



The Alcove

Rosalind Abel

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Jasper Getty is living his dream as the owner of the charming bookshop, Lavender Pages. For seven years, he's enjoyed the safety and freedom to be himself, selling books by day and curling up and getting lost in novels by night. But a dark page from the past comes back to haunt Jasper as his ex begins stalking him. ?Russell Wallace hit reset on his life in Nashville and became a bodyguard after decades of living according to family expectations. But even years later, he doesn't believe he deserves happiness. When Russell is asked to travel to the beautiful seaside town of Lavender Shores to protect a friend's brother, he expects nothing more than a job and a paycheck. ?But Lavender Shores reveals a world Russell never imagined, and his immediate attraction to the adorably geeky Jasper complicates an already difficult job. Jolted by the memory of a shared moment and paths that crossed years ago intensifies the sparks into a bonfire of passion and hope. ?When danger comes pounding at the door, Jasper is in danger of losing his life... and his heart.

(Contains Lavender Shores maps and family trees.)

The Alcove Details

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ISBN :

Author : Rosalind Abel

Format : Kindle Edition 303 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Contemporary

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From Reader Review The Alcove for online ebook

Natalie says

I really enjoy a good bodyguard trope and this was a great twist on it. Russell isn't guarding a rock star or actor, he's guarding Jasper, Harrison's brother and bookshop owner. Jasper's ex is out of jail and he's pretty sure the guy is stalking him. The surprising part of having Russell watching him is realizing they have a past connection, an anonymous bathhouse encounter on a night that was a turning point for both of them. Big bonus, it's also a May-December/age gap, another favorite and Russell was closeted until he was 40. Lots of obstacles for a romance to develop.

There was just a little too much repetition of Russell's apprehension over having a real relationship. The surrounding events kept it moving along as he's exposed to the atmosphere and love stories of Lavender Shores. There's also a touch of suspense and danger from Jasper's ex. It avoids the obligatory break-up and reconciliation scene, which was refreshing. All of the books in the series are very enjoyable romances, with a healthy dose of steam. Robert also makes a brief appearance (pun intended) for a light comedic touch. Another success for this author.

Mia Sciberras says

Prev forgotten anonymous hook-up ✓

May/December ✓

Bodyguard ✓

almost insta-love ✓

There is so much to love about the Lavender Shore series, not least it's unashamed love affair with, and homage to, all of our favorite romantic tropes, and in The Alcove we're served a trope-feast. In the story of a nerdy book-loving 'ginger' (Jasper) and his broody, reticent hunk of a bodyguard (Russell). Throw in a criminal ex-boyfriend stalker, a town full of crazy yet charming characters, bathhouse encounters and just enough self-deprecating references to princess/damsel in distress lore and you've got one hell of a cute-sexy #MM romance.

Do yourself a favour, grab this book and hunker down in your personal alcove [insert favorite reading spot here] and let yourself be swept away by the love story of two men who were simply meant to be. I enjoyed Jasper and Russell's, it had me gasping and giggling in equal amounts. You can't go wrong with the Lavender Shore series and The Alcove is the perfect addition to this collection.

namericanwordcat says

We get the bodyguard theme in this romance with fun nods to the Houston/Costner film. The other great fun of this book is we have a ginger bookworm hero. Yea! And he loves romance and cozy mysteries so there is all kinds of great allusions, romance conferences, and book club joy.

Jasper gives books to Russell which we all know much better than flowers. The stalker aspect of the book is

of less interest to me but Jasper does end up saving his self.

Able/Witt always does a wonderful job with sex positive love stories and we get this here along with the lingering impact of domestic abuse and internalized homophobia. I wish we have a bit more unknottling of Russell's issues and more time after the heroes commit to each other but this book is a bookworm's delight overall.

haletostilinski says

I enjoyed this seventh installment in this series. It was different than the other novels have been - still keeping the charm and almost storybook feel of Lavender Shores in it, but also a lot darker compared to the other books in this series.

With Jasper's ex getting out of jail and starting to stalk Jasper, Harrison insists on hiring a bodyguard for Jasper - especially while he and Adrian are away for their one year anniversary in San Fran - and Jasper agrees.

Of course his bodyguard is Russell Wallace, who Jasper had sex with in a bathhouse seven years prior to present day in this book in Nashville before Jasper moved out to Lavender Shores.

Russell has a lot of things to start to unlearn in this, as he got used to Lavender Shores. Even though he was out for seven years in Nashville, he was probably still surrounded by a lot of homophobes and such, so Lavender Shores, being such a safe haven, is a whole new experience for him.

He frustrated me at the same time I completely understood him. Like, with what he grew up with, the rampant homophobia in his long line of men in his family who were cops (including himself), what he had to hear all the damn time for 40 years straight...it made sense. Doesn't take away the cringe factor of Russel still wondering if "gay relationships" were somehow different than straight couples, or calling Robert straight just because he's married to a woman and being flabbergasted that he would be with a woman because of how he presents himself. Things like that.

By this book it's 2023 in this universe, and while I doubt homophobes are going anywhere (especially in the south) five years from now, it's still crazy to me that there will be people like that who still marvel at this stuff, even if they're LGBT+ themselves, because of what they've been made to believe their whole life. I mean there were times where Russel still wondered if gay people could have relationships - he says at some point that he didn't or doesn't - can't remember - believe in gay relationships. Not that that doesn't change, but still.

Even with that though, Russel was still an interesting character. And he and Jasper worked well together and had great chemistry. Although less than other couples for me in previous books in this series. Took a bit for me to connect with these two, but it eventually happened.

The ending was interesting - it deviated from the norms of these books, for one. I mean most of this book deviated from the norm with the very real danger of Jasper's ex and what goes down with that and how the epilogue goes. They're still happy as can be, but it doesn't go like months and months in the future. I did appreciate this book more this change of pace, this difference than the other books.

I've found these books to be cozy and warm and fun - while still keeping a good amount of realism at the same time too - and I've loved it, but some harsh realities of the world coming into Lavender Shores is a nice change of pace. (Not that it's fun for there to be a crazy asshole trying to hurt Jasper or anything, just that it made for an interesting story.)

So, not my favorite of this series, but still really enjoyable. On to the next! (and finally catching up with this series, woohoo!)

Debbie says

Independent reviewer for Archaeolibrarian, I was gifted my copy of this book.

This is book 7 in the Lavender Shores series, and I would recommend you read the other books before this one. Not totally necessary, but you should, not least because I said so!

Jasper is happy in Lavender Shores, working his bookshop, Lavender Pages. That is, until someone he thought long gone turns up. So Harrison, Jasper's older brother, hires a bodyguard for Jasper while he is out of town. But Jasper and Russell have met before, 7 years ago. While neither immediately remembers their encounter, its clear the attraction is felt from both sides. When Jasper's ex gets nasty, can Russell keep his head to save Jasper??

In another review for this series, I said I was enjoying these books because there were no nutty exes or no violence to deal with but I LOVED this because there is both of these in this book! Go Figure!

I really am struggling to word what I need to say about this book, I loved it that much! So bare with me, okay?? I might waffle!

Jasper is happy. He doesn't want a relationship but he can get as much or as little male companionship as he wants. That is, til Russell walks through his door and then all bets are off. I loved that neither Jasper or Russell believed they deserved to be truly happy, but they each thought the other did.

Russell's reason for being in that bathhouse 7 years ago comes out all in one go, and your heart breaks for him, it really does. I'm not gonna go into details, cos spoilers and all but know this, it really is painful reading.

I'm not usually one for professions of love early on. While the words are bandied about in each guy's head early, they aren't SAID early. They were said at the right and proper time, I thought.

Loved that Jasper managed to dig deep inside himself to bring things to a head with the nutty ex. I won't say how.

Harrison obviously plays a part here, and there are some pop ups along the way of other couples who have had their stories.

But now I'm left wanting another story. One which has already gone. Pete, from the coffee shop, already had his happy ever after, but his husband has passed away. And now I want THEIR story!

Abel keeps doing that to me, making me want stories, stories and MORE stories!! A sign of an accomplished author, that, making me want more, more MORE!!

Who is next?? No idea, and I really don't care so long as I can get my grubby little mitts on it!

310 pages; one sitting; wanting more, means I can't give it anything other than...

5 full stars

same worded review will appear elsewhere

~☆~Doni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~☆~ says

~3.5~

The seventh *Lavender Shores* book didn't disappoint; kudos to:

- Age gap (Russell is nearly two decades older than Jasper)
- Two imperfect, slightly damaged MCs who are perfect together
- **Geeky ginger bookworm + burly former cop/bodyguard**
- Sexual tension galore (Russell and Jasper have great chemistry!)
- SIZZLING, unforgettable one-off in a public bathhouse that is the beginning of a beautiful love story
- Lots of book talk, a shout-out to Lucy Lennox's *Made Marian* series, and a naughty drunken lingerie show
- A scene at a romance readers' convention that was pure fun

Even though it's been done a thousand times, I don't really mind the stalking-ex angle. I'm also a big fan of the bodyguard trope and love the idea of Russell trying (and failing!) to resist the sexy readhead who's been haunting his dreams for seven years.

What I could have done without is the amount of cracked-out melodrama that was Jasper's ex, Neal, who in this book is released from jail following a drug-dealing charge (and is the reason Jasper's brother, Harrison, hires a bodyguard). Neal's a fucking lunatic, which fine; what stalker isn't?

But considering Russell's profession (the man was a cop for twenty years!), I could only roll my eyes as time and again both MCs acted like idiots, putting themselves in danger when they knew a psychopath was out there waiting. And the *Lavender Shores* police ... UGH; so much stupidity.

I get really frustrated with dumb behavior and thought there was more of that here than necessary in an effort to crank up the tension.

For the record, this story actually works as a standalone. There is sparse mention of the other MCs, and just

one scene is quintessential Lavender Shores (not surprisingly, it involves Robert Kelly drunkenly groping Russell.)

The Alcove delivers tender romance and smokin' hot sex. **Following a few scary moments, some violence, and a good dose of hurt/comfort, Russell and Jasper write their own happy ending.**

Jennifer?Pher? says

Ok, so I can't stop reading this series. I am completely drawn to it for some reason even though I obviously have a love hate relationship with it.

This was on the side of love again. Whew! I was hoping for a win with Jasper's story.

This wasn't my favorite installment but it is pretty close. I wasn't even annoyed by the inner voice and not using your real voice!

I've been having a pretty in depth convo about age gaps with one of my friends and I normally am not a fan. For some reason this one didn't bother me. I don't know if it has to do with the actual numbers or the actual people but there are times it is gross and there are times where it just works. This one worked for me. I feel like due to Jasper's past he was settled enough and a tad bit older than his years. He for sure knew what he didn't want and was building a life with just what he did. Russel on the other hand was probably a little bit younger than his years due to his life experience. He seemed to be in a constant state of learning which seemed to make him younger than he was. Put these two together and I really feel like they fit.

Bring on the next one!

Cammey Kelley says

May-December romance..the bodyguard trope works well for big, gruff Russell and bookworm Jasper.

Jasper, free from an abusive relationship, celebrates with a trip to the local seedy bathhouse in Nashville. There he has a hot...smoking hot...encounter with Russell, a police officer, who has had life altering series events which brings him seeking the same relief as Jasper.

Fast forward several years, and these two meet again. Jasper is now the owner of Lavender Shores bookshop and Russell is hired to keep the crazy ex at bay.

This is book 5 in the Lavender Shores series, but can easily be read as a stand-alone. This is a great addition to an awesome series..highly recommended!

Glakritz says

5***** Stars

Book: The Alcove Book 7

Series: Lavender Shores
Author: Rosalind Abel
Publisher: Wings of Ink Publications
Genre: Contemporary Romance
Rated Mature
Release Date: May 30,2018
Pages:

This is the Seventh Book of this series, and I am hoping there is no end in sight. We have been intrigued by this author giving us a beautiful place to visit and filling it with people whose lives we are sharing. Lavender Shores is a wonderland, a beautiful town in the Pacific northwest, settled by the founding families to provide acceptance for all. In all small towns its past shares secrets and darkness, and we are invited to see.

Our 7th entry The Alcove, we prologue 7 years prior, to two strangers meeting 7 years ago. It was a hook up at a bath house, each there for specific reason unknown to each other. The meeting was sexy, passionate and over. Until.....

Jasper Getty, owner of the book shop Lavender Pages has just found out his abusive ex has been released from jail without anyone letting him know. His brother Harrison and his husband have planned a getaway and Harrison refuses to go unless he hires a Body Guard for Jasper. ENTER Russell Wallace ex cop nee bodyguard.

This story hits every bell and whistle you could ever want, but it works and I loved it. The two are sweet and searching and they are meant for each other. Again, Rosalind Abel writes a smoking hot love story with twists and turns that add again to the stories mystery.

Debra says

When I start a Lavender Shores book I know what to expect and this one was no exception. What was quite different here was that neither of the MCs were part of the founding families and I quite enjoyed that aspect. There were, of course, cameos from past couples, but it was nice seeing two “outsiders” take the lead for a change.

Jasper is the quiet bookstore owner and brother of Harrison (The Glasshouse). He moved to Lavender Shores to rebuild his life after his brother did and enjoys the life and friendships he has built there. He allows Harrison to hire him a bodyguard when his ex is release from jail and with good reason. Russell is that bodyguard and he looks the part. Older and bigger than Jasper, also eerily familiar.

I enjoyed this story as I have the ones before it. There is lust and love, humor, drama and some super steamy sex. Russell has been carrying some baggage going back to his childhood and though he’s come a long way, he’s still not completely settled. Jasper has a better handle on his life, aside from the crazy ex, and is really just the man to turn Russell’s life around if Russell will give it a chance.

There were a lot of fun moments between the book club and the book con Russell escorts Jasper to. There were a couple of times where I doubted Russell’s ability as a bodyguard, as Jasper provided ample

distraction, but not enough to take away from the always enjoyable bodyguard trope.

There was so much to enjoy here, with a bit of ramped up crazy and some suspense courtesy of the threat Neal poses. Book lovers will likely take a bit of extra enjoyment out of this one too. I absolutely adored the passage where Jasper describes his love of books to Russell.

This was another romantic, sexy read from Rosalind Abel that fans of the series will thoroughly enjoy and will work just fine for new readers wanting to jump in.

Dixiecowgirl says

I loved this story!! i enjoyed the touch of fate bring both of these men together when they needed each other, not once but two times. i really loved both of these MC's, they each had characteristics that i found endearing and back stories that hurt my heart. Both men were strong because of what they had endured and they both remade themselves and moved forward in life.

Jasper and Russell were a fun, likable and engaging couple. You could feel how they fit together and their chemistry fogged up my kindle and my glasses!!

This story is part of a series but could be read as a stand-alone if you insisted. However i think that it is so much better if you have read the entire series because many of the characters from the previous books are referenced or are a part of this story.

Molli B. says

My third book from this series (I've now read 8, 5, and 7), and I'm still enjoying them! Getting to know people better, figure out who everyone is. There was a tiny bit of Connor and Micah in this, and lots of Harrison and Adrian, at whom I'm still cranky because I read book 8 first. :) (I doubt I'll ever read their story, #6.)

I liked both Jasper and Russell—they seem to complement each other well. And Jasper has basically my dream life/job. I thought it was interesting how the author chose to resolve the major conflict. I like (view spoiler), but I'm not sure how I feel about (view spoiler). :) But I liked it all anyway. A bit more violence than I'd expect in Lavender Shores!

Which to read next...maybe #1!

Cadiva says

This love in a bookshop romance hits the spot

This was a cracking return to form for the Lavender Shores series as bookworm Jasper gets his Whitney Houston 'The Bodyguard' moment when he falls for Russell.

With any book which relies on a stalker plot, you need to balance the line between amping up the tension and making the threat too much. I think Rosalind Abel hit the right note here without making Russell or Jasper commit a stupid mistake to allow the stalker access.

Clever timing and a note that the bad guy paid attention (although the police would change up their patrols to avoid just this situation in my experience) meant that I didn't feel like with MC had behaved like an idiot to set up the big finale.

This book also features two of my other favourite tropes - a May to December romance and a first time gay sexual encounter and has two incredibly likable characters in Jasper and Russell.

Chris says

3.5 stars for this book. I enjoy this series but this story didn't quite hit the mark for me. While I like Jasper, i really didn't buy the dynamic for some reason. The whole stalker element was frustrating ! As for Russell his closet issues were super annoying - for a big tough guy like him, I expected him to be out and proud. I'm glad they both worked it out .. eventually!!

Elaine White says

Book – The Alcove

Series – Lavender Shores #7

Author – Rosalind Abel

Star rating - ★★★★★

No. of Pages – 303

Cover – Beautiful!

POV – 1st person, dual POV

Would I read it again – Yes!

Genre – LGBT, Romance, Contemporary, May/December

Content Warning – stalking, domestic abuse, violence, history of child abuse, scenes of therapy discussing child abuse and homophobic families

I fell in love before the end of Prologue: Part One, and I stayed in love long after 'The End'.

I've fallen in love with every Lavender Shores book as the series has progressed, but this one is just...too much for words. Decadent. Stunning. Heart-wrenching. Bottom-lip-biting worthy. Awkward, cute, romantic. Full of sizzling chemistry. All of that and more.

I've been left so speechless by this one that I barely know where to start.

Jasper has been one of my favourite side characters for a long time now, but seeing him get his own story proved that he is so much more than I ever thought he was, in all the right ways. He's hot. He's a geek. He's a reader. He's ginger. What more could I want? Then comes along Russell, the hot, bodybuilder type bodyguard with a cop-history, and HELLO! Perfect couple.

I was, honestly, amazed to see how brave and strong Jasper was. He's suffered five years with the horror that was Neal – a drug dealer, a domestic abuser, and a manipulator – and he somehow managed to not only save himself, to walk away and start a new life, but he was genuinely happy. He got his book store, he got his alcove, and he had his brother. That was all he wanted. Seeing him with Russell, both in the past within the Prologue, and in the present, was so utterly beautiful. The romance between them was soft, charming, and tentative. It didn't have that rushing, lusty heat that some of the others had; the intense physical urge; the “take me now” and “use me” passion and demand. This one was tender, unsure, loaded with unresolved chemistry and always just on the cusp of dropping headlong into the abyss of unbridled passion. I loved every second.

Again, the minor characters did their part to make this feel like an amazingly beautiful community, to offer support and love at all the right times, and to be there for one another through good and bad. I swear, I almost swooned when I first read about Xander, thinking about how perfect he would be for Moses. We definitely need a little young-love romance in there, right? And Pete? Oh. My. God. Pete nearly killed me. He had me in tears when he was signing Lavender Loves. The book club is something that was always talked about but never really shown on page in all its glory and BY. GOD! Maybe it shouldn't have been. Robert took my breath away. Jasper drunk was so stinkin' adorable! And Russell's terror was hilarious.

Neal was a terrifying villain for the simple fact that he was real. That he portrays thousands of real, evil people who are in the world today, terrorizing someone they claim to love. Just as the parents of Xander and Alex, the kids at the youth centre, are scarily all too real, too. Their experiences, the stalking, the abuse, the taunts and the shame that they've been made to endure are one of the most well written but frightening parts about the book (and the series) because it's REAL! They happen every day, in countries all around the world. Yet, the way Rosalind Abel deals with their part in the storyline is real too. Not everything has a shiny, happy ending. Not even villain is put in prison and stays there, like they're supposed to. Not every bad guy is considered evil to cops and blamed for their actions. Sometimes, the cops relate to the bad guys. Sometimes, there's not enough evidence. And it's that realness that thrusts a fist through your chest and grips your heart so tight. It makes the joys so much higher, the pain hurt so much more, and the ache stay with you that much longer.

Because I can't say too much about the plot, without giving it away, I'm going to limit myself to pinpointing some of the best, most beautiful moments, with a quote. I can't explain what they did to me, why they matter, or what they mean, but just know that they were THE moments of unquestionable brilliance:

“I'd like it if you stayed.”

“I collapsed to my knees, joining them.”

“I want you to be part of the pages.”

“I'm glad this can be an uncomfortable experience for both of us.”

Utterly, truly, perfect. It took my breath away.

~

The months cannot go fast enough. I want my greedy little hands on The Wilderness RIGHT. NOW! And, I want it to be either Andre or Seth, because I would kill to see Kimberly Epstein's face!

~

Favourite Quotes

“So that was what love was. Loving someone so much that you simultaneously wanted to smother them with a pillow, because they were pissing you off so badly and yet needing to wrap them in your arms and hold them just so you could breathe.”

““I don't want to hurt you. I love you.”

I only stared at him. In numb horror. This was the man I'd given my life to for five years. [...] This was going to be the man who killed me.”

(I had to remove half of this quote, because it would have given away a spoiler, or possible spoiler.)
