valorans though that are gender neutral, called Gens, they can choose not to choose, but they're sort of despised by their society. Lefi suspects Afton is a Gen, but the Inspector is still so caught up in his cultural upbringing and he's stuck in a situation that gives him no emotional and personal satisfaction.

The world building, with the different races, is very interesting. The protagonists come into contact with many people and each has its set of peculiarities. I felt there was a bit of repetition sometimes because the same concepts were explained many times with small variations. The plot was engaging, because Lefi and Afton have soon to collaborate to unveil a traffic of people that are being kidnapped and sold as sex slaves in brothels. At the beginning the book focused more on their personal relationship, but then the action plot became more central and I honestly enjoyed it more. Obviously the sexual interactions between the main characters are told with a lot of details, because Afton's struggle to accept his nature is the most original aspect of the book. Even if the scenes were frequent and I personally would have preferred more investigation and action, they're very well done and I think they took into account Afton's special biology. Afton seems to identify more with the male gender, even if in the book he learns to enjoy and accept his female side.

It was enjoyable and a quick read, and if you've read the other books in the same storyverse, you should read this one too.

Dee Wy says

4.5 stars - Fantastic Sci-Fi adventure and romance. The cover is to die for and the writing excellent. Looking forward to the next book!

Kassa says

3.5-4 stars

I'm a fan of this author's alternate world stories and was excited to see another one. The Bacchi is peripherally associated with An Uncommon Whore and When I Fall but can easily be read as a stand-alone book. The world building and occasional character from the previous books shows up but I think the author offers enough details to understand this one on its own. The writing is clean and engaging and the characters draw you in from the start. The world building is creative and interesting even as it draws on so many considered taboos. There is some m/f but really it's minor and I honestly wouldn't think it would bother a lot of readers. This is definitely an m/m romance with some hermaphrodite and other species kinkiness added in.

Afton is a Valoran hermaphrodite that has always identified as male. Lefi is a Somian and a Bacchi, or legalized prostitute/sex worker. Afton is in charge of overseeing the legal matters for Lefi and in the year they've known each other Lefi has relentlessly pursued the quiet, proud man. Only once Afton starts to succumb to Lefi's tender ministrations does Afton learn that he's really gender-neutral, someone balanced between male and female without choosing either side. Together the two explore their chemistry that may help heal the wounds of both men.

The main theme of the story is romance and sexual exploration. Afton and Lefi are exploring new things sexually, not necessarily kink wise but involving emotional and mental needs. Lefi is devastated by the death of his twin and thinks he can't ever love again while Afton is slowly discovering what his true sexual identity really is and what it means. The book explores these themes in a very languid way. No rush to get to the end or solve all the drama at once. At the same time there is an illegal slavery and prostitution side plot going on that keeps the action moving and events happening. The actual emotional and sexual bond between the two men happens early but it's slow to really develop and fully change the men. The side plot helps keep the narration moving and from being too slow.

I didn't mind the languid pace as I like both men and their nuances. Both Afton and Lefi are well crafted with deep intricacies. There is very little angst between them, some minor drama at the end with Lefi trying to do the right thing and then the kidnapping plot but for the most part these two men love each other and heal each other. The real interest comes from their emotional journey together as they learn how to love and make love with each other. It's more sensual than previous books (if possible since they were smoking hot and erotic) but this is definitely a slower, more careful pace. The subplot is nicely constructed, if predictable, and helps give life to the various secondary characters that no doubt will appear in upcoming books.

The world building is creative and one of my favorite parts of this loosely related series. There are clear rules and definitions to the various races and creatures and even if not all of that is available to the reader, I trust the author plays within those bounds. It's clear in the continuity and subtle repetition that highlights the important aspects without too much dry exposition. Likewise the stories show very different aspects of love between different males and watching Lefi and Afton find their way together is a lovely journey. I easily enjoyed this one and can recommend it to fans and new readers alike.

Deja Dei says

Nice addition to a series I really like, from an author I really like. I enjoyed the characters very much. I could have done without the m/f, but I won't rate it down because of it, since the author gave a warning and I knew it would be there. Everything else was great anyway!

?♥? Michaelle ♥? says

4.5 Stars

Gah, this whole series is just amazing. The underlying message of societal pressures urging conformity, of parental influence on gender identity & expression is just so well-done. Makes me appreciate more the parents that give their daughters dolls and toy trucks to play with; who let their sons wear pink & still play

football...as long as that's what the children *choose*. I wish that school and public opinion didn't make that a scary proposition, and even more of one in today's political climate.

I love that (legitimate) sex-work is, for the most part, treated with respect and that the Guild fights for the rights of & protection for sex-workers. I adore that Afton, who can definitely see the therapeutic and necessary aspects of Lefi being a Bacchi, will probably struggle some with the jealousy Lefi's job requirements bring up...but I think his new-found confidence & underlying nature makes him mature enough to talk with his lover about it and thus doesn't make an ultimatum for Lefi to quit his job.

Afton identifies as male...but even when that was in question, when he was exploring this other part of his identity - one that he'd been raised to ignore - I didn't even mind the more detailed than usual intersexed relations. It was a necessary step for him to fully embrace who he was & decide what he wanted. (I'm admittedly more familiar with how a series like the *Chronicles of Ylandre* kind of fuzzes the female sex organ intimacy - or make it a rare occurrence - mainly because that's the only other series I've read where a species has had both. I think I'll try looking for more!)

I can't wait to read the loosely connected MMF installment, *Belle Starr*, either. Doesn't have ratings as high as these do, but I love this 'verse Belinda has created and crave more stories from ALL the different species represented...

And I know books are slow to come from this author but man what I wouldn't give for Rev's story now!

~ Lei ~ Reading Is An Adventure ~ says

4.5

I've really liked the Uncommon Whore world and was intrigued by the Valoran Cali Polis in so I figured that I'd enjoy this story which I did. The Somian culture is very interesting as well.

Afton opens with having repressed his natural gen tendencies and Lefi sees through him immediately and is attracted to him. Lefi plays a delightful cat and mouse game until Afton finally comes to realize who and what he really is and I have to say being a gen is pretty hot. The best of both worlds.

There was a little cliffhanger at the end that leads me to hope there will be more books set in this world, please Belinda.
