



The Last Sun

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Rune Saint John, last child of the fallen Sun Court, is hired to search for Lady Judgment's missing son, Addam, on New Atlantis, the island city where the Atlanteans moved after ordinary humans destroyed their original home.

With his companion and bodyguard, Brand, he questions Addam's relatives and business contacts through the highest ranks of the nobles of New Atlantis. But as they investigate, they uncover more than a missing man: a legendary creature connected to the secret of the massacre of Rune's Court.

In looking for Addam, can Rune find the truth behind his family's death and the torments of his past?

The Last Sun Details

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Author : K.D. Edwards

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From Reader Review The Last Sun for online ebook

WMD says

Fantasy/mystery with gay mc

I really liked the Last Sun. Fast moving, likable MC, and generally a gradual reveal of his history and his world. The battle scenes and explorations of new territories did make it feel like a video game sometimes (I started announcing "level up...Achievement unlocked" a couple of times, as we accumulated treasure and clues). But the mystery holds together, and the creatures and magical features are interesting and, I think, not overexplained. The tarot theme has been a hit lately in fantasy books (e.g., Jenn Stark's Immortal Vegas series) but this one is a loose connection so far (not making us go too much into what each Arcana represents).

Half the fun of any new fantasy series is learning the history of the characters and the world, so I won't go into it too much. This is not a romance, but a fantasy/mystery in a world that appears to endorse either hetero or gay couples.

I will mention that there is gradual reveal of a harsh sexual assault of a minor, years ago, which impacts the story (including flashbacks). Given this, I think it is not a young adult book. However, this and the complexity of the MC's relationships, are added layers that makes the book not your typical intro fantasy. I will be reading the next one when it comes out.

Like the sound of The Last Sun?

I can recommend the following which are all M/M romance in a fantasy setting.

The Magpie Lord by KJ Charles.

Treasure for Treasure by R. Cooper

Black Dog Blues by Rhys Ford

Alison says

I absolutely loved this. What an entertaining and exciting queer urban fantasy! It's vivid, funny, imaginative, gripping, fast-paced, creepy, poignant, and well written. Rune, our enigmatic eponymous MC, is a fantastic character and his narration is so entertaining. The secondary characters are amazing and Brand is wonderful. He and Rune have the best relationship--they're best friends and brothers and are completely devoted to each other. Excellent characters all around. The romance part of the story is just barely getting going here and is a definite secondary part of the proceedings, so don't go reading this book for the romance. Read it for the: thrills! chills! suspense! daring heroics! witty banter! excellent world-building! zombies! magic queers! and more! On finishing this, I immediately pre-ordered the sequel, which doesn't come out for like six months (bummer). The setting is an AU America where the governing structure is based around the Tarot deck, which is pretty neat and different. It's also a very queer-happy place. The mystery plot is intriguing and builds to an exciting ending. This is an impressive debut and it's one of my favourite things I've read this year. It's exciting and funny and creative and super entertaining, and worth a look if you like imaginative queer fantasy.

Megan says

I know I'm not the only one with a distressingly large amount of books on my tbr pile. But sometimes a book catches your eye, and it has a pretty cover or the protagonist has a cool name and you think, sorry tbr, but why not. These spur of the moment books often turn out to be just ok, sometimes less than ok, sometimes more. And sometimes, just sometimes mind you- it wouldn't be one of the most special things about being an avid read if it happened all the time- but sometimes the book you never saw coming turns out to be one of the best books you've read in your life.

So I guess you could say I enjoyed *The Last Sun*.

So, Atlantis. No, come back, don't be turned off! The worldbuilding is one of the best parts of this book (I'm going to say that about every part of this book by the end of this review, I can see it now). So, Atlantis. Or rather, New Atlantis. The under the sea version is no more, and the Atlantians who outlived the city have built a new one in America, existing as kind of a new city-state in the world. They also built their new city by buying and magically transporting old and unwanted buildings from all over the world, which means that this book is peppered with delightful little history of architecture lessons that I never got tired of.

New Atlantis is governed by ruling houses, and it took me an embarrassingly long time to realise they all reflect tarot cards. Yes I know the series is called the Tarot Sequence. Shut up. Or hero, Rune, is the last scion of the Sun Throne. His father and house were wiped out by persons unknown when he was a teenager, and so while he's technically a scion and heir to his house he also has to take odd jobs to make ends meet. Rune is the best. He's funny and just the right amount of self-deprecating and being inside his head was a blast. This book does this thing where an unfamiliar term or concept will be introduced and then Rune will kind of pause the narrative and take the reader aside and explain it. Which, written down like that sounds info-dumpy and boring, but Rune's voice is so engaging that I didn't care at all. And it was kind of a new feeling too; if I was confused by something I didn't have to try and figure it out from context clues, I knew I just hang to hang tight for a minute and Rune would catch me up. I appreciated it his consideration for my mental energy levels.

Rune has this bodyguard/magically bonded companion named Brand, and did you know that magically-bonded-companion is one of my favourite tropes? (Actually, it's almost creepy how this book pretty much went down the list of my favourite tropes and ticked them all off... Right down to character and possible love interest must take shelter but, wait, what's this? only one bed????!!!!) And only scions can cast magic, so non-scion Brand has to rely and guns and super-cool bodyguard senses to keep Rune safe. He is delightfully competent and fun to watch in action. Plus, such bromance.

Speaking of scion magic, such a cool system. Scions can only cast spells by charging sigils, which are rare items mapped to their owners. And Rune of course has only a ragtag little collection of sigils so he must get creative with their use. This book has so many epic battles, each one a mix of magic and non-magic weaponry, and they never got boring or repetitive. The rules of the magic system are laid out well, and the power-creep over the course of the book feels natural. If epic bad-arse moments are your thing then please, step this way.

I feel like I've barely even scratched the surface of all the things I loved about this book. Characters? Amazing. Worldbuilding? Legit some of the best I've read. I'm not talking Sanderson attention to detail, but just so much cool and well thought out stuff. Prose? Every sentence made me happy. Plot? Gripping. The main story wraps up, but I will say this is clearly book one of hopefully twenty-seven, so there are loose

ends. Another thing I must mention is that there is sexual violence in Rune's past, and while it doesn't happen on-page there are some pretty confronting flashback moments. I was ok with this, and found it to be handled well, but I know some people choose to avoid this in their reading. Also, I honestly didn't notice it while reading, but realised after I was done that there's a slight lack of female characters which again, doesn't bother me, but I know it's a concern for others.

Stephanie says

An urban fantasy with fascinatingly unique world-building and real heart, full of characters whose relationships I care about SO much. Perfect for fans of Ilona Andrews (as I am)! I checked out a library copy this time, but now I'm planning to buy a copy of my own for future re-reads.

TW: the hero, Rune, is a rape survivor (it happened 20 years before the events of this book), and while the subject is handled sensitively, he does experience a few extremely vivid (brief) flashbacks.

The magic in this version of North America is truly fabulous and the magical action is exciting, but most of all I just adored the characters. I loved that ALL of Rune's relationships matter so much, in all of their different ways. The romance (which doesn't even get started until the second half of the book) is really lovely, but his relationship with his bodyguard/partner/best friend/brother is even more important to the book, and his reluctant assumption of a guardian's role to a hurting teenager is incredibly important too. I just cared SO MUCH about every one of these characters. I can't wait to read Book 2!

Scott Reintgen says

An urban fantasy that has as much beauty as it has teeth. Edwards takes the promises of his genre and outruns all possible expectations. New Atlantis is the kind of world that invites readers to wander away from the characters and get lost in the endless sprawl. We'd disappear early and often into the world Edwards offers us if it wasn't so breathtakingly addictive to follow Rune and Brand instead. The dynamic duo at the center of this story will find themselves sneaking onto every list of famous fantasy pairings as fans fall in love with their irreverent dialogue and unflinching loyalty to one another. This is the tale of Atlantean magic we didn't know we wanted.

Kristen Burns says

4.5 Stars? 5 Stars? IDK, decisions are hard.

Review:

I received a copy of this book from the publisher. This has not influenced my review.

This was the first book in a new series, and between the realistic characters, adorable friendship, unique world-building, and detailed magic system, it's off to an amazing start!

This book was urban fantasy, but more unique, and I loved it. It took place in New Atlantis, which exists in our world but is like a little country of its own where the Atlanteans live. The story, the city, the characters,

and the writing were modern and urban, but it was mixed with magic and the Atlantean society (which consists of noble courts based on tarot cards) and its old ways. It was an interesting combo that sucked me into the story.

The setting itself was also really unique. The Atlanteans literally took abandoned buildings from all over the world, used magic to bring them to this island, and repurposed them. And for many of the buildings the characters visited, the author explained where they came from, what they originally were. There was also the Westlands, which was interesting in its own way because it was filled with wild magic. The anecdotes about things that had happened there, like time paradoxes, were so creative. So much thought was put into this world.

The magic system was interesting too. The scions, or some of them, had a power that related to their house. They also had general magic, but it was limited because they had to use sigils (which were not easy to come by) to store and use spells, and storing the spells took time, focus, and the use of special locations called sanctums.

Now let's talk about the characters! They were so well-written. Some were intriguing. Some were mysterious. Some were likeable. Some were relatable. All were believable and three-dimensional. That was one of the best things about this book, how natural the characters and all their interactions felt, like I was reading about real people. They kept growing on me until I adored them and kept smiling at their banter and antics and relationships with each other.

Rune had a relatable, slightly sarcastic voice and was easy to root for. I felt oddly protective toward Matthias (Max) and Quinn. I can see why Rune was attracted to Addam, what with his tattoos, and his carefree barefoot dancing, and his compassion and empathy. I will admit, however, that I had mixed feelings about Brand. His answer to everything was violence, and I could excuse some of it (Dalton 100% deserved it), but not his treatment of Max. When a teenager under your care does something wrong, it's not ok to dunk their head in a toilet or stick them out the window of a moving train. I know things are different in New Atlantis, but that really rubbed me the wrong way. But of course he had good traits too, and I don't need to like everything about every character in order to appreciate how well-written they are.

Another great thing was the fantastic friendship between Rune and Brand. The banter between them was so much fun and cracked me up, but they also didn't have issues with hugging, expressing how much they cared, and doing little things for each other, like giving their jacket when the other was cold. And the way Rune sometimes referred to Brand as "my Brand" was touching. There was nothing romantic between them, just pure, adorable friendship.

The blossoming romance was nice too. I got to see the characters spending enough time together and connecting to each other that I believed they were starting to develop feelings. But that's all it was---the start of something, not a full-blown romance. And what's cool about this society is that being LGBT+ is common and widely accepted.

I just realized I haven't even mentioned the plot, but I promise that was good too! It was gripping and filled with plenty of action and just the right amount of mystery.

Last but not least, I want to give a *TRIGGER WARNING* for a couple very brief but explicit mentions of rape. When it was revealed just how terrible (terrible isn't remotely a strong enough word) that incident in Rune's past was, it nearly brought me to tears. It was not a thing that was brushed aside. It's something that will likely always affect him.

Before I wrap this up, I want to thank Tammy @ Books, Bones, & Buffy and Kathy @ Pages Below the Vaulted Sky for raving about this book since I might've passed it by otherwise, and that would've been a real loss!

Overall, this was a gripping, unique start to an urban fantasy series with complex characters, interesting magic, and a unique world that I can't wait to keep reading!

Recommended For:

Anyone who likes realistic and likeable characters, adorable friendship, magic, and completely unique urban fantasy world-building.

Original Review @ Metaphors and Moonlight

Initial Thoughts:

Still deciding on my rating, but I loved it! Realistic characters, adorable friendship, and a unique urban fantasy world!

Lindsay M. says

Holy. SHIT.

Do not sleep on this book.

It's hilarious, heartbreakingly original, queer, and incredibly well written. I don't think I've ever read a book where I can't pick a favorite character. I can't even pick between four. They fly off the page, and there is so much depth to this world that I can't wait to reread it and immerse myself again and again.

If you love fantasy, **you have to try this.**

Adri says

Another addition to my all time favorites shelf! I've read this book a while ago but I just couldn't figure out how to put my feelings into words. I can only say that I absolutely love *The Last Sun* and that I am DESPERATE for many more installments in this series.

? My Thoughts

***The Last Sun* is a unique Urban Fantasy set in New Atlantis, where magical beings of all imagination co-exist.** This modern-day Atlantis is governed by the Arcana, powerful rulers of their respective courts. The Arcana are **based on archetypal figures from the tarot deck.**

Our protagonist, Rune, is heir of the fallen Sun Throne. The only other survivor of his House is Brand, Rune's companion and protector. These two have made a life together, working as investigators-for-hire. Having survived unspeakable terrors during the raid that killed his whole court, Rune struggles every day to keep moving forward and away from his haunting past. But that proves to be impossible when, per instructions, Rune and Brand participate in the raid of the Heart Throne and find themselves bound as caretakers of an orphaned teenager. It only gets worse when they get hired by Lord tower to find the kidnapped son of another Arcana. As Rune and Brand work to solve this mystery, they get entangled in dark magic and uncover connections to the massacre of Rune's court.

The best thing about this book, for me, was the characters. They feel so real that it is impossible not to grow to care for them. In New Atlantis, sexual fluidity is the norm and there are mostly LGBTQIAP+ characters featured. **The protagonist is gay and the rep is #OwnVoices.** There is an m/m romance but that's definitely not the main focus of the story. I wish there were more POC characters though. Hopefully, we will get that in future installments.

? **Rune**, our protagonist, is too lovable for words. He is snarky and funny, but he tramps down his deep-seated fears and hurts, and keeps secrets. Everyone knows about the fall of his court, and true to Atlantean culture, he has been shunned for it. But Rune doesn't let that get to him; he does everything he can to rise up and trudge on.

? **Brand** is Rune's companion, bonded to him in the crib. He has been trained to protect Rune and is willing to risk everything for him, but, much to Brand's frustration, Rune is ready to do the same for him. Brand's bone-deep loyalty and blunt humor makes him impossible not to love. He might own a motorcycle and an array of guns, but he's as affectionate and protective as a mother hen when it comes to Rune.

All these characters are complex and fully fleshed out, further solidified by the relationships they form with each other. No two characters in this book have similar dynamics. The strongest relationship in this book, though, was between Rune and Brand. **It was truly refreshing to see such an intimate friendship between two men.** I could say they have the best bromance in the history of bromance, across all forms of media, but to relegate it to that feels too simple. Of course their banter is fantastic and their interactions are heartwarming, but the bond between these two is much more intricate.

The world is vibrant and unique, with an intriguing magic system. I like how the magic-use has limitations. Spells are stored in sigils and need to be constantly refilled. It's interesting how magic is not only dependent on a person's innate powers, but also social standing and wealth as that affects the number of sigils you have. I could write a whole page about the side characters, too, but I've already said too much. All you need to know is that **The Last Sun is everything Fantasy should be and more; it rises above the stereotypical male characters and male relationships in the genre.** It has unforgettable characters and a gripping story. The action is unrelenting and the stakes high enough to keep you on the edge of your seat. I rarely laugh while reading a book but **the humor in this was too excellent** (I've highlighted so many passages that my copy's barely readable anymore). I really can't recommend this book enough. I hope everyone picks it up!

? Praise / Criticism

??Gay main character #OwnVoices rep

??Laugh-out-loud humor

??BEST male friendship ever that doesn't shy away from intimacy

??Full of unforgettable, lovable characters

??Lots of great action

??Unique world and intriguing magic system

??Exploration of all types of male relationships

??The only ‘criticism’ I could think of: I wanted to see more POC characters

? Trigger Warnings

?Sexual abuse (not on-page but flashbacks and references to it can be a bit graphic and triggering)

?Torture

★ Check out more reviews at my blog:

Tammy says

I received this book for free from the Publisher in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review. **The nitty-gritty:** Bursting with complex magic, populated with fascinating and lovable characters, and written in sparkling prose, *The Last Sun* can’t possibly be a debut. And yet.

Pyr is knocking it out of the park lately, folks. And I mean you need to start paying attention if you aren’t already. After I was bowled over by Tracy Townsend’s debut last November, *The Nine*, I figured they wouldn’t be able to top themselves. But along comes *The Last Sun* by debut author K.D. Edwards and once again I’m left in awe of how amazing a debut can be. I loved everything about this book: the characters, the relationships, the humor and snark (oh yes, some serious snark!), the magic system, the world-building, the pacing and the writing. The story may seem familiar but Edwards injects his own special touches into what could have been a “been there, done that” urban fantasy.

The story takes place in New Atlantis, created after the Atlantean World War destroyed the original Atlantis, displacing all the great ruling families of the Arcana. Rune Saint John, the last surviving member of the Sun Court, is occasionally hired by Lord Tower for jobs that require discretion and magical skills. Accompanied by his ever-present Companion Brand, Rune is powerful enough to command respect among the other Atlanteans, but the downfall of his family empire is still a sore spot. When Lord Tower asks Rune and Brand to find his missing godson Addam Saint Nicholas, Rune agrees.

But as Rune and Brand start their search and begin to interrogate members of Addam’s family, Rune suspects that Addam’s disappearance is tied to some very dark magic. As one clue leads to the next, Rune and Brand sink further and further into danger, especially when they discover that someone may be using dangerous summoning magic in order to tip the political balance of the families.

The Last Sun has a fantastic ensemble cast, something I’ve really come to appreciate lately. Although I do want to mention that this is largely a *male* ensemble cast, with very few female characters in the story. And those female characters are mostly relegated to the background with little influence on the outcome of the story (except for one, who actually figures into the plot to kidnap Addam). BUT I honestly did not care—which is strange because I’m a big supporter of female-centric fiction—because the male characters stole my heart. The relationships were, for lack of a better word, delicious. Rune and Brand have been

bonded since infancy and have literally grown up together, rarely leaving each others' sides over the years. Brand is human but has been carefully trained to protect Rune at all costs, and I loved that while Brand must use traditional weapons to fight, like guns and knives, and Rune uses spells, they are perfectly in tune with each other.

And for those of you who love snarky characters, I could not get enough of Brand and Rune being snarky to each other! At first I thought there might be sexual tension between them, but their relationship is much deeper and more complex than simple lust. But when Addam enters the picture, that's when the sparks start to fly. I loved that Atlanteans do not always have traditional male/female relationships, they believe in group marriages and are not concerned with the sex of the person they fall in love with, so it wasn't too much of a surprise to see a same-sex relationship between two of the main characters. Addam's presence in the story added some fun and flirty banter—and if you are the sort of reader who appreciates good ol' flirting in stories, you'll really enjoy it here—as well as some tension among the group. And a fourth character named Max adds *another* layer of tension, as Rune has agreed to take care of him until he reaches maturity. And lets just say Max has some feelings too. All these feelings the characters have (or don't have) for each other get tangled up, and it was simply a blast to read.

Addam just looked at me, long enough to have me fidgeting. He finally said, "You interest me, Hero. I'm fairly sure you saved my life, and a simple thank you seems so small. I don't know whether I should pay you handsomely, or invite you into the shower with me."

"We take checks," I said, before I could get uncomfortable or act stupid.

But hey, don't worry because the romance part of the story is really very small compared to the rest. What sets this story apart from other urban fantasies I've read are a couple of things: the world-building and magic system, and Edwards' writing skills. The author drops us right into his world with very little explanation, and the reader figures out the details of the world as we get deeper into the story. The whole idea revolves around the Tarot, and you may notice that some of the characters' names relate to various tarot cards: the Sun, Justice, the Lovers, the Tower, etc. The rulers of each of these "families" are called the Arcana and they have immense power.

The story is set in New Atlantis, which came about after the destruction of the original Atlantis during the Atlantean World War. Atlanteans live alongside humans, who are now aware of their existence, as well as that of other supernatural creatures like vampires, pixies and many others. And one of my favorite elements was the way the city was constructed: by using a kind of magic called "translocation" to literally transfer famous historical buildings from all over the world to New Atlantis. It's a fantastic idea and I don't want to say much more than that because you should discover all the intricate details for yourself.

I also loved the magic system, which uses sigils, receptacles for magical spells like jewelry and other small trinkets. Atlanteans are able to meditate and channel magic spells into these sigils to take with them out into the world, and the spells can be released with a simple touch whenever they are needed. And in *The Last Sun*, the characters desperately need those spells to fight the dangers they face.

And I was really impressed with K.D. Edwards' prose. He just has a way with words that I found completely refreshing, and his dialog was really good as well. This quote will give you a good idea of both his writing

style and his humor:

We both swore as something lumbered into view.

It was huge. And shaggy. It had orange-brown fur and forklift-shaped tusks. It looked like it had chewed through the barbed wire around Jim Henson's workshop and fled into the wild.

And yes, there is plenty of action, as Rune and Brand follow the clues that will bring them closer to the truth about what happened to Addam. But Edwards smartly adds in an emotional element to his story by giving Rune a painful secret from his past that he's trying to deal with. Oddly, the mystery aspect of the story—trying to find out who's behind Addam's kidnapping, among other things—didn't end up being the big reveal I was expecting. This story really is about the journey rather than the destination, and when we do find out what's going on, by that point I almost didn't care. I simply wanted to hang out with these characters and follow them on their adventures, whatever those might be.

Big thanks to the publisher for supplying a review copy. Above quotes were taken from an uncorrected proof and may differ in the final version of the book. This review originally appeared on Books, Bones & Buffy

Hart says

A very good debut urban fantasy. It has the fast-paced feel of this genre, with lots of banter and action scenes. So many action scenes. Overall I enjoyed the core of the book, but the experience of reading it was often pretty exhausting, because the characters are constantly battling enemies. At some point I got drawn in, but it didn't happen for at least three-fourths of the book. So it was a slow read for me, even though I did end up really liking it.

First: major content warning (view spoiler)

Most of the major characters are something like demigods or superheroes, called Atlanteans, who live in their own community in the human world, but can use magic in various ways. The rules of magic are defined pretty well. Usually, Rune tells the reader important information in a fairly conversational style, which I liked. But I was confused sometimes, because you really only see how magic actually works when it's relevant to the plot. I felt like I had a decent handle on it about halfway through. The Atlanteans' everyday lives are mostly like human lives from our own world, although most of them are fabulously wealthy, except for Rune and his household.

The characterizations are all very good and consistent. The book is completely in the first-person PoV of the main character, Rune, and I felt like I knew him very well. He's easy to like, yet not a reader-insert type of character. He has his own experiences and his own personality. He's very powerful and makes a living as a sort of badass-for-hire, along with his bonded human companion and best friend, Brand, a highly trained warrior.

The plot is about Rune and Brand finding an Atlantean who has been kidnapped, rescuing him, figuring out who kidnapped him, and fighting against monsters. The monsters are mostly zombies; I hate zombies, but it isn't an overly gory book. This plot is totally resolved in this book, but other plot threads are introduced which I'm sure will be explored in the rest of the series.

Atlantean society has an "everyone is bi/pan" feel, with some exceptions. Rune reads as almost completely gay to me. But I thought that his love interest (view spoiler) was a great example of bisexual representation. He is flirty and promiscuous, but neither of those are portrayed as especially negative traits. (view spoiler)

This book's major flaw, to me, is its serious lack of interesting female characters. Almost any of the major characters could have been female, with no changes to the plot: Lord Tower, Kiran (sorry if I misspelled that; I listened to the audiobook), Brand, Quinn, Max. I found the most important female characters impossible to sympathize with, and I don't think any of them were meant to be sympathetic. There are also jokes about anorexia, and about the size of Rune's butt, and I consider that kind of humor to be in bad taste.

On that topic, I don't really like fast-paced banter in general, especially with a lot of real-world references, so I wasn't really the target audience for this book. But I know many readers would like the humor.

I think Rune and Brand are in their late 30s, but Atlantean society works differently, because people age more slowly and live longer lives. They are good at what they do, but the story is very much about Rune coming into his power. So, I'd probably categorize the book as new adult.

It was the gripping plot, as well as my fondness for Rune, that kept me reading, even though there are a few elements that aren't my kind of thing. I'm really eager for the next book. The audiobook narration by Josh Hurley was perfect for an action-oriented story.

Kathy says

I've been sitting on this review for over a month, all the while rewriting and tweaking and coming to the realization that a written review can't properly encompass the adoration I have for this story and its characters. A hundred gifs of muppet flails would be a better representation of my feelings, but I figure I still have some shred of respectability and professionalism to maintain.

But that was more or less my experience reading this book--every cell of my body flailing their tiny cytoplasmic limbs in abject worship. **Because *The Last Sun* shines with the light of a supernova. It brims with life and love and wonder and serves as a testament to some of the best this genre has to offer.** It's everything I want in quality fantasy and more: a lovingly-crafted, rich setting that's a blend of contemporary and high fantasy; prose that moves from laugh-out-loud humour to quiet poignancy; caffeine-fueled pacing and breakneck action sequences; complex, unabashedly queer characters, and heartfelt exploration of the many kinds of male relationships.

The story takes place in New Atlantis, an island formerly known in the human world as Nantucket. This Earth is very much like our own--same countries, same pop culture, same technology--except for the presence of various magical beings. These magical beings used to exist unbeknownst to humans, but then came the Atlantean World War and the boundaries between Atlanteans and humans became frayed. Among these beings are those called the "Arcana." Named after tarot cards--like The Tower, The Fool, Justice, and The Sun--they're the closest things to gods of this world. Their access to immense power and their

considerable influence within and outside of New Atlantis make them the de facto Atlantean rulers.

New Atlantis is like if *Shadowrun* had a baby with *Neverwhere*. Worldbuilding in urban fantasy don't normally excite me because many of them feel the same. There's either the fae--the Seelie and the Unseelie--or the paranormal--wereanimals, vampires, spirits, and such. You get the gist after reading half a dozen UF series. *The Last Sun*, though? It makes me giddy in a way that the *Shadowrun* world does. For those who are unfamiliar, *Shadowrun* is a cyberpunk RPG that's unfortunately shadowed (no pun intended) by the popularity of D&D. And what I adore about *Shadowrun* is its diversity. Its major cities are a hub for not only human diversity--various ethnicity, sexuality, and gender--but magical diversity. When you walk down a street, you would see orcs intermingling with trolls, elves, dwarves, shamans, druids, and more.

The same goes for New Atlantis. The island is crammed with all manner of magical beings. Wereanimals, spirits, fae, ghouls, elementals--pick the name of any random fantasy creature floating around in your brain and it can probably be found in New Atlantis. Every corner of the story unveils something new and exciting and I couldn't help but grin like an idiot tourist at the absolute wonder of it all.

The magic system is very reminiscent of RPGs--dynamic and fiendishly delightful. The plot moves from your standard mystery to something with larger implications, and its pacing grabs you by the neck and hurls you forward at a hundred miles per hour. And what's incredible is that even though the pacing hardly ever lets up, Edwards still makes time for meaningful character interactions without disrupting the momentum.

The book could have stopped there and I still would have given it a very high score. But Edwards takes it a step further. Let's talk about the reason this gets a 10 out of 10: the characters. Because the characters of *The Last Sun* have wormed their way into my heart, built themselves a little cabin, and are now refusing to leave.

In a genre that so often celebrates a testosterone-laden brand of masculinity, Edwards whittles down stereotypes. Take Brand, our protagonist's foul-mouthed, sarcastic bodyguard. We're all familiar with the type. But the thing with Brand is that he never shies away from showing how much he cares about Rune. He dons the tough bodyguard look and the emotionally vulnerable look with equal confidence.

Take Addam, who is a perfect example of the Knight In Shining Armour archetype done right. He's one of those people that you want to hate because they're so perfect, but can't because they're so perfectly nice. In fiction, nice characters--especially nice male characters and *especially* nice male love interests--are often disparaged as boring. Dull. Weak. Addam shatters this notion to pieces. He's a pillar of strength born of unconditional kindness and love and trust--qualities that we as a society often misconstrue as naiveté.

And then there's Rune, our protagonist. The heir to the fallen Sun Throne. Victim of an unspeakable tragedy. He lives in a tiny house on the edge of poverty with the fear over his head that someday his luck will run out and his enemies will catch up to him. But most of all, Rune is a survivor. And his display of strength--through his jokes, his empathy, his determination to keep moving forward--amidst the demons of his past is nothing short of inspiring.

But what I love and appreciate the most, and what makes the book special to me is in the way that Edwards tackles relationships. Specifically, the notion that deep, emotional intimacy can't exist between two people who are not romantically involved.

I'm always drawn to stories about friends who share hugs and kisses and tell each other, without shame or hesitation, "I will walk to the deepest of hell for you." Because my own relationship with my best friend is a very intimate one where we tell each other things like "You're my raison d'être" with complete seriousness.

But I hardly ever see this explored in modern western literature--mostly in manga and anime.

Then this book comes along.

Rune's relationship with Brand is different to his relationship with Addam--in that it's not a romantic or sexual one. Yet it's no less intimate. It's still love. It's palpable love that makes you want to burst into tears at the sheer beauty of it. To see this portrayed with pitch-perfection in a book--a fantasy one at that--makes me ridiculously happy. Reading through Rune and Brand's snarky exchanges are always great, but the moments of quiet, during which they reiterate their bond to one another, are what makes this relationship so compelling. They make my heart soar in the same way that the genre's best duos do.

What else can I say? The book is only just over 350 pages, but Edwards utilizes every single one of them and takes you through a whirlwind of an adventure. *The Last Sun* gives so much and leaves room for yet so much more. And I feel incredibly privileged to witness the start of what's no doubt going to be a magnificent one-of-lifetime journey alongside these characters.

~

Review copy provided by Pyr and Edelweiss.

Mogsy (MMOGC) says

3.5 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum [https://bibliosanctum.com/2018/06/24/...](https://bibliosanctum.com/2018/06/24/)

It can be a dog-eat-dog world out there—especially if you’re an Atlantean. Rune Saint John learned that lesson early on the hard way, following a bloody coup on his family when he was just a young boy, which tragically resulted in the complete destruction of the Sun Court. Now, years later, rumors about that day still fly among the elites of New Atlantis, who love to gossip about the Sun’s sole survivor whenever the nobility holds their swanky soirees. For even though Rune is still considered royalty, his family’s downfall ultimately cost him much of his status and power, and as such, he and his loyal bodyguard Brand often find themselves doing odd jobs for Lord Tower, the head of another high-ranking house.

But this time, their employer has charged them with a doozy. It appears that Addam Saint Nicholas, son of the powerful Lady Justice, has suddenly gone missing. Tasked to track down the young man, Rune and Brand start their investigation by questioning those closest to Addam, including his family, who may know significantly more than they are revealing. The deeper they dig, the more they also find evidence of foul play and dark magic. And as if that weren’t enough, the case is further complicated when our characters are saddled with an unexpected houseguest, to whom Rune must play guardian. Everything comes to a head when they discover that Addam’s disappearance might have links to the massacre that destroyed the Sun Court, and Rune has no choice but to face the terrible things done to him in the past if he is to uncover the truth to preserve his family’s legacy.

I enjoyed *The Last Sun* a lot. Everything about it—from its amazing characters and relationship dynamics to the action-packed plotline and incredible world-building—seemed perfectly aligned with my tastes. Still, like most debuts, it had its fair share of flaws, and I’ll be sure to go into those later, but to start, I definitely want to talk about the elements that really worked for me.

First things first: the world-building. Wow. Just wow. I can hardly remember the last time I was this blown

away by such sheer magnificent creativity and imagination. I haven't seen world-building of this caliber probably since Max Gladstone's Craft Sequence. I could easily go on for pages about what impressed me, but the following are some key features that stuck out. One, the story takes place in an alternate world with many similarities to our own, but with the inclusion of magic as well as the existence of supernatural beings. History also differs dramatically, with the Atlantis being a real place (albeit previously unknown to humans) until the continent was destroyed after the Atlantean World War, which revealed its magic and left the ruling families scattered across the globe. Two, these powerful houses are all named after the Major Arcana of the tarot deck, and their nobles are practically godlike compared to mere mortals thanks to their access to and control over magic. Three, as the prince of a once great house, Rune also possesses a good deal of magical power, including a special mental bond with Brand, who takes his role as protector very seriously. Their mental connection means Brand feels what Rune feels, a perk which actually allows them to communicate quite effectively.

Speaking of which, there's the character development. Rune is a fascinatingly deep and complex character, with a well-crafted back story, and he's not even my favorite of the bunch (that honor would belong to Matthias). Granted, it's a heavily male-dominated cast, sometimes with too little variation in the personalities to set each person apart, but I have to admit, this was an extremely entertaining group to read about, with their lively banter and camaraderie. I also have to mention the queer-friendly themes and the fact that the inclusion and representation of the LGBT characters in this book felt very natural and meaningful, as opposed to being reduced to a mere symbolic gesture or selling point. Without a doubt, the characters were the heart and soul of this novel, and I loved reading about their thoughtful and wonderfully subtle relationships.

In terms of criticisms though, I thought *The Last Sun* suffered from one minor, but not insignificant, problem. Mainly, it almost feels as if there's too much going on. The plot might be action-packed, but it's also arguably the weakest aspect of the book, by which I mean it was decent and entertaining, but still paled in comparison to the spectacular world-building and character development. While you had plenty of skirmishes and nail-biting escapades, ironically my favorite parts of the book were always and unfailingly the quieter parts of the novel, when Rune had his moments of connection with other characters. To me, these were the defining moments of the story, worth more than all the action scenes put together. And yet, the latter was what we mostly got, to the point where the idea of another umpteenth battle sequence actually became unbearably exhausting, so that by the halfway mark I was already skimming over a lot of them.

Still, I can't emphasize how impressed I was at how all the pieces came together. With so many ideas and moving parts, this book easily could have become a disaster, but in K.D. Edwards' capable hands, *The Last Sun* instead became a special series starter full of promise and potential. Despite some hiccups, I enjoyed the book immensely, and I'm excited to see what the sequel will bring.

Donna says

So part of me is like this book needs more women because there are basically none. Those that do exist are functioning in the background as either a mere hovering presence or a tertiary villain that's barely useful. But at the same time I want to rave about the fluidity of sexual orientation and how "maleness" isn't really a thing in this world. It is, but not so much in the standard American society type of maleness, mainly because love is love and what does it matter? So I'm torn there. No points for feminism but a ton of points for representation. Not sure if that balances out, but there you go.

The world Edwards creates is fantastic. New Atlantis is this rich, otherworldly place that exists just off the coast of Rhode Island, filled with all manner of magical, mystical creatures that may or may not peel the flesh from your bones. You know. The norm. There's a ruling caste modeled after the tarot, of which Rune is (was) one of them and they have certain abilities and powers that they grow into and learn so long as their house doesn't fall. Boo for Rune. But it's his story so you can imagine where his story does or doesn't end for the sake of a burgeoning series.

I loved Rune and Brand's relationship. Completely unapologetic best of friends that show all manner of emotions toward each other without the slightest hint of shame or questioning. Because why wouldn't they? Brand is Rune's protector by some sort of magical bond. But it's more than that. But less than that. There is no romantic pull between the two, but there exists an incredibly strong love for each other that goes beyond even brothers. It's so refreshing to see interaction like that without fear of what it may or may not look like.

Everything is so vivid in Edwards's world. The story is amazing and riveting, the interactions between all of the characters are at times hilarious and stressful (Brand's probably my favorite for all his neurotic tendencies), and most importantly it makes me want to read more. Being the world whore that I am I want more of that, without a doubt. But he writes some good characters too. I didn't dislike any of them. They were all compelling in each of their unique ways that helped to draw you into the story more.

THE LAST SUN is a great debut and an excellent start to the Tarot Sequence. I look forward to reading more!

4.5

I received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Blake Traina says

Oftentimes I avoid sci-fi and fantasy fiction because I find the world building to be awkward and dull. As far as I'm concerned, there's nothing worse than front-loading your novel with loads of exhaustive exposition for the purpose of establishing the back-story. And don't even get me started on glossaries. No thanks.

K.D. Edwards dispenses with that nonsense and drops the reader right into a rapidly moving plot, smack dab in the middle of this unique world of families and kingdoms based on the Major and Minor Arcana of the Tarot with basically no explanation of who, what, where or why. Confused already? Don't worry – you'll catch up. I'll admit, at first I was skeptical. Particularly when we're introduced to our heroes, Rune and Brand, two bantering buddies (or possibly more?) right out of a Joss Whedon-penned escapade. I was so not in the mood for yet more snappy dialogue lifted straight out of an Avengers/Firefly script.

Happily, I judged too quickly and too harshly. Like their universe and back-story, the characters are slowly revealed over the course of the book and they definitely grew on me – to the point that I was actually chuckling over their witty back-and-forth and disturbed when I learned the deep psychic wounds their glibness hides. (I guess that can also serve as my trigger warning)

Rune is the only survivor of the fallen Sun Court and Brand is his longtime companion/bodyguard. Like Holmes and Watson, they share digs with their trusty housekeeper Queenie. After reluctantly being placed in charge of the flirty teenage son of Lady Lovers, Rune is hired by the mighty Lord Tower to investigate the

kidnapping of the son of Lady Justice, the matriarch of yet another Major Arcana family. The investigation leads this little band of mercenaries into quite a few adventures - from nail-biting scrapes to epic battles – all entertaining, suspenseful and surprisingly cinematic. There's also a bit of very hot (and somewhat explicit) gay sex with the tease of the possibility of romance in future installments.

While there are flaws, they're mostly quibbles. The author is obviously a fan of all the same things I am, which isn't necessarily a good thing, because it was too easy for me to spot his influences. For example, Quinn, a wide-eyed and loquacious seer who knows every possible outcome to any situation, is way too similar to a character in Men in Black III. And the snarky repartee between the lead characters, while mostly entertaining, is a trend in genre fiction [and film] that's starting to overstay its welcome. And while I loved the idea of New Atlantis (the section of Nantucket where these characters live in a polyglot of historical buildings imported from all over the globe) I had a hard time getting a real picture of it in my mind based on the information provided. If you are at all familiar with Nantucket, you'll know what I mean. But again, quibbles.

Basically, I loved this book more than I expected to and am eagerly anticipating future installments in the series.

Dumbledore11214 says

In this debut novel and series starter, the last member of a murdered House searches for a missing nobleman, and uncovers clues about his own tortured past.

Rune Saint John, last child of the fallen Sun Court, is hired to search for Lady Judgment's missing son, Addam, on New Atlantis, the island city where the Atlanteans moved after ordinary humans destroyed their original home.

With his companion and bodyguard, Brand, he questions Addam's relatives and business contacts through the highest ranks of the nobles of New Atlantis. But as they investigate, they uncover more than a missing man: a legendary creature connected to the secret of the massacre of Rune's Court. In looking for Addam, can Rune find the truth behind his family's death and the torments of his past?

Review,

Dear K.D. Edwards,

So apparently after Atlantis was destroyed , the people who lived there built a New Atlantis on the island somewhere within the limits of State of Massachusetts. New Atlantis people live very interesting and exciting lives. Often such excitement turns deadly. Oh and I had to talk myself into accepting as given that Courts who rule the city are divided according to the Cards of Taro deck. I have very passing familiarity with Taro cards, basically some of them sounded familiar and some powers are explained along the way, however I am sure that a lot of magic that will come into play later will come as a surprise for me, and probably the names of Magical Courts alone served as some kind of clues/foreshadowing, but were lost on me.

The book is written from the first person POV and Rune Saint John, last member of the Sun Court narrates it. When he was fifteen Sun court was destroyed, his father murdered and he badly hurt (raped). Now Rune and his Companion Brand do odd jobs on behalf of Lord Tower and whoever else hires them I am assuming.

In the very beginning Rune and some other Atlantians participate in the "sanctioned raid" on Lovers court - because they "turned bad" (paraphrase). I am not sure yet just how much I accept this premise - that as long as the raid is sanctioned, it is okay to destroy one of the courts (simply because Rune's court was destroyed years ago and it is clearly presented as a huge trauma for him). However the whole book presents Rune as a good guy and I do not have much reason to distrust him either. In any event, as a result of this raid Rune is giving an Oath to the Arcana of the Lovers court and ends up getting her grandson Mattias (Max) as a ward.

Shortly after Lord Tower Rune's sometimes ruthless employer and Arcana (Leader?) of one of the most powerful courts in New Atlantis hire Rune (and where Rune goes Brand does) to find Addam, one of the sons of Lady Justice who disappeared and could be in mortal danger.Rune starts investigation and quick breath of the air after the raid on Lovers Court is almost the last one in the book. The action starts moving fast and furiously and one of my small criticisms of the book is that I needed a breather . I love action, I really do, but occasionally in this book (NOT all the time) it was a bit much for me. Not in a sense that it hurt the pacing, but I did not feel that it always advanced character development.

I know this feels contradictory with what I just wrote, but the character development did took place and interactions between Rune and Brand and Max and couple other characters were great, sweet and occasionally even humorous amongst all the action, I just wanted more.

As a related small criticism, the characters' non stop use of the magical weapons (sygils) occasionally felt gimmicky.

I know it is the first book in the series and there are some questions left unanswered. I am very much looking forward to Rune's further adventures.
